



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation & Tourism (MWCT) & African Parks

Official Opening of the Maruwa Tourist Camp,
Greater Pibor Administrative Area, South Sudan

26 March 2026 - Boma National Park

The Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation & Tourism (MWCT) of the Republic of South Sudan, in partnership with African Parks, is pleased to announce the official opening of the Maruwa Hills Tourist Camp in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. This milestone represents the first phase of a responsible, community-centered tourism initiative designed to support conservation outcomes, strengthen livelihoods, and showcase South Sudan's emerging identity as the Land of Great Abundance. Located within the globally significant Great Nile Migration Landscape - home to the world's largest land mammal migration - the Maruwa Hills pilot anchors a broader, long-term vision for sustainable tourism development. The site provides an ecologically and culturally grounded introduction point for visitors while strengthening local stewardship of one of Africa's last great wilderness regions, in a way that is deeply rooted in - and respectful of - local culture, traditions, and knowledge.

In 2022, the Government of South Sudan entered a landmark 10-year partnership with African Parks to manage Boma and Badingilo Migratory landscape across Jonglei, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria states.

Key Points

- Tourism development will remain paced, environmentally conscious, and aligned with long-term ecological management plans.
- The Maruwa Tourism pilot project has been developed in partnership with MWCT, African Parks, and local communities to generate employment, enterprise opportunities, and a conservation dividend.
- The initiative strengthens community engagement and national identity while positioning South Sudan as a responsible and competitive ecotourism destination.

Statements From Key Officials

Hon. Minister of Wildlife, Conservation & Tourism:

“Today is a historic and proud moment for our country. We are opening the first tourism site of its kind in South Sudan - a place that will welcome visitors from across the nation and

around the world. What was once a question from the community - ‘What will we gain from this?’ - is now being answered. The benefits have already begun.

Through this partnership with African Parks, we are seeing real change: jobs are being created, incomes are growing, and opportunities are emerging for families. Visitors who come here will support your businesses, buy your goods, and contribute directly to your livelihoods. This is how conservation begins to deliver real value to the people.

But with this opportunity comes responsibility. We ask the community to ensure peace and security, because this place now represents South Sudan to the world. Many communities would have wanted such a project, but it is here - and now it is your role to show that this area is peaceful, welcoming, and ready to host the world.

As a ministry, we are committed to working closely with you. Together with African Parks, we will continue to support this initiative so that it brings lasting benefits - so families can earn an income, educate their children, and build a better future.”

Gola Boyoi Gola, Chief Administrator – Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA)

“Today is truly a historic day for our people. This is the first project of its kind, and it shows what is possible when we work together. When I first came here, I said that one day there would be hotels and development in this place - because of its beauty and potential. Today, we are witnessing that vision becoming reality.

I want to sincerely thank African Parks for turning what was once a vision into something tangible. This project demonstrates that when national government, local authorities, and communities collaborate, we can achieve meaningful and lasting development.

This is also a new direction for our country. We must begin to think beyond oil and explore other sectors like tourism, which can bring sustainable opportunities to our people. This project helps answer an important question from communities - why protect wildlife? Today, the answer is clear: because it brings benefits, livelihoods, and development.

As local leadership, our responsibility is to ensure peace and security so that visitors feel safe and welcome. This place belongs to us, and we must show the world that it is peaceful, stable, and ready to receive guests. If we continue to work together, we will not only sustain this project but expand it to other areas and unlock even greater potential.”

Jan Fourie, Park Manager – Boma National Park:

“Today marks a truly important milestone for all of us. Just over a year ago, this was only an idea on paper - something we spoke about and hoped could become real. Standing here

today, we are witnessing that vision come to life. It is a proud and humbling moment for me and my team.

I want to especially thank the community of Maruwa - the real team behind this achievement. Throughout this journey, we have learned to understand one another, to work together, and to build something meaningful as one united effort. This project was not built from the top down. The opportunity may have been created through African Parks and our partners, but it is the community that took it forward - with their own strength, commitment, and determination.

As beautiful as this camp is, it is only a symbol of the greater responsibility ahead of us. If we want this to succeed, we must work together to protect the wildlife, restore these ecosystems, and ensure that this land continues to provide for future generations. This must become a true 'land of abundance.'

Tourism should be a good news story, and I believe this can be one. More importantly, I hope this project inspires the next generation - so that children who see their parents working here can dream of being part of something like this in the future.”

Philip Winter, Chair of the African Parks South Sudan Board: Today’s opening of the Maruwa Hills Tourist Camp represents a defining moment for conservation-led development in South Sudan. It reflects what can be achieved when government, communities, and partners work with a shared vision and long-term commitment. The Maruwa Hills initiative lays the foundation for sustainable tourism while ensuring that local people remain central beneficiaries of their own landscape. We are proud to stand alongside MWCT and the peoples of South Sudan in laying the groundwork for a model that will allow them to benefit from wider recognition of the unique natural resources with which they live.

H.E. Ambassador Philippe Michel-Kleisbauer, Ambassador of France to South Sudan

“Wildlife is a powerful symbol of freedom. The animals, the trees, and the landscapes you are protecting - they do not speak, they do not vote, and they do not ask for anything. When you protect them, you do it freely, for something greater than ourselves. That is why conservation is such a strong symbol of both freedom and the future.

What you are building here is not only for today - it is for the next generation. It is for the children who will grow up here, who will one day look at this place and say, ‘I am proud to continue this work.’ That is the true meaning of what is being achieved here.

I am very honored to be here, and I can say this will not be my last visit. I look forward to coming back again - and I hope to be among the first tourists to experience this place. Because it is important that people living in South Sudan are the first to discover and appreciate the beauty of their own country.

Thank you for what you are doing - for protecting this land, for protecting wildlife, and for contributing to something that represents freedom, hope, and the future.”

[About the Partners](#)

The South Sudan Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT) leads efforts to protect biodiversity, natural ecosystems and wildlife in South Sudan, while promoting sustainable tourism that benefits people and the economy. Through strategic partnerships, it works to ensure long-term stewardship of the country’s natural assets.

African Parks is a non-profit conservation organisation that takes on responsibility for the long-term management of protected areas in partnership with governments and local communities. African Parks manages 24 protected areas in 13 countries covering over 20 million hectares in Angola, Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

[Notes to Editors:](#)

In August 2022, African Parks and the Government of South Sudan signed a 10-year agreement to rehabilitate, manage, and conserve Badingilo and Boma National Parks and the Jonglei landscape, home to the world’s largest animal migration. This agreement empowers AP and MWCT to work with local communities to restore ecosystems, establish ecotourism, and build resilience in the face of climate change.

[Media Contacts](#)

MWCT Communications: media@mwct.gov.ss or cllosio@gmail.com | +211 925 059 677

African Parks South Sudan Communications: kenyij@africanparks.org

Visit: [African Parks – South Sudan](#)

Photo Captions (26 March 2026) : Images of [Maruwa Camp](#) and the [opening event](#).

1. Hon. Minister inaugurates the Maruwa Tourist Camp at an official ribbon-cutting ceremony.
2. GPAA and MWCT leadership, alongside African Parks staff, joined community representatives in a celebratory traditional bull slaughter to mark the occasion.
3. First visitors arriving at Maruwa Hills with panoramic views over the Boma landscape.

[Audios files.](#)