

Project Update: March 2016

In Kasongoire forest, we identified feeding trees to monitor for chimpanzee feeding phenology and, despite the abundance of certain wild fruits after the height of the rainy season in November 2015, the chimps often seem to preferentially feed on the sugar cane surrounding the forest. I am recording the age/sex class of the individuals feeding on sugar and the variety and crop cycle stage of the sugar cane to find out if they have a preference and whether this affects their ranging behaviour.

The chimpanzees have faced increasing pressure with clearance of whole strips of their already depleted riverine forest. The large scale logging is taking place on privately owned patches, whereas the small-scale, but persistent, logging occurs on the patch owned by the sugar company. It will be interesting to see the influence of land tenure and crop guarding presence on the chimps' ranging and human activities in the forest.



Left: An example of forest clearance between the forest and sugar field, showing tree stumps, cultivation and a tobacco drying house. Right: Big male Thor resting in the forest gap before feeding on sugar.