

Landscape Highlights

Surface Area: 35,138 km²

Partners: CNPN, IGAD, INC, MINEF, Missouri Botanical Garden, PPG, WCS, MINEF-ROC, PPG-ROC

National Parks: 1, covering 2,050 km² or 6% of the landscape; 1 proposed (5,300 km²)

Biodiversity (N species)

Plants: TBD
Mammals: TBD
Birds: TBD
Reptiles: TBD
Amphibians: TBD

Threatened Species

Animals

- Forest elephant
- Western gorilla
- Chimpanzee
- Lion
- Grimm's duiker

Plants

TBD

Major Threats to Landscape

Direct

- Illegal hunting and burning
- Unsustainable agriculture

Indirect

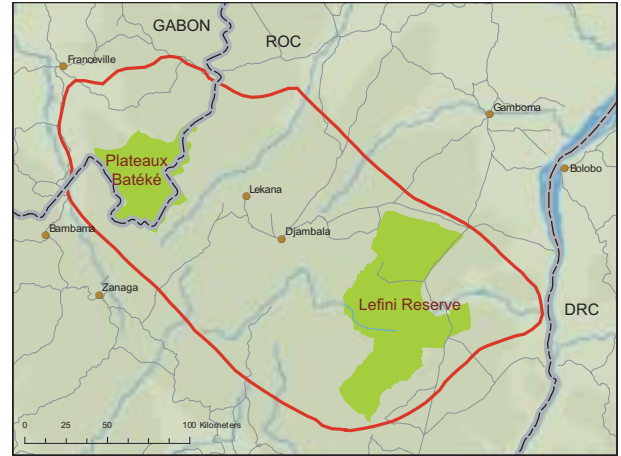
- Lack of clear management systems for NPs and reserves
- Weak capacity
- Lack of alternative protein and employment for local people
- Lack of wildlife management in national forestry policy (Gabon)
- Absence of legal structure for NP management authority (Gabon)

Key Interventions

- Baseline surveys for zoning and management planning
- Threats assessment
- Wildlife management systems development and implementation
- Development of sustainable funding mechanisms
- Monitoring systems and GIS databases
- Sustainable community resource planning
- Environmental education and capacity building of local NGOs
- Promotion of alternative income-generating activities
- Eco-tourism planning

Leconi-Batéké-Léfini Landscape

This landscape is dominated by an ancient sand dune system—the Kalahari geological formation. The land is covered by large open expanses of grass interspersed with wooded savannas and dense gallery forest hugging river valleys. Despite low productivity on poor soils, which supports low overall biomass, habitat diversity is high, and the landscape supports one of the most important quasi-intact grassland ecosystems remaining in Central Africa. Low human population density and no tradition of pastoralism means that this fragile grassland system has not been degraded through overgrazing. The landscape supported wild dogs until recently, and may still contain a relic population of lions. Bird diversity is outstanding. The Batéké Plateau is an important watershed for growing human populations in ROC and Gabon—and not least, it is an area of remarkable physical beauty.



Sustainable Resource Management

The management of this landscape will focus on a national-park and managed buffer zone approach to landscape planning. A sustainable structure for long-term conservation will be developed through integration of the public and private sectors and local communities.

Over the past year ecological and socioeconomic surveys were conducted over 5,300 km² in ROC to assess the potential to create a new protected area: Bambama-Lekana-Zanaga. A lion survey is programmed for early 2005. The 6,300 km² Léfini Reserve, created in 1961, will be assessed in 2005 for potential revision of boundaries and creation of the Léfini National Park. PBNP was officially designated on the Gabonese side in 2002, and management activities began there in earnest in 2004, including close collaboration with an existing gorilla PPG, which manages gorilla sanctuaries in both Gabon and ROC. Transboundary poaching is a problem, and steps have been taken to work with local authorities on both sides of the border to halt the practice.

Natural Resource Governance

Technical and administrative coordination began at the landscape level through a meeting between Gabon and ROC partners in Brazzaville in 2004. A follow-up technical meeting, programmed for February 2005, will focus on developing strategies to address transborder poaching. In ROC, socioeconomic work and meetings with the local administrations have permitted communication and information sharing with landscape stakeholders. Rustic infrastructure has been built in PBNP to date, including PPG headquarters and tent platforms for testing tourism potential. PBNP now has three eco-guards for park surveillance. WCS-Gabon continues to play an active role in CNPN meetings in LBV, and in mentoring the Park Conservator. Antipoaching missions have resulted in arrests of Congolese poachers in Gabon and the seizure of

ivory and weapons; unfortunately, suspects have been subsequently released. A tourism management proposal was submitted to stakeholders for comment. Discussions are under way with IGAD for possible collaboration on small-scale rural development projects in villages near the park. Environmental education and village outreach teams are active in both ROC and Gabon, and regular meetings are held with local and regional authorities on both strategy and day-to-day management.

Natural Resource Monitoring Institutionalized

Biological and socioeconomic surveys and mapping of the status of illegal human activities has been undertaken in the PBNP, Gabon, and the Bambama-Zanaga-Lekana area of ROC. Collaboration has been developed on monitoring methodologies with the CNIAP in ROC. In Gabon the Batéké Landscape project has collaborated with PPG-Gabon on ecology monitoring in PBNP and communication with local communities. Likewise, in ROC PPG-ROC is an important partner in developing monitoring for the southern area of the Léfini Reserve and in the Lesio-Louna Gorilla Sanctuary in the Léfini Reserve. WCS is providing technical advice to the MEFÉ and PPG-ROC to develop management strategies including ecological and socioeconomic monitoring, eco-tourism, and site-based law enforcement. The WCS “Global Carnivore Program” will assist in planning, training, and executing lion surveys in the region, which may contain the last lion population in the rain forest belt of Central Africa.

