



# Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

[www.dzanga-sangha.org](http://www.dzanga-sangha.org)



Sunset at Doli Lodge © Nuria Ortega

## Newsletter October 2022





## Wildlife

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Following the death of the silverback Mayele, his group has been temporarily dispersed. There is one part of the group containing six of the nine remaining group members. The other part however consists of just two individuals, a young silverback (Moangalé), and an adult female (Mapoki) but lacking her infant (Moandja) presumed dead. The team is trying to monitor both groups.



*Mayele family ©Nuria Ortega*

About three years ago, we reported that Mayele had acquired a new female, named Mongonda. It however seems we may have been wrong about the sex of this individual. Our long-term collaborator and expert gorilla ecologist from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris spent enough time observing the gorillas during her last field mission and observed that Mongonda has all the typical characteristics of a male (strong smell, characteristic size of a black back and almost identical build to that of Lungu, the 12-year-old black back). Given that macroscopic observation to determine the sex of individuals is very difficult, faecal samples were therefore collected to carry out a genetic analysis before a conclusion can be drawn.

Tracking of the remaining members of the Mata group had also been very challenging. The five-member group was temporarily lost by the tracking team but found after two weeks of intense search. The group is going through a stressful period with Mata gone and the infant Mossika killed by another silverback. The individuals however seem to be in good physical health and are now led by the adult female Indolia. The field teams continue to observe them, though at a reasonable distance, to avoid further stress.

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The research team from the Mbeli Bai Study in Nouabale-Ndoki National Park (Congo), visited the Dzanga Forest Elephant Project for three days to strengthen the collaboration that began in 2021 between the two projects on elephant research. The new Mbeli team saw Dzanga bai with its faunal richness for the first time. The Dzanga researchers shared their experience of elephant observation work especially individual elephant identification, health monitoring, photo archiving, and active counting of numbers at the bai. Several researchers also spent a night at the bai, which made it possible to observe elephants using thermal cameras.



The teams also exchanged protocols, study materials and ideas for the development of future collaborative research projects. They agreed to organize several exchanges per year between the two sites. We are looking forward to this collaboration.



*Working in the bai © Yvonne Kienast*

An example of the need for information sharing and collaboration can be seen with the identification of a male elephant in the databases of the two research sites. The individual appears in photos of Mbeli bai named AM224, and in the Dzanga bai database named Dourou, a male born around 1956 and seen for the first time in Dzanga in 1991 (Photo 1 and 2).






*Nouabale Ndoki NP 2014 © Mbeli Bai Study/WCS*



*Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas 2016 © Andrea Turkalo*

*Dzanga bai data: based on the number counted by the Elephant Listening Project every 30 minutes between 11:00 to 16:30 each day of the month. From now onwards we will also collect data on 4 nights each month, from 17:30 to 10:30 the next day.*

Species	Minimum	Average	Maximum	Night
	13	96	161	92
	0	0	26	3
	0	5	9	0





## Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



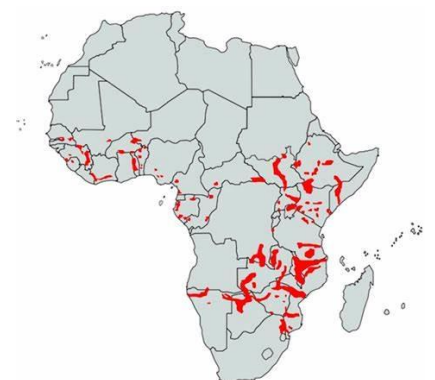
@ Nuria Ortega

**Scientific name** *Hippopotamus amphibius*

**English name:** *Hipopotamus*

**Taxonomy:**

- Class : mammals
- Order : artiodactyla
- Family : Hippopotamidae
- Genus : hippopotamus
- Specie : *H. amphibius*



Apart from elephants and rhinos, the hippopotamus is the largest land mammal on earth.

Hippos are one of the well-known animals in the World, recognisable for their barrel-shaped torsos, wide-opening mouths with large canine tusks, nearly hairless bodies, pillar-like legs, and large size. Bulls (adult males) weigh an average of 1,500 kg (3,310 lb) and cows (females) 1,300 kg (2,870 lb). Despite the stocky shape and short legs, they are capable of running up to 30 km/h (19 mph) over short distances. Hippos inhabit rivers, lakes, and mangrove swamps.

In Dzanga Sangha, they can be found in the Sangha River, south of the village of Bayana. During the raining season, they move up the River and can be observed from Doli lodge.



## Antipoaching

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Dzanga-Sangha and Nouabale Ndoki Law Enforcement teams organized a pioneer bilateral meeting aimed at strengthening collaboration and achieving better coordination of joint surveillance mechanisms between the two segments. During this four-day exchange that took place in Bayanga, both teams discussed how to improve coordination at the border and strengthen mixed patrols. They also exchanged experiences in capacity building and the operation of command centers. One thing for sure, the Dzanga-Sangha and Nouabale Ndoki teams agreed to join forces to secure their common border



*First aid training in Kongana ©Mark Garrigues*

On October 20, 2022, one of our patrol teams helped to save the life of a pregnant 18-year-old girl bitten by a snake in the forest. This team exercised first aid skills learned during their training sessions to help the young girl. They made stretchers with their uniform jackets to transport the victim for 8 km to the Bayanga secondary hospital, arriving at about 11 p.m. After receiving proper care and spending 72 hours in the hospital, the girl returned home, and her life is out of danger. The snake could not be identified by the injured girl but experts who observed the bite think it may have been a Viperidae and probably the bite was dry

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32 regular patrols and 2 patrols from the tri-national anti-poaching brigade were conducted. In total 1,448 rangers/days, 1,479 km traveled on foot and cover an area of 1,208 km<sup>2</sup>. This resulted in the seizure of 8 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns, 15-gauge cartridges, and 73 kg of meat. In addition, 4,411 metal snares were dismantled. One elephant carcass was found. We recover the tusks but could verify that it was killed by poachers.



## Community Development

As the process for the participatory design of a potential management plan for the community hunting zone has commenced, DSPA and Chengeta Wildlife are using Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) method to engage with the local population. The different stages of the process have been clearly communicated to the community.

We organized field visits to villages within Dzanga Sangha in October to follow up and ensure an effective start of the 2022 – 2023 school year. Our teams participated in meetings with school authorities and community relays, discussed the role of community relays to follow-up and facilitate school attendance by Ba'Aka students. Our teams also took images of school infrastructure needing maintenance and collected data on students enrolled for the 2022 – 2023 school year.



© Valere Banzo

### *Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients*

Structure	Number of patients
Monasao Health Post	414
Belemboke Health Post	433
<b>Total</b>	<b>847</b>

## Park Administration

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Access to cash on the field was quite challenging this month, making it difficult to effectively implement activities. Due to persisting fuel shortage in the country for both cars and planes, we have not been able to resume the regular flight program. Although we have stocked enough diesel to run our cars for the next four months, we are uncertain of what will happen after that.

We also encountered serious problems with the Internet connection throughout the month. We are testing different options to see which service provider is the 'least bad'. Hopefully we will be able to switch to optic fibre in a few months as the sub-river fibre between the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic passes through Bayanga,



*We are happy with the arrival of this boat (optic fiber). ©Nuria Ortega*

After several meetings and with the help of many people, especially the US Ambassador, we ensured the annulation of the mining permit operational on the Sangha River within the APDS for a few months.



*And with the departure of this one (mining) © Christian Bassoun*





## Tourism and Marketing

With the support of the European Union, we organized a gastronomy training for the chefs at Doli Lodge. The training was successfully carried out with lot of enthusiasm by Martin Scheffer from Sprout 360, a team of service industry professionals specialising in safari hospitality solutions. (all pictures are copyright Martin Sheffer and Nuria Ortega)

First identifying fruits and vegetables in the bush....



Then, teaching how to use them, how to cut meat, making deserts etc







And finally the results suitable for everyone even vegetarian, celiac or vegans !!!



Doli Lodge team as well received some nice warm jackets ideal for this weather!!



©Nuria Ortega





## Arrivals and departures



© Nuria Ortega

Mathilde Legressus, came to continue the long term research work on the gorillas carried out by the National Museum of Natural History, Paris



© Nuria Ortega

Martin Scheffer from Sprout 360, spent one month with us training the chefs at Doli lodge.



© Yang center WWF / WCS

The Mbeli Bai Study (Nouabale Ndoki) and Dzanga Forest Elephant Project (DSPA) teams spent time working together and sharing information.





Same thing with the Law Enforcement teams of both protected areas

© Mark Garrigues

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