Mount Kala

Nkol Nlong (Test version)

CMNTIPA009

Country: **Cameroon**
Administrative region: **Centre (Region)**
Central co-ordinates: **3.83480 N, 11.35000 E**
Area: **33km²**

Qualifying IPA criteria

A(i)

IPA assessment rationale

Mount Kala qualifies as an IPA on the basis of several globally threatened species which are present here and at few other locations, including some that are endemic to the site or the wider Yaounde area.

Site description

Mont Kala is an east-west oriented ridge approximately 7 km in length located about 20 km west of Yaoundé. It is part of the chain of prominences located between the main N3 and N3A roads running into Yaoundé from the west which form the southern section of the steep topography flanking the western side of Yaoundé. The ridge is mostly around 900–950 m high with several summits rising to over 1,000 m.

Botanical significance

Many botanical collections were made in the Yaoundé area by Zenker and Staudt in the 1890s (Cheek et al., 2011). While unfortunately most of these can not be precisely located, the western hills are the main surviving areas where some natural habitat remains. These are forested inselbergs and provide an interesting flora differing from the lower surrounding areas. Subsequent collecting has recorded several globally threatened species from these hills, including Mount Kala which is one of the least degraded due probably to its greater distance from the centre of Yaoundé. In particular, two species of Afrothismia are currently considered endemic to Mount Kala. Pavetta bidentata var. sessilifolia is also considered endemic to Mount Kala and the Kombing area 30 km to the Southwest. Disperis aphylla (VU) appears to be only recorded in Cameroon from this site. Gastrodia africana is a very rare and little understood species which was apparently collected at Mount Kala in 1968 (although the specimen appears to be missing) and from one or two other locations. Other species such as Callichila monopodialis (VU), Tricalysia amplexicaulis (provisionally VU, Onana & Cheek, 2011), T. atherura (VU) and Culcasia sanagensis (VU) are mainly known from here and other hills in the Yaoundé area.

Habitat and geology

The hills around Yaoundé rise from the South Cameroon plain between the Sanaga fault and the north-thrusting Congo craton. They are formed from high grade metamorphic rocks, mainly granulites and migmatites also referred to as embrichite gneiss (Achoundog, 1985), formed from sedimentary and igneous protoliths and apparently dating from around 600 mya (Nzenti, 1988; Tchouatcha et al., 2018; Ngnotue et al., 2012). The soils and topology of these hills are often unstable and susceptible to catastrophic landslips (Zogning et al., 2007).
Precipitation in Yaoundé is 1,605 mm per annum, falling in a bimodal pattern with a small (March-June) and greater (September-November) wet season interspersed with a drier period (July-August) and a second more severe dry period between December and February when mean monthly rainfall drops below the relatively

flat mean monthly temperature curve (range: 2.8–25.47 °C) on a Walter-Leith type chart (Simo et al., 2009; Bissaya et al., 2014; Noumi, 2015). This is below the level of rainfall normally thought necessary to sustain evergreen tropical forest (Cheek et al., 2011), although the level maybe higher on the summits with orographic precipitation likely (Noumi, 2015; Simo et al., 2009). Achoundong (1985) describes the vegetation as semi-deciduous although the lower altitudes are largely cultivated and even up to the highest altitude there is cultivation and wood extraction (Mbenoun Masse & Makon, 2019).
Madiapevo et al. (2017) describe the summit forest as diverse and having affinities with other West African submontane forest but with high representation of Clusiaceae and Cola. Common species included Allanblackia gabonensis, Tabernaemontana crassa, Santiria trimera, Ceolocaryon preussii, Pycnanthus angolensis, Cola attiensis var. bodardii and Aulacocalyx jasmiflora.

Conservation issues

Yaoundé was the second largest city in Cameroon at the last census but has been estimated to be growing at over 5% per year. It is now estimated to have the largest population in the country and is predicted to reach 5.7 million by 2030 (United Nations, 2018). All of the western hills and areas of vegetation have been seriously degraded or lost due to small scale agriculture, suburban spread, hotel development, extraction of timber and quarrying. Mount Kala is one of the furthest from the centre but has not escaped habitat loss at all altitudinal levels. Clearance for agriculture and logging has particularly impacted the slopes up to 1,000 m, with cleared areas easily visible on satellite imaging. A road has been bulldozed from the base of the site as far as the rock cliff and land is being sold off (R. Fotso, 2021, pers. comm, 9 June).
The site is included in the Mbam Minkom-Mount Kala Important Bird Area (Bird Life International, 2020) and in 2009 Mount Kala was considered the only other remaining nesting site in the Yaoundé area for Picathartes oreas (VU) other than the larger Mbam Minkom massif (Awa II et al., 2009).

Site assessor(s)

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IPA criterion A species

SPECIES	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 1% OF GLOBAL POPULATION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL POPULATION	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	ENTIRE GLOBAL POPULATION	SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT	ABUNDANCE AT SITE
Afrothismia amietii Cheek	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	
Afrothismia pusilla Sainge & Kenfack	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	
Callichilia monopodialis (K.Schum.) Stapf	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	–	–	
Culcasia sanagensis Ntepe-Nyame	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	–	–	
Drypetes molunduana Pax & K.Hoffm.	A(i)	–	–	–	–	–	
Gastrodia africana Kraenzl.	A(i), A(iii)	✓	✓	✓	–	–	
Prioria joveri (Normand ex Aubrév.) Breteler	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	–	–	
Loesenera talbotii Baker f.	A(i)	✓	–	✓	–	–	
Pavetta bidentata Hiern var. sessilifolia S.D.Manning	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	–	–	
Tricalysia atherura N.Hallé	A(i)	✓	–	✓	–	–	
Turraeanthus mannii Baill.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	–	–	
Allanblackia gabonensis (Pellegr.) Bamps	A(i)	–	–	–	–	–	
Diospyros crassiflora Hiern	A(i)	–	–	–	–	–	
Entandrophragma cylindricum (Sprague) Sprague	A(i)	–	–	–	–	–	
Entandrophragma utile (Dawe & Sprague) Sprague	A(i)	–	–	–	–	–	
Garcinia kola Heckel	A(i)	–	–	–	–	✓	
Khaya anthotheca C.DC.	A(i)	–	–	–	–	✓	

SPECIES	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 1% OF GLOBAL POPULATION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL POPULATION	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	ENTIRE GLOBAL POPULATION	SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT	ABUNDANCE AT SITE
Kylicanthe cornuata Descourv. & Stévart & Droissart	A(i)	✓	–	–	–	–	
Oxyanthus doucetii Sonké & O.Lachenaud	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	–	–	
Disperis aphylla Kraenzl. ex De Wild. & T.Durand	A(i)	–	✓	✓	–	–	

IPA criterion C qualifying habitats

HABITAT	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	≥ 10% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	AREAL COVERAGE AT SITE

General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Moist Montane Forest	–	
Rocky Areas - Rocky Areas [e.g. inland cliffs, mountain peaks]	–	

Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Agriculture (arable)	20	Minor
Harvesting of wild resources	100	Minor

Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
Residential & commercial development - Housing & urban areas	High	Ongoing - increasing
Agriculture & aquaculture - Annual & perennial non-timber crops - Shifting agriculture	High	Ongoing - increasing
Biological resource use - Logging & wood harvesting	High	Ongoing - trend unknown

Conservation designation

DESIGNATION NAME	PROTECTED AREA	RELATIONSHIP WITH IPA	AREAL OVERLAP
Mbam Minkom-Kala IBA	Important Bird Area	protected/conservation area encompasses IPA	–
Mbam Minkom-Kala IBA	Key Biodiversity Area	protected/conservation area encompasses IPA	–

Management type

MANAGEMENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION	YEAR STARTED	YEAR FINISHED
No management plan in place		–	–

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