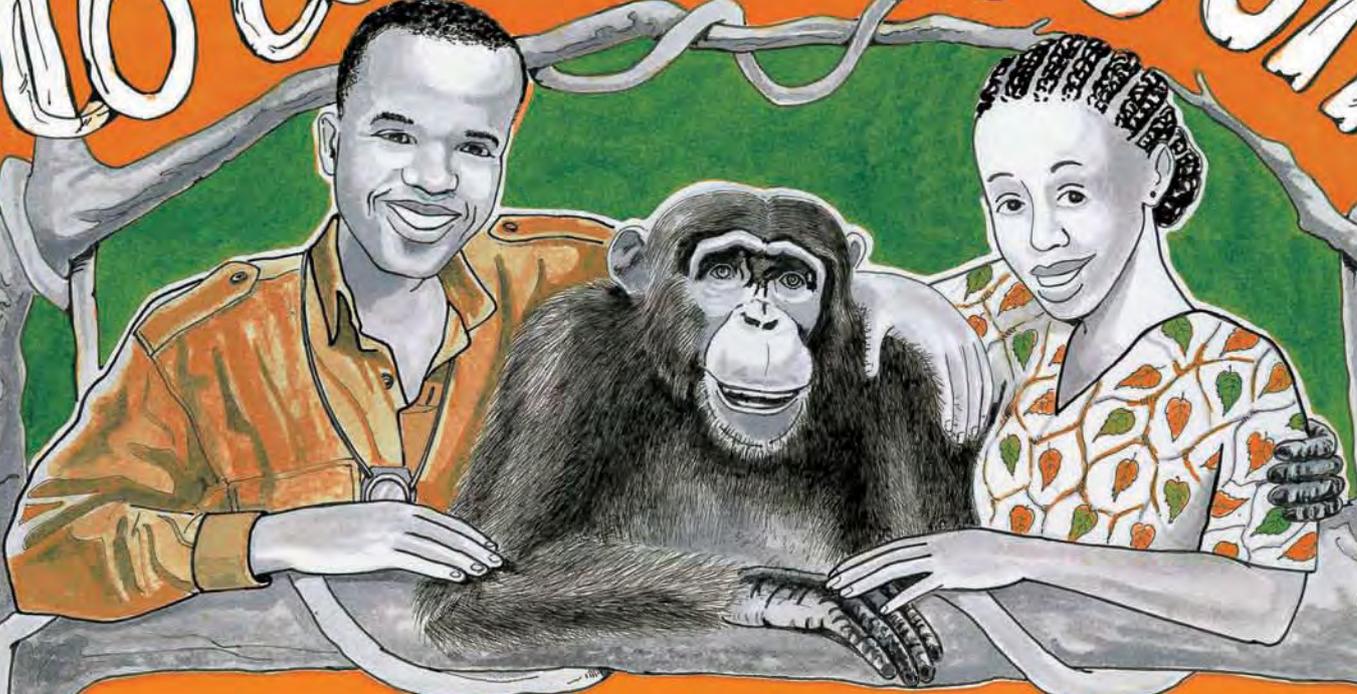


Forest Wisdom



Journal No. 11
June 2010

???



FOREST WISDOM



A NEWSLETTER FOR ALL OF YOU

- Villagers who live near a national park
- Anyone who works for the conservation of forests

FOREST WISDOM

- Tells the story of special forest inhabitants: chimpanzees
- Shows the problems and threats to the forest
- Supplies information
- Answers your questions and invites you to contribute to this newsletter
- Invites you to protect the great forest, a national heritage that is yours as well

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WCF-Team in Abidjan with WCF-founder President Christophe Boesch (first line in the middle), WCF-director in Côte d'Ivoire Ilka Herbinger (behind Christophe Boesch).

The event had to be rescheduled to a later date.

Du 10 au 19 février 2011
au Centre Culturel Français (CCF) Entrée gratuite

30 ans de recherche sur les chimpanzés du Parc National de Tai

Exposition
Conférences
Théâtre

Journée portes
ouvertes au Parc
National du
Banco

Des célébrités
attendues

Contact: 23 51 99 33
Email: tcp@eva.mpg.de
www.wildchimp.org

Si proches de nous, mais en voie de disparition

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"Forest Wisdom" is published and distributed by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF)* with financial support from



* WCF – Europe c/o Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Deutscher Platz 6, 04103 Leipzig, Germany

WCF – Africa c/o CSRS, 01 BP 1303, Abidjan 01, Ivory Coast

In 2009 and 2010, the WCF was financially supported for its awareness and bio-monitoring activities by private donations and the following organizations:





Christophe Boesch

Hello everybody,

Biodiversity. Monocultures. What do these expressions actually mean? In her book, "The Forests that We Kill (Ces forêts qu'on assassine)," Emmanuelle Grundmann writes the following during a flight over the tropical forests of Borneo, Asia:

"The canopy, a veritable roof over the vegetal world, loomed while we were flying in the bluish sky. Majestic trees appeared here and there like isolated sentinels. When I squinted my eyes a bit, I could see a hornbill taking a break on his journey over the green ocean. But suddenly, there was a rupture, a gaping blood-colored wound of bare soil. The emerald kingdom made way for a singular geometric area, for an immense green and clay-colored dam. No magnificence, no fantasy remained any more; just the same desolate, austere and monotonous image. The cause: the extensive cultivation of oil palm trees".

When she flew over this agonized forest in Borneo, Emmanuelle Grundmann said that half of the tropical forests had already been cut down by humans. In addition, about thirteen million hectares of forest disappear each year worldwide, all the victims of hoes, chain saws, bulldozers, and intentional fires. Yesterday – rubber, today – palm oil and wood pulp. With knowledge of the forests' resources coming to light, so too has the greediness of the people who plunder, destroy, and pollute it, and in doing so wipe out the animal species and expel indigenous human communities for the benefit of only a few people.

And what will remain of this natural heritage in West Africa, of these tropical forests, in a few years? Alongside the Taï National Park in Côte d'Ivoire, further

down to the coastline, the forest has completely disappeared to make room for the continuous rubber and oil palm tree plantations. When driving for hours through these plantations, no food products whatsoever can be seen. How do the people living there manage to get a hold of the food they like?

It would be necessary to urge investors (mining and timber companies or monoculturalists) who come into a country and profit from its natural resources to return a share, which would allow the countries' nature and populations to live in dignity and according to their traditions. **Chimpanzees, gorillas, and elephants are only ambassadors of the forests in which they live. They are the guarantors of a harmonious future for humans.** The reality is that extensive deforestation has forced entire populations to move and that technological progress will never be able to replace the absence of rain or replenish the soil. As is true for health, "it is better to prevent than to cure" since the former is much more economical and realizable than the latter.

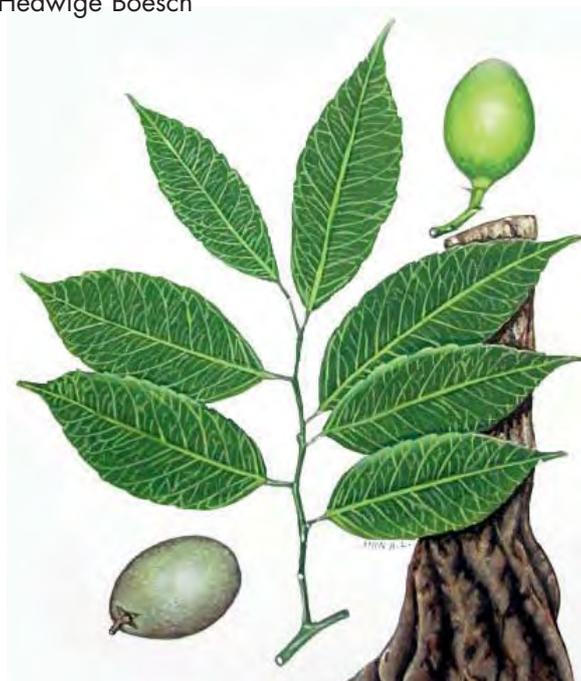


Little Girl with her Newsletter.





Gnesio Téré Henri,
Hedwige Boesch



Sacoglottis gabonensis (Baill.) Urb.

Sacoglottis gabonensis is a tree in the moist, evergreen Taï forest in the west of Côte d'Ivoire. It can also be found in many other countries with tropical forests, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, and DR Congo. Local names for it include Akouapo (in Abey), Akohio (in Ebrié), and Effouinlin (in Agni). In Guéré, it is called Déhè-toué, which means "not silent." This name probably comes from the joyful vocalizations chimpanzees make when they eat this fruit. Unfortunately, these same vocalizations make it easy for poachers to find the chimpanzees.

Sacoglottis gabonensis varies in height between 25 and 30 m. These large trees have heavily knotted trunks that are deeply twisted and irregularly furrowed and have heavily branched crowns. Its dark brown bark is flaky and jagged and detaches into fibrous reddish colored sheets. Its simple leaves are serrated and alternating. Its oval fruit are succulent and contain a nut that is covered by small resin-filled holes. Many animal species eat its nuts, including chimpanzees, elephants, and many others. Humans value this tree mainly for its therapeutic and cosmetic virtues.

Domestic use of the timber

Its timber is used to make furniture (tables, benches, chairs, beds, etc.) and traditional kitchen utensils

such as mortars and soup bowls (earlier in Baoulé). It is also used for firewood and as a source of charcoal.

Medical use of the bark and root

- A paste made out of the bark is used to treat hemorrhoids. The crushed bark is also drunk to treat abdominal pains. When put into palm wine, the bark acts as an aphrodisiac.
- Its ground up root and bark are mixed with kaolin and applied topically to treat rheumatism.
- Finally, the powder and paste from grinding up its bark and root help to cure wounds.



Use of the fruit

The grains of *Sacoglottis gabonensis* are used to produce oil.

- In order to produce the **black oil** that is used in cosmetics, the grains or nuts of *Sacoglottis* are dried, peeled, roasted, and then squeezed to extract the blackish oil. This oil is an excellent remedy against rheumatism, but is also used as a high quality beauty product, used to even out the skin tone and remove facial spots.
- In order to produce the **edible white oil**, the grains are dried, peeled, and put into hot water. The whitish oil is then skimmed off the surface of the water.
- The flesh of the *Sacoglottis gabonensis* fruit can also be consumed without any special preparation.

This tree is very useful indeed! Now, we would like to pass on the knowledge of the elders in the Guéré region in western Ivory Coast:

... At that time, the wild animals lived in perfect harmony. Their boss was the panther (Bathahé Djou). Three animals differed according to their exemplary behavior. All three of them were adored by everyone: the Royal Antelope (Dohoum bléké), the Pigeon (Paou), and the Chimpanzee (Goué).

KNOWLEDGE OF OUR ANCESTORS

The Royal Antelope was adored for her sagemess and intelligence, the Pigeon was famous for being a great dancer and singer, and the Chimpanzee was renowned for being a great drummer. In addition, the chimpanzees excelled at their work and were not hesitant to contribute to the group. That is why the prominent villagers asked them one day to gather the *Sacoglottis gabonensis* for the provisioning of the entire community. The crop was good and the chimpanzees returned with several sacks of fruit. Then, as tradition dictated, a party was organized to distribute the crop.

The complete crop was brought together in the village commons. The tam-tams were drummed in excitement and joy could be seen in all faces. However, when it was time to distribute the fruit, the village leader noticed that four sacks of fruit were missing. He immediately ordered an investigation to find them. The elephant said that he saw the chimpanzee and the pigeon embezzling several sacks and giving them to their mother and father-in-laws. In order to escape the martyrdom of their punishment, the two thieves had to take flight to remote areas.

Some days later, when Guy, the panther, charged himself harvesting the fruit, he met Goué, the chimpanzee, in the forest. A heavy dispute arose between them when suddenly two men arrived for their own harvest. The two animals became scared but while Goué was able to escape, Guy was not and he fell into a pit and lost his life. Since this drama, the family of the panther always tries to take revenge ...

This is why the panthers believe that the chimpanzees escape by jumping from branch to branch and shouting “hou-hou,” as if to remind the panthers ironically of this terrible event. In response to the chimpanzees’ shouts, the pigeons answer “kouho-kouho, ha-non-non, Glougôh Bathahé Djou, Zonzin Bathahé Djou,” which means “I am fed up with this story”.

By the way, the pigeons there are very astute! They do not hesitate to pretend that they are the panthers’ slaves when they are looking for their food on the ground ... then, when they fly away, they make fun of them openly, mocking them and crying, “ha-mon-nin Guy est von,” which means “we are in conflict with the panthers!”

The elephant who betrayed the thieves must pay attention when he is walking below the trees as the chimpanzees try to break his beautiful tusks, tossing a large stone fall onto them from high up in the canopy. This explains why poachers sometimes find elephant tusks on the ground!

Unfortunately, this whole story describes an atmosphere of conflict between the animals, each species living in its well-defined territory in isolation from each another. Oh, Dêhè-Touè (*Sacoglottis*), when you hold on to us!



A mother opens and shares the nuts with her baby.

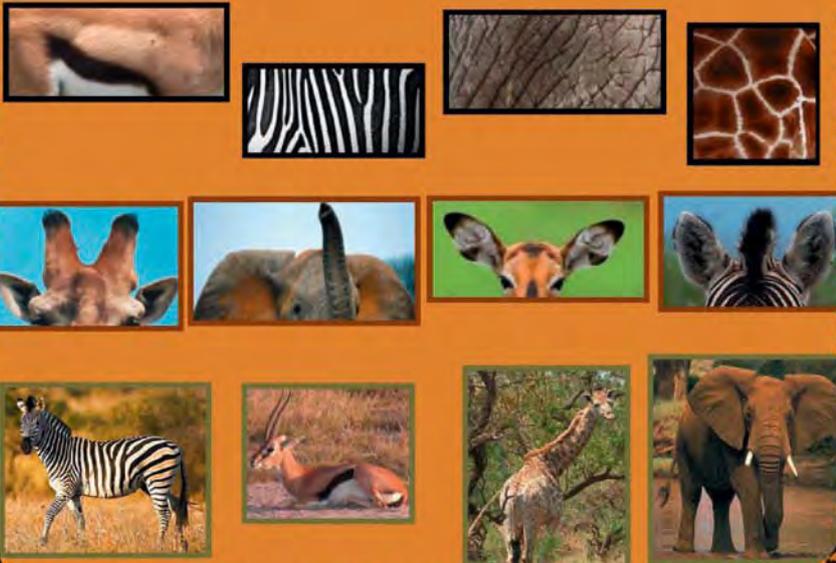


*An anvil with shells of the *Sacoglottis* nuts.*



Head and fur

Guess which animal is pictured.



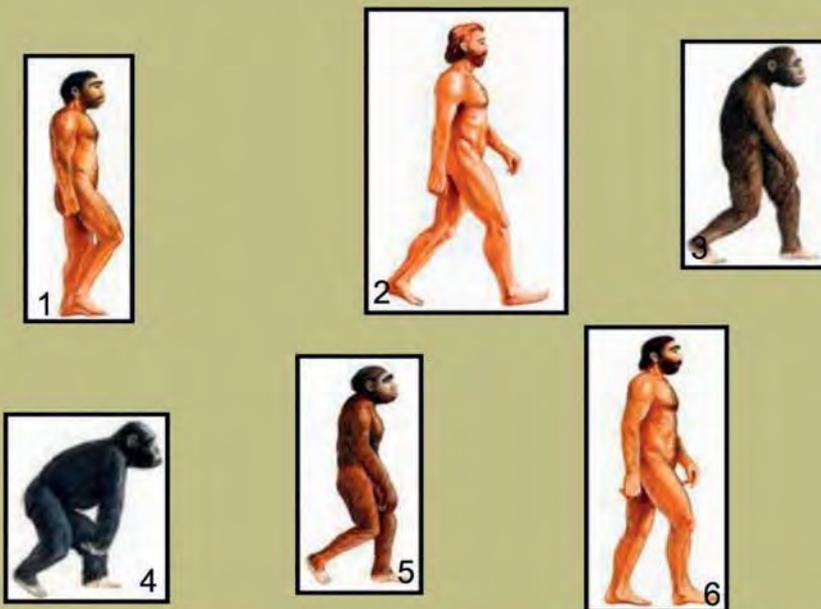
What do I eat?

Circle what I eat



In the footsteps of man.

Put the pictures in the correct order to show the different stages of our evolution



Cross out what I do not eat!



Bushmeat trade – we are all in danger!

Claudia Borchers

Do you like to eat bush rats and monkeys because you like the taste? We can not change your taste but go on reading and maybe we can change your mind!

Let's do an easy calculation. There are less than 500 chimpanzees left in Taï National Park, Côte d'Ivoire and there are 74 villages near the national park. This means that if only one hunter from every village goes into the park and hunts one chimpanzee per day, there will be no more chimpanzees in less than one week! If this happened, you would only ever see chimpanzees again in zoos.

Unfortunately, this is happening everywhere and with many different animal species. Female chimpanzees have babies only once every 5 years so the death of one individual in the group can cause a big void in the community!

What do you know about the meat that you are eating? Chickens or sheep normally come from your village or from a neighboring village, but what about bush rats, duikers, and monkeys? Where do they come from? Maybe from very far away! And thus, this meat had to travel for many days before coming to you. Maybe this meat was already dead for a long time when the hunters found it. Maybe the animal was even ill. What risk does this all present to you and your health? You never know what you are eating if you eat bushmeat. So the best is to take care of yourself, your children, and your environment. Do not buy and eat bushmeat. Your life and your nature are too precious.



To kill an adult chimpanzee can endanger the survival of its entire group.



Even the hornbill is hunted by poachers – its extraordinary chant has expired for good ...

PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

Hedwige Boesch

Immigration of females: Narcisse, a young female, leaves her group and heads into an uncertain future.



PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

In August 1994, we saw her for the first time. She must have been 12 years old, was very beautiful, with a completely black body, brown legs, slightly rosy lips, and she was in oestrus. She was very appealing to males!



Information :

It seems to be easy to explain how chimpanzees use tools or hunt monkeys. However, it is still very difficult to understand the social life of chimpanzees.

In all populations that we know of, males spend their entire lives in the same group as their mothers and their brothers, with whom they are in permanent contact.

At approximately 10 to 12 years of age, females leave their group and, with it, all that they have known since birth, to integrate into a different unknown group. This also implies major risks: the females of the new group are often aggressive towards newcomers and it is difficult to find food in an unknown territory. Physically and mentally, this is a critical stage. It is certainly not a coincidence that many young females are injured or suffer from accidents shortly after immigrating into a new group.

For an animal species, it is very important to avoid incest as it may have serious consequences for the infants such as malformations or impairments.

PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

She is surrounded by Brutus, Macho, Marius, and Fitz. She seems to especially like Fitz, although all of them show a great deal of interest in her.



PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

In the beginning, Narcisse is afraid of the human who observes her. She even throws a stick at him from the top of a tree and runs away. But as all the others seem to not worry at all about this human, she calms down quickly and is habituated two weeks later, a process that normally takes 5 years.



PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

One day, we saw something extraordinary. Narcisse used a liana fruit (*Strychnos aculeata*) that was round, very hard, and a bit bigger than a tennis ball to successfully crack a Coula nut! Nobody else from the group had ever done this before.



Guess what Sartre did the next morning? He cracked nuts with a liana fruit! So, that's how new things are introduced and learned!!!



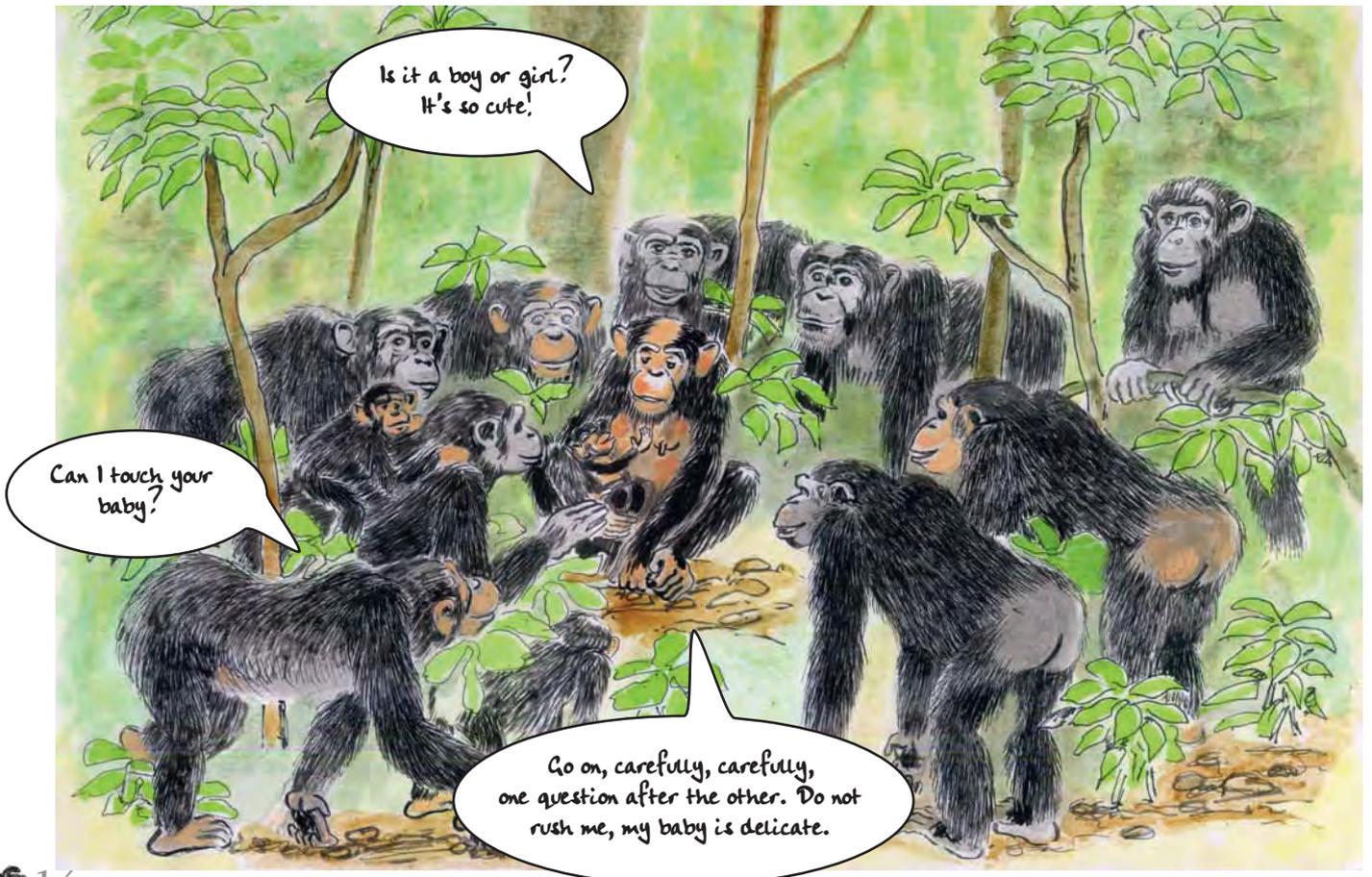
PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

Nacisse has a very strong character. She might come from a dominant family. She fearlessly faces other females who attack her, barks, and chases them (even after having been attacked). Finally, despite this, she is accepted, even appreciated, in this group of ladies. She takes pleasure in caring for infants, and carries them and plays with them. This helps and pleases all! She is socially very skillful.



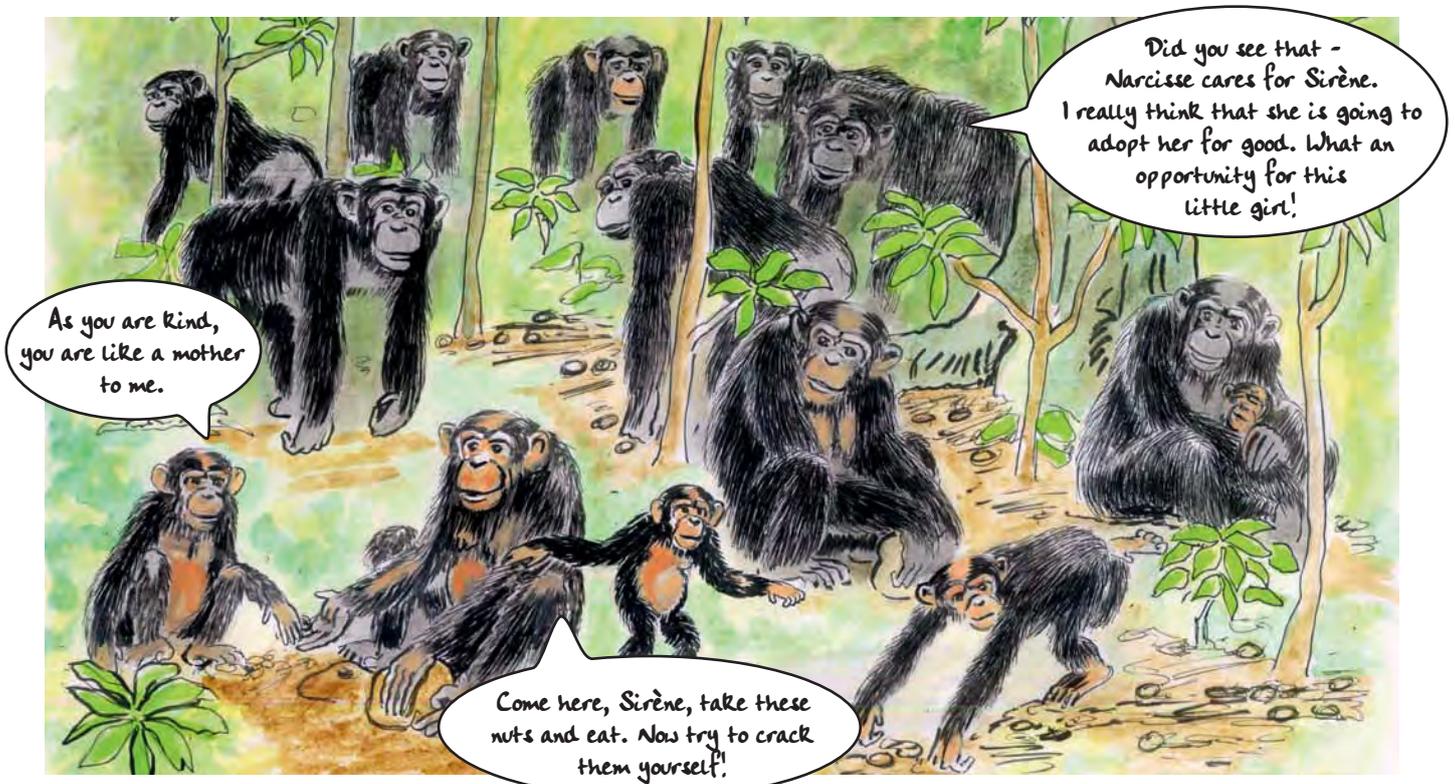
PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

Almost two and a half years after her immigration, Narcisse arrives one morning with a newborn baby!!! It's a small male, Noureyev, who she is breastfeeding and carrying tenderly. This is met with much excitement by the rest of the group! Narcisse is really part of the group now.



PORTRAIT: NARCISSE – WELCOME, STRANGER!

Narcisse has a big heart. In 1999, she adopts Sirène, an orphan. Sirène was only 5 years old when her mother Ondine died in 1992. It was difficult for her to become adopted. Too often she was abandoned and miserable. With Narcisse, however, she was able to develop, to happily care for little Noureyev and also to become sufficiently self-confident to be able to emigrate herself to a new life elsewhere!



At the age of 12 years, Sirène felt that the moment had come for her to leave her group. For us, it was hard to see a young female disappear ... then, some days later, we had to realize that she had left forever to make her life elsewhere. That's how life goes for a young female chimpanzee ...



WCF Education tours across West Africa

Dervla Dowd,
Zoro Goné Bi Bertin,
Antoine N'Guessan



Tour around Mount Nimba in Côte d'Ivoire: yearly chimpanzee ceremony in the Gbapleu village

On the way to Liberia with some difficulties ...!

In 2010, in collaboration with STEWARD, the WCF began three education projects in transboundary areas that are a priority for chimpanzee conservation. The WCF education team travelled to 10 villages in Côte d'Ivoire along the Liberian border in the famous Taï-Sapo Forest Complex, 8 villages around the renowned Mount Nimba in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, and 10 villages around the exceptional Outamba-Kilimi National Park in Sierra Leone and Guinea.



Theatre performance in Liberia close to the Sapo National Park: dancers in Saygbeken.

We worked in collaboration with different theatre groups, including Ymako Teatri and Tabule Theatre, as well as the local authorities and forestry departments of the different countries to carry out a very successful program.

To encourage communities to protect and be proud of the forests they share with neighbouring countries, theatre pieces and films about chimpanzees and the importance of forest conservation were presented to over 17,000 people throughout these villages. In all the villages across the region, the local communities were very excited to learn about chimpanzees and the importance of connecting and protecting the forest for future generations. Many of them even said they hoped that WCF would come back again in the future with different programs.



Presentation in Guinea: attentive reading of the newsletter in Sanya.

So, thank you everyone who came to see the shows and films and to all those that made these tours possible. We hope to see you all very soon!

Hedwige Boesch

We know that across the world, there are major differences between humans. One says that this is “culture”! For example, some people eat with sticks, some with forks, and some with their hands. When eating fruit, usually, most of us just eat them directly from our hands. Others, however, highly elaborately, use a knife and fork to eat fruit!!!



Now, let's look at the chimpanzees. As our two species are so similar, do we also find these differences between chimpanzee groups?

To answer this question, let us give an example, again from Côte d'Ivoire.

The first time we went to Mount Niénokoué (60 km in the south of Taï), we had a big surprise. **Indeed, to our astonishment we found large anvils, broken nut shells and stone hammers that had been used to crack Sacoglottis nuts all over the place.**

Our guide, a man from Djiroutou, confirmed that there were several places in the forest where these kinds of objects could be found.

* For more information about this plant and examples of nut cracking, look at pages 5 in No 4.

CULTURE IN CHIMPANZEES NEAR DJOUROUTOU, 60 KM AWAY FROM TAI –
PLENTY OF SACOGLOTTIS NUT-CRACKING



He did not hesitate to tell us the amazing way the chimpanzees transported these “hammers” – on their heads! We were doubtful and thought that he was maybe just trying to impress us...



Back to Tai, walking across the forest, we found anvils of Coula, Panda, Parinari, and even Detarium nuts, but we found only one small anvil with Sacoglottis nuts next to one of these magnificent trees. What a surprise!



CULTURE IN CHIMPANZEES - NEAR BOTH SITES, TAÏ AND DJOUROUTOU, THE PULP OF SACOGLOTTIS FRUITS IS EATEN



We found many “wadges” from the pulp of these fruits near Djouroutou as well as near Taï.

Before chewing them, chimpanzees wash them!!! First, they collect about ten of these small round fruits and transport them to a water puddle where they regularly soak them. When soaked, the chimpanzees chew the fruits intensely and suck out all of the good juice. When they are through feasting, they leave small, hard compressed balls on the ground on which the “imprints” of their teeth and the interior of their mouths can be seen. Such artifacts could come directly out of an archaeological laboratory!



CULTURE IN CHIMPANZEES

These fruits are consumed during the rainy season in September and October. The chimpanzees often eat them in the morning before going hunting.





Information:

How can we understand this important difference between chimpanzee communities that live about 60 km away from each other?

What should this small anvil that we found in the Tai group tell us? Has it been made by a young female who immigrated and brought with her "her own culture" before it got lost as the other

members of the group did not use it? (See our story about immigrating females in this newsletter).

Finally, why do chimpanzees in Tai only eat the pulp of the fruit? Why are they not also interested in cracking nuts like the chimpanzees 60 km to the south? They are ignoring a valuable food source. We cannot currently explain this but an Ivorian student is studying this question of cultural differences at the moment.

Chimpanzee Survey in the Sapo National Park

Sapo National Park, the only national park in Liberia, represents one of the most important sites for tropical forest biodiversity conservation in West Africa. To efficiently protect a park, it is necessary to know the number of animals living there, in particular the number of large mammals, such as chimpanzees and elephants. From June to September 2009, the WCF (in collaboration with IUCN* and FDA*) initiated a project to estimate the numbers of such animals.

Paul N'Goran Paul and Kouakou Celestin from the WCF led the training activities of FDA officers (see photos). On the photos they explain how to count the number of chimpanzee nests in the forest to estimate the number of chimpanzees remaining. Overall, they found 178 nests along 44 km of transects, which means an overall estimation of 1079 individuals in the whole park! We were all very happy about these findings!

The WCF hopes that the Liberian authorities, donors, and other NGOs will support our efforts to protect this park, which we now know is home to an important population of chimpanzees.

** : the IUCN program for the Monitoring of the Illegal Killing of Elephants (IUCN-MIKE) and the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA)*



Célestin Kouakou and Paul N'Goran explaining the methods.

Participants learning how to use a GPS.



The biomonitoring team crossing the Sinoe River in Liberia.

Education on the radio

As part of its education programme, the WCF has started working with the local radio station in Guiglo, "The voice of Guiglo." During its weekly "Health and Environment" program, the local population can listen to information about the WCF and its activities, and the chimpanzees and their habitat. So if ever you're passing through Guiglo, be sure to tune into 107.3 Mhz between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. every Thursday!



THE TAM TAM ...



The WCF contributes to the well-being of neighboring populations by fish-farm rehabilitation



Weighing fish in Nounoubaye. The fish farms are a good alternative to bushmeat, which presents a serious health risk (see page 7).

The WCF, as part of its “Ameliorating the conservation of biodiversity in the Taï region” program, in addition to the biomonitoring and sensitization activities, has started a fish farm rehabilitation project in 10 villages next to the classified forests of Goin-Débé and Cavally, Côte d’Ivoire. The main aim of this project is to re-launch fish farming activities in the region as a means of proposing an alternative to bushmeat

and to fight against poaching activities. Each of the 10 sites received 2000 carp fry (*Tilapia nilotica*) for two of their ponds. We will continue to support this project to encourage the local communities to protect the wild chimpanzees and other animals in the region. We are very grateful for the efforts made by the local communities to ensure the success of this new project.

