

Project Update: February 2024

Objective:

Our project seeks to study the population, distribution, and habitat preferences of the endangered, and poorly known Mount Kupe bush-shrike and other species of conservation concern on the Obudu Plateau, Nigeria. We aimed to document the breeding behaviour and habitat utilisation of the species in Nigeria and raised awareness on the need to conserve the remaining gallery forest on the Obudu Plateau where the species has been sighted in Nigeria.

Table 1: Summary of objectives, activities, and outputs

Activities	Output	Forthcoming
Meeting with Cross River National Park (CRNP) Ranch communities and school leaders	The team held three meetings with the Ranch and Anape Communities all in Obudu Plateau. The closest community to the Anape range of the Cross River National Park, Okwangwo Division where there has been previous reports and records of Mount Kupe bush-shrike and other birds of conservation concern such as green breasted bush-shrike, <i>Picathartes oreas</i> , and the white throated mountain babbler. This community have forest patches perceived to host this species.	Activity completed
Purchased of Field equipment and project materials.	Field equipment such as a camera for taking pictures, GPS for recording coordinates, projector used during training the trainers workshop on bird identification and outreach and raising awareness in school. An android device used in data collection during field survey. Branded t-shirts, notebooks, notepad, drawing books, pen and pencils were also produced and distributed as gift to students, pupils and community participants who answered questions during school visits, train the trainer workshop and community meeting and engagement.	Activity completed
Preliminary survey and finalize survey design	We conducted preliminary survey in 10 different forest patches on the Obudu Plateaus and the Cross River National Park. The sites we surveyed includes Becheve Nature Reserve (BNR), Izulvacha, Emba, Grotto, Megbe, Okpazange, Mete, Women Woodlot Reserve (Etesela), Onimba, and Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park (CRNP). We surveyed a total of 23	Activity completed

	transects totalling 28.073 km across the sites.	
Bird survey	We carried out an intensive bird survey and habitat assessment in the 10 sites we chose. We surveyed for all birds of conservation concern, and take detailed vegetation measurement in points where our target species are sighted.	One more survey to be carried out in dry season in all the sites where Mount Kupe Bishshrike was sighted.
Design and production of posters, and teaching aid for train the trainer	We printed 30 t-shirts and 100 notebooks and notepad, pen, pencils drawing book and two banners for conservation education. As well as purchase of projector, and design of online material and PowerPoint presentations.	Activity completed
Report writing and distribution to stakeholders.		Activity yet to start
Analyses and writing of manuscript for publication		Activities yet to start

Community meeting and engagement

We held three meetings with the host communities (Ranch and Anape) all in Obudu Plateau. These are the closest communities to the Anape range of the Cross River National Park, Okwangwo Division where there has been previous reports and records of Mount Kupe bush-shrike and other birds of conservation concern such as green breasted bush-shrike, *Picathartes oreas*, and the white throated mountain babbler. T-shirts were presented to His Royal Highness Chief (Onum) Sunday Ichile, and other community heads present during awareness and community engagement.



Figure 1: Presentation of T-Shirt during meeting and community engagement

Equipment and other communication materials

We purchased a camera for taking pictures, a projector to be used during training the trainers workshop in communities and awareness during school visitation, computer, GPS and other consumables used during data collection and conservation outreach. We bought some rain boots and a raincoat, and insect repellants that was used during rain and field activities. We also produced some branded notebooks, t-shirts, and writing materials for the conservation ambassadors.



Figure2: Some equipment purchased for the project.

Highlight of fieldwork

During our first-round field survey in forest patches on the Obudu Plateau and the CRNP, we didn't record any individual of our target species (Mount Kupe bush-shrike), we didn't also record green breasted bush-shrike, we however, recorded species of conservation concern such as *Ploceus bannermani*, *Picathartes oreas*, and *Kupeornis gilberti*. In CRNP, we found four breeding sites with six active nests building of *P. oreas*. During our second visit to CRNP on the 17 September to 4 October 2023 we had no record of *Chlorophoneus kupeensis*. We unfortunately found that two of the nests of *P. Oreas* in site one were destroyed. We found one nest with two chicks, and the other two nests with two eggs each. We have so far recorded 40 individuals of *P. bannermani*, and nine nests of *P. bannermani* were recorded in seven forest patches (Emba, Grotto, Becheve Nature Reserve (BNR), Izul-Vacha, Okpazange Forest, Women Woodlots Reserve and Megbi). We similarly recorded 36 individuals of *Kupeornis gilberti* in three forest patches: Emba, Becheve Nature Reserve and CRNP.



Figure 3: Picture of *P. Oreas* in CRNP. Figure 3: active nest building of *P. bannermani* in Women Woodlot Reserve (Etesela).



Figure 3: Nests of *P. Oreas* in CRNP.

Highlight of Conservation Education Activities

We visited three secondary and three primary schools to create awareness on the need for sustainable used of natural resources, advocate for the conservation of the forest patches on the Obudu Plateau, and train young people on the identification of common birds on the Obudu Plateau and how to report sightings of birds of conservation concern to global and regional citizen science projects. We reached out to a total of 248 students and pupils in all the schools.



Figure 4: Conservation education and training of students to identify common bird species on the Obudu Plateau.

Challenges faced during the implementation of project activities.

The equipment we bought arrived late. Weather was another challenge that we had to plan our field survey in line with the weather forecasts, which affected our field survey, and we shifted our field survey for weeks between August and October due heavy rainfall.