

## **Insectivorous bat monitoring in the Kruger National Park**

**D.M. Parker, University of Mpumalanga**  
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Microchiropteran (insect-eating) bats play important ecological roles as predators of small vertebrates and insects and as indicator species for environmental health. Although bats form a substantial part of mammalian biodiversity, they are frequently overlooked because of their behaviour (being nocturnal, flying, and living during the day in caves, crevices and other hard to reach places). Consequently, bats are a notoriously hard group to survey. In this project, we aim to use a combination of ultrasonic bat detectors and live captures to survey bat species occurrence in critical riverine habitat, inside the Kruger National Park. At the same time, the data collected will add to the known distributions of bats in southern Africa and be comparable with historical data. The data will inform us about bat community structure in these habitats in what is considered one of South Africa's premier refuges for insectivorous bats. With the focus being on riverine habitat, the data will also provide a more complete understanding of the ecology of these habitats.