

1 **Title: Potentially zoonotic gastrointestinal nematodes co-infecting free ranging non-**
2 **human primates in Kenyan urban centres**

3 **Running Title: zoonotic nematodes of urban nonhuman primates**

4 Peris Mbuthia¹, Edwin Murungi², Vincent Owino¹, Mercy Akinyi³, Gillian Eastwood⁴,
5 Richard Nyamota¹, Isaac Lekool⁵, & Maamun Jeneby⁶

6 ¹Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Egerton University. P.O. Box 536-
7 20115 Egerton, Kenya.

8 ²Department of Medical Biochemistry, Kisii University. P.O. Box 408-40200 Kisii, Kenya.

9 ³Animal Sciences Department, Institute of Primate Research (IPR). P.O. Box 24481-00502
10 Karen, Kenya.

11 ⁴Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences.
12 309 Latham Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA.

13 ⁵Kenya Wildlife Service, P.O Box 40241-00100 Nairobi, Kenya.

14 ⁶Zoonoses Unit, Tropical Infectious Diseases department, Institute of Primate Research
15 (IPR). P.O. Box 24481-00502 Karen, Kenya.

16 **Abstract**

17 **Background:** Natural infections with soil transmitted nematodes occur in non-human
18 primates (NHPs) and have the potential to cross primate-species boundaries and cause
19 diseases of significant public health concern. Despite their presence in most urban centres in
20 Kenya, comprehensive studies on their gastrointestinal parasites are scant.

21 **Objective:** Conduct a cross-sectional survey to identify zoonotic nematodes in free-ranging
22 NHPs found within four selected urban and peri-urban centres in Kenya.

23 **Methods:** A total of 86 NHPs: 41 African green monkeys [AGM] (*Chlorocebus aethiops*),
24 30 olive baboons (*Papio anubis*), 5 blue monkeys (*Cercopithecus mitis stuhlmanni*) and 10
25 red tailed monkeys (*Cercopithecus ascanius*) were sampled once *in situ* and released back to

26 their habitat. Microscopy was used to identify nematodes egg and larvae stages in the
27 samples. Subsequently, PCR coupled with high-resolution melting (PCR-HRM) analysis and
28 sequencing were used to identify nodule worms.

29 **Results:** NHPs inhabiting densely populated urban environs in Kenya were found infected
30 with a rich diversity of nematodes including three potentially zoonotic nematodes including
31 *Oesophagostomum stephanostomum*, *Oesophagostomum bifurcum* and *Trichostrongylus*
32 *colubriformis* and co-infections were common.

33 **Conclusion:** Phylogenetic analysis showed that *O. stephanostomum* from red tailed and blue
34 monkeys have a close evolutionary relatedness to human isolates suggesting the zoonotic
35 potential of this parasite. Moreover, we also report the first natural co-infection of *O.*
36 *bifurcum* and *O. stephanostomum* in free-ranging AGMs.

37 **KEYWORDS:** Non-human primates, *Oesophagostomum*, PCR-HRM, urban, zoonoses.

38 **Introduction**

39 Free-ranging non-human primates (NHPs) are a source of information regarding
40 maintenance, transmission and disease dynamics of public health importance (Kooriyama et
41 al., 2012; Kouassi et al., 2015; Eastwood et al, 2017). Of concern are soil-transmitted
42 helminths (STHs) whose partial development outside their hosts allows persistence of
43 infective stages in the environment, enabling transmission between closely related host
44 species (Ghai et al., 2014; Cibot et al., 2015). Several studies have described cases of
45 zoonotic STHs transmission in sympatric populations of NHPs and humans (Cibot et al.,
46 2015; Ghai et al., 2014; Frias et al., 2019). However, little is known about urban zoonoses
47 and possible reservoir hosts despite having abundant wildlife in most urban habitats in
48 Africa.

49 Relevant to this context are the strongylid nematodes (genus *Oesophagostomum*) commonly
50 referred to as nodular worm that parasitise pigs, ruminants, NHPs and humans.

51 *Oesophagostomum bifurcum* is considered as the principal nodular worm of humans (Terio et
52 al., 2018) while *Oesophagostomum stephanostomum* infects great apes including
53 chimpanzees (Cibot et al., 2015) and gorillas (Makouloutou et al., 2014). Although the
54 potential for cross-transmission of *Oesophagostomum* spp between humans and NHPs has
55 been disputed (Gruijter et al., 2005; Van Lieshout et al., 2005) a novel *Oesophagostomum*
56 clade infecting humans and sympatric NHPs populations has been described in Uganda (Ghai
57 et al., 2014; Cibot et al., 2015). Therefore, localised research to determine the zoonotic risk
58 and the role of NHPs as potential reservoirs, particularly in East Africa's urban centres is
59 imperative.

60 To formulate effective control measures, accurate diagnosis and genetic characterisation of
61 nematodes is vital (Pouillevet et al., 2017). Comparatively, the polymerase chain reaction
62 (PCR) technique is superior to conventional microscopy. Additionally, real-time high-
63 resolution melting (HRM) analysis, a probe-free post-PCR analysis, allows direct
64 characterisation of PCR amplicons (Reed et al., 2007). PCR-HRM has effectively been used
65 to genotype hookworms without the need for sequencing (Nguï et al., 2012). Thus, PCR-
66 HRM is a robust method for answering epidemiological questions that underpin pathogen
67 surveillance and control programs (Villinger et al., 2016).

68 Previous surveys on helminths have focused on NHPs within wildlife reserves and rural
69 forest habitats (Ghai et al., 2014; Akinyi et al., 2019; Obanda et al., 2019) leaving
70 information gap on helminth zoonoses originating from free-ranging NHPs within urban and
71 peri-urban centres. In East Africa, the sharing of habitats between NHPs and humans, such as
72 public parks in major cities or watering points in peri-urban towns, may facilitate the cross-
73 species transmission of zoonotic STHs. In Kenya, frequent close contacts between humans
74 and monkeys often occurs in most urban public parks. Resident troops of monkeys often
75 snatch food snacks from visitors, and this act may contaminate salvaged food with nematode

76 infective stages. In addition, visitors often encourage the monkeys to climb on their heads
77 and shoulders for photo shoot, which may represent spread of zoonotic parasites from NHPs
78 to humans via the faecal-oral route. This human and monkey interaction suggests an
79 increased risk for cross-transmission of zoonotic pathogens, and potential epidemiological
80 consequences on pathogen evolution within urban ecology. Determination of the zoonotic
81 risk and the role of NHPs as potential parasite reservoirs in urban centres is imperative. Thus,
82 we utilised PCR-HRM and sequencing to investigate the distribution and characterise
83 potentially zoonotic nodular worms in free-ranging NHPs within densely populated urban
84 and peri-urban centres in Kenya.

85 **Materials and methods**

86 **Study sites**

87 This study focused on NHPs found in urban centres of Mombasa and Kisumu, and peri-urban
88 centres within Murang'a and Kakamega counties of Kenya (Figure 1). NHPs were captured
89 at six sites: (a) Mombasa (4° 03' S, 39°40'E), a city at the coastal region of Kenya with a
90 population of 1.2 million people. Mombasa has a tropical climate with hot and humid
91 weather, temperature of 29°C and 11.2 mm of precipitation. (b) Kisumu (0° 00' N, 34°48'E),
92 located in western Kenya at the shore of Lake Victoria has a population of about 599,468
93 people. The lake side town has no true dry season but significant rainfall throughout the year
94 averaging 1321mm and temperatures of 24°C. (c) Murang'a (0° 43' S, 37° 09'E) in central
95 Kenya has warm and temperate climate (averaging temperatures of 17.4°C and 1590 mm of
96 rainfall) and a population of about 1.06 million people. (d) NHPs were sampled from
97 Kakamega County, Western Kenya. This region has a population of about 1.8 million people
98 and temperatures average 20.4 °C with 1971mm of rainfall annually. Here, NHPs were
99 captured from three peri-urban townships namely Buyangu (0° 19'N 34°57'E), Isecheno (0°
100 17'N 34°51'E) and Malava (0° 26' N 43°51'E).

101 **Animal trapping and sample collection**

102 Animal sampling was opportunistic. NHPs trapped were targeted for translocation to wildlife
103 reserves because they were a public menace in urban areas or were regarded as pests by
104 small-scale farmers within peri-urban areas. They were trapped as previously described
105 (Maamun et al., 2011) following the guidelines for animal trapping and sampling after
106 appropriate ethical review committee approval was received. Age group and sex of the
107 trapped animals was determined according to Brett et al., (1982). Faecal samples were
108 collected from the rectum via swabbing and stored in 70% ethanol for molecular assay.
109 Where only one NHP was trapped in a cage, defecated material was collected and stored in
110 10% formalin for parasitological assays. If more than one animal was trapped in a cage, the
111 faecal material in the cage was not collected because sample identity could not be confirmed.
112 The samples were transported in a cool box with dry ice (-78.5°C) to the laboratory.

113 **NHPs sampled**

114 A total of 86 NHPs: 41 African green monkeys (*Chlorocebus aethiops*), 30 olive baboons
115 (*Papio anubis anubis*), 5 blue monkeys (*Cercopithecus mitis stuhlmanni*) and 10 red tailed
116 monkeys (*Cercopithecus ascanius schmidts*) were trapped. The species caught from each
117 location, their age category and sex are shown in Table 1. All 86 animals were rectal swabbed
118 for samples while 69 that were individually trapped over the study period had extra faecal
119 samples collected from their cages. In some cases where two or more animals were trapped in
120 a single cage, it was impossible to utilise any of the excreta because of sample identity.

121 **Parasitological examination**

122 Formal-ether sedimentation and sheathers sugar floatation techniques (Lee et al., 2010) were
123 used for microscopic helminth detection. In both approaches, the slides were examined at
124 400X in duplicates in a Leica DM2000 LED microscope equipped with a digital camera
125 control unit (Leica DFC 450) and representative images captured. Parasites were identified

126 on the basis of egg color, shape, internal contents and larvae according to (Kouassi et al.,
127 2015).

128 **DNA extraction, PCR assay and sequencing**

129 A total of 86, ethanol-preserved, rectal swabbed faecal samples were snap-frozen in liquid
130 nitrogen and ground to fine powder. The powder was homogenised with double distilled
131 water as described previously (Phuphisut et al., 2016). Total DNA was extracted from 200 µl
132 of the homogenate using the QIAamp DNA stool Mini kit (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany),
133 according to the manufacturer's instructions and stored at -20°C.

134 *Oesophagostomum* spp. were detected by PCR amplification of ITS2 gene using NC1
135 forward (5'-ACG TCT GGT TCA GGG TTG TT-3') and NC2 reverse (5'-TTA GTT TCT
136 TTT CCT CCG CT -3') primer pairs (Ghai et al., 2014). PCR was performed in a RotorGene
137 Q thermocycler (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany) using 10µM concentrations of each primer, 4µl
138 of 5X HOT FIREPOL Eva Green HRM Mix (Solis Biodyne, Tartu, Estonia) and 2µl of the
139 DNA template in a 25µl reaction mix. Thermal cycling conditions were as follows: initial
140 denaturation at 95°C for 15 minutes, followed by 35 cycles of denaturation at 95°C for 1 min,
141 annealing at 55°C for 45 secs, and extension at 72°C for 45 secs and a final extension at 72°C
142 for 5 min. The PCR products were immediately utilised for high resolution melting (HRM)
143 analysis as described (Villinger et al., 2016). Briefly, the amplicons were denatured at 95°C
144 for 1 min, annealed at 40°C for 1 min and equilibrated at 65°C for 90 sec, and then increasing
145 the temperature in 0.1°C increments up to 90°C with fluorescence acquisition after 2 seconds
146 incremental holding periods. The melting curve profile was then analysed using Rotor-Gene
147 Q series software version 2.1 with fluorescence (melting curve) normalised by selecting the
148 linear region before and after melting transition. Melting temperature (T_m) was interpolated
149 from the normalised data as the temperature at 50% fluorescence. Distinct HRM profiles,
150 normalised in the range of 80-90°C, were visually determined for each reaction after

151 completion of HRM data acquisition. PCR-HRM products were further visualised by 2%
152 agarose gel electrophoresis stained with ethidium bromide. Gel readings were compared with
153 corresponding PCR-HRM melting peaks for consistency with HRM analysis. Representative
154 positive amplicons from PCR-HRM amplification were purified using the QIAquick Gel
155 Extraction Kit (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany), according to the manufacturer's instructions and
156 sequenced.

157 **Phylogenetic analysis**

158 Consensus sequences for ITS2 rDNA gene were generated from forward and reverse
159 sequence data using Seqtrace version 0.9.0 (Stucky, 2012) and their identity ascertained by
160 BLAST (Altschul et al., 1990) searches of GenBank (Benson et al., 2005). For species
161 identification, a homology cut-off of 97-100% identity with a GenBank E-value threshold of
162 1e-130 was used. Sequences generated from this study and ITS2 ribosomal DNA sequences
163 retrieved from GenBank were used for multiple sequence alignments in MAFFT (Edgar,
164 2004). Evolutionary analyses were performed to determine the relatedness and diversity of
165 the *Oesophagostomum* spp. and *Trichostrongylus* spp. identified in this study to other
166 nematode species endemic in East Africa. The evolutionary history was inferred using the
167 maximum likelihood method in MEGA7 (Kumar et al., 2016) with bootstrapping at 1000
168 replicates. Phylogenetic trees were rendered in iTOL (Letunic & Bork, 2019).

169 **Results**

170 **Microscopic nematode detection**

171 Microscopic examination of the 69 faecal samples identified nematode eggs and/or larvae in
172 78.3% (54/69) of the samples. These included *Strongyloides* spp., *Ascarid* spp., *Trichuris*
173 spp., *Oesophagostomum* spp., and *Enterobius* spp. (Figure 2A). *Strongyloides* eggs and
174 larvae were observed in 25/69 (36.23%) of the samples while *Trichuris* eggs were observed

175 in 54/69 (78.3%) of the samples. Eggs of *Enterobius*, *Ascarid*, and *Oesophagostomum*
176 species. were each observed in 5/69 (7.2%) of the faecal samples (Figure 2B).

177 **Molecular detection of nematodes and sequencing**

178 PCR-HRM analysis (Figure 3) identified *Oesophagostomum* spp. in 33/86 (38.4%) of the
179 NHPs. Of these, 21 and 23 animals were infected with *O. bifurcum* and *O. stephanostomum*
180 respectively while 11 animals were co-infected with both species (Table 2). BLAST searches
181 of GenBank upon sequencing confirmed their presence and identified another nematode,
182 *Trichostrongylus colubriformis*. These sequences have been submitted to the GenBank under
183 accession numbers (MT184881 to MT184891).

184 **Overall nematode infection by microscopy and PCR-HRM**

185 Parasitological and molecular assays enabled identification of nematodes in 74/86 (86.05%)
186 NHPs samples. Overall, (35/41) AGMs, (27/30) olive baboons, (9/10) red-tailed monkeys
187 and (3/5) blue monkey showed evidence of helminth infection. *T. colubriformis* and *Ascarid*
188 spp. were only detected in AGMs, *Enterobius* in olive baboons and red-tailed monkeys while
189 the rest occurred in all the NHPs (Figure 4). Two AGMs were infected with *T. colubriformis*.
190 Infection varied across the sampling sites with 89.3% (25/28) in Kakamega, 81.0% (7/21) in
191 Kisumu, 85.7% (6/7) in Murang'a and 86.6% (26/30) in Mombasa. *Ascarid* infections
192 occurred only in Murang'a, *T. colubriformis* in Mombasa while *Enterobius* occurred in
193 Kisumu and Kakamega.

194 **Helminth co-infections as identified by microscopy and PCR-HRM**

195 Co-infections were observed across the sampling sites in various NHPs (Figure 5). *Trichuris*
196 and *Strongyloides*. co-infections were the most common 17.44% (15/86) and occurred mostly
197 in AGMs from Mombasa 24.39% (10/41). *Strongyloides* and *Oesophagostomum*. co-
198 infection was also detected in 4.65% (4/86) of all the NHPs except AGMs. Co-infections
199 with three nematodes were observed in all NHPs except the red-tailed monkey and were

200 absent in NHPs trapped from Kisumu and Murang'a. Co-infections with four nematodes was
201 observed in 8.12% (7/86) NHPs. Mixed infection with the two *Oesophagostomum* species
202 occurred in 11 NHPs (Table 2).

203 **Phylogenetic analysis**

204 The phylogenetic tree obtained resolved into three distinct clades of *O. stephanostomum*, *O.*
205 *bifurcum* and *T. colubriformis* (Figure 6). The *O. stephanostomum* clade lacked species or
206 geographical sub-structuring; red-tailed monkeys' sequences and a blue monkey sequence
207 formed one sub-cluster while sequences from AGM and red-tailed monkey formed a second
208 sub-cluster. Contrastingly, the *O. bifurcum* clade grouped the baboon and AGM isolates in
209 different sub-clusters. The cryptic *Oesophagostomum* species described from Uganda (Ghai
210 et al., 2014) was phylogenetically distinct from both *O. stephanostomum* and *O. bifurcum*
211 identified in this study. The *T. colubriformis* clade grouped AGM-derived isolates in a
212 distinct cluster from previous sequence of *T. colubriformis* DNA isolated from yellow
213 baboon in Kenya and those reported from humans in Laos.

214 **Discussion**

215 The diversity of STHs identified in selected Kenyan urban centres highlights the possible
216 reservoir role played by NHPs in helminths urban ecology. The significant diversity of
217 nematodes infecting different species of NHPs within urban and peri-urban centres
218 compliments previous molecular surveys that detected helminths in free-ranging NHPs
219 within remote wildlife habitats in Kenya (Akinyi et al., 2019; Obanda et al., 2019). In STHs
220 endemic countries, re-infection has been observed in half of the children treated for intestinal
221 worms (Jia et al., 2012) a phenomenon attributed to re-infection due to persistence of
222 infective worm stages in the environment. As the Kenyan government commits to strengthen
223 helminth control (Mwandawiro et al., 2019) it is faced with the challenge of identifying
224 reservoir hosts. This study provides useful information on possible reservoir hosts of STHs

225 that may contribute to environmental sustenance of zoonotic nematodes in urban and peri-
226 urban regions of Kenya. It also illustrates the possibility of utilising PCR-HRM analysis to
227 efficiently differentiate between *Oesophagostomum* spp. without the need for sequencing as
228 earlier described for hookworms (Nguï et al., 2012). PCR-HRM differentiated *O.*
229 *stephanostomum* and *O. bifurcum* co-infecting NHPs (Figure 3) as confirmed by sequencing
230 indicating its utility as a non-subjective approach to supplement sequencing for accurate
231 characterisation of nodular worms.

232 Phylogenetic reconstruction of nodular worm isolates demonstrated separation of *O.*
233 *stephanostomum* sequences into a sub-cluster consisting of isolates from red-tailed monkeys
234 and blue monkeys in Kakamega and a sub-cluster consisting of sequences from AGMs
235 sampled in Kisumu and Murang'a indicating that *O. stephanostomum* is neither geographical
236 nor host species-based. In addition, clustering of *O. stephanostomum* detected in this study
237 with an isolate from human (accession number KR149647.1) indicates close evolutionary
238 relatedness and therefore suggests the potential for this parasite to infect both humans and
239 NHPs. This finding concurs with Cibot et al. (2015) reports of human and NHP infection
240 with *O. stephanostomum*, suggesting increased risk of transmission for this helminth between
241 primate species. *O. bifurcum* sequences from olive baboons in this study formed a
242 monophyletic cluster with *O. bifurcum* sequences from other NHP species retrieved from
243 Genbank. However, the *O. bifurcum* sequence from a chimpanzee sampled in Uganda
244 clustered with sequences recovered from an AGM in Kenya. The two were evolutionarily
245 divergent from the rest of the sequences within this cluster. This points to potentially new
246 host species since *O. bifurcum* has not been previously reported in AGMs in Kenya and is not
247 commonly described in chimpanzees. Because transmission occurs via the ingestion of the
248 infective third-stage larvae present in contaminated food or water, oesophagostomosis is a
249 potential zoonotic risk when infected NHPs and humans share the same habitats. Therefore,

250 intervention strategies to combat oesophagostomosis need to factor NHPs as potential
251 reservoirs. Sequencing data also confirmed infection by *T. colubriformis* in olive baboons. *T.*
252 *colubriformis* sequences generated in this study were distinct from the *Trichostrongylus* spp.
253 isolates from yellow baboon in Kenya (Obanda et al., 2019) which may be as a result of sub
254 structuring according to host species.

255 Other nematodes identified in this study included *Trichuris.*, *Enterobius.*, *Ascarid.*,
256 *Strongyloides.* and *Trichostrongylus* species. *Trichuris trichiura*, has been detected in
257 different primate species in Kenya (Mbora & McPeck, 2009; Akinyi et al., 2019) and
258 experimentally transmitted from NHPs to humans (Monteiro et al., 2007) providing evidence
259 of its zoonotic potential. In addition, a single taxon was found to be both human and NHPs
260 infective in a *Trichuris* host diversity study (Ghai et al., 2014). NHPs are known to be the
261 major hosts of *S. stercoralis* and, especially, *S. fuelleborni*. A peculiarity of *Strongyloides*
262 spp., is their ability to penetrate the host's skin and/or autoinfect making them burdensome
263 helminths causing long-term suffering. Identification of *Strongyloides* in this study is thus of
264 public health concern. Klaus et al.,(2017) demonstrated *Ascarid* spp. cross-infection and
265 zoonotic potential between human and NHPs. Nematodes in the genus *Trichostrongylus* are
266 known to infect humans, wild animals, herbivorous animals (Obanda et al., 2019). Primates
267 including humans become infected due to environmental contamination. Where NHPs,
268 ruminants and humans live in sympatry, *T. colubriformis* is a perpetual public health burden
269 thus its presence poses a potential risk of transmission in the study areas. Contrary to
270 previous studies (Munene et al., 1998; Obanda et al., 2019) AGMs in this study were infected
271 with *O. bifurcum* which adds AGMs as reservoir host species to the epidemiology of nodular
272 worm. Overall, a complex anthrozo-zoonotic transmission cycle may be maintained in the
273 study regions.

274 Consistent with other studies (Klaus et al., 2017; Akinyi et al., 2019), we also observed
275 coinfection with multiple nematode species. Parasites co-occurring within a single host
276 interact in a variety of ways that influence their abundance, distribution, and the dynamics of
277 one another (Pedersen & Fenton, 2007). One such interaction is the immune modulation. A
278 helminth induced immunosuppression caused by infection with one helminth species may
279 strongly alter a host's response to subsequent infection by other species enhancing the
280 likelihood of coinfection (Cox, 2001). Further, mechanisms related to host exploitation can
281 be modified to ultimately enhance coexistence. For instance, the distinct spatial niches of
282 worms within a host e.g. *Ascaris lumbricoides* predilection in jejunum while *Trichuris*
283 *trichiura* resides in the cecum reduces levels of resources competition between the two
284 worms. Predominance of *Trichuris* and *Strongyloides* co-infections in this study may be due
285 to their abundance in the faecal samples as they were the most dominant infections. Given the
286 ubiquity of coinfection in nature, and the effects coinfecting parasites are likely to have on
287 one another, interactions among parasites may be a major force generating variation in the
288 transmission of disease and in shaping infectious disease dynamics. While most studies on
289 intestinal helminths of free-ranging NHP rely on faecal samples collected after defecation in
290 the wild, challenges in interpretation of results may arise due to collection of several samples
291 from the same animal (Gillespie et al., 2010). In the current study, stool samples could be
292 traced back to the individual animal having collected the sample from the rectum of the
293 animals or freshly excreted faecal sample from trapping cages with single animal.

294 With respect to host species infections, the taxonomic diversity was highest in AGMs
295 followed by olive baboons, red-tailed monkeys and blue monkeys. This may be due to
296 behavioral factors; blue monkeys are mainly arboreal while AGMs are semi-terrestrial, which
297 means they spend more time on the ground hence increasing their chances for contact and
298 contraction of infective stages of different nematodes. The rich taxonomic diversity in AGMs

299 parallel other studies that report high prevalence of helminth infections in terrestrial NHPs
300 (Poulin & Morand, 2005;Ghai et al., 2014; McCabe et al., 2014). Although olive baboons are
301 also terrestrial, the slightly lower number of different nematode taxa identified compared to
302 AGMs could be the consequence of sample size, and therefore strong inferences cannot be
303 made. However, and to the best of our knowledge, studies comparing taxonomic diversity
304 and infection rates among different species of NHPs in Kenya remain scarce.

305 The number of nematode infections in NHPs was highest in Mombasa and Kakamega while
306 Murang'a had the least cases of infections. By comparison, the prevalence of all STHs in
307 human population in Kenya is highest in coastal and western regions (Brooker and Michael,
308 2000; Masaku *et al.*, 2017). One explanation for high cases of infection in Mombasa could be
309 a coastal habitat providing ideal environmental conditions such as humidity and warmth for
310 egg development. Although Kisumu is also warm, humidity is much lower. Additionally,
311 frequent recurrence of STHs at the same location may facilitate environmental accumulation
312 of infective parasite stages and could result in reinfection. This is especially relevant in the
313 case of reservoir hosts, since adult worms' lifespan is typically longer than annual periods
314 when environmental conditions favours transmission thus maintaining overall endemicity.

315 A key limitation of this study is that we were unable to sample humans within the studied
316 regions. Our sampling was opportunistic because we focused on NHPs that had been targeted
317 for translocation to national reserves. In most cases, surveillance of zoonotic pathogens under
318 the 'One Health' approach recommends that humans, wildlife and domestic animals that
319 share same habitats are screened concurrently. Our approach to phylogenetic analysis
320 addressed this limitation by comparing our generated sequences to those of nematodes
321 isolated from humans and domestic animal faecal material. Although our data provides
322 baseline information on the potential zoonotic risk of gastrointestinal nematodes in urban
323 centres, we recommend further surveillance of the nematodes using the one health approach.

324 Since NHPs serve as sentinels for surveillance of emerging diseases, the rich taxonomic
325 diversity of nematodes detected NHPs from selected urban centres in Kenya could be an
326 important reference to the helminth prevalence in altered urban habitats. In addition, the
327 detection of *Oesophagostomum* species in free -ranging NHPs within densely populated
328 urban centres is of public health interest because of the zoonotic nature of these nematodes,
329 especially *O. bifurcum*, a parasite that can be lethal to humans.

330 **Authors Contribution:** MJ, VO, PM, MA formulated the project, MJ, MA, IL, PM GE,
331 conducted fieldwork, PM, MJ, MA, conducted laboratory analysis, MJ, EM, VO, RN, PM
332 analysed the data. MJ, MA, PM, VO, EM drafted the manuscript. All the authors revised the
333 manuscript and approved the final manuscript draft.

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341 **Ethical Note**

342 Animal trapping, sedation and sampling were undertaken with approval from and according
343 to the guidelines of Institute of Primate Research (IPR) Institutional Scientific Review
344 Committee and the Department of Veterinary and Capture Services of the Kenya Wildlife
345 Service (KWS), Nairobi (Review number, ISERC/04/18).

346 **Conflict of interest statement**

347 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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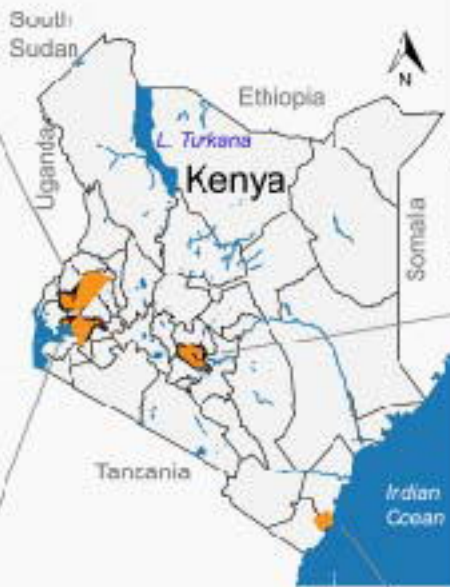
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- 498

499 Table 1: The total number of NHP species sampled, distribution of each species according to sampling urban regions according to sex and age-
 500 group.




Region	Sex	Age-group	AGM	Olive baboon	Blue monkey	Red tailed monkey
Mombasa 30	Male 18	Juvenile	1			
		Sub/Adult	9			
		Adult	8			
	Female 12	Juvenile	2			
		Sub/Adult	2	1		
		Adult	7			
Kakamega 28	Male 14	Juvenile		2		1
		Sub/Adult		3	1	3
		Adult		2	1	1
	Female 14	Sub/Adult		2		2
		Adult		6	3	1
Kisumu 21	Male 10	Juvenile		1		
		Sub/Adult	2	3		
		Adult	1	3		
	Female 11	Sub/Adult		1		
		Adult	2	6		2
Murang'a 7	Male 5	Juvenile	1			
		Adult	4			
	Female 2	Adult	2			
86			41	30	5	10

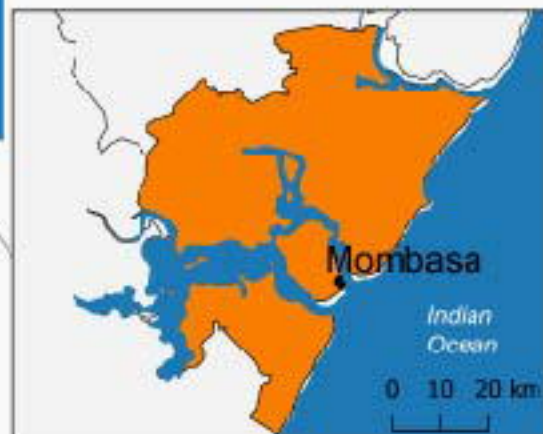
Table 2: *Oesophagostomum* spp. infection of non-human primates (NHPs) from urban and peri-urban centres in Kenya.

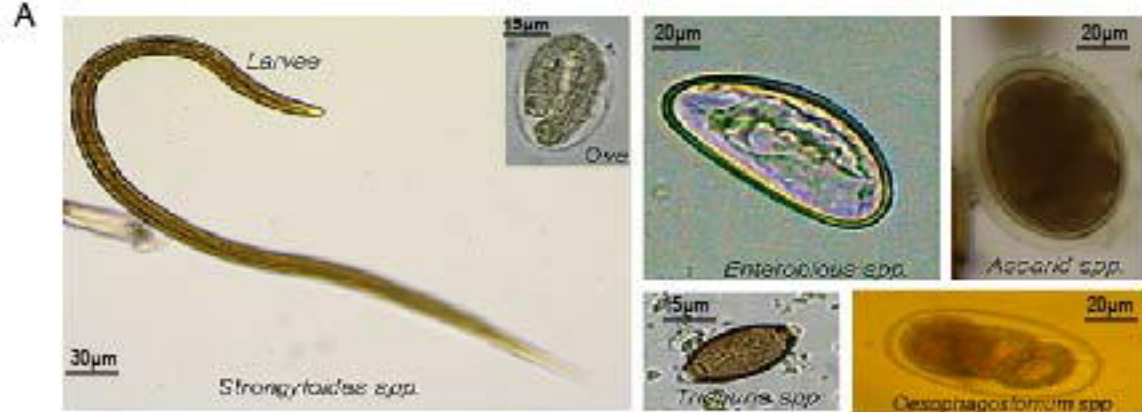
Species	Number sampled	<i>O. stephanostomum</i>	<i>O. bifurcum</i>	<i>O. stephanostomum</i> and <i>O. bifurcum</i>
Africa green monkey	41	12(29.3%)	9(21.95%)	5(12.19%)
Olive baboon	30	9(30.0%)	4(13.33%)	4(13.33%)
Blue Monkey	5	1(20.0%)	3(60.0%)	1(20.0%)
Red-tailed monkey	10	1(10.0%)	3(30.0%)	1(10.0%)
Total	86	23(26.74%)	21(24.42%)	11(12.79%)



Legend

-  County boundary
-  Sampled county
-  Sampling site
-  Water body

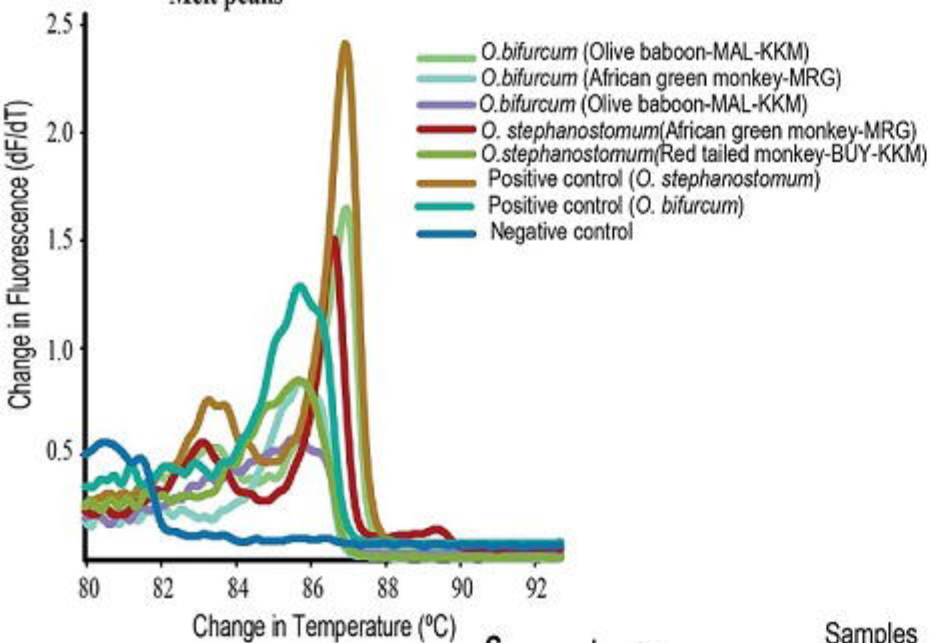
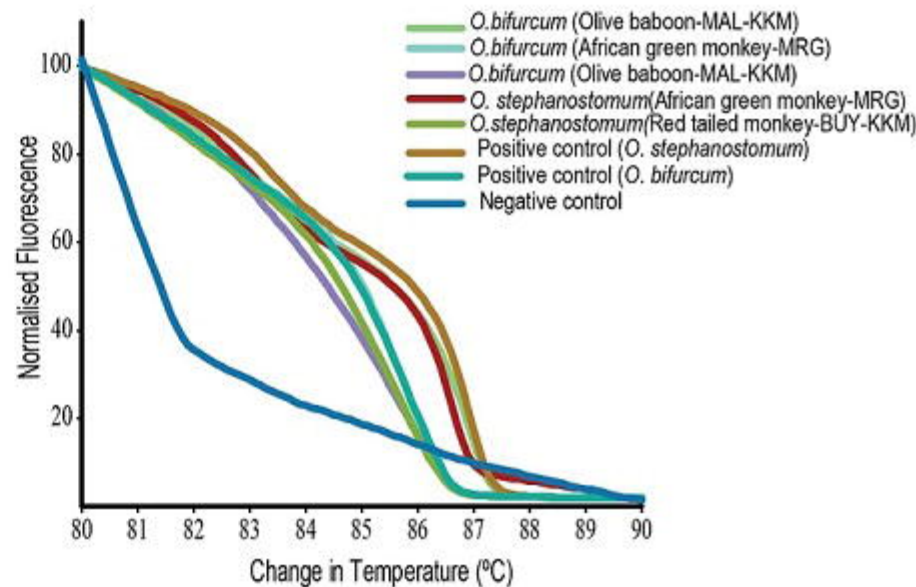
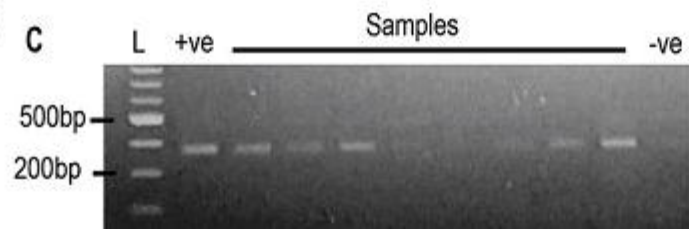




B

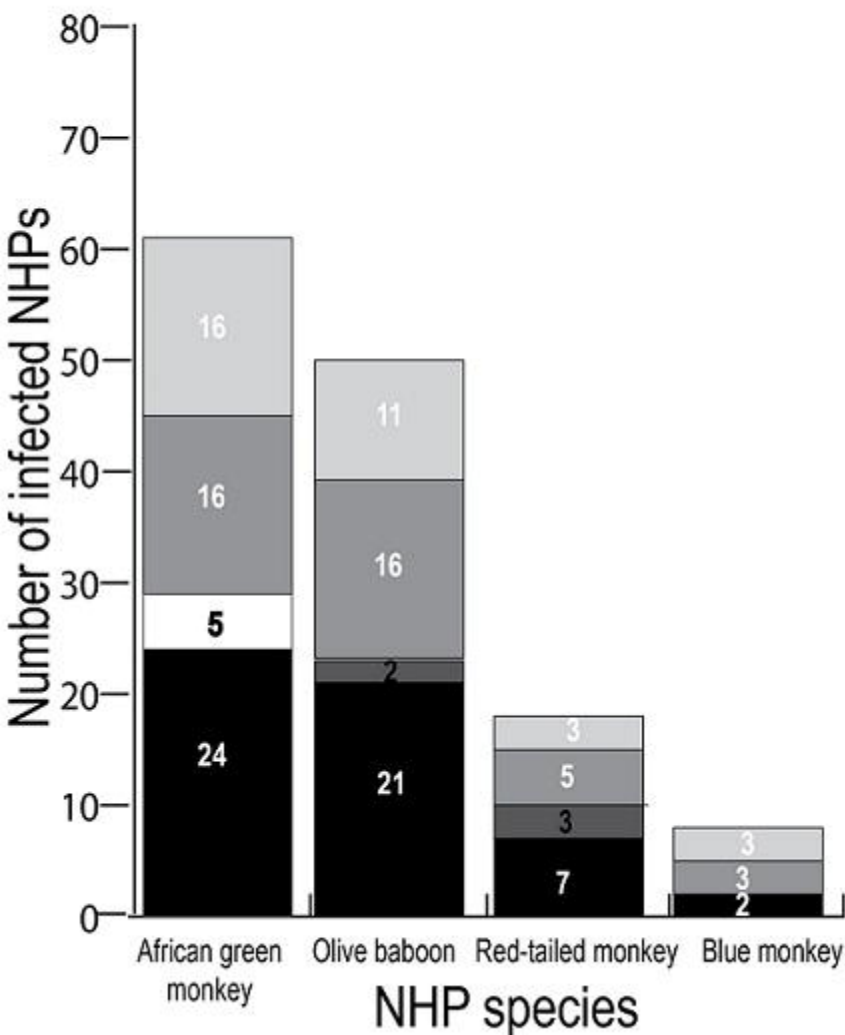
NHP species	Soil transmitted helminth species				
	<i>Enterobius</i> spp	<i>Ascarid</i> spp	<i>Trichuris</i> spp	<i>Strongyloides</i> spp	<i>Oesophagostomum</i> spp
Red-tailed monkey (n=10)	3	0	7	4	1
Blue monkey (n=5)	0	0	2	1	1
Olive baobon (n=30)	2	0	21	9	0
AGM (n=41)	0	5	24	11	3
Total (n=86)	5	5	54	25	5

NHPs-Non-human primate species, AGM-Africa green monkey, n-number of individuals sampled per NHP species

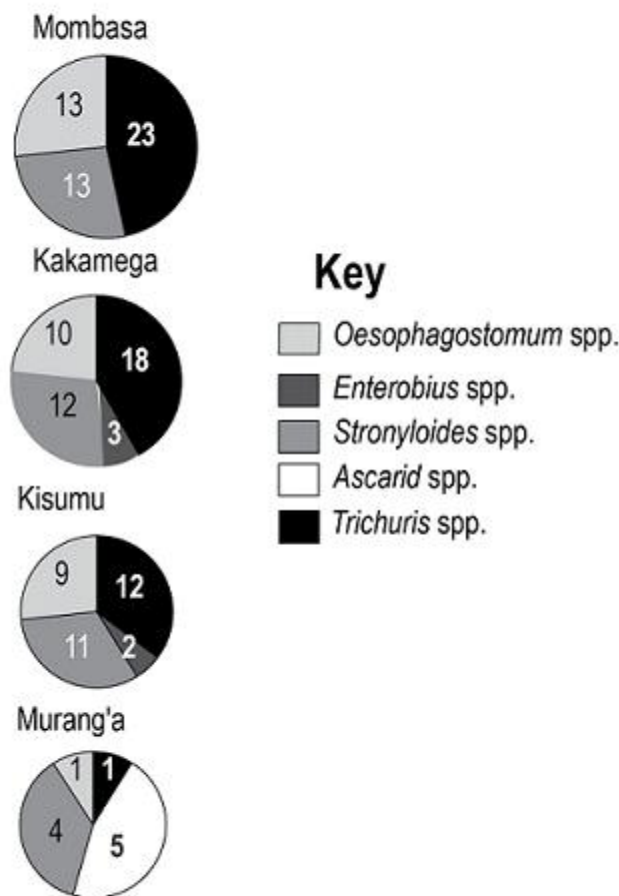
A**Melt peaks****B****Melt profiles****C**

Distribution of nematodes

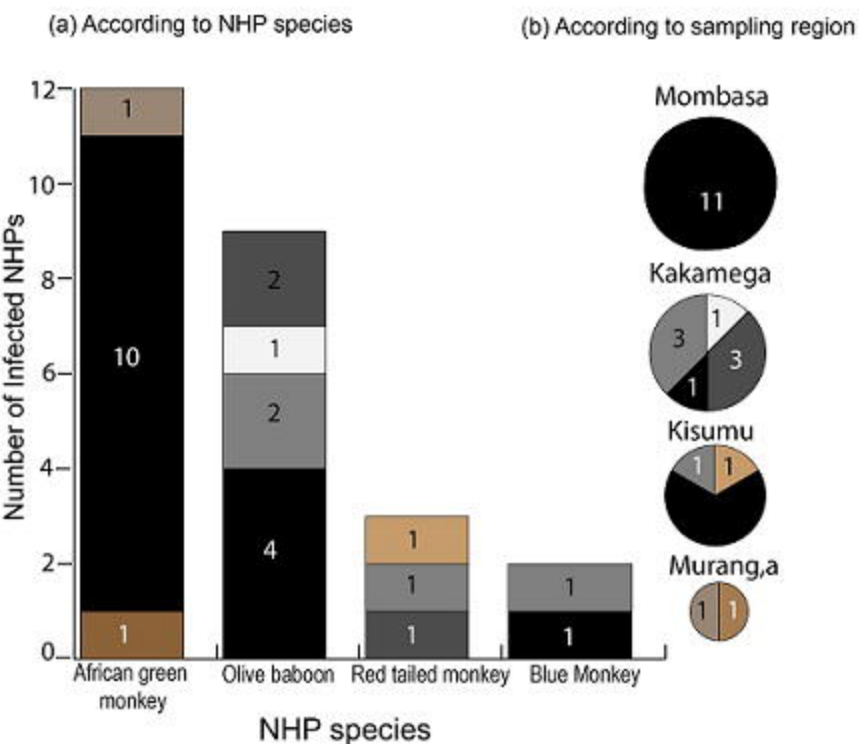
(a) According to NHP species



(b) According to sampling region



A) Co-infection with two nematodes



B) Co-infection with three and four nematodes

