



CITES & LIVELIHOODS CASE STUDY 2022

Trophy Hunting of Elephants in Zimbabwe

SPECIES, USE AND TRADE

Zimbabwe has a proud history of successful elephant conservation. Elephants are distributed in four main regional populations: Northwest Matabeleland, Sebungwe, and the mid-Zambezi Valley and the South East Lowveld (Figure 1). In 1900 it was feared that elephants might become extinct south of the Zambezi River with an estimated population of just 4000. By 2014 – the date of the last national census – this number had increased to nearly 83,000 elephants despite attempts to limit elephant population growth between 1960 and 1995 by culling 49,000 elephant in tsetse control areas and state protected areas.

The distribution of elephants coincides with the lowland zones of Zimbabwe where the climate is hot and dry, rainfall erratic and the growing season is very short meaning agriculture is risky with harvest levels low. Most households in the lowland zones rely on casual labour, sales of wild, foraged foods, beer brewing, firewood sales and handicraft sales as supplementary sources of income. Communities in these zones reside in an environment where conflicts between humans and wildlife are common, as both compete for the limited available land and water resources.

In 1982, amendment of the Parks and Wild Life Act enabled Rural District Councils (RDCs) to obtain 'appropriate authority' (AA) to utilize wildlife for commercial gain in order to augment subsistence agriculture and mitigate human-wildlife conflict in the communal lands bordering National Parks and Safari Areas. This led to the birth of Zimbabwe's Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE). The programme has been heavily reliant on the sustainable hunting of big game, especially

elephants, for financial viability.

Each year, the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority allocates hunting quotas to each of the CAMPFIRE Districts through a participatory and science-based process. Between 2010 and 2018, 10 participating districts were allocated a quota of 1,437 elephants (approximately 160/year) and a further 4,939 other animals (half of which were buffalo). Each CAMPFIRE District negotiates concession agreements with safari operators who in turn market the allocated quota to foreign hunters. Not all the quota is used each year (over the 9 year period, just over 50% of the elephant quota was used and just under 50% of the quota for other animals).

Trophy hunting is, however, controversial and hunting in Zimbabwe has been affected by temporary import bans – e.g. hunters have only just started being able to import trophies to the US following a temporary suspension in 2014. This highlighted the reliance of the CAMPFIRE programme on revenue from hunting and a need to diversify. The Government of Zimbabwe has completed a comprehensive review of the CAMPFIRE programme and is in the process of developing a CAMPFIRE policy to allow for further devolution of user rights directly to communities to receive full benefits from wildlife and to diversify the model.



ZIMBABWE



AFRICAN SAVANNAH ELEPHANT (*Loxodonta africana*)



APPENDIX II
(for populations in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe)



ENDANGERED



Elephants in Zimbabwe.
Photo: Zimparks.



LIVELIHOOD BENEFITS

Trophy hunting has been reported to have resulted in increasing food and livelihood security of rural people, as well as playing a role in mitigating human-wildlife conflict.

Reported data show that:

- between 2010 and 2018 the hunting sector in CAMPFIRE districts earned approximately \$17 million.
- Of this amount trophy fees contributed approximately \$12 million of which elephant trophy fees contributed approximately \$7.6 million (63%).
- Under the benefit sharing guidelines, the RDCs received approximately 56% (range 23% - 66%) or \$1.05million/year and the Wards received 46% (range 26% - 77%) or \$830,000/year.

The RDC and Ward Wildlife Committee allocate these funds between Administration and Community costs, respectively. Given the number of people resident in CAMPFIRE areas, the revenues are not allocated to individual households but are invested in community infrastructure such as schools, clinics, water piping and storage, boreholes etc. In special circumstances dividends may be paid out as direct cash benefits.

An estimated \$1.5 million/year drop in income following 2014 import bans resulted in the Districts and Wards having to adjust their operational budgets. In most cases they continued to support existing social service projects but reduced investments to maintain law enforcement and general administration costs.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

The net impact of the CAMPFIRE programme is best described as securing wildlife habitat and assisting in the regeneration of degraded landscapes, as well as undermining the drivers of poaching. There is approximately 5 million ha of communal area outside of the Zimbabwe protected area network. Within this area, the CAMPFIRE programme covers approximately 1.6 million ha of important habitat for wildlife, especially elephants. Legal trade – including hunting and trophy export – in CITES-listed species is a strong incentive for wildlife to remain a viable land use option beyond the protected area network.

Over the past few decades, however, some CAMPFIRE Districts have experienced drastic declines in wildlife populations, loss of habitat and habitat destruction. This has been due to an increase in the human population resulting in increased demand for agricultural land, poaching and human-wildlife conflict – a demand which is not sufficiently offset by the income from wildlife.



Elephant in Zimbabwe.
Photo: Zimparks.

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Zimbabwe's Government recognises that the survival of wild animals depends entirely on those among whom they live. Unless local people want to save them, wildlife will be poached to the point where just a few remain in fortified reserves. The CAMPFIRE programme is meant to prevent this and the future of wildlife, and elephant, in communal areas rests on the success of this programme.

Reliance on trophy hunting to finance the programme is risky, however, given the controversy surrounding the practice. Restrictions in trade in CITES listed species including hunting trophies has an impact on community livelihoods and thus on incentives for conservation. A recent review of the CAMPFIRE model highlighted the need for diversification and re-configuration to cushion communities from the shocks that come from CITES trade restrictions. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe sees the absence of being able to trade in elephant products as the greatest threat to elephant survival in the country.

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IN COLLABORATION WITH:



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