IUCN Conservation Outlook Assessment 2014 **(archived)**
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# Manovo-Gounda St Floris National Park

## SITE INFORMATION

Country:
Central African Republic
Inscribed in: 1988
Criteria:
(ix) (x)

Site description:

The importance of this park derives from its wealth of flora and fauna. Its vast savannahs are home to a wide variety of species: black rhinoceroses, elephants, cheetahs, leopards, wild dogs, red-fronted gazelles and buffalo, while various types of waterfowl are to be found in the northern floodplains.
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# SUMMARY

## 2014 Conservation Outlook

**Critical**

The site is threatened by permanent human activities (poaching, grazing, agriculture, fires, diamond mining, insecurity) that have hugely impacted flora and fauna. The combination of the existing threats makes the situation complex. The insecurity as well as the insufficient means of the area does not allow any control. There is an urgent necessity to develop the emergency action plan as the last aerial survey shows a decrease of 75% of the large mammals in the last 5 years. The last great mammals populations are now concentrated in the periphery of the site. On the basis of the aerial inventories of 2010 it may be concluded that the property has lost its Outstanding Universal Value. However, there still remains a potential for regeneration based on the relict pockets of biodiversity and exchanges with neighbouring zones, but this potential is very fragile. Only urgent actions with international assistance and real involvement of the State could maintain this potential. However, the present political situation created by the overthrow of the current government by the Seleka rebellion on 24 March 2013, risks once again to prevent the implementation of the corrective measures and the preparation of an emergency action plan, necessary to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

## Current state and trend of VALUES

**Critical**
**Trend: Deteriorating**

The situation is very critical as well as the trend. The site is threatened by permanent human activities (poaching, grazing, agriculture, fires, diamond mining, insecurity) that have hugely impacted flora and fauna. The last great mammals populations are now concentrated in the periphery of the site. On the basis of the aerial inventories of 2010 it may be concluded that the property has lost its Outstanding Universal Value. However, there still remains a potential for regeneration based on the relict pockets of biodiversity and exchanges with

neighbouring zones, but this potential is very fragile. Only urgent actions with international assistance and real involvement of the State could maintain this potential.

## Overall THREATS

**Very High Threat**

The current threats have been at a constant very high level since a long time. Poaching and grazing are certainly the two major problems but fires, agriculture and mining also pose a very high threat to the site’s values and integrity. The difficulty to maintain and restore natural values of the site is related to this combination of problems.

## Overall PROTECTION and MANAGEMENT

**Serious Concern**

The situation is of serious concern. The present political situation created by the overthrow of the current government by the Seleka rebellion on 24 March 2013, risks once again to prevent the implementation of the corrective measures and the preparation of an emergency action plan, necessary to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Any enforcement activities are nearly impossible due to the situation of insecurity. It is therefore very difficult to mitigate pressures from poaching and grazing, as well as other threats.

# FULL ASSESSMENT

## Description of values

### Values

### World Heritage values

▶ **Very rich fauna of sudano-sahelian and sudano-guinean savannas**
**Criterion:(x)**

Several species of particular conservation concern occur within the park: black rhinoceros, elephant, leopard, cheetah, wild dog, shoebill and crocodile. Unfortunately, poaching still has a significant effect on rhinoceros and elephant numbers, and has in the past affected both leopard and crocodile. Red-fronted gazelle is also found within the park at its southern limit. Within the St Floris region, the most abundant large mammal would appear to be kob, with nine other fairly abundant ungulates including the duiker, waterbuck, hartebeest, oribi, topi, reedbuck, buffalo and warthog. Other conspicuous or noteworthy large mammals include hippopotamus, roan antelope, lion, giraffe and giant eland. Less common animals include golden cat, red-flanked duiker and yellow-backed duiker. Some 320 species of bird have been identified, with at least 25 species of raptor including bateleur and African fish eagle. There are large seasonal populations of pelican and marabou stork, and the park may be fairly important for both waterbirds and shorebirds. (WHC/Unesco website, 2012)

▶ **The largest savanna of Central Africa**
**Criterion:(ix)**

The Manovo Gounda St Floris National Park contains extraordinary natural formations. The Park straddles the Sudano-Sahelian and Sudano-Guinean biogeographical zones. This results in a variety of habitats from grassy plains

in the north to savannas with gallery forests in the south. The site encompasses the entire watershed of three major rivers (Manovo, Koumbala and Gounda) with grassy floodplains and wetlands. The plains are interspersed with small granitary inselbergs with, to the south, the rugged sandstone massif of the Bongos. The lowland areas are subject to both flooding and fire, and this is reflected to some extent in the vegetation. Further south, the higher ground is covered by bamboo open savannah, and woodlands associated with the hilly areas of the river sources. (SoOUV, 2011)

## Assessment information

### Threats

#### Current Threats

**Very High Threat**

The current threats have been at a constant very high level since a long time. Poaching and grazing are certainly the two major problems but there are also fires, agriculture and mining that together with the two main threats pose a very high threat to the site’s values and integrity. The difficulty to maintain and restore natural values of the site is related to that combination of problems. (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010)

#### ► Mining/ Quarrying

**High Threat**
**Inside site**

Small scale diamond mining exists with perturbations on fauna and flora as well on rivers, adding problems to the other threats. Diamond mining is important in the southern periphery of the site (Village Hunting Zones, Hunting Reserves). Only one site has been identified by the 2010 aerial survey . (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010)

#### ► Fire/ Fire Suppression

**High Threat**

**Inside site**
**Outside site**

Fires are frequently set for favouring diverse illegal activities (hunting, grazing, and agriculture). These fires contribute also to heavy changes in the ecosystems. According to the 2010 aerial survey, the fires are quite important in the southern periphery of the site (Village Hunting Zones? Hunting Reserves) and some of them are located within the site (southern part). (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010)

### ► Commercial hunting, Subsistence hunting

**Very High Threat**
**Inside site**
**Outside site**

Poaching is at a very high level for large mammals that are now quite rare in the site with savanna elephant almost extinct in the site. Subsistence hunting is also important in the site. The last aerial survey (2010) shows a fall of 75% for great mammals in comparison with the previous survey (20005)

### ► Livestock Farming / Grazing

**Very High Threat**
**Inside site**
**Outside site**

One of the main threats is due to grazing activities in the site from transhumant cattle coming from CAR, Chad and Sudan. According to the last aerial survey (2010), the total of domestic animal in the site is about 280000 heads but would be certainly higher for a survey during the great transhuming migrations. This number must be compared with the estimation (2010) of wild fauna: 50000. (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010)

### ► War, Civil Unrest/ Military Exercises

**Very High Threat**
**Inside site**
**Outside site**

In late 2007 the country’s civil conflict was acute in the northeast of the country, and not far across the border in Chad. In 2009 the property was still suffering from the disrupting effects of the conflicts and the arrival of Lord’s Resistance army rebels. But that year, the government was began to restore

the park's integrity by supplementing the guard force, providing military equipment to conservation teams and by promoting inter Ministry cooperation and the management of peripheral (UNEP/WCMC, 2012)
The global and local security situation remains very insecure and makes the management and protection of the site impossible Poachers, transhumant cattle herders, diamond miners are heavily armed and rebels from several regions operate within the site.

### ► Crops

**High Threat**
**Inside site**

Some agricultural activities are reported inside the site. Not at a very large extension but contributing to the global current threats. The 2010 aerial survey has observed fields in the southern periphery of the site (Village Hunting Zones and one field in the northern limit of the site (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010) Some clear-felling for agriculture is also reported (UNEP/WCMC, 2012)

## Potential Threats

**Data Deficient**

It is possible that petroleum prospecting is being conducted inside the property, accompanied by poaching related activities (Unesco, 2011, SOC).

### ► Oil/ Gas exploration/development

**Data Deficient**
**Inside site**
**Outside site**

Since January 2011 a Chinese oil company, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) is located at Gordil (one of the bases of the Park). It is possible that petroleum prospecting is being conducted inside the property, accompanied by poaching related activities (Unesco, 2011, SOC)

## Protection and management

## Assessing Protection and Management

### ► Relationships with local people

**Serious Concern**

The relations with the transhumant breeders are very difficult as they now enter the site with weapons or accompanied by armed mercenaries. (UNEP/WCMC, 2012) Awareness raising and training campaigns for the local populations have been launched as part of the ECOFAC actions since 2008 (RCA, 2011) but there is still a lack of consultation (UICN, 2009)

### ► Legal framework and enforcement

**Serious Concern**

Any enforcement activities are nearly impossible due to the situation of insecurity. In 1997 the Park was under the administration of one Manager and one assistant with five guards, supplemented on occasions by army personnel for anti-poaching patrols. The then concessionaire employed ten people on management oriented tasks (undated information).In 2009, after a decade of disruption, 60 newly trained Water and Forestry agents joined 60 existing ECOFAC guard-patrollers in order to begin restoring order (UNEP/WCMC, 2012) but there is no information whether these agents have been within the site. (Unesco, 2011, SOC)

### ► Integration into regional and national planning systems

**Data Deficient**

Data Deficient

### ► Management system

**Serious Concern**

The management system has been totally inefficient in the context of insecurity existing in the area. A new strategy has been established proposing a zoning of the property defining a central core surrounded by Village Hunting Zones (ZCV), the construction of advanced surveillance bases, a development plan for the entire north-east territory including the

redefinition of transhumance corridors, the increased size of the team monitoring the property and ZCV peripheries. That strategy has been approved by the State Party in 2010. (Unesco, 2011, SOC). The effectiveness and efficiency need to be assessed.

### ► Management effectiveness

**Serious Concern**

The present political situation created by the overthrow of the current government by the Seleka rebellion on 24 March 2013, risks once again to prevent the implementation of the corrective measures and the preparation of an emergency action plan, necessary to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the property (SOC Report, 2013).

### ► Implementation of Committee decisions and recommendations

**Serious Concern**

The site is on the List of World Heritage in Danger since 1997. A short term emergency plan has been decided by the World Heritage Committee for a) Restructuring of the management of the Park, b) Strengthening of supervisory staff c) Increasing the number and training of ground staff d) Functional zoning of the Park with a priority intervention zone e) An action plan targeting the restoration of security and tranquility f) A provisional budget adapted to these priorities, g) A plan to emerge from the crisis to be undertaken in parallel. The decisions
and recommendations of the Committee have had no real effect because of the local and national situation (COM31/7A.1, COM32/7A.1, 33COM/7A.1)

### ► Boundaries

**Some Concern**

The limits are clear but the site is considered as too large to be controlled (IUCN, 2009).The management strategy of the North-East protected areas proposes a zoning of the property with a central nucleas surrounded by a ring of Village Hunting Zones (ZCV).(Unesco, 2010, SOC).Even if that strategy has been approved by the State Party, it is still far from being implemented (Unesco, 2011, SOC).

### ► Sustainable finance

**Some Concern**

Little site-specific information is available but it seems that the budget granted by the State is highly insufficient. There is since many years a high level of international financial assistance The 1988 EEU/FED grant of US$27million to control poaching and grazing for ten years was to be succeeded in 1997 by funding from a private foundation to continue the work. In 2001 the World Heritage Bureau approved a grant of US$150,000 for an Emergency Rehabilitation Plan. An additional US$146,650 was later granted for emergency assistance and technical cooperation. (UNEP/WCMC, 2012)

### ► Staff training and development

**Data Deficient**

Data Deficient

### ► Sustainable use

**Data Deficient**

Data Deficient

### ► Education and interpretation programs

**Serious Concern**

Due to the situation of insecurity there are no education and interpretation programs The tourism concessionaire, Manovo S.A. carried out limited park management such as grading tracks and burning to improve game-viewing, but it is unclear how much this was coordinated with the Park management. Nearly all the management effort went into limiting the very heavy poaching and preventing grazing within Park boundaries. (UNEP/WCMC, 2012)

### ► Tourism and interpretation

**Serious Concern**

Tourism is impossible in the area (UNEP/WCMC, 2012). This also induces a huge reduction of safari hunting which was a very important income for the

site and the area. (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010)

### ▶ Monitoring

**Mostly Effective**

Thanks to the international assistance monitoring has been regularly undertaken: 1969/1970, 1977, 1978, 1985, 1991, 1998, 2005, 2010. (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010)

### ▶ Research

**Serious Concern**

The research field is at very low level and does not provide with sufficient elements for a better conservation and management of the site (Unesco, 2009)

## Overall assessment of protection and management

**Serious Concern**

The situation is of serious concern. The present political situation created by the overthrow of the current government by the Seleka rebellion on 24 March 2013, risks once again to prevent the implementation of the corrective measures and the preparation of an emergency action plan, necessary to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Any enforcement activities are nearly impossible due to the situation of insecurity. It is therefore very difficult to mitigate pressures from poaching and grazing, as well as other threats.

### ▶ Assessment of the effectiveness of protection and management in addressing threats outside the site

**Serious Concern**

The threats outside the site are the same as in the site but it seems that the Zones Cynégétiques Villageoises and the neighbouring Bamingui Bangoran NP have a better conservation status than the site itself. The fauna seems to use these areas as refuges.

## State and trend of values

### Assessing the current state and trend of values

#### World Heritage values

▶ **Very rich fauna of sudano-sahelian and sudano-guinean savannas**
**Critical**
**Trend:Deteriorating**

The last survey (2010) shows that some species are not far from extinction in the site (elephants, giraffes). Since the last survey (2005) the density of great fauna has fallen of 75%. A large majority is found outside of the site in the Zones Cygénétiques Villageoises.
For the main species, the results are dramatic: Elephant=0, Hippopotamus=0, Giraffe=0, Giant Eland=152, Buffalo=13, Roan Antelope=0, Red Hartebeest=152, Bontebok=0, Waterbuck=0, Kob =184, (RCA/ECOFAC/Cites/UE/Mike, 2010). On the basis of the aerial inventories of 2010 it may be concluded that the property has lost its Outstanding Universal Value. However, there still remains a potential for regeneration based on the relict pockets of biodiversity and exchanges with neighbouring zones, but this potential is very fragile (SOC Report, 2013).

▶ **The largest savanna of Central Africa**
**Critical**
**Trend:Deteriorating**

Poaching, grazing, fires, agriculture and presence of rebels are permanent threats since a long time and the situation is very critical. Improving the trend will need a continuous effort with strong international assistance combined with strong involvement of the State.

### Summary of the Values

### ► Assessment of the current state and trend of World Heritage values

**Critical**

**Trend: Deteriorating**

The situation is very critical as well as the trend. The site is threatened by permanent human activities (poaching, grazing, agriculture, fires, diamond mining, insecurity) that have hugely impacted flora and fauna. The last great mammals populations are now concentrated in the periphery of the site. On the basis of the aerial inventories of 2010 it may be concluded that the property has lost its Outstanding Universal Value. However, there still remains a potential for regeneration based on the relict pockets of biodiversity and exchanges with neighbouring zones, but this potential is very fragile. Only urgent actions with international assistance and real involvement of the State could maintain this potential.

## Additional information

### Key conservation issues

### ► Poaching

**National**

Poaching is at every scale as there is no control of the site and because of the global insecurity of the area. The approved emergency action plan focuses on the increase of the number and training of ground staff , the definition of a functional zoning of the Park with a priority intervention zone and the development of an action plan targeting the restoration of security and tranquility

### ► Grazing

**Regional**

The number of domestic animals inside the site is very high. The great movements of transhumance between Central African Republic, Chad and Sudan used the site for grass and water inducing direct and indirect problems

(diseases, poaching, drying of pools)

### ▶ Fires

**Local**

All the area is affected by anthropic fires but the main concentration is found in the Zones Cynégétiques Villageoises where the majority of the wild fauna has now taken refuge.

### ▶ Diamond mining

**Local**

That activity affects mainly the Zones Cynégétiques Villageoises and Hunting Sectors at the south of the site. This is a key conservation issue as it causes perturbation of biotopes and rivers and induces poaching in the area of current refuge for wild fauna.

## Projects

### Compilation of active conservation projects

| № | Organization/ individuals | Project duration | Brief description of Active Projects |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ECOFACV | | The aim of the program is to contribute to the conservation and the sustainable management of fragile ecosystems in Central Africa to warranting the perenniality of environment services and to contributing to the poverty reduction |
| 2 | ECOFAUNE | | Projet Ecosystèmes Fauniques du Nord-est RCA. The aim of the project is to improve the governance and the sustainable management of natural resources and of biodiversity of CAR, and particularly to safeguard the threatened ecosystems from anthropic pressure, instability and insecurity |

### Compilation of potential site needs

| № | Site need title | Brief description of potential site needs | Support needed for following years |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | N.A. | Definition of a transboundary cooperation program with the protected areas, protected forests and hunting reserves of Chad |

# REFERENCES


| № | References |
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