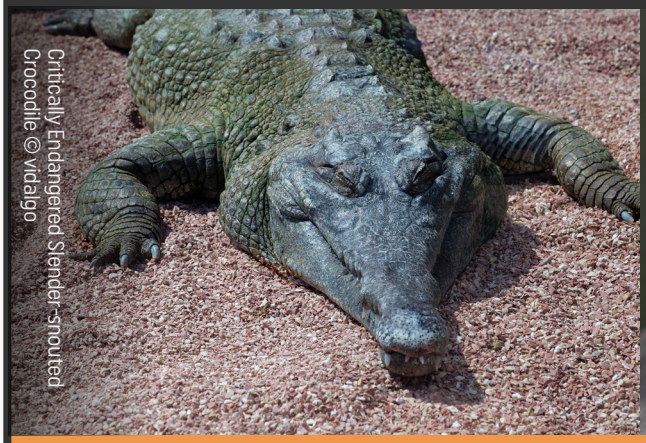
PROPOSED PROJECT
NIGERIA

Help Build Lasting Protection Across Nigeria's Threatened Coastline

SFA Southern Ijaw Coastal Communities



Critically Endangered Slender-snouted Crocodile © vidalgo

Endangered Red-capped Mangabey © Number One

PROJECT ACRES	PROJECT COST	COST PER ACRE	CO_2e STORED
6,500	**$1,051,871**	**$161.83**	**1,962,159 mT**

The Niger Delta on the coast of Nigeria is one of the most ecologically important yet under-protected conservation landscapes in Africa. This is Africa's largest river delta and home to the world's third-largest contiguous mangrove system. The Niger Delta supports exceptional biodiversity and stores vast amounts of carbon. Despite this, it suffers a conservation vacuum due to security risks, governance complexity, and the challenges of operating in a landscape shaped by oil extraction and socio-political instability. Durable conservation in the region has proven possible only through deeply embedded, community-led approaches.

Over the past decade, the SW/Niger Delta Forest Project has successfully demonstrated such a model, establishing a 2,492-acre community conservation area (CCA) in the Apoi Creek forest with Rainforest Trust support to save the rare Niger Delta Red Colobus monkey from extinction. They are now scaling this approach across the broader landscape to build a network of community-managed conservation areas capable of protecting a meaningful share of the Delta's remaining forests and mangroves, with a long-term goal of securing up to 20% of the entire Niger Delta.

Our current project together is located on the coast downstream from Apoi Creek, in the Foropa Middleton Kingdom, where a rare convergence of mangrove forests, tidal wetlands, freshwater swamp forests, and shallow marine ecosystems forms an ecological mosaic vital for biodiversity and local livelihoods.

This prime wildlife habitat is under increasing pressure from illegal logging, overfishing (commercial trawling and unregulated artisanal fishing), and oil pollution, contributing to declines in a number of resident species. Without timely action, these threats will compromise biodiversity and the resilience and livelihoods of the communities who depend on these forests.

Rainforest Trust seeks $1,051,871 to support the S/W Niger Delta Forest Project to establish the coastal Foropa Community Conservation Area of

KEY SPECIES | Slender-snouted Crocodile (CR), Red-capped Mangabey (EN), African Manatee (VU), and multiple marine turtles, notably Leatherback Turtle (VU), Green Turtle (EN), Hawksbill Turtle (CR), Loggerhead Turtle (VU), African Softshell Turtle (VU) and Olive Ridley Turtle (VU)

Vulnerable Baby Olive Ridley Turtle © Erica Ruth Bassem Zein

6,500 acres. The new CCA will secure habitat for a number of threatened species, including the Critically Endangered Slender-snouted Crocodile, Endangered Red-capped Mangabey, Vulnerable West African Manatee, five out of seven species of sea turtles (Critically Endangered Hawksbill Turtle; Vulnerable Leatherback Turtle, Loggerhead Turtle, and Olive Ridley Turtle; and Green Turtle) as well as the Vulnerable African Softshell Turtle.

Save essential habitat for threatened species on Nigeria's coast

Most of the mangrove areas within the project are highly intact, and they are an important nursery for commercial fisheries: about 60% of all fish caught between the Gulf of Guinea and Angola breed in the mangroves of the Niger Delta.

The project area contains nesting beaches for five species of sea turtles and hosts West African Manatees and Slender-snouted Crocodiles, all of which suffer from indiscriminate hunting and capture. This project would mitigate these threats and conserve the ecosystems and species through formal, community-led management, surveillance, and enforcement mechanisms.

Support community-led conservation in a challenging environment

This landscape is marked by deep socio-political challenges. It overlaps hydrocarbon-rich zones exploited for crude oil and natural gas, fueling decades of conflict between communities, government, and multinational oil companies over resource control. Our partner has proven that conservation can be achieved when it is anchored in community leadership, local knowledge, and environmental stewardship. The Foropa CCA will safeguard biodiversity and enhance sustainable

Vulnerable African Softshell Turtle © Vlad3344

livelihoods through a holistic, community-driven solution.

While a CCA does not constitute a formal statutory protected area under Nigerian Federal law, it is a long-term community commitment legally anchored through local bylaws adopted by traditional authorities. These bylaws define clear conservation rules, enforcement mechanisms, and land-use zones, with legal restrictions on logging, hunting, and fishing alongside the establishment of specific land-use zones (including strict no-take zones). To ensure compliance, the project supports the deployment of community rangers and monitoring systems.

Our partner plans to expand conservation into at least five additional communities across the coastal landscape using this successful model.

PROJECT PARTNER

SW/Niger Delta Forest Project

SW/Niger Delta Forest Project is an established Nigerian conservation organization founded in 2013. The organization has a strong track record of implementing conservation projects in the Niger Delta, including the establishment of Community Conservation Areas in the Apoi Creek landscape.

A key strength of this project is the leadership of Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh, who brings nearly two decades of experience and a demonstrated ability to deliver results where others have struggled. What Rachel and the SW/Niger Delta Forest Project team have accomplished over the past decade demonstrates a real ability to engage communities, build local support, and achieve lasting conservation.

Critically Endangered Hawksbill Turtle © Dr_Flash

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