

Boumba Bek National Park is a national park in extreme southeastern Cameroon, located in its East Province.

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History[edit]

The park was never logged; according to the World Wildlife Fund's scientific advisor in the region, Paul Robinson Ngnegueu, "poaching is the biggest threat to Boumba Bek." [1] This is a result of the late 1980s economic depression in Cameroon. [2] The indigenous people followed the poachers, attracted by the financial opportunities. [2] They would sell their product through "intermediaries" for money and more hunting supplies. [2]

In 1995, the park was named an Essential Protection Zone, its first official status. [2] It was not formally established as a national park, however, until the Cameroonian government decreed the creation of Boumba Bek and Nki National Parks on 17 October 2005. [1] Its establishment is a result of a summit held by seven central African leaders in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, in February 2005. [1]

Cameroon and Gabon are currently working on the TRIDOM project, a conservation initiative leading to a land management plan which will oversee access to and use of forests. [3] It will create a tri-national "interzone" bordered by the Minkebe, Boumba-Bek, Nki, and Odzala National Parks and the Dja Wildlife Reserve. [3] This project is part of a conservation movement toward the zoning and designation of new protected areas. [3]

Geography and climate[edit]

Boumba Bek is located between the Boumba and Bek Rivers in southeast Cameroon, from which it derives its name. [1] The site is accessible only by pirogue and several hunting trails. [1] It is sandwiched between the towns of Yokadouma and Moloundou in the Boumba et Ngoko department in Cameroon's East Province. [4] The park is situated from latitude 2°09 to 2°20 N and longitude 15°35 to 15°50 E. [4]

Sixteen bais, or forest clearings, have been discovered in Boumba Bek National Park. [4] Of these, four are currently being monitored for large mammalian activities. [4]

The park has a tropical climate with temperature ranging from 23.1 to 25°C with an average annual temperature of 24°C. Its relative humidity varies between 60 and 90% while annual rainfall is 1500 mm per year. [2] According to the Cameroon Ministry of Agriculture, Moloundou has a rainy season from September to November, a dry season from November to March, a rainy season from March to June, and a dry season from July to August. [2]

Demographics[edit]

The area around the park, as defined by the World Wildlife Fund, has a population of 33,169 people, mostly comprising ethnic Bantus [4] and, despite being named a minority in

Cameroon's constitution of 18 January 1996, Baka Pygmies.[2] These include the Kounabembe, Bangando, Bakwele, Mbomam, Essel, Mbimo, and Mpong-Mpong tribes.[4] Non-indigenous employees of logging companies and Muslim merchants from northern Cameroon make up a sizeable amount of the total population.[4]

Biodiversity[edit]

Flora[edit]

A majority of the park is semi-evergreen lowland rainforest, along with several patches of closed-canopy evergreen forest.[1] Small areas of seasonally flooded forest, swamp-forest, and grassy savannas also exist within its boundaries.[1]

Fauna[edit]

Boumba Bek, according to the Environmental News Service, "encompass[es] a biodiverse group of plants and animals." [1] Chimpanzees, forest antelope, crocodiles and bongos are all found in Boumba Bek National Park.[1] In addition, roughly 300 fish species, three of which are not named, swim in the park's rivers.[1]

The forests of Cameroon contain some of the highest population density of African forest elephants of any nation, and Boumba Bek is no different,[1] with an elephant density of roughly 2.5 for Boumba Bek and Nki combined.[5]

Boumba Bek was designated an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.[1]

See also[edit]

Geography portal