



# Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

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



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## Newsletter October 2023

DSPA receives funds from



Co-funded by the European Union



## Wildlife

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Silverback Yoko (one of Mayele's sons), visited us at the Mongambe camp site staying around for several hours, and chest beating multiple times, most probably to gain our attention, and as part of typical gorilla display. As he was seen alone, we presume that he has not his own group yet.

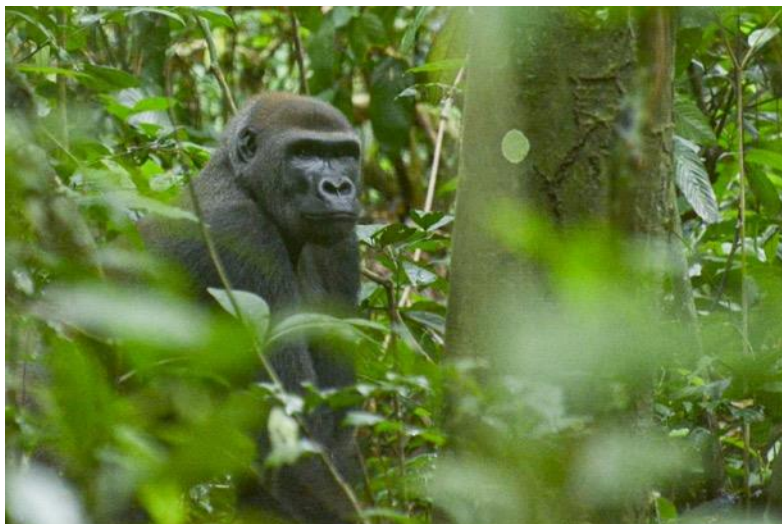


*Yoko © Andrea Sotto Mayor*

At the end of the month, we lost contact for a full week with both gorilla groups that are in the process of habituation. The Wonga group appears to have left the area after an interaction with another group (traces at the nest site show proof of a physical conflict).

The second group, composed of the still unidentified silverback, as well as by semi-habituated gorillas Duma, Loungu, Kenga, and Meteyba, seems to be separating. First, the silverback was not found near the other members of the group, even though vocalizations were heard in the distance. We assumed that Loungu, despite his young age, would take over the role of the group leader. But over the last days of the month, Loungu had not been seen again, and following Duma and the two juveniles became difficult.

Despite exhausting and unsuccessful days, our teams did not lose hope and doubled their efforts to find the two groups and study their group composition.



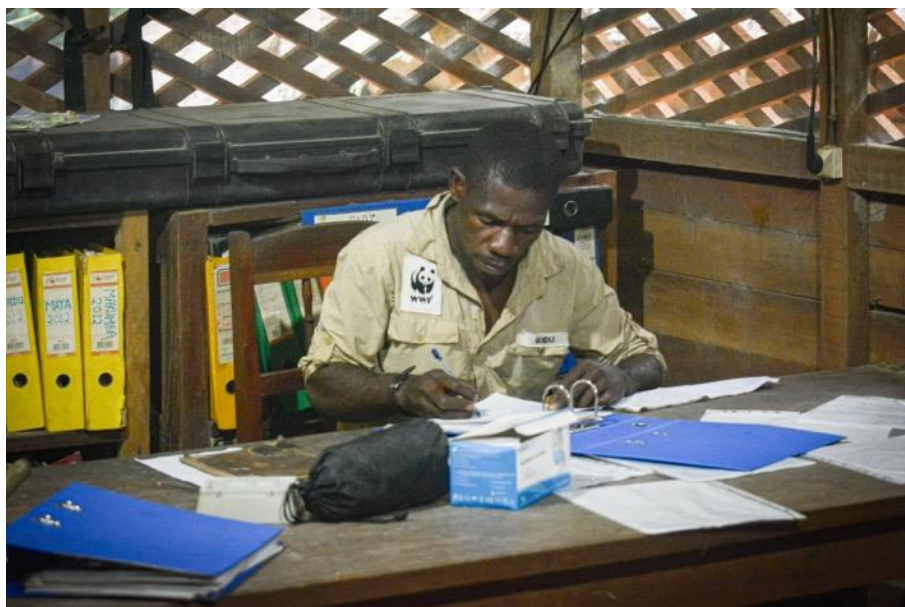
*Loungu © Andrea Sotto Mayor*



Our teams also follow on a daily basis the group of Agile Mangabey around the Bai-Hokou camp, facilitating visitors to see them. The size of the group is very large, and while we estimate hundreds of individuals, we try to collect data to know the precise number of mangabeys. Given that the larger group is composed by several smaller groups, that can further divide again, it is difficult to have an exact figure. Several of our Ba'aka trackers have been trained in data collection and transcribe their notes into the binders in the evening, fulfilling this responsibility brilliantly.



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On October 3rd, 2023, a school kit distribution session took place at the Bayanga mixed school. The kits consisting of school backpacks, notebooks, pens, and other supplies, were distributed to 12 children that participated in an immersion program at Dzanga Bai over the school break. The kits were offered by the Elephant Listening Project through the Club of Friends for Nature, both ensuring the effective delivery of the material.

At the end of the ceremony, the children and their parents were visibly very happy to have received these kits and expressed their gratitude to WWF/APDS/ELP. Some, to materialize their feelings of gratitude, have agreed to give a testimony and urge other children to join the Club of Friends for Nature.



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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.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
	6	85	153
	0	3	29
	0	3	9

## Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



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**Scientific name** *Varanus niloticus*

**English name:** Nile monitor

**Taxonomy:**  
Class : Reptilia  
Order : Squamata  
Family : Varanidae  
Genus : Varanus  
Specie : V. niloticus



The Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) is Africa's longest lizard. They grow from about 120 to 220 cm in length.

They have muscular bodies, strong legs, and powerful jaws. Their teeth are sharp and pointed in juvenile animals and become blunt and peg-like in adults. They also possess sharp claws used for climbing, digging, defense, or tearing at their prey.

Like all monitors, they have forked tongues, with highly developed olfactory properties.

Their nostrils are placed high on their snouts, indicating these animals are very well adapted for an aquatic lifestyle. They are also excellent climbers and quick runners on land. Nile monitors feed on a wide variety of prey items, including fish, frogs, toads, small reptiles, birds, rodents, other small mammals and invertebrates.

## Antipoaching

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In the month of October, two poachers that were arrested by the ecoguards in September, appeared before the court of Nola for the crime of elephant poaching. Both individuals were sentenced to 3 and 4 years in prison. A greatly functional collaboration is underway between the Anti-Poaching Department and the judicial authorities who remain very sensitive to conservation issues in the Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas.

Furthermore, this month another arrest was made, this time of a team of big-game poachers equipped with AK 47 brand weapons. The ecoguard teams carried out the arrest without incidents and with the utmost care and respect for the human person.

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From October to the end of this year, ecoguards recruited in 2022 are participating in a level 2 training delivered by Chengeta Wildlife trainers. This training specializes on increasing their capabilities in the field and develop their collective skills.

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In collaboration with the Elephant Listening Project/K.Lisa Yang Center for Conservation Bioacoustics, ecoguards have been trained on the installation and maintenance of acoustic recorders in the forest. These recorders are part of a major project that uses passive acoustics to monitor illegal activity and elephant distribution in the protected area. Sounds are recorded continuously and afterwards recordings are screened for the detection of gunshots and elephant vocalisations. A total of four teams of ecoguards have been already trained to support the monitoring effort, and 34 units are currently deployed in the forest.



During this time of the year, the rainy season, elephants are often seen at the headquarters. Mainly adult males approach the areas around the houses or the office buildings, which shows that they feel safe. But this year, the elephants have begun to enter the town of Bayanga and although in general they are calm, concern is arising amongst the inhabitants, which could cause problems and impact our conservation efforts. While we are carrying out awareness campaigns, the ecoguards now must spend more time trying to avoid accidents with elephants close to the villages than patrolling the park.



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45 regular patrols were conducted. In total 1.823 ranger/days, 2.144km traveled on foot to cover an area of 4.560 km<sup>2</sup>. This resulted in the seizure of 11 manufactured 12-gauge firearms, with 18 ammunitions. Also 25 kg of meat and 1.788 metal snares were dismantled.  
4 elephant tusks were seized.  
2 elephant carcasses were found.



## Community Conservation

The first international soccer match in the new Bayanga stadium was held on Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The teams of Libongo (Cameroon) and Bayanga (RCA), attracted a huge crowd (no-ticket signs were posted several days before the match), and Bayanga experienced one of its biggest parties in recent years.



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The match was very exciting, and while of course the most important things were the sportive spirit, mutual respect and the good relationship between all the players and the fans, in this case we can add that we won 1:0.



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The new doctor has finally arrived in Bayanga and although he will initially be dedicated to organizing all the medical material that we received last month from the CURE project, he will be able to immediately restart the Mobile Health Program in the villages. He will also help the hospitals in Bayanga, Monasao and Belemboke.

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

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Number of patients</b>
Monasao Health Post	374
Belemboke Health Post	477
<b>Total</b>	<b>851</b>

## Park Administration

A joint mission of the KfW / FTNS has come to evaluate the progress of the project, see the difficulties we have and try to find solutions.



©Luis Arranz

The wood for building tables and benches for the school has finally arrived in Bayanga.



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We have received confirmation from USFWS that they have approved the project we presented to them, focused on the development of tourism. We expect to sign the contract and receive their financial support at the beginning of the next year.



## Tourism and Marketing

As every month of October, the rain was really intense and the Sangha River grew over its borders flooding the area underneath the tourism lodge restaurant.



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Dzanga Sangha hosted a joint mission from the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The purpose of this mission was to collect field data for the new national tourism development policy. The data collection was possible through a workshop attended by all parties involved.



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The local tourism is definitely increasing in DSPA © Nuria Ortega



## Arrivals and departures

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Olivier Collinet, a doctor who has a lot of experience in tropical medicine, has arrived to run the mobile clinic in DSPA.

- *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.*