

I.Coast hosting bid to save its last chimpanzees

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The Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, which works to safeguard chimpanzees in west Africa, says less than 2,000 chimpanzees are left in the Ivory Coast compared to 12,000 in 2002

Ivory Coast, which has seen a 90 percent decrease in its chimpanzees in just 20 years, is to host international talks in July in a bid to save the primates.

Some 200 experts are due in the economic capital Abidjan from July 24 to 27 "to share experiences on chimpanzee conservation across Africa," Inza Kone, who heads a Swiss Scientific Research Centre (CSRS) in Ivory Coast, told AFP.

The Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, which works to safeguard [chimpanzees](#) in west Africa, says less than 2,000 chimpanzees are left in the country compared to 12,000 in 2002.

The decrease is due to the reduction of their forest habitat due to urbanisation and the hike in cocoa production, with Ivory Coast now the world's top cocoa producer.

The country's forests have shrunk to account for 13 percent of land cover compared to 78 percent at independence in 1960.

Poaching too has contributed to their decline with Ivorians last year eating 120,000 tonnes of bush meat though hunting wild animals is banned.

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