

# Meet Tonga Torcida

## Word Bank

Word	Meaning
Biologist	A scientist who studies human and animal life
Tracking	Following the footprints or other traces of animals (like following the footprints of the lion)
Identifying	To figure out or show who/what something is
Partnership	Working together on a shared activity or goal
Impact	Effect, result or outcome (something that happens because of something else)



Hi, my name is Tonga Torcida and I was born and raised in the hills of Gorongosa. To go to secondary school, I had to move to Villa Gorongosa and live with a family friend.

In 2006, when I was 15 years old, a helicopter landed near where I was playing ball and people got out. I knew some English so I greeted the visitors. A man called Gregg Carr, the founder of the Gorongosa Restoration Project, asked me to guide the group to the Murombodzi waterfalls.

After that I visited the Park myself and began to work there during school holidays. I was given books and binoculars, and I studied the local flora (plants) and fauna (animals). In 2011, I met the famous **biologist**, Professor E.O. Wilson, and in 2012 I served as his assistant during his second visit to Gorongosa.

While I was doing a degree in Wildlife Management I worked in Gorongosa on the Lion Project team. This meant **tracking** and **identifying** lions that are new to the Park.

Did you know that every lion has a unique pattern of whisker-spots on each side of its face? Just like a human fingerprint, no two whisker-spot patterns are the same, and they don't change over time!

I am very proud of what the Gorongosa Restoration Project, in **partnership** with the Mozambican government, is doing for the local communities. We run community education programmes to help farmers to get more from their land. We also encourage people not to cut down the rainforests because this **impacts** badly on the Park's wildlife and communities.

We bring children from local schools to the Park. We want them to keep their sense of wonder in nature, to honour wildlife, and to want to protect it, so that Gorongosa Park exists for future generations, not only for Mozambicans but for the rest of the world.

**BIOLOGIST:**  
 a scientist who studies human and animal life.

In 2014 Irish Aid began funding the Gorongosa Restoration Project



Photos courtesy of Gorongosa National Park