

## Final Evaluation Report

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Your Details	
<b>Full Name</b>	Samuel Njuki Mahiga
<b>Project Title</b>	Seasonal dynamics in feeding and health indicators for the mountain bongo ( <i>Tragelaphus eurycerus</i> spp. <i>isaaci</i> ) at Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy.
<b>Application ID</b>	38463-1
<b>Date of this Report</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2024

**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
To understand the foraging ecology across age-sex classes and season of Mountain Bongo				6061 focal animal counts have been successfully conducted to date. The project has documented and developed a comprehensive mountain bongo browse checklist and food preferences.
To determine Mountain Bongo gastrointestinal parasite diversity and abundance across populations age-class, sex and season				A total of 1652 faecal samples were collected and analysed. Strongyles and coccidia eggs have been identified in the samples collected. A comprehensive list has been shared to MKWC management.
To build the capacity of local stakeholders in Mountain Bongo feeding ecology				The project trained seven young wildlife conservation graduates in in mountain bongo monitoring, plant identification, sample collection, plant pressing, faecal sample egg per gram lab analysis and identification of parasite eggs

**2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

- a) The project has documented and developed a comprehensive mountain bongo browse checklist and food preferences. This information will guide the planned mountain bongo reintroduction programmes, especially in selecting suitable release sites in Kenya. The Research document over eight plant species browsed by mountain bongo.
  
- b) The project trained seven young wildlife conservation graduates in mountain bongo monitoring, plant identification, sample collection, plant pressing, faecal sample egg per gram lab analysis and identification of parasite eggs. Five of the trainees have since been employed by Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy as mountain bongo research assistants.



Pressed mountain Bongo browses plant species display during Mountain Bongo feeding ecology workshop at Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy.



Figure 1: Data collection.



**Figure 2: Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy staff training on Mountain Bongo preferred plant species.**



**Figure 3: Samuel Njuki during field work.**

- c) The project documented and shared a comprehensive list of endoparasite affecting mountain bongo at Mount Kenya Wildlife conservancy. This information will aid in management of this critically endangered species.
- d) Twenty bongo surveillance project rangers were trained in mountain bongo ecology. Data from the study has enabled keepers to be able to correctly identify and harvest edible and nutritious plant species for sick bongos and bongo in the animal orphanage.



**Figure 4: MKWC Wildlife officer during faecal sample preparation training.**

- e) Mount Kenya Wildlife conservancy animal keepers and bongo surveillance project teams were trained in mountain bongo faecal collection and analysis, preferred browse plant species.



**Figure 5: Mountain Bongo at Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy. © Owen Evince.**

**3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.**

The project team had not foreseen effects of unstable economy on project cost, this led to a sharp increase of project consumable and equipment. We tackled the differences by negotiating discounts and topping up the differences from the project team.

**4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.**

- a) During the project cycle seven local wildlife conservation students were engaged as research assistants where they were trained, and later employed by Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy as research assistants.
- b) Local schools were given conservation talks, and field visit by the research team.



**Figure 6: Research team.**

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

We plan to continue with the work. The work will start once the mountain bongo population start to use the entire Mawingu Mountain Bongo Sanctuary. Currently they are only using one partition for easier monitoring. The sanctuary is partitioned into four bomas.

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

The browse check list, endoparasite profile has been presented and shared to managers and practitioners involved with the long-term population recovery and conservation efforts of mountain bongo.

A research publication and thesis will also be published.

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

With the planned mountain Bongo reintroduction programmes in Ragati forest and Meru bongo and rhino sanctuary, there is need to carry out site survey to determine availability and density of preferred mount bongo browse species and to survey endoparasite loads in existing bovinds.

**8. 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?**

Rufford Foundation logo was used in all publication materials including presentations and reports. The logo will also be used in thesis and research publications.



**9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.**

**Samuel Njuki** – Principal investigator of the study.

**Peter Njagi** – Project research methodology advisor.

**Humphery Kinyua** – Community member and field assistant.

**Eunice Wangu Gikonyo** - Community member and field assistant.

**Andrew Mulani** - team member and involved in data collection and data entry.

**Morphine Athiambo** - Research Assistant Involved in data collection.

**Damaris Ngina** - Research Assistant involved in lab work and data collection.

**10. Any other comments?**

We thank The Rufford Foundation for funding all research costs. The work forms and important foundation in mountain bongo population recovery efforts.