

► The West African Protected Areas Newsletter



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The world heritage natural properties: thinking their future over in West and Central Africa?

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The convention for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage of 16 November 1972 classifies natural heritage in three groups of sites that have an outstanding universal value as far as science, conservation and natural beauty are concerned. The first two are on the one hand natural monuments, and on the other hand geological and physiographical formations. The third one comprises natural sites or strictly delimited natural areas. To the last group are associated most of the areas dedicated to the conservation of nature.

The natural properties of the Central and West African region represent vast natural ecosystems, rich in biodiversity and meeting, for most of them the criteria (ix): “to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, aquatic, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants” and (x): “to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for *in-situ* conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the science or conservation’s point of view”.

But for a few years in Africa, the world heritage protection strategies have been confronted with difficulties that may cause irreversible damages. From the 32 African natural properties, 12 are endangered from which 11 in West and Central Africa. The size of the natural ecosystems thus degraded equals about one third of France surface area.

The main causes of these pressures and threats are, in order of importance, poaching and habitats destruction (overgrazing, deforestation, mining, etc.).

A key factor is political instability in these African regions. All these pressures and threats are intensified by the inexistence of appropriate management systems for the protection of national protected areas’ network. When we make a comparison with the early post-colonial time, we can say that Africa is not yet aware of the importance of conserving and enhancing a safe and authentic nature. Of course, efforts are made; however, which future can we expect if nature conservation and/or enhancement strategies that are still implemented do not take into account the changes of the current society? This question calls for the dropping of the current practices and change the vision. To this end, it is important to recognize the true value of the actions of the organizations that provide training for young African executives in the area of nature conservation. Thanks to these training sessions, they better understand the stakes and learn how to preserve their heritage. If well monitored, they may be able to impulse a new vision to sustainably conserve the world heritage properties.

Therefore, it is urgent to take action...

35th Meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Paris: an African natural site inscribed in Kenya

The 35th meeting of the World Heritage Committee was organized in Paris, in June. One natural site has been inscribed in Kenya: the **Kenya Lakes System within the Great Rift Valley**. It comprises three lakes that are ecologically, geologically and

hydrologically inter-linked and located in Kenya (Rift Valley province). From North to South:

Name	Area of the property (ha)	Buffer zone (ha)
Lake Elementaita	2,534	3,581
Lake Nakuru	18,800	0
Lake Bogoria	10,700	0

The property inscribed combines thus a total core area of **32,034 hectares** which includes the area covered by the water bodies of the three lakes, the entire area covered by Lake Nakuru National Park and Lake Bogoria National Reserve together with the riparian area of Lake Elementaita. These lakes are shallow (except Bogoria that has a maximum water depth of 19 meters), alkaline and don't have any surface outlet. They are included among the sixty "Important Bird Areas of Kenya" by Birdlife International (hosting at least 13 globally threatened bird species and supporting globally important populations and congregations of water birds). They also host dozens of different mammal species, some of them being included in the IUCN Red List (Black Rhino, Rothschild's Giraffe, Greater kudu, Lion, Cheetah, Wild Dog...).

Lake Bogoria National Reserve lies about 10 km north of the equator in Baringo and Koibatek Districts, in the Rift Valley province. The Reserve Headquarter is situated at Lobo. It was designated as a national reserve in 1970 and includes the entire lake (about 3,800 ha) and its surroundings (for a total of 10,700 ha) while the catchment surface is approximately 93,000 ha. The reserve has an altitude between 970 m at the lake to 1650 meters on Siracho escarpment. It is now managed as an IUCN category II. It holds regionally and nationally endangered species and has unique physiographic features and geothermal manifestations (fumaroles, hot springs, geysers) due to its geological context. This area is rich in natural resources that include land forms, forests, wildlife, wetlands and pastures. Terrestrial vegetation is primarily thorny bush land dominated by *Acacia* sp., *Combretum* sp., *Ficus* sp. and alkaline-tolerant grasslands (210 species of flora). The lake is a key feeding ground for the itinerant Rift Valley population of Flamingos. Congregations of more than 1.5 million of Lesser Flamingos have been counted while more than 370 bird species also occur as well as a range of typical savannah woodland fauna, to which belongs a population of Greater Kudu (around 350 individuals).

Lake Nakuru National Park is located in the Nakuru district, 3 km south to the city of Nakuru and is included within the Nakuru municipality boundaries. This park is built upon a very shallow, alkaline lake (approximately 4,000 ha), surrounded by woodlands and grasslands for a total of 18,800 ha. Its catchment

covers an area estimated around 1,800 km². Nakuru was first gazetted as a bird sanctuary in 1961 and upgraded to National Park in 1968 (managed as an IUCN category II). A northern extension to the park was added in 1974, thanks to WWF support; the park was fenced in 1976 and became a State rhino sanctuary in 1984. A species of Tilapia (*Sarotherodon alcalicus grahami*) was introduced in 1962 that is now the main base for fishing birds' alimentation. The park can be divided into different complementary ecosystems: the open water zone is where one finds the main primary producer (an algae called *Spirulina platensis*). The lake shores are open alkaline mud, with areas of marsh around the river inflows and springs, giving way to grassland. The lake is surrounded by a belt of acacia woodlands and bushed woodlands. Rocky hillsides on the park's eastern perimeter area are covered with scrub. The *Euphorbia* forest which occurred on the eastern shore has recently been burnt (a rehabilitation process is ongoing). More than 550 species of flora occur in the property.



Nakuru is internationally famous for its populations of Lesser Flamingo: numbers can reach 1.5 million at times. Attempts by flamingos to breed here have not been successful. Nakuru is also a major feeding ground for Great White Pelicans, which nest on rocky islets in the Lake Elementaita and move to Nakuru daily to feed. Large numbers of Palearctic waders winter at Nakuru or use the site on passage. More than 480 bird species have been recorded. The park is fenced completely and has a wide range of typical African mammal species, particularly as black rhino population (125 individuals), and a Rothschild's giraffe population (almost 200 individuals), and large numbers of waterbucks, gazelles, elands and Cape buffalos. Nakuru was designated Ramsar site in 1990.

Lake Elementaita National Wildlife Sanctuary is a shallow alkaline lake some 20 km south-east of Nakuru town, in the Rift Valley province, at an altitude of 1775 m. It has been gazetted as a National

Wildlife Sanctuary in July 2010. The property covers the lake area and its close riparian lands (2,534 ha, managed as a IUCN category II) and a buffer zone is defined around the lake (3,581 ha, the larger part of it being under protection (conservancy) and managed as a IUCN category VI) but is not included into the property. The drainage basin (630 km²) can be divided into four minor watersheds, some of which manifesting geothermal activities. To the east, the lake is bordered by the Ndundori-Ngorika-Gitare hills (2500 m) and to the west by Eburru hills (2600 m) which are part of the Mau ranges. North and South are made of the flat rift valley floor. Prominent features include the “Sleeping Warrior” hill, caves, “badlands lava” near the property, and the pelican breeding rocky islands on the lake itself. To the east, the lake is flanked by small-scale agriculture and hotel accommodations, while some ranches surround the remainder. Vegetation around the property consists of upland forest, woodland (mostly acacia forest), bush land and grassland. Through time, much of the natural forest has either been modified into shrubs and bush land by cultivation, grazing and fires but it is still present in the buffer zone. The lake hosts important populations of Greater and Lesser Flamingo. Although it lacks fish, except in the peripheral hot springs, Elementaita also hosts a large population of Great White Pelicans (sometimes over 20,000 individuals) which breed on rocky islets. The pelicans move daily to Lakes Nakuru and Navaisha to feed. Greater Flamingos have also bred there ten years ago, but seem to have been displaced by pelicans. Approximately 450 species of birds have been counted within the property and its buffer zone while lots of typical African mammal species occur in the riparian and in the surrounding conservancies, including the Rothschild’s Giraffe (around 150).

More information on www.unesco.org

Decisions related to the African natural sites proposed to be inscribed on the World Heritage list at the 35th meeting of the committee

(Paris, 19 to 29 June 2011)

State	Site	Decision
Benin	Pendjari National Park (extension of the Niger “W National Park”)	Postponed
Kenya	Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley	Inscribed
Congo, Cameroun, CAR	Sangha Trinational	To be presented again
Senegal	Saloum Delta	To be presented again

Call for applications

The GIZ Abidjan (German Agency for International Cooperation) is searching a consultant or a service provider for the renewal and updating of the website of the Tai National Park (Ivory Coast).

Download TDRs on:
<http://www.parc-national-de-tai.ci>

Interested consultants or services are invited to submit: 1/their curriculum vitae that meet the minimum of criteria specified in the TDR. 2/ Degrees and certificates in pdf format. 3/ references and websites developed and updated by the provider in word format, by e-mail before July 13th, 2011 at 09 UT at the following address: gisela.djidji@giz.de

NGOs’ contribution to resolving social conflicts related to protected areas management: case of the Oti-Kéran National park in northern Togo

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INTRODUCTION

Managed without any socioeconomic and cultural consideration before 1990, Togo protected areas however enabled to conserve biological diversity, restore lands and develop tourist activities for which the State was the main beneficiary. This way of managing made of Togo a reference in West Africa as far as the protection of fauna and its habitat is concerned.

Unfortunately, during the 90’s socio-political unrest, the bordering populations rebelled against this classical protected areas management approach and questioned all the conservation symbols by invading the protected areas and all the State’s protected properties. These populations indulged, among others, in poaching, bushfires, transhumance, anarchical logging, excessive forest exploitation and extension of agriculture in protected areas. As a consequence, the country faced a critical situation and the sector of natural resources and environment planning was paralyzed.

In order to reverse the situation, the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources in charge of implementing the government’s policy on the conservation of forest resources, has committed itself in the rehabilitation of protected areas in the vein of the Convention on Biological Diversity. To this end, measures have been taken to reverse the trend but they failed in reducing human pressures and stopping the degradation of protected areas’ biological resources.

In this context of permanent conflicts between the State and local communities, particularly in the Togolese socio-political context, the involvement of other stakeholders such as civil society organizations may help getting all the parties engage in the protected areas' management process.

This article highlights the efforts made by the AGBO-ZEGUE NGO to establish confidence among the stakeholders involved in the Oti-Kéran National Park's management through concrete activities in the field.

1. PRESENTING THE OTI-KERAN NATIONAL PARK

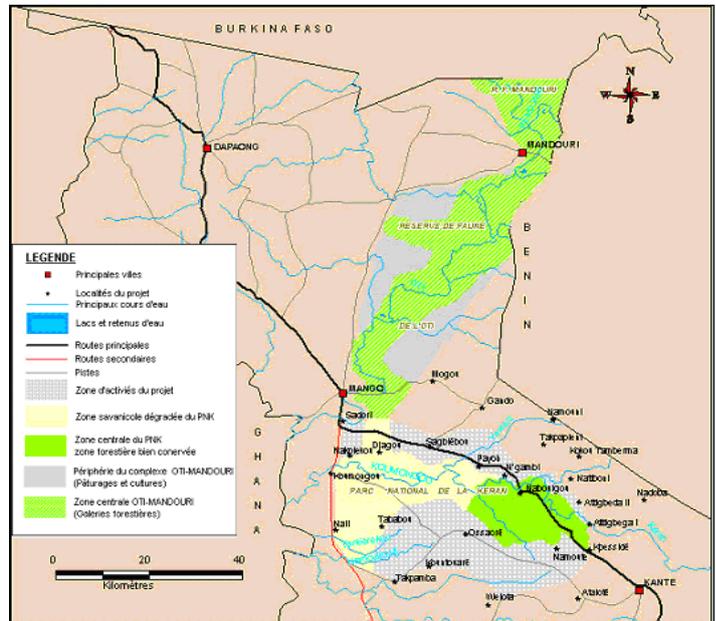
The Oti-Kéran Park is located in the northern region of Togo (figure 1). One third of the park is located in the Kara region (Prefecture of Kéran) and 2/3 in the Savannah region (Prefecture of Oti). The western and eastern ends of the park are located a few kilometres from Ghana and Benin borders.

Created on 28 September 1950, as Kéran classified forest, on the site of a former sacred forest, this protected area covers an area of 6,700 ha and was successively extended from 1971 to 1976 and erected as Kéran National Park and Oti Hunting Reserve in 1971. Its area was extended between 1981 and 1982 to reach 179,550 ha. According to a study conducted by the European Union in 2001, its area had already been reduced to 104,162 ha in 2001. Today, according to a Wildlife Division report in 2010, within the framework of the project for rationalizing and enhancing the national protected areas system, the area of the Oti-Kéran National Park is 59,478 ha.

The whole relief is a vast plain with a chain of mountains in the south-east that constitute natural limits. This area is drained by the Kéran River and the Oti River which join the Koumougou to create a vast area of flooding plains. The Oti-Kéran ecosystem is a transition area between the northern and southern ecosystems. The vegetal units are dominated by degraded savannahs on hardened plateaus, much grazed. The presence of *Mytragyna inermis* and *Adropogon gayanus* savannah show the influence of the Kéran waters during the rainy season. There are also wooded savannahs dominated by *Pterocarpus erinaceus*. The best conserved vegetations in the park are forest galleries on the Kéran banks, relatively dense and dominated by big trees such as *Celtis integrifolia*, *congensis*, *Pterocarpus santalinoides*, *Tamarindus indica*. The open forests of *Anogeissus leiocarpus* attached to the galleries were among the most beautiful of Togo.

The requalification of the park is ongoing because it had been partially invaded in the early 90's by the bordering populations (that had been sent off the field in the 70's). During a consensual review of its limits,

the protected area went from 179,550 ha to 69,000 ha, an area which remains theoretical because humans are still settled there, and this situation is strengthened by the development of cotton farming, carbonization, grazing and fishing. The less favourable areas for human settlement and activities, as well as the park's core near the rangers' camp are little better conserved and some animal species, generally very timid, can still be observed. Natural predators and emblematic species have disappeared.



Location of the Kéran NP

However, fauna used to be very diversified and comprised great mammals such as elephants, which used to make seasonal incursions in the park, buffalos, Buffon Cobs, Bushbucks, roan antelopes, monkeys (baboon, patas, vervets), warthogs and many carnivores (lion, hyenas, etc.).

The population of Kéran is estimated at about 60,000 inhabitants. The main ethnical groups are Lamba, Fulani, Tamberman, Ngamgam, Gmandé and Mossi. Today, one interest of the Oti-Kéran national park remains the opportunity to connect it to the WAP complex (W, Arly and Pendjari) in the neighbouring Burkina Faso and Benin.

2. REMINDER OF FACTS

From the early 90's up to 2005, it was difficult to organize an event on protected areas management in the bordering villages of the Oti-Kéran National Park. The bordering populations were so loath to the issue of the existence of this park that the Togo protected areas' rehabilitation and requalification programme, launched in 1997 and supported by the European Union, for which the Oti-Kéran national park had been selected as pilot area, has not really achieved the expected outputs. Today, the Oti-Kéran National Park does not have a requalification decree

while the other areas initially concerned by the programme have one.

3. INITIATING DIALOGUE WITH BORDERING COMMUNITIES

In February 2004, during a joint academic exercise with ENGREF (Ecole Nationale du Génie Rural, des Eaux et Forêts de Montpellier) and the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lomé, assessment foundations have been laid for the first time in the bordering villages of the park. The spirit of this exercise was to enable a group of students, through concrete work in the field, to be confronted with the various aspects of the issue of natural resources conservation. These collective studies also aimed at contributing to planning or rehabilitation approaches for the park. This study was continued in 2006 by the AGBO-ZEGUE NGO that assessed the baselines of a sustainable development of this area, thanks to the financial support of the IUCN Netherland Committee.



4. MEETING THE BORDERING POPULATIONS

During a first phase, from February to July 2006, six pilot localities were selected by the project's steering committee jointly with the local administration, near the Kéran Prefecture, to be the setting of sensitization. It was the districts of Ossacré, Kokou Tamberma and the villages of Kpélinga, Namouté, Késsidé, Koukounbé. This choice was made on the basis of their strategic position around the park and the level of involvement of the local populations

concerned by the rehabilitation process. Most of them are Chefs lieux of Districts comprising many villages.

The meetings were always chaired by the Regional Director of Environment and Forestry who is the local guarantor of the national policy on wildlife conservation. He was supported by the Kéran Prefectural Director of Environment and the park manager, who are members of the project's steering committee. This committee was assisted by a representative of the prefect and a representative of Kéran local official press.

The meetings allowed the participation of traditional authorities of other localities not targeted by the outreach campaign. The meetings were participatory, and the outreach team brought participants to identify the problems by themselves, as well as the causes and consequences and propose approaches for solutions. The animation was conducted in French and translated into local language, namely in Lamba, Kabyè and Tamberma.

Apart from local specificities, generally, the environmental problems that the visited localities have to face are related to the lack of drinkable water, the lack of water sources for livestock, impoverishment in water resources, soils degradation and impoverishment, pets' straying and uncontrolled transhumance, difficulties to be supplied with energetic resources, deforestation, poaching, stocking existing water courses for fishing, inexistence and insufficiency of sanitary and school infrastructure.

The populations responded positively to the opportunity they were given to contribute to their economic development. Projections of video films, posters and chat-discussions enabled the animating team and the bordering communities to jointly define approaches for solutions that should make them change their behaviour towards fauna conservation and environment restoration in the aim of improving their living conditions.

5. WHAT SHOULD BE RETAINED FROM THE MEETINGS

In spite of the difficulties met, we should congratulate the NGO for its initiative to organize such a wide-scope activity in the park's bordering localities which had been so far loath to any message related to the park's rehabilitation because of their painful past and the unmet promises of the forest administration. This initiative enabled the NGOs to penetrate the area and undertake activities to the benefit of populations and the conservation of natural resources; as well, it enabled to encourage the forest administration and the bordering populations to discuss quietly.

The very encouraging behaviour of the populations of the villages of Kokou Tamberma, Kpélinga, Namouté, Késsidé, Koukoubé has to be noted; in fact, they have accepted the messages and committed to fully participate in the ongoing process because, as a participant said "when you are ill and the drug you are given does not cure your illness, do not refuse another proposed drug under the pretence that drugs are ineffective".

Given the importance of this project for restarting the rehabilitation of Togo protected areas and restoring dialogue and confidence between the bordering populations and the forest administration, the project's team has been provided with all the administrative support at the central and local levels.

6. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN THE BORDERING VILLAGES

Following the first phase of IUCN NL financial support, a programme of priority actions has been developed based on expression of interest by local populations. This programme was implemented between September 2007 and September 2010 (second phase of the support). During this phase, concrete activities have been carried out in the bordering villages. Examples of activities included:

- Reforestation: twenty hectares of land have been reforested to meet the community's needs and five hectares of school plantations were set up. In addition, line plantations have been set up in many schools. 120,000 seedlings of all local species and 30,000 stumps of teaks coming from dry tree nurseries have been distributed and planted.
- From now on, eight out of the thirteen villages have a drinkable water supplying source thanks to the Bioker project. Efforts are continuing to help the other villages benefit from drinkable water facilities. This indicator has been widely met and water is now available in the beneficiary villages, resulting in the reduction of water-related conflicts.
- Thirty primary school teachers and thirteen secondary school teachers have benefited from capacity building sessions on environmental education, 55 school visits have been organized for primary and secondary schools in the Kéran Park.
- Two initiatives (support to stockbreeding and gardening) have been taken. Training to the use of compost and enhancement of animal manure was conducted. It was followed by the collection and use of animal droppings by market gardeners. About a hundred women were concerned by market gardening activities and stockbreeding, as well as wood charcoal trading. Sixty breeding herds have been distributed to 30 households, that is, 10 households per district.

- Fifty school desks have been offered to the public primary school of the village of N'Gambi.

The project implementation enabled, among others, to strengthen collaboration between the NGO and the bordering populations, to solve social conflicts and provide facilitation during conflicts with the forest administration, to reduce pressure on forest resources; protected areas were not political stakes during the 2010 electoral campaigns.



7. SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE AGBO-ZEGUE NGO'S ACTIONS

According to the conclusions of a socioeconomic study conducted in the bordering villages of the Oti-Kéran National Park (Somana, 2010) within the framework of this project, the bordering populations, even though expropriated of their lands for the purpose of public use, are still concerned with the rehabilitation of these protected areas and still consider them as both local and national heritage that can generate wealth for all if rationally managed. In view of such a situation, it is worth noticing the bordering populations' clear desire to actively participate in the government's policy on the conservation of protected areas. However, these populations subordinate their participation in conservation actions to the taking into account by the State of their daily problems of poverty and survival.

It should be noted that today, these populations tend to positively consider protected areas as a source of revenues for all, if rationally managed, and they are no longer reticent and suspicious as they used to be. They recognize that protected areas have important socioeconomic advantages if properly managed.

CONCLUSION

The work done by the AGBO-ZEGUE NGO in the bordering villages of the Oti-Kéran enabled to realize how important it is to involve populations in any

initiative of resource management strategy development in a densely inhabited land. The second phase enabled to strengthen collaboration with the bordering populations, to resolve social conflicts and improve bordering populations' perception on the existence and even the sustainable development of the park.

This work allowed the creation of many civil society organizations in the region and allowed the various stakeholders to conduct field missions mostly as part of the "project for rationalizing and enhancing national protected areas system" financed by the French GEF and for which the Oti-Kéran complex has been chosen as pilot site.

This work can be an example and be extended to other projects dealing with environment and natural resources management. The AGBO-ZEGUE NGO expects to continue benefiting from the confidence of its main partners to continue its mission.

Job offer at the GRET

Within its "Environment, Value chains and family farming" cluster (EFA), GRET is seeking a project officer for its thematic programme on natural resources management (GRN).

The officer will work closely with the whole team and contribute to the development and monitoring of activities, notably the sustainable management of forests and protected areas in Central Africa (Congo Basin).

Education: University degree in environment, forestry or tropical agronomy.

Required experience: At least 8 years of work experience in the area of environment/ rural development. A field work experience in multiannual projects coordination in a developing country will be appreciated. A sound experience in the area of tropical forestry and in contributing to the development of public policies is required. A work experience in the Congo Basin will be appreciated. It is a permanent contract with a 4-month trial period. The officer will be based at GRET headquarters with regular missions on the GRN programme intervention fields.

The officer will take his/her position in mid-August 2011.

To submit your application, please send your CV and a cover letter at Caroline Baud baud@gret.org

For more information on GRET: www.gret.org

IUCN job offer

IUCN-PACO is recruiting a sub-regional programme officer for Central Africa forest protected areas. His/her activities are part of the IUCN quadrennial programming, particularly the Central Africa strategy, and aim at strengthening IUCN participation in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The forest protected areas programme officer in Central Africa will contribute to IUCN activities on conservation and enhancement of biological diversity, through the strengthening of the protected areas network in Central Africa, and particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo and will be part of IUCN commitment to protected areas at the Pan-African level. The full job offer is available in the IUCN Human Resources Management System through the following link: <http://www.iucn.org/involved/jobs/>.

The position is based at Yaoundé.

Applications should be sent **no later than 22 July 2011 at 00:00 GMT.**



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