

**ELEPHANT:** *Loxodonta africana*

7000 kg

**HABITAT:** Grasslands, savanna, and woodlands

**DIET:** Herbivore (browser)

Leaves and fruits from trees and shrubs. Elephants will knock down trees if they cannot reach the leaves. They drink over 50 gallons of water each day.

**PREDATORS:** Adults have no natural predators.

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Related females with their offspring. Males may also form herds or remain solitary.



Elephant

**BUFFALO:** *Synercus caffer*

500–900 kg

**HABITAT:** Forests, woodlands, and savanna

**DIET:** Herbivore (grazer)

Tall, coarse, or green grasses. Their mouths are not well suited for eating very short grass.

**PREDATORS:** Lions

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Large herds of both males and females. Nearby herds sometimes mix; herds tend to merge in the wet season and break apart during the dry season.



Buffalo

**KUDU:** *Tragelaphus strepsiceros*

270 kg

**HABITAT:** Woodlands, grasslands, and savanna

**DIET:** Herbivore (browser)

Leaves, fallen fruits, and young grasses.

**PREDATORS:** Lions, hyenas

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Small groups of females and their offspring. Males can be in small bachelor herds. During the rainy season males may live as single bulls.



Kudu

**WARTHOG:** *Phacochoerus africanus*

45–150 kg

**HABITAT:** Woodlands, savanna

**DIET:** Omnivore

Grasses, roots, berries, bark, fungi, insects, and occasionally small mammals, birds, reptiles, and eggs.

**PREDATORS:** Lions, hyenas, and crocodiles

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Groups of related females and their offspring. Males can form groups until they reach about four years old, then they are solitary.



Warthog

**LION:** *Panthera leo*

150–250 kg

**HABITAT:** Grasslands, savanna, and woodlands

**DIET:** Carnivore

Wildebeest, buffalo, and zebra. Will prey on smaller antelopes and warthogs if other food is not available.

**PREDATORS:** None

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Prides of related females, their offspring, and one or two males.



Lion

**WILDEBEEST:** *Connochaetes taurinus* 120–270 kg

**HABITAT:** Grasslands, savanna

**DIET:** Herbivore (grazer)

Prefer short, green grass. Often feed on grass patches that have been “mowed” short by buffalo or zebra, as well as on green grass that has regrown after a fire.

**PREDATORS:** Lions, hyenas

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Medium to large herds, sometimes hundreds of individuals.



Wildebeest

**ZEBRA:** *Equus quagga quagga* up to 350 kg

**HABITAT:** Grasslands

**DIET:** Herbivore (grazer)

Tall, coarse, or green grasses. Can eat grasses of lower nutritional value than other herbivores.

**PREDATORS:** Lions, hyenas

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Small groups including one male, several females, and their offspring.



Zebra

**IMPALA:** *Aepyceros melampus*

61 kg

**HABITAT:** Grasslands, savanna

**DIET:** Herbivore (grazer/browser)

Prefer green grasses but will browse on leaves, shoots, pods, and fallen dry leaves.

**PREDATORS:** Lions, hyenas

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Large herds of females and their offspring dominated by one or two males seasonally. Males live in small bachelor herds nearby.



Impala

**HARE (2 species):** *Lepus microtis* 2 kg  
*Lepus saxatillis*

**HABITAT:** Woodlands, savanna

**DIET:** Herbivore  
Leaves, roots, berries, fungi, bark, and twigs.

**PREDATORS:** Birds of prey, servals

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Solitary except when nursing their young.



Hare

**VULTURE (5 species) Family: Accipitridae 7–9 kg**

**HABITAT:** Savanna, grasslands

**DIET:** Carnivore (scavenger)  
Carrion (dead animals).

**PREDATORS:** None

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** May live singly or in colonies. They feed in large groups.



Vulture

**INSECTS (many species) Class: Insecta Size varies greatly**

**HABITAT:** Woodlands, grasslands, savanna, desert, and marshlands

**DIET:** Omnivore  
Plants, carrion, other insects, and animals.

**PREDATORS:** Birds, rodents, lizards, mammals, and other insects.

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Varies greatly.



Insects



Tall Grass

**SERVAL:** *Leptailurus serval*

13 kg

**HABITAT:** Grasslands, savanna, and marshlands

**DIET:** Carnivore

Rats, mice, and other rodents, along with small birds.

**PREDATORS:** Hyenas

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Solitary and territorial.



Serval

**SHREW (8 species)** Families: *Soricidae*  
*Macroscelididae* ~50 g

**HABITAT:** Desert to grasslands and forests

**DIET:** Omnivore

Insects, spiders, worms, and occasionally small amounts of plant matter, seeds, and small fruits.

**PREDATORS:** Snakes, lizards, birds of prey, and small carnivorous mammals.

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Usually monogamous pairs. Offspring leave the nest after about 40 days.



Shrew

**AFRICAN FISH EAGLE:** *Haliaeetus vocifer* 3–4 kg

**HABITAT:** Freshwater lakes, rivers, and streams near savanna and grasslands

**DIET:** Carnivore

Fish, other waterfowl, turtles, baby alligators, and small mammals.

**PREDATORS:** None

**SOCIAL GROUPS:** Live as breeding pairs.



Eagle



Short Grass



**Small Trees/Shrubs**

## Drought

Annual cycles of flood and drought shape the flora and fauna of Gorongosa National Park. During the dry months of July through September, the rivers and lakes begin to dry up and water sources are concentrated at watering holes that become hotbeds for animals. Plants, especially grasses, grow more slowly, or not at all, and competition among animals for green foliage increases. The rainy season replenishes the water in Gorongosa's lakes and rivers, and green, nutritious vegetation is abundant.



**Drought**

## Agriculture and Deforestation

Forests in and around Gorongosa are primarily cleared by local farmers for agriculture. Deforestation removes essential habitat for many forest-dwelling animals, such as birds, reptiles, small mammals, and browsing antelope. Deforestation in the higher elevations of Mount Gorongosa affects the seasonal pattern of runoff because the soil is less able to absorb moisture, so precipitation runs off immediately rather than gradually throughout the year.



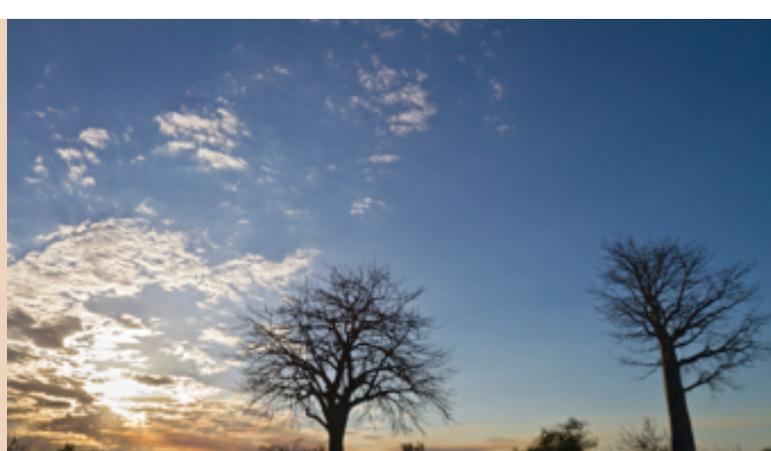
**Agriculture and Deforestation**

## War

A civil war raged from 1977 to 1992 in the Gorongosa region. Battles, violent raids on villages, and massacres occurred throughout the country, including in the park and around Mount Gorongosa. Soldiers and farmers decimated the populations of large animals, like lion, elephant, zebra, buffalo, and wildebeest, destroying their habitat and hunting them for food.



**War**



Large Trees

## Fires

Gorongosa's large, open grasslands and savannas depend on naturally occurring fires and heavy grazing by herbivores. Without fire or grazing, grasslands are quickly invaded by shrubby and woody vegetation, depriving many of Gorongosa's grazers of prime feeding areas. Fires release nutrients and remove old, dry grasses above ground, allowing new growth to sprout from the roots when the rains arrive. These areas of lush, green regrowth provide prime feeding grounds for many of Gorongosa's grazers, including zebra, wildebeest, and African buffalo.



Fires

## Increasing Human Population

The population in Mozambique, whose livelihood largely depends on agriculture, has increased more than threefold in the roughly five decades since Gorongosa National Park was established. As a result, animals like elephants, buffalo, wildebeest, and other grazers can no longer roam large swaths of land to find food and locate mates. Traditional migration routes are often blocked by villages, roads, and farms. Increased human populations can also increase poaching of animals of all sizes. Animals confined to smaller habitats can become crowded and stressed, and therefore more likely to fall prey to diseases and parasites.



Increasing Human Population

## Tourism

People from all over the world travel to see African animals, and charismatic animals like lions and elephants are often seen as celebrities. Tourist infrastructure can negatively impact some habitats, but the money that tourism brings is an essential resource for park managers and to support a sustainable economy for communities around the park.



Tourism