Final Evaluation Report

We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in MS Word and not PDF format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please DO NOT fill in and submit this form until the project has been completed.

Complete the form in English. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to jane@rufford.org.

Your Details	
Full Name	LUSEKELO ADAM SILABI
Project Title	Preventing the Aquarium Trade and Illegal Collection of *L. kungweensis* to Enhance its Conservation in Tanzania
Application ID	44621-1
Date of this Report	14th October 2025

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Assessing and quantifying the number of *L. kungweensis* collected by local fishermen and people		✓		This objective was successfully achieved through structured interviews and direct field observations at several landing sites around Kungwe Bay. Although no recent collections of *L. kungweensis* were confirmed, the exercise provided essential baseline information on historical harvesting patterns, species presence, and community perceptions. The findings suggest that previous overharvesting, habitat degradation, or increased awareness may have influenced the current absence of the species. This assessment built a foundation for ongoing ecological monitoring and strengthened collaboration with local fishermen
Assessing the ecological habitat condition of *L. kungweensis*			✓	

Building capacity and raising awareness among stakeholders about *L. kungweensis* conservation			✓	This objective was fully achieved through the successful implementation of education and awareness campaigns conducted in eight fishing villages around Kungwe Bay. The meetings engaged artisanal fishermen, fisheries officers, and local leaders, significantly improving understanding of *L. kungweensis* conservation importance. Many participants pledged to adopt sustainable fishing practices, comply with fishing regulations, and report illegal trade activities. The awareness sessions also strengthened cooperation between communities, local authorities, and conservation partners, laying a strong foundation for long-term, community-based conservation efforts

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a) The assessment and quantification exercise provided essential baseline information regarding the current collection status of *Lates (Lamprologus) kungweensis* around Kungwe Bay. Through structured interviews with local fishermen and direct observations at key landing sites, it was established that no individuals of *L. kungweensis* had been recently collected, nor were any specimens observed during the survey period. This finding suggests that active harvesting of the species is currently not taking place within the area. Seven (7) villages around Kungwe Bay were surveyed, and 20 respondents from each village were

interviewed, making a total of 140 participants. These included village leaders, government officials, fishermen and BMU leaders.

However, interviews revealed that collection activities likely occurred in the past, particularly when demand for the species in the aquarium trade was high. The absence of recent records may therefore indicate either a notable decline in the local population due to historical overharvesting and habitat degradation, or a positive behavioural change among fishermen resulting from increased awareness and law enforcement. Some respondents also attributed the species' absence to possible seasonal movements or habitat shifts associated with breeding or environmental changes.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the exact cause of the observed absence, this assessment yielded several important outcomes. It confirmed that past harvesting pressure may have significantly reduced local populations, highlighting the urgent need for continuous ecological monitoring and population surveys. Additionally, the interviews strengthened engagement with local fishermen, fostering open dialogue on the importance of protecting *L. kungweensis* and its habitat. The data collected now serve as a critical reference point for future conservation interventions aimed at tracking population recovery trends and evaluating the effectiveness of awareness and enforcement measures around Kungwe Bay

b). The ecological habitat assessment provided valuable insights into the environmental conditions of *L. kungweensis*'s potential habitats within the Kungwe Bay region. Using field observations and discussions with local stakeholders including village leader, government officials, artisanal fishermen, and beach management unit (BMU) leader), the study identified key ecological factors influencing the species' distribution, including water clarity. All laboratory costs associated with the study were covered by my personal funds, demonstrating my strong commitment to completing the research successfully. In addition, the university played a key role in helping me achieve the project's objectives by providing continuous academic guidance and close supervision throughout the entire research process.

Despite the fact that no individuals were observed during the survey period, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of key ecological and environmental factors. This was done to gain a

deeper understanding of the current status of habitat quality, identify potential threats, and assess whether the existing conditions could still support the species in the future. It was observed that several historical collection sites have experienced noticeable habitat degradation due to increased sedimentation, shoreline agriculture, and domestic waste discharge. These pressures have led to reduced water quality and loss of critical spawning and shelter areas for native fish species, including *L. kungweensis*. This outcome emphasized the need for integrated habitat management strategies and stricter control of anthropogenic activities affecting the lake ecosystem. The findings also provided baseline ecological data that can guide restoration efforts and inform local conservation planning. Importantly, the habitat assessment fostered collaboration between the project team, local fisheries officers, and environmental authorities, ensuring that conservation actions align with local development priorities. Through this process, communities began to recognize the connection between their daily livelihood activities and the overall health of the aquatic environment. This has laid a strong foundation for future initiatives focused on habitat restoration, water pollution reduction, and sustainable resource use around Kungwe Bay

c). The education and awareness campaign on the conservation of *Lates kungweensis* yielded several positive outcomes among the targeted fishing communities around Kungwe Bay. Ten (10) meetings were conducted with a total of 200 participants, who demonstrated an increased understanding of the ecological importance of the species and the broader value of conserving Lake Tanganyika's ecosystem. Many artisanal fishermen expressed a willingness to adopt sustainable fishing practices, including the use of legal fishing gears and the avoidance of destructive methods such as beach seining and the use of small-mesh nets. No fisheries officers were provided with working gear for monitoring and data collection during this phase. We plan to address this gap and provide the necessary equipment in the second phase of the project.

The campaign also strengthened collaboration between local communities and fisheries officers. Village leaders and fisheries committees agreed to incorporate messages on *L. kungweensis* conservation into their routine meetings and local by-laws governing fishing activities. This has created a stronger sense of collective responsibility for resource management and environmental protection at the community level. Furthermore, the

discussions revealed improved awareness about the potential impacts of overfishing, habitat destruction, and pollution on fish populations. Community members showed increased interest in participating in future monitoring and conservation programs, indicating a shift in attitude toward more sustainable resource use. Although *L. kungweensis* was not sighted during the period of the campaign, local residents expressed commitment to reporting any future observations of the species and to cooperating with researchers and conservation agencies in data collection.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

During the project, several unforeseen challenges emerged. The first was unpredictable weather conditions on Lake Tanganyika, which occasionally disrupted travel and field activities, leading to slight delays in data collection. Secondly, limited accessibility to remote fishing villages around Kungwe Bay made it difficult to reach some communities as planned, especially due to high transport costs and poor road infrastructure. This was managed by adjusting the itinerary and conducting extended interviews in accessible villages to compensate for the gaps. Another challenge was low community participation, as some fishermen were hesitant to discuss past collection activities due to fear of legal implications. To address this, the team worked closely with local fisheries officers and village leaders to build trust, clarify the project's conservation purpose, and ensure confidentiality. Additionally, budget constraints caused by fluctuating exchange rates slightly affected allowances and logistical costs; however, prudent financial management and local support from community members helped minimize the impact. Despite these challenges, all core objectives were completed

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

Local communities played a central role in the success of the project. Fishermen, village leaders, and local fisheries committees participated in interviews, awareness meetings, and monitoring discussions. Their traditional ecological knowledge was essential in identifying historical collection sites and understanding the species past abundance and local threats. The communities benefited through capacity building and knowledge exchange—many

participants gained new understanding of sustainable fishing practices, species identification, and the ecological role of *L. kungweensis*. The awareness sessions empowered them to take part in community-led monitoring and to collaborate with fisheries authorities in combating illegal trade. Additionally, the project strengthened relationships between local communities and conservation stakeholders, enhancing their access to technical advice and future conservation opportunities. The project also instilled a strong sense of ownership and pride in protecting their local aquatic biodiversity.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. There are strong plans to continue this work through follow-up ecological monitoring and community-based conservation programs. The project team aims to collaborate with local fisheries officers to conduct periodic surveys to monitor the presence and recovery of *L. kungweensis*. Furthermore, discussions are underway with conservation partners to expand awareness campaigns to more fishing communities along the Kigoma shoreline. A future proposal will focus on habitat protection, pollution control, and promoting alternative livelihoods such as community aquaculture and beekeeping, which can reduce pressure on wild fish populations.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

I plan to produce one publication in a reputable peer-reviewed journal, presenting the study's methodology, key findings, and conservation implications in detail. In addition, I aim to publish two short and accessible summary papers through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X. These posts will communicate the main results to a wider public audience, raise awareness about the species, and highlight its conservation needs. This approach will help engage individuals who may not have access to formal scientific publications while promoting broader conservation understanding.

7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The next critical steps include conducting comprehensive ecological surveys to confirm the presence, population status, and habitat preferences of *L. kungweensis*. Strengthening law enforcement and community patrols around Kungwe Bay is also essential to deter illegal collection and habitat destruction. Another key step is to develop a long-term community

conservation strategy that integrates local fishermen into monitoring programs and promotes sustainable alternative livelihoods. Finally, building stronger institutional partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions will be crucial to sustain conservation gains and ensure the long-term survival of *L. kungweensis*

8. Did you use the Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?
YES

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their roles in the project.

Name	**Role**
Lusekelo Adam Silabi	Project Leader Coordination, data collection, and reporting
Alferd mbiliko	Assistant Researcher Community engagement, data analysis
Hazama mwalu	Field Officer Logistics, interviews, and awareness facilitation
Husen hasan	Local Guide Translation and liaison with fishing communities
Hamza mwema	Data Clerk: Record keeping, financial management, and report preparation
Dr. Fredrick ojija	Project advisor
Farida mayowela	Project Advisor

10. Any other comments?
This project has been a significant step forward in understanding and protecting *Lamprologus kungweensis*, a species of high conservation concern in Lake Tanganyika. The collaboration The Rufford Foundation's support not only enabled data collection and awareness creation but also inspired community-driven stewardship for aquatic biodiversity. The team expresses sincere gratitude to the Foundation for its trust, funding, and commitment to small-scale but impactful conservation initiativesbetween local communities, government officers, and the project team demonstrated that grassroots engagement is key to effective conservation.

ANNEX – Financial Report

[Intentionally removed]