



Project Title: Improving the conservation status of the White-necked Picathartes (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) in Sierra Leone

Region or Country: Africa: Sierra Leone

Date of Project Approval: September 2006

Focal Area: Species Conservation

Donor: Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund

Duration: 1 year

Amount of Financing: \$ 19,900

Project Status: Ongoing

Last Updated: February 2007

Project Description:

Objectives:

1. Level of off-take across range states determined and reduced by 10-20% in 5 years.
2. Realistic estimate of population size, distribution trends in all range states known and data used to identify strongholds.
3. Breeding success at selected strongholds of the species determined and baseline levels increased by 10 – 20%.
4. An environment for the White-necked Picathartes created by raising awareness among all stakeholders (especially local communities).
5. Management plans for the White-necked Picathartes strongholds developed and implemented.
6. Unsustainable human-related development activities at White-necked Picathartes strongholds reduced by 50-75% in all range states.
7. White-necked Picathartes Species Action Plan incorporated into national conservation strategies.

Overall Goal: *The provision of a framework within which a vision for improving the conservation status of White-necked Picathartes (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) from Vulnerable to Near-Threatened may be achieved.*

Rationale:

To prevent the extirpation of the White-necked Picathartes at a major stronghold in a key range state – Sierra Leone.

Main Activities

- Scientific research in order to establish and maintain a database of sites for the White-necked Picathartes in Sierra Leone
- Field surveys to update population estimates in the Western Area Peninsular Forests
- Education initiatives including conducting awareness raising campaigns to promote identification.
- Publicise the protected status of the White-necked Picathartes to relevant stakeholders within the Western Area Peninsular Forests.

Recent Project Status:

The project is still ongoing with the inception report having been submitted. As intended in the project design, field surveys have been carried out in 8 of the 15 known Picathartes breeding site in WAPF, additional breeding sites have been discovered which bring to 16 the number of nesting sites in the Forest. Consultative meetings have also been held with the local community heads and government officials to introduce the project and establish contact with the local communities. This resulted in the heads of 12 villages around the forest and local youth group representatives committing themselves to assisting with monitoring and conservation work in the forest. Ten Picathartes wardens have also been identified from the local communities and they will commence patrolling and monitoring of Picathartes breeding sites to report on and reduce human disturbances after completing the required training. A 5 member project team has been constituted, training needs have been carried out especially in the uses of GPS and other data collection tools. Also required equipment for fieldwork and data collation and analysis have been procured and are currently in use.

Challenges: There is a lack of community awareness at most sites and protective legislation enforcement is nominal due to lack of resources. Also, the species is very long-lived and has bred in captivity, but stringent highly specialized habitat requirements and low breeding success in some parts of its range may mean that the species is naturally rare. This will hamper any recovery programme

Contact Us

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