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# MARINGA-LOPORI-WAMBA LANDSCAPE



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – 2014: Forest elephant populations are safer due to USAID's anti-poaching efforts in the landscape. Photo by © Martin Harvey/AWF

## THE LANDSCAPE

The Maringa-Lopori-Wamba landscape, located in north-central Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and just east of the Lac Télé -Lac Tumba landscape is one of nine USAID-supported landscapes. It is a mix of lowland rainforest and swamp forest bounded by two Congo Basin river watersheds, the Maringa in the south and the Lopori in the north.

The landscape covers 75,000 square kilometers – about three times the size of Maryland – and tracks the gentle arc of the Congo River as it reaches its northern limits. Located in one of the poorest, least developed and most remote areas of DRC, it has been isolated and landlocked since the deterioration of the road infrastructure in the 1980s and 1990s, and the discontinuation of river transport following the outbreak of war in 1996. The central portion is almost totally devoid of roads with only limited river access by dugout canoe.

Maringa-Lopori-Wamba has tremendous ecological value, with rich biodiversity and extensive carbon stored in its vast forests. Due to its low relief and high rainfall, a quarter of the area is comprised of swamp or floodplain forest, with the remainder drier land providing a rich mix of ecosystems supporting an expansive variety of wildlife.

The landscape is home to critical and endangered species, such as bonobos, bongo, Congo peafowl, forest elephants, golden cat, giant pangolin and water chevrotain, along with sitatunga, monkeys and other primates, amphibians and reptiles. It also supports more than 400 species of birds and 240 species of fish, including at least 12 endemic species.

**Area:** 74,544 km<sup>2</sup>

### Protected areas:

- Lomako-Yokokala Wildlife Reserve
- Kokolopori Bonobo Nature Reserve
- Iyondji Community Bonobo Reserve
- Luo Scientific Reserve
- Yala Community Forest Reserve (proposed)

### Main biodiversity threats:

- Slash and burn agriculture
- Poaching
- Commercial and illegal logging
- Charcoal production

### Intervention strategies:

- Ensuring sustainable management of targeted forest landscapes through implementation of REDD+\*
- Mitigating threats to biodiversity in targeted forest landscapes through the development of conservation tools and techniques
- Supporting the improvement of living conditions and resource management practices of surrounding communities

### Partners:

African Wildlife Foundation (lead),  
World Resources Institute,  
local non-governmental organizations,  
government partners.

# THREATS

An estimated one million people currently live in the Maringa-Lopori-Wamba, most of them in extreme poverty. With few sustainable income-generating opportunities, they rely on the area's natural resources to meet their basic needs, including food, fuel, shelter and income.

One consequence is that hunting for bushmeat, both subsistence and commercial, is contributing to the disappearance of endemic animal species.

Forest cover is also degraded or lost due to agricultural expansion and industrial logging roads, which are also offering poachers easier access to previously remote sections of the forest and more direct routes to get illegal products to market.

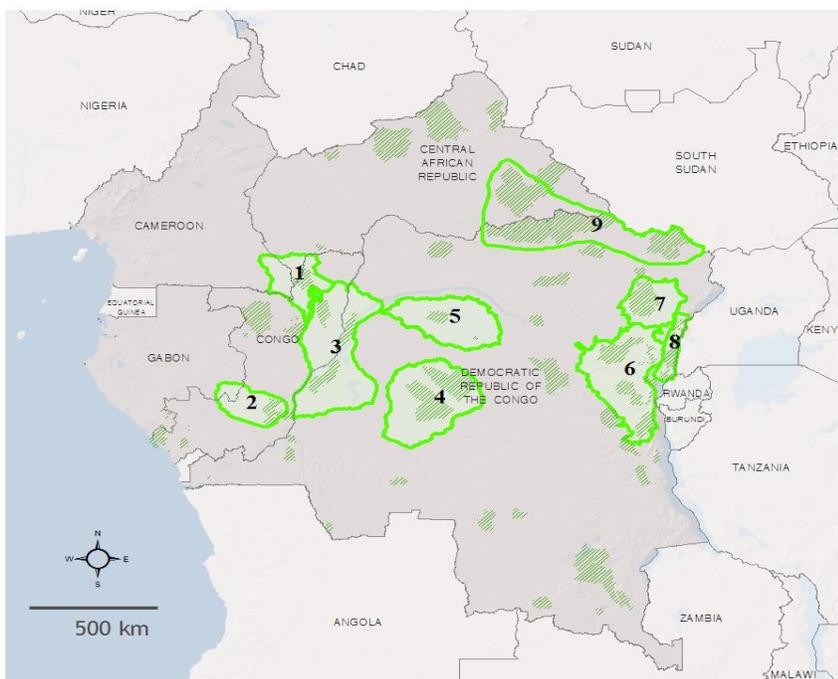
Indirect threats include population growth, weak institutional capacity, and the loss of cultural values.

## CAFEC at a glance

USAID's Central Africa Forest Ecosystems Conservation (CAFEC) program focuses on sustainable forest management, wildlife conservation and REDD+ activities in nine carbon rich, biologically sensitive and diverse natural forest landscapes covering 32 million hectares of land; spread of covering four country, especially the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, the Central Africa Republic and the Rwanda.

CAFEC and the Environmental Monitoring and Policy Support (EMAPS) program, which improves environmental policies and regulations, builds capacity of public and private institutions to support conservation of forest and biodiversity, and boosts the quality and scope of conservation management, climate change mitigation efforts, and data collection to maintain the ecological integrity of the humid forest ecosystem of the Congo Basin..

The CAFEC and EMAPS program are interdependent. The information collected and shared through the local efforts of CAFEC informs national and regional policy work, while improved policies supported under EMAPS allows for better conservation efforts and land use management at the local landscape level. These programs align with and contribute to the Presidential Initiative on Global Climate Change and the National Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking (CWT).



### MAP KEY

- Protected Area
- CARPE Priority Area

### USAID Supported Landscapes

- 1 - Tri-National Sangha
- 2 - Léconi-Batéké-Léfini
- 3 - Lac Télé-Lac Tumba
- 4 - Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru
- 5 - Maringa-Lopori-Wamba
- 6 - Maiko-Tayna-Kahuzi-Biega
- 7 - Ituri-Epulu-Aru
- 8 - Virunga
- 9 - Garamba-Chinko

# INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

CARPE implementing partners are working with local communities throughout Maringa-Lopori-Wamba to develop solutions to conserve the environment and meet the needs of the people. Solutions implemented include land use planning, formalizing forest and wildlife protection measures and creating jobs. They also include improving local understanding of wildlife laws and conservation principles, and actively engaging and supporting them to sustainably manage their forests.

Improved farming practices are being introduced to reduce forest loss caused by slash and burn agriculture. These new practices are dramatically increasing yields, allowing farmers to better provide for their families, sell the surplus to generate income and limit their incursion into new forested areas. Micro-credit loans are helping to get this surplus to markets that have previously been too difficult or expensive to reach. This incentive, together with investment in education, builds local constituencies for forest and wildlife conservation.

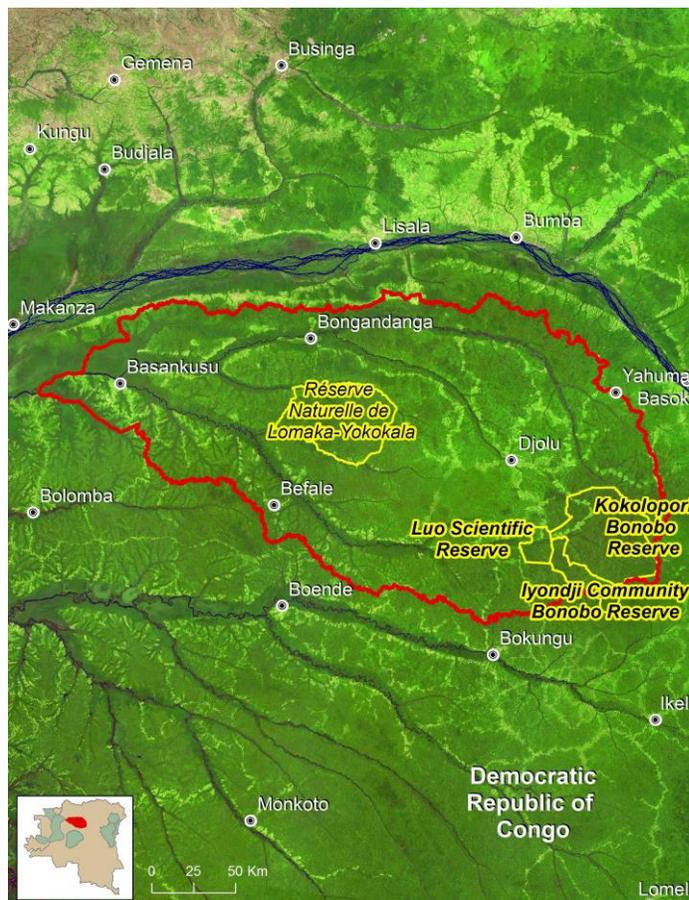
Deforestation is also being reduced through the expansion of the network of protected areas, and by building the capacity of local, provincial and national development organizations to support protected area management.

SMART<sup>1</sup> technology is enabling wildlife officials to better combat illegal poaching and logging, especially in critical elephant and ape habitats, and bring offenders to justice. As more teams are trained to use SMART, levels of hunting, poaching and illegal logging are decreasing.

The vision is for the landscape to be anchored by three sustainably managed protected areas, linked by effectively managed community areas and timber concessions to achieve a measurable decrease in the overall deforestation and forest degradation rates.

<sup>1</sup> Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool

<sup>2</sup> Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stock

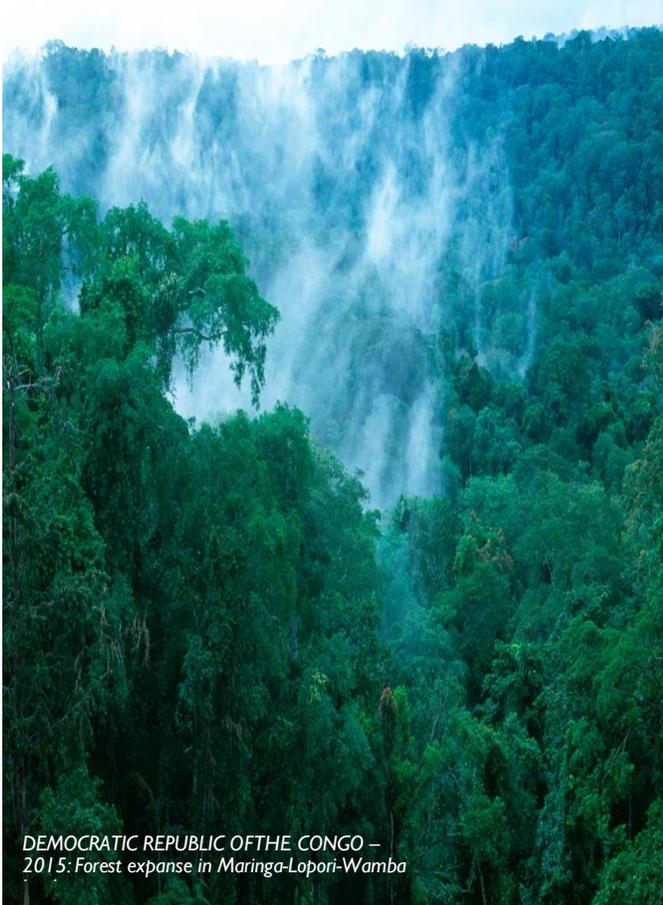


Landsat composite image courtesy of the University of Maryland

To help achieve this goal, a proposed new protected area in the north – the Yala Community Forest Reserve – will be linked by community-managed areas and forest concessions to the Lomako-Yokokala Wildlife Reserve, in the center of the landscape, and the Iyondi Community Bonobo Reserve in the southeast. The new protected area will secure a significant expanse of forest for conservation and carbon sequestration.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – 2015: Morning assembly at the new Ilima Conservation School. Photo by Billy Dodson for USAID



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO –  
2015: Forest expanse in Maringa-Lopori-Wamba

## Select FY 2017 Accomplishments

- A total volume of 13,900,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> reduced, sequestered or avoided.
- 3,890,000 hectares under improved natural resource management.
- A total area of 165,000 hectares of community forest registered.
- Protected area management effectiveness improved by 54 percent due to the use of SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) technology to patrol critical elephant and ape habitats.

### For more information:

[www.usaid.gov/central-africa-regional](http://www.usaid.gov/central-africa-regional)

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