



GOUALOUGO CHIMPANZEE STUDY

Report from the Field: David Morgan, Goualougo Triangle Chimpanzee Project, Nouabalé Ndoki National Park, Republic of Congo

I knew from an early age working with chimpanzees and gorillas was what I wanted to do. I spent most of my summers and weekends visiting the local zoological parks observing chimpanzees and learning all I could about them. Even at that time it was apparent that chimpanzees and gorillas were disappearing from the wild and my concerns about what was being done to protect them grew.

Certainly there were projects in need of support and I was interested in finding a place to contribute in anyway possible. Information slowly started to emerge out of the Republic of Congo, about a field biologist named Mike Fay who was initiating an effort to help protect one of the last intact forest landscapes in the region, known as the Ndoki. Mike's commitment towards protecting the forests and wildlife in Africa was inspiring and his work was having a positive influence on conservation in the country and prompted well-deserved attention from the media and scientific



A video clip from a chimp-cam, recorded in the Mayele Community, which is south of the habituated Moto Community. A total of 12 chimpanzees were seen in this particular video clip.

community. National Geographic ran a cover story on the effort in 1995 in which Nick Nichols contributed the photographs. This article had a tremendous impact on me. I was truly amazed that there were still forests where chimpanzees had possibly never before encountered humans. The fact that these last tracts of land were under threat of mechanized logging was outrageous, and I was committed to doing what I could to help protect such unique place.

Admirably, Mike also saw the benefits in establishing collaborations with the zoological community in this effort to protect the Ndoki forest. Fortunately there were other individuals working in several zoological parks just as concerned about protecting places such as Ndoki, and collaborations and partnerships were

formed. As fate would have it, I proved to be in the right place at the right time! I eventually found my way to Congo and the same forests inhabited by the chimpanzees highlighted in the National Geographic magazine article.

