



TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRADING YEARS FOR WILDLIFE

AN INVESTIGATION INTO WILDLIFE CRIME
FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF OFFENDERS IN NAMIBIA

*Dominique Prinsloo,
Sacha Riley-Smith,
David Newton*

SUMMARY

WILDLIFE CRIME OFFENDER INTERVIEWS

SPECIES INVOLVED

The number of cases according to the species involved.



45

WILDLIFE CRIME OFFENDERS

were interviewed in six locations

- Hardap
- Windhoek
- Evaristus Shikongo
- Oluno
- Elizabeth Nepemba
- Divundu

LOCATIONS

25 OF 31
CASES
originated in Namibia

23
DESTINATIONS
were in Namibia

CHINA AND ZAMBIA
WERE REVEALED AS DESTINATION COUNTRIES



INVOLVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE SUPPLY CHAIN



Offenders took on numerous roles in the IWT supply chain, including:

SOURCING	TRAVEL
TRADING	FACILITATION
SUBSISTENCE	STORAGE

SUMMARY OF MOTIVATIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

FINANCIAL

19 OFFENDERS
sought funds to fulfil basic needs

SOCIAL

10 OFFENDERS
became engaged as a favour to an acquaintance, friend, or family member

NUTRITIONAL

5 OFFENDERS
used the products for local consumption

CURIOSITY

6 OFFENDERS
were unaware of the species or product and attempted to find out more

INNOCENCE

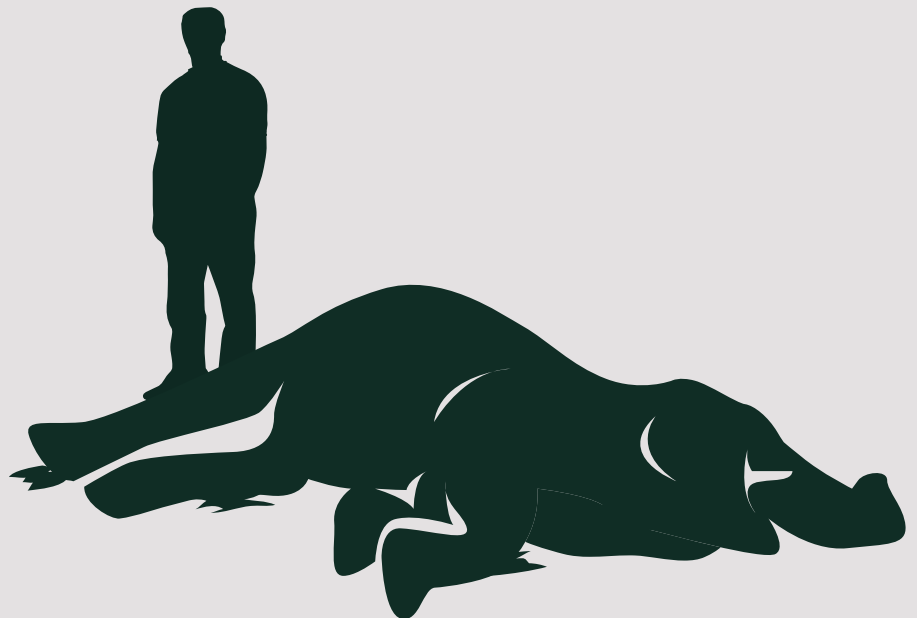
3 OFFENDERS
claimed to be innocent

FUNCTIONAL

2 OFFENDERS
engaged in IWT to protect livestock or dogs

OFFENDER DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER	MALE	100%
AGE	30–39	43%
HIGHEST EDUCATION RECEIVED	PRIMARY SCHOOL	40%
NATIONALITY	NAMIBIAN	44%
DEPENDENTS	1–4 CHILDREN	70%



RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study provide considerable insight into the socio-demographic and psychographic profiles of low-level offenders, as well as the nature and *modus operandi* of their crimes.

Reducing the number of criminal offences that occur may ultimately require a more expansive and holistic approach, beyond enforcement and application of the law as it stands today, such as:

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS AS A PRE-EMPTIVE STRATEGY

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SENTENCING

There is a suite of legislation in place in Namibia to protect wildlife. Improved levels of interdiction and prosecution will effectively reduce involvement in IWT. There is also an opportunity for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and NCS, alongside penologists and possibly wildlife trade specialists, to review the appropriateness of sentencing and whether the intention is either to punish or deter. A lesser prison sentence and an alternative to incarceration may do both.



CASE DELAYS

The sheer volume of ongoing cases is leading to lengthy delays in court proceedings. These foreseeable delays are placing pressure on defendants to plead guilty to avoid even longer detention periods. Further investigation is needed to understand how the criminal justice system can be made more efficient, which may involve both increasing the number of prosecutors and magistrates and also improving systems and procedures.



LEGAL AID

The decision by offenders not to apply for legal aid is worth further exploration by the Legal Aid Directorate. One of the recommendations of this study is that legal aid, which is necessary to assist low-income individuals in putting forward their defence at trial, is made entirely free. The obligatory "contribution" of NAD350, which effectively acts as a barrier to access, should be removed. In this study, the impact of this contribution is that many offenders are left with no choice but to conduct their own defence which is to their disadvantage (see "Pleas, Charges and Outcomes" in Chapter 6).



IWT DYNAMICS IN NAMIBIA AND BEYOND

These interviews provide information on IWT dynamics within Namibia in its role as a source country. Some information was obtained on the role of Namibia’s neighbouring states; however, this is insufficient, and there is a need to understand better the cross-border trade dynamics within the KAZA region to direct prevention strategies accordingly. It is therefore recommended that TRAFFIC extend this research to include interviews with wildlife crime offenders in neighbouring states and consumer states, with an emphasis on those offenders at higher-level positions within the supply chain, such as the middlemen linking the source, supply and consumer countries. These could specifically target higher-level operatives beyond Namibia’s borders that have so far eluded capture and will remain drivers, facilitators, and enablers of IWT.



LIMITING INDIVIDUAL INVOLVEMENT

Based on the study results, TRAFFIC recommends that strategies designed to inhibit engagement in wildlife crime should include “up-stream” preventative interventions. These would fall under the heading of behaviour change strategies and complementary alternative livelihood schemes that have the potential to dissuade the lower-level operatives (typified by those interviewed in this study), from engaging in “wildlife crime” (both need and opportunities driven). This area of work is described in detail below (see Changing behaviours as a pre-emptive strategy).



SAMPLE SIZE

It is recommended that future similar studies should be based on a larger sample size to allow for more robust statistical analyses of data.



OFFENDER PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

This study has highlighted some interesting issues in terms of offender perceptions and attitudes which are worth exploring further, e.g. through qualitative focus groups, to inform appropriate behaviour change communication (BCC) messaging. Assuming that further funding could be secured, further research would be undertaken by experienced organisations to help design a BCC strategy targeting people who are tempted to engage in wildlife crime.

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS AS A PRE-EMPTIVE STRATEGY:

The relevance of behaviour change approaches to dissuade engagement in crime further is emphasised in the “Why” chapter of this report. Focusing on the drivers of behaviour behind the decision to participate in IWT activities, messaging should be designed around each of the motivations (financial, nutritional, social and functional). Communications will challenge respondents to re-assess their consideration of the potential gains versus costs/risks. These communications could develop around cautionary narratives created around the shame, guilt, sense of sorrow and loss experienced by those convicted of wildlife crimes. Messaging

should also address social influences such as pressure from peers or their employer. Other behaviour change approaches could be grounded within the motivation categories, which would complement “pathways to criminal behaviour”/behavioural journey mapping.

BCC experts could develop messaging that could take the form of educational entertainment materials delivered across various media, including community outreach, for example:



TALES CO-PRODUCED AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL WITH REHABILITATED OFFENDERS AND EMBEDDED IN “EDUTAINMENT” STYLE RADIO DRAMAS OR SHORT SEGMENTS ON TV, COULD BE INCREDIBLY IMPACTFUL.



LOCAL TOURING THEATRE GROUPS COULD DELIVER PLAYS AND PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES, WORKING THROUGH REAL-LIFE SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAYING EXERCISES THAT EQUIP AUDIENCE MEMBERS WITH PHRASES AND TACTICS TO AVOID DISAPPOINTING THOSE APPLYING VERTICAL OR KINSHIP PRESSURES TO ENGAGE IN IWT.

Such BCC messaging would complement existing government communications which are purely knowledge and awareness focused, providing information on the law and penalties, designed to be deterrents, but only addressing perceptions of “cost” from a one-dimensional (financial) perspective. For offenders that had the category “functional” as their “primary” motivation, it would be critical to ensure that barriers to change, such as an inability to secure enough to eat and slow/no processing of compensation claims when livestock are lost, are reduced. Traditional hunters could be engaged (by the project) as champions for, and custodians of, the “living” landscapes in which they hunt, with complementary programmes that recognise/celebrate the cultural significance of their knowledge and skills. Changing behaviours, in this context of IWT, would also require incentives (benefits) and the provision

of substitute, alternative behaviours to engaging in IWT. Such interventions might include livelihood schemes such as small scale horticultural/livestock or micro-enterprise schemes. Further considerations are described in detail in the report titled *Livelihood alternatives for the unsustainable use of bushmeat* (van Vliet, 2011).

In conclusion, conducting offender surveys provides insight into the criminal, geographic, demographic, motivational and behavioural components of wildlife crime. Without much needed behaviour change interventions and alternative sustainable livelihood options in the manners described above, wildlife crime will continue in and around protected areas. This report provides a firm foundation for initiatives to address these recommendations.



Community members standing in front of their home in the Zambezi Region

TRAFFIC is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

TRAFFIC
Global Office
David Attenborough Building
Pembroke Street
Cambridge CB2 3QZ
UK

+44 (0)1223 277427
traffic@traffic.org
traffic.org

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