

Project Update: July 2020

We deployed 30 camera traps during the dry season for a minimum of 90 trap nights per camera in the dense forest area of Mpem et Djim National Park. The objective of this survey was to compare the detection frequency of camera traps used on logs versus non-logs using a systematic approach to come up with the optimal microsite between the two mentioned that offer detection of the white-bellied pangolin with the best detection probability in the wild; to analyse the effect of climatic variation on the white-bellied pangolin detection using CTs in the wild.



Survey team with wildlife law enforcement officers at a checkpoint in the village Mindou around Mpem et Djim National Park: Franklin Simo, third from the right extremity (principal investigator); Ghislain Difouo Fopa, to the right extreme (survey assistant); Fokou Osgard third from the left extremity (2nd survey assistant)

Camera-traps establishment the dense forest area of Mpem et Djim NP

We deployed 30 camera traps in the dense forest area of MDNP including 15 on log-based locations and 15 on non-log-based locations (ground level). We took some appropriate steps to ensure that no factors apart from the placement strategy have a significant effect on the cameras' detection.

All cameras were similar models (Bushnell Trophy Camera 119836, and Bushnell Trophy Cam HD) equipped with the same SD cards (SanDisk 16 GB class 10, 48MB/s').



Camera trap retrieval during the dry season in Mpem et Djim National Park

Camera-traps retrieval in the dense forest area of Mpem et Djim NP

All the cameras were recovered after 90 operational trap days. There were some minor difficulties to get the necessary permission to access the protected area due to the COVID 19 outbreak, however all the survey team was however tested negative and given the permission to entered the area which was at that time relatively COVID19 free.



Left: Camera preparation in our first camp inside the Park. Right: Camera installation and checking on a ground feeding site.

Pangolin detection during the dry season

The white bellied pangolin was detected in MDNP during the dry season on the targeted locations (log vs non log). We are currently doing the full analysis to assess placement strategy and the effect of seasonal variation and writing the article that we are planning to submit late August 2020. Other species detected during that survey include the African golden cat.



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White-bellied pangolin detected on a log during the dry season in Mpem et Djim National Park.



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White-bellied pangolin climbing a dead tree in Mpem et Djim National Park

Next steps:

The next steps to this project include:

- The giant ground pangolin monitoring in the forest-savannah mosaic during the next dry season. We will use camera trap data to analyse spatial and temporal overlap between the giant pangolin and the armadillo *Orycteropus afer*.
- Awareness raising campaign during the upcoming World Pangolin Day (February 2021). We will use a combination of entertainment and environmental education about the ecological and cultural importance of pangolin.



Survey team leaving the park after camera trap retrieval: Franklin Simo, left extremity (principal investigator); Ghislain Difouo Fopa, 2nd from the left extremity (survey assistant).



A camera trap invaded by termites in the dry season.



Human logging activities in the protected area



Presence of nomadic shepherds' livestock in the protected area.