



# Ramsar Sites Information Service

## Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

### Congo

14 Ramsar Site(s) covering 13,813,865 ha

#### Bas-Kouilou-Yombo

Site number: 2,325 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Kouilou

Area: 55,124 ha | Coordinates: 04°25'07"S 11°51'21"E | Designation dates: 25-09-2017

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The Site includes the estuary of the River Kouilou and its sandy shores and sand banks, other permanent and temporary rivers, lakes, the Yombo lagoon, marshes including some dominated by *Cyperus papyrus*, and flooded and swamp forests including mangrove forests. Due to its diverse ecosystems and the permanent presence of water, the Site maintains populations of chimpanzees, sitatunga (*Tragelaphus speki*), African buffalo and hippopotamus, and fish such as the slender lungfish (*Protopterus dolloi*) which is endemic to the Congo Basin and neighbouring river basins. Exploitation of parts of the Site such as the Monje mombomo river has long been forbidden, ensuring the stability of habitats and the maintenance of biological diversity. Silting at the mouth of the River Kouilou and Yombo lagoon constitutes a real threat to the Site.

#### Cayo-Loufoualeba

Site number: 1,740 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Kouilou

Area: 15,366 ha | Coordinates: 04°52'S 11°55'59"E | Designation dates: 13-12-2007

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Cayo-Loufoualeba. 13/12/07; Kouilou; 15,366 ha; 04°53'S 011°57'E. A complex of marine and continental wetlands in the south, including the Malonda mangrove, the Loemé and Malonda rivers, Cayo and Loufoualeba lakes, small streams, marshes and submerged forested islets, resulting in a highly diversified ecosystem. It is an important refuge for the Hippopotamus and Chimpanzee, species of conservation concern. About 378 bird species (including about 284 breeding birds) and a significant number of waterbird species restricted to the Congo-Guinea biome have been spotted, thus contributing significantly to maintaining the biodiversity of the region. As an important source of fish, fuel wood, water for domestic use, and other forest and water resources and as a site associated with traditional beliefs, it is of considerable socio-cultural value to the surrounding population. An overall hydrological balance is maintained by ground water recharge ensured by the lakes, flood prevention, shoreline stabilization and nutrient retention ensured by the marshes and vegetation cover. In the absence of a management plan for the site, it presently benefits from the hunting law which bans hunting from November to May every year. Resource use in some zones is also restricted to clan members, hence ensuring controlled exploitation of resources. Ramsar site no. 1740. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

## Conkouati-Douli

Site number: 1,741 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Kouilou

Area: 504,950 ha | Coordinates: 03°55'S 11°27'E | Designation dates: 13-12-2007

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Conkouati-Douli. 13/12/07; Kouilou; 504,950 ha; 03°55'S 011°27'E; National Park. A diverse complex of marine and continental wetland types on the border with Gabon (littoral coast and beaches, mangroves, lagoons, lakes, permanent rivers and streams, papyrus marshes and submerged swamp forests) results in a highly diverse fauna (1207 species in 129 families), makes it a refuge and reproduction zone for fishes, shrimps, crabs, waterbirds and mammals, and maintains the overall hydrological balance of the zone through groundwater recharge, flood prevention, shoreline stabilization and nutrient retention. The resulting fauna diversity contributes to maintaining the biodiversity of the region and gives the site its great biological, hydrological and economic importance. Species of global conservation concern include the forest elephant, gorilla, marine turtles, etc. Fishing and hunting are the major socio-economic activities. Harvesting of forest resources mostly for subsistence also occurs. The waters of the site are exploited for traditional and religious rites, making it culturally important. The National Park has an official management plan but also benefits from the fishing and hunting laws of Congo, further ensuring conservation of its resources. The appearance of invasive aquatic plants, practice of bush fires and slash and burn agriculture, and poaching of turtle eggs are major threats. Ramsar site no. 1741. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

## Grands affluents

Site number: 1,742 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Plateaux, Cuvette, Sangha et Likouala

Area: 5,908,074 ha | Coordinates: 00°28'12"N 17°04'43"E | Designation dates: 13-12-2007

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The Site consists of large expanses along the Congo River, which with its tributaries forms the most important hydrological basin in Central Africa. It features lakes, ponds, marshes, flooded and swampy forests, along permanent and temporary rivers such as the Ubangi, Sangha, Likouala-Mossaka and Alima, all Congo tributaries which give the Site its name. This diverse biotope hosts a wide variety of plants, macroinvertebrates, fish, birds, reptiles and aquatic mammals. It is home to endangered mammals such as forest elephant, gorilla and hippopotamus, and offers refuge to migratory fish and bird species. The migration of hippos along the Likouala-Mossaka and the Sangha maintains the depth of the rivers, and allows fish species belonging to the families Distichodontidae, Cyprinidae, Citharinidae and Clariidae to be present even during the dry season. The Site is prominent in the socio-economic development of the sub-region: the Ubangi and Congo rivers are used to transport goods between Central African Republic and Chad and the Atlantic Ocean. It supplies fish products to Brazzaville and Pointe Noire. The surrounding region is a development zone for forestry and cash crops such as oil palm and cocoa; rainforests in the Congo Basin are being cleared at an alarming rate amid global demand for mineral, energy and wood resources, and new roads have opened up vast tracts of virgin rainforests to legal and illegal loggers, miners and others. In this context, access to some of the Site's water bodies and forests is restricted or regulated.

## Lac Tél /Likouala-aux-herbes

Site number: 950 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Likouala

Area: 438,960 ha | Coordinates: 01 11'21"N 17 13'45"E | Designation dates: 18-06-1998

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The Site is an undisturbed and unique wetland ecosystem which comprises a swamp forest, flooded and wooded savannahs and floating prairies. The soil and climate provide good conditions for the herbaceous and shrub flora which support western lowland gorillas (the Site supports one of the region's densest populations) and chimpanzees, elephants, buffaloes, duikers and hippopotamuses. The water of Lac T    is turbid, and has high organic content; in contrast the rivers support rich fish resources and particularly populations of African darter (*Anhinga rufa*) throughout the year. The Site is owned by the local communities, which depend on its various natural resources. They practice subsistence agriculture around the wetland's firmer ground, and fishing is also a major activity. Access to the lake is conditioned by a ritual organized under the authority of Boha village notables. Several villages are located in or around the Lac T    Community Reserve, and the villagers depend heavily on the lake's natural resources for fish, agricultural crops, medicines and materials for construction and canoes. Traditional territorial limits and land tenure rights are well established and generally respected. However, in the absence of a regular conservation presence, previously-established quotas regarding the off-take of fish and wildlife have been allowed to lapse.

## Leketi-Mbama

Site number: 2,222 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: D   artement de la Cuvette-Ouest

Area: 774,965 ha | Coordinates: 00 59'55"S 14 47'04"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Leketi-Mbama is a unique inland wetland with a mixture of varied habitats including lakes, marshes and floodplains. It supports a wide range of animals including the critically endangered western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*), the endangered chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), the vulnerable hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) and the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). Its flora, characterized by floating meadows, savannah and swamp forests, also provides a safe haven for migratory bird species including the African darter (*Anhinga rufa*) and the woolly-necked stork (*Ciconia episcopus*). It also hosts a diverse wealth of fish species, with more than 15 species recorded. The main hydrological function of the site is groundwater recharge: it retains about 35% of the direct precipitation occurring in the area. Traditional agriculture, fishing, hunting and collection of non-timber forest products are some of the activities in the Site. The major threats are illegal hunting and uncontrolled tree-cutting. The Site has no management plan at present although the critical status of the gorilla population underlines the urgency of such planning. However it benefits from the provisions of the Congolese Land and Forest Code and the resident customary laws.

## Les Rapides du Congo-Djou 

Site number: 1,857 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Brazzaville

Area: 2,500 ha | Coordinates: 04 19'S 15 10'59"E | Designation dates: 03-04-2009

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Les Rapides du Congo-Djou . 03/04/09; Brazzaville; 2,500 ha; 04 19'S 015 11'E. A complex comprising two of the principal tributaries of the River Congo, the Djou  and the Loua, permanent and temporary rivers, marshes, forested islands and aquaculture ponds. It is one of the rare zone of rapids on the Congolese side of the Congo River basin. The l'    du Diable, one of three forested islands found within the site, provides refuge for a high concentration of birds that have escaped the ever-increasing human pressures that have led to the disappearance of several species. The waterways of the site support important populations of fish and other invertebrates as they serve as spawning grounds and part of the migration path along the River Congo. While the site is poor in endemic flora, it is known to sustain over 163 species of flora in 60 families. The site is a magnet for tourists due to its unique features, which create a spiritual and cultural attraction to the area. The main economic activities within the site, however, are market gardening, fishing, harvesting of wine palm oil, transport, and presence of a hydroelectric dam. While there is currently no management in place, there are national laws enforced for its protection. Ramsar site no.1857. Most recent RIS information: 2009.

## Libenga

Site number: 1,743 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Likouala

Area: 59,409 ha | Coordinates: 02°51'N 18°00'E | Designation dates: 13-12-2007

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Libenga. 13/12/07; Likouala; 59,409 ha; 02°51'N 018°00'E. Located in the north and extending to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the level of River Oubangui, the site consists of River Libenga (325 km long), marshes on both sides of the river, small streams, floodplains, and swamp forests. It plays an important role in biodiversity maintenance, hydrological regulation, and socio-economy of the zone. The river is an important refuge for the hippopotamus population coming from River Oubangui where they face some threats. A wide variety of endemic and migrant fish species inhabit these waters, and the prairies around the river serve as a refuge for some migratory birds (Marabou Stork and Pelicans) and migratory buffalos. The river is important for local transportation. Fishing and palm wine exploitation constitute the main economical activities. The site has no management plan at present but benefits from national and local resource management measures such as restrictive hunting seasons and limitation of exploitation of certain zones to clan residents. River Libenga continues to benefit from the program of control of aquatic invasive species that was initiated by the government in 1998. Ramsar site no. 1743. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

## Loubetsi-Nyanga

Site number: 2,221 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Niari

Area: 251,151.1 ha | Coordinates: 02°55'05"S 12°01'23"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Characterized by a range of habitats including dryland gallery forests, swamp forests and river bodies, the Loubetsi-Nyanga is an important biological reserve which supports varied flora, macroinvertebrates, fish, reptiles, birds and terrestrial mammals, and provides refuge for several notable species including the forest elephant, gorilla, chimpanzee, hippopotamus, hyena, leopard, lycaon and the giant ground pangolin. The Site is also home to the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*), African dwarf crocodile (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*) and the critically endangered slender-snouted crocodile (*Mecistops cataphractus*). The hydrological functions of the Site include sediment retention, flood control and groundwater recharge. The local communities, estimated at 12,500 inhabitants, are highly dependent on the numerous resources of the Site for food, medicine, transportation and goods for trading with nearby towns. Slash-and-burn agricultural practices, poaching, and illegal logging are the major threats to the Site.

## Sangha-Nouabalé-Ndoki

Site number: 1,858 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Sangha, Likouala

Area: 1,525,000 ha | Coordinates: 01°40'59"N 16°25'59"E | Designation dates: 04-03-2009

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Sangha-Nouabalé-Ndoki. 03/04/09; Sangha, Likouala; 1,525,000 ha; 01°41'N 016°26'E. National Park. Found in the northwest of Congo, the site is characterised by lakes, marshes, ponds, floodplain forests, swamps and the Sangha river, whose main tributary is the Ndoki. Various species of conservation concern are found here; flora from the family Fabaceae and Orchidaceae as well as fauna such as the Chimpanzee, Leopard and the Giant Pangolin amongst others. The site provides refuge for palearctic waterbirds such as *Glareola pratincola* as well as for the Nile Crocodile and fish such as *Heterobranchius longifilis* that take refuge as the extent of their aquatic habitat declines during the dry season. Apart from the resources provided by the site, it also plays an important role not only in the hydrological regulation of the Congo Basin but also in the socioeconomic development of the country. The Sangha is a communication route through which local communities can move their timber to Brazzaville. Agriculture, fishing, hunting, research, and extraction of sand and clay for construction are also practiced. At present there is a management plan in place only for the National Park, but a management plan will be elaborated for the entire site following the adoption of the National Policy on Wetlands. Ramsar site no. 1858. Most recent RIS information: 2009.

## Site Ramsar Ntokou-Pikounda

Site number: 2,079 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Sangha, Cuvette  
Area: 427,200 ha | Coordinates: 00°10'14"N 16°16'50"E | Designation dates: 08-09-2012  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Site Ramsar Ntokou-Pikounda. 18/09/2012; Sangha, Cuvette; 427,200 ha; 0°10'15"N 16°16'50"E. A complex of permanent freshwater rivers and lakes surrounded by marshes, trees, shrubs and ponds. The diverse habitat types favour a rich biodiversity including several IUCN Red-Listed species such as Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), Western lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) and Central Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes troglodytes*). The site serves as refuge to several migrating waterbirds, and it supports above 180 fish species and several plant species with great economic value for the local population, who harvest and trade on non-timber forest products and carry out subsistence agriculture, fishing and hunting. It is very important in maintaining the general hydrological balance of the Congo basin and ensuring ground water recharge. In addition to its economic and hydrological values, it is of great cultural, historical and religious value to the resident population. The site is mostly threatened by invasive exotic aquatic plant species, destructive fishing techniques, agriculture by burning, and poaching. Ramsar site no. 2079. Most recent RIS information 2012.

## Site Ramsar Odzala Kokoua

Site number: 2,080 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Sangha, Cuvette-Ouest  
Area: 1,300,000 ha | Coordinates: 00°55'59"N 14°52'E | Designation dates: 18-09-2012  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Site Ramsar Odzala Kokoua. 18/09/2012; Cuvette-Ouest, Sangha; 1,300,000 ha; 00°56'00"N 014°52'00"E. National Park. With permanent freshwater rivers surrounded by very dense seasonally flooded freshwater swamp forests and ponds, the site is characterised by semi-evergreen forests, swamp forests, saline marshes, shrubs and a rich savannah forest. The diversity of forest types provide a habitat for a wide range of species including the Lion (*Panthera leo*) and Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), which are savannah species, and forest primates such as the Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) and Western lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*), all listed in the IUCN Red List of threatened species. It supports 25 families and over 150 species of indigenous fishes and 108 migratory fish species, as well as 1,062 plant species, including several endemic species, usually harvested by the local population for food and trading in nearby towns. The main activities carried out in the site are agriculture, aquaculture, hunting, and harvesting of non-timber forest products. It is also an eco-touristic site and an ecological research ground. Ramsar site no. 2080. Most recent RIS information 2012.

## Site Ramsar Vallée du Niari

Site number: 2,081 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Niari, Bouenza, Kouilou  
Area: 1,581,000 ha | Coordinates: 03°46'59"S 12°30'E | Designation dates: 18-09-2012  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Site Ramsar Vallée du Niari. 18/09/2012; Niari; 1,581,000 ha; 03°47'S 012°30'E. A complex of permanent freshwater rivers and lakes surrounded by seasonally flooded freshwater swamp forests. It supports a rich diversity of plant and animal species including several IUCN Red-Listed species such as the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), Western lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) and Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*). It is a migrating path for over 200 waterbird species and serves as a spawning ground and food source for several fish species. Its main hydrological functions include groundwater recharge, flood control, shoreline stabilisation, and sediment trapping. Ecotourism activities, especially bird-watching, are currently being developed in the site. It is of great cultural value to the resident population, who depend on fishing, hunting, agriculture and harvesting of forest products for a source of livelihood. The site is threatened by slash and burn agriculture and wood logging. This has promoted the current development of a management plan for its exploitation. Ramsar site no. 2081. Most recent RIS information 2012.

## Tchicapika-Owando

Site number: 2,223 | Country: Congo | Administrative region: Département de la Cuvette  
Area: 970,165.8 ha | Coordinates: 00°54'02"S 15°57'33"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2015  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Tchicapika-Owando is a biodiversity-rich wetland which supports fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, and invertebrate species and plays an important role in the hydrological regulation of the Congo river basin. The Site is known to support a multitude of species of fauna and flora, with its grassy savannah, rainforest and rural complexes particularly characteristic of the Guinean-Congolese/Zambezian biogeographic region. Notable species include the leopard (*Panthera pardus*), water chevrotain (*Hyemoschus aquaticus*), forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), African civet (*Civettictis civetta*), side-striped jackal (*Canis adustus*), the critically endangered western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*), crocodiles, tortoises and reptiles. The aquatic vegetation and marshy forests offer ideal feeding and breeding ground for waterbirds such as the African darter, egret, woolly-necked stork and the tawny eagle. The local human population depends on the resources of the Site for its livelihoods, such as traditional fishing, hunting, subsistence farming, livestock rearing, collection of non-timber forest products and medicinal plants.