



Drivers of Biodiversity Conservation in Sacred Groves: The Overlapping Management Scenarios in South-western Nigeria.

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Overview

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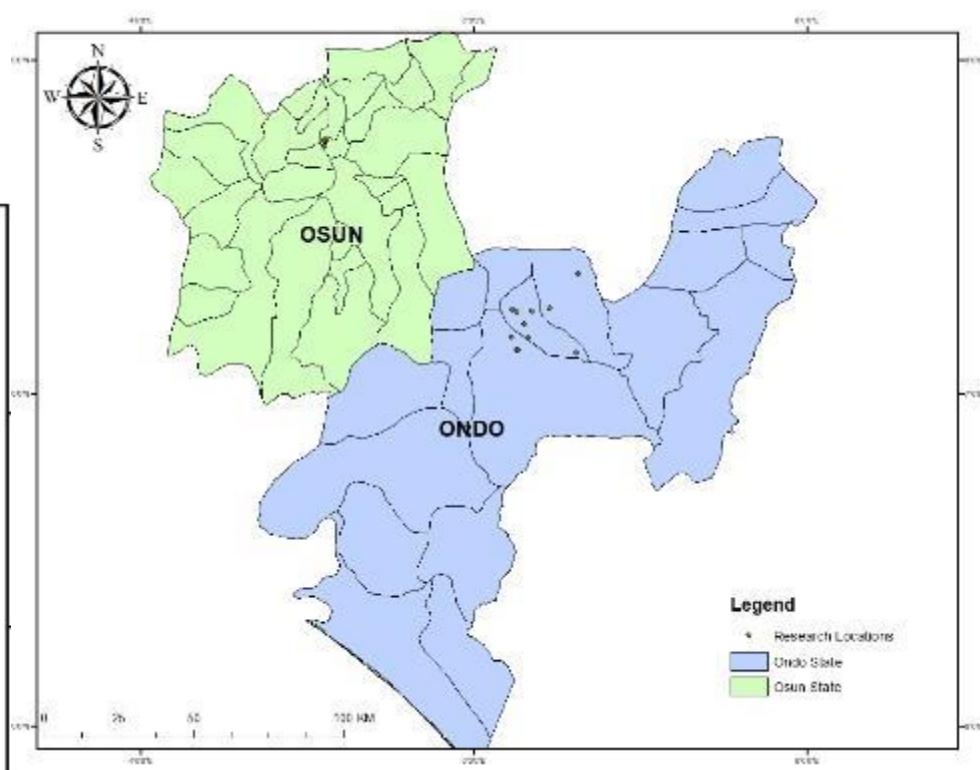
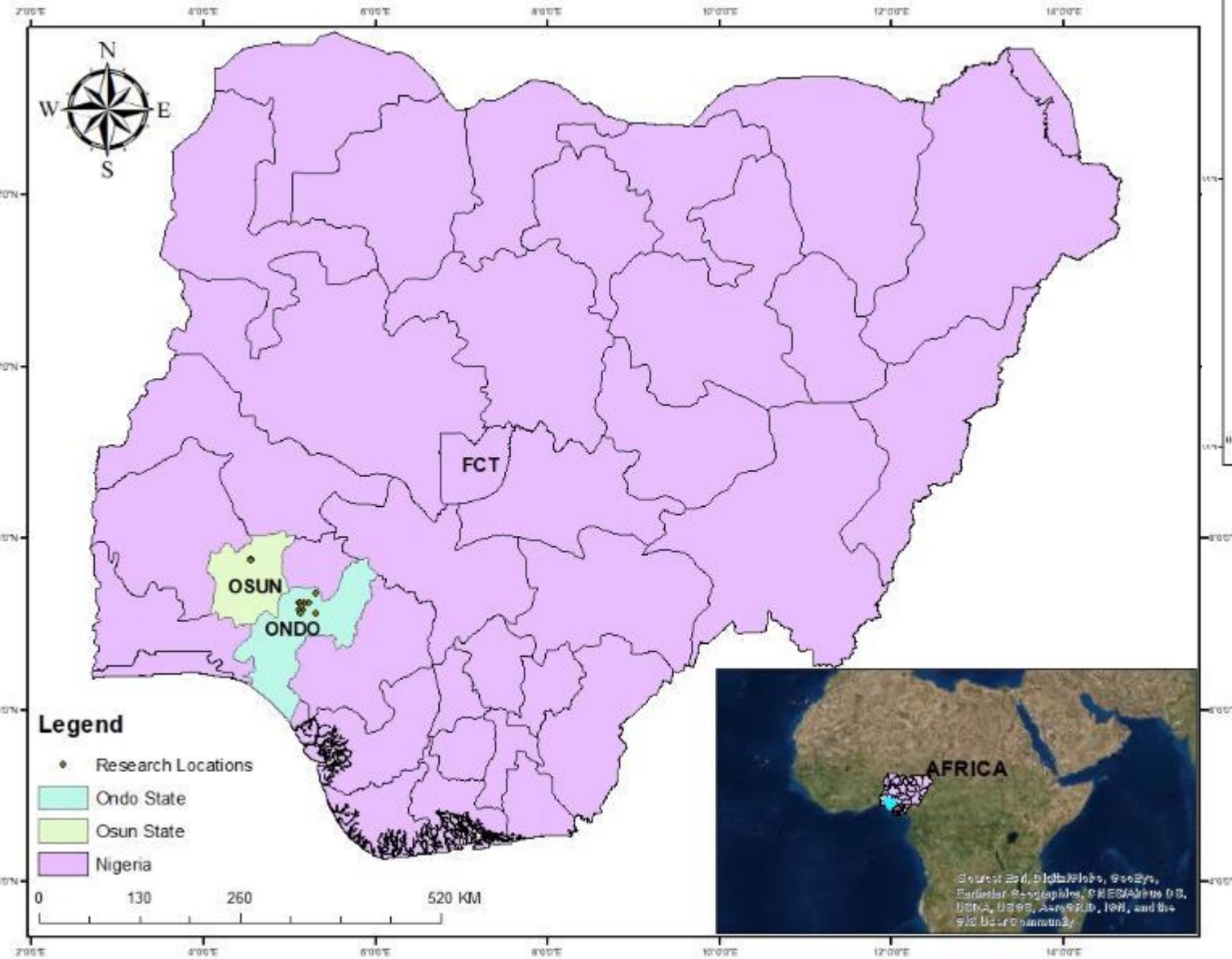
Introduction

Globally, sacred groves represent a traditional form of community-based conservation, recognized for its capacity to preserve areas that are of strong cultural and religious importance to local people¹.



¹ Ormsby, A. A., and Bhagwat, S. A. (2010). Sacred forests of India: a strong tradition of community-based natural resource management. *Foundation for Environmental Conservation*, 37(3), 320–326.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0376892910000561>

Study Sites



Study Sites

Site (Grove)	Osun Osogbo	Idanre	Igbo-Olodumare
State Located	Osun	Ondo	Ondo
Size of the grove (major features)	75 hectares forest area and a buffer zone of 47 hectares (River, forests, sculptures, shrines)	(Mountains, forests, sculptures, shrines)	7 hectares (Mountains, forests, sculptures)
UNESCO World Heritage listing	World Heritage Site (2005)	On the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Site (2007)	Nil
Status in Nigeria	National Monument	On the tentative list of National Monument	On the tentative list of National Monument (Local and State Cultural site)
Special regulation	Decree 77 of 1979 of the Federal Government of Nigeria	State government laws	State government laws
Government law enforcement officials	Over 15 staff including patrol officials	About 5 staff	1 staff
gods or goddess related to the site	The goddess of fertility 'Osun' and of other deities	'Orosun' and 'Olofin' are major deities worshiped here	None

Study Site: Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove



Study Site: Idanre Hills





Study Site: Igbo Olohumare Sacred Grove

Data collection: Mixed method approach



Results and discussion

- Sacred groves play key role in protecting the remaining biodiversity in the region.
- Five major factors influences preservation of scared groves namely:
 - Socio-cultural benefits
 - Prohibitions
 - Established traditional practices
 - Fear of the gods and goddesses
 - Government law enforcement.



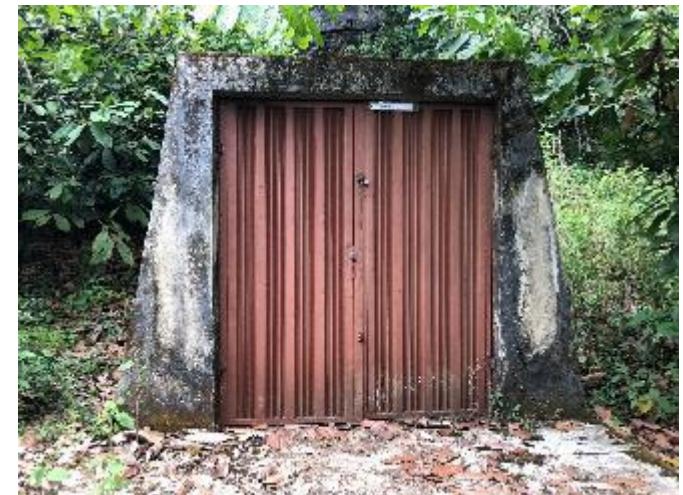


Results and discussion

- Both UNESCO and national government regulations helped to reaffirm established traditional practices.
- UNESCO designation and government take over of the groves contributed to the socio-economic benefits (Osun Osogbo and Idanre Hills)
- Minor government involvement in Igbo Olo dumare = Lesser socio-economic benefits enjoyed by the villagers.

Results and discussion

- Increase in migrant population in Igbo Olo dumare reduces awareness and enforcement of traditional practices = reduced grove sacredness and preservation



Conclusion

- Multiple benefits drive biodiversity conservation in sacred groves including socio-economic, religio-cultural and ecological benefits.
- Co-existence of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and formal government legislation offers assurance in the long term preservation of sacred groves and its biodiversity.



Recommendations

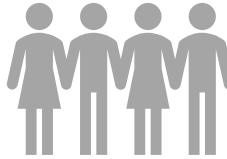


Government

Eminent domain

Adopt principle of
subsidiarity and devolution
of decision making

Transparency with revenue
generated and its use for
developmental projects.



Local People

Preserve and embrace TEK
especially in places where
majority of the population
are migrants

Embark on reforestation of
groves in collaboration with
other partners where
needed.



NGOs

Support local people's
interest in engaging with
government and other
stakeholders

Support the preservation of
TEK that protects remaining
biodiversity in sacred
groves.



Thank you to my funders and collaborator