

# **Wildlife Tourism and Human-Wildlife Conflicts in Zimbabwe: Causes, Compensation, and Community Perceptions**

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## **Abstract**

The chapter examines human-wildlife tourism conflicts (HWCs) in local communities surrounding Matobo national park, Zimbabwe. HWCs continue to soar in Zimbabwe, presenting multiple policy challenges on wildlife tourism policy makers. Limited empirical studies have examined wildlife compensation schemes and community perception nexus within the broad HWCs precinct with special reference to communities adjacent to Matobo national park. Past research predominantly decoupled causes of HWCs, wildlife damage compensation schemes, and overall communities' perception on wildlife tourism and compensation schemes, which has not helped policy makers and wildlife tourism proprietors. The chapter analysed the main causes of HWCs in Zimbabwe; examined wildlife damage compensation measures; and determined overall local communities' perceptions on compensation schemes and wildlife tourism in Zimbabwe. A qualitative approach was adopted in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected wildlife tourism stakeholders. Results showed that wild animals' threats on human life, interference with community life, and damage on community residents' source of wealth are major causes of HWCs in Zimbabwe. Additionally, findings confirmed the availability of an exclusive and non-grass root driven compensation framework. Overall, wildlife tourism benefits and opportunities mediate local communities' perceptions. The study is significant as it integrates critical HWCs themes to enhance understanding community perception outcomes. It also contributes on the evolving and topical HWCs issue by amplifying the wildlife damage compensation aspect underrepresented in previous studies focusing on communities in the western region of Zimbabwe. The limitation of the study is that it focuses on the Zimbabwean wildlife tourism-human conflict experience.