

## Updates on Dry Season Data Collection at Uluguru Forest Nature Reserve

**Title: The abundance and distribution of Geata Mouse Shrews (*Myosorex geata*) and their environmental and anthropogenic drivers in the Uluguru Mountains, Tanzania.**

Data were collected between 5th and 24th October 2025. This period is characterized by dryness and slightly higher temperatures. The same procedures (see report; ([https://media.rufford.org/media/project\\_reports/pdf](https://media.rufford.org/media/project_reports/pdf)) used during the wet season were applied for trapping within the permanent plots established at three sites along the elevation gradient. The purpose was to ascertain the distribution of *M. geata* and other small mammals across different elevations.

### Results

Generally, there was a higher abundance in the dry season than in the wet season. A total of 127 individuals, belonging to the orders *Rodentia* and *Eulipotyphla*, representing 13 species, and three families were collected. Among these individuals, six were recaptures, accounting for 4.7% of the total capture. As in the wet season, the order *Eulipotyphla* had few individual (16.5%, n = 21) compared to *Rodentia* (83.5%, n = 106).

Similarly, at the lower elevation, abundance was highest (48%, n = 61), followed by the higher elevation (28.3%, n = 36), while the middle elevation had the lowest abundance (23.6%, n = 30). Field identification of all captured individuals was carried out using Kingdon (2015) and the small mammal identification key. Important notes, measurements, and records (Figure 1) were taken in the field before each animal was released at the point of capture, except for a few voucher specimens that were taken to the Museum, University of Dar es Salaam and later were taken to Sokoine University of Agriculture, Institute of Pest Management for further

identification. Contrary to the dry season, *Praomys* spp. was the most abundant species, accounting for over 50% of all individuals trapped during the dry season, followed by *Lophuromys flavopunctatus* (11%). Other species were *Mus* sp., *Crocidura* spp., *Sylvisorex* sp., *Grammomys* sp., *Mastomys natalensis*, *Myosorex* sp., *Dendromus* sp., and *Hylomyscus* sp.



Figure 1. Identification and important records in progress in the field. Photo by Boniphace Mashauri

For *Myosorex* sp. (Figure 2), only one individual was trapped at the upper elevation, and it is yet to be fully identified. The specimen was taken to the Sokoine University of Agriculture Institute of Pest Management, but we were unable to identify it. The sample has been reserved for future molecular analysis.



Figure 2. *Myosorex* sp. captured at the upper elevation during dry season (2025).

### **Dissemination of the results**

Also, as part of the dissemination, we conducted two workshops/meetings at Vinile and Vituli villages in Bunduki and Bigwa wards, respectively (Figures 3 & 4). During the workshops, we targeted village leaders and the members of the Village Environmental Committee, as they are the ones who work most closely with and convey environmental information to the rest of the community. The topics covered during these meetings were based on the results of the current study and included: the daily roles of the Village Environmental Committee, the importance of conserving the Uluguru Forest, anthropogenic activities that are harmful to the forest and their contribution to climate change, and individual and communal efforts in combating climate change.



Figure 3. Group photo showing researchers from UDSM, the Village Executive Officer, and members of the Village Environmental Committee during a dissemination workshop at Vinile Village. Photo by Boniphace Mashauri.



Figure 4. Group photo showing a researcher from UDSM, the Village Chairperson, and members of the Village Environmental Committee (who are also part of the village *Mazingira* (Environmental) group)) during a dissemination meeting at Vituli Village. This village is among those with an ongoing project on fruit and spice tree planting. In the background are avocado trees on the village chairperson's farm, who told us that he is "leading by example". Photo by Hajji Ally.

Current progress includes preparation of the final report, revisiting key informants for additional data, and conducting one more community dissemination meeting.