Community engagement, research, education and outreach for conservation in the Ebo Forest: Cameroon’s newest National Park?

Ekwoge Abwe
San Diego Zoo Global/Ebo Forest Research Project
Ebo Forest

- Gorillas of uncertain taxonomic affinity
- Healthy population of chimpanzees and drills
- 11 diurnal primate species including
  - Nut cracking chimps
  - Preuss’s red colobus
- Grassroots support for conservation
- Goal: Ebo National Park Creation
Healthy Ecosystem

- Ecosystem Services
  - Supporting Services
  - Provisioning Services
  - Regulating Services
  - Cultural Services
  - Biodiversity
Cultural Services
Community Engagement
Uniqueness of Ebo forest:

Grassroots support for biodiversity conservation and Ebo National Park creation
Grassroots support for biodiversity conservation and Ebo National Park creation

**Club des Amis des Gorilles (CAG)**
- Voluntary membership, recognized by administration
- More than 200 members in three villages
- Gorilla and large mammals monitoring by CAG members
- Recognition of outstanding CAG members by Mayor
- Community sensitization
- Hunters and school education
- Alternative sustainable livelihoods
- Showcase for research and education
Conservation outreach and livelihood activities

1. Training hunters at Limbe Wildlife Center
2. Teachers’ training workshop
3. Sustainable alternative livelihood projects
Research and Conservation Work in Ebo Forest

Newly Discovered Gorilla Population in the Ebo Forest, Littoral Province, Cameroon

Bethan J. Morgan,1,3 Chris Wild,1 and Atanga Ekobo2

Received February 10, 2003; accepted March 3, 2003

Healthiest population of Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzees, with more than 700 individuals

Chimpanzees use stone hammers in Cameroon

Bethan J. Morgan1,2 and Ekwoge E. Abwe2

All studied chimpanzee populations use tools, with differences in behavioural repertoires between populations
Other important vertebrates

The forest harbors the only other population of the Critically Endangered Preuss’s red colobus.

The drill population of Ebo is the healthiest for the species that is threatened across its range.

A preliminary checklist of 160 species of birds from ongoing ornithological inventories.

Herpetologists from Berlin Museum and University of Buea have been surveying for frogs across the forest.
Botanical Inventories

Dr. Cheek – Kew Gardens, UK botanist in Ebo forest, 2005

2013 National Herbarium and Royal Botanical Gardens expedition in Ebo

1. *Palisota ebo*
2. *Ardisia ebo*
3. *Talbotiella ebo*
4. *Gilbertiodendron ebo*

Dr. Tchiengue, botanist at National Herbarium Yaoundé at Ebo forest, 2005
Ebo forest – showcase for biodiversity research
Employment and building local capacity

1. Camera trapping and other remote sensing devices
2. Research facilities for education and conservation
3. Ebo forest-wide elephant and large mammal surveys
4. Training of traditional rulers on Cameroon Wildlife Law
Community resource base

- Food and especially animal protein source
- Source of fresh clean water
- Source of building materials
- Deep spiritual value for the Banen tribe
  - Site for ancestral graves and groves
Effects of over-exploitation

- Habitat loss and fragmentation
- Species population size and range decline
- Local extinctions
- Food security in local communities – unequal distribution of benefits
conserving biodiversity for the service of present and future generations

• Resource base for benefit of local communities and beyond
• Potential for potable water for Douala and other large cities
• Showcase for biodiversity research and conservation
• Potential for ecotourism
• Other ecosystem services
The Ebo National Park – conserving biodiversity for the service of present and future generations
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