



WCS CONSERVATION EDUCATION – AFI, MBE, OKWANGWO

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SUMMARY: *The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has worked to safeguard Africa's great wildlife and wild places for the long-term benefit of the people of Africa, and the world since 1920. Today WCS has the oldest, largest and arguably most effective field conservation program of any NGO in Africa. WCS's mission in Africa is: to save wildlife and wild places by understanding critical issues, crafting science-based solutions and taking conservation actions that benefit nature and humanity. This mission identifies landscapes and species conservation as WCS's core purpose, highlights the role of science in studying threats and designing interventions and recognizes that conservation must benefit people to be effective and sustainable.*

During this period, WCS carried out 20 school visits, 8 field trips with 194 students to Mbe Mountains, Cross River National Park and Afi Mountains Wildlife Sanctuary. Other activities include film show in 30 villages with a total of 8,187 viewers, 8 exchange visits, and community meetings. During the period the WCS conservation education coordinator also worked with the Okwangwo law enforcement project manager to carry out a survey of farm encroachment in the Cross River National Park.

Film Show: Great Apes films were showed in 30 villages in Afi, Mbe and Okwangwo Villages of Cross River National Park and viewed by a total of 8,547 persons. The aim of the film show was to enable the people understand the threats facing Cross River gorillas and other endangered wildlife, and to discuss ways to improve their protection. During the film show, discussions focus on farming in protected areas and other factors contributing to habitat destruction. Farm encroachment is a serious issue especially in Afi and Okwangwo.

Table 1: Villages visited during film show and number of viewers

Date	Name of community	Site	Estimated number of viewers
7/4/2017	Bamba	Mbe	360
8/4/2017	Kakwagom Irruan	Afi	271
9/4/2017	Kakubok	Afi	400
17/4/2017	Okwa I	Okwangwo	231
18/4/2017	Okwa II	Okwangwo	167
19/4/2017	Mbuli	Okwangwo	200
20/4/2017	Nzosor	Okwangwo	400
23/4/2017	Akwekia	Okwangwo	134
24/4/2017	Oshonekpa	Okwangwo	280
16/5/2017	Buanchor	Afi	300
19/5/2017	Okubuchi	Afi	201
20/5/2017	Ndomechang	Afi	280
21/5/2017	Kakwagom	Afi	431
22/5/2017	Kakwagom (Upper side)	Afi	200
30/5/2017	Bamba	Mbe	170
31/5/2017	Bokalum	Mbe	160
1/6/2017	Buentsebe Secondary School Wula	Mbe	500
1/6/2017	Wula 2	Mbe	350
15/6/2017	P/S Bamba	Mbe	150
17/6/2017	GSS Kanyang	Mbe	180
18/6/2017	Enyi Boje	Afi	350
21/5/2017	Esekwe	Afi	200
22/6/2017	Ebok	Afi	300
23/6/2017	Italy Boje	Afi	190
24/6/2017	Ebranta Boje	Afi	120
25/6/2017	Asuben	Afi	400
26/6/2017	Katabang	Afi	218
27/6/2017	Buanchor	Afi	381
28/6/2017	Olum	Afi	423
1/7/2017	Okwabang	Okwangwo	600
	Total		8,547

FIELD TRIP: During this period, eight field trips were organized with schools around the three Cross River gorilla sites with a total of 194 students participating. Four field trips were organized with 4 schools in Mbe, 2 schools in Afi and 2 schools in Okwangwo respectively. The field trips were organize students to learn about biodiversity directly in the field, and about the conservation actions being taken to mitigate the many threat facing wildlife.

They were also used to inspire and motivate the students to contribute to biodiversity conservation.

Table 2: Number of students that participated in field trip during this period

Date	Site	School(s)	Site/camp visited	Number of pupils
April 5	Okwangwo	Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang	Becheve Nature Reserve	20
April 6	Mbe	Government Secondary School Kanyang	Obue's camp	27
May 13	Okwangwo	Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang	Cross River National Park	25
May 15	Afi	Government Secondary School Buanchor	Base Camp, Afi Mountains	22
May 18	Mbe	Community Secondary School Bamba	Obue's Camp	20
		TOTAL		67
June 14	Mbe	Community Secondary School Okwabang	Obue's camp	32
June 16	Mbe	Government Secondary School Kanyang	Base camp Afi	23
June 20	Afi	Government Secondary School Okundi	Esekwe Camp	25
		Total		194



Field trip with Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang to Mbe Mountains

SCHOOL VISIT: During this period, WCS Conservation Education Coordinator visited twenty schools in all WCS field sites to plan for field trips, and carry other conservation education activities including lessons, gorilla games, and distribution of 1090 Cross River gorilla notebooks. The lesson topic for the period was “Endangered Wildlife Species” and focused on threats to wildlife and the IUCN species assessment criteria.

Table 3: *Schools visited and number of gorilla notebooks distributed*

Date	School Visited	Site	Number of Gorilla Exercise books distributed
5/4/2017	Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang	Okwangwo	50
11/4/2017	Community Secondary School Olum	Afi	50
16/4/2017	Community Secondary School Kanyang	Mbe	50
17/4/2017	Community Secondary School Okwa	Okwangwo	50
18/4/2017	Government Primary School Okwa 1	Okwangwo	50
22/4/2017	Pioneer Secondary School Balegete	Okwangwo	100
23/4/2017	Government Primary School Balegete	Okwangwo	100
11/5/2017	Government Secondary School Butatong	Okwangwo	50
15/5/2017	Community Secondary School Buanchor	Afi	50
18/5/2017	Community Secondary School Irruan	Afi	50
30/5/2017	Community Secondary School Bamba	Mbe	50
31/5/2017	Government Primary School Bokalum	Mbe	50
1/6/2017	Government Primary School Wula 1	Mbe	50
3/6/2017	Government Secondary School Okundi	Afi	50
12/6/2017	Comprehensive Secondary School Bokalum	Mbe	40
12/6/2017	Community Secondary School Olum	Afi	40
16/6/2017	Government Secondary School Kanyang	Mbe	40
20/6/2017	Government Secondary School Okundi	Afi	70
29/6/2017	Community Secondary School Butatong	Okwangwo	50
30/6/2017	Community Primary School Bamba	Mbe	50
	Total		1090

EXCHANGE VISIT: Eight exchange visits involving sixteen schools were organized for students to share knowledge on conservation issues. A total of 808 students participated in the activity (Table 4). Exchange visit enable conservation club members in schools to share ideas and knowledge they have acquired on conservation issues. Activities implemented during the exchange visits include Cross River gorilla game, poems recitation, quiz competition and conservation drama. These activities were carried out in a competitive manner and all the teachers in the host schools were involved. The students were excited and participated actively throughout the period. Exchange visit enable students and all the schools involved to take conservation activities seriously due to it competitive nature and knowledge acquired.

Table 4: Number of students that participated in exchange visits organized April-June 2017

Date	Site	School	Location	Number of students
April 10	Afi	Buentsebe Secondary School Wula & Community Secondary School Olum	Olum	140
April 11	Mbe	Community Secondary School Bokalum & Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang	Bokalum	80
May 12	Mbe	Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang & Government Secondary School Kanyang	Kanyang-Mbe	70
May 17	Mbe	Community Secondary School Bamba & Buentsebe Secondary School Wula	Bamba	120
May 19	Afi	Primary School Okubuchi & primary School Esikwe		80
June 13	Mbe	Comprehensive Secondary School Bokalum & Government Secondary School Olum	Bokalum	90
June 19	Afi	Community Secondary School Boje & Government Secondary School Okundi	Bamba	140
June 29	Okwangwo	Government Secondary School Butatong & St. John the Baptist Secondary School Wula	Butatong	88
		Total		808

COMMUNITY MEETINGS/VISIT TO BORDER COMMUNITIES: A total of 9 village meetings were held to discuss conservation issues. Six meetings were held with the Balegete villages, 2 with Okwa I and Okwa II, and one meeting at Boki Paramount Ruler's palace organized by Cross River State Forestry Commission. Issues such as hostility towards park and conservation NGOs field staff and ongoing farm encroachment in the park were also discussed. WCS Conservation It was stressed that violence against park staff will not bring the development that communities desire. Communities were advised to contact politicians representing them for assistance with development projects which may be outside the scope of work of conservation NGOs. At the meeting at the Boki Paramount Ruler's palace on 13th of April the Chairman, Cross River State Forestry Commission warned against the increasing illegal activities carried out by communities around Afi and Mbe, especially logging.

Following reports of elephants killed in the Okwangwo-Takamanda border area the WCS conservation education coordinator visited and spent 3 days from in Matene village to carry out investigations. The reports could not be confirmed. The people of Matene reported that the Takamanda project did not favour their community and that motor-cycle roads constructed around the park were limited to Takamanda village and did not extend to Matene. It appears from information gathered in the village that hunters from Matene may be intensifying their hunting in both Takamanda and Okwangwo in protest.

OKWANGWO FARM ENCROACHMENT SURVEY: A four days survey was conducted by Louis Nkonyu and Emmanuel of WCS to assess the level of farm encroachment Okwangwo. The survey covered areas around Buabre, Yagwanbe, Otsakwai and Oguefor. Other areas visited were Okwa- Butatong road, Okwangwo-Okwa road, Balegete-Okwa road and Bashu-Obonyi axis. In all the areas visited several farms were observed, with many being expanding deeper into the park. The crops planted were cocoa, bananas and plantains. Action needs to be taken by the park authority to stop farm encroachment in the park.