

Ebolowa-Kribi Road Project in Cameroon

ARRC Task Force's comments on Phase II dry season survey design

January 17th, 2024

The ARRC Task Force has been asked to provide feedback on the proposal for dry season baseline surveys.

To that effect, we received a word document entitled 'EAK Project_Great Apes_Survey Dry S_SoW' which provides details on the proposed dry season surveys based on some of our recommendations made to the project in December 2023 and an email with questions for clarification (received December 22nd, 2023).

Upon review of the document provided and the questions emitted, the ARRC panel for this project recommends the following:

Recces

- Question from the project: *We have a question about the recces, as is not clear for us if recces should be done:*
 1. *only in the central part of the road (as hot spot area) flipped, or instead*
 2. *following the same areas done during the rainy season, but flipped, and cutting off the area that will be done in line transect?*

In response to the above question, we recommend **flipping the wet season recces design and surveying the entire length during the dry season**; this will allow for greater detail in great ape distribution along the entire area of influence; no area should be omitted as seasonal variation remains to be established.

Line Transects

- For the line transects, we recommend that these also encompass the central portion of the road currently marked out in the proposal for recces and line transect surveys, especially considering its proximity to the Campo Ma'an National Park (NP) (survey effort should be based on the nest encounter rates of the targeted survey area as previously suggested). The central area is also critical to include as it incorporates location where the quarry was proposed to be located close to Akom II, which was in great ape habitat, and where workers and machinery will also be based. This town may become a trading place for wildmeat and may grow due to in-migration from the project and the presence of the road, and therefore it would be useful to have more detailed information from this area. We also recommend that any map in the future highlights the location of the Campo Ma'an NP. We also recommend concentrating on **individual nests** which is what is most typically done during such kind of survey work with great apes.

Camera traps

- We are pleased to see that for the camera traps you plan to maintain the current sampling, with the possibility of changing location for cameras that do not take images of great apes. These will in effect serve to further confirm presence of great apes in some areas, while also allowing for a better understanding of which great ape species are present, their external physical condition (e.g., any external signs of disease or injury), as well as potentially number of groups and their structure (age and sex classes).

Road crossing points

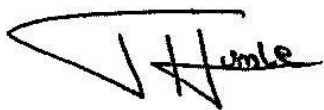
- It is also good to hear that the dry season survey will include once again a road team for the road crossing points investigations as suggested, including both observations and village interviews (with a social local expert involved). As previously mentioned, we wish to emphasize that both confirmed (evidence of signs recorded within min. 50 m on either side) and potential (local people claim to have witnessed wildlife and great ape cross but no signs of great apes were recorded within min. 50 m on either side) crossing points are important information to help inform placement of speed bumps and signage in crossing hotspot areas, as well as any other possible mitigation measure, such as underpass for example, that could be put in place. When it comes to explaining to local people why such information on wildlife crossings (for all large mammals including great apes) is critical to gather, all teams should potentially emphasize the benefits, e.g., avoid collisions that could be dangerous for both wildlife and people and could disrupt traffic.

Wildmeat baseline

- Concerning the WILDMEAT baseline and data; it is critical that the biodiversity and GA teams continue to gather data on threats, including hunting signs. As wildmeat surveys are not our expertise, we will direct you to appropriate contacts.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Humle', with a stylized flourish to the left.

Dr Tatyana Humle

On behalf of the ARRC Task Force panel for this project