

= Nki National Park =

Nki National Park is a national park in southeastern Cameroon , located in its East Province . The closest towns to Nki are Yokadouma , Moloundou and Lomie , beyond which are rural lands . Due to its remoteness , Nki has been described as " the last true wilderness . " It has a large and varied ecosystem , and it is home to over 265 species of birds , and the forests of Cameroon contain some of the highest population density of forest elephants of any nation with an elephant density of roughly 2 @. @ 5 per square kilometer for Nki and neighboring Boumba Bek National Park combined . These animals are victims of poaching , which has been a major problem since an economic depression in the 1980s . The indigenous people follow in the footsteps of the poachers , attracted by the financial opportunities . The removal of logging industries from the park , on the other hand , has been a success ; it is no longer considered a major threat to Nki 's wilderness .

= = History = =

The World Wildlife Fund has been in the process of conserving the park since the 1980s , including ridding the area of the logging business . This movement , however , has been met with some criticism , especially by members of the remote village of Ndongo , Cameroon . Before WWF arrived , Ndongo was a bustling logging town of 300 residents with fairly good roads and plentiful working opportunities . Once the organization established itself , it pressured the logging companies to operate in a more environmentally friendly manner . The logging companies pulled out of the town in 1988 , leaving broken machinery and severely damaging Ndongo 's economy . According to Leonard Usongo , manager of WWF projects in southeast Cameroon , " we cannot convince a community of the need to protect forests if we don ' t acknowledge their problems or their poverty . "

Today , logging is no longer a major problem , as " it would require a lot of investment to develop necessary infrastructure , such as roads , for [its] operations , especially in the southern portion of Nki . " According to the WWF 's scientific advisor in the region , Paul Robinson Ngnegueu , " poaching is the biggest threat to ... Nki . " It is a result of the late 1980s economic depression in Cameroon . The indigenous people followed the poachers , attracted by the financial opportunities . They would sell their product through " intermediaries " for money and more hunting supplies .

Cameroonian authorities fought poaching in Nki by applying repressive measures to the indigenous population . An example of this was in January 1997 , when Bakas were forced from their homes near Mambele . These actions turned the Bakas against the WWF , which they considered " an organization of whites who want to protect animals " . Every year , poachers travel up the Dja for central Nki , where elephant ivory is abundant . Strong currents on the river are a deterrent for half the year , but after that , according to freelance journalist Jemini Pandya , the fauna is easy to prey upon .

Nonetheless , when Pandya of the WWF visited Nki National Park in the early 1990s , she described it as " the last true wilderness . " In 1995 , the park was named an Essential Protection Zone , its first official status . It was not formally established as a national park until the Cameroonian government decreed the creation of Boumba Bek and Nki National Parks on 17 October 2005 . This establishment was not without opposition ; the Bakas have continually asked to reduce the park 's boundaries and ask for higher usage rights , which invaded upon " their " land .

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 . It will create a tri @- @ national " interzone " bordered by the Minkebe , Boumba @- @ Bek , Nki , and Odzala National Parks and the Dja Wildlife Reserve . This project is part of a conservation movement toward the zoning and designation of new protected areas .

= = Geography and climate = =

The park is located in a remote area of southeastern Cameroon , which " has helped maintain most

of its pristine forest and beauty . " It has never been completely explored . Largely hilly in its terrain at an elevation of 350 ? 650 m , it falls within the Sangha ecoregion . Nki is crossed by several large rivers , including the Dja River . A waterfall , Nki falls , is located on the river in the park , giving " a tinge of exoticism to the landscape . " The park is situated from latitude 2 ? 05 to 2 ? 50 N and longitude 14 ? 05 to 14 ? 50 E. It covers a surface area of 3 @, @ 093 km² (1 @, @ 194 sq mi) and straddles two administrative divisions in the East province : Ngoyla in Haut Nyong and Moloundou in Boumba et Ngoko Division . The closest towns to Nki are Yokadouma , Moloundou and Lomie , beyond which is rural lands .

Seventy @-@ three bays , or forest clearings , have been discovered in Nki National Park . In April 2006 , while looking for elephant groups , a WWF team discovered the largest bay in the region , Ikwa Bai . Dr. Mike Loomis , a member of the group , confirmed that this bay is slightly larger than Dzanga Sangha Bai (Central African Republic) , which had previously held the record . He also reported little human development adjacent to the bay , and noticed 21 elephants and 16 buffaloes in it simultaneously . The bay has a small creek running through its center , which sits atop a bed of rocks and sand . A large mineral pit is located next to the stream . It is the habitat of several wildlife species , the largest @-@ numbering being chimpanzees , elephants , buffaloes , and gorillas .

The park has a tropical climate with temperature ranging from 23 @. @ 1 ? 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 . According to the Cameroon Ministry of Agriculture , nearby 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 .

= = Demographics = =

The area around the park , as defined by the World Wildlife Fund , has a human population of 22 @, @ 882 , mostly ethnic Bantus and , despite being named a minority in Cameroon 's constitution of 18 January 1996 , Baka Pygmies . These include the Djem , Bangando , Bakwele and Zime tribes . Non @-@ indigenous employees of logging companies and traders make up a sizeable amount of the population . The population density of the region is about five people per square kilometer , concentrated along the main Yokadouma @-@ Moloundou road . The villages around the park are mostly homogeneous as there are few non @-@ natives , most of whom work as civil servants or traders .

= = Biodiversity = =

= = = Flora = = =

As with Boumba @-@ Bek to the northeast , the main type of forest is semi @-@ evergreen with an open canopy dominated by the 50 ? 60 m Triplochiton , though it is mixed with large patches of closed evergreens . There are also some seasonally flooded Uapaca trees along the Dja River .

= = = Fauna = = =

Nki , according to the Environmental News Service , " encompass [es] a biodiverse group of plants and animals . " This has been confirmed by various studies over the years . Sitatunga , chimpanzees , forest antelope (largely duikers) , bushbucks , giant forest hogs , bush pigs , leopard , Nile crocodiles and bongos are all found in Nki National Park , along with " hundreds " of fish species .

The forests of Cameroon contain some of the highest population density of forest elephants of any nation , and Nki is no different , with an elephant density of roughly 2 @. @ 5 per square kilometer for Boumba Bek and Nki combined . The population has been steadily rising , from 1 @, @ 547 in 1998 to 3 @, @ 000 in 2006 . Gorillas are also reported to abundant ; there are an estimated 6 @, @

000 adults in Nki . The park is also home to diurnal primates , such as the threatened crested monkey , De Brazza monkey , and the black colobus , who reportedly only live east of the Dja River .

A 20 @-@ day study held by BirdLife International discovered 265 species of birds in the park . Of these , the yellow @-@ bellied form of forest robin is widespread . In the study , a pair of Ja River scrub warblers was discovered in a 1 hectare patch of Rhynchospora marsh ; its population must be small as there are few such marshes in Nki . Three species of forest nightjar have been observed in the park ; Bate 's and brown nightjars are common in southeastern Cameroon , while a rarer and unidentified third species ' call has been heard twice . It is likely that this is Prigogine 's nightjar , as its voice is identical to that of the only known specimen of this species which was found in the Democratic Republic of Congo . Two small owls , Sjostedt 's and African barred owlets coexist in Nki , due to similar habitat requirements .