

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Rufford Small Grant

Project number: 45899-2

Combining camera trapping and local hunters monitoring approaches to assess status of the African wild dog in a key ecological area (Adamawa-Cameroon)



*Family photograph taking in front of the Lamidat of Dodeo after the meeting*

### Progress Report

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## **Project Update**

**Overall objective:** Raise awareness among local people on the safety of camera traps and to train local hunters and assistants.

### **Specific objectives:**

- Presentation of the new project;
- Selection of the hunters and assistants;
- Training of the hunters/assistants in data collection and equipping them with smartphones to document sightings of the evidence of African wild dogs;
- Raising awareness among local communities on the camera trap security to prevent theft after deployment.

### **Fieldwork preparation**

Before the first field trip, we prepared a datasheet for data collection (see Appendix 1) and started the process of obtaining the necessary documents for the study, such as the Research permit from MINRESI and the letter from the Kontcha Divisional Officer. We also ordered the field equipment online from the United States (25 camera traps and 27 SD memory cards) and obtained 10 camera traps from Idea Wild. Two smartphones to be used by the assistants/hunters in the field as well as batteries for camera traps were purchased directly here in Cameroon.

### **Methods**

The first fieldwork was carried out from 9 to 18 March 2025 in the Tchabal Mbabo mountain range, particularly in the village of Dodéo, where the meeting took place. The meeting was attended by 34 participants, including the Lamido of Dodéo (chief of 2<sup>nd</sup> level traditional authority), five “Djaouro” (village chiefs representing five villages), 17 hunters, six shepherd chiefs, two local assistants, one local translator, one research assistant, and the project leader (see the list of all participants in Appendix 2).

### **Presentation of the project**

During this section, the project was presented to the local people to inform them of the study's aims and importance. We also reminded the local people that some of our camera traps and SD memory cards were stolen during the first study, which had a detrimental effect on the research. After the project presentation, the local people were invited to participate by asking some questions and sharing their thoughts. These discussions were very productive, with the local

people expressing their willingness to contribute to the success of the new project by raising awareness of camera trap security in their local communities.



**Figure 1:** The project leader presenting the project in the meeting room.

## Selection of the hunters and assistants

At the end of the project presentation, local hunters and assistants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) knowledge of the ecology of the African wild dog, (2) the ability to identify the species, (3) the ability to record data on a datasheet, (4) the ability to use a smartphone to photograph all evidences signs of the target species, and (5) availability during the survey period. Five hunters and two local assistants were selected (see the list in Appendix 3). Datasheets and other equipment, such as smartphones, pencils, erasers, and razor blades, were regrouped in the flap shirts (Fig. 2a), placed in plastic bags and distributed to the selected hunters and assistants (Fig. 2b).



**Figure 2:** Selection of local hunters/assistants: a) preparation of datasheets, b) local hunters/assistants selected and distribution of the data sheets and work equipment to each data collector.

### Training local hunters and assistants

Local hunters and assistants were trained on how to record data on the datasheet (Fig. 3a) and how to use smartphones to accurately photograph signs of African wild dogs (Fig. 3b). Given the low level of education in the study area, the datasheet was designed in French to make it easier for the hunters to use. To this end, images of various signs indicating the presence of wild dogs were used (see Appendix 1).



**Figure 3:** Training session with local hunters and assistants on: a) how to record data in the field, b) how to use smartphones to document target species.

## Next step

The next step of this project will be the deployment of camera traps in the field, camera traps service, camera traps recovery and awareness campaigns.

## Some pictures from the field



**Legend:** a) Field team with their motorcyclists in the village of Sambolabo; b) Project leader in the field; c) Lamido of Dodéo with his guards; d) Local leader during the meeting.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Datasheets used by hunters and local field assistants

### Fiche de collecte des indices du lycaon (chien sauvage) dans les chaines de montagne de Tchabal Mbabo

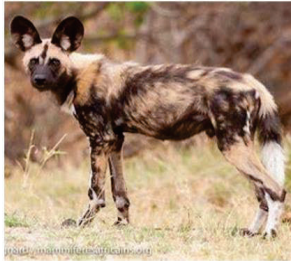
Entre Numéro :.....

1) Date entrée : ...../...../.....

2) Date sortie : ...../...../.....

3) Assistant N° 1 2 3 4

4) Chasseur N° 1 2 3 4



**Présence d'adultes**

Oui

Non

**Nombre d'adulte vu**

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	
	19	20		



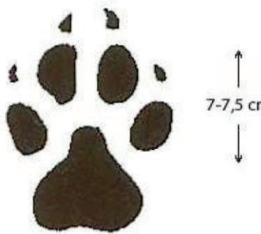
**Présence des petits**

Oui

Non

**Nombre de petit vu**

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15		
16	17	18	19	20	



**Empreintes**

Oui

Non

**Nombre d'empreintes**

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15		
16	17	18	19	20	

**Age d'empreintes**

- Fraiche
- Récente
- Vielle
- Très vielle



**Crottes**

Oui

Non

**Nombre de crottes**

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15		
16	17	18	19	20	

**Age des crottes**

- Fraiche
- Récente
- Vielle
- Très vielle



**Peau**

Oui

Non

**Nombre de peau**

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15		
16	17	18	19	20	

Cri Oui

Non

Nombre de fois : 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

## **Appendix 2:** List of participants