signals would seem attributable to decision-making. Tufted capuchins give different calls in re-
sponse to aerial and terrestrial predators. While the aerial alarm is context-specific (elicited only
by aerial stimuli), the terrestrial alarm is given in other contexts, including ‘deceptive’ uses during
feeding, resulting in a decreased response rate to the latter in feeding contexts. To determine if
variation in responses to terrestrial alarms is better explained by variation in either meaning at-
tribution or decision-making, I conducted a playback experiment with wild capuchins in Iguazu,
Argentina. Specifically, I played back aerial alarms in competitive contexts and non-competitive
contexts to determine if responses vary similarly to those of the less specific terrestrial alarm.
Preliminary results suggest that receivers respond less strongly to the aerial alarm in competitive
contexts relative to non-competitive contexts. Given that such trends are better explained as
variation in decision-making, the reduced response rate to terrestrial alarms likely also results
from a decision to ignore signals during feeding, rather than from receivers attributing different
meanings to deceptive signals.

Herbaceous Plant Availability and Use by Western Lowland Gorillas
in South East Cameroon

Jacob Willie a, Nikki Tagg b, Charles-Albert Petre b,c, Zjef Pereboom b, Luc Lens a

a Terrestrial Ecology Unit, Ghent University, Ghent, b Centre for Research and Conservation,
Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, Antwerp, and c Laboratoire de Forsterie des Régions
Tropicales et Subtropicales, Université de Liège, Liège, Belgium
E-Mail: jacob.fils.willie@gmail.com

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The ecological patterns and the use of herbs were studied in a forest site in south east Cam-
ero to assess the influence of ecological factors on these resources and establish a link between
environmental variables and herb availability and use by gorillas. Herbs were monitored in 250
4-m² plots to investigate possible influences of environmental factors on their availability. Nests
built by gorillas were monitored during an extended period to identify the plant species used in
their construction and classify them in terms of preference. Herbs of the families Marantaceae
and Zingiberaceae were preferentially used by gorillas, and light seemed to be the limiting factor
to plants of these families. The spatial variability in the magnitude of abiotic factors translated to
spatial variations in the community structure of herbs. Environmental gradients influenced go-
rilla ranging patterns, as they commonly built nests and harvested their herb foods in habitats
with high herb species diversity, many large-sized herb stems, more pronounced herb clumps and
high herb stem density. Recently, disturbed forest areas and less-accessible swamps which are
characterised by a limited visibility and a high density of herbs can play a crucial role in the ecol-
ogy and conservation of gorillas as they provide abundant and clumped nest-building materials,
year-round nutrient-rich herbs and natural protection from hunters. Although light appears to
be an important factor for herb availability, soil properties and climatic variables potentially rep-
resent important drivers. Conservation-applied research efforts should therefore focus on issues
such as the effect of climate change on gorilla plant resources and the impact of logging-induced
alterations of canopy and forest soil properties on herbs.