

## **Project Update: September 2010**

In February 2010, because of a dry period most of the primates had migrated towards the green valleys of the unhabituated and undisturbed wilderness of southern Sudan. They were thus not accessible. But they resumed activities in April 2010 following the resumption of growth of vegetation and abundance of food (mostly fruit trees).

From April-May 2010, the population density and distribution of the L'hoest monkeys were determined by censuses conducted while walking along the line transects set earlier on in each of the (5 x 5) square km forest blocks, with the help of field assistants. While we used the line transects, valuable information recorded included: sighting distance to the animal; activity budgets; ranging patterns; and feeding frequency. The observational method using high power binoculars was also used to collect data and the following activities were noted for all individual L'hoest monkey's seen: grooming, playing, fighting, food species fed upon, other food types eaten, group-spread, sub-group size and site preference exhibited by these monkeys. Apart from establishing the populations, feeding and movement of the primates each forest block, other mammals and human activities were also recorded.

The above knowledge allowed the determination of numbers, movements, feeding patterns and overall design of conservation strategies during different periods of the year. Conservationists, the UWA, and the forest department can then further develop a long-term strategy from the vortex analysis to ensure that viable populations of the primates are maintained

In January and May 2010, two community participatory training workshops were conducted. The rural community around the forest land acquired significance knowledge on nature conservation and sustainable utilisation and the conservation of L'hoest monkey following activities and data collected in April 2010. Information, education and communication (IEC) brochures on nature conservation and eco-tourism were developed with help of workshop groups and distributed to most participants and stakeholders involved in the project. Some of the facilitators to this training were from the Department of Entomology who provided training in apiculture to local beekeepers within forestlands as alternative to sustainable forest utilisation, and with the aim of improving their apiculture production techniques. The Forestry Department also educated and trained community members in sustainable conservation of the wildlife and forest.

At the completion of the 5-day workshop in each case, the capacity of village forest and nature conservation management committee formed during first RSG were enriched/built. They were also provided technical knowledge that facilitated the establishment of village forest sustainable management programmes to combat deforestation and bush burning. Environmental conservation education materials and additional free tree seedlings were distributed to the community living in and around the forest reserve. A series of recommendations were also made by the participants. One of the main recommendations was

that another surveying of major forest blocks be done in order to establish and monitor the number of the primates in each of the forests block.

From July to August 2010, sensitisation and mobilisation through local radio FM and spot messages and community meetings were conducted. A community-based conservation and activity centre at Palabek-Kal forest reserve was established. The communities around the forestland were mobilised to set up this activity center. Management committees of this centre were also established; these were elected by the community themselves. The centre is now acting as model for training, knowledge sharing and information exchange. Other activities at the centre currently include drama and music to dissemination information about forest management and as well as creating awareness about the significance of nature conservation (especially of primates) to the rural communities, and how people can derive economic benefit from such conservation without destroying nature.

From August to September 2010, through interactive meetings, we supported the activity of community-government partnerships to facilitate participatory community involvement in conservation management programmes. We Introduced on-farm crop production by distributing free seeds (e.g. simsim) and strengthened programmes on harvesting of non-timber forest products, especially honey production than rely on hunting and logging. With the help of the 2<sup>nd</sup> RSG, an additional group around the forest land was formed and supported with 50 beehives and other equipments.

We are currently conducting Information sharing and discussion with government departments and people in community about the over impact of the project and create support community-government partnerships in nature conservation.

