



## Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)

<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>Partners(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 2020, (HYR2)</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.**

ZSL continued the application of a generic “Basic Law Enforcement, Tactical patrol and Proactive Law Enforcement” curriculum developed with MINFOF, partner NGO’s, the Judiciary and other Law Enforcement experts to continuously address weaknesses related to the application of wildlife laws in Cameroon, ranging from detection, arrests and prosecution. This training component always takes into consideration personnel levels, their operational environment and resources available (Activity 1.1) while the major instrument in the application of wildlife laws in Cameroon remains the 1994 code. In July 2020, 12 Law Enforcement officials from MINFOF, Judiciary, and local community members were trained in the collection and communication of intelligence (information) concerning poaching and trafficking in protected wildlife species in general and parrots in particular. The training delivered by ZSL, in collaboration with TRAFFIC and LAGA, covered aspects such as who an informant is, how to collect information, and who information should be passed on to. This was done under the ambit of the 1994 wildlife law and its related text of application, (Activity 2.2) while a follow up system through a WhatsApp group has been put in place to keep in touch and provide guidance to participants confronted with AGP-related case implementation in the field (Activity 1.3). Following receipt of intelligence from the field in August 2020, 8 African Grey Parrots were seized from a trafficker in Djoum (southern sector of the Dja Reserve) on their way to be sold in the local market. These parrots were later transferred to “improved

upon” aviaries (none died as compared to the past seizures) and handed over to the conservator of the Limbe Wildlife Centre (South-West Region of Cameroon) where they will be rehabilitated and eventually re-introduced to the wild. Meanwhile, the suspect was arrested although later released on bail (provided for by the law) and later pleaded guilty before the law court in Djoum. ZSL is closely following up the procedure in court and final verdict is expected in the months ahead.

ZSL maintains collaboration with other international structures such as the World Parrots Trust where information concerning poaching, trafficking and handling of seized AGP is shared. In their efforts to denounce trafficking in African Grey Parrots in Cameroon, ZSL, in collaboration with the World Parrot Trust, has published a press release concerning the 8 Grey Parrots seized in Djoum in August 2020 (<https://www.zsl.org/conservation/news/threatened-parrots-saved-from-wildlife-traffickers>), while further investigations to determine trade trends and routes are underway and details of its results would be forwarded to the authorities (MINFOF) for deterrent measures.

**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.**

Following up from the data collected in Y1, while we continue to explore parrots site in Dja Biosphere Reserve (DBR) and Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary (MGS), additional baseline data on Africa Grey Parrots (AGP) in the TRIDOM landscape has been collected using social sciences approaches (informal interviews, semi structured interviews and focus group discussions) in Nki National Park (NNP) and in Ngoila Wildlife Reserve (NWR). From April to September 2020, 7 MINFOF personnel from NNP and 5 from NWR were interviewed alongside 9 community members from villages in MESOUBOU, DIMAKO, DIADEM, NGOILA all around the NNP and NWR area (Activity 2.1). The information gathered has helped in identifying 6 sites that were later visited by NNP and NWR monitoring team to confirm parrot sightings of less than 1-year old and provision of the location of GPS points. For now, only 3 sites (2 in NNP and 1 at the periphery of NWR) were investigated and georeferenced during the field missions in this part of the landscape (Activity 2.2). These 3 sites visit revealed parrots’ presence and existence of parrots’ active traps that were dismantled by MINFOF rangers. These sites were immediately incorporated into NNP and NWR surveillance plan for regular monitoring (Activity 2.2).

Concomitantly to the identification and mapping of new sites in NNP and NWR, the implementation of the SMART approach has been launched in these 2 sites to secure very important sites for Parrots with technical and financial support from our ZSL team based in the field (Lomié). Over the last 6 months ZSL has supported field missions to secure parrots sites in DBR (22 patrols covering 2340km on foot, boat or car), in MGS (12 missions carried out, covering 908 km on foot and by car) and in NNP (1 patrol carried out, covering 83 km mostly on foot) (Activity 2.4). The Parrot sites protection of NWR is planned for the next reporting period. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we could not organize SMART training workshops but remote support via telephone calls and online assistance was provided to 3 DBR head of sectors, 2 MGS staffs (head of surveillance and head of monitoring) 2 in NNP (the conservator and the head of the surveillance team) and the conservator of NWR (Activity 2.3). Pertaining to camera placement at potential sites, only one deployment of 15 cameras was carried out in the eastern periphery of the DBR in the 10036 Forest Management Unit (Activity 2.5) and we hope to have some interesting results when the cameras are retrieved. The rapid response team of the DBR has been active in the field and has seized among other seizures, 8 parrots in August 2020 through an operation launched as a result of a community-based intelligence (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 with its mission of engaging more local communities to denounce poaching and trafficking activities in their respective villages. For this reporting period, two new villages Biba I and Bemba (Activity 3.1) have been engaged following the ZSL engagement protocol (1- proximity of the identify village to other project villages, 2- willingness of village members to participate in the project, 3- proximity of the target village with AGP aggregation sites) and has been encouraged to carry out income generating activities as well as helping in sharing information about any illegal wildlife activity going on in their respective villages. As part of the engagement protocol, the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) was carried out with community members chaired by local chiefs (Activity 3.2) alongside an assessment of well-being and KAP (knowledge, attitude, practice) (Activity 3.3). For these 2 villages, the initial IGA diagnosis revealed that VSLA and IGA activities will be very challenging to implement whereas the surveillance network was clearly an activity they were interested in. So, these villages were only taken onboard for Community Surveillance Network (CSN) bringing the number of villages engaged so far in CSN to 21. It is thanks to this network that in August 2020, a trafficker was arrested in the town of Djoum in possession of 8 African Grey Parrots ready for the local market. ZSL has maintained a cordial communication system with these communities and during this reporting period, a total number of 88 calls were received, assessed, and forwarded to MINFOF for action. Though not only related to Parrots trafficking, other protected species such as chimpanzees, mandrills, etc. have been seized through this network. It is intended that in the months ahead, the network would be expanded to cover more villages bordering other protected areas in the TRIDOM (Activity 3.4).

For IGA and VSLAs, we continue to support the 6 newly created VSLA groups (Biba2, Alat Makay, Nomedjoh, Akom, Ayene and Lomie) offering alternatives to incite them to adopt good practices. Also, the awareness messages on the need to protect parrots in addition to other Class A species serves as a reminder to members of different groups during community work sessions (Activity: 3.5). So far, total savings amounted to FCFA in these 6 new VSLAs (Activity 3.4). We have moved one step ahead in the support we give to the local communities through harnessing local success stories and promoting local achievements in other to build a sustainable IGA system. To that effect, we have transferred the "improved village chicken" rearing practices from the Djoum-Mintom area to the Lomié-Ngoila area effectively. Products from Ando'o village constituted the initial material for other local communities. In Biba 2 for instance, 50 "breeders" were handed over to the village, which had previously built a farm according to a model which was shown to them with the mentorship of Ando'o VSLA community members (Activity 3.7). Three months later in Biba 2, few hens began laying eggs and the village received a gas incubator and training to use it (Activity 3.6).

As regards the activity linked to the PIF (banana-plantain improve production technique), the members of the Biba 2 and Nomedjoh groups are producing the suckers which will be planted in March (next planting campaign) (Activity 3.7). At Ayene the members have already replanted the products (PIF) in their personal farms. In general, all the villages are being prepared to produce PIF that will be planted in March.

As part of ZSL exit strategy and in order to build local capacities in chicken rearing, a training on producing chicken feed using locally produced raw materials was carried out during the last reporting period. During this reporting period, VSLA members of four villages out of 6 (Biba2, Nomedjoh, Akom and Ayene) were donated maize and soyabeans seeds to start producing chicken feed. Harvests recorded were satisfactory everywhere except Nomedjoh (activity 3.7). Regarding the production of seedlings in the nursery, we have started the domestication of some Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) such as moabi, bush mango, etc. that will be soon replanted in community forests.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). 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:** High turnover of MINFOF staff is still the main issue for site based protection as highly trained ecoguards who were involved in the planning and implementation of camera trap deployment and roosting sites protection are either being transferred to other PAs which usually causes a delay in activities implementation and roosting sites protection.

**Law Enforcement challenges:** 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. Also, the outburst of the Corona virus jeopardised the effective implementation of this project within this period as we mostly worked from home. Most offices were shut down and law enforcement officers could not effectively track down poachers/traffickers of AGP due to measures put in place to fight the disease.

**Community engagement:** Alat Makay encountered a problem during this period, their VSLA cashbox was stolen. They are solving that issue (the thieves were identified, and they are trying to recover what was stolen) and will restart with a new cycle soon. This situation gave us the opportunity to come back to an aspect of the training which concerned the handling and transport of the VSLA cash box. We have reminded of the importance of discretion and of the precautions to be taken to secure it and avoid any lust of it.

The Lomie group slowed down activities because they expected financial rather than technical support for IGAs. After training and distribution of basic equipment for the implementation of IGAs, they expressed the wish to be financially supported. Subsequently, since this was not possible, we began to observe a disinterest in activities. We are trying to rely on a few motivated members to move forward with the activities, taking the neighbouring communities as an example of motivation.

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

As a result of the Covid-19, all TRIDOM conservation-oriented platforms and workshops (Activity 3.8) of necessitating the presence of more than 50 participants, including the “forum des acteurs de la Reserve de Biosphere du Dja” (stakeholder platform) were postponed temporarily. However, anti-Covid protocols and equipment (face masks, soap, disinfectant, etc.) were provided to the relevant stakeholders and to those communities willing to carry out their VSLA meetings. For the chicken rearing assistance to the community, because APADER or ZSL staff could no longer travel to the field as often as they used to do, local government veterinarians were therefore contacted and provided with the means to be our liaison with communities in overseeing ongoing IGAs. For activities linked with the identification and protection of parrots sites, the approach was similar, involving increasing sensitization to ecoguards on anti-covid measures and providing equipment (disinfectant for patrol vehicles, hand washing points, face masks, etc.). The telephone and internet allowance to maintain communication was increased to enable more effective communication and follow-up between ZSL staff and partners.

**2c. 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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**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.

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.