

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

IUCN TECHNICAL REVIEW

1. IDENTIFICATION NUMBER AND NAME 153 Parc national du Niokolo-Koba
2. LOCATION: Southeast Senegal, 13°N, 13°W
3. NOMINATED BY: The Government of Senegal
4. DOCUMENTATION:
 - (i) Nomination form
 - (ii) Supplementary documentation (IUCN)
 - a) Lariviere, J. and Dupuy, A.R., 1978. Sénégal: Ses Parcs, Ses Animaux. Editions Fernand Nathan, Paris. 144 pp.
 - b) Dupuy, A.R., 1973. "Guide touristique du Parc National du Niokolo-Koba". Direction Eaux et Forêts, Dakar. 56 pp.
 - c) Le Parc National du Niokolo-Koba. Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, No. 48 (1956): 1-266; No. 62 (1961): 1-378; No. 84 (1969): 1-487.
 - d) Dupuy, A.R., 1971. Le Niokolo-Koba: Premier grand Parc National de la République du Sénégal. G.I.A., Dakar. 271 pp.
 - e) Consultation: Maarten Bijleveld, Executive Officer, IUCN Commission on Ecology
 - f) Consultation: Dr. Norman Myers, Environmental Consultant, Nairobi.

5. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Niokolo-Koba National Park covers 913,000 hectares of the Guinea savanna of Senegal, with significant areas of bushland and gallery forest along both banks of the upper Gambia river. The area is rich in wildlife, with over 70 species of mammals, 329 species of birds, 36 reptiles, 20 amphibians, and vast numbers of invertebrates. The lions are a special attraction, reputed to be Africa's largest; Derby's eland, an endangered species, is the world's largest antelope. Other endangered species present include chimpanzees, leopards, and elephants. Basic research covering more than 25 years has provided a great fund of information of the area, which is clearly Senegal's foremost national park. The large and well-trained staff make this one of West Africa's best-managed national parks.

6. INTEGRITY

With nearly a million hectares, Niokolo-Koba certainly has sufficient size to demonstrate the key aspects of the functioning Guinea savanna ecosystem, and to ensure the survival of the endangered species contained therein. The area has about 200 well-equipped guards and receives appropriate budgetary support from the Government. However, recent reports of considerable poaching of elephant suggest that the human element in the ecosystem is threatening to overwhelm at least some of the natural elements. Proposals for barrages on the Gambia and Niokolo-Koba rivers also give cause for concern, as the consequences for the ecological integrity of the park would be disastrous.

7. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

Niokolo-Koba is in the West African Woodland/Savanna biogeographic province, a province which is very well covered by protected areas. IUCN has compared Niokolo-Koba with some 65 protected areas from 10 other West African countries totalling well over 19 million hectares. The best areas of the same general type which might be considered for eventual World Heritage status include Bamingui-Bangoran in Central African Republic and "W" National Park in Benin, Niger, and Upper Volta. Niokolo-Koba is better known and better managed than either of these. One of the consultants has expressed concern that on a world scale, Niokolo-Koba can hardly compare with the great game parks of East and Central Africa.

8. EVALUATION

On the basis of available information, Niokolo-Koba is the most important site of its type in West Africa, and the best-managed. It meets the criteria of providing a spectacle of outstanding wildlife and providing a safe habitat for endangered species.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Niokolo-Koba should be added to the World Heritage List. The Committee might wish to express its concern about the upstream dam and barrage developments and to seek the assurances of the Senegalese Government that Niokola-Koba will be fully protected in the event of such developments. A management plan for the area should be seen as a high priority.



July 1981 (rev)