

Updating Key Biodiversity Areas in the **CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND** Lofa-Gola-Mano & Nimba complexes : Two case studies: Lake Piso & Ziama

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1. Ziama

The Ziama Massif, a Biosphere Reserve of 915 km², is located in Guinea in the continuity of the Wologizi and Wonegizi massifs in Liberia.

The site contains some of the best preserved submontane and montane forests in the region. The Ziama Massif is entirely granitic. The forest cover is interrupted locally by some granite slabs (inselbergs) and savannah areas.



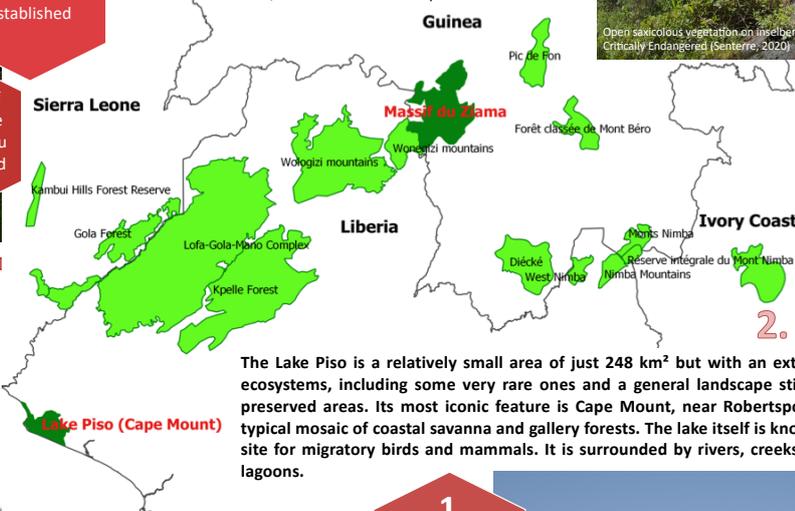
Conservation stakes

- Submontane and montane forests are preserved.
- Secondary lowland forests, threatened by plantations.
- *Terminalia ivorensis* forestry.
- Agroforestry based on coffee and cola trees.
- Wet lowlands used for rice cultivation.



The Ecosystems

- Ziama is located at the transition between wet and perhumid zones, resulting in an exceptional diversity of ecosystems.
- Contains 26% of mesic submontane perhumid forests and 18% of montane forests in a good state of conservation.
- Marshes, riparian forests and open vegetation on granite slabs are present.
- Probable presence of submontane riparian forests, which would be unique to Ziama.



The Flora

- 420 plant species have been recorded.
- 39 species are threatened according to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, including 22 published on the Red List.
- Among the 39 threatened species, 12 are Endangered, and 27 are Vulnerable.
- 8 species were assessed in 1998 and should be updated.



Conservation stakes

- The site contains a unique assemblage of ecosystems, most of them threatened.
- The Cape Mount forest is threatened by wood harvesting.
- Intense coal production from lowland savanna trees and gallery forests.
- Intensive human-induced fire events.
- Pollution threatens the coastal ecosystems.



The Flora

- 306 plant species known from the area.
- 17 species are threatened according to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, including 12 published on the Red List.
- Among the 17 threatened species, 1 is Critically Endangered, 3 are Endangered, and 13 are Vulnerable.
- 7 species were assessed in 1998 and should be updated, and 5 of them are still preliminarily assessed.



The Ecosystems

- Cape Mount is a unique superhumid rainforest with steep slopes close to the sea.
- Lake Piso is the only site in West Africa with extensive coastal lagunes, delta and associated within the superhumid life zone.
- The coastal backshore dunes, savannas and forests remain unexplored.
- Swamp forests are poorly known and probably include a diversity of distinct types of ecosystems such as backshore coastal swamps, and peat swamps.

2. Lake Piso

The Lake Piso is a relatively small area of just 248 km² but with an extraordinary diversity of ecosystems, including some very rare ones and a general landscape still containing relatively preserved areas. Its most iconic feature is Cape Mount, near Robertsport, but also harbors a typical mosaic of coastal savanna and gallery forests. The lake itself is known to be an important site for migratory birds and mammals. It is surrounded by rivers, creeks/streams, lakelets and lagoons.

