

Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment

CARPE

Technical Report

Presented to

U.S. Agency for International Development

For the period

April 1, 2000--- October 31, 2000—

Award Number PCE-A-00-96-90026-00

Submitted by
Tony Mokombo

October 2000

INTRODUCTION

The cooperative agreement (No. PCE-A-00-96-90026-00) between World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the United States Agency for International Development (US AID) for the Central African Regional Program for Environment (CARPE) Project totals \$2.5 million and covers the period of April 26, 1996 through April 25, 2001. The award was obligated on September 27, 1996, and signed by WWF on September 30, 1996.

This technical report covers the period of April 1, 2000 through October 31, 2000, and will focus on activities carried out by WWF-US Headquarters and WWF-Central African Regional Program Office during this semester, and those conducted by the field offices that enlighten the importance of biodiversity conservation in the region. It will also expand on future activities in CARPE II.

It should be noted that as most of the activities funded by CARPE are linked to others field activities, we found it necessary to include all these information in this report to enlighten the conservation work.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS TO DATE

A. WWF-US HEADQUARTERS ACTIVITIES

A.1. African Professional Development Program (APDP)

Goal: To train a cadre of professional natural resource managers who have the multidisciplinary education background and field experience to address complex natural resource management challenges in Central Africa.

Progress:

WWF has used some of the CARPE capacity-building funds to enhance his key staff's English level in order to excel in their biodiversity conservation job. Since most of conservation literatures and meetings are in English. To this end, Mr. Jean Yamindou, the National Coordinator of WWF-CAR has benefited from this grant while he was here in Washington DC for WWF-Field Operation Training. He attended a six-week intensive English course. This fiscal year Gabon office has sent in proposals for an intensive English course for his GIS lab staff and those who have already benefited from this CAPRE fund will continue their English classes. These courses will be at the country level.

A.2. African Forestry Action Network

- **Background:** Established June 1994, the Africa Forest Action Network (AFAN) is a network of NGOs from various African countries whose purpose is to promote the conservation of forests and the sustainable use of forest resources, particularly for the well-being of the people. This is done through information exchange, cooperation, and mutual support among NGOs

participating in AFAN. Funding from CARPE and the MacArthur Foundation has positioned WWF to strengthen the capacity of the AFAN and its NGO members. Following are the Goal, the expected results and progress to date.

Goal: To strengthen the capacity of African NGOs working in community forest management through providing support to the African Forest Action Network (AFAN).

Expected Results

1. Information dissemination and experiences among members with other networks and other organizations facilitated.
2. Lobbying activities in the field of sustainable forest management coordinated, and
3. The organizational capacity of the network and NGO members strengthened

Progress:

It is unfortunate that in CARPE II WWF will not be able to support AFAN. This is due to the amount of funds allocated to WWF for this second phase of CARPE. However, WWF has been able to allocated some of the remaining funds from CARPE I to:

- ◆ Support the Coordinator trip to two country members, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo in order to apprehend the difficulties these countries have been faced with.

In Democratic Republic of Congo, Swedi Elongo's CADIC that is supposed to be the Focal Point for the Network does not reside in this country. Worse still, he is not even unable to talk about AFAN neither in Bujumbura, his current headquarters, nor in Eastern Congo where his NGO claims to be working. The Network has adopted a crisis and rather realistic approach of appointing two Kinshasa resident NGOs—Luketa Simbi's "Faune et Vie" and Geraldine Mayunga's "PROPRE". But from all indications the choices are as wrong as those they made in Bangui in 1994—without prior knowledge of their effectiveness on the ground. The CARPE Focal Point in Kinshasa has confirmed this to the Network's Coordinator in Cameroon and has promised to be of assistance to AFAN in identifying some more active NGOs.

In Nigeria, the change of guard though democratically done, from Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) to NEST has rather helped to rob AFAN of its little gain in Nigeria under NCF than bolster it. Since the last AFAN Focal Point Representative Mrs. Nkiru ABBA quit her job at NEST last year, The Coordination has not have any contacts with NEST, despite his repeated mails to them.

- ◆ To organize exchange visits among the Network Country Members..
- ◆ Organize a workshop on Fund raising for its members in order to enhance their capacity to seek for funds even locally, nationally or internationally.

Due to the issues mentioned above, the network Coordinator has chosen to organize these last two activities, back to back, in Ghana owing to the relatively strong NGO establishment in this country.

During this reporting period, AFAN had been able to produce its ninth, tenth and eleventh Newsletter, which was distributed to CEFDHAC's participants in Bujumbura. In the eleventh newsletter they voiced their opinion on linking Decentralization to Environmental Good Governance. The author of this article highlights the importance of decentralization, which entails a kind of sharing power sharing arrangement that cedes major prerogatives to the periphery, i.e greater grassroots participation and consequent consensus building. Whereas Environmental good governance integrates the civil society in the dynamics and process that lead to the judicious and rational management of natural resources. It appeals on governments that they can not be the best managers of our last remaining forested areas.

He has also urged the CEFDHAC leaders that this institution should be structured in such a way as to ensure full devolution of powers, empowering more the National Working Groups, which is composed of all stakeholders (NGOS, economic operators, parliament and the government.

Under the long road to Environmental article, the network has highlighted that although countries of the Congo Basin have reviewed or envisage reviewing their laws on forests and the environment, strategies so far adopted tend to compartmentalize natural resources within ministries in charge of environment.

There are number of bottlenecks that stall environmental good governance. These bottlenecks include: expropriation of resources by the state; inadequate flow of resources; lack of permanent mechanism for dialog with the civil society and general absence of permanent communication links and working relations between the government and communities; the desire of big industrial concerns that are against change to exploit natural resources, etc. and the list is not exhaustive.

A.3. TRAINING IN APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Background

Key stakeholders, local residents, governments, and NGOs have critical roles to play in the success of conservation in central Africa. Therefore, it is important that each of these groups participate fully in the planning, design, and implementation of conservation activities in their communities. To inform their participation, they must also have the skills necessary to assess the ecological, socio-economic, and institutional conditions of targeted project sites. Toward this end, WWF launched a regional training program in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in year-one of this grant.

The PRA training program is divided into three phases, during which WWF staff and partners in Gabon, CAR, and Cameroon were introduced to the following theory and practice of participatory applied research and planning techniques, testing PRA tools in village settings (WWF project sites) and reporting findings in written reports. The first phase of the program provided hands-on, intensive training, while subsequent phases focused more on providing

technical assistance and facilitation. Each phase resulted in a range of case studies for WWF project sites, which provided a series of recommendations for project management teams to integrate into the project operational plans.

Goal: To provide WWF country program staff and associated governmental, non-governmental and academic partners with the skills to conduct participatory and applied research and land use planning with rural communities.

Expected Results

1. Socio-economic and ecological information needed by WWF field projects in Central Africa for project design, monitoring, or evaluation generated
2. The training program used as a vehicle to launch a participatory community level planning process at selected project sites supported by WWF.

Progress and future actions:

The first phase of this program has been achieved. However, as the development of a vision for biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin has been frustrated by the lack of good scientific information on which to base priorities and lack of funding and qualified National staff and partners to conduct surveys (to date, expatriates have carried out the majority of the surveys done).

In the mid-1990's, to address a parallel need for socio-economic information and a need for expertise among National staff and partners to collect it, WWF developed a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) training program. This program introduced WWF National staff and partners in Gabon, CAR, and Cameroon to the theory and practice of participatory applied socio-economic research and planning techniques. Phase one of the training program provided intensive theoretical and field training, while subsequent phases focused on providing technical assistance and facilitation. The PRA training program resulted both in a cadre of trained National staff and partners in the PRA methodology and in a set of case studies and recommendations for WWF project sites.

Building on this model, WWF now seeks to complement and deploy the PRA teams with teams of trained National staff and partners to carry out socio-economic and biological assessments of areas identified as priorities for biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin, particularly in areas of civil unrest.

Implementation: Using the PRA training program format, WWF will develop a Biologic Assessment Team. To do this, WWF will:

- ◆ Develop a training program which incorporates both theory and practical aspects of surveys and monitoring, including design, proposal, budgeting, preparation, analyses and reporting, as well as different methods of surveys and monitoring, logistics and management.
- ◆ Train a core team of trainers, two from each ecoregion country. The trainer will be a survey biologist experienced in all aspects of surveys and monitoring.
- ◆ Conduct the training one pre-selected site, which will include a real survey.

- ◆ Following the initial training, the individuals trained will conduct training programs within their own countries to develop a cadre of biological survey technicians.

WWF will mobilize PRA teams and Biological Assessment Teams to conduct community-level socio-economic research and to survey areas of the forest that were 1) identified in the biodiversity workshop as having conservation potential, but are data poor and 2) areas of known potential, but possibly impacted by civil war. Very little biological data for many of these areas exists, and while some socio-economic information is available through the government and other large institutions, it does not reflect the quickly changing realities of areas affected by war. The grassroots information collected through the PRA teams and the Biological Assessment Teams will be analyzed in a broader ecoregional context and will serve as essential information for the ERBC planning currently underway in Central Africa.

B. WWF- CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE ACTIVITIES:

B.1. OVERVIEW OF CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE REGION

B.1.1. CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

WWF-CARPO has continued making considerable progress in the past year toward its goal of preserving the biological uniqueness of the Congo Basin. The level of species richness and endemism, the unique higher taxa, its remarkable ecological and evolutionary history and the global rarity of major habitat types and keystone habitats justify sustained intervention in the Congo Basin, an intervention even more necessary given the increasing threat from human activities. This progress has been made easier by CARPO's good working relations with regional governments and their various ministries.

One of the goals for CARPO is to maintain forest cover and numbers of key species within areas of intervention to at least 1994 levels. To this end, the establishment of a network of protected areas is being pursued, and the development of a trans-national initiative continues. The first tri-national area (15,000 km²) constituting three protected areas located in Cameroon (Lobeke), in CAR (Dzanga-Sangha), and in Congo (Nouabale-Ndoki) is being implemented through planning of activities, sharing resources and information, and developing a shared conservation strategy among partners (national governments, WWF-CARPO, WWF-CPO, WCS, and GTZ).

Another trans-border conservation initiative has also been developed between the Reserve of Minkebe (Gabon), the National Park of Odzala (Congo), and the Reserve of Dja and Nki (Cameroon) in collaboration with ECOFAC. The implementation of ecoregion-based conservation better achieves the conservation objectives of the region. The declaration of the heads of states of the Central Africa sub-region made during the Yaoundé Forest Summit held in March 1999 gave a great importance of trans-border conservation initiative. The final project proposal has received the approval from GEF focal point from the three countries involved and has been transmitted to WWF-US before being submitted for funding to GEF-UNDP in New York.

The two greatest challenges to achieving these objectives are: insufficient funding and lack of trained national staff. In addition, hunting for bush meat and rampant poaching throughout most

of the sub-region cause a major loss of biodiversity, even in protected areas. Political instability and a limited capacity of governments to increase guards also pose challenges. Logging, oil drilling, and gold and diamond mining all negatively impact the forest.

Because funding and capacity-building issues figure prominently in future plans, CARPO has been pursuing means to establish auto-financing for protected areas and project areas. In particular, dialogues on the establishment of the Dzanga-Sangha Foundation have been pursued, as well as discussions on establishing mechanisms for its auto-financing through innovative partnerships with the private sector (logging, safari hunting, and tourism concession fees), as well as through the donor community (endowment and revolving trust fund).

Protected areas are an important component of Gabon's conservation strategy. The country currently has some 2.6 million hectares under some form of protected area status, and it has recently indicated that it would like to increase this to 4 million hectares. A number of studies have been undertaken to identify priorities for new protected area sites.

To date, the Gabonese government has been unable to adequately provide the necessary funding to manage its protected areas. There have been years when the budget of the *Direction de la Faune et de la Chasse* (DFC) has not been made available until late in the fiscal year. Such subvention practices means that the government agency charged with protected area management has no ability to plan its activities or carry out its mandate.

New approaches are required that will not only ensure that resources are conserved for future generations, but those who benefit from their exploitation pay a more realistic cost for their use. The development of mechanisms, such as debt conversions and trust funds, providing operating costs derived from interest on capital may be appropriate in cases such as Gabon. The country has extensive private investment that is used to exploit the natural resource base that could be a source of capital. The international importance of the country's tropical forests should likewise generate support from the international donor community. Gabon's debt situation may make it possible to initiate a debt-for-nature swap as well.

Through such approaches it should be possible to build up and maintain enough capital to establish a fund that would provide for the operations of those agencies charged with natural resource and protected area management in Gabon. To undertake such an initiative will require those who are often in conflict (e.g., private industry, multi-lateral institutions such as the World Bank, bilateral agencies, government and conservation organizations) to work together.

Before such a process can begin, however, something must be known of what is possible. This is the reason why WWF-CARPO is undertaking a scooping exercise to determine what options exist towards the development of a fund that would provide recurrent support to Gabon's conservation management agencies, and to propose the way forward in the development of such a fund. It is hoped that through this process, various interest groups can be brought together and a common vision be developed that will provide for long-term financing of Gabon's protected areas.

After the program review of the WWF-CARPO conducted in December 1999, WWF-CARPO invited some 25 people, WWF-CARPO staff members and key WWF-CARPO partners from the

Central Africa sub-region (including WWF-CPO), for a workshop and formulated its goals, objectives, and targets for its 2000-2004 program work period.

B.1.2. SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Started in July 1997, the CARPO-Forest Program (FP) goals are to initiate forest activities and providing technical support to field projects in the six countries of Congo Basin covered by CARPO.

Objectives:

The objectives of this Forest Program are as follow:

- 1 - To promote Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the Congo Basin;
- 2 - To promote Certification in timber production in the Congo Basin;
- 3 – To produce forest information in order to help Central Africa decision makers to achieve sustainable logging
- 4 – To provide technical assistance to field projects;
- 5 – To participate in the definition of the forest policy for Congo Basin;
- 6 – To encourage and participate in the multi stakeholders working groups on SFM;
- 7 – To identify biologically important forests needed to be protected.

Progress:

In its second year, the project has steadily gained momentum and developed. Its technical and political bases have been established and activities have been implemented despite the poor integration of this project in the program of WWF-CARPO.

The Gabonese National Working Group is now operational and has developed a work plan primarily focused on the strengthening of the technical knowledge of its members in issues related to sustainable forest management and certification. A draft of s set of principles, criteria and indicators adapted to Gabon has been initiated.

A conference on certification organized in Libreville in November 1999. This has been a decisive step for t recognizing the importance of this topic in relation with sustainable forest management.

The project has elaborated a technical proposal for collaborating with CEB (*Compagnie Equatoriale des Bois*). The objective of this collaboration is to provide CEB the necessary support to establish a full-fledged management plan taking into account the biological and the social elements.

In addition, the Regional Coordinator of the project, Séraphin Dondyas, has been involved in many meetings and seminars in Africa and Europe to promote sustainable forest management and wood certification and improved harmonization of a vision and policies regarding these two topics in the Congo Basin.

The main project's focus has been:

- Supporting of National Working Group in Gabon and CAR

- Enhancing collaboration with logging companies interested in implementing sustainable forest management plan and producing certified wood
- Supporting capacity building activities on certification issues in Africa
- Supporting collaboration with European buyers groups
- Promotion of a vision regarding sustainable forest management and wood certification
- Promotion of exchange information on sustainable forest management and wood certification in the region.

B.2. OTHER ACTIVITIES

B.2.1. Networking and partnership

Worldwide, CARPO has established working relationships between key WWF entities including WWF-Belgium, WWF-Germany, WWF-International, and WWF-US in the context of decentralization of operations. WWF-CARPO is working with a large number of partners, including government agents at the highest levels (President, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Water and Forest, Tourism and Environment) and at a technical level (Offices of Water and Forest, Environment, Education; Université Omar Bongo; Institut de Recherche en Ecologie Tropicale (IRET)). CARPO is also collaborating with major international and national aid agencies, diplomatic representations, international and local conservation organizations, researchers, and key individuals. These include UNDP, the WB, the EU, the Caisse Française de Développement, the American Embassy, the Canadian Embassy, CARPE, GTZ, WCS, ECOFAC, VSF, Les Amis du Pangolin, CIAGE, and DGIS.

In the context of the ERBC Program developing a long-term biological vision for the Congo Basin biogeographic region has been a very useful tool for promoting and strengthening conservation efforts in the region. Collectively, WWF, ECOFAC, CARPE, WCS, Conservation International, IUCN-SSC, BirdLife, the Copenhagen Museum (Denmark), the Missouri Botanical Garden (USA), the Royal Museum of Central Africa (Tervuren, Belgium), the "Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle" (Paris, France), the American Museum of Natural History (USA), the Natural History Museum (England) etc. were present at the workshop, including representatives from Gabon, Cameroon, CAR, Congo, DRC, Sao Tome & Principe, Nigeria, and Equatorial Guinea. The vision is catalyzing debate, and our hope is that it will greatly enhance the effectiveness of conservation activities throughout the region.

Networking and partnership activities are excelling as there are more activities and issues on the table to tackle.

B.2.2. WWF-CARPO Capacity Building: training and recruitment

In the context of the ERBC program, Rufin Mikala Mussavu, Lydia Elisabeth Nguema and Jean Paul Bounougou have been appointed respectively as GIS specialist, ERBC Administrative Assistant, and ERBC logistical driver.

In July 1999, a training session on WWF Core Values was carried out by the Communications Officer for all the employees of Gamba project working on the site. DFC colleagues were also

invited to attend. More than 30 persons attended the session, showing interest in what was described as WWF big family. The same task was accomplished at Bangui in November 1999, with office and project staff.

As the WWF logo has changed throughout the network, the Communication Officer was designated, as brand coordinator for CARPO, and an information campaign was carried out for every employee using the WWF logo so as to make sure that the new brand was considered: headings for letters, covers and envelopes have been changed.

In the Gamba Protected Areas Complex, Jean Bourgeois has been appointed as PTA for the Gamba project.

The training on mammal survey techniques was carried out and three collaborators were sent to Cameroon to attend a two-month training program organized by WCS.

In the context of the Minkebe Project, the Project Executant, Mr. Pauwel De Wachter, has continued to recruit staff to implement this important project in Northeast Gabon. Two graduate engineers from the 'Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts' have been recruited: one to work as coordinator for the Woleu-Ntem Province base and one to work as GIS manager. These two recruits will be integrated soon in the Water and Forest Administration (Wildlife Department) and it is foreseen that they will continue to work full time for the Minkebe Project.

In order to reinforce operations in Ogooué-Ivindo, three new field agents have been recruited and are based in Makokou. Sosthène Ndong Obiang, Water and Forest Ministry agent responsible for reconnaissance surveys is transferred to Makokou as coordinator for the Ogooué-Ivindo base, cumulatively with his reconnaissance survey job.

DGIS agreed to fund an associate expert 'Park Advisor' for the Minkebe Project. Bas Huybregts, formerly working as a local consultant to assist Minkebe reconnaissance surveys, was recruited by DGIS in September 2000. His duties include assisting the professional development of reconnaissance and patrolling and the setting up of the GIS database. During this reporting period a second driver was also hired. As such, the technical staff of Minkebe now consists of 7 university-educated people with key responsibilities, 7 permanent field agents, one logistician in Makokou and two drivers. The project staff members has been also increased by the participation of Water and Forests Provincial Inspection staff, and the temporary workers field team who have been participating in most field missions.

In terms of training one field assistant followed (and performed brilliantly) the 3 month training course on inventories organized by WCS in Nouabale Ndoki National Park in Congo. The counterpart to the project leader followed the 'WWF introductory course' in Switzerland and with assistance of the DGIS associate expert and the WWF/ECOFAC GIS manager. The Minkebe GIS Manager is being trained on the job and performing well with ArcView, MapInfo and ACCESS. Minkebe assists also students from the National School for Water and Forests and for example this academic year (99-00) 6 students from this school will realize their memoirs in the framework of the Minkebe Project.

B.2.3. Ecoregion-Based Conservation Program (ERBC)

The Congo Basin Biodiversity Workshop that was held in Libreville (Gabon) from March 30 - April 2, 2000 has allowed to achieve a major step in the implementation of the Ecoregional conservation strategy in the Congo basin. The workshop provided an opportunity for biodiversity and conservation specialists, governments representatives, local NGOs and other stakeholders to work together to analyze patterns of biodiversity, ecological requirements, and trajectories of biodiversity loss in the Congo Basin, and to lay down the foundation of a scientific vision for biodiversity conservation in the future. As a result, a strategic biological vision for the Congo Basin region has been developed.

The workshop steps and approach followed the fundamental goals of biodiversity conservation (representation, viable populations, sustaining ecological processes, large blocks of natural habitat to retain resiliency and integrity) and seven tractable targets which represents primary biodiversity targets: 1. distinct assemblages, communities, and habitats; 2. large blocks of intact habitat; 3. intact biota; 4. keystone species, habitats, phenomena; 5. large-scale ecological phenomena; 6. species of special concern; 7. minimize impact of alien species.

Major elements of the biological vision include:

- A prioritization of **46** representative core conservation areas (areas that harbor particularly important biodiversity targets) **totaling 1,103,957 square kilometers of area** (see Table 1 & Figure 1 below). These areas were evaluated in terms, of the nature of biodiversity targets they harbor, their overall habitat integrity and an estimation of the minimum area for different focal species (elephant, gorilla, etc.) or processes. Few of these sites offered current effective protection.
- A prioritization of **45** freshwater priority sites (see Figure 2 below)
- Major linkage areas or corridors designed to promote the flow of populations, genes, and processes across landscapes or along rivers. **The proposed 4 corridors encompassed an area of 150,587 sq. km** (see Table 2 & map 2 below), in addition to the proposed trans border and tri-national conservation areas.
- Priority short-term actions, as well as the most significant threats to focus conservation attention.

Table 1: Terrestrial Biological priority Level

| Terrestrial Biological Priority level | Area (Sq. km) | Number |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Very high | 269,854 | 22 |
| High | 785,136 | 20 |
| Moderate | 48,967 | 4 |
| Total | 1,103,957 | 46 |

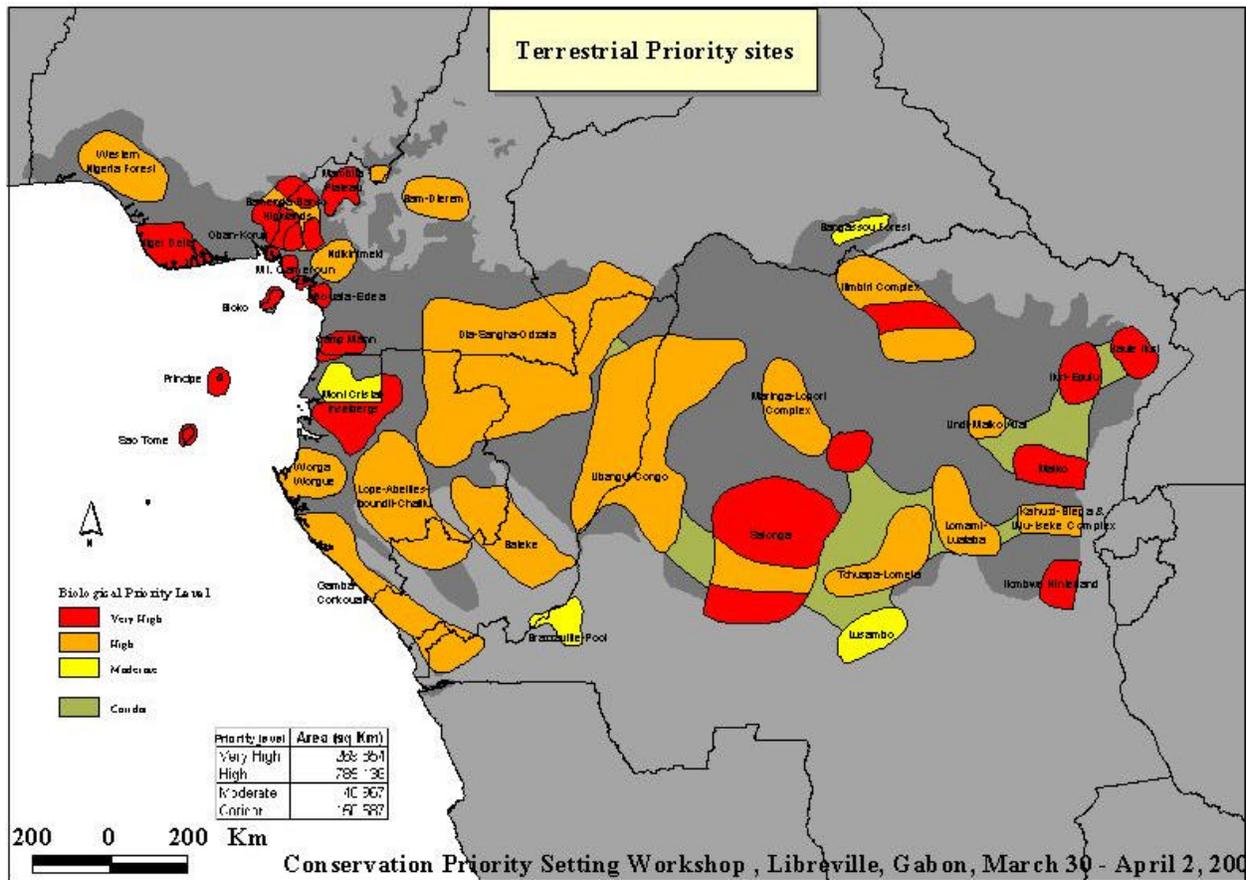


Figure 1 Terrestrial priority sites

Table 2: Freshwater priority level

| Freshwater Biological Priority level | Number |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Highest | 22 |
| High | 11 |
| Moderate | 12 |
| Total | 45 |

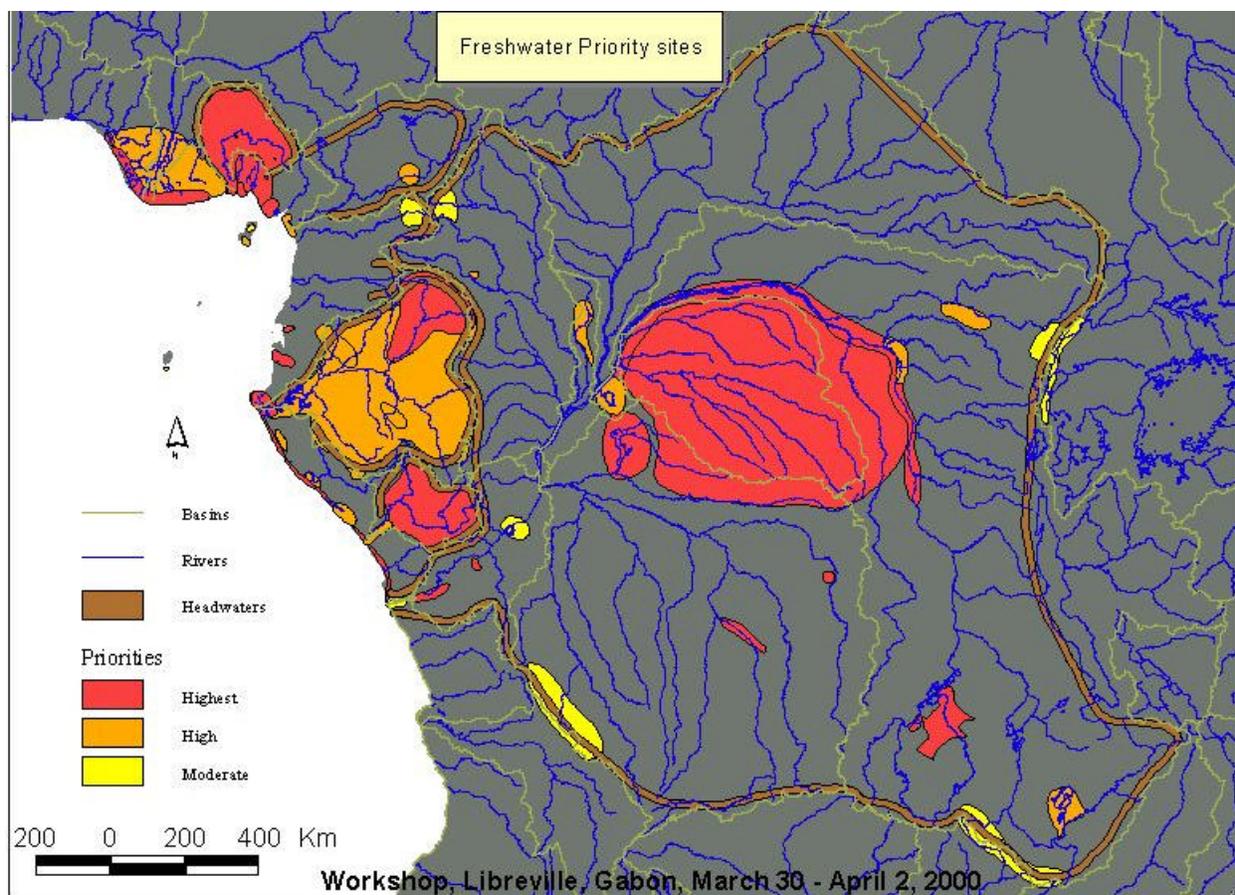


Figure 2. Freshwater priority sites

Both the consensus recommendations and consensus map of priority areas are being circulated for review to participants.

Some key developments in FY 00:

1. **Development of a biological vision and its adoption by the Central Africa governments.**
2. **Establishment of a GIS Lab.** The ERBC program has now established a well-equipped GIS laboratory in Libreville/Gabon.
3. **Communication.** ERBC has been successfully communicated to various stakeholders in the ecoregion. Two pamphlets (one in English and the other one in French) have been produced. In addition, the ERBC Coordinator has been invited by Gabon media: Africa No.1 broadcasting all over Africa and RTG2 (a national TV), and took this opportunity to emphasize the convergence of WWF objectives in the region with that of the Central African government as mentioned in the Yaoundé Declaration.
4. **Designing a conservation plan for Gabon:** The Gabon government has agreed to work with WWF/ERBC and WCS on a proposal designed to develop a nationwide conservation plan based on the biological vision map developed for the Congo Basin.

5. Involvement of potential leader in conservation of the subregion in field work

B.3. ECOTOURISM TRAINING

Goal: To develop a high quality interpretation and visitor services program that supports and perfects tourism development potential in Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve in CAR and the Gamba Protected Area Complex in Gabon.

Results

1. Recommendations for development for an interpretation and visitor services program at Gamba Protected Areas Complex project in Gabon, produced. **Accomplished**
2. Recommendations made in the interpretive Ecotourism management plan and training program developed for the Dzanga-Sangha project in collaboration with USDA Forest Service or International Forestry, implemented.
3. Recommendations made for the Gamba Protected Areas Complex project, implemented.
4. Tourism technical assistance to carry out market and feasibility studies where tourism activities do not yet exist, provided.
5. Exchange visits among tourism investors in the region, facilitated.

Progress:

A. Gamba Protected Area Complex:

The new Technical Advisor of Gamba Protected Area Complex is eagerly looking forward to implementing the following in the complex:

1. The creation of a publicity and advertising posters intended for the development of the ecotourism, for the sensitization of the future local partners, and especially for the development of the project and the direct implication of the WWF.
2. The production of panels of sensitization and demarcation of Gamba's complex. To inform dies today about the visual limit of the complex, the project of conservation of which is administered with the WWF, Waters and Forests and the local partners of the ecotourism.
3. The creation of several “ ecotourist safaris” in association with the local population (use of local house, eco-guides, boats supplied and prepared by the local population). We are identifying good places.
4. The creation of a lookout post in petit Loango on the primates, a rural lookout posts with possibility of bivouac.
5. The creation of an association for the promotion of the tourism of the complex of Gamba, administered with communities, supported by the WWF for the starting up and allowing the use of infrastructures and average premises: villages, dugouts, local guides.

According to the Project Technical Advisor, it's urgent and capital for the project to implement an ecotourism network administered locally, and to integrate the legislative aspects of the future various zones of the complex in it.

B.3.2. The Dzanga-Sangha Project:

B.3.2.1. Dolicom

Dolicom, a private company, manages Doli Lodge. It pays to the project an annual rate for the rental of lodge facilities as well as a graduated – international, expatriate resident, national - nightly charge for each visitor. Both these fees will increase annually for the next two years at which time the rental agreement will be reviewed and modified if deemed appropriate.

Tourist activities within the Reserve and National Park remain the responsibility of the Project's Tourism Center. With the transfer of Doli Lodge management to Dolicom, the project should be able to put a greater effort into diversifying and/or improving existing tourism activities as well as reinforcing the capacity and knowledge of guides. Unfortunately, the national economic crisis has been an impediment for this business. Due to the instability in the country, Outside visitors are scarce.

B.3.2.2. Primate Habituation Programme

The habituation program has been following two groups of gorillas. During this rainy season, it has been very difficult to closely follow the first group of gorillas. Even sometime, it is not easy to track their footprints. When it starts raining the tracker team stops the survey to avoid any sudden contact with gorillas. This is because it is always difficult to differentiate gorilla's noise from the raindrops.

However, following is the result from the last quarter of this reporting period:

| Months | Number of contacts | Average means | Aggressiveness (%) | Curiosity (%) | Ignorance (%) | Eviction (%) | Fear (%) |
|-----------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| July | 53 | 17 | 21 | 4 | 69 | 2 | 4 |
| August | 63 | 24 | 15 | 7 | 75 | 3 | 0 |
| September | 24 | 18 | 9 | 27 | 55 | 5 | 5 |

Due to lack of sufficient personnel, the follow up of the second group of gorillas was limited during this trimester. However, 29 contacts have been made and which allow the researchers to know the vital domain of at least two groups moving within an adjacent area.

B.3.2.2.1. Researchers Meeting in Bomassa (Congo Brazzaville)

All Researchers working on plain gorilla issues met in Bomassa in September 2000. The Bai Hokou Team, composed of three persons represented the Dzanga-Sangha Project. Ecotourism, Research and Health issues were the major topics discussed during this meeting. Information exchange, comparing methodologies and objectives were most beneficial to project participants, since they will help each country team to improve their techniques.

B.3.2.2.2. Experience exchange visit to Rwanda

In September 00, The Bai Hokou Team visited the Rwanda gorilla project. The goal of this trip was to produce a documentary movie on the process of plain gorilla habituation. This is just to follow upon the work that the project has started in May 00 with the Cicada company. The major purpose is to show the differences between the habituation process of the two gorilla sub-species. The Bai Hokou Team realized the effort they have made despite the big difference in vegetation, and the visibility in Rwanda, which facilitate more easily the habituation work.

B.4. REGIONAL MONITORING

Goal: To improve ecological and socio-economic planning and monitoring at WWF project sites based on: 1) the regional model developed at the Integrated Monitoring Program (IMP) meeting in September 1994 in Tanzania and 2) the results of “tri-national” planning meetings to be organized by WWF and WCS.

Results:

1. Information networking (GIS, mapping) assessed and introduced;
2. Demographic surveys/ monitoring are continued, and
3. Site-specific systems for ecological surveys/monitoring, consistent with the IMP regional system, developed and implemented.

The tri-national area of Cameroon, Congo, and CAR represents a key region for biological conservation. This vast area is a mosaic of dense semi-deciduous forest interspersed with numerous clearing, attracting a rich assemblage of species. It is particularly remarkable due to outstanding concentrations of large, rare mammals, including forest elephants, bongo, gorillas, and chimpanzees. Furthermore, conservation of the tri-national area has significant regional importance, given its central location in the Congo basin, the involvement of three key nations, and the international prominence that it has attracted. In this important ecoregion, WWF and WCS have collaborated to enhance their collective capacities to ensure effective conservation in this area through comprehensive planning, the implementation of a monitoring program, forest management, and plans for safari hunting and eco-tourism.

Progress:

1. The Sangha River Trinational:

The period from July 1999 to October 2000 was characterized by resurgence in Sangha River Trinational (SRT) collaboration among the three original partners with a fourth project joining the effort:

- ◆ Dzanga-Sangha Project (DSP). Dzanga-Ndoki National Park and Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve. CAR Government, WWF, and LUSO Consult/GTZ.
- ◆ Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (NNNP), Congo Government and WCS
- ◆ The “future” Lac Lobéké National Park, Cameroon Government and WWF
- ◆ *Zone Périphérique*, Congo Government and WCS

The renewed interest in trinational collaboration, particularly among the three countries, is partially attributable to the April 1999 Yaounde Summit at which the central African heads of states committed to regional strategies of conservation and sustainable natural resource use.

Funding from the MacArthur Foundation has been used during the four month period from July to October 2000 in support of trinational activities including meetings, anti-poaching, and support to wildlife guards (supplies, vehicle and boat running costs, per diems, and communication among trinational partners).

1.1. Fourth Meeting of Trinational Partners (MacArthur funded)

Held at the headquarters of the NNNP project in Bomassa, Congo, the fourth meeting of the managers from the four respective project sites ran from 21-24 July 2000. To provide direction to later discussions, the participants first evaluated the work plan enumerated at the third meeting in December 1999. Smaller groups discussions focused on:

- The development of a coherent approach to trinational anti-poaching on the Sangha River
- Coordination of ecological monitoring
- The continuing development and improvement of institutional structures implicated in the creation of a trinational protected area

As a means of further developing a coordinated trinational approach to conservation and development issues, the following groups and individuals attended the meeting:

- The Coordinator and Acting Regional Representative from WWF-CARPO's (Central African Regional Program Office) Ecoregional Based-Conservation (ERBC) program;
- The Coordinator of the MIKE/CITES project (Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants) and the National Elephant Officers for MIKE from Congo and CAR; and
- A representative of the Sangha River Network based at Yale University in the USA.

1.2. Legal and Institutional Framework

- Meeting of Experts:

Progress continues on the development of a legal and institutional framework for the SRT in preparation for a Meeting of Forestry Ministers from the sub-region scheduled for December 2000 in Yaounde, Cameroon. In September experts (legal advisors, representatives of financial and technical assistance organizations, project managers, representatives of Environment and Forestry Ministries) met to evaluate progress since the Yaounde Summit. MacArthur funds supported the participation of one representative of the Sangha Trinational initiative. At the meeting, participants agreed to propose that the draft Cooperative Agreement for the SRT be officially signed at the meeting of Forestry Ministers of the sub-region scheduled for December 2000 in Yaounde.

- Meeting of *Prefets*:

To garner greater support and in recognition of their role in the administration of the region, a meeting of the three *Prefets* (similar to governors) was organized in Yokadouma, Cameroon in late October. Co-financed with MacArthur funds, participants included project managers, the *Prefets*, armed forces responsible for international border control in their respective countries, and regional representatives of forestry ministries (apart from those directly involved in project management). Discussions focused on:

- The role of *Prefets* and other national administrations in the Sangha River initiative including how to facilitate the movement of project personnel among countries
- Anti-poaching and the future development of an anti-poaching protocol for review and support by the *Prefets* (of particular importance as trinational anti-poaching involves the transboundary movement of armed wildlife guards)
- Communication - particularly how to assure direct and regular information sharing with *Prefets* as well as local communities.

The workshop participants also provided commentary on the draft Cooperative Agreement for the Sangha Trinational.

1.3. Anti-poaching Support

Patrolling on the Sangha River by mixed teams for the four project areas continues on an almost monthly basis. During patrols in August, September and October, the wildlife guards confiscated:

- 2 arms: 1 caliber 12 and 1 Mauser caliber 458
- 17 cartridges of 7.62 caliber ammunition, 12 cartridges of caliber 458, and 20 cartridges of "00"
- 41 cable snares
- Bushmeat including crocodile

Increased capacity to patrol the Sangha has also facilitated rapid response to reports of elephant killings on the islands and banks of the Sangha River. Wildlife guards from DS have followed up on nine reports since May 2000. Equally important, dialogue with residents of 7 illegal fishing camps has led to their voluntary displacement to islands or other legal locations.

B.5. PROJECTS SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

B.5.1. WWF -- CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC PROGRAM

B.5.1.1. Dzanga-Sangha Project

B.5.1.1.1. Project Background

The Dzanga-Sangha Project (DSP) began formally in 1988 with the establishment of a cooperative agreement between WWF and the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR). The Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve (3,159 km²) and the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park (1,220 km²) were gazetted in 1990 and are, since 1994, jointly managed by the Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing, GTZ/LUSO Consult and WWF. Located in the southwestern corner of the country, the DSP area is home to high populations of forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*), chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), and other characteristic flora and fauna of the Northwestern Congolian Lowland Forest ecoregion. The forest also shelters the BaAka pygmies, an indigenous hunter-gatherer population whose traditional livelihood is directly linked to the forest and its plant and wildlife resources.

B.5.1.1.2.3. Project Partners:

The Dzanga-Sangha Project continues to work in partnership with the Government of CAR, WWF and GTZ through LUSO Consult. The project continues to progress in its objective to include local communities as active participants and decision-makers in its various activities. WWF hopes that a future partner will be the logging company, which was recently awarded the reserve-based logging concession.

Funding and technical and logistical support of project activities have been provided by WWF (Germany, Netherlands, USA), GTZ, the World Bank, USFWS, USAID through CARPE, the US Embassies, WCS, and the Central African Government.

The Dzanga-Sangha Project is an active partner in the Sangha River Tri-National Park comprising contiguous forest of Cameroon (Lac Lobéké), Congo-Brazzaville (Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park - NNNP) and CAR (DSP).

Permitted activities in DSP's multiple use zone or Special Reserve includes safari hunting, subsistence hunting and fishing, logging, agriculture and tourism.

B.5.1.1.5. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

B.5.1.1.5.1. Administration and Finance

As per last semester several events have taken place during this reporting period, among which the most painful is the death of National Director of the project, Mr. Urbain Ngatoua, on September 23, 2000, while he was on vacations in his family in the capital city of Bangui. There is nothing

that could allow us to measure the impact of this death upon the project activities; Mr. Ngatoua was following upon, personally, some especial important documents. We will deeply miss Mr. Urbain Ngatoua.

Progress:

a) Staffing:

During this reporting period, the habitual staff management file has been updated, notably the absence files, employer registration, and salary payment books; the fiscal and salaries charges were declared to the Social Security Office and benefits are paid to the beneficiaries.

Due to some irregularities done on the payment slip of family allowances, a letter was sent to the General Direction of the Social Security Office for correction and re-establishment of omitted cases. However, the human resource service is analyzing the allowance payments to come up with non-paid periods and then take it back to the Social Security Office.

b) Infirmary/Medical Center

Medical cares are given to staff, support staff to ensure that they are healthy and can excel on their jobs. As the Responsible for the Infirmary has not yet recovered from malaria during this reporting period, it will be difficult to report on the medical statistics for this semester. They will be in the next semi-annual report.

c) Finances

- **Material, Gas and oils**

The eternal problem of purchasing unsuitable auto parts from and sent back to Bangui for exchange has happened again during this semester. Because of this, the two following project vehicles TT4207 and 4208, respectively properties of Gorilla Habituation Research Project and Sustainable Development Department, have not been repaired. However, efforts have been made in supplying the project with a new engine, 40 CV Yamaha, for the conservation boat.

Within the scope of collaboration between projects, WCS from Bomassa Congo has lent their canoe to the Dzanga-Sangha project upon which the new engine has been installed and operational.

Fuel consumption for the third trimester has been around 12, 559 liters, which is 4186 liters per month. We can also add that the lack of fuel for a while in the entire country has hindered project activities.

B.5.1.1.6. STRUCTURE, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

A considerable effort is made to integrate conservation and rural development activities; however, each of the funding partners comes to the project with its own strengths. WWF-related technical and financial backstopping is aimed at conservation activities and LUSO Consult/GTZ concentrates on rural and community development actions, although numerous overlaps exist. The project operates according to a three-year planning cycle with the second phase having started in April 1997 and ending in March 2000. The objectives and outputs guiding the present phase are:

Global objective: The rate of ecosystem degradation in the Dzanga-Sangha region is slowed down

Project objective: Sustainable resource utilization, adapted for the region, is partially implemented

- Outputs:
1. Surveillance system is improved upon and expanded
 2. The negative impact of logging on the Reserve's ecosystem is reduced
 3. Revenue from sustainable activities grows
 4. Ecotourism revenue increases
 5. Organizational capacity of local population is improved
 6. Research organization is improved
 7. Project management is ameliorated particularly in regards to collaboration and efficiency.

Progress

The Ministry of Water and Forest has assigned a new warden to the Project. The Conservation Department, which encompasses the largest number of project personnel, has all its leaders in place.

a) Anti-poaching patrol:

Anti-poaching activities led by five Brigade Leaders supervising a total of 28 guards and two BaAka trackers were carried out through 75 field missions distributed as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| • Forest Patrol | 33 |
| • River Patrol | 07 |
| • Mobile Brigade | 02 |
| • Ambushes | 04 |
| • Number of ecological monitoring | 22 |
| • Trinational Patrols | 02 |
| • Perquisition (?) | 04 |
| • Mix patrol with Gendarmes | 01 |

b) Patrol Results and constraints:

- Seized Guns 08, out of which 1 Mauser 375 caliber.
- Munitions 232 (44 of 7.5 mm and 04 of 375 caliber)

- Bushmeat confiscated 724 kg, out of which 466 kg of elephant, 35 kg of gorilla and 28 kg of Bongo
- Cable snares 1434 pieces and 1.5 roll
- Elephant tusks 02 weighing 41 kg

These patrol results, neatly in progress, have been possible because of the new communication equipment and the engine for the boat that the project had acquired. The difficulties encountered during river patrol have been overcome because of the two speed-boat engines that the project has purchased and the canoe it has borrowed from the Nouabali Ndoki Project, WCS, Congo-Brazzaville.

Since August 2000, the project has received communication materials, composed of 25 portable Motorola, 7 others for vehicles and one for the central station, which have dramatically improved the communication system.

The project hopes that with the recruiting of new ecoguards in the last quarter of this year, this issue of lack of personnel will be partially resolved and that it should be blown in new dynamic to the entire conservation team.

Contentious issues:

Three arms were transferred to the court in Nola, and another one was given back to the owner after he has presented the papers. All the 724-kg bushmeat were sent the Water and Forest Division in Nola to be sold for the benefit of the treasuries and the tusks are sent to the Water and Forest Department in Bangui.

To the number of pending issues, another guard (the sixth one) Mr. Mokoko, involved in illegal killing of elephant, has been arrested and is in jail in Nola.

Difficulties encountered

Following are the three major problems that the project has been faced with:

- Increased population migration to Bayanga in search of work, and this has allowed the introduction of new arms. Solution to this issue is far beyond the conservation unit even the project.
- Lack of fuel at a favorable time for anti-poaching patrol on river, which has become an easiest way for poachers to evacuate their meat.
- Insufficient number of guards to cover at the same time part of the reserve and the park.

These three issues have been the cause of increasing poaching activities in the region. Despite these problems, the conservation effort has kept steady, as we can tell from this reporting period.

The project revenues add up to \$ 2209.10 (CFA 1, 435,900) and this amount does not include Doli-Lodge's \$2307.70 that Dolicom had deposited directly into the project bank account. On the

other hand, the project expenses amount \$8,879 whereas the revenues are decreasing steadily due to the reduction of the number of tourist visitors.

B.5.1.1.8. A Training for Protected Area Managers

Goal: To improve the effectiveness of protected area management of the Dzanga-Sangha Reserve and make the conservation program in Dzanga-Sangha more professional in improving the protected area managers' skills.

Results:

1. A curriculum for the training of forest conservation personnel in the project developed and implemented;
2. Park manager training in Dzanga-Sangha is linked to efforts to be carried out in the region including:
 - The GEF project in southeast Cameroon and WWF/Netherlands initiatives in Cameroon, Both of which are focused on training of the personnel at the park level;
 - The participatory rural appraisal training program mentioned above, and
 - The Central Africa Parks training to take place in the context of CARPE project.

Progress:

In May 2000, the Warden and his Assistant attended the training on Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephant (MIKE) in Lac Lobeke, in Cameroon. Right after this training, the Central African MIKE Officer, Mr. Oylele with the collaboration of the warden, trained ten Eco-guards to serve as Patroller Secretary for the Dzanga-Sangha Project, which was chosen as one of the MIKE pilot sites.

From August 3 through August 4, five Conservation staff and the head of Ecotourism attended a meeting organized by the Procurer and the Nola Court President, on the relationship between the Magistrate and Judiciary Police Officers. Other participants were the gendarmes, police officers, the Mayor and ECOFAC staff.

B.5.1.1.9. SURVEY AND MONITORING

Goal: To inform long term decision-making for Dzanga-Sangha forest reserve through improved understanding of economic/ecological importance of the project area.

Results:

1. A system for carrying out ecological and ethno-botanical surveys and monitoring established and implemented in Dzanga-Sangha project site and integrates local talent and knowledge.

2. Ecological and economic analysis of the forest conducted and a forest management plan developed for Dzanga-Sangha with participation from the logging companies.

Progress:

A) Socio-economic Component

The population census sheet is finally completed and official contacts with the local authorities (Sous-Prefets, Mayor) have been made in order to explain to them the purpose of the work undertaken and also to solicit their support. A second meeting is foreseen with the Municipal authorities to identify better strategies to carry out the census. Because the project foresees that the local population will not be convinced of the objectives of this activity and will think that it is another maneuver from the Dzanga-Sangha project to limit immigration into the reserve area.

The draft report on food crop destruction by elephant had been discussed with the senior staff members and finalized during this third quarter. It will be a subject of internal training for the agriculture extension agents.

About tourism revenues, during the last quarter of this reporting period, there has been no visitor and the project had to face recurrent expenses by soliciting advances from WWF-US Headquarters.

B) Ecological Monitoring Component

The biological data collection activities continued this semester and have once again confirmed the degradation observed on transect 8 and 9 due to agriculture activities, starting from Kenie creek. This degradation added to the forest exploitation influence, has made elephant dump observation very difficult and which could lead to a wrong conclusion on the dump (defecation?) rates, although this rate should be very high due to the flowering period of edible fruit trees. We could also assume that the heavy rain, during this period of the year, has probably washed away most of the elephant dumps.

It should be mentioned that on this occasion, 235 snares had been collected along transects 1, 4, and 6. Elephant population remains concentrated within the Bai Hokou, Mongambe, Bakombo and Dzanga sectors.

B.5.2. CAR PROGRAM OFFICE

Goal: To effectively coordinate and provide support to WWF project activities in Dzanga-Sangha and Bangassou, as well as represent WWF/CAR in national and international level fora.

Results:

1. Programmatic, financial and administrative support are fully provided to WWF/CAR Field Office

2. Technical advice to the Ministry of Water and Forest and other governmental agencies on environmental policies and issues, provided.
3. Donor projects reviewed and a national environmental education program prepared and presented to the national Environmental Action Plan Formulation Team, serving the team effectively.

Progress:

5.3. PARTIAL CONCLUSION

The Dzanga-Sangha Project has been working to conserve CAR's last lowland tropical rain forest through the management and protection of the National Park and by promoting the sustainable utilization of natural resources in the Special Reserve. As an Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) activities are focused on protected area management, rural development, tourism, environmental communication, and project administration as well as applied ecological and social research.

Despite all the will and physical and financial investment the following immediate threats still hinder the Project efforts:

- The recommencement of logging in January 2000. The logging company has committed verbally to banning hunting by employees and the transport of bush-meat on their vehicle. The Project plans to develop a monitoring system to backstop this promise.
- Human migration into the Project area has grown with the beginning of timber exploitation. Project conservationists feel that the recent upsurge in cable snare trapping and the use of illegal firearm is directly linked to this increase.
- The illegal establishment of semi-permanent and permanent hunting and fishing camps on the banks of the Sangha River in the Ndoki sector of the National Park.
- The inability of the small guard force to patrol the entirety of the Reserve and National Park. Budget constraints, linked to fiscal year 1999 overspending,
- National and local government support of the project has been problematic particularly in the period leading up to presidential elections

It is hoped that the combining of resources as a part of a nascent tri-national collaboration – Congo, CAR, Cameroon – will reduce some of these pressures, particularly along the Sangha River.

B.6. WWF - GABON PROGRAM

B.6.1. GAMBA PROTECTED AREA COMPLEX

The Gamba Protected Areas Complex Project is a WWF integrated conservation and development project (ICDP). The master plan produced in 1995 defined the different project objectives related to: zoning, regulations, management and protection, research, environmental education, and rural development. An implementation phase defining major activities started in 1996.

The major conservation achievement that the project can claim is the creation of a new protected area covering 332,000 ha, the *Réserve des Monts Doudou*. This site was identified more 12 years ago by WWF as a major site for conservation of biodiversity of Gabon. In gazetting this new reserve the Government of Gabon demonstrates its will and commitment in supporting the conservation objectives of the project. The level of biodiversity is very high and local endemism among plants remarkable. The main activity was to start working on the definition of management zones for the complex. This has been possible through the production of seven thematic maps of the complex, and the organization of meetings and workshops with the administration and the local populations. A project steering committee has been created and major stakeholders will be involved in the management of the Gamba Protected Areas Complex. On going activities include the training of agents of DFC in mammal, fish, reptile, and botanical (leading to the discovery of a plant species new to science) survey techniques in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). So far a total of 45 people (village collaborators, DFC, NGO, WWF) have been trained. Exchange visits were also held in Cameroon and Burkina Faso. In addition to biological surveys conducted in forest and fresh-water biomes, a sea-turtle survey, as part of a sub-regional effort initiated by ECOFAC, has been conducted along the coast in the complex. The socio-economic survey of the complex has been completed and a total of five PRA reports are available. A micro-project in agroforestry has started as a result of the socio-economic survey. Results of both, socio-economic and biological surveys will help define the future zoning plan of the complex. Other current activities include community-based monitoring systems related to bushmeat trade and fish landing and the implementation of a local environmental education strategy. The education component of the project produced the first issue of a bulletin *Manga*, which aims at informing the local population of the complex on activities of the project.

Since 1996, CARPE funds have supported the following activities:

- The development of a new methodology for mammal surveys in tropical rainforests,
- A preliminary mammals survey and a botanic survey in the complex of protected areas,
- A bushmeat trade survey in Gamba, Tchibanga and Omboué, the implementation of a monitoring system on fisheries in the Nyanga river, the Ndogo lagoon and the Iguela lagoon,
- The monitoring of nesting sea turtles, and
- The socio-economic survey in all communities of the complex. Reports are available.
- Training of village-collaborators and Gabon's wildlife department agents

Progress

Community-based natural resource monitoring system up and running for fisheries, bushmeat trade and socio-economic in the Gamba Protected Areas Complex, Gabon.

Two MOU signed with tourist operators in the Gamba Protected Areas Complex, Gabon and revenues shared for conservation and development activities.

Biological inventory of Monts Doudou documenting the very important species richness in selected taxonomic group and leading to discovery of several species new to science.

The rapid biological inventory that was conducted along an altitudinal transect in the Monts Doudou Reserve in February and March 2000 by a multidisciplinary and multi-national team brought the evidence of the extremely high species richness of this site.

This was the first time that such a rapid biological assessment was conducted in Gabon by a multi-disciplinary team led by Steve Goodman from the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

The data collected during this inventory are still being analyzed, but some elements show the biological importance of this newly created reserve.

- The herpetofauna is the richest ever found in one site in Gabon. More than 50 species inventoried in Monts Doudou within less than two months compared to 30 inventoried in 30 years of research in the Makokou Research Station. Several species of frog are new to science.
- The small mammal fauna is the richest ever found in one site in Gabon. More than 24 species of rodents (excluding squirrels) and insectivores have been identified;
- The avifauna is the richest ever found in one site in Gabon with more than 200 species among which a possible new species in the Pycnonotidae family;
- Many ant species new to science;

This important data base with the one compiled by the Gamba Project on large mammals will be valorized to plan conservation of biodiversity of the biologically important site of the Gamba Protected Area Complex.

B.6.2. MINKEBE

Background

The Minkebe region (30,000 km²), located in the northeast of Gabon, is part of one of the few intact forest blocks left in Africa. The Minkebe Forest has one of the most unspoiled and intact faunas of the region. It is remote and distant from permanent human communities. It is known to be one of the strongholds, (if not the stronghold) for large forest mammals in particular the forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), and giant pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*). All of these species are under very heavy hunting pressure in most parts of their range - this pressure is the result of the large demand for bush-meat in Central Africa coupled to the opening up of previously almost inaccessible forest by logging trails and roads. The Minkebe region has some good prospects to conserve viable populations of large mammals as roads are few and the potential for human-animal conflict in the interior forests limited. Defensibility is high, especially in the heart of Minkebe. Minkebe region is also renowned for riverine swamp forest and open marshes.

A mission conducted by two experts from IUCN and WWF in 1986 proposed the creation of a reserve in Minkebe. In September 1997, 600,000 ha of Minkebe Forest were given a temporary protected status of forest reserve. In October 1998, a technical committee representing all stakeholders approved the gazettelement of the *Réserve Forestière* de Minkebe as a protected area. Funding is secured from DGIS and CARPE to execute Minkebe conservation project (1997-2001). The projects works towards the gazettelement of the protected area, the creation of broad-scale support among stakeholders and concerned parties, a land-use plan for the reserve and its periphery, to identify potential economic incentives for conservation and the production of a management plan. The focus of the project is not only the 6,000-km² reserve but also the whole forest of Minkebe. As such it has a regional strategy, and acts as a conservation catalyst. The project is developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Water and Forest, and works closely with DFC and DIARF. Strategic partnerships are developed with the provincial inspections of the Water and Forest Ministry and with partners in neighboring Congo (ECOFAC) and Cameroon (WWF-CPO, MINEF, ECOFAC). Other partners include ECOFAC - *Cellule de Coordination Régionale*, and WCS.

Minkebe Project started in August 1997 with the arrival of the project leader in Gabon. The core staff now consists of the expatriate project leader, the counterpart to the project leader from DFC, the coordinator for reconnaissance surveys and forest operations from DIARF, an anthropologist, and a Dutch consultant assisting reconnaissance surveys and forest operations. Recruitment of an associate expert Park Advisor funded by the Dutch Government is underway. Staff from the provincial inspections of the Water and Forest Ministry in Oyem and Makokou work closely together with the project. The Forest Officer of CARPO based in Libreville works part-time for the project. A Congolese logistician is based at Makokou, and works for ECOFAC-Congo as well as Minkebe project. Presently the project has also four field assistants, working as team leader or assistant -team leader during reconnaissance surveys or forest operations. Finally, two students from the National School of Water and Forests and a large number of daily workers are also regularly involved in project work. The project has two logistical bases, one in Oyem and one in Makokou (at the Mpassa Research Station). In Libreville, the project has an office at CARPO headquarters and one at the Wildlife Department. Soon the project will also have offices at the provincial inspections of Water and Forest Ministry, and so its regional scope and impact will increase. Plans are underway to construct a base camp on the Ivindo River, and this will be financed by PFE.

Long reconnaissance missions are undertaken by the project, and up to now 7500 km² have been explored. The focus is on flexible and polyvalent teams capable of undertaking high level discussions with the hunters and communities they contact. Walks of 200 km and more are realized. Reconnaissance teams also revisit some areas to discuss with hunters or gold miners. For example, all hunting camps (50) on the Cameroon border have been contacted and warned about their ivory poaching activity. Also, all gold-mining camps have been contacted. Results are positive and gold-miners are interested in memorandums of understanding which link their stay in the area to the respect of a certain number of rules considering hunting. Contacts are also pursued with BaAka pygmies who wander in the northern part of Minkebe. The project hopes to secure use of the area for them in return for a stop on ivory poaching. Work has also started in a Malaysian logging concession where hunters and workers from the company hunt for bush-meat. The project has an active role in the actual dynamics concerning conservation in the inter-zone Gabon-Congo-Cameroon. Meetings are undertaken with Cameroon Government officials so as to

install real Trans-border collaboration. Soon Minkebe Project and ECOFAC Congo will undertake a joint field mission of the Djoua headwaters in Gabon, a potential Trans-border addition to the Odzala National Park.

Goal: To seize the potential for conservation in the northeastern part of Gabon where timber and mineral exploitation have been limited, and where large expanses of primary forest are still intact, providing a stronghold for numerous plants and animal species.

Expected Results

1. A protected area is gazetted in the project zone;
2. Conservation measure integrated into forestry, mining, agriculture, and hunting practices in the area,
3. Sustainable forestry-base industries established;
4. A mechanism whereby funds generated in the region are used for conservation and development locally is developed, and
5. A Conservation Education Program about the tropical forest developed promoting environmental awareness throughout the Northeast.

Progress:

1. Minkebe Reserve:

The Government of Gabon has definitively gazetted Minkebe Reserve as a protected area (5617 km²) on December 30, 1999. No logging or hunting is allowed in the protected area, with the exception of some very limited resource use by local people which can be included in the conservation plan for the protected area. The whole gazettelement process took two years.

Hunting in the Malaysian logging concession 'Bordamur' (Rimbunan Hijau), in West-Minkebe, has decreased considerably through a process catalyzed by the Minkebe Project. Which process has involved the Provincial Inspection of Water and Forest, the Provincial Authorities (Governor's administration), the Wildlife Department, the National School of Water and Forests and WWF staff.

Some key accomplishment in FY 00:

- 1) **PA network development:** During FY 00 the 5600 km² Minkebe Protected area was definitively gazetted by decree on December 30, 1999 (before this date it was only protected by '*arrêté ministriel*'). Logging and hunting are forbidden in this new protected area consisting of un-logged forest. This protected area is a major step forward towards the creation of a network of protected areas which includes Dja, Nki-Boumba and Lobeke in Cameroon, Dzanga-Sangha in CAR, Nouabale Ndoki, Lac Télé and Odzala in Congo and Minkébé in

Gabon. To make this network a linked system the trans border conservation initiative Cameroon-Congo-Gabon proposes the gazettement of new protected areas and corridors in Cameroon (Ngoïla-Mintom), in Gabon (Djoua and Liboumba) and in Congo (Nabemba-Garabinzam in Souanké District)

- 2) **GIS.** Minkebe has now a fully functional GIS (Arcview-ACCESS-MapInfo) which includes at the time of writing 17,000 lines of data collected in the field. The Forest Inventory Agency assisted with the production of a detailed base map in ArcView vector format and which covers Northeast Gabon and Southern Cameroon.
- 3) DGIS provided funding for an **Associate Expert to Minkebe Project.** Bas Huybregts was recruited. His specific tasks include providing technical advice to the reconnaissance surveys and patrolling and the setting up of the GIS for Minkebe.
- 4) **Reconnaissance:** Extensive reconnaissance surveys have covered in FY00 western periphery of the Minkebe Reserve, the southern part of the PA and its southern periphery, the Oua, Ivindo and Ntem rivers, and for the second time the Northeastern corner of Minkebe PA.
- 5) **Patrolling:** Through effective collaboration with the Provincial Inspections of Water and Forests patrolling has started (Ivindo river system, Bordamur logging concession). Elephant poaching is a major problem and efficient patrolling is necessary. Patrolling is also supported by anti-poaching missions from the wildlife department (DFC).
- 6) **Organisation:** An efficient organizational structure is operational: Bases in the provincial capitals Oyem and Makokou, offices also in the Provincial Inspections, a new office in Libreville (close to CARPO HQ). Provincial coordinators have been affected to the provincial bases and assure smooth running of operations. Note that the distance between Oyem HQ and Makokou HQ is 350 km. It is also foreseen that work can start by June on a base camp on the Upper Ivindo.
- 7) **Proposed Extension of Minkebe PA:** During a major meeting with high level officials of Water and Forests in Oyem last December a 4000 km² extension West and South of the Minkebe PA was proposed. The extension is located in zones with almost no human activity (zones with tame animals etc.). The Ministry gave a clearing to WWF to develop the concept and to study the feasibility of selling carbon sequestration credits linked to this extension. WWF is in contact with WRI for the carbon sequestration issues.
- 8) **Poaching is down in the Bordamur Malaysian logging concession.** Heavy commercial bushmeat poaching was diagnosed in this Malaysian logging concession in the western part of the Minkebe Forest Block. Subsequent patrolling missions and discussions with Provincial authorities, Bordamur, *Eaux et Forêts* made the company to really control its entry gate and access to its concession forest. Equally hunting by company workers has diminished.
- 9) **Goldmining in Minkebe:** Progress has been achieved on the terms of a memorandum of understanding concerning goldmining in Minkebe PA.

5. Trans-border Collaboration:

The declaration of the heads of states of the Central Africa sub-region, made during the Yaoundé Forest Summit held in March 1999, gave a great importance to trans-border conservation initiatives. Therefore, another trans-border conservation initiative has also been developed between the Minkebe Reserve (Gabon), the Odzala National Park (Congo), and the Dja and Nki Reserves (Cameroon) in collaboration with ECOFAC. The GEF focal point from the three countries has

approved that was transmitted to WWF-US for submission for funding to GEF-UNDP in New York.

A joint mission with Cameroonian partners was organized in South Cameroon to inform local authorities on the transborder conservation initiative Dja-Minkebe-Odzala and to address the issue of elephant poaching in South Cameroon, and which threatens elephant populations in Minkebe, Dja, Ngoïla-Mintom, Nki and Northwest Congo. The Ministry of Water and Forest (MINEF), IUCN, WWF-Cameroon Program Office and ECOFAC, from Cameroon, and WWF, DFC, and the Provincial Inspection of Water and Forests in Woleu-Ntem province, have participated in this field visit.

Finally Minkebe continues to play an instrumental role in the development of the transborder conservation initiative. It is actually working on the Cameroon-Congo-Gabon transborder initiative, which could be funded by GEF-UNDP.

The two greatest challenges to achieving these objectives are insufficient funding, and lack of trained national staff. In addition, hunting for bush meat and rampant poaching throughout most of the sub-region cause a major loss of biodiversity, even in protected areas. Political instability and a limited capacity of governments to increase guards also pose challenges. Logging, oil drilling, and gold and diamond mining all negatively impact the forest.

Because funding and capacity-building issues figure prominently in future plans, WWF-CARPO has been pursuing means to establish auto financing for protected areas and conservation projects. In particular, dialogues on the establishment of the Dzanga-Sangha Foundation have been pursued, as well as discussions on establishing mechanisms for its auto-financing through innovative partnerships with the private sector (logging, safari hunting, and tourism concession fees), and through the donor communities (endowment and revolving trust fund).

Protected areas are an important component of Gabon's conservation strategy. The country currently has around 2.6 million hectares under some form of protected area status, and it has recently indicated that it would like to increase this to 4 million hectares. A number of studies have been undertaken to identify priorities for new protected area sites.

To date, the Gabonese government has been unable to adequately provide the necessary funding to manage its protected areas. There have been years when the budget of the *Direction de la Faune et de la Chasse* (DFC) has not been made available until late in the fiscal year. Such subvention practices means that the government agency, in charge of protected area management, has no ability to plan its activities nor carry out its mandate.

New approaches are required that will not only ensure that resources are conserved for future generations, but those who benefit from their exploitation pay a more realistic cost for their use. The development of mechanisms, such as debt conversions and trust funds, providing operating costs derived from interest on capital may be appropriate in cases such as Gabon. The country has extensive private investment used to exploit the natural resource base that could also be a source of capital. The international importance of the country's tropical forests should likewise generate support from the international donor community. Gabon's debt situation may make it possible to

initiate a debt-for-nature swap as well. Through such approaches it should be possible to build up and maintain enough capital to establish a fund that would provide for the operations of those agencies charged with natural resource and protected area management in Gabon. To undertake such an initiative will require those who are often in conflict (e.g., private industry, multi-lateral institutions such as the World Bank, bilateral agencies, government and conservation organizations) to work together.

However, before such a process begins, something must be known of what is possible. This is the reason why WWF-CARPO is undertaking a scoping exercise to determine what options exist towards the development of a fund that would provide recurrent support to Gabon's conservation management agencies, and to propose the way forward in the development of such a fund. It is hoped that through this process, various interest groups can be brought together and a common vision be developed that will provide for long-term financing of Gabon's protected areas.

B.6.2.1 Future Plan:

During CARPE II, WWF plans to test Community participatory mapping in two villages in Cameroon north of the Minkebe reserve in the Minkebe-Dja Corridor. WWF will partner with Innovative Resources Management (IRM – an organization with Cameroon experience and interest in funding, testing, and developing participatory resource mapping for biodiversity conservation in selected sites in the Congo Basin) to produce background data on resource use issues in the forest zone situated Northeast of Minkebe, Gabon and South of Mintom, Cameroon. They will also use this data to:

- 1) mobilize stakeholder support for conservation and sustainable resource use in this area,
- 2) develop, in a participatory manner, recommendations for a land-use plan, which takes into account local people's needs, MINEF's vision of the region, protection of Minkebe Reserve and the potential to establish a corridor to the core of Ngoïla-Mintom Forest.

The focus of activities will be in South Cameroon, and WWF will work closely with MINEF at all levels (National: Wildlife and Forest Department, and at Provincial and District level). The outputs of this process will help in providing recommendations for the Minkebe land-use plan, the land-use plan for the Ngoïla-Mintom forest and village hunting zones for the Lélé-Alati sector.

B.6.3. GABON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION/COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

Goal: To introduce Environmental Education into the Gabonese school system and develop a non-formal education/public awareness program for use in both rural and urban areas to help promote conservation awareness at various levels

Results

1. The knowledge and level of concerned decision-makers vis-à-vis conservation is increased
2. Project-specific awareness raising efforts enhanced;

3. Gabon's NGOs are assisted in defining their role vis-à-vis environmental activities in Gabon, and specific activities and partnerships pursue pinpointed.

Progress:

This project has been phased out in February 2000 as a result of shortage of funding. WWF-CARPO is still involved in public awareness through its Communications Officer who has (Joseph Mayombo) maintained the good relations he initiated during the previous FY with the press in CAR and Gabon. Partnerships therefore remain effective:

- *L'Union*, the daily newspaper in Gabon, continues to publish articles related to conservation themes and program activities;
- Africa N° 1, the pan-African radio broadcasting over the continent and Paris maintained the daily three-minute slot to WWF-CARPO until it changed its program grid by January. It now has an environmental magazine, and WWF-CARPO has been invited many times to explain its activities in the Sub-region;
- WWF-CARPO has conserved its page within *Le Cri du Pangolin* where the program's activities are widely described. The program has been generally presented, followed by Minkebe Project, ERBC, and Gamba Project. Dzanga-Sangha has been scheduled for next year, as *Le Cri du Pangolin* has become a sub-regional environmental magazine.
- Other special magazines such as *Galago* of PFE, the Gabon/World Bank project, have been giving the opportunity to WWF-CARPO to publish articles regarding the program activities.
- Guy Dingote Kossani, journalist for *Radio Rurale* in Bangui and based in Bayanga area, agreed to work with the Communications Officer who proposed to develop a Radio and TV report on CARPO/ERBC programs once the funds are available.

In addition, the Communications Officer has been involved in environmental education activities. Before it came to an end, assistance had been brought to the Gabon Environmental Education Program in implementing some activities such as supporting schools (*Ecole de Gros Bouquet*) and NGOs (*Jeunesse Chrétienne du Gabon*, A.N.C.E., ...) in organizing public awareness actions. A campaign was built on with mayor offices that consisted of posting environmental messages together with endangered species on taxis in Lambaréné and Libreville, two main cities where the rates of bush-meat consumption are considered to be the highest.

During a tourism show organized in September by tourism entrepreneurs and air companies in Gabon, the Communications Officer was invited to state the importance of conservation for tourism in the Congo Basin, with examples on Dzanga-Sangha, and gave information on the Russel E. Train Scholarship that was demonstrated as an incentive for young people to be interested in studies related to conservation/ecotourism.

With the need to harmonize the Africa and Madagascar Program communications activities, a meeting was held in Tanzania (Zanzibar and the Udzungwa Mountains National Park) with Javier Arreaza, then AMP Communications Officer together with Joseph Mayombo (CARPO), Sam Kasulwa (Tanzania), and Sylvain Rafiadanazoa (Madagascar). Apart from the common objective around which everybody agreed to carry out specific actions within a communications strategy that was to be adapted to one's local site, the meeting helped the Communications Officers know each

other professionally. It also was an opportunity for the three others to get acquainted with a colleague's work environment in details.

In February, Séraphin Dondyas, Sub-regional Coordinator for the Sustainable Forest Management and Certification Project, was invited to a debate at Africa N° 1 – *Une heure pour convaincre* – to state WWF-CARPO's objectives regarding forests conservation and economy.

As a result of information campaign for WWF-CARPO activities in the sub-region, a pamphlet has been produced in English and French to describe the *Global 200* concept and explain ERBC – ecoregion-based conservation process that is now being implemented in the Congo Basin. For preparation to the ERBC assessment workshop that took place in March-April this year, a TV document – *Carte Blanche, RTG 2* – was produced featuring ERBC Coordinator who presented during one hour the ambitious plans of ERBC conservation within the scope of WWF-CARPO.

Future Action Plan

During FY01, WWF-CARPO plans:

- to reinforce and expand activities toward management of existing parks and reserves;
- to provide guidance to the private sector in the promotion of sustainable logging;
- to pursue technical discussions with Cameroon, Congo and Gabon and ECOFAC for the implementation of the trans-border conservation initiative, and with the WB and the EU for securing funds for the first 12-month phase;
- to continue discussions to further investigate the possibility of a debt-for-nature swap in Gabon
- to complete biological inventories through partnerships with research institutions, especially in relation of the newly created reserve of Monts Doudou;
- to finalize negotiations with the governments of DRC and Gabon to sign new country agreements;
- Assist the Communications Officer in implementing a communication strategy considering needs of the sub-region;
- Production of the ERBC biological workshop proceedings in collaboration with the Conservation Science Program (WWFUS).
- Lobbying strategy to raise support for the biological vision:
 - Presentation of the biological vision and the implementation strategy at the **THIRD CONFERENCE ON CENTRAL AFRICAN MOIST FOREST ECOSYSTEMS (CEFDHAC)**, meeting scheduled from June 5-7 in Bujumbura, Burundi. The CEFDHAC conference or the **Brazzaville Process** is a forum for consultations which is open to all the stakeholders in the forestry sector of the Sub region, namely politicians (Parliamentarians and Ministers), Technicians, the private sector and NGOs, with a view to sustainably manage the Central African forests ecosystems. Though CEFDHAC staff have attend the Libreville workshop, it is strategically important that we share a common conservation agenda with this high profile governmental bodies in the sub region.
 - Presentation of the biological vision and the implementation strategy at the **YAOUNDE SUMMIT** follow up expert meeting designed to prepare the inter ministerial conference scheduled on September 15, 00. The Yaoundé Declaration represents a high political

commitment made by the head of states that has elevated forest conservation and management to one of the most important issues in the sub-region. We expect the inter ministerial conference to support the biodiversity conservation vision developed for the sub region, as this was explicitly expressed by the wildlife Directors at many occasions, and as mandated by the Yaoundé Declaration and the Heads of State.

- One of the critical issue that came out from the Reconnaissance and that ought to be addressed immediately was the issue of forest taxation. Several countries in Central Africa are undertaking policy reforms that fundamentally change the way forest concessions are allocated, taxed and managed. It is argued that recent taxation changes in some countries are considered to encourage higher cutting intensities, which could have serious consequences in the whole ecoregion. Work is being done with Central African government, and with WWF Regional Forest Officer, and staff at CPO to develop a forest policy that could be economically and environmentally attractive.
- Biological and socio-economic assessment in priority areas
 - Development of needs to conduct biological and socio-economic field surveys, identify participants, Operate adequate recruitment, organize training of inventory teams, establish partnership with relevant scientific institutions, and facilitate field work to be conducted in the Congo Basin Moist Forest Ecoregion.
 - Conduct biological and socio-economic assessments in the Congo Basin Moist Forest Ecoregion (Gabon, CAR, Congo-Brazzaville, and SE Cameroon) and produce a report to be used as a tool to develop a conservation plan for the Congo Basin Moist Forest Ecoregion. This should lead to the organization of the conservation plan workshop with participation of all stakeholders from that ecoregion early FY02.
 - The map of priority terrestrial and freshwater sites marks an attempt to synthesize several data layers of biodiversity features. Some of the priority sites are very large and represent educated approximations of the boundaries of distinct communities, relatively intact areas, or areas over which certain process operate. A more specific step is to refine the landscapes recommended for immediate conservation action.
- Fund raising strategy to support the implementation of the biological vision
 - Development of a fund raising strategy and identification of opportunities that support the implementation of the biological vision will be a key activities for the coming fiscal year. Specific themes to be covered in proposals include: harmonization of forestry policies in Central Africa, the biological and socio-economic assessment, the establishment of the Training program for biological surveys and monitoring, species specific action plans for great apes and elephants, TRAFFIC presence and/or trade studies on bushmeat, ivory, timber.

Production of a cost analysis report on the implementation of the biological vision: A document to serve as a reference material to secure long-term funding for the ecoregions.

C. CONCLUSIONS

World Wildlife Fund (WWF), with the financial support of the USAID Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), has established the conditions and practices necessary for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources in the region. We are grateful to USAID for their constant support to biodiversity conservation in the project zones.