



Quarterly conservation update – Kordofan giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis antiquorum*), Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo

February – April 2018

Summary

Following the last population estimation of 45 giraffe in Garamba NP in August 2017, our latest population assessment estimates the population now at 48 individuals with five newly identified juveniles. Two ossicone-units were recently donated by the GCF to support monitoring of giraffe in the Park and are planned to be deployed in May/June 2018. The Giraffe National Strategy and Action Plan 2018-20 has been approved by APN's head office and ICCN. Following the giraffe conservation research activities of 2016-2017, Mathias D'haen submitted his Master's Thesis to the Czech University of Life Sciences and will be assessed by mid-2018.

Programme

In August 2017 the Kordofan giraffe population in Garamba National Park (NP) was estimated at 45 giraffe based on a year's ongoing field efforts. Following ongoing field work and surveys in early 2018, the new population estimate for Kordofan giraffe in Garamba NP is 48 giraffe in April 2018. This number is based on all unique giraffe that were identified since August 2017 – a total of 282 giraffe in 91 herds. With aerial capacities being limited due to a technical issue with the surveillance plane, observations were however highly focused on the eastern giraffe population in the Park as this is the only population that can be researched by ground assets.

The giraffe population inhabiting the Gangala na Bodio Region has been difficult to monitor due to the densely forested area. A combination of the two above factors might explain why four giraffe that were assumed to be alive in August 2017 have not been seen since August and thus not included in the population estimation – but may still be observed at a later date. Moreover,

some giraffe in Gangala na Bodio Region are known to be extremely elusive with only single observations for only two of the giraffe.

Importantly, GIR48U and GIR49U, two juveniles who were assumed to have died and recorded as such in the August 2017 estimates, have been re-sighted and included in the new population estimation. No giraffe carcasses were found this quarter which is positive.

Table 1. Table of population dynamics for the population estimation of April 2018. Green cells are newly discovered giraffe, red cells are giraffe that have not been seen since August 2017 and thus not included in the population assessment.

	Juvenile (9)	Subadult (9)		Adult (30)	
	Male/Female (9)	Male (3)	Female (6)	Male (11)	Female (19)
Block 6/9	GIR54U	GIR02M	GIR01F	GIR04M	GIR03F
	GIR57U	GIR15M	GIR44F	GIR09M	GIR05F
	GIR58U	GIR17M	GIR45F	GIR10M	GIR06F
	GIR60U			GIR14M	GIR08F
	GIR61U			GIR21M	GIR12F
				GIR38M	GIR13F
				GIR39M	GIR16F
				GIR41M	GIR20F
					GIR37F
					GIR43F
Gangala na Bodio	GIR52U		GIR29F	GIR46M	GIR11F
	GIR56U		GIR30F	GIR19M	GIR42F
	GIR59U			GIR47M	GIR50F
	GIR48U				GIR53F
	GIR49U				GIR51F
					GIR28F
				GIR55F	
Block 10			GIR35F		GIR32F
					GIR33F
Block 1			GIR26F		GIR22F
					GIR24F

Two giraffe ossicone units were donated by the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) at the end of April and are planned to be deployed in May/June 2018. To better facilitate monitoring of the highly elusive giraffe in Gangala na Bodio Region, one female of this population will be targeted as well as one of the three individuals in Block 10 to fit the solar GPS satellite tags. The

latter will be fitted with a unit to assess the giraffe's home range and guide a possible translocation to another area of the Park that is now feasible by road through the construction of a bridge in early 2018.

The Giraffe National Strategy and Action Plan (NGSAP) 2018-20 that creates a road guide for further giraffe activities in the Park and that has been created following the outcomes of the giraffe research in 2016-17 has been approved by APN's head office and ICCN. Critical in the process is the acquisition of appropriate budget permitting the implementation of activities as outlined in the NGSAP.

Following the research activities of 2016-17, Mathias D'haen finalized his Master's Thesis which has been submitted to the Czech University of Life Sciences for review. It is hoped that the content of the thesis can be published in a scientific journal to help spread awareness and understanding about the populations current conservation status and threats.

Preliminary results of the MSc thesis research "Population dynamics and spatial behaviour of Kordofan giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis antiquorum*) in Garamba National Park, DRC" indicates that GNP's giraffe population is most hindered by predation of juveniles. From this perspective, it is critical that special attention is given to the monitoring of juveniles and sub-adults. Recently, only two juveniles and sub-adults have died out of 15 since the August 2017 results – this is relatively positive compared with a high predation rate of juveniles observed in their first year in other populations. Touch wood!



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