

BUPOKO Project

Nocturnal Primate Research

Kom-Wum Forest Reserve, July-August 2016

I. Background

The Kom-Wum Forest Reserve (KWFR) is an understudied forest of the North-West region of Cameroon (Figure 1). It is found in the biodiversity hotspot of West-Cameroon and East-Nigeria (WCEN). Situated on the edge of the Bamenda Highlands, at 700-1,400m of elevation, it is mainly covered by a tropical forest which extends towards the south-east. However, an important area of the 8,030ha of the protected site has been reduced to pasture land or plantations (small family farms and large rice farms). The KWFR is surrounded by Buh (Wum council), Baiso, Mughom, Mbengkas, Mbongkissu and Buh villages (Fundong council). The mayor of Fundong has been supporting conservation projects in KWFR since the Elliotti Project (2013-2016).

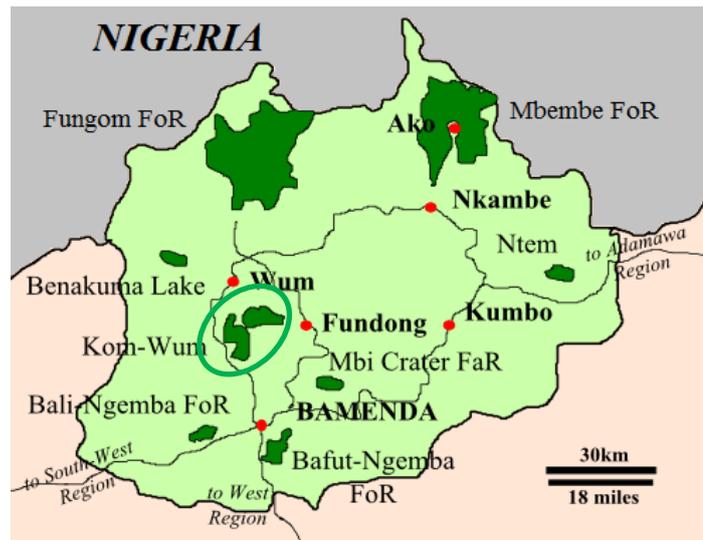


Figure 1: Map of the North-West region of Cameroon. KWFR is encircled in green. (Osiris Doumbé)

The Elliotti Project was a regional pilot study on the distribution of chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*) and the diversity of monkeys in the North-West region of Cameroon. In KWFR, about half of the 560 recorded chimpanzee nests were found outside the protected area (Figure 2). In addition to *P. t. ellioti*, six species of monkeys¹ were observed in and around the protected area making it the richest forest in terms of diurnal primate diversity in the North-West region of Cameroon.

In order to complete the inventory of the primates of KWFR, the Bushbabies and Pottos of Kom Project (Bupoko Project) was created in 2016. This project was created by Sekakoh organization and financed by the Cleveland Zoological Society. The main objectives of this project were: 1) survey of the nocturnal primates of Kom (the area within and outside of

¹ Including the Preuss's monkey (*Allochrocebus preussi*), Endangered according to the IUCN Red List and endemic to West-Cameroon East-Nigeria.

KWFR located in the Fundong council); and 2) sensitization of the villagers in the protection of nocturnal primates².

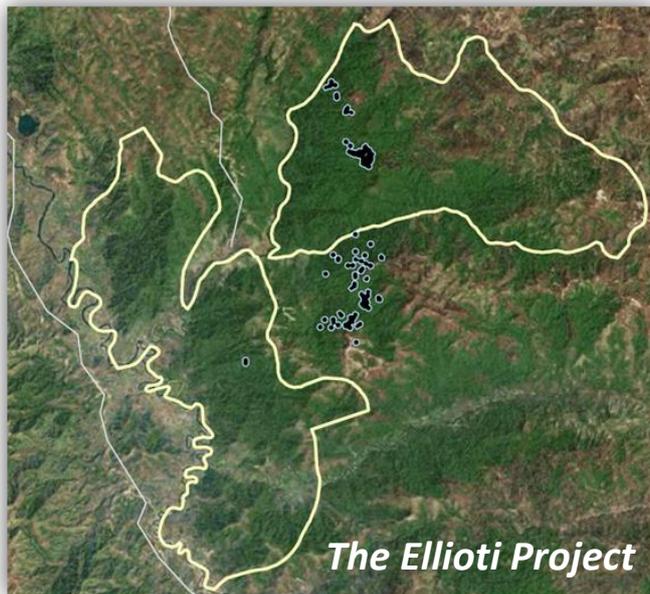


Figure 2: Chimpanzee nesting sites (black areas) recorded by the Ellioti Project, within and outside the KWFR (Osiris Doumbé)

The survey was conducted by Simon Hoggett (SH), a Master student from the University of the West of England, UK. SH and his team (composed of Samuel Fru and local villagers) walked every night using the paths of least resistance as straight as possible (reconnaissance walks method). The pocket identification guide of the primates of West Africa (generously donated to us by John Oates) was used to identify the observed taxa. In addition, SH used bioacoustics devices (generously lent by Alexander Piel of Liverpool John Moores University) programmed to record sounds during night times. Due to the nature of the study (comparing the reconnaissance

walk method with the bioacoustics), the difficult landscape, and the rainy weather slowing down the data collection, only one unit was used. The two others were safely stored in the village of Baiso.

II. Results

SH and his assistants recorded several species of galagos and pottos based on direct observations:

- Thomas's galago (*Galagoides thomasi*)
- Demidoff's galago (*Galagoides demidovii*)
- Allen's galago (*Sciurocheirus alleni*)^{3,4}
- Northern needle-clawed galago (*Euoticus pallidus*)³
- Milne-Edward's potto (*Perodicticus edwardsi*)^{3,4}
- Angwantibo (*Arctocebus calabarensis*)^{3,4}

² All villagers are aware chimpanzees are integrally protected by the law, but few know some nocturnal primates have the same protection status.

³ Endemic to West-Cameroon and East Nigeria

⁴ Integrally protected in Cameroon



Unfortunately, the bioacoustics devices only recorded a total of six nights. During these six nights no calls of nocturnal primates were detected. One gunshot, one alarm call of bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*), and many birds, frogs and insect calls were recorded.



Figure 3: One of the bioacoustics units used in the forest. (Samuel Fru)

III. Future projects?

Nocturnal primates are generally understudied due to their cryptic behaviour. Out of the six species recorded in this study, four are endemic to WCEN: *S. alleni*, *E. pallidus*, *P. edwardsi* and *A. calabarensis*. The little information found on these taxa in the literature is exclusively limited to the South-East of Nigeria and the South-West region of Cameroon. In that regard, one of Sekakoh's next projects is to radio collar several galagos and pottos in order to study their home range and their use of the habitat.