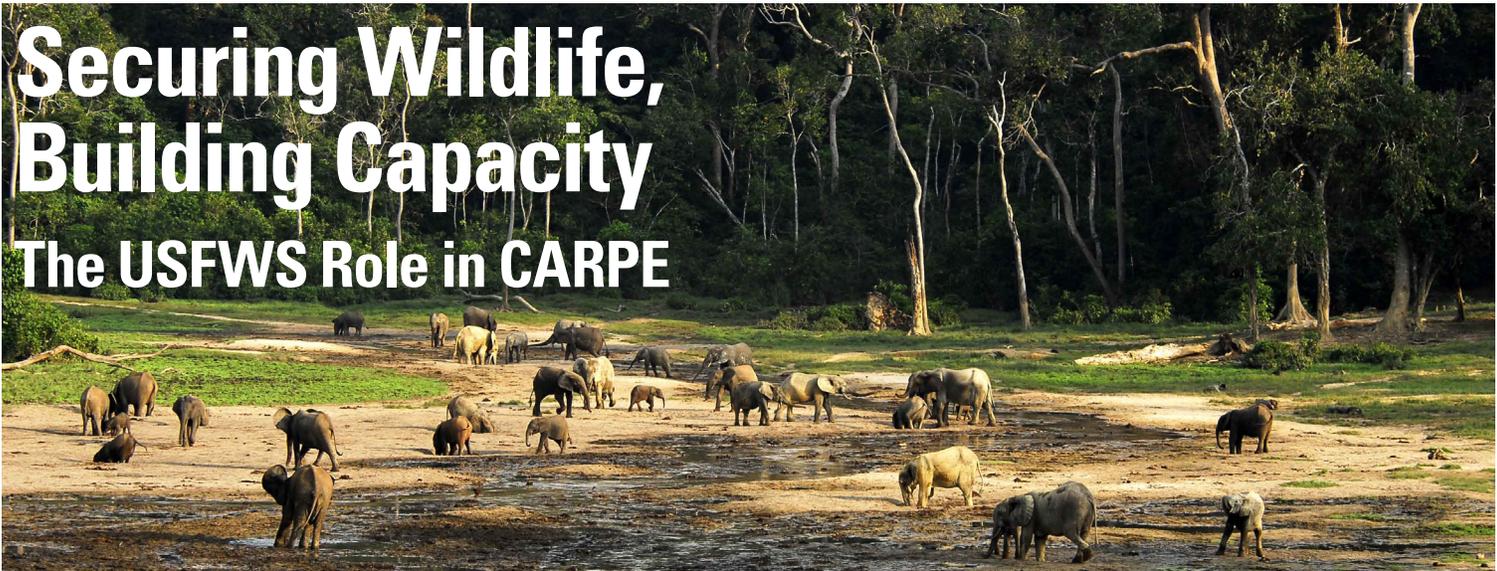


Securing Wildlife, Building Capacity

The USFWS Role in CARPE



Dzanga bai forest elephant herd. Credit: Richard Ruggiero / USFWS

The Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) is one of the main funding mechanisms that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) uses to support projects to secure and conserve wildlife populations in Central Africa. CARPE's primary objective is to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss and forest degradation in the Congo Basin by increasing capacity for natural resource management at local, national and regional levels. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the lead agency for CARPE, which the U.S. government launched in 1995.

USFWS has been a major CARPE partner since 2006, when the U.S. Congress first allocated a portion of CARPE funding directly to the wildlife agency. USFWS also provides support through three acts of Congress collectively known as the Multinational

Species Conservation Acts: the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988, the Great Apes Conservation Act of 2000 and the Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004.

Together with USAID, USFWS works with a range of CARPE partners. These include Central African government and non-government organization (NGO) partners, as well as the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Department of State, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, U.S. and Central African universities, and international NGOs with an established presence in the Congo and Ogooué Basins.

USFWS provides financial and technical support to our CARPE partners to meet the complex and demanding tasks required to conserve Central African wildlife and habitats. In addition, USFWS leverages its expertise in law enforcement and the implementation of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to further strengthen the capacity of governments and NGO partners to fight wildlife trafficking in Central African countries.

For Fiscal Year 2015, USFWS received \$17.5 million in CARPE funding to support programs in priority landscapes with threatened and endangered wildlife populations. These programs seek to eradicate wildlife poaching and secure wildlife populations while strengthening capacity for long-term sustainable management of endangered species and their habitats.

Why support wildlife conservation in Central Africa?

Central Africa contains some of the most iconic wildlife species on the planet. Forest elephants, great apes and other awe-inspiring species have inhabited Central Africa for millions of years. Many of these species now face the threat of extinction within the next 100 years. Global forces have accelerated this threat through well-organized poaching networks and uncontrolled resource extraction. Combined, these forces wipe out vulnerable populations and devastate habitats. As a global leader in wildlife conservation, USFWS has an obligation to help secure endangered Central African species and habitats. Their future hangs in the balance, and we have the power to shape that future.

Why conserve wildlife through CARPE?

CARPE's primary objective is to reduce the rate of forest degradation and biodiversity loss in the Congo Basin by increasing capacity for natural resource management at local, national and regional levels. Biodiversity and functioning ecosystems are critical to securing human health, economic prosperity and regional stability. CARPE provides a vehicle through which U.S. government agencies can work together to achieve these goals in partnership with Central African governments, NGOs and local communities.



Central chimpanzee. Credit: Ian Nichols / National Geographic

Threats to Central African Wildlife

Inadequate law enforcement, corruption and poverty create an environment that puts wildlife populations at risk by enabling the following threats:

Elephant poaching

The ivory trade poses the single biggest threat to the survival of the African elephant. The number of forest elephants in Central Africa fell 60 percent between 2002 and 2011. The ivory trade uses large-scale transport and heavily armed criminal syndicates to systematically kill unprotected elephant populations.

Commercial bushmeat trade

Commercial demand for bushmeat poses the single greatest threat to the majority of forest animals in Central Africa. A thriving commercial trade often emerges around logging concessions and other work camps, where new roads provide access to previously remote forests and facilitate transport back to urban markets.

Extractive industries

Logging, mining and oil exploration that are unregulated and unmanaged threaten wildlife by destroying and degrading habitats. These industries also create indirect effects through the creation of roads that attract poachers, new human settlements and conversion of forest into agricultural land.

Marine turtle mortality

Marine turtles along Central Africa's Atlantic coast face two main threats: the intentional or incidental capture of marine turtles by commercial and artisanal fishing operations, and the capture of nesting females and raiding of nests for eggs. Logs on nesting beaches from nearby logging concessions also pose a serious threat.

Disease

Ebola and other infectious diseases are a major cause of decline in African great ape populations. Ebola has a higher mortality rate for chimpanzees and gorillas (up to 95%) than for humans (50 to 80%). Apes are vulnerable to many diseases spread by humans who share their habitat. Influenza, leprosy and tuberculosis are often fatal for previously unexposed apes.

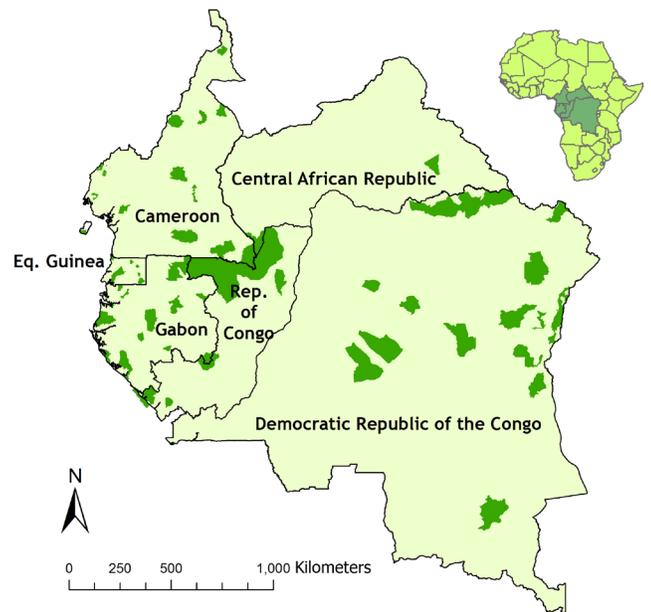
The Pet Trade

Live capture of animals for the pet trade threatens many species, including great apes.

Over the last two fiscal years, USFWS has invested \$16.6 million of CARPE funding into Central African projects and generated an additional \$19.3 million in leveraged funding.

Locations of projects in the Congo Basin supported by USFWS since 2010.

Credit: William Kanapaux / USFWS



USFWS focuses on areas with important wildlife populations experiencing high levels of threat. Our major Central African initiatives are located in:

- Gabon's network of 13 national parks, home to 75 percent of Africa's remaining population of forest elephants, and its new network of 10 marine protected areas.
- The Sangha TriNational and Northern Congo landscape, home to forest elephants and great apes.
- Virunga National Park in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), home to the endangered mountain gorilla.
- The Tshuapa-Lomami-Lualaba landscape in DRC, home to the endangered bonobo and the world's most recently discovered monkey species.

- Conkouati Douli National Park in the Republic of Congo, home to chimpanzees, gorillas, forest elephants and marine turtles.

USFWS employs a two-pronged strategy for reversing the tide of wildlife trafficking, resource exploitation and habitat degradation in Central Africa: 1) small, competitive grants for on-the-ground projects that respond to immediate threats, and 2) long-term investments that focus on building internal capacity for effectively managing wildlife populations and their habitats. This combined approach allows USFWS to support quick responses to near-term threats while providing support and technical assistance for achieving long-term results. In this way, USFWS plays an active role in shaping Central Africa's conservation programs over time.



Mountain gorillas. Credit: Direk Byler / USFWS

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