



Monthly Report

April 2024



Sundevall's leaf-nosed bat (*Hipposideros caffer*)

Contents

SITES SCOPING FOR ILRI.....	3
BAT TALKS AT ACACIA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL	4
OUTREACH EVENT IN KUMBALI	5
SUMMARY OF WORK	6
BAT SURVEYS CARRIED OUT IN APRIL 2024	6
BIOSAMPLES COLLECTED APRIL 2024.....	7
ACOUSTIC SAMPLES COLLECTED APRIL 2024.....	8
HELPLINE CALLS RECEIVED APRIL 2024.....	8
TOTAL EVENTS / LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED APRIL 2024	8
ABC PROJECT SPECIES LIST.....	9
OUR PARTNERS AND SPONSORS	11

Sites Scoping for ILRI

By Luisa Auletta, Senior Research Assistant



Figure 1. One of the sites scoped for ILRI.

Since the ILRI project commenced last month, the ABC team has been reviewing previous survey data to identify sites that may be suitable for the project. Specifically, the project focuses on three habitat types: riverine vegetation, local farmlands, and gardens. As many of these sites have not been visited in several years, the team has been conducting thorough scoping assessments to determine their current viability for bat surveys (Figure 1). Ensuring that these locations meet specific criteria is essential to maintain the integrity of the surveys and to support the project's long-term success.

During scoping, the team found that while some sites remain appropriate for bat surveys, others have experienced significant environmental changes that have rendered them unsuitable. For instance, a previously surveyed location near the Game Complex in Lilongwe has been heavily affected by recent road construction. The extension of a tarmacked road has not only removed access to the site but also cleared much of the vegetation near the river, eliminating its potential as a suitable habitat for the project.

In other cases, the team identified promising new sites that may be more appropriate than some of the original locations. These findings highlight the dynamic nature of environmental conditions and underscore the importance of regular habitat assessments.

While scoping does not always produce the anticipated results, it generates valuable data. These assessments help the ABC team document environmental changes over time and monitor the effects of urbanisation on bat populations and broader urban biodiversity. This work contributes essential insights into habitat alteration and biodiversity resilience in the face of ongoing development.

Bat Talks at Acacia International School

By Luisa Auletta, Senior Research Assistant

In addition to conducting research projects and collecting field data, a core objective of the ABC team is to organise educational events that raise awareness about the ecological significance of bat species in Malawi. In this region, misconceptions about bats are widespread, and the public are often unaware of their crucial roles in pest control and seed dispersal, both of which support biodiversity and agricultural health.

Through these educational initiatives, the ABC team aims to foster a deeper understanding of bats, their biology, and their positive impact on the ecosystem. Engaging with children has proven particularly effective, as they are likely to become future stewards of Malawi's natural resources (Figure 2). On such event focused on bat biology, roosting behavior, and their ecological roles, providing students with a well-rounded perspective of these often-misunderstood mammals.

This educational session was a great success, with enthusiastic participation from students ranging in age from five to adolescence. Events like these enable ABC to broaden its impact by bridging gaps in knowledge and promoting conservation and research efforts throughout Malawi (Figure 3). By empowering younger generations with accurate information and an appreciation for bats, ABC is fostering a more informed and conservation-minded public that can support bat conservation well into the future.



Figure 2. Head of Research and Conservation doing a presentation on bat biology at Acacia International School.



Figure 3. Students learning about the lifecycle of bats.

Outreach Event in Kumbali

By Marisa Costa ABC Volunteer April-June 2024

On April 20, 2024, ABC hosted a public engagement and educational event at the Farmer's Daughter Café, Kumbali Lodge, with the aim of raising awareness for bat conservation and building support for ABC's initiatives. The event offered a range of interactive activities, including "make-your-own" bat mask stations and educational activity books for children. Bat boxes were also available for purchase, encouraging attendees to support bat-friendly habitats in their own gardens. Informational leaflets were distributed, highlighting bats' vital roles in pest control, pollination, and seed dispersal.

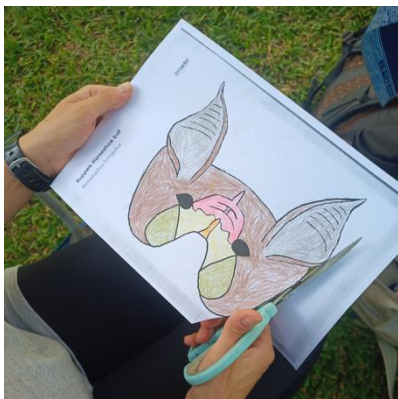


Figure 4. ABC face masks.

The daytime activities concluded with an evening presentation and a guided bat walk. During the presentation, attendees learned about the diversity of African bat species, their biology and ecological roles, and the main threats they face. The ABC team also offered practical guidance on how individuals can contribute to bat conservation.

The bat walk provided a unique hands-on experience using bat detectors connected to speakers, allowing participants to hear the bats' echolocation calls in real-time. ABC staff explained how bats emit high-frequency sounds that bounce off objects, enabling them to navigate and locate prey in the dark. By converting these ultrasonic calls into audible sounds, participants could listen to the distinct clicks and buzzes of echolocation as bats flew overhead, offering insight into both the diversity of species and the intricacies of their behavior.



Figure 5. Kids enjoying their new bat masks.

This event not only promoted a greater public understanding of bats but also helped ABC strengthen community involvement and support for its conservation work in Malawi.

Summary of Work

Bat surveys carried out in April 2024

Date	Type	Site code	Location	Total bats caught	Species caught / encountered
12/04/2024	Opportunistic	LLWKU03	Lilongwe	0	-
14/04/2024	Opportunistic	LLWO23	Kumbali	0	-
16/04/2024	ILRI	LLWO08	Lilongwe	9	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>
18/04/2024	ILRI	LLWOP3	Lilongwe	18	<i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper (A)
21/04/2024	ILRI	ROOST182	Lilongwe	16	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper, Vesper (A)
22/04/2024	Opportunistic	LLWKU03	Kumbali	2	<i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>

Biosamples collected April 2024

Date	Survey type	Sample type	Site code	Location	No. samples	From which species
16/04/2024	ILRI	Wing punch	LLWO08	Lilongwe	6	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>
16/04/2024	ILRI	Faecal	LLWO08	Lilongwe	3	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>
16/04/2024	ILRI	Hair	LLWO08	Lilongwe	7	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>
18/04/2024	ILRI	Wing punch	LLWOP3	Lilongwe	7	<i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper (A), Unknown
18/04/2024	ILRI	Faecal	LLWOP3	Lilongwe	4	<i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper (A), Unknown
18/04/2024	ILRI	Parasite	LLWOP3	Lilongwe	1	Vesper (A)
21/04/2024	ILRI	Hair	ROOST182	Lilongwe	14	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper, Vesper (A)
21/04/2024	ILRI	Faecal	ROOST182	Lilongwe	4	Vesper, Vesper (A)
21/04/2024	ILRI	Hair	ROOST182	Lilongwe	14	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper, Vesper (A)
22/04/2024	ILRI	Wing punch	LLWKU03	Lilongwe	2	<i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>
22/04/2024	ILRI	Faecal	LLWKU03	Lilongwe	2	<i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>

Acoustic samples collected April 2024

Date	Survey type	Site code	Location	Total no. recordings	Species caught / encountered
18/04/2024	ILRI	LLWOP3	Lilongwe	7	<i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper (A)
21/04/2024	ILRI	ROOST182	Lilongwe	11	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i> , <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> , <i>Scotoecus hindei</i> , <i>Scotophilus dinganii</i> , Vesper, Vesper (A)

Helpline calls received April 2024

Date	Type	Location	Details
06/04/2024	WhatsApp message	Mbazi Estate past Airwing	The owner has bats in the roof of their property and has asked if it is possible for us to undertake an exclusion

Total events / leaflets distributed April 2024

Date	Type	Location (incl. district)	Total people	Materials distributed	Outcomes
20/04/2024	Presentation	Kumbali – Farmer's daughter	10	2 bat boxes sold	Talk on bat ecology and conservation followed by a bat walk around the boardwalk.
27/04/2024	Farmers Market	Lilongwe - Woodlands	-	1 bat box sold	We engaged with the local community at the Farmers Market, which takes place on the last Saturday of each month, to showcase ABC's research and conservation efforts focused on African bat species. We were also able to sell one bat box during the event.

ABC Project Species List

Latin name	Common name	Liwonde NP	Lilongwe City	Nyika NP	Vwaza Marsh	Kasungu NP	Kuti WR & Salima	Other
<i>Chaerephon</i> sp.	Free-tailed bats		X					
<i>Chaerephon ansorgei</i>	Ansorge's free-tailed bat	X						
<i>Chaerephon pumilus</i>	Little free-tailed bat	X	X		X	X	X	X
<i>Eidolon helvum</i>	Straw-coloured fruit bat		X					X
<i>Epomophorus crypturus</i>	Peters's epauletted fruit bat	X	X		X	X	X	X
<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i>	Little epauletted fruit bat	X	X		X	X	X	X
<i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i>	Wahlberg's epauletted fruit bat	X	X		X		X	X
<i>Epomops dobsonii</i>	Dobson's epauletted fruit bat		X		X			
<i>Eptesicus hottentotus</i>	Long-tailed serotine	X						
<i>Glauconycteris variegata</i>	Variegated butterfly bat	X	X		X		X	
<i>Hipposideros caffer</i>	Sundevall's leaf-nosed bat	X	X		X	X	X	X
<i>Hipposideros ruber</i>	Noack's leaf-nosed bat	X						
<i>Kerivoula lanosa</i>	Lesser woolly bat				X			
<i>Laephotis botswanae</i>	Botswana long-eared bat	X	X		X	X		X
<i>Lissonycteris goliath</i>	Harrison's soft-furred fruit bat							X
<i>Macronycteris gigas</i>	Giant leaf-nosed bat	X	X					X
<i>Macronycteris vittatus</i>	Striped leaf-nosed bat							X
<i>Mimetillus thomasi</i>	Thomas's flat headed bat	X						
<i>Miniopterus</i> sp.	long-fingered bats	X						
<i>Mops condylurus</i>	Angolan free-tailed bat	X			X	X	X	X
<i>Mops niveiventer</i>	White-bellied free-tailed bat		X					X
<i>Miniopterus inflatus</i>		X						
<i>Miniopterus natalensis</i>		X						
<i>Myopterus whitleyi</i>		X						
<i>Myotis bocagii</i>	Rufous myotis	X	X		X			X
<i>Myotis tricolor</i>	Temminck's myotis	X			X			X
<i>Myotis welwitschii</i>	Welwitsch's myotis	X	X					
<i>Neoromicia</i> sp.*	Pipistrelles	X	X		X			X
<i>Neoromicia nana</i>	Banana bat	X	X	X	X		X	

<i>Neoromicia capensis</i>								
<i>Neoromicia rendalli</i>	Rendall's serotine	X			X			
<i>Neoromicia zulensis</i>								
<i>Nycteris grandis</i>	Large slit-faced bat	X						
<i>Nycteris hispida</i>	Hairy slit-faced bat				X		X	
<i>Nycteris macrotis</i>	Large-eared slit-faced bat	X	X				X	
<i>Nycteris nana</i>		X						
<i>Nycteris thebaica</i>	Egyptian slit faced bat	X	X		X		X	
<i>Nycticeinops schlieffeni</i>	Schlieffen's twilight bat	X			X		X	
<i>Pipistrellus sp.*</i>	Pipistrelles	X	X	X	X			X
<i>Pipistrellus grandidieri</i>		X						X
<i>Pipistrellus hesperidus</i>		X						
<i>Pipistrellus rueppellii</i>	Ruppell's pipistrelle	X			X		X	
<i>Rhinolophus sp.*</i>	Horseshoes							
<i>Rhinolophus clivosus</i>	Geoffroy's horseshoe bat		X					
<i>Rhinolophus fumigatus</i>	Ruppell's horseshoe bat	X	X		X	X		
<i>Rhinolophus hildebrandtii</i>	Hildebrandt's horseshoe bat	X			X			
<i>Rhinolophus lobatus</i>	Lander's horseshoe bat						X	
<i>Rousettus aegyptiacus</i>	Egyptian rousette	X						
<i>Rousettus lanosus</i>	Hairy rousette			X				
<i>Scotoecus hirundo</i>	Dark-winged lesser house bat	X	X		X			X
<i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>	Yellow-bellied house bat		X		X	X	X	X
<i>Scotophilus leucogaster</i>	White-bellied house bat	X	X		X	X		X
<i>Scotophilus viridis</i>	Green house bat	X	X				X	
<i>Scotophilus nigrita</i>	Giant yellow house bat	X						
<i>Tadarida aegyptica</i>	Egyptian free-tailed bat	X						X
<i>Tadarida ventralis</i>	Giant free-tailed bat							X
<i>Taphozous mauritanus</i>	Mauritian tomb bat	X	X		X	X	X	
<i>Triaenops afer</i>	African trident bat	X						X

Our Partners and Sponsors

