

Amis des Bonobos du Congo (ABC)

Friends of Bonobos in Congo

2017 Annual Report

2017 at a glance

- ▶ **Lola ya Bonobo: bonobo rehabilitation center**
 - ▶ Rescue of bonobo orphans, birth, deaths
 - ▶ Bonobo Infrastructure improvements
- ▶ **Ekolo ya Bonobo: bonobo reintroductions**
 - ▶ Preparations for (and delay with) reintroduction
 - ▶ Bio-ecological studies & potential for site expansion
- ▶ **Education program**
 - ▶ In Kinshasa & at the reintroduction site
- ▶ **Social & Community Development Initiatives**
 - ▶ Primary schools, community health centers, fishponds, nutrition, dentistry...
- ▶ **... and behind the scenes**
 - ▶ Staff changes & staff capacity building
 - ▶ Thank you to all our donors!

Lola ya Bonobo: Rehabilitation Center for rescued bonobo orphans

Aerial view of Lola ya bonobo



Lola ya Bonobo: The nursery

3 surrogate mothers: Yvonne Vela, S'arrive Nsimba, and Micheline Nzonzi, take care of the 4 smallest and most recently rescued bonobo orphans, among them 2 orphans rescued in 2017:

► **Kwango (male, 2 ½ year), received on August 4 (pictured)**

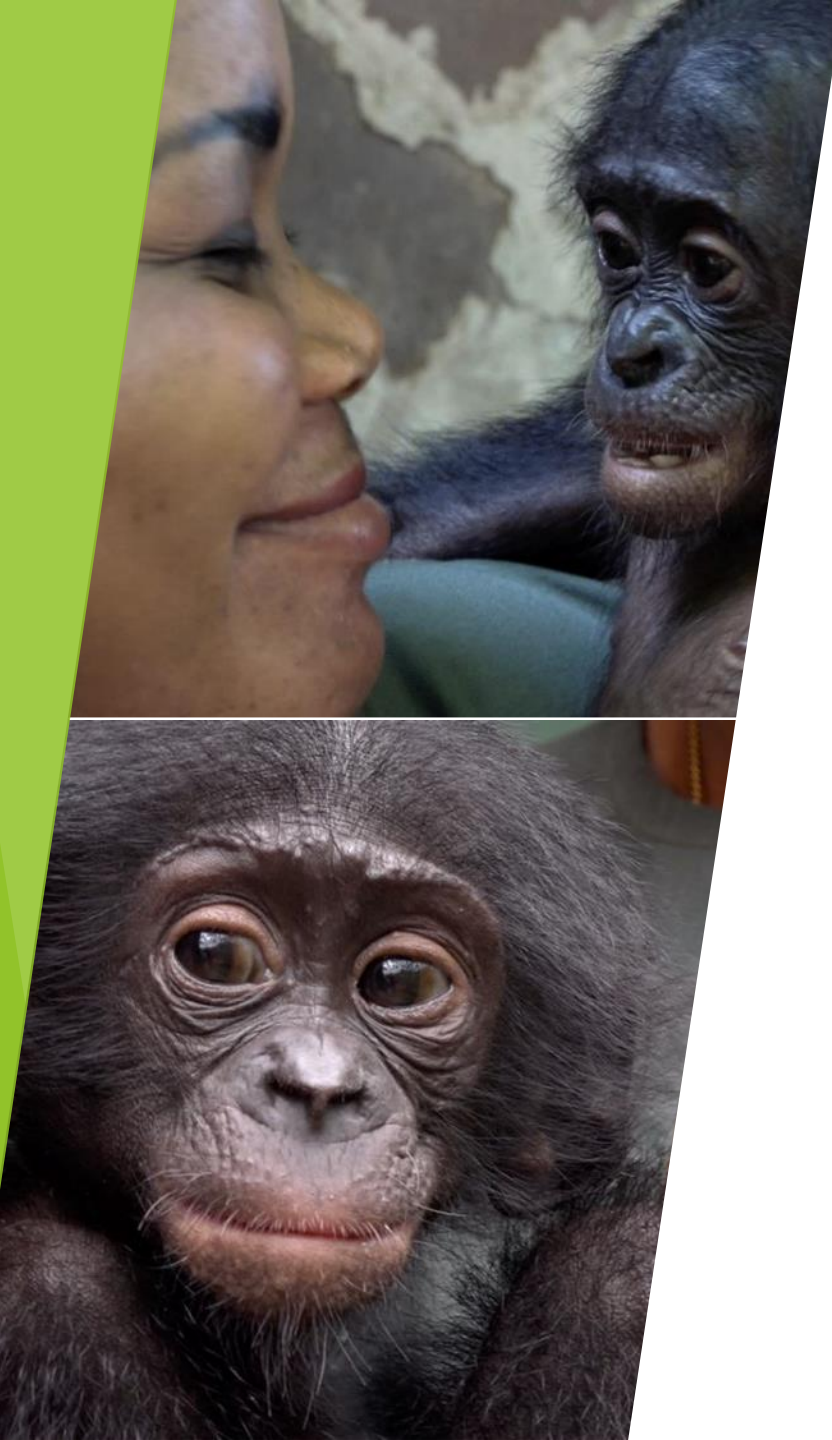
He was voluntarily handed over by the man who bought it in Bandundu. He arrived malnourished, dehydrated, with oedemas, intestinal parasites and a bullet under his scalp. His surrogate mom is Yvonne Vela.

► **Balangala (male, ~3 years), arrived at Lola ya Bonobo on November 4.**

Rescued by ABC staff in a village located 140 km from the reintroduction site. He was dehydrated and his skin was cut by a rope around his hips. ABC tracker Veronique Djea served as Balangala's surrogate mother for 2 weeks until his trip by river & plane to Kinshasa, 800km away, could be organized.

He had a severe skin infection & was kept in quarantine for 7 weeks. He was very timid and stayed close to S'arrive, his surrogate mother for a long time.





The following videos document the main steps in Balangala's rehabilitation:

- ▶ Arrival: <https://youtu.be/3lhL94Zlp90>
- ▶ Health check: <https://youtu.be/4rNHTqVshcw>
- ▶ Introduction with another orphan bonobo, Kwango: <https://youtu.be/SdMeTipAuLk>
- ▶ Integration to the nursery: <https://youtu.be/-Ev8-qtINGg>

Three births

- ▶ *Likunzi ya Lola*, male, born January 22

Mother: Bandundu (18 years), second born
(accident of contraception)

- ▶ *Elaka ya Lola*, female, born May 23

Mother: Lisala (15 years). One of the females in the reintroduction group, Lisala is already the mother of Nyota ya Lola, a 6-year-old female

- ▶ *Libaku ya Lola*, male born December 9

Mother: Sandoa (11 years), first born

Three deaths

- ▶ *Bili*, male, 16 years

died January 7, unknown causes

.

- ▶ *Mongata*, female, 7 years

died April 12, respiratory complications

- ▶ *Lomami*, male, 18 years

died July 19, cerebral hemorrhage

Elaka ya Lola

Her name means: the promise
of paradise in Lingala

Her mother, Lisala, is part of the
next reintroduction group and was
supposed to deliver after the
bonobos' transfer to Totaka Island
for their quarantine.

Her name is our commitment that
she will soon be reintroduced in
the wild !



Bonobo infrastructure

Enclosure 3 shelters

- Construction of 3rd sleeping room
- Construction of 2nd tunnel between day enclosure and night shelter, to ease the movement of bonobos in and out.

Thank you Lush-France!

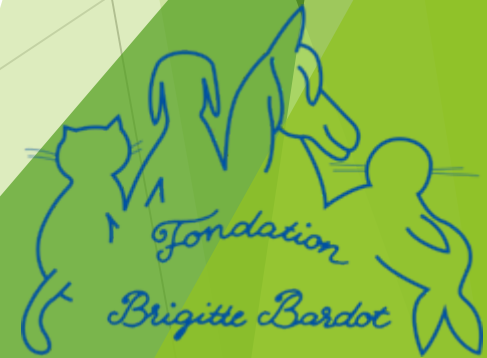
In May, Lush also organized a « Charity Pot » campaign for Lola ya Bonobo at all LUSH stores in France



Enclosure 2 shelters

- Transformation of large food storage room into 2 additional sleeping rooms
- Construction of ceiling tunnel linking the rooms to each other and to the isolation enclosure outside.
- Construction of a replacement storage facility

Thank you Foundation Brigitte Bardot!



Ekolo ya Bonobo: Reintroduction

Lukaya and Bikamwa ya Ekolo



Preparation for new reintroduction

Everything seemed ready for a February 2017 transfer:

- ❖ 13 bonobos from Enclosure 2 had been selected :
 - 5 male: Mbandaka, Yolo, Bisengo ya Lola, Kole, Mayele ya Lola
 - 8 female: Maya, Ndonga ya Lola, Muanda, Mvula ya Lola, Lisala, Nyota ya Lola, Malaika ya Lola, Masisi
- ❖ Cargo flight from Kinshasa to Basankusu obtained from UN Mission in Congo
- ❖ 9 transport crates built/restored to transfer the bonobos from Kinshasa to Basankusu and Totaka Island.
- ❖ Totaka: a 50 hectare partly submersible island located across from Ekolo ya Bonobo, ideal quarantine site
- ❖ All paperwork had been secured from Environment Ministry... **but not from ICCN** (verbal concurrence only).

Legal context of reintroduction

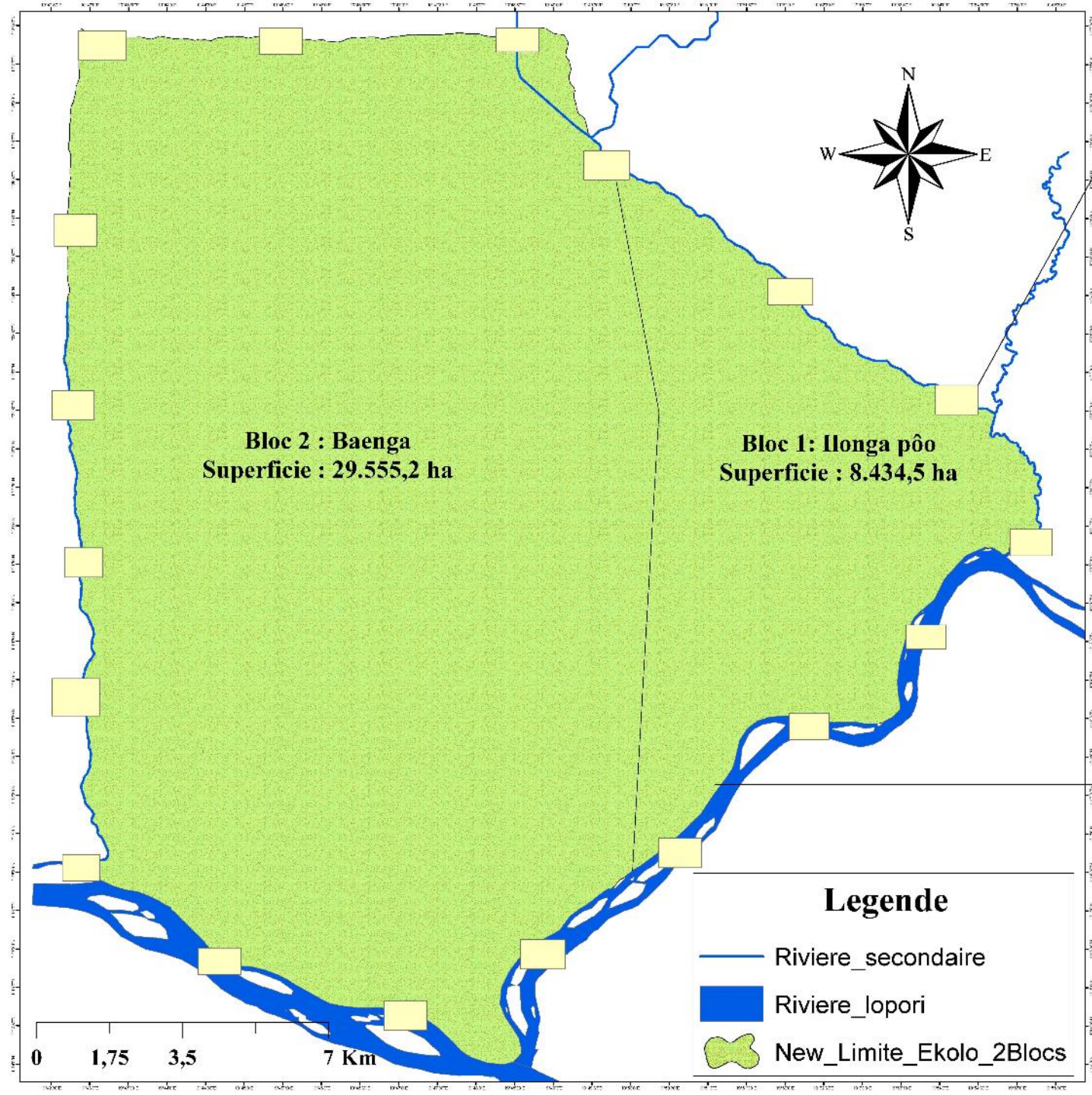
- ▶ Expanded role of Institut Congolais for Nature Conservation (ICCN) for wildlife in- and ex-situ was not reflected in original ABC framework agreement with the Environment Ministry (2002 for Lola ya Bonobo, 2008 for Ekolo ya Bonobo)
- ▶ Most of 2017 spent cultivating a new working relationship with ICCN, aiming to
 - ▶ Re-negotiate ABC framework agreement
 - ▶ Secure ICCN authorization for new bonobo reintroduction
 - ▶ Negotiate official Protected Area status for reintroduction site
- ▶ The ICCN letter endorsing the reintroduction was **signed in February 2018**

A small (1 year+) delay for the reintroduction, a huge leap forward for the project...
All is now ready for the bonobo transfer to take place in 2018!

While we were waiting....

- ▶ Bio-ecological survey of Baenga forest
- ▶ Led by Marius Kabongo: 261 km of line transects and recce over 60 days
- ▶ Forest blocks are twice the size of Ekolo ya Bonobo (30 000 ha)
- ▶ The Baenga people are willing to dedicate or sell the forest to the project
- ▶ Swamp forest with rich diversity of flora: 209 species, >100 consumed by bonobos
- ▶ Rich wildlife: 16 large mammal species, including several protected species endemic to the DRC: leopard, Aardvark, Bongo, Greek Tortoise, pangolins, bonobos...
- ▶ Signs of two bonobo groups
 - ▶ Small party = possibly the 3 released bonobos who split from the group in 2011-2012
 - ▶ Large party = certainly wild bonobos
- ▶ Reported presence of forest elephants to north and west





Ekolo ya Bonobo,
existing community
reserve belonging
to the Ilonga-Poo
(right)

Proposed expansion
into Baenga forest
(left)

Bonobo monitoring GPS and VHF collars....

Pilot conducted in 2016...

- ▶ GPS satellite (Iridium) collars, 3 data points per day
- ▶ 2 FOLLOW-IT brand: lighter, with drop-off mechanism, but never before used with Great Apes → placed on females, worked well but shorter battery life than vendor estimate
- ▶ 2 SIRTRAK brand: commonly used on Great Apes, but large & heavy → placed on males, seemed disruptive & did not function well

... decisions in 2017

Only use FOLLOW-IT collars

Mix of satellite and (cheaper) VHF collars

Only 1 data point/ day to save battery life

- ▶ 2 existing GPS collars were re-purposed
- ▶ 1 additional GPS collar was procured
- ▶ 7 VHF collars were procured



Lukaya tests a
Follow-it GPS collar

Conservation Education

Children play the “game of the hunt”
to explore one of the main threats
faced by bonobos



Conservation Education results: a very strong year

- ▶ 15,268 visitors at Lola ya Bonobo, including
 - ▶ 105 school group visits with 5,350 children
 - ▶ 39 Kindness Clubs active
 - ▶ > 9,000 spontaneous week-end visitors
- ▶ 4,546 students & teachers reached in outreach activities in Kinshasa schools & universities
- ▶ 54,184 reached in Basankusu & villages near the reintroduction site
 - ▶ 96 school visits with 17,750 students and 777 teachers participants (~ 4000 unique participants)
 - ▶ Over 25,000 audience at video/film projections with pedal-powered cinema
 - ▶ 2,403 river travelers educated while observing the reintroduced bonobos
 - ▶ Monthly shows on local radios
 - ▶ Monitoring of local bushmeat markets

Conservation Education in Kinshasa

Quality of engagement >>> number of participants

Strategic focus on Kindness Clubs

- ▶ More structured engagement with teachers who lead Kindness Clubs
- ▶ Thematic focus: e.g. the forest
- ▶ Mix of activities in schools and one visit / year at Lola ya Bonobo
- ▶ Development & strategic use of additional pedagogical resources





Conservation Education at Ekolo ya Bonobo

Improved outreach in primary schools

- ▶ Focus on 21 primary schools
- ▶ More structured engagement: 8 sessions over school year
- ▶ Team of 4 educators for cost-efficiency: concurrent sessions for all classes in target schools
- ▶ Adaptation of ABC pedagogical materials to local context

Community Development Initiatives





Claudine André inaugurates the new clinic

HEALTH

- ▶ 4 local clinics/maternalities equipped with solar lights & solar vaccination fridges
- ▶ 1 clinic (serving 10,000 people in 4 villages) build in durable materials
- ▶ Nutrition education sessions with mothers and fathers in villages
- ▶ 703 persons received free dental and nursing care by volunteers from Italy & Spain (Thank you Pina, Rosa & Beatriz!)



The two dentists, Pina & Rosa, are ready to start...



EDUCATION:

- ▶ All 21 local primary schools (3,615 students & 155 teachers) received text books, locally made desk/bench units, black boards, and teaching & learning materials.



LIVELIHOODS

- ▶ 4 demonstration fish ponds established in 3 villages; 3 family-level replications
- ▶ ~100 men and women learned to manage fish ponds
- ▶ Strong demand from other villages !



The ABC Team

This work would not have been possible without the dedication of ABC staff





Executive Director Fanny Minesi manages a solid team, almost 100% Congolese:

- ▶ 40 staff at Lola ya Bonobo
- ▶ 21 staff at Ekolo ya Bonobo

And many volunteers who contribute their time and expertise in the DRC and elsewhere



Staffing changes

- ▶ April 29 was Henriette Lubondo's last day with us. The bonobos' first surrogate mother, Henriette left Kinshasa after close to 20 years of loyal services. Farewell!
- ▶ Odile Odia Kalombo, souvenir shop keeper, resigned in April to take care of her sick mother. She is replaced by Damas in June
- ▶ Anaïs Auchatraire, volunteer from March - September (social media, dietetics oversight...)

Henriette was our first surrogate mom

Technical & scientific Department

- ▶ Cintia Garai, PhD, Director of new Technical & Scientific Department and assistant for fundraising & communications. September 2017 - March 2018
- ▶ Marius Kabongo, Ekolo ya Bonobo Technical & Scientific Coordinator. Responsible for biomonitoring & for designing & implementing all forest surveys at the reintroduction site
- ▶ Papy Ithambala Bokoli: Marius's assistant



New tools for monitoring & reporting

- ▶ APCC conference: practical orientation on Geospatial Information System (GIS), Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology System (SMART) and Cybertracker.
- ▶ Decision to procure and use these tools at Ekolo ya Bonobo

Staff capacity building

At Lola ya Bonobo

- ▶ Suzy Kwetuenda: Weekly sessions on bonobo ethology & behavior to all **bonobo caregivers**
- ▶ Delphine Berger (Swiss lab technician): worked with **veterinary team** to design / improve protocols for fecal sample analysis and for blood sample testing on site.
- ▶ Lauren Lepeletier (La Flèche zoo, France): support **dietetics team** on food stock hygiene and storage
- ▶ Self-defense (tonfa) training for 4 sanctuary **guards**

Teresa Sauquet: exposure training for **2 Lola and 3 Ekolo** educators on participatory, interactive pedagogical methods; design of qualitative impact evaluation tools.

At Ekolo ya Bonobo

- ▶ Exchange visit (11 staff) to AWF's Lomako-Yokokala Reserve. Hands-on training on Cybertracker, SMART use & patrol management.
- ▶ Marius: training of all Ekolo staff on GPS use, transect & recce, digital data collection, management and reporting tools
- ▶ Wildlife Angels assessment and orientation training of eco-guards on self-defense and implementation of anti-poaching patrols



The veterinary team.
From left: Paulin, Dephine
Berger (volunteer), Mimie and
Raphael



Thersa Sauquet &
Mathieu Ndjoni
prepare a session



Training of anti-poaching
patrols by Wildlife Angels

Thank You to all our donors !!!

This work would not have been
possible without your generous
support and commitment



Thank you!

