

8 Biological Hotspots of Africa



Guinean Forests of West Africa

The Guinean Forests of West Africa are home to more than a quarter of Africa's mammals, including more than 20 species of primates. These and other species are threatened by logging, mining, hunting, and ever-increasing numbers of people.

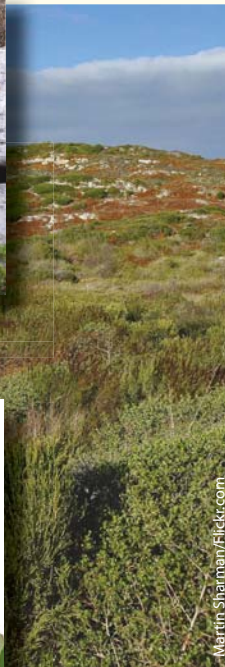


Succulent Karoo

The Succulent Karoo of South Africa and Namibia boasts the world's richest succulent flora and exceptional plant endemism—69 per cent of its plants are found nowhere else—as well as a number of unique reptile species. It is one of only two of the world's completely arid hotspots. Grazing, agriculture, and mining threaten this fragile region.

Cape Floristic Region

This is one of the world's five Mediterranean climate zone hotspots and contains its largest non-tropical concentration of higher vascular plant species. It is the only hotspot encompassing an entire floral kingdom.

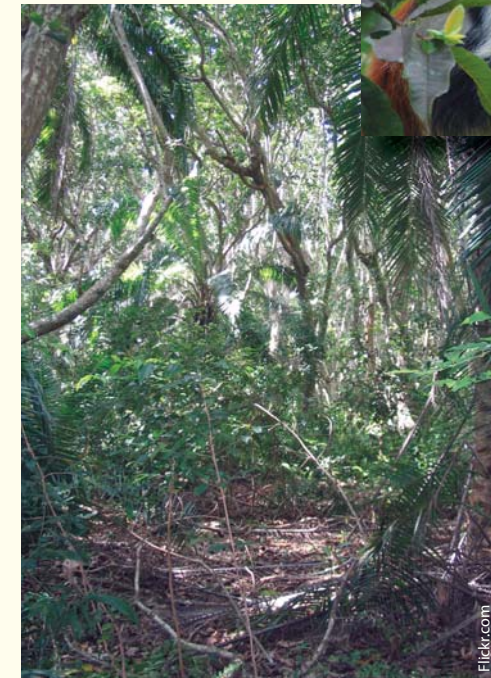


Eastern Afromontane

This hotspot is formed by scattered mountains with very similar plant communities. The Albertine Rift has more endemic mammals, birds, and amphibians than any other African region. The Eastern Afromontane also contains some of the world's most extraordinary lakes, which harbour about 617 endemic fish species. Agricultural expansion of crops such as bananas, beans, and tea, as well as the growing demand for bushmeat, are threatening the region's biodiversity.

Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany

Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany, which stretches along the east coast of southern Africa, is an important centre of plant endemism, with nearly 600 tree species alone. This region has the world's highest tree diversity of any temperate forest. One of the region's most well-known endemic plants is the Bird of Paradise flower (*Strelitzia reginae*). This hotspot is also world-renowned for its conservation efforts to save the southern subspecies of white rhinoceros from extinction. Commercial and local small-scale farming and the expansion of grazing lands are encroaching on the extensive grassland habitats here, threatening many of its large mammals.



Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa

This tiny and fragmented hotspot has exceptional levels of biodiversity. It is the original source of the world's lucrative trade in cultivated African violets and is home to a wide variety of threatened primates, including some that are endemic. The expansion of both commercial and subsistence agriculture is severely threatening this habitat.



Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands

Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands have exceptional biodiversity: eight plant families, four bird families, and five primate families that are found nowhere else on Earth. Madagascar has more than 50 lemur species, although 15 others have become extinct since the arrival of humans. A number of critically endangered bird species inhabit the Seychelles, Comoros, and Mascarene islands in the Indian Ocean.



Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is one of the two entirely arid global hotspots and is renowned for its biological resources. It has Africa's highest number of endemic reptiles and a number of endemic and threatened antelope. With only five per cent of its original habitat remaining, this hotspot is also one of the world's most degraded. It has been devastated by overgrazing and charcoal harvesting.

