



Ecology and the use of elementary technology by wild chimpanzees in the Nimba Mountains, Guinea, West Africa

Wild chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) use elementary technology in foraging and nest-building and populations vary greatly in the number of different types of elementary technology used. Elementary technology refers to the use of one or more physical objects as a means to achieve an end. A well-known example of chimpanzee elementary technology is the use of a hammer and anvil to crack open a variety of hard-shelled nuts to reach the edible kernel within. Little is known about the effects of local ecological conditions on the use of elementary technology.

We investigate how the environment influences the use of elementary technology in a group of largely unhabituated chimpanzees in a mountainous region. In addition, we address a wide range of topics related to the behavioural ecology of wild chimpanzees (e.g. feeding ecology, nest-building, grouping/ranging patterns, phenology). We are currently in the process of habituating the chimpanzees to human observers.

Relevant references:

Koops, K. (2011) Chimpanzees in the Seringbara region of the Nimba Mountains. In: *The Chimpanzees of Bossou and Nimba*. T. Matsuzawa, T. Humle and Y. Sugiyama (Eds.). Springer, Tokyo, pp. 277-287.

Koops, K., McGrew, W.C. and Matsuzawa, T. (2010) Do chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) use cleavers and anvils to fracture *Treculia africana* fruits? Preliminary data on a new form of percussive technology. *Primates* 51: 175-178.

Koops, K., Humle, T., Sterck, E.H.M. and Matsuzawa, T. (2007) Ground-nesting in the chimpanzees of the Nimba Mountains, Guinea: Environmental or social determinants? *American Journal of Primatology* 69: 407-419.

Researchers: dr. Kathelijne Koops, University of Cambridge (email: kk370@cam.ac.uk); supervision in Utrecht: dr. Liesbeth Sterck (tel: 2535405; email: e.h.m.sterck@uu.nl)

Start date: Jan. 2012 (start field work)

Minimum length of student research: 10-12 months (field work, processing of data and writing of student report), minimum duration of field work: 8 months

Application: as soon as possible and before 31st of Aug. 2011 (contact dr. Liesbeth Sterck), interviews will take place in early Sept. 2011 (max. 2 students will be accepted)

Requirements: physically fit; independent; willingness to work and live in very basic conditions in a remote area; ability to speak (basic) French; course in Cognition and Behaviour; course in statistics.