

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	Tajudeen Amusa
Project title	Spatial distribution and conservation of forest elephants (<i>Loxodonta cyclotis</i>) in Southwestern Nigeria
RSG reference	17265-B
Reporting period	April 2015-March 2016
Amount of grant	£9950
Your email address	teejayui@gmail.com
Date of this report	April, 2016

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
1. Identify key elephant habitats within the project area			√	Key elephant habitats were identified based on interviews, village discussions and direct field observations. The direct observation focused on elephant dung piles, feeding signs, and footprints impression in and around the project sites.
2. Improve the practical capacity of forest guards and park rangers in the area in terms of elephant survey and monitoring			√	The project team organised capacity building programme on systematic elephant survey, monitoring and reporting for conservation objectives for recruited survey corps as well as park rangers using power point presentations and hands-on demonstration.
3. Stimulate environmental sensitivity and awareness among local communities towards elephant conservation			√	Sensitisation and planning meetings were held with selected communities to enlist their supports and further enlightened them on the need for the protection of elephants and other wildlife species in their areas.
4. Determine the population status and distribution of elephants in the project area			√	A dry and wet season survey was undertaken using two methods: The Line Transect Survey Method (Barnes and Jensen, 1987) and the Short-cut or Reconnaissance ("recce") Method (Barnes, 1988). The selection of transect lines followed a systematic-random approach. There were two important aspects to data collection: One was the finding and recording of dung piles along the transect; the other was the regular checking of a number of dung piles to measure decay rate. As each pile along the transect is found, its state of decay was categorised according to the MIKE 'S System' for dung-pile classification (Hedges and Lawson, 2006). The data collection protocol also involved recording habitat-related data such as land cover, land use information and threats at 200 m intervals and at a radius of 25 m in every direction from the survey point. Direct observations of elephants (using trail

				camera) and signs such as footprints, dung, trails and feeding evidence were recorded and subsequently localised along the transects/survey routes. Sightings and signs of human activities and of other large mammals were also noted. The survey also relies on a series of formal and informal interviews with local resource users, researchers in the area as well as park staff.
5. Prepare a comprehensive survey document and recommendations for conservation and management of forest elephants in southwestern Nigeria			√	A number of recommendations stemming from the outcome of the work are being made to relevant conservation authorities in the project area.

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

The attitude of local communities in the Omo forest complex axis of the project area and some parts of Okomu National Park were found to be rather off-putting. A number of the locals would not lend their support especially as it relates to questionnaire administration. This was precipitated on suspicion that the project was to garner information about their land-use activities within the forest patches and relate same to government authorities who may then plan to raid or evacuate them. We assure the locals that this suspicion was grossly unfounded and that we see them as partner in conservation activities. More importantly, we worked with the community leaders and recruited survey corps from the communities as part of strategies to circumvent this feeling.

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

- (i) The contribution of current information on the status of elephant populations in the study sites is one of the most important outcomes of the project. Hitherto, very little was known about the population status and spatial distribution of elephants in southwestern Nigeria. The results of our survey describe where the elephants range within the forest patches. This will ensure that the species are adequately monitored henceforth.
- (ii) The project also identifies threats and management issues militating against elephant conservation efforts in the study area. Anthropogenic activities, particularly farming and hunting have led to habitat fragmentation and direct assault on elephants. We identify the need to carry out a ground survey and re-demarcate the core elephant habitats within the project area. Other management recommendations are being highlighted in the survey report to be presented to the management authorities of the forest sites.
- (iii) One more outstanding outcome of the project is the improvement in practical capacity of forest guards and park rangers in the area in terms of elephant survey and monitoring. Management

authorities and park rangers of Okomu National Park were very much excited at the use of trail camera in elephant survey in the area.

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

Local communities played very valuable roles in the execution of the project. They were also part of the targeted intervention of the project. Survey corps were recruited from the communities, especially during the socio-economic studies aimed at eliciting the perception and attitudes of the locals towards elephant conservation in the area. These survey corps received simple training and participated actively in the project delivery. Field survey supplies and stipends, including project t-shirt with the Rufford Small Grants Foundation logo were given to the corps as a form of motivating them.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes! With the heavy pressure on the rainforest habitats, where they live, forest elephants are facing severe threats from habitat loss and conflicts with human communities. There is the need to promote public understanding of the precarious situation of the remaining forest elephants in southwestern Nigeria and to seek further policy support for their protection in designated protected areas.

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

Raising significant level of awareness is one of the aims of this project. Therefore, the results will be shared with stakeholders and the general public especially government and resource users including the scientific community. The detailed reports of the project are already being prepared for the Nigerian National Park Service, and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation. Articles and scientific write-ups from the work will also be published in popular tabloids, environmental news blogs and international journals with full acknowledgement of the Rufford Small Grants Foundation. The results, findings and outcomes of the work will also be handy in both teaching and research.

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

The RSG was used throughout the project duration, 12 months. The project timescale compared favourably to anticipated schedule.

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
Materials and equipment for survey	4400	4550	-150	Most survey equipment were procured offshore thereby incurring more costs from international shipping charges

Camping and field supplies including stipends/subsistence and refreshment	2000	2200	-200	More costs were incurred giving the large number of sites to be covered and the large size of the project team members
Training aid and incentives	1700	1800	-100	More costs were also incurred owing to the large size of the project team members
Local transportation	1000	1300	-300	Fuel scarcity across the nation led to high prices of fuel sometimes sold at almost thrice the original price
Project administration (Co-ordination and reporting)	850	750	+100	Costs were saved from project administration and reporting
Total	9950	10600	-650	

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

It is very important for us to step up sensitivity and awareness on elephant conservation in communities within the project area, particularly in the Omo Forest Reserve axis. There is an emerging relationship in people's attitudes towards elephant conservation and land use for farming, especially in core elephant habitats. It is also very important at this stage that the relevant stakeholders consider demarcating and implementing a conservation area for the remaining populations of elephants and other critical wildlife species within the forest reserves in south western Nigeria. Establishing a biodiversity monitoring centre, setting up Rangers squad, and provision of equipment and vehicle for patrol are critical activities for the protection of large mammals such as elephants in the project area.

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?

The RSGF logo was used in questionnaire design, posters and project t-shirts given as incentive to volunteers and as souvenir for publicity of the project.

11. Any other comments?

We remain grateful to the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for supporting this project. Experiences from this project have been very rewarding. It has helped built an improved relationship between some of the protected elephant ranges and the people. It has equally helped in charting a new course for the protection of the Nigerian elephant populations.

Project Photographs

Project planning and discussion of protocols



Sensitization and planning meetings with community stakeholders





Conservation education outreach





Questionnaire administration for gathering socio-economic data



Line transect survey at project sites



Elephant dung piles along transect lines at survey sites



Dung piles collection for measuring of decay rate at survey sites

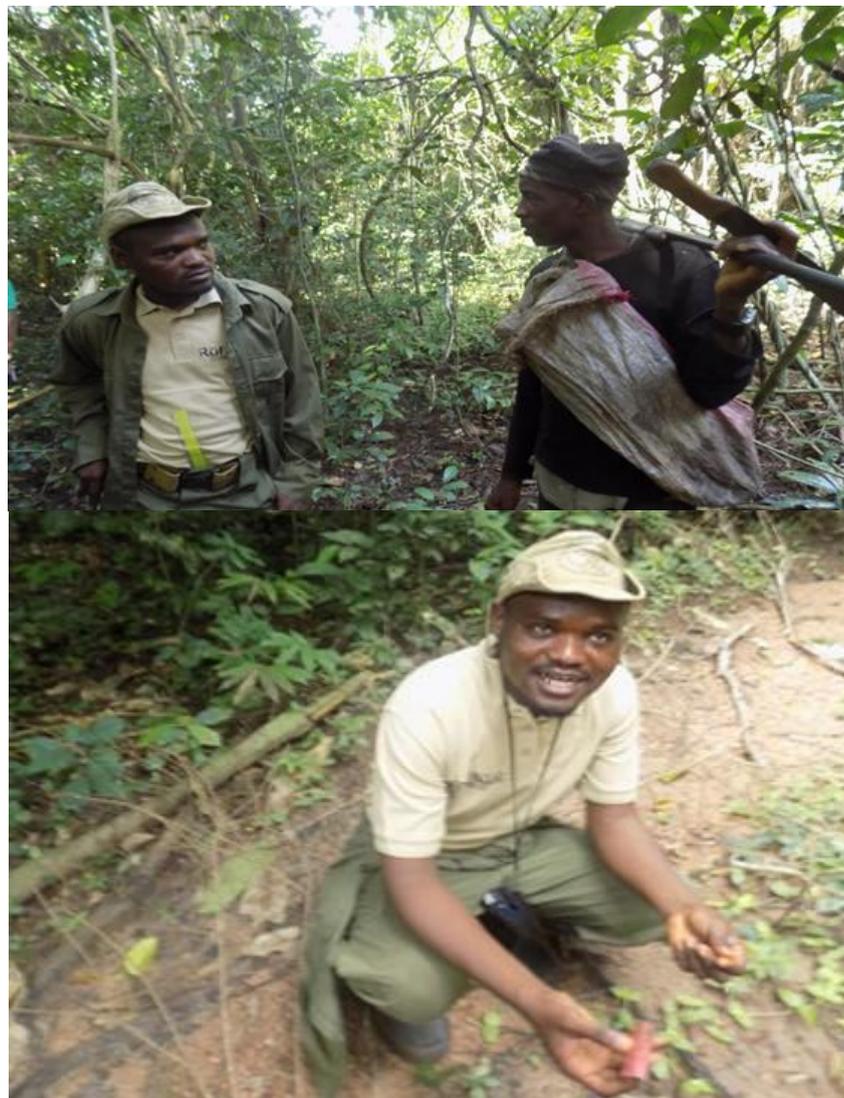


Mounting of camera trap along elephant routes at survey sites





Elephant habitat-related factors including land use information and threats at survey



Some members of elephant survey team and park staff involved in data collection



Donation of Bushnell trail camera at Okomu National Park

