

Gabon Trip Report

August 16 to September 2, 2019

Participants: Cheryl Antonucci, Luc Van Den Berg, Deb Bradley, Laura Busby, Stuart Chapman, Joanna Langdale, Keith Millar, Steve Morgan.

Leaders: Fiona Reid, Vianet Mihindou, Gislain Ngonga Ndjibadi (Mikongo)

After reading Jon Hall's report from his 2018 trip to Gabon, I decided to follow a similar route, in hopes of seeing many of the iconic mammals Jon listed. I especially wanted to see Giant Pangolin (as did all participants) and Long-eared Flying Mouse (not as important for others, but a mammal I had painted and found super intriguing). And then of course there were other draws such as Lowland Gorilla, Mandrills, Red River Hogs and more. I worked with Vianet setting up the trip and making arrangements. Vianet was our full-time local guide as well.

August 16

Deb and I arrived a day early, after a really awful Ethiopian Airlines flight. We spent time walking the beach and watching the colorful agama lizards and local birds. I found a swift nesting on a coconut palm – after a long while it finally dawned on me it was an African Palm Swift - duh! We overnighted at Hotel Tropicana, nicely located on the beach, with OK rooms and not very good food, especially for vegetarians.

August 17

The rest of the group arrived at different times throughout the day. Keith arrived without luggage but it came in the next day (thankfully we were still in Libreville to receive it). The evening was uneventful, apart from one of the participants being propositioned at his room. He declined offers of “sucki-sucki” (or so he said), but this did provide a lot of amusement for the rest of us.



Northern Talapoin, Cheryl Antonucci

August 18

We had arranged to camp overnight at Akanda, in hopes of finding African Manatee in the early hours, but Vianet told us the camp was not yet prepared, so we took two day trips to Akanda instead. We set off early to the boat dock, a rather unappealing garbage-strewn area, where we had a light breakfast provided by Vianet as we waited – a long time – for our boat to arrive. We had no luck with manatee but enjoyed a few birds such as Rosy Bee-eater, on our way to Nende Island. This tiny island is home to Northern Talapoin, and after chasing around in the mangroves at the far end of the island we did all eventually get rather unsatisfactory views of these small, shy monkeys. Later we boated over to mainland and walked through a mangrove forest. I started my usual searches for bats in hollows, but the first mammal that was seen was a wood mouse (*Hylomys* sp) in a large tree hollow. We boated over to a restaurant for lunch and a rest at a rather incongruous resort. After rounding up the birders, led astray by Vianet, we left a bit later than planned to go on another monkey search. We did manage to get much better views of the Talapoins in mangroves (very hard to get pictures though), and walked into the forest again where we had even better views of these monkeys. We heard Red-capped Mangabeys but as the light was fading we didn't get to see them. Stuart saw a climbing mouse with his heat scope, possibly another *Hylomys*. When we neared the dock we all had good views of a flying fox foraging close by and landing on occasion. I believe it was an Angola Fruit Bat. We got back late to the Tropicana for another uninspired meal.

August 19

We got up at 5 a.m. to head to Akanda and try for manatee, but had no luck. Still, it was an enjoyable morning on Nende Island where we ate breakfast and searched for wildlife on the bank and in the water. We had a late lunch back at Hotel Tropicana before heading to the train station. The train left just an hour late, which in retrospect was one of the more punctual departures of the trip. It was quite civilized, with reclining seats, and the world's slowest dinner service. We waited 3 hours for fish and chips, and nearly 4 hours for a green salad! I guess they were growing lettuce on board. We finally arrived at Lope at 2:30 a.m. and made it to our rooms at about 3:30.



Gray-cheeked Mangabey, Cheryl Antonucci

August 20

We all managed to drag ourselves out of bed for a 7 a.m. breakfast, but the staff declined to appear until 7:30... we all could have used a bit more sleep! At Lope we divided into groups of 3 that were to go out with David Lehmann to look for radio-collared Mandrills, with the rest of the group going on safari. Laura, Joanna and Luc set off for Mandrills, while the rest of us were lucky enough to see a distant group of Chimpanzees crossing the savannah. I got them in my spotting scope so the distant views were not too bad. The Lope Safari vehicle took us into the park where the highlights were 3 primate species: Putty-nosed and Moustached Monkeys, and Gray-cheeked Mangabeys. We also located a couple of squirrels, which we identified as Green and Red-footed Sun Squirrels. We returned for a late lunch and nice views of the colony of Peter's Dwarf Epauletted Fruit Bats in the dining room. The bats appear to have been banned from the cabins by netting, but at least are still allowed in the middle area of the dining room. Around mid-afternoon the Mandrill team returned. They had seen Mandrills but had walked a long way to avoid being trampled by Forest Elephants!

Our afternoon outing was sabotaged as the driver decided to take other guests in the one and only safari vehicle. I took the group down to the river to record bats emerging at dusk, which was very peaceful but not as exciting as the promised safari. We were able to add Little Wrinkle-lipped Bat to our list as these were both seen and recorded. An additional 5 species were identified by my detector, but the IDs were not reliable, given that the bat library was for southern Africa. After dinner we had a night drive in place of our missed afternoon safari. Some of us saw a Servaline Genet, but not everyone was able to spot it. We saw a Forest Elephant through the heat scope, too far for our spotlights. Buffalo were seen, and several Bushbuck came close to the bus, giving us great views. A bird highlight was a sleeping Finfoot.



Red River Hog, Stuart Chapman

August 21

It was my turn to see Mandrills. I went with Cheryl, Keith and another hotel guest. We had a fantastic time, getting close views of a large group (about 500) including two adult males. The coloration of wild males, even when seen through small gaps between trees, was quite remarkable. We were lucky also in seeing two younger males that stopped and turned to look at us. It was fun to go out with David Lehmann and learn about forest ecology and his work on the Mandrills. We saw the three smaller monkey species as seen the previous day, but the Putty-nosed Monkeys kept eluding me. Cheryl saw a large bat flying into a hollow tree. I got a brief look, but there were swarms of army ants around and in the tree so it was quite hard to approach. It was a Cyclops Round-leaf Bat. The other group went into Lope where they saw Crowned Monkey, Black Colobus and a Green Squirrel.

After a late lunch we went on a 5 p.m. safari which was our best to date. We started with excellent views of the lovely Moustached Monkeys in the village, followed by several groups of Putty-nosed and Moustached monkeys feeding in *Ceiba* trees. I finally got my Putty-nosed. *Ceiba pentandra* trees are native to Central America, and Vianet said they were native here too (Wikipedia concurs). Certainly the buds are very important food sources for many monkey species.

We stopped at sunset to watch one of the controlled burns. It seems strange that these still occur, as the open savannah does not house large numbers of game, whereas the forest is very productive for wildlife. However the driver told us it helps them spot elephants and buffalo with tourist groups. Hmm. After dark we spotted an African Palm Civet, which was a real score for Steve and me after missing it in Ghana. Later Vianet spotted a Franquet's Fruit Bat eating fruit. We also recorded Dwarf Crocodiles in the river, a distant Servaline Genet and several buffalo and elephants. Our best sighting was 3 Blue Duikers seen in forest close to the road. We returned for a 10 p.m. dinner. Meals at Lope were slow but pretty good. It was just a pity that they took some evil pleasure in keeping us waiting then serving the food stone cold.



Young male Mandrill, Cheryl Antonucci



Moustached Monkey, Cheryl Antonucci

August 22



Large-eared Slit-faced Bat, Fiona Reid

The third group took off with David for Mandrills, while the rest of us returned to Lope for a morning drive. We saw a Marsh Mongoose dash across the road, a brief but good sighting. We took a long walk in the forest which was not very productive for mammals. We glimpsed some largish monkeys, possibly Black Colobus, but did not get a good enough look. There were mixed feeding flocks of birds around, including the stunning Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills. I found a pair of slit-faced bats in a hollow fallen tree. Based on later examination of photos and my size estimate at the time, they appear to be *Nycteris macrotis*. On our way back to the truck, we all relaxed a bit after being on high alert and very quiet in the forest. This was unfortunate as there was a Bay Duiker in the road in front of us. It startled and ran off, so not everyone saw this brightly colored animal. We met up later with the Mandrill group who had not only seen mandrills, but also had extremely close views of Red River Hog. Deb took great pride at showing her video and making the rest of us very jealous.



Franquet's Singing Bat, left, Peter's Dwarf Epauletted fruit Bat, below, Cheryl Antonucci



In the afternoon we went out for a late safari drive which was productive. We had great views of Forest Elephants, seeing two groups both consisting of a mother with a large and a smaller offspring. It was a bit disturbing to see other vehicles leave the road and drive as close as possible to the elephants, although the animals seemed unconcerned. After a pause at another controlled burn, we headed on. I saw a small tree that looked like it was full of Christmas lights – bats' eyes! About 12 Peter's Dwarf Epauletted Fruit Bats were in the tree, but only a couple could be seen easily. Deb, Cheryl, and I got out for photos, but Deb slid under the bush. Cheryl and I ignored her until we finished taking pictures. The generous heart of the mammal-watcher! Soon after, an African Wood Owl posed dramatically close to the vehicle. We got out for a short and illicit walk (all night walks had been banned in Lope and Mikongo) along a forested road in search of galagos. We succeeded, and all had excellent views of an unusually cooperative Demidoff's Galago. As we headed back to the vehicle, a potto was seen, so all attention was put on this new species for many, a Milne-Edward's Potto. It had a white belly, unlike the subspecies I had seen in Ghana. We headed back for another late dinner, seeing a few Buffalo along the road.





Demidoff's Galago, Cheryl Antonucci

August 23

We decided to check out the bat cave that Jon Hall's group had seen, and all ten of us squeezed into a small car for the short ride. It was a long walk uphill to the cave, but well worth it. Large numbers of Egyptian Rousettes were seen hanging and in flight around a beautiful rock structure. After a late lunch and a very nice cake to celebrate Laura's birthday, we headed to Mikongo. Along the way we stopped for Putty-nosed and Moustached Monkeys. Ahead of us, one of our cars had stopped and was indicating that we should stay put. The suspense was too much so we tried to walk quietly up to the parked car. They had been watching a Leopard that had crossed the road then lay down on the bank next to them. Amazingly, it moved off into cover, but remained very close by so that everyone was able to see it. I

heard some African Gray Parrots that we had seen flying over us on our way to the bat cave, and this time they perched, allowing a very good view, much enjoyed by Deb in particular.



Egyptian Rousettes, Cheryl Antonucci

Leopard, Stuart Chapman



As we approached Mikongo it started to rain and turned into a downpour. Fortunately, the tents had been set up for us and we managed to get settled without soaking all our gear. Dinner was late and the rain persisted, so we had no outing. We were all pleasantly surprised by the OK food, great supply of fruit, and even bottles of rum and gin to enjoy.

August 24

In the morning we were rapidly divided into groups for gorilla tracking or Black Colobus watching. Cheryl, Keith and I were part of the latter group, led by Alex, who spoke no English. This meant we had to manage with my horrible French. We did see several groups of Black Colobus, along with three other species of monkey we had seen earlier. We saw a Red-footed Sun Squirrel and a brief view of Ogilvy's Duiker. The gorilla trackers returned after a long hike, having seen Crowned Monkey, various squirrels and two snakes. They were impressed with Gislán's tracking skills and guiding.



Beecroft's Anomalure, Fiona Reid



Cyclops Round-leaf Bat, Fiona Reid

As we were not allowed to walk in the forest at night, Vianet had arranged for us to walk around the electrified fence surrounding the village. We only had one vehicle, so we had to divide into two groups and take two shorter walks. This was annoying but did at least allow us to do some night-walking. Stuart kindly allowed the other group to use his thermal scope, which was extremely useful on these walks. The first group saw a hammer bat with a baby, a potto, and two Lord Derby's Anomalure. I was with the second group. Our first sightings were of Lord Derby's Anomalure. One animal went to the end of a branch and flew off – it was amazing to watch. We saw a couple of Demidoff's Galagos bouncing like popcorn in the undergrowth. On the way back we spotted a Beecroft's Anomalure which posed nicely, leaning over a branch to reveal its deep orange throat. Near the exit we spied a bat twirling on the bottom of a thin vine. On close inspection it was a Cyclops Round-leaf Bat that was flycatching from this

perch. I heard Hammer Bats making their pinging call nearby, so I asked if I could go look for them. I got no reply from Gislán or Vianet so I took that as a yes. I located a nice adult male, calling as part of a larger lek. Everyone had a good look at this impressive bat. On the way home we had great looks at a Water Chevrotain on the road, a great end to a good night.

August 25

One group left very early to drive out and look for Sun-tailed Guenon. They did not find this rare and local primate, but did see Crowned Monkey (one I seemed doomed to miss). Their best sighting, though, was a Golden Cat, seen crossing the road in front of them. This was down in the area past where the logging had started, in the buffer zone of the national park. It was in the process of crossing the road, stopped as the car came round a corner, looked at the car, then walked straight into heavy brush. Sadly not everyone in the vehicle saw this very rare species, as they were craning out of the windows trying to see monkeys in the canopy. It was seen well by Cheryl, Deb and the driver. A zebra mouse was also seen by the group and later identified to species based on photos.



Typical Striped Grass Mouse, Cheryl Antonucci

The gorilla tracking group set out a bit later. We saw a lot of Black Colobus and the other common monkey species. We also saw a striped squirrel which we later determined to be Lady Burton's Rope Squirrel. Gislán showed us tracks of young gorillas and was sure they were close by. Eventually we approached an adult male Western Gorilla, which was straddling a tree. We had great views, a first for most of us. Gislán suggested we not bother the rest of the group as it contained several infants and he did not want to stress the mothers. We agreed, privileged to have seen a wild, unhabituated animal. As we started to head back, Gislán found a pangolin scale on the trail. He was quite angry, saying that chimps must have killed the animal which they do by beating it with sticks. He mentioned he knew of a spot under rocks where a pangolin had been seen a week earlier. We immediately agreed to another 2-

hour walk to this location. Arriving at a sheer rock face, we scrambled around and were shown the spot that the pangolin had used. Despite searching every crevice, Gislán could not locate the animal. The walk was worthwhile, though, as we had excellent views of a lovely Yellow-backed Duiker. On our long walk back we also had close looks at Forest Elephants and troops of monkeys.



African Palm Civet, Cheryl Antonucci

Once again we divided into two groups to walk the electric fence line. I went with the first group. We walked in the reverse direction of the previous night, into more secondary forest. We saw a couple of Demidoff's Galago, a very distant genet, and several hammer bats. On our way back we found a Lord Derby's Anomalure and a Milne-Edward's Potto. It was our last night in Mikongo and I was feeling pretty desperate to see the Large-eared Flying Mouse, so I stayed on to walk with the second group. Our first new sighting was a Thomas' Galago, very high in the canopy. We also recorded sleeping Putty-nosed Monkeys, a distant Lord Derby's Anomalure, and some of the group saw a large black snake pursuing a mouse through the trees. I missed this. We had very good views of two African Palm Civets, and another potto. On our drive home we watched a Bushbuck cross the road, and were later blocked by a gray wall of 5 Forest Elephants.

Stuart and Deb had been setting traps without success, but as I had seen a couple of mice scampering around my mosquito net, I had set a trap and noticed I had already caught an animal when we returned. The mouse got even with me by scabbling against metal all night until I finally evicted it to the porch.

August 26

We examined the mouse and concluded it was the same species as recorded by Jon Hall, Walter Verheyen's Wood Mouse (aka granola bar thief). I was mortified to learn that the early fence-walkers had seen the Long-eared Flying Mouse right around the cabins when they returned.

One group set off very early to look for Sun-tailed Guenons. They located the guenons in the same buffer zone area where the Golden Cat had been seen. One was on one side of the road and 4 on the other side. They were very skittish and the group had brief views of them. The logging concession HQ said the monkeys had been hanging out the day before near their office. The group also saw a DOR White-bellied Pangolin on their way back to Lope. It had been hit by a car.

The rest of us left camp at 9 a.m. to head back to Lope. The drive back was uneventful, aside from a pair of Slender Mongoose crossing the road. On arrival at Lope Hotel, we had 3 rooms for the 8 of us, at least allowing a chance to charge batteries and have a shower.

After lunch we headed out on the safari vehicle for an afternoon drive. This seemed like a nice time-killer before the night train, but actually turned out to be one of our best drives. We saw the usual monkeys feeding on cecropia buds, but then Vianet spotted a distant group of Red River Hogs. Very exciting, as many of us had not seen this iconic species. But they were distant. However, just before dusk, another much closer group was encountered – around 50 or more animals – that paused, looked at us, and crossed the road in small groups. A large male was the last to go, showing his incredible ear tufts and brightly patterned fur. With Buffalo in the background and a setting sun, it was fabulous.

We had dinner at the Lope Hotel and then had to hustle to the train station as a report came that the train would be arriving early, by 11 p.m. This seemed to be a malicious report as the train eventually arrived at 1:15 a.m., after the station's mosquitoes had drained us all of blood. While waiting watched one bat foraging at a station light, but were not able to identify it beyond family (Vespertilionidae). Some very loud frogs also kept our attention. Unfortunately, Vianet had not been able to buy the requisite 10 tickets, and we had only 5 seats. Half of the group had to stay in the dining car, which was very uncomfortable.



Red River Hogs, Cheryl Antonucci

August 27

We got to Njole at 4:30 a.m. and eventually transferred to cars for the 2-hour drive to Lambarene. Here we had breakfast at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital, set in nice grounds by a lake. We saw some Green

and Red-legged Sun Squirrels. The boats coming to pick us up were late, and getting to them involved hauling our luggage some distance over soft sand. We finally set off in two boats to Tsam Tsam, with several stops en route. We saw a few Red-capped Mangabeys along the way, and a huge raptor being chased by a smaller raptor. Keith later identified the large bird as a Crowned Eagle – a rare and hard to see species. Tsam Tsam is set on the edge of a lake and has well-designed platforms for tents, each with a shower area and a bucket of water (no plumbing), along with a communal dining and relaxing area. Most of us were disappointed with the very repetitive food and foul-smelling salt-fish, but at least the place looked nice. We recovered a bit after lunch, having had virtually no sleep, and set out by boat at 4:30 p.m. We didn't see any mammals but enjoyed Pel's Fishing Owl, Ornate Monitor Lizard and various water birds. There was a bit of a misunderstanding about our return time, and the driver (who turned out to be co-owner) seemed quite angry when I asked for the boat to continue until dinner was actually ready. We saw eyeshine and he revved the boat at it, scaring the animal so we were not able to get an ID. Keith also spotted a genet on the far bank, but it too was scared off by the revving boat. After dinner, which bore a strong resemblance to lunch, we went out for a night walk with Cyrille. It was a very long and unproductive outing – we saw eyeshine of a duiker but did not get close enough to see it well. We stumbled back into camp at 11:30, happy the tents were equipped with pillows.



Red-capped Mangabeys, Cheryl Antonucci

August 28

We got off to a slow start, eventually boating over to an area where manatee activity had been reported. We saw bubble trails in two different areas which seemed promising. Long, hot waits ensued, but no manatees appeared. We saw various water birds including Hartlaub's Ducks, but no monkeys. Stuart and Deb had caught a mouse, which appeared to be one of the soft-furred mouse species. We took measurements and released it.

Soon after lunch, Red-capped Mangabeys were seen on the beach opposite the lodge. They forage in the water for shellfish and often walk on their hind legs.

In the late afternoon we returned to the manatee area. The bubbles seemed to coincide with boat movement and I became skeptical about the presence of manatee.

After dinner we had a boat trip where we saw Vermiculated Fishing Owl and African Palm Civet, along with various sleeping cormorants and ducks. As we were not allowed to walk (we had been told that morning that no night walks were permitted), we tried a compromise approach of letting two people out, with thermal scope, but the ground was thick with leaf litter so their movements were too noisy, and this was only attempted once.

Lord Derby's Anomalure (?), Cheryl Antonucci



August 29

Stuart and Deb caught 4 mice in 4 traps. One was much smaller than the others, but I think it was a juvenile of the same species, and similar to the one caught the previous night. Cyrille took us for a long hike after breakfast. We went through a decent patch of forest, where I found an anomalure in a hollow tree. It graciously came out and perched on the side of the tree, then later moved to another tree trunk. It seemed fairly small, with a brown back and a whitish belly, unlike Beecroft's Anomalure. I thought at the time it was probably a Lesser Anomalure, but it had a very distinct black facial mask. On later examination of photos, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was a subadult Lord Derby's Anomalure. We also found a slit-faced bat in a fallen hollow tree. I was not able to identify it to species as we did not get photos. Putty-nosed Monkeys and Red-capped Mangabeys were also seen. A highlight toward the end of the walk, after more forest, some second growth and open savannah, was the Central African Slender-snouted Crocodile (*Mecistops*

leptorhynchus). We saw the eyes and nostrils of one, then the entire body of a second animal. Only about 500 individuals of this rare species remain. Just before reaching camp, we passed an area of Giant Pangolin activity. It was very frustrating as we had been told we could not walk at night. Cyrille also informed me we had used too much gas for the boat and could not do more than one more trip. I proposed that we take a short late-afternoon boat trip and a short after-dinner walk to the pangolin area. He reluctantly agreed. Unfortunately, neither outing brought much of interest, aside from a very spiky grasshopper and a scorpion.

August 30

We left Tsam Tsam after breakfast, with stops en route for Red-capped Mangabeys eating Ceiba, and two hippos that were very shy. A second group of 4-5 hippos were a little easier to watch. They are



hunted for meat and quite wary as a result. In Lambarene we hauled bags up to the side of the garbage-strewn road and waited. And waited. There was no sign of the cars that were supposed to meet us. Vianet kindly sent us all to the Schweitzer Hospital, where we had an OK lunch and were able to relax. I found a group of 17 Hammer-headed Bats, including moms with babies and some mature males. It was fun to watch them in daylight and kept us all occupied for about one of the 5 hours we waited for transportation. Eventually Vianet showed up with all our bags and a tiny van. We squeezed in and made our way back to Libreville, a long and crowded 5-hour drive with a stop at the equator. Thankfully the participants were all very amiable with each other and survived the crushed conditions. The Tropicana Hotel seemed quite luxurious after camping.

Hammer-headed Bats, Fiona Reid

August 31

We had booked a whale-watching trip and a lunch at an eco-resort in Pongara. Sadly, the boat was cancelled. One fishing boat had spots for 2 and in the end 3 people got on board. They had a viciously rough ride, seeing two Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins, and signs of a Humpback. Some of us headed into town to see about an afternoon whale trip, but our taxi was stopped by police. They attempted to haul Steve off to jail for not having his passport with him. It was worrying at first, but after Steve and I exhausted our bad-French arguing skills, Vianet appeared and laughingly chatted with the junior officer. Eventually I slipped him money from inside the car, and we escaped, paying a bribe that had been reduced from \$300 to about \$120. By that time it was too late to try for whales. After a late lunch, most of the group packed up for their evening departure.

September 1

Luc left in the morning. Vianet offered to take the remaining three of us to see a bat colony. He overslept, however, so we went to the local craft market, which was uninspiring.



September 2

Vianet arrived early to take us to the bat roost. It turned out to be a large colony of Straw-colored Flying Foxes, located in an area known as Batterie Quatre, about 10 minutes from the hotel. It was a pity that others had missed these lovely bats, but we enjoyed seeing them before departing. After that we were in the hands of Air Ethiopia for our long trips homeward.

Straw-colored Fruit Bats, Fiona Reid

Parting Thoughts

Gabon is a difficult country to run a trip. I have never had so many cancellations, late shows and messed up plans on a tour. I booked the trip direct with Vianet and it is hard to know how much of this would be improved had we used a local agency. Vianet is a good guide, although we found him sometimes quite moody and distracted. He knows his birds and mammals well, and this was the first time he had operated a trip, so he will no doubt improve. I felt that things might have gone a bit more smoothly had I not been a female leader. Jon Hall used a travel agent, whose info can be found on his report. I met another tour operator at Lope, Jannie Fourie, who is setting up wildlife camps in Gabon. I expect his tours will be more expensive (and Gabon is not a cheap country) but possibly a bit smoother (www.gabonwildlifecamps.com). Even the safari drivers are not well trained – in Lope we would be trying to watch a shy duiker and the driver's cell phone would ring loudly, which he answered and chatted loudly despite our protests. We enjoyed Lope, and loved Mikongo (Gislan was great there), although both would have been more productive had we been allowed to walk in the park at night. The walks around the electrified fence were pretty good, much aided by Stuart's thermal scope, a very important piece of gear for Gabon, but the logistics were complicated and made us lose time. Tsam Tsam was a bust for us, apart from Red-capped Mangabeys, which could probably be seen at Akanda with a bit more effort, and hippos, but nobody goes to Gabon for hippos.

Gabon has a lot of stellar wildlife, but it is not an easy country, and we had the feeling that much of the wildlife is suffering from hunting pressure. Even in parks the monkeys were very shy. Nonetheless, we all saw a great diversity of mammals including many of our "most wanted" species, some quite rare herps, and several excellent and hard to see birds. Our bird list was 150 and details can be found here:

Mammal List

1. Red-legged Sun Squirrel, *Heliosciurus rufobrachium*
2. Forest Giant Squirrel, *Protoxerus stangeri*
3. Biafran Bight Palm Squirrel, *Epixerus wilsoni*
4. Green Bush Squirrel, *Paraxerus poensis*
5. Lady Burton's Rope Squirrel, *Funisciurus isabella*
6. Typical Striped Grass Mouse, *Lemniscomys striatus*
7. Walter Verheyen's Wood Mouse, *Hylomyscus walterverheyen*
8. Missone's Soft-furred Mouse, *Praomys misonnei*
9. Beecroft's Anomalure, *Anomalurus beecrofti*
10. Lord Derby's Anomalure, *Anomalurus derbianus*
11. Long-eared Flying Mouse, *Idiurus macrotis*
12. African Palm Civet, *Nandinia binotata*
13. Leopard, *Panthera pardus*
14. Golden Cat, *Felis aurata*
15. Marsh Mongoose, *Atilax paludinosus*
16. Slender-tailed Mongoose, *Herpestes sanguinea*
17. Straw-colored Fruit Bat, *Eidolon helvum*
18. Egyptian Rousette, *Rousettus aegyptiacus*
19. Angola Fruit Bat, *Lissonycteris angolensis*
20. Hammer-headed Fruit Bat, *Hypsignathus monstrosus*
21. Franquet's Singing Fruit Bat, *Epomops franqueti*
22. Peters' Dwarf Epauletted Fruit Bat, *Micropteropus pusillus*
23. Cyclops Roundleaf Bat, *Hipposideros cyclops*
24. Large-eared Slit-faced Bat *Nycteris macrotis* (and another *Nycteris* sp)
25. Little Wrinkle-lipped Bat *Chaerophon pumilus*
26. Milne-Edwards's Potto, *Perodicticus edwardsi*
27. Demidoff's Galago, *Galagoides demidoff*
28. Thomas' Galago, *Galagoides thomasi*
29. Black Colobus, *Colobus satanas*
30. Mandrill, *Mandrillus sphinx*
31. Red-capped Mangabey, *Cercocebus torquatus*
32. Grey-cheeked Mangabey, *Lophocebus albigena*
33. Moustached Monkey, *Cercopithecus cephus*
34. Greater Spot-nosed (Putty-nosed) Monkey, *Cercopithecus nictitans*
35. Crowned Monkey, *Cercopithecus pogonias*
36. Sun-tailed Monkey, *Cercopithecus solatus*
37. Northern Talapoin, *Miopithecus ogouensis*
38. Chimpanzee, *Pan troglodytes*
39. Western Gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla*
40. Red River Hog, *Potamochoerus porcus*
41. Hippopotamus, *Hippopotamus amphibius*
42. Water Chevrotain, *Hyemoschus aquaticus*
43. African (Forest) Buffalo, *Syncerus caffer*
44. Bushbuck, *Tragelaphus scriptus*
45. Sitatunga, *Tragelaphus spekii*
46. Bay Duiker, *Cephalophus dorsalis*

47. Peters' Duiker, *Cephalophus callipygus*
48. Blue Duiker, *Philantomba monticola*
49. Ogilby's Duiker, *Cephalophus ogilbyi*
50. Yellow-backed Duiker, *Cephalophus silvicultor*
51. African Forest Elephant, *Loxodonta cyclotis*
52. Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*