

Project Update: October 2006

Progress on implementation of activities:

The Mathews range De brazza study is currently going on in collaboration with a local Community Based Organisation - Milgis Trust who is helping with local scout's recruitment, deployment and ground logistics.

The following activities have so far been undertaken:

Local scouts who are familiar with the remote rugged mountain, have been trained and are currently gathering information on the distribution of the de brazza's in the extensive Mathews Range Forest Reserve.

More scouts have now been deployed to the eastern side which has not been surveyed yet. For the next one month, two teams will patrol the Luggas of the eastern side recording the distribution and population sizes of troops suspected to inhabit the areas.

A graduate research assistant has joined the team to give scientific guidance to the data collection process. The second phase of Intensive data collection by the Lead Investigator and the trained research assistant will resume in December when rains subside. The current team is expected to have located all the groups in Mathews and possibly in the neighboring mountains.

Findings:

Preliminary findings reveal that there have been sightings in the central and western range of the reserve. In one Lugga, the scouts counted 24 de brazza's in two troops, while in the central luggas, they counted a troop of four before the rest disappeared into the thick riverine forest. A few Kilometers up stream, on a different tributary, the team located another troop and managed to count four.

The three groups will be closely followed and studied to determine the population size, structure and socio organization in December.

Conclusion:

Apart from the three confirmed groups, we have received reliable reports of sightings by locals honey gatherers of more troops on the eastern Mathews. Two teams comprising of local honey gatherer acting as guides have been deployed there already to give exact location.

It worth noting that from extrapolation of the findings so far received, the population of the Mathews range forest ecosystems could be one of the highest in the country among the protected Areas where De Brazza occurs.