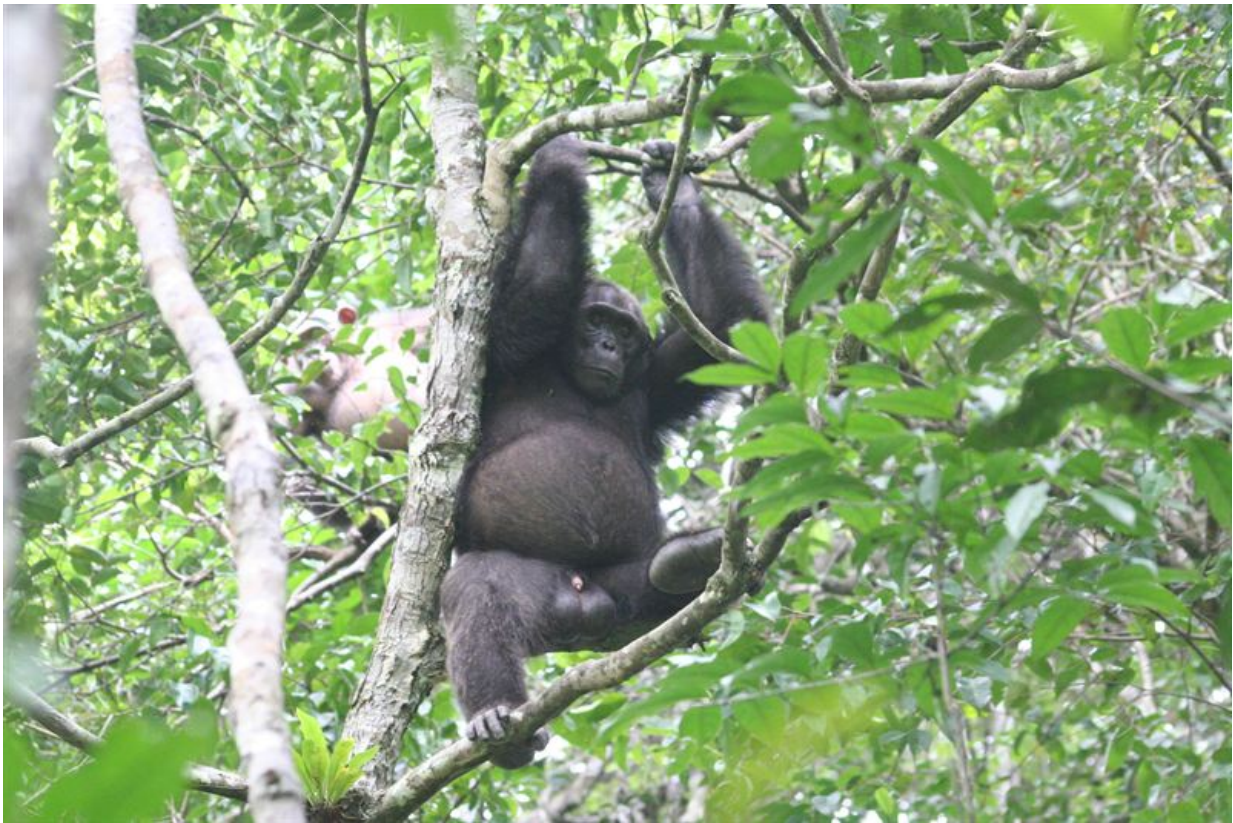


Drones could contribute to saving endangered chimpanzees

July 23 2015



Credit: Liverpool John Moores University

A new study has revealed that drones fitted with a standard camera are able to detect chimpanzee nests, saving conservation researchers hours of ground work.

Conservationists can now use drones to map chimpanzee distribution frequently in remote areas and detect changes at a much faster rate than with traditional survey methods. They can then detect areas where population levels of the [endangered species](#) are low.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has classed [chimpanzees](#) as endangered as their population has been reduced significantly in the past 20 to 30 years. In order to save them , it is essential to monitor areas where they live.

Drones (sometimes also referred to as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) provide the ideal solution as the [wild chimpanzees](#) they live in low densities and are very shy towards humans. The drone used in this study is a low-cost and easy-to-use model. The drone can obtain a large number of photos during its 20 minute flight in an area that would take researchers on the ground many hours to cover.

Liverpool John Moores University's Professor Serge Wich, who co-authored the study alongside Alexander van Andel from IUCN Netherlands commented:

"The most commonly used method to survey great ape populations is counting nests during ground surveys as they build a new nest each night but these ground surveys do not occur frequently enough with due time and costs involved.

"So far, aerial [drone](#) surveys have successfully detected nests of orangutans, but before this study it was unknown if this technology would work for African apes, which often construct their nest lower below the canopy. This study shows that drones are also a promising tool to assist African ape conservation."

Alexander van Andel added: "The results of this study show that drones

can be a new tool to determine faster whether chimpanzees are present in a certain area. In addition the study shows that habitat suitability can be determined by drones by identifying tree species which are important in the chimpanzee diet."



Credit: Liverpool John Moores University

More information: *American Journal of Primatology* Article first published online: 14 JUL 2015. DOI: 10.1002/ajp.22446

Provided by Liverpool John Moores University

Citation: Drones could contribute to saving endangered chimpanzees (2015, July 23) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-07-drones-contribute-endangered-chimpanzees.html>

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