



# Kafa Biosphere Reserve

South-West Ethiopia



## Background

The highland coffee, *Coffea arabica*, originates from the rainforests of the south-western plateau of Ethiopia. The forests are the sole home of many wild coffee varieties – an invaluable genetic resource. They are at high risk due to deforestation. This poses a massive threat to the survival of the genetic resources of *Coffea arabica*. As a result, the diversity of what was once around 5,000 coffee varieties, unique in the world, is in danger of being irretrievably lost. To ensure the conservation of the remaining wild coffee forests, the establishment of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve provides the chance to combine conservation and sustainable development in the region. The *Kafa Biosphere Reserve* is

**Ethiopia’s first biosphere reserve** and the **first coffee biosphere reserve** of the world, which can be recognised as a worldwide attraction for coffee consumers and ecotourists.

**General description**

The last remaining montane cloud forests that contain wild trees of *Coffea arabica* as a natural part of the ecosystem exist in the region in Kafa Zone, around Bonga. This is where the *Kafa Biosphere Reserve* is located, in a predominantly highland region covered by evergreen montane forest in Southwest Ethiopia. The plateau, which was formerly densely forested, presents primeval forests, bamboo thickets and wetlands. Around 106 woody plant species belonging to 74 genera and 38 families are recorded. Dominant species are *Coffea arabica*, *Pouteria adolfi-friedercii*, *Berasama abyssinica*, *Schefflera abyssinica*, *Trilepsium madagascariense* and *Polyscias fulva*. One hundred bird species have been recorded in the area; 15 of the bird species are reported to comprise the “Highland Biome Species”, thus accounting for 31% of the Restricted Highland Biome Assemblages in Ethiopia. At least 48 mammalian species, representing 14 families are estimated to be present in the zone. With its three major rivers: Gojeb, Dinchia and Woshi, the forest area is an important fresh water reservoir for the entire region. However the size of the forest has dramatically reduced; the forest is now dispersed to include settlement areas, grazing and agricultural land. Areas of mostly undisturbed forest have been identified as untouchable core zones.

The forest ecosystem makes an important contribution to the livelihoods of people in the area. It provides wild coffee, a variety of commercially valuable spices and honey from wild bees. Until now the allocation of user rights to user groups or communities (*Participatory Forest Management, PFM*), the designation of *Coffee Gene Reserves* (EU) within the *Coffee Improvement Programmes* (CIP), and governmental designation of *Forest Priority Areas* has helped to minimize forest destruction and to establish long term user systems. Nevertheless, protection through the *Kafa Biosphere Reserve* is urgently needed in order to conserve the unique forests.

<b>Region</b>	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Regional State
<b>Administration Zone</b>	Kafa Zone
<b>Location</b>	Kafa Zone: the area stretches across the boundaries of seven contiguous administration sectors (called “Woredas”); namely Adiyo, Gimbo, Telo, Gewata, Bita, Decha and Chena.
<b>Area</b>	The proposed Kafa Biosphere Reserve is located between the following latitudes and longitudes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Latitude: 35°29’50.55” to 36°47’33.78” East</li> <li>b) Longitude: 35°48’50.57” to 35°44’34.30” East</li> <li>c) Central Point: 36°3’22.51” East &amp; 7°22’13.67” North</li> </ul>
<b>Altitude</b>	The altitude of the area ranges from 500 to 3350 m.a.s.l.
<b>Area (hectares)</b>	
Core area	41.391,1 ha (consists of 11 Protected Forest Areas)
Candidate core area(s)	219.441 ha (do not have statutory conservation status yet)
Buffer zone(s)	161.427 ha
Transition area(s)	337.885 ha
Area covered with forest	422.260,01 ha (=55,55% of the BR)
<b>Total</b>	<b>760.144,1 ha</b>
Core & buffer zone	422,259.1 ha

<b>Population in the BR</b>	
Transition area	657.780 (of which 91,68% live in rural areas and 8,42% in urban areas)
<b>No. of persons/household</b>	4.4
<b>Population growth rate</b>	2.9%
<b>Population composition</b>	44% aged 14 and younger
<b>Ethnic origin of population</b>	The SNNPRS is the most ethnically and linguistically diverse Administrative Region in Ethiopia, with more than 80 different ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups constituting the Biosphere Reserve are the Kafecho (81.4 %), Amhara (5.5 %), Oromo (2.35 %) with the remaining 5.38 % comprising of other ethnic groups like the indigenous Manja.
<b>Major ecosystem types</b>	Moist Evergreen Montane Forest containing wild <i>Coffea Arabica</i> (Eastern Afroalpine Biodiversity Hotspot) Bamboo Thickets Wetlands

#### Major habitats & land cover types

Unique wild coffee forests including rare wetland habitats and vegetation types of *Combretum-Terminalia* bushlands and thickets, Sub-Afroalpine Habitat Type, Evergreen Mountain Forest and Grassland Complex, Moist Evergreen Montane Forest Habitat Type, and Aquatic Habitat.

Diversity of topographic features including a key portion of the Shonga Mountains, with the main features being the Sami Ridge, Kukum Chego Ridge and the Koma and Saja Summit. Ecological corridors of immense importance include the Gojeb River System, Alemgono Wetland System and the Gojeb-Gewata Wetland System.

#### Research and Monitoring

- Baseline studies on fauna, flora and land use
- Conservation and use (e.g. bee honey)
- Economic valuation of diversity
- Rainforest ecology
- Epiphytes ecology, bird ecology, biodiversity, avifauna
- Colobus guereza ecology and species status, forest ecology
- Medicinal plants, woody forest species assessment, fauna
- Forest and coffee ecology, coffee diseases, coffee diversity, natural resources management, biosphere reserve approach and management
- GIS mapping, land use, main habitats, monitoring and change detection on forest loss
- Sustainable tourism and conflicts
- Peace and conflict studies

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