

Project Updates: March 2019

Based on the planned project activities, our recent project comprised of two phases of field data collection. The project period was subjected to minor changes due to the delay of the research fund. The first phase of field data collection entailed gathering of giraffe foraging observations and data on woody plant availability for the first 2 months (January/April) in the wet season. Whereas in the second phase of field data collection, the same procedures will be repeated to obtain field data for the other 2 months of the dry season. A pilot study was carried out before the field data collection to test the feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed methods. While conducting a pilot study I trained and worked closely with a team of two field assistants who were trained in GPS usage and assessment methodology and tools. During the field data collection giraffe groups were observed opportunistically from dawn to dusk and forage data were recorded for two hours in each group using instantaneous scan sampling as described in the project proposal. Vegetation sampling was conducted immediately after completing behavioral forage observations as shown in Figure1 below.



Figure 1: Matana Levi and Field Assistant (Mpole) taking measurements of woody plants in vegetation plots of the study site



Figure 2: (a) Giraffe Foraging patch made up of *Dichrostachys cinerea*, a frequently fed shrub for giraffes in Tarangire National Park (left), (b) Giraffe feeding on *Dichrostachys cinerea* patch in Tarangire National Park (right).



Figure 3: (a) Matana Levi (researcher) and Oscar (driver) collecting forage observations (left), (b) Matana Levi showing Oscar the view of Randilen open woodland (right).

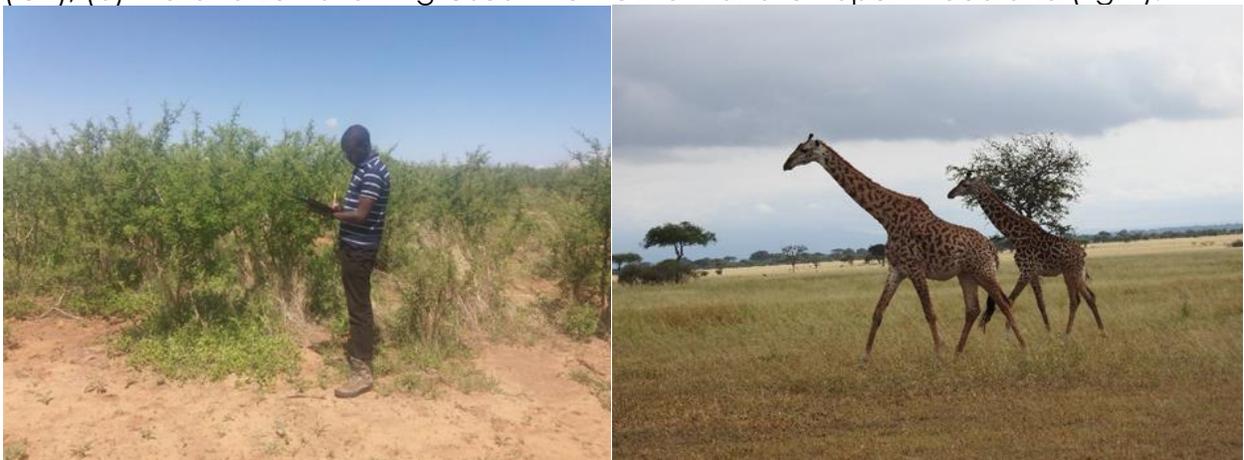


Figure 4: (a) Matana Levi taking note on habitat type in Randilen WMA (left), (b) Giraffes roaming in open woodland in Randilen WMA (right)



Figure 5: *Dichrostachys cinerea* (bushes resuming normal growth before (left) and soon after the rain started (right) in Randilen WMA



Figure 6: Woody vegetation expanding over open grasslands



Figure 7: (a) Domestic animals (donkeys) sharing the same habitat with the giraffes in Randilen WMA (left) (b) Cultivated land within the protected areas, Randilen WMA (right).