



Activity report 2015



Main results 2015

Community based conservation programme

- In 2008 Chimbo started to build a network of villages committed to conservation of chimpanzees and their habitat. In each of those villages (now 30 villages with in total 27 CVV's) a Village Vigilance Committee (CVV) with 5 members (2 women and 3 men in general) monitors the chimpanzee groups living on their village lands, discourages and denounces hunting/killing of chimpanzees and poaching in general, and evaluates damage caused by chimpanzees to crops. In these committees stakeholder groups like village elders, former hunters, women, volunteer forest guards, and youth are represented. They warn our staff in Béli and the authorities if they detect poaching in their area, and conduct field visits twice a month about which they fill in patrol-reports. Our research coordinators carried out joint patrols in order to be able to discuss the time and place CVV's select for patrolling and control their way of filling in patrol forms. This led to some adaptations of the patrol forms. Some CVVs depend on the local school teacher to write the report because they themselves are all illiterate. Our alphabetisation program could not solve this issue. They are equipped with two bicycles (one for the women and one for the men of the CVV) that they need for their CVV work: transport to trainings and meetings in Béli, or for reporting on patrols and poaching. We have made identity cards for every CVV member which gives him or her authority to comment on undesirable behaviour of their fellow villagers that harm the environment but also gives them the responsibility to behave as an example to others.



CVV members of Dandula resp. Dandum during instruction on use of identity card

All CVV-members are also supplied with a uniform and boots. After 5 years of field work they needed new uniforms. First we had to find suppliers of good and not too expensive uniforms and boots. We had to decide on colour and logo, type of trousers and of shirt, what kind of boots and socks, whether to include a belt and what kind of belt. In total we needed 4 different suppliers with all different delivery dates.

We had to measure sizes for boots and make people try out samples of trousers and shirts, because boots, socks, trousers and shirts all had to be ordered in certain quantities for each size.

Everything had to be transported by boat to Bissau, had to pass customs without too many things disappearing (only one pair of boots), and transported to Béli. In November 2015 we could start distributing. Between April and November members had gained or lost weight and therefore needed other sizes, members had left because of work or marriage and had been replaced, and we deplored the death of two members. We succeeded to give everyone the right size of uniform.



April 2015



November 2015

- The programme against harmful bushfires focused this year on advice to set early fires (in November or December). By burning still humid grass late fires are prevented to cause too much damage: late fires set by hunters, cattle owners or farmers become very hot when too much dry grass gets on fire and will thereby cause substantial damage even to bigger trees. Fai Dje Djo Director of Fauna of DGFF explained the legislation concerning bush fire to the meeting of representatives of the CVV's and the PH in November. Frequent radio emissions (at least weekly) with detailed instructions spread information on ways to prevent late bush fires. Posters were produced that could be found all over the Boé thanks to the distribution by CVV members. Bush fires are a serious problem that not only causes harm to forests and wildlife but also to villages (houses burned) and orchards of the local populations.



Poster on early fire methodology on tourist cabin in Dinguirai
Ecotourism development



Illegal bush fire probably caused by a cattle owner

- The facilities of the Fonda Huuwa tourist camp in Béli are well appreciated by almost all visitors. We had to change the cooking team after complaints concerning the quality and timing of meals offered. Some visitors make a mess of the toilet; also they have to be instructed by the camp manager. The camp manager is daily fighting termites that attack the walls and roofs of the bungalows, while the cleaning ladies are working hard to make the stay for visitors enjoyable.
- Thomas van Steenis prepared an extensive and useful management plan for the camp site.
- The two tourist cabins in Dinguirai are now ready for visitors: mattresses, bed linen, towels, water bins etc. have been provided by Chimbo and the houses have been built by the people from the village.



Fonda Huuwa tourist camp in Béli



Tourist cabins in Dinguirai

Equitable sustainable development of the Boé

- Two well attended meetings of the Horizontal Platform (PH), that unites NGO's, the local population, local authorities, specialized government bodies and the mining company, were held. The main goal of the PH is to promote a sustainable development of the Boé in which the local population can lead a decent life based on the use of the products and services of the ecosystems of the area while at the same time the local chimpanzee population can thrive.

- Of the three rice banks that have been set up by Chimbo and Daridibó, those in Béli and Capebonde still function. Their goal is to ensure local farmers of a fair price when selling and local consumers of a reasonable price when buying locally produced rice. They make sure that rice needed by the local population in the months before the new harvest, has not been exported from the area by traders. Regular control of rice stocks and money remains essential, because not everybody respects the difference between mine and thine.



Finding the right measure for a kilo of rice at the cereal bank of Capebonde



Control of the cereal bank of Béli

- Thanks to the fence around the area of the camp site and Casa Daridibó, we could offer goat-free space to people to plant crops like manioc and for a group of women to start a horticulture project using the water from the pump we installed. Hannah Jacobs (Belgian cultural anthropologist), our programme manager in Béli in the first part of 2015, analysed the way women were selected to participate and ways to make the project even more successful. The visitors at the camp site profit also, because now the cooks can find fresh vegetables in Béli.



Horticulture project for women in Béli

- We helped out with pre financing the battery of the government owned ferry that enables our cars to cross the Corubal: an essential life line for the local population and the only way for agricultural products to be transported to the market.
- Health care in the area is of very poor quality. We are very happy that both the girl with Lepa and the one with Noma that we evacuated in 2014 could return to Vendu Leidi, cured after treatment in Bissau. The girl that had Noma is a candidate for plastic surgery to restore her mouth; we hope that the Dutch surgeons that come once a year to Bissau can help her.

- We have a stock of anti-snake venom serum that has saved a life in 2015. In the rest of the country this is not available.
- We take care of the education of the daughter of a staff member who died because of Aids.
- We arranged for proper medical treatment of a guide and his family infected with the HIV-virus.
- We continued the programme of Ebola prevention awareness-raising that we started in 2014 and gave presentations in villages that we visited.
- We set up an ambulance insurance system. For those that do not participate in the insurance we make sure that we always have sufficient gasoline they can buy from us for the ambulance in stock. Béli is far away from any petrol station!



Awareness-raising on Ebola prevention in Vendu Leidi

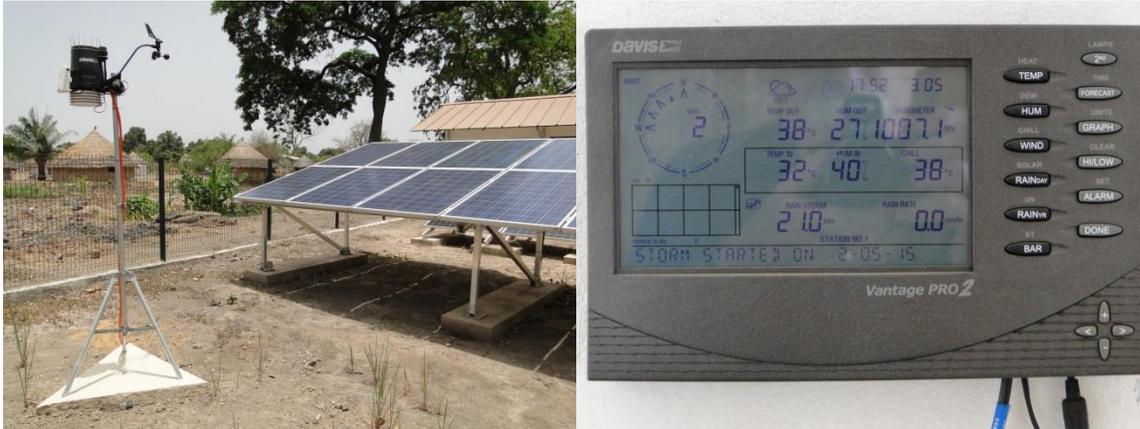


Girl that had Noma

Research programme

Our research programme aims to support the improvement of the conservation status of the area.

- We installed a weather station in the enclosure next to Casa Daridibó and the first results have been analysed by one of the students: David van der Meer. It will enable us to link for instance phenology data with weather conditions in a specific year and monitor long term trends in rain and temperature.



Weather station next to Casa Daridibó

- Two students (Menno Breider and Esmee Mooi) analysed the data of the phenology monitoring of trees that started with the PANAf survey. (Phenology studies the time of the year when each tree carries leaves, flowers, and fruits.) This research is important to find out whether chimpanzees experience a shortage of food during certain parts of the year. They also studied the methodology used to determine the quantity of leaves, flowers and fruits and the selection of trees used at this moment. Their reports will be finalized in 2016.
- David van der Meer investigated whether camera traps placed randomly could be used to measure population density of chimpanzees. The interesting result of his study was that even when randomly placed (so not oriented to places where chimpanzees drink, to trails that they use through the forest or to specific trees) would yield images of chimpanzees crossing in front of the camera. The methodology needs further research work: it uses so many variables that have to be given an estimated value that it led to unrealistic numbers for the chimpanzee population of the Boé.
- Esmee Mooi studied the effect of expanding agriculture on biodiversity of the Boé. She investigated which animals raid the crops of the farmers and what farmers do to protect their crops from these crop-raiding animals. She interviewed local residents and asked questions on the size of their land and animal stocks, how they use their fields, what animals visit their fields, or raid their livestock and how they protect themselves against predators. Her field research will be finished early 2016.
- We hope that detailed analysis of drumming behaviour of chimpanzees that our guides showed us for the first time in 2010 and has been found on the images of our camera traps, will give more insight on the background of this behaviour. Bartelijn Buys, who studies these images, also came to Boé to be able to link camera images to the field situation.
- Erik van der Hoeven visited the Boé for the third time and collected information for the eco tourist brochure he will write on the flora of the Boé.
- End of 2014 Henk Eshuis started to set up a survey programme with 29 camera traps (25 on a grid and 4 near drumming trees) meant to be a pilot for a long term biodiversity monitoring and chimpanzee distribution survey programme for the whole Boé. The CVV members of Pataqué and Béli and BNP staff were trained to do the necessary field work. The pilot started in the surroundings

of Pataqué and Béli, an area to the south of the PANAF site and slightly overlapping it. Brecht Coppens resp. Gerco Niezing took over in 2015. During 2015 several cameras of this grid were relocated to other villages. This had two reasons: we wanted also other villages to get experience with the handling of the cameras and some of the sites in the grid were too difficult to reach by CVV members from Béli and Pataqué.

The data gathered are being analysed. We hope to find new information on biodiversity of the area within the grid and see this as a start for the monitoring of long term biodiversity trends.



Research on the grid

Bird research

- Student Marn Manders studies a possible link between behaviour of chimpanzee and the time of the day or the period in the season that this behaviour was recorded by our cameras. He also wanted to improve the way the images gathered are stored and make them more easily accessible to different researchers. He hopes to be able to finalize his report in 2016.
- Many volunteers and students studied bird life of the Boé in 2015: Brecht Coppens (Belgian volunteer), Katharina Kühnert (student of the University of Göttingen), Robrecht Debbaut (Belgian biologist), Miguel Lecoq (Portuguese ornithologist) and Piet Wit (advisor to the Board of Chimbo). Most research aimed at identification of the number of species to be found in Boé to establish the importance for birdlife of the area. Katharina investigated the differences between 4 habitats and the importance of sacred forests for bird conservation.
- Jelle de Vries (Dutch cultural anthropologist), our programme manager in Béli in the second half of the year, studied the importance of sacred forests for the local population by means of interviews of knowledgeable persons in Béli. His report will be published in 2016.
- During the last part of 2015 Menno Breider came for the second time to the Boé and studied this time the occurrence of large predators especially in parts of the Boé where population density is low. He wanted to find the Lion (that until that moment had only been seen as a disappearing tail by one of our cameras) and he succeeded to trap it with a camera. During a meeting of representatives of all CVV's he showed all animals that he hoped to find and got information about their presence today or in former times, as far as the CVV members present knew from own. Leopards and Servals were seen as common, Lions and Golden Cats as rare, Wild Dogs as occurring in some areas, but nobody of those present recognized the Caracal.

Almost at the same time of this meeting (the meeting was held the 24th of November in Béli), a camera trap on the east side of the Féfiné recorded a Caracal. The first image of this animal recorded in the Boé.

Later Menno found out that some hunters were aware of the presence of two types of yellow cats: one with plumes on the ears (the Caracal) and one without these plumes (the Golden Cat).

According to the Red List of Species of IUCN Caracals experienced substantial loss of their range in West Africa. So we are very happy with the proof that the species can be found in the Boé.



Caracal (image camera trap 18.11.2015)



*Range of the Caracal in North West Africa
IUCN Red List of species*

Publications in 2015

One scientific publication has seen the light and several research reports have been published on our website.

- Scientific publication by J. Guilherme and P. Wit in the Bulletin of the African Bird Vol. 22 No. 2: “First records for Guinea-Bissau of Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus* and its nesting association with a paper wasp”.
- Report on the ornithological importance of the Boé region, Guinea-Bissau based on fieldwork from January to July 2015, by Brecht Coppens.
- The impact of agriculture on the biodiversity in the Boé region (Guinea Bissau) by Bernard Oosterlynck.
- A survey of reptiles and amphibians, Boé region, Guinea-Bissau by Tom Cabuy.
- Forest foods and local livelihoods AN EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION IN BÉLI IN THE BOÉ REGION OF GUINEA-BISSAU by Jitske Willemsen.
- Rise of the eco-volunteer tourist in the Boé, a research on the Dutch eco-volunteer market by Mellisa Rizos.
- Small terrestrial mammal and amphibian survey, Boé region, Guinea-Bissau by Roy Mol and Sil Westra.

Awareness-raising and stakeholder engagement

We focus our awareness raising at different levels: at the local population that shares the area with the chimpanzees, at the national level (implementation of legislation, increasing levels of legal protection of

habitats, general public, etc.), and at the international level (financing mechanisms for nature conservation, influencing companies and governments to use natural resources in a responsible way, etc.).

We use our website and that of Daridibó, our Facebook page, the local radio in Béli, newsletters, etc. to generate attention for our programme.

This year:

- We have produced four newsletters in Portuguese and English, of which one also in Dutch for our different groups of stakeholders.
- Through the website of SOS two news items on our work (Reducing human-chimpanzee conflicts in Guinea Bissau & Ecotourism as an alternative source of income generation in the Boé) have found a large audience.
- We participated in the annual partner meeting organized by IBAP in Bissau in February.
- Students and scientists gave presentations on their research and results for staff of IBAP.
- We gave presentations about our programme for very diverse audiences in Guinea Bissau and the Netherlands. This has been an important method to attract volunteers or students to come to Boé.

Promotion of responsible bauxite mining

- We decided to become a member of the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative. The standard that ASI wants to develop for environmental, social and governance practices throughout the entire aluminium value chain might become a useful tool to influence parties involved in bauxite mining in the Boé towards responsible behaviour.
- Bauxite Angola, the exploration company that is active in the Boé, has not yet succeeded in the search for an investor in the mining itself: the world market for bauxite and the political instability of Guinea Bissau take their toll. It gives us more time to do research on the chimpanzee populations around concession areas. We have set up trail cameras in the area of Dinguirai and Vendu Leidi, near resp. at bauxite concessions.



Double-spurred Francolin

Fundraising

- We have been successful with our proposal to the local EU programme in Guinea Bissau aimed at local authorities and non-state actors. The contract for a subsidy of € 499,000 with a total project budget of € 666,000 has been signed by the end of 2015. The project “COMMUNITY BASED CONSERVATION OF THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL VALUES OF THE BOÉ SECTOR”, in short COMBAC Boé, seeks to strengthen the role of the local population in safeguarding the cultural and natural assets of the Boé sector, by a program of community-based conservation and rational and equitable use of these assets. Conservation of sacred forests, installation of a long term monitoring program, and development of ecotourism and financing of micro projects aimed at sustainable economic development are the main goals of the project. The project will run for four years: 1.2.2016 - 1.2.2020.



Meeting room in Limbi Afia: plans on the conservation of sacred forest are discussed

- For the seventh year the local soccer club of Kesteren, the Netherlands, organized a successful fund raising event for Chimbo.
- We participated successfully in a fundraising auction organised by GlobeGuards (The Netherlands).
- We have sent in 1 big and 2 small subsidy proposals in 2015 of which the big one was successful and we received a negative decision on a proposal that had been submitted in 2014. A subsidy proposal of our sister organisation Daridibó was unsuccessful.
- MPI donated the 15 trail cameras that had been used for the PANAF survey in the Boé, to Chimbo after the field work for this survey was finished.