



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

www.dzanga-sangha.org



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Newsletter April/May 2026



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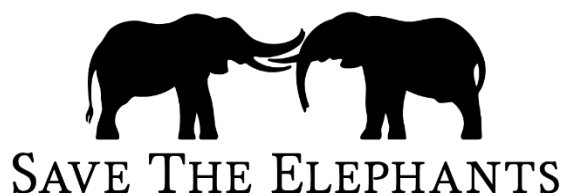


Ehepaar Fronja





DSPA collaborates with



Wildlife

Male Sitatunga Visits Dzanga Bai

In the early morning of 25 April 2026, following rainfall the previous day, a male sitatunga was observed at Dzanga Bai. The animal spent approximately three hours feeding and moving around the bai before quietly returning to the surrounding forest. As with previous observations, sightings of sitatungas at the bai remain rare and occasional, making this visit a noteworthy event for both researchers and visitors.



Adult male Sitatunga at Dzanga Bai seen in April 2026. © ELP for the Yang Center for Conservation Bioacoustics/WWF

New Arrivals in the Forest Hog Group

The group of giant forest hogs that regularly visits Dzanga Bai continues to grow. During recent observations, three new piglets were recorded within the group, a positive sign that the population remains healthy and continues to reproduce successfully. These new additions are a welcome sight for both researchers and visitors to the bai.



A group of giant forest hogs at Dzanga Bai, including three newly recorded piglets, photographed during their visit to the bai in May 2026 © ELP for the Yang Center for Conservation Bioacoustics/WWF

During May 2026, more than 16 newborn elephant calves were recorded at Dzanga Bai. Among them were two calves observed just a few hours after birth, providing a rare opportunity to witness the earliest stages of their lives. These newborns were born to the females Scarside and Juno, making the month particularly memorable for the Dzanga Bai monitoring team.



Juno with her newborn baby© ELP for the Yang Center for Conservation Bioacoustics/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 60 minutes from 11:00 to 16:00 each day of the month.

April 2026

<i>Species</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
	26	113	191
	0	26	50
	0	7	14



May 2026



<i>Species</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
	23	82	150
	0	14	36
	0	9	14

Find below an article highlighting the exceptional research carried out at Dzanga Bai, one of the most important sites in the world for studying forest elephants.

<https://mainnews.co.za/environment/studying-the-worlds-largest-gathering-of-forest-elephants-with-sound-and-field-observation/>

Antipoaching

During the month of April, DSPA deployed 111 ecoguards across 40 patrols, totaling 1,923 ecoguard days and covering 4,301 km within and around the protected area, including more than 2,818 km completed during regular foot patrols. One team covered 292 km on foot during the month.

Law enforcement activities resulted in the seizure of 11 firearms, including 5 homemade firearms, as well as 31 shotgun cartridges. Ecoguards also seized 1,186 wire snares.

Several illegal activities were documented during patrols, including the discovery of three African forest elephant carcasses, two of which had been killed by gunfire.

The month of May saw the deployment of 104 ecoguards, who conducted 46 patrols throughout the protected area and its surrounding buffer zone. These operations totaled 1,833 eco-guard days and covered 3,559 km, including more than 2,525 km completed during regular foot patrols. One patrol team alone covered 324 km on foot during the month.

Anti-poaching operations resulted in the seizure of 17 firearms, including 9 homemade firearms, as well as 5 shotgun cartridges. Ecoguards also removed 2,834 wire snares from the forest. Compared with the previous month, the increase in the number of homemade firearms and wire snares seized highlights the continued pressure being exerted on wildlife.

No elephant carcasses were discovered during the reporting period. However teams carried out 5 arrests.

Ecoguards Capacity Building

DSPA ecoguards also strengthened internal capacities through a two week leadership training program conducted simultaneously for team leaders and assistant team leaders, aimed at improving field coordination, decision-making, and overall patrol effectiveness.



Leadership training module: eco-guardians learning to identify different pangolin species through scale characteristics during a session led by Tessa Ullmann (The Forest Collective) ©Emmanuel Cenciai

Community Conservation

Through DSPA support to the Municipality of Bayanga, a monthly market held every 4th of the month has been established, improving access to markets for remote communities and strengthening local agricultural value chains through enhanced trade and market facilitation.



©Marien Ndemaye et Michel Ngounda

For the 2026 agricultural campaign, DSPA is supporting farmer and agricultural development through the production of maize, groundnut, beans, and white yam across 18 villages. Building on pre-positioned inputs (beans, ginger seed, and maize stored in community granaries), additional supplies in April 2026 included 174 *Ngawi* of yam and 300 *Ngawi* of groundnuts, benefiting 275 farmers in both APDS villages and surrounding communities to strengthen production and market access.



Yams©Amandine TOUMBOU



Groundnuts seeds©Marien Ndemanye

MonaSao Agroforestry Team, April & May Activities

In April, the Mona-Sao agroforestry team conducted training sessions on agroforest establishment, covering key steps such as field marking, pit digging, and the planting of fruit and forest species. Farmers also cultivated macabo (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*) and white yam (*Dioscorea spp.*), and carried out sowing of groundnut (*Arachis hypogaea*) and maize (*Zea mays*), alongside seed distribution to project beneficiaries.

In May, activities focused on registering beneficiary plots and distributing seedlings. Each farm was assessed for size and technical quality before validation, after which beneficiaries received 200-250 seedlings per 0.5 hectare, depending on plot occupancy.

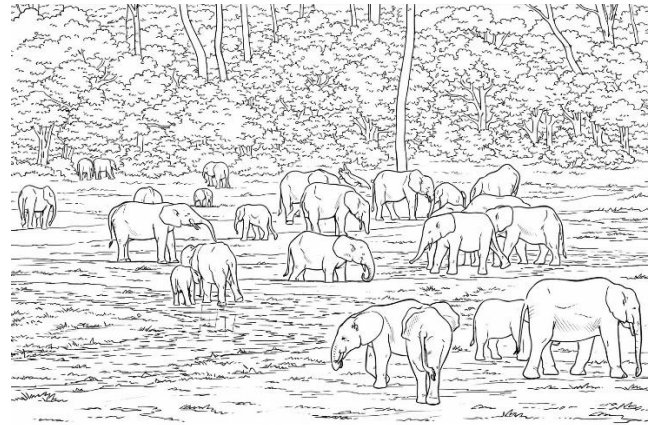


Farmer field schools and distribution of seedlings from the nursery.

Friends of Nature

We continue to organize awareness and film screening session with the “Friends of Nature” under the theme *“The Social Life of Elephants,”* bringing together around 300 young people from Yandoumbe, Moussapoula, and Bayanga through interactive activities such as games, songs, poems, quizzes, and coloring workshops.





Film screening at the PAPA House featuring songs, dances, and coloring workshops with young participants ©Amandine TOUMBOU, Gloria LASSEM, and Ivonne KIENAST

An educational excursion also took place at Dzanga Bai with a group of 10 youths from Bayanga, including a visit to Dzanga Bai, exchanges with the APDS elephant research team, and hands-on learning and creative activities to deepen their understanding of forest elephants and their ecosystem.



Nature excursion: visit to the Dzanga Bai with youths from Bayanga ©Amandine TOUMBOU, Gloria LASSEM, and Ivonne KIENAST

In Bayanga, **the Human Rights Center** is doing remarkable work in promoting access to justice for Indigenous peoples. It provides legal support, mediation, and human rights awareness, while also helping communities address disputes and access essential administrative documents.



This initiative plays an important role in strengthening social cohesion and ensuring that Indigenous communities can more effectively defend their rights and participate in local life.

Find below a link to an excellent article on the Human Rights Center.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2026/04/a-human-rights-center-opens-a-path-to-justice-for-indigenous-peoples-in-the-central-african-republic/>

A human rights center opens a path to justice for Indigenous Peoples in the Central African Republic



David Akana
7 Apr 2026 Africa

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Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients (April/May 2026)

Structure	Number of patients
Monasao Health Post	426
Belemboke Health Post	921
Community consultation	107
Total	1454

In collaboration with the hospital in Bayanga, the APDS doctor conducted capacity-building training sessions for the hospital's healthcare staff.



You can find below a link to an article on DSPA Mobile Clinic :

<https://news.mongabay.com/2026/04/far-from-home-a-rwandan-nurse-fulfills-her-calling-among-car-forest-communities/>

One Health

One Health activities under the InForBio project were officially launched at Lobéké National Park during a joint mission by the DSPA One Health team and the Helmholtz Institute for One Health. The mission included training the park's One Health officer in fly trapping techniques and identifying additional capacity building needs. Regular exchanges between DSPA and Lobéké National Park are planned to strengthen collaboration across the TNS landscape.



© Frederic Singa

In April, the second InForBio field mission brought together PhD students from Cameroon and the Central African Republic for training in small mammal and fly sampling, as well as laboratory techniques. The team sampled 83 rodents and 294 flies, with support from six members of the local Ba'Aka and Bantu communities.



© Lorenzo Lagostino



© Lorenzo Lagostino

Bangui scientific days

From 25/27 May 2026, DSPA/WWF CAR participated in the Bangui Scientific Days, co-organized by the University of Bangui and the Institut Pasteur de Bangui under the theme One Health.

Together with our long-term research partner HIOH, we hosted a stand showcasing One Health activities in the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas. Frédéric Singa presented DSPA's One Health work, while Yanthe Nobel introduced the One Health Exploratories.

The event provided an excellent platform to exchange ideas with researchers and students, explore future collaborations, and raise awareness of both the One Health approach and the biodiversity and conservation efforts in the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas.



© Jean-Marc Zokoué – Institut Pasteur de Bangui



© Jean-Marc Zokoué – Institut Pasteur de Bangui

Following the first expedition last fall, a joint team of Czech researchers from the Primate Symbiont Ecology Research Group at the Institute of Vertebrate Biology (Brno) and Charles University (Prague) returned to DSPA in May and June. The team was joined by Don-Devine Junior Django, a student from the University of Bangui, who gained valuable hands-on experience in field research and conservation.

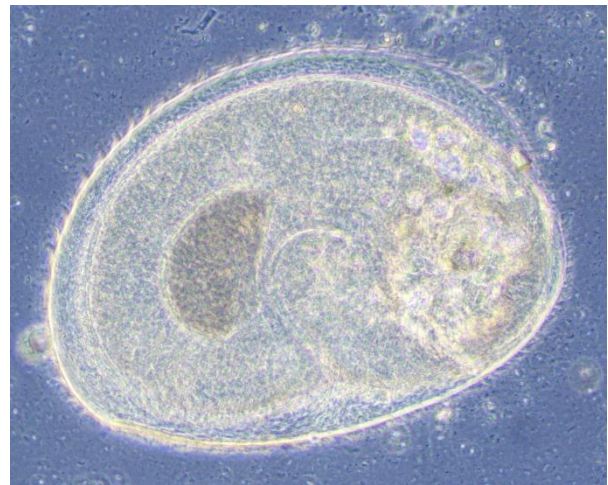
The expedition focused on studying the symbiotic entodiniomorphid ciliates of gorillas and chimpanzees to better understand their role in great ape digestion and health. Additional sampling of fish, frogs, reptiles, and invertebrates was also conducted to expand knowledge of the biodiversity of Dzanga-Sangha and the diversity of their symbiotic ciliates.



A young juvenile chimpanzee i Dzanga Sangha©Bethan mason



Traditional fishing expedition with Bayaka community



(left) Troglodytella gorillae single cell from the gorilla faeces ; (right) Sicutophoridae sp. single cell from the fish gut

DSPA Administration

On April 20, 2026, in Bangui, the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries, in partnership with the WWF, organized a national validation workshop for the management and development plan of the DSPA, officially opened by His Excellency the Minister of Water and Forests. The event brought together national and local authorities, technical and financial partners, as well as representatives of local communities and Indigenous peoples.



©Ministère de l'économie forestière, des ressources faunique et aquatiques

We also organized in Bayanga the 39th CTPE, bringing together the three segments of the Sangha Trinational (TNS) as well as the Fondation Tri-Nationale de la Sangha.



©Gervais Faustin Sana

For many years, DSPA has been committed to solar energy; over the past few months, we have further expanded our installations through an additional extension.



©Yoann Galeran

Tourism and marketing

This article, *“Life under canopy: rethinking conservation in Dzanga-Sangha,”* offers an insightful look into the innovative conservation model of Dzanga-Sangha Protected Area. It highlights how conservation in the area goes beyond wildlife protection, integrating ecotourism, community engagement, and sustainable development. From forest elephant gatherings at Dzanga Bai to gorilla tracking and the involvement of local communities, the piece illustrates how Dzanga-Sangha is emerging as a unique example of a landscape where people and nature coexist through a balanced and forward-looking approach.

<https://jimgreenfootwear.eu/life-under-canopy-rethinking-conservation-in-dzanga-sangha/>

Arrivals and departures



Czech research team, including a University of Bangui intern. From left to right: Dr. Kotyk, Mr. Django, Mr. Sovis, and Dr. Mason.



Mission team composed of FAO staff and focal points from the Ministries of Water and Forests, Livestock, and Environment working together on the One Health assessment for the IKI Inforbio.



We were also pleased to welcome Jean-Marc Gauthier, Infrastructure Expert for the European Union.

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