

Project Update: December 2017

Data collection

Surveys are being conducted on line transects from July 2017 onwards. Two teams comprising three people each simultaneously search for ashy monkey using line transects (following Peres, 1999). When a group is encountered, the number of individuals, sex and age composition, sighting distances to the group, GPS position and bearing from the observer to the group are recorded. Because this method can leave out some groups (Ferrari *et al.*, 2010), especially in very large areas, it was complemented with complete counts (*sensu* Davenport *et al.*, 2007). Total population size estimates will be obtained by summing up groups found in all sites of the Ufipa plateau. Faecal samples for DNA analysis are being collected and preserved following Ting (2008) and Mbora and McPeck (2011). Collected samples are being kept in fridges at University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Ashy red colobus monkeys

Whereas surveys are finished in the Mbuluzi Forest area, survey teams are still working in the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem. The groups of red colobus recorded vary in size among the sites surveyed in Tanzania (figures will be provided on the final report). Inter-site variations in group size may be due to differences in land protection status, the extent of human activities (cultivation), and inter-site habitat heterogeneity. Whereas many groups were mostly found in montane forest mosaics (Figure 1), some were astonishingly found in woodlands. Details will be presented in the final report.



Figure 1: Ashy monkey in a forest patch in Mbuluzi Forest area on the Ufipa plateau.

Faecal samples

About 80 faecal samples have so far been collected from all sites in the Mbuluzi Forest area (60 samples) and Masito-Ugalla ecosystem (20 samples). Some samples are being kept in fridges at the University of Dar es Salaam. Faecal collection is continuing in the large Masito-Ugalla ecosystem.

Conservation threats

Bushfires and influx of livestock keepers are a common problem in the entire study area. In the Mbuzi Forest area, major human activities taking place in all study sites include tree cutting, farming, poaching and livestock keeping (Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). Details on the specific activities for those major human activities will be given in future reports. Human signs for the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem will be released in the 2nd quarter report.

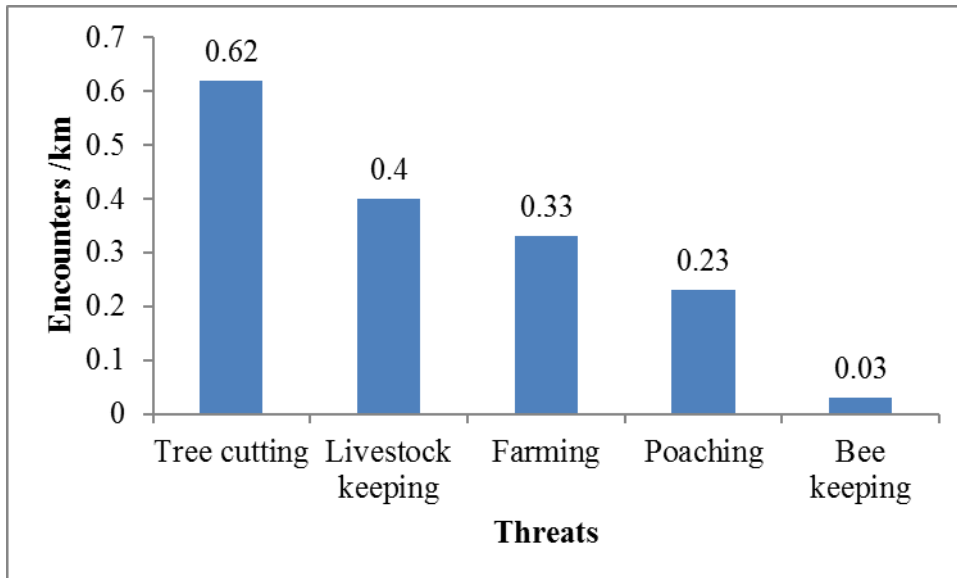


Figure 2: Encounters of anthropogenic threats per kilometer in the Mbuzi Forest area (ER = frequency of each threat per total transect length).



Figure 3: A field assistant displaying abandoned poachers cooking utensils in Chala Forest.



Figure 4: Locally made smash trap for trapping cane rats and dik-diks in Chala Forest.



Figure 5: Deforestation in the Mbuzi Forest site on the Ufipa plateau.



Figure 6: Forest conversion into farming and livestock keeping in the Mbuzi Forest site on the Ufipa plateau.

Ongoing and Pending activities

- Surveys in the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem and expected to end in January 2018 instead of December 2017, because the funds reached me 1 month late. Surveys in the Mbuzi Forest area are now completed and the corresponding data are being processed for manuscript write up.
- Data entry and analyses for the surveys in the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem (upon completion of surveys, which are ongoing and will end in February 2018).
- Community conservation campaigns will start in January 2018 and will go until to July 2018 as planned in the proposal.
- Conservation action plan. Arrangements will be made from February to July 2018 and will be produced in August 2018.
- Collection of faecal samples is ongoing. This collection will be concluded in February 2018, at the same time when the surveys in Masito-Ugalla ecosystem conclude.