



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

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Newsletter January 2021



sacharuna

Wildlife

Inguka and Inganda, the two gorilla twins, turned 5 years old on January 25th. Both are currently in good health. Given that this year we have tried to approach them as little as possible due to COVID 19, we do not have good quality latest images of them. We therefore share an image from the previous year. <https://vimeo.com/460287551/59160cc46f>



Dzanga Sangha Greco-Roman wrestling team during a training session © Nuria Ortega

On the other hand, Mio, a young male from Mata's group, has emigrated from the group.

After its suspension last year due to COVID 19, we have relaunched the search for a new gorilla group in Bai Hokou to start habituating them. New groups are essential for the continuity of the program.

Our veterinary team performed an autopsy on an elephant calf found dead close to the Bai Hokou camp. The body showed no external wounds or any sign of poaching, and after analyses in the field lab the samples tested negative for filoviridae (Ebola and Marburg) as well as for Anthrax.



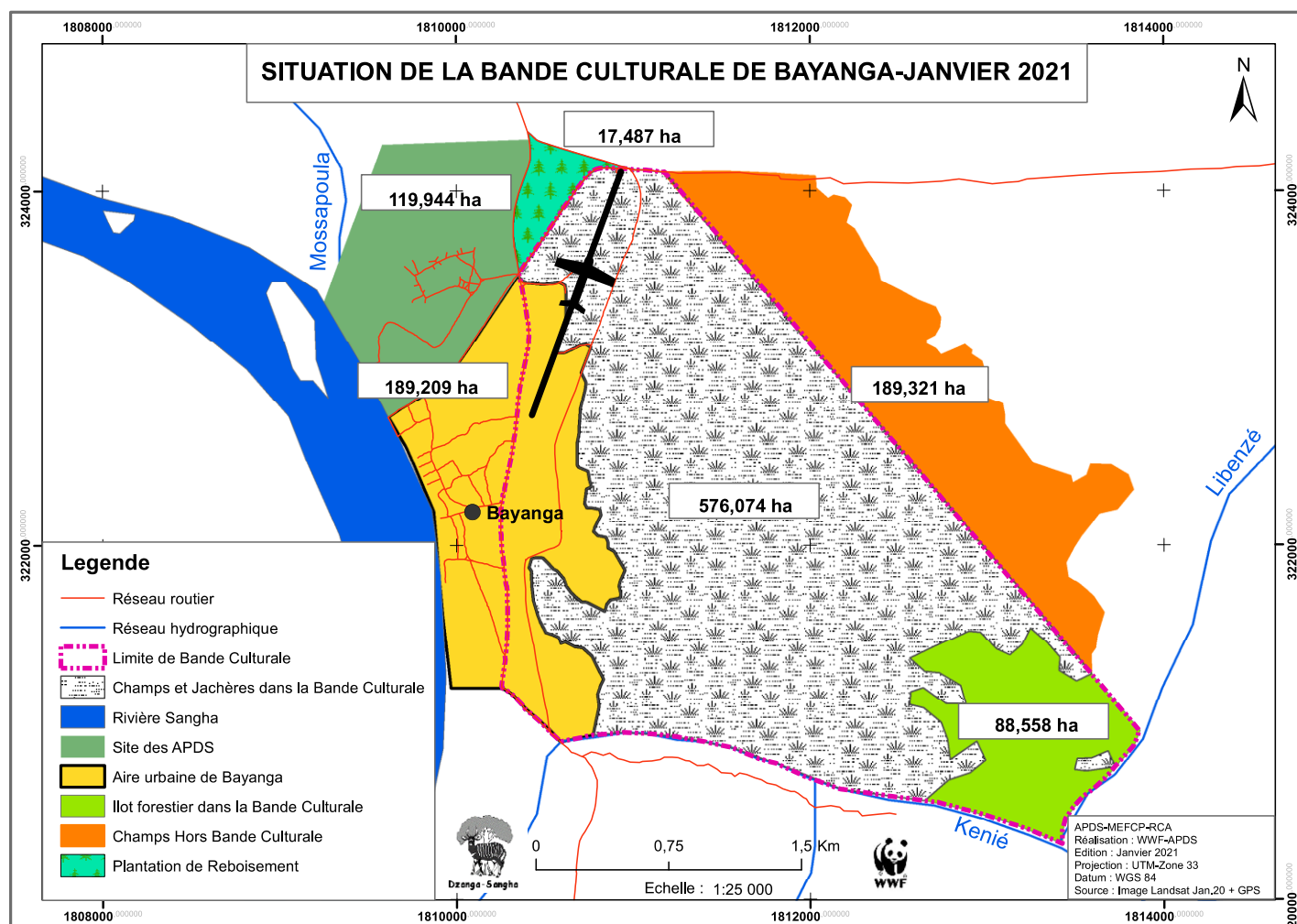
First taking samples © Frédéric Singa



And then performing analysis in the lab © Nuria Ortega



We carried out a study on land use and the current boundary of the agricultural zone in Bayanga and observed that at least 30 farmers have largely exceeded the limit and opened farms within the special reserve. The study will be extended to other parts of DSPA to have a good idea of how much the agricultural zone has been exceeded. The results will be presented to the government and the community and the way forward decided during upcoming consultation meetings scheduled for the elaboration of the next management plan of DSPA.



Map of land use around Bayanga done by Denis Lambert

In other related news, we have finished the plantation project of 8.000 new trees in that same crop band.

The staff canteen has been already equipped.

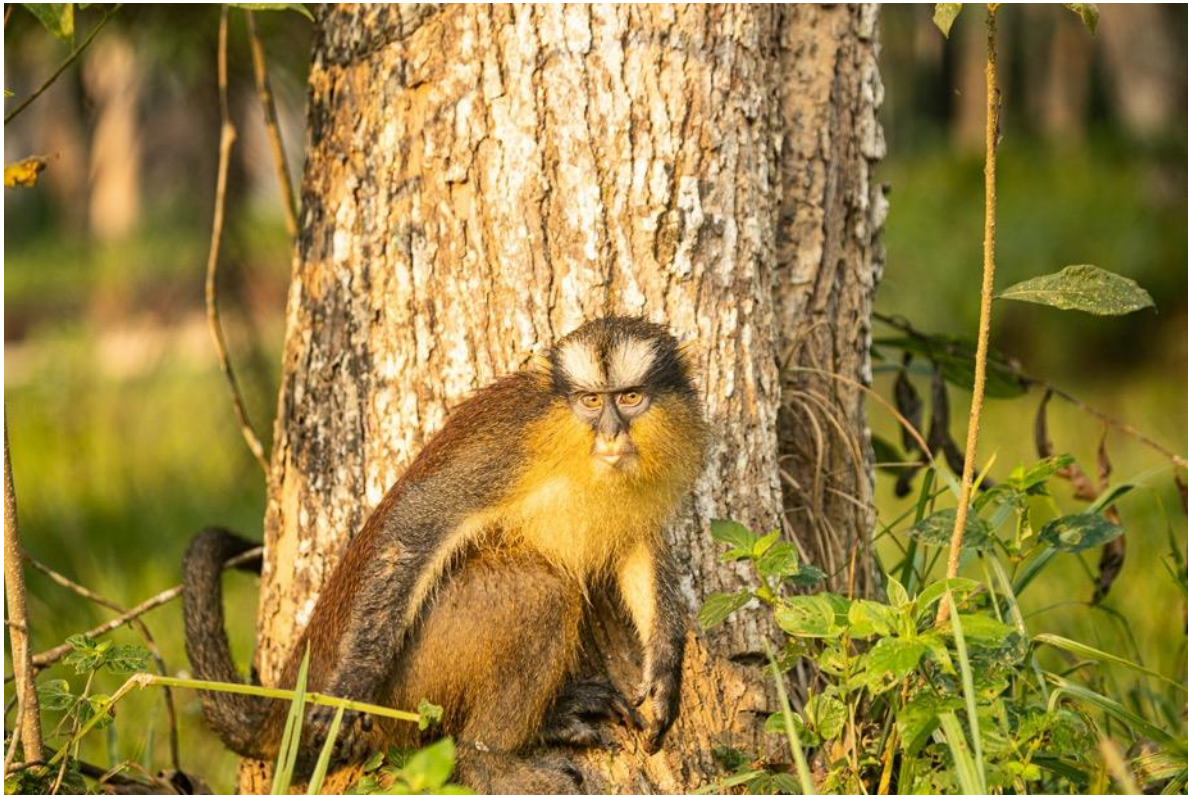


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Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



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Scientific name: *Cercopithecus pogonias grayi*

English name: Crowned monkey

Taxonomy:

- Class: Mammals
- Order: Primates
- Family: Cercopithecidae
- Genus: Cercopithecus



The crowned monkey is found in west central Africa. There are three subspecies, though the one that lives in DS is called Gray's crowned monkey (*Cercopithecus pogonias grayi*) which is practically endemic to the basin of the Sangha river.

Although sexually dimorphic in size, both females and males exhibit similar coloration and patterns. Their brown coat is speckled with gray.

The hair surrounding their face is yellow marked with wide black stripes, which run from beside the eyes over to the temples and across the center of the forehead. This forms a small crest, which gives the crowned monkeys their name.

The crowned monkey is mostly frugivorous, being very valuable seed dispersers for their ecosystem, but can also eat leaves, flowers, and insects

Crowned monkeys are most active during the morning and late afternoon, making them diurnal. They are very agile and are able to cross large gaps between trees by jumping.

Anti-poaching



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The Ecoguards continued with regular patrols throughout this month.

Although security issues emanating from armed conflicts all over the country have not directly affected the DSPA, the armed groups have freed multiple prisoners and destroyed every prison that they have encountered.

Last year we implemented a new system whereby all judged and condemned poachers were sent to carry out their sentences in jails far away from DS, to reduce their chances of escape. Now, they are again free in the country



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46 regular patrols and 3 BLAB patrols. In total 1.723 rangers/days, 2.048km traveled on foot and covering an area of 1.932 km². No one bi or tri national patrol because of the COVID 19. This resulted in the seizure of 8 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns, 12 homemade 12-gauge shotguns, 30 gauge cartridges. In addition, 2.685 metal snares were dismantled and 405 kilograms of meat and 3 kilograms of pangolin scales were confiscated.

Five (5) poachers were arrested in total. One, who had committed minor offenses was sensitized and released while the other four (4) will be tried based on judiciary records since the socio-political situation of the country is not favorable for detention.

One elephant carcass was found but not killed by poachers

Community Development

We are still supporting the Baaka that have exited confinement in the forest and now need to replant their cultures. This month we have distributed yucca stems in Mossapola. Yucca is a perennial plant cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions and produces a root vegetable from which flour, starch and tapioca are made. It is the base of the alimentation in the region.



Distributing... ©Nuria Ortega



...planting... ©Nuria Ortega



...growing... ©Nuria Ortega



...and harvesting crops ©Nuria Ortega

Local construction materials were made available to the **NDONG-KO-BONGUILLIMO** association for the fortification of fish ponds.



A pig farm in Bayanga©

As a way of improving productivity in pig farming in Bayanga, also the **NDONG-KO-BONGUILLIMO** Association benefited from the development of their pig enclosure using local materials.



The latest rains in Bayanga considerably destroyed access routes to areas of collective interest such as Bayanga College and many other places. We have repaired them in collaboration with Youth Associations from the sub-prefecture. We provided and transported the material while they contributed the workforce.

We distributed planting seeds to local farmers with the goal of diversifying local production as well as satisfying the needs of the population.



Lettuce crops © Franck Mavinga

As part of the development of an action plan for the fight against infectious diseases in the Ba'Aka environment, a medico-anthropological study was launched in early January 2021 taking into account the opinions of these minority communities, keeping in mind a possible association of the principles of modern medicine with traditional indigenous knowledge.



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We remain COVID-19 free and continue testing all the people arriving. In the other hand, this month, the mobile clinic didn't work due to security reasons.

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

Structure	Number of patients
Lindjombo Health Post	48
Monasao Health Post	208
Belemboke Health Post	417
Bayanga health post	40
Mobile clinic	0
Total	713

Park Administration

After the elections held on December 29 and the rejection of the results from certain armed groups, they launched an attack to take over Bangui on the morning of January 13, but were defeated by the CAR army with the help of MINUSCA and other international forces.

The armed groups, however, have continued moving all over the country, taking control of other cities and most notably, blocking roads and have succeeded to almost completely stop ground transportation. The prices have increased enormously doing the life more difficult and we are unable to bring in any supplies from Bangui by road, which is going to be a serious issue in regards to fuel

A state of war has been declared country wide and a 6p.m. curfew has been established for safety.

Although DSPA and its periphery remains calm, we cannot ignore the current situation and so we carry on with our emergency plan, which is affecting almost all of our activities.

The preparations for the construction of a new football field are underway and this month we have removed the tree stumps.



© Nuria Ortega



Is not easy to play football with obstacles like this on the field © Nuria Ortega



Tourism and Marketing

3 television crews who had planned to come in February and March have cancelled their trip due to the situation in the country.

After a meeting held with the managers of other national parks in the region the decision was made not to open tourism activities for now but rather continue to monitor the evolution of the pandemic. These meetings will be held monthly to keep all Park managers up to date.

Below some camera tramps' pictures and the link to some videos which prove the biodiversity of Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas.

https://youtu.be/LoBDEbTB_Xk

<https://youtu.be/wjglfHDxHxk>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMv_s_qZwGk





Arrivals and departures



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Stef de Stef de Béthune, a Belgian biologist, came to Bayanga to help in the administration of WWF RCA, given his experiences in project management at the European Commission. He will spend a year with us.



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A few months ago, a baby crowned monkey (*Cercopithecus pogonias*) arrived at our headquarter and has adapted completely, which means there is no way for it to return to its' natural habitat.