



**Faculdade de Ciências
Naturais**
Departamento de Ecologia Terrestre

Progress report

Title of Application: Extinct or just shy? A quest to find two of the least known skinks in East Africa.

Name of leader: Harith Farooq

The grant has been received by the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Lúrio University on January 7, 2021.

The main methodological approach of the project:

An unprecedented one year long trapping of amphibians in reptiles in one sampling site in order to find two lizards not see in almost 100 years.

Instagram:
eos_lumbo

Website:
<http://www.extinctorshy.org/>

Conducted activities

Step 1: Selection of students

We interviewed candidate students to conduct the sampling for the first 6 months – completed

Students selected: Ali Luciano Puruleia, Wilson Monia, Abdurabe Yamal.

(A new set of students will be selected to conduct the remaining 6 months of the sampling).



Figure 1: Selected students upon arriving at Lumbo.

Step 2: Acquire traps

A collaborator, Luke Verburgt donated his trapping system. This is especially relevant since his trapping system was able to collect a sister species of our target species.

Step 3: Training students

The trapping training was conducted at the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Lúrio University, located in Pemba, Mozambique, between 30 and 31 of March 2021.



Figure 2: A selection of images illustrating the training process for the students participating in the project. We conducted both theoretical and practical sessions before starting with the fieldwork.

Step 4: Sorting logistics

We found cheap accommodation for the students in Lumbo (Fig. 3) so instead of camping, they can stay in a proper house and concentrate on their fieldwork.



Figure 3: Image of the housing we are renting for the whole duration of the 365-day long sampling.

The trapping systems are 10km apart, and the students visit these traps twice a day. So we managed to sort out a free of charge bicycle, so the students don't have to walk the whole distance daily.

We have also introduced our team and research project to local authorities. Attached here the stamped credentials (Appendix).

Step 5: Mounting the trap

In total, 4 trapping systems are mounted in our study site.

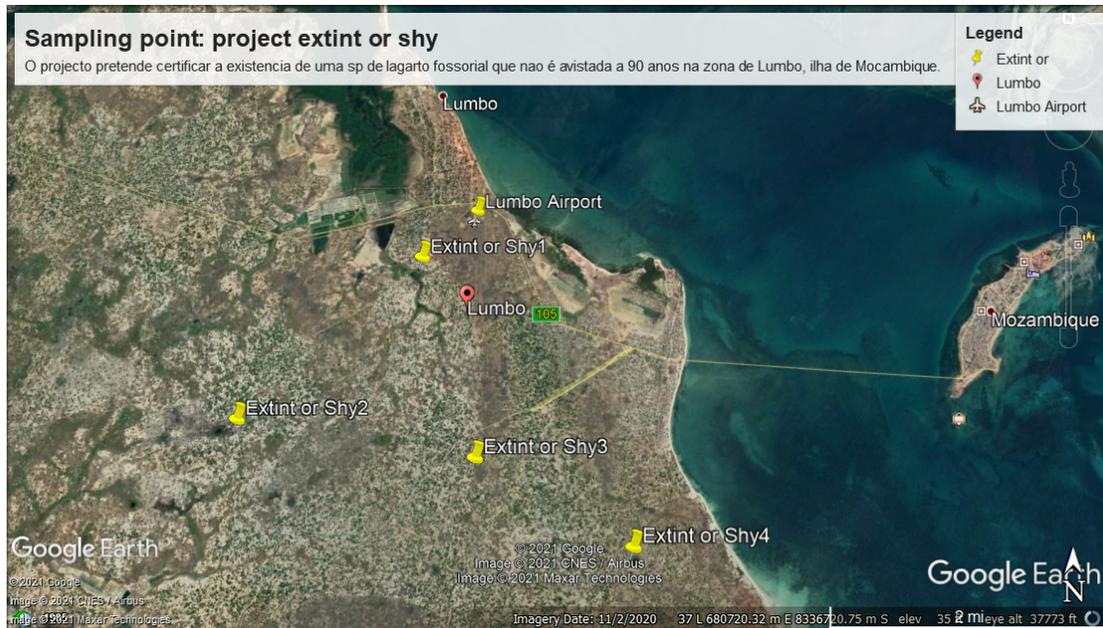


Figure 4: The location of the trap placement.



Figure 5: The habitat type where the traps were placed.

Table 1: Location of the pitfall trap arrays

Site	Latitude	Longitude	Habitat description
Extinct or Shy1	-15.033025	40.664418	Wetland with trees and leaflet
Extinct or Shy2	-15.052409	40.642038	Wetland with trees and leaflet
Extinct or Shy3	-15.055964	40.672013	Wetland with few trees and leaflet
Extinct or Shy4	-15.066722	40.689839	Wetland with trees and leaflet

Results:

We have already collected and photographed 21 species. More importantly, we have collected a range of fossorial species such as *Hemisus marmoratus* (Fig. 6), *Mochlus sundevalli* (Fig. 7), *Myriopholis longicauda* (Fig. 8), *Apparalactus capensis* (Fig. 9) and *Atractaspis bibronii* (Fig. 10). We have also been able to collect a rare skink, of the species *Trachylepis megalura*. This species has only two records in the country. One of them is precisely from our sampling location and from an expedition in 1918, by Arthur Loveridge. It was exactly that expedition that found the lizards that we are now trying to find. Finally, we have also created an Instagram account to report our progress using the photographs we have been taking daily from our trapping systems. The account can be reached at eos_lumbo.



Figure 6: *Hemisus marmoratus*, a fossorial frog that our trap system caught.



Figure 7: *Mochlus sundevalli*, a fossorial skink found inside one of our traps.



Figure 8: *Myriopholis longicauda*, a fossorial and harmless fossorial snake



Figure 9: *Apparalactus capensis*, this centipede-eater is a hard-to-find fossorial snake.



Figure 10: *Atractaspis bibronii*, a dangerous snake capable of causing cytotoxic bites.



Figure 11: *Trachylepis megalura*, a species found more than a year before during the same expedition where our target species was collected last time in 1918.

Identifications

Trachylepis megalura (Peters, 1878)

Animalia Chordata Reptilia Lepidosauromorpha Squamata Sauria Scincidae Trachylepis megalura

Grass-top skink; Long-tailed skink

Identified by José Rosado

Nature of ID: expert ID

Mabuya megalura

Animalia Chordata Reptilia Lepidosauromorpha Squamata Sauria Scincidae Mabuya megalura

Identified by Catalog

Nature of ID: migration

Remarks: Catalog/1997

Locality and Collecting Event Details

Continent/Ocean: Africa

Country: Mozambique

Specific Locality: Lumbo

Verbatim Locality: Lumbo,PEA

Collecting Source: wild caught

Coordinates: -15.031667° 40.669722° (Datum: WGS84) , Error: 2530 m

Cleo Falvey; 2020-05-27; Source: GEOLocate

Collecting Date: 18/11/1918-18/11/1918 (1918-11-18)

Collectors

[Arthur Loveridge](#)

Figure 12: The collected specimen is at the Natural History Collection at Harvard

Constraints:

We don't own a photographic camera. We have been reporting our findings using a phone camera.

Appendix:

