

AFRICA

NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

RWANDA



L'Hoest's Monkey, *Allochrocebus lhoesti*, Nyungwe National Park © IUCN / Wendy Strahm

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK (RWANDA) – ID N° 1697

IUCN RECOMMENDATION TO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE: To refer the nomination under natural criterion (x)

Key paragraphs of Operational Guidelines:

Paragraph 77: Nominated property meets World Heritage criterion (x), but does not meet criterion (ix).

Paragraph 78: Nominated property partially meets integrity and protection requirements, but does not meet management requirements.

1. DOCUMENTATION

a) Date nomination received by IUCN: February 2022

b) Additional information officially requested from and provided by the State Party: Following the session of the IUCN World Heritage Panel, a progress report was sent to the States Parties on 25 January 2023. This letter advised on the status of the evaluation process and requested supplementary information on research in relation to criterion (ix), species lists in relation to criterion (x), wildlife corridors, a road crossing the park, transboundary management and the management plan of the nominated property. The supplementary information was provided by the State Party on 27 February 2023.

c) Additional literature consulted: IUCN's evaluation consulted a wide array of relevant reference material for the biology, ecology, protection and management as well as the comparative values of the nominated property. References included: Akayezu, P. (2011). Impact of anthropogenic and environmental stresses on plant diversity. Case of the paved road in Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda. Retrieved November 5, 2022 from <https://sites.google.com/a/aag.org/mycoe-servir/the-team/rwanda---nyungwe>; Budowski, G. (1975). Synthèse des propositions concernant l'élaboration d'un programme de sauvegarde de la Forêt naturelle de Nyungwe. MAB, Kigali; Chao, N., Rugyerinyange, L. and Scholte, P. (comps.) (2009). International Conference on the Impact of *Sericostachys scandens* on the Conservation of Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda. Protected Areas Biodiversity Project (PAB), REMA/GEF/UNDP; Easton, J. (2009). Feasibility report for the Re-introduction of African Elephants to Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda. WCS, REMA. REMA/GEF/UNDP. Retrieved November 10 from Wildlife Conservation Society: <http://www.wcs.org/>; Howard, P. C. and Bertzky, B. (2020). Natural World Heritage in Africa: Progress and prospects. BIOPAMA Programme, IUCN Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), Nairobi, Kenya and IUCN Regional Office for West and Central Africa (PACO), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.;

Moore, J., Mulindahabi, F., Gatorano, G., Niyigaba, P., Ndikubwimana, I., Cipolletta, C. and Masozera, M. (2018). Shifting through the forest: Home range, movement patterns, and diet of the eastern chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii*) in Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda. *American Journal of Primatology*, 80, e22897. 10.1002/ajp.22897; Plumptre, A.J., Masozera, M., Fashing, P.J., McNeilage, A., Ewango, C., Kaplan, B.A., and Liengola, I. (2002). Biodiversity surveys of the Nyungwe Forest Reserve in S.W. Rwanda. WCS Working Paper No. 19, July 2002; Plumptre, A.J., Davenport, T.R.B., Behanganac, M., Kityoc, R., Eiluc, G., Ssegawac, P., Ewango, C., Meirted, D., Kahindoc, Cl, Herremansd, M. Kerbis Peterhanse, J., Pilgrim, J.D., Wilson, M., Languyi, M. and Moyer, D. (2008). The biodiversity of the Albertine Rift. *Biological Conservation* 134, 178-194; Rwanda Environment Management Authority (2015). Study to establish a national list of threatened terrestrial ecosystems and species in need of protection in Rwanda. Kigali, Rwanda; White, L. and Vande weghe, J.P. (2008). Patrimoine mondial naturel d'Afrique central: Bien existants – Bien potentials. Rapport de l'atelier de Brazzaville du 12-14 mars 2008. UNESCO-CAWHFI Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative, Paris, France.

d) Consultations: 9 desk reviews received. The mission was able to meet with the Ministry of Environment; the Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy; the Rwanda National Commission of for UNESCO; Rwanda Development Board; Nyungwe National Part site management and eco-guards; Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS); National Herbarium; Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); two local communities; tea plantation representatives, among others.

e) Field Visit: Wendy Strahm and Inza Koné, 10 to 17 October 2022

f) Date of IUCN approval of this report: April 2023

2. SUMMARY OF NATURAL VALUES

Nyungwe National Park is located in the very biodiverse Albertine Rift Ecoregion and nominated under criteria (ix) and (x). It is composed of three nominated component parts – one principal block, the Nyungwe Natural Forest, and two small isolated forest patches, the Cyamudongo Natural Forest and the Gisakura Natural Forest. The nominated property presents three distinct altitudinal forest zones: low montane, middle montane, and upper montane. Vegetation types found in the nominated property include montane forests, bamboo forests, savanna grasslands, and high-altitude wetlands, such as the Kamiranzovu swamp with nearly 1,300 ha of peat bog. This is reported to be the largest peat bog in Africa preserving pollen archives of at least 200,000 to 300,000 years. The nominated property represents the largest remaining montane rainforest in the country and serves as a source of the Congo and Nile River basins.

	Nominated component part	Area (ha)	Buffer zone (ha)
1	Nyungwe Natural Forest	101,515.59	10,085.22
2	Cyamudongo Natural Forest	430.38	-
3	Gisakura Natural Forest	17.70	-
Total:		101,963.67	10,085.22

Table 1 : Area of nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated component part of Nyungwe Natural Forest consists of montane rainforests, high altitude wetlands, tall ericaceous thickets and low ericaceous moorlands with an altitudinal range from 1,480 m to 2,950 m. The lowest, more humid parts are on the western side, which includes the Kamiranzovu Marsh at 1,950 m. The driest parts are north and east. Some patches of Bamboo forest occur in the south-east (Nshili).

The nominated property's flora includes 1,441 species of native vascular plants, including 256 Albertine Rift endemics of which 38 are endemic to Rwanda. The small Cyamudongo Forest has 628 species, 266 of which are not present in the much larger Nyungwe Natural Forest. Currently, the flagship species in the nominated property are its primates, with 14 different species listed in the nomination, of which four species (Chimpanzee, *Pan troglodytes*, EN, Angolan Colobus, *Colobus angolensis*, VU, L'Hoest's Monkey, *Allochrocebus lhoesti*, VU, and Blue Monkey, *Cercopithecus mitis*, LC) are habituated and serve as tourist attractions. Two other threatened primates, Owl-faced Monkey (*Cercopithecus hamlyni*, VU) and Golden Monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis ssp. kandti*, EN) are reported to occur in the nominated property. The Upland Horseshoe Bat, (*Rhinolophus hillorum*, CR) is endemic to the nominated property, although little is known about the distribution of this species. As for birds, the nomination notes 351 species, of which around 25-30 species are Albertine Rift endemics. The Grauer's Swamp-Warbler (*Bradypterus graueri*, VU) has probably its second largest population in the Kamiranzovu swamp, and the only large population in

a protected area. A few other threatened birds are listed for the Park, including the Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, VU). For the 32 species of amphibians, 22 are Albertine Rift endemics of which two are endemic to the nominated property. Of these, one amphibian (*Boulengerula fischeri*, VU) is only known from its type locality in the Cyamudongo Forest.

3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER AREAS

The nominated property has been recognised by IUCN in thematic studies as a possible priority for new nominations to the World Heritage List, most recently in 2020. The nomination dossier presents a comparative analysis applying a multi-scale approach to both biodiversity criteria, criteria (ix) and (x). Following a discussion of tropical montane forests at the global level, the dossier analyses montane, sub-montane and lowland forest at continental scale, distinguishing the Albertine Rift, which covers significant eco-climatic gradients giving rise to very high levels of endemism and biodiversity with more than 5,800 plant species, representing approximately 14% of all vascular plant species in Africa, as well as 404 mammal species, representing 39% and 1,062 bird species representing 46% of the species recorded in Africa respectively.

At the scale of the Albertine Rift, the analysis proceeds to compare the nominated property with 13 sites within this region. In conclusion, the nomination considers the nominated property as one of the most biologically important Afrotropical forests in Africa. Together with Kibira National Park in Burundi, with which the nominated property is contiguous, the landscape forms the largest remaining lower montane forest block in Africa. According to the nomination file, the nominated property is representative of the Albertine Rift montane forests and the dynamics that take place within them, preserving both the largest intact mountain forests of the Albertine Rift and an intact complex landscape of the central sector of the Albertine Rift. In particular, it protects the several plant successions taking place within the peat bogs and the colonisation process of moors and meadows, as well as the interactions between dense forests, bamboo thickets, and open-canopy forests.

IUCN, in collaboration with UNEP-WCMC, has undertaken supplementary comparative analysis with regards to criteria (ix) and (x). Based on the spatial analyses and literature review, the biodiversity that characterises the nominated property appears to be of global significance, particularly under criterion (x).

Regarding criterion (ix), the WCMC Comparative Analysis notes that the nominated property represents a key area for rainforest conservation in Central Africa thanks to its size and altitudinal gradient. It also overlaps with the Lake Tanganyika ecoregion, which is not yet represented. However, it overlaps with biogeographical areas, including a hotspot, Endemic Bird Area and priority ecoregion, already well represented on the World Heritage List. The Afrotropical Tropical and Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests

terrestrial biorealm, where the nominated property is found, is already very well represented on the World Heritage List, with 20 inscribed properties. The East African Woodland/Savanna Udvardy Province is also well represented on the World Heritage List with eight properties already. The nominated property does not appear to overlap with any Centres for Plant Diversity.

Based on the solid account provided in the nomination dossier and supplementary information, the input from the field evaluation mission, external desk reviews and the WCMC Comparative Analysis, IUCN notes the importance of the very complex mosaic of vegetation with numerous plant associations and of the Kamiranzovu swamp as the largest peat bog in Africa. However, the nomination also notes that the dynamism between closed-canopy and open-canopy forest, between the vast mountain bamboo thickets and the various types of surrounding forests, put forward as attributes under criterion (ix), is currently poorly understood. Regarding the fauna, IUCN notes that four keystone species recently became extinct within the nominated property: African Savanna Elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*, EN), Buffalo, Giant Forest Hog (*Hylochoerus meinertzhageni*, LC) and Leopard (*Panthera pardus*, VU). Whilst there is consideration of reintroducing these species, the absence of predators and large herbivores suggests an incomplete representation of the nominated property's ecosystem under criterion (ix), with the effects of the loss of keystone species unknown. It is likely though that the vegetation dynamics have changed as a result. IUCN took note of recent draft feasibility studies for the proposed reintroduction of Savannah Elephants and Grey Parrots along with biomonitoring report drafts provided in supplementary information. However, the supplementary material did not substantiate further the case for criterion (ix) as scientific attention focused on other fields of research. In this respect, it is welcome that the final draft of the Long-Term Sustainability Strategy (LTSS), provided in supplementary information prioritises closing key knowledge gaps. Based on the current level of knowledge, IUCN considers that the nominated property does not appear to demonstrate global significance under criterion (ix).

In contrast, there appears to be a strong case for global significance under criterion (x). The nominated property supports a wide variety of flora and fauna and is a key site for biodiversity conservation in the Albertine Rift region, with a particularly rich mammal and bird diversity. It generally shows a high level of biodiversity when compared to other World Heritage properties and Tentative List sites found in the same Eastern Afrotropical terrestrial biodiversity hotspot, as well as in the same Rift Valley Lakes freshwater priority ecoregion and Albertine Rift Montane Forests terrestrial ecoregion. The flora of the site is very diverse with 1,468 plant species. There are 73 globally threatened plant species recorded within the nominated property, including two Critically Endangered (CR): *Capparis lucens* and *Polystachya erica-lanzae*; 32 Endangered (EN); and 39 Vulnerable (VU) species. The nominated property is reported to host 256 species of plants endemic to the Albertine Rift region, of which 37 are endemic to Rwanda.

Notably, it hosts 14 primate species, including some globally threatened species, such as the Chimpanzee and Golden Monkey. The nominated property is considered a primate hotspot due to the high number of primate species representing 20% of all African primate species. The nominated property is reported to host 12 species of globally threatened mammals and among resident and breeding bird species, there are seven threatened species. The endangered White-Bellied Pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*, EN) is also found within the nominated property. Several animal species are endemic or sub-endemic to the Albertine Rift, including several mammal, amphibian and reptile species. The nominated property also hosts 317 species of birds, making it one of the most important sites for bird conservation on the African continent after the Itombwe Mountains. Consequently, the nominated property is considered to be amongst the top 0.1% of most irreplaceable protected areas in the world for mammal, bird and amphibian conservation. The nominated property also overlaps with one Alliance for Zero Extinction site (AZE), an Important Bird Area and a Key Biodiversity Area which are not currently represented on the World Heritage List.

In conclusion, IUCN considers that the nominated property demonstrates global significance under criterion (x) whereas currently there does not appear to be a convincing case for criterion (ix).

4. INTEGRITY, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

4.1. Protection

The nominated property has been formally protected since 1933 when it was designated as a forest reserve. In 2005, Nyungwe National Park was officially established by Law N° 22/2005. Article 2 of the law also establishes the buffer zone of the nominated property. Nyungwe National Park is legally owned by the State, including the buffer zones. The nominated property falls under IUCN Protected Area Category IV, although it could be argued that large areas of the nominated property fall under Category II as these areas are almost completely inaccessible. Law enforcement is ensured by the Law Enforcement Department comprising one Manager, two Heads of Zones (South and North), 80 rangers, 18 security guards, 35 posts' aids, 33 primate trackers, and one control room operator.

Regarding the buffer zone, IUCN notes that the law establishing the nominated property's buffer zone confirms under Article 3 that "the use and management of the buffer zone will be conducted in accordance with the laws in force, determining the use of land, environment and forests". However, the Management Plan 2012-2021 notes that other than this general provision, the law does not prescribe how the buffer zone will be managed and how the use of the area is regulated. In this respect, the Management Plan played an important role in ensuring that the buffer zone of the nominated property effectively functioned as an added layer of protection in line with

the *Operational Guidelines*, thanks to prescriptions provided in the plan. However, this is no longer the case as the Management Plan has expired (see section 4.3).

In December 2018, a procurement procedure was initiated in compliance with relevant domestic Public-Private-Partnership laws and guidelines to delegate the management and financing of Nyungwe National Park. As a result a contract was signed in October 2020 between the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and African Parks Network, an organisation specialised in conservation, management and sustainable use of protected areas in Africa. The contract runs for 20 years and is renewable.

Overall, IUCN concludes that the protection requirements for the nominated property are met, but considers that the legal definition of the buffer zone would need to be strengthened so as to serve as an effective added layer of protection, also following the expiry of the management plan.

IUCN considers that the protection status of the nominated property meets the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* but that the requirements are currently not met for the nominated property's buffer zone.

4.2 Boundaries

The nominated property is congruent with the boundaries of Nyungwe National Park whose boundaries are defined in great detail through Appendix 1 of before-mentioned law. The nominated property is surrounded by tea plantations and exotic forest plantations. Some small-scale farming borders the nominated property. Whilst the nomination dossier reports small incursions of previous Eucalyptus and Pine plantations, the nominated property maintains a very high level of integrity with intact natural forests and open-canopy formations, the latter hosting some of the most important endemic species.

The nominated property is part of the largest remaining lower montane forest block in Africa. Whilst the nominated property is relatively small compared to other Protected Areas in the region, the field evaluation found that it is of sufficient size to maintain the proposed Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). It deserves to be noted though that the nominated component parts of Cyamudongo Natural Forest (430 ha) and Gisakura Natural Forest (17 ha) are extremely small. Both Cyamudongo and Gisakura Natural Forests are completely disconnected from each other and from Nyungwe Natural Forest due to the presence of tea plantations and settlements hampering movement of wildlife. In this respect, IUCN welcomes the State Party's consideration noted in its supplementary information of the potential development of ecological corridors to improve the connectivity between the nominated component parts. Nevertheless, given this lack of connectivity, IUCN considers that the integrity requirements under criterion (ix) are currently not met. Regarding criterion

(x), both Cyamudongo and Gisakura Forests play an important role in ensuring the nominated property's integrity in terms of completeness under criterion (x). Cyamudongo Forest hosts 35 important plant species not found in Nyungwe Natural Forest, including important endemics, amounting to almost 13% of the nominated property's important plants. Gisakura Natural Forest features a population of Angola Colobus (*Colobus angolensis*, VU).

The nominated property is subject to a zoning regime to achieve different management objectives in different parts of the protected area. Four main zones have been identified: Ecologically Sensitive Zone; Tourism High Use Zone; Wilderness Zone; and Buffer Zone. The nominated component part of Nyungwe Natural Forest is surrounded by a legally defined, discontinuous buffer zone totalling 10,085 ha, consisting mainly of exotic pine plantations. It provides a buffer for about 70% of the nominated component part. The south-western and southern end is bordered by Kibira National Park (Burundi). In other areas without a buffer zone, the nominated component part borders tea plantations with some small-scale agriculture, which provide a buffering function, even if they are not legally defined as buffer zone. The topography separates it clearly from heavily used lower-altitude areas surrounding the nominated property and its buffer zone. Cyamudongo Natural Forest, at an altitude of about 1,700-2,100 m has no buffer zone, but is mostly surrounded by plantations and farmland. Gisakura Natural Forest is entirely surrounded by tea plantations.

In conclusion, IUCN considers that the boundaries of the nominated property are appropriate, though improvements are recommended to consolidate the buffer zone and enhance the connectivity between the three nominated component parts.

IUCN considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zones partially meet the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*.

4.3 Management

The nominated property transitioned from a traditional Government management system to a public-private partnership arrangement with African Parks. There is a Transition Protocol in place for the first 12 months of national park management, which also provides for the establishment of the Nyungwe Management Company (NMC). Starting in April 2021, NMC is charged with the management of the National Park on the ground.

The forestry plantations in the buffer zone of the nominated property fall under the management authority of the Rwanda National Forestry Authority (NAFA). In July 2011, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) signed a long-term management agreement for the buffer zone with a forestry company applying sustainable and socially responsible standards. The company now has responsibility for the management of the existing buffer zone forestry plantations as well

as for the replanting of denuded areas using enrichment planting regimes involving both indigenous hardwood trees as well as commercial forestry species such as pine.

A detailed and comprehensive Business Plan from 2022-2026 was included in the nomination. The Business Plan aspires to make the nominated property self-sustaining through a quality tourism approach. In the period from 2022 to 2026, the planned funded expenditure of the nominated property ranges from 2.8 to 3.9 million USD annually. The management system of the Park is documented in a management plan, which expired in 2021. A Long-Term Sustainability Strategy (LTSS) is expected to be approved in 2023 to succeed the expired management plan. The State Party provided the LTSS as part of its supplementary information submission. The LTSS is expected to guide the implementation of the Business Plan and the development of a future Management Plan as well as a Land Use Plan that will define the activities permitted in the different areas of the nominated property. Whilst the LTSS provides a commendable vision for the nominated property that is centered on community-inclusive conservation and the expansion of the ecosystem and connectivity, and creates a framework for the development of the next Management Plan, the LTSS does not replace it and therefore an updating of the expired 2012-2021 Management Plan is a pressing requirement. The updated Management Plan should contain the same level of detail and concrete action as the successfully implemented 2012-2021 Management Plan, and in particular specify how the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property should be preserved.

Therefore, IUCN considers that the nominated property is currently not meeting management requirements in line with paragraph 108 of the *Operational Guidelines*, which requires each nominated property to have an appropriate management plan which must specify how the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property should be preserved.

IUCN considers the management of the nominated property does not meet the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*.

4.4 Community

Whilst large areas of the nominated property are almost completely inaccessible, the nominated property overlaps with densely populated districts. Therefore, careful consultation with stakeholders and rights-holders including local communities and park management are required. The field evaluation mission found that stakeholders are regularly consulted and informed about management decisions and issues. The boundaries of the nominated property are known to stakeholders and rights-holders and cultural rights do not appear to be affected by the presence or management of the nominated property.

The Community Partnership Programme of Nyungwe National Park intends to ensure that communities benefit from the National Park. Several community-based cooperatives have been established in different zones to address specific issues: a surveillance cooperative as well as tea producing, milk producing and honey producing cooperatives. Local communities and private companies also contribute to enforcing the unauthorized access ban to the nominated property. The local communities met by the mission judged the revenue sharing scheme as promising. Human-wildlife conflict management mechanisms are in place and considered to be satisfactory by stakeholders. These include avoidance measures as well as compensation measures.

4.5 Threats

The nomination highlights roads traversing the nominated property and illegal mining as threats, among others. The international road crossing the nominated property is completely illuminated and used by heavy truck and bus traffic causing disturbance and risks of roadkill and pollution. At one point, the road was closed to traffic at night, but this regulation has not been maintained. The mission noted truck traffic is expected to decrease significantly once a road to the north of the nominated property is upgraded. In supplementary information, the State Party confirmed that this project is expected to be completed by mid-2024. There is a process underway to regulate the traffic through Nyungwe National Forest with the intention to reduce vehicle speed and noise. Mining inside the Park ceased in 2004 and the old mining areas are in the process of restoration through natural regeneration. Since designation as a National Park in 2005, pressures on the nominated property have been reduced and areas affected by fire are being restored.

The 10-year Management Plan, which expired in 2021, as well as the Nyungwe National Park Business Plan (2022-2026) address the threats to the nominated property, and significant progress has been made. However, it is regrettable that at the time of this evaluation a process to update the Management Plan had not been put in place to guarantee the continuation of the same level of successful action.

The field mission observed examples of the revenue-sharing scheme working successfully, benefitting local communities living in the vicinity of the nominated property. Forest fires have been prevented through awareness raising among communities. At the same time, the nomination notes that fire is also an important factor to maintain the nominated property's mosaic habitats, which will need to be carefully managed by the park authorities.

Several reintroduction projects to restore locally extinct fauna (Savannah Elephant, Buffalo, Giant Forest Hog and Leopard) and to reinforce the Grey Parrot population are being considered. These initiatives will require careful planning and evaluation to ensure translocation is undertaken in accordance with international best practice and to assess the suitability

and risks associated with such activities, including by addressing the root cause for their initial extinction within the nominated property.

Overall, IUCN considers that the nominated property exhibits a high level of integrity with adequate boundaries and protection levels. The management of the nominated property has been successfully guided by the 2012-2021 Management Plan and there is a promising vision in place for the nominated property, which may in future address concerns to improve the connectivity between the three nominated component parts and to strengthen the buffer zone arrangements of the nominated property. However, as there is currently no Management Plan in place that would ensure continuity at the same level as the previous 2012-2021 Management Plan, the management requirements are not met at the time of writing of this evaluation report. This also leaves a gap for the management of the buffer zone. It will be important to reinforce the legal status of the buffer zone, to ensure its functioning as added layer of protection.

In summary, IUCN considers that the integrity requirements and protection and management requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* are partially met.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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5.1 Consideration in relation to serial properties

a) What is the justification for the serial approach?

Whilst very small and disconnected from the main forest block of Nyungwe Natural Forest, the nominated component parts of Cyamudongo Natural Forest and Gisakura Natural Forest are legally part of Nyungwe National Park. The inclusion of Cyamudongo Natural Forest and Gisakura Natural Forest ensures consistency of the boundaries of the nominated property with the boundaries of Nyungwe National Park. Each of the nominated component parts contains attributes not represented in the other nominated component parts. Therefore, each nominated component part is essential to fully represent the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

b) Are the separate component parts of the nominated property functionally linked in relation to the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*?

The nominated component parts are separated by tea plantations and settlements, which present a barrier to wildlife movement. However, all three nominated component parts contribute towards the completeness under criterion (x). All three nominated component parts contribute to the overall species richness of the nominated property and they should therefore not be excluded from the nominated property. In supplementary information, the State Party confirms its

willingness to consider wildlife corridors to improve the connectivity between the three nominated component parts.

c) Is there an effective overall management framework for all the component parts of the nominated property?

The 2012-2021 Management Plan and the 2022-2026 Business Plan cover all of the nominated component parts, including the two small forest blocks. However, as noted in section 4, at the time of writing this evaluation report, it has not been demonstrated that the continuation of the effective management framework of the 2012-2021 Management Plan would be ensured if the nominated property would be inscribed now.

6. APPLICATION OF CRITERIA

The **Nyungwe National Park (Rwanda)** has been nominated under natural criteria (ix) and (x).

Criterion (ix): Ecosystems/communities and ecological/biological processes

Nyungwe National Park represents an important area for rainforest conservation in Central Africa, thanks to its size and altitudinal gradient. Furthermore, the nomination and supplementary information highlights the importance of the dynamics between closed-canopy and open-canopy forest, between bamboo thickets and surrounding forests, but notes that scientific study of these dynamics is lacking. Whilst this complex mosaic of vegetation appears to be important further research would be needed to potentially confirm significance of the ecological processes of the nominated property at global level. The fact that keystone species went extinct recently does not demonstrate a complete representation of the nominated property's ecosystem under criterion (ix). The lack of connectivity between the three nominated component parts also calls into question the intactness of the nominated property under criterion (ix). In addition, the nominated property overlaps with biogeographical areas that are already well represented on the World Heritage List, including the Afrotropic Tropical and Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests terrestrial biorealm, which is already represented by 20 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. As stand-alone site, the nominated property could not be considered a complete representation of the Albertine Rift.

IUCN considers that the nominated property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion (x): Biodiversity and threatened species

The nominated property boasts both intact forests and montane non-forest environments, including peat bogs, moors, thickets and grasslands, providing habitats to a highly diverse flora and fauna. Nyungwe

National Park has a very rich flora with 1,468 species of vascular plant species. The nominated property counts 73 globally threatened plant species, including two Critically Endangered, 32 Endangered and 39 Vulnerable species. It hosts one of the most species-rich montane rainforest primate communities in Africa. One fifth of Africa's primate species are present in the nominated property, including the globally threatened Eastern Chimpanzee and Golden Monkey. The nominated property also features the Albertine Rift population of the Angola Colobus as well as the l'Hoest's Monkey. There are 12 mammal and seven bird species that are globally threatened. With 317 species of birds recorded, Nyungwe National Park is one of the most important sites for bird conservation in Africa. The Grauer's Swamp-Warbler (VU) is estimated to have its second largest population in the Kamiranzovu swamp within the nominated property. Nyungwe National Park is an important site for endemism. There are 32 species of amphibians, 22 are Albertine Rift endemics of which two are endemic to the nominated property. The nomination reports at least 290 species of butterflies, out of which 47 are endemic to the Albertine Rift. The Critically Endangered Hills Horseshoe Bat is endemic to the nominated property. Therefore, the nominated property contains the most important and significant natural habitats for a number of species found nowhere else in the world.

IUCN considers that the nominated property meets this criterion.

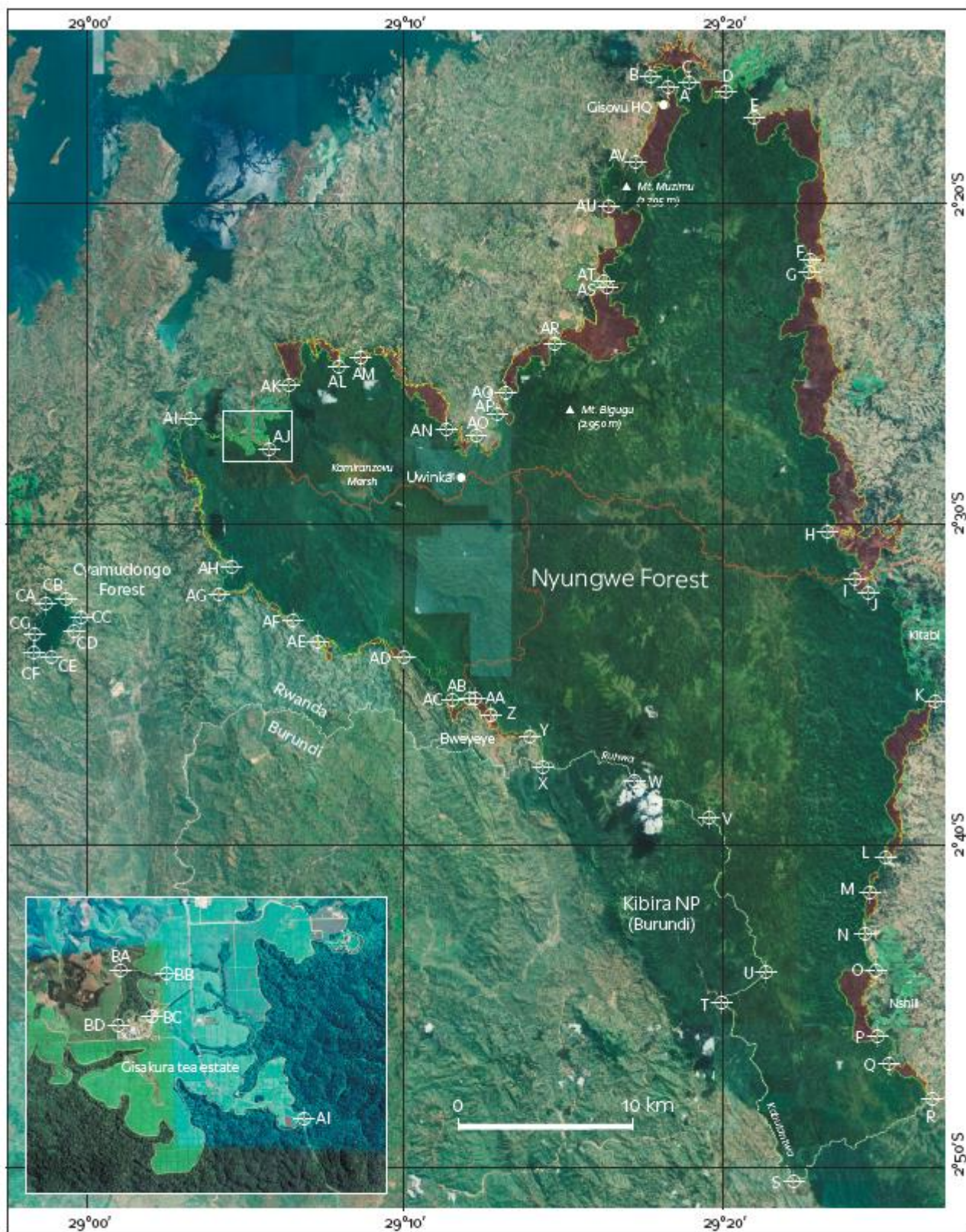
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopts the following draft decision:


The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/23/45.COM/8B and WHC/23/45.COM/INF.8B2;
2. Refers the nomination of **Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda**, back to the State Party, taking note of the potential of the nominated property to meet criterion (x), in order to allow it to complete protection and management arrangements to fully meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines through the development and adoption of a new management plan, to follow the expired 2012-2021 Management Plan and based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, including the management system for the proposed buffer zone;
3. Recommends the State Party to:
 - a) Extend the buffer zone of the nominated property in line with the recommendations in the IUCN evaluation report and to enhance the connectivity between the component parts,
 - b) Ensure traffic on roads crossing the nominated property is reduced following the upgrade of an alternative road to the north of the nominated property.

Map 1: Nominated property and buffer zone.



2. Nyungwe NP with its boundaries, reference points (A-AV, BA-BD, CA-CG), border with Burundi and administrative posts of Gisovu, Gisaakura and Uwinka. The Head Quarters will be moved to Gisaakura.

 Buffer zone (mainly pine plantations).