

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh
Project title	Status Survey to Determine the Population Viability of the Nigerian-Cameroon Chimpanzee in the Nigerian Lowland Rainforests of South-Western Nigeria.
RSG reference	12281-1
Reporting period	October 2012 – May 2013
Amount of grant	£6,000
Your email address	r.ashegbofe@gmail.com
Date of this report	31 st May 2013

1. Please 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 gather relevant information on the species population status.			√	
To contribute faecal samples to ongoing genetic studies that seek to determine its evolutionary linkage.	√			Surveys and efforts are still ongoing to collect available genetic samples.
To map the occurrence, range and distribution of chimpanzee within each site.			√	
To determine the type, distribution and intensity of human activities directly affecting chimpanzee and their habitat.			√	
To examine management issues in establishing protected areas in the region and its correlation to other threat factors.			√	
To make management recommendations and priorities for action, including delineating key hotspots for conservation.			√	

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

One of the major difficulties encountered by the project team is the activities of armed gangs (some with sophisticated weapons) cultivating Indian hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) plantations within the forest reserves. The extent of these operations and its impact only became known upon commencement of the field surveys. Since our survey protocol was designed to be objective following a predetermined bearing on an approximate straight-line direction, it then became inevitable to encounter these gangs in operation. After one particular near-death encounter with stern warning from the gang, we decided it was a huge risk to life to continue with this survey technique. The survey methodology was restricted to using local hunters to direct the team to areas where chimpanzees have been previously observed (though also part of the initial plan).

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- I. One of the most significant outcomes of our project is the contribution of critical information and knowledge on the status of chimpanzee populations in the study sites. Prior to our study, very little is known about the distribution or approximate numbers of chimpanzees that may be present in these areas identified in the 2011 Regional Action Plan as Exceptional and Important priority sites for chimpanzee conservation. The results of our survey were able to depict where the great apes' range within these forest patches

including possible areas of previous occupation/re-colonization. This will ensure that the species are adequately monitored from hence forth.

- II. Similarly, the project was able to identify threats and management issues hindering conservation efforts such that the official survey report showed areas where human activities overlaps areas of chimpanzee occurrence and subsequently emphasized the establishment of a conservation management landscape of about 438.7km² in the Idanre forest cluster (180km² in Akure-Ofosu forest reserve, 198.4km² in Idanre forest reserve and 60.3km² as a community conservation area(CCA)) to ensure habitat corridor and connect isolated populations.
- III. Another major outcome of the project is the management recommendations highlighted in the survey report and presented to the State Governments in charge of managing these forest sites. One significant result that emanated from these recommendations is the reaction from the Ondo State Government taking immediate action against all forms of forest encroachment which resulted in the arrest and persecution of hundreds of perpetrators of illegal activities in the forests.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

Local communities were duly involved in the project. Firstly, they had to be consulted prior to field work so as garner support and cooperation for the project. Secondly, local hunters were recruited and given some form of training on survey methodologies and in the use of some survey equipment during their involvement in the field work especially as they acted as guide to areas where they frequently observe chimpanzees. Thirdly, the discussions that ensued between the project team and major local groups particularly with the local chieftain prior to field work was structured as a form of awareness campaign to increase the knowledge and information the people already have about chimpanzee, also to educate them on the importance of conserving such large mammal in their forests.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Absolutely! The status of chimpanzees and other wildlife species is at a precarious level such that if no remedial action is undertaken within the next year, it is likely that the populations of this great ape in south-western Nigeria may not recover.

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

Articles and scientific write-ups are currently being prepared and some are under review for publications in popular tabloids, environmental news blogs and international journals. Raising significant level of awareness is one of the continuation agenda of this project and I hope to use available mediums to share results with stakeholders and the general public especially government and resource users including the scientific community such as the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group of which I am a member.

7. Timescale: Over what period was The Rufford Foundation grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

Actual Period Grant was Used = October 2012 – April 2013

Anticipated Period = October 2012 – May 2013

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Equipment	1695	1254	441	Most equipment was found locally saving costs from international shipping charges.
Camping and Field Supplies	400	1004	604	Food costs for team were not properly budgeted. Actual cost reached £5 per day/person for 83 field days.
Transportation/Logistics	700	1112	412	Transportation costs increased significantly due to the prevalent fuel scarcity across the nation leading to high prices of fuel sometimes sold at almost twice the original price. In addition, lodging costs was also initially under-budgeted
Stipends and Compensations	2850	2150	700	-
Administrative Costs	355	480	125	-
Total	6000	6000	2282	

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

It is very important that at this stage that the relevant stakeholders consider demarcating and implementing a conservation area for the remnant populations of chimpanzees and other critical wildlife species within the forest reserves. In addition, connecting these isolated populations is imperative and achievable. Chimpanzees and other large mammals will continue to come into conflict with humans unless an adequate area – of minimal human disturbance - is demarcated for their optimal survival. Our survey has initiated the first steps and has also taken extra efforts to determine and delineate these core areas that can serve as conservation areas and habitat corridors.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, the Rufford Foundation Logo was featured prominently in the final report and on the project's website as a major funder and partner of the project. The RSGF support is also mentioned in proposals developed to other funding organizations as one of the first supporters of the project.

11. Any other comments?

I wish to sincerely appreciate and acknowledge the RSGF for the funding support. I believe this support is significant to any future achievement that will be recorded by the project.