



Peace Parks Foundation Newsflash 6/2016

WILDLIFE THRIVING IN MAPUTO SPECIAL RESERVE, MOZAMBIQUE

At the end of September, the Maputo Special Reserve/Tembe Elephant Park management committee conducted an aerial census to determine the status of the large herbivore species in Maputo Special Reserve, with a focus on the species that had been reintroduced. The census was made possible thanks to funding from the National Administration for Conservation Areas (ANAC) and Peace Parks Foundation. In 2006, Peace Parks Foundation and ANAC signed a cooperation agreement to develop and manage Maputo Special Reserve.

The species found to be the most abundant in the reserve are hippo, reedbuck, elephant, grey duiker, red duiker, blue wildebeest and zebra, while the giraffe population is increasing steadily. The species with the most animals in the reserve remains reedbuck, with an estimated 2 611 individuals. Since 2015, blue wildebeest and zebra have increased significantly from 276 to 351, and from 303 to 446 respectively. There are also an estimated 400 elephant, 750 hippo, 405 red duiker, 200 impala, 350 kudu, 100 warthog and 230 nyala in the reserve.

The census team was delighted to confirm the presence of three waterbuck, while field staff have observed three female buffalo. While most reintroduced populations remain concentrated in the south of the reserve, they are beginning to disperse north and eastwards from their initial release locations.

As part of developing the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation and Resource Area, the governments of Mozambique and South Africa, with support from Peace Parks Foundation, began a wildlife translocation programme to Maputo Special Reserve in 2010. The translocations reintroduce animals that were historically found in the area to enable the fast recovery and subsequent increase of the reserve's wildlife populations. This is essential to developing the reserve as a tourist destination. This multi-year endeavour has been made possible thanks to Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's donation, capture and transportation of wildlife from reserves in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, to Maputo Special Reserve in Mozambique. Altogether 1 115 animals have been translocated since 2010, including kudu, warthog, impala, nyala, zebra, giraffe and blue wildebeest.

Dr Bartolomeu Soto, Director-General of ANAC, welcomed the census results and said: "This is a true transfrontier conservation success story, thanks to the mutual efforts of the partner countries. Maputo Special Reserve regaining a wealth of wildlife is sure to benefit everyone involved in the Lubombo TFCA, including the local communities. I thank the reserve staff and rangers for their efforts to protect the animals."

Mr Werner Myburgh, CEO of Peace Parks Foundation was equally pleased and said: "As is the case with so much transfrontier conservation work, true results become visible over time. We remain thankful to all the donors who have been supporting the development of Maputo Special Reserve and Lubombo TFCA."

Maputo Special Reserve is an important component in the protected areas system of Mozambique, as it conserves the exceptional biodiversity of a coastal zone that lies in the Maputaland Centre of Endemism and enables linkages between marine, coastal and inland components. At 1 040 km², it is a spectacular area that combines coastal lakes, wetlands, swamp forests, grasslands and mangrove forests with a pristine coastline that supports a wide variety of birds, including aquatic, terrestrial, migratory and endemic birds. Situated in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot, it is part of one of earth's 36 biologically richest and most endangered terrestrial ecoregions.

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The translocated giraffe population has increased from 21 in 2015 to 28 in 2016. Photos: Andrea Borgarello for the World Bank and Brian Neubert