



# CERCO-NEWS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

MAY 2010

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Diplomats Efram Gomez (Sweden) and Lauri Voionmaa (Finland) in the Rhoko canopy

## Nordic countries on top of climate change

Visits from the diplomatic missions of Sweden and Finland caused a stir of excitement in Cross River State this past month, and especially in CERCOPAN as we hosted them both in Calabar and in Rhoko forest.

The State is strengthening its relationships with both countries in order to enhance its own environmental management capabilities.

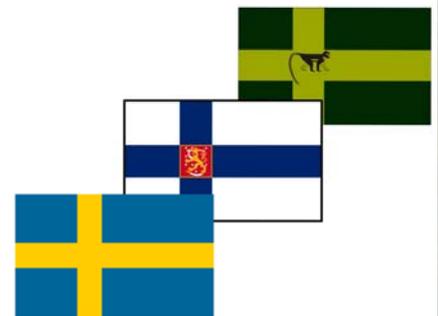
Cross River's policy is to leverage its greatest asset by protecting its forests and minimising urban environmental impact through efficient waste management. Tourism and investment are being attracted to the 'Clean and

Green' state.

Not least amongst the targets for incoming investment is the United Nations 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation' (REDD+) programme. This offers incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forest destruction and to enhance forest carbon stocks.

It's a natural step for Cross River State to turn to countries with similar environmental management policies, but also with the technologies and capabilities to implement them.

With CERCOPAN at the forefront of REDD dialogue



in Nigeria, the State was eager for us to showcase our programme, and the diplomats were equally eager to observe front-line rainforest conservation in practice.

After two days of meetings discussing the potential for collaboration in the urban setting, we travelled with them to Rhoko to give an overview of our community-based conservation activities.

Enthusiastic and hands-on, they wasted no time in immersing themselves in our programme, ending with a climb to our tree platform for a fuller view of the forest.

Our partnership with State Government goes from strength to strength. We will continue to be integral to this initiative in the succeeding rounds of exchanges and negotiations, with every intention to foster the Nordic connection to the benefit of Cross River State's inhabitants.





Claire Coulson  
CERCOPAN  
Director

## From the Director

Our visitors all play an important role in reiterating that the outside world views solutions to conserve the rainforests of Nigeria as an urgent priority.

Just the presence of expatriates in the village and at Rhoko lends strong support to our message on the importance of conservation and to our efforts to bring about change.

For those of you who read our article below on Volunteer opportunities and are thinking about whether you're right for the job, please bear in mind that this

ambassadorial role alone helps our cause. Sign up soon!

And on the subject of Ambassadors, we had diplomats from Sweden and Finland visiting with us in Calabar and in Rhoko this last month.

Read in our lead article about the Cross River State Government's intentions to form a close working relationship with these two countries to enhance the State's environmental programmes, both in the city and for the forests of the State.

It was invigorating for me to participate in the meetings and work with

individuals who had so much energy for their mission, and love for nature.

I've been an ambassador for wildlife since I learnt to talk, and I continue to be delighted that Cross River State relies on me on these important occasions to show the good work that is being performed in Cross River, and the opportunities for enhanced protection of its forests.

*Claire*

*"So you, yes you there, the one looking for something different to do this year....check it out!"*

## Volunteer 2010

We made a big hit in 2009 when we marketed the volunteer concept to those in full-time work who want to spend their vacation doing good and experiencing a totally new world.

Now we've published our Short-Term Volunteer Brochure 2010, and invite you to consider spending time with us in Nigeria this year applying your skills to

support our cause. And perhaps changing your life!

The brochure is packed with information: How can you help; Have you got what it takes to be a volunteer; Meet the monkeys; Life in the forest; Village life; Preparing to travel; and What to bring.

2-4 weeks is the typical stay for those in full-time

work, but we welcome longer stays for those of you with flexibility. Prices, Availability and How to apply are also included.

You can find the new brochure both on our Facebook fan page, and on our home page (see the back of this newsletter).

So you, yes you there, the one looking for something different to do this year....check it out!



Oliver at the ready

## Cost-efficiency driven

Our latest recruit is a driver. His name is Oliver and his work is improving our efficiency daily.

Okadas (that means motorbike taxis) used to be ubiquitous in Calabar. For a short trip, flag one down, negotiate the fare, and hop on the back. A very useful service for CERCOPAN staff, with our

daily requirements for materials purchases and logistics

But life has changed in Calabar. In the State's continuing 'Clean and Green' drive to attract tourists, Okadas can no longer ply for trade.

The alternative, car taxis following fixed routes, have turned out to

be very time-consuming and beyond our budget.

With only management qualified to drive our trucks, it has proven highly cost-efficient to take on a driver.

Our daily transportation needs are solved, and our maintenance and repairs needs can be monitored directly. Welcome Oliver!

# Seeking alternative employment

Chief's Council in Owai

Our work in the community has now successfully jump-started a series of alternative livelihoods projects, and is laying the groundwork for further expansion within our host community Iko Esai and extension to our neighbouring villages Agoi, Owai and Iko Ekperem.

Our funders for these initiatives reach the same end from two different starting points.

For the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the requirement is to trial adaptation strategies to address climate change. Increasingly erratic weather patterns threaten the means of living for those dependent entirely on the natural resource base.

projects that will provide diverse income sources.

From the point of view of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) the aim is environmental protection, and this requires finding alternatives for those whose activities directly threaten the survival of the forest and its fauna – primarily hunters.

Following extensive dialogue in Iko Esai and Agoi, a variety of strategies to discourage hunting have been developed.

These include improving income through cocoa farming (a training course has been completed), the provision of abattoir and storage facilities to hygienically and humanely slaughter domestic animals for consumption (also partially funded by Toronto Zoo), and the establishment of a cow meat co-operative group. All of these projects are well underway at present.

A successful awareness workshop was organised for those who had not yet been exposed to the

information regarding the causes and impacts of climate change in Agoi.

Excellent progress has been made with the most vulnerable groups in both villages, including the establishment of a piggery (see last month's CERCO-NEWS), the introduction of poultry farming, and a small-scale bakery.

Work is ongoing and all these projects will be expanded to involve more participants over the coming months.

Our Community Conservation Manager has been visiting the villages of Owai and Iko Ekperem to meet with the Chiefs and support the development of indigenous organisations to write funding proposals for alternative livelihoods assistance.

Progress is good, with development bodies established in both communities, and training is underway in proposal writing and budgetary skills.



*“Excellent progress has been made with the most vulnerable groups in both villages, including the introduction of poultry farming, and a small-scale bakery”*

Iko Esai's thriving piggery



Awareness training on climate change provides the motivation to engage in

Women's baking group in Iko Esai



# Back home again

We had a most welcome visit this past month from Zena Tooze, Founder (and now Trustee) of CERCOPAN.

We are a member of the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA), a

US-based organisation which performs the crucial role of promoting cooperation, adherence to standards, and a sense of community amongst its member organisations across Africa who share our mission to conserve and protect African

primates.

Zena sits on the PASA Steering Committee, and gave a presentation at the annual PASA Management Workshop recently on the advances made by CERCOPAN in the past year. By good fortune the workshop was held in Cameroon. This meant that it was a short step (well actually a rather uncomfortable boat-ride) to Calabar, and our headquarters.

Once Zena was in-country, the priority was to scrutinise the final details for our impending second release of Mona monkeys.

The vision of ultimate release back to the wild was with Zena from the day she first took in our first monkey, Leo, and set in progress the organisation we have become today.

And it's an organisation that is changing all the time, so Zena was quickly on the move to welcome all the new staff we have engaged since she was last here. In Iko Esai she provided gifts from the UK to the Chiefs, and in Rhoko it was a time to relax in the forest we all love.

For more information on PASA, please visit <http://pasaprimates.org/>

## Zena back in 'her village'



## Cutting it fine

The rains came late to Nigeria this year, but they announced themselves in full force when they finally arrived.

the canopy had accumulated a vast mass of weakened limbs, and had become an accident waiting to happen.

Two large buttress trees laying right across one of the Mona enclosures had to be removed urgently in case the construction collapsed entirely.

We also had to address trees down on the road to Iko Esai, as well as one that damaged and set back the roofing work on our new community centre.

Salvage operations were conducted under the guidance of expert tree surgeon, and visiting volunteer, Joe Brophy. Without his help, we would not have been able to get our operations back to a reasonable state of normality by nightfall.

And that was our one piece of good fortune in a difficult day. It was Joe's last day at camp before returning home!

The first fierce thunderstorm of the year is the one to fear in the forest. With an extended and particularly hot dry season,

completed to ensure no further escapes. But sections of the fence will have to be replaced in the longer term.



There's a Mona enclosure in there somewhere!

# Rebirth of Bonny and Clyde

A peak in births of primates is coincidental with the beginning of the rainy season and the emergence of additional food in the forest.



Bebi and Bosco

Three new babies were born in May in Rhoko: a mona and two mangabeys. Bebi, a 4 1/2 year old adult female mona gave

birth to her first baby, named Bosco. We don't yet know if Bosco is a male or a female since it is very difficult to assess this in young guenons. Bosco is very healthy and totally under the protection of the mother who sometimes gets annoyed by the mischievous and still young Wanna who always wants to get the attention of the others.

July, the adult male of the group and father of the baby is also very protective and tolerant toward Bebi and Bosco. July and Bebi were among the release group in 2007-2008 but unfortunately they had to be re-captured subsequently. The addition of a juvenile enhances our chances for their re-release.

Only a few days later, Bototo, which means "gift",

gave birth to a little boy called Bassey. Even though they are similar in size to monas when new born, it is easier to identify the sex of baby Red-capped mangabeys early on.

Bototo was born in Rhoko in 2005 and it is her first child. She looks after him very well, taking the example of her mother Blessing.

Finally, by the end of the month, one of our most popular adult female Red-capped mangabeys, Bonny, gave birth to her fourth baby. Bonny is the best friend of Clyde.

Clyde is one the most dominant males of the group despite his advanced age (almost 20 years old now) and is used to following Bonny everywhere she goes.



Bonny with her fourth child

*"A peak in births of primates is coincidental with the beginning of the rainy season and the emergence of additional food in the forest."*

# Virus scanning licence needed

In the last month Fabian Schmidt, from the University of Cambridge has been supporting us by screening our primate populations for viral pathogens. Fabian is a PhD student in Professor Jonathan Heeney's group at the Department of Veterinary Medicine. He specializes in viral diseases found in primates of the *Cercopithecus* and *Cercocebus* genii.

His main aim for this visit is to gain permission to export diagnostic samples from Nigeria to the UK. There he will apply tests that are specific to the species that are kept at CERCOPAN. This will mean an improvement to our health-checks, as the tests

we have access to here in Calabar are established for human pathogens only.

To ensure that as many animals as possible are suitable for future releases, those with transmissible, chronic infections must be identified and housed apart from healthy animals. The Cambridge group has the required experience and technical set-ups to assist us with this decision making.

However, to ship samples into the UK, Fabian requires an Export licence from the Federal Ministry of Environment which is the Management Authority for CITES in Nigeria.

CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, in force since

1975. CITES ensures that the international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

To exclude any loopholes, diagnostic samples require a CITES license as well. Unfortunately a suspension was placed on Nigeria by CITES six years ago.

We are optimistic that CERCOPAN's contribution to the conservation of endangered primate species will be taken in account and the export of these samples permitted. This would be a positive example to support Nigeria's ambition to ensure stronger and more effective enforcement of the convention's regulations aiming for a total lift of the suspension in the future.



Our Vet Nurse Austin assisting Fabian in the lab

## 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/> or joining our Facebook fan page <http://www.facebook.com/cercopan/>
- 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](mailto: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](http://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://www.cercopan.org)

<http://cercopan.wildlifedirect.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/cercopan/>



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Design & Layout by Claire Coulson; Written by Claire Coulson, Rachel Hemingway, Amy Baxter  
Edited by Claire Coulson