

Field course on Forest Biodiversity in Cameroon

For students of the programmes: M.Sc. Biodiversity, Ecology and Evolution & M.Sc. International Nature Conservation

Information meeting

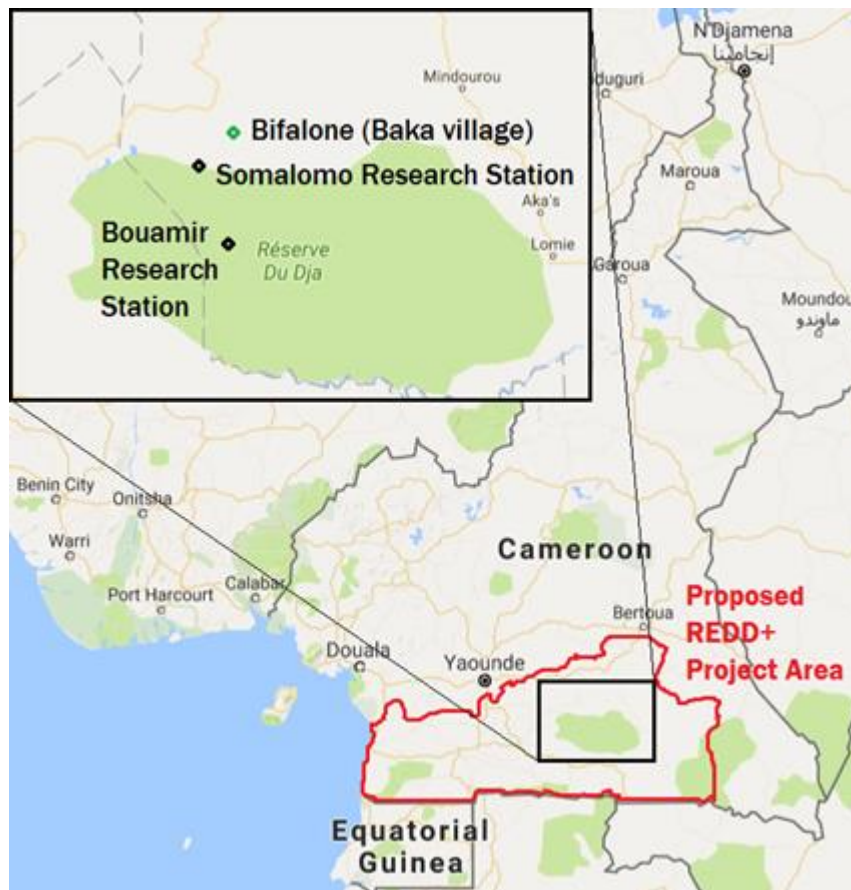
Wednesday, 07.11.2017, 4.15 p.m.

Room 2.102, Conservation Biology, Bürgerstraße 50

Excursion period

March 03rd – 22nd, 2019

Map of the area



Cameroon and Dja Faunal Reserve

Cameroon has earned the name of “Africa in miniature” for how much it mirrors the continent’s diversity—especially from an ecological standpoint. Most of this biodiversity is found in protected areas which cover about 10% (5 million hectares) of the national territory of Cameroon.

The focus area of the study trip will be Yaoundé and Dja Faunal Reserve. Yaoundé is the capital of the country, where the headquarters of several conservation NGOs and governmental agencies are

found. This includes, for example, the facilities of Congo Basin Institute (CBI), a center of higher learning and scientific excellence in Central Africa created through a partnership between UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) and IITA (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture). CBI has its field research stations in Dja Faunal Reserve.

Dja Faunal Reserve covers an area of 526 000 ha and is located in South-Central Cameroon. It is one of Africa's most species-rich rainforests, with more than 100 mammal species (including threatened species such as the African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*), western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*), chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), the mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*), three pangolin species, black colobus (*Colobus satanas*)), 3500 bird species (including Bates's Weaver (*Ploceus batesi*), the largest known breeding colony of the Grey-necked rockfowl (*Picathartes oreas*)) and 1500 plant species. It extends to 526 000 ha, was created in 1950 and was listed as UNESCO Heritage Site in 1987. As many other protected areas, there is significant human-pressure. Around the reserve, for example, there are threats like mining, logging, agricultural clearance, and construction of dams. And there is also hunting both for subsistence and commercial.

The reserve has a population of Baka pygmies who live in a relatively traditional manner. Although agriculture and commercial hunting are prohibited, Pygmies are allowed to hunt traditionally.

Near to and within Dja Reserve, CBI has two research station: Somalomo and Bouamir. Somalomo Research station is at the edge of Dja Faunal Reserve, around 4-5hours from Yaoundé. The areas around this research station include secondary forest and agricultural land. Bouamir is located in mature forest at the center of the Reserve, it is about 30 Km from Somalomo and can be reached by foot via a 7 hour hike.

Content of the course

The focus of this year's course will be primarily on biodiversity assessments, but students will also be exposed and will learn about the conservation issues that West African rainforests face, especially during the first part of the trip.

During the first part of the trip, students will participate in a regional workshop on "Resolving conservation conflicts in West African PA's" that will take place in Yaoundé. This regional workshop will gather international, regional, and local experts on bushmeat and conservation conflicts. Students will be able to hear and participate in the discussions and four selected students will give presentations on related research topics.

During the second part of the trip, participants will be introduced to tropical field biology, ecology, and field research methods and will get equipped with a diverse set of skills needed for ecological and conservation careers and future research. Participants will learn to identify characteristic plants and animals and will learn and practice a wide array of entomological, bird and mammal survey techniques. These may include bird captures, point counts, line transects and baited traps for butterflies. Additionally, they will learn other field skills among which GPS navigation is most important. Moreover, participants will have to analyze and interpret results of fieldwork in a collaborative report that will be submitted by the whole group at the end of the course. Also, preparing presentations for an international audience and in a developing country is part of the learning experience and a requirement for all 8 participants.

Examination proceedings

Every participant will give a presentation on a conservation topic related to the excursion contents. The group of participants will prepare a joint excursion report, analyzing data from their field surveys, and reflecting on the biodiversity and the conservation issues in Cameroon. This report will also be provided to the cooperation partners in Cameroon.

Preliminary schedule

Date	Activity	Location
3 rd March	Arrival in Yaounde	Yaounde
4 th -10 th March	Participation in GAUG-CBI workshop “Resolving conservation conflicts in West African PAs”	Yaounde
11 th March	Travel to Dja – arrival at Somalomo Research Station (CBI) and discussion with representatives of Dja Conservation Society	Dja Reserve (Somalomo)
12 th March	Visit a pygmy village (night at CBI Somalomo)	Bifalome/Dja Reserve (Somalomo)
13 th March	Hike into the reserve to Bouamir (7h)	Dja Reserve
14 th -19 th March	Exploration of biodiversity, conduction of field surveys and practice of field techniques	Dja Reserve (near Bouamir)
20 th	Hike back to Somalomo (night at Somalomo)	Dja Reserve (Somalomo)
21 st	Travel to Yaounde by bus (night at CBI Bastos)	Dja Reserve - Yaounde
22 nd March	Conclusion Departure to Germany	Yaounde

Budget

Location	Description	Cost per student (Euros)
Germany	Visa	120
	International travel	Note: Prices checked on 24/10/2018 -> From Frankfurt (AirFrance) - 511Eu/From Hamburg (Turkish Airlines) - 553 Eu/ From Hannover Flight (AirFrance) - 499 Eu
		550
Yaounde	Accommodation and food	42
	Transport	44
Dja Faunal Reserve	Accommodation and food	274
	Transport	42
	Staff/Assistants	166
	Extras	17
	Total cost	1255

Potential support to each student: from 250 to 790 Euro (to be confirmed)

Contact

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