Following the identification of the growing palm oil industry as an impending threat to forests, wildlife, and local communities, ZSL has recently started to engage with Cameroon’s palm oil industry to identify, implement, and adopt sustainable standards to serve as a model of good palm oil practices in West and Central Africa. ZSL has been a leader in engaging this agribusiness industry in Indonesia since 2009 and is relying on experiences abroad to improve practices locally.

ZSL Cameroon participates in the creation of the National Palm Oil Strategy being developed by the government and other stakeholders as an important way to plan for the impending sectorial growth. Gaining from ZSL’s experiences abroad, Michael Zrust from ZSL Indonesia visited Cameroon to assist in two workshops aimed at advancing conservation principles of RSPO-certification, including a workshop organized with the Forest People’s Programme on September 16 to update the monitoring protocol for two RSPO HCV criteria related to social and cultural aspects of sustainability. In another important contribution to the regional palm oil sector, ZSL, in collaboration with Wild Asia, held an RSPO training workshop for Africa in Yaoundé on September 17-19. This workshop focused on high conservation value identification, management, and monitoring within oil palm landscapes, and was attended by participants from agro-industry, government, and NGOs.

ZSL is committed to continued engagement with the oil palm sector and we hope to contribute to ensuring that the expansion of the industry provides not only economic development but social and environmental sustainability.

ZSL’s recent visit to the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development’s (IRAD) Specialized Oil Palm Research Centre (CEREAH) revealed that while some seed producing palm oil companies still produce old generation, lower quality palm oil seed, IRAD is engaged in the production of a much improved quality, newer generation seed stock. IRAD is engaged in advanced palm oil seed production because of the technology at their disposal and their interest in seed stock research. IRAD is the only accredited government institution in Cameroon that is officially charged with the responsibility to research, produce and sell improved oil palm seeds, and this is important because the development of better quality seeds will result in oil palms with high yield potential. High yielding oil palms are an important component of sustainable palm oil practices because of their ability to produce greater quantities of oil on less land, which is economically important to both palm oil companies and the government.
On September 10 and 11, 2013, the ZSL hosted a workshop in London on “Fostering Sustainable Behaviour: Community-Based Social Marketing” led by Dr. Doug Mckenzie-Mohr. Community-Based Social Marketing, or CBSM, is based on the idea that in using a social science-based approach, it is possible to identify a specific behaviour to change and to initiate sustainable behaviour change within the community. This approach relies on five scientifically proven steps: Selecting the end-state behaviour, identifying barriers and benefits as perceived by the community, developing a strategy to facilitate the behaviour change, running a pilot, and implementation and evaluation.

CBSM requires a community-based approach whereby the needs and capabilities of the community actually drive the sought after behaviour change using a combined “bottom-up” / “top-down” approach. In this way, CBSM is different from other “top-down” behaviour change models that tend to focus on providing information and education as a means to an end: If the population is aware and motivated enough, they will take action to change their behaviour. The opposite, by default, also becomes true. Specifically, when the population is aware and they don’t change their behaviour, they are seen as the problem.

Unfortunately this has often become the discourse of conservation organizations working within the context of Cameroon. When education fails to make any concrete changes on the ground, blame falls on the communities rather than the approach that was used. These traditional models of outreach, education, and sensitization provide no real possibility for behaviour change considering the context of Cameroon where communities dependent on resources have little room to take the risks that are involved in changing behaviour.

It is time to examine how NGOs and government organizations can change their own behaviour in order to be more effective with funds and to make the positive impact they seek to help communities better manage their own resources.

For more information on CBSM methods, please contact Lauren Redmore (Lauren.Redmore@zsl.org).

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**Staff changes in Cameroon**

**Welcome to our new oil palm and biodiversity coordinator!**

**Clement TOH**, the new Oil Palm and Biodiversity Coordinator since September, 2013, comes to ZSL with over 15 years of work experience in conservation, development and business management. He holds a B.Sc. in Development Studies and has extensive work experience with several international conservation NGOs and within the private sector as well. Clement has a good first-hand understanding of wider environmental issues, particularly the complexities inherent in integrating biodiversity conservation with other forms of development, including sustainable oil palm development issues.
SMART meets Cybertracker in the Dja

The over 500,000ha Dja Biosphere Reserve (DBR) is unique because it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an IUCN priority site for the conservation of great apes and elephants. Despite this it is under serious threat from commercial bushmeat hunting and illegal trafficking. A lack of resources and up to date information on the extent of threats and the status of wildlife populations is hindering conservation and law enforcement. To respond effectively to the current threats and protect the Dja all stakeholders must work together - government officials, private sector, civil society, NGOs, as well as local communities. ZSL and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) are working alongside the MINFOF conservation service to apply an innovative system to patrol and monitor the reserve efficiently with fewer resources. This system uses two freeware applications called Cybertracker and SMART that allow users to collect data on wildlife populations and illegal activities quickly and easily with data processing and reporting done automatically. The park manager saves time and can visualize the patrolled areas as well as the patrol effort made, and a quick overview on species abundance and the extent of threats can help the conservation service to organize a targeted rapid response. 30 ecoguards and interns of the DBR, including the park conservator, gathered in Lomië for a 5 day training series under the supervision of ZSL and AWF where a cybertracker sequence was developed and approved for use by all the participants. Afterwards, a short reconnaissance survey was carried out within the DBR to field test the sequence and new data collection device, the Trimble L30. DBR ecoguards were positive about the potential for this new system to contribute to conservation and requested continued support in and around the DBR to improve their work.

230 cable traps removed...230 animals saved!

230: This is the number of cables that we removed from one line of cable traps found during a surveillance mission in one logging concession, a two days walk into the forest from the road.

Based on the style of fabrication, these cables were not meant to capture small mammals. The majority of these cables are made of 2 or 3 strands of cable wire wrapped around themselves which makes them resistant to the force of large mammals struggling to try to free themselves. These poached animals would then have been sold for a considerable sum of money to the benefit of the poacher who laid the traps, making use of old trails in the forest that are currently not being used by the logging company.

If we consider that some traps capture animals more than once, whilst others never capture animals, we estimate that these traps would have killed a minimum of 230 mammals!

We do not have to wait for traps like these to kill. We urge MINFOF to take action, to send its agents into the forest by foot, to remove cable traps and protect wildlife before its too late. Seizing animals after they are dead will not on its own keep wildlife in our forests for future generations. Wildlife protection must happen in the heart of the forest!
Bamboo is a controversial resource in Cameroon. While it has important uses for some as firewood and building material, it is considered by others to be a nuisance. Invasive bamboo in the forested regions is considered a roadside hazard, and in the Lake Ossa Reserve, near Edéa, invasive bamboo is used as a novel fishing tool where it is cut and carried into the lake by fishermen to catch small fish. Because of the hearty nature of this bamboo and the changing ecology of the lake, the bamboo is unintentionally “planted” when it is not removed at the end of the fishing season, further augmenting problems for fishermen and other users of the lake.

Next time in the ZSL Cameroon Bulletin:

- **October and November, 2013:** ZSL Cameroon will carry out a scoping survey within the palm oil plantation sector to assess capacity limitations and general willingness of palm oil companies to engage in RSPO sustainable palm oil practices.
- **November, 2013:** ZSL Forestry and Oil Palm Project Manager and a partner from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will participate in the RSPO annual round table, being held this year in Indonesia. During this visit, the two participants will also take the opportunity to visit an RSPO-certified palm oil plantation to better understand good practices and opportunities for Cameroon’s palm oil industry to benefit from lessons learned elsewhere.
- **November, 2013:** Community participation in wildlife protection will be trialled for the first time in the East Region of Cameroon within the context of the Wildlife Wood Project. Community members will be encouraged to report illegal activities occurring within the forest, and results from this pilot test can inform the development of similar activities elsewhere.
- **December, 2013:** ZSL’s Sustainable Oil Palm and Biodiversity Project will produce and make available materials to better inform palm oil companies about sustainable practices, including information about RSPO certification and High Conservation Values (HCVs). These documents will be available at ZSL. Contact Clement TOH for more information (Toh.Lo-AhClement@zsl.org).
- **December, 2013:** Before the end of the year, SMART software will be tested for the first time ever in a logging concession under the Wildlife Wood Project partnership and a successful trial could lead to increased adoption of this free monitoring and reporting tool.