

Letter from the Country Director

Achieving conservation success is an increasingly complex undertaking. ZSL's holistic landscape approach to conservation in Cameroon includes: providing support to the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) for the effective management of protected areas; training and support of law enforcement agencies at transit hubs; partnering with private sector operators to encourage the sustainable management of wildlife in forestry concessions; and engaging with communities to increase their wellbeing through participatory sustainable management of local natural resources. This work has been made possible by generous funding from the European Union and numerous other donors and partners.

The future of Cameroon is in the hands of its youth, and ZSL has made efforts to recruit a cadre of extremely talented young Cameroonian scientists and conservationists, adding four new staff members in 2018. Among other activities, these staff members have contributed to our wildlife inventory of the whole of the Dja Biosphere Reserve, walking a total distance of nearly 2,000km, and confirming the presence of large populations of forest elephants, gorillas and chimpanzees.

Conservation will not succeed without the active and effective participation of local people who depend on the protected areas and wider landscape for their lives and livelihoods. ZSL's community engagement this year has continued with the creation of new Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in additional communities, and support for the establishment of income-generating activities such as growing more productive plant varieties and chicken rearing. ZSL has also begun to engage primary schools in communities adjacent to the Dja Biosphere Reserve, with the intention of introducing an

environmental education programme. Radio shows continue to broadcast weekly, with listening groups created to maximise the impact. The shows feature interviews with local people as well as special visiting guests.

The last twelve months has seen considerable success with the two largest seizures of ivory in Cameroonian history, carried out by the Dja Conservation Service, who have received ongoing training and support from ZSL for a number of years.

In 2019 we will continue with our bio-monitoring activities in the Dja Biosphere Reserve, including deploying new camera-trap capture technology to provide real-time data on human and animal activities. We will continue to provide training and support to MINFOF in their management of Cameroon's protected areas, increasing patrol intensity and effectiveness, and support for law enforcement agencies to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, especially focussed on pangolins, grey parrots and elephants. We will also increase our support to MINFOF in their engagement with the private sector to ensure better management of wildlife in areas outside protected areas. ZSL intends to increase the number of local communities benefiting from our VSLA programme, encouraging the sustainable use of local resources to benefit people and create a world where wildlife thrives.



Andrew Fowler
Cameroon Country Director, ZSL



ZSL's Cameroon Programme

Located on the west coast of Africa, Cameroon harbours one of the most diverse set of ecosystems in the world and is often referred to as 'Africa in miniature'. To the west, Mount Cameroon is one of the largest volcanoes in Africa and to the north, savannah and semi-desert extend to Lake Chad. In the south, tropical rainforests form the north-western boundary of the Congo basin and vast mangroves follow the coastline. This range of habitats makes Cameroon one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and a priority for conservation.

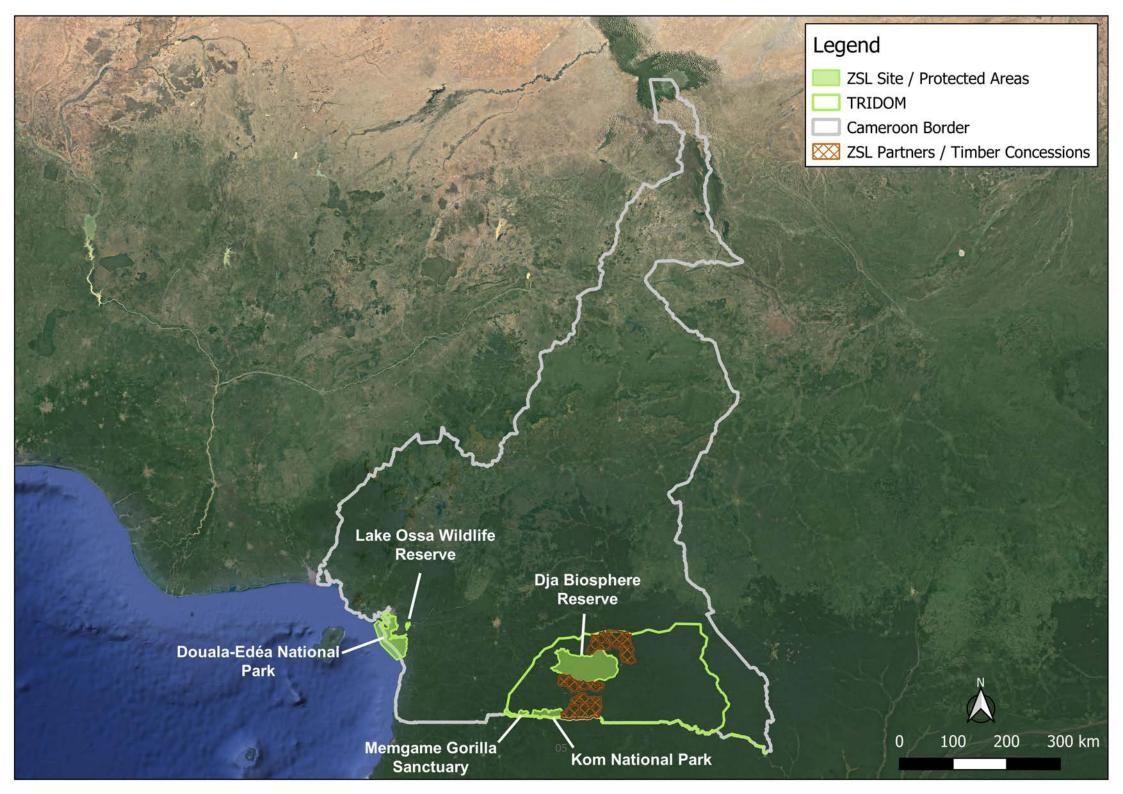
ZSL has been working in Cameroon since 2007, supporting the government and people of Cameroon to protect and sustainably manage the country's natural resources. We are currently focusing our efforts on two of the most important landscapes in Cameroon for biodiversity: the TRIDOM and Douala-Edéa.

The **TRIDOM** landscape covers 178,000km², making up 10% of the Congo Basin rainforest. It spreads across Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Gabon, taking its name from the Dja, Odzala and Minkebe Protected Areas in the three countries. It is a haven for elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, pangolins and a host of other wildlife. To date, ZSL's activities have focussed primarily on the Dja conservation complex, which encompasses the core Dja Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage site, set within a mosaic of forestry and mining concessions, agricultural land and community-managed forests. Further support has been provided to the neighbouring protected areas of Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary and Kom National Park. Poaching for bushmeat and the illegal wildlife trade is widespread and expanding extractive industry, infrastructure development and agro-industrial plantations are posing increasing pressure on the landscape.

The **Douala-Edéa** coastal ecosystem, which includes the mangroves, swamps, upland forests, rivers and lakes south of Cameroon's second largest city, Douala remains one of the last opportunities to conserve a large expanse of African coastal wildlands and wild waters. However, habitat loss and overexploitation of fisheries, mangroves and forest are significant threats to this diverse ecosystem.

ZSL is working alongside government, private sector, communities and civil society organisations to address some of the threats to these landscapes through the following areas of work:

- Support for effective management of protected areas including the Dja Biosphere Reserve, Kom National Park, Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary, Boumba Bek National Park, Deng Deng National Park and Douala-Edéa National Park through strengthening of protection and surveillance using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) approach.
- Monitoring of biodiversity through wildlife surveys, camera trapping and social surveys across both landscapes.
- Reinforcing law enforcement efforts to combat wildlife crime through training and mentoring of law enforcement agents around the protected areas and at transit hubs.
- Working with communities who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods to empower them to combat wildlife crime, engage in sustainable livelihoods and play a role in the management of their resources.
- Engaging with the private sector to reduce its impact on the landscapes.
- Building the capacity of young conservationists and conservation professionals by working with educational institutions and universities across Cameroon to train and support future conservationists.



2018 Highlights



Full faunal inventory conducted in the Dja Biosphere Reserve which produced population estimates for forest elephants (219), western lowland gorillas (1,258) and central chimpanzees (2,313)



40 eco-guards trained in Basic and Tactical Law Enforcement techniques



15 police, gendarmerie and customs officials trained in anti-wildlife trafficking enforcement



50 eco-guards and landscape managers trained in the use of SMART



100 students trained using ZSL's Forestry Tool-Kit



35 Village
Savings and Loan
Associations
(VSLAs) established



8 communities
trained in alternative
income-generating
activities



Weekly
conservationrelated radio
broadcasts conducted
on 4 radio stations



Discovery of a freshwater ray species in Douala-Edéa that hadn't been recorded in 30 years



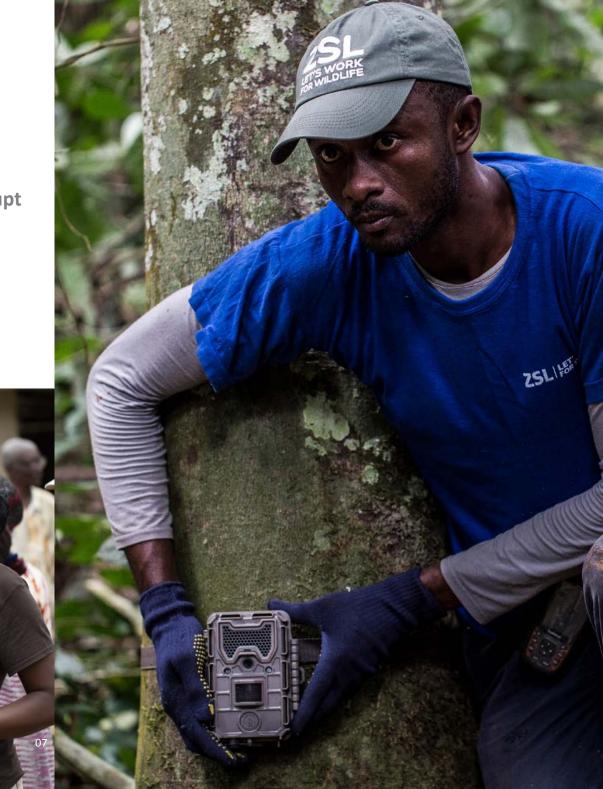
8 seizures made by ZSL-trained law enforcement agents including a seizure of 216 tusks, the largest seizure recorded in Cameroon



Operational support provided for 31 judicial cases of wildlife crime

2018 - ZSL in the TRIDOM

Working with the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) and other partners, we carry out a number of different activities in the TRIDOM to strengthen management of protected areas, disrupt the illegal wildlife trade, reduce the impact of the private sector and engage communities in natural resource management efforts. The team has achieved several successes across these areas of work which are detailed over the next few pages.



Protected Area Management

The Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) has been implemented as a standard patrol planning, data collection and management tool across the protected areas where ZSL supports MINFOF, including the Dja Biosphere Reserve, Kom National Park, Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary and Boumba Bek National Park.

SMART provides a standardised approach to patrol implementation, with eco-guards collecting data on signs of human activity, arrests, seizures and wildlife signs. SMART has now been accepted by the government of Cameroon as a standard patrol management tool, and ten regional focal persons have been appointed, who have received training from ZSL and other partners. A national SMART focal person has also been appointed. The introduction of SMART has resulted in greater efficiency in patrol planning and implementation. ZSL also worked with MINFOF to create and validate a code of conduct for MINFOF eco-guards.

During 2018, we supported MINFOF eco-guards to carry out patrols throughout all four sectors of the Dja Biosphere Reserve using the SMART approach. A total of 68 patrols were completed in all sectors of the Dja covering a distance of 7,769km and 93% of the Reserve. During these patrols, 14 arms were seized, along with 131 pieces of ammunition, and a total of 9 people were arrested on charges of poaching. To assist eco-guards in carrying out this challenging work, ZSL provided equipment necessary for effective patrolling, including 60 sleeping bags, 60 backpacks, 20 tents, 60 head torches and 60 water bottles. A boat equipped with a 15-horse power outboard motor was also supplied to help transport eco-guards along the Dja river for patrolling., which has helped to increase patrol coverage in areas where access by foot is severely hampered during the rainy season.

In order to further enhance ZSL's support to MINFOF, two regional offices were set up in the landscape close to the Dja in the towns of Djourn and Lomie. These offices are now staffed by ZSL field assistants who can carry out field activities more easily and respond to the needs of partners including MINFOF.



Engaging with Timber Companies

Much of the forest within the TRIDOM landscape falls outside protected areas. These 'inter-zone' regions are important corridors ensuring connectivity between populations of large animals such as forest elephants and great apes. Considerable human activity characterises these areas, including subsistence farming, logging concessions and commercial plantations for the production of rubber and fruit.

ZSL has committed to engaging with the timber concessionaires directly adjacent to the Dia Biosphere Reserve. This work has included the formation of wildlife surveillance teams who patrol the concessions, and the creation and implementation of wildlife management plans. During 2018, ZSL has been instrumental in inviting these private sector actors to relevant environmental platforms such as the Dja Biosphere Reserve 'Forum des Acteurs', which is a meeting of key stakeholders. Patrols by wildlife management teams have continued, and in conjunction with the deployment of camera traps and line-transects, these have confirmed the presence of several key species in these concessions, including forest buffalo, gorilla and several monkey species. Two hundred copies of ZSL's toolkit on managing wildlife in production forests were printed and distributed to MINFOF staff and the private sector. We also organised SMART training courses for personnel of Pallisco timber company to improve wildlife management in their logging concessions and a workshop in Bertoua to engage private sector operatives located on the periphery of the Reserve.





Patrols in forestry concessions confirmed presence of key species including buffalo, gorilla and monkeys



200 copies of the ZSL Forestry Toolkit printed and distributed



SMART training course organised for personnel of Pallisco logging concession



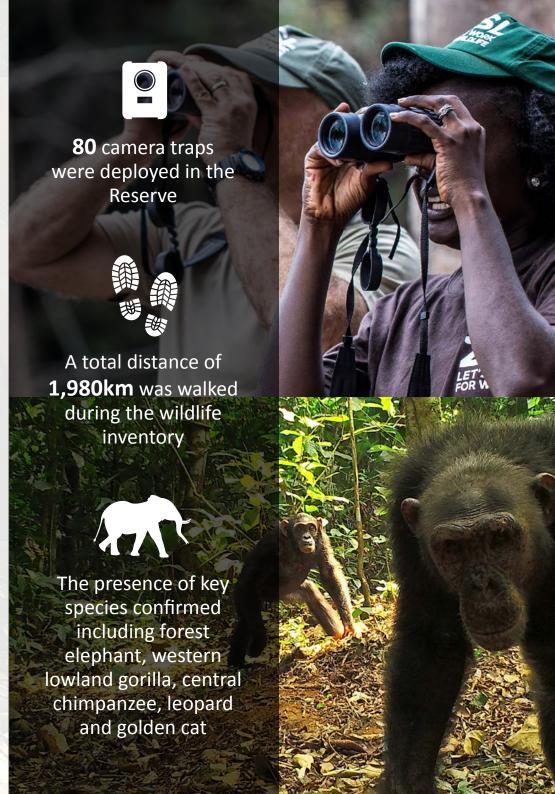
Monitoring Wildlife

This year we have carried out a comprehensive faunal inventory (wildlife survey) of the Dja Biosphere Reserve in collaboration with MINFOF and the African Wildlife Foundation to help protected area managers assess the status and trends of populations of larger species. The inventory was supported by the European Union's Programme de Conservation et Utilisation Rationale des Ecosystemes Forestiers en Afrique Centrale 6 (ECOFAC 6).

Conducted between April and June 2018, the inventory teams covered a combined distance of 1,980km, with 298km walking along line transects. Distance sampling analyses were used to estimate the density and abundance of forest elephant, central chimpanzee and western lowland gorilla. We were able to identify spoor from forest elephant, central chimpanzee, western lowland gorilla, yellow-backed duiker, forest buffalo, bongo, sitatunga and leopard. Encounter rates for arboreal primates and various ungulate species were recorded based on direct sightings.

Nineteen mammal species were encountered during the survey and we were able to estimate the forest elephant population to be 219 individuals, with approximately 1,258 western lowland gorillas and 2,313 central chimpanzees. These figures show a decline in all three species since previous surveys, suggesting that conservation efforts and collaboration between stakeholders in the landscape need to be strengthened.

Another important element in ZSL's support to MINFOF for monitoring of wildlife populations is the deployment of camera traps in the Dja. A total of 80 cameras were deployed between January and May by five different deployment teams in two set camera grids in the Northern and Eastern Sectors of the Reserve. The camera traps were still active at the same time as the faunal inventory was underway to allow a comparison of species-specific metrics gathered by both survey methods. An initial analysis of the camera trap images has confirmed the presence of a wide variety of key species, including forest elephant, western lowland gorilla, central chimpanzee, leopard and golden cat.



Community Engagement

People are key to conservation success and ZSL engages with local communities living around protected areas and in wildlife corridors to empower them to combat wildlife crime, engage in sustainable livelihoods and play a role in the management of their resources. We provide them with tools and mechanisms through which they can monitor and report on natural resource use as well as establishing village saving schemes to help build financial resilience. We also provide seed funds to diversify livelihoods and reduce dependence on environmentally-damaging activities.

We have established Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in 12 communities around the Dja Biosphere Reserve. These VSLAs now have a total of 387 members (230 women and 157 men). By the end of 2018, these groups had a combined saving of 6.5 million FCFA (£8,840) and had facilitated loans of 4 million FCFA (£5,440). In an effort to reduce reliance on threatened species and their habitats for people's livelihoods, ZSL has initiated alternative income-generating activities with a conservation emphasis in eight communities. Initiatives include training on sustainable agricultural practices to reduce slash and burn agriculture, establishment of fruit tree nurseries and orchards, and poultry husbandry. Additionally, ZSL has focussed on the valorisation of Non-Timber Forestry Products (NTFPs) to ensure the sustainable management of forests throughout the periphery of the Dja.

Community Surveillance Networks (CSN) continue to be a crucial part of ZSL's community engagement, developed in collaboration with ExCiteS – an initiative developed by UCL. The CSNs provide real-time intelligence on the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) throughout the landscape. The ExCiteS programme has continued to assist ZSL to track IWT and the unsustainable use of resources within and around the Dja, using its innovative app-based data collection tool. Currently operational in 6 communities, ExCiteS to date has generated a total of 503 records, including 434 photo images and audio files.



Law Enforcement

One of ZSL's key activities is to develop the capacity of law enforcement agents, prosecutors and courthouse staff to effectively apply wildlife laws relating to trafficked species.

This helps increase awareness, understanding and the ability to effectively carry out a range of essential enforcement activities including: gathering information on illegal activities, building criminal cases, making arrests, scene of crime and evidence management and taking statements, proper application of wildlife-crime-related laws in Cameroon and associated criminal and legal processes. We also monitor the progression of illegal wildlife trade cases and provide technical support throughout the prosecution process.

In the past 12 months we have trained 40 eco-guards in Basic and Tactical Law Enforcement and provided training to 15 members of the Cellule Aeroportuaire Anti-Traffics (CAAT), an elite anti-smuggling port-based unit comprising law enforcement agents from police, gendarmerie, customs and MINFOF, in how to identify and stop trafficking of wildlife products through ports.

Following this training, eight seizures were made during 2018 including a seizure of 216 tusks, the largest seizure recorded in Cameroon. ZSL has also provided operational support for 31 judicial cases of wildlife crime.







40 eco-guards trained in Basic and Tactical Law Enforcement techniques



15 Police and Customs Agents trained in antismuggling techniques



8 seizures of IWT products including over 200 elephant tusks



Support to 31 judicial cases





2018 – ZSL in Douala-Edéa

ZSL has been working in the Douala-Edéa landscape since 2014, initially in the Lake Ossa Wildlife Reserve and more recently in the Douala-Edéa National Park, which was upgraded from a Reserve at the end of 2018, creating Cameroon's first combined marine and terrestrial protected area. Our key activities include protecting threatened species from overexploitation and hunting by strengthening management of the protected areas, engaging communities in sustainable livelihood initiatives and conservation, and working with the private sector to reduce negative impacts on the landscape. Over the last year, the project has expanded its scope significantly and the highlights of what has been achieved are detailed over the following pages.







Community Engagement

Community engagement is core to ZSL's conservation projects, and we place critical importance on the role local communities play in achieving long-term conservation goals for ecosystems and the species they support.

One of the biggest challenges in this landscape is a lack of understanding of the important ecosystem services provided by Douala-Edéa for people living in the area. Responding to this gap, ZSL has worked to build environmental awareness of the ecosystem services, not only to the surrounding population but also globally.

In 2018, ZSL established eight new Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in communities around Lake Ossa, Lake Tissongo and Siossio. VSLA's give communities access to savings and micro-finance that they can use to invest in existing livelihoods or build new modes of alternative income generation. Many of the local communities in Douala-Edéa are reliant on fish for subsistence and income resulting in a lack of food diversity and financial security. Basic financial services such as VSLAs help local communities to save and therefore have access to money when times are particularly difficult or when they need to pay for larger items such as school fees. They also enable access to loans to help people develop new, sustainable livelihoods that work for them and the wildlife with which they live.

A total of 26 VSLAs are now operating in Douala-Edéa, supporting 564 men and women to save a total of 28 million FCFA, the equivalent of £37,971. Individual group members have used their savings to provide a secondary source of income and reduce financial pressures on the household. Some households have used their savings to construct new family homes and to pay for children's school fees and school uniforms.

As well as providing communities with an important source of income, the VSLA's help ZSL to develop trusting relationships with community members. This has helped ZSL to engage individuals in conservation activities and we saw a number of initiatives develop through the existing VSLA's in Lake Ossa, including reforestation activities on the lakeside, the creation of seedling beds for forestry, and community surveillance networks to reduce instances of harmful agricultural practices such as 'slash and burn'.

Community Management of Natural Resources

The ZSL team works with communities in Siossio and Tissongo to identify priority sites for protection and management, and to agree on best fishing practices that will help fish populations to recover.

Developing a community-owned management plan for Siossio has strengthened community participation in monitoring practices and the community is now supporting MINFOF to protect the reserve.

In Tissongo, local communities depend solely on the lake for their lives and livelihoods. Therefore, to build support for a sustainable approach to fishing, the team carried out participatory mapping of resource use and introduced discussions on the concept of 'no-take' zones in the lake. The next step will be to work with community members to establish a local fishery management committee.



7 'no-take' zones still under community management in Lake Ossa, protecting 267 ha of critical habitat



16 rangers trained in basic law enforcement techniques to improve 'no-take' and antipoaching patrols, and reduce illegal mangrove harvesting





Net-Works Initiative

ZSL has been working to reduce the impact of discarded fishing nets on aquatic systems, through the Net-Works Initiative, a sustainable business model led by ZSL and Interface™. Discarded fishing nets pollute marine and freshwater ecosystems and can often trap aquatic species.

The nets are sold and exported for carpet-tile manufacture and the income is then is managed through the VSLAs, benefitting the communities whilst reducing plastic pollution in aquatic ecosystems. Over 6 tonnes of discarded fishing nets have been removed from the Lake Ossa and Douala-Edéa National Park so far. Six VSLA's participated in the net collection, the profits of which went back into their community savings.

ZSL also addresses new impacts generated by climate change, such as the invasive plant *Salvinia molesta*, which is clogging up Lake Ossa and adjacent waterways. As part of the adaptive management of the project, ZSL is conducting research on this infestation to identify a solution to this local problem that will likely extend to the rest of the landscape of Douala-Edéa.





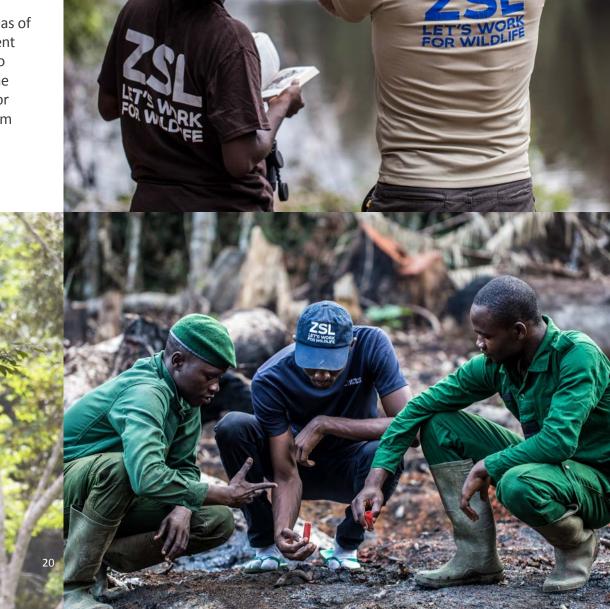
"Village Savings and Loans Associations are established so that people can better manage the small amount of income they have, and in some cases, reinvest in alternative activities. They also help to achieve our conservation objectives by involving members in plastic clean-ups through the Net-Works Initiative, which is a programme that recycles discarded fishing nets, as well as replantation initiatives and working with small farmers on agricultural best practices."

Fanny Djomkam, Community Conservation Officer, ZSL Cameroon

ZSL's Operations in Cameroon

2018 was a year of change for ZSL Cameroon with an increase in project staff members working in our various landscapes and the establishment of new regional field offices in both Djoum and Lomie, ensuring increased effectiveness in the field.

Additionally, the improvement of accountability measures in the areas of logistics, finance and procurement has strengthened the management of the ZSL Cameroon programme. The Operations Team continues to work on the validation of our 'Arrangement d'etablissement' with the Ministry of External Relations and facilitated a field and office visit for the Ministry in November. We were also delighted to have a visit from the new Director General of ZSL, Dominic Jermey in July 2018.





Plans for 2019

In October 2018, the Douala-Edéa Wildlife Reserve was upgraded to national park status. The government of Cameroon approved a near 350,000-acre expansion that includes mangrove forests, rivers and marine habitats. Collectively this expansion and conversion will bring protected status to 741,000 acres. This is a great opportunity for ZSL to deliver long-lasting impact for Cameroon's wildlife in 2019 and beyond. A new park management plan will need to be created, underpinned by further biodiversity monitoring, increased awareness and understanding of the needs of local communities and greater collaboration with government agencies responsible for managing this incredible landscape.

In the TRIDOM landscape, ZSL will continue to focus on key issues such as IWT in the coming year. We anticipate an increase in the number of patrols conducted to enable patrol coverage of the entire Dja Biosphere Reserve by increasing our provision of equipment and training to MINFOF eco-guards. We will target the inclusion of more communities that are having a direct impact on the landscape, in education and alternative livelihood approaches to facilitate an increasingly participatory and sustainable approach to the management of natural resources. In the forestry sector, ZSL intends to support the relevant government agencies, including MINFOF, to engage more effectively with private sector operators to manage wildlife populations in key regions between protected areas.

In 2019, the Operations Team will continue to streamline processes to ensure their relevance and efficacy for upcoming projects. Further development of field bases and the establishment of health and safety protocols will ensure that the ZSL team have a successful 2019.

Thank You

ZSL is extremely grateful to all our funders and donors, without whom, none of this work would be possible. In addition to our major donors listed (see right), we also want to extend our sincere thanks to Pete and Val Charlton for their generous support.

Partners



Successful conservation requires collaboration and ZSL is very proud of the strong partnerships it has in Cameroon, particularly the close working relationship with the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF). Together, we are achieving significant results.

Our continued collaboration with Local Authorities throughout our landscapes remains key to our success, their support to our projects ensures our ability to tackle the critical issues faced by wildlife.

The partnerships ZSL has established with the environmental schools in Cameroon: Douala University, Yaoundé 1, Ecole de Faune de Garoua, ENEF de Mbalmayo, ensure that future conservationists have the tools for success.

Thank you also to our local implementation partners, whose ongoing support for our activities is vital to our success: APADER, SOCAPALM, SAFACAM, RESOPEM, AMMCO, Evergreen, CWCS, SUDCAM, Hydro Mekin, Pallisco, Rougier (SFID-Mbang, SFID Djoum), Community radios in Lomie, Midourou, Meyomessala and Djoum.

And to our close partners: AWF, CBI, CIFOR, FCTV, IUCN, LAGA, OFAC, PADI-Dja, TRAFFIC, UCL, UNESCO, WCS, WWF.



We're ZSL, an international conservation charity working to create a world where wildlife thrives. Join us at zsl.org

Major donors





























