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CARPO FOCUS

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Nurturing Solutions for Local People through Partnerships



Gestion responsable des forêts du Bassin du Congo

Une société forestière de la sous-région obtient la certification FSC



Giraffe's relative rediscovered in E. Congo



Working with local people in Dzanga Sangha - CAR

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Front page photos from Top to Bottom;

Base of *Ayous* tree in the Loboke National Park, Cameroon - © WWF-CARPO / NZOOH Zacharie;

The Okapi - closest known relative to the Giraffe, rediscovered in East of DRC - © WWF-CARPO / Virunga

Local woman of the Bantu tribe looks out from the window of her mud-thatch house in the East of Cameroon
Courtesy : Sacha deBoer

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Editorial

Nurturing solutions for local issues

During an interview with RFI last month, the journalist asked me whether Central African forests were under threat. Of course my answer was in the affirmative. As I put it: "when you see the present and future threats you will agree with me that the forests are threatened but not in the scale as presented by certain people".



Quizzed by RFI, I did not hesitate to point at poaching and illegal trade in wildlife as one of the leading threats. I also cited deforestation as a major problem.

Are the governments of the countries of this region aware of these threats? I was again asked by the journalist. There is no other place like in the sub region where governments are so aware and are becoming committed to fighting back these threats; beginning with the Yaoundé Declaration to the reaffirmation of engagements through the signing of a treaty for the sustainable management of Congo Basin Forests. In addition to these actions, a host of dedicated NGOs and partners have provided technical and material support to back up words with action.

What has changed since the 1999 Central African Heads of State summit in Yaoundé? RFI wanted to know. In my humble opinion, progress is being made especially in the area of sustainable forest management and the institutional framework - judging from grounds covered so far by COMIFAC.

How comforting is it to know that certified wood is already being harvested from this region. It is equally good news that more logging companies are gearing up for certification and are signing up to the WWF Central African Forest and Trade Network.

In the wilds, the news too is exciting. Leatherbacks are back to the shores of Gabon. The Okapi, giraffe's relative is rediscovered in the East of Congo as the once war ravaged sections of Virunga and Kahuzi Biega are again teeming with gorillas.

True, the sub region's natural areas are under severe threat - with disastrous consequences. Plant and animal species are becoming more and more extinct. There is still much to be done on issues like governance, access and benefit sharing ... to name only these. But with more commitments, hope is on the horizon. We never give up. WWF is dedicated, determined and acutely focused on nurturing solutions for both local issues and the global policy context. WWF's ultimate goal is to stop and eventually reverse environmental degradation and to build a future where people live in harmony with nature. Through working together, we will find the best solutions to save nature!

Laurent Somé



Major logging companies embrace responsible forest Management

Four major logging companies join WWF's Central Africa Forest & Trade Network (CAFTN), (affiliated to Global Forest and Trade Network - GFTN) in setting a new standard for responsible forestry in the forests of the Congo basin. Under the agreement, over 1million hectares of natural forest will

forests could be lost within fifty years.

The Global Forest & Trade Network or GFTN is WWF's initiative to eliminate illegal logging, improve the management of the world's valuable and threatened forests, and promote credible forest certification. By provi-



Photo : WWF-CARPO / Peter NGEA

These key timber producers are the first in the region to join the newly launched CAFTN, a branch of WWF's Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN).

Family photo at WWF CARPO Office in Yaoundé shortly after Regional Representative, Laurent SOME and SEFAC's Commercial Director Giggio Coates signed convention on CAFTN. The WWF team was joined by partners from MINFOF, CIFOR, FSC...

now be placed under a sustainable management regime. One of the world's largest remaining areas of intact rainforests, Congo Basin forests are a haven for indigenous peoples, provide habitat for endangered species like elephants and gorillas, sequester carbon, and safeguard water quality. Despite this importance, estimates indicate that the region loses 1.5 million hectares of forests - about half the size of Belgium - each year due mainly to illegal and destructive logging. Other threats include poaching and smuggling of wildlife, and the illicit bushmeat trade. If present trends continue, two-thirds of the Congo Basin

ding support to and facilitating trade links between progressive forest industry companies, the GFTN seeks to create market conditions that will help conserve the world's forests while providing economic and social benefits for the businesses and people that depend on them.

Firm Engagements

By becoming members of CAFTN, Groupe Decolvenaere, Groupe Pallisco - CIFM, Groupe Transformation Reef Cameroun and Groupe SEFAC demonstrate their commitment to responsible forest management and to obtaining Forest▶▶▶

News



Laurent SOME (left) exchange signed convention with Michel ROUGERON of Groupe PALISCO as CAFTN Coordinator, Elie HAKIZUMWAMI exchanges with another official of the logging Company

Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for their operations and supplies. These key timber producers are the first in the region to join the newly launched CAFTN, a branch of WWF's Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN). By becoming members, the companies receive technical assistance from WWF and partners to help them achieve certification for their forestry practices. WWF's CAFTN monitors their progress and provides market links to purchasers of legally-produced and certified products.

"In The Netherlands as well as in other European countries, the timber market demands more and more FSC certified products. With WWF support within the framework of CAFTN, we are hoping to be able to supply FSC certified wood not long from now," said Paul Reef, Director General of Groupe Transformation Reef Cameroun. TRC is a subsidiary of Dutch company Reef Hout, a founding member of the Netherlands Forest & Trade Network. Transformation Reef Cameroon is managing four logging concessions totalling about 270 000 hectares in the Coastal and Central Provinces of Cameroon, and sells timber to several GFTN members in The Netherlands.

Local people and partnerships

The commitment of these companies to work toward certified forestry is a significant milestone in the socio-economic development of Cameroon and the well-being of the local population. By embracing sustainable forest management, these companies will also be contributing to the conservation of Congo Basin forests.

"WWF is convinced that the adoption of sustainable forest management schemes by these companies will contribute greatly to the conservation of the Congo Basin forests for the benefit of the people and also the wildlife," said Laurent Somé, Regional Representative of WWF in Central Africa.

Illegal forest exploitation and forest crimes are largely due to poor gover-

nance at the national level, as well as insufficient implementation of the law at the level of forest management units. WWF recognizes that responsible forest management and sustainable commercialization of wood plays an important role in the economic growth of tropical countries and poverty reduction for people dependent on the forest for their livelihoods.

"The development of markets for credibly certified tropical wood will contribute to improving the national economy and also improve livelihoods of local communities," said Elie Hakizumwami, WWF CA-FTN coordinator.

"The international timber market is increasingly asking for certified wood, and we are lucky to be able to work with the support of WWF in the framework of CAFTN," said Guy Decolvenaere, Director General of Groupe Decolvenaere. "We hope to supply FSC certified products in the market from the Congo basin not long from now." Decolvenaere Cameroon, daughter company of Belgium-based Decolvenaere – a member of the Belgian Forest & Trade Network – is operating two forest concessions totaling about 138 000 hectares in the south-east of Cameroon. It mainly sells timber to Belgium and the Netherlands, where its customers include a GFTN member company.

To the Commercial Director of Groupe SEFAC, Dr. Giorgio Coates, "five years ago we could not imagine sitting on the same table for common discussions with NGO and administration about better management of the forest. Today reason has triumphed and surely we are resolutely bound towards sustainable forest management and most important, we are working hard to obtain FSC certification".

Groupe SEFAC, has been operating in the South East of Cameroon for close to 40 years and manages five logging concessions totalling about 400.000 hectares with two wood transformation units.

By Peter NGEA



...Shakes hands with Guy DECOLVENAERE, DG of Groupe Decolvenaere as WWF Jengi Manager, Leonard USONGO looks on



TRC's Paul REEF (left) signs up for CAFTN

Le WWF félicite CIB pour son obtention de la certification FSC

La société d'exploitation forestière CIB qui opère dans la République du Congo a effectuée un grand pas vers la gestion responsable des forêts dans toute la sous région de l'Afrique Centrale en obtenant une certification FSC. Cette réalisation renforcera la contribution du secteur forestier à la croissance socio-économique du pays et en particulier, assurera un meilleur moyen de subsistance aux populations locales et contribuera également à la conservation des forêts du Bassin du Congo, la seconde plus grande forêt tropicale humide au monde après l'Amazonie.

Le WWF saisit cette opportunité pour féliciter la société d'exploitation forestière CIB pour la grande réalisation qu'est l'obtention de la Certification FSC comme l'une de ses concessions forestières. Après tant d'années passées dans l'illégalité, les sociétés d'exploitation forestières en Afrique Centrale font d'importants progrès vers la gestion responsable des forêts. La nouvelle de la certification FSC par la CIB est une indication claire de ce progrès et une étape importante effectuée par l'un des plus grands concessionnaires du Bassin du Congo.

Le WWF encourage la CIB à prendre au sérieux les observations de certaines organisations en vue d'améliorer la situation actuelle sur le terrain. Il s'agit d'une nécessité afin de ne pas détruire le bon travail déjà réalisé par la société. Le WWF reconnaît que le contexte institutionnel en Afrique Centrale rend le processus de certification complexe et en appelle à l'engagement ferme de ces sociétés. Dans le but de maintenir ses niveaux de certification, la CIB doit travailler en collaboration avec le gouvernement du Congo et les autres partenaires pour vérifier les activités illégales tel que le braconnage qui pourrait détruire la biodiversité de la région.

Mise en garde

Il s'agit également d'un appel pour la société d'exploitation forestière à maintenir un niveau élevé et de s'assurer que ses activités présentes et futures n'entravent pas la biodiversité à l'intérieur et autour des unités d'exploitations forestières. Tout ceci devrait contribuer à la croissance durable de l'économie nationale, à l'amélioration du style de vie des populations locales et en respectant les droits des communautés indigènes telles que les pygmées.

En fin de compte, en félicitant les organisations qui ont données à la CIB la technique nécessaire et le soutien financier tout au long du processus, notamment ITTO, GTZ, AFD, KfW, WCs, parmi tant d'autres, le WWF a encouragé la CIB à continuer le processus de certification pour les autres concessions.

Le WWF est convaincu que l'exploitation forestière illégale et les crimes forestiers sont en grande partie causés par la mauvaise gouvernance au niveau national ainsi que par un manque de suivi et une application insuffisante de la loi au niveau des unités de gestion des forêts. Le WWF reconnaît que la gestion responsable des forêts et la commercialisation durable du bois joue un rôle important dans la croissance économique des pays tropicaux, de même que les stratégies de réduction de pauvreté pour les peuples totalement dépendant des forêts pour leur subsistance.

Après tant d'années passées dans l'illégalité, les sociétés d'exploitation forestière en Afrique Centrale font d'importants progrès vers la gestion responsable des forêts.



la commercialisation durable du bois joue un rôle important dans la croissance économique



Locals in partnership to manage community forest

Through the facilitation of WWF, local communities around the Campo Ma'an National Park in the South of Cameroon are beginning to take control over the management of the forests in their vicinity. The creation of community forests units has enabled locals to be directly involved in the sustainable management of forests with direct access to benefits accruing there from.

One of those communities at the peripheries of the park to take the lead in obtaining its own community forest are the people of Akak* who through the technical support of WWF Campo Ma'an Project* got the government of Cameroon in November 2005 to officially designate a total of 5.000 hectares of forest to be managed by them.

On June 29, 2006, the Akak community organized under a common initiative group proceeded to signing its first agreement with a local wood company, Parquet-Cam*, which will henceforth buy wood legally exploited from the Akak community forest.

Win - Win

"WWF has worked tirelessly to enable local communities to be fully involved in the management of their own natural resources and to participate in the sharing of the benefits", said Dr. Martin Tchamba, Technical Manager of WWF Cameroon. "On the other hand, by dealing with a local community that has a management plan for its forest, Parquet-Cam is taking a positive step into harvesting wood legally".

While promising WWF continuous support to other communities around the Campo Ma'an Park to obtain their own community forest to ensure sustainable management in the peripheries, the Technical Manager underlined: "it is our wish that the company respects the terms of this agreement rigorously and that revenue genera-

ted from the forest will contribute to the reduction of poverty and improve on the livelihood of the entire community".

Accepting the challenge to do business with the Akak community, Mr. Michel Pierson, Director General of Parquet-Cam said: "My opinion has always been that community forests is an excellent approach which permits the local population to have direct access to their natural resources and also gives the opportunity to small companies to buy wood

know that this is the source of our livelihood and it is the only wealth that we will be leaving behind to our children".

Notes:

*The **Campo-Ma'an** Project is located in the extreme southwest corner of the South Province in the Republic of Cameroon and covers a total land area of about 264.064 hectares. The area is considered important to conservation primarily due to its highly diversified coastal forest. ***Akak** community is made up of about 3.000

"...we will take good care of our forest because we know that this is the source of our livelihood and it is the only wealth that we will be leaving behind to our children"

legally. I must salute the technical support of WWF and hope that with its constant surveillance, some of the abuses that usually characterize such agreements with communities will be checked".

On behalf of the Akak community, M. MBA ALO'O Jérémie who is delegate of the common initiative group craved for continuous technical support from WWF and promised to use funds generated from the forest to the benefit of the entire community. "I believe we will take good care of our forest because we

people scattered across 8 villages.

***Parquet-Cam** is a small wood processing company based in Edea, about 200 KM away from Akak and 80 KM away from the port of Douala. It has a work force of about 60 locals.

P.N



WWF team, MINFOF... join Parquet-Cam and AKAK leaders in family photo after signing of agreement in Kribi

Photo : WWF-CARPO / Peter NGEA

Les étudiants de l'Université de Kinshasa sensibilisés sur les activités du Programme CARPE/USAID en RDC

La RDC recèle des ressources naturelles exceptionnelles qu'il convient de gérer efficacement pour les générations actuelles et futures



Mme Véronique TSHIMBALANGA, Point Focal CARPE-RDC

Le Bureau national du Programme Régional de l'Afrique Centrale pour l'Environnement en RDC (CARPE) a organisé le mardi 06 juin 2006 dans la salle Kamel Morjane de l'Université de Kinshasa, un atelier d'information sur le programme en présence du Directeur de cabinet du Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et universitaire, du Recteur de l'Université de Kinshasa, des professeurs et des étudiants de l'Université de Kinshasa (UNIKIN).

Mme Véronique TSHIMBALANGA, Point Focal CARPE-RDC, a, dans son allocution d'ouverture, présenté les objectifs du programme CARPE. Elle a montré la nécessité de préserver et de conserver les richesses du Bassin du Congo qui constituent le deuxième massif forestier après l'Amazonie. La République Démocratique du Congo représente près de 55% des forêts du Bassin du Congo et regorge des ressources naturelles exceptionnelles, cependant, les ressources humaines sont insuffisantes. La RDC recèle des ressources naturelles exceptionnelles qu'il convient de gérer efficacement pour les générations actuelles et futures.

Renforcement des capacités

L'un des objectifs du programme CARPE est le renforcement des capacités locales, nationales et régionales, c'est ainsi que le programme espère poser les jalons d'une collaboration fructueuse avec l'Université de Kinshasa qui est un partenaire incontournable.

Le Point Focal CARPE, a également souligné que le programme CARPE et ses partenaires offrent des possibilités de stage sur le terrain aux étudiants de dernière année en vue de renforcer leurs capacités.

Monsieur Bernard LUTUTALA MUM-PASI, Recteur de l'Université de

Kinshasa s'est dit honoré de la présence du Point Focal CARPE et ses partenaires avant de qualifier le choix porté sur l'Unikin de judicieux, du fait que cette institution regorge un nombre important d'étudiants, de professeurs, de chefs de travaux et assistants représentant une large audience auprès de la population.

Le Professeur BIBOMBE MUAMBA, Directeur du cabinet et représentant du Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et universitaire a affirmé qu'il était important d'informer la communauté estudiantine sur les activités de conservation menées sur le terrain et les menaces qui pèsent sur notre environnement.

Partenaires

CARPE et ses partenaires présents à cet atelier dont African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Conservation International (CI), Fonds Mondial pour la Nature (WWF), Observatoire Satellital des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (OSFAC/UMD), Bonobo Conservation International (BCI) et Innovative Resources Management (IRM) ont tour à tour montré aux étudiants les missions et objectifs de leurs activités dans les paysages de la RDC où ils sont opérationnels. Les partenaires de CARPE ont également relevé les obstacles auxquels ils sont confrontés sur le terrain telles que le braconnage, la sur-pêche, l'exploitation non contrôlée des forêts, la chasse non durable et le commerce de la viande de brousse. Ils ont pour cela proposé des pistes de solutions en vue de la protection et de la gestion durable des ressources naturelles du Bassin du Congo. CARPE et ses partenaires ne se sont pas empêchés de montrer à l'assistance quelques-unes de leurs réalisations au niveau des paysages:

AWF a octroyé des petites subventions aux Ongs locales de Basankusu, Befale, Bongandanga et Djolu dans le paysage de Maringa-▶▶

News

Lopori-Wamba province de l'Equateur. Il a également mis un bateau à la disposition de population afin de les aider à évacuer les produits agricoles vers les grands centres urbains ;

Conservation International (CI) et Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (DFGFI) ont créé en Janvier 2004, l'Institut pour la Conservation Biologique (TCCB) dans la province du Nord-Kivu. Cette institution vise la formation des étudiants issus des populations environnantes.

Fonds Mondial pour la Nature (WWF) a pour sa part mené des études socio-économiques, développé des pratiques de lutte anti-bravonnage au niveau des paysages Lac Tumba et Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru et apporte un appui matériel et financier à l'ICCN ;

L'Observatoire Satellital des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (OSFAC) a mis en place un Laboratoire de Télédétection et des systèmes d'information géographique (SIG) afin d'encadrer les étudiants, les stagiaires académiques et professionnels dans le renforcement des capacités.

Questions pertinentes

Les partenaires ont rappelé que la conservation offre des possibilités d'emplois potentiels dans différents domaines.

Après ces différents exposés, quelques questions ont été posées par les étudiants au Point Focal CARPE ainsi qu'à ses partenaires présents à cet atelier telles que : quels sont les exemples concrets des réalisations CARPE en RDC par rapport à ces objectifs ? Pourquoi les Etats-Unis qui refusent de signer le protocole

Pourquoi les Etats-Unis qui refusent de signer le protocole de Kyoto met en place le programme CARPE et demande aux populations du bassin du Congo de préserver leur forêts ?

de Kyoto met en place le programme CARPE et demande aux populations du bassin du Congo de préserver leur forêt ? Que fait le gouvernement pour soutenir le projet bateau initié par AWF ? etc...

Cet atelier s'est déroulé dans un processus participatif avec environ deux cent dix-neuf (219) étudiants dont 56 de la faculté des sciences politiques et administratives, 53 de la faculté des sciences économiques, 42 de la

faculté d'agronomie, 31 de la faculté des sciences département de l'environnement, 15 des relations internationales, 3 de la faculté des sciences département de biologie, 2 département d'anthropologie, 1 de la faculté de psychologie, 1 de la faculté de médecine, 1 de la faculté de droit, 1 d'histoire et enfin 3 de la faculté de sociologie.

La République Démocratique du Congo représente près de 55% des forêts du Bassin du Congo

Photo : WWF-Canon / M. HARVEY



Giraffe's relative rediscovered in eastern Congo

After nearly 50 years, the okapi – the closest known relative to the giraffe – has been rediscovered in Virunga National Park in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), WWF announced recently.

This is the first sign of okapi presence in Virunga National Park since August 1959 according to official records.

The discovery happened during a recent survey led by the global conservation organization and its governmental Congolese partner ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature).

Still rare and threatened, the okapi lives nowhere else than in tall primary forests of eastern DRC, mainly in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve, centered around the village of Epulu. But the species was originally discovered further east in the forests along the Semliki valley, now in the Virunga National Park – created in 1925 and today a World Heritage site protected by international and national laws.

The survey team also included staff from Gillman International Conservation as well as trackers from the local Bambabuti and Twa communities, who know how to spot signs of okapi. The team was studying the status of the forests and threatened species such as elephants and chimpanzees when they recorded 17 okapi tracks including prints in the mud and evidence of browsing and dung. They also noted the presence of the bongo, a rare large forest antelope which has not been recorded in the area for 50 years either.

The lowland sector of Virunga National Park has been the hideout for different rebel groups over the past 20 years. This has prevented ICCN from patrolling the areas. The difficult terrain has also prevented logging and farming there, which, according to WWF, explains why the rare species has survived unnoticed.

"The rediscovery of okapis in Virunga National Park after almost half a century is a positive sign. As the country is returning to peace, it shows that the protected areas in this troubled region are now havens for rare wildlife once more," said Marc Languy, of WWF's Eastern Africa Regional Programme. "Key species have survived a critical period but a lot remains to be done to preserve them."

WWF and ICCN have been working together with local communities in the Virunga



The Okapi - closest known relative to the Giraffe, rediscovered in East of DRC

National Park since 1987 despite recurrent unrest in the area. Conservation activities include the participatory demarcation of the parks boundaries, peaceful relocation of illegal settlers, community agroforestry projects, and environmental education.

However, WWF is still very concerned by massive human activity within the protected area and calls by local political leaders inviting farmers to farm inside the national park.

"As the okapi is the national symbol of ICCN, to see it back in Virunga is very encouraging for our rangers who went through difficult times during the past few years and is a reward to their legendary commitment," said Norbert Mushenzi, the ICCN senior warden in charge of the area where the rediscovery took place. "But ICCN needs continued support from its partners and local people to stop illegal activity in the park and conserve the forest and wildlife for future generations"

WWF urges the DRC government to take appropriate measures to ensure the long-term protection and conservation of the Virunga National Park. Otherwise, the okapi's return to the area may be short-lived.

(Written with report from WWF Network)

Leatherbacks are back in Gabon

A moving marine turtle season has come to an end in the Gamba Complex in Gabon. Results of four years of intensive monitoring show that after three years of decline, the leatherbacks have come back to Gabon's virgin beaches.

The ever growing monitoring team, consisting of six IBONGA (local conservation NGO) employees working as research assistants, managed by a graduate from the School of Water and Forests (ENEF), employed by WWF, was this year reinforced by Suzanne Livingstone, a leatherback expert who just finished her PhD at the University of Glasgow.

Suzanne investigated nest ecology and nest temperatures. Temperature studies on marine turtle nests are interesting as the temperature influences the sex ratio of the hatchlings. A rise of one degree Celsius in the nests leads to only female hatchlings as a drop of one degree leads to only male hatchlings. With the global warming effect these kinds of studies become more and more relevant. Nests were studied in their natural habitat and in a hatchery (enclosure). Nest temperatures on the beach were slightly lower than average (29.07°C versus 29.5 °C), so probably a higher percentage of male hatchlings are produced on the beaches of the Gamba Complex. In the hatchery, hatching success was higher because of the absence of predators, inundation and destructive roots, temperatures were also higher (29,6 °C). The latter is most probably caused of the lack of natural wash over by the sea and man dug egg chambers. The higher temperatures did speed up the developing process and most probably led to more female leatherbacks.

Apart from this intensive nest ecology study, WWF Gamba also participated in the aerial surveys to monitor the distribution of marine turtle nests along the entire coastline of Gabon. Three surveys have been done (December, January, and February). Data has not been analyzed yet, but extreme high numbers of leatherback nest were recorded just before the Congolese border, where no research team is permanently present.

Another important activity this year was the deployment of three satellite transmitters in the Framework of the Trans-Atlantic Leatherback Migration Program initiated by WWF-LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean). With the help of PROTOMAC's (EU funded regional Marine turtle Programme) turtle experts and the team of "Gabon Environnement" (Gabonese NGO) three transmitters were successfully mounted in Pongara National Park, who can now be followed on:

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/latin_america_and_caribbean/our_solutions/marine_turtle_programme/leatherback_tracking_project/tracking_logs/index.cfm

As mentioned before this year's monitoring results show a change in leatherback nesting numbers. After three

years of decline in nesting numbers, the leatherbacks returned in the highest numbers (estimated at 2500 on 200 km of beach) ever recorded over the last four years (see graph).

These four year cycles and general fluctuation in nesting numbers are found on many research sites around the Atlantic, and confirms a normal nesting behavior. Only long term monitoring (10-15 years) would be able to show trends in nesting populations. Ibonga and WWF will



A member of the Ibonga team measuring a leatherback on the Gamba Beach

therefore continue their important work for the many seasons to come with help from The European Union Program "RAPAC" and The US Fish and Wildlife Service initiative "MTCA" and hopefully many others so that Gabon can keep on enquiring knowledge to protect one of the largest nesting leatherback populations in the world.

By Bas Verhage



Little leatherback on the Gamba Beach struggles to make its way to the water where it will continue its growth

Cameroon Looks toward a Future of Conservation, Minister Says (during visit to Washington)

Cameroon's environmental future depends on creating new economic opportunities and a new, cooperative mindset in the communities surrounding protected areas, Cameroonian Minister of Forestry and Wildlife Egbe Achuo Hillmann told the Washington File July 27.

The minister, during a weeklong trip to Washington to promote several ongoing conservation projects, expressed hope that the efforts will succeed.

Cameroon is sometimes called "Africa in miniature," he said, for its extraordinary biodiversity. The country boasts more than 9,000 varieties of plants, and 18 percent of the nation's territories are protected areas, somewhat above the CBD recommended threshold of 12 percent.

Rural poverty presents great challenges to conservation, however, and Cameroon has undergone a net loss of forests of .65 percent per year. The destruction stems from several economic activities, both legal and illegal: slash and burn agricultural practices, over fishing and unsustainable logging and mining, among others.

As fully 70 percent of Cameroon's citizens depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, creating other economic opportunities is a fundamental element of conservation in the country, he said. Egbe Achuo would like to see the creation of a better infrastructure -- roads, schools and hospitals -- to help these citizens, as well as stimulate the development of eco-tourism, fishing ponds and game farming as alternate forms of subsistence.

New thinking is necessary as well, said Egbe Achuo, "to train the minds of people to accept the conservation areas as property that belongs to everyone, including them." Cameroon needs to strike a balance, he said, with "the right of use, without abuse."

This is where the U.S. government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) -- "people with a long record" of conservation - can help, he said. Their expertise is necessary to help develop a "sentiment of global belonging" to discourage the exploitation of the environment.

Egbe Achuo said that after what he called an "extensive dialogue in several areas," some officials of different U.S. government agencies expressed interest in lending their expertise to Cameroon's efforts, particularly through education. This training would be most helpful in the areas of alleviating poverty, promoting good governance of forest areas and combating illegal poaching, he said.

The U.S. Department of State already funds several conservation efforts in the region, contributing or generating \$150 million to conserve tropical forests worldwide and co-sponsoring regional ministerial conferences on fighting forest crime. One such conference will be held in the fall in Cameroon's capital, Yaoundé.

Most State Department funding goes through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which channels funds through some of its conservation partners. The Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), a long-term USAID initiative, helps combat deforestation and ensure biodiversity.

Cameroon already has made significant progress. In the past



Photo: WWF-CARPO / Peter NGEA

Minister Egbe Achuo Hillmann (left) signs partnership agreement with WWF in Yaoundé

two years, the government has established four national parks spanning 825,377 hectares. It also has taken part in two trans-boundary conservation initiatives, one with the Central African Republic and the Congo, and the other with the Congo and Gabon. These countries are "making history as a reference in Africa," said Egbe Achuo, and might inspire others on the continent.

A senior State Department official called Cameroon one of the leaders of environmental conservation in the region, adding that Egbe Achuo had impressed many officials with his serious attitude toward environmental conservation and enforcement of forest law, such as the prosecution of poachers.

"It's clear that there was a lot of interest" in the Cameroonian minister's proposals and in a continued dialogue, said the official. One proposal called for linking several existing protected areas, perhaps involving other countries as well, to create more extensive environmental corridors.

Cameroon would like to establish a trust fund to support this work. The United States might provide assistance in setting this up, Egbe Achuo suggested, thus giving international donors the opportunity to help.

Members of the Global Forest and Trade Network, a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) initiative to improve forest management, also met with the Cameroonian delegation. About 25 percent of Cameroon's forest is included in this program, which helps train forest administrators and local populations in conservation techniques and also supports community forest management.

The meeting with the Forest and Trade Network also included discussions of how to help industries interested in decreasing their environmental impact obtain international funds to do so.

Successful implementation of Cameroon's conservation and training programs will help reduce the hardships of the rural poor and also benefit the environment, Egbe Achuo said. The minister added that he felt he had been able to "drive home this message" to members of the WWF and some government officials at a conference on July 25. The group reiterated its commitment to its activities in Cameroon, ending "on a very hopeful note," Egbe Achuo said.

(Culled from an article written by Elisa Walton (Washington File Staff Writer))

Interview

Gorilla habituation will be difficult without the expertise of the BaAka Pygmy people

David Greer and Chloe Cippoletta

The key ingredient to habituating western gorillas is to elicit the invaluable contribution of the BaAka pygmy trackers. Without their expertise, it is an otherwise, impossible feat. Their ability to follow the nearly invisible traces that gorillas leave behind is a trait that only they have really mastered. This is the testimony of two dedicated WWF field staff in Dzanga Sangha, (Central African Republic) David Greer and Chloe Cippoletta who have worked so heartily over the years for WWF with focus on improving the livelihood of locals. Just before David and Chloe left their Bai Hokou camp to continue their careers elsewhere, the Regional Communication Manager for WWF CARPO, Peter Ngea got them to share their experiences in the following interview:



David Greer observes a group of Gorilla near Bai Hokou camp

'The BaAka are an amazing group of people. They carry with them this incredibly appealing illness and it is very contagious. Its symptoms are lots of happiness and loads of laughter'

When did you start working in Dzanga Sangha?

David: I began working at Dzanga-Sangha in 1998, though not initially with WWF. I was habituating a group of gorillas at Mondika Research Center (in the Ndoki sector of the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park), which straddles the border of Congo and CAR. I joined the WWF team in 2002.

Chloe: I started to work at Dzanga-Sangha in 1998: Bai Hokou camp was a small camp with two huts and 6 other people working in the Program. Gradually we expanded the camp and the team, which now numbers approximately 40 national staff, and includes international volunteers and researchers as well.

What does your job entail?

David: As the park advisor, my primary responsibility is to closely collaborate with the Dzanga-Sangha Project's conservation team. This entails everything from writing funding proposals, to ensuring that the team of guards is well equipped. Most importantly, it also requires that I periodically accompany the guards into the forest on reconnaissance missions. This is the most rewarding part of the job, watching the wildlife guards in the forest actively ensuring the protection of their biodiversity, often under harsh and dangerous conditions.

Chloe: Over the past 8 1/2 years I have supervised the Dzanga-Sangha Primate Habituation Program, based at Bai Hokou. The main objective of this program is to develop a controlled form of tourism based on the tracking and viewing of gorillas. To diversify the attractiveness of our program, in 2004 we started the follow of a group of over 100 agile mangabeys.

To habituate both the gorillas and the mangabeys, we maintain a regular presence in the forest behind the groups, all year round. Everyday, from 6h00 to 18h00, three or more of our teams are somewhere in the forest, tracking, observing or leading tourists to view wild gorillas or mangabeys.

From the beginning, the creation of a detailed map of our area was fundamental, so as to be able to quickly locate the animals and find our way around. Also part of the initial work was to establish a series of guidelines to prevent potential risks associated with our work.

Luckily, I did not need to worry about training people to find gorillas : the most important task



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being already secured by the BaAka's exceptional skills. Training concentrated on how to behave in front of wild gorillas, how to record ecological and behavioral data, how to guide tourists.

From the start, we established a long term data collection protocol, aiming to gather ecological information on the basic needs of the groups followed. Most importantly, we aimed from the beginning to monitor our impact on the gorillas' health and behavior, with the objective to reduce it to a minimum level.

Through the years, my involvement with the ecotourism program in Bayanga increased, as did the number of tourists who visited the gorilla.

Describe your typical day at work?

David: An office day entails sitting down with the anti-poaching supervisor, Josue Nambama and several of his unit chiefs to hash out anti-poaching strategies, which change daily. We consolidate information received from informants and from any activity patterns we can attempt to predict and then send the teams out accordingly. The office day also entails ensuring that the cars, fuel, food and field equipment are in adequate condition and supply in order to carry-out the field missions.

A field day also requires reflection on anti-poaching strategies, depending on the information received prior to the mission and/or from the cues we receive during the mission in the field, which can come in auditory (e.g., gunshots) or visual form (e.g., human footprints). Typically, we'll cover as much ground as possible in order to increase our chances of locating, and thus reacting to these signs. We'll also target frequently traveled foot paths on which to carry out 'ambushes.' We may conduct an early morning mission, from 4:00 on, or perhaps carry out a midnight ambush in an attempt to locate illegal night hunters.

Chloe: Everybody familiar with the field will agree that no such thing as a typical day exists! When following gorillas or agile mangabeys, I may leave at 6am to reach the groups where they were left the previous day. During my stay with the group I will make observations on their behavior and health, as much as on their feeding and movements. I will return to camp by 13h30, as the afternoon team will be continuing the follow till 18h00. In camp, I will enter the day's data. If I was part of the afternoon team, I would leave camp at 11 and return by 18h00. The evenings are for discussing the day's events and make planning for the next day search of gorillas or follows of the regular groups.

When tourists visit, we welcome them with a brief presentation and instruction on our guidelines. As there is always room for improvement, we encourage them to give us feedback filling our questionnaires.

Whenever there is time, I check on the data of

the gorillas and mangabeys, to assure they are recorded consistently, I look for the trends and when needed introduce changes (like in the number of visitors, duration of visit etc).

As we are always joined by international volunteers and researchers, I try to assist whenever needed to make their contribution to our project has helpful to them as it is to us.

How much do you interact with locals during your work?

David: As the project headquarters is located in the village of Bayanga, I interact with the local community on a daily basis. Additionally, when I am on patrol with the guards and trackers we encounter locals in the forest regularly, some of whom are in the forest legally but many of whom are conducting illegal activities.

Chloe: Habituating gorillas for tourism has as much to do with local collaborations as it has to do with working with the gorillas. To start, the follow and habituation of gorillas would never have been possible without the extensive knowledge of the BaAka trackers, which are the real backbone of our program. The dedication of the assistants from Bayanga and their increased passion towards their work has also proved very important to spread the word in the village and create understanding for what we were doing. Finally, in as much as they all contributed to the success of our program, I am truly hopeful that the success of our program will make a positive contribution to their life and that of the people in their villages.

Gorilla habituation: how would you describe this to someone who has no idea?

David & Chloe: Gorilla habituation is a very long, arduous process. People have been trying to do this for years with western gorillas but with only very limited success. The key ingredient to habituating western gorillas is to▶▶▶

'I am truly hopeful that the success of our program will make a positive contribution to their life and that of the people in their villages'



Chloe relaxes with a BaAka family after a local meal

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elicit the invaluable contribution of the BaAka pygmy trackers. Without their expertise, it is an otherwise, nearly impossible feat. Their ability to follow the nearly invisible traces that gorillas leave behind is a trait that only they have really mastered.

The habituation process itself requires that we make daily contact with the group allowing them to become accustomed to our presence. This obliges us to gain their trust and thus encourage them to recognize that we are not there to harm them or compete with them for resources (or mates!). Once they begin to understand this, they permit us to spend increasingly more time near them. Eventually, they come to see us as a neutral element in their environment and they begin to ignore us. This then allows us to observe their movements without highly influencing their behavior.

Briefly speaking, what has happened over the past few years on gorilla habituation in Bai Hokou?

David & Chloe: At the start there was no certainty we could really succeed in habituating gorillas, as many people had tried before at several other sites in central Africa, unsuccessful-

fully.

Gorilla habituation is a very slow process which requires a long term commitment and the presence of very skilled trackers. It turned out that at Bai Hokou we had both of these ingredients. During the 8 ½ years at Bai Hokou, we successfully habituated 2 gorilla groups, a large community of over 100 agile mangabeys and we are in the process of habituating a third gorilla group. Well over 500 tourists have visited the habituated gorillas these past years and a number of documentaries have increased their notoriety at the international level.

Do you think ecotourism has a place in Central African economies?

David & Chloe: We still have a long way to go in Central Africa regarding eco-tourism development. Although special hotspots of biodiversity such as Dzanga-Sangha offer exceptional tourism opportunities, much economic investment must be put in place in order to make the destinations in the Central Africa appealing to international tourists. However, to improve the ecotourism potential in this area, substantial funding is not the only thing needed. A real commitment from the Central African governments is fundamental to guarantee the protection of their respective countries' biodiversity. With its healthy populations of elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees and other flagship species, Central Africa offers a unique attraction for the expanding tourism sector.

Future tourism success will largely depend on how well the product is marketed. We cannot simply say that 'there are elephants, gorillas and indigenous cultures here, so come and see them,' though this would indeed work with a small number of tourists. It has to be something more like; 'we offer you the extraordinary opportunity to accompany the true experts of the forest, the BaAka pygmies, in search of rare and elusive forest elephants and western lowland gorillas, found in one of the last remote forests remaining on earth'....it has to be raw and adventurous, yet with comfortable accommodations and a real comprehension of 'customer service.' Considering our current level of infrastructure, this is not an easy feat to accomplish. We have to appeal to a market that has not yet been well-exploited (though we must do it consciously). If we can do this correctly, then there is a great chance for success.

We must also eliminate 'les tracasseries,' the hassles that well-meaning and well-paying tourists experience along the way. These guests immediately return to their home countries to tell everyone they can that they should not go to Central Africa. If we cannot completely do away with these hassles, tourism will never reach its full potential here.

We must also maintain political and social stability. At the moment, for example, even though▶▶▶

'We must also eliminate 'les tracasseries,' the hassles that well-meaning and well-paying tourists experience... then return to their home countries to tell everyone they can that they should not go to Central Africa'

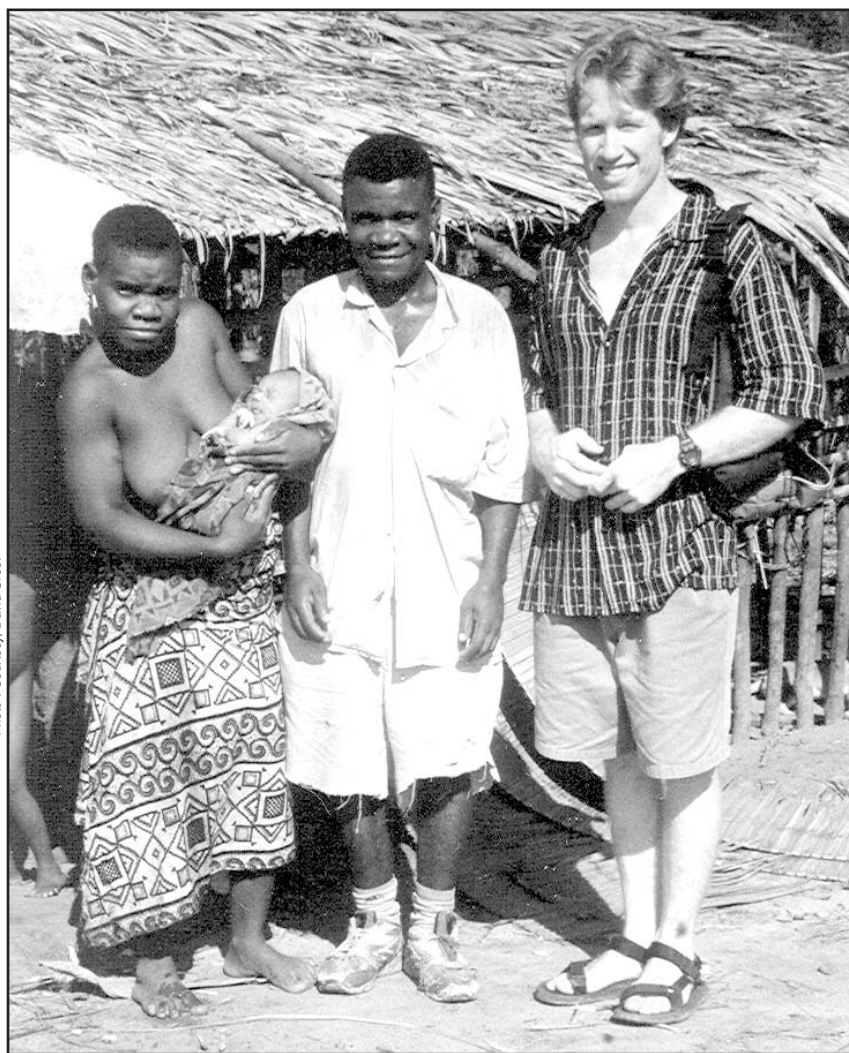


Photo : Courtesy, David Greer

The BaAka were a major reason why we stayed for so long

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we know that CAR is a relatively safe destination for visitors, other governments, particularly western ones, still consider it a 'no-go zone.'

Ultimately, we must recognize that tourists want to see something different than what they have in their hometowns. Gorillas, elephants, local cultures...this is what they want to see. Thus, we must do all we can to protect these assets. Indigenous rights must be respected (and in most cases, elevated) and wildlife laws must be enforced. Without this assurance, Central Africa will remain just another poor African country. And if we continue to empty its forests and 'westernize' its cultures, any attempt to develop a successful tourism venture will be unsuccessful.

What advice will you give to the gov't of CAR in the area as far as environment management is concerned?

David & Chloe: Firstly, uphold the wildlife/protected area laws and enforce appropriate consequences to those who break them. Secondly, revise those laws which are inadequate and outdated. Lastly, implement more environmental/biodiversity education into your school curriculums. If the younger generation can grasp the importance of preserving its biodiversity, this understanding will remain with them when they mature and enter into the career market. Whether they become a policeman, a politician, an economist or a biologist, all these professions have a role to play in environmental management. When this common understanding exists on all societal levels, we can better begin to work together and achieve our goals of biodiversity preservation and economic prosperity.

What are your anxieties or regrets?

David: Of course, I am very anxious and even sad about leaving; however, I am also very excited about pursuing the next endeavor, which will undoubtedly be in wildlife conservation. Although I am very proud of what I have helped to accomplish here at Dzanga-Sangha, I certainly regret that I could not have done more. For example, although we've made tremendous strides in conservation and anti-poaching, we have still had endangered animals killed on our watch. For me, one endangered death is too many. However, working with what I believe may be the best team of guards in Central Africa, has been incredibly rewarding. Watching them excel under such difficult circumstances has been extraordinarily encouraging.

Chloe: Once you have been part of habituating wild animals you have a great responsibility towards them. They no longer fear humans and can thus be an easy prey for poachers. Additionally, close contacts with humans (our teams, the tourists) increases the risk of disease transmission. Although measures are in place to reduce all risks, once habituation has



Photo : WWF-CANON / Martin HARVEY

It is as though the BaAka don't have time to be sad and angry

been achieved, together with the success come the worries: somehow anxieties is something I am already accustomed to feel.

What is your opinion about BaAkas?

David: The BaAka are an amazing group of people. They are a major reason why we have stayed here for so long. They carry with them this incredibly appealing illness and it is very contagious. Its symptoms are lots of happiness and loads of laughter. It is as though they don't have time to be sad and angry. Life is simply too short for this. Moreover, they truly are the experts of the forest. Our most peaceful, comfortable and gratifying moments here are when we are in the forest with the BaAka. We'll cherish these moments forever.

Chloe: The BaAka, as a group of people, often personify the idea of 'traditional forest people'. In that respect, there is really no equal to their knowledge of the forest, the ease with which they move in it, find food and shelter. As it is often said about them, they truly have an incredible tendency towards happiness, and it is contagious. Yet, the world around the BaAka has changed very fast. As they too change and try to adapt to the different opportunities and pressures, they sometimes seem to be moving at different paces. At times they seem, like many cultures, African and Western alike, ready to jeopardize this amazing culture in a cup of palm wine. Yet, back in the forest, it seems that time has a parallel dimension, where the BaAka live in confidence, with their usual joie de vivre. It will be difficult to take the best of the new opportunities while keeping all that is valuable of their unique culture. My wish is for them to be able to do so. Protecting their forest, while guaranteeing the BaAka's right to use it, is a way to contribute to make it happen.

'...It is as though they don't have time to be sad and angry. Life is simply too short for this...'

Elephants Are Still Heavily Persecuted For Ivory Trade –

Dr. Michael Loomis, North Carolina Zoo Veterinarian

Is almost a decade since WWF Cameroon and North Carolina Zoo Society signed a technical agreement to collaborate in field research to protected savannah and forest elephant populations in Cameroon. The work consists of tagging and monitoring species population in the wild. Data is collected on movement patterns of species, major corridors and other bio-sociological factors that may affect populations in the wild. . One person who has been instrumental to this conservation exercise on the ground is Dr. Michael Loomis, a veteran Veterinarian from the U.S. During his recent elephant tagging trip to Cameroon, journalist Pegue Manga got the soft spoken specialist to talk about his business with elephants. Excerpts:

Who is Dr. Mike Loomis

Dr. Michael Loomis: I am an America Veterinarian. I work for the North Carolina Zoological Park. I have worked on zoo and wildlife medicine for my entire career -, over 25 years now. I have been working for the World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF and the Ministry in charge of wildlife in Cameroon for Elephant Conservation for the past nine years.

What is elephant Conservation?

M.L.: Elephants are very important animals for a variety of rea-

for economically valuable ivory as well as meat for many households in Central and West Africa. Elephant population, due to the ivory trade, plummeted in the 1970s and 1980s. Then the Convention on trade in endangered species passed a resolution preventing the illegal trade in ivory. This convention significantly reduced the number of elephants hunted and subsequently the ivory trade.

However in most parts of Central and West Africa, elephants are still heavily hunted for same demands of ivory and meat.

Ivory trade is mostly international driven by markets in Asia whilst the meat is to meet domestic markets. Therefore, it is important that measures are taken to safeguard existing elephant populations. We need to have good knowledge on species ecology in order to better protect them in the wild. The present work in collaboration with NCZS is to develop good data-base on elephant land use and movement patterns. This information is required for long term monitoring of species populations in the wild as well as to help park wardens develop strategies to combat illegal hunting and bush meat trade reminiscent in range countries. The government of Cameroon and other non-governmental conservation organisations like WWF also use data generated from our studies to develop policies and management approaches aimed at protecting the species.

Taking the case of Southeast of Cameroon, would you say the efforts you have been making to protect elephants are yielding fruits?

M.L.: I think if you look at all of the conservation efforts that are put into play, in the Southeast of Cameroon, it is a situation that you advance two steps and you slide a step backward. It is expensive to provide protection for elephants. In reality you have to rely on local population to buy into conservation or else your efforts will fail. I guess what I can say in some areas of the Southeast, where we are working, particularly in Lobeke-National Park, where we have worked since 2000, I have seen



Photo : WWF-CARPO / M. Tchamba

Dr. Mike Loomis takes a quick photo with a friend besides a tranquilised elephant in the North of Cameroon

sons. They play an important role in forest dynamics as important vectors for dispersal of seeds of certain tree species. Studies have proven that seedlings of certain plant species only germinate well after passing through the digestive tract of elephants. . They are culturally very important, and they are charismatic mega-vertebrates: Elephants are recognised all over the world, even though they are only found in Africa and parts of Asia. They are hunted for variety of reasons, none the least

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a decrease in poaching pressure in some areas of the park, and increase pressure in other areas. The first time I went to Lobeke, we heard gunshots every night and we found fresh poacher camps and elephants carcasses. But over the last couple of years, I have been to Lobeke, the number of illegal activities in the park have decreased. But it is very, very important to keep the anti-poaching pressure on because if we relinquish the efforts poaching will resuscitate. We are partners with WWF and they have an agreement with Cameroon government. WWF is doing an excellent job in anti-poaching in some areas. If you look at the range of elephants in Southeast Cameroon, it is pretty large. To maintain a significant anti-poaching pressure through out that kind of range is extremely expensive. That is where part of the information data-base we are producing in collaboration with WWF is very useful. Since we are looking at elephant movement patterns, we can apply that information to other activities such as anti-poaching operations. If we have been able to identify elephant corridors, important areas where elephants are found then anti-poaching operations will be oriented to other troubled spots. Also, sensitisation and education programs will focus on some of these areas so that the local population has a better understanding of conservation and its values.

What is elephant tagging?

M.L.: Since 1988, we have been putting satellite collars on elephants in several locations in Cameroon. We started in the Far North and the North Provinces and then extended to the Southeast Province. Ideally the collars should put on a matriarch of the herd of elephants. Elephants are matrilineal: the boss of the family is the oldest and largest female. And if we put a collar on a matriarch, then rather than tracking a single elephant, we have a herd. For example, in Waza National Park in north Cameroon, as many as 250 elephants move out of the park during the rainy season and follow the same corridor south. So instead of following a single elephant, that has been collared, in ideal sense we follow 250 elephants, which is virtually a major movement of elephants. We have been able to amass tremendous amount of data of movement pattern of a herd out of Waza National Park.

In order to put Satellite tracking collars on elephants one has to go into an area that has been identified as important for developing data for use in elephant conservation. There are a lot of areas that elephants are found but these areas may not be quite as important in developing data for movement and land use patterns. So the first thing to do is identify an area where elephants are located which are usually areas of major conservation value. Once that is done, we follow tracks sometimes to a place where the elephant is resting, and then we try to dart it.

Once we get the anaesthetic dart on the elephant, it falls asleep and we put a collar on the elephant. The collars that we use have two transmitters. One of the transmitters goes to weather satellites and the information is downloaded to a location in North Carolina. We then get the elephant's location daily from the weather satellite. The second transmitter has a short range and is usually taken to the field for on the ground identification of elephant presence.

How costly is the process exercise?

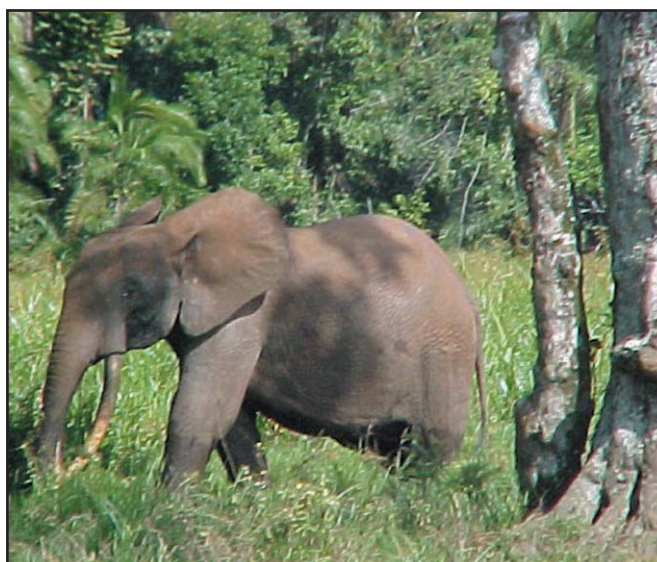
M.L.: The whole process is very expensive. The collars and cells cost approximately 5000 US dollars. The satellite time to monitor movement patterns cost about 1700 US dollars/year per animal. The field cost which consists primarily of guide fees, porters, food rations is high.

What are some of the field difficulties you have experienced in Cameroon?

M.L.: There are always illnesses and injuries in the field. The most severe injury occurred last year in Northern Cameroon where one of my Cameroon colleagues, Dr. Martin Tchamba who was seriously wounded by an elephant coming out of anaesthesia. We were able to treat his wounds, until he stopped bleeding, and get him to the hospital in about six hours. He underwent four hours of surgery and a second operation in Europe. He is doing quite well now. Every year when we go to the field, at least one person comes down with malaria, which we treat. People also have injuries such as muscle strains, cuts and scratches and bruises. During the most recent trip, we had one of our team members dislocated a shoulder.

Have you ever been attacked by elephants?

M.L.: In several occasions, elephants charged at me. One thing I always caution my field colleagues and team is that you cannot outrun an elephant. Sometimes you can out-bluff an elephant but the best thing to do is to quickly get behind a tree for safety. That has always been my strategy in such circumstances.



Forest elephant in Lobeke National Park

Photo : WWF-CARPO / Jéngi

It is very, very important to keep the antipoaching pressure on because if we relinquish the efforts, poaching will resuscitate

La « Pause Café », espoir au cœur d'une réserve

'je sais que beaucoup de gens dans le monde continuerons à venir voir les animaux de la réserve et ils auront besoin de mes services- un bon repas et un logement'

L'extrême pauvreté, des opportunités économiques limitées sont des caractéristiques particulières des populations qui vivent autour de la Réserve Dzanga Sangha, à l'ouest de la République Centrafricaine. Cette combinaison a contribué à créer une énorme pression à la fois sur les populations et sur les ressources naturelles étant donné que la survie quotidienne dépend du plus habile.

Avec la campagne de sensibilisation menée par les organisations de conservation qui opèrent dans la région tels que le WWF et l'Agence de coopération technique allemande, la GTZ, les populations abandonnent progressivement le braconnage et les autres activités illégales dans le souci de se tourner vers d'autres moyens de survie durables. Mettre une affaire sur pied dans un coin aussi reculé de la sous région peut être comparable à chercher de l'eau au cœur du désert du Sahara - un véritable casse-tête. Mais

Utilisant son propre argent, et avec la permission du Directeur du projet Dzanga Sangha, Maman Delphine, une native de Bayanga, a pris l'initiative d'ouvrir un restaurant près des bureaux du projet qu'elle a baptisé Pause Café. L'idée est née après avoir réalisé que le personnel du projet travaillait de 7 h30 le matin à 15 heures sans s'arrêter pour déjeuner parce le site était loin de leur maison.

Pendant deux ans Delphine a économisé de l'argent et a peaufiné ses projets de construire ce petit restaurant. Finalement le 15 janvier 2005, le Pause café est devenu une réalité. Le restaurant ouvre du lundi aux vendredi et propose juste le déjeuner avec un seul menu chaque jour. Le personnel du projet et les autres équipes locales apprécient le repas qui leur est offert à un prix raisonnable. Pour chaque repas acheté, de l'eau potable filtrée leur est offert gratuitement tandis que les sodas, thé et café peuvent être achetés à un prix supplémentaire. On ne vend pas de l'alcool au Pause café.

Selon Delphine, la planification reste un exercice épineux et risqué car le chiffre d'affaires est toujours imprévisible. Parfois le restaurant est réellement bondé et la demande pour la nourriture est alors élevée. Mais souvent également, les gens semblent trop occupés pour venir manger. Cette situation rend difficile les achats et la préparation d'une quantité de nourriture précise. Cependant, la femme d'affaire s'adapte aux différentes situations et garde la tête hors de l'eau.

Son projet immédiat est d'économiser assez d'argent pour l'achat d'un réfrigérateur en vue d'une meilleure conservation des aliments et boissons. Par ailleurs, Delphine a un rêve plus grand : « Avec l'aide de Dieu, je serai capable d'ouvrir une case de passage pour les touristes dans les deux ou trois prochaines années - je sais que beaucoup de gens dans le monde continuerons à venir voir les animaux de la réserve et ils auront besoin de mes services- un bon repas et un logement. »



Pause Café : Chez Maman Delphine

comme **Ken Cochrane** l'écrit de Bayanga, (un petit village situé près de la rivière Sangha et qui abrite les organisations de conservation pour le projet Dzanga Sangha), les ambitions pour un hôtel ultra moderne commencent avec un restaurant en bordure de route à menu unique.

WWF Projet Savane prépare la plate-forme de collaboration Guides - Populations riveraines de l'UTO Bénoué

Dans la poursuite de sa mission de prise de contact avec les partenaires, le Chef de Projet WWF Savanes a rendu visite aux 14 Communautés Organisées à la Base (COB) autour du Parc National de la Bénoué. Cette tournée vient après celle effectuée auprès de guides de chasse professionnels au cours de laquelle le WWF Projet Savanes leur a proposé une offre de collaboration en vue d'assurer de manière durable la lutte contre le braconnage dans l'UTO Bénoué et le respect des cahiers de charge. Les guides de chasse sont des opérateurs économiques qui louent les zones de chasse et payent une taxe annuelle proportionnelle à la superficie de la zone. Un cahier de charge est signé à cet effet et définit les droits et les devoirs du guide. Il doit gérer ainsi la zone en bon écologiste, ayant pour objectif constant la recherche de beau trophée, protéger et maintenir le capital faunique à un niveau optimal.

La mission de six jours effectuée auprès des communautés avait plusieurs objectifs : (i) Présenter le nouveau chef du projet WWF Savanes aux COBs autour du PNB; (ii) Evaluer le niveau de collaboration entre les guides et les populations ; (iii) Négocier une plate-forme de collaboration entre les COBs et les guides de chasse professionnels exerçant autour du PNB, (iv) Poser les bases sur le processus de négociation d'une délimitation des zones agricoles des populations au sein des ZICs amodiées ; (v) Apprécier les réalisations des guides auprès des communautés suivant le cahier de charges, (vi) Evaluer les réalisations faites par les COBs avec la taxe rétrocédée par l'administration en charge de la faune et des aires protégées.

Constats généraux

Le premier constat qui se dégage de ces rencontres est qu'il n'y a pas de contact entre certains guides et les populations riveraines. Les communautés dans l'ensemble décrivent cette attitude des guides qui ne respectent pas les civilités africaines à savoir une visite de courtoisie en début de saison cynégétique. Cette visite de courtoisie peut permettre de régler bon nombre de problèmes et qui sont parfois des malentendus ou un manque de circulation de l'information. Le braconnage qui sévit dans toutes les ZICs peut aussi trouver en partie des solutions par la mise en place de cadre de dialogue entre les populations et les guides respectifs à travers des comités d'auto surveillance. La présence des éco gardes villageois dans toutes les communautés est un atout. La communication reste une des voies prometteuses pour pallier ces problèmes.

Le second constat est le non-respect du cahier de charge par les guides de chasse professionnel. Les clauses

du cahier de charge en ce qui concerne les œuvres sociales, (à savoir une œuvre sociale par an et par guide ; 80% du personnel à recruter localement) ne sont pas ou très peu exécutées. La plupart des villages n'ont jamais bénéficié de l'appui des guides.

Le troisième constat est que le braconnage dans la zone de chasse est rampant. Il est entretenu soit par les populations riveraines qui reçoivent et hébergent les braconniers étrangers de la zone, ou alors certains gardes de campement qui ont la confiance totale des guides et qui organisent le braconnage de la zone pendant la saison de pluies, période pendant laquelle les guides sont en congé.

Le quatrième constat est que la viande issue des safaris n'est pas rétrocédée aux populations riveraines aux ZICs, contrairement aux clauses du cahier de charge. Dans certains cas, il ressort que cette viande est vendue parfois par leurs personnels avec l'onction des guides. Certains employés actuellement en congé affirment qu'ils sont payés par les recettes de cette viande. S'il faut reconnaître que le cahier de charge autorise au guide de disposer de la viande comme il le veut, il faut reconnaître, que le même cahier de charge lui interdit formellement de la vendre, car, cette situation tend à légaliser toutes les viandes de brousse qui se retrouvent sur les marchés et à encourager le braconnage.▶▶▶



Photo : WWF-CARPO / INSSP

Certaines communautés, celles des ZIC 2 Nord (Doudja) et ZIC 3 (Taboun) ont développé une bonne stratégie de surveillance des zones respectives. Elles ont habillé leurs gardes communautaires villageois (tenues complètes) et assurent une motivation minimale. Impliquer les éco gardes villageois à la surveillance de la zone, minimise les coûts de conservation notamment ceux relatifs à la lutte contre le braconnage

News

Position du WWF

Au cours des rencontres avec les populations, le Chef de Projet a donné la position du WWF dans le cadre de la gestion participative des ressources naturelles.

- Le WWF est une organisation internationale de conservation de la biodiversité. Il s'assure que les ressources naturelles sont durablement gérées tout en s'assurant que les conditions de vie des populations locales sont améliorées et garanties pour les générations présentes et futures.

- Le WWF prône bonne gouvernance à travers l'équité et la transparence dans la gestion des retombées de la conservation. Son rôle est de faciliter la plate-forme de collaboration entre les différents utilisateurs des ressources naturelles afin de restaurer une population viable des espèces menacées, établir les mécanismes de gestion efficace des aires protégées, minimiser les conflits et se rassurer que les communautés locales bénéficient des retombées économiques et financières de la conservation. Pour cela, une des solutions est le respect des engagements pris par les guides vis à vis de l'Etat du Cameroun, lesquels sont consignés dans le cahier de charge. Toutefois, les populations doivent cesser des actes illégaux d'exploitation de la faune. Elles doivent comprendre par ailleurs que les taxes qui leur sont rétrocédées proviennent de la chasse sportive et que la mise en péril de la faune affecterait négativement le montant de la taxe qui leur est rétrocédée. Les œuvres sociales ne seront pas réalisées, et l'amélioration de leur condition de vie ne serait qu'un rêve. Les communautés devraient donc se mobiliser pour surveiller leurs villages contre les installations des braconniers, dénoncer toute manœuvre tendant à compromettre la protection des ressources naturelles. Cette attitude préparerait les communautés à la politique de décentralisation de gestion des ressources naturelles.

Des actions qui interpellent le WWF Savane et ses partenaires

Les actions suivantes à court et moyen terme sont à entreprendre sous les auspices du MINFOF et du WWF. Il s'agit de :

- Provoquer en début de la prochaine saison cynégétique, une réunion de concertation entre les guides de chasse et les COBs des zones respectives. Prendront part à cette réunion le préfet du Mayo Rey Président du Comité de Suivi du Plan d'Aménagement du Parc National de la Bénoué, le Conservateur du Parc National de la Bénoué, les responsables locaux du MINFOF et le Directeur de la Faune et des Aires Protégées au MINFOF à Yaoundé. Ces réunions de concertation seront facilitées par le WWF. Les recommandations de ces réunions

seront consignées dans les procès verbaux (PV) signés par les parties et le suivi de la mise en œuvre des PV sera assuré par le Préfet ou son représentant.

- Intensifier les campagnes d'information et de sensibilisation de masse sur le braconnage. Les cibles sont les élèves des écoles primaires et secondaires, les fonctionnaires des administrations publiques et privées. Les canaux de communication seront les tracts, les posters, table ronde, causerie éducative...

- Utiliser les gardes communautaires déjà présents dans les villages pour les patrouilles de lutte anti braconnage (LAB). Un pladoyer sera fait auprès des communes décentralisées qui perçoivent une bonne partie de la taxe d'affermage (40%) afin qu'elles investissent au moins un pourcentage (5-10%) au profit de la conservation. Il s'agira du recrutement, de la formation et de la prise en charge des gardes communaux qui assisteront les Délégations Départementales concernées au LAB. Les conseillers municipaux, considérés comme leader villageois, devront être des messagers pour sensibiliser les populations à la base en leur montrant l'importance de la



Photo : WWF-CARPO / NSSP

Une salle de classe du Cours Préparatoire dans un village de la ZIC 7. Le respect de l'application du cahier de charge par les guides contribuera à améliorer les conditions scolaires des enfants qui ont la destinée de gestion des ressources naturelles.

faune au développement local. Sur le plan technique, le WWF assurera les outils de sensibilisation.

- A l'instar des ZIC 1 et 4, matérialiser les limites des zones agricoles et pastorales arrêtées de commun accord entre les guides et les populations. Les arbres seront utilisés pour cette démarcation.

- Avec l'accord de collaboration signé entre le WWF et l'Ecole de Faune de Garoua d'une part, et d'autre part celui que le WWF négocie avec les guides de chasse de l'UTO Bénoué, la formation des éco gardes villageois et le recyclage des éco gardes MINFOF est envisageable pour renforcer la surveillance dans le parc et les ZICs.

Par Dominique ENDAMANA

Banking on those who live in it and on it

...I know many people from around the world will keep coming to see the animals in the reserve and they will need my services – good food and accommodation”

Extrême poverty and limited economic opportunities are characteristic features that envelope the people living around the Dzanga Sangha Reserve, west of the Central Africa Republic. These have combined to create tremendous pressure on both people and natural resources as daily survival depends on the fittest. With sensitization campaigns carried out by conservation organizations operating in the area such as WWF and the German technical cooperation agency, GTZ, people are gradually shying away from poaching and other illegal activities in a bid to look for alternative and sustainable means of survival. Operating a business in such a remote corner of the sub region can be likened to a search of water in the heart of the Sahara desert - nerve breaking exercise. But as **Ken Cochrane** writes from Bayanga, (a small village nestling by the Sangha River and hosting conservation bodies for the Dzanga Sangha Project), ambitions for an ultra modern hotel begins with a one-menu road-side restaurant.

Using her own money, and with per-

mission from the Dzanga Sangha Project Director, Maman Delphine, a native of Bayanga, took the initiative to open a restaurant which she baptized, Pause Cafe near the project offices. The idea came after she realized that project staff worked from 7:30am to 3:00pm without stopping to eat lunch because it was too far to travel home.

For two years Delphine saved her money and refined her plans to build this small restaurant. Finally on January 15, 2005 the Pause Cafe became a reality. The restaurant opens on Mondays – Friday and offers only lunch with one food option available each day. Project staff and other locals appreciate the meal which is offered them at a reasonable price. Filtered drinking water is provided for free with each meal that is bought, while sodas, tea and coffee can be purchased at some additional cost. Alcohol is not sold at the Pause Cafe.

According to Delphine, planning can sometimes be tricky and risky as turn over is always unpredictable. Sometimes the restaurant is really crowded and demand for food is high. But often too, people seem too busy to come and eat. This makes purchasing and preparing an appropriate amount of food difficult. But the business woman is adapting with the changing attitudes and is holding her head above the water. Her immediate plan is to save enough money to purchase a refrigerator for better preservation of food and drinks. Delphine has a bigger dream: “With God’s help, I will be able to open up a Guesthouse for tourists in the next two or three years – I know many people from around the world will keep coming to see the animals in the reserve and they will need my services – good food and accommodation”.



The Dzanga Bai-Potential tourist destination

Photo : WWF-Caron / M. HARVEY

Improving livelihoods through responsible forestry

‘What we have received is surely not enough compensation for our loss but the recognition that we the people who live in the forest are important and must be taken into consideration each time you bring big machines here to chop down our wood and carry away’

Within the framework of the Central Africa Forest and Poverty Alleviation Programme, CAFAP, in which three conservation organizations (IUCN, CED and WWF), work in synergy in the area of nature conservation and poverty alleviation, the rights of local communities are beginning to gain recognition.

Injustice to local people created by inappropriate logging more than five years ago around some four villages in Meme and Kupe- Muanenguba Divisions of the South West Province of Cameroon has recently been checked. Transformation Reef Cameroun logging company, reportedly exploited timber in a way that resulted to far reaching damages to the local people whose livelihood depends entirely on forests. Cash crops such as cocoa, fruit trees and food crops were reportedly destroyed in the process as falling logs and new roads damaged farms.

The Center for Environment and Development under the umbrella of CAFAP, initiated and facilitated negotiations between these impoverished people and the logging company in order to compensate for past “wrongs” which evidently had aggravated the people’s economic quagmire.

On June 29, 2006 this objective was met as TRC came back to pay out the sum of about U.S \$ 40.000 as compensation to individuals and the community as a whole.

“We think conservation organizations have helped us – they have removed the scales from our eyes and have brought a tonic into our grim way of living. What we have received is surely not enough compensation for our loss but the recognition that we the people who live in the forest are important and must be taken into consideration each time you bring big machines here to chop down our wood and carry away”; notes Chief Etongwe Samuel Itoe, one of the influential traditional leaders of the victimized villages.

“Conservation organizations must safeguard and restore natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations. Forest exploiters have an obligation to harvest wood in a sustainable manner taking in to account the needs of the people whose very lives depends entirely on the forests” says Belmond Tchoumba, CED representative in reaction to the fulfillment of the compensation scheme.

With TRC now a member of the WWF Central African Forestry and Trade Network (CAFTN), and also gunning for certification, the slate must be clean. Responsible forestry is on top of the company’s agenda, according to Mr. Effala Jean, Assistant General Director for TRC. “We now try as much as possible not only to keep a good reputation and relationship with the local people, but also to respect all rules that will enable us carry out sustainable forest management where ever we work. And where it is possible to correct mistakes of the past, like in this case, we won’t hesitate”.

According to Elie Hakizumwami, coordinator of WWF CAFTN; “by becoming a member of CAFTN, Transformation Reef Cameroun has to demonstrate its commitment to responsible forest management and to obtaining Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for its operations and supplies. WWF is convinced that the adoption of sustainable forest management schemes by the company will contribute greatly to conservation and above all for the benefit of the people and also the wildlife”.

By Peter Ngea with field reports from Jane Molisa



Sometimes, all that is left behind is just a trail of dust, a shaken vegetation, broken bridges and an impoverished and sometimes helpless people

Photo : WWF-CARPO / Peter NGEA

WWF People

Chargée de Programme pour le Bureau du Gabon

Célestine Mengue Medou a intégré, le 12 juillet 2006 la famille WWF où elle occupe le poste de Chargée de programme pour le bureau du Gabon à Libreville. Célestine est détentrice d'un doctorat (PhD) en sciences de l'environnement obtenu à l'Université du Québec Montréal, avec spécialisation dans les domaines d'aménagement forestier et évaluation environnementale stratégique. Son expérience professionnelle aussi inclue la conservation communautaire de la biodiversité dans les zones transfrontalières. Avant de s'engager au WWF, Dr Mengue a exercé pendant plusieurs années comme chargée d'études au Ministère Gabonais des Eaux et Forêts.



Célestine Mengue

Forest Officer pour « Un arbre pour la vie »

M. Bene Bene Christophe Lambert a intégré le Projet WWF « Un arbre pour la vie » basé à Garoua le 1er août 2006 en qualité de Forest Officer, responsable de la coordination et du suivi des activités de reboisement pour lutter contre la désertification et réduire les changements climatiques. Depuis 2001, il travaillait pour le programme WWF/Jengi comme Park Assistant où il assurait la coordination de toutes les activités de conservation (suivi écologique, appui à la lutte anti-braconnage, aménagement et développement des infrastructures de base, appui aux communautés locales, etc.) dans et autour du Parc National de Boumba Bek. Dans le même temps, il a coordonné les inventaires fauniques des éléphants et grands singes comme Team Leader du programme MIKE/CITES dans le site de forêt Boumba Bek. Agé de 34 ans, marié et père de 2 enfants, il est titulaire d'un diplôme d'ingénieur des Eaux, Forêts et Chasse obtenu en 1998 à l'Université de Dschang au Cameroun.



Lambert Bene Bene

Chef du Projet DGIS et Coordonnateur du Programme Forêt pour le bureau du Cameroun

François HIOL HIOL a intégré, le 1er juillet 2006, la famille WWF où il occupe le poste de Chef du Projet DGIS et Coordonnateur du Programme Forêt pour le bureau du Cameroun à Yaoundé. François HIOL HIOL est titulaire d'un diplôme de Docteur de l'Université Louis Pasteur de Strasbourg en France en géographie physique, spécialité aménagement des bassins versants forestiers, après une formation initiale d'Ingénieur des Eaux et Forêts à l'École Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie de Yaoundé et un MSc en Foresterie de Auburn University en Alabama aux USA. Dr HIOL HIOL a une longue et riche expérience professionnelle dans la gestion durable des ressources naturelles au Cameroun et dans la sous-région Afrique Centrale : D'abord comme Enseignant-Chercheur au Département de Foresterie de l'Université de Dschang au Cameroun à plein temps (15 ans), puis successivement conseiller technique au Programme Forêt Cameroun du DFID (Coopération du Royaume-Uni, 2 ans) et au Programme de Renforcement des Capacités de la Société Civile camerounaise active dans le secteur forêt mis en œuvre par la SNV (Organisation Néerlandaise pour le Développement, 2 ans) et Directeur du Projet d'Appui à l'Aménagement du Parc National du Mbam et Djerem au Cameroun (2 ans) au sein de WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society). Il a aussi dans son actif de nombreuses missions importantes de consultation en rapport avec le secteur forêt et environnement pour le compte de l'Etat du Cameroun et plusieurs organisations internationales.



François Hiol Hiol

Coordinatrice régionale du Projet DACEFI

Mlle Andrea Paola Mekui Biyogo a rejoint la grande famille du WWF en tant que Coordinatrice régionale du Projet DACEFI basée à Libreville au Gabon. Paola a longtemps servi en tant que gestionnaire de base des données d'informations géographiques (SIG) auprès du Projet Minkebe, pour le compte du ministère des Eaux et Forêts. Paola a su s'imprégner des procédures du WWF pendant les sept années passées au sein du projet. Son implication accomplie à plusieurs niveaux de la conservation à Minkebe, doublée d'un rattachement séculaire au sein du ministère des Eaux et Forêts, permettra certainement au projet DACEFI d'atteindre les objectifs qu'il s'est fixés.



Andrea Paola Mekui Biyogo

Gardons notre
planète propre



Notre monde étouffe
sous les sacs plastique

