

**Predation on the leaves of some rainforest species of trees around Madang (Papua New Guinea).**

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**ABSTRACT**

We studied predation on the leaves of 62 shrubs and trees in a lowland rainforest in Madang to find out the risk of predation for insect herbivores feeding on these trees. Predation was measured by experiments during which 30 termites *Microcerotermes biroi* were pinned on leaves of the study tree and the number of them found by predators was counted after 30 minutes.

These experiments were used to compare predation on different species of trees, and also on one species, *Ficus wassa*, during the day and night. We found that the predation was high as in most of the experiments, at least some of the termites were discovered and attacked by predators. Trees attracting ants, such as *Macaranga aleuritoides* or *Endospermum labios*, had a particularly high predation. This was because ants were the most important predators, particularly during the day. There was almost three times more predation during day than during the night. The activity of ants during the night decreased, but the predation activity of crickets (Orthoptera) increased. Similarly, herbivores were more active during the day than night, except the grasshoppers (Orthoptera), which were more active during the night.

