

## **Press Release**

– for immediate release –



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### **Giraffe in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe can now be tracked online!**

- GCF in collaboration with ZimParks recently fitted 14 Southern giraffe (*Giraffa giraffa*) with GPS satellite tracking units in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe.
- There are only about 117,000 giraffe remaining in Africa and there is still a lot to learn about their movements and how they use their habitat.
- Strong conservation partnerships are key to giraffe conservation in Africa.

**In June, the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) in collaboration with the Namibian-based NGO Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) embarked on an exciting operation of fitting solar-powered GPS satellite tags to 14 Southern giraffe (*Giraffa giraffa*) in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. Conservation managers and researchers can now follow the movements of these giraffe online from anywhere in the world. This tagging exercise was the first of its kind in Hwange National Park and created the perfect platform for building local capacity in Zimbabwe by training park rangers and conservation officials in best practice giraffe capture techniques.**

As part of their Africa-wide Twiga Tracker Initiative, GCF follows and analyses the movements of all four giraffe species in ten African countries. Data from this groundbreaking study will contribute to this important initiative and ultimately inform giraffe conservation actions locally and throughout the continent.

*“Gaining a better understanding of giraffe and their movements in this landscape is the first step in their protection! We are excited to follow these giraffe online and find out more about where they go and what they do.”* says Daphine Madhlamoto, Acting Principal Ecologist at ZimParks.

More specifically, data from these innovative GPS units will help improve our understanding of giraffe movements and habitat requirements throughout this landscape, a critical part of the wider Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) landscape. GCF recently facilitated the development of the first-ever KAZA-wide Giraffe Conservation Strategy during a collaborative workshop with representatives of all five partner states and local conservation partners. It is awaiting final approval and will soon guide giraffe conservation efforts in this critical landscape which collectively supports 10% of Africa’s wild giraffe population. The importance of gaining a better understanding of giraffe movements within these interconnected systems was highlighted in the document.

For Zimbabwe, the data is anticipated to help build a baseline for a proposed development of a National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for the country. Over the past three years, GCF in

collaboration with ZimParks and local conservation partners have already collated a detailed estimate of giraffe numbers, established their range and started to assess their taxonomic status.

*“Conservation cannot happen in isolation! Only when all partners come together can we reach the best outcomes for giraffe conservation in Zimbabwe. As giraffe experts we are excited to work with ZimParks to learn more about the Hwange giraffe population and together we will develop the best possible strategies to secure the long-term survival of these iconic animals.”* comments Dr Julian Fennessy, Director of Conservation at GCF.

ZimParks and GCF both acknowledge that conservation cannot happen in isolation, and it was a great experience for all partners to work collaboratively with a wide range of committed conservationists including representatives from Wilderness Safaris, African Wildlife Management and Conservation, Flying for Wildlife, GAP Conservation, Imvelo Safaris, Dr Richard Hoare and Sian Brown. All fieldwork and ongoing efforts are coordinated by Jaco Olivier, a GCF PhD student at the Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

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#### **About the Giraffe Conservation Foundation**

The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) is the only organisation in the world that concentrates solely on the conservation and management of giraffe in the wild throughout Africa. GCF currently implements and/or supports giraffe conservation efforts in 17 African countries impacting over 100 million acres of giraffe habitat. As an international science-based conservation organisation, GCF that provides innovative approaches to saving giraffe effecting all four species of giraffe. GCF is dedicated to a sustainable future for all giraffe populations in the wild. For more information, visit our website:

<https://giraffeconservation.org/>

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#### **Images can be downloaded at this link:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sez7iey5l9kcued/AADDqjzYaQcQQK0AlySkmXt1a?dl=0>

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