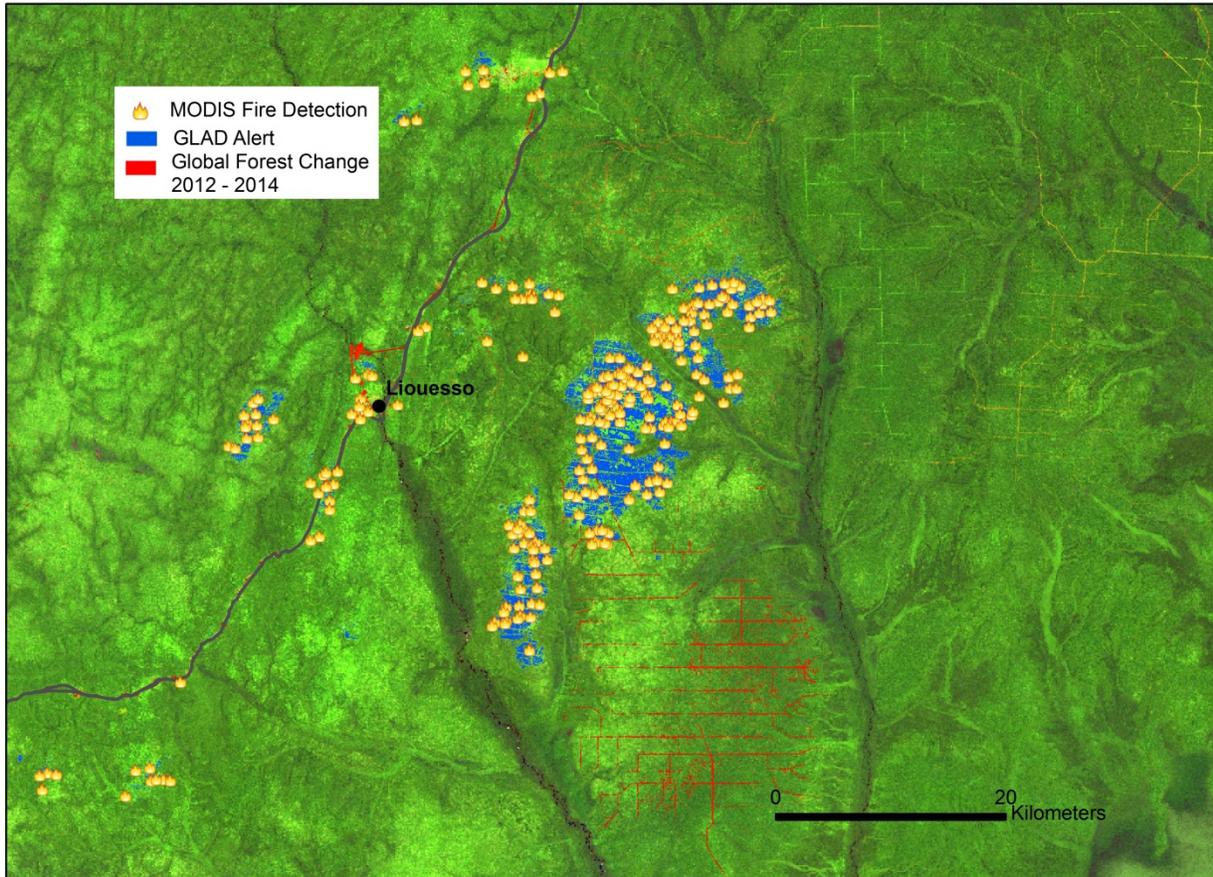




New Landsat-based forest change alerts for CARPE detect large forest fires in Republic of Congo



GLAD Forest Change Alert, MODIS fire detections and Global Forest Change mapped on a Landsat composite image for 2016.

The University of Maryland's Global Land Analysis and Discovery (GLAD) alert system detected one of the largest forest fires ever observed in the rainforests of Central Africa. GLAD launched the new Landsat-based forest disturbance alerts for Peru, Kalimantan, Indonesia and the Republic of Congo in February 2016. As mapped by the alert system, fires burned an estimated 15,000 ha in upland open canopied *Marantaceae* forests of the Republic of Congo and were confirmed by active fire detections from January 28 through February 4 by both MODIS and VIIRS sensors.

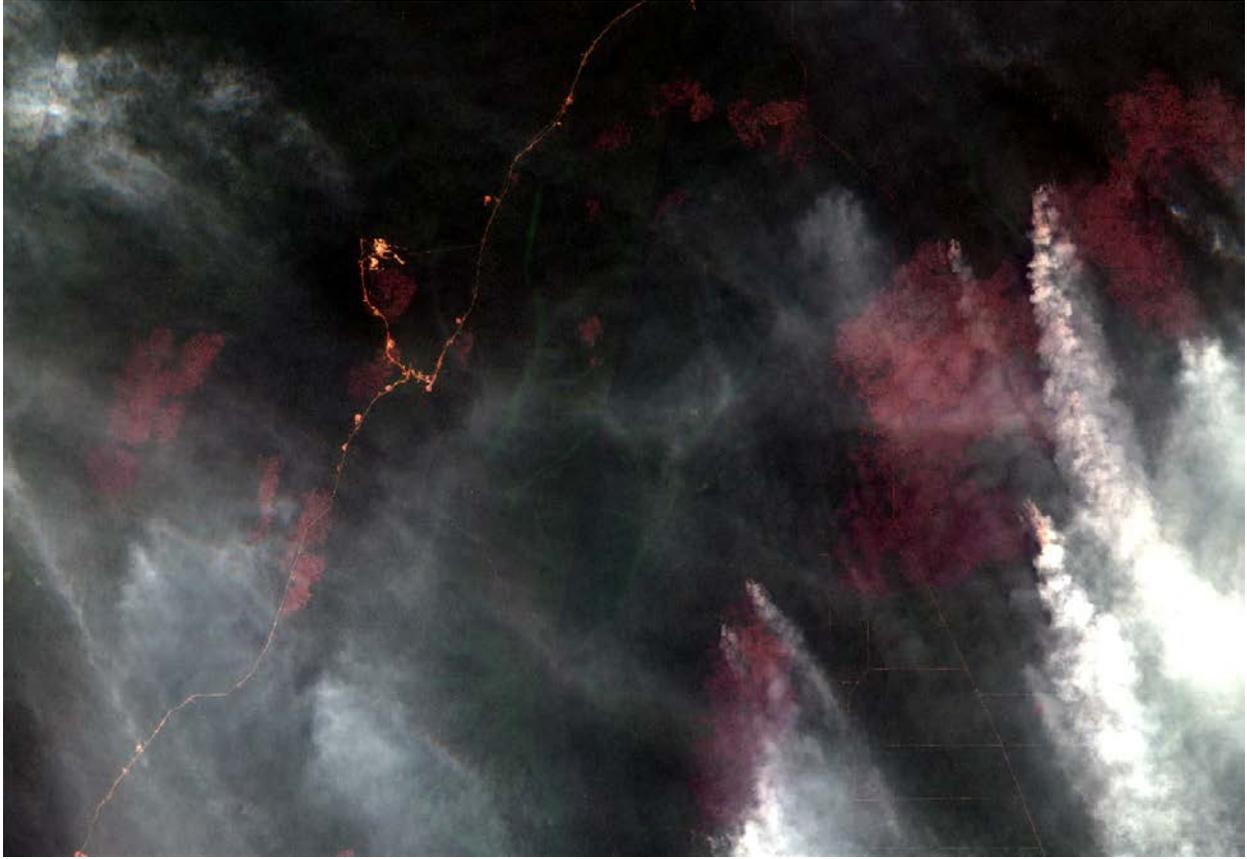


Marantaceae forests are known to provide excellent gorilla habitat. The extreme drought caused by the strong 2014-2016 El Nino event has increased fire risk in Central Africa, particularly for the more open and well-drained Marantaceae forests. Photo M. Hansen 2015

The forests where the greatest concentration of fires was detected are within the logging concession held by *Industrie Forestier d'Ouessou*, which is Forestry Stewardship Council certified for forest management and chain of custody. Although fire vulnerability has increased due to the *El Nino* induced drought, it is likely that the fires were ignited by humans as fires were observed in the vicinity of logging roads recently constructed in the area.

Increasing frequency and severity of drought could lead to more fires in some of the largest remaining expanses of intact humid tropical forest in Central Africa, threatening large mammal habitat and changing the dynamics of this ecosystem.

The GLAD forest change alerts will soon be extended to the Democratic Republic of Congo. All the GLAD alerts are posted to the Global Forest Watch interactive map, along with the annual Global Forest Change data.



Smoke from forest fires east of Liouesso, Republic of Congo, captured by this February 2 image from the European Space Agency's Sentinel-2A satellite

The data posted on the Global Forest Watch website can be viewed here:

<http://www.globalforestwatch.org/map> (select "GLAD alerts" under "Forest Change")

Visitors to the GFW site can subscribe for e-mail notifications when an alert occurs in their area of interest by logging into "My GFW", selecting "GLAD alerts" and then click on "Analyze & Subscribe".

The alert layer can also be viewed directly on the GLAD website:

<http://glad.geog.umd.edu/alarm/openlayers.html>.

The Republic of Congo fires were reported on Mongabay:

<http://news.mongabay.com/2016/03/massive-wildfire-rips-through-congo-rainforest-is-logging-to-blame/>