



MAJETE

WILDLIFE RESERVE
MALAWI

AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2003

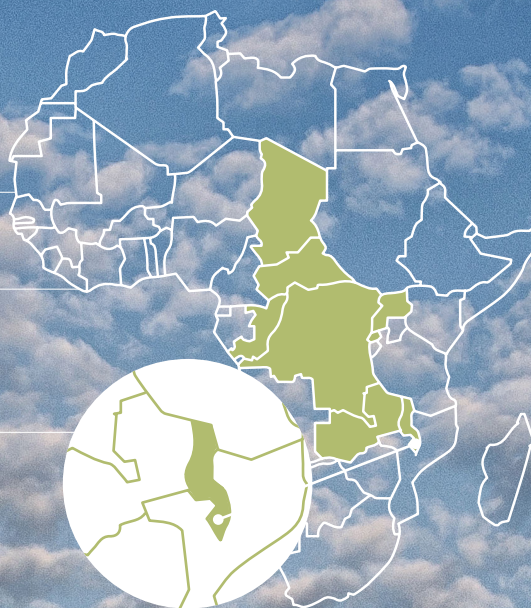
Area: 700 km²

Partner: Malawi Department of National Parks and Wildlife

Key Funders: The Wyss Foundation and WWF-Belgium

0 rhino and elephant poached since 2003

1,129 children visited Majete through the environmental education programme in 2017



The Story of Majete

Over just 15 years, Majete Wildlife Reserve has transformed from an empty forest into Malawi's premier Big Five wildlife destination. Majete was the first park to enter into the African Parks portfolio, when in 2003 we signed a 25-year management agreement with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) to manage this 700 km² reserve. We immediately began to revive Majete through the development of infrastructure; we overhauled law enforcement and carried out a series of species reintroductions which saw the return of 2,900 animals from 14 species including rhinos, elephants, lions, leopards and buffalo. Today Majete's wildlife is flourishing so much so that they are helping to re-populate other parks through projects like the historic '500 Elephants' translocation. The success of Majete's restoration is evident in its 15-year track record of zero poaching incidents of rhinos and elephants, as well as in the yearly increase in employment and tourism. The reserve received over 9,000 visitors in 2017, half of whom were Malawian nationals, bringing in over \$500,000 in needed revenue to support the park and local communities. Majete is a tale of a park rising from the ashes – living proof of how a park once deemed to be a wasteland can be revived and restored to serve as a life-source for both wildlife and humans alike.



The Challenge

By the early 2000s, after two decades of rampant poaching, fishing and illegal logging, Majete's ecosystems were almost irreversibly degraded and the reserve's wildlife had been decimated. With under-resourced rangers who were ill-equipped to counter the ever present threats, the reserve's resources were plundered, tourism was non-existent, and the park had produced few to no benefits for local communities. Today, more than 140,000 people live around Majete, which means that managing the pressure on natural resources, preventing human-wildlife conflict, and unlocking the benefits the park can provide, are critical to ensuring for Majete's long-term and sustainable future.

Highlights

- More than 2,500 animals have been reintroduced including black rhino, elephant, lion, leopard, sable antelope, impala and buffalo.
- By 2017, the elephant population had grown to over 430 individuals since 2006 resulting in the ability to translocate 154 individuals from Majete to Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve in Malawi, to help repopulate that reserve as part of the historic '500 Elephants' initiative.
- Effective law enforcement has resulted in not one rhino or elephant poached since 2003.
- The local economy has been transformed by creating economic opportunities and provisioning of services through the construction of infrastructure, including schools, health clinics and safer roads.
- Tourism has been on the rise, with over 9,000 tourists visiting the reserve in 2017, a 14% increase from 2016, generating more than US\$550,000 in revenue in 2017.
- In 2018, four additional lions were translocated to Majete from South Africa in order to increase genetic diversity.



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 15 parks in nine countries – Benin, CAR, Chad, Republic of Congo, DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Zambia – with a combined area of 10.5 million hectares. Our goal is to have 20 parks under management by 2020.

The Solution

Majete's full rehabilitation required a multi-pronged approach. The first steps were to address the poaching threat through the establishment of an effective law enforcement team. Community participation complemented these efforts through the implementation of an effective informant network, whereby community members would alert the reserve to any illegal activity. Once law enforcement had been successfully overhauled, numerous species were reintroduced into the park, and with safety restored wildlife were able to breed and thrive. Maintaining a close and constructive relationship with local communities has been essential to the success of Majete. By generating tangible benefits for the community, through employment, tourism, education and health benefits, and investing in sustainable local enterprises, Majete is ensuring that people and wildlife benefit from the parks existence.

Next Steps

- 1 Strengthen law enforcement capacities through training.
- 2 Maintain ongoing track record of zero losses of rhino and elephant from poaching.
- 3 Secure funding for the reintroduction of giraffe.
- 4 Create a successful honey production scheme to produce seven tonnes of honey to benefit the local community.
- 5 Increase tourism revenue with the construction of a new bush camp