



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas



© David Santiago

Newsletter April 2020



sacharuna



Wildlife



April is butterfly time in DSPA



© Luis Arranz

The teams carrying out the great ape nests and elephant dung degradation study were sent out to revisit the 563 indices which they have been searching and marking since November 2019. The team sizes were significantly reduced to minimize the risks of disease transmission. If the marked indices aren't revisited as planned, all the work done during the past 5 months would have been useless and we would have to restart.



After having cancelled all their performances, April has been a relaxed month for them ©Miguel Bellosta

One of the gorilla twins of the Makumba group fell from a tree after a branch on which he was standing broke. He was limping for a while causing the whole team to be worried. He was closely followed by our veterinary team to determine the necessity to intervene. Luckily, after a couple of weeks, he completely regained his health and normal life.

An adult elephant, probably a bull in must, charged a much younger elephant in Dzanga bai, killing it. Although this is not frequent, it is not the first time it has been observed. As we do with all carcasses found, we took samples to analyze in the field lab. Two days later, the body had been almost completely devoured by giant forest hogs and we found a piece of the elephant on the trail to the bai, probably dropped there by an eagle.



The elephant tusks removed from the small dead elephant ©Luis Arranz



Bizarrely we found a piece of the elephant in the forest ©Luis Arranz

Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



© Miguel Bellosta

Scientific name: *Ispidina Lecontei*

English name: Dwarf Kingfisher

French name: Martin-pêcheur à tête rousse

Taxonomy: Class: birds; Order: Coraciiformes; Family: Alcedinidae; Genus Ispidina

This is the world's smallest kingfisher with a length of 10 centimeters (3.9 in) and a weight of 9–12 grams (0.32–0.42 oz).

The adult lacks the blue on crown of African Pygmy-Kingfishers, with only a narrow, black bar across its forehead. The red bill is broad, with a square-ended tip. It has a very high-pitched chipping call in flight.

It is a kingfisher that is not often seen; it is much rarer than the pygmy kingfisher, which resembles it and which one frequently sees along the roads in the villages, even sometimes in the gardens.

The dwarf kingfisher is found in the forest; it is insectivorous so it does not depend on rivers; it follows in particular the columns of ants which make the large insects flee.



Anti-poaching

After receiving training on the rules put in place to avoid any possible contamination, the rangers have continued to carry out anti-poaching patrols. All bi and tri national patrols were cancelled.

A group of 4 people, who had entered the Park to hunt, was apparently attacked by an elephant that killed one of them and seriously injured another. The latter was operated at the Bayanga Hospital and is initially out of danger. We are trying to find out exactly what happened and why they had entered the Park even though it is prohibited



©Luis Arranz

Main DSPA Patrols data:

34 regular patrols and 2 BLAB patrols. In total 1,380 men/days, 1.648 km traveled on foot and covering an area of 1,536 km². This resulted in the seizure of 4 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns, 5 homemade 12-gauge shotguns, 115 manufactured 12-gauge cartridges, In addition, 1.339 metal snares were dismantled. No one arrested. One fresh elephant carcasses found (small elephant killed by an adult) and 3.5 kg of pangolin scales were found in the month

Community Development

This month all the activities of this department have been focused on health.

We continue to believe that until now, although we might have been exposed to it, the DSPA is still free from coronavirus. We learnt that somebody passing through Bayanga in early April on his way to Cameroon had observed COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival in Yaoundé and went straight to the hospital where he indeed tested positive.

We immediately informed the national authorities that sent a joint Ministry of Health / WHO mission to investigate any possible transmission. Everyone who had interacted either directly or indirectly with him was interviewed and 13 people deemed at risk were sampled and tested at the Pasteur Institute in Bangui. All the tests were negative confirming no contamination.



© Luis Arranz



People in Yandoumbe preparing their confinement ©Luis Arranz

As COVID-19 continue to spread at an alarming rate all over the world, we have held a meeting with local administrative and health authorities during which we brainstormed on the best ways in which we could work together to minimize its spread to communities within DSPA



Mindful of the difficulty of enforcing social distancing rules, especially among the Ba'Aka population, we proposed that they confine themselves in their old hunting camps in the forest until the worst is over. Given that Ba'Aka villages are subdivided into clans and each clan has a hunting camp, they could easily group themselves by families, clans or villages.

First of all we approached the Ba'Aka in all the villages to share our idea and to explain the advantages. We made it clear that it is completely voluntary and we will continue to provide the necessary support as long as they respect the measures put in place. The idea was highly welcomed as they all didn't only accept but were very excited about it.

We then went ahead to train 68 community representatives who will be in charge of organizing these camps and the relationship with the outside world.



In order to ensure that the confinement process is efficient, we will be responsible for providing over 3,000 people with food and essential supplies for at least three months, which is not an easy task. Throughout this month we have dedicated ourselves to stocking up supplies.

© Franck Mavinga



Handwashing material © Luis Arranz



In addition to this strategy and for those who do not want to confine themselves in the forest, both indigenous and local people, we have taken a series of measures to minimize spread within the villages.

Firstly, we organized sensitization campaigns involving all the social actors, teachers, churches, Christian youth groups, youth representatives and representatives of children to explain the measures we are putting in place.



We have worked specially with the moto-taxi drivers. © Martial Betoulet

We raised awareness in two ways; door-to-door campaigns and radio emissions. During village visits we used megaphones to pass the messages so as to avoid crowds. On the community radio, “Radio Ndjokou”, we initiated a daily emission devoted to broadcasting information about the fight against COVID-19, with programs specially prepared for children.

Additionally, we installed health control posts on the main road coming from Bangui into DSPA as well as on the border with Cameroon in the village of Lindjombo.



Also, we are installing 200 hand washing units to encourage and facilitate this activity

©Luis Arranz



Tailors at work© Luis Arranz

Furthermore, one of the offices of the community conservation department has been converted into a Tailoring Workshop to manufacture face masks. We have already distributed nearly 2,000 face masks while more are being manufactured.



Probably not with the other equipment, but our masks would be objects of desire in many countries © Luis Arranz

On the other hand, the reagents necessary to test for coronavirus in our field laboratory that were donated by the Robert Koch Institute, Berlin have finally arrived and we are ready to test both people and wildlife in DSPA. Until now, the only place to carry out such a test in CAR had been the Pasteur Institute in Bangui. Both the Ministry of Public Health and the WHO in CAR have acknowledged the help that we would provide in this region.

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients April 2019

Structure	Number of patients
Lindjombo Health Post	52
Monasao Health Post	192
Belemboke Health Post	203
Bayanga	97
Total	546



Park Administration

His Excellency Leopold Mbolé Goumba, Minister of Mines and Geology during a mission in the region, expressed his interest to visit Doli Lodge. However, given that the lodge is completely closed, he promised to return on a private visit when things return to normal.



His excellency the Minister of Mines and Geology © Luis Arranz

After more than six months of waiting, electrical material which we ordered from Europe has finally arrived. Now, we will be able to change the entire installation at the DSPA HQ which is very old and degraded.



© Luis Arranz

An amendment of the 2020 financial agreement between DSPA and the FTNS has been signed which includes additional funds for activities to minimize the spread of COVID-19 within DSPA.

Tourism and Marketing



The day after the storm ©Luis Arranz

We observed one of the strongest storms in recent years during which several trees fell at our HQ and one of them destroyed the roof of a bungalow at the Lodge. We have been able to completely repair it.



Three days after the storm © Luis Arranz

The EU has contacted us as it has launched a study to understand how lack of income from tourism is affecting protected areas and how this can be compensated.



Arrivals and departures

This month we present a series of “different” photos.



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