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## OWLS IN MALAWI AND EASTERN ZAMBIA

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During 10 May – 2 June 2002, I explored 15 locations in Malawi and eastern Zambia for owls. I used tapes of owl calls and my own vocalizations, and on several nights set up a sound-activated cassette recorder to catch night sounds. The sampling intensity (frequency and duration of calling and listening, and number of days and nights) varied among sites, but I tried to hold each calling station relatively constant at about 20 minutes each. Over 20 days and nights, I catalogued a total of 34 owls among 10 species, including all species known to occur in Malawi and eastern Zambia except for Pel's Fishing Owl. The following table summarizes my findings:

Species	Location \1															Total
	DZ	LI	ZO	NC	LE	SA	SE	VI	NY	VW	NK	NJ	NT	LU	SL	
Barn Owl							1			1						2
Grass Owl									2							2
Marsh Owl									2							2
African Scops Owl							1			1				2	1	5
White-faced Owl							1									1
Spotted Eagle Owl						1		1	2						3	7
Giant Eagle Owl										1		1		2	1	5
Pel's Fishing Owl																0
Pearl-spotted Owl										1		1			1	3
African Barred Owl		2								1					1	4
Wood Owl						1								1	1	3
<b>Total no. spp.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total no. individs.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>No. nights surveyed</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>

\1 Location codes (all in Malawi unless noted otherwise): DZ = Dzalanyama Forest Reserve; LI = Liwonde National Park & Shire River; ZO = Zomba Plateau and Forest Reserve; NC = Nchalo, Chikawa; LE = Lengwe National Park; SA = Satemwa Tea Estate, Thyolo Mountain & Escarpment, and Shire Highlands; SE = Senga Bay, Lake Malawi; VI = Viphya Plateau; NY = Nyika Plateau & National Park; VW = Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve; NK = Nkhotakhota Game Reserve; NJ = Njobvu, Lake Malawi; NT = Ntchisi Forest Reserve; LU = Lupande Game Management Area, Zambia; SL = South Luangwa National Park, Zambia.

Lack of detection of owls in specific locations should not be interpreted as absence of the species there, given the low number of nights and hours spent at each site. However, overall, the species I encountered most often was Spotted Eagle Owl, followed by African Scops Owl and Giant Eagle Owl. The species seen least often was White-faced Owl. The site having the highest numbers and diversity of owls was SL (see above location codes) in eastern Zambia where I saw 8 individual owls among 6 species. In Malawi, VW was relatively owl-rich, with 6 owls sighted among 3 species. NY was the only location where I saw Marsh Owl and Grass Owl, in the highland grasslands.

Owls that responded to my solicited calls (tape or voice) included African Scops, African Barred, Wood, Pearl-spotted, and Marsh Owls. Other species were chance encounters or did not specifically respond, although during previous owling expeditions (June-July 2000) in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Caprivi Strip of Namibia, I also solicited active responses from Giant Eagle and Spotted Eagle Owls.

I explicitly called for Cape Eagle Owl in several locations including DZ, LI, and LE, but did not find any of this species.

I also spent a total of 36 hours searching expressly for Pel's Fishing Owl (in all sites but intensively in LI, ZO, SE, SL, VW, and NJ) via hiking, boating along Lake Malawi shorelines, and 4-wheel drives, during day, evening, and night, at historic or known resting, foraging, roosting, and nesting sites, accompanied by local guides who knew the locations. I heard and saw no Pel's. This does not necessarily signal absence of the species, but others might attempt further surveys to help determine long-term presence.