

Project Update: March 2017

1. SUMMARY

A study is underway in Maiko National Park, DR Congo granted by the Rufford Foundation. The project aims to make up a continuous monitoring programme oriented on Grauer's gorilla, chimpanzee, okapi, elephant, buffalo and bongo, in relation to habitats use and results will be used as background data for the development of a long-term conservation strategic plan for Maiko NP.

In the integrated conservation and development approach, local knowledge on wild resource has proven useful to conservation and management for sustainable use of resources. In the scope of this project, activities include the increase of knowledge on flagship species abundance and distribution in Maiko NP through literature review and with experience from buffering local communities and capacity building on research design.

2. ACTIVITY

In July 2016, a workshop was held in the park headquarters, that involved six park staff and eight members from surrounding villages to work out on the level at which participants could contribute to locate better recent Grauer's gorilla sites and active salt works (saline) in the southern sector of the park. These people were selected among the community as former hunters and some of them have been recruited previously as carriers during research expeditions into similar zones.

The joint team demonstrated its ability from different backgrounds. Park staff use modern techniques (GPS, map and photography) to navigate and park places in the park whereas former hunters use field techniques tied on custom and traditional lifestyle. They drafted a zone map from ground, then to the raw paper copy and finally agreed for a finishing copy by the parties.



Joint team transfer draft map on to paper



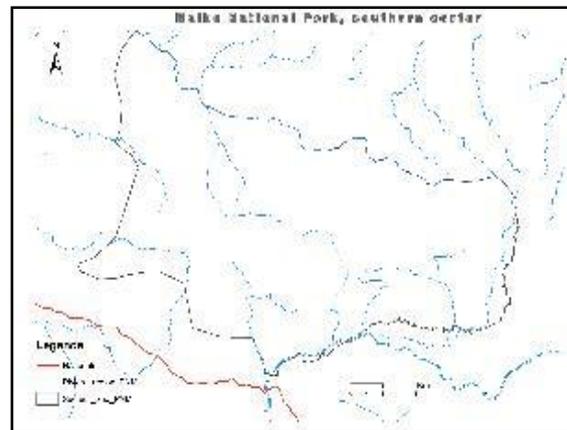
Community members and park rangers drawing and labelling map on ground



Community members and park staff present the map with place names

The team came up with a hand-drawn map with detailed sites information and unambiguous place names that were missing from the park GIS database.

The map below shows the map of the site study with site of predilection for Grauer's gorilla and salt works.



Final map version with sites of predilection for Gorilla and salt works in the study area - Community map as compared to the existing Maiko GIS map

Among these local trackers, some have been selected as reconnaissance team members for field works alongside the park inventory and monitoring unit. Names of important recent places were listed in accordance with the great probability to find gorilla, size and activity of saline.

3. CONSTRAINTS

The group identified some constraints in regard with:

- Better understanding of the topic being dealt by ground teams;
- Trust among parties to minimize field discussions and get to best results (find gorilla and active salt works);
- Security and suitable collaboration between park managers and partners from local community.



Arboreal chimp nest



Observer on arboreal gorilla nest



Recent ground gorilla nest



Gorilla dung measurement



Gorilla dung sample collection



Ground gorilla nest and dung



Team on progress



Team preparing for night camp



Snaring threat



Nylon snares destroyed



Poachers camp



Confiscating weapons from poachers



Bushmeat