



## **Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea**

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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For the winter of 2014/2015 Lindsay and I volunteered for the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program on Bioko. We monitored nesting sea turtles and did primate surveys. We lived in a remote field camp, Moraka, for the majority of the time. We were able to spend about a week in Moka, 3 days in Moaba, and a 5 day trip to the Gran Caldera de Luba. The other place on the island that would be great for mammal watching is Pico Basilé. Bioko should be visited between mid December and mid March 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.

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. I'm not sure how this is done, and it can take a few days to weeks. The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program occasionally takes on "temporary volunteers" during their field season and can advise on how to plan a trip.

<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. 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. Those are the times that end of season volunteers with mid-sized packs could do.





Moaba has several large waterfalls and easier access to bat caves. Primate numbers are lower in this area, however it is easier to see Drills. Porcupines are also much more common here than Moraka. Moaba sees far more tourists. They had people stopping through every weekend. Moraka had 4 sets of tourists all season.









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. 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.



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.

I know little of Pico Basilé, but it does have primates, including Preuss's. Access is difficult, with no over night stays, but possible.

Straw-colored Fruit Bats can be seen overhead at night or roosting in many trees around Malabo.



## Mammals

**Western Tree Hyrax** (*Dendrohyrax dorsalis*) Heard often, but harder to find, I only saw 7 in 5 months.. I was only able to follow one to its call, and it was 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.



**Bioko Putty-nosed Monkey** (*Cercopithecus nictitans martini*) Difficult to find around Moraka and Moaba. I only had a total of 7 sightings. Try walking west from the Badja just out of earshot of the coast.

**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 January through March to take advantage of the breadfruit trees. 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 Rivers. I did not see them within 1 or 2 km sea level until the dry season.

**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.

**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 basillii*) 1 trapped near Moka.





**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 one 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.



**Cameroon Scaly-tail** (*Zenkerella insignis*) I only saw one, which we spot lit near Hormigas Camp. It stayed still, and only moved once.

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

**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.





**Lander's Horseshoe Bat** (*Rhinolophus landeri*) 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 this 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.





**African Linsang** (*Poiana richardsonii*) I had 4 sightings. 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. We saw one on a night walk at Moka and the last one along the trail between the Ole and the Tope Tomo coming back from turtle shift at around 2 am.

Jack Dudding©



**Ogilby's Duiker** (*Cephalophus ogilbyi*) Normally I saw them during the day. I don't think I ever saw one at night. I had a least 10 sightings, mostly late in the season near Moraka.

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

## UnIDed

***Hipposideros* sp** There were two caves that contained this genus. One is near a waterfall near Moaba. The other is off of the Badja 2k transect. You need ropes to enter that one, so I never did.



**Dolphin sp** Pod of 15ish observed off of Moaba in December.

**Whale sp** What appeared to be three small baleen whales observed off Moraka in October.

**Egyptian Rousettes** There is a open cave roost over water near Moaba, I think it was this species. I could not get close due to dangerous wave conditions.

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



**Eisentraut's Mouse Shrew (*Myosorex eisentrautii*)** I can only find reference to two species of shrews in the literature from Bioko Island. There was a shrew in a Sherman Trap in the Caldera that was definitely not *Crocidura*, so this shrew was either Eisentraut's, or a species not yet reported from the island. It was at significantly lower elevation than Eisentraut's has been recorded from.



## What I missed

**Hammer Bat** This species night roosts over Moaba in the dry season.

**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.

**Long-tailed Musk Shrew** One was observed in a creek bed in the Caldera.

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



### Photo Credits

Jack Dudding: Bioko Red-eared Monkey, Pennant's Red Colobus, Central African Linsang, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bioko Allen's Galago.

Lindsay Gedacht: All scenery photos

Curtis Hart: All the rest.

Feel free to contact me with questions.

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