

Mr. and Mrs. Badrian,  
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28/11/1975

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IMPo RTANT

Dear Dr. Verschuren,

We have recently returned from Africa after our expedition to Zaire to study the ecology and behaviour of Pan paniscus. We spent 11 months in the country. After several weeks in Lubumbashi trying to get permission to drive through the Kasai region, we set off for Boende. The journey by landrover took us over three weeks as roads were so bad. We spent some time in the Befale area looking for a suitable study area. Finally we selected a nice tract of mainly primary forest between the Lomako and Yekokora rivers. We had a hut built and stayed over seven months studying the pygmy chimps. It was a wonderful experience and produced some interesting data on the behaviour of these animals. We are at present writing a paper which we hope to have published in a scientific magazine and also some short articles in magazines such as Oryx.

We have read your articles on the wild-life of Zaire in Oryx with great interest. While in the Boende area we enquired about the existence of pygmy chimps in the Salonga Park and everyone told us there weren't any there. Even the conservateur of the Park who he had never seen any. A Japanese team had spent several weeks there and found no trace of the pygmy chimpanzees. Do you think it possible that they only occur in the remoter corners of the Park as may be suggested by the map of their distribution to be found in Reynold's paper "Some Behavioural Comparisons between the chimpanzee and the Mountain Gorilla" (American Anthropologist, 67 (3): 691-706 (1965) )? Owing to scarcity of petrol and time we decided not to risk a trip to the Park to investigate for ourselves but went to the Befale area where pygmy chimps were quite often seen.

We would be very interested to know of any sightings of the pygmy chimps in the Salonga Park and also of the progress of Dr. de Wys's study or if you could let us know his address.

We cut short our study as we could not get our visas renewed and our money had run out. If we could get more money to return and carry on our work do you think the Zaire authorities would let us into the country at the moment? We have heard rumours that Zaire is now closed to outsiders.

If you would be interested in reading the results of our study we will send you a copy of our data.

Yours sincerely, Alison Badrian