



25 years of conservation efforts in Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda: progress, challenges, lessons learned and way forward

WCS Rwanda Program



World Tourism Day

Tourism & Water – Protecting our common future

Celebrating 25 years of partnership
in tourism and conservation



Wildlife Conservation Society
25 YEARS
in Nyungwe

Wildlife Conservation Society in Nyungwe

Since 1988,

WCS's work in Rwanda has focused on the Nyungwe forest, situated in the southwestern part of the country, which together with the contiguous Kibira National Park in Burundi, forms the largest montane rainforest in Africa. Nyungwe is a special place: during the Ice Ages, it served as a vital refuge for the region's biodiversity and today hosts an astonishing array of unique and endemic species (species found nowhere else in the world). In total, Nyungwe is home to at least 275 species of birds, 145 species of orchids, and 13 species of primates including the rare golden monkey; more than 4000 elephants and groups of mountain gorillas that can number in the hundreds. Nyungwe provides important benefits to people as well: it is a critical catchment for Rwanda's fresh water and helps to regulate the region's climate.

In 2005, Nyungwe's protection status was elevated by becoming Rwanda's third national park. However, the forest still faces a range of critical threats. Human population densities along the boundary of the park are some of the highest in Africa, with as many as 500 people per square kilometer. Poverty in the area is severe. Key threats include poaching, mining for gold and cobalt, the cutting and fires, often inadvertently set by people seeking fuel for their stoves.

What We Are Doing

WCS is working to address the threats to Nyungwe's biodiversity and the people who depend on it. Our work includes:

Conservation Science and Research
WCS is conducting research to better understand the forest's biodiversity and the needs of the people who live around it. This includes monitoring the population of mountain gorillas and golden monkeys, and studying the forest's role in regulating the region's climate.

Community Outreach and Education
WCS is working to raise awareness of the forest's value and the threats it faces. This includes conducting outreach activities in the communities surrounding the forest, and providing education to school children about the importance of the forest and the need to protect it.

Capacity Building
WCS is providing training and support to local conservation organizations and government agencies. This includes training in wildlife management, forest monitoring, and community outreach.

Policy and Advocacy
WCS is working to influence policy and advocacy to better protect the forest and its biodiversity. This includes providing technical advice to government agencies, and advocating for stronger laws and enforcement.

Partnerships
WCS is working in partnership with a wide range of organizations, including the Rwandan government, local conservation organizations, and international partners. This collaboration is essential for the success of our work.

Impact
WCS's work in Nyungwe has had a significant impact on the forest's biodiversity and the lives of the people who live around it. We have helped to protect the forest from logging and fires, and we have provided education and training to the local community. As a result, the forest's biodiversity is being protected, and the lives of the people who live around it are being improved.

Support Us
WCS's work in Nyungwe is made possible by the support of our donors and volunteers. We are grateful for their support and we hope that you will also support our work.

Contact Us
For more information about WCS's work in Nyungwe, please contact us at nyungwe@wcs.org or www.wcs.org/nyungwe.

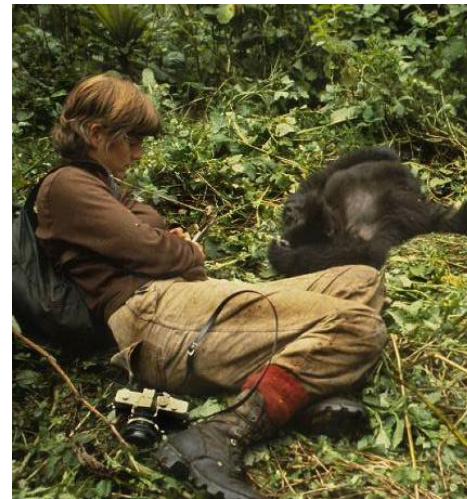
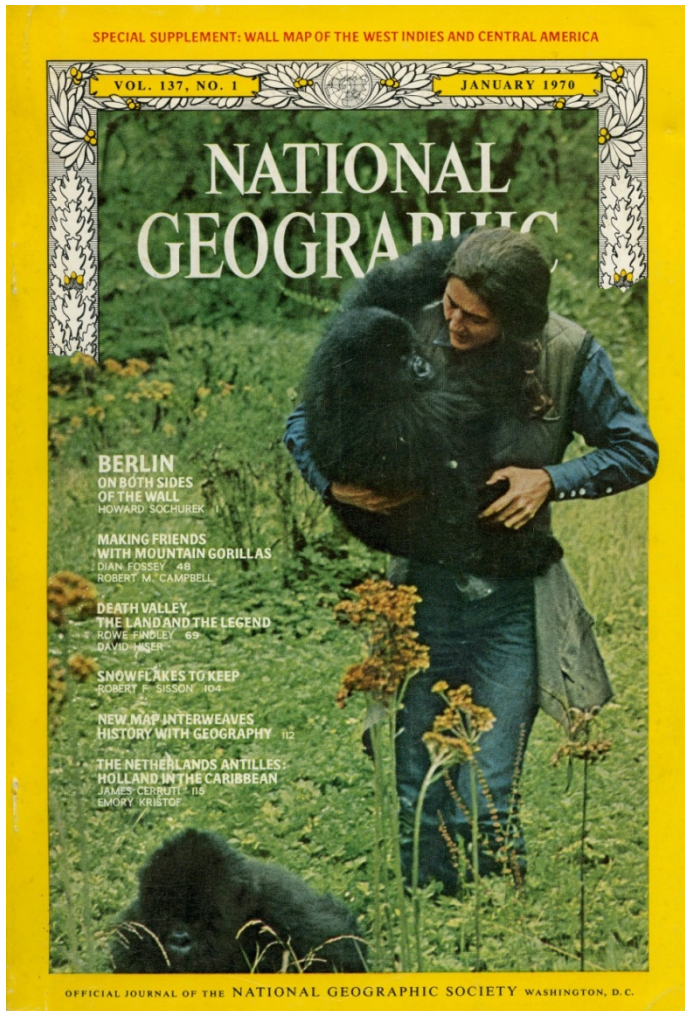
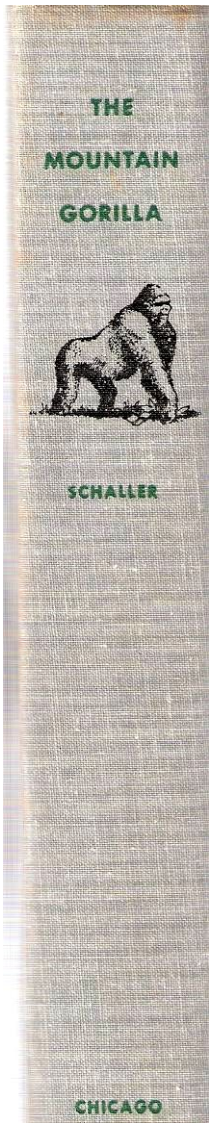
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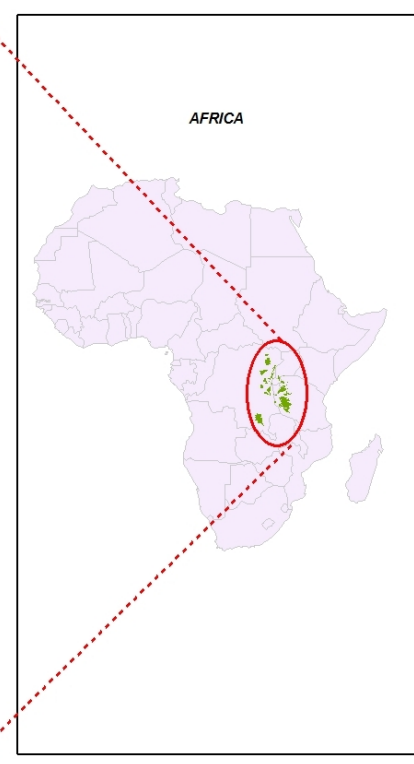
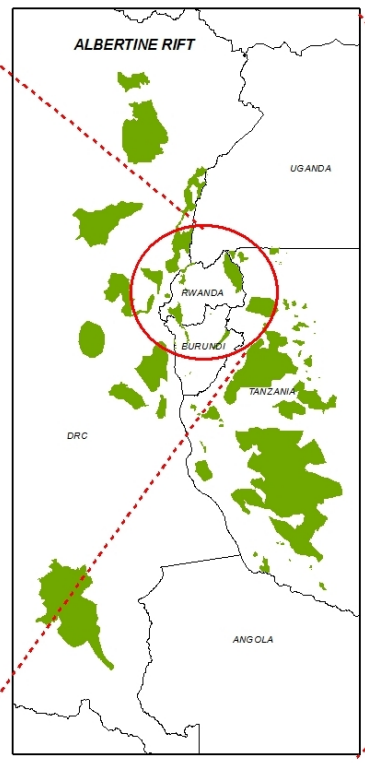
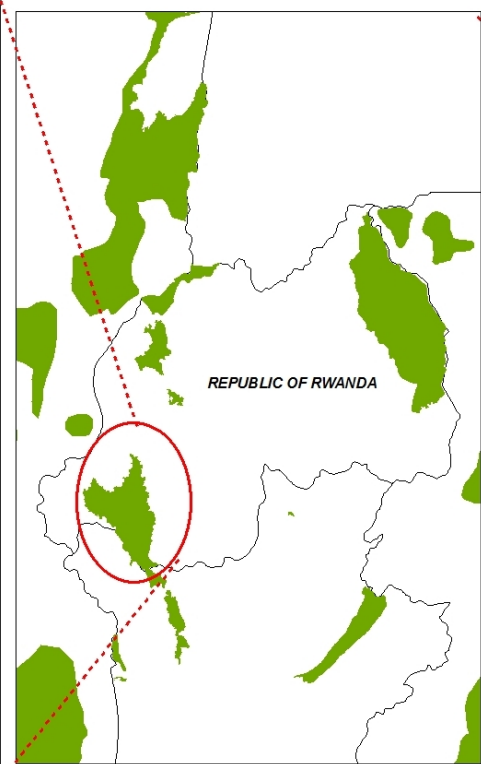
Golden monkeys live in
less than 100 acres of forest
and are critically endangered.




"Pre-history"...



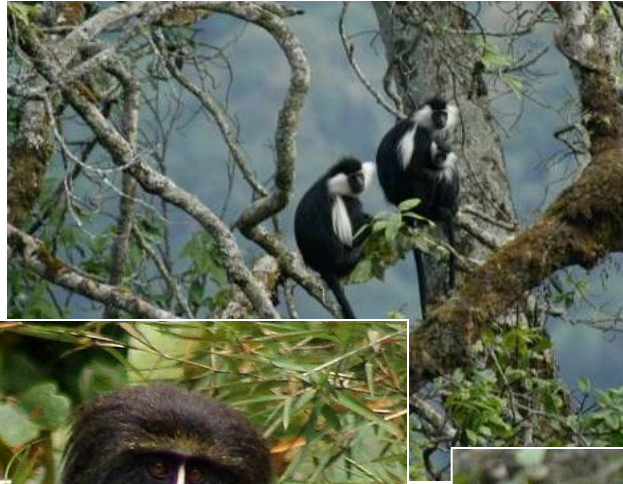
LOCATION OF NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK



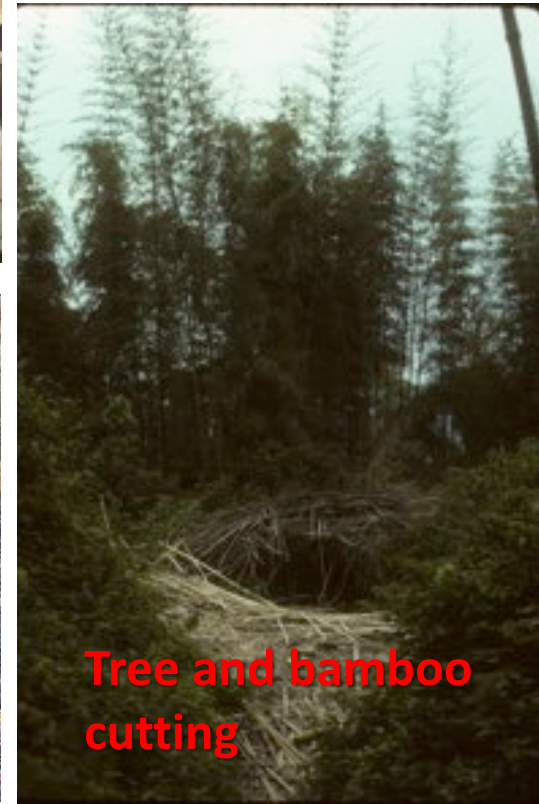
Legend

-  Protected Areas
-  Countries





Main threats



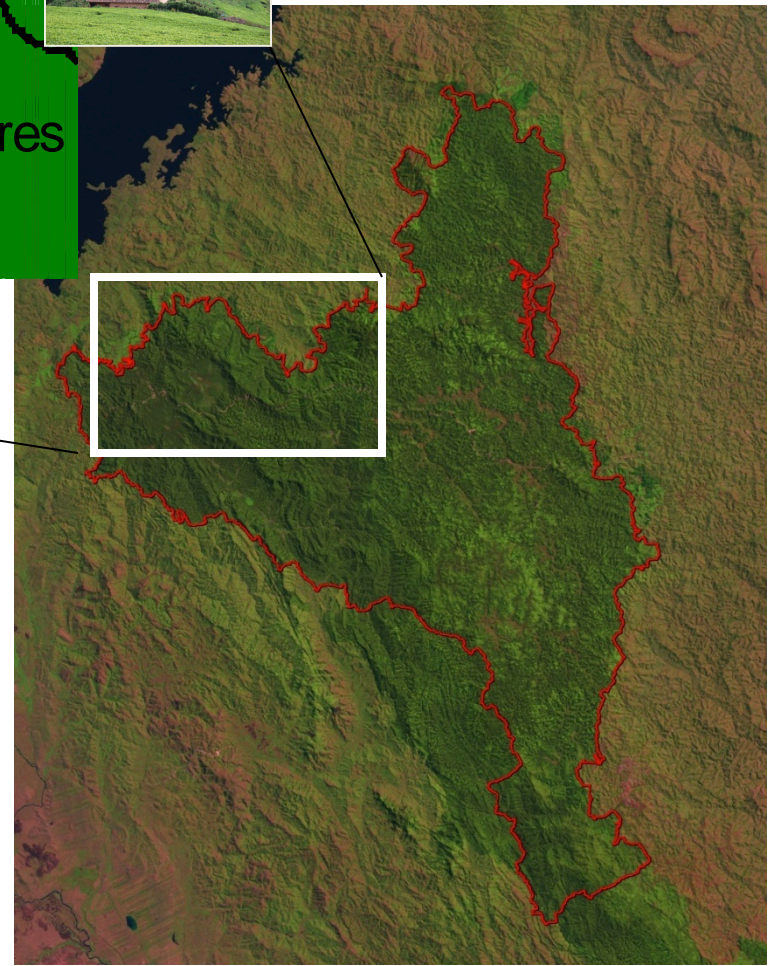
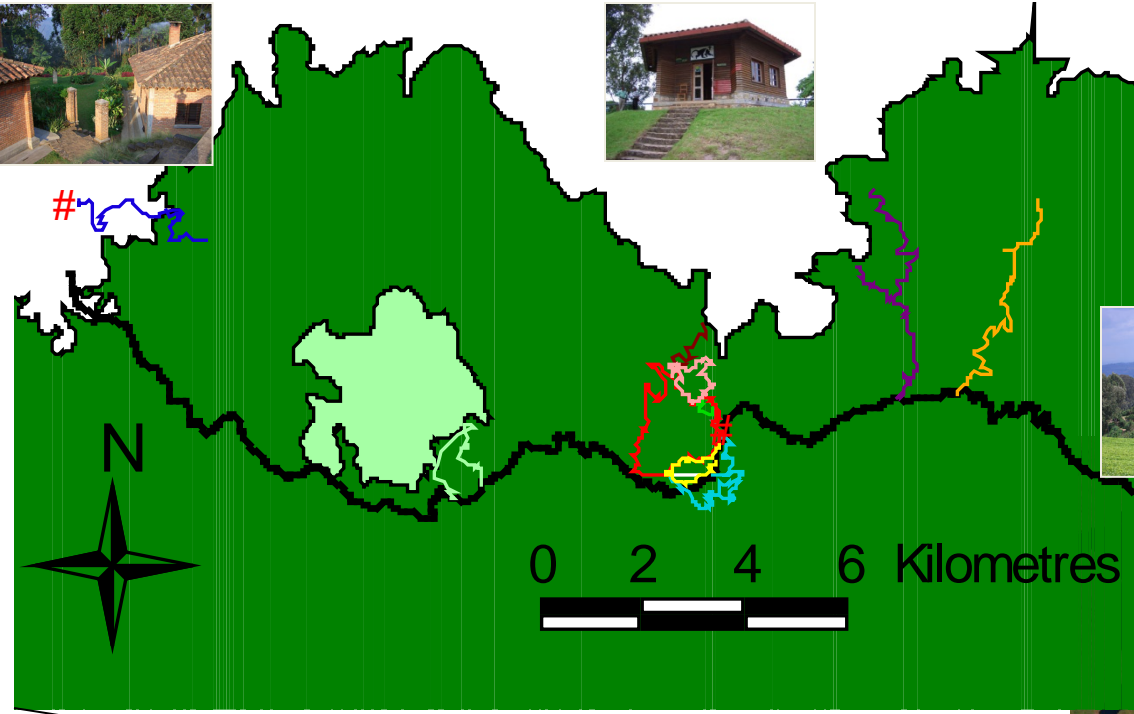
1988

PCFN: Projet Conservation
de la Foret de Nyungwe

WCS receives one of first
USAID Biodiversity grants for
Nyungwe

ORTPN begins full-time





1988
Official tourism begins in Nyungwe

1990-1993
Infrastructure development



1994



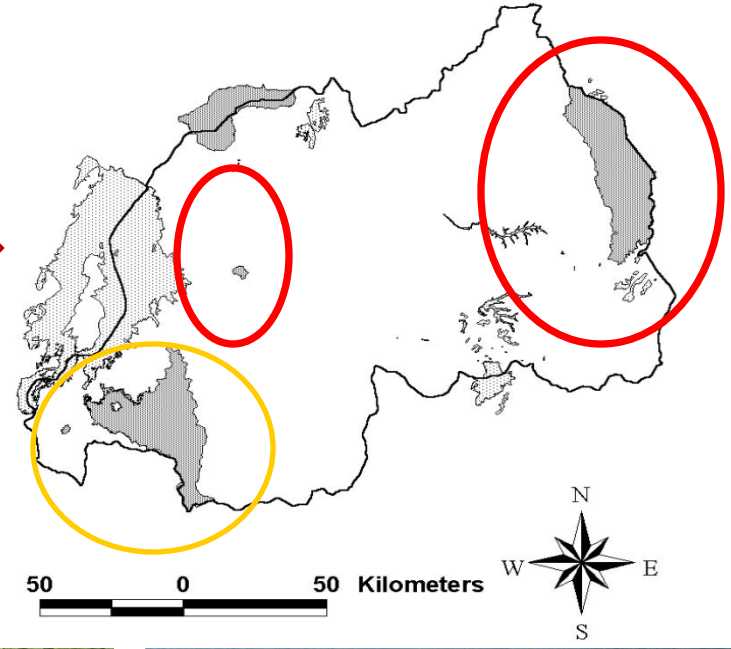
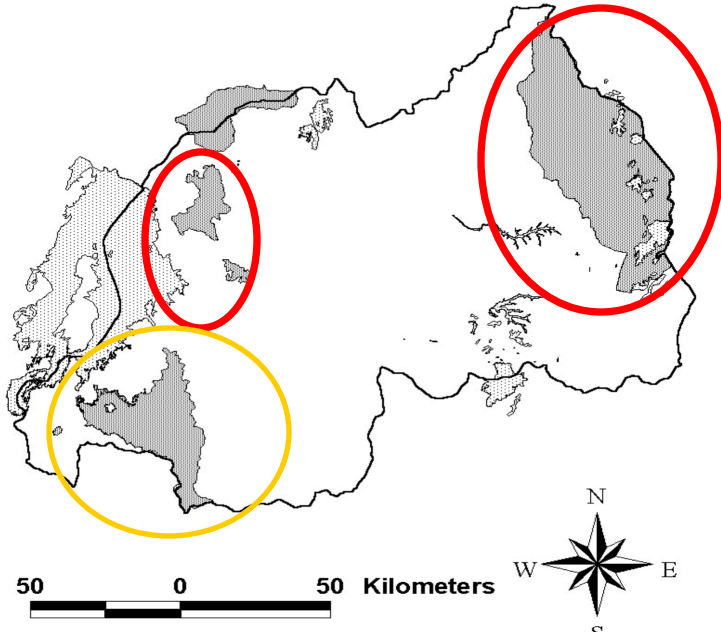
1995 – 1999 : Nyungwe Future in Question

- Rising threats: poaching, mining, encroachment, security
- All efforts are focused on rebuilding the country, reconciliation, resettlement of returnees : conservation is not a priority
- Rwandan Park Service (ORTPN) understaffed, focus on Volcanoes mountain gorilla tourism in VP



Rwanda in 1990

Rwanda in 2000



WCS Leadership in Nyungwe



Post war priorities

- Resume security & patrols
- Halt encroachment
- Gain local leaders' support



Moving onwards

- 1999 : first donor support other than WCS (including UNDP, USDS, Dutch technical assistance, MacArthur Foundation, PIC, USFWS) for construction of ranger posts and equipment for mobile patrols, rehabilitation of infrastructures, support to local cooperatives, biodiversity and socio-economic surveys.
- 2003 : increased engagement of ORTPN
- 2005 : Nyungwe gazetted National Park



2006 to present

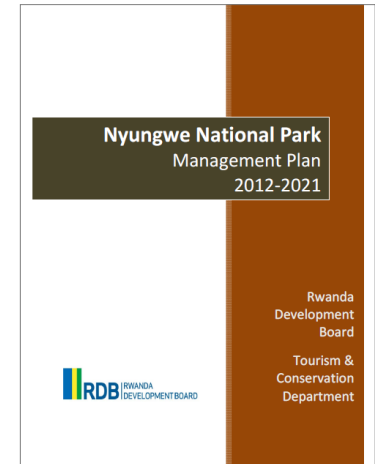
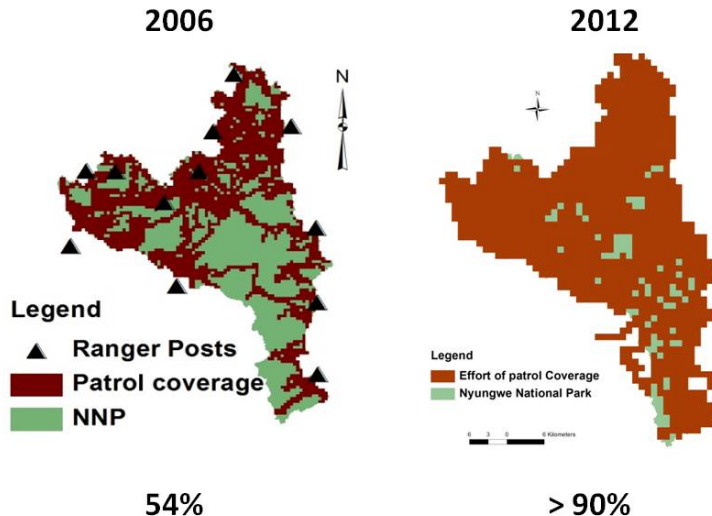
- 2006 – 2011 : GEF Protected Areas Biodiversity (PAB) project
- 2006-2009 : USAID Destination Nyungwe(IRG/WCS)
- 2010-2015: Nyungwe Nziza (DAI) & Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in NNP (WCS)
- USFWS chimpanzee conservation: tourism, awareness, transboundary
- US Forest service, MacArthur Foundation, Columbus Zoo, MMBF...
- 2008 : RDB to manage Parks



Park management and institutional support

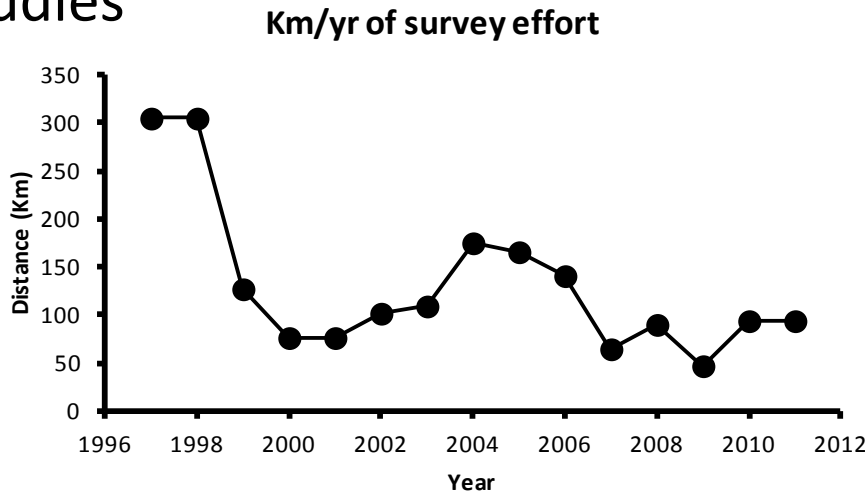
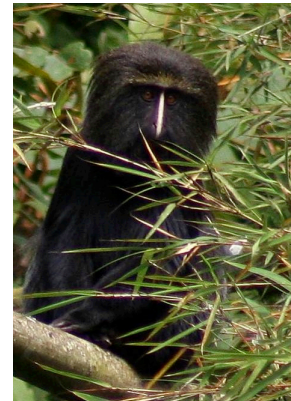
- Support, guidance, capacity building and transfer of core activities
- Technical advice and lobbying for policy development

PATROL COVERAGE IN NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK



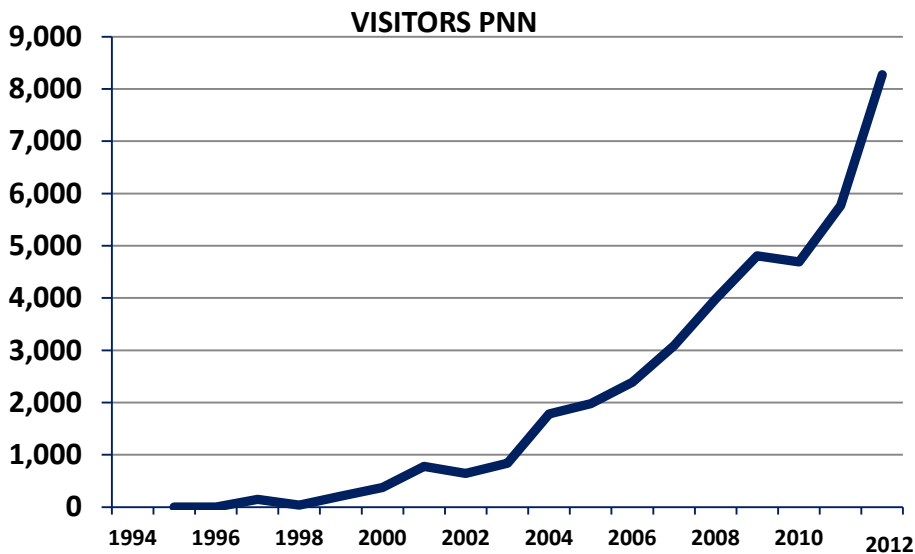
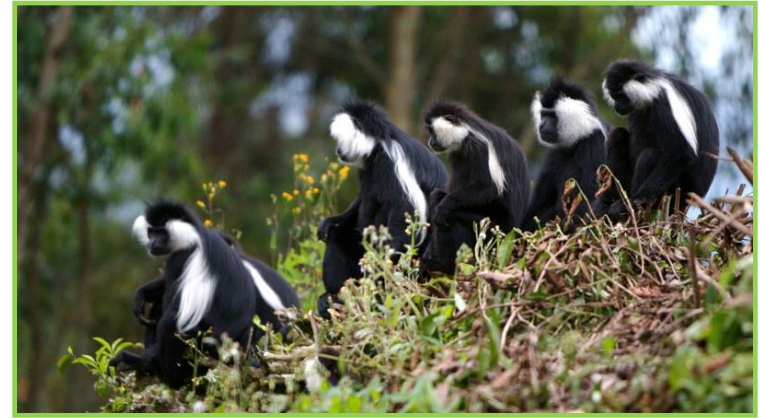
Research

- Inventories and surveys
- Ecology of the park's primate species
- Long-term biodiversity monitoring
- Forest restoration
- Monitoring of climate and ecosystem services
- Attitudes & awareness, socio-economic studies



Tourism

- Product development
- Guidelines and impact monitoring
- Transfer of responsibility
- Revenue sharing



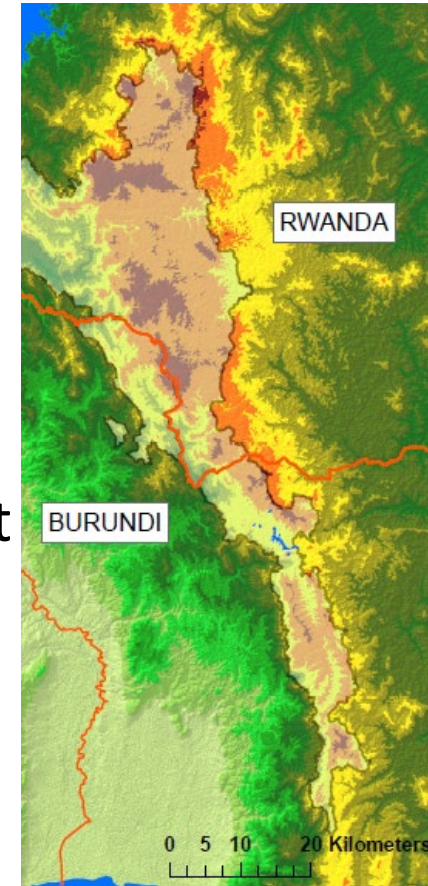
Community development

- Support to activities directly linked to threat reduction
- Beekeeping
- Energy efficient stoves
- Livestock to ex-poachers associations



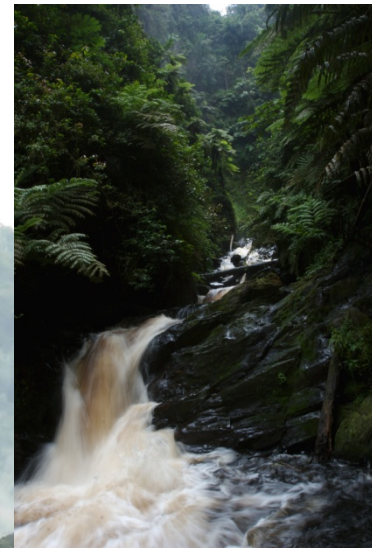
Nyungwe-Kibira transboundary collaboration

- Formal agreement between RDB and INECN for transboundary cooperation (2008)
- Ten-year transboundary strategic plan (2009-2018)
- Joint planning meetings and joint patrols
- Threat monitoring and wildlife surveys
- Chimpanzee conservation and tourism development
- Owl-faced monkey and bamboo forest conservation
- Sharing of lessons learned and best practices



Ecosystem Services

- Monitoring and modeling ecosystem services
- Identify users and the value of the ES
- Raising awareness and willingness to pay
- PES National task force
- Forest restoration



Outreach and education

- Education and outreach strategy
- Development of materials
- Training of teachers
- Conflict resolution and community liaison officers (ANICOs)
- Socio-marketing events and community radio program

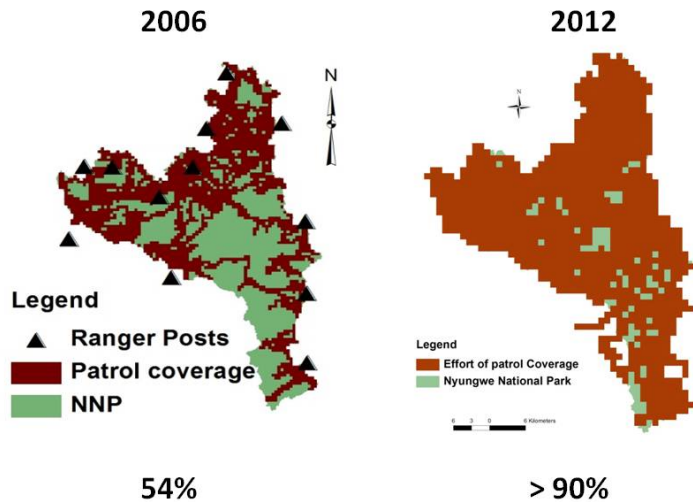


Threat reduction

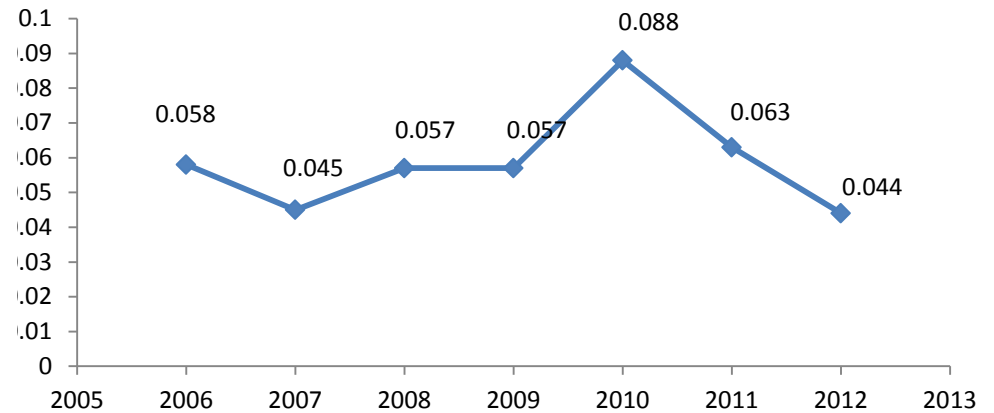
- Increase coverage
- Increased community involvement in threat detection and reduction



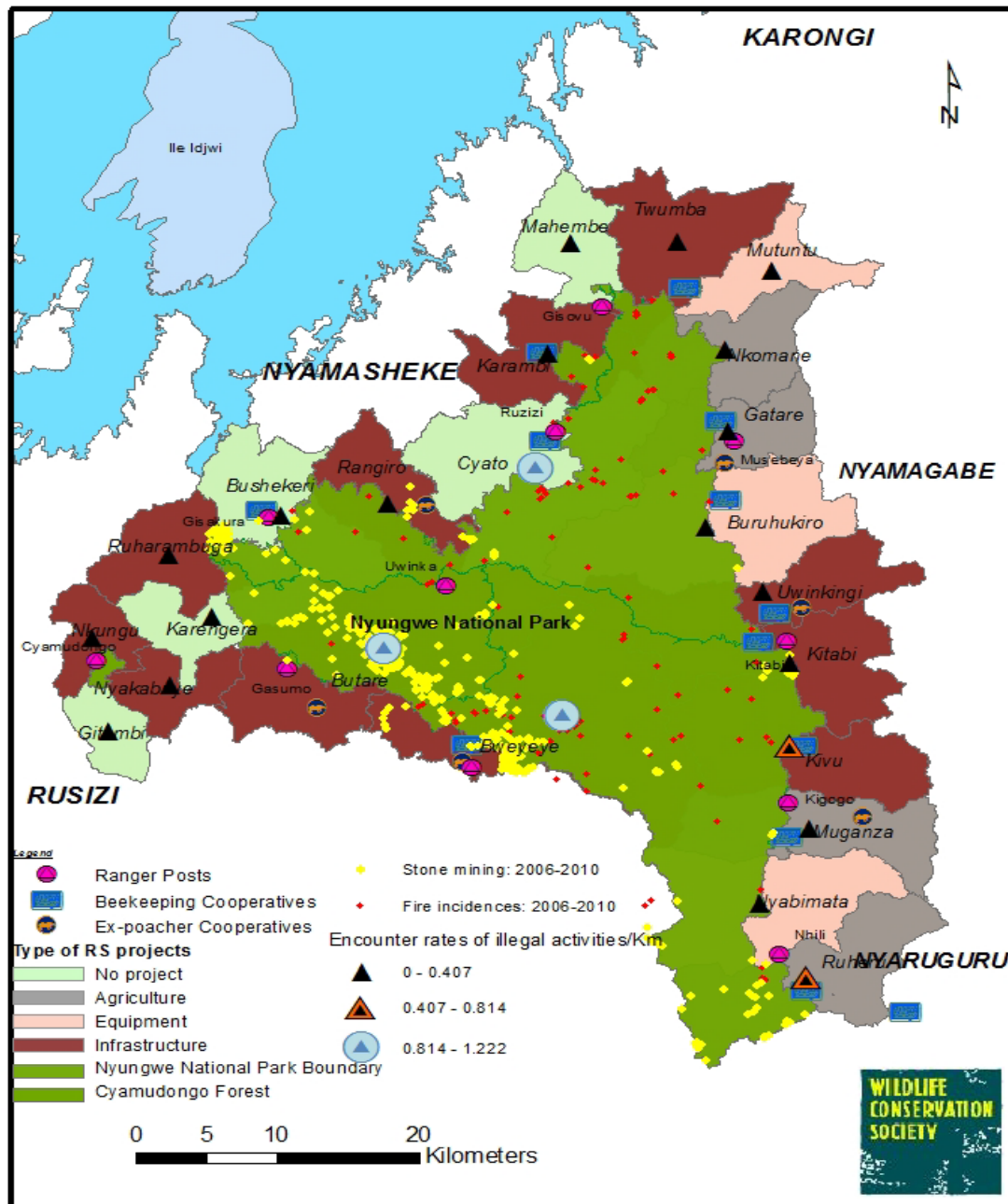
PATROL COVERAGE IN NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK



Encounter rates of illegal activities



Distribution of Revenue Sharing projects and encounter rates of illegal activities in the NNP



WCS Lessons Learned

- Nyungwe tourism is very different from Volcano model
- Value of long term science-based information
- Poverty reduction and community support are key to the long term conservation of NNP
- Achieve and secure conservation successes through local and national capacity building and awareness raising
- Stay the course – persistence pays



WCS Looking forward

- Promote tourism as a conservation tool
- Foster research in Nyungwe
- Scale up conservation focus outside the park
 - Outreach and education
 - Threat reduction via rural enterprise and agriculture
- Greater transboundary efforts
- Private market interests dominate in Rwanda
 - Management of national tourism assets (NPs)
- National PES strategy & policy



Thank you!

