



# NAPA

## News from African Protected Areas

Nouvelles des Aires Protégées  
en Afrique

N°121  
July 2018

### Edito

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PAPACO coordinator

#### “The silent extinction”

The Giraffe is an endearing animal. It is elegant, placid, walking at a seemingly slow pace, as if not to disturb the nature around. It is funny when it ruminates dreamily, comical when it spreads apart to drink, awesome when it overlooks the canopy. It does not make a fuss, does not pick fights and survives noiselessly among the rest of the crowd: predators, cattle, villages, roads...

Despite its size and colorful dress, we rarely see or hear it. It lives discreetly and dies just as discreetly. Articles have flourished in recent years about its decline in Africa, its only continent. This is quite emblematic of what happens far from our sight, focused on the most emblematic species: elephants, lions, rhinos or even the so elusive pangolins.

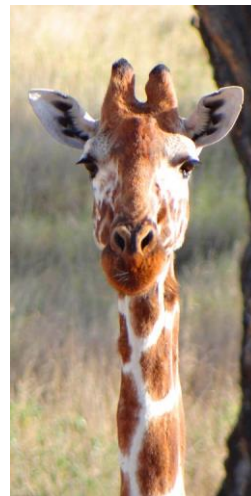
**Africa Geographic\*** recently published an article (*prepared by the Giraffe Conservation Foundation - <https://giraffeconservation.org/>*) about this beautiful animal. It has a lot to say about the causes leading the Giraffe to fade progressively from our landscapes.

The Giraffe is ranked as "vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List. They are therefore an endangered species and their numbers have decreased by 40% over the last 30 years, with a total of about 100,000 individuals in all of Africa today. What differentiates it from more “famous” species is that its



disappearance is not linked to a global traffic (mainly towards Asia). No, like most of Africa's biodiversity, the giraffe is just dying because of the fragmentation or disappearance of its natural environment, an inevitable consequence of population growth and unsustainable development.

Of course, the situation varies from one region to another and therefore depending on the species of giraffe.

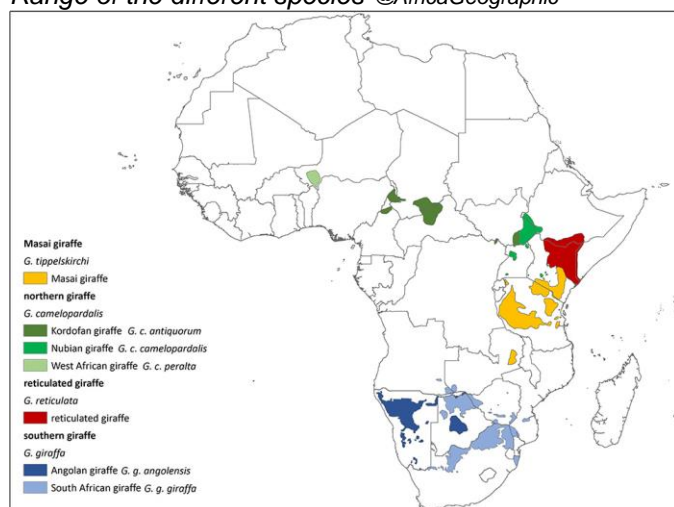


The most abundant one is the southern African species (*Giraffa giraffa*) which accounts for just over half of the total giraffe population in Africa. It is rather light-coloured, with large, vaguely outlined marks - the typical “cartoon” giraffe. The Maasai Giraffe (*Giraffa tippelskirchi*) is found in the Center-South and East of Africa. It is darker, with jagged marks. There are still a few more than 30,000 individuals left. The reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa reticulata* – picture above) lives in East Africa, amounting to about 9,000 individuals, and looks very different with its large dark spots separated by a clean and clear line. Finally, the last species, the Giraffe of the North (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), more ocher in color, has settled over a fragmented space in the North of the continent, ranging from Kenya to Niger in very small population pockets. The smallest one is the West African species, of which there are less than 600 individuals in the Kouré area (Niger).

As the title of the **Africa Geographic** article suggests (*and I just picked it up for this editorial*), the “silent disappearance” affecting the Giraffe (and indeed almost all other African species) takes place nearly unnoticed. The numbers decline, the range is reduced, and little by little the animal disappears from nature, memories and stories. Many initiatives are nevertheless carried out to protect it (*especially by the GCF*), sometimes even going so far as to reintroduce groups into their former habitat. But in truth, who can believe that without a radical change in the paradigm of "development", this harmless animal will keep its place in our world except behind a few fences?

\*[http://magazine.africageographic.com/weekly/issue-208/giraffes-silent-extinction/?mc\\_cid=96795e3a6d&mc\\_eid=b264f6199a](http://magazine.africageographic.com/weekly/issue-208/giraffes-silent-extinction/?mc_cid=96795e3a6d&mc_eid=b264f6199a)

Range of the different species @AfricaGeographic



The Masai Giraffe

Papaco is also on:



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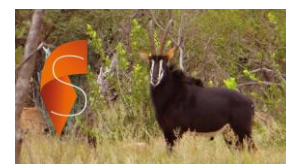
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Please also visit the IUCN-GPAP (IUCN global PA program) webpage and read the newsletter:  
<https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/newsletter>

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## The human cost of conservation in Republic of Congo

Extracts of the report prepared by the **Rainforest Foundation UK** (Inès Ayari and Simon Counsell)

The consequences of a new or already existing protected area on the populations living inside or near it can be extremely variable depending on the context, the territory's management category (whether or not it includes a certain degree of exploitation of natural resources) and the type of governance that is being implemented (whether or not it considers expectations of said populations or even includes them to final decisions). It would therefore be unfounded and illegitimate to draw general conclusions from just few cases. But while there are neighbouring communities praising the existence of protected areas and appreciating the benefits, other populations suffer, and this suffering may be increased by many unsuitable practices. The Rainforest Foundation (UK - [www.rainforestfoundationuk.org](http://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org)) produced in 2017 a report called "The Human Cost of Conservation in Republic of Congo" which is based on the analysis of two of this country's protected areas.

The executive summary of this report is published in this NAPA, and we strongly recommend reading the entire report which you can download through the following link:

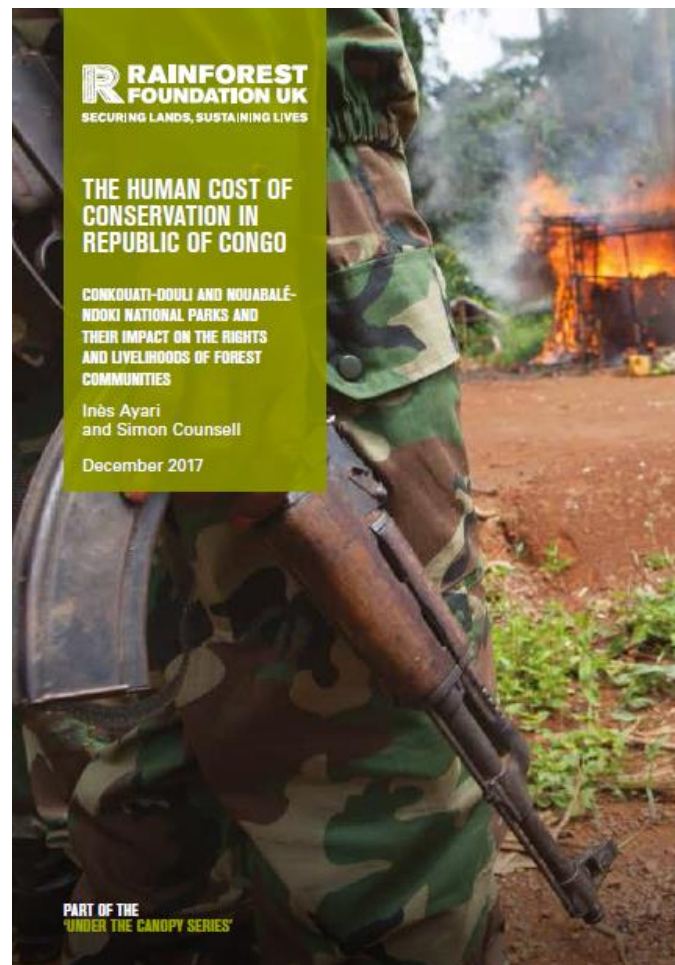
<https://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/media.ashx/the-human-impact-of-conservation-republic-of-congo-2017-english.pdf>

The goal here is not to judge these parks, the country or the incriminated actors, as all of this of course also occurs in many other places and other countries, but rather to make us think about the situations described, and when possible, find suitable solutions. And the best way to find a solution is to start asking questions...

This report is based on investigations in Republic of Congo by our local civil society partners, mainly within six forest communities living in or on the periphery of Conkouati-Douli National Park (CDNP) and Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (NNNP). Both of these protected areas have largely been shaped by the intervention of the US-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The aim of our investigations was to understand the impact of the protected areas on those communities and the evolution of the relationships between them.

If not conceived in a participatory manner, protected areas can dramatically affect communities' livelihoods and infringe upon their

most basic rights; and may not even enhance biodiversity protection.



Although the Congolese legal framework offers some consideration of forest communities' land and resources rights, this report highlights outstanding issues which need be addressed in order to avoid further infringements of forest peoples' rights and foster an inclusive approach to conservation in the country.

*"The lifestyle of an average conservationist living in an Industrial country places a far heavier burden on the natural Environment than most actions of indigenous peoples and Local communities. Nevertheless, when the latter act in a Non-sustainable way, conservationists cry blue murder".*

*Ellen Desmet, indigenous rights entwined with nature conservation*

The main findings of the report are as follows:

- Both protected areas have outdated management plans and inappropriate zoning, failing to include communities or to understand their land use dynamics. Local inhabitants generally aren't aware of the laws related to protected areas. When they are aware, there is confusion about which laws

apply to them (such as in relation to the prohibition of species to be hunted) and about the geographical areas within which any laws may apply. Physical demarcation of park boundaries is neglected, which adds to the confusion.

- Conservation-related restrictions prevent communities from accessing their traditional lands and resources, hampering villagers' subsistence activities – such as hunting and gathering – and affecting their social identities. Difficulties encountered by communities to readjust their livelihoods to the imposed restrictions are often overlooked or ignored by conservation programmes. Livelihoods are further compromised by wildlife-human conflict, which is amplified by conservation programmes and often disregarded by the authorities. No defensive measures can be taken by farmers – often women – who suffer material damage and sometimes face physical danger due to the presence of elephants in proximity to their fields. They have to carry the costs of protecting their cultivated lands and crops; and they often have no other choice than relocating or giving up on gathering and farming activities.



Localisation of the study area

- Economic displacement is a significant and detrimental issue, especially as it is almost never accompanied by adequate reparation of the damage and losses endured by local people. Despite some local employment related to anti-poaching monitoring and/or ecotourism and some housing improvements for certain villages (mostly in NNNP), the lack of economic benefits accruing to communities from conservation areas is stark. Existing benefit-sharing plans are often inefficient,

leaky and non-transparent. Overall, flows of funding into the two national parks fail to compensate communities for the loss of livelihoods and rights. Such compensation could be done, for example, through the enhancement of basic infrastructure (schools, hospitals and decent transportation networks). The few attempts at 'economic alternative' measures have failed, particularly bushmeat substitution programmes, which neglect the cultural importance of wild game to forest communities and have not proven to decently and adequately provide dwellers with culturally-appropriate and affordable meat substitutes.

*“The recognition of rights is often mitigated or undone by other Legal provisions. Such half-hearted or empty recognitions Raise false expectations among the supposed rights-holders. Moreover, they may be used as window-dressing by the State, invoked incorrectly to demonstrate compliance with International human rights law, for instance”*

*Ellen Desmet, indigenous rights entwined with nature conservation*



- 'Consultation' processes – however poor – did take place in the initial phases of the two national parks' establishment, but were undertaken with only a limited number of concerned communities and often involved only a certain segment of each of them. Although inaugural steps in CDNP's creation seemed promisingly inclusive, the measures did not last. The intervention of WCS in the process undermined rather than enhanced a challenging but ongoing participatory process.

- Indigenous hunter-gatherers appear to have suffered the biggest impacts related to conservation programmes taking place on their customary lands. They find themselves not only discriminated against by their Bantu neighbours and authorities, but they also carry the biggest burden of conservation-related restrictions and limitations.



- Conservation actors tend to favour agreements with the private sector – including logging and mining interests – over constructive and strong partnerships with communities. This strategic approach to generate technical and financial support for protected areas' management and anti-poaching monitoring activities tends to increase communities' land tenure insecurity, as well as their sense of grievance towards park managers.

- One of the most significant and detrimental consequences of imposed conservation models in the areas investigated are the tensions between communities and park management authorities – ultimately embodied by eco-guards – leading sometimes to serious conflicts. In some reported cases, these tensions have resulted in fatalities among villagers. Such conflicts are often the direct consequence of recurring abuses of power, intimidating and harassing behaviour (including physical violence), application of arbitrary sanctions, and unfair treatment of forest dwellers by eco-guards. This seriously problematic situation is exacerbated by a lack of access to justice for communities, as well as the impunity from which eco-guards often seem to benefit.

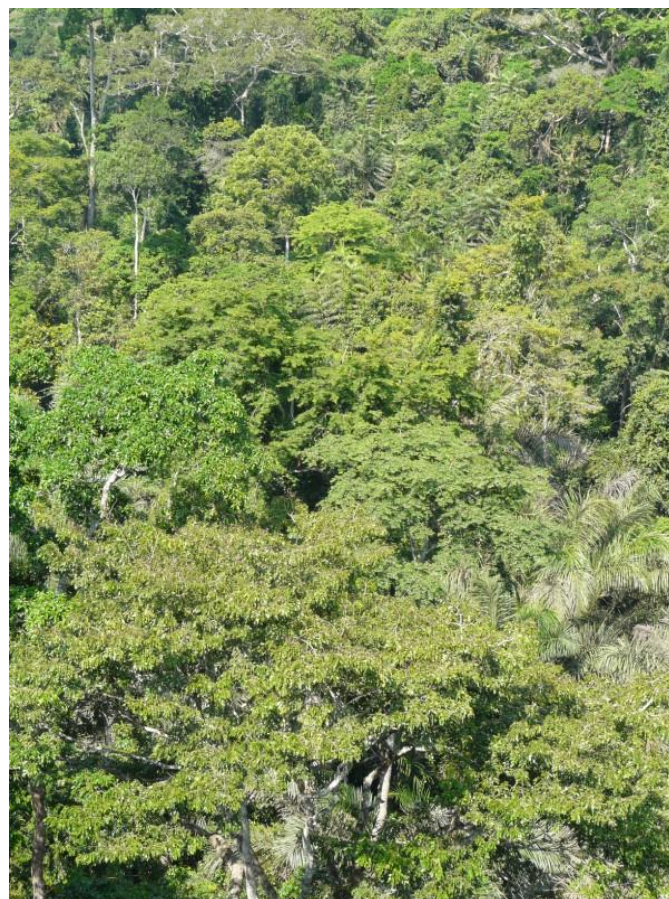
The present report also stresses the current state of the Congolese legal framework, which is often incomplete and/or unenforced. Urgent measures need to be taken to ensure participatory management is developed and that it includes communities in projects affecting them. Legal loopholes need to be addressed, and the laws and rights of communities must be made clear and available to them.

Based on the numerous observations and findings of this report, we propose a number of recommendations. These include the integration of indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights to lands, livelihoods, participation and free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) into protected areas planning and management. In order for this to become a reality, a number of practical steps need to be taken:

- The principles of participation and the obligation to satisfy local populations' needs within the frame of protected areas management does exist in Congolese law (Law No. 37-2008 on Wildlife and Protected Areas). It is crucial to build the conditions and define terms under which local communities and indigenous peoples are to be fully involved in the elaboration and implementation of protected area's management plans. It is of utmost

importance that this is done through a participatory approach and by including obligations in terms of stakeholders' involvement in mapping and planning. In that sense, conservation organisations also need to make proactive efforts to ensure effective representation of local people in decision-making processes and strengthen partnerships with them. This entails that communities have access to adequate information about all current or future conservation measures, as well as information about park zoning and eco-guards' scope of intervention.

- Ensuring the effectiveness and accessibility of mechanisms aimed at making individual and collective customary land recognition easier, as foreseen by law (Decrees No. 2006-255 and No. 2006-256 and Law No. 10 2004).



- Ensuring the recognition of land rights prior to the creation of protected areas and the enactment of legislation to guarantee redress and compensation in cases of restricted rights to customary land and usage rights, such as for damage caused by wildlife to community assets, including in buffer zones.

*“both commercial logging and strict biodiversity conservation may serve to exacerbate [discrimination and exploitation] because they either cause a Depletion*



*of, or reduce access to, forest resources (especially bushmeat) That are the basis of the [indigenous] economy.”*

*Simon Counsell, greenbacks in the garden of eden: conservation funding and its impact on Indigenous people.*

- The national land use plan – the elaboration of which is currently ongoing – needs to help prevent land allocations for different uses from overlapping; something that is all the more important with regards to customary lands.

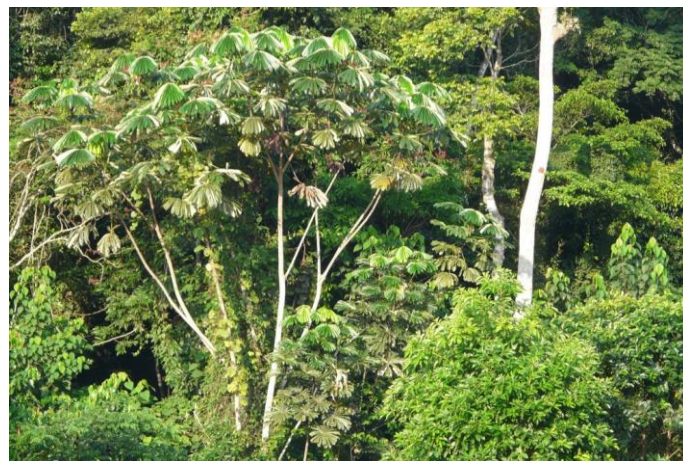
- Negotiations and agreements between conservation organisations and industrial interests need to include local communities from the outset; land use planning processes should be undertaken only with their full consent and in total transparency.

- Communities' livelihoods are at stake and often threatened when protected areas are established without consideration for local populations' rights, traditions and socio-economic dynamics. While this issue is common to most protected areas across the country (including the two under investigation in this report), it could be addressed by taking several steps, such as: making benefit sharing schemes mandatory and effective, as per law; extending such schemes to peripheral zones and conservation areas under public-private partnerships; and designing culturally-appropriate development alternatives that promote and respect traditional knowledge and dynamics.



- The Congolese legal framework lacks a clear and adequate definition of usage rights in protected areas and their buffer zones, and this needs to be addressed with full participation and consent of local and indigenous communities. These usage rights then need to be respected by external stakeholders.

- The specific needs of indigenous communities have to be taken into consideration in conservation initiatives and measures. Indigenous communities' rights lag far behind despite the existence of Law No. 5-2011 on the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Indigenous Populations, which is considered as pioneering in the region but is not yet enforced. Measures need to be taken to ensure that indigenous peoples are consulted (via application of FPIC) prior to any project on their lands, including for conservation purposes, and that they are involved in land and resource management, according to the law. Conservation organisations and donors need to ensure indigenous people benefit equally from employment opportunities or alternative subsistence schemes and to consider them as equal stakeholders in discussions.



- There is an urgent need for the country to respect its obligations with regards to international human rights standards, including in the context of nature conservation policies and programmes. This goes along with improving access to justice for communities and providing remedy for previous violations. Eco-guards should be held accountable for their repressive behaviour, and should be subject to effective sanctions. The government of Republic of Congo would gain from collaborating with national and local human rights organisations – including indigenous peoples' organisations – in the interest of both forest communities and conservation objectives. Conservation NGOs should proactively ensure that their projects do not undermine local rights, by integrating human rights in their plans, fostering participatory approaches, and giving more credit to (and promoting) local peoples' traditional knowledge and governance schemes. Special attention must be placed on indigenous peoples' special needs and situations, to avoid further discrimination and violations affecting them in particular.

Institutional and private donors also have a role to play in a more proactive approach to this situation, such as through monitoring conservation projects' compliance with relevant laws and human rights standards. Donors can provide more specific support to both governments and conservation bodies for better application of human rights standards in conservation. They could also provide more support for community-based conservation programmes and make sure local communities benefit adequately from conservation initiatives. Above all, this requires a better understanding of customary land tenure, livelihoods and social dynamics.

*"In order to capitalize on this potential of cooperation, it is a prerequisite that the human rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected not only in nature conservation discourse, but also in conservation legislation, Policies and practices."*  
Ellen Desmet, indigenous rights entwined with nature conservation

### More on

<https://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/media.ashx/the-human-impact-of-conservation-republic-of-congo-2017-english.pdf>



### Improving relationships between local communities and Saadani NP management (Tanzania)

<https://panorama.solutions/en/solutions/improving-relationships-between-local-communities-and-saadani-np-management>

Since the establishment of Saadani National Park, Tanzania, there has been conflict between the park agency and adjacent communities as a consequence of the restrictions imposed and the lack of perceived benefits by the communities.

The primary issues perceived by villagers include: ongoing dispute over park boundaries; expectations on economic benefits of the park not been fulfilled, particularly on employment; and, restrictions imposed on communities by the park, such as moving around the park after dark. The loss of village land occurred when

the park was created but without appropriate compensation from the perspective of the communities. Similarly there was a loss of access to natural resources, e.g. firewood and building materials.

Working through PECC committees in six of the main villages (out of 17) bordering the park, Kesho Trust, a Tanzanian-Canadian NGO, facilitated a mutual learning process. The committees planned and implemented various activities on conservation awareness raising, relationship building and sharing experiences.



Joint meeting between community members, Kesho Trust staff and park staff © Bruce Downie

Most project communities acknowledge that relationships with the park are much better now than at the beginning of the project. For example, PECC committee members in Buyuni said that the project activities provided them with guidance about conservation, whereas in the past, they didn't feel involved. Committee members in Matapwili highlighted the impact of the awareness raising events in particular: people show great interest in the events and they continue to talk about them afterwards. They also mentioned that community members now adhere better to regulations of the park, because they are more aware of these rules, and the need for them. Committee members appreciated TANAPA participation in meetings. There were other examples of positive changes implemented by the park. In the past, there had been restrictions for people from Mkange for bringing charcoal to Saadani village. Thanks to improved relationships with the park administration, these restrictions were loosened. The park supported the construction of a dispensary in Mkange...

### More info on PANORAMA

<http://panorama.solutions/en/portal/protected-areas>

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