



**Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund  
Half Year Report**

**(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019)**

<b>Project reference:</b>	IWT062
<b>Project title:</b>	Disrupting the illegal wildlife trade in grey parrots in Cameroon
<b>Country(ies):</b>	Cameroon
<b>Lead organisation:</b>	Zoological Society of London
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF), World Parrot Trust (WPT), Association pour la Promotion des Actions de Développement Endogènes Rurales (APADER)
<b>Project leader:</b>	<i>Andrew Fowler</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):</b>	<i>31 October 2019, (HYR1)</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media:</b>	<a href="http://www.zsl.org">www.zsl.org</a>

**1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to the end September).**

**Outcome:** Poaching of African grey parrots reduced in the TRIDOM through enhanced law enforcement and strengthened site-based protection, supported by communities benefitting from improved wellbeing.

**Output 1. Law enforcement personnel operating in the TRIDOM and Douala and Yaoundé air/sea ports have enhanced capacity to effectively investigate, target and intercept trafficking of African grey parrots and other IWT-threatened species; and effectively gather, manage and process evidence, ensuring cases are ready for prosecution.**

In order to combat IWT, ZSL has developed a generic “Basic Law Enforcement, tactical patrol, and proactive law enforcement” training curriculum in consultation with Law Enforcement (LE) experts, MINFOF and judicial officials. The training addresses the weaknesses observed in the implementation of core policing knowledge related to the detection, presentation and acquisition of evidence in IWT-related cases. It considers the existing resources and the type of operational environment and personnel levels of the agency being engaged (Activity 1.1). Capacity development always puts an emphasis on the 1994 Wildlife Law code which is the major instrument in the application of wildlife law in Cameroon; 481 copies of these books were printed and distributed to various LE agencies (MINFOF, Customs, Magistrates, Gendarmes, Police etc.) for a better understanding and application of the relevant law to act as deterrent to traffickers and their networks. Additionally, 13 LE agents (Eco-guards and Magistrates) from the TRIDOM (Boumba Bek National Park (NP), Nki NP, Mengine Gorilla sanctuary, Ngoyla-Mintom and Dja wildlife reserves) received training in the conservation of the African Grey Parrot (AGP), jointly delivered by ZSL, TRAFFIC and LAGA staffs. The training mainly covered CITES procedures in relation to parrots and a review of the 1994 Wildlife Law in Cameroon and its related texts of application (Activity 1.2). A follow up system has been put in place through the creation of a WhatsApp group to keep in touch and provide guidance to participants confronted with AGP-related case implementation in the field (Activity 1.3).

A scoping mission has been developed by the ZSL Cameroon Country Director, Rowan Martin of the World Parrot Trust and Gary Ward, Curator of Birds at London Zoo, and is planned for November 2019. The mission will assess the capacity of ecoguards in order to provide targeted training to key personnel from each of the four sectors of the Dja Biosphere Reserve in how to handle and care for seized AGPs. It will also identify suitable sites for the construction of temporary aviaries where seized birds will be housed for assessment and eventual release.

**Output 2. Key aggregation sites for populations of grey parrots in five target TRIDOM protected areas (Dja Faunal Reserve, Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary and Kom National Park, Boumba Bek National Park) are identified and integrated into MINFOF site-based protection and monitoring programmes (SMART), with anti-poaching detection systems and rapid response protocol piloted.**

From April to September 2019, both semi-structured and informal interview methods have been used to gather information on parrots from MINFOF officials and local community members within the TRIDOM landscape. A total of 58 MINFOF personnel from DBR, Boumba Bek NP, Nki NP and Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary were interviewed. In addition, 16 community focus group (groups ranging from four to 27 individuals) discussions were carried out in villages surrounding the Dja Faunal Reserve (DFR) and two communities bordering the Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary. Also, five key informants (former trappers and village guides) were interviewed from selected villages based on their reputation in AGP capture (Activity 2.1). Data from these interviews suggests that approx. 48 sites could be potential aggregation sites for AGPs and could be highly targeted by AGP trappers. Of these sites, 22 were visited by the ZSL monitoring team in four independent field missions and AGPs were recorded in varying intensities at most of the sites visited. Monitoring records have identified three AGP roosting sites, with video records of parrot visits numbering more than 200 individuals at each site. Additional sites are being monitored to identify more AGP roosting sites (Activity 2.2). So far these very important locations for parrots in the DBR, in Boumba Bek NP and Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary have been incorporated into the protected area patrol plans on a monthly basis. A parrot specific surveillance approach is under discussion with DBR park management and will be integrated into the overall DBR patrol strategy (Activity 2.2). In order to secure these integral areas for parrots, at least in the DFR and Boumba Bek NP, the implementation of the SMART approach continues. In addition, several training sessions were organised to ensure staff are patrolling and collecting data according to SMART protocols. In this regard, a training session on data collection, map and compass reading and GPS use was carried out in Djoum from the 26<sup>th</sup> of June to the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2019 for 11 field staff. Concomitantly, an advanced SMART training session was conducted for all four Sector Chiefs, the interim Conservator, the Head of Anti-Poaching Unit, and three DBR SMART ecoguard focal points (Activity 2.3). Since April 2019, ZSL has supported the implementation of SMART in Boumba Bek NP after the SMART configuration and training that occurred in late March 2019. During this reporting period, SMART Patrols have been ongoing in the Dja (17 patrols carried out, 2716km covered on foot and by car), in Boumba Bek (8 patrols carried out, 2873km mostly covered by car) and in Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary (4 patrols, 286km covered by foot and by car) (Activity 2.4).

To complement the patrols, satellite-linked camera traps are under development and will be placed at identified sites with the most AGP species records, aiming to detect human presence (Activity 2.5). A patrol strategy for the Dja has been in development since June 2019 with ZSL support and has been going through MINFOF internal consultation before final validation. While awaiting the formal validation of this document in early November 2019, its recommendations now form the base for SMART patrols in the DBR and the greater TRIDOM, to ensure key species such as AGP are not involved in IWT. ZSL and the conservators of the protected areas within the TRIDOM landscape are now progressively putting in place a Rapid Response Squad. Their recent field intervention in the Dja on the Mintom-Djoum-Yen axis with the reinforced anti-poaching truck (that has led to seizures including two guns and ammunitions, a leopard skin, elephant meat etc in May 2019) is encouraging and suggests that we are gradually building a group which could potentially play an important role in stopping IWT in the larger TRIDOM (Activity 2.6).

**Output 3. Key local communities, adjacent to identified aggregation sites and trafficking hubs within the TRIDOM are actively engaged in monitoring and reporting of IWT through Community Surveillance Networks (CSNs), incentivised through establishment of VSLAs and enhanced local livelihoods.**

ZSL is continuing to engage with more local communities in the TRIDOM landscape in order to empower them in the development of Income Generating Activities (IGAs). The selection of suitable villages to be part of the existing and functional ZSL local community network were based on 1- the proximity of the identified village to other project villages, 2- the willingness of village members to participate in the project, and 3- the proximity of the target village to AGP aggregation sites. In this regard, two new Bantu village associations (Ayene and Akom) were created in the landscape between the DBR and Mengame Wildlife Sanctuary. In the Dja–Ngoyla Reserve area, four additional villages (three Bantu villages namely Biba 2, Ekourou, Alat-Makay and one Baka village - Nomedjoh) joined the community network (Activity 3.1). To date we have engaged with eighteen villages in the TRIDOM landscape, with some (Bi, Ze, Alat-Makay, Biba 2, Akonetye, Odoumou, Ando'o) assessed for their inclusion in the ZSL CSN/ExCiteS programme owing to their proximity to AGP aggregation sites. The engagement process required a Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process which was carried out during inclusive community meetings chaired by local chiefs. During these meetings with community members, the project variables and constraints were presented and discussed with communities and when successful, a consent agreement was written, and activities planned (Activity 3.2). The most recent well-being and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey was carried out in the area in February 2019, and this suggests the IGAs in the area vary very little over the years and basic needs are still not fully

met. KAP data revealed that community members are becoming conservation minded but still lack means to fully adopt alternative sources of income for alternative sources of protein (Activity 3.3). The next survey is planned for January 2020 and will be extended to the new TRIDOM villages. A review of the well-being and KAP metrics will also be done with the existing communities. The above-mentioned inclusion in the ZSL CSN, has provided fourteen villages of the TRIDOM landscape with a sense of empowerment and responsibility in securing their natural resources. The ZSL LE Officer has built trust with these local communities and created a communication channel that allows community members to denounce IWT perpetrators. As a result, the ZSL LE Officer has so far received fifteen calls from community members, five of which involved information on AGP trafficking. All information received was assessed and forwarded to MINFOF for action. It is intended that in the months ahead, the same network would be established in villages bordering the other protected areas in the TRIDOM (Activity 3.4).

We also use Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) as a platform to promote sustainable wildlife management (in this case the AGP) and discuss strategies for community-led law enforcement (Activity 3.4). VSLA setup and trainings were carried out at Ayene, Akom, Alat Makay, Nomedjoh, Ekourou and Biba 2, these new villages are now making savings from small incomes ranging from 100 FCFA to 1,500 FCFA and have to date saved 611,500FCFA. In other villages involved in the process, follow-up is ongoing to keep the momentum (Activity 3.4). VSLAs are also the backbone of the ZSL community engagement approach through which IGAs are promoted. These IGAs are derived from initial assessments of the specific production potential in selected villages and participatory selection of the activities to be implemented, followed by several theoretical and practical training sessions on selected topics (Activity 3.5). These trainings are mostly delivered with the technical support of a local NGO APADER (Association pour la Promotion des Actions de Developement Endogene Rural). The most common IGAs being implemented in the area are vegetable gardens, poultry and banana-plantain farming, tree nurseries and Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) collections and processing (Activity 3.6). As a result of thorough follow up, there is a perceived seriousness in the local community self-appropriation of the IGA techniques (tree nursery, incubators for hatching eggs, etc.) taught so far. To date, selected villages (Baka and Bantu) of the TRIDOM are running 6 improved village chicken poultry farms, maize farms, several individual vegetable gardens, banana-plantain farms and a few fruit tree-nurseries. Villages such as Ando'o and Ze are now able to produce their own chicks using the incubator (Activity 3.7) with minimal supervision. A platform meeting to share experience is planned to be held early 2020 in Djoum (Activity 3.8).

As it stands, VSLAs act as a model to engage local communities in conservation and as an awareness platform to promote sustainable wildlife management (in this case the AGP) and discussions on strategies for community-led law enforcement (Activity 3.4). The next step is to create Community Surveillance Networks (CSN) in participating communities. This involves a programme of sensitization on the relevant aspects of Cameroonian Wildlife Law and a discussion of the need to prevent encroachment by those engaged in IWT related activities (such as commercial bushmeat hunting, ivory and pangolin scale collection and parrot trapping and trafficking) into the forests used by local communities. A telephone is supplied to one member of the community and monthly credit provided, by which means local community members can provide information anonymously regarding IWT related activities occurring in the area.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

**Site-based protection:** There is still a high turnover of MINFOF staff in different protected areas and divisional services of MINFOF divisions in the TRIDOM. Over the last 6 months, 30% of ecoguards from DBR, 20% from Mengame and 50% from Boumba Bek who were fully-trained in SMART have been transferred out of the TRIDOM area. This suggests a loss of momentum in the quality of SMART implementation in the TRIDOM.

**Law Enforcement challenges:** Though the government of Cameroon is fighting to improve good governance, corruption remains a major handicap in the application of wildlife laws. There are still officials whose corrupt activities hinder the proper procedure from investigations to judgement, thereby demoralising front-line agents who are the backbone of wildlife law application in Cameroon. Where appropriate laws exist, they are often not properly administered with suspects released without proper process or very low fines being imposed, which are not then collected.

**Community engagement:** The implementation of IGAs in forest regions need more presence, materials and experience in the field, especially with Baka communities whose culture is to hunt, fish and collect naturally occurring produce in the forest. They need more sensitization and training to begin to effectively practice farm and animal husbandry activities. These regions generally contain many insects, parasites and diseases for plants and

animals, and with recent changes in climate, it has become more difficult to manage temperatures, rainy and dry seasons for IGAs. This situation has caused many delays and a loss of investment in some of the IGA projects implemented and has discouraged some villagers from engaging, for example 125 chickens and more than 1400 eggs have been lost from the 6 poultries due to disease and malfunction, and many banana plantains trees have been destroyed by parasites.

These problems form part of the working environment in Cameroon. None of these problems are likely to affect the budget or timetable of the project.

**2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with LTS:	No
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	NA

**3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £

**3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget, so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT Challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

No

**If you were asked to provide a response to this year’s annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to [IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: IWT001 Half Year Report.**