

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	University of Gondar
Project Title:	<i>Threatened Mammal and Bird species of Key Biodiversity Areas in the Central Highlands of Ethiopia: Biological survey on distribution and conservation status in Three CEPF priority KBAs (Aliyu-Amba, Ankober-Debresina and Guassa plateau).</i>
Date of Report:	15/09/2017
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CEPF Region: Eastern Afromontane

Strategic Direction:

Strategic Direction 2: “Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot”

Grant Amount: \$19,710 USD

Project Dates: 1, February 2017 – 30, August 2017

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

- **Menz Guassa community tourism association:** The community tourism association has been engaged in the project from the initial stage of designing the project to the final stages of validation, of course, similar to the community representatives from Aliyu-Amba, Ankober-Debresina and Guassa plateau. The Guassa community tourism association provides us the map of the area, booklets produced about the biodiversity of the area, and offer discount fare for the lodge room services to spend nights during the survey. In fact all the community representatives from the specific survey sites were helpful in the course of showing of roads and accompanied of the team.
- **Amhara Region Bureau of Environment, Forest and Climate change:** As a responsible government structure, the regional bureau offers an official permission to run the project work. Moreover, it provided to the team independent support letters to each project site in order to have conducted the survey according to the rules and regulations of wildlife survey that has been set by the bureau.
- **Zone environmental protection & land administration department:** the Zone actively participated in the initial consultative meeting arranged to obtained basic information from community member, experts and other stakeholders. Besides, it was a good source of secondary information that was relevant for the survey. Above all, top management of

- the zone has agreed to consider, use and further disseminate the project findings to enhance existing conservation efforts and future planning.
- **North Shewa Zone culture and tourism department:** the zonal tourism department was equally engaged throughout the project life in the form of active members for both the consultative meeting and validation workshop. Basically, its greatest contribution is in linking the survey results as major source of information to promote the ecotourism potential of the area for nature lovers and tourists. In the validation workshop the survey result was tried to be aligned with one of the national conservation strategy through developing tourism in areas similar to the project site (Aliyu-Amba, Ankober-Debresina and Guassa plateau) having great potential to attract environmentally friendly visitors.
 - **Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS):** FZS was a good source of information on previous data on Red Fox and it was consulted since the project inception and designing of survey methods particularly for Red Fox.
 - **SUNARMA:** Similar to other partners it has been involved in all project phases. However, its major contribution was i. Shared best conservation practices in Wof Washa, ii. Presented its success stories on the development of Ecotourism at Ankober area with the financial grant obtained from CEPF, iii. Its plan presented for stakeholders creates a good opportunity to reach at consensus that the project sites ecology and wildanimals abundance has great potential for ecotourism, and accordingly each one to take its part to improve the quality of the environment.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

Globally the IUCN data and previous research findings indicated that the trigger species which were major focus areas of the project requires research attention and quick intervention. Thus, the biological survey conducted on these endangered / vulnerable species; such as in Aliyu Amba (*Serinus flavigula*), Ankober (*Neophron percnopterus*), and in Guassa, the two mammal species (*Canis simensis* and *Crocidura baileyi*) are crucial to exhibit their existing conservation status and habitat conditions. In effect, it helps for future environmental planning and to guide the global community to improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot. Thereby, it can be a good reference to initiate management actions.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal:

Expected result 1: KBAs assessed for threatened species (bird and mammal), threats and habitat conditions.

The assessment has been done using variety of methods. First, contact has been made with informants from different offices: past and/or current CEPF grantees in the KBAs, district officials, experts and community organizations. Then review of available secondary information was done. Available information on species, habitat, site, community, management/conservation efforts and related areas were obtained from different sources: Given that the project targets on conducting threatened species survey in KBAs where CEPF has invested by supporting projects with conservation outcomes, past (and current) grantee organizations were targeted as a main source of information; these are Lem, the Environment & Development Society of Ethiopia (for Aliyu Amba-Dulecha KBA), Sustainable Natural Resource Management Association- SUNARMA (for Ankober-Debresina KBA), and Frankfurt Zoological Society- FZS (for Guassa KBA). Accordingly, soft and hardcopies of survey/assessment information, project reports and other information

relevant for the current project were obtained from these organizations. Besides, a thorough discussion (on management/conservation efforts and related) has been made with coordinator of these grantee organizations, particularly, with SUNARMA and FZS, as they are based at Debirebirhan town. Contact with Lem Ethiopia was made via phone. In addition to these CEPF grantees, other organizations (Zonal and district offices of Environmental Management and Culture and Tourism) were also approached for data/information, and available documents and reports on wildlife and management/conservation related issues were obtained. Besides, information was also accessed from published articles and websites of popular organizations- IUCN, Birdlife International and EWNHS.

Having and reviewing the preliminary information mentioned above, field visits were carried out in CEPF-funded sites (KBAs). During the visit, officials at the KBA site were met. And, a rough, participatory survey/assessment was held across the villages (Peasant association) at each KBA, during which some preliminary information on the habitats were recorded. After the field work, key informant interview and group discussion were conducted. This was done during the last sessions of the consultative and training workshop (See description below in Expected result 2), where animal survey, sites to be surveyed and overall plan of the survey were presented to participants, and target species to be surveyed at each site was displayed on a projector. Then, participants were grouped into three based on the site- KBA- they came from (i.e. Group I- Guassa plateau; Group II- Ankober-Debiresina; and Group III- Aliyu-Amba Dulecha). Each group was given color-printed copy of target species, and was asked to discuss on status, habitat/vegetation, threats, and other related information on the species, then representative of each group presented their discussion output. Finally, using the information from secondary sources, and informant interview, group discussion combined with information from the rough field observation, representative and accessible sites to be assessed for the survey were selected, and appropriate survey strategies were designed specific to each target species at each KBA. The surveyed species were: *C. simensis*, *C. baileyi*, *S. ankoberensis* and *C. cyanoptera* for Guassa KBA; *S. ankoberensis*, *C. cyanoptera* and *N. percnopterus* for Ankober Debresina Escarpment; and *S. flavigula* for Aliyu Amba Dulecha.

For *C. simensis* (Ethiopian Wolf): a total of nine transects were laid out systematically, two at Dargeny site, and one at each of such sites as Dija, Aganchit, Firkuta, Yehata, Gidm, Yedi and Ras Ketema. Counting was made twice per month (from February to June 2017). So, each transect was walked ten times across the survey period.

For *C. baileyi* (Bailey's Shrew): Five sites one with that comprised of *Festuca* grassland, *Euryops-Festuca* grassland, *Erica* moorland, *Helichrysum-Festuca* grassland and *Lobiela-Festuca* habitat/vegetation types were assessed in three sessions- February-March, May and June for three consecutive days using Sherman live traps. Number, sex and age (adult, juvenile and sub-adult) of *Crociodura baileyi*, and habitat type, other rodent species and observations on habitat condition/disturbance and related features were recorded.

For *S. ankoberensis* (Ankober Serin): The survey was conducted using point sampling, where 13 points in Guassa (nine in and around protected reserve, and four outside protected land) and 18 points in Ankober, three at six sites (Dense, Den Afe, Temkie, Ashale, Kundi and Mescha). Counting was carried out three times.

For *C. cyanoptera* (Blue Winged Goose): The species was surveyed in Guassa and Ankober Debresina escarpment. Areas surveyed in the two KBAs were open grasslands, swampy/marsh grasslands and grassland areas along river/stream, on a total of 18 transects in Guassa and 10 in Ankober. Counting twice, in late February and mid June.

For *N. percnopterus* (Egyptian Vulture): surveyed KBA was Ankober Debresina escarpment. Using the road-count technique, surveying was done along five routes, representing possible habitats, within the KBA boundary, twice, in February and June.

For *S. flavigula* (Yellow Throated Seed Eater): surveyed in Aliyu-Amba Dulecha KBA using transect count on three sites along Melka Jebdu river, and one at Teter Amba Village and Gacheni village, twice, in late March and early June.

For Disturbance and threats to species and KBA: Disturbance and threats to species and KBA were identified and recorded when encountered in one or both of such occasions as: during the general, preliminary survey, and along transects/points established for survey of each species. Furthermore, informants were also asked.

Expected result 2: Local expert gain knowledge and skills on assessment and monitoring of biodiversity in general and of threatened species in particular.

This is achieved. Community representatives, association members and partner organizations got a lesson and practical experience on survey of triggered species and better monitoring and protection of it for wider use.

Training and consultative workshop has been held for three consecutive days- February 25-27, 2017- at Debrebirhan town with 60 participants from government offices and local community representatives. Major issues of the training/workshop encompass: Basic concepts of Biodiversity, Assessment and monitoring of threatened species, and Conservation interventions (with a particular focus on CEPF-funded project activities). Presentation and discussion were also made on the current project, its objectives and activities to be done.

All participants actively engaged in the training & discussions, and obtained knowledge on BD, its assessment, moreover, they better recognized importance of BD conservation projects. They also become aware of the project idea & collaborative efforts of CEPF & University of Gondar. Participants has also reached at consensus and promised to support the biological survey.

While our proposal has planned to provide theoretical based knowledge on different aspects of BD and its conservation and management, we have made a great deal of actions by incorporating sessions for presentation of CEPF-funded project activities in target KBAs, which, as confirmed by participant feedback, added weight on the importance of BD conservation projects.

Some community members and experts- selected from workshop participants- have been invited to go with project teams to sample sites- representative habitats/sites selected in the workshop. During the visit, participants had opportunity to attend/observe the field session where project team and surveyors have made a discussion and demonstration of species survey methods in one of the selected sample site at Guassa KBA. This was intended as part of practical reflection of the theoretical lesson presented during the training.

Expected result 3: Document on ecology, distribution and population status of threatened species compiled and delivered to local stakeholder (community groups, experts and administrative officials).

Achieved: A survey document on ecology, distribution and population status of threatened species compiled, presented and delivered to local stakeholder (community groups, experts and administrative officials). It has been disseminated in the form of soft copy, and hard copy. The document was immediately reported to the major organizations directly working on the issues of wildlife conservation and sustainable utilization. Besides, it was given to community representatives and project partners.

As soon as the relevant information were gained and workshop participants assure us the biological survey findings were inline with the reality, official write-up of the project was conducted. The report was organized in four major parts: with brief description of the background to this work and its objectives in the first part; data collection methods, survey designs and data analysis in the second; detailed finding of the survey with elaborative description in the third section; and conclusion, implication and recommendations in the final section. Miniature of the survey finding is presented below [The detailed survey report document is attached separately].

Abundance and Distribution of species at Guassa Plateau

Ethiopian Wolf density in Guassa KBA is 0.306 per km², with estimated population size of 34 individuals. It's most preferred habitats are *Euryops– Festuca*, *Festuca* grassland and *Euryops– alchemilla* shrubland. There has been a sharp increase in the population size of Ethiopian Wolves in Guassa over the past time periods, which is mainly attributed by protection of natural habitats from all forms of human exploitation. However, there still exist such threats as Livestock grazing, Grass harvesting, Fuel wood extraction and Exotic tree plantation.

C. baileyi occurs with 65.3 per km² density in Guassa, and based on the area of surveyed habitat, total population is 7248. It is more abundant in *Helichrysum-Festuca* & *Festuca* grassland habitat. Livestock grazing and grass extraction are major disturbances across the major habitats of the species.

With density of 76 km², *S. ankoberensis* is found across rocky and steep slope areas of the Guassa KBA, from 2950 up to 3500 masl of altitude, with cliffs and steep extensions of *Festuca* grasslands. While there is no evidence available to imply to population trend overtime, the species is still facing disturbance from Livestock grazing, farming and Exotic tree plantation.

Density of *C. cyanopterus* in Guassa is 30 per km². The species is common in Swampy/marsh grassland and open grasslands. Protection status of habitats influence abundance of the species, and due to protection, its population has remained stable or increased sharply overtime. However, even habitats within the protected area, there are some disturbances, though limited in extent, such as livestock grazing and grass harvesting. Outside the protected area, there are Livestock grazing, Farming, Grass harvesting and Settlement.

Abundance and Distribution of species at Ankober Debresina Escarpment

Density of *S. ankoberensis* in Ankober is 68 per km², with more common in areas characterized to be steep, rocky areas and sloppy cultivated lands. Though survey data over some time periods is not available and hence, limits quantitative trend analysis, the existence of disturbances from different human activities whose presence was evidenced by field observation and informant discussion give an idea that the status of the species is still under threatened. Particularly, livestock grazing, farming, exotic tree plantation and settlement are threats in Ankober, and it probably seriously affects populations in some areas.

20 individuals per km² of *C. cyanopterus* are found in Ankober. Abundant in Swampy/marsh grassland and open grasslands, as well as grasslands along river/stream, the species occupies habitats of such. Existing disturbances include livestock grazing, grass harvesting, farming, exotic tree plantation and settlement.

With 0.7 individuals per km, *N. percnopterus* is limited to low to mid altitudes; bare, rocky lands and open grasslands; near to towns/settlements; whereas, little or no in and around forest areas.

Abundance and Distribution of species at Aliyu Amba Dulecha

S. flavigula endemic and endangered bird species, resides in Aliyu Amba, with 9.2 individuals per km² density and 112 total population. It is restricted to such habitats as Acacia woodland, scattered trees on Savannas and riverine areas. The species status is hence rare, and suffered from many of the common human activities including over grazing, grass harvesting, farming, fuel wood and timber/other wood extraction, exotic tree plantation and settlement.

Habitat protection and use/disturbance

Regarding protection status, there is little / no land under protected area in all KBAs, except in Guassa, where there exists some 110 km² land under protection, legally recognized by Formal institution since 2012. In Ankober, about 80 km² of forest land is under formal management, supported by local byelaws. In Aliyu Amba, no protection except one enclosure of degraded land established for rehabilitation.

Protection and community owned management system in Guassa has resulted in avoidance or reduction of human uses responsible for habitat loss and degradation of the land under protection: Farming / cultivation, Grazing / grass harvest, Fuel wood extraction, Timber/other wood, Exotic plantation and Settlement. But still some illegal uses exist. Even though there exists areas within the KBA where protection is necessary, no attempt has been done to expand protected land, and hence, some of the threats continue outside of the protected area within the KBA, such as farming / cultivation, exotic tree plantation and settlement.

Protection and management of natural forest by community based groups, supported by formal institution in Ankober has resulted in reduction of such activities in and around the forest as: Farming / cultivation, Fuel wood extraction, Timber/other wood extraction, Exotic plantation and Settlement; but still illegal uses exist, and grazing continues within the forest. However, habitats other than natural forests, such as grasslands, are continued to be faced with immense pressure and degraded overtime. These are suitable habitats for two of the KBA's trigger species- *C. cyanoptera* and *Ankober Serin*- making the status of the species threatened.

CEPF Projects and its impact on habitat and species status

Though impacts may require time to be manifested, CEPF funded projects has with clear and tangible impact in Guassa; limited, Important note to be taken in this regard is that though there might be efforts other than CEPF project which is most likely, such confounding factors are not taken into account in impact analysis.

The project in Guassa directly contribute for protection and conservation of habitats and species through three major mechanisms: by enhancing institutional recognition and capacity of Community Conservation council, reduces illegal resource use; by enhancing income from ecotourism and grass sale, it increases conservation value of resources; and by enhancing alternative income sources and livelihood diversification for households, it reduces dependency on or the look for natural resources. All of which addresses human-induced degradation, and hence restoration of habitats and species. For instance, habitats of Ethiopian Wolf, particularly

Festuca and Festuca-other species mix habitats have shown a clear improvement in quality as a result of protection and on-farm intervention activities, resulting effect is stable or sharp increment of Wolf population. Additional evidence is the higher abundance of *C. cyanoptera* inside protected area than unprotected one, and the response of informants stating an increase in the species abundance overtime.

The project in Ankober supported community based natural resource, forest, eco-tourism and marketing cooperative targeting Wof Washa Forest. It contributes for sustaining the community based management institution / system by providing capacity building training, production and marketing facilities. The major tangible outcome resulted from such intervention is strengthen protection and conservation of natural forest. However, nothing is there on habitats other than forests and on trigger species of the KBA. Given that the intervention sites were concentrated only in and/or around Wof Washa forest, the project hasn't impacted areas of scrub-grass mosaic and afroalpine grassland vegetation of the KBA, where the major threatening human activities have still continued to be increased on these ecosystems. Finally, the project in Aliyu Amba is found not to have any clear impact on habitat, nor on the trigger species.

Expected result 4: Information on CEPF-attributed changes in conservation status of KBAs and its species disseminated to wider audience/community.

This is achieved: the document is reported to both CEPF and the University of Gondar and anticipating it to be upload very soon to share the project results to the scientific community, conservationists, policy makers, leaders and the global community at large.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: ...
Species Conserved:
Corridors Created:

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

Success:	Challenges:
<p>During the project work there has been strong cooperation from conservation partners, stake holders and the local community. Particularly the information obtained from local farmers were quite indicative to address the different type of habitats and took the proper sample representation of areas.</p> <p>In addition, the project was successful to ensure the existence and also explain the abundance and habitat situations of <i>Serinus flavigula</i> bird in Aliyu Amba.</p>	<p>Lack of baseline data to compare status overtime was the important problem. While the survey was conducted, there has been a time stress. In effect regular field work, strict observation of seasonal differences in encountering and scientific counting of the selected species was many.</p> <p>Related to this, some pressure/disturbance on other species of wild animals on the project site might have occurred. However, maximum care was taken by the data collectors.</p> <p>Another Challenge was: inconvenient time for officials to participate in the current survey.</p>

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The validation workshop brought a very positive outcome through creating integration among stakeholders to focus on the conservation of the triggered species. Most importantly, the **North Shewa zone environmental protection & land administration department** took it as opportunity to immediately put it as a priority. Hence, the project completion has good timing to consider the project results in the new fiscal year.

The other thing is that species not included in KBA profile were found: i.e. *C. baileyi* found in Ankober Debresina Escarpment and *N. percnopterus* found in Guassa plateau.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Obviously, from the biological survey, the project team took a lesson that the initial consultative meeting was a key for the successful completion of the project. The consultative meeting was so vital to get glimpse of indigenous knowledge and skills to identify the triggered species the survey targeted. Besides, it creates a good room for the data collectors to freely move between places. Therefore, the meeting was relevant to enhance the quality of the survey by combining of scientific survey methods with local community recommended survey methods, and get the blessings of both.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

Primarily, in the development of the project idea and designing of the log-frame It has been found important to quickly have shared it for key stakeholders. Thereby, it was interesting to organize the views of key stakeholders in order to follow a proper methodology, produce quality information and came up with a tangible findings that was acknowledged by all the validation workshop participants.

- We involved the community in the direct counting, as well as
- Post graduate students on the survey

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

- Use of community knowledge through the orientation session and the survey period was crucial.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Proper planning of a survey with an appropriate survey methods that are thought to be correct by all key stakeholders led to a successful project result. It also takes up the result and recommendation on the selected KBAs in to direct planning of conservation works or integrated planning that can improve conservation efforts such as ecotourism.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

****Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

- A*** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*

- B*** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*

- C*** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The community and conservation partners very well recognize the conservation status of these triggered species. It gives everyone a lesson on the urgency of being involved to safeguard few of the threatened species and on the need to still being involved on the conservation of habiatat or nature in general. Hence, the major findings depict how to best utilize nature and save the triggered species. Accordingly, recommendations that ensure the sustainable utilization of resources were discussed and recommended. So, these scientific recommendations can surely enhance the conservation, such as through supporting the community tourism association, arrangement of seasonal free grazing access and focusing on environment friendly economic activities. Thereby, the implementation and long-term/sustainability of the project will be achieved.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

The commitment of the community particularly in Menz-Guassa was a continuation of the *Qero* system (traditional way of conservation of nature that lasts for about 400 years) and contributed much for the success of the survey.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

In the implementation of the project the team has considered proper scientific methods of survey and research ethics not to harm the environment. Such as there was a very careful live trap and walking on the selected transects during the survey work. Moreover, the local bylaw was considered relevant in which the community representatives were all the time engaged in following up and assisting of the project. Besides, the result of the survey was communicated for transparency and discusses it with the social and other relevant organizations involved on conservation.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

To sustain the conservation efforts, the project team strongly recommends the continuation of conducting such relevant biological surveys in order to trace the number and existing status of threatened species or species that are endangered or in declining conditions. ***Detailed insights and recommendations are available on the Survey report.***

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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*****please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved for project from inception of CEPF support to date	Describe the principal results achieved during project period (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No		Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No		Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	NO		

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.

