

Title	<Note> Bossou Chimpanzees Crossed the National Border of Guinea into Liberia
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in the southeastern corner of the Republic of Guinea¹. The core area of the group consists of four small hills that are located about 4 km east from the Nimba Mountains. Due to the small core area and large distance of the Nimba Mountains, the Bossou group is thought to be geographically isolated from others. Secondary forests and abandoned fields cover over the border between Guinea and Liberia. Here I report the first observed case in which Bossou chimpanzees actually crossed the national border into the Liberian forest. Locations were recorded by GPS.

OBSERVATIONS

At 7:23, on February 14th, 2006, eleven chimpanzees, including my focal individual (PE, an adolescent male), were found eating *Myrianthus libericus* fruits (7°38'19.3" N, 8°30'48.0" W). Next, they rested on the ground for a while. At 8:29, they started to move on the ground. Due to the heavy bush, the local assistants and I lost the chimpanzees at 8:39. At 10:47, we found the focal chimpanzee again (7°38'07.7" N, 8°30'55.2" W). The party consisted of six chimpanzees: three adult males (TA, FF, and YL), two adult females (Pm and Yo), and one adolescent male (PE). They were resting on the ground, but they soon started to move. At 10:58, the six chimpanzees entered a swamp, and ate *Nephrolepis biserrata* leaves for about 5 minutes (7°38'09.7" N, 8°30'57.6" W). They moved again and arrived at a pineapple field (7°37'53.9" N, 8°31'11.8" W). The field is located on the western slope of a hill called Zono, which Bossou chimpanzees often visit during consortship periods. For about 10 minutes, they ate pineapple fruit before entering the forest. At 11:46, three chimpanzees (YL, Yo, and Pm) started to eat *Pseudospondias microcarpa* fruit, and the other chimpanzees rested on the ground (7°37'56.3" N, 8°31'13.1" W). At 12:23, the six chimpanzees climbed the hill, and arrived at another *Pseudospondias microcarpa* tree at 12:52 (7°37'45.0" N, 8°31'27.6" W). They ate fruit and rested in the tree. At 14:14, they started to move on the ground again. On the way, at 14:43, Yo started to eat *Pennisetum*

<NOTE>

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1976, a group of wild chimpanzees has been studied at Bossou, which is located

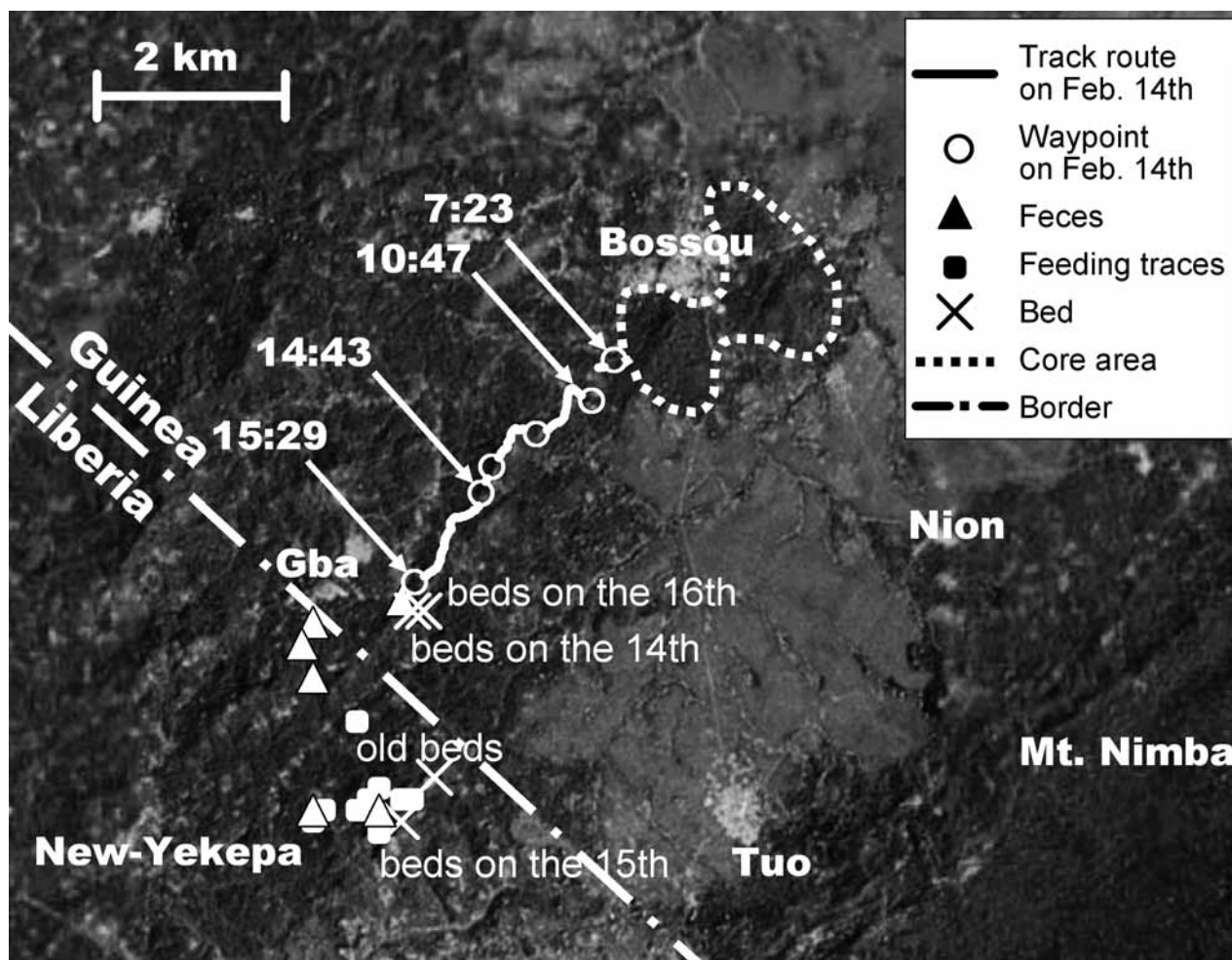


Fig. 1. Survey map of Guinea and Liberia (modified from Google Earth image).

purpureum pith, but the other five chimpanzees continued to travel ($7^{\circ}37'36.7''$ N, $8^{\circ}31'30.8''$ W). The five chimpanzees entered the primary forest at the Gba village, Guinea. Gba is on the border with Liberia. At 15:27, three adult males (TA, FF, and YL) uttered pant-hoot, climbed trees, and traversed a valley. Since the forest over the valley appeared to be a sacred area of the village, we stopped following them at 15:29 ($7^{\circ}37'03.6''$ N, $8^{\circ}31'57.3''$ W).

On February 15th, we looked for the chimpanzees in the Gba village. We found six beds there ($7^{\circ}36'57.0''$ N, $8^{\circ}31'56.3''$ W). Judging from the fresh feces under the beds, they apparently slept there from the evening of the 14th to morning (Fig. 1, beds on the 14th). When we visited the hill near the Liberian border, we found feces at the top ($7^{\circ}36'58.2''$ N, $8^{\circ}31'57.3''$ W), but we could not find any chimpanzees in the Gba village.

On February 16th, six new beds (Fig. 1, beds on the 15th), fresh traces, and feces were

found in the forest at New-Yekepa, Liberia ($7^{\circ}35'45.8''$ N, $8^{\circ}31'59.1''$ W). Judging from the traces, the chimpanzees appeared to have eaten sugar cane pith, *Parkia* fruit, *Landolphia* fruit, *Myrianthus* fruit, pineapple fruit, *Aframomum* pith and fruit, and palm petiole. We also found two old beds ($7^{\circ}36'00.1''$ N, $8^{\circ}31'47.3''$ W. Fig. 1, old beds).

On February 17th, four new beds were confirmed in the Gba forest ($7^{\circ}36'57.3''$ N, $8^{\circ}31'53.4''$ W. Fig. 1, beds on the 16th). Judging from the beds, the six chimpanzees returned to the Guinean side on the evening of the 16th. At 13:23, TA, Pm, and PE were observed eating *Morus mesozygia* fruit at the core area of Bossou ($7^{\circ}38'30.1''$ N, $8^{\circ}30'26.7''$ W). At 14:58, all six chimpanzees were confirmed in the same *Morus* tree.

DISCUSSION

In February, fruits were abundant in

the forest at Bossou². Actually many trees bore their fruits, including *Pseudospondias microcarpa*, *Morus mesozygia*, *Parkia bicolor*, and *Myrianthus libericus*. The chimpanzees apparently did not travel to the peripheral area due to a lack of food. There are many sugar cane plantations in Liberia for distilling alcohol. Possibly their strong preference toward sugar cane tempted the chimpanzees into the Liberian forest.

Old beds were also found in the forest at New-Yekepa, Liberia. It suggests that Bossou chimpanzees had previously visited the forest. In this case, the chimpanzees only stayed in Liberia for two days. Due to the short stay and the difficulty of observation on the peripheral areas, researchers have probably missed traveling patterns.

According to the local people, chimpanzees exist in the northern part of Liberia. However, the distribution of chimpanzees there is almost unknown. Bossou chimpanzees may emigrate from Guinea to Liberia. As well as in Ivory Coast³, further extensive survey and conservation effort are needed in Liberia.

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