

SPECIES COMPOSITION, ABUNDANCE AND HABITAT ASSOCIATION OF SMALL MAMMALS FROM DAMOT MOUNTAIN FOREST PRIORITIES PROTECTED AREA, WOLAYITA ZONE, ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

An investigation on species composition, abundance and habitat association of small mammals in Damot Mountain Forest Priorities Protected Area, Wolayita Zone was carried out from August 2011 to February, 2012 during wet and dry seasons. Trapping was conducted in five habitats types, bushland, Erica forest, grassland, farmland and bamboo with mixed forest. Forty nine live-traps were used to capture the small mammals. A total of 421 individual animals were captured in 2940 live-trap nights. The small mammal species trapped were *Lophuromys flavopunctatus* (37.5%), *Stenocephalemys albipes* (24.2%), *Pelomys harringtoni* (14.3%), *Arvicanthis abyssinicus*, (12.6%), *Arvicanthis niloticus* (7.6%), *Mus mohamet* (1.7%), *Crocidura flavescens* (1.4%) and *Lemniscomys zebra* (0.71%). The distribution and abundance of small mammals showed variation between habitats. The highest mean trap success was recorded from bushland (25.2%) while the least was from Erica forest (6.4%). Abundance of small mammals was higher during the wet season than dry season.

Keywords

Abundance, Damot Mountain, Distribution, Habitat preference, Rodents, small mammals

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