

Project Update: August 2016

It is a right time to save the lives of Vulnerable black crowned cranes (*Balearica pavonina* L.) in Chora boter district through capacity building and awareness creation. Previous research findings (Gemed, 2016) shows that wetland degradation is the major factors that affect the life of black crowned cranes. If wetland degradation and loss continues in the future without conservation intervention, the species should be either extinct or migrated to other areas. The local communities justify that habitat loss and degradation, depletion of water resources, wetland conversions to agricultural fields, overgrazing in wetlands buffer zone, and lack of awareness about the socio-ecological values of wetlands from the community are the major threats of Black Crowned cranes in Chora boter distric (Gemed et al., 2016).



Figure 1: Pair of Black Crowned cranes flying on Chalalaki wetland (©Dessalegn Obsi Gemed)

I am happy to write this progress report for Rufford foundation. This is the 2nd outreach activities after the student's workshop

(http://www.rufford.org/projects/dessalegn_obsi_gemed_0). The multi-stakeholders workshop on the conservation of black crowned cranes

was conducted on July 25th 2016 in Chora boter district at Bege town (See figs 2 and 3). The workshop was official opened with well come speech by Mr. Miftahu Abdulkadir, Chora boter district vice administrative and head agricultural office at Bege town. The representative of key governmental organisation in the district participated on the workshop.

The principal investigator of the project (Mr Dessalegn Obsi Gemed) invited four additional experts (Dr Debela Hunde, Mr Adugna Eneyew, Mr Ababayehu Aticho, and Mr Akalu Dafissa) for technical and scientific contributions for the multi-stakeholder workshop from Jimma University. On the workshop a total of 28 people participated from different sectors in the district. The participants were invited from district administration office, agricultural office, land administration office, political organisation, agricultural extension office, finance office, cooperative office, educational office (district and also from schools), animal health office, urban administration office, animal and fishery office, district communication office and also university academia and researchers (including Dean and vice dean of Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine).



Figure 2: Photo taken during multi-stakeholders workshop presentation by Dessalegn Obsi Gemeda (© Akalu Dafissa Sima)



Figure 3: Some pictures of the multi-stakeholders workshop (© Akalu Daffisa Sima)

The content of the workshop was as follows:

1. Detailed explanations by the project investigator on ***Qajeelcha Kunuunsa Simbira Abbaa Waaqoo Godina Jimmaa Aanaa Cooraa Botor*** (black crowned crane conservation guidelines) which was developed with the support of Rufford Foundation (See the cover page of the conservation guideline of black crowned cranes in figure eight on page nine of this report). The copies of the conservation guidelines were distributed for all the workshop participants. During the workshop the role of various stakeholders on conservation, the importance's of black crowned cranes conservation, major threats of black crowned cranes, community attitudes towards black crowned cranes conservation, the advantages of using bottom-up and top-down approaches for conservations and the role of social media in species conservation were presented. The conservation guidelines as well as the two articles published by the project were given for national media, Ethiopian Broad Casting Television and Radio (EBC) Jimma branch on Monday August 1, 2016 for media distributions.
2. Two published scientific articles on black crowned cranes were presented for the workshop participants. (1), Community knowledge, attitude and practice towards black crowned crane (*Balearica pavonina* L.) conservation in Chora Boter district of Jimma Zone, Ethiopia. *Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment*. Vol. 8(4), pp. 40-48. (2), black crowned crane (*Balearica pavonina* L.) conservation guideline in Chora Boter

district of Jimma zone: The case of Ethiopia. *International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation*. Vol. 8(8), pp. 164-170.

3. General facts about the current situations of black crowned cranes in Chora boter district were presented and discussed based on the previous findings of the project for further conservation actions.
4. The ecological, cultural and economic values of wetlands which was presented by Mr. Ababayehu Aticho (Natural Resources Management experts from Jimma University).

The training participants understand the major threats of the black crowned cranes: habitat degradation, wetlands (See fig. 4), conversions of wetlands to agricultural fields, black crowned cranes eggs destructions by children, overgrazing and climate change. After the workshop, the district administration head Mr Degefa Gelana (Fig. 5 with black jacket) request us to do more on awareness creations about the importance of black crowned cranes and its habitat specifically wetlands to the public. Mr Degefa also reported that the existence of Chalalaki wetland, Botor bocho forest and various hot springs makes our district unique from others in Jimma zone which will attract researchers and conservationist. All these unique resources should be protected and conserved properly in order to transferee to future generation. Lastly, the district administration head appreciate the initiatives of black crowned crane conservation and also strongly recommends the project investigator and Jimma University to continue on black crowned crane conservation and other species.



Figure 4: Land degradation in wetland buffer Zone (© Dessalegn Obsi Gemed)

Land degradation in wetland buffer zones is one of the major factors that affect the feeding and breeding success of black crowned cranes around Chalalaki wetland. The workshop participants understand the impacts of environmental degradations on the life of black crowned cranes and

they agreed to do more on environmental conservation and awareness creations. The district agricultural office head, Mr Miftahu Abdulkadir, state that “If the current environmental degradation specially wetlands continued without interventions, we will loss not only our beautiful cranes but also other aquatic biodiversity and in the long run we will loss our fresh water.” So, it time to save our species through environmental conservation which needs strong efforts from various stakeholders to mobilise and aware the public to wise use the natural resources.

After the workshop, the project investigators provides high resolution of black crowned cranes photo in the form of gift to Chora boter district administration head (See fig 5 and 6).



Figure 5: High resolutions photo of Black Crowned cranes with photo frame provided for the district (© Akalu Daffisa sima).



Figure 6: Chora boter district administrative head with happy face after receiving beautiful images of Black Crowned cranes (© Dessalegn Obsi Gemed).

Capacity building on the conservation of black crowned cranes is not limited to office holders (experts) but also designed for farmers and students at different levels. The awareness creation for elementary and high school students will be started after September 2016 when the students returned to school after vacations. Beside awareness creation, this project enhances the school environmental club through reference book donations. A total of 22 reference books were given to the district ministry of education bureau which will be shared to

Ayte elementary school (seven books), Bege high school (ten books) and Bege Preparatory School (five books). The three schools will be the targets for awareness creations in the coming academic years. The representatives of the district of ministry of education received 22 books which will be directly delivered to the above three listed schools (See figure 7).



Figure 7: Providing reference books to strengthen the environmental education (© Akalu Daffisa Sima)

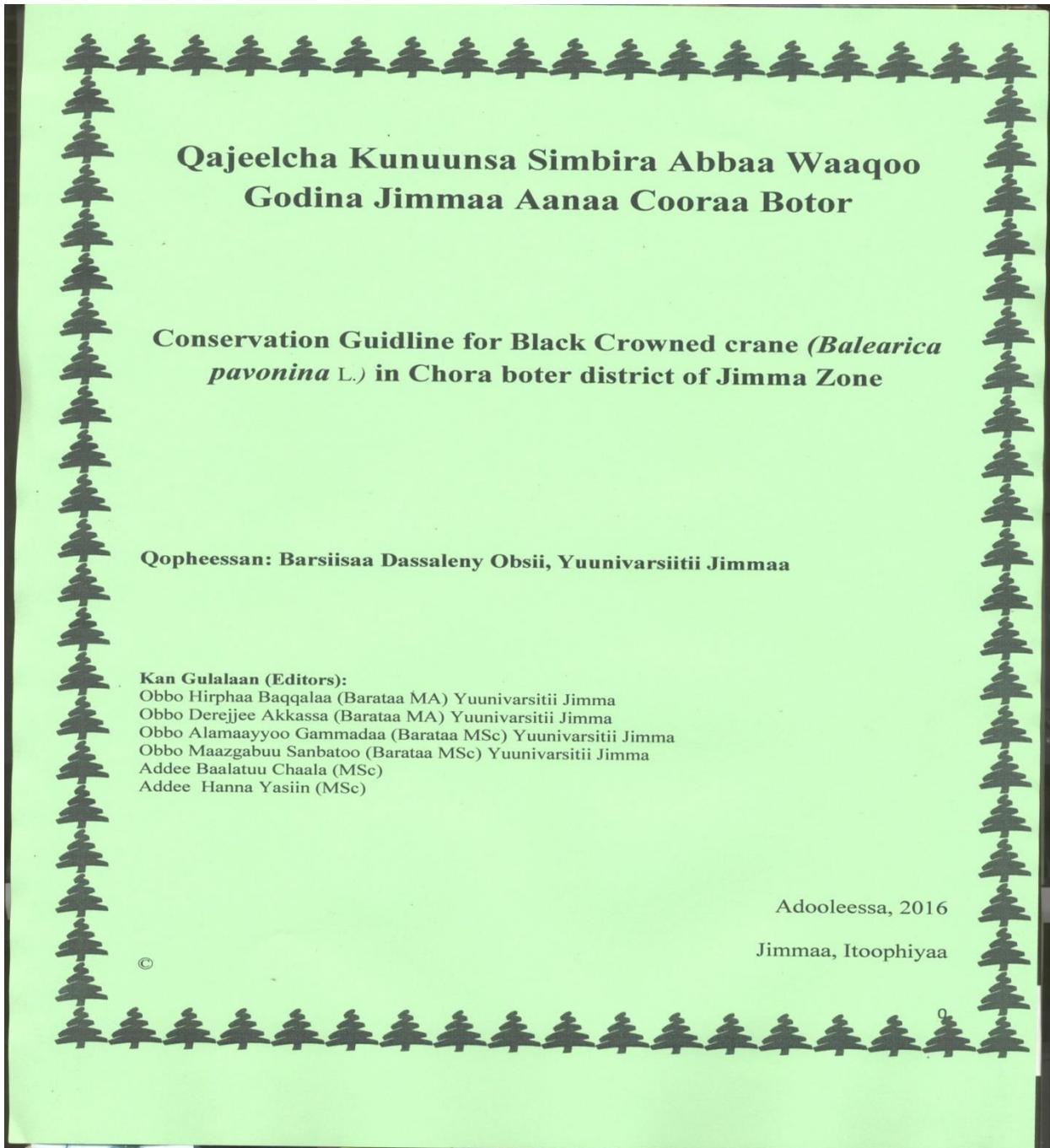


Figure 8: Cover pages of Black Crowned cranes conservation guidelines in local language (Afan Oromo)