Dear friends, colleagues and partners,

We are pleased to present you the new bulletin of the Zoological Society of London’s Cameroon Conservation Programme. Present in Cameroon since 2007 through the Wildlife Wood Project, ZSL has been growing up since 2012 in this country. From now on, our team will share with you every 3 months the results of its thoughts, its labor progresses in the field and its growing commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in Cameroon.

In this first issue, we will focus on the rich recent events of the Wildlife Wood Project, which has for goal the contribution of the industrial logging sector to the conservation of forest ecosystems in Cameroon, and more widely in the Congo Basin. For that purpose, we collaborate with industrial partners, government wildlife services, local populations and other stakeholders to ensure wildlife is better considered and protected in logging concessions. Thanks to a strengthened team, partners – old and new –, and the ZSL’s scientific skills globally renowned, we work on capitalizing the project outputs from past years on a broader scale, while carrying on innovation to propose concrete solutions to issues met in the field by our collaborators.

In a context where, every day, we have to control the constantly growing pressures affecting the ecosystems on which we all rely for our survival, we must remain close together, learn from each other, know how to question ourselves in all humility and try again. It is in this spirit of sharing and discovery that we write this bulletin, with the hope that it will generate fruitful thoughts and ideas, awareness and actions, exchanges and collaborations.

We wish you a good reading.

The editorial team

Welcome to our new staff!

Marc Dethier is our new Technical Assistant. Back in Cameroon for the first time in 13 years, his 20 years of experience in Central Africa will benefit the country’s forests.

Madeleine Ngo Bata, former ZSL intern during her masters degree in audit & certification, she worked for Nature+ on community forests. She began working in January as Research Coordinator.

Lauren Redmore is our new Social Officer as of January 2013. She comes to the ZSL after three years as an agroforestry Peace Corps volunteer in the South Region of Cameroon.

Léopoldine TEGUIA, forestry engineer, is our new Social Coordinator. She comes to the ZSL after one year as a volunteer for NGO FCTV on a collaborative management project around the Dja Reserve.
As part of the Wildlife Wood Project we are working to develop a model of wildlife management fully integrated to the organization and operations of timber companies so that there is a gain in efficiency and continuity. In this context and in collaboration with our partner Pallisco, we carried out a strategic planning exercise that led to the design of a wildlife management plan for the company’s concessions. This ‘Strategic Plan for Wildlife Protection’ is a reference framework guiding actions related to wildlife according to law requirements and the company’s official policies and management habits, and is also useful as a daily management support tool. Its structure is indicative of an objective-based management approach: it describes the management activities and includes a monitoring programme with measurable indicators and quantitative verifiers matching the targeted objectives. An ongoing evaluation of the plan’s performances will allow objectives and activities to be reviewed in a continuous and adaptive manner. This experience is unique at the moment for Cameroon, but we are already working on replicating it within other logging concessions.

**SMART: simple and efficient**

**SMART** (Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool) is a new, easy to use, and free programme developed by a group of international conservation organizations, including the ZSL. The programme facilitates monitoring, evaluation, and improvement in the protection of a site against illegal activities, especially poaching: it is a preferred tool for the application of an adaptive management approach within wildlife management.

Adapted to be used by various stakeholders, whether conservation professionals or members of community associations, this programme is very simple to use and helps to standardize the tools and methods of wildlife surveillance and the monitoring of the application of the different laws applicable within a diverse landscape, from protected areas, production forests, and community forests.

The programme can also facilitate the elaboration and the implementation of a protection strategy for larger landscapes. SMART is equally designed to progressively evolve with the possible addition of modules with other functions, like ecological monitoring.

Thanks to the ease of its use and the fact that it is free to download, SMART replaces its big brother, MIST. The ZSL will work in the upcoming months to facilitate a transition to SMART in Cameroon in collaboration with other members of the consortium. We work equally to explore the capacities of the programme to put into action wildlife management plans within production forests, with the development of training sessions adapted to forester managers.

In the spirit of sharing, volunteers are welcome to profit from the conservation community’s experiences with SMART and to rapidly adapt the programme according to its numerous possibilities. The threats to ecosystems today are more numerous than ever before: it is imperative that we become more efficient in our actions and SMART can help us.

To learn more, download the programme and the training manuals for free and share your experiences: [www.smartconservation.org](http://www.smartconservation.org), or contact us directly!
Beginning this year, the Wildlife Wood Project has started to test a multiple actor, collaborative approach for anti-poaching activities within the forestry landscapes of Cameroon. This approach notably includes the development of a pilot network to obtain information that can be quickly transmitted to logging companies and wildlife authorities concerning poaching and other illegal activities. At the same time, we are encouraging logging companies to react more efficiently against illegal activities within their Forest Management Units despite an overwhelming context of weak forestry governance. This initiative comes after the 2012 creation of an engagement strategy for stakeholders to encourage more effective stakeholder collaboration and to encourage more responsibility amongst local populations through various means of communication. Among these actions, “roadshows”, proven to be a successful communication tool in 2010 carried out by our collaborators, the local NGO ASTEVI (Association of Earth and Life), will be programmed in the coming weeks to facilitate dialogue amongst the different stakeholders and increase the transparency and collaboration necessary to fight against the network of illegal activities.

ARTS : Finding chimpanzee territories to limit logging impacts

The Wildlife Wood Project team developed the ARTS method (Adaptive Recce Transect Sampling) to identify and monitor the forests of high conservation value for chimpanzees that helps obtain measures of management and protection, notably within the context of FSC-certified Forest Management Units. ARTS combines 1) the speed of recce transects for collecting indexes of the presence of diverse wildlife species, and 2) the efficiency of linear transects for finding the position on chimpanzee nests. With a reputation for requiring less effort than other simple methods, ARTS allows technicians to obtain kilometric indexes of abundance for the population being inventoried, but also to estimate the absolute abundance of chimpanzees and to locate zones with high nest concentrations, considered to be the heart of a community’s territory. Because chimpanzees are territorial, chimpanzees are sensitive to disruptions caused by logging operations. A shift in one group’s territory can create conflict with other groups of chimpanzees occupying a neighbouring space. Used in five-year operation blocks just before exploitation, ARTS produces localisation maps which enable the technician to propose specific recommendations to enable forestry operators to plan their operations accordingly and to reduce possible impacts on chimpanzee communities.
Marc Dethier, the technical assistant for the Wildlife Wood Project, shows a youth from village how to examine duiker teeth to determine the age of the animals. With this information it is possible to know the status of the population, particularly as influenced by hunting pressure.

Next time in the ZSL Cameroun Bulletin:

- From April to June 2013: Carrying out of a rapid evaluation for the distribution of the conservation status of elephants in the South and East regions of Cameroon (see below for a call for contributions).
- From the 15th to 20th April 2013: The first training of trainers on the use of SMART for ZSL Cameroon staff and other partners in Cameroon.
- June 2013: The first roadshows from ZSL-ASTEVI this year in the East to encourage local populations to act for better forestry governance.
- June 2013: Heather Koldwey and Nick Hill, ZSL specialists on the conservation of fresh and marine waters, visit ZSL Cameroon to elaborate a project on the conservation of mangroves in Douala Edea in collaboration with local NGOs.
- Early June 2013: Raj Amin, ZSL expert on wildlife monitoring and ZSL focus point for SMART, visits Cameroon to work with the ZSL team on the validation of a series of methods associated with SMART for putting wildlife man-

**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:**

**Have you seen an elephant recently?!**

We are doing a rapid evaluation of the distribution of the conservation status of elephants using a participatory approach. The target zones are the South and East regions of Cameroon. We are looking for witnesses who can testify to the recent presence of elephants in the regions, as well as all literature that supplies information on local populations of elephants (inventory reports, etc.) from all periods within the regions. If you have such information, we appreciate if you contact: sandra.ratiarison@zsl.org