



COMUNE DI CALIMERA

MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE DEL SALENTO

7th scientific expedition in the Ivindo National Park (Gabon).

Duration of shipment

16/17 days including flight, in June 2016 (the exact dates of departure and arrival are not yet fixed, probably from 14th June to 1st July).

Airline company

Probably Ethiopian Air Lines or Air France.

Departure from Milan or Rome; arrival at Libreville Leon Mba airport (depending on the cost of the ticket, the airline company could change; in which case also the departure airport could be different).

The cost to reach the airport of departure is not included.

Baggage

2 bags are allowed to be loaded with a maximum weight of 23 kg each, only one hand baggage up to 10 kg. If the transfer Libreville-Makokou and return should be done by plane you have to keep in mind that you can board only one 20 kg bag and one hand bag of 8 kg, so **any additional baggage shall be considered extra baggage and the related overcharge is paid by the individual traveler** (anyway it is not too expensive: about 1.50 euros per Kg of extra baggage).

Travel Documents

For entry into Gabon a visa issued by the Embassy of Gabon is necessary; passport valid for at least 6 months from the date of departure and at least two contiguous pages free.

Health provisions

Yellow fever vaccination is mandatory, which is essential for the issuance of entry visa: **to be done at least 30 days before departure**. Recommended, as a precautionary measure, are tetanus, hepatitis A and B, typhoid and cholera vaccinations. Also malaria prophylaxis is recommended. In addition to the vaccinations, appropriate health and hygienic regulations are strictly recommended.

Language.

French is the official language.

Currency

The currency in Gabon is the CFA franc.

It is necessary to carry cash, because credit cards are not easily accepted.

In the capital, it is possible to change money at a post office at the airport exit, in some banks or simply in the hotel without increasing costs.

In Makokou, change is possible in some Lebanese supermarkets, again without great difficulty.



COMUNE DI CALIMERA

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Time difference

GMT +1.

Telephone area code

To call from Europe to Gabon the international code is: 00241.

From Gabon to European Countries, please refer to the related area codes.

The Gabonese telephone providers work well all over the country; it is suggested to buy a local telephone card at the arrival in Gabon.

Weather

The climate is equatorial, warm humid with frequent rains from October to December and from February to May/June, but there is much local variability.

From July to September great dry season, from December to January small dry season.

All over the year, temperature is from 23°C to 30-35°C.

The Gabon is covered for its 80% from dense equatorial forest.

Organizer

Museo di Storia naturale del Salento

managed by Cooperativa Sociale Naturalia (a non profit organization)

Contacts

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Fee and payment

Fee is fixed to € 2,700 per person (this amount could have small variations depending upon the better flight price; in particular, price to Makokou is quite variable).

It includes: ticket to/from Rome (or Milan or Paris)-Libreville-Makokou; hotel accommodation (Tropicana hotel) in Libreville (3 or 4 nights and related dinners. Drinks, breakfast and lunches are not included).

Accommodation in the rooms of the Ipassa Research Station in the Ivindo National Park; one meal per day (usually dinner; drinks not included); two transportations by taxi Ipassa-Makokou and back; invitation letter to enter the territory of Gabon for scientific research purpose; entry visa; permission to access and collect materials relating to your systematic group (Insects, Amphibians, Reptiles) inside the park; export permit from Gabon to Europe of the collected material (Insects, Amphibians, Reptiles), with the exception of the species included in Annexes of the Convention of Washington (CITES); insurance.



COMUNE DI CALIMERA

MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE DEL SALENTO

Payment of a first quote equal to 30% of the fee (€ 900) to be paid before 28th February 2016, as confirmation of participation. The remaining amount should be paid before 30th April 2016 on the following Bank account:

Cooperativa Naturalia

BIC Swift UNCRITM1TM1

IBAN IT 10 D 02008 79471 000000511840

Unicredit Banca, ag. di Calimera,

Reason: fee Gabon 2016.

On request, invoice is issued with the addition of 4%.

Renunciation

The cancellation of the journey booking before the 28th February 2016, gives entitlement to the reimbursement planned by the travel agency. The MSNS will hold for itself the only amount already spent and not refundable (i.e., entry visa; assurance; air ticket Libreville-Makokou...).

The cancellation after the 28th February gives to the MSNS rights to hold the 60% of the remaining amount as reimbursement of the already spent or to be spent sum.

Before 28th February, however, the renouncer could try to be replaced by a new participant. In that case, the MSNS will transfer for free the documentation and permits to the new name (except non refundable expenses, i.e., visa or name changing on the ticket). The sums will be reimbursed from the renouncer directly to the new entry by mean of direct agreements between the two.

Since the aim of the journey is **non-profit** we ask the respect of the above rules, otherwise the expedition will turn into a disbursement to which the MSNS could not face, with the consequent failure of the mission.

Purpose of the expedition

The Museo di Storia naturale del Salento (MSNS) signed an international convention with the CENAREST (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique), whose Parks Commission manages the activities in the protected areas and generally on the territory of Gabon. The aim of the agreement is the knowledge and material exchange between the two bodies (MSNS and CENAREST), the improvement of the scientific research in Gabon and the training of the local students.

In agreements with these intentions, the MSNS organizes the present expedition with the primary purpose to collect and classify Insects, Reptiles and Amphibians, to provide the CENAREST the tools to know and protect the Gabonese biodiversity.

Thanks to the Convention, the MSNS obtains from ANPN (Agence Nationale des Parcs nationaux) and from CENAREST the collecting permit inside the Ivindo National Parck, and from the Ministry of Water and Forest the export permit of the collected material. This material must necessarily be dead (IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO EXPORT LIVE SPECIMENS – ANY VIOLATION TO THIS PROVISION WILL BE THE SOLE RESPONSABILITY OF THE OFFENDER).

After the conclusion of the expedition (within two months), a report is kindly requested on collecting methods, approximated number of collected specimens, systematic groups (at least at the rank of order or



COMUNE DI CALIMERA

MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE DEL SALENTO

family), the perspectives for new researches on that material (about systematic, morphology, ecology, other), a realistic prediction for results.

In addition, a donation to the MSNS of a part of the collection is requested to each participant, better if already prepared (at the option of the researcher) (the material will be stored in the collections of the MSNS with the relevant *legit* and partially destined to the CENAREST to constitute a small local collection).

In the case of description of new taxa, the deposit in the MSNS collection of few specimens of the typical series is warmly desired.

In all the scientific or popular papers, the citation of the MSNS, CENAREST and ANPN is required in the acknowledgements.

Trip description

Arrival in Libreville in June (probably on 16th) and hotel accommodation (Tropicana hotel offers decent rooms with air conditioning, which not always works, and a very beautiful beach).

Two nights and departure to Makokou by plane (if the plane will not flying – sometimes the airport in Makokou is closed – the travel will continue by off road cars or bus. This allows to cut all the Gabon and observe the wonderful forest: this solution has been already successfully tested several times).

Arriving at evening in Makokou on 19th and immediate transfer to the Ipassa Research Station: the accommodations are made by sober and comfortable masonry, some of which with air conditioning (normally not necessary, since the temperature at night is around 24°C, and during the day rarely exceeds 30°); the windows are equipped with mosquito net, which, however, is often in poor condition (it is recommended to carry some tape to patch it the best).

The buildings in Ipassa have a wide living room, a kitchen (except for the “Case de passage”), two or three single or double bedrooms, one or two bathrooms.

Tap water is not always present, in this case it is substituted by a transportation of tanks, with which you should do everything.

For a complete bath, if the shower does not work, there is a nice small river at about 1 Km far from Ipassa.

It is strictly recommended to drink only bottled water purchasable in Makokou according with oneself needs (it is recommended also to use bottled water only for drinking and brushing your teeth: drinking water in Africa is quite expensive, do not use for shower!).

The reception for telephone communications from Gabon to Italy and probably to the remaining Europe is good, but the use of internet in Ipassa presents problems related to a rather slow connection. There is, however, the possibility to connect quite well in Makokou at cheap price.

It is recommended to buy in Libreville a rechargeable local phone card, because the calls through European companies are extremely expensive.

The research station is equipped with library, laboratories (very basic), canteen with kitchen.

The registration fee includes a meal per day, which, for the sake of collecting activities, I think it is better to fix around 19.00. Everyone, however, can manage as he likes and can eat in another time or not eating at all. The food (fruit, bread and canned variety, milk, biscuits, etc..) for quick snacks during the day should be purchased in Makokou on its own account (if you wish, Makokou also offers the option of eating in a real



COMUNE DI CALIMERA

MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE DEL SALENTO

restaurant, but including transfers, meals and taxi search, if all goes well, you lose three hours (during which you may have picked up 7-8 species new to science, so... everyone will decide as he prefers).

Makokou is about 12 km far from Ipassa and can be reached, as well as on foot, with a taxi that must be called by phone, so one must take into account that the driver can be busy and that in any case it will take some time (30-60 min., if all goes well) before it reaches Ipassa. In addition, the taxi race costs twice, because the taxi has to come to Ipassa alone and then return to Makokou with you. The good news is that a vehicle can carries 4-5 people who can share the cost (about 10 € coming to Ipassa, empty, and going to Makokou. The participation fee includes two rides, that is € 20, which, if well managed – i.e. , traveling in a group – could be enough for the whole stay).

Once arrived in Ipassa, you can manage in various ways: to explore and collect in front of the house and its surroundings; follow the roads that branch off from the station to the forest, to degraded or cultivated areas, to a not very distant Bai (a clearing of uncertain origin and nature in the forest, with muddy bottom and likely high number of endemic species); cross the Ivindo from Loa Loa (a nearby village) negotiating the cost with local fishermen or the curator of the park and to enter into an extremely dense primary forest; organize stays in the bungalow of the Kongou falls (about three hours in the pirogue, with possibility to carry a generator – rather high costs to be agreed with the curator of the park). While moving around the station is preferable to be at least two people, especially at night (the leopard hunts mostly at night). It is possible (but not sure) that we have at our disposal a guide for a fee with a good knowledge of botany.

Plane or bus to Libreville probably on 29th June; accomodation at Tropicana hotel and leaving on 30th June or 1st July to Europe.

Please note

The MSNS is not a travel agency, so it is not liable for mistakes in the schedules or any changes to the program. It just provides the opportunity to collect, export, and study material in areas off-limits to the collector not tied to any scientific institution and it aims to increase its scientific collections in order to make them available to the scientific world.

It assumes no liability for damage or injury to persons due to accidents and not due to its direct responsibility. It is not responsible for incorrect or offensive behavior by a member of the expedition. If the limits of the insurance for the shipment should not be considered appropriate by the participants, they are kindly requested to provide themselves a supplementary insurance policy.



COMUNE DI CALIMERA

MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE DEL SALENTO

Recommended equipments

- Mosquito-net to be fixed on the bed to protect from mosquitoes
- Electric tools and body sprays against mosquitoes (you can buy at Makokou the environment sprays, so it is unnecessary to carry them from Europe)
- Medicines: it is recommend that you bring along the medicines you normally use and eventually some drugs of first necessity as a broad-spectrum antibiotic, antibiotic eye drops, an antihistamine cream, an analgesic and an antipyretic, a drug for the treatment of intestinal infections and problems, anti-diarrheal, a cortisone. In any case, in Makokou there is a new hospital and pharmacies have everything you need, so you do not need to be overloaded with disinfectant, bandages, gauze, and common medicines. Do not forget eventually a sunscreen for skin and lips with a high protective value
- 1 pocket rain jacket
- Flashlight (better a head torch)
- Light and summer wear
- It is advisable to carry an adequate supply of photographic material, which can be difficult to find on site or particularly expensive. Bring spare batteries, memory cards and what you need to clean the camera and lenses.
- Electrical adapter with French attack

N.B.

- This program is subject to small variations, which will be promptly communicate to you.
- Those who have decided to join the trip will receive a form to fill out to formalize the agreement.
- You will be required to share a double bed if necessary; the mandatory request of sleeping in a single bed could increase the fee cost (about 120 euros).
- The journey may be cancelled due to severe causes (health reasons or natural disaster) or to the failure to achieve the minimum number of 8 participants. In that case the fee will be refunded except for the non refundable expenses (i.e., entry visa cost, share of the ticket retained by the travel agency).
- The cancellation of the trip for the failure to achieve the minimum number of participants entitles you to a full refund.