

Project update: August 2022

Introduction

This research project consisted of deploying camera traps along the park edge of the Volcanoes National Park. The main objective is to understand the dynamics of native carnivores along the park and the exposure of livestock from local communities. The research is planned to cover the entire boundary and use camera traps for a minimum of forty days of sampling.

Camera trapping

The sampling design consists of surveying at least 45 points along the park boundary at a 1 km distance. In addition, at each site we collect additional information, including the crop and livestock types in 100 m radius, vegetation type inside the park, estimated distance to neighbouring settlement.

The deployment of camera traps started on 30th April 2022, and we deployed in total 27 camera traps in the first round, and they were picked up from 18th June 2022 – or after 48 days of sampling. After picking up, the images were downloaded and visualised. During the deployment, the field team is briefly trained on how the camera traps work and the project objectives.



Image 1. Field team at park edge after a briefing

Wildlife captures

The images were downloaded and stored on computer, they contained wildlife, native carnivores, feral dogs and some livestock.

Species identification (12)

We have so far identified 12 different species of wildlife including four native carnivores, one exotic carnivore and seven other species inhabiting the ecosystem.

(a) Native carnivores (4)

1. Side-striped jackal, *Canis adustus*
2. Serval cat, *Leptailurus serval*
3. African golden cat, *Caracal aurata*
4. Genet, *genetta servalina*

(b) Exotic carnivore (1)

1. Domestic dog, *Canis lupus familiaris*

(c) Other wildlife (7)

1. Cape buffalo, *Syncerus caffer*
2. Bushbuck, *Tragelaphus scriptus*
3. Black-fronted duiker, *Cephalophus nigrifrons*
4. Porcupine, *Atherurus africana*
5. Mountain gorilla, *Gorilla beringei*
6. Golden monkey, *Cercopithecus mitis-kandti*
7. Francolin, *Francolinus nobilis*

Challenges:

- The procurement of camera enclosures was not done because we realised that these would not reach us on time.
- Camera trap failure

Conclusion

The camera trapping is ongoing on the remaining part of the park, and we expect to record more wildlife. In addition, data entry will start soon using specific software for image processing and management, this will enable us to extract the individual photo data to be used in occupancy models.



Leptailurus serval



Left: *Canis adustus*. Right: *Genetta servalina*.



Left: *Canis lupus familiaris*. Right: *Atherurus Africana*.