

# Ecosystem Management Project for the Periphery of the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (PROGEPP)

Annual report 2024





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 List of acronyms
- 05 Presentation
- 06 Key figures
- 07 Key dates
- 08 Anti-poaching campaign
- 12 Ecological monitoring
- 14 Community conservation
- 15 Support services
- 17 Problems and solutions
- 18 Challenges and prospects
- 19 Conclusion

## List of acronyms

Abbreviation	Definition
CIB	Congolaise Industrial Timber Company
MEF	Ministry of Forest Economy
NNNP	Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park
PIKE	Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
ITCR	Lake Télé Community Reserve
PROGEPP-Kabo	Peripheral Ecosystem Management Project at Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park
GIS	Geographic Information System
SWM	Sustainable Wildlife Management
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tools
UFA	Forest Management Unit
USLAB	Anti-Poaching Surveillance and Control Unit
APC	Small Game Firearm
EPP-P	Environmental Partnership Program -Poultry
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society



# PERIPHERAL ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROJECT AT NOUABALÉ-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK

## OVERVIEW

The Peripheral Ecosystem Management Project at Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (PROGEPP-Kabo), is a project set up by a tripartite partnership between the Ministère de l'Economie Forestière (MEF), the Congolaise Industrielle de Bois (CIB) and the international NGO Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) to protect wildlife in the forest concessions allocated to the CIB forest concessionaire.

This tripartite agreement was formalized by the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 1999, renewed most recently in August 2021.

Covering a forest area of 13,000 km<sup>2</sup>, PROGEPP contributes to 3 major objectives :

- Sustainable management of ecosystems (flora and fauna) in forest concessions surrounding the park
- Protect the park (NNNP) from the negative impacts of logging
- Work with local communities to ensure rational management of their land and natural resources.

The implementation of these objectives can be summarized as follows in 5 main areas :

- Project Management and Coordination
- Logistics
- Law enforcement (Wildlife protection)
- Ecological monitoring
- Community conservation (Socio-economic monitoring and environmental education)

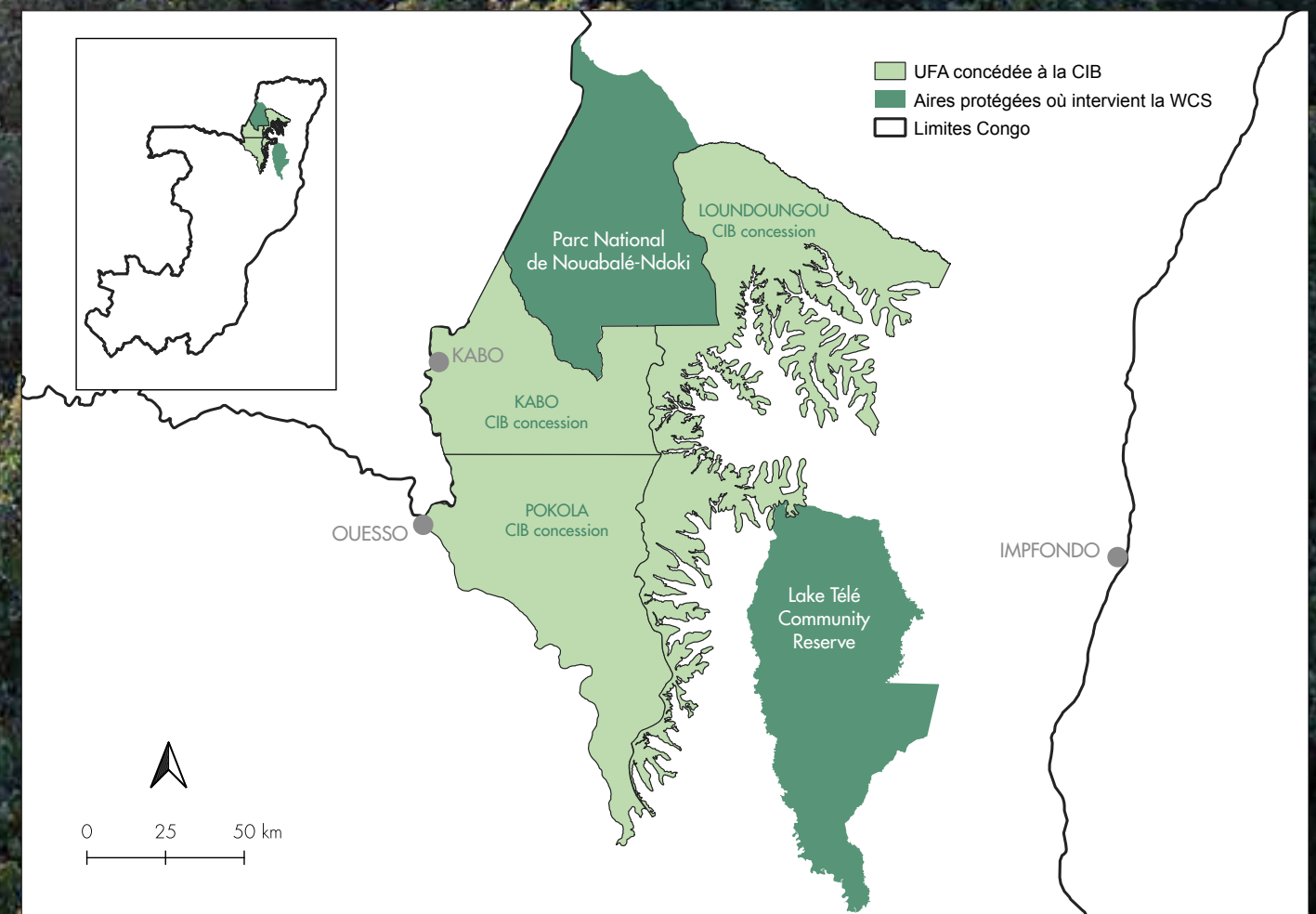
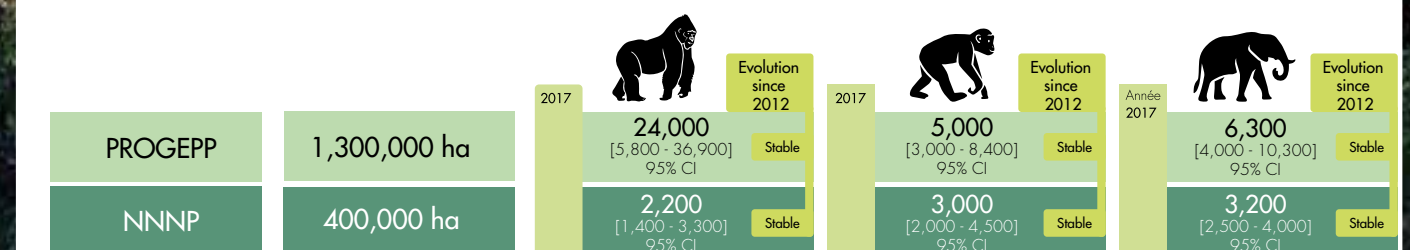


Fig.1 : PROGEPP-Kabo Action Area





# KEY FIGURES FOR 2024

25  
YEARS

Created in 1991, PROGEPP has celebrated its 25th anniversary.



2005  
ELEPHANT  
DUNG

and 830 great ape nests recorded, indicating a significant wildlife presence despite ongoing threats, as observed during ecological monitoring activities.



167%

in achieving the objectives of fixed patrols (objective largely exceeded)



27,742  
RECORDED  
INHABITANTS

allowing conservation and human-wildlife conflict prevention efforts to be tailored to community dynamics.



186  
OFFENDERS  
APPREHENDED

eight (08) of whom were referred to the public prosecutor due to the severity of the offenses committed.



112  
DWARF  
CROCODILES

released back into the wild: a major success in the conservation of threatened species.



## KEY DATES

### February 2024

- February 8: Visit from the coordination team of USLAB Mimbéli-Ibenga of CIB for a working session and experience sharing.
- February 24: Participation of the Chief Technical Advisor of PROGEPP-Kabo in the project steering committee.
- February 26: Visit by the European Union delegation for an experience-sharing session with PROGEPP-Kabo.

### March 2024

- March 4–10: Participation of the SMART Focal Point for PROGEPP-Kabo and the National SMART Coordinator in the 1st International SMART Congress in Windhoek, Namibia.
- March 25–27: Participation in the 35th Wardens' Meeting at the headquarters of the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (Bomassa).

### April 2024

- April 8: Visit from a team of the FLEGT VPA and a delegation from the Technical Assistance Project and the Ministry of Forest Economy.
- February 27 – April 8: Initial training of 46 eco-guards from the northern Congo USLABs (PROGEPP-Kabo, Mokabi-Dzanga, Mimbéli-Ibenga, Betou-Missa, Ipendja, and Ngombé).

### May 2024

- May 11: Visit by a delegation led by Alfred NKODIA (Coordinator of the Independent Observer - FLEGT VPA) and Igor OSSETE (Public Prosecutor at the Ouesso Court).
- May 17: Visit of the FAO Congo representative for a discussion with the SWM project.
- May 22 – June 3: Mission by the protected areas authorities as part of the project activities.

### June 2024

- June 14–18: Training on project management and coaching in Ouesso.
- June 17–21: Online participation in the French session of the course "Getting Started with Conservation Standards."
- June 23: Working visit to monitor the implementation of the SWM programme.

### July 2024

- July 3: Visit by Jim WALTON, Chairman of the Board of Arvest Bank and Community Publishers Inc.
- July 8–12: Participation of the Brigade Chief and the Operational Support Officer in the 37th TPEC-TNS meeting in Moloundou (Cameroon).
- July 14: Visit by a team from Nature+ for a working mission.

### September 2024

- September 27–29: Participation in the 36th Wardens' Meeting held in the Central African Republic (Bayanga).
- September 27–28: Participation of the National SMART Coordinator in a training on Earth Ranger in Kenya.

### October 2024

- October 14–23: Advanced first aid training for 7 eco-guards and 1 WCS driver.

### November 2024

- November 20–22: Participation in the 5th National SMART Workshop in Ouesso on the theme "Review of SMART Tool Implementation from 2021 to 2024."

### December 2024

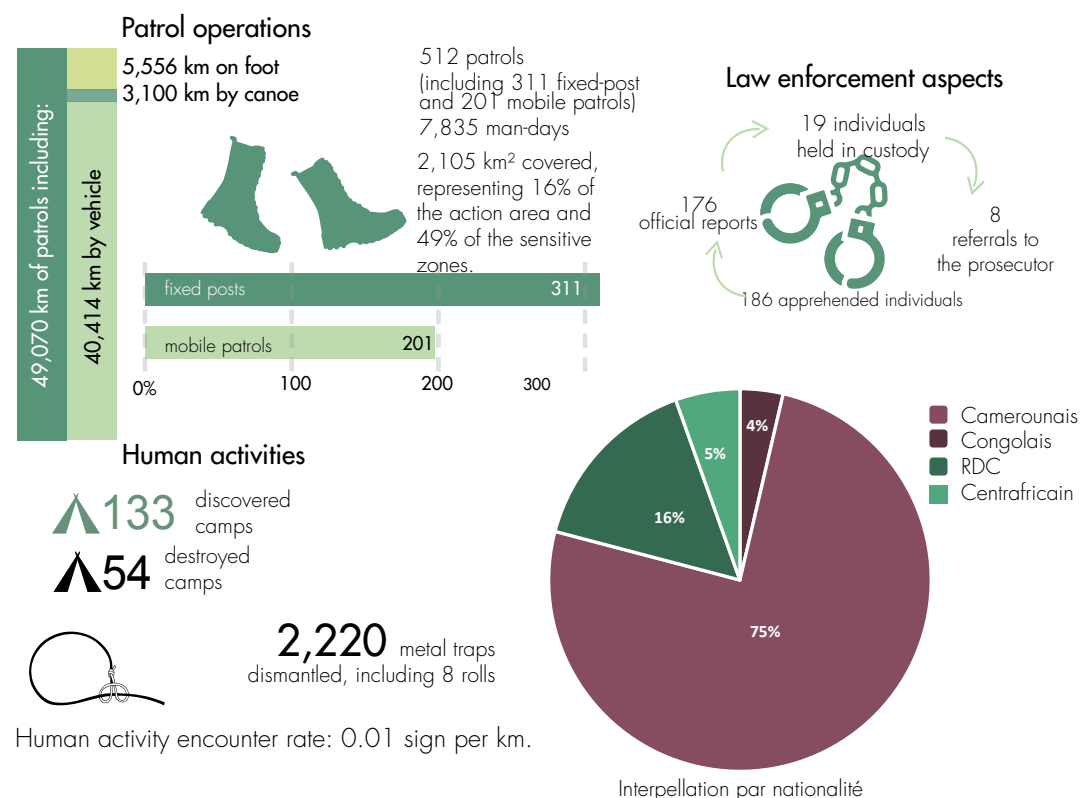
- December 10: Visit by a project delegation for the handover of some law enforcement equipment.



# ANTI-POACHING EFFORTS

Anti-poaching is a core pillar of PROGEPP-Kabo's activities, aimed at protecting wildlife and reducing illegal human pressures on the ecosystems surrounding the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park. In 2024, efforts were marked by an intensification of patrols, the dismantling of numerous poaching networks, and strengthened cooperation with local and regional stakeholders.

## THE YEAR IN FIGURES



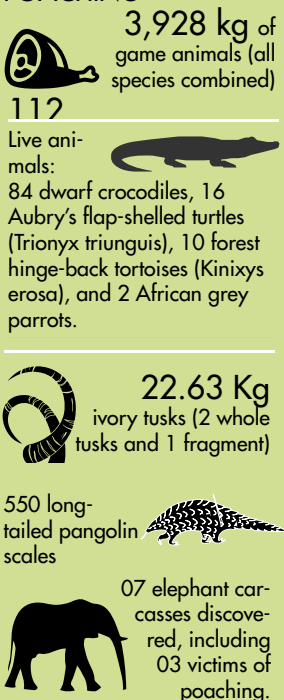
The effort put into fixed-post patrols has far exceeded expectations, reaching 122% of the set objectives. In contrast, mobile patrols achieved 86% of the planned targets, indicating partial success in this area. These results are directly linked to the indicators defined during the last Technical Steering Committee (TSC) and reflect a significant focus on fixed-post patrols, likely in response to pressures identified in sensitive zones.

## SEIZURES

### WEAPONS AND AMMUNITIONS



## POACHING



## RECRUITMENT

During the PROGEPP Technical Steering Committee meeting held in Pokola in February 2022, several decisions were made to improve the implementation of activities within PROGEPP. Among these decisions was the recruitment of 15 new eco-guards. A pre-selection of 30 candidates was organized by WCS, and the 15 best candidates were selected to undergo initial paramilitary training organized by the protected areas authorities with technical support from WCS. This training took place from February 27 to April 8, 2024, at Ndoki-2 and involved 46 eco-guards from the northern Congo USLABs (PROGEPP Kabo, Mokabi-Dzanga, Mimbéli-Ibenga, Betou-Missa, Ipendja, and Ngombé). The training involved several entities:

- Military Zone Defense Trainers No. 5 for weapon handling and combat techniques;
- A WCS legal expert for courses on human rights and the protection of indigenous peoples;

## TRAINING OF ECO-GUARDS

In 2024, PROGEPP placed particular emphasis on strengthening the capacity of its agents through various technical and operational training programs.

### Training of law enforcement Agents

- 5 refresher sessions were conducted, allowing PROGEPP eco-guards to train in:
  - Self-defense and weapon handling
  - Navigation and use of orientation tools
  - Obstacle crossing
  - Legal aspects and human rights
  - Wildlife crime.

### Advanced First Aid Training

A specific advanced first aid session, which concluded with the issuance of advanced first aid certificates, was delivered by the Brazzaville firefighters for:

- 7 eco-guards and 1 WCS driver.

### Strengthening Technical Skills and Experience Sharing

- Participation in key congresses and mee-

tings, such as the 1st SMART Congress in Namibia and the 35th TNS Conservators' Meeting.

- A WCS veterinarian for collecting data on ani-mal carcasses and remains;
- The protected areas authorities, led by its Technical and Scientific Director and the Head of the Litigation and Public Relations Service, for monitoring the proper conduct of the training;
- The USLAB and PROGEPP-Kabo patrol leaders for technical and operational support, as well as a course on the application of laws concerning wildlife protection;
- The PROGEPP-Kabo coordinator for operational support and a course on navigation and orientation in the forest.
- Training sessions on strategic tools such as ArcGIS Pro, Earth Ranger, and Conservation Standards.
- Project management skills enhancement during a dedicated session in Ouessou.

### Partnerships and Technical Support

- Exchange missions and experience-sharing with CIB teams, EU delegations, FAO representatives, and the law enforcement teams from Cameroon.
- Implementation of a new law enforcement strategy, in collaboration with Chengeta Wildlife, to strengthen anti-poaching interventions starting in 2025.

In summary, these trainings and exchanges have significantly strengthened the skills of PROGEPP agents, ensuring better operational efficiency and more rigorous field mission management.





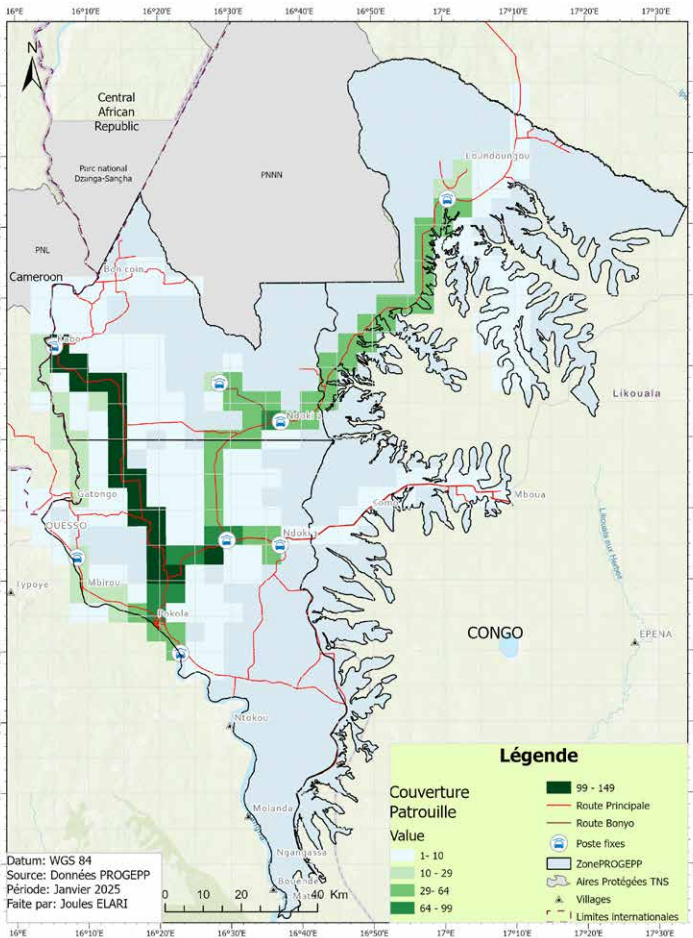


Fig. 2: Coverage of Deployed Patrols, © J. Elari / WCS

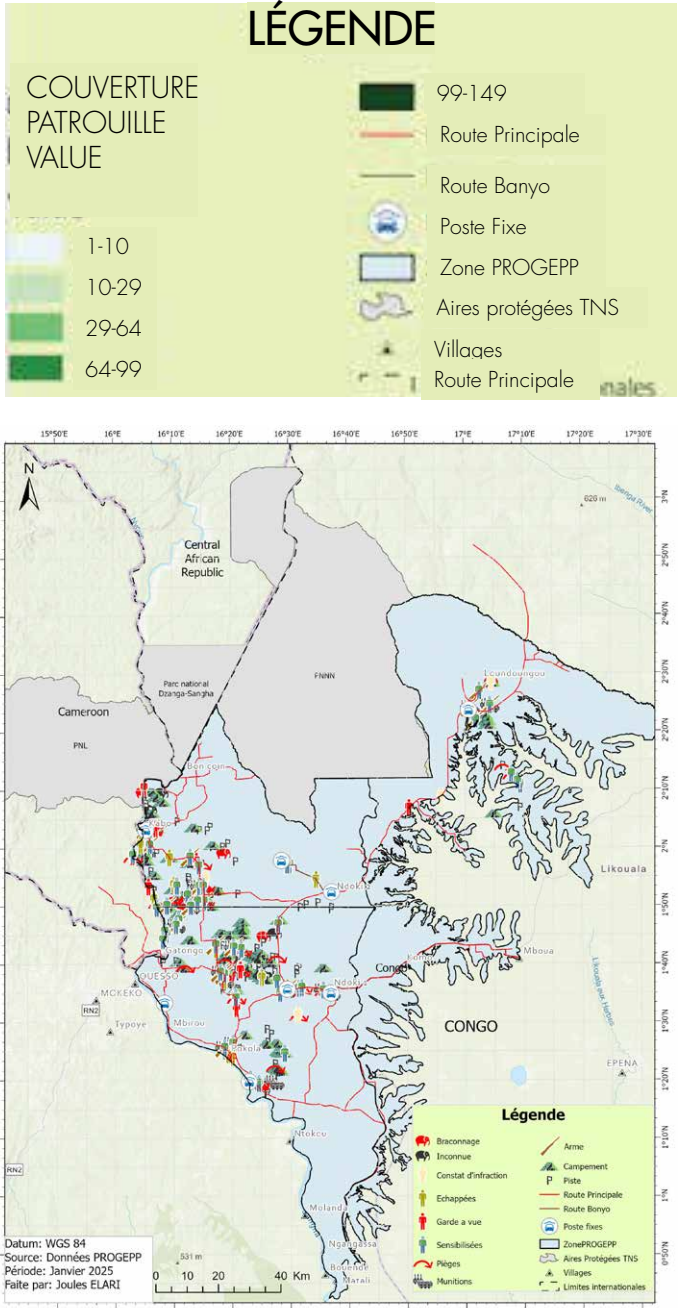


Fig. 3: Distribution of Poaching Indices Detected by Teams, © J. Elari / WCS

The analysis of the spatial distribution of patrols and identified threats highlights several significant trends. The road axis connecting Kabo – Pokola – Ndoki-1 – Malé – Matoto – Léopard has been under particularly intense surveillance, as this road is the main route linking operational bases to the more remote areas. The teams have also increased their presence in areas identified as high-risk hunting zones, including Bongandzi, Keli-Keli, Lengoué, and Mbolo, where poaching pressure is particularly high. Illegal camps have been discovered in several key areas, including Longa, Boko, and Bodingo, known to be trafficking points for bushmeat. These camps

significantly contribute to the threat to local wildlife resources. Meanwhile, river patrols have intensified along the Sangha, Ndoki, and Djaka river routes, where some illegal camps are gradually taking on the appearance of villages, with continuously expanding structures. This observation calls for heightened vigilance in these areas to prevent the permanent establishment of these camps.



# ECOLOGICAL MONITORING

In 2024, the PROGEPP ecological monitoring team conducted 8 missions across the three (03) Forest Management Units (UFAs) covering the PROGEPP area, distributed as follows:

- UFA Kabo: 4 missions in the Bonyo, Mombongo, Poche Ayous, and Mokoubé – Mbolo – Mboulé areas;
- UFA Pokola: 2 missions in the Djaka Lake area and the Fouloungou bay complex;
- UFA Loundoungou Toukoulaka: 2 missions, notably in the Longa – Komo – Ndoki2 and Loundoungou West – Buffle bay areas.

The team covered 658 km over 84 days, dedicating 550 hours to data collection.

These deployments allowed for the identification of areas with high concentrations of large mammals and various threat zones linked to anthropogenic activities.

## ANIMAL PRESENCE INDICATORS

During the monitoring missions, the following animal presence indicators were observed:

- 58 direct observations of small monkey groups, totaling 312 individuals observed;
- 59 ungulate individuals (all classes combined) directly observed;
- 2,005 elephant droppings, of which 61% are old and over 50% belong to class S4; only 5% of the droppings are fresh or recent. The encounter rate for elephant droppings across the entire route is 3.14 droppings/km;
- 446 elephant tracks crossed, with more than 68% showing a high or medium level of use;
- 830 large ape nests, including 316 gorilla nests, 14 chimpanzee nests, and 500 unidentified nests. Most of these nests (82%) are old or very old. The encounter rate for nests is 1.26 nests/km;
- 2,045 ungulate droppings, with more than 4/5 being old or very old, and the majority (60%) belonging to the U2 ungulate class. The encounter rate for these droppings is 3.11 droppings/km;
- 82 vocalizations of African grey parrots.

## HUMAN ACTIVITY INDICATORS

During the team deployments, the following human activity indicators were discovered:

- 3 individuals observed in the forest, notably in the Mopandzi and Loundoungou areas;
- 34 camps, mostly for small game hunting and mixed activities;

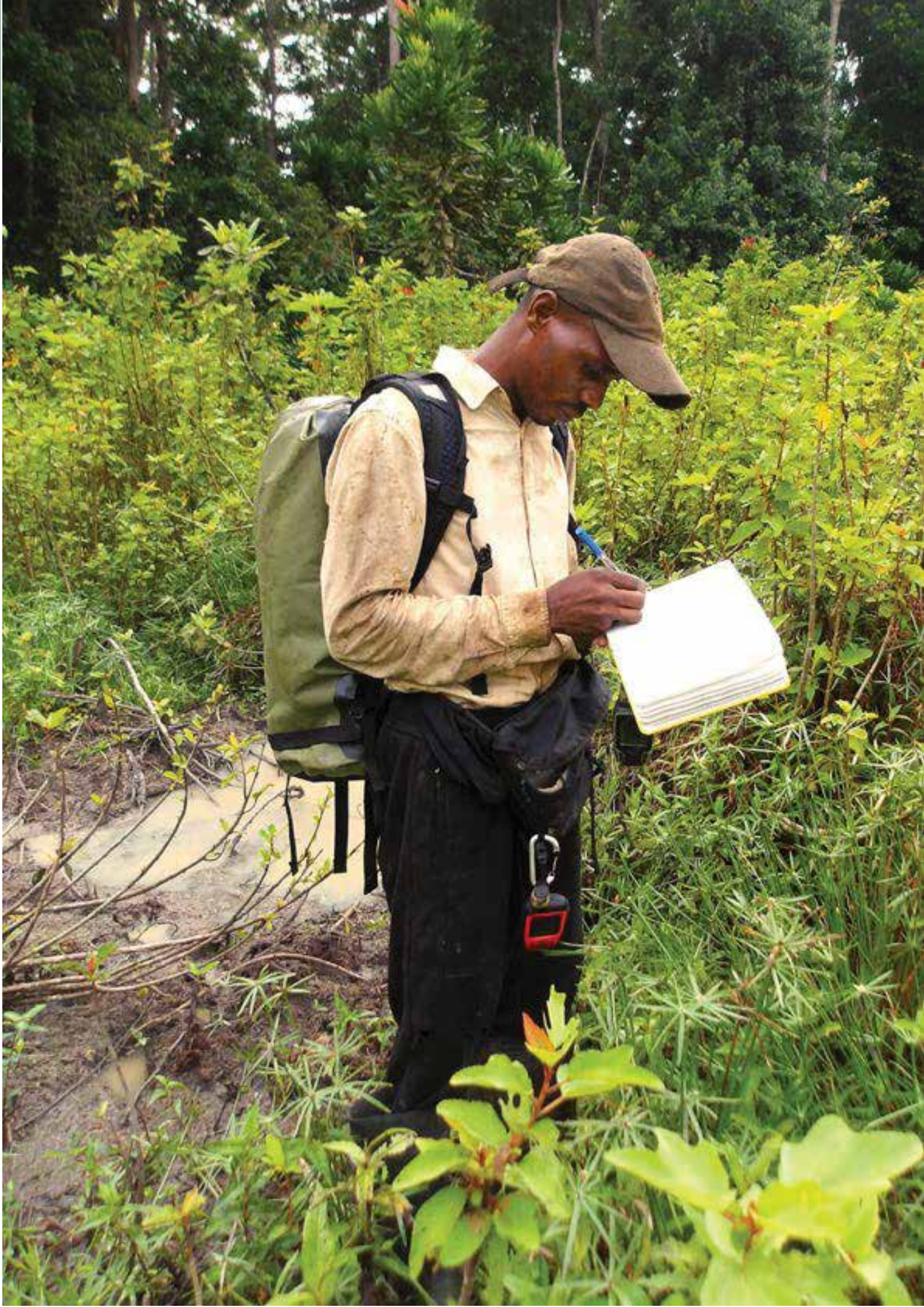
- 28 active metal trap lines;
- 73 hunting tracks identified;
- 72 signs of human passage;
- 426 machete cuts, with more than 90% being old;
- 85 double-zero ammunition casings, with more than 70% being old;
- 17 gunshots heard;
- 3 former gold mining sites (2 years old) from illegal artisanal gold mining activities.

## ANALYSIS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY SIGNS

The analysis of the human activity signs discovered provides valuable information on the spatial distribution of the identified threats:

- A high concentration of hunting signs was found in UFP 4 (2020 – 2024, Mbolo and Antenne Km23 zones) of UFA Kabo, UFP 4 (2022 – 2026, Djaka Lake and Komo zones) of UFA Pokola, and UFP 7 (2041 – 2044, Loundoungou village zone) of UFA Loundoungou-Toukoulaka.
- Several hunting camps were discovered in the Loundoungou village area, indicating the level of pressure this sector is facing.
- The majority of trap lines were observed in the Mbolo and Mboulé areas, highlighting the intensity of illegal hunting in these sectors.
- A significant number of machete cuts were noted in the Lombé – Nyangui areas and around the old Léopard post installations.
- Several ammunition casings were found concentrated in the Mbolo, Mboulé, and Mokoubé areas, which is a concerning sign of the intensification of hunting practices in these sectors.
- The discovery of old gold mining signs (previously found in 2022), which are now completely inactive, suggests that this activity has not been active in the Ndoki-1 – Fouloungou area for nearly 2 years..

To facilitate decision-making in the protection of wildlife resources, it is necessary for the ecological monitoring teams to regularly deploy in areas with limited or almost no patrol coverage.





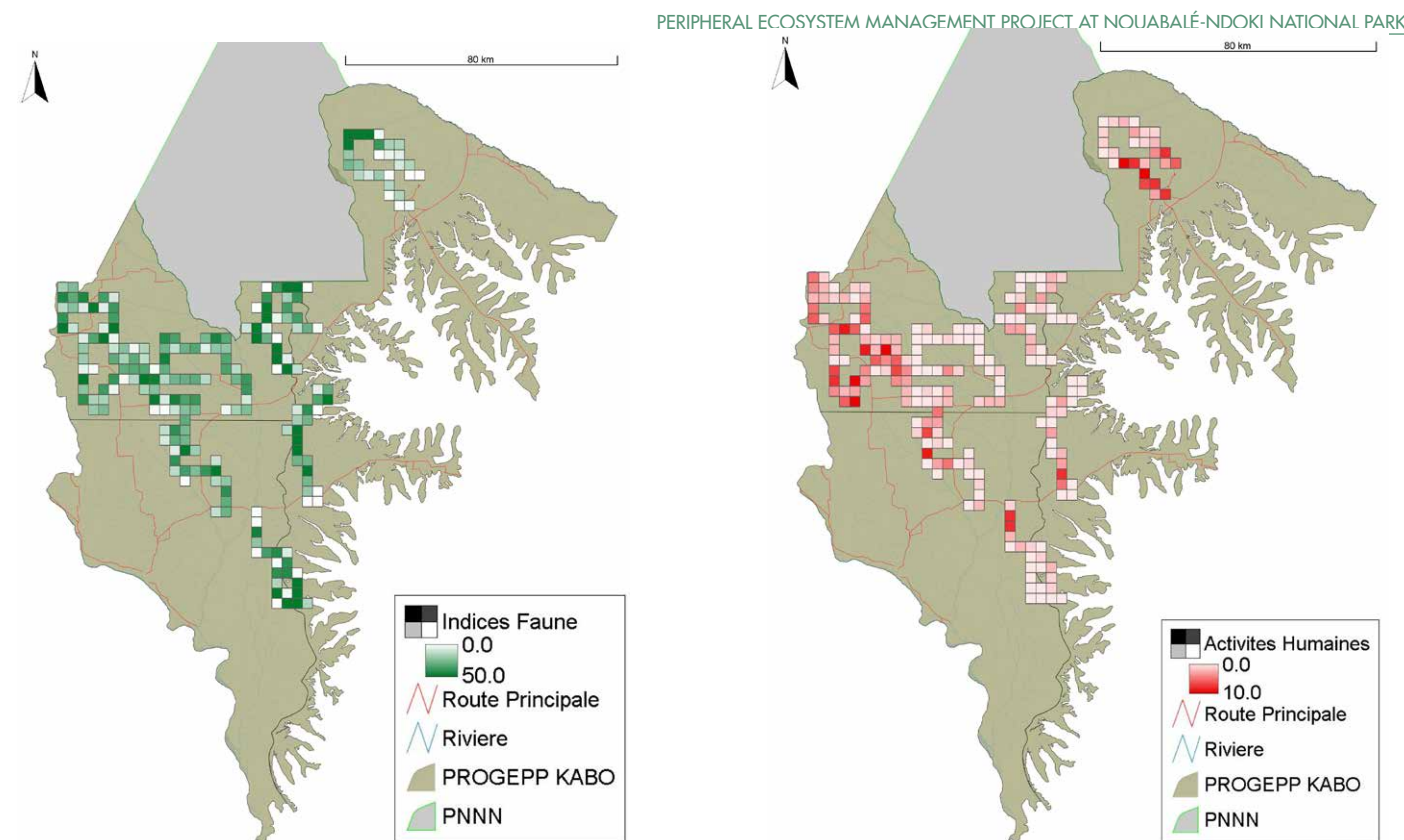


Fig. 4: Spatial Distribution of Wildlife Presence Indicators

Fig. 5: Distribution of Discovered Human Activity Signs

## COLLABORATION WITH THE ANTI-POACHING SERVICE

In accordance with the objectives set for the revitalization of ecological monitoring activities at PROGEPP, the deployments carried out by the ecological monitoring team have provided crucial and complementary information for management and have guided APE patrols.

Several cases of collaboration between the APE teams and the ecological monitoring team have been noted:

**Case 1:** During the ecological monitoring mission in the Malé River area, the team found an active trap line and three animals caught in its traps. An alert was sent via Garmin InReach devices to the control room for action. A team was then deployed to patrol the area and dismantle the traps. On-site, the APE team identified and dismantled some cables; the majority of the cables had already been destroyed by the traps, just as the ecological monitoring team passed through. The Djaka camp, the closest to the trap-setting location, was sensitized by the ecological monitoring team leader through the village chief.

**Case 2:** During the ecological monitoring mission in the Kabo – Mopandzi – Mombongo – Gbagbali area, repeated gunshots from hunting rifles (12 gauge) were heard. This information was quickly reported to the control room. This prompted the deployment of two APE patrol teams, one along the river route and the other along the road route. Investigations

were carried out on the ground, but the offenders had already left their hunting area.

**Case 3:** The hunting tracks discovered by the ecological monitoring team in the areas of Mboulé, Mbo-lo, Loundougou village, and Foulougou were of great importance, as they allowed the APE service to identify and update the list of poachers' access points in the PROGEPP area. This list will be used to revise the APE operational strategy for 2025.

**Case 4:** Through the data reported by the ecological monitoring team, we gained a clearer understanding of the wildlife potential in the covered areas, in terms of the presence and absence of large mammals. Additionally, a better overview of the various activities taking place in and around the visited clearings was obtained.

**Case 5:** In the Mokoubé area, the information provided by the ecological monitoring team regarding the gunshots heard and the active hunting tracks discovered enabled the APE team to deploy in the area. This operation resulted in the seizure of one hunting firearm and the dismantling of 246 metal cable traps.

# COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

## SIGNAGE PANEL SETUP

The signage panels indicate the geographic location of the different hunting zones to users. This year, a 7-day refreshment of the signage panels was carried out across the entire area. This focused on the following road axes: Bomassa-Kabo, Kabo-Pokola, Carrefour Km32-Bananier, Pokola-Loundougou, Pokola-Mboua, Loundougou-Mbandza, and Loundougou-Makao.

The 77 maintained panels are distributed as follows: **35 protected area panels, 19 safari area panels, and 23 hunting area panels**. All defective panels were immediately replaced, and any panels not found at their designated site were systematically replaced.



## MONITORING OF DAMAGE

For the year 2024, the activities monitoring crop damage caused by wildlife continued in the field, with a focus on the localities of Kabo, Djaka-village, and Ndoki-1.

In this regard, **the team visited 22 devastated fields**. On-site, the team observed that all the damage was caused by elephants.

Overall, in the three visited localities that reported crop damage, it was found that cocoa cultivation was the most affected (171 trees), with a high rate of devastation observed in Kabo.

Damage to cassava and banana crops was mainly reported in the localities of Djaka-village and Ndoki-1, with Kabo having no cassava or banana plantations.



## POPULATION CENSUS

As part of PROGEPP's conservation efforts, managing demographic evolution and population movements is essential for ensuring effective ecosystem management. Population growth places increasing pressure on wildlife, particularly due to the higher demand for natural resources and activities such as hunting or the collection of forest products. This census helps identify high-density population zones, assess demographic trends, and tailor conservation and outreach efforts to the realities observed in the field.

To obtain an accurate view of the population residing in the PROGEPP area (UFA Kabo, Pokola, and Loundougou-Toukoulaka), a population census campaign was implemented. Data collection took place in 55 villages and settlements, allowing for an assessment of the total population within the three CIB UFAs, its geographical distribution, age and gender structure, and composition according to demographic and economic characteristics.

### Key Findings:

The resident population of the three UFAs is estimated at 27,742 people, including 14,223 men and 13,519 women.

The Congolese population represents 84.47% of the total population surveyed, amounting to 23,479 people, consisting

of 11,860 men (51%) and 11,615 women (49%).

The foreign population is estimated at 4,263 individuals, composed of 2,359 men (55%) and 1,904 women (45%).

It is worth noting that RDC nationals make up 64% of the total foreign population, or 2,695 people, which is 11% of the total population.

The urban commune of Pokola has nearly 17,471 people, which accounts for 63% of the total population in the three PROGEPP UFAs.

The distribution of the surveyed population by household indicates 5,661 households, with 3,958 in Pokola, 801 in Kabo, and 902 in Loundougou-Toukoulaka.

A demographic analysis reveals that more than half of the population (51%) is in the Childhood and Adolescence category (ages 0-19). Young Adults (ages 20-34) and Middle-aged Adults (ages 35-54) represent 23% and 21% of the population, respectively. Seniors (55 years and older) account for only 5%.

An examination of the ethnic diversity of the population in the three UFAs shows that the Bomitaba (21%) and the Mbendjelé (18%) are the majority ethnic groups in the inhabited areas.





Support services always played a key role in ensuring the smooth functioning of PROGEPP's operational activities. These services managed logistics, maintained infrastructure, handled human resources management, and coordinated the overall project.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

À travers les appels d'offres lancés en 2023 pour les postes d'écogarde, et celui de 2024 pour le poste d'assistant comptable, l'effectif des agents du PROGEPP a été revu à la hausse avec l'intégration de seize (16) nouveaux agents. Parmi ces nouvelles recrues, on compte 13 hommes et 3 femmes (dont 2 écogardes et 1 assistante comptable recrutée par WCS), comprenant 14 Bantous et 2 Autochtones.

L'ancien chef de brigade, M. Stanislas Barthélemy DOUMA, dont PROGEPP salue l'engagement et les actions menées, a été affecté à Ngombé. Il a été remplacé par M. Marien YOKA, ancien chef de patrouille au NNNP.

Le chauffeur Herman MIEMBA d'Olam Agri a été remplacé par M. Yannick GAMAGO.

Trois incidents malheureux ont concerné des écogardes :

- Un accident de la route dans l'exercice des fonctions ;
- Deux cas ayant nécessité des interventions chirurgicales.

En complément du recrutement d'agents permanents, plusieurs contrats de prestataires ont été engagés :

- Quatre (4) agents recenseurs lors du lancement du recensement de la population dans les 3

UFA formant le PROGEPP, avec le soutien d'une centaine de guides recrutés localement ;

- Trois (3) cuisiniers (2 femmes et 1 homme), ainsi que quatre (4) aides recrutés lors de la formation initiale des écogardes à Ndoki-2 ;

- Trois guides de forêt (2 Autochtones et 1 Bantou) pour les missions écologiques ;

- 21 gardiens engagés en prestation lors de la grève des écogardes.

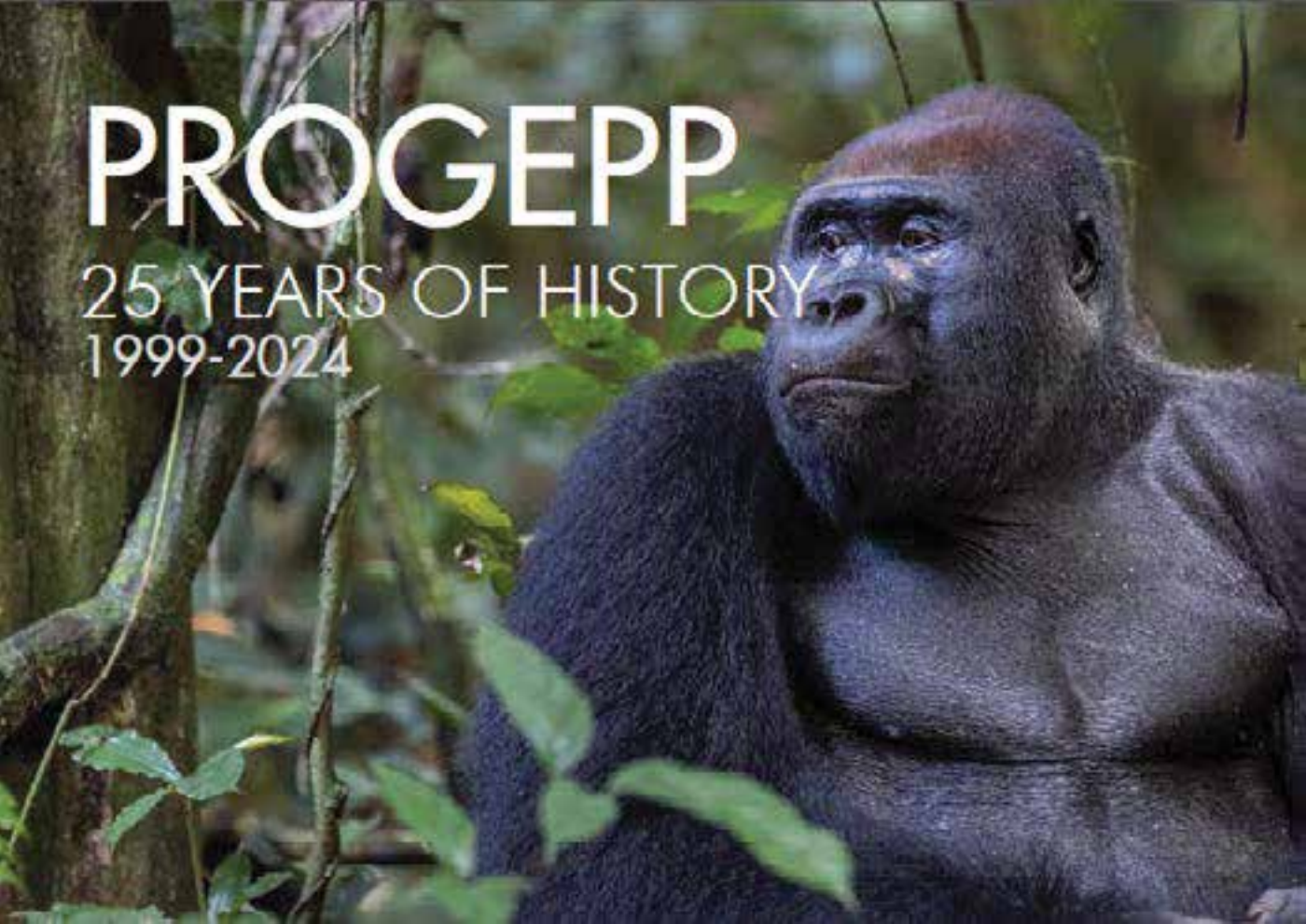
De plus, le PROGEPP a accueilli une stagiaire, Mme Reine MAFOUA, de l'Institut Panafricain du Développement - Afrique Centrale (IPD-AC), pour un stage de six mois dans le cadre de sa formation et de sa mise en situation professionnelle.

À ce jour, l'effectif des agents permanents du PROGEPP s'élève à 66 personnes, dont 36 écogardes.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The construction work for the new control room, initially scheduled for 2024, has been postponed due to budget constraints. However, a shed for the new generator (45 KVA) and a washing area have been completed.

The Delta fixed post, fully completed, was handed over to PROGEPP



COMMUNICATION AROUND PROGEPP'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

On the occasion of PROGEPP's 25th anniversary, a dedicated brochure was designed to trace the key milestones of this tripartite partnership and highlight PROGEPP's successes in biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource management, and community involvement. This document also sheds light on the current challenges and future perspectives of the project.

In addition, a press release was issued by WCS to announce this celebration and highlight PROGEPP's major achievements, particularly the stabilization of forest gorilla and elephant populations, the increased fight against poaching, and awareness-raising efforts among local communities.

This anniversary also attracted the attention of independent press. Specialized media, including Mongabay, shared the information, highlighting the major advancements of PROGEPP and its key role in preserving the ecosystems of the Congo Basin. These publications helped to enhance PROGEPP's visibility as an innovative model of public-private partnership for conservation.



Press Release on  
WCS  
Newsroom



Article in  
«Mangabay»  
Media



# DIFFICULTIES AND SOLUTIONS

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED	PROPOSED SOLUTIONS
The advanced age of some eco-guards and the inability of a few to carry out deep-foot patrols	Recruit new eco-guards and reassign sick or unfit eco-guards to other positions within the structure. A strict medical check-up should be carried out to determine the future of these personnel.
Scheduling of refresher training during the hot periods hinders the proper implementation of the law enforcement strategy	Develop an efficient schedule for refresher training sessions (approximately one week per session), taking into account critical poaching times during the year.
Poor condition of the Bonyo road damages vehicles during eco-guard rotations at the Safari site	Continue the road rehabilitation works for Bonyo, previously initiated, and maintain the road at least once per quarter.
Advanced deterioration of some guard posts, especially the Delta post	In collaboration with CIB, continue the gradual rehabilitation of the control posts.
Lack of data collection module with SMART Mobile during refresher training sessions increases data collection errors	Involve SMART database managers during refresher training sessions to improve the technical capacity of eco-guards.
Existence of a wildlife trafficking network along the Sangha River and the Kabo-Pokola road, as well as a dwarf crocodile capture network in Bodingo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amplify the deployment of forest patrols and mobile patrols by CESSNA, executing the existing APE strategy;</li><li>• Regularly deploy check patrols at strategic points along the rivers and roads;</li><li>• Create random control posts along the various routes.</li></ul>
Lack of performance monitoring and no results from the Socio team for 3 years, despite their participation in training	Halt the Socio component of PROGEPP, which is already handled by the CIB and WCS teams outside of PROGEPP.
Repeated presence of foreign nationals (mostly from the DRC) deep in the forest, engaging in illegal hunting activities, particularly trapping	Strengthen collaboration with stakeholders involved in immigration control through departmental platforms for wildlife crime prevention; Intensify the deployment of patrol teams deep in the forest.
Problems with supplying control posts with water and firewood	Periodically plan a monthly supply of water and firewood to the posts.
High circulation of war weapons	Involve departmental platforms for wildlife crime prevention to raise awareness among communities and law enforcement officers; Launch awareness campaigns for the collection of war weapons.
Poaching of protected species (great apes and African grey parrots) for ritual practices, with the extraction of essential parts (hands, legs, feathers, and heads), intended for the local market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intensify mobile foot patrols deep into the forest.</li><li>• Involve intelligence gathering to prevent parrot poaching actions.</li><li>• Raise awareness among local communities and indigenous peoples about the ecological importance of great apes.</li><li>• Raise awareness about the protected status of the African grey parrot.</li></ul>
Insufficient MEF agents (particularly Patrol Chiefs) to ensure supervision and guidance of teams both on-site and in the field	Contact protected areas authorities to assign two Patrol Chiefs.

## PERSPECTIVES FOR 2024

- Implement the new strategy developed by Chengeta, while considering the new threats that may arise with the construction of the bridge over the Sangha River and the paving of the Ouesso-Bangui road.
  - Continue discussions with CAWPA for the assignment of 2 Patrol Chiefs.
  - With the addition of 15 new eco-guards and their salary adjustments, along with the already active presence of CIB and WCS social teams in the area, discontinue the Socio component in order to maintain a controlled budget.
  - Organize SMART Mobile training for the 15 newly recruited eco-guards.
  - Ensure that all eco-guards participate in at least one refresher training session.
  - Provide training on intelligence gathering and crime scene management for the contact leaders (Brigade Chief, Patrol Chief, and PTA).
- Engage with CIB regarding the rehabilitation of dormitories and guard posts at Ndoki-1, Mombako, and Malé.
  - Continue ecological monitoring activities in the PROGEPP area through reconnaissance walks and the placement of cameras at strategic locations.
  - Enhance exchanges with other biodiversity protection actors, as well as administrative, political, and local authorities, in the context of implementing the departmental platforms for wildlife crime prevention.

## CHALLENGES FOR 2024

- Leverage the strategy developed by Chengeta.
  - Increase the capacity to monitor technical operations in the field and provide guidance to eco-guards through the assignment of new MEF contact leaders.
  - Secure sensitive areas to observe a significant return of wildlife in these zones.
  - Expand and improve the coverage of
- deep forest patrols through the effective implementation of the anti-poaching strategy.

  - Improve the quality of data collection by training eco-guards on the use of mobile devices equipped with SMART Mobile.
  - Refine the quality of data reporting by socio-economic and ecological monitoring teams through the organization of training sessions.





# CONCLUSION

- Looking back, the year 2024 was marked by streamlined field operations, capacity building, an increase in staff, and the procurement of field equipment.
- Anti-poaching efforts were strengthened by the recruitment of 15 new eco-guards. In addition, several training sessions held for law enforcement officers contributed to enhanced monitoring of law enforcement in the field, leading to multiple seizures of bushmeat and hunting equipment.
- Ecological monitoring enabled the collection of valuable data on wildlife resources, providing essential information to guide anti-poaching operations.
- However, the socio-economic and environmental education components have remained underperforming for several years. In the past, this area benefited from dedicated budgets, but since the last Steering Committee (COPIL) in 2021, funding was suspended, and proposals were made—at the request of CIB and WCS—to either terminate the contracts or transfer the team to CIB's social department. As a result, current activities are limited to support for the SWM program and participation in hunting opening and closing meetings, without any real budget.
- In 2024, human-wildlife conflict was a key focus, particularly through monitoring cocoa field damage and population surveys. However, these punctual tasks are not sufficient to fully engage the team year-round.
- It is therefore necessary to reassess the future of this team at the beginning of 2025, during the upcoming COPIL.

