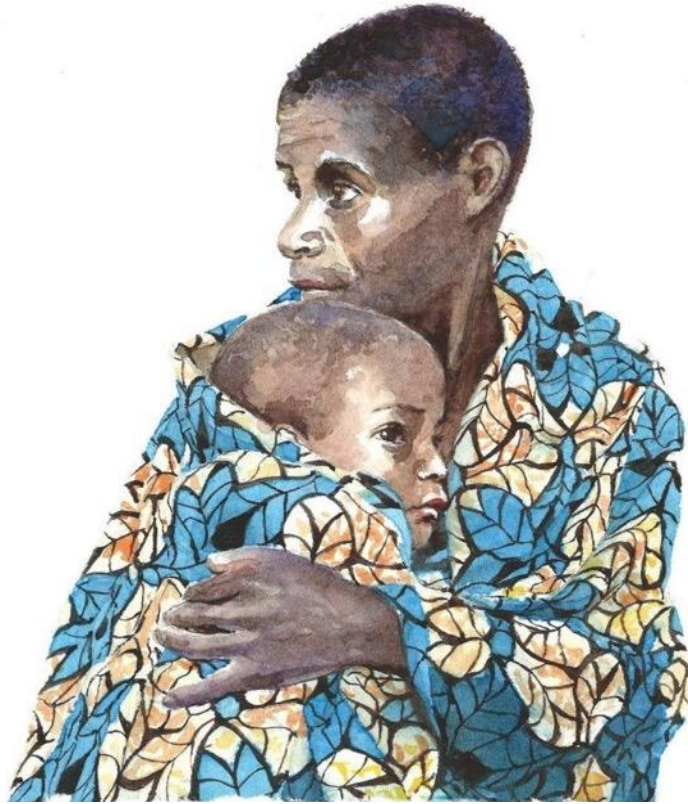




Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

www.dzanga-sangha.org



Jean Paul Rosseau

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2024

Newsletter November 2023

DSPA receives funds from



Co-funded by the European Union



K Lisa Yang



Wildlife

Maureen, an adult female who is estimated to have been born in 1960 and therefore is one of the oldest females registered at Dzanga Bai, gave birth to her 7th known offspring, a male, between Oct 3rd and Nov 5th. In May she had been observed rolling on the ground, lying down and getting up continuously for about 1 hour. Researchers suspected that she was in pain due to her pregnancy, though her offspring was not born until 5 months later. At 63 years old she is one of the oldest mothers still giving birth, although other females of similar age are suspected to be pregnant too.



Maureen and her new male infant © ELP for the Yang Center/WWF

The new gorilla group at Bai-Hokou is being contacted more often than previously. Most importantly, we are now certain that we are always following the same group. This group has a nest count of 10, which means that there are at least 10 individuals that already build nests (younger offspring normally does not). The silverback does not hesitate to charge us during contact. We hope the process will continue to evolve with this group.

The group of habituated mangabeys was contacted 25 days out of 30 during this month. The teams are maintaining their tracking efforts and this has allowed three groups of tourists to observe the mangabeys.

At Mongambe, the habituation process found hurdles at the end of October, with both focal groups being untraceable for more than 7 days. Therefore, all efforts were focused on the Wonga group, which was quickly found and followed throughout the month. The other group, however, was only contacted twice.



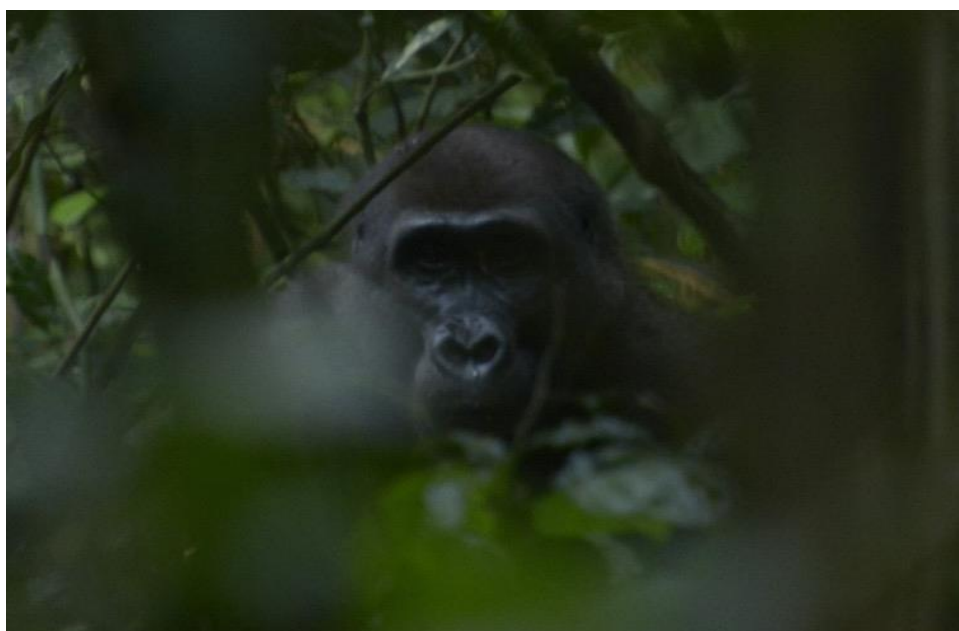
We were able to begin the identification of certain members of the Wonga group.

Bassembo is an subadult male and one of the least fearful individuals in the group. He begins to observe us for a long time and only moves back a few meters when we approach. He has white sideburns on the sides of his face, some significant marks on his face, and a left hand that appears atrophied. In Ba'aka language "Bassembo" means "the favorite".



Bassembo © Andrea Sotomayor

Ebube is a female with a white forehead. In Ba'aka language "Ebube" means "white". She is often observed because she vocalizes aggressively and intimidatingly when she sees us, sometimes even slightly charging us. She appears old, has many wrinkles on her face and very recognizable marks on her nose.



Etube © Andrea Sotomayor



One juvenile has the same mark on the nose and is often seen close to this Ebube, so we suspect this individual to be her child. We still need some time to identify the rest of the group but in addition to this juvenile, another female and another very young gorilla have been observed several times.

Ultimately, Wonga himself is sometimes the hardest to observe, as he does not charge nor vocalize.

On the morning of November 23rd, the resident group of giant forest hog entered the bai with a newborn, under heavy rain. The group crossed the river that runs through the bai, but as it had grown quite large and profound, the current dragged the newborn hoglet and it sadly drowned.

Two days later. The same group came in with another newborn from the same mother, so we believe that the birth lasted at least a full day.






The pregnant female in November 2023 © ELP for the Yang Center/WWF .

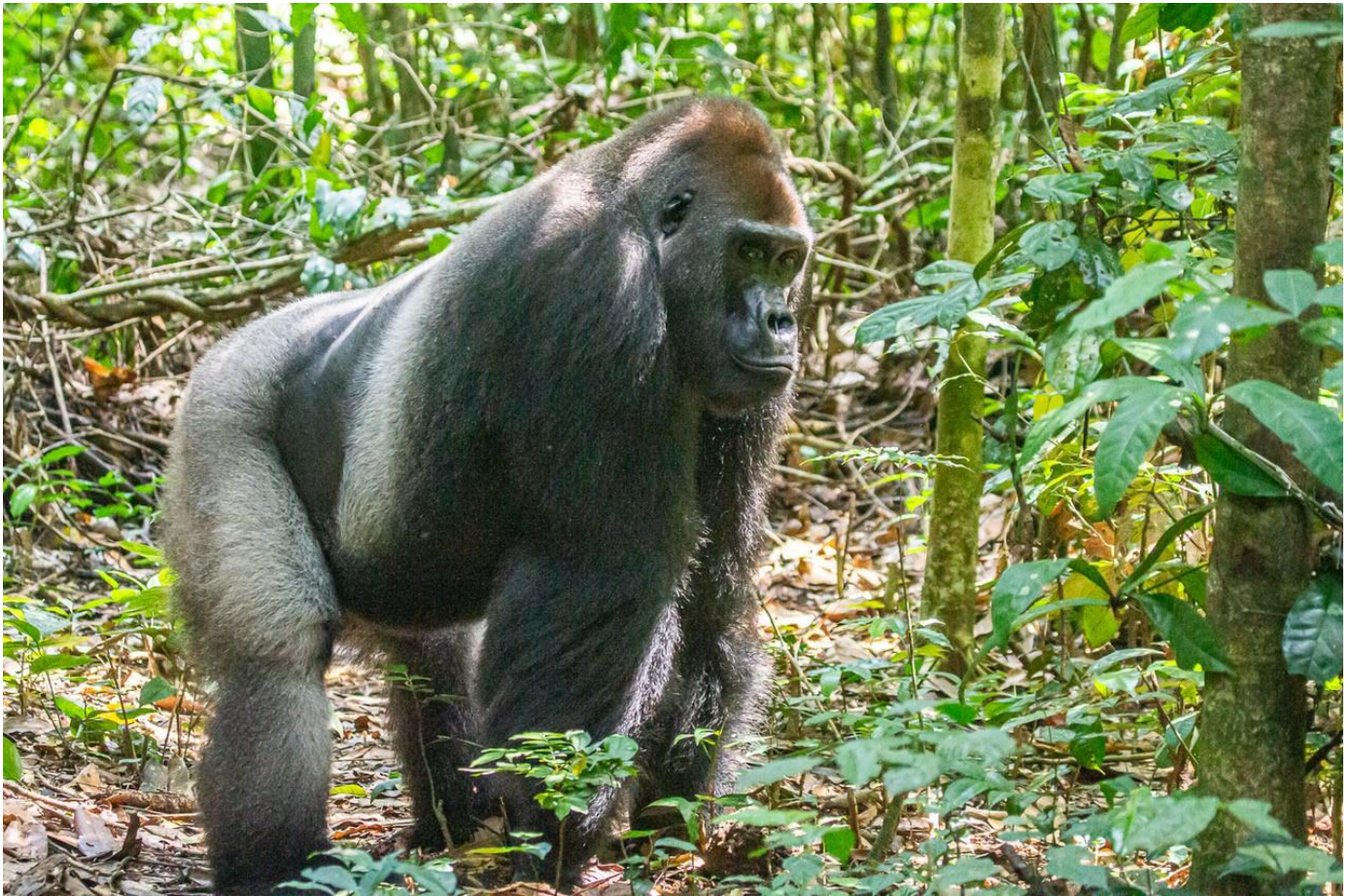


Left : the first newborn hoglet moments before drowning, Right : The mother with the second newborn two days later. © ELP for the Yang Center/WWF .

Dzanga Bai data collected in collaboration with the Elephant Listening Project: presence of mammals at the clearing based on the number of individuals counted every 30 minutes from 11:00 to 16:30 each day of the month.

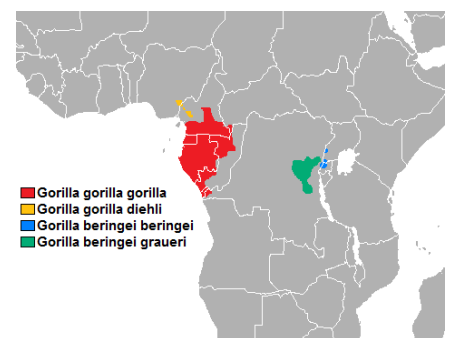
| Species | Minimum | Average | Maximum |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | 31 | 78 | 148 |
|  | 0 | 1 | 39 |
|  | 0 | 3 | 9 |

Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



© Nuria Ortega

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Scientific name | Gorilla gorilla |
| English name: | Lowland gorilla |
| Taxonomy: | Class : mamalia Order : primates Family : hominidae Genus : gorilla Specie : G. gorilla |



The gorilla is the largest primate that exists in the World and is easily recognizable by its color, and above all, by its size. Gorillas are only found on the African continent, and of the four subspecies that exist, DSPA is home to the lowland gorilla or *Gorilla gorilla gorilla*.

The adult males are called silverbacks because their hair on the back becomes of grey color when they reach adulthood. They can weigh up to 200 kilos, and are generally peaceful animals.

DSPA is one of the few sites where groups of gorillas are habituated, which means that they can be observed in their natural habitat and in complete freedom. The PHP (Primate Habituation Program) started in DSPA 30 years ago and has been ongoing since then, habituating gorillas and serving as research hub of gorilla ecology.

Antipoaching

During the latest training of the rangers, carried out by Chengeta Wildlife, the focus has been on first aid skills and respect of human rights



© Alice Péretié



© Alice Péretié

39 regular patrol were conducted involving 92 rangers. In total 1418 Rangers/days. 1370 km traveled on foot to cover an area of 2407 km².

This resulted in the seizure of 5 manufactured 12 gauge firearms, 6 Homemade firearms, with 53 ammunitions.

Also 1 leopard skins and 774 pieces of illegal wild meat. And 3253 metal snares were dismantled.

1 old elephant carcasses were found.



Community Conservation

Meetings were held on the 28th and 29th of November as a final stage of the FPIC procedure for the DSPA community hunting zone management plan. Decentralized government representatives came to Bayanga to validate the plan. A subsequent final community consultation session in Bayanga in presence of local authorities, all DSPA village chiefs, community representatives and the local civil society then accepted the plan as presented, to be escalated to the CAR government. The hunting zone management plan will implement a community-based wildlife management for which the community develop rules like closing specific hunting zone sectors to gun hunting for 6 months on a rotational basis for the recovery of species, evaluating that the plan is being respected and assessing the environmental effects of it by using passive acoustic monitoring.



Participants of the hunting zone management plan workshop © Christian Bassoum

A master student from the Senghor University of Cairo who did an intership at the DSPA, has published her thesis on gender vulnerability to human-wildlife conflicts in the protected areas of the CAR, specially focused on the populations of DSPA.





The Club of Friends for Nature has continued its activities. Among others, the visit of its members to the Dzanga Bai to see, not only the elephants, but also the work that our research team carries out.



The Friends of Nature team on the way to the bai © Christian Bassoum



The futures researches in DSPA © Christian Bassoum

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

| Structure | Number of patients |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Monasao Health Post | 357 |
| Belemboke Health Post | 419 |
| Total | 776 |



Park Administration

His excellency Amit Idriss, Minister of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing of CAR and president of the Board of Directors of DSPA passed away this month in Cameroon where he had been evacuated due to an illness.



The Minister in one of his several visits to DSPA © Nuria Ortega

A minute of silence was held in his memory. Rest in peace.



One minute of silence in honor of our Minister © Nuria Ortega



This month we have had several official visits.

A team from KfW/FTNS came to Bayanga from 20-22nd of November for a mission to prepare a potential new project proposal.

A mixed WWF-US / WWF-INT mission came to Bayanga to understand and work on DSPA operations.



©Andrea Sotto Mayor

WWF INT colleague Cornel Kapiyo visited Bayanga to conduct an internal programmatic operational audit.

An external audit from WWF and an audit from the Ministry of Water and Forests has come to see the status of the money received from tourism revenues.

The DSPA management participated in the FTNS board. The budget for next year was presented and approved.

We have received the first grant of the funds from a private donor, Lisa Yang, to support a variety of activities at the DSPA.



Tourism and Marketing

An illustrator who has been traveling around central Africa for years to capture all the landscapes and people there, and who has published a book about the pygmies, (Monsieur Jean-Paul chez les pygmées) has been with us last month at the DSPA. The first day he asked me if I was sure he would see forest elephants, because despite years visiting this part of Africa, he had never seen them. The second day he asked us if a car could come pick him up in the morning at the guest house to take him to the office, which is 200 meters away because he couldn't go on foot due to the elephants that were in the area. This defines what DSPA is.



Arrivals and departures



© Nuria Ortega

Jean Paul Rosseau has spent a lot of time travelling in the Congo Basin to draw the forest and the people living in the forest.



© Nuria Ortega

Loren Mayor, WWF-US Chief Operation Officer (COO), Mike Pejic, WWF-US, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Yvonne Godo, WWF-Int, ROA, COO, and Allard Blom (WWF US) Managing Director Congo Basin



© Nuria Ortega

The KfW team, Camille Jepang, Martin Bostroem, Gregor Taistra, Sophie Sobkowiak and Stephanie Bellack



Yvon Amolet, who has managed the Human Rights Center in Bayanga since it was created, 8 years ago, has left us to start a new adventure. He really helped to improve the life of the Ba'aka people in DSPA.

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- *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.*