



CHOBE



Conservation – Community – Wildlife – World Heritage – History – Tourism

CONSERVATION

Tourism, beef or both?

Is it either or both? Rethinking productivity in the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area

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The Wildlife Conservation Society's AHEAD (Animal & Human Health for the Environment and Development) programme, supported by USAID, USFWS and the Rockefeller Foundation, is working to

develop new approaches to mitigating animal disease-related conflicts between live-stock agriculture and southern Africa's vision for trans-frontier conservation areas (or TFCAs). Within these landscapes, farmers sharing the land with wildlife are faced with a serious dilemma: they cannot sell their healthy, free-range beef to regional or international markets.

Current international trade practices dictate that they cannot protect wildlife and, at the same time, farm cattle in the same general area



Elephant and giraffe on the banks of the Chobe River, Chobe National Park, Botswana. The success or failure of transfrontier conservation area initiatives like KAZA has significant implications for the world's largest population of elephant



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because of disease concerns. If they want to export their beef to wealthy nations, they will have to get rid of wildlife like buffalo or put up environmentally damaging veterinary cordon fences.

But what should rural farmers choose when trying to lift themselves and their communities out of poverty: protect the wildlife and pursue opportunities related to ecotourism and trophy hunting, or turn their backs on conservation and sell their cattle into the beef export

market? The truth is that there is a win-win solution.

AHEAD's *Beyond Fences* programme is working with regional and international partners to find new approaches to the safe trade of beef and beef products, based on the safety of the meat production process itself rather than focusing on where a particular cow has come from.

This policy work is leading to new, non-fence based ways to manage commercially

important diseases like foot-and-mouth that address this land-use conflict, with important implications for (for example) the world's largest remaining population of elephant – the approximately 250,000 elephant that call the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA their home.

This prime conservation real estate spans five countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe), and at more than 440,000 km² is similar in size to the north-eastern United States, or twice

the size of Great Britain.

Given the importance of both the livestock and wildlife sectors to many countries across Africa, it is time to reevaluate how best to manage risks from diseases like foot-and-mouth in ways that help Africa's pastoralists and farmers, do not threaten free-ranging wildlife and associated economic opportunities, and also provide confidence to beef importing countries that the products they are buying pose minimal threats to their own agricultural sector.



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