DEVELOPING A NATIONAL BONOBO CONSERVATION STRATEGY USING SPATIAL MODELS FOR ACTION PLANNING

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This workshop brings together bonobo conservationists, spatial modelers and conservation planners to discuss an action plan for standardized data collection that should allow appropriate use of spatial modeling for bonobo conservation planning. Estimated bonobo numbers vary widely: between 5,400 and 100,000 individuals may exist across a 200,000km² range in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/entry/bonobo). Ongoing research programs and recent field surveys are clarifying factors that influence bonobo distribution and densities. Survey observations and insights contribute to spatial models designed to predict habitat suitability in areas not yet surveyed. In addition to informing species conservation strategies, the models of bonobo habitat suitability serve as critical inputs to conservation planning software that can be used to generate cost-effective reserve design scenarios. These scenarios will be crucial to shaping a DRC bonobo conservation strategy and contribute to a national land use planning initiative that sustainably balances needs for both human development and wildlife. At this workshop, we will evaluate to what extent today's available data allow for spatial modeling for bonobo conservation planning and discuss on how to address identified data gaps in order to optimize the use of this tool for bonobo conservation. Ideally, this workshop leads to an action plan to fill the existing data gaps.

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