Project Update: February 2020

1. Nest types, direct observation, nest group sizes, and genetic samples

Several chimpanzee ground nests (N = 53) have been recorded in Kom-Wum Forest Reserve in this phase of our survey (fig. 1a). Most of these nests were ground night nests (N = 45), and a few ground day nests used by chimpanzee for resting (N = 8). Thirteen chimpanzees were seen directly at the time of nest construction. We further encountered 39 fresh nests which indicate a group size of 39 chimpanzees left this location before our arrival. Out of the fresh nests (N = 57) monitored to assess the nest decay time from the beginning of our survey (November 2019), only a few (N = 3) have decayed completely. More chimpanzee hair samples (N = 37) and faecal samples (N = 9) have also been collected. All chimpanzee hair samples were collected from ground nests.

2. Camera trapping

More chimpanzee footage has been captured by wildlife cameras (N = 12). Most chimpanzees in the footage avoided wildlife cameras. However, one curious chimpanzee attempted to remove a wildlife camera in December 2019 (fig. 1b). After two unsuccessful attempts to remove the camera on December 27, 2019, the same chimpanzee returned on February 05, 2020, to remove wildlife camera (fig. 1d).

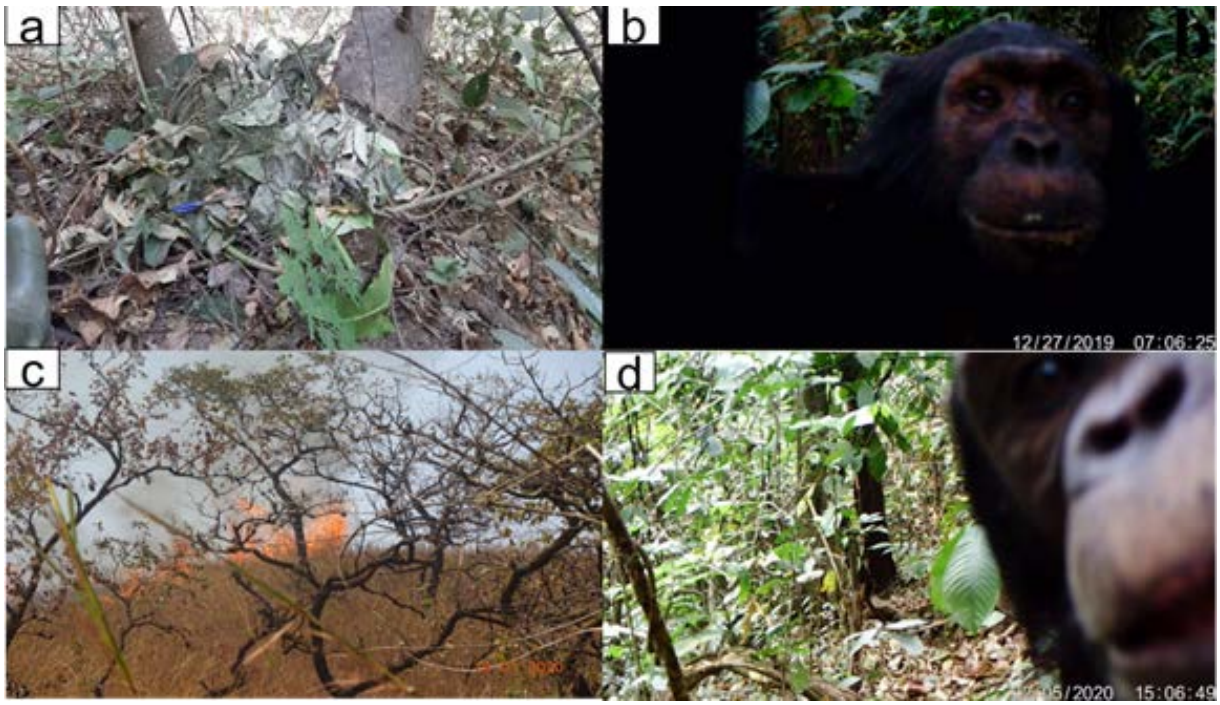

Figure 1 Photo of a) ground nest b) chimpanzee first attempt to remove wildlife camera c) bush fire around the reserve and d) chimpanzee third attempt to remove wildlife camera.

3. Human pressure

Bushfires associated with extensive cattle rearing practised by Bororo grazers were recorded during this phase of our survey (fig. 1 c). Community eco-guards are currently doing fire tracing in the scope of the Small-Scale Initiatives Program (PPI),

which is currently coordinated by two local NGOs (SEKAKOH and SURUDEV) in and around Kom-Wum Forest Reserve.

4. Further planning

The last phase of this project will begin on March 2nd 2020, to complete chimpanzee nest decay time and habitat type assessment with a botanist in the study area.