

Third Quarterly Report

July - September 2019



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Zoological Society of East Anglia



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1. Firebreak work

The firebreak maintenance work for 2019 was carried out for 3 days from the 4th – 6th August. The way the event was organized was slightly amended this year to improve productivity.

In past firebreak maintenance events we have distributed the zebu prior to cooking so this time we pre-cooked the food and then distributed it to the participants. We allocated 17 people to the preparation and distribution of the food to the participants who each had a ticket.

The advantage of this system is that everyone eats the same food in the same way of cooking and they can then spend more time working on the firebreaks than in cooking.



Photo 1 : Building firebreak



Photo 2 : Firebreak Participants



Photo 3 : Serving the meal



Photo 4 : Completed firebreak

Some of the volunteers from the local community arrived the day before the work commenced and were served coffee and this year, unlike in previous years, water was available directly from the camp instead of people having to travel far to access water.

The maintenance work this year concentrated on old paths and in total about 7 km of firebreak was maintained.

The number of participants decreased compared to 2018, in total 670 people took part during the 3 days. The number of participants who live the farthest from Ankarafa forest is always lower compared to those who live in the close vicinity.

Villagers from Amboloboza numbered up to 250 people, which is impressive. There were no staff attending from the Madagascar National Parks even though they were informed in advance of the dates.

The general decrease in participants this year may be attributed to the lack of awareness and understanding of the dates for 2019. Last year we shifted the dates of the firebreak work and we believe that many people assumed we would keep the same dates. This is something we can ensure does not happen in 2020.

The participants respected the rules we set, which were not cutting trees in the forest, respecting the cleanliness of the place and using the existing toilets.

Feedback from the participants was good in that they appreciated the changes that were made for this year, however, we still need to improve on the available accommodation and the transportation of people coming far beyond the area of work.

2. Field School

From 19th – 26th September 20 students and 2 teachers from the University of Antananarivo visited Ankarafa forest. They carried out a field study and participated in the 'Akomba Manga Maso' festival (local lemur festival).



Photo 5 : Night time lemur observation



Photo 6 : Lemur observation



Photo 7 : Conducting Villager Surveys



Photo 8 : Visit at the Research Camp

3. ‘Akomba Manga Maso’ Festival

From 23rd – 25th September the celebration of the ‘Akomba Manga Maso’ festival took place in the village of Antafiabe. This festival was well organized compared to those in previous years. This year there was enough time during the festival to conduct vital environmental awareness with attendees and we were encouraged with how many people from Antsohihy visited. A football match was held that went very well, the stage was decorated more this year and there was plenty of food. A car was organised to transport people from the main road to the site of the festival in Antafiabe.

The number of participants increased to approximately 1000 people which is really positive for this annual festival.



Photo 9 : Stage with a new look



Photo 10 : Speeches



Photo 11 : Dance students



Photo 12 : Environmental quiz

During the festival, the District Chief of Analalava, the Regional Directorate of Tourism, a representative of the Regional Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Mayor of Ambolobozo and many teachers and students from the University of Antananarivo were present.

The AEECL ran all the same activities as in the previous year and students from Antananarivo helped us during the environmental awareness sessions.

We also inaugurated the new school in Antafiabe during the festival.



Photo 13 : Environmental awareness sessions



Photo 14 : Environmental awareness

4. School Inauguration

The construction of the new school in Antiafiabe was started in 2018 and the school was completed and ready for use on 15th March 2019. Pupils from the village started using the school straight away! The school can take more than 50 pupils.

The new school was officially inaugurated during the 'Akomba Manga Maso' festival on 24th September 2019.

This school build project is part of a major aim of the AEECL to improve education and protect the environment.



Photo 15 : The new school

The AEECL received funding from Marat Karpeka Lemur Foundation to help build the school. A sign has been put up on the wall of the school displaying the logo of Marat Karpeka Lemur Foundation and the text explains that the school was constructed for the protection of lemurs.



Photo 16 : Setting of donor's logo

The District Chief, the Mayor of Amboloboza, the Head of the Administrative and Education Area from Amboloboza and many other authorities were present to witness the inauguration.

The AEECL Director explained to the authorities that the poor condition of the old school and the positive attitude and motivation of the villagers in Antaifiabe to protect the environment led to the AEECL building the new school in this village.



Photo 17 : School inauguration



Photo 18 : Ribbon cutting

The District Chief has expressed his gratitude to the AEECL for their contribution to improve education in Sahamalaza.

5. School Meals

To bring something new to the 'Akomba Manga Maso' festival, we organized group meals for the children who were present during the festival. The teachers whose salaries are subsidized by the AEECL, some students from the University of Antananarivo, and the educational organisation Mikajy Natiora, helped our team to organize the meal event. They cooked and served the meal.

In total, 235 meals were prepared for 100 children from 10 villages surrounding the park during the festival.

The menu included rice and beans with meat and also cookies and juice. The children enjoyed having the meal together between them.



Photo 19 : Children's meal preparation



Photo 20 : Children ready for their meal



Photo 21 : Children enjoying their meal at the festival



Photo 22 : Children tucking into their meat, rice and beans

6. Upgrading Equipment And Transportation Materials

a. Solar Pump

The water supply at the tourist camp has not been working for around 2 years due to a broken solar pump. This resulted in staff having to walk about 400m to access water using jerry cans!

A new solar pump was purchased from a company called SQ Vision and the installation of this has now resulted in a good water supply available at the tourist camp and has greatly facilitated the tasks the staff need to carry out at the camp. SQ Vision is a renewable energy company specialist and expert in photovoltaic techniques and solar pumping.



Photos 23 & 24 : Pump installation



Photos 25 & 26 : Running water at the tourist camp

Because water at the camp is now functioning the vegetable garden was started.

Soon, we will construct a building where the well and the pump are located. This is to secure the pump and to allow the installation and removal of the pump whenever it is needed.

b. Boat Trolley

The AEECL boat is a vital piece of transportation equipment and it has always been pushed in and out of the water. This was quite an effort and took extra personnel, time and cost and was also starting to damage the boat.

To limit extra expenses, we decided to invest in a trolley from Antananarivo. The trolley was then transported to Antsohihy which has now vastly limited how many people we need to help get the boat in and out of the water. We are also now able to store the boat in the courtyard of the AEECL office in Antsohihy.



Photo 27 : Boat at the courtyard in Antsohihy

c. Purchase of New Vehicle

The most recent AEECL vehicle, bought in 2011 has recently been breaking down on a regular basis. Failures included braking system, clutch, gearbox, oil cooler, crack on windshield, dampers, ball joints, tie rod ends, axial rods, tie rod assemblies, centre rods, chassis deformation, and injection pump and so on....so not simple fixes!



Photos 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 : Damaged parts on the old AEECL vehicle.

Faced with the accumulation of breakdowns it was clear that it was no longer safe to use this vehicle. The roads in Madagascar between the villages and tourist/research camps can be horrendous and without transportation the work of the AEECL was very limited. As the car was no longer functioning we had to temporarily rent a car for travel to Sahamalaza whilst we started a fund raising campaign to be able to purchase a new 4x4 truck that could cope with the Madagascan roads!

We were delighted when many zoos stepped forward and pledged funds to help us purchase something suitable. We are indebted to these zoos and would like to thank our major donator, Wilhelma Zoo in Stuttgart, Heidelberg Zoo, La Palmyre Zoo, Opel Zoo, Mulhouse Zoo, Parc Merveilleux, Paradise Wildlife Park and the Zoological Society of East Anglia for their generosity and for keeping the AEECL on the road!

We have now purchased the vehicle. We opted for the same make of truck (Ford) as before but a vehicle specification that should last us for many years and ensure we can continue our work safely.

We are also working on a new sign to attach to the vehicle displaying all the logos of our generous donors.



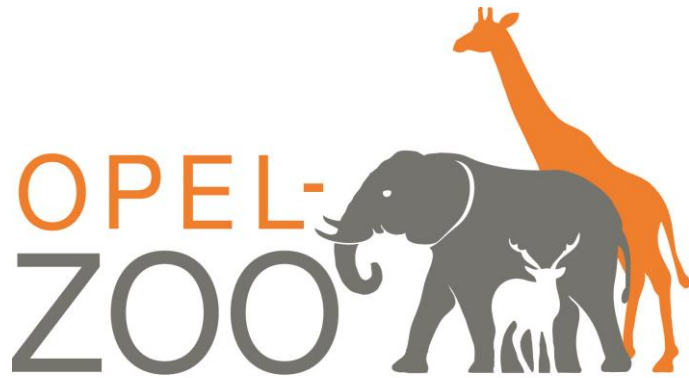
Photos 33 & 34 : The fantastic new 4x4 truck!

Thank you to our wonderful donors for the new vehicle!



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7. Research Camp Construction

The construction of the new research camp at Ankarafa is continuing and going very well. The walls have been raised and they were then connected by a concrete ring belt. The walls were then continued above the ring belt. The wood for the roof structure is ready and the roof is planned to be completed before the rainy season. Steel connecting feet have also been made.



Photo 35 : Wall of the new research building



Photo 36 : Building wall above the concrete ring belt



Photo 37 : Steel feet



Photo 38 : Poles connected to the steel foot



Photo 39 : Making the roof structure

8. Mulhouse Zoo visit to Sahamalaza and Distribution of Clothing

Two staff from Mulhouse Zoo visited Sahamalaza Park on the 26th September 2019. They arrived right after the 'Akomba Manga Maso' festival. Before travelling to the forest of Ankarafa, they stayed for one day in the village of Antafiabe to distribute clothes and shoes to the villagers. This donation was a surprise to the villagers of Antafiabe and was very well received and the visitors were welcomed to the village.

The AEECL Director said a short speech to the villagers who were present and said that the visitors were in Sahamalaza to see lemurs but they also came with gifts. He also noted that without the lemurs, there would be no visitors and therefore no gifts like the clothes and shoes. Protecting the environment is important and beneficial to all because you receive more when the environment is well protected.



Photo 40 : Distribution of clothes

Many thanks for your continued support of the AEECL.