

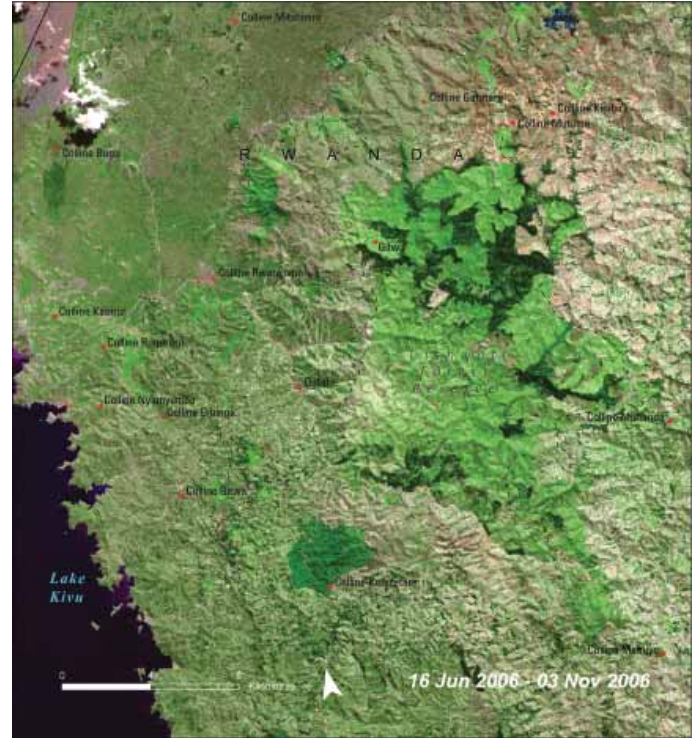


AFRICA

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Dramatic Deforestation: Gishwati Forest, Rwanda



Gishwati Forest Reserve in northwestern Rwanda is one of the most severely deforested areas in the country. Exploitation of the forests for commercial products such as charcoal, timber, medicine, and

food has been the main driver of this deforestation. The 1978 satellite image shows the Gishwati Forest Reserve as a dark-green carpet of dense forest nearly covering the entire protected area. The 2006 image shows that most of the forest has been cleared; the dark-green areas have

been replaced by patches of pink and light green where the vegetation has been largely removed. Only a fraction of the forest that was intact in 1978 remains; what is left is in degraded condition.

On a positive note, reforestation efforts in parts of the region, using agroforestry techniques such as radical terracing, progressive terracing, and live mulches, are currently being researched and implemented. Seedlings of species such as *Calliandra calothyrsus* and *Leucaena diversifolia* are being planted in several provinces of the country with collaboration from stakeholders and the local community. If such efforts continue and are successful, the Gishwati Forest Reserve may experience considerable regeneration within the next five to ten years.

