

028

**FIG (*FICUS*, MORACEAE) PHENOLOGY AND FOOD AVAILABILITY TO PRIMATES IN KALINZU FOREST IN UGANDA**

H. Muhanguzi, P. Ipulet

*Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda.*

*Presenter's Email: hmuhanguzi@dosate.mak.ac.ug*

The work was aimed at phenology patterns of *Ficus* species as reliable food source for primates in Kalinzu forest. The forest holds a high percentage of the country's primate population, with *Musanga leo-errerae* as its main food source. *Musanga* has reached senescence stage of its 50 year growth cycle, and only succeeds in large forest gaps opened through logging which is now fairly well controlled. Therefore, can figs sustain the primates? The objective was to investigate the leaf and fruit phenology of *Ficus* species, conducted from December 2007 to January 2009. A total of 723 individuals belonging to 16 species, and at least 30 individuals per species were selected. *Ficus sur* had the highest individuals (n = 71) of which 30% fruited, two species had only one individual that fruited. The species with highest percentage of fruiting individuals was *F. vallis.choudae* (78.4%), the lowest was *F. cyathistipula* (15.4%). For most species, a relatively high number (40%) fruited and at least 1/3 always had a fruiting individual. *Ficus cyathistipula* had the shortest fruiting episode of one month and *F. sur* the longest of 12 months. For leaf phenology, at least one individual of each species shed all its leaves during the study, the shedding periods and peaks varied amongst species, and, species largely retained leaves in most months. The episodes lasted 1-3 months and 99% of the individuals had only one episode. Generally figs provide food throughout the year.

Keywords: phenology, *Ficus*, primates, food.