

Project Update: September 2021

Community engagement (January 2021)

In early January 2021 we formally encountered local administration (dean officer, mayor), parks and traditional authorities (conservators, fon, chief) of study sites (north Cameroon) in order to let them know briefly about the project and ensure their participation and facilitation during project implementation. They responded positively to project and provided facilitations measures for socioeconomic and vulture survey.

Socio economic survey

From mid-January to April 2021 we completed questionnaire surveys with interviews and focus groups discussion in 20 Communities (villages) living around the hunting zones of Benoue and BoubaNjida National parks to assess perceptions and attitudes of locals towards vultures species in area (January and April 2021).

During this phase of our study, we focused on understanding perceptions and attitudes of local communities towards vultures, identify and assess the main factors threatening vulture survival and conservation in the area. Semi-structured questionnaires were designed to capture demographics, socio-economics, the perceived value of vultures, feeding and roosting hotspots, and prevalence of vulture poisoning and persecution, and also local conservation measures proposed.

So far, we have met with 215 people in 20 villages of Mayo Rey Division (Tchollire, Madingring and Rey Bouba sub divisions)





Irene Kenfack during questionnaire surveys (Interview and focus group discussions)

Vulture Surveys:

Dry season - First session From the end of January to end of March 2021 vulture surveys were done for the dry season. Data were collected by direct counts of birds on vantage points and by road survey transect. Observations were made between 7 am and 7 pm. Vultures hotspots identified by locals during the questionnaires were visited in early morning and observations were made. During counts vulture species were identified, group size and the number of nests recorded when seeing. In addition, information on habitat characteristics and potential conflict between existing human activities and vultures were also recorded at each point. Road survey transects were done along the roadside in 12 hunting zones (20 villages) around Benoue and Bouba Njida National Parks were associated to hotspot counts to assess vultures. Road transects were at speeds of 20-30 km h⁻¹, and we stopped when seeing a vultures species to record data at point.

Rainy season - Second session

From July to August 2021 we visited the same hotspots and road transects surveyed during the first session (dry season). Unfortunately some count points were not reachable due to flooding in four villages.

Only critically endangered white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*) were recorded in study sites during survey, but two hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*) were recorded in Benoue division far away from study sites.



Irene [unclear] ck

