

# ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

A case study of the WCS-CIB-Republic of Congo project to reduce commercial bushmeat hunting, trading and consumption inside a logging concession

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Bushmeat for sale in market

Private logging companies have been granted the timber exploitation rights to major tracts of forest in Central Africa. In addition to representing a source of revenue for developing countries from commercial timber, these forestry concessions support critical resources for indigenous peoples, wildlife populations (as both a sustainable resource and natural heritage), and key ecosystem processes. Thus, sound management of these forest concessions requires an ecosystem approach including reduced impact forestry exploitation, land-use planning, wildlife management systems and social programs. Some forestry concessions are located in the proximity of protected areas, which have been established with the goal of long-term forest ecosystem conservation.

Without attention to wildlife management, the infrastructure of many forestry companies has been used for the commercial bushmeat trade and illegal hunting of protected species. Forestry camps often create markets and staging points for commercial bushmeat hunting in previously remote, undisturbed areas. The revenue of forestry company employee communities (camps and towns) attracts traders, commercial bushmeat traffickers, job seekers and hangers-on who benefit from the logging company infrastructure and economy, contributing to rapid demographic growth. The end result of these changes has been increased hunting of bushmeat, which, if uncontrolled, will lead to local extinction of species and longer-term disruption and destruction of ecosystem processes in the forests. Loss of wildlife and cultural hegemony associated with demographic booms caused by commercial logging activities have also had a strong impact on the indigenous local peoples that directly depend on the forest resources.

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS IN THE KABO AND POKOLA FOREST CONCESSIONS IN NORTHERN CONGO

The Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (NNNP) in northern Congo has four concessions surrounding it, impacting not only

the NNNP, but the adjacent Lac Lobéké National Park in Cameroon and Dzanga-Ndoki National Park in Central African Republic (CAR) (Figure 1). To address the problems associated with wildlife management in the concessions, WCS embarked on official collaboration with the industry (Congolaise Industrielle des Bois (CIB) and the Government of Congo in 1999 for the management of wildlife in the concessions around the park. Although the objective is quite clear: to design, implement and monitor the timber company and local community-based wildlife management systems in the concessions adjacent to the national park, the implementation of the interventions is complicated.

Some of the initial steps undertaken were to modify company interior regulations regarding bushmeat, ban the use of snares, prohibit the exportation of bushmeat from the sites within and outside the concession and extend protection to protected species throughout the concessions. These basic wildlife management principles were integrated into the company's administration. Additionally, conservation and land-use zoning was designed and created based on studies of traditional community zones and natural resource use. No-hunting areas, community hunting zones and buffer zones around the park were adopted and established in the concessions.

Education and raising awareness of local villagers, hunters, women's groups, company employees and workers' unions was undertaken as an important initial step in addressing the wildlife management problems in the concessions. A dialogue was established to engage key groups through individual contacts, films, meetings and seminars to present the project and encourage participation and support for the wildlife manage-



ment principles in the concessions. Nature clubs were also created with the local schools closest to the park. Through these means, conservation awareness has been raised not only locally and regionally, but also on national levels through television and media.

Wildlife protection measures commenced in collaboration with and under the auspices of the Ministry of Forestry Economy. Ministry officers associated with the project, military officers and project staff trained Ecoguards, who were recruited from local communities to provide jobs for local people and ex-poachers. Control posts at key trafficking points were put into place, and mobile patrols surveyed important sectors of the forest. Wildlife protection, with the help of CIB management, was extended throughout most of the concessions.

Little to no alternative protein sources were available prior to the initiation of the project. The project has undertaken alternative protein source pilot studies, including surveys of consumer taste and market preference, and has initiated a system of beef importation, tilapia production and chicken farming. Alternative sources of protein, including the raising domestic animals, gardening and creating fishing associations, have also been created both within the company camps and the traditional communities to reduce the immediate pressure on wildlife populations. More importantly, the company has realized that its obligation is concrete, and it is increasingly providing food for its workers in camps.

During the course of the project, it became evident that by increasing the price of bushmeat and attaching ownership to it by creating zones exclusive to certain communities, the wildlife being exploited has a real value. With this mindset, bushmeat can compete with domestic protein substitutes, such as beef. Additionally, it is necessary to work with the domestic meat



Imported cattle

importers or suppliers to decrease the price of alternative sources of protein.

In order to monitor the project progress, a socio-economic research and monitoring program was established, which includes market surveys, household surveys, hunting return rate monitoring, population census baselines, an alternative protein source component and education dissemination processes. In addition to the socio-economic data collection, an ecological monitoring program has been established using ecological surveys throughout the different land-use zones, forest clearing monitoring and patrol return rates of wildlife protection efforts.

## RESULTS

Some of the short-term gains over two and a half years were to extend wildlife management and conservation to an estimated >500,000 hectares, in a one million hectare concession, ensuring protection of key species and habitat adjacent to the park. Over the period June 1999 through June 2001, the protection efforts resulted in the confiscation of 15 high caliber elephant guns, 27 tusks and an estimated 15,000 snares. Snare rates have decreased, indicating that people are shifting hunting techniques from using wasteful snares to more appropriate methods. In the large town of Pokola (population 11,200, census 2002), people have shifted away from non-selective hunting techniques with a drop from 40% to 4% of animals taken by snares. One hundred-sixty legal charges for wildlife violations were submitted to the local ministry authorities, and the zoning is being respected and supported by the company and the communities.

The direct costs of the wildlife management program have been estimated as approximately \$ U.S. 1 per hectare/year up to 300,000 hectares or \$U.S. 0.75 per hectare up to 1,000,000 hectares. A larger concession will have decreasing costs per hectare after an initial investment, as there is an "economy of scale" for the costs of protection and monitoring efforts. Additional costs need to be added to these estimates to cover technical expertise and administration. Initially, the company paid for basic infrastructure and partial support of anti-poaching efforts. Company funding has been complemented by international support (WCS, USAID, CARPE, ITTO, USFWS, Columbus Zoo (education), and others) and Congo government resources. CIB has increased its participation steadily as the program has developed and expanded, particularly in the areas of alternative activities and wildlife protection

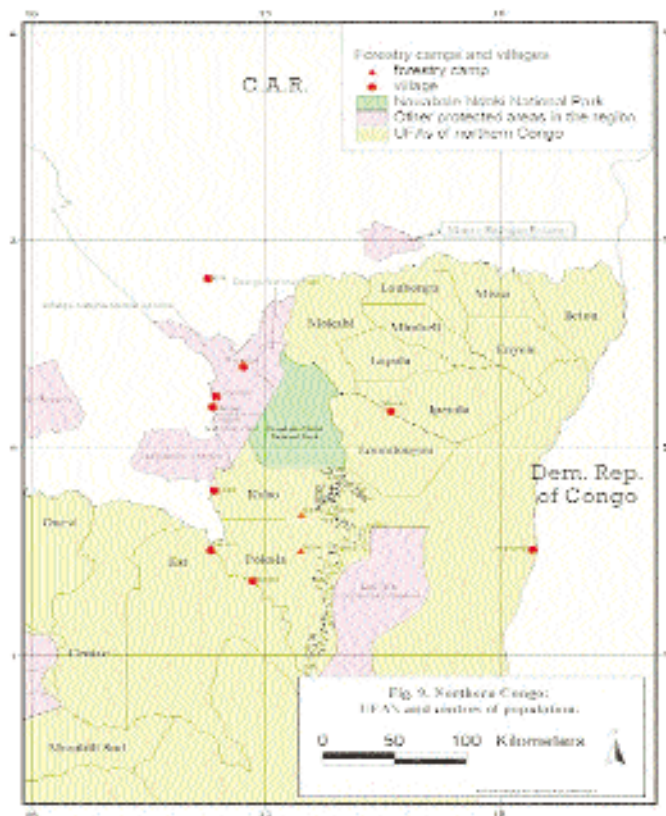


Figure 1. UFAs of Northern Congo and the position of NNNP and centres of population around the Park (Maisels 2001).

with regards to its camps and infrastructure. Longer-term costs will be defined in 2003 as part of the logging concession management plan adopted by the government.

Longer-term benefits include ensuring buffer zone protection to adjacent National Parks and extending protection to

wide ranging and endangered species (elephants, bongos, gorillas, chimpanzees, etc.) over a broad landscape. Sustainable legal hunting programs for local communities will result in a long-term wildlife resource base, thus ensuring the quality of life of traditional forest people. The company itself is adopting a more progressive approach to its own forestry management, introducing techniques to reduce the direct impact of logging and implementing a forestry management plan as required by Congolese laws. On

the national policy level, the government's Ministry of Forestry Economy announced in 2001 that it is now requiring all forest concessions in northern Congo to develop and pay for wildlife management programs with ecoguard enforcement based on this model.

In late July 2002, the U.S. Department of State sponsored a three-day workshop on "Wildlife Management and

Conservation in Forestry Concessions in the Republic of Congo." WCS, the Ministry of Forestry Economy, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and USFWS worked together to organize the technical workshop in Brazzaville, bringing together 54 field practitioners, managers and policy makers from Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Central African Republic. The objectives were to examine, refine and propose basic templates for wildlife management, law enforcement and monitoring programs at the scale of forest concessions, and identify the processes necessary for their integration in concession, regional and national level planning in the Republic of Congo. The forum also contributed to related initiatives concerned with wildlife conservation in managed forests (i.e., CITES bushmeat working group) through the exchange and communication of information on wildlife management and conservation in forestry concessions using practical "lessons learned" from northern Congo.

As a result of the workshop, the Ministry of Forestry Economy of the Republic of Congo proposed for adoption formalized standards for the design, implementation and monitoring of wildlife conservation and management programs in forest concessions. Directors of Wildlife of Central Africa and their representatives gained the opportunity to gather information about the lessons learned from the WCS-CIB-MEF efforts in northern Congo and apply the results of this experience to strategies in their respective countries as appropriate. The proceedings of the workshop will be published in the coming months for distribution to participants and other interested practitioners and policy makers. **A**



Ecoguard with passing truck

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