

Final Project Evaluation Report

Your Details	
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Project Title	Awareness and perceptions of local people about wildlife hunting for bush meat and traditional medicine in Lama forest communities
Application ID	23234-2
Grant Amount	£5000
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1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
O1. Examine the level of awareness of communities in the Lama ecosystem regarding illegal hunting, legal hunting practices, and perceptions of law enforcement.				To reduce bias, interviewers avoided sampling all people congregated in one area, e.g. around shops, or people encountered close together. A minimum of 30 interviews were conducted in each village cluster.
O2. Assess the influences of socio- demographic factors on local awareness of illegal hunting and perceptions of law enforcement.				Prior to commencing each interview participants were informed about the general nature of the research. Participants were also informed that all information would remain anonymous and advised that they did not have to answer any question they did not wish to, and could withdraw at any time. The demographic section of the interview collected information on household age structure, wealth indicators, main livelihood activities, education level, and participation in village groups and number of dependents on the household.
O3. Elaborate on some of the methodological challenges of researching a sensitive issue like poaching.				Data have been collected from different stakeholders and we are drafting the methodological field guide in researching a sensitive issue like poaching in the context of Lama forest. This will be disseminated among student and forest officers, rangers.

O4. Implement some awareness activities based on the findings of our field work.				Conservation education was focused directly on those perpetrating these threats namely the hunters, farmers and youths. As so awareness activities were implemented with school kids and bush meat sellers in two villages around Lama. Using 200 posters produced on the project activities and distributed.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

During the field work in line with the objective 1 and 2, the informants in some villagers initially thought that we were an informer of Forests Department and didn't want to participate to the study. To minimise sensitivity, interviews were conducted by field assistants in the local language. Due to the lack of accurate census data for any of the villages, an opportunistic sampling technique was employed in each case, with either the village headman. It was also explained that data would be remain anonymous. A few months ago I had to undergo medical surgery twice and I have continued post-surgery treatment, including repeated hospitalisation. This has taken over 6 months for total recovery. Luckily field data were collected before the surgery and the second phase of implementing some awareness activities was done with the help of the local guide, my assistants and one master student from the Laboratory of Applied Ecology.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

1. The suggestions for alternatives to bushmeat use focused on either different ways to improve food and income security, or ways to legally obtain bushmeat. These suggestions of alternatives reflect the drivers of bushmeat use that have emerged from this research (poor food and income security, HWC and enjoyment of consumption) and indicate that villages would be receptive to projects addressing these drivers.
2. We found that 70% of respondents were not aware of the IUCN or Benin Red List conservation status of the species they traded. However, they did confess to being aware that some species such as pangolin sold are protected by law and that they were prepared to take the risk of being arrested. Also, many are likely to be illegally traded from neighbouring countries. Lack of benefits that accrued from wildlife could have further contributed to negative attitude of the local community towards wildlife. This kind of dilemma if not controlled could lead to irreversible wildlife depletion especially the vulnerable pangolin species and other wildlife species.

3. We found that the rarest species on display in the traditional medicine market were more expensive than more commonly available species. This may be an important factor in the reduced numbers of a given species as selective hunting is carried out to supply demand and make more profit. In addition, as reported by the interviewees, the rarer a species is and the more difficult to hunt, the more likely it is used as a traditional medicine ingredient. For the rarest mammal species, demand almost exceeds supply in the medicinal use purposes. Thus, the high prices and corresponding demand for some of these species increases hunting pressure in the Lama Forest, as the traders likely prefer to display high value, rare species.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

The project received support from local communities living around the reserve right away after deeply explanation of the project goal and confidence relationship establishment and as such most of the activities were carried out by local communities. Because of their active participation in the implementation of the activities, the majority of local communities have gained new various skills and knowledge ranging from project design, planning and development; project implementation; monitoring and evaluation; law enforcement; and also running and management of agri-businesses such as beekeeping and agroforestry system practices.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, there are numerous reasons to re-evaluate wildlife hunting for bush meat and traditional medicine in Benin. In doing so, account should be taken of the rarity of some species, the unnecessary suffering that hunting incurs, and the possible health risks linked to the administration of animal based remedies. The African voodoo tradition, a threat to wildlife conservation and ecosystem functioning, needs to be investigated deeply.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

The data from this research is being used by Mr Herman Tchabi, one of our master student at the Laboratory of Applied Ecology, to write his thesis on "Assessment of consumer motivations and quantities of bushmeat consumed, marketed around in the riparian villages of Lama Forest in Southern Benin". This thesis will summarised our finds and papers will be submitted on this subject in the African Zoology journal. I will also present the findings of this research at the national seminar on protected area management next year (February 2019) but several other informal talks are being given already in my institution and other institutions in Benin working on biodiversity conservation. I am organising a technical session during the International Union of Forest Research Organization (IUFRO) world congress to be held in Brazil, 1-4 October 2019 and this represents another unique opportunity to disseminate my research findings.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The RSG was used for a period of 12 months. When compared to the anticipated or actual length of the project which was planned to be 16 months, it is discovered that the project had been extended by a period of 4 months mostly due to break I made because of my medical problem. A details explanation have been provided in the section 2 of present report.

8. Budget: Provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Public awareness through media	600	600		
Awareness material	500	500		
Workshops organization:	1,060	1,060		
Local manpower for field data	1,125	1,125		
Communications	215	215		
Transportation cost to research sites	1,200	1,200		
Field-Laboratory-field	300	300		
Total	5,000	5,000		

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

As poverty is the main drivers of the illegal hunting in Lama Forest, any project tackling poverty through the introduction and promotion of viable alternative micro-enterprises such as livestock production and beekeeping, thus, fostering biodiversity conservation through non-consumptive use by forest dwellers will be well appreciated by the local population. With the help of basic equipment, materials, knowledge and skills, local people have to be supported in viable micro-enterprises from which they generate additional income and alternative sources of protein.

A key example of where the interface between people and their natural resources is particularly strong, and where management is urgently required, is the bushmeat trade. Consequently understanding exploitation, inflation and deforestation, the future holds for bushmeat hunting in Benin Forest Island, we could anticipate in the future development of the bushmeat trade, but also for designing effective management policies that incentivise desirable behaviour. We will use the case study of a bushmeat hunting system in Benin and apply scenario analysis techniques

to explore how actors in the system are likely to respond to changing incentives to participate in the trade. The scenarios could be designed to reflect hypothetical future developments in the local economy, landscape and climate, based on existing literature and personal knowledge of the study area.

Understanding the effects of hunting on mammal communities is of critical conservation relevance and may be addressed indirectly by comparing forests with similar ecological characteristics and contrasting hunting pressure, because a temporal analysis within one area is often unfeasible because of a lack of data on the pre-hunting state. One of our next project could be understanding whether and how intensive hunting altered the mammal communities of a forest reserve with low management effectiveness, in comparison to a well-protected forest area within a national park where hunting does not occur but which has comparable elevation range, forest type and rainfall patterns. We could use camera trapping to collect data on the presence of mammals. This will also help to build a local skill in biodiversity monitoring using camera trap and also to assess the impact on the management policy in protecting species from overexploitation.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, we used the Rufford Foundation logo in the posters that were distributed to hunters and bush meat sellers in two villages around Lama (see the poster on the project webpage). The Rufford Foundation therefore received the publicity that it deserved during the course of our work and many stakeholders have come to know RF because of our publicity. We also used the logo and in the training workshop with hunters, farmers and youths. Finally the Rufford Foundation will be acknowledged in any paper published from the data collected during this project.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Mr Samson Dognimon: he earned his MSc in Natural Resource Management from University of Abomey-Calavi. Samson coordinated the field work of the project, with a focus on logistics, and data collection, presentations.

Mr Galvius Degbello: he earned his MSc in Natural Resource Management from University of Abomey-Calavi. He has assist in elaborating the training awareness material.

Mr Hermann Tchabi: He has participated to the data collection at training level and he is using the data collected from this study to write his master thesis on "Assessment of consumer motivations and quantities of bushmeat consumed, marketed around in the riparian villages of Lama Forest in Southern Benin". He is expecting to finish by February 2019 and the thesis could be published on the RSG project webpage.

Mr LAMIDI (local guide): He helped to conduct the survey in local languages and as translator during the field data collection and the workshop, sensitization activities.

12. Any other comments?

The project team including local communities that have benefited from this project in one way or another would like to express their great gratitude to the RF for the financial support which had enabled the project to be implemented.