

## CHIMPANZEES (*PAN TROGLODYTES*) POPULATIONS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Many of the local populations of the chimpanzees had been exterminated in southwestern Nigeria. A clearer indication of the extent of depletion in population in the region is necessary. The aim of this paper is to present a review on the censuses in the population of chimpanzees in the region. A total of 7,134.6 km<sup>2</sup> of potential chimpanzee habitats was estimated for the region, with only 53.9% (3,845.5 km<sup>2</sup>) yielding evidence of the chimpanzees' presence. Chimpanzees occur at an estimated density of 0.10 Chimps km<sup>-2</sup>, giving an estimated 384 individual chimpanzees for the region. The priority areas identified for chimpanzee conservation include Omo-Oluwa, Idanre-Ofosu, Ise Forest Reserves, and Okomu National Park. Although the potential chimpanzee habitats still appeared to be large in the region, the level of threats to the animal had greatly reduced the population to critical levels.

**Keywords:** Southwestern Nigeria; Chimpanzee Populations; Potential Chimpanzees' Habitat

### INTRODUCTION

Chimpanzees in Southwestern Nigeria occur mainly in the forest vegetation (Agbelusi, 1994; Ogunjemite, Afolayan, Agbelusi, & Onadeko, 2006; Greengrass, 2006). The lack of accurate information on their population is a cause for concern for conservation and management of this species. In most cases, chimpanzees are not common in the protected areas, but they are close to farmlands, hunting zones, or logging concessions where they become very vulnerable to poaching. Chimpanzees have been used as flagship species in developing a management plan in and outside protected areas of the Gashaka-Mambilla region (McManus, 2005; Miles, Caldecott, & Nellemann, 2005; Fauna and Flora International, 2006; Ogunjemite & Ashimi, 2008). This could have been possible in south-western Nigeria if the numbers and distributions are well determined. This can only be done through population estimates recorded over time as a means of detecting changes in population. However, the current situation does not support procrastinating before conservation efforts to sustain the animal could be put in place in the region.

Many local populations of chimpanzees in the region have disappeared over the last decades or are in danger of extinction due to hunting, deforestation, and other forms of human induced threats (Gonder Gonder, Oates, Disotell, ... Melnick 1997); Ogunjemite, Afolayan, & Agbelusi, 2005; Ogunjemite, 2006; Greengrass, 2006). It is therefore imperative that extensive sampling of wild chimpanzee populations should be performed urgently considering the high probability of extinction that populations face in the region today. There is need for such immediate action in the region of Southwestern Nigeria since the

populations are so fragmented and moreover the taxonomy population in the region is still shrouded with some controversy (Gonder, Oates, & Disotell, 1999; Gagneux, Gonder, Goldberg, & Morin, 2001; Gonder & Disotell, 2006; McManus, 2005).

Two main studies had been conducted on the populations of chimpanzees in the southwestern Nigeria in recent times (Ogunjemite, Agbelusi, Afolayan and Onadeko 2006; Greengrass, 2006). Ogunjemite's team covered 15 sites and expressed its results in densities, while Greengrass (2006) covered 17 sites and based its results largely on interviews. Both studies confirmed the existence of chimpanzees in more than half of the surveyed sites. Nevertheless, none of the studies have been able to say, specifically, the number of remaining chimpanzee in the region. A clearer indication of the chimpanzee populations in the region is, therefore, necessary. The aim of this paper is to present a review on the population of chimpanzees in Southwestern Nigeria. The review became necessary in order to gain a clearer picture of the status and to create awareness on the plight of the animal in the region.

### **CHIMPANZEES' DENSITY ESTIMATE AND ABUNDANCE**

An accurate and appropriate evaluation of the status of threatened and endangered species population is important to conservation decision. Density values are often used to express the population of chimpanzees in fragmented habitat. Teleki (1989) observed that crude density estimates that the intensive studied sites run from a low 0.1 chimpanzee's to a high 6.8 chimpanzee's  $\text{km}^{-2}$  with most localities supporting an average density of less than 1.0. Marginal habitat density estimates less than 0.1 were recorded in Senegal and in Southern Mali (Kormos, Boesch, Bakarr, & Butynski, 2003). The most intensive studied community of chimpanzees in Nigeria to date is the Kwano Community, Gashaka-Gumti National Park (Sommer, Adanu, Faucher, & Fowler, 2004). An estimated density of 1.3  $\text{km}^{-2}$  was recorded for the site. Ogunjemite and Ashimi (2008) reported a density of 1.75  $\text{km}^{-2}$  for Ngel-Nyaki forest, while Beck and Chapman (2008) also reported a density of 1.67  $\text{km}^{-2}$  for the same site. Both Kwano and Ngel-Nyaki are locations within the Gashaka-Mambilla region. In southwestern Nigeria, Ise Forest reserve had been the only site to receive ample study within the zone with an estimated density of 0.31 – 0.40 chimps  $\text{km}^{-2}$  and only about 12 -17 chimpanzees in the sites (Ogunjemite, 2004). The reserve is an isolated patch of forest entirely surrounded by farmland. This made it receive less attention for any serious and long term conservation initiative.

### **HABITAT**

Chimpanzees' habitats have come under serious threats from human activities. This has affected the status of the animal within its degraded environment. Available information on chimpanzee populations in Nigeria reveals that this animal still exists within some of the rainforests. Steinitz, Heller, Tsoar, Rotem and Kadmon (2005) observed that the effective management of natural systems requires the understanding of their functioning not only for their improvement, but also to stop their further degradation. Vegetation type is an important factor determining the distribution of chimpanzees (Chapman & Lambert, 2000; Ogunjemite, Ajayi, & Agbelusi, 2007). Most of the forests in Nigeria, including protected areas, are under severe fragmentation. The result is that smaller fragments have fewer numbers of animals than the single larger fragments. Every species has a minimum viable population size or range of sizes in which if a population are reduced below it extinction may occur (Simberloff, 1992). As the area of fragments gets smaller and smaller, it becomes too small to maintain a minimum viable population size of species. Chimpanzees in southwestern Nigeria has a wider distribution across the region

than previously thought. The animal is available in many forested areas of the region, but it has gone into extinction locally in many areas over the last few decades (Ogunjemite, 2006; Greengrass, 2006). It has been established that once the deforestation on major scale combines with hunting, the effect on wildlife populations could be terminal (Teleki, 1989; Kormos, Boesch, Bakarr & Butynski, 2003).

### THE SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIAN CHIMPANZEE HABITAT

The southwestern Nigeria chimpanzee environment comprises of the lowland rainforest, stretching from the coast to about 50 km inland in its western boundary near the Dahomy Gap, to about 150 km inland around the region of the Kukuruku hills and further stretching to the western bank of Niger River as its eastern boundary (Figure 1). Rainfall is usually between 1,500-2,500 mm and capable of sustaining the rainforest environment under natural condition, distributed over 8 – 9 month period (March – October/November) and depending largely on the distance from the coast. In the times past, vegetation in the zone falls within the lowland rainforest (Keay, 1959; White, 1983). However, the present physiognomic component of the environment, particularly in region of Kukuruku Hills, is mainly that of forest/savanna mosaic. The southern parts still have large, continuous patches of reserved forests that had been variously degraded as a result of timber exploitation and encroachment for farming. The impacts of human activities have contributed seriously to the degraded value of the forest environment. .

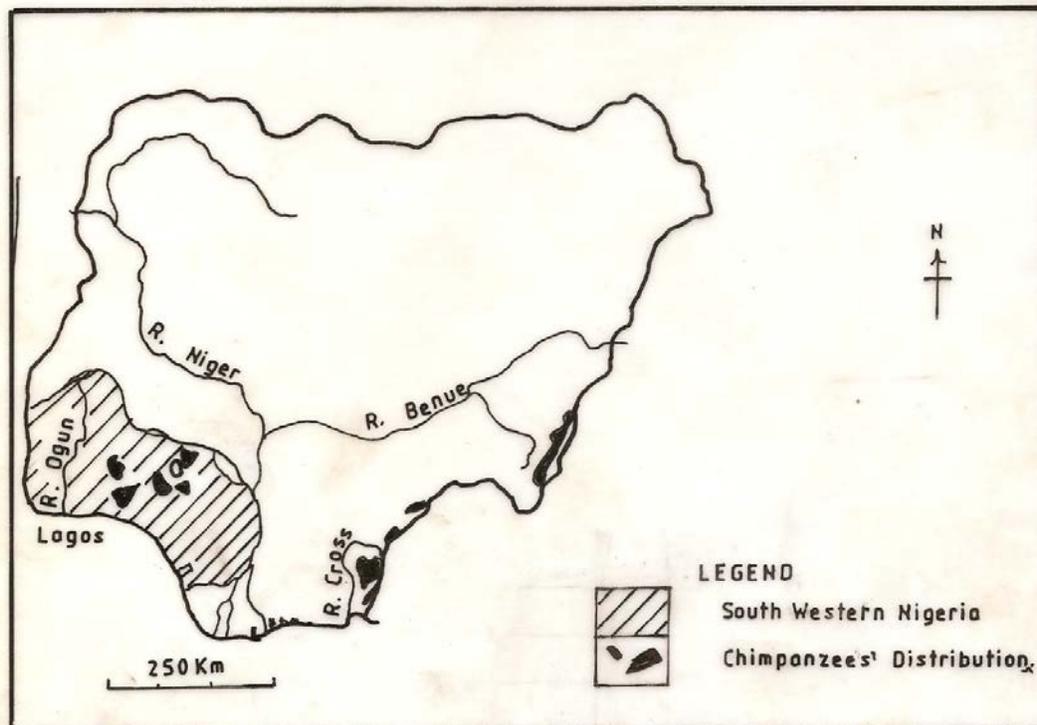


Fig. 1: South Western Nigeria and the major areas of Chimpanzees' distribution in Nigeria.

## **CHIMPANZEE SURVEY IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA**

The distance sampling method (Buckland, Anderson, Burnham, Laake... Thomasm, 2004) is currently the most widely used approach in apes' population studies. However, this method does not often give desirable results if adequate observations are not made. The density of chimpanzees in southwest Nigeria is very low. Desirable observations that could justify the use of the distance sampling method is not often attainable. As a result, the distance related methods: the transect sampling method was mostly adopted in the chimpanzee study across the region. Extensive surveys and forest reconnaissance were carried out in the region spanning six years, from 2002 – 2008 (Agbelusi, Ogunjemite, Koyenikan, & Okeyoyin, 2003; Ogunjemite, 2004; Ogunjemite, Afolayan, & Agbelusi., 2005; Ogunjemite Afolayan, Agbelusi, & Onadeko, 2006, Greengrass, 2006). The methods also incorporated the Participatory Approach of Focus Group Discussion (PAFGD) and interviews carried out among experienced hunters, community leaders, conservation personnel, and old farmers in all the surveyed sites.

## **CHIMPANZEES' LOCATIONS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA**

Chimpanzees' locations that are known in southwest Nigeria include, but are not limited to, all 15 sites enumerated in Table 1 and Figure 2. Densities across the sites in the region are generally low, with an average of 0.10 chimps / km in most of the forest reserve. The maximum density of 0.25 chimp km<sup>-2</sup> as recorded from two forest reserves of Ise and Eba. No new/fresh nests were observed in the five sampled forests. Evidences of chimpanzees presence were obtained from old nests in Ifon and Owo forest reserves. Bones and skulls of chimpanzees were shown to researchers at Ila forest reserve, while a whole animal body, without the palms and the head, was brought to market for sale from Ogotun in 2005. The mean chimpanzee density for the region was calculated to be 0.10 chimps km<sup>-2</sup>. Out of about 4302.52 km<sup>2</sup> of forest sampled, only 1965.3 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. about 57.76%, yielded evidence of the chimpanzees' presence. Other sites reputed to harbor chimpanzee population, but not directly, enumerated by the author within the reported period of survey, are presented in Table 2. Figure 3 shows the map of these locations across the region.

Table 1: Chimpanzee estimates from Southwestern Zones of Nigeria

Chimpanzee sites (Forest reserves)	Latitude/ Longitude	Original area of reserve (Km <sup>2</sup> )	Forested area remaining (Km <sup>2</sup> )	Chimpanzee density (Km <sup>-2</sup> )	Hunting threat	Threat to chimpanzee habitat	Evidence of chimpanzee presence.
1, Ago Owu	N7° 13'; E4° 07'	248.47	79.4	0.17	5	4	Nest count
2, Shasha	N7° 03' ; E4° 28'	308.34	240.8	0.10	4	3	Nest count
3, Oluwa		827.0	318.66	0.15	5	4	Nest count
4, Eba	N6° 27' ; E 4° 23'	18.3	15.3	0.25	3	2	Nest count
5, Eti-Oni	N7° 20' ; E4° 41'	39.53	39.53	0	4	3	Hunters report
6, Onisere	N6° 51' ; E4° 57'	98.42	43.0	0	5	4	Nest count
7, Idanre	N6° 48' - 6° 59' E4° 59' - 5° 07' '	540. 33	402.33	0.15	3	3	Nest count
8, Akure-Ofosu	N5° 12' 5° 30' E6° 50' 7° 5'	421.45	401	0.22	4	3	Nest count
9, Ala		199.43	93	0	5	5	Hunters report
10, Ise Ekiti	N7° 0' - 7° 20' E5°0' - 5° 20,	56.89	34.09	0.25	5	3	Nest count
11, Ogotun	N7° 27' ; E4° 56'	10.0	10.0	0	5	5	Whole dead animal displayed for sale in local market
12, Owo	N7° 03' ; E5° 36'	420	230	0	4	5	Hunters report
13, Okeluse		106.19	56.19	0.11	4	4	Nest count
14, Ifon	N6°40' 7°15' E 5°55'	282	80.0	0	5	4	Nest count
15, Ila	N8° 03' ; E5° 02'	25.6	15.0	0	4	5	Trophy of dead animal seen
		3402.52	1965.3	Mean 0.1	Mean 4.33	Mean 3.8	

Source Ogunjemite et al 2006

N.B. Only 53.9% of the remaining forest covers in southwestern Nigeria is occupied by Natural forest types, the rest consists of plantations and cropland (Nigerian Environmental Analysis, 2002).

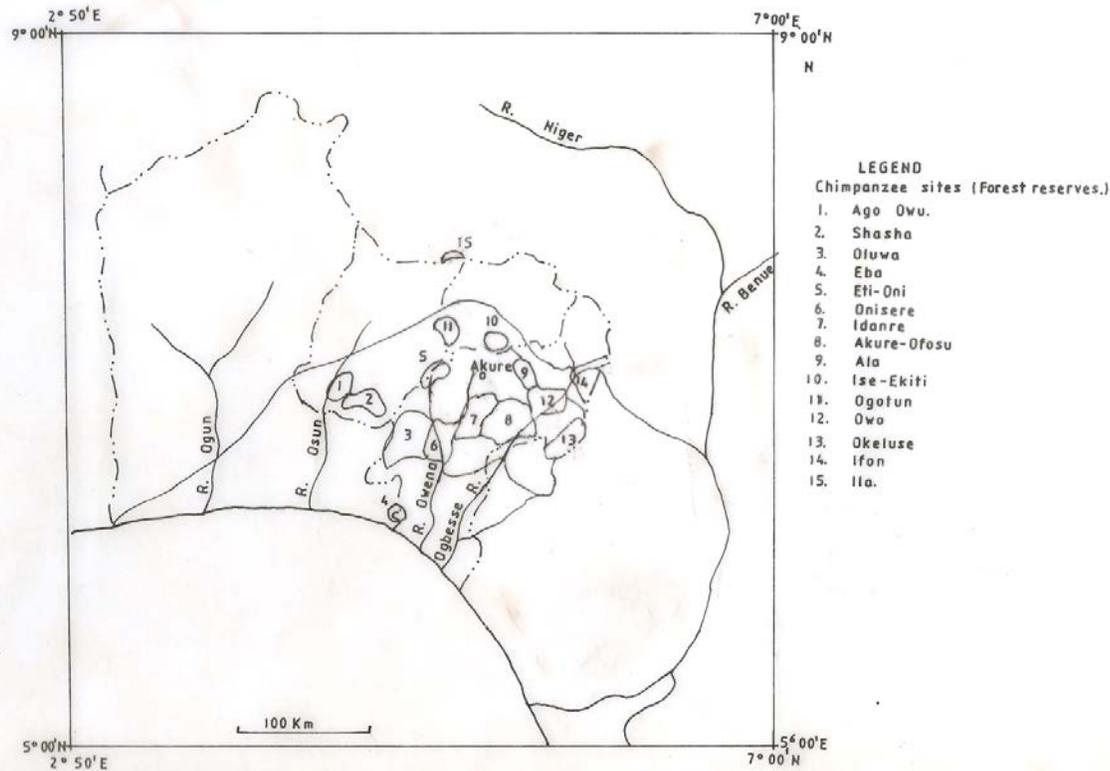


Fig. 2: Southwestern Nigeria showing surveyed sites in the core area of Chimpanzee distribution.

### ESTIMATES OF POPULATION IN THE SOUTHWEST ZONE

Putting a specific number to chimpanzees in the southwestern zones is not a straight forward task since there is no concrete information regarding the sizes of suitable/potential chimpanzee habitats. This is rather deduced from the proportion of suitable locations where an actual presence of chimpanzee was confirmed through their nests. Old nests and trophies could mean that the animal has left or was passing through the sites. It could further mean that the last of the animal had been killed or wiped out in that location. Only locations where fresh evidences of their presence were obtained could be considered for computation.

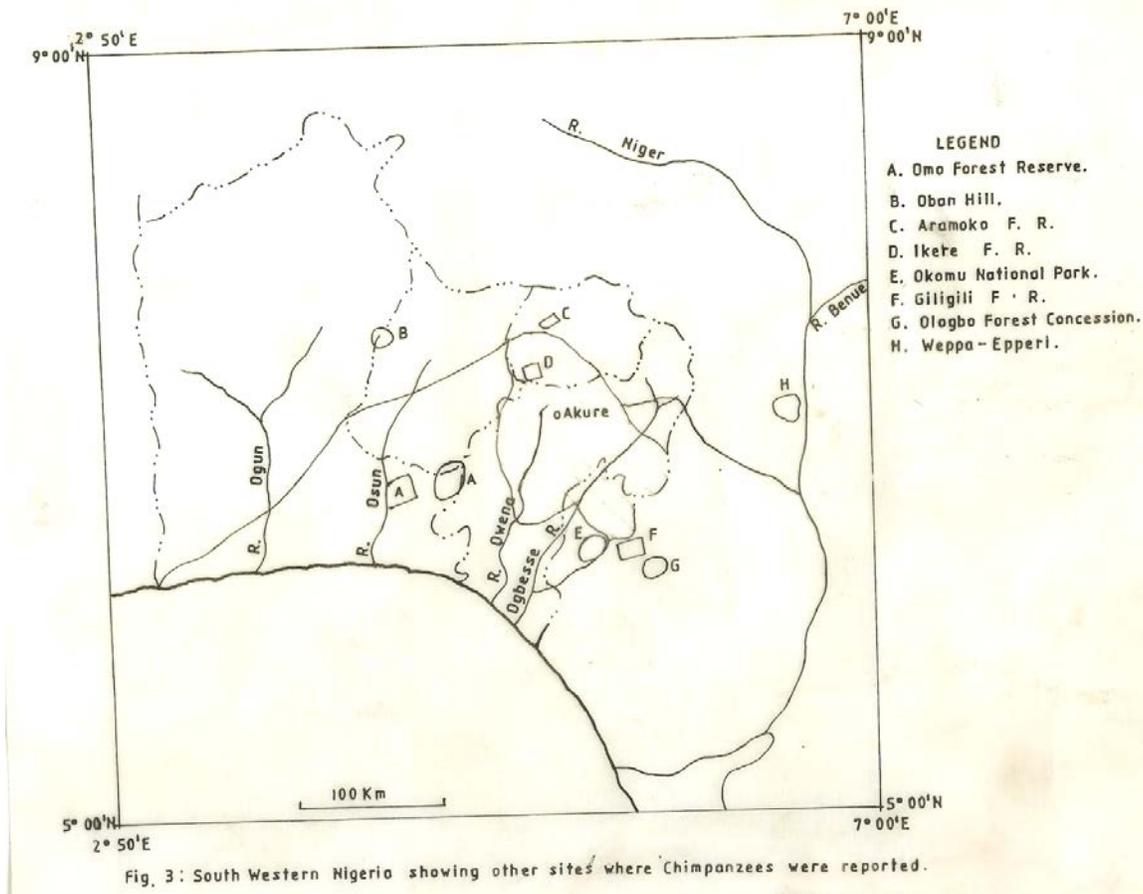
The total area of 3,402.52 km<sup>2</sup> of forest was sampled, out of which only 1,965.3 km<sup>2</sup> had forest cover, but not all could be regarded as suitable chimpanzee habitat (Ogunjemite et al., 2006). Going by the analysis of the Nigerian Environmental Analysis (2002), only 53.9% of these sampled forested areas are occupied by natural forest types that could be adjudged to be suitable habitats for chimpanzees. The rest consisted of plantations and croplands. This is to say that only 1,059.3 km<sup>2</sup> of sampled forests are suitable as chimpanzees' habitats. This is the only portion available to chimpanzees since chimpanzees thrive in forest habitats (Chapman & Lambert, 2000; Ogunjemite, Afolayan & Agbelusi, 2005). Nigerian Environmental Analysis (2002) estimated that the total land under reservation in the area of chimpanzee distribution of Ondo, Osun, Ogun, Ekiti and Edo States as 12,352.15km<sup>2</sup>, out of which 57.76% (7,134.60 km<sup>2</sup>) yielded an actual presence of chimpanzees. It follows that only 7134.60 km<sup>2</sup> of suitable habitats could be sustaining chimpanzees in the region, at a density of 0.10 chimps

km<sup>-2</sup>. However, only 53.9% (3845.5 km<sup>2</sup>) of this actually consists of natural forest cover that can sustain chimpanzees. The numbers of chimpanzees sustained was therefore calculated to be 384 at a density of 0.10 chimpanzees km<sup>-2</sup>.

Although this estimated number of chimpanzees for the southwestern zone might still appear to be generous, it should be noted that chimpanzees are reported in many locations outside the core areas in the region (Table 2 and Figure 3). Greengrass (2006) listed Akure Forest Reserve in Ondo State and Ologbo in Edo State, besides the sites sampled by Ogunjemite (2006). Person and Werner (2003) reported chimpanzee in Omo Forest Reserve. Chimpanzees are also well reported in the fresh water coaster swamp forests of the region from Okomu National Park to Epe, Lagos State. The Ologbo Green Project (Oates, Dunn, Greengrass, & Morgan 2008) is a combination of freshwater swamp and high forest vegetation (Ogunjemite, 2007). Chimpanzees were recently reported in the woodland area of Weppa/Epperi, the northern part of Edo State thus confirming the extensive but fragmented distribution of the animal all over the southwestern zone.

Table 2: Other locations where chimpanzee presence were reported

Sites	Location	Size Km <sup>2</sup>	Authority	Remark
A, Omo Forest Reserve	Ogun State		Oates <i>et al</i> , 2008, Person and Wanner, 3003	A very large track of forest that had been highly fragmented for farming and conversion to monoculture plantation of exotic trees. Few tracks of forest remain around the area designated as Biosphere reserve and in the northeastern corner of the forest
B, Oban hills	Osun State	?	Kormos et al 2003	The location is the savanna environment and might represent the upper limit of distribution in the region
C, Aramoko F. R.	Ekiti State	25	Ogunjemite per obs.	Very small reserve, part of which had been converted to exotic monoculture and some parts fragmented for farming
D, Ikere F. R.	Ekiti State	24	Ogunjemite per obs.	This location is suffering the same fate with Aramoko
E, Okomu National Park	Edo State	212	Agbelusi <i>et al</i> , 2003; Greengrass 2006	This is the only rainforest relic of National Park status in the region. However the size is very small and only a transient population was reported
F, Giligili Forest Reserve	Edo State	?	NCF/ Shell Petroleum 2006	Fragmented forest that is just receiving conservation attention from coalitions of Multination (Shell Petroleum) and Ngo (NCF)
G, Ologbo Forest Concession	Edo Sate	60	Ogunjemite per obs.	The location had been granted as concession for oil-palm plantation development and less than 20% of the site is set aside for biodiversity conservation
H, Weppa-Epperi	Edo State	undefined	Nwufor and Ogunjemite per obs.	This location is in wood land savanna and highly fragmented by farming. Probably the animal visits the location occasionally.



The review has shown that the chimpanzee density in the southwestern zone is very low, although there appears to be more suitable habitats in the zone. The southwestern zone is a region of high population explosion. The implication is that the chimpanzee population in the region is under serious human pressure. Seventy percent of the human populations in the zone are rural dwellers (Okunlola, 2006). One peculiar problem in the region is migrant farming communities from other regions of the country who heavily abuse local resources to their own monetary advantage (Koyenikan, 2004; Greengrass, 2006). Indigenous people tend to look at their natural resource with respect to keep and to maintain it (Child, 2004). These cultural instincts have been broken down with the influx of migrant farmers from other regions to southwest Nigeria.

The presences of conservation structures, such as the National Park, have significantly assisted in the protection of chimpanzee in other regions of Nigeria, particularly in the Gashaka-Mambilla region and southeast Nigeria. Although the Okomu National Park also occurred in the southwest zone, the size and influence of this park is minimal as compared with other regions. Agbelusi *et al.* (2003) reported only a transient population of chimpanzee in the Okomu National Park, while Greengrass (2006) reported sighting recent and fresh signs of chimpanzees and concluded that two groups may be in the park. There is a general belief among park managers that the populations of chimpanzee in the park are gradually recovering, thus

raising the hope that the park may play an important role in the conservation of chimpanzees in the region in the nearest future. However, the number currently supported in the park does not show that the park has been making serious contributions to the conservation of chimpanzees in the region.

## **MANAGEMENT/CONSERVATION OPTIONS AVAILABLE ON CHIMPANZEE POPULATIONS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA**

The management/conservation initiative on chimpanzee populations in southwest Nigeria seems to have evolved over four distinct levels. These are:

### The Conservation of populations within Forest Reserves

Nearly all categories of protected areas in Nigeria, today, could be traced to have evolved from forest reserves. Forest reserves are managed by the state governments. These are usually large areas of natural forests demarcated in the colonial time to provide sustainable supplies of timber through logging and to protect the water sheds. Sustained-yield management was abandoned in the post-colonial era and has led to a depletion of the forest and its associated fauna, including the chimpanzee. Remnant populations are now left in some of the forests all over the eco-zone. Chimpanzee densities are very low in these reserves. Ogunjemite, Agbelusi & Ajayi 2007) observed that forest reserves in Nigeria have proven to be very difficult to police. Many illegal settlements have sprung up within them and have seriously affected the large-bodied mammalian species in them, including the chimpanzee. There is the urgent need to upgrade some of these reserves for biodiversity conservation in many parts of southwest Nigeria. Such reserves that require upgrading include Omo, Oluwa, Idanre, Akure-Ofosu, and Ise Forest reserves.

### Conservation within National Parks

The Nigerian National Parks were derived from amalgamation of some contiguous forest reserves and are managed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. There are seven of them presently, but only three harbor chimpanzee populations. The only one in southwest Nigeria is the Okomu National Park, which is known to sustain only a transient population (Agbelusi *et al*, 2003). The size of the park, 212 km<sup>2</sup>, is also very small in comparison to a vast forest estate of the region to guarantee effective conservation of the biological resources of the region. There is the need to improve and strengthen the protection of the animals in the park.

### Conservation in NGO/Government/Community Partnership

Government enterprises are often not well managed in Nigeria. The emphasis on natural resources management is therefore shifting gradually unto partnership among Non-Governmental Organizations, the Government and the local communities. This is the situation in the Omo-Shasha-Oluwa Forest Project that is jointly managed by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, Ogun-Osun-Ondo State Governments, and the local community. Although direct sightings of chimpanzees are rare to come by in these forests, thriving populations still exists in some parts of the forest complex, particularly in the Oluwa Sector of the forest complex (Ogunjemite, 2010).

### Conservation in partnership with NGOs Private Organizations and Government

This is the most recent initiative in areas where forest reserves have been badly exploited. Instead of leaving the reserves to further degradation, it is now been given out to private organizations for economic usage with the understanding of preserving whatever it could be salvaged of its biological resources. One of the first examples in a forest containing chimpanzees in Nigeria is the Ologbo Green Project in Edo State (Oates, Dunn, Greengrass, & Morgan, 2008). Ologbo forest reserve was given to PRESCO oil Plc. in partnership with Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD) to manage for oil palm plantation. An approximate of 20% of the 7,000 hectare area of the concession is set aside as the Green Belt for the preservation of the remaining biological diversity of the forest which include chimpanzees.

### **PRIORITY AREA OF ATTENTION**

The categories of conservation options itemized above exist in the region of southwest Nigeria; however, it does not appear that they could adequately cater for the quick recovery and sustainable management of the populations of chimpanzees in the region. Conserving a representative member of the population of chimpanzees in southwest Nigeria should be viewed as a matter of urgency and utmost priority whatever the circumstances surrounding them now. It has not been proved, conclusively, that neither the Dahomey Gap nor the Niger is the bio-geographical barrier separating the population of West Africa chimpanzees. Therefore, the populations of chimpanzees in southwest Nigeria are important in planning a strategy that can ensure the conservation of representative diversity in the living great apes. Examining populations in southwest Nigeria is one of the most important factors that can throw light on the pattern of divergence among the populations in the West African subspecies. Olorode (2009) observed that the astonishing patterns in nature have impinged on man's mind and that living things show spectacular identities and continuity and, at the same time, show differences and discontinuity. The patterns of continuity and discontinuity in man's closest relative, the chimpanzee, should be of paramount interest not only to primatologist, but every branch of knowledge that seeks to proffer a solution to the human problem. Bearing in mind the few numbers of the population of chimpanzees in southwest Nigeria, every animal that could be safe should count. Because it is very costly to conserve, it is proposed that priority attention should be given to populations in the following locations: Omo-Oluwa-Shasha Forest Complex; Ise Forest Reserve; Idanre/Ofosu Forest Complex; and Okomu National Park.

#### Omo-Oluwa-Shasha Forest Complex

Omo-Oluwa-Shasha Forest Complex contains the largest track of forest in southwestern Nigeria, today. Both surveys (Ogunjemite *et al.*, 2006; Greengrass, 2006) agreed that chimpanzees are still remaining in these tracks of forest. Oates, Ikemeh, Ogunesan & Bergl (2008) and Ogunjemite (2010) have further confirmed these views.

#### Idanre/Ofosu Forest Complex

Idanre-Ofosu forest complex contains the second largest contiguous forest. Thriving populations of chimpanzees are still within the reserves. The terrain of the reserve is of peculiar interest to chimpanzees' conservation. Ogunjemite and Oates (2008) reported that the animals are sighted at the rugged terrains that are not easily accessible for loggers, as well as being good for the settlement of migrant farmers. The major problem of this site is hunting and this could

be eliminated with the cooperation of indigenous people as long as they are carried along, especially with the assistance of Traditional Institutions.

#### Ise Forest Reserve

This is the foremost and most reported site of the chimpanzees in southwest Nigeria (Agbelusi, 1994; Gonder, Oates and Disotell, 1999; Ogunjemite, 2004; Ogunjemite, Afolayan & Agbelusi, 2005; Ogunjemite, Afolayan, Agbelusi & Onadeko, 2006; Ogunjemite, Ajayi & Agbelusi, 2007). It has been in focus for almost 20 years. Although the habitat is extremely fragmented, it has sustained one of the most densely populated communities in the region. It may be worthwhile to continue to observe exactly the threats that are working against the population in the southwestern region of Nigeria from this community, with the aim of understanding better how the animal could cope with human threat in the region.

#### Okomu National Park

Okomu is the only strictly protected area of the National Park status where chimpanzees' presence had been reported in southwest Nigeria (Agbelusi *et al.*, 2003, Greengrass, 2006). While it is worthwhile to continue the monitoring of the animal in the park, it is necessary that an enabling atmosphere be created to guarantee the management of the animal. Particularly, facilities that could accommodate chimpanzee reintroduction programs should be incorporated into management plans for the park. Okomu National Park remains one the major hope for long-term survival of most of the biological diversity in southwest Nigeria. However, the park had been severely threatened by the activities of "militants". We have yet to see the impact of the recent amnesty given by the government on protection in the park, but it is hoped that it may impact positively on the management activities in the park.

### **CONCLUSION**

Sustaining the chimpanzee populations in southwest Nigeria is crucial to the conservation action since the population in the region represents the link between the two West African subspecies of Nigeria, the Cameroon Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*) and the West African Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*). The potential chimpanzee habitats still appeared to be large in the region. The level of threats to the animal had greatly reduced the population to critical levels. There are less than 400 chimpanzees remaining. Every effort counts to maintain and improve upon the remaining few, since these populations hold the key to a better perspective of taxonomic and conservation knowledge of the animal in the West African Region. There is the need to urgently address the situations threatening the animal in all fronts possible to prevent local extinction of the populations in the region.

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