

## Project Update: August 2019

A detailed baseline survey of habitat quality, grazing pressure and grassland birds in the two reserves was done in November 2018. Fencing and setting up of paddocks as experiment units were done soon after – December 2018 and January 2019.

Thirty adult cows were allowed to graze in each of the two reserves. In each reserve, 15 cows are let to graze in the control patch throughout while 15 are grazed in the experiment, and moved from one of the three paddocks after every month. Every second week of each month assessment of vegetation structure and sward height is done, alongside that of the abundance and diversity of grassland birds. In addition food abundance in the control and experiment paddocks through pitfall and sweep-nets.

There was a prolonged dry period from November 2018 through to May 2019 greatly affecting the regeneration of grass. The vegetation was back to normal after the rains in May. However, we are considering to continue collecting data for an extra 3 months after October, the scheduled end of project to cover on the drought period. We have continued to receive farmers at one of the reserves where we have a resource centre, mostly informally. In July 2019, we hosted a team of 14 students and two teachers from Gituru Secondary School and 14 students, three teachers and one parent from Peter August B (PAB) from Germany in the reserve. We had opportunity to talk to the group about the importance of the grasslands as habitats for unique biodiversity, provision of ecosystem services and support of livelihoods. Dietmer, the parent from PAB Germany volunteered to join the field survey. So far, six volunteers have been involved in the field survey, helping them expand their capacity in biodiversity monitoring.

The efforts of our conservation were recognized in some print and visual media.

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/lifestyle/article/2001314828/efforts-to-protect-rare-bird-species-bear-fruit>

<https://ntv.nation.co.ke/news/2720124-4856704-format-xhtml-1rycaaz/index.html>



Left: Sharpe's Longclaw. ©Andy Panhorst. Right: Ibrahim working on the Fence.