

Lac Télé–Lac Tumba Swamp Forest Landscape

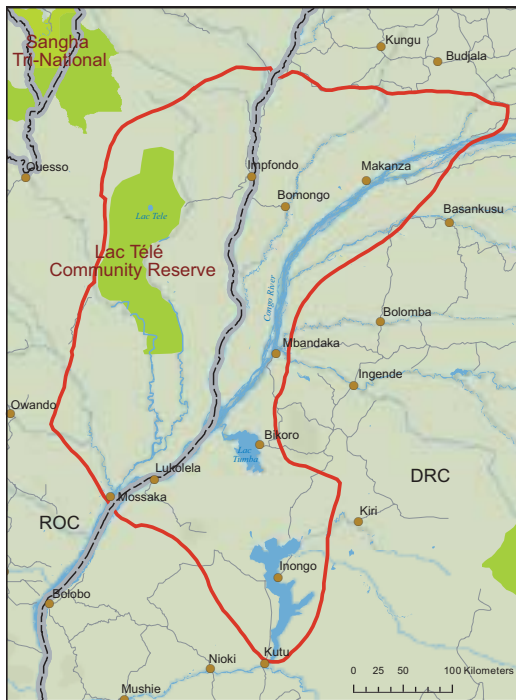
Straddling the Congo River, the LTLT Swamp Forest Landscape contains the most extensive block of swamp and seasonally inundated forest in Africa. Fish biodiversity and endemism is high, yet poorly studied. The Congo River forms an impervious biogeographic barrier separating two of Africa's great apes, and a suite of other species. Lac Télé in ROC holds among the highest densities of western lowland gorillas yet found, while Lac Tumba in DRC is an important area for the conservation of bonobos, man's closest genetic relative. The principal threat to the biodiversity and ecological functions of this landscape is uncontrolled resource use, particularly hunting and fishing.

Sustainable Resource Management

To the northwest, the landscape is contiguous with the Sangha Tri-National Landscape. The landscape contains one reserve, LTCR in ROC. Ecological surveys, participatory mapping of traditional community territories, and socioeconomic assessments of resource needs and use are being conducted to guide land-use and wildlife management plans. Community involvement in the planning process and management in order to ensure sustainable resource use is a high priority. A major activity of the LTLT landscape is the development of alternative livelihoods for local communities. Education and awareness raising in the landscape about national laws concerning wildlife and the environment has led to increased support among local communities.

Natural Resource Governance

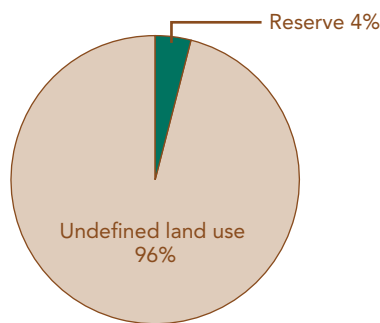
Natural resource governance is further along in the northern sector of the landscape. In the ROC sector, Lac Télé has been a site of conservation interest for many years, and was already a recognized community reserve when it became part of the landscape. In ROC, trained eco-guards are working with MEFE and the CIB logging company to control hunting and the bushmeat trade along major access corridors. The project leadership is also liaising with local military



leaders and politicians to improve security and wildlife protection by reducing the number of automatic weapons entering the reserve. In the south, natural resource management is weak, owing primarily to the short history of natural resource management in the area, but Lac Tumba partners are in the initial stages of improving natural resource management governance by building local constituencies and participatory management structures.

Natural Resource Monitoring Institutionalized

A forest monitoring program, focusing on bonobo and other large mammal populations, is being implemented in the Lac Tumba sector, where local CREF staff has received ecological methods training. Monitoring surveys of large mammals across LTCR were completed in 2004 and indicated that populations of apes and elephants in particular were stable. Capacity building was an important component of this work. Waterbird surveys have continued into their eighth year, indicating that Lac Télé is of international importance for at least three species. Local communities rely on fish for 90 percent of their protein consumption; therefore, understanding fisheries dynamics is vital to sustainable management planning of fish stocks, which will also reduce pressure on other wildlife species. Monitoring fish populations is scheduled to begin across the landscape in 2005.



Landscape Highlights

Surface Area: 126,440 km²

Partners: WCS, WWF, BCI, IRM, CREF

National Parks: 0; 1 community reserve

Biodiversity (N species)

Plants: > 1,100

Mammals: > 60

Birds: > 300

Threatened Species

Animals

- Western lowland gorilla
- Bonobo
- Forest elephant
- Hippopotamus
- Red-tailed monkey
- Red colobus monkey
- Slender-snouted crocodile

Plants

TBD

Major Threats to Landscape

Direct

- Bushmeat hunting
- Over-fishing

Indirect

- Weak natural resource governance
- Military complicity in illegal hunting and fishing
- Lack of alternative protein and work for local people
- Lack of information
- Lack of wildlife management in national forestry policy
- Civil strife and war

Key Interventions

- Threats assessment
- Biological and ecological surveys
- Community wildlife management
- Collaborating with the military to reduce illegal hunting and improve security
- Law enforcement
- Bonobo habituation program
- Sustainable community resource planning
- Developing alternative livelihoods
- Establishing effective monitoring