



Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea

October 2014 – March 2015
November 2016 - March 2017
Curtis Hart & Lindsay Gedacht

For the winter of 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 Lindsay and I volunteered for the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program on Bioko. We monitored nesting sea turtles and continued long term primate surveys. We lived in a remote field camp, Moraka, for the majority of the time. We were able to spend about 3 weeks in Moka, 6 days in Moaba, 1 day on Pico Basilé and a 5 day trip to the Gran Caldera de Luba. Bioko should be visited between mid December and late February due to weather. The best weather on the southern beaches is in January. The highlands have better (drier) weather later in the season. Expect rain 3-7 days a week at Moraka any time except January. For some reason, it is actually cold at night during the dry season at sea level, so a jacket or hoodie would be needed for sleeping. It is not advisable/possible to go to the southern beaches during summer. There is a high probability that no one would be willing to take you due to high, dangerous river crossing.

Travel around Bioko is currently a bit difficult. First off, it can be difficult to get a visa, with the exception of US citizens, who do not need one. You then have to obtain permits to leave Malabo and to enter the Gran Caldera de Luba Scientific Reserve. The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program can facilitate trips to the southern beaches. There is also a tourist agency, Russian or German perhaps, that runs trips. I neglected to write down their contact info the one time I saw it.

<http://bioko.org/>



The southern beaches of Bioko are paradise, long, black sand beaches, broken by rocky points and clear water streams, with plenty of waterfalls. There are two BBPP field camps, Moaba and Moraka, as well as camp near Maoba run by another university. There may be a 4th camp about an hour past Moaba that will be filming. Moaba is about an hours' quick walk east of Ureca, and Moraka is about 3 hours quick walk west of Ureca. Expect those hikes to be as much as double, depending on fitness, pack weight, and tides (It took me 7 hours when I returned the first time in 2016 with an 80 pound pack).

Moaba has several large waterfalls and easier access to bat caves. Primate numbers are lower, however there are still Drills. Porcupines were much

more common here than Moraka in 2014, but this no longer seems to be the case. Moaba sees far more tourists. They had people there every weekend, with one group staying over a week. Moraka still has lower numbers, but they are increasing.

Moraka has a much better system of trails, more primates, and higher wildlife density in general. Moraka is also a stop along the way to the Caldera. Hormigas is a camp that is about 12 k inland from Moraka. From there it is an additional half days' hike into North Camp in the Caldera. Hormigas and North Camp normally only have people at them a few days a year. The Caldera is beautiful and has a lot of wildlife, but it is not as easy to see as it is in the Moraka area. The trails around North Camp have not been cut in 2 years at this point, so unless they are cut, there is not a lot of reason to go there.

Moka is in the highlands and has some access to trails in the area. The nature center has a 1 km path that is great at night for 3 species of galagos and a few other mammals such as the African Linsang. A guide can be hired in this area that could possibly show you a Preuss's Guenon, but it would take a few days. There is a hotel in the town of Moka and a couple of stores and cheap places to eat.

Pico Basilé is doable as a day trip, it requires permits, but those can be obtained at the same time as the Southern Beaches permit. You must have a guide and no photography is allowed at the top. There is an endemic bird, and this is by far the best place to see Preuss's Monkey. The day I went there, there was a group of 8 of us, and the guide and first person in line saw a Preuss's. I was third in line. It was a hard miss.

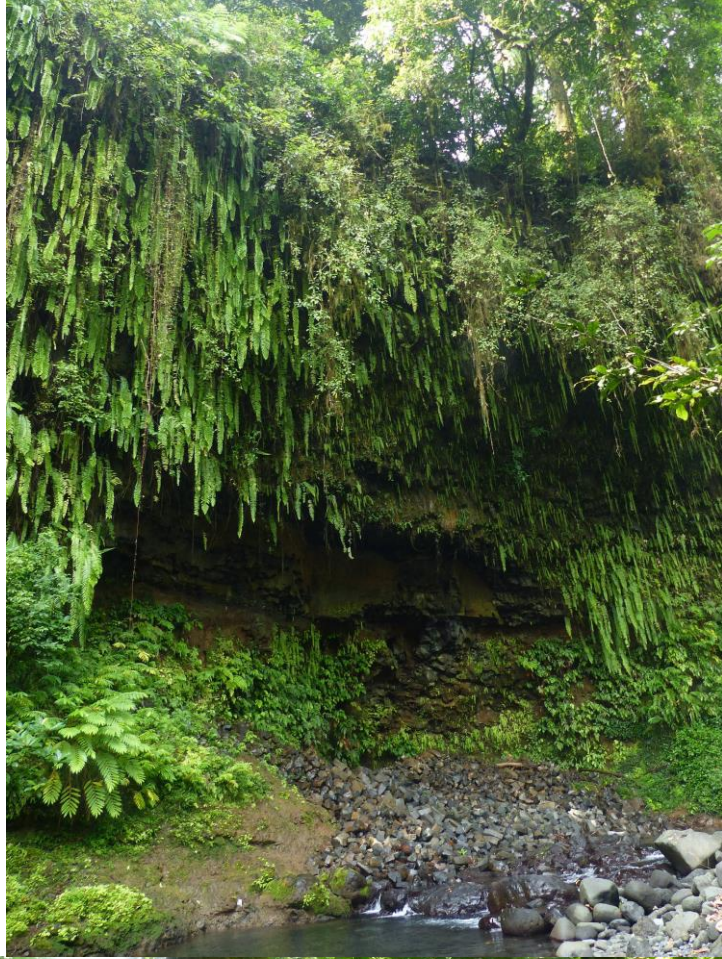
Straw-colored Fruit Bats can be seen overhead at night or roosting in many trees around Malabo. There is a place called French Beach with a colonial house that had several Angolan Soft-haired Fruit Bats in it.













Mammals

Western Tree Hyrax (*Dendrohyrax dorsalis*) Heard often, but harder to find, I only saw 7 in 5 months the first time and 11 in four months the second time. I was only able to follow a couple to the call, and they were on an exposed branch over the beach. The rest I found randomly. Small eyeshine. I saw all of them at Moraka. Heard at Moka, Hormigas, and the Caldera, heard less often near Moaba.



Bioko Needle-clawed Galago (*Euoticus pallidus pallidus*) I saw them along the nature trail at Moka. I saw them most times I night walked there.

Bioko Allen's Galago (*Galago alleni alleni*) Common at Moraka, Moaba, Hormigas, and Moka. Probably common in the Caldera as well, I just didn't search much there.



Demidoff's Galago (*Galago demidoff*) I saw a few near Moka. Check the elephant grass, or walk the road at night uphill from research center.



Thomas's Galago (*Galago thomasi*) Common at night near Moraka. I saw them most in the tangles of vines between 40 M and 300 M north of Moraka.



Bioko Red-eared Monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrotis erythrotis*) Most common diurnal primate. I saw them most days around Moraka.



Jack Dudding©



Bioko Putty-nosed Monkey (*Cercopithecus nictitans martini*) Difficult to find around Moraka and Moaba. I only had a total of 7 sightings the first winter and 9 the second. We were better able to recognize the females call, so that made it easier towards the end of the 2017 season. Try walking west from the Badja just out of earshot of the coast or the Tope Tomo trail.

Crowned Monkey (*Cercopithecus pogonias pogonias*) Common around Moraka and Moaba. I saw them at Hormigas as well.



Bioko Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus poensis*) Easy to see at the blind near Moaba. I saw plenty near Moraka, but if you asked me to find one, it wouldn't be 100%. They are around camp February through March to take advantage of the breadfruit trees. Late February is the best. Rare near Moka.



Bioko Black Colobus (*Colobus satanas satanas*) Findable at Moraka, Hormigas, and the Caldera. Difficult near Moaba. Try along the Badja or Ole. There was a pair along the coast west of the Ole that was very approachable in 2017.



Pennant's Red Colobus (*Procolobus pennantii*) Common and easy to see at Moraka, Hormigas, and in the Caldera. They are not found at Moaba or Moka.



Red-cheeked Rope Squirrel (*Funisciurus leucogenys*) Not as common as the Red-legged Sun Squirrel, but I did see several around Moraka, and saw them at Moka, Moaba, and Hormigas.



Red-legged Sun Squirrel (*Heliosciurus rufobrachium*) Probably the most common squirrel. I saw plenty around Moraka, Moka, and Moaba.

African Pygmy Squirrel (*Myosciurus pumilio*) I only saw one, about 300 M behind Moraka. Only a few were seen by entire field crew. In 2016 I saw one in the exact same place as before.

Green Bush Squirrel (*Paraxerus poensis*) I saw one in Malabo and a few near Moraka.

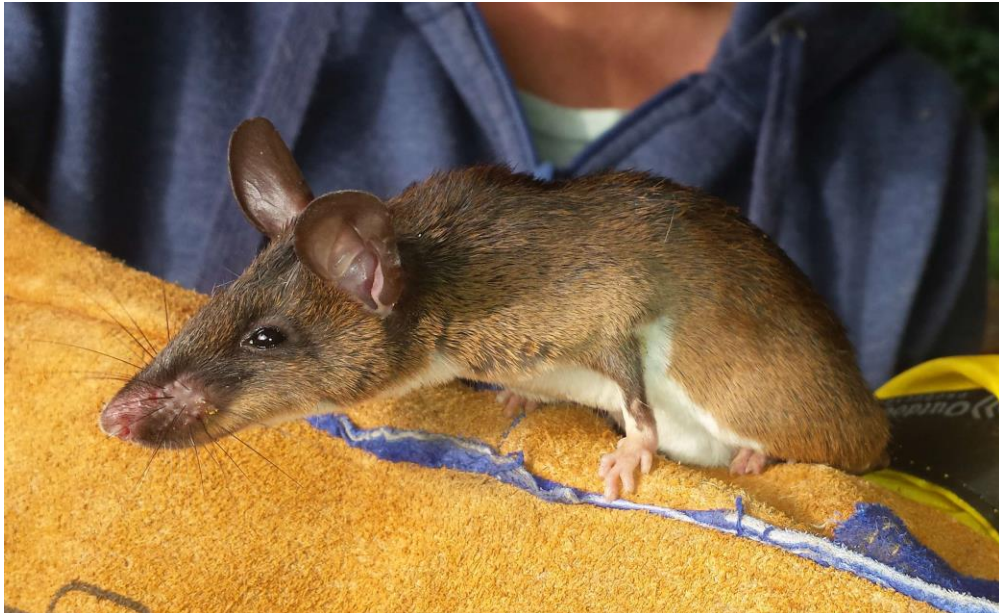
Forest Giant Squirrel (*Protoxerus stangeri*) Common. I normally saw them along the beach trails near Moraka.

Forest Giant Pouched Rat (*Cricetomys emini*) Commonly observed on night walks, and while walking back from turtle shift. I also saw a few near Moka.

Bioko Hybomys (*Hybomys basili*) 1 trapped near Moka. Two found dead in 2016 along a trail through grassland on the way to Lago Biao.



Common Malacomys (*Malacomys longipes*) One observed at night near the stream that enters the east side of the Ole at the mouth. Several trapped around Moka.



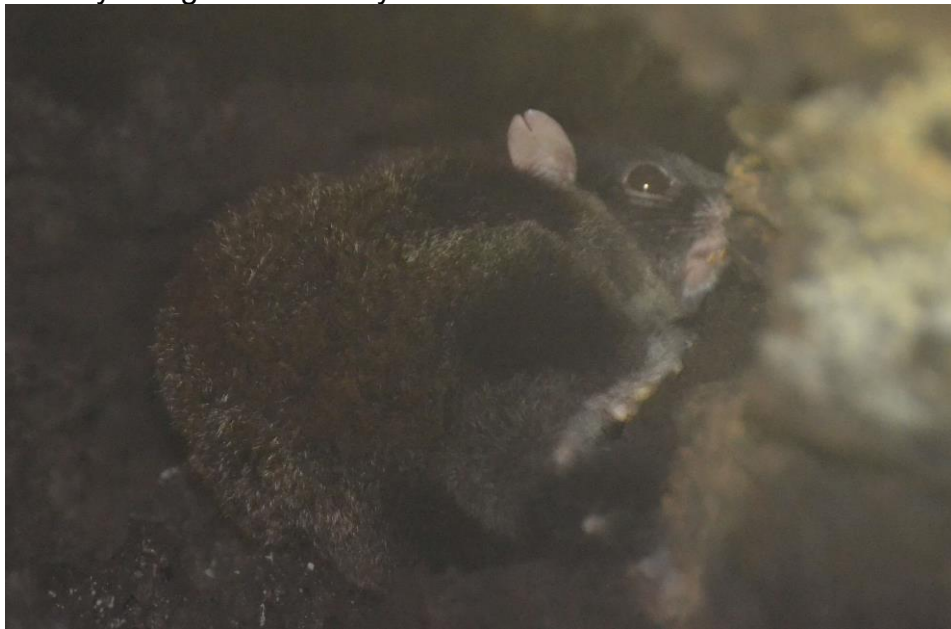
Target Rat (*Stochomys longicaudatus*) This rat was a pest at Moraka. It lived in our kitchen and gear tents, ate our food, and was a general nuisance. When we took down the kitchen, I counted 14 run into the jungle. I also occasionally saw these on the trail between the forest and the beach.

Beecroft's Anomalure (*Anomalurus beecrofti*) Seen on night walks around Moraka relatively frequently. They were common in the fruiting trees in camp in December and January. We observed some that appeared to be melanistic.





Lord Derby's Anomalure (*Anomalurus derbianus*) I saw three individuals, two of them I saw multiple times. They can be found in hollow trees, typically with Slit-faced Bats. One tree was about 200 M behind Moraka, and the other tree was about 2.3 K up the Ole River Trail. I also saw one at night on a palm on the trail between the Ole and the Tope Tomo. In hindsight, I am only sure about the latter definitely being a Lord Derby's.



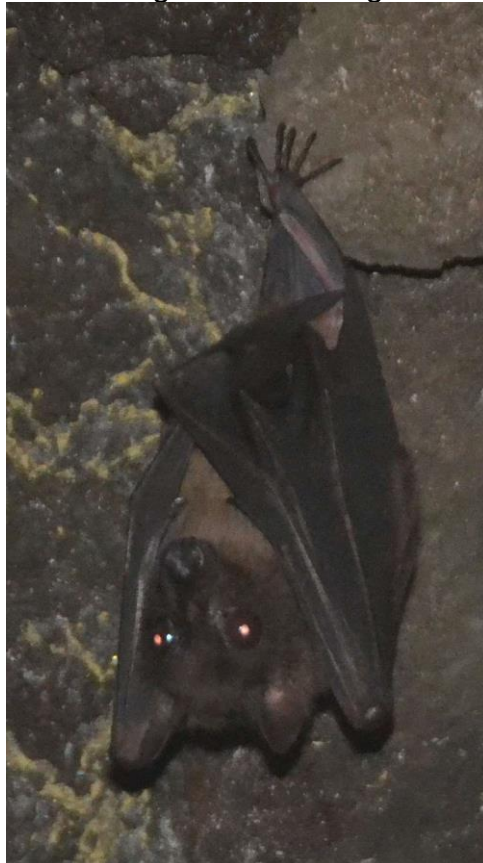
Cameroon Scaly-tail (*Zenkerella insignis*) I only saw one, which we spot lit near Hormigas Camp in 2015. It stayed still, and only moved once. I did not know it at the time, but this was the first time this species was photographed. I gave someone permission to use the photos for a paper, I will add them to this report after they have been published.

African Brush-tailed Porcupine (*Atherurus africanus*) Occasionally seen on primate transects near Moraka, or on the stream be just west of Moraka. Previously very common east of Moaba.

Johnston's Forest Shrew (*Sylvisorex johnstoni*) There was a shrew in a Sherman Trap in the Caldera that was not *Crocidura* and had a shorter tail.

African Straw-colored Fruit Bat (*Eidolon helvum*) Common in the sky over Malabo at night. Can be found roosting in palms or other trees in Malabo during the day.

Angolan Soft-haired Fruit Bat (*Lissonycteris angolensis*) Check small volcanic caves for these, they do change caves though. There are typically some in the caves on the rock wall just west of the Badja. Low numbers in Moaba bat caves. One was captured inside a building at Moka. Large colony at French Beach.



Noack's Leaf-nosed Bat (*Hipposideros ruber*) There were three caves that contained this species. One is near a waterfall near Moaba, one is on the coast on near the Purdue camp, and the other is off of the Badja 2k transect. You need ropes to enter that one, so I never did. We also caught 5 as incidentals while mist netting for birds. This is probably the most common bat observed flying in the forest in the lowlands.



Halcyon Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus alcyone*) Two caught as incidentals while mist netting for birds in the Caldera.



Bate's Slit-faced Bat (*Nycteris arge*) Observed in at least 3 hollow trees. Usually alone, or with 1 young. One was caught as an incidental while mist netting for birds near Moraka.



Tree Pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*) Apparently 2014/2015 was the best winter ever for volunteers seeing Pangolins. I saw 4 different individuals, and was able to observe some great feeding behavior. At Moraka there were a total of 6 sightings. At Moaba, three were found near camp. One poacher was observed with 2 near Moaba late in the dry season. In 2016/2017 I was the only volunteer to see a wild pangolin. I had a great extended observation while I was on primate survey. The locals that work at Moraka really stepped up their trapping this year and caught at least 5. They were pretty secretive about pangolin captures, as they knew we didn't like it. Our camp manager made them release the one that she saw still alive.



African Linsang (*Poiana richardsonii*) I had 4 sightings each time. Two sightings were hunting along streams at night. I saw one kill a frog and eat it while it was mobbed by birds on Christmas Day. I also observed one running up a down tree with a 12" black snake in it's mouth. I mainly saw them on the trail that goes from Moraka to Beach A. I saw two on different occasions along the Badja Norte trail at dawn.



Ogilby's Duiker (*Cephalophus ogilbyi*) Normally I saw them during the day. I only ever saw one while spot lighting. I most often saw them west of the Ole River.

Blue Duiker (*Philantomba monticola*) Typically seen running away during the day. Easy to spot light and approach at night.



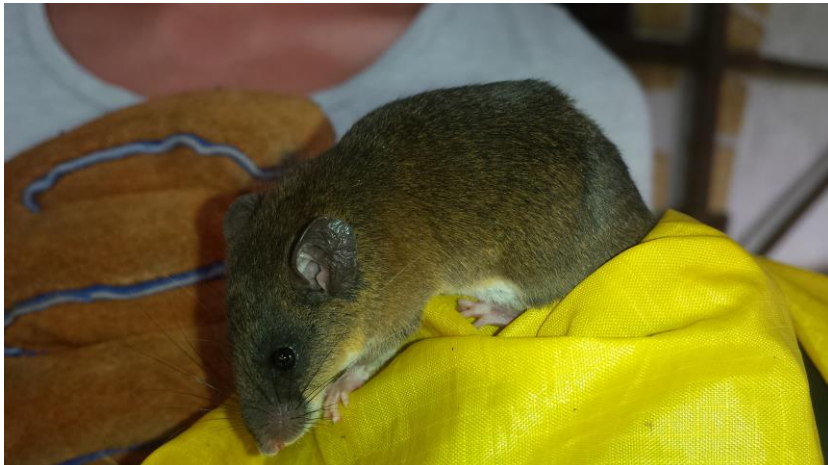
UnIDed

Dolphin sp Pod of 15ish observed off of Moaba in December. Bottle-nosed Dolphins are the most likely.

Whale sp What appeared to be three small baleen whales observed off Moraka in October. Bryde's or Minke would be my guess.

***Praomys* sp** and ***Hylomyscus* sp** were trapped, DNA should determine the species, which I will put in a revised trip report.

Shrews I saw various shrews briefly that I could not ID. The best were two attacking one of the purple crabs together in the rocks around the Moaba waterfall on New Years Eve.



What I missed

Preuss's Guenon I was only in habitat for a couple days, and I was mist netting, so I never had much of a chance. The person standing next me saw one. Super frustrating.

Sperm Whale One washed up on the beach dead. Who knows where it died.



Photo Credits

Jack Dudding: 2nd Bioko Red-eared Monkey, Central African Linsang, 2nd Bioko Allen's Galago.

Lindsay Gedacht: Most scenery photos, Drill with the Breadfruit

Curtis Hart: All the rest.