



CHIMPANZEE CONSERVATION CENTER

Activity report **August -September 2017**

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Team

Local manager

With the CCC long-term sustainability in mind and in accordance with our action plan, we hired a local manager. Mr. Alexandre Konaté as program manager for a trial period on August 1st 2017. In June 2017, Mr. Konaté had recently graduated in China with a doctorate degree. His degree gave him training in Environmental management and protection. During his training he twice collaborated with the CCC in the past and as such he was considered as an ideal candidate for this post.

Unfortunately Mr. Konaté resigned at the beginning of September. Due to significant family problems he encountered upon his return from China in July, he decided not to continue with us. We are disappointed that this trial was not conclusive but, simultaneously, we were reinforced in our will to hire a local manager for the project's development and the local team's management. Mr. Konaté's last month at the center did, in fact, highlight many positive points of this position.

The management team reviewed the job description for this position and decided to recruit an assistant manager. We have already received multiple resume and we will organize interviews to recruit an assistant manager before the end of the year, if possible.

The CCC got the Dentist's visit!

At the beginning of August, we welcomed Dr. Pina Ponziani, an Italian dentist, who came to help us for a short 10-day mission. Dr. Ponziani was able to treat the whole local team and many teeth were pulled! Dr. Ponziani also gave dental hygiene lessons with the hope of limiting future infections and she generously distributed toothbrushes to the whole team.



Dr. Ponziani is interested in coming back to help us in the future.

Dr. Ponziani also treated two of our chimpanzees (see chimpanzees' section).

PASA (Pan African Sanctuary Alliance) Strategic Development Conference and PASA Educator Workshop

Christelle Colin, executive director, and Ibrahima Baldé, educator, both travelled to N'dola in Zambia to participate respectively in the annual PASA Strategic Development Conference and the PASA educator workshop held September 5-9, 2017.

These five days of exchange were very enlightening and gave Ms. Colin and Mr. Baldé the opportunity to share with their colleagues from other sanctuaries.

The highlight moment of these five days was the visit to the Zambian sanctuary, Chimfunshi, with the presentation of an award to its founder, Ms. Sheila Siddle. It was an emotional ceremony that allowed us to acknowledge the immense work achieved by Ms. Siddle and her late husband, David, for chimpanzee conservation.



Gregg Tully, PASA executive director, donated on behalf of PASA, a computer and two projectors for our outreach and education program.

We warmly thank PASA and all our colleagues for these moments together.



Visit from our founder Estelle Raballand

At the end of September the CCC received a visit from its founder Estelle Raballand, who came to see our progress since her last visit in February 2016. Estelle was able to spend quality time with each group of chimpanzees, as well as with the team to assess the project progress and needs.

Estelle continued in the field for five days in the aim of finding a new release site for another group of chimpanzees. She prospected the other full protected area of the PNHN, the Kouyah. The results are promising and the research will continue!



Media

On August 22nd and 23rd, the CCC welcomed two journalists from France 2, a French national television channel, who came to film the CCC activities for a short coverage. This program was aired during the 8:00 pm news, which is usually watched by at least 5 million people.



The journalists were at the CCC during the river Koffin's flooding (see attached picture) and their return was therefore rather complicated!

To see the program (in French), [click here](#).

Chimpanzees

Dentist's visit

August was punctuated by a visit from Dr. Ponziani, DDS. She examined and treated two of our residents, Ali and Habou.



Ali is one of our young chimpanzees who arrived last April following a massive confiscation operation to close an illegal zoo in Kindia. Ali had an infected incisor with an infection reaching deep into his gum. After the examination, Dr. Ponziani decided to pull out the baby tooth and fully clean the root canal. Ali made a quick recovery.

Habou is a young adult male who suffered last April of a canine's abscess. The abscess receded thanks to an antibiotic treatment but we were worried that the canine was rotten and the abscess still present. Habou was therefore anaesthetized and Dr. Ponziani carefully examined the state of the canine and other teeth. She found that the canine was ultimately healthy but that other teeth needed to be pulled. The surgery took 90 minutes after which Habou calmly awoke in the treatment cage adjoining the veterinary room, under the surveillance of our veterinarian, Pauline. Habou was moved back in a cage next to his group the same evening. He was separated from his group for a week, during which time his wound healed and he was given his antibiotic treatment. Habou was reintroduced to his group without difficulties.

Dominance Conflicts in the young adult group

The young adult group is composed of 7 males and 5 females. There has not been a clear dominance in this group for more than a year and recently tensions have risen.

In August and September we have had many major conflicts because of this unclear dominance status, sometimes involving every member of the group.

One of the first conflicts took place at the end of August and involved almost every member of the group. One of the males, Max, was bitten repeatedly, although not too seriously. The following day, the group had calmed down, but barely two weeks after this incident, on September 11, a new conflict erupted at around 9:00 am while the entire group was in its forested electrified enclosure. Wodo, one of the males often involved in conflicts, panicked and escaped from the enclosure, breaking an electric wire. Louna, one of the females, followed him, and Oga, another male, took advantage of the breach a little later to escape as well.

The management team and senior keepers immediately took charge of the situation. All the other personnel were quickly placed under security as well as the youngest chimpanzees.

Wodo was anaesthetized 90 minutes after his escape and immediately moved into a transport cage, then transported to the treatment cage next to the veterinary room. Louna entered the young adult cage voluntarily without anaesthesia. Oga was blow darted shortly before noon and placed in a transport cage. He was returned to his group the following day. Wodo spent two days under observation as it took him a long time to recover from the anaesthesia, probably because of his stress level.

The whole group had to be kept in their cage for a week in order to observe the individual interactions. All were calm, and they were released back into their enclosure September 18, but so far the males have not resolved their dominance conflict.

The management team, along with Stuart Beaman, the CCC's chimpanzee manager, is currently evaluating potential solutions to help this group that has too many males. Some males could be transferred to other groups or females could be added to this group. We hope to find the best solution for all.



Paco



Wodo

Tya's transfer from the juvenile to the adolescents group

Tya, a young teenager was a member, until recently, of the juvenile group. Tya, naturally, changed behaviour at the beginning of adolescence, with the appearance of her first swelling.

The management team had therefore decided to transfer Tya to the adolescent group, a natural process in the framework of our chimpanzees' rehabilitation program. There she joined her two friends Sam and Tango, who were also transferred there earlier this year from the juveniles' group. Her first interaction with the adolescent group went well, the males were thrilled to have a new female! Tya will benefit from a new, more interesting social group in an environment with reduced human contact. Our chimpanzee manager, Stuart Beaman, will be in charge of her integration.



Released chimpanzees' collars replacement

The released chimpanzee monitoring team, led by Mamadi Camara, and assisted by Matthieu Laurans, Program Director and Pauline Greitzinger, Volunteer Veterinarian, were able to replace the radio tracking collars of some released chimpanzees and re-equip females who had lost their collars. Robert, Albert and Lola were re-equipped with VHF collars with a new battery. The whole group, adults and babies (now numbering 4), is doing well. Nanou, already a mother of Dinié ,5 years old, is pregnant again!



Replacing collars



The group spent 24h in the release facility and enjoyed some good food!

Infrastructures

New satellite cage for the teenagers' group

This big project to build a large satellite cage for the teenagers group started last March, with the construction of the first part of the cage. The group has been using this 1st part since April.

The two other large rooms were constructed this summer and were finished at the end of September. This sturdy, large structure, adjoining the group's new enclosure, which was finished at the end of January, will allow us to integrate chimpanzees into this group now that they have access to more space.

The final strokes of paint were applied at the end of September and we were then able to move Tya from the juvenile group. This new structure offers the chimpanzees from this group access to a very beautiful space and will allow the CCC team to integrate more individuals into this group, to form a multi-age, more natural, social group. The chimpanzees spend their days in the forested enclosure and sleep in the shelter of this new building at night. The old satellite cage has been remodeled; it has been reinforced to increase security, and the flooring has been redone. It now serves as an additional space for integrations or in case of separation of one or multiple individuals from the group.



Koffin bridge flooded.

On August 23, we had the unpleasant surprise of finding the Koffin Bridge submerged by water, blocking us completely from Faranah! The Koffin River marks the western boundary of the Integrally Protected Zone (ZIP) of the Upper Niger National Park (PNHN). This small river is a tributary of the Niger River, and it is dry during the dry season. In the rainy season, it drains rainwater from the entire south-western part of the ZIP and thus there can be exceptional floods after heavy rains.

We had to rent a vehicle in Faranah to bring us the 2nd weekly food supply for chimpanzees all the way to the bridge. We then used a small inflatable boat to get all the bags across Koffin to the CCC and to cross people that had to go to Faranah!

We had to wait two days for the water level to decrease to be able to repair the damage. The water strength had moved the bridge's heavy beams. We asked for help from some men from Sambouya, one of our partner villages, to put the beams back in place. Captain Kouyaté, PNHN conservator, graciously sent us a chainsaw in order to cut 4 new beams to replace those that were too damaged.

On the 27th, the bridge was as good as new, thanks to the work of all and the collaboration of our partners of the PNHN and the support of Sambouya population.

This is not the first time that the CCC is cut off from the world during a Koffin flood, a dangerous situation for everyone's safety. Along with the PNHN authorities we must reflect on the possibility of building a significantly more elevated cement bridge.



Conservation

Community development project

On August 23rd, the community project "Planting 5 hectares of cashew trees and reforestation of 5 hectares" in collaboration with the Sidakoro village, in close partnership with the PNHN and our partner Project Primates France, was inaugurated.

The PNHN team had supervised the implementation of the project (buying material and plants, supervision of the plantation with the villagers). Christelle and Matthieu, respectively the CCC's

executive director and programs' director, were invited to the plantation inauguration ceremony, in the presence of all of the dignitaries of the region, but they were unfortunately stuck at Somoria due to the Koffin's flooding (see previous section).

Captain Kouyaté, who had been notified of their situation, apologized on their behalf and served as their representative.

The Sidakoro population and all the dignitaries commended this initiative by PNHN and Captain Kouyaté and expressed their profound satisfaction with the CCC and its partners for this concrete project in community development, which will benefit the entire Sidakoro population.



Workshop for the revision of the national Guinean chimpanzee conservation action plan

The previous action plan dated back to 2005, thus revision was absolutely necessary. This workshop, which took place from September 12th to 15th in Conakry, brought together nearly 40 participants representing all parties involved in the Chimpanzee Conservation in Guinea.

Christelle Colin, director, represented the CCC. The CCC scientific advisor, Dr. Tatyana Humle, was also present as consulting expert.

This workshop allowed all to discuss the current knowledge about chimpanzee populations in Guinea, to identify and classify the threats (15 were identified, including poaching and chimpanzee trafficking, which directly involve the CCC) and to work on conservation strategies. The work sessions were very intense and constructive.

A scientific board reviewed this national action plan and clear proposals were made for its implementation and monitoring. A final version will be presented at the Regional Action Plan meeting that will be held next December in Monrovia, Liberia in order to coordinate all the West African national efforts for chimpanzee conservation.



Equipment

We bought a new 18HP TOHATSU engine for the release site's boat, thanks to OAT support. The other boat motor was repaired and the two motors now allow the released chimpanzee's tracking team to work in serenity.

Our partner OAT assisted us in buying an additional motorcycle for the management team. This Yamaha AG was bought used in Faranah.



For the next following months:

We will focus on recruiting an assistant manager, and hire a few additional keepers to complete the team.

We will also be working on quotes for several construction projects that will take place in the months to come (construction of a non-releasable chimpanzees infrastructure; improvement of the people and chimpanzees' living conditions; etc.). Our big challenge will be to recruit if possible two technicians that we want to train in building electrical enclosure techniques so they can stay after completion of the non-releasable chimpanzees' facility. They will be in charge of all the future construction projects and maintenance of our facilities, equipment and tools.

We will also begin the first steps to search for a new chimpanzee release site. An expert has been recruited and she will begin her work in October, following Estelle Raballand's first assessment, thanks to the grants from the Columbus Zoo Conservation Funds and The TUSK Trust.

Thanks to all our partners and thank you to Anastasia and Estelle for the translation of this report!

