

Project Update: October 2012

Predators and predation of livestock and stocked game are an emotive and continuous problem for farmers in Botswana. Botswana is one of the core areas for predator populations in Southern Africa but large predators are often in conflict with livestock farmers and with the relatively new and developing game ranching industry. The game ranchers' livelihood, the stocked game, are the predator's natural prey, therefore depredation can be substantial and difficult to prevent.

This research will conduct interviews with game ranchers from around Botswana to discuss the extent and causes of conflict between commercial farmers and predators and the potential solutions to enable co-existence. Interviews have begun, starting with Gaborone the capital city and the Tuli Block farmland in South East Botswana. The interviews conducted so far with both cattle and game ranchers show that leopard are the species causing the highest number of stock losses and conflict whilst brown hyaena, spotted hyaena, baboon and cheetah cause occasional losses. One of the biggest issues for the area is poaching and snaring. Large numbers of snares are regularly found and removed by farm workers and the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks, with many farms employing their own anti-poaching officers. Snares being indiscriminate catch and kill all species including game and cattle.

Interviews will continue to be conducted in different areas of Botswana to compare the issues facing ranchers across the whole industry and to enable comparison between geographical regions.

Rufford has supported this research by providing funding towards project running costs.

This has enabled Botswana's game ranchers an opportunity to voice their concerns and potential solutions towards co-existing with predators.



Brown hyaena with a snare around its neck. The photo was taken with a motion camera by Dr Zsolts funded by Tachila, equipment provided by Unchartered Africa courtesy.