

THE TRUTH ABOUT: AFRICAN WILD DOGS



Photo: R. Lines



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STATUS:

- Most endangered large mammal in Africa*
 - Most endangered large mammal in Namibia
 - National population of perhaps just 300
 - Protected species under Namibian Constitution
 - Now extinct from 24 of 39 sub-Saharan countries
- *Except for highly endemic Ethiopian wolf

MAIN CONSERVATION THREATS:

- Human persecution, habitat loss, road kills, disease contracted from domestic dogs & loss of wild prey

CONFLICT WITH FARMERS:

- Farmers accuse wild dogs of killing too much livestock
- But wild game are natural prey as with all predators
- Wild dogs kill only what they need to survive
- When wild game numbers are depleted wild dogs occasionally kill livestock if husbandry is poor
- Losses are often hugely exaggerated

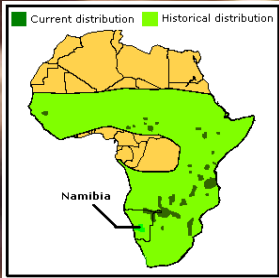
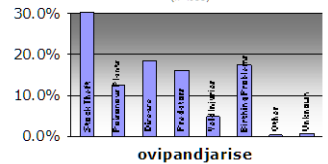


Photo: A. Alberts

ROLE OF PREDATORS:

- Removing weak, old & diseased animals from wild population, improving health & fitness of wild game
- By reducing large predator numbers, smaller predators (e.g. Jackals) increase, causing severe small stock losses
- Predators form part of the rich cultural traditions inherited by local communities from their ancestors

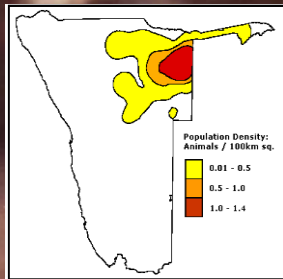
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- Only found in North-East of Namibia
- Only 5% of range within protected areas
- Most wild dogs live on farmlands
- Considerable transboundary movement across the border with Botswana.

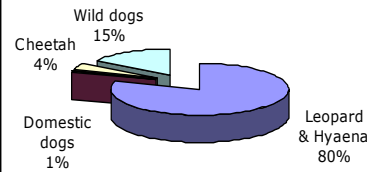
LIVESTOCK LOSSES:

- Research shows that wild dogs are responsible for just 2-3% of livestock losses
- Stock theft, disease, poisonous plants, birthing problems & drought are much more important causes of livestock death

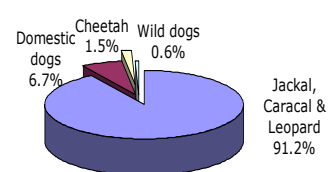


Stander, 2004

Cattle losses to Predators



Small Stock Losses to Predators



ECOLOGY:

- Live in close family units, much like humans
 - Have very large ranges in Namibia (>2000km²)
 - Natural prey = duiker, steenbok, hares & calves of kudu & eland
 - Chase prey to exhaustion, killing it very quickly
- This is not cruel, but very efficient & specialised*



Photo: R. Lines

HOW MANY DOGS?

- A wild dog pack can easily move 50km in 1 day
- One pack reported in 3 places, often reported as 3 packs because numbers are hard to count accurately
- Farmers insist several packs are using the area when the reverse is true with one pack using many farms
- False numbers often used to motivate persecution

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFYING LIVESTOCK LOSSES CORRECTLY

- ✓ Only by identifying the true stock loss cause can the right management steps be taken to minimise future losses
- ✓ Refer to livestock management guides by R.E.S.T, CCF or NARREC to help identify stock loss causes
- ✓ Speak to your Farmers Associations about support in identifying livestock loss causes

IMPROVED LIVESTOCK HUSBANDRY & WILDLIFE

MANAGEMENT: DECREASES LOSSES, INCREASES PROFITS

- ✓ All predators are afraid of people so keep people near livestock at all times
 - ✓ Keep livestock near homestead & kraaled (dusk to dawn) when predators feed
- Associated benefits include: rapid detection of disease outbreaks, injured animals, birthing problems, bulling effectiveness, poisonous plants & very importantly, reduced stock theft*
- ✓ Help your conservancy reduce poaching of wild game to provide more natural prey species for predators

IF YOU SEE WILD DOGS IN YOUR AREA:

- ✓ Be more attentive of your livestock & ensure herders are present at all times
- ✓ Tell your neighbours to do the same & inform your local Conservancy members

