

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	Fidelis Akunke Atuo
Project title	Mitigating trade on avian derivatives in South-east Nigeria
RSG reference	19177-2
Reporting period	January 2016 – January 2017
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	fidelis.atuo@okstate.edu
Date of this report	March 21 st 2017

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
<p>Identify the cultural and economic drivers of trade on wildlife derivatives focusing on trade in birds body parts.</p>				<p>We carried out questionnaire surveys in 27 communities living in proximity to the three main protected areas in Cross River State (i.e. Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, Mbe Mountains Community Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Cross River National Park). Surveyed villages were selected <i>a priori</i> by randomly drawing the required number of villages without replacement from a pool of all the villages surrounding each protected area. In each of the selected community, we obtained permission to carry out our study from the community chief. We interviewed between 10 -15 men across different age classes as to collect information. Using a semi-structured questionnaire with open and closed questions, we obtained information related to their socio-economic status, cultural believes, and their propensity to harvest and sell wildlife derivatives in local trade. Overall, we interviewed 221 men. Trade on avian body parts was driven primarily by monetary gains associated with the trade. 78% of all respondents indicated that they would not collect wildlife body parts given better livelihood options. The number of wildlife derivatives sold increased with household size. Also, respondents making between <15000 Naira (\$37 US) a month were highly (98%) like to harvest and sell wildlife derivatives. The frequency of trade however appeared to have decreased compared to our previous survey in 2014.</p>

<p>Identify determinants of compliance with wildlife protection laws among indigenous people living in proximity to protected areas in the south-eastern Nigeria.</p>			<p>We obtained information on factors that will deter respondents from illegal collection of wildlife body parts. 56% of respondents have participated in the trade on wildlife body parts in the last 3 years suggested that offenders should pay fine to the government, 26% said offenders should be punished by their community, 18% will not respond, while 0.5% think offenders should not be punished at all. It is likely that a greater number of respondents advocating for government punishment are doing so knowing that enforcement of government laws have been weak. They are more afraid of community regulations since they can hardly escape them. This was confirmed by 85% of respondents not involved in the trade who think community level sanctions will be most effect in curbing trade.</p>
<p>Community based conservation awareness campaigns aimed at changing local attitude towards vulture persecution in their localities.</p>		<p>80 %</p>	<p>Our conservation awareness campaign activities were completed through community meetings, and television talk shows. We held meetings with community leaders in all 27 communities that we visited. During meetings, community leaders were exposed to the important ecological role that birds play and the danger of losing species. We specifically discussed the consequences of trade on avian body parts on declining population of avian species. Also, we completed two television talk shows focussed on the effects of illegal harvesting of wildlife derivatives on endangered species like the hooded vulture. One of the talk shows can be access on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8VrNuu_hr4.</p>

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

Community meetings with village leaders were generally cordial. Nonetheless, we received hostile treatments in one community due to our inability to meet their demand of hiring not less than five of their sons as field technicians. This was not well received and we were barred from completing surveys in that village. Several other communities also had high expectations in terms of social and economic benefits. Some communities expected us to provide monetary rewards or livelihood options as an alternative to poaching. Community meetings with chiefs and other community leaders were used as an avenue to clarify such misunderstandings.

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

- A practice where selected species are constantly hunted and sold in traditional medicine markets was recently identified as a major driver of population decline in the hooded vulture and other raptor species in Africa. Our study provided new and important insights into the factors that are driving this practice in a tropical rainforest region. We identified household size and economic status of people living in proximity to protected areas in southeast Nigeria as major drivers of illegal harvesting of wildlife derivatives. For example, 78% of all respondents indicated that they would not collect wildlife body parts given better livelihood options. Generally, the number of wildlife derivatives sold increased with household size. Household size range from 2–22 individuals. Families with more than 11 members were 97% more likely to harvest and sell wildlife body parts. Average household income was 17,239 Naira (\$43 USD) per month. Respondents making between <15000 Naira (\$37 USD) a month were highly (98%) like to harvest and sell wildlife derivatives. Our project has therefore contributed to a topical conservation priority in the West African region by providing up-to-date information that can be incorporated into a regional action plan to save species like the critically endangered hooded vulture.
- The Cross River region in southeast Nigeria has three major protected areas (Cross River National Park, Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Mbe Mountain Community Wildlife Sanctuary) which together protects ~4200 km² of montane tropical rainforest in Nigeria. Despite their protection status, these forest areas are undergoing rapid degradation due to intensive illegal hunting and deforestation activities. Over the years, law enforcement has been weak and have failed to provide the required protection for the region's vulnerable but rich fauna and flora. Our study demonstrates the importance of integrating local community institutions into conservation planning. For

example, 56% of respondents that have participated in the trade on wildlife body parts in the last 3 years believes people who break wildlife laws should pay a fine to the government compared to 26% that believe offenders should be punished by their community institutions (e.g. elder's councils). On the other hand, 85% of respondents not involved in illegal harvesting of wildlife derivative believes community level sanctions will be most effect in curbing trade. Although more respondents with established pedigree in wildlife body parts trade advocated for government punishment over community sanctioning, evidence suggested that they are doing so knowing that enforcement of government laws is weak and it is unlikely that they will be arrested by rangers. On the contrary, they are more afraid of community regulations since they know they can hardly escape them.

- Strategic community based conservation awareness has gained popularity as a tool for effective protection of biodiversity across the globe. We completed our conservation awareness campaign in two major steps. First, we held conservation awareness meetings in 27 communities where surveys were carried out. During meetings, we discussed the potential dangers of biodiversity loss and advocated for community regulations to cob the rate at which birds and other wildlife are currently persecuted. We proposed community level sanctions for poaches as a way that communities can take some level of ownership of the biodiversity in their forests. We distributed ~700 posters bearing conservation messages against trade on wildlife derivatives. Posters were distributed during community meetings and during house to house visitations. To ensure complete awareness, some posters were placed in centralised public areas where most of the villagers can access them. Secondly, we completed two television talk shows that were aired on the Cross River Broadcasting Cooperation (CRBC). At the moment, one of the talk shows can access on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8VrNuu_hr4. Overall, our awareness activities is helping to draw attention of the general public and government agencies to the menace of wildlife trade on the regions rich biodiversity.

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

Throughout the duration of our study, we worked closely with village chiefs, community elders and focused groups in organising and implementing conservation awareness meetings. In each community, we hired at least one villager to assist our team as paid guides during field surveys. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with our project team members, these guides gained first-hand knowledge on the dangers of biodiversity loss and were able to share their experiences with other community

members during community conservation awareness meetings. During meetings, community elders gained good insight into government regulations, administrative structures, and conservation action planned for biodiversity in their surrounding forests. As testified by many community leaders, this knowledge will assist communities to develop strategies that compliment government efforts at the local scale.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Our goal is to build on the achievements recorded during this second phase of our project. Hence, we plan to continue with our conservation education scheme which at the moment is targeted at local people and traditional institutions. In addition, we hope to bridge the gap between traditional institutions and relevant government agencies by encouraging the integration of local authority into conservation planning and actions. There is also a need to provide training and support for the local people on livelihood options as an alternative to selling wildlife body parts. These areas will continue to be the focus of our project in the future.

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

We intend to publish our findings primarily in peer-reviewed journals. One manuscript is currently in advance stage of preparation and will be submitted to the Journal of Ecology and Society. One abstract from our findings has already been submitted for an oral presentation in the forthcoming Student Conference on Conservation Science in New York scheduled for 11th– 13th October 2017. A copy of our final report will be shared with the Cross River State Forestry Commission (the Cross River State government agency responsible for managing wildlife outside of the Cross River National Park), the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, and other NGOs working in the region. In addition, we plan to continue with our media outreach program through media interviews and talk shows.

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 project duration was 12 months: March 2016 to February 2017

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
Communication	140	140	0	
Accommodation for team members during field work	1600	1600	0	
Food for team members during field work	800	800	0	
Allowances for 1 field guide	1000	1000	0	
Monthly transport costs	560	560	0	
Printing of posters for the awareness campaign	400	380	+20	The price for printing 1000 copies went up, so we reduced the number of copies to 700 for £380
TV talk shows	200	200	0	
Bank charges	10	20	-10	There was a change in bank charges that increased it from £10 to £20
Questionnaire production	20	35	-15	The cost of questionnaire production was underestimated by £15
Total	5000	5005	-5	

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

Strategic community-based conservation awareness campaign across the Cross River region.

- In the future, we intend to facilitate a stakeholder forum that will bring together community leaders, government agencies, and conservation NGOs in order to explore ways of engaging local communities in conservation planning and action.
- We plan to develop modalities for training and supporting local people on livelihood options as an alternative to harvesting and selling wildlife derivatives.

- Also, we plan to conduct a reconnaissance survey to measure levels of knowledge, attitude and behaviour of people living around our study area. This will be significant in measuring the impact of last two phases of our project.

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 Rufford Foundation logo featured prominently in our conservation awareness poster and will be used in all future presentations. We also acknowledged the Rufford Foundation as the sole funder of our project during meetings with community leaders. Further acknowledgement of the support received from the Rufford Foundation will be mentioned in planned publications.

11. Any other comments?

We are pleased to announce that results from our first Rufford Small Grant project were published in Biological Conservation <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S000632071530063X>.

Rufford Foundation was acknowledged in the publication as the sole founder of this project.