



# Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

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



*Makumba 1979? – 2024 © David Santiago*

## Newsletter May 2024





DSPA receives funds from



Co-funded by the European Union



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## Wildlife

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May was a very difficult month for the PHP team with the loss of Makumba. Followed by our teams for more than 24 years, his death on May 15th was a terrible shock for everyone.

Makumba tribute

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C8AYwhaqKjh/>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/dolildoge/videos/952343929967827>

The loss of our last group of habituated gorillas has serious consequences for the entire park and for the primate habituation teams. It was decided under these conditions to temporarily shut down the Mongambe habituation camp to reinforce the Bai-Hokou habituation camp.

Since Makumba's death it has been very difficult to keep up with the rest of the group. We have found tracks of the group several times but they are extremely difficult to follow. There have been numerous contacts with a solitary male in the areas where Makumba's females roam. Several teams are sent to continue to work in that area.



© Andy Leskowitz





© Nuria Ortega

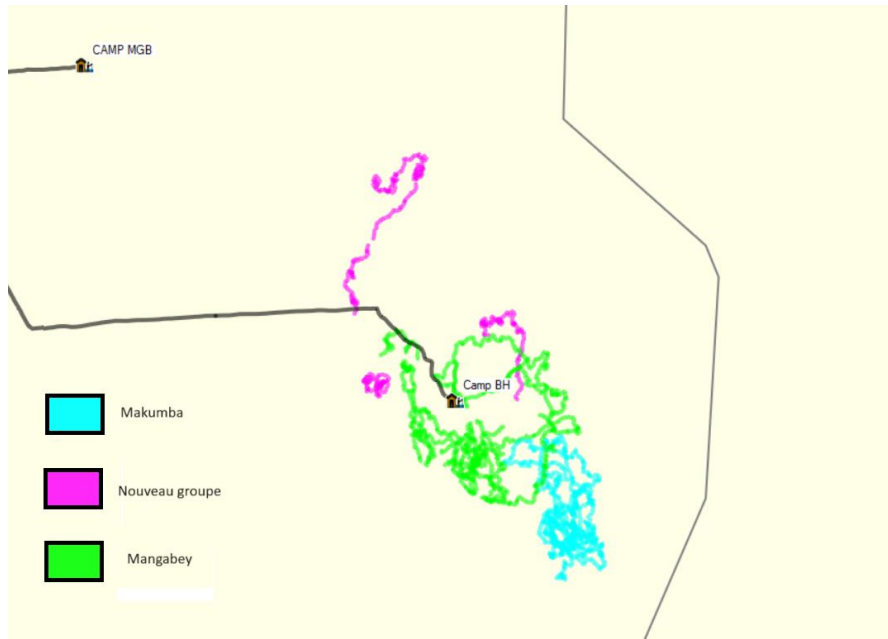


© Miguel Bellosta





Tracking has improved with the new gorilla group that our teams have been following for almost a year now. However, at this stage of the habituation process, the group remains still far from our location and its sector of activity is therefore very large. There is no doubt that several individuals in the group are former habituated gorillas, probably females from the Mata group. We hope that during the month of June we will be able to know the identity of these females who sometimes can be observed for several minutes.



We have distributed the new uniforms for the Primate Habituation Project team.



© Andrea Soto-Mayor



Thanks to the daily monitoring at Dzanga Bai we are able to observe and note down every new elephant that enters the clearing. This month, four new babies have been registered. Meet the families below:

Odessa II(II) was born in 2002 into the Odessa family. She is an avid visitor of Dzanga Bai and easily recognizable due to the rings around her eyes, and her short and curved tusks. She has been observed since 2021 with her juvenile male offspring and entered the clearing in May with a newborn female.



*Odessa II(II) and her newborn female offspring. ©ELP for the Yang Center/WWF*

Maddy is the first identified female in her family. She was seen and named for the first time in the year 2000, and we think that we are celebrating her 60's birthday this year. Her family counts with at least seven individuals, plus Maddy's newborn male.



*Maddy with her newborn male offspring. ©ELP for the Yang Center/WWF*



Sappho IV (30) was registered in the existing database as having died in 2016. Comparing individuals that visit the clearing with over 50.000 pictures from the historical record, we found out that Sappho IV was not dead, and still visiting the clearing. She surprised us this month with a newborn male.



*Sappho IV with her newborn male offspring. ©ELP for the Yang Center/WWF*

Juanita III(III) is the second offspring of Juanita III, who is also a second offspring but to Juanita. In this family curiously several of the adult individuals are missing a piece of tail. Juanita III(III) also has a newborn infant, a little female.



*Figure 7. The newborn offspring of Juanita III(III) ©ELP for the Yang Center/WWF*





This month, two eDNA sampling missions were carried out at the Sangha River. “eDNA”, or environmental DNA, is a relatively recent technique that makes it possible to identify the species present in a habitat using the DNA traces they leave in their environment. This initiative, in collaboration with the University of Zurich, will allow us to assess the decline in river biodiversity caused by human pressure and climate change and find measures to counter it.



*Taking DNA samples © Antoine Ede*

From May 21st to the 23th, 2024, research teams from Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, including the great ape habituation teams from Mondika and Goualogo, as well as the One Health Program team, conducted an exchange visit to the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (APDS).



*The Nouabale Ndoki Team in DSPA © Antoine Ede*






On May 27th, 2024, a mission of inspection and advisory was conducted at the STBCA forestry operation, located in the northwestern part of the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (APDS). The main objective of this mission is to ensure the proper implementation of the forestry companies' management plan and support forestry operators in adopting more sustainable practices.



*We cannot forget the pressure of the logging companies around DS © Denis Lambert*

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
	3	90	194
	0	6	35
	0	7	9





## Antipoaching

The rangers have worked normally but once again, this month they found a carcass of an elephant killed by poachers. They detained 5 people involved in the killing, but sadly the elephant was already dead.



*Discussing about work © Aaron Porter*

38 regular patrols were conducted involving 86 rangers. In total 1.443 rangers/days. 2.027 km were traveled on foot.

This resulted in the seizure of 4 manufactured 12-gauge firearms, and 5 homemade firearms, with 24 ammunitions.

30 kg of illegal wild meat were seized, and 1.917 metal snares were dismantled.

1 elephant carcass was found and 5 suspects arrested.



## Community Conservation

The month of May ended with the soccer tournament organized by DS. The final match was between the rangers and the legal hunters. Despite what one might think from the team names, the game was played with great sportsmanship. The hunters won the tournament (and although we all know that the important thing is to participate, of course the guards will not be paid this month).



*The Cup for the winners. © Amandine Toumbou*



*The winners with the Cup © Amandine Toumbou*





The members of the African School of Music of Bouar (CAR) <https://www.africanmusicschool.com/en/> visited DS this month. The objective was to compose a song and make a video clip about the park, which will be finished in July. The visit ended with a concert at the Bayanga stadium, which again was sold out.



*African school of Music live © Luis Arranz*



*After Taylor Swift's concerts, probably the concert with the most public in the year © Luis Arranz*





The Club of Friends for Nature has organized two games and awareness sessions in which more than 50 young people from the area have participated.



*Playing and learning about nature and conservation © Christian Bassoum*

We have begun, in collaboration with the UCB, the distribution of peanut seeds in 10 Ba'aka villages in the area.



*Peanut seeds © Amandine Toumbou*

**Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients**

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Number of patients</b>
Monasao Health Post	423
Belemboke Health Post	527
<b>Total</b>	<b>940</b>



## Park Administration

This month we held the DSPA Steering committee meeting which has led to the first visit of the new Minister of Water, Forest, Hunting and Fishing, his Excellence Gervais Mbata, President of the committee, and the new Minister of Arts, Culture and Tourism, her Excellence Ngela Françoise Ramadan Mahata, member of the committee.



*Arrival of the Ministers to Bayanga © Christian Bassoum*



*His Excellence Gervais Mbata, and her Excellence Ngela Françoise Ramadan Mahata © Christian Bassoum*





We also received the visit of the members of the independent panel to evaluate the recommendations that the same panel has made as result of certain allegations against a WWF committee. They could meet and work with the local population to know the reality of the situation.



*The members of the independent panel at Bayanga © Christian Bassoum*

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Previously, the responsible of the German Cooperation as well as the Executive Director, Country Offices Management of WWF International also visited us to see the DSPA and our work..



*Prassana da Silva, from WWF Int, met the Ba'Aka population during his first visit to DSPA. © Luis Arranz*

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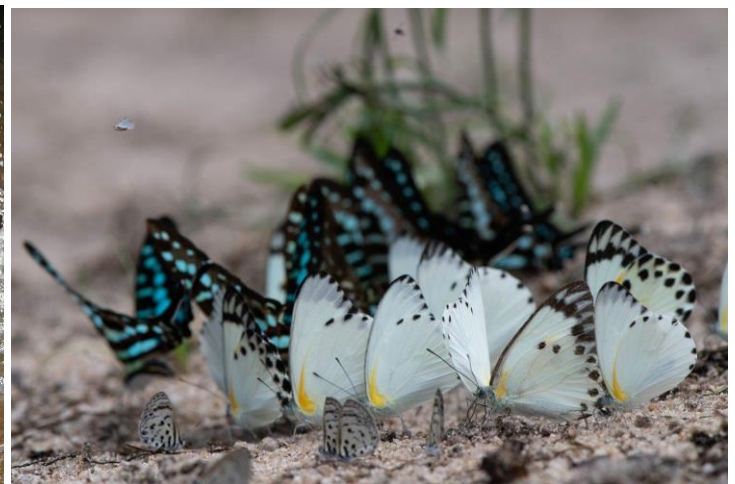
We have received confirmation from both, USFWS and UNESCO, that they will start to fund DSPA.

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## Tourism and Marketing

The loss of Makumba, after those of Mata and Mayele, have been a hard blow for tourism in DS because now we cannot guarantee the sight of gorillas. Despite some visitors having cancelled their trip, most of the scheduled visitors are still coming because DS has much more activities to offer. (© all pictures Miguel Bellosta)



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