

Project Update: September 2024

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Introduction

The Usambara Flap-nosed Chameleon (*Kinyongia tenuis*) and the Banded Shovel-snout Snake (*Prosymna semifasciata*) are endangered species native to the East Usambara Mountains in Tanzania and the Shimba Hills in Kenya. The Shimba Hills National Reserve (SHNR) is a critical habitat for both species, providing unique ecological niches. However, these species are experiencing habitat decline and population reduction due to human activities such as logging and unsustainable agriculture. This project aims to contribute to their conservation by providing essential data on their taxonomic status, population size, and abundance in the Shimba Hills, alongside community engagement for habitat protection.

Aim: The project aims to contribute to the conservation of the endangered Usambara Flap-nosed Chameleon and the Banded Shovel-snout snake by providing information on their taxonomic status, population size, and abundance, as well as conducting community outreach and education on habitat protection for this endangered species survival.

Objectives

- To establish the taxonomic status of the Usambara Flap-nosed Chameleon population in Simba Hills.
- To establish the population size, and abundance of the target species in the unprotected areas within Shimba hills
- To conduct community awareness and information dissemination on the presence of the two species and their conservation importance.

Field sampling was conducted in April and May 2024 in various forest blocks within SHNR, including Makadara, Mwele, and Longo-Mwagandi forests. These areas vary in their ecological characteristics, ranging from dense coastal rainforests to open grasslands. Methods used include:

- Pitfall traps and drift fences to record reptile abundance.
- Day and night visual encounter surveys.
- Engagement with local communities to understand human impacts and raise awareness of conservation efforts.

Results and Discussion

During the two-month sampling period, six records of *Kinyongia tenuis* were made, primarily near the main gate of SHNR and in Makadara forest. No observations of *Prosymna semifasciata* were recorded, which may suggest a decline or elusive behavior of the species. Additionally, a total of 165 other reptile and amphibian observations were made, 125 of those were reptiles.

Distribution of Orders Testudines

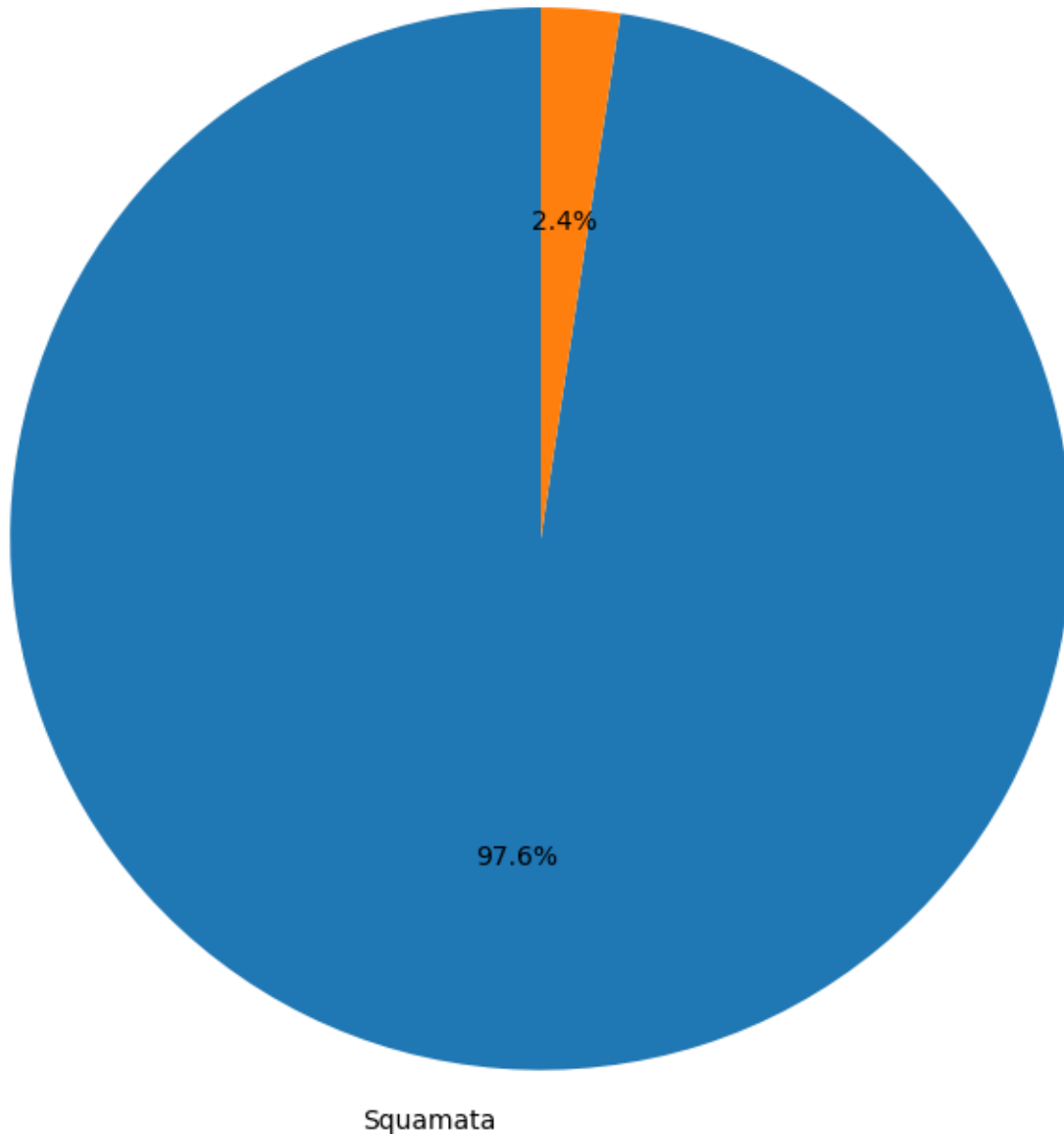


Figure 1: Reptiles observation by order

5. Next Steps

To promote species conservation, the next phase will focus on community awareness through educational workshops, collaboration with local leaders, and participatory mapping. These efforts aim to:

- **Educational Workshops:** Engage villages around the SHNR through interactive sessions, focusing on the ecological roles, conservation status, and threats facing the species.
- **Collaboration with Local Leaders:** Involve elders and influencers as conservation ambassadors to enhance community acceptance.
- **Information Dissemination:** Share findings with local communities, authorities, and environmental organizations to influence behavior and policy.
- **Participatory Mapping:** Empower community members to identify key areas for alternative livelihoods and conservation efforts
- **Field survey in January for the extreme dry season**

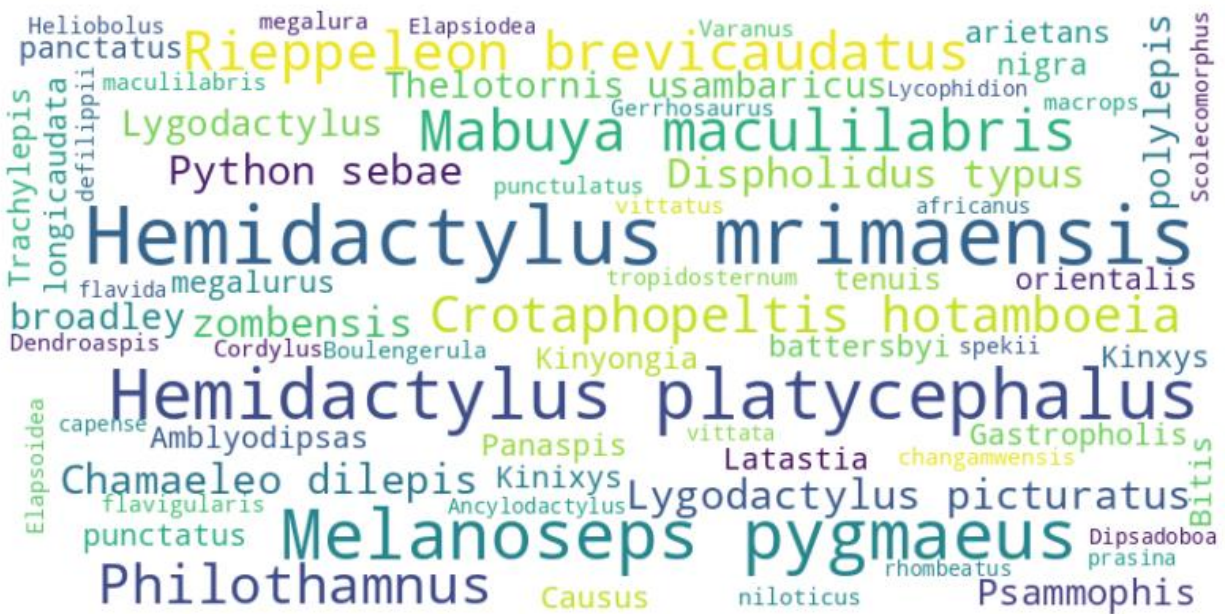


Figure 2: Species Word Cloud Representing Observations from Sampling