



BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAY-JUNE 2026

Dear Friends of the Lac Télé Community Reserve,

Despite a demanding operational context, the months of May and June 2026 were marked by sustained momentum. The teams at the Lac Télé Community Reserve continued their efforts to balance the priorities of conservation, community development, scientific research and infrastructure development.

Several major activities were carried out during this period, including strengthening awareness-raising activities with communities, monitoring cacao plantations, supporting consultations with the FAO, and continuing research on the large mammals of the reserve. The team's capabilities were also strengthened through a bioacoustic monitoring training course, which opens up new perspectives for ecological monitoring of species.

Improvements to infrastructure, the reopening of the Mandoungouma river and the opening of the east boundary trail of the reserve demonstrate our commitment to improving working conditions, accessibility and the management of the territory in the long term.

Finally, the resumption of dialogue with the Epéna "notables" platform demonstrates our commitment to participatory governance based on listening, consultation and finding common solutions. We would like to thank all our partners, the local authorities, the communities and all the RCLT teams for their constant commitment to conserving this exceptional natural heritage.

With conviction,

The Lac Télé Community Reserve (RCLT) Team



KEY DATES & HIGHLIGHTS

- **May 1–4, 2026:** Review of the BNS methodology through the development of a new list of goods and services within the Ndoki-Likouala landscape in Epéna
- **May 9–23, 2026:** Fieldwork in Likonda aimed at better understanding the behavior of chimpanzees and elephants
- **May 25–28, 2026:** Online training on bioacoustics with Cornell University
- **May 12–June 5, 2026:** Support for the FAO in conducting participatory community consultations to develop sustainable livelihoods
- **May 22–June 4, 2026:** Opening of the trail along the eastern boundary of the RCLT and installation of signage starting from the village of Mohounda
- **June 25, 2026:** Participation in International Environmental Day in Brazzaville
- **June 26, 2026:** Resumption of meetings with the Epéna "Notables" platform

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION



Raising Community Awareness of Wildlife Legislation and Zoonotic Risks

As part of ongoing efforts to raise awareness of wildlife legislation, the RCLT team conducted a field mission from June 10 to 13, 2026, in the villages of Ibolo, Koundoumou, Matoko, and Iyahou, as well as in three neighborhoods of Epéna-Centre.

The objectives of this mission were to:

- explain the provisions of Law No. 37-2028 of November 28, 2028, on wildlife and protected areas;
- distribute and display posters showing the classification of fully and partially protected animal species, in accordance with Decree No. 6075/MDDEFE/CAB;
- raise public awareness of the risks associated with zoonotic diseases.

A total of 172 people participated in the various awareness-raising sessions, including 80 men and 92 women.



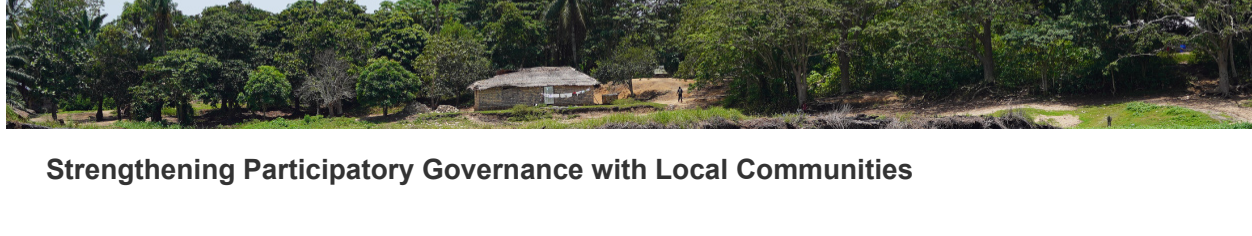
Monitoring of Cocoa Plantations

As part of efforts to increase the density of cocoa plantations, a technical monitoring mission was conducted from **May 13 to 23, 2026**, in Epéna-Centre (the **Moumenguelé** and **Elenda** neighborhoods) as well as in the villages of Matoko, Iyahou, Ibolo, and Koundoumou.

The objective of this mission was to assess the development of young plants, verify compliance with recommended technical guidelines, and identify the main challenges faced by producers.

The observations made indicate that the young cocoa trees are developing overall satisfactorily and that the plantations are in good condition. However, additional efforts are still needed to improve plot maintenance and limit the losses observed. Continuing these technical support missions will help guide producers and consolidate the results of the redensification program.

GOVERNANCE



Strengthening Participatory Governance with Local Communities

The governance at the Lac Télé Community Reserve is based on ongoing dialogue with public institutions, local authorities, and communities to ensure participatory and collaborative management of natural resources. During May and June, several initiatives helped strengthen this approach. In particular, RCLT teams supported the FAO in organizing participatory consultations on the development of sustainable livelihoods for the benefit of local communities and indigenous peoples. These discussions helped identify the communities' priorities and tailor future interventions to on-the-ground realities.

On June 26, meetings with the Epéna "Notables" Platform also resumed. This consultative framework provides a valuable forum for dialogue between the Reserve and community representatives. It helps build mutual trust, facilitate the sharing of information regarding the Reserve's management, and encourage active community participation in conservation and development efforts.

Furthermore, discussions are continuing with the various stakeholders with a view to resuming the field activities of the rangers. The RCLT coordination team remains fully committed to supporting this process in a spirit of dialogue, collaboration, and the search for sustainable solutions that will ensure the effective and peaceful management of the Reserve.

ANTI-POACHING

The negotiation process aimed at resuming the rangers' field operations is ongoing. Discussions among the various stakeholders are continuing in order to find a solution that will allow operations to resume under the best possible conditions.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING



Ecological Monitoring Mission for Chimpanzees and Elephants in the Southern Sector of the RCLT

From May 9 to 23, 2026, an ecological monitoring mission conducted in partnership with the Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the Czech Academy of Sciences was carried out in the Likonda forests to study the presence of chimpanzees and elephants using local ecological knowledge and bioacoustic tools.

The results confirmed the presence of chimpanzees within their historical range, while only past signs of elephants were observed, underscoring the need to strengthen conservation efforts in this area. The data are currently being analyzed, and a new mission is planned for July to further investigate the dynamics of large mammals.



Training in Passive Acoustic Monitoring

From May 25 to 28, 2026, part of the research team participated in a training session on the use of the Passive Acoustic Monitoring method, in collaboration with Cornell University. The goal of this training was to strengthen participants' skills in processing and analyzing acoustic recordings collected in the field. In particular, it provided an opportunity to deepen understanding of methods for identifying species based on their vocalizations, to better understand tools for analyzing bioacoustic data, and to improve the interpretation of results for use in ecological monitoring and wildlife conservation.

The knowledge gained will help optimize the use of data currently being collected within the Lac Télé Community Reserve and strengthen research and monitoring activities for priority species.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION



Improvement work was carried out on the access road to the Impfondo office to repair potholes and muddy areas. This work improved the site's accessibility for vehicles and pedestrians, made it easier to get around during daily work, and helped enhance the office's image.



Following the rains, dredging work was carried out on the Mandoungouma River to remove trees and vines blocking the channel. This effort restored safe navigation, facilitated travel for local residents, and supported the resumption of economic activities that depend on this waterway.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



A team of researchers is making its way through the swamp forests of the Lac Télé Community Reserve to document the presence of large mammals and guide future conservation efforts.

Photo credit: WCS/T. Romani



Thank you to our **sponsors and partners.**

Copyright © WCS Congo. All rights reserved.
151 Av Ch de Gaulle Brazzaville,
BP 14537 République du Congo