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Unlike the North American grey squirrel that's prevalent in Cape Town (having been introduced there by Cecil John Rhodes), the ground squirrel (*Xerus inaurus*) is a poor climber, and stays mostly on or under the ground, where colonies of up to 30 live in a maze of interconnecting burrows. They inhabit the drier parts of southern Africa, e.g. the Kalahari, Northern Cape and Namibia. The tail is used as a sunshade (bent over its back while feeding) and also as an alarm signal to other squirrels by moving it up and down while making a drawn-out whining sound.

Photo: Jenny Cole-Rous  
Email: linguist@mweb.co.za



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