

Project Update: May 2014

Report on stakeholder workshops on conservation of bats and their ecological habitats in Musanze from 27th to 28th May 2014

In line with promoting the bats and their ecological habitats conservation efforts in Musanze caves, two workshops were organised for all the stakeholders. Stakeholders were: Rwanda Development Board/tourism and conservation staff, Volcanoes National Park tourism department staff, Musanze cave tourist guides, local community conservation association representatives and local leader representative (Musanze district). The workshop was organised for 14 people and 17 participants in Buhanga, in Musanze District on the 27th and 28th May 2014.

After the topic discussions, there were field site visits to the tourism caves in particular to see the formation changes that have been done on the caves to facilitate tourism and discuss the effects on the bats populations and even suggestions on safety precaution of the bats and humans.

The topics for discussions were:

- **Rufford support introduction and bat biology**
Rufford Foundation background, support for the bat conservation in Musanze ecological caves efforts. Bats evolution, migration characteristics, feeding and roosting colony, reproduction, echolocation, population and community ecology, hibernation, flight and biogeography.
- **Importance of bats to environment and human and how to do conservation efforts**
Ecological services played by bats to human, economical services and health services. Ways of conservation of bats.
- **Bats diseases and responsible tourism**
Disease of bats that can affect man. Diseases propagated by humans that affect bats. Good cave tourism practices/activities, dos and don'ts.
- **Rwanda bat species inventory report** – with more emphasis on the species seen in Musanze caves.

Bat species report including pictures and species names and location/characteristics. Dr. Julius was the main discussant and was assisted by Albert Kayitare of Rwanda Development Board/Tourism and Conservation Department. Anaclet Rudahera head of Tourism Department of Volcanoes National Park did the opening remarks.

Major outcomes included an enthusiastic team of conservationists ready to champion bat conservation efforts. All the participants were happy to have information on bats (it was their first time) and to hear someone talking about bats importance. The local community association requested more engagement in the bat conservation efforts support in the

Musanze caves which will be highly considered by the coordinator in soon mobilisation efforts for the bats and their ecological habitats conservation.



