



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report

Project reference	IWTR6S2/1018
Project title	Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Nigeria-Cameroon Green Corridor
Country	Nigeria
Lead organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
Partners	Africa Nature Investors Foundation (ANI) Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Bauchi State Nigeria National Park Service
Project leader	Andrew Dunn
Report date and number	October 2021 (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media	Twitter: @WCS_Nigeria and @ANI_Foundation

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept).

Output 1. Improved understanding of IWT within the Green Corridor through community surveys and gathering of intelligence from communities, and Nigerian and Cameroonian agencies.

Activity 1.1 Conduct community baseline surveys and gathering of IWT intelligence.

Community baseline surveys were completed in 12 communities in Yankari Game Reserve (YGR) and 14 communities in Gashaka Gumti National Park (GGNP) in March/April 2021. The main aim of these surveys was to understand the socio-economic context of the surrounding communities, their development needs and their relationship with IWT issues. Although only limited IWT intelligence has been obtained, important relationships have been established that we can now build on. Survey reports from both YGR and GGNP have been compiled and are currently being edited.

Key findings of the YGR survey report include:

- Communities in all the three districts surrounding Yankari have similar cultural patterns, demography, and economic lifestyle.
- Poverty levels are high, the major livelihoods practiced are subsistence farming and petty trading.
- Women lack funds and skills in financial management and have low economic status. Women have poor or no knowledge in accessing loans /grants as capital for trade and/or improvement in existing livelihood activities.
- Majority of residents are not educated and fifty percent of the key respondents had no

literacy levels at all.

- The level of social amenities is poor or absent. School structures and health facilities are often dilapidated and there is a shortage of trained personnel. There are acute shortages of safe drinking water, and various diseases such as malaria, typhoid and cholera are rife.
- Hunting and illegal trade in wild animal parts is widely practiced, though only a few communities admitted to this. Most communities are aware that such trade is prohibited and therefore were reluctant to acknowledge that it occurred in their communities.
- Human-wildlife conflict is a growing problem, predominantly crop damage caused by elephants from YGR.

Key findings of the GGNP survey report include:

- Most villages around the park are small, the largest surveyed had 740 people, the smallest had 66 people (except for Serti town that has over 100,000 people).
- Most people are engaged in subsistence farming and cattle herding.
- There are no schools or health centres in any of the villages inside the park. Water and sanitation are also big needs. Villages on the main road outside the park are better served with education and health facilities.
- Literacy levels are very low even for this part of Nigeria and poverty levels are high.
- 90% of the people within the park are semi-nomadic Fulani, outside of the park, they come from another eight ethnic groups.
- There is generally a good relationship between the park and communities.
- Many of the bushmeat hunters in the park come from the surrounding communities. Species hunted include duiker, guinea fowl, antelope, buffalo, baboons, and bushbuck. They are aware it is illegal but still do it because the chance of capture and arrest is low. Animals are sold in nearby markets especially Serti town.
- There is much interest in support for education, health, and village enterprise (e.g., agriculture and processing of shea nuts/other non-timber forest produce).
- Many said they would no longer hunt if they could be engaged in alternative livelihoods. Most requested was for support with agriculture particularly value adding for agricultural crops (e.g., a grinder to process maize and sorghum), support with cattle herding such as veterinary services and better access to markets. Most communities also specifically asked for support with education, health, and access to clean water.

Additional surveys in GGNP are planned for October/November and will target the nomadic Fulani herders to better understand grazing patterns, grazing routes and the relationship between pastoralists and IWT issues.

Activity 1.2 Training and mentoring of informant network around YGR and GGNP.

In YGR we have an existing intelligence network, although informal, and about 20 regular sources of intelligence. Many people don't want to be identified as an informant but are keen to provide intelligence, often anonymously. Training to improve management of the intelligence network is planned with the Lagos-based 'Control Risks' (an international company specialising in global risk management). In GGNP, following the extensive community engagement during the social surveys we have started to meet the traditional leaders and other key individuals in the communities to gather intelligence on IWT and to identify potential

individuals in each community who might engage. This is a slow process requiring trust building, but much progress has been made in the identification of individuals some of whom have already started to provide intelligence that has led to arrests.

Activity 1.3 Gathering of IWT intelligence from Cameroon.

Not yet done (see activities 1.5 and 2.1 below).

Activity 1.4 Gathering of IWT intelligence from Nigerian agencies.

We are in close contact with the Nigeria Customs Service and the National Park Service and hope to gather more IWT intelligence from other security agencies during and following the inter-agency training planned for 2022 (see activity 2.1 below).

Activity 1.5 Produce a Transboundary Wildlife Trafficking Report.

A draft 'Report on Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Nigeria-Cameroon Green Corridor' was produced by Maisha in August. The report contains a review of existing information available online but does not contain any analysis or actionable intelligence. A replacement partner has been identified who is scheduled to visit Nigeria later this year (see 2a below).

Activity 1.6 Produce an alternative livelihood strategy for communities surrounding YGR and GGNP.

Based on the social baseline surveys/community needs assessments (see activity 1.1 above), various options for an alternative livelihood strategy for communities surrounding Yankari have been proposed including: development of cooperatives for women; development of poultry farming for women; veterinary training and services to pastoralist groups surrounding the reserve; planting of trees for sustainable firewood supply; provision of fuel-efficient woodstoves; provision of improved crop varieties (cassava, maize, cowpea, etc.) to boost agricultural incomes; computer literacy programmes for secondary school leavers who are preparing for university entry examinations known as the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB); development of beekeeping and beehive fences to reduce levels of human-elephant conflict; and boreholes to improve supply of safe drinking water for humans and livestock.

An alternative livelihood strategy for the communities surrounding GGNP will be produced once the above-mentioned pastoralist survey is also complete. However, we have already started to engage women's groups in eight of the villages with the aim of assisting them to formally constitute and register their groups. We will then support them with "grinding machines" that can add value to locally grown maize and sorghum and will also be used to process shea nuts collected from the forests around the park.

Output 2. Improved levels of border control between Nigeria and Cameroon by promoting training and capacity building of local enforcement agencies which results in more arrests by law enforcement agencies.

Activity 2.1 Facilitate inter-agency training courses for Customs, Police, Army and NESREA.

The Nigeria Customs Service recently established a Wildlife Crime Unit with support from Focused Conservation, although their activities are mainly Lagos-based. Now that COVID restrictions in the country are gradually easing we are planning a joint-transboundary workshop/meeting to take place with Customs in January/February of 2022. The meeting will probably be held in Yola and will involve other security agencies as well as Customs, ANI, WCS and Focused Conservation, in addition to the National Park Service and stakeholders from Cameroon.

Activity 2.2 Provide logistical support for IWT operations within the Green Corridor by the Nigeria Customs Service.

This activity to be planned during the meeting planned for 2022 (activity 2.1 above).

Output 3. Improved levels of security and stability for the region by fostering inter-agency collaboration and establishing security partnerships between 2 protected areas and local communities.

Activity 3.1 Organise ranger training in YGR and GGNP

Training for YGR rangers by Conservation Outcomes (a highly experienced international ranger training organisation) started in September 2021 for 60 rangers. The training covers physical fitness, drill, wildlife law, patrol techniques, human rights, code of conduct for rangers, first aid, and tactical skills (ambushes, camp attacks, tracking and anti-tracking signs).

In GGNP, following the successful training of 41 rangers in March 2021, Conservation Outcomes trained another 16 rangers in basic field ranger training in May. The training covered a wide range of skills including national park law, human rights, community negotiation, animal tracking, first aid, etc.

Activity 3.2 Purchase of essential field equipment for rangers in YGR and GGNP.

Field equipment provided for rangers in YGR included uniforms, boots, beret, belt, water bottle, sleeping mats. GGNP rangers have also been provided uniforms, boots, bush-hat, belt, water bottle, backpack, tent, sleeping mat and GPS tracker.

Activity 3.3 Provide support for law enforcement patrols by rangers in YGR and GGNP.

In YGR, all ranger patrols use SMART for monitoring law enforcement effort. During the reporting period 70 patrols were facilitated by WCS, covering a distance of 8,637 km over a total of 3,743 patrol man-days. A total of 22 arrests were made including 18 hunters and four commercial firewood collectors (using a motorcycle to evacuate the firewood), and were all successfully prosecuted. See map 1 below showing patrol effort in YGR for April-September 2021.

In GGNP systematic patrols were carried out across the southwestern 3rd of the park. Over 121 arrests were made of various individuals including poachers (hunting for the bushmeat trade), loggers (targeting rosewood) and illegal cattle herders. Over 459 kg of animal carcasses were seized during the arrests and 21 guns confiscated as well. As the wet season got underway the rate of arrests has decreased, possibly due to the patrols acting as a deterrent but also probably due to the rains which make poaching activities in the park more difficult. We expect this trend to reverse with the approaching dry season.

Activity 3.4 Formation of Conservation Security partnerships in YGR and GGNP.

In YGR, WCS is working closely with the Alkaleri LGA Security Council which comprises of the LGA Chairman, traditional rulers, army, police, immigration, DSS, federal road safety commission, Nigeria civil defence corps and WCS. Meetings of the Alkaleri LGA Security Council are held to share information and discuss the growing insecurity problems in the LGA, especially the high rate of kidnapping in the rural communities. Ensuring that YGR is kept free of bandits and kidnapers is an important function of the Yankari rangers. During the reporting period, WCS has had three meetings with the police and the army about local security concerns, particularly the rise of kidnapping in the area. As a result, six joint patrols between YGR rangers and the army were completed to help maintain security for local communities and wildlife.

In GGNP the formation of security partnerships is being discussed with local communities. The socio-economic survey in April/May 2021 has helped start these discussions and we learned repeatedly that communities value the presence of the park's rangers because many of the poachers and loggers we have arrested are the same armed bandits that have raided local villages. As a result of the extensive community engagement during the socio-economic

survey, more information and intelligence on potential illegal activity has been received from local communities. This information led to the arrest of a gang of armed robbers as well as illegal grazers. Preliminary meetings have been held between the national park, the police, Local Government Authority and traditional leaders and we are planning a “stakeholders meeting” in December/January to discuss establishing a coordinated community-multi agency partnership that will aim to protect the park and address local security issues. The proposed security partnership will be more pro-active than the standing Local Advisory Committee that was established by the National Park Service.

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.

The Transboundary Wildlife Trafficking Report (Activity 1.5) produced by Maisha did not contain any real intelligence or recommendations for further action. We have identified a replacement partner who is scheduled to visit Nigeria later this year. We have also been receiving support and advice from counter wildlife trafficking specialists within WCS.

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.

COVID-19 affected our ability to implement certain conservation activities during the first year of the grant and due to the risks involved we postponed the project start date until 1 October 2021. As COVID-19 restrictions were gradually lifted we were able to start certain field activities (holding meetings outdoors where possible, using face masks and hand sanitiser etc) but other activities such as large training workshops were postponed until Year Two. We are strongly encouraging all staff and rangers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. During the peak of COVID-19 in the country, courts and government offices were temporarily closed making prosecution of arrests difficult – but this has now eased. We hope that COVID-19 cases will not increase, and restrictions will continue to ease with increased vaccination rates. At this stage we are still unsure what the residual impact there may be on the project budget and timetable.

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: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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.

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. 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.**