**Linking past to present: resuming research at Nkula park (Luki, DR Congo) after decades of forest growth**

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The Luki Biosphere Reserve (33,000ha) is part of semi-deciduous tropical rainforest situated at the southernmost edge of the Mayombe forest near the Atlantic Ocean (western D.R. Congo). It was established in the 1940’s by the INEAC (Institut National des Etudes Agronomiques du Congo belge) and extensively used from 1947 until 1960 to conduct several forestry experiments. In order to improve knowledge on tropical forest species, the Nkula park (170ha) with additional research station was developed to study (i) tree autecology, (ii) impact of microclimate on forest formation, and (iii) tree growth and phenology. From 1948 until 1957, the park was weekly investigated by monitoring the phenology of 6300 trees and shrubs. Moreover, tree growth (dbh) was periodically recorded and herbarium specimens were made. Afterwards, no significant research was carried out and the obtained results remained unpublished. Recently, an international scientific collaboration was set up with INERA (the successor of INEAC) and preserved documents with phenological data were digitized and analysed. Moreover forest research at Nkula park was resumed by i) installing monitoring equipment, ii) tracking tree phenology, iii) re-establishing the trails and iv) retrieving 500 trees that were observed in the 1940’s. The recovery of these individual trees provides a unique opportunity to conduct spatio-temporal forestry analyses. Historical plant functional trait data can be compared to newly measured traits and the possible observed chronological variation can be correlated with available climatic data. As a result, this will enable us to elucidate the response of tropical forests to a changing environment.