

Project Update: July 2021

The project has gone according to schedule so far, despite a few minor setbacks.



In March 2021, we purchased equipment/materials and visited the four sites we (the team) had chosen, based on their accessibility by land, in order to do a preliminary survey and ask for permission to do our survey at the site. At one of the sites, Ilaje/Bariga, we were invited to a meeting with the Baale (high chief) and the other community chiefs following our request and given immediate permission to use the area as part of our survey. We also got permission to access the University of Lagos (UNILAG) campus in March 2021, following a letter requesting access. But for the other two sites, we had to wait to be granted access.



We began data collection in April 2021. At Ilaje, where we were accosted by the locals while we tried to collect data. Some of the youths wanted a monetary settlement, and it didn't matter that we had already seen the Baale. We were told that we would be required to pay an entry fee at every visit to enable us to use the jetty facility, which we had chosen as a vantage point for counting birds. We agreed on the sum of 5000 naira (c. £10) per visit. Additionally, we allowed one of the young men (who claimed our site was his father's land) to appoint himself as our field guide and escort on that site, to prevent further extortion. We now pay him 1000 naira (c. £2) per visit. We were also able to collect data on the UNILAG campus. But we didn't have fieldwork in the second half of April 2021 since we didn't have access to the second pair of sites.



We were given permission to access the second pair of sites in May 2021. After a meeting with the Director-General of the National Theatre (the location of the third site), we were given permission and support (provision of a security escort) to carry out our survey at the wetlands on the grounds of the theatre. We will submit a report of our survey to the management at the end of the study. Also, we intend to tailor a science communication/outreach programme to the National Theatre audience (through an event like a science fair or exhibition) at the end of our survey. We got permission from the chairman of the resident's association to visit the fourth wetland at Ogudu as well.

Thus, we have had 10 field outings so far, compared to the 12 we could have had, but the project is on schedule. We also have bird photos and videos from the project posted on Instagram and Facebook, to which more will be added.

