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TITLE RESEARCH PROJECT	Temporal And Spatial Interactions Of African Elephants And Cattle And Their Impacts On Agricultural Practices At The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area Human/Wildlife Interface

Abstract

Livestock rearing and cropping are central to livelihoods of small scale farmers adjacent to GLTFCA, Zimbabwe. Human wildlife conflicts threaten conservation efforts and agricultural production at this interface. Elephants damage crops and compete for grazing and browse with livestock. Human wildlife conflicts have been investigated for decades, but understanding both social and ecological determinants remains a key challenge to define realistic management options in a context of increasing human and elephant densities. To this end, questions on whether elephants influence agricultural systems or what socio-ecological determinants drive conflicts remains poorly understood. The primary objective of this study is to model the dynamics of elephant/livestock interaction at the interface area, for purposes of predicting impacts on crop production at the wildlife-livestock interface. Accordingly, we will combine ecological and sociological methodologies, in a spatially explicit multi-scale study, to focus on elephants/ cattle interactions explaining conflicts on crop production. This study is expected to produce an inventory of socio-ecological aspects of human wildlife conflict relating to crop production at the GLTFCA. This study will offer new insights into the spatial variables of human–elephant conflict and provide guidance for land-use planning initiatives and conservation managers.