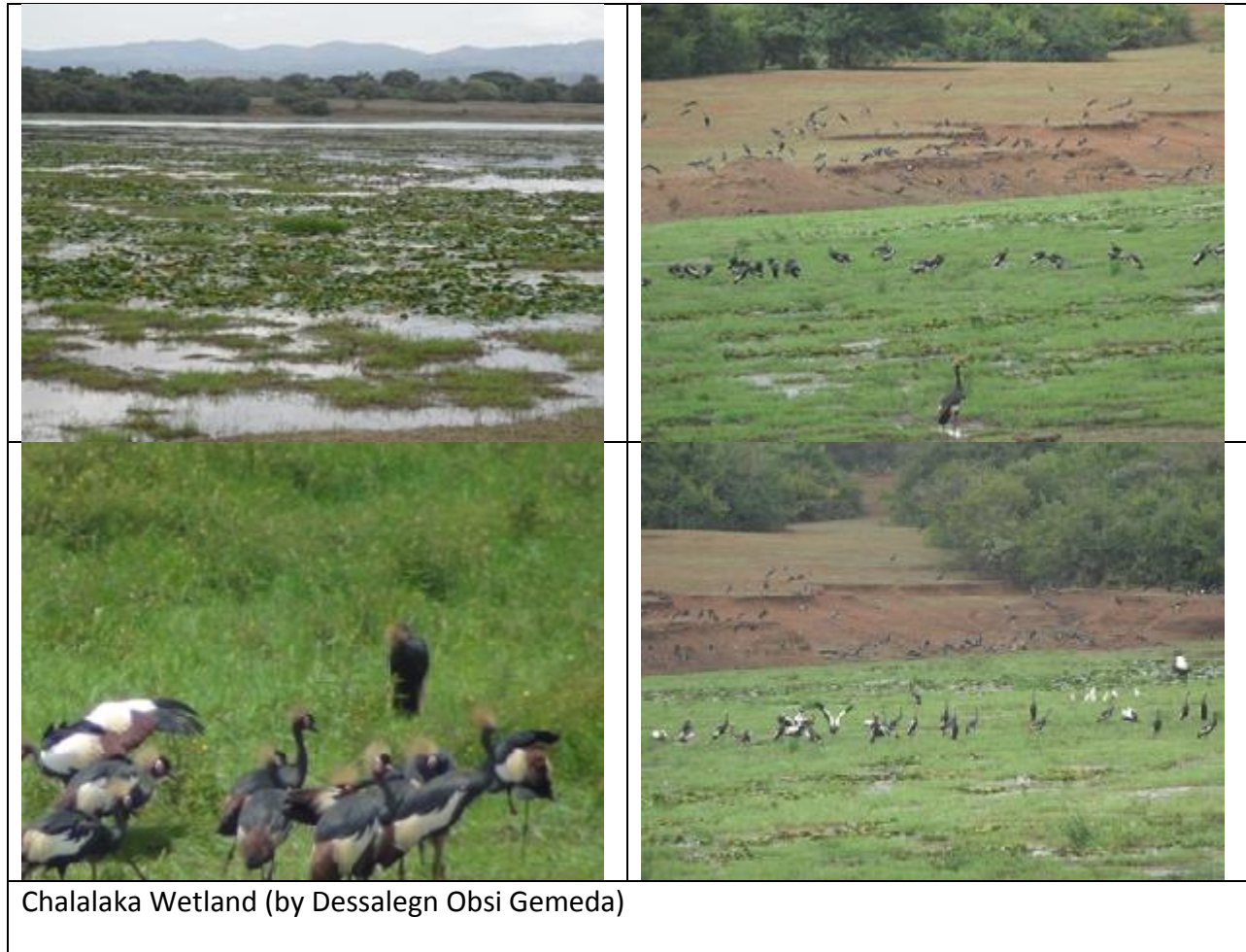


Project Update: October 2015

Data collection and outreach activities progress report



Outreach activities were conducted to enhance the conservation of vulnerable Black Crowned Cranes in the former Limu districts of Jimma Zone what we called today the district of Chora Botor district. Stakeholders workshop were conducted in May 2015 at district level within the presence of the district high officials and key stakeholders which have a high power to convince and influence others that will support the implementation of desired the outreach activities in their district. The stakeholders have strong feelings on the conservation of biodiversity at large and specifically wetlands and cranes because they considered as a future tourist attraction site as well as a source of revenue for the district.



Multi stakeholder's workshop at Bege town (Photo by Behilu)

Open public awareness was conducted on market day in Meca dire village which is very near to Chalalaka lake on October 15, 2015. The outreach activities targeted to promote the conservation of Black Crowned Cranes for mass population within a short time which will be excellent to the community from every corner of the district since they come from different village to buy something for their family. After they return to their home they disseminate what they heard to their neighbors about the issue of conservations.

Open public awareness without the restrictions of gender and age will be conducted in order to develop last long conservations of the species in the area. The local community, the developmental organization, students and teachers were involved in the outreach activities.

Until this report was generated, about **1044** people were aware about the conservation needs of Black Crowned Crane. From these total populations, about 311 were the local community, in which majority of them were addressed on the open market day (Thursday) during the tour visit in the project area, 653 students (53 of them are from University), 14 elementary teachers, 37 higher institution teachers and 29 stakeholders from various governmental organization in the region which is I make proud of my work.



Photo taken during data collection (Photo by Mitiku Tezera)



Interview with the farmers (by Dessalegn Obsi Gameda)

Some people shared their experiences during focused group discussion on the ecology of the Black Crowned Crane (Habitat preferences, feeding and breeding sites) including the population variation of the species during the dry and wet season and over series of time. The coffee ceremony, the most respected meeting in the community in which all the neighbors (15 to 20 people) call each other to drink coffee together for 30 to 45 minutes sometimes for an hour used systematically for focused group discussion. During and after coffee ceremony group discussions was conducted among the participants. First the elders share their experiences concerning the population of Black Crowned cranes whether increasing or decreasing, distribution, habitat preferences, breeding sites and time as well as their interactions with human beings particularly on their agricultural fields in rare cases. After the elders, the middle age people also share their experiences and lastly, the young people from the coffee ceremony reflect their experiences. Majority of the participants during the coffee ceremony is women.



Group discussions during coffee ceremony (by Dessalegn Obsi Gameda)



Interview with household during coffee ceremony (by Dessalegn Obsi Gameda)

The following general questions were given for focused group discussion after they share their experiences: Do you think the population of the Black Crowned cranes is increasing or decreasing?

1. In which season the number of Black Crowned Crane is very high (Dry or Wet)
2. Do you know the breeding season?
3. Do you think the breeding of Black Crowned crane is successful in your area?
4. Do you come across the breeding nest of the Black Crowned Crane?
5. Do you come across any injured (dead) Black Crowned in your area? If yes what are the main reasons?
6. Is Black Crowned Crane is a pest species that can damage your crops?

For the last questions, almost all people justify that Black Crowned Crane is not categorized as a pest species since it did not damage their crops like other wild animals. In rare cases, they dig out and eat maize during the germination period only if they lack insects from the wetlands only. The communities also understand that the life of Black Crowned crane is dependent on the existence of health wetlands. If wetland is available in the area the cranes stay in the wetlands to feed insects and worms. Thus, the community fully understands the interdependence between Black Crowned Crane and wetlands.

The outreach activities also well addressed the students, which were considered as the future generation of our country. In order to do so, first the district educational bureau give permission during our stakeholder's workshop of last May 2015, based on that permission, the elementary school director of Ayite motivated to arrange the students for the outreach activities. Accordingly, the school director, Mr. Zelalem, introduce to the students concerning our objectives and then we start our promotion to 600 students under big trees with conducive atmospheric condition. From the total of 600 elementary students, 336 and 264 were males and females respectively. During our promotion, we introduced to the students about general facts of wetlands and its use for the people, the characteristics of the Black Crowned crane including the ecology, breeding, feeding and geographical distributions within Ethiopia as well as at Africa continent and its main threats were presented to the students informs of speech. The school teachers were also participated on the meetings. The student was advised to share what they heard from us to their family and their friends after they returned from the school to ex-cell our message to the mass with very simple methodology and possibilities of accessing to high number of people. The students were also advised to take their lion share in the conservation of the vulnerable Black Crowned cranes in their area by respecting and implementing the following promises:

1. Do not destroy the nest of the Black Crowned crane if you saw in the future;
2. Do not destroy the eggs of Black Crowned cranes;
3. Do not catch the young cranes if you saw on the fields in the future;
4. Do not throw stones towards Black Crowned Cranes since they fear human being at a distance;
5. Do not disturb the Black Crowned crane on the wetlands since it has the right to exist;

6. Promote the conservation of Black Crowned cranes since their a possibilities of attracting tourists in our areas and
7. Increase your level of appreciation to support the life of Black Crowned crane in your area in the future.

After these all recommendation and promises, one student come to us around the gate of the school compound and asked the following question:

1. Why this Black Crowned conservation is needed?
2. What are the main advantages we are going to get if Black Crowned crane is conserved and its population is increased in our region?

I surprise the question of this students and I try to answer by taking examples like tourist attractions for our people and possibilities of ecotourism destination site. Thus, within the long time we can attract the local and international bird watcher which will generate incomes for our regions. At this stage majority of the proposed activities in this project was accomplished (i.e. outreach activities for the local community, stakeholders workshop, information dissemination for students, and data collection from the community (100 sample were taken from the total of 507 households) were completed.





Photo taken during outreach activities (by Mitiku Tezera)



Photo taken during field observation (by Dessalegn Obsi Gemed)



Interview with cattle keeper, Mr. Abdulkadir who lived for more than 40 years (by Dessalegn Obsi Gemed)



Interview with cattle keeper, Mr. Mohammed (by Dessalegn Obsi Gemed)



Interview with high school student (by Dessalegn Obsi Gameda)



Photo taken during field observation (by Dessalegn Obsi Gameda)



Photo taken during field observation (by Dessalegn Obsi Gameda)



Mr. Mitiku Tezera with Ayite elementary students after outreach activities (by Dessalegn Obsi Gameda)





Photo taken during field observation (by Dessalegn Obsi Gemeda)

Next step:

1. Community workshop
2. Conservation guidelines both in English and local language (Afan Oromo)
3. Data analysis for publication (which will be published on in per-reviewed international journals)
4. Final report to Rufford Small Grant Nature Conservation