



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

www.dzanga-sangha.org



April is bongo time in Dzanga bai © Nuria Ortega

Newsletter April 2021



sacharuna

Wildlife



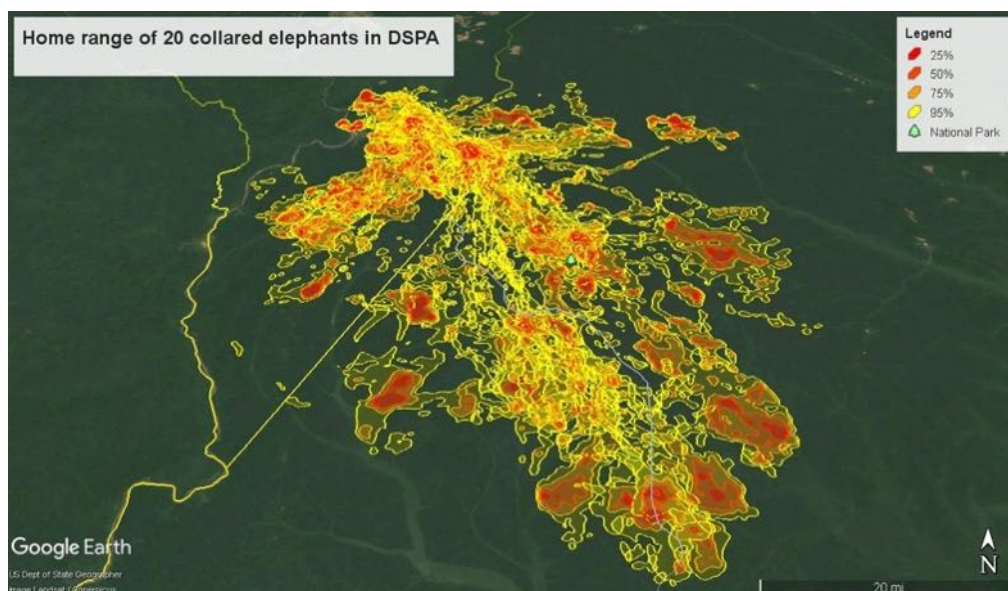
Mata © Nuria Ortega

The Mata gorilla group at Bai Hokou has not been made contact with throughout this month. The group was lost following an inter-group interaction that resulted in the dispersion of group members. Even though the interaction occurred in the presence of the tracking team, the scene was not visible. Nevertheless, the hitting of tree trunks and vocalizations of females could explain what was going on. After this interaction, it took two days to find the Mata group again and only 4 individuals out of 8 were observed (the silverback Mata, 2 females and a juvenile) while Mata was hooting all day to call in the rest of the group. Unfortunately, the following day the group could not be found and for a month now multiple teams are sent out daily to search within and outside their home range. All this effort hasn't yielded any fruits yet but we hope to find them all and in good health

Although we are still analyzing the data from the large mammal inventory carried out last year, preliminary results from line transect data suggests that elephant and great ape populations are stable in DSPA with a tendency to have higher densities in the national park than the rest of the reserve. Even though great ape population in general remained stable, sharp changes in gorilla and chimpanzee estimates were observed but may be a result of the difficulty in differentiating the nests of these two species. However, ongoing analyses of data from the over 22,000 processed camera trap videos should clarify this.

Two researchers from the National Natural History Museum in Paris and students of long-term DSPA researcher Shelly Masi are currently in DSPA to continue their research on western gorilla feeding strategies, communication and spatial coordination.

We have completed the map of the home range of the collared elephants in the last two years. This will be really useful for us to try to protect them



Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



©Miguel Bellosta

Scientific name: Tragelaphus eurycerus

English name: Bongo

Taxonomy: Class: mammals
Order: artiodactyla
Family: bovidae
Genus: tragelaphus



Bongos are forest antelopes characterized by striking reddish-brown fur, black and white markings, white-yellow stripes, and long, slightly spiral horns forming a V on their forehead. They can measure up to 95 cm and they are the only tragelaphus in which both sexes have horns

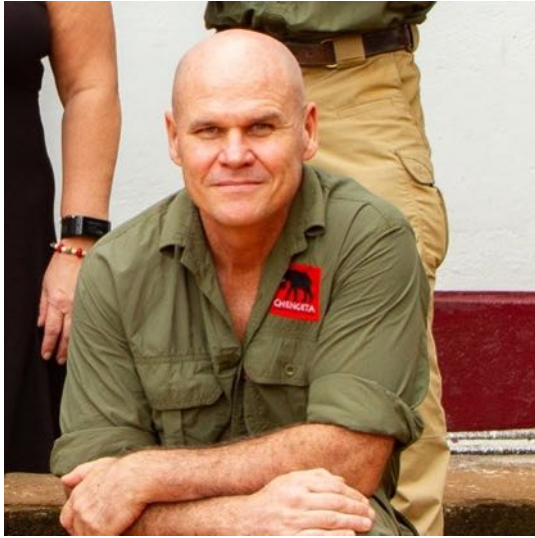
The bongo is the biggest forest antelope, males can weigh over 400 kg and females 240 kg. The body measures between 1.70 and 2.50 m in length, with a height up to the back of 1.25 m. They have a white spot under the eyes, another under the snout and a black one on the nose.

The bongo is a strict browser, it prefers the leaves and shoots of shrubs. They are mainly nocturnal, although partially diurnal. The observation of the bongo is difficult, since they exhibit very shy behavior and remain hidden in the thick of the forest, especially during the hours of sunshine. They frequent mud pools and salt deposits. Their hearing is excellent

They usually live in pairs or form family groups of several related females and their young. Sometimes they can be found in herds. In Dzanga bai it is possible to see groups of more than 40 individuals during the months of March and April

Although usually silent, they make a bleating sound and their alarm voice is loud and resonant. They can live for as long as 12 to 15 years.

Anti-poaching



Rory Young © Nuria Ortega

Rory Young, cofounder and CEO of Chengeta Wildlife, an organization specialized in LE that has been helping us for the last three years with the training and mentoring of our guards, was murdered along with two Spanish journalists at Arly National Park (Burkina Faso) while filming a documentary about poaching and the difficulties protecting nature in many parts of Africa.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/world/africa/spanish-journalists-burkina-faso.html>

Since Rory and Chengeta have been working with us, it is important to highlight two facts that speak for themselves. First of all, the number of elephant carcasses found has considerably gone down, with only 6 in 2019, 7 in 2020 and none so far in the year 2021. Secondly, the number of conflicts between the rangers and the population of the area has also decreased, with no cases since 2019. This is what the anti-poaching fight should be like.

During a meeting with the members of Chengeta currently working in DS we have decided to continue with the scheduled program as we believe it is the best way to honor Rory's memory and thank him.



Rory with the Chengeta team in Bayanga ©Nuria Ortega

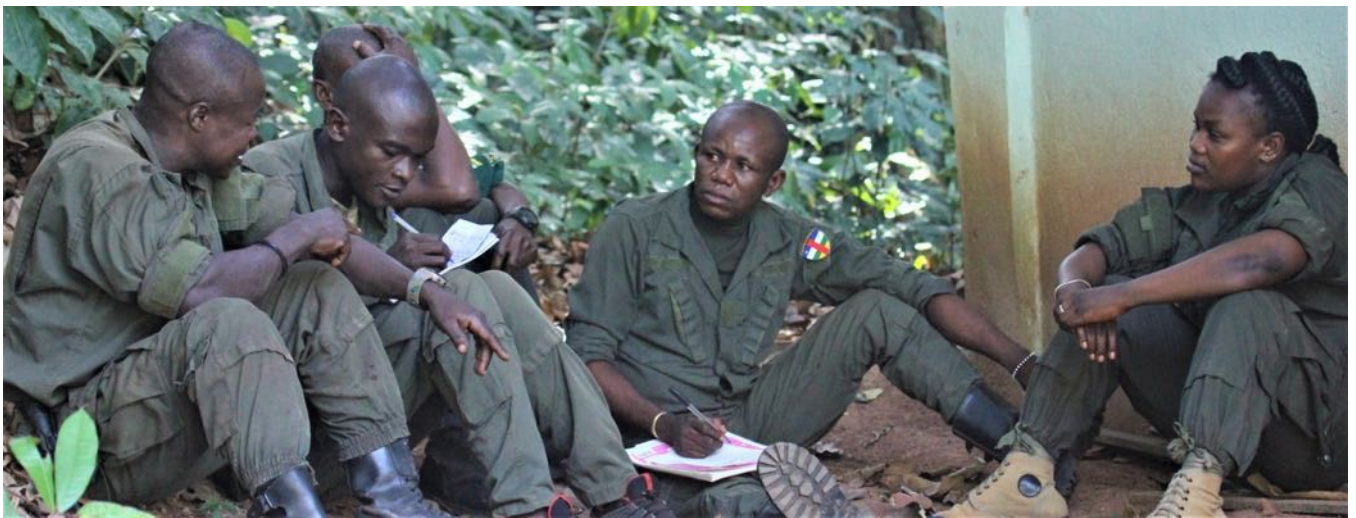
We started the "Anti-poaching Level 2" training in groups of 20 people in the Kongana training center. This program has been specially designed for DSPA eco-guards based on the realities on the field recorded during the numerous deployments of Chengeta Wildlife trainers to DSPA. This training program specific to the DSPA anti-poaching unit is a common core for all and trains eco-guards in the fundamentals in skill areas such as tracking, surveillance and reconnaissance, the legal aspect (Human rights and the use of force) in the context of law enforcement by eco-guards, community liaison and conflict management, navigation, first aid and movements ... and aims to "help trainees" improve their efficiency in the field in the DSPA environment.



This level 2 training is a continuation of level 1 which was an introduction to the skills and exercises of minimum level, where the eco-guards learned all the basics necessary to operate in DSPA. Currently, Level 2 is a reminder as well as a revised application of all subjects under test circumstances (live scenarios which are common in DSPA).



Training at Kongana ©Aaron Porter



Training at Kongana © Aaron Porter

32 regular patrols and 3 BLAB patrols. In total 969 rangers/days, 1.212 km traveled on foot and cover an area of 1.200 km². No one from the bi or tri national patrol because of COVID 19. This resulted in the seizure of 6 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns, 9 homemade 12-gauge shotguns, and 17 gauge cartridges. In addition, 514 metal snares were dismantled
2 poachers, arrested and auditioned
No elephant carcasses found this month



Community Development

This month we started a Socio-economic study. It included 7 data collection training sessions for 44 community animators and 7 indicator workshops with focus groups that will be the basis for the larger Socio-economic study and the monitoring/evaluation to be implemented in later years.



Learning to use tablets @Carolyn Robinson

The workshops, which are divided into smaller focus groups, have included a total of 219 individuals with 108 females and 111 males.

Currently, we have completed the demographic/mapping of Mossapoula, Yandoumbe, and Bayanga with 1873 houses censused, yielding a total population count of 10,331 individuals, all ages included.

Bayanga:	1424 houses	8420 individuals
Yandoumbe:	236 houses	931 individuals
Mossapoula:	213 houses	980 individuals

Following the detection of COVID 19 in DS, we sent some samples to the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) in Berlin for further analyses in an effort to know more about the strain present here. They sequenced the virus genomes of 7 people who tested positive and found two different genomes, B.1 and B.1.177. These are the same virus genomes that circulated all over Europe in 2020.

They also detected several unique mutations in the spike protein which helps the virus attack human cells and could lead to a higher transmissibility or even help the virus evade the immune system.

RKI has sent a technician to help us with the detection of cases, as well as material to do the analysis, including 1,000 rapid tests, which will help us especially with regular testing of the staff of the Primate Habituation Program to reduce the probability that the virus reaches the gorillas.



The new rapid tests will help us @Nuria Ortega



We continue finding new cases in the area but less than we could expect and most of them, luckily, present as asymptomatic or with very mild symptoms

The Ndima-Kali Association <http://www.ndimakali.org/> carried out a survey on the use of latrines in Ba'Aka villages and out of 500 households surveyed, more than 400 households didn't have a latrine. As a result, Ndima-Kali conducted an awareness campaign in more than 600 households in the villages within DSPA.

After the campaign Ndima-Kali also supported the communities with the construction of latrines. 100 households have benefited from this support so far.

The new coordinator of the PAPA project (Project for the Support of Indigenous Populations), a program funded by the EU, has been recruited, and will join the team in June.

Two twins who were born prematurely spent 3 weeks in an artisan incubator (a cardboard box set in the sun) and in the end they managed to survive thanks to the nuns of Belemboke Health post



Maria Teresa and Maria Sofia with sister Alba © Belemboke nuns

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

Structure	Number of patients
Lindjombo Health Post	43
Monasao Health Post	364
Belemboke Health Post	563
Bayanga health post	56
Mobile clinic	
Total	1026



Park Administration

We participated in the ECOFAC program meeting held in Bangui to show our work and present our projects. Along with members of the EU and the ministries involved, all three Conservation Organizations operating in CAR took part in the meeting: APN in Chinko, WCS in the Northern parks (Manovo – Gounda – St Floris) and WWF in DS.

The new pier being built in the Sangha river has finally been completed.



©Nuria Ortega

The construction of the new eco-guard base in Bai Hokou has been also completed.



©Nuria Ortega



A Public Works Engineer sent by the FTNS is presently in DSPA to support us with the construction of Bayanga's future stadium.

©Nuria Ortega



Next month, we'll be able to play the first football match ©Nuria Ortega

This month we finally signed a contract with the MIKES project securing funds to support a large part of our LE activities over the next three years

Last year, with the spread of the pandemic, we received a donation from Lisa Yang, a private donor in the USA, who offered and eventually gave us financial aid to combat the spread of Covid. This year she has given us another donation which will greatly help the Park

Two of our staff members, François Nakoe, Eco-guard and Vianney Manga Pkata, Watchman, passed away this month. With a two-week interval between them, they both fell sick and were evacuated to Bangui, where they died. Neither of them was positive for COVID.



Tourism and Marketing

The Construction of a new liana footbridge has been carried out by the ecotourism department and built by the Association of Promoters of Ecotourism of Yondo-Yobé (APEY). The work is made according to the local know-how.



©Nuria Ortega

The FTNS sent a communication team this month to document and cover our 2020 achievements.

There was an article published this month on the Spanish newspaper Público
<https://elasombrario.publico.es/viaje-dzanga-sangha-corazon-africa-gestiona-espanol/>



THYSEN-BORNEMISZA
MUSEO NACIONAL

EL
MUSEO
DE TODOS

Público

EL ASOMBRARIO & Co.



Follow @Elasombrario



Viaje a Dzanga Sangha, el corazón de África que gestiona un español



Arrivals and departures



© Nuria Ortega

Eustache Watsop Kuete : Expert in Communication and Laureanne Ngono, Assistance in Communication have been tasked by the FTNS with making a documentary about the work being done in all three parks. Lobeke NP (Cameroon) Nouabale Ndoki NP (Republic of Congo) NP and DSPA (CAR)



© Nuria Ortega

Wakil Said, Civil engineer, has come to conduct a study about quality and prices of construction materials being employed in all three TNS parks



©Nuria Ortega

Ivan Ngameni, civil engineer, is helping us with work on Bayanga's future stadium, as well as with other infrastructures we are working on.



© Bruce Deguene

Jean Bakouma WWF Congo Basin Conservation Director visited DSPA to get a closer look at the work we are doing on the ground and to work with the teams to enhance the theory of change and mainstream climate change adaptation in the WWF CAR Office Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 (The photo is taken behind the office and no, is not Photoshop)



© Nuria Ortega

Markus Ulrich, veterinary from the Robert Koch Institute of Germany, has come to help us in the detection of Covid 19 cases in DSPA



© Nuria Ortega

Eléazar Jocelyn Gbintekara Ngaisse, student at Senghor University in Alexandria (Egypt) with a specialization in Management of Protected Areas and Biodiversity is currently at DSPA as part of a practical training for the drafting of the end of his training thesis



©Nuria Ortega

Silvia Miglietta, graduate in Eco biology at 'La Sapienza University of Rome, (Italy) and working as a Research Assistant for the 'Musée de l'Homme' of Paris is here to take data for the long term data collection of Shelly Masi about feeding behavior of Western gorillas and to train her PhD student.



© Nuria Ortega

Lara Nellissen studied biology in Utrecht (Netherlands) and after working in Sumatra with wild orangutans, has come to the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas to study the acoustic behavior of wild gorillas for her PhD thesis



© Nuria Ortega

Karl Neba Wendefeuer, the future Primates Habituation Program manager, has come to Bayanga to know the place and have the first contact with the groups of gorillas. Two months old, he wanted start sooner that his father