



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

CONKOUATI-DOULI NATIONAL PARK



CONTENTS

PRESENTATION OF THE PARK	04
THE VISION FOR THE PARK	09
MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2023	10
● MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE	12
● INFRASTRUCTURE & LOGISTICS	16
● PROTECTION & SECURITY	18
● BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION	22
● COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	24
● FINANCING MECHANISMS	28
FINANCIAL REVIEW	30

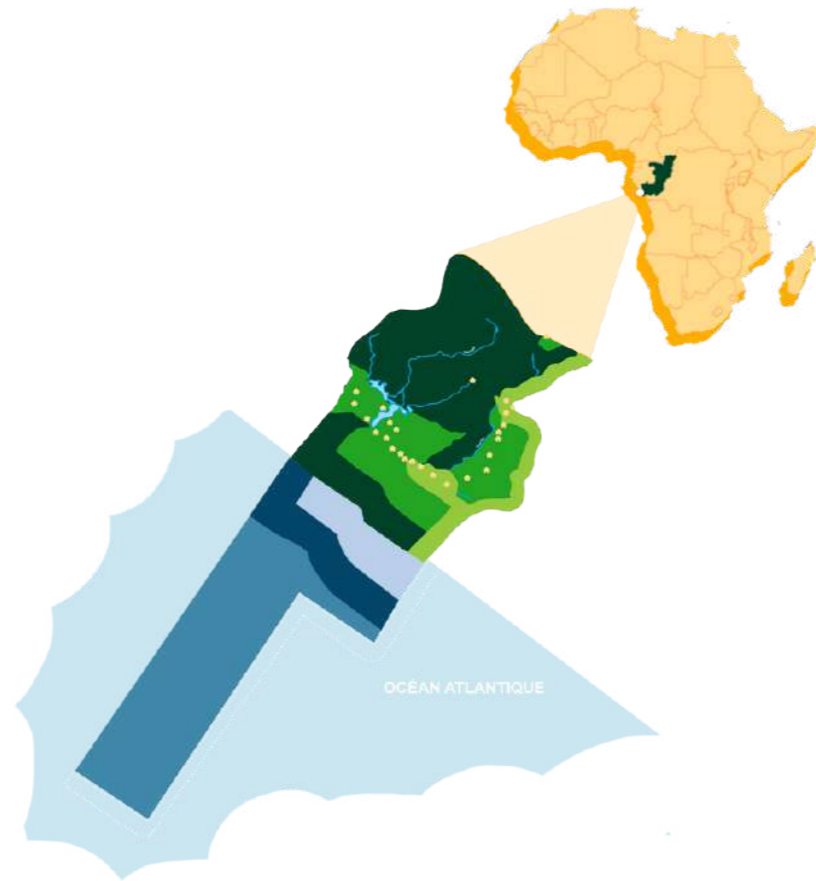
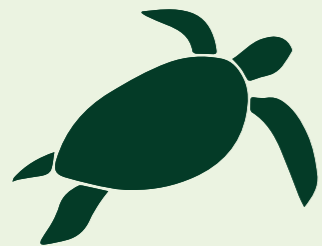
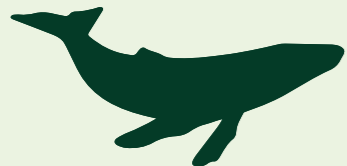
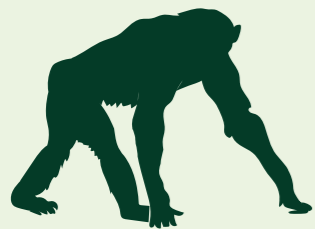
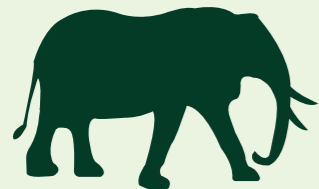
PRESENTATION OF PARK

 **IUCN**
Category II
protected area

 **Ramsar site**
(wetland of
international
importance)

 Included on
UNESCO's
tentative list of
World Heritage
sites

Area
795 550 hectares
368 050 ha land
427 500 ha marine



ECOSYSTEMS (BIOMES)

- Gulf of Guinea (marine ecosystem)
- Western Congolese forest-savanna mosaic
- Equatorial Atlantic coastal forests

KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES AT RISK

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

Western lowland gorilla, hawksbill turtle, Atlantic humpback dolphin + 10 marine species (sharks, rays).

ENDANGERED

White-collared Cercocebus, Central African Chimpanzee, Common Pangolin, Giant Pangolin, 2 bird species, 3 fish.

VULNERABLE

Leatherback turtle, Olive Ridley turtle, Manatee, Hippopotamus, Mandrill, Tetradactyl Pangolin, Panthera + 3 species of fish.

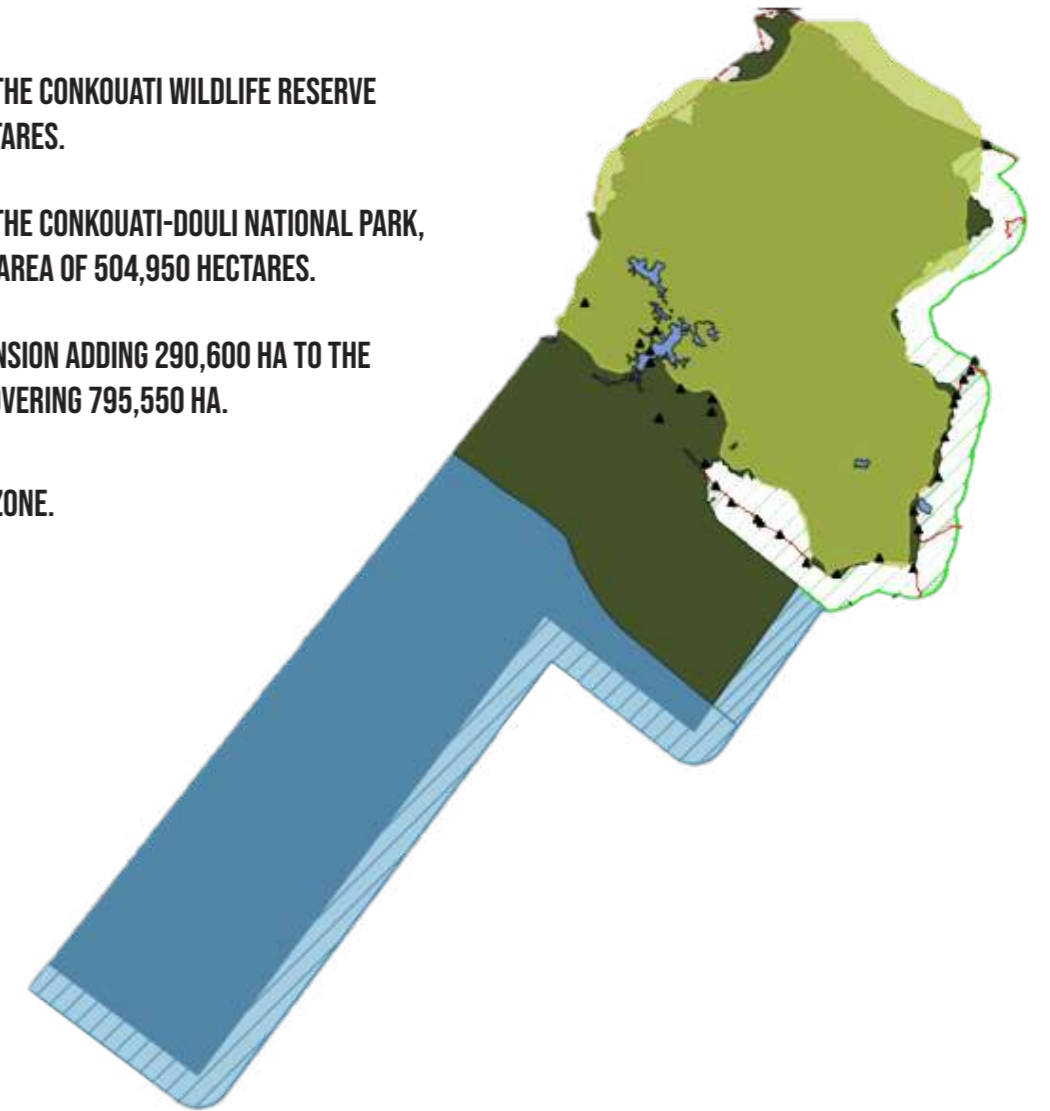
HISTORIC OF THE CONKOUATI-DOULI NATIONAL PARK

1980 CREATION OF THE CONKOUATI WILDLIFE RESERVE
300,000 HECTARES.

1999 CREATION OF THE CONKOUATI-DOULI NATIONAL PARK,
COVERING AN AREA OF 504,950 HECTARES.

2023 MARINE EXTENSION ADDING 290,600 HA TO THE
PARK, NOW COVERING 795,550 HA.

 5KM BUFFER ZONE.



NOÉ IN CONGO

Following the end of the collaboration between WCS and the Congolese government in 2018, the latter launched a call for tenders in 2019 to seek a new partner to take over the management of Conkouati-Douli National Park with the aim of diversifying the partners. Following a selection procedure, Noé was chosen in 2020 to take on management of the park, leading to the signing of a 20-year Partnership Agreement in April 2021.





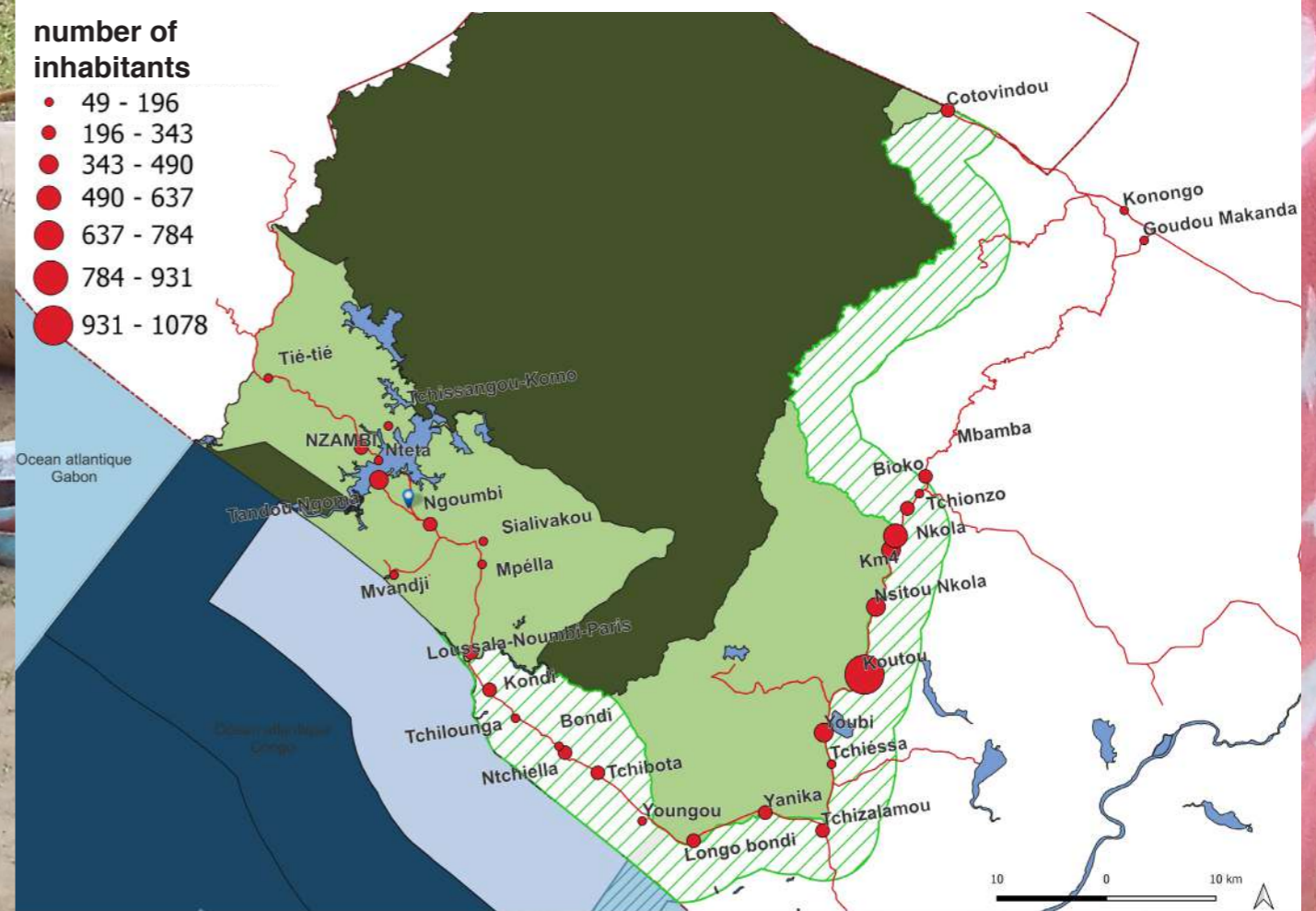
LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Conkouati-Douli National Park comprises an eco-development zone and a buffer zone with 7,800 people spread over 31 villages. Those living on the coastal plain are mainly fishermen. In the north-eastern part of the park, the inhabitants make their living by exploiting wood for cooking, charcoal and construction, by artisanal gold and cassiterite mining, and by gathering and producing manioc. Agriculture and livestock farming are underdeveloped, and mainly for subsistence.

Formal employment is generated by the park, potash extraction, forestry and tourism. Despite the efforts made by the park in 2023, some villages still do not have access to running water, access to electricity is also poor and the mobile network does not cover all villages. The area also suffers from a shortage of teachers, resulting in a low level of education, and a lack of access to healthcare, with health centres in poor condition and shortages of staff, medicines and medical equipment.

number of inhabitants

- 49 - 196
- 196 - 343
- 343 - 490
- 490 - 637
- 637 - 784
- 784 - 931
- 931 - 1078

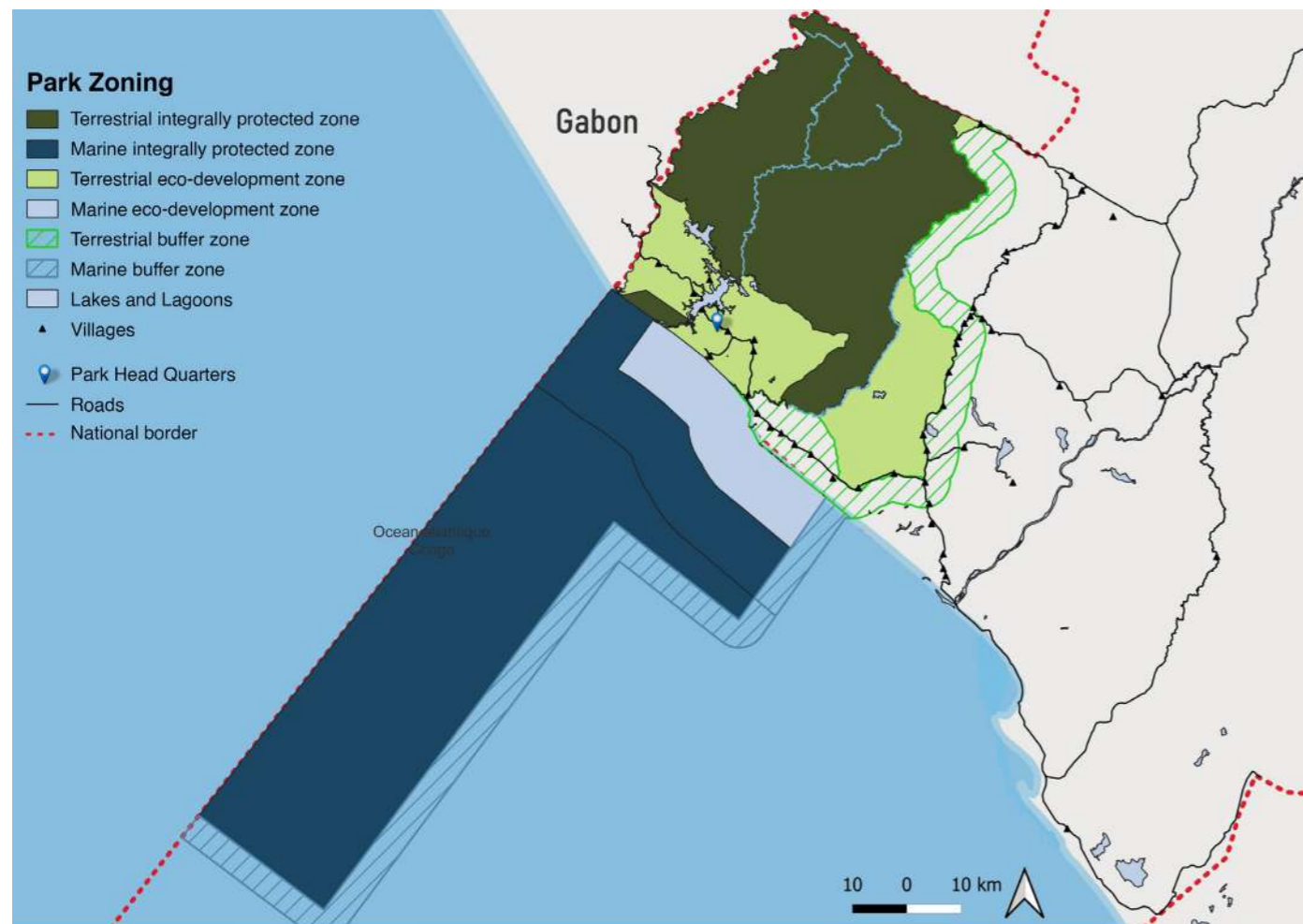


LAND USE PLANNING

The decree creating the park (Decree No. 99-136 bis of 14 August 1999) specifies an eco-development zone and a buffer zone five kilometres wide around the park (excluding the border with Gabon).

The Park Management Plan (PMP) drawn up by IUCN and adopted in 1999 defines eco-development zones as areas for the realisation of use rights delimited around villages (Ntié-Tié & Nzambi (22,900 ha); Tandou-Ngoma, Ngoumbi, Mvandji, Sialivakou, Mpella, Loussala (32,600 ha); Cotovindou (9,600 ha); Lakes and lagoon (4,000 ha)).

In 2015 WCS proposed a simplification of the zoning between Integrally Protected Zones and Eco-Development Zones, but without a new PMP being adopted. The Park Board has nevertheless authorised the use of this zoning pending a new management plan (map below).



THE VISION FOR THE PARK

The vision for the next 20 years (the duration of Noé's management mandate) is for the Conkouati-Douli National Park to become an intact, protected haven for Central Africa's emblematic biodiversity, benefiting local communities and indigenous peoples and helping to mitigate global climate change.

Over the next five years, Noé aims to strengthen (recruit, train and equip) the marine and terrestrial protection teams, set up an ecological monitoring and research team and extend the park's essential infrastructure to accommodate this new staff. This will enable the park to take stock of the ecological situation on land and at sea, strengthen protection against illegal mining and industrial fishing in particular, involve local people in park management and improve access to subsistence needs and basic social services. In addition, revenue-generating processes should contribute to the park's financing mechanisms via a carbon credit programme and the development of tourism.

To achieve this, operations can be divided into :

6 PILLARS

- 1 **MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE**
Partnerships, HR, finance, communication.
- 2 **INFRASTRUCTURE & LOGISTICS**
Investment & operations.
- 3 **PROTECTION & SECURITY**
Anti-poaching and surveillance.
- 4 **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**
Ecological monitoring, research, species specific action.
- 5 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
Involvement in management, living conditions.
- 6 **FINANCING MECHANISMS**
Revenue generation and fundraising.

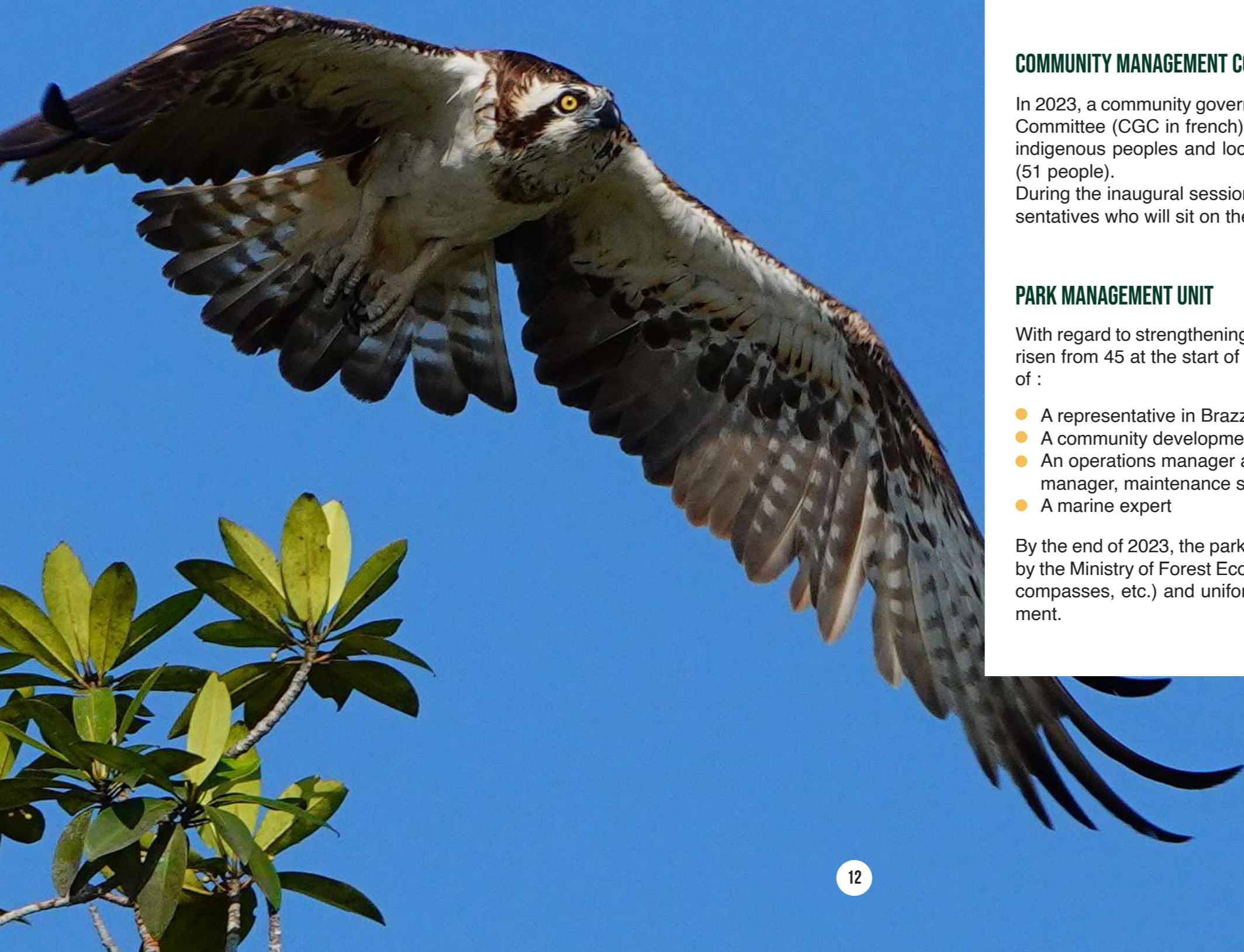
This annual report summarises the main achievements of the Conkouati-Douli National Park in 2023





MA IN ACHIEVEMENTS 2023

MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE



PARK GOVERNANCE: THE BOARD

As a reminder, after four years without a technical partner, Noé and the Congolese government have set up a new governance body, the Board, as well as a management unit in 2021. The Board is made up of 8 members, 4 appointed by Noé, 2 appointed by the Congolese government and 2 members from the local communities. The Board meets once a year, the last meeting being in February 2023.

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CGC)

In 2023, a community governance body was also set up, called the Community Management Committee (CGC in french). The CGC is made up of representatives of local communities, indigenous peoples and local authorities from the Districts of Nzambi and Madingo-Kayes (51 people).

During the inaugural session, the CGC's internal regulations were adopted and the 2 representatives who will sit on the park's board, were elected.

PARK MANAGEMENT UNIT

With regard to strengthening the Park Management Unit (PMU), the number of park staff has risen from 45 at the start of the year to 69 by the end of 2023. This includes the recruitment of :

- A representative in Brazzaville
- A community development team: head of department, 4 assistants and a cartographer
- An operations manager and his logistics team (logistician, storekeeper, drivers, grage manager, maintenance staff, caretakers, etc.).
- A marine expert

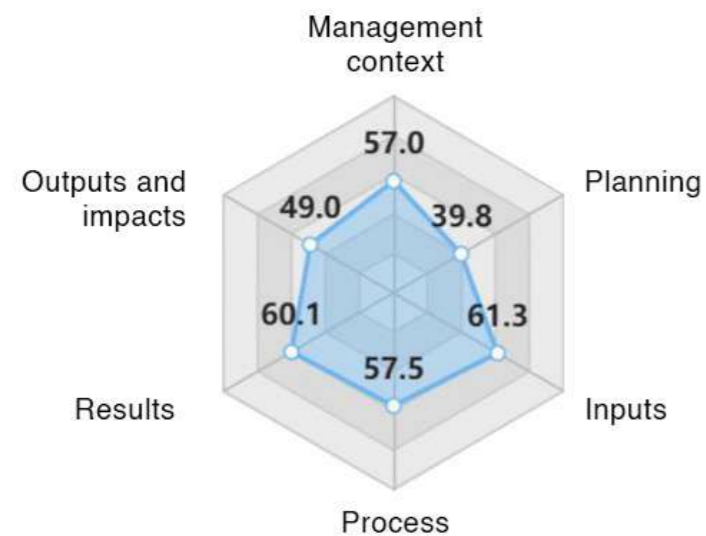
By the end of 2023, the park employed a total of 64 national staff (including 9 made available by the Ministry of Forest Economy) and 5 expatriate staff. Field equipment (tents, mattresses, compasses, etc.) and uniforms have been supplied to the 27 staff in the protection department.

ACCORD DE SIÈGE

As far as management and governance tools are concerned, after a long period of exchange with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the end of 2023, an “Accord de Siege” was signed between Noé and this Ministry on 12 January 2024 to grant certain tax and statutory advantages to the NGO Noé in Congo, In return for Noé’s long term engagement in the Country.

ASSESSING MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

In order to assess the effectiveness of the park’s management, an IMET (Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool) took place in March 2023. The tool makes it possible to define reference levels, facilitate planning, analyse the state of conservation and focus assessments of management effectiveness on conservation objectives. The park obtained an IMET Index score of 54.13 (out of 100), bearing in mind that parks considered to be supported by good management are around 70.



INFRASTRUCTURE & LOGISTICS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

The year 2023 saw the recruitment of an Operations Director and his team. The department now employs 22 people, including a director, 1 logistics officer, 1 garage manager, 1 storekeeper, 4 car drivers, 2 boat drivers, 1 carpenter and 6 maintenance staff and 5 watchmen.

LOGISTICS

As far as logistical equipment is concerned, the park has been provided with a marine vessel (9m with a 2 x 150hp engine) for marine surveillance, a new vehicle (for a total of 4) and 4 new motor-bikes (for a total of 8) for terrestrial missions, as well as a new outboard motor (85hp) for the Noubi ferry. Crossing the Noubi river with this ferry is the only way to get to the park's headquarters.

INFRASTRUCTURES

Concerning park infrastructure, a contractor was hired to build :

- 1 operations room with an armoury, equipped with IT and communications equipment for permanent contact with teams in the field;
- 1 building with 4 studios for technical staff;
- 3 buildings, each with 5 individual rooms, housing the support staff;
- Total refurbishment of a guesthouse (with 5 rooms);
- The renovation of a sanitary building for support staff;
- The launch of the construction of a tourist lodge;
- The acquisition of 8 large tents to create temporary accommodation.

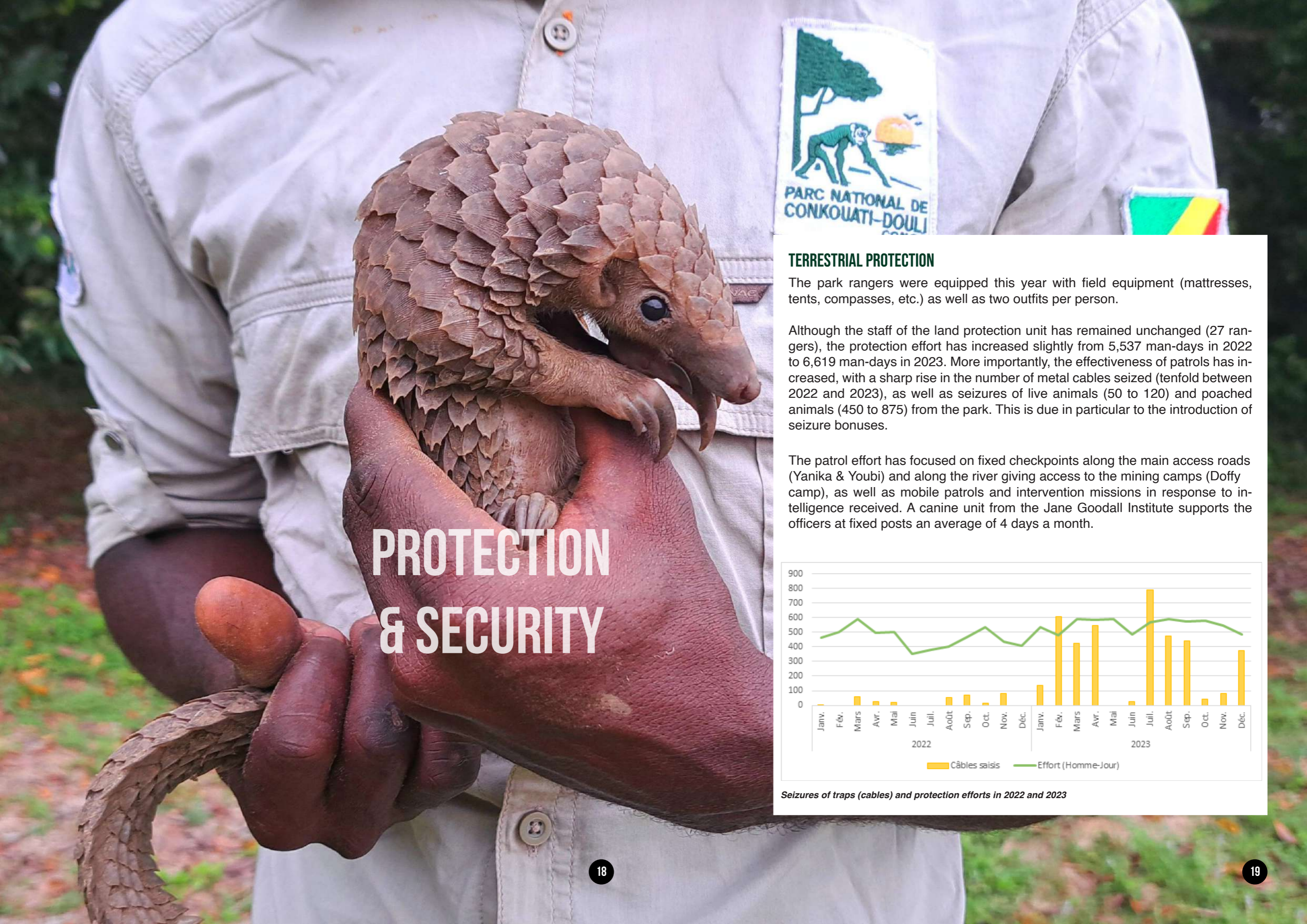
This will allow permanent accommodation at the park's headquarters by the end of 2023 for 6 managers, 15 workers and 20 eco-guards.

The Jane Goodall Institute, one of the park's partners, which conducts research and reintroduction activities in the park, has rehabilitated a site for protection staff. This site can accommodate 4 staff during surveillance missions.



Operations room (left) and one of the workers' houses





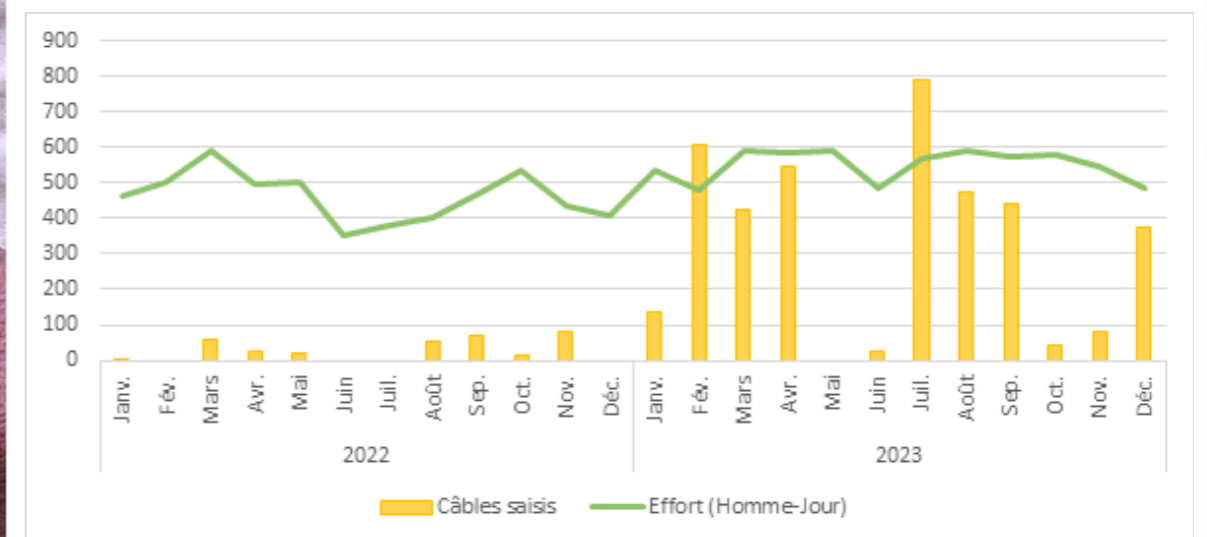
PROTECTION & SECURITY

TERRESTRIAL PROTECTION

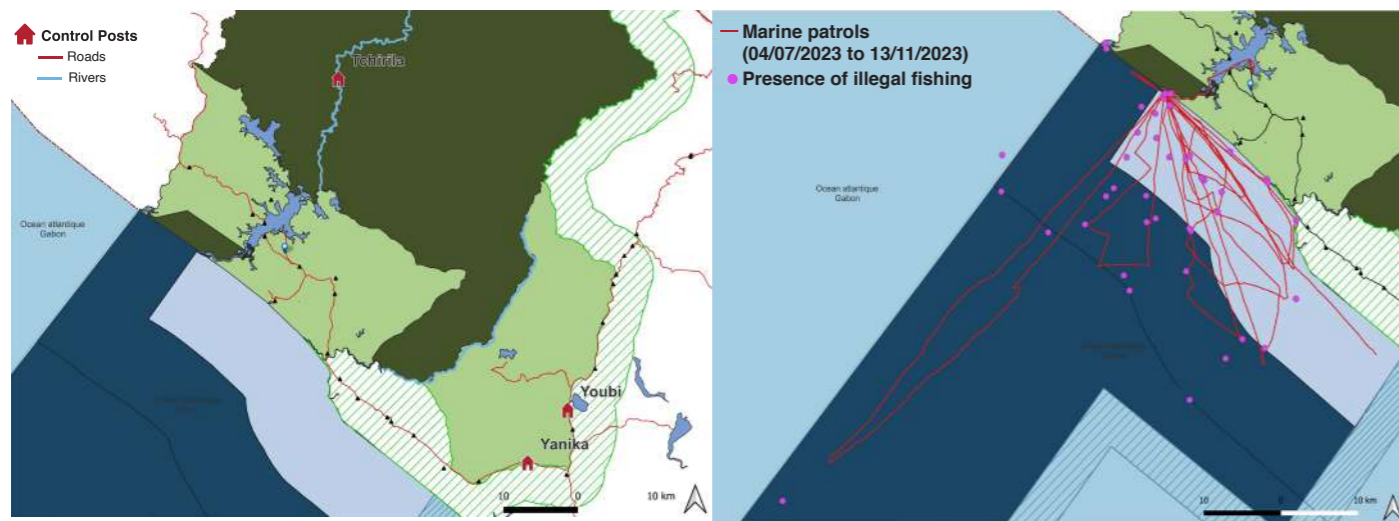
The park rangers were equipped this year with field equipment (mattresses, tents, compasses, etc.) as well as two outfits per person.

Although the staff of the land protection unit has remained unchanged (27 rangers), the protection effort has increased slightly from 5,537 man-days in 2022 to 6,619 man-days in 2023. More importantly, the effectiveness of patrols has increased, with a sharp rise in the number of metal cables seized (tenfold between 2022 and 2023), as well as seizures of live animals (50 to 120) and poached animals (450 to 875) from the park. This is due in particular to the introduction of seizure bonuses.

The patrol effort has focused on fixed checkpoints along the main access roads (Yanika & Youbi) and along the river giving access to the mining camps (Doffy camp), as well as mobile patrols and intervention missions in response to intelligence received. A canine unit from the Jane Goodall Institute supports the officers at fixed posts an average of 4 days a month.



Seizures of traps (cables) and protection efforts in 2022 and 2023

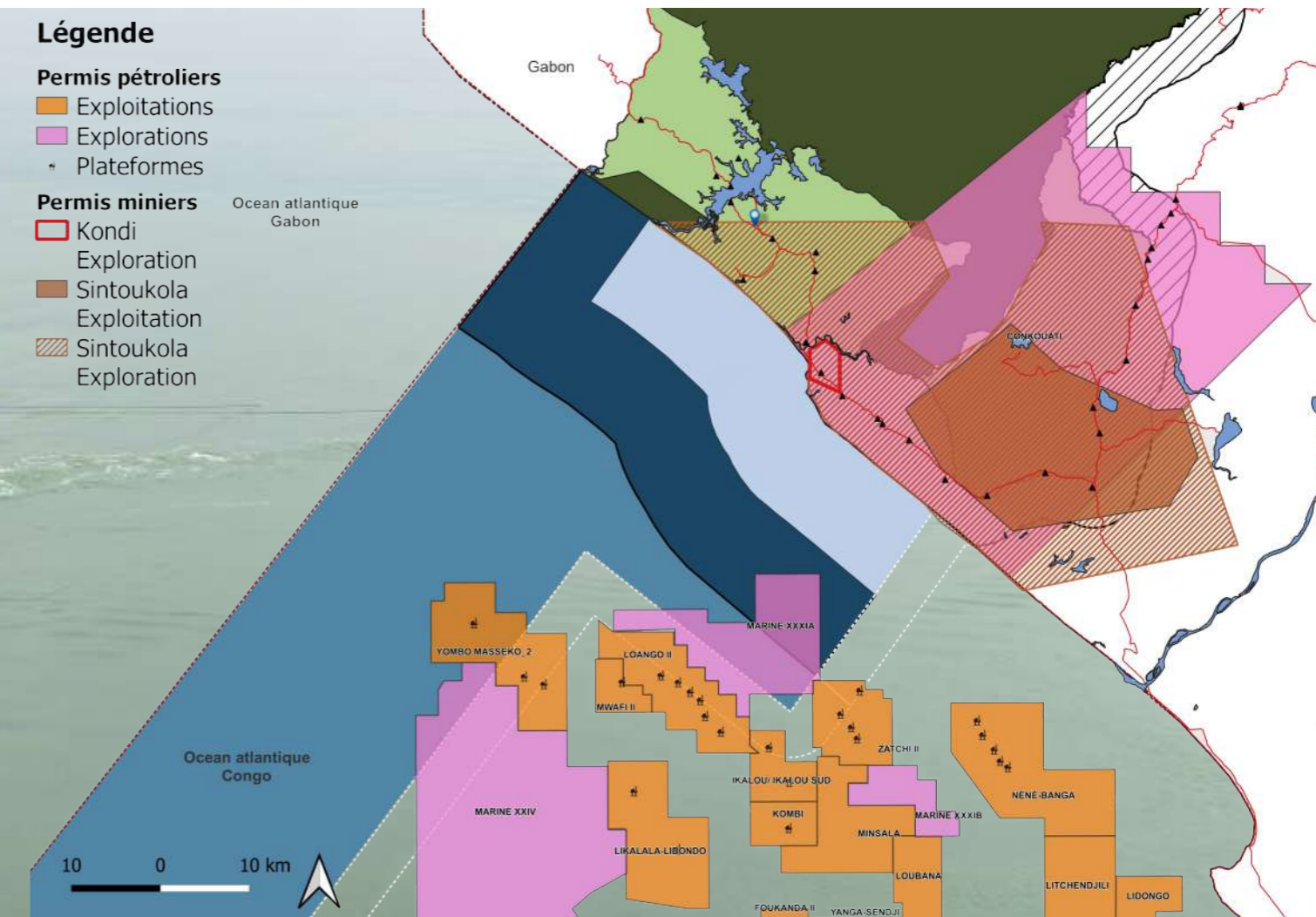


MINING

Artisanal mining remains a major threat to the integrity of the park, with an estimated 800 people in the integrally protected zone.

Despite the government's promises, there has been no intervention by the state security forces. The park intends to step up the pressure on these mainly foreign miners by increasing the number of protection staff from 27 to 70 in 2024. At the end of 2023, park staff were able to arrest 16 people from the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as soldiers involved in mining in the park.

In addition to artisanal mining, several industrial mining exploration permits (for gold and oil) have been granted in the park and its buffer zone. Correspondence has been sent to the Congolese government to ensure that this exploration and exploitation does not take place inside the park.



MARINE SURVEILLANCE

Thanks to the arrival of a vessel for maritime surveillance and a marine expert in July, 29 missions at sea were organised, totalling 79 hours of patrols and 1,875 km covered between July and December 2023. During these missions, 53 boats were observed, including 43 motorised wooden pirogues from Pointe Noire, 2 semi-industrial Chinese metal boats with mechanical gillnets (focused on shark fishing) and 5 industrial Chinese trawlers, all illegally present in the park. In addition, 3 local fishing boats were observed, which are authorised to fish in the area. Of the 50 illegal boats, 43 have been made aware of the illegality of their actions and have left the park. There has since been a reduction in the number of boats fishing illegally in the park, particularly industrial fishing boats, which are now continuing this activity at the park boundary.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

PARTERSHIPS

A number of partners are involved in nature conservation within the park, using partnership agreements (MoUs).

RENATURA



is financially and logistically supported by the park to monitor sea turtles during the nesting season from October to March. These teams are based in 6 camps on the park's beaches. During the 2022 - 2023 season, a total of 688 turtle nests were counted, including 483 olive ridley turtles, 200 leatherbacks and 5 green turtles. In addition, 49 turtles were freed from fishing nets.

HELPCONGO



(Habitat Ecologique et Liberté des Primates) continued to manage a chimpanzee sanctuary (4 islands) and monitor a reintroduction site (Triangle). The association has also undertaken other initiatives, such as cleaning up some of the park's beaches and building a pre-school centre. In addition, the park has supported HELP in obtaining funding to carry out an inventory of manatees.

JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE



uses the east of the park as a reintroduction site for mandrills and chimpanzees collected from their sanctuary at Tchimpounga and provides a canine surveillance unit (see Protection above). JGI has rehabilitated a camp for park eco- guards close to their reintroduction site.

The park also welcomed 2 students from ENSAF (École Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie et de Foresterie) and 4 students from ENEF (École National des Eaux et Forêts) working on conservation and protection of the park.

ECOLOGICAL MONITORING

The park undertook camera trap monitoring using 8 strategically placed traps to carry out an initial inventory of the presence/absence of species and the state of populations (juveniles, injuries, etc.).



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SETTING UP THE DEPARTMENT

The park's priority objective for 2023 was to set up a Community Development Department, which was launched in March 2023 following the recruitment of a Head of Department. Today, the department has 6 employees, including a fisheries assistant, a human-wildlife conflict assistant, facilitators and a cartographer. Respect for the human rights of local communities is at the heart of the department's activities.

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CGC)

To ensure that an inclusive framework for territorial governance is put in place, all 31 villages in the park have been visited to ensure transparent elections of delegates from the villages or indigenous communities, and regulations for the Community Management Committee (CGC in french) have been developed. This platform enables communities in the park and its buffer zone to express their needs and difficulties through 51 representatives, including indigenous peoples. The CGC's main requests and recommendations are forwarded to the Park's Board, which includes 2 community representatives elected during the CGC's inaugural session. The CGC will meet twice a year.

MANAGING HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

A survey of the intensity of devastation of plantations by wildlife in each village showed that in 32% of villages the intensity was low or non-existent, in 52% of villages the intensity was medium and in 16% of villages the intensity was high. Several options are available to protect plantations against incursions, including bees, chilli pepper, strong-smelling biological products, trenches and electric fences. In 2023, two systems were piloted: an electric fence and a biological barrier.

The type of farming most commonly used around the park is slash-and-burn. To be able to fence off plantations against incursions, they need to be grouped together to form a large enough area so that crops can be rotated within this space for at least a decade. An initial pilot site has therefore been identified in the village of Mvandji, where the plantations are grouped together. An electric fence and a biological barrier (with a strong odour) over 600m each were installed and have proved effective to date.

ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER

In the 31 villages in the park, all 40 boreholes (built by the government in 2014) had broken down due to a lack of monitoring and maintenance. The park was able to rehabilitate 20 boreholes this year, ensuring the operation of at least one water point in the main villages in and around the park.



FINANCING MECHANISMS

INCOME GENERATION

Conkouati-Douli National Park is mainly financed by public funds, philanthropic donations and the private sector. The park also generates income from tourism and carbon.

TOURISM

In order to develop tourism, the park has received support from the CEERC project (Conservation through Economic Empowerment in the Republic of the Congo, funded by USAID) to draw up an ecotourism development strategy, drafted by Solimar. The document analyses the park's tourism potential and the strategies to be put in place to exploit this potential more effectively.

In order to diversify the tourist infrastructure, construction of a lodge under park management has begun and will be completed by mid-2024. This lodge will offer a slightly higher standard of accommodation than that currently available through the 4 existing operators (Kunda Lodge, Noubi Resort, HELP, Agedurene), and will generate income for the park.

Today, the park only receives tourist entrance fees to the park (15 euros per day for expatriates and 7.5 euros for nationals), which will amount to around 7,000 euros for the 289 tourists received in 2023. Of course, the spin-offs from the tourist activity itself, which have not yet been quantified, also include the jobs created by these operators and the sale of products by the communities.

CARBON

To better understand the park's carbon sequestration potential, Noé signed a partnership agreement with Treevive, which carried out a feasibility study to generate funds through the sale of carbon credits. This study demonstrated a sufficiently interesting potential for a REDD+ project guaranteeing 300,000 ha of forest cover, which could generate benefits for the park and its communities. The project document is currently being developed placing the credits on the market, potentially in 2025.

FUNDRAISING

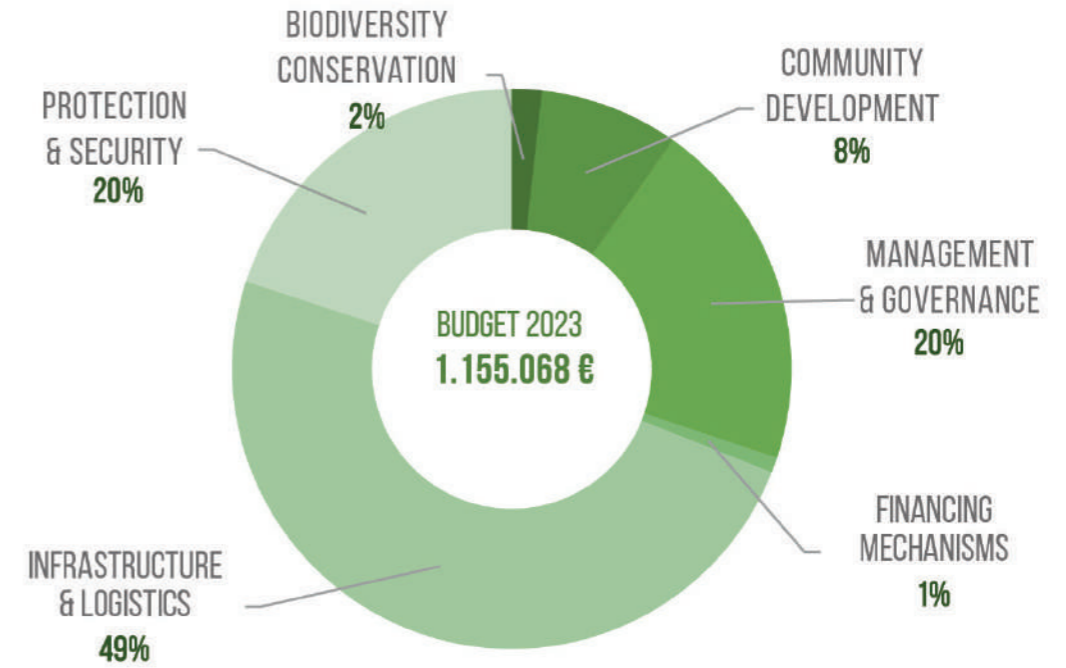
Contributions from the international community for the sustainable management of this globally important heritage remain the main source of revenue, as is the case for most of the world's protected areas, which are considered to be public goods. Noé has identified 4 new sources of public funding for 2023: Canada (Affairs Canada), the United States (US Fish & Wildlife Service and USAID via CEERC) and the European Union (Naturafrica).

These funds have not yet been committed in 2023 and will be committed in 2024. Discussions with new private donors have also been undertaken, but have not yet resulted in concrete financial commitments.

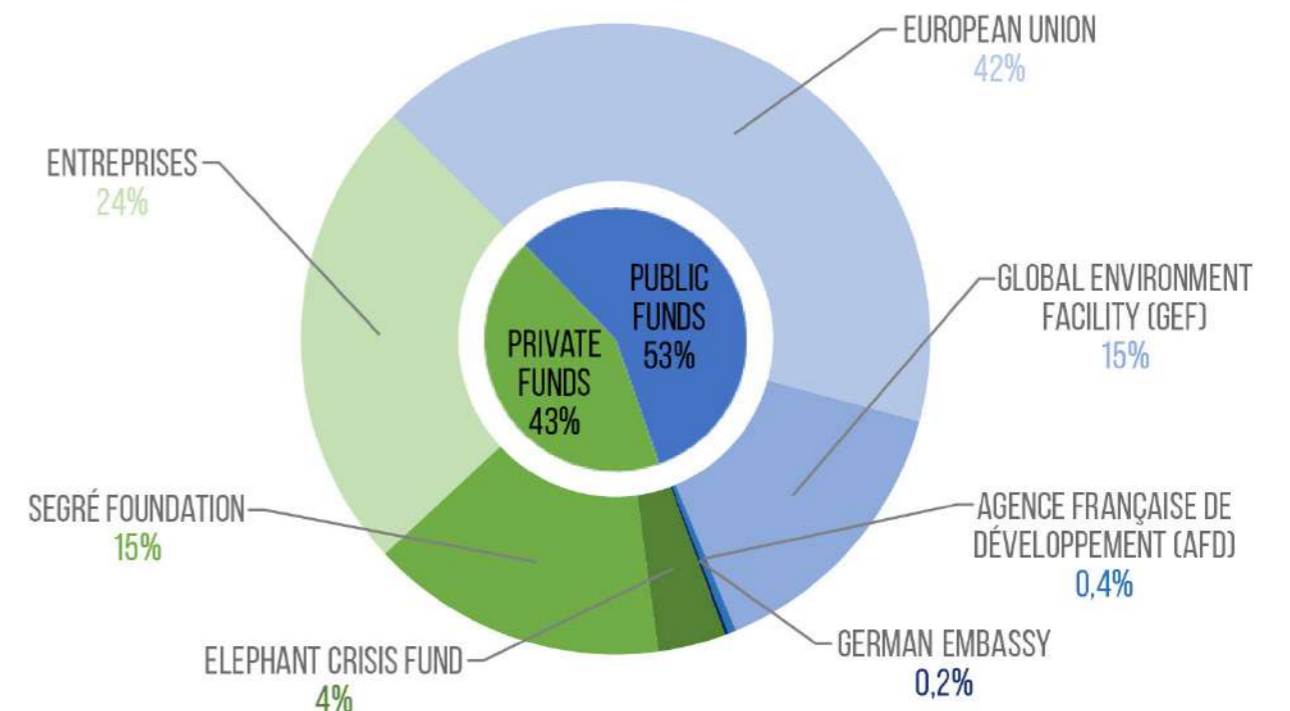
FINANCIAL REVIEW

INVESTMENTS 2023

EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT



SOURCES OF FUNDING





Noé is a non-profit nature conservation association of general interest, founded in 2001.

In 2023, Noé was working in 7 countries around the world to safeguard and restore biodiversity, for the well-being of all living species, including humans.

Following a partnership with African Parks, Noé has created a programme dedicated to long-term management of protected areas in partnership with governments and local communities. Hereby, Noé contributes directly to international commitments to protect 30% of the earth's land and 30% of its seas by 2030. Today Noé has assumed responsibility for the management of three protected areas in Africa - the Termit & Tin-Toumma reserve in Niger, the Binder Léré Complex of Protected Areas in Chad and the Conkouati-Douli National Park in the Republic of Congo.

FINANCIAL PARTNERS



Noé works according to the strategic guidelines of the Congolese Wildlife and Protected Areas Agency.

Noé is technically supported by the African Parks incubator programme.

