



Lac Télé-Lac Tumba Landscape

A Young Program in an Ancient Landscape

The Lac Télé-Lac Tumba – or Lake Télé-Lake Tumba – Landscape is the largest mass of swamp and flooded forest in Africa. Cradled in the lowest altitude zone in the Congo Basin, the landscape contains many distinct habitats, ranging from swamp forests and grasslands to sweeping savannas and prairies along the Congo River and its tributaries.

Running down the center of the landscape, the Congo River serves as the dividing line separating many animal species, including species of great apes – western lowland gorillas in the Republic of Congo and bonobos in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

WWF first became involved in the landscape with the creation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership in 2002. Funded by USAID, WWF partners here with the capacity-building organization PACT, the Wildlife Conservation Society and others.

WWF has recently initiated conservation actions in the Lac Télé-Lac Tumba Landscape. Surveys of large mammals indicate that important populations of apes and elephants remain – in addition to a newly discovered population of the endemic bonobo. Surveys have also indicated that the landscape is of international importance for species of fish and waterfowl, in addition to bonobos, chimpanzees and forest elephants. Alarming, however, fish surveys in Lac Tumba indicate that populations have taken a dramatic downturn since 1984.

WWF was instrumental in creating the new 172,970-acre Lac Tumba-Lediima Nature Reserve, helping to fulfill the commitment of the Democratic Republic of Congo to increase the protected area system to 15 percent of the country.

Threats

The principal threat appears to be uncontrolled resource use in the form of hunting and fishing. WWF is currently conducting a full assessment of threats to the landscape.



Lac Télé-Lac Tumba at a Glance

Surface Area:

- Over 31 million acres (12.7 million hectares)

Countries:

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Republic of Congo

National Parks:

- 0 (2 community reserves)

Species:

- Western lowland gorilla
- Bonobo
- Forest elephant
- Hippopotamus
- Red-tailed monkey
- Red colobus monkey
- Slender-snouted crocodile

LAC TÉLÉ-LAC TUMBA LANDSCAPE

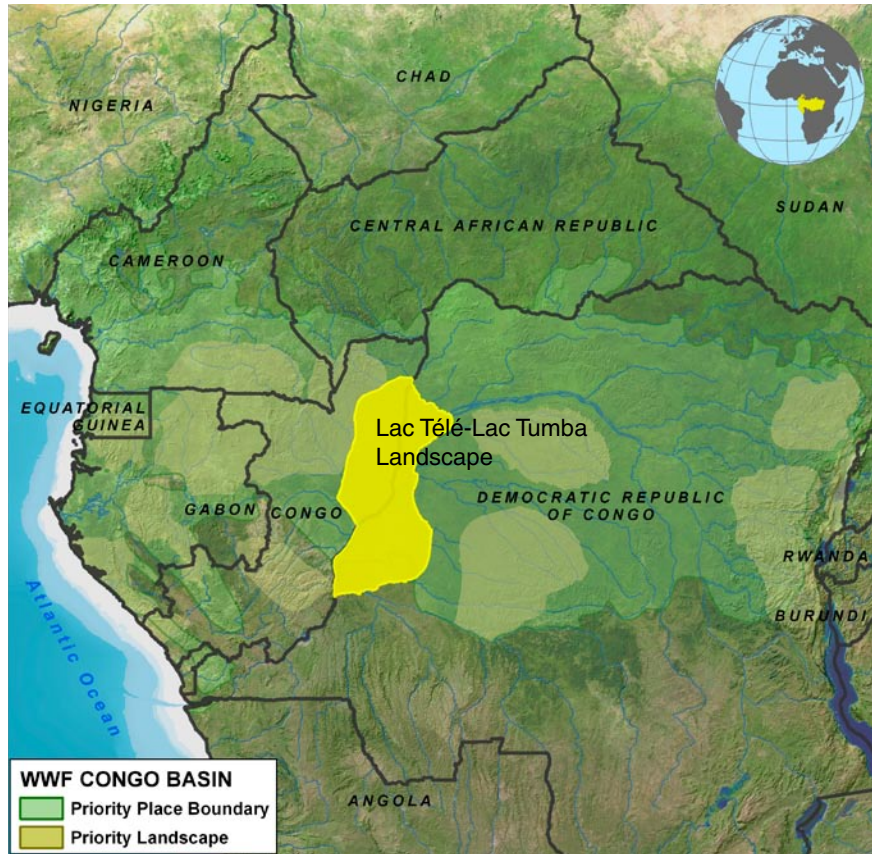


Bonobos

The threatened bonobo lives only south of the Congo River in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Also known as the pygmy chimpanzee, the bonobo is humankind's closest relative. Small but important differences separate bonobos from common chimpanzees: Bonobos are slightly smaller with longer legs, shorter arms, rounder skulls and flatter, black faces with red lips. Bonobos were first identified as a new species in 1929.

WWF survey teams found a previously undiscovered population of bonobos in the savanna-forest mosaic of this landscape. This population exhibits the highest population density and largest group size yet known for this species.

Bonobos are extensively hunted for their meat – both for personal consumption and for the commercial bushmeat trade. Their habitat is rapidly being lost to logging and agriculture.



Programs

We are working with local and international partners to improve sustainable development in the landscape as well as preserve biodiversity. For example, we work for the conservation of great apes by strengthening the ability of local communities to partner with governments and the private sector. Such partnerships create opportunities for the development of a tourism venture based on a group of habituated bonobos.

WWF, with partners such as the WorldFish Center, is also surveying fisheries and working to develop community-based fisheries. Local people depend on fishing, the source of as much as 90 percent of their protein. Community-based fisheries can alleviate poverty and improve the livelihoods of local people. Sustainable fisheries may also reduce the demand for other wildlife species, leading to a decrease in hunting for bushmeat.

WWF will also work with communities to ensure that their economies are based on sustainably managed natural resources.



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