



# BANGWEULU

WETLANDS  
ZAMBIA

AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2008

Bangweulu totals 6,000 km<sup>2</sup>

Partners: Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW)  
and six Community Resource Boards (CRBs)

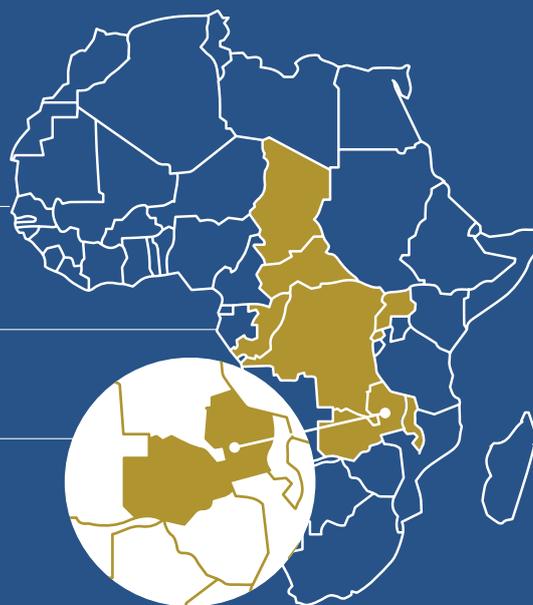


689 bird species



Designated an Important Bird Area

Educational outreach to 10 schools per year



## The Story of Bangweulu

Bangweulu means “where water meets the sky”, an apt description for one of the most extraordinary wetlands in all of Africa. Bangweulu is a community-owned protected wetland system in north-eastern Zambia. Comprising of a unique richness in floral and faunal diversity, 689 bird species inhabit its wilderness, including the rare and prehistoric-looking shoebill. Built on a system in which local people retain rights for sustainable harvesting of natural resources, the wetland is unique in its co-governance, and is positioned to become a leading example of community-driven conservation.



BANGWEULU  
WETLANDS  
COMMUNITY OWNED, COMMUNITY CONSERVED

## The Challenge

In the absence of a management plan, Bangweulu's natural resources were being rapidly depleted. Relentless poaching exterminated several large mammal species, but spared small remnant populations of buffalo, elephant and hartebeest. Prior to a partnership with African Parks, unrestricted fishing and rampant hunting decimated fish stocks and black lechwe (a type of antelope), on which local communities were, and are, largely dependent for their survival.



## The Solution

The long-term sustainability of Bangweulu is contingent on maintaining a close partnership with the communities that own the park and depend on its natural resources. Communities are engaged to increase awareness of the value of their natural heritage, and they are beginning to experience the tangible benefits deriving from sustainable management of the park's resources, increased tourism activities and employment opportunities. Recruitment and training of Bangweulu's law enforcement team simultaneously plays a key role in safeguarding the communities' resources.



## Highlights

- The park is one of the largest employers in the region, and through a Community Development Fund has supported medical and school facilities.
- Communities are benefitting from improved fishing yields after a fishing ban was implemented over the spawning season to allow fish stocks to recover over time.
- Anti-poaching measures have seen the recovery of black lechwe by more than 45 % in three years, as well as sitatunga and shoebill populations.

## Next Steps

- 1 Expand the Shoebill Guard Programme, which has successfully employed local fisherman to monitor the safety of shoebill nests.
- 2 Focus on the reintroduction of species that once flourished in the park.
- 3 Provide further assistance to livelihood projects, such as training in bee-keeping practices, to boost community income generated through honey production.



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

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