

REPORT ON GIRAFFE SEARCH AT ZERAF ISLAND

March 5 – April 6, 2021

Agency: Agency for Conservation and Development (ACD)

Introduction

There are several wild animals that are almost deemed to extinct due to human illicit activities. Through support of Saves Giraffe Now (SGN) and Philip Winter, ACD sent out an expedition to locate and identify the habitats for Giraffes, Elephants, Lions, Buffalo, and other animals killed for their products. This is the fourth time in a space of four months for ACD team to lead expeditions for search and conservation of Zeraff wildlife.

The Mission team

The Expedition team comprised of three ACD Community Wildlife Ambassadors, two staff and a member of Government office's Wildlife Department. The team left old Fangak following the Phow (White Nile) River to the North, towards New Fangak and branched at Tuoh village, thirteen hours rowing on canoes, and headed to Nyadiany, Kuerdil, Kuergor, Lajab and Panhol. These are the Giraffe grazing fields and longtime habitats. Movements were only made during daytime and night hours were for rests as they are also dangerous.



March 5, 2021; Departure at Old Fangak



March 8, 2021; Rowing at the marshes of Nyadiany

Equipment





Due to increased risks from poachers roaming the forests and marshes of Fangak Island, the CWAs and Wildlife Department team were all armed. This was meant to protect themselves. The team were provided with basic needs.

- Tents, mosquito nets, backpacks, utensils
- Food
- Canoes

Findings

The team managed to identify some bones and footsteps of which the Guides confirmed were bones, footsteps, dung and grazing fields of the Giraffes. These were fresh as seen in the pictures. The guide suspected the giraffes might have moved to further areas due to occurrence of floods in their previous territories. They found a leopard in the forest but when the cameraman was trying to locate suitable position to take pictures the animal noticed their presence and hide in the nearby bushes. There were sightings of antelopes but could not be seen clearly in the pictures due to shorter zoom of the camera.

Locals at Pulpam boma, about two days' walk from Old Fangak (due to floods) reported large tower of Giraffes that had passed their area, early January 2021. The CWAs and ADC team were excited of the news and are still feeling tireless to continue the search until they have the chance to take clear pictures and locate their habitats.

	
<p>Fresh Giraffe dung, Nyadiany, April 2, 2021</p>	<p>Fresh Giraffe bones,</p>
	
<p>Jaws of killed male Giraffe</p>	<p>Rhino prints</p>

Challenges faced by the expedition team

- Flooding hindered the movement of the team
- Lack of suitable camera for long range zoom, lack of drone cameras which would have made capturing proper pictures of animals from far

- Scarcity of clean water for drinking
- The team requires proper gears for the expedition, proper boots and clothes
- They suffered from mosquito bites and required availability of mosquito repellents incase of any other mission
- Challenge of first aid kits