

## **Project Update: June 2013**

Overall, the project has continued well since the last update and is currently near completion. In particular, the research component, a novel and integrated approach to the study of the Udzungwa red colobus, has rapidly progressed in line with the planned schedule. Field data collection was successfully completed as of November 2012. In total, four forest blocks have been surveyed (Mwanihana, Matundu, Magombera and Uzungwa Scarp Forest Reserve) through line-transect sampling for arboreal primates. Sampling used a diffused grid of 2 km transects that covered most of the forests' area (150 transect repetitions for nearly 300 km walked overall). In addition, four, 20 x 20 m vegetation plots were established for over 400 plots measured. Faecal sampling was opportunistically conducted in all forests and samples are currently analysed for endocrine, parasite and genetic purposes. Samples are also being analysed for the population genetic assessment. Analysis are currently at an advanced stage, and two manuscripts on the results of ecological modelling and density estimation are on-going. These results have revealed the large contrasts across forests in the abundance of red colobus, and highlighted the strong effects of both habitat type and human impact on their abundance.

The second component (enhancing the park-wide ecological monitoring) has also continued but progressed at a slower rate than planned. However, following the participatory review of the data collection routines with the Ecology Department of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, a modified transect arrangement has been realised with a view of increasing the park coverage by mammal census. Besides enhancing the transects spanning from the ranger posts (which were all standardized to 6 km), additional transects were cut in the interior of the park. This exercise was however not completed and it remains to be assessed whether a larger set of transects is sustainable in terms of logistic and costs that will be incurred by the park to properly use and maintain these additional transects. Despite these limitations, field data collection has begun in the fall of 2012 but progressed slowly mainly because of the heavy rainfall season that ensued, and the persisting difficulties of ensuring allocation of trained personnel by the park for the emerging needs of personnel or vehicles for tasks other than ecological monitoring (law enforcement, fire control, etc.). It is foreseen that with the dry season, data collection will resume regularly. In addition, and according to plans, a nationwide training of Tanzania National Parks' (TANAPA) forest park ecologists is scheduled for August 2013, with all arrangements with TANAPA already made. This workshop will aim to boost the ecological monitoring in all six to seven forest parks in the country (including Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Gombe, Mahale National Parks) by reinforcing the need for standardized ecological monitoring of forest biodiversity.



Training of park personnel on GIS at the Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Centre (left) and the field team in the forest establishing transects for primate census (right).