

Scientists to study biodiversity along river Congo

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A fisherman is seen along the banks of the Congo River in Kisangani. A large team of DR Congolese and Belgian scientists will next week embark on a 47-day expedition to study the fauna and flora along central Africa's Congo river, organisers have announced.

A large team of DR Congolese and Belgian scientists will next week embark on a 47-day expedition to study the fauna and flora along central Africa's Congo river, organisers announced Wednesday.

At least 67 ornithologists, biologists, geologists, linguists and other experts will thus mark both the International Year of Biodiversity and the 50th anniversary of the independence of the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#).

The scientists will board a boat in Kisangani in the northern DR Congo's

Oriental Province and arrive 47 days later with their findings at Kinshasa, the capital some 1,750 kilometres (1,085 miles) downstream.

Organised by Belgium's Royal Museum for Central [Africa](#), the University of Kisangani, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and the National Botanical Gardens in Belgium, the expedition has obtained much of its funding from the Belgian development cooperation agency.

A further goal of the exercise is to strengthen the DR Congo's capacity for scientific research and found a biodiversity centre in Kisangani, where all the animal and vegetable species collected by the mission will be stored. These collections will remain open for further research by Congolese and foreign scientists.

According to the organisers, the DR Congo has no recent data on its [biodiversity](#). In many domains, the details date back to the colonial era and sometimes the beginning of the 20th century. The scientists hope to discover hitherto unknown species during their river trek.

The DR Congo celebrates the 50th anniversary of its independence from Belgium on June 30.

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