Living with wildlife –

the story of Mudumu North Complex

A joint management area embracing state and community conservation initiatives, named after Mudumu National Park
and is home to around 20,000 people. It embraces an area of particularly high biodiversity along both sides of the Kwando River, covering about 3,400 square kilometres and has the mission to work together to rehabilitate and manage the area’s fauna and flora, and guide the development of tourism and wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration. While conservancies and community forests, people in communal areas can now actively manage – and generate benefits from – wildlife, forest resources and related activities in their area, encouraging wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration. Natural Resource Management Complexes enable conservation and development over large areas... MILESTONES AND SUCCESSES 1990 – Mudumu National Park is proclaimed 1991 – the first community game guards are appointed in eastern Caprivi 1996 – policy changes allow communal area residents to benefit from wildlife and tourism by forming conservancies 1999 – Kwandu and Mayuni Conservancies are registered in December 2001 – implementation of the Event Book monitoring system in the Kwandu and Mayuni Conservancies and the Mashi community 2001 – Kwandu and Mayuni Conservancies pilot the Human Animal Conflict Conservancy Self Insurance Scheme (HACCSSIS) 2001 – the Forest Act is passed by Parliament 2003 – Mashi Conservancy is registered in March 2005 – the Mudumu North Complex is formed 2005 – the Forest Amendment Act is passed, amending the 2001 Act 2006 – the Kwandu, Lubuta and Masida Community Forests are registered in February 2006 – the Kyaramacan Association is officially recognised by the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET) as the legal entity representing the area for tourism development; he also wins the Environmentalist of the Decade Award from the Namibia Nature Foundation 2009 – the devil’s claw harvest of the Kyaramacan Association is seen as a threat to crops, livestock and infrastructure, as well as community safety. The conservancy legislation passed in 1996 paved the way for the sustainable use of communal forest resources. By forming conservancies and community forests, people in communal areas can now actively manage – and generate benefits from – wildlife, forest resources and related activities in their area, encouraging wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration. While conservancies and community forests are natural resource management structures, they are defined by social ties, as they unite groups of people with the common goal of managing their resources. Today, over 70 communal conservancies and 13 community forests embrace one in four rural Namibians, underlining a commitment to sustainability – people living in Mudumu North Complex share a common vision for managing their area and its resources. THE MUDUMU NORTH COMPLEX • is a cluster of resource management areas including Kwandu, Mashi, Mayuni and Sobbe Conservancies, the Kyaramacan Association, Kwandu, Lubuta, Masida and Sachona Community Forests, Mudumu National Park and the eastern section of Bwabwata National Park • has the mission to work together to rehabilitate and manage the area’s fauna and flora, and guide the development of tourism and resource use for social, cultural and economic benefits through collaborative management of conservancies, community forests and national parks • aims to accomplish goals greater than any smaller unit could achieve • embraces an area of particularly high biodiversity along both sides of the Kwendo River, covers about 3,400 square kilometres and is home to around 20,000 people... LITTLE HISTORY Prior to Namibia’s independence in 1990, communal area residents had few rights to use wildlife or other natural resources. 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Today, over 70 communal conservancies and 13 community forests embrace one in four rural Namibians, underlining a commitment to sustainability – people living in Mudumu North Complex share a common vision for managing their area and its resources... people are living with wildlife, are managing natural resources wisely and are reaping the benefits... 13 community forests embrace one in four rural Namibians, underlining a commitment to sustainability – people living in Mudumu North Complex share a common vision for managing their area and its resources... THE MUDUMU NORTH COMPLEX offers an enchanting mix of charismatic, free-roaming wildlife – elephant, buffalo, crocodile, lion, wild dog, abundant birds... wildlife generates a variety of benefits for local people. In eastern Caprivi, wildlife populations declined considerably in the 1970s and 80s due to poaching by local people, the South African Defence Force and government officials. Species such as giraffe, black rhino, sable and eland became locally extinct. The utilisation of forest resources was not controlled, leading to degradation in many areas. In 1990, staff of the local NGO Integrated Rural Development & Nature Conservation (IRIDCN) consulted traditional leaders to develop new approaches to conservation that would involve communities in decision making and provide them with benefits from wildlife and other natural resources. This was followed in 1992 by a socio-ecological survey by the MET and laid the foundations for the establishment of conservancies and community forests in the region. In 2005, recognizing that all the neighbouring conservation areas along the Kwando River had shared objectives and were inter-dependent, various stakeholders met to explore the possibility of some form of joint management. The result was the formation of the Mudumu North Complex. people are living with wildlife, are managing natural resources wisely and are reaping the benefits... 13 community forests embrace one in four rural Namibians, underlining a commitment to sustainability – people living in Mudumu North Complex share a common vision for managing their area and its resources... THE MUDUMU NORTH COMPLEX offers an enchanting mix of charismatic, free-roaming wildlife – elephant, buffalo, crocodile, lion, wild dog, abundant birds... wildlife generates a variety of benefits for local people. In eastern Caprivi, wildlife populations declined considerably in the 1970s and 80s due to poaching by local people, the South African Defence Force and government officials. Species such as giraffe, black rhino, sable and eland became locally extinct. The utilisation of forest resources was not controlled, leading to degradation in many areas. 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The Mudumu North Complex is a living landscape...

The Mudumu North Complex embraces a diversity of cultures. Population movements and cultural dynamics in the area in recent centuries were heavily influenced by the Lozi and Kololo kingdoms, which dominated the region in successions of power from the 1600s to the late 1800s and affected the heritage of the Mbukushu, Sifwe, and Khwe language groups. The Khwe, a sub-group of the San, today make up the majority of residents in Bwabwata National Park, while a smaller Mbukushu community also resides in the park. Most people living along the eastern side of the Kwando River speak Sifwe or Mbukushu, as well as the regional Lingua franca, Lozi — a remnant of the Lozi empire.

Elephants jostling for a place to drink; countless hooves of buffalos swirling up clouds of grey dust as they file down to the water; and everywhere more wildlife, and birds in great number and diversity — all attracted to the river...

The Kwando is the heart of the Mudumu North Complex.

The environment of the Mudumu North Complex is rich and diverse. The heart of the complex — from both a geographical and natural resource perspective — is the Kwando River. The river originates in Angola, winds its way across the Caprivi strip and delineates a part of Namibia’s border with Botswana. The Bwabwata National Park stretches to the west from the Kwando to the Okavango River, while the conservancies, community forests and Mudumu National Park all lie to the east. Few rivers anywhere in the world function like the Kwando.

Since the establishment of conservancies, wildlife numbers in communal areas have rebounded from historic lows prior to independence. Large herds of elephant and buffalo are characteristic features of the complex, while hippo and crocodile are common along the river, where Cape clawless otter and spotted-necked otter also occur. The MNC is a birder’s paradise, with more than 450 species occurring in the area.

The Kwando is the heart of the Mudumu North Complex support some of the highest diversity of fauna and flora in all of Namibia. The heart of the complex, while roan, tsessebe, duiker, kudu, bushbuck, steenbok, warthog, bushpig, sitatunga, reedbuck, red lechwe, vervet monkey and baboon can all be spotted in the area.

The Kwando is rich in forest resources that are valuable to both people and wildlife. The Kwando has created broad floodplains but also supports dense riverine vegetation. Away from the river, the broad-leaved woodland is composed of a diversity of valuable tree species, interfaced with areas of open grassland. Plants have provided people living in Caprivi with a wealth of resources for thousands of years. Some are used daily by most people, such as grazing and browse for livestock, and needs, thatching grass and wood as building materials and a source of firewood. Other plants and resources such as honey are harvested less frequently, depending on when they are available or needed as a source of food or for medicinal purposes.

Around The Mudumu North Complex...

The Kwando is the heart of the Mudumu North Complex lies at the very core of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KaZa), and forms a critical component in the success of the initiative. KaZa spans five countries — Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia — and embraces numerous state protected areas and community conservation initiatives, including regional attractions such as the Okavango Delta, Victoria Falls and Chobe National Park.
LIVELIHOODS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Mudumu North Complex facilitates joint management and enhances development.

The Mudumu North Complex has an approximate population of 20,000 residents, who have a diverse cultural heritage and a complex history of settlement and traditional livelihood activities. The original inclusion of the finger-like Caprivi strip into Namibia was agreed in the late 19th century by European colonial powers at the ‘Berlin Conference’ to allow the then German colony access to the Zambezi River. The borders were drawn without following any cultural divisions and separated people with a common heritage into different nations. All the Capriviian language groups together today make up less than ten percent of the national population of Namibia.

The Mudumu North Complex facilitates joint management and enhances development... by enabling joint management and coordinated development, as well as effective marketing of the entire area and its resources, the Mudumu North Complex can maximise benefits from natural resources.

Development in communal areas was sorely neglected prior to independence, and infrastructure in the Mudumu North Complex remains limited. The Trans-Caprivi Highway (B8) bisects the region, and Kongola, situated along the road just east of the Kwando, provides the most facilities and services of any settlement in the complex, including the only fuel station, as well as basic shopping facilities. Most children in the complex have reasonable access to education, with 11 schools dotted throughout the area. There are three clinics in the MNC providing basic health care. The regional capital, Katima Mulilo, lies around 100 kilometres to the east, and provides access to a state hospital, a number of schools and a variety of other facilities and services.

The livelihood activities of most residents of the area are still based on livestock herding and crop cultivation, as well as the use of natural vegetation for food, fuel and building materials. This is supplemented by cash income from employment and trade, as well as by pensions and remittances. Community-based natural resource management through the conservancies, community forests and the Kyaramacan Association has significantly diversified livelihood options for people living in the complex. Joint-venture tourism and trophy hunting have made the largest contributions. Tourism in the area is largely based on wildlife. Before the conservancies were established, lodges were developed with little recognition of the rights of the people living there. Despite having to cope with the problems caused by the wildlife that tourists wanted to see, residents gained little from tourism. Conservancies now provide communities with rights over tourism development, which means that operators must negotiate an agreement with the conservancy to be able to utilise the area. Most establishments work well with the conservancies, and tourism now creates a variety of benefits, including conservancy and community income through joint-venture agreements, as well as income from community campsites, cultural tourism products and craft sales. Tourism also creates significant employment and training. A tourism hub has developed at Kongola and includes the Mashi Craft Market, a vibrant outlet for a great variety of goods and information. The market provides a sales outlet for producers living throughout the complex.

Conservancies spend money and provide community and individual benefits in various areas. Areas and amounts vary from year to year, depending on factors such as conservancy income and priorities. Private sector jobs are created through agreements with private sector partners. The pie charts show the main expenditure and benefit areas in 2010.

Benefits to conservancies and their members come from a variety of sources. Sources and amounts vary from year to year, depending on factors such as agreements with private partners, and market fluctuations. The pie charts show the main benefit sources in 2010.

Trophy hunting generates important cash income for conservancies, while the meat from both trophy and own-use hunting is used at festivals and distributed to residents. A range of valuable timber resources such as Zambezi teak, and various non-timber forest resources including thatching grass, devil’s claw and honey, generate important income. The conservancies, the community forests and the Kyaramacan Association also create direct employment, and provide diverse social benefits.
The Mudumu North Complex enables coordinated management of a large area...  

The formation of the Mudumu North Complex provided a new approach to natural resource management. It was the first time in Namibia that such a mix of stakeholders – government, traditional authorities, conservancies, community forests and NGOs – joined forces to cooperate in managing state protected areas and adjoining communal land. While wildlife resources fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET), the management of forest resources falls under the Directorate of Forestry within the Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Forestry (MAWF). The management structure of the MNC is headed by a Senior Decision-makers’ Forum representing all key stakeholders. Reporting to the forum is the Management Committee, while the Technical Support Group is made up of government, NGO and donor-funded support project staff members. Activities... One of the complex's initial steps was to arrange for the conservancies to share anti-poaching and game monitoring responsibilities. Measures were also taken for conservancies and community forests to cooperate in the management of wildlife and forest resources. As important components of the complex, community forests have played a significant role in adding vegetation to the suite of natural resources now managed and owned by people in the area. Several working groups address specific issues. The Law Enforcement Group provides a platform for tackling illegal resource use on a broad front, while the Enterprise Group supports marketing of the whole area for tourism and promotes the commercial harvesting of indigenous plant resources. The Zonation and Land-use Group works to optimise each zone and was responsible for the creation of wildlife corridors in the conservancies along the Kwando. The Monitoring Group collates information collected by individual units into an integrated reporting system. The national parks, the conservancies and the Kyaramacan Association all take part in the annual Caprivi Game Count, jointly carried out by MET staff and community game guards, with support from NGOs. Ongoing natural resource monitoring is carried out throughout the complex, and data is aggregated into monthly and annual reporting charts that facilitate adaptive management. Based on the wildlife data, the MET sets annual quotas for using game, which enables the conservancies to carry out hunting. The Directorate of Forestry sets allowable harvests for various forest resources, based on participatory inventories, and permit systems control all use of forest and wildlife resources.

Increasing wildlife populations have resulted in a rise in human wildlife conflict incidents. Predators and elephants move freely between the national parks and the conservancies, and the effective management of conflicts thus requires collaboration. The Human Animal Conflict Conservancy Self Insurance Scheme (HACCSS) provided offsets for losses in the past, using conservancy and donor funds, but a new system is now being implemented in collaboration with government, based on the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management. Fire is another issue requiring cooperative management. Fires can quickly spread over large areas, making it difficult for individual units to develop their own management regimes. While fire has moulded woodlands naturally over thousands of years, the high frequency of intense fires now set by people in winter causes severe degradation, and many resources of direct value to people are lost. The complex is now encouraging an ‘early burn’ fire strategy which reduces the chances of intense, destructive wildfires. The MNC programme is probably the largest communal area fire management system in Africa.  

a mix of modern technologies and traditional knowledge is required in the Mudumu North Complex to enable healthy wildlife populations, a productive environment, and the effective management of natural resources...
KWANDU CONSERVANCY

Kwandu Conservancy and Kwandu Community Forest have slightly different boundaries, yet have integrated the management of wildlife and forestry resources. The Kwando River, after which both are named, delineates the border with Bwabwata National Park in the west, while the Caprivi State Forest lies to the east. In the south, the Trans-Caprivi Highway (B8) between Rundu and Katina Mulilo separates Kwandu from Mayuyi Conservancy while Zambezi lies to the north.

The residents of the area began discussing issues of human-wildlife conflict in 1996 and decided that forming a conservancy could bring benefits from wildlife rather than only losses. The conservancy was registered in 1999, and a trophy hunting concession currently provides the largest portion of income. The Mafwe Living Museum, located around 20 kilometres north of Kongola, provides genuine insights into Mafwe culture and generates important income, while craft sales create a valuable source of income for individuals. The Bumhill community campsite, which Kwandu was operating in Bwabwata, was unfortunately destroyed by fire, but camping is now possible at the Baobab Campsite close to the living museum. The conservancy plans to develop a lodge to diversify its tourism income, and is exploring new options for benefiting from Bwabwata. Kwandu creates a variety of community benefits, including meat distribution and cash payments, divided amongst the six village areas. Chilli-growing demonstration plots show farmers how to grow chillies and use them to deter elephants. Kwandu is run by a management committee of nine members, a four member executive committee, and a number of field and office staff, and has its office along the D3502 road, a few kilometres north of Kongola.

QUICK FACTS

- Size: 190 square kilometres
- Approximate population: 4,300
- Main languages: Sifwe and Mbukushu
- Date of registration: December 1999

MASHI CONSERVANCY

The conservancy is named after the local name for the ushivi tree, which is also an alternative name for the Kwando River that delineates the conservancy’s border with Bwabwata National Park in the west. In the south-west, Mashi borders a wildlife and hunting area situated across the Kwando in Botswana. The Mudumu National Park lies to the south of Mashi, which also borders Sobbe Conservancy in the east, while the Lubuta Community Forest straddles both conservancies and the Sachona Community Forest falls entirely within Mashi.

The traditional leadership and some local residents started to cultivate an interest in forming a conservancy in 1998, leading to the registration of Mashi in 2003. Most conservancy income is generated through joint venture agreements with Namushasha Country Lodge and Camp Kwando, both offering accommodation facilities along the river. The lodges also create significant employment and training opportunities. A trophy hunting concession provides important additional income. Mashi distributes meat and cash benefits to each of the four village areas, and other income has been used for road maintenance and support for the local schools. Crafts provide important income to individuals, while the Lizauli Traditional Village, located along the C49 road close to the Mudumu border, provides wonderful cultural insights and important community income. In order to further diversify income, Mashi has plans to operate its own campsite, and has applied for a tourism concession in Mudumu National Park. Mashi has its office close to the Mudumu border along the C49, which leads south from Kongola through Mudumu and east to Katina Mulilo. The conservancy is run by a management committee of 12 members, and a number of field and office staff.

QUICK FACTS

- Size: 297 square kilometres
- Approximate population: 3,900
- Main languages: Sifwe and Mbukushu
- Date of registration: March 2003

A CONSERVANCY IS...

- a legally registered area with clearly defined borders and a constituted management body run by the community for the development of residents and the sustainable use of wildlife and tourism
- facilitate sustainability
- empower rural people...
- managed by a group elected to serve the interests of all its members
- a place where residents can add income from wildlife and tourism to traditional farming activities
- community conservation facilitates access to diverse training and capacity building, empowers individuals, especially women, to actively take part in decision-making, as well as instilling a renewed sense of pride in cultural heritage
A CONSERVANCY IS...

- a place where wildlife populations increase as they are managed for productive gain
- a place where the value of the natural resources increases, enhancing the value of the land

SOBBE CONSERVANCY

Sobbe Conservancy falls within a large area of mopane woodland to the east of the Kwando River. It borders the Mashi Conservancy in the west and wraps around the north-eastern corner of Mudumu National Park to reach Dzoti Conservancy on the south-eastern border of the park. The Trans-Caprivi Highway (B8) delineates the northern border of the conservancy, while emerging conservancies lie to the east. Both the Lubuta and Masida Community Forests partially overlap Sobbe. The conservancy was registered in October 2006.

Due to its distance from the Kwando, the Sobbe area has less tourism potential than the conservancies along the river, and the largest portion of conservancy income is obtained from trophy hunting. Meat from both trophy and own-use hunting is distributed to conservancy residents, who also receive cash benefits from the conservancy. Occasional sales of live game, which is captured and translocated to other areas to boost game numbers there, provide further income. Craft production creates an important source of income for individuals. Sobbe is practicing conservation agriculture, a farming method designed to optimise crop yields in areas of low or erratic rainfall and poor soils. The conservancy has created water points for wildlife to improve game management and is working on improving rangeland management in the conservancy. Sobbe Conservancy is managed by a nine member management committee and a number of office and field staff. The conservancy office is located along the Trans-Caprivi Highway, around 40 kilometres east of Kongola.

MAYUNI CONSERVANCY

Mayuni Conservancy lies south of the Trans-Caprivi Highway (B8), which separates it from Kwandu Conservancy in the north. Mayuni borders the Bwabwata National Park, lying across the Kwando River to the west, and Mashi Conservancy to the south.

Mayuni Conservancy was established with very strong support from Chief Joseph Mayuni, who has been a driving force for conservation in the area, and has encouraged people to resettle to free up high-value floodplain areas for tourism development. The conservancy was registered in 1999, by which time it had negotiated a joint venture agreement with the already established Susuwe Island Lodge. The agreement now includes the management of Kubunyanja on the eastern bank of the Kwando, which may be developed as a lodge in the future. Mayuni also has entered a joint venture agreement with Mazambala Island Lodge, and the conservancy runs its own Nambwa Campsite on the western side of the Kwando, within Bwabwata. Mayuni generates some income from a trophy hunting concession, and meat from trophy hunting and own-use hunting is distributed to residents. Crafts provide an important source of income for individuals, while cash benefits are distributed to each of three village areas, and financial support is provided to schools, as well as cultural and social activities. There are plans to provide vulnerable children with targeted support, to develop another primary school and to explore more income-generating activities that will continue to benefit conservancy residents. The conservancy office is located at Kongola, and Mayuni is run by a management committee of nine members, and a number of office and field staff.

Combined Cash Income and In-kind Benefits for Mayuni

Combined Cash Income and In-kind Benefits for Sobbe

Conservancies maximise benefits from wildlife...

Conservancies... facilitate tourism development

community conservation enables a range of new livelihood options, including employment and income from tourism, craft production, the utilisation of forest resources, and other sales and services based on the sustainable use of natural resources

Conservancies

...A CONSERVANCY IS...

- a forum through which services and developments can be channelled and integrated
- zoned for multiple uses to minimise conflict and maximise the interests of all stakeholders

Conservancies

...Maximise benefits from wildlife...

Conservancies

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Maximise benefits from wildlife...
The overlapping Kwandu Community Forest and Kwanndu Conservancy are successfully piloting the integration of both community conservation structures in the area. The landscapes of Kwanndu are made up of a mixture of vegetation units, dominated by Zambezi teak. Sadly, most of Mudumu North Complex’s valuable teak timber resources have been lost to extensive logging by Zambezi teak. Sadly, most of Mudumu North Complex’s valuable community conservation structures in the area. The landscapes of Conservancy are successfully piloting the integration of both... 

The LubuTA COMMUNITY FOREST overlaps with the eastern part of Mashi and the western corner of Sobbe Conservancy, and borders Mudumu National Park in the south, as well as the Masida Community Forest in the east. The area is generally dominated by mopane woodland on heavy clay loam soils, dotted with camel thorn, knob thorn and sickle-leaved albizia trees, and interspersed with pockets of sandy soils where stands of burkea, orbital tree and variable comberum occur. Dense mopane shrublands cover parts of the landscape. The LubuTA COMMUNITY FOREST overlaps with the eastern part of Mashi and the western corner of Sobbe Conservancy, and borders Mudumu National Park in the south, as well as the Masida Community Forest in the east... 

The southern two-thirds of Masida Community Forest overlap with Sobbe Conservancy, and Masida also borders onto Mudumu National Park in the south. The Trans-Caprivi Highway crosses through the northern parts of the community forest. The forest resources of Masida are mostly dominated by mopane woodland on heavy clay loam soil, interspersed with pockets of burkea, orbital tree and variable comberum on more sandy soil. Some areas of highly leached sands are dominated by silver cluster-leaf. Grazing across most of the area is relatively poor, with grasses dominated by unpalatable annuals. Cultivation potential is limited by the poor soils. Silver cluster-leaf has a great variety of medicinal, food and construction uses. Burkea wood is also widely used as a construction material. Masida still holds significant high-value timber such as Zambezi teak and kiaat, which accounts for a big part of the annual income. Other sources of income include firewood, devil’s claw and honey. Masida works closely with Sobbe Conservancy, and has its office opposite that of Sobbe along the B8 highway.

The emerging Sachona Community Forest lies entirely within Mashi Conservancy and embraces the conservancy’s core area. It borders Mudumu in the south and LubuTA Community Forest in the east. In 2005 the traditional authority of the area initiated the process of registering as a community forest. While the registration is still pending, a management committee is in place and Sachona takes an active part in activities within the MNC. The landscape of Sachona is dominated by mopane woodland, mixed with camel thorn, silver cluster-leaf and variable comberum. Timber trees are rare in the area, but mopane provides great firewood and construction poles, and will be an important source of income once the community forest is registered. Sachona is known for its high density of devil’s claw and is cooperating with Mashi and LubuTA in sustainable harvesting and marketing of the high-value indigenous plant. Bee-keeping has become an important forestry activity, as honey from Caprivi is in demand throughout Namibia. Although Sachona does not have an office yet, the seven committee members meet regularly to organize activities.

A COMMUNITY FOREST IS...
• a legally registered area with clearly defined borders run by the community according to a forest management plan that ensures the sustainable use of plant resources
• a place where forest resources are healthy and well managed, enabling a healthy overall environment
• a place where people can generate additional income from plant resources, enhancing livelihoods and supporting development
• a forum which can coordinate activities and developments, build capacities and enable integrated land use
The Kyaramacan Association
facilitates natural resource benefits for park residents...

The Khwe have been utilising what is today the Bwabwata National Park for countless generations. The area was proclaimed as a Nature Park in 1963, which was elevated to Game Park status in 1968. The park was however declared a military zone in the same year and received no conservation attention until independence, but the resident Khwe were allowed to continue living there. The park residents started taking an active role in natural resource management in the 1990s and this led to the establishment of the Kyaramacan Association to represent the approximately 5,500 people living in the park. The association is managed by a board of ten members, as well as numerous field staff.

The Kyaramacan Association was awarded the rights to the trophy hunting concessions in Bwabwata in 2006 and this is generating significant income for the association and its residents. While there were contractual challenges with the concessions, resulting in a loss of income in some years, these have been resolved and the use of wildlife through trophy hunting in an area of limited tourism potential highlights the importance of diversifying natural resource use options. Residents also generate important income through the harvesting of plant products such as devil’s claw and Kalahari melon seed, as well as other forest resources such as honey. A variety of forest resources are also used as building materials and for food and medicinal purposes.

The national parks, with their wildlife, wetland and wilderness appeal, create the most important tourism attractions in Caprivi and add a unique experience to Namibia’s tourism product. By drawing visitors to the area, they also create direct benefits for surrounding community conservation initiatives.

**THE KYARAMACAN ASSOCIATION**

**THE NATIONAL PARKS**

**WOODLANDS AND NATURE PARKS**

**THE NATIONAL PARKS**

... conserve biodiversity and act as tourism draw cards

The Mudumu National Park was proclaimed just prior to independence, long after people living there had moved away following a severe outbreak of tsetse flies in 1945. The park embraces large areas of well preserved mopane woodland and a beautiful section of Kwando River front, as well as the Mudumu Mulapo, a seasonal marshland extending to the east of the river. Healthy populations of rare sable and roan antelope, and a diversity of other game including large herds elephant, as well as small numbers of lion, provide great wildlife viewing. Three campsites in the park offer adventurous camping without any facilities. Lianshulu Lodge and Lianshulu Bush Lodge offer beautiful accommodation within the park and are run by the private sector, while sharing benefits with neighbouring Mashi Conservancy through joint venture agreements. The C49 road provides a transit route through Mudumu, while permits to explore the four-wheel drive game viewing tracks throughout the park are obtainable at Ngenda Station, just west of the C49 along the park border.

**Bwabwata National Park**

was proclaimed in 2007 to incorporate the former Caprivi Game Park, Mahango Game Park and the so-called Kwando Triangle (which had no prior conservation status) into one protected area. The park embraces high value core wildlife areas along the Kwando and Okavango Rivers, as well as a large section of Kalahari woodland within its long and narrow strip. Large herds of elephant and buffalo, as well as a great variety of other game occur in park, which is also an important refuge for African wild dogs. The Nambwa community campsite provides excellent camping facilities in the Kwando Core Area and is operated by the neighbouring Mayuni Conservancy. The Trans-Kalahari Highway creates a transit route between Divundu and Kongola, while a small network of sandy tracks allows wonderful game viewing in the Kwando Core Area, but requires four-wheel drive. No permit is required to travel along the highway, while permits to visit the Kwando Core Area are obtainable at the Susswe Station, a few kilometres north of the tar road.

**QUICK FACTS**

**Kyaramacan Association**

- Approximate population: 5,500
- Main language: Khwe
- Date of registration: 2006

Legislation only allows for the formation of conservancies on communal land and not in state protected areas, requiring a unique approach in the Bwabwata National Park — the Kyaramacan Association.

**Bwabwata National Park**

- Size: 6,274 square kilometres
- Date of proclamation: 2007

The national parks, with their wildlife, wetland and wilderness appeal, create the most important tourism attractions in Caprivi and add a unique experience to Namibia’s tourism product. By drawing visitors to the area, they also create direct benefits for surrounding community conservation initiatives.

**Mudumu National Park**

- Size: 737 square kilometres
- Date of proclamation: 1990

**QUICK FACTS**

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**THE NATIONAL PARKS**

National parks

... conserve biodiversity and act as tourism draw cards

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The Mudumu North Complex is developing into a successful example of collaborative management of resources by local communities and the public service, with support from NGOs. A major strength of the complex is that joint management is driven by demand, as its member units share common issues and realised that addressing them requires cooperation amongst neighbours. Collaboration is facilitated by the conservancies and community forest, since they share some of the conservation objectives of the national parks and have the legal mandate to manage natural resources in their area on behalf of the local communities.

Challenges... The complex faces the challenge of maintaining sound technical ability, management and infrastructure in each of the MNC’s components. While collaborative management developed because it was needed, its maintenance requires ongoing communication and cooperation amongst all stakeholders. The regional council, as well as all line ministries active in the area, also need to be aware of plans and initiatives within the complex, so that these are not undermined by uncoordinated planning and actions. The increasing game populations in the area demonstrate that wildlife is valuable to and accepted by local residents. However, growing human wildlife conflicts create one of the main challenges of the complex, and further innovative measures need to be developed to counter losses caused by wildlife. In addition, there is a need to reduce elephant pressure on the local environment. Valuable riparian woodlands are being degraded by the concentrations of elephants attracted to water and food along the Kwando River during the dry winter months. The loss of browse in the dry woodlands as a result of rampant burning causes the elephants to focus their feeding on the riparian vegetation to an even greater extent. By facilitating improved wildlife movement throughout the greater region through the creation of effective wildlife corridors, the KaZa Transfrontier Conservation Area can begin to reduce some of this pressure.

Human wildlife conflicts are monitored in conservancies using the Event Book and clearly indicate the main conflict species. The chart shows the combined conflict incidents from all four conservancies.

Community forests and conservancies already cooperate in many areas, and further integration creates opportunities to unlock the full potential of natural resources. Each structure has strengths to offer which can be combined for the benefit of all. Community forests have legal control and ownership over a broader range of natural resources than conservancies, while conservancies can contribute high value wildlife and tourism, as well as longer management experience. Although the Caprivi State Forest has been signposted for many years, it has yet to be declared a legally protected area. By becoming a part of the Mudumu North Complex, the state forest can further strengthen joint management of issues.

Plans... The Tourism Development Plan for the Bwabwata, Mudumu and Marrili National Parks proposes a variety of possible developments that can improve the tourism products within the complex and create local employment opportunities. The individual conservancies also have plans to develop tourism in their areas. The Mudumu North Complex can play an important role in ensuring that the various plans are compatible, and that the complex fulfills its role within KaZa.

Challenges, Opportunities... Natural resource management complexes enable diverse opportunities... The Mudumu North Complex is the ideal structure to enable its coordinated, sustainable development. The Kwando River with its wealth of natural resources is one of Namibia’s greatest environmental assets, and the Mudumu North Complex should play an important role in its coordinated, sustainable development. The Caprivi State Forest has been signposted for many years, yet it has yet to be declared a legally protected area. By becoming a part of the Mudumu North Complex, the state forest can further strengthen joint management of issues.

The Mudumu North Complex is demonstrating the benefits of joint management at a large landscape level. Continued collaboration and further integration of activities amongst all stakeholders can ensure that both the benefits to residents and the conservation goals of the area are maximized, creating a bright future for the complex and all its components.

Come to the Mudumu North Complex — be part of the future...
The production of this brochure was jointly funded by MCA-Namibia, Norad and WWF.

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