

Chapter 9

A rapid survey of the primates of Boké Préfecture, northwestern Guinea

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SUMMARY

A rapid assessment of the primate fauna was conducted between April 22 and May 12, 2005 in northwestern Guinea's Boké Préfecture. Three sites were surveyed and a total of eight species of primates were recorded. We confirmed the presence of one prosimian species (Demidoff's galago *Galagoides demidoffi*), six monkey species (Western red colobus *Procolobus badius*, Guinea baboon *Papio papio*, Sooty mangabey *Cercocebus atys*, Patas monkey *Cercopithecus patas*, Calithrix monkey *Cercopithecus aethiops sabaenus* and Campbell's monkey *Cercopithecus (m.) campbelli*) and one ape species (West African chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes verus*).

INTRODUCTION

Primates are a good indicator of overall mammalian diversity and represent a significant proportion of the total mammalian biomass. Studies have shown that primate biomass can represent upwards of 46% of the total mammalian biomass in some tropical forests (Terborgh 1983). They play an important role in the dynamics of tropical ecosystems and help maintain plant species composition by acting as both seed dispersers and, less certainly, as pollinators (Chapman and Onderdonk 1998; Lambert and Garber 1998; Chatelain et al. 2001). Primates, being large bodied with long life spans and slow reproductive cycles, are especially susceptible to environmental changes like habitat loss and hunting pressure.

The combination of hunting and habitat destruction are the two main drivers of primate species decline in tropical ecosystems (Cowlshaw and Dunbar 2000). With habitat loss, many primate populations have been declining drastically and some species have vanished completely from certain areas in some countries. For example, Miss Waldron's Red Colobus, *Procolobus badius waldroni*, is no longer found in Ghana, and several other species have not been seen in Sierra Leone and Liberia (Lee et al. 1988). It is believed that the Endangered West African Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) is locally extinct in four West African countries (Togo, Benin, Gambia, and Burkina Faso) and Guinea is one of the few countries, along with Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, and Sierra Leone, that still harbor potentially viable populations (Kormos and Boesch 2003).

This RAP survey was conducted to assess the presence of and relative abundance of primate populations in the Boké Préfecture region of Guinea, to examine the threats to primates in the region, and to present conservation recommendations.

METHODS

The RAP primate team conducted a survey of primate species at three sites within the Boké Préfecture in the northeastern part of Guinea: Sarabaya along the Rio Kapatchez (Site 1), Kamsar in the Kamsar sub-préfecture (Site 2) and Boulléré in the Sangarédi sub-préfecture (Site 3) (Table 9.1). Within Kamsar, five different localities were visited: Taïgbé East, Taïgbé West, Kaiboutou, Tarénsa and Kataméne.

During our surveys, we recorded all indications of the presence of primates while quietly