

Progress Report

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*Implementation of Conservation Strategies for the endemic and critically endangered freshwater crab, *Afrithelphusa afzelii* from Sierra Leone. Implication for conservation.*

By

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Hassan Sesay during field work

The aim of this project is to collect information on the abundance, distribution, habitat preference and threats of the freshwater crab (*Afrithelphusa afzelii*). This information will form the basis of a species Action Plan for its long-term conservation and protection. Such a plan will also include educational messaging targeted at the local population and governments level on the benefits and importance of protecting rare species and the habitats upon which they depend.

So far, fieldworks were conducted in Moyamba District and its surrounding areas that include Mano ecological forest (GPS: lat. 8.032049N long. -12.078165W), the National Park of Outamba (GPS: lat. 09°39'19.87N. long:-12°11'02.06 W) and Gola (GPS: lat. 07°41'39.53 N. long:-10°57'29.68 W.). As a result, we recorded serious environmental degradation and poor water quality due to pollution from human activities at the habitat of *Afrithelphusa afzelii*. Our educational sessions were

ongoing basis (during the fieldworks) with presentation sessions that were helped to bring local people to adapt practice that are less damaging on crab sensitive habitats (Fig.4). During our biotic surveys on behalf of conservation action, we recorded the lost species *Afrithelphusa gerhildae* Bott, 1969 at National Park of Outamba, undescribed species of freshwater crab genera *Liberonautes* at National Park of Gola and *Afrithelphusa* at Mano ecological forest. The identification of these species were approved by Dr. Pierre A. Mvogo Ndongo (Cameroon) and Prof. Neil Cumberlidge (USA). However, habitats of these species are also under serious environmental degradation and poor water quality due to pollution from human activities and need further conservation action to save them from extinction.

Full detail data for this conservation project is provided in the following manuscript in preparation. This entitled: **New collection of freshwater crabs from Sierra Leone (Crustacea: Decapoda): implication for conservation.**



Fig.1. Potential new species of *Afrithelphusa* from Mano



Fig.2. *Afrithelphusa gerhildae* Bott 1969 from Outamba



Fig.3. Potential new species of the genus *Liberonautes* from Gola



Fig. 4. Sensitization Programs from Moyamba