CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	BirdLife Zimbabwe
Project Title:	Updating information on trigger species for Stapleford Forest Key Biodiversity Area (KBA)
Date of Report:	30 January 2018
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CEPF Region: Eastern Afromontane Hotspot

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

Grant Amount: USD20,000

Project Dates: 01 March 2017 to 31 December 2017

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

This project was implemented in collaboration with Allied Timbers Zimbabwe (ATZ), Forestry Commission (John Meikles Forest Research Station (JMFRS)), Border Timbers Limited (BTL) and Rupinda Community. There was a high level of involvement of these partners at all stages of this project. The above mentioned institutions and community were directly involved in all field and training activities which took a participatory approach. Allied Timbers Zimbabwe, BTL and JMFRS manage areas within and around this KBA and therefore have been instrumental in leading the way during bird and plant surveys in their areas of jurisdiction. Local communities manages landscape that include few forests and grasslands in the buffer zone of the KBA and also have strong traditional background of the area. They were key in guiding us especially on places within the KBA which are sacred. People from these institutions and communities were trained and have their knowledge on birds and biodiversity monitoring improved.

Conservation Impacts

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

The project has improved skills and knowledge in birds and biodiversity monitoring among local people at Stapleford Forest KBA. Field personnel from the key institutions namely ATZ, JMFRS, BTL and Rupinda Community received trainings in bird identification and survey techniques, data capturing, analysis and storage. In addition, a feedback meeting provided current knowledge on trigger and other key species found during the project as well as proposed monitoring mechanism for these species in this KBA. The local institutions were prepared for future monitoring of the trigger species and associated habitats. They were now in a position to identify the three trigger bird species, five trigger plant species, biome-restricted bird species and other species sighted during surveys. This project, therefore, supports CEPF strategic direction 2.1 ‘Increase the protection status (via creation or expansion of protected areas) and/or develop, update and implement management plans for terrestrial priority KBAs’. Current information gathered on trigger and other species is useful in guiding management decisions at this KBA. Meanwhile, management on site are aware of habitats where trigger species have been recorded. In addition, update on project findings was provided to senior management who include the ATZ Head Office for Manicaland Province (in Mutare), Forestry Commission and BTL. The information gathered has been found useful by both personnel on the ground and senior management and is being integrated into

planning for improved biodiversity conservation of the site. Community involvement was key in empowering them for monitoring trigger species in few habitats found outside protected area.

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

Long-term impact: Improved biodiversity conservation at Stapleford Forest KBA

This project has contributed to improved biodiversity conservation at Stapleford Forest KBA through empowering local stakeholders in species identification and site monitoring, establishing recent information on status of trigger species and providing guiding monitoring framework for the KBA.

Short-term impacts:
1. Improved knowledge among site-based stakeholders on the status of three bird and nine plant trigger species at Stapleford Forest KBA. These stakeholders are the Allied Timbers Zimbabwe, Forestry Commission (John Meikles Forest Research Station), Border Timbers and local communities who will get to know the trigger species of the site, help raise awareness about their conservation on site, and contribute to future sightings or monitoring.

Building local capacity in identifying and monitoring the trigger species for this KBA was one of the greatest impact achieved by this project. A total of 13 people comprising 4 females and 9 males had their skills and knowledge improved in bird and plant species identification, survey techniques and species monitoring. The target institutions were represented in all five field surveys, two classroom- based trainings and meetings where they participated effectively. The knowledge of these institutions was improved through their active participation in project activities. Prior to training, participants were able to identify birds at family level only but post training and during field surveys they were now able to identify most birds by genus. Blue Swallow and Wattled Crane sightings were reported by the trained local people who included a community member and this also confirmed improved knowledge among them. Overwhelming support shown by these institutions during the project indicate great commitment for KBA conservation by these stakeholders.

2. Improved skills in biodiversity monitoring among four local institutions at Stapleford Forest KBA

The four institutions mentioned above have their skills in biodiversity monitoring improved through two trainings conducted in March and November 2017, four bird surveys and one plant survey carried out between March and December 2017. In October 2017, the knowledge acquired by stakeholders helped them contribute effectively during the development of a biodiversity monitoring framework. This framework guides stakeholders on key species and habitats to consider for future monitoring of the species at this KBA.

3. Updated information on current status of trigger species at Stapleford Forest KBA shared with four local stakeholders on site and Forestry Commission at national level to inform management.

A detailed report with project findings produced, shared with all the four institutions on site and Forestry Commission Head Office captured current status of trigger species at Stapleford Forest KBA. The report provided recent information on sightings and distribution of trigger species, biome-restricted species and special species for the Eastern Highlands within this KBA. It provided pointers to site managers on areas that require dedicated conservation efforts for improved biodiversity. In addition, a KBA data sheet was completed with KBA trigger and biome restricted species provided biological value for the site.

Project Results:
1. Participatory surveys of three bird and nine plant trigger species completed with local institutions at Stapleford Forest KBA.

Participatory bird and plant survey conducted with local stakeholders between March and December 2017 were successful. These surveys empowered 15 local people (12 males and 3 females) who gained practical skills and knowledge on target and other priority species for Stapleford Forest KBA. A total of 45 pairs of Swynnerton's Robin *Swynnertonia swynnertoni* were sighted from the montane forests during the project. At least a pair of Swynnerton's robin was recorded from each suitable forest habitat searched and the total number of pairs obtained was a good for this KBA. Two sightings of Blue Swallows *Hirundo atrocaerulea* and one sighting of Wattled Crane *Burgeranus carunculatus* were reported during the project. Generally, the number of Blue Swallows recorded were lower than the expected number of five pairs recorded in previous years in this KBA. For the Wattled Crane, there has not been satisfied records of this species in the previous years and, therefore, our finding indicates potential presence of this bird species. However, the available wetland habitats favourable for the Wattled Crane is limited in this KBA due to steep terrain on most parts of landscape of this site. In addition to trigger bird species, a total of eight biome-restricted species which are also IBA trigger species were recorded. Out of the nine trigger plant species a total of five were recorded. The recorded target species were *Bersama swynnertonii, Bulbophyllum ballii, Clutia monticola, Helichrysum chasei, Tephrosia festina.* Only three *Bersama swynnertonii* trees were recorded on the forest margins near JMFRS though the species was said to be widely distributed in the past. There was no apparent threat to the species. A few individuals of *Helichrysum chasei* were scattered among the grasses in the fireguard. The grasses are burnt every few years to protect the forestry plantations in the area. These fires open up the vegetation, thus ensuring that the *Helichrysum chasei* is able to survive since it requires open areas to grow. The frequent clearing also ensures that there is no buildup of fuel that would cause hot fires which will in turn reduce the abundance of the species. A total of five plants of *Clutia monticola* were recorded, three of them were fairly common in a fireguard on a hill near the gate into the ATZ offices, one was along the road in ATZ estate and single plant was recorded on roadside along JMFRS road. There was no immediate threat to this species. *Tephrosia festina* was abundant in a forest margin scrub to the south of JMFRS. It was growing among bracken fern and rubus shrubs. No immediate threat to the species was noted. *Bulbophyllum ballii* was recorded growing on various trees where they formed large colonies in the Chinyamuriro forest in BTL. It was particularly abundant on Podocarpus latifolius trees. There is no immediate threat to this species. However, its survival is dependent upon the survival of these afromontane forests.

There is a high possibility of existence of trigger plant species missed during the surveys in this KBA. Other species of interest recorded during the survey include several species of *Asplenium*, *Cryptostephanus vansonii*, *Jamesbrittenia carvalhoi* and *Streptocarpus umtaliensis*. All these species are only known from the mountains at the border of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. They were common and abundant in the evergreen forests where they were recorded.

2. Local institutions trained in identification and monitoring of trigger species at Stapleford Forest KBA.

Two trainings, one on bird identification and survey techniques, and the other on data capturing, analysis and storage were conducted in March and October 2017 respectively. All local institutions were represented at these trainings where a total of 13 people (9 males and 4 females) participated. Local stakeholders gained skills and knowledge that helped them during surveys of trigger species. They were also empowered for active participation in current and future data capturing and storage at this KBA.

3. Information on trigger species for Stapleford Forest KBA updated.

A consolidated report on trigger species for this site with recent information gathered during the project was produced and shared with stakeholders. The report provided pointers on areas where the trigger species are found, and has been useful to managers in guiding conservation decisions in the KBA.

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.

A participatory approach taken under this project was instrumental in delivering project objectives. There was active participation of local institutions in all project deliverables. The trainings conducted were linked with field work where trainees were directly involved in field activities. The trainees had opportunity to learn from both indoor trainings and practical field activities. In addition, there was good interactions characterized by knowledge sharing among local people from the target institutions. This helped enhance knowledge among field personnel at the Stapleford Forest KBA. The support received from the target institutions made this work a success. All target institutions were representatives in all project activities and knowledge and skills have, therefore, been passed on across these stakeholders. BLZ had maintained its relationship with the local stakeholders and there was constant communication with them, keeping everyone on track. This was key in ensuring presence of all target institutions.

The initial project period had most of its activities covered outside season when a migratory Blue Swallow was available. This was due to logistical delays when the project started and, therefore, became challenge as this bird species was not fully accommodated. However, extension of the project with no costs as per our request helped to accommodate this target bird species. Due to steep terrain in this KBA, other areas were inaccessible, others needed more time than budgeted for and this became a challenge especially during the plant survey where there was limited days to cover the whole of the KBA.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Through sharing information on trigger species with senior managers at target institutions, there was increased awareness among these stakeholders on biodiversity of this KBA. In addition to trigger species, a total of 8 biome restricted species and 4 plant species special for the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe were recorded.

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.

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

In order to empower local people in species surveys and monitoring, it is imperative to consider participation of stakeholders at all project phases. This was one of the important lessons learnt during the design of this project. This aspect contributed to successful delivery of this project. Consultation with key stakeholders during project design was also another lesson learnt as these people played a pivotal role in project delivery. The design of this project had combined expertise and local knowledge that is technical personnel from institutions worked together with non-technical people from communities. This allowed transfer of knowledge among local stakeholders as well as strengthening local relationship at the KBA site. The project design also considered provisioning of external expertise on plant identification which helped inject new knowledge and skills to local stakeholders.

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

Active support of local stakeholders in project implementation and planning of activities was a good lesson learnt as this indicated commitment by these locals in supporting biodiversity conservation at the KBA. Where guidance is provided, we learnt that local stakeholders have capacity to collect scientific data that is essential for informing management decisions and promoting biodiversity conservation. Use of citizen science for KBA monitoring is important. However, necessary training should be provided for systematic data collection.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

The Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe where Stapleford Forest KBA is located do not support big game which attract top decision makers. As a result we learnt that biodiversity conservation in such areas receive less attention by other donors and decision makers than in areas where the big five are found. Areas with low attention, therefore, should be prioritized for conservation activities with full involvement of local people to save biodiversity.

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)*

BLZ contributed a total of US$3,656 for salaries of Toga (US$1,800), Fadzai (US$600, Sylvia (US$728) and Julia (US$528). It also contributed a total of US$500 for Office rentals and US$500 for communication throughout the project duration. In addition it provided a vehicle used during the project.

Institutions (ATZ, BTL and Forestry Commission) involved in the project contributed staff time for the personnel who participated in project activities. Local community members also contributed their time through voluntary participation especially during field work.

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.

This project have empowered local people from the target institutions in birds and biodiversity monitoring. Capacity of local stakeholders in monitoring target species was strengthened and this will ensure future monitoring of the trigger species in this KBA. Networks among local stakeholders

was strengthened. With guidance from BLZ, local institutions are in a position to coordinate themselves in data collection of trigger species. Participatory surveys and trainings conducted by BLZ during this project helped equip local people with required skills and knowledge for basic monitoring of trigger species at site level. Engagement of senior managers during the project exposed them to issues of conservation and how this fit into their work plans. A roadmap for future monitoring was developed with stakeholders. With guidance from BLZ, stakeholders have potential to continue collecting data on trigger species for this site.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

The project managed to demonstrate the importance of trigger species as indicators of montane forests and grasslands. Interest expressed by local institutions indicate commitment for future monitoring of these indicator species as part of their fulfillment to biodiversity conservation in their areas apart from other core business of timber production in the case of ATZ and BTL.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

Prior to conducting this work permission was sought from relevant authorities and this was granted to BLZ to conduct surveys of trigger species in the Stapleford Forest KBA. With regards to health and safety issues, a Health and Safety plan was developed and implemented to ensure safety of people and species during field surveys. Safety measures implemented during field surveys include maintained team work in a group, moved in a single file with voices lowered to avoid disturbances to birds. Cultural and traditional beliefs were respected throughout the project. Each institution led walks in its area of jurisdiction during surveys to ensure health and safety of participating people. The surveys were conducted during the day for human safety. Participants brought their own protective clothes used during surveys and this was inspected prior to walks to ensure that everyone was putting on safe clothes.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

This project demonstrated success of mixed expertise on different taxa and local knowledge in updating information of a KBA which is key in guiding management decisions. This inclusive process should, therefore, continue to be strengthened and promoted to make a difference at the KBA. It is recommended to replicate this work to other KBAs in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe for improved understanding of the current status of trigger species at sites as well as strengthening citizen science through local involvement.

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.

Please include your full contact details below:

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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	The project was working in 26,000ha that is the size of the KBA.	Bird and plants surveys conducted target the whole KBA. Most of the target trigger bird and plant species and IBA trigger species have been recorded. Information gathered revealed current distribution of these species and provided pointers on where dedicated conservation by local institutions should be focused on. A monitoring plan was developed with local stakeholders and will guide future species and site monitoring.
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	yes	100ha	Communities from Rupinda took a lead in strengthening conservation of forests and grasslands in their communities which provide habitat for few species of Swynnerton's robin, Blue Swallows and few other species special for the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. They provide information of target trigger species found in their community. In addition, they raised awareness on the importance of birds in their community, influencing for improved local management of few habitats in their villages.
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1below.	No		

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												
									Increased Income due to:												
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	▪ Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental services	Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	More secure access to water resources	Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.	Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	More secure sources of energy	Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit	Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	Other
Total																					

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit: