




Cameroon government once more opens way for logging in the biodiversity rich Ebo Forest, a Key Biodiversity and Tropical Important Plant Area.

work because there are no law enforcement agents present to prevent large-scale poaching facilitated by logging. It is not a priority for logging companies. The management strategy of Conservation Enclaves within Forest Management Units needs revamping. We fear therefore that this decision will lead to extirpation of threatened and rare species such as Preuss's red colobus *Ptilocolobus preussi* (with only two remaining populations, one of which is in the Ebo forest), the Goliath frog *Conraua goliath* (the largest living frog), the culturally unique Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes ellioti* (which both fishes for termites and cracks nuts), and a potential new subspecies of gorilla occurring between the western lowland gorilla *Gorilla gorilla gorilla* and Cross River gorilla *Gorilla gorilla diehli*. One hundred and fifty-six threatened and 14 new plant species have been recorded in this forest since 2004 by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the National Herbarium of Cameroon.

To mitigate this problem, we recommend the classification of the remaining 1,316 km² of the Ebo forest as a protected area, to provide a haven for these unique, rare and threatened species, and inclusion of ranger patrols in the management plans of Forest Management Units within Conservation Enclaves, in collaboration with grassroots conservation organizations.

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Second ministerial conference on Transboundary Transhumance in Central Africa

In recent decades, livestock has intruded into almost every protected area in Central Africa's savannahs, with cattle now more numerous than wildlife (Scholte et al., 2021, *Conservation Biology*, 36, e13860). Insecurity as a result of the activities of Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria has spread into Cameroon since 2010, causing pastoralists to move south-eastwards. The 2003–2007 conflict in Darfur and the 2013 civil war and ongoing instability in the Central African Republic also caused changes in pastoral movements.

In January 2019, a conference was held in N'Djamena, Chad, uniting ministers in charge of livestock, wildlife and security from northern source countries (Chad, Niger, Sudan), transit countries (Cameroon, Nigeria), and southern destination countries (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan). The conference launched a call for regional and international cooperation to address the challenges and opportunities associated with transhumance. During 10–12 July 2023, a follow-up ministerial conference took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, taking stock of conservation activities, compiling lessons learnt and presenting country investment plans. We were keynote speakers at both conferences and preparatory sessions, and here present our impressions of the progress of conservation actions (for policy and other matters, see pfbf-cbfp.org/news-partner/Presentations-blocks-PIP.html).

Transhumance originally signified regular seasonal movements of livestock with their herders, distinct from long-term migration. Sahelian countries generally see transhumance as a productive mainstream economic practice. Southern countries perceive transhumance as destructive, alien to their culture, associated with armed non-state groups, and dominated by absentee owners, complicating the dilemma of pastoralists as both perpetrators and victims.

Amongst field achievements, surveillance has been strengthened with the assistance of aerial monitoring, including small planes, reinforcing anti-poaching operations in an increasing number of protected areas, including Chinko (Central African Republic) and Bouba Ndjida (Cameroon). Arguably, the biggest recent achievement has been the establishment of dialogue with pastoralists through fora with their leaders in Bouba Ndjida and Faro (Cameroon), and sensitization and engagement teams in Chinko, Faro and Zakouma (Chad). With these Transhumance Engagement Officers or TANGO agents (africanparks.org/chinko-creating-solution-coexistence), parks have been able to convince pastoralists to divert from core protection zones. Yet, despite successes, sustainability remains an issue, with efforts to date focusing on short-term pastoral problem displacement rather than long-term grazing alternatives (Brottem et al., 2023, *Transhumance and Conservation at a Crossroads Project*). Investments

in pastoral economies that support employment (especially for youth), offering an alternative to lucrative illegal activities, are lacking. The ministerial conference called for investment in pastoral mobility (schooling, pastoral infrastructure) and integration of this in territorial planning/cross-border law enforcement; the proposed investment plans amount to USD 500 million over the next 5 years.

We recommend that conservation organizations develop partnerships with pastoralists in support of integrated landscape management, promoting mobility of livestock and wildlife. Governments should include transhumant representatives in security consultations, taking the lead on territorial planning while ensuring measured representation of pastoralists, and the international community should strengthen coordination across conservation, security and development sectors and ensure continuity of integrated financial and technical assistance.

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Empowering conservation of the Critically Endangered tree *Buchanania barberi* through an education campaign

The eight species of the genus *Buchanania* (family Anacardiaceae) occurring in India are valued for their fruits, timber and medicinal importance, but as a result of utilization and other anthropogenic pressures several species are categorized as threatened on the IUCN Red List. *Buchanania barberi*, known as *malamavu*, is a small tree endemic to the South Western Ghats. It was previously known from only two mature trees in the Palode region (Dhyani & Anilkumar, 2017, *Oryx*, 51, 584), but in recent surveys we have located two additional mature trees in a school campus in Nanniyodu in South Kerala. Because of limited seedling production and developmental activities, *B. barberi* is categorized as Critically Endangered.

Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute has received funding from the Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, UAE, to conserve *B. barberi*. In March 2022 and February 2023, we conducted education campaigns about the species, engaging key stakeholders such as the Forest Range Office in Palode, the Kerala Forest Department in Thiruvananthapuram, three schools (Government high school, Jawahar Colony; Upper primary school, Karimancode; Government lower primary school, Karimancode), and the local communities



Conservation and education campaign for *Buchanania barberi*: (a) poster, (b) water bottle and mug, (c) bag, (d) seedling planting, (e) painting by Reema Abraham, (f) school awareness campaign.

residing near the species' natural habitat. Additionally, we collected seeds and initiated germination for seedling production (following the method of Dhyani et al., 2023, *Plants People Planet*, 5, 502–507).

To raise awareness effectively, we developed educational materials, including a poster highlighting the species' status, threats and conservation actions, and created water bottles, mugs and bags with conservation messages. Our sessions attracted c. 200 students (90 boys and 110 girls) and 50 local community members. These sessions, conducted in Malayalam, educated participants about the importance of conserving *B. barberi*, its identification and conservation status, threats to the species, propagation and potential interventions.

We also organized quiz programmes, with winners receiving awareness posters, mugs, bags and bottles, and students and teachers planted c. 15 *B. barberi* seedlings in their school grounds. The awareness materials have been shared with staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum, and Botanic Gardens Conservation International. A painting of *B. barberi* by Reema Abraham featured in the art exhibition *The Endangered—Can Art Save Them* organized by Art Impact International, USA.