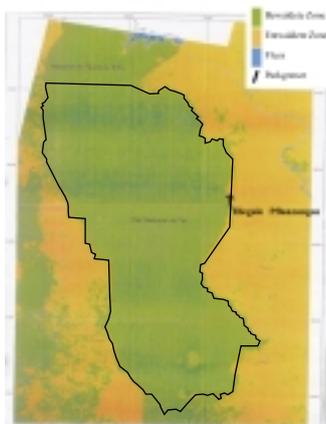


**The Tai National Park lies in the south of the Ivory Coast. With an area of 4540 km<sup>2</sup>, it is the largest protected rainforest area in West Africa since its declaration in 1972.**



A forest island in West Africa - the Tai National Park. If the Tai Forest had not been declared a National Park in 1972, there would not be any green areas left in this map today.

Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

Exploitation for the timber industry has reduced the primary forest in the Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Nigeria since 1880 to 10% of the original area. The Tai National Park is the last coherent rainforest in the whole of West Africa.

Though legally protected, the Tai Forest is currently threatened by illegal plantations, particularly along the park borders.

## Compassion, empathy, understanding

Tai Forest, February 1984:

Ethologists Christophe and Hedwige Boesch witnessed how chimpanzee Vera got into a poacher's snare with her right hand. Screaming she pulled on the cable, while other chimps moved closer. After a few minutes the cable broke.

Vera calmed down and stared at her hand. She was not bleeding. In vain, she pulled on the loose end of the cable with her teeth. Then Schubert, a mature male, approached her. Vera let him come close and showed him her injured hand.

Schubert sat with his back to the Boeschs. Bending his head down to Vera's hand he must have pushed his canines under the cable.

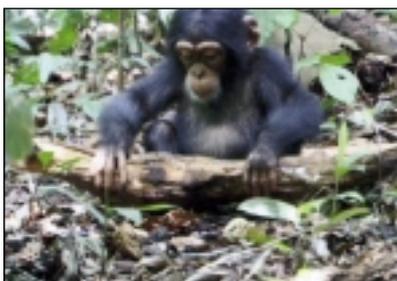
The Boeschs saw him making an abrupt movement and Vera ran off, screaming but freed from the cable.

Following this incidence, the whole group moved in opposite direction into the woods for about one hour, without stopping once.



Goma and her children queue to use Perla's rare stone hammer.

Wild Chimpanzee Foundation



Early practice: Debussy (2 years) breaking nuts.

Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

Five of the 42 mammal species in the Tai Park are on the Red List. Among them Leopard, Green colobus, Chimpanzee, Jentink's Duiker and Pygmy Hippo. The last two mentioned and the Zebra Duiker are endemic, meaning they only exist in this region. Besides the chimpanzees, ten other primate species can be found in the Tai National Park.

Although hunting (particularly the hunting of apes) is illegal or regulated in the Ivory Coast, as it is in many other African countries, wild animals are a major food resource for local people. In the Ivory Coast, the consumption of wild animal meat is twice as high as of domestic animal meat. Whole groups of chimpanzees as well as single individuals suffer a tragic fate through poaching.



Machos aching hand - injured by a poacher's snare.

Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

## Suffering and death of the female chimpanzee Pitchou

Pitchou was a young female chimp who lived with her mother Pokou and her bigger brother Darwin in the Tai forest. Like most five year old adolescents, she liked to play with the other children. Her experienced mother followed her wild play from a distance. One day, when the family moved through the woods, Pitchou felt a pinching pain in her left hand. Screaming she rolled around on the ground and tried to free her hand from the cruel grip. By mistake she had been trapped in a snare. Her fingers were caught in an iron cable - a bicycle break cable. Poachers distribute those snares in the woods on animal paths. They monitor them but often do not find them all again...

Pokou and Darwin ran towards Pitchou. Pitchou, in pain and panic, would not stop rolling around on the ground. The cable which held her hand in a powerful grip broke only after several minutes. Pitchou climbed a tree and stared at her hand. The cable cut deep into her flesh and she was bleeding severely. With every movement of her hand, waves of pain shot through her whole body. Pokou came closer but Pitchou was scared that her mother would touch the wound, and therefore avoided her.

Chimpanzees are intelligent enough to free themselves from a sling. But if you have never seen a knot before, it is difficult to open it. Small chimpanzee youngsters run straight into their mothers arms, and she removes the sling quickly. Adults find usually a way to free themselves. But adolescent chimps like Pitchou are too young to remove the sling themselves. While in panic and pain, they do not allow adults to help them either.

Pitchou could not use her hand. The cable protruded from her flesh. Some chimp youngsters live with this pain for months. Their hand swells up and turns black as if it would drop off every minute. Chimpanzee Tina lived for 11 months with a cable round her hand before it dropped off. Pitchou did not have such "luck": The wound caused by the snare got infected - the foul stench could be smelled a long way off. It was terrible for the researchers to follow the family and to see how Pitchou longingly watched the other children play. Every time another youngster came close she ran away screaming.

Pitchou died after four long weeks of suffering.