

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

**1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:**

21-04-1997

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

DD	MM	YY
30	12	86
Designation date		

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Site Reference Number					

**2. Country:**

Gabon

**3. Name of wetland:** Wongha-Wonghé

**4. Geographical coordinates:** 00°45'S 09°25'E

**5. Altitude:** (average, max., min.) sea level

**6. Area:** 380,00 ha

**7. Overview:** (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

Wongha-Wonghé is an extensive coastal region composed of plains, gently rolling hills and plateaux. The site is bordered to the west by the Atlantic, and to the other directions by various rivers, streams and lakes. The area is dissected by a number of small coastal rivers. Some of them give rise to erosion features such as the "amphitheatre" of the Cirque du Grand Bam-Bam. Vegetation varies from humid tropical forest to stunted woodland and savannah with thickets of *Aucoumea klaineana* and other ligneous species.

**8. Wetland Type** (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document.)

marine-coastal: A · B · C · D · E · F · G · H · I · J · K

inland: L · M · N · O · P · Q · R · Sp · Ss · Tp · Ts  
· U · Va · Vt · W · Xf · Xp · Y · Zg · Zk

man-made: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant: I W Sp Ts M E F

**9. Ramsar Criteria:** (please circle the applicable criteria; see point 12, next page.)

1a · 1b · 1c · 1d | 2a · 2b · 2c · 2d | 3a · 3b · 3c | 4a · 4b

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 1a,2a,3b

**10. Map of site included?** Please tick **yes**  -or- **no**

(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

**11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:**

**Please provide additional information on each of the following categories by attaching extra pages (please limit extra pages to no more than 10):**

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**12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page.** (Please refer to Annex II in the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document).

1a: Wongha-Wonghé is a good example of a wetland characteristic of the west coast of Central Africa.

2a: The wetland supports an appreciable assemblage of rare and vulnerable species like the chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes*, *Gorilla gorilla gorilla*, elephant *Loxodonta africana* and white pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*.

3b: The wetland regularly supports substantial numbers of individuals from particular groups of waterfowl, indicative of wetland diversity.

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**13. General location:** (include the nearest large town and its administrative region)

Wongha-Wonghé is situated in the coastal region of Gabon, between the cities of Libreville and Port Gentil, about 50 km south of Libreville and 99 km south of the equator.

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**14. Physical features:** (e.g. geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

The Ramsar site comprises parts of the plains, the hills and plateaux of the coastal plain. Much of the area is flat, and soils are predominantly ferralitic. The small coastal rivers can give rise to rather severe erosion features. The coastline is flat and straight, with sandy beaches. Average temperature is 26°C, and annual rainfall varies between 2000 mm and 2200 mm, with two dry seasons each year. During the longer dry season, which lasts from June till September, there is almost continuous cloud cover.

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**15. Hydrological values:** (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc)

no information available

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**16. Ecological features:** (main habitats and vegetation types)

The vegetation varies from humid tropical forest, mangroves and swamps to stunted woodland savannah, covered in grass species during the rains, with thickets of stunted *Aucoumea klaineana* and other ligneous species.

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**17. Noteworthy flora:** (indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc)

see 16. *Ecological features*

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**18. Noteworthy fauna:** (indicating, e.g., which species are unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important; include count data, etc.)

Wongha-Wonghé supports several threatened species. The two most notable threatened mammal species in the park are the chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes*, and the western race of the gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla gorilla*. Elephant *Loxodonta africana* also occurs. Birds include white pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*.

There have been a number of introductions of exotic species to the area, including Burchell's zebra *Equus buchelli*, black-tailed gnu *Connochaetus taurinus*, peccary *Tayassu* sp., wild boar *Sus scrofa* and pony *Equus caballus*. All but the zebra have established themselves in the park.

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**19. Social and cultural values:** (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc.)

Since access to the area is strictly limited to those people who are invited by the president, the only social and cultural values known are aesthetic values and limited recreational values.

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**20. Land tenure/ownership of:**

- (a) site: the reserve is state owned  
(b) surrounding area: no information available
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**21. Current land use:**

- (a) site: the reserve is essentially managed as a Presidential Reserve, where hunting parties are organised for guests of the President. Access is strictly limited, and only really possible by light aircraft from outside the area.  
(b) surroundings/catchment: no information available
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**22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:**

- (a) at the site: Intensive poaching has been reported in the past, but poaching control instigated by the guide de chasse is apparently very effective. Forestry exploitation has occurred in the reserve. Several exotic species have been introduced to the area, including Burchells zebra, black-tailed gnu, peccary, wild boar and pony. Only the zebra did not establish itself in the park.  
(b) around the site: no information available
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**23. Conservation measures taken:** (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

The reserve used to be divided in three basic areas. Currently the area is essentially managed as a Presidential Reserve, which means access is strictly limited. Anti-poaching activity is undertaken. The area was designated a National Park in 1967, a few years after it was set up as three Domaines de la Chasse: Wonga-Wongué, Grand Bam-Bam and Petit Bam-Bam. The flora and fauna are totally protected, and cultivation is prohibited. There is no management plan.

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**24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:** (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)

There is a proposal to expand this reserve so that it will include some valuable areas of swamp forest.

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**25. Current scientific research and facilities:** (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)

virtually none (details not stipulated)

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**26. Current conservation education:** (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)

none

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**27. Current recreation and tourism:** (state if wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type and frequency/intensity)

only hunting parties for guests of the President

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**28. Jurisdiction:** (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment etc.)

no information available

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**29. Management authority:** (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)

The reserve falls directly under the authority of the President of the Republic of Gabon

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**30. Bibliographical references:** (scientific/technical only)

- IUCN (1987). *A Directory of Wetlands of International Importance*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. 460 pp.
- Jones, T.A. (ed.)(1993). *A Directory of Wetlands of International Importance - Part I - Africa*. Ramsar Convention Bureau, Gland, Switzerland.
- Nicoll, M. and Langrand, O. (1986). *The conservation of forest ecosystems in Gabon*. IUCN/WWF Project 3247, Systems review of protected areas in Gabon.
- Schepers, F.J. and Marteijn, E.C.L. (eds.). (1993). *Coastal waterbirds in Gabon, winter 1992*. WIWO-report nr. 41. Zeist.
- Stuart, S.N. and Adams, R.J. (1990). *Biodiversity in Africa and its islands - Its conservation, management and sustainable use. Draft for comment*. IUCN, WWF and ICPB.
- Tutin, C. and Fernandez, M. (1983). *Recensement des gorilles et des Chimpanzé's du Gabon*. CIRMF, Gabon.
- World Bank (1993). *Ecologically sensitive sites in Africa. Volume I: Occidental and Central Africa*. Compiled by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre for the World Bank, Washington DC, USA.

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