

Chad extends key conservation area in national park

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A Zakouma National Park anti-poaching team patrol in 2014

Chad is to boost protection for a key haven for endangered wildlife in the south of the country under an agreement with a conservation group.

African Parks is to take over management and protection of a territory of high ecological value that lies around the vast Zakouma National Park in southern Chad.

The programme will help beef up security at the Siniaka Minia and Bahr-Salamat reserves around the park, as well as vital corridors used by fauna, African Parks said in a statement.

The deal was signed on Tuesday in Johannesburg.

African Parks has been managing Zakouma since 2010, after the park's elephant [population](#) had slumped by 95 percent over the previous eight years.

Since then poaching has been "practically eliminated," helping its elephant population rise for the first time in a decade and creating jobs for the local community, the NGO said.

Chad's first national [park](#), created in 1963, Zakouma has an area of nearly 3,000 square kilometres (1,200 square miles), lying just south of the Sahara and above the fertile regions of the rainforest.

On Sunday, Chad and South Africa signed a memorandum of understanding under which African Parks will move a "founder population" of six black rhinoceroses from South Africa to Zakouma next year.

The black rhinoceros was last seen in the wild in Chad in the late 1980s.

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