The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park

The joint initiative between Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe has resulted in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. This park was proclaimed on 3 December 2002, and consists of the linking-up of the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, Kruger National Park in South Africa, Gonarezhou National Park, Mapungubwe National Park, and Matshozi Safari Area in Zimbabwe, as well as two areas between Kruger and Gonarezhou, namely the Singwe communal land in Zimbabwe and the Matshozi region in South Africa.

This vast landscape of 35,500 km² surface area (roughly the same size as the Netherlands) will be managed as an integrated unit across three international borders. What makes this concept even more exciting is the fact that this is the first example in the world of a transfrontier cooperation area of such a large scale.

One of the main goals in the establishment of a TFCPA is that the local communities will benefit from the increased eco-tourism to the area. But of course this is dependent on the communities’ involvement in the development of the park.

Other corridors occur at Palm, Mapungubwe, and Singwe. These corridors serve as access facilities, making the tourism and wildlife trails more accessible to the visitor.

During the first phase community leaders were identified and socio-demographic data assembled. The second phase involved a more comprehensive and participatory approach aimed at community involvement in the development of the park. The leaders identified in phase one were involved in drafting a management plan for the new park.

Conservation is defined as a successful characteristic that forms part of a country’s tourism sector as numerous examples have generated sufficient income to sustain themselves independent of state support, it is both practical and profitable for stakeholders, and plays an important role in the conservation agency and country’s sustainability.
Vision
To achieve intra-state collaboration in the conservation of transboundary ecosystems and their associated biodiversity, promoting sustainable use of natural resources to improve the quality of life of the peoples of Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

Mission
To collaboratively establish and manage, on a sustainable basis, a viable Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park with full stakeholder participation, including local communities, fostering regional co-operation, biodiversity conservation, and cross-border socio-economic development.

Objectives
As political borders are seldom respect ecological systems, the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park will strive to re-establish historical animal migration routes and other ecosystem functions that have been disordered by fences and incompatible legislation. This can assist greatly with regulating elephant populations, for example, as it would enable them to move freely from area to area. This unimpeded ecosystem will then also be jointly managed according to harmonised wildlife management policies, promoting the return of a greater and more resilient ecosystem with better chances of long-term sustainability.

Of equal importance is the providing of jobs and opportunities to generate revenue for many of the thousands of people affected by decades of civil war. Improving the lives of these rural communities will also contribute towards biodiversity that can be gained through conservation as an alternative and viable land-use option. The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park is made up of three main areas: Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, Kruger National Park in South Africa, and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe.
Mozambique – Limpopo National Park

The background of Limpopo National Park is definitely filled with an exciting history. The area originally existed as an old hunting concession known as Constable’s. It was then upgraded to National Park status in 1972, and declared a protected nature conservation area in order to safeguard its outstanding variety of animals and plants. But jumping from hunting grounds to a conservation area was not that easy. Mozambique’s wildlife population was nearly destroyed during the 14 years of war preceding 1990, and ever since then the country’s parks have been battling to restore the game reserves. Up to date, the wildlife numbers are slowly but surely continuing to grow.

Welcome help came in the form of a R42 million donation from Germany, which is currently helping the Limpopo National Park to upgrade itself with fences and anti-poaching units.

The vast landscape of this national park is mainly savannah, covered by mopane, ironwood and broadleaf acacia. Although it is located in an area that is largely waterless in the dry season, the mighty Shingwedzi and Limpopo rivers aid in the survival of the area’s inhabitants. About 27 000 people call this piece of natural beauty their home. Visitors can enter the park via South Africa’s Kruger National Park through either Gyrondo or Faluni border gates, and from Mozambique via Mapal or Mussie gate. The park is known for its exceptional natural magnificence, which make it a valuable asset to the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park.

Accommodation

Machampane Wilderness Trails Camp – a privately owned operated luxury tented accommodation facility. 30 km from Gyrondo border gate. Includes all meals plus guided game walks. Contact Marlion on marlion@clayden.co.za for info / reservations.

Camp coordinates: 31°46’46.1” E / 23°46’13.24” S

All bookings for the following camps can be made with Mabola at limpopo@welco.za or +27(0)72 447 4279.

Campismo Agua Pesquera – situated about 55 km from Gyrondo border gate and about 25 km from Mussie gate. Placement high on the escarpment ensures magnificent views of the dam, which is about 230 m in sway. There is no electricity in the camp. The camp has various accommodation levels that are categorized into 3 “nodes”, but all possess ablution and kitchen facilities.

Camp coordinates: 32°0’26.31” E / 23°51’29.59” S

Campismo Albufeira – Situated at entrance / exit at Mussie, about 70 km from Gyrondo border gate. The camp is close to the dam wall, and consists of camping sites with kitchen and ablution facilities, as well as chalets. This camp has one 4-bed chalet, while the rest are all 2-bed. The chalets all have electricity and each its own socket/brass en-suite.

Camp coordinates: 32°9’42.44” E / 23°52’24.28” S

Campismo Sandala – a camp with only the basic necessities of showers and toilets, situated 3 hours drive from Agua Pesquera.

Camp coordinates: 31°46’13.2” E / 23°29’51.18” S

Campismo Nhampinda – very basic camp with showers and toilets, located on boundary in the north close to Mapal. Camp coordinates: 31°55’17.36” E / 22°53’33.93” S

Activities

Game viewing

Bird watching

Day walks / guided trails (at Machampane Wilderness Trails Camp)

Limpopo National Park

Limpopo National Park
EXPERIENCE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

South Africa – Kruger National Park

As the biggest of South Africa’s national parks, stretching for about 350 km along the Mozambiquan border to where the 2 countries meet at Zimkowane, Kruger is known for its extensive collection of plants and wildlife. The park was first proclaimed in 1898 as the Sabie Game Reserve by the then president of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger. In 1926 the Sabie and Shingwedzi Game Reserves were merged, and Kruger National Park was born.

A spectacular collection of wildlife roam these landscapes: buffalo, rhino, lion, wild dog, giraffe, zebras, bushbucks, Nympheas and many more can all be spotted. With the Kruger National Park being part of the Transfrontier Park, Great Limpopo is growing close to 150 mammals, over 100 species of indigenous trees, and more than 500 bird species.

Another exciting element and valuable asset are the almost 254 known cultural heritage sites in the park, including nearly 130 recorded rock art sites. This, along with significant archaeological ruins, evidence of San civilization and many historical stories, contributes greatly to the value of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park.

Accommodation

Kruger National Parks offers camp-run accommodation. Each camp has its own unique selection of accommodation types, including camping, bush, safari tents, bungalows, cottages, luxury lodges and more.

Letaba Camp – An idyllic rest camp that is situated on the sweeping bend of the Letaba River, midway between Kruger’s southern and northern boundaries.
Camp coordinates: 23.851 S / 31.5767 E

Satara Camp – Satara’s location in an excellent game viewing area makes it a very busy camp. It is well wooded and is known for its splendid selection of birds.
Camp coordinates: 24.3926 S / 31.7999 E

Skukuza Camp – The largest rest camp and administrative headquarters of Kruger. It is located on the southern banks of the Sabie River, is well sited and has a diverse range of activities and facilities.
Camp coordinates: 24.9998 S / 31.5924 E

Shingwedzi Camp – Located in the northern part of Kruger in the heart of mopane country, this rest camp provides regular sights of waterbuck, steenbok, bushbuck and kudu.
Camp coordinates: 23.1136 S / 31.4331 E

Olifants – Olifants camp is situated on top of a hill towering several hundred feet over the Olifants river.
Camp coordinates: 24.6057 S / 31.7402 E

Activities

Kruger, with its sheer size and vast biodiversity, offers numerous activity options that cater for all visitors’ needs. Adventure Trails (4x4 trails)
Birding
Hiking Trails
Guided Walks
Game Drives
Bush Braai
Swimming Pool
Golf
Zimbabwe – Gonarezhou National Park

The astounding biodiversity known as Gonarezhou, meaning "Flies of many Elephants", is located in the south eastern lowland of Zimbabwe and covers an area of 5,000 square kilometres. Field trips to the park are arranged for the tourists who would wish to have an unfolding experience for themselves.

Three major rivers – The Save, Runde and Mwenezi – flow right through the park forming pools and natural water sources where a large variety of birds and fish gather to feed and drink. Gonarezhou is famous for its elephants, but numerous other remarkable wildlife species can be glimpsed across the park including buffalo, giraffe, zebra, numerous large antelopes, and the popular big cats (lion, leopard and cheetah). In addition, hundreds of species of bird types may be spotted as well. Unique species of aquatic wildlife such as the Zambesi Shark, Freshwater Goby, Black Bream and the unique turquoise killfish can be seen within the park’s rivers and pools.

One of the most prominent and enduring natural features of Gonarezhou National Park is the beautiful Chilozi Cliffs. These magnificent red sandstone cliffs have been formed through eons of erosion and overlook the scenic Runde River valley aiding in providing picturesque settings for the national park.

Accommodation
Swimwini
The Mhlabura section in the Mwenezi sub-region includes the Swimwini rest camp. The camp is situated 8 kilometres from the park's office and overlooks the Mwenezi River. There are well-equipped self-catering accommodation facilities at the camp.

Camping is possible at Swimwini at the Mhlabura Rest Camp site which has ablution facilities.

Visitors with canoes on tow can also camp at Swimwini and use the same facilities for standard camp sites.

Chipoza Pool
This section has predominantly camping facilities, with no self-catering accommodation facilities. Guests can choose from 19 sites at the beautiful Chipoza Pool Camp, each with basic ablutions.

Chipoza Camp: (22°10’ S / 31°59’ E)

Chingoli
There are 16 camping sites in the Runda sub-region at Chingoli, which also have similar facilities to those at Chipoza.

Undeveloped Camping Sites
Several undeveloped camping sites are located at Njupuangwa, Motlongwe, Bopimba, Lomwa, Gota, Chiloeve, Chamavudzi and Chilozi. These exclusive sites may be booked by a single party of up to 10 people and are not available to the public. Visitors need to bring their own water and may collect dead wood in the vicinity for firewood.

Activities
Game viewing – Visitors are encouraged to keep a safe viewing distance from elephants.

Fishing
Walking safaris – permitted in certain areas. The pools at Savurena Gorge ("the place of siltings") are of major interest.

Bird watching – especially at Tsembwa’s natural water pool.

Picnicking – There are several picnic and braai sites located in the park.

Attractive nature spectra for photography enthusiasts – especially the Chilozi and Dogon Falls.

Gonarezhou National Park

Gonarezhou National Park
### Activities Chart

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<th>Activity</th>
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Activities in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park

Accommodation in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park