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## CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (CARPE) - GARAMBA AND CHINKO PROTECTED AREAS

### OVERVIEW

USAID is supporting Garamba National Park (GNP) in northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Chinko Nature Reserve in eastern Central African Republic (CAR), in partnership with African Parks and the governments of DRC and CAR.

### BACKGROUND

GNP is one of the oldest national parks in Africa and covers an area of 4,900 square kilometers, with a buffer zone of hunting reserves to the east, south and west as well as South Sudan's Lantoto National Park to the north. GNP and the three hunting zones collectively comprise the 14,760 square kilometer Garamba Complex. With both forest and savanna habitats, GNP is home to 165 species of mammals, 363 species of birds, 82 species of reptiles, and 42 species of amphibians. The park lies on the transition zone between two centers of endemism: Guinea-Congolian forest and Guinean-Sudanese savannah, hosting species typical to both of these biogeographic zones. Garamba thus supports important populations of elephant, buffalo and hippo. GNP also contains the last population of Kordofan giraffe in DRC, and is the last known area where the northern white rhino existed in the wild. Large populations of Uganda kob, Lelwel's hartebeest, buffalo and lion also roam the park. Other important forest species found in the hunting areas include chimpanzees, bongo, giant forest hog and sitatunga.

The Chinko Nature Reserve (Chinko), one of the last remaining strongholds for elephants in CAR, covers an area of 19,846 square kilometers. Chinko is situated in the Chinko-Mbari drainage basin in the east of CAR. Chinko has rich biodiversity and a mosaic of sparsely inhabited Medio-Sudanian and Sudano-Guinean savanna with some patches of Congolian lowland rainforest. This mosaic of ecosystems at such latitude on the African continent makes this area incredibly rich and unique in biodiversity. Due to its wide diversity of habitats, Chinko is an important ornithological site with more than 400 bird species recorded. It is also home to large antelopes, notably the Giant Eland and the Bongo. Recently, researchers documented more than 10 species of primates, both forest and savannah elephants, 23 even-toed ungulates, four ant-eating mammals and 21 carnivores including the African wild dog, lion and nine species of mongoose.

Over the past few decades, GNP and Chinko have been challenged with massive increases in poaching pressure on elephants and other species. Armed poachers and rebel groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army, take advantage of the instability generated by conflict and the lack of strong government presence in the area.

In Chinko, armed groups pose a serious threat to wildlife by facilitating or directly engaging in poaching. In addition to the threats caused by professional poaching, wildlife populations have decreased due to bushmeat hunting by local populations and nomadic pastoralists' cattle migrations through conservation areas.

At present, African Parks manages both GNP and Chinko. African Parks will manage GNP for the next 10 years in partnership with DRC's wildlife and protected areas authority, *Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature* (ICCN), and has managed Chinko since 2014 in partnership with the Central African Republic Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting & Fishing and has a 50 year agreement. The overall goal of African Parks' role with GNP and Chinko is to achieve sustainable long-term conservation management through a public-private relationship with the local governments.

## **PROGRAM**

The Garamba-Chinko Protected Areas project strengthens biodiversity conservation planning and implementation. By 2021, a higher standard of park management and reduction of threats to wildlife will be achieved in GNP and Chinko project areas, successfully restoring and conserving key wildlife species in each complex, and establishing a foothold for governance, security and stability for surrounding communities as well as the wider DRC-CAR-South Sudan trans-boundary landscape. This will be achieved by; i) improvement of the security of the protected areas, ii) strengthened management capacity for the protected areas and iii) development of partnerships and constituency for conservation.

## **2017 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **Garamba National Park**

- Total of 40 elephants collared in 2017;
- Three new giraffe calves born;
- Recovery of 58 kg of ivory, 26 kg of giant pangolin scales;
- 41 rangers completed Basic Field Ranger (BFR) training courses; 32 completed specialized Mamba training courses; 101 completed leadership courses and 15 completed tracking training;
- 137 poaching camps were seen and if possible destroyed, 41 arrests made with 13 of them leading to convictions; 32 firearms confiscated;
- The Grand Magasin (large Belgian-built store building) refurbished and once more in use (building was burnt down by the LRA in 2009); 65 new ranger houses and five managers houses constructed; 50 staff ablution blocks constructed throughout the Station; total of 230 km were graded and 607 km manually maintained using local community teams; 139 km of road opened again since they were last in use over 10 years ago;
- Over 9,000 people treated by Nagero Hospital; 4 mobile clinics conducted, benefitting around 1,700 people.
- 283 people visited Park; two primary schools supported during the year (Nagero and Gangala Na Bodio), and one secondary school (Nagero); teacher's salaries were supplemented and environmental education support given.

## **Chinko Nature Reserve**

- Obvious behavioral changes in the wildlife, moving during day and in the open;
- 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Chinko core zone) kept free from cattle herders and poachers;
- More than 14,000 km of ground patrols and 150,000 km of aerial patrols completed;
- Fully functional Very High Frequency (VHF) radio network installed covering 4,000 km<sup>2</sup>;
- 14 Wildlife Monitors trained and recruited for monitoring of the wildlife;
- 9 Lord Derby eland, 4 Roan antelope and 3 Lewlel's Hartebeest collared with GPS transmitters;
- Weapons, animal skins, dried meat and uniforms confiscated from local and Sudanese poachers;
- A total of 58 rangers completed the Advanced Ranger training course
- Construction work done on 1 management house and workshop, maintenance of airstrips/roads