

Project Update: February 2012

1.0 Introduction

Commercial drivers in Ghana contribute to unsustainable exploitation of forest resources by transporting them and causing road kills of wildlife. This project seeks to improve conservation awareness among the drivers in order to help reduce the impact of their activities on natural resources. The project leader is Eric Cudjoe and he is implementing this project with technical support from Ghana Wildlife Society, a national conservation NGO in Ghana. This is a progress report that presents the initial project activities undertaken since in February to March 2012.



Eric interviewing a bushmeat seller on a commercial drivers' route during the scoping activity

2.0 Project activities undertaken

Activities undertaken so far include scoping the routes of commercial drivers, initial consultations for project planning, and design of questionnaire for collecting baseline data.

2.1 Scoping the routes of commercial drivers

I scoped the routes of inter-city commercial drivers in Accra, Cape Coast, Kumasi, and Takoradi, in order to gather initial information on the major sources of bushmeat to and from these cities. This scoping exercise enabled me to decide on the main lorry stations to focus the project on. I selected the lorry stations in Mankesim in the Central Region and Ejura in the Ashanti Region as the focal areas of the project. The reasons for selecting the two stations included the following:

- a. Mankesim is the main departure station for bushmeat from the Central Region to Accra, the capital of Ghana. It is on the Takoradi-Accra route. It is the main market surrounded by many villages where bushmeat is obtained from the area.
- b. Ejura is one of the main departure stations for bushmeat to Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana. Based on this scoping, a draft project plan was developed.

2.2 Initial project planning consultations

These initial consultations involved contacting and visiting the commercial drivers in the two sites selected. During these consultations, I informed them about the project, discussed the draft project plan and schedule.

2.3 Design of questionnaire for collecting baseline data

As part of project planning and implementation, an initial assessment of conservation awareness among drivers is necessary. A questionnaire has therefore been developed for this pretest assessment. The questionnaire is below. Information gathered during this initial assessment will also be used to develop educational messages on the major issues and benefits of nature conservation in the focal areas and in Ghana as a whole. These messages will be used to develop messages for t-shirts.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BASELINE & POST-COMPLETION ASSESSMENTS

This questionnaire collects information on conservation awareness among inter-city commercial drivers, as part of a project aimed at increasing conservation awareness among these drivers in Ghana. Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge.

General Information

Date: _____ City: _____ Drivers Union/Station: _____

Gender: M / F Age: _____ Main driving route: _____ to _____

General conservation knowledge

1. Please list the names of any useful wild plants and animals you know in Ghana.

Plants: _____

Animals: _____

2. What benefits do wild plants and animals provide? _____

Knowledge of conservation laws in Ghana

3. Do you know of any laws governing natural resources management in Ghana? Yes / No.

Please list them: _____

4. Do you know about the close season of hunting in Ghana? Yes/No. If yes, what is the period?

Conservation action

5. Please state the last time you killed a wild animal with your vehicle. _____

6. When driving, do you make any special effort not to kill any wild animal? Yes / No

List animals or plants part that are usually transported from this station _____

7. Have you ever spoken to any person about the need to protect natural resources? Yes / No

General conservation attitudes: Please state how you agree or disagree with the following:

SA=Strongly agree, MA=Mildly agree, U=Unsure, MD=Mildly disagree, SD=Strongly disagree.

8. It is important to conserve natural resources so they can always be available into the future.____

9. Wild plants and animals will always be available no matter how much they are exploited.____

10. The earth is like a car or a room with limited room and resources._____

11. Humans can continue degrading nature because nature repairs itself quickly._____

12. Humans need to conserve natural resources for their own survival._____

13. Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature, so they can do whatever they like with it.