

Four new mammal species discovered in Democratic Republic of Congo

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Julian Kerbis Peterhans, a Roosevelt University professor and adjunct curator at The Field Museum who has conducted extensive studies on mammals in Africa, has announced the discovery of four new species of small mammals in the eastern section of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The mammals were found during an expedition to the Misotshi-Kabogo highlands led by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and in another nearby forest with the Centre de Recherche en Sciences Naturelles (CRSN) Lwiro – areas that were previously unexplored. "Our discoveries demonstrate the need for conserving this isolated reservoir of biodiversity," Kerbis said.

"Three new species from a single forest (with a fourth from a nearby forest) is quite unique," Kerbis added. "More often such finds would be made on island ecosystems. However, the highlands in which these species reside are isolated from adjacent forests and mountains by savannah habitats and low elevation streams."

In two new papers published in the German journal *Bonn Zoological Bulletin*, Kerbis and his colleagues describe the two new species of shrews and the two [new species](#) of bats.

WCS and CRSN scientists together with Trento Science Museum in Italy are in the process of describing three new frog species and possibly a new chameleon from the same area from these surveys. The team also

confirmed the presence of a unique squirrel and monkey whose existence had been recorded in historical surveys and collections dating from the 1950s.

Remarkably, all of these species were found during the course of a short survey of less than 30 days in 2007. "Given the clear importance of this site, we are working closely with the local communities and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to protect this unique area," reported Dr. Andrew Plumptre, director of WCS's Albertine Rift Program. "The local community has elected to create a new national park here to protect these unique [species](#), but concerns over mining concessions that have been granted in the area are hampering its creation."

Kerbis' colleagues included scientists from the Wildlife Conservation Society (New York) the Centre de Recherché des Sciences Naturelles (Lwiro, Democratic Republic of Congo) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Provided by Field Museum

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