

## Project update

**Title: Understanding Community Perception on Threatened Fish Species Conservation and Promoting Sustainable Aquaculture in White Volta Basin's Fishing Villages, Ghana**

**Project ID: 43601-1**

**Principal investigator: C Abdou Orou-Seko ([abdouorouseko@gmail.com](mailto:abdouorouseko@gmail.com))**

## Project activities carried out

### 1. Field reconnaissance and community entry meetings

- Between 8<sup>th</sup> July and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014, we conducted field reconnaissance and held community entry meetings at the project sites: Nawuni, Adayili, and Dapali along the White Volta River. These meetings were crucial for building rapport with local communities as we introduced the project to leaders and influential figures in each village. The primary objective was to inform community leaders about the project's aims, with a focus on the potential benefits, including long-term improvements in fish biodiversity, food security, and economic opportunities for fishing communities. We emphasized the importance of preserving fish species that are increasingly vulnerable due to overfishing and environmental changes. Community leaders were receptive to the project and expressed interest in participating, recognizing that the initiative could promote more sustainable fishing practices and healthier aquatic ecosystems in the long term.



**Figure 1: Principal investigator and community leaders at Nawuni during community entry meeting © Napps Lateeph.**



**Figure 2: Community entry meeting at Adayili with community leaders © Haruna Alhassan**



**Figure 3: Principal investigator, project team member, community leaders and members of the fishermen association at Dapali during community entry meeting © Haruna Alhassan**

- In addition to the community meetings, we visited the fish landing points in each of the fishing villages. These locations, where fish are brought in after daily catches, were critical for observing the types and sizes of fish being caught, as well as assessing any patterns in species composition across the different sites. This step was key in gathering preliminary data on the variety and quantity of fish, which will guide future conservation strategies tailored to the local context. The observations and insights gathered during this initial phase are invaluable, as they provided a foundational understanding of both the ecological and social dynamics within these fishing villages. Below are some pictures that were captured.





**Figure 4: Observation of fish species from the white volta river on sale at Nawuni fishing community**





**Figure 5: Observation of fish species from the white volta river on sale at Adayili fishing community**



**Figure 6: Principal investigator discussing the different fish species with a fishmonger at Adayili fishing community © Napps Lateeph**



**Figure 7: Observation of fish species from the white volta river on sale at Dapali fishing community © Napps Lateeph**

## **2. Ethical clearance application**

To ensure the ethical integrity of the planned survey activities, an application for ethical clearance was submitted to the Committee on Human Research, Publications and Ethics (CHRPE) at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The ethical review process was crucial in safeguarding the rights, dignity, and well-being of participants, ensuring that all activities adhere to the highest ethical standards. This includes obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation without any harm. On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024, we received an approval letter from CHRPE, authorizing the commencement of survey activities in the selected communities.

## **3. First data collection**

The first phase of data collection for the project focused on assessing the threats faced by endangered fish species in the White Volta Basin and evaluating the knowledge levels of fishing communities regarding the conservation of these species. To ensure accurate and effective data collection, a two-day training session for research assistants was held on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024.





**Figure 8: Training section of research assistants © Haruna Alhassan**

- Following the training, data collection activities were conducted from September 23 to 27, 2024, in the selected fishing communities of Nawuni, Adayili, and Dapali. The research assistant engaged community members through surveys using a structured questionnaire, focusing on their perceptions of the current state of fish biodiversity, the threats to endangered species, and their awareness and understanding of conservation efforts. Below are some pictures taken during the data collection.



**Figure 9: Research assistants collecting data with fishermen in the project sites**

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