



Community-Based Conservation Strategies in Eastern Zimbabwe: An Analysis of Endangered Wildlife Protection Efforts

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Abstract

Community-based conservation strategies have gained traction as a viable approach for protecting wildlife in Eastern Zimbabwe, particularly with endangered species such as the African wild dog and the black rhinoceros. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative interviews with local stakeholders and quantitative data from environmental surveys conducted across selected protected areas in Eastern Zimbabwe. Community participation significantly increased the reporting of illegal activities such as poaching by over 30%, indicating a heightened awareness and vigilance against wildlife crime. However, financial constraints remain a critical barrier to ongoing conservation efforts. While community-based strategies show promise in enhancing local engagement with wildlife protection, they face significant logistical and resource limitations that need addressing through targeted interventions and policy support. Policy makers should prioritise funding for enforcement activities and infrastructure development within communities. Additionally, collaborative frameworks between government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are essential to ensure long-term sustainability of conservation initiatives.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, Community-Led Conservation, Participatory Approaches, Ecosystem-Based Management, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Ecotourism, Sustainable Livelihoods*

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