



GARAMBA

NATIONAL PARK
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

AFRICAN PARKS PROJECT SINCE 2005

Area: 5,133 km²

Adjacent Areas: 9,663 km²

Partner: Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN)

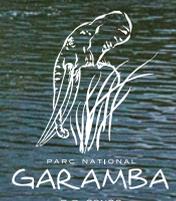
Key Funders: European Union (EU), Barrick Gold Corporation, Save the Elephants and Wildlife Conservation Network's Elephant Crisis Fund, The Wildcat Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

55 Kordofan giraffe, up from 38 in 2016
98% decrease in elephant poaching since 2016



The Story of Garamba

Garamba is one of Africa's oldest national parks, designated in 1938, and in 1980 was declared a World Heritage Site. But this ecologically diverse and stunning landscape has had a difficult past. Garamba contained 22,000 elephants as recently as the 1970s, and was once home to the Northern white rhino, but militarised poachers have reduced the elephant population to fewer than 1,200 individuals, and the last white rhino was seen in the park in the early 2000s. In order to prevent Garamba's complete destruction, African Parks assumed management in 2005 in partnership with the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN). The park represents one of African Parks' greatest challenges, but through the complete overhaul of our law enforcement strategy with critical support from the Wildcat Foundation, the EU and USAID, and with improved ranger training and the integration of new technology, we are finally gaining significant ground. Elephant poaching is down by 98% since 2016 and only two carcasses with signs of poaching were found in 2018. Furthermore, no giraffe have been poached since 2017. Illegal activity in the park has been significantly reduced, and key wildlife populations including giraffe and hartebeest have either stabilised or are increasing. Garamba's growing ranger force not only provides security for the park's wildlife but also to thousands of people living around the park, slowly returning peace to this corner of the world again.





The Challenge

Sharing 261 km of its border with war-torn South Sudan, Garamba is situated in one of the most anarchic parts of Africa. Militant ivory and bushmeat poachers have systematically targeted the park's natural resources to fund their campaigns of terror and instability. The Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), has been known to operate throughout the Garamba Complex and has posed a considerable threat to the safety of the local communities and wildlife. In 2016, close to 1,000 armed men retreated from South Sudan to Garamba, creating a serious security threat and challenging the park's integrity. The fighting in South Sudan also created an increasing flow of refugees to DRC who were housed close to the park boundary by international organisations. The humanitarian need surrounding Garamba was and still is obvious and shows the critical role the park plays in providing safety and stability to surrounding communities. However, without careful management, this could become an increasingly urgent situation for the park's natural resources.

Highlights

- In January 2016 African Parks renewed its management agreement for Garamba for an additional 10 years.
- An effective law enforcement strategy that was devised in 2016 has resulted in a 98% decrease in elephant poaching with only 2 elephant carcasses found with signs of poaching in 2018.
- 16 elephants received collars in 2018, taking the total number of collared individuals to 43 – a critical tool in helping to protect this heavily targeted species in the park.
- The park's critically endangered Kordofan giraffe, which are the last remaining individuals in the DRC have increased to 55, up from 38 in 2016.
- Garamba is one of the largest employers in the area with over 500 full-time staff and hundreds more on short-term contracts, including law enforcement teams and dedicated community personnel.
- A K9 unit was deployed in January 2019 to help detect and interdict illegal activities and significantly broaden our Law Enforcement capabilities.
- Garamba's scholarship programme supported three local schools, benefitting 709 students. The park also supplemented 21 teachers salaries.
- Seven mobile health clinics were operational in 2018 serving 2,536 individuals in 21 villages.

The Solution

Solutions for the long-term protection of Garamba are multi-pronged including two main components: intensive law enforcement efforts to counter the poaching threats the park faces on a constant basis, and the sustainable development of the area, in order to realise the socio-economic benefits for surrounding communities. Park rangers are equipped with the requisite skills to effectively counter sophisticated and highly militarised poachers aided by new technology. Community involvement is essential for the long-term future of the park, and with large support from the EU and USAID, we are rolling out a Sustainable Development Strategy to provide clean, reliable and sustainable electricity to local communities; to help individuals who are engaged in illegal mining to identify alternative sources of income; to provide health care, clean water and education; and to impact 100,000 households with an agro-ecology program focussed on cacao, honey, livestock and forestry products, and small-scale farming. Ultimately our goal is to alleviate dependency on the park's limited resources, providing people instead with the potential for a long-term, sustainable future.

Next Steps

- 1 Maintain and increase the integrity of the park from armed group activity.
- 2 Develop new technically advanced methods of monitoring wildlife.
- 3 Implement a responsible Sustainable Development Strategy which addresses the need for alternative livelihoods for local communities.
- 4 Improve our understanding of the regional dynamics and open dialogue with South Sudanese authorities in order to seek stability.
- 5 Implement a Land Use Plan strategy in partnership with local communities and authorities.
- 6 Establish a capacity building programme to strengthen skills of local personnel



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. With 15 parks under management in nine countries, we are protecting 10.5 million hectares which is the largest amount of area under conservation for any one NGO on the continent.