

Country Profile

Republic of Mozambique



Giraffe Conservation Status Report

Sub-region: Southern Africa

General statistics

Size of country: 801,590 km²

Size of protected areas / percentage protected area coverage: 25%

(Sub)species

South African giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis giraffa*)

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List (IUCN 2012):

Giraffa camelopardalis (as a species) – least concern

Giraffa camelopardalis giraffa – not assessed

In the Republic of Mozambique:

Giraffe in the Republic of Mozambique (referred to as Mozambique in this report) are protected under the Forestry and Wildlife Law (Law No. 10/99) and Regulations of the Forestry and Wildlife Law (Decree No. 12/2002). Giraffe are listed in Annexure 2 of the Regulations as a protected species that may not be hunted. They are listed as one of the eight mammals on Mozambique's National Red List that are either extinct or in danger of extinction (MICOA 2009).

Issues/threats

Conversion, loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats as well as over-exploitation of resources and wildlife are some of the biggest threats facing Mozambique's biodiversity (Beyers *et al.* 2013; Weyerhaeuser 2013; WWF 2013; Ölund Wingqvist 2011; MICOA 2009). Agricultural expansion, conversion of land to industrial plantations, logging, firewood cutting, charcoal production, uncontrolled wildfires and illegal hunting have altered natural environments and threaten the survival of many species (Beyers *et al.* 2013, Ölund Wingqvist 2011; MICOA 2009). Giraffe are one of the most threatened large mammal species in Mozambique (Beyers *et al.* 2013).

The Mozambican civil war (1977–1992) has severely impacted biodiversity conservation in the country (Lindsey & Bento 2012). Most protected areas in Mozambique were established in the 1960s and 1970s (Beyers *et al.* 2013). During the war, these areas were mostly abandoned, and, without adequate management, infrastructure lapsed into a state of degradation (Beyers *et al.* 2013). Protected areas were invaded and occupied by local people from the surrounding areas as well as military troops (Beyers *et al.* 2013; Lindsey & Bento 2012; MICOA 2009). During this time, illegal and uncontrolled hunting was rampant and wildlife populations, particularly large mammals, were severely overexploited to the point of depletion (Beyers *et al.* 2013; Lindsey & Bento 2012; Miller *et al.* 2012; Le Bel *et al.* 2011; Ölund Wingqvist 2011; MICOA 2009; DEAT 2002).

Since the end of the war, the national government has directed efforts on the establishment and rehabilitation of the protected areas network and the recovering of lost wildlife populations in Mozambique (Lindsey & Bento 2012; MICOA 1997). These efforts have been challenged by several constraints such as weak operational capacity, poor infrastructure and a lack of funding and human resources (MICOA 1997). Illegal hunting still continues on a large scale in most protected areas and human population growth combined with people's dependency on natural resource contributes to an increase in human-wildlife conflict (WWF 2013; Lindsey & Bento 2012; Miller *et al.* 2012; Le Bel *et al.* 2011; MICOA 2009).

Estimate population abundance and trends

Historic

South African giraffe (*G. c. giraffa*) formerly occurred in southern Mozambique, mainly to the south of the Save River and Limpopo Rivers in the Guija, Uanetze, Saute and Funhalouro Regions (Agreco 2008; East 1999; Dagg 1962¹).

By the early 1970s giraffe in Mozambique were extinct in most of their former range and the few surviving animals were restricted to the area between the Limpopo River and Kruger National Park on the western South African border (East 1999). Mozambique's civil conflict took its toll on the wildlife in the following decades and by the late 1990s, giraffe were thought to have gone extinct in the country (East 1999).

Recent

In recent years, giraffe have been re-introduced into Limpopo National Park, Zinave National Park and Maputo Special Reserve in southern Mozambique (Beyers *et al.* 2013; MICOA 2009).

Eighty-two giraffe were translocated from Kruger National Park in South Africa to Limpopo National Park between 2002 and 2007 as part of the development of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (I. Engelbrecht pers. comm). In 2002, sections of the boundary fence between Kruger and Limpopo National Parks were removed to allow for cross-border movement of wildlife (Peace Parks Foundation 2012). In 2008, another 33 giraffe were introduced into Limpopo National Park (A. Alexander pers. comm.). A country-wide aerial wildlife census conducted in 2008 reported the only giraffe in Mozambique occurred in Limpopo National Park (MICOA 2009; Agreco 2008). At the time of the census the population was estimated at 125 individuals (Agreco 2008).

¹ *G. c. wardi*, as referred to by Dagg (1962) is now considered to be a synonym of *G. c. giraffa* (Dagg 1971).

Current

In 2010, an aerial census of Limpopo National Park estimated the giraffe population at 116 individuals (Stephenson 2010). These numbers were potentially an undercount as anecdotal observations from patrols suggested that more giraffe could be found in the park (A. Alexander pers. comm.). Giraffe in Limpopo National Park have grown in numbers and distributed themselves across the park including all the way into the eastern sandveld area (A. Alexander pers. comm.). A recent aerial survey of Limpopo National Park was conducted in 2013, but the results of this count were not yet available at the time of writing, although will be updated when available (A. Alexander pers. comm.).

In 2012, seven giraffe were translocated from Kruger National Park to Mozambique's Zinave National Park as part of an initiative to rehabilitate the park (Masala 2012; Miller *et al.* 2012). Zinave National Park forms part of the larger transfrontier conservation area surrounding the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park.

During a wildlife restocking initiative implemented as part of a collaboration between the Mozambican and South African governments, six giraffe from Hluhluwe Game Reserve and two from Tembe Elephant Park in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province were translocated to Mozambique's Maputo Special Reserve in 2012 (A. Guenha pers. comm.; Peace Parks 2013). Maputo Special Reserve forms part of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (Peace Parks 2012). An aerial census later in that year confirmed that the translocated animals had adapted well to their new environment and in 2013, an additional 12 giraffe, six from Ndumo Game Reserve and six from Pongola Nature Reserve in KwaZulu Natal, were introduced into the reserve (A. Guenha pers. comm.; Peace Parks 2013). So far three offspring have been born bringing the current number of giraffe in Maputo Special Reserve to 23 individuals (A. Guenha pers. comm.).

In summary, current giraffe numbers for Mozambique are all re-introduced and estimated at 146 South African giraffe, with 116 in Limpopo National Park, seven in Zinave National Park and 23 in Maputo Special Reserve.

Future Conservation Management

The following are proposed conservation management options for giraffe in Mozambique:

- Development of National Giraffe Strategy for Mozambique;
- Any future giraffe introductions into Mozambique should only be the same (sub)species as previously introduced: *G. c. giraffa*;
- Anti-poaching efforts to conserve the key population in Limpopo National Park;
- Support to dedicated giraffe conservation, habitat protection, education and awareness initiatives (government, NGO and academic)

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Map

In preparation.