

## Project Update: October 2023

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The rainy season sampling of arachnids from Ghana was initially scheduled for June 2023. However, due to mining of the restored forest in Terchire, an alternative restored area needed to be chosen to maintain the study's objectives. After concluding on the restored area managed by Form Ghana on the Tain II Forest reserve that had been formerly logged and replanted and a nearby degraded area after logging, permits were obtained, and sampling began on 5 August 2023. Due to concerns about the dangers of using insecticides in areas intended for conservation, the fogging method was also replaced. Pitfall traps, Beating, and visual searches were used to sample ground-dwelling and higher strata arachnids.



**Figure 1:** Sampling Techniques applied; A: Pitfall trap, B: Beating, C: Visual Search

### 2. TRAINING OF STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY INDUCTION

From the 1-5 August 2023, three University of Energy and Natural Resources Sunyani Ghana students were recruited and trained in sampling techniques, sorting and identifying arachnids. On the first day of sampling from each forest reserve, 2 hours were dedicated to meeting the community members to inform them of the relevance of the study, show them some spiders and get volunteers from the community to serve as local guides.



**Figure 2:** Training students on Sampling Techniques, Sorting and identification of

arachnids.



**Figure 3:** Meeting with community members to inform them of the relevance of the study.

### **3. ARACHNID SAMPLING**

Arachnids were sampled from the Tain II Forest Reserve, Asukese Forest Reserve, Bosomkese Forest Reserve and a degraded area close to the Tain II Forest Reserve. Eight plots, each 20 x 20 m, were established in all sampling locations. Three pitfall traps were set on each plot with 100% ethylene glycol as a preservative. Pitfall traps were emptied every 7 days for 4 weeks, and arachnids were sorted from insects and stored in 95% ethanol. Beating of shrubs and tree branches at basal height was done in the 1st and 3rd weeks. Visual search was also done on the 2nd and 4th weeks, and samples were immediately stored in 95% ethanol.

### **4. CONFERENCE PRESENTATION**

Upon returning from the field sampling, I was privileged to present a poster at the 23rd GfO Conference in Leipzig from the 12-16 September 2023, acknowledging The Rufford Foundation's support in my research.