



Jengi

Jengi Newsletter No. 34, April 2018

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

14 suspects standing trial for poaching, arms trafficking



WWF Africa Director communes with Baka, Bantu communities in Jengi landscape

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Enthusiastic Bakas of Yenga Village welcome Fred in traditional dance

The passage of Fred Kumah, WWF Director for Africa, through Jengi landscape in Southeast Cameroon could have been brief but the visit will last long in the minds of Baka and Bantu communities.

The visit of Fred and Marc Languy, WWF Central Africa Director, to the landscape in February, provided an opportunity for communion with indigenous forest people (Baka) and Bantu tribes, game rangers, WWF personnel as well as chiefs and civil society representatives. Drums and the melodic voices from Baka and Bantu tribes reverberated throughout the forest, telling their august guest that he was at home.

"It was great moment for us to commune and share issues around our landscape with the WWF top official," stated Rorbert Tango," leader of Bakas in Mambele Village. From Mambele to Yenga, Fred and Marc met and

discussed with communities; listened to their worries and expectations. Key worries from the communities revolve around securing access rights to natural resources in protected areas for Bakas, mitigating human-wildlife conflicts, addressing issues relating to abuses of Baka and engaging directly with Baka in WWF's work with them. To Fred, addressing these are key to success in WWF's conservation work.

In his own words at the end of the trip, Fred said: "Jengi landscape is one of the most beautiful spots in the world If there is any place that our mission comes together, then, I would say this Jengi landscape is the place. We need to, really, be here for the long term".

[Read Fred's blog on his trip to Jengi landscape on wwf-congobasin.org](http://wwf-congobasin.org)



Baka and Bagando communities welcome Fred with songs and dance

Bakas mobilized as WWF-Plan project implementation brings changes in schools



Mboli community being sensitized on creation of community forest

Baka communities targeted by a WWF-Plan International project (being implemented in 10 villages in the East Region of Cameroon) are witnessing transformation. A public primary school in Mboli, a Baka community near Boumba Bek National Park is being transformed as the project has moved to its field phase. Classrooms with toilets for boys and girls have been built. Classrooms have been furnished with benches while school authorities, pupils and community members have received training on inclusive education. Sensitisation on hygiene and sanitation have been carried out in eight communities while community members have participated in building three latrines.

Bakas of Mboli Village will soon manage their own community forest with the legal entity of the community forest legalized. This will be the third community forest to be wholly managed by Bakas after that of Yenga/Mambele and Ngoyla. At least 60 Baka women have been identified and are set to lead the process for the commercialisation of non-timber forest products. "Activities have taken off the ground well. We will make remarkable progress in the near future," states Esther Pedie, Plan Cameroon Project Coordinator.

Before commencing the project, WWF and Plan carried out a series of awareness campaigns in Baka communities to seek their consent and participation in the project. During the sensitization meetings around Lobeke and Boumba-Bek national parks, Baka pledged their support and participation.

"We will collaborate with those who will come to work with us in order to ensure the success of this project," stated David Mbangawi, President of the Association for the Development of Bakas of Yenga and Mambele (ASDEBYM).

Yoko Jeanine, a Baka woman of Mambele Village, cannot wait to see a leap in revenue from the sale of non-timber forest products. "We are very happy with the coming of this project. It will help us (women) to better harvest and sell wild mangoes and *njangsang*".

For Moise Kono, WWF IP Officer, constant dialogue with Baka and close follow up will be key to success of the project.

Plan International and WWF are working closely with relevant Cameroon's ministries of Environment and Nature Protection, Wildlife and Forests, Basic Education, Social Affairs, Agriculture and Rural Development as well as local councils to leverage institutional support for the success of this project.

EARTH HOUR:

Hundreds join WWF, Roger Milla to campaign for forests in East Cameroon



March past through the streets of Bertoua raised awareness on need to protect our forests

Hundreds of students, men and women, administrative and traditional authorities in Bertoua, East Region of Cameroon joined WWF and Fondation Coeur d'Afrique of African football legend, Roger Milla, in a sensitisation march on March 24 to drum support for the protection of forests.

The occasion was the commemoration of Earth Hour, a global event that mobilizes millions of people across the globe for the environment. WWF in collaboration with Coeur d'Afrique organized the event for the third time in Cameroon.

With the use of brass band and placards bearing messages related to the environment, the caravan reached an estimated 5000 people as the team covered a 7-kilometre distance through the main streets of Bertoua. Some of the messages read: "Water, clean air, forests. For you, for me, today and tomorrow",

"I am dedicating my hour to earth, the only reason we exist".

Other activities included a college football match and an advocacy meeting with local authorities, civil society actors. Local authorities represented by the Region's governor pledged to work with the Roger Milla Foundation and WWF to protect the environment.

«We cannot be indifferent to climate change» On his motivation to engage in the crusade for the environment, Roger Milla said; "Our

environment is changing before us all and we cannot be indifferent to these changes. I think WWF is carrying out a noble mission to protect our planet and we all have to lend our support."

The East Region described as the "Green heart of Cameroon" occupies 23% of the country's landscape and is the richest region in terms of forest and biodiversity. The region hosts six protected areas, with WWF Jengi Forest Program intervening in five priority areas.

At the end of the exercise, participants planted trees to reinforce their message of preservation and reforestation.

This year's event in Cameroon kicked off in the capital city Yaounde with a 10-kilometre sensitisation walk

involving diplomatic representations, representatives of the ministries of the environment, sports fan clubs, students and the media.



Roger Milla plants symbolic tree in the heart of the East Region

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT:

Integrating Kenyan community wildlife conservancy model in Lobeke



Essombe and Penkem (middle) exchanging with Mara inhabitants on best practices on handling human-wildlife conflicts

In a meeting between WWF and local communities around Lobeke National Park, Aboula Bibiana, president of Women Health and Conservation Society (WHCS), came close to shedding tears as she recounted how animals destroy crops on her farm. She lamented the loss they incur each time her

group (comprising 30 women supported by WWF) plants crops and cannot harvest the yields. "It is very frustrating and this discourages us from farming activities. We need your help," Bibiana told Lobeke Park authorities.

Complaints of monkeys and gorillas devastating the farms of poor communities have been piling. Seeking solutions to the perennial conflict between animals and populations living around Lobeke National Park has been a challenge for the park authorities. It was in the light of seeking lasting solutions to human-wildlife conflict around Lobeke and ensuring a harmonious relationship between the two that the park authorities sent two game rangers to Kenya for capacity building. Kenya has a long experience in these issues due to the concept of conservancy practised in the Mara landscapes. Rangers Penkem Eben Joseph, head of protection and ecological monitoring, and Essombe Njoh Jean, head of research and eco-logical monitoring, undertook a 10-day ex-change from 15 to 25 January 2018.

"This exchange visit enabled us to build our capacities on concepts such as; 'Community wildlife conservancies' models and the involvement of the communities in decision making processes and human-wildlife conflict management in community areas," states Essombe.

Importing and domesticating the Kenyan model Lobeke could prove valuable. "We already have some ideas on how to tackle human-wildlife conflicts around Lobeke. We plan to initiate a project that will see locals planting crops like pepper that repel animals from their farms. It will also serve as a source of income as the conservation service will help the local population in selling their produce to potential buyers," Essombe explains.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

14 suspects standing trial for poaching, arms trafficking



War guns wrenched from poachers potentially saves elephants and other targeted species

In just two months (February and March), rangers arrested 14 suspected poachers and arms traffickers. They are standing trial in courts in Yokadouma and Bertoua the East Region of Cameroon.

The suspects, some of them notorious elephant poachers, were arrested variously around Nki and Lobeke national parks as game rangers battle relentlessly against wildlife criminality in the area.

In February, rangers of Lobeke National Park apprehended six suspected poachers with war guns and elephant tusks. In another tian-poaching operation organized in March, the rangers again arrested four suspects in Socambo (a frontier locality bordering the Republic of Congo) with 12 elephant tusks, 9 kilograms of giant pangolin scales and a leopard skin.

Meanwhile, during a joint anti-poaching patrol inside Nki

National Park in February, a squad comprising Cameroonian and Congolese rangers arrested an elephant poaching kingpin, Mouele Liboire, with an AK47 rifle. Liboire's arrest led to the arrest of three other suspects in Moloundou, Cameroonian frontier town with the Republic of Congo. More arrests are likely to follow given the reported involvement of many local officials in the poaching network.

The string of arrests is a telltale of the pressure on elephants in the three parks (Nki, Lobeke and Boumba Bek) that make up the Jengi landscape. Given the rate and scale of circulation of war arms in the area, park authorities are collaborating with the military army and local populations in the fight against poaching. WWF provides financial and technical support to ensure effective application of the law and fair trial of suspects.



Pangolin scales, leopard skin and elephant tusks seized from poachers indicate the species most threatened



Baka and Bantu women discuss conservation on March 8

In Ngoyla, a small community near Nki National Park, women did not just march and make merry on March 8, celebrated worldwide as Women's Day. Besides discussing this year's theme; «Intensifying the fight against all forms of discrimination against women and rein-force partnership for sustainable development », the women also took time to discuss the role of rural women in the sus-tainable management of natural resources. With the support of WWF, some 200 Baka and Bantu women organised a roundtable conference on their role in sustainable management of natural resources. Besides the women's day fabric, many women donned WWF t-shirts, which they used as a tool to sensitise the community. Other activities included a march past, singing and dancing, a foot-ball match and gala.

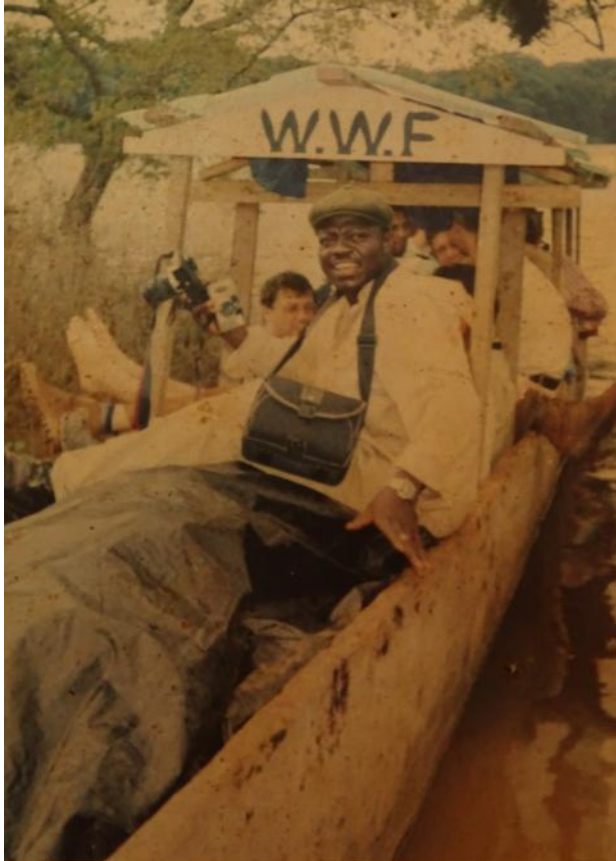
Baka women turned out in their numbers to assert their rights



Baka woman shows off her 'kabba'

TRIBUTE:

Ex-WWF field assistants retire eternally



Late Mokoguya (left) and Pial stamped their footprints in the forests of Southeast Cameroon

Two of ex-WWF's foremost field assistants in Eastern Cameroon; Valentin Mokoguya and Damien Pial, have quit the stage. Both men died in April 2018.

WWF's earliest wildlife inventories and research works in the Jengi landscape were possible largely thanks to Valentin Mokoguya and Damien Pial, who both served as Junior Field Assistants.

While Mokoguya left WWF in 2013, Pial left in 2017 after many years of service. Mokoguya and his family were the pioneer conservationists in Southeast Cameroon and their home hosted the first WWF teams in the zone in 1993.

Mokoguya's commitment to conservation attracted the rejection of his family by the village. "All wildlife and plant inventories carried out in Boumba-Bek and Nki national parks (covering a surface area of almost a million hectares) between 1996 and 1998 were successful thanks to the commitment of Valentin," states Gilles Etoga, who worked with him. Pial served as Curator of Djembe Tourist Camp for over a decade, carrying out biological data collection and maintenance of the tourist site managed by the Jengi TNS Programme.

Pial and Mokoguya would be remembered for their commitment to conservation work.

Pondo and Ikwah forest clearings in six shots

The Pondo and Ikwah forest clearings in Boumba-Bek and Nki national parks in Southeast Cameroon continue to enthrall us with more captivating and breath-taking camera trap images of wildlife presence like never before. Just like in a parade, more and more species show up now during the day in the clearing. It is exciting to see the Bongo antelopes and buffaloes, sharing same space. A gorilla frolics and then saunters through one of the clearings while forest hogs, monkeys, the giant birds and the big cats all take turns for a photo shot.



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Elephants that had not been observed for a while (particularly in the day) in Ikwah bai in Nki National Park seem to be returning. This family of three (left) spent almost two hours in the bai



Gorilla caught on camera trap (Pondo clearing)



Bongo antelope and buffaloes sharing same space (Pondo)



The elusive leopard (the big cat) gave the camera enough time for a shot



Cigogne episcopale (the big bird) poses for the camera

Our Partners



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Word of gratitude to our supporters engraved in wood in Ikwah forest clearing (also pronounced Ikouah) in the heart of Nki National Park



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