

Project Update: September 2001

Hello again from Ghana! I've just completed another few weeks at the Krokosua Hills forest reserve. Unfortunately, I haven't much new information to offer. As of now I have three confirmed sightings of the Roloway monkeys. Based on hunter reports, I estimate there are at least three groups immediately surrounding Mim, a small village inside the Krokosua reserve. I have also conducted scouting surveys from other villages (namely Agyemadiem and Dome) but have had no luck as of yet. Each encounter with the Roloways has been sheer luck it would seem. They do not alarm call (or utter any sound!) and flee silently. I wonder how many groups I might pass by that offer no signs for identification.

I have had no sightings of chimpanzees or White-crowned mangabeys. All hunter reports for both species indicate they are incredibly rare and most hunters have not seen them for at least a year. One hunter reports catching a juvenile White-crowned in a wire snare 6 months ago, it was sold as a pet to a German woman in Asafo. Chimps are reported to move seasonally through the area in large noisy groups but I was not able to confirm this.

I have received three somewhat believable reports of Red Colobus since my arrival. One man reported seeing an individual moving with Black-and-white Colobus only three weeks ago a few kilometres from Agyemadiem. A scouting survey into the area provided no confirmation. The two reports from Mim that I mentioned previously are also yet to be confirmed. There was one report of red colobus in Bia where a snail hunter claims to have seen one group on two different occasions about 8 months ago. Again, a scouting survey was conducted but unfortunately cancelled due to rain. I have arranged a five-day scouting survey with the man and wildlife department staff to investigate the area.

I will be returning to Krokosua and Bia each for one to two weeks later in the study. It is my hope that further into the dry season the monkeys will be more visible. Based on these five weeks in Krokosua I can draw two major conclusions. First, the human-use pressure in this reserve is relatively intense compared to other forest areas I have visited in Ghana. Rarely was I able to conduct a survey in the forest (particularly near Agyemadiem) without hearing or seeing snail trappers, people collecting wood, yam harvesters and most of all trappers even in the most remote areas without established trails.

Based on hunter interviews and evidence in the forest there are few hunters using guns but most trappers have over 50 and in some cases over 1000 traps. Second, large sections of the forest in this area are intact and offer ideal habitat for Roloways, black-and-white colobus. I have never visited Ankasa so I cannot compare the two; however, Ankasa is already afforded some protection under the wildlife department. Krokosua as a forest reserve does not receive the same protection. Wildlife guards do not patrol the area and farmers have planted cocoa (estimated at 10 years old) and plantain farms inside the reserve.