

Project Update: May 2018

The activities in the first month involved conducting a workshop for all stakeholders, mainly community leaders from the sectors around the Musanze Volcanic Caves. Thirty participants were invited. These included local leaders, conservationists and park community conservation staff.

Workshop objectives:

The primary objectives were to sensitise the stakeholders about bat conservation and explain of the aims and objectives of the project. Participants were informed about the project objectives, aim and scope including timeframe and outputs. They were sensitised about: the ecological and environmental health benefits of the bats, using pictures; importance of bat conservation; and threats to bat species globally, regionally and particularly in the Musanze caves. There was a discussion on challenges of bat conservation and local people living near the bat habitat.

Workshop organization:

Prior to the workshop, the principal investigator and the assistants sent letters of invitation to the different relevant stakeholders. During the 1-day workshop, the principal investigator explained the aims and objectives of the workshop, scope and timeframe. He also talked about ecological benefits and environmental benefits of bat conservation and challenges. Project assistants were involved in sessions and logistical organisation. There was open discussions and question and answer session. Volcanoes National Park conservation staff moderated the sessions.

Workshop out puts:

- Participants were sensitised about the project and they agreed to support and participate in the future project activities
- A majority were curious about the species in the caves and were excited to understand differences between the species
- They got information about the importance of bats and hence need for their conservation
- They proposed to form local bat conservation community-based organisations in the next 2 months
- Local leaders promised to take the message of bat conservation to the locals who didn't come to the workshop using different platforms like mass gatherings.
- Community based organisations will comprise mainly of guano harvesters and other interested community members



Left: Dr. Julius and Mr. Janvier (community conservation warden Volcanoes N.P) showing the participants different bat species pictures. **Right:** Dr. Julius showing participants fruit bat picture.



Left: Participants in the session on bats conservation challenges discussion. **Right:** Participants of the sensitization work shop on the bats conservation efforts around Musanze caves.



Section of the participants in the sensitization workshop.