



1st Rufford Small Update

Northern Ghana is known to harbour significant population of freshwater turtles including the vulnerable *Triunx triunguis*, and possibly the critically endangered *cyclanobis elegas*. However, previous preliminary studies shows that, these species have come under serious threat in the form of hunting and trade. Nevertheless the extent of this trade and the species been traded is unclear. Studies on freshwater population distribution, habitat status in northern Ghana is limited making management decisions particularly on the vulnerable species challenging. It is against this background that this study is beining conducted to provide data for management of the critically endangered and the vulnerable freshwater turtle species.

The objectives of our study include;

Activity (1) Project Lunch and recognisance studies

Activity (2a) conduct rainy season and dry season turtle market survey

Activity (2b) conduct rainy season and dry season ecological field survey for freshwater turtle

Activity (3) Community education

Activity (4) analysis of data

Activity (5) stakeholder workshops

Activity (6) Monitoring and Evaluation

Activity (7) Reporting



Figure 1 the research team

Activities Undertaken

1. As at 31st may 2025, objective 1 (Project Lunch and recognisance studies) was carried out. We met with chiefs, opinion leaders, turtle dealers (merchants) local people to discuss our project and solicited their support for the project.



Figure 2 principal Investigator Haruna Acheriga Sumaila at the paramount chief of Bolgatana palace, Naaba Martin Abilba during community entry meeting

2. We conducted the dry season market survey (Activity 2a) in all the six local wildlife market for freshwater turtle in the market. From our survey we observed 54 individual freshwater turtles in the markets belonging to three different species including three (3) individual species of (*Trionyx triunguis*) one of our focal species. We also collected over 1000 individual reported sale through interviews for the period of the six month. This data is been sorted for analysis.



Figure 3 principal Investigator Haruna Acheriga Sumaila at (A) turtle sealers home in Garu Market Surveying turtle in his possessing for sale (B) Bolgatanga market holding *Trionyx triunguis* species on sale.



Figure 4 rescued *Trionyx triunguis* from turtle sellers at Bolgatanga wildlife Market

3. We have carried out activity (2b) by conducting dry season ecological field survey for freshwater turtle in different wetland/water bodies along the Red and White Volta and along the Sisili river, a tributary of the Black Volta river at the northern parts of the Mole national. During our survey we met and intervened fishers as well turtle collectors. From the survey we observed two (*Cyclanorbis senegalensis*) species along the Sisili River basin, a tributary of the Black Volta River.



Figure 5 Research team during ecological turtle survey

4. We have carried (activity 3) Community education in part. We have carried out community outreach in (2) senior high schools; Kongo senior high school and Garu Community senior high school and one basic school in Navrongo. During this educational tour we met with student and sensitized those (pupils) on the plight of the freshwater turtle we have also formed environmental club to promote pro- turtle, wildlife and environmental conservation.



Figure 6 Basic school children in freshwater turtle sketch competition in Navrongo

We are continuing with the wet (rainy) season part of our data collection together with our stakeholders' workshop. After which an aggregate analysis of our data will be made and evaluated.

We will keep you updated in all levels of our activities.