



For Immediate Release

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Nigerian State Government of Bayelsa imposes a total ban on logging operations that will end massive deforestation in the Niger Delta

Conservation work also leads to capture of first-ever footage of the Critically Endangered Colobus Monkey

(Warrenton, VA, and Abuja, Nigeria) Conservation efforts in the Niger Delta have led to an announcement by the Bayelsa State Government at the beginning of 2025—a total ban on all logging operations in the state effective January 1, 2025.

The forested wetlands of the Niger Delta contain incredible biological importance as the largest River Delta in Africa, but unregulated and indiscriminate logging activities in the region have not only depleted the state's natural resources but also driven many families into extreme poverty. Since the 1950s, the Niger Delta has been also plagued as the continent's top oil producing region.

Throughout 2024, [SW/Niger Delta Forest Project](#), supported by Rainforest Trust, worked on increasing their reach across the state. They have now established three community-based conservation areas and conducted sustained outreach to strengthen the knowledge base and skills of both the state government and communities in wildlife and forest management.

With support from Rainforest Trust, SW/Niger Delta Forest Project has been conducting consultations and stakeholder engagement, and at the beginning of September 2024, launched an interactive weekly radio show on Radio Bayelsa. This radio program led to an immediate increase in calls from individuals in numerous communities across the state asking the government to put an end to unregulated logging activities.

Conservation efforts have also produced the first-ever [video footage](#) of the Niger Delta Red Colobus. The Critically Endangered and endemic Niger Delta Red Colobus (*Ptilocolobus epien*<https://youtu.be/yvZ4xzTeUEwi>) was described by science just 30 years ago. Since then, populations have dropped nearly 80% due to habitat loss and bushmeat hunting, and the species has ranked among the world's 25 most threatened primates for the last decade. Less than 500 individuals remain in the wild.

SW/Niger Delta Forest Project in collaboration with the Apoi people of Bayelsa State, Nigeria, with the support of Rainforest Trust [have been working together since 2021](#) to protect critical habitat in Nigeria for the Niger Delta Red Colobus and other threatened species. In late 2024, a project was implemented with Rainforest Trust support involving camera traps and training on their installation. Soon after, cameras captured footage of this rare and highly threatened primate.



Speaking about this news, Rachel Ikemeh, Founder and Executive Director of SW/Niger Delta Forest Project stated:

“This remarkable development illustrates how local initiatives can ripple across global networks, influencing policies and inspiring movements that transcend boundaries. This never before seen video footage and the continued presence in this area of one of the rarest species on Earth is beyond exciting, and directly highlights the effectiveness of habitat protection.”

James Deutsch, Rainforest Trust CEO, stated:

“Rainforest Trust is thrilled by this exciting news, and looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Rachel and SW/Niger Delta Forest Project to support the hugely impactful and successful work they are doing in this region.”

The journey to achieving these remarkable milestones was not without its challenges. For years, artisanal logging that was largely unregulated threatened the rich biodiversity of Bayelsa State, putting enormous pressure on the natural environment and on local communities that rely on forests for their livelihoods. However, through public education and advocacy, SW/Niger Delta Forest Project, supported by Rainforest Trust since 2021, effectively engaged stakeholders and highlighted the urgent need for conservation measures. Their dedication has inspired local leaders and residents alike, uniting them in the fight to protect their natural heritage by establishing community-based conservation areas. This community-driven approach has been instrumental in changing perceptions and building support for the logging ban.

This exciting success demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of public education, grassroots advocacy, and political engagement in conservation efforts, and highlights an optimistic path forward for the protection of habitat, species, and communities in the highly threatened Niger Delta forests. The state government's momentous announcement of an immediate total ban on logging activities is not just a triumph for forest ecosystems, but an inspiration for similar actions globally.

To learn more about Rainforest Trust, visit www.rainforesttrust.org.

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About Rainforest Trust

Since 1988, Rainforest Trust has been working with partners to safeguard imperiled tropical habitats and endangered species by helping to establish protected areas in partnership with Indigenous and local organizations and communities. To date, Rainforest Trust has helped protect more than 54 million acres of vital habitat across Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region. Rainforest Trust is a nonprofit organization that relies upon the generous support of the public to successfully implement its important conservation action. The organization is proud of earning a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. Learn more about the work of Rainforest Trust by visiting RainforestTrust.org, [X \(Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).



About SW/Niger Delta Forest Project

The SW/Niger Delta Forest Project is a grassroots-focused conservation organization with a mission to provide conservation solutions that will ensure the survival of threatened species and habitats. In the last ten years, the organization has established itself as Nigeria's most prolific conservation organization – the only Indigenous group in the country to have spearheaded the creation of four protected areas in the country (three in the Niger Delta and one in SW Nigeria) while currently negotiating protection for five new sites in the vast swamp forest and mangrove of the Niger Delta. The [SW/Niger Delta Forest Project](#) has three main work streams: i) Provide the conservation solutions that will ensure the survival of threatened species and habitats; ii) build local capacities for actions to be sustained; and iii) become a resource hub that will provide access to information/learning vital to increase public participation in conservation. Follow us on [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [Linkedin](#)

