

## The Rufford Foundation Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Tajudeen Okekunle Amusa
Project title	Feeding pattern, community education and rehabilitation of conservation facilities for forest elephants in Omo Forest Reserve, southwestern Nigeria
RSG reference	21635-D
Reporting period	February, 2017 – January, 2018
Amount of grant	£9850
Your email address	teejayui@gmail.com
Date of this report	February, 2018

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. Establish foraging pattern of elephants within the project area.				The utilisation pattern of food species by elephants in the project area was investigated for both rainy and dry seasons. This involved the use of rapid rural appraisal (RRA) technique and direct field data collection on elephant food trails.
2. Determine food availability and species preferences by elephants within the project area.				Food availability and preferences of elephants were determined through transects surveyed twice for each of rainy and dry seasons. Laboratory analysis of elephant dung for the determination of micro-plant fragments in elephant's diet was also carried out.
3. Promote public understanding of the precarious situation of elephants in the project area.				Several community-based conservation education/outreach programmes were carried out. These were aimed at generating and promoting environmental awareness as well as creating capacity at local level for responsible behaviour towards the elephants and other wildlife species in the area.
4. Rehabilitate conservation facilities in the project site.				The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) carried out the rehabilitation of conservation facilities at the elephant sanctuary in order to enhance research and ecotourism activities bordering on the forest elephants. This involved laying of wooden bridge and renovation of chalets, including repair of roof, wall, doors, and floor panels as well as provision of bed, mattresses and cooking utensils.
5. Prepare a comprehensive survey document and recommendations for conservation and management of elephants in the project area.				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).**

A major unforeseen difficulty that arose during the course of the project was the embarkation on industrial action by the non-academic staff union of the Nigerian Universities. Members of the union are responsible for overseeing activities in the laboratories. This development hampered laboratory work analysis of elephant dung for the determination of micro-plant fragments in elephant's diet. The problem was circumvented by resorting to the use of private laboratories outside the university while the industrial action lasted.

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

- (i) The project has helped in providing useful information on the foraging pattern of elephants within the project area. It also revealed the diversity of elephant food and their preferences in different seasons within the area. It further showed the relative importance of different plant species in the diets of elephants. Some of the most important elephant food species in the area include: *Alstonia boonei*, *Brachystegia nigerica*, *Ceiba pentandra*, *Celtis zenkeri*, *Cleistopholis patens*, *Cissus spp.*, *Desplathia sp.*, *Dracaena mannii*, *Elaeis guineensis*, *Ficus ingens*, *Ficus mucoso*, *Khaya ivorensis*, *Musanga smithii*, *Nauclea diderrichii*, *Rauvolfia vomitoria*, *Thaumatococcus danielli*, and *Zanthoxylum zanthoxyloides*. These plant species are essential to the continued survival of elephants in the project area and therefore, also require conservation attention.
- (ii) The community-based education/outreach have contributed to the conservation of elephants and other endangered species in the project area. It helped greatly in changing some of the people's negative attitudes and behaviours towards biodiversity conservation to that of supporting our conservation initiatives. We recorded no case of human–elephant conflict throughout the project duration owing to increased environmental sensitivity towards the animal and cooperation of local communities.
- (iii) The repair and refurbishment of facilities at the elephant sanctuary was very helpful to our research and has been attracting ecotourists in the project area. It is expected that in the nearest future some revenue coming in via tourism will be used to support local communities and protection of the habitat.

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

A major fulcrum of the project was community-based conservation education/outreach programmes, which were aimed at generating and promoting environmental awareness as well as creating capacity at local level for responsible behaviour towards the elephants and other wildlife species in the area. The outreach programmes were also designed to increase understanding of elephant conservation issues, exchange opinions and experiences, and establish a dialogue among sectors of the community. It involved education and extension programmes.

A total of six communities were covered. Our interactions also involved giving out of reward items including t-shirts, key holders, writing pens and bottle openers, all carrying important conservation messages.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes, there is need to seek further policy support for the protection of elephants in the project area. In particular, there is need for political will to stop all human land use practices capable of causing destruction and fragmentation of elephant habitat in the area.

**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 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 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	2100	2200	-100	More costs were incurred from international shipping charges of some survey materials.
Micro-histological analysis of dung samples	4000	4000	0	
Local transport for Advocacy /community-wide conservation education outreach	1000	1000	0	
Posters, multimedia, flip chart and stationery	750	750	0	

Stipends/Subsistence and Refreshment during stakeholders' workshop/survey walks/ community sensitization and conservation education outreach	1000	1000	0	
Incentives for stakeholders and other participants	500	500	0	
Co-ordination and reporting including correspondences, phone calls, internet connection, map production and hard copies of reports	500	500	0	
<b>Total</b>	9850	9950	-100	

**Notes to Budget:** The official exchange rate of the Nigerian Naira (₦) to the UK pound Sterling (£) was ₦392.98: £1 at the start of the project. This however, rose to ₦426.00: £1 before the end of the project.

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

The management of the project area needs to be stepped up. There is need for more political support for the protection of elephants in the project area. Improving on the conservation facilities, setting up a Rangers Squad, and provision of equipment and vehicle for patrol are critical activities in this regard.

### 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 RF logo was used in questionnaire design, posters, t-shirts, key holders, writing pens and bottle openers given as incentives and souvenirs for publicity of the project and motivation of local communities' members.

### 11. Any other comments?

We remain eternally grateful to the Rufford Foundation for supporting this project. Experiences from the project have been very rewarding.