

CHIMPANZEE CONSERVATION CENTER

Activity report

January – July 2017

Contact :

Christelle COLIN

Executive director

Email : wara_guinee@yahoo.fr

www.projetprimates.com/en

Team

The local team has been trained under the guidance of our training manager, Stuart Beaman. We have been working towards creating a more professional team by recruiting supplementary Guinean keepers and diminishing the number of expatriate volunteers.

As of July 31, 2017, the local team is composed of :

- 1 driver
- 2 camp aides
- 1 educator/keeper
- 1 keeper/technician
- 12 keepers
- And 3 trackers at our release site

This team is led by :

- Christelle Colin, executive director
- Matthieu Laurans, program director
- Hélène Rase, program manager
- Elise Neveu, program manager, finishing her contract on July 31
- Stuart Beaman, keeper training manager and chimpanzee manager
- Gaspard Julien Laferrière, release site manager

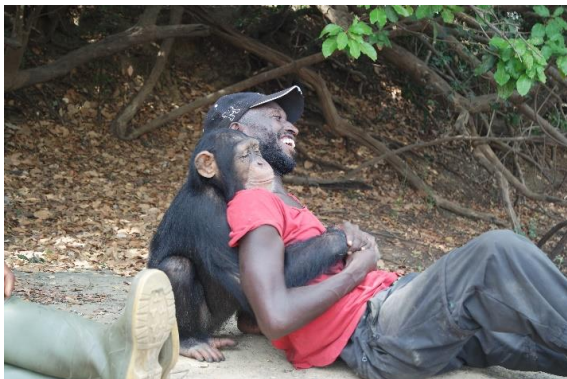
Communication and administrative management are currently undertaken voluntarily by Anne-Claire Denis.

The team is assisted by 8 expatriate volunteers (6 at the base site, Somoria, 2 at the release site, Bakaria) who work daily with the local team.

The team will be reinforced on August 1 by the arrival of Alexandre Konaté, who just successfully completed a doctorate in China, and who will begin work as local program manager.

Additionally, we have continued our development in conjunction with the Guinean administration. All our contracts have been reviewed and approved by Mr. Kourouma from l'Agence Guinéenne pour la Promotion de l'Emploi (the Guinean Employment Promotion Agency). All of our permanent workers are now registered at la Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale (National Social Security Office) and we pay the required subscription fees.

We thank all the representatives of the Guinean Administration that guide our development, and that do so with understanding.



Chimpanzees

We have had a great deal of movement between groups during the first half of this year.

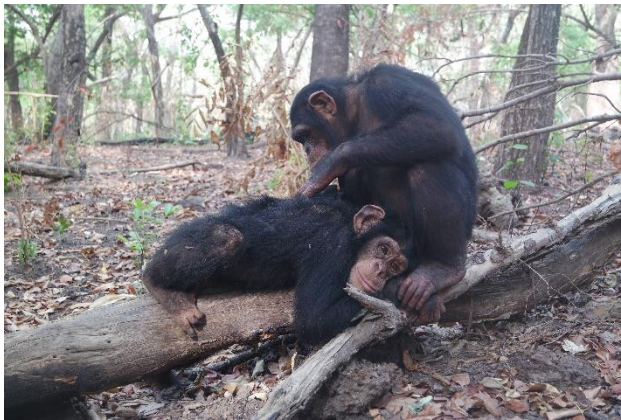
Noël, Missy, and Hawa : In the beginning of January, they were transferred to the annex cage alongside the juvenile group, completing their integration with this group that had begun in Summer 2016. They sleep alongside the juvenile group at night and during the midday break.

Hawa has had a skin problem since the end of 2016. A treatment was put in place based on the results obtained following biopsies carried out by our veterinarian Claudie REYLAND. By the end of July, she was almost completely cured.



Toto :

Toto's integration was conducted over many months and by the end of July Toto was well integrated in the juvenile group. He plays more easily with the dominant male, Bailo, and also with Tya.



Juvenile Group : The group of juveniles has undergone a number of changes in the first half of this year. At the beginning of the year, Hawa, Missy, and Noël joined this group in a definitive manner following their integration which began at the beginning of July 2016.

At the beginning of February, Sam, the dominant male of the group, was removed because he became too difficult to control during the forest walks. He was temporarily placed in the treatment cage in the vet room due to a lack of space, but then joined the group of adolescents at the beginning of May for integration.

At the end of February, Sanka, one of the oldest females of the group, was transferred to the group of young adults as her behavior had changed, becoming much less beneficial for her group.

In mid-March, Toto began his integration in this group.

As a reminder, Toto arrived at the CCC in November 2016, transferred from Senegal at the request of our colleague Ms. Janis Carter and thanks to the support of ***Friends of Animal*** and Dr. Jill Pruetz. Toto had at first endured a quarantine period isolated from other chimpanzees at the Center, before beginning his integration in this group. Today, Toto is well integrated.



At the beginning of June, it was Tango's turn to be removed from the group. He joined Sam in the group of adolescents and they were integrated together in June.

Adolescent Group : The big project to enlarge this group's enclosure (thanks to the support of ***LUSH France***) was finished at the end of January following the dismantling of their old enclosure. On January 23, the chimpanzees emerged for the first time in their new enclosure, which measured approximately five times the size of their previous one. The new tree-filled enclosure offers this group a better quality of life, allowing them to experience and learn every day from a natural environment. This stage is very important in the process of rehabilitation as it allows the chimpanzees to reinforce their social ties while adapting to their environment.



At the beginning of February Douma was reintegrated into this group. Douma was unfortunately



removed from his group and kept in a cage following his numerous escapes from the old enclosure. His return to the group was accomplished without problems. His companions greeted him with great pleasure and Douma has been able to rediscover a normal life with his group mates.

At the beginning of April, Panza, who had recently lost his place as the dominant

male to Hakim, escaped from his enclosure for the first time. This was followed by three more escapes during the month, which pushed us to isolate him from his group and keep him enclosed in the night cage. We anticipate transferring Panza to the adult group.

Young Adult Group : This group was modified at the end of February with the arrival of Sanka, a young female transferred from the juvenile group. Her integration was carried out in a few days ; Sanka was easily accepted, even by the females of the young adult group.



This group does not have a clear dominant male. Dan often comes across as the dominant male, but the other males frequently fight over and challenge the position.

The lack of females following the death of Charlotte in July 2016 is slightly counterbalanced by Sanka's arrival, but the continual addition of females to this group in the near future remains one of the team's current priorities.

Adult group : Everyday life for the adult group was strongly interrupted due to the arrival of a wild female chimpanzee. Our team has been aware of the existence of this female for a number of years, as she approached the Center regularly during each dry season, but she typically remained on the other side of the Niger river. At the beginning of May 2017 she crossed the river and came very close to the group of adults as she was in oestrus, and her presence seriously agitated the group! The team tried to frighten her so that she would distance herself from the Center, but three days later she jumped into the interior of the enclosure. Moka and Kyo, the dominant male and female of the group, respectively, chased this wild female out of the enclosure. Even so, she returned to the enclosure, and Ced, the beta male of the group, defended her against the entire group. She remained hidden in the enclosure for many days, but ultimately succeed in gaining the acceptance of the group. The team spots her occasionally during the chimpanzee meal times.



This is the second wild female to be integrated into this group, following Loundan who joined this group in the same way at the end of 2008.

New arrivals :

The CCC was contacted by the government, and its partner GALF (Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique or Guinean Application of Wildlife Law) at the end of 2015 with regards to an « illegal zoo » near Kindia, a large city two hours from the capital city of Conakry. This private and completely illegal infrastructure, owned by a high ranking person in the Guinean Army, held around thirty wild animals (ostriches, a serval, crocodiles, birds, a baboon, chimpanzees...) in terrible captive conditions with the object being public «presentation » and/or to sell them in the illegal international wild animal trafficking market. Amongst these animals, we found 4 chimpanzees, between the ages of 2 and 15. The babies were kept in a minuscule cage and were occasionally taken out for photo opportunities with visitors. A young female of around 5 years old was kept alone and also posed with visitors. The young adult male was enclosed alone in a small, dirty cage.



The terrified babies



Rambo before being rescued

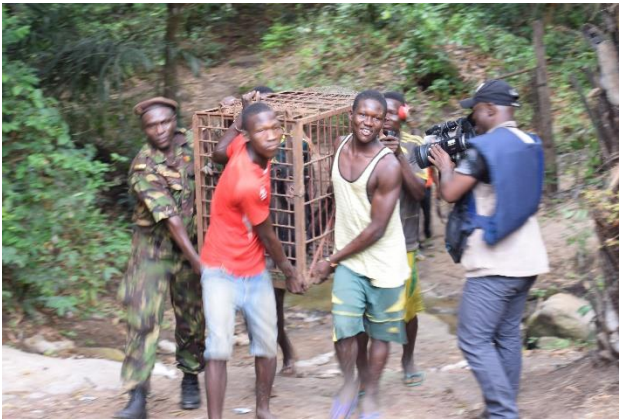
At the time, the CCC did not have the capacity to take in these 4 chimpanzees. It is thanks to the support of a new partner, presented by GALF, the ***Olsen Animal Trust (OAT)***, that the CCC could undertake the necessary construction work of a new quarantine structure capable of hosting the 4 chimpanzees and to ensure our ability to care for them.

The construction work lasted from January until the beginning of April. The final features of the cage were finished on April 12, the same day as the seizure of these 4 chimpanzees.



working hard, even at night!

GALF, with the support of Guinean police and INTERPOL, organized the shut down of the illegal zoo and the confiscation of its resident animals on April 12. The CCC had mobilized a team composed of Matthieu Laurans, program director, Dr. Pauline Gretzinger, veterinarian, and Alémou Barry, keeper. The CCC team immediately took charge of the 4 chimpanzees and helped the authorities with all other animals present on the illegal site.

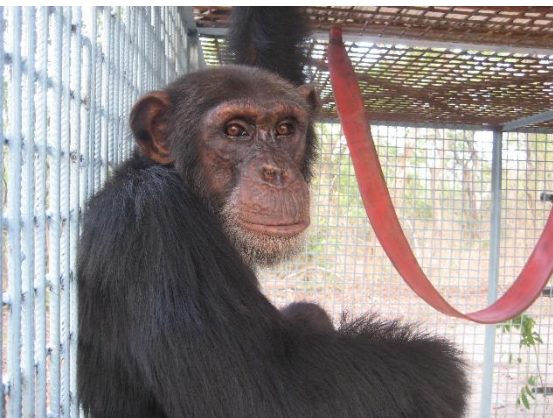


Leaving the horrific zoo



Arriving at the Center

The 4 chimpanzees arrived at the CCC on April 13 after a night at Faranah. They were taken care of by the CCC team.



The National Park of Upper Niger took responsibility for some of the animals, and certain ones were able to be released (a TV report can be watched here: [reportage TV5Monde](#)).

Pauline, our veterinarian, examined the 4 chimpanzees on their arrival to evaluate their state of health, and Stuart, our chimpanzee manager, along with Matthieu and H  l  ne, evaluated their psychological state.

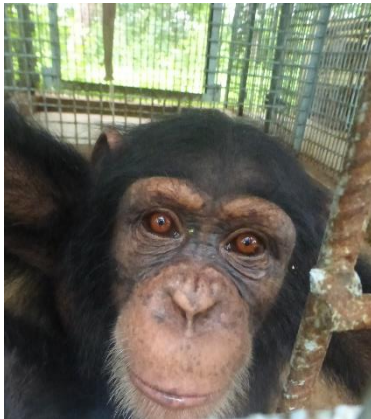
The three young chimpanzees were in a deplorable physical state, suffering from intense malnutrition, stunted growth, and presented behavioral problems, signs of enormous psychological suffering. The adult male, Rambo, was malnourished and fearful.

Pauline was able to carry out the routine inspections (parasitism, tuberculosis test) and put in place the necessary treatments (vitamin regime, antibiotic treatment, deworming, adapted nutritional program) for each of the 4.

The young female, named Gipsy, was at first kept separate from the two young males, Ali and Dave. They were then progressively integrated together, which has been very beneficial for the three chimpanzees, Gipsy taking on the role of big sister.

Following their integration, it was then necessary to habituate them to have positive contact with the keepers as they had known nothing but negative contact with humans previously. Our team took time to earn their trust. We were able to begin taking the 3 young chimps into the bush at the beginning of June, once a good confident relationship was established between the keepers and the chimpanzees, and after the state of health of these three youngsters had improved.

Rambo benefited from enrichments and little by little gained confidence. His appetite has much improved and he has been able to gain some weight.



Gipsy and Rambo at the end of July, looking great!

The four chimpanzees have passed their quarantine period with success. The three young chimps should be integrated in the weeks to come with one of our groups.

Rambo will likely join Coco, Zo  , and Moucky.

Infrastructures

Two big construction projects took place at the beginning of this year: the construction of a new quarantine complex and the drastic improvement of infrastructures in the adolescent group.

New enclosure and satellite cage for the adolescent group

We were able to construct a new enclosure for the group of adolescents (see 2016 annual report) thanks to support from **LUSH France (Charity Pot)**. The work was finished at the end of January and the group was given access to their new enclosure on January 28. This enclosure is around 5 times bigger than the previous enclosure, with a perimeter of 480 m (1574.8 ft), and gives this group access to a vast tree-covered space, rich in species appreciated by the chimpanzees. The chimpanzees are therefore able to develop many natural behaviors, gather food, construct nests, and adapt to their natural environment in a social group.

This group's satellite cage dated to 2004 and did not fulfill the needs of this group. We had therefore constructed the first part of a new satellite cage attached to the enclosure between February and mid-April. This cage is three times bigger than the previous cage and provides the space necessary to undertake integrations.



The builders team



The cage finished

The construction of the central part of this cage began at the beginning of July and should finish in September, thanks to the renewed support of **LUSH France Charity Pot et de la Fondation Ensemble** (LUSH France Charity Pot and The Together Fondation).

This group now has access to a vast tree-covered enclosure, along with a spacious and secured satellite cage. This is very beneficial for the rehabilitation of this group, which is now in the phase of constructing strong social ties.

The old satellite cage has been remodeled ; it has been reinforced to increase security, and the flooring has been redone. It now serves as a supplementary space for integrations or in the case that we need to separate one or multiple individuals.

New quarantine complex – OLSEN ANIMAL TRUST (OAT)



The CCC no longer had a quarantine structure adapted to the housing of chimpanzees older than one year. It was therefore necessary to subsidize a new structure in order to favorably respond to the Guinean government's confiscation efforts, represented by l'Office Guinéen des Parcs et Réserves (OGUIPAR, the Guinean Office of Parks and Reserves), and the NGO fighting against wildlife criminality, GALF, so that the CCC could receive new chimpanzees.

It was as such that at the beginning of January, the **Olsen Animal Trust (OAT)** agreed to support us following a recommendation from GALF and the network EAGLE and its director Ofir DORI. OAT accepted to finance the construction of a new quarantine structure sufficiently big to house multiple chimpanzees at once, and therefore helping us to increase our ability to accept more chimpanzees. OAT's support has reinforced our capacity to support our national partners in the fight against illegal chimpanzee trafficking.

The welding work on this structure began in Faranah in February along with the preparation of all the panels, doors, and traps.

In March, OAT sent one of its directors, David HIGGS, to come investigate our needs on the ground and the progress that had been made on the new quarantine structure.

The new quarantine structure was finished on April 12, after a very intense work period led by our welder Mamadi OULARÉ and his team. Mr. Oularé's team worked day and night for 40 days at Somoria in order to finish the structure by the deadline. The entire CCC team, keepers, volunteers, and managers, worked extremely hard to paint the structure and prepare it before the arrival of the chimpanzees. This was a powerful example of teamwork that allowed us to meet our deadline in order to be ready to receive the confiscated chimpanzees.



We were able to welcome these 4 chimpanzees into excellent conditions. The adult male Rambo has a space adapted to his size. The three youngsters have the same space as Rambo, but they have also benefited from forest excursions for a few weeks now.

The 4 chimpanzees will soon be transferred to other groups, and we will then have at our disposition a quarantine structure adapted to receive other individuals as needed.

New rooms for our keepers

As we have increased the number of our keepers, we urgently need to increase too our capacity for the staff. Almost all our staff live in traditional huts. Following our project to improve the living and working conditions, we have built a new 2 rooms building for 4 persons.

We have planned to build 2 others buildings of 3 rooms (each for 2 persons), that could sleep all our local team in much better conditions. This is a much needed long term investment.



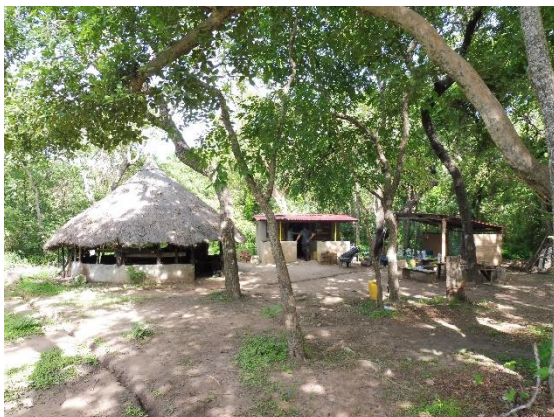
Improvement of the volunteer camp

We were able to improve the infrastructure of the volunteer camp with the construction of a « secure kitchen, » a project in which two volunteers, Nicolas and Clélia, were very invested.

This kitchen allows us to securely stock all foodstuffs for the volunteers, the workers, certain products for the chimpanzees (milk for the youngest chimps, for example), and cleaning supplies (bleach, brooms, etc.).

The « cooking » corner has also been renovated. The communal living space for the volunteer team has therefore much improved, including its hygienic conditions.

A solar panel system was donated by one of our volunteers, Romain, which allow volunteers to charge their appliances and to have light in the kitchen.



Our partner OAT has donated new dishes and gas burners, which offer an undeniable higher standard of living, especially during the rainy season!

Creation of a living space for the management team

The CCC expatriate management team spends a great deal of time in the bush in conditions that are not always easy. Until now the managers did not have their own living space and had to share the kitchen and showers with the volunteers.

In order to give the managers more space and the possibility of isolation, a small local kitchen was constructed in the manager corner and was outfitted simply so that the managers could cook for themselves if they wish. This is an agreeable living space where the management team can also meet in a less formal way than in the office.

A small hut was also constructed and outfitted as a shower.

These small improvements for managers' « comfort » are important as they allow them to take time for themselves when, for example, they do not wish to be with the volunteers.



Release Program

The chimpanzees

The CCC released its first group of chimpanzees in June 2008 in the Protected Area of the National Park of Upper Niger, about twenty kilometers from Somoria, where our sanctuary is located. Three females were added to the group in 2011.

Every year since 2009, some chimpanzees have crossed the Niger River during the dry season, when the water level becomes very low. This poses a problem, as the north bank of the river is not fully protected and is an area where human activities are present. During this time, we temporarily hold the chimpanzees in release cages, while we wait for the level of the river to rise in order to avoid any risk of encounters between released chimpanzees and local people (fishermen, hunters etc.). We use this time to change the chimpanzees' VHF collars, to do veterinary checks, and to give them vitamins and treatment for parasites, if necessary.

Our goal for this year was to avoid the temporary holding of the released chimpanzees in cages by strengthening the protection of the area with park guards and by using a new tracking method. We reequipped most chimpanzees with new VHF collars in 2016.

We strengthened the tracking team during this risky dry season to have 6 permanent members : the 3 local trackers, assisted by 2 volunteers and managed by Gaspard Julien-Laferrrière, a Volunteer for International Solidarity (le volontariat de solidarité internationale or VSI) who has been working with us since February 2016. This allowed us to train 3 teams of 2 people each, with one team dedicated to the telemetric monitoring of chimpanzees, 1 team to accompany fishermen to avoid encounters with the released chimpanzees, and 1 team in relay between the other 2 teams.

Our team was supported by park guards who helped us effectively protect the area and manage the relationships between the fishing groups who usually come to the release area every year.

Thanks to the walkie-talkies bought with the support of TUSK TRUST, our two monitoring teams were able to communicate with each other easily: the tracking team was able to inform the team that was accompanying the fishermen if and when a chimpanzee was approaching a fishing zone. This was a great improvement to our previous tracking method and led to the increased safety of both humans and chimpanzees. The 2 males of the group, Albert and Robert, crossed the river at the beginning of May, following a violent storm. Gaspard, assisted by Matthieu, found them 3 km from the river on the north shore and called them back. The rest of the team, led by team leader Mamadi Camara, monitored the area to ensure the two males were able to cross the river to reach the females. The team was able to view the whole group and to confirm the good health of all the members, adults and babies.



The 2 males cross the river



Mamadi



Albert, Nanou, Lottie

The fishermen left the area at the end of May. Our goal was reached, and we are proud to have succeeded in monitoring the released chimpanzees in the bush during the difficult dry season, which is often very stressful due to bush fires, the increased presence of poachers and fishermen in the area, and a scarcity of food resources for wildlife. This year, we were lucky to have an early and abundant fruiting of wild species such as sagba (*Saba senegalensis*) and nere (*Parkia biglobosa*), which certainly helped the chimpanzees.

The team

At the end of his first year as a Volunteer for International Solidarity, Gaspard Julien Laferrière decided to extend his stay by one year. One of Gaspard's main missions is to train Mamadi Camara as a tracker/manager of the team tracking the released chimpanzees, and finally as a local manager at the end of Gaspard's contract.

Gaspard and Mamadi worked together closely in the first half of 2017 to strengthen Mamadi's skills.

Gaspard has been a great help to Mamadi and the rest of the team in managing chimpanzee monitoring throughout the dry season, and ensuring the team's success.



There were a few negative events that occurred at the beginning of the year, including the dismissal of the 2 trackers that used to work with Mamadi. One had to be dismissed due to a serious behavioral problem, and we had to let go of the 2nd because he did not fulfil his duties satisfactorily. Thus, we were pressed to find 2 new trackers at the last minute. This was added stress for Gaspard and Mamadi, but we were able to recruit a former tracker who agreed to come back, and a new one who was trained fairly quickly. We also welcomed 2 CCC volunteers, Bérenger and François, who have remained at the release site for several weeks and have perfectly fulfilled their duties to assist the local team.

CONSERVATION / PROTECTION of The National Park of Upper Niger

Intervention in a chimpanzee/human conflict in Faranah

At the end of March, the CCC team was summoned at the request of the Regional Inspector of the Environment, to intervene in a conflict between local people and a wild chimpanzee in a peripheral district of Faranah.

The district has become extremely urbanized in recent months, which has encroached on a known passage/corridor of wild chimpanzees.

The chimpanzee was stuck in a tree after being chased by the locals since it passed too close to their residences. Our team, accompanied by two lieutenants from the National Park of Upper Niger, advised and alerted local residents with the help of local authorities to keep away from the tree. The young female chimpanzee finally descended from the tree after 24 hours, and disappeared into the bush.

The rapid urbanization around Faranah, and in most places in Guinea, is creating more and more conflict situations between the wildlife and local populations.

Following this incident, our educator, Ibrahima Balde, assisted by Daouda Keita, travelled to the outlying districts of Faranah and surrounding villages to explain to the populations how to deal with wild chimpanzees.

Protection of the Park

This year, we have welcomed the resumption of activities with the staff of the National Park of Upper Niger, thanks to the will and dynamism of the new conservator appointed at the end of 2016, Captain Kouyaté.



Captain Kouyate



Guards in the Park



Bushmeat confiscated

Guards have been redeployed in different areas of the Park.

We were able to count on the presence of these guards (especially the released chimpanzee monitoring team) from the end of February to mid-May. They helped us manage the different groups of fishermen in the areas in which we work.

Several missions were carried out by the Park in our area, including the dislodging of illegal dwellings on the former site of Bakaria and the confiscation of weapons, illegal fishing nets and bushmeat.

In July, the CCC was also able to provide financial support to the PNHN for another mission north of the park. Park guards seized chainsaws, a poacher's motorcycle, bushmeat and many animal skins.

A more comprehensive report on the protection of the Park will be provided in the coming months.

Community Project

A community project to reforest and plant cashew nuts will be developed in collaboration with the village of Sidakoro (a village with which we have been working for years to buy food for the chimpanzees), The National Park of Upper Niger (which will provide technical support), and our partner Project Primates France (PPF).

This project will allow the reforestation of 5 hectares of degraded forest and the planting of 5 hectares of cashew trees (which produce cashew nuts). Cashew nuts should begin production within 3 years. The benefits of this project will be for the whole village community of Sidakoro.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Opening of a CCC office in Faranah

An office in Faranah was established and serves as a workspace for the CCC management team. It will also be the location of our education and awareness programs next year.



Partnership with Habib Cherif Sankaran Educational Academy (AEHCS)

The Habib Cherif Sankaran Educational Academy contacted us in March to create a partnership. The AEHCS is a soccer club, which welcomes children, boys and girls from 5 to 16 years old. The Academy teaches important values (respect for others, respect for established rules). Members of the Academy wanted to form a partnership with us to add environmental awareness to the values taught to children.

The CCC agreed to fund the organization of a « Chimpanzee Tournament » to raise awareness about chimpanzee conservation.

The tournament took place on Sunday, April 23rd in Faranah and was a real success, with the participation of many young people in Faranah.

More awareness activities are planned with the children of AEHCS.



Tour of Faranah schools and surrounding villages

Our educator, Ibrahima BALDE, accompanied by Daouda KEITA, visited 17 schools in Faranah, and 14 villages around Faranah, reaching 1,816 people. The film « The Life of Nelson » was aired.

This tour was completed prior to rainy season. Our outreach team will return to these schools and villages after the rainy season.



NEW PARTNERSHIP

We were very pleased and honored to welcome David Higgs of the **Olsen Animal Trust** (OAT), to the CCC at the end of March. It is very rare that donors visit us on-site.

Dave was deeply touched by the fight to conserve chimpanzees, and by what we do at the CCC.

OAT has therefore decided to make a concrete and lasting commitment to us to allow the CCC to develop and improve.

Christelle travelled to England at the invitation of the entire OAT team at the end of May to meet new donors. These few days spent together were very prolific and beneficial. Several organizations have already agreed to support the CCC : **David Sheperd Wildlife Foundation**, **Good Heart Animal Sanctuary** and **Worldwide Veterinary Services**.

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with OAT for the very important support they will provide, that is vital the development of our chimpanzee infrastructure.

We sincerely thank Dave, Sue, Jon and Polly from OAT for their dedication, support and friendship. It is through the long-term commitment of partners such as OAT that we can truly make a difference on the ground in our mission to conserve chimpanzees.



ENCOUNTERED CHALLENGES/DIFFICULTIES

Staffing problems

Unfortunately, we have had to fire several members of the local team at the beginning of the year, some of them for serious misconduct leading to a layoff. It is always difficult to cope with such problems, but it forces us to bounce back and often to review how we work with the team. Important lessons were learned from these events, allowing us to move forward in a positive and productive way.

The vehicles

Our old Land Cruiser broke down at the beginning of the year, leaving us with only one vehicle: the pickup bought at the end of 2015 thanks to the support of **TUSK Trust** and our partners, PPF and PPI.



The broken car



The pick-up coming back from town

In order to limit the premature wear of this vehicle, another vehicle is rented at the end of each month when we do the monthly grocery shopping for the entire CCC team, which requires the transport of 350 kg of rice and many other foods!

We will have a new 4x4 before the end of the year, thanks to the renewed support of the Brigitte Bardot Foundation, PPF, and PPI.

Evacuation of our veterinarian following an accident

Our volunteer veterinarian suffered an accident at the end of April. She suffered a severe head injury, and we sought the help of her insurance to have her evacuated.

It took 48 hours between the time of the accident and her evacuation from Somoria by a medical team dispatched by the insurance company. These two days were particularly challenging for the whole team, which welcomed the medical team with obvious relief. Pauline was first evacuated to Faranah by ambulance, and then to Dakar, Senegal by plane. She was accompanied by H  l  ne,

our manager, who stayed at Pauline's bedside in Dakar for a few days before she was repatriated to France.



The Senegalese doctor taking care of Pauline in Somoria before her evacuation to Faranah

The event reminded us how important it is for our volunteers to be well insured (it is mandatory to come to the CCC).

THANK YOU...

A huge thank you to the entire CCC local team, the management team, the volunteers, the national authorities of the Ministry of the Environment, the Guinean Office of Parks and Reserves, UNOPS, the National Park of Upper Niger and its conservator, Captain Kouyaté, to our donors, and especially OAT, our PPF and PPI partners, the CCC Board of Directors, and all individual donors and supporters for their unfailing support.

And thank you to Tara and Anastasia for the translation of this report!

