

Luangwa Wilderness Society

Nature conservation in Luambe National Park, Zambia

The Luangwa Wilderness Society was founded in Germany on Nov. 26, 2002. The founding members are veterinarians who have been working for years with wild animals and endangered species protection, who are also friends who have a strong interest in nature and conservation. Dr. Olaf Behlert, a zoo veterinarian and assistant chairman of the Cologne Zoo, is the president of the Luangwa Wilderness Society. Dr. Friederike von Houwald, the curator of the Basel Zoo, is the vice-president.

In 2003, Dr. Behlert signed a “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU) with the Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA). The goal of this MOU is to protect and manage Luambe National Park in Zambia in cooperation with the ZAWA. The society supports ZAWA’s conservation efforts within the Luambe National Park by providing them financial and material assistance.

Why conservation in Zambia? Why in Luambe National Park?

Zambia is a landlocked African nation of 752,614 square kilometers (more than twice the size of Germany). Zambia was proclaimed a nation on Oct. 24, 1964, and is one of few politically stable countries in Africa. Zambia has always been a natural paradise but poaching has caused serious reductions in among many animal species. Even today, poaching is the most serious problem for the animals within Zambia’s 19 national parks. The Luambe National Park is in



eastern Zambia in the Luangwa Valley. To the south of this relatively small national park (254 square kilometers) is the famous South Luangwa National Park; to the north is the isolated North Luangwa National Park. The western border is the Luangwa River. The 15,500-square-kilometer Luangwa Valley is one of Africa’s greatest natural treasures. The geographical diversity of this valley has allowed it to be the home of an enormous variety of plant and animal species. Unfortunately, this diversity has also attracted many poachers.

Description of the project

In the past, the Luambe National Park has been seriously neglected by the local government. The conservation efforts all took place in South and North Luangwa national parks. The majority of these efforts were brought about by private parties. The biggest problem for the Luambe National Park is also poaching. Because of its location near the Malawi border, Luambe suffers from border-crossing poachers as well as those from within Zambia.



The main purposes of this project are to protect the flora and fauna and to support the local population. The emphasis is on fighting poaching. The Luangwa Wilderness Society is a legal non-profit organization that works to protect endangered species and habitats. Financial and material donations go directly to the Luambe National Park without going through layers of administration. An agreement was made with the Zambian government allowing donations not to be subject to taxes.

Concrete measures

The day-to-day duties of this project are performed by park managers and gamekeepers who patrol the park and track down poachers. This park is home to marshes, grass fields, lagoons and savannas in addition to the large forests. The gamekeepers often cover long distances through the wilderness that often require them to be out for days at a time.

For these park managers and gamekeepers to work efficiently, they need good equipment like shoes, jackets, knives, weapons, sleeping bags, food and water. Depending on the time of year, there is plenty of water in the park's rivers. Most of the time, however, this is poor quality water.

How Katadyn offers support



In 2004, the society received a very generous donation from Katadyn Products. Inc., including 10 Drip Filters as well as many ceramic filter elements that were sent from Cologne to Zambia in a container with other equipment for the park. These filters have since been in use by the team in Zambia. The water filters play an important role in its efforts and were selected carefully with its specific needs in mind. Complicated, difficult-to-use systems have no place in the wilderness. The water comes directly from a river that is home to over 400 hippopotamuses that live just out the front door.

Naturally, these filters needed to be of high quality given the poor hygienic conditions. These are all reasons why the society only wanted to work with Katadyn. As has been shown already in Zambia, these filters have been easy to use for all team members, and the water quality has been excellent. The capacity of each system has allowed every team member to have all the clean water he needs for extended journeys. All in all, these filters have proven themselves in the wilderness.

We'd like to thank Katadyn for its willingness to support these people. Nature conservancy always starts with the basics. When those on location do not have what the necessary equipment, it is difficult to expect them to be able to help the environment. Since water is a basic element of life, it is especially important in the African wilderness where temperatures can rise to over 40°C each day, the water in the lagoons and rivers isn't always safe and the closest flowing tap is hundreds of kilometers away.



In addition to the team, it is also possible for tourists to visit and support the conservancy efforts (<http://www.conservation-luambe.de>). This small national park in eastern Zambia is still very unknown and wild -- a real plus for all who love the African wilderness. To preserve the park, the number of visitors is limited, but all are welcome who are interested in the project. One thing is certain: Visitors will experience real Africa up close. The species diversity and the proximity to nature are part of the park's attraction. Clear filtered water is naturally another (<http://www.luangawilderness.com>).