

WILDLIFE WOOD PROJECT: SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN TIMBER CONCESSIONS

Protected areas are fundamental for conservation, but are often too small and fragmented to support wide-ranging or rare species. As around half of Africa's remaining forest cover is allocated to timber exploitation, improved wildlife management in timber concessions is therefore critical. In West and Central Africa, a particular threat to both conservation and local livelihoods is commercial hunting for the bushmeat (wild meat) trade, which is often exacerbated by logging activities providing access to new forest areas for hunters. ZSL has established the Wildlife Wood Project (WWP) to help logging companies adopt low-impact logging practices and apply innovative, practical and cost-effective measures for managing wildlife in their concessions, thereby helping to provide a sustainable future for both wildlife and people.

A collaborative project in Ghana and Cameroon

Wildlife in West and Central African forests faces a multitude of anthropogenic threats, including commercial bushmeat hunting, habitat loss or modification and risk of disease. Protected areas cover only around 10% of the remaining forest in Africa and, because of a lack of resources, governments often do not have the capacity to manage wildlife outside them. Paradoxically, because it has the capacity on the ground, the logging sector has the potential to help ensure the long-term survival of species inhabiting areas that do not benefit from legal protection.

Following an inter-governmental conference hosted by ZSL in December 2003, Ghana and Cameroon were selected as case studies for sustainable forest management in timber concessions in West and Central Africa respectively.



Through a collaboration with Timbmet, a major importer of African hardwoods to the UK, ZSL has established partnerships between the WWP and progressive local timber producers in Ghana and Cameroon. In addition to timber companies, the WWP collaborates with a diversity of other stakeholders, including governments, timber certification bodies, conservation groups, universities and local communities.

ZSL's Wildlife Wood Project (WWP) works in Ghana and Cameroon and uses these countries as case studies for West Africa's Upper Guinean and Central Africa's Congo Basin forests respectively. © ZSL, adapted from CIA

The management practices of timber companies are critical to conservation efforts. © ZSL



Everything wood should be



Timber certification

By increasing access to markets or providing market premiums, timber certification provides a strong economic incentive for timber companies to engage in more sustainable practices. The process of certification rests on internationally agreed standards, based on economic, social and environmental sustainability criteria and measured via a set of indicators. A forest area managed to the required standards receives certification.

However, the interests of wildlife are currently poorly integrated into timber certification standards and wildlife indicators have yet to be developed for most standards. The WWP aims to address this shortcoming of the certification process by identifying simple, cost-effective but scientifically-rigorous wildlife indicators that can be used to audit timber companies' management of wildlife in their concessions. With agreed wildlife indicators, certification bodies will be better able to determine whether sufficient efforts are being made by a given company to maintain wildlife status in its concession.

The bushmeat trade



Roads used by timber companies open up previously inaccessible forests and exacerbate commercial bushmeat hunting.
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Commercial bushmeat hunting negatively impacts conservation efforts and local communities which depend on hunting for subsistence. In West and Central Africa, logging activities often accelerate unsustainable hunting of wildlife for the bushmeat trade. The forest roads constructed by timber companies can make previously inaccessible forests accessible to commercial hunters and bring in timber workers who themselves hunt wildlife for subsistence and sale. By assessing wildlife offtake and use

around timber concessions, the WWP is able to gain insights into local bushmeat economies and the impacts of hunting on wildlife, and develop interventions to control hunting while minimising adverse impacts on local people who may have few alternative sources of food or income.

Capacity building

The WWP is training timber company staff, government officials, local communities and university students in wildlife monitoring techniques so that future generations of timber concession stakeholders will be able to continue efforts to conserve wildlife alongside sustainable development.



The WWP is training a wide variety of personnel in wildlife monitoring techniques.
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Policy links

Laws exist to protect wildlife in logging concessions and to ensure that only sustainable logging is carried out in restricted areas. However, commonly governments lack the capacity to enforce these laws and poaching and illegal logging are rife. Partnerships such as the WWP, involving conservationists, the private sector and local government, enable improved forest management and timber certification to be linked to more general, high-level policy initiatives, such as the European Union (EU)'s FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in Trade) licensing system, which aims to improve governance and ensure that forest policy and laws are enforced in producer countries wishing to export timber to the EU.

This project is funded by Timbmet, the UK Government's Darwin Initiative and the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation.

WWP-Cameroon collaborates with Pallisco and SFID timber companies, MINFOF, CIFOR and Yaoundé I and CRESA universities. WWP-Ghana collaborates with JCM, LLL and Samartex timber companies, the Forestry Commission and Ghana (Legon) and KNUST universities.

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January 2009



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