

Udzungwa 2009 Q1

Year:

2009

Communications activities:

Following approval in May 2009 of the research permit to implement monitoring by the Tanzania wildlife authorities, the project activities were presented in July to the staff of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, where TEAM site is.

Unusual Events at the TEAM Site:

None

New Species:

None. However, the first 2 arrays of camera-trapping have been completed and data are yet to be analyzed. The first array of 20 cameras produced over 1700 photos, and at a first screening no unusual species appear to have been trapped.

Protocol Problems:

Implementation of climate protocol has delayed further. Mainly because it took long time to have all the equipment working and some sensor connections and data download problems occurred. Extensive communication and technical support from TEAM office helped solving the problems. Once we managed to have the climate station working (September) we decided to try it at the station first while looking for a more suitable site in the forest. Following communication with TEAM office, it was agreed that a safe site (from poachers and elephants) was needed, and we identified a site near the park offices. Setting the tower will be completed in Q2 (by December) as official permit from Tanzania National Parks was requested, and construction of basement and proper fencing is needed.

Schedule Problems:

Delayed permit obtainment than planned and, consequently, delayed staff recruitment resulted in slight delay in the beginning of sampling (the staff was in place and fully trained at the end of July). As a result, all the sampling has been slightly "pushed" forward in time, however on average it is no more than one week of difference with the scheduler. It was also realized that placing and removing cameras takes on average a few more days than planned, because of rough terrain. Likewise, being the staff newly recruited and trained, data compilation, especially for vegetation plots, took longer than expected. Thus some delays have occurred in uploading the data (camera-trapping photos were sent to TEAM main office on DVDs). Generally, however, both terrestrial vertebrates and vegetation sampling have started proceeded well. See below for climate protocol.

Logistical Problems:

The main problem has been the severe delay to have the new 4WD car, due to delays in the obtainment of duty and VAT exemption which is done through a local NGO partner of Trento Museum. The delays are due to new Government regulations making the process much harder. The issue is now solved and the car will be available by November (Q2). Meanwhile, Trento Museum project car was used.

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