

COUNTER-POACHING IN KEY NATIONAL PARKS IN MOZAMBIQUE

PROGRESS REPORT
JANUARY – JUNE 2020



Submitted by



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Continuing to build on the success of the partnership which was established to support the Government of Mozambique in conservation and counter-poaching efforts, the [GEOS Foundation](#), the [Environmental Management and Conservation Trust](#) (formerly the Dyck Advisory Group) and [Peace Parks Foundation](#) are stepping up their endeavours to curb the escalating and destructive wildlife crime in and around key Mozambique Protected Areas. In the long-term it is envisaged that this partnership will extend over Limpopo, Zinave, and Banhine National Parks, and the Maputo Special Reserve with Ponta do Ouro Partial Marine Reserve, as well as the area known as the Greater Libombos Conservancy.

It is also noteworthy that 2020 saw the Environmental Management and Conservation Trust expand operations into Malawi, providing technical advice to the Park Wardens to improve law enforcement in Nyika National Park. It is anticipated that the Rapid Response Unit will be complemented by four tracker dogs and a helicopter.

Commencing Mozambique operations with a focus on Limpopo National Park to manage and contain the threat that the shared border of roughly 220 miles with wildlife-rich Kruger National Park entails; and the Maputo Special Reserve with Ponta do Ouro Partial Marine Reserve and its vulnerable coastline; the partnership successfully treads a sensitive line of counter-poaching support, technical advice, and law enforcement, whilst seeking to maintain the delicate balance with communities living in and around the protected areas and their utilisation of natural resources.

Highlights of the reporting period include:

- Restriction of movement and disruption of the supply chain due to COVID-19 has resulted in low poaching numbers of key species, [South African rhino poaching halves in six months due to COVID-19 lockdown](#) although Limpopo National Park has experienced challenges due to poisoning and increased poaching for meat.
- Training in basic Human Rights has been undertaken by field rangers and senior staff in Limpopo and Zinave National Parks, and partially completed in Maputo Special Reserve with remaining staff and Banhine National Park to do training once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.
- Upgrade of the house for the Environmental Management and Conservation Trust (EMCT) personnel in Maputo Special Reserve has been completed.



Figure 1: Ponta Do Ouro Partial Marine Reserve



1. COUNTER-POACHING AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

1.1 Limpopo National Park

EMCT, in partnership with PPF and in support of Mozambique's National Administration for Conservation Areas (ANAC), oversees all Limpopo National Park (LNP) counter-poaching operations from a central Forward Operating Base (FOB) based at Massingir Vehlo in the Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) of the Park.

The FOB is the centre of all counter-poaching information, data, and control. A satellite internet system was installed at the offices to improve communications, coordination, and overall management efficiency.

There is a permanent, dedicated EMCT ground staff component on site as well as 22 LNP Scouts, and six Lion Protection Unit Scouts whose main purpose is to detect and deter any poaching activity, especially poisoning, of lions as well as to assist with potential Human Wildlife Conflict involving the presence of lions around village areas inside and outside the park.

The continued successful area domination of the Park's IPZ along the Kruger National Park (KNP) border led to a seven-month (September 2019 – March 2020) period with only two recorded incidents of high value wildlife poacher trafficking between KNP and LNP.

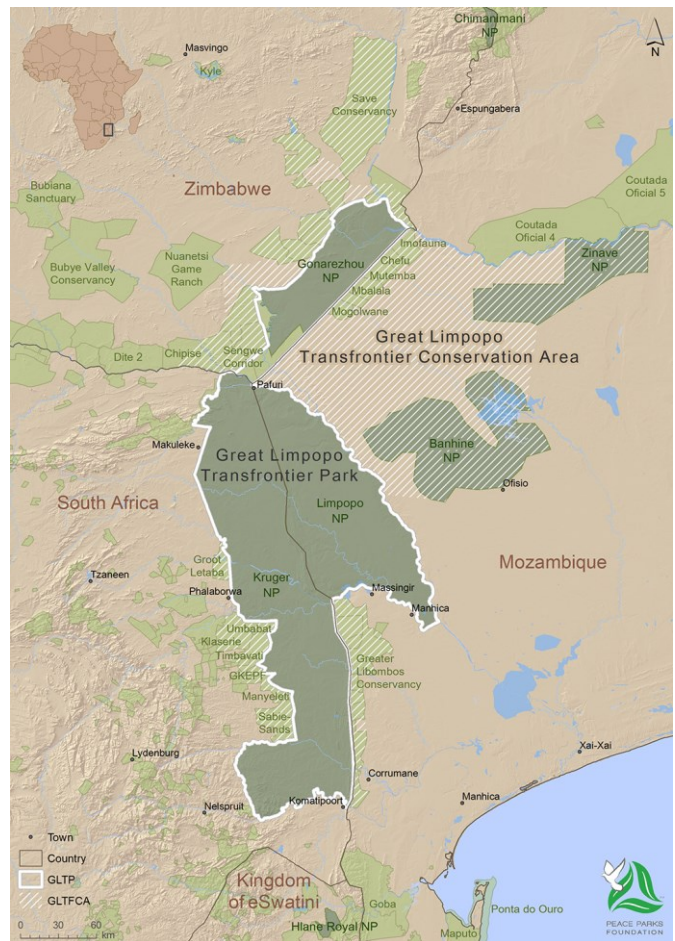


Figure 2: Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park

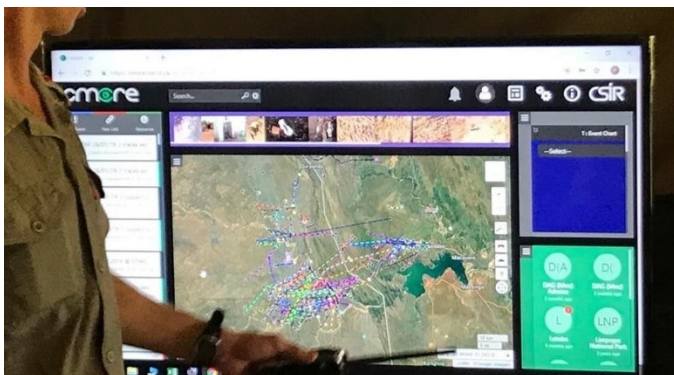


Figure 3: Forward Operating Base, Limpopo National Park

A Great Limpopo TFCA Security meeting was held in Skukuza where positive feedback was received on LNP's efforts and achievements to halt the poacher insurgency into Kruger National Park (KNP).

Although the poaching figures for 2020 in KNP have not yet been officially released, it can be noted that there was a 24% reduction in rhino poached in KNP from 421 in 2018 to 321 in 2019, which has largely been attributed to improved collaboration and results in cross-boundary counter-poaching operations.



To date, 78 poachers have been arrested in and around KNP compared to 174 in the same period last year. The figures for elephant poached in KNP also showed a significant drop, demonstrating the positive impact that EMCT is having in disrupting poaching activities. The FOB has created a barrier between KNP and communities, successfully stopping the free flow of rhino poacher movement.

The helicopter plays a vital role where restricted vehicle access and limited road distribution in the dense landscape hinder the ease of deployment to various poacher hotspot areas, as well as providing rangers confidence in timeous support when needed.

For example, during an incident, the helicopter arrived timeously to save the lives of a patrol team by physically separating and deterring an armed community mob from continuing to attack the patrol team.

The patrol team managed to escape without further harm and still managed to retain custody of an arrested poacher. A ranger with a serious head injury, due to mob aggression, was heli-lifted to hospital for immediate treatment.

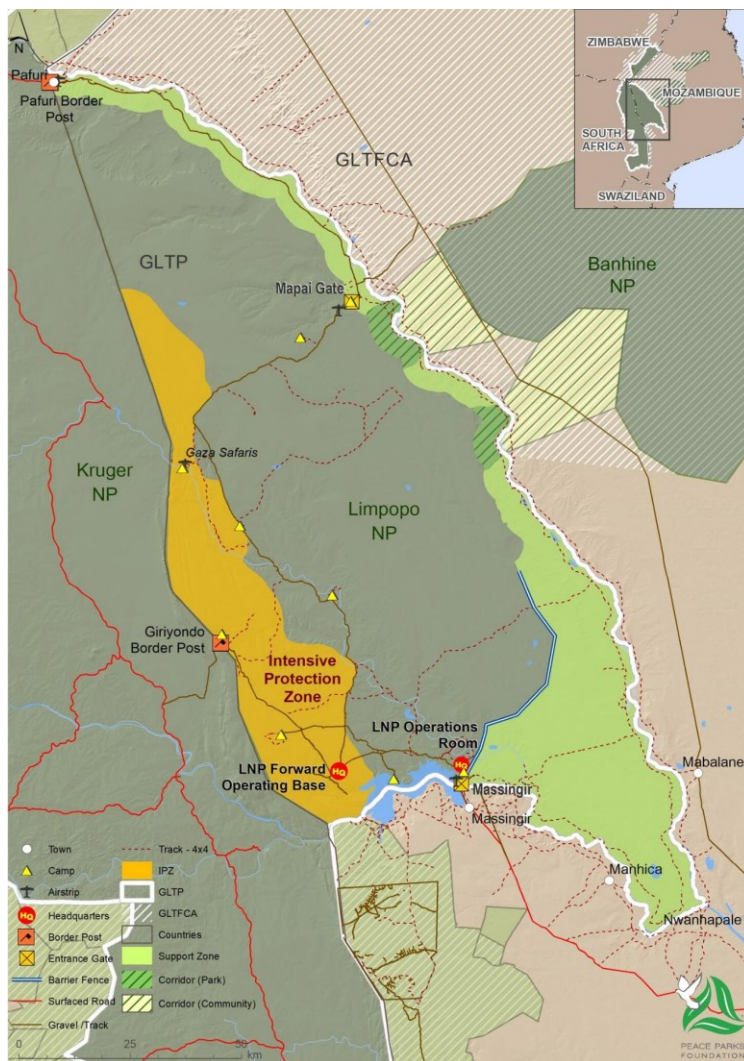


Figure 4: Intensive Protection Zone, Limpopo National Park



Figure 5: Aerial patrol, Limpopo National Park

While the patrols from the savannah aircraft have increased, the rebuilt EMCT Bathhawk has additionally returned to LNP again on 30 June after being away for two and a half months. Aerial patrols have proved challenging due to restricted movement of the pilots during COVID-19.

It was found that roadblocks and boat patrols have less of an impact than resources spent on track detection zones in and around villages at this stage.



The average for snares and gin traps recovered are showing a marginal drop as well as number of arrests made. Depending on the duration of COVID-19, the economic impact may drive more villagers to bush meat poaching.

Payment of fines remains a challenge and can be linked to the socio-economic situation whereby poachers just do not have the money to pay and instead serve jail time.

Of concern, remains the increase in Human Wildlife Conflict cases, and the increased use of poisoning. Unfortunately, two poisoning incidents have occurred this year in which 15 and 63 vultures succumbed respectively. These have been included in the “Animals Poached” statistic in Table 1 below which has raised the average number per month significantly compared to 2019.



Figure 6: Snares kill and maim indiscriminately

Table 1: Limpopo National Park law enforcement and counter-poaching statistics for 2020

LIMPOPO NATIONAL PARK - 2020									
Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTAL	2020 Average	2019 Average
# Rangers deployed	102	102	102	102	102	102	612	102	101
# Patrols (All types)	348	370	377	365	439	584	2,483	414	396
# Man Hours on Patrol	2,862	2,353	3,027	2,747	3,833	3,754	18,576	3,096	2,910
Hrs Aerial Patrol	26	21	58.46	82	49	71	308	51	40
Hrs Boat Patrol	0	9	4	4	6	12	35	6	10
# Animals Poached	6	17	2	7	73	13	118	20	14
# Road Blocks	3	1	0	0	1	3	8	1	7
# Snares	103	137	66	95	371	316	1,088	181	161
# Gin Traps	1	2	0	0	2	3	8	1	5
# Firearms	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1
# Arrests	2	3	0	0	1	2	8	1	3
Fines issued (MT)	199,182	55,432	0	0	28,000	45,600	328,214	54,702	86,663
Fines issued (ZAR)	47,424	13,198	0	0	6,667	-	67,289	11,215	8,151
Fines paid (MT)	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
# Convictions	0	1	0	0	1	-	2	0	1
# HWC cases	8	24	21	32	22	19	126	21	8

Two new PPF-procured Landcruisers were delivered, one of which was allocated to the specialised Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) Unit who are experiencing a rise in HWC incidents since the predators have been returning to the landscape – although those participating in the Park’s Herding for Health programme have not experienced any livestock losses from predation.





Figure 7: Training in Human Rights for LNP Field Rangers

A total of 98 LNP staff attended training in basic Human Rights through SAWC. It is anticipated that refresher courses will be conducted annually.

In alignment with PPF's policy of capacity building at project level, a Field Ranger is undertaking a one-year natural resource management certificate course at SAWC. However this is likely to extend into the next year due to COVID-19.

1.2 Zinave National Park

Counter-poaching operations are currently supported by an EMCT manager and vehicle which has proven invaluable in improving counter-poaching standards.

There is an opportunity to reintroduce white and black rhino to Zinave in 2021. Discussions are still underway to determine feasibility. It is to be hoped that this Park will become Mozambique's first Big 5 protected area, with lion and leopard reintroduction foreseen for 2021. As wildlife numbers increase both naturally and due to our [Rewilding Zinave](#) efforts, counter-poaching activities will become ever more important and focussed.

Table 2 : Zinave National Park law enforcement and counter-poaching statistics for 2020

ZINAVE NATIONAL PARK - 2020									
Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTAL	2020 Average	2019 Average
# Rangers deployed	52	52	52	52	52	52	312	52	52
# Patrols (All types)	73	99	76	56	41	77	422	70	64
# Man Hours on Patrol	1,752	2,376	1,824	1,344	984	1,848	10,128	1,688	514
Hrs Aerial Patrol	12	2	20	0	0	0	34	6	2
# (Key) Animals Poached	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
# Road Blocks	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
# Snares	0	5	151	758	2,272	1,546	4,732	789	336
# Gin Traps	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
# Firearms	0	0	1	0	2	2	5	1	2
# Arrests	0	1	0	9	12	9	31	5	4
Fines issued (MT)	0	0	0	12,000	13,404	40,212	65,616	10,936	136,107
Fines issued (ZAR)	0	0	0	2,667	2,979	8,936	14,581	2,430	30,324
Fines paid (MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# Convictions	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
# HWC cases	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	1





Figure 8: Field rangers, Zinave National Park

The significant increase on the previous years figures is attributable to a drought and COVID-19 impact on community livelihoods, most notably through a loss in migrant labour earnings. Fortunately the impact of this increased activity has not resulted in any notable increase in animals poached.

In the year to date almost 5,000 snares have been removed, and over the past three years around 20,000 snares and over 200 rifles have been removed from the region.

1.3 Maputo Special Reserve

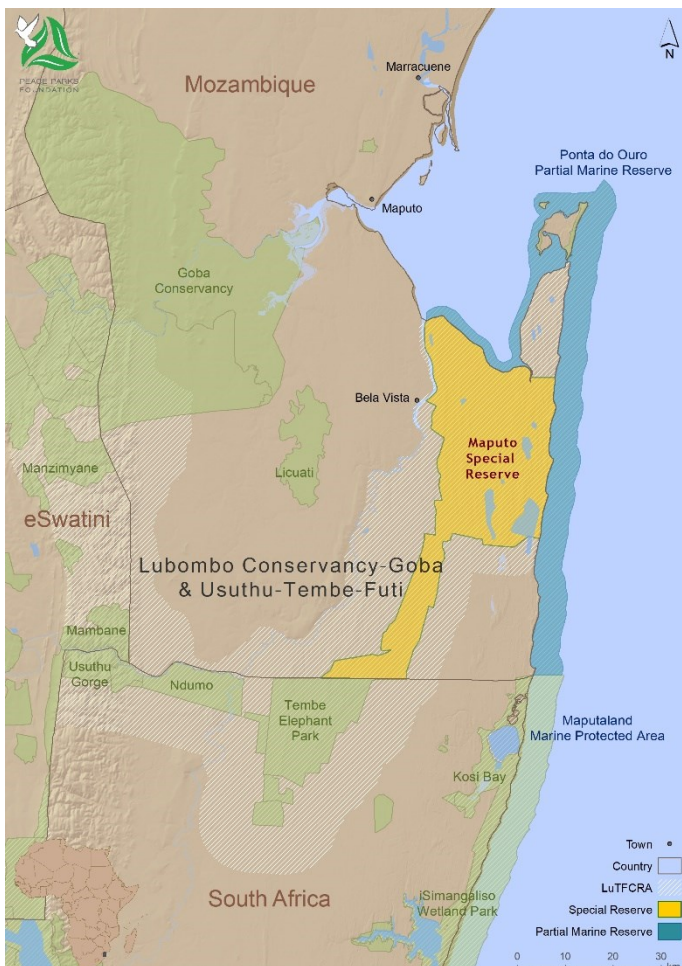


Figure 9: Maputo Special Reserve

Counter-poaching operations are supported by an EMCT manager and an Operations Room administrator as well as an EMCT vehicle. These operations are supported by a donor-funded helicopter which all continue to ensure the maintaining of high standards.

[Celebrating 60 years of conservation](#) in mid 2020, Maputo Special Reserve (MSR) has seen over 4,964 animals translocated since 2001. For the first time in 30 years, eland are roaming the Reserve again.

However, the area bordering the Reserve is quite densely populated and unfortunately there has been a significant spike in Human Wildlife Conflict with a serious incident recorded in May resulting in both human and elephant fatalities.

To attempt to alleviate this, Elephant Human Conflict kits are currently being trialled. The kit comprises rope, reflective tape, flashlight and a hooter which enables communities to make sensory distractions during day or night to chase elephants away.



Preliminary findings show that reflectors and spotlights have been effective in repelling elephants resulting in less inroads near the farms, and no crops damaged during the study period. The creosote technique proved to be effective in preventing the passage of elephants along the corridors to which it was applied. Studies will continue over a longer duration - “Evaluation of the new Mitigation Methods for Human Elephant Conflict.” M. Bastise and H. Chiponde. Maputo, June 2020. MSR and Tembe Elephant Park in South Africa continue their cross-border information-sharing meetings on a regular basis.

Many of the senior personnel and field rangers have undergone training in basic Human Rights through SAWC, with the remainder to be completed once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

Upgrades to the house for EMCT personnel have been completed.



Figures 10 and 11: EMCT Personnel House, Maputo Special Reserve

Table 3: Maputo Special Reserve’s counter-poaching and law enforcement statistics - January-June 2020

MAPUTO SPECIAL RESERVE - 2020									
Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTAL	2020 Average	2019 Average
# Rangers deployed	76	76	69	54	46	46	367	61	52
# Patrols (All types)	309	285	297	247	253	198	1,589	265	213
# Man Hours on Patrol	2,472	2,280	2,376	1,976	2,024	1,584	12,712	2,119	1,701
Hrs Aerial Patrol	36	33	30	22	10	19	149	25	12
# (Key) Animals Poached	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
# Road Blocks	26	27	25	0	0	0	78	13	11
# Snares	8	2	46	10	1	86	153	26	106
# Gin Traps	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
# Firearms	0	0	1	3	0	0	4	1	2
# Arrests	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	1	4
Fines issued (MT)	0	0	30,000	35,000	0	32,000	97,000	16,167	95,050
Fines issued (ZAR)	0	0	6,667	7,778	0	7,111	21,556	3,593	22,453
Fines paid (MT)	0	0	0	35,000	0	32,000	67,000	11,167	308,333
# Convictions	0	1	0	1	0	6	8	1	0
# HWC cases	26	27	28	48	32	22	183	31	20



Despite the Reserve being currently closed to the public due to COVID-19, and operating at a reduced capacity with half the ranger unit taking leave to reduce travel exposure to the pandemic, regular patrols are still being conducted and no key species have been poached in 2020 to date.

CONCLUSION

Although COVID-19 has brought undeniable challenges of accessibility and mobility, as well as increased poaching for meat by communities in dire socio-economic straits, Peace Parks Foundation remains committed to the protection of Africa's wildlife whilst acknowledging the growing imperative to relieve the pressure on natural resources by assisting the vulnerable communities who share their landscape.

We thank the GEOS Foundation for its invaluable support and look forward to continuing the journey together towards a safer environment for both wildlife and humanity.



Figure 12: Field rangers, Zinave National Park

