

Democratic Republic of Congo adds an exceptional new Site to the Ramsar List

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Democratic Republic of the Congo



Bassin de la Lufira

The Democratic Republic of Congo has designated Bassin de la Lufira (the Lufira river basin) as its fourth Wetland of International Importance. With the addition of this vast and exceptional wetland area, the country joins a select group of Ramsar Contracting Parties – Bolivia, Canada, Chad, Congo and the Russian Federation – with over 100,000 square kilometres under Ramsar protection.

The Site (**Ramsar Site no. 2318**), in the south-east of the country, consists of rivers and their floodplains, natural and artificial lakes and ponds, waterfalls, papyrus and other marshes, and marshy forests. The main river feeding it is the Lufira.

The prevailing soil and climatic factors ensure the maintenance of the Site's unique biological diversity. Many endemic species are present: 16 bird species including the Lufira masked weaver, the Upemba masked weaver and the black-faced waxbill; 15 reptile species including the Upemba mud turtle, the lined water snake and the Mulanje water snake; and at least two endemic amphibians, the Katanga thick-toed gecko and the frog *Afrixalus upembae*. The Lufira Basin remains the only biotope for rare mammals such as the Grant's zebra and the greater kudu, and it is also home to populations of giant sable and roan antelope.

The lack of control and regulation of mining activities and the related hydrometallurgical treatment plants presents a real threat to the Site. Its designation was completed thanks to the financial and technical support of WWF-International.

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