

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

---

Your Details	
<b>Full Name</b>	Stanislas Mahussi Gandaho
<b>Project Title</b>	Community-based conservation of red-bellied monkeys and wetland ecosystems on Agonve island, Benin
<b>Application ID</b>	46571-1
<b>Date of this Report</b>	March 02, 2026

**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
Increased community awareness of conservation and wetland importance			X	Awareness of the monkey's endangered status rose from 0% to 100%; recognition of key threats increased from 18% to 98–100%. Radio outreach reached approximately 1,023 community members.
Enhanced knowledge of species presence and population status		X		Eight wildlife species documented in the first systematic survey, including two IUCN/Benin Red List Endangered species. An analysis of population size is currently underway for scientific publication. <i>C. erythrogaster</i> was not camera-confirmed but community reports place it at the reserve periphery. Monitoring is ongoing. Additional species were identified during fieldwork and are documented on the Agonve website: <a href="https://agonve.naben.org/biodiversite/">https://agonve.naben.org/biodiversite/</a>
Foster environmental stewardship among youth through education			X	20 pupils and 2 teachers participated in interactive classroom sessions and a field visit to the Sanctuaire des Singes. Pupils demonstrated strong ability to identify threats and conservation benefits. Teachers are now equipped to continue disseminating conservation messages.

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

**a) A Measurable and transformative shift in community conservation awareness**

The participatory workshop held in June 2025 produced one of the most striking knowledge-change results of the project. Before the workshop, 89% of community participants believed the red-bellied monkey was abundant and non-threatened, while 0% recognized it as endangered. Following the session, these figures reversed entirely: only 1% held the initial misconception, and 100% of participants acknowledged the species' precarious conservation status.

This transformation extended beyond species-level knowledge. Understanding of key threats, particularly unsustainable agriculture and uncontrolled hunting — rose from 18% to 98–100%. Awareness of the wetland's dual ecological and economic value reached unanimity (100%). This shift was reinforced through radio broadcasts in the local Fon language, which extended conservation messaging to approximately 1,023 community members beyond the immediate workshop participants.

#### **b) First systematic wildlife survey**

Prior to this project, no systematic wildlife documentation existed for the wetland ecosystems of Agonvè Island. Across five camera trap deployment periods between April 2025 and February 2026, the project generated 21 station-deployment combinations and recorded eight wildlife species, constituting the first biodiversity baseline for this ecosystem.

Two species of high conservation concern were confirmed: *Perodicticus potto ssp. juju*, classified as Endangered (EN) on both the IUCN and Benin Red Lists, and *Tragelaphus spekii*, listed as Endangered (EN) on Benin's national Red List. Additionally, a pivotal institutional discovery was made: the survey area corresponds to the officially gazetted Réserve Biologique d'Agbogon, designated by decree in 2012 but effectively unknown to local authorities. The team digitized the reserve boundaries and made them available to Naben, providing a formal legal framework for all future management operations.

#### **c) Integration of youth and schools as long-term conservation actors**

Recognising that durable conservation depends on the next generation, the project invested directly in environmental education for children in the communities of Houeli and Agonvè Azilidji. Twenty pupils from public primary schools participated in interactive classroom sessions covering species endemism, threat identification, and the ecological role of primates in seed dispersal and forest regeneration.

The sessions were complemented by a field visit to the Sanctuaire des Singes of Drabo Gbo in Abomey-Calavi, where children observed the red-bellied monkey in a protected setting for the first time. The impact of this experience was captured in the testimony of one pupil, who stated: "I didn't know they were protected." Two schoolteachers also participated and were equipped with conservation knowledge, significantly multiplying the reach and sustainability of this educational effort.

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

- Seasonal flooding cut field access for ~4 months, forcing temporary removal of all camera traps. The team restructured monitoring into five discrete deployment periods to recover lost time.
- Camera malfunctions reduced the functional camera pool from 20 to 14 — five units were already degraded from prior use, and one was destroyed by giant ants. The team compensated area coverage by relocating active cameras.
- Security risks in the north-eastern reserve zone, due to herder activity and human pressure, prevented camera deployment there. Trust-building with

surrounding villages ensured equipment elsewhere was protected by community members.

- Non-detection of the target species on camera traps, despite community-confirmed sightings at the reserve periphery. This was compounded by the inability to deploy cameras in high-pressure zones (particularly the north-eastern sector) where human activity had already been flagged as security risks. Monitoring continues, with camera placement being adjusted toward edge habitats where *C. erythrogaster* is more likely to occur.

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

Local communities were engaged at every stage of the project. Village chiefs, the District Manager of Kpedekpo, and youth representatives participated in an initial stakeholder meeting where they shaped the project's direction and raised concerns about human-wildlife conflict. Community members assisted with camera trap deployment, guided the team through the reserve. Local radio broadcasts in the extended outreach beyond direct participants. School pupils and teachers from Houeli and Agonvè Azilidji were directly integrated through environmental education sessions, and a field visit to the Sanctuaire des Singes.

##### Benefits to Communities

- Participants gained accurate understanding of the red-bellied monkey's endangered status, the ecological value of the wetland, and practical non-violent methods to reduce crop damage by monkeys.
- 20 pupils and 2 teachers received structured conservation education, with teachers now equipped to continue disseminating these messages in future school years.
- The digitization and sharing of the Agbogon reserve boundaries gave local authorities and partners a legal framework they were previously unaware of.
- Communities were informed about the potential for wildlife-based tourism on Agonvè Island as a future alternative income source, with children specifically encouraged to envision a role as local guides and interpreters.

#### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes! First, expanding camera trap coverage. This will begin with targeted community awareness in the north-eastern villages, where human pressure remains high, before deploying cameras in that sector. The camera trap network will also be completed to 45 units, based on lessons learned from the current monitoring experience. Second, a formal management plan by tree planting to restore some part of degraded wetland forest.

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

The findings of this project will be submitted for publication in the African Journal of Ecology. The paper will present the first systematic wildlife survey (population density, species pattern activity and overlap, species co-occurrence, etc.), complemented by an evaluation of the key threats affecting the study area, including land use and land cover changes and flood risk assessment. Project progress has been regularly

shared through Naben's LinkedIn page (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/nabenngo>) and website (<https://naben.org/>), ensuring ongoing visibility throughout the project period. Following publication, a dissemination seminar will be organised to present the full results.

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

The most critical next step is achieving confirmed detection of the red-bellied monkey through expanded camera trap monitoring. In parallel, formalising the management of the reserve with Naben will ensure that the legal and ecological foundations built during this project are translated into concrete, long-term conservation action on the ground.

### **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, the Rufford Foundation logo was included in all materials produced during the project, including brochures distributed, T-shirt, Themed notebook, etc. The Foundation also received public recognition through Naben's LinkedIn page and website.

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

- Stanislas Mahussi Gandaho (Principal Investigator) I led all project activities including stakeholder engagement, camera trap deployment, workshop facilitation, and reporting.
- Habib Agossou: Contributed to camera trap deployment, environmental education sessions, and field investigations.
- Crépin Dossa and Laurent Legba: Field guides for camera trap deployment
- Mohamed Ayaka: Participated in camera trap deployment and field monitoring.
- Myriame Salanon: Contributed to documentation of stakeholder meetings and community engagement.

### **10. Any other comments?**

This project delivered results beyond initial expectations. The discovery and digitization of the Réserve Biologique d'Agbogon and the first systematic biodiversity baseline for the ecosystem are outcomes of lasting scientific and institutional value. The non-detection of *C. erythrogaster* reflects the genuine complexity of surveying a cryptic species in a difficult wetland environment, not a failure. The community engagement achieved, from village chiefs to schoolchildren, represents the most durable outcome of the project and the strongest foundation for its continuation.

**ANNEX – Financial Report**  
**[Intentionally removed]**