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SALONGA-LUKENIE-SANKURU LANDSCAPE



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – 2015: Aerial view of the Salonga landscape.
Photo by Kirsten Jensen for USAID

THE LANDSCAPE

Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru, located in central Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) south of the Maringa-Lopori-Wamba and east of the Lac Télé-Lac Tumba landscapes, is one of the largest of the nine USAID-supported landscapes. Salonga National Park, is divided into two almost equally sized north and south sections.

Salonga National Park is the largest tropical park in Africa and the second largest in the world. Isolated by the collapse of the regional transportation infrastructure in the 1980s and 1990s, accessible only by air and water, this sprawling lowland provides habitats for a variety of endangered species, including large populations of bonobos, along with forest elephants, bongos, giant pangolin and the golden-bellied mangabey. It is also home to nearly 130 species of fish and more than 220 species of birds.

The landscape, located in the Central Basin of the Congo River, includes three important watersheds. It is almost completely covered by forest, including flooded forests and swamps, and swampy clearings, or “bais,” which are created and maintained by forest elephants and an array of other wildlife.

Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru contains huge carbon stocks, with the above-ground carbon resources estimated at nearly 10 billion tons making it a globally significant carbon sink that is included in DRC’s national REDD+¹ accounting and implementation.

¹ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks

Area: 102,847 km²

Protected areas:

- Salonga National Park

Main biodiversity threats:

- Deforestation due to agriculture, forestry and charcoal production
- Poaching for ivory and bushmeat
- Unsustainable fishing

Intervention strategies:

- Building capacity for protected area management
- Developing sustainable land use practices
- Ensuring enforcement of laws relating to wildlife and illegal logging
- Integrating REDD+¹ programs

Partners:

World Wildlife Fund (lead),
Wildlife Conservation Society,
Zoological Society of Milwaukee,
PACT,
World Resources Institute,
local non-governmental organizations,
government partners

THREATS

Poaching, trade in protected species, illegal and unsustainable fishing and the impact of villages situated inside and near Salonga National Park are the most serious threats facing Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru.

Poaching has depleted elephant numbers by 60 percent in recent years. Although the forest can support tens of thousands of elephants, the current population is estimated to be just 2,000. The Salonga elephants may be one of only five viable populations of more than 500 individuals left in DRC. Bonobos and many other animals in the landscape are increasingly threatened by hunting for bushmeat and the live animal trade.

Local residents are also putting increasing pressure on the environment through slash and burn agriculture, deforestation for charcoal production and over-fishing. Weak governance systems at the local and national level do little to curtail these activities.

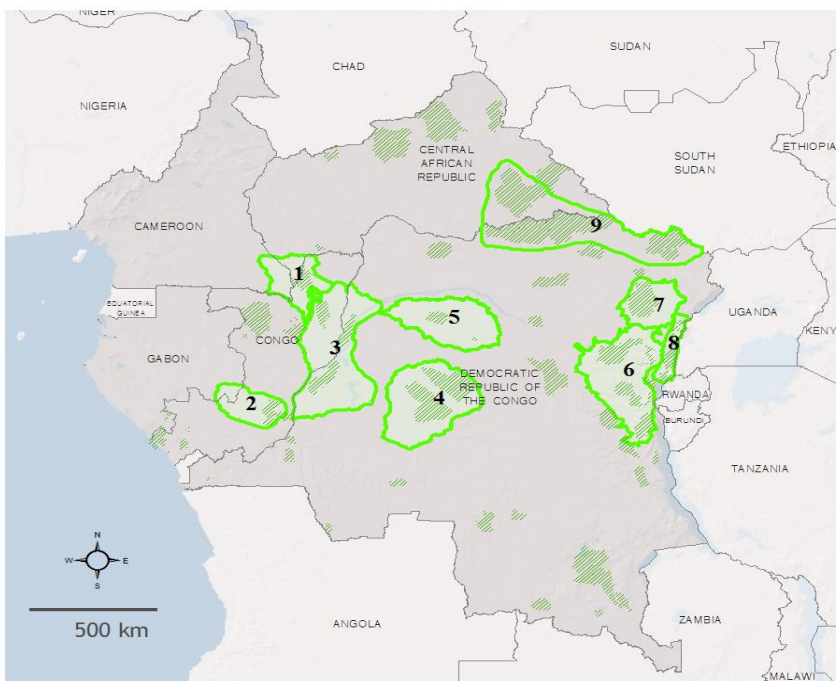
Although commercial logging remains relatively limited, the impact of logging on the landscape's important carbon reserves and may also affect the ecological integrity of the Salonga landscape.

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 countries, 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).



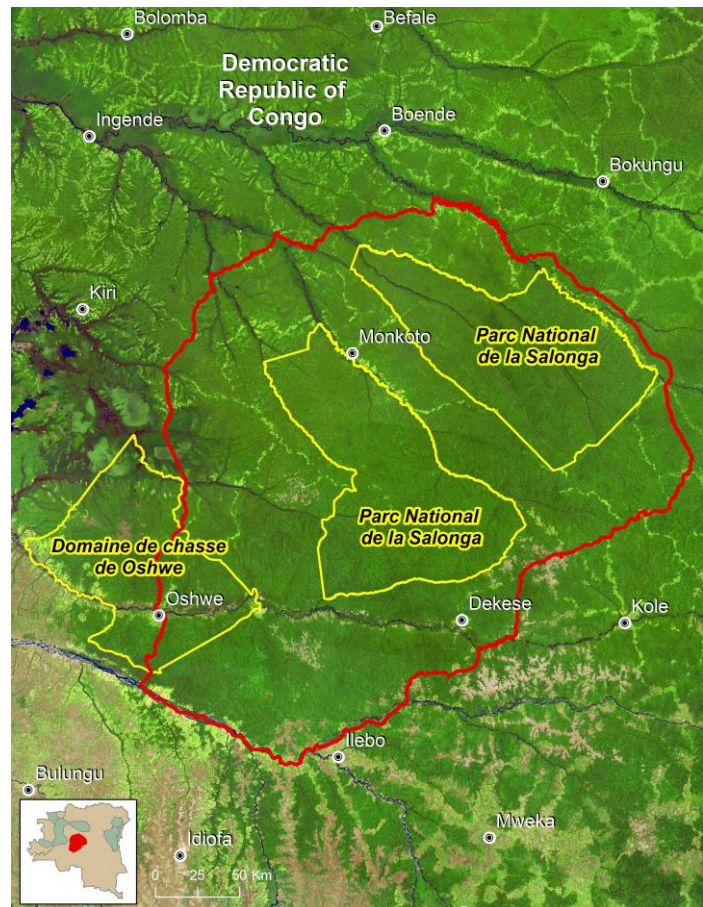
INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

USAID's CARPE implementing partners are preserving Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru's rich biodiversity and important carbon stocks by working with local communities to create sustainable livelihoods based on its natural resources.

Improving the management efficiency of the landscape in general, and Salonga National Park in particular, is helping to protect key areas for elephants and bonobos. Rangers and magistrates are being trained to promote the implementation of environmental legislation and follow proper legal procedures to ensure those arrested are held to account.

Poaching for ivory and bushmeat is being reduced through the use of SMART¹ technology, which allows managers to target hotspots and routes frequented by elephant and bushmeat poachers. The new technology, along with the use of mobile brigades, improves patrol efficiency and reduces poaching and illegal hunting, allowing threatened populations to stabilize.

Forestry companies in the landscape are preparing for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certifications through an FSC initiative that educates loggers, along with the introduction of REDD+ projects in forest concessions.



Landsat composite image courtesy of the University of Maryland



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – 2014: Salonga River.
Photo by Jonas Abana Eriksson for USAID

Select FY 2017 Accomplishments

- 4,670,000 hectares under improved natural resource management.
- An increase of 25% of the total area patrolled due to the use of new technology and tools.
- A total area of 163,000 hectares of community forest registered.
- 32,000 individuals committed to support conservation activities with signed Memorandum of Understanding with conservation NGOs.

For more information:

www.usaid.gov/central-africa-regional

cod.forest-atlas.org

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