CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	**The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International**
Project Title:	**Biological Surveys of the Gishwati forest**
Date of Report:	**31st October 2017**
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CEPF Region: **Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot**

Strategic Direction: **Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot**

Grant Amount: **US$14880**

Project Dates: **May to October 2017**

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

Conservation Impacts

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

This project has documented the current trends and distribution of the trigger species and other important species found in the Gishwati forest, provided baseline information for the lesser studied species, and recorded encountered threats. In addition trends in imminent threats were discussed during a workshop meeting to evaluate the threats and actions to mitigate threats to the trigger species and their habitat. Major threats and actions were highlighted in order to influence decision makers for achieving better conservation outcomes. This study found the chimpanzee population being stable with an average of 24 chimpanzees (from 16 to 34 chimpanzees). The 2011 study estimated between 19 and 29 individual (Chancelor et al., 2012) while Barakabuye et al., (2007) estimated between 10 and 20 chimpanzees in 2006. In addition, the current golden monkey population size was estimated to be around 205 individuals (67-342) while all previous golden monkey surveys estimated around 100 individuals, however, the survey design and efforts were totally different. In order to provide baseline information on less studied species, we encountered l'hoesti monkeys for 25 times, which estimates around 200 monkeys (numbers ranged between 48 and 450), though it had very few

observations. During this study a total of 134 bird species, including 16 species endemic to the Albertine Rift, and two threatened species, (grey crowned crane *Balearica regulorum* and martial eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*), were recorded. We also found a 11 amphibian species including, the vulnerable Karisimbi tree frog *Leptopelis karissimbensis*, four Albertine Rift Endemic species; six reptiles including two were also recorded while a total of 35 butterfly species and seven small mammal species and more than 240 plants species have been recorded during this study. Primary threats such as mining, grazing, non timber collection and climate change appear to be the persisting threats to the forest and the major recommendations for better conserving the Gishwati forest were future research, community engagement, and forest protection efforts.

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

This study has assessed the population trends of the existing trigger species (Chimpanzees) and other important conservation species, such as vulnerable species and endemic species, and documented less studied species in order to provide accurate baseline information for future monitoring. In addition, threat analysis was undertaken and solutions were proposed in order to better conserve the trigger species and other important species of the forest. Generally, the trigger species and other important species appeared to be stable compared to previous studies, and this study has found many endemic species, while the threats seemed to be decreasing. Species list of birds, small mammals, butterflies, herpetofauna, and plants have been produced in order to be used in the future as baseline information. Threats were ranked from lowest (with Mark 1) to highest (with Mark 4), and mining, grazing, overpopulation, climate changes, and non-timber collection were the highest threats to the forest. Different stakeholders who are working to protect Gishwati forest were consulted in order to make sure that the proposed actions, such as more engagement of local communities, more protection efforts, and more research, are applicable and useful.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected:
Species Conserved:

Corridors Created: No

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

The results from this project have provided the current trends for the species surveyed before this study (where field observations were sufficient), and it has

provided good baseline information for future monitoring and studies. However, it would be better if the study covered wet and dry seasons in order to record seasonal species such as migratory bird species, some of which we could have missed. Future study should try to cover two seasons especially the wet season, and also try increase field observation on trigger species such as grey crowned crane, martial eagle, the moon forest shrew and Karisimbi tree frog (whose good field observations were not attained during the field data collection) and endemic species in to provide total population of the species. If possible a separate study should focus on the population size of trigger and important species only, in order to record sufficient observations to calculate species population size.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

We were surprised by recording few illegal activities during this survey; this suggests that the forest is being well protected and managed. The existing threats could be minimized by improving and strengthening community engagement and awareness. We were also not expecting a high number of species such as birds, amphibians, and butterflies. This small forest relatively houses many taxa compared to other larger forest in the region, which emphasizes the importance of conserving this important forest. We were not able to record many observations of trigger and other important species such as grey-crowned crane, martial eagle, the moon forest shrew and Karisimbi tree frog; this is might be due to general methods used (instead of focusing on key species only), and being highly threatened in the forest, some species used specific small forest area such as the wetland.

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.

During the design and implementation of the project, we learned that surveying different taxa (e.g. primates, birds, butterflies) using similar method (e.g. line transects) might not be effective since some species such as butterflies prefer specific areas such as the open forest. In addition, plant phenology affects the distribution of some species; biodiversity survey design should consider ecological requirements for each taxa. Some species might be rare, which is difficult to get total population.
A complete seasonal study (12 months) would provide more robust results. The patterns in fruiting trees, for example, would affect the distribution and observation of primate species and frugivorous bird species; this would provide better standardized results on the species distributions across seasons which will also

record all migratory species and more observation on trigger and other important species.
This study included six undergraduate students who were trained on surveying different taxa, and they should be potential candidate for future surveys. This project employed local people who have been working in the forest during the past 10 years, due to their experiences, we could recognize paths used for illegal human activities, and therefore, we emphasis that it is important to use local communities in biological surveys where possible.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)
The project design included reading existing research on the forest, and specifically on the trigger and other important species, visiting the forest for ground truthing and consulting different stakeholders (such as the Gishwati Forest of Hope Association, and other scientists) whom have been working in the forest.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)
During the project implementation, we continued ongoing communication with stakeholders and scientists and this helped us adapt our methods along the way. The project was executed by experienced people in all taxa (with more than eight years of experience), local communities with high knowledge of the forest were employed, and students with up to date conservation training were included in the team. The team was first trained (as refreshment training) on how to implement the project, including health risks and data collection. During the project, we checked the progress on field data collection against the project outcomes.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

The study area is the youngest protected area (Park) in Rwanda and local communities are eager to contribute to the conservation of the forest. Therefore, more community engagement should be included in the conservation management of the forest.

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
DFGF	Research funding	**2,285 US$**	**Basic equipment, partial supervision and office overhead.**

***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.

During this project, we have recorded more species than expected, and a diversity of stakeholders participated in developing future actions for reducing threats to the study area. The main surveys followed existing transects used during the previous surveys, therefore, future surveys could follow the same trails in order to have comparable data. This study has covered all corners of the forest and spent many days in the field compared to the previous studies. In addition, it has documented many taxa that could help in future biological surveys.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

This project has replicated previous transects line used during previous surveys, so that they should be used in future. Coordinates are available for future use. In addition, a new reconnaissance way was located in the forest so that it should be used in the future in order to check presence and absence of the species.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

During the implementation of this project, all appropriate health measures were taken. The park permit was acquired from the Rwanda Development Board and not allows us to collect any animal specimens. Therefore, all animals recorded were not killed. In some cases, where animals were captured (such as small mammals and herpetofauna), they were handled properly using health grade gloves, and released unharmed at the site. The field team was trained on how to handle amphibians,

small mammals, and butterflies, and none of the sample specimens were collected or killed. The field staff was healthy and fit to minimize the risk of disease transmission. All equipment used in the forest including gloves, boots, and clothes were washed properly to limit the possible spread of disease.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

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.	YES	1850ha	Number of trigger species and other important species seemed to be stable, baseline data on less studied species were produced, and final lists of species were produced for future use in biological surveys.
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	NO		
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued	NO		

tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1below.			

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

Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics								Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit												
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic	Pastoralists/nomadic	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Increased income due to: sustainable natural resources	Ecotourism	Park management activities	Payment for environmental	security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing,	More secure access to water resources	or other natural resource due to titling,	natural disasters (fires, landslides,	More secure sources of energy	public services, such as education, health,	traditional knowledge for environmental	decision-making due to strengthened civil	Other
Total																					
If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:																					