

Newsletter

April 2017

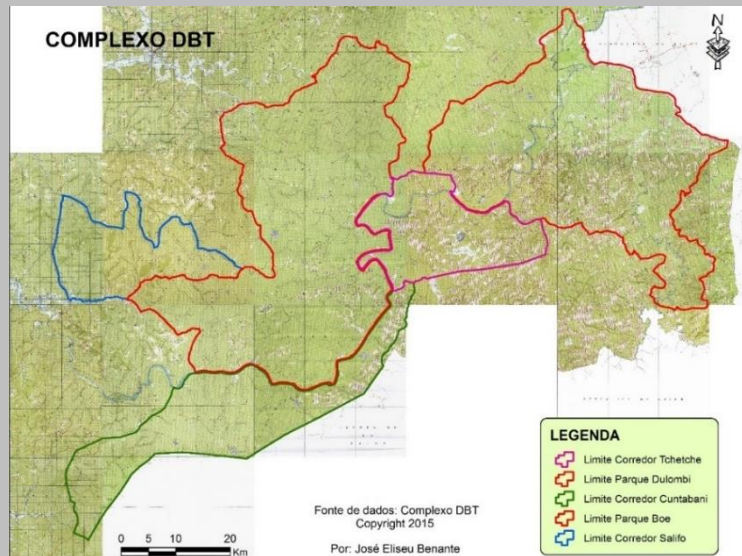


The importance of sacred forests

Differences between sacred forests and other sites might be based on the availability of food, water or big trees needed for the nests chimpanzees build every day. Their preferences might also change during the season: in the dry season sites with water might be essential. Other mammals could have other preferences. We are happy with two students of Wageningen University that will try to find answers on the importance of sacred forest for chimpanzees and other mammals this year.

Boé National Park

Due to the frequent changes of government, it has taken much more time than planned, but finally our friend Alfredo da Silva, Director of IBAP, announced that part of Boé and Dulombi have now officially been declared National Parks, with the CheChe corridor to connect the two. Other corridors connect these two National Parks with Protected Areas in the coastal zone of Guinea Bissau. We are very pleased with this development and congratulate Alfredo and his staff with their tenacity on this dossier. Guinea Bissau is among the world's leading nations as far the percentage of land under legal protection.



Dark colour phase of the Golden Cat

Our trap cameras continue to give us amazing pictures and positive surprises. This time we trapped a dark colour phase of the Golden Cat. Dorst and Dandelot (a Field Guide to the larger Mammals of Africa; Collins, London (1970)), describe the species as “generally reddish brown; sometimes greyish or blackish.” Our individual is definitely more on the blackish than greyish side.



New car

The old Toyota Prado that we took over from the Bhantal Boé Project has served us very well, but after 10 years of hard labour on Boé roads it is due for retirement. Our new car (a Toyota Landcruiser) was first shipped to the wrong harbour. Then it took us three months to get it through customs and out of Bissau harbour. Bureaucracy has its merits for transparency and accountability but combined with political instability and indecisiveness, it gets dramatic dimensions. Thanks to Nati – liaison officer at our Bissau office - and her informal network, we finally got the car out of the grip of Bissau’s bureaucrats.

Eco-tourism

The Fonda Huuwa tourist campsite turns out to be an important asset to receive visitors. More and more people know how to find it. Last year we had over 750 visitors’ nights of which 86 for 12 (research) tourists. Although the facility is very basic, most guests appreciate the comfort of a clean bed, the possibility to take a shower in your own buckaroo and a simple local meal. Most of them did see Chimpanzees. We were very honoured by the visit of the EU-ambassador and his wife. For this category of visitors it would be nice if a less basic type of lodging would be built in Boé. On Lugajole hill the ambassador told us his memories of the day that Guinea Bissau declared its independence. He was 17 years old at the time. He shared with us the deep joy and the profound gratefulness he felt for Guinea Bissau’s heroes.



The EU-ambassador, his wife and Carla Sorneta, led by Amadal at Vendu Cobolo



Palmoil production

In our December newsletter, we mentioned the 68 proposals for a microproject we received. To improve food security and stimulate sustainable income generation the first proposals we selected, improve palmoil production. Three women groups led by respectively Adama Djam Sané from Beli, Fatumata Bailo Djaló from Limbi Afia and Yira Queita from Dandula sent in the best proposals and will receive financial support. The income the projects generates, will be spent on rice in case of food shortages and on the equipment needed to prevent bush fires at the sites where palm fruits are collected.

