

## Crop-raiding by Wildlife in Ghana – the Important Role of Uncharismatic Wildlife Species

**Edem K. Ekpe**<sup>1,2</sup>, Erasmus H. Owusu<sup>2,3</sup> and Reuben Ottou<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biology Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA

<sup>2</sup> Ghana Wildlife Society, Accra, Ghana

<sup>3</sup> University of Ghana Legon, Ghana

Crop-raiding by wildlife is a major source of human-wildlife conflict in tropical forest management. To proactively avert such a conflict, an assessment of crop-raiding by wildlife was undertaken in the Afadjato-Agumatsa conservation area, Ghana, West Africa from April 2006 to July 2007.

The research area is about 12km<sup>2</sup> in size and was designated a conservation area by the Gbledi and Fodome-Ahor communities, with technical support from Ghana Wildlife Society since December 1998. Typical of many tropical forest areas, the Afadjato-Agumatsa conservation area is a mosaic of lowland forest, upland woodland and old and abandoned farmlands, and is surrounded by many small, active farms.

The methods used included participatory assessments with farmers, as well as actual field observations in the area. The results indicate that crop-raiding by wildlife has high potential of resulting in human-wildlife conflicts in the Afadjato Agumatsa area. The most important wildlife culprits are small rodents and forest ungulates, such as the cane rat and small duikers. While addressing crop-raiding by large and charismatic wildlife species (e.g. elephants and large ungulates) is important, the results of this research suggest that attention should also be given to non-charismatic wildlife species in mitigation strategies to promote conservation of increasingly changing tropical forests.

Key words: Crop-raiding, uncharismatic wildlife species, human-wildlife conflicts

Contact information: Edem Kodzo Ekpe, Biology Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32816. Phone: 321-206-8542 Email: e\_edem@yahoo.com