

Internship at Chimbo Foundation

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I did my internship at Chimbo Foundation. Chimbo is a Dutch NGO that was established in 2007. Their main mission is to guarantee the long-term survival of the Western Chimpanzee in the Boé, Guinea-Bissau, through community based conservation efforts. The research facilities are located in Béli, which is one of the larger villages in the Boé.

During my internship I worked on a tree-inventory which includes trees from five different sacred forests where chimpanzees are present. In these five forests camera traps are present and pointed at so called ‘drumming trees’ where the chimpanzees carry out a unique type of drumming behavior. In total I identified 32 tree species which the chimpanzees use as a food source. The inventory contains 2327 trees, together with information about location, species, height, crown diameter and diameter at breast height. Local guides helped me to identify tree species and taught me about the local ecology.

The Boé is a remote area and is very different compared to Sweden. It is hot during the day which makes working in the field physically challenging. There is no internet and almost no cars, fresh food is limited to what grows in the area. People do not speak English and healthcare is bad. The fact that the area is undeveloped means that the nature is relatively undisturbed. A lot of birds, reptiles, insects and animals can be found. The people are very friendly, and the Fula culture is interesting to learn about.

This internship can give you a very good insight on what it is like to carry out fieldwork in a remote area. Doing a research project with Chimbo offers you the opportunity to find out what it is like to live in a developing country and learn about the challenges that the local environment and people are facing.