

CHAPTER 25

Elephant hunting and poaching in Botswana: Politics, popular grievances and the power of animal advocacy

Keith Somerville [University of Kent]

“It bamboozles me when people sit in the comfort of where they come from and lecture us about the management of species they don’t have.”

[Botswana president Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi]

This comment by Dr Masisi sums up the feelings of not just Botswana’s president but also of many of its parliamentarians, community leaders and – especially – of Botswana who live in rural areas alongside potentially dangerous and destructive wildlife. To them it seems that Western animal lovers and animal-rights NGOs, and their African allies, appear to cherish wildlife above any concern for people who suffer crop damage or loss of livestock. This has been a long-running issue across southern Africa, but Botswana in particular is now caught up in an increasingly bitter controversy over its elephants that is fueled by a number of factors, including:

- * Vastly differing estimates of elephant numbers and elephant poaching.
- * Competing approaches to the conservation of wildlife and habitats.
- * Significant political divisions within Botswana since the Presidency changed in April 2018.
- * Conflicts of interest between the eco-tourism and sustainable-use lobbies and rural people and their elected representatives.
- * Foreign sentiments about wild species and habitats, especially versus the needs of rural people.

Poaching, EWB & the BBC

In Botswana, these issues heated up in September 2018, when Dr Mike Chase, the veteran elephant researcher and founder of the advocacy group Elephants Without Borders, told the BBC News that he and his EWB colleagues had found 87 elephant carcasses between the Okavango and Chobe rivers, and that many of these had been killed illegally – i.e. poached. Hunting (for trophies or meat) has been illegal in Botswana since January 2014.

Yet most of the reported carcasses had been seen only from the air, and no corroboration was provided of how many there were, how many had been killed, how long they had been there, or of their ages or sex. Nonetheless, the BBC’s Africa correspondent, Alastair Leithead, ran with the story.¹ He uncritically reported Chase’s claims that “[this] scale of poaching deaths is the largest seen in Africa” and that it indicated a massive rise in poaching resulting from “Botswana’s anti-poaching unit being disarmed.”

“‘People did warn us of an impending poaching problem and we thought we were prepared for it,’ said Mr. Chase.” Leithead included no statement from the Botswana government or the DWNP, the Dept. of Wildlife and National Parks, and no verification of the statement that its APU, the Anti-Poaching Unit, had been disarmed.

The claim that this was the “largest scale” of elephant poaching in Africa was preposterous, but it gained public attention. While elephant poaching in Botswana has risen since President Khama’s 2014 ban on hunting, it pales against the mass killing (generally for ivory) of elephants in Tanzania and Mozambique in recent years and, in 2012, in northern Cameroon and the Central African Republic.

As a former BBC journalist (I spent 28 years with the BBC World Service and the BBC College of Journalism), I know how these stories are put together, and how the customary BBC concern with balance often goes out the window when it comes to wildlife. Animal-rights groups are routinely treated as the sole purveyors of truth, and such stories – the furore over Cecil the lion, for example, which I researched and wrote about in detail² – become emotive clickbait. So I contacted Alastair Leithead to ask about the balance and facts of his report.

His reply: “I honestly don’t believe Mike Chase made up the 87 carcasses – I’ve met him a few times and respect him and his work and believe he acted in the best interest of the animals at great personal cost it seems.” Leithead thought it was “a shame” that people with “an agenda” had used his statement of findings to create a row about hunting, the APU and conservation.

However, the Botswana government has said³ it did not find the number of carcasses Chase claimed had been killed illegally, and it strongly disputed any lapse in effectiveness of the APU. President Masisi responded angrily to the BBC story,⁴ and the truth about the “disarming” of anti-poaching patrols emerged: Botswana’s APU had traditionally carried semi-automatic rifles, as used by game rangers across southern Africa. But during the presidency of Ian Khama – a vehement opponent of legal hunting as well as poaching, and a former commander of the BDF, the Botswana Defence Force – the APU had been given full-automatic military assault rifles. This was illegal, but President Khama overrode the law and never submitted the issue to Parliament. The APU continued to be deployed along Botswana’s borders with Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe and members were authorised to shoot suspected poachers. As a result, in 2015 alone, “at least 30 Namibians and 22 Zimbabweans”⁵ were killed by the APU or the BDF on suspicion of poaching.

After taking office, in April 2018, Ian Khama’s successor, President Masisi, announced (to the relief of neighboring governments) an end to this aggressive approach to suspected poachers, and the APU gave up its assault rifles. However, the members were not “disarmed”; they went back to their semi-auto rifles. There was never a period when the APU was unable to perform its duties, and it can still call in heavily armed BDF units in the Chobe, Linyanti, Savuti and Okavango districts for support if necessary. Though in November 2020, the issue of the BDF shooting suspected poachers was raised again when the BDF shot and killed four Namibians⁶ in a boat on the Chobe River, inside Botswana territory. The BDF claimed they were poachers but Namibian relatives of those killed said they were fishermen and pointed out that no ivory or guns had been found after the men were killed.

In the view of many sustainable-use conservationists across Southern Africa, Chase’s BBC story (which was picked up by other international news organisations) and his conclusion (that, since the APU was “disarmed,” elephants were in unprecedented danger) seemed calculated to generate sympathy for elephants – and timed just as a move to end Botswana’s four-year-old ban on hunting was gathering strength.

Elephant numbers, elephant hunting

Rural communities and their leaders and MPs (Members of Parliament) say that after hunting was banned in Botswana, in 2014, they suffered substantial increases in crop losses and property damage due to elephants, and in livestock losses to lions. Some communities also lost significant hunting-related revenue. As a result, a large majority in Parliament, of both the governing Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) and opposition MPs, have called on government to lift the hunting ban,⁷ particularly on hunting elephants.

Vice-President and Boteti West MP Slumber Tsogwane said that human-wildlife conflict is a major problem in areas bordering the wildlife-rich habitats of the Okavango Delta

and the Chobe and Boteti rivers. Elephant numbers have increased in these areas, he said, and they are causing unsustainable levels of damage to crops and property. The Vice-President emphasised,⁸ however, that if government did reinstate hunting, this “should not be regarded as a leeway to promoting poaching of elephants, as government would implement stringent measures to protect elephants and other wildlife species.”



Figure 1: Elephant near the Chobe River, Botswana. *Photo:* Keith Somerville

According to Maun East MP Kosta Markus, speaking in June 2018,⁹ available figures indicated that Botswana’s elephant population is 237,000 while the country’s carrying capacity had been calculated by the DWNP (in the early 1990s) to be 50,000 elephants.

The number 237,000 is widely regarded as inflated; it may instead be the elephant population of KAZA, the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, where Botswana, Namibia, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe converge. Figures extrapolated from the African Elephant Status Report 2016¹⁰ put elephant numbers for KAZA between 202,000 and 240,000. That survey also calculates Botswana’s elephant population at 131,626 with a margin of error that could mean a maximum of 144,134. Elephants Without Borders¹¹ now sets Botswana’s number at 126,114 with a possible maximum of 136,036.

In response to the request to allow hunting again, the Masisi Government appointed a ministerial committee to consult with all affected parties and to call traditional *kgotla* meetings, local assemblies where Botswana can question, challenge and even defeat suggested government policies. This committee was formed in late 2018 and its findings were made public in February 2019. The committee’s report, combined with further media coverage of Chase’s claimed catastrophic rise in elephant poaching, led to the politicisation of the issue of elephant conservation and management in Botswana. In May 2019, Botswana lifted the ban¹² on trophy hunting and set a quota for the number of elephants that could be hunted. In February 2020 an auction was held at which seven lots of 10 elephants each were sold in the capital Gaborone. The auction was limited to

hunting companies registered in Botswana. The government had issued a quota for the killing of 272 elephants in 2020. Hunting of elephants under the quota system resumed soon after but then was halted by the COVID-19 restrictions and the resulting lockdowns and virtual ending of tourism to Botswana for safaris or hunting that resulted.



Figure 2: Elephant damage in Northern Linyanti, Botswana. *Photo:* Keith Somerville

Before going further, it is worth looking briefly at historical and political contexts.

Conservation, militarisation & grievances

Between Independence, on September 30, 1966, and the imposition of the hunting ban by President Ian Khama in January 2014, Botswana had seen, thanks to favorable natural conditions, protection in national parks and strict quotas in hunting concessions, a significant rise in elephant numbers. At the time, elephant poaching was not widespread in Botswana. This led to a wildlife conservation plan built on three platforms: protected national parks, photo-tourism reserves and concessions where controlled hunting – for trophies and also for meat by communities such as the San/Bushmen, who use traditional weapons – was legal. In each hunting concession, the DWNP set annual quotas of game that could be harvested.

This wildlife plan fostered high-price/low-volume tourism, which earned substantial income for the country and for safari operators but, other than some employment, it provided little cash at the local level. However, many San (and Tswana) communities opted to sell their hunting quotas, set by government for species including elephants, to safari operators and to work for them as guides, trackers, skimmers, drivers and camp staff.

Then President Khama banned hunting. In this, he was supported and encouraged by his brother Tshekedi (the Environment Minister, responsible for the DWNP and APU) and by anti-hunting allies and business associates such as Dereck Joubert (the filmmaker and owner of the vast Selinda Concession) and Mike Chase and Elephants Without Borders. Just as Jomo Kenyatta had done in Kenya 40 years earlier, Khama unilaterally banned hunting with no consultation or public input and no legislation in Parliament. At the same

time, he gave military weapons to the APU and authorised them to shoot poachers, also without the permission of Parliament.

Government did not provide alternative livelihoods and many villages lost (literally) the lion's share of their income. In 2015, Steve Johnson of the Southern African Regional Environment Program told me of San communities along the Khwai River, outside the protected area of the Okavango, that had earned hundreds of thousands of dollars annually from selling their hunting quotas. In 2018, Chief Timex Moalosi of Sankuyo, north of Maun, told me that the hunting ban cost his villagers \$600,000 a year in lost income, and that they were suffering wildlife damage on a massive scale.

The hunting ban not only impoverished communities, it also led to more human-elephant (and human-lion) conflict. Hunting concessions had acted as buffers between game parks and farmland, and boreholes in the concessions (wells maintained by safari operators or local people) meant that wildlife need not move into farms in search of water.

Hunting provided other benefits as well: Safari operators supplied meat to villages and left partial carcasses in the bush, which meant that, if necessary, lions and other predators could find food without raiding livestock. The presence of hunting parties also deterred poachers.

These issues were ignored by the Khama Administration, which moved away from the democratic and consultative traditions of Botswana and became increasingly authoritarian and unaccountable. It began to crack down on journalists, critics and freedom of speech. In several visits, from 1993 to 2018, as a journalist and then an academic researcher (as well as a camping-safari aficionado), I saw how ordinary Batswana and conservationists, local and foreign, had become wary of expressing any opinion not in line with President Khama's policies. Researchers feared losing their permits if they were seen to be "off message" by the government.

Another worrying trend was the evidence of growing cronyism and the development of a powerful elite around the Khama brothers and their intelligence chief and business associate Isaac Kgosi. Kgosi has since been sacked and arrested¹³ on charges of corruption.

In April 2018, by law, Khama stepped down after two terms in office. He had tried to arrange for his brother Tshekedi to succeed him, but the Botswana Democratic Party would not accept that. Instead, Mokgweetsi Masisi was elected President. As a fallback, Khama expected Masisi to appoint Tshekedi to be Vice-President. When he did not, Khama turned against President Masisi.

A new day, a new outlook

The power struggle in Botswana is still going on, with national elections coming up in October 2019. But many Batswana, and political and conservation commentators, are relieved that the country appears to be returning to the more accountable and democratic ways of the pre-Khama era. One of the most encouraging aspects of the current furor over elephants is that, as evidenced by the appointment of the committee tasked to study hunting, government is now listening to citizens again.

In *Africa Geographic*, carnivore specialist and human-predator conflict consultant Gail Potgieter¹⁴ compared the reactions of Western animal-advocacy NGOs and the international media with those of ordinary Batswana to the proposed return to hunting:

“Western news media seems to mourn the change of presidency in Botswana, and yet in Botswana itself this is not the case. To find out why, perhaps it is necessary to look at the apparent difference in governance style of these two presidents. Masisi consulted with his people by setting up this [hunting] task team specifically for Social Dialogue.

“The broad community consultation process was actioned at the request of parliament, in recognition of calls by citizens and local scientists to re-think the hunting ban.¹⁵ This may not seem revolutionary to outsiders, as this is surely what presidents of democratic governments should do. But for the citizens of Botswana, this simple act of consultation¹⁶ was seemingly both a breath of fresh air and a blast from the past. The spirit of democracy and consultation is what made Botswana a successful nation; and some say that this was sorely missed during Khama’s reign.”

These sentiments were echoed in Botswana’s *Mmegi* newspaper by Masego Madzwamuse and Liz Rihoy,¹⁷ who also contrasted the focus on elephant advocacy by the Western media and NGOs with the importance, in Botswana, of accountability and the need to consider the human cost of wildlife damage.

The Khama brothers opposed this return to consultative politics and President Masisi’s policy of listening to the people on hunting and their wildlife problems. As Environment Minister, Tshekedi Khama had fought for the hunting ban; in December 2018, seven months after his brother left the Presidency, he lost his ministerial post. In the same month, the Botswana government decided not to renew Mike Chase’s “large herbivore” (i.e. elephant) research permit.¹⁸ With this, and the committee report and the doubts about Chase’s poaching report, the bitter divisions over hunting were now openly on display.

The committee & poaching

The ministerial report on hunting was made public by the government on February 21, 2019; it contained a number of recommendations:

From the submissions made by the communities and other stakeholders, the Committee as assigned by Your Excellency, found it necessary to propose the following recommendations, stated here in summary form.

- * Hunting ban be lifted.
- * Develop a legal framework that will create an enabling environment for growth of safari hunting industry.
- * Manage Botswana elephant population within its historic range.
- * Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) should undertake an effective community outreach program within the elephant range for Human Elephant Conflict mitigation.
- * Strategically placed human-wildlife conflict fences be constructed in key hotspot areas.
- * Game ranches be demarcated to serve as buffers between communal and wildlife areas.
- * Compensation for damage caused by wildlife, *ex gratia* amounts and the list of species that attract compensation be reviewed. In addition, other models that alleviate compensation burden on Government be considered.
- * All wildlife migratory routes that are not beneficial to the country’s conservation efforts be closed.
- * The Kgalagadi southwesterly antelope migratory route into South Africa should be closed by demarcating game ranches between the communal areas and Kgalagadi Wildlife Management Areas.
- * Regular but limited elephant culling be introduced and establishment of elephant meat canning, including production of pet food and processing into other byproducts.

The Masisi Administration reacted, as noted above, by lifting the hunting suspension, setting a quota for the numbers of elephants that could be hunted and auctioning off the first set of licences – only to be interrupted by COVID-19. Post COVID-19 there will

undoubtedly be a strong desire on the part of the government, local communities who derive income from legal hunting and hunting operators to resume hunting and to take full advantage of the quotas. New regulations and other actions – to reduce human-wildlife conflict and to restore income from hunting to local communities – are likely when tourism and hunting resume fully.

The recommendation to cull elephants and process their meat for pet food was the most controversial and drew immediate reaction from animal-rights advocates such as Dereck Joubert, who called it a “Blood law”¹⁹ that would lead to the killing of “massive numbers of elephants.” The BBC²⁰ continued to adhere to Chase’s story of elephant poaching and seemed to reject (mainly through the tone of its reporting) the government’s new pro-hunting stance; it too highlighted the pet-food angle, as did CNN,²¹ Britain’s *The Telegraph*²² and many other international news outlets. The highly emotive reporting largely ignored the fact that these were still just recommendations, not policy or legislation, and that many observers expect that the culling proposal in particular may not be implemented because of possible damage to Botswana’s tourist industry and its international reputation.

The resumption of legal hunting was welcomed by communities in Ngamiland and by the majority of MPs. The suspension of hunting had been decreed by Ian Khama with no vote in Parliament and no legislation. One hopes that once the auctions and hunting resume, in the process, the ministers responsible and the DWNP creates formula for scientifically based hunting quotas and fair shares of hunting revenue. As before, hunting concessions should not only act as buffers against wildlife intrusion, to reduce damage to crops, livestock and property, but also provide income and livelihoods at the community level to encourage the conservation of habitat and a diversity of wildlife.

The poaching dispute worsens

However, while government works on this, it still has to contend with the growing row over poaching. Back in September 2018, Mike Chase had reported 87 elephant carcasses and said that many of them had been killed illegally. In December, Elephants Without Borders submitted its 2018 Dry Season Survey,²³ an aerial study of elephants and other wildlife in northern Botswana, and this time it reported 128 “fresh/recent” elephant carcasses, “many of which showed clear signs of [having been] poached,” and from this extrapolated a total of 837 such elephant deaths.

The report was not supposed to be made public, yet the BBC got a copy. In January 2019, Mike Chase took Alastair Leithead on a helicopter flyover of the area. Leithead told me he saw 66 dead elephants from the air, and that Chase had “verified” to him that these were mainly victims of poaching and that the carcasses were anywhere from fresh to one to two years old – but offered no information on how any of this had been determined. In an extensive follow-up BBC report in February,²⁴ Chase is quoted as saying, “We saw with our own eyes 157 confirmed poached elephants. We estimate that the total poached in the last year is at least 385 and probably far more because that is based on what we actually saw and have not had time or finances to visit all carcasses on the ground.” In addition, EWB claimed a “six-fold increase in the number of fresh or recent elephant carcasses in northern Botswana amid obvious signs of poaching.”

The director of DWNP told the BBC that he was unimpressed by these numbers: “Nobody can deny that elephants are being killed in Botswana, but those reported by Mr. Chase had died from natural causes and retaliatory killings.”

Quoting sources on both sides of the issue, the BBC story includes terms such as “false and misleading,” “unsubstantiated and misleading,” “hoax,” “traitor and liar” and says that Chase has received death threats.

If we examine Chase’s claims against carcass reports from MIKE, the respected CITES-linked Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants programme, the observed counts,

whether 66 or 87 or even 157, are within the expected range and would not suggest a catastrophic rise in illegal elephant deaths over this period. MIKE figures for 2004-2016 in Botswana are:

Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)												
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
73	15	11	10	11	12	37	42	35	15	23	19	12
	3	1	1	3	0			1	6	9	7	1

What is harder to explain, and has been flatly rejected as incorrect by the Botswana government, is EWB’s Dry Season Survey report of 837 “fresh/recent” elephant carcasses and a 600% increase in deaths and poaching. A government press release, dated February 24, 2019, questioned EWB’s estimates, noting that there is no great change in the country’s overall elephant numbers that would suggest a serious rise in poaching:

The figure reported by [EWB] in the report on the number of elephants in their survey area is not statistically different from the 2014 survey. The only reasonable conclusion that can be inferred from the authors’ statistical analysis is that the population has remained stable between the two surveys. The results of the survey are at odds with statements attributed to Dr Mike Chase in an interview with BBC.²⁵ It is regrettable that Dr Chase, in a report purporting to be scientific, includes an astonishing number of pictures of dead elephants, 63 pages to be precise. This is definitely not standard practice in aerial survey report writing. By their own admission, only a portion of all carcasses observed during the aerial survey were verified by helicopter. The authors report that only 33 out of a total of 128 suspected poaching events were actually confirmed by ground verification.

The government also took issue with the methodology used to estimate total deaths and likely poaching:

“[T]he authors reported a carcass ratio of 2% in 2010 and 7% in 2014, with 8.1% reported for 2018. The 2014 figure is almost 4 times higher than the 2010 figure, but the authors did not sound the alarm at the time. Instead at that time, the authors considered Botswana an elephant safe haven. Surely, greater concerns should have been expressed after their 2014 survey than now, when the ratio is only slightly higher.”

The government’s observation that, although carcass sightings rose after 2014 (when the hunting ban came into force), no alarm was sounded by EWB until a change in the no-hunting policy was likely, is supported by my own experience. Beginning in 2015, I wrote a series of articles for *African Arguments*, *Commonwealth Opinion*, *Talking Humanities* and *The Conversation*²⁶ that called attention to a rise in poaching after the hunting ban. During my research trips to Botswana after 2014, Amos Ramokati (of the DWNP in Maun), Michael Flyman (organiser of the DWNP wildlife censuses) and Baboloki Autletswe (head of the Kalahari Conservation Society) all told me that poaching had increased since hunting was banned, and that Botswana were no longer cooperating with anti-poaching teams as they had previously. Instead, more rural people were helping ivory poachers from Zambia and Namibia and were themselves engaging in poaching for bushmeat. (See my book *Ivory. Power and Poaching in Africa* for details.) Flyman said that known elephant poaching had risen from about 30 to 35 animals annually before the ban to more than 50 per year since 2014.

In 2015, I contacted Mike Chase to ask about poaching levels and the possibility that the rise was linked to the hunting ban, but he was then busy in Kenya. From 2016 onwards, Chase declined to reply to e-mails from me and (on my behalf) from veteran

conservationist John Hanks requesting his views on the evident rise in poaching. He had been pictured with carcasses of recently killed elephants in mid-2016 but did not then flag this as a potential crisis. It was only after the change in government, with the impending end of the Khama Regime and the strong likelihood that hunting would be legalised again, that the opportunity arose to try to link the (false) story of disarming the APU to an increase in poaching. Chase has openly opposed the restoration of legal hunting.

Even taking a conservative estimate of around 130,000 for the elephant population of Botswana, EWB’s carcass figures do not show a serious threat – especially as the 130,000 figure is part of the 202,000 to 240,000 population of KAZA. Elephants are highly mobile and move into and out of Botswana’s main elephant habitat in Ngamiland. (Also, given the high levels of poaching in the southern Angolan and southwestern Zambian parts of KAZA, elephants know that Botswana is a relatively safe haven.)

The eminent Zimbabwean conservationist Brian Child, now teaching at the University of Florida, flatly says that “88 dead elephants are a storm in a teacup” and underlines this with the following calculation of the carcass ratio from the reported finds of elephant carcasses against the total estimated elephant population, alongside annual population growth rate:

Dead Elephant	880	88 (x 10% sample)
Elephant population	130,000	conservative estimate, possibly an under-estimate
Carcass Ratio	0.7%	
Population Growth	5.0%	ca. 6,500 elephants per annum
Population Doubling Time	14 Years	Calculation: 70/5%

Fears of poaching raised by rhino killings and elephants deaths in 2019 and 2020

The issue of poaching was kept in high profile in 2019 and 2020 by a massive rise in rhino poaching in the Okavango Delta,²⁷ with over 50 rare black rhinos (which had been reintroduced to the region, having been poached out in the 1990s) killed for the horns in what was supposed to be a heavily protected area, suggesting incompetence by the anti-poaching units or the army or even an inside job with those protecting the rhinos in some way involved in their killing. The rhinos had to be dehorned and captured (being moved to a small heavily protected area to try to prevent further poaching). Then elephants came into the headlines when hundreds of elephant carcasses were found in the northern panhandle area of the Okavango Delta between March and July 2020. The carcasses were found in a relatively small area around Seronga and then 22 were found in a small forest reserve near Zimbabwe’s Hwange National Park. At first there was suspicion that poaching was to blame, with poison as a possible cause of death. But all the elephants still had their tusks and tests ruled out shooting or poison, Then it was thought they had been weakened by a long drought or killed by anthrax. In the end,²⁸ a series of tests on tissue from the dead animals led the Botswana DWNP to conclude that toxins made by microscopic algae in water, called cyanobacteria – a cyanotoxin, was responsible and had been ingested when elephants drank substantial amounts of water from infected waterholes.



Figure 3: Tracks of where a tusk was dragged from thick mopane bush down to the swamp.
Photo: Keith Somerville

Hope for tomorrow

It is clear that there has been a rise in elephant poaching in Botswana since hunting was banned in 2014, but not a significant one; and it is also clear that this progressive but modest rise in poaching began when the suspension of hunting came into effect and local communities lost substantial income, meat and jobs. The present controversies over hunting, conservation policies and the threat of poaching are a complex (and evolving) mix of politics and power struggles within Botswana. However, these domestic matters are made worse by the Western media's tendency to favour animal advocacy over science and to ignore the views of African governments – and the experience of people who have to coexist with wildlife.

Increasingly, however, in Africa and elsewhere, conservationists and wildlife scientists, universities and international organisations (like the International Union for Conservation of Nature and its Sustainable Use & Livelihoods Specialist Group) recognise the importance of listening to and working with local communities. Sustainable conservation and development solutions must empower, incentivise and bring income to rural people, while conserving habitats and species that would disappear if land were taken from wildlife and turned into farms.

E-mail: k.somerville@kent.ac.uk

NOTES

This paper was originally published by Conservation Frontlines:
<https://www.conservationfrontlines.org/>

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45396394>
2. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cecil-Lion-British-media-prejudice-ebook/dp/B07656NNYL>

3. <https://africasustainableconservation.com/2018/09/04/botswana-government-denies-87-elephants-dead-the-plot-thickens/>
 4. <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/botswana-hits-back-at-critics-on-anti-poaching-policy-20180909>
 5. <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-136399.html>
 6. <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/namibia-citizens-up-in-arms-over-botswanas-shoot-to-kill-approach-20201112>
 7. <https://theconversation.com/botswana-set-to-weigh-in-on-whether-ban-on-elephant-hunting-should-be-lifted-99379>
 8. <https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/1719472494802068>
 9. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=76402&dir=2018/june/25>
 10. https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/SSC-OP-060_A.pdf
 11. <http://elephantswithoutborders.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2018-Botswana-report-final-version-compressed-upload.pdf>
 12. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-48374880>
 13. <https://thevoicebw.com/the-arrest-of-isaac-kgosi/>
 14. <https://africageographic.com/blog/opinion-human-wildlife-conflict-specialist-botswana-found-voice-will-listen/>
 15. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=76562&dir=2018/july/06>
 16. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=76631&dir=2018/july/13>
 17. <https://africasustainableconservation.com/2019/03/05/botswana-democracy-human-rights-consultation-and-conservation-management/>
 18. http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=79846&dir=2019%2Fmarch%2F01&fbclid=IwAR2Pyp2DeobsShBA-Vlo-fYFF4IXzV_545kjqL1ObvkNTSoRiKsjnWxvINw
 19. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/6690-joubert-opposes-%E2%80%98blood-law%E2%80%99%E2%80%93as-botswana-moves-to-lift-hunting-ban.html>
 20. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-47330414>
 21. <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/22/africa/botswana-elephants-hunting-intl-scli/index.html>
 22. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/02/22/botswana-may-lift-elephant-hunting-ban-turn-culled-animals-pet/>
 23. <http://elephantswithoutborders.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2018-Botswana-report-final-version-compressed-upload.pdf>
 24. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-47321241>
 25. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45396394>
 26. <https://africanarguments.org/2015/07/23/no-longer-at-ease-clouds-on-the-horizon-for-botswanas-conservation-success-story-by-keith-somerville/>
- <https://commonwealth-opinion.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2013/botswanas-jumbo-dilemma-the-expanding-elephant-population-and-the-environment-by-keith-somerville/>
- <https://talkinghumanities.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2016/10/06/botswanas-elephants-and-conservation-are-things-starting-to-fall-apart/>
- <https://theconversation.com/botswana-set-to-weigh-in-on-whether-ban-on-elephant-hunting-should-be-lifted-99379>

27. <https://www.global-geneva.com/botswanas-rhino-poaching-crisis-covid-19-increases-the-pressure>
28. <https://talkinghumanities.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2020/09/10/why-are-elephants-dying-in-zimbabwe-and-botswana/>