

The honeybees (fam. apidae) and the beekeeping potential in the Udzungwa area Tanzania
Pauline Masalabana Mpuya
Master of Science (Wildlife Ecology)
University of Dar es salaam, College of Natural and Applied Sciences, 2002

The honeybees *Apis*, *Meliponinae* and *Trigonini* are of great potential for beekeeping development in Tanzania. This study investigated both stinging and stingless honeybee species and their beekeeping potentials in the Udzungwa area. The study established the nest choices of these honeybees. In addition the plant species used by the honeybees to produce honey “melliferous plants” were investigated. The abundance and density of honeybees at different zones of the Udzungwa area were also studied. The income generation of keeping honeybees was assessed. Studies on the honeybee species occurring in the Udzungwa area revealed six species of stingless and three subspecies of stinging honeybees. These were *Apis mellifera scutellata*, *Apis mellifera litorea* as well as *Apis mellifera monticola* and *Meliponula bocandei*, *Meliponula junodi*, *Melipona* species, *Axestotrigona erythra*, *Trigona spinipes* and *Trigona denoiti* respectively. The results also revealed that suitable nest site availability limits colony density. Moreover, the diameter at breast height was an important factor considered by honeybees in tree choice for nesting. The density of honeybees also varies with season, in both highlands and lowlands no matter whether the area is protected or not. Investigation on melliferous plants showed that, although the core zones have high diversity, buffer and transition zones are adversely affected by agricultural activities. However, buffer and transition zones showed capacity to support beekeeping in terms of occupancy, density, melliferous plant species and honey production. Data on honey production showed that Udzungwa is a sleeping giant. On income generation, beekeeping has proved its worth provided the hives are occupied and managed properly. Beekeeping in the Udzungwa area is hampered by nest sizes. The study concludes with recommendations for further investigation related to the ecology of both stinging and stingless honeybees in the context of the overall management of the UMNP.