

CBPP & CAMBIO

Impact Report 2024

Safeguarding Biodiversity in the Mbam & Djerem National Park Landscape



Introduction

Since 2016, the **Cameroon Biodiversity Protection Program (CBPP)** and the **Cameroon Biodiversity Alliance (CAMBIO)** have partnered to safeguard the extraordinary biodiversity of the **Mbam & Djerem National Park (MDNP)**.

Through a model that integrates **science, education, protection, and cultural engagement**, the partnership has transformed Gangah and Mbakaou into hubs of innovation—advancing global science while uplifting local communities.

1. Scientific Research & Monitoring at Gangah

The Gangah Research Station, established in 2016, is the first permanent research hub in northern MDNP. A decade of continuous monitoring has generated one of the richest datasets on Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*) and secured Gangah as a global reference point for conservation.

Highlights for 2024

- **1,236 km of forest surveyed;** >4,000 km since inception.
- **980 nests recorded** in 2024 (5,500+ nests since 2016), representing ~75 individuals across 8 groups.
- **69 termite-fishing tools** recovered in 2024; >300 tools catalogued since monitoring began.
- **104 fecal samples collected** for dietary, genetic, and health analysis.
- Anti-poaching patrols: **17 traps deactivated, 14 poacher camps and 12 fishing camps destroyed**, illegal nets seized.
- **Zero human activity recorded** inside the Gangah core zone in 2024—a testament to deterrence.

Scientific Impact

- **Culture & Behavior:** First detailed evidence of cultural variation in termite fishing among *Pan t. ellioti* (Andres-Bray et al., 2025).
- **Ecology & Adaptation:** Studies link habitat quality to tool use patterns (Andres-Bray et al., 2024).
- **Population Monitoring:** Established nest decay benchmarks for reliable abundance estimates (Kamgang et al., 2020).
- **Dietary Ecology:** Revealed diverse foraging strategies across a forest–savanna mosaic (Abwe et al., 2020).
- **Human–Wildlife Dynamics:** Documented local community–chimpanzee interactions to inform conflict mitigation (Kamgang et al., 2021).
- **Health & Genetics:** Confirmed *P. t. ellioti* is free of SIVcpz (Locatelli et al., 2016) and mapped genetic structure tied to rivers and climate vulnerability (Mitchell et al., 2015; Sesink Clee et al., 2015).
- **Global Policy Influence:** Data fed directly into the IUCN Regional Action Plan for Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzees (Morgan et al., 2011).

Mentorship & Legacy

Through its leadership and mentorship, **CBPP-CAMBIO has not only safeguarded one of the last strongholds of the Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee but also trained the next generation of conservation scientists** (4 PhDs, 3 MS, and counting). The long-term nesting dataset—spanning a decade and now complemented by genomic and ecological studies—has become a cornerstone for both **global science and local conservation policy**.

2. Environmental Education & Youth Empowerment

The **Mbakaou Wildlife Education Center (MVEC)**, founded in 2020, is the beating heart of conservation outreach.

Highlights for 2024

- **150+ children** attend weekly classes
- **6 schools visited weekly**, embedding biodiversity into curricula.
- **1,800 students** engaged during Youth Day celebrations.
- **150 school kits** and **15 books** distributed to exam classes.

Other Highlights

- Publication of **“The Adventures of Aiya and André”**, a children’s book introducing conservation to young readers.
- Creation of a **conservation comic book**, distributed in schools and MVEC.
- **International Women’s Day**: 40+ women trained in pastry-making and mobilized in marches for biodiversity.
- **Christmas Biodiversity Celebration**: 140+ participants; 130 children received conservation-themed gifts.
- Granted land to build an **agricultural livelihood project** and **expanded MVEC facility**.

3. Cultural Engagement & Community Participation

Conservation is woven into local culture through football, festivals, and arts.

Highlights for 2024

- **500+ people daily** at Conservation Football Tournament.
- **8 village teams** (Mbakaou, Naskoul, Djaouro-Kombo, Carrière, Aviation) competing under conservation slogans.

Other Highlights

- Slogans like *“Our Biodiversity, My Fight”* and *“Conservation, a Collective Challenge”* now rally youth.
- Cultural evenings with **songs, plays, poetry, and Miss Conservation contests** drew parents, elders, and leaders.
- Women and girls trained in soap-making, pastry, and handicrafts—new income streams that reduce reliance on park resources.

4. Local Employment & Professional Training

CBPP–CAMBIO creates jobs and builds conservation capacity.

- **25–30 residents employed annually** as eco-guards, guides, and educators.
- **Dozens trained** in biomonitoring, camera traps, and anti-poaching.
- Alumni advancing conservation across Cameroon and beyond: **Olivia Manezeu, Yannick Djouguela, Fabrice Kentatchime, Alvine Dadjo**, and others.

5. Conservation Outcomes & Policy Influence

- **Stabilized chimpanzee populations** in a historically poaching-prone zone.
- **Community transformation:** measurable gains in biodiversity knowledge and pro-conservation attitudes.
- **Policy engagement:** CBPP–CAMBIO data inform MINFOF's MDNP management committee.
- **Global recognition:** Publications in Nature, PNAS, American Journal of Primatology, Ecology & Evolution, and contributions to IUCN Red List assessments.

Conclusion & Looking Ahead

CBPP and CAMBIO have built a conservation model that is **scientifically rigorous, culturally resonant, and community-driven**. Together, they have:

- Monitored thousands of chimpanzee nests and stabilized populations.
- Reached thousands of children and families through education and cultural engagement.
- Reduced poaching and illegal fishing in MDNP.
- Launched careers of young conservation professionals.

Our vision

- Expand MWEK to accommodate growing demand.
- Scale education to additional villages.
- Integrate genomics, drones, and acoustic sensors into monitoring.
- Secure long-term financing to sustain and grow this impact for generations to come.

Gangah's Legacy:

Once a little-known site, Gangah is now a **globally significant conservation and research hub**. Its long-term datasets on the Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee advance theories of primate culture, adaptation, and conservation, while shaping international monitoring protocols and conservation policy.