

CHIMPANZEE CONSERVATION CENTER

Annual Report 2004

I. Introduction from the Director:

This year has been rich in laughter but unfortunately very rich in tears as well.

Thanks to the ongoing Arcus foundation grant and Edith J. Goode foundation grant, as well as to the USAID grant that was signed on March 1st, we've increased our carrying capacity by building a new fence for the youngsters as well as a new quarantine cage with an electrical fence.

We also continued searching for potential release sites and expanded our education program. I can tell you in advance that we did find a release site at the beginning of 2005, when I'm writing this report.

One new staff member has entered our team, while two members had to be dismissed. I had to travel a lot out of Guinea this year too but the staff, local and expatriate have kept the project running.

I'd like to dedicate this report to the three beautiful beings who left us this year, Prince, El Hadj and Kippy. They'll always be in our hearts and minds.



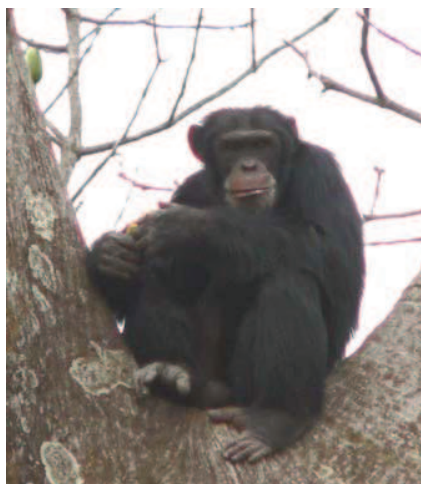


II. Animals

Chimpanzee list (as of December 2004)

Older group

Robert, male, 18 years old



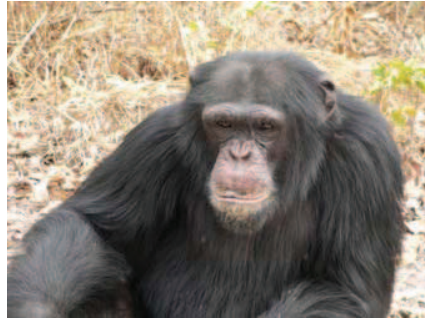
Maddy, male, 15 years old

Alphonse, male, 18 years old

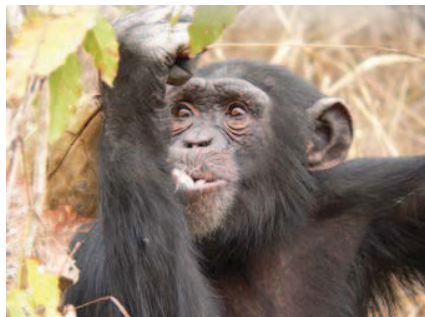




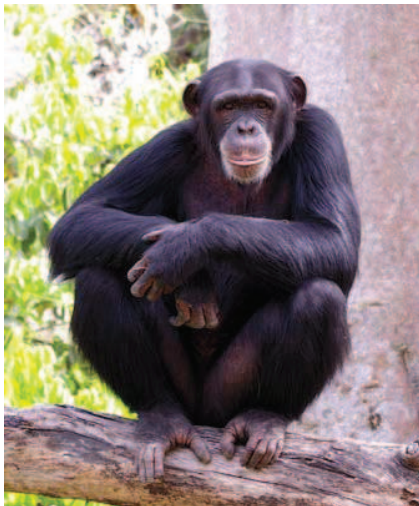
Babou, male, 14 years old



John, male, 15 years old



Orlando, male, 15 years old



Zira, female, 13 years old



Nana, female, 17 years old



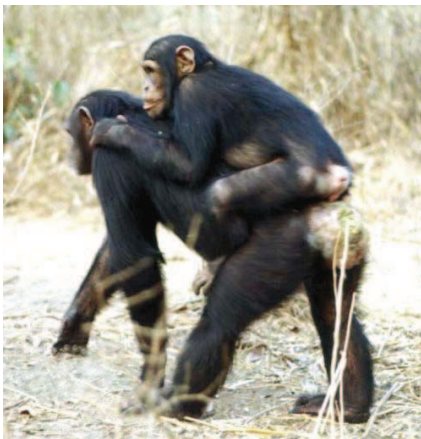
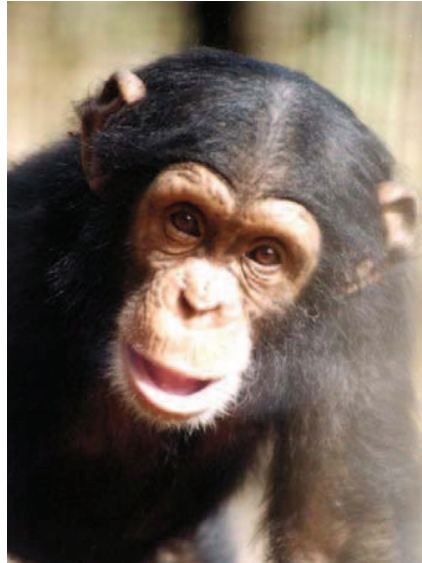
Nikita, female, 18 years old

Lottie, female, 15 years old



Mama, female, 15 years old

Andrew, male, 4 ½ years old
(Lottie's offspring)



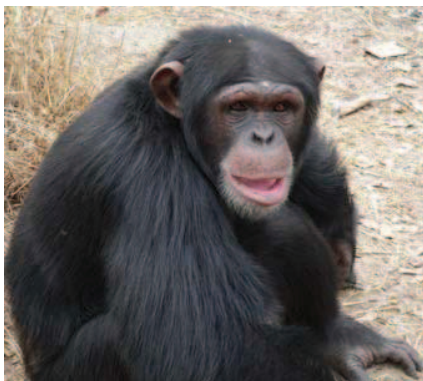
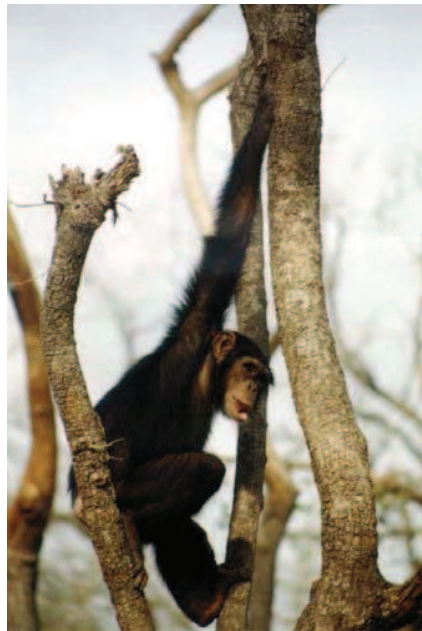
Laurence, female, 5 ½ years old
(Nana's offspring)

Teenagers group

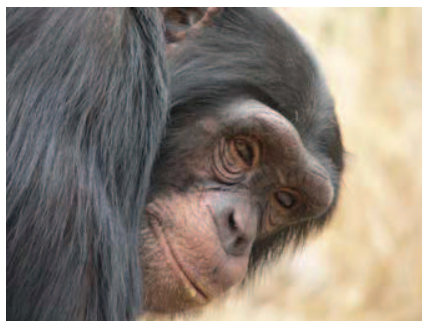
Albert, male, 11 years old



Georges, male, 11 years old



Rappa, male, 8 years old



Nanou, female, 11 years old



Lola, female, 11 years old

Youngsters group

Rocky, male, 7 years old



Mike, male, 6 years old

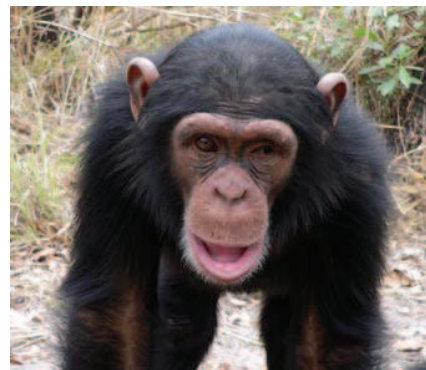


Ced, male, 5 years old



Nimba, female, 4 years old

Paco, male, 4 years old





Kyo, female, 5 years old



Awele, female, 7 years old



Sita, female, 5 years old



Amina, female, 4 years old

Charlotte, female, 3 years old



Other group

Coco, male, 21 years old



Amadeus, male, 15 years old

Quarantine group

Vévé, female, 2 years old



Oga, male, 2 years old

Fatim, female, 1½ years old



Our losses

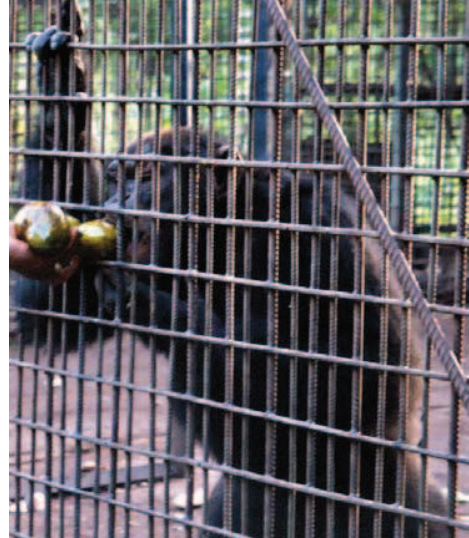
This year, three of our males from the adult group passed away. The cause of their death is unknown but biological samples are being analyzed by a team of researchers at the Robert Koch Institute in Germany. Their deaths were really quick and despite all our efforts, we couldn't save them. It appears that they didn't die from a contagious disease but we still don't know what it was. They had been part of the CCC since its beginning and the pain of losing them is really deep. We miss them every day.

Prince, male, 15 years old

Died May 10th, 2004

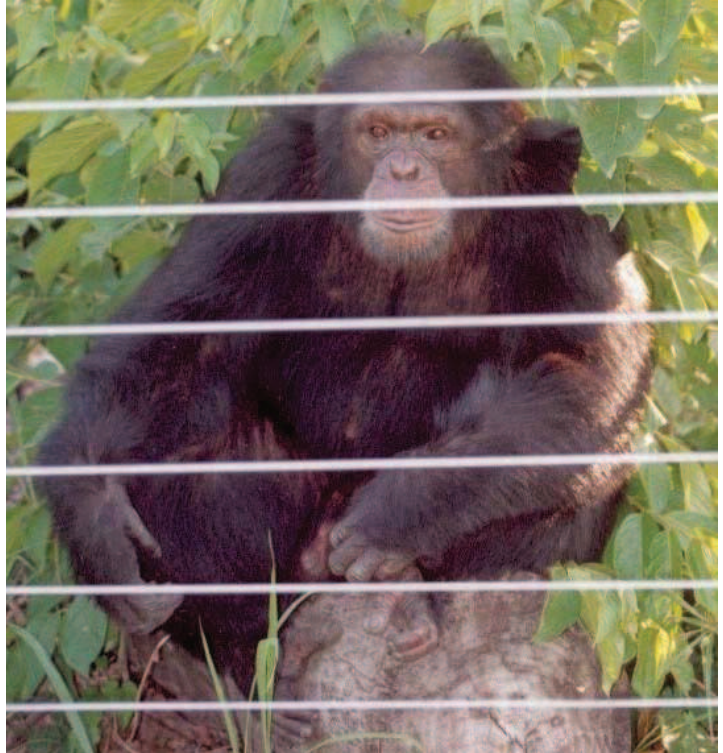


El Hadj, male, 19 years old
Died July 13th, 2004



Kippy, male, 16 years old
Died December 7th, 2004





New animals

Vévé

Tatiana Humle, a chimpanzee researcher working at the Bossou chimpanzee research site near N'zerekore, seized Vévé in February 2004. The CCC director, Estelle, had gone to visit the center and view their famous wild chimpanzee group. Estelle flew from Conakry to N'zerekore and on her way back came across Vévé in her guardian's arm. She tried to convince him to donate her to the center. No luck! She then went to see the wildlife authority, but it was a day off! The mayor was in so she met with him in his office but time was short and she had to leave to catch her plane. Unfortunately she had to leave Vévé behind. As soon as Estelle arrived in Conakry, she got in touch with Tatiana and asked her to confiscate the chimpanzee on her next trip to N'zerekore, that was scheduled for a couple of days later. Tatiana contacted the mayor, who had insured Estelle of his collaboration, and together, Tatiana and the mayor went to see the neighbor chief. The three of them, after hours of threats and negotiation, finally seized her. Tatiana flew into Conakry the same day with the baby that she had named Vévé sleeping on her lap.



Tatiana Humle and Vévé on her confiscation's day

Oga

We were very lucky to get Oga. Last year, we got a tip from a Peace Corp volunteer living close to Faranah that there was a chimp in Mamou (a city half way between Conakry and Faranah). As soon as logistically possible, the director went to the place where that chimpanzee was being kept but couldn't find him or the owner. The information concerning that chimp was that the guardian had sold the chimpanzee. A month later, a woman living in Conakry who knew about the center got in touch with me to explain that her husband had brought a baby chimpanzee back from Mamou, where he works all week, the past weekend. She wanted the Center to take him. Unfortunately at the time, the Center didn't have room for him in quarantine and the new cage wasn't built yet. She kept him for over a month when we finally brought him up to Somoria.



Oga

Fatim

Fatim was a very difficult confiscation that involved anti-gang personnel, the director of wildlife authorities and many agents. She was spotted by a friend of the center who informed the director right away. It took almost a week of discussion with the owner who had her tied by her waist to a tire in front of his garage. But when all discussion failed, the special anti gang police had to be called. They arrested the owner, took the baby and placed her under the CCC's care. She arrived at the center at the beginning of December in bad physical condition (she had scabies, taenia worm and hookworm infestation). They had also shaved the side of her face to make her look "more human". But she adapted pretty quickly and she's doing great.



Fatim on Peggy's back



III. Release site

Two researchers, Mr. David Lucas and Dr. Catherine Sourmail, came this year to help the CCC to find potential release site (and we did!)

All together five potential sites were surveyed. The studied sites were Kafama Island, N'dama protected forest, the Reserve de Faune de Kankan and two sites in the Parc National du Haut Niger (Mafou Zone Integrale Protégée (ZIP) and Zone Périphérique).

Below is a table that we've used to help in making our decisions. In italics are criteria that can't be changed so these are considered prime criteria. The scale is given in relation to the potential for release, not to the presence or absence of the criteria.

For example, the wild chimpanzee population in N'dama is +/- as there are some chimpanzees located there so it's not a +; but there are not a lot of chimpanzees there so it's not a -.

Scale: + > +/- > +/-- > -

Criteria	N'DAMA Reserve	KAFAMA Island & forest	MAFOU Buffer zone	MAFOU ZIP	KANKAN Reserve
<i>Habitat</i>	+/-	+/-	-	+	+
<i>It has to be a habitat where chimpanzees can live. Although chimpanzees are highly adaptable, the released chimpanzees will adapt better in a habitat similar to what they've know in Somoria (Clear forest, savanna, forest gallery)</i>					
Human population	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/--
The human population has to be to nonexistent. Because of their human habituation, the released chimpanzees have to be as far as possible from any human settlement and roads (even foot paths). The forest where they'll be released can't be used by villagers to harvest timber, fruits or to hunt. Since human population can be displaced, that criterion isn't in italics.					
<i>Wild chimpanzee population</i>	+/-	-	+/-	+/--	+
<i>Due to potential territory competition, it's usually accepted that chimpanzees should not be released where the wild chimpanzee population exists. The reality of Guinea is that there is no area suitable for chimpanzees that doesn't have chimpanzees already. In Kafama, there is only one group of chimpanzees, but since they are under so much hunting pressure, as well as deforestation, the criteria for Kafama is -, as it can't accommodate another group.</i>					
Water	+/--	+	+/-	+/-	+
Obviously, the released chimps will need water, but a reservoir can be dug or a water pump can be used if water is lacking during the dry season.					

Hunting pressure	+/--	+/--	-	+	-
Due to their lack of fear in humans, the hunting pressure will have to be low at the time of the release. The entire sites visited were under hunting pressure, the higher pressure was in Kankan as well as Mafou buffer zone and the lowest in Mafou ZIP.					
Chimpanzee hunting	+/-	-	+/-	+	-
That criterion was added from the original site searches criteria. It became important to make the distinction, after visiting the sites, as to where chimpanzee hunting previously occurred (Kankan), occurs to this day (Kafama), or doesn't occur (Mafou ZIP). For the same reason as the hunting pressure criteria, the released chimpanzees would have no chance of surviving in an area where hunting is high, since they lack the fear of humans. In addition to the release, sensitization, awareness and protection of the release site will be conducted. Also, researchers and guards will follow the Somoria chimps during the first stage of their release so if the hunting is not too high, their protection will be ensure by the trackers.					
Deforestation	+/--	-	+/-	+	+
Obviously that criterion matches suitable habitat, but doesn't include farming and burning, only timber cutting or mining. Kafama and N'dama, as well as the buffer zone of Mafou, were really degraded by the deforestation. In Kankan (based on the number of chain saws) and in the Mafou ZIP (because of its protection), the deforestation was pretty minimal.					
Current protection	+/-	-	-	+	-
<i>Apart from the Mafou ZIP, which benefits from full protection, and N'dama, which has some protection since its part of the AGIR (Appui à la Gestion Intégrée des Ressources naturelles) program under the Niokolo Koba-Badiar National Parc, all the other areas have no current protection.</i>					
Future protection	+/--	+/-	-	+/--	+
The future protection is extrapolated from the current protection and the future plans. Since AGIR is coming to an end, whatever protection N'dama and Mafou are beneficiating from, it'll come to an end once the GoG (Government of Guinea) is the sole in charge of it. On the other end, Kafama may get better protection in the future as the GEF (Global Environment Funds, the World Bank environmental branch) is funding a conservation program in Guinea maritime; Kafama may benefit from this. The Mafou buffer zone is already under lots of pressure and whatever little protection it's getting will stop completely. Thanks to the lease of the area, we're hoping that the protection of Kankan will become very efficient in the future.					
Outside hunters	+	-	+/-	+	-
The necessary data to answer that criterion has been hard to get and is based on conversations with local hunters and villagers. It was obvious that there were lots of outside hunters in Kankan but wasn't as obvious in Kafama. The major threat with outside hunters is that they hunt everything, including chimpanzees, even if the local population doesn't.					

Size	+	-	+	+	+/-
<i>It's one of the most basic criterion and it can't be changed. Based on the number of chimpanzees living in similar habitat (Chimpanzee density in the Parc National du Haut Niger (PNHN), Brugiere & Fleury 2001), it has been extrapolated that the first release group will need 67 square kilometers, approximately 7 km by 10 km. In addition to this 67 km² of this area a buffer zone of at least 5 km is necessary to avoid any human contact with the released group.</i>					
Extension potential	+/-	-	-	+	-
<i>The areas around the release site have to be accessible and usable by the released chimpanzees once the populations grow or if they get displaced.</i>					
Authority support	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+
<i>PPI and the CCC have always worked with the local authorities since the project aims to become sustainable and run by the local authority. It is imperative to have their support at all levels. The support of the higher level has always been given, but local authority support is a criterion that needs to be taken into account.</i>					
Farming, burning	-	+	+	+	-
<i>These criteria are linked to the deforestation and the habitat criteria. There was intense farming in Kankan as well as in N'dama. The land is not very rich in Kafama and the space is limited so hunting and timber harvesting were the two major threats, not farming. Even if the Mafou protection is more a myth than a reality, it does benefit from the presence in Sidakoro of the park officials so farming is limited even in the buffer zone.</i>					
Feeding density	+/--	-	-	+	+
<i>This criterion is based on the presence or absence of consumable fruit and leaves in the forest in sufficient quantity to accommodate thirteen additional individuals.</i>					

Due to extensive human encroachment into protected areas, there do not appear to be other high potential release sites to survey in Guinea. The table shows that there are no perfect sites and that the decision has to be made using the criteria in order of importance. Based on all of the findings the Mafou ZIP appears to be the best release site possible in Guinea at this time.

Since the AGIR project is coming to an end, the government will be the sole entity in charge of the protection of the PNHN. The small amount of funds, and weak dedication of the Government of Guinea to protected areas management outside of donor-funded projects, makes the adequate protection of the park highly doubtful into the future. One of the positive points concerning the use of the Mafou ZIP as a release site is that the presence of researchers, eco-guards and chimpanzee trackers will discourage hunters and tree cutters, better ensuring the future protection of the area. Also, since the CCC is located in Somoria, at the extreme west part of la Mafou ZIP, the logistics of conducting the release, monitoring and evaluating the progress of released chimps, and protecting the integrity of the area will be easier.

The most negative point of using the ZIP is the considered high chimpanzee population. Based on expert opinions, that population is high compared to the remaining population of wild chimpanzees. In the other chimpanzee release project, the HELP-Congo release site called the triangle, the wild chimpanzee density was between 0,17 and 0.33 per square kilometers. In the Mafou ZIP, in usable forest (in savanna land it's 0.1) the density is 0.15 to 0.47/km². The released group consists of 11 adult and sub adult chimpanzees with two youngsters. Since they've first been moved to Somoria, wild chimpanzees have been visiting them, at first with some aggression, and over the last couple of years, without aggression. The releasable chimpanzees have been tested and are not carriers of known transmittable diseases.

The ZIP is 55000 hectares, adding thirteen chimpanzees will not impact greatly on the wild chimpanzee population, while insuring their protection in short and long term. The released chimpanzees know this area, there are possibilities of extension and the size and habitat are suitable as well.

Although not a perfect site, an area in the center of the Mafou ZIP, along the river (30 km from Somoria), will provide the best possible release site and should offer protection to the wild population with limited impact on it by humans since the camp will be based on the other side of the river, in the buffer zone.

IV. Building



New hut

A new bedroom at camp has been built for the veterinarian's volunteer. Local villagers using local materials built it. We've also redone the thatch roofs for all of the huts.



V. Equipment

Once again, our old Mitsubishi Pajero, has been the cause of a lot of trouble. We've had to redo the motor. The expenses were worth it as without a second car, our education or site search activities had to be stopped. The pickup is also showing signs of age.

Bet Margolin, the Division of Natural Sciences, at ORANIM Academic College, the largest teacher education institution in Israel, has donated a microscope to the Chimpanzee Conservation Center (CCC). Oranim Academic College strives to educate future Natural Science teachers to understand and respect the natural world around them, and has wished the CCC much success in its important work. Mr. Eyal Ofer, Veterinary Surgeon from Israel who volunteered at the CCC for three months, conveyed the microscope together with best wishes. CCC wishes to express their appreciation and thanks to Shula Nachmias, Head of Bet Margolin, the division of Natural Sciences, together with Professor Yair Caro, Head of Oranim Academic College, for their generosity.

VI. Fence

Youngsters

A new fence for the youngsters has been built. Its length is about 600 meters of fence line and it connects to the cage by a high tunnel. It took four months to build it and the chimpanzees were allowed in their new fence at the beginning of October. That first time, they almost all escaped (but we had no problem catching them back) when a branch fell on the fence. Once the fence was repaired, Rocky and Kyo went out that same week using a fig tree that wasn't protected but since that tree has been protected, nobody else has escaped. They are still going out on walks in the forest every morning, for at least three hours. A fence extension for Coco and Amadeus will be built with the building materials that are left and using the money left from the USAID grant.



Youngsters' fence



Youngster's tunnel and fence

New Quarantine cage

Since the beginning of the CCC, the quarantine babies have been sleeping in a mud brick hut built in the first year. Awele and Rocky had been the first users of that old hut so a new facility was more than necessary. The quarantine cage is approximately two meters high and five by five meters. It was completed in August and the babies have been enjoying their cage since the beginning of September, when we finished painting the bars. They're still not used to staying in the fence when they are alone since they're not used to being left without a human but we're habituating them slowly. They are still going out every morning and afternoon with a volunteer in the forest but we always spend a minimum of an hour a day in the fence with them.



Quarantine Cage



Quarantine fence

VII. Education

Radio

This year, Mr. Xavier Dufail, a French engineer working in a recording studio, wrote and recorded with a local artiste, Bademba Diallo, four radio spots of three minutes each. They were created in French and three local languages, Soussou, Peul and Malinke. It has been broadcast in five rural radio (Kindia, Boke, Labe, Faranah, Kankan), between two and five times a day, every day for three months. The impact of these spots was bigger than expected and we could hear people singing the song when they saw the stickers around.

Stickers

The stickers, funded by the Disney Conservation foundation, were printed at the beginning of 2004 in the USA and the director brought them back in her luggage. Two kinds of stickers were printed, weatherproof bumper stickers and papers stickers. Both designs were well understood and reinforced the radio message. Guineans are big fans of stickers so we quickly ran out of them. We'll reprint them using some of the available funds left from the USAID grant (\$2,000).

Paper stickers:



To Kill, Eat, Capture, Buy, Sell or Own a Chimpanzee is ILLEGAL



Weather proof bumper stickers:



Chimpanzees, leave them in the forest!

VIII. Local Staff

Our team has been working even harder this year to keep the cages sparkling clean and all the fences cleared. Unfortunately, we had to dismiss our head keeper this summer and our driver a month later. The rest of the team rose up to the occasion and the work was done as usual.

Felix Mara, our fence manager has done his keeper's job as well as building the new fence. He's getting very knowledgeable about fencing and we're relying on him to be in charge of all the fence building and management.

Sekou Camara, our latest recruit has worked really hard and very well this year. In November, Maddy escaped three times in a week, until we finally found where he was coming out from. The first time he escaped, Sekou just carried him back in the cage on his back! 80 kilos of chimpanzee!

Mohamed Kenda Diallo, our oldest keeper, has celebrated this year his 10th year anniversary of working with these chimpanzees.

Thierno Balde had been sick at the beginning of this year, but he's now recovered his good humor and his energy.

Our new driver Ousmane Balde, was highly recommended by a friend of the project. He was right, Ousmane has been a real asset to the CCC since his employment. His mechanical skills and his patience have made him an invaluable part of the team. Unfortunately, he was on break when the staff picture was taken.



The CCC staff

From left to right: Thierno Balde, Sekou Camara, Kenda Diallo, Felix Mara

IX. Expatriate staff

Estelle Raballand:	Director
Dr. Christelle Colin:	Manager/ Resident veterinarian
David Lucas:	Researcher release site 6 weeks in April - May 2004
Dr. Catherine Sourmail:	Researcher release site November 2004 - February 2005

X. Volunteers in 2004

Lissa Ongman:	October 2003- April 2004
Julien Lecomte:	December 2003 – June 2004
Anne Frere (veterinarian):	January 2004 – June 2004
Alexandra Grignard:	May 2004 – September 2004
Peggy Morillon:	End of August 2004 – February 2005
Gael Monier:	July 2004 – December 2004
Yasmine Ridoux:	September 2004
Virginie Laporte:	November 2004 – May 2005
Eyal Opher: (veterinarian):	November 2004 – February 2005

XI. The Humane Society International (HSI) Award



Dr. Andrew Rowan (HSUS executive senior vice-president) and Mr. Neil Trent (HSI director) with Estelle Raballand (CCC director) during the HSI award in Dallas, TX in March 2004. The award was given to the director in recognition for her work protecting chimpanzees in Guinea.



XII. Humane Society of the USA Expo



The award ceremony took place during The Humane Society of the United States and The Humane Society International expo that was held in Dallas, Texas. A table, exposing Guinean craft and artifact as well as chimpanzee items, was set up near The HSI table.

We sold most of the artifacts and all of the profits were used for the CCC.



XIII. Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) workshops:

- Veterinary workshop:

Dr. Christelle Colin, the CCC's veterinarian, participated and has been an active member of the PASA veterinary workshop that was held in Pointe Noire (Congo Brazzaville) in May 2004. She's also been translating the PASA veterinary manual that is being used by all the sanctuaries.

- Manager workshop:

In June 2004, Estelle Raballand went to the PASA manager workshop hosted in Johannesburg (South Africa). Mrs. Raballand is also a board member of PASA.

XIV. USAID grant to the Jane Goodall Institute:

The CCC director has been highly involved in preparing, thinking, consulting and writing an APS for USAID under JGI, with Pro-natura and Humane Society International as partners. That grant is directed to the Education and sensitization of the Guinean and Sierra Leonia's populations concerning the status and the plight of chimpanzees.

XV. Goals for 2005

As explained in the Annual Report, the survey results showed that the central part of Mafou Zone Integrale Protégée (ZIP) as being the best site for the release of the first group. The suggested release method consists of building an electrical fence (500 meters long) at the release site with a veterinary cage (6 meters by 8 meters by 2 meters high) adjacent to that fence. A human camp will also be built on the other side of the river to prevent the released chimpanzees from following their human trackers back to camp, since chimps do not swim.

The first group of releasable chimps (11 adults and sub-adults with 2 youngsters), will be anesthetized and transported to the veterinary cage, in two or three trips. Once they're awake, they'll be allowed to leave the cage and enter the new fenced area.

In a month or two, once they're used to their new environment, the chimps will be taken on acclimation trips into the forest. The main goals of these walks will be to habituate the chimpanzees to their new environment and to show them where the food and water are. The main difference between these walks and the walks they used to go on as youngsters being that they won't be forced to go back inside the fence or the cage at night. Only those who choose to will be coming back inside the fenced-caged area. Feeding will be minimal and will only supplement what they'll get outside.



The released chimpanzees will be followed for at least three years, using a nest-to-nest method and telemetric collars. The USAID grant's available funds will not be sufficient to buy these collars, so additional proposals will be submitted to USAID and other organizations for the purchase of these collars.

Intense protection of the area will also be put in place and one of the goals of PPI for 2005 is to find a conservation NGO willing to take over the Parc National du Haut Niger's protection since the AGIR program is now coming to an end. It is anticipated that after the first group is successfully released, this new site could be reused for additional chimpanzee releases.

We're also planning on starting the education and sensitization project under the JGI grant and we'll reprint the stickers.

Depending on funding, we're hoping to build a new kitchen and buy a new car as well.

XVI. Conclusion:

I'd like to thank everyone who's been standing by my side this year. Without them, the CCC would not be what it is.

First, I'd like to thank Christelle Colin, for being here, after so many years without pay! The PPI volunteers and the CCC's volunteers. Thank you for dedicating a part of your life for the Guinean orphan chimps.

Thank you to the Arcus foundation for its on-going support and for caring, the USAID employees who's made the PPI grant possible, Dr. Andrew Rowan for believing in my abilities and Mr. Neil Trent, the Edith J. Goode Foundation, three years already since their first grant.

To all the private donors and friends of the project, thank you and to PASA for representing us slaving in the field.

And finally to the Guinean government and the park authority for helping when they can.