

CEPF's 'rapid response fund' in the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot – a first success

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Elands at Nsumbu National Park

[The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund](#), through its [Regional Implementation Team in the Eastern Afromontane biodiversity hotspot](#), started providing '[rapid response fund](#)' grants of maximum USD 10,000 in July 2014. These grants are issued to fund projects that aim to protect Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under immediate and urgent threat. The main idea behind these grants is "to support the role of civil society organizations in the application of site safeguard policies and procedures in order to avoid or minimize / mitigate ongoing and emerging threats on critical biodiversity habitats".

A first grant under this call for proposals was provided to [Conservation Lake Tanganyika \(CLT\)](#), a local NGO in Zambia. CLT's project aimed to enhance the participation of local people in the management of two KBAs (also an Important Bird Area) in Zambia: [Sumbu National Park and Tondwa Game Management Area](#). They completed their project in October 2015.

What's the story

22% of Zambia's land area is covered by Game Management Areas where the Wildlife Act of Zambia provides for the establishment of Community Resource Boards (CRBs) to be established where the community shares a common interest in wildlife and natural resources, providing a

legal and institutional mechanism for sharing responsibilities for conserving and managing wildlife with ZAWA (the Zambian Wildlife Authority). The ZAWA Act provides for CRBs as a means of ensuring that both the responsibilities and the benefits of well-managed natural resources accrue to local communities.

Sadly very few GMAs in Zambia have achieved this vision and there has been an ongoing deterioration of biodiversity in most GMAs.

In the far North of Zambia, Tondwa GMA is one of the most diverse and beautiful GMAs in Zambia, and encompasses an area of 400km² adjoining Nsumbu National Park. Tondwa has critical populations of wildlife and perhaps more importantly includes one of the few watersheds leading into Lake Tanganyika that is completely within a protected area. An effective and well representative CRB is critical to protect these two KBAs, as well as the waters of Lake Tanganyika (a third KBA to benefit from this project), as the area is under increased threat of poaching, encroachment, land clearing for agriculture and illegal commercial fishing.



Elephants at Nsumbu NP

Democratic process

CRBs are active for a period of five years, and the 'old' CRB was dissolved in September 2014, without a proper process in place to elect a new CRB due to a lack of concerted efforts and finance. This presented an urgent threat to the GMA and the NP, as anti-poaching activities in Tondwa and the monitoring of a commercial fishing camp in Nsumbu fell under the direct supervision of the Natural Resource Coordinator, a senior position within CRB. An immediate increase in terrestrial poaching in Tondwa and illegal fishing in Nsumbu NP was expected without an active CRB being in place.

With financial support from CEPF, Conservation Lake Tanganyika agreed to support for the first time a fully democratic process to elect a new CRB through free and fair elections carried out throughout the Nsama Chiefdom (covering Sumbu NP and Tondwa



Elections

GMA). This included a sensitization campaign to ensure community participation, the carrying out of elections in all communities, the formation of a final board and subsequent training of the CRB and Village Action Groups at a lower level on the roles and responsibilities of CRBs.

Clear result!

The democratically elected Nsama CRB is now actively working with the Zambia Wildlife Authority towards sustainable and inclusive use of Tondwa GMA as well as Nsumbu National Park, the election process

fulfilling all criteria to ensure the CRB is duly recognised by government, representative of the entire community and able to ensure an inclusive conservation strategy for both KBAs going forward. The ecological continuity of these areas requires a holistic approach to their management, the partnership between ZAWA and the CRB now allows for this to become a reality and ensures all human and biodiversity considerations are taken into account.

CLT is now working with its partners in the area to develop further conservation programmes, building on the success of this small, but vital project.



Elections

- All photos from Nsumbu and Tondwa.

See the interactive map of all projects implemented under the CEPF Eastern Afromontane hotspot programme [here](#).

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation. More information on CEPF can be found at www.cepf.net.

BirdLife International, together with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (BirdLife in Ethiopia) form the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) investment in the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot (2012-2017). The investment will support civil society in applying innovative approaches to conservation in under-capacitated and underfunded protected areas, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and priority corridors in the region.