



# AKAGERA

NATIONAL PARK  
RWANDA

AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2009

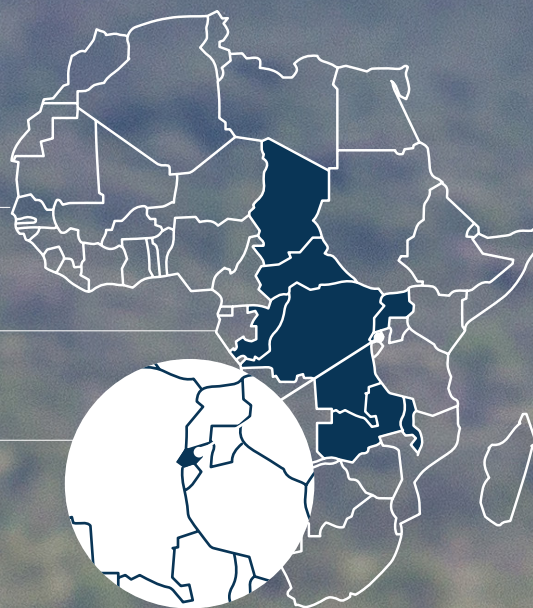
Akagera totals 1,122km<sup>2</sup>

Partners: Rwanda Development Board (RDB)



7 lions reintroduced in August 2015

7 lion cubs born in May 2016



## The Story of Akagera

Akagera National Park's rolling highlands, savannah plains and swamp-fringed lakes make up the largest protected wetland in central Africa, and the last remaining refuge for savannah-adapted animals and plants in Rwanda. Despite being a relatively small park at just 1,122 km<sup>2</sup>, it is home to an impressive array of wildlife, including a number of rare species such as the shoebill and sitatunga.

Since African Parks assumed management of Akagera with the Rwanda Development Board and established the Akagera Management Company (AMC) in 2010, the partnership has led to several flagship projects, including the reintroduction of lions after a 20-year absence, and plans are now in place to reintroduce black rhino. Akagera is well on track to becoming Rwanda's only Big Five park and a premiere tourism destination, which is helping the park become financially self-sustaining.



Akagera  
NATIONAL PARK

## The Challenge

Akagera National Park was founded in 1934, and has had a difficult past. In particular, the Rwandan Civil War in the 1990s took its toll on the park when much of the land was reallocated as farmland for returning refugees, reducing the park from 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> to just 1,122 km<sup>2</sup>. Akagera's wildlife were also heavily impacted by rampant poaching, with lions being completely eradicated by returning pastoralists who were protecting their cattle. Today, Rwanda has the highest population density in continental Africa, and human encroachment into park remains a pressing issue.



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## The Solution

Since 2010, African Parks has completely overhauled the law enforcement efforts, which has dramatically curbed poaching in the park and led to crucial arrests for wildlife-related crimes. As a result, wildlife are now flourishing and Akagera's tourism potential has been transformed, expanding opportunities for local employment and strengthening ties with communities. Through the creation of revenue streams from which Rwandans directly benefit, African Parks is securing the park's long-term ecological and economical future.



## Highlights

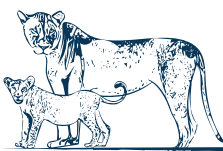
- In 2015 seven lions were reintroduced, for the first time in Rwanda after a 20-year absence, and 7 cubs were born in 2016, doubling the population.
- A 120 km-long electrified predator-proof perimeter fence has been constructed and is reducing human-wildlife conflict.
- Over 1,000 students and educators annually visit Akagera.
- The park's upgraded facilities, including a visitor complex, Ruzizi Tented Lodge and Karengye Bush Camp, generate funds for community projects.

## Next Steps

- 1 Continue to reduce poaching through rigorous law enforcement including patrols and removal of snares.
- 2 Utilise and enhance park infrastructure to continue to grow the park's tourism offering.
- 3 Develop a seasonal tented bush camp and a luxury lodge in the north of the park.
- 4 Continue to increase revenue from tourism productivity and channel towards community development.



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African Parks is a non-profit conservation organisation that takes on direct responsibility for the rehabilitation and long-term management of national parks and protected areas, in partnership with governments and local communities. We currently manage 10 parks in seven countries – CAR, Chad, Republic of Congo, DRC, Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia - with a combined area of six million hectares. Our goal by 2020 is to have 20 parks, and 10 million hectares, under management