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**Project: Assessing Threats and Local Perceptions of Giant
Pangolins in Budongo–Mukihani Forest Linkage Zone**

QUARTER TWO PROJECT UPDATES REPORT

By

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PROJECT RESULTS

This section provides a comprehensive update of the project's performance relative to its intended outcomes, based on the established indicators and targets. It presents the progress achieved during the Quarter 2 of the project between the month of December 2025 and March 2026 highlighting key accomplishments

Activity 1: Conducting Threat Monitoring

Monitoring of giant pangolins was conducted using a combination of camera traps deployment, and Bi-weekly patrols by community conservation monitors. Throughout the monitoring period, no direct sightings of giant pangolins were recorded. Camera traps also did not capture any images of the species.

Community conservation monitors conducted Bi-weekly patrols, providing consistent updates on both wildlife activity and emerging threats. Their observations supported camera trap findings, indicating no confirmed sightings of giant pangolins but occasional evidence of habitat use through indirect signs. The regular presence of monitors in the field improved detection of illegal activities and helped identify areas of concern.

Habitat degradation was also widely observed, with evidence of agricultural encroachment recorded and reported through Bi-weekly monitoring. Camera trap images further confirmed human presence in forested areas which causes a threat to the well-known highly valued giant pangolins, including along informal access routes within the forests that were identified during Bi-weekly monitoring.

Despite the absence of giant pangolin sightings, a wide range of other wildlife species was recorded, indicating that the ecosystem still supports significant biodiversity. Animals such as white-bellied pangolin, Chimpanzees, monkeys, and olive baboons were captured by the Camera traps.

Overall, the monitoring results indicate that while giant pangolins have not yet been directly observed or captured on camera, there is some evidence to suggest possible presence within the area. However, ongoing pressures from poaching and habitat degradation remain significant and may be limiting detectability or population recovery. Continued integrated monitoring, strengthened anti-poaching efforts, and increased community engagement will be essential to improve the chances of confirming the species' presence and ensuring the protection of the wider ecosystem.

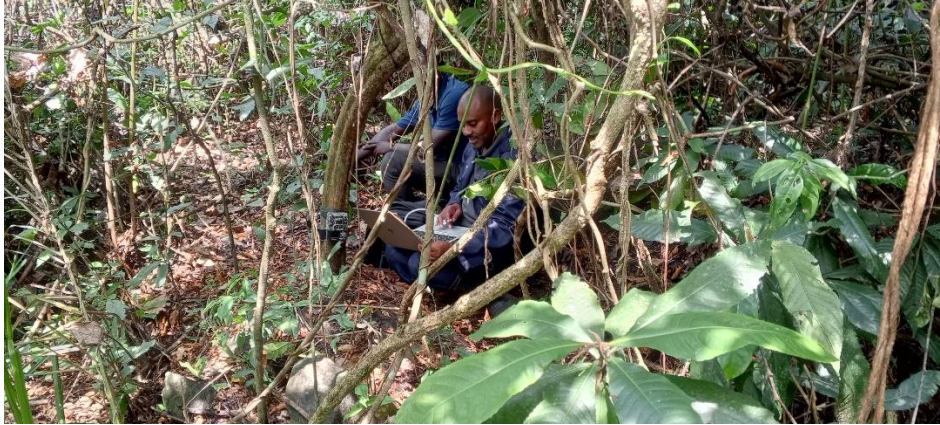


Photo 1: Project Coordinator and Community Conservation Monitor During data retrieval from Camera Trap. © Joseph Ssemuyaba



Photo 2: White bellied Pangolin captured by Camera Trap © Joseph Ssemuyaba



Photo 3: Other wildlife animal captured by Camera Trap © Joseph Ssemuyaba



Photo 4: Chimpanzee captured by a Camera Trap © Joseph Ssemuyaba



Photo 5: Cleared forest land for agriculture © Joseph Ssemuyaba



Photo 6: Vegetable garden in middle of the forest being evidence for agricultural encroachment © Joseph Ssemuyaba

Activity 2: Conducting of Household Interviews

The survey, conducted among 66 respondents across three villages (Abangi, Ogadra, and Onieni), provides important insights into community knowledge, perceptions, and interactions with Giant pangolins, as well as the key threats affecting the species.

Overall, the communities demonstrate high awareness and familiarity with pangolins, with nearly all respondents having heard of them and a large majority having seen them. Local knowledge is strong, particularly regarding pangolin ecology, such as their diet. This is supported by the fact that many respondents are long-term residents, allowing them to draw on indigenous ecological knowledge.

Despite this high awareness, there is a widespread perception that pangolin populations are declining, mainly based on reduced sightings over time. The primary threats identified are habitat loss and hunting, driven by factors such as agriculture expansion, demand for meat, and use in traditional medicine. Although many respondents report an increase in forest cover in recent years, this may reflect improvements in quantity rather than quality of habitat, which may still negatively impact pangolins.

A significant concern is the disconnect between positive attitudes and actual behavior. While most respondents view pangolins as beneficial and support their conservation, a large proportion still kill or capture them when encountered, indicating gaps in behavior change and practical conservation action.

Institutionally, there are notable weaknesses. Although many people are aware that pangolins are protected, knowledge of legal penalties is low, and law enforcement is widely perceived as ineffective, with limited patrol presence. This reduces the deterrent effect against illegal activities.

Encouragingly, there is strong community willingness to support conservation efforts, with nearly all respondents expressing readiness to participate. Preferred solutions include community education, alternative livelihoods, habitat restoration, and community patrols, highlighting the importance of locally driven and inclusive conservation approaches. Below are the survey results attached



Giant Pangolin
Survey repor.pdf

Activity 3: Community Focus Group Discussions

The Project team conducted several Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) Involving Men and Women from the three villages Abangi, Ogadra, and Onieni located in Kasenene Parish, Masindi District, Uganda. These Discussions provides important insights into community knowledge, perceptions, and interactions with Giant pangolins, as well as the key threats affecting the species. These discussions were facilitated by the project coordinator with support from the project assistant who was acted as the secretary for the engagements.

Fifteen (15) Women five (5) from each Village and Twenty-Seven (27) men Nine (9) from each Village were engaged in the discussion and a total of 42 participants were reached. The FGDs were kept concise, with a maximum duration of Two hour per session. Participants were selected in collaboration with the respective village Chairpersons, who identified individuals with a high likelihood of possessing relevant knowledge about the giant pangolins. Participation in the FGDs was voluntary and guided by the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). The project team, with assistance from the Chairpersons, extended invitations to potential participants. During the meeting

the project team further explained the project's goals and objectives to ensure diverse perspectives, participants were grouped based on shared characteristics such as gender and age, and proximity to the forest was highly considered.

During the sessions, participants were assured that the themes discussed were not of a sensitive nature. Topics covered during these engagements included: - Knowledge and Status of Giant Pangolins, Threats and Drivers of Decline, Human–Pangolin Interactions, Governance, Laws, and Enforcement, Community Participation and Livelihoods, Conservation Efforts and Solutions as well as Priority Actions and Recommendations.

During the engagements men revealed that community members generally have basic knowledge of giant pangolins, including their physical characteristics and typical habitats in forested areas, particularly around termite mounds. Participants noted a significant decline in pangolin sightings compared to the past, attributing this to increased human activities, and indicated that sightings are more common during rainy seasons when the animals are more active. Men demonstrated relatively deeper knowledge due to their frequent interaction with forest environments, while women expressed more general awareness.

Across both groups, the main threats to giant pangolins were identified as hunting and habitat destruction. Hunting was described as a common practice driven by the need for income and demand for meat and scales. Participants emphasized that expanding agricultural activities, logging, and charcoal burning have contributed to the loss of pangolin habitats. When community members encounter pangolins, responses vary from capturing or killing them to simply avoiding them, although the species is generally perceived as harmless and non-threatening. There were no major reports of direct conflict between humans and pangolins.

In terms of governance, awareness of laws protecting pangolins was found to be limited, particularly among women, and enforcement was described as inconsistent due to challenges such as limited personnel, weak monitoring, and occasional corruption. Participants were largely unaware of any local by-laws or traditional rules specifically protecting pangolins. Livelihoods in the area, mainly farming and forest resource use, were recognized as contributing to habitat degradation, and participants suggested alternative income sources such as goat keeping, Piggery, Poultry, beekeeping and small businesses to reduce dependence on forest exploitation. However, there was little evidence of existing conservation or livelihood programs reaching these communities.

Overall, participants felt that conservation efforts in the area have been minimal and not sustained. They recommended increasing community awareness, providing viable alternative livelihoods and strengthening law enforcement as key strategies for protecting giant pangolins. There was a strong emphasis on involving local communities in conservation initiatives, with support needed from government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders in the form of training, funding, and improved enforcement mechanisms. These findings highlight the urgent need for integrated, community-based conservation approaches to address both ecological and socio-economic drivers of pangolin decline.



Photo 7: Female participants from getable Abangi Ogadra and Onieni villages engage in a Focus Group discussion facilitated by the project team sharing insights on the Giants Pangolins © Joseph Ssemmyaba



Photo 8: Male participants from getable Abangi Ogadra and Onieni villages engage in a Focus Group discussion facilitated by the project team sharing insights on the Giants Pangolins © Joseph Ssemmyaba

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT HALF

During the upcoming reporting period, the project will undertake:

- Conducting several key informant Interviews
- Conducting community/ Stakeholders Meeting for data presentation and feedback gathering