

11

Indigenous knowledge used in the management of human–wildlife conflict along the borders of the Etosha National Park

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INTRODUCTION

Humans and wildlife in Africa have coexisted for millennia, but conflicts between them have become common phenomena (Shemwetta & Kideghesho, 2000). Worldwide, borders between humans and wild spaces have become blurred, particularly those surrounding protected areas. As a result, wildlife frequently moves out of protected areas and enters nearby human settlements (Ogra, 2008). In addition, the frequency of human–wildlife conflicts (HWCs) in these areas has grown in recent decades, largely because of the increase in human population, the expansion of human activities and changes in wildlife management systems (Graham, Beckerman, & Thirgood, 2005).

In this chapter, we describe how commercial and communal farmers who live along the borders of Etosha National Park (ENP) use their indigenous knowledge in dealing with HWC. We interviewed 48 farmers from cattle posts in the communal areas north of ENP and 51 commercial farmers on private land south of ENP through a semi-structured questionnaire. The majority of farmers indicated that they have techniques and strategies to protect their livestock, crops, families and property from being harmed by problem wildlife. Understanding the indigenous knowledge that farmers have to deal with HWC is important for improving wildlife management systems in Namibia.