

## Project Update: January 2020

### Summary

This is a progress report on Exploring terrestrial molluscan biodiversity in the Atewa Range Forest Reserve: a biodiversity hotspot in Ghana in order to provide first hand data on land snail assemblages in the remaining upland-evergreen forest of Ghana which is under severe threat of degradation and also contribute to a build-up of local capacity in terrestrial mollusc research. So far, we have successfully organised a capacity building workshop, undertaken a reconnaissance survey to familiarise ourselves (project team) with the study area and have commenced fieldwork to collect data.

### Capacity Building

Ghana's 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Molluscan Diversity and Conservation was organised in conjunction with CSC – Ghana and Threatened Species Conservation Alliance (THRESCOAL) on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. The workshop was attended by 41 participants, mostly students from the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources. Personnel from the Forestry Commission, Wild Fauna Foundation, THRESCOAL and University of Energy and Natural Resources were also in attendance. Various lectures were given including an overview of molluscan biodiversity and conservation in Ghana, knowledge gaps and the steps necessary in addressing these gaps to proposal writing. These participants formed the nucleus of a younger generation that could be called upon at any time to support in fieldwork on biodiversity conservation and conservation campaigns.

The lectures were focused on giving an opportunity to participants to appreciate the magnitude of conservation work which must be done on molluscs in Ghana and the need to carry out ecological projects to provide adequate data to drive conservation projects on the species groups. Hopefully, they will utilise their newly gained fundraising skills to think up and write projects which will have positive impacts on mollusc research and conservation in Ghana



Figure 1: Executive Director of CFC, Ghana having a chat with the a section of the participants (left); Lead researcher making a presentation on the overview of terrestrial snails' research in Ghana (right).



Figure 2: Executive director (left) and Deputy director (right) of THRESCOAL giving a talk on proposal writing for research and academics and potential sources of funding for research.



Figure 3: Group photo of participants attending the first molluscan capacity building workshop.





Figure 4: Some participants searching for landsnails in the forest (left); First live snail (*Gonaxis* sp.) found by one of the participants (right).

### Reconnaissance survey

We undertook a 5-day survey in the study area to undertake various administrative protocols (permit acquisition from the Forest Service Division of the Forestry Commission of Ghana), acquaint ourselves with the terrain of the area and to also test our field data collection protocols.



Figure 5: one of the signposts around the study area (left) along one of the cleared tracks for the proposed bauxite exploration (right)



Figure 6: Lead investigator beating understorey vegetation for arboreal snail species (left); *Gymnariom* species collected from the vegetation (right).