

HIGH FIVE CLUB

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Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation, Zambia



The increasing human population growth, with expanding settlements and farms and the corresponding increase in demand for natural resources, has resulted in an increase in conflict between wildlife and people living near protected areas in Africa. In Zambia's Luangwa Valley there are significant numbers of rural people living in close proximity to wildlife, especially elephant populations, which has translated into amplified conflicts including crop raiding and property damage.

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Elephants are not only under attack from poachers for ivory and bushmeat but face additional threats from people as a result of their crop raiding and property damage, resulting in injury or



death to both people and elephants. Local subsistence farmers, in a single night of their crop fields being raided by elephants, can also lose their food security for the next 6 months leading to extreme hunger and starvation in these poor communities.

To address this rampant Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC), a local Zambian NGO called Conservation South Luangwa (CSL), launched back in 2008 a human-

wildlife mitigation conflict programme. The overarching goal of this programme has been to reduce the impacts of elephant crop and property damages, thereby reducing elephant killing driven by community retaliatory behavior. At the same time the aim is to reduce poverty by improving food security and livelihoods. The programme supports local people to protect their staple crop fields in an efficient and systematic way, to foster the production of cash crops which are unattractive to elephants within the area and to encourage safe storage of people's harvested staple crops in elephant-proof grain stores.

CSL has worked extensively with communities over the years to put in place a variety of mitigation methods including chilli patrols, alternative crop production, chilli blasting, chilli fences, chilli brick-making, elephant restraining fences, trial conflict free zones and watch towers. The use of local radio to educate communities living in close proximity to wildlife is also being trialled. While the HWC problem is gigantic, efforts to reduce it have been somewhat effective.

High Five Club Support:

Two HWC techniques that we have found to be quite successful in helping to mitigate conflicts are the planting of alternative crops and storing grains (maize, millet, rice, sorghum, etc.) in elephant-

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safe grain stores. High Five Club has previously supported CSL to construct elephant-proof grain stores, and we are thrilled that this year we have together joined hands to enable CSL to expand their alternative crops initiative. With funding from the High Five Club of \$3,200 (£2,562.48), CSL has worked with local farmers to plant elephant-friendly crops like chillis, turmeric and lemongrass,

rather than maize, their staple food. Since elephants don't like the taste of these alternative crops, they can be produced on a small scale then sold to CSL, with the profits they make going towards purchasing their staple food and covering other household needs. On behalf of the farmers, CSL facilitates the sale of these alternative crops to local safari lodges and shops in Mfuwe and a Zambian-owned company, Rivonia Farm Products Limited. Through this alternative crops programme local



communities have avoided conflict with elephants by actively managing their crop selection and hence discouraging the crop and property damaging behaviour of elephants. Chilli, lemongrass and turmeric work as an effective elephant repellent and as a secure cash-crop for local farmers. **A win-win situation for both people and wildlife!**

Our funds have been used



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to support:

- Transport and supplies for local meetings, trainings and workshops with women's groups, farmers, CRBs, VAGs
- Purchase of four treadle pumps (one for a women's group in each chiefdom - Kakumbi, Malama, Mnkhanya, Nsefu)
- Equipment and supplies for harvesting/purchasing/processing/packaging/selling of alternative crops (scales for weighing crops, harvest bags, processing supplies, packaging supplies, etc.)
- Transport for monitoring, purchasing and hauling alternative crops to CSL's base (vehicle hire, fuel, vehicle maintenance, bicycle spares, etc.)
- Travel for meetings in Mfuwe, Chipata and Lusaka to expand markets for alternative crop sales (transportation, food and accommodation)

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