

PINSELLY CLASSIFIED FOREST, GUINEA, WEST AFRICA

25/11/2015; Adam J. & O. B. Barry

Some words about Guinea. It is country in West Africa. Southern end of the country lies within the Guinean Forest of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot; there are closed canopy rainforests and dramatic mountain ridges. Most of the country characterized by woodlands; however northern part of the country characterized by dry savanna.

Notable strongholds of wildlife are Pinselly Classified Forest, National Park of Upper Niger, Ziama Massiff Classified Forest, Diécké Classified Forest, and Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve UNESCO World Heritage Site. Guinea has diverse flora and fauna, but you need to travel far away from urban areas to enjoy rich wildlife. Important national parks and reserves are also far away from human settlements. You need to contact Guinean Park Foundation (info@guineanpark.org), if you want to visit protected areas.

Pinselly Classified Forest belongs to Ouré-Kaba city. Important to note, that it is approx. 7 hours away from Conakry, thus it is the closest reserve to the capital, if you want to see real rainforest wildlife. The protected area characterized by dry montane forest, tall-grassed savanna patches on the hilltops, and dense vegetation with giant trees in the moist valleys. According to data, it is a home of forest elephants, hippopotamuses, Western chimpanzees, large variety of primates and ungulates.

Unfortunately, we were able to spend only two hours there, because we had to return to Conakry (we sleep in Mamou before day). We met with two guiders in Ouré-Kaba, then go into the forest. Temperature surprisingly low in early hours (10-12 degree C), there are foggy valleys in the morning, but temperature increasing rapidly (35 degree C, by midday). This is because of the Fouta Djallon Mountains and high elevation. We walk approx. 15 minutes, and we met with a large group of Diana monkeys. We heard their alarm signal, then they gone away quickly. We saw some "flying" monkeys in the canopy, it was funny. We saw also many footprints and spoor of small ungulates around fruit trees. In fact, monkeys afraid of human, therefore you need to walk through the forest silently. We met with monkeys in every 10-15 minutes, but we heard their alarm signals in some cases. It is a good way to sit down and wait silently close to a big fruit tree. We saw western chimpanzees once, and we found chimpanzee nests twice. Unfortunately, I have a Canon SX500 IS, it was small to take good photos in the dense forest. If you want to make quality animal photos, you need a DSLR camera with zoom lens (200mm or higher). After two hours and a great round, we turned back to the car.

It was a great rainforest experience; despite we did not see elephants. I keep, you will be able to see more rainforest animals if you stay longer (one or two days). Pinselly Classified Forest is very beautiful, you can experience a real rainforest, and in addition it is only 7 hours away from Conakry or 1 hour away from Mamou. N1 national road has generally good condition.

Some recommendations in case of visit Pinselly Classified Forest or other protected areas in Guinea:

1. Best time to mammal watching is the dry season from November to April
2. Best wear in the rainforest: trousers (because of prickly shrub), strong shoes or boots
3. Best photo equipment: DSLR camera with zoom lens (200mm or higher)
4. Best chance to see animals: at permanent water sources, forest clearances, fruit trees
5. Best chance to see primates: around fruit trees

OBSERVED MAMMALS, PINSELLY CLASSIFIED FOREST		
Common name	Scientific name	Frequency (2 hours visit)
Diana monkey	<i>Cercopithecus diana</i>	frequent
Western chimpanzee	<i>Pan troglodytes verus</i>	common
Patas monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	rare
Lesser spot-nosed monkey	<i>Cercopithecus petaurista</i>	rare
Duiker sp.	<i>Cephalophus sp.</i>	common



Open canopy dry forest



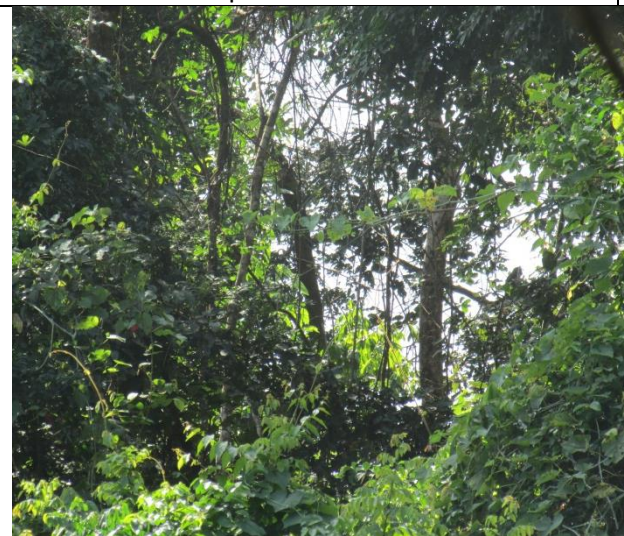
Closed canopy moist forest



Hilltop wooded savanna



Western chimpanzee's nest



Diana monkey



Village close to the forest