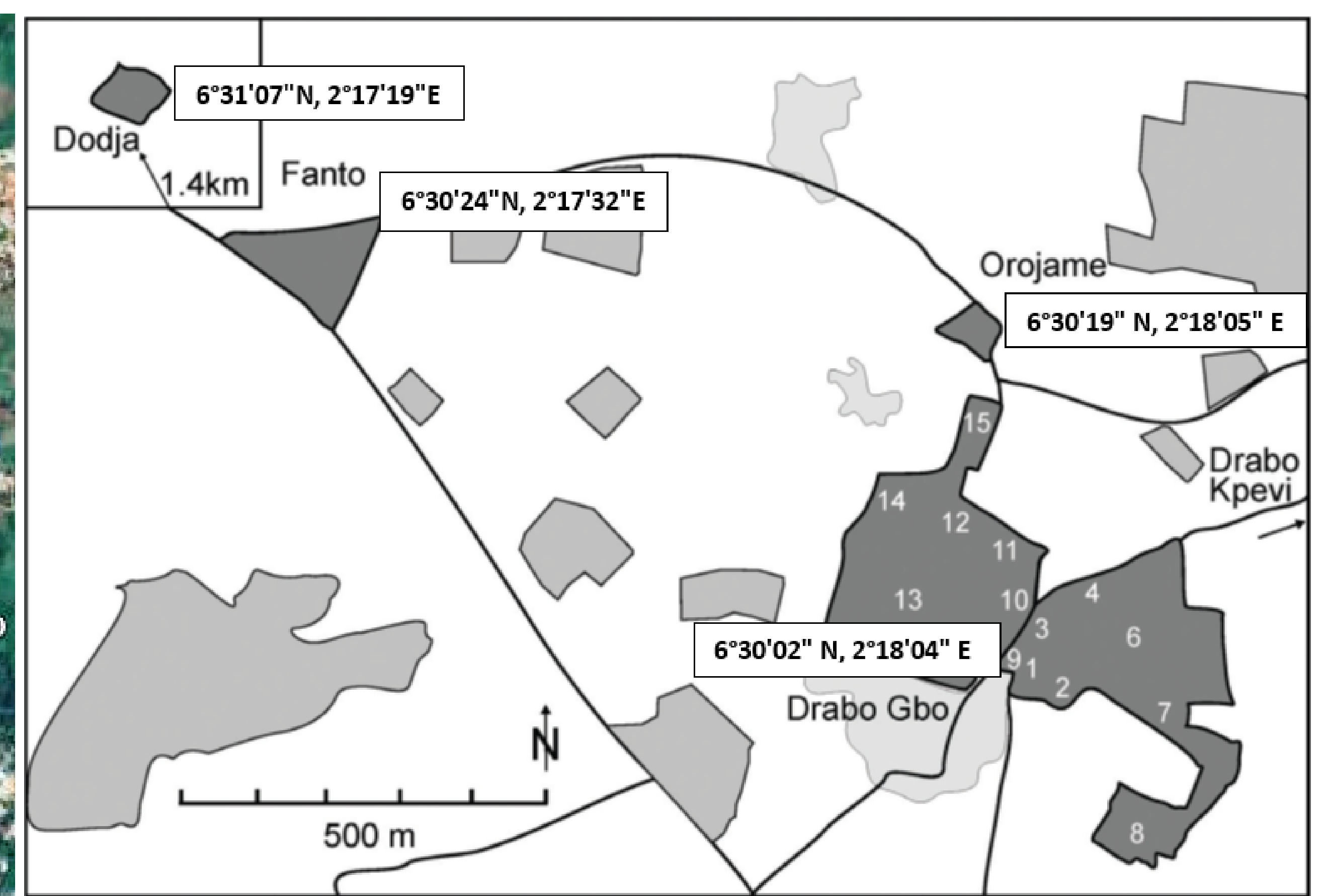
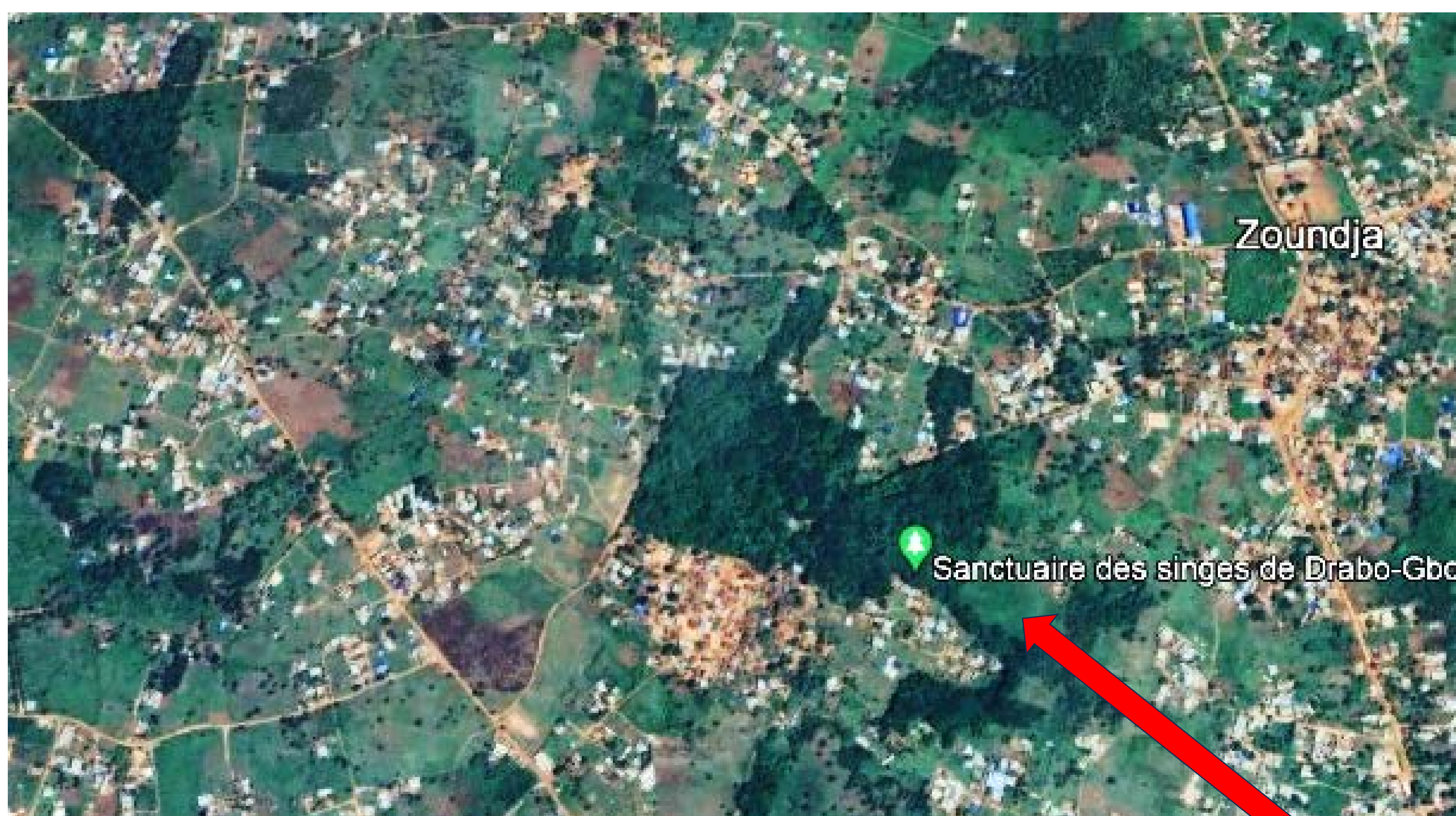


Creation of the ‘Sanctuaire des Singes’

The ‘Sanctuaire des singes’, 15 km north of Cotonou in the village of Drabo Gbo, was established in 1996. During the following ten years, a total of 14 ha of maize fields, meadows, fallow fields, or teak forests were acquired with title deeds and gradually transformed into rain forest. For this, rare plants from the forests in the south of Benin were collected, raised in a nursery and transplanted into the forest. Today, this is the richest forest in Benin with about 600 species of plants, among which 250 were introduced. Since its beginning, the sanctuary includes two old sacred forests, the Orojamè and the sacred forest of Dodja (see map), which are islands of biodiversity. The sanctuary also shelters a rich fauna, with five species of monkeys, a duiker, four mongooses, 80 species of birds, etc.

Since 2014, the ‘Sanctuaire des singes’ belongs to IITA, which integrated it into its portfolio, as approved by the Benin government.



How to find us: On Google Maps insert ‘Sanctuaire des Singes de Drabo-Gbo’

Sacred forests are islands of biodiversity: They cover less than 2% of Benin, but harbour 20% of the flora and 64% of all threatened plants.

Here Orojamè, part of the ‘Sanctuaire’, which was established in 1996.



With colleagues from the University of Abomey-Calavi, like Aristide Adomou, we are collecting rare plants.



Red-bellied monkey: Beginning with a female from the Dantokpa market in 1994, and a dozen more from the floodplain of the Ouémé, a total of 40 monkeys can now be observed in the sanctuary. This species, which is confined to south Benin, is critically endangered. It offers the major attraction for the numerous visitors of the sanctuary.



Rich vodun culture of Drabo Gbo on display during a funeral. In the past, vodun cults were responsible for protecting these forest patches as sites for their gods.

Why is the 'Sanctuaire des singes' important for IITA and Benin?

The sanctuary contributes to safe-guarding the flora and fauna of Benin, particularly the red-bellied monkey, 57 endangered plants that are on the Red List of Benin, ten of them critically endangered.

Biodiversity is important for the sustainability of a productive agriculture. The sanctuary contributes to this goal and offers a framework for corresponding research.



Why visit the 'Sanctuaire des Singes'?

The sanctuary offers a unique opportunity to see the red-bellied monkey and to observe first hand the rehabilitation of a rain forest. It is rather easily accessible, and frequently visited by schools and tourists. It also offers the possibility to appreciate the role of vodun in the management of a small village.

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<https://www.facebook.com/people/Sanctuaire-des-singes-de-Drabo-Gbo-de-IITA-Benin/100081911083232/>

