



Twiga Tracker Initiative: Giraffe Tagging Report

Maputo National Park, Mozambique

28 May & 11 June 2024

Background

Historically, giraffe (*Giraffa spp.*) were distributed widely throughout regions south of the Save and Limpopo Rivers in Mozambique, and likely also further north. Despite this broad distribution, accurate historical abundance estimates, and detailed documentation of their ranges are not well known and uncertainty remains about their northern distribution in particular. Maputo National Park (MNP), located on the coast southeast of the capital Maputo, is a vital sanctuary for a wide range of species, supported by a unique vegetation and topography including forest, grassland dunes, wetland and sand forest. The 170,000 ha park forms part of the Usuthu-Tembe-Futi Transfrontier Conservation Area which links up with the Tembe Elephant Park in South Africa via the Futi Corridor.

The Giraffe Conservation Foundation's (GCF) Twiga Tracker Initiative is the largest GPS tracking programme for giraffe in Africa. Expanding the number of tagged animals in MNP will offer valuable insights into their spatial behaviour within a vast and diverse landscape that includes settlements and other human elements.

Objective

The primary objective of this operation was to tag six South African giraffe in MNP to collect spatial data. Each of the six giraffe were to be fitted with a Ceres Trace GPS ear tag. Additionally, tissue samples were also to be collected from each giraffe for the ongoing Mozambique DNA analysis project. Specific research goals were to:

- Track movements and habitat use by examining giraffe space use patterns and resource selection in MNP.
- Collect GPS data that can support the development of effective conservation strategies, including insight into giraffe movement across the major roadways through MNP.
- Sample the tagged giraffe for tissue as part of ongoing Mozambique DNA project.

Results

Four giraffe (three female and one male) were caught and tagged on 28 May 2024 near the Futi Gate area. The remaining two giraffe (one female and one male) were caught and tagged using a helicopter on 11 June 2024 near the Futi Corridor. The operation was led by Dr Joao Almeida, wildlife veterinarian and Director of the Mozambique Wildlife Alliance. All six giraffe were tagged with Ceres Trace GPS ear tags with the standard setting of four data points per day. Tissue for DNA analysis was also collected from four of the six giraffe (three female and one male) and stored in nunc tubes with ethanol.

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