



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

www.dzanga-sangha.org



© Miguel Bellostá

Newsletter May 2021



sacharuna



Wildlife



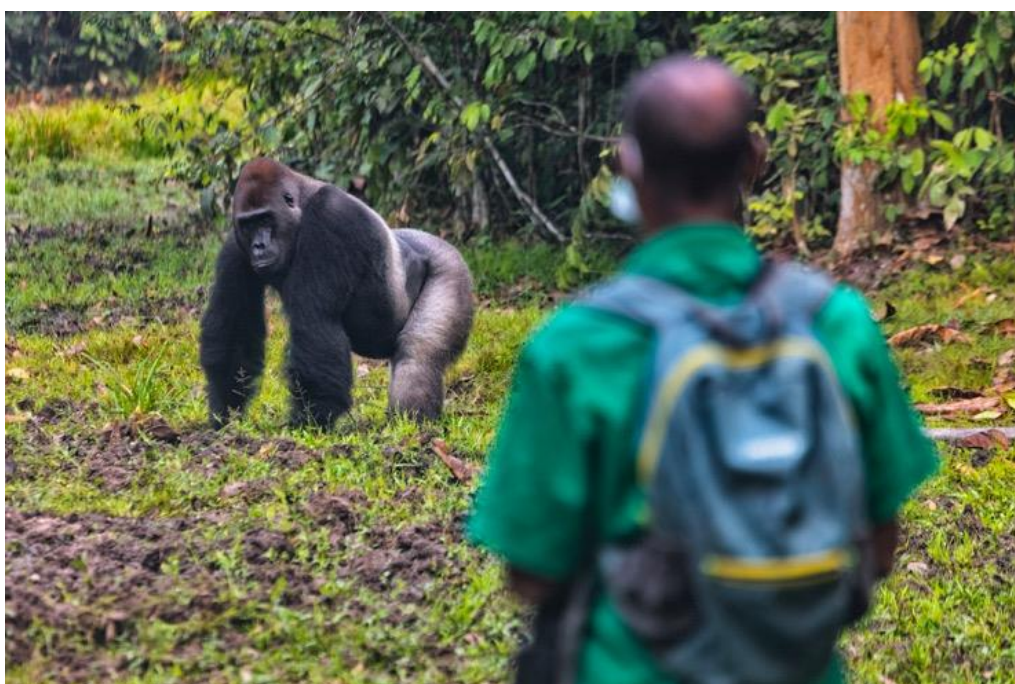
The month of May has already ended and the rainy season has not yet started. Although it has rained some days, it is just a few days compared to a normal year and the level of the Sangha River remains relatively low



The level of the Sangha River is really low for this period of the year © David Santiago

The Mata group that was not contacted throughout the month of April following an interaction with another male, was finally found after 5 weeks of extensive search by the tracking teams. The good news for Mata and ourselves, is that all eight group members were present (including the silverback, 4 females and 3 youngsters) and in good physical health. The other male was probably overpowered by Mata as he did not succeed to take any females from the group.

We sent out 5 groups of trackers daily during the 5 weeks period to participate in the search and the group was found in the extreme northern edge of its home range, over 5 km from the Bai Hokou camp.



After 5 weeks without news, we were happy to find Mata again © David Santiago



We developed and fully implemented a COVID-19 testing protocol for the Primate Habituation Programme using quick tests. Staff members are tested as they enter the forest and then tested one week later while they are on the field to confirm that they are still negative. We have stocked up 2000 quick test that will serve for this purpose other needs. We also reduced staff turnover in the gorilla camps to minimize potential risks of contamination.

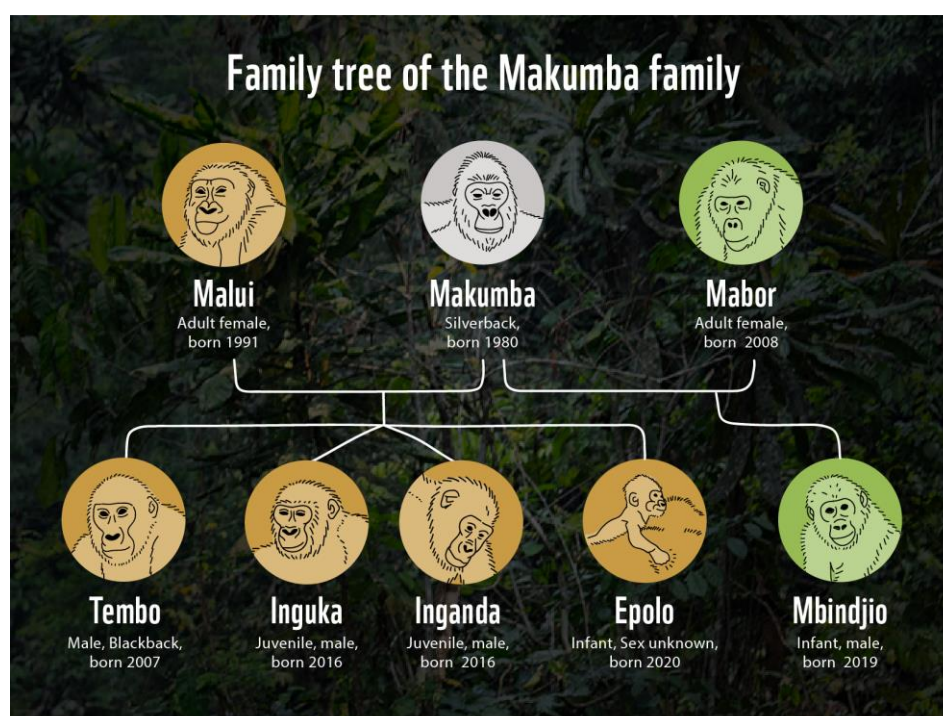


We have set up the database for the continuous monitoring of four important forest clearings using CAMELOT software and photos are currently being uploaded. Once the species on the photos are identified, analyses will be done to determine the frequency of use of these forest clearings by different wildlife species. We have accumulated about 233,000 photos and videos over the past 2 years and so far 56,000 photos have been uploaded into the database and 28,000 of them already identified.

Frederick Singa, our Wildlife Veterinary Officer was selected to receive a Wildlife Conservation Network Veterinary Scholarship that recognizes dedicated individuals who have demonstrated exceptional promise for lifelong commitment as wildlife veterinarians and conservationists. The funds will cover the cost for his training in the Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Center's Capacity-Building Program for African Vets in DRC.

<https://wildnet.org/protecting-wildlife/scholarships/>

The Makuma group family tree has been completed and now, we'll do it for Mata and Mayele groups



Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



© Miguel Bellosta

Scientific name:	Ciconia episcopus
English name:	Woolly Necked Stork
Taxonomy:	Class Birds
	Order Ciconiiformes
	Family Ciconiidae
	Genus Ciconia
	Species C. episcopus



The woolly-necked stork is a medium-sized stork at 75–92 cm tall.

The stork is glistening black overall with a black "skull cap", a downy white neck which gives it its name. The tail is deeply forked and is white, usually covered by the black long under tail coverts.

It has long red legs and a heavy, blackish bill. The African birds are described as having the edges of the black cap diffused or with a jagged border compared to a sharp and clean border in the Asian birds.

Sexes are identical, though males are thought to be larger

It is a widespread tropical species which breeds in Asia, from India to Indonesia, and across much of western, eastern and south-central Africa- It is a resident breeder building nests on trees on natural cliffs, and two to five eggs form the typical clutch

They use a variety of freshwater wetlands including seasonal and perennial reservoirs and marshes, crop lands, irrigation canals and rivers. It walks slowly and steadily on the ground seeking its prey, which like that of most of its relatives, consists of amphibians, reptiles and insects. This species is largely seen as single birds, in pairs, or in small family groups of 4–5 individuals.

Anti-poaching

The second Group of rangers have completed the “Anti-poaching Level 2” training at the Kongana training center. A new trainer from Chengeta joined the team to reinforce the training.



Second wave of training for the rangers© Aaron Porter

The rangers found three elephant carcasses in the Park this month and after examination, we could confirm that two of them died from natural causes. They still had the tusks and no bullet entry points.

We collected samples and tested in our field lab and they were negative for Anthrax, Ebola (and Covid 19). For one of them, which was female, we think it was simply too old since its molars were completely degraded, which is a sign of old age. The loss of molars makes it difficult to chew and digest food and the elephant could die of starvation or malnutrition

The third carcass was poached.

36 regular patrols and 3 BLAB patrols. In total 1.384 rangers/days, 1.435 km traveled on foot and cover an area of 1.680 km². One bi-national with the rangers of Lobeke NP. This resulted in the seizure of 10 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns and 173 gauge cartridges. After an information received, we found a war gun, AK 47 with 12 bullets in a car. In addition, 1.833 metal snares were dismantled and 134 kgs of bush meat and 5 kgs of pangolin scales were confiscated.

11 poachers were arrested, 5 for judgment and 6 sensitized and released

Three elephant carcasses were found, 2 natural dead, and one poached.

Four tusks were recovered



Community Development

A new anthropologist has come in to continue with the socioeconomic study. We have trained 94 community members to use Survey123 on tablets for the data collection (in addition to the core team). Our joined team has been able to complete the demographic census of 16 villages, as well as carry out 24 indicator and tablet training workshops..

DSPA Demographic Data Summary						
Village	Neighborhood	# Households	# Adults	# Children	Total Individuals	Average Household Size
Mossapoula		213	432	547	979	4.60
Yandoumbe		236	434	494	928	3.93
Bayanga		1424	3716	4705	8421	5.91
	Bomitaba_2	188	446	586	1032	5.49
	Assabisse	175	468	617	1085	6.20
	Bomitaba_1	135	394	507	901	6.67
	Mokoko	132	348	401	749	5.67
	Bongoville_3	152	369	465	834	5.49
	Beretia	168	407	452	859	5.11
	Bongoville_1	124	316	412	728	5.87
	Bongoville_2	118	355	478	833	7.06
	Joli_Soir	226	602	766	1368	6.05
Bomandjokou/ Sokambo		111	239	387	626	5.64
Lindjombo		175	404	567	971	5.55
Babongo		125	283	371	654	5.23
Yondo/Yobe		86	174	234	408	4.74
Koundapapaye		54	127	164	291	5.38
Kanza		69	136	197	333	4.83
Nguengueli/ Medao		258	540	694	1234	4.78
Monasao		502	1092	1366	2458	4.90
Belemboke		465	598	1327	1925	4.91
SCED		529	1126	1489	2615	4.94
Salo 1		462	1148	1544	2692	5.83
Salo 2		394	1015	1189	2204	5.59
SINFOCAM/ Boanda		293	589	498	1087	3.71
TOTAL		5390	12042	15752	27794	5.34



We have performed till now about 300 Covid-19 tests (PRC and rapid test) yielding 39 positive cases, most of them asymptomatic or with very mild symptoms. As observed in the results of the demographic study, 56% of the total population are children (compared to 16% in Europe), which probably explains why the outcomes of the virus have been less severe than in others parts.



The staff of all the health post have been tested © Nuria Ortega

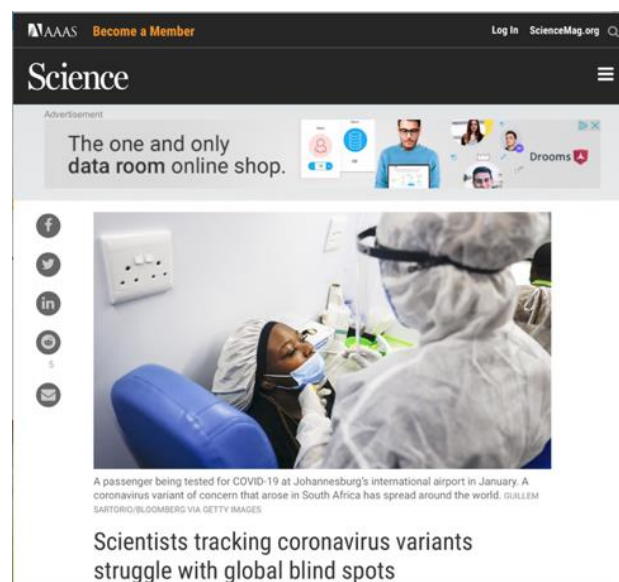
In the analysis we have seen that the sequences are now belonging to a new variant called B1.620 which were identified in Cameroon and CAR and were introduced to Europe on several occasions with travelers coming from Cameroon. This variant has mutations that were also found in other variants of concern and could lead to increased transmissibility and escape of the immune response.

Three articles have been published in scientific journals.

Preprint: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.05.04.21256637v1>.

Nature: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01285-4>.

Science: <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2021/05/scientists-tracking-coronavirus-variants-struggle-global-blind-spots>



After the first step of training teachers in the Bayanga center last March as part of improving education for engagement in the DSPA, the second step of this program was carried out from May 24 to 28, 2021 in Monassao school, bringing together 16 teachers from 6 schools

As part of the promotion and enhancement of traditional culture, Ndima-Kali organized (4) workshops on the knowledge of medicinal plants, Ba'Aka tales and stories, the making of hunting nets and the construction of huts. A total of 110 young people including 65 girls and 08 elders from the villages of Bomandjokou, Lindjombo, Mona-Sao and Nguengueli took part



Students of the Faculty of Architecture in practice. © Martial Betoulet

The head of the local NGO Maison de l'Enfant et de la Femme Pygmée (MEFP) which manages the Human Rights Center in Bayanga, came to DSPA to follow up on the operations of the Center.

Activities of the Human Rights Center

- 12 missions carried out;
- 34 cases of minor domestic conflicts recorded;
- 07 denunciations to the Gendarmerie
- 16 cases under analysis;
- 09 Mediations started (including 02 in progress)
- 07 successful conciliations;
- 02 people benefited from legal assistance.

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

Structure	Number of patients
Lindjombo Health Post	57
Monasao Health Post	244
Belemboke Health Post	475
Bayanga health post	67
Mobile clinic	
Total	843

Park Administration

This month we were able to play the first football match on the future Bayanga Stadium. We also carried out a geotechnical study to obtain information about the properties of the soil and rock makeup where the stands will be constructed. Once the final result of the study is available, the next step will be the construction of the stands.



As - Kangba – Ndjokou Vs ... ©Nuria Ortega



...PHP Staff © Nuria Ortega



First match in the future new stadium © Nuria Ortega

We participated in the meeting of the Steering Committee (Comité de Pilotage) of the ECOFAC Program that took place in Douala, Cameroon.



We have started the construction of a new building that will house our One health laboratory including both wildlife and more specifically human related laboratories.



The new Laboratory / health center will be ready soon © Luis Arranz

We have completed the construction of gutters on the road leading to staff's houses on the project HQ



© Nuria Ortega

Tourism and Marketing

This month we are carrying out a hospitality training granted by the EU as part of the project “Strengthening and replication of ecotourism achievements in the protected areas of Sub-Saharan Africa”

A trainer from Rwanda Valtel School, one of the best international tourism business schools, has started the training of 26 trainees from the DSPA Tourist Welcome Center, Doli Lodge and Sangha Lodge in customer service skills, attitude and behavior, English language, and front office.



The staff from Sangha Lodge and from Doli Lodge are receiving training © Christian Bassoum

Arrivals and departures



© Nuria Ortega

Jérôme Sitamo, Head of the local NGO Maison de l'Enfant et de la Femme Pygmée (MEFP)



© Luis Arranz

Luc Bastide from Chengeta Wildlife, is in DSPA for helping us during the training of rangers



Nuria Ortega

Hervé Christian Muyambo from Rwanda Valtel School is carrying out the training for the tourism staff



Liz Hall, an anthropologist from Chengeta Wildlife, has come to continue the socioeconomic study in the area

© Luis Arranz