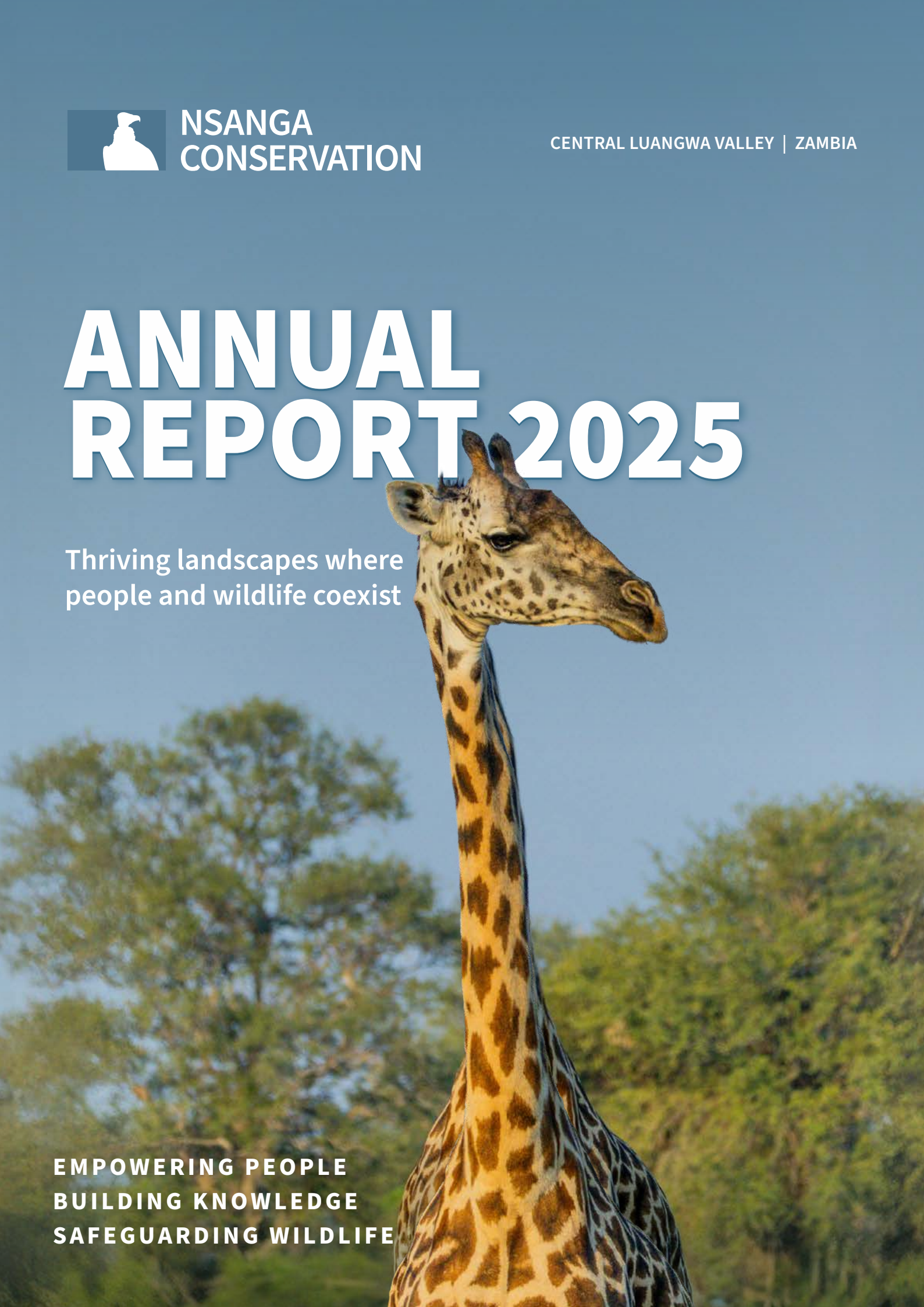
NSANGA CONSERVATION

CENTRAL LUANGWA VALLEY | ZAMBIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Thriving landscapes where people and wildlife coexist



EMPOWERING PEOPLE
BUILDING KNOWLEDGE
SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE



Contents

1 Foundation and Highlights

- Message from Nsanga Conservation Zambia 1
- Operating Landscape 2
- Our Approach, Mission and Vision 3
- Our Impact 4
- Key Highlights 5

2 Core programme pillars

Ecological and Conservation Science

- Long-term Herbivore Monitoring in Luambe National Park 7
- Environmental DNA Research 8
- The Luambe–Lukusuzi Corridor 9
- Carnivore Research 10
- Giraffe Research 11
- Pangolin Research 12
- Darwin Wasp Research 13

Social Research, Community Engagement and Livelihoods

- Solar-Wire Fencing 14
- Black Soldier Fly Farming 15
- Kamukonzo Community Campsite 16
- Luambe Conservation Cup 17

3 Partners, People and Future

- Capacity building 18
- Partnerships 18
- Voices from Our Partners 19
- Organisational Development 19
- Financial Review 20
- The Vision Ahead 20

Message from Nsanga Conservation Zambia

2025 was a productive and transformative year for Nsanga Conservation. We strengthened our partnerships, expanded our team, and deepened our impact across both research and community initiatives within the Luambe-Lukusuzi landscape. Together with our growing network of collaborators and partners, we continued to advance efficient, evidence-based, and sustainable conservation in the Luambe-Lukusuzi region.

In partnership with key stakeholders, we made a significant contribution by adding an ecological and social research component to the development of the community-conservancy corridor linking Luambe and Lukusuzi National Parks (NPs), an ambitious yet crucial step toward ensuring long-term connectivity for wildlife in the Luangwa Valley.

Our research programmes also grew substantially this year. We initiated long-term ecological monitoring projects, including herbivore density assessments, raptor population surveys, and collaboration with the Zambian Carnivore Programme on camera trapping and telemetry studies. Additionally, we expanded our experimental work on innovative environmental DNA techniques, employing water and air sampling, as well as flies as bioindicators, to improve biodiversity monitoring.

Community engagement remained at the heart of our mission. We strengthened local partnerships through continued support for the Kamukonzo Community Campsite, helping ensure that tourism benefits reach local communities. We also assisted the Tizachita Women's Group in expanding their insect farming project, promoting sustainable sources of protein, fertiliser, and livestock feed, while proudly hosting the third annual Luambe Conservation Cup, a unifying event that brought together the three chiefdoms surrounding the park. Additionally, we enhanced our direct involvement in human-wildlife conflict mitigation by supporting the installation of solar-wire fencing networks using a cluster-fencing approach, improving coexistence and protecting livelihoods.

Our capacity also grew, with three new staff members joining the team and two interns from Copperbelt University contributing valuable skills and enthusiasm to our conservation efforts.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners, supporters, and friends. Your trust and collaboration make our work possible. Together, we look forward to building this momentum and continuing our mission for a resilient and thriving Luangwa Valley.



Operating Landscape

Nsanga Conservation works across roughly 4,000 km² of the Luangwa Valley, in the landscape that ties together Luambe, Lumimba and Lukusuzi in eastern Zambia. Luambe National Park sits at the centre of this work. It is the only national park on the eastern bank of the Luangwa River, and its position between North Luangwa, South Luangwa and Lukusuzi National Parks makes it a vital link for wildlife moving through the wider valley, without it, that connection breaks down.

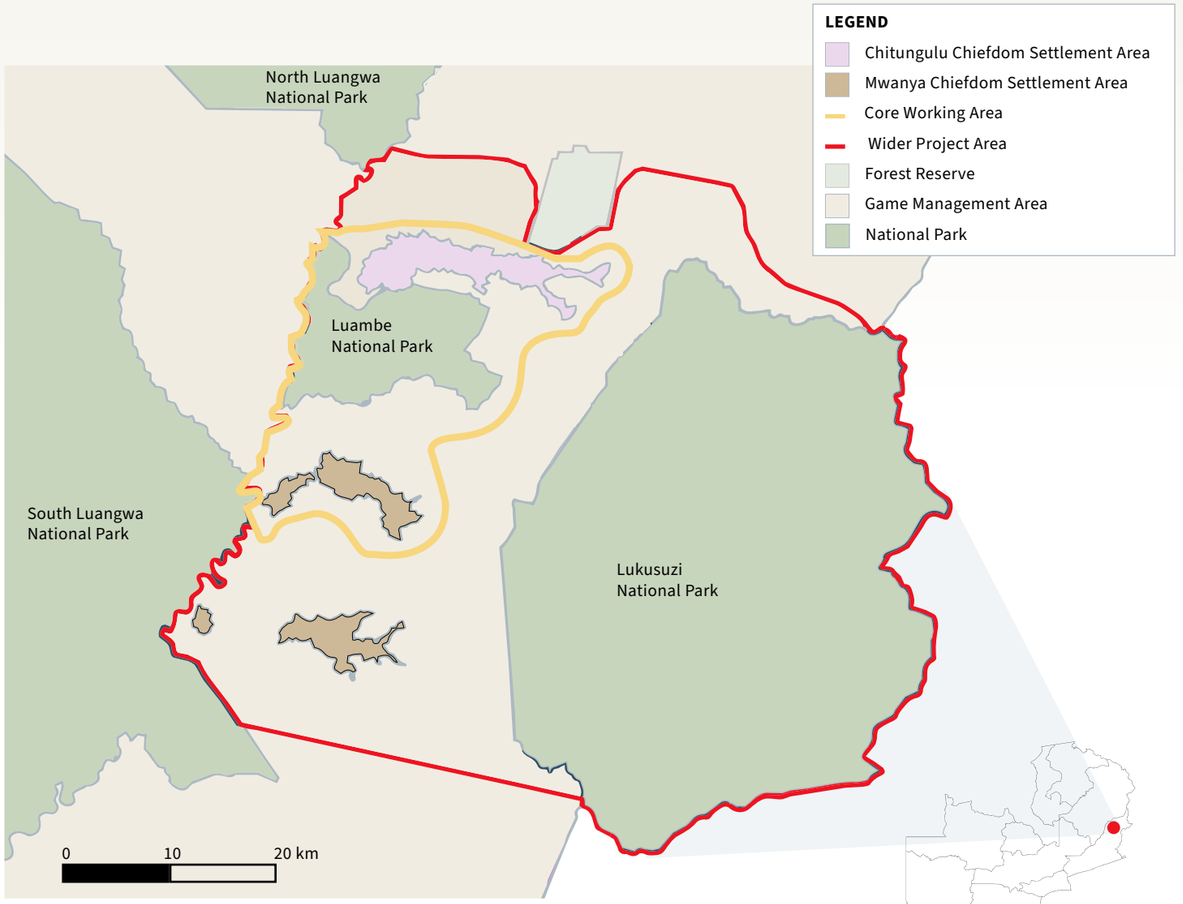
From the park, our work reaches into the Lumimba Game Management Area and Lukusuzi National Park. Managing these areas together, rather than as isolated islands, keeps wildlife corridors open and keeps the protected areas connected to the communities living alongside them. Between them, they hold a broad range of habitats, significant populations of large mammals, and some of the valley's most important movement routes.

The landscape is under growing pressure. Human–wildlife conflict is rising, land use is shifting, and across much of the area we still lack the basic ecological and social data needed to develop evidence-based conservation action.



4,000 km²

OF CENTRAL LUANGWA LANDSCAPE



NSANGA

Our Approach

VISION & MISSION

VISION: Thriving landscapes where people and wildlife coexist.

MISSION: To conserve the central Luangwa landscape through scientific research, evidence-based decision making, local empowerment and collaboration with stakeholders.

CONSERVATION ACTION

- HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION
- WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIVITY
- ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS
- KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COLLABORATION

OUTCOMES

- Human-wildlife coexistence
- Diversified and independent income streams
- Habitat protection
- Collective conservation impact

CONSERVATION SCIENCE

- BIODIVERSITY MONITORING
- THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENTS
- SOCIAL DATA
- PRIORITY SPECIES AND SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS

OUTCOMES

- Evidence-based action
- Insights into wildlife populations and habitat change
- Understanding community perceptions, opportunities and challenges
- Accessible and actionable research

EMPOWERMENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- AWARENESS AND EDUCATION
- CAPACITY BUILDING
- LOCAL EMPLOYMENT
- SENSITISATION, TRUST AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP

OUTCOMES

- Local capacity in the conservation sector
- Community trust and support
- Local ownership of conservation work
- Openness to conservation action

Three connected pillars guide our work and lead from knowledge and empowerment to practical conservation action.

Our Impact in 2025

137
VERTEBRATE TAXA DETECTED THROUGH AIRBORNE E-DNA

26
KEY MAMMAL SPECIES DOCUMENTED IN THE PROPOSED CORRIDOR

141
COMMUNITY MEMBERS INTERVIEWED

10 km
SOLAR-POWERED ELECTRIC FENCING

83%
COMMUNITY CAMPSITE VISITORS RATED THEIR EXPERIENCE AS EXCELLENT

2,000+
CONSERVATION CUP PARTICIPANTS

4,000
CONSERVATION CUP SPECTATORS REACHED

100%
EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS FOR INTERNSHIP GRADUATES



From e-DNA to community partnerships. 2025 strengthened the case for landscape-scale conservation.

Key Highlights

BIODIVERSITY MONITORING

- **Improving our eDNA Pilot Research.** Detected 137 vertebrate taxa using airborne eDNA, confirming 17 of 17 camera-trap species.
- **Evidence for Corridor Formation.** Documented presence of 26 key mammal species in the proposed Luambe–Lukusuzi corridor.
- **Trends are Key.** Established long-term herbivore monitoring across western Luambe National Park.



SOCIAL RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION PLANNING

- **Understanding People.** Interviewed 141 community members generating the first integrated ecological and socio-economic evidence base for the Luambe–Lukusuzi corridor.

HUMAN–WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION

- **Investing in co-existence.** Deployed 10 km of solar-powered electric fencing across three cluster-farming zones.



AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

- **Football for Conservation.** Engaged 2,000+ participants and 4,000 spectators through the Luambe Conservation Cup. Reached 68 football teams while promoting conservation awareness and gender equality.



PRIORITY SPECIES RESEARCH

- **Supporting the Zambian Carnivore Programme.** Supported monitoring of lions, African wild dogs and Luangwa giraffes.
- **Evidence for the Threatened.** Advanced Zambia's first non-invasive genetic monitoring framework for pangolins.
- **Cross-Country Collaboration.** Expanded national and international research partnerships.



SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **A pilot protein source.** Expanded Black Soldier Fly farming with the Tizachita Women's Group.
- **Tourism for Communities.** Upgraded the Kamukonzo Community Campsite, achieving 83% visitor excellence ratings.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

- **A Growing Team.** Welcomed 3 staff members and 2 university interns.
- **Local Workforce.** Created opportunities for 28 temporary workers.
- **Supporting Careers.** Maintained 100% employment success for internship graduates.
- **Stronger Together.** Strengthened partnerships across government, academia, NGOs and the private sector.

02 Core Programme Pillars

Ecological and Conservation Science

- Biodiversity Monitoring
- Research on Priority Species
- Scientific Projects

Social Research, Community Engagement and Livelihoods

- Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) Mitigation
- Alternative Livelihoods
- Awareness and Outreach



BIODIVERSITY MONITORING

Ecological and Conservation Science

Long-term Herbivore Monitoring



OUR WORK INCLUDES:

- Systematic field surveys across key areas
- Tracking species presence and distribution
- Data informend managment decisions
- Long term monitoring for lasting impact

"Knowledge today for wildlife tomorrow."

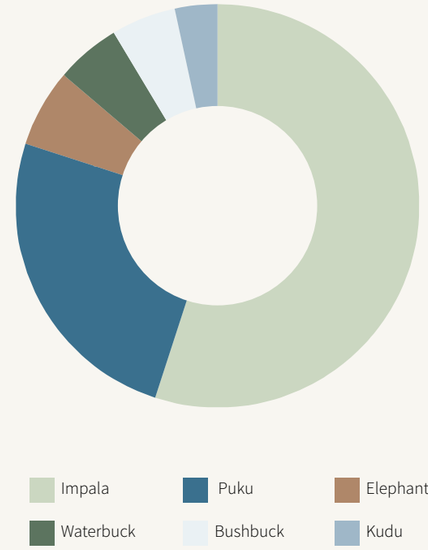
PERMIT REF: NPW 72/2/5

KEY PARTNERS: Copperbelt University, Dr. Vera Rduch, German Society for Mammal Biology, Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Demographics:** Assess population size, density, and sex ratios of herbivore species.
- **Health & Ethology:** Monitor body condition and behavioural patterns.
- **Ecology:** Map habitat-species relationships within Luambe National Park (LNP).

In partnership with Copperbelt University and the DNPW, our long-term herbivore monitoring programme establishes vital ecological baselines for LNP. By focusing on repeatable, low-impact surveys along the western third of the national park, we are tracking herbivore population trends and health indicators. This data serves as a primary metric for the park's ecological integrity and provides the scientific foundation for adaptive conservation management.



Mean Population Density of the most common herbivore species during our surveys. Due to security reasons, we do not publish exact density values or data.

Environmental DNA research

Evaluating environmental DNA and tsetse flies as biodiversity indicators and pathogen samplers



PERMIT REF: NPW 101/8/4

KEY PARTNERS: Faunomics, Helmholtz Institute Munich, University of Zambia, University of Edinburgh, Dept. of Livestock & Fisheries, DNPW.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Innovative Monitoring:** Evaluate blood-feeding flies and environmental DNA (air/water) as non-invasive tools for vertebrate and biodiversity assessments.
- **One Health Pathogen Screening:** Identify pathogens within tsetse populations (e.g., Trypanosoma) to assess risks to human and animal health.
- **Genomic Analysis:** Map the genetic diversity and distribution of Trypanosoma species across different ecological contexts.

Building on our 2023 water-eDNA trials, we are now pioneering a multi-modal genomic approach. By integrating airborne eDNA and invertebrate-derived DNA (iDNA) from fly species, we aim to create a non-invasive 'biodiversity stethoscope' capable of detecting a vast range of species, from large vertebrates to tiny organisms. Going forward, the monitoring framework also plans to support a 'One Health' strategy, allowing us to track ecosystem integrity and pathogen prevalence (particularly Trypanosoma) simultaneously.

KEY FINDINGS:

The study tested **airborne eDNA** in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia, using six samplers over four days.

- It detected **137 terrestrial vertebrate taxa**, including mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians.
- It detected all **17 species recorded by camera traps**, although only **54% of species-by-day camera detections** were matched by eDNA.
- Detection was rapid: **66.4% of taxa were detected on Day 1**, while a single sampler detected **56.7% of all taxa**. Additional sampling continued to reveal more, but with diminishing gains.
- We highlight airborne eDNA as a promising **rapid, scalable biodiversity-monitoring tool**, while noting limitations including **incomplete reference databases, seasonal effects, sampler placement, and taxonomic ambiguity**.

HOW IT WORKS

AIR
sampling

WATER
sampling

BIOINDICATORS
Tsetse fly

ANALYSIS
through DNA extraction

DETECTION
of wildlife species

SUPPORTING CONSERVATION
through improved decision making

Check out a related scientific publication:

Gygax, Daniel, et al. "Monitoring terrestrial vertebrates with airborne DNA in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia." bioRxiv (2026): 2026-03. https://doi.org/10.64898/2026.03.11.711018

The outcomes of the insectDNA (iDNA) and pathogen component of the project are not yet available.

The Luambe–Lukusuzi corridor

Investigating presence of key mammal species in the Luambe-Lukusuzi (LULU) Corridor with IFAW

PERMIT REF: N/A

KEY PARTNERS: International Fund for Animal Welfare, Advanced Ecological Services Zambia, DNPW, Chitungulu and Mwanya Chiefdoms.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Ecological Validation:** Confirm the presence of large mammals within the Lumimba Game Management Area, between Luambe and Lukusuzi National Parks and identify areas of high wildlife use to inform corridor planning.
- **Socio-Economic Assessment:** Understand community demographics, livelihoods, infrastructure and development needs, and patterns of human-wildlife conflict (HWC).
- **Community-Conservation Planning**: Assess local perceptions of conservation and identify the conditions needed for sustainable human-wildlife coexistence and a community-linked corridor model.

In collaboration with IFAW, DNPW, Advanced Ecological Services Zambia, and the leadership of the Chitungulu and Mwanya Chiefdoms, the project provides the ecological and socio-economic evidence needed to support the development of a functional wildlife corridor between Luambe and Lukusuzi National Parks. Ecological surveys combined camera trapping, transect walks and acoustic monitoring, while household surveys examined livelihoods, service gaps, conservation perceptions and HWC dynamics.



KEY FINDINGS:

The project found **clear evidence of wildlife activity** in the proposed Luambe-Lukusuzi corridor, making this the first empirical support for corridor use between the two parks.

- Camera traps and transect walks together documented **26 key mammal species**, including elephant, lion, leopard, hyena, buffalo, zebra, roan antelope, and kudu.
- Acoustic surveys added more evidence confirming **leopard vocalisations** and showing **high bat activity** and a diverse bird community.
- The social research covered **141 households** across Chitungulu and Mwanya Chiefdoms. Agriculture was the dominant livelihood, with maize the main staple and cotton the most common cash crop.
- **Elephants were the leading cause of crop damage**, followed by bushpigs and baboons, while poultry accounted for most reported livestock losses.
- **Communities also identified healthcare, education and water supply** as key development priorities; 22 respondents reported lacking access to clean water.
- Despite these challenges, **97% of respondents considered conservation important and 72% felt they received benefits from living alongside wildlife**.
- Communities expressed willingness to support conservation, while highlighting the need for improved protection from wildlife, education, employment opportunities, services and communication with conservation authorities.

What it means:

The combined findings strengthen the case that the LULU landscape functions as a wildlife corridor rather than simply a predicted connectivity area, while demonstrating that its long-term viability will depend on meaningful community participation and equitable benefit-sharing. The project recommends GPS telemetry as a next step to refine understanding of corridor use and wildlife movement, alongside continued development of a community-linked conservancy model that addresses both ecological connectivity and local livelihood needs.

Carnivore Research

Carnivore Research with the *Zambian Carnivore Programme*



PERMIT REF: N/A

KEY PARTNERS: Zambian Carnivore Programme, DNPW

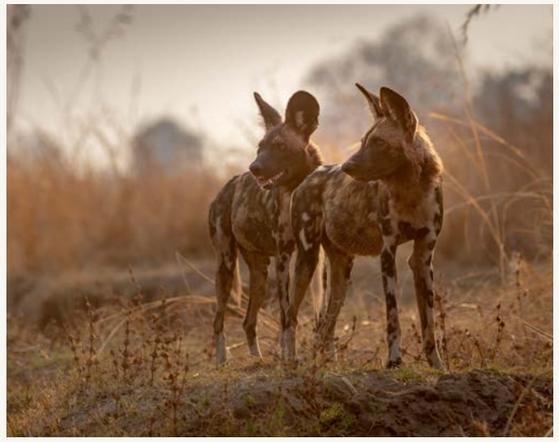
CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Population Dynamics:** Long-term monitoring of carnivore presence, distribution, and trends using an extensive camera-trap network.
- **Targeted Surveillance:** Intensive tracking of collared African wild dog packs and lion prides to monitor health, reproduction, and social dynamics.
- **Adaptive Management**: Collecting real-time data to trigger timely conservation interventions.

In a strategic partnership with ZCP and DNPW, Nsanga supports carnivore monitoring in LNP. By combining a camera-trap network with a citizen-science reporting system, we assist with the continuous data necessary to track the health and movement of key carnivore species. This collaborative model ensures that expert scientific research is backed by consistent field support, creating a robust framework for the long-term protection of Luambe's apex predators.

KEY FINDINGS:

- As a supporting partner, Nsanga contributes field support to this project; the detailed findings are published by the Zambian Carnivore Programme (ZCP).





Giraffe Research

Monitoring giraffes with the *Zambian Carnivore Programme* and *Giraffe Conservation Foundation*

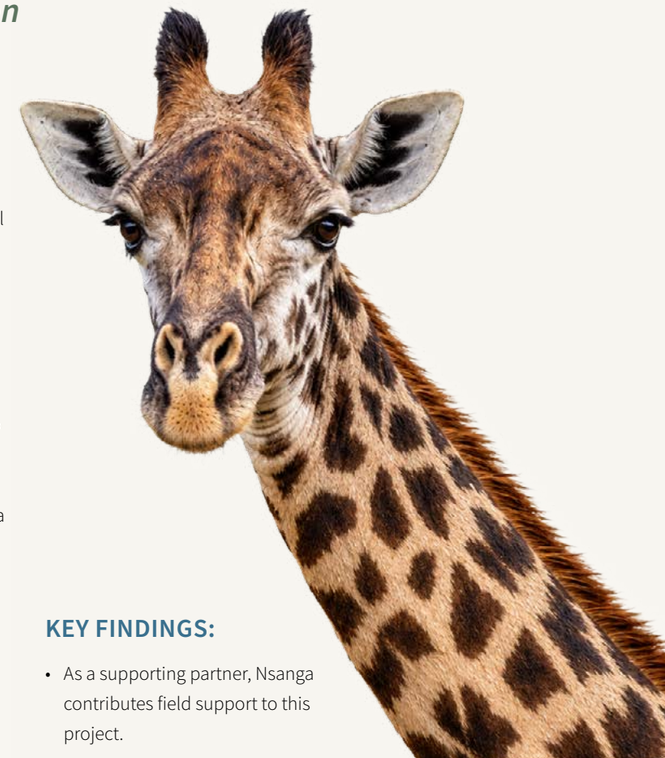
PERMIT REF: N/A

KEY PARTNERS: Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF), ZCP, DNPW.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Range Dynamics:** Monitor population trends and socio-ecological drivers of the endemic Luangwa Giraffe at its northernmost range limit.
- **Technological Tracking**: Support high-tech monitoring through the deployment of GPS satellite collars to map seasonal movements.
- **Data Crowdsourcing:** Utilise a citizen-science reporting system to track individual sightings and herd compositions.

In partnership with Giraffe Conservation Foundation and ZCP, Nsanga contributes to the study of the endemic Luangwa Giraffe at its northernmost range. By providing the logistical support for satellite tagging and individual-based monitoring, we are helping to uncover the social and seasonal dynamics of breeding herds. This research is vital for the long-term protection of this subspecies, ensuring conservation strategies account for the unique ecological pressures found at the edge of their known habitat.



KEY FINDINGS:

- As a supporting partner, Nsanga contributes field support to this project.



RESEARCH ON PRIORITY SPECIES

Monitoring of Endangered Pangolin species using environmental DNA

Establishing Non-Invasive Methods in Zambia



PERMIT REF: N/A

KEY PARTNERS: Wildlife Crime Prevention (WCP), University of Zambia, Faunomics / Rifcon GmbH, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU), DNPW

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Genomic Referencing:** Generate the first full mitochondrial genome (mitogenome) library for Zambia's *S. temminckii* (Ground) and *P. tricuspis (*White-bellied Tree) pangolin populations.
- **eDNA Tool Development:** Inform the safe relocation and monitoring of rehabilitated pangolins back into the wild by proving the presence and absence of pangolins in wilderness areas.
- **Forensic Origin Tracing**: Establish protocols to trace the geographic origin of seized individuals to support law enforcement and judicial proceedings.

In collaboration with Wildlife Crime Prevention and the DNPW, we are pioneering non-invasive genetic tools to protect Zambia's endangered pangolins. By building a mitogenome reference library, we are adding high-sensitivity eDNA detection in soil and water to traditional sightings. This project serves a dual purpose: providing a breakthrough method for monitoring these elusive animals in the wild, while establishing forensic 'origin-tracing' protocols to support law enforcement in the fight against illegal trafficking.

KEY FINDINGS:

- There are no results of this project yet since data analysis is yet to be conducted.



SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS

Taxonomic Research

Darwin Wasps



PERMIT REF: NPW 72/2/5

KEY PARTNERS: Natural History Museums of Basel & Vienna, Livingstone Museum, DNPW.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Phenological Mapping**: Utilise Malaise traps to document seasonal activity patterns and distribution of Darwin wasps (Ichneumonidae).
- **Taxonomic Discovery:** Identify and describe species new to science and to Zambia, expanding the global biodiversity record.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** Facilitate knowledge transfer between international taxonomists and local institutions like the Livingstone Museum and Copperbelt University.

In collaboration with leading European and Zambian natural history museums, we are contributing to the study of Darwin wasps, an ecologically vital but poorly understood group of parasitoids. By facilitating systematic sampling in Luambe National Park, we are supporting researchers to identify species new to science and map their roles in ecosystem health. This research goes beyond pure taxonomy; it explores the potential for biological pest control against threats like the Fall Armyworm, directly linking Luambe's biodiversity to national food security and global scientific discovery framework.



KEY FINDINGS:

- There are no results of this project yet since data analysis is yet to be conducted.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT (HWC) MITIGATION

Social Research, Community Engagement and Livelihoods

Solar-wire fencing to mitigate Human-Elephant Conflicts

KEY PARTNERS: Conservation South Luangwa, IFAW, DNPW, Chitungulu Resources Board, HRH Chief Chitungulu, Lumezi Town Council, WIGWAM Tours.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Food Security & Livelihoods**: Safeguarding agricultural yields and community economic stability from wildlife-induced crop damage.
- **Passive Mitigation:** Implementing non-lethal, passive deterrents to manage human-elephant interactions safely and effectively while not triggering more conflict.
- **Ecological Connectivity:** Through the cluster approach, we balance essential agricultural protection while preserving critical wildlife movement corridors.

Baseline community surveys identified elephant incursions as the primary threat to local agricultural yields and livelihoods. In direct response to community feedback prioritising HWC intervention, we initiated a targeted mitigation strategy. Leveraging the extensive HWC expertise of Conservation South Luangwa, and in close coordination with HRH Chief Chitungulu, the Chitungulu CRB, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Lumezi Town Council and IFAW, we introduced a cooperative cluster-farming model in the Chitungulu Chiefdom.

To support this initiative, we procured and deployed 10 kilometres of solar-wire fencing. This model consolidates individual farm plots into larger, defensible agricultural zones. Each cluster is governed by an elected committee responsible for ongoing fence maintenance and incident reporting. In late 2025, three initial clusters were established across two Village Action Groups to pilot the system's efficacy within the Luambe landscape.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Performed a site visit and learning exercise with Conservation South Luangwa and the Chitungulu leadership to introduce the cluster-fencing approach.
- Established 3 solar-wire fencing clusters around farming blocks in Chitungulu.
- Protected crops of 119 farmers and many more dependants across three fencing clusters.





ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

Sustainable Protein and Livelihoods

Black Soldier Fly (BSF) Farming



KEY PARTNERS: Tizachita Women's Group (Chitungulu), University of Wisconsin–Madison.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Circular Agriculture**: Establishing small-scale insect farming to provide affordable feed for poultry, fish, and human-protein-supplement.
- **Soil Health:** Utilising organic-by-products from black soldier fly farming as high-grade natural fertiliser.
- **Women's Empowerment:** Providing specialised training and income-generating assets to the Tizachita Women's Group.

In partnership with the Tizachita Women's Group and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we are pioneering Black Soldier Fly farming as a sustainable engine for rural development. By converting organic waste into high-quality livestock feed and organic fertiliser, this project provides a climate-smart alternative to expensive commercial inputs. Our 2025 expansion, including a new production facility and advanced technical training, has empowered local women to lead this circular economy initiative, creating a repeatable model for food security and economic resilience across the Luangwa landscape.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

2024: Proof of Concept and Setup

- **Planning & Procurement:** Finalised project design through expert consultations and literature reviews and constructed the initial pilot insect farm facility.
- **Community Integration:** Established a formal partnership with the Tizachita Women's Group to manage and lead pilot operations.
- **Operational Launch:** Sourced the foundational BSF larvae colony from Siavonga.
- **Biological Milestone:** Successfully achieved the first full BSF reproductive cycle in October 2024, following iterative pilot trials.

2025: Capacity Building and Optimisation

- **Technical Training:** Sponsored specialised BSF farming training in Lusaka for the Tizachita Women's Group Chairlady and an additional community representative.
- **Production Monitoring:** Maintained continuous small-scale farming to establish baseline metrics for monthly yields and reproductive success rates.

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

Kamukonzo Community Campsite

Strengthening Sustainable Tourism

KEY PARTNERS: Chitungulu Community Resource Board (CRB), Caring for Conservation, Luambe Camp.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Infrastructure Investment**: Equip the Chitungulu Community with high-quality facilities to run an income-generating tourism site.
- **Business Mentorship:** Support the management, marketing, and operational efficiency of the community-run enterprise.
- **Economic Linkage:** Connect tourism revenue to local livelihoods and community development.

In partnership with the Chitungulu CRB, we are transforming Kamukonzo Campsite into a community-led tourism enterprise. Our 2025 infrastructure investments (expanded sanitation and visitor facilities) have significantly increased the site's capacity to host international travellers. By integrating a 'Community Business Map' that links guests to local vendors, we are ensuring that tourism provides broad economic benefits for the chiefdom, directly rewarding the community for their role as guardians of the landscape.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

2024: Local Economic Integration

- **Community Business Mapping:** Developed and installed local business maps at the campsite and along popular self-drive routes to connect tourists directly with local shops, gardens, and artisans.

2025: Infrastructure & Quality Assurance

- **Facility Expansion:** Constructed a second toilet and shower, a dishwashing sink, and BBQ areas to increase capacity. These upgrades were implemented as a direct response to visitor feedback.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Established a systematic client satisfaction assessment using seasonal feedback questionnaires to track operational standards.
- **Guest Satisfaction Metrics**: Achieved high-performance ratings, with 83% of visitors rating their experience as excellent, including 95% excellence for staff service and 87% excellence for cleanliness and maintenance.
- **Operational Sustainability**: Maintained successful, independent management by the Chitungulu CRB, ensuring campsite revenues continuously cover operational costs while contributing to the community development fund.





AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

Luambe Conservation Cup 2025

Football for Change

KEY PARTNERS: IFAW, Project Luangwa, Chitungulu Foundation, Chitungulu Community, Mwanya Community, Nabwalya Community

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Social Cohesion**: Facilitating inter-chiefdom cooperation and building institutional trust between local communities and conservation NGOs through large-scale, shared events.
- **Environmental Education:** Integrating structured conservation awareness and natural resource management messaging into high-attendance community platforms.
- **Gender Parity:** Ensuring equal participation, visibility, and resource allocation for men and women across all tournament activities.

The Luambe Conservation Cup 2025 marked the third operational year of this regional community engagement initiative, utilising sports as a strategic platform for conservation education. Engaging the Nabwalya, Mwanya, and Chitungulu chiefdoms, the tournament functions as a targeted intervention to foster peaceful coexistence between rural communities and the adjacent Luambe National Park.

The 2025 programme achieved substantial demographic reach, directly involving over 2,000 players and staff, across 68 teams (50% female, 50% male) and drawing an estimated 4,000 spectators. Furthermore, the event served as a centralised hub for environmental outreach, integrating youth-led sanitation initiatives, educational forums on human-wildlife coexistence, and dedicated information stations operated by regional conservation partners. Thanks to support from Project Luangwa, we were able to distribute a number of football kits to participating teams.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Scale & Gender Parity**: Successfully coordinated 68 football teams across three chiefdoms, achieving near-perfect gender parity.
- **Structured Conservation Education:** 400 athletes participated in a wildlife and conservation quiz, assessing and expanding local knowledge regarding ecosystem dynamics, forest conservation, and park regulations. Winners were awarded with football kit provided by Project Luangwa.
- **Youth Leadership & Action:** Facilitated a youth-led environmental sanitation exercise where students from Chitungulu Primary School Conservation Clubs (led by Chitungulu Foundation) successfully cleared and safely disposed of four industrial drums of waste from public spaces.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E):** Conducted M&E via structured questionnaires with teams, committees, and local businesses. Data confirmed high retention of conservation messaging and documented localised economic boosts during the events.
- **Strategic Iteration:** Areas for improvement were identified, specifically highlighting the need to recruit and train female referees, and establishing a plan to rotate future host chiefdoms to distribute economic benefits more evenly.
- **Tournament Results:** Concluded the sporting bracket with Muchinga (Chitungulu) securing 1st place in the Women's Division, and Chocha FC (Chitungulu) taking 1st place in the Men's Division.

2,000+
PLAYERS AND STAFF

4,000+
ESTIMATED SPECTATORS



03 Partners, People, and Future

Capacity Building

Through our MOU with Copperbelt University, we take on graduates in BSc. Wildlife Management as interns, who gain field experience and exposure to a diverse set of conservation projects, from ecological and social research to community-based activities. In 2025, we welcomed 2 interns. So far, all our interns have managed to secure employment in the conservation and tourism sector afterwards, either through employment in our organisation or in others'.

Through our close partnership with the Chitungulu Foundation, which supports the careers and qualifications of community members from surrounding areas, we prioritise the employment of people from our direct working area to foster leadership and build a sense of ownership. This itself, as proven in other regions across the Luangwa Valley and beyond, is one of the greatest impacts a conservation organisation can have to safeguard wilderness. In 2025, we welcomed two additional full-time team members from Chitungulu Chiefdom, north of Luambe National Park.

As a small organisation with a limited budget, we also engage temporary staff, particularly for construction and other project-specific work. In 2025, we engaged 28 external or temporary staff.



With thanks to

Dr. Vera Rduch
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Daniel Boyd
Dr Hélène Jacques
Dr Thierry Jacques
Martin Johansen
Dr. Gloria Mulenga

Partnerships

Nsanga Conservation Zambia works in close partnership with authorities, local communities, non-governmental organisations and private sector parties. Our core approach is to work together – identifying areas where gaps exist but also backing away from areas, even if it would complement our own, that are already covered by others. This creates an environment that targets the greatest gaps and thus uses resources and capacities available in the most efficient way.

Our tourism partner

Voices from our partners



Dr. Moses Chibesa, Senior Lecturer, School of Natural Resources, Copperbelt University

"Through the Memorandum of Understanding with Copperbelt University, Nsanga Conservation Zambia has played an instrumental role in providing CBU graduates with valuable internship and employment opportunities. These opportunities have enabled graduates to translate the knowledge and skills acquired during their university education into practical experience in wildlife conservation, natural resource management, research, and related professional fields. This partnership has also strengthened collaboration between the two institutions by creating opportunities for joint research, student mentorship, professional development, knowledge exchange, and field-based training..."



His Royal Highness, Chief Chitungulu, Chitungulu Chiefdom, Lumezi District

"Nsanga Conservation is a valued and trusted partner in supporting the Chitungulu community. Through initiatives such as alternative livelihood programmes, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and awareness and education activities, Nsanga has become a much appreciated stakeholder. These efforts contribute to sustainable development, strengthen conservation, and support the well-being of communities across my chiefdom."

OUR TEAM

Organisational Development

Nsanga Conservation is a grassroots organisation founded in 2021, following years of its directors' involvement in Luambe National Park. As a small but growing organisation, we continue to experience healthy, organic growth each year.



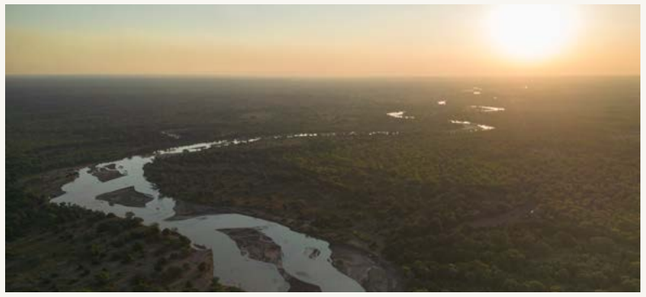
- Dr. Michael Riffel, Director
- Tom Riffel, Director
- Geofrey Zulu, Project Manager
- Julianne Joubert, Financial Manager
- Penius Lungu, Community Outreach, Chef
- Charlotte Neumann, Researcher
- Peter Zimba, Field Assistant, Camp Maintenance
- Jackson Chimbelu, Field Assistant, Driver
- Rosemary Zimba, Field Assistant, Chef
- Esnart Ng'ona, Field Assistant, Camp Maintenance
- Arnold Ng'uni, Hangar Security

FINANCIAL REVIEW AND FUTURE

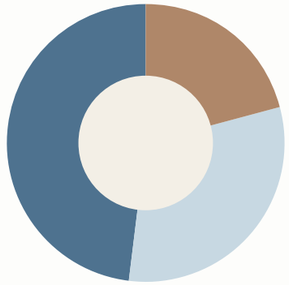
Financial Review

US$51,611.20
Total income

US$65,898.00
Total expenses



CORE EXPENSES



HUMAN RESOURCES
21%

OPERATIONS & LOGISTICS
48%

DIRECT PROJECT EXPENSES
31%

The Vision Ahead

We look forward to growing our impact, forming new strategic partnerships, and expanding our operational footprint.

Over the coming years we will keep developing our biodiversity protocols into a toolbox of complementary methods, adding remote sensing, bioacoustics, and stronger environmental DNA work to what we already do. The point is not the methods themselves, but what they let us see: read together, they give us a fuller picture of how the ecosystem is changing, and they keep our conservation decisions grounded in evidence rather than assumption. That means we can pin down real ecological trends, spot the gaps in what we know, and understand what is driving both.

Furthermore, we aim to strengthen our community-based activities. This includes providing continued support to the Kamukonzo Community Campsite and assisting in the development of additional community-led tourism products. We also intend to scale our Black Soldier Fly (BSF) farming pilot, establishing viable market demand so that insect-derived protein can generate sustainable income and support local livelihoods. The expansion into other sustainable and practical income-generating initiatives is also a priority of ours.

Another essential pillar for our future operations is the expansion of our Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation work. We will continue to focus on and reworking our solar-wire cluster fences while ensuring critical wildlife connectivity is maintained.

To optimise this, we plan to integrate a strong research component into our HWC actions, scientifically assessing which fence designs and deployment strategies yield the highest efficacy. This ensures an adaptive design to ensure the highest efficiency possible.

Beyond our fieldwork, we will prioritise expanding our capacity building and local leadership support. We are focusing on hiring local talent and recruiting graduates from Copperbelt University and other partners. Concurrently, we are developing a structured curriculum for our internship programme to enhance the practical takeaways for interns through targeted activities, guided projects, and standardised learning activities.

Finally, a major upcoming milestone is the development of a formalised wildlife corridor between Luambe and Lukusuzi National Parks, in close collaboration with IFAW, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), and the communities of the Chitungulu and Mwanya chiefdoms.

By integrating robust scientific monitoring with targeted investments in local capacity and sustainable micro-economies, our overarching goal is to build long-term resilience across the Luangwa landscape. We are committed to advancing conservation models that do not just protect biodiversity but actively rely on and benefit the people living alongside it.





NSANGA
CONSERVATION

www.nsanga.org