

FACTS & FIGURES PROTECTED AREAS OF CENTRAL AFRICA 2024



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The Protected Areas of Central Africa report is a flagship publication of the Observatory of Forests of Central Africa (OFAC), providing current information on the forest ecosystems of Central Africa. This report offers detailed analyses to inform decision-makers and managers, presenting a unified overview of the protected area network throughout the region.

Covering themes such as governance, ecotourism, human-elephant conflicts, transhumance, mining, and the oil industry, this report emphasizes 'facts and figures'* that underscore the vital role of protected areas in the sustainable development of Central Africa.

* The figures were updated in 2024



SUMMARY



262 protected areas

both terrestrial and marine protected areas in the exclusive economic zone of central African states. (Page 20, Paragraph 1, Line 9).

The total surface area covered by all types of protected areas in the exclusive economic zone of Central African countries is

1,239,344 km²

(Page 20, Paragraph 1, Line 10).

50%

of the protected areas in Central Africa were established in the first two decades of the 21st century, with 20% created during the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity from 2011 to 2020 (Page 21, Paragraph 1, Line 1).

3 most prevalent categories of protected areas

in Central Africa are national parks, conservation areas (including forest reserves and others and others), and protected areas allowing sustainable biodiversity use (such as hunting domains) (Page 23, Paragraph 1, Line 1).

Central Africa boasts an estimated total area of intact forest landscape of

840,000 km²

representing approximately 15.6% of the sub-region's surface area (Page 281, Paragraph 5, Line 2).

In 2017, Gabon established the largest set of marine reserves in Africa, covering over

>50,000 km²

(Page 261, Paragraph 4, Line 5).

GOVERNANCE



+85%

of protected areas are directly managed by governments, of which about 2/3 managed by an independent agency.

±12%

protected areas in Central Africa are managed through Public-Private Partnerships (Page 78, Paragraph 2, Line 2).

Various forms of participation of local communities are developed but true community managed protected areas are scarce.

ECOTOURISM

10%

of tourism income is generated from tourism in protected areas in Rwanda is allocated to socio-economic projects jointly selected by local representatives, park officials, and sector agents (see instead page 340, table 10, line 21-22).

In 2017, Central Africa welcomed

3 million

international visitors with the tourism sector generating around

USD ±1 billion

in revenue (Page 313, Paragraph 5, Line 2).

The Congo Conservation Company collaborated with Wilderness Safaris in

2011

to establish the first high-end safari camps in Central Africa at Odzala-Kokoua National Park in the Republic of the Congo (Page 323, Paragraph 1, Line 1).

Zakouma National Park in Chad generated about

USD 767,000

in tourist revenue in 2018 with luxury Camp Nomade accounting for

70%

of the total revenue (Page 324, Paragraph 1, Line 24).

A community eco-tourism project funded by the European Union between 2003 and 2006 in Sette Cama south of Loango National Park in Gabon trained

45 individuals

in hotel management, catering, crafts, and eco-tourism escorts (Page 328, Paragraph 2, Line 5).

In Cameroon in 2012, about

110,000 tourists visited

Yaounde and Limbe gardens, mostly nationals, generating far more entrance revenues than all protected areas. (Page 331, Paragraph 3, Line 12).

PEOPLE AND PROTECTED AREAS

75 million

people benefit from the natural resources provided by the forests of Central Africa (Page 18; Paragraph 1; Line 5).

In the 2000s, consumption of game meat from forests amounted to between

1 and 5 million tonnes

Central Africa's forests provide

40,000 jobs for rural populations

Protected areas are preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services that are vital for local people and national economies.

TRANSUMANCE



Livestock farming contributed **35%**

to the agricultural GDP of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) in 2012 (Page 224; Paragraph 9; Line 4).

Chad has an estimated national herd size of over

20 million heads

with transhuman breeding accounting for more than 80% of the country's animal production (Page 225; Paragraph 2; Line 7).

The estimated GDP value of the livestock and hunting sectors in Cameroon was

USD 420 million

in 2016 (Page 225; Paragraph 2; Line 21).

80%

of Central Africa's livestock is managed through pastoral systems, characterized by high animal mobility (Page 225; Paragraph 3; Line 1).

In Cameroon,

100,000 heads of cattle

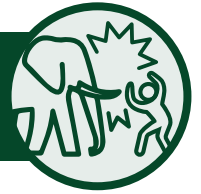
from the north arrive at the Waza-Logone flood plain alone, a movement which accentuates the risks of overgrazing, land compaction, and soil degradation (Page 235; Paragraph 2; Line 2).

The population growth rate in pastoral zones in the Sahel is approximately

2.5% to 3.5%

per annum, leading to a doubling of populations dependent on pastoral livestock every 25 to 35 years (Page 233; Paragraph 2; Line 4).

HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT



The reduction of human-elephant conflicts will need various measures such as to keep farms close to villages and far from elephant corridors and preferred habitats, grouping farms and avoiding standing trees whose fruits are eaten by elephants.

60%

decline in forest elephant populations occurred between 2002 and 2011 based on long-term studies of forest wildlife, indicating recent rapid decreases (Page 100; Paragraph 1; Line 11)

±4,000 elephants

in Zakouma National Park in Chad were poached for their ivory tusks between 2002 and 2010 (Page 135; Paragraph 4; Line 1).

An elephant can consume up to significant

450 kg

of food daily due to their large size and nutritional requirements, leading to conflicts with humans due to their diverse behaviours (Page 181; Paragraph 4; Line 6).

0 incursion of elephants

damage was recorded in May 2020 in farmlands in Bomassa village, near the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park in north Congo following the installation of electric wire fences. (Page 203; Paragraph 4; Line 1)

Crop destruction results in the loss of **25%** or more of the harvest, leading to severe consequences for food supplies and family income (Page 183; Paragraph 1; Line 10).

Locals in the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in the Republic of Congo pay

XAF 2,500

to insure their fields against destruction by animals through a local scheme supported by partners like the European Union (Page 206; Paragraph 2; Line 2).

Insured farmers in the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in the Republic of Congo receive a maximum compensation of

XAF 200,000
per hectare per year

for destruction by animals when the damaged area equals or exceeds 25% of their field size (Page 206; Paragraph 3; Line 4)

MINING ACTIVITIES



5%

of protected areas are impacted by

+200

official mining claims overlapping them by

+50,000 km²

In Cameroon, there are

40 mining permits

overlapping with about

12,000 km²

of protected areas, affecting

18.1% of the distribution area

(Page 280; Paragraph 4; Line 4).

OIL INDUSTRY



>88

on-shore oil and gas contracts overlap more than 17% of the total surface area of intact forest landscapes in Central Africa (Page 282; Paragraph 2; Line 3).

50%

of the network of protected areas in Central Africa and 50% of intact forest landscapes in the sub-region are covered by extractive contracts (Page 300; Paragraph 1; Line 2).

Since **2018**

the surface area of protected areas in Central Africa overlapped by oil and gas permits has increased from 221,467 km² to 422,787 km², almost doubling in just a few years (Page 282; Paragraph 3; Line 16).

2,590,000 km²

is the total surface area in Central Africa covered by oil and gas permits that have been granted or are in the process of being contracted (Page 261; Paragraph 2; Line 4).

EXTINCTION THREATS



25% to 42%
of plant species in Africa could be threatened with extinction due to a loss of 81% to 97% of favourable habitats by 2085 (Page 368; Paragraph 2; Line 1).

As of January 2016, there are an estimated **250 to 300** critically endangered Cross River gorillas in Central Africa (Page 35; Table 6; Line 6).

15% of the distribution area of the charismatic tree moabi is included in protected areas.

±1,000 mountain gorillas in Central Africa as of August 2018 are at risk of extinction (Page 35; Table 6; Line 9)

Since the 1980s, **80%** of antelope populations in most dry Savannah protected areas in Central Africa have been lost (Page 100; Paragraph 1; Line 5).

COUNTRY COMMITMENTS



<9% of current climate change/REDD+ projects being implemented in Central Africa, in terms of funding, focus on protected areas, despite their crucial role in carbon sequestration and climate regulation through forest protection (Page 378; Paragraph 3; Line 3).

Under the Blue Gabon program, Gabon aims to establish **20** marine protected areas to enhance the protection of its marine environment and species (Page 36; Paragraph 2; Line 9).

of the distribution area **30%** of its land but almost none of its marine territories yet.

5 out of eleven member countries of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) have ratified the revised Maputo Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, which came into force on July 23, 2016 (Page 39; Paragraph 4; Line 1).

FINANCE

The estimated total amount of funding committed to the biodiversity sector for the period 2015-2029 is

USD 3.1 billion

(Page 46; Paragraph 1; Line 4).

>90%

of the budget for all protected areas in Central Africa relies on international funding, with the exception of Rwanda's Akagera National Park (Page 109; Paragraph 1; Line 4).

68%

of the total funding for biodiversity conservation in the Central African sub-region comes from the European Union (Page 46; Paragraph 2; Line 5).

Among the international climate and REDD+ fundings in Central Africa, only

9% are coming to protected areas



The 2020 edition of the Protected Areas of Central Africa report is coordinated by three scientific editors from CIRAD and OFAC-COMIFAC, and written by a group of experts specializing in conservation in Central Africa. Produced with the financial support from the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OEACP) and the European Union (EU) through the BIOPAMA and RIOFAC projects, as well as from GIZ. It follows a first edition published in 2015, which has now become a reference publication on protected areas in the region.