



Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas

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© David Santiago

Newsletter July 2021



Wildlife

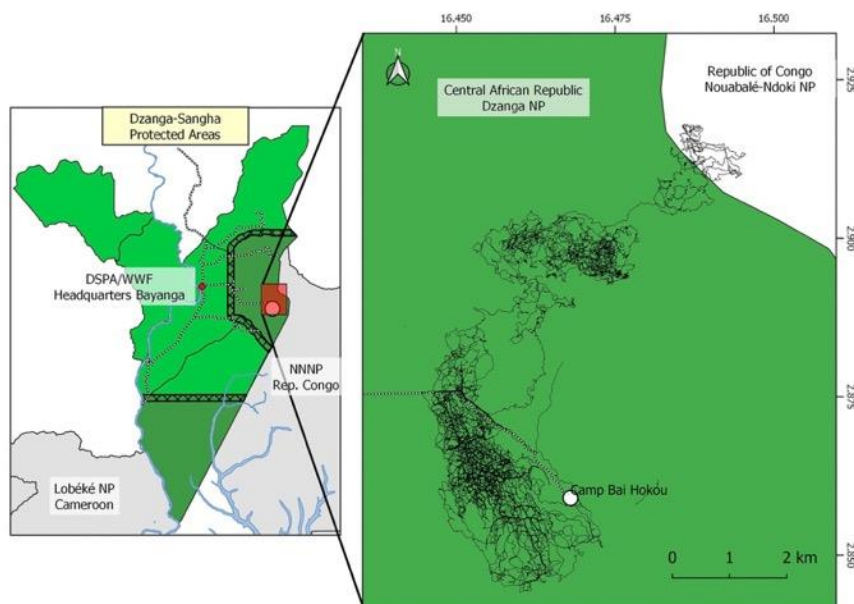
The gorilla infant born into the Mata group at Bai Hokou last month is growing well and has been named “Mossika” by the trackers which in Ba’Aka language means "far away" referring to the fact that it was born while the group is residing far from its home range. Mossika is an offspring of the female Wusa and was born almost 5 years after its older sibling Payo.



Mossika, four days old ©Lara Nellissen

Last January, a sub adult male, Mio, emigrated from the Mata group, reducing group number but with the addition of Mossika, the group is back to 9 individuals

The group is still residing far from its normal home range and far from camp. We hope that at some point they will come closer as it would facilitate tracking.



Mata group situation



This month we installed GPS collars on 10 more elephants. In total we have 30 collared elephants although the first group of collars installed will soon stop emitting signals due to the battery life. The data collected from these collars help us to better to understand elephant hotspots, major corridors and ranging patterns in order to better protect them, and also gives us an idea on the level of poaching.



The veterinarian team with Martina and her new neckless © Stef de Béthune



Craft respirator for elephants, simple but effective © Stef de Béthune






Elephants and BaAka, the soul of Dzanga Sangha © Stef de Béthune



While the analyses of camera trap data collected during the 2020 wildlife inventory is ongoing, preliminary results show that we have at least 2000 elephants in DSPA, which is double the estimate from the previous inventories. There is still much to be done but it is clear that this estimate is closer to the reality than that of previous surveys estimated by indirect signs on line transects.



From this month onwards, we will present a table of the presence of large mammals in Dzanga bai every month so that everyone can get an idea of what it really is. This table is based on the number counted every 30 minutes between 12:00 to 16:30 and every day of the month.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
	12	76	120
	0	5	25
	0	8	10

Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA



© Miguel Bellosta

Scientific name: *Bycanistes albotibialis*

English name: White-thighed hornbill

Taxonomy:

- Class : birds
- Order : bucerotiformes
- Family : bucerotidae
- Genus : Bycanistes
- Specie : B. albotibialis



The white-thighed hornbill (*Bycanistes albotibialis*) is a species of bucerotiforme

It is one of the three large hornbills in the region, and sometimes is considered to be a subspecies of the brown-cheeked hornbill (*Bycanistes subcylindricus*) due to their resemblance. We can distinguish them especially by the terminal strip of the completely white tail and also the white tip of the wings. The bird in the picture has a rather worn plumage and it will soon molt.

Fruit constitutes 90% of the diet. and due to the long distances they travel in search of fruit, hornbills play an important role in seed dispersal, contributing to forest regeneration.

The range stretches across West Africa and in the Gulf of Guinea, from Sierra Leone to Ghana and its natural habitat is lowland tropical rainforests, although they can also be found in degraded forests.

Anti-poaching

Last year the CAR Government approved a new Wildlife Code. This month we organized a workshop in Bayanga to present and explain the new regulations to local and judicial authorities.



Judicial authorities attending the workshop © Christian Bassoum

This was followed by a court hearing where 5 poachers were tried and convicted of major offenses



The President of the Court © Christian Bassoum



The five convicted poachers © Christian Bassoum



The last group of rangers underwent the “Anti-poaching Level 2” training at the Kongana training center. In the course of a patrol exercise organized during the training, this group arrested 7 suspected poachers setting metal snares inside the Park. We found out that these same suspected poachers had already been arrested for the same offense in the Nouabale Ndoki National Park in Congo where their game was confiscated, and they were sensitized and released. Upon returning to CAR, they entered the Dzanga Ndoki National Park to set more snares.



Hunting illegally in the DSPA © Luis Arranz

This month we lost one of our ecoguards Bernard AKA-M’PIO. He joined DSPA as a boat driver in 1995 and became a ranger in 1999. Last month he was evacuated to Bangui due to ill health where he died on July 31st. He dedicated 26 years of his life to conservation, 22 of them as an ecoguard.

35 regular patrols and 1 binational patrols with the rangers of NNNP. In total 1.045 rangers/days, 1.074 km traveled on foot and cover an area of 1.528 km². This resulted in the seizure of 9 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns and 16 gauge cartridges. In addition, 2.024 metal snares were dismantled and 430 kgs of bush meat and 0’75 kgs of pangolin scales were confiscated.

20 poachers were arrested, sensitized and released.

Two elephant carcass was found in the Mabea sector.

Community Development

The Coordinator and General Secretary of the Ndima-Kali association participated in an exchange workshop organized by the GIZ in Mambelé (Cameroon) with various actors of the Sangha Tri-National landscape (TNS). The workshop was aimed at reflecting on ways to conserve and enhance traditional knowledge in connection with the management of forest ecosystems.

The Ndima-Kali youth association organized 2 workshops on traditional knowledge focused mainly on the braiding of baskets for fishing and emptying ponds and the manufacture of hunting nets for subsistence hunting. A total of 42 youths (30% girls) took part in these activities and the knowledge was passed on by 14 experienced elders.



Young Baaka learning to make baskets © Martial Betoulet



No too bad © Martial Betoulet

In an effort to revive the Union of Ba'Aka Communities (UCB) which has been dormant for quite some time, we carried out consultations in 11 communities of Indigenous People within DSPA and its surroundings, and mobilized 273 representatives. The UCB will be very instrumental in ensuring the active participation of Ba'Aka in the management of DSPA



Meeting at the Moussapola Conference Hall © Martial Betoulet



We started the renovation of some schools in the area that are in very poor condition.



© Martial Betoulet



© Martial Betoulet

We carried out 69 random COVID test this month and did not detect any new cases.

The two German specialist doctors who came in to support the 'access to medical care' program continued to attend to patients in the villages within DSPA and its periphery this month. By the end of their stay they attended to over 700 patients.



Doctors at work © Hans Hoffmann



Sometimes is hard to be a doctor here © Hans Hoffmann



Really hard © Monika Hoffmann



But others, it compensates. A couple of twins were born prematurely but are healthy thanks to the health team © Luis Arranz

Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients

Structure	Number of patients
Lindjombo Health Post	
Monasao Health Post	217
Belemboke Health Post	452
Mobile clinic	389
Total	1.058

Park Administration

His Excellency the Minister of Water and Forest paid a visit to DSPA. The visit which was originally planned for 4 days, finally lasted 7 days because the chartered plane could not fly as a result of poor weather conditions. Given that the last time he visited was before the Covid-19 pandemic, this visit was an opportunity to discuss many issues and find solution to problems. It was also the opportunity for the Minister to officially deliver the new statute of the ecoguards that had been approved by the Ministry.



The Minister arriving to DSPA © Terence Fuh

A delegation from the Sangha Mbaere took part in the meeting of the Tri-National Monitoring Committee (CTS), held in Ouesso, RoC. The CTS is one of the governance structures of the TNS that brings together the “Prefets” from the tree countries and the sessions deal with issues relating to free movement of persons within TNS, communication between the administrations of the different countries and any conflicts that have arisen between TNS stakeholders.



And the local authorities leaving for Ouesso © Luis Arranz



The last stretch of the road to Bai Hokou field site has been repaired and now driving the 30km to the site requires just 40 minutes instead of almost 2hours as before. Both passengers and cars will appreciate it.



The final part of the road to Bai Hokou presented us some problems.... © Luis Arranz



A dead tree among them © Luis Arranz

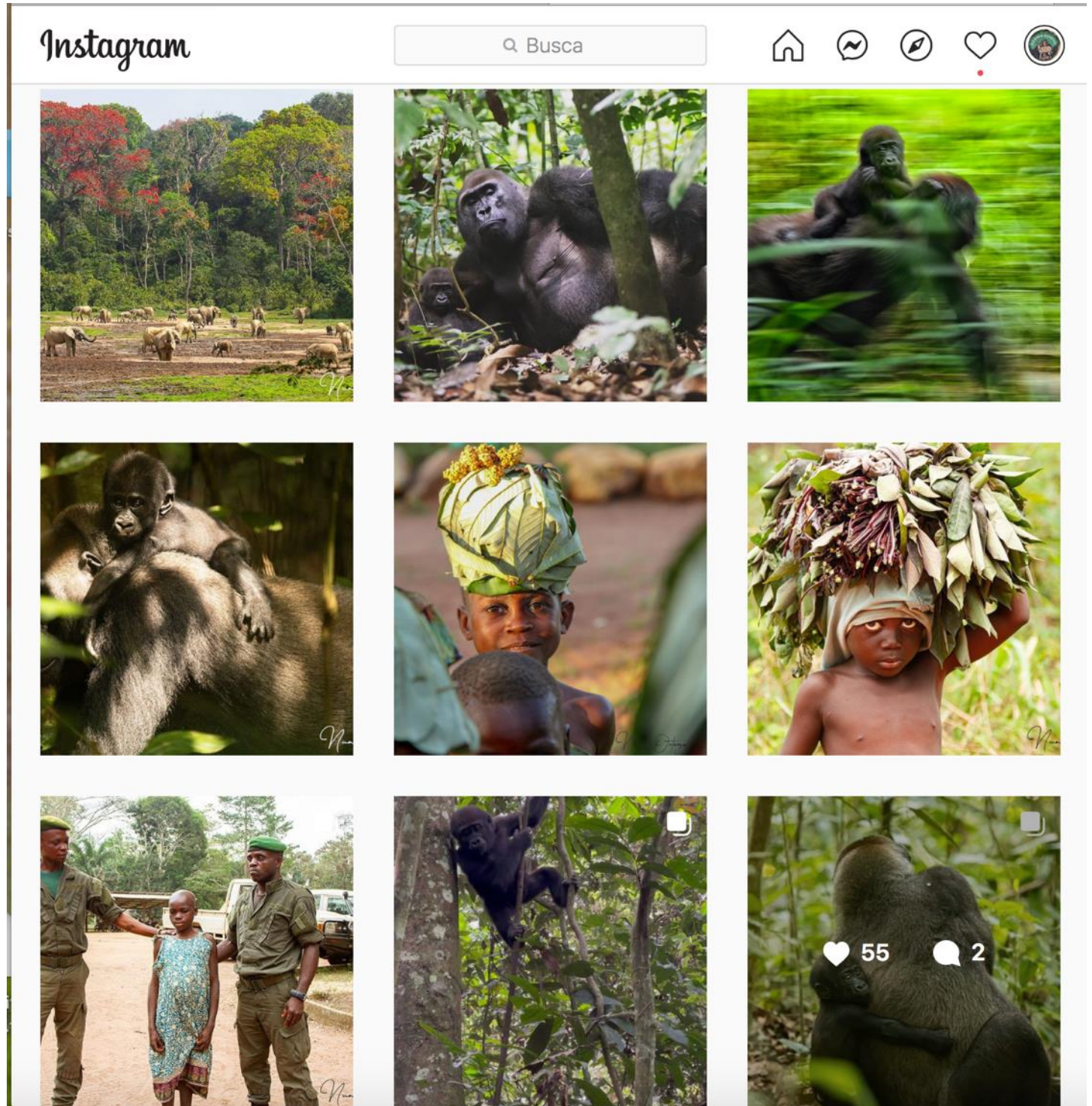
We brought in an architect to help us with construction works in general, but more especially with the construction of the Bayanga soccer stadium. Together, we studied the different options to construct the stadium and he took along samples of local building materials (reinforced concrete, iron rods, etc) to analyze and measure their resistance before we can determine the type of structure to construct.



Tourism and Marketing

We took part in a meeting with the managers of the other Parks within the region to reflect on the feasibility of re-opening tourism activities and to establish a common protocol to be implemented by all. We came to a consensus that if nothing new comes up, we will relaunch tourism from the 1st of October 2021.

Since now, you can follow us in Instagram Dzanga.sangha



- 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



Arrivals and departures



© Luis Arranz

Richard Harvey, a British veterinary, have come to collar ten more elephants in DSPA. He did it in five days



© Luis Arranz

Oliver Quinzano and Beatriz Gomez, an architect team from Spain has come to help us with the infrastructure program