Project Update: October 2014

Bird survey

The bird survey is still going on and currently it is being undertaken by the forest rangers in close collaboration with local community representatives (Village forest rangers). The Uluguru Nature Reserve management is according a good cooperation. In September 2014, I joined the field survey team in order to assess the effectiveness of activity. We surveyed for 5 days and we could not see any Uluguru bushrike, however by the aid of audio recorded call that was played and replayed at specific time intervals using the PCM- D5O Linear PCM Sony Recorder we managed to hear the bird only two times and it was heard in a part of the forest reserve called Kivaza at around 167 m asl, the site adjacent to military base (Mzinga military camp) where forest is still relatively intact. In addition, an informal interview with the local people using a picture on poster revealed that most in particular youths and mid-aged are unfamiliar with Uluguru bushrike.

Moreover, still there are a lot of ongoing forest disturbances especially tree cutting for poles and a bit of felling of large trees for timber. Many large trees are debarked for medicinal plants. Dense bushes, steep terrains were major challenges for the crew. Additionally, in August 2014, the local crew reported that it was nearly being attacked by illegal loggers but presence of forest ranger who intervened properly was a great deed. Nevertheless, another crew denied doing a survey in a certain forest patch claiming that there is a residential leopard. So, for safety reason the survey has been maintained to the existing forest management trails/paths. Nevertheless, in the southern part of the reserve problems of wildfires are immense, fires emanate mainly from a village namely Vinile. Local people use fire in farm preparations, hunting small mammals and honey gathering. A discussion with the village leaders was undertaken and we were informed that the village has bylaws to control use of fire but villagers due at very high altitude. There was a beans farm that was located at around 1480 m asl. Thus, in general the Uluguru bushrike population seems to be very low due to ongoing disturbances in particular felling of large trees for timber, tree debarking for medicinal products, and poles harvesting for building and equipment making such as hand hoe/plough and furniture making.

Adoption of fuel wood efficient stoves

Up to mid-October 2014, the project has managed to facilitate construction of over 138 fuel wood efficient stoves in three project villages (Choma, Kivaza & Tangeni). However, most of them are in Tangeni village (87), followed by Choma 41 and Kivaza only 10. Moreover, a local artisan from Choma village who was trained by this project informed that he has even constructed 13 stoves in a village

outside this project namely Mbete. Efforts are underway to boost progress at Kivaza that seems to be a prime area as the Uluguru bushrike was heard in the forest adjacent this village. Major reasons for poor progress and response in Kivaza was absence of the three local artisans that were trained by this project as we were informed that they have moved to a distant village for clay pot making activity. Also, in this village it was noted that there are some influential people who are growing plants that are deemed illegal by the government, thus they tend to suppress development efforts to minimize interaction with external world.

Progress in Tangeni and Choma is very good and I am expecting the number of efficient stoves to increase. During my survey, where I held a meeting with 20 women from each village to assess adoption rate and challenges in the household the stove has been constructed and being used fuel consumption has decreased by over 43%. Villagers (mostly women) were asked to put aside a pile of wood that is adequate to prepare an ordinary meal made from maize flour and beans (staple crops) for a household comprising of five people. First, by using three stone stove and then sort another pile for improved stove, thereafter by the aid of digital spring balance the wood were weighed. Upon comparing the results, the traditional 3 stone stove requires about 5.22 kg of well dry chopped wood while fuel wood efficient stove required 2.94 kg. Wood chips of *Senna spectabilis* tree were used, this a tree that is locally planted for wood and shade around homestead and farm boundaries. The results of this survey also concurred to the informal interviews with the efficient users who said for sure it is good as it uses few woods, few smoke and easy to maintain. One villager said "If the efficient stove would have arrived let say a decade ago we would still have many trees left in our landscape". A challenge that was noted is some household having a very poor kitchens e.g. some too small, no window others no roof and cost of the chimney (a piece metal pipe) that was deemed necessary due to the kitchen design and settings.

Future activities include: direct more efforts on stove construction, recruit bachelor students, prepare a map showing suitable habitat for the bird.