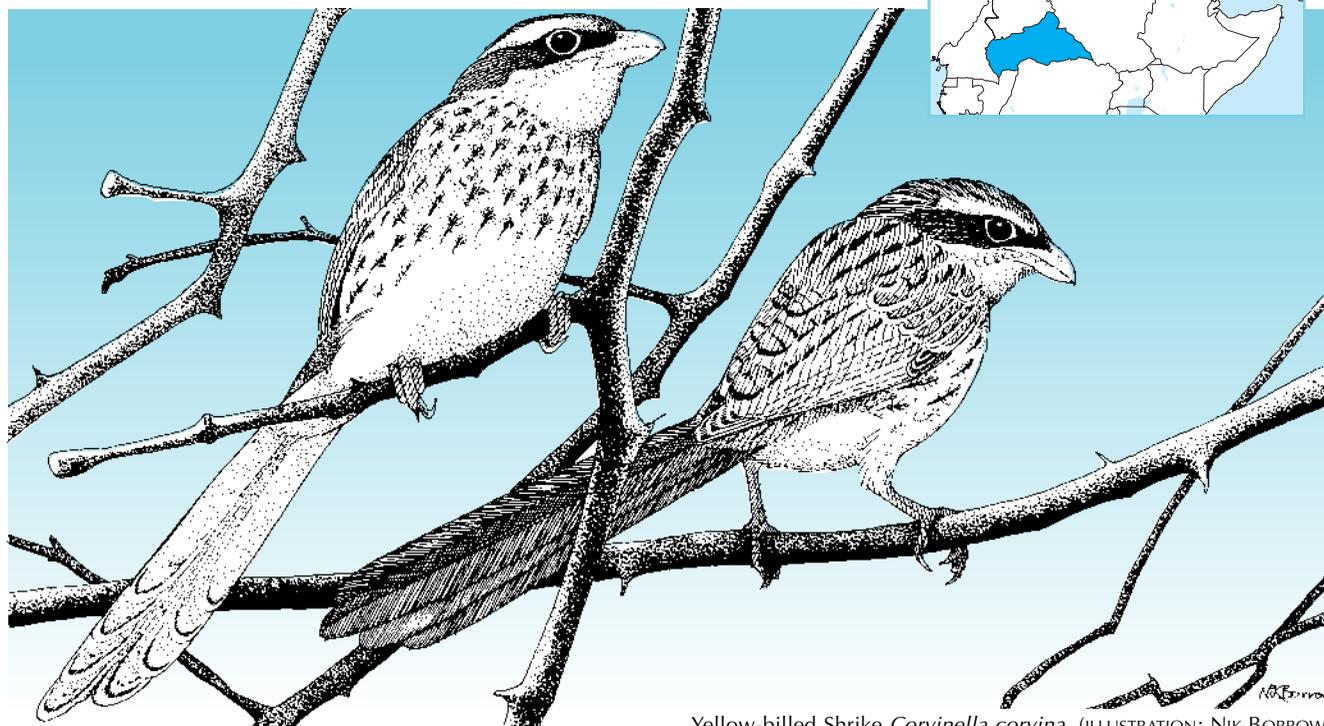


# CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (REPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE)

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Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvinella corvina*. (ILLUSTRATION: NIK BORROW)

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Central African Republic (République Centrafricaine) is a large, landlocked country, bordered to the south by the Republic of Congo (ex-Congo-Brazzaville) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (ex-Zaire), to the west by Cameroon, to the north by Chad and to the east by Sudan (Map 1). It covers some 622,980 km<sup>2</sup>. The Central African Republic lies between 02°12'N and 11°01'N, and extends from 14°25'E to 27°28'E. The population was estimated at only 3,000,000 in 1990, over half of whom live in rural areas (mainly in the south and west). The overall human density is 4.9 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, but in much of the north and east it is only 0.5–3.0 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. Half the country can be said to have very low human densities, and remarkably undisturbed natural vegetation (although drought has in recent years greatly reduced plant cover in parts of the north). Population growth is estimated to be 2.7% per annum. Administratively, the country is divided into 16 préfectures.

Most of the Central African Republic consists of a vast plateau at an altitude of 500–900 m. This plateau forms the watershed between the Congo and Chari river systems. There is one fairly large area of higher altitude, the Massif de Yadé in the west (up to 1,410 m on Mont Ngaoui), and a very small one in the north-east, the Massif des Bongos (peak 1,326 m). The Massif de Yadé is the extension of the Adamaoua plateau of Cameroon.

The climate in the south is warm and humid, becoming much drier in the north. In the forest zone there is a single rainy season of six months (May–October), diminishing to four months (June–September), or even less, in the north. Typically, annual precipitation in the south is in the region of 1,500–1,800 mm and in the north 700–1,400 mm. There is some evidence to suggest that rainfall has declined significantly since the 1970s. Mean maximum temperatures vary from 32°C (in the south) to around 37°C (in the north), mean minima from 17–20°C. The hottest months throughout tend to be March–May, the coldest July–August (in the south) or August–September (in the north). In the forest zone conditions remain humid and cloudy for much of the dry season,

while in the north the Harmattan has a marked effect.

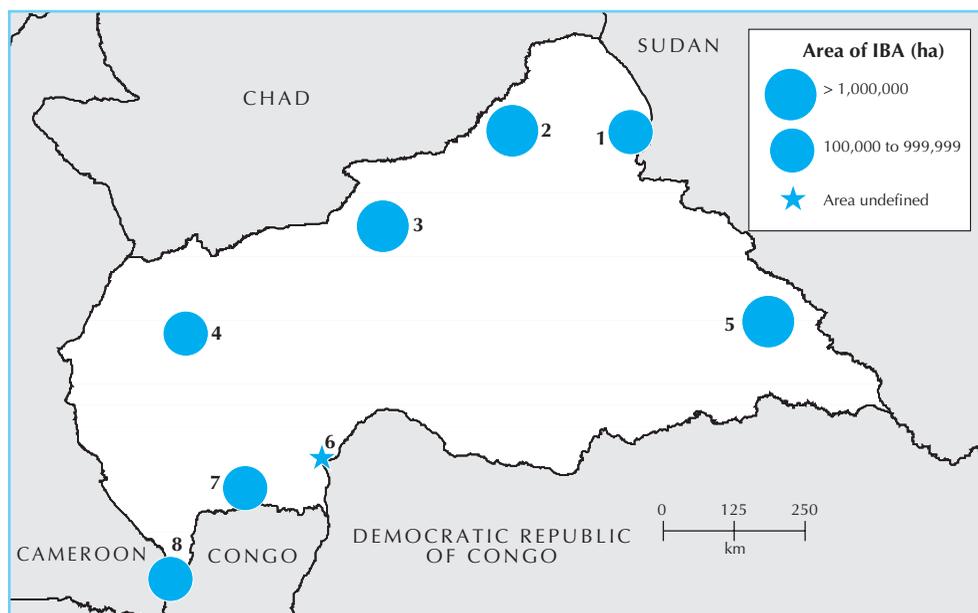
Only 8.0–8.5% of the country is covered by rainforest, which forms a narrow block across the extreme south-west (from Gamboula to Bangui) and in the south-east (along the Mbomou river). Most of the remainder of the country lies in the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome, with a limited Sahel influence in the extreme north.

Agriculture is the main foreign-exchange earner (forestry products, coffee, cotton and tobacco comprising half the country's exports). Although forest exploitation is considerable (155,000 tonnes per annum, half of it exported), the major threat to the southern forests is undoubtedly the building of the planned Bangui–Douala road, and the following human invasion. Much of

**Table 1.** Summary of Important Bird Areas in the Central African Republic.

8 IBAs covering 73,622 km<sup>2</sup>

IBA code	Site name	Administrative region	Criteria (see p. 11; for A2/A3 codes, see Tables 2/3)			
			A1	A2 085	A3 A04	A5
CF001	André Félix National Park complex	Vakaga			✓	
CF002	Manovo–Gounda–St Floris National Park complex	Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran			✓	
CF003	Bamingui–Bangoran National Park complex	Bamingui-Bangoran			✓	✓
CF004	Bozoum	Ouham-Pendé			✓	
CF005	Zémongo Faunal Reserve	Haut-Mbomou				✓
CF006	Bangui	Ombella-Mpoko				✓
CF007	Ngotto	Lobaye				✓
CF008	Dzanga–Ndoki National Park	Sangha	✓	✓		✓
Total number of IBAs qualifying:			1	1	4	5



**Map 1.** Location and size of Important Bird Areas in the Central African Republic.

the rest of the country remains fairly untouched and, as far as conservation of bird habitats is concerned, human activities on the whole have a minor impact.

### ORNITHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

Few naturalists have lived for any length of time in the Central African Republic and even fewer have published their observations in a critical manner. A significant proportion of what has appeared in print has proved to be of doubtful validity. Species lists of varying completeness are available from few areas (mostly protected) while the highlands and most of the east remain completely unexplored. Some attempt has been made in recent years to improve coverage and correct errors and the national bird list currently numbers 729 species (of which at least 600 certainly or probably breed).

Wetlands are very few, apart from the larger rivers of the south, such as the Oubangui, Mbomou, Lobaye and Mambéré. Lakes Gata (Bahr Aouk) and Mamoun (Bahr Oulou) are probably of only seasonal importance, but this needs to be investigated. The geographical position of the country suggests it ought to have considerable relevance as a refuge for migratory species but, again, data are largely lacking. Despite these limitations, the known resident avifauna is fairly large and varied. It contains elements of two biome-restricted assemblages—the majority of the country lies within the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome (A04), and 44 of the 54 species of this biome have been recorded nationally, while the extreme south-west and south-east are occupied by the Guinea–Congo Forests biome (A05) and 188 of its 278 species are known from the Central African Republic.

Species of global conservation concern that have been recorded include *Balaeniceps rex* (NT), *Aythya nyroca* (VU), *Circus macrourus* (LR/nt), *Falco naumanni* (VU), *Glareola nordmanni* (NT), *Bradypterus grandis* (DD) and *Batis minima* (DD). The first five are no more than rare or uncommon non-breeding visitors (four of Palearctic origin), and they are not used as justification for the inclusion of any IBA. *Bradypterus grandis* (DD) and *Batis minima*

(DD) are also restricted-range species of the Cameroon and Gabon lowlands Endemic Bird Area (EBA 085).

### CONSERVATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECTED-AREA SYSTEM

Wildlife conservation in the Central African Republic is the responsibility of the Ministère des Eaux, Forêts, Chasses, Pêches et Tourisme (Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting, Fishing and Tourism). The main laws dealing with wildlife conservation and utilization are Loi No. 61/273 of 5 February 1962 and Ordonnance No. 84.045 of 1984. Protected areas fall into several categories:

- Parc National (National Park; four sites)—Areas for the protection of fauna, flora, minerals and ecosystems of scientific or aesthetic value. Human access is strictly limited.
- Réserve naturelle intégrale (Strict Nature Reserve; one site)—An area in which all human presence is forbidden.
- Réserve de faune (Faunal Reserve; seven sites)—As for National Parks, except that customary rights of grazing and cultivation are allowed, under government control.
- There is also a single Special Reserve (Dzangha–Sangha) and a Private Reserve (Avakaba Presidential Park).

These protected areas cover some 64,449 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. an impressive 10.3% of the country. This system seems to cover most major habitat-types in the country, in both the forest and savanna zones. One of the National Park complexes (Bamingui–Bangoran Conservation Area), as well as some 146 km<sup>2</sup> of the Basse-Lobaye Forest, have been accepted as Biosphere Reserves, but these appear never to have been promulgated in national law (Fay *et al.* 1990). The latter has, however, been incorporated into a larger forest management plan (the EU’s Ngotto project) and it is hoped to increase the conservation core to 733 km<sup>2</sup>.

In the past two decades there has been an alarming poaching pressure on mammal populations throughout much of the Central African Republic, as well as pastoral invasion of protected areas. Although birds are not usually affected directly, the resulting habitat changes remain to be assessed and the insecurity means that some areas will continue to be unvisited by naturalists able to determine the status of birds.

### INTERNATIONAL MEASURES RELEVANT TO THE CONSERVATION OF SITES

The Central African Republic has ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, CITES, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Climate Change and the World Heritage Convention under which one site, the Manovo–Gounda–

**Table 2.** The occurrence of restricted-range species at Important Bird Areas in the Central African Republic. Sites that meet the A2 criterion are highlighted in **bold**. Species of global conservation concern are highlighted in **bold blue**.

<b>085 – Cameroon and Gabon lowlands Endemic Bird Area</b> (two species in the Central African Republic; one site meets the A2 criterion)	
IBA code:	<b>008</b>
<i>Bradypterus grandis</i>	✓
<i>Batis minima</i>	✓
Number of species recorded:	<b>2</b>

**Table 3.** The occurrence of biome-restricted species at Important Bird Areas in the Central African Republic. Sites that meet the A3 criterion are highlighted in **bold**. Species of global conservation concern are highlighted in **bold blue**.

<b>A04 – Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome</b> (44 species in the Central African Republic; four sites meet the A3 criterion)								
IBA code:	<b>001</b>	<b>002</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>004</b>	005	006	007	008
<i>Falco alopex</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
<i>Francolinus icterorhynchus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
<i>Vanellus superciliosus</i>		✓		✓		✓		
<i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>		✓						
<i>Poicephalus crassus</i>		✓	✓	✓				
<i>Tauraco leucolophus</i>		✓	✓	✓				
<i>Merops bulocki</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
<i>Coracias cyanogaster</i>		✓	✓	✓				
<i>Lybius dubius</i>			✓	✓				
<i>Lybius rolleti</i>	✓	✓						
<i>Dendropicos poecilolaemus</i>		✓	✓			✓		✓
<i>Galerida modesta</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
<i>Lanius gubernator</i>		✓		✓				
<i>Corvinella corvina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
<i>Cossypha albicapilla</i>		✓	✓					
<i>Myrmecocichla albifrons</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓
<i>Turdoides reinwardtii</i>			✓	✓				✓
<i>Cisticola ruficeps</i>		✓						
<i>Cisticola rufus</i>				✓				
<i>Cisticola troglodytes</i>		✓		✓				
<i>Drymocichla incana</i>		✓	✓	✓				
<i>Hypergerus atriceps</i>		✓	✓	✓				
<i>Eremomela pusilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
<i>Muscicapa gambagae</i>			✓					
<i>Anthoscopus parvulus</i>				✓				
<i>Nectarinia cocciniger</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<i>Emberiza affinis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
<i>Nesocharis capistrata</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓		
<i>Pytilia phoenicoptera</i>	✓	✓	✓					
<i>Pytilia hypogrammica</i>			✓	✓		✓		
<i>Euschistospiza dybowskii</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Lagonosticta rufopicta</i>		✓	✓					✓
<i>Lagonosticta rara</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓		
<i>Lagonosticta larvata</i>		✓	✓	✓				
<i>Estrilda caerulea</i>		✓	✓					
<i>Estrilda troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓					
<i>Vidua interjecta</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
<i>Petronia dentata</i>		✓	✓					
<i>Plocepasser superciliosus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
<i>Ploceus heuglini</i>		✓						
<i>Grafisia torquata</i>		✓						
<i>Lamprotornis purpureus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
<i>Lamprotornis chalcurus</i>		✓	✓	✓				
<i>Ptilostomus afer</i>	✓	✓						
Number of species recorded:	<b>12</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>	2	10	6	5
<b>A05 – Guinea–Congo Forests biome</b> (185 species in the Central African Republic; five sites meet the A3 criterion)								
IBA code:	<b>002</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>006</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>008</b>	
<i>Tigriornis leucolophus</i>					✓		✓	
<i>Bostrychia rara</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Pteronetta hartlaubii</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Dryotriorchis spectabilis</i>								✓
<i>Accipiter castanius</i>								✓
<i>Accipiter erythropus</i>					✓		✓	
<i>Urotriorchis macrourus</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Spizaetus africanus</i>						✓		
<i>Francolinus lathami</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Agelastes niger</i>								✓
<i>Guttera plumifera</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Sarothrura pulchra</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Himantornis haematopus</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Columba unicincta</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Columba iriditorques</i>		✓				✓	✓	
<i>Turtur brehmeri</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>					✓	✓	✓	
<b>A05 – Guinea–Congo Forests biome ... continued</b> (185 species in the Central African Republic; five sites meet the A3 criterion)								
IBA code:	<b>002</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>006</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>008</b>	
<i>Agapornis swindernianus</i>							✓	✓
<i>Tauraco persa</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Cercococcyx mechowi</i>				✓		✓	✓	
<i>Cercococcyx olivinus</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Chrysococcyx flavigularis</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Centropus anelli</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Otus icterorhynchus</i>								✓
<i>Bubo poensis</i>			✓			✓	✓	
<i>Bubo leucostictus</i>						✓		
<i>Scotopelia bouvieri</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Glaucidium tephronotum</i>						✓		
<i>Glaucidium sjostedti</i>						✓		
<i>Caprimulgus binotatus</i>								✓
<i>Caprimulgus nigriscapularis</i>			✓		✓	✓		
<i>Caprimulgus batesi</i>						✓		
<i>Telacanthura melanopygia</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Rhaphidura sabinii</i>					✓	✓	✓	
<i>Neafapus cassini</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Apaloderma aequatoriale</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Alcedo leucogaster</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Ceyx lecontei</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Halcyon badia</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Merops gularis</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Merops muelleri</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Merops breweri</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Eurystomus gularis</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Phoeniculus castaneiceps</i>						✓	✓	
<i>Tockus albocristatus</i>					✓	✓	✓	
<i>Tockus hartlaubii</i>				✓			✓	
<i>Tockus camurus</i>					✓	✓	✓	
<i>Tockus fasciatus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Ceratogymna fistulator</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Ceratogymna subcylindricus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Ceratogymna albotibialis</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
<i>Ceratogymna atrata</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
<i>Gymnobucco sladeni</i>								
<i>Pogoniulus scolopaceus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Pogoniulus atroflavus</i>					✓		✓	✓
<i>Pogoniulus subsulphureus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Buccanodon duchaillui</i>						✓	✓	✓
<i>Tricholaema hirsuta</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓
<i>Trachyphonus purpuratus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Indicator maculatus</i>					✓	✓	✓	
<i>Indicator willcocksi</i>							✓	✓
<i>Melichneutes robustus</i>					✓		✓	✓
<i>Melignomon zenkeri</i>					✓			
<i>Sasia africana</i>						✓		✓
<i>Campethera nivosa</i>						✓	✓	✓
<i>Campethera caroli</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Dendropicos gabonensis</i>							✓	✓
<i>Dendropicos xantholophus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Smithornis rufolateralis</i>							✓	✓
<i>Smithornis sharpei</i>								✓
<i>Pseudochelidon eurystomina</i>							✓	
<i>Riparia congica</i>						✓		
<i>Hirundo nigrita</i>						✓	✓	✓
<i>Psalidoprocne nitens</i>							✓	✓
<i>Coracina azurea</i>							✓	✓
<i>Campephaga oriolina</i>							✓	
<i>Andropadus gracilis</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Andropadus ansorgei</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓
<i>Andropadus curvirostris</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Calyptocichla serina</i>							✓	✓
<i>Baeopogon indicator</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Baeopogon clamans</i>							✓	✓

**Table 3 ... continued.** The occurrence of biome-restricted species at Important Bird Areas in the Central African Republic. Sites that meet the A3 criterion are highlighted in **bold**. Species of global conservation concern are highlighted in **bold blue**.

A05 – Guinea–Congo Forests biome ... continued (185 species in the Central African Republic; five sites meet the A3 criterion)															
IBA code:	002	003	004	005	006	007	008	IBA code:	002	003	004	005	006	007	008
<i>Ixonotus guttatus</i>						✓	✓	<i>Muscicapa comitata</i>							✓
<i>Chlorocichla simplex</i>					✓	✓	✓	<i>Muscicapa cassini</i>						✓	✓
<i>Chlorocichla falkensteini</i>					✓	✓	✓	<i>Myioparus griseigularis</i>				✓		✓	✓
<i>Thescelocichla leucopleura</i>						✓	✓	<i>Bias flammulatus</i>		✓				✓	✓
<i>Phyllastrephus scandens</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	<b><i>Batis minima</i></b>							✓
<i>Phyllastrephus albigularis</i>				✓	✓		✓	<i>Batis occulta</i>						✓	✓
<i>Phyllastrephus icterinus</i>					✓	✓	✓	<i>Platysteira castanea</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Phyllastrephus xavieri</i>						✓	✓	<i>Platysteira tonsa</i>						✓	✓
<i>Bleda syndactyla</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Erythrocerus mcallii</i>						✓	✓
<i>Bleda notata</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Trochocercus nigromitratus</i>				✓		✓	✓
<i>Nicator chloris</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Trochocercus nitens</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Nicator vireo</i>					✓	✓	✓	<i>Terpsiphone rufiventer</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Criniger chloronotus</i>						✓	✓	<i>Terpsiphone rufocinerea (batesi)</i>		✓			✓	✓	
<i>Criniger calurus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Parus funereus</i>						✓	✓
<i>Criniger ndussumensis</i>					✓	✓	✓	<i>Anthoscopus flavifrons</i>						✓	✓
<i>Dryoscopus senegalensis</i>		✓				✓	✓	<i>Anthreptes fraseri</i>						✓	✓
<i>Dryoscopus sabinii</i>						✓	✓	<i>Anthreptes aurantium</i>							✓
<i>Laniarius leucorhynchus</i>					✓	✓	✓	<i>Anthreptes rectirostris</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓
<i>Telophorus bocagei</i>						✓	✓	<i>Nectarinia seimundi</i>		✓		✓		✓	
<i>Malaconotus cruentus</i>				✓	✓			<i>Nectarinia batesi</i>						✓	
<i>Prionops caniceps</i>					✓	✓	✓	<i>Nectarinia reichenbachii</i>						✓	✓
<i>Neocossyphus fraseri</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	<i>Nectarinia cyanoalaema</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Neocossyphus poensis</i>				✓	✓			<i>Nectarinia rubescens</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<i>Alethe diademata</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Nectarinia minulla</i>						✓	
<i>Stiphornis erythrothorax</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Nectarinia johannae</i>						✓	✓
<i>Sheppardia cyornithopsis</i>						✓	✓	<i>Nectarinia superba</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Cossypha cyanocampter</i>						✓	✓	<i>Pholidornis rushiae</i>						✓	✓
<i>Cercotrichas leucosticta</i>				✓				<i>Parmoptila woodhousei</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Illadopsis cleaveri</i>							✓	<i>Nigrita fusconota</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Illadopsis albipectus</i>				✓				<i>Nigrita bicolor</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Illadopsis fulvescens</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Nigrita luteifrons</i>						✓	✓
<i>Phyllanthus atripennis</i>				✓	✓			<i>Spermophaga haematina</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Cisticola anonymus</i>							✓	<i>Ploceus aurantius</i>							✓
<i>Apalis nigriceps</i>							✓	<i>Ploceus nigerimus</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Apalis rufogularis</i>		✓					✓	<i>Ploceus tricolor</i>							
<i>Apalis goslingi</i>							✓	<i>Ploceus albinucha</i>						✓	✓
<i>Cameroptera supercilialis</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Ploceus preussi</i>					✓		✓
<i>Cameroptera chloronota</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Ploceus dorsomaculatus</i>						✓	
<b><i>Bradypterus grandis</i></b>							✓	<i>Malimbus coronatus</i>						✓	
<i>Eremomela badiceps</i>							✓	<i>Malimbus cassini</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Sylvietta virens</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	<i>Malimbus erythrogaster</i>							✓
<i>Sylvietta denti</i>		✓				✓	✓	<i>Malimbus nitens</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Macrosphenus flavicans</i>				✓		✓	✓	<i>Malimbus malimbicus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Macrosphenus concolor</i>						✓	✓	<i>Malimbus rubricollis</i>						✓	✓
<i>Hylia prasina</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Brachycope anomala</i>					✓		
<i>Hylia violacea</i>							✓	<i>Poeoptera lugubris</i>							
<i>Fraseria ocreata</i>						✓	✓	<i>Onychognathus fulgidus</i>						✓	✓
<i>Fraseria cinerascens</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Lamprotornis purpureiceps</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Muscicapa infuscata</i>						✓	✓	<i>Oriolus brachyrhynchus</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Muscicapa olivascens</i>							✓	<i>Oriolus nigripennis</i>					✓	✓	✓
<i>Muscicapa epulata</i>						✓	✓	<i>Dicrurus atripennis</i>				✓		✓	✓
<i>Muscicapa sethsmithi</i>							✓	Number of species recorded:	15	38	6	51	82	149	157

St Floris National Park (IBA CF002), has been designated. In addition, the country has signed, but not ratified, the Convention on Migratory Species and also participates in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme and two Biosphere Reserves have been designated, as mentioned above.

## OVERVIEW OF THE INVENTORY

This inventory contains eight Important Bird Areas (IBAs), covering a total area of more than 73,622 km<sup>2</sup> or 11.8% of the land

area of the country (Map 1, Table 1). These represent most of the major habitats for birds. The four sites selected for the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome (A04) hold, between them, all 44 of the species of this biome known from the country (Table 3). Five sites also qualify for the Guinea–Congo Forests biome (A05), at which occur 182 of the 185 species recorded nationally (Table 3). Of the 729 species presently known from the Central African Republic, at least 716 (98%) occur within the IBAs. Of the 13 species not within the IBAs, most are known from sites in neighbouring countries and can be expected to be found in time within these IBAs. These figures do depend, however, on a suitable protected site being

found in the region of Bangui. It also remains true that parts of the country remain unexplored and further species (at present unknown from the country) are yet to be found; the Massif du Yadé in the west, Zémongo Faunal Reserve (CF005) in the east and the unprotected forests of the south-east would all repay investigation.

Five of the eight sites are legally protected as National Parks and Faunal Reserves, while a sixth (Ngotto) is protected as part of an EU-funded conservation project. The information on which these site inventories are based is often incomplete, depending usually on casual observations only (and, in the case of the Bozoum area, they relate to some 60 years ago!). André Félix National Park and Zémongo Faunal Reserve are included, but at present their bird lists are hypothetical in that observations are all from areas just outside the IBAs (though in similar habitat), in the Birao and Baroua areas respectively. Inclusion is justified because of their geographical importance and size, but at present their avifauna is

quite unknown. The Bangui region is included, although it remains to identify a suitable core area (preferably a protected one).

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## GLOSSARY

**Harmattan** dry, cool, dust-laden, mainly south-westerly winds from the Sahara that may predominate in December and January.

**inselberg** a rounded hill, rising from a surrounding plain.

## SITE ACCOUNTS

### André Félix National Park complex

Admin region Vakaga  
Coordinates 09°30'N 23°20'E  
Area 590,000 ha  
Altitude c.470–1,330 m

CF001

A3 (A04)  
National Park,  
Faunal Reserve

#### Site description

The IBA covers the André Félix National Park in the broad sense, i.e. the National Park (170,000 ha) and surrounding buffer zone of Yata-Ngaya Faunal Reserve (420,000 ha). This area of the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome is situated in the north-east of the country, south-east of the town of Birao and against the international frontier with Sudan where it is contiguous with Radom National Park (SD012). It consists of a low-lying, fairly open woodland in the northern half, with a more thickly wooded, elevated southern sector.

#### Birds

See Box and Table 3 for key species. No bird observations are available specifically from the National Park itself, but some 228 species have been recorded from the adjacent Birao area (the result of four months' survey). Of these, 180 species can be expected to breed.

#### Key species

A3 (A04) Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome: 12 of the 44 species of this biome that occur in the Central African Republic have been recorded in areas close to this site; see Table 3.

#### Other threatened/endemic wildlife

There is a small, isolated population of the mammal *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* (LR/cd) just outside the IBA, to the north-west (the only population in the Central African Republic).

#### Conservation issues

Large-scale poaching, often across international frontiers, has made access to, and administration of, this area very difficult.

#### Further reading

Bretagnolle (1993), Fay *et al.* (1990).

### Manovo–Gounda–St Floris National Park complex

Admin region Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran  
Coordinates 09°30'N 21°30'E  
Area 2,550,000 ha  
Altitude c.400–940 m

CF002

A3 (A04)  
National Park, Faunal Reserves,  
Biosphere Reserve,  
World Heritage Site

#### Site description

The area consists of the National Park (1,740,000 ha) and adjacent buffer zones of Ouandjia–Vakaga and Aouk–Aoukalé Faunal Reserves (480,000 ha and 330,000 ha, respectively). The park is mainly

Sudan–Guinea Savanna woodland, on relatively flat ground and is located in the north-east of the country, where the western edge of the Aouk–Aoukalé Faunal Reserve abuts the international border with Chad. Dominant trees include *Terminalia* spp., *Isobertlinia doka* and *Anogeissus* sp. Along watercourses there is a narrow riparian forest/thicket community, which broadens out in places and even spreads as dryland forest on higher ground. This is of considerable interest, containing as it does a number of southern Guinea–Congo forest species. The low-lying northern part contains extensive flood-plains.

#### Birds

See Box and Table 3 for key species. Some 418 species are recorded from the area, of which 307 certainly or probably breed. Species of global conservation concern that have been reported are *Balaeniceps rex*, *Circus macrourus*, *Falco naumanni* and *Glareola nordmanni*. *Balaeniceps rex* may now be no more than a rare visitor (if it were ever otherwise), in view of the drought and lack of modern sightings. In addition to the IBA's importance for its Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome avifauna, it also holds, at the northernmost distribution limit of some, 15 species of the Guinea–Congo Forests biome (A05; see Table 3). In addition, one Sahel biome species (A03), *Ardeotis arabs*, also occurs. The site is the only known IBA in the country for no fewer than 35 species.

#### Key species

A3 (A04) Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome: 36 of the 44 species of this biome that occur in the Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 3.

#### Other threatened/endemic wildlife

The area is important for a number of mammal species including *Panthera leo* (VU), *Acinonyx jubatus* (VU), *Gazella rufifrons* (VU) and *Damaliscus lunatus* (LR/cd).

#### Conservation issues

The Aouk–Aoukalé Faunal Reserve to the north of the park has, in the past few years, been invaded by large numbers of cattle. However, the park and associated buffer zone have been managed by the European Union-funded Programme de Développement de la Région du Nord (PDRN) since 1988.

#### Further reading

Blancou (1938–1939), Carroll (1988), Christy and Dowsett (in prep.), Fay *et al.* (1990), Ruggiero (1991).

### Bamingui–Bangoran National Park complex

Admin region Bamingui-Bangoran  
Coordinates 08°00'N 19°30'E  
Area 1,986,000 ha  
Altitude c.400–980 m

CF003

A3 (A04, A05)  
National Park, Strict Nature Reserve,  
Faunal Reserves, Biosphere Reserve

#### Site description

This IBA covers the Bamingui–Bangoran National Park in the broad

sense, i.e. the National Park (1,070,000 ha) together with the Vassako–Bolo Strict Nature Reserve (86,000 ha) and the adjacent Gribingui–Bamingui and Koukourou–Bamingui Faunal Reserves (450,000 ha and 110,000 ha respectively). Also included is the Sangba river area (conservation zone and hunting concession of 270,000 ha), following Fay *et al.* (1990). The complex is located in the centre-north of the country, west of the town of Ndélé, while a short length of the western border of the park is formed by the international frontier with Chad.

The park lies mostly on a plateau of 400–500 m, the rivers of which drain north-westwards to the Chari. It is mainly Sudan–Guinea Savanna woodland, on relatively flat ground. The northern part is essentially drier Sudan vegetation, the southern a more humid Guinea savanna. Dominant trees include *Terminalia laxiflora*, *Isoberlinia doka* and *Anogeissus leiocarpus*. In places these savanna trees form quite extensive dry deciduous forest. Along watercourses there is a narrow riparian forest/thicket community of considerable interest containing, as it does, a number of southern Guineo-Congolian forest species. The Bamingui river is perennial, whereas others are seasonally reduced to no more than small pools. Seasonal marshes and ponds occur in some low-lying areas. Open or lightly-wooded grasslands may have *Mitragyna inermis*, *Lophira lanceolata* and *Crossopteryx febrifuga* trees. In the south and east there are also a few granite inselbergs.

### ■ Birds

See Box and Tables 2 and 3 for key species. The bird list of 374 species is based to some extent on two years' residence by a single observer. Of these, at least 250 certainly or probably breed. Species of global conservation concern reported are *Aythya nyroca* and *Circus macrourus*. In addition, one species of the Sahel biome (A03), *Ardeotis arabs*, and one of the Afrotropical Highlands biome (A07), *Ploceus baglafecht*, have been reported.

#### Key species

A3 (A04) Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome: 33 of the 44 species of this biome that occur in the Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 3.

A3 (A05) Guinea–Congo Forests biome: 38 of the 185 species of this biome that occur in Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 3.

### ■ Other threatened/endemic wildlife

The area is important for a number of large mammal species including *Panthera leo* (VU) and, in particular, a number of Guineo-Congolian forest species which reach the northern limit of their distribution in the gallery forests, e.g. *Tragelaphus eurycerus* (LR/nt).

### ■ Conservation issues

In recent years there has been a great increase in the amount of poaching of game animals and invasion of the protected area by tens of thousands of cattle. As well as severe changes to the habitat, human residence has resulted in the poisoning of the irregular rivers with pesticides. The park and associated buffer zone has, since 1988, been managed as part of the European Union-funded project (PDRN), which one hopes can contain these excesses.

### ■ Further reading

Christy and Dowsett (in prep.), Dowsett (1997), Fay *et al.* (1990), Green (1983, 1984, 1990).

#### Bozoum

Admin region Ouham-Pendé

Coordinates 06°19'N 16°23'E

Area c.500,000 ha Altitude c.675–1,410 m

CF004

A3 (A04)

Unprotected

### ■ Site description

Situated in the west of the country, towards the international frontier with Cameroon, west of the town of Bozoum, the area is essentially comprised of Sudan–Guinea savanna. It also includes, however, the Monts Karé, while the topography becomes increasingly broken at higher altitude towards the Cameroon border and the Massif du Yadé. In theory, there could be some evergreen forest at higher levels, but this and the possible presence of a montane avifauna have not been investigated.

### ■ Birds

See Box and Table 3 for key species. Some 244 species are known from

this IBA. The area is important as the southern limit of many Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome birds. The most interesting species known from this little-explored region is the submontane sunbird *Nectarinia preussi* of the Afrotropical Highlands biome (A07). In addition, six species of the Guinea–Congo Forests biome (A05) occur (see Table 3). The only bird of global conservation concern reported is *Circus macrourus*.

#### Key species

A3 (A04) Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome: 30 of the 44 species of this biome that occur in the Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 3.

### ■ Other threatened/endemic wildlife

The Massif du Yadé is one of only two known sites in the Central African Republic for *Oreotragus oreotragus* (LR/cd), while *Redunca fulvorufula* (LR/cd), known hitherto in West Africa only by a small population in the neighbouring highlands of Cameroon, ought to be looked for.

### ■ Conservation issues

None known.

### ■ Further reading

Blancou (1938–1939).

#### Zémongo Faunal Reserve

Admin region Haut-Mbomou

Coordinates 06°30'N 25°30'E

Area 1,010,000 ha Altitude c.650–865 m

CF005

A3 (A05)

Faunal Reserve

### ■ Site description

Zémongo, in the east of the country, bordering the Sudan, is essentially Sudan–Guinea savanna with gallery forest lining many of the watercourses that traverse the area, but no vegetation survey appears to have been undertaken.

### ■ Birds

See Box and Table 3 for key species. No bird observations are available specifically from the National Park itself, but some 95 species have been recorded from an adjacent area of gallery forest to the south, west of Baroua (the result of three weeks' survey). The avifauna is also likely to include a good proportion of the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome avifauna (A04: two are known to occur) including, no doubt, a number of species at present unknown from the country.

#### Key species

A3 (A05) Guinea–Congo Forests biome: 51 of the 185 species of this biome that occur in the Central African Republic have been recorded in areas close to this site; see Table 3.

### ■ Other threatened/endemic wildlife

The situation within the Faunal Reserve is incompletely known, but the tremendous poaching pressure on large mammals in the safari-operated buffer zones (Haut Chinko: 1,400,000 ha) is all too well-documented. Much of this poaching is from across the Sudan border.

### ■ Conservation issues

The Faunal Reserve is currently unadministered, but safari companies maintain some sort of stability (at least during the dry season) in some of the buffer zone.

### ■ Further reading

Blom *et al.* (1995), Friedmann (1978).

#### Bangui

Admin region Ombella-Mpoko

Coordinates 04°22'N 18°33'E

Area Undefined Altitude c.340–765 m

CF006

A3 (A05)

Unprotected

### ■ Site description

This IBA covers the area centred on the capital Bangui; it remains to determine a core site (preferably protected). The area extends from

Ndélé (Bangui) and Kembé Island in the north, to Botambi and Bokassi Island in the south.

#### ■ Birds

See Box and Table 3 for key species. About 334 species have been reported from the area, (the result of several observers being resident over a number of years). Of these, at least 233 species can be expected to breed. Of the Guinea–Congo Forests biome species, two are unrepresented nationally in the other IBAs. In addition, one species of the Afrotropical Highlands biome (A07), *Ploceus baglafecht*, and 10 species of the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome (A04) also occur (see Table 3).

##### Key species

A3 (A05) Guinea–Congo Forests biome: 82 of the 185 species of this biome that occur in Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 3.

#### ■ Other threatened/endemic wildlife

None known to BirdLife International.

#### ■ Conservation issues

The Bangui region is the most heavily populated part of the country and a suitable conservation area (including the Oubangui river) should be identified as soon as possible.

#### ■ Further reading

Germain and Cornet (1994).

### Ngotto

Admin region Lobaye

Coordinates 03°55'N 17°20'E

Area 268,300 ha

Altitude c.450–700 m

CF007

A3 (A05)

Protected Forest,  
Biosphere Reserve

#### ■ Site description

Ngotto, in the south of the country, west of the town of Mbaïki, is part of the Lobaye forest, on sandstone. The site is part of the area currently being managed by the European Union-funded Ecofac project; the IBA comprises the conservation area (the 'Basse-Lobaye Reserve' of 14,600 ha), which it is hoped to expand to 73,300 ha, and a zone of forestry management (195,000 ha). Excluded is the forestry exploitation zone (556,700 ha). The conservation area lies between the Mbaéré and Bodingué rivers (south-west of Bambio), and comprises two major habitat-types, both reportedly pristine in places; semi-deciduous forest and savanna. Along watercourses the forest becomes riparian or even seasonally flooded. Important trees for birds include *Staudtia gabonensis*, *Pycnanthus angolensis*, *Celtis* spp., *Musanga cecropioides*, *Dacryodes edulis*, *Uapaca heudelotii*, *Strombosia* spp. and *Blighia welwitschii*. The wooded savannas are dominated by small trees such as *Annona senegalensis*, *Terminalia glaucescens*, *Hymenocardia acida*, *Bridelia ndellensis* and *Maprounea africana*. The savannas are clearly separated from the adjacent forest and it is thought that regular bush fires may preclude regeneration of forest-edge trees. Nearer the Lobaye river the grassland is less well-wooded and is seasonally inundated in places.

#### ■ Birds

See Box and Table 3 for key species. The number of species recorded from this site is 332, of which 270 certainly or probably breed. The avifauna also includes six species of the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome (A04) near the southern limit of their distributions (see Table 3).

##### Key species

A3 (A05) Guinea–Congo Forests biome: 149 of the 185 species of this biome that occur in Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 3.

#### ■ Other threatened/endemic wildlife

Large mammals are very scarce in the area now, doubtless as a result of the considerable subsistence hunting pressure.

#### ■ Conservation issues

The area is currently administered by the Ecofac Project, funded by the European Union. As the project includes a commercial forestry

element, it is to be supposed that some funding will continue to be generated for some time in the future, even if direct support from the European Union should stop. A management plan is being prepared, but clearly the long-term conservation of the Ngotto area will depend on factors that are probably outside the control of the current donors.

#### ■ Further reading

Agreco (no date), Christy (1995), Christy and Dowsett (in prep.).

### Dzanga–Ndoki National Park

Admin region Sangha

Coordinates 02°30'N 16°10'E

Area 457,900 ha

Altitude c.340–615 m

CF008

A1, A2 (085), A3 (A05)

National Park,  
Special Reserve

#### ■ Site description

This National Park, in the extreme south-west of the country, is in two separate parts, a northern Dzanga sector (49,500 ha) and a southern Ndoki sector (72,500 ha). The two are joined by the Dzanga–Sangha Rainforest Reserve (335,900 ha); although controlled hunting (both traditional and safari) and other exploitation is allowed in this buffer zone, it is appropriate to include it here. The Dzanga sector was logged in the 1980s, whereas the southern Ndoki sector is primary forest. The IBA is also contiguous with the protected areas of Lobéké of Cameroon (CM033) and Nouabalé–Ndoki in Congo (CG001). The whole area is on alluvial sands. The forest is of three main types; mainly dryland, semi-evergreen forest, with swamp-forest along the main rivers and, locally, a closed-canopy monodominant *Gilbertiodendron dewevrei* forest. The dryland forest has an open, mixed canopy (dominated by species of Sterculiaceae and Ulmaceae), with very often a dense understorey of Marantaceae and Zingiberaceae. On alluvial land along the Sangha river there are locally pure stands of *Guibourtia demeusii*. There are many forest clearings along streams, forming marshy depressions known as 'bai'.

#### ■ Birds

See Box and Tables 2 and 3 for key species. Some 357 species have been reported from the National Park in the wider sense (in part the result of an incomplete survey over some two years, plus further shorter visits). Of these species, at least 260 can be expected to breed. The two species of global conservation concern, *Bradypterus grandis* and *Batis minima*, are also restricted-range species of the Cameroon and Gabon lowlands EBA. One other species of global conservation concern has been reported, *Falco naumanni*. *Stiphornis sanghensis* has been described as a new species, known so far only from Dzanga–Sangha. However, independent field research there and in neighbouring Cameroon and Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) suggests it is no more than a subspecies of the widespread *S. erythrothorax*, and it is treated as such here, pending further evidence. In addition, five species of the Sudan–Guinea Savanna biome (A04) have been recorded (see Table 3).

##### Key species

A1 *Bradypterus grandis* *Batis minima*  
A2 (085) Cameroon and Gabon lowlands EBA: Both of the species of this EBA that occur in Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 2.  
A3 (A05) Guinea–Congo Forests biome: 157 of the 185 species of this biome that occur in Central African Republic have been recorded at this site; see Table 3.

#### ■ Other threatened/endemic wildlife

The National Park is of considerable importance for a number of forest mammals, in particular *Pan troglodytes* (EN), *Gorilla gorilla* (EN), *Loxodonta africana* (EN) and *Tragelaphus eurycerus* (LR/nt)

#### ■ Conservation issues

The Dzanga–Ndoki/Dzanga–Sangha project is at present funded by the World Bank and administered by WWF.

#### ■ Further reading

Beresford and Cracraft (1999), Christy and Dowsett (in prep.), Dowsett *et al.* (1999), Dowsett-Lemaire and Dowsett (2000), Fay *et al.* (1990), Green and Carroll (1991).

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