



**PARTICIPATORY SURVEY AND CONSERVATION OF ENDANGERED
SAVANNAH ELEPHANTS OF KAMUKU AND ITS ENVIRON, NIGERIA**

BEING A PROGRESS REPORT PREPARED

BY

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*Participatory Survey and Conservation of Endangered Savannah Elephants of
Kamuku and its Environ, Nigeria*

PROJECT BRIEF

Title: Participatory Survey and Conservation of Endangered Savannah Elephants of
Kamuku and its environ, Nigeria

Categorization: Mammal

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Project Duration: 12 Months

Status of Report: Progress

Date of Submission: June 2010

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Introduction:

This report details the progress recorded so far in the implementation of the Rufford Small Grants Foundation sponsored nature conservation project- *Participatory survey and conservation of endangered Savannah Elephants of Kamuku and its environ, Nigeria* (ref: 53.10.09). The project aims at strengthening the capacity of locals and Park rangers, as well as raise awareness and enlightenment of local communities on the need for conservation of wildlife species, with special focus on the preservation and protection of the endangered savannah elephants of Kamuku National Park and its environ. The project also seeks to carry out the first systematic survey of the Kamuku elephants by involving local communities through capacity building and conservation education.

Kamuku elephants are highly migratory and maraud to surrounding unprotected areas. Given the stressed human-nature relation in the area, the elephants have become greatly endangered as they are susceptible to major threats including hunting for ivory, habitat destruction and a lack of conservation action plan. It is believed that the viable populations of this savanna elephants will not survive long into the future without increased protection efforts. Therefore, a long road of environmental sensitivity including conservation education and joint action was proposed.

The unique feature of this initiative is its participatory approach at ensuring an improved conservation of the Kamuku elephants. A participatory approach shares the planning, research activities and use of the results between different groups of people who have an interest in the sustainability of a project. The foregoing is an in-depth account of the various activities that have been carried out towards achieving the overall objective of the project.

Project planning and setting out:

Following the safe receipt of fund from the Rufford Small Grants Foundation, the project team, beginning from April, embarked on project initiation and additional advocacy visit to the authority of Kamuku National Park, Birnin Gwari, Kaduna State. This was with a view to garnering more support and carrying out further re-evaluation of problem analysis and also identify possible challenges/constraints to successful project implementation. Particular interest was expressed by the Kamuku National Park authorities (led by the Conservator of Park, Abdullahi Ahmad) about the need and importance of the project and its willingness to commit resources and logistics to the project fruition and sustenance.

Development of Work Plan:

Since the guiding principle behind the project is to ensure the active participation of all stakeholders in the conservation of the Kamuku elephant, 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.

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Sensitization and planning meetings with community leaders/stakeholders:

Within the month, sensitization and planning meetings was carried out with community stakeholders in the support zone area of the Park (communities that lie within 0-5km radius of the Park) on 14th April, 2010. Communities visited were: Kakangi, Dagara I, Dagara II and Bugai. Goron dutse, Kuiga I, Kuiga II, Gwaska and Nabongo were visited on 16th April, 2010. The exercise was premised on the fact that the local communities have the highest stakes in the success and sustainability of the project. In addition, the local communities as custodians of the environment have the knowledge and capacity to contribute to successful conservation of wildlife species. This approach thus, helped to incorporate the views, perceptions, religious beliefs, interests, priorities and realities of the communities in project planning and design. Reception was generally warm and great in all communities visited. The community leaders and village council specifically promised their commitment towards ensuring the success of the project. To date we have maintained good relations with the traditional chiefs and councils in these communities.

Formation of community-based elephant conservation/ monitoring committees:

Pursuance to the above, in the month of May, we held consultation meeting and discussion with various stakeholders in the selected support zone communities of Kamuku National 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. These 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 the community-based elephant conservation/ monitoring 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.

Recruitment of survey corps /team from the various villages:

Again, in the month of May, we have also been able to recruit survey corps for the project in all the target communities through the elephant conservation/ monitoring committees.

Summary of 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.

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- 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.

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PHOTO MART



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