

Gambella National Park, also spelled Gambela National Park, is a 5,016 km² (1,937 sq mi) large national park in Ethiopia.[1] It is the nation's largest national park and is located several hundred kilometers from Addis Ababa.[2] It was established in 1974,[3] but is not fully protected and has not been effectively managed for much of its history.[4]

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Fauna and flora[edit]

Gambella National Park has one of the highest concentrations of wildlife in Ethiopia.[5] Sixty-nine mammal species occur in the protected area, including African elephant, African buffalo, bushpig, common warthog, giraffe, hippopotamus, Nile lechwe, sable antelope, tiang, waterbuck, cheetah, leopard, lion, mantled guereza, olive baboon, patas monkey and spotted hyena.[2][6][7]

The park also hosts herds of Bohor reedbuck, bushbuck, Lelwel hartebeest, oribi, reedbuck, roan antelope, and white-eared kob.[2][6][7] The white-eared kob migration is Africa's second largest mammal migration.[8][9] In 2015, African Parks and the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority surveyed the park's giraffe population for the first time, and estimated there were between 100 and 120 giraffes. Gambella's giraffes are classified as the Nubian subspecies.[10][11][12] The IUCN designated the protected area as a 'lion conservation unit' in 2005.[13]

Three hundred and twenty-seven bird species, including seasonal migrants, have been recorded, including the African skimmer, black-faced firefinch, Carmine bee-eater, cisticolas, crowned cranes, Egyptian plover, exclamatory paradise whydah, African green bee-eater, pelicans, approximately 40 species of raptors, red-necked buzzard, red-throated bee-eater, storks, warblers, and vultures.[2][7]

Plant species along the Akobo and Baro rivers include: *Acacia victoriae*, *Arundo donax* and *temba* (*Pennisetum petiolare*). The invasive *Eichhornia crassipes* (water hyacinth) and *shenkorageda* (*Saccharum officinarum*) have also been reported.[6]

Efforts to reduce poaching doubled the number of wild animals in the park between 2008 and 2012.[2]

History[edit]

Gambella was established during 1974–1975 to protect habitat and wildlife, especially the Nile lechwe and white-eared kob, two antelope species thought to be endangered at the time.[6][7] Animal populations in the park have declined because of agriculture,[14] cotton farming, hunting, poaching, and the creation of refugee camps, especially following the 1983–1985 famine in Ethiopia and by displaced Sudanese.[7][9][15]

In 2012, Bantayehu Wasyihun, head of the park's office, said infrastructure development was underway to make Gambella more accommodating to tourists.[2] The park management organization African Parks and Addis Ababa University's Horn of Africa

Research Centre worked with park officials to draft plans to improve Gambella's security and structure.^[1]^[16]

See also^[edit]

[Africa portal](#)

[List of national parks of Ethiopia](#)