



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

www.dzanga-sangha.org

*Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year 2023*

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Newsletter November 2022



Wildlife

Continuous monitoring of elephants at Dzanga bai is yielding interesting observations. A 37-year-old cow nicknamed Vicky III (meaning she is the second daughter of Vicky mother) was identified in February 2022 accompanied by a calf estimated at the age of 6 years. Since this first observation, they continuously visited the clearing. Vicky III was pregnant, but as there is no detailed information on the stages of pregnancy advancement for elephants, the prediction of a date of birth was not possible. Gestation in elephants lasts 22 months, and data has been collected on Vicky III's pregnancy for 10 months. Eventually, on November 1, 2022, she was last seen in her pregnant state, and two weeks later (November 14) she visited the bai with her new-born calf.



Vicky III at Dzanga Bai in April 2022 showing the swelling of the belly on both sides (left) and in September 2022 showing her belly greatly swollen belly on the right side (right). ©I. Kienast for the Yang Center/WWF



Vicky III at Dzanga Bai in November 2022 with her new-born calf. © Yankoisie for the Yang Center/WWF



We have started the habituation of a new gorilla group at Bai Hokou, initiating both direct and indirect contacts with the group during the month. Several individuals were observed from about 15 to 20m, including a silverback, two females and a juvenile.

Following a decision to restart the habituation of the WONGA, a group at Mongambe whose habituation had been suspended some years ago because they ranged too far from the camp, we may have to install a new camp. The group was found after an intensive search within its known home range. During contacts made with the group, some individuals were clearly observed as close as 10m including a silverback, a blackback and a female with a baby. The silverback was approachable.

The primate research and habituation team **from** Nouabale-Ndoki National Park visited the DSPA primate habituation program for two days with the aim to exchange ideas on harmonizing data collection protocols between sites and installing more automatic and modern data collection techniques for habituated primates.



© Nuria Ortega

During these two days, primate habituation staff were trained to collect data using the free, easy-to-use iPad application for behavioural data collection called 'Animal observer'. This application should facilitate the collection of detail behavioural and health data on habituated primates (gorillas) in the field and eases data analysis and reporting.

There was also more brainstorming on data collection materials, protocols, and project ideas that could foster collaboration, habituation efforts, and a standardized data collection procedure between sites in the nearest future.






The Dzanga-Sangha Wildlife Veterinarian participated in a workshop to develop strategies of One Health Surveillance organized by long-term DSPA partner at the newly created Helmholtz Institute for One Health (HIOH) in Greifswald, Germany. This scientific workshop was dedicated to designing One Health Surveillance strategies to be implemented in various world regions, ultimately creating solutions for better pandemic preparedness and prevention.



Participants of the one health surveillance workshop in Greifswald, Germany © Helmholtz Institute for One Health (HIOH)

We started the annual health checks of field staff this month with over 200 people already consulted and some received treatment for observed illnesses. This work was done in collaboration with the main hospital in Bayanga as well as the HIOH team, currently in Bayanga to support the One Health Program

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

<i>Species</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
	7	80	163
	0	4	8
	0	1	34

Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



© Miguel Bellosta

Scientific name *Mixiomyces*

English name: *Mixiomyces*

Taxonomy:
Class : mixiomyces
Order : mixiales
Family : mixiaceae
Genus : mixia

They are heterotrophic organisms that can be found both in unicellular form and in groups, reaching enormous size of up to 1 m and weight of up to 20 kg.

We know very little about them, but they are spectacular, and it is also a photo that can evoke Christmas

Antipoaching

Eco-guard training has been going on throughout the month at the Kongana training centre. Unfortunately, we found two elephant carcasses this month, one of them resulting from poaching.



First aid training in Kongana ©Mark Garrigues



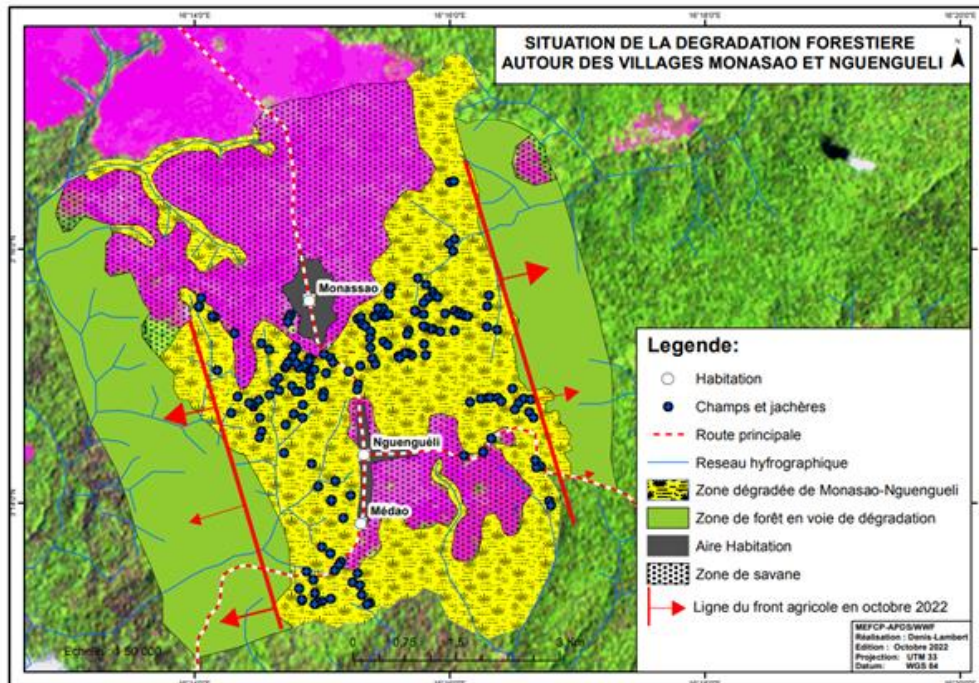
© Mark Garrigues

26 regular patrols and 2 patrols from the tri-national anti-poaching brigade were conducted. In total 1.133 ranger/days, 1.352 km traveled on foot to cover an area of 1.352 km². This resulted in the seizure of 4 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns, 272-gauge cartridges, and 82 kg of meat. In addition, 780 metal snares were dismantled.

Two elephant carcasses were found in the park

Community Development

The project launched in August 2022 to restore forest and develop complementary income-generating activities in Mona-Sao (on the edge of Dzanga Sangha) in collaboration with the FAO, proceeded to identify beneficiaries and localize forest degradation fronts. Two recruited Project Animators were also presented and officially installed to mobilize the population and local authorities to give them the support necessary for the implementation of planned activities.



Dzanga-Sangha was represented in a Ba'Aka & Bantou festival organized by the Lobeke National Park in Mambélé, Cameroon, from November 10 to 17, 2022. A team of 10 people represented the DSPA



Baaka craft in the festival © Martial Betoulet

After returning from the festival in Cameroon, the Baaka continue their normal life in CAR



Baakas in Moussapola © Stef de Bethune

A mission from the Helmholtz Institute for One Health and the University College London was in Dzanga-Sangha to support us with the preparatory phase for the development of a new proposal for the IKI (international Climate Initiative) project. This is in relation not only to an early warning system for zoonosis transmission but also Project Bwanga community mobile health clinics.

The head of the health program, also responsible of the mobile clinic in Dzanga-Sangha has left DSPA for personal reasons and we are in the process of recruiting a new one. The Monasao and Belemboke health centres continued to provide health care throughout the month.

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

Structure	Number of patients
Monasao Health Post	427
Belemboke Health Post	441
Total	868

Park Administration

Dzanga-Sangha was represented in several meetings and workshops this month.

DSPA Deputy Director and WWF-CAR Forest Program Officer participated in the third meeting of the steering committee of the Forest and Landscape Restoration project (The Restoration Initiative) in Bangui.

The Deputy Director led a DSPA/WWF delegation to take part in a sharing and training workshop for managers from the four main priority zoonoses monitoring sites (Protected Areas) of the Ministry of Water and Forests of the Central African Republic.

The workshop organized in Bangui from 7 to 11 November 2022 aimed at training executives and field agents of the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing as well as the managers of Protected Areas on the management of zoonotic diseases at the national level



© Gervais Pamongui

The head of the Development and Community Rights component of DSPA participated in a regional coordination meeting organized in Brazzaville to discuss the management of grievance mechanisms in the Congo Basin.

The DSPA warden participated in the WWF Central Africa Wildlife Crime Hub annual meeting in Brazzaville.

The deputy director and the warden took part in a workshop to prepare the drafting of the report on the state of conservation of the TNS.

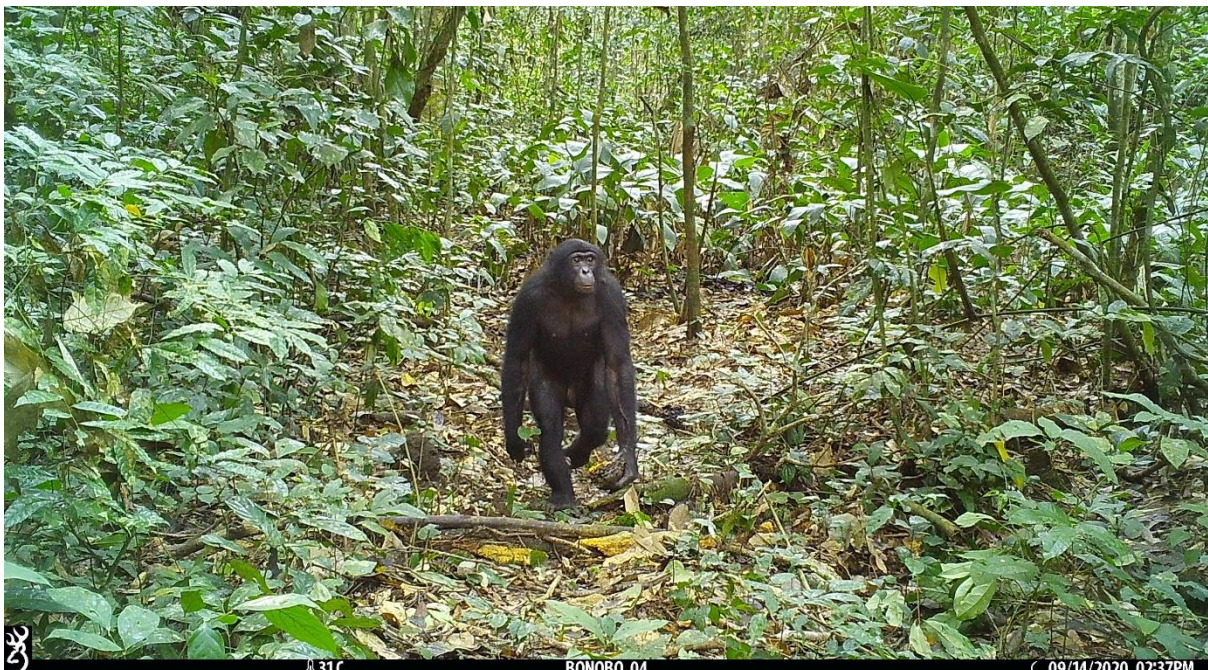


DSPA Director and Deputy Director participated in the 29th Meeting of the Board of Directors of the FTNS held from November 22 to 23 in Brazzaville where they presented the 2023 DSPA annual workplans and budgets



FTNS meeting at Brazzaville © FTNS

It is also important to note that from now onwards, the DSPA director will also manage the Salonga National Park <https://salonga.org/> in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This is a National Park with almost 34.000 square kilometres in the Congo basin and home to 40% of the World's bonobo population. This will entail some changes in responsibilities of the project and the Park.



Bonobo in Salonga NP © Camera trap

Tourism and Marketing

Two film crews collected material for documentary productions about Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas.



Film crew from Germany. ©Nuria Ortega



Film crew from UK ©Nuria Ortega

Colleagues from the Lobeke National Park visited Dzanga-Sangha to witness the operation of the ecotourism programme. There were many discussions about strategies and how to improve collaboration.



New information was published on the Dzanga-Sangha website: one about the loss of the two habituated silverback gorillas <https://dzanga-sangha.org/teaser-new-story> and, other about the big surprise that Inguka and Inganda, the twins, now six years old, who we thought were cheeky boys all along, turned out to be female! <https://dzanga-sangha.org/gender-of-gorillas/>



OUR WORK

Two habituated silverback gorillas lost in three weeks

Recent News

07.12.2022

The loss of 2 habituated silverbacks

Read the most interesting article in our news & story section.



NEWS BIODIVERSITY

Is it a boy? Or is it a girl?

05.12.2022

Even habituated gorillas remain wild animals and can only be observed from a distance. That's why trying to identify the sex of a juvenile gorilla is like a game of chance, and even trained observers can hardly get more than a fifty percent hit rate.

First of all, because in their first two years of life, the young gorillas mainly cling to their mother's back – a posture that reveals absolutely nothing. When the offspring then starts to climb and romp around, you not only need an infinite amount of patience, but also great luck to catch a revealing glimpse through the binoculars. Nevertheless, you can't be completely sure at a distance. Only a genetic analysis can bring clarity, but this requires some effort.

Arrivals and departures



© Luis Arranz

Martin Bostroem and Sebastian Manthey from KfW (German Cooperation) were in Dzanga-Sangha to witness the situation on the ground. The KfW has supported DSPA through the FTNS for over 10 years



© Nuria Ortega

A team from Lobeke NP in Cameroon, part of the Tri National de la Sangha (TNS) visited DSPA to see how we work and try to improve



© Nuria Ortega

Livia Patrono and Moritz Jochum, from the Helmholtz Institute for One Health were in DSPA as part of the continuous support to the one health programme



© Nuria Ortega

Romain Duda from the Pasteur Institute came to DSPA to carry out a project checking on the vulnerability of local populations to potential Ebola epidemic and other outbreaks like MonkeyPox



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Simon Hoyte from University College London came to DSPA to support the preparation of the new IKI project.

- *This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of WWF CAR and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union*