

Project Update: May 2021

Summary

Poor management and protection of Mount Rungwe forests led to heavy fragmentation and loss of biodiversity in the past years. Severe damage of the mountain due to unmanaged resource extraction activities conducted by community members such as change in land use for agriculture, charcoal burning, hunting and logging has threatened the area despite that it is a home of almost 93% of the Kipunji population (Davenport et al., 2005, 2006). To ensure conservation and secure Kipunji population, the forest was upgraded as nature forest reserve in 2009 (Bracebridge et al., 2011). From April – May 2021, household survey interviews around selected villages bordering Mount Rungwe nature forest reserve were conducted in order to assess community awareness on the existence of Kipunji and conservation of Mount Rungwe nature forest reserve.

To assess community awareness on conservation of kipunji

A reconnaissance survey was conducted in the villages bordering Mount Rungwe Nature Forest reserve. Semi-structured questionnaires composed of both open-ended and closed questions were administered to collect information. Five villages (Isongole, Ndaga, Kibisi, Syukula and Ilolo) were selected for household interviews. Numbers of households to sample was determined following Badjie et al. (2019) protocol.

To ensure a wide range of coverage and relative independence, each interviewee included in the study was to be a resident of the area for at least 10 years and their houses were at least 100 m away from each other. A total of 116 households were included in this survey. To gather more information, key informant interviews with forest officers, tourism officers, VEO, as well as through participatory field observation was also conducted. The interview was escorted with a representative person from village office in each of the village that was surveyed. A respondent was interviewed only after verbal agreement was taken and once, they agreed to share the details. Local translators were employed in cases where the interviewee did not understand Swahili.

Challenges

- Excessive rains.
- Language barrier.
- Unwillingness of some of the interviewee to provide information.

Current step

- Data analysis and initial drafting of finding.

Next step

- Result dissemination and community awareness creation.
- Manuscript preparation.





Plate 1: Household interview activity at selected villages around Mount Rungwe nature forest reserve. ©Catherine Boaz, Goodluck Jonas, Scholastica Mbinile





Plate 2: Observed posters and boards that are placed on different places as one of the means the authority in charge of conservation uses to create awareness among community members around Mount Rungwe nature forest reserve. ©Scholastica Mbinile, Warda Kanagwa.



Plate 3: Services that community benefits from Mount Rungwe nature forest reserve; Left: Tukuyu water spring (A water industry that benefits water from the mountain) and Right: collected firewood that most of community members uses as a source of fuel. ©Scholastica Mbinile

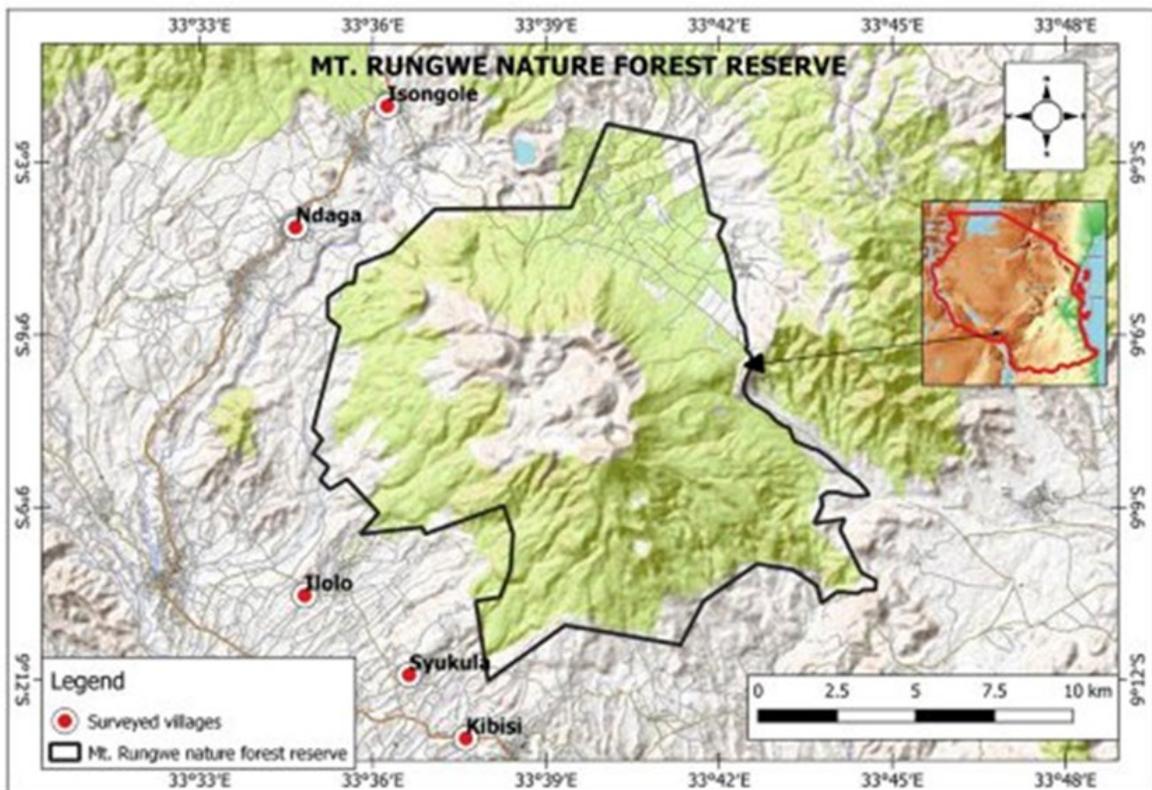


Figure 1. A Map showing the five surveyed villages for household interview around Mount Rungwe nature forest reserve.