



## TIPA ASSESSEMENT: GBÉLÉN FOREST, DUBREKA PREFECTURE

### ABSTRACT

The Gbélén forest is a lowland evergreen forest of high biodiversity value comprising significant populations of threatened species such as *Talbotiella cheekii* EN and *Diospyros felicis* EN, and rare herbs that grow on moist rocks (*Heterotis pygmaea* EN and *Cinnobotrys felicis* EN).

Pépé Haba, Charlotte Couch et Gbamon Konomou

# TIPAs Assessment: Gbélén Forest, Dubreka Prefecture.

## IPA criteria under which the site qualifies: A(i), C(iii)

**Assessed by:** Pépé Haba (Guinée Biodiversité), Charlotte Couch (RBG Kew) and Gbamon Konomou (Herbier National de Guinée)

### IPA ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

The Gbélén forest is a lowland evergreen forest of high biodiversity value comprising significant populations of threatened species such as *Talbotiella cheekii* EN and *Diospyros felicis* EN, and rare herbs that grow on moist rocks (*Heterotis pygmaea* EN and *Cinnobotrys felicis* EN).

### SITE OVERVIEW

Site Name: Gbélén Forest	
Country: Republic of Guinea	Administrative region: Dubreka
Central co-ordinates: 09°57'02"N, 13°31'19.5"W	Area: 14.5 km <sup>2</sup>
Altitude minimum: 150 m	Altitude maximum: 500 m

### SITE DESCRIPTION

Gallery forest and lowland evergreen forest situated in the north of Dubreka prefecture. This forest suffers from illegal wood cutting in the southern part by the local populations of Bawa and Balayah (Khorira Sous prefecture), but the majority of the forest is found in the northern and western valleys are intact due to flow of water and the vertical rocks on both sides making access very difficult. Here there is a closed canopy with open understory throughout. This forest is surrounded by villages that illegally enter the area for excessive timber cutting; bush fires and cattle breeding are observed on the plateau.

Gbélén means valley in the local soussou language. This valley belongs to the old village of Bétayah that has now moved to the new village called Bawa on the Dubreka- Tanènè road because of the easier access. The river Gbélén took its name from the valley it flows through.



Map showing the proposed area for protection as an IPA.

#### BOTANICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This is one of the most beautiful intact lowland evergreen forests that survives in the valleys of Dubreka prefecture. Fed by several rivers which support the high biological diversity to exist here, notably populations of threatened species such as *Talbotiella cheekii*, *Heterotis pygmaea*, *Diospyros feliciana* and *Cinnobotrys felicis*. Forest trees of large circumference are still present and form a closed canopy over the area.

#### GENERAL HABITAT AND GEOLOGY DESCRIPTION

The valley and surrounding area is made up of Ordovician quartzitic sandstone and oligomictic conglomerates. This is the same outcrop that continues towards Pita and the southern extent of the Fouta Djallon. The plateau has grasslands with forested valleys.

#### CONSERVATION ISSUES

A part of the forest has been illegally exploited by the local population since 2013. The excessive cutting of wood from the forest has resulted in the reduction of the quality and number of threatened species in the forest. The areas of grassland on the sandstone plateau above are subject to the effects of bushfires set for field clearance and growth of pasture for cattle. The forest found in the valleys in the north, east and west on both sides of the Gbélén valley are protected by the steep vertical rock faces.

#### PROTECTED AREA STATUS AND MANAGEMENT

The area is not currently protected.

## THREATS

Deforestation	Excessive wood cutting by the local population
Agriculture	Clearance of areas for fields
Pastoralism	Unseasonal fires across grassland for cattle grazing

THREAT LEVEL: **Medium-High**

## Criterion A: Threatened Species

Criterion A taxon present	IPA subcriterion	IUCN redlist assessment	Site contains...			Entire global population (single-site endemic)	Species is of socio-economic importance	*Abundance at site
			≥ 1% of global population	≥ 5% of national population	Is 1 of 5 best sites nationally			
<i>Talbotiella cheekii</i> Burtg	A(i)	EN	⊙	⊙	⊙			Abundant
<i>Heterotis pygmaea</i> (A.Chev. & Jacq.-Fél.) Jacq.-Fél.	A(iv)	VU?	⊙	⊙	⊙			Abundant
<i>Cinnobotrys felicis</i> (A.Chev.) Jacq.-Fél.	A(i)	EN?	⊙	⊙	⊙			Abundant
<i>Diospyros feliciana</i> Letouzey & F. White	A(i)	EN	⊙	⊙	⊙			Abundant
<i>Tessmannia baikieaoides</i> Hutch. & Dalziel	A(i)	VU	⊙	⊙	⊙			Abundant
<i>Baphia heudelotiana</i> Baill.	A(i)	VU	⊙	⊙	⊙			Abundant
<i>Apodiscus chevalieri</i> Hutch.	A(i)	EN	⊙	⊙	⊙			Scarce

Associated look-up tables: Abundance (Abundant, Common, Frequent, Infrequent, Scarce, Unknown).

## Criterion B: Botanical Richness

Insufficient information available to apply this criterion.

## Criterion C: Threatened Habitat

*Habitat type	IPA subcriterion	IUCN redlist assessment	Site contains...		Estimated area at site (if known)
			≥ 5% of national resource (for C(i) and C(ii))	≥ 10% of national resource (for C(iii))	
Lowland evergreen forest (Guinée Maritime)	C(iii)		○	⊙	

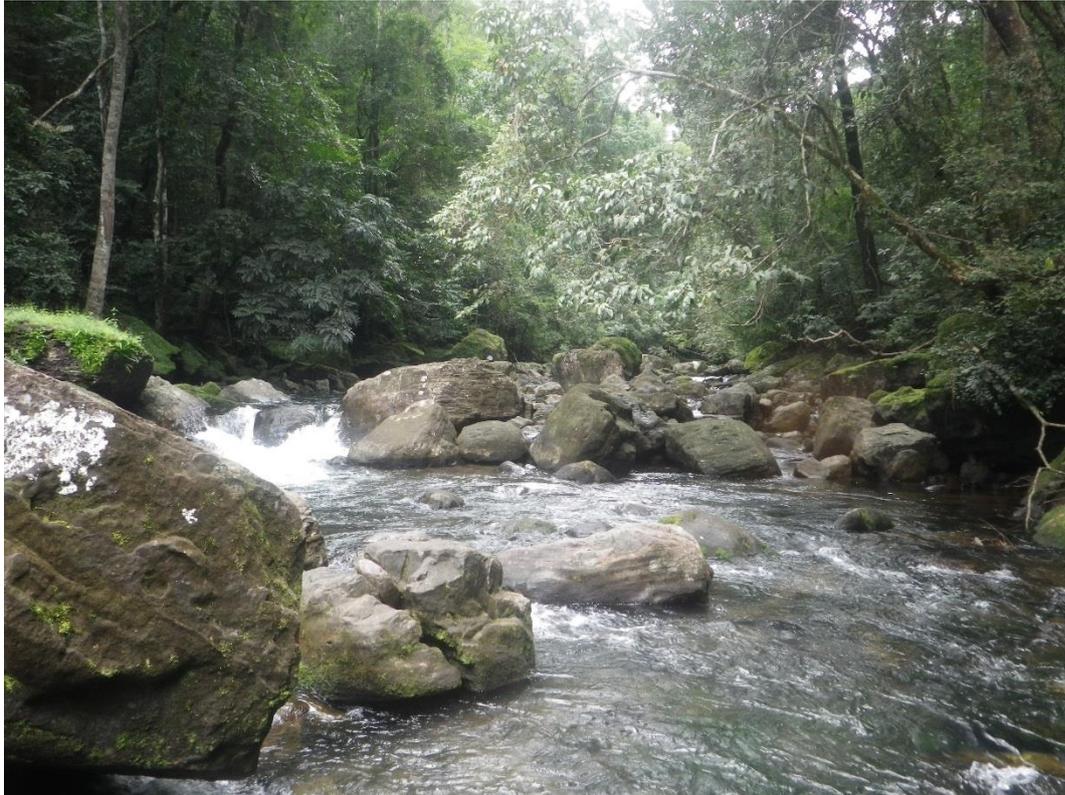
## Bibliography

IUCN Red List: [www.redlist.org](http://www.redlist.org) accessed Dec 2018

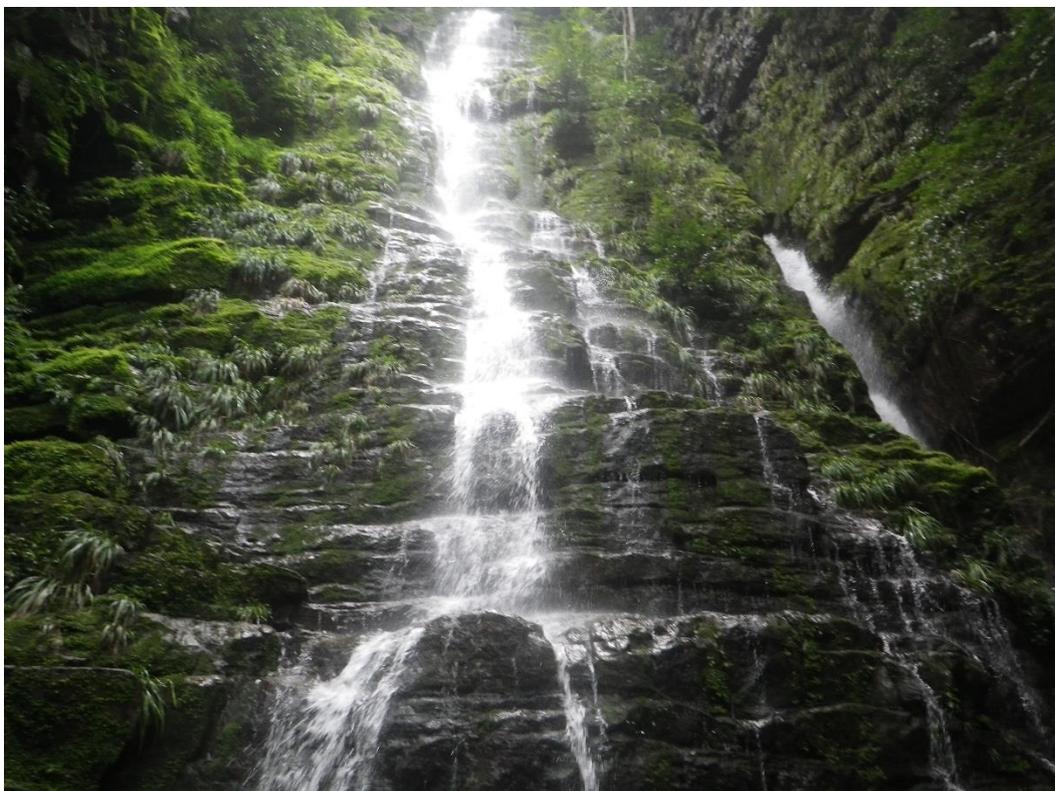
Couch, C; Magassouba, S; Rokni, S; Cheek, M. (2107) Threatened plants species of Guinea-Conakry: A preliminary checklist. PeerJ Preprints. <https://doi.org/10.7287/peerj.preprints.3451v1>

Haba, P.M. ; Konomou, G. Rapport de terrain de la forêt de Gbélén a Dubreka. Octobre 2018.

Site in pictures



Foret de Gbélén © Pépé Haba



Chute dans la Foret de Gbélén © Pépé Haba



*Heterotis pygmaea* (A.Chev. & Jacq.-Fél.) Jacq.-Fél.  
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*Talbotiella cheekii* Burgt © Xander van der Burgt



*Diospyros feliciana* Letouzey & F.White©  
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*Cincinnobotrys felicis* (A.Chev.) Jacq.-Fél ©  
Pépé Haba