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Rights, revenues and responsibilities - solving conflicts using PFM for wild coffee conservation

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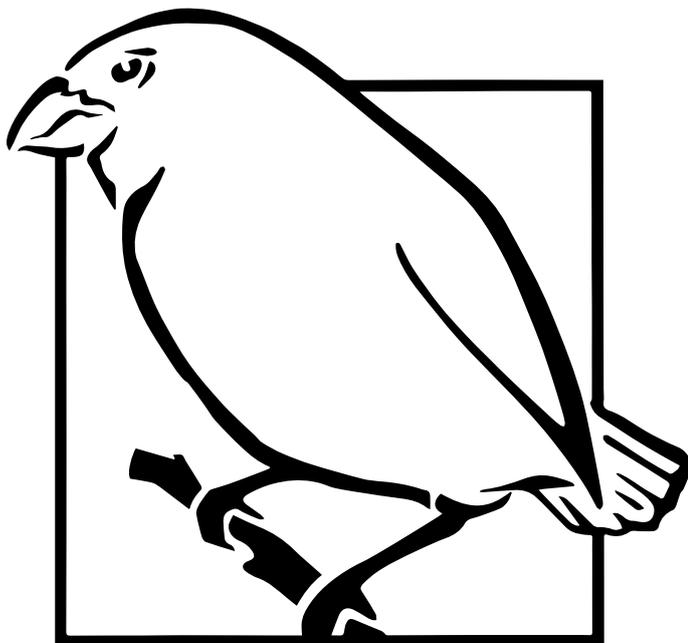
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# Newsletter

January 2017



Juvenile and infant chimp playing, Credit: A. Plumtre



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The Darwin Initiative supports developing countries to conserve biodiversity and reduce poverty. Funded by the UK Government, the Darwin Initiative provides grants for projects working in developing countries and UK Overseas Territories (OTs).

Projects support:

- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)
- the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

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Credit: Rona Dennis

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Community meeting,  
Credit: Indrias Getachew

## Rights, revenues and responsibilities - solving conflicts using PFM for wild coffee conservation

Conflicts have often occurred with conservation initiatives due to their impacts on local communities. Key issues are the displacement of people, the loss of access to resources, and impacts on livelihoods. It is now broadly recognised that the rights of human communities need to be respected. New approaches to conservation need to be explored so that communities are engaged in meeting conservation goals and ensuring sustainable outcomes. The use of participatory forest management (PFM) for the conservation of wild coffee in southwest Ethiopia is one such approach. It could ensure long-standing conflicts over forests are resolved and new ones avoided, while conserving wild coffee.

The forests of southwest Ethiopia are globally significant and host the largest remaining population of wild Arabica coffee. Maintaining this diverse genepool is important for the future of coffee breeding and exploring natural adaptation of these plants to climate change. These forests became state property in the late 19th century when the modern Ethiopian state was established. Since then, local use of the forest was formally restricted, while parcels of forest have been granted as rewards to national elites (before 1971) and more recently used for state farms, resettlement schemes, and commercial estates of national and international investors. Due to limited state staff and resources the remaining state forest has been effectively “open access” and much was degraded. In total almost half of the forest in this

area has been lost in the last 50 years and the remaining stands of wild coffee have been threatened.

There is conflict between communities and the government over restrictions on local use, and access to the forest. Application of PFM has been one way of protecting the wild coffee stands, whilst also improving the livelihoods of many people living in forest-fringe areas, and mitigating this conflict. Through this process the natural forests have been given back to the communities – and the risks of forest alienation by the state reduced. Management plans for the forest, including the wild coffee stands, have been agreed between the communities and the government allowing monitored sustainable off-take of most forest products. Increasing the revenue for these forest products has been achieved through the development of community based cooperatives with links to international markets for honey and both cultivated and wild coffee. Secure access rights to their forests and revenues from these assets are the benefits the communities receive in return managing and monitoring the forest and its precious wild coffee. Community and government jointly monitor the forest management plans and address issues as they arise. A working forest is now secured, with wild coffee stands protected.

Written by Adrian Wood and Fiona Hesselden. For more information on project 19-025, click [here](#) or contact Project Leader Professor Adrian Wood, [a.p.wood@hud.ac.uk](mailto:a.p.wood@hud.ac.uk)