

Project Update: July 2014

FIRST TRAVEL TO CAMEROON

From January-April 2014, the PI of the Elliotti Project (OA Doumbe) travelled to Cameroon to start the preparations for the project. Even though the project was first planned to begin in March and to end in late 2014, very quickly the calendar was changed. Actually, two main problems appeared: first, the heavy rains of June-September prevented any field work in the north-west region of Cameroon; secondly, obtaining a research permit in Cameroon is a long process (3 months on average). Therefore, some changes were made, and so the purpose of this first travel to Cameroon was mainly to apply and receive the research permit, and to meet with the local authorities.

a. **Research Permit**

The proposal to be sent for the application for the research permit needed to be changed because of the calendar changes. OA Doumbe applied for the research permit with the collaboration of Marcellus Che from COMAID (a local NGO based in Bamenda, North-West region), and Olivier Sene from the WCS-Cameroon, Yaoundé, Centre region. Thanks to these collaborations and the help of Mme Mbah (Chief Delegate of the Ministry of Wildlife of the North-West region) and Professor Ndifon (Ministry of Research Science and Innovation) the research permit from the Ministry of Research Science and Innovation was obtained in 1 month.

b. **Meeting with Local Authorities**

OA Doumbe has travelled throughout the North-West region to meet with local authorities. He met the Regional Chief Delegate of the Ministry of Wildlife, the mayor of Fundong, the *Fon* (King) of Finge, the Chief of the Mbembe Forest Reserve, the *Fon* of Ako (Mbembe forest), the *Fon* of Kedjom-Keku and the conservator of Mbi Crater Faunal Reserve. The Elliotti Project was very much welcomed by all the cited persons who were excited to help and collaborate for the project.

c. **Meeting with International Scientists**

OA Doumbe met with several pairs while in Cameroon. Dr Roger Fotso, the director of WCS-Cameroon, who he met in his office in Yaoundé, advised him to go to Limbé (South-West region) for a Cross River gorilla workshop which would gather many primatologists and conservationists over the matter of the protection of the Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*). The Cross-River gorilla is a critically endangered great ape that shares most of its habitat range with the Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*).

d. **Cross River Gorilla workshop**

The 13-14th of February 2014, OA Doumbe went to the Cross-River Gorilla workshop, in Limbé (South-West region). Presented as the director of the Elliotti Project, he met several well-known primatologists, including Richard Bergl and Andrew Fowler. During this workshop, OA Doumbe met Romanus Ikfuingei, a Cameroonian from the North-West currently working for the WCS (based in Limbé). Romanus Ikfuingei conducted several unpublished studies in the North-West region including in Kom-Wum and he gave OA Doumbe much advice for the Elliotti Project.

A month later, OA Doumbe was invited by Richard Bergl to a workshop in Uganda: Apes Across Africa.

e. **Apes Across Africa Workshop**

From 25-30th May 2014, OA Doumbe was invited to Fort Portal, Uganda, for the Apes Across Africa workshop. This workshop was created and financed by the Max Planck institute (Martha

Robbins), the North-Carolina Zoo (Richard Bergl), the Cleveland Zoo (Kristen Lukas), and Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (Tara Stoinski).

OA Doumbe gave a presentation on the Ellioti Project with acknowledgments to Primate Conservation Inc. and The Rufford Foundation.

CHANGES

Due to various reasons (heavy rainy season, long research permit application, discovery of new interesting sites), many changes have been added to the Ellioti Project. These changes are:

- Two new sites: Batomo forest and Ntem valley. Both are small unprotected forests from where the presence of chimpanzees has been mentioned (by Romanus Ikfuingei from WCS-Cameroon, Kenneth Tah from COMAID, and Perrine Odier from CCRG)
- New data collection dates (see next chapter).
- The mentioned volunteer was removed, the teams will be composed of the following team leaders:
 - Team #1: OA Doumbe
 - Team #2: Simon Tapper
 - Team #3: David Achomochi

NEW SCHEDULE

October 2014-May 2015: data collection in the 9 sites (OA Doumbe, Simon Tapper, David Achomochi & field assistants)

January-February 2015: presentations in schools of the following cities/villages: Bamenda, Kedjom-Keku, Finge, Sabga, Ako, Abungshie (OA Doumbe with the assistantship of Moses 'Pa' Amah Alukeh).

June-August 2015: data analysis

September 2015: writing of the scientific paper

