

Illegal Bushmeat & Poaching threats to Ecotourism in Botswana

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Summary of known Poaching incidents in one reserve - past 10 years

Wilton Raats – Bushcraft APU



- **121 illegal bushmeat poaching suspects apprehended**
- **Cost implications of conducting arrests and collecting evidence in remote parts of the Okavango Delta are very significant: Military Helicopter to transport 4 suspects will cost over US \$2,000 per trip!**
- **Minimum of 311 animals recorded where evidence was found that humans were involved**

Summary of known Poaching incidents in one reserve - past 10 years

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- Evidence of 401 illegal activities have been collected over the past 10 years. Area: 1750km² (430,000 acres)
- 31 cases with traceable evidence reported
- During a 3 year period: 26 Firearms, 45 horses, 17 donkeys, 38 dogs & 3 mekoro were confiscated. In 24% of cases only the best meat on a carcass is taken – the rest is left behind.
- It had become large scale syndicated bushmeat poaching

In at least 80% of cases the meat is used in commercial bush-meat trade – information on where this meat goes and who is involved is sensitive.

The bushmeat being moved across the buffalo fence has major implications in terms of spreading foot & mouth disease. In many cases the buffalo fence has been cut or pushed flat by illegal hunters moving across it.

The economic implications of foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks in Ngamiland have been very severe over the years.



Kudu carcass & horses used to transport meat



Nxamasere

Gudikwa Village

Betsha Village

Sepupa

Seronga

Gunitsuga

Ikoga

Etsha 13

Sephane

Etsha 6

Gumare

NG26

Nokaneng Village

Maur

Tsau

61 km

A 3

A 35

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Google earth



Giraffe carcass concealed by leaves



Some of the 43 dead vultures found close to a giraffe carcass that had been poisoned. These Incidents occurred in NG22 and NG29 and NG30.



Impala poached next to fence



Poacher horses loaded with meat from different cases, selected bundles of meat and carcasses



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Biological Conservation

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Illegal bushmeat hunters compete with predators and threaten wild herbivore populations in a global tourism hotspot

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ABSTRACT

Illegal bushmeat hunting is a global threat to wildlife, but its secretive and unregulated nature undermines efforts to mitigate its impacts on wildlife and wildlife-based industries. We investigated the scale of illegal bushmeat hunting in the Okavango Delta, Botswana ($\sim 20,000 \text{ km}^2$) to assess its potential contribution to wildlife population declines. Approximately 1,800 illegal hunters each harvest an average of 320 kg of bushmeat annually, though some reported harvesting $\geq 1000 \text{ kg}$. While impala were the most commonly hunted species, buffalo and greater kudu accounted for most bushmeat. Hunters remove $\sim 620,000 \text{ kg}$ of medium-large herbivore biomass (equivalent to 15,500 impala) annually from the delta and humans are the fourth most prominent predator in the delta. Cumulative harvest by humans and other predators likely exceeds the intrinsic population growth rate of several species of ungulates in the delta, and helps explain purported declines in ungulate populations. Competition between humans and other apex predators for limited prey reduces the ecosystem's carrying capacity for large carnivores. Illegal bushmeat hunting represents an economically inefficient use of the delta's wildlife and a threat to the region's tourism industry. Strategies are required that provide clearer avenues for communities to benefit legally from wildlife, while concurrently curbing illegal hunting through effective law enforcement.

- We investigated the scale of illegal bushmeat hunting in the Okavango Delta to assess its potential contribution to wildlife population declines.
- Approximately **1,800 illegal hunters** each harvest an average of **320 kg each of bushmeat annually** (some harvesting ≥ 1000 kg).
- Impala were the most commonly hunted species, buffalo and greater kudu accounted for most bushmeat.
- Hunters remove **~620,000kg** of medium-large herbivore biomass (equivalent to 15,500 impala) **annually** from the delta



Evidence of Poachers crossing the Buffalo Fence with fresh meat – possibly spreading disease such as foot-and-mouth

- **Humans are the fourth most prominent predator in the delta.** Cumulative harvest by humans and other predators likely exceeds the intrinsic population growth rate of several species of ungulates in the delta, and helps explain purported declines in ungulate populations.
- Competition between humans and other apex predators for limited prey reduces the ecosystem's carrying capacity for large carnivores.
- Illegal bushmeat hunting represents an economically inefficient use of the delta's wildlife and a threat to the region's tourism industry.



Horses transporting meat



The decline in herbivore populations on the periphery of the Okavango Delta has significant implications for the Tourism Industry and the apex predators, herbivore population declines results in:

- **Insufficient prey for key predators, predator numbers decline negatively impacting the Photographic Tourism Industry**
- **Predators move into livestock areas and there is an increase in human-wildlife conflict**
- **Foot and mouth disease outbreaks in livestock areas from transporting bushmeat has had severe financial implications in Ngamiland for the past decade**

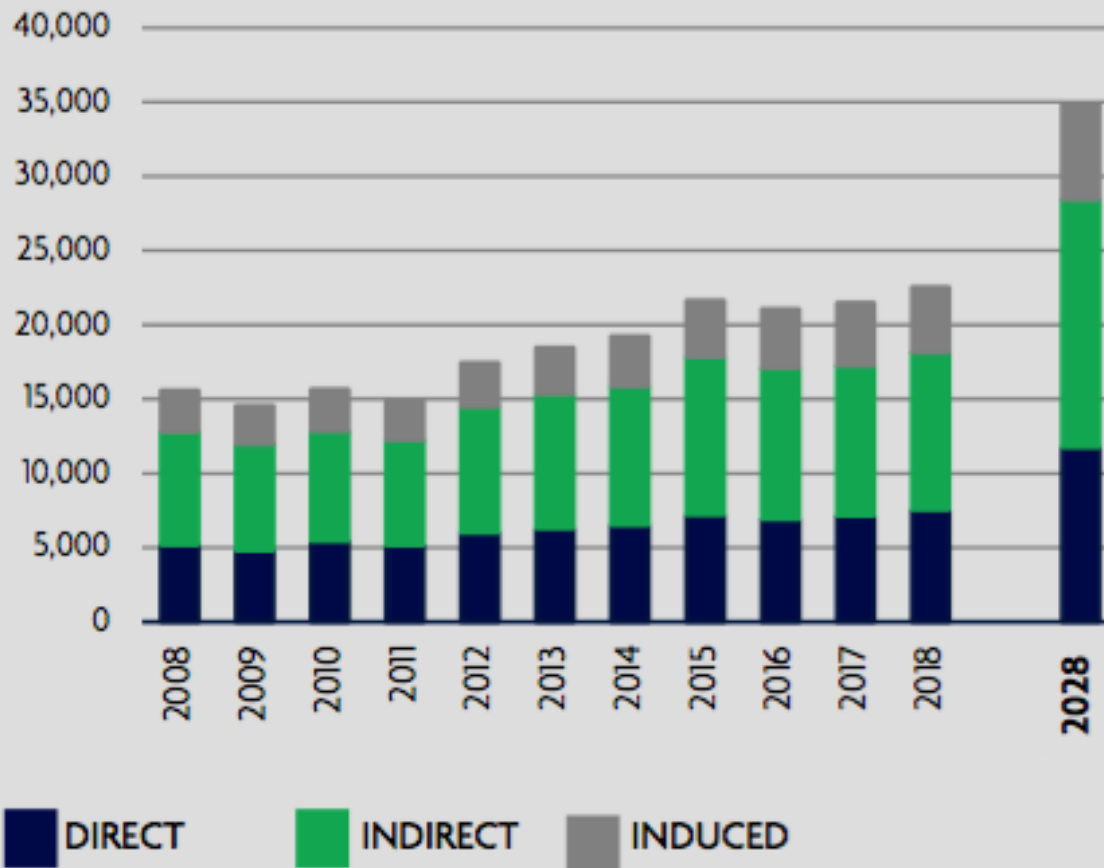


Tourism plays a very significant role in the national economy and society

- The total **contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD \$2 billion** in 2017
11.5% of total^[L]_[SEP]GDP.
- It is forecast to **rise by 4.9% in 2018**
- And forecast to **rise by 4.5% pa to USD \$3.4 billion in 2028**
- **In 2017 Travel & Tourism directly supported 26,000 jobs**
- **In 2017, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by^[L]_[SEP]the industry was 7.6% of total employment 76,000 jobs.**

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL & TOURISM TO GDP

2017 BWPmn



The tourism industry is threatened by the increase in illegal bushmeat poaching as well as poaching of elephant and rhino

THE JOURNEY OF A RHINO HORN

In 1895,

ONLY 20

white rhinos were left in South Africa due to poaching.

YET

Numerous conservation efforts, such as establishing reserves, led to their recovery of over

20,000



SINCE 2007

7700 %

Increase in rhino poaching in South Africa

AND

1175

Rhinos killed in 2015

One hundred years later however, the rate of illegal poaching has increased to record levels.

The illicit trafficking of wildlife products is the fourth largest global illegal trade after:



Narcotics



Humans

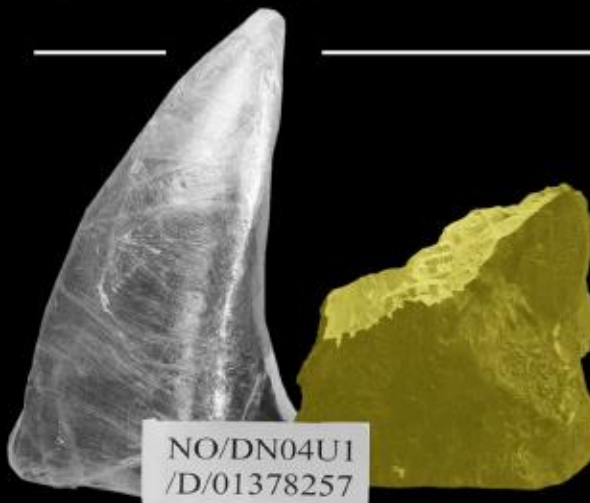


**Counterfeit
Products**

It is believed the trade generates

\$17 BILLION

a year, and growing.

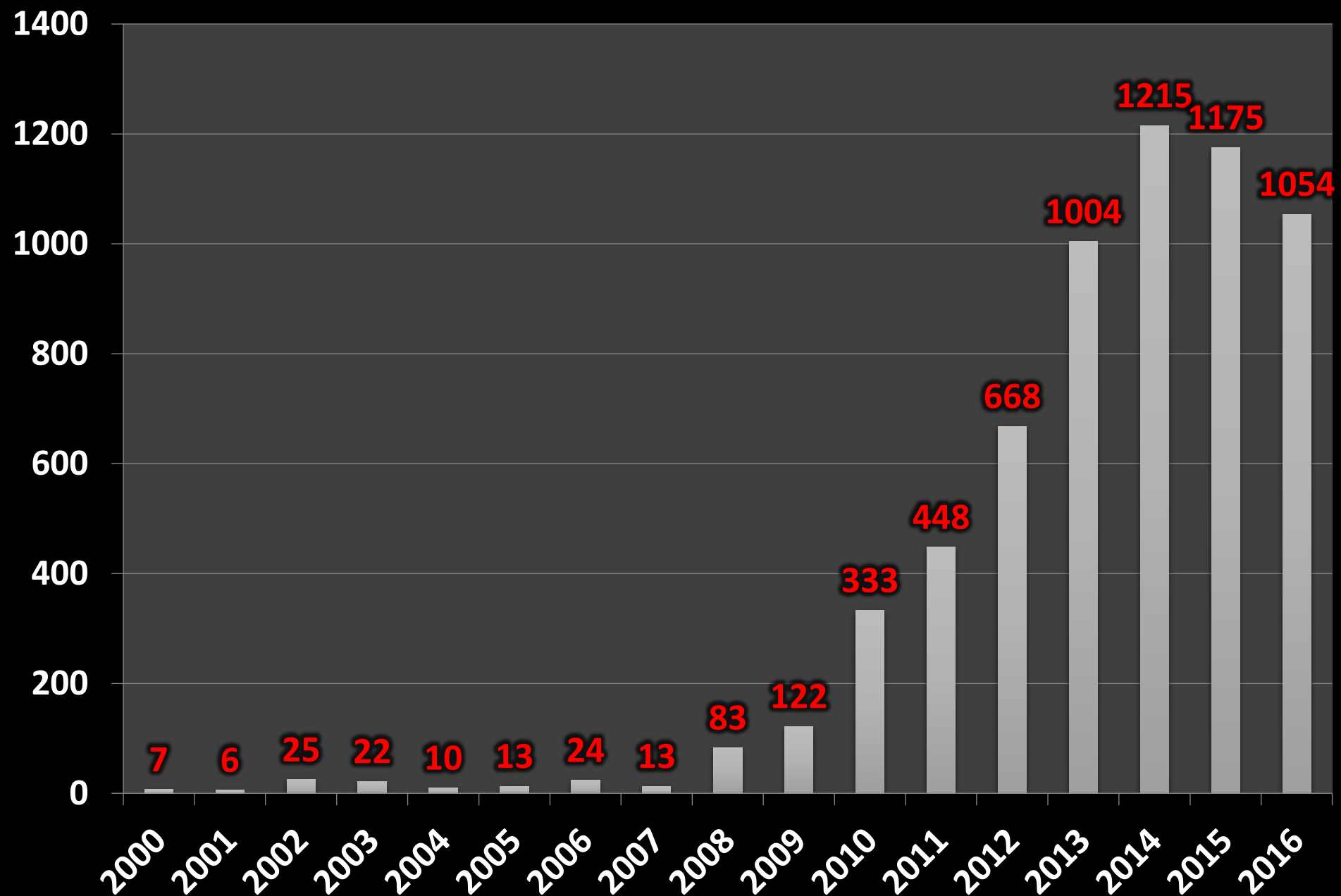


Fuelled by demand from Asia, rhino horn is now worth

MORE THAN GOLD

and over 800 rhinos are likely to be killed in South Africa in 2013.

South African Rhino Poaching Epidemic



Botswana Rhino Reintroduction Project



Commercial, syndicated illegal wildlife crime poses a very significant threat to Botswana's economy and needs to be curtailed as soon as possible



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