

Year End 2023 - Update from Drill Ranch, Nigeria



photo by Jessica Gunson of Group 7 with dominant male Goremus

An unusual year - kicking off with **chaos**, and **closing with joy** and new mouths to feed.....

The Cash Crisis: From January-April there was virtually **no cash nationwide**; Nigeria's Central Bank invalidated the Naira ₦ currency then failed to print enough new notes. We waited daily with huge crowds outside guarded bank doors, hoping in vain to withdraw cash. Drill Ranch is among the largest income sources for our communities, buying over **₦100,000 in farm & forest produce daily to feed the animals**. Without cash, we scrambled to buy food, and **invented a scrip** farmers could cash with village shopkeepers who we reimbursed by bank transfer. As 2023 draws to a close, banks again are refusing to release cash; we don't know why.

Elections: Amid the cash crisis were **6 weeks of presidential & state elections**. Nigeria has a new president and Cross River State a new Governor...too soon to comment. Drill Ranch organized schedules so all staff could vote, an oft-challenging ordeal for Nigerians.

New Roof & Renovations Calabar: As if no cash & elections weren't enough, we ripped the roof off the Drill Ranch house/office, then the **rains came early**, 2 cm+/day!! We were out of the house, living in the carport for months. It wasn't easy but once back indoors in May, with all new roof, wiring, floors, raised ceilings, enlarged kitchen & solar system, the result was worth waiting for; we can again hold meetings inside with no shame. Extra thanks to Rettet den Drill!



Liza, Dauda & Zack on a typical rainy evening under our only roof - the carport - our kitchen, dining room, office, living & meeting room for months - cheers!



The beautiful, restored house! We moved back in by May; most furniture, books, maps & 32 years of project history survived the continuous deluge.



Cooperation Against Wildlife Trafficking:

Collaborating with **Nigeria Customs Service**, international NGOs Focused Conservation and Wildlife Justice Commission, we received **2 infant chimpanzees** and an **infant gorilla** confiscated from illegal trade. We're stewards for gorilla "Bili" until she is repatriated to a recognized gorilla sanctuary in a country where her subspecies occurs. The little chimpanzees will eventually join our group in the forest at Afi Mountain.

We welcomed **29 African Grey parrots**, **19 Senegal parrots** & **2 rose-ring parakeets** for care & rehab. Confiscated by authorities from illegal trafficking, the birds were cared for at Okomu National Park (Edo State) and Greenfingers Initiative, Lagos. We thank the **World Parrot Trust**, **Nigerian Conservation Foundation**, **Greenfingers** and **Nigeria National Park Service** for successful collaboration! The birds will be released to the wild once healthy and fully feathered.



Nigeria Customs Police rescue "Bili" from smugglers.

Transnational Zoonosis Awareness Campaign: ProWildlife & GIZ are funding Drill Ranch and 3 other African sanctuaries to undertake a year-long, multi-media zoonosis awareness campaign. The message: **protect human health, avoid bushmeat** and handling wild animals - the desired result is animals are respected in their wild homes, and humans avoid Ebola and other transmissible disease. Drill Ranch veterinarian **Dauda Onawola** leads our campaign; he's a **fantastic inspiration** for all participants with posters, leaflets, caps, calendars, radio programs, rallies, and a nationwide network of young Nigerian "ambassadors".



National Youth Service Corpers at a Zoonosis rally.

Drill Ranch Afi Veterinary Building:



Our **multi-year effort** to complete a new Afi vet building is **finally wrapped up** - including electricity, ceiling fans, surgery, refrigeration, pharmaceutical & supply storage, and a dedicated room for extended care, observation and treatment. **Many thanks** for extra help from Rettet den Drill and the German zoo community.

James Emmanuel, Jana Lopez and Zack examine "Kashomba" under anesthesia after he broke his leg in a fall. With 2 months care and restricted movement, his leg fully healed!

Our thanks to MedLED Headlights of Portland, Oregon, for donation of fine surgical head lamps.

While we remain optimistic, the



Like drills, the Cross River Squirrel Galago (a primate) is native only to our Cross-Sanaga Faunal Region.

challenges facing Africa's forests & wildlife continue to increase. With your help, we believe we can continue to meet those challenges in our small corner of Africa with exceptionally high, unique biodiversity. It's more important than ever to try for every species and we need your help. Thank you and all best for 2024!



Donations are fully tax deductible. Mail a **check** to Pandrillus Foundation, P.O. Box 10082, Portland, OR 97296, or **online** at <https://www.pandrillus.org/contact/donate/> **We thank you!!**