

Project Update: May 2021

The project involved distribution, conservation status and environmental correlates of a poorly known and most threatened stingray (*Fontitrygon margarita*) in Nigeria.

The first phase of the project involved having personal interviews with the heads of the village and local fishermen to document indigenous knowledge of daisy stingray. Likewise, distribution of questionnaires among social groups (market women and fishermen) located along the coastal water course where daisy stingray occurred, to document the indigenous knowledge. This has been done through frequent visits since January 2021.



Figure 1: Field activities by the team members, the local head, and chiefs of the fishing community

Similarly, there was the ecological and social survey to determine the distribution patterns of daisy stingray in Badagary, Nigeria. The field survey was focused in areas where fishing activities are being carried out (Figure 2) along with community-based conservation activities focusing on the target group in the local community. The survey was done by visiting the landing sites at the banks of the ocean for the stingray catches for documentation.

Representative species vouchers from the ecological field survey were collected and processed (Figure 3). A few daisy stingrays were encountered; we observed, collected, and preserved three individual samples for an inventory of daisy stingrays in Nigeria and description of the various species that might be present (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Field activities by the team members and target group of local fishing community.

During the social and field survey, several threats to stingrays were observed - uncontrolled fishing, harvesting of the newly recruited individuals, oil pollution and sand mining (Figure 4 and 5).

We engaged in community-based conservation activities with the target group in the local community, involving conservation sensitisation and awareness programmes. We visited different communities and interacted with local heads and the fishermen (Figure 6). We enlightened them on the importance of sustainability of stingray in the ecosystem and the need for the conservation and its associated habitats.

Species distribution modelling

The next stage of the project will be dedicated to conservation education programmes in schools within the local communities in Badagary and learning group in Lagos State, Nigeria. Likewise, analysing of the results of the social, ecological field survey and drafting of manuscript will be carried out.



Figure 3: Daisy Stingrays recorded during the field survey.



Figure 4: Harvesting of new recruited individuals observed during the field survey that may pose threats to the stingray in the area.



Figure 5: Different human activities (sand mining) observed during the field survey that may pose threats to the stingray in the area.





Figure 6: Conservation sensitization and awareness with the local heads and the fishermen