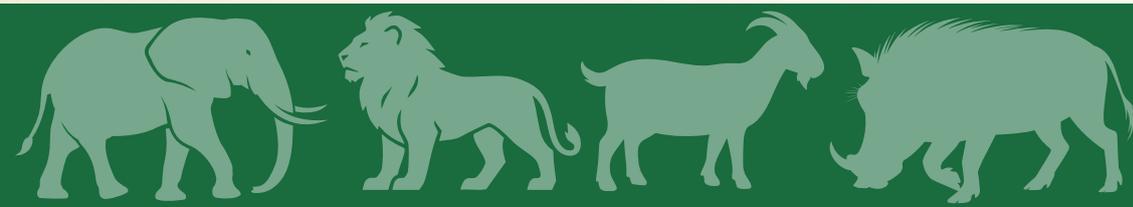


STATUS REPORT



CENTRAL REGION



2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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For further information, please contact:

Secretariat of the Zambia CRB Association

Plot 12494

Off Police Post Rd

PHI Flats, Lusaka

E-mail: secretariatzncrba@gmail.com

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ACROYNOMS

CRB	COMMUNITY RESOURCES BOARDS
AGM	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HWC	HUMAN WILDIFE CONFLICT
ZCRBA	ZAMBIA COMMUNITY RESOURCES BOARDS ASSOCIATION
DNPW	DEPARTMENT OF NATIOANL PARKS AND WILDLIFE
VAGs	VILLAGE ACTION GROUPs
GMA	GAME MANAGEMENT AREAS
NP	NATIONAL PARK
CR-CRB	CENTRAL REGION COMMUNITY RESOURCES BOARD
GMP	GENERAL/GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN
AP	AFRICAN PARK
TNC	THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
WPO	WILDLIFE POLICE OFFICERS
CS	COMMUNIT SCOUTS
CFMG	COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT GROUP
PA	PROTECTED AREA

ABOUT THE REGIONS (NUMBER OF CBOS/ GEOGRAPHICAL/ HABITAT TYPE) NUMBER OF GMAS AND STATUSES OF THE GMAS

The Central Region CRB Association has 7 CRBs and is the mother body for all the individual CRBs in the region. The region is located in the Lower Zambezi Area Management unit and its geographical boundaries covers Chiawa GMA, Rufunsa GMA, Lower Luano GMA and Upper Luano GMA. Additionally, the region has two National Parks namely Lusaka National Park and Lower Zambezi National Park.

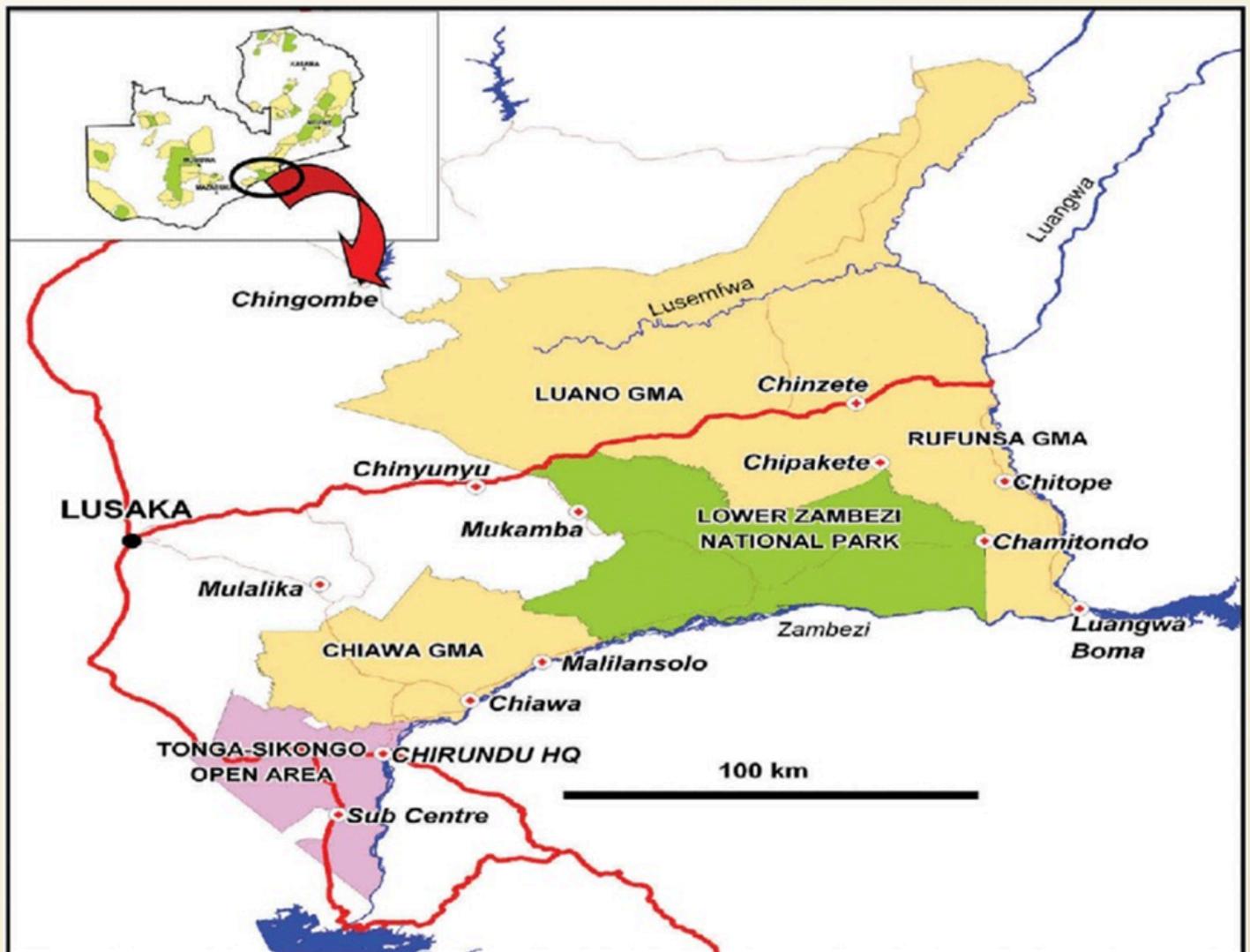


Figure 1: Map for lower Zambezi National Park and GMAs.

The biophysical environment in the region is characterized by floodplains, Mopane woodlands, a minimal number of huge acacias and scattered winter thorn tree species. Even though the Lower Zambezi National Park covers an area of 4092 square kilometers, most of the game is concentrated along the valley floor. The National Park is still undeveloped leaving its beauty hidden in the back woods and the animal species in the vicinity are not as extensive as in other National parks, fortunately this has not been a limiting factor to opportunities to explore the remarkable Zambezi National Park.

STATUS OF THE GMAS

SN	NAME OF GMA	STATUS OF GMA	NAMES OF CRBs	STATUS OF CRB
1	CHIAWA	ACTIVE	CHIAWA CRB	ACTIVE
2	RUFUNSA	ACTIVE	MPHUKA	ACTIVE
			MBURUMA	ACTIVE
			MPHASYA	ACTIVE
3	LUANO	ACTIVE	SHIKABETA	ACTIVE
			MBOROMA	INACTIVE
			MBOSHYA	ACTIVE
			CHEMBE	ACTIVE
			BUNDA-BUNDA	ACTIVE

Table 1: Status of GMAs and CRBs for Central Region CRB Association.

WHAT MAKES THE REGION OUTSTANDING

The Central Region CRB exclusivity lies in a number of features and one of the many being the Lower Zambezi National Park that is opposite the famous Mana Pools Reserve in Zimbabwe making the area a sight of beauty to look and mesmerize on the enormous Wildlife on the two sides of the Zambezi River. The beautiful sites on the south side of the valley is known for abundant wildlife inclusive the elephants, Crocodiles, buffalos, hippos and fish eagles. There is an escarpment along the northern end which acts as a physical barrier to most of the Park's animal species. Enormous herds of elephant, some up to 100 strong, are often seen at the river's edge. 'Island hopping' buffalo and waterbuck are common. The Park also hosts good populations of lion and leopard, and listen too for the ubiquitous cry of the fish eagle. Another intriguing aspect of the Region is the hot topic of Mining in the Lower Zambezi National Park which has erupted debates amongst the different social classes in Zambia and the World at large.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION IN THE REGION

Law enforcement

The Central Region CRB Association enforces laws in line with the already existing systems that is controlled by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife and in the Wildlife Act that states that each CRB shall employ community scouts as a way of empowering the communities and giving them the sense of ownership to guide the natural resources in GMAs that are buffering the National Parks and their communities. Fortunately, this engagement activity is seriously being implemented and can be backed by the number of community scouts (89) who have been given the opportunity to enforce laws in the GMAs through patrols, anti-poaching activities and monitoring of natural resources. It is for this reason that the system has helped to conserve natural resources.

Sensitization in natural resources management and developmental opportunities

Dissemination of information to various levels that make up a complete a community is cardinal and has proved to be an effective and efficient method to educate and inform the local communities on different activities being implemented in their areas. Therefore, CR-CRBA has taking this initiative serious during this whole year in engaging the communities at grassroots as a way of accommodating everyone to fully participate and be aware of what is taking place in the region. The region calls for individual CRB meetings programs that are aligned to management of the natural resources found in the area and engage everyone in the community to decide on which projects can be implemented in line with the need. Awareness programs for the communities to venture into other businesses are have been initiated in the region as a mechanism to curb illegal activities in the protected areas.



Resource monitoring

The Central Region has continued to prioritize resource monitoring in all the protected areas which was collectively done by conservation coordinating partners and other collaborating stakeholders (DNPW, Forestry Department and Partners like CLZ). The law enforcers from CR-CRB in 2024-2025 continue to be equipped with gadgets and machinery that they are using for the monitoring process of natural resources. The community law enforcers have continued to make use of the GPS's and other monitoring/tracking tools in areas that have constantly threatened natural resources sustainability.

Land use planning and GMP

GMPs and Land use plans are valued in the Region for the guiding purposes and assistance it gives to the communities to identify areas that have been zoned for different activities, this has really helped when it comes to natural resource protection and conservation in the GMAs. The CR-CRB has put in place measures to apprehend any person (s) found doing illegal activities in the GMA and zoned areas in the region.

REGION ACHIEVEMENTS

Community development

Development of an area is cardinal in enhancing livelihood of the local communities it is for this reason that in 2024-2025 the Central Region CRB Association took the path of development seriously and has so far implemented a number of projects while some are still underway. Below is a list of projects that undertakings by individual CRBs in the Region.

Employment creation

Employment helps in alleviating poverty and helps in decreasing the illegal activities in protected areas, for Central Region, tourism is the backbone of its economy because through tourism development many community members have been employed by lodge owners and NGOs, some members have been employed as community scouts whilst others have been upgraded from scouts to Wildlife Police Officers.

Capacity building

The custom of all the CRBs in the Region are that after a new board is formed an orientation/ induction training is done by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife that covers roles and responsibilities of each member of the CRB. Apart from these no other independent capacity building trainings happen in the region due to financial constraints on the side of the Central Region CRB association.

Income generating activities

Central Region CRBs have a number of economic activities, in 2024-2025 the region opted to try out other avenues to aid their livelihood enhancements and search for greener pastures during this year. The Regional CRB generates income from hunting fees and carbon trade which is becoming a great option of generation of income and in a way reducing emissions from deforestation through Sustainable management of forests and an initiative to do tree planting. Note that the first Community Forest Management Groups to be recognized in the Central Region CRBs are Shikabeta and Mpanshya CRBs who partnered with BCP to address deforestation in protected areas of Zambia. BCP's mission is to make forest conservation valuable to people which is a plus for the development and livelihood improvements through the benefits (Carbon fees) accrued from carbon trade.

OTHER CONSERVATION INITIATIVES IN THE REGION EG COMMUNITY GAME RANCHES, ECOTOURISM (COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM)

Central Region CRB Association in its quest to conserve the diverse natural resources bestowed in the area have explored a number of avenues to conservation and protection of the natural redid sources and below are some of the initiatives currently being explored.

1. Community Forest Management Groups (CFMGs) have been formed by two CRBs Shikabeta and Mpanshya who were recognized by the Director Forestry after meeting the requirements to trade in carbon. Carbon fees have lifted the financial statuses of the CRBs and also brought the zeal to conserve the tree species after learning of how the carbon business works whilst for Mburuma, Mphuka and Chiawa have equally begun the process of registration t form CFMGs as a way of boosting the Regional financial status.

2. Fish farming projects in Mphuka and Mburuma were commissioned and handed over to the communities through the CRBs a form of livelihood empowerment by the Zambia CBNRM Forum.

3. Stakeholder/Partnership engagements with Conservation Lower Zambezi operating in all the Central Region CRBs and the Zambezi Wildlife Trust that is operating in Chiawa GMA signs some memorandum of understanding with the Regional CRBs to support community scouts and 5% of the basic salary of each scout is given to the CRBs as an administration fee.

THREATS TO THE GMA

Encroachment

The beautiful and spectacular GMAs, open areas and other historical places in the past decades are slowly losing their captivating sceneries due to the uncontrollable encroachments to the Regional sites. The many Wildlife protected are being encroached every single minute a good example is that of Chiawa GMA that has big agriculture fields and human settlements a case leading to high HWCs in the region due to human negligence and ignorance.

Another pinning issue that is causing encroachment in the Region is lack of game management plans (GMP) and Maps for the protected areas to clearly show areas that are zoned for particular and designated activities to be done there.

Human Wildlife Conflicts

Human Wildlife Conflicts are so rampant in the Central CRB Region at a scale of 9/10 percent leading to Crop destruction, Loss of Livestock, Loss of Human life and Injury, this vice has been increasingly affecting the livelihood of the communities in the region as not much is done by the relevant authorities' due constraints that they encounter in their operations. Some of the major cause of HWC in the region are due to human settlements, agricultural field expansions, illegal grass collection, overgrazing by livestock and deforestation in protected areas that are increasing on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, the Region has had plans to initiate wildlife protection programs to be implemented in order to lessen the numbers of HWCs through rapid response to incidents using the readily available machinery (Vehicles) and Manpower. Dialogue with conservation bodies (DNPW, Outfitters and Other partners) to

protect the resources and help alleviate and prevent the occurrences of incidents from emanating. Engagements and efforts that have been put in place by Central Regional CRB Association through support, pledges and HWC community awareness programs have been normalized though more still needs to be done.

Mining

Destruction of the habitat is the main component of biodiversity losses, but direct poisoning caused by mine-extracted materials and indirect poisoning through food and water can also affect animals and natural vegetation. Consequently, mining continues to be one of the main issues of natural resources loss as seen from areas of natural habitat getting destroyed during mine construction and exploitation which forces animals to leave the site. In the case of mining in the Lower Zambezi which has brought mixed views and different reactions towards it, only two views have constantly been echoed and are still being on either to continue with “conservation of natural resources and wildlife” because mining benefits from the operations are short term defeating the purpose of saving the ecosystem from global warming (Green campaign) etc. whilst posing a number of threatening consequences to biodiversity. As compared to wildlife management and conservation which accrues funds from hunting activities at the same time, some people are for the idea to “allow for mining activities”. but no one seems to agree with what they don’t support is being perceived to be backed by political interference which has been bulldozing some activities.

Impacts of Mining on natural resources in Central Region

1. Contamination of surface and ground water
2. Global warming
3. Land degradation
4. Biodiversity loss (Wildlife and vegetation)
5. Air pollution (Dust and Gases emissions)
6. Global warming

Climate Change

Climate change is increasingly affecting the biophysical environment across the globe, consequently the CR-CRB has not been spared from the diverse effects. For instance, the rainfall patterns are now disturbed especially those CRBs who are fully dependent on agriculture have been affected and owing to the fact that agriculture is the second to tourism in the Region and a great boost to the economy, this calamity has led to food shortages for communities who in turn have opted to poach wildlife to sustain themselves and venture in business that are not environment friendly.

activities were equally halted to allow for health personnel to contain the virus, the CR-CRB Association that solely depends on hunting as well as majority of the community members were impacted negatively to an extent of them resorting to illegal activities. Reduction of revenues from tourist, hunting and carbon during this pandemic have been recorded negatively leaving some CRBs underperforming roles and responsibilities due to the financial constraints.

Poor coordination among PA Actors.

Private Conservation Stakeholders within the Region are championing in running the affairs of the Community Scouts disregarding the CRBs as Employers mandated by the Wildlife Act of the Republic of Zambia to Employ Community Scouts, monitor and manage the activities of the scouts in the protected areas without any interference from other parties. But this not the case as most CRBs in the Region have no say with regards to the welfare of the community scouts.

CONCLUSION

Emphasis on HWCs must be loudly echoed to all the corners of the Region to educate the communities of the dangers of settling in protected areas and poaching as it is from these vices that led to loss of human life, engaging of the relevant law enforcement teams such as Zambia police, WPOs, C/scouts to ensure order in the GMAs by making sure people follow rules, laws and procedures if they are to access entry into the protected areas and also the Region hopes to engage partners to funds strategies, initiatives and other economic ventures if illegal activities are to be a thing of the past.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hold monthly, quarterly and annual sensitization programs on dangers of encroachment and dangers of illegal activities to the GMA targeted at all relevant actors.
- Introduction of capacity building programs and refresher courses for the CRB members.
- Intensifying of anti-poaching activities in the Region
- Formulation of GMPs to be done
- Mitigation measures and plans for human wildlife coexistence.
- Rapid response teams to handle incidents in the region.

CONSERVATION STAKEHOLDERS OPERATING IN CENTRAL REGION CRB ASSOCIATION

SN	STAKEHOLDER NAME(S)	OPERATIONAL FUNCTION(S)	AREA OF OPERATION
1	Bio carbon Partners	Forest Conservation/	Rufunsa, Lower Luano, Chiawa
2	Conservation Lower Zambezi	Wildlife protection/Community	Lower Zambezi National Park and
3	Game Rangers International	Wildlife Protection/Human	Mburuma and Mphuka CRBs
4	Zambezi Wildlife Trust	Wildlife protection/Community	Chiawa GMA
5	Lower Zambezi Tourism Association	Wildlife Protection/Tourism	West Lower Zambezi Area
6	Makasa Safaris	Safari Hunting	Lower Luano GMA
7	Nyampala Safaris	Safari Hunting	Rufunsa GMA
8	Jungle Safaris	Safari Hunting	Chiawa West Hunting Block

Table 3: Central Region partners and stakeholders in conservation.

PARTNERS IN THE REGION

It is in order to thank all our conservation partners in the region and the nation at large for their continued support to improving and enhancing CBNRM in Zambia and we anticipate for a long-term relation in the management, governance and conservation of natural resources.



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