

# Cawston Game Ranch

## Zimbabwe

### Facts and Figures

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**On behalf of**

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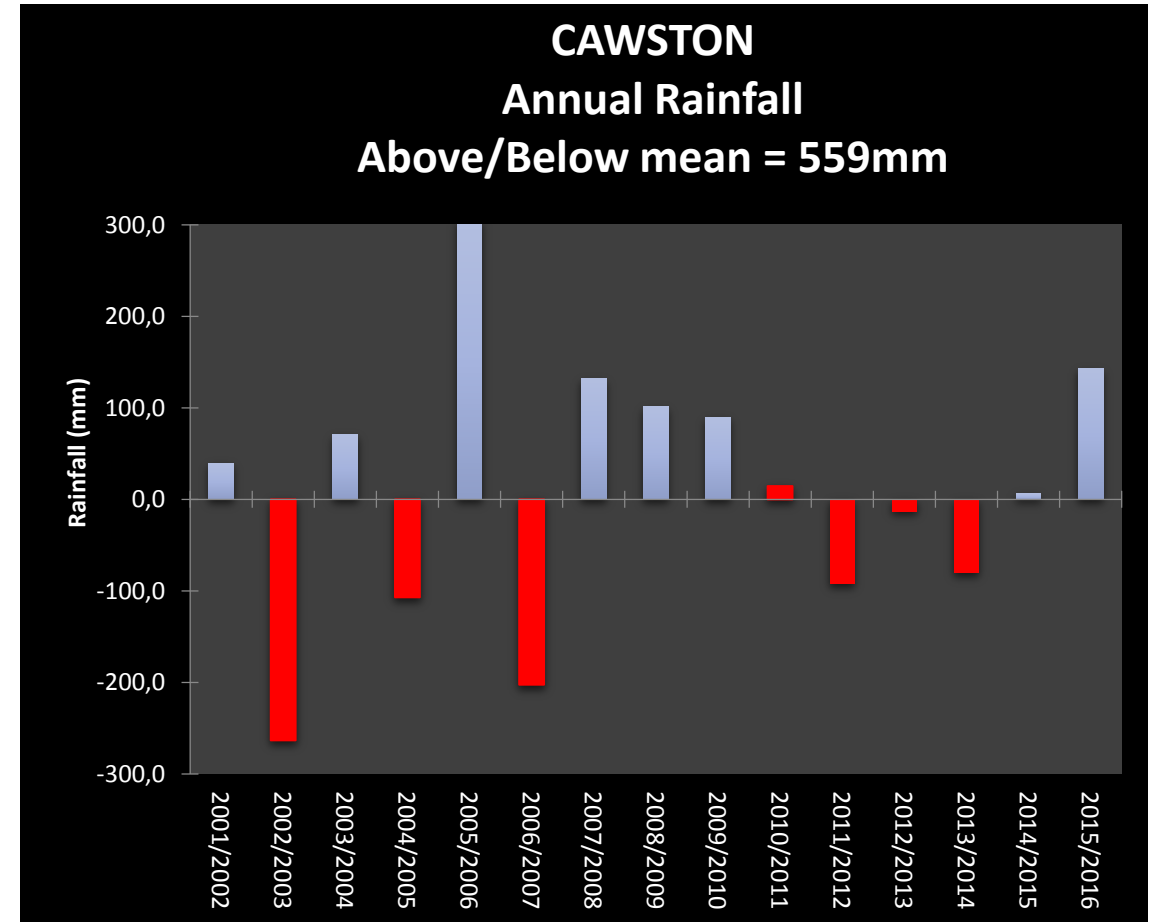




## History of game ranching in Zimbabwe

- Earliest experiments on Doddieburn Ranch south of Bulawayo in 1960's
- Policy and legislation reviewed in 1973 – 1974 culminating in 1975 Parks and Wildlife Act
  - Devolved right to use wildlife to private land owners
  - Expansion of game ranching as a land use on private land from 1975 – 1995
- Zimbabwe independence in 1980
  - Legislation promulgated to devolve Appropriate Authority status to Communal Areas
  - CAMPFIRE programme initiated in 1982
  - Establishment of wildlife Conservancies (Save, Bvumba, Chiredzi)
- Policy reform in 1990's
  - Use rights on private land clawed back with introduction of S.I. 26 by the Parks and Wildlife Authority.
- Fast track land reform introduced in 2000
  - Decline of game ranching industry 2000 – 2015
  - Hyper-inflation: 2002 – 2008
  - Dollarization of economy in 2009

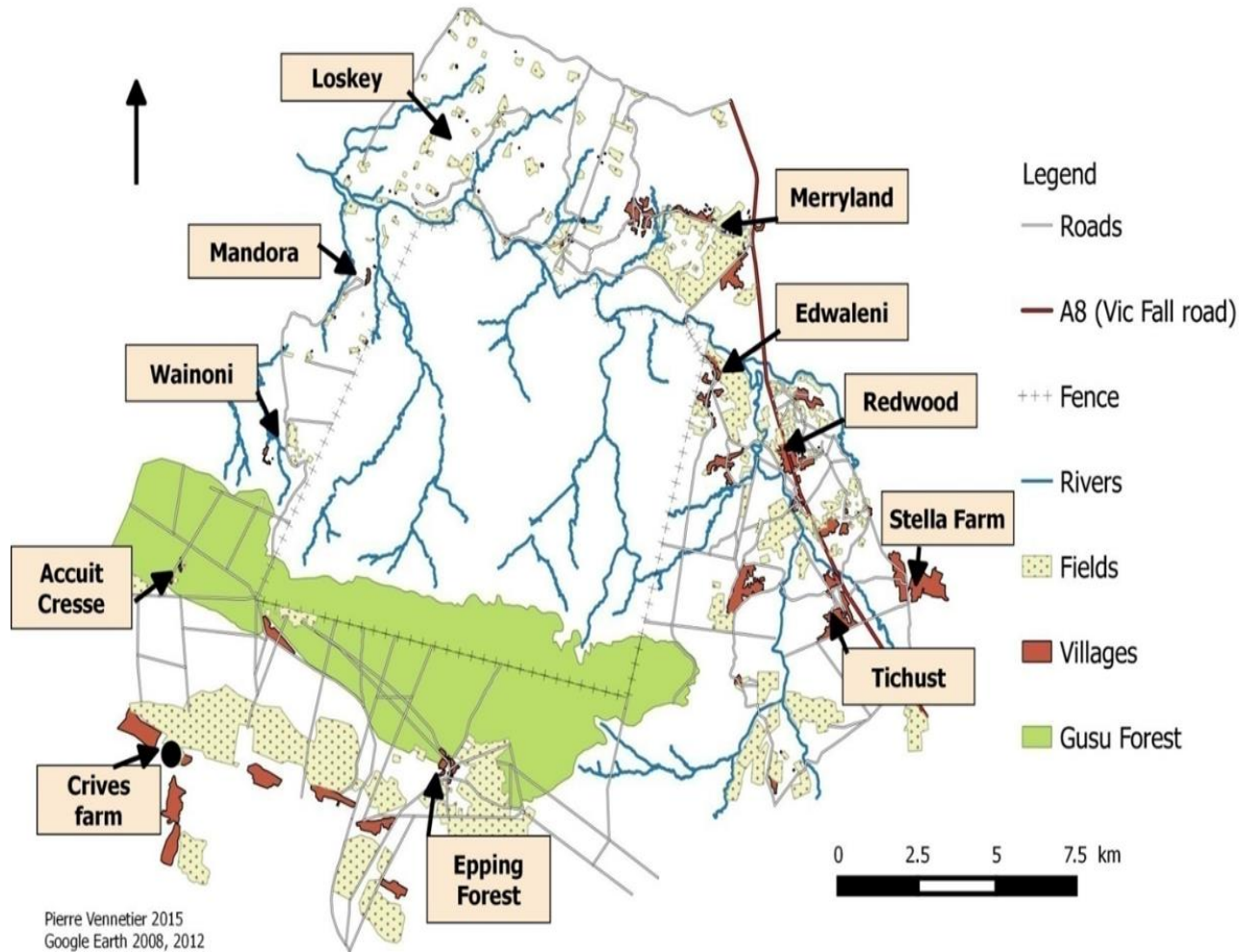
## Physical features and location of Cawston



- North western Zimbabwe, Matabeleland North Province
- Semi-arid eco-region IV, suitable for extensive livestock, limited arable soils.
- High rainfall variability



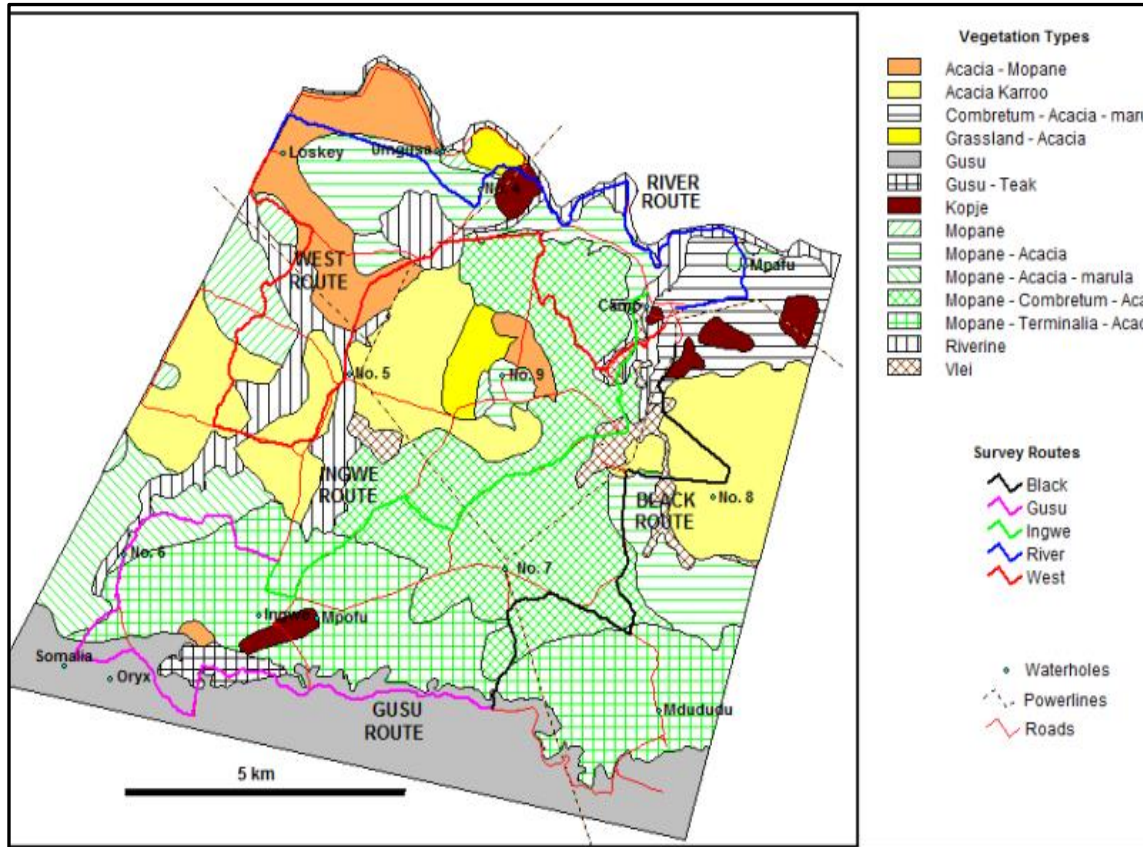
## Peripheral socio-economic environment



- Ranch surrounded by >1000 resettlement and subsistence farmers and their families.
  - >1800 cattle - less than half the families own cattle.
- Wildlife in very low numbers (warthog, small mammals).
- No large mammal species or carnivores
- Limited social services available (clinics, transport)
- General level of education Grade 7

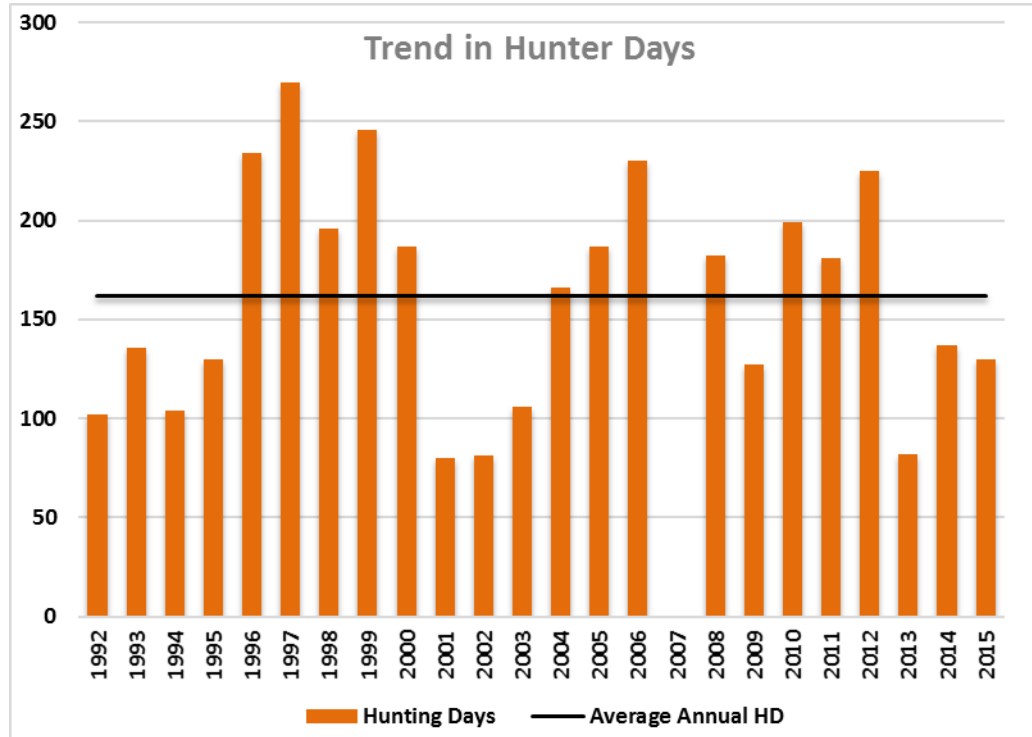


## Physical Features of Cawston Ranch



- Mixed vegetation dominated by *Colophospermum mopane* – *Acacia* species on basalt soils
  - Teak woodland (*Biakia plurijuga*) on infertile Kalahari sands ('Gusu').
  - Limited grassland/vlei and riverine vegetation
- No perennial river systems
  - 14 artificial game water supply systems strategically located across the ranch.
  - Natural pans and springs augment these supplies, but are unreliable during poor rainy seasons.
- 55km perimeter game fence - 2.4 m high with 13 strands.
  - Approximately 130km of internal roads
- Ad hoc fire management plan in place
  - Controlled fires implemented sporadically

## Economic Performance of Cawston



- On average 17 hunters are accommodated each year (range:8 -27)
- Each hunt is approximately 9 hunter days (range: 5 – 13) generating on average 167 hunter days annually.
- Last three years have been below average (82 – 137 hunter days).



## Management of Cawston

Cawston employs 40 people: management and administration (x 4), apprentice guide (x 1), camp staff (x 7), general labour (x 7), butchery staff (x 2), workshop (x 2), driver (x 1) and 16 game scouts. This team is responsible for undertaking a variety of routine management activities including:

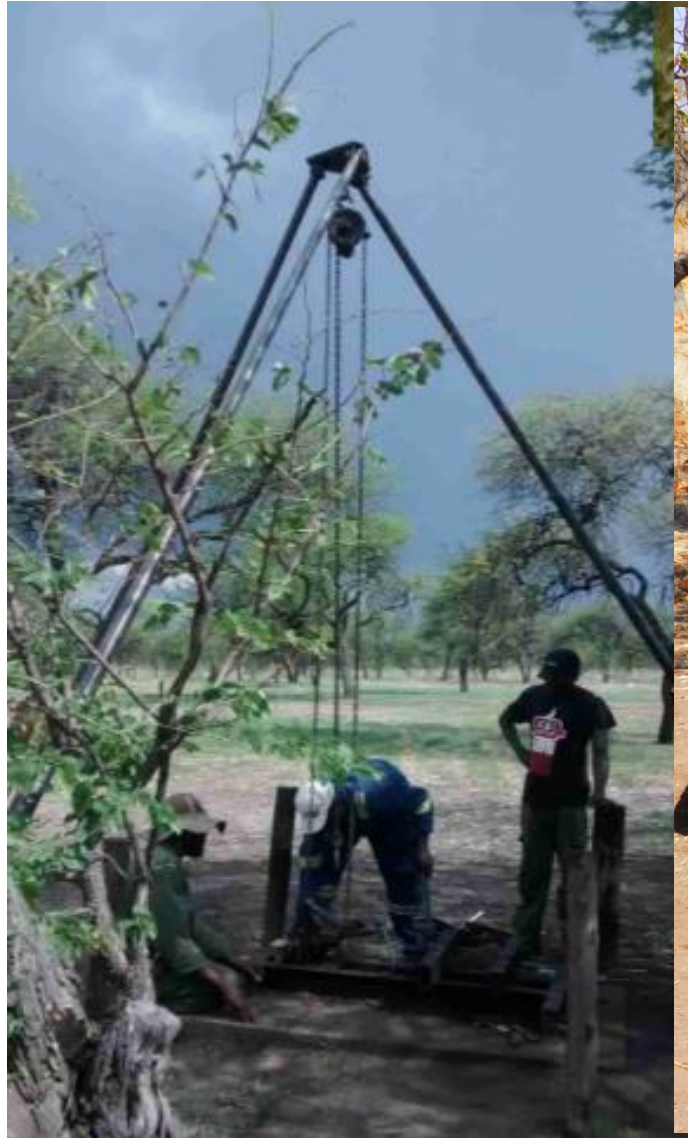
- General maintenance
  - Fences, roads, infrastructures, vehicles, waterholes and pumps
  - Fire guards and vegetation management (bush clearing)
- Monitoring of wildlife population trends
  - Annual road strip count surveys and 48-hour waterhole counts, game scout patrol reports
- Management of populations
  - Cropping, culling, live capture
  - Tick management
- Maintenance of hunter and staff accommodation
  - Catering of hunters
- Processing trophies and meat
- Anti-poaching and surveillance
- Community provisions (meat donations, transport services, borehole repairs, etc.)
- Administration, marketing























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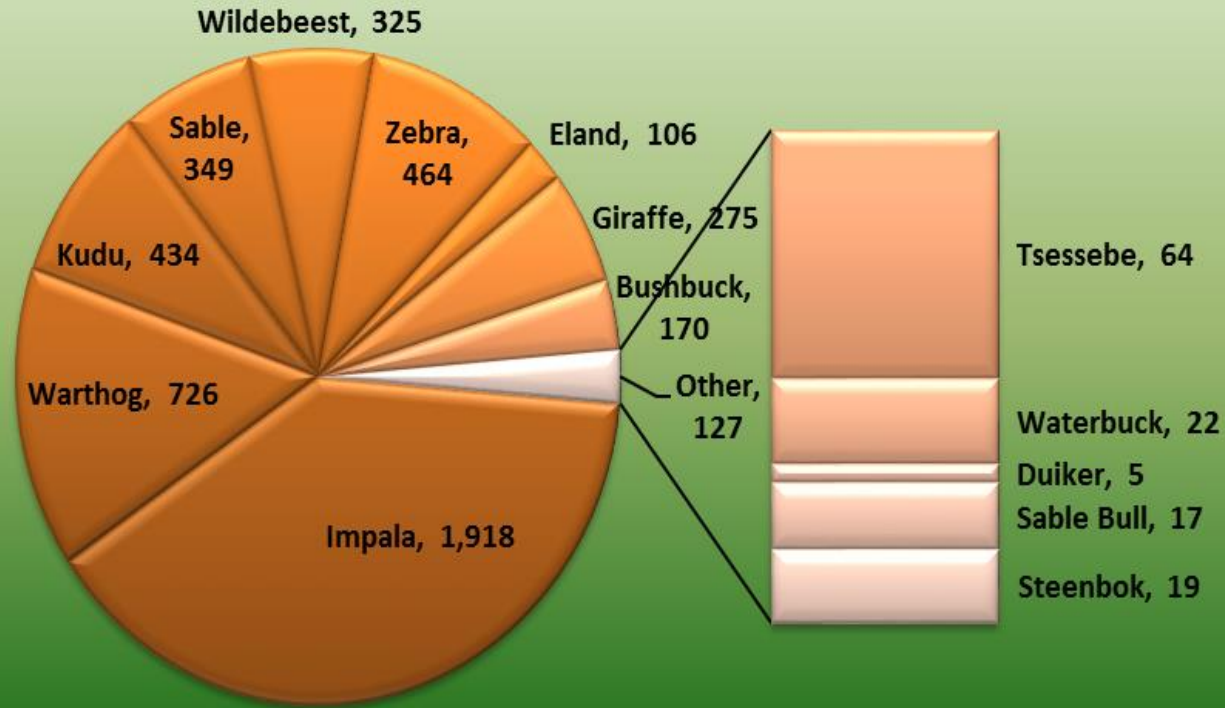




## Wildlife populations



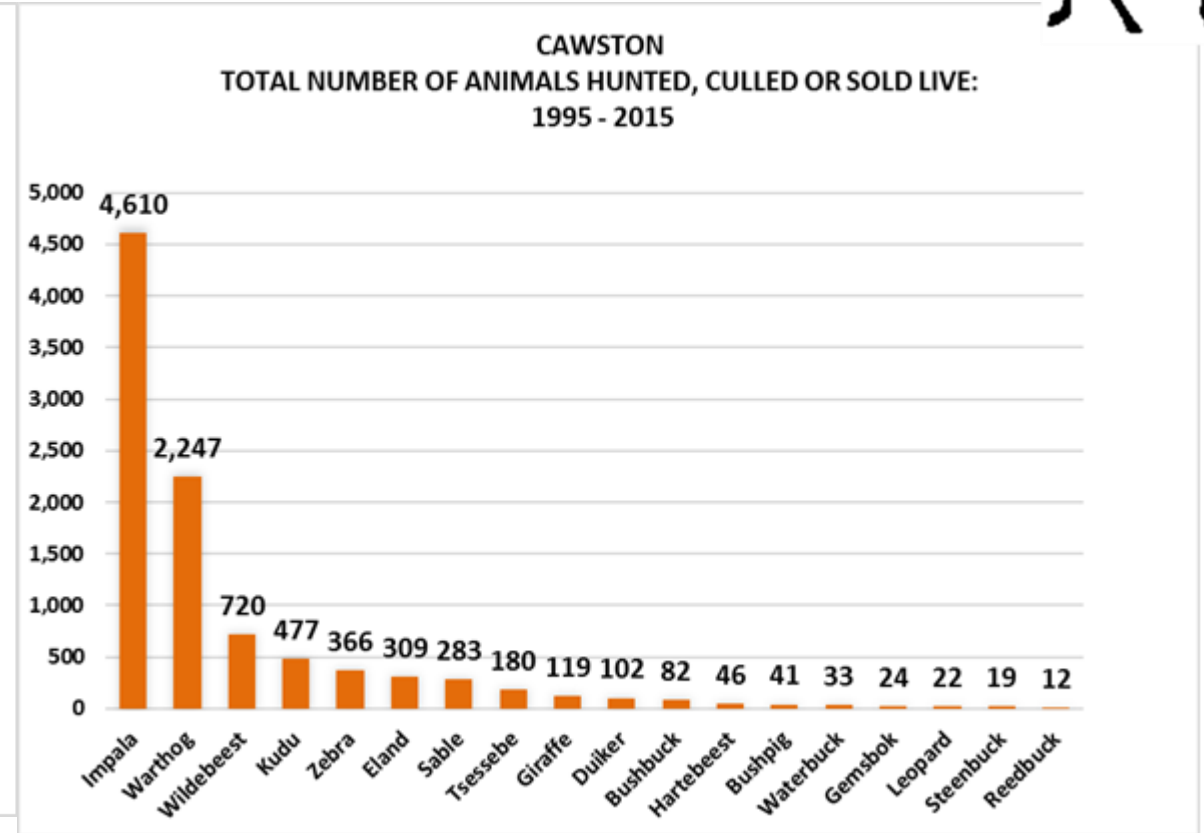
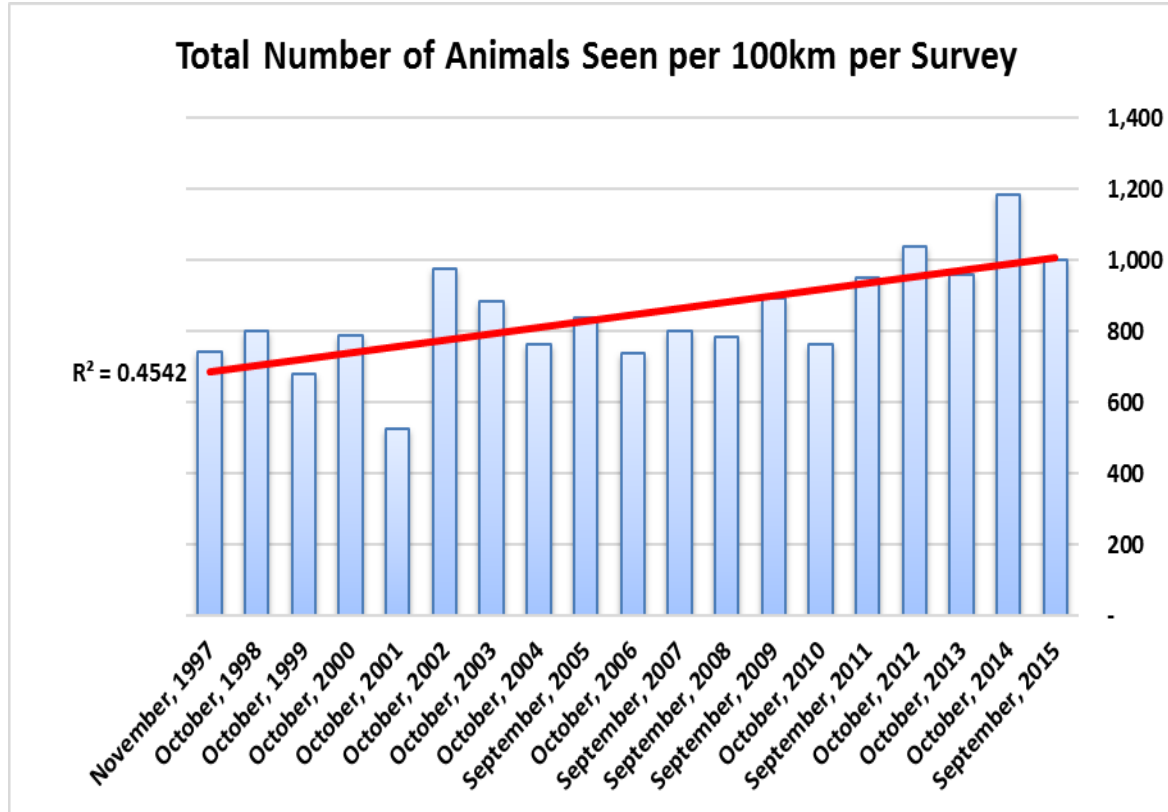
Cawston RSC Results - September 2015



- Mixture of grazers (40%), browsers (35%) and mixed feeders (25%)
- Approximately 4,500 animals on the property dominated by impala
- Large predators limited to resident leopard (c. 5 – 9) and brown hyena (c. 10 – 15)
  - Occasional cheetah
  - Several small species (jackal, serval, civet, genets, caracal, porcupine, vervet monkeys)
- Healthy population of game birds (guinea fowl, francolin)
- No buffalo, lion or elephant



## Overall growth of the wildlife population on Cawston over time:



- Rifle and bow trophy hunting (quotas approved by National Parks)
- Local recreational hunting (kudu, wildebeest, impala)
- Cropping of impala, warthog, wildebeest (quotas approved by National Parks)
- Irregular live sales of impala, giraffe, sable, wildebeest, kudu and warthog (offtake approved by National Parks)
- Total of 9,700 animals have been removed in a 21 year period 1995 - 2015



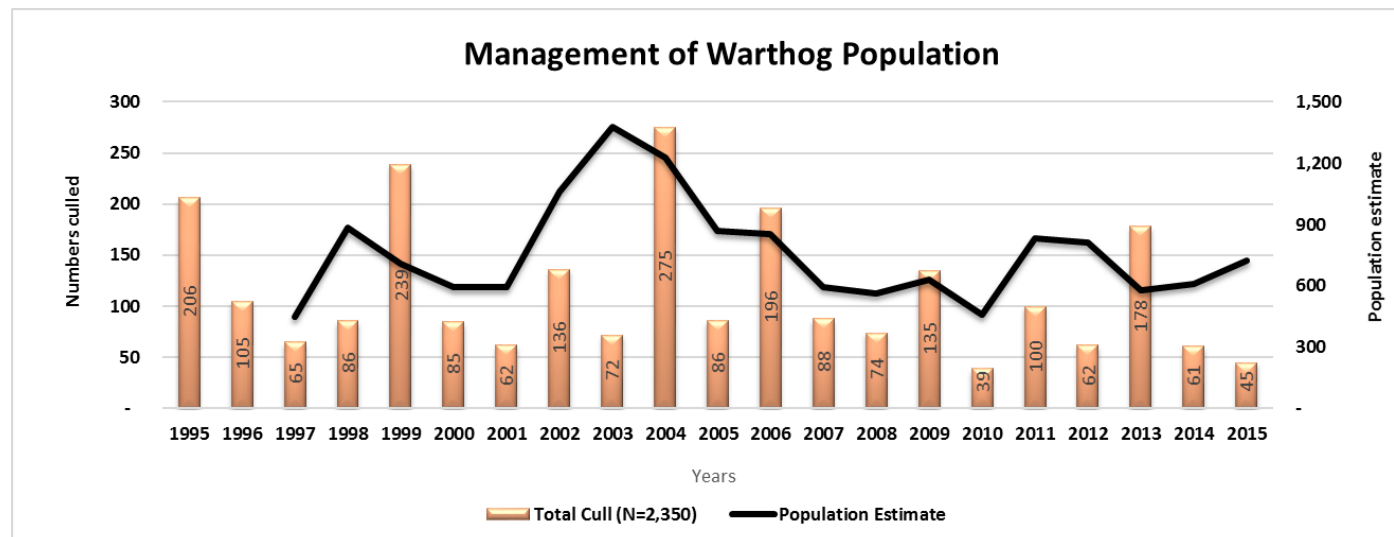
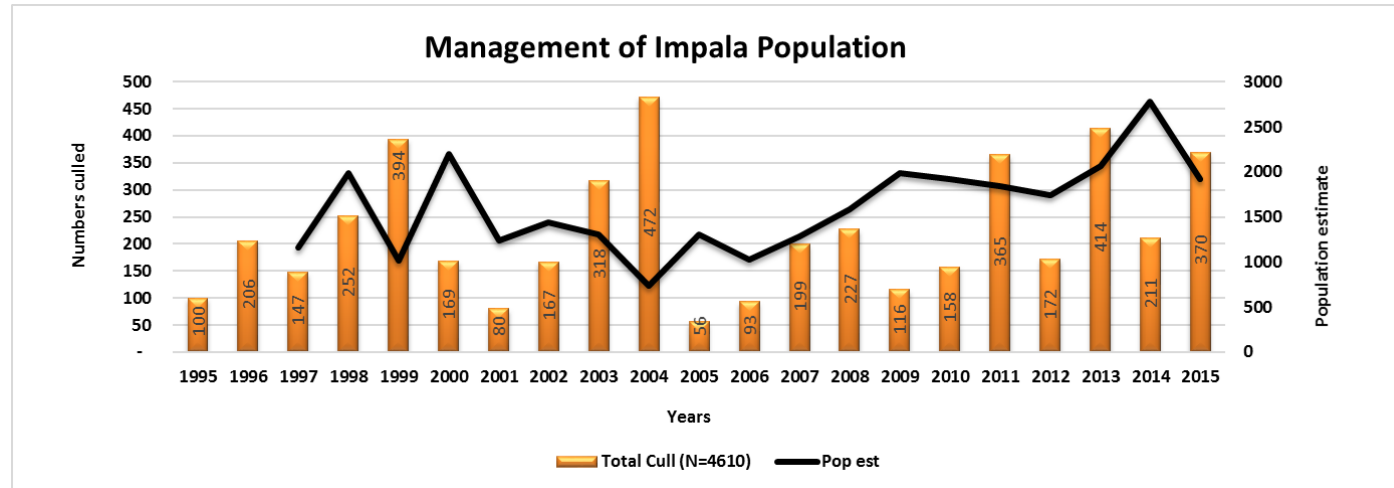
## Impact of sport hunting, culling and capture on wildlife populations

Motive of the culling programme of the less valuable trophy species impala, warthog and wildebeest is for:

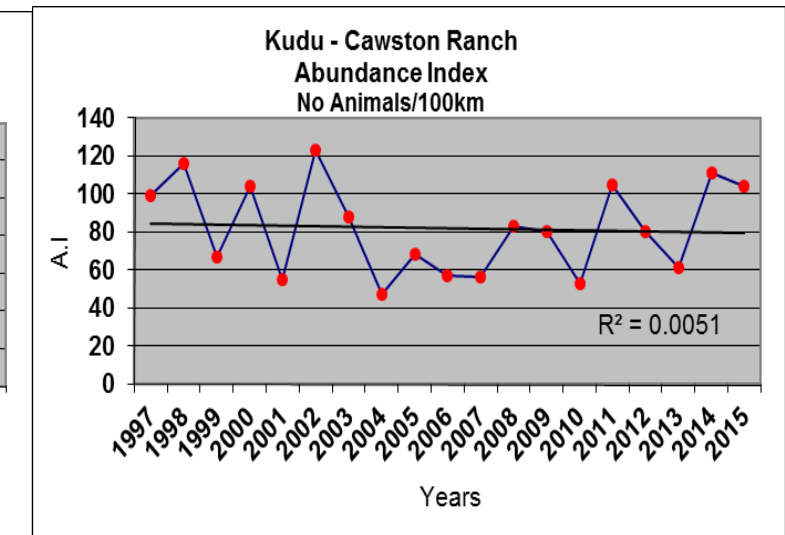
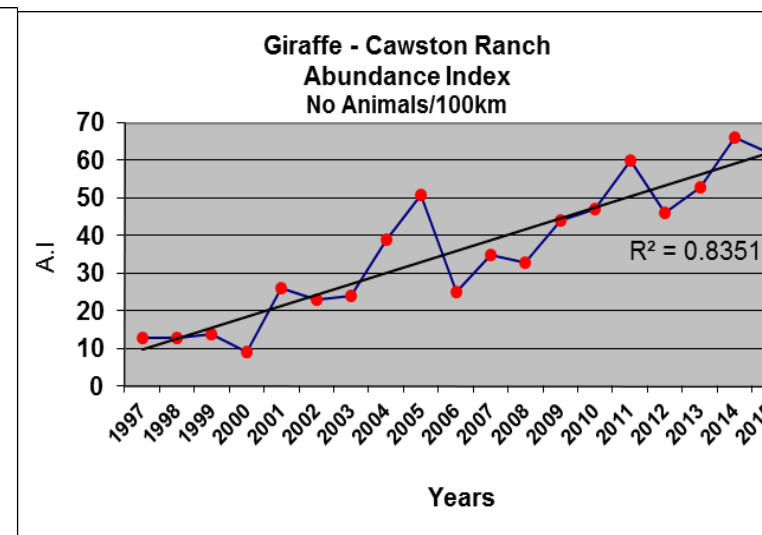
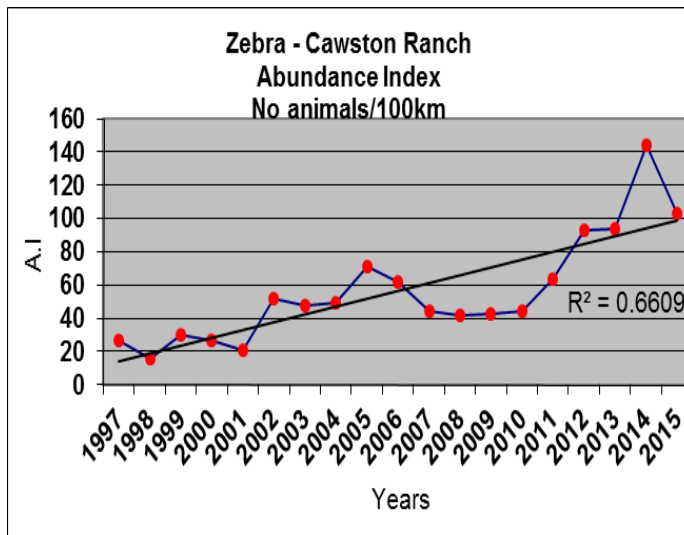
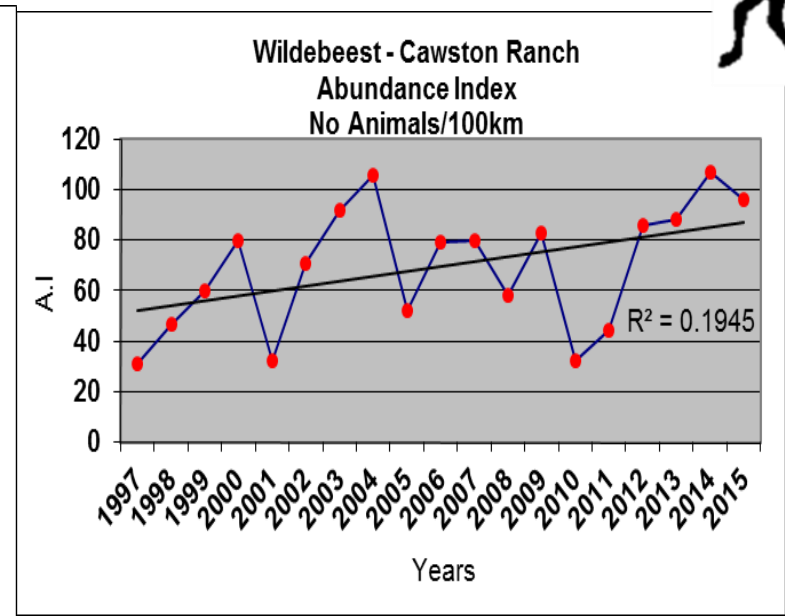
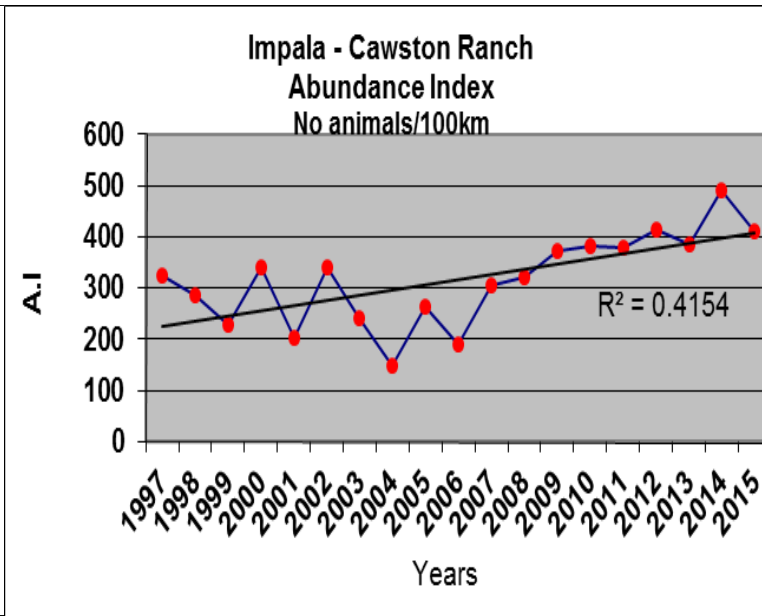
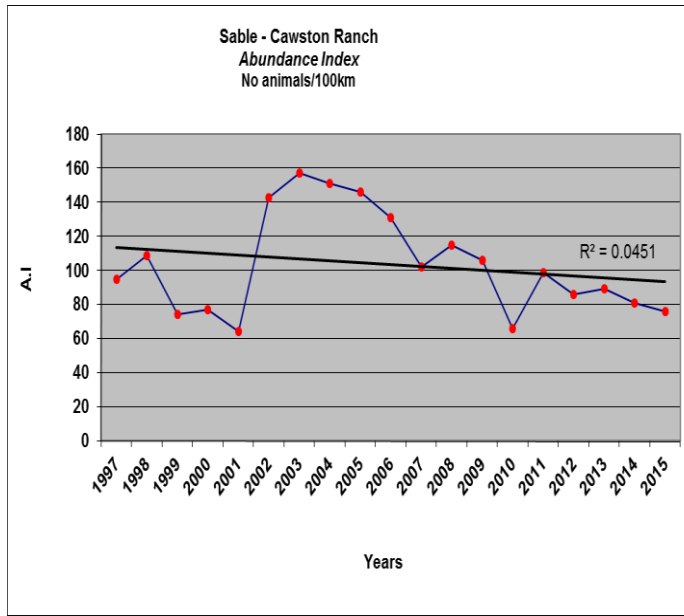
- Production of venison
- Reduction of animal numbers
- Protection of sensitive habitats

**Impala**: Cawston has produced approximately 103,584kg (approximately 5,355kg/year) of venison from the ~4,686 impala culled/captured over the last 21 years.

**Warthog**: approximately 81,430kg (approximately 3,995kg/year) of venison from the ~2,395 warthog culled over the last 21 years.



## Long term trends for some species





## Conclusions



- Populations respond to sound management (water, habitat) and protection (law enforcement)
- Careful monitoring and regulated quotas ensure sustainable and increasing populations.
- Property can withstand higher offtake of bulk grazers.
- Populations of key species (sable, kudu) have fluctuated since inception of the ranch.
- Populations of specialist species (sable, waterbuck, tsessebe) affected by high densities of bulk grazers (impala, zebra, wildebeest)
  - Fecundity and calf survival affected by high tick loads
  - Habitat modification



**Thank you...**

