

An Enduring Story

There's much more to learn about Bili-Uélé and your role in the extraordinary conservation progress happening there. After making your contribution, see the full Bili-Uélé story map at awf.org/bili-storymap. It's what's possible when we create vitality for wildlife and opportunity for people ... *together*.



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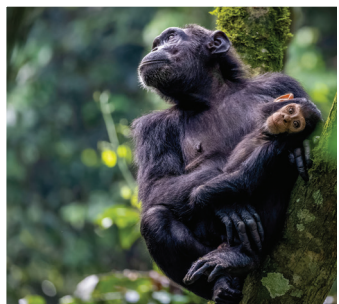
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Journey with us to Bili-Uélé



Landscape, Ecosystem, Story

The Bili-Uélé landscape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a mosaic of conservation and community lands, including the largest protected area complex in the country. Vital to the survival of eastern chimpanzees, forest elephants, and other wildlife, it is also a proving ground for AWF's conservation vision.



Critical Species

The 78,000 km² Bili-Uélé landscape is a safe haven for Africa's largest interconnected population of the endangered eastern chimpanzee subspecies, as well as some of the largest populations of endangered forest elephants and vulnerable lions in the DRC.

Unparalleled Biodiversity

The Congo Basin rainforest is one of the most biodiverse regions on Earth. Teeming with wildlife of all kinds, it is home to more than 1,200 species of birds, 450 mammals, 700 fish, and 280 reptiles.



Shared Stewardship

Despite widespread poverty, people living within Bili-Uélé place immense value on the wildlife and wild lands around them. With support from AWF, they are embracing a collaborative approach to sustainable growth and livelihoods — balancing the protection of forests and other natural resources with conservation economy livelihood practices.



Conservation & Local Priorities Work Hand-in-Hand

Gilbert Dikumbo is the chief of Bili-Nzokongba, a village at the center of the Protected Area Complex within Bili-Uélé. His mandate is to manage local priorities like security, health, and education with conservation guidelines he helped negotiate.

“Since the beginning of AWF’s activities here at Bili,” he says, “it has developed mechanisms to raise awareness of the merits of conservation and provided approaches that allow the population to reduce the pressure on the forest.”

Dikumbo says conservation is now a central part of his community’s agenda. “[Conservation] is really important for me and for the future generation who must live from this forest ... [and its] resources.”

Crediting AWF’s commitment to bringing community members to the decision-making table with improving trust, he says the door is open to further conservation advances in Bili-Uélé.

Measurements of Success

80% of Bili-Uélé community members reported a good relationship with AWF and the wildlife authority, largely due to the participatory and inclusive decision-making facilitated by the CLDCs.

2,000+ people sensitized to the protection status and hunting regulations of local species. A collaborative process mapped 11,000 km² in Bili-Uélé, marking boundaries for wildlife habitat, farming, regulated hunting, fishing, artisanal mining, and gathering non-timber forest products.

Stability Satellite and high-tech on-the-ground monitoring confirm that chimpanzee and forest elephant populations are stable and no longer trending downward.

