



BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH APRIL 2025

Dear Friends of the Lac Télé Community Reserve,

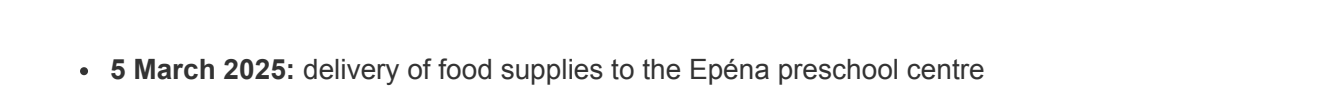
Despite financial difficulties (see previous bulletin), a significant amount of work was carried out in March and April. This included an awareness campaign among local communities on compliance with the provisions of the **mini fishing charter**, a document whose provisions promote the **sustainable harvesting of fishery resources**. In the area of **sustainable natural resource management**, it is also worth mentioning the launch of a study on monitoring populations of forest antelope and small monkeys, which are hunted by local communities for subsistence.

We were also pleased to welcome the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in April. After the working meetings, the Ambassador travelled to Lake Télé with logistical support from the Reserve. It was an eight-day expedition through the forest, covering 84 km on foot! To date, Mr Wolfgang Klapper is the only ambassador to the Congo to have visited Lake Télé, which demonstrates his strong interest in nature conservation in the Congo.

Dr. David Brugière & Fabien Nzolani Silaho

WCS-MEF Coordination

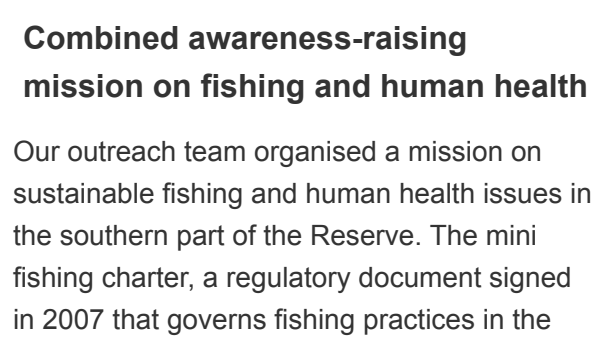
Lac Télé Community Reserve (RCLT)



KEY DATES & HIGHLIGHTS

- **5 March 2025:** delivery of food supplies to the Epéna preschool centre
- **12-28 March 2025:** combined 'fishing and health' awareness campaign in 14 villages in the southern part of the Reserve
- **13 March 2025:** Start of the study on the abundance of forest ungulates and small primates in the Reserve
- **7 April 2025:** arrival of the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany for a visit to the Reserve and Lake Télé
- **30 April 2025:** meeting of the Steering Committee for the Community Reserve Management Support Project implemented by WCS

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION



Combined awareness-raising mission on fishing and human health

Our outreach team organised a mission on sustainable fishing and human health issues in the southern part of the Reserve. The mini fishing charter, a regulatory document signed in 2007 that governs fishing practices in the Reserve, was updated, particularly with regard to Articles 9 (prohibited practices) and 10 (catch limits). Awareness-raising on the zoonotic disease monkeypox (Mpox) was carried out by the WCS One Health programme, which focused on symptoms and modes of transmission.

This combined awareness-raising campaign involved 787 people, including 537 men and 250 women.



Distribution of agricultural equipment to cocoa producers

At the beginning of the year, the Epéna Preschool requested food donations for the young children enrolled in the school. The Reserve's management unit mobilised and drew on its food stocks to help the centre. In March, food items (rice, pasta, milk, sugar and salt) were handed over to the school's managers. The donation, which was warmly appreciated and will benefit 30 children, took place during a public meeting attended by the pupils' parents.

GOVERNANCE



Visit by the German Ambassador:

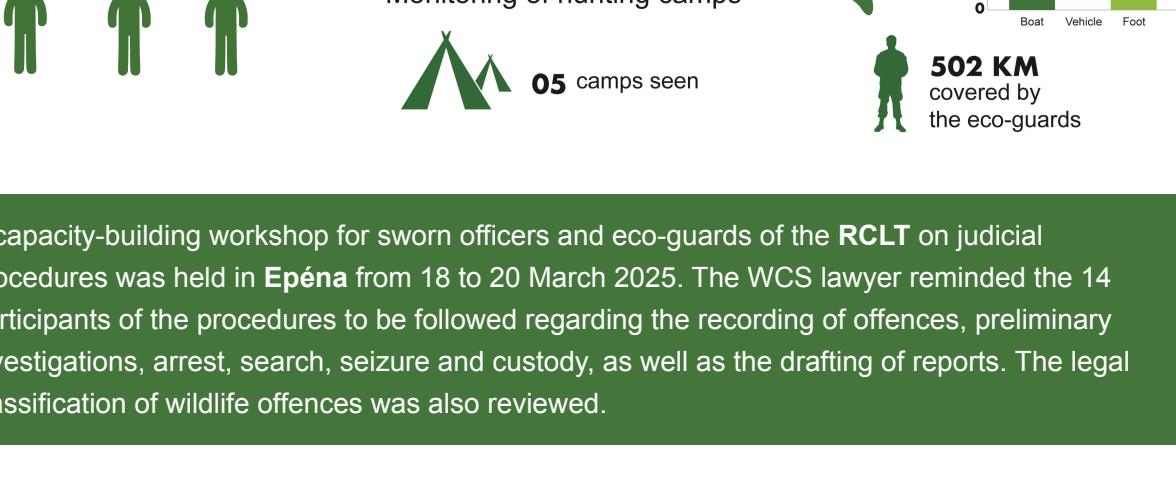
The Reserve welcomed the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Congo on 7 April 2025 as part of an inspection tour of a regional peatland forest protection project supported by Germany under the International Climate Initiative (IKI) since 2020. After the working meetings, the Ambassador, accompanied by Reserve staff, went on an eight-day trek through the forest to visit Lake Télé. This was a significant visit for this isolated site (a 42 km walk through the forest), as it was the first time in the history of the Reserve that an ambassador had visited Lake Télé.

Steering Committee:

On 30 April 2025, the fourth regular meeting of the Steering Committee for the Community Reserve Management Support Project implemented by WCS since 2008 was held in Impfondo.

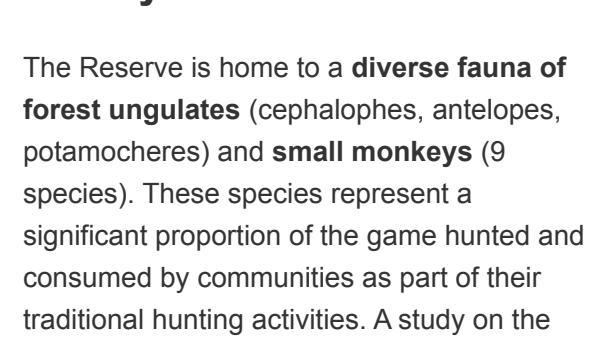
The official delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Forest Economy, the Congolese Agency for Wildlife and Protected Areas of the Ministry of Tourism, and a representative of the prefect of the Likouala department and the two districts covered by the Reserve. The Reserve Coordination presented to the members of the Steering Committee the activities carried out and the expenses incurred for the years 2022 to 2024. The Budgeted Work Plan for 2025 was also presented. While acknowledging the work accomplished in recent years, the Steering Committee issued recommendations that will require special attention from the Coordination.

ANTI-POACHING



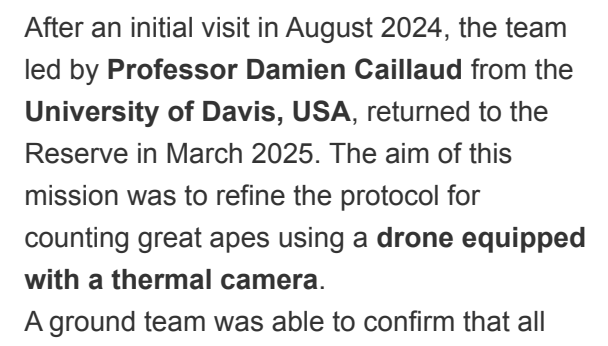
A capacity-building workshop for sworn officers and eco-guards of the RCLT on judicial procedures was held in Epéna from 18 to 20 March 2025. The WCS lawyer reminded the 14 participants of the procedures to be followed regarding the recording of offences, preliminary investigations, arrest, search, seizure and custody, as well as the drafting of reports. The legal classification of wildlife offences was also reviewed.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING



Study on the abundance of forest ungulates and small monkeys

The Reserve is home to a **diverse fauna of forest ungulates** (cephalophes, antelopes, potamochores) and **small monkeys** (9 species). These species represent a significant proportion of the game hunted and consumed by communities as part of their traditional hunting activities. A study on the abundance of ungulate and small monkey populations through transect counts and photo capture (camera traps) began in March 2025. It will last six months and will establish a baseline. The study will then be repeated every two years using the same protocol. Monitoring the dynamics of ungulate and small primate populations will enable a decision to be made on the sustainability of hunting and any management measures to be taken.

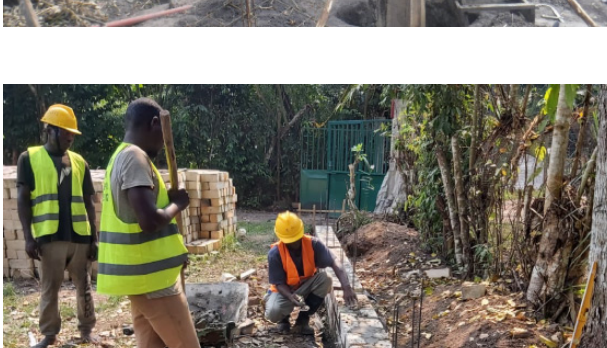


Second thermal drone study mission on great apes

After an initial visit in August 2024, the team led by **Professor Damien Caillaud** from the **University of Davis, USA**, returned to the Reserve in March 2025. The aim of this mission was to refine the protocol for counting great apes using a **drone equipped with a thermal camera**.

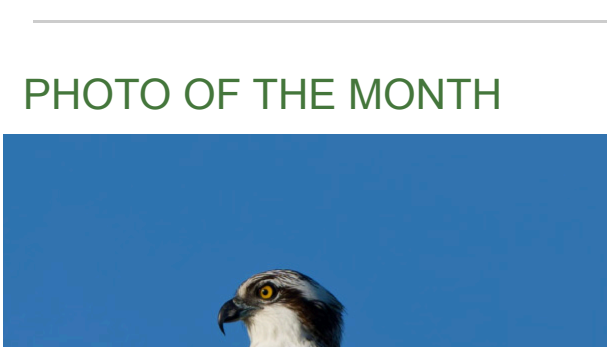
A ground team was able to confirm that all the thermal signatures recorded on the drone's night-time images corresponded to night-time groups of great apes (mainly gorillas). These results represent a significant advance in great ape counting techniques, particularly for areas where the traditional method of counting nests on transects is not appropriate.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION



Installation of a new fuel tank and fire extinguishers:

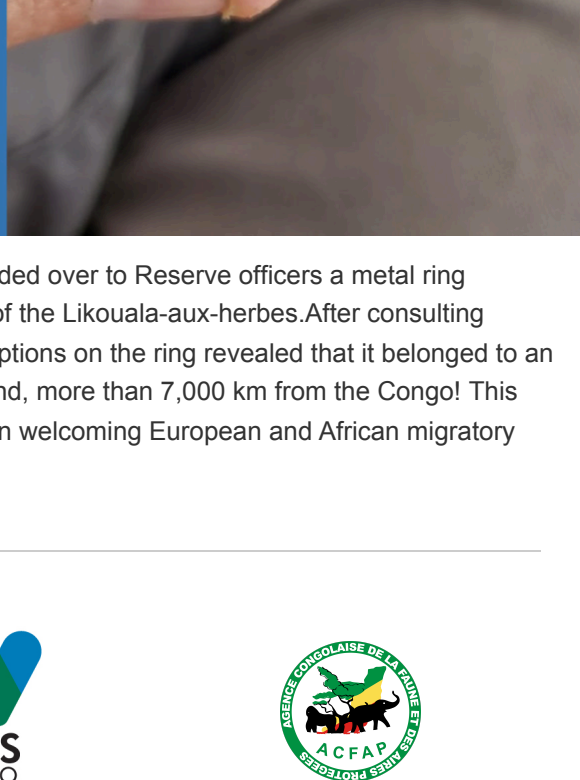
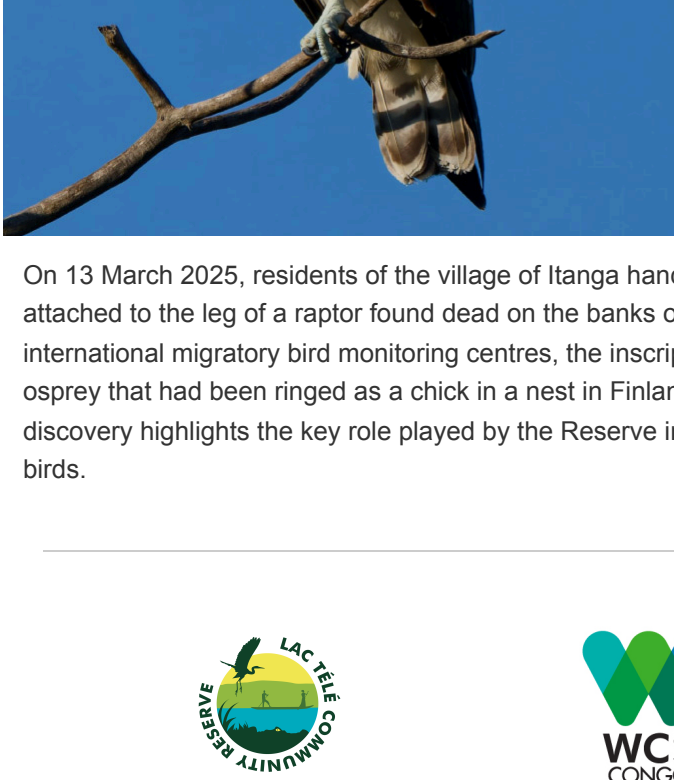
Thanks to funding from the **Elephant Crisis Fund**, a fuel tank was purchased and installed at the Reserve's base camp in Epéna. This tank will both increase the Reserve's fuel independence and ensure safer fuel storage.



Renovation of the quarantine hut:

Animals seized by eco-guards are taken back to the Reserve's base in Epéna and placed in quarantine in a special building. This hut, built entirely from local materials, has gradually deteriorated due to the weather. Renovation work began in April 2025 and includes laying concrete flooring, reinforcing the walls and renovating the roof.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



On 13 March 2025, residents of the village of Itanga handed over to Reserve officers a metal ring attached to the leg of a raptor found dead on the banks of the Likouala-aux-herbes. After consulting international migratory bird monitoring centres, the inscriptions on the ring revealed that it belonged to an osprey that had been ringed as a chick in a nest in Finland, more than 7,000 km from the Congo! This discovery highlights the key role played by the Reserve in welcoming European and African migratory birds.



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