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CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

**CAFEC LANDSCAPE SANGHA TRINATIONAL  
CAFEC ANNUAL REPORT: OCTOBER 1, 2013 –September 30, 2014**

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The Sangha Trinational World Heritage Site (known by its French acronym TNS) is the single most biologically intact landscape in the Congo Basin. The core conservation macrozone in the Republic of Congo focuses on Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (NNNP), buffered by well-managed logging concessions (the Kabo, Loundoungou-Toukoulaka, Mokabi-Dzanga, and Pokola logging concessions). NNNP is the largest protected area in the TNS, has never been logged, and harbors the largest populations of most charismatic and indicator species (including about 2,500 forest elephants, 3,500 western lowland gorillas, 2,500 central chimpanzees, and various forest ungulates, carnivores, primates, amphibians, etc.). The greatest direct threat to biodiversity in the Landscape is unsustainable hunting—including illegal hunting of fully protected species (such as elephants for ivory as well as great apes for food or sale) and overharvesting of regulated species such as ungulates and monkeys (to feed logging company workers, their dependents, and town residents through the commercial bushmeat trade). These direct threats are driven by: ivory demand in Asia, increased access to the forest through logging roads, lack of alternative affordable protein sources, and poor governance and law enforcement.

**1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

During the past year, with support from USAID as well as UFWS, the TNS Foundation (FTNS) and private donors, WCS has made significant progress in strengthening the management of Nouabalé Ndoki National Park, in setting up the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements that will take over the management of the park and buffer zone, and in greatly strengthening the law enforcement capabilities of the wildlife protection force. In addition, we have completed a feasibility study for a major new commercial meat processing business which has the potential of bring domestic protein below the price of bushmeat in the major market town of Ouessou. Over thirty new ecoguards have been trained and hired, and the SMART law enforcement monitoring system has been well established. A park management plan, business plan, and tourism strategy are all underway and expected to be

completed by the end of the year. Progress on implementation and highlights of accomplishments of each of the CAFEC strategies are described below.

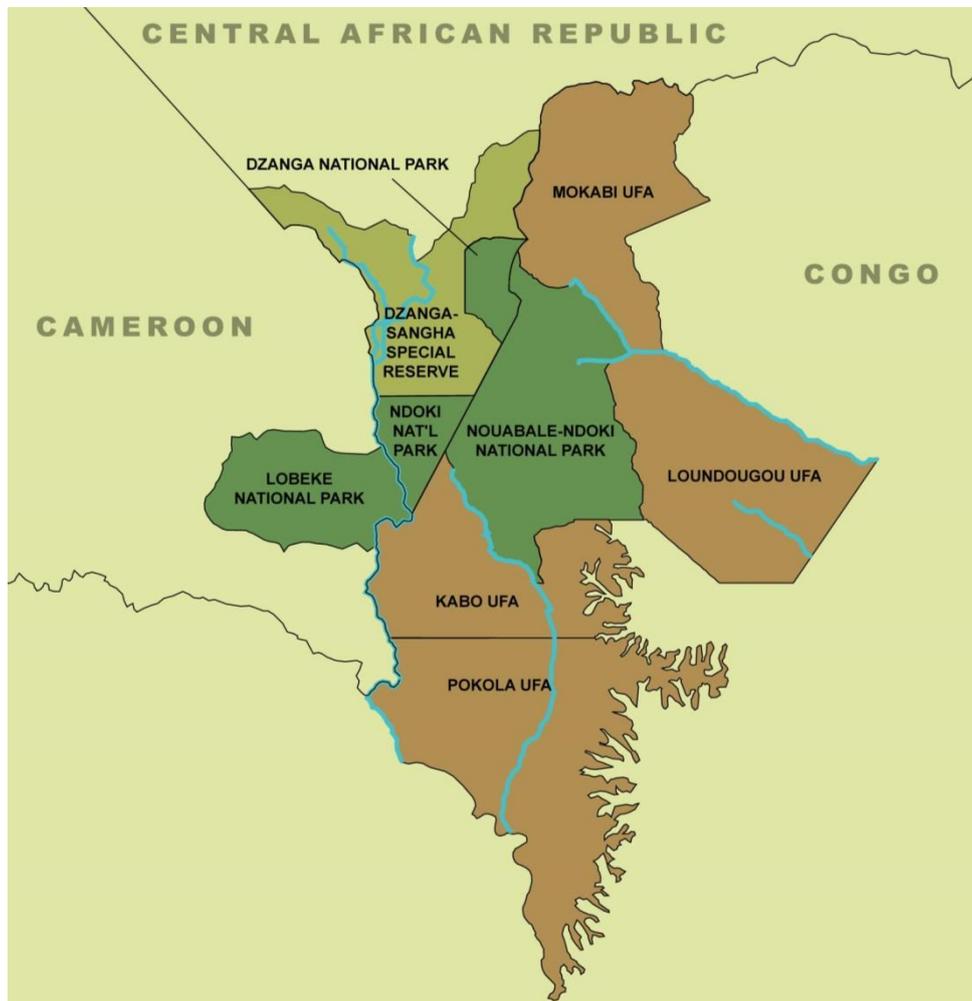


Figure 1. Map of the Nouabalé Ndoki National Park and surrounding logging concessions

### **Strengthen Protected Area (PA) management capacity**

In May 2013 WCS signed a Cooperative Agreement with the Government of Congo/Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development (MEFDD), creating the Nouabalé Ndoki Foundation Public Private Partnership to protect the biodiversity of NNNP, develop world-class ecotourism, and ensure that Ndoki continues to benefit local people, the nation, and the global community in perpetuity. While the process of actualizing the Foundation has taken longer than expected due to a number of necessary bureaucratic steps, we are now in the final stages. A major achievement was reached in early August 2014, when Minister Djombo and WCS Senior Vice President John Robinson signed the Foundation statutes during a visit to New York by the Minister. The signed protocols have subsequently been submitted to the Ministry of the Interior, and the formal document (*recipisse*) which formally creates the Foundation is due to be issued.

Conrad Aveling, a widely respected expert on conservation and Africa as well as an author of many park management plans, has been working on the revised NNNP management plan in collaboration with Mr. Innocent Nganga, a national consultant specializing in management

plans and the validation procedures in Congo. A meeting was held in Bomassa in June 2014 bringing together the key stakeholders to openly discuss and brainstorm on the key components of the plan including protection, tourism development, research, and community engagement. The plan is expected to be submitted for review and ratification by the end of the year. We are currently working with two consultants to complete a business plan for the park, as well as a procedures manual for park administration and operations.

Once the Foundation is officially created (anticipated to be by the end of January 2015), the candidates for key positions such as the unit heads for administration and finance, logistics, and protection will be nominated for official approval by the board.

Meanwhile, in addition to the work on strengthening law enforcement described below, we continue to work with local communities in Bomassa and Makao villages to raise awareness of hunting laws and conservation principles such as sustainable off-take, threatened and endangered species, and adaptive management. Awareness raising efforts include teaching formal environmental education classes in two local schools in Bomassa and Makao, village meetings, and the use of resources such as posters and video. The conservation awareness campaigns were also organized in collaboration with the WCS Global Health Program to disseminate information on the Ebola outbreak in western Africa countries, and the lessons to be learned for Ebola prevention locally. The resulting support has been very strong and collaborative. For young children at school, the campaign consisted of nature activity groups, “Club Ebobo”, established in Bomassa and Makao schools. Additional brochures and posters were produced to facilitate the broadcasting of information about natural resource management.

During the reporting period education teams reached five villages surrounding NNNP with 1550 people sensitized. Apart from the usual schools (Bomassa and Makao), outreach teams also worked in five additional villages in the CIB concession, for a total of seven schools with 949 students attending the Club Ebobo campaigns. Villages such as Gbangbali, Kabo, Loundoungou, Leme and Kabo were also targeted. A Total of 882 (470 men and 352 women) people attended our sensibilisation meeting. In Pokola, five schools were visited and 775 (435 men and 344 women) students attended our sessions. During these sessions, conservation awareness posters were distributed.

### **Strengthen the implementation of land use management plans**

As the land use management plans in the landscape refer to the park and the logging concessions surrounding the park, the activities relevant to this strategy are included under *strengthen protected area (PA) management capacity* (i.e. production of new management plan for NNNP) and *reduce impact of extractive industry (mining, logging, agriculture) by promoting best management practices (BMPs)* (i.e. implementation of management plans under CIB). We continue to work on plans to include the Djeke Triangle (which includes the tourist site, Mondika) in the park and to gazette the Bomassa Triangle as a community reserve. Both contiguous areas fall within the concession held by CIB. The next step in the process is to conduct an updated inventory of large and medium mammals as part of the 2015 landscape surveys.

### **Enhance law enforcement and prosecution**

An intensive, forty day paramilitary training of existing and new recruits was conducted during May and June 2014. Experts from Maisha Consulting, a specialized conservation

security agency with extensive experience in Central Africa, worked closely with WCS and key staff from the Congolese government and military to develop a comprehensive training regime that stresses discipline, combat skills, and pride in performance. The training course was then implemented by two French ex-military trainers with extensive operational experience, alongside three Congolese army officers selected from the provincial military command. The course was overseen by a Congolese Colonel who is responsible for all paramilitary activities undertaken by the Ministry for Forest Economy, Sustainable Development & the Environment, and regularly monitored by senior WCS staff, including Country Director Mark Gately. The training concluded with a series of field missions.

Following the successful completion of the ecoguard training session, the total size of the ecoguard force for the National Park (Bomassa and Makao bases) increased to 38 ecoguards, with an additional 12 law enforcement officers from the Ministry. The number of patrols during the period July to September 2014 increased slightly in comparison to the previous period (from 45 to 50), but efforts to better target the patrols meant that 26% were conducted in 'ecologically sensitive' areas within the national park, as opposed to 12% previously (Fig. 3).



*Figure 2. Paramilitary training of ecoguards.*

While we are recruiting for a new Protection Unit Director and continuing with new ecoguard recruitment (another training of an additional 30 ecoguards is scheduled for November 2014), we have devised a new short term protection strategy for more effective patrols:

- Ecoguards are grouped into seven teams, of either five or six members that will target five identified priority sectors of the National Park and Buffer Zone requiring special focus from anti-poaching patrols - working clockwise from the northern tip of the park these are: 1) north/north-east; 2) Loundougou sawmill area 3) Ndoki river/south-east NNNP boundary 4) Bomassa-Djeke triangle 5) Mabale-Mingingi-Bonye 'bai complex'. These areas represent either key access points into the Park from the buffer zone, or represent key elephant hotspots (ie bais) that are typically targeted by poachers. Each team works three full weeks followed by one rest week, which means that on any single day there will usually be five teams deployed in or around the Park.

As such, continual coverage of these areas represents a preventative and deterrent approach to patrolling.

- One of the seven teams will be retained at Bomassa base as a mobile response unit.
- Teams will be deployed from two base camps, Bomassa and Makao, with at least two vehicles based at the former and one at the latter.
- Additional advanced camps at Mokala and the bai complex will increase operational flexibility and reinforce deterrence in key elephant areas
- Deployment will usually be for two weeks to an advanced position, followed by one week at a post closer to Bomassa/Makao. Attention will be placed on alternating patrol routes rather than re-using fixed paths.

The construction of the ecoguard barracks (funded with matching funds from a private donor) has now been completed at the Makao base camp, and will increase the deployment options for anti-poaching teams, as they will no longer be constrained by a lack of accommodation in the eastern sector of the NNNP. In addition, construction material is currently being purchased and transported to the site so that significant renovation of the existing buildings can be undertaken. New field equipment (GPS, uniforms, tents, backpacks etc.) was also purchased and provided to guards and a new communication system (additional satellite phones and radios) was procured in order to ensure security and coordination of teams.

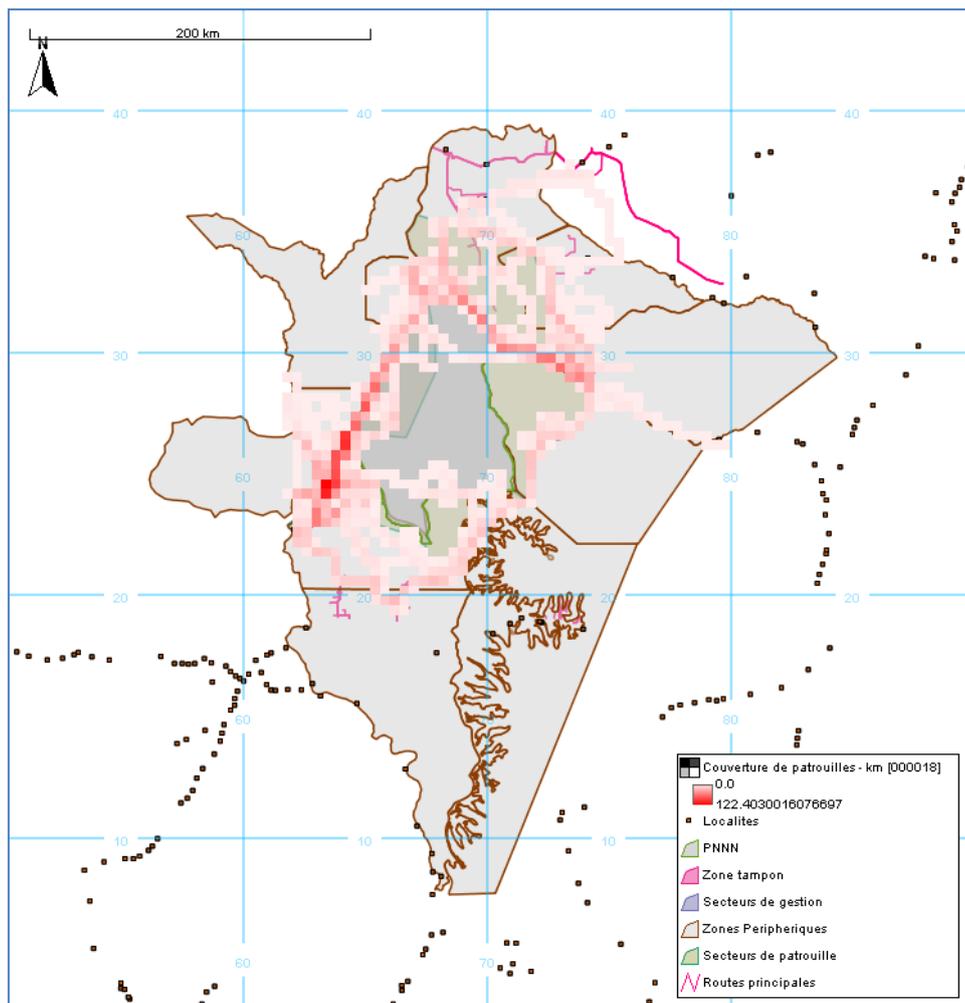
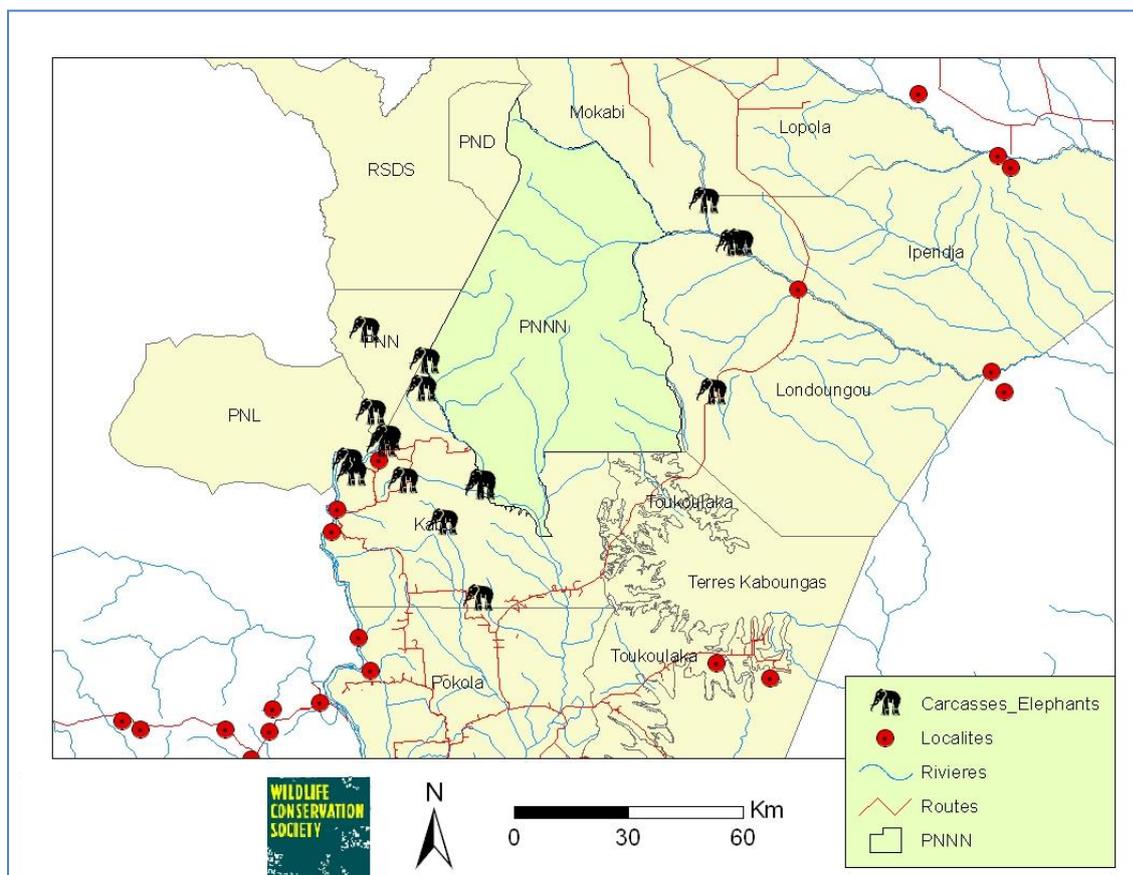


Figure 3. Patrol effort between January 2014 and October 15 2014. Areas of darker red indicate greater coverage.

	NNNP	Kabo, Loundougou-Toukalaka, Pokola and Mokabi-Dzangha FMUs
Number of patrol days	1,596	1,906
Number of days at fixed post	NA	1,668
Number of patrols	140	305
Number of man days	7,737	5,274

*Table 1. Patrol effort in NNNP and surrounding concessions from October 1, 2013-September 30, 2014*

While effort and manpower has increased, particularly within the park, poaching continues to creep closer in the periphery. A total of 18 elephant carcasses were discovered during this period (Fig. 4). While this is still not at the crisis level of poaching witnessed in some of the other parks throughout Africa, this nonetheless the rising pressures on the park.



*Figure 4. Location of elephant carcasses found during the reporting period. Although all 18 carcasses were found outside of the park (including two in the neighboring Central Africa Republic), three were discovered in close proximity to park headquarters.*

There is still a significant amount of work to be done in order to ensure that wildlife crime is successfully prosecuted by provincial courts. WCS and PALF recently worked together to prosecute a former WCS employee who had been accused of selling an elephant tusk to a local dealer. The prosecution was successful in so far as the person was found guilty, but he was subsequently released, amid allegations that his relatives had bribed the judge to give him a non-custodial sentence.

In addition, to try and tackle these problems, the Park Director, Principal Technical Advisor, and WCS-Congo Director have met with a number of officials in the provincial capital of the Sangha Department, Ouesso, including the local Governor (*Prefet*) and the Departmental Director of the MEFDD. Over time, it is hoped that these relationships can be strengthened, and increased support to wildlife prosecutions will be forthcoming. Part of this effort will include the expansion of the WCS presence in Ouesso. This office will provide a venue in which to engage with prosecutors and other law enforcement authorities (including the military, immigration, etc.) and will be shared with PALF. The office will also facilitate a greater PALF presence in the north and will increase coordination between PALF and the WCS field teams. A number of potential buildings for this office were viewed over the past two months, but nothing suitable has been discovered yet.

Since 2013, the Nouabale-Ndoki National Park has been operating a fully functional law enforcement monitoring system for patrol evaluation and strategic planning using SMART. SMART manages information collected by patrol teams on threats and patrol effort and has four main objectives: firstly to monitor threats and poaching hotspots on an as-near real time basis as possible; secondly, to ensure that up to date information on threats is directly incorporated into patrol planning and patrol strategy is modified accordingly; thirdly to evaluate the performance of patrols in meeting key targets (ie. patrolling key hotspots and sensitive zones such as bais or access points), and fourthly, to improve management of patrol personnel (ie ensuring that work rates, performance, team spirit and leadership are all strengthened).

A comprehensive SMART training course was held in Bomassa from March 15-21 in order to expand the training to the greater TNS and to provide more extensive technical training to the NNNP staff. The course was led by WCS law enforcement monitoring expert Dr. Emma Stokes and included 21 participants in the TNS landscape (participants included ecoguards, conservators, SMART focal points, and research assistants). The purpose of Training focused on hands on instruction using the program on specialized CyberTracker handheld units and applying the analysis of the data to park management. During the training we also developed a strategy for the implementation of SMART at the national level in Congo and selected Fortune Iyenguet as the WCS SMART National Coordinator in Bomassa. Dr Stokes also provided targeted training session for SMART focal points to enhance their capacity to manage compilation and analysis.

Over the last year, the following improvements to the law enforcement monitoring system have been made under the supervision of our regional LEM advisor (Emma Stokes):

- recruitment of a national coordinator whose role is to ensure regular reporting and follow-up on key indicators for enforcement across northern Congo programs
- extension of SMART into the buffer zone of the Park, through nomination of a SMART focal point based in Kabo, whose role is to monitor activities of mobile patrols and roadblocks along logging roads (a week long training was held in Kabo in October 2014)

- definition of ‘sensitive areas’ across NNNP and buffer zone, which will form targets for patrol coverage in our SMART reports and will help ensure patrols are targeted at the right places and increasing deterrent effect for poachers
- development of a 3-monthly reporting ‘dashboard’ that is able to rapidly provide key indicators on patrol effort, results and judicial follow-up across the Park and buffer zone and will form the basis of site-level patrol planning and evaluation meetings with key personnel
- development of a case-tracking system for monitoring legal and judiciary follow-up to arrests made by NNNP and PROGEPP ecoguards

We continue to monitor Mokoubela, Djadja, Mokoube, Mboule bais every three months on two week missions. Given that the open bais are particularly vulnerable to hunting, this monitoring trends in mammal and human sign allows us to detect which areas are at greatest risk. Continued monitoring reveals that mammals, including elephants and great apes continue to visit the four bais, particularly Bokoumbela and Mokoube (Figure 5).

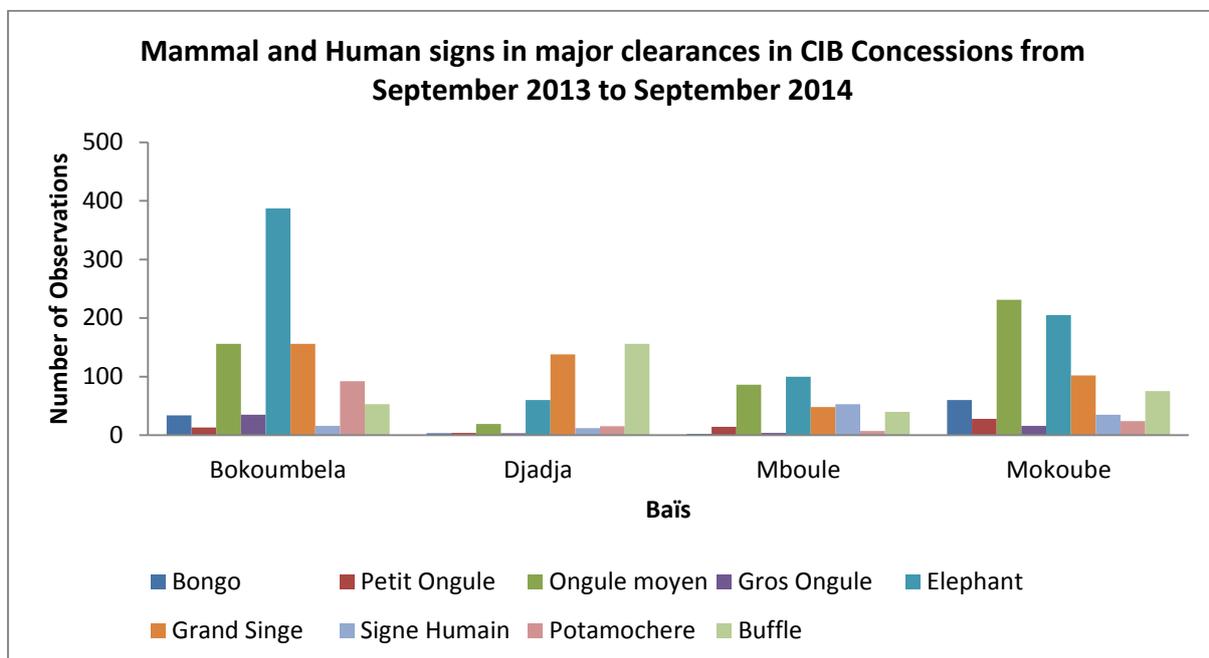


Figure 5. Results of monitoring bais in the CIB concessions September 2013- September 2014.

We also have permanent monitoring teams stationed at Lac Djaka and Mombongo bais. Since establishing the permanent monitoring, we have observed no poaching incidents and in the last year and teams have begun to observe elephants visiting the bais during the day. Moreover, most of the elephant direct contacts were witnesses during this reporting period (Figure 6, Table 2).

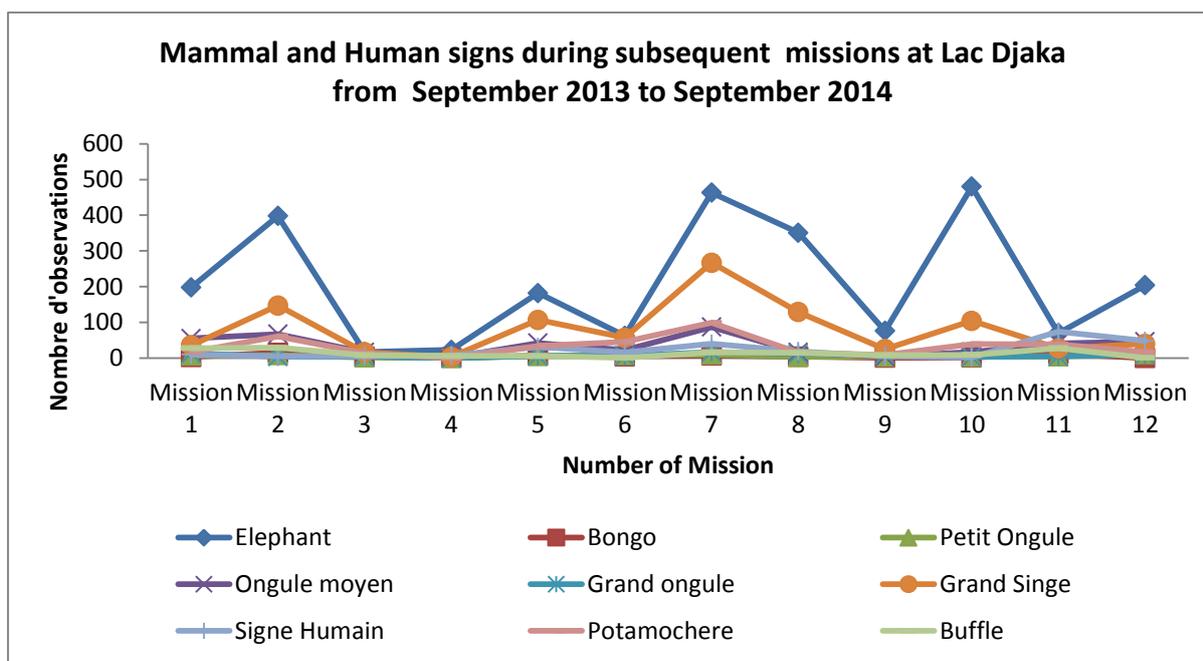


Figure 6. Results of monitoring Lac Djaka September 2013- September 2014.

Species	Animal signs	Nest	Human signs	Direct Observation
Bongo	302	NA	NA	45
Elephant	3280	NA	NA	187
Apes	215	376	NA	29
Human	NA	NA	134	0
Potamochère	508	NA	NA	42
Chimpanzee	34	105	NA	31
Buffle	776	NA	NA	22
Small Duiker	138	NA	NA	32
Medium Duiker	687	NA	NA	33
Large Duiker	127	NA	NA	0

Table 2. Mammal and human signs recorded at Mombongo September 2013- September 2014.

### Promote sustainable livelihood alternatives as a substitute for unsustainable practices

In conjunction with the Bateke landscape, WCS enlisted the services of International Partnership for Human Development (IPHD) to examine the feasibility of large scale animal husbandry projects in the north Congo landscape, specifically in Ouesso. The objective of the feasibility study was to evaluate whether commercially viable meat production would be possible in northern Congo at a final sale price at or below the current price of bushmeat. Chicken, fish, pork and mutton farming options were considered. IPHD's final feasibility assessment report showed that for chicken and fish farming options, commercially viable businesses can be established which had the potential of bringing the price of domestic meat below that of bushmeat. Business plans were drawn up for these investments which are based on initial *capital loans* from the Ministry of Agriculture's development fund (Fonds de Soutien Agricole, FSA) to be paid back over 5-10 year periods from the farming profits. In

each case, a condition of the business plan is strict adherence to technical support provided by IPHD technicians. Such projects are therefore designed to be financially autonomous and profitable at the end of the loan payback period. This generates significant local development and employment potential, while at the same time delivering a conservation objective (reduced demand for bushmeat and improved political support for wildlife protection). Based on these results, we are currently working to solicit the required funding needed to implement the project under IPHD’s management.

**Promote (ecologically) sustainable artisanal use of natural resources (NR)**

Household surveys continue to be conducted in Kabo and Loundougo in order to evaluate the links between socioeconomic factors and bushmeat consumption. Bushmeat continues to be the main source of protein followed by fish in both areas. In particular we have been working with the CIB site manager in Loundougou to reduce bushmeat consumption in this currently active concession. From December to February there was a particular push to supply CIB staff with more fish, resulting in a temporary decrease in bushmeat consumption. Beginning in April, CIB enforced a policy of locking up authorized staff firearms on non-hunting days (see section on Reduce impact of extractive industry (mining, logging, agriculture) by promoting best management practices (BMPs)), also resulting in a temporary decrease in bushmeat consumption. While it is still too early to be certain, and difficult to quantify, anecdotal evidence seems to imply that the current Ebola crisis in West Africa and sensitization campaigns in the region are having an effect on reducing consumption of bushmeat due to the fear of contracting the disease (particularly through bats).

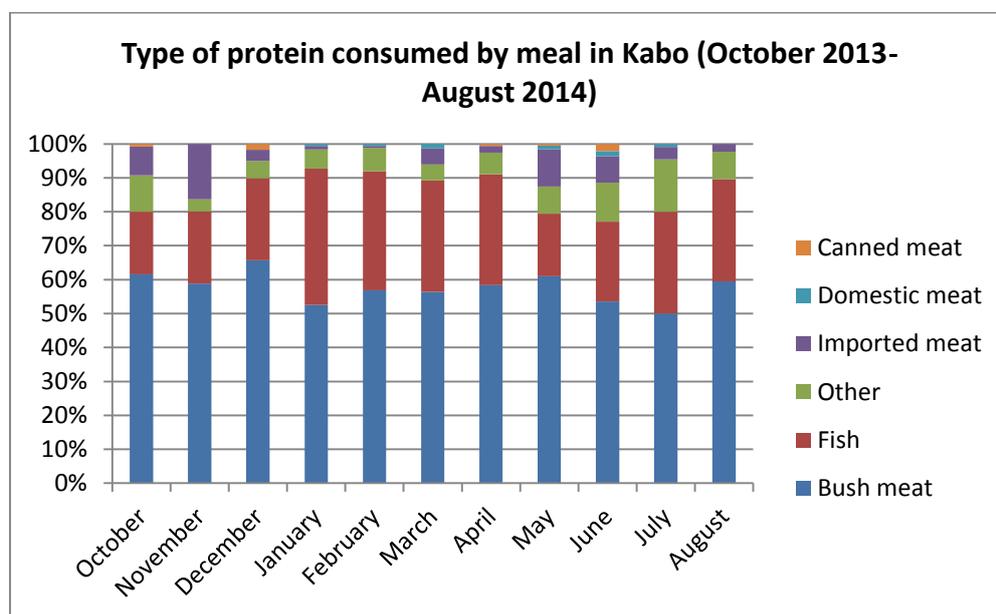


Figure 7. Percentage composition of protein in meals consumed in Kabo (October 2013-August 2014)

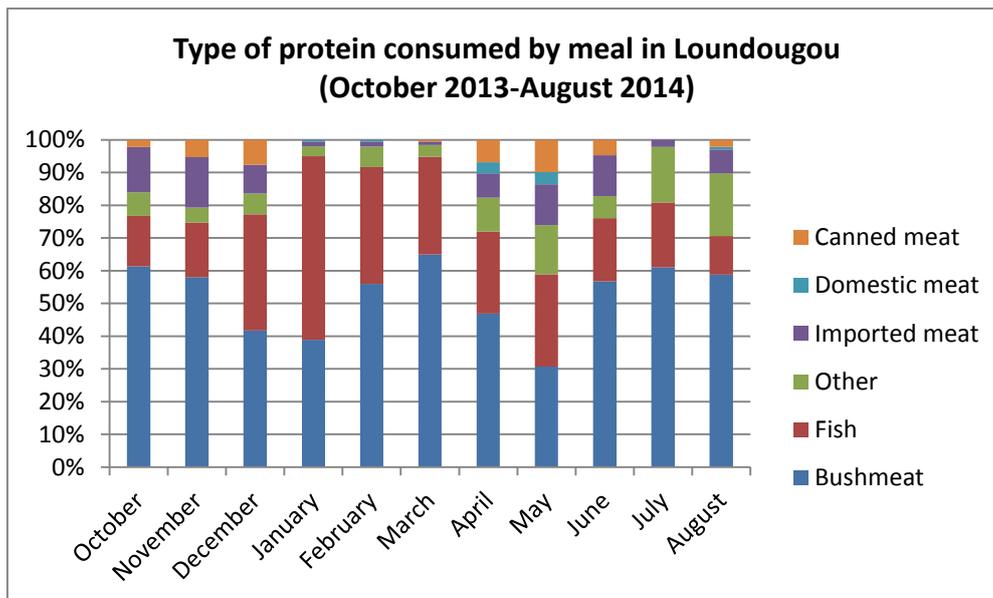


Figure 8. Percentage composition of protein in meals consumed in Loundougou (October 2013-August 2014).

Work also continues to build better governance systems within the fishing association on the Sangha River. Currently, an association exists, but does not function properly as it is poorly organized and there is no enforcement of rules. We have completed a preliminary study to evaluate 1) where fishing sites are located, 2) what is the demographic composition of each fishing group, 3) what species are being caught, 4) who they are selling the fish to, and 5) how much revenue do they make from selling the fish. We are currently in the process of analyzing this data. The next step will be to assist the association to set up internal rules to establish criteria for membership and conditions and enforcement of agreements (i.e. no poaching by members and alerting WCS to illegal activities). Adherence to these conditions will in part be monitored via ecoguard patrols and law enforcement activities in the area (see strategy on Enhance law enforcement and prosecution). Once the association governance system is established, we will facilitate a formal agreement between the association and CIB that will commit CIB to buying the fish from the association to provide to their staff.

### Piloting the use of REDD+ financing mechanisms

Using data from the assessment of forest cover made by the University of Maryland<sup>[1]</sup> we have calculated the forest area and forest change that has taken place over the landscape between 2000 and 2012. This gives a gross figure for deforestation and provides an initial estimate of the baseline, or business as usual rate of forest loss. As expected, deforestation is not a current major threat to the TNS landscape. The landscape is about 2M ha in size, and about 94% covered by forest. Over the period since 2000 to 2012 it has lost an estimated 12,721 ha of forest, or 0.63% of the total forest cover.

Deforestation and forest cover loss is not uniform across the landscape, and these landscape figures will be broken down by macro-zone to see how the different areas compare with the landscape average.

<sup>[1]</sup> <http://earthenginepartners.appspot.com/science-2013-global-forest>

TNS forest cover and deforestation statistics					
Total area (ha)	Area of forest 2000 (ha)	Percent forest cover	Area of forest loss (ha)	Percent forest loss 2000-2012	Estd. Annual loss
2,132,097	2,014,398	94.48	12,721	0.632	0.053

Using a conservative estimate of 400 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per ha based on IPCC figures, this results in an estimated emission of 5,088,400 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> over the last 10 years.

In addition, WCS has have engaged with the CN-REDD and the forestry company OLAM to participate in the development of an Emissions Reduction Project (ER-Project) under the World Bank Carbon Fund. The project concept note covers a range of activities across the north of Congo and includes the entire TNS landscape. WCS is the main biodiversity partner in the project consortium, and will provide biodiversity data and spatial planning expertise to ensure that set aside areas maximise both carbon and biodiversity benefits. Our role in this project is described in more detail under Section 2 of this report.

**Reduce impact of extractive industry (mining, logging, agriculture) by promoting best management practices (BMPs)**

We continue to work closely with CIB in the ERZ macrozones surrounding the park. In May 2014 CIB upheld the rules of its management plan by implementing a program of control of authorized fire arms of its employees. This was partially in response to an FSC audit finding from the previous year. Now all authorized guns are locked in a case when not authorized for use. Also in adherence to the management plan, CIB now follows a program of organizing hunts of licensed hunters (employees) who are allowed to go out twice a month (only on Sunday) during the hunting season in the established hunting zone as a way to increase control of hunting. A staff member from WCS participates on these designated Sundays in order to monitor and record offtake.

During the reporting period, the safari hunting company, Congo Hunting Safaris, has continued to operate in the macrozone but has failed to register with the government or adhere to any control or monitoring measures – such as conducting a wildlife inventory, creating a management plan, or supporting ecoguard patrols. WCS has continued to monitor the area through our existing patrols and recce surveys between the bais. Along with CIB, we have raised these serious concerns of non-compliance with the ministry. As a result of an independent FSC audit in October which cited the violations of CHS, CIB had its FSC certification suspended. In response, the government of Congo has suspended the operations of CHS.

In addition, the FSC audit cited the lack of performance of the ecoguards in the CIB concessions (macrozones) as a reason for suspension of certification. This reflects the continued issue we have had with resolving the protocols between the government, CIB and WCS in terms of management of the ecoguards. Currently, WCS is not able to hire, fire, or otherwise enforce accountability and performance among the ecoguards due to flawed protocols. The recent FSC suspension has pushed this issue forward and we have currently been working with CIB and a third party forestry expert to draft a revised protocol to be

submitted directly to the ministry by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Given the escalation of the issue due to the FSC suspension, we are confident that there will finally be a resolution regarding the protocols within the following weeks.



*Figure 9. Ecoguards conduct road block inspections of trucks passing on the logging road.*

### **Promote tourism as a Payment for Ecosystem Service (PES)**

The primary PES focus for the TNS landscape is its vast potential for ecotourism. We have continued to maintain the key tourist sites of Mbeli Bai and Mondika as well as the tourist facilities in Bomassa, including continuous tracking of the two habituated gorilla groups in Mondika. During this period the park received 194 tourists, representing 737 visitor days. Prior to the conflict in the neighboring Central African Republic, the number of tourists peaked at about 220 before declining to around 140 tourists in recent years. It is therefore promising that visitor numbers are starting to rebound. These visits resulted in about \$200k in revenue for the park and an additional \$20k in revenue for the Village Development Fund.

While these figures are encouraging, tourism is largely being run by WCS. We are continuing with the aim to professionalize operations by attracting investors and international operators. As a first step, we have enlisted an ecotourism consultant (EcoImagination) with the support of the TNS Foundation to develop a tourism strategy for the greater TNS. The strategy is

expected to be completed for validation by local and regional stakeholders by the end of this year.

## 2. PROGRESS TOWARDS NATIONAL REDD+ STRATEGIES/ACTION PLANS

Firstly, we have completed an assessment of forest loss across the landscape using historic satellite images, and begun the construction of a landscape-specific reference scenario. This process is described in detail above, under the strategy *Piloting the use of REDD+ financing mechanisms*. This deforestation assessment sets the baseline for future forest loss under business as usual conditions, and will provide a basis for monitoring success in each macro-zone over the life of the project. The landscape specific reference scenario will provide a case study for the development of the national reference scenario, which is currently underway.

Secondly, we have engaged with the CN-REDD and the company OLAM to participate in the development of an Emissions Reduction Project (ER-Project) under the World Bank Carbon Fund. This proposal, for a jurisdictional-level REDD project is by far the most ambitious REDD-related development in RoC to date. The project concept note, which covers a range of activities across the north of Congo, and includes the entire TNS landscape, was validated by the carbon fund in June 2014. WCS is the main biodiversity partner in the project consortium, and will be responsible for assuring that emissions reduction activities taking place in the landscape do not compromise biodiversity priorities. One of the focal activities is the promotion of set aside areas within forestry concessions. WCS will provide biodiversity data and spatial planning expertise to ensure that set aside areas maximise both carbon and biodiversity benefits. Specifically, WCS's role will address the following:

- **Identification of set aside areas:** To assist in the selection of forest set asides within commercial concessions (for forest management planning and the application of REDD+ methodologies - Logged to protected forest), WCS will conduct spatial analysis using Marxan, and elements of the WCS FOOTPRINT approach to identify optimal overlaps between high carbon stock and high biodiversity conservation priority areas.
- **HCV mapping:** Land zoning across the landscape based on a transparent and participatory process of HCV threshold setting to ensure forest massifs necessary to maintain viable populations of most naturally occurring species are maintained intact and to establish biodiversity conservation targets to be met over the lifetime of the project.

WCS will outline a biodiversity monitoring program for the ER project. The program will include:

- The monitoring of hunting practices and wild meat consumption at local levels,
- The monitoring of commercial bushmeat and ivory hunting
- The monitoring of the effectiveness of wildlife protection efforts
- Landscape scale biodiversity inventories, and other innovative monitoring approaches to check the status of populations of endangered species across the landscape

Discussions are ongoing with OLAM and CN REDD to define more clearly the role of WCS in the ER project. A detailed project description will be prepared by all partners in 2015.

## 3. EXPLANATION OF DEVIATION FROM APPROVED FY14 BENCHMARKS

Regular large mammal monitoring surveys are planned on a five year cycle with the next landscape survey scheduled to be completed in 2015. We therefore do not have updated

figures to measure the rate of change of abundance of elephant, great ape, and antelope populations at this time.

A WCS TNS staff member was trained in BNS during a workshop held by WCS Livelihoods Coordinator, Michelle Wieland in June 2014. While he had conducted a preliminary BNS prior to the meeting, we are now working to strengthen the work by integrating gender and diversity based on the harmonization of techniques discussed with CARPE partners in June and September.

Governance measures are also not available at this time as they will be more relevant under the establishment of the Ndoki Foundation as this will entail a new management structure and emphasis on governance.

We continue to encounter a challenge in terms of the judiciary and the lack of follow-up when these cases reach the courts; to date, only one case has been judged since the start of 2014; the others are either still underway, or have been dismissed by the judges. In the short term, additional support will be sought from PALF in order to try and increase the rate of convictions for wildlife criminals; in the longer term, WCS will push ahead with plans to expand the Ouesso office and recruit additional legal assistants to work alongside the PALF team.

**4. EXPLANATION OF VARIATION FROM APPROVED WORKPLAN**

The majority of activities in the workplan have progressed as anticipated. One major factor for the delay of some activities has been the delay in the establishment of the Ndoki Foundation. This in turn has stalled the hiring of new senior support positions for the park management as these candidates need to be approved by the board. This has therefore resulted in less on the ground capacity than originally anticipated. However, we have already taken steps to install short-term support staff to improve management, administration, and logistics in the meantime. Candidates have also been selected to submit to the Ndoki Foundation board at the first board meeting (anticipated in January 2015).

As mentioned above, the biodiversity surveys originally listed in the year one workplan will be conducted in year 2 instead. The results of this survey will also support the proposed annexation of the Djeke Triangle and the establishment of the Bomassa Triangle as a community reserve.

**5. MANAGEMENT CHANGES, PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS AND BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND OTHER ISSUES REQUIRING USAID'S ATTENTION**

***Management Changes***

Long-time WCS employee Richard Malonga has been serving as interim NNNP Director since July 2014. Richard has subsequently excelled in the position, rapidly improving relationships at site-level and overseeing a marked improvement in effectiveness of project operations, both in terms of anti-poaching and logistics/construction. Richard continues to receive support from WCS Northern Congo Senior Technical Advisor Tomo Nishihara and Principal Technical Advisor Jean-Robert Onononga.

Mark Gately was officially announced as the new Congo Country Program Director at the end of April 2014. Since then he has focused on reinforcing efforts in NNNP, having already made three visits to the park to assess its current status and design a plan to move forward. Mark brings not only the experience and strategic vision of leading two of WCS's major country programs (Cambodia and Gabon) but also an extensive, hands-on knowledge of NNNP, where he worked from 1999 to 2007, including four years as Project Director.

As mentioned, the formal establishment of the Nouable Ndoki Foundation is imminent and the first board meeting is expected to take place in January 2015. At this time, the new management structure will formally be put in place along with management procedures, business plan and management plan.

#### ***Partnering Arrangements and Budget Allocations***

The initial budget submission proposed a small subgrant to IUCN to work on community development plans. Since that time, IUCN has initiated a program based out of Ouessou. Based on the results of the IPHD study, we believe that it will be more effective to work with IPHD and its existing program of government endorsed individual loans and system of training and monitoring. We are currently pursuing other sources of funding to support implementation of the project with IPHD. We propose to therefore reallocate the amount budgeted for IUCN in the CARPE budget to provide support to the development of the community and livelihood strategy to be developed in year 2 under the guidance of the WCS Livelihoods Advisor, Michelle Wieland.

## **6. LINKS TO OTHER USG AGENCIES**

The activities being implemented are entirely complementary with those outlined in the USFWS cooperative agreement, "Improving management to conserve the ecological integrity and connectivity, and the wealth of wildlife in the Sangha Tri-National and Northern Congo continuous forest landscape". In particular, the activities reported under CARPE are relevant to the USFWS cooperative agreement objectives of: 1) the protected area network is extended and the management effectiveness of existing protected areas is improved, 2) wildlife law enforcement is strengthened and monitored to reduce illegal killing of wildlife and 3) large mammal population abundance and distribution are better understood through proper surveys in key areas. Key activities under the USFWS TNS fund include law enforcement and protection, strengthening management capacity and infrastructure, developing ecotourism, and continuing the biodiversity research and monitoring program. However, while the USFWS initiative extends to a wider geographical area and includes added emphasis on disease as a specific threat to apes, the CARPE activities involve greater emphasis on building on good governance systems and sustainable community management.

## **7. LESSONS LEARNED**

A number of important lessons have been learned during the first year of CAFEC, including:

#### ***Development of a public-private partnership***

The Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park is the single most biologically intact landscape in the Congo Basin. Over the last year, WCS has made good progress in negotiating a PPP agreement with the Government of Congo, and have developed a structure which provides a transparent, inclusive governance structure, The Ndoki Foundation, based on the model developed by Africa Park Network for Odzala National Park. Further details are given in the success story below. The Foundation will have responsibility for oversight of park

management. The Foundation board is chaired by the government representative, and the vice-chair is provided by WCS. The Foundation delegates responsibility for management to WCS, who provide a strong management unit, with professional staff, both national international, to ensure the effective running of the park and buffer zone. This structure is already being used as a model in developing plans for PPP's for other protected areas.

#### *Conservation with neighbor at war*

During the past year, there has been ongoing civil unrest in the Central African Republic, which has affected the Dzangha-Sangha area, which forms the CAR side of the TNS landscape. This has required certain responses in the TNS landscape in the Republic of Congo:

- Extra vigilance is required along border areas for poachers coming in to the Nouable Ndoki National Park
- Attention must be given to the presence of refugees coming from CAR to the villages close to the border, including Bomassa where the park headquarters are. These are not designated refugee reception centres, and we have worked with the local authorities to make sure that these refugees are properly looked after, so that they do not put extra pressure on the park and the natural resources of the area.
- We have in addition been able to help the park authorities and NGOs operating in CAR to maintain contact with teams left in the field, even when most senior staff have had to be evacuated. This has included helping a team of security consultants to get into the area and negotiate the ongoing protection of key wildlife spots, such as the Dzangha bai with incoming military forces.

We are happy to report that the situation in the CAR side seems to be returning to calm, and the amount of damage to the wildlife and forests of the landscape has been considerably less than might have been the case.

#### *Bai monitoring as an effective anti-elephant poaching.*

Experience has shown that having a permanent presence at forest clearings, or *bais* as they are known locally, can be an effective deterrent against elephant poaching. Bais are a major focus of elephant ranging patterns, and are often targeted by poachers as easy places to shoot elephants while in the open. WCS has for many years monitored elephants at certain bais. Recently, in the face of the widespread increase in elephant poaching, we have noticed the degree to which such bai monitoring can play an important role in preventing elephant poaching. As a result, we have increased the number of bais which are monitoring permanently, and as a result poaching levels in the vicinity has been greatly reduced, and we have noticed that elephants have started to use the bais more as a result.

## **8. SUCCESS STORY**

### ***The Nouabalé Ndoki Foundation***

The establishment of the Nouabalé Ndoki Foundation (NNF) public private partnership is a significant achievement over the last year. While the original agreement with the government was signed in May 2013, the process to actually operationalize the Foundation has been long and complex. On August 5, Minister Djombo and John Robinson, Executive Vice President of Conservation and Science, WCS, met in Washington DC to sign the statutes for the Nouabalé Ndoki Foundation. This was the final major requirement in the process of officially creating the Foundation as the management body for the Nouabalé Ndoki National Park.

Since that time, the statutes have been delivered to the Ministry of the Interior and on October 29 we received a copy of the *récépissé* which formally registers the Foundation.

The goal of the NNF is to protect the extraordinary biodiversity of NNNP, develop world-class ecotourism, and ensure that Ndoki continues to benefit local people, the nation, and the global community in perpetuity. The PPP model has proven to be one of the most promising models for longterm conservation as evidenced by South Africa National Parks, Gorongosa National Park, and Virunga National Park. The structure was first introduced in the Republic of Congo in 2011 by Leadership for Conservation in Africa (LCA) and African Parks Network in Odzala-Kokoua National Park. While the implementation in ROC has come with challenges, the project has significantly increased protection, expanded operations, and introduced one of Central Africa's first luxury tourist destinations. The experience gained by APN and the lessons learned have resulted in a clearer road map for setting up the NNF. At a recent event during the 69th UN General Assembly, honoring his efforts to support innovative models in conservation, President Sassou reconfirmed his commitment to the PPP model in Congo and specifically WCS's role in the NNF.

The NNF board will convene for the first time in January 2015. We expect significant improvements from the outset, including increased capacity at all levels, greater ability to implement our protection strategy and enforce accountability among rangers, and wider engagement in governance and community issues.



*Figure 10 Minister Djombo and John Robinson sign the NNF statutes at a ceremony in Washington DC*



*Figure 11. Minister Djombo, WCS CEO Cristian Samper, President Sassou, Antoinette Sassou and John Robinson at a ceremony in New York honoring President Sassou's commitment to innovative models in conservation*

## **9. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

Following the signature of the Nouabale Ndoki Foundation statutes, Minister Djombo requested that WCS consider presenting the Congolese Head of State, President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, with an award to recognize his contribution to 'innovations in conservation', and in particular his role in the development of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to manage NNNP and Odzala National Park. This presentation subsequently took place in mid-September 2014, on the fringes of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York during a ceremony led by WCS CEO and President, Dr Cristian Samper. In addition to raising the profile of conservation within Congo, the award to the President will also lead to improved relations with the MEFDD and will vastly facilitate interactions with Minister Djombo.

Congo Country Program Director, Mark Gately, was named as one of the top 50 conservationists to follow on Twitter. <https://www.thedodo.com/64-conservationists-you-should-621196654.html> (<https://twitter.com/GatelyMark>)

WCS CEO, Dr, Cristian Samper, contributed to the Huffington Post blog and highlighted the importance of the development of the PPP in NNNP for elephant conservation. ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-cristian-samper/elephant-conservation-suc\\_b\\_5405752.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-cristian-samper/elephant-conservation-suc_b_5405752.html)).

Tim Rayden, WCS Congo Technical Advisor, Forestry and Climate Change, attended the FSC General Assembly from September 7-14 and presented on the topic of "Change the culture, change the sector: Governance overhaul desperately needed in Congo Basin" (<http://ga2014.fsc.org/opinion-analysis-78.change-the-culture-change-the-sector-governance-overhaul-desperately-needed-in-congo-basin>).