



Musicking Animal Crisis Narratives and Welfare Threats Occasioned by Drumming in Southwest Nigeria

Olufemi Akanji Olaleye¹ & Kadupe Sofola²

¹Federal University of Technology, Ilaro, Nigeria

²University of Venda, South Africa

Article History

Received: 2025-06-26

Revised: 2026-04-09

Accepted: 2026-04-18

Published: 2026-04-21

Keywords

Anthropocene

Capitalocene

Ecomusicology

Yoruba drumming

How to cite:

Olaleye, O. A., & Sofola, K. (2026). Musicking Animal Crisis Narratives and Welfare Threats Occasioned by Drumming in Southwest Nigeria. *African Musicology Online*, 15(1), 54-67.

Abstract

This study explores animal crisis narratives and welfare threats triggered by the killing and use of animal body parts for drum-making in Southwest Nigeria. The Yorùbá culture relies heavily on the use of animal body parts for food production and the making of drums. They also use animal parts for medicinal and spiritual fortification purposes. Despite this reality, studies on animal welfare from a musicological perspective are rare. This study, therefore, examines the threats to animal welfare and the destruction of animals as a result of the age-long drumming culture. Ethnographic methods were used to source data, including participant observation, interviews, music analysis, and textual analysis. Secondary data were sourced from books and relevant internet sources. Ecomusicology's theoretical framework was employed to bridge music, wildlife, environment, and culture to expose the hidden human music cruelties against animals. The levels of animal crisis narratives, animal welfare incursions, and animal brutalities were represented with the table of opportunity cost, and the percentage cost in economic terms were shown with multiple bar graphs. Findings further reveal the dangers of animals turned into capital and its attendant effects on human existence. The article argues that cruelty towards ecological features like animals, dismembering their body parts for drum-making, and exhibiting animals for money-making schemes is a danger to the ecosystem. The study seeks strong protection for animals, and an alternative, sustainable strategy for sourcing animal use in drum-making.

Copyright © 2026



Introduction

In the “anthropocene,” humans, animals, ecosystems, and their environments are interrelated. Nonetheless, the boom in the drumming economy in Southwestern Nigeria has led to the displacement of both domestic and wild animals. The continued exploitation of animal resources, in part for drum production, has become concerning, especially as it tilts towards capitalist exploitation of bionetworks and the biosphere for commercial gain, a practice that is inconsistent with ecological sustainability. This hypothesis points to the intrinsic annihilation of the ecology, the harvesting of body parts from domestic and wild animals, and the use of animal fetuses for drum-making in Southwest Nigeria. This study, therefore, explores the totalitarian attitude of humans towards animal welfare, as evident in their destruction, which negates the tenets of ecological sustainability. Neglect



of animal welfare raises concerns, especially as it has continued to contribute to the depletion of wildlife populations and the extinction of some animal species in the region. This points to a potential ecological crisis, and its hazardous environmental consequences could trap Nigerian society on an undesirable ecological trajectory. Therefore, the present ecomusicological engagement aims at potential ecological improvement in the conservation of animals and the environment in general. This objective necessitates conceptualising human empathy towards animals and its attendant call for cultural-global recognition, knowledge sharing, and dissemination. This sympathetic thinking about animal welfare and its essential role in ecosystem modification and modernity remains the focus of the study. The justification for this study aligns with the notion that animal destruction and ecosystem degradation undermine modern science-based ecosystem management principles. If solutions to the enumerated inquiries constitute the agenda for sustainable ecosystems, this article's approach is apt.

Literature review

Despite the aim of the Nigerian Animal Welfare Strategy and Framework Policy (2016) to treat animals as sentient beings within the animal resource value chain (NCARD, 2016), animals are still considered sources of wealth and property (Alabi et al., 2020; Safitri et al., 2022). It is important to note that animal welfare is a complex and multifaceted issue (Shoyombo et al., 2019). Still, stakeholders handle animals in aversive ways that increase their rates of death and injury (Boluwaji, 2022). The justification for a musicological approach is evident in Titus (2017), who argues that music has the power to educate about current, burning issues in national policy. Numerous studies have examined the importance and interconnections among the environment, natural habitats, music, culture, animals, and human beings. Taylor (2011), for instance, notes that birds have served as muses for musical compositions through the centuries and argues that birdsong can provide more than just the composer's inspiration or intentions.

Rees (2016) also observed a sudden awareness of China's ecological songs and noted the wealth of current concerns regarding the environment, social change, and the disappearance of traditional arts. This study conceptualised ecological commotions as a threat to animal survival, owing to the destruction stemming from humans' insatiable appetite for musical drumming pleasure. This study clarifies and uncovers the exploitation of the planetary system for the purposes of the capitalocene, which signifies capitalists' exploitation of the natural resources of ecosystems and the biosphere. Taylor and Hurley (2015) highlighted the need for interaction between music and the environment, noting that it can foster social stability and musical responsibility. Therefore, critical discourse analysis is used in this study to examine how musical responsibility may help animal welfare and sustainability in Southwestern Nigeria because, as Pedelty (2013) submitted, a wider discussion of popular music and environmental matters is necessary in the contemporary study of ecological issues.

Theoretical framework

The ecomusicology theoretical framework by Allen informs the research because it accentuates culture, environment, and humans (Allen et al. 2014; Allen & Dawe, 2015). Ecomusicology considers the sonic and textual properties of music, as well as performances related to ecology and the natural environment in all the complexities of those terms. Ecomusicology is considered the study of music, sound, and nature in a given environment. Ecomusicology, therefore, becomes an important area of study in the context of environmental crises, as it serves as a branch of multidisciplinary research addressing such crises. Within the scope of this theoretical framework, the study focuses on the tripartite spheres of Yorùbá culture and ecologies, unsustainable harvesting of animal body parts, and the booming economy of drum music. These three areas were utilised to cross-examine the Yorùbá socio-cultural philosophies surrounding the use of animal skin in the construction of drum ensembles, sources of animal skin for drum production, the mechanics of peeling of animal skin and the



management of drum construction materials, trading in drums made from animal skin, frequency of animal violation, level of awareness about the rights of domestic and wild animals, and potential hope of alternative material asides from the use of animal skins from thousands of slaughtered domestic and wild animals. Thought-provoking questions regarding the building of ecosystems and the selling of nature are the focus of this research.

Methodology

This empirical study used ethnographic methods to collect data through participants' observations and unstructured oral interviews (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Data were sourced through primary and secondary means. For the primary data, key informant interviews were held with two prominent resource persons – Chief Odewale Adisa, the head hunter of Ilaro town, Ogun State, Nigeria, on 3 August 2022, and Mr Odebowale Olukewu on 6 September 2022, and two drum makers in Ilaro town. Participant and non-participant observation also aided the gathering of data on the ecologies of the Yorùbá people in the towns and cities of Nigeria during the two hunting seasons of 2023 and 2024, a methodological strategy consistent with Owoaje & Sofola (2021) and Olaleye and Loko (2025). This methodological strategy is valuable because it allows researchers to gain long-term, firsthand experiential knowledge of the phenomenon under study, thereby augmenting findings from key informants. For secondary data, relevant information was sourced from existing studies and online sources. Data were analysed using ethnographic summaries, explanation-building techniques, musical narrative analysis, and graphic representations. This analytical strategy has been employed in studies such as Olaleye & Loko (2025), Owoaje and Adegbola (2022), and Owoaje and Sofola (2020). The study was reviewed and approved for ethical compliance by the Research Institutional Ethics and Review Board of the Federal University of Technology, Ilaro. Participants were duly informed of the aim of the study, and their specific role as informants whose insights provided the data for realising the study's objective. Informed consent was obtained before the interactions and before the engagements were recorded.

Results

The Yorùbá ancestral birthplace spans southwestern Nigeria and parts of the Republic of Benin. The population of the Yorùbá people who inhabit the western part of Nigeria is estimated at 42,844,000, which is 21 per cent of the estimated Nigerian population (WorldAtlas, 2019; Eberhard et al., 2020; World Bank, 2020). The bulk of the Yorùbá people presently live in the Southwest states of Ògùn, Òsun, Òyó, Òndó, Èkìtì, Lagos, Kwara, and Kogi in North Central Nigeria, as shown in Figure 1. The weather in southwest Nigeria is characterised by both wet and dry seasons and moderately high humidity. The mean annual rainfall is about 1200 mm (Olaniran 2002). The flora of Yorùbá is terrestrial and can be categorised as savannah. Though there are dense forests and rivers, the Yorùbá region of Nigeria is endowed with vast arable land that can be cultivated to harvest abundant food. The climatic variations offer prospects for a variety of crops and abundant wildlife in Yorùbá land. Notwithstanding its huge agricultural potential, the activities and ecosystem violations pose a great danger to humanity.

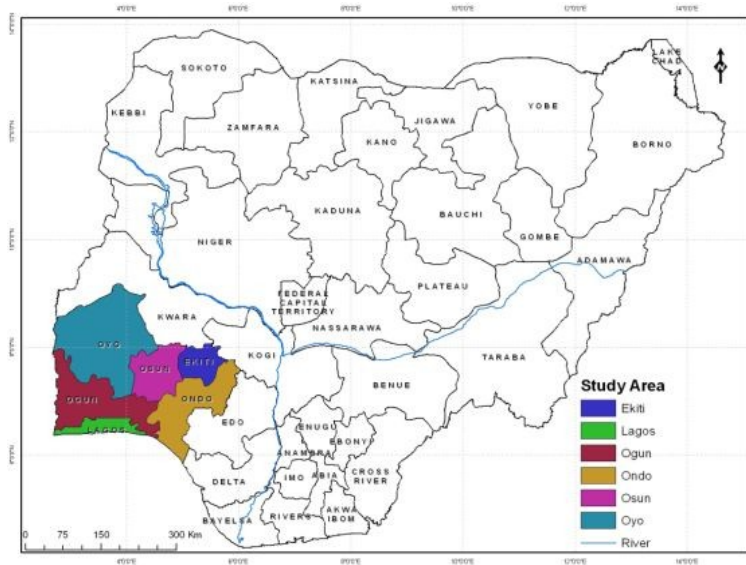


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the Southwest states (Faleyimu & Agbeja, 2012)

The exceptionality of the enormous drum-making and drum-ensemble phenomenon is treasured in Yorùbá musical culture, particularly the *dùndún* drum ensemble, as a cultural autograph entrenched in social entertainment, environmental rituals, and artistic phenomena. The importance of the *dùndún* ensemble is established in Yorùbá folklore, culture, history, language, proverbs, poetry, and socio-religious daily life. In modern civilisation, the Yorùbá have fashioned unique, elegant, and excellent drumming entertainments in classy language, glazed with extravagant cyphers, for superior knowledge that eludes flippant minds. The Yorùbá drummer can mimic the intonation, tone, stress, rhythm, and even emotion of human speech. The principal talking drum is hourglass-shaped and christened the *gàngan* or *dùndún* family ensemble with the *Ìyá-ìlù*, *àdámò*, *omele*, *gàngan*, *gúdúgúdú*, *sákàrà*, *omele bàtá*, *keríkèrì*, *omele akò*, *omele abo*, and *Ìyá-ìlù bàtá* featuring prominently. Numerous functions are performed with Yorùbá drums, such as accompaniment to dance, symbolic functions, ritual purposes, invocation practices, and the dissemination of encoded messages according to the dictums of Yorùbá custom and tradition (Durojaye et al., 2021; González & Oludare, 2022). The continuous drum supremacy is obvious in the contemporary unveiling of the tallest drum during a drum festival in Abeokuta as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: The tallest drum during the World Drum Festival in Abeokuta, Ogun State, South West Nigeria (Source: Osewezina 2016)

The drums shown in Figure 2 stood at 16 and 17 feet during the inaugural Nigerian drum festival, the first of its kind in Nigeria and indeed the continent of Africa. The dignitaries present included the



former Nigerian president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, previous and current governors of Ogun State, arts and drum scholars, and especially the Nobel laureate Professor Wole Soyinka (seen in Figure 2c), whose presence attests to the importance of the drum among the Yorùbá.

The current mindset of dominating and commodifying animals for economic gain is driving a destructive environmental narrative in southwest Nigeria. Previous knowledge among the historic Yorùbá prioritised a high reliance on animals as raw materials for food, for sale, entertainment, animal parts for medicine, charms, amulets, security, rituals, sacrifice, and, most importantly, for mass drum construction. Therefore, in the spirit of knowledge sharing, animal perception among the Yorùbá is exemplified in the following proverbs and idioms that reflect total dominance over both domestic and wild animals:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| i. | <i>Ìfẹ́ tí a fẹ́ adìyẹ̀ ò dé 'nú
lbi ká paájẹ́ ló mọ́</i> | Our love for the fowl is not genuine
It is merely kept to be slaughtered for meat. |
| ii. | <i>Bí àgùtàn ò bá kú,
Enìkan ò lè f'awọ́ è se gbèdu</i> | Except the sheep dies,
No one can produce the <i>Gbedu</i> drum
with its skin |
| iii. | <i>Òkú ewúrẹ́, tí n f'òhùn bí ènìyàn</i> | A dead goat that sounds like a human. |

These proverbs and expressions emanate from the Yorùbá's perception of animals and their continuous hazardous interaction with humans. The derivations of notions, ideas, knowledge, and practices from ecosystem interactions constitute expressions of socio-cultural identity, cultural traits, ethical norms, and life experiences. Proverb (i) depicts that domestic animals enjoy fairly good treatment until they are old enough to be slaughtered for consumption. Idioms (ii and iii) are expressions of popular linguistic aphorisms on drum and the production of membranous drums for human music businesses and enjoyment. The daily constant contact and interaction between the people and animals – small, big, domestic, and wild- is central to the crisis of displacement, mysterious disappearance, and potential extinction. Reflecting on the natural Yorùbá language philosophy, this study noted the historical abundance of animals in southwest Nigeria, which is enshrined in folklore, proverbs, adages, chants, jokes, riddles, moonlight stories, myths, and art exhibitions.

Currently, the Yorùbá ecosystem is undergoing a rough period, owing to human capitalogenic activities; exploitative economic forces have invaded the forest in an attempt to subdue wild species for economic gain. Abject poverty has been identified as a contributing factor to domestic and wildlife destruction and the overexploitation of forests (Oyediji & Adenika, 2022). Historically and culturally, there are organised hunters called *Ọdẹ* who specialise in hunting wildlife and engaging in direct confrontation with animals in the wild across southwest Nigeria. Findings from interviews and non-participant observations revealed that apart from personal hunting expenditures, hunters organise events in which participants kill animals within a certain timeframe for cash, trade, prizes, entertainment, and general trade. The burial and celebration of a deceased hunter, known as *isípà ọdẹ*, also attracts the special hunting of wildlife as part of the funeral rites. Exploitatively, the group competes over the number, weight, gender, particular species, and body parts of the animals. This action is exemplified in the traditional hunters' special lyrics (*Ìjálá Ọdẹ* or *Orin Ọdẹ*).

Human destruction of the ecosystem in search of animals for drum-making is also common. Wild animals are killed through bush burning, setting of mechanical, snare, and ring-rope traps, direct gunshots, animal wrestling with amulets, charm-call-killing, cutlass-sudden cut, pouring of hot flames, rod-throwing, or after being caught alive. Sadly, an interesting and major finding of this study is the use of goat, cow, and antelope fetuses (known as *ọlẹ́*; unborn goat, cow or antelope) for the



production of *gangan*, the renowned Yorùbá talking drum regarded as the lead drum in the *dùndún* ensemble, which serves as a prominent Yorùbá cultural signature. The Yorùbá ideology of drum-making with the skins of the unborn aforementioned animals is that the flexibility of the skin produces better sound on the drums than that of mature animals. Such practice, which constitutes cruelty, is rampant and occurs almost daily, especially given the boom in the drumming culture and its commercial ecosystem.

A common sight in Southwestern Nigeria is the parading of baboons, monkeys, and snakes, from one location to another, for acrobatic displays aimed towards financial gains. This abuse is an aspect of animal narratives and a direct selling of nature in Yorùbáland. In most cases, these animals are tamed through charms, amulets, or forced compliance. Baboons and monkeys are forcibly displayed to dance in public places such as local markets, motor parks, and roadsides for passers-by, while the displayers collect money by selling nature for economic gain. While Chapter 50, Section 495 of the Nigerian Criminal Code Act prohibits several forms of animal cruelty that include forcing wild animals to perform such acrobatic displays through intimidation and possible infliction of unnecessary suffering, these laws are rarely enforced.

The propensity of Yorùbá cultural belief for animal sacrifice and the traditionalists' sacrificing of wild animals and their inclination to using animal body parts for charms with special affiliations to Yorùbá deities is alarming. The religious rituals give preference to the supernatural potency of drums made from animal skin or to spirit evocation, especially depending on the species of animals and trees used. The Yorùbá also believe that drums carry spiritual traits and forces useful for their survival on earth and they venerate such gods with drums such as *Obátálá*: *ìgbìn* and *gangan*; *Èṣù*: *bàtá* and *gangan*; *Ṣàngó*: *bàtá* and *gangan*; *Ọṣun*: *bàtá*, *bembé*, and *òlùkorìgì*; *Ọsányìn*: *dùndún*, *bàtá*; *Òrìsà ìbejì*: *bàtá*, *dùndún*; *Òrìsà èlẹ́gbé*: *bàtá*, *dùndún*; *Egúngún*: *gangan*, *bàtá*; and *Orò*: *òbẹ̀tẹ̀*. The validation of the Yorùbá religious beliefs and wildlife crisis is found in several forms of Yorùbá oral poetry: *ìjálá*, *òkú pípẹ̀*, *ẹkún iyàwó*, *ràrà*, *ewi*, and *ọfọ*. The interesting praise poetry of *sàngó* exemplifies the concepts of anthropocene and capitalocene:

When the guinea fowl wakes up in the forest,
It must prostrate to the lord of the forest,
If it fails to greet him thus,
It will be killed by the hunter,
He will carry it home on his back,
and he will sell it in the market
And use the money to make charms.
If the antelope wakes up in the morning
The hunter will come and eat its head with pounded yam. (Akpobaro, 2012 p. 245)

The biodiversity of guinea fowl, hunter, antelope, and their interaction in the ecosystem shows human domination of the environment (anthropocene) through the hunter (the lord of the forest), and the selling of the guinea fowl and the antelope is the economic system of selling nature (the animals) for profit that is reflected in the capitalist exploitation of the reward of ecosystems (capitalocene).

The Ecosystems Crisis and its Sonic Validation

The ongoing crises between the Yorùbá hunters, the animals, and the drum makers are variously composed and musicked in Yorùbá folklore, culture, and worldviews. The following is the *oríkì* that expresses such a struggle, according to an interview granted to the authors by the head hunter, Chief Odewale Adisa, in Ilaro town on 3 August 2022:



<i>Ọbọ akájá l'óde</i>	The Monkey, who trains the dog to hunt
<i>Agbóri igi pète ikà</i>	Evil schemer who resides on top of a tree
<i>Agbóri igi pète èké</i>	A lie schemer that lives on top of a trees
<i>Ògbójú akítí tí gbà'bon lówọ'ode</i>	The brave animal who seizes the hunter's gun
<i>Eranko tí tan'de wọ'gbó</i>	The animal that lures the hunter into the forest

The above Yorùbá praise poetry validates the ecosystem crisis between hunters and monkeys. The struggle is so intense that the brave monkey must defend itself against the predator. The hunters' ruthless exploits are also noted in the following song, which exemplifies the survival instinct of animals – in this case, the rabbit, which is known to run away upon perceiving a hunter:

o - mo a - le l'è - ho - ro ni - nu i - gbe o o - mo a - le l'è - ho - ro

4
ni - nu i - gbe o b'ò ba ti r'ò - lo - de ni yo pa - le mo ki - a

7
o - mo a - le l'è - ho - ro ni - nu i - gbe o

<i>Ọmọ àlè l'ehoro nínú ìgbé o!</i>	The rabbit is a bastard in the forest
<i>Ọmọ àlè l'ehoro nínú ìgbé o!</i>	The rabbit is a bastard in the forest
<i>B'ó bá ti r'ólódẹ</i>	Whenever it perceives the hunter
<i>Ni yó palẹ mọ kía</i>	He quickly picks a race
<i>Ọmọ àlè l'ehoro nínú ìgbé o!</i>	The rabbit is a bastard in the forest

The unhealthy relationship between Yorùbá hunters and animals generally, as exemplified in this song, creates crises in the ecosystem of southwest Nigeria and raises ecological concerns. Another critical data validation is the “capitalocene” situation in the following song, according to an interview voluntarily granted to the authors by Odebowale Olukewu on 6 September 2022:

Yo j'ò-run-la la-a-sa-gan 'be yo j'ò-run-la la-a-sa-gan 'be o-de to

4
re - 'gbe o ti o me - ran bo yo jo - run - la la - a - sa - gan 'be



Lead singer:	<i>Ajáà mi ò</i>	Where is my dog
Chorus:	<i>Ajá ọdẹ</i>	The hunter's dog
Lead singer:	<i>Ajáà mi ò</i>	Where is my dog
Chorus:	<i>Ajá ọdẹ</i>	The hunter's dog
Lead singer:	<i>Ògé 'mọ gérééré</i>	The one that tears an animal into pieces
Chorus:	<i>Ajá ọdẹ</i>	The hunter's dog
Lead singer:	<i>Òso pàkà gbéemì</i>	The one that picks and swallows
Chorus:	<i>Ajá ọdẹ</i>	The hunter's dog
Lead singer:	<i>Ògbá'lẹ̀ gbá'ràwé</i>	The one who sweeps the floor and the leaves
Chorus:	<i>Ajá ọdẹ</i>	The hunter's dog
Lead singer:	<i>È sáré, ẹ mí a bọ</i>	Run quickly and come here
Chorus:	<i>Ajá ọdẹ</i>	The hunter's dog
Lead singer:	<i>Ajá mi dà</i>	Where is my dog
Chorus:	<i>Ajá ọdẹ</i>	The hunter's dog

The intelligence capacity of the dog is exploited by Yorùbá hunters, as evident in the above song. Domestic dogs are made to face wild animals in the forest at the expense of the dog's life. This unhealthy relationship has caused many animals to flee at the sight of hunters and regard them as archenemies, creating an age-long, unfriendly relationship between humans and animals.

Discussion

An examination of the selling of nature is deep-rooted in all forms of musical entertainment among the Yorùbá people. Economically, the entertainment industry, of which drum music is the strongest element, is one of the most vital, viable, and rich economic pursuits among the Yorùbá in Nigeria. To provide drums for the various genres of Yorùbá music, hundreds are produced, with animal skin as one of the major raw materials. These drums are even exported to the diasporic community, creating an avenue for export revenue, especially since they are paid for in dollars and pounds. The distribution network, which is part of the mechanisms for distributing these drums, is also becoming more robust. In addition, live music performances are very common among the Yorùbá. Popular genres like *fújì*, *jùjú*, *àpàlà*, *sákárà*, and *wákà* make use of heavy percussion from drums made using animal skin. These genres are often performed live at social functions and at religious gatherings. Across these performances, the *gangan* remains a dominant instrument, especially those made using skin harvested from an animal fetus.

The drumming economy is one of the most significant business models across Yorùbáland. Drumming produces strong rhythmic patterns that invoke dance movements. The culture of money being sprayed on performers by dancers is well established at Yorùbá burial ceremonies and festive gatherings. The Anthropocene epoch in Southwestern Nigeria is shaped by Yorùbá drum manufacturers and drummers, as encouraged by the culture-backed appetite for drum music in the capitalocene economy. In practical terms, the animal skin is beaten or flogged to make desired sound or to "talk" for human enjoyment – an example of selling nature.

Another form of commercialisation of the ecosystem and the selling of nature in the music economy is the use of traditional drums in religious gatherings. Apart from the use of special drums for the worship of Yorùbá gods like *Sàngó*, *Ògún*, *Obàtálá*, and *Oya*, several drums have also been introduced to Christian worship (Ademiluka, 2023; Oyeniyi, 2024). Yorùbá Christians and Muslims blend



indigenous belief systems with myths, legends, proverbs, and songs, all of which are influenced by cultural and social contexts (Oludare, 2024). Drumming provides the musical support for ecstatic experience and spiritual communication (González & Oludare, 2022). A number of Yorùbá deities have specific drum ensembles associated with their worship, as well as vocal forms. Divinities are accorded the serenity of service and placated to attract more blessings and protection. In essence, drum-musicking is the soul of any ritual event in Yorùbá traditional society. Within this cultural landscape, drum-making, which uses animal skin as a major raw material, retains its status as a promising economic activity. Furthermore, the Yorùbá animal-skin drums serve as art objects in various museums both at home and abroad (MoMMA, 2024). They possess incised patterns related to fabric designs or sculptures with motifs that reinforce the socio-environmental identity of the Yorùbá people (Ozokeraha, 2025; Ogunbunmi & Adepoju, 2026). The commercialisation of art museums and galleries, where drums are displayed, is another part of the drum-musicking business ecosystem in southwest Nigeria. This is in addition to the exhibition of drums at major tourist events, to promote the Yorùbá culture.

Drums hold a deep, symbolic, and historical significance. It is believed that they contain three spirits: the spirit of the tree from which they are carved, the spirit of the animal whose skin was used, and the spirit of the carver of the drum. The engravings and relief sculptures on drums convey iconographic connotations associated with the people. A set of three, four, or more drums in a Yorùbá ensemble emphasises the family structure in which an ensemble has the mother drum (*Ìyá ìlù*), the father drum and other members whose roles are similar to those of children in a family (González & Oludare, 2022; Olaniyan, 2007).

Features of Nature Turned into Capital

The study observed the destruction of domestic animals and wildlife, as ecosystems and features of nature were turned into capital, especially at a tender age, for economic gain and multifarious purposes. Therefore, a table of the opportunity costs of animals reaching maturity, assuming they are better protected and enabled to optimally play their roles in the ecosystem, was prepared (Table 3). Tables 1 and 2 below were drawn on the *Dùndún* ensemble, to display the identified animals, their monetary cost at maturity, and their monetary cost when truncated for drum-making.

Table 1: The Dùndún ensemble and its tie with the environment

Ecosystem Crises (Environments): ECE					
ECE1	ECE2	ECE3	ECE4	ECE5	ECE6
Name of drum	Names of animal killed	Killing method	Natural expected lifespan	Animal average age when killed	Type of wood used for drum construction
<i>Ìyá Ìlù Dùndún:</i> (mother drum)	Goat	Slaughter	15-18 years	4 years +	Ọmọ wood
<i>Gáangan:</i> (Talking drum)	Goat Fetus	Surgical Operation	15-18 years	Gestation period (5 months)	Ìrókò wood
<i>Omele Akọ:</i> (Leading drum)	Sheep	Slaughter	10-12 years	4 years +	Apá wood
<i>Omele Abo:</i> (Back rhythm)	Goat	Slaughter	15-18 years	4 years +	Apá wood
<i>Gúdúgúdú:</i> (timekeeping)	Antelope	Gunshot	10-25 years	5 years +	Landosan wood
<i>Kerikeri:</i> (tenor drum)	Cow	Slaughter	15-20 years	4 years +	Ọmọ wood



Table 2: *The Dùndún ensemble and the selling of nature*

Selling of Nature (Economies): SNE				
Name of Drum	SNE1 Music business purposes	SNE2 Alternative business purposes of animal skin	SNE3 Animal monetary cost when killed	SNE4 Animal monetary cost at maturity
<i>Ìyá Ìlù Dùndún:</i> (mother drum)	Lead drum of the Dùndún ensemble	Goat skin as food, Artwork, Mat	₦10,000.00 (USD 7.50)	₦30,000.00 (USD 23)
Gángan: (Talking drum)	Lead drum in live performances and studio recordings	Usually wasted	₦80,000.00 (two lives lost) (USD 60)	₦50,000.00 (USD 37.25)
Omele Akọ: (Leading drum)	Lead Rhythm	Food, Work, Charms	₦10,000.00 (USD 7.50)	₦30,000.00 (USD 23)
Omele Abo: (Back rhythm)	Back rhythm	Food, Art Work	₦10,000.00 (USD 7.50)	₦30,000.00 (USD 23)
Gúdúgúdú: (timekeeping)	Timeline keeping	Food, Museum exhibition, Charms and amulets	₦100,000.00 (USD 7.50)	₦30,000.00 (USD 23)
Kerikeri: (tenor drum)	Tenor tone	Food, Prayer mat	₦50,000.00 (USD 37.25)	₦300,000.00 (USD 230)

The tables show selected animals slaughtered for *dùndún* ensemble drums in Ilaro town, Southwest Nigeria, during the two hunting seasons covered by the research, 2023 to 2024.

Table 1 presents the name of the drum, animals slaughtered, the killing method, the natural expected lifespan, the animal’s average age when killed, and the wood species for the drum, which represents the ecosystem crises in the environment. Table 2 spelt out the selling of nature in Yorùbáland, including music business purposes, alternative business purposes of animal skins, animal monetary cost when killed, and animal monetary cost at maturity. Although these animals, before maturation, would have required feeding and possibly veterinary attention, domestic goats are usually cheap to maintain, given that they are often fed once daily and allowed to roam freely in search of complementary food. In essence, they are often cheap to manage.



Table 3: Table of opportunity cost generated from the animals killed at a tender age for the sake of drum-making

Animals	Market Value (Live)	Salvage Value	Opportunity Cost (Lost Value)	% of Value Lost
Goat	₦30,000:00 (USD 23)	₦10,000:00 (USD 7.50)	₦20,000:00 (USD 15)	67%
Sheep	₦30,000:00 (USD 23)	₦10,000:00 (USD 7.50)	₦20,000:00 (USD 15)	67%
Goat and fetus	₦50,000:00 (USD 38)	₦10,000:00 (USD 7.50)	₦40,000:00 (USD 30)	80%
Wild goat	₦60,000:00 (USD 45)	₦15,000:00 (USD 11.15)	₦45,000:00 (USD 34)	75%
Deer	₦70,000:00 (USD 52.13)	₦20,000:00 (USD 15)	₦50,000:00 (USD 38)	71%
Bushbuck	₦80,000:00 (USD 60)	₦20,000:00 (USD 15)	₦60,000:00 (USD 45)	75%
Monkey	₦100,000:00 (USD 74.5)	₦20,000:00 (USD 15)	₦80,000:00 (USD 60)	80%
Antelope	₦100,000:00 (USD 74.5)	₦30,000:00 (USD 23)	₦70,000:00 (USD 53.13)	70%
Buffalo	₦110,000:00 (USD 82)	₦30,000:00 (USD 23)	₦80,000:00 (USD 60)	73%
Ram	₦120,000:00 (USD 87)	₦20,000:00 (USD 15)	₦100,000:00 (USD 74.5)	83%
Cow	₦300,000:00 (USD 220)	₦50,000:00 (USD 38)	₦250,000:00 (USD 186)	83%

Table 3 presents the opportunity cost of animals killed at a tender age. The monetary cost of the animal at maturity is used to divide the cost at the tender age at which the animal is killed. The percentage cost, in economic terms, is presented in the table. The implication of the analysis in Table 3 is that the destruction of ecosystems also comes at a loss of human benefits, based on the opportunity cost to humans.

Conclusion

The study has examined the interaction among ecosystems, animal crisis narratives, and the economic systems of the Yorùbá of southwest Nigeria, with a focus on the use of skins from domestic and wild animals for drum-making. The article has highlighted the use of animals, dead or alive, as a means of trade and human economic survival without any regard for the rights of animals, their privacy, and survival; however, ecosystem creatures are needed for the survival of humanity on planet earth. According to the website Earth Reminder (earthreminder.com), animals play a significant role in the stability of the environment, ecosystem, and our lives. In southwest Nigeria, the marketing of ecological elements such as animals and animal skins has unearthed a binary dualism between the features of ecosystems and nature turned into capital. However, the importance of animals cannot be overstressed because without natural ecosystems, human existence is not possible on Earth. Ecomusicology, as a theoretical framework, appropriately interconnects the wildlife animals’ narrative, the Yorùbá people’s concept of drums and drumming, the selling of nature in the music economy, and capital gain and ecological crisis. Ecosystems are among the most central elements of human health, and enough cannot be said of their importance. Ecosystem preservation protects the environment from harmful human activities. Besides, the preservation of healthy ecosystems in the Yorùbá forestland will help provide raw materials and resources for medicine and repair damage and trends. According to a report of the Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on planetary health,



“humanity’s progress has been supported by the Earth’s ecological and biophysical systems. The Earth’s atmosphere, oceans, and important ecosystems such as forests and trees, wetlands, and tundra help to maintain a constant climate, provide clean air, recycle nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, and regulate the world’s water cycle, giving humanity freshwater for drinking and sanitation” (Whitmee et al. 2015). Indeed, forests and trees are essential for humanity, providing numerous ecosystem services. There is a need for research towards the production of synthetic materials for drum making among the Yorùbá, so as to ensure a sustainable ecology.

References

- Ademiluka, S. O. (2023). Music in Christian worship in Nigeria in light of early missionary attitude. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 44(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v44i1.2796>
- Akpobaro, F. B. O. (2012). *Introduction to African oral literature*. Princeton Publishing Company.
- Alabi, O. M., Akinoso, S. O., & Alabi, B. O. (2020). PSIX-36 Animal welfare and its science in Nigeria; past and present outlook. *Journal of Animal Science*, 98(Supplement_4), 323-324.
- Allen, A. S., & Dawe, K. (Eds.). (2015). *Current directions in ecomusicology: Music, culture, nature*. Routledge.
- Allen, A. S., Titon, J. T., & Von Glahn, D. (2014). Sustainability and sound: Ecomusicology inside and outside the academy. *Music and Politics*, 8(2), 1-20.
- Allen, A. S. (2011). Ecomusicology: Ecocriticism and Musicology. *Journal of the American Musicology Society*, 64(2), 391-393. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2011.64.2.391>
- Boluwaji, V. O. (2022). Animal Welfare in Nigeria: challenges and recommendations. *Journal of Veterinary Science Technology*, 13(7), 7-14
- Criminal Code Act, Cap. C38, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (2004).
- Durojaye, C., Knowles, K. L., Patten, K. J., Garcia, M. J., & McBeath, M. K. (2021). When music speaks: An acoustic study of the speech surrogacy of the Nigerian dùndún talking drum. *Frontiers in Communication*, 6, 652690. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.652690>
- Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (2020). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world* (23rd ed.). SIL International.
- Faleyimu, O. I., & Agbeja, B. O. (2012). Constraints to Forest Policy Implementation in the Southwest Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and Cure. *Resources and Environment*, 2, 37-44.
- González, M., & Oludare, O. (2022). The Speech Surrogacy Systems of the Yoruba Dùndún and Bàtá Drums. On the Interface Between Organology and Phonology. *Frontiers in Communication*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.652542>
- Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of higher education*, 6(5), 26-41.
- MoMAA. (2024). *Drum symbolism: The sacred voice of African cultural expression*. Museum of Modern African Art. <https://momaa.org/drum-symbolism/>
- Ogunbunmi, O. A., & Adepoju, H. A. (2025). Continuity and transformation of Oyo arts and its implications for socio-cultural development of Yorubaland. *Redeemer's University Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 8(2). <https://runjmss.com/index.php/runojs/article/view/133>
- Olaleye, A. O., & Loko, O. O. (2025). Intertwining ecolinguistics with ecomusicology: musicking Yorùbá indigenous plants for environmental sustainability. *Journal of Research and Academic Writing*, 2(2), 66 - 77. <https://doi.org/10.58721/jraw.v2i2.1274>
- Olaleye, O. A., & Loko, O. O. (2025). Musical Narratives of Oil Exploration and Profit Manoeuvring in Post-Colonial Nigeria 1989-2022. *Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 3(1), 11-23. <https://doi.org/10.58721/jvpa.v3i1.1273>
- Olaniran, O. J. (2002). *Rainfall anomalies in Nigeria: The contemporary understanding* [55th inaugural lecture]. University of Ilorin.



- Olaniyan, Y. (2007). Male/female dichotomy of African drums: Guide to the instrumental organization of Yorùbá drumming. *African Musicology Online*, 1(1), 66-76.
- Oludare, O. (2024). Traditional practices and techniques of the àgídìgbò: (re)examining the Yoruba 'box piano' through African pianism theory. *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, 21(1), 75-94. <https://doi.org/10.2989/18121004.2024.2437720>
- Osewezina, W. (2016, April 23). World tallest drums unveiled in drum festival in Ogun. *Channels Television*. <https://www.channelstv.com/2016/04/23/world-tallest-drums-unveiled-in-drum-festival-in-ogun/>
- Owoaje, T., & Sofola, K. (2020). Two sides of same migration coin: Song narratives of Bembe Aladisa and Adekunle Gold. In O. M. A. Daramola, K. Adeniyi, E. T. Babalola, & M. Ademilokun (Eds.), *Migration: Identity construction and reconstruction* (pp. 62-78). Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University.
- Owoaje, T. O., & Sofola, K. O. (2021). Music for Prayer, Hope and Historical Commentary: Art Musicians' Response to Covid-19 Pandemic in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Christian Musicology*, 2, 1-29.
- Owoaje, T., & Adegbola, T. (2022). Song melody and speech tone conflict in translated Yorùbá Christian hymns. *Yoruba Studies Review*, 7(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.32473/ysr.v7i1.131447>
- Oyediji, O. T., & Adenika, O. A. (2022). Forest degradation and deforestation in Nigeria: Poverty link. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 5(10), 2837-2844. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v5-i10-35>
- Oyeniya, A. (2024). Multilingual Singing in Nigeria: Examining Roles, Meaning, and Function in Wazobia Gospel Music. *Religions*, 16(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16010004>
- Ozokeraha, A. B. (2025). Ara aesthetic: Embodying Yoruba philosophy in the evolution of Nigerian art. *Journal of Exceptional Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(2), 17-21.
- Pedelty, M. (2013). Ecomusicology, Music Studies, and IASPM: Beyond Epistemic Inertial. *Journal of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music*, 3(2), 32-47. <https://doi.org/10.5429/609>
- Rees, H. (2016). Environmental Crisis, Culture Loss, and a New Musical Aesthetics: China's Original Ecology Folksongs. *Theory and Practice Journal of the Theory for Ethnomusicology*, 60(1), 53-88. <https://doi.org/10.5406/ethnomusicology.60.1.0053>
- Safitri, L., Syamsi, A. N., Purwaningsih, H., Muatip, K., Fadloli, A., Ariyani, D., & Rahman, I. K. (2022). Animal welfare from Islamic perspective. *KnE Life Sciences*, 524-533. <https://doi.org/10.18502/cls.v0i0.11841>
- Shoyombo, A. O., Alabi, O. O., Adeyonu, A. G., Akpor, O.B. & Oluba M.O. (2019). Animal Rights Policy in Nigeria: The Way Forward. *Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences*, 14 (22), 8439-8443.
- Taylor, H. (2011). Composers' appropriation of pied butcherbird song: Henry Tate's "undersong of Australia" comes of age. *Journal of Music Research Online*, 2, 1-28.
- Taylor, H., and A. Hurley. 2015. "Music and Environment: Registering Contemporary Convergences." *Journal of Music Research Online*, 6, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.20851/kybj9n12>
- Titus, O. S. (2017). From social media space to sound space: Protest songs during occupy Nigeria fuel subsidy removal. *Muziki*, 14(2), 109-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18125980.2016.1249163>
- Whitmee, S., Haines, A., Beyrer, C., Boltz, F., Capon, A. G., de Souza Dias, B. F., ... & Yach, D. (2015). Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on planetary health. *The lancet*, 386(10007), 1973-2028.
- WorldAtlas. (2019). *Largest ethnic groups in Nigeria*. WorldAtlas.
- World Bank. (2020). *Population, total - Nigeria [Data set]*. World Bank Open Data.