

# Three weeks of practical work for the twenty-three (23) ERAIFT GAP/GRB Master's students in the Dja Biosphere Reserve, Cameroon

Students of the 5th batch of the Professional Masters in Protected Area Management and Biosphere Reserve Management at the Ecole Régionale Post-Universitaire d'Aménagement et de Gestion Intégrés des Forêts et Territoire Tropicaux (ERAIFT) in Kinshasa, DRC, who are specialising at the Ecole de Faune de Garoua (EFG) as part of their sub-regional mobility, regularly carry out practical work in protected areas at the end of their theoretical courses. After spending three weeks in the Bénoué Biosphere Reserve in the savannah areas last October, they are currently in the Dja Biosphere Reserve in the equatorial forest for the period from 26 December 2024 to 16 January 2025. There are twenty-three (23) students in all, from eight (08) African countries (Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, CAR, Senegal and Togo). The main objective of this study trip is to enable GAP/GRB learners to link theory to practice through a good knowledge of field realities and to be able to understand the complexity of management in different ecosystems (forest/savannah).

This protected area was created in 1950 as the Dja fauna reserve and classified in 1981 as a biosphere reserve by UNESCO and finally as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. Like other protected areas, this site is subject to multiple pressures (poaching, incursions by local people in search of forest products) which threaten its integrity.



The 23 GAP/GRB students in the RB of Dja, around a Baka community in their living environment in the middle of the forest for learning by doing, thanks to cooperation between EFG and ERAIFT.

The main participants in this field mission are conservation department managers, conservation NGOs, civil society organisations, traditional and administrative authorities, etc. The teaching activities will focus on working groups, household surveys, interviews with the main stakeholders, identification of wild fauna using the field tracking system, and discussions with the manager of this protected area.

This sub-regional mobility benefited from the support of AGRINATURA through funding from the European Union. We sincerely thank these two institutions for their ongoing support for the training of protected area managers. We would also like to thank the Garoua Wildlife School for hosting these students for their professional training during the semester 3 and the conservation services of Dja reserve for their hospitality.