

Project Update: October 2008

Fire Plan Progress

All Gabon National Parks are currently engaging in simultaneous system-wide development of management plans. For six out of the 13 national parks, this includes thinking about managing fire-prone and fire-dependent savanna environments. We attended meetings for Plateaux Batéké National Park on March 6-15 and September 5-6, 2008. The management plan is still being drafted, but supports the development of a fire plan. We are working towards creating this plan and once the general management plan is adopted we will move forward with a fire plan meeting, as funded by this Rufford Small Grant. The results of the social, vegetation, and bird research funded under this grant will be critical in plan development.

In further preparation for this meeting, we have visited other parks and ranches that use fire as a management tool, in order to gather local lessons in management. In September, I was invited to talk about fire on Radio Massuku's "Nature et Nous" with Sandra Nse.

Communicating to the public about fire's role in the ecosystem is important, as it underscores the positive role that fire can play in terms of local hunting and gathering practices as well as in and managing protected areas.

