

Project Update: September 2015

Summary

Ghana's Critically Endangered giant squeaker frog (*Arthroleptis krokosua*) is threatened with extinction. Its last remaining populations are known to be surviving at Ghana's Sui River Forest Reserve. Unfortunately, the Sui River forest is under constant threat from logging, farming, and invasion of the alien plant, the devil weed (*Chromolaena odorata*). These activities are increasingly pushing the frog to the brink of extinction. To promote its rapid recovery, we planned out habitat restoration programmes for which we established three community tree nurseries, raising 5,000 native tree seedlings. We also organised conservation education programs including the celebration of Save The Giant Squeaker Frog Day, and art and poetry competitions reaching at least 1,000 local people and school children.

Nursery tree establishment

In collaboration with community leaders and professional foresters from the Forest Research Institute of Ghana and the Forestry Commission, we trained five local people in seed storage, seed treatment for planting, nursery bed preparation, and seedling raising and management. Together with the local communities, we have established three community tree nurseries. We also equipped each nursery with water tanks and cans, headpans, wheelbarrows and other relevant equipment. We raised a total of 5,000 native seedlings of fast-growing tree species: limba (*Terminalia superba*), African mahogany (*Khaya anthotheca*), kapok (*Ceiba pentandra*) and Gedu Nohor (*Entandophragma angolense*).

Field surveys

We also conducted both nocturnal and diurnal surveys in the dry and wet seasons within the Sui River Forest Reserve. We recorded 15 new individuals of the giant squeaker frog of which three were gravid/pregnant females. These efforts did not only more than double the giant squeaker frog's population size, from 13 to 28 but confirm the Sui River Forest Reserve as a crucial habitat for the species long-term protection. We also recorded other frogs including three globally threatened species: ringed river frog, *Phrynobatrachus annulatus* (Endangered); Ivory Coast frog, Yapo River frog, *P. villiersi* (Vulnerable) and *Hylarana occidentalis* (Endangered).

Conservation education and capacity building

We carried out community education programmes in surrounding communities and schools. We held talks on radio and also organised video shows to educate the communities. We also organised frog quiz, art and poetry competitions for pupils, introducing them to the importance of conserving frogs. For the first time, we marked 'Save The Giant Squeaker Frog Day' drawing local people and school children within project location and from neighbouring communities. We seized the opportunity to educate local stakeholders about the need to protect the Sui River Forest Reserve for the conservation of the giant squeaker frog, other frogs and biodiversity in general.

We trained and involved undergraduate students from our university chapters, local people and foresters in carrying out activities for the effective protection of the giant squeaker frog.

Publicity

In all, we reached at least 2 million people through live and media interactions, educating them on the importance of amphibians, the need to conserve them and their habitats and how to conserve them. We also distributed educational materials (posters and flyers) to local stakeholders and the general public. All activities related to the protection of the giant squeaker frog have been announced to the public on social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. We also blogged and sent out newsletters to SAVE THE FROGS! +30,000 subscribers. Below are some links to the posts:

<https://www.facebook.com/savethefrogs.ghana.9?fref=ts>

<http://www.savethefrogs.com/frogblog/save-the-frogs-news/community-tree-nursery-project-implemented-to-rescue-the-giant-squeaker-frog-from-imminent-extinction/>

<http://www.savethefrogs.com/frogblog/save-the-frogs-news/the-2015-giant-squeaker-frog-conservation-leadership-training-is-here/>

In addition, we documented all activities, taking pictures and shooting videos. We will share with the rest of the world on YouTube and other social media platforms these materials to promote amphibian conservation and RSG worldwide.

Upcoming Activities

With the involvement of professional foresters, community members and school children, we have started our enrichment planting exercises with the nursery seedlings to restore 5-ha of the species' degraded habitat. These efforts will help the giant squeaker frog and the other co-occurring frogs have healthy habitat to ensure their rapid recovery from extinction.

