

Project Update: June 2015

Our project spanned two periods: a) First field season: bat capturing, cave data collection and community education program and b) Final field data collections at additional caves and perform data analysis. This update reports the first field season.

Data collection

Ofomata *et al.*, 1983 list 30 sandstone caves in the Agbogugu area of Agwu Local Government Area. During our first field visit we found 12 caves, of which eight were occupied by bats. Roost characteristics data was collected from all caves, while bats were captured using mist nets.

Community conservation outreach events

Four conservation outreach events targeting different age groups in Agbogugu were conducted during our first field visit. The events were designed to engage the audience with activities appropriate for their age and educational background. We visited a primary school and two secondary schools engaging over 300 students. Our school visits involved giving talks and engaging students in interactive sessions, drawing exercises, a quiz competition as well as craft making sessions that depict bats on bags and towels. Poster materials were handed over to schools for ongoing education. Similarly, a short brochure with quick facts about bats, their ecosystem services and disease concerns were distributed to all students. In addition, with the support of the community youth leaders, we engaged a group of adults in the ecosystem roles of bats, while introducing aspects of our study and why it was important. This group of over 120 adults was engaged in an interactive session discussing locally applicable ecosystem services of bats, in addition to a craft session by women in the group.

Next steps

The next phase of our project included a second field visit for catching bats and cave data collection as well as data analysis. This spanned February to March 2015.