

IVORY COAST

- NAME Tai National Park
- MANAGEMENT CATEGORY II & IX (National Park and Biosphere Reserve)
World Heritage Site (Criteria: ii, iv)
- BIOGEOGRAPHICAL PROVINCE 3.1.1 (Guinean Rainforest)
- LEGAL PROTECTION Total. The buffer zone has the legal status of a managed Fauna Reserve.
- DATE ESTABLISHED 28 August 1972, by Presidential Decree 75-545. Reduced by 20,000ha (N'Zo Reserve) on 21 March 1973 by decree 73-132, then redefined by special decree 77-348 of 3 June 1977 which added a 20,000ha buffer round the park. The area was part of a Forest Refuge under a decree of 16 April 1926 then part of a 425,000ha Fauna Reserve under a decree of 7 August 1956. Accepted April 1978 as a Biosphere Reserve, and 1982 as a World Heritage Site.
- GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION In the south-west of Ivory Coast about 200km south of Man and 100km from the coast, between the Cavally River (which marks the western border with Liberia) and the Sassandra River on the east. In the Guiglo and Sassandra Districts. Contiguous with the 70,000ha N'Zo Faunal Reserve and 13,000ha Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve in Guinea. 5°15'-6°7'N, 7°25'-54'W.
- ALTITUDE 80-396m
- AREA 330,000ha, with a further 20,000ha of buffer zone
- LAND TENURE State property
- PHYSICAL FEATURES An area of ancient peneplain, forming a sloping area of granitic rock, broken by several inselbergs formed by volcanic intrusions, including the Niénkoué hills in the south. A large zone of schists runs from south-west to north-east across the park, dissected in places by tributaries of the watercourses which run parallel to it. Ferralitic soils of generally low fertility, but more fertile gleysoils in the south. There are two distinct climatic zones of an equatorial transitional type. Rainfall ranges from a mean of 1700mm in the north to 2200mm in the south, reaching a peak in June and with a shorter wet season in September, followed by a marked dry season from December to February. Small temperature range, 24-27°C, because of oceanic influence and the forests. High relative humidity 85-90%.
- VEGETATION The Park is the last remaining portion of the vast primary forest that once stretched across the territories of present-day Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This humid tropical forest has a high level of endemism - over 150 species have been identified as endemic to the Taï region. Vegetation is predominantly dense evergreen ombrophilous forest of a Guinean type, characterised by tall trees of 40-60m with massive trunks and sometimes large buttresses or stilt roots. Large numbers of epiphytes and lianes form an important element in the lower horizons: Platyserium species, Nephrolepis biserrala, Drynaria laurentu and Asphenium africanum. Two types of forest can be recognized: the poorer soils of the north and south-east support species such as the palm Eremospatha africana, ebony Diospyros mannii,

Parinari chrysophylla, Chrysophyllum perpulchrum and Chidlowia sanguinea; in the south-west the 'Sassandrian' forest is dominated the most water-demanding species of ombrophiles: ebony Diospyros and Mapania, and there are also numerous endemic species, especially in the lower part of the Cavally valley and the Meno and Hana depressions near Mont Niénokoué. Gilbertiodendron spendium occurs in the swamp forest. Plants which were thought to be extinct such as Amorphallus standtii have been rediscovered in the area.

NOTEWORTHY FAUNA

The fauna is fairly typical of the forests of West Africa, and of the 54 species of large mammal known to occur in Guinean rainforest, some 47 are found in Taï, 5 of which are threatened. Mammals include mona, white-nosed and diana monkeys Cercopithecus mona, C. nictitans, and C. diana, black-and-white, red and green colobus monkeys Colobus polykomos, C. badius and C. verus (R), sooty mangabey Cercocebus torquatus, chimpanzee Pan troglodytes (V), giant, tree, and long-tailed pangolins Manis gigantea, M. tricuspis and M. longicaudata, golden cat Felis aurata, leopard Panthera pardus (V), elephant Loxodonta africana (V), bushpig Potamochoerus porcus, giant forest hog Hylochoerus meinertzhageni, pygmy hippo Choeropsis liberiensis (V, the only viable population remaining), water chevrotain Hyemoschus aquaticus, bongo Tragelaphus euryceros, buffalo Syncerus caffer, an extraordinary assemblage of forest duikers which includes Jentink's Cephalophus jentinki (E), banded duiker or zebra antelope C. zebra, Ogilby's C. ogilbyi, black C. niger, bay C. dorsalis, yellow-backed C. [sylvicultor] and royal antelope Neotragus pygmaeus. Almost a thousand species of vertebrate have been identified.

POPULATION Two main groups of people in the area: the rural Bakoué and kroumen living on the forest edge but having only a marginal impact on the forest, and the aboriginal Baoule who are responsible for most of the forest destruction.

ZONING The National Park is almost completely surrounded by a buffer zone of about 5km width. To the north the Réserve de Faune du N'Zo acts as a buffer.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT There is a management plan for the area.

DISTURBANCES OR DEFICIENCIES There are some cultivation plots within the limits of the buffer zone and forest exploitation both within the buffer zone, and within the park itself, particularly in the north. Since independence, this region has become the principal producer of rough timber. A perimeter road designed for defining the boundaries and making protection more effective has had the reverse effect, opening up significant portions of the reserve to timber contractors, shifting cultivators and poachers (many of whom are local officials). Insufficient staff to deal with extensive poaching. Other disturbances include gold prospecting in the centre of the reserve and an influx of outsiders moving into the forest zone to grow cocoa, and an impending dam project at Soubre which could have severe effects on the site by bringing more people into the region. There is a lack of the means to carry out effective management and research has been more theoretical than management-oriented.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH The Park is the site of the MAB project on the effects of human interference within the natural forest ecosystem. In this vast research project, which is run under the auspices of the University Institute for Tropical Ecology, there is great international scientific cooperation as exemplified by the Ivory Coast, French, Italian, German and Swiss teams presently working together on various research programmes. The research project and the site have enormous potential for training and for scientific study. ORSTOM has worked here for a number of years.

SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC FACILITIES

An ecological station in Andrenisrou basin within the core zone and the Federal German team base at Fedfo camp in the buffer zone.

PRINCIPAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

Ake Assi, L. and Pfeffer, P. (1975). Inventaire Flore et Faune du Parc National de Tai, Abidjan, BDPA/SEPN.

IUCN (1982). Rapport de Mission UICN/WWF/PARCS CANADA - Côte d'Ivoire (Parc National de Tai). IUCN, Gland.

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Fgu-Dronberg (1979). Etat actuel des Parcs Nationaux de la Comoé et de Tai. Tome 3. Parc National de Tai, Abidjan, GTZ.

Lauginie, F. (1975). Etude de milieu naturel et de l'environnement socio-economique du Parc National de Tai, Abidjan, BDPA/SEPN.

Roth, H.H. (1982). We all want trees - case history of the Tai National Park in Ivory Coast. Proceedings of the World National Parks Congress, 11-22 October 1982.

Other reports under IUCN/WWF Project 3052.

Biosphere Reserve nomination submitted to Unesco.

STAFF

Personnel from the Ministry of Water and Forest Resources, together with members of the University Institute of Tropical Ecology.

BUDGET

1981-85 100 million francs CFA. 1982 W.W.F. T.F Campaign grant of US\$127,350 towards the implementation of the management plan and cost of a 4 wheel drive vehicle, 5 motorbikes, a motorboat, radio telephones and other essential equipment. German technical assistance.

LOCAL PARK OR RESERVE ADMINISTRATION

Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, Direction des Parcs Nationaux et reserves analogues, B.P. V 178, Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

DATE

April 1982