

Cameroon

Investing in wildlife security, community engagement and applied research to conserve Cameroon's endangered wildlife.



Located in Western Central Africa, Cameroon shares borders with Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Republic of

Congo, the Central African Republic and Chad, in addition to a 250 mile coastline along the Bight of Biafra. Since the independence of part of the country from France in 1960 and the rest from the United Kingdom in 1961, Cameroon has been relatively stable, which has benefited economic and infrastructure development. Cameroon's 23.1 million inhabitants represent a wide range of ethnic groups and languages. More than 50% of the population live in urban areas.

Cameroon has 13 national parks representing a multitude of different climates and landscapes. Northern Cameroon's sahelian savannas are in stark contrast to the humid, tropical rainforests of its south. Cameroon is often called "Africa in miniature" because of the diversity of landscapes, including coastal areas, mountains, and deserts in addition to savanna and rainforest.

Cameroon's beautiful and varied landscapes are home to more than 900 bird and 300 mammal species. More than 630 of Cameroon's species are listed as threatened on the IUCN Red List, of which 183 are Endangered and 115 Critically Endangered. Cameroon is home to four subspecies of great apes: Cross River gorillas, central chimpanzees, Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzees, and western lowland gorillas. Other species of global conservation concern include forest and savanna elephants, Preuss's monkey, and the African golden cat. Scientists estimate that fewer than 15,000 forest elephants exist in Cameroon and only a small number of them occur inside protected areas.



Cross River gorilla habitat in Cameroon.
Credit: Aaron Nichols/Wildlife Conservation Society.

Current threats to Biodiversity in Cameroon

Elephant poaching

Poaching for ivory is the greatest threat to the survival of elephants in Cameroon. Across Central Africa, poaching is increasing due to the quality of the ivory of forest elephants; the ability of poachers to remain undetected in their dense forest habitats; and the lack of law enforcement coupled with corruption. In early 2012, approximately 30-40 poachers on horseback rode into Bouba Ndjida National Park in northeastern Cameroon, near the Chadian border, and slaughtered up to 600 elephants (including juveniles) for their ivory.

Commercial bushmeat trade

Commercial bushmeat hunting is the over-hunting of wildlife for their meat and income. Unsustainable hunting represents the single greatest threat to the majority of wildlife species in Central Africa. Bushmeat hunting is particularly problematic around logging concessions and other work camps, where new roads provide hunters access into previously remote forests and also facilitate market

access for traders. Unsustainable demand for bushmeat is fueled by urban consumers, who associate bushmeat with status and culture.

Extractive industries

Extractive industries – including logging, mining, and oil exploration – threaten Cameroon's wildlife directly by destroying or degrading habitat, and indirectly by providing road access to poachers, and by attracting new human settlements. The indirect impact of extractive industries in Central African forests represents a serious threat to wildlife.



Cross River gorilla skulls confiscated from poachers. Credit: Aaron Nichols/Wildlife Conservation Society

Since 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has invested in 45 grants, totaling nearly \$5.1 million which has been leveraged by more than \$5.6 million in matching funds.

Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA)

In 2003, the Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA) developed an unprecedented approach to wildlife law enforcement in Cameroon with USFWS support. Bridging civil society activism with government enforcement capacity, LAGA demonstrates great success in investigations, arrest operations, legal follow-up, and outreach to deter wildlife crimes and corruption. LAGA's approach helped Cameroon move from a baseline of zero wildlife prosecutions to the arrest of one major illegal wildlife dealer per week from 2006 onwards. Wide media coverage raises awareness of the illegality of the trade and the seriousness with which the government is addressing wildlife crimes. The LAGA model is now being replicated in six countries in Central and West Africa, coordinated through the "Eagle" (Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement) Network based in Yaounde. LAGA has received seven prestigious international awards. Since 2005, USFWS funding to LAGA has totalled \$669,416, leveraged by \$977,483 in additional matching funds.

Cross River Gorilla

With less than 300 individuals in 11 sites in Nigeria and Cameroon, the Cross River gorilla represents the most endangered subspecies of gorilla. In 2010, USFWS signed its first species-focused cooperative agreement in Africa for the proactive conservation of this critically endangered subspecies. In collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), USFWS funding will total \$1.3 million by the end of the five year agreement. In close collaboration with the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon, the agreement has led to the development of a threat monitoring framework to guide wildlife security efforts and conservation investment across the Cross River gorilla's range. In addition, the agreement supported the establishment and continued running of the Kagwene Gorilla

Sanctuary, and the deployment of 'gorilla guardians' or local villagers who collect data and conduct outreach. In 2013, an awareness-raising radio theater program was also broadcast to hundreds of villages across the Cross River gorilla's range to reinforce the importance of gorilla conservation.

Ecole de Faune de Garoua (EFG)

The Wildlife College of Garoua (EFG) was established in northern Cameroon in 1970 to provide training in wildlife management for francophone Africans. Since 1970, EFG has trained over 1,300 students from 24 countries. To date, EFG remains the only regional wildlife college serving francophone Africa. In 2011, through a 3-year cooperative agreement, USFWS awarded \$220,000 to EFG for 11 graduate student scholarships, and for a competitive faculty development program to raise the training capacity of the college.

Sangha Trinational (TNS)

The Sangha Trinational, or *Tri-National de la Sangha* (TNS), one of the world's largest blocks of pristine tropical lowland forest, represents the first three-country transboundary area to become a World Heritage Site. TNS encompasses three contiguous national parks - Lobéké in Cameroon, Nouabalé-Ndoki in the Republic of Congo, and Dzanga-Ndoki in the Central African Republic. Within TNS, USFWS has supported various activities through 78 grants, totaling more than \$6.8 million and leveraging more than \$7.6 million. In 2013, USFWS signed a 5-year, \$10 million cooperative agreement with the African Parks Network (APN), WCS, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to further strengthen the ecological integrity and connectivity in and around TNS.

Mbam Djerem National Park

Mbam Djerem National Park, located in the center of Cameroon, marks the transition zone between savanna and forest landscapes. It contains one



Staff and supporters of Kagwene Gorilla Sanctuary in Cameroon.

Credit: Aaron Nichols/Wildlife Conservation Society

of the highest levels of mammalian biodiversity in Cameroon. Since 2007, USFWS has supported WCS to improve conservation in Mbam Djerem by engaging the local community, enhancing law enforcement efforts to combat illegal poaching and bushmeat hunting, and building the capacity of park staff. USFWS has awarded \$187,013, which has been leveraged with \$133,437 in matching funds.

Waza (Human-Elephant Co-Existence)

USFWS, through support to *Des Elephants et Des Hommes*, helps to mitigate human-elephant conflict in northern Cameroon and around Waza National Park. This project was started in 2012 with an award of \$48,000 by USFWS. In addition to implementing an environmental education program called "My Elephant Neighbor", which conducts surveys of human-elephant conflict, the project develops capacity of Waza National Park staff to enhance protection of elephants in the park.

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September 2014



USFWS Support to Cameroon FY2006-FY2013	
Grants Awarded	45
Amount Awarded	\$5,090,872
Amount Leveraged	\$5,632,715
Total	\$10,723,587