

## Project Update: December 2017

One of the objectives of the second booster grand from the RSG was to work on a draft of the management Plan for Mt Hoyo Forest Reserve. There are steps to get to the final document. There are three main points that make the MP structure:

1. The protected area's physical and ecological characteristics.
2. The zonation of the reserve showing the different geographical locations and ecological zones.
3. The different management programmes and activities to local peoples that must be included in the objectives and followed during the implementation phase.



Prince Kaleme introducing the workshop

Prior to starting the write-up, the phases 2 and 3 need meetings with stakeholders and information collected from the field that will lead the discussions.

Prior to this trip, many things were discussed and conducted over the phone with the chief warden, the Environment Officer of the Municipality and the office of the Provincial Minister in charge of Environment.

The objectives of the third trip were twofold: collect some more data in the field and verify the efficacy of the trained peoples in identifying specimens and meetings with the stakeholders to discuss the draft of the documents according to the information collected by the teams.

### Activities

Used in this kind of works, Sam Okameli conducted the fieldwork with students under sporadic supervision of one of us (since this took place in evenings). While the others were implicated in the meetings. Since he is from the area, he and the Environment

Officer was appointed by the minister to act as the MC for all the meetings while the secretary of the reserve acted as the secretary of the meetings to make sure the minutes of the meetings are reliable.

## Methods

### Bats collection

To collect the bats, mist nets were set with a harp trap. Nets were set far from cave entries while the harp trap was set at the cave entry. The mist nets were opened at 18.00 and closed at 22.00 The opening at dawn (04.30 – 05.30) depended on the number of individuals captured at night. Some nets were set near the villages since it was during fruiting time to catch species foraging on the mango fruit trees or building dwellers.

Bats were identified using Field Guide to Mammals of Southern Africa (Stuart and Stuart, 2007) and Monadjem et al. (2010).

### Workshops and conferences

Two workshops and three conferences were held with stakeholders under the supervision of the provincial Minister of Environmental Affairs of the Ituri Province. Both workshops were conducted by the Environment Officer of the Irumu Municipality. Following the process of preparation, all went well all the participants were prepared and selected among the least problematic. The audience was composed of local chiefs, the representative of the Administrator of the Municipality, some representatives of conservation NGOs, two representatives of the universities based at Bunia (Ituri Province) and some schools principals and teachers.

## Results

### Bats collection

One hundred and twenty-five individuals were captured during our trapping session, of which one hundred were released after identification, because representing already known species. A total of eight species were recorded (see table 1). Of the new records, we found one Albertine Rift endemic species. But, as always in this site, the most numerous species was *Roussetus aegyptiacus*, represented by more than half of the individuals captured, followed by *Hyposideros gigas*. The species *Chirophon pumilius* was only captured near buildings at a Health Center.

Table 1. List of bat species recorded. \*(AR) represents the Albertine Rift endemic species.

No	Scientific name	observation
1	<i>Roussetus aegyptiacus</i>	Egyptian rousette
2	<i>Epomops franqueti</i>	Franquet's epauletted fruit bat
3	<i>Hipposideros ruber</i>	Noack's leaf-nosed bat
4	<i>Hipposideros gigas</i>	Giant leaf-nosed bat
5	* <i>Rhinolophus ruwenzori</i>	Ruppel's horseshoe bat (AR)
6	<i>Rhinolophus alcyone</i>	Halcyon horseshoe bat
7	<i>Miniopterus inflatus</i>	Greater long-fingered bat
8	<i>Chirophon pumilius</i>	Little free-tailed bat

The Individuals more abundant as seen at cave entry at sun set, but we avoided to collect too much to reduce damage from people still at the learning stage. More individuals were captured with the harp trap set at the cave entry while the traditional nets could not capture more individuals due to the strategy they used when exiting from the caves. Many bats escaped the nets.

### Workshops and conferences

Peoples were delighted to participate in these meetings as the audiences overlapped. Only some local chiefs that could not understand French were (auto) excluded to the conferences. But the results were fantastic. All agreed to support the reserve following the outcomes of the workshops and the interest they would get from the management of the reserve s stated in the draft of the Management Plan. The reserve management was also very happy to have the support of the local chiefs as they have been among the target groups that all the times put them in trouble with the populations they manage in villages, allowing them to hunt in the reserve (this is the part of the country where bats are a delicacy). It is sold in the local market.

### **Threats**

For the whole reserve, there has been some change in the reserve management. This time, following our reports to ICCN and other conservation NGOs, WCS has invested in providing funds for patrols and some monitoring equipments to the rangers. The eastern part of the reserve is still unsecured. That is why the rangers have less access for many reasons:

- No fund for patrolling (the reserve had instructions not to send patrols this part to avoid attacks by militias).
- Low number of rangers at the site to cover a larger reserve.

Mt Hoyo suffers from a big problem of poaching. The caves harbouring bats, which are the main delicacy for the local peoples attracts all kinds of peoples to collect the bats, mostly fruit bats. But, for the use as food, following the results of our socio-economic survey, the use of bats by local peoples is irrespective of either it is a fruit bat or an insectivore. Since the beginning of our project in Mt Hoyo, we always meet peoples in the reserve either collecting bats or poaching. This is confirmed by the presence of bats in local markets. In a recent message transmitting the report of our work to ICCN, we reminded (again) the prerogative of the institution and their obligation to work with the provincial government to establish the basis for a sustainable management of the reserve and also look for funds for the rangers in order to cover it entirely for their activities. We hope that they will work diligently on the Management Plan draft to allow its implementation in a near future.

The fact that ICCN does not have resources to support Mt Hoyo or partners to support research is a big issue.

The reports from our project has allowed WCS to provide assistance in form of patrol ration and also provide a bonus to those that participated in the field work.

The fact that many rangers are not paid by the state makes them also not be so motivated. But with opportunities such as our RSG that could provide assistance to those participating in monitoring, they have been encouraged.

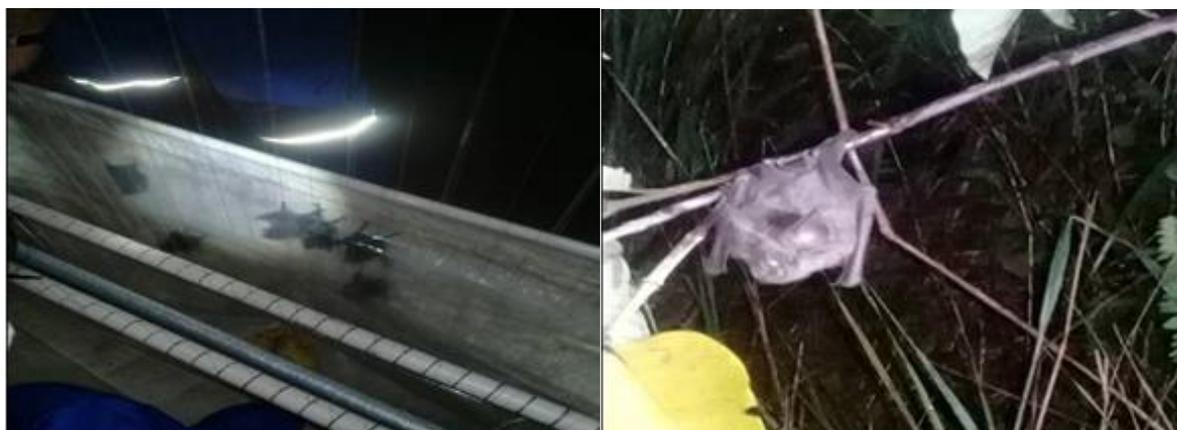
The implication of the Ituri Provincial Minister has been instrumental in giving confidence to the reserve from the local chiefs that are now more implicated than ever before. Thank to the Ituri Province Governor to allow his minister get implicated and give strength to the reserve.



Left: Prince Kaleme - (right) in the workshop. Right: ICCN representative presenting



View of the audience during the workshop.



Left: Bats in the harp trap before identification and being. Right: An insectivore bat before the release.



Bats during the identification process



Left: The assistant (Chris) removing a bat from the net. Right: The team investigating cave entries in the savannah part of Mount Hoyó.



Bats caught with babies: identified and released shortly after capture.