

AFRICA

TAÏ NATIONAL PARK

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

WORLD HERITAGE MINOR BOUNDARY MODIFICATION PROPOSAL – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

TAÏ NATIONAL PARK (CÔTE D'IVOIRE) – ID No. 195Bis

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Taï National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982 under criteria (vii) and (x). The World Heritage property consists of a single area designated both as Biosphere Reserve and national park, totalling 330,000 ha at the time of inscription. The property has a buffer zone that has the legal status of a managed Fauna Reserve.

The World Heritage Committee has examined the state of conservation of the property on several occasions since 1984. Based on the 2006 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission and the State of Conservation report presented by the State Party in 2018, the Committee requested the State Party in 2020 to *“elaborate as soon as possible a boundary modification proposal to align the boundaries of the property with those of the national park, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN regarding the appropriate format for such a modification”* (Decision 43 COM 7B.31). In response to decision 43 COM 7B.31 of the World Heritage Committee, the State Party submitted on 11 March 2021 a request for a minor boundary modification in accordance with Decree No. 2018-496 of 23 May 2018. This decree formalized the extension of the Taï National Park.

In its latest decision, the Committee also reiterated its recommendation to the States Party to *“integrate the EIA/HIA processes into legislation, planning mechanisms and management plans, and reiterates its recommendation to use these tools in assessing projects, including assessment of cumulative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of properties, as early as possible and before any final decision is taken”* (Decision 44 COM 7B.200).

The relevant documentation is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/195/documents/>.

2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BOUNDARY MODIFICATION

The minor boundary modification proposed by the State Party would consist of the addition of two adjacent areas to the property (see map 1):

Firstly, the modification proposes to add the managed Fauna Reserve to the inscribed property. This would result in widening the property by around 5 km at its western, southern and eastern limits. This would add 96,000 ha to the nominated property.

Secondly, the modification proposes the addition of more than two thirds of the “N’Zo Fauna Reserve”

adjacent to the Northern border of the inscribed property. The reserve has thus far functioned as a buffer zone, though there is no formal World Heritage buffer zone.

IUCN notes that the State Party amended the Law 2013-864 of 23 December 2013 to allow the government to modify by Decree the boundaries of national parks and natural reserves and that the proposed boundary modification of Taï National Park approved (by Decree 2018-496 of 23 May 2018) the inclusion of both the N’Zo Fauna Reserve and the managed Fauna Reserve. The new boundaries would add a part of the Haut Dodo classified forest in the south-west and a part of the Rapides Grah classified forest in the south-eastern and eastern part of the national park.

Overall, the property’s area would increase by 178,186 ha (53.99%) to 508,186 ha.

3. IMPACT ON OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

IUCN notes that the proposed minor boundary modification adds a significant part of two adjacent areas that have been subject to strong conservation efforts in past years. Even though the managed Fauna Reserve and the N’Zo Fauna Reserve have served as a Peripheral Protection Zone and a Partial Fauna Reserve, respectively, until May 2018, they have, for 40 years, both been functioning as quasi-buffer zones preserving Taï National Park as one of the last major remnants of primary tropical forest in West Africa. The values contained in these areas would in IUCN’s view clearly add attributes to the OUV of the property. The integrity of the property would also be improved in terms of completeness if these areas would be included in the property.

Furthermore, the boundary modification proposal responds to a World Heritage Centre and IUCN recommendation made in 2020, and based on the Committee’s Decision 43 COM 7B.3, IUCN also notes that the extension provides a wider area of protected habitat for threatened mammal species that are a key attribute of the OUV. These include the Pygmy Hippopotamus, *Choeropsis liberiensis* (EN), and 11 species of monkeys preserved within the park. In addition, the proposed modification would align the boundaries of the property with the current boundaries of the national park facilitating more streamlined management.

Therefore, IUCN concludes that the proposed minor boundary modification represents a clear improvement of the conservation of the property's OUV.

Based on the 2019 State of Conservation Report, IUCN acknowledges the progress made by the State Party to reduce illegal activities, including poaching and artisanal gold mining. Therefore, IUCN reiterates the importance to continue these efforts to eliminate the threats posed by illegal activities, to continue identifying effective measures to prevent the above mentioned risks within the property, and to report on these as applicable and in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

4. RECOMMENDATION

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

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/22/45.COM/8B.ADD and WHC/22/45.COM/INF.8B2.ADD,

2. Recalling Decisions **06 COM VIII.20**, **43 COM 7B.31** and **44 COM 7B.200** adopted at its 6th (UNESCO, Paris, 1982), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,

3. Approves the minor boundary modification request for **Taï National Park, Côte d'Ivoire**;

4. Welcomes the progress made by the State Party to address threats to the property, underlines the importance of continuing efforts to eliminate those threats posed to the property by illegal activities, and encourages the State Party to report on any development of threats as applicable and in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, including on any potential impacts on the integrity of the property and the newly added areas.

Map 1: World Heritage property and proposed minor boundary modification