

First record of the leopard *Panthera pardus* in Bui National Park, Ghana

The leopard *Panthera pardus* is categorized as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. In West Africa, populations of the African subspecies *P. pardus pardus* have declined drastically, with only nine populations in 5–14% of the species' historical range now remaining.

The 1,821 km² Bui National Park in western Ghana is characterized by savannah woodland, grassland and riverine gallery forest. Between 2007 and 2013, a large hydroelectric dam was built on the Black Volta River that runs through the Park, flooding c. 23% of its area.

In September 2022, we set up 14 camera traps in Bui National Park during a training workshop organized as part of the project Improving Capacity for Protected Area Management in Ghana (supported by the Audemars-



Leopard *Panthera pardus pardus* captured by a camera trap in Bui National Park, Ghana.

Watkins Foundation). The survey extended over 808 camera-trap days and covered < 2% of the Park area. We captured images of leopards at one camera-trap station, with four capture events on 11 October 2022, providing the first confirmed record of the species in the Park. Prior to this, the only indication of the species in the area was a report of leopard vocalizations in March 2005 and unconfirmed reports of leopard tracks by Park staff. Our cameras also confirmed the presence of the side-striped jackal *Canis adustus* in the Park.

Our finding highlights the value of camera trapping as a tool for monitoring the presence of large mammals. Further monitoring through a systematic camera-trapping programme is now needed in Bui National Park to assess the status, range and distribution of the population of the leopard and other threatened species, to inform management interventions and targeted species conservation actions.

KOFI AMPONSAH-MENSAH* (orcid.org/0000-0002-8625-1681, mak2kofi@gmail.com) and YAA NTIAMOA-BAIDU* (orcid.org/0000-0002-3915-3341) Centre for Biodiversity Conservation Research, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana. FRANCESCO ROVERO* (orcid.org/0000-0001-6688-1494) Department of Biology, University of Florence, Sesto Fiorentino, Italy. P.J. STEPHENSON* (orcid.org/0000-0002-0087-466X) Laboratory for Conservation Biology, Department of Ecology and Evolution, University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

*Also at: IUCN SSC Species Monitoring Specialist Group

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