



Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary: Research and Ecotourism

Tiwai Island Field Research Station

Rules and Regulations for Researchers

1. Purpose of this document

The “rules and regulations” serve two purposes:

- a) Protect the well-being of you, the Researcher.
- b) Protect the well-being of other users of the facilities.

2. Rules and regulations

Tiwai Island Research Station is in a relatively remote location and infrastructure in Sierra Leone is not well advanced, by international standards. However, the Island has an enviable safety record and we hope to keep it that way. If you have any suggestions as to how these rules and regulations may be improved please contact the following:

- Professor Richard Wadsworth on: rwadsworth@njala.edu.sl +232 79 675004
- Professor Aiah Lebbie on: aiahlebbie@gmail.com +232 78. 615158
- PC Alameen Kanneh on: pckanneh0530@gmail.com +232 76 364429
- Tommy Garnett on: tgarnett@efasl.org +232 76 684832

Agreeing to these rules and regulations forms an implicit part of the MoU (memorandum of understanding) between you, the researcher, and the Research Station.

2a) Your health

Make sure you have every inoculation you can think of, and carry a **First Aid** and/or **Medical kit**, which should especially contain anti-malarials. There are many dangerous tropical diseases, so you have to take your health seriously. There are reasonable medical facilities in Bo (run by the NGO Mercy Ships, although this is only staffed during their frequent “campaigns”), otherwise, you will have to go to Freetown for anything beyond the minor complaint. The various High Commissions and Embassies regularly review what medical facilities are available in Freetown and the provinces. If you feel unwell, there is nothing resembling an ambulance service (either public or private) so it might be as well to start moving towards a treatment center while you are still coherent.

Note that there are many common and fairly innocuous human diseases (e.g. colds, flu), which can be passed onto other primates where they can cause much more serious reactions than in humans.

2b) Dehydration / heat stroke

Despite being in the forest and in the shade, it is quite easy to become dehydrated; always ensure that you have sufficient water with you. For strenuous activity, the recommendation is half a liter of water every half hour.

2c) Essential equipment

Be like a scout and be prepared – carry plenty of water, a penknife, GPS, compass, binoculars, whistle, mobile phone (although unlikely to be coverage they do double up as a torch) and a first aid kit.

2d) Getting lost

Please inform your colleagues and the site manager where you intend to work each day and when you intend to be back. It is remarkably easy to become disorientated if you leave the trail system and progress through the undergrowth is physically impossible in some places without cutting a trail. Several researchers have ended up sleeping in the forest after wanting “just one more sample” - the experience was distinctly uncomfortable but was probably not particularly dangerous. If you disappear, search parties from the local communities can be organized (provided someone realizes that you are missing), but that will not happen before the next morning at the very earliest. In the unlikely event that you have a cell phone (mobile phone) coverage about the only useful thing you can tell anyone is your GPS coordinates (saying “I’m just by a big tree” isn’t going to help ...).

2e) Working at night

Please inform your colleagues and the site manager if you intend to do field work at night. A number of hazards, (trips, falls, etc.) is more likely at night. It is very easy to become disorientated at night.

Disturbing animals at night may make them more vulnerable to predation or other mishap and may, therefore, be subject to more scrutiny by the research committee.

2f) Working on or by the river

A distressingly high number of drownings occur each year in Sierra Leone. The Moa is known to claim several victims each year. If you get into trouble there is not much chance of anyone being around to help you. There are rocks, snags, pools, rapids, discarded nets and lines, a whole range of hazards to add to your problems of fast flowing water with limited visibility. Use a life jacket. Tell your colleagues and the site manager where you will be working and when you intend to be back.

2g) Animal health

It probably is not wise to approach any dead or dying animal, as it may indicate an outbreak or epidemic of something. It would be unusual to find or see one, however, in the unlikely event that you do find one, please contact the site manager or contact any or all of the following:

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2h) Traps, snares, cartridge shells, sound of gunshots

The island is a non-hunting reserve; any sign of hunting please contact the site manager and / or the following:

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Note that nets are used for hunting as well as fishing; but it probably isn't wise to confront any hunters encountered.

2i) Diamond mining

Artisanal mining is not mentioned in the legislation covering the Island, but the standing and generally, accepted rule is that mining of any sort is not permitted on the island. Researchers are thus advised to report any sighting of mining activities, while avoiding such sites or expressing a public opinion on the matter. Please contact the site manager and / or:

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2j) Introduced species

Please ensure that all equipment carried onto the island is clear of soil and other debris that may introduce new species to the island. While the vegetation has been significantly altered by the activities of humans, we would prefer if any further species (parasites, pathogens, weeds etc.) made it to the island by their own efforts.

2k) Problems with infrastructure

Problems with infrastructure on site (failure of electricity or water supply, problems with the building or fittings) should be reported to the site manager and any or all of the following:

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2l) Disposal of waste

- **Plastic and glass bottles**, jars, boxes etc. can all be reused in the local communities as insect proof storage for seeds, etc.
- **Broken bottles**, food wrappings, tin foil, cling film etc. should be compacted and transported off island for disposal.
- **Metal items**, tin cans etc. are not particularly reusable but should be placed in the appropriate storage location until they can be recycled (in some parts of the country aluminum scrap is recast as cooking pots and spoons).
- **Organic waste** should be composted.
- **Human waste** – please use the appropriate facilities, noting that it is strongly recommended that **people do not defecate in any primate research or conservation**

area because of this risk of disease transmission to the wild animals. This should especially apply in a protected area like Tiwai Island. If you do have to do this away from camp you should either carry your stools back to camp or dig a proper hole and bury.

- **Chemical waste** of any sort should be put back into its original containers and shipped off island for proper disposal.

3. Further information

For further information, comments etc. please contact:

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