



# CERCO-NEWS

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Growing conservation skills	1
From the Director	2
Power to the people	2
Loyal Highness	2
Sprucing up the forest	3
Having the neighbours round	4
From CEO to CBO	4
Joining us for Christmas	5
Thank You and Goodbye	5
Want to be a part of it ?	6

## Growing conservation skills

Within the scope of our BBC Wildlife Fund grant, CERCOPAN has developed a Tree Nursery and an accompanying educational programme at the secondary school in our host community Iko Esai.

The goal of the program is to plant out 3,000 saplings into degraded areas along the forest edge. This will serve to consolidate existing boundaries of protected areas of rainforest, provide education as to the importance of reforestation programmes, and serve as the pilot for potential future efforts to support the global carbon sequestration effort.

CERCOPAN's new Volunteer Environmental Education Capacity Building Coordinator, Daniel Roper-Jones, is heading up the tree nursery programme at the secondary school in close collaboration with Mr. Hans, the resident biology teacher and head of the school's Conservation Club.

Dan has been working

closely with the local teachers, and has conducted a month of programming, providing over three hundred students and their teachers with a fundamental understanding of primates, tropical rainforests, ecology, and conservation solutions.

The nursery itself covers an area of land of approximately 1,500 square metres within the school's boundaries. Thus far, nine brand new shade beds have been constructed, each capable of holding and shading 500 seedlings. A supply shed to house tools and teaching equipment is near to completion, and two large water tanks are being moved to the site for water storage during the dry season.

An area of the land has been set aside for an outdoor classroom, where Dan and Mr. Hans are leading further educational programmes on managing the nursery and

conservation in general. Ultimately, after further education, the Conservation Club students will take on the management of the nursery under Mr. Hans supervision. They will attend to the planting, watering, and care of the seedlings as they are grown.

The team has so far collected and planted 500 seeds. These are presently being monitored and cared for by CERCOPAN staff while the school is in December recess. Future plans include establishing a working relationship between the secondary school and the Cross River State Forestry Commission, and involving the students in excursions to Rhoko Camp to see the rainforest first-hand, participate in field based education programs on our Nature Trail, and gather seeds of their own to plant and grow at the nursery site.

We will have to wait until April when the rainy season begins in earnest, and the schoolchildren can plant the saplings out with confidence that nature can take charge over the coming months. And we trust that seeing the results by the end of the season will start the new school year off with even greater enthusiasm than we have already seen, and the chance for a natural continuation of the project.



Soon to be 100  
new trees



Claire Coulson  
CERCOPAN  
Director



*"Hiring of the hall will bring in funds to provide for maintenance of the Centre."*



Working for  
primates globally

## From the Director

Greetings here in Nigeria are enormously important, every day. With the first encounter, if I were to try a brisk 'hello', it would come across as hopelessly inadequate. Politeness demands far more than that.

Something along the lines of an extended dialogue following an established protocol, is absolutely the norm. 'Good morning!', 'How was the night?', 'Did you sleep well?', 'Did the children eat well?', 'How work?', 'How body?', together with appropriate responses throughout, would see you in good

standing. It would take me a long time to get to work each day if my staff did not allow me a few concessions in this regard.

In the North the opening greeting 'Sanu' commits you into a recitative of up to a dozen follow-on questions and answers. Try it in passing down the street, and you will have to bend your neck to shout the final phrase!

In our village of Iko Esai the Chiefs' greeting is quite unique. You offer a pair of hands actioning the opening of a bi-valve shell. In response they blow into the opening and then

close it with their hands outside yours.

In my experience, the opening greeting everywhere here is replaced on Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, precisely to the day. For a month I will hear no other. To all our loyal friends and sponsors, in anticipation of the continuing dialogue that I trust will follow, let me use it now to wish you the best and show our respect for all the generosity and loyalty you have shown CERCOPAN in 2011: *'Compliments of the Season!'*

*Claire*

## Power to the people

We are now in the final phase for the Iko Esai Community Centre project - preparing it for use.

A system of two 85W solar panels supplying two 200Ah deep-cycle batteries is now delivering electricity. There is enough power to supply lighting, ceiling fans, and use of computers.

A Yamaha upright piano has been donated

for the meeting hall, and this should prove a huge draw for groups that wish to hire the room - especially for weddings and other church events.

Computers and a printer have been purchased for use by members of the village. Tables, chairs and shelves are on their way. We have a start-up collection of books for the library.

In use, the centre will provide offices for CERCOPAN and the village's Community Conservation & Development Committee. There is accommodation for visiting NGO's working in the village and a library to help with adult literacy.

Hiring of the hall will bring in funds to provide for maintenance of the Centre.

## Loyal Highness

With three new primate mouths to feed (see penultimate article), the news of a new grant award from the International Primate Protection League (IPPL) was timely and as welcome as ever.

IPPL, under the leadership of Dr Shirley McGreal, has worked tirelessly for almost 40

years towards the well-being of non-human primates all over the world (over 30 countries in fact!).

Lobbying for bans on the hunting of primates, helping establish protected areas, and monitoring welfare in zoos and laboratories are all part of their programme.

Most critically for our primates in captive care, IPPL raises funds through its supporters to help with the running costs of multiple primate sanctuaries.

We can be sure that each and every one of those organisations is as grateful as we are for another year of support for such vital work.

# Sprucing up the forest

Wet season is over, and a full refurbishment of the tourism facilities in Rhoko camp has just been completed.

To begin with, upgrades have been made to our tourist cabins. New vanity screens and bedding have been added, all from beautiful local fabrics. Each hut now has a balcony so you can sit outside and take in the full view, and new mosquito screens have been incorporated throughout.

The steps up have been rebuilt and we have extended the rooves so that they now cover the stairs and the extra floor space, so as to be ready for the onslaught of next year's rains.

The toilet and shower areas have also been given a makeover, while the deluxe accommodation, still as sturdy and as spacious as the day it was built, remains ready to receive those guests who would like some extra comfort in the bush (solar power and ceiling fan included).

The most significant change of all is in the kitchen and dining facilities. In the past the cooking area was functional, but now we have a new building incorporating a covered barbeque area, a store room with serving hatch, and an elevated covered balcony where visitors can dine open to the sounds and sights of the forest.

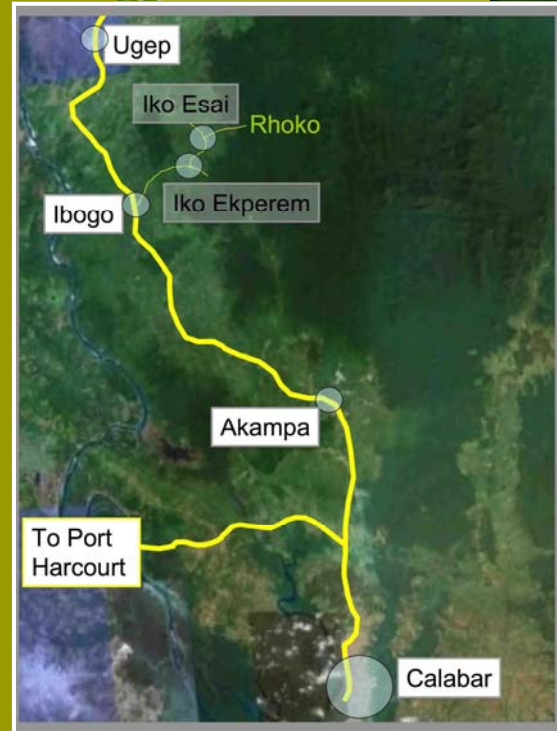
ready to take people up to the tree platform - an exhilarating experience, if you are ready to take up the challenge.

Dan is also our resident night-time expert. He will take visitors on evening excursions, when you are almost certain to see Bush-babies, and perhaps a chance sighting of an Angwantibo.

It has been a busy time recently for our ecotourism programme and the feedback has been universally positive about the experience, with the new kitchen area especially favoured.

Cross River State is the tourism centre of Nigeria, and a weekend away in Rhoko forest will show you one of its primary attractions. For more information or booking contact us at [info@cercopan.org](mailto:info@cercopan.org), or call 08062795848.

How to get to Rhoko



The new dining area

While the facilities have changed, so too has the management. Rhoko camp has a new manager, Lisa Lane. Not just that, we have a new long-term volunteer, Dan, staying at camp. He has completed his tree climbing training, and is

*“...the deluxe accommodation, still as sturdy and as spacious as the day it was built, remains ready to receive those guests who would like some extra comfort in the bush...”*



New mosquito screens (left), and the new kitchen and dining complex (right)

# Having the neighbours round

Continuing our efforts to expand our community-based conservation model beyond our host community of Iko Esai, we recently

invited key members of the nearest neighbouring village, Iko Ekperem, to visit our field site, Rhoko Camp. The excursion largely

followed the pattern of the Owai visit reported in our last issue. Following an educational workshop, key decision-makers agreed to come to Rhoko to witness our operation and then report back to their respective peer groups.

On this occasion we had 30 visitors in all. Lisa Lane, Research & Protected Area Manager, was on hand to welcome the group. Then Mike Ekpe, our Community Liaison and Education Officer, led the programme covering forest and primate conservation, and the benefits of sustainable management.

Members of the Iko Ekperem group, with Mike Ekpe in the foreground



## From CEO to CBO

CERCOPAN has been fortunate enough to host Jo Gardner for a month-long volunteer working holiday experience. Jo normally works in Australia as the CEO of a charitable organisation, and brings a wealth of experience. She also likes to travel - preferably with a difference.

C E R C O P A N ' s Community Conservation Manager, BenJee Cascio,

has been working closely with Jo while she has been assisting with our Community Based Organisation (CBO) capacity-building program.

A CBO works on behalf of their village to engage support to improve the lives of community members. Education, training, and construction grants can be gained by well-managed and hard-working CBO's. Our role is to help them get off the ground, and then to support them as they grow in experience.

In recent weeks Jo has met with the CBO's of Owai and Agoi Ibami, analyzing their current capacity and organization history, and then planning on ways to assist them.

CERCOPAN will soon hold a large workshop

involving all of the CBO's we are working with. We will be assisting them with how to structure and operate a CBO, and we will also go through how to complete a funding proposal.

Jo's assistance has been welcome and her expertise extremely useful. The communities always enjoy seeing new faces, especially those who bring capacity building skills!

Getting to experience real life in a Nigerian village, working hard for its people and making a difference to their lives will make for a more memorable holiday than most people have in 10 years. If you want that life-changing experience, working in any aspect of our conservation programme, seek out the brochure on our home page.

Jo in discussions with the Agoi CBO



# Joining us for Christmas

After several quiet months, we have just seen the arrival of three new monkeys from two sources almost on the same day. Word came to use that two mona monkeys were illegally being kept as pets at a hotel in Calabar.

The veterinarian was on his way out to assess the situation when a four to five month old female Red-eared guenon was handed over to him just as he was about to exit the gate. The young Red-ear sadly had a rope and chain around her waist. She felt very hot to touch and was quite dehydrated.

While she initially seemed in poor condition she was quick to take milk from a bowl. After that she couldn't quite work out whether to eat the

watermelon or the banana all with a multi-vitamin Gummi Bear in her mouth. She had been sent down from Afi Mountain, but it was not thought that she had been in captivity long.

Nevertheless, it is a long journey from there so she would have had a stressful time in the car, and undoubtedly attracted a lot of unwanted attention from everyone who saw her. Despite her ordeal she quickly acquainted herself with the feeding arrangements and has been doing just fine ever since.

Meanwhile the two mona monkeys were being kept in a Calabar hotel in a small cage. The 'owner' cared for his 'pets' but they were both thin and under-developed. He had picked up the monkeys on the side of the road about a year

ago and had kept them ever since. The cage was very small but they were let out periodically to roam around the compound and bar area.

Monkeys do not make good pets, and it is a particularly bad situation for both parties when there are people eating and drinking.

The man reluctantly relinquished his two little male monas, and they have already settled into their enclosure and are loving their new diet, and will soon get a new group of mona buddies to play with.



Now that was a good meal!

# Thank you and goodbye

It is with considerable sadness but a lot of happy memories that we say goodbye this edition to close CERCOPAN friend Robert Warren who will be leaving his Lagos-based job as a geologist for a new position in Russia.

Any volunteer or visitor travelling to Nigeria to visit CERCOPAN over the last 4.5 years will no doubt have stayed with Robert in Lagos, or otherwise benefited from his immense hospitality during their stay. His flat, the home from home for all long-term volunteers visiting the big city, is fondly known as the 'CERCOPAN Lagos office'.

Robert has assisted with countless aspects of our

work, ranging from volunteer logistics and training, to transporting goods from the UK, from proposal writing and editing, to primate rescue, carrying bags of cement, and bailing floodwater out of the office!

In 2007, Robert joined forces with former Rhoko Manager Richard Carroll to run the daunting 'Obudu Ranch International Mountain Race' which raised 1.5M Naira for CERCOPAN. An expert on the butterflies of Nigeria, his long term study at Rhoko has yielded both very rare and new-to-science species, and his results now point to Rhoko having the highest biodiversity of butterflies in Africa.

In addition to all of Robert's help with the day-to-

day aspects of the organisation, he has been a constant and solid source of support to the Director and long-term volunteers through the best of times and the worst.

It is impossible to thank him enough for everything he has done for the organisation, and for each of us personally. We wish him all the very best for the future and just hope his new home has space for the 'CERCOPAN Moscow office'!



Robert with Director Claire on one of his Rhoko visits

*"...his results now point to Rhoko having the highest biodiversity of butterflies in Africa."*

## 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/> and 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. Use the Fundraising Pack on our web site to help you.
- 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>  
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