

## Project Update: November 2013

1. We have been conducted field research for the last 4 years in Aboi Gara, Abune Yoseph and Delanta Afro-alpine ecosystems, in North Wollo highlands as part of my master and post graduate diploma study. This year we extended our study sites to South Wollo highland Afro-alpine ecosystem at Borena Saynt National Park (BSNP), which will be one of my PhD study site, for the coming 2-3 years.
2. We conducted pilot survey in October 2013 in our new study site BSNP. We piloted using transect walk throughout the park on foot and by car to observe the Afro-alpine vegetation pattern, physiography, grazing intensity, wildlife, human encroachment, resource use and human wildlife interaction to design our formal ecological and socio economic survey.



Girma and his assistant from left to right



Girma on transect walk

- 2.1. From the transect walk inside the park we observed Afro-alpine vegetation micro-habitats such as Afro-alpine meadow, *Euryops* shrubland, *Festuca* grassland, *Euryops-festuca*, *Euryops-lobelia*, *Festuca-Lobelia*, *Lobelia* grassland, ericaceous moor land in both inside and outside the park as indicated respectively on the following photos.





2.2. We also observed endemic Afro-alpine wildlife such as Ethiopian wolf and Gelada baboon



Ethiopian wolves © EWCP



Gelada baboon © EWCP

3. We seeded in two grids 50 live Sherman traps in 5 x 5 m<sup>2</sup> grid at 10 m interval inside grazed and ungrazed *Euryops-Festuca* micro-habitat for 3 consecutive days to survey small mammal abundance and species composition after pre-bated the trap for 1 day with a mixture of peanut butter and barley flour.

3.1. From these two pilot grids we captured a total of 64 rodents. *Arvicanthis abyssinicus* and *Lophuromys flavopunctatus* were rodent species identified and recorded. One insectivore species *Crocidura fumosa* was also recorded.



Collapsible live Sherman trap



*Arvicanthis abyssinicus*



*Lophuromys flavopunctatus*



*Crocidura fumosa*

- 3.2. Using this pilot survey result we will design our formal small mammal sampling grid to see the effect of grazing on rodent abundance and species composition.
4. Finally, we bought basic field equipment such as tent, sleeping bag, mattress, binocular, GPS etc. which we are now using for the study.