

DRILL INFO

Rettet
DEN DRILL
save the drill
...mehr als Artenschutz!

Issue 12, August 2011

Dear members, dear friends of the Drill!

Thanks for help from „Save the Drill“! The technical preparations for the reintroduction of the first big group of around 100 Drills into Afi Mountains could be finished. We will report about this in more detail on the annual member meeting on

Saturday 27th August at the Erlebnis-Zoo Hannover.

We are looking forward to your attendance!
Your editorial department

Limbe Wildlife Centre, Cameroon and Drill Ranch, Nigeria, a field report

It was my dream to work with wild animals, especially with primates. When I was a small boy, I saw my first Drill in a zoo and recently I remembered this interesting specie. From 11/30/2010 to 01/30/2011 I completed an internship from for my veterinary study at the Limbe Wildlife Centre (LWC) and with Pandrillus in Nigeria.



Male Drill at the Limbe Wildlife Centre

At the LWC and especially at the Drill Ranch in Nigeria the Drills are of high importance. On the Drill Ranch these animals are the only ones which are systematically bred to be reintroduced into the wild. Alone in Nigeria more than 40 offspring were born in 2010. This success is especially due to the natural housing in big groups, in which many males have to compete for access to the females. Due to the increasing number of individuals in the groups the space for the Drills at the LWC is slowly decreasing. A new and bigger enclosure on an already existing area is already planned. A reintroduction project like in Nigeria is also planned. It will be conducted at Mount Cameroon, but until now the needed personal as well as the funding is missing. A semi free-ranging housing would also

be – apart from the wild – an ideal option.

As a veterinarian to work with wild animals is something totally different from the work in a clinical practice, were all the patients (at least most of them) are waiting patiently in the waiting room. Certainly not all animals are sick. Often a problem appears suddenly and unexpected and one has to improvise. Also an adult male Drill with its long canines is much more dangerous than a dog or a cat. In the case an animal has to be medicated, most of the times a blow tube or a gun with a narcotic injection is needed to immobilise the individual from a distance.

After a short time I was allowed to perform daily treatments independently and to assist with smaller operations and surgical interventions.

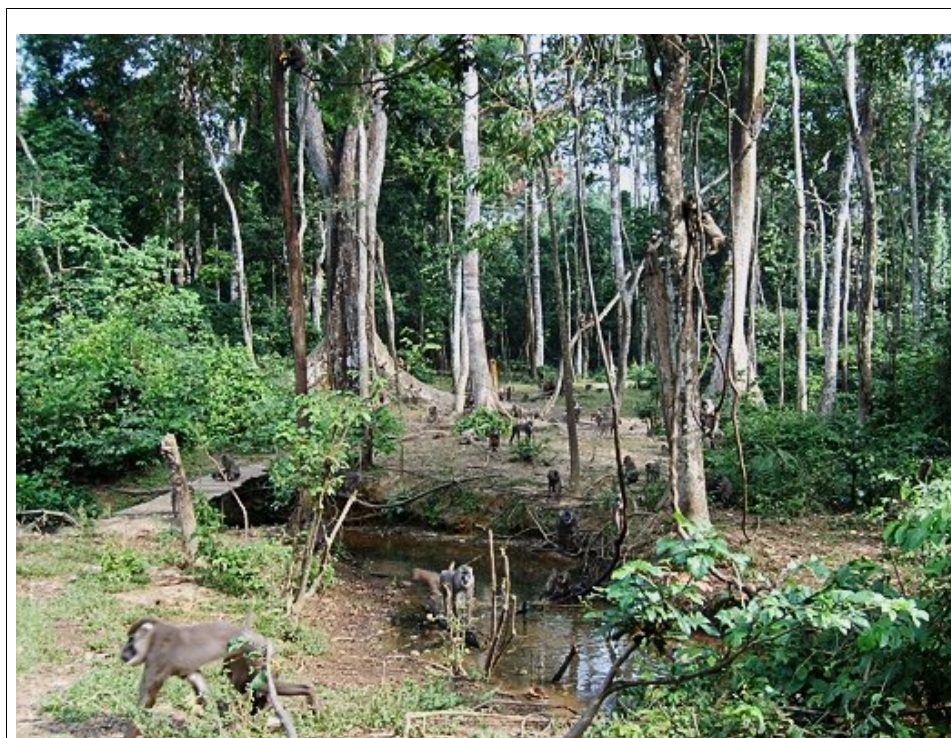
Great importance is laid on the health prevention. This comprises regular health checks of the animals, which also includes tuberculosis tests and worming.

I had enough time to have a closer look on the behaviour, the whole biology and the communication of this specie. For my point of view an important basis for the work as a veterinarian! When I am able to interpret the mimic and gestures of the Drills correctly and even to copy their calls, I have a better chance to interact with the animals like all other animals..

A lot of discipline is needed to cut all contacts to the animals on the smallest signs of a cold. Especially great apes are predisposed to human pathogens. This phenomenon is called zoonosis. Everybody who saw a whole group of chimpanzees suffer on a cold or how an individual was dying from a pneumonia will take this tip seriously. Monkeys are receptive to our diseases and they suffer much more on them than we do.

The ferry passage from Limbe to Calabr was around 4 hours and very comfortable.

The keeping conditions of the Drills in Cameroon are differently from the housings in Calabar or even the Afi Mountains. In Calabar they have one huge central enclosure surrounded by several so called satellite cages. The enclosure of the big group is filled with natural substrate, so the animals can achieve their natural behaviour, the foraging for food within the soil. I had the feeling, that the animals were very relaxed. Also the animal keepers were going into the enclosures without any problems.



Drill group at Pandrillus / Nigeria

For Drill friends Afi can be seen as heavenlike. 6 groups are partly living in huge fenced forest areas. Here the natural behaviour of the Drills can be studied.

In the wild Drills are sleeping over night in trees. It is very impressive to see such a gigantic tree where the Drills are playing in the canopy of 25m height.

From the huts for visitors it is always possible to see the monkeys. Many animals of the rainforest are living around oneself and many primate species can be seen.

It is a long and stony way if one wants to work with wild animals, but not impossible – if you have your goal always in mind!

I am always for any questions.

Dirk Jörgens

Bioko Island: An island under threat, part 2

This is the second part of our series about the Bioko Island, last time we gave you an insight in the islands wildlife. In this part we want to point out some of the threats for it.

As already mentioned (see “Drill-Info 11, January 2011) nine of the eleven primate species native on Bioko are classified as “endangered” or “vulnerable” on the “Red List of Threatened Species”. Under this species is also the endemic Bioko Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus poensis*).

One of the biggest problems for Biokos wildlife is the illegal trade. In 1980th a commercial bushmeat market appeared in Malabo, the capital city, and hunting to supply animals for this market became more organized by the early 1990s.

Easily accessible areas of the island were hunted out very soon. By 2000, commercial hunting became increasingly challenging as the larger wild animals became less common and their geographic ranges contracted to more remote parts of the island. By then bushmeat was firmly established as luxury food - priced by its scarcity well above the more available sources of protein on Bioko Island.

Several factors combined increased hunting pressure on the remaining populations of large forest mammals. First, as a result of the development of offshore oil extraction, local people had more money for bushmeat, driving the prices higher and making commercial hunting more profitable. Second, because species reproduced at different rates, some popular bushmeat species (blue duiker) remained relatively common in the forests, while others (the monkeys and Ogilby's duiker) became increasingly rare. However, hunters shot anything profitable without regard for rarity, taking the rare species almost as "by-catch" when hunting for the more common species. And third, as hunters entered the most remote parts of the Island they were aided by the better roads and many more vehicles travelling to capital Malabo.



typical bushmeat market

The government of Equatorial Guinea has taken steps to protect Bioko Island's wildlife, and therewith also the Drill. Two protected areas, Pico Basile National Park and the Gran Caldera and Southern Highlands Scientific Reserve were created already in the late 1980's, but neither protected area has ever received any government protection. It is still possible to hunt in these areas. A new threat to biodiversity materialized 2009, with the beginning of construction on a highway between the villages of Belebu and Ureca. This highway will bisect the Gran Caldera and Southern Highlands Scientific Reserve and provide hunters with direct access to the southern coast of Bioko Island.

Since 2007 Bioko's monkeys were directly protected by a Presidential Decree that banned the hunting, possession and consumption of all primate species throughout Equatorial Guinea. Although briefly effective, the entire lack of enforcement quickly led to a resumption of hunting and harvest rates in the market that far exceeded previous levels. Also the number of hunted Drills almost doubled during this time.

Eight of Bioko's eleven non-human primate species are sold in the Malabo bushmeat market. These species are big enough to be sold. The Bioko Drill is one of the two largest mammal species remaining in Bioko's forests (the other is Ogilby's duiker). The red-eared monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrotis erythrotis*) is consistently the most common monkey in the market, but the frequency of the other species depends on where the hunters are most active on the island. In addition to the monkeys, one prosimian primate species, the Bioko Allen's galago (*Sciurocheirus alleni alleni*) appears in the market. Although it is still relatively common on the mainland of Africa, the Bioko Island subspecies is endangered. Although it is only 24cm in length, it is typically captured by shotgun.

The Galagos are a good example how the hunting has changed over time. A decade ago most bushmeat was trapped rather than shot, and shotgun hunting was limited to monkeys, which are difficult to trap, and to the two duiker species, which are large enough to make the cost of a shotgun cartridge worthwhile. As bushmeat prices have increased, the cartridge cost has become less important and now even relatively small animals such as birds and squirrels are frequently shot rather than trapped. Shotgun ownership on Bioko Island is restricted to the military and to persons with close ties to the government. Typically the shotguns are rented out to hunters in exchange for some share of the profit.

Recently commercial hunters from other nearby countries have become more common. Bushmeat in Malabo sells at much higher prices than in either nearby Cameroon or the mainland part of Equatorial Guinea, the result of its status as a luxury food and the fact that people in Malabo have the disposable income to pay the higher prices. As a consequence of the high prices, bushmeat animals captured on the mainland are now routinely transported to Malabo for sale. Especially common are animals such as hinge-back tortoises (*Kinixys erosa*), crocodiles (*Crocodylus cataphractes*), and even giant pangolins (*Manis gigantea*). They are transported alive to assure freshness upon arrival at the market.

In the next part of this series we will inform you about the work of the „Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program“ (BBPP). Their mission is the conservation of Bioko Island’s biodiversity, especially its critically endangered primates.

Tanja Wolf

On personal concerns:

In the course of a bachelor thesis at the University of Bielefeld an extensive archive will be established. If you have any exhibits / documents / pictures or any other information concerning the Drill (we are also interested in wooden spoons / stamps and so on) we would be happy if you would agree to give these items to us for documentations. Please contact annefallner@web.de

Short News around the Drills:

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| <p><u>Hannover:</u> On February 4th the 27 years old female “Hanna” had to be euthanized <u>Saarbrücken:</u> On June 15th the 13 years old female „Antonia“ gave birth to her fourth offspring. Father of the young female is the 9 years old „Katanga“</p> |
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We are happy to welcome our new members:

Alexandra Lagaly, Matthias Papies, Nadine Wack

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