



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

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Newsletter July 2022

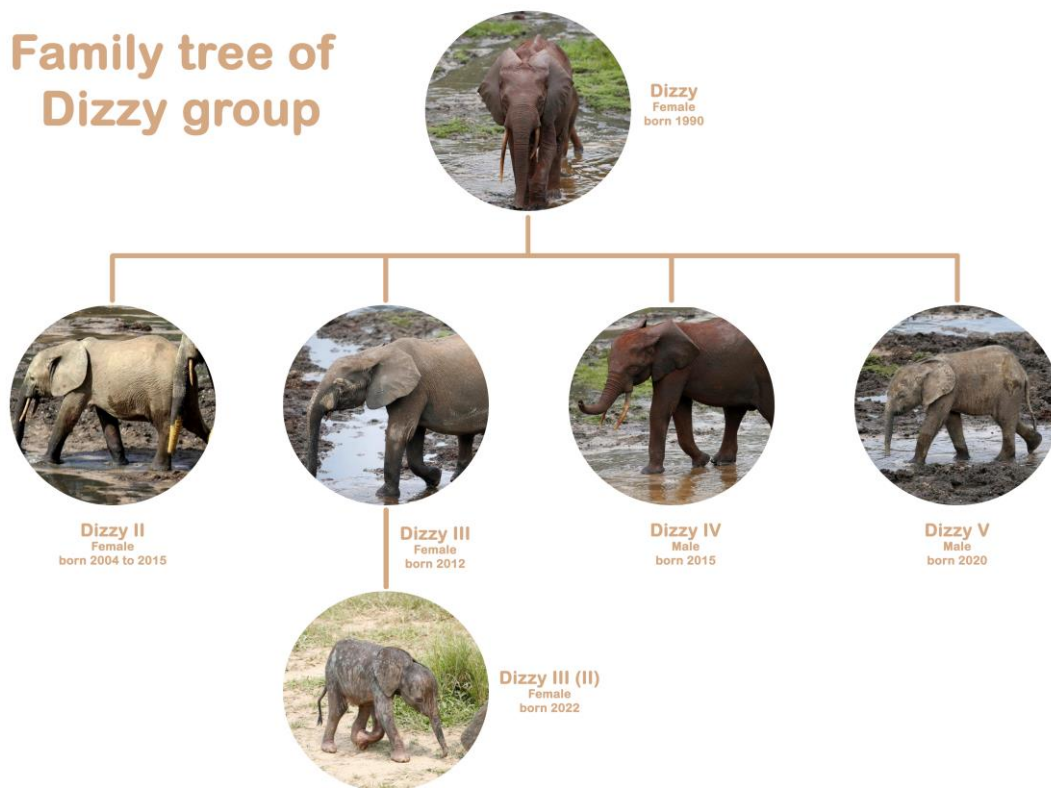


Wildlife

No contact was made with the Mata gorilla group at Bai Hokou for a period of 12 days. After intense searching by tracking teams, they were finally found with all seven members of the group present and in excellent physical health. The group was found in the far north of its home range, over 5 km from the Bai-Hokou camp. Last year, the group was lost for 5 weeks between April and May and had been found in this same area, which is now part of its home range probably because it feels safe there.

Identification of individual elephants is part of the daily work at Dzanga Bai. Following the disruption of research activities between 2017 and 2021, there is a knowledge gap which is being filled by re-identifying individuals that visit the bai, completing their family tree, updating group compositions, and registering new family members. We also register individuals that cannot be identified due to lack of information or because they arrived at the bai after 2017.

Family tree of Dizzy group



Dizzy I and Dizzy II © AndreaTurkalo

A good example is that of the Dizzy family. For better understanding it should be noted that a family is named after the adult female of the group. The social unit in forest elephants is an adult female with her dependent offspring, therefore infants, juveniles and subadult females. All individuals bear the name of the mother, with a number behind, to facilitate the task of recording and understanding family ties. Dizzy was first seen in 2004, with a daughter (Dizzy II). Dizzy was estimated to have been born in 1990. She gave birth to a second daughter (Dizzy III) in 2010 and to a male calf (Dizzy IV) in 2015.



In February 2022 we confirmed the presence of Dizzy at the bai, accompanied by Dizzy III and a little male that we registered as Dizzy V (probably born around the beginning of 2020). Sometimes we see the group also accompanied by Dizzy IV, a young male already looking for his independence.

As forest elephants normally give birth for the first time around the age of 20, big was the surprise when we noticed on July 14th the presence of a newborn, a small female, child of Dizzy III (who is only 12 years old). Mother and child named Dizzy III (II) took a bit of time to get used to each other, but as of now they have good a mother and daughter relationship.



Dizzy III with her newborn Dizzy III(II). © Ivonne Kienast for the Yang Center/WWF






Dizzy and Dizzy V (on the left) and Dizzy III with Dizzy III (II) (on the right). © Ivonne Kienast for the Yang Center/WWF

This month a male sitatunga visited Dzanga bai. It is very rare to observe sitatungas there. They are rather more frequent in clearings around Bai Hokou



A male sitatunga in Dzanga bai © Ivonne Kienast

Dzanga bai data: based on the number counted every 30 minutes between 11:00 to 16:30 each day of the month.

Species	Minimum	Average	Maximum
	22	83	144
	0	5	28
	0	7	9

Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



@ Miguel Bellosta

Scientific name *Gypohierax angolensis*

English name: *Palm-nut vulture*

Taxonomy:

- Class : birds
- Order : accipitriformes
- Family : accipitridae
- Genus : gypohierax
- Specie : *G. angolensis*



The palm-nut vulture (*Gypohierax angolensis*) is a large bird of prey.

Its plumage is all white except for black areas in its wings and tail. It has a red patch around each eye

In flight, this species resembles an eagle and can be mistaken for the African fish-eagle presented in our last newsletter (June 2022)

The sexes are identical in appearance, with the female being the same size as the male. Juveniles are predominately brown with partially black wings and take a lengthy three to four years to make the transition into the adult plumage

It breeds in forest and savannah across sub-Saharan Africa, usually near water, its range coinciding with that of the oil and Raffia palms.

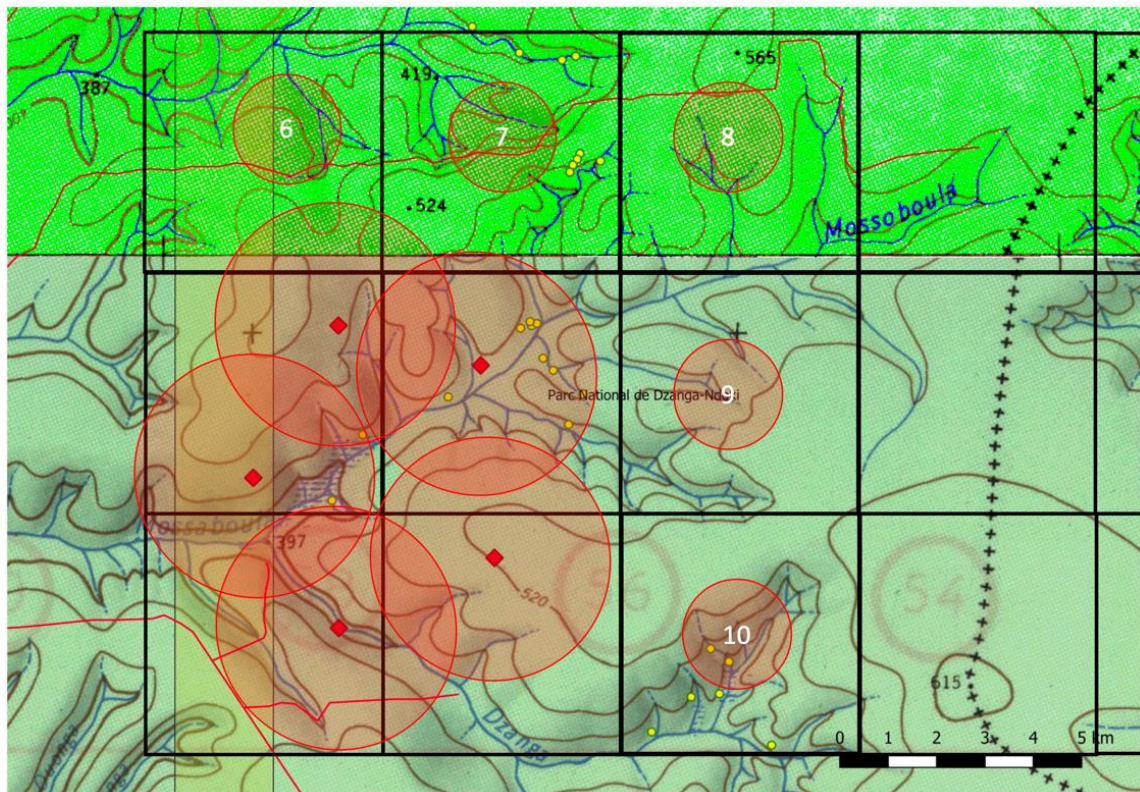
The palm-nut vulture feeds mainly on the fleshy fruit-husks of the oil palm and on the palm-fruits of Raffia palm. It has also been recorded to feed on crabs, molluscs, frogs, fish, locusts, small mammals, even reptiles

Breeding pairs construct large stick nests high up in tall trees and will often exhibit a strong attachment to the nest site

Antipoaching

We recovered acoustic units that had been installed within an area of approximately 10 km² around Dzanga bai. Following data analyses by the Elephant Listening Project Congo team in Bomassa, the results show that there have been no shots from any type of weapon in the area throughout the months of April, May, and June, which is the period that the study lasted.

More units will be installed in other areas of the park to get a real idea of the incidence of poaching.



The 5 acoustic units (positioned around Dzanga bai) have confirmed us that no poachers have "visited" the area.

43 regular patrols and 2 patrols from the tri-national anti-poaching brigade were conducted. In total 1.786 rangers/days, 1.949 km traveled on foot and cover an area of 1.580 km². This resulted in the seizure of 3 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns, 38-gauge cartridges, and 178 kg of meat. In addition, 2,630 metal snares were dismantled.

This month neither elephant carcasses nor pangolin scares were found.

Community Development

We had to delay or even cancel some activities this month because of the fuel crisis in CAR. However, the mobile clinic is one of the activities that continued without any interruption.



The mobile clinic is functional @ Odilon Abouka



Helping a lot of people that really need it @ Odilon Abouka

It is already one year since the new 14-man coordination committee of the Ba'Aka Community Union (UCB) was elected. We organized a meeting with them to evaluate the progress they have made so far and to update their workplan for 2023. All 14 members of the committee participated and at the end of the meeting, developed an operational plan for the period August 2022-April 2023

The heads of the Bayanga Human Rights Centre and the Ndima – Kali Association both participated in the African Regional Assembly of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities held in coordination with the IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) in Kigali RWANDA.

The two had the opportunity to present the work they carry out in DSPA as well as give updates about the state of progress of Areas Protected and Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in CAR



The Dzanga Sangha / WWF team in Kigali.

The Ndima-Kali Association organized a mission to collect faecal samples of unhabituated gorillas in the two logging concessions for laboratory analysis. This is part of the programme monitoring the impact of human activities on great ape health.



Collecting gorilla faecal samples © Martial Betoulet

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

Structure	Number of patients
Monasao Health Post	364
Belemboke Health Post	506
Mobile Clinic	159
Total	1029



Park Administration

No flight was made between Bangui and Bayanga all month as the jet fuel crisis in CAR continues. All the necessities movements for the running of the park were made by car.

The Director General of WWF International visited DSPA to know the Park and witness first-hand the work being done on the field. He spent an entire week in DSPA.



The Director General of WWF International at the bai ©Luis Arranz

He met with heads of the different departments of DSPA and had working sessions with the community radio known locally as Radio Ndjoku, the Human Rights Centre, the Ndima-Kali Association, the Ba'Aka Community Union, and the mobile health programme.

It is now impossible to buy diesel in CAR as the fuel crisis persist. DSPA has however continued to function thanks to our fuel stock, although we had to reduce car movements as much as possible. We are covered for the next two and a half to three months, but we would have serious problems if after this time no fuel arrives in the country.

As a prerequisite to signing the contract for the UNDP funds to DSPA, a risk assessment was carried out at the beginning of this month. Confident that the risks at all levels are minimal, we hope to be able to sign the contract soon.

The CURE Project, that is donating medical material to three health posts (Belemboke, Monassao and Bayanga) in DSPA has already collected the requested items and the container should leave the USA next month. We hope that the material will be functional in DSPA by the end of this year or latest the beginning of next year.

We have concluded our agreement with the contractor who will be constructing the stands of the Bayanga soccer stadium.

We also concluded the agreement regarding the installation of the solar plant that will provide electricity to the city of Bayanga.

Tourism and Marketing

Most of the tourists who had made reservations for the month of July had to cancel their trips as there are no flights between Bangui and Bayanga. However, few of them came through Cameroon or Congo by boat or from Bangui by road.

Among these few is a crew filming for almost the whole month. They landed in Douala (Cameroon), chartered a flight to the bordering town of Libongo and continued by boat to Bayanga. A large part of their gear did not arrive making it impossible to achieve their aim, so they had to cut their stay short, to return later with all their gear.



The film crew arriving Bayanga after a long trip via Cameroun © Lambert Padou



Observing Makumba group © Luis Arranz

Arrivals and departures



© Luis Arranz

Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International, and Yoshiko Lambertini visited DSPA. They spent a full week here (plus two days travelling by car)



© Luis Arranz

Emmanuel Ayuk AYIMISIN, a new member of the Elephant Listening Project has started to work with us this month.



© Luis Arranz

Jany Christel Dobe and Andrien Yankoise, have come to work on the Forest Landscape Restoration Project.

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