

Project Update: August 2018

The activities of the mentioned months involved conducting training on the bat counting team, counting the bats and also conducting community sensitisation about bats conservation around Musanze caves.

Training Objectives:

The primary objectives for training the bat counting team was to educate them on the counting methods of the bats so that they can be periodically perform population estimates of the bats in the Musanze caves. Participants were training on different methods of bats counting and did desktop training with presentations on different methods and then field work training in the caves. Training was a success and included community members who were literate and had passion for bats conservation.

Population Estimates of the Bats in Musanze caves

First counting trip, the team estimated about 1560 bats in Susa caves. Subsequent trips yield on average 1970 bats observed in the caves. The activity is being done every fortnight.

Method used, direct counting in different roosts and then estimated average population is done by overall summation.

The counting members are from the organisation locally initiated after the first workshop that comprises of local community members interested in bats conservation and some who are guano harvesters.

Community Sensitization on Bats Conservation around Musanze Caves

The local community was sensitised on bats conservation efforts by the field team. This was done on the end of month community day (umuganda), where the local would be gather to talk about community issues and the team leader talked to the about the important of bats conservation in the caves. Main points of discussion were importance of bats, efforts on conserving them, any challenges on bats conservation and how best to tackle them. These sensitisation meeting are organised in partnership with the local leaders.



Bats counting trainees being taught how to do population estimates.



Bats counting inside the caves.



Left: Bat counting team getting ready for another bats counting phase. Right: Another phase of bats counting.



Musanze Caves entrance and roosting site.



Part of the local community members attending one of the community sensitizations about bat conservation by the bat conservation field staff.