

Some notes on mammals in Central Benin in summer 2003

In 2003, I got the opportunity to spend three months in Benin in Western Africa, to do research for my Master thesis on medicinal herbs. This was in the early days of my interest in mammals, so I could have seen a lot more than what I saw, but I wrote down all the species I encountered, and since there is nothing about Benin on mammalwatching.com I thought it would be nice to write something short about it.

I spent most of my three months in a small village called Koussoupka. This was situated next to a swamp forest that could only be explored by boat for most of the year. It was a wonderful place, and most of the days I was somewhere in this forest in a small boat looking for medicinal trees.

For the final two weeks I did a small trip more to the north, to visit some fellow students.

Mammal list:

1. **(African) wild cat** *Felis silvestris*: one animal was seen near the village of Koussoupka on August 8th.
2. **Slender mongoose** *Herpestes sanguineus*: seen once near Manigri on September 18th.
3. **African savanna hare** *Lepus microtis*: seen once near the university at Calavi on September 7th.
4. **Kintampo rope squirrel** *Funisciurus substriatus*: seen on several occasions in the forest near Koussoupka.
5. **Red-legged sun squirrel** *Heliosciurus rufobrachium*: seen on several occasions.
6. **Striped ground squirrel** *Xerus erythropus*: occasionally seen more to the north.
7. **Mona monkey** *Cercopithecus mona*: common in the forest near Koussoupka.
8. **Geoffroy's black-and-white colobus** *Colobus vellerosus*: I heard about the possibility to see this species near a village (Kikélé) where some other students were staying, so I went over there and had great views of this species in the forest around this small village.