



To the Reader

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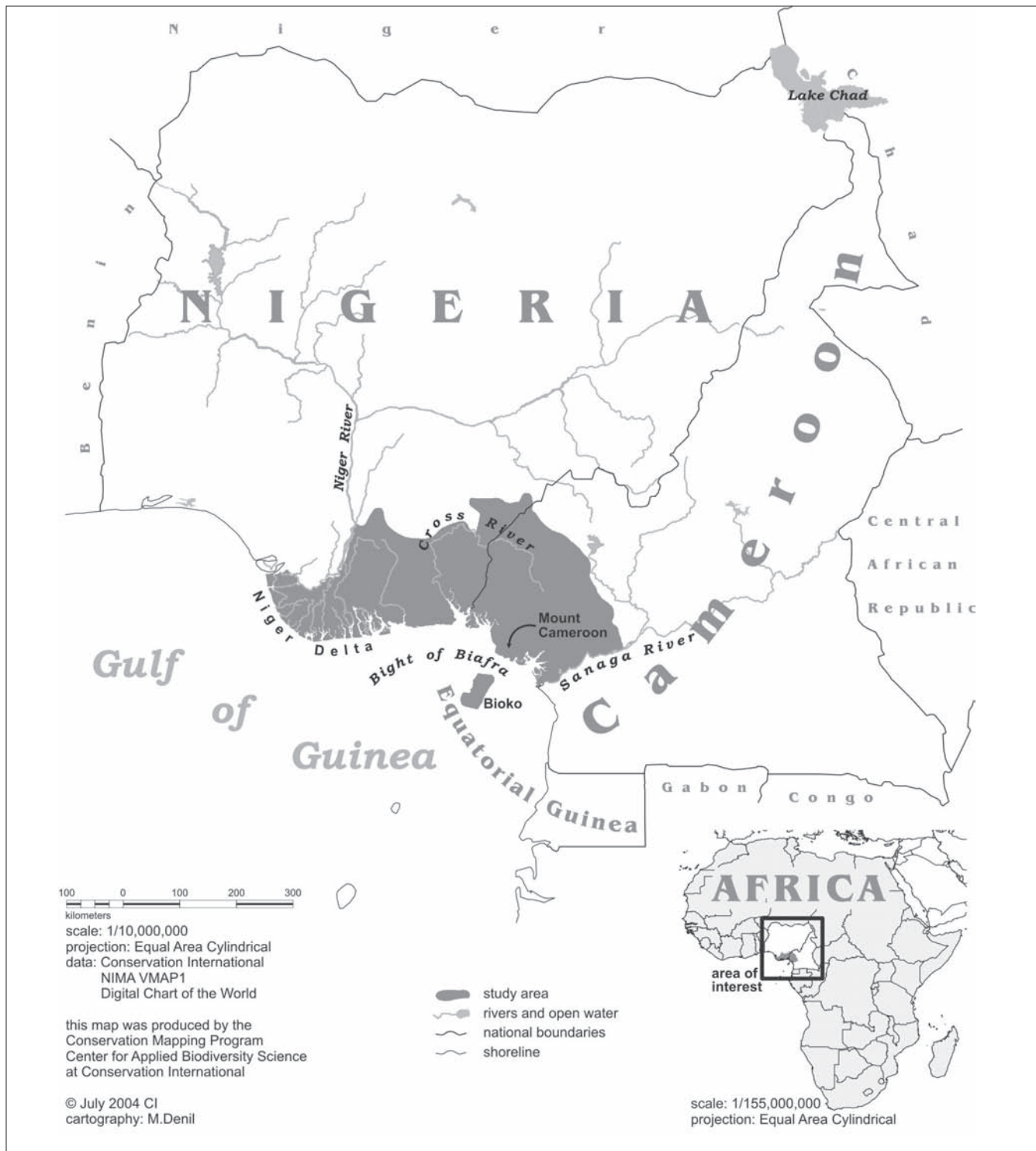
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The rain forest region of the Gulf of Guinea considered in this volume extends along the coast of the Bight of Biafra from the Niger River in Nigeria to the Sanaga River in Cameroon, and includes the continental shelf island of Bioko, part of the nation of Equatorial Guinea. The Gulf of Guinea forests have very high levels of endemism and are rich in species. This high biodiversity is partly a consequence of the special and complex geography of the region, which contains the Niger Delta (the largest river delta in tropical Africa), the basin of the Cross River, and the highlands of Cameroon, including the volcano of Mount Cameroon, the highest mountain in West Africa. But the region also includes some of the densest human populations in all of Africa. As a consequence, much of the original forest cover has been removed or greatly modified, and populations of the larger animals reduced to perilously low levels by rampant hunting for the bushmeat trade.