**Title:** Marine spatial planner
**Location:** Congo Basin Coast, Libreville, Gabon **Closing date:** Applications considered immediately and not after 29 October 2012

**Start Date:** On or before 1 January 2013

**Background**:

The 1,400 miles of pristine beaches, lagoons and waters of the Congo Basin lie alongside the world’s second-largest intact forest. Here, on the western edge of Central Africa, WCS supports a major commitment to marine conservation. Increasingly, this wild coast is challenged by intensive overfishing, burgeoning offshore industry and coastal development. Successful conservation of the Congo Basin Coast, its ecosystems and wildlife can only be achieved by strengthening and connecting protected areas along the coast, improving fisheries enforcement, and assisting governments and private industry to put conservation at the heart of development planning. Having played an integral role in creating Gabon’s ambitious national protected area system, WCS is well positioned to provide the scientific and conservation leadership needed to ensure a future for this coast’s awe-inspiring wildlife.

**Position Objective:**

The Marine spatial planner/Conservation planner will work closely with WCS Congo Basin Coast program and country offices staff, NY staff, the government of Gabon, and partners in industry and non-governmental organizations to compile and analyze the information necessary to make informed decisions about the future of the marine environment off Central Africa’s west coast. The planner will be responsible for leading a multi-stakeholder process to identify priority areas for conservation action that will ensure the persistence of biodiversity and balance conservation interests with that of other stakeholders (*e.g*. petroleum exploration, foreign and domestic fisheries, coastal development) in the planning process. This person will report to the Director of the Congo Basin Coast program and will be based in Libreville, Gabon.

**Principle Responsibilities:**

**A) Data Analysis**

Develop and manage a comprehensive database of marine and coastal biodiversity and socio-economic activities in the CBC marine area. Work with stakeholders and scientists to manipulate, analyze and interpret scientific data for use in planning of the marine environment. This will require proficiency in the use of a GIS to assimilate spatial and non-spatial data and the ability to design and conduct spatial analysis. Work with project lead to develop a data dissemination strategy/platform to ensure partners have timely access to data developed. Conduct a gap analysis of the data available and work with the project manager and scientists to prioritization data collection and design research agendas to fill gaps identified. This may require designing, conducting and analyzing surveys for regional stakeholders.

**B) Marine spatial planning**

Work with stakeholders and partners to lead a systematic conservation planning process to identify no-take marine protected areas in the CBC. Identify priority areas for marine conservation and support informed decision making about use in the coastal and marine environment through the implementation of a decision support tool (such as Marxan). Engage stakeholders to refine requests and requirements into discrete planning scenarios. Work with partners and diverse stakeholder groups to promote buy-in to planning process.

**C) Stakeholder outreach/Communication**

Lead workshops for stakeholders and partners to facilitate the marine spatial planning process. Develop workshop training materials and build capacity to conduct planning.

**D) Project management**

Maintain and build upon collaborative engagements with project partners, including the National Parks Agency in Gabon (ANPN), CEDAMM training centre, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture, National Centre for Research in Science and Technology in Gabon (CENAREST). Lead/work on multiple project teams simultaneously. Assist program staff with grant/proposal writing and other fundraising activities to support the continued growth of the program.

**Requirements and experience:**

* Graduate degree in conservation policy/science, spatial planning or related field
* 3+ years relevant work experience
* Fluency in either/both French or English, with a strong and demonstrable working knowledge of the non-fluent language.
* Experience in marine spatial planning, fishery managements or marine policy
* Experience working in Africa or other developing regions preferred but not essential
* Ability to work closely with stakeholders to establish objectives for conservation and extractive users.
* Experience coordinating and prioritizing project work, and the ability to set realistic timelines and budgets for task completion, and generate reports on progress to project milestones.
* Strong written and verbal communication skills, including experience developing white papers for managers and writing or contributing to peer-reviewed scientific papers.
* An ability to adapt approaches to local cultures and project situation, while maintaining a high professional standard
* Proven ability to work effectively in a multidisciplinary, highly interactive team

Additional skills:

Microsoft Office Software Suite

Proficiency in ArcGIS, QGIS or GIS

Experience using R, SAS, SPSS or other statistical software package strongly desired.

Experience with species distribution modeling or modeling of coastal and marine ecosystem

Knowledge of Marine and coastal ecosystems.

Knowledge of fisheries management and experience working with fisheries data, fisheries management agencies and/or fishermen.

**Application**: Please send a CV, a cover letter describing your background and interests, and the names and contact information for three references, including a peer reference to jpolsenberg@wcs.org and mcallow@wcs.org.