

Project Update: August 2021

Following the approval of my research project, here is to present a quick update on the progress and status of the implementation of the project so far.

- As indicated in the project plan, in August 2021, a field visit was made to the seven projects communities with the focus to administer a well designed semi-structured questionnaire to the local community inhabitants. A total of 68 questionnaires have been successfully administered to 68 community respondents in all seven communities. The questionnaire captured data about the demography and general information of the respondents, knowledge of the respondents of the three focal primate species, their perceptions about wildlife tourism, their livelihoods in relation to wildlife tourism and their experience and expectation about wildlife tourism. Analysis of the questionnaire data is yet to be done.

- Also, there is an ongoing individual stakeholders meeting. At the moment eight stakeholders have been reached out of 20 targets. An interview guide was used to guide the discussion with the stakeholders. The discussions were based on the threats faced with regards the conservation of the primates, population trend over the last 10 years, benefits options for the local population in conserving the species, existing policies for the conservation of the species and the extent of policy implementation geared towards the long-term conservation of the species in Sierra Leone among others. The eight stakeholders were from government institutions, academia and CSO. However, the stakeholder engagement and discussion is a continuous activity scheduled to be carried out towards the hosting of the stakeholder workshop later in December 2021. There are appointments to meet with other relevant stakeholders from various sectors whose office mandates relates to the environment and the conservation of biodiversity.

- Currently, the project team is preparing for the implementation of the upcoming ecological survey in October 2021 and the training of the community bio-monitoring technicians who will participate in the ecological data collection. The major ongoing preparations are the carving of two local boats for crossing on the island by the survey team and the gathering of the required survey equipment and other relevant materials for the training and the transect survey.

I am attaching some field photos from the community interviews and in meetings with some of the stakeholders for reference. You can use any of the photos that you find interesting for the web page. If you require more photos, please let me know and I will send more.

A detailed report from the activities will follow after the ecological survey in October 2021.