

NOTES BRÈVES

CEPHALOPHUS OGILBYI CRUSALBUM GRUBB 1978, DESCRIBED FROM COASTAL GABON, IS QUITE COMMON IN THE FORÊT DES ABEILLES, CENTRAL GABON

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In 1978, Grubb described a new antelope (*Cephalophus ogilbyi crusalbum*) from Gabon on the basis of eleven specimens housed in the National Museum of Natural History, Washington and one specimen housed in the American Museum of Natural History, New York. All these specimens were previously described as *Cephalophus leucogaster*.

Eleven specimens were from the Fernan Vaz region of the lower Ogooué Basin, Western Gabon. The other was from Kango, North of the Ogooué River (Fig. 1). A few additional locations were given by Blom *et al.* (1990), who saw two animals in the Monts Doudou. They stated that *C. o. crusalbum* may be restricted to the coastal area between Port-Gentil, Lambaréné and Tchibanga, possibly extending further northwards (approximately 0° to 3 °S latitude ; Fig. 1).

Grubb (1978), without giving his references, suggested that *C. o. crusalbum* could be present in Congo. This suggestion was also made by Feer (1990) in his list of bushmeat observed on the markets in the lower Kouilou Basin. This author did not justify his statement, however, which was not confirmed later on by Dowset & Granjon (1991) working in the same region.

On the basis of these limited data, *C. o. crusalbum* has been considered as having a limited range and was classed as rare ; it was given a high conservation priority (Blom *et al.*, 1990 ; East, 1990). Recently the « Direction de la Chasse et de la Faune » in Gabon asked for the white-legged duiker to be put on the list of totally protected species.

We recently established a new field site (Camp de la Makandé ; 0° 40' 39" S ; 11° 54' 35" E ; Fig. 1) in the Forêt des Abeilles, Central Gabon. This poorly-known region was brought to the fore when Harrison (1988) discovered a new guenon species *Cercopithecus lhoesti solatus* which only occurs within this forest (Gautier *et al.*, 1986, 1992). A few days after our first trip into the Forêt des Abeilles, we had the opportunity to observe duikers we never saw previously. For one of us, the first observation lasted 15 minutes. A sub-adult duiker was peacefully chewing the fruits of *Klainedoxa gabonensis*, glancing without fear at the observer, 10 meters away. The day after, F. Lasserre had the opportunity to take good colour photographs of what was probably the same individual eating beneath the same tree (Fig. 2). The most striking pattern was its white lower

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shanks : the subspecific name *crusalbum* given by Grubb (1978) to this form of *C. ogilbyi* suits quite well this duiker whose white legs are highly conspicuous in the forest, making two white flashes when the animal is running. This makes its identification very easy.

Later on, this type of duiker was observed regularly by all the field researchers present at the site. It was seen either alone or in pairs, frequently under the trees where monkeys were seen eating, consuming any fruits, seeds or flowers

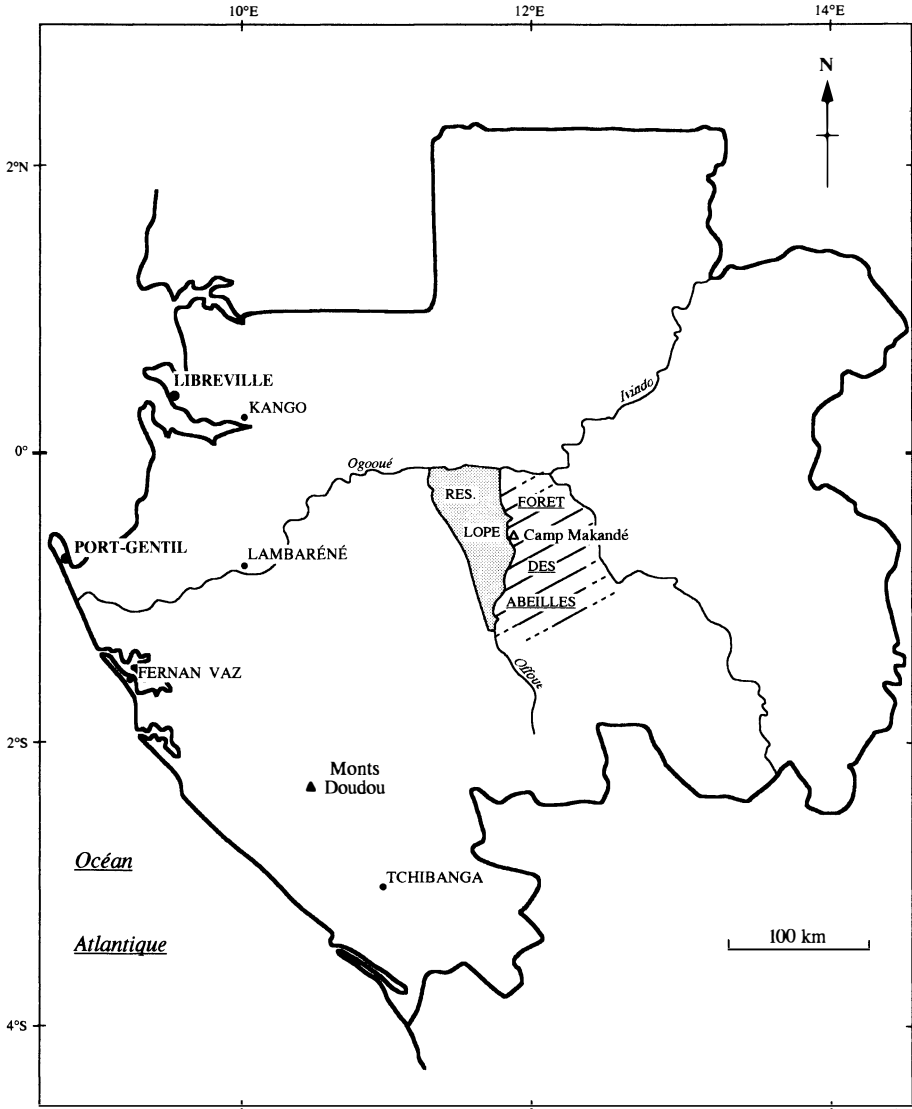


Figure 1. — Map of Gabon showing the areas where specimens of *C. o. crusalbum* were collected and where live animals are observed (see text).

that fell down. One *C. o. crusalbum* was also observed eating at a few meters from one *C. callipygus*. All daily sightings concerned active individuals, pointing to a diurnal species.

The photographed animal (Fig. 2) as well as all of the living subjects observed in the field and an adult male specimens killed by hunters collected 20 km away from the camp site, meet perfectly the description given by Grubb (1978). Our observations allow us to refine this description that notably missed the colour of the ears. The ears are covered with very short, sparse black hairs, except for the internal edges which are sprinkled with orange-ochre hairs in the continuation of the forehead. Inside the ear, white stripes make a highly conspicuous pattern (Fig. 2). As Grubb (1978) pointed out, the dorsal black strip does not overrun the hindquarters but narrows posteriorly to attain less than 10 mm width at the base of the tail (in the case of the adult male specimen). In the field, the most striking feature when the animal is seen full-face is the two chesnut arches over the eyes, which contrast with the blackish muzzle and the darker brown long hair of the toupee (Fig. 2).

These field observations of *C. o. crusalbum* in the Forêt des Abeilles greatly enlarge its known area of distribution, which probably extends from the coast up to Central Gabon, South of the Ogooué River and possibly North of this river if the specimen collected at Kango actually originated from this region. Additional observations by P. Christy (pers. comm.) whose description of a duiker from the Lopé Réserve (on the left bank of the Offoué, Fig. 1) fully agrees with ours, convincingly document the presence of *C. o. crusalbum* in this area. This suggests that during his census, White (1992) who noted the presence of *C. leucogaster*,



Figure 2. — *Cephalopus ogilbyi crusalbum* photographed at the field site of the Camp de la Makandé, Forêt des Abeilles (photo by F. Lasserre).

confused the two species. Our observations also show that, in the Forêt des Abeilles, an area devoided of human pressure up to recently, this duiker is quite common and its population density fairly high. Furthermore, contrary to Grubb (1978), *C. o. crusalbum* is fully sympatric with *C. callipygus* at the Makandé site.

RÉSUMÉ

La nouvelle forme de céphalophe (*Cephalophus ogilbyi crusalbum*) décrite en 1978 par Grubb à partir de quelques spécimens de musée était supposée avoir une distribution limitée à la zone côtière du Gabon. De ce fait, elle fut classée comme rare et comme faisant partie des espèces nécessitant des mesures de protection urgentes. De récentes observations effectuées sur le site d'étude du Camp de la Makandé (Forêt des Abeilles) montrent que cette espèce est en fait commune dans cette région où elle est régulièrement observée. Les jarrets blancs qui la caractérisent constituent un critère d'identification aisé. Des observations complémentaires faites dans la réserve de la Lopé confirment que *C. o. crusalbum* est également présent sur la rive gauche de l'Offoué. Ainsi la distribution de cette forme endémique pourrait couvrir une partie importante du territoire gabonais, sur la rive gauche de l'Offoué.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was realized thanks to the financial support of the EEC (DGXII, STD3 program) and to the logistic support of the Leroy-Gabon forestry company. We thank François Lasserre for his photographs and for the dead specimen, Patrice Christy for his informations about the Lopé Reserve, and Heather McKiggan who proof read the English text. Thanks are also due to all field researchers of the Camp de la Makandé, especially F. Maisels and A. Cruikshank.

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