

Identification, Abundance, and Behaviour of Galagos in Mulanje and Thyolo Districts, Malawi

Graham Wallace

gwallace@brookes.ac.uk

Department of Anthropology, School of Social Science and Law
Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, OX3 0BP

Awarded a PSGB Conservation Grant in February 2005

Although galagos, as a taxonomic group, are widely distributed across sub-Saharan Africa, many species of galago are only partially described in terms of their morphology, behaviour, ecology and/or distribution. In particular, there is a lack of data for species occurring in southeastern Malawi, including an undescribed form at Thyolo Mountain.

The aims of the study were to (i) identify and describe the species of galago occurring in Malawi's Mulanje and Thyolo Districts, (ii) assess their distribution and relative abundance across the region, (iii) gain insights into their behaviour and substrate-use, and (iv) gather information in relation to local human impacts that impinge upon their conservation status. Assessment of the inter-relationships between these factors is fundamental for ensuring the long-term viability of galago populations in the region.

Systematic surveys were conducted from May to July 2005 across eight sites representing most of the suitable galago habitat in southeastern Malawi. Analysis of vocalisations and morphological characteristics identified two species of galago in Mulanje and Thyolo Districts – *Galagoides granti* and *Otolemur crassicaudatus* – and indicated the presence of a regional or acoustic form of *G. granti* at Thyolo Mountain. Vocal repertoires were described for each species, comprising twenty calls for *G. granti* and four calls for *O. crassicaudatus*. Call-type and frequency profiles for *G. granti* highlighted differences across sites that are likely to reflect local habitat conditions and selection pressures. Relative abundance was determined on the basis of encounter rates in appropriate habitat, and this differed between sites. There was only one record of sympatric occurrence. Behavioural sampling data were used to construct

activity budgets and substrate-use profiles for *G. granti* that reflect habitat characteristics at sites where they were encountered. Preliminary information regarding human impacts and disturbance (particularly subsistence and bushmeat hunting, as well as timber extraction) was also acquired. The results of the study not only clarify galago diversity in southeastern Malawi, but also provide valuable baseline data fundamental to management and conservation of galagos across Mulanje and Thyolo Districts.



Galagoides granti from Mulanje in Malawi