

Mudumu National Park



Mudumu National Park is one of Namibia's least-known parks, but is richly rewarding for adventurous visitors. The main attraction is the riverine habitat of the Kwando River, while inland the Mudumu Mulapo fossilised river course and the dense mopane woodland shelter woodland species. There is no formal entrance gate or park fence – the park is separated from neighbouring communal farmland by a graded cutline.

Mudumu is home to a large elephant population. The park acts as a corridor for these pachyderms as they migrate between Botswana, Zambia, Angola and Zimbabwe.

In recent years, Mudumu has become the model for co-operation between parks and neighbours. The parks, conservancies, community forests and traditional leaders work together on law enforcement, fire management (early burning), game monitoring and translocations. This evolved from the need to manage common resources across unfenced park and conservancy boundaries.

FACT FILE

Park size: 1 010 km² (737 on cutline)

Date proclaimed: 1990

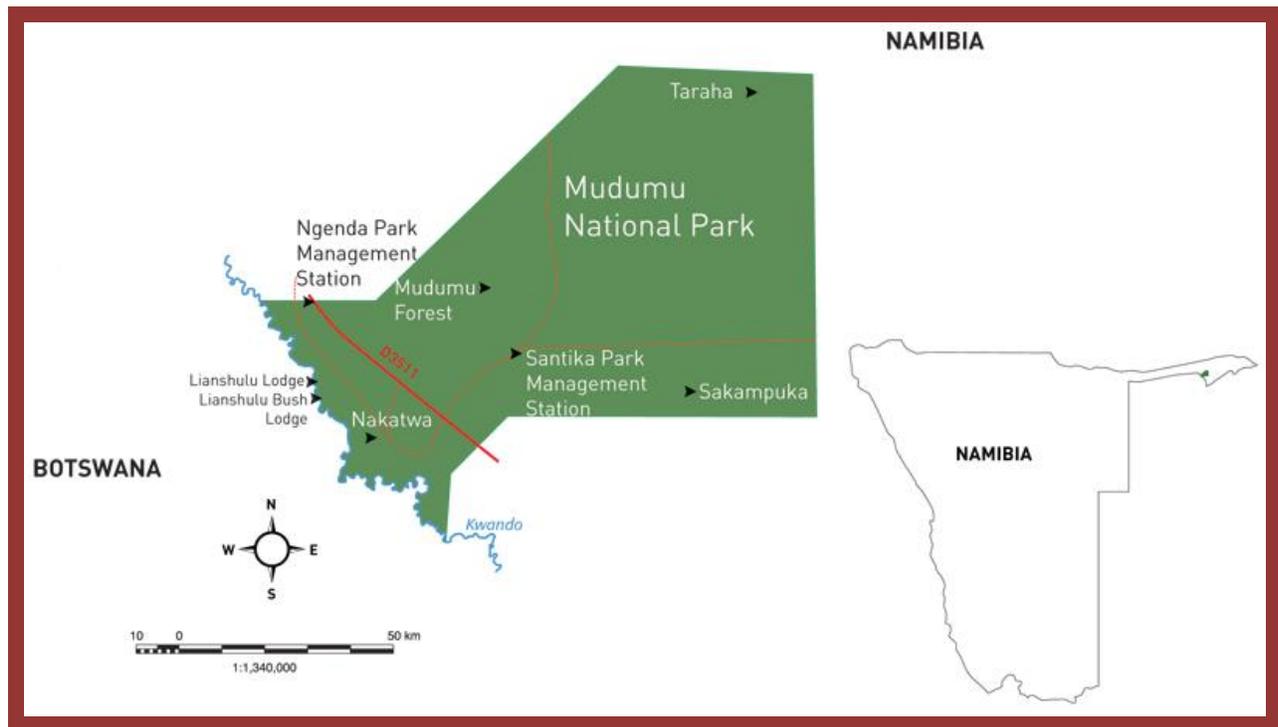
Natural features: Kwando River floodplain and associated grasslands and riparian woodlands.

Vegetation: Tree and Shrub Savannah Biome. Vegetation type: North-eastern Kalahari Woodlands, Riverine Woodlands and Islands, Caprivi Mopane Woodland and Caprivi Floodplains. Mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*), leadwood (*Combretum imberbe*) and mangosteen (*Garcinia livingstonii*) trees.

Wildlife: Elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard, spotted hyaena, cheetah, African wild dog, hippo, crocodile, spotted-necked otter, sitatunga, red lechwe, common impala, Burchell's zebra, sable antelope, eland, wildebeest and giraffe. Tiger fish and tilapia are common fish species. The 430 bird species recorded in Mudumu include African fish eagle, African skimmer and western-banded snake eagle.

Tourism: Walking, bird-watching, game viewing. Camping at Nakatwa Camp. Visitors must provide their own water, food and fuel. Two privately managed lodges within the park with luxurious accommodation. Located within a high-risk malaria area. Precautions necessary. Note signs indicating 4x4 vehicles. Two vehicles recommended during rainy season. Permits obtainable at the MET offices in Windhoek, Katima Mulilo, Susuwe in Bwabwata National Park and Nakatwa in Mudumu National Park.

Map



Conservation successes

In Namibia, conservation is a national priority. From its historic place in the Constitution to its roots in the hearts and minds of local people, conservation is making a strong, positive impact on rural communities and the animals that share their land.

Since independence, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has worked closely with local conservancies to protect and expand the range of Namibia's wildlife. Over the past several years, hundreds of animals have been relocated from Namibian parks back into parks and conservancies in the Caprivi Region. After decades of extinction, eland, Africa's largest antelope, giraffe and rare sable antelope have been reintroduced into the Mudumu National Park, while conservancies surrounding the park have welcomed these species and also impala, giraffe and buffalo back onto their land.

Several animals were fitted with global positioning collars and one with a satellite collar so that rangers in Namibia and scientists as far away as the US are able to track their movements. The information gathered from these collars will give us a better understanding of how and why animals move across this stunning landscape; and with understanding, our ability to protect these creatures and this spectacular area will grow.

Key management issues

Poaching remains a threat due to poverty of surrounding neighbours. Staff conduct monthly anti-poaching patrols within the park, assisted by game guards from neighbouring conservancies.

Fire is a management tool but can be a destructive force. Much of the Caprivi burns each year. An early burning programme (May–July), creates firebreaks for fires in the hot season and provides a 'green bite' for important wildlife species. Increasing numbers of elephants and predators result in human-wildlife conflict, particularly as the park is unfenced.

Future plans

The Ngenda Ranger Station will be developed into park headquarters with a gate entrance and a visitor centre. The existing Nakatwa Ranger Station will be closed and staff relocated to Ngenda. Nakatwa will be developed as an upper/mid-market tourism concession.

Further campsites are to be developed at Mvubu, Balyerwa, Hippo Pool and Maziba.