



Bonobo © Muhammad Asif/shutterstock



Giant Ground Pangolin © Maggy Meyer

Last Chance to Save Unprotected Species in the Heart of the Congo

In the heart of the Congo Basin, Salonga National Park is the largest protected area of dense tropical rainforest on the African continent. Located in western Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), it has been declared a World Heritage Site for its global importance and its value to numerous endemic, endangered species. But gaps in this important habitat put conservation success at risk.

We now have another opportunity to build on our conservation impact in the region and seek \$1,915,929 for our work with Rainforest Foundation UK and local NGOs Actions pour la Promotion et Protection des Peuples et Espèces Menacés en RDC (APEM), Le Groupe d'Encadrement pour le Développement Intégral (GEDI), and Action pour la Biodiversité et le Développement Durable (ABED) to establish 740,000 acres of highly biodiverse, lowland forest as the Oshwe Local Community Forest Concessions (known by their french acronym, CFCLs).

Comprising 13 community forests that blanket a buffer zone of the park, the Oshwe project will secure land tenure and management rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities over the forest and its abundant resources, and safeguard critical habitat for the Endangered Bonobo, Giant Ground Pangolin, and Golden-bellied Mangabey.

This equatorial, primary rainforest is alive with running waterways and tributaries that create areas of swampy forests intermingling with peat bogs. It is interspersed with pockets of inhabited areas used by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Over 60% of the area remains highly intact forest as it is highly remote and accessible only by boat.

PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS IN THE CONGO FROM MULTIPLE THREATS

As in many regions of the Congo, deforestation and degradation from logging and slash-and-burn agriculture are the most serious threats to the rainforest here. Poaching, hunting for the bushmeat trade, and water pollution from toxic products used for illegal fishing further threaten these lands and waters. The movement of people from neighboring provinces is increasing pressure on biodiversity here, mainly fish and game.

Once participatory mapping occurs and customary land rights are secured, Indigenous and local communities will be better equipped to sustainably manage resources as they continue practicing subsistence livelihoods.



740,000
ACRES

\$1,915,929
PROJECT COST

\$2.59
COST PER ACRE

147,098,236 mT
CO₂ EQUIVALENTS
STORED

KEY SPECIES:

Bonobo (EN),
Giant Ground Pangolin (EN)

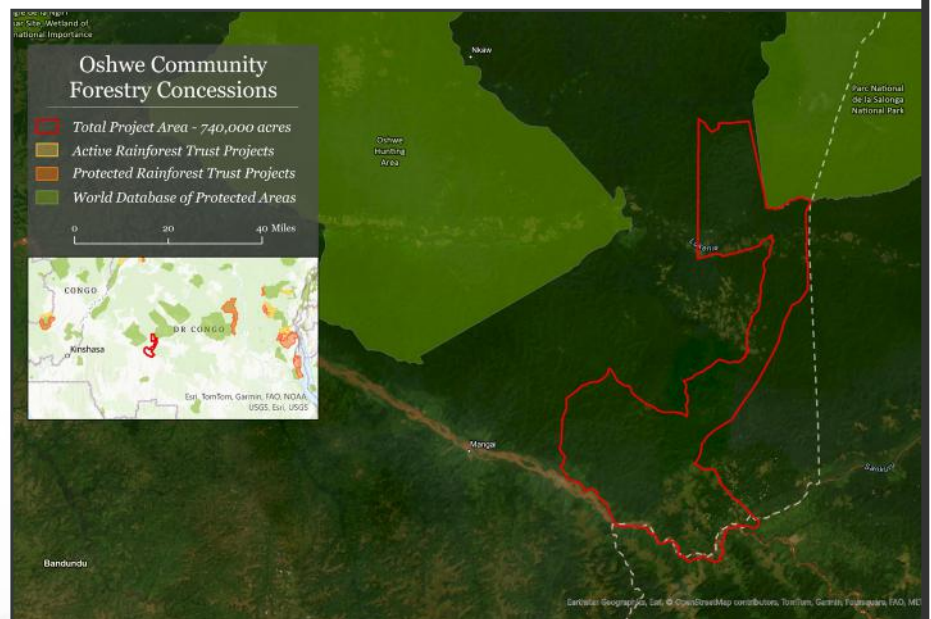


EXPAND A VAST WILDLIFE CORRIDOR IN THE CONGO BASIN

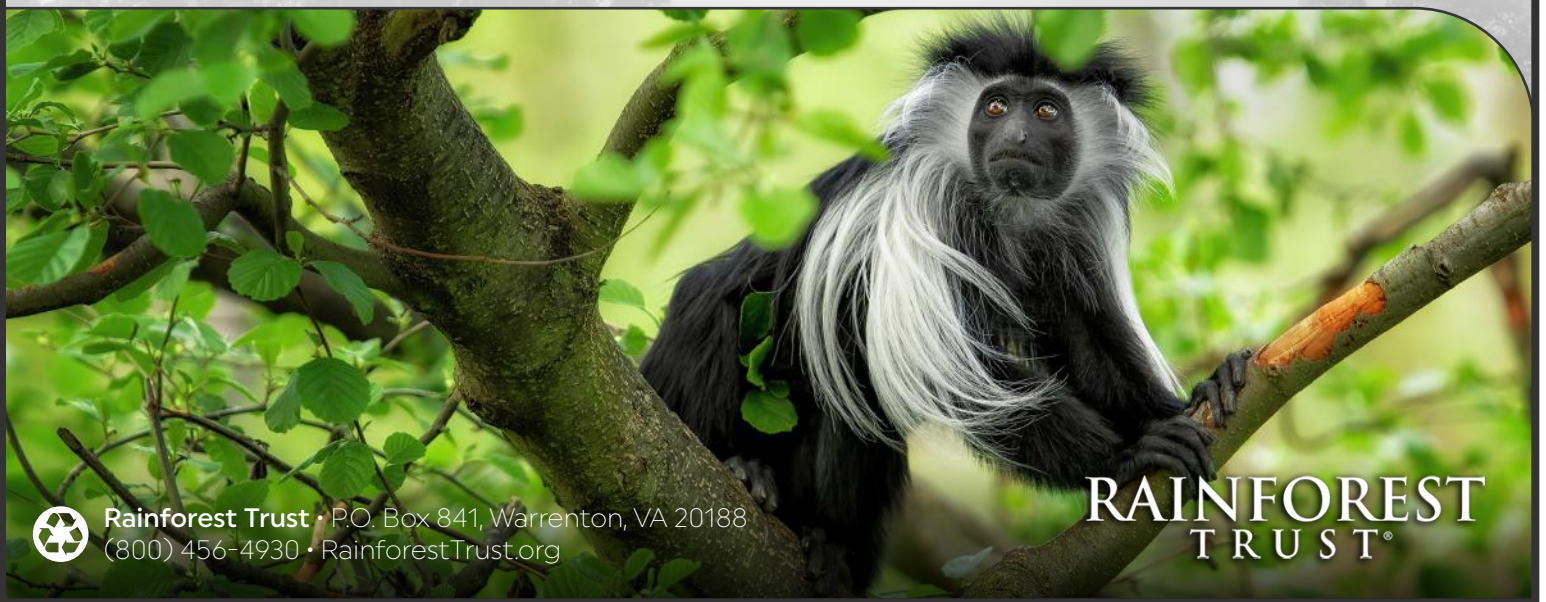
The proposed Oshwe Community Forests will fortify the ecological corridor between the 8.3-million-acre Salonga National Park, the 3.3-million-acre Oshwe Hunting Reserve, and the Mangai Hunting Domain of about 470,000 acres.

Endangered Bonobos, only found in the DRC, are present in large numbers in the Salonga landscape. Rainforest Trust has supported other front-line efforts to save the Bonobo by helping establish the 117,412-acre Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve in 2019, and supporting an 80,000-acre expansion that is currently in progress.

Three species targeted by this project are currently not protected in any National Parks or Nature Reserves: the Vulnerable Fire-bellied Wolf's Monkey, the Endangered Golden-bellied Mangabey, and *Teleogramma monogramma*, a Cichlid fish. The project will carry out surveys to document the current status of these threatened species within the proposed Community Forests.



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Rainforest Trust • P.O. Box 841, Warrenton, VA 20188
(800) 456-4930 • RainforestTrust.org

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