

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF MBELILING FOREST ON FLORES, INDONESIA

Report over project visit of DOF IBA
caretakers, June 16th-27th, 2009

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Dansk Ornitologisk Forening

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1. Introduction

On June 16th-27th, 2009, four representatives of DOF visited the project *Sustainable Management of Mbeliling Forest on Flores, Indonesia*. Hosts of the visit were Burung Indonesia/BirdLife Indonesia (BI) and their local working partner, Yakines, who together guided the participants around the villages surrounding the protected forest of Mbeliling on the western part of Flores.

The purpose of the report is to document officially the contents of the project visit.

Abbreviations used:

- BI: Burung Indonesia (BirdLife Indonesia)
- CDG: Community Conservation & Development Group
- DKK: Danish kroner
- DOF: Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (BirdLife Denmark)
- IBA: Important Bird Area
- LKM: Low Key Monitoring
- mio.: millions
- rp: Indonesian rupiah
- Yakines: Yayasan Komodo Indonesia Lestari (a local organisation working with community involvement)

2. Participants and hosts

The members of the DOF caretaker delegation were:

- Ms. Kirsten Marie Haugstrup (KMH), member of the DOF board
- Ms. Henriette Tøttrup Hansen (HTH), volunteer caretaker of the IBA Hjarbæk Fjord & the River Simested Valley
- Mr. Bo Kayser (BK), volunteer caretaker of the IBA Lake Furesø with Vaserne & Lake Farum
- Mr. Thomas Vikstrøm (TV), coordinator of DOF's IBA Caretaker Project

At Flores, the hosts of the DOF caretaker delegation were the following

- Mr. Budi Aulia (BA), project leader at Flores for BI
- Mr. Ferdinand (Ferdy) Mau Manu (FMM), Yakines
- Mrs. Laura Smelter (LS), interpreter, Australian volunteer at BI

3. Realised itinerary

3.1 Tuesday, June 16th: Arrival at Flores, Labuan Bajo – Cunca Lolos

Arrival

Pick-up by BI at Komodo Airport around 1:30 pm. Lunch at restaurant Philemon in the harbour of Labuan Bajo.

Project presentation

Project presentation by Budi Aulia at the Burung Indonesia head quarter in Labuan Bajo. Among other subjects the following were emphasized:

- The two different CDG models
- the growing number of villages involved in the project
- Mbeliling National Park
- growing public awareness of endemic bird species
- non-timber forest products: Until now only ginger
- ecotourism facilities
- the small annual number of tourists to Flores compared to Komodo
- the great financial value of Mbeliling as a water source: 33,4 DKK/år
- the still large local poverty
- LKM



- successful halt of deforestation
- threatening gold mining

The present BI staff was presented.

Arrival at Roe, a sub-village of Cunca Lolos

Around 4:30 pm we started driving to Cunca Lolos. Arrival here around 5:45 pm. We were received through an exhaustive welcome ceremony.

Meeting at Cunca Lolos

After this, meeting at village chief Ferdinand Hamin's place with all village officials and other local people. Among subjects informed about and discussed were

- The former intensive logging and bird shooting by the village has almost ceased now
- A villager (Petrus Nanti, age 45) asked BI/DOF for some economic support to establish a livestock as he now has lost his former income by logging. BA answered that nothing could be promised, but that pressure would be laid on the local government.
- The price of a cow is 2 mio. rp (1.000 DKK)
- BA asked DOF for two binoculars for local ecotourism
- A small grant from DOF has yielded the village families 7 durian trees each
- Possible inputs to improve the local school were welcomed
- Proposed by KMH and HTH a separate meeting between them and the women of the village was arranged for the following day. By the end of the actual meeting only one woman was present

Generally, a lot of questions were posed to the DOF delegation, although fewer villagers attended the following presentation by TV. The meetings ended at midnight.

3.2 Wednesday, June 17th: Cunca Lolos

LKM

As proposed by BK the evening before, the caretaker delegation participated in a local LKM, lasting 6-9:30 am. It was the third LKM in this part of Mbeliling forest (the fourth if the first preparing LKM is included) and the first since the rainy season this year. The last one was 3 months ago.

Breakfast at 10-11 am.

Visit to Family Forest CDG in Leram

Visit to the *family forest CDG* Maju Bersama (meaning Moving Together) in the neighbouring sub-village of Leram, especially their *customary forest garden*, a Yakines conservation project covering 20 ha of which until now 60 % are cultivated in terraces. Every grown-up villager here has an individual plot of 0.25 ha where one can cultivate their own crops. The purpose of the project is to avoid erosion and forest logging. In the garden the trees are given names after villagers and hence are strictly protected. "Family forest" is a good brand, among other reasons because monocultures as e.g. oil palm plantations are very sensitive to changing conjunctures.

Among the crops we were shown were

- Cloves (*zanzibar*)
- Tuba nut, poisonous to fish and formerly used for fish catching, but too dangerous for the consumers
- Acacia sp., (a Mimosa), used for livestock feeding, soil surface stabilisation against erosion and firewood
- Pineapple (*nenas*): In the rainy season, the price is 1000 rp (0.5 DKK), the rest of the year 10 or 20 times as much. Pineapples are served with salt! But they are much sweeter than at home...
- Papaya
- Durian
- Cassava
- Mahogany
- Banana (*pisang*)
- Rambutan
- Palm-wine palm
- A tree species used as malaria medicine and as an organic pesticide
- Jackfruit



- Cocoa
- *Gladio* (with giant leaves)
- Vanilla
- Rice: Paddy fields are very stable in respect to income as well as to erosion
- Candle nut

Between the village and the forest garden there was a big area of slash-and-burn cultivation. In the distance the sound of a chain saw could be heard, should come from a neighbour village not involved in forest protection!

Meeting with the women of the village

As proposed by KMH and HTH the day before a separate meeting between them and the women of the village was held in the afternoon. The presence of a few men was needed to translate from manggarai. Among other information the women told about how they have to get up very early each morning to take care of the children and the fields – and to make breakfast to the men! This was told with humour, as the women felt pity for men of the village who because of their weakness have to get a lot of support from the strong women. The only gender difference driven discrimination that were told about with anger was that women get much less paid for the same work if they e.g. get a job of field work for a great land owner.

Visit to local jungle

Unusually, this forest area is owned by Cunca Lolos, not by the state. A little lake here is created by a landslide. The endemic bird species Flores Monarch was seen here.

Information exchange

In the evening a meeting of information exchange between the village and DOF was held at Ferdinand Hamin's place. Among subjects informed about and discussed were

- The DOF delegation was asked also to say something negative about the village, but not really possible...
- There is a need of knowhow about organic farming and livestock keeping. Lack of education is the main problem for nature conservation at Flores
- The village school is situated near the forest border and functions closely with the village; the children are taught about nature conservation and birds
- The village/the project has the possibility of engaging Indonesian – and maybe Danish? - students for a period. Presently BA together with Thomas Lehmborg is investigating this
- A villager expressed his hope for that the continued conservation activities will involve the local agriculture, too
- Ferdinand Hamin's expectations of his visit to Denmark in August: To hear and learn about ecotourism and birding

At 9:12 pm the last woman disappeared from the meeting while there were still 17 local men left.

3.3 Thursday, June 18th: Cunca Lolos - Werang

Breakfast at 8:15 am after morning bird watch.

Visit to water catchment area with tree planting

The visit started at 9 am.

Above the area is a slope that has been afforested to save the water reserve. Among the cultivated plants here are coffee, cocoa, orange, chilli, betel nut, and snakeskin fruit. The largest of the trees here are natural and they are preserved. The planted trees are about 10 years old. The biodiversity advantages of the area are recognised, too. Cattle are allowed to graze here. Formerly, logging in the area caused internal village conflicts.

Formerly, water was carried manually from the catchment area to the village, but now the water runs through a simple gravitation pipeline starting from a reservoir in the form of a little building to keep the water clean. However, there only has money enough to cover half of the reservoir with a roof.

An example of a tree species very capable of storing water was shown: Tall, white-barked, with cauliflory and edible fruits. However, it is hard to find and thus to grow.



Visit to the village school

The school was built in 1967, but didn't get cemented floors until the 1980ies and -90ies. A building in a very bad condition was shown; among other things the roof was broken. A new roof would cost 30 mio. rp (15,000 DKK), which the village can't afford; they hope of support from the local government or from abroad. Another building is a present from the Netherlands, received in 2000. Only the teachers, not the buildings, are financed by the community. The school has got the books and other materials for teaching English, but no teachers capable of doing it.

After the presentation of the school, the school children performed the traditional Caci dance and other dances, and in return the DOF delegation sung a Danish children's song.

Visit to Cunca Rami waterfall

At 1 pm we drove to the Burung Indonesia project office in Werang to get installed here.

From the office we went to Cunca Rami waterfall. Underway, we had a little talk with some inhabitants of the local village, Golo Ndaring, about the fact that this village hasn't signed any agreement about forest protection. The reason for this should be that the central government has expanded the protected area towards the village, compared to the delimitation in former times of Dutch colonisation.

Return to the office in Werang at 6 pm.

3.4 Friday, June 19th: Werang - Nunang

Breakfast at 8:30 am after morning bird watch.

Information and discussion about CDG's

Proposed by BI, TV presented the history of the DOF Caretaker Project.

FMM, who is program coordinator of Yakines, started presenting the activities of the organisation, which was officially founded in 1999 (unofficially in 1997) and is open for everyone to join. It's working at two places in Nusa Tenggara: Manggarai (Western Flores) and Eastern Sumba. Until 2001 all activities were carried out by volunteers, as e.g. FMM himself. Since 1999 both Yakines and FMM has been working in Mbeliling, since 2001 together with BirdLife International, and since 2007 together with BI. The local project consists of:

- Sustainable agriculture incl. water catchment preservation
- Organic farming with focus on "poly-cultures" and tree planting
- Conservation of natural resources, e.g. in the form of sustainable agro-forestry
- Education of the local population in e.g. conflict handling
- Community Economic Development incl. "Local Credit Unions" in which villagers (as in Cunca Lolos) go together to save money for improvements
- Cultivation of rice

Yakines is getting support from VECO, a Belgian state institution. They choose their working areas from where most illegal logging is going on, or – where BI is involved – for the benefit of birds. In one area Yakines had to cease their support of rice cultivation because drought caused by logging made the cultivation impossible. Another activity of Yakines is to facilitate mediation in conflicts between authorities and farmers, especially by means of education and establishment of CDG's – meaning Community Conservation Development Groups. One of our local hosts at this part of the visit originally was a farmer who joined a CDG and afterwards Yakines.

The director of Yakines is the famous Ella Uran, under who serves the program coordinator (FMM) and a finance administrator. At the "bottom" of the hierarchy are found 6 facilitators, 3 from VECO and 3 from BI.

The presentation was continued in Labuan Bajo on June 25th.

1:00-2:30 pm: Car transport from Werang to Nunang



Arrival at Lempe, a sub-village of Nunang

A shorter and less formal welcome ceremony. Presentation of village officials, among others Rina, a young female village facilitator. Table prayer before and after dinner, and dance competition in the evening.

3.5 Saturday, June 20th: Nunang

Morning bird watch before breakfast.

9 am-1 pm: Walk together with many villagers to the local summit of Puncak Savana to see the local LKM route.

Afternoon meeting with the local ecotourism (handicraft) group

At least at this meeting, the group consisted of the four women Frida, Seima, Ratna and Numus.

One species of rattan (Indonesian: *Pandan*, manggarai: *Rea*) is cultivated here at the shore of Lake Sano Nnggoang. The rattan products are placed in water for one night, dried for two nights and then dyed with red and blue sap from a tree locally known as *capang*. Only women are doing this work – in their “spare time” when men and children are asleep. Rattan can reach an age of 20-30 years, but produces only a few leaves each year.

Rattan is used for baskets, bags and carpets, which are sold at the market. The most important function of the carpets are: To be slept on. It takes about one week’s work to produce e.g. a bag. One is not expected to touch a carpet with *shoes*, as it is produced using *hands*.

3.6 Sunday, June 21st: Nunang – Golo Desat

Morning birds watch before breakfast.

10 -11:30 am: Car transport to Ranggawatu, a sub-village of Golo Desat

Arrival at and presentation of Ranggawatu from 11:30 am

Presentation of, for and about Melati, the local CDG, from which 20 members out of 37 were present, 13 women and 7 men. The CDG was established in March 2004, from the start without any men, who only joined the group in 2007 with help from Yakines. The CDG receives 5 mio. rp. (2,500 DKK) per year from the local government of Western Manggarai and is co-operating with BI. As a part of this co-operation the CDG has made a visit to the joint project of BI and DOF at Sumba.

The DOF delegation was asked to present themselves and their families. Among others, the following questions and subjects were discussed:

- Why do DOF want to protect the birds – are there to few?
- What kind of “civil” jobs do typical DOF caretakers have? (An often posed question during the trip)
- What are the main tasks of the DOF caretakers (as volunteers)?
- Who founded DOF?
- The main challenge for Melati is to protect the water resource, which is necessary for both man and nature
- Are Danish birds caught to be sold alive?
- Melati now is protecting the local birds because they 1) help predicting the rain, dry, sowing and harvest seasons, 2) remove insects from gardens and crops and 3) predict the death of specific persons, especially the owl!
- Prioritised working fields of Melati include water and soil, food security and LKM

After this the present people as a choir made the voices of different birds: 1) Owl: “Boooo”, pronounced as the Danish man’s name, 2) Large-billed Crow: As a rook, 3) Black-naped Oriole: In a lingual version like the Danish of Chaffinch, this one meaning “It’s time to rise!”, 4) a species of White-eye and 5) Flores Crow.

Demonstration of ginger powder production

In the afternoon we were shown the production of ginger powder. Two types of ginger are used, roots as we



find them in Denmark and smaller ones – only the last ones smell like at home! Crushed ginger is mixed with red palm sugar and water in the relation 1:1:1. The water is pressed out again. Then the mass is boiled over open fire with the same amount of cane sugar (which is bought) to improve the consistence. The burned product is treated with spoons and fast becomes a powder, which is served with boiling water, one spoonful per glass.

The procedure is carried out by women, although the sugar is produced by men who pick it up far away in the forest, too. The ginger powder is produced here in response to orders from Labuan Bajo, the latest one amounting to 5 kg.

Presentation of a food security project

Hard to understand, but some of the food belonging to each family is delivered to the local community to create a food reserve. A giant basket was shown, containing a rice reserve for 4 months for the c. 20 families connected with the CDG. A similar reserve of another product was shown.

End of day

Bird watching 5-6:25 pm, during which a recently harvested paddy field was shown; the field already was planted with new rice as there is water enough this year. Dinner and rest.

3.7 Monday, June 22nd: Golo Desat

5:45-8:30 am bird watching at Puar Lolo, a famous bird site in the Mbeliling forest. 8:30 am breakfast.

Visit to the sub-village of Kampung Lokot 11:15 am – 2:45 pm

At 9:30 am we started walking through agro-forested areas and the sub-village of Nara to Kampung Lokot where we arrived 11:15 am.

Welcome ceremony and meeting with the village officials. Unlike all other meetings until now, at this meeting we all are sitting in chairs. In all, Golo Desat, which consists of 9 sub-villages, has 2900 grown-up inhabitants, 80 of which living in Kpg. Lokot. About once each year all inhabitants of all 9 sub-villages are meeting here in Kpg. Lokot to e.g. make decisions or celebrate a new priest.

This sub-village is hundreds of years old, but it's history is only existing in the memory of the inhabitants. It has three sacred places, i.e. 1) the drinking water plant, 2) a rock functioning as a place of prayer and 3) a pre-Christian sacred place. At the last place chickens and eggs are sacrificed. These places are the most important reasons for preservation of the forest, and the village does not want to follow possible wishes from the local government to use the forest more intensively. However, nothing written exists to document the rights of the village to anything in the forest. As in Roe (Cunca Lolos) the water supply takes place through pipes, although here made of bamboo stems. Traditionally, four pipes were leading to each of the four big families of the village, but now only one pipe remains. Everyone who grows up in the village and leaves it, has to return, e.g. with a spouse from abroad. As a part of the wedding, a newly married couple has to take a swim together in the drinking water plant, in the presence of the whole village. The same counts for the relatives of newly dead villagers. The village really wants to establish one more drinking water plant so that they could cover one of them and thus reserve it for people while the other one could remain uncovered to the benefit of birds and mammals, e.g. wild boars, as the existing one is today. This new water supply is the most important goal of the village, as it will make eco-tourism possible, which moreover will require improvement of roads and education of guides. The village would like to learn to know the local bird fauna. Questioned by HTH, the present villagers don't know whether the village children learn about birds in the school, but this is convincingly confirmed by the present children themselves, e.g. they immediately sing a little nature song learnt from BI. For the sake of the forest the village would like to get closed an old road formerly used for fire wood collection. Similarly the village is conscious that it should not be opened for an uncontrolled tourist flow; by the time they are discussing at which level they want. Only guided tourists are wanted. The village wants support to oppose gold mining in the area.

Walking back to Ranggawatu, arrival here at 4 pm.

Visit to Spider Web Rice Fields at Lembor 4:15 – 6 pm

Visit by car incl. stops for bird watching in steppe areas. Arrival at Ranggawatu at 7 pm.



3.8 Tuesday, June 23rd: Golo Desat – Melo – Labuan Bajo

6:05 – 7:05 am: Bird watching at Puar Lolo, followed by a visit to the local church of Ranggawatu. Departure from here after breakfast.

Liang Dara, sub-village of Melo, 9:50 am – 1:10 pm

A short welcome ceremony and meeting with the local CDG, called Sanggat Compat To'e. Watching Caci dance performance by local men of the village. Lunch and departure for Labuan Bajo.

Labuan Bajo from 2:30 pm

Check-in at hotel Bay View Gardens and dinner at Paradise Restaurant with a lot of representatives from BI, Yakines and DOF

3.9 Wednesday, June 24th: Labuan Bajo – Rinca – Labuan Bajo

Breakfast at restaurant Philemon in the harbour at 6 am.

8 am-5:55 pm: Whole-day visit by boat to the island of Rinca in Komodo National Park, to learn among other things about the management of the population of Komodo Dragon. Guidance by the local guide La Costa.

Dinner at hotel Bay View Gardens in Labuan Bajo.

3.10 Thursday, June 25th: Labuan Bajo

Bird watching at the forest of Tobedo 6-8 am. Breakfast at the hotel at 9 am.

Presentation of Yakines by FMM and Lodi Fikus, 10-12 am

The presentation was a continuation of the presentation by FMM in Werang on June 19th, see above.

There are 12 villages in the Mbeliling area; of these now 4 have been facilitated by Yakines, and 3 have signed protection agreements. Among many other things these agreements deal with establishment of water closets. Apparently, Nunang hasn't reached as much as Cunca Lolos, Golo Desat and Melo in the process. Every 3rd month it is controlled whether the villages are following the agreements.

In Golo Ndarang most parts of the agreements are followed, although nothing is signed! Cf. June 18th, p. 6. Generally it is clear that the respect for wild birds has increased, e.g. catchment by traps has ceased/stopped. The first steps in the agreement process are to produce maps and an outline of the local history. Following approval in the village, the procedure is repeated at the local state forest district.

Yakines finds it important to involve women not only in the activities, but also in the monitoring of them. LKM is initiated and first done by BI staff, but hereafter has to be taken over by local CDG's. The LKM route in Nunang (to Puncak Savana) is only a proposal and is still considered.

Yakines was financed by WEKO until 2002 and again 2009-2013 and co-financed with BI 2007-May 2010. They have got financed organic farming from the local government, besides some support of local medicine etc. from the Indonesian (state?) fund SEAKOLOGI. Yakines would like to hear about further possibilities of funding, especially after 2010! HTH mentioned the idea to ask the new leader of the first Danish national park during the BI visit here in August, and KMH repeated that DOF hopes to get the Flores project prolonged.

Visit to Yakines' Organic Outlet Shop in Labuan Bajo, 0:30-0:50 pm

Actually, the reserve of products for sale are the lowest possible, but the shop has some rice, honey and t-shirts for sale. Normally, tomatoes, beans, cashew nuts, bananas and pineapples are sold here, too. Until now there has been sold rice for 25.000 rp (12,50 DKK). All products come from groups cooperating with Yakines. The shop is one year and 7 months old and still hasn't got many local customers. The profit, e.g. 100 rp/kg rice (0,05 DKK) goes to the work of Yakines.

Meeting with BI in Labuan Bajo: Comparing CDGs and DOF caretaker groups & ideas exchange



about how to improve the results of BI, 1:30-3_30 pm

Table 1. Comparison of DOF Caretaker Groups and CDGs.

Indicator	DOF Caretaker Groups	Burung Indonesia (BI) CDGs
Program	Mostly birds	Various
Life of participants	Secure	Needs improvement
Education	High to very high seen globally. (High school, university, possibly teacher)	Low. Majority primary only (hanya SD).
Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with members - with program - with public 	E-mails, web sites, seminars, newsletters E-mails Web sites, tours, radio, newspapers	Direct, meetings in the field, house Letters, directly Newspapers, magazines, radio
History	Concepts developed in the 1960s Continued in 1980s Current form from 2003 Merged ideas from DOF & Birdlife International	80 existing community groups in Mbeliling (many from government (usually for improving livelihood), also independent groups) 12 groups selected from CDGs in 2007. Concept developed in Sumba Island (2001)
Use of results by authorities/org's	By government to fulfil requirements of EU (conservation reporting requirements) By municipalities for spatial planning	Data collection of socio-economic factors used by government & other organizations to prioritize conservation, biodiversity programs, etc.
Interest	Wonder how? Migratory pattern, biology etc.	Traditional, livelihood, economic
Motivator	Like birding, visible results	Like nature, economic, livelihood
Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External - Internal 	Potentially high: Influencing authorities and land owners Low: Not important for livelihood, other priorities	Low: Not influential with government High: Holistic approach, great benefit to achieving goals
Member integration with BirdLife partner	High	Low
Future	Funding ends 2013. What will happen? Expected to continue without funding.	Funding until 2010. BI wants to continue. Possible to seek alternative funding. Some CDGs can continue independently (e.g. farming groups). New CDGs are not sufficiently established.
Goals	Collect data	RNCA's (depending on village to which CDG belongs)



Indicator	DOF Caretaker Groups	Burung Indonesia (BI) CDGs
	Protect & improve sites Inform public Conserve/protect birds	Gender equality Conservation (e.g. cultural /traditional forest care ?)
Sites	128-200 sites (national) 150 groups 1-35 people in each group 20 % women	1 in Mbeliling: facilitate area 15 groups in Mbeliling, 39 in Sumba Island 15-48 people in each group 40-50 % women, variable in groups

Ideas to improvements of BI's work on Flores:

1. Visual aids to children's education (Posters/booklets in schools, pictures of common bird and plant species)
2. Pocket guide/field guide to area. Simple to use, lightweight, waterproof. Only relevant species. Different topics: Birds, plants etc.
3. Education materials about bird species in English, Indonesian as well as in Manggarai, e.g. Flores Crow and Gagak Flores
4. Identification of CDG members who are interested in birds. A local bird database for people interested in this, connection to Birdlife International database WorldBirds.org
5. A skilled volunteer caretaker, possibly from DOF, to work with CDGs to arrange local caretaker activities
6. Request records from birdwatchers in Flores to provide data to Wati.
7. Donation from DOF of old binoculars to Flores as CDG members are too poor to purchase new.
8. Bird watching tower (like in mangroves in Bali). E.g. canopy in Puar Lolo, Nunang etc.
9. CDGs in villages with tourism need to have products ready to sell.

Furthermore it was stated that LKM is not suited for monitoring (illegal) logging, but more the forest quality generally seen.

Bird watching at Gorontalo fish ponds 4:55-6:05 pm, followed by dinner and evening at the hotel.

3.11 Friday, June 26th: Labuan Bajo

Bird watching at Gorontalo fish ponds 6:30-8:25 am, followed by breakfast at the hotel at 9 am.

Presentation of DOF's IBA Caretaker Project and "DOFbasen" (DOF's bird database) at BI mess, 10-12 am

Bird watching at the forest of Tobedo 1:45-5:55 am. Departure dinner for our hosts at the hotel 8-10 pm, arranged by the DOF delegation.

3.12 Saturday, June 27th: Departure for Denmark

Departure from the hotel at 9 am and from Komodo Airport at 11:15 am.

4. Taxonomically ordered list of birds etc. observed



A list of the birds observed is found in the spreadsheet "Bird observations from Flores in Infonesia 16-27 June 2009", made by Bo Kayser and Thomas Vikstrøm with the file name "Flores_obs_DOF_Caretaker_2009_v0c_BK.xls".

