

Project Update January 2021

Achievements to date:

- Gathering new information on the poorly monitored local cetacean populations in order to understand the threats posed by interactions with fisheries.
- Partially achieved.
- The first quarter of the project focused on the principal investigator and his assistant familiarising themselves with the project landscape. In doing this they chanced upon a lot of information on cetaceans which has determined the areas to prioritise for streamlined action

Difficulties:

The project has always been focused on the fishermen throughout the proposal development phase but our initial interaction indicated that over 60% of fishermen interviewed were reluctant to speak with the team on cetaceans. This was because not all fishermen are committed to protecting cetaceans. Most of them specifically hunt dolphins while others believe it is a bad omen to encounter whales at sea. One group reported that some cetaceans, especially dolphins, compete with them for fish.

Outcomes to date:

Visits were made to 10 fish landing sites: Jamestown, Teshie, Tema, Akplamanya, Keta, Mumford, Cape Coast, Elmina, Axim and Elohim.

By interacting with locals, five fish landing communities have been shortlisted as the priority areas for frequent visits to possibly encounter live, dead, or stranded cetaceans.

Involvement of local communities so far:

Two hundred and fifty-four locals, mostly fishermen, have been engaged from the fish landing communities, at a time where fishing activities have declined due to the protocols in place to curtail Covid-19. Most of the fishermen were available for interviews. Based on their response and observation, the five priority areas for monitoring were selected as Akplamanya, Keta, Mumford, Elohim and Cape Three Point. A list of locals interviewed, and their responses is in the Annex 1 of this document. Pictures and maps from the site visits are in Annex 2.

Ten locals have been added to the cetacean network WhatsApp platform base on our initial interactions with the locals. A member on the platform reported our first sighting of a stranded young humpback whale at Keta and reported in Annex 3 here.

Planned activities for the next quarter:

In the next 3 months, the project team will visit the five selected fish landing sites twice each month to monitor for cetacean sighting. The team will also look to expand the participation for the Cetacean Network by encouraging many locals to be part. This is expected to increase the reporting of cetacean sightings.

Share the results:

The first sighting was widely reported by the network on our Facebook and YouTube pages. A report has been sent to RSG administration and the Society for Marine Mammalogy to be published on the webpages. A copy of the reported is attached

to this document as Annex 3. Subsequent reports will be submitted and reported using the same channels. The final project report will be published as a scientific paper in ResearchGate and other scientific webpages.

Members of your team and their role so far:

Cosmos Acquah: Is located at Benyin on the western coast of Ghana. After our first visit to the coastal communities in the west, he continues to visit the coastal communities in the western and central regions of Ghana to interact with locals and encourage them to report sightings of cetaceans and any other rare species they identify at sea or on their coast.

Daniel Atsu: is a fisherman and a cetacean conservationist from the Volta region of Ghana and stationed at the south-eastern coast of Ghana where he plies his trade. He usually engages colleague fishermen on the significance of cetaceans to fishing and the need for fishermen to support cetacean conservation approaches. He has added six fishermen to the Cetacean Network. A fisherman he brought on board reported the network's first sighting.



Principal investigator interviewing young fishermen at Winneba.

ANNEX 1: List and response of locals Interviewed during the initial assessment and community engagement

Name	Location/Contact	Sighting cetacean Y-Yes N- No	Last sighting Y-Years W-Weeks M-Months	Should cetaceans be protected	Will you support cetacean protection
Nana Mensa Bonsu	Cape Coast/ 0542415007	Y	2 y	Y	Y
Nana kweigya	Cape Coast/ 0243288315	Y	2 y	Y	N
Rebeca Eshun	Cape Coast/ 0246694613	N	-	-	-
Nenyei Mortey	Mumford/ 0242162327	N	-	-	-
Nana Kra	Cape Coast/ 0263543539	Y	1 y	N	-
Nana Senaman Tawiah	Cape Coast/ 0246572624	N	-	-	-
Adjoa Arthur	Cape Coast/ 0240414077	N	-	-	-
Araba Kobinaba	Cape Coast/ 0246572624	N	-	-	-
Nana Obrenu Dabum	Mumford/ 0543390930	Y	6 m	N	N
Nana Afful Awotwe	Mumford/0243536116	Y	Over 6 m	Y	N
Nenye Ben Otchie	Mumford/0243469299	Y	6 m	Y	N
Rose Mensah	Mumford	N	-	-	-
Ama Ambreye	Mumford/0245994036	N	-	-	-
Grace Lamptey	Mumford/ 0502367973	Y	2 y	Y	N
Nana Kwadwo Kotu	Mumford/ 024483052	Y	2 m	N	N
Nana Caiko	Mumford/ 0553050377	Y	6 m	Y	N
Kwadwo Quansah	Mumford/ 0248839343	Y	2 ws at sea	Y	Y
Adwoa Badu	Mumford/ 0249630469/	N	-	Y	N
Ama Adoma	Mumford/ 0247583594	N	-	-	-
Kweku Mbir	Winneba/ 0502807995	Y	6 m	N	N
Nana Boafo	Winneba/ 0232857005	Y	3 w	N	N
Nana Kwesi Asabir	Winneba/ 0271182644	Y	2 y	Y	Y
Nana Kodwo Mbeah	Winneba/ 0248382010	Y	2 m at sea	Y	Y
Nana Banyin Asem	Winneba/ 0246910661	Y	3 y	N	N

Kofi Awer	Winneba/ 0243164155	Y	4 m	N	N
Kweku Awotwe	Winneba /0247763159	Y	2 m	N	N
Kweku Essuon	Winneba/ 0540314672	Y	2 y	Y	Y
Nana Simons	Winneba/ 0500407310	Y	Over 1 y	Y	N
Kwesi Duncan	Winneba/ 0249144225	Y	1 y	Y	Y
Nana Kampo	Elmina	N	-	-	-
Kwame Kobeah	Elmina/ 0243876835	Y	6 w	N	N
Kow Tawiah	Elmina/ 0244761922	Y	1 y	N	N
Ato Quainoo	Elmina/ 0540818593	Y	2 w	Y	N
Nana Kweku Abaka	Elmina/ 0267179312	Y	2 w	Y	Y
Kow Gyaaha	Elmina/ 0246873458	Y	2 y	Y	N
Amoako Essel	Elmina/ 0242783689	Y	1 y	N	N
Yaw Ababio	Elmina/ 0244233180	N	-	-	-
Nana Bonfi	Elmina/ 0245325296	Y	3 m	Y	Y
Kwamina Sanka	Elmina/ 0242318356	Y	2 m at sea	Y	Y
Kojo Tian	Elmina/ 0247789675	Y	6 m	N	-
Kweku Anso	Elmina/ 0544501391	Y	3 y	Y	Y
Theresa Botwe	Elmina/ 0546448283	N	-	-	-
Eduwaa Ewuah	Elmina/ 0544501391	Y	3 y	-	-
Akua Esi Kro	Elmina/ 0541746462	N	-	-	-
Aba Brekuwaa (48)	Elmina/ 0542584679	N	-	-	-
Nana Ibrahim Quansah	Benyin/0243046988	Y	2 m at sea	Y	Y
Nana Kwasi Opaku	Benyin/0554475117	Y	3 w	N	-
Nana Thomas Aikins	Benyin/0500372012	Y	2 m	N	-
Nana Kojo Arthur	Benyin/0279051305	N	-	-	-
Nana Dotse Terkpa	Benyin/0241481953	Y	2 m	N	-
Nana Kwabena Abore	Benyin/0549941539	Y	2 m	N	-
Nana Isaac Semenya (Ewe community)	Benyin/0591741536 / 024631633	Y	7 w	Y	Y
Nana Emmanuel Odwire	0245065869	N	-	Y	-
Nana Kwamena seidu	Benyin/0545930367	Y	3 y	Y	Y
Nana Kwabena Kaya	0549105773	Y	3 y	Y	N
Nana Ekow Abro	Akwidaa/0248786956	Y	2 y	Y	Y
Nana Abraham Blay	Akwidaa/0546415575	N	-	-	-
Nana Akaboasi	Akwidaa/0541525138	Y	3 m	N	N

Nana Eghan Francis	Akwidaa/0544527604	Y	1 y	N	N
Nana Kow Mensah	Akwidaa/0245543933	Y	1 m	Y	N
Nana Kojo Korsah	Akwidaa/0506035898	Y	2 y	N	N
Wute Nda		Y	5 ms	N	N
Paul Nda Arloo	Princess town/0241954784	Y	1 w	N	-
Alex Bakali	Princess town/0240235526	Y	1 w	N	N
Joseph Morkeh Kwaw	Princess town/0591746013 / 0549293521	N	-	-	-
Nana Gordon Arthur	Princess town/0244324260	N	-	-	-
Nana Kojo Sam	Elohim/0247788113	Y	2 m at sea	N	N
Francis Armoh (C. F. Secretary)	Elohim/0248556433	Y	3 days at sea	Y	Y
Nana Ebenyenle Kermah	Elohim/0246559618	N	-	-	-
John Kossey	Elohim/0593535141 / 0272481440	N	-	-	-
Nana Andrews Ndekyi	Elohim/0202728307	Y	2 y	Y	N
Kwaw Bondzo	Elohim/0272364892	N	-	-	-
Nana Kwabena Mesuro	Half Assini/ 0547859185	Y	8 m	N	N
Nana Kofi Ansah	Half Assini/0245618805	Y	3 m	Y	Y
Nana John Arkah	Half Assini/0550636465	Y	2 w	N	N
James Nkrumah	Half Assini 0545957211	N	-	-	-
Mr. Ebenbey	Half Assini/0544183195	Y	1 y	N	N
Mr. Maccarthy John	Half Assini/0205024539	Y	6 m	N	N
Nana Kojo Pebi	Half Assini/0541045399	N	-	-	-
Nana Kojo Panyin	Axim/0546029353	Y	3 m	Y	Y
Nana Kuedza	Axim/0200653895	Y	3 m	Y	Y
Nana Kow Eshien	Axim/0242071848	Y	2 y	Y	N
Nana Annan	Axim/0544101993	Y	3 m	N	N
Nana Daniel Cobbinah	Axim/0558157932	N	-	-	-
Francis Korangi	Axim/0240993640	N	-	-	-
Nana Asunya	Axim	N	-	Y	Y
Nana Kolu	Axim/0550829100	Y	2 w at sea	Y	N

ANNEX 2: Stranding of Humpback Whale on the Eastern Coast of Ghana

It is Friday 23rd October 2020 and residence of the Keta fishing community in south-eastern Ghana (5.9031° N, 0.9868°) have gathered on the coast. With awe and amazement, they watch on while about 20 young men cautiously try to pull a stranded live whale towards land with ropes tied around the cetacean. These men have no knowledge of the species they are dealing with. To them, this was just a big fish that washed ashore, and they are willing to kill and survive on it for the next couple of days. What will be left of after feeding will be unburied, allowed to rot on the beach releasing a bad stench in the community. The days after, people will complain of severe headaches and other ailments in the community. With residence having no knowledge of how to treat stranded marine megafaunas this cycle will repeat once every few years. So is the fate of both stranded dead and alive whales and coastal communities in Ghana.

- Young men trying to capture a stranded humpback whale at Keta fishing community

This was the second such occurrence in the area in a week. This was alarming because in the past, whale strandings were very rare, occurring once in a couple of years. Our checks indicated that the whale seen in the picture is a young humpback whale between 6 months to 2 years old. It might have been swimming close to shore with the family to feed and missed the tides. It might have been caught in the low tides, displaced on land unexpectedly. Had this occurred faraway from communities, the tides will return after some time and the young humpback will be washed back into see.

He reported that, they tried to rescue the whale from the young men, but they were outnumbered and misunderstand and were chased out of the area.

Fortunately for us, this was the first time some fishermen stood against this practice because we have arrived in the community exactly 12 days ago and spoken to the chief fisherman and his team about the significance of protecting cetaceans. This video seen here was captured by one of the fishermen present at our meeting. He reported that, they tried to rescue the whale from the young men, but they were outnumbered and misunderstand and were chased out of the area.

We received two different reports of what happened to the young humpback whale. The initial report stated that these men were able to capture the whale but were unwilling to share their game with other locals and decided to haul it into a track to a place unknown. The second report said, after several hours of unsuccessfully trying to capture the whale, heavy wave arrived, and the injured whale powered back to sea with a few locals' present to witness this. I visited the sight, a day after getting this information but there were no tracks nor carcasses of whale but only several versions of the story. Either ways, the whale was certain of a brutal fate. Either killed by the men or return to see injured, making it vulnerable to attacks.
<https://youtu.be/aNnO24yei7M>

- Stranded young humpback whale being pulled to shore by locals

For the first time, some locals resisted the capturing of a stranded whale because of our interactions with them and someone playing a local journalist decided to report

this occurrence to us. We are assured by this action that; locals are ready to support the protection of cetaceans and we are motivated to strengthen the network among coastal dwellers and continue the push for legal protection for cetaceans in Ghana.



Identified cetacean backbone at Shama.



Principal investigator measuring a whale skull at Axim.



Project team member interacting with fishermen at Jamestown while helping them pull their net.