

2nd Report

Introduction

Colobus vellerosus is a monkey that behaves like an oracle, predicting the misfortunes of villages near its habitat and enabling wise men to take precautions (Djego-Djossou et al., 2012). At present, the species is only found in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria.) In Benin, the range of *C. vellerosus* has shrunk from 56,000 km² in 1953 to 9,000 km² in 2009 (Djego-Djossou and Sinsin, 2009). This habitat loss is induced by anthropogenic activities, notably agriculture, transhumance, logging and climate change (Koutchoro, 2021). This project aims to put in place strategies for the restoration of its habitat and to develop an awareness and communication programme to reduce the threats and bring back the different layers of the population to its conservation in order to save it from extinction. Our first report presented the degradation factors and the degree of regression of *C. vellerosus* habitats in the Wari-Maró gazetted forest. This second report presents the continuation of the project's activities, focusing in particular on environmental education and the restoration of the degraded habitats initially identified.

Methodological approach


Environmental education

In order to reduce anthropogenic pressures on the species, we conducted environmental education meetings in the villages bordering the Wari-Maró gazetted forest, in collaboration with the NGO SOS Savane. We also produced and distributed posters with key messages (Photo 1), picture boxes (Photo 2) and t-shirts (Photo 3) to participants. Before the beginning of the awareness activities, the LEB (Laboratory of Ecology, Botany and Plant Biology) sent information notes to the local authorities of the villages bordering the forest and to the forest managers, informing them about the beginning of the project's environmental education activities and asking for their assistance in making them a success. School directors were also informed.



Photo 1: Poster created for the awareness meetings.

Une espèce de primate en voie d'extinction.



Le Colobe de Geoffroy

Colobus vellerosus

Agissons tous ensemble pour sauver et conserver l'espèce !

(A)

NOM : Colobe de Geoffroy

Nom scientifique : *Colobus vellerosus*



C'est un singe qui vit dans les forêts et galeries forestières des savanes et qui pèse entre 8 et 19 Kg. Au Bénin, on le retrouve en petit groupe de 3 à 20 dans les forêts classées du Sud et Centre du pays comme les forêts classées de Lama et de Wari-Marô. On le retrouve aussi à Kikélé où il est sacré et protégé par les populations locales. Il se nourrit de feuilles, fruits, écorces, graines et fleurs.

MENACES SUR L'ESPÈCE

C'est une espèce en danger critique d'extinction (CR) selon l'UICN et la population continue de décroître. L'espèce est menacée principalement par la chasse et la perte de son habitat (déforestation).

Comment le protéger ?

- Sensibiliser
- Interdire la chasse du Colobe de Geoffroy
- Protéger son habitat.




(B)

Photo 2: (A) Face 1 of picture boxes, (B) Face 2 of picture boxes.



(A)



(B)

Photo 3: (A) Front view of t-shirts, (B) Back view of t-shirts.

Reforestation of degraded habitats

Nurseries of *Azelia africana* and *Vitellaria paradoxa* were realised for the *C. vellerosus* degraded habitats restoration (Photo 4). Maintenance was carried out under the supervision of forestry officers, with technical and financial support from the project.



Photo 4: *Azelia africana* and *Vitellaria paradoxa* plants in the nursery at the Bassila forestry station.

Results

Environmental education

We have held eight awareness meetings involving more than 240 people from villages bordering the Wari-Marou gazetted forest (Bétérou, Sinahou, Samba, Wari-Marou, Agramarou, Alafiarou, Agbassa, Oubérou and Banagri). During these meetings, we briefly presented the results of our research to the participants (degradation factors and regression degree of *Colobus vellerosus* habitats in the Wari-Marou gazetted forest) through oral communications (Photo 5). We also raised local population awareness of the species' ecological and economic roles, the decline in its population mainly due to hunting, the extensive destruction of its habitat and the contribution of the local population to save it from extinction. To raise young people's awareness, we organized competitions focusing on the species for schoolchildren in six schools (Photo 6, 7, 8, 9). In all, 500 schoolchildren were involved.



Photo 5: Awareness workshop in the Wari-Marou village.



Photo 6: Schoolchildren awareness at Wari-Maró public primary school, group A.



Photo 7: Schoolchildren awareness at Wari-Maró public primary school, group B.



Photo 8: Schoolchildren awareness at Bétérou public primary school.



Photo 9: Schoolchildren awareness at Banagri public primary school.

Reforestation of degraded habitats

In collaboration with local people, forestry officers and forestry guides, we planted 2350 plants, *Azelia africana* (1300 plants) and *Vitellaria paradoxa* (1050 plants) in degraded habitats (Photo 10, 11, 12, 13).



Photo 10: Plants transportation from the nursery to the forest for planting.



Photo 11: Planting of Afzelia seedling in degraded habitats by Sadam MAMA (Project manager).



Photo 12: Partial view of the reforestation team.



Photo 13: Planting of the seedlings with the local population (farmers (C), field guides (B) and forestry agents (A)).

It should be noted that awareness activities will continue in the other remaining villages (Koda, Igbèrè and Wannou). At the end of this phase, we will be writing the project's final report and a scientific article to be published. We would like to thank The Rufford Foundation for fully funding the activities of this project. We would also like to thank the members of the LEB, forestry managers and officers, forestry guides, local authorities and populations, and the NGO SOS Savane for their assistance and contribution to the success of this project.