5.8 VETERINARY PROTOCOLS AND PROBLEMS IN PREPARATION FOR THE RELEASE OF 12 CHIMPANZEES

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- Release planned for June 2007
- Veterinary preparation in Oct/Nov 2006

12 chimps:
6 males and 6 females (2 captive born, with their mum); 8 years old to 20 years old
- 4 males moved in March to the released site (=real quarantine for them)
- 1 male moved 3 weeks before release
- 7 chimps moved the day of the release

Parasitology
- All chimps tested in October 2006 (Dr W. Bailey, Senior Parasitologist, Liverpool School of tropical Medicine), as well as CCC staff (Figure 2)
- Results negative for pathogenic parasites
- No more done in 2008, but SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE (lack of time, organization on site: vets occupied with non-vet problems)
- Chimps received ivermectin before release
Blood tests
● Blood collections done in November 2006 (1 week)
● Blood sent in Europe in December for analysis (Holland)
● Problems with transport (time needed) - conservation prior and during transport
● No more done after (logistics, opportunities, etc.)
● No significant findings (Testing followed Disease of concern protocols)

TB tests
● Done in November 2006, MOT
● 2 chimps positive (both eyes swelling)
● Tracheal wash for these 2 chimps in March 2007, sent to France: results negative (PCR, culture).
● No tests in 2008: no MOT, no fridge, etc.
Collars – VHF + ARGOS satellite

Figure 3 and 4. Fake collars were placed November 2006 on most of the release animals. Those not in the release group were seen using pieces of branch trying to give themselves a collar!

Collars on Males
- 2 of the males removed the collar, and it had to be put back on twice
- One male removed it again and decision not to try again as he did not keep the fake one
- Occasion to take blood but then? No storage, nobody was leaving the release site at this time – due to the remoteness of the area, there was no way the blood could be analysed – this was an ongoing logistical issue.
Collars on females
- Real collars were placed the day before the release
- 7 chimps in 5 hours, females put in individual transport cages
- Carried to the release site the next morning
- Good organization (the director, 2 vets, 2 keepers, 2 volunteers)
- No point to take blood few hours before release
- One female removed her collar 5 minutes before the release – was not replaced
Followup
- No close following possible (unlike the releases at HELP Congo previously) adults chimps, they hide, etc. Had to follow from distance!
- 1 chimp came back one month after release (captive born), jumped in her enclosure. Still with her new group
- 2 chimps without collar
• 1 male lost his collar in July, stays with 2 females
• 4 females+1offspring (Andrew) located, checked regularly, healthy
• 3 males followed thanks to Argos system
• Chimps will be monitored more during the dry season
• Learning from mistakes to prepare the next release! - i.e preparing from now what should be needed at the sanctuary = fridge, MOT, equipment for transport of blood, etc.
• Next release pleased planned for 2010
• Parasitology at least 2 or 3 times before release (in the 6 months before)
• Blood tests + TB tests 6 months before = time to do more investigations, to repeat tests if needed
• **Need a fridge** to keep MOT, blood samples...