

Impact of armed groups' incursion into Protected Areas: a case study of the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger)

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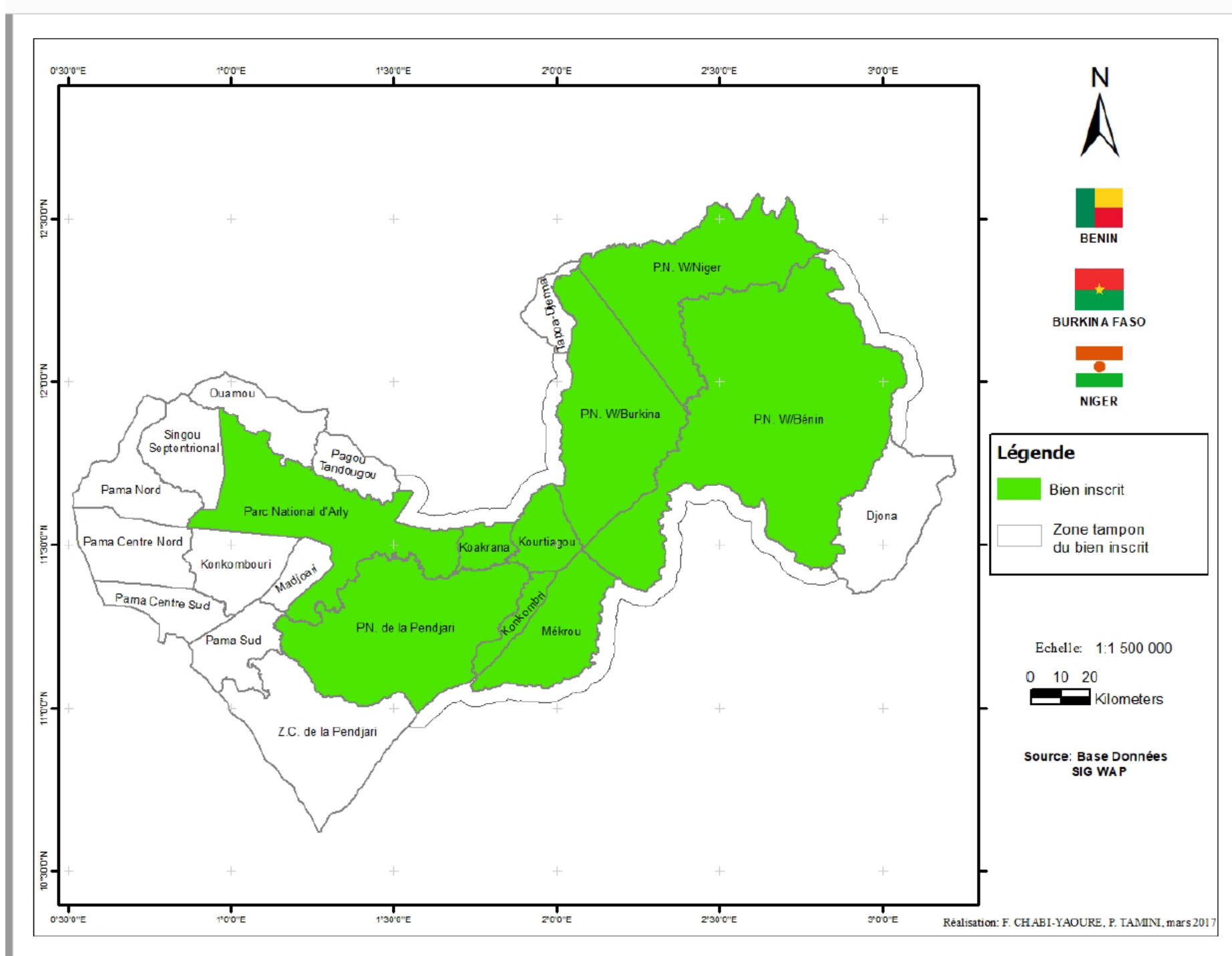


Fig 1. Map of the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger) – World Heritage since 1996 (significant modifications to the boundaries in 2017)

Property: 1,714,831 ha

Buffer zone: 1,101,221 ha

Our results show that conservation responses to the security crisis have been multi-faceted, depending on the WAP countries. It ranges from a withdrawal of conservation actors from the parks (Niger and Burkina Faso) to continued active management in the Benin component. Benin's resistance can be associated with changes in the management system, synergies between actors, and solid foundations being put in place before the crisis. Focusing on a conservation strategy that meets the needs of forest-dependent communities to reduce their vulnerability is a critical factor in building a local alliance in the face of such a disaster.

Introduction

WAP, a transnational World Heritage site, has been deeply impacted by armed conflict in West Africa since 2017. With its unique values, the site has been the focus of various conservation strategies, yielding mixed results.

Objective

Our objective is to describe the current state of conservation of the different components of the WAP Complex in line with the management system's effectiveness.

Approach

Four months of data collection resulted in 177 questionnaire responses (2023-2024), IMET (Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool) data analysis, field observations 2023, and elephant collaring data from 2021 to 2023.

IMET Index trends of the WAP (2016 - 2021)

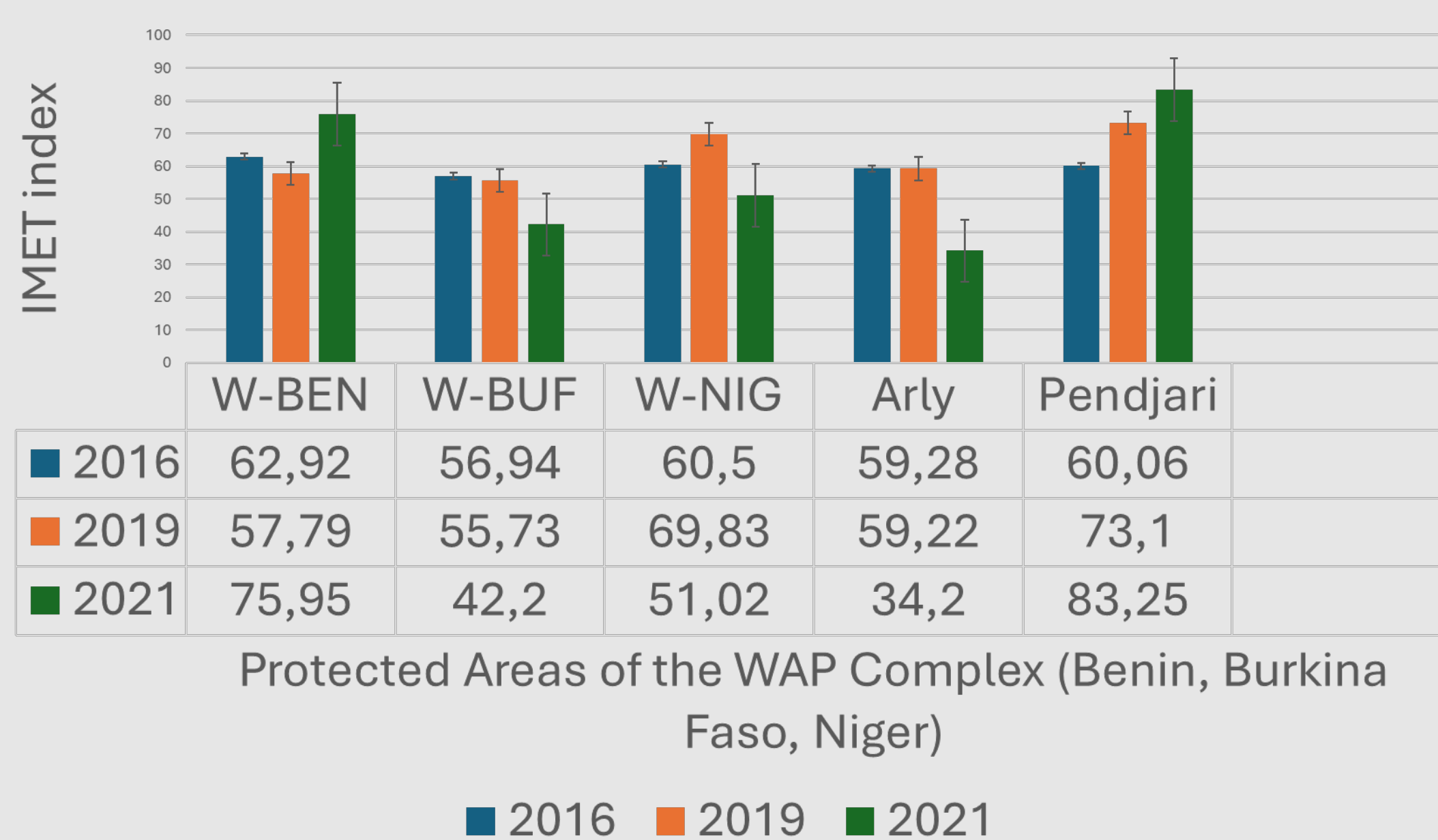
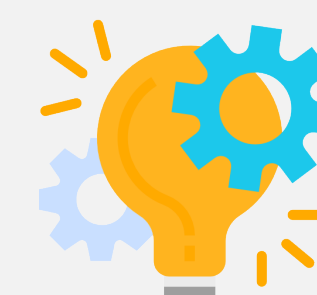


Fig 2. Index of the IMET (Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool) for the WAP Complex (2016-2021)

Results



Protected Areas (PAs)	Type of Governance	State of conservation
Pendjari NP (under PPP with APN)	Shared governance	Good
W Benin NP (under PPP with APN)	Shared governance	Good
W Niger NP (managed by State)	Governance by State	Poor
W Burkina Faso NP (managed by State)	Governance by State	Poor
Arly NP (managed by State)	Governance by State	Poor

Ongoing research, funded by the European Union, AGRINATURA, and ERAIFT is currently being conducted on conservation responses to the intrusion of armed groups into PAs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger (WAP Complex), and the DRC (Okapi Wildlife Reserve).

