

Taxonomic Report on Small Mammals from Two Coastal Wetland (Ramsar) Sites in Ghana

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Abstract

Surveys of the small mammal populations of two coastal wetlands in Ghana, Muni-Pomadze (Central Region) and Keta (Volta Region), were undertaken over a 1-month period as part of an assessment of the ecological status of these wetlands. The study investigated aspects of the ecology of the small mammals, which are known indicators of habitat (environmental) quality. The methodology involved live-trapping of the terrestrial small mammals (rodents and insectivores) using collapsible Sherman traps (for smaller species) and National (Tomahawk) traps (for larger species). Bats were also live-trapped using mist nets at Muni-Pomadze only. A total of 11 species of small mammals were recorded at Muni-Pomadze, comprising 47 individuals of seven rodent species, four individuals of two insectivore species and two individuals of two bat species. Four species were recorded at Keta, made up of three individuals of two species of insectivores and eight individuals of two rodent species. Generally, majority of all the adult individuals captured at Muni-Pomadze were in reproductive condition. At Keta, most of the captures were sub-adult females, and only one of two males captured was in reproductive condition (scrotal testes). The grassland/thicket habitat at Muni-Pomadze was the most diverse, probably because the thicket "islands" provided shelter from potential predators, which were themselves scarce because of the openness of the habitat. The Keta Ramsar site was characterised by low abundance and diversity, attributable to human settlement and economic activity. A taxonomic report on the captured small mammal species is provided.