

C.6. Virunga Conservation Project, DRC

Project Area: Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo. Administered by Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de Nature (ICCN)

Status:

National Park, IUCN Category II
Established 1925, the first in Africa
World Heritage Site 1979, on Danger List since 1994
Ramsar Site 1996

Geographical Location: North-east DRC, bordering Uganda and Rwanda (0°55'N -1°35'S and 29°10' - 30°00'E)

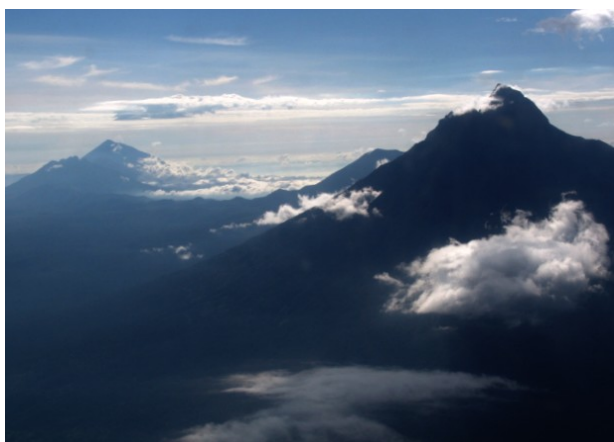
Size: 7,900 km². Transboundary with Rwenzori Mountains NP (Uganda), Parc National des Volcans (Rwanda) and Mgahinga Gorilla NP (Uganda).

Description:

The park lies in the Albertine Rift valley and on the adjacent mountains, covering a huge range of habitat types from afro alpine heat and montane forest in the Rwenzori in the north, through steep and savanna, lowland equatorial forest, dry and transitional forests and equatorial forest in the south that harbors the mountain gorillas. Altitudinal range from 5119m asl to around 800m on savanna plains.

Project Partners: ICCN, Agro Allemand Action, European Union, Zoological Society of London, International Gorilla Conservation Project, Wildlife Conservation Society

Justification in terms of FZS Global Strategy:



FZS priority biomes:

Montane, savanna, tropical forest

Globally threatened and rare species:

Mountain gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*), Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), L'Hoest's monkey (*Cercopithecus lhoesti*), Owl-faced monkey (*Cercopithecus hamlyni*)

Centre for endemism:

Amphibians; 32: Birds; 30: Mammals; 25: all strictly endemic

International recognition

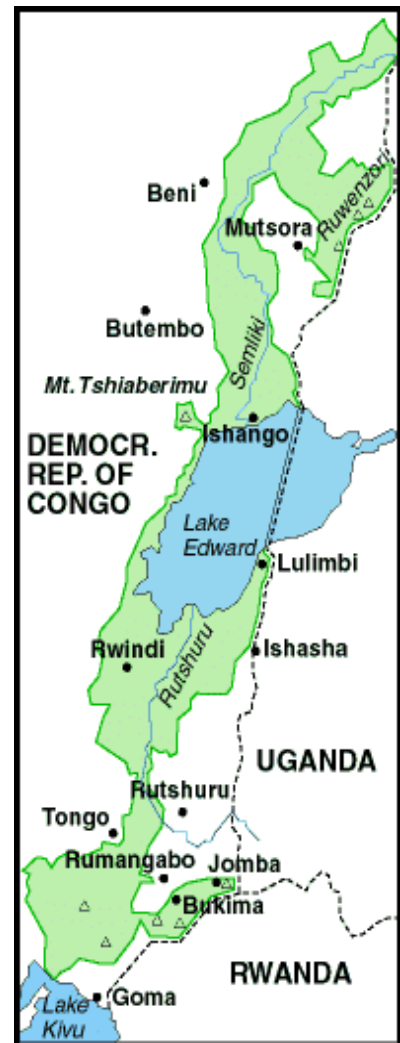
World Heritage Site (UNESCO)

Eastern Afrotropical Biodiversity Hotspot (Conservation International)

Global 200 (WWF)

Endemic Bird Area (Birdlife International)

Class 1 Conservation Intervention Priority (High biodiversity and High threat) WWF



History of Project:

FZS has supported biodiversity conservation the Virunga area intermittently since Bernhard Grzimek visited the area in the 1950s and indeed was the sole source of rangers' salaries in some years. In 1980s, FZS supported the very first habituation of gorillas for tourism and, a little later, chimpanzees. The civil war and unrest in the area meant that support declined in the early 1990s, but in 2003, support was reinstated and a project leader was appointed in 2004.



The civil war and massive upheavals over the last decade has been a major blow for the stability of the region and for its biodiversity. Poaching has been wide scale, but habitat is still largely intact. In addition, protected areas in Rwanda and Uganda have provided refuge for DRC wildlife. However, in recent years, stability and security have improved, and many major donors are now focussing on this critical Great Lakes region.

Additional Funding:

- EU/USFWS/UNF-UNESCO: Ranger training
- Paul Nunn Memorial Fund: Support for Ranger Schools
- FFI Rapid Response Facility: Support for Ishango and the mobile anti poaching unit
- EU and USFWS: Support for the mobile anti-poaching unit
- African Parks Foundation: Anti-Poaching Training for Garamba Rangers

Goal of Project:

To conserve and manage the threatened wildlife of Virunga National Park in partnership with the Congolese Wildlife Authority, neighboring communities and other stakeholders

Project Logframe 2004-2006

FZS-Africa Objective 1: Protected area operations

FZS Outputs	VCP Activities
1.1 Operational procedures strengthened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Incorporate contemporary law enforcement strategies into new PA operational framework ii. Support ICCN's lawyers
1.5 Infrastructure in support of effective operations improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Build and maintain Ishango as a Ranger Training School for the ICCN and as temporary accommodation for the anti-poaching unit ii. Identify and establish a medium to long term base for the rapid reaction anti-poaching unit iii. Improve facilities at Ishango Training School, including a basic assault course iv. Provide uniforms, other equipment and patrol rations for rapid reaction anti-poaching unit. v. Provide and maintain transport (vehicles, boats and motorbikes) for

	<p>rapid reaction anti-poaching unit</p> <p>vi. Provide lorry for rapid deployment of the anti-poaching unit and associated equipment necessary for short to medium term operations.</p> <p>vii. Renovate and maintain HF and VHF communications through out the park, including provision of radio equipment, and training of radio technicians</p> <p>viii. Support vehicle running costs at ICCN Goma and PNVi Northern sector</p> <p>ix. Boundary demarcation in sensitive areas carried out e.g. Stone wall Jomba</p> <p>x. Ranger posts constructed, equipped and maintained, e.g. Tongo, Kibati</p> <p>xi. Eastern Congo ICCN Airwing developed to support PA management</p>
1.6 VNP/ICCN finance and administration systems strengthened.	i. Support administration and equipment for ICCN office in Goma and provide office equipment in Kinshasa

FZS-Africa Objective 2: Policies, plans and awareness

FZS Outputs	VCP Activities
2.2 Conservation advocacy carried out	<p>i. Lobby the ICCN and the local authorities to protect the chimpanzee habitat</p> <p>ii. Lobby for further rearmament of the park rangers</p> <p>iii. Facilitate the development of a working group between the ICCN and MONUC in order that operations to secure the park might be more effective.</p> <p>iv. Lobby to maintain park boundaries in sensitive areas, such as Rwanda border</p>
2.3 Public awareness activities conducted	i. Two day closing ceremony for the training programme organised and financed
2.4 Capacity of national planning for PAs strengthened	i. Facilitate training for the ICCN and its partners in protected area planning
2.5 Site-specific participative planning supported	i. Support GMP process by financing workshops, providing impetus for decision-making and providing information

FZS-Africa Objective 3: Community Conservation

FZS Outputs	VCP Activities
3.2 Natural resource use and needs understood and community management plans development	i. Nursery for wood lots established and maintained at Tongo.
3.6 Costs and benefits to communities from wildlife better understood and mitigated/enhanced	<p>i. Human wildlife conflict issues explored and assessed through workshops and mitigation testing</p> <p>ii. Protection from crop-raiding elephants and buffalo improved through using wall as boundary demarcation at Jomba</p>

FZS-Africa Objective 4: Knowledge. No activities

FZS-Africa Objective 5: Sustainable financing. No activities

FZS-Africa Objective 6: Special programmes

FZS Outputs	VCP Activities
6.6 Tourism development supported	i. Chimpanzee re-habitation carried out, including trail cutting and observations, for tourism opportunity development

FZS-Africa Objective 7: Human resources

FZS Outputs	VCP Activities
7.1 Appropriate short and long term training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Basic training for 480 VNP rangers provided. ii. Student supported at the Wildlife Management Diploma Programme at Mweka, Tanzania iii. 16 ranger trainers from 5 World Heritage Sites in Congo trained to increase their capacity as instructors iv. 50 best rangers in VNP provided with advanced training in conservation, physical fitness, weapon handling, conflict resolution, human rights and judicial process, tactical methods and investigative techniques v. Training provided for Garamba National Park Rangers
7.2 <i>In situ</i> training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop and carry out a leadership training course for park wardens ii. Develop and carry out further advanced training for VNP 'Rapid Reaction Force'

