

## BREAKING NEWS: first film of a Golden Cat in Guinea Bissau

We discovered a feline species on a film taken by one of our trail cameras in the Boé of which we thought that it might be an African Golden Cat (*Caracal aurata*). Several experts studied the images and confirmed our observation. This is very exciting news, because until now the occurrence of the Golden Cat has only been confirmed for the south of Senegal and south-eastern Guinea. Our camera image is not only the most recent observation of the species in the last 20-30 years for West Africa but also the first observation for Guinea Bissau. The species is on the IUCN red list. For the second time this year, beginning of this year we could confirm by tracks and images the return of the lion to Guinea Bissau, this observation shows that community based nature conservation works well.



A golden cat in Gabon (website IUCN)

## Chimpanzee survey

All the fieldwork we agreed to do following the PANAF protocol of the Max Planck Institute is finished. Joost, Els, Menno, Benjamin, Iris and of course Amadu Sadjo, Samba, Mussa and Saccamussa collected a lot of material and data. They walked more than 150 km of transects on difficult terrain; made an inventory of all the plants in 250 habitat plots; checked 227 trees monthly for leaves, flowers or fruits; collected and watched more than 30.000 films, of which 1137 films with chimpanzees; collected faeces and hairs for genetic research; gathered geological data, etc. etc. All data have been sent to the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig (Germany) for further analysis and will be compared with the same kind of data of 40 other sites in Africa. The researchers of the Max Planck Institute are impressed by the quality of our collected data. We hope to learn how important our area is in comparison to other areas where chimpanzees live after the analysis of all material, in about 2 or 3 years. A bathing chimpanzee, like the one on this image, is certainly very rare.



Chimpanzee in the Boé (image trail camera)

## Cooperation with IBAP

We have been working closely with IBAP for a long time now. All students and volunteers that are doing research for us



get a permit from IBAP; we work together in a project to make (a part of) the Boé a legally recognized National Park: with our research programme we provide useful information to strengthen the case; our local staff has participated in courses given by IBAP while IBAP staff members participated in our course on GPS and trail camera use. Since a few months the park rangers of the future National Park Boé join our staff into the field, for example to learn how to work with trail cameras and how to apply their GPS knowledge in the field. In addition they have the possibility to learn French and English in Chimbo's language training facilities.

## Bikes for patrolling

End of November 80 bikes have arrived in the port of Bissau: 60 of them new and 20 reused bikes. We obtained the reused ones from Tools to Work, an organization where bikes, computers, tools, sewing and knitting machines are refurbished. Tools to Work contributes in this way to the development of socially and economically vulnerable people that have no entry to the labor process and gives at the same time people in developing countries a cheap chance to generate their own income with the refurbished



goods. Organizations like Chimbo can buy the goods for their projects. Unfortunately Tools to Work could not provide enough bikes on time.

We were lucky and could get a good deal for 60 new bikes. Each village committee received two new bikes in December. The reused bikes will be used by our local staff, field guides, students and volunteers.



## Theft and poaching

In November we reported several negative incidents that took place during the year to the local and national authorities. It started with the cutting down of a large number of Borassus palms that were obviously meant for illegal trade outside the Boé area; then a large piece of forest including a field with crops was burned down by neglect and for no good reason because the necessary firebreak was not made, this fire destroyed also two of our trail cameras; later two of our cameras disappeared from their location in the forest; and worst of all a large piece of the power cable between the solar plant and our office was stolen and used to make snare traps. This is an illegal hunting method, also in Guinea Bissau. All this happened in the same area near Beli (Aicoum) with proven involvement of many members of one family. With our reporting we hope that the authorities will put a stop to these illegal acts. At the same time we inform the local population by radio about the damage caused by snare traps and make them aware of the dangers they cause also for the people themselves.



*Snare trap made with power cord*

## Dried mangoes



Bernard, who investigated conflicts between nature and agriculture, also started a small project to teach people how to increase the yield of the mango harvest. Bernard noticed that many mangoes are lost for human consumption because of a surplus in the season the mangoes get ripe, they rot away on the ground. His idea was to dry the mangoes to preserve them. The baker's clay oven in Beli is not used all day and can get an extra function. Bernard tested what would be the best way to dry the mangoes and shared this knowledge with the local population. This nice and useful initiative brings extra food in times of scarcity at the end of the rainy season, when it is hard to reach the city because the ferry does not work.

The Boé on the web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eKRsv-yz4w>

