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8.15 Rwanda

Protected and conserved areas in Rwanda⁷⁶

Rwanda has 10 protected areas covering 2 320 km² of the land (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2019p).

The majority of the national ecoregions in the country are under protected, in particular wetlands which are recognized as sanctuaries of rich biological diversity. An ecological gap analysis for Rwanda has been identifying new sites to be designated as protected areas. Akagera National Park is managed through a public-private partnership with African Parks.

Transboundary protected and conserved areas

Rwanda includes part of three transboundary conservation areas, namely Greater Virunga Landscape, Kagera TFCA, and Nyungwe-Kibira.

Policy context

A comprehensive report on legislation and policy related to protected area management, governance, and equity was undertaken by the BIOPAMA programme. It identified 47 relevant laws and policies in Rwanda (Tessema, 2019).

Key species⁷⁷

Biodiversity is highly threatened due to high human populations and the associated pressures on natural resources. Within the protected areas, including national parks and forests, biodiversity is well-protected, and represents a diverse set of ecosystems. Rwanda is home to the mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*), a population shared with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda that has shown a significant increase in population size. Akagera National Park has undergone an intensive restoration effort. Rwanda's bird diversity is very rich, particularly as there are so many diverse habitats across the country. Freshwater systems are also home to a diversity of fish species, including some endemics.

Pressures and threats⁷⁸

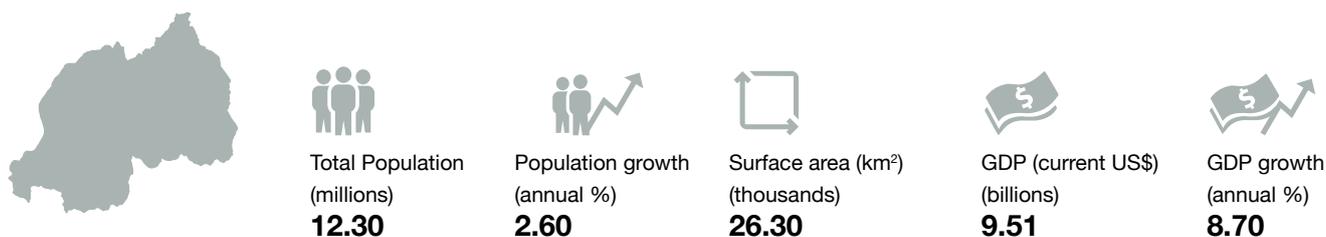
The threats to biodiversity in Rwanda include: poaching and other illegal activities; fires; alien invasive species; deforestation; mining; illegal grazing; damming; dropping water levels; unsustainable fishing; lack of connectivity; unsustainable tourism use and infrastructure development; wetlands encroachment; and pollution. Rwanda has a very high human population density, which puts increasing pressure on available natural resources.

⁷⁶ The section draws on information contained in Rwanda's Fourth National Report to the CBD (Republic of Rwanda, 2009).

⁷⁷ The section draws on information contained in Rwanda's Fifth National Report to the CBD (Republic of Rwanda, 2014).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Figure 8.29 Rwanda Summary



Source: The World Bank Group, 2018.

Area Protected:

10 protected areas covering **2 320 km²** of land



Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, (2019p)

Protected and conserved areas in Rwanda in IUCN Management Categories



Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019p).

Coverage of protected areas in Rwanda

| Type of protected area | Area protected or conserved* | Area protected or conserved** |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Terrestrial and inland water | 9.11% | 10.10% |

* WDPA dataset ** From National Report on Biodiversity

Source: Republic of Rwanda (2014); UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019p).

National designations of protected and conserved areas in Rwanda

| National designation | No. | Area (km ²) |
|----------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Other Area | 3 | 308 |
| National Park | 3 | 2 201 |
| Forest Reserve | 2 | 34 |

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019p).

Protected and conserved areas designated as global sites of importance in Rwanda

| Global designation | No. of sites |
|---|--------------|
| UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves | 1 |
| Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) | 1 |

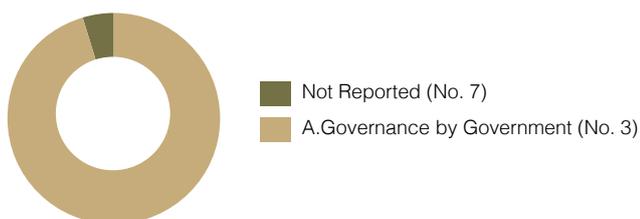
Source: Ramsar (2019); UNESCO (2019a, 2019b).

Priority areas for conservation



Source: AZE Secretariat (2019); BirdLife International (2019b, 2019c).

Protected and conserved areas in Rwanda in IUCN Governance Types



Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019p).

Figure 8.30 Rwanda protected areas

