

Project Update: August 2015

This month, I finished collecting data for a habitat map of the core area of Gorongosa National Park, which I will also share with other researchers and park managers. I am interested in comparing wildlife behavior and distribution across different areas of the park, and seeing how human settlement and hunting may be affecting these patterns. However, to do this effectively, I need to make sure that I am comparing areas of comparable habitat.

The park is incredibly diverse in habitats, including open floodplain grassland, uniform acacia woodlands, dense palm woodland, open miombo woodland, closed riverine forests, dry sand forest, thickets of scrub, and mixed deciduous forests. It's part of what makes the park so exciting, but also challenging to conduct large-scale comparative studies across different areas of the park since habitat diversity is such a confounding factor. We need to understand how these habitats are spatially distributed.

I will also use this habitat map, along with the wildlife observation records that I have collected and aerial count data collected by the park, to assess habitat selection by different ungulate species. I hope to eventually use this analysis to gain insight into the vulnerability of different species to snaring and other human activities.



Photos: Gorongosa has a diversity of habitats. Clockwise from top left: Acacia woodland; floodplain; Hyphenae palm woodland; Combretum woodland