

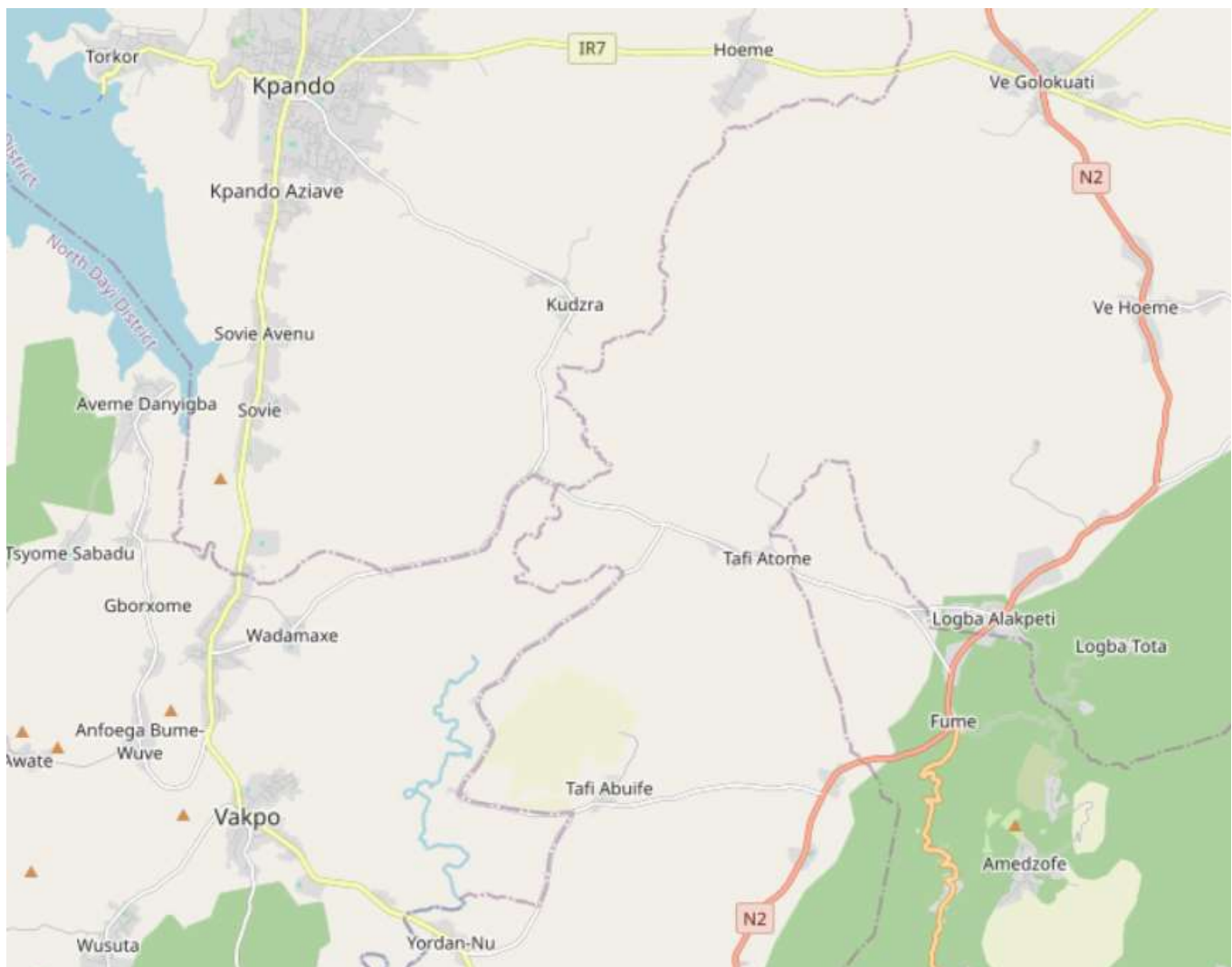
- Monkey Sanctuary located in the village of Tafi Atome
- More than 300 endangered playful True Mona monkeys
- The monkeys are divided into groups with each their own leader
- The monkeys are believed to be the messengers to the Gods
- Indigenous tropical forest with high floral concentration
- Guided walk with different species of trees, birds and medicinal plants



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- Tafi-Atome Monkey Sanctuary is home to more than 300 of endangered True Mona monkeys.
- It is a beautiful and quiet village surrounded by thick forest with luxuriant vegetation where sacred and rare species of Mona Monkeys dwell.
- Till the late 1980`s the villagers protected the monkeys which they believed to be messengers to the gods. Due to the erosion of traditional beliefs they started to destroy the forest and even to kill many of them monkeys .
- In 1993 the sanctuary was created to protect the monkeys for tourism purposes. A trip into the forest with a guide gives visitors the opportunity to see real endangered species in their natural habitat.
- The baby monkeys sometimes come and sit on your arm to eat the banana in your hand.
- The best time for viewing the monkeys are early hours of the day up to 8:00 am and between 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm daily.

## How to get there





## Mona Monkeys

The Mona monkey (*Cercopithecus mona*) is an Old World monkey that lives in western Africa between Ghana and Cameroon. The Mona monkey can also be found on the island of Grenada as it was transported to the island aboard slave ships headed to the New World during the 18th century. This guenon lives in groups of twelve up to thirty-five in forests. It mainly feeds on fruit, but sometimes eats insects and leaves. The Mona monkey has brown agouti fur with a white rump. Its tail and legs are black and the face is blue-grey with a dark stripe across the face. The Mona monkey carries food in cheek pouches.



## History

- The people of Tafi migrated from Assin (Central Region of today Ghana, between Kumasi and Cape Coast) more than 200 years ago. During the migration they carried their God and placed him in a house when they arrived at Tafi. The God was then demanding for a cool place to live so they moved him into the forest.
- After some days, the God was surrounded by lots of “Mona monkeys” and the natives believed these monkeys followed and guided them from Assin to their current location and they started worshipping the monkeys and believed they were the messengers to the gods.
- In the late 1980's however, the villagers lost their reverence for the animals due to an erosion of traditional beliefs by Christianity. In order to prove that they no longer feared the monkey's, they started to destroy the forest in search for firewood en farmland and even killed many of the monkeys.
- In 1993 John Mason (who worked for NGO in Accra) introduced the benefits the town might have from the monkeys.
- Recognizing the potential value of the endangered species for tourism purposes, a coalition villagers, public institutions and NGO's created a sanctuary in 1993.
- Families who owned land in the village contributed valuable land full of hardwood trees and some of their rich farmlands to create the sanctuary. This, they did with the hope of gaining the financial means to develop the village and for the love of their monkeys.
- So the monkeys and their forest home were not only protected but declared a Community-Based Ecotourism Site. The monkey sanctuary is a perfect example of eco-tourism in Ghana as it protects the environment and as the revenues from tourism has brought electricity to the village, as well as improvements to the school and the local clinic
- Today the humans and animals live together in peace as neighbors.

## Nature

- The forest ecology boasts of bird species, butterflies and such rodents as squirrels, with all animals living in perfect harmony with each other.
- Besides from the animals, you'll notice many trees. As the jungle is densed with many plants, it is a perfect source for herbal medicine for the community. One particular tree that you'll encounter is the Ficus Parasite tree. A tree that lives of a palm tree by completely surrounding it. Eventually, the inner tree will die.



## Monkey life

- Even though the monkeys are of the same breed and share the same environment, they live within a smaller groups of 12 to 35 animals.
- There are more than 7 groups, each with their own leader (the Alpha, or as in the local dialect 'the grandpa'). The Alpha can be recognized by his size, as he's the biggest one in the group. Every female is entitled to that Alpha monkey.
- For this whole time, no-one has seen a dead monkey before. When a monkeys die, his companions will take care of the body and finally bury it. In general, no one in the community has seen a dead monkey before. Except for one time when, unfortunately, a car hit one of the alpha males. When this tragedy happened, the priest of the town hosted a ceremony for the monkey. He is now buried at the entrance of the sanctuary, where the accident happened.

