



# **STRENGTHENING MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF FOREST ELEPHANTS IN OMO FOREST RESERVE, SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA**

BEING A 3RD PROGRESS REPORT

By

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## **SUBMITTED TO**

Rufford Small Grants Foundation  
(for nature conservation)

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**OCTOBER 2020**

## **Procurements of Equipment and Materials for Patrol Activities in Project Area**

Working as rangers protecting flagship species like the elephants and their habitats is not an easy task. Trainings on new technologies, methods and strategies to achieve better results lightens the load a bit. In furtherance of our work, backed by the Rufford Foundation on strengthening monitoring systems for adaptive management and protection of forest elephants in Omo Forest Reserve, Southwest Nigeria, we have continued to engage rangers on the use of Mobile Technologies in their work. GPS enabled android phones with power banks and scandisk memory cards were purchased to help data collection. A customized data collection and monitoring system for ranger patrols based on the GeoTracker software package was developed and deployed. This system allows for consistent and rapid collection of geo-referenced data by rangers, along with automated tracking of patrols and easy analysis of patrol data. This has continued to help in gathering important data in the biodiversity conservation work in more systematic and time efficient ways. It has also helped improve rangers tracking capabilities of the remaining elephants in the forest for optimized protection. Part of funds received from Rufford Foundation was also used to procure new motorbikes for improve rangers policing and general mobility in the forest. In addition, a desktop computer was purchased and set up at the Elephant Project Initiative Office within the forest reserve. This is to have a central-based system to collate field data especially on patrols and biomonitoring. Part of the fund was also used to support provision of solar system unit at a newly constructed rangers station funded by African Forest Elephant Foundation through the Nigerian Conservation Foundation.

### **PHOTO SPEAK**

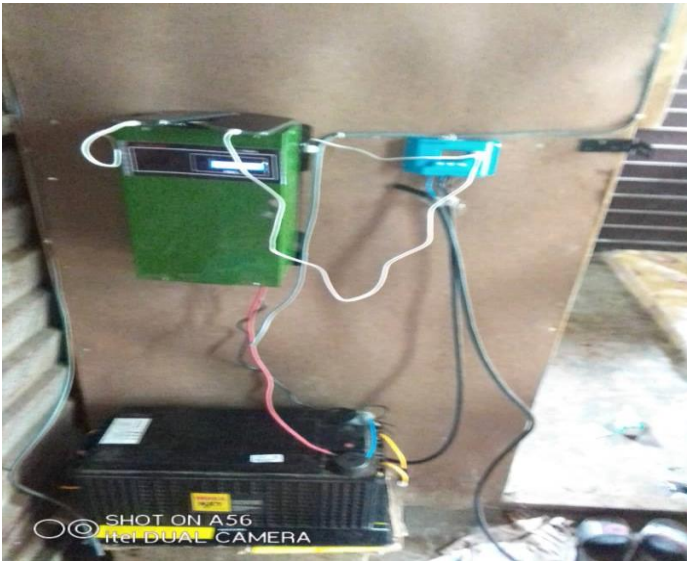
**Desktop computer system for a central-based system to collate field data on patrols and biomonitoring**



**Motorbike for improve rangers policing and general mobility in the forest**



**Mobile solar system unit at a newly constructed rangers station**



**GPS enabled android phones with power banks**



### **Data collection on illegal activities in elephant sanctuary and adjoining areas using the GeoTracker system**

Illegal activities and elephant sighting in and around the elephant sanctuary of Omo Forest Reserve are being monitored through data by rangers while on patrol activities using the GeoTracker system. Patrol routes can be viewed as transects with unfixed width used to collect information on indicators of illegal activities and animal observations. During the patrol activities, standardized data sheets were used to keep records of the numbers of staff on patrol; the duration of the patrol; the area traveled; the types, quantity, and locations of illegal activities encountered; and the numbers of elephants or their indices encountered.

Given that patrol movements should be unpredictable by nature, the rangers have been trained to randomize patrol movements as much as practically feasible, both to optimize impact of law enforcement, and to enable statistical inference from monitoring data. The patrol routes and the location of all encounters are normally marked using the GPS enabled android phones. These are later overlayed on a base map of the project area. Patrols take place either during the hours of day time (day patrol), night time (night patrol), or both (long patrol).

For elephant sightings/indices, the location and signs detected during patrol was recorded. In the case of illegal hunting activities, these were categorized according to those offences which directly relate to arrest of poachers, confiscation of firearms, spent cartridges found, gunshots heard, poacher's camps found, animals found killed, and wire snares recovered. Data collection is ongoing and outputs and analysis are still being worked upon.

## PHOTO SPEAK

### Rangers on field patrol





**Elephant trail within project area**



## **Works on production of documentary on elephant conservation**

Elephant conservation project activities in Nigeria as supported by the Rufford Foundation are being put together in form of a documentary. The documentary is titled, *In the footprints of a megaherbivore...the Elephants of Nigeria*. This is to showcase the efforts and contributions of the project leader through the Rufford Foundation at ensuring the protection of elephants and other wildlife species in the country. It is also aimed at calling the attention of stakeholders, particularly the government towards muscling up the right political will at protecting biodiversity species in the country. Some of the features of the documentary include scripting, field visit, filming, interviews and editing among others.

### **PHOTO SPEAK**

#### **Interviews and Filming for documentary on elephant conservation**



