Habituation of chimpanzees at Loango National Park (Gabon)
The habituation

➢ To habit individuals to human presence in order to collect proper research datas on behaviour

➢ Risks
  ❖ Disease transmission
  ❖ Changes in behavioural ecology
    • Never be a « truly neutral presence »
  ❖ Decrease of fear toward human populations (poachers, agricultural areas...)
    ✓ Remote protected areas
Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*)

**Map:** Distribution of Chimpanzee subspecies

- **Pan troglodytes verus** (yellow)
- **Pan troglodytes vellerosus** (green)
- **Pan troglodytes troglodytes** (purple)
- **Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii** (blue)

**Location:** Gabon
Chimpanzees in Gabon

- 2\textsuperscript{nd} most important chimpanzee population of Central Africa \((Pan troglodytes troglodytes)\) in Gabon (34%), after Congo (42%)

- Between 1983 and 2000: Gabon lost half its great ape population
  - Poaching, habitat lost and degradation, disease, and climate change

- Central Chimpanzee populations remain highly vulnerable today
  - Estimated to be ~ 140,000 individuals

- Illegal to kill, capture or trade in live Chimpanzees
  - No sanctuary known
The project

- Beginning of the Project in 2005
- Habituation of chimpanzees and gorillas
- Since 2014 separation of the project in two parts
- Beginning of ecotourism on gorillas in 2015
Objectives of the project

➢ Habituation for future studies on chimpanzees

➢ Costal environment and variety of habitats: few studies in such areas
  ❖ Central Chimpanzees are found predominantly in moist lowland tropical forests and swamp forests
  ❖ Loango: coastal forest, savannah, open mature forest, close mature forest, secondary forest up to swamps and permanent and seasonal lagoon
Objectives of the project

➢ Home range size:
  ❖ In Goualougo, Republic of Congo: 13.7–25.6 km² (Morgan 2007)
  ❖ In Loango, Gabon: Can reach 45 km² (Arandjelovic et al., 2011): biggest ever reported

➢ Conservation preoccupation
  ❖ Research for better protection concerns
  ❖ Public sensibilisation (tourists...)

➢ Welcome tourists on the camp to talk about the project only
Rekambo community

➢ Close to Yatouga Camp (Gorillas habituation team)

➢ Surrounded by at least 3 chimpanzee communities

➢ Estimated at 60 individuals (bigger community) on 45km² Including 12 adult males and 19 adult females
  ❖ Currently 5 males and 4 females are habituated to human presence
Chimpanzee diet and seed bank

➢ More than 100 fruits, flowers and leaves eaten
➢ Meat: monkeys, termites...

- **Myrianthus sp**
- **Harungana sp**
- **Wadge of Dichapetalum sp**
- **Ficus sp**
- **Salacia shrub sp**
Data collected during my mission

Identification by camera trap and pictures
Data collected during my mission

- Time of beginning and ending of each visual contact

- How did we found them?
  - Vocalisations
  - Fruits sounds
  - Just seen during walk...

- How did we lose them?
  - During we followed them
  - We let them go
  - They ran away
Data collected during my mission

- **Distance and degree of vocalisations heard**
  - Found or not found

- **Age, number and high of nests found**

- **Genetic project**
  - Hair et faecal samples collected
  - Genetic, pathogens, hormones

- **Evolution of the data collect with the habituation progress**
Evolution of habituation

➢ Progression due to chimpanzee reactions but also to the effectiveness of the habituation team

➢ Between 5 to 15 years to habituate a chimpanzee population

➢ Today the project is running since 12 years: few minutes to more than 11 hours!
Tool use

Binga Binga nest eaten by chimpanzees

Binga Binga tool
Tool use
Merci de votre attention