



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

www.dzanga-sangha.org



Elephants at the bai by Jean Paul Rosseau

Newsletter December 2023

DSPA receives funds from



Co-funded by the European Union



K Lisa Yang



Wildlife

A 39-year-old female known as Aida II (she is the first daughter of Aida's mother) was identified in 2022. Since this first observation, she has continued to frequent the clearing. Aida II was pregnant, but as there is no detailed information on pregnancy stages for elephants, predicting a birth date was not possible. Gestation in elephants lasts 22 months and data has been collected on the subject for a long time. Finally, on August 5, 2023, she was last seen in her pregnant state, and 4 months later (December 12, 2023) she returned with her newborn, a little boy.



Aida II with all her offspring including the newborn © ELP for the Yang Center/WWF

Not only elephant newborns are recorded, but also those of other mammals at Dzanga Bai. After the latest arrival to the giant forest hog group, on 12/27 at around 4 p.m., a little buffalo was seen for the first time with the resident group. The female had been observed for several months during her pregnancy.



A new buffalo born in December 2023. © ELP for the Yang Center/WWF.



The Wonga group was only lost for one day this month and our teams moved on to a new stage of habituation. Rather than counting the number of contacts per day, it becomes one long period of contact where we always stay with the group. Even when they move, they are never too far away. The periods of observation, however, still remain weak, and only Bassembo is often observed for several minutes with very good visibility. There are still many charges and vocal threats but they are reducing in intensity and even Wonga is starting to be visible more often. A new individual from the group has been identified. He has a lot of marks on his face that make him look like a very old gorilla even though he must be barely three years old. He has exactly the same mark on his nose as Ebube, the female identified last month. Recently, he was even seen on the back of this female, which confirms the fact that he must be her child.



© Bassembo Andrea Soto-Mayor

As for Makumba, everything went well until the end of the month when a major interaction with a solitary male caused us to lose the group for more than 48 hours.




During this month, the new group in Bai Hokou was found and followed for 16 days, often with several contacts on the same day. It is becoming easier for our teams to understand the sectors that this group occupies and the increase in contact with them is a good sign for the future. One female is very fearless and she could most certainly be Indolia, a female from the Mata group. This has yet to be confirmed.

The record of presence in Dzanga Bai is of 203 elephants at the same time one year ago. This month there were “only” 199.



Traffic jam in Dzanga Bai © 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.

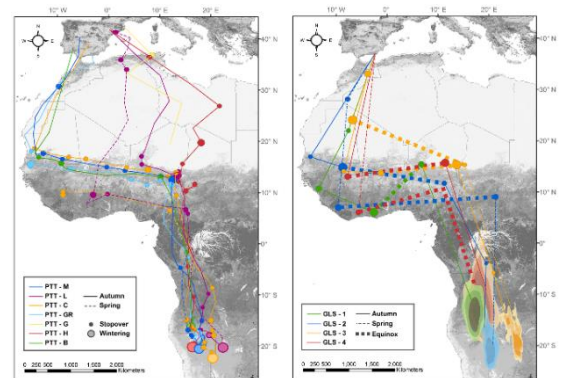
<i>Species</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
	20	117	199
	0	1	39
	0	5	9

Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



© Marc Langui

Scientific name	Coracia garrulus
English name:	European Roller
Taxonomy:	<p>Class : birds</p> <p>Order : Coraciiformes</p> <p>Family : Coraciidae</p> <p>Genus : coracias</p> <p>Specie : C. garrulus</p>



The European Roller is a fairly large, colorful bird, mainly blue with an orange-brown back, that nests in southern and eastern Europe. The entire world population winters in Africa.

Monitoring studies of European rollers have shown that birds nesting in Spain migrate across the Sahara and pass through Cameroon and the CAR before wintering in Angola and Botswana. The birds move south into the APDS region in October and return to spring migration in March. They therefore do not winter at ADPS but are passing visitors there.

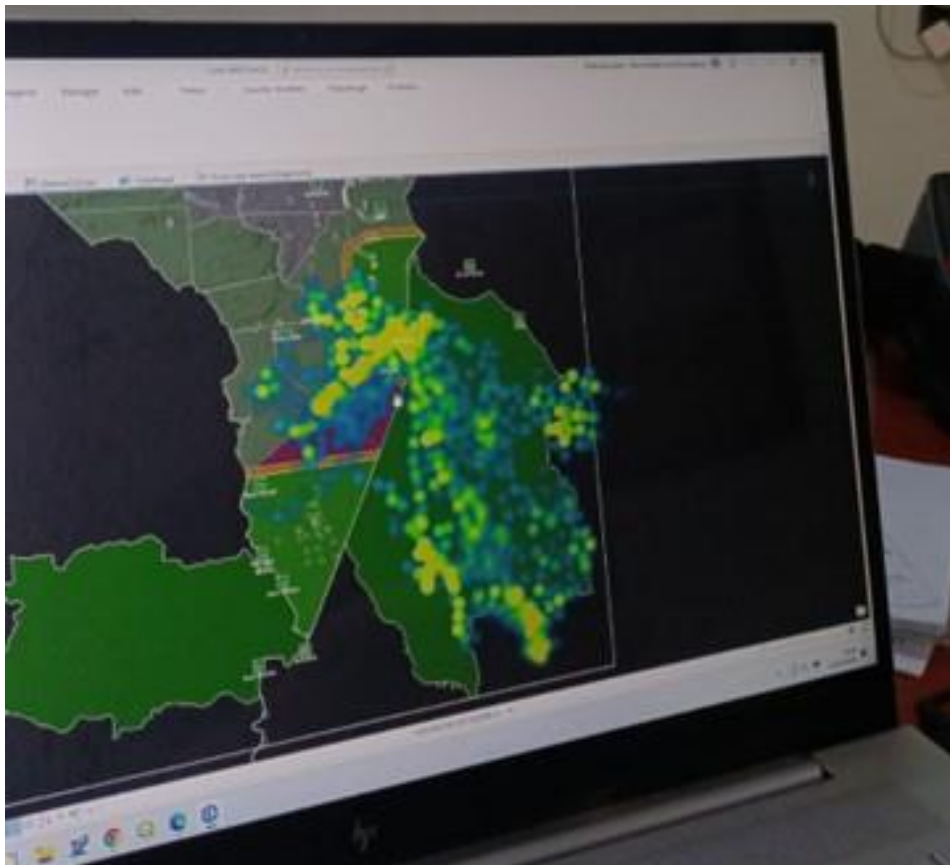
The European Roller is essentially a species of open environments. We can therefore find it hunting dragonflies and other large insects in the included savannahs. In DSPA it can be found at Dzanga Bai.

Antipoaching

During the month of December, we have made considerable progress regarding our analytical capabilities. The organization Langland Conservation did send an expert that helped us to develop a powerful analytical capability which combines a range of datasets into a unified geospatial analysis platform. To achieve this Langland configured a vastly improved and highly automated system based around ArcGIS to enable our DSPA analyst to deliver powerful analytics with just a few clicks.



© Yoann Galeran



Tracking the elephant collared in the TNS. © Yoann Galeran



On Christmas Day, we have received in Bayanga our new boat and 60 HP Yamaha engine dedicated to the surveillance on the Sangha River.



The new boat © Yoan Galeran

December is a difficult month regarding poaching, as illegal activities increase during the holidays. This year has not been different from previous years. The ecoguards have seized a total of 21 firearms, one of them an AK 47, a weapon to kill elephants.



A lot of poaching pressure this month in DSPA © Yoann Galeran

41 regular patrols were conducted involving 81 rangers. In total 1507 Rangers/days. 2180 km were traveled on foot to cover an area of 2407 km².

This resulted in the seizure of 1 AK 47 magazine and 22 AK 47 ammunitions, 8 manufactured 12-gauge firearms, and 12 homemade firearms, with 108 ammunitions. 144kg of illegal wild meat and 1 kg of Pangolin scales were also seized, and 2845 metal snares were dismantled.

4 live turtles were seized and released and 2 elephant carcasses were found.



Community Conservation

More than 60 participants were present during the two days of the workshop during which speakers presented studies carried out in the APDS allowing us to understand the impact of hunting on species and ecosystems, and to be aware of the legal practices dictated by the Wildlife Code.

At the end of the workshop, groups were formed with a view to develop a program of activities for the year 2024. Activities such as “continue participatory mapping” were announced.



Participant at the workshop © Yoann Galeran

We have continued with the delivery of benches to schools in the region.



Benches for the Moussapola school © Luis Arranz



We have delivered to the Monassao and Belemboke health centers the medical equipment that we had received from the CURE project. With this material, both centers will greatly improve their services and, therefore, the health of the population in the area



Medical equipment for the Belemboke health center © Olivier Collinet



And for the Monassao one © Odilon

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

Structure	Number of patients
Monasao Health Post	357
Belemboke Health Post	386
Total	776



Park Administration

Finally, and several months behind schedule due to various problems with construction companies, the building that will house the offices of Ndima Kali, the Union of Baaka Communities, and the multipurpose room, has been completely finished.



The PAPA building already finished © Luis Arranz



Office of Ndima Kali and library inside the PAPA building © Luis Arranz



The big multipurpose hall... © Luis Arranz



....ready to host meetings, cinema, parties and theater representations © Luis Arranz

After having signed a contract last July with the European Union's Naturafrica project, the approval of new financing starting in the second half of this year has been approved. These funds will help us in a very significant way, to consolidate ongoing activities, but also to carry out new ones.



Tourism and Marketing

Like many of the great men in history, Makumba already has his sculpture. Benoit Lebeurre, who came to visit us a few years ago, has made a series of sculptures of the animals that he has seen on his travels, and among them is our silverback Makumba.

[Bronze Animalier | Bronze Animalier Benoît Lebeurre \(bronze-sculpture-lebeurre.fr\)](#)



Makumba, sculpture in bronze made by Benoit Lebeurre

A team from WTS Mixemedia, from Germany, has come to make a documentary (in German) about the work we are doing, in collaboration with the Helmholtz Institute on the search for new pathogens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APqopsMki2Y>



COVID-19

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Arrivals and departures

This month there were no extra movements, except for the project employees leaving for the holidays.

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