

A LIST WITH NOTES OF THE MAMMALS OF THE NSANJE (PORT HERALD) DISTRICT, MALAWI

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Introduction

AT the suggestion and encouragement of G. D. Hayes, Esq., M.B.E., I have endeavoured in this paper to set down my collection and record of mammals made during ten years of residence in Malawi, at Chididi Mission Station in the Nsanje District. The period covered is from mid-July, 1951 to early April, 1956, and late September, 1957 to early July, 1962. Most specimens were collected after 1958. These specimens were divided between the Malawi Museum, Blantyre, and the National Museum, Bulawayo, Rhodesia.

The basis of study was a simple collection of small mammals to aid the two institutions cited above, and to make sight records of larger mammals. A few mice were kept in captivity and an odd note made. It was not possible to do more since most of my spare time was taken up with ornithology.

The area covered is the Nsanje District, and in a few cases, the adjacent hill area on the escarpment to the south-west. For detailed topographical, vegetational and climatical matters, reference should be made to my paper in *The Ostrich*, 1960: 86-90. If anyone has a special interest in the area covered, a copy of the MS referred to may be obtained from the author.

My thanks are due to the Director of the National Museums of Rhodesia, Dr. R. H. N. Smithers, for assistance in various ways, and for the supply of ammunition needed for collecting. Also to Messrs. Graham Child and M. P. Stuart Irwin of the above institution in Bulawayo who have given me every assistance in identifying specimens. Mr. Peter Hanney, while Curator of the Malawi Museum, gave me every assistance and aided in the identification of many species. With Mr. W. F. H. Ansell of Zambia and Mr. R. C. H. Sweeney I have had correspondence. Mr. Ansell has also read through the draft. I also wish to thank Dr. D. H. S. Davis of the Medical Ecological Centre, Johannesburg, for the identification of a rodent, and to J. P. Doncaster, Keeper of Entomology at the British Museum for the identification of insect hosts on specimens. Last of all, thanks must go in the greatest part to my African collector, Mr. Suzi Dai, who spent a great deal of time shooting and trapping small mammals. He also prepared all

of the 183 specimens, of which some 15 cannot now be traced. Many Africans living in villages near Chididi brought in interesting specimens, and to all of these I give my thanks.

It is hoped that this list may be of encouragement to add to the fauna of a most interesting part of Malawi.

Native names are given in Appendix I, where these differ from Sweeney's "A Check List of the Mammals of Nyasaland", and Ansell, Benson and Mitchell's paper "Notes on Some Mammals of Nyasaland and Adjacent Areas". It ought to be pointed out that in the Nsanje District many Sena names are used, so that most of these given are taken from that dialect.

Systematic List and Notes

Elephantulus brachyrhynchus. Short-snouted Elephant-Shrew.

Specimen: sex ? 23-4-59 Nkotamu vg., 150 feet.

Petrodromus tetradactylus. Four-toed Elephant-Shrew.

Specimens: *M 22-7-59 Nyamitanda stm., 1,500 ft.

M 1-10-58 Dai vg., 2,100 ft.

M 9-11-60 Kadyanda forest, Chimombo, 100 ft.

This is probably the common elephant-shrew noted during early mornings on the Nsanje road or along the edges of streams on the escarpment and in the foothills.

Rhynchocyon cirnei. Checkered Elephant-Shrew.

Specimens: †F 27-5-60 Smabaya stm., 300 ft. Tangadzi.

F 20-6-60 Nyamatika stm., 1,800 ft.

M 24-5-60 Kauto Hill, 2,000 ft. Length 20 inches including tail.

Crocidura mariquensis. Black Musk Shrew.

Specimen: M 10-10-61 Chididi Mission, 2,000 ft.

Crocidura flavescens. Giant Musk Shrew.

Specimen: F 24-5-60 Chididi Mission, 2,000 ft.

Rousettus aegyptiacus. Egyptian Fruit-Bat.

Mlolo vg., nr. Chiromo (Sweeney 1959: 7).

Epomophorus sp. Fruit-Bat.

Specimens: 2 MM, 3 FF and one young F, collected on the escarpment in the Malawi block area during August, September

*M=male.

†F=female.

Tragelaphus scriptus. Bushbuck.

Common, widespread, all areas except marshes. Many records for January, July, August and October. Newly born calf found by boys at Chididi, 13-8-58 after the *F*fled. *F* killed by my car 31-7-61 at Dzunde. She was carrying an unborn fawn. One seen with Guineafowl, 15-8-60, Bwangu, 200 ft. According to game counts, low in Mwabvi Game Reserve (Fauna Preservation Society Newsletter, Oct. 59, June 60).

Tragelaphus angasi. Nyala.

Two sight records:

9-1-52 Mwabvi Game Reserve (2FF).

18-9-60, Tanki, 1,200 ft. at 1730 hrs. (*M*).

Mr. Dewar, Director of Forestry and Game, reported 25 in 1964 from the Mwabvi Game Reserve. During 1963 none were seen nor reported. (Minutes, N.F.P.S., May, 8 1964.)

Tragelaphus strepsiceros. Greater Kudu.

Fairly common, with up to 17 reported in the Mwabvi Game Reserve during the September 25-27, 1959 game count (*Nyasaland Times*, November 13, 1959, and Fauna Preservation Society Newsletter, June 60). The Society's weekend, Oct. 25-27, 1959, also counted 17 in the Mwabvi Game Reserve. My sight records are as follows:

31-8-51 Cibwata, 800 ft. (pr.).

7-1-52 Rode vg., 200 ft. (*M*, 3 FF).

25-10-54 Nkundi/Misamvu, 2,500 ft., to 300 ft. (a few).

16-8-60 Maceka (*M*).

Daryl Ring of Chididi Mission also saw *M* and 7 FF at Cibwata on 31-7-59. See also Sweeney 1953:56 regarding an unusual observation.

Syncerus caffer. African Buffalo.

Nyasaland Fauna Preservation Society minutes, 21-6-63 reported 2 herds of 66 and 74 in the Mwabvi Game Reserve. I have only seen spoor and droppings.

Diceros bicornis. Black Rhinoceros.

Two reported during the Mwabvi Game Reserve count of September 25-27, 1959 (*Nyasaland Times*, November 13, 1959). In the Fauna Preservation Society Newsletter, June, 60, A. Foot states that seven were in the Reserve in 1953; fifteen in 1960,

(he saw a *M*). The minutes of 21-6-63 report seventeen. Africans were constantly reporting this from the Tangadzi area.

Equus burchelli. Burchell's Zebra.

One sight record by Ken Hinds, 25-10-54, Nyakali-Mlaka area, 500 ft. (a few). (See Sweeney 1953: 58.)

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