

25 Years of
**COLLECTIVE
IMPACT**



AFRICAN PARKS



2025

ANNUAL REPORT



The forests of Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda, hold a greater number of endemic species than any other forest in the Albertine Rift Mountains

© Gael Vande Weghe

Cover: Lozi communities maintain traditional fishing practices, alongside measures that support sustainable harvesting and local incomes, Liuwa

Plain National Park, Zambia © Marcus Westberg

Introduction



BENIN

CHAD

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

SOUTH SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

RWANDA

Kundelungu •

ANGOLA

ZAMBIA

MALAWI

ZIMBABWE

MOZAMBIQUE

The African Parks Management Partnership Portfolio

African Parks was founded in 2000 as an African solution to conserve Africa's biodiversity for the benefit of people and wildlife. We take on responsibility for the long-term management of protected areas, in partnership with governments and local communities. Our goal is to restore and effectively manage these landscapes, making them ecologically, socially and financially sustainable so they can deliver a multitude of benefits for people and wildlife in perpetuity. By the close of 2025, African Parks was managing 24 protected areas in partnership with governments and communities in 13 countries.

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0km 1,000km 2,000km

A Foundation Built to Last



VASANT (VAS) NARASIMHAN

Chairperson of the Board, African Parks Network

This year marks 25 years since African Parks was founded. The purpose that drove its founding is even more urgent today than it was then: to safeguard some of Africa's most important natural landscapes, in genuine partnership with the governments and communities that live alongside them.

Today, African Parks manages more than 20 million hectares in partnership with 13 African governments and hundreds of local communities. The scale of this work reflects both the maturity of the organisation and the strength of the partnerships that underpin it. African Parks has adapted continuously to a changing world while holding to a clear conviction: that long-term, accountable management of protected areas can reverse ecological decline and improve human wellbeing – and that this work is most enduring when it is led from the continent, by African institutions, alongside the people who carry it on the ground.

2025 was another year of meaningful progress across the portfolio, but also one that asked the organisation to evolve. Safeguarding human rights in and around the protected areas we manage is not an add-on; it is foundational. The Board implemented deliberate governance and oversight adjustments, including the establishment of an Independent Panel of African legal and human rights specialists to oversee our Grievance and Redress Mechanism. We also constituted a Rights and Safeguards Sub-Committee

of the Board and delivered targeted training across the organisation – to embed a rigorous human rights-based approach in our work. The Board will continue to champion those frameworks and hold itself and the organisation accountable to them.

The operating environment also shifted sharply in 2025, with a significant loss of international financial support. The organisation's response – absorbing the impact across the portfolio, moving quickly to alternative funding, and maintaining operations without interruption – reflects an institution that has matured and gives me confidence in its ability to navigate what comes next.

Our in-park Board meeting in Rwanda this year left a lasting impression on me. Walking into the new headquarters of Nyungwe National Park – built entirely by local partners, with sustainable materials – was physical proof of what happens when conservation is invested in for the long term. Watching Rwandan and international visitors alike experience the park, and seeing the local economy that has grown up around it, was tangible proof that well-managed conservation not only safeguards critical ecosystems, it creates economic opportunity, income and pride in the places that host it.

Looking ahead, African Parks remains focused on the goal of managing 30 million hectares across 30 protected areas by 2030. Delivering on that ambition will require deeper collaboration with national institutions and regional partners, further investment in community-driven models, strengthened human rights, and accelerated sustainable financing so that more landscapes and more people can benefit from conservation done well.

To the staff, government partners, community leaders, donors, and supporters who make this work possible – thank you. What has been achieved over these 25 years matters now more than it ever has, and must be built on. We enter the next chapter of African Parks grounded in the strength of our people and our partnerships, and we are committed to meeting the moment ahead with the clarity, integrity and long view that this critical work requires.

**Sincerely,
Vas Narasimhan**



The skilled ranger unit of Bazaruto Archipelago National Park includes Mozambique's first female rangers © Andrew Macdonald

Perspectives From The Field



PETER FEARNHEAD
African Parks CEO

When we established African Parks 25 years ago, we believed it was possible for an organisation, working in partnership with governments, to support the long-term management of national parks, provided this was embedded within strong governance and accountability structures. We also saw an opportunity for this approach to help unlock additional funding into a sector that was already under pressure from declining state resources. At the time, this was not how national parks were managed or funded, and so building trust with our first government partners required time, commitment, and shared conviction. It is a credit to those partners that they were willing to explore a different approach. In doing so, they helped set in motion a model that is now widely recognised in the management and financing of protected areas. A quarter of a century later, I am not sure any of us fully appreciated how challenging and complex that journey would be. What we did understand, however, was that it would take decades rather than years, and that it would depend entirely on the people and institutions who chose to do this work alongside us.

In 2025, African Parks marked 25 years of existence, although this anniversary nearly passed us by. Over that time, there have been periods of steady progress, as well as times where we have had to navigate difficult and uncertain situations. It has required consistency, patience, and a willingness to learn and adapt. Above all, it has been a collective effort – with our teams on the ground, our government partners, local communities, donors, and partner organisations.

This year's theme, 25 Years of Collective Impact, reflects that reality. It recognises the partnerships and systems that underpin the work that we do and the progress we have made, while also pointing to the next phase as we work towards managing 30 protected areas by 2030 with the same discipline and long-term focus.

An overview of the operational details is set out in the executive summary that follows. For the individual park reports, we have selected a specific theme or story that characterises each park during 2025. Here, I share a few personal moments and reflections from the year.

I spent part of the year visiting several of the areas we manage, including Liuwa Plain in Zambia, where, in many ways, our journey began. Spending time there and meeting with the Litunga, the King of the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE), brought those early years back into focus. The Litunga's leadership was instrumental in protecting the Liuwa system and laying the foundation for our earliest management partnership – signed in May 2003 between the BRE, the Zambian Government, and African Parks. His leadership and friendship continue to this day, and it has been an honour to work with him over the past 25 years.

I also visited Benin, where, due to severe insecurity emanating from militant extremists from Burkina Faso, our teams continue to operate under very challenging conditions. Despite this, their morale and resolve were humbling, as was their commitment to these landscapes and to the communities connected to them. I also visited Chad on several occasions, both to meet with our government partner and to spend time with the teams on the ground, who have had to navigate one of their most challenging years to date. One of my most consistent observations across these visits is the level of commitment to these areas – from staff, from partners, and from the communities we work alongside. This contributes to the resilience of these systems and their ability to endure over time.

This year has asked more of us as an organisation. We absorbed significant shifts in international funding, including the loss of USAID to the broader development landscape; we navigated a period of uncertainty around our mandates in Chad; and we worked through the implementation of recommendations arising from the independent review into abuses in Odzala-Kokoua National Park. None of this has been straightforward.

But conservation at this scale is rarely linear; the challenges we face, and how we respond to them, are part of what builds resilience over time. What matters most is that the work on the ground has continued – steadily, without interruption, and without loss of focus.

Looking ahead, our ambition to manage 30 protected areas by 2030 remains within reach. More importantly, our conviction in the approach that has carried us this far is as strong today as it was at the beginning. Landscapes of this scale only endure

through partnership, consistent presence, and the patience to stay the course through difficult periods.

To our government partners, the communities we work alongside, our donors who make this work possible, and our teams in the field who deliver it – thank you. The progress we have made is shared, and so is the responsibility for what comes next.

**Thank you for your continued support,
Peter Fearnhead**



White-ringed atlas moth in Garamba National Park, DRC © Marcus Westberg



Above: Iona National Park, Angola, provides local people with skills and opportunities © Emma Badger

Bazaruto Archipelago National Park. Bazaruto's new park administration offices and operational bases were inaugurated by His Excellency Daniel Francisco Chapo, the President of Mozambique, with the park's plastic-to-pavers programme providing much of the construction material – a practical example of a circular economy applied on the ground.

Extensive negotiations were concluded with the Barotse Royal Establishment and the Government of Zambia on the renewal of the Liuwa Plain mandate, also incorporating a large component of the Upper West Zambezi Game Management Area, an important part of the broader Liuwa ecosystem. We anticipate this renewal and extension being concluded in 2026.

Building on earlier analytical work conducted by African Parks, a new collaborative assessment with the Rob Walton Foundation, Frankfurt Zoological Society and Wildlife Conservation Society led to the establishment of the Africa Keystone Protected Areas Partnership. This work identifies a set of protected areas with the potential to deliver disproportionate ecological and socio-economic impact across the continent – the

Keystone Protected Areas – and provides a practical, evidence-based framework to help guide investment and coordination across the sector. It also unlocked a transformational financial commitment by the Rob Walton Foundation into the management of these keystone areas.

Biodiversity conservation and monitoring

Rhino Rewild, an initiative that aims to rewild 2,000 southern white rhino over the next 10 years, continued to scale. In 2025, 256 rhino were translocated to secure, well-managed areas, bringing the total to over 630 animals to date. This included the translocation of 70 rhino to Akagera in Rwanda and 24 to Garamba in DRC. These operations are complex and require meticulous coordination among national authorities, veterinarians, logistics companies and park management teams. Each move carries real risk and is physically and logistically demanding. That the initiative has continued to scale safely reflects years of coordination and shared expertise across teams, authorities and partners.

Species restoration went beyond rhino. Over the course

Below: Conservation work in Pendjari National Park, Benin, includes wildlife monitoring and collaring © Marcus Westberg

2025 Executive Summary

Growth and partnership developments

Towards the end of the year, we signed a new long-term management partnership with the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) for Kundelungu National Park in the south-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Kundelungu is a critical watershed that forms part of the headwaters of the Congo River system, supporting both biodiversity and downstream communities. Work began on an environmental and social due diligence, stakeholder engagement, and early planning, ensuring that implementation is grounded in a clear understanding of the landscape and local priorities.

Our partnership with ICCN in Garamba National Park was also renewed for a further ten years, extending a relationship that began in 2005.

In Chad, the cancellation and subsequent reinstatement of management agreements was carefully navigated. The investments made in community development and building the constituency for conservation amongst local and national stakeholders, around all three parks and over many years, were critical in Government's re-evaluation of the decision, resulting in their reinstatement ten days later. Both Government and African Parks have committed to concluding fresh agreements for all three parks, as well as for the Aouk-Keita Landscape, in 2026. While this was an extremely challenging period for everyone involved, especially our 550 employees, work across Zakouma, Siniaka Minia and Ennedi continued, and we remain deeply committed to these partnerships and to Chad.

In Ethiopia, work in Gambella National Park progressed through its transition phase into a fully operational project, with surveys and a social due diligence informing a management plan that is being developed with local stakeholders. In Mozambique, a tripartite agreement with the Government and Conservation International set the foundation for a unified marine strategy in the Inhambane Seascape, which includes



of the year a total of 2,217 animals were translocated across 13 species. In Zimbabwe, eland, buffalo and sable were reintroduced into Matusadona. In Zambia, large-scale translocations of wildebeest and zebra bolstered populations in Kafue. In Liuwa Plain, hartebeest returned – fifty years after they became locally extinct. Translocation is one step within a broader process of restoring ecological function in an ecosystem and maintaining populations over time, often in conditions that remain complex and unpredictable. Over the past 25 years, a total of 11,610 animals from 37 species have been translocated, 18 species of which were reintroduced after becoming locally extinct.

Our efforts to enhance measurement of ecological outcomes continued. Environmental DNA, the Molecular Ecological Network Assessment pilot, and the BIOSCAN partnership all expanded our understanding of biodiversity at levels that traditional surveys are unable to do. This work informs better decision-making, from fire and water management to invasive species control and ecological connectivity.

Conservation law enforcement remains central to ensuring

that national legislation relating to protected areas is being respected and upheld. During 2025, a total of 310,185 patrol days were conducted by rangers, removing 25,000 snares, and confiscating 235 illegal weapons plus an additional 250 firearms that were handed in voluntarily. Since African Parks was founded, rangers have collectively spent over 2.4 million days in the field and on patrol. This work is physically demanding and often carried out in challenging environments.

Livelihoods and enterprise projects

In 2025, more than 33,000 people participated in livelihood initiatives across the areas where we work. These programmes, which include beekeeping, fisheries, agriculture and other small enterprises, are locally designed and continue to evolve. While not all of these succeed immediately, over time they contribute to more stable household incomes and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Education remains one of the most important investments in the regions where we work. More than 2,200 scholarships and vocational opportunities were



Above: Matusadona National Park, Zimbabwe, supports a variety of wildlife including leopard, lion and a range of antelope © Fothergill Island

Below: In 2025, 24 southern white rhino were translocated to Garamba National Park, DRC © Wiki West



provided, alongside support for 395 schools, including infrastructure improvements, teachers' salaries, and school feeding schemes. Over 20,000 children visited parks during the year.

For many, this represents a first opportunity to experience the landscapes and wildlife that form part of their heritage, but which are often distant from where they live due to remoteness, travel costs or the practical challenges of accessing parks.

Healthcare support reached close to 100,000 people in 2025 through park-supported clinics and mobile services. Women's health initiatives, including antenatal care, are reaching more women and reducing maternal and neonatal risk. In many of these remote areas, healthcare access is limited, and the need far outstrips what any single actor can provide.

Human-wildlife conflict remains one of the most persistent challenges in the landscapes we manage, as it does anywhere in Africa where there is a nexus of humans and wildlife. Managing human-wildlife conflict is a daily challenge that is only going to increase as pressure on

land intensifies. In 2025, targeted interventions reduced pressure in specific areas – including water access points that redirected elephant movement in South Sudan, community-managed fencing in Malawi, crop insurance schemes in Republic of Congo, and protected gardens in Zimbabwe. These responses are all locally developed and tailored to the specific context on the ground, and while they help mitigate the impacts of the conflict, are unlikely to eliminate them entirely.

Across the network, procurement continued to favour local suppliers, directing the majority of operational spend into surrounding economies – an often under-appreciated impact of well-managed protected areas.

Financial resilience and revenue generation

The operating environment in 2025 was shaped by geopolitical and economic pressures, including shifts in donor funding and broader financial uncertainty. The cancellation of United States government funding removed over US\$8 million from the annual budget and a further US\$16 million in contracted funding through to 2028. Our response was immediate. We



Above: Full-time fence technicians maintain the predator and elephant-proof boundary fence, Majete Wildlife Reserve, Malawi © Marcus Westberg

human rights specialists, including from an ethno-anthropologist who is supporting the Odzala team as well as our Independent Human Rights and Criminal Justice Advisor. Whilst Project Bomoko is a multiyear project, significant progress was made this year. An Independent Panel, consisting of African legal and human rights specialists, was appointed to oversee the grievance mechanism, and a Rights and Safeguards Sub-Committee of the African Parks Board was constituted and convened its first meeting. Progress has been strong, though not without complexity, and work continues with authorities and communities to align systems, training and accountability.

The road ahead

The next decade will test conservation in Africa in ways the last twenty-five years did not. Climate volatility is moving faster than the assumptions underpinning most park management plans. Population pressure, land-use change arising from expanding settlement and extractive interests,

and shifting politics are the systemic drivers that shape these landscapes. At the same time, the case for these landscapes has never been clearer. How Africa's protected areas are managed over the coming decades will shape far more than biodiversity outcomes – it will shape water security for hundreds of millions of people, the stability and resilience of regions, the viability of rural economies across wide parts of the continent, and whether the systems these landscapes sustain remain intact for the communities who depend on them.

The challenge is not to defend these places from change. It is to keep them functional through it. That depends on sustained partnerships – with the governments who hold ultimate authority over these landscapes, with the communities who live within and around them, with funders who stay the course when donor cycles shift – and, on our part, the discipline to stay, to learn, and to adapt. Harder years will come. We intend to keep doing this work through them all – because these landscapes, and the people who live alongside them, matter that much.

Below: Siniaka Minia National Park provides support for women's groups producing balanites oil and shea butter © Irene Galera

reduced costs, prioritised core activities, and worked with partners to close an overall US\$25.4 million gap by November. Despite these pressures, operations continued throughout, and no jobs were cut. In many of the areas where we operate, these roles are significant not only for park operations but also for local economies, where parks are normally among the largest regional employers. We remain deeply grateful to our funding partners for their continued support, particularly during this period.

Meaningful progress was made with nature-based finance mechanisms, particularly carbon, and this year saw the first disbursements made to community funds in Chinko. These funds support locally selected priorities, determined through governance structures chosen by the communities themselves. Equally, we have entered into robust communications with a US-based carbon developer responsible for a carbon project in Malawi, where we have raised concerns regarding methodology and the distribution of benefits to project sites and stakeholders. In Kafue, a new fire management carbon project progressed through validation.

Tourism revenue increased by 8% to US\$17.8 million across the portfolio. This was enabled by increased investment in infrastructure and visitor experiences, with new lodges and camps opening across several parks and further developments planned in 2026. Nyungwe launched Munazi Lodge and one of Africa's longest ziplines, Camp Oundubha opened in Ennedi, and Albida Camp welcomed guests in Matusadona. Majete surpassed US\$1 million in annual revenue for the first time. Akagera reached over US\$5 million in park revenue, achieving full financial sustainability – an enormous milestone – and was named one of National Geographic's Best of the World destinations for 2026.

Safeguards and governance

A huge effort went into strengthening safeguards and human rights systems in accordance with the recommendations from the independent Omnia investigation into abuses in Odzala-Kokoua National Park. All recommendations were adopted, and Project Bomoko was launched to embed them into our operations, along with those made by other

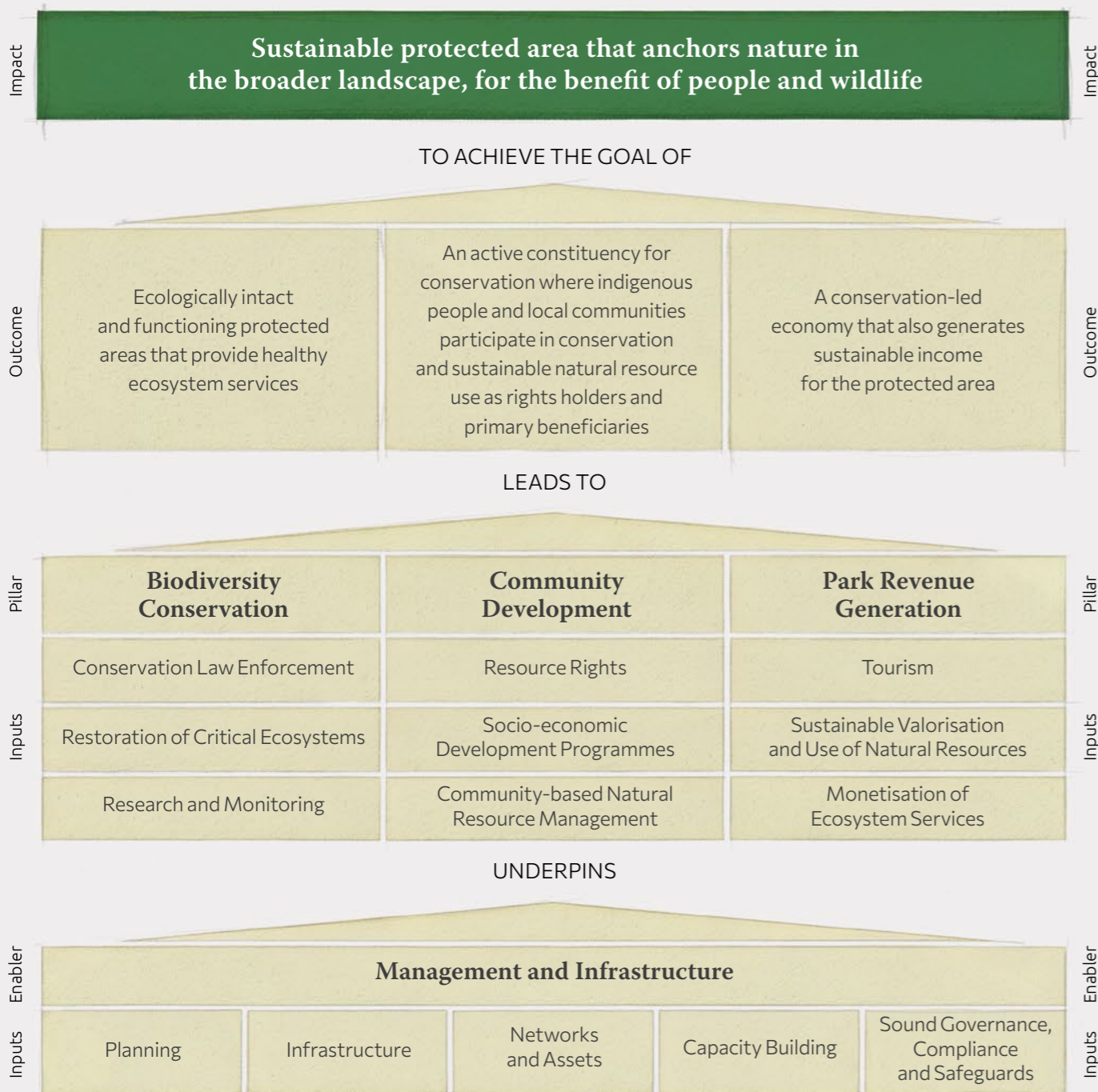


Our Model

Protected areas that are restored and managed sustainably benefit both people and wildlife. African Parks pioneered the 'Public-Private Partnership' model as a protected area management solution 25 years ago. Through this partnership model, we are responsible for all park management functions and are 100% accountable to our government partners, who remain the owners and policy-makers of the landscapes. This is achieved through long-term management partnerships

(mandates), establishing park management on the ground (management) and putting in place funding solutions (money). Each project has its own legal entity with its own local governing board that represents key local stakeholders. In each park we implement three integrated pillars, underpinned by management and infrastructure, with the objective of ensuring that each area becomes ecologically, socio-politically and financially sustainable.

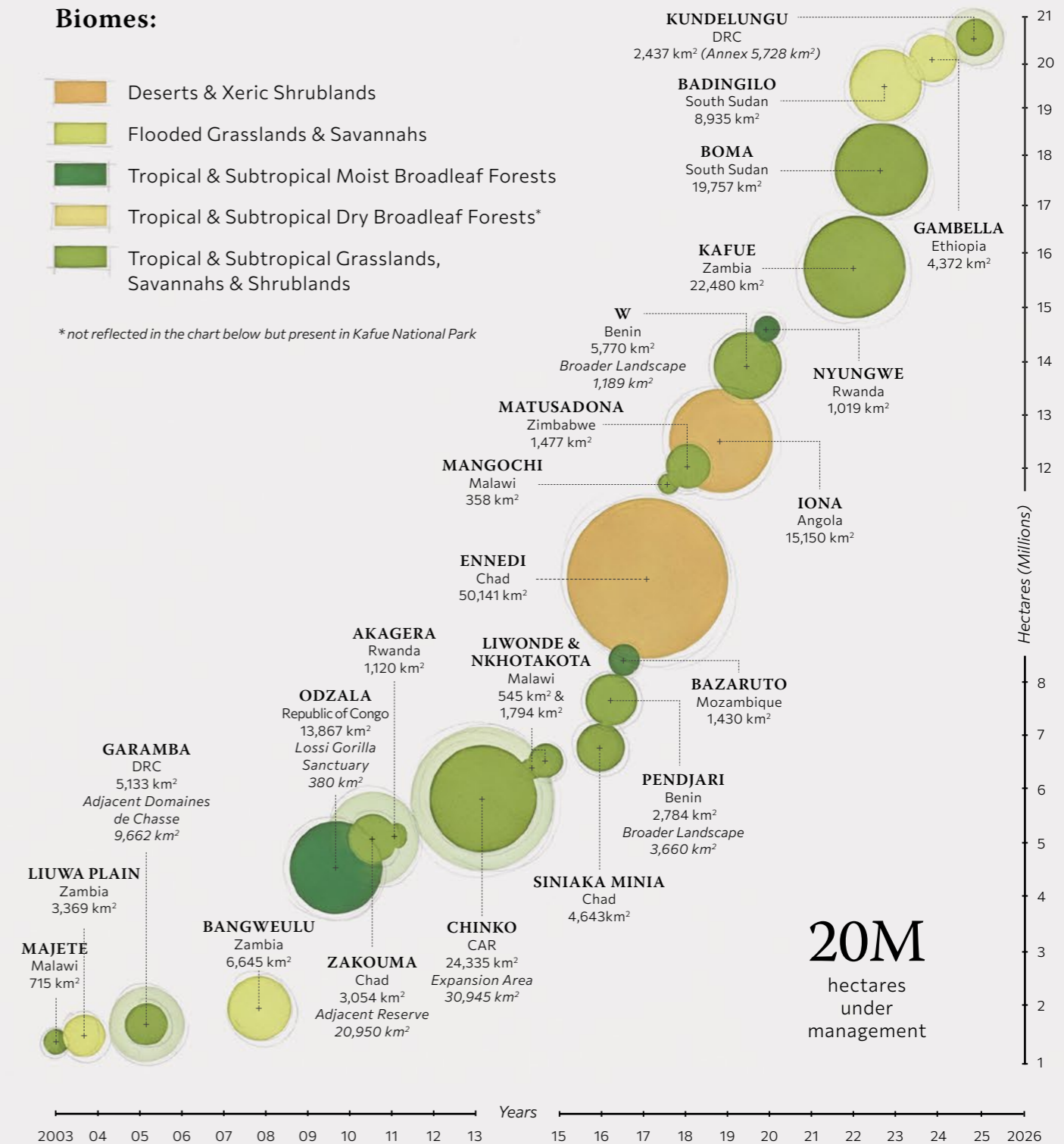
Three Key Pillars of Management



Biomes:

- Deserts & Xeric Shrublands
- Flooded Grasslands & Savannahs
- Tropical & Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
- Tropical & Subtropical Dry Broadleaf Forests*
- Tropical & Subtropical Grasslands, Savannahs & Shrublands

* not reflected in the chart below but present in Kafue National Park



Where We Work

African Parks manages 24 protected areas in partnership with governments and communities in 13 countries, ensuring that over 20 million hectares are effectively managed. This diverse portfolio encompasses five of Africa's seven major biomes.

Our goal is to sustainably manage 30 protected areas covering 30 million hectares by 2030, thus contributing to the broader vision of having 30% of Africa's ecosystems, and the important biodiversity they contain, secured and valued in perpetuity.

Reflecting on 25 Years of African Parks

A CONVERSATION WITH PETER FEARNHEAD, CEO

At a top-line level, what is the 25-year collective impact of African Parks?

The first thing is that conservation is never "done". A national park that exists in legislation doesn't necessarily exist in reality. These areas have to be intentionally and effectively managed to survive, and if not, they are being lost – often quietly.

That said, the collective impact over 25 years is significant. African Parks, in partnership with governments and local communities, is currently responsible for the management of 24 protected areas across 13 countries, covering 20 million hectares. These ecosystems span tropical and afro-montane rainforests, savannahs, grasslands, wetlands, woodlands, coastal marine, and desert biomes. They sit in the headwaters of four of Africa's five largest rivers and collectively represent what is likely the most ecologically diverse portfolio of protected areas anywhere in the world. Securing these systems has required sustained effort: over 2.5 million ranger patrol days, the removal of 300,000 snares and traps, and the confiscation of 3,650 illegal weapons with 250,000 rounds of ammunition. As part of restoring ecological function, we have translocated 11,610 animals from 37 species, 18 of which had become locally extinct.

More than \$1 billion has been channelled into Africa over the last 25 years, with close to 70% spent directly in local economies. We have hosted over 1.4M paying visitors to the parks, the majority local, and made 200,000 free environmental education park visits possible for people from local communities. We provided healthcare to over 650,000 people in the last 10 years alone and we currently employ over 6,000 people. In 2025, we built 22 schools and supported close to 400 through food or materials, with over 2,000 students receiving a full scholarship.

These numbers matter. But what they represent matters more – functioning landscapes, communities with a stake in their future, and governments with a partner they can rely on.

Is there a single thing you are most proud of?

Every park has something worth celebrating, and something that is a learning opportunity for others. Examples are the reinforcement of traditional fishing rights for communities in Liuwa Plain; the Echo/Tango teams in Chinko that enable conservation-compatible pastoralism; the complete restocking of all large mammal species in Majete; Akagera achieving full financial sustainability – each of these represents years of work by dedicated teams and committed partners.

But if I had to choose one, it's that we helped pioneer a collaborative management approach that is now embraced by governments and communities across the continent. The model has proven itself. Beyond the 24 areas we manage directly, our Incubator Partners manage another seven, and there are now over 50 areas managed in a similar way across Africa. The approach has scaled beyond us, which was always the point.

Do you have any regrets?

We've made many mistakes along this journey, but I distinguish between mistakes and regrets. Mistakes can normally be corrected – regrets cannot.

Omo National Park in Ethiopia is a genuine regret. We left in 2008, pushed out by external pressure from an international advocacy organisation that we weren't able to withstand. We shouldn't have gone. Within years of our departure, the park was largely under sugarcane plantations – with devastating consequences for biodiversity and for the communities whose lives depend on that landscape.

There are the areas that we did not commit to, or the landscapes that we did not support quickly enough, all resulting in the loss of nature and the fragmentation of these natural systems.

What one lesson have you learnt along the way?

The one that comes to mind most readily is the absolute

necessity of leadership. Because our approach was a genuinely new one, it required specific individuals willing to consider a different proposition, understand it, and have the courage to act on it.

Whether it was His Royal Highness Litunga Lubosi Imwiko II, who championed our involvement in Liuwa Plain, or Leonard Sefu, the Director of National Parks and Wildlife in Malawi – behind every commitment has been a leader willing to embrace something new. That kind of leadership is not incidental to the model; it's foundational to it.

It's not a one-time requirement. The deeper and more genuine the partnership, the more both sides are able to achieve together.

What is the "secret sauce" of African Parks?

It's hard to be precise, but I'd point to a few things.

Clarity of purpose matters enormously. We know what we are – a protected area management organisation – and we don't drift from that. Then, a genuine commitment to staying. We don't do short-term projects. We sign long-term mandates and we mean them, which changes how governments and communities engage with us, and what becomes possible over time.

The quality and commitment of our people is central to it all – people who are deeply connected to the continent and its landscapes, and who bring that into their work every day. And the governance structures that give those people the space, authority and accountability to do the job well.

Part of what makes our partnerships work is knowing when to say no. When a prospective government partner can't commit to the mandate terms we know are necessary for effectiveness, we'd rather pause than set everyone up to fall short. It's not about rigidity, but rather about discipline and delivery.

Finally, we try to look honestly in the mirror. We make mistakes, and when we do, we try to name them, understand them, and, importantly, correct them.

That kind of institutional self-awareness doesn't come naturally to organisations; it has to be actively cultivated. Learning is an attitude, not an event.

What does the next 25 years look like for African Parks and African conservation?

Nature and wildlife have shaped every culture on this continent, and hundreds of millions of people depend on the ecosystem services its landscapes provide. An Africa that loses significant representations of its natural heritage will be a poorer continent – ecologically, economically, culturally, and in ways that are harder to quantify but no less real.

The pressures are intensifying. Extractive interests, land-use change, population growth, climate volatility – these are structural drivers, not temporary problems. The case for sustainably managed protected areas has never been stronger, but the window to act is narrowing. As a sector, we simply need to do more and better – to increase reach and deepen impact.

The Africa Keystone Protected Areas Partnership, developed together with the Rob Walton Foundation, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Frankfurt Zoological Society, provides focus and resourcing that is continentally significant. It is our responsibility, as implementers, to match that commitment with actions that fulfil its intentions: the safeguarding of these 162 areas and the landscapes they anchor.

We're focused on managing 30 protected areas by 2030, and on investing in the sector more broadly through our Incubation Programme and the African Conservation Academy.

But the honest answer is: we need to keep doing this work through the harder years that are coming, and we need to do more of it. If in 25 years' time, the leaders of African Parks are sitting down to a version of this conversation – reflecting on what they had to learn and what held true – that will be success.

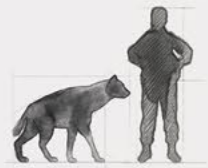
Impact by Numbers

African Parks provides effective protected area management through long-term partnerships with governments and communities. These partnerships help protect ecosystem services, improve socio-economic benefits, and establish security and governance. Here we look at our impact and where we have increased our ability over the long-term to safeguard biodiversity for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

SOCIO-POLITICAL SUSTAINABILITY Well-managed protected areas support healthy ecosystem services that sustain community livelihoods. Adequate management and resources improve access to healthcare and education for local communities, enhancing quality of life, building active participation and a strong constituency for conservation amongst local people.



151,000
people provided with African Parks-supported healthcare



15,000+
people benefitted from human-wildlife conflict mitigation



US \$2.3M
in funds channelled to communities for their use



US \$2.1M
in income earned by communities from enterprise projects



395
schools assisted, 176 teachers supported and 22 school blocks built



34,000
people reached through environmental education and 22,000 children are members of wildlife clubs



386,000
people attended outreach campaigns

AN INCREASE IN OVERALL POSITIVE SENTIMENT (61% → 69%*) WAS RECORDED IN THE 2025 CCI SURVEY

Benefits	Costs	Engagement	Attitude	Rationale
51% → 64%	46% → 56%	66% → 75%	60% → 71%	76% → 77%

*The Constituency for Conservation Index is a quantitative survey reporting a 0-100% positivity score of people's perceptions & attitudes towards the protected area. The 2025 CCI is based on 15,406 surveys conducted across 17 protected areas. The 2025 CCI includes 2 new questions and 2 parks without a baseline in 2023. When analysing the change since 2023 versus 2025, we excluded these from the analysis for a fair comparison.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY Well-managed protected areas generate revenue from job creation, tourism and other sustainable development projects, stimulating a conservation-led economy.

US \$54.7M
total spend on salaries across the African Parks portfolio

US \$139M
spent across parks & Rhino Rewild
64% spent locally

188,000
paying visitors to African Parks parks in 2025
59% of whom were local



US \$17.8M
earned from African Parks commercial projects in 2025
8% increase from 2024

US \$7.3M
generated for parks from nature-based solutions
35% increase from 2024

US \$25.1M
earned in total revenue in 2025
16% increase from 2024

ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY Functioning ecosystems are imperative for human survival. Our numbers show how we are building ecological resilience across the protected areas we partner with.

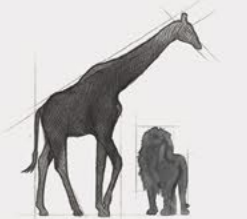


235
illegal firearms
5,304
rounds of ammunition
25,000
snare traps confiscated in 2025
250 additional firearms were handed in voluntarily

17%*
decrease in average poaching rate



2,217
animals from 13 species translocated in 2025



83%**
of key species have increased or stabilised populations since partnership inception

*Poaching rates for 2025 (detected mammal carcasses per field day) were compared with the average from the previous 3-5 years, using only parks with at least three years of data. The figure reflects the average decrease per park, the median is 20%.

**Applying a methodology followed by Harvard, Oxford & Princeton. For 85% of increasing or stable species, there is medium-high confidence in the trend. This extends to all species with a declining trend, but also to at least half of them stabilising recently. Declines may be associated with disease, increased competition or environmental factors.

The Parks





Angola

IONA NATIONAL PARK

15,150 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2019

PARK MANAGER : PEDRO MONTERROSO

MAJOR FUNDERS Global Environment Facility through Conservation International, Legacy Landscapes Fund, The Rob Walton Foundation, Stichting Natura Africae, The Wyss Foundation
KEY PARTNER International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF)

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

National Institute for Biodiversity and Conservation Areas (INBAC)



The National Institute for Biodiversity and Conservation Areas (INBAC) is the public authority responsible for implementing Angola's biodiversity conservation policy and for the management of the National System of Conservation Areas. Operating under the Ministry of Environment (MINAMB), INBAC oversees the protection, sustainable use, and enhancement of the country's natural heritage. In 2019, African Parks entered into a 20-year co-management partnership with MINAMB through INBAC for the restoration, conservation and development of Iona National Park.



In Iona National Park, conservation is understood as a shared responsibility, built on the knowledge and leadership of the communities who have lived in this landscape for generations. In 2025, the park deepened this approach by investing in local capacity through vocational internships, scholarships and applied learning across all departments.

The park invested in vocational training with a focus on creating lasting employment and strengthening the operational capacity that conservation across this landscape requires. Following training, several young community members are working as mechanics, welders and construction workers. Their work underpins vital functions such as vehicle maintenance, repairs and infrastructure development across a 15,150km² landscape where mobility and

operational efficiency are essential for conservation law enforcement, wildlife monitoring and community engagement. Employment within the park not only bolsters operational capacity but also provides income, and a sense of contribution to a nationally significant conservation effort.

Education support is central to Iona's long-term vision. Forty students (14 girls and 26 boys), many coming from vulnerable households for whom education might otherwise be inaccessible, received scholarships. With the understanding that the provision of nutrition at schools increases the likelihood of children attending school, Iona reinforced its support through financial contributions to a school feeding initiative, resulting in 21,323 meals being provided to 208 students over the year. The park expanded environmental learning opportunities, with four wildlife clubs and park visits giving 189 students the chance to experience Iona first-hand.

Ranger and professional training continued across the park. Fourteen local candidates graduated from Basic Field Ranger training, joining the park's conservation teams as Wildlife Monitors, while 39 individuals received training in wildlife mortality assessment,

carcass handling and investigation. First aid training was completed by 90 staff. A further 22 law enforcement staff participated in specialised training on human rights and grievance mechanisms, reinforcing responsible, accountable conservation practice.

A total of 255 community members took part in literacy programmes, the majority of whom were women. These programmes build foundational literacy and confidence, enabling women to participate meaningfully in community meetings, decision-making processes and engagements with park management. Structural leadership roles expanded: the newly established Pediva Water Point Management Committee comprises six members, five of whom are local women, all trained in water governance and sustainable management. In a region where water access underpins livestock health and community stability, their leadership is vital.

“After other women from our communities joined [Iona], they became an example for us to follow. My role has changed and my confidence has grown, knowing that my work is about education, sharing, love for others and, most importantly, honesty.”

LUCIANA TRISTINO
NEWLY APPOINTED WILDLIFE MONITOR

Economic opportunity expanded through women led livelihood groups such as the Ovakande Homahere Sour Milk Association. The group, comprising ten Ovahimba women who prepare fermented milk known for its sour taste and freshness, has received training on governance structure, financial literacy and project management.

Local research capacity was further expanded through hands-on scientific training. Five Angolan Master's students completed fieldwork in water eDNA sampling, while two PhD candidates continued research aligned with Iona's conservation priorities. Their work enhances national scientific expertise while providing data-informed support to park management and conservation planning.

In a landscape shaped by extremes, investment in people is building durable foundations for long-term conservation. Where traditional knowledge and contemporary conservation science are brought together, the result is a more resilient approach to managing this landscape.

2025 KEY UPDATES



23 small mammals captured and catalogued to establish Iona's first genetic and ecological reference library.

First marine turtle capture and tagging operation supported by Iona.

The Household-to-Household engagement programme reached 2,076 households and 10,062 people across six communities.

Construction of the community-led Marinde weir completed, reducing grazing pressure in the sensitive Kondundo area.

6,102 visitors generated
US\$62,590 in park revenue.

Aviation hangar completed and fitted with additional anchor points to expand aircraft operations.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- Land Use Plan finalised and endorsed.
- Complete Annual Aerial Survey across entire park, producing updated population estimates for springbok, gemsbok and Hartmann's mountain zebra.
- Complete a value-chain analysis and valorisation of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) of Iona.
- Ensure at least 50% of priority communities have functional emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, including reporting and grievance resolution channels.
- Open the new semi-permanent tented camp with minimum 10% occupancy.



Wildlife monitoring in Iona National Park expanded through the deployment of 15 camera traps, documenting 21 wild mammal species © Emma Badger



Pendjari National Park, Benin, is an important refuge for West African wildlife, including the Tantalus monkey © Marcus Westberg



Benin

PENDJARI NATIONAL PARK

2,784 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2017

Broader Landscape: 3,660 km²

PARK MANAGER : HABTEYESUS M. TADESSE

MAJOR FUNDERS The Government of Benin, Elephant Crisis Fund, European Union, Lion Recovery Fund, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Wyss Foundation

W NATIONAL PARK

5,770 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2020

Broader Landscape: 1,189 km²

PARK MANAGER : ABDEL-AZIZ BELLO

MAJOR FUNDERS The Government of Benin, Elephant Crisis Fund, European Union, Lion Recovery Fund, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Government of Benin



The Government of Benin signed a management partnership agreement with African Parks in 2017 to rehabilitate and develop Pendjari National Park, followed by W National Park in 2020. This partnership is implemented through the Centre National de Gestion des Réserves de Faune (CENAGREF), the government agency mandated to ensure the conservation and sustainable management of protected wildlife areas, and the Agence Nationale des Patrimoines Touristiques (ANPT), responsible for promoting Benin's natural, historical, and cultural heritage as part of the country's national tourism development agenda. The restoration of Pendjari and W National Parks forms part of Benin's broader national investment programme to strengthen conservation, tourism, and sustainable development.



In a regional context marked by persistent insecurity and socio-economic vulnerability, Pendjari National Park has continued to invest in programmes that strengthen livelihoods while fostering a shared commitment to conservation. Despite the security challenges, these investments – from enhanced dialogue to socio-economic interventions – have contributed to community resilience and stability, built trust in the park and deepened a shared sense of ownership over the landscape's future.

Income-generating initiatives remained central to this progress. In 2025, these included the donation of equipment to advance the production capacity of five agri-food processing cooperatives. The 71 beneficiary cooperatives received processing mills,

kitchen equipment and stoves, thus improving the processing of rice and soya.

Other community-based enterprises generated US\$25,213 in revenue. These included the production of 350 litres of neem oil, which provided income for a women-led cooperative, while seven beekeeping groups produced 1,563 litres of honey and community fishing activities supported 81 fishing cooperatives. The park helped establish new women-led initiatives, such as a shea nut collection and processing cooperative. Pendjari now supports 17 local cooperatives with 396 active members, including 183 women, promoting more inclusive local development.

As local production capacity grows and quality improves, the park is working to ensure sustainable, reliable demand for community products. One of the primary means is the "PUR" brand, which continued to expand toward full commercial rollout, providing a guaranteed market for products such as honey, neem oil and processed foodstuffs. Through this model, the park acts as both a market catalyst and a dependable buyer, offering producers predictable income while generating modest commercial revenue for the park

through resale. PUR therefore serves a dual purpose: bolstering local economies and contributing to the park's financial sustainability.

Additional livelihood support was provided to 320 farmers through material and technical assistance to promote sustainable agriculture in the Controlled Occupation Zone (ZOC) and Seri area. Following the rehabilitation of 13 boreholes, communities reported much easier access to safe drinking water. In Kani, residents noted that the restored pump now functions reliably, easing the daily burden of collecting water.

"Our only hand-operated pump was broken and we had great difficulty getting drinking water... Thanks to the intervention of the Pendjari management, everything has been repaired. Today, the water flows easily. This is a huge relief for us, especially the women, in our daily work."

JACQUELINE NONTI,
KANI VILLAGE, MUNICIPALITY OF MATÉRI

Youth livelihoods also received attention. Ten young people completed vocational training, reinforcing future employment opportunities through diversified livelihoods, and reducing dependence on unsustainable practices such as bushmeat hunting.

The park has generated substantial economic impact at the local level more directly, through employment and the sourcing of goods and services from local suppliers. A total of 394 full-time Beninese staff were employed, with more than 50 casual workers, resulting in US\$2,360,782 in salaries paid into the local economy. During 2025, the acquisition of goods and contracting of local service providers amounted to US\$1,892,474, stimulating regional markets and supporting local enterprises. Overall, park operations injected more than US\$4.25 million into the local economy, reinforcing the Pendjari landscape's role as both a critical conservation area and a meaningful driver of economic activity.

The progress made in Pendjari in 2025 is inseparable from the people who made it – teams, communities and partners working in conditions that would stop most programmes entirely. That they continue, and that the results show, says everything about the commitment behind this work.

2025 KEY UPDATES



11 elephant collared, bringing the total number being monitored to 19.

22,690 cattle belonging to 291 herders were vaccinated.

6,176 seedlings planted in Pendjari's annual reforestation programme.

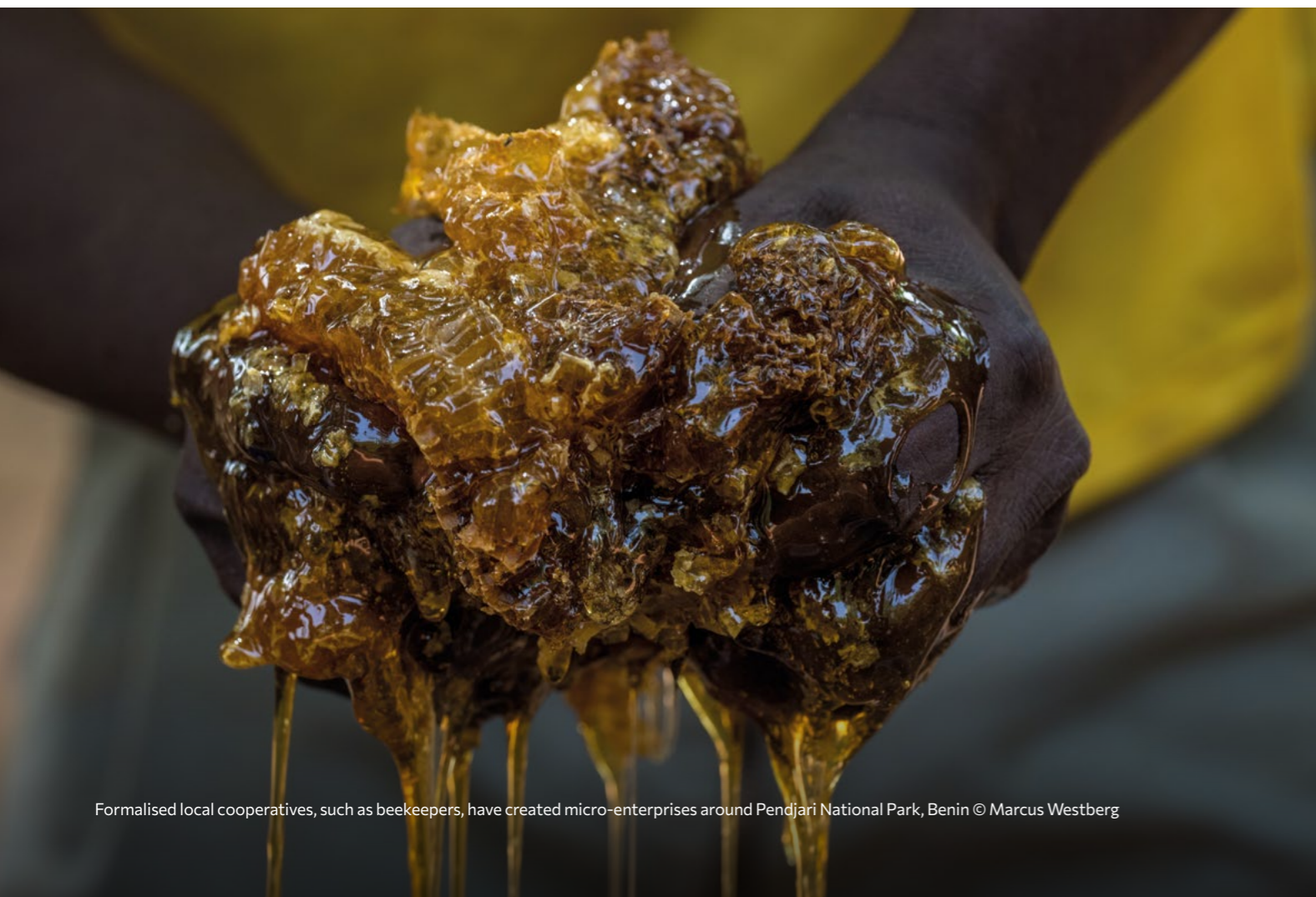
Carbon project operational, enabling carbon funding to contribute to park revenue, community development and government.

56 schools supported, benefitting nearly 9,000 children.

Six new wildlife clubs created, bringing the total to 24 with 2,387 participants.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Establish a management plan for the Seri area; open 60 km of its perimeter road.
- ▶ 10% of Pendjari ZOC to be managed in line with the Land Use Plan.
- ▶ Rehabilitate public school infrastructure and provide education materials for 3,000 schoolchildren.
- ▶ Income-generating activities and sustainable natural resources management plan to generate \$30,000 for local communities.
- ▶ Park's net income from carbon to close the 2026 funding requirements; community revenue sharing fully implemented from the first carbon payments received.





W National Park operates in one of the most challenging security environments in the region, with persistent instability compounding the pressures of pastoralism, agriculture and cotton production on the surrounding landscape. Managing these competing demands requires coordination well beyond the park boundary. In 2025, landscape-level land-use planning was one of the primary frameworks through which the park worked to stabilise ecological processes and maintain the long-term viability of conservation across the wider system.

Following two years of consultation with national and regional stakeholders, a Land Use Plan was finalised in 2025 to address the competing pressures around the park. Its phased implementation is designed to safeguard core conservation areas while guiding

agricultural and pastoral practices in ways compatible with conservation objectives. To support rollout, a complementary mapping study of the park's five-kilometre buffer zone was launched, covering riparian corridors, watershed systems, pasture areas and farmlands, and informing sustainable land-use practices from 2026 onward.

Several targeted income-generating initiatives were supported. Four cooperatives, specialising in vegetable oils, beekeeping, baobab fruit harvesting and fishing, benefitted 171 members. This included 57 beekeepers who managed 480 beehives and produced 1,779 litres of honey; 67 community members harvested 14 tonnes of baobab fruits in the Djona area; and 47 women from the vegetable oils cooperative processed 515 litres of shea and nut oils. Youth entrepreneurship also advanced with a second cohort of 20 young people completing a vocational training programme, receiving equipment and materials to begin or expand their own businesses in agroecology, nurseries and poultry.

Over the year, W National Park offered stable, long-term employment opportunities to 360 residents, a core team complemented by more than 40 casual

workers. Together this resulted in US\$2.36M injected directly into the area's economy through wages and labour contracts. At the same time, the park prioritised local suppliers, sourcing US\$2.8M-worth of goods and services from small enterprises, supporting the growth of markets and artisans, and reinforcing the park's role as a key economic pillar in the region. Overall, more than US\$4.28 million circulated within the immediate economy as a result of the park's operations in 2025.

Improving access to basic services, particularly water, was also a focus during the year. The park restored the Alfakoara community borehole, equipping it with solar systems, watering troughs and metal towers. The Batran community dam was rehabilitated, improving water availability for people and livestock. Procurement for the Guene community dam was also completed, with work to begin in 2026. Together, these initiatives improve daily living conditions and reduce pressure on natural resources within the park.

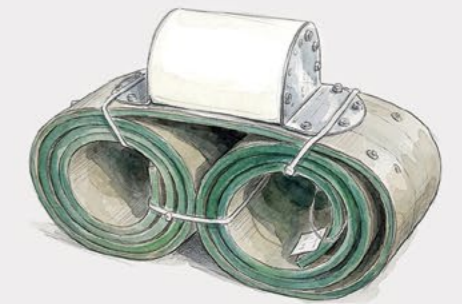
"WNP really helped my business. I had a small incubator, but had egg losses, so thanks to training and financial support, I bought a modern incubator with a 352-egg capacity, increasing production capacity and my revenue"

MOUTÉNI OROU MARO, YOUNG AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING PROGRAMME

Limited access to education remains a constraint for long term stability in communities surrounding W National Park, shaping livelihood options and future opportunity. In 2025, two schools were rehabilitated, while environmental education efforts reached 4,310 pupils and 190 teachers across 109 schools. Two additional wildlife clubs brought the total to 20, engaging 1,090 pupils in conservation activities. Targeted assistance for 25 vulnerable children – including school supplies, furniture and exam fees – helped reduce the risk of school dropout and support continued learning.

By aligning conservation with sustainable land use practices and targeted socio economic investments, W National Park is working to create the conditions under which biodiversity can be maintained, ecosystem services can recover, and people and wildlife can coexist within one of Benin's most important protected areas.

2025 KEY UPDATES



**12 elephant collared;
19 individuals monitored.**

1,093 seedlings planted, bringing the total to 1,957 trees planted since 2024.

Community Constituency Index recorded a score of 79.5%, up from 61.7% in 2023.

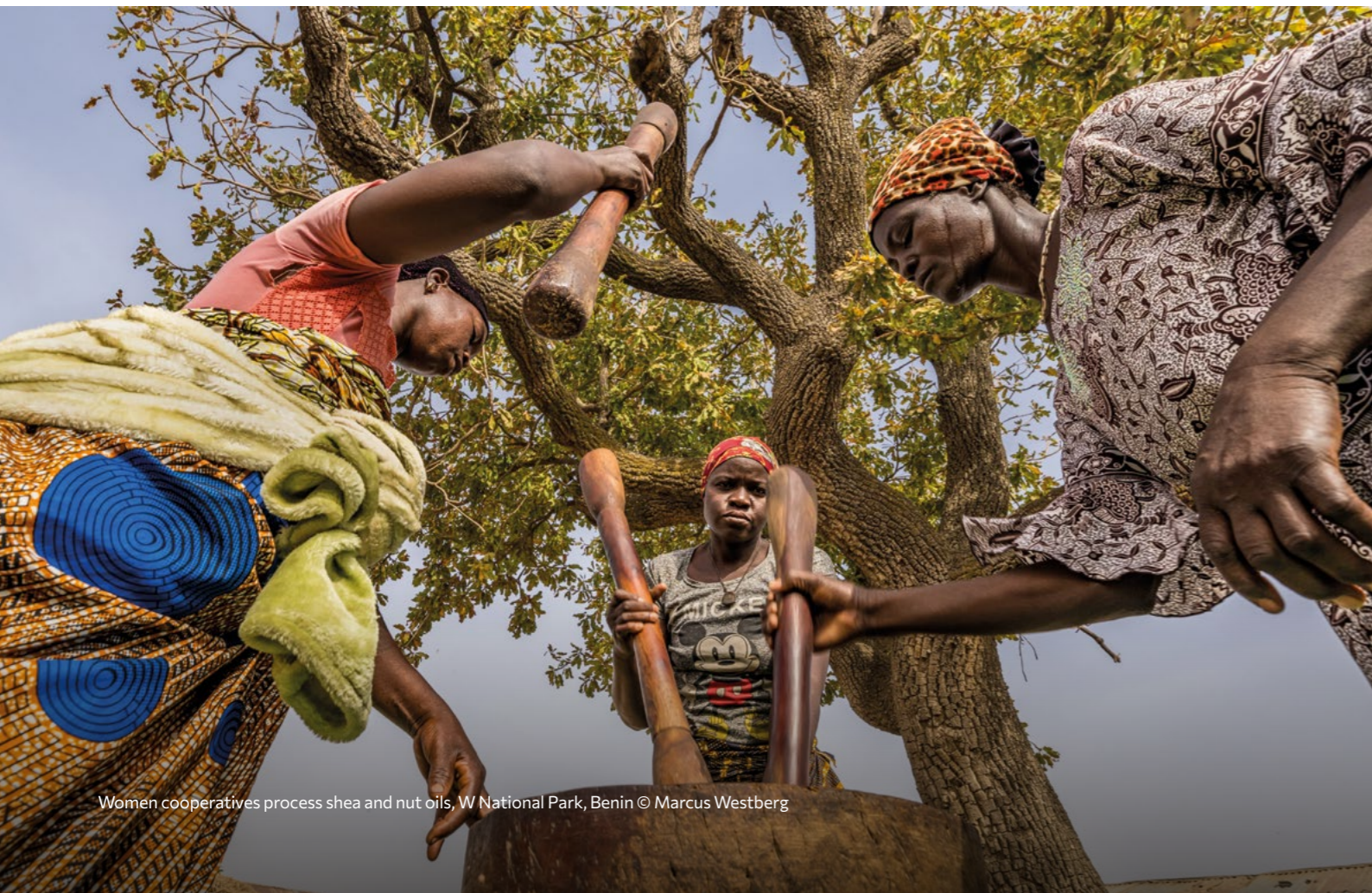
School canteen programme reached 5,807 schoolchildren in 22 schools.

Carbon project operational, enabling the first funding cycle of US\$790,704 for 2024–2025 operations.

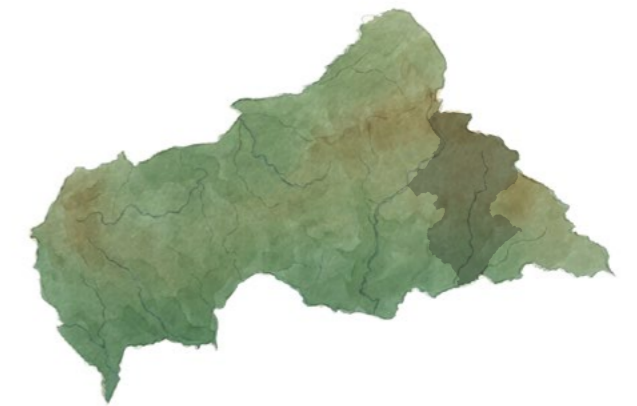
Operational base protection was increased with a 200-metre fence extension and security infrastructure completed.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Ensure no criminal activity against Alfakoara and Kandi bases.
- ▶ Manage at least 3,000 ha of buffer zone in the Kandi area in line with the Land Use Plan.
- ▶ Complete the rehabilitation and handover of the Guene community dam.
- ▶ Generate at least US\$30,000 for local communities through income-generating activities and sustainable natural resource management.
- ▶ Implement community revenue-sharing under first year of carbon funding; use net income from second tranche to help close 2026 funding gap.



Women cooperatives process shea and nut oils, W National Park, Benin © Marcus Westberg



Central African Republic

CHINKO

24,335 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2014

Broader Landscape: 30,945 km²

PARK MANAGER : JEAN-BAPTISTE MAMANG-KANGA

MAJOR FUNDERS Bel Group, Elephant Crisis Fund, European Union, Good Energies, Lion Recovery Fund, Rainforest Trust, The Rob Walton Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing



The Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries of the Central African Republic (CAR) is responsible for developing and implementing Government policy on water, forests, wildlife, hunting and fisheries. It provides the regulatory and institutional framework, oversees the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources, and coordinates partnerships with national and international stakeholders. In 2014, the Ministry entered into a public-private partnership with African Parks for the management of the Chinko Conservation Area in eastern CAR. This agreement was later revised and extended to a 25-year mandate signed in 2020.



Chinko Conservation Area (CCA) is one of Central Africa's most ecologically significant landscapes - and one of the greatest opportunities on the continent for integrated conservation and landscape management. Covering a vast area of eastern Central African Republic, Chinko sits at the intersection of seasonal pastoralism, subsistence fishing, agriculture and the livelihoods of diverse neighbouring communities. The challenge and the opportunity are the same: managing these overlapping land uses through shared governance, agreed rules and genuine co-ownership of the landscape's future.

In 2025, the formal framework for that approach was strengthened. Guided by the Territorial Development Master Plan (SDAT, in French) and a decree from the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries, a macro-zoning framework was established for the broader Chinko landscape. This provided the first formal structure for reconciling conservation priorities, community resource needs and land-use decisions across the area, and forms the backbone of Chinko's integrated development strategy going forward.

Building on this foundation, neighbouring communities increasingly led the annual multi-stakeholder consultation process, which brings together resource users, customary authorities, local leaders and technical services to review past activities and inform governance decisions. These platforms clarified rules of access and use, documented agreements and strengthened local support for protected area management.

The Nganga lakes within the CCA offer a clear example of this model in practice. Since 2024, these lakes - where seasonal fishing is central to food security and income in communities like Fodé - have been a focal point for dialogue between conservation teams and communities. Through structured consultation and the park's grievance mechanism, concerns around access were raised, heard and addressed. The outcome was significant: the lakes were formally recognised as community-managed areas, embedding use rights within a co-management framework rather than leaving them contested.

Fishing across the broader landscape was also strengthened through the training of 200 fishers from the sub-federations of Bangassou, Rafai, Ouango and Béma in the 'acadja' technique - a traditional West African method using brush enclosures in water bodies to attract and concentrate fish, allowing for controlled, sustainable harvesting without damaging aquatic habitats. Five acadja ponds subsequently produced 1,114 kg of fish in Rafai and 97 kg in Ouango, supplementing income and reducing pressure on wild stocks.

The inauguration of the Ndolo saltlick observation platform in January further embedded shared stewardship. The mirador - a raised wildlife observation structure positioned at a natural saltlick, where animals congregate to access minerals - was built in partnership with communities and is maintained by the Ouanda, Ndenguïro, Yakossi, Fodé and Lengo communities. It supports biodiversity monitoring and environmental education while giving communities a direct role in wildlife oversight.

Transhumance management saw comparable progress. Targeted awareness and mediation, combined with unarmed law enforcement, helped guide herders towards identified corridors and encouraged rotational grazing, reducing friction linked to seasonal cattle movements and protecting sensitive habitats.

Livelihoods were strengthened through local sourcing of produce for Chinko operations across 17 sites and eight product categories, agricultural training for 100 participants, and the distribution of cassava cuttings and rice seeds. Village Savings and Loan Associations - community-led financial cooperatives that pool savings and provide small loans to members - expanded to 24 groups across Bakouma and Rafai, representing 678 beneficiaries.

"In the past, animals like elephant were poached and fled the area. Today, thanks to the work that Chinko has done with communities, our children who have never seen elephant, lion or leopard will be able to see them and be part of protecting them."

ISAÏE ZAMBOLO, PRESIDENT OF YAKOSSI (ZACKO-BAC) BRANCH, FRIENDS OF CHINKO ASSOCIATION

Through the carbon revenue sharing scheme, US\$257,379 was invested via the Community Development Fund into 41 community-led projects, covering school and health centre infrastructure, water access points, roads and teacher fees.

Across all of this work, the common thread is co-design: access and resource-use rules defined with communities, agreed through consultation, and implemented through practical actions. The emphasis on dialogue and shared governance reflects a longer-term effort to align conservation and livelihoods in a landscape where both depend on the same natural systems.

2025 KEY UPDATES



89 camera traps deployed to document wildlife.

30,000 km² remained free from illegal human activity in 2025.

Food production projects produced 96,860 kg of rice and 5,200 kg of market products.

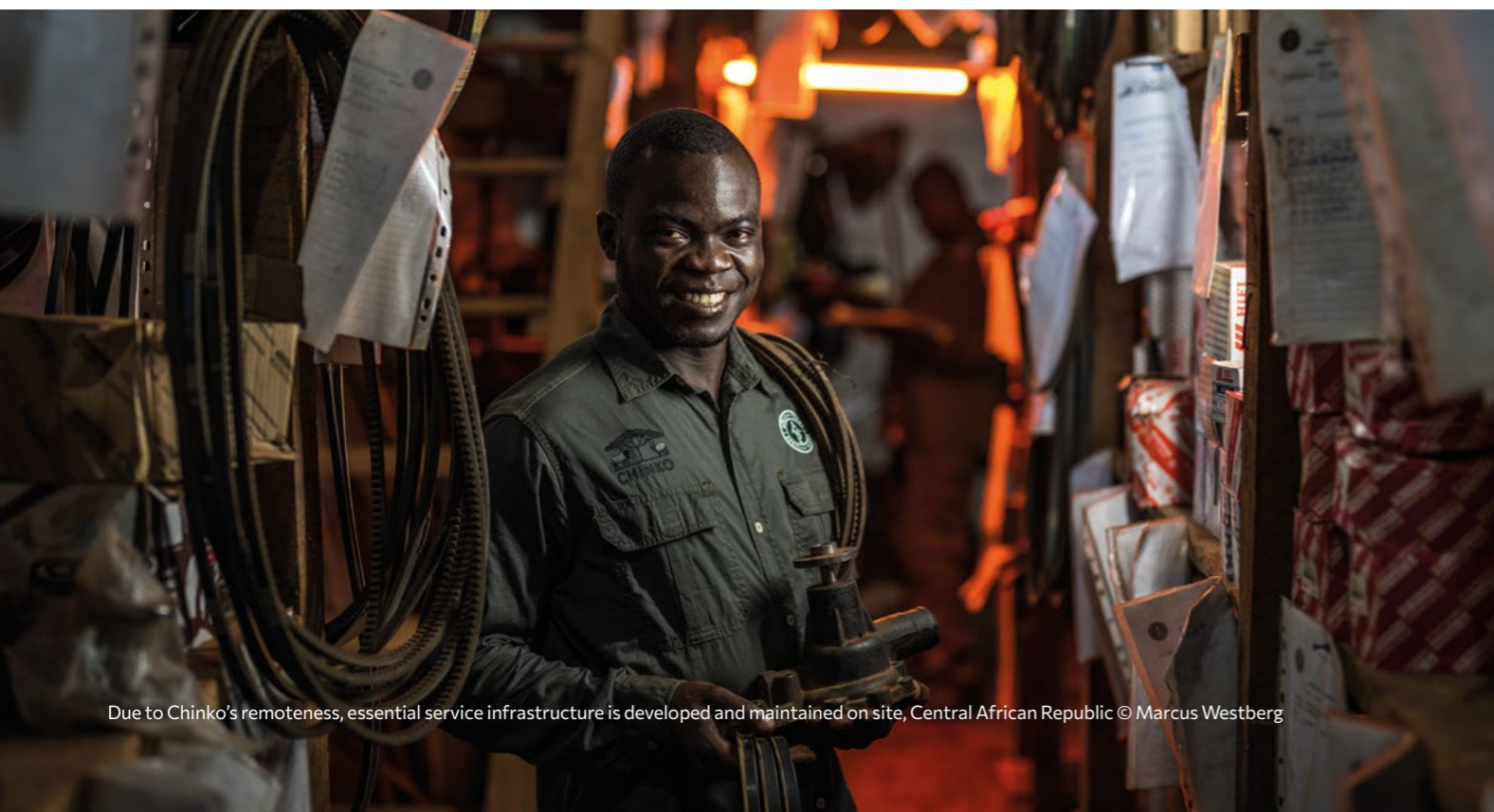
69 mass outreach events reached 15,255 participants.

8 wildlife clubs, comprising 176 members, supported.

Improved access through construction of 456.6 km and maintenance of 2,112 km of roads.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Implement the SDAT as a management framework across 15 community hunting zones.
- ▶ Strengthen the management of transhumance corridors to reduce incursions and safeguard habitats.
- ▶ Conduct annual monitoring of key species and pressures, including track counts and aerial livestock surveys.
- ▶ Source 80% of products from local communities.
- ▶ Advance the Community Development Fund through consultations, trained management committees, scaling, and transparent monitoring of funds.



Due to Chinko's remoteness, essential service infrastructure is developed and maintained on site, Central African Republic © Marcus Westberg



Chad

ENNEDI NATURAL & CULTURAL RESERVE

50,141 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2017

PARK MANAGER : ISSAKHA GONNEY GUIRKI

MAJOR FUNDERS European Union,
Fondation Segré, Stichting Natura Africae

SINIAKA MINIA NATIONAL PARK

4,643 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2017

PARK MANAGER : GUY MBONE

MAJOR FUNDERS The Dhanam Foundation, European Union,
U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International
Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

ZAKOUMA NATIONAL PARK

3,054 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2010

Bahr Salamat Faunal Reserve : 20,950 km²

PARK MANAGER : CYRIL PÉLISSIER

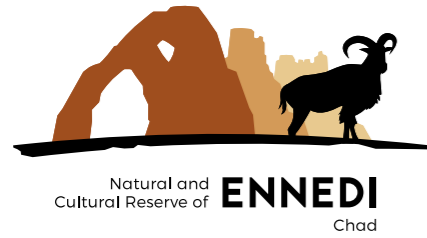
MAJOR FUNDERS Elephant Crisis Fund, European Union,
Lion Recovery Fund, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International
Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

The Republic of Chad



The Government of Chad partners with African Parks through the Ministry of Environment, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, the government authority responsible for the design, coordination, and implementation of national policies on environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, sustainable natural resource management, fisheries, aquaculture, and climate change. The Ministry works to balance economic development with environmental sustainability and signed its first management agreement with African Parks in 2010 for Zakouma National Park. Since 2017, this partnership has expanded to include Siniaka-Minia Faunal Reserve (classified as a National Park in 2024), Bahr Salamat Faunal Reserve, and the Ennedi Natural and Cultural Reserve.



The Ennedi Natural and Cultural Reserve (ENCR) spans a remote and environmentally fragile landscape in north-eastern Chad, where communities have lived for generations within some of Africa's most distinctive desert and semi-arid ecosystems. Human development and conservation are not separate goals - they depend intricately on one another. In 2025, ENCR continued to invest in education, adult literacy, women's participation and livelihoods as the foundation for long-term community resilience and conservation.

Access to education remains a significant challenge in the region. For girls in particular, distance to school, early marriage and household responsibilities continue to limit attendance and completion. Addressing these barriers is central to ENCR's community work - not only because education improves individual prospects,

but because it strengthens the broader social fabric on which stable, long-term conservation depends.

A key step in 2025 was the establishment of the local office of the Association of Mothers of Schoolgirls (AMEF) in the sub-prefecture of Archi. AMEF mobilises mothers to support school attendance, particularly for girls, reinforcing the link between families and schools and building a community-level commitment to education. The launch brought together administrative, educational and traditional authorities. The Chief of Archi canton offered strong support, urging parents to prioritise girls' schooling as an investment in their communities' future. Fifty women participated - a clear signal of local engagement.

The Archi initiative formed part of a wider education programme implemented across the reserve. In collaboration with the National Education Delegations and local associations, ENCR supported 30 teachers working in 16 schools serving 793 students, including 323 girls. School kits were distributed to all pupils to reduce financial barriers, while three school canteens helped improve attendance and concentration. Three new school buildings - each comprising two classrooms - were constructed in Fada, Ouro and Bachikélé,

providing safe and durable learning environments.

Environmental education was woven throughout the year's school and community work. A total of 911 schoolchildren participated in sessions linking local knowledge to biodiversity and sustainable resource management - connecting what communities know about the landscape to broader conservation goals.

"I encourage parents to enrol more girls in school to ensure a better future for them. The example of the ENCR community facilitator, who is a woman from our province, clearly shows that girls' education opens up real opportunities for success and contribution to local development."

CHIEF OF ARCHI CANTON

Adult literacy classes continued to expand, with 79 women gaining reading, writing and numeracy skills. The classes are often complemented by cultural activities including singing, which has made them a space for connection as much as learning. Beyond the skills themselves, the classes have strengthened women's confidence and their capacity to support their children's schooling - and reinforced their voice in community decision-making, in a landscape where women are central to family wellbeing but have historically had limited access to formal education.

Livelihood support centred on rain-fed agriculture and market gardening, with training provided on biopesticides and soil management - practical tools that help farming communities adapt to an unpredictable climate. Local products including dried hibiscus and Chadian tea were promoted to diversify income, connecting communities to wider markets through what the landscape itself produces.

Together, these initiatives reflect the reserve's broader approach: supporting human development as a foundation for sustainable conservation. ENCR's education and community engagement work has helped strengthen connections between families, schools and the reserve, fostering greater participation and a shared understanding of conservation values. As more women take on leadership roles and more young people access quality learning environments, the conditions are being built for communities to shape the future of Ennedi alongside the park team.

2025 KEY UPDATES



Six GPS-tracked addax tracked; 69 ostriches counted in the wild and 16 at Sougounaw Farm.

Community engagement reached 2,948 people through 53 local meetings and 9 awareness sessions.

Logistical support provided for 4,456 children's polio vaccinations.

Over 1,000 kg of seeds distributed to 261 farmers, and training provided.

Local expenditure reached US\$2.7M through park procurement and services.

408 new archaeology sites documented, raising the total to nearly 500 recorded locations.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Reduce illegal natural resource extraction by 30% and implement habitat management plan for all operational areas.
- ▶ Restore and conserve key species, including dama gazelle, oryx and addax, with a target of 100 ostriches in the wild.
- ▶ Validate and implement the land use and management plan, ensuring full engagement of community focal points across the reserve.
- ▶ Build knowledge of Ennedi's archaeological heritage by identifying 400 new sites, conducting excavations, enhancing databases, and promoting five iconic sites.





Siniaka Minia National Park continued to build its role as a conservation and community partnership anchor throughout 2025. Covering 4,643 km² and managed in partnership with the Government of Chad since 2017, the area was formally elevated to National Park status in February 2024. This designation bolstered its strategic importance within the broader landscape and provided impetus to its long-term objective of restoring a functional ecosystem.

In advancing conservation activities, the park ranger team increased its field presence and upgraded technological monitoring; these supported efforts to secure sensitive areas, prevent illegal resource use, and create better conditions for wildlife recovery. Measures ranged from addressing illegal fishing in Kitiga to maintaining water sources critical during the dry season. Scientific data collection, including

the tagging of seven buffalo, four Kordofan giraffe and two elephant provided essential information on movement patterns and habitat use, supporting evidence-based decisions and helping identify priority corridors for conservation. Track counting was carried out over 2,025 kilometres, providing essential data on species distribution. An intensive aerial assessment in the Dafra region further contributed to understanding the interaction between elephant and agricultural zones, aligning with national biodiversity priorities and informing mitigation measures to support coexistence.

As part of this aim, the park expanded its support for livelihood initiatives that promote sustainable resource use. By helping to organise producer groups, increase access to equipment, and improve management of the value chain, the park is working with existing cooperatives to ensure that products are processed, marketed, and sold under conditions that benefit households and encourage long-term economic participation. In this way, the landscape's natural resources are becoming a direct source of income for surrounding communities, reinforcing the connection between conservation and local livelihoods.

Women's cooperatives producing balanites oil and

shea butter remained a key focus, with a notable advancement achieved through the certification of these products by the Centre for Food Quality Control. Certification has introduced recognised standards for quality and traceability, so that producer groups can meet market expectations and build consumer confidence. This formalisation supports the emergence of more professional and competitive enterprises, while reinforcing the broader objective of linking sustainable natural resource management with diversified rural economies.

Small-scale trade and service activities also benefitted from the park's engagement. Siniaka Minia continued to work with cooperatives and community associations to develop business skills and organisational practices, and boost access to regional markets. These initiatives reflect a wider effort to expand livelihood options and ensure that communities surrounding the park are better able to manage environmental uncertainties and economic pressures. Meanwhile, the construction of the new park headquarters enabled meaningful local employment.

"Before, we used to crush the balanites with stones; now we use a crusher and can produce large quantities of oil, which we sell at the market to buy millet and feed our families."

MS TCHILAGA BARKA, PRESIDENT OF THE ANDI WOMEN'S BALANITES OIL PRODUCERS' GROUP

Siniaka Minia continued rehabilitating and installing boreholes and water points to enable safe and healthy access to water and reduce pressure on shared natural resources. The completion of a drinking-water system in the village of Andi provided a long-term solution to persistent water quality challenges. To strengthen the health system and access to basic healthcare, essential medicines were provided to Daguella health centre, contributing to improved health and wellbeing for communities living around the park.

Siniaka Minia's work in 2025 underscored the interconnected nature of conservation and development in the greater landscape, and the importance of building a climate of security and mutual trust. Solid partnerships, consistent governance and adaptability to the Sahelian context remain essential to this work.

2025 KEY UPDATES



14 villages took part in a survey to document community-wildlife relationships.

68 camera traps and collars on 7 species enabled monitoring and real-time surveillance.

Education support included 267 scholarships (113 girls), and construction of Moreh School.

310 km of roads and 6 airstrips constructed.

791 people benefitted from water and sanitation interventions.

26 cooperatives currently supported, representing 735 people, 70% of whom are women.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Launch sustainable fisheries management model to enhance long-term natural resource stewardship.
- ▶ Launch initial park visitation programme for local youth and schools.
- ▶ Reduce impact of late-season fires and illegal pastoralism by 30%.
- ▶ Five sustainable socio-economic initiatives to deliver measurable community benefits.
- ▶ Achieve 100% operational coverage through dual communication networks, alongside full law enforcement and Tango patrols.



Siniaka Minia National Park, Chad's youngest national park, plays a vital role in maintaining wildlife corridors that connect to other protected areas
© Marcus Westberg



2025 was Zakouma National Park's most challenging year yet. In October, the Government of Chad terminated the management partnerships for the Greater Zakouma Ecosystem and the Ennedi Natural and Cultural Reserve. The decision prompted an intensive period of dialogue, and eleven days later the mandates were reinstated – a reflection of the underlying strength of a partnership built over 15 years. Both parties signed a joint statement committing to negotiate new, strengthened agreements for Zakouma, Siniaka Minia and Ennedi, in a spirit of goodwill and cooperation, reaffirming a shared responsibility for Chad's extraordinary natural heritage. It was a process that required honesty and humility from everyone involved, and it demonstrated something that long-term conservation partnerships depend on: the willingness of all parties to come to the table when difficulties arise and work through them together. This is ultimately what determines the outcome.

The year also brought loss. In January, four members of the Chadian National and Nomadic Guard were killed during an encounter with poachers in the Bahr Salamat Wildlife Reserve – a sobering reminder of the risks carried by those protecting this landscape every day. In May, Zakouma lost two of its own team members in a tragic plane crash: Hamid Nichola Taloua, the head of the rhino monitoring unit who had been part of the Zakouma team since 2018, and Charles van Eden, a pilot who had joined in 2025. Both served with professionalism and dedication, and they are deeply missed.

Renewed illegal hunting pressure resulted in the loss of several giraffe in the Bahr Salamat Wildlife Reserve and two black rhino in Zakouma. This was driven in part by regional instability linked to the ongoing civil war in Sudan, which has increased the circulation of small arms in south-eastern Chad. Operational capacity was immediately boosted, coordination with national and local authorities deepened, and the commitment of Chadian government partners, traditional leaders and state services all helped to stabilise the situation. Long-standing conservation gains remain vulnerable in rapidly changing contexts, and strategies must adapt accordingly.

In February, an inclusive consultation process was initiated with sedentary and nomadic communities

on the planning and management of the Bahr Salamat Wildlife Reserve. There was broad agreement on the importance of participatory, inclusive management, both to conserve the biodiversity of the wider landscape and to support a local economy grounded in sustainable natural resource use. Eight facilitators specialising in pastoralism and ten community focal points were recruited to enhance daily communication with residents. This work, carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, will culminate in 2026 with a formal management plan and regulations to guide management of the landscape.

Progress was also made in sustainable conservation financing. In December, the Verifiable Nature Units pilot project was independently verified and the first units issued – a meaningful step toward an outcomes-based mechanism for monitoring and financing conservation at scale.

"In 2025, Zakouma was severely tested. Yet, thanks to our strong partnerships, we showed that resilience is not only a response to challenges, but a driver for building a safer, more sustainable future for biodiversity, communities, and the development of this unique landscape."

MAHAMAT MOUSSA, DEPUTY PARK MANAGER,
GREATER ZAKOUMA ECOSYSTEM

Human rights training was carried out for teams and partners throughout the year, contributing to a period without major incidents. Communities and government partners reaffirmed their commitment to the relationship and the work ahead. Collaboration with local authorities, NGOs and community leaders helped maintain stable, constructive conditions, allowing the management team to focus on long-term planning and the reinforcement of systems and partnerships.

2025 was not the year anyone would have chosen. But the work continued – through loss, uncertainty, and a process of institutional reflection that required dedication and resilience from everyone involved. What carried Zakouma through 2025 was not any single decision or outcome, but the people – teams, communities and partners – who remained committed throughout.

2025 KEY UPDATES



79 animals monitored, including 38 elephant, 10 giraffe, 11 hartebeest and 9 tiang.

More than 1,300 Kordofan giraffe live in Zakouma, more than 55% of the global wild population.

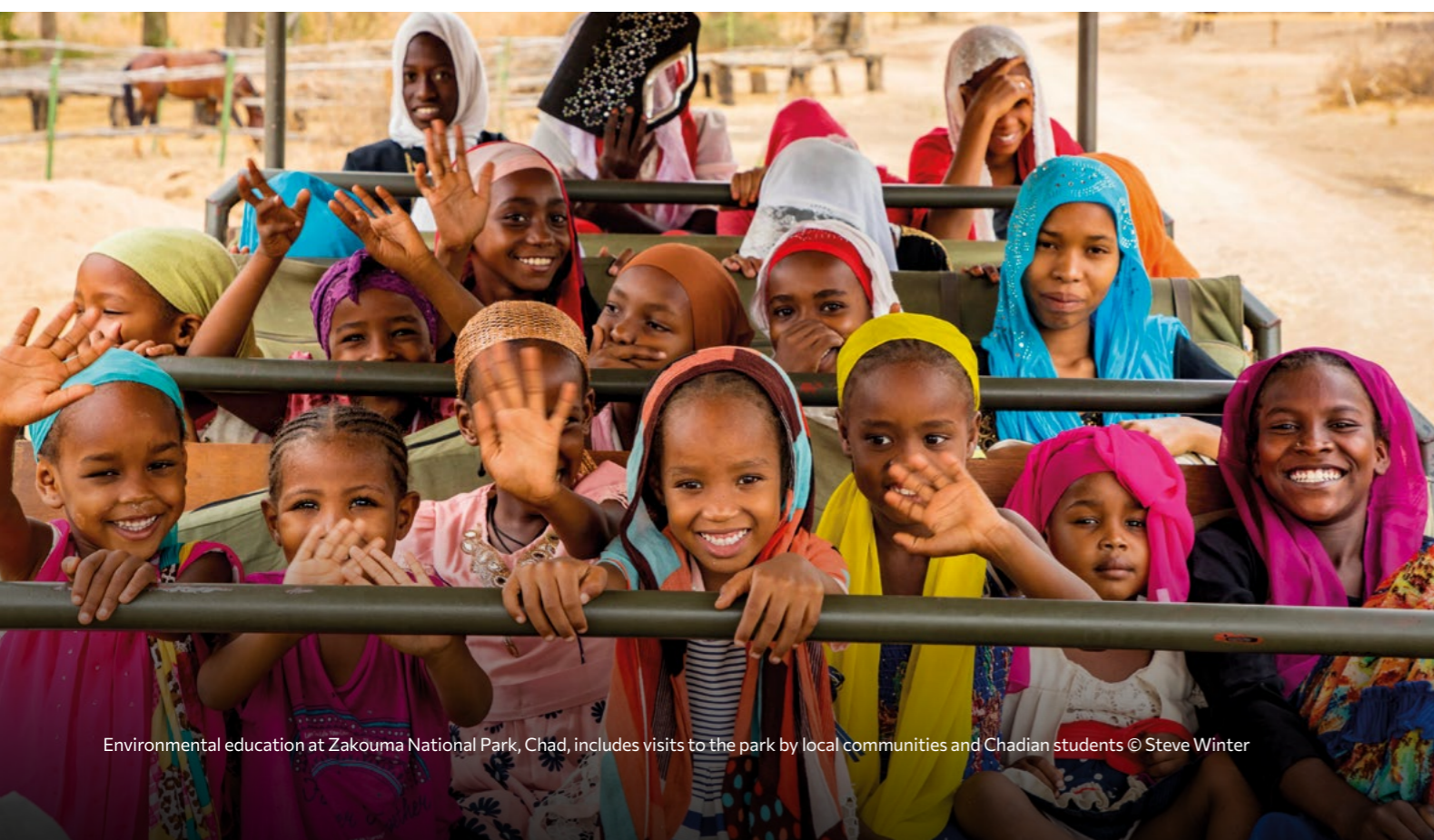
10,716 people benefitted from park-supported health interventions and centres.

16 schools and 12 wildlife clubs with 7,434 participants supported; nearly 400 scholarships awarded.

Domestic tourism increased, with more than 6,300 Chadians visiting.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

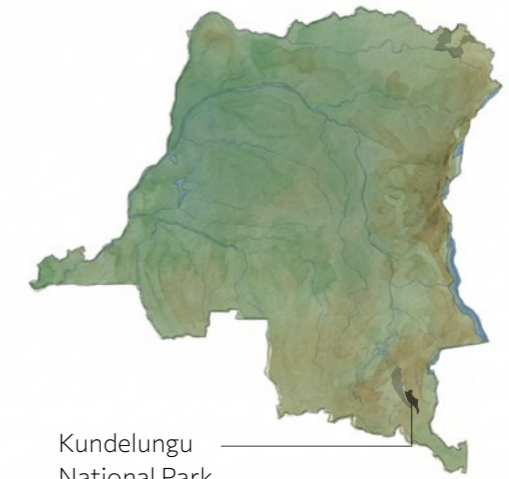
- ▶ Train and deploy 12 Périferrick-Tango agents to monitor transhumance regulations and support habitat connectivity in the Bahr Salamat buffer zone.
- ▶ Roll out the human-wildlife conflict mitigation plan across 10 pilot villages, including focal point training, victim support and compensation.
- ▶ Grow tourism revenue across both camps and advance the concession process through expression of interest and tender stages.
- ▶ Deepen nature-based financing through continued VNU implementation and develop a carbon storage valuation concept for the wider ecosystem.
- ▶ Implement the South-Eastern Chad Conservation Landscape as a fully integrated and effectively managed conservation entity, ensuring coordinated management across all areas.



Environmental education at Zakouma National Park, Chad, includes visits to the park by local communities and Chadian students © Steve Winter



Kundelungu National Park in Democratic Republic of the Congo is a varied landscape of escarpments, grasslands, woodlands and immense waterfalls © Jean Labuschagne



Democratic Republic of Congo

GARAMBA NATIONAL PARK

5,133 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2005

Adjacent Domaine de Chasses 9,662 km²

PARK MANAGER : PHILIPPE DECOOP

MAJOR FUNDERS Elephant Crisis Fund, European Union, Lion Recovery Fund, The Rob Walton Foundation

KUNDELUNGU NATIONAL PARK

2,437 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2025

Annex 5,728 km²

SIGNED AT THE END OF 2025

MAJOR FUNDERS The Rob Walton Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN)



The Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) is a public entity housed under the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development tasked with the sustainable management of biodiversity in protected areas in the DRC, in cooperation with local communities and other partners. The ICCN oversees a natural and cultural heritage comprising nine national parks and a network of 80 reserves, covering over 13% of the country's area.



Garamba National Park is one of Africa's most complex and historically significant conservation landscapes. For two decades, African Parks and the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) have worked side by side to stabilise and restore this area in the north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The early years of the partnership were difficult. Regional instability had destabilised the broader landscape, exposing people and wildlife to serious risk. Elephant numbers had declined dramatically, and the northern white rhino, once a defining species of the park, had disappeared entirely from the system. Yet the foundations for recovery were laid: road networks cleared and maintained, VHF communications reestablished, and logistics systems developed in a park somewhat isolated by remoteness and

insecurity. Sustained investment in conservation law enforcement gradually restored the park's integrity, reducing illegal activity. These steps, implemented over two decades, created the conditions for both wildlife and communities to recover.

A consistent focus on intelligence-led conservation operations gradually reduced illegal activity in the park, enabling wildlife to stabilise and, eventually, to recover. By 2020, Garamba recorded a significant milestone: no rangers had lost their lives during contacts with poachers, and no elephant were lost to poaching. Further indicators of stability emerged, such as fewer armed contacts and stronger cooperation with neighbouring authorities. Wildlife numbers began to rebound, with Kordofan giraffe numbers increasing, while elephant populations rose from fewer than 600 in 2019 to close to a thousand today.

With improved security, the restoration of species lost to local extinction could also begin. In December 2025, 24 southern white rhino were translocated to the park, supplementing the first move that occurred in 2023. With the northern white rhino functionally extinct, the southern white rhino now fulfils that ecological role in Garamba. These translocations aim to establish a genetically viable breeding population to restore Garamba's ecological integrity and help secure

the species' future. Early signs of recovery are already visible, including the regeneration of grazing lawns that in turn benefit other species, indicating that key ecological processes are returning.

Thanks to these efforts, as well as broader improvements in regional stability, communities surrounding the park are increasingly engaged in conservation – through livelihoods, education, health and energy initiatives – and sharing in its benefits. Since 2018, Garamba's Sustainable Development Strategy has expanded access to essential services. Three solar mini grids now reach hundreds of households, health services through Nagero Hospital, Gangala health posts and mobile clinics have helped over 15,000 patients, and farmers are supported through Farmer Field Schools using agroecological and climate-smart agriculture practices. The opening of Camp Dungu in 2021 bolstered environmental education, hosting around 50 school visits each year and engaging approximately 5,000 students in conservation learning.

Two decades after the last rhino was lost in Garamba, trucks carrying southern white rhino crossed into the park. Such complex operations are only possible thanks to decades of hard work and progress on the ground.

While challenges remain, ranging from illegal wildlife trade to pressures linked to land use, refugee movement from South Sudan and gold mining, the trajectory of the past twenty years is unmistakably one of growth. The signing of a new ten-year management mandate between African Parks and ICCN in 2025 reflects a shared confidence in both the partnership and Garamba's continued recovery and long-term potential.

The park's progress has been possible through the sustained commitment of many partners and long-standing conservation allies: the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, ICCN, the European Union, local authorities and communities, and the teams working daily on the ground. Garamba's journey demonstrates that when partners stay the course together, through the complexity, even such challenging landscapes can move toward restoration, strengthened governance, and renewed stability. Safeguarding these gains remains an ongoing responsibility.

2025 KEY UPDATES



The Critically Endangered Kordofan giraffe population increased to 105 individuals.

Verifiable Nature Unit (VNU) audit and verification completed: 5,112 VNUs issued.

150 community volunteers across 25 village committees trained in human-wildlife conflict management.

Solar energy provided to 172 customers in Dungu and 493 customers in Faradje and Tadu.

Environmental education reached 6,422 participants across 98 schools.

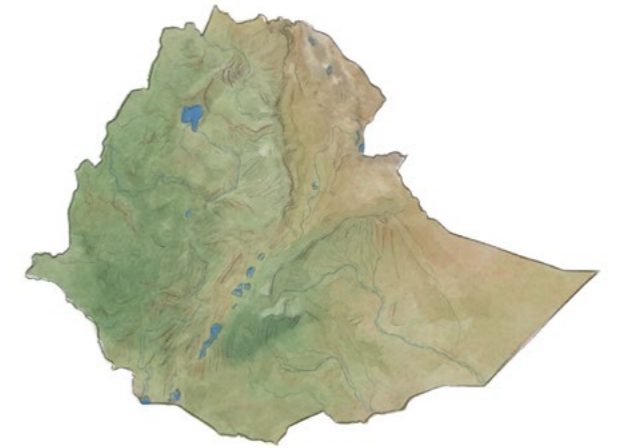
24 southern white rhino translocated to Garamba.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Conduct aerial survey to determine the population and distribution of medium- and large-sized mammals.
- ▶ Design and implement an approach to keep illegal pastoralists out of protected areas.
- ▶ Conduct a legal, environmental and social assessment to determine possibility of increasing the protection status of the Azande Hunting Zone.
- ▶ Contain extensions of existing and new mining sites, with the support of provincial and national state authorities. Reach agreement on land usage through a free, prior, and informed consent process with all stakeholders.
- ▶ Conduct third translocation of 30 southern white rhino.



Garamba National Park, DRC, helped expand access to reliable electricity through three solar mini-grids, reaching thousands of households © Wiki West



Ethiopia

GAMBELLA NATIONAL PARK

4,372 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2024

ACTING PARK MANAGER : ERIC BEDIN

MAJOR FUNDERS European Union,
Hempel Foundation, Lion Recovery Fund,
The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA)
& The Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS)

In 2024, African Parks entered into a 10-year renewable management agreement with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) and The Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS) to partner in managing Gambella National Park.



EWCA is mandated to conserve Ethiopia's wildlife through science-based conservation, enforcement of national and international laws, and the active participation of communities and stakeholders, ensuring benefits for present and future generations.



GPNRS is mandated to exercise legislative authority, administering public service and natural resources, promoting socio-economic and cultural development, maintaining peace and security and representing the interests of its diverse people all within the framework of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution.



In December 2024, African Parks signed a long-term management partnership with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) and the Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (the Gambella State) for the management of Gambella National Park. The agreement sets out a clear ambition: to enhance the conservation of the Great Nile Migration through safeguarding a key sanctuary within this landscape and strengthening cross-border collaboration with South Sudan's national parks.

The year that followed was intentionally focused on laying the foundations needed for responsible, long-term management: understanding the landscape, assessing risks, establishing operational capacity and building relationships with local communities and government partners.

A major milestone was the completion of the Environmental and Social Due Diligence (ESDD) assessment. Conducted in early 2025, the ESDD provides a baseline understanding of the park's risks and opportunities, engaging 265 people across 21

villages and drawing on Ethiopian legislation and international safeguard standards, thus combining community input with historical and operational analysis.

The assessment confirmed Gambella's exceptional ecological value within the transboundary Great Nile Migration system, as well as strong community willingness to engage in conservation. Importantly, while gaps were identified, from structured grievance mechanisms to ranger safeguards and land-use clarity, none were deemed unmanageable, particularly given the early stage of the partnership. All risks were found to be addressable through a clear Environmental and Social Action Plan, which will be implemented by the park team.

Alongside this baseline, a series of complementary assessments deepened the park's understanding of the social landscape. Structured engagement sessions with more than 110 community representatives introduced the park's mission and management approach, while discussions focused on sustainable resource use, benefit sharing and conflict-resolution mechanisms. These sessions led to the creation of 12 Community Committees comprising 91 members, marking the beginning of a more inclusive governance framework that will support participatory decision-making as park operations progress. Health facility assessments across 11 clinics serving park-adjacent communities highlighted gaps in sanitation, maternal healthcare and health education, underscoring the need for

future healthcare support initiatives. A regional stakeholder mapping exercise further clarified the institutional landscape, identifying key actors influencing conservation outcomes, and supporting the design of coordinated governance structures.

Other appraisals included a comprehensive aerial survey, which provided data regarding wildlife distribution and population trends across the park and offering a critical baseline for species recovery planning. While many species showed significant declines from historical figures, importantly, buffalo numbers had increased. Additional landscape-level analysis was conducted in the Tedo Hunting Area, which was identified as a critical ecological corridor linking Ethiopia to South Sudan, essential for the movement of migratory species and the broader functioning of the Great Nile Migration.

"By beginning with due diligence and community dialogue, we have laid the groundwork for a thoughtful and informed approach to managing this special landscape."

HABTEYESUS MATHEWOS TADESSE,
PARK MANAGER

Important operational groundwork also began. A ten-week Basic Field Ranger training and selection process resulted in a cohort of 28 rangers forming the first conservation law enforcement team in Gambella. New operations facilities included the construction of an office and a workshop in Gambella Town, and the rehabilitation of Paju Forward Operating Base, which will serve as a strategic anchor for future field operations.

By year's end, Gambella had reached two administrative milestones: the completion of its first comprehensive Business Plan, establishing a structured financial framework, and holding its inaugural Board meeting, forming the basis for accountable, transparent governance.

Together, these efforts defined 2025 as a foundational year, where Gambella built the knowledge, partnerships and systems required for long-term management. The groundwork is now in place to enter the next phase of the park's journey. This is a long-term commitment to conservation grounded in partnership, and a first step in realising Gambella's exceptional potential.

2025 KEY UPDATES



First comprehensive wildlife assessment completed since 2015, confirming inundation-period migrations and lower wildlife numbers than expected.

Environmental and Social Due Diligence finalised and action plans developed.

Reviews of 29 schools highlighted opportunities to build wildlife clubs.

Construction began on 15 offices and two staff houses.

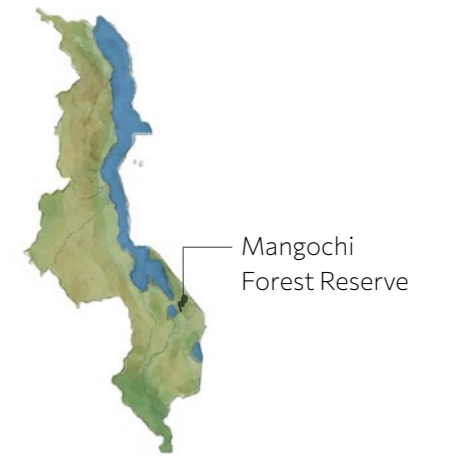
Formal HR Transition Plan agreed between EWCA and African Parks, clarifying staffing, secondments and compliance.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Reduce impacts from illegal resource use and poaching through management and collaboration, supporting wildlife population recovery.
- ▶ Identify opportunities in and around Gambella to guide long-term tourism development in the region.
- ▶ Fully staff the Community Team, enabling it to implement an effective Community Development Strategy.
- ▶ Launch community liaison committees across representative Woredas and Kebeles, and 10 school environmental clubs.
- ▶ Establish operational foundations required for effective landscape management including restoration of the Ranger Field Operations Base.



Gambella National Park supports large herds of buffalo © Marcus Westberg



Malawi

LIWONDE NATIONAL PARK & MANGOCHI FOREST RESERVE

903 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2015

PARK MANAGER : SHAIBU KADEWERE

MAJOR FUNDERS The Rob Walton Foundation, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, WWF Belgium, The Wyss Foundation

MAJETE WILDLIFE RESERVE

715 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2003

PARK MANAGER : JOHN ADENDORFF

MAJOR FUNDERS The Rob Walton Foundation, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, WWF Belgium, The Wyss Foundation

NKHOTAKOTA WILDLIFE RESERVE

1,794 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2015

PARK MANAGER : DAVID NANGOMA

MAJOR FUNDERS The Rob Walton Foundation, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, WWF Belgium, The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Malawi Department of National Parks & Wildlife (DNPW)



The Government of Malawi partners with African Parks through the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), the government authority responsible for managing and conserving wildlife resources and administering the Wildlife Policy and the National Parks and Wildlife Act. African Parks' longest-running partnership began in 2003 with the management of Majete Wildlife Reserve. In 2015, the partnership expanded to Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve and Liwonde National Park, and in 2018 to Mangochi Forest Reserve, in collaboration with the Department of Forestry.



But in landscapes where human settlement is dense and livelihoods depend on farming, unmanaged elephant movement carries serious consequences for communities – in injury, loss of life and destroyed crop harvests. Where those pressures exist, an effective fence is not a compromise of conservation principle; it is part of responsible protected area management.

Liwonde has invested in new fencing methodologies, in particular the type of fence known as a “Kenya fence,” which is comprised of loose, flexible electrified strands that make it difficult for elephant to break. The park’s fence construction, originally planned at 110 kilometres, surpassed expectations in controlling elephant breakouts, resulting in the park extending the build and securing the full length of Liwonde’s 244-kilometre perimeter with a dual-layer system: the existing perimeter fence and the new more elephant-resistant Kenya fence. This investment represents a decisive step in mitigating human-wildlife conflict, a persistent challenge for the park and neighbouring communities.

One of Liwonde National Park’s most important long-term investments is building an effective boundary to reinforce its ability to mitigate conflict between wildlife and neighbouring communities. This year marked an important milestone in that effort, with major progress on the Kenya fence expansion and the strengthening of community partnerships that support its integrity.

The primary purpose of an electrified perimeter fence is to keep wildlife inside the park and reduce incidents of human-wildlife conflict. Fencing does restrict wildlife movement, and that involves real trade-offs.

Elephant breakouts have long shaped relations between Liwonde and surrounding villages. Between July and November 2025, the park recorded 330 breakouts, most linked to fence sections compromised by vandalism or not yet reinforced with the Kenya fence. However, once construction was completed, December recorded zero breaches, a significant shift that immediately changed daily life for farmers living along the boundary. Reduced crop losses, improved safety and fewer night-time disruptions have increased community confidence, while improved fence integrity has allowed the park conservation team to focus more fully on wildlife and ecosystem management. Enhanced ranger patrols and rapid-response systems further support the durability of the fence.

By involving local communities in safeguarding the fence, Liwonde is transforming a boundary into a shared asset that benefits both people and wildlife.

A recurring challenge around Liwonde has been fence vandalism and theft, often linked to illegal hunting, which has undermined the effectiveness of the fence. In late 2024 the park, therefore, launched the Community Fence Protection Initiative: an incentive-based, community-led programme that enables residents to safeguard the fence themselves.

Beginning with two groups overseeing 16 kilometres, the project has expanded to a network of 27 groups responsible for 126 kilometres across Liwonde and Mangochi in 2025, covering all recognised vandalism hotspots. The results have been substantial: a 39% reduction in wire theft, a 17% drop in pole theft, a 36% decrease in snaring incidents and an 18% decline in animal breakouts. Visual assessments confirm stronger fence integrity across the sections managed by community groups.

The community dimension of the initiative is reshaping the park’s relationship with its neighbours. As communities take a direct role in maintaining and protecting the fence, the boundary becomes a shared, jointly managed asset. By involving local groups in the management of this asset, the park is reinforcing the shared responsibility that is critical for its relationship with neighbouring communities.

2025 KEY UPDATES



4,861 snares and 43 gin traps collected; 81 canoes and 139 boats confiscated from illegal fishermen.

Five female African wild dog translocated into Liwonde from South Africa.

10,580 books distributed to 35 primary schools to boost libraries.

Communities around Mangochi Forest Reserve collected natural resources, including Timber and Non-Timber Forest Products, valued at US\$137,165.

US\$740,203 in tourism revenue earned compared to US\$645,827 in 2024.

Ligulo House renovated and Chimwala Camp expanded.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- Maintain zero poaching of key animal species, particularly rhino and elephant.
- Conduct biennial aerial census to monitor animal population dynamics and determine the need for herbivory management.
- Education support to include 100 scholarships and 7,000 Environmental Education Centre visitors.
- Maintain all-season road network within Liwonde and increase access to the west and Mangochi with 25 km new roads.
- Continue community fence monitoring initiative; demonstrate Kenya fence success through continued reduction in human-wildlife conflict.



Yellow-billed stork, one of the 400 bird species that live in Liwonde National Park, Malawi © Marcus Westberg



The reserve continued to strengthen its position as one of Malawi's leading wildlife destinations in 2025, welcoming nearly 16,000 visitors and generating more than US\$1 million in commercial revenue for the first time. Growth in tourism has been supported by consistent wildlife sightings, reliable infrastructure and positive visitor experiences across the reserve. Social media and digital engagement also helped raise awareness of Majete among regional and international audiences. The addition of Mwembezi Gorge Bush Camp, a self-catering and self-drive option accommodating up to eight guests, added a different style of experience to the reserve's accommodation offering. As tourism continues to grow, revenue generated through visitor activities remains an important source of support for conservation operations and community programmes.

This trajectory shows that a well-managed wildlife reserve can bolster visitor confidence and national tourism positioning, generating belief in the reserve's stability and future. Tourism income is deliberately reinvested into community development programmes, from education to livelihood support, which in turn reinforce conservation outcomes. Over the year, 202 structured meetings and outreach activities reached over

Majete Wildlife Reserve entered 2025 as a restored and increasingly stable landscape. After years of intensive restoration, key species now reflect the maturity of a functioning system: Majete's black rhino are well distributed across age and sex classes, while viable populations of wild dog and cheetah contribute to a functioning predator guild. After the lion population peaked at 80 individuals in 2023, science-led management brought numbers to a more sustainable range of 40 to 50 lion in 2025. Crucially, since the formalisation of the partnership, Majete has not recorded any rhino or elephant losses to poaching, reinforcing the effectiveness of long-term conservation law enforcement. Camera traps and expanded tracking systems continued to strengthen informed decision-making across the reserve.

68,000 community members, building collaboration on natural resource management, human-wildlife coexistence and livelihood opportunities. The reserve exceeded its target of planting 60,000 trees across community areas and schools, bolstering local climate resilience and shared stewardship of natural resources. Community-owned campsites operating through joint profit-sharing models provide neighbouring villages with direct benefits from the reserve's tourism growth.

Majete's performance has relevance for Malawi's wider protected area estate, illustrating what sustained management, community partnerships and strong governance can build over time. System-wide indicators reinforced this picture as Majete advanced the rollout of Verifiable Nature Units (VNUs), an emerging mechanism developed by African Parks that quantifies ecological integrity and lays the groundwork for outcomes-based financing. A total of 711 VNUs were issued in 2024 and reissued in 2025, positioning Majete within conservation-finance markets and providing tools for long-term sustainability.

"Majete has become our home away from home. Each accommodation offers a unique experience, perfectly positioned for memorable wildlife interactions. Well-maintained roads, waterholes and viewing decks create incredible adventures and every visit feels different. What keeps us coming back however is the staff, always smiling, and eager to share their knowledge and passion. Their dedication to this extraordinary park is truly commendable."

KAREN AND STEPHEN JEWKES, MAJETE GUESTS

Majete is no longer defined solely by its restoration story. Ecological health, tourism performance and community benefit are increasingly reinforcing one another, creating a system in which conservation success drives tourism growth, tourism revenue fuels community development, and community participation strengthens conservation. Governance systems, supported by transparent grievance mechanisms and the addition of a dedicated human-rights partner, ensure that Majete's growth is managed responsibly. As the reserve moves into its next phase, the focus remains on what has driven progress so far: rigorous management, genuine community partnership and transparent governance.

2025 KEY UPDATES



132 scholarships awarded to 84 boys, 27 girls in secondary schools; 19 boys, 2 girls in university.

Wild dog population sustained at 21, confirming species establishment, with cheetah maintaining a viable population of 11.

39,780 people attended 202 community meetings, and 28,618 participated in 12 mass outreach events.

Tourism revenue of US\$1 million represents 36.68% of operational expenditure.

More than 300 kilometres of well-maintained roads ensure accessibility.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- Maintain black rhino population growth at 5% annually while keeping mortality below 2%.
- Manage elephant population using science-based approach: set population thresholds and moderate growth.
- Continue implementation of the buffer zone pilot to assess project feasibility, conservation impact and long-term sustainability.
- Maintain strong financial performance with revenue of over US\$1.1 million, and achieve over 35% financial sustainability.
- Conduct aerial census to support data-driven conservation decisions.



Thawale Lodge is one of several accommodation options in Majete Wildlife Reserve, Malawi © Cathan Moore



In 2025, Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve marked its long-term collaboration with surrounding communities through the successful handover of the Mgoza Health Clinic servicing Mzimba, which borders the northern section of the reserve. For remote households living adjacent to the reserve, essential healthcare is now more readily available and public health systems have been reinforced. The clinic reflects the reserve's long-standing commitment to supporting community health and wellbeing alongside its conservation work.

The new facility ensures that an estimated 12,000 people, many of whom previously travelled many kilometres to the nearest health centre, now have improved access to healthcare. Affirming the significance of this investment for the area,

its handover drew more than 1,000 participants, including government officials, community leaders, representatives from the District Health Office, as well as the District Commissioner and Senior Traditional Authority Khosolo. Speaking on behalf of government, the district's Director of Health and Social Services, Prince Chirwa, stated: "Mgoza Health post is a timely development in line with the government agenda of improved access to health services. In addition to offering basic health services, we are also planning to introduce an Outpatients Department."

Alongside the clinic, Nkhotakota implemented other integrated health interventions, such as tsetse fly control and youth-focused reproductive health education, both of which further improve outcomes for people and wildlife. Tsetse control remains a critical component of disease prevention, given the long history of sleeping sickness in the region. In 2025, 2,478 tsetse targets and 136 traps were deployed across priority zones in and around the reserve. These efforts contributed to an exceptionally low disease burden: only four cases of sleeping sickness were recorded during the year compared to nine in 2024. Complementing these efforts, and in partnership

with the District Health Office, quarterly community screening reached 4,531 people (including staff and surrounding communities) ensuring rapid diagnosis and treatment. By combining vector control, routine monitoring, chemical treatment, and assisting government screening programmes, Nkhotakota bolstered public health while building trust and collaboration across the landscape.

Youth-focused reproductive health education played an important role. Through school outreach, environmental education sessions and youth camps, more than 3,000 learners participated in sessions covering gender equality, responsible behaviour and personal wellbeing. These interventions address vulnerabilities linked to early marriages, school dropout and exploitation, supporting young people's long-term prospects. Alongside these sessions, young people are developing a stronger understanding of the reserve's ecological importance and of the role they can play in conservation.

"The Mgoza Clinic will not only bring the services closer but also address maternal and child deaths. We were forced to travel a long distance to access health services at the health centre over 24 km away, which was compromising the lives of many community members, specifically women"

SENIOR CHIEF KHOSOLO

Education support extended further across the reserve. Teacher support was provided in five schools, with stipends provided to 14 volunteer teachers and over 11,400 learners were reached through environmental outreach activities. Scholarships were awarded to 65 secondary school learners, as well as 41 university and seven technical college students.

Nkhotakota's work in health and education reflects the extent to which conservation outcomes depend on addressing community needs alongside ecological priorities. By improving access to healthcare, investing in young people's education, and working in close partnership with authorities and traditional leaders, the reserve is strengthening the social foundations that support long term landscape protection. The progress made in 2025 continued to reflect the shared responsibility and ongoing collaboration between the reserve, communities and authorities that underpins conservation in this landscape.

2025 KEY UPDATES



Livelihood enterprises included 3,003 kg of honey harvested and 1,105 chilli farmers registered.

Monitoring included 140 grid-based camera traps and 45 collars across different species, including 18 elephant and two eland.

Confirmed leopard sightings demonstrated growth of predator presence.

2025 Constituency for Conservation Index (CCI) Survey recorded 76.3%, up from 69% in 2023.

Tourism revenue more than doubled in 2025, from US\$50,221 in 2024 to US\$101,805 in 2025.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Maintain zero poaching of key animal species, particularly elephant.
- ▶ Reduce movements of illegal gold miners on Bua River by 80% from 2025 baseline.
- ▶ Secure the mandate to manage the Lower Bua River to support Mpsa conservation.
- ▶ Increase tourism revenue to cover a minimum of 12% of operational expenditure and optimise visitor facilities.
- ▶ Expand beekeeping production beyond 900 kg and reinforce mushroom and mango value-addition initiatives.



Almost 500 elephant were reintroduced in 2017 to Nkhotakota National Park, Malawi © Frank Weitzer



Mozambique

BAZARUTO ARCHIPELAGO NATIONAL PARK

1,430 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2017

PARK MANAGER : ARMANDO GUENHA

MAJOR FUNDERS The Dhanam Foundation,
TUI Care Foundation, The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC)



The National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC) is the government authority responsible for the management and oversight of Mozambique's national parks and conservation areas. Reporting to the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries, ANAC is mandated to ensure the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources within protected areas. In December 2017, African Parks entered into a 25-year co-management partnership with ANAC to support the restoration, development, and long-term conservation of Bazaruto Archipelago National Park.



Bazaruto Archipelago National Park navigated a challenging year while making meaningful progress in infrastructure and capacity, with new administration offices and a rangers' training centre marking a practical investment in long-term conservation management.

The start of 2025 saw heightened national political tensions that contributed to periods of localised unrest affecting communities on the mainland and islands. This situation disrupted park operations, particularly tourism activities, resulting in a decline in visitor numbers and 13% decrease in revenue compared to 2024. In response, the park's conservation law enforcement team strengthened collaboration with the Navy, Maritime Police, and the Coastal, Lake and River Police, intensifying patrol and monitoring operations. Community engagement efforts were broadened through meetings with community leaders and members to address concerns and promote peaceful conflict resolution. Together, these efforts played

an important role in restoring stability and helping operations return to normal, without any damage to property or harm sustained.

Encouragingly, despite these challenges, the year saw considerable positive developments, most notably significant progress in infrastructure and capacity building. On 4 November 2025, His Excellency Daniel Francisco Chapo, President of the Republic of Mozambique, officially inaugurated two new facilities: the park's administration offices in Vilankulo and the Mupale Rangers' Training Centre on Bazaruto Island, enhancing the park's long-term operational capacity.

From the outset, construction of the Vilankulo offices went beyond providing staff with a safe, modern, functional workspace; it aimed to demonstrate that infrastructure itself could embody the park's core values of environmental responsibility and community inclusion. The structure used a mortarless dry-stacked interlocking masonry system which significantly minimised the use of cement, one of the most carbon-intensive construction materials. This approach reduced the project's environmental footprint, improved construction efficiency, and lowered overall costs.

Combining green design with community development, the surrounding outdoor spaces were paved with interlocking pavers produced from recycled plastics

collected through the Basisa Programme. Employing 62 community members, the programme transforms waste recovered from coastal cleanups into durable construction materials. By purchasing and using these pavers, the project supported the Basisa Programme, creating a practical link between marine conservation, waste reduction, and infrastructure development – turning collected coastal plastic into a functional element of the park's new facilities.

"These new facilities bring new momentum to the sustainable management of this natural jewel of our country."

*HIS EXCELLENCY,
PRESIDENT DANIEL FRANCISCO CHAPO*

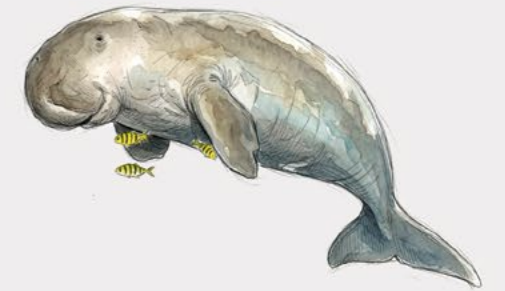
Locally sourced timber and grass-thatched roofing also reduced the environmental footprint, supported local supply chains, and maintained architectural styles that blend naturally with the coastal landscape. The resulting office now houses dedicated spaces for Tourism, Research, Community Development, Fundraising, Finance, Human Resources, IT, Conservation Law Enforcement, and Park Management. Staff also benefit from a medical room, recreational areas, a kitchen, and a spacious boardroom.

Complementing the new administration offices is the Mupale Rangers' Training Centre on Bazaruto Island. Here too, local materials such as grass thatch and timber were used to build classrooms, a gymnasium, catering facilities, and accommodation for 35 trainees. This centre is expected to significantly strengthen future patrol, monitoring, and emergency response capabilities.

Both projects provided employment for more than 100 workers from island and mainland communities, contributing directly to local livelihoods, building practical skills, and strengthening shared ownership in park development. Throughout construction, strict safety standards such as mandatory personal protective equipment and regular breathalyser testing ensured strong occupational health and safety.

President Chapo described the construction of the new facilities as "a deeply symbolic moment that illustrates the direction we are taking for the future of tourism in Mozambique. This is a modern facility, purpose-built, which brings new momentum to the sustainable management of this natural jewel of our country."

2025 KEY UPDATES



29 dugong tagged, and 30 genetic samples exported for analysis.

Turtle nesting increased steadily; 6,990 hatchlings were recorded from 9,095 eggs.

MOU between Conservation International, ANAC and African Parks signed to establish the Inhambane Seascape Marine Conservation & Development Programme.

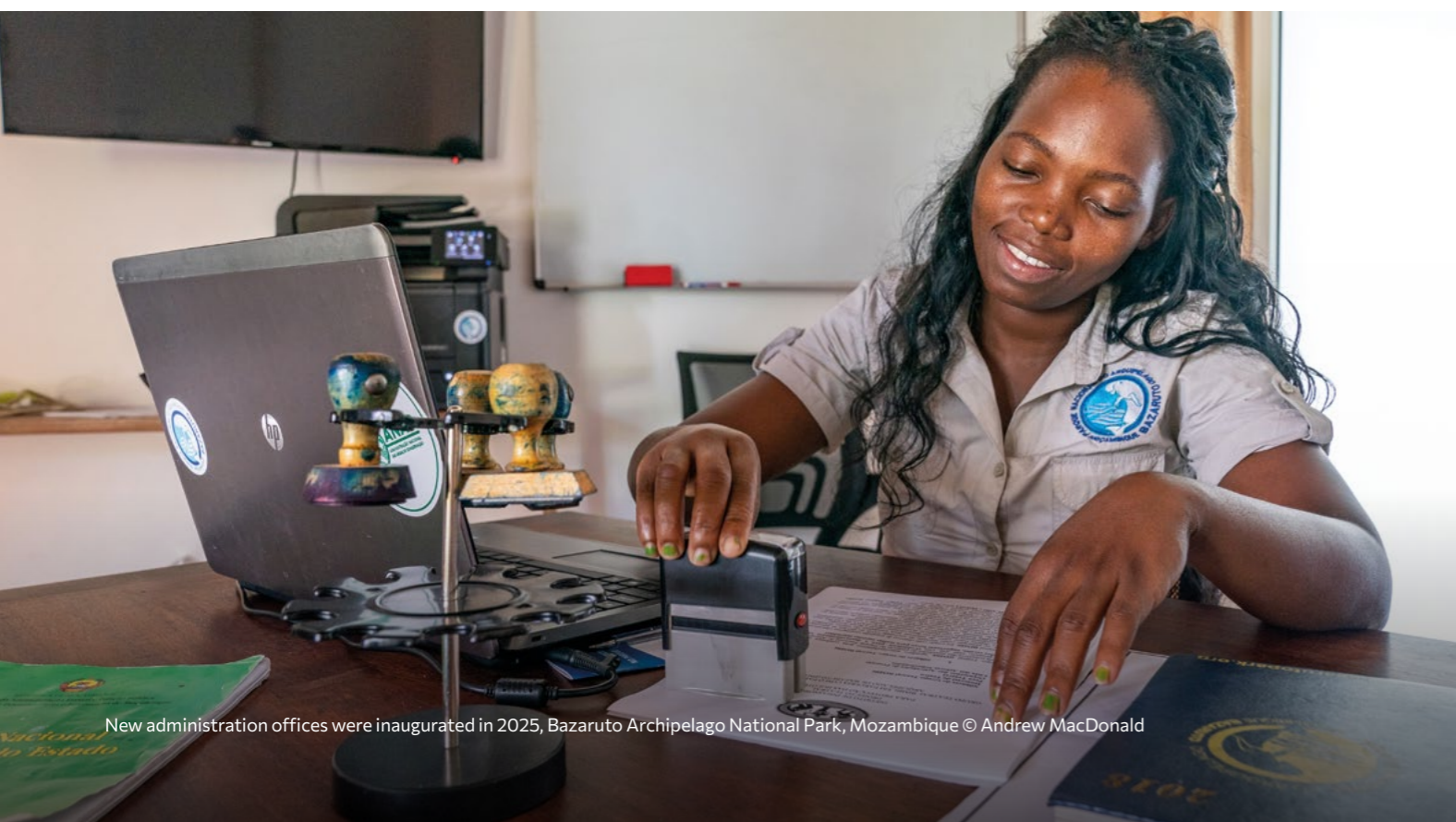
Community health workers delivered essential health services to 11,702 recipients.

157,003 kg of refuse removed across multiple material categories.

97 community members assisted in conservation-aligned agriculture practices.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Maintain or increase populations of key marine megafauna, resident fish stocks, and island fauna.
- ▶ Ensure ecological connectivity with adjacent seascapes to support macro level ecosystem functioning, focusing on sustaining dugong and marine turtle populations.
- ▶ Strengthen stakeholder participation in park planning and management through inclusive decision-making forums and dialogue.
- ▶ Expand employment opportunities and an enabling environment for communities.
- ▶ Develop diverse revenue streams to enhance long-term financial viability.



New administration offices were inaugurated in 2025, Bazaruto Archipelago National Park, Mozambique © Andrew MacDonald



Over 12,000 people across nine major ethnic groups and a broad range of cultures live around Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Republic of Congo
© Irene Galera

Lossi Gorilla
Sanctuary



Republic of Congo

ODZALA-KOKOUA NATIONAL PARK

13,867 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2010

Lossi Gorilla Sanctuary: 380 km²

PARK MANAGER : JEAN-YVES KOUMPOGUE

MAJOR FUNDERS Anna McWane, Elephant Crisis Fund, Global Environment Facility through Conservation International, Legacy Landscapes Fund, The Rob Walton Foundation, Stichting Natura Africae, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Ministry of Forest Economy



The Ministry of Forest Economy is the government authority responsible for the formulation and implementation of national policy on forests, wildlife, and protected areas in the Republic of Congo. It is represented operationally by the Agence Congolaise de la Faune et des Aires Protégées (ACFAP), the national agency in charge of wildlife conservation, protected area management, ecological monitoring, and law-enforcement units. In partnership with African Parks, the Ministry signed its first public-private management agreement in 2010 for the management of Odzala-Kokoua National Park. In 2020, the agreement was amended to include the Lossi Gorilla Sanctuary, expanding the mandate under the joint management framework, with the Odzala-Kokoua-Lossi Foundation serving as the designated management entity.



2025 was a challenging but also important year for Odzala-Kokoua National Park. An independent investigation into allegations of human rights abuses by seconded eco-guards, which was concluded this year, confirmed that some abuses had indeed occurred, and African Parks acknowledged this fully. African Parks and the Odzala team deeply regret the harm caused to those affected – there is no place for abuse in the name of conservation. Taking the investigation's findings and recommendations seriously, African Parks launched Project Bomoko: a comprehensive, multi-year integrated management plan to embed a human rights-based approach across all park operations and drive compliance with international safeguards standards. Implementation of the project reinforced the park's engagement with all stakeholders and its commitment to zero tolerance regarding human rights abuses. Progress of this kind depends on staff, communities, authorities, partners and civil society working collaboratively, and that collaboration has been a defining feature of the year. Concrete actions on the ground focused on priorities identified by communities

during consultations: safety, livelihoods and essential services.

Human-elephant conflict has long placed serious pressure on farming communities, with crop damage threatening food security and household income. In 2025, the park constructed protective trenches around six villages, bringing the total to 13 and securing 65 hectares of farmland across Odzala-Kokoua and the Lossi Gorilla Sanctuary. A second 72-hectare electric fence was completed for Ebana and Akelle villages, complementing the 2,500-hectare fence installed in Mbomo in 2023. These measures substantially reduced elephant incursions into farmland. A compensation programme provided US\$28,572 to 126 farmers whose crops had been damaged by wildlife, providing direct financial relief and helping stabilise household income.

Secure access to clean water was identified as a fundamental need for communities – particularly for Indigenous Peoples, for whom the distance to reliable water sources had at times required travelling into the park itself. In 2025, 15 water points were constructed across 15 villages, benefitting more than 10,000 people. The impact was immediate and tangible. In November, a delegation led by the village chief of Ngangué-Bongui visited the park headquarters to express gratitude in person.

Infrastructure improvements also contributed to broader stability. Maintenance of 256 kilometres of rural roads enhanced mobility and trade, allowing

taxis and buses to reach Mbomo and supporting local commerce with increasing development of small businesses, electrification through generators, and internet access for young people. A school in Goa was constructed with two classrooms, an administrative office and two latrines. Community health support enabled 4,309 people in the Mbomo district to access consultations and free treatment.

Human rights training sessions were held throughout the year for all staff and partners. Strengthened collaboration with local authorities, NGOs and community leaders helped foster more stable and constructive conditions, enabling the park management team to focus more effectively on the work ahead.

Thanks to sustained dialogue, areas that had previously been difficult to access are now fully open to park teams. This progress was formally acknowledged during several high-level visits from administrative and political authorities, including the First Vice President of the National Assembly. Two independent studies – a Milestone Review commissioned by a donor and an Environmental and Social Due Diligence – documented meaningful improvements: increased adherence to human rights standards, a bolstered grievance mechanism, and reinforced respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights. The 2025 Constituency for Conservation Index survey showed a marked improvement in community perceptions, with increased positivity recorded on job creation, benefit sharing, human-wildlife conflict mitigation and relationships with rangers.

"In 2025, we witnessed a major change in Ngangué Bongui. The park dug a trench to stop elephant from entering, protecting our farmland, then developed a water point, which now provides safe drinking water. We had to come thank the park management and the community development department for their work in our village."

ALPHONSE LETSOMBI,
CHIEF OF NGANGUÉ BONGUI VILLAGE

While there is much still to do, the progress made in 2025 is meaningful, and reflects the commitment and resilience of the park's teams, partners and communities, all of whom have embraced this process with seriousness and good faith.

2025 KEY UPDATES



One troop of western lowland gorillas is undergoing successful habituation.

Wildlife inventory launched across 2.5 million hectares: 93 transects completed, 38% of data collected for Odzala Kokoua and 100% for Lossi Gorilla Sanctuary.

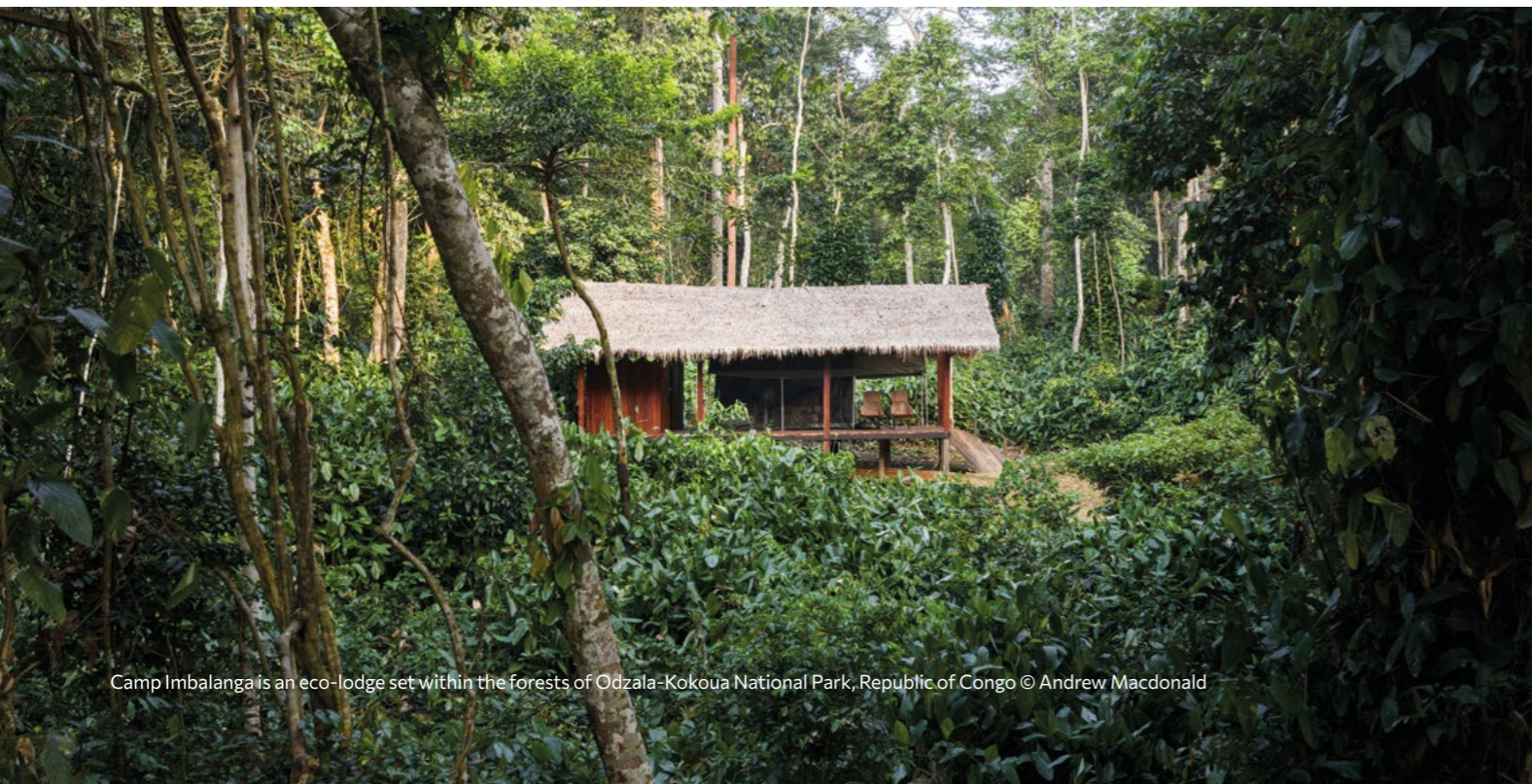
Salaries for 14 teachers were funded to address shortages in 11 schools.

10 young students received scholarships for vocational training in Brazzaville.

670 guest nights sold at Imbalanga Camp – 28.6% increase compared to 2024.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

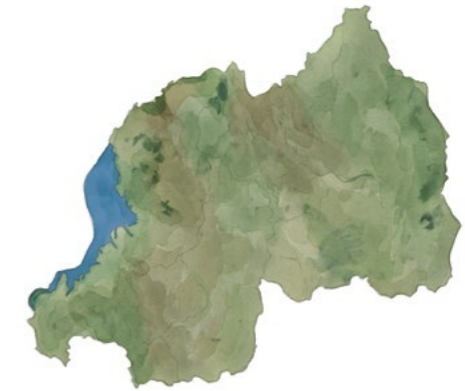
- ▶ Continue to implement the Bomoko Project.
- ▶ Construct 20 water points and 10 mobile electric fences.
- ▶ Establish two multi-stakeholder platforms to bring together all segments of society and enhance community involvement in conservation.
- ▶ Complete the triennial wildlife inventory.
- ▶ Installation of a flux tower to measure carbon sequestration.
- ▶ Construct operational base at Lossi Gorilla Sanctuary.
- ▶ Issue civil status documents for Indigenous Peoples living around the park.



Camp Imbalanga is an eco-lodge set within the forests of Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Republic of Congo © Andrew Macdonald



Nyungwe National Park holds the largest tract of forest, interspersed with grassland and valleys, in Rwanda © Gael Vande Weghe



Rwanda

AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK

1,120 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2010

PARK MANAGER : LADIS NDAHIRIWE

MAJOR FUNDER The Howard G. Buffett Foundation

NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

1,019 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2020

PARK MANAGER : PROTAIS NIYIGABA

MAJOR FUNDERS The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Rwanda Development Board (RDB)



The Rwanda Development Board (RDB) is the government agency responsible for managing Rwanda's national parks and protected areas.

Its mission is to transform and develop Rwanda's economy by enabling its private-sector growth. African Parks began its work with the RDB in Akagera National Park in 2010 and in Nyungwe National Park in 2020. In both agreements, African Parks recognises RDB CEO, Jean-Guy Afrika and senior management for their unwavering support of Akagera and Nyungwe.



In 2025, Akagera National Park became the first in the African Parks network to fully cover operating costs through self-generated revenue. For the partnership with the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), it is a significant moment – the result of years of sustained effort – with the park now operating as a financially self-sustaining conservation landscape.

Financial sustainability was driven primarily by strong tourism growth. Paying visitors increased by 7% annually, supported by product improvements and Akagera’s growing reputation as a high-quality wildlife destination. Hospitality, leisure activities and the fisheries programme performed strongly, contributing to over US\$5 million in commercial revenue – a 4% increase over 2024. Careful financial management ensured that internally generated income could fully cover park operations.

Several developments consolidated Akagera’s tourism offering. The rebuild of Karengye Bush Camp into a three-star experience expanded mid-range

accommodation in the wildlife-rich northern sector, driving improved occupancies, both Rwandan and international. Wilderness’ soft opening of Magashi Peninsula added further capacity at the high end of the market. The introduction of guided rhino walks with expert trackers provided a new revenue stream and enhanced engagement with conservation.

This commercial expansion was reinforced by global visibility. Akagera’s inclusion in National Geographic’s Best of the World 2026 list placed it among the top destinations globally, recognising its sense of place and inspiring conservation story. The recognition reflects Rwanda’s conservation-led approach to tourism, and the value of the long-term public-private partnership between RDB and African Parks. Importantly, 2025 was also the first full year in which Akagera no longer required RDB operational funding: a significant turning point as the park transitions into a self-reliant protected area.

The year also reflected the importance of partnership in long-term protected area management. The Howard G. Buffett Foundation supported rhino reintroduction and helped raise Akagera’s international profile, while RDB and Visit Rwanda continued to bolster the park’s visibility within Rwanda’s broader tourism strategy.

The park’s financial stability has had an expanding impact on neighbouring communities through

Rwanda’s Tourism Revenue Sharing (TRS) scheme. In 2025/2026, Akagera’s annual 10% contribution of its tourism income came to US\$354,646, with communities receiving more than US\$880,000 due to the pooled national model. This system ensures equitable distribution of benefits and allows communities around Akagera to access support that exceeds revenue generated locally.

The impact of these investments is visible on the ground. TRS funding supported 26 projects worth US\$579,144, including school construction, improved market facilities and clean water systems. Infrastructure such as paved roads and bridges enhanced mobility, while specialised carpentry and metal workshops created new artisanal employment opportunities. Dairy farmers benefitted from upgraded milk collection systems, and arts and crafts cooperatives received improved production spaces. These projects have strengthened local economies, diversified livelihoods and reinforced the link between conservation success and community prosperity.

Becoming the first African Parks-managed landscape to reach full financial sustainability is a significant marker of what long-term partnerships can achieve – and a platform for Akagera’s next chapter – reinvesting in conservation and delivering consistent benefits to neighbouring communities.

Conservation progress continued alongside the tourism and community work. The translocation of 70 southern white rhino from South Africa in one of the largest such operations ever undertaken, highlighted the park’s maturity and credibility as a secure area for species recovery. Despite some losses and health challenges, the operation contributed to Akagera’s growing role in regional conservation initiatives, generated community engagement through rhino themed awareness events and added new tourism offerings linked to rhino monitoring.

As Akagera enters its next chapter, financial sustainability is more than an operational milestone. It is a platform for reinvestment into conservation and consistent benefit to communities – and an indication of what long-term, committed management can make possible in partnership with government.

2025 KEY UPDATES



Akagera welcomed 59,538 visitors, an 8% increase on 2024.

76 grass species recorded and favourable grazer composition confirmed.

167 ha of invasive Lantana cleared.

Six anti-poaching campaigns facilitated voluntary handover of 96 snares and 54 weapons from former poachers.

Local procurement totalled US\$2.29M, supporting Rwandan businesses.

Community programmes provided 17,127 kg of affordable fish protein to improve nutrition.

Eco-club activities reached 2,350 students across 76 programmes.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Advance roan conservation and manage lion population growth and genetics in line with the Lion Management Plan.
- ▶ Recruit 16 rangers, including one tracker team and one marine team, to enhance operational capacity.
- ▶ Complete socio-economic survey, with representative sampling across three districts to establish a baseline.
- ▶ Upgrade of Ruzizi Tented Lodge; follow up on the construction of Kageyo Lodge.
- ▶ Support the development of the African Conservation Academy project.



Akagera National Park, Rwanda, has healthy populations of savannah-adapted species © Clement Uwihanganye



In 2025, Nyungwe National Park marked five years of partnership between African Parks and the Rwanda Development Board, a period characterised by sustained investment, ecological restoration and growing tourism-led opportunities for surrounding communities. Over this first half-decade, the park established the foundations of its 20-year Long-Term Sustainability Strategy, guiding Nyungwe toward ecological security, financial resilience and deeper social impact. This work began to show tangible results in 2025, particularly through the diversification of tourism experiences.

Tourism development was central to the year's progress. Three major new products were launched to broaden the visitor experience and the park's commercial base: Munazi Lodge, the Uwinka Zipline and the Gisakura Rope Course. Opened in the second half of the year, these offerings have already contributed 13% of tourism revenue, signalling their long-term potential.

With a length of 1,935 metres, the Uwinka Zipline is one of East Africa's longest aerial experiences. Starting from Uwinka Visitor Centre, it winds through the forest canopy across three consecutive segments, completing the adventure circuit with the Canopy Walkway. The 21-segment, 280-metre rope course at Gisakura offers an additional attraction for both domestic and regional adventure seekers. Finally, Munazi Lodge, a Park-managed 20-bed mid-range facility, expanded accommodation options and created new local jobs.

To further diversify the tourism offering, two multi-day hiking trails with self-catering campsites were introduced, providing an immersive forest experience. Trail and visitor access infrastructure also expanded, enhancing Nyungwe's portfolio of nature-based activities. A total of 54 kilometres of new trails were developed in Kamiranzovu and Mayebe, supporting tourism, ecological monitoring and research. These improvements were complemented by the rehabilitation of visitor centres, guesthouses and ranger posts undertaken over the first five years of the partnership.

These developments contributed to an 8.8% increase in visitor numbers between 2024 and 2025 – from 26,586 to 28,927 – which reflected Nyungwe's growing status as a leading conservation-tourism destination. This was mainly driven by the significant

rise in national visitors (42%), which offset the slight decline in regional and international visitor segments in 2025.

Responsible primate tourism remained a core draw. With four chimpanzee troops and three colobus groups now successfully habituated, Nyungwe delivered 5,709 primate visits, including 4,161 chimpanzee treks, and achieved a visitor success rate of 99%.

Beyond tourism infrastructure, the park continued to invest in people. Over the past five years, 36 cooperatives with 1,759 members have been supported, strengthening livelihoods across farming, beekeeping, tourism and short-term employment. Cooperative members have used this support to access health insurance, pay school fees, improve homes, and expand agricultural production. Training delivered through selected cooperative representatives, covering financial management, bookkeeping, governance and conservation, has helped build long-term capacity from within communities. Product development efforts included improved branding, packaged mushrooms and processed honey, while the Tourism Revenue Sharing mechanism continued to channel funds into community priorities, reinforcing the link between conservation and local livelihoods.

"Your assistance has been a great relief to my family. Because of your support, I was able to focus on my studies without worry. This has contributed greatly to my moral, social, and financial wellbeing and has given me hope for a better future after completing my studies."

TUMISHIME JEANNETTE,
ASNAP CYANI KA, L5 BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Nyungwe's conservation value received global recognition in 2025 when it was inscribed as Rwanda's first Natural World Heritage Site by UNESCO. This milestone underscored the international significance of Nyungwe's biodiversity and the ecosystem services that it provides, reinforcing the importance of sustained investment in its conservation.

With its Sustainability Strategy guiding development through to 2040, Nyungwe is working toward lasting ecological protection and meaningful socio-economic benefits, ensuring that Rwanda's iconic montane forest continues to thrive as a national asset and an example of conservation-led development.

2025 KEY UPDATES



50.5 hectares of forest restored, bringing total restored habitat to 113.5 ha.

100 community Eco-Monitors trained across 7 teams.

36 cooperatives with 1,759 members supported, generating US\$585,861 in earnings in 2025.

Constituency for Conservation Index increased from 76.5% (2023) to 82.3% (2025).

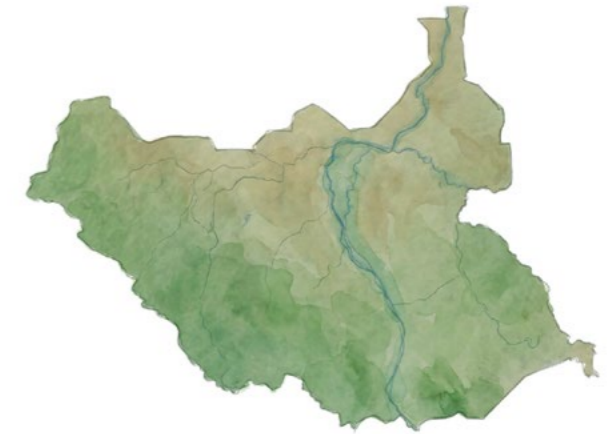
Nyungwe was recognised as the district's top taxpayer for the third consecutive year.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Restore 2,020 ha of degraded forest through exotic species removal, natural regeneration and habitat rehabilitation.
- ▶ Build capacity through targeted staff training, exchange visits and publication of 2025 biodiversity survey.
- ▶ Implement drone based aerial patrols, achieving 90% coverage and 80% informed patrols.
- ▶ Support community based restoration and sustainable resource use through producing 20,000 bamboo cuttings, distributing 10,000 seedlings and rolling out 1,000 energy efficient stoves.
- ▶ Engage 500 adults and 1,000 youth through park visits.
- ▶ Maintain core and commercial budgets; increase commercial revenue to US\$3.9 million in 2026.



New tourism initiatives such as the Nyungwe rope course have increased local job creation in Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda © Gael Vande Weghe



South Sudan

BADINGILO NATIONAL PARK

8,935 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2022

PARK MANAGER : JOHN VOGEL

MAJOR FUNDERS Anonymous Fund of MCF, Edith McBean, Elephant Crisis Fund, Fondation Segré, Lion Recovery Fund, Michael and Georgia Michelson, Rainforest Trust, The Wyss Foundation

BOMA NATIONAL PARK

19,757 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2022

PARK MANAGER : JANNIE FOURIE

MAJOR FUNDERS Anonymous Fund of MCF, Edith McBean, Elephant Crisis Fund, Fondation Segré, Lion Recovery Fund, Michael and Georgia Michelson, Rainforest Trust, The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT)



In 2022, the Government of South Sudan, through the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT), signed a 10-year renewable management agreement with African Parks for Boma and Badingilo National Parks and the wider Jonglei Landscape, covering more than 12 million hectares. This partnership reflects the government's commitment to the long-term conservation and sustainable management of these critical ecosystems for the benefit of people and wildlife. It is implemented in close collaboration with the South Sudan Wildlife Service (SSWS), as well as the Conservation and Tourism Units within MWCT, ensuring a coordinated approach to protected area management, conservation, and tourism development in the country. The current Minister of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism is Hon. Denay Jock Chagor.



In 2025, conservation efforts across the Great Nile Migration Landscape (GNML), spanning Badingilo and Boma national parks and the wider Jonglei ecosystem, reached a pivotal point. After several years of fieldwork, data collection and community engagement across one of Africa's largest and least documented ecosystems, the landscape has been mapped, measured and understanding progressed to a point where coordinated, landscape level land-use planning is now possible.

Through systematic aerial surveys, reconnaissance flights and the collaring of migratory species, a clearer picture has emerged of the movements of millions of white-eared kob, tiang and Mongalla gazelle. While migrations broadly follow seasonal patterns, tracking revealed multiple overlapping routes shaped by rainfall, water access and human activity, demonstrating a dynamic network rather than a single pathway. Surveys also confirmed non-migratory populations

of elephant, giraffe, buffalo, eland, roan, oryx, African wild dog and other predators, many persisting at substantially reduced numbers, underscoring the importance of safeguarding both migratory and resident wildlife.

Gaining clearer insight into where and how land is used has been equally important, helping to identify the seasonal routes, grazing zones and key water points that sustain pastoralist and agropastoralist livelihoods across the landscape. Participatory mapping was begun in conjunction with communities in and around Badingilo and Boma to identify settlement areas, agricultural zones and resource-use patterns, highlighting both constraints and opportunities. Areas of intensive human use often restrict wildlife movement, while conflict-affected borders have become important refuges for migratory species. Local communities contributed detailed knowledge of how ecosystems and wildlife patterns have shifted over time, insights that were central to building a shared picture of the landscape.

By consolidating wildlife movement data, habitat types, hydrology and threat mapping, a network of Ecologically Critical Areas was identified across the GNML. These form the backbone of a practical approach to landscape conservation, allowing priorities to be set based on evidence and risk. Given its

scale, the landscape has been divided into manageable units aligned with ethno-administrative boundaries. Badingilo and Boma form two units, while a Jonglei unit is growing under Badingilo's operational oversight. This structure enables conflict-sensitive recruitment, tailored implementation and a shared long-term vision across the wider system.

The consolidation of this knowledge marks a shift from learning to action. The data can now guide operational planning and inform a long-term sustainability strategy for the GNML, allowing management to respond with flexibility within a framework and within South Sudan's rapidly changing context. It also supports the country's emerging governance systems as they work to balance conservation, livelihoods, and development, with African Parks contributing as a technical partner alongside government. Community-based natural resource management remains central to this approach, recognising that the health of the GNML is inseparable from the wellbeing of the people who live within it.

"Badingilo's evidence-driven strategy together with capacity building of MWCT rangers in Jonglei has moved us to the operational phase of the GNML plan, where ecologically critical areas, corridors, and work priorities are set by data and designed for results."

GENERAL KHAMIS ADIENG, DIRECTOR GENERAL,
MINISTRY OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND TOURISM

There are still challenges to be overcome. Resident wildlife populations remain fragile; migratory species are vulnerable to commercial trade; legal frameworks for protected areas continue to evolve; and inter-ethnic conflict and widespread civilian instability complicate conservation efforts. Governance capacity is still developing, and land-use decisions carry high stakes for communities and wildlife alike. Yet trust is growing, at both grassroots level with local communities and with partners at the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT). All are cognisant of the tremendous efforts being made to establish this groundwork and the value of coordinated landscape management.

With a shared understanding of how the GNML functions and where it is most vulnerable, the next phase can begin, turning evidence into decisions, and decisions into action.

2025 KEY UPDATES



White-eared kob lekking areas mapped, leading to recognition of 15 ecologically critical areas, 5 in Badingilo and Jonglei.

Corridor analysis around the Jonglei Canal identified three open wildlife corridors.

Over 70% of villages around Badingilo conducted participatory mapping.

Badingilo honey launched by Juba-based partner, Hagana, to be sold locally.

24 buildings in Badingilo Headquarters constructed or renovated.

Over US\$1M invested in in-country procurement.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Launch an integrated land-use planning process, aligning national-level planning with community consultations, participatory mapping and local zoning.
- ▶ Initiate community-based natural resource management discussions with communities in Lafon and Duk.
- ▶ Maintain proactive, transparent, and consistent communication with MWCT for collaborative decision-making.
- ▶ Establish the conditions required for sustainable operations in Jonglei, including staffing, infrastructure and stakeholder support.
- ▶ Reduce recorded bushmeat flow entering Bor by at least 30% compared to 2025 baseline.



Ranger training in Boma and Badingilo national parks, South Sudan © Marcus Westberg



Boma National Park lies within one of the world's most important migration landscapes, where seasonal movements of wildlife and cattle overlap across vast terrain. Intricate interactions between nature and people result in a complex system and the need to carefully manage corridors used by both humans and wildlife.

In 2025, tailoring to the respective needs of sedentary populations and semi-nomadic pastoralists, Boma launched a network of community agents, and, for the first time, accessed cattle camps so remote they can only be reached on foot. The teams – 48 Tango (Transhumance Engagement Officer) staff members from Murle, six Tango members from Jie, and nine agents from the sedentary Anyuak communities – covered more than 8,500 kilometres on foot over the year, moving with the livestock to reach seasonal water and grazing areas. Cattle camps exist alongside herds of

white-eared kob; two migrations share the same space. These overlaps highlight both the risks of conflict and the opportunity to plan corridors that work for people and wildlife alike.

A central achievement was the treatment of almost 30,000 head of livestock (predominantly cattle) in critical condition. Livestock represent wealth, security and status in the Boma landscape, and their health directly influences whether communities turn to wildlife for sustenance. Through coordinated planning with Boma's aviation team, veterinary medicines were dropped at strategic points along transhumance routes, where they were collected and administered by the Tango teams as they moved with the herders. This support reduced livestock mortality, helping to protect livelihoods.

As Tango staff members belong to the same age-sets, clans, and cultural groups as the pastoralists they engage, they have been able to facilitate conversations about sustainable resource use, conservation, and community safety that could not have been achieved through formal enforcement alone. Much of this dialogue centred on youth who are often most involved in conflict and illegal hunting but also have the greatest ability to affect change. These continuous engagements set the stage for a customary law workshop in Pibor

in December, where more than 180 government and traditional representatives from the Murle community reached agreement on penalties for wildlife crime aligned with the national Wildlife Bill. This was a critical step in translating national legislation into local governance.

Information gathered through such engagements strengthened the evidence base for future planning. Tango teams mapped livestock movements during the most pressured periods of the year, documented how land, water, and natural resources are used, and recorded motivations behind wildlife offtake, whether for meat, cultural use, or sale. In remote areas where ecological surveys are limited, these datasets are essential to biodiversity monitoring. By overlaying cattle routes and wildlife movements, Boma's team provided a more accurate picture of where human and ecological needs intersect. This shared evidence now underpins discussions on risk, land use, and coexistence. Meanwhile, community agents were trained on data collection to quantify antelope offtake at fixed settlements.

"Everyone knows that cattle are integral to our life, our fathers', our own, and our children's after us. As a man, you know that cattle are your wife, your children, your reason for being alive. This could be the same for wildlife. We know that we also depend on wildlife, and it is also the reason why we are still alive today"

ACHEREN NYATI KO, KURENEN YOUTH LEADER

Livelihood development progressed, informed by insights from the field. New community enterprises, including a women's shea butter cooperative in Nyat and beading production in Otallo, have begun to support households that rely on wildlife harvesting. These initiatives are part of a broader approach to help build resilience, reduce vulnerability, and support communities through conservation-compatible pathways.

The extensive presence of transhumance and fixed engagement teams has built trust with communities, traditional authorities, and government partners, positioning the park as a reliable facilitator in a complex landscape. By weaving conservation science, community engagement and livelihoods together, the foundations are in place for an approach that can deliver sustained benefits for both wildlife and communities over time.

2025 KEY UPDATES



Four schools supported with study materials, books, equipment, and teacher incentives, providing access to education for over 2,000 children.

New records of species found include African wild dog, striped hyaena and Boutourlines' blue monkey.

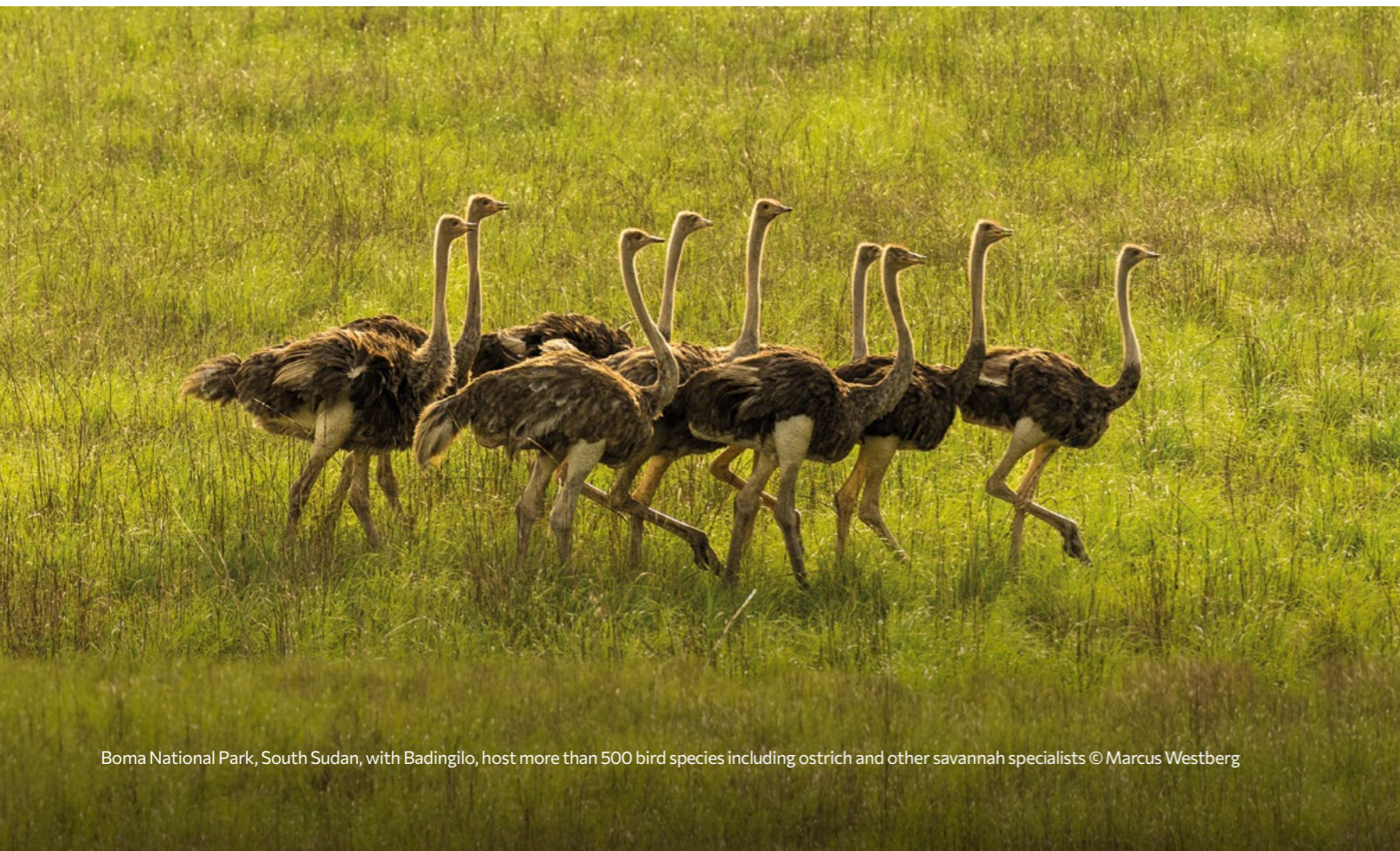
144 animals collared across the GNML; an aerial survey over 112,620 km² was completed.

3 community boreholes and 5 waterholes for wildlife and livestock implemented in critical dry-season areas.

Pilot livelihood projects, including Nilotic shea butter extraction, benefitted 52 people (70% women).

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Zone 12 sub-sectors and establish a legal pathway for community conservation areas and conservancies.
- ▶ Integrate key natural-resource and wildlife cases into customary law; establish locally accepted conservation law-enforcement mechanisms across traditional and government systems.
- ▶ Develop a functional tourism product alongside livelihood initiatives.
- ▶ Establish a baseline to quantify bushmeat flow, focusing on cross-border movement.
- ▶ Recruit additional Tango teams from other communities to expand reach.



Boma National Park, South Sudan, with Badingilo, host more than 500 bird species including ostrich and other savannah specialists © Marcus Westberg



Bangweulu Wetlands in Zambia is a Game Management Area where people and wildlife share these important wetlands © Mana Meadows



Zambia

BANGWEULU WETLANDS

6,645 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2008

PARK MANAGER : ANDREW CHOMBA

MAJOR FUNDER Stichting African Horizon

PARTNERS Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) & the Six Community Resource Boards

KAFUE NATIONAL PARK

22,480 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2022

PARK MANAGER : CRAIG REID

MAJOR FUNDERS Anna McWane, Bennink Foundation, Elephant Crisis Fund, The Rob Walton Foundation, The Wyss Foundation
PARTNER Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW)

LIUWA PLAIN NATIONAL PARK

3,369 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2003

PARK MANAGER : DEON JOUBERT

MAJOR FUNDERS The Rob Walton Foundation, Stichting Natura Africae, WWF Belgium
PARTNERS Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) and the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE)

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW)



The Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), under the Ministry of Tourism, is focused on protecting and conserving Zambia's wildlife estates while enhancing the quality of life among communities and maintaining healthy biodiversity. African Parks commenced its partnership with DNPW in Liuwa Plain National Park in 2003, followed by the Bangweulu Wetlands in 2008, and Kafue National Park in 2022. Mr Dominic L. Chiinda is the Director of DNPW. Jones Masonde is the acting Director of DNPW.



In 2025, Bangweulu Wetlands deepened its engagement with communities, with a renewed focus on listening and co-design following the 2023 Constituency for Conservation Index (CCI) survey, which identified areas where trust and engagement needed to be strengthened. Supported by Jumpstart funding, the year was defined by more structured listening, information gathering and designing solutions together with the communities living in the wetlands. These efforts formed the basis for more inclusive development planning and conservation strategies that reflect the needs of all stakeholders.

Although the relationship remains a work in progress, the 2025 CCI survey showed meaningful improvement. The score rose from 36% in 2023 to 59%, signalling that recent actions are beginning to resonate. More importantly, the survey provided insights into how communities define “fair benefit sharing,” such as equal

access to employment opportunities across different chiefdoms, and highlighted their expectations for law enforcement that balances wildlife protection with human needs. These perspectives, along with views on trust, participation and decision making, now directly shape the updated Community Development Plan.

Throughout the year, a series of studies deepened understanding of community livelihoods and resource use. A fisheries management assessment, socio-economic survey and stakeholder mapping exercise were carried out across all six chiefdoms, involving over 1,000 community members through meetings, focus groups, interviews and household surveys. For many, this was an important opportunity to speak openly about development needs, natural resource pressures, and their expectations for conservation. The process surfaced detailed local knowledge and reinforced the value of transparent, inclusive engagement.

The socio-economic survey generated a set of livelihood initiatives defined by communities themselves. Fish farming, rice cultivation, small livestock production and horticulture emerged as priority activities, each well suited to the local environment. These initiatives form the backbone of the updated Community Development Plan. Because communities defined these priorities, the likelihood of

long-term adoption and impact is increased.

An assessment of Bangweulu’s water bodies was completed to evaluate fish diversity and the effects of increasing pressure on aquatic habitats. Combined with community consultations, the findings informed the establishment of Fisheries Management Committees (FMCs) in all six chiefdoms. These committees, aligned with national legislation, support enforcement of the annual fish ban, promote sustainable harvesting and bolster compliance through local leadership. Eco-Monitors and community representatives played a role in monitoring fish species, fishing methods and catch volumes, ensuring that traditional knowledge and scientific data inform decision making. The creation of the committees reinforces the link between biodiversity conservation and community wellbeing, ensuring that resource use rules are developed and implemented with those most affected.

“When communities are trusted to help manage their own resources, they protect them better. The fisheries committees have shown that working together can strengthen our livelihoods.”

WEBBY CHISHALA, SENIOR HEADMAN OF MUWELE COMMUNITY, CHIUNDAPONDE

Together, the findings from the surveys, assessments and consultations now feed into the development of Bangweulu’s Land Use Plan, the overarching framework that will guide both conservation and development across the landscape. With clear zoning, resource-use rules and community participation embedded within it, the plan aims to link ecological integrity with community resilience. It provides a roadmap for managing natural resources in a way that reflects shared priorities and builds co-management between communities, traditional leadership and the park.

Through evidence-based planning, community-defined priorities and increased engagement, 2025 marked an important year for Bangweulu Wetlands. Trust is beginning to be rebuilt, and communities are increasingly shaping the strategies that affect their lives and livelihoods. While challenges in this system remain, the year reinforced the importance of sustained, open engagement and the continued involvement of all stakeholders in shaping these landscapes.

2025 KEY UPDATES



16 Eco-Monitors trained and equipped to collect data on fish species, fishing methods, and catch quantities.

32 conservation law enforcement members completed an Accelerated Ranger Course, enhancing operational capabilities.

Catch Assessment Surveys by Eco-Monitors recorded over 60 fish species and a monthly average catch of 1,500 kg.

Progress made towards improving tourism infrastructure, including opening access routes and enhancing visitor experience at shoebill viewing sites.

Largest-ever Bangweulu Wetlands Annual General Meeting hosted, including the Minister of Tourism, senior government officials, all six Chiefs and CRBs.

Road access between Chiundaponde and Chitambo improved, boosting regional connectivity.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- Conduct aerial surveys to determine large mammal abundance across Bangweulu and Kalasa Mukoso GMAs.
- Strengthen the Grievance and Redress Mechanism.
- Finalise the Land Use Plan with enhanced community sensitisation.
- Implement the Fisheries Management Plan alongside livelihood interventions.
- Improve branding and signage across Bangweulu.



Bangweulu Wetlands, Zambia, is home to a significant endemic black lechwe population © Lorenz Fischer



had been lost or reduced to unsustainable levels. In late 2024, 400 Kafue lechwe were released into the southern region of the park. They settled quickly, with females calving, and herds beginning to influence grassland dynamics. This operation was an essential first step, both ecologically and symbolically, towards rebuilding Kafue's depleted grazer base.

In African Parks' 25th year, Kafue National Park entered a new chapter, defined by investment in wildlife recovery and ecological renewal. At the centre of this work is a multi-year effort to rebuild the vast 22,480 km² park's grazer populations, beginning with the reintroduction of Kafue lechwe in 2024 and continuing in 2025 with wildebeest and zebra, in what is one of Zambia's largest and most complex wildlife translocations.

By 2024, the necessary foundations were in place to initiate targeted reintroductions of species that

A significant milestone in Zambia's conservation history was reached in August 2025. Drawing on two decades of successful conservation in Liuwa Plain National Park, where wildlife populations have rebounded, Kafue partnered with the Barotse Royal Establishment, the Zambian Government, and specialist capture teams to move 1,952 wildebeest and 206 zebra from Liuwa Plain to Kafue. With more than 47,000 wildebeest and 2,300 zebra, Liuwa's populations are now robust enough to serve as a source without compromising the ecological integrity of the population.

The translocation was an extremely challenging and complicated undertaking, a two-stage journey using aerial and ground teams, specialised six-wheel-drive capture trucks that navigated Liuwa's deep sands, and heavy long-haul vehicles that undertook the 400km trip to Kafue. Ultimately, 1,567 wildebeest and 172 zebra were released into Kafue, with the remainder going to Lusaka Park and Sioma Ngwezi National Park respectively. To stimulate recovery in multiple ecological zones simultaneously, five release sites were selected across the park.

Early monitoring showed encouraging results: Most herds remained within 10 to 20 kilometres of their release points, feeding well, joining resident groups, and producing calves within a month. The ecological effects are becoming visible already. Wildebeest and zebra shape grassland structure, influence fire patterns and drive nutrient cycling. As populations grow, their grazing will maintain productive short-grass systems that support a wider range of species, while enlarging the prey base for lion, cheetah and wild dog.

Seeing trucks offload hundreds of wildebeest and zebra into landscapes that had been quiet for decades sent a powerful message: recovery is possible.

The translocations involved surrounding communities, local leaders and tourism operators, and featured in national media. The arrival of wildebeest and zebra into areas where these populations had been absent for years was a visible marker of what long-term management has made possible.

The translocation also demonstrates how Zambia's protected areas can function as an interconnected network. As Liuwa supports Kafue's grazer recovery, the Kafue Ecosystem has contributed carnivores and hartebeest back to Liuwa, demonstrating the value of a coordinated conservation efforts in which progress in one landscape accelerates gains in another.

The 2024–2025 translocations have accelerated a sustained programme to restore ecological function to Kafue. The foundations are in place for wildlife populations to continue recovering, and for the park to develop into one of the region's most important and ecologically complete conservation landscapes.

2025 KEY UPDATES



20 lion prides, 13 wild dog packs, and 8 cheetah groups monitored.

1,567 wildebeest and 172 zebra released into Kafue.

Field operations capacity strengthened: all five sector outposts functional under Field Operations Managers.

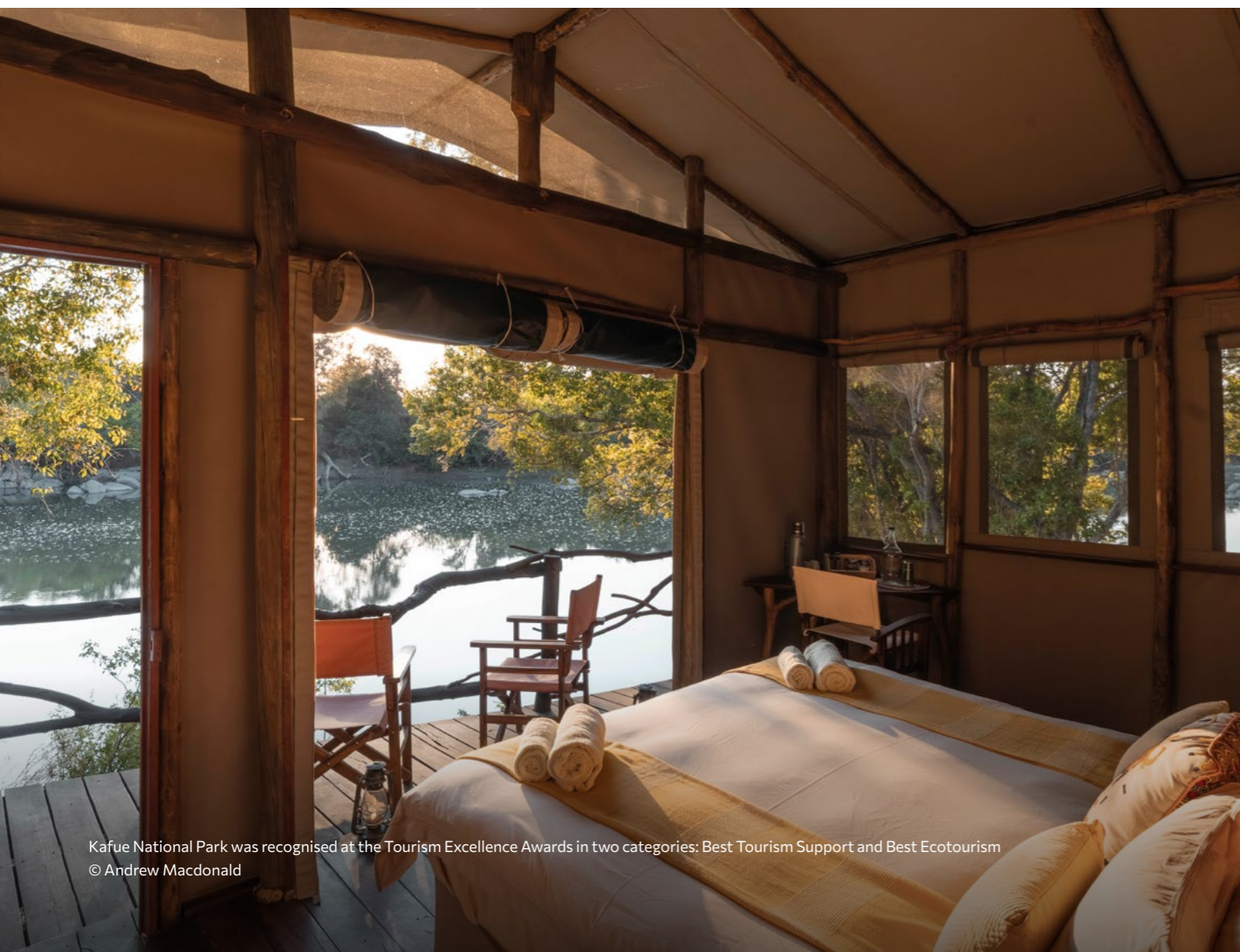
Environmental education reached 458 children and 56 adults; classroom blocks built in 4 schools and 28 schools supported with learning materials and teaching aids.

1,904 fishers benefitted from effective fishing permits; bream and kapenta harvests totalled 2,745 tonnes and 1,330 tonnes respectively.

At US\$1.91 million, park-generated revenue represents 20% financial sustainability.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- ▶ Complete key infrastructure for the Intensive Protection Zone (fence, roads and accommodation); translocate black rhino.
- ▶ Proactively manage fire to reduce area burned to below 55% of the park.
- ▶ Reduce roadkill incidents on M9 highway through strengthened speed control and compliance measures.
- ▶ Implement Human-Wildlife Conflict Strategy across surrounding GMAs with partners, including the Itezhi-tezhi fishery.
- ▶ Implement Fire Carbon project, enabling redeemable carbon credit generation.





In the late 1800s, King Lewanika of the Lozi people established Liuwa Plain National Park as a game sanctuary, laying the foundations of its modern conservation story. The journey he began continued in 2003, when King Lubosi Imwiko II of Barotseland made the decision on behalf of the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) to partner with African Parks and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) for the management of Liuwa Plain National Park. This was the start of a 20-year collaboration.

In 2025, the Lozi people and the Barotseland Kingdom marked the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty the Litunga Lubosi Imwiko II. Held at Limulunga Palace, the Jubilee honoured 25 years of his leadership and his long-standing role in championing Liuwa's conservation. The event included a Jubilee-themed Kuomboka Ceremony and broad participation by traditional

leaders, communities, and dignitaries. His commitment to conservation, grounded in traditional governance, continues to shape the region's vision and ensures that the Lozi's identity as custodians of the floodplain remains strong.

Several other milestones were reached in 2025. Lichtenstein's hartebeest returned to Liuwa after an absence of more than 50 years. Fifty individuals were translocated from Mulobezi Game Management Area, re-establishing a missing component of the herbivore guild. While there were 16 mortalities during transportation and in the bomas, their return overall underscores how far the landscape has come and highlights how habitat recovery and effective conservation can enable successful species reintroduction.

In addition, wildlife populations are now strong enough not only to sustain the park itself, but to help restock other protected areas. In one of Zambia's largest and most complex wildlife translocations, 1,952 wildebeest and 206 zebra were moved from Liuwa Plain to Kafue National Park and other sites to support national restoration efforts. This was only possible because

of the remarkable recovery of Liuwa's wildebeest population, from a declining population of around 23,000 in 2003 to more than 47,000 today; Liuwa hosts Africa's second-largest wildebeest migration, a testament to sustained conservation management and deep community engagement.

"It is thanks to His Majesty the Litunga Lubosi Imwiko II who, concerned about the depletion of wildlife in the park, in 2003 continued in the footsteps of King Lewanika and arranged a partnership to manage Liuwa."

OFFICE OF THE RT. HON. NGAMBELA
(BAROTSE ROYAL ESTABLISHMENT)

Another milestone was the revision of Liuwa Plain's General Management Plan. The revision was carried out as a participatory process, drawing together communities, conservation partners and park management to ensure the plan reflects both technical best practice and local realities. Other accomplishments in 2025 included the Community Resource Board (CRB) taking full ownership of enterprises such as the Agrovet Shop and Hino Truck Transport Service, boosting local control, income generation, and sustainability. Through the Jumpstart Project, these assets were handed over to the CRB to support community-led economic development and reduce reliance on external support. Technical guidance was provided to ensure transparency, compliance with legal frameworks, and responsible financial management.

These achievements capture the essence of Liuwa's story: a landscape re-energised through partnership, leadership and long-term commitment. The return of hartebeest and the ability to support other parks through wildlife translocations reflect an ecosystem that has not only recovered but is now contributing to Zambia's wider conservation vision. Cultural heritage, community stewardship and ecological renewal remain inseparable here – each reinforcing the others.

The continued partnership with the BRE and the DNPW has been critical in strengthening park governance and conservation planning. This partnership plays a vital role in ensuring that conservation objectives are aligned with community needs and national policy priorities.

2025 KEY UPDATES



Liuwa's wild dog population grew from 11 reintroduced in 2021 and released in 2022 to 25 by the end of 2025, in 2 distinct packs.

The food relief programme, providing food to 1,500 most vulnerable households, continued through to April 2025.

The number of registered cattle-owners in the Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Fund increased to 700.

Liuwa Camp was fully operational for its second year.

King Lewanika Lodge reopened in March 2025.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- Secure a renewed 20-year mandate and strategically expand into the Upper West Zambezi Game Management Area (UWZGMA).
- Upgrade key infrastructure, including roads, ranger posts, and community campsite facilities, while improving communication networks.
- Strengthen anti-poaching efforts with more rangers, community scouts, improved patrols, and reduced human-wildlife conflict.
- Enhance monitoring, habitat restoration, and species management, including updating the Predator Management Plan.



The magnificent Kuomboka Ceremony of the Lozi people celebrates the movement of the Litunga and his people to higher ground, Liuwa Plain National Park, Zambia © Marcus Westberg



Matusadona National Park, Zimbabwe, is fast becoming a premier destination, with tourist numbers on the rise © Melanie Van Zyl



Zimbabwe

MATUSADONA NATIONAL PARK

1,477 KM² | AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2019

PARK MANAGER : MICHAEL PELHAM

MAJOR FUNDERS Elephant Crisis Fund,
Global Wildlife Fund, Stichting Natura Africae,
Thomas and Sara de Swardt, The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA)



The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) operates under the Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act of 2024, managing about five million hectares of land, or 13% of Zimbabwe's total land area. Mandated with the protection, management, and administration of Zimbabwe's wildlife, the Authority signed a 20-year partnership with African Parks for Matusadona National Park in 2019. Professor Edson Gandiwa is the current Director General of the PWMA.



In 2025, Matusadona National Park continued developing a model that links conservation outcomes directly to community livelihoods, with a focus on Lake Kariba's fisheries. Illegal fishing, unsustainable gear and unregulated extraction threaten fish populations, undermine local economies, and place strain on communities that depend on the lake for food and income. Against this backdrop, Matusadona invested in conservation law enforcement while working with fishers to develop legal, sustainable alternatives that support both ecosystems and household economies. Increased patrols and collaboration with Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority have significantly reduced illegal catches within Matusadona's controlled waters. Illegal harvests intercepted by rangers decreased from 2,718 kg in 2023 to 1,863 kg in 2025, reflecting both deterrence and improving ecological conditions in protected areas.

These efforts form part of a strategy to expand the management of Lake Kariba from 15% to 30% of the dam's area, the level recommended by scientists to ensure long-term sustainability. Within this zone, the difference between legal and illegal fishing is increasingly evident: resurgent fish stocks, higher numbers of breeding adults and healthier age structures. In 2025, 86 legally permitted fishers at Kings and Msampa camps harvested 300,463 kg of fish, earning a combined US\$515,443 in income. These results underscore how regulated fishing, supported by monitoring and data-driven management, can deliver reliable income without depleting natural resources.

To address the growing demand for fish and the limited number of legal permits available, Matusadona and community cooperatives introduced two complementary livelihood initiatives in 2025: community-based aquaculture at Msampa and a cold-chain pilot at Kings Camp, both designed to expand economic opportunity while reducing pressure on wild stocks.

At Msampa, the park and fishers launched a floating-cage aquaculture project to provide a steady supply of fish without relying on river extraction. Sixteen community members completed aquaculture training,

and a 480-cubic-metre cage was installed and stocked with 48,000 tilapia fingerlings, followed shortly by a second cage with 15,000 more. First harvests are expected in early 2026. The model offers a year-round protein source and new revenue stream, and increases the number of local community members who benefit, while helping wild indigenous stocks in the Ume River recover.

At Kings Camp, the primary constraint facing legal fishers has been the lack of cold storage to preserve catches, so that fishers have been forced to sell immediately at reduced prices to middlemen. In 2025, foundations were completed for solar-powered bulk freezers, with installation under way. Once operational, the facility will enable fishers to store, consolidate and transport catches, allowing them to access markets directly. The project is a "lake-to-fork" model that links the fishing camps to wholesale and retail outlets, ultimately increasing the amount each fisher earns.

The model is designed to scale to Msampa in 2026, allowing more families to enter legal, sustainable fishing. The park is also exploring local fish-feed production through community gardens to further localise the value chain and boost household benefits.

Matusadona is developing a different architecture on Lake Kariba: The floating cages on the Ume River and the cold-chain facility at Kings Camp aren't just infrastructure. They are conservation and livelihoods working together.

The broader impact is already visible. As legal alternatives grow, communities are more invested in the success of healthy fisheries. Fishers report illegal activity, help protect spawning areas and participate in monitoring programmes, demonstrating the value of aligning incentives with conservation. While challenges remain, including disease risks in aquaculture, feed sourcing, cold-chain maintenance and market logistics, the fundamentals of the approach are strong. Communities require income and protein; ecosystems require recovery; and the two objectives can reinforce one another.

In Matusadona, sustainable fisheries are proving to be a meaningful foundation for conservation, providing economic resilience for lakeshore communities while helping to safeguard one of Zimbabwe's most important aquatic ecosystems.

2025 KEY UPDATES



**257 community engagements reached
13,076 community members (53% women).**

**19 collared elephant confirmed
movements into 3 more protected areas
surrounding Matusadona.**

**10 eland, 14 sable and 50 buffalo
translocated and released.**

**Nyaminyami Rural District
Land Use Plan ratified.**

**Reported Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC)
incidents rose by 47% in 2025
compared to 2024, following the
recruitment of 9 HWC monitors.**

**Constituency for Conservation Index score
improved from 53% in 2023 to 60%.**

**Park revenue for 2025 totalled US\$681,698
(56% year-on-year growth from 2024).**

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

- Reintroduce black rhino and African wild dog.
- Recruit, train, and induct 40 field rangers.
- Support Nyaminyami Rural District communities to implement the Integrated Land Use Plan.
- Operationalise lake-to-fork ventures at Msampakaruma (Msampa) and Kings fishing camps.
- Finalise inclusion of Basin 4 into building revenue generation capacity through expanded tourism opportunities.
- Complete Tashinga Education Centre, accommodating 32 students for immersive conservation experiences.



Little bee-eater, Matusadona National Park, Zimbabwe © Fothergill Island



Key Initiatives

Rhino Rewild

MAJOR FUNDERS

Adessium Foundation,
Pershing Square Foundation,
Rathmann Family Foundation,
The Rob Walton Foundation,
VGP Foundation

Rhino Rewild continued to build momentum in its aim to restore southern white rhino to landscapes where they can once again play an ecological role. Now in its third year, the initiative is progressing through its structured three-phase approach with activities advancing concurrently across multiple sites.

In 2023, African Parks acquired the world's largest captive southern white rhino breeding operation in South Africa's North West Province, with the objective of rewilding its 2,000 rhino over ten years into secure, well-managed protected areas across Africa. Previously bred primarily for their horns, these animals had been unable to contribute to ecological processes within the confined environment in which they were kept. Rhino Rewild was established to change this trajectory by helping create new populations, reinforce existing ones and contribute to well-functioning ecosystems while reducing species-level risk across the continent.

Overall, Rhino Rewild showed a net rhino population growth rate of 6.59%, with 632 individuals rewilded into 16 recipient areas since the project's inception.

The Rescue Phase began with the acquisition of the property out of liquidation and now centres on the continued management of the project site, ensuring rhino welfare and stability as rewilding progresses. Infrastructure to support daily operations remained a priority in 2025, including staff housing, storage facilities, and the continued use of Capture Camp for operational coordination, donor engagement, and the capture of rhino for translocation. Appropriate conservation-aligned commercial activities took place, contributing towards the objective where 5% of the site's budget is generated by commercial revenue by 2030.

Rhino welfare was maintained through improved nutrition, supplementary feeding during dry periods, veterinary intervention where required, and sustained care for calves in the orphanage to enable their eventual

integration into the broader population. Healthier females able to care for their calves contributed to a further decrease in orphan intake in 2025, with 14 calves received (-26% year on year), the lowest annual intake since African Parks assumed management. Strengthened security measures remained effective, with no rhino lost to poaching during the year, aligning with the project's objective of zero poaching losses and a continued reduction in mortality from other causes.

The Rewild Phase aims to ensure that no less than 300 rhino are rewilded per year within the ten-year timeframe. In 2025, a total of 256 rhino were moved off the project site into protected areas in South Africa. Additional translocations that were delayed due to inclement weather will be completed in March 2026. Of the rhino moved in 2025, 72 were translocated to four new recipient areas, bolstering existing populations. Member reserves of the Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Foundation received a further 164 rhino, while two other protected areas received 20 and eight animals respectively.

Translocations vary by context: Some involve single releases with close monitoring to assess adaptation, while others occur in stages, allowing management teams to evaluate habitat capacity, behaviour, and social dynamics before further introductions. This phased approach supports adaptive management and informed decision making.

A significant milestone in 2025 was the completion of several multinational translocations under Rhino Rewild. In June, 70 rhino were flown to Rwanda for release in Akagera National Park. In December, 24 animals were transported to Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and eight to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary in Uganda. Over the year, seven new recipient areas were secured.

The Renew Phase focuses on the long-term protection and integration of rewilded rhino within well-managed protected areas, recognising their role in supporting biodiversity and ecosystem processes. Recipient areas continued to share monitoring data with African Parks, providing insight into adaptation, births and mortalities, and informing broader conservation and security practices. Through African Parks' protected area management model, rhino function as an umbrella species, contributing to ecological integrity in ways that also support habitats, in turn benefits other wildlife, and surrounding communities.



Since the project's inception, over 600 southern white rhino have been moved from the rhino farm to other areas © Wiki West

Incubation Programme

MAJOR FUNDERS

The Rob Walton Foundation, LGTVP

African Parks' objective is to manage 30 protected areas by 2030, while supporting an additional ten to fifteen areas through the Incubation Programme. Established in 2018, the programme focuses on supporting other organisations who share our vision for effective, accountable, and resilient protected area management; we assist such organisations in developing management agreements with governments and share our governance frameworks, business structures and best practices.

In 2025, the Incubation Programme continued to mature as a platform for long-term conservation capacity building. Progress during the year included expanding partner-managed protected areas, sustaining strategic and technical engagement with partner teams, and delivering targeted financial support through grant-making. Collaboration between African Parks and partners was further strengthened, supporting greater alignment and shared learning across the network.

Conservation Lower Zambezi, operating within Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park, was welcomed as a new partner by the programme. Unfortunately, the partnership with the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust in Malawi was terminated as a result of the Trust's lack of adequate progress toward its mandate and partnership milestones.

With generous support from the Rob Walton Foundation, financial support to partners was significantly expanded in 2025. A total of US\$2 million in direct grants was provided to several partner organisations, enabling them to strengthen priority operational functions, invest in critical conservation activities, and accelerate progress toward fulfilling partnership objectives.

The programme's five partner organisations manage seven protected areas covering over two million hectares across Africa.

Noé: Noé runs conservation and restoration programmes in France and five African countries to protect endangered species, manage protected

areas, support nature-friendly value chains, and raise awareness, enabling communities, business and governments to take action to protect biodiversity. Noé manages three protected areas through long-term mandates: Conkouati-Douli National Park (since 2021), the Binder Léré Complex of Protected Areas (since 2021), and Manda National Park (since 2025).

Forgotten Parks Foundation, DRC (FPF): Forgotten Parks Foundation's mission is to enhance the management of national parks and protected areas in partnership with governments and local communities and to empower people to conserve wildlife and wilderness. The organisation operates in national parks and protected areas in Africa that have high biodiversity but are largely unknown or forgotten and receive inadequate support to ensure their long-term protection. Since 2017, FPF has managed Upemba National Park, together with its two hunting reserves, under a Public-Private Partnership agreement with the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN). FPF also consults and delivers technical support to partner conservation organisations throughout Africa.

Enjojo Foundation, South Sudan (EF): Enjojo Foundation is a non-profit conservation organisation active in Uganda and South Sudan whose mission is to manage and conserve protected areas through a model that fosters peace, supports sustainable community livelihoods and enterprises, and enables socio-political stability. In 2022, EF signed an MoU with the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism of South Sudan for the co-management of Lantoto National Park (LNP) and Kidepo Game Reserve (KGR). In collaboration with the South Sudan Wildlife Service, EF takes on responsibility for all aspects of park management, including promoting peace and inclusive governance, supporting community development, ensuring effective park conservation, building and maintaining essential infrastructure and logistics, managing wildlife and habitats responsibly, and developing tourism and other sustainable revenue streams. EF currently operates under a co-management mandate with the Government of South Sudan.

The Chewore Conservation Trust, Zimbabwe (CCT): The CCT's mission is to revitalise and conserve Zimbabwe's unique ecosystems, beginning with its pilot project in Chewore South in the Zambezi Valley, implemented in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority. The Trust is working to build a sustainable, conservation-led economy that

ensures those living alongside Chewore's wildlife are its greatest beneficiaries. The Trust assumes responsibility for all aspects of managing the Chewore South Safari Area, including community development, conservation, infrastructure and logistics, wildlife and habitat management, promoting good governance, and tourism development.

Conservation Lower Zambezi, Zambia (CLZ): A Zambian-registered not-for-profit NGO established in 1994, CLZ is dedicated to the long-term conservation of wildlife and the sustainable management of natural resources in and around the Lower Zambezi ecosystem. CLZ works in close partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife across the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding Game Management Areas, supporting conservation efforts across an expansive landscape of nearly 20,000 km². Through law enforcement support, applied research, environmental education, and community engagement, CLZ plays a critical role in safeguarding one of Zambia's most important conservation areas. CLZ is governed by a voluntary, democratically and annually elected Board.

African Conservation Academy

Protected area management is highly complex, and becoming more so. Leaders of these systems operate within increasingly challenging geopolitical contexts, while constantly balancing ecological, socio-political, and financial priorities to ensure long-term sustainability. Navigating this nuanced balance is no easy task. Amongst many other actions, managers must guide teams in remote areas, engage and collaborate with local communities, ensure the highest safeguarding standards, oversee finances, shape conservation-friendly commercial opportunities, manage logistical networks and infrastructure development and respond to rapidly changing ecological realities.

Human capital is a defining driver of conservation success, yet scaled solutions to build the capacity of

Below: Upemba National Park, DRC, is managed by the Forgotten Parks Foundation, an incubation partner © Jean Labuschagne



managers who appreciate that balance, and who have the necessary leadership and holistic management skills, remains one of the sector's greatest constraints. Many existing programmes are too academic, too long, or too expensive. As a result, managers are left with limited capacity development options that equip them for complex, real-world environments. As countries work to meet broader continental ambitions, including the global 30 x 30 target, building capacity for Africa's rapidly scaling conservation needs has become urgent.

Recognising a critical gap, African Parks and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) have partnered to establish the African Conservation Academy, a dedicated training hub for protected area managers, near Akagera National Park. With management oversight from the African Leadership University's School of Wildlife Conservation, the intent with this bespoke training solution is to build capacity on the key principles needed for good management, irrespective of what model or context an individual is working within. This will include both soft skills as well as the full set of technical management skills needed for sustainable protected area management.

The Academy will be open to conservation practitioners from across the sector (state officials, community organisations or private sector), and will be grounded in practical, site-based learning shaped by real management scenarios and diverse contexts. With Akagera National Park as a 'living classroom', trainees will learn directly from a functioning yet evolving protected area, linking the theory to practice.

The campus design is nearly complete, and course content is currently under development in collaboration with the School of Wildlife Conservation and the South African Wildlife College, along with input from a network of subject matter experts. While much work remains, the first official cohort is expected in 2027.

Investing in people is one of the most powerful levers for long-term conservation and socio-economic impact. By bringing together partners and experts from across the region, the Academy aims to set a new standard of protected area management training in Africa, ensuring that there is a pipeline of leaders that can carry Africa's conservation priorities forward.

Below: Fishing cooperatives serve as vital centres for sustainable aquaculture development and community training, Akagera National Park, Rwanda © Clement Uwihanganye



Above: Boma and Badingilo National Parks, South Sudan, span diverse habitats across three million hectares © Marcus Westberg

African Keystone Protected Areas Partnership

In 2020, African Parks conducted an internal evaluation of Africa's remaining large, relatively intact "anchor" protected areas. Drawing on spatial datasets, ecological criteria, and more than two decades of operational experience, the analysis identified 161 areas with significant ecological and social potential.

In 2024, this work informed a new collaboration between the Rob Walton Foundation, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Wildlife Conservation Society, and African Parks. Building on the original analysis, these three organisations, together with independent experts Ashley Robson and Peter Lindsey, and with support from the Rob Walton Foundation, undertook a more systematic, updated assessment of the continent's protected area network.

This work culminated in 2025 with the publication of the Keystone Protected Areas white paper. The analysis identified a set of protected areas with

the potential to make a disproportionately large contribution to biodiversity conservation in Africa, benefitting both people and wildlife.

While effective landscape conservation requires a range of approaches, well-managed, legally designated protected areas remain fundamental. They provide critical refuges for species, support ecological processes that extend beyond their boundaries, and safeguard ecosystem services relied on by millions of people. When adequately resourced, they can also generate broader economic and conservation benefits across surrounding landscapes – functioning as "keystones" within larger conservation systems.

The quantitative analysis applied a set of conservation parameters designed to capture both the role and condition of protected areas:

Irreplaceability: The extent to which a protected area is essential for species survival, based on the availability of alternative habitats.

Connectivity: The importance of a protected area in maintaining ecological linkages across the broader network.

Integrity: The condition of a protected area, assessed through levels of human pressure and resulting ecological degradation.



Above: Awareness and engagement sessions with communities at Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Republic of Congo © Irene Galera

The Keystone Protected Areas initiative offers an evidence-based, continent-wide framework to guide investment toward areas where a disproportionate impact can be achieved. With strong partnerships, sustained management, and adequate resourcing, these areas can provide stability to national protected area systems while enabling conservation and socio-economic benefits to extend into wider landscapes.

This work has led to the establishment of the **Africa Keystone Protected Areas Partnership**, a collaborative platform to align organisations, funders, and governments around shared priorities and coordinated implementation, thus translating the analytical framework into practical action.

As African Parks continues working towards its 2030 objective of supporting 30 protected areas across Africa, it will be guided by the Keystone Protected Areas analysis as part of its growth strategy. We look forward to working with implementing partners, governments and donors to advance this bold initiative.

Embedding Human Rights

African Parks’ commitment to embedding human rights within conservation continues to deepen through Project Bomoko, our integrated, multi-year framework designed to strengthen safeguards and ensure that conservation benefits are achieved together with, and never at the expense of, the people living in and around the protected areas we manage. The initiative builds on the foundations articulated in African Parks’ Statement of Human Rights Principles and is translating these commitments into tangible improvements in systems, governance, and practice across the network.

In 2025, significant progress was made at both the institutional and park levels. A dedicated team under the Director of Community Development has overseen the implementation of Project Bomoko, commissioning numerous actions across the year. This has included the appointment and onboarding of the

Independent Grievance and Redress Mechanism Panel, the development of new operational manuals, and upgrades to grievance management systems to improve transparency, record-keeping, and accountability. These improvements were reinforced by strengthened investigative capacity, with fifteen managers receiving formal training in investigative procedures.

A crucial development in 2025 was the establishment by the Board of a Rights and Safeguards Sub-Committee, created to provide elevated oversight of human rights, safeguards, and governance. This sub-committee includes a dedicated human rights expert and receives regular reporting from the executive team on the progress of Project Bomoko and the integration of lessons into operational frameworks. This enhanced governance ensures human rights considerations remain central, strategic, and sustained.

Independent assessments have played a central role in refining policies and procedures. Multiple evaluations were commissioned to assess human rights risks associated with conservation law enforcement, including the documentation of ranger-suspected poacher encounters. Findings from these assessments are informing updates to standard operating procedures, reinforcing a precautionary and rights-based approach. In Odzala-Kokoua National Park, a comprehensive Environmental and Social Due Diligence review showed a significant reduction in risk profile compared with 2021, reflecting progress in mitigation, oversight, and community development efforts.

Considerable emphasis has also been placed on capacity building. Over 70 senior managers completed training on the principles of human rights in conservation, facilitated by African Parks’ Human Rights and Criminal Justice Advisor. This course built on the established curriculum for Conservation Law Enforcement teams, ensuring consistent understanding of international norms across leadership and field personnel.

At the park level, progress continued in improving equitable access to natural resources, particularly for Indigenous and Autochthone communities in Odzala-Kokoua. New boreholes and alternative water-capture systems were installed across several villages, with additional sites planned, contributing to increased access to safe drinking water for more than half of surrounding communities.

As part of addressing historical grievances, disciplinary processes were concluded for eight eco-guards following an independent investigation, carried out in full compliance with national labour laws. Parallel efforts are under way to finalise a comprehensive remedy framework for identified victims.

Project Bomoko represents an evolving commitment that grows systems, improves governance, and builds capability to ensure that conservation outcomes are delivered in a way that respects and protects human rights. The various actions on Project Bomoko support our commitment to fully integrate safeguards systems and processes into our operations.

Below: Floodplains, seasonal and permanent swamps and woodlands are home to hundreds of fish and bird species, Bangweulu Wetlands, Zambia © Lorenz Fischer





Our Partners

Catalysts For Conservation

STRATEGIC FUNDING PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful to a core group of funders who provide largely flexible, multi-year funding at significant levels. We also acknowledge several European and American strategic private funders who prefer to remain anonymous. Together, these strategic partners have helped us scale our efforts in protected area management across Africa with their incredibly generous and, mostly, unrestricted support.



Allen Family Philanthropies

Anna McWane



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Click here to read descriptions of each organisation, individual, and government entity, along with a summary of their significant contributions and collaborative projects with African Parks.

Zambia's Kafue National Park holds a growing lion population, recent estimates suggesting around 300 individuals © Andrew Macdonald



Institutional Information

We are ever grateful to our Boards, for their governance, leadership, oversight and financial support. The details of the governance structures are as of 31st December 2025.

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P.O. Box 2336, Lonehill, 2062, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 465 0050 Email: info@africanparks.org
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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

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Malmøgade 5
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sophie.v@afrikanparks.org

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P.O. Box 313, 3940 AH Doorn, The Netherlands
netherlands@africanparks.org

AFRICAN PARKS ASIA PACIFIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

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In Remembrance

Each year, we face the sorrow of bidding farewell to colleagues, partners and friends, some lost under heartbreaking circumstances. In 2025, we honour their lives and the vital contributions they made to African Parks' mission of conserving landscapes across the continent, recognising their commitment and the lasting impact of their work. We extend our deepest condolences to their families, friends, and the communities who mourn them.

Below, we pay tribute to African Parks staff members who passed away in the fulfilment of their duty or due to other causes.

Ranger **William Habimana**, who joined Akagera in 2012 and passed away 9th June, will be remembered for his dedication to the K9 Unit.

Carlos Franisse Vilanculo joined Bazaruto in 2022

as a heavy machine operator, passing away on 31st January in a car accident.

Jerry Macka, Control Room Technician, joined Chinko in 2023 and was dedicated, rigorous and professional, passing away on 13th May due to illness.

Driver **Euphrème Mbono**, who joined Chinko in 2024, is remembered for his eagerness to learn. He fought bravely against his illness before passing on 16th January.

Jean Kawangia Minisale, an inspirational ranger in Garamba since 2013, passed away on 9th November due to illness.

Augustin Vungwangba Migunde joined Garamba in 2016 as a ranger, passing away on 21st February due to an accident. He is remembered for his strong work ethic.

Rufino Ernesto, who joined Iona in 2022, passed away on 5th July due to illness, remembered for the music he played and the happiness he brought to Pediva.

Three men who worked for Kafue National Park were tragically killed by a crocodile as they tried to cross

a river on 23rd November: **Sunday Chabakola** and **Teddy Chivuno** had both joined Kafue in 2024, while **Freeze Kapasa** had joined in 2025; they worked on vegetation control and with the roads team.

Hardworking park ranger, **Charles Kalatambala**, joined Kafue in 2022, passing away on 21st December due to illness.

Shaibu Alisa joined Liwonde in 2020, working as a fence attendant before passing away on 22nd August from illness, known for his friendly nature.

Wiseman Phillip, who joined Nkhotakota in 2023, was struck by lightning on 3rd May while on duty maintaining the reserve fence. He is remembered for his integrity and hardworking spirit.

Leandre Hatungineza, who joined Nyungwe in 2021, was killed in a car accident on 9th February. Originally a ranger, he was serving as a store keeper, and was admired for his skill and supportiveness.

Germain Apouta Angonga, who joined Odzala in 2012, passed away on 24th February due to illness. He was a

dedicated ranger and respected team leader.

Senior Investigator **Hubert Mboua**, who joined Odzala in 2012, passed away on 20th August due to illness. Hubert dedicated his life to conservation.

Moutakirou Ibouraima who joined W National Park in 2020, was shot and killed during an aerial patrol on 8th March. He is remembered for his bravery, talent, and exceptional field performance as a ranger.

Dedicated medical assistant **Souka Abou Bakari**, who joined W Park in 2020, was killed on 24th August in an attack at his home.

Hamid Nichola Taloua and **Charles van Eden** were killed in a tragic plane crash on 14th May. Hamid joined Zakouma in 2018 and was a rhino monitor and Charles, who joined in 2025, was a pilot. Both served with immense professionalism and commitment to conservation.

Habitat Service Manager **Satangar Dogringar**, who joined Zakouma in 2010, passed away on 29th September due to illness.





Financials

2025 Financial Highlights

The 2025 year had an exceptionally rocky start due to the collapse of USAID in the first quarter. Funding for contracted activities amounting to around \$8m for 2025 and another \$16m over the following three years was lost as a result. This funding was not easy to replace as it was allocated to vital activities as per the park business plans and budget. We were therefore left with few options but to reduce costs. The operational and finance teams did exceptionally well in planning and executing this cost restructure, with no jobs being lost. The decreases were aimed at non-critical unfunded activities, resulting in a reduction of our operational budgets by \$4,3m across the parks and African Parks headquarters. Additionally, we managed to close the 2025 funding gap – US\$25,4m – by the end of November.

Carbon initiatives remained successful, and they are delivering positive cash flows even though the cost of the carbon funding requires upfront investments. Carbon funding for Chinko has been so successful that we have been able to close the park funding gap two years in advance. However, the carbon project approvals for Benin were delayed.

Our investment in reserves has stood us in good stead once again with our cash flows and cash position remaining positive throughout the year. Having estimated that three to five months' cash cover is ideal, it was encouraging that the organisation succeeded in operating on three months' cash cover throughout 2025. This ensures that we are not over-invested in reserves, which could result in donor funds not being spent where most needed, and not under-invested so that our operations suffer from cash flow constraints.

Basis of preparation

The financial highlights in this section are derived from the summary management accounts for the group, which are prepared on a cash basis and do not contain non-cash elements such as depreciation or exchange rates profits and losses. All entities within the group aim for balanced budgets by ensuring that income equals expenditure.

At a park level, funding received from grants is only drawn once the expenditure related to that funding has been incurred. Our income for 2025 increased by 8% mainly due to maturing parks such as Kafue, Boma, Badingilo and Iona, and newer projects like the Incubator Programme. New partnerships were concluded in Gambella and Kundelungu, and added to the budget.

Grant funding accounted for 78% of the group's total income at US\$129,6 million (\$120m – 2024), with the remaining 22% coming from commercial income (11%), nature-based solutions (7%) and endowment income (4%) respectively. Grant funding is made up of individual donors and foundations 52% (55% – 2024), institutional funding 15% (16% – 2024), conservation organisations 5% (4% – 2024), lotteries 3% (3% – 2024) and local government funding 3% (2% – 2024).

Our **Endowments** have shown strong growth with African Parks Foundation of America (APFA) managing US\$154,9 million (US\$71,2 million – 2024) while still contributing a \$2,85 million drawdown. Stichting African Parks Foundation (SAPF) managed €45,8 million (€40,6 million – 2024) while contributing a €1,5 million drawdown. These endowments provide African Parks with unrestricted funding in the form of annual drawdowns that, to a large degree, assist in funding institutional oversight.

Both endowment funds are invested in a mix of equity, bonds and cash according to the funding committee's investment policy. The endowment fund assets are held on the balance sheets of SAPF and APFA, both foundations being affiliated entities of African Parks Network (APN).

APN controls group spending through careful annual budget pre-approval and monitoring processes. Actual spend against these budgets is monitored every month through the monthly management accounts. The total budget approved by the APN Board for operational and commercial expenditure for 2025 was US\$166,3 million (2024 – US\$175 million).

Two of the ratios that we keep a close eye on stood out in terms of good performance. Our sustainability ratio, which indicates our ability to use transactional activities like tourism and carbon to fund the parks, increased from 22% in 2024 to

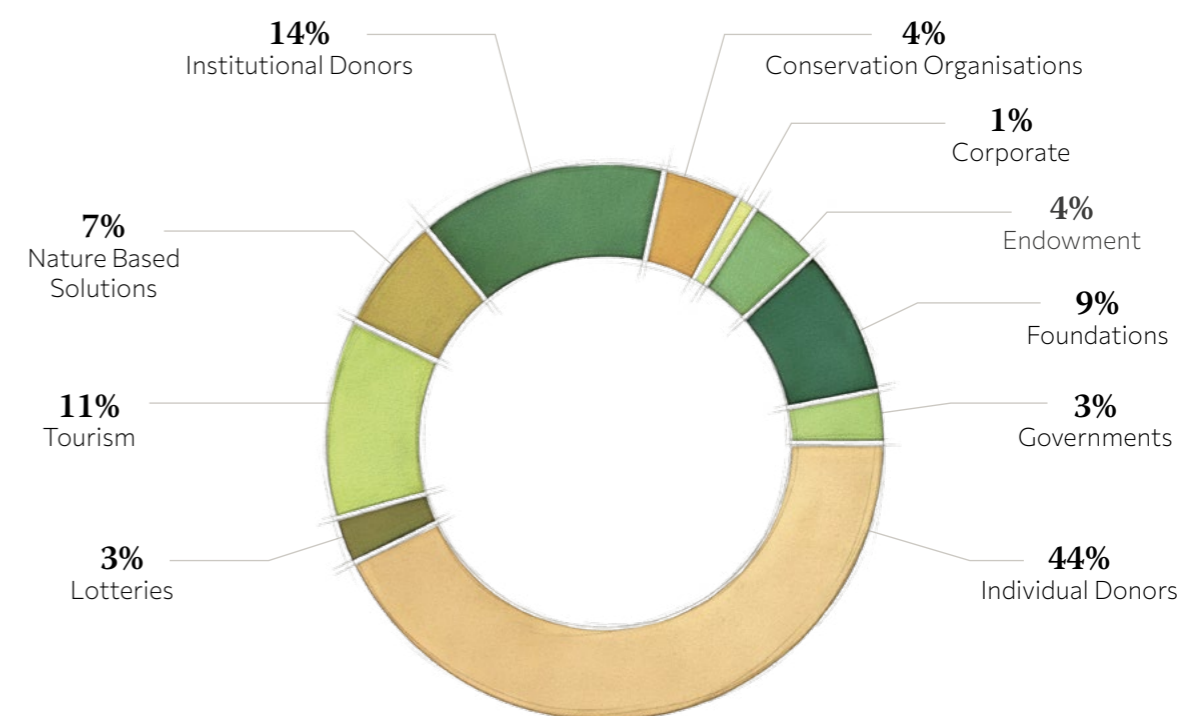
23% in 2025 among the protected areas that have active revenue-generating projects. The proportion of park spending done in local economies also grew

by almost 1%, up to 66.4% in 2025. This excludes head office, project and parks without commercial activities.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS VS ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025

	Protected areas US\$'000	Projects Rhino Rewild/ Aouk/ Incubator US\$'000	African Parks Network US\$'000	Total for 2025 US\$'000	Total for 2024 US\$'000
Income	130,562	11,951	22,716	165,229	151,281
Grant funding	102,640	11,478	15,482	129,600	120,094
Gross commercial revenue	14,737	473	2,613	17,823	16,478
Nature based solutions	10,837	-	-	10,837	9,647
Endowment income	2,348	-	4,621	6,969	4,200
Other income	-	-	-	-	862
Total spending	130,543	11,982	21,881	164,406	149,593
Operating expenditure	117,837	11,547	19,613	148,997	131,367
Capital expenditure	12,706	435	2,268	15,409	18,226
Net surplus before taxation	19	(30)	835	823	1,688

2025 SOURCES OF FUNDING



Governance

Sound governance, disciplined internal controls, and professional financial management are core focus areas at African Parks.

The main governing body, African Parks Network, based in Johannesburg, South Africa, is a registered non-profit company in terms of Section 10 of the Companies Act of South Africa. African Parks Network is the strategic and decision-making entity responsible for approving the business plan of each park, determining capital investments, operating budgets, standard operating procedures, and appointing skilled park management.

The African Parks Network Board, consisting of one executive and seven non-executive Board members, is responsible for the overall governance of the organisation. Four specialised sub-committees – the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, the Remuneration and Human Resource Committee, the Rights and Safeguards Committee, and the Conservation Committee – ensure additional focus on governance.

Each park managed by African Parks has a local Board set up in-country. Each Board is represented by partner institutions, key stakeholders, and African Parks Network, and is directly accountable to government for the professional management of the park.

Parks are required to operate in accordance with national legislation, the mandate with governments and the standard operating procedures determined by

African Parks Network. Park management reporting disciplines include the preparation of monthly management accounts, annual budgets, and annual business plans, which are reviewed and approved by the local boards and then African Parks Network management in Johannesburg. All employees are required to sign a code of conduct and to observe the highest standards of ethics. Liaison with African Parks stakeholders, identified as local government, local communities, donors, employees, and affiliated organisations, is conducted through formal channels of communication as specified in the standard operating procedures.

The African Parks Network group financial statements comply with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and are audited by KPMG South Africa.

African Parks Network has affiliated fundraising entities in The Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, the UK, and the USA. These are: Stichting African Parks Foundation (The Netherlands); African Parks Foundation Switzerland; African Parks Foundation Germany; African Parks Association Denmark; African Parks UK; and African Parks Foundation of America (USA). These entities have charitable status and their role is to further the mission of African Parks. These separate legal entities are governed by independent Boards but are bound by a collaboration agreement that ensures a common purpose for all.

Join Us

When you donate to African Parks, you are investing in the future of Africa's landscapes, wildlife, and people. Your support enables the long term conservation and restoration of vital ecosystems, restoration and safeguarding of wildlife populations, and well managed protected areas that contribute to local socio economic development and global environmental health. Through our work, we are creating safe places where employment opportunities are generated; sustainable enterprises are supported; schools are built; mobile health units are deployed; and conservation-led economies begin to grow. We operate at scale, overseeing every aspect of protected area management with full accountability. Every dollar we receive is directed toward delivering the most immediate and lasting conservation impact, while creating the conditions for people and nature to thrive together. Our objective is to manage 30 protected areas by 2030, to align with the global vision to effectively conserve and manage at least 30% of the world's land, freshwater, and oceans by 2030. With a proven track record and a clear strategy, we

believe this goal is within reach. Every contribution, no matter the size, brings us closer to a future where nature is safeguarded for generations to come.

Thank you for your support. If you would like to find out more, please contact:

SIMON CAMERER

Global Fundraising Director

simonc@africanparks.org

TINEKE FLOOR

Director – EU

tinekef@africanparks.org

LIAM T. DALL

Executive Director – USA

liamd@africanparks.org

ANDREW KRUPA

Director – APAC

andrewk@africanparks.org

AZIZA BUKA

Director – Institutional Funding

azizab@africanparks.org