

Project Update: June 2010

In April 2010, the Kamuku Elephant Survey Project team embarked on project initiation and further advocacy visit to the authority of Kamuku National Park, Birnin Gwari, and Kaduna State. This was with a view to garnering more support and carrying out advanced evaluation of problem analysis as well as identifying possible challenges/constraints to successful project implementation.

In addition, and since the guiding principle behind the project is to ensure the active participation of all stakeholders in the conservation of the Kamuku elephants, the project team engaged in a round table discussion with relevant personnel and field officers of Kamuku National Park to jointly formulate a work plan for the project. The project was described by the team leader and series of meaningful inputs were made by participants. Communities were further identified and protocols for engaging them was thoroughly discussed and analysed.

Within the month, sensitization and planning meetings were also carried out with community leaders/village council in the support zone area of the Park (communities that lie within 0 – 5 km radius of the Park). Communities visited were: Kakangi, Dagara I, Dagara II and Bugai. Others include Goron dutse, Kuiga I, Kuiga II, Gwaska and Nabongo. This exercise was aimed at enlisting community support and ownership of project.

In May 2010, we held consultation meeting and discussion with various stakeholders in the selected support zone communities of the Park. This included women and youth groups, hunters, pastoralists and farmers. In collaboration with the community leaders and stakeholders, community-based elephant conservation/ monitoring committees have been established in each of the target villages. We have also been able to recruit survey corps for the project through these committees.

Achievements:

- The Kamuku National Park Authorities (led by the Conservator of Park, Abdullahi Ahmad) expressed particular interest about the need and importance of the project and its willingness to commit resources and logistics to the project fruition and sustenance.
- The community leaders and village council specifically promised their commitment towards ensuring the success of the project. To date we have also maintained good relations with the traditional chiefs and councils in these communities.
- We have also established community-based elephant conservation/ monitoring committees in each of the target villages.
- The community-based elephant conservation/ monitoring committees are serving as a village task-force for supervision of community responsibilities relating to organising, implementation and monitoring of project activities in the various communities.

- In specific terms these committees among others help sensitize and educate members of their community on the need for the protection of elephants in their province.
- They will also serve as the first point of call in any case of elephant raid in farmlands and are expected to report to the project team for rapid assessment and possible intervention.
- Appreciably, we have been able to recruit survey corps for the project through these committees.

The next line of activities is to organise a capacity building program/workshop on participatory survey, monitoring and reporting for recruited survey corps as well as park rangers on elephant survey procedure. At the end of the programme, we will carry out a participatory survey of elephants in Kamuku National Park and its environ among other activities earmarked for ensuring the active protection of the Kamuku elephants.