

Butynski, T.M. (2003) The chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes*: taxonomy, distribution, abundance, and conservation status. In: Kormos, R., Boesch, C., Bakarr, M.I., Butynski, T.M., eds, *West African Chimpanzees: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*. IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. pp. 5–12.

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For protected area and other data, see 'Using the maps'.

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This country profile draws extensively on the Guinea chapter from the IUCN/SSC *West African Chimpanzees: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*.¹² Many thanks to four anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on the draft of this section.

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REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU

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BACKGROUND AND ECONOMY

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau is one of the smallest countries on the Atlantic coast of West Africa, sandwiched between Senegal to the north and Guinea to the south and east. With an area of 36 125 km², it includes a number of small offshore islands – the Bijagos archipelago – that are separated from the mainland by wide intertidal mudflats. Guinea-Bissau's population, which includes about 20 ethnolinguistic groups, was approximately 2.4 million in 2004, and was growing at about 2 percent annually.³

After independence from Portugal in 1974, Guinea-Bissau established a one-party system and a centrally planned economy. A military coup in 1980 established a new system with a more pro-market stance, which won a mandate in the country's first elections in 1994, but there were repeated coup attempts through the 1980s and 1990s, one of which led to civil war in 1998. Intermittent fighting between Senegalese-backed government troops and a military junta destroyed much of the country's infrastructure and caused considerable damage to the economy. A brief return to democracy in 2000–2002 ended with another coup in September 2003 that installed the current government.

Like the other former Portuguese colonies that were abandoned to independence without much preparation in the mid-1970s (Angola,

Mozambique, and East Timor) the country suffered terribly, and is now deeply impoverished. It depends mainly on fishing and farming. Cashew nut production is increasing, and most foreign exchange comes from the export of fish and seafood along with relatively small amounts of peanuts, palm kernels, and timber. Rice is the major crop and staple food. Offshore oil reserves could provide much-needed revenue in the long run, but are currently unexploited.³

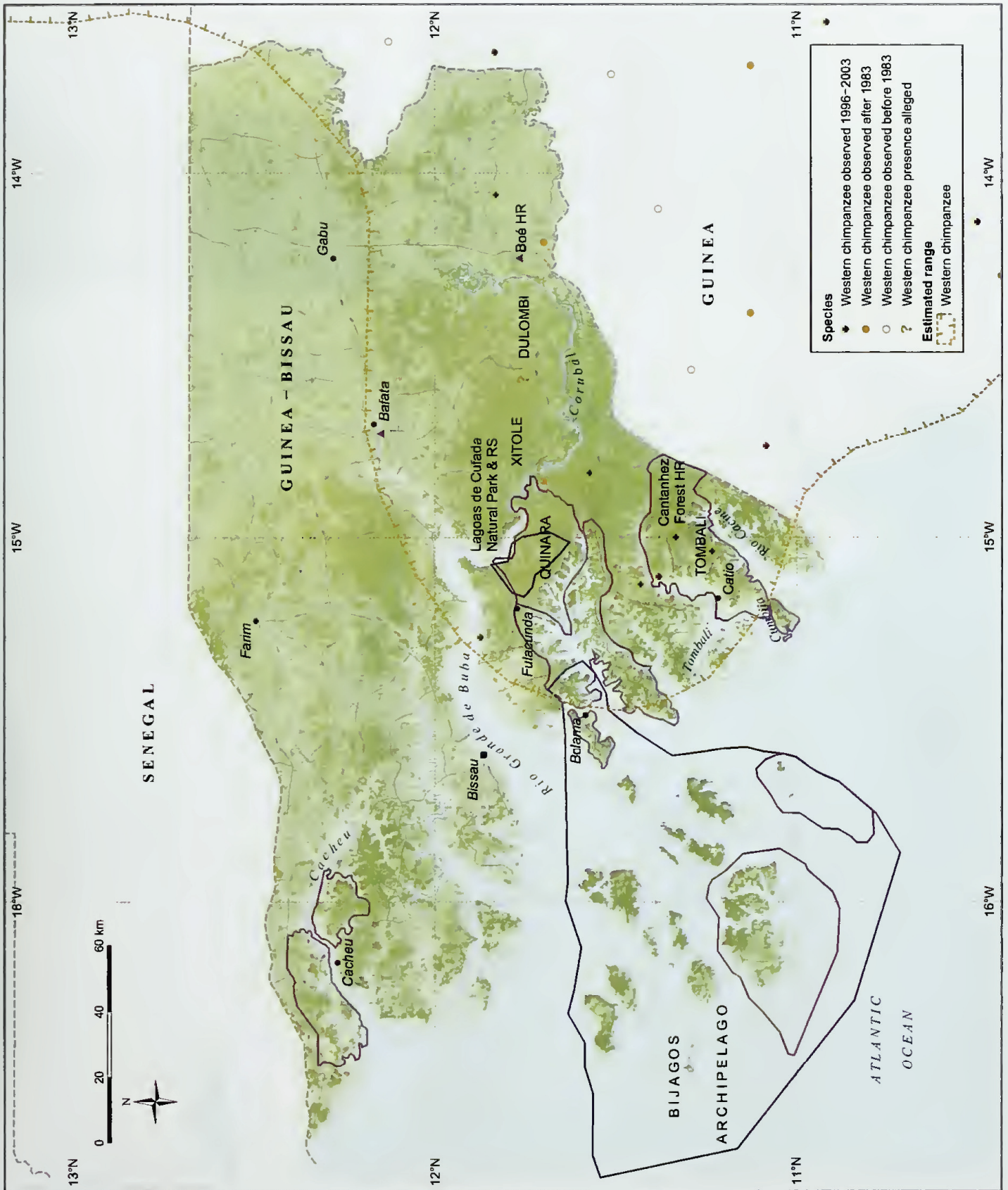
Sixty percent (21 870 km²) of Guinea-Bissau was forested in 2000, mainly with natural broadleaf humid or semidry forests. The country has the largest area of mangroves and coastal flats in Africa; originally 11 percent of the country was covered with mangroves.⁹

DISTRIBUTION OF GREAT APES

Guinea-Bissau has 11 species of wild primates, of which the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) is the only great ape.^{5, 13} Due to the very limited survey data, it is uncertain how many chimpanzees are found in Guinea-Bissau, but estimates range from 600 to 1 000 individuals.^{7, 8} Until 1989, chimpanzees were thought to be extinct in the country,¹¹ but they were confirmed to be present after a comprehensive wildlife inventory was undertaken by Guinea-Bissau's Direção General das Florestas e Caça (DGFC) and the Canadian Centre

Map 16.12 Chimpanzee distribution in Guinea-Bissau

Data sources are provided at the end of this country profile



Left: Mangroves in Lagoas de Cufada Natural Park.
Right: Forest destroyed for cultivation.



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for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) with financial support from IUCN–The World Conservation Union.¹² More recent studies suggested their presence in the region of Xitole (an area once proposed as a national park to the north of the Corubal River), the Lagoas de Cufada Natural Park (a Ramsar Site), the North Bank of Rio Grande de Buba, Cantanhez Forest Hunting Reserve, and the Cacine Basin.^{5, 6, 7, 8} The range is believed to extend through the country to the south of the Corubal River,⁸ specifically in the Boé sector, between the Corubal River and the Guinea border, and in the southeastern regions of Quinara and Tombali.^{7, 8}

THREATS

The major threat seems to be the destruction of chimpanzee habitat, especially primary forest.⁸ Between 1990 and 2000, an estimated 220 km² of forest was lost each year.⁴ Most land-use change within chimpanzee habitat is linked to local human population increase. Failure to take ecological constraints into account in the National Development Plan has also been identified as a leading factor.⁹ Pressures include timber exploitation, bushfires, clearing for agriculture, fruit farming, and clearing of mangroves for rice cultivation. This is most common in the Tombali and Quinara regions. The Cantanhez Forest Hunting Reserve (Tombali region) is becoming seriously fragmented by banana, cashew, and other plantations. Consequently, crop-raiding by chimpanzees has also increased.

Chimpanzees are not generally eaten in Guinea-Bissau as they are considered too similar to humans. The young are sometimes taken for the local pet trade and chimpanzee skins are used in traditional medicine.⁶ Accidental capture of chimpanzees in snares set for game animals such

as duikers and other forest ungulates is also a threat.⁶

LEGISLATION AND CONSERVATION ACTION

Guinea-Bissau has signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (1995), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1990), the Ramsar Convention (1991), and the Convention on Migratory Species (1995).

Chimpanzees are protected from hunting under Decree No. 21/1980. In addition, all hunting is prohibited in hunting reserves. Guinea-Bissau is still developing its protected area legislation.⁷ One protected area falls within the range of the western chimpanzee: Lagoas de Cufada Natural Park, which was officially declared in 2000 and covers an area of 890 km².² Since 1990, about 44 percent of this park has been internationally recognized as a Ramsar Site.² Possibly of much greater significance for the short-term survival of chimpanzees in Guinea-Bissau is the traditional protection afforded to them in most parts of the country by their perceived close resemblance to people.^{6, 8} In the Boé region they are thought to shelter the spirits of elders.⁸

FUTURE CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Overview

There is ample scope for chimpanzee conservation measures in Guinea-Bissau. Three major actions needed are:⁸ to obtain basic information on chimpanzee populations in the country; to undertake a feasibility study for establishing protected areas in the country and a transnational protected area along the border between Guinea-Bissau and Guinea; and to develop a national strategy for chimpanzee conservation.

Research and protected areas

Future research should aim at developing action plans for chimpanzee conservation through studies of their ecology, particularly in open woodlands, and through identifying appropriate protected areas for two viable populations at least: in Cantanhez Forest Hunting Reserve and in the Boé region.^{6,8} The basin of the Tombali, Cumbija, and Cacine Rivers, which includes Cantanhez, has long been recognized as a promising, high biodiversity area and recommended for protection.^{6,8,9} The status of Cantanhez was in the process of being upgraded in 2001.¹

Local participation

Guinea-Bissau's growing population depends heavily on forest resources. Biological conservation is therefore directly linked with economic growth and development. The participation of rural communities by assuring them the legal right to manage at least part of the natural resource base could well be the best long-term way to reconcile wildlife conservation and rural development. In addition, ecotourism programs could help empha-

size the importance of the primates, while potentially boosting the local economy.^{7,8}

Capacity building

Long-term collaboration between government authorities, overseas governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations is required to support the creation of a national system of protected areas, and build national capacity to manage it effectively.

Education and tourism

General education, awareness-raising programs, and the involvement of local communities in conserving chimpanzees and managing their habitat can help greatly to relieve pressure on chimpanzees. There are currently no sanctuaries for orphaned chimpanzees. The establishment of a rehabilitation center and its use as an educational resource would support the development of future ape conservation in Guinea-Bissau. Alternatively, confiscated animals could be sent to sanctuaries in neighboring countries.⁸

FURTHER READING

Gippoliti, S., Dell'Omo, G. (1996) Primates of the Cantanhez forest and the Cacine basin, Guinea-Bissau. *Oryx* 30: 74–80.
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MAP DATA SOURCES

Map 16.12 Chimpanzee data are based on the following sources:

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