

## **Project Update: May 2012**

### **Field Survey**

Preliminary field surveys and reconnaissance commenced in September 2011. At the end of November 2011, the guided reconnaissance line transect survey method was adopted and since then, different parts of the Oban division (Oban east and west) of the Cross River National Park have been surveyed strategically using different communities situated round the area as access routes moving inwards into the study area. This approach was adopted to ensure that every part (sub-habitat) of the park is represented in the area being assessed for chimpanzees and their signs as well as identifying threats to the chimpanzees. Other faunal species encountered during the survey were also recorded. Direct searches were also carried out based on information from park rangers or members of local communities for chimpanzee nest sites and all signs encountered are being noted and recorded.

### **Community Education**

My survey team has also been interacting with members of the local communities serving as an access route into the Oban and questionnaires/interviews have been administered to assess their attitude towards the chimpanzees and the Oban forest and also inquire about sites/areas where chimpanzees are known to occur. One or two people with such knowledge from of each local community are co-opted to work closely with the team as field assistant(s)/guide(s).

### **Outstanding Work**

Communities in close proximity to identified chimpanzee-occurring areas have been noted and will be targeted for conservation education and awareness workshop on the importance of protecting and preserving the chimpanzees and the Oban forest.

Direct searches will be conducted over the next 2 months in areas of likely occurrence of chimpanzees occurring areas in order to identify preferred habitat type for the chimpanzees. All chimpanzee signs encountered will be noted and recorded. Conservation education and awareness workshop targeting community leaders and youths will be carried out in a few remaining communities. Students of secondary schools and even primary schools will be included as well in order to improve their knowledge on the chimpanzee, associated threats and conservation implications.

The project is expected to be completed in June 2012 and a final report will provide information on the current status of chimpanzees in the area, observed threats to the chimpanzees, other species and their habitat, information on the attitudes of the local communities to the chimpanzee and suggestions for the conservation of the species and its habitat.

