# The Kruger National Park

Kruger National Park, in Mpumalanga, South Africa, founded as a game reserve in 1898, expanded in 1903 and given its current designation in 1926.

The Sabie Game Reserve was founded by Paul Kruger, President of the South African Republic, in 1898. After the republic became a British colony in 1902, the reserve was expanded in 1903 to incorporate the Shingwedzi region and in 1926 it was renamed Kruger National Park.

Having been further expanded it now stretches for 350 km along South Africa's border with Mozambique. Its 19,485 sq km (7,523 sq mi) of flat, grassy savannah bushveld support 137 species of mammals, about 500 birds, and about 1,000 species of reptile, including such endangered animals as the elephant, the white rhinoceros, the pink-backed pelican, and Pel's fishing owl.

Kruger National Park, like many other parks and reserves in Africa, has long had to deal with the threat to wildlife posed by poaching. Poaching had a particularly severe impact on the elephant population until the international trade in ivory was banned in 1989 but it still continues to affect many animals in the park today.

The increase in the number of elephants above 7,500, which is believed to be the optimum number that can be supported without serious damage to the environment, poses a problem of quite a different kind.

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