

Project Update: August 2010

1. Resource use surveys conducted by questionnaires in every household in Kanjonde village (August 2009); currently being analysed and written up as a 5th year biology project by Angolan student Feliciano Tchalo, based at the ISCED in Lubango. Progress is slow on this front and it may be several months (at best) before I have his report.
2. Fuel efficient stoves demonstrated to the community of Kanjonde and three stoves (two Vesto fuel efficient stoves and one solar oven) left with the community (July 2010). A follow up visit in August 2010 showed that the Vesto stoves were greatly appreciated by the community and worked very efficiently. Plans are under way to purchase and transport Vesto stoves for every household (n = 70) in the community, together with partners in Angola (Michael Rogerson of CGG Veritas and Juliet Mills of the Luanda International School).
3. A nursery has been established at Kanjonde village, employing four young men in the village on a part-time basis. Currently we have approximately 150 seedlings and several seed trays of seeds in the nursery (July 2010). This was done with the help of botanical horticulturalists Adam Harrower and Ernst van Jaarsveld of the South African National Biodiversity Institute. A follow-up visit in August 2010 showed that most of the seedlings were doing well, and some seeds had already germinated. The first seedlings should be ready to plant towards the end of next year (2011), before the onset of the rains.
4. Extensive botanical collections made at Mount Moco by Ernst van Jaarsveld and Adam Harrower from SANBI and Francisco Maiato from ISCED (July 2010). Plant specimens have been transported to South Africa, where most specimens still await identification. It will be some time before a final botanical report and species list is available. This will be used to motivate for the area to be formally protected as a national park.
5. An environmental art competition was held at the local primary school (July 2010), to raise environmental awareness among scholars. Winner's art work will be added to the website in due course.
6. Small mammal surveys were made in forest and grassland at Mount Moco (July 2010). I still await the report from Alta de Vos and her co-workers, which will hopefully be available early next year. This will be used to motivate for the area to be formally protected as a national park.
7. Butterfly expert Steve Braine visited Mount Moco with our July 2010 expedition and is in the process of compiling a preliminary species list of butterflies, hopefully available before the end of the year. This will be used to motivate for the area to be formally protected as a national park.
8. Detailed hunting and wood use surveys made by Portuguese-based Masters student Aimy Caceres (July 2010). She is in the process of writing a report on her findings. This should be available by May 2011.

9. Bird communities of individual forest patches on the mountain were surveyed in order to understand how bird community's change as forest shrinks (August 2009). These data are being analysed and written up by Angolan student Jose Dala as his 5th year biology project. It may still be several months before I have his final report.

10. Portuguese journalist Alexandre Vaz joined the July and August 2010 visits to the mountain, taking photographs and video footage of our work. He is busy compiling a short documentary on our work. I hope this will be available before the end of the year. The mountmoco.org website will also be updated once I have received photographs from him.

11. Local support for the project is slowly being built. Huambo-based organisation Ecovisao is helping keep an eye on the nursery at Kanjonde, with Juares Bongo visiting once a month. Beat Weber of the NGO Development Workshop in Huambo visited Mount Moco with us in July 2010, in order to profile the mountain and the work we are doing in an atlas they are preparing for Huambo province government.

12. A partnership is being built with the Luanda International School to work on the Mount Moco project. About 80 seedlings were collected at Mount Moco in August 2010 and have been transplanted into the school's shaded nursery facility in Luanda. The plan is to transplant trees back at Mount Moco in a couple of years, once they have reached an acceptable size. Two teachers from the school are planning a school outing to the mountain next month for some of the students interested in being involved in the project.

13. Surveys made of the threatened Swierstra's Francolin (July 2009). There is a paper currently in press on this work with Bird Conservation International.

As you can tell from all these activities, the project has already outgrown my personal input, and there are many people I must thank for their support, most especially Martim Melo who has been involved in all of the work. Due to the nature of the work, and the number of other people involved, many reports of work done are currently outstanding, but these will be made available to you as soon as I receive them.

At this stage we plan to continue with this project for at least the next 3-5 years, until we've developed a local partner to carry forward this work independently.