



CENTRAL AFRICAN REGIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (CARPE/USAID), VIRUNGA FOCAL AREA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND RWANDA: a WWF led Consortium, including WCS, SNV and AWF, made possible with the generous support of the American People.



DATA COLLECTION

Par
Deo Kujirakwinja
WCS



i. Vegetation mapping process

WCS GIS hub has produced the draft of Virunga vegetation map (focusing on the central part of the park where vegetation is more variable) to be used for the GMP process. Maps have been provided to ICCN for the purpose. It has been a useful map for UNESCO to try to understand the different changes occurring in the Park.

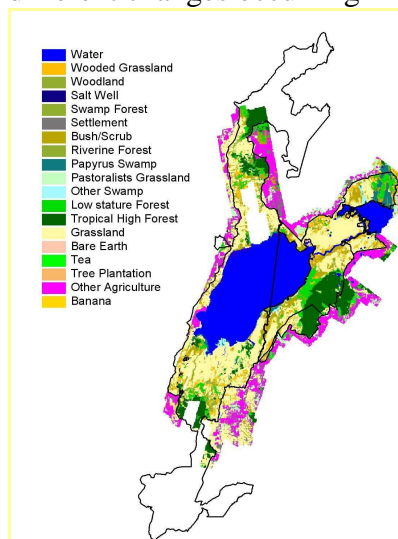


Photo 1 : Vegetation map of Virunga NP

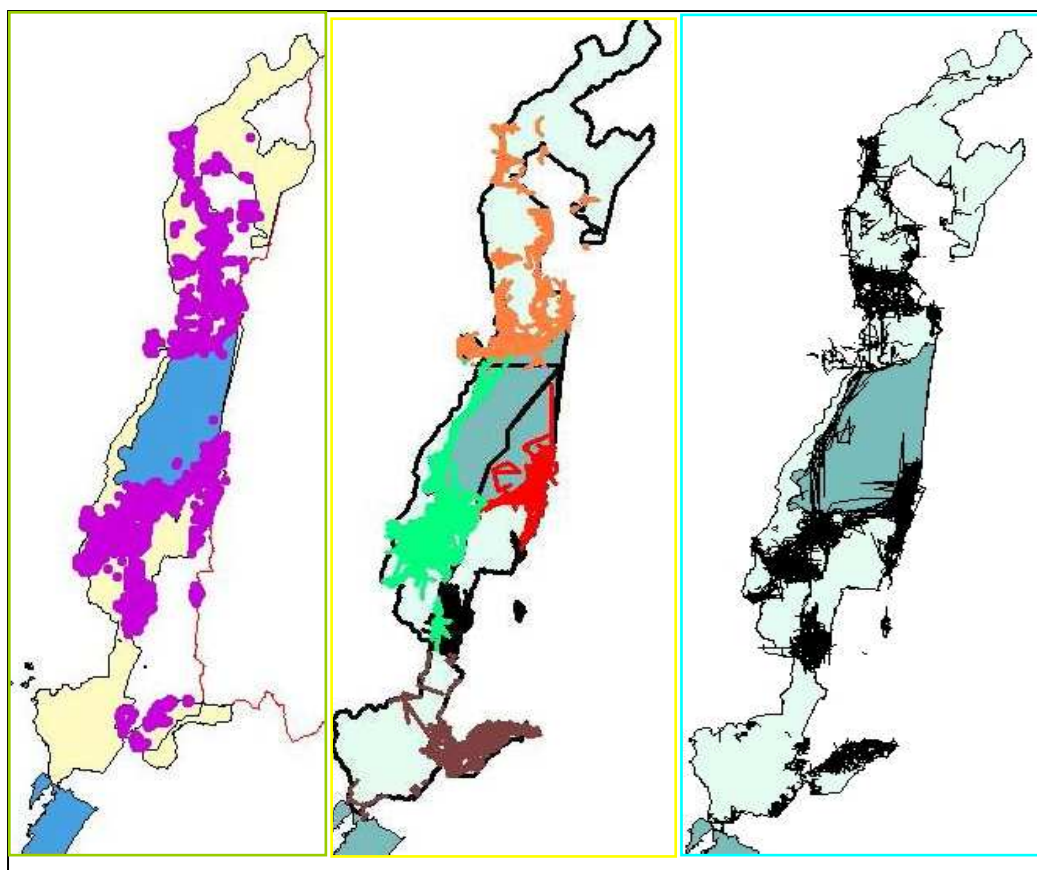
ii. Compilation of information

Available information has been compiled and partly drafted into reports. Comments from different partners are being obtained at the moment. During the orientation meeting, data were presented to stakeholders and there was a need for modification (see report attached).

iii. Ranger-based monitoring

In order to get information about the situation of the Park, rangers go out for patrolling every day in different sectors of the Park. This information gives an idea about wildlife distributions and identification of different sites related to human activities. To get this information and make it available, there is need of support and commitment from field staff to get data collected and entered into a computer to easy analysis and information use by partners.

This system has been developed since March 2004 and RBM data is available at the Virunga HQ and a synthesis report is being produced which will cover 2004, 05, 06 for the patrols covered by rangers.



Patrol coverage for 2004, 05 and 06

These maps show the changes in patrol coverage for the past three years. Data for 2007 are still ongoing and most of it has been entered into computer. We started the process with a central database at the Park headquarters level and we are trying to bring it down to the sector levels as we've already trained rangers in data entry and data analysis.

iv. Timber collection study

The Northern sector of Virunga Park has been inaccessible for long time (more than 10 years) and even the local community had fled because of militias' presence in Ituri region. With support from the EU, a road long of 62 km has been rehabilitated in the area which has facilitated the resettlement of local communities in their farms, which are close to the park boundary. Apart from agriculture, timber exploitation is the main activity in the area with possible impacts on the forest from logging, charcoal making, fire wood and building poles for construction. These products come from the forest close to the Park without any assessment of sustainability. In order to assess the possible impact of the resettlement on the Park, there is need for a study to assess the quantity of timber and traders operating in this area and make recommendations to prevent loss of the forested areas in the lowland forest of Virunga. To date, contact has been made for the study, questionnaires and forms have been agreed up on and field staff identified for data collection.

