

## Project Update: August 2018

### Activates to improve wattled crane reproduction

The promising conservation practices to enhance wattled cranes reproduction were started in three sites. The project has been monitoring these sites to take the necessary conservation actions when crane breeding attempt started. In one of the sites, a breeding pair has built nest and laid two eggs (Fig. 1). In this sites, the project has been working on to keep the nest area free from disturbances (human as well as livestock) through implementing promising conservation practices and following the breeding progress.



Figure 1: Wattled crane eggs. ©Abebayehu A.

The potential breeding site that is prone for flooding problems has been affected with severe flooding problem before the breeding seasons. In the past years, some parts of the wetlands are covered with water and some with grasses (e.g., sedge) that are used for livestock grazing and suitable for crane breeding. But, in this year flooding has affected the entire parts of wetland including areas suitable for breeding (Fig. 2a & b). Because of this reason, the breeding pair found in this area has not incited any breeding attempt, and we have not executed the proposed fencing to keep the breeding pair and its nesting place safe from livestock interference.



Figure 2: Top: Status in 2016 (a) Bottom: Status in 2018 (b) Wetland situated prone to flooding problems from Gibe River. ©Abebayehu A.

In addition, a breeding pair found in Buyo Kachama wetland has started the breeding process via laying eggs (Fig. 3). The pair at this wetland had a successful reproduction histories for the last 2 years due to the substantial conservation efforts made (e.g., community awareness creation, breeding area protection from disturbance) through financial supports of the Rufford Foundation. This show, the conservation efforts we have made for the last two has meaningfully contributed for sustainable conservation of wattled crane via ensuring continues reproduction. Now, we are following the breeding progress of this pair in order to know the final outcomes, and identify any problems that may hinder the progress.



Figure 3: The eggs laid by the breeding pair. ©Abebayehu A.

### **Activities on practical ecological and conservation**

The project has provide theoretical trainings at two schools (Jitu and Kachama) for seven small group students and two mentors on threatened bird species conservation focus on wattled crane and its habitat. Among the small groups; three were in Kachama and four in Jitu schools. After, the training the students and mentors are inspired to undertake the practical exercise because they thought that the exercise will helps them to observe, and do what they learn in the class. The small groups at each school has undertaken the following activities under the guidance of their respective mentors, and project supervision;

1. Lists birds in their own language (Afan Oromo language) depends on wetlands and grasslands in their village.
2. Each group has selected bird of their interest assessed the birds feeding, habitat preference, and drown the bird and describe its main body parts (Refer to Fig. 4).



Figure 4: Photos show students attempt to sketch the bird's main body parts

3. Each of the group were made continues observation on human and natural factors that affect the lives of the bird they monitor.
4. Based on field observation on factors that hinder the bird's life each group has wrote small proposal (their own language- Afan Oromo language) to minimise one of the factors affect the bird's life by their own knowledge. The proposals

were evaluated by the school director, the Rufford-funded project members, and their respective mentors for small cash gift to implement their conservation on ground. Then, each of the proposal was briefly presented (oral) at the end of academic years on parent assembly and received cash gift of different amount from the Rufford-funded project and their parents to implement their conservation idea (Fig. 5). The photo below shows each team (small group) pictures and receiving small cash gift to undertake their conservation ideas.



Figure 5: Photos when groups their conservation idea and receives small cash gift for conservation actions. ©Ababayehu A.

### **Questionnaire survey on community Knowledge, and perception towards environment**

After intensive literature review on community knowledge, perception and attitude towards environmental issues (including nature conservation) we have developed questionnaire to conduct community knowledge and perception assessment. The questionnaire has three parts:

- 1) Basic background items.
- 2) Basic environmental knowledge questions.
- 3) Perception questions (For more information see separately attached file).

Initial we have developed the questionnaire in English language and then translated to local language, Afan Oromo, to facilitate the interview processes. Then, we have pretested the questionnaire to validate each equation and maintain the reliability of information generated via the questionnaire survey. Final, we have conducted face to face interviews with 300 respondents using three trained data collectors. Now, we have been working on data cleaning, cleaner, analyzed and moving to under manuscript writing to publish the finding on international reputable journal.