

MAKIRA NATURAL PARK, NORTHEAST MADAGASCAR

MIARO ATIALA, MITSINJO LAVITRA!
TO PROTECT THE FOREST IS TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF NEXT GENERATIONS!

INTRODUCTION / PRESENTATION

Covering 372,470 hectares of low and mid-altitude rainforest, Makira Natural Park is Madagascar's largest terrestrial Category II protected area. Located in the epicenter of Madagascar's terrestrial biodiversity, Makira Natural Park harbors more than 60 species of mammals (17 lemur species), more than 120 species of birds, more than 200 species of reptiles and amphibians and more than 450 species of plants, many of which are found only in Makira. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) manages Makira Natural Park on behalf of the Government of Madagascar and in collaboration with 73 community associations that manage the community forest around the Park.

Around 90,000 people live in and around the protected area and depend on the natural resources and ecological services that the Park provides including land for agriculture, timber, bushmeat, non-timber forest products, and water supply. Makira thus faces a number of challenges including growing demands for agricultural land for slash-and-burn rice production (*tavy*) from communities living around the protected area, illegal logging and mining, and unsustainable hunting of endemic species, primarily for subsistence needs of households.

To achieve desired conservation outcomes, WCS has developed a holistic, multi-faceted approach to ensure the protection of the biodiversity that is found in Makira Natural Park while simultaneously improving the wellbeing of local populations.

Makira is also a functioning REDD+ project that sells emission reduction credits on the voluntary markets with revenues from sales used to finance Park management and community development activities around the Park.

GOAL

The overall conservation goal for the Makira Natural Park is to maintain the ecological integrity by ensuring the protection of its biodiversity and ecological services.

Conservation targets

- **Dense humid forest ecosystems**
- **Diurnal and cathemeral lemur species:**
 - White-fronted Brown Lemur (*Eulemur albifrons*)
 - Common Brown Lemur (*Eulemur fulvus*)
 - Red-bellied Lemur (*Eulemur rubriventer*)
 - Western lesser bamboo lemur (*Hapalemur occidentalis*)
 - Indri (*Indri indri*)
 - Red-ruffed Lemur (*Varecia rubra*)
 - Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur (*Varecia variegata subcincta*)
 - Silky Sifaka (*Propithecus candidus*)
- **Forest corridors:**
 - Vohitaly, Ampoahantsatroka, Maintimbato, Ambavala, Besariaka, and Lokaitra

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OUR APPROACH

Control and Surveillance

Within the core zone of the Park, WCS implements a mixed strategy of joint WCS/community patrols based on the use of SMART conservation software (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool – smartconservation.org) and mixed patrols with Government law enforcement agents when required. WCS undertakes annual aerial surveillance of the Park and trains communities and local authorities in the regulatory framework that applies to the Park. WCS works with communities to manually mark the boundaries of the Park to minimise unintentional intrusions.

Community-Based Natural Resource Management

Makira is ringed by over 350,000 hectares of community managed lands that form a 'green belt' around the Park. WCS works in close collaboration with a network of community associations (COBAs) in this green belt and supports them to become active partners in the conservation of the unique species and ecosystems within the Park boundaries. To date 73 COBAs have signed contracts with the Government of Madagascar to manage the forests in the green belt. The COBAs are the entry points for WCS's livelihoods activities and are the beneficiaries of 50 percent of net revenues from sales of carbon credits.

Sustainable Livelihoods & Conservation Enterprises

WCS implements activities to support livelihoods of communities living in the 'green belt' around the Park to minimize the effects of the creation of the Park on local livelihoods and to generate incentives for the communities to engage in conservation activities. In this context WCS provides support to communities to improve subsistence livelihoods (e.g. rice, fish farming, household livestock, and honey production), to develop sustainable alternative sources of protein to replace bushmeat sourced through illegal hunting activities, and to develop sustainable and certified revenue sources through sustainable cash crop value chains, including community conservation enterprises in raffia, tourism, cocoa, vanilla, and cloves.

Health and Education

WCS implements an integrated health and conservation education program that aims to empower local populations to build awareness, knowledge and skills to sustain a healthy environment and assure human wellbeing. Education activities are focused around the 'Open Classroom' in Maroantsetra which welcomes hundreds of school children each year, and activities with teachers and students in rural schools in Makira's green belt. Health activities include mobile clinics, family planning advice, and training of community health agents within COBAs.

Forest Corridor Restoration

WCS carries out long-term restoration and maintenance activities of critical forestry corridors with the support of different partners and the local population to ensure the ecological integrity of the Makira Natural Park and the broader landscape. The restoration of six forest corridors with an area of 1,300 hectares is planned and to date 22 percent (285 hectares) of corridors have been already restored.

Bio-monitoring and Research

WCS ensures that regular monitoring is carried out on the status of conservation targets and to measure the impact of the Park on household wellbeing. In addition, WCS promotes research activities in collaboration with research institutes to provide a better understanding of the Park's biodiversity, ecology and its threats, associated triggers and social factors.

Quick facts

- Makira Natural Park harbors 372,470 hectares of low and mid-altitude rainforest was created in 2012
- An IUCN Category II Protected Area
- Six field offices and one Park headquarters office located in Maroantsetra
- 71 field agents work in and around the park
- 90,000 local people live in proximity, depending on its ecological services
- 17 lemur species including four Critically Endangered species
- First sales of Makira carbon credits signed in December 2013
- SMART community patrolling established in 2014
- 73 COBAs managing over 178,000 hectares of forest in the Park's green belt
- Six forest corridors of 1,300 hectares under long-term restoration
- Opening of the Simpona Ec lodge at the Antsahabe ecotourism site in 2016

With our activities in and around the Makira Natural Park we aim to contribute to the following sustainable development goals:



Historic and current project partners:

The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Peter and Kristan Norvig & Family Fund, The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, Madagascar Biodiversity Fund (FAPBM), Fondation Tany Meva, Zoo de Zurich (ZZ), Ambassade de Suisse, Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance (UNICEF), Fonds Additionnel PE3- Banque Mondiale, Sunshine Comes First Ltd, Madagascar National Parks (MNP), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD), CARE International, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), International Trade Centre (ITC), Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA Disney), Global Environment Facility (GEF), CI-GEF Project Agency, Conservation International (CI), Association Eben!Holz, The Wallace Research Foundation, Population Services International (PSI), Hopper Dean Foundation, Margot Marsh Biodiversity Fund, WCS Canada, Harvard University, Holcim, US Fish Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Forest Service (USFS), European Association of Zoo and Aquaria (EAZA), Conservation International-Green Climate Fund (CI-GCF), BETTER-U Foundation, Conservation through Poverty Alleviation (CPALI), Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CI-CEPF), Community Enterprises Development Fund (CEDF), Lafaza Trading Company, Private donors