

# Securing Wildlife and Landscapes in Central Africa: *The USFWS Role in CARPE*



*A herd of forest elephants at Dzanga Bai, Central African Republic.* Credit: Direk Byler/USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) works in Central Africa to conserve some of the world's most iconic species, including forest elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, and marine turtles. Together with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), USFWS supports a range of partners in the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) to secure wildlife, protect vital landscapes, and strengthen capacity for wildlife management.

USFWS provides financial and technical assistance to meet the complex and demanding tasks required to conserve Central Africa's wildlife and habitats. Some of our major CARPE initiatives are located in:

- Gabon's network of 13 national parks, home to more than 50 percent of Africa's remaining population of forest elephants, and a network of 10 marine protected areas covering 23 percent of the country's territorial waters.
- The Sangha Trinational and Northern Congo landscape, a vast tropical forest and stronghold for elephants and great apes. It includes national parks in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of the Congo.
- Virunga National Park in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), an area besieged by militia groups and home to the endangered mountain gorilla.
- The Tshuapa-Lomami-Lualaba (TL2) landscape in DRC, providing habitat to the endangered bonobo and Africa's most recently discovered monkey, the lesula, and the site of the country's first new national park in more than 40 years.

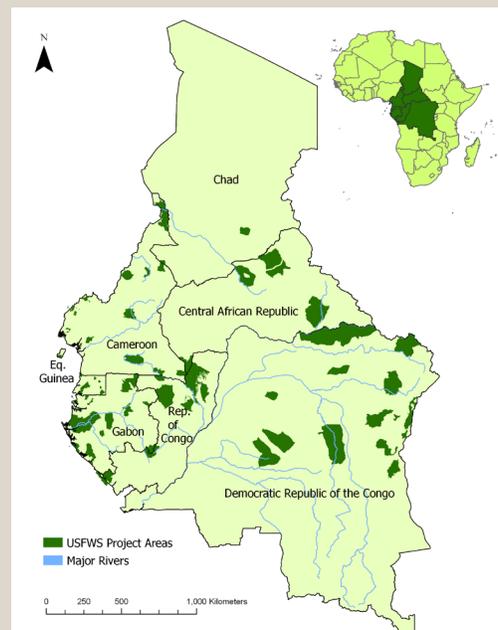
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*Demand for bushmeat, poaching for ivory, and international wildlife trafficking are devastating forest elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, pangolins, and other iconic species across Central Africa.*

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## Program Highlights

- USFWS supports a network of key projects and trusted partners based on wildlife priorities for the region, and provides critical monitoring and evaluation as well as expert technical support.
- USFWS-CARPE investments build on more than 30 years of USFWS work in Central Africa to conserve African elephants, great apes, and marine turtles, as mandated through Acts of Congress.
- USFWS leverages its expertise in law enforcement and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to strengthen the capacity of government and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to fight wildlife trafficking and protect threatened species in Central Africa.



*Project areas in Central Africa supported by USFWS since 2010.* Credit: Matthew Luizza/USFWS



*Central chimpanzee.*

Credit: Ian Nichols/National Geographic

## Threats to Central African Wildlife

### Commercial bushmeat trade

Commercial demand for bushmeat poses a critical threat to the majority of forest animals in Central Africa. The illegal luxury bushmeat trade empties the forests of their wildlife and threatens the security of rural people.

### Transnational illegal livestock grazing

Seasonal movement of cattle by pastoralists across borders (i.e., transhumance) occurs within a landscape of escalating violent conflict and threatens both wildlife and people.

### Elephant poaching

The illegal ivory trade poses the single biggest threat to the survival of the African elephant. The number of forest elephants in Central Africa fell 62 percent between 2002 and 2011.

### Extractive industries

Logging, mining, and oil exploration that is unregulated and unmanaged threatens wildlife by destroying and degrading habitats. These industries also create roads that attract poachers and new human settlements.

### Marine turtle mortality

Commercial and artisanal fishing operations threaten marine turtles through direct and incidental capture. During nesting season, poachers also capture females and raid nests for eggs.

### Disease

Ebola and other infectious diseases are a major cause of decline in Africa's great ape populations. Ebola's mortality rate is higher for chimpanzees and gorillas (up to 95 percent) than for humans.

## Strategic Objectives

CARPE's primary objective is to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss and forest degradation in the Congo Basin by increasing capacity for natural resource management at local, national, and regional levels. USFWS has been a major CARPE partner since 2006, and works closely with national governments, other U.S. agencies, international donors, and a range of other partners to ensure a results-based approach to wildlife stewardship in Central Africa.

## Major Program Goals

- Promoting landscape connectivity in Central Africa's wildlife strongholds.
- Protecting parks through support to protected area management, improving wildlife training institutions, building workforce capacity, and strengthening wildlife monitoring.
- Addressing regional threats to wildlife and conserving critical wildlife populations, amplifying investments through the Multinational Species Conservation Funds.

## On-the-Ground Investments

For 2018, USFWS received \$17.5 million in CARPE funding, which leveraged more than \$13.6 million in additional matching funds, to support threatened and endangered wildlife populations in Central Africa's Congo and Ogooué Basins.

USFWS applies a two-pronged strategy:

- Competitive grants for on-the-ground projects that respond to immediate threats.
- Long-term investments to strengthen capacity for wildlife and habitat management.

This combined approach allows USFWS to respond to emerging threats while providing strategic support and technical assistance to achieve long-lasting results.

## Achievements

- Significant reduction in illegal commercial and artisanal fishing in Gabon's coastal waters and lagoons (in partnership with ANPN).
- Support for the training of 200 new rangers in DRC's Virunga National Park, increasing the total number to 500 (in partnership with the Virunga Fund).
- Establishment of Lomami National Park, the first new national park in the DRC in more than 40 years (in partnership with the TL2 Project). As the country's first protected area that was established in a participatory manner involving all levels of the community and administration, this marks an important milestone for wildlife as well as local communities, and may serve as a model for the region.
- Initiation of a regional network to combat wildlife trafficking, now independently active in Central Africa, that has resulted in more than 600 wildlife traffickers jailed to date (in partnership with the EAGLE Network).
- Formation of a new regional network of partners working to prevent illegally harvested species from entering the commercial bushmeat trade (in partnership with the Central Africa Bushmeat Action Group).
- Transboundary collaboration in the Garamba-Chinko landscape in the DRC and Central African Republic to restore and conserve key wildlife species, while also establishing a foothold for governance, security, and stability throughout the region (in partnership with the African Parks).

For more details on the USFWS results-based vision for conservation in Central Africa and guidance to enhance project effectiveness, please see the USFWS website to download [A Results-Based Vision for Conservation in Central Africa](#) and [Standard Measures of Effectiveness and Threats for Wildlife Conservation in Central Africa](#).



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