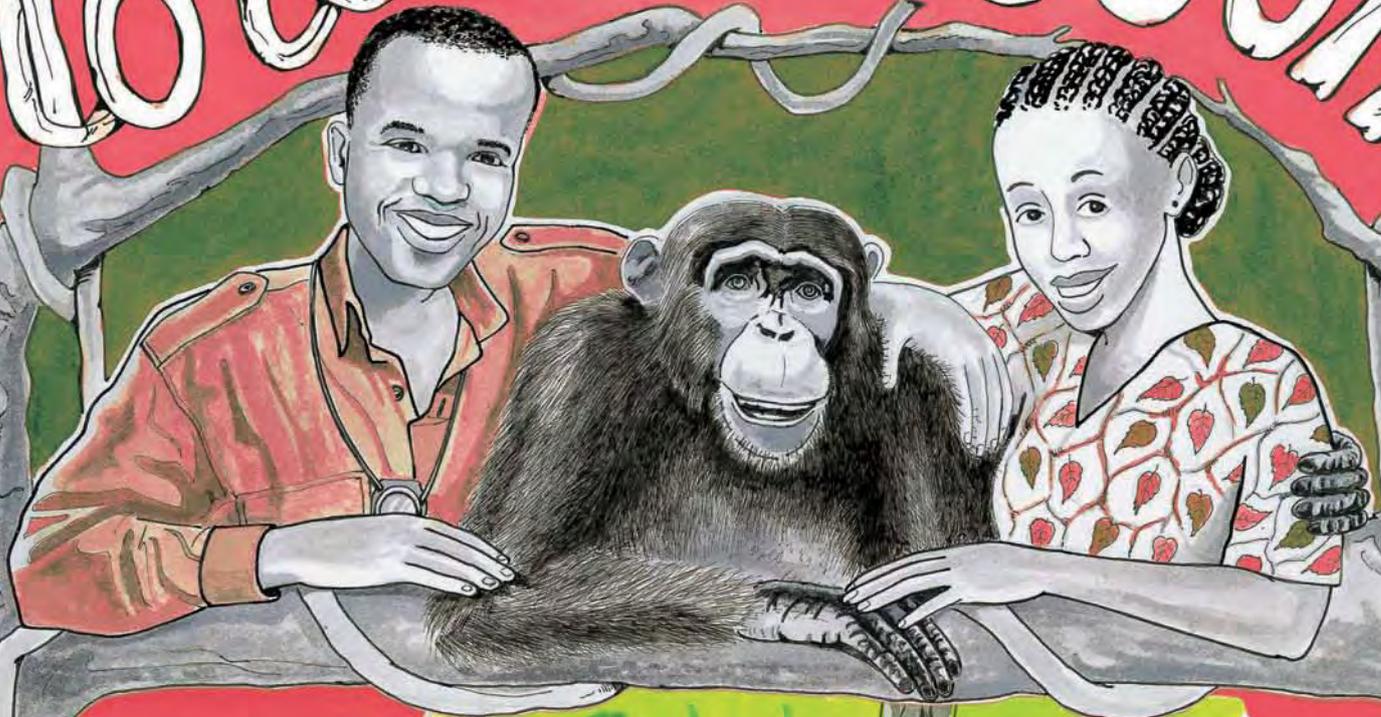


Forest Wisdom



Journal No. 8/9
June 2008

Sometimes,
I have doubts...



FOREST WISDOM

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALL OF YOU:

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



Photo: Sonja Metzger



A scene of the Gorabun Youth Group's performance in Tilorma near Gola Forest in Sierra Leone



Photos: WCF

Construction of a bridge to access the Madina village near Gola Forest in Sierra Leone

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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Editorial Committee: Hedwige Boesch, Christophe Boesch, Ilka Herbing, Zoro Bertin Goné Bi, Christine Levant
Comics & Text: Dao N'Daw Koumba
Illustrations: Désiré Koffi, Ben Amara Sylla

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



EDITORIAL:

What is research in national parks and classified forests good for?

I am sitting in a plane that is taking me to Abidjan. This is at least my 60th travel to Ivory Coast since the research project on chimpanzees in the Taï National Park, Ivory Coast, started.

I am thinking back to the days in 1979 when we went into the Taï forest for the first time and took a break at the camp of old Pahi, chief of the Oubi canton, which borders the Park. The old man welcomed us warmly and embraced my wife Hedwige. He showed us his impressive collection of leopard tooth trophies and gave us chilli and fruits. "Come back often and visit us", he said, "we will help you with your work in the forest". We really enjoyed this cordial welcome in these difficult beginnings.

Thirty years later, I am returning to Ivory Coast to look at the work of my collaborators and students. For one of them, it is a great day! He will pass his doctoral thesis at the University of Abidjan. His work, which I supervised, is focused on the nutritional diet of wild chimpanzees. Two other Ivorian students will soon finish their doctoral thesis on chimpanzees of Taï National Park, too. All three of them spent some time in Germany to complete their education and analyse their results. In the meantime, the first female Ivorian student of the project has started observations in the forest. In addition to this, over the years, many local people were able to find a job within the research project.

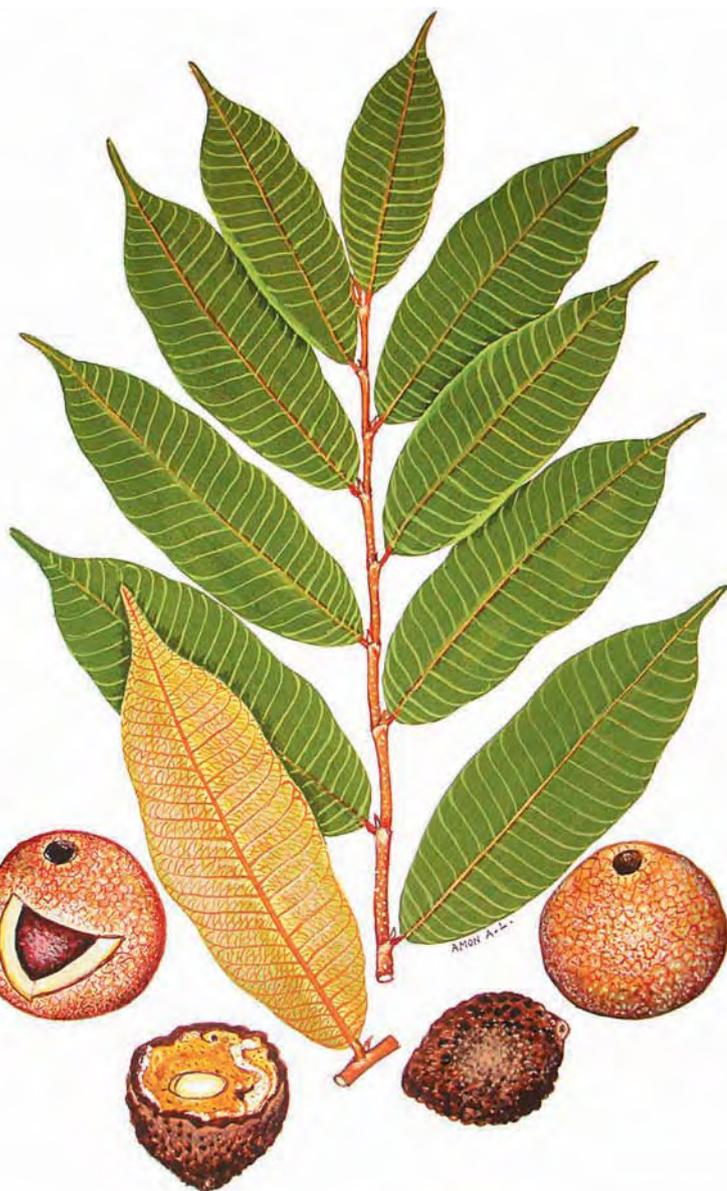
The integration of all these young people in research projects and in nature protection activities helps to increase the knowledge of the forest and its fauna among the population. In addition, young African researchers can be trained to manage and to fight for the protection of their environment. However, due to climate change and a lack of rain that leads to poor harvests, researchers from tropical African countries have a great deal of work. Their efforts are crucial for the protection of the parks and forests that are essential to our planet.

One of the Ivorian researchers told me that he intended to work together with the ministries and the university in order to include environmental issues in the criteria of development projects. Other researchers would also like to continue their work for the WCF. "It is time to take our future into our own hands", they told me, "If we are not fighting today for the forests and animals living there, tomorrow there will be nothing left. We have to do everything possible to save our forests. The survival of our planet is depending on it!"

I can only support these young scientists in their aims and I hope that a team of many African researchers will follow their path!

*See you soon,
Christophe Boesch*





Parinari excelsa

The plant we present here is a tree primarily found in the dense and humid Taï forest in Ivory Coast, although it can also be found in many tropical forests from Guinea to Angola and also in Brazil. Its Latin name is *Parinari excelsa* (Chrysobalanaceae). In local languages it is called Kotossouma (in Agnié), Piolo (in Attié), Kotossouma (in Abbey), So (in Ebrilé), Assain (in Kroumen), Tabotou (in Oubi), Kantoué (in Guéré), Konhon-touè, Kon-touè or Koho-touè (in Soussou).

Parinari excelsa is a tall tree with a straight and cylindrical trunk that can reach up to 30 to 40 meters in height. Its bark is a yellowish light grey colour that is decorated with sharp irregular scales. Its wood is hard and smells like sugarcane.

The timber is a red-brown colour and is very hard and resistant to shocks. The timber is used in carpentry, in construction, timberwork and charcoal.

Its fruits are very nice. The pulp and also its oily grains (oleiferous) are edible.

In traditional pharmacopoeia, a mixture made from its fruits is used as an antidiysenteric. A concoction made from the *Parinari excelsa* bark is used as a purge and for the relief of lower back pains and abdominal pain.

The conservation or fermentation of the bark in palm wine, known as the “bandji” drink, is supposed to be a good aphrodisiac. The bark of the branches can also be used as a diaphoretic tea to increase perspiration. Oil extracted from the nuts can be used for cooking, as well as in cosmetics. The oil extracted from the grains’ cotyledons can be made into a traditional creme.

Here is what people say about this tree in the west part of Ivory Coast. It explains how monkeys and chimpanzees went their separate ways! Did you know that in former times, in the dense forests, monkeys and great apes lived together in harmony in village communities ...

Once upon a time, Glé, a young Diane monkey, went into the dense forest to look for firewood. After many hours of walking, he found a place full of *Parinari excelsa*. Suddenly, a strong wind smashed the branches of the trees around him. Glé found refuge under a big tree. He then heard a tiny voice that said, “You came with good intentions; you do not want to do harm, so you are a brother. Do not try to do harm or your life will be condemned to death. However, you will get what you were looking for.” Glé, still under the influence of what he heard, continued to walk through the forest without fear and went to a place where he could find plenty of dry *Parinari excelsa* wood. He filled his basket and went back to his village. The return of Glé was celebrated with a traditional ceremony: everybody danced and ate the whole day around a big fire of *Parinari excelsa*. Despite all this joy, the wise village men made sure that nobody interrupted the ceremony.

KNOWLEDGE OF OUR ANCESTORS

Unfortunately, as is often the case when rice and wood are distributed, a fight started between Glé, the Diane monkey, and Gouè, a chimpanzee of his community. Furious over this dispute, Glé took his wife Zoahi and they went into the forest to take refuge under the protective spirits of the Parinari. And so, Glé made a pact with the Parinari: to be able to jump freely from branch to branch without falling down, he should protect the *Parinari excelsa* trees in return. As soon as the pact had been signed, his legs and the legs of his wife Zoahi became completely red. Overjoyed, they balanced on the branches of *Parinari excelsa* and the red colour was reflected in the leaves, so that they now became a red-brown colour.

Since this day, monkeys can jump from branch to branch without ever falling off. And when a tree is falling down, Glé warns the others in shouting, “Nao-Nao-Nao-Nao” which means, “I am here, but far from you”. Yré, a white-nosed monkey shouts back, “Hum-Hum” which means, “Me-too-Me-too”. Very often, Glé hides in the leaves of a *Parinari excelsa* to signalize the arrival of his enemy Goué, the chimpanzee, on a hunting trip.



Preparation of a concoction using the bark of *Parinari excelsa*.

CAN YOU GUESS THE HIDDEN PHRASE?

Start

A important phrase is hidden in this grid! To reveal it, you must connect the adjacent letters to form words and use the grey fields as spaces ...

*A small hint to help your search:
The phrase starts with
“Chim ...”*

Now it's up to you to find out how it continues!

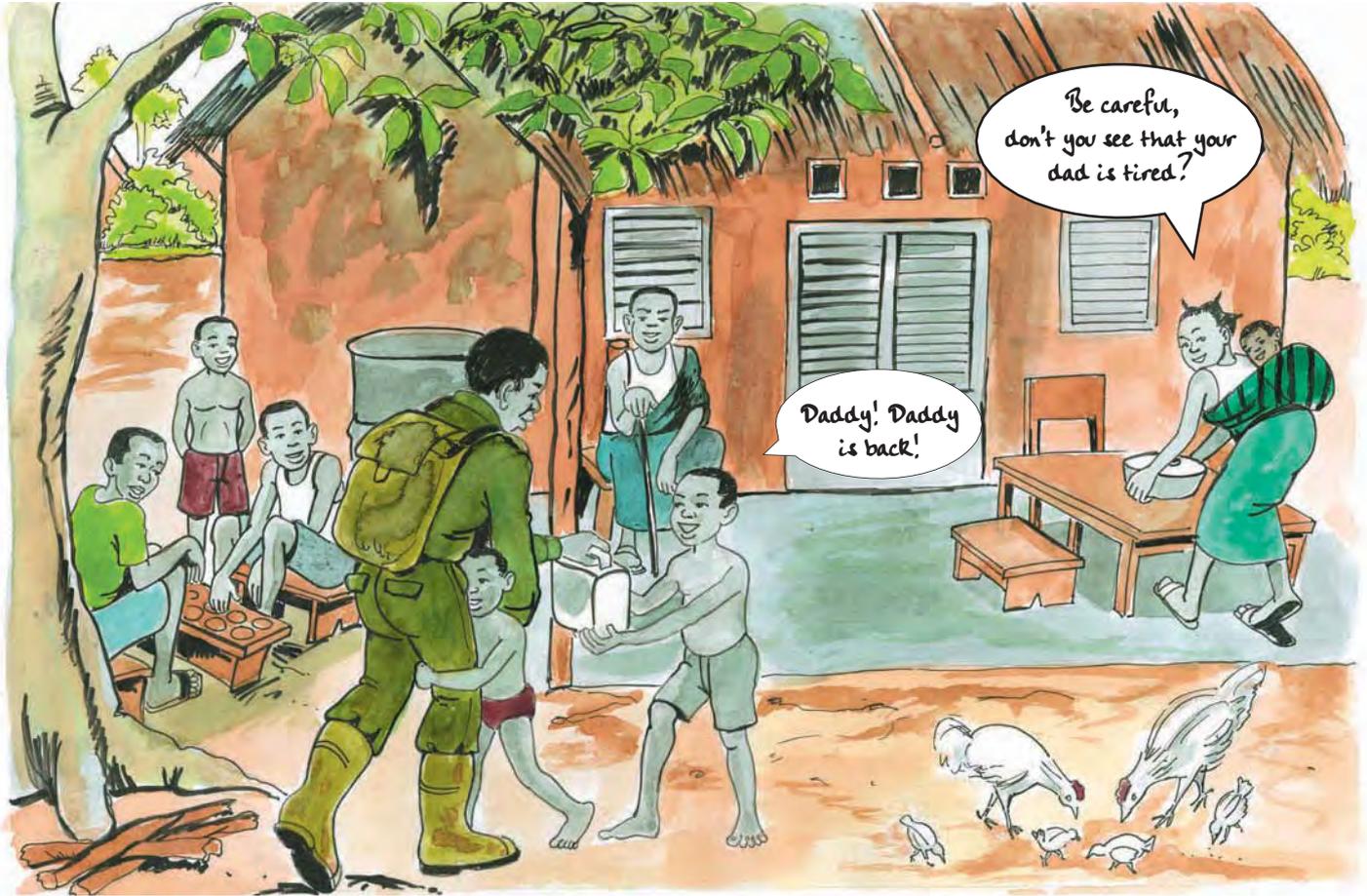
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R	P		Z	E	E	S		X	O
F	U	E	M	N	S	C	U	H	U
D		J	C	E	H	E	N	I	S
A	I	U	T	T	E	I	S	A	S
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End

GREGOIRE NOHON TALKS ABOUT ... ADOPTIONS

Hedwige Boesch

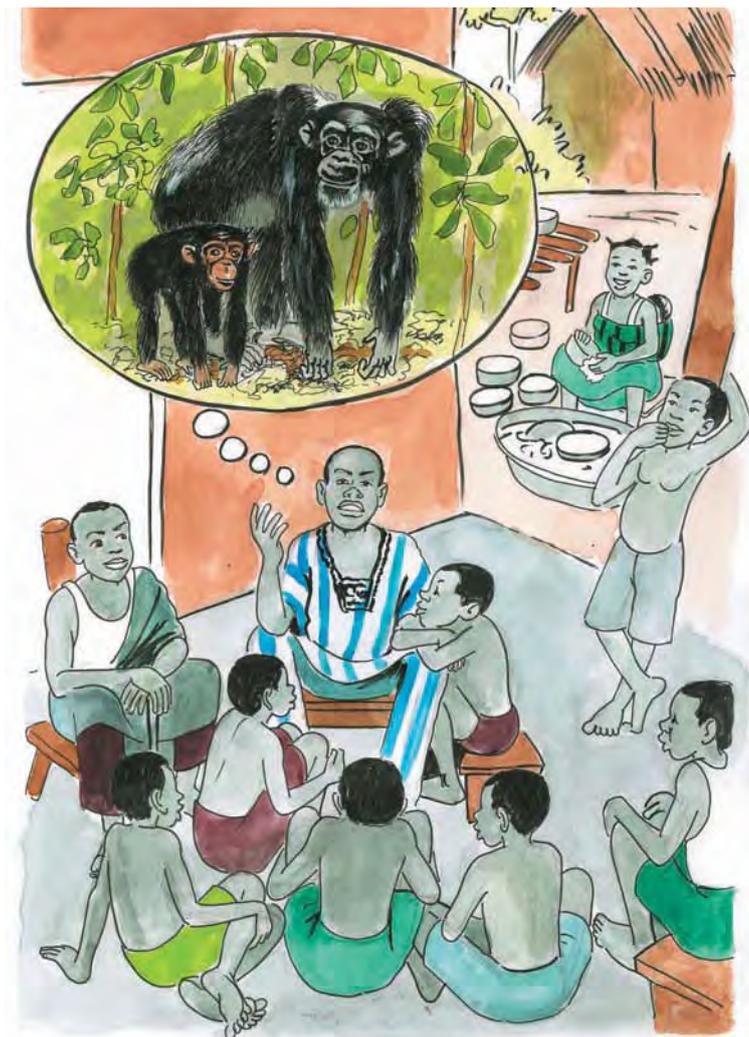
Grégoire returns to his village to take a rest among his family. As always, his wife, his brothers and his children are there and a meal is ready.



Here, the wife of a deceased uncle takes her leave. She leaves the village with her young daughter to join her family. Grégoire and his family accompany her to the bus. Grégoire knows that she will take good care of the little girl since he knows how important a mother is.

It's not at all easy to raise a child alone.

It really makes me sad that they have to leave us.



This sad event makes Grégoire think of an adoption which he observed during the last few weeks in the forest between Brutus and Ali, a little chimpanzee who had lost his mother. Here, Grégoire tells the story to his family ...

Information on chimpanzee adoptions:

- Among chimpanzees, orphans are principally adopted by an older brother or sister or by another female chimpanzee.
- Unfortunately, orphans under 5-years old die despite being adopted; even when they have been weaned before their mother dies.
- In the Taï forest, we have observed numerous cases of adoptions by adult males, which is unique among chimpanzees as far as we know. First there was Ali, then a year later Tarzan, another young 5-year old chimpanzee, was adopted. These adoptions lasted several years.

“Some days ago, in the morning, I saw Brutus, closely followed by Ali, a young 5-year old chimpanzee. But I did not see Ali’s mother – this was strange! Normally, such young chimpanzees never walk around without their mother...”

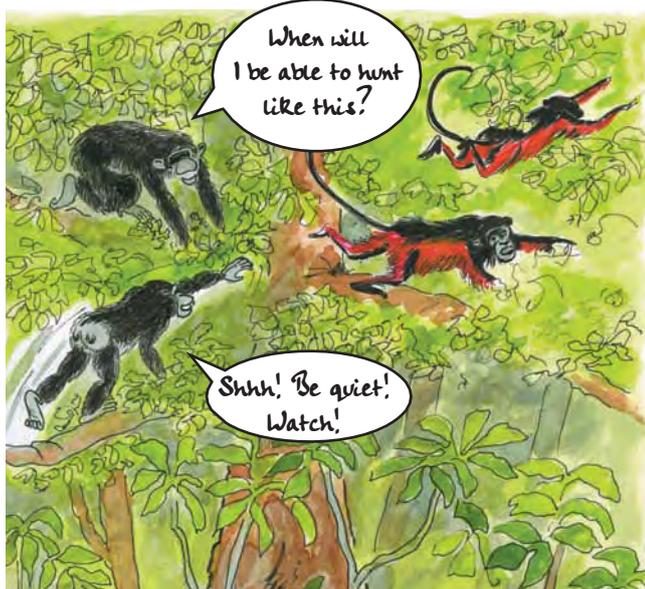




Soon everything became clear. Ali stayed continuously with Brutus who waited patiently for him when the group went ahead too fast. I understood that Brutus, the head of the group, the dominant male, had adopted him! This was unbelievable but true!

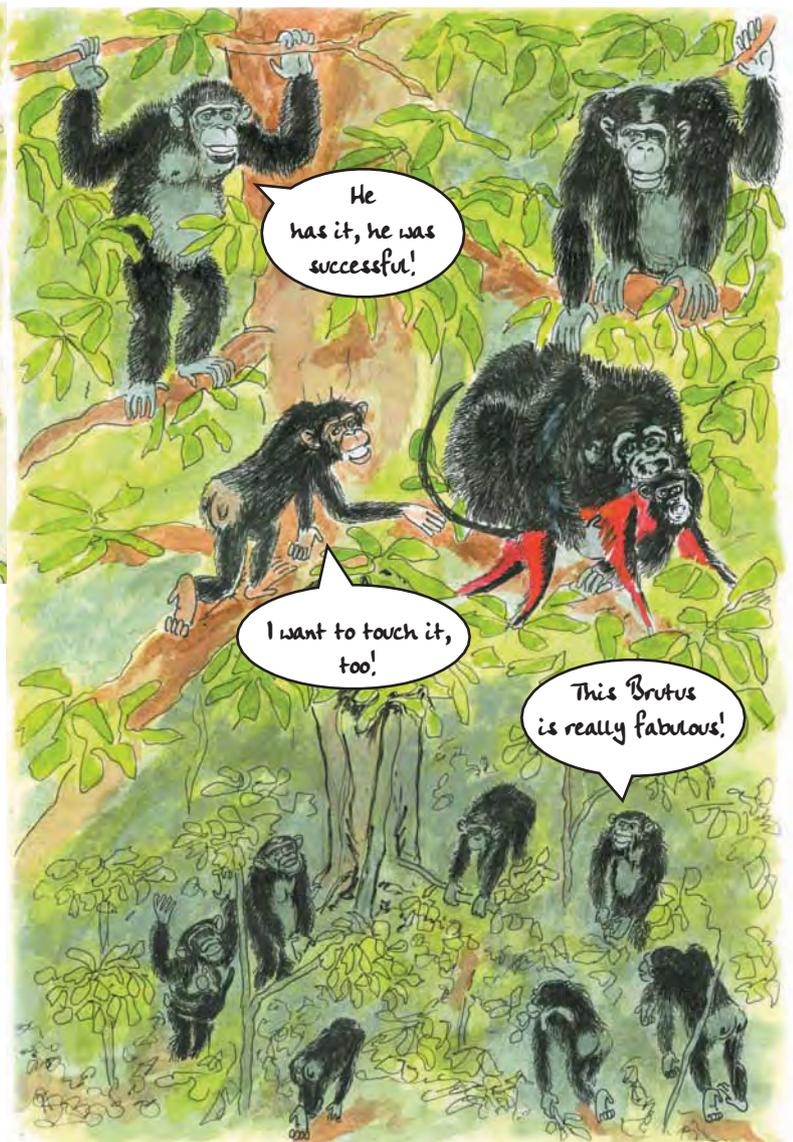
Once, he even put him on his back, as mothers do, to be able to catch up with the other adult males who were drumming and fighting for power and for the females ...

In these situations, little Ali was at the heart of everything, on Brutus' back!



Ali learned exceptional traits four years earlier than the other young chimpanzees. At an age when his little friends only thought of playing, he already knew how to hunt. When Brutus captured a monkey, Ali could follow the gestures that lead to a successful finish at close range.

He observed Brutus who followed the movements of the other hunters that were driving the monkeys in a certain direction. He kept his eyes on Brutus as he ran at top speed through the undergrowth to finally show up at the right tree at the right moment just in time to capture the prey!



GREGOIRE NOHON TALKS ABOUT ... ADOPTIONS

After this, I was not surprised to see that Brutus also gave some good pieces of meat to Ali ...



... but that's is not all. Just like a real mother, Brutus also shared with Ali a large quantity of nuts that he had opened and he lent Ali his hammer to allow him to practice his technique.



GREGOIRE NOHON TALKS ABOUT ... ADOPTIONS

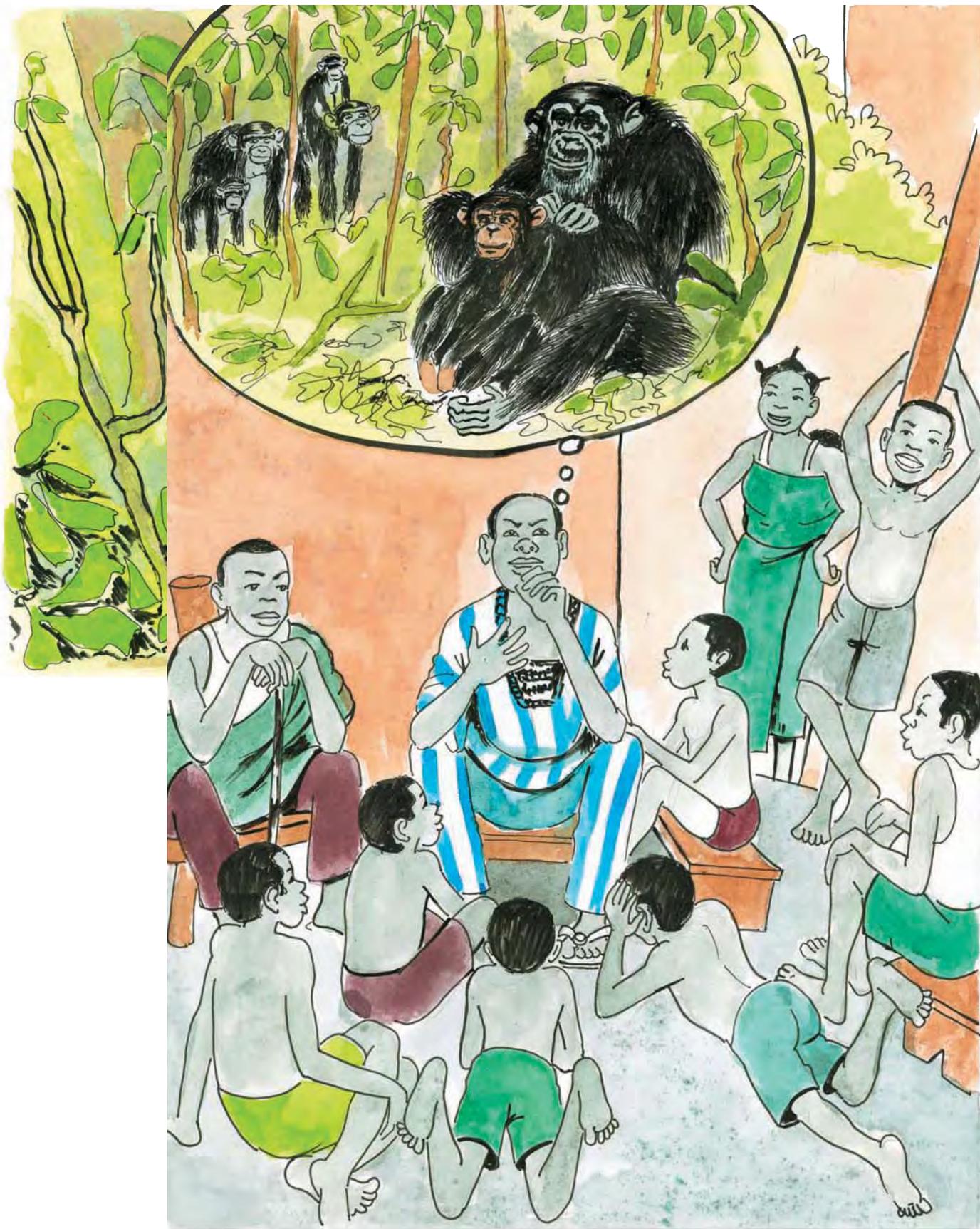
In the evening, Ali started whimpering – he missed his mother terribly. Brutus seemed to know this because at nightfall, when he climbed into the trees to prepare his nest, he kindly accommodated Ali and snuggled up next to him. And the two watched the moon rise together ...



GREGOIRE NOHON TALKS ABOUT ... ADOPTIONS

It is really touching to discover such care and tenderness in Brutus – this big dominant male, who is a fearsome hunter and is not afraid of panthers. Tender and strong – that's what makes a great man!

Just like humans, chimpanzees have a heart of gold, since they too know how to love!



HOTCH-POTCH

There are 7 differences between the two drawings. It's up to you to find them!



ONE MINUTE OF FUN

ANI	M	AL
---	I	--
---	N	--
---	U	---
---	T	---
----	E	--

Use the letter groups below to complete the table and form 6 new words.

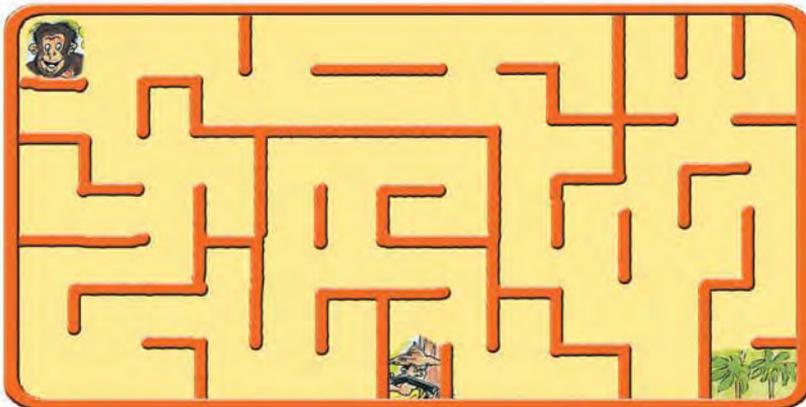
Example: ANI – M – ALS

ANI
AL

AFR
CT
TS
RESP
RAL

PLA
PRO
NAT
CA
ECT

LABYRINTH



Our little chimpanzee has lost his way in the forest!
 Help him find his way back to the trees ... but pay attention not to encounter the poacher with his rifle!

WCF AND ITS PROJECTS ...

Ilka Herbinger

The research project on chimpanzees in the Tai forest (TCP-Tai Chimpanzee Project)

Ilka Herbinger

The research project on chimpanzees in the Tai National Park, Ivory Coast, started in 1978 with two Swiss researchers, Christophe Boesch and Hedwige Boesch, who habituated a community of chimpanzees to their presence. Their aim was to observe these animals that were unknown to the scientific public without interfering with their normal way of life, which would mean not feeding them. In all, the whole process required 5 years of patience. Today, 4 chimpanzee communities are studied within the TCP. For that past 30 years, a great number of young local people have joined the project. Today in 2008, there are 15 local assistants and several students from Ivory Coast and other countries who observe the chimpanzees every day from morning until nightfall. Among the numerous research topics, two have particularly contributed to the fact that the Tai forest has become known to the rest of the world: the use of hammers to crack nuts and the group hunting techniques of chimpanzees. These data have enabled many students to do their thesis (DEA and doctorate). Hundreds of scientific articles and books on different aspects of the lives of chimpanzees in the Tai National Park have been published and many documentary films have been produced. One of them has been considered by nature cinema experts as, "the most beautiful film on chimpanzees that has ever been made". The WCF shows this film regularly during their village tours.



Photo: Sonja Metzger

Inauguration of an Eco-Museum in Banco

Ilka Herbinger

With
support
of



The Eco-Museum "House of Nature" in the Banco National Park which was rehabilitated and renovated by the WCF in collaboration with the OIPR since 2006, was officially inaugurated on 22nd of November 2007 in the presence of the Ivorian Minister for Environment, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Director of the Leipzig Zoo in Germany and many administrative and traditional personalities. Some days after the official inauguration, the "House of Nature" was visited by the Ambassador of the United States of America in Ivory Coast. The inauguration was broadcasted in several reportages on the two national public television channels (TV1 and TV2) as well as on the radio of the UN mission in Ivory Coast (ONUCI FM) and on BBC-Africa. Since its inauguration, numerous schools and many visitors have received the opportunity to become familiar with the precious Banco National Park and its museum in the middle of Abidjan. You are ALL welcomed to discover this primary forest and its fascinating museum exhibition (entry near Fanico, on the old road). Price: nationals and CEDEAO members pay 1000 FCFA, children pay 500 FCFA and other visitors pay 5000 FCFA. Group rates upon inquiry.



Inauguration day at the Banco Eco-Museum.

Contact: OIPR phone 0225-22 40 61 12 • email: OIPR@aviso.ci
WCF phone 0225-23 51 99 33 • email: herbinger@wildchimps.org

WCF AND ITS PROJECTS ...

Theatre tour in Sierra Leone

Ilka Herbinger, Zoro Bertin Gone Bi

Between the 11th to 23rd of February 2007, the WCF team, consisting of Ilka Herbinger and Zoro Bertin Goné Bi, organized a second theatre tour in 15 villages around the Gola forest reserve in Sierra Leone. The professional theatre group called “Tabule Theatre” is directed by David S. Kabba and Ali Banguara. They have been very convincing with their piece entitled “We and the Chimpanzees, our brothers”. Additionally, the Gorahun village theatre group, founded in December 2006, has acted before an enthusiastic audience in 2 villages! The discussions after the performances were very active since the population benefited from this opportunity to be informed and to discuss the issues that concern them directly as people who live next to the protected forests. It is commonly asked, “What to do with this cousin in the forest who eats on our fields?”. This, in short, is the principal conflict to solve. More than 6600 spectators have watched the different theatre performances. They also had the possibility to watch two films on chimpanzees and the conservation activities on large screens. The increasing interest in the activities to protect our natural environment is encouraging. Sincere THANKS to all spectators!



“Tabule Theatre” near Gola Forest
in Sierra Leone

The conservation aims of Club P.A.N.

Julia Riedel from the Conservation group of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig

In 2007
with
support of



Club PAN outdoors!

“To teach children around Taï National Park about the flora and fauna of the region’s ecosystem, so that they may appreciate and take pride in the biodiversity that exists in their region.” This was the aim of the Club P.A.N. when it was first created.

What is the aim of these students from the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig and the teachers in Ivory Coast? That the WCF establishes an education and a conservation programme around the Taï National Park in Ivory Coast. As we know, the Taï National Park is the largest undisturbed forest block in all of West Africa to be protected as well as the home to a large number of western chimpanzees, hence our name P.A.N. (the genus name for chimpanzees). P.A.N. also stands for “People, Animals, Nature” as reference to educating people which is a crucial part of this programme.



... EPP Hôpital 1 in Soubré



... EPP in Ziriglo



... EPP in Sakré

PORTRAIT OF DARWIN – THE BATTLE OF SURVIVAL

Hedwige Boesch

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of our research on chimpanzees in the Tai National Park, we would like to present some important personalities of the community which we had the privilege to observe for many years and who deeply impressed us.

The chimpanzee Darwin, named after the famous scholar Charles Darwin, is himself a lesson in life! He was physically impaired by a medical condition of his two feet known as “clubfoot”, which made it impossible for him to climb or to move normally in the trees. But even if this handicap made him an easy prey for panthers and hunters he continued to survive for many years!

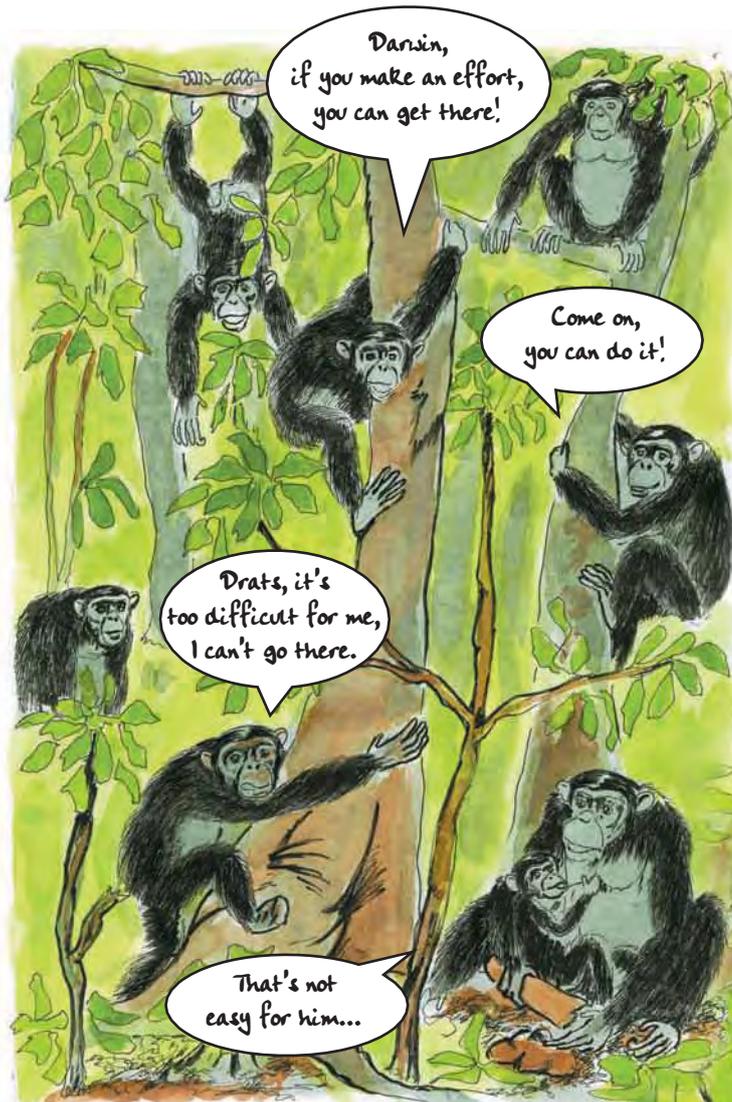


We identified the young male in 1984. He was probably 14 or 15 years old. Thanks to Darwin and his friend Rousseau we were able to ask ourselves our first philosophic questions about tool use, the sharing of food and the survival of chimpanzees ... (for more details on tool use, have a look at our previous newsletter issues).

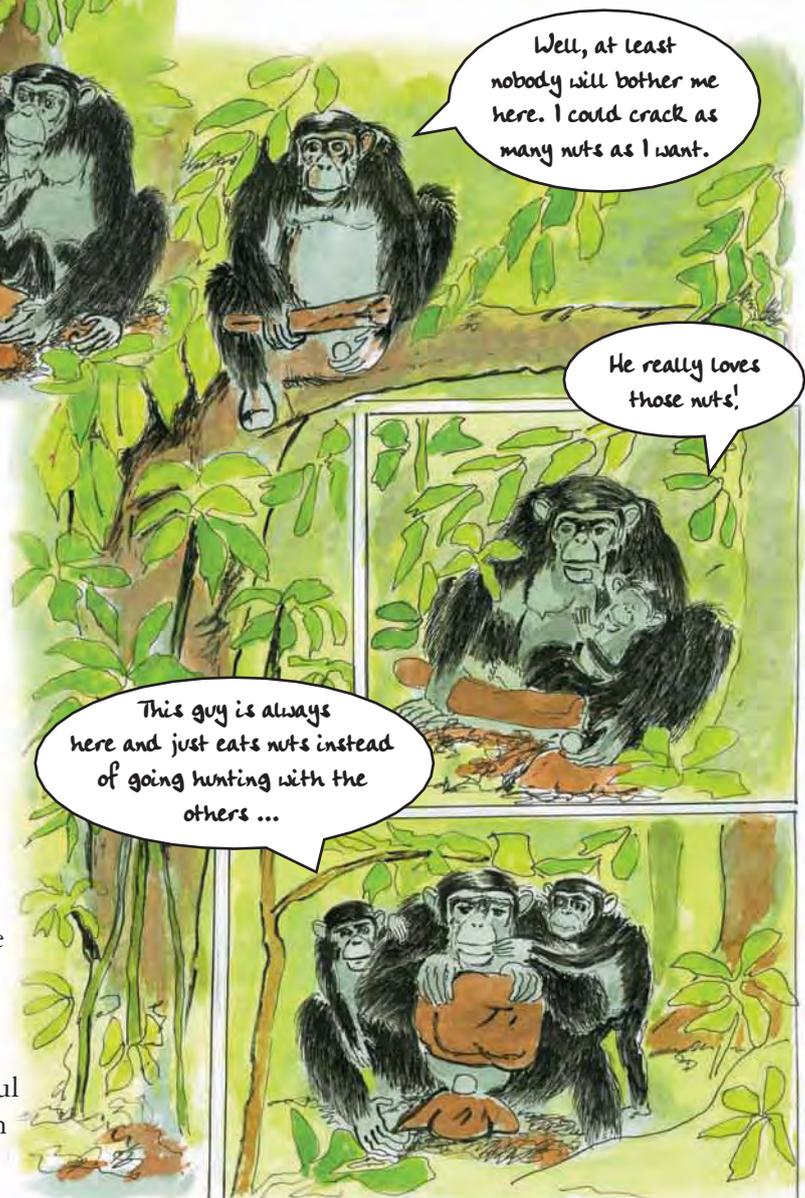
One day, we heard the typical noise of someone cracking *Panda oleosa* nuts. These are very hard fruits that can only be cracked with the help of a large stone! Hidden in the bushes, we then saw not only one but two chimpanzees! One of them cracked nuts with a 4 kilo stone. The other one collected the nuts, he then brought to the cracker, sat down next to him and then they ate together. What a surprise! These two young males shared their work and their food – a behaviour only attributed to humans. How is it that two chimpanzees can share their food which is so difficult to obtain in such a “civilized” manner? Did they simply understand what is important: instead of fighting for a stone, it is better to unify one's forces and to benefit together from a good meal?



PORTRAIT OF DARWIN – THE BATTLE OF SURVIVAL



A further philosophical problem, also inspired by Darwin, is survival in the forest. Darwin with his feet infirmity had many difficulties in climbing trees. Additionally, he also had a dental problem – he had no upper carnassial teeth. But nevertheless ... how is it possible that an individual with such handicaps is able to survive in the forest where he is exposed to thousands of dangers? Is the survival of the fittest not the common rule among chimpanzees?



Darwin had not been made for hunting or for battling against other males! He would never be the leader! But he was intelligent and did not push himself needlessly. Instead, he spent hours cracking nuts, either in the trees or with groups of mothers and their infants. There he found his share and was well nourished. And who was this Pokou, the only female who groomed him regularly and for a long time? She was his mother!!! He was very lucky to have such a devoted mother who defended him come what may.

Despite his disabilities, Darwin also became interested in females like his friends. And although he behaved discreetly when the other big males tried to impress a female in oestrus, he succeeded in having two beautiful infants: Nino and Bambou! He succeeded in seducing these ladies on the quiet ...

PORTRAIT OF DARWIN – THE BATTLE OF SURVIVAL

Darwin adored meat even though he was a bad hunter because of his handicap. But nevertheless he was very brave! In 1985, we saw him in the middle of a group of big males heading towards Schubert, the owner of a freshly caught colobus monkey! And he defended himself like a real devil against Macho, Ulysse, Brutus and the females who wanted to take away his meat.



After having succeeded in taking together with Snoopy, another young male, the whole back part of the prey, Darwin was intelligent enough to cut off a leg of the monkey. He knew that he would not be able to keep such a big part for himself. Snoopy, who did not have this reflex lost everything to the other big males.

Darwin was well integrated in his group! As clever and intelligent as he was, he regularly became an ally of Fitz, a strong and ambitious male who has risen in hierarchy (see Newsletter No. 5; Ella ...). He helped Fitz to stand up against the dominant males and Fitz compensated him with many privileges like granting him access to big pieces of meat.

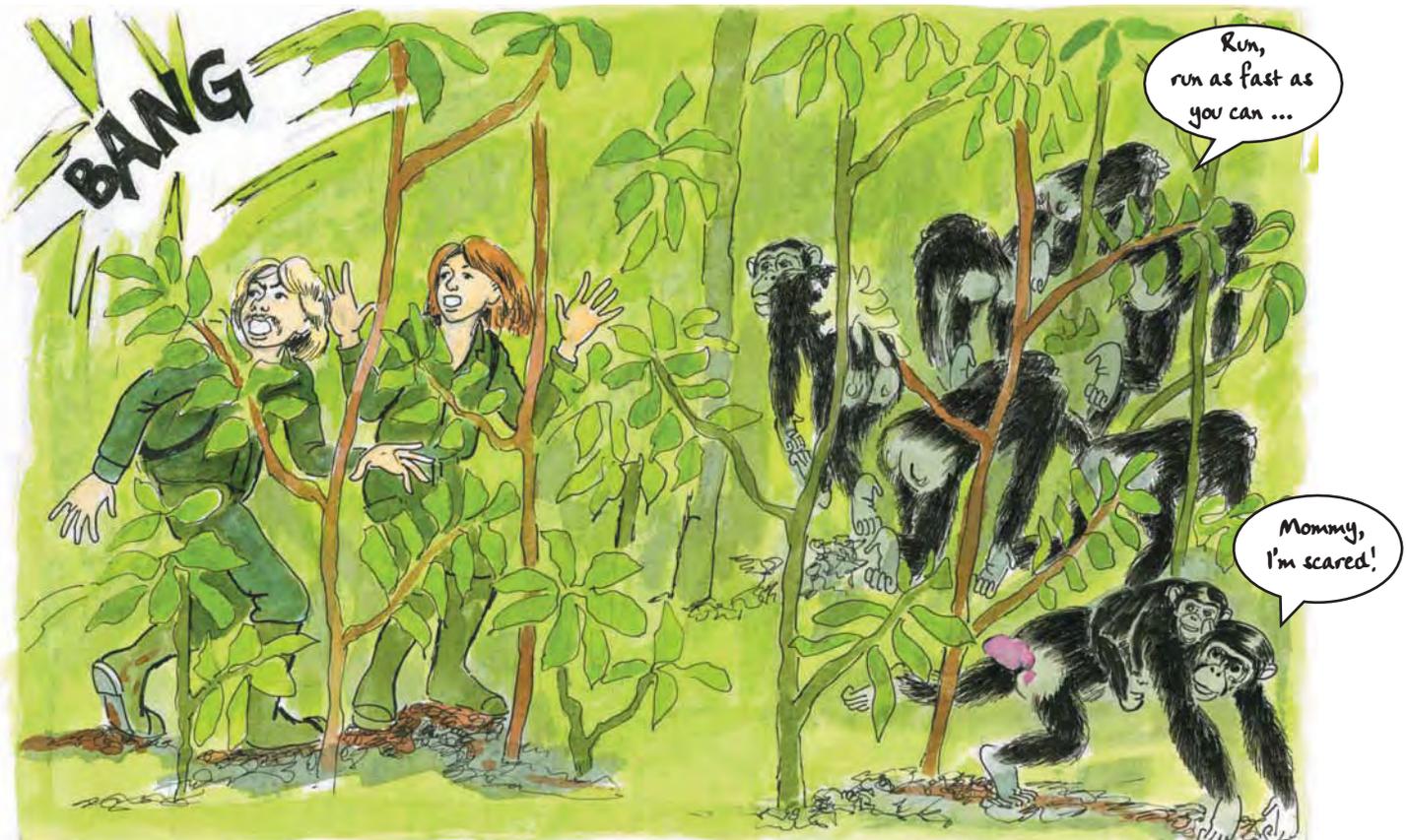


PORTRAIT OF DARWIN – THE BATTLE OF SURVIVAL

December 1987: Just like any other day, we followed the chimpanzees. Suddenly we heard a gunshot about 40 meters away. We saw Macho, Ulysse, Kendo, Snoopy, Hera and her baby running away. Darwin also seemed to run away but appeared to be very confused.



A second gunshot followed! There was no trace neither of Darwin nor of his mother!



PORTRAIT OF DARWIN – THE BATTLE OF SURVIVAL

With pain in our hearts we went near the place from where we heard the gunshots and there, we heard the poachers talking and could even smell the smoke of their cigarettes.



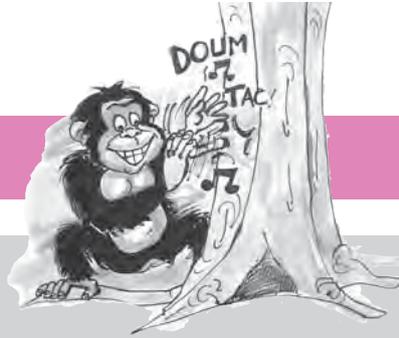
Darwin and his mother stayed absent for many days, even weeks! Their death seemed more and more certain



Conclusion of our story: The right of the fittest is not always the best one!

Today, 14 years after his death, Darwin lives through his son Nino. Nino is the dominant male. He controls 7 females and has many infants!!!

THE TAM TAM ...



Let us save the great apes

Hedwige Boesch

During the weekend of the 4th to 6th of April 2008, Neuchâtel, a little town in Switzerland became the “capital of the great apes”. The Natural History Museum and the University of Neuchâtel – with the marvellous efforts by Blaise Mulhauser and Redouan Bshary, organized a festival devoted entirely to primates. The invited experts had the opportunity to present their research results and to discuss their concerns and hopes regarding the survival of primates and the tropical rain forest. Everybody agreed on the urgency of the situation: if we do not stop the exploitation of their natural habitat, orang-utans in Asia will be the first great apes to disappear in about 20 years. They will be followed by gorillas, bonobos and chimpanzees. The reasons are the same everywhere: the excessive destruction of their habitats coupled with poaching activities. Christophe and Hedwige Boesch talked about the situation in West Africa and showed films on the chimpanzees of the Taï National Park and the activities of the WCF. A big THANKS to all who organized and volunteered during this festival and helped by selling beverages and cake to obtain donations in the amount of 1'660.00 CHF for the benefit of WCF activities.



Photo: Sonja Metzger



sign the manifesto: www.apesmanifesto.org

The protection of the classified forests Cavally, Goin Dèbé (Ivory Coast) and Grebo (Liberia) – a high priority issue

Biomonitoring activities in classified forests enable us to obtain updated and detailed information on the fauna of these forests and help to implement a forest management plan that aims at reducing potential negative effects of forestry activities. The ultimate aim is to protect the majority of the remaining habitat of wild chim-

panzees that are still living in these forests. Since most of the great apes in Africa do not live within protected areas, these forests need to be included in protection measures as quickly as possible. After having done some preliminary studies on site we are now waiting for the funding confirmation which will enable us to act quickly.

Defense of a Doctoral Thesis

Ilka Herbinger



On Saturday the 24th of November 2007, Zoro Bertin GONE BI has brilliantly defended his doctoral thesis at the University of Cocody-Abidjan titled, “Alimentation of chimpanzees, spatial distribution and phenology of plants whose fruits are consumed by the chimpan-

zees of the Taï National Park, Ivory Coast”. He has passed with the degree “summa cum laude, with congratulations of the jury”. On this occasion, Prof. Christophe Boesch, director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and also president of the WCF, acted for the first time as the chair of a thesis committee in the African continent. The preparation of this thesis was supervised by Prof. Christophe BOESCH and Prof. Dossahoua TRAORE from the University of Cocody-Abidjan.