

05 May 2009

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RE: Update on Insect Project, 10 days in.

Today is our 10th day on island, and a good time to update you on our progress. The entomology program is now well established, with results pouring in from hand collecting in dry, mesic and mangrove forest, with short-term trapping sites established at Savannes (mangrove), Escap (dry) and La Porte (mesic). We have now exceeded the number of beetle and fly species and families recorded from St. Lucia in the last 150 years (1758-2008). But, most importantly, we have the full outline of our sampling plan awaiting arrival of our final equipment from Customs.

To date, in addition to the first five team members who arrived on 26 April to lead the Coleoptera work, we have been joined by Drs. Runyon and Delphia on 02 May, who are initiating the Diptera inventory, and we are preparing to welcome Dr. and Mrs. Sibley next week, who will conduct the Odonata inventory.

Meetings and discussions with Mr. Toussaint, Mr. Graveson, Mr. Smith, Mr. Morton, Dr. Daltry and others, have allowed us to identify our 14 trapping localities, to be run for 6 weeks each (7 sites at a time, with rotation). These are scaled to represent all of St. Lucia's forest types in proportion to their geographic extent (i.e. large in area = more sites, small in area = less sites), and chosen to coordinate with the activities of other inventory groups and Project goals. In the absence of an established/agreed upon forest type classification, we agreed to the following temporary classification tentatively used by Mr. Graveson: Dry Forest, Mesic Forest, Submontane Forest, Montane Forest and Cloud Forest (including *Podocarpus* Subtype, Elfin Subtype, Palm Brake Subtype). Our trapping sites are distributed as follows (priority order within a type indicated in parentheses):

Dry Forest

1. Mont Gaiac [La Borne] (#5)

2. Grande Anse [Des Barre] (#2)
3. Louvet (#1)
4. Caille Des (#3)
5. Bordelais [Prison] (#4)

Mesic Forest

1. Chassin [Mr. Toussaint's land] (#2)
2. Gros Piton, top (#1)
3. River Dore ravine (#3, tie)
4. River Dugard (#3, tie)

Submontane Forest

1. Des Cartiers at big shady area (#1), established Tuesday, 05 May
2. Mont Lacombe
3. Piton Flore summit

Montane Forest

1. Lower Troumassée

Cloud Forest

1. Upper Piton Troumassée, to be established Wednesday, 06 May

Other priorities identified are hand collecting in the special biodiversity hot spot on Petit Piton (Mr. Smith to facilitate and guide ascent), a visit to the cave at Vieux Fort (contact info needed for Mr. Stephen Lesmond), a visit with Guy Mathurin (contact info needed) to discuss past work on the fauna (including obtaining a copy of his book), and determine the possibility of use of Ministry of Health fogging equipment.

Many hand-collecting sites will be visited on an ad hoc basis.

Please send comments, corrections or additions to <mivie@montana.edu>