

Newsletter

October 2014



Reptiles and amphibians survey

In a period of approximately 8 months (October 2013 - June 2014) a total of 22 amphibian species were found. This is already more than the 17 species expected by www.amphibiaweb.org to occur in Guinea Bissau. Moreover of the 22, 11 are not on the list. This indicates that the area probably has a high amphibian species richness. Biology student Tom Cabuy (Leuven University), who participated in the amphibian survey, also carried out a reptile inventory. [Reptile-database.org](http://reptile-database.org) gives a total of at least 48 species for Guinea-Bissau. He found 30 species in 4 months, of which 17 are not on the list. For such a short period of fieldwork, a remarkably high number of species. Further research on the collected animals has to show whether new species have been found.



Tarentola senegambiae (photo:Tom Cabuy)

Small mammals survey

A small mammal survey has been set up near Beli by two experts Roy Mol and Sil Westra and carried out by biologist Amber Baele and Dorien van Montfort, student of the University of Utrecht in the same area and over the same 8 months as the above mentioned amphibian survey. Dorien analysed the captures in



Graphiurus kelleni (photo:Tom Cabuy)

traps which were located in 5 different vegetation types. In total 93 individuals, belonging to 16 species were captured. Her main conclusion was that species richness (the number of species captured) and abundance (the number of individuals captured) did not differ between research locations. Species composition however, differed between the 5 sites. Some of the animals that could not be identified to the species level in the field were collected and have been sent to Brussels and Leiden for further research.

Publication on bird inventory

In our December newsletter we mentioned João Guilherme's bird inventory in the Boé. [His paper](#) is now published in the ABC (African Bird Club) Bulletin. During his survey in the Boé region, in January and February 2013, 170 bird species were recorded. Of these, three are new for the country: Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*, Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* and Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini*. In his paper João states that the Boé region harbours a significant and diverse fauna and flora and constitutes an exciting birding destination in West Africa. However, current uses of land and natural resources constitute potentially important threats to the biodiversity and ecosystem services, and require urgent attention. In his opinion development of a conservation strategy for the Boé region should follow a community based approach by involving local populations in the planning, decision-making and management of natural resources.



Oenanthe heuglini, Boé, Guinea-Bissau, 14 February 2013 (photo: João L. Guilherme)

Garbage awareness days

Chimbo's interim program manager Tamara Borges de Oliveira organized two 'Garbage Awareness Days' for children, one in Beli and one in Pataque. While their teachers were on strike she gave environmental education to the children of Beli. Garbage is a good example of an environmental problem. The garbage events were divided in a theoretical and a practical phase. During the practical phase the children were divided in groups to clean their village. The children were excited and worked very hard. After collecting all non-organic waste, they also learned to separate materials like glass and aluminum and store them in a safe place.



Child collecting garbage in Beli

9th Horizontal Platform

The 9th Horizontal Platform (PH) took place in Beli on the 6th of May 2014. Issues presented and discussed during the meeting were the garbage awareness days, the results of the MISUBAB project, cereal banks, anti-bushfire action, the ongoing research program and the criteria for villages that will be helped by Chimbo to become a village that has

opportunities for tourists. An important subject of this meeting was the adoption of the internal rules of the PH itself. As a first step to develop an action plan for the PH each member gave one or two subjects for such a plan: empowerment of PH Members,



Snacks and drinks before the meeting



Meeting of Horizontal Platform

training, activities especially aimed at young people or women, creation of more synergy, drinking water, improvement of the Fefine River crossing facilities, buffer zone development and lion conservation etc.

Ecotourism in Beli

Chimbo is helping Fonda Huuwa (a local NGO) to develop a good functioning bungalow campsite in Beli where students and volunteers of Chimbo, visitors, and ecovolunteers or other tourists can stay during their visit of the Boé. Thomas van Steenis, student of the University of Applied Sciences NHTV in Breda that specializes in tourism, was asked to make a management plan for the camp. He assisted camp manager Samba Djuma Diallo for three months. He structured the cleaning of the camp by making a schedule and controlling it, made a task list for the cooks and taught the staff about waste management. Thomas taught Samba Djuma English, management skills, financial skills, administrative and social skills. Together they worked on a long term planning for the camp.

Thomas is very positive about the camp and the staff. He concludes that Fonda Huuwa is ready to receive not only the already frequently staying students and volunteers, but also tourists in the camp. He concludes: the Boé is a special place with fantastic and welcoming people.



Two of the nine bungalows and the tap for drinking water

