The forest area we protect, called Rhoko, is exceptionally rich in wildlife. We often host researchers who come especially to this part of Africa to pursue their studies. Following his recent trip, visiting butterfly-enthusiast Robert Warren writes:

The number of butterfly species in South-Eastern Nigeria is staggering—almost 1,000, compared with less than 80 in the U.K. My work is to try and uncover how many species there are in Rhoko Forest itself.

Consistent with the popular image, I can be seen with a net in hand in hot pursuit of my target. Less commonly known is that many butterfly species are attracted to bait of various kinds.

One excellent bait is urine. The large ‘Swallowtails’ and ‘Swordtails’ will congregate on a patch of pee in large numbers—more than 50 sometimes. You may have seen a photograph of this spectacular display, but now you know the cause!

A very common sign all over Nigeria is ‘DO NOT UNIRATE HERE’ (yes— invariably spelt incorrectly). Fortunately for me the only sign in Rhoko’s protected forest is ‘NO HUNTING MONKEYS’.

Bait brings in butterflies that we don’t normally see. The best baits are rotting fruit, and decaying crab meat. The latter has an appalling smell that lingers, leading to banishment from camp in the evenings, and a lonely life.

But it works. I have so far confirmed the presence of 430 species in Rhoko, around 20 of great rarity. I’ve seen 2 species for which only 3 sightings had been recorded before, ever.

The growing Biodiversity database being built by researchers strengthens CER-COPAN’s case for stronger and broader protection of Cross River’s forests, and I’m glad to be part of that.
From the Director

As preparations for the Copenhagen International Conference on climate change get underway, rural communities with CERCOPAN's help have begun their own assessments and action plans for dealing with the local impacts of global warming.

Here at CERCOPAN HQ, in response to an ever increasing number of monkey adoptees, we welcomed a new primate-keeper into the CERCOPAN fold, and our extended family grew further with the birth of a baby girl to Martina amongst our Education staff. You can read about our extensive on-going Outreach programme in schools just below. To the right we report the rescue of a new red-capped mangabey, as a direct consequence of one of our school visits. This animal was in a particularly sorry state and brought tears to my eyes, but I know he is safe now and is becoming healthier by the day.

The red-capped mangabey is an endangered species, and the next on our list for release into the protected Rhoko forest. We'll be working on that in the New Year.

Thankfully, climate Change will never alter the patterns of the Festive Season! As we await the arrival of the most famous red-capped one of all, let me wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone here at CERCOPAN!

Out reaching to the minds of tomorrow

CERCOPAN’s annual outreach program has just been completed and this year it included over 50 secondary and 20 primary schools! Since the 12th of October our Calabar education staff, Abakum and Martina, have been very busy visiting several schools per day; reaching out to many rural communities as well as the schools surrounding the Calabar area.

The aim of our program is to create awareness of primates, rainforest, their relationship to one another, the effects of deforestation and how it relates to climate change, and the importance of conserving local rainforests within Cross River State. We also encourage schools to start 'Conservation Clubs', and help provide activities for them to do while advising the group's coordinator.

We had a lot of positive responses by students, with schools visited previously anticipating our return. Several showed interest in beginning their own conservation club and now plans are underway to begin new groups with exciting activities in the new term. CERCOPAN has also been invited as a guest speaker to the final Christmas meeting of several conservation clubs.

We are really pleased with how our outreach program is expanding and we hope next year to incorporate several more schools!
New Arrivals at CERCOPAN

CERCOPAN has always taken a multi-dimensional approach when it comes to the conservation of wildlife; incorporating rescue and rehabilitation, community development, environmental education, research, and ecotourism. It can often be difficult to assess which of these aspects is making a difference to the overall cause, but we are pleased to say we have just had a success story with our environmental education program.

The program is currently undertaking its annual school outreach aspect, and recently visited a new rural school from a neighboring village close to our forest site. The lesson taught and discussed environmental issues, including why primates should not be kept as pets. We encourage the children to report any incidents they may see in the future to CERCOPAN, so we can make a rescue attempt.

It wasn’t long after this visit that our Education Officer received a call from one of the students who knew of a family keeping a pet mangabey. After several attempts at rescuing the mangabey, every time finding the family absent from the village, we eventually met with them and were able to confiscate the individual.

Upon arrival we examined the mangabey who turned out to be a male. It has been very hard to determine his age; he is the size of a juvenile but he is extremely malnourished and this seems to have severely stunted his growth.

Now at CERCOPAN we hope to greatly improve his health and nutrition. After a few months in quarantine we look forward to being able to begin socializing him with other mangabeys. It is nice to think that on this occasion our environmental education program certainly made a difference for this monkey.

It hasn’t just been the monkey variety we have rescued this month though... it’s also been feathered friends we’ve gained! This month one of the research assistants at our forest site, Usor, found a baby owl on the trails of our protected forest. It seemed the owl had fallen from a height and badly broken it’s wing.

Our camp manager, Richard, immediately took him in and called Calabar HQ to gather as much information as possible on the best course of action. We searched online for tips on mending broken wings as well as the food we should be feeding this specialized bird.

With the help of some handy websites and Richard’s innovation (bearing in mind all the equipment required to mend a broken wing is not available at our rainforest camp) he made a fantastic bandage and set to work finding appropriate food.

A search amongst our spartan food supplies revealed only a tin of corned beef as a potential food item; hardly ideal, but more palatable to an owl than potatoes or instant noodles. Variations were attempted and hours were spent attempting to convince this fussy little eater that, really, a mix of tinned meat, fish, raw egg and maggots was very tasty.

Now the owl is at Calabar HQ being fed on meaty steak and egg shells. With steak every day it’s eating better than the volunteers! The bandage is now off and the wing has been checked by a vet who thinks that Orville (as he is now known) will still be able to fly after adjusting to the slightly differently shaped wings. We look forward to seeing how that goes, although it may still be a while before this fledging gets overly ambitious again and leaves its Calabar nest.

It hasn’t just been the monkey variety we have rescued this month though... it’s also been feathered friends we’ve gained!
Austin has returned with lots of enthusiasm to try new methods in many different aspects of veterinary care and has already organized meetings with keepers to discuss new routines. He additionally returned with various veterinary consumables given out by PASA that will be particularly helpful in the coming months. We look forward to seeing all the improvements Austin hopes to make here at CERCOPAN.

CERCOPAN is very excited to congratulate Martina on her new arrival! After doing a fantastic job of still visiting schools despite her heavy bundle, she has finally given birth to her first infant, a baby girl, on Friday 27th Nov.

We had long been anticipating the birth as it had been imminent a month ago, and we were starting to get very worried that it might even occur while at work!

As Martina begins her maternity leave we wish her and her husband well as they enjoy their first months of parenthood. We especially look forward to meeting the new arrival in the not-to-distant future!

We are delighted to welcome Edet, who began working as a primate keeper in Calabar at the start of November, to the CERCOPAN family.

Edet arrived to assist our keepers now that several of them have had promotions and will be required to do additional tasks to their usual duties.

Edet had been interviewed on a previous recruiting period and had made a very good impression, being remembered when this new position became available.

Coming from one of the rural communities close to our forest site, we are very pleased to employ another Agoi resident, already having a Research Assistant at our forest site from the village.

We hope he will enjoy his time at CERCOPAN and are all very pleased with the progress he is making. Keep up the good work!
Climate change action in communities!

As part of the CIDA funded ‘Building Nigeria’s Response to Climate Change’ program (BNRCC) we have been visiting our target communities Iko Esai and Agoi Ibami to begin participatory assessments and awareness campaigns.

The men and women of the villages are encouraged to carry out a series of analysis activities in building up a greater understanding of the challenges they are likely to face as a result of the impacts of climate change.

This stage of the project also allows them to identify those sectors of their society who will feel the current and future effects most keenly.

The visits were a resounding success and, despite the long hours put in by the participants, enthusiastically received. The results gathered from the visits will be used to inform and direct what measures are adopted in the communities to assist in overcoming the hardships around the corner. Weather extremes and a drastic departure from the usual patterns of seasonality in recent years have already had a major impact on crop yields and traditional farming methods. To cope with this, people increasingly resort to harvesting forest products to supplement their income. One of the aims of the project is to reduce this over reliance and exploitation by offering alternative solutions to the problems.

Visiting writer at CERCOPAN

CERCOPAN was very excited this month when writer, Lucy Christopher, came as a short-term volunteer to gather inspiration and information for her new book.

Lucy, having already published ‘Stolen’, now nominated for several book awards, and with a second book in press, is currently gathering information for her third book based in the rainforest.

Having spent 2 weeks at our forest site she has now experienced life in the rainforest first hand and will be able to give detailed descriptions of the surroundings of her characters. We all wait in anticipation for this new novel and wish her well in the coming months while she works hard to get her creativity on paper.

Our short-term volunteer program is now proving very successful, with 3 volunteers staying this month. Places are still available for February, March and April 2010 - check out our website for further details!
WANT TO BE A PART OF IT?

- Stay in touch with our on-going programme by bookmarking our home page http://www.cercopan.org/ and our Blog site http://cercopan.wildlifedirect.org/

- Volunteer for CERCOPAN in either Nigeria or the UK. We offer a range of different programmes so there is something for everyone! Visit our website volunteer section for further details.

- Help CERCOPAN attain corporate funding. If you work for a corporate sponsor who may be interested in funding CERCOPAN please contact claire.coulson@cercopan.org

- Undertake a sponsored event to raise funds for CERCOPAN.

- Make a cash donation to CERCOPAN via our website...every little helps!

- Buy a gift for friends or family from the Good Gifts Catalogue (www.goodgifts.org). You can buy a month’s supply of fruit for growing CERCOPAN orphan monkeys - called in the catalogue ‘A-peeling Monkeys’ for only £20! The price of the gift is passed on to CERCOPAN. So, it is an excellent way of solving your gift problems, and supporting our work! Alternatively visit the CERCOPAN gift shop on our website today.

- Donate useful goods and equipment such as building and fencing materials, veterinary medicines, old laptop computers etc. or services such as printing, blood testing and architectural design.

www.cercopan.org
http://cercopan.wildlifedirect.org