

Newsletter

March 2016



Lions in the Boé

In an earlier newsletter we wrote that villagers reported the presence of lions in the Boé. Local people spotted two adult lions in 2013, and in 2014 again two lions, this time with a cub. A research team of Chimbo went out to the field to look for more concrete signs, and with success: they actually found lion tracks. Now we are excited to share with you that the return of the lion in Guinea-Bissau has been confirmed by footage of one of our trail cameras (see picture). This proves again that lions are coming back to Guinea-Bissau after possibly decades of absence, while at the same time elsewhere in West Africa lion populations are decreasing rapidly. An article about our findings will be published shortly in the international scientific journal "Cat News".

Chimpanzee accumulative stone throwing

The international journal *Scientific Reports* recently published some results of the PANAF research programme "Ecological influences on Culture in Chimpanzees and Hominoids" of the Max Planck Institute (MPI). Chimbo participated in this research by collecting data in the Boé area. In 2010 one of our local guides showed us a site where chimpanzees use a stone to drum on a hollow tree to communicate with other chimpanzees. Later on we discovered other spots with "drumming trees". In order to learn more about this chimpanzee behaviour, we placed cameras at a number of such sites. The MPI studies populations in the different parts of Africa where chimpanzees occur. Out of the 34 chimpanzee populations studied, only in 4 chimpanzees bang trees with stones or throw rocks against the trunks of trees. Often stones are tossed in hollow trees or accumulate at the foot of the tree trunks. This behaviour was unknown to science and the article concludes that this is an interesting cultural aspect of chimpanzee behaviour. For those who are interested in reading the full article, please click on the link: <http://www.nature.com/articles/srep22219>.



Community based conservation of the cultural and natural values of the Boé sector

We are happy to announce that Chimbo Foundation signed a new 4-year contract with the EU. The general objective of this new project is to strengthen the role of the local population in safeguarding the cultural and natural assets of the Boé sector. An example of what we expect to achieve with the project is the establishment of a network of sacred sites, protected by law and managed by local communities. Sacred forests (see picture) and other sacred sites are invaluable assets for the cultural identity of the people from the Boé. Not only do they provide places of worship, they also protect essential resources such as springs. At the same time they provide an ecological infrastructure that benefits the rich biodiversity of the Boé and the people themselves.



International Tropical Conservation Fund

More good news: Chimbo Foundation received a donation from the International Tropical Conservation Fund (ITCF). ITCF is a charity created in 1989 by two European zoos, the Papiliorama in Switzerland and the Royal Burgers Zoo in the Netherlands. ITCF strives to link words to acts by carrying out concrete and efficient action to conserve tropical ecosystems. The donation will be used to buy GPS equipment and trail cameras for our research- and monitoring programme in which the local Village Vigilance Committees participate. Analysis of the images taken by these cameras will tell us a lot about the trends in biodiversity of the Boé.



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