LAC TÉLÉ COMMUNITY RESERVE



Dear Friends of the Lac Télé Community Reserve,

The months of September and October were marked by the continuation of several important activities related to the management of the Lac Télé Community Reserve (LTCR), particularly in the areas of community-based conservation, governance, research and ecological monitoring. However, the reporting period was also marked by an exceptional flooding event that affected Épena and several other localities within the Reserve. Rising water levels affected the living conditions of local communities and disrupted the normal implementation of community activities and ecological monitoring. Given the severity of the situation, the safety of people was made the top priority, with emergency measures implemented and arrangements made to evacuate staff and their families to safer areas.

This event reminds us of the importance of solidarity, vigilance and our collective ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances. While the situation continues to be closely monitored, our attention remains focused on the needs of local communities, the conditions required for the gradual resumption of activities, and the measures needed to address the significant disruptions expected to affect local ecosystems.

Despite these challenges, our teams and partners continued their efforts, making progress in supporting local communities, strengthening capacities and consolidating the Reserve's management framework. We would like to commend their commitment and express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to the activities carried out during this period.

We invite you to explore this new edition of our newsletter and discover the key achievements and latest updates from the Lac Télé Community Reserve (LTCR) for September and October 2026.

Happy reading!

The Lac Télé Community Reserve (LTCR) team



KEY DATES & HIGHLIGHTS

- **09–12 September:** Working visit by the WCS Congo Programme Management Team to Épena.
- **15 September:** Ebola virus disease awareness session for LTCR staff.
- **29 September–09 October:** Refresher training for LTCR eco-guards in Épena.
- **05–11 October:** Support mission to the consultant conducting the cocoa value chain study, as part of the process of developing cocoa guidelines for the LTCR.
- **06–16 October:** Capacity-building training in great ape health monitoring, in collaboration with IVB and PNNN.
- **19 October:** Scientific publication on hippos in the LTCR featured in the IUCN's *Suiform Soundings*.
- **23–25 October:** Meeting of the Technical Review Committee responsible for reviewing and consolidating the draft LTCR Management Plan, held in Kintélé.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION



Supporting the Development of Sustainable Beekeeping

As part of the project *"Securing Critical Biodiversity, Carbon and Water Reserves in the Congo Basin Peatlands through Informed Decision-Making and Good Governance"*, funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) and implemented by the FAO in partnership with WCS, a joint mission to select beneficiaries for beekeeping support was conducted from 28 August to 2 October 2026.

The mission aimed to identify beekeepers who met the eligibility criteria jointly established by the partners. To this end, individual interviews were conducted with 208 beekeepers



Supporting the Development of Sustainable Cocoa Farming

A mission was conducted from 16 to 23 September in the villages of Edzama, Likonda, Mossengué, Moungouma Moké and Ebambé, with the aim of strengthening farmers' technical skills and contributing to the improvement of their production systems.

Two main activities were carried out:

- Provision of agricultural equipment and capacity-building for farmers: In Edzama, Moungouma Moké and Ebambé, **64 farmers received practical training on the use of agricultural tools, along with the provision**

previously identified in the target communities. These discussions helped assess their experience, level of commitment to beekeeping and eligibility for the support provided under the project.

Following this selection process, **163 beekeepers, including 9 members of Indigenous communities, were selected**. They will receive support through technical training and the provision of beekeeping equipment.

This support aims to improve production practices, strengthen beneficiaries' skills and promote the development of sustainable beekeeping, while contributing to the diversification of local communities' sources of income.

of farming equipment. This support aims to facilitate agricultural work and improve the beneficiaries' production capacity.

- Training in the establishment and management of community nurseries: In Likonda and Mossengué, **41 and 26 farmers respectively, bringing the total to 67, received training in techniques for establishing and managing community nurseries.** This initiative aims to strengthen local skills in seedling production and ensure the availability of planting material needed to develop cocoa plantations.

In addition, an expert mission commissioned by WCS was conducted to develop sustainable cocoa farming guidelines for the Reserve. These guidelines seek to balance increased production, improved livelihoods for local communities and the conservation of forest ecosystems.

GOVERNANCE



Progress in the Validation Process of the LTCR Management Plan

From 23 to 25 October 2026, a workshop of the technical committee responsible for reviewing the draft LTCR Management Plan was held in Kintélé. The committee was established by Service Note No. 222/MEF/CAB-ACBLABPAGR.

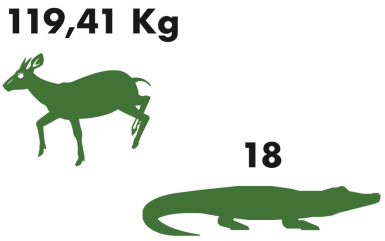
The workshop brought together experts from the Ministry of Forest Economy for an in-depth review of the draft Management Plan. Discussions focused on analysing the document's various components, reviewing the comments received and identifying proposed improvements needed to consolidate and finalise the document.
This stage represents an important step forward in the institutional validation process of the Management Plan, which aims to provide the Reserve with a strategic framework for sustainable management, balancing biodiversity conservation, natural resource management and the needs of local communities.

ANTI-POACHING

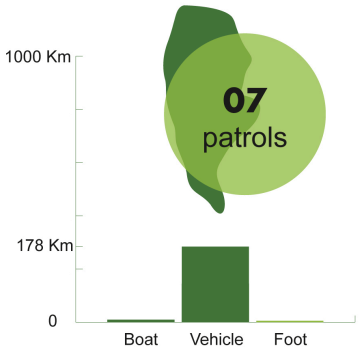
Interpellations

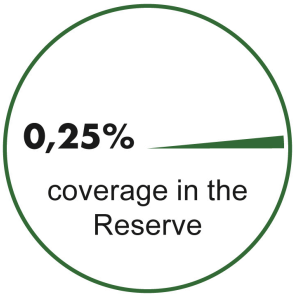


Seizures



Patrol efforts





The SMART focal point participated in a training workshop on the Stock Management System (SMS), held from 9 to 12 September 2026 at the Ouesso Departmental Directorate of Forest Economy.
In addition, six eco-guards took part in a capacity-building session on paramilitary techniques, held from 29 September to 7 October 2026. The training was delivered by two instructors from Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park and aimed to strengthen the eco-guards' operational skills in carrying out their reserve surveillance and protection duties.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Scientific Publication on Hippos in the LTCR



The study on the monitoring of common hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) in the Lac Télé Community Reserve has reached a new milestone with its publication in *Suiform Soundings*,

Entitled *"Counting Giants: A Common Hippopotamus Survey in the Likouala-aux-Herbes River of the Lac Télé Community Reserve, northern Republic of the Congo"*, the publication presents the findings of the survey conducted in 2025 and contributes to documenting the status of this small hippopotamus population in northern Republic of the Congo.

This publication is the result of a collaboration between WCS and the Institute of Vertebrate Biology (IVB) of the Czech Academy of Sciences. It highlights the importance of scientific partnerships in making field data available, sharing knowledge and strengthening biodiversity conservation efforts across the Congo Basin.

the newsletter of the IUCN Hippo Specialist Group.

The article is now available to the public online on the IUCN Hippo Specialist Group's website: https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.34329471

CAPACITY BUILDING

From 6 to 16 October 2026, WCS Congo and the Institute of Vertebrate Biology (IVB) of the Czech Academy of Sciences, with support from Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, organised a training course on non-invasive sampling and faecal parasitology. The training was led by Dr Bethan Mason (IVB), with contributions from Dr Toni Romani (IVB and WCS).

Bringing together researchers, students and conservation professionals from four protected areas in the Republic of the Congo, the training combined theoretical sessions with practical laboratory exercises. Participants were introduced to faecal sample processing, the identification of gastrointestinal parasites through microscopy, and coproscopic techniques.



Beyond strengthening technical skills, this initiative contributes to improving great ape health monitoring and promotes the exchange of experience among conservation teams.

It also marks another milestone in the partnership between WCS and IVB, bringing together scientific expertise and field experience while laying the groundwork for shared approaches to parasitological monitoring across several protected areas in the Republic of the Congo.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION

- **Renovation of the electrical system at the Impfondo office:** Batteries and photovoltaic panels were replaced with higher-capacity equipment to restore and strengthen the office's energy autonomy.
- **Assessment of the solar system at the Mokengui borehole:** A diagnostic mission revealed a decline in the performance of the batteries and solar panels. The pump was temporarily shut down pending the replacement of the faulty batteries.
- **Maintenance of solar installations in villages:** A mission assessed solar installations in villages along the southern axis of the Reserve, identified faults and determined the maintenance requirements.
- **Preventive measures in Épena and Bouanéla:** In response to the exceptional rise in water levels, protective measures were implemented at both sites, including securing and transferring equipment to storage areas protected against flooding.

MEDIA

In a report from the heart of the Lake Télé Community Reserve, the Swiss daily newspaper ***Le Temps*** gives a voice to local field actors and explores the impact of fires in the Reserve, as well as the challenges involved in protecting these ecosystems.

Read the full report: https://bit.ly/4edGcp0

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



View of the Matoko Bridge and the exceptionally high water level of the Likouala-aux-Herbes River.

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