

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Akwasi Anokye
Project Title	Status and Conservation of <i>Mecistops cataphractus</i> in the Obuasi Municipality
Application ID	32445-2
Grant Amount	£6000
Email Address	anokye91@gmail.com
Date of this Report	3rd January 2022

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Population Monitoring for adaptive management				<p>We recorded 82 direct encounters of <i>M. cataphractus</i> along a 25km stretch with a cumulative survey distance of 75km. The overall mean encounter rate was 1.09 crocodiles/km. This encounter rate was slightly higher than what was recorded in the first phase of the project which was 0.93crocodiles/km. This difference is a result of our team covering additional 13.8km of survey areas which provides better picture of <i>M. cataphractus</i> population at the site as well as reduced killings due to our previous conservation interventions. The 82 encounters comprise, 31 adults,11 subadults, eight juveniles, 19 hatchlings and 13 eye shines. We recorded seven nests. Five of the nests were abandoned at the construction stage despite no visible signs of human disturbances and two nests successfully hatched. GPS coordinates were recorded for all nesting sites as well as areas where crocodiles were spotted. This information will be used to update the distribution map.</p>
Awareness campaigns and local capacity building for community volunteers				<p>We reached out to 800 adults and 500 children from four fringe communities. In order to observe the necessary COVID-19 protocols, we organised the various campaigns in groups of few individuals. We used various approaches including PowerPoint presentations, video shows and focal group discussions to educate locals. Promotional materials such as brochures and t-shirts were also used</p>

			to further raise awareness on <i>M. cataphractus</i> conservation. Five community volunteers from our previous project were trained together with five new volunteers in crocodile handling and relocation as well as survey techniques. They were further trained in crocodile exclusion fence establishment and maintenance.
Social survey			<p>The team adopted the use of focus group discussions, semi structured interviews and ethnography to gather data on the local perceptions of crocodiles, history of crocodiles in the area, population trends, human crocodile conflicts and local knowledge of existing wildlife laws.</p> <p>200 respondents within the local communities were interacted with, 73% saying they are aware crocodiles are in the Jimi River. Only 17% of respondents believed they have any form of ancestral connection with crocodiles. This suggests weak level of traditional protection for the species among the local communities.</p> <p>62% of the respondents perceived crocodiles as threats and man eaters, whereas 23% perceived them as animals who will not harm you unless they feel threatened. The remaining 15% perceived them as some sort of aesthetic animals that will help the community attract tourists in future. Our result suggests bad local perception that needs continuous awareness campaigns to improve protection of the species.</p> <p>On population trends 68% said the population was experiencing decline whereas 32% had no idea of the population trends.</p> <p>20% of people we interacted with rated instances of human crocodile conflict as high whereas 57% rated it as moderate and 23% rated it as low. Local knowledge of existing wildlife laws seems to be very low as 90% of people interacted with had no</p>

				<p>knowledge on the existing wildlife laws and the remaining 10% had a fair idea.</p> <p>There is the need to raise awareness among locals on the existing Ghana wildlife laws.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

Due to the existing COVID-19 restrictions within the various communities, large crowds could not be gathered at a time for awareness campaigns. The team however resorted to organising small groups through a series of meeting in order to reach majority of community members.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- Through this project we were able to expand our survey areas from previous 11.2km to 25km. We have recorded *M. cataphractus* in new sections of the Jimi River indicating wider distribution. With 82 direct encounters of *M. cataphractus*, the overall encounter rate has increased from 0.93km/crocodiles in the first phase of project to 1.09crocodiles/km. The improved encounter rate suggests expanding our survey efforts could provide bigger picture of the current status of the species in river.
- Through awareness campaigns and community engagements we were able to mobilise 10 local community members who were trained, equipped and engaged as community volunteers. With this in place there will always be people to provide timely response to crocodile related incidents. This will help limit the number of instances where crocodiles are brutally killed. They will further serve as community focal persons who can provide first-hand information on issues involving crocodiles and the community as a whole.
- Through our stakeholder workshops, we have been able to attain the support of the traditional authorities as well as local communities towards efforts being made to protect crocodiles and biodiversity in general.

4. What do you consider to be the most significant achievement of this work?

5. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

Local community members, particularly traditional authorities have been a part of this project right from the first phase through to this second phase. Traditional leaders were actively involved in introducing the project to the communities as well as mobilising community support towards the activities of the project.

Local community members have been engaged as community volunteers who have been trained in safe methods of crocodile handling and relocation. Local

volunteers have also been trained in crocodile exclusion fence establishment and maintenance

6. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, there are plans to continue with the next phase of the project.

7. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Results from this study has been shared with local authorities. There are plans to further share technical reports from this work with the wildlife division of Ghana as well as the municipal assembly. Findings from this study will further be shared with the IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group and other conservation NGOs.

8. Timescale: Over what period was the grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The grant was utilised within a 1-year period which is in line with the anticipated length of the project.

9. Budget: Provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Fieldwork component: Vehicle maintenance fee @ £10/day for 50 days	500	500		
Fieldwork Component: fuel cost of 4gal/day for 50 days @ £3/gal	1600	1600		
Fieldwork component: DSA for 3 team members +1 local guide @ £8/person/day for 50 days	250	250		
Awareness campaigns, capacity building and evaluation: cost of developing and printing questionnaire, posters, flyers and project banner @ £250	280	280		
Awareness campaigns, capacity building and evaluation: Vehicle maintenance fee @ £10/day for 50 days	500	500		
Awareness campaigns, capacity building and evaluation: Fuel cost of 10gals/ return trip for 5 trips conservation education at local community @ £3/gal	150	150		

Awareness campaigns, capacity building and evaluation: DSA for 3 team members and 1 local guide during conservation education outreach £8/person/ day for 50 days	1600	1600		
Awareness campaigns, capacity building and evaluation: food for 10 volunteers during workshop @ £5/person/ day for 5 days	250	250		
Reconnaissance survey: Vehicle maintenance fee @ £10/day for 5 days	50	50		
Reconnaissance survey: fuel cost of 4gal/day for 5 days @ £3/gal	60	60		
Reconnaissance survey: DSA for team members & 1 local guide @ £8/person/day for 5 days	160	160		
TOTALS	6000	6000		

10. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

- Intensify search for *M. cataphractus* nests and further investigate the cause of nest failures.
- We to will expand our survey areas to cover other areas along the Jimi River.
- We will create more volunteer groups in other fringe communities
- Intensify training of volunteer groups and adequately equip them for the effective execution of their mandate
- We will continue to raise awareness on the threats of *M. cataphractus* and the need for its conservation

We will work with local authorities to protect critical nesting areas and where necessary restore degraded areas

11. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The Rufford Foundation logo was used on all print media used during this project including banners and t-shirts. The foundation logo was further used in all PowerPoint presentations and Rufford was duly acknowledged at all times during awareness campaigns and other educational programmes.

12. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Akwasi Anokye – Team Leader (project coordinator) - Handled the day-to-day management of the project. He also liaised with local communities for their cooperation for the success of the project. Actively involved in education aspects and other field aspects of the project.

Emmanuel Amoah – Team Member- Handled all field surveys and was very instrumental in volunteer selection and training activities. He also served as a facilitator during stakeholder workshops.

Kwadwo Asare Gyebi – Team Member – He was in charge of organizing community educations, stakeholder meetings and all the social aspects of the project.

13. Any other comments?

The continuous support from The Rufford Foundation has gone a long way in minimising the occurrence of human-crocodile-conflicts and improving protection for *M. cataphractus* within the Obuasi Municipality