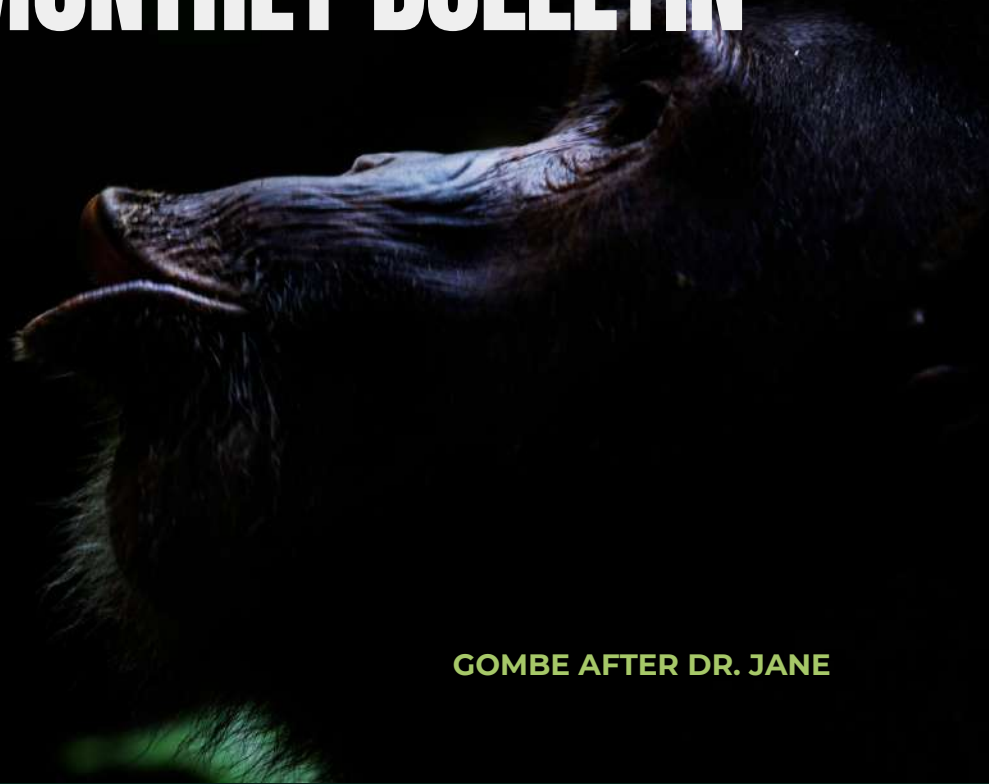


The Jane Goodall Institute (JGI)
Gombe Stream Research Centre (GSRC)

GOMBE MONTHLY BULLETIN

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GOMBE AFTER DR. JANE

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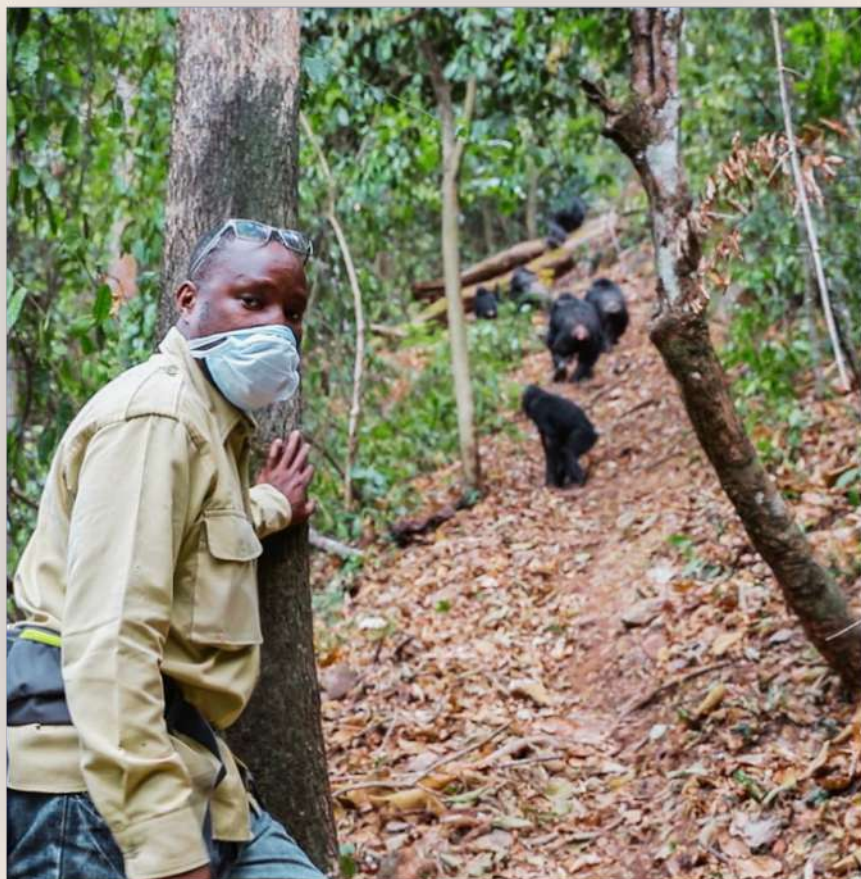
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Message from the Program Director

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this edition of our bulletin, highlighting our continued efforts to research, conserve biodiversity and support local communities.

During this dry season, people and wildlife face increased pressure as water and food become scarce, reminding us that conservation is a year-round responsibility.



Through chimpanzee research, surveys, and habitat protection, we continue working with our partners to strengthen our understanding of these remarkable animals and support their long-term research and conservation in Tanzania.

Thank you to our staff, partners, donors, and supporters for helping advance this important work.

I hope these stories inspire you to remain part of our research and conservation journey.

Dr. Deus Mjungu

Director
Gombe Stream Research Centre (GSRC)
The Jane Goodall Institute Tanzania

Bush Viper in This Dry Season in Gombe: A Master of Disappearing



The Bush Viper, locally known as Kilamata, is one of the most remarkable snakes found in Gombe National Park. Although it is highly venomous, it is naturally shy and prefers to avoid people. **In this dry season in Gombe**, its behavior makes it one of the park's most difficult reptiles to find.

Unlike the rainy season, when Bush Vipers may occasionally emerge to bask in the morning sun after cool nights, they spend most of this dry season hidden beneath dense vegetation. They seek out cool, moist places under thick leaves, vines, and shrubs to avoid the intense heat and dry conditions. As a result, sightings become extremely rare.

Their excellent camouflage makes them even harder to detect. Their green scales blend perfectly with surrounding leaves and branches, allowing them to remain almost invisible even when they are only a few meters away. Many people walk past them without ever realizing they are there, they can spend even days in exactly the same place. Bush Vipers are slow-moving and primarily nocturnal. They are most active at night, when they hunt small prey.

During the day, they usually remain motionless, conserving energy and relying on their camouflage for protection. Because their daytime vision is relatively poor, they may become defensive if they sense movement nearby, often coiling and appearing ready to strike. However, they usually bite only when they are accidentally stepped on, handled, or otherwise disturbed.

Where it found during this dry season

In this dry season in Gombe, Bush Vipers are most likely to be found in Gombe's lush valleys, **such as Kakombe, Kahama, Kalande, Mitumba, and Mkenke**, where moisture and dense green vegetation persist throughout the year.

The Bush Viper's behaviour in this dry season in Gombe is a perfect example of adaptation. Rather than moving around in search of food during the hottest part of the day, it remains hidden, conserves energy, and waits for the safety of night.

This secretive lifestyle, combined with its incredible camouflage, makes it one of Gombe's most elusive and fascinating reptiles.



Baboon Observation: Atlantis (ATL) Hunts and Consumes an Infant Colobus Monkey

New
reports
from field



The AC baboons group meets Colobus often along the beach.

On 22 August, near Dr. Jane Goodall's house in Gombe National Park, researchers observed a remarkable hunting event involving a male baboon known as Atlantis (ATL) from the AC group.

During the observation, Atlantis the baboon successfully captured the infant of a colobus monkey. After making the capture, Atlantis began consuming the meat.

Interpretation

Baboons rarely hunt baby monkeys, but this observation recalls the behaviour of Harubu, who was an exceptionally skilled hunter in DB group. At that time, Atlantis was still a young male in Harubu's group, and it is possible that Atlantis learned or refined his hunting skills by observing Harubu's unusual behaviour.

This event suggests that social learning may play an important role in the transmission of hunting techniques among the baboons.

It is a coincidence that both these males are now in AC group, who frequently encounter Colobus at close quarters along the beach: We are interesting to see whether Harubu resumes hunting there, and whether Atlantis will continue.

As he fed, several other baboons approached, apparently hoping to obtain a share of the meat. Among them were Unarasika (UNK), accompanied by her offspring, Usinge (USN), and several other troop members.

Throughout the event, the mother of hunted baby remained close by, following Atlantis while repeatedly calling, crying and showing clear signs of distress.

As Atlantis continued feeding, the carcass became increasingly difficult to consume. At one point, he tore off one of the infant's arms while eating. A remaining portion of the carcass was later taken by Unaraska (UNK).

After obtaining the largest remaining piece of meat, Unaraska moved away from the rest of the troop, apparently to avoid having it stolen by other baboons.



New Joy in Gombe: Imani and Fadhila Welcome Two New Chimpanzees in the Kasekela Community

Nothing brings greater joy to the forests of Gombe than the birth of a new chimpanzee. It is an event that signals renewed hope for the future of chimpanzees and the ongoing conservation efforts dedicated to protecting these remarkable animals.

This joy is not limited to the mother who has given birth; it spreads throughout the entire chimpanzee community. Researchers, conservationists, and everyone who closely follows the lives of the chimpanzees also celebrate each birth as an important step toward safeguarding the future of these communities.



Good News for the Kasekela Community

This August has brought another reason to celebrate after two chimpanzees from the Kasekela community—Imani and Fadhila—gave birth to new infants. The babies have not yet been named.

For Fadhila, this is her second infant. Her first infant, Fukama, was born in 2021 and has continued to grow well within the community. For Imani, this is her fourth infant, highlighting her reproductive success and her contribution to the continuation of the Kasekela community.



A Sign of Hope for Future Generations

These new births bring this year's total to six already, catching up on last year's total of seven.

Every new chimpanzee born in Gombe is more than an addition to the population. It is a sign of hope, evidence of the importance of long-term research, and a result of conservation efforts aimed at ensuring that Gombe's chimpanzees continue to thrive for generations to come.

For Gombe researchers, each birth adds a new chapter to the long-term study of chimpanzees while providing an opportunity to follow the growth, behavior, and social relationships of the new generation from the earliest days of their lives.

TOOL-USING BEHAVIOUR CAPTURED BY A CAMERA TRAP: RARELY-SEEN UNHABITUATED CHIMPANZEE SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITY

Studying Chimpanzees in the Wild

Monitoring wild chimpanzees that have never become accustomed to human presence presents one of the greatest challenges in primate conservation. These unhabituated chimpanzees are naturally wary of people, making direct observations extremely difficult during field surveys. As a result, understanding their population size, distribution, and behavior often requires innovative, non-invasive research methods.



A Remarkable Discovery

The survey team recorded **a wild chimpanzee engaging in ant-dipping**—the remarkable use of tools to extract **biting army-ants (siafu) from their nests** using carefully selected sticks.

It is a considerable achievement to record this seldom-seen behaviour by an unhabituated chimp.

It is also a positive record to understand **chimpanzee culture in different places**, the chimpanzees at Mahale Mountains, for example, do not do this.

Advancing Conservation Through Technology

This remarkable image demonstrates the growing value of camera trap technology in modern conservation. Beyond documenting species presence, camera traps are helping researchers uncover the hidden lives of some of Africa's most elusive primates, providing critical information that supports conservation planning and strengthens efforts to protect vital chimpanzee habitats.

As technology continues to advance, these silent observers are opening new windows into the secret lives of wild chimpanzees, allowing conservationists to witness behaviors that were once thought impossible to document in unhabituated populations.

The Role of Remote Cameras

To address this challenge, **the Jane Goodall Institute Tanzania (JGI-TZ)** has increasingly integrated remote cameras (camera traps) into its chimpanzee surveys.

Strategically placed along wildlife trails and key feeding areas, these motion-activated cameras allow researchers to document chimpanzees without disturbing their natural behavior. The technology not only improves population assessments but also provides valuable insights into behaviors that would otherwise remain unseen.



JGI TANZANIA CONSERVATION EFFORTS BEYOND GOMBE RESEARCH

Chimpanzee Survey Begins in the Masito-Ugalla Forests

The Jane Goodall Institute Tanzania (JGI Tanzania), together with conservation partners, has launched a major chimpanzee survey in the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem, spanning Kigoma and Katavi regions and bordering Mahale Mountains National Park.



The forests support Tanzania's largest chimpanzee population, estimated to be larger than those of Gombe and Mahale National Parks combined, free-ranging and unprotected.



Three Months of Fieldwork

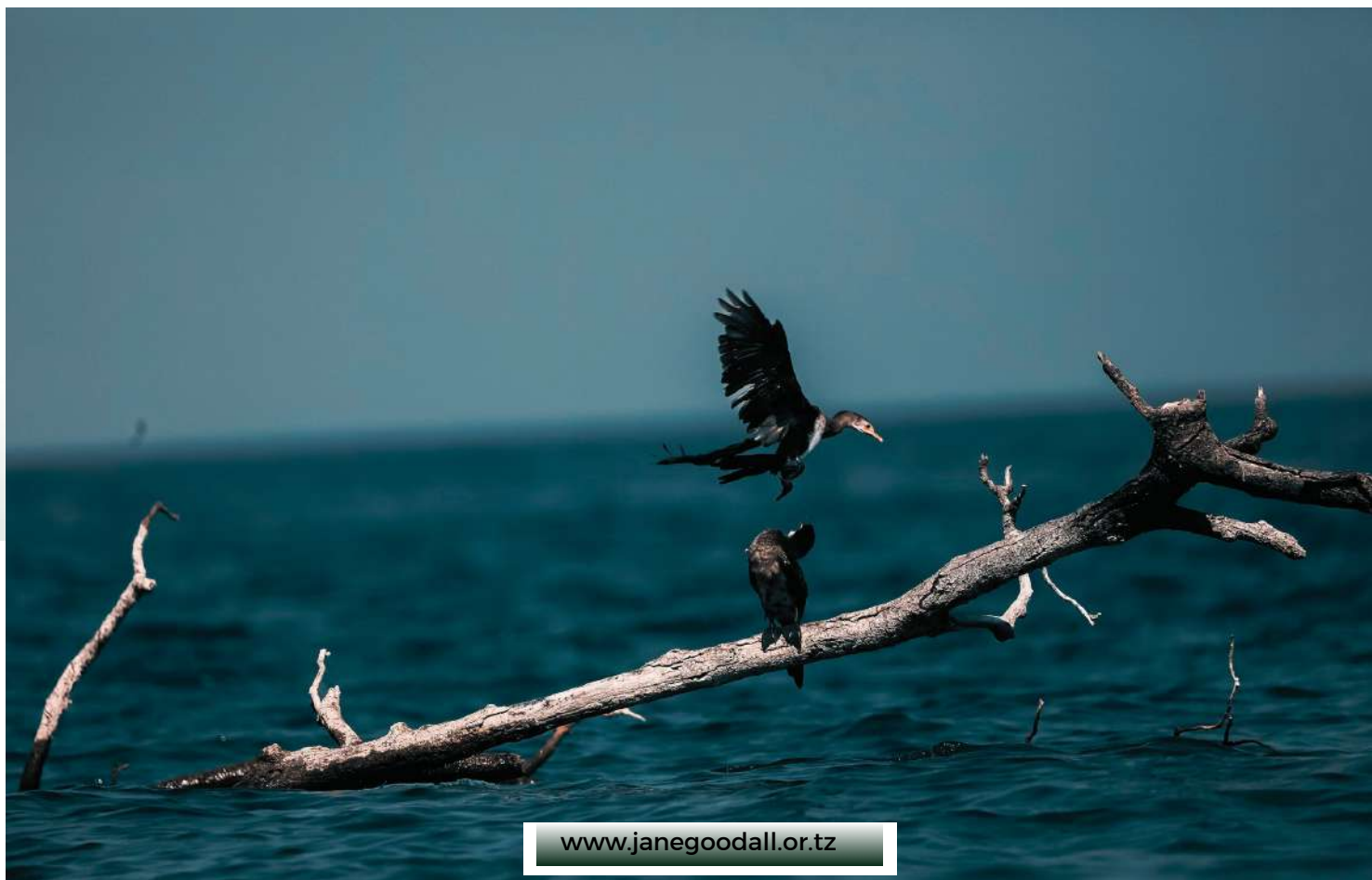
More than 30 trained field assistants will spend three months documenting chimpanzee populations, nesting sites, other wildlife and habitat degradation, (see, for example, bark-stripping in photo lower-left).

A Strong Conservation Team

The survey brings together field assistants and conservation experts from JGI Tanzania, the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA), and district authorities from Tanganyika and Uvinza. Their collaboration will strengthen research, monitoring, and conservation planning across the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem.

Technology Supporting the Survey

The field teams will use Survey123 App, drones, and camera traps to support accurate and efficient data collection. These tools will help researchers document chimpanzee populations, assess habitat conditions, and monitor wildlife activity in remote areas.



Photos by Stephano Lihedule, Dr. Anthony Collins and Dr. Deus Mjungu

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