



Peace Parks Foundation Newsflash 7/2013

First wildlife translocation to Simalaha Community Conservancy

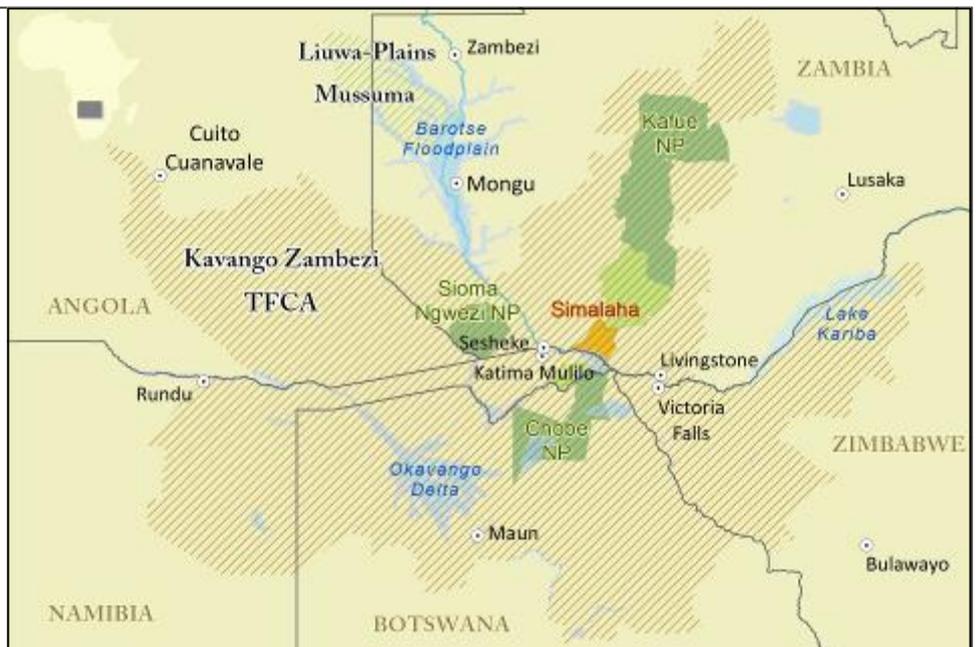
Sunday, 6 October 2013 saw the first ever wildlife translocation to the Simalaha Community Conservancy. Simalaha is one of Zambia's first conservancies and will be an important area in KAZA TFCA to re-establish wildlife populations and their migration routes while stimulating community benefits through wildlife and tourism development.

The Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) translocated 100 impala, 135 blue wildebeest and 50 zebra from parks in Namibia and Zambia to the newly fenced wildlife sanctuary.

The Zambian Minister of Tourism and Arts, Ms Sylvia T. Masebo, MP, was on site to release the first impala into the sanctuary. She said: "We congratulate their Royal Highnesses, Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta and Chief Sekute, for providing the leadership that has inspired their people to embark on this exciting venture. This is a community-driven initiative, which has the full support of the Zambian government. We encourage you to invite partnerships with the private sector as you design the way forward for this unique project."

Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta said: "Today is an historic occasion in the development of the Simalaha Community Conservancy. Soon the Simalaha will once again teem with wildlife, and children of this area will be able to know wildlife, by seeing them, not just in books, but in real life."

He also said: "The success of tourism in Zambia should not be measured by the volume of tourists passing through our airports, but in how many employment opportunities are created for local communities. This will be a true measure of success. The Simalaha Community Conservancy holds the promise



of many such employment opportunities, not only in tourism, but also in many other sectors such as agriculture and fishing."

BACKGROUND

On 22 October 2012 the Simalaha Community Conservancy was officially launched by Chief Sekute of the Chundu Chiefdom and Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta of the Siseke Chiefdom as a wildlife recovery area and a mechanism to stimulate benefits for the communities through wildlife and tourism development.

With funding received from Peace Parks Foundation and WWF Germany, the first steps in the establishment of the conservancy were taken. The boundaries of the conservancy were determined through a consultative process with the local communities.

The wildlife sanctuary covers an area of 24 000 ha that involves both chiefdoms. The sanctuary will be used to relocate the seed

stock of wildlife to where they can be properly protected and allow them to increase in numbers.

A large and varied wildlife experience will result in more tourism that will generate much-needed income. Field rangers will also be trained in this area and an awareness programme for the communities will be launched to ensure ownership of the wildlife and the project as a whole. Once the animal numbers have increased sufficiently, the fences of the sanctuary will be removed to allow the wildlife to move into the bigger area.

A game proof fence was erected around the wildlife sanctuary thanks to funding by Mava Foundation for Nature, the Swedish Postcode Lottery and the Cleveland Zoological Society. Local community members were identified to assist with the construction of the fence, which enabled them to earn a living for their families. Eighteen

community members, including a number of these labourers, will be trained as field rangers. The field ranger training will be funded by the Cleveland Zoological Society. Two field ranger stations will be built in the sanctuary, one in each of the chiefdoms, as well as water wells to serve the stations. Two mobile stations will also be constructed to allow for mobile patrols. While ZAWA is training the community field rangers who will work in the conservancy, the Chundu chiefdom has kindly sent in 10 of their rangers to guard the wildlife in the sanctuary.

The Simalaha Community Conservancy, under the traditional leadership of Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta and Chief Sekute, has adopted a human rights-based approach for the communities living in the conservancy. The approach focuses on democracy, gender equality and empowerment by supporting environmental sustainability, accountability and participation. The communities are allowed to manage their own natural resources in a sustainable way that takes into consideration economic, social, cultural and political human rights. In May 2012 Peace Parks Foundation and the Joaquim Chissano Foundation secured funding from the Swedish Postcode Lottery, which donated SEK 10 million for the human rights programme that constitutes four projects, namely the establishment of two wildlife sanctuaries, training in conservation agriculture, training in controlled grazing, and the introduction of sustainable energy products, which will all bring socio-economic benefit flows to the community.

The Kadans Foundation, with its partners Hitachi Data Systems and Hercuton, is also funding conservation agriculture in the conservancy, while Stichting Energo funded the construction of teachers' houses, built by the communities.

Minister Sylvia Masebo thanked the donors at the translocation event: "The positive programme outcomes achieved through the financial and technical support from Peace Parks Foundation have attracted other partners, namely the Swedish Postcode Lottery, the Mava Foundation for Nature, the Kadans Foundation and the Cleveland Zoological Society. On that note I must record here our sincere gratitude to Peace Parks Foundation for the supporting and facilitating role they have played to bring the Simalaha Community Conservancy to this stage."



Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta, Minister Sylvia Masebo and Chief Sekute's daughter, a princess in the Royal Chundu Establishment, at the translocation event



Community members came from far and wide to witness the historic event



Minister Sylvia Masebo (far right) and community members enjoying the release of the first impala into the wildlife sanctuary

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