

Project Update: December 2010

The dry season survey of Kamuku elephants was carried out from September through December 2010 in farmlands around the Kamuku National Park. Fresh dung, footprints, trails and playground of elephants were found in Gwaska village/farmlands only. We measured the dung and footprint diameters as indices of elephant number in the area. The major crops within the farms are guinea corn, maize, cassava, cowpea, rice and groundnut. There were indications of clipping, uprooting and trampling of crops by elephants. The farmlands where elephant indices occurred were also very close to a major river in the Gwaska area, river Kumunanu. The Gwaska, Goron-dutse, Nabango and Kuyambana junction were also found to be important migration routes for the Kamuku elephants.

At village level fora we have advised farmers to cultivate crops such as chilli (pepper), which are highly detested by elephants as hedge plants. Community-based elephant conservation/monitoring committees (taskforce) in each of the target village are saddled with the responsibilities of ensuring compliance among farmers so as to reduce incidence of crop raiding by elephants.

Achievements:

- We now have a firsthand report of elephant occurrence in the study area.
- We have identified the Gwaska-Goron dutse-Nabango-Kuyambana axis as critical migration routes of the Kamuku elephants.
- Authorities of Kamuku National Park have held a tête-à-tête discussion on elephant protection with the management of Kuyambana Game Reserve. This is because the Kamuku National Park forms a contiguous boundary with Kuyambana Game Reserve of Zamfara State, only separated by a major river. The bilateral discussion centred on the need for trans-boundary joint patrol activities and sensitization campaign within the reserve's support zone communities. This is very significant towards ensuring the viability of the Kamuku elephants as the game reserve and other areas have been identified as important haven of the elephants.

The next line of activity is to organise a stakeholder's workshop and media sensitization at Kamuku National Park Headquarters.



