

# Liberia Conservation Status Review

## **Liberia National Conservation Strategic Planning Workshop**

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  - U.S. Forest Service
  
- June 7, 2023

# Early Liberia

- 90 – 95% cover with forest
- Known as the Grain Coast in West Africa



# Early Liberia

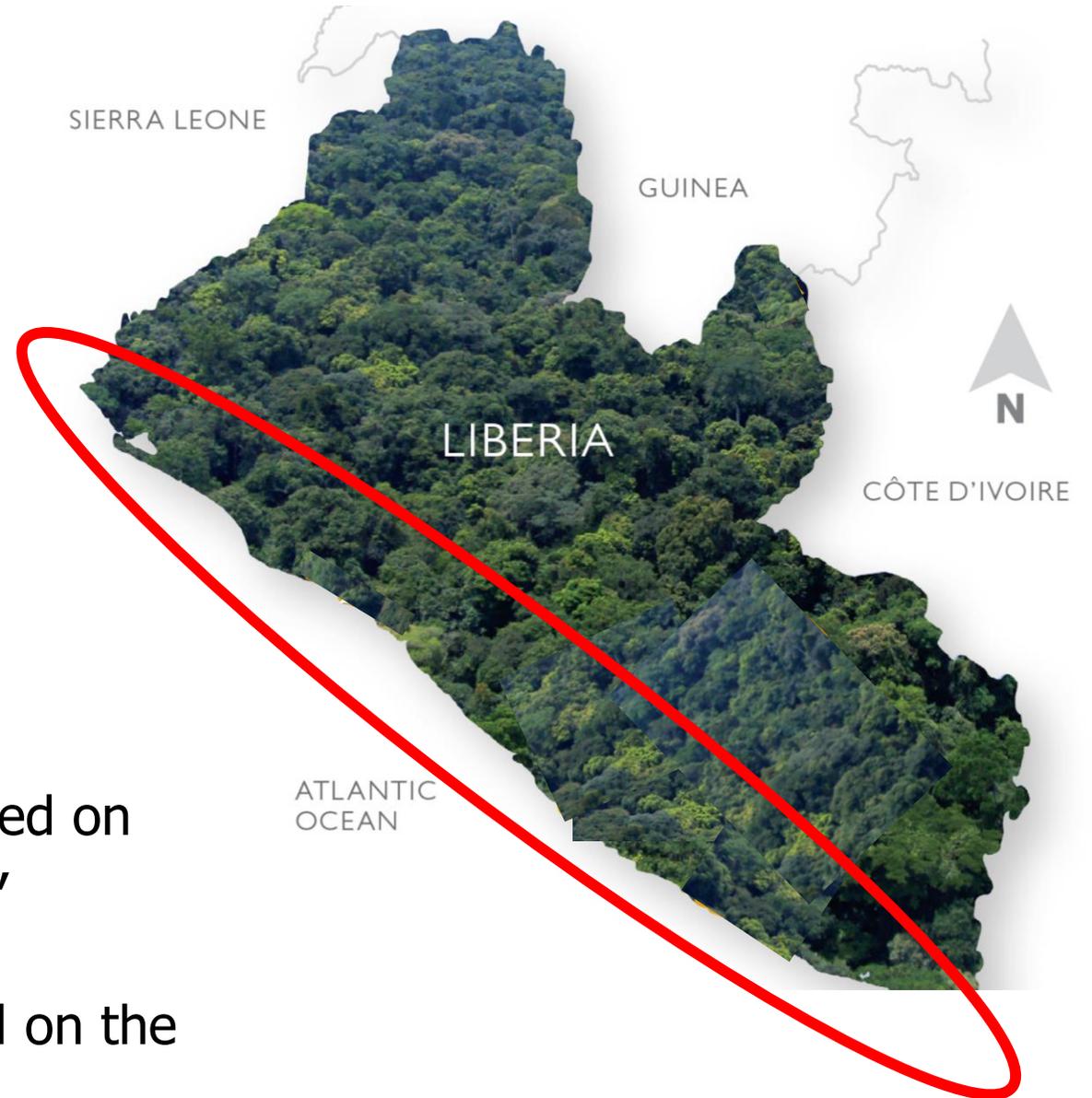
- Liberia was a center of exploration for European traders, particularly the Portuguese since the 15<sup>th</sup> century
- The Portuguese named major rivers and places along the Liberia coast
- Liberia also attracted many naturalists who documented the fauna and flora species



# Early Liberia

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- Birds
- Mammals
- Plants
- However, many of those studies were based on scouting missions or special projects (e.g., Firestone Rubber Plantation Expedition)
- Early assessments were mostly conducted on the coast because of easy access



# History of conservation in Liberia

## **1945 -1951**

- First nationwide aerial photography of Liberian forests by the US Air Force
- Three national forest resources assessment missions conducted by the US Department of Agriculture and US State Department
- These assessments laid the foundation for conservation and sustainable forest management in Liberia

## **1951 – 1959**

- First forest conservation Act passed into law (1953)
- Bureau of forest conservation established
- First Liberian trained in forestry (1951)
- First school of forestry in Africa established at the University of Liberia (1955)
- Supplementary Act to the 1953 Act passed (1957)

# History of conservation in Liberia

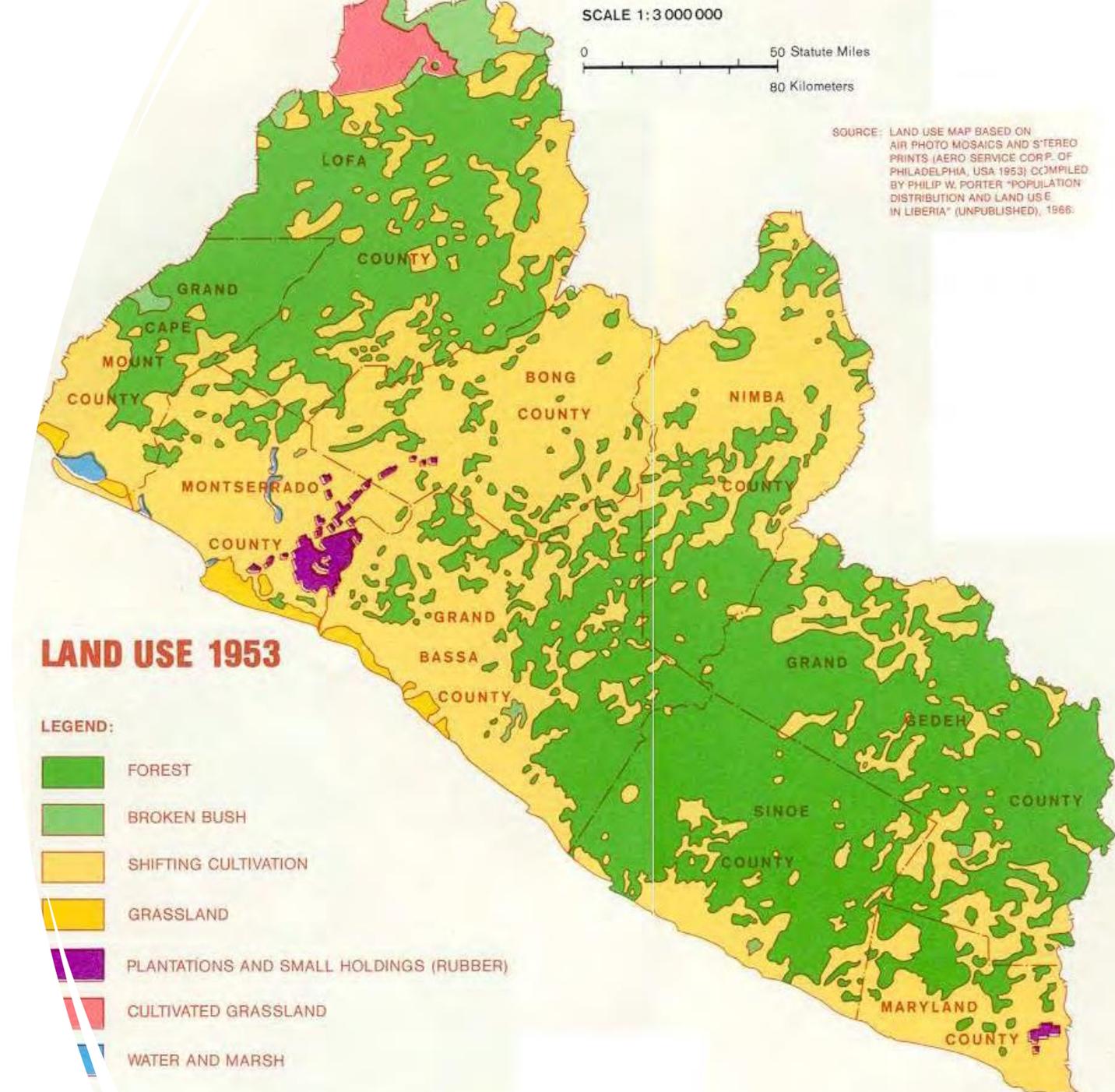
## **1960 -1969**

- National forest inventory conducted by a German Mission and generated comprehensive data on the the timber resources of Liberia
- IUCN established the first biodiversity research center in Nimba, headed Kay Curry-Lindahl (1963)
- Kay Curry-Lindahl submitted a report to GoL on conservation, management and utilization of wildlife resources

## **1970 – 1987**

- An Act establishing the FDA was passed (1976)
- The FDA was established in 1978
- Report on conservation review
- Sapo National Park was established in 1983
- New Wildlife and National Parks Act passed (1987)

- The first detailed forest cover map for Liberia
- First US Mission forest cover estimates:
  - High forest = 37.6 %
  - Broken bush – 42.5%



# The Forest Conservation Act of 1953

"Our forests are among our greatest natural resources and may best contribute to our economic and social welfare by being devoted to their most productive use for the permanent good of the whole people"

- III - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUREAU OF FOREST CONSERVATION
- IV - POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES OF CONSERVATION
- V - FUNCTIONS OF THE BUREAU OF FOREST CONSERVATION
- VI - ESTABLISHMENT OF GOVERNMENT FOREST RESERVES
- VII - ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIVE AUTHORITY FOREST RESERVES
- VIII - ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNAL FORESTS
- IX - APPOINTMENT OF FOREST OFFICERS
- X - ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS

# Present state of conservation in Liberia

## **2000 – 2023 – laws and policies**

- Environmental Management Law passed (2003)
- Protected Area Network Act passed (2003)
- East Nimba Nature Reserve Established (2003)
- National Forestry Reform Law passed (2006)
- Community Rights Law passed (2009)
- Land Rights Act passed (2018)
- Gola National Park established
- Grebo-Krahn National Park established

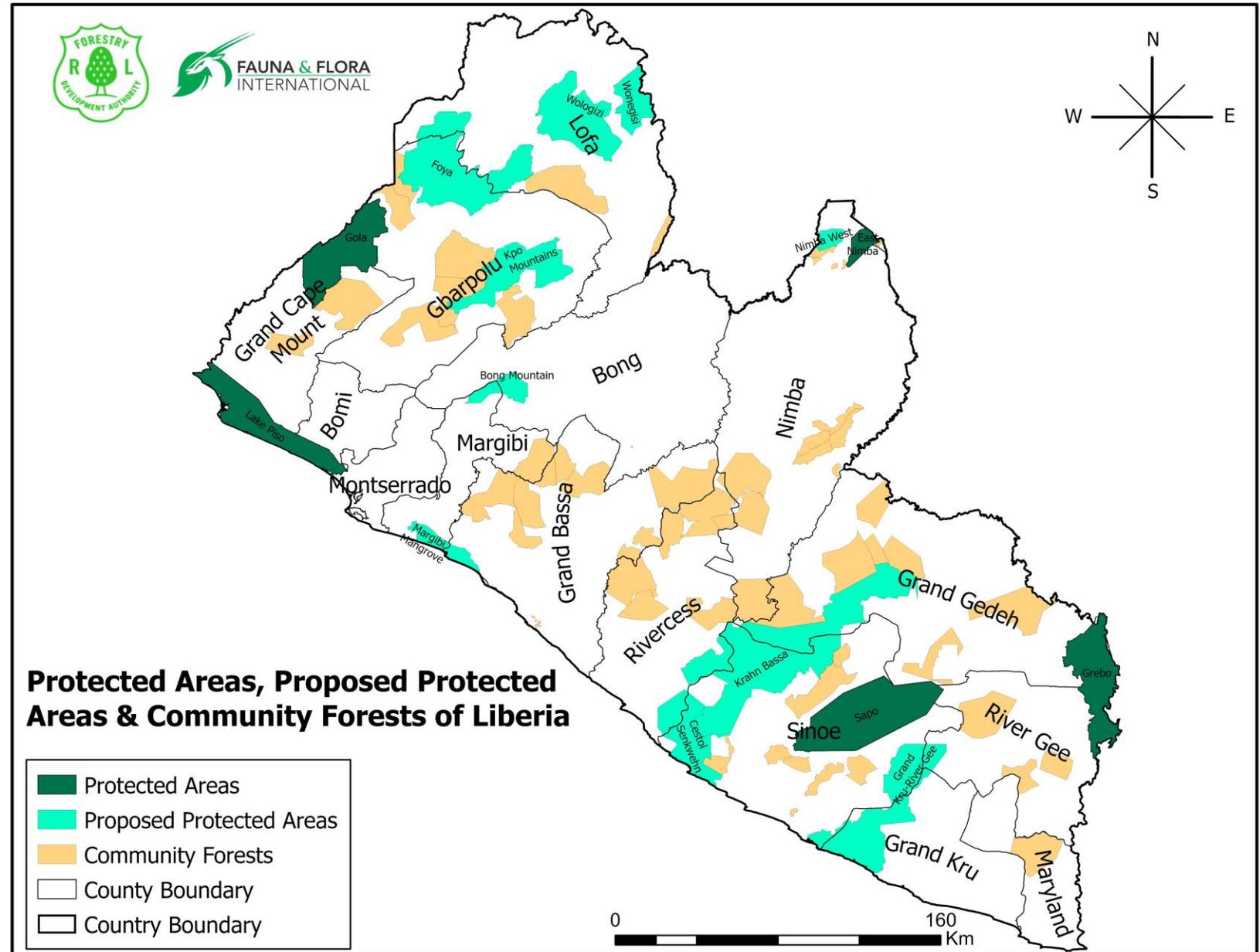
# Present state of conservation in Liberia

## **2000 – 2023 – laws and policies**

- A network of PAs and PPAs established
- A national conservation target set to conserve 30% of forest area
- National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Developed
- Community Forests established along with their management bodies
- National Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Management Law (2016)
- Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve established

# PAAs, PPAs and Community Forests

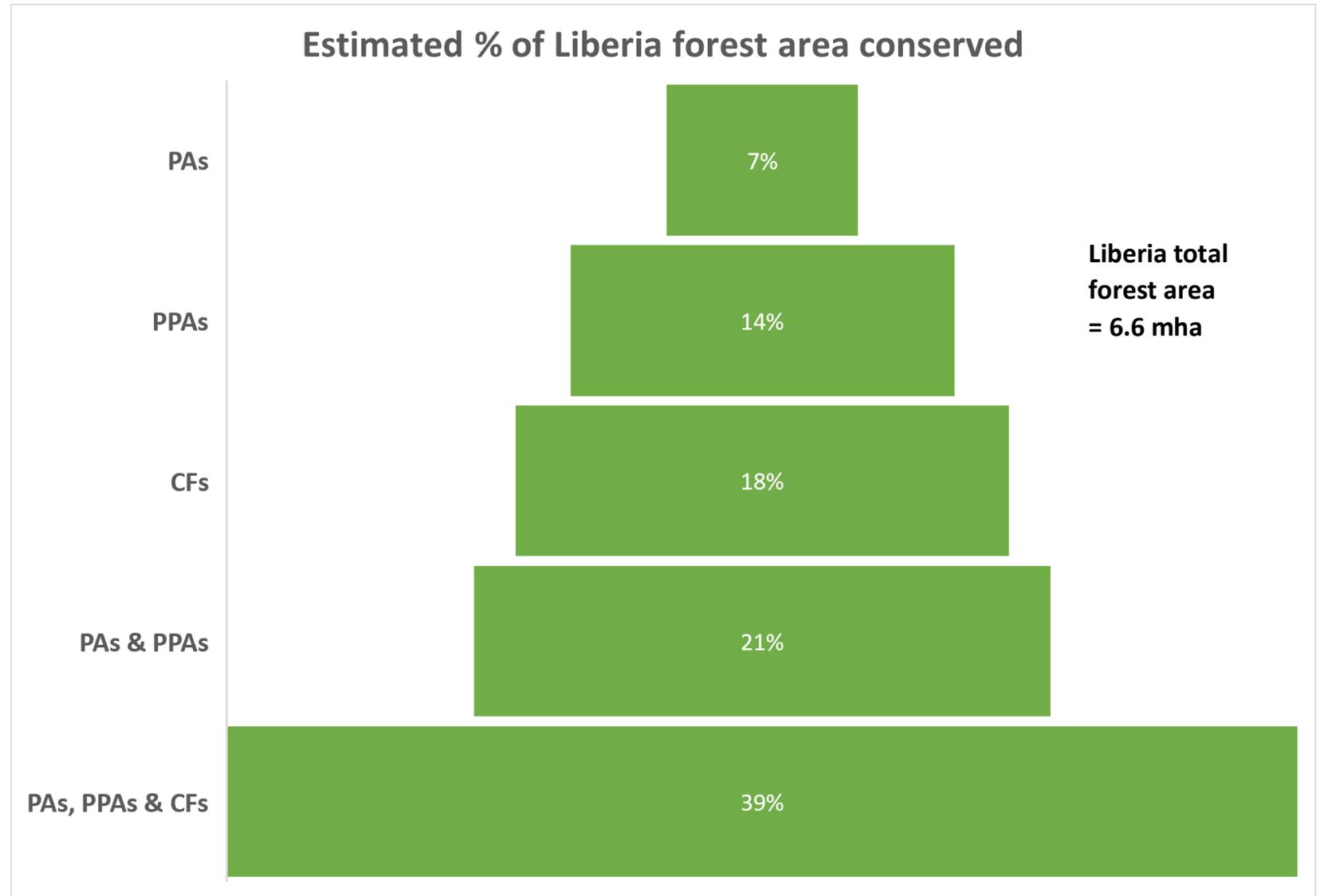
Present state of conservation in Liberia



# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## Contributions of PAs, PPAs and CFs to national target of 30%

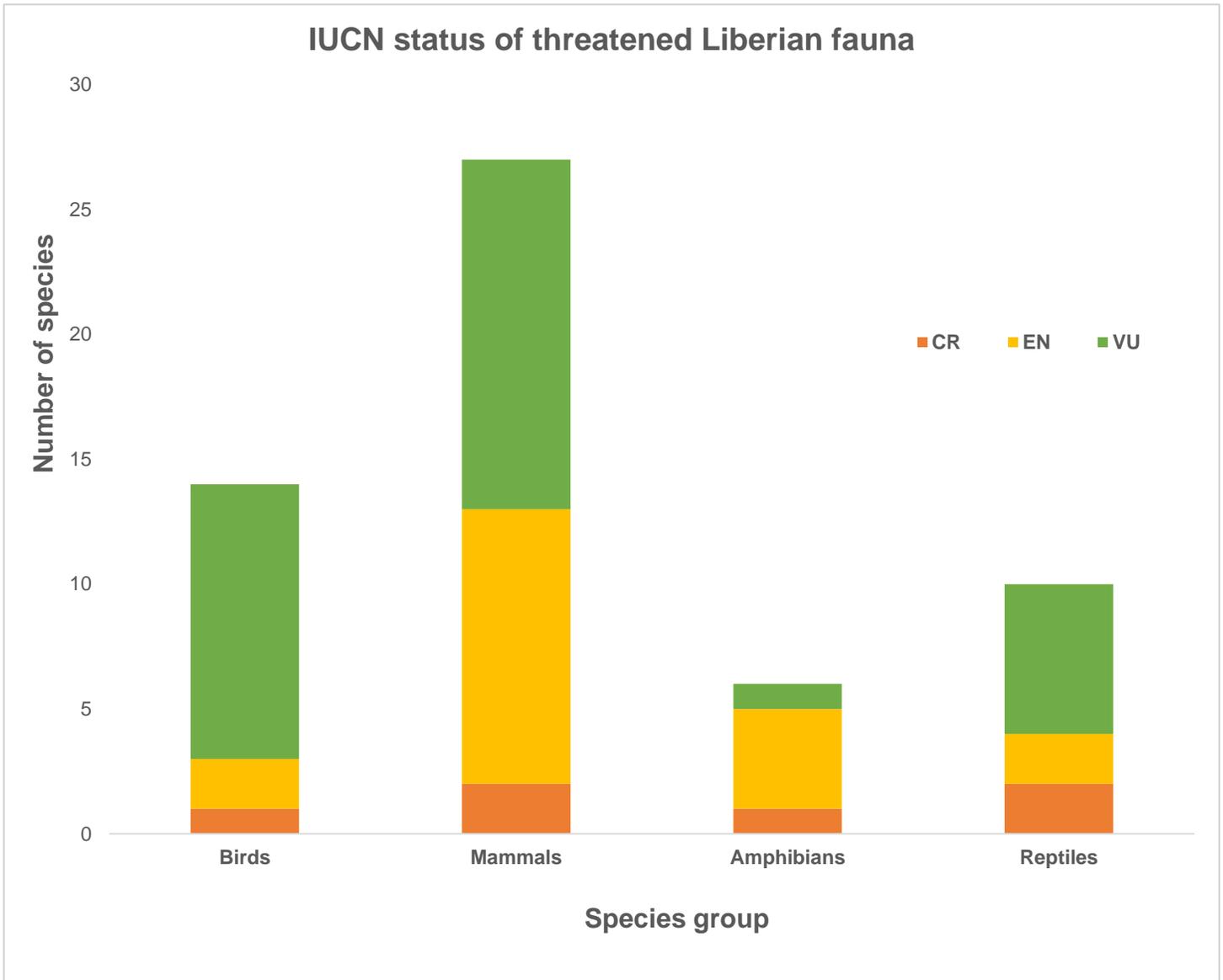


# Present state of conservation in Liberia



## Status of Liberia's fauna species

4 Species Action Plans have developed so far



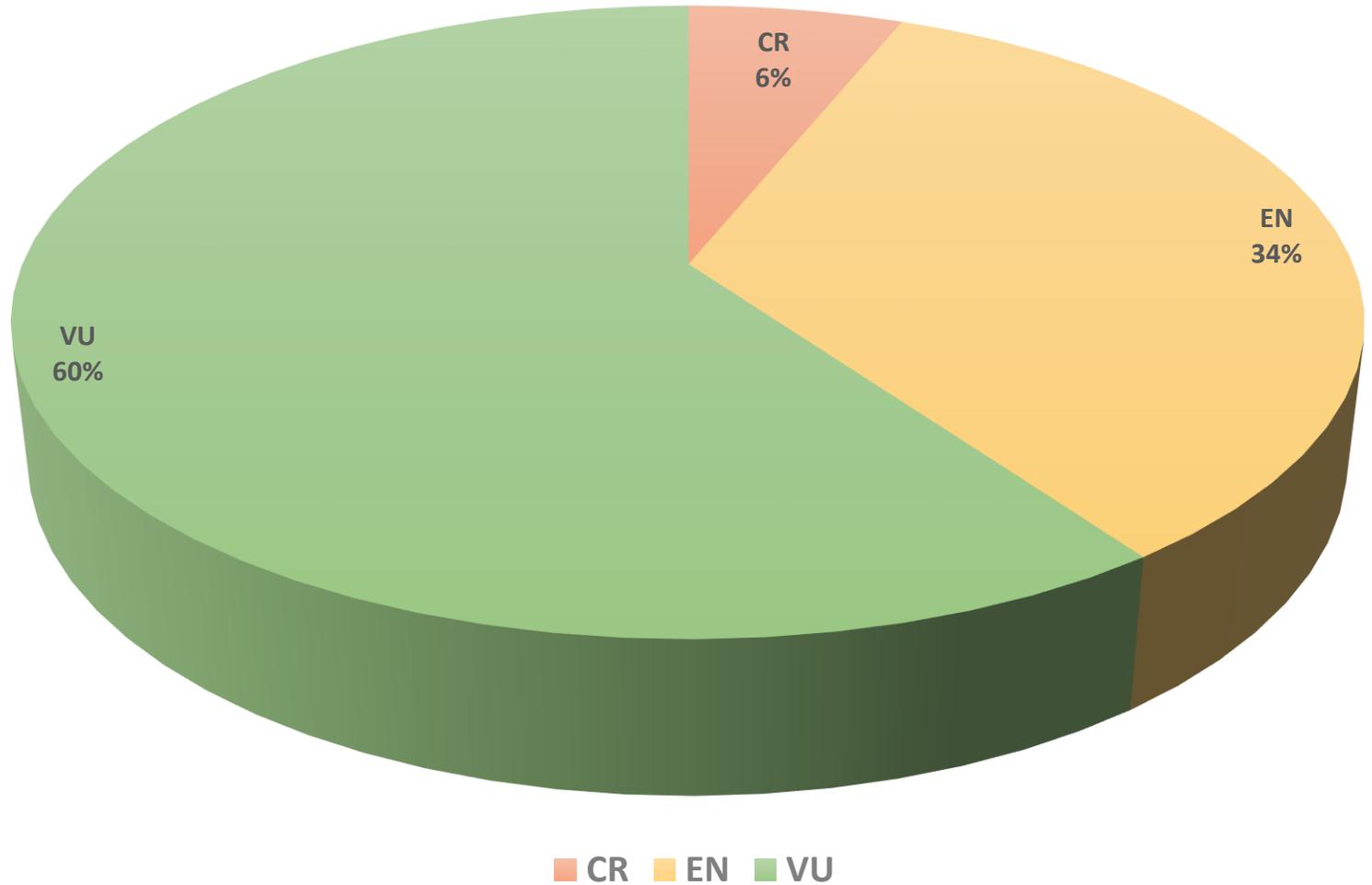
**Total threatened fauna species = 57**  
**4 Species Action Plans have developed so far**

# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## Status of Liberia's flora species

IUCN status of threatened Liberian plants



**Total threatened flora species = 147, including 12 widely traded timber species**

# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## **Threats**

### **Charcoal production**



# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## Threats - Mining



# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## Threats - Logging



# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## Threats - Hunting



# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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**Threats**  
**Shifting cultivation**



# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## **Threats**

### **Alien and invasive species**



# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## **Opportunities to enhance conservation in Liberia**

- Regional collaborations through transboundary projects
- National collaborations (NGOs, GoL, CSOs, etc.)
- Community-based conservation
- PAs establishment by regulation
- Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures
- Ecotourism
- Co-management approach
- Increased national capacity
- Conservation trust funds
- Carbon financing (e.g., REDD+)

# Present state of conservation in Liberia

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## **Challenges**

- Limited intersectoral coordination
- Limited mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in national development planning
- Limited technical capacity at all levels (national, regional, local, community, etc)
- Limited budgetary allocations for GoL institutions
- Limited scientific and research capacity
- Many more ---