

In your reply, please refer to:  
En répondant, veuillez rappeler:

IUCN REVIEW

World Heritage Nomination

1. NAME: Virunga National Park, Zaire
2. LOCATION: Kivu Province, Eastern Zaire
3. NOMINATED BY: Government of Zaire,  
Mr. Lessedjina, Kiaba Leka  
November 2, 1978
4. DOCUMENTATION:
  - i) Nomination form
  - ii) Supplementary appendices

Note: The nomination form received was not comprehensive -  
supplementary information has been collected from other IUCN  
sources.

5. BACKGROUND and SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

Virunga National Park (809,000 ha.) was the first national park created in Africa (Albert National Park, 1925); "straddling the equator, the Park embraces large and small lakes at various levels, marshes, bogs, rivers, different types of savannas and forests, all montane vegetation belts, extinct and active volcanoes, hot springs, lava plains and non-volcanic mountains.

"The two largest lakes in the Park belong to different water systems: Lake Kivu to the Congo Basin and Lake Adi Amin to the Nile system."

Curry-Lindahl, Harroy. p. 42, Vol. II,  
National Parks of the World.

"I do not know any other park in Africa or southern Asia with such a variation in biotopes. The volcanoes in the south; the hot springs habitat of the hippos near Rutshuru, the enormous plains, herds of elephants, antelopes, rhinos, the bird life of Lake Edward, the mountain gorilla."

Personal communication 18 January 1979  
Jhr. Mr. Van der Goes Van Naters

"The diversity of the environment in the Park is a consequence of the range of altitudes from equatorial forest at 798 metres to eternal glaciers and snow on Mt. Ruwenzori at 5,119 metres".

appendix to Nomination Form

6. JUSTIFICATION:

The Virunga National Park has been evaluated against the "operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention" as amended at its 2nd Meeting.

Item 10 Outstanding universal value

ii) Geological and biological processes

- active volcanoes: Karisimbi            4,407 m  
                                 Nyamulagira       3,068 m  
                                 Nyiragongo       3,470 m
- dormant volcanoes: Mikenno            4,437 m  
                                 Visoke               3,711 m  
                                 Sabinio              3,647 m
- glaciation: Mt. Ruwenzori - perpetually covered with glacial ice
- flora: The Park covers all of the main habitats of tropical Africa (except deserts, semi-deserts and marine biotopes).

iii) Unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena

- "Rivers are lined with date palms and inhabited by thousands of hippopotamuses (Virunga N.P. has Africa's densest populations."

Lindahl, Harroy (p.43)

iv) Habitats where rare or endangered species survive

- 1) Mountain gorilla Gorilla gorilla beringei (p.6-10)
- 2) Colubus monkey Colubus polykomos (p.17-18)
- 3) Leopards Panthera pardus (p.36)

Reference - Exploration du Parc National des Virunga. Bourlière et Verschuren: 1972.

Also note the works of Coolidge, Schaller, Curry-Lindahl, Harroy, etc.

In brief, there is no doubt that the Parc National des Virunga meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv) of the natural properties criteria.

INTEGRITY

The nomination form item 4(a) notes a continuous problem related to poaching from neighbouring countries and local peoples. It also notes potential problems from growing populations in adjacent countries.

The Park is well staffed. The announced policies of the Government give a high priority to conservation. The financial resources to execute these policies are extremely limited. A proposal for technical assistance has been submitted. IUCN does not endorse the proposal as submitted however, we have no doubt that substantial financial assistance is necessary and desirable.

RECOMMENDATION:

Parc National des Virunga should be placed on the World Heritage List.



International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

March 1979