

The first edition of an environmental comic book (on the importance of forests and tree planting in the community) has been prepared for printing. It is aimed at secondary schools but, in a region where there is a paucity of reading material, will be assured a much wider adult audience.

The education programme is also reacting practically to the problems between park and people, in particular the demand for wood which in some areas poses a considerable threat. Development agency funds have been obtained for a reforestation project in one critical area and a technical officer has been recruited locally and trained to set up tree nurseries and tree planting activities involving the local villages.

Chimpanzee Conservation Programme

The project has recently started a chimpanzee conservation programme in the southern sector of the Parc National des Virunga. It focuses on habituation of chimpanzees to tourism, and has the same conservation goals as the gorilla programme. The chimpanzee programme is funded by the Messerli Foundation through FZS. The chosen site was severely threatened by illegal charcoal exploitation but support for the project has resulted in a Ministerial decree stopping charcoal production.

Future Activities

The project's three programmes have continued into 1988, but with less emphasis on mountain gorillas as this work is mainly the responsibility of Conservateur en Chef (Chief Warden) Makabuza Kabirizi and his staff. Certain areas of the eastern lowland gorilla range will receive attention from the park managers, but the project will mainly focus on chimpanzees and environmental education. WWF has agreed to core funding for the education work, but the programme is also trying to bring in national agencies and development funds.

Project 1954

Garamba Rehabilitation Project

WWF Expenditure 1986/87 — US\$ 203,452

(Total since 1984 — US\$ 522,118)

Project Executants: C. Mackie, Project Manager; F. Smith, Technical Specialist; K. Smith.

Participating Organization: Institut Zaïrois Pour la Conservation de la Nature (Zaire Institute for the Conservation of Nature — IZCN).

Objectives: To continue the Garamba Rehabilitation Project to restore the park's infrastructure to former levels by supplying equipment and the expertise necessary to train staff in order to control poaching.



*The last remaining wild population of northern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum cottonii*) is found in Garamba National Park, Zaïre: a total of some 20 individuals. WWF is helping protect them.* Photo: WWF/C. Mackie

Park National de la Garamba (Garamba National Park — PNG) in north-eastern Zaïre is representative of a unique ecosystem in the Sudanian/Guinean biome, situated between the forests of West Africa and the savannahs of East and Central Africa. It has a population of around 35,000 buffalo, 8000 elephants, 1300 hippopotamus and 175 giraffes. The last remaining wild nucleus of northern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum cottonii*) occurs here, and now numbers 21 individuals (others are found in zoos).

PNG was formed in 1938 by the Belgian Government. In recent times the park's infrastructure collapsed. Poaching became a severe problem. There was no equipment and the remaining park staff were untrained and demoralized.

The initial phase of the project covered ordering and delivery of equipment. This was a major undertaking. The equipment was shipped from the UK to Kenya

and then trucked to Zaïre via Uganda. The most important items were an aircraft, four sturdy motor vehicles, two tractors and trailer, grass mowers, a heavy-duty truck, radios, solar panels and batteries, workshop equipment, spares, fuel and guard uniforms. In addition, living quarters for staff were constructed or renovated.

Reorganization of the headquarters at Nagero has been a major aspect of the project, particularly the mechanical and carpentry workshops. The park staff are now equipped to undertake major construction, vehicle repairs and maintenance. Good quality furniture is being made for tourist and staff accommodation.

An attempt is being made to revitalize the elephant domestication centre. Three young elephants were captured and are ready for training. Four adult elephants are being retrained, and a prototype saddle has been made in preparation for elephant-back safaris for a limited number of tourists.

Training of staff at all levels takes place continuously.

Development of the park infrastructure has begun with the construction of several patrol posts, one of which is located in the area of rhino concentration. It has been necessary to clear tracks and make several river crossings. A major achievement was the construction, at park headquarters, of a low-level crossing over the Dungu River to allow direct and rapid access into the park — the headquarters being outside. Four educational displays were completed for tourists.

Periodic aerial searches for rhino are conducted. As a result, the park managers are gaining an understanding of the distribution and home range of individual rhinos. The team has carried out two sample counts. It has conducted a total count of buffalo. A detailed inventory of biological resources is being compiled. A bird list has been completed. The researchers then moved on to make a vegetation map and describe the plant community. Climatic data have been collected and analysed.

Poaching is now reasonably well-controlled. Subsistence poaching, mainly for buffalo, is continuing, but only four incidents of elephant poaching have been noted since the project started. Perhaps the most spectacular result of protection has been that since March 1984 the white rhino population has increased by six animals. Two rhinos were poached shortly after the start of the project, but there have been no known cases of poaching since then.

Project 3249

Ituri Forest, Conservation of Okapi

WWF Expenditure 1986/87 — US\$ 55,851
(Project initiated 1986)

Project Executant: J. Hall.

Participating Organizations: Institut Zaïrois pour la Conservation de la Nature (IZCN); New York Zoological Society.