



Aires Protégées



30 years
1990-2020

Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas



© David Santiago

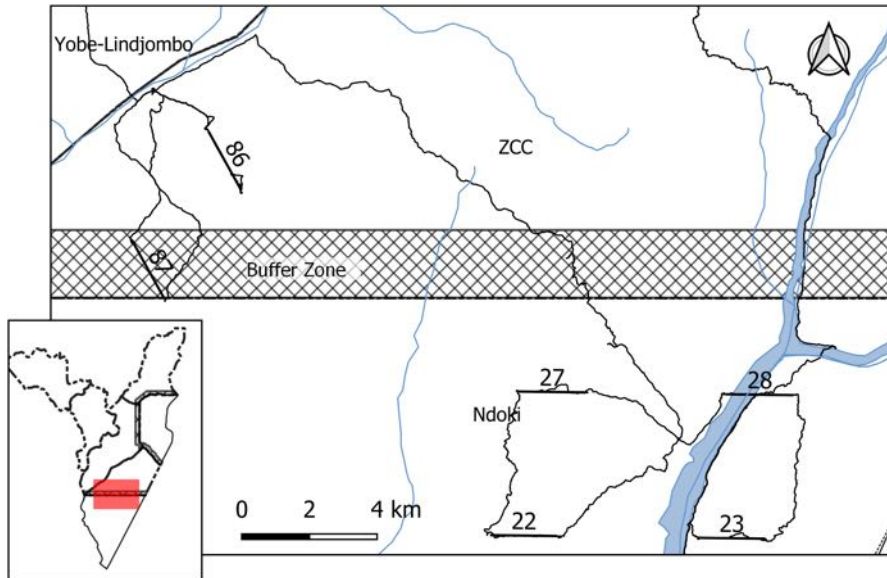
Newsletter June 2020



sacharuna

Wildlife

At the beginning of the month, we sent out a team to the Ndoki sector of the Park and the Community Hunting Zone to correct some errors committed by survey teams during the installation of camera traps and to re-walk one transects a second time to register direct observations of wildlife. Crossing the Ndoki River was a great challenge to the team as a result of the rising water level.



Transects in the Ndoki NP



It is not always easy to respect the transects © Isidore Yankoise



We have restarted the planning and preparation of missions for the 6 wildlife inventory teams. With the elephant dung and great ape nest degradation study completed, we are now planning the degradation study for ungulate dung pellets that will begin in July. The cameras traps continue to provide us amazing videos. https://youtu.be/Q_RSEkzkeDA

We participated in a meeting with managers and partners of other Parks in the region to follow up on the situation in each Park and their post-lockdown plans. We all agreed that it is too early to make any decision regarding Park reopening as there was too much uncertainty. All partners also agreed to apply a unified approach to minimize contamination now and after reopening. It was agreed that a follow-up meeting be scheduled within a month, as the situation evolves and new information becomes available.

While the human world is in chaos, the Park is in excellent health. The three habituated gorilla groups continue to be followed at a safe distance and each time we visited Dzanga Bai, we were able to count at least 100 elephants.



Dzanga Bai at its best© Nuria Ortega

Discover the Biodiversity of the DSPA

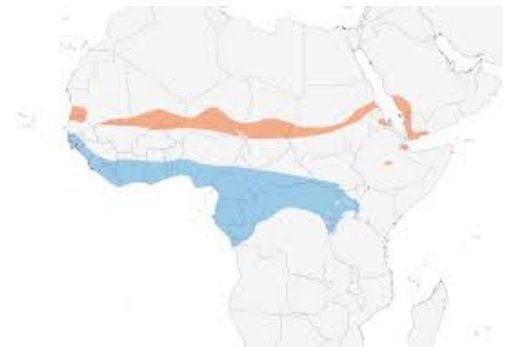


© Miguel Bellostá

Scientific name: *Merops albicollis*

English name: White -throated bee-eater

Taxonomy: Class: birds; Order: Coraciiformes; Family: Meropidae;
Genus genus merops



The white-throated bee-eater (*Merops albicollis*) is a near passerine bird in the bee-eater family, Meropidae. It breeds in semi-desert along the southern edge of the Sahara (red area on the map). The white-throated bee-eater is migratory, wintering in a completely different habitat in the equatorial rain forests of Africa from southern Senegal to Uganda (blue area on the map).

This species, like other bee-eaters, is a richly colored, slender bird. It is predominantly green, but its face and throat are white with a black crown, eye stripe, and neckband. The underparts are pale green shading to blue on the breast. The eye is red and the beak is black.

The white-throated bee-eater can reach a length of 19–21 cm, excluding the two very elongated central tail feathers, which can exceed an additional length of 12 cm. They weigh between 20 and 28 grams. Sexes are alike, except that the male has longer tail feathers.

White-throated bee-eaters also feed and roost communally. As the name suggests, bee-eaters predominantly eat insects, especially bees, wasps and hornets, which are caught in the air by sorties from an open perch.

They are gregarious, nesting colonially in sandy banks or open flat areas. They make a relatively long 1–2 m tunnel in which the 6 to 7 spherical white eggs are laid. Both the male and the female take care of the eggs.

It is very easy to observe the white-throated bee-eater in DSPA mainly near the viewing platform at Dzanga Bai

Anti-poaching

With great help from the population this time, rangers were able to arrest two elephant poachers who had just killed an elephant. The tusks and the weapon used were retrieved. It was an automatic weapon, an AK 47. These poachers based in Salo had already been arrested and handed to the authorities for the same reason last year. Following a hearing, one of them had been released due to doubts about his implication while the other had been sentenced to three years in prison and didn't finish serving his term yet.



One less elephant in Africa. The only real way to stop this, is to stop the ivory demand © Luis Arranz

This time, just the next day after turning them over to local authorities, one of the poachers escaped. He was tracked down again two days later. They were both transferred to the court in Nola, which in turn sent them to Bouar to prevent them from escaping again. This is the reality of how difficult the work is.

The only positive aspect about this poaching incident is that the elephant was poached north of DSPA and across the Sangha River, in an area where we have not observed elephants for quite some time and didn't expect to find any. With such pressure on them, we can understand why.

Main DSPA Patrols data:

36 regular patrols and 3 BLAB patrols. In total 1,404 men/days, 1,896 km traveled on foot and covering an area of 1,856 km². This resulted in the seizure of 5 manufactured 12-gauge shotguns, 5 homemade 12-gauge shotguns, and 1 AK 47 gun. 357 cartridges type 00. In addition, 2,899 metal snares were dismantled. 2 people arrested with 2 elephant tusks and an automatic gun. They were transferred to the Bouar Court. One fresh elephant carcasses was found (killed by the two poachers arrested)

Community Development

For the third consecutive month, a large part of the Ba'Aka community remains confined in their forest camps and we have dedicated most of our efforts trying to make their living conditions as comfortable as possible.



© Miguel Bellosta

We continue with zero cases of COVID-19 in the area although the predictions are worrying. On the one hand, there are more and more cases in Bangui and on the other hand, travel restrictions in the Country are being lifted. People have started traveling again, so we predict that COVID-19 will end up arriving here soon.



After having hesitated for a long time to camp in the forest to protect themselves from COVID-19, the 160 Ba'Aka of Yobe village finally decided to confine themselves in a forest camp located 5 km away from the village.

© Miguel Bellosta



A control mission was carried out this month at the confinement sites to ensure the proper functioning of these camps especially related hygiene measures explained to community relays during their training.

This month, 361 patients in 13 camps were consulted through the medical visit program that was set up to ensure regular follow up of the health of BaAka in Forest camps.

The forest confinement monitoring committee, made up exclusively of leaders of indigenous peoples' organizations, met on 29 June 2020 at the DSPA HQ to discuss and set up a protocol to assess the living conditions of BaAka in forest camps. This committee composed of 3 persons representing the Union of Ba'Aka Communities (UCB), Ndima-Kali Association (NK) and the Maison de l'Enfant et la Femme Pygmée (MEFP), made objective arrangements for a 5-days mission to the forest, starting on 1st July.



© Luis Arranz

We have received and distributed another 10,000 masks, as well as the rest of the medical equipment that we had ordered including medicines and 40 flash thermometers which will allow us to check the temperature of people confined in all the forest camps



© Luis Arranz

<i>Main DSPA Health Data Number of patients June 2020</i>	
Structure	Number of patients
Monasao Health Post	267
Belemboke Health Post	336
Bayanga	63
BaAka camps	361
Total	1027

Park Administration

The internal roads at the DSPA HQ had greatly deteriorated with the rainy season. We repaired them this month, channeling the rain water and building new entrances to the houses.

We also continued to enhance the paths between the different offices as well as the garden



© Luis Arranz



© Luis Arranz



© Luis Arranz



This month we received a truck with fuel. This is normally not news to highlight but this time it has been for two reasons: Firstly, with so much uncertainty about the future, this fuel stock could serve us almost until year-end. Secondly, considering that the truck left Bangui on May 30 and arrived in Bayanga on June 17, it has possibly set a new record for that distance



Eighteen days to cover 500 kilometers gives us an idea about the problems with the transport system in CAR © Luis Arranz

With tourism activities suspended since March, we are facing a big challenge meeting up with our commitments that depend solely on Tourism revenue. In fact some activities and salary costs were planned to be covered through the tourism revenue.

In the other hand, we acquired a new grant through WWF Germany that will allow us to replant trees on 20 Ha of land within DSPA degraded by unsustainable farming practices.



Tourism and Marketing

We continued with the maintenance of the Lodge and declining tourists who want to visit

Two other articles on DS have been published in June; one in the Spanish newspaper El País and the other on Medium.com.

https://elpais.com/elpais/2020/06/04/album/1591290772_617882.html#foto_gal_2



<https://medium.com/@WWF/in-car-the-baaka-community-re-turns-to-their-traditional-forests-to-avoid-covid-19-46a56a708b4b>



An afternoon in the forest with the youth of Ndima Kali: They try to hunt small mammals under the guidance of their doyenne and symbolically bury the bad luck when they don't catch anything. They later gather medicinal plants and build a hut in the forest. ©Martina Lippuner



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Arrivals and departures

The new old life in the forest



© David Santiago



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