Observing insects
Traditional entomological knowledge and Adaptive Responses
Of Congo Basin Hunter-Gatherers to Climate Change

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Introduction: tropical rainforests and climate change
Impacts of climate change on tropical rainforests are lesser known than impacts on other biomes. Effects of climate change are overshadowed by deforestation, which constitutes a much heavier threat on rainforests. Because the incidence of climate change in tropical forests is subtle and poorly understood, we need to investigate forest dwellers’ perceptions with much greater attention.

Biotemporal signals: an innovative approach to local perceptions of climate change
Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) rely on many converging biotemporal signals—be they visual, sonorous, olfactory, tactile, etc.—upon which they organize the calendar of their activities and decide to invest in some activities and not in others. Among the various sources of biotemporal signals that forest dwellers refer to, insects are probably the most accurate and the most fascinating. Insects are sensitive to very subtle fluctuations of climatic conditions humans cannot perceive.

Conclusion
By failing to take account of traditional knowledge and to share in a meaningful way the findings of scientific research, the current international policy making environment on climate change ignores much available knowledge and potential, practical adaptive solutions.

We advocate in favor of involving IPLCs into the process of assessing the poorly visible impacts of climate change on tropical forests. Through their extensive knowledge and knowledge, IPLCs can play a determining role as ‘sentinels’ by providing first-hand, accurate observations and supplementing data that dramatically fail to incorporate anthropological data into the elaboration of predictive models of climate change.

Further readings