



Protection in practice: Salonga National Park

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ICCN ecoguards.

Salonga National Park is the green heart of Africa. Part of vast, remote rainforests in Democratic Republic of Congo, measuring 33,350 km², it is the largest forest national park on the continent. Despite its isolation, Salonga's luxurious rainforests suffer from heavy poaching. Three hundred ecoguards, officially assisted by the army, are in place to protect this exceptional and endangered World Heritage Site, where bonobos, forest elephants and the endemic Congo Peacock still thrive.

Protecting a protected area in Central Africa can be a complicated and tough job. Wildlife specialist Samuel Matungila and park manager Oliver Nelson stress the need of law enforcement. They also point out the importance of developing alternative livelihoods. Less poverty reduces the need to poach. Rural development officer Papy Lolatui shows how improved agricultural practices add to forest conservation in the buffer zones around Salonga.

Salonga National Park is divided into two large blocks, with a 45-kilometre wide corridor between Salonga North and Salonga South. The park is co-managed by the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN) – in charge of nature conservation in DRC on behalf of the national government – and the Worldwide Fund for Nature WWF.