



Job Description

Site and Research Manager Republic of Congo (RoC)

Location: Mondika (Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park), Republic of Congo
Reports to: Nouabalé-Ndoki Director of Research and Principal Investigators of Mondika
Start Date: May 2021
Type of contract: 1-year full-time contract, renewable

Organizational Context:

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a private US non-profit organization founded in 1895. Its mission is to preserve wildlife and wilderness by understanding critical problems, developing scientific solutions and taking conservation actions that benefit nature and humanity. With more than a century of experience, long-term commitments in dozens of landscapes, a presence in more than 60 countries, and experience in the creation of more than 150 protected areas around the world, WCS has accumulated the biological knowledge, cultural understanding and partnerships needed to ensure that wild places and animal species thrive alongside local communities. Working with local communities and organizations, this knowledge is applied to address species, habitat and ecosystem management issues that are essential to improving the quality of life of the rural poor whose livelihoods depend on the direct use of natural resources.

WCS Congo Program Overview

Over the past 25 years WCS Congo has been the government's principle conservation partner, assisting the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF) in managing wildlife and its habitat in several of the country's national parks, reserves, and protected area buffer zones. Within these sites WCS is developing and implementing actions for effective wildlife protection; community based natural resource management; ecological monitoring; scientific research; and environmental education. The program is the largest in WCS's global portfolio and reports to the Regional Program for Central Africa and Gulf of Guinea. WCS Congo's current portfolio of programs includes the management of the Nouabale-Ndoki National Park through a Public-Private Partnership with the Government of Congo, wildlife management in the substantial buffer zones of the Park, co-management of Lac Tele Community Reserve, a national program to support reform of marine conservation and resource management and a substantial policy support program to the central government in Brazzaville.

The Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (NNNP) covers more than 4,000 square kilometers of intact contiguous lowland rainforest in northern Republic of Congo. The forest is part of the larger Sangha Tri-National Forest Landscape inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The region is a stronghold for important populations of large mammals, including forest elephants, western lowland gorillas, and chimpanzees. The park also contains forest clearings that offer a window into the lives of shy forest wildlife, creating fantastic opportunities for tourism development and conservation science.

Created in 1993, the NNNP and its buffer zone have benefited from more than 25 years of collaborative management between the Congolese Government and WCS to emerge as one of the most successful protected areas for the conservation of wildlife in Central Africa. In October 2014, WCS signed a Public Private Partnership (PPP) with the Ministry for Forest Economy (MEF), for the long-term management and financing of NNNP, creating the Nouabale-Ndoki Foundation as the Park management entity under a 25-year agreement. Mondika is one of the three long term research sites.

Position Summary:

We are looking for a dynamic Site and Research Manager to manage Mondika research and monitoring activities, and liaise with the Tourist manager to coordinate tourism activities. The successful candidate will have a strong scientific background, a strong interest in conservation and in working in remote places in tropical forest. This is a full-time position.

Main tasks:

Management of Field Research at MDK

- Supervise the effective implementation of the research protocols at MDK field site;
- Coordinate field work of all MDK's Research Teams;
- Participate in daily follows/habituation of gorillas at MDK;
- Supervise the collection of data (e.g. behavioral observations, health symptoms using Animal Observer App, meteorology, Cybertracker) at the MDK site;
- Implement tests of reliability measures to ensure that research team members are collecting data accurately and in a standardized manner;
- Oversee the implementation of the direct observational health program for gorillas at MDK;
- Train Congolese Research staff in reduced impact protocols for daily ape follows, behavioral monitoring techniques, use of portable data collection devices, data management, and reporting;
- Contribute to the professional development of the Congolese Research staff at MDK including individualized research projects to present in Bomassa and/or Brazzaville;
- Supervise data entry and backups for the MDK site;
- Ensure the quality of collection, storage, inventory and transport of biological samples (i.e. fecal, insect samples) obtained at MDK, as well coordinated shipment to Bomassa.

Communication and Personnel Management

- Organize staff schedules and movement logistics;
- Compile monthly site reports summarizing data collection, field efforts, staff participation, and research highlights which are submitted to the GTAP Project Manager, NNNP Director of Research and Ecological Monitoring and the Principal Investigators of MDK;
- Work with the GTAP Project Manager, Principal Investigators of MDK and the NNNP Director of Research and Ecological Monitoring to provide transparent, timely supervision of the gorillas, site and personnel;
- Communicate and collaborate as necessary with the NNNP/WCS Tourism manager and team on all aspects of tourist activities having place at MDK.

Management of MDK Camp, Food Stocks, and Facilities

- Oversee the submission, preparation and arrival of food orders for the MDK site;
- Ensure MDK camp facilities are properly maintained;
- Ensure MDK Research staff maintain proper use and care of field equipment;
- Work with WCS/GTAP to minimize the impact of the tourist site construction and footprint on MDK; including wildlife, staff, camp, and operations;

Qualifications:

- A master's degree (or higher education) in Biological Sciences or other relevant conservation field experience;
- At least 3 years of experience in Africa in a similar role;
- Fluency in French and English, both oral and written;
- Good knowledge of animal behavior and ecology are crucial for a successful application, as well as experience in managing a remote field site;
- Previous experience in project management (staff supervision, work-planning and reporting, etc.);
- Knowledge of Excel/Word is mandatory, with working knowledge of GIS, SMART and R also preferable;
- Field tracking and navigation skills (with GPS and compass) are essential, with previous training in wilderness first aid also preferred;
- Previous experience using camera traps for research is also preferred;
- Excellent social and communication skills with local staff and all cooperation partners; s/he should be able to work in a multicultural and multinational environment while living in isolated field camps (solar power, limited satellite internet and no running water);
- S/he needs to be physically fit, enough for forest work in tropical climate;
- Additional skills could be a plus: mechanical aptitude, construction skills, electrical skills and problem-solving mindset.

Interested candidates who meet the above criteria are invited to submit their application (CV and cover letter with the contacts of three references) to wcscongobrazza@wcs.org.

Please indicate "Site and research Manager" in the subject line of your email. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Deadline for applications: March 22, 2021.

WCS is an equal opportunity employer that strives to recruit and support a diverse workforce. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive work environment and are looking for future team members who share this same value.

EOE/AA/M/F/Vets/Disabled - END