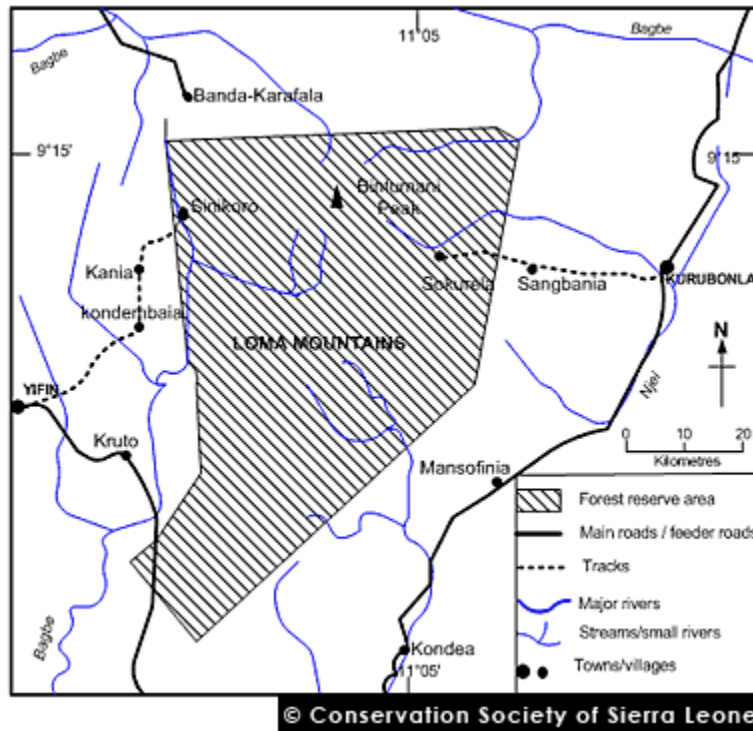


# Loma Mountains & Mount Bintimani

Loma Mountains comprise the northernmost outlying forest in Sierra Leone, and the largest area of montane forest in the country. Bintimani peak is the highest in West Africa. The Loma Mountain range has a rich bird fauna, quite different from that of the lowland forests such as Gola.



Loma mountains forest reserve is found in the Nieni and Neya Chiefdoms in the Koinadugu District, Northern Province, about 346 km northeast of Freetown.



The forest reserve is found on a range of hills of wide altitudinal range (400 – 1900 m), the highest being **Bintimani Mountain (1945 m), which is the highest in West Africa - west of Cameroon**. Many rivers drain the mountain range and two of Sierra Leone's major rivers have their sources from this region; the Sewa to the southwest and Rokel to the northwest.

## Birds

This forest reserve is one of the regions in Sierra Leone that has attracted the interest of many ornithologists. Granville (1961) recorded 60 species at Bintimani peak. Several earlier surveys were conducted in an effort to produce a list of birds of Sierra Leone (see Bannerman, 1953). Recent surveys include Atkinson et al (1992) and they recorded 245 species, of which five are globally threatened – Lesser Kestrel (Vu), Rufous Fishing Owl (En), Yellow-throated Olive Greenbul (Vu), White-necked Picathartes (Vu) and Sierra Leone Prinia (Vu) - and four near-threatened. The little known Rufous Fishing-owl was seen three times along the same stretch of river in two weeks (Atkinson et al., 1992), and the Sierra Leone Prinia occurs in the gallery forests on the plateau. Survey by H. Thompson and P. Wood in 1991 discovered five active colonies with nine nesting sites of White-necked Rockfowl in the reserve (see Thompson, 1997). It also holds 60% of Guinea-Congo forest biome species recorded in the country.

## Mammals

Ten species of primates and several other large mammal species occur at Loma.



Included among these are threatened primates such as Western Chimpanzee (En), Red Colobus monkey (Vu), Black-and-White Colobus Monkey (NT), Sooty Mangabey (NT) and Diana Monkey (En). Other threatened mammals are, Forest Elephant (Vu), Leopard (Vu), Pigmy Hippo (Vu), Water Chevrotain (NT), Savanna Buffalo (NT), Jentink's Duiker (Vu), Black Duiker (NT) and Maxwell Duiker (Vu).

## Access and Facilities

Kabala, which is 100 km to the northeast and Bendugu, 40 km to the northwest, are the nearest big towns. Roads leading to the Loma Mountain region are poor, though motorable with the use of strong vehicles. Yiffin, the chiefdom headquarters, which is about 15 km away, has a government clinic run by a dispenser, and there is a modern missionary compound nearby. The Tingi Hills forest reserve and Lake Sonfon are within 40 km to the east and northeast respectively.

Information provided courtesy of the [Conservation Society of Sierra Leone](#)