



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The SW/Niger Delta forest project is a grassroot -cum- multi-stakeholder initiative that was established in the wake of alarming reports of forest loss and local extinctions of critical wildlife populations. The project emerged from a research and conservation effort focused on chimpanzees in five priority sites identified for southwestern and Niger Delta Nigeria in the IUCN regional action plan for the subspecies in 2011. The project is essentially an urgent response to find lasting conservation solutions for the highly threatened forest ecosystems and wildlife species in this region of high human population density.



NIGERIAN-CAMEROON CHIMPANZEE RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

We have conducted wide-ranging surveys of chimpanzees across 500,000 hectares of forest ecosystems in the Southwest and Niger Delta of Nigeria. The Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*) has the lowest population size of all the four chimpanzee subspecies and it has a very restricted distribution in Nigeria and Cameroon. Meanwhile, populations occurring in the SW and Niger Delta are arguably at the most risk of extinction. We hope to ensure species-based and landscape level conservation as well as increase local and scientific knowledge of this endangered species and ecosystem over the next five to eight years. Our work also seeks to contribute to ongoing research to determine the evolutionary linkage of chimpanzee in these sites and if it is proven that these populations are genetically different from populations elsewhere, then it would increase the conservation priorities of these populations.

NIGER DELTA RED COLOBUS MONKEY CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

The Niger Delta red colobus monkey (*Procolobus pennantii*) is the most recently described form of red colobus species has a restricted distribution in central Niger Delta and has since been classified as critically endangered by the IUCN. Civil conflicts that engulfed the Niger Delta in the last decade hindered any meaningful conservation action while many stakeholders could only rely on species data from only one intensive study carried out about 20 years ago. In 2013, our project intervened by establishing a range-wide systematic research program to update the species status and current distribution. Our results so far shows that the species population has reduced substantially - about 90% - suggesting the red colobus may become extinct or reach irrecoverable numbers in 5 years or less at the current rate of habitat loss. Based on this result, we have since started engaging stakeholders particularly local communities and the State government to establish conservation efforts for surviving population(s) and to legalize the protection of the species and its habitat.

IDANRE FOREST LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION PLAN

Our work in the Idanre forest landscape is part of a larger initiative to conserve critical chimpanzee populations and habitat in southwestern Nigeria. The project is supporting the State Government to demarcate and implement recommended strict conservation areas using upgraded GIS tools and mapping technique to establish a conservation management landscape of about 438.7km² in the Idanre forest cluster (180km² in Akure-Ofosu forest reserve, 198.4km² in Idanre forest reserve and 60.3km² as a community conservation area(CCA) to ensure habitat corridor and connect isolated populations.

If we do nothing...



...deforestation will continue unchecked



...more forest land will be converted to other land use



...targeted hunting & capture will reduce remnant populations



...many wildlife including chimpanzee will disappear locally.



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OUR APPROACH:

- ✓ RESEARCH AND MONITORING
- ✓ TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING
- ✓ EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY
- ✓ ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

<http://swnigerdeltaforestproject.org/>

OUR PROJECT IS ALSO SUPPORTED BY: