



The Congo River Basin WWF contribution

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WWF's Global Freshwater Targets

Our Vision Freshwater habitats around the world are conserved and sustainably managed to benefit people and nature

Our targets

1. Ensuring : Healthy environmental processes in at least 50 river basins and ecoregions by 2010

2. Promoting : adoption by governments and industry of policies and techniques that conserve life in rivers and reduce poverty by 2010

3. Protecting and sustainably managing: 250 million hectares of representative wetlands by 2010

Our approach = IRBM or the heart of IWRM

Freshwater ecoregion conservation mainstreamed as integrated river basin management (IRBM) and implemented (WWF's challenge).





African Transboundary basins





- Importance of CRB
- Issues in CRB
- WWF action



WWF action :
The Congo River Basin SAP
The CongoWet





Importance of the CRB

- The largest in Africa and the 2nd in the world after the Amazon: 3.8mioKm²
- 32% of the renewable water resource for Africa.
- Debit 40,000 m³/second
- High levels of endemism: more than 500 of the fish species are endemic
- Water tower of Africa: 30% of Africa's freshwater
- Yet, degradation has accelerated dramatically in recent years.



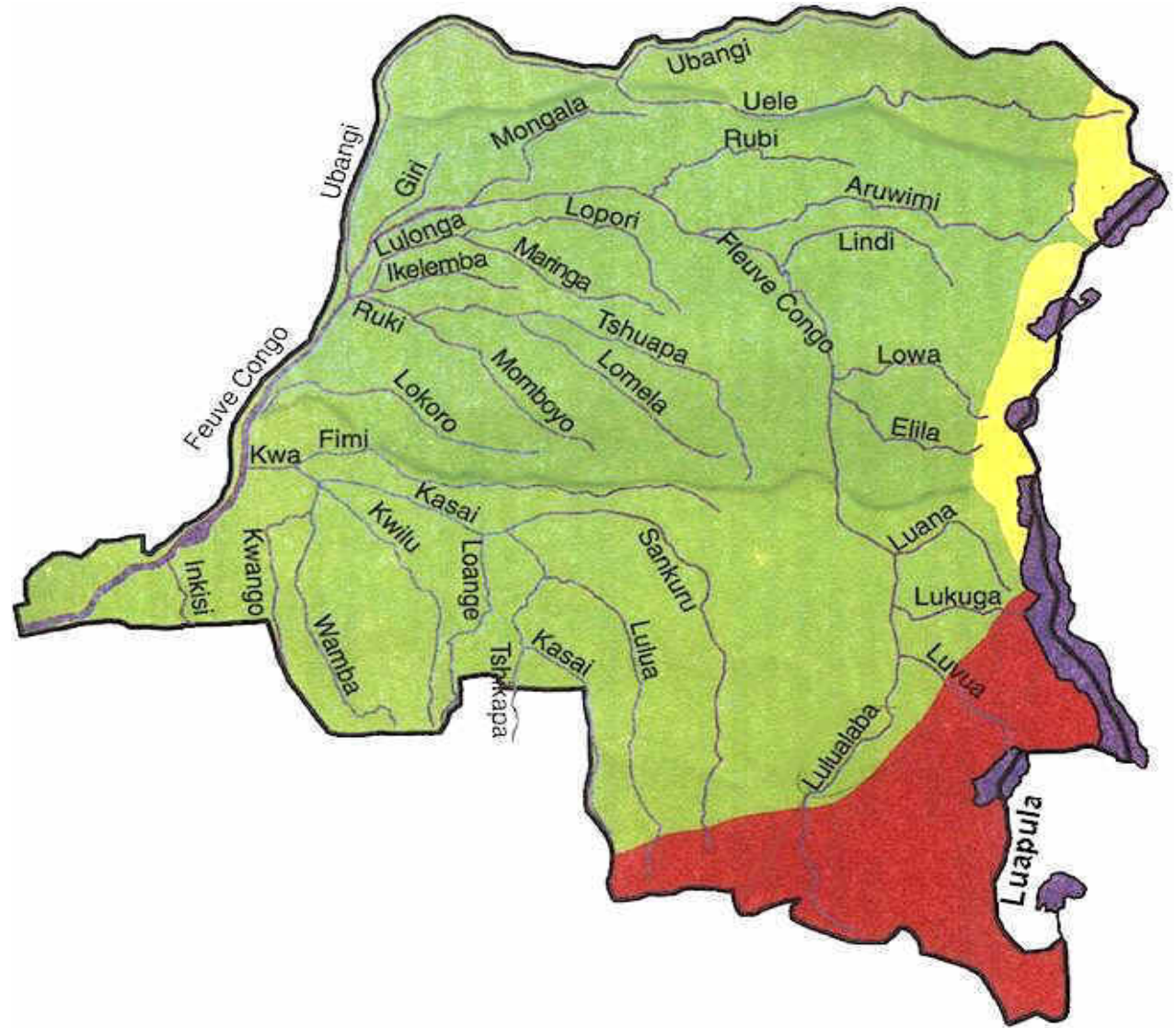
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The Congo River Basin in DRC 62%





Issues of the CRB

- **The forest dependency.**

Over 50% of the water is recycled within the basin's hydrological system. The basin's water cycle is very vulnerable to ecological change – such as deforestation

- **The challenges**

Loss and degradation of habitat, loss of vegetative cover, decline in the population of key species, decline of fish populations, land degradation and desertification, land erosion and land slides, sedimentation of rivers and river pollution.

- **The economic potential**

Transport, with over 14,500 km of navigable waterways

Agriculture, with an estimated 9.8 million hectares of potential irrigation land;

Fisheries, with fish providing 37% of animal proteins to the local populations in the region

Energy, the huge water flows and frequent rapids represent an enormous potential for generating electricity.





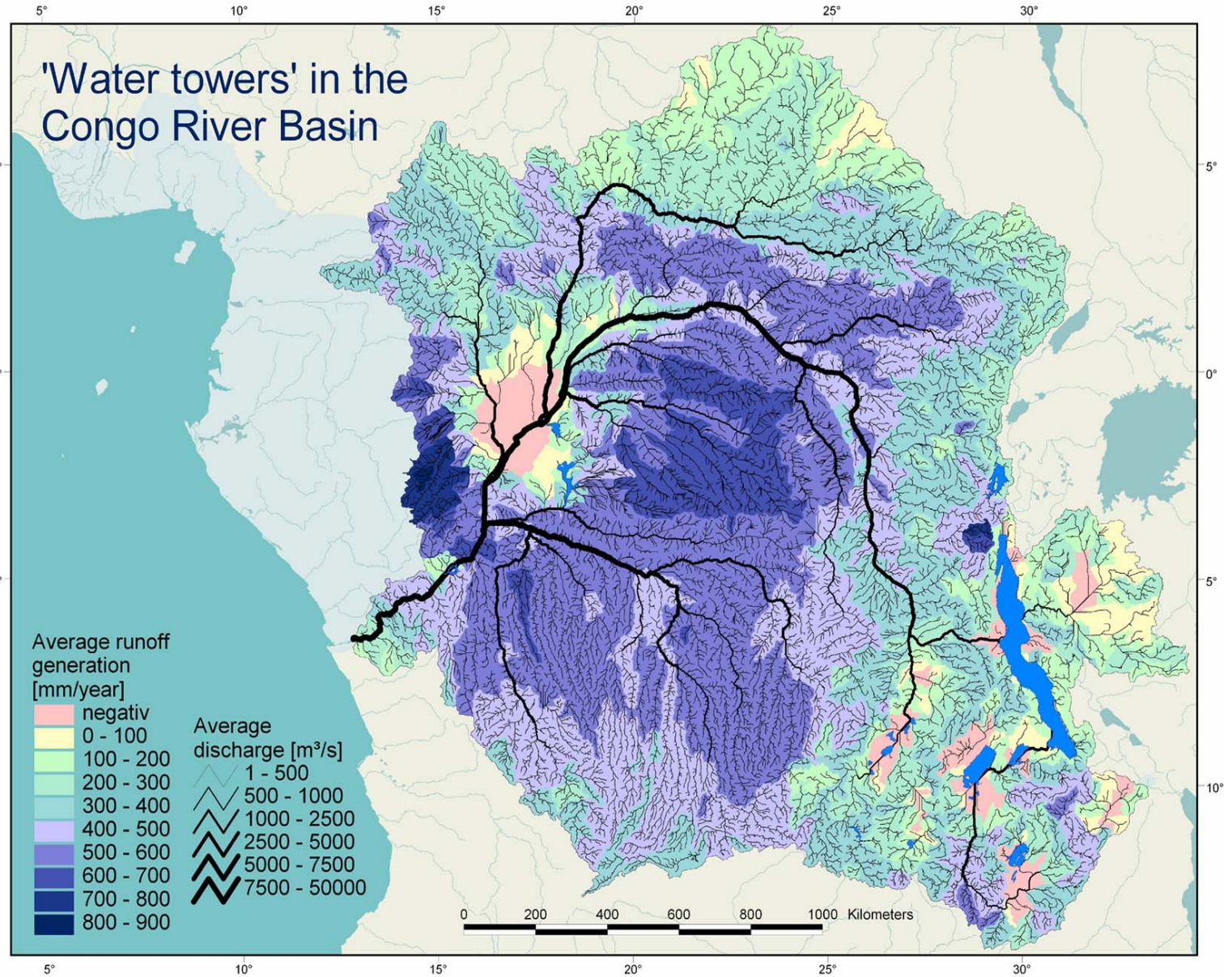
Congo River Basin Strategic Action programme

- Long term goal: sustainable development of CRB through the use of an integrated, ecosystem approach to managing resources or IRBM
- Objective: to strengthen capacities to address priority transboundary water related environmental issues
- Activities: Consultation, capacity assessment, Identification of priority areas and issues
- Process: preparation of PDF B project and Aquatic Biodiversity Action Plan (ABAP) for the Congo River Basin. Trans-Boundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Program (SAP).





The Congo River is an estimated 4375 km long and the Basin covers approximately 3.8 million km².



Source: WWF US CSP



CongoWet: Towards Regional Integration



- National and regional commitments to wetland conservation and wise use
- WWF is working to promote networks of well managed wetlands (Ramsar sites) that provide critical environmental functions in major river basins (headwaters, floodplains, deltas, etc)
- These are recognised as Regional Ramsar Initiatives for wetland conservation and wise use
- Two sister initiatives - ChadWet and NigerWet - were adopted at the Ramsar COP9 in Uganda in November 2005
- WWF is promoting learning and exchange between networks of wetland managers and other stakeholders in the basins





Developing *BasinWet* initiatives for international river basins



- ***BasinWet* initiatives = Ramsar Network for basin-wide implementation of the 3 pillars of the International Convention on Wetlands, ie.:**
 - The Ramsar List (of Wetlands of International importance)
 - The Wise Use of Wetlands (= Sustainable Management)
 - The International Cooperation
- ***BasinWet* initiatives need to result from a high-level political mandate by the relevant governing body of International River Basin Organizations (Council of Ministers, Summit of Heads of States and Governments, etc.)**
- ***BasinWet* initiatives need to secure formal endorsement as “*Ramsar Regional Initiatives*” by triennial Ramsar Conferences of the Parties**
- ***BasinWet* initiatives can get formally started once that a minimum level of “tangible Ramsar assets” can be demonstrated, eg.:**
 - A basin-wide network of Ramsar Sites under construction
 - At least a few sustainable management projects under way or about to start in Ramsar Sites
 - A minimum degree of pre-existing International Cooperation at the scale of the basin and beyond between the River Basin Organization, Ramsar Focal Points of its member Countries, the Ramsar Secretariat and at least 1-2 Ramsar International NGO Partners





WWF priority interventions

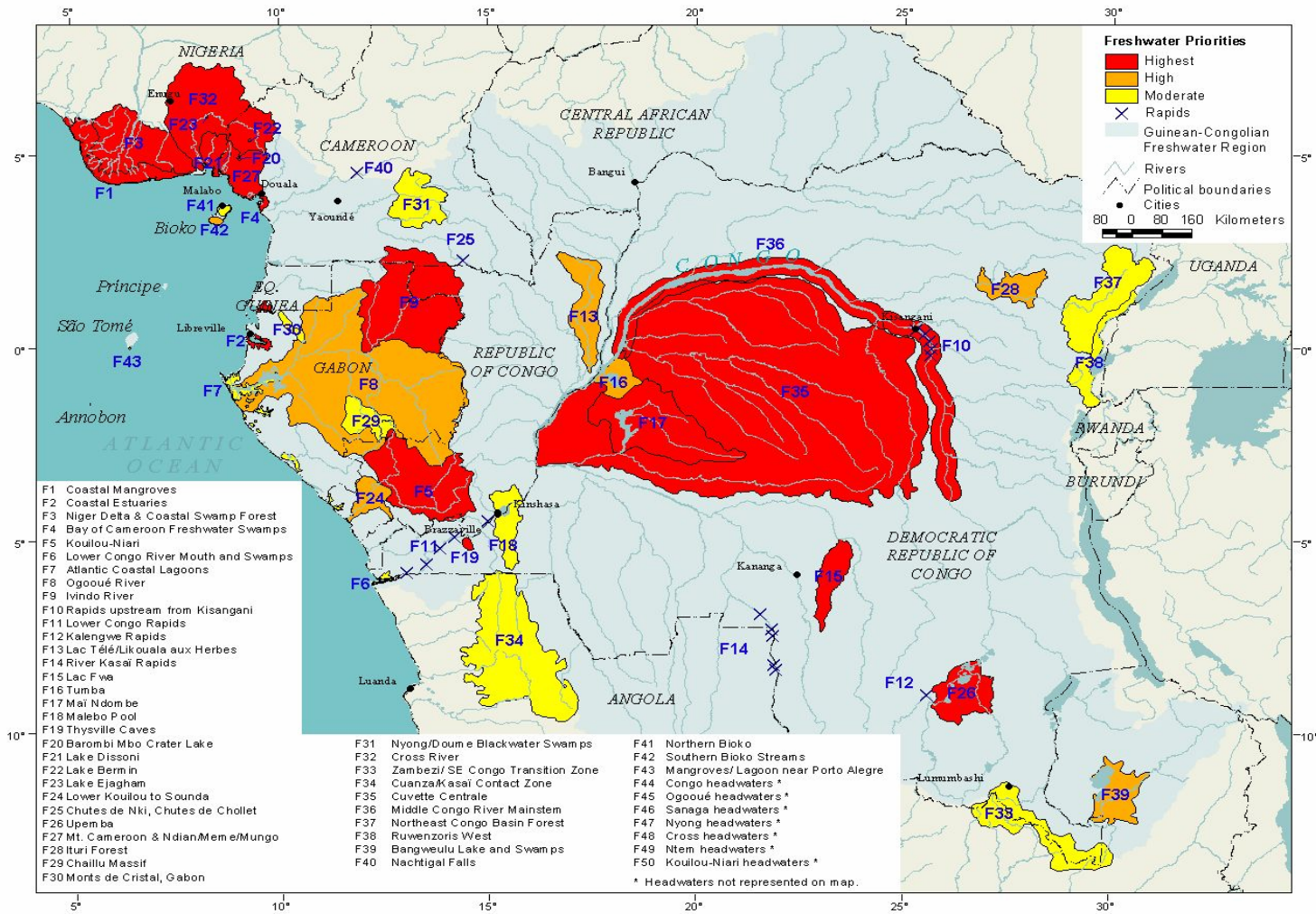


Figure 4. Freshwater priorities for conservation action.

Baseline data: ESRI, 1993. Digital Chart of the World. Environmental Systems Research Institute, Redlands, CA





WWF Freshwater ecoregions

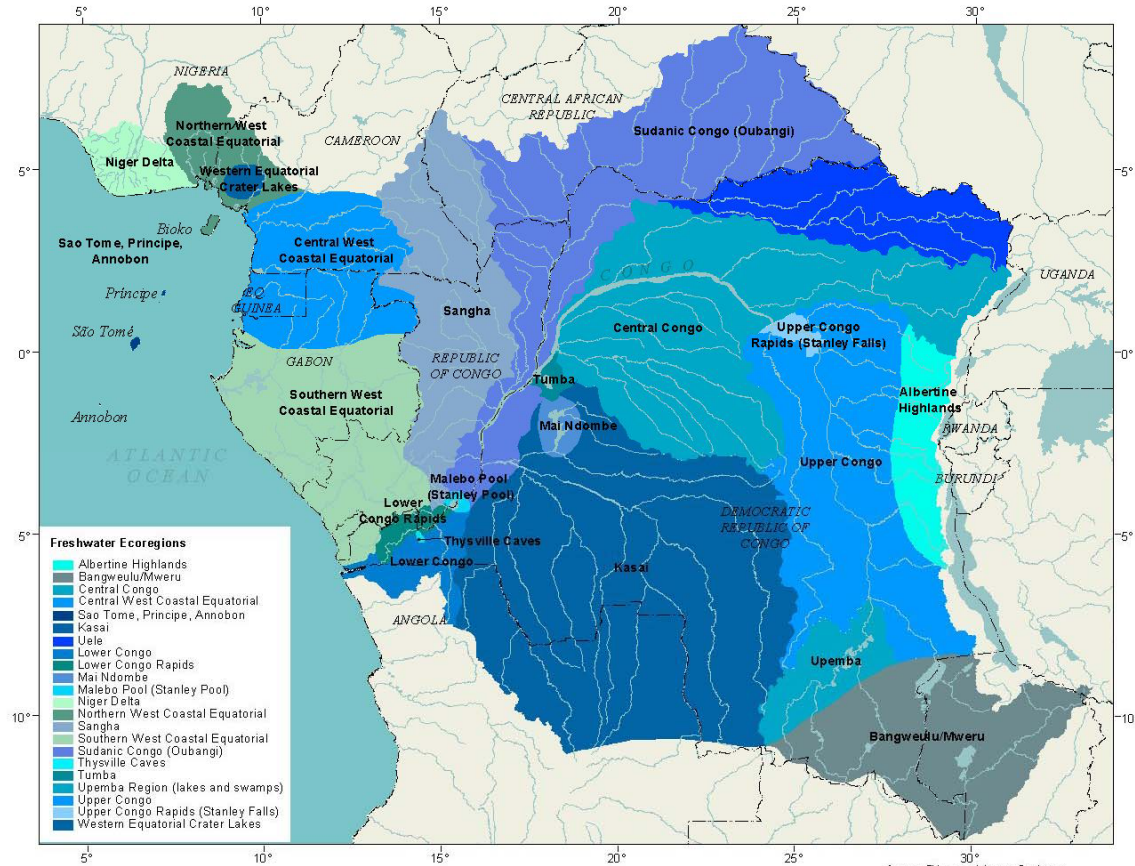


Figure 7. Freshwater ecoregions.

Sources: Thorne et al. In prep. Freshwater ecoregions of Africa: a conservation assessment. ESRI, 1993. Digital Chart of the World. Environmental Systems Research Institute, Redlands, CA





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