

Nature Conservation Research Centre



Community Sanctuaries Initiative

Prime Contractor:

Nature Conservation Research Centre

Partners:

Wildlife Division
Ghana Tourist Board
Calgary Zoological Society
Granby Zoological Society
US Peace Corps
Newmont Gold Ghana Ltd.
IUCN-NL Committee
Wienco Ghana Ltd.
Canadian Hydro Developers Ltd
Arc Financial Ltd
Earthwatch Institute - Europe

Geographic Targets:

National

Project Duration:

On-going since 1999

Contact Information:

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ACTIVITY BRIEF

Community Approaches to Conservation in Ghana

Project Objective

The goal of the *Community Protected Areas Initiative* is to link the benefits of nature protection with rural economic development leading to poverty reduction. Rural populations can experience improved quality of life by protecting their natural resources. In order to succeed in the realization of these dual purposes however, primary decision-making responsibility for managing their ecosystem must be placed in the hands of local people.

The objectives of the *Community Protected Areas Initiative* can be grouped into six broad categories:

- Increasing protection for keystone species.
- Creating local protected areas to protect habitat and species.
- Demonstrating community ownership & management of conservation areas as a useful approach in Ghana.
- Using conservation to address poverty in communities through development of tourism & other economic activities.
- Building capacity of community institutions to handle current & future management challenges.
- Monitoring ecosystem changes.

Approach

As a community based initiative, each sanctuary is fully owned and controlled by traditional leadership and community representatives. A management board with representatives from all participating communities is responsible for decision-making activities leading to the successful management of each site's unique natural resources. Government endorsement for the initiative is strong however there is no state involvement or funding in the establishment or on-going operations of the community protected areas. Local management boards receive technical and financial support from domestic and international partners.

Expected Results

The success of the *Community Sanctuaries Initiative* demonstrates how community conservation can contribute to enhanced environmental protection, new economic opportunities and reduced poverty. The current locations include the following:

- Wechiau: Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*)
- Volta Lake: West African Manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*)
- Avu Lagoon: Western Sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekei gratus*)
- Boabeng Fiema: Geoffroy's Pied Colobus (*Collobus vellerosus*)
- Asumura: White-necked Rockfowl (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*)
- Nyankamba Escarpment: Leopard (*Panthera pardus*)

NCRC's approach is being introduced in Liberia in 2009.