

Human-Wildlife Conflicts in Urban Areas of Zimbabwe

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Abstract : Globally, HWCs are on the rise. Such is the case with urban areas in Zimbabwe, yet little has been documented about it. This study was done to provide insights into the occurrence of human-wildlife conflicts in urban areas. The study was carried out in Harare, Bindura, Masvingo, Beitbridge, and Chiredzi to determine the cause, nature, extent, and frequency of occurrence of HWC, to determine the key wildlife species involved in conflicts and management practices done to combat wildlife conflicts in these areas. Several sampling techniques encompassing multi-stage sampling, stratified random, purposive, and simple random sampling were employed for placing residential areas into three strata according to population density, selecting residential areas, and selecting actual participants. Data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire and key informant interviews. The results revealed that property destruction and crop damage were the most prevalent conflicts. Of the 15 animals that were cited, snakes, baboons, and monkeys were associated with the most conflicts. The occurrence of HWCs was mainly attributed to the increase in both animal and human populations. To curtail these HWCs, the local people mainly used non-lethal methods, whilst lethal methods were used by authorities for some of the reported cases. The majority of the conflicts were seasonal and less severe. There were growing concerns by respondents on the issues of wildlife conflicts, especially in those areas that had primates, such as Warren Park in Harare and Limpopo View in Beitbridge. There are HWCs hotspots in urban areas, and to ameliorate this, suggestions are that there is a need for a multi-action approach that includes general awareness campaigns on HWCs and land use planning that involves the creation of green spaces to ease wildlife management.

Keywords : human-wildlife conflicts, mitigation measures, residential areas, types of conflicts, urban areas

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