

A Preliminary Checklist of Mammals and Plants: Conservation Status of Some Species in Salonga National Park



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Abstract

The Salonga National Park, the world's second largest tropical forest park and the largest in Africa (UNEP 2004; Gauthier-Hion et al. 1999; Kemsf and Wilson 1997; Thompson-Handler et al. 1995), is located in the central basin of the Congo River and consists of two blocks: the northern and the southern sectors. Fifty-two mammal and 132 plant species were identified in the Salonga National Park between 1997 and 2005 in 11 different locations, and through different methods. Among mammals, eight primate species were confirmed. SNP is, however, among the least described protected areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo, despite its speculated high potential biodiversity. This lack of ground-truth knowledge on the SNP is attributable to the isolation and insecurity imposed by armed gangs (e.g. Krunkelsven et al. 2000), which precluded access to the park by the conservation and scientific communities. To craft a sound conservation plan for the SNP, as is the case for other protected areas, there is need for scientific information on SNPs biological diversity and distribution (Blake and Hedges 2004; Sutherland 2000, 1999 and 1996). This paper intends to provide an overall preliminary description of the major biodiversity components in the SNP with emphasis on the conservation status of indicator large mammals and plants across 11 sites of the SNP. Additionally, this paper will attempt to assess the extent of human activities in the SNP.

About the Author

Bila-Isia Inogwabini's previous work has included surveys of eastern lowland gorillas, chimpanzees, and elephants in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and bonobos in Salonga National Park. He recently served in the Regional Forest Program, Central Africa, with the Wildlife Conservation Society, where he has worked on the MIKE (Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants) survey. Before joining the World Wide Fund for Nature/DRC Program, where he is currently the project manager for the CBFP-funded project in the Lac Tumba Landscape, he oversaw the Elephant Monitoring Program in the Odzala National Park in Congo-Brazzaville.