

FAUNA IN LIBERIA

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Abstract

In this paper, it is presented fauna which lives in Liberia. Here are presented almost all systematic categories of animals with one representative for each, ranging from mammals to invertebrates. Systematic categories of animals are also shown numerically based on graphical presentation which clearly shows that from vertebrates in greater number are birds and from invertebrates are insects. In Liberia apart from the presence of cosmopolitan animals are also present endemic forms e.g. the type *Archachatina knorri* (Jonas, 1839) by the family Achatinidae and the type *Bellamyia liberiana* (Schepman, 1888) by the family Viviparidae.

Keywords: fauna, Liberia, species.

Introduction

Liberia is mostly low coastal plains watered by shallow lagoons, marshes, creeks and mangrove swamps. The coastline is 560 km long and over half of it is sandy beach. Inland areas are densely forested plateau, and standing sentinel is a region of mountains near the Guinea border. Monrovia is the capital city and the two other important ones are Harper and Buchanan, both ports. The neighbouring countries are Sierra Leone, Guinea Republic and Cote d'Ivoire (Fig.1).



Fig.1 Liberia map

<http://www.freewebs.com/banboseshango/liberia-map.bmp>

The Fauna in Liberia comprises of 150 mammal groups, 590 bird species, 125 reptiles and amphibious groups along with 1,000 species of insects (Fig.2). The forests have Bosman's potto, which is popularly known as Lemur, different kinds of Monkeys, like Diana, the long-haired among others. Buffalos and elephants used to be present in large numbers, but these have disappeared nowadays.

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One can see wild pigs as well as porcupines and some categories of Leopard in some parts of Liberia.

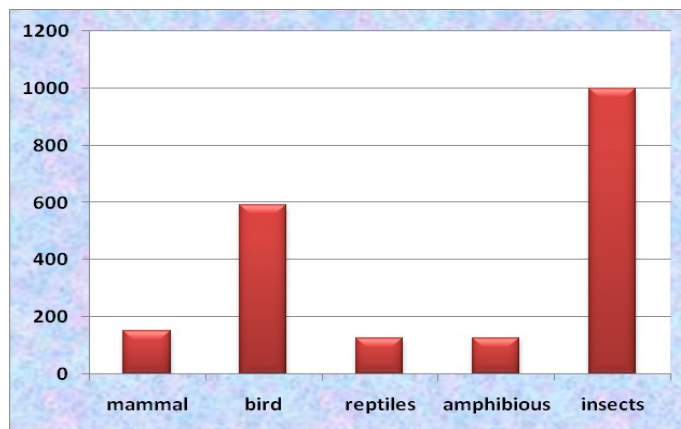


Fig.2 Graphic presentation of the number of groups making up the fauna of Liberia

Antelope and shouldered duiker and also zebra antelope can also be seen in the forests. There are a good number of tsetse fly and termites in the forests. The different species of birds that are seen are wild guinea fowl, horn bill, cattle egret (cowbird), woodpecker, flamingo and weaver among others.

Some of the most characteristic representatives of the fauna in Liberia

The pygmy hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis* (Foto.1) or *Hexaprotodon liberiensis*) is a large mammal native to the forests and swamps of western Africa and the Millheela region of Kenya (the scientific species classification means "of Liberia", as this is where the vast majority live).



Photo 1. *Choeropsis liberiensis*

Source: hi.baidu.com/.../3db0972ac9b1f5315243c1bc.html

The pygmy hippo is reclusive and nocturnal. It is one of only two extant species in the Hippopotamidae family, the other being its much larger cousin the common hippopotamus. The pygmy hippopotamus displays many terrestrial adaptations, but like its larger cousin, it is semi-aquatic and relies on proximity to water to keep its skin moisturized and its body temperature cool. Behaviors such as mating and giving birth may occur in water or on land. The pygmy hippo is herbivorous, feeding on whatever ferns, broad-leaved plants, grasses and fruits it finds in the forests. A rare nocturnal forest creature, the pygmy hippopotamus is a difficult animal to study in the wild. Pygmy hippos were unknown outside of West Africa until the 19th century. Introduced to zoos in the early 20th

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century, they breed well in captivity and the vast majority of research is derived from zoo specimens. The survival of the species in captivity is more assured than in the wild: the World Conservation Union estimates that there are fewer than 3,000 pygmy hippos remaining in the wild.[1] Pygmy hippos are primarily threatened by loss of habitat, as forests are logged and converted to farm land, and are also vulnerable to poaching, hunting, natural predators and war. The African Fish Eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*[2]) (Foto.2) or – to distinguish it from the true fish eagles (Ichthyophaga), the African Sea Eagle – is a large species of eagle. It is the national bird of Zimbabwe and Zambia.



Photo.2 *Haliaeetus vocifer*

Source: thisplanetiswonderful.blogspot.com/2009/09/aq...

Its closest relative appears to be the critically endangered Madagascar Fish-eagle (*H. vociferoides*). Like all sea-eagle species pairs, this one consists of a white-headed species (the African Fish Eagle) and a tan-headed one. These are an ancient lineage of sea-eagles, and as such have dark talons, beaks, and eyes (Wink et al. 1996). Both species have at least partially white tails even as juveniles. *Bitis gabonica* rhinoceros (Foto.3) is a venomous viper subspecies [3] found in West Africa.

It is distinguished from the nominate subspecies primarily by the presence of a set of large nasal horns.[4] *B. g.* rhinoceros has a distinctive set of enlarged nasal scales that look like a pair of horns on its nose. This is a characteristic that it shares with a close relative, *B. nasicornis*. However, *B. nasicornis* has a brighter color pattern and a narrower head.[5]

B. g. gabonica has no such enlarged nasal horns, and is overall somewhat smaller than *B. g. rhinoceros*. Also, with *B. g. gabonica*, the dark triangular marking leading back from the eye towards the angle of the mouth is divided. With *B. g. rhinoceros* it is not.



Photo.3 *Bitis gabonica rhinoceros*

www.boa-constrictor.cc/?tag=viper

Xenomystus nigri (Foto.4), the African Brown Knife Fish or African Knife Fish, is the only species in the genus *Xenomystus* of the family Notopteridae. This fish inhabits coastal river basins in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Togo, Benin and Cameroon. It also in Chad, the Nile, the Congo, and the Niger basins.[6]



Photo.4 *Xenomystus nigri*

www.eurofish.nl/foto_nigeria.htm

This fish reaches 30 centimetres (12 in) SL in length.[6] The body of these fish is unusual, with the body ventrolaterally flattened and elongated, giving the appearance of a knife blade. The caudal and anal fins are fused and run from beneath the gill opening to the pointed end of the body, creating a uniform, skirtlike fin. This appendage gives the animal superior control in the water, as it is able to propel itself forward and backward with a minimum of wasted energy. The pelvic fins are extremely reduced and are not used in locomotion. The dorsal fin is absent. The pectoral fins of the African brown knife fish are lengthy and designed to give the animal precise control as it swims. They are often employed in a windmilling motion, in conjunction with the caudal/anal fin, as the fish retreats into its lair. The scales of the knife fish are extremely small, giving the fish a smooth appearance

broken only by its fairly prominent lateral line.

Apart from its eyes, the lateral line is the knife fish's most important sensory apparatus. The African brown knife fish is nocturnal and uses the nerve-filled pits running down its body to navigate lightless waters. In addition, the eyes of this fish are large in relation to its body size. They provide the animal with excellent night vision. The mouth is large, and the fish also possesses a pair of short barbels used in hunting. The knife fish, when not hiding away, spends much of its time swimming with its head down and the barbels in close proximity with the substrate. Combined with its acute eyes, the barbels aid the fish in locating its food. Achatinidae (New Latin, from Greek "agate") is a family of medium to large sized tropical land snails, terrestrial pulmonate gastropod mollusks from Africa. The family includes some 13 genera. *Archachatina knorri* (Foto.5) is a species of large air-breathing land snail, a terrestrial pulmonate gastropod mollusk in the family Achatinidae[7]. This species is endemic to Liberia.



Photo.5 *Archachatina knorri*

http://www.petsnails.co.uk/gallery/archachatina_marginata/archachatina_marginata_07.jpg

Bellamya liberiana is a species of gastropod in the Viviparidae family. It is endemic to Liberia.

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