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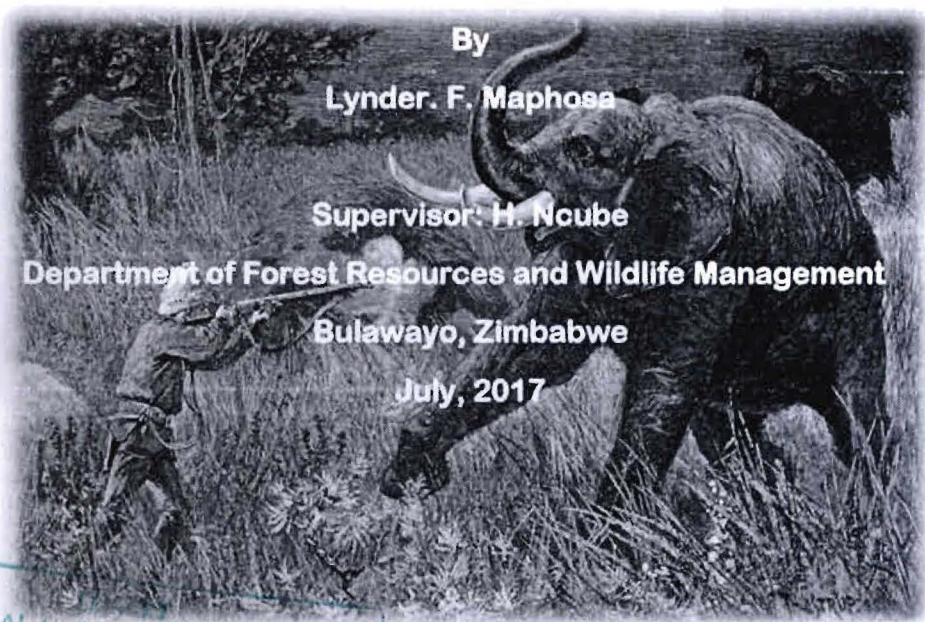
## Optimising 'human-elephant co-existence' through competitive marketing: Hwange, Tsholotsho & Umguza Districts

MSc dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Ecotourism and Biodiversity Conservation.



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## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to evaluate the potential of elephant trophy hunting venture through marketing strategies of price and promotion by Rural District Councils who have Appropriate Authority Status through the CAMPFIRE program. It looks at a specific product being elephant pricing and promotion. Price in this context includes discounts given, whereas promotion includes advertising and packaging of the elephant trophy hunts. The thesis examines how factors like utilisation, trophy size, location and target market affect pricing of elephants in ensuring that the best price and the best paying client is reached at the current market competitiveness. Rural District Councils were viewed as drivers of economic growth of the elephant trophy hunting industry who should take an active role in ensuring formidable marketing of the industry. Purposive sampling was used to identify area of study through use of questionnaires, interviews and secondary data. Data was analysed using SPSS version 24. There was no effect on price from all the factors tested. America had the highest number of elephant hunting tourists whilst Africa had the least. Sustainable hunting is debated in the context of its maximum value to the people who suffer from human wildlife conflict against the ecological implication and economic gains to be realised thereafter. To ensure that there is business continuity, it is imperative to make a marketing analysis which will also show viability of a business venture through maximum profit attainment. More so, it is of key importance to note that for a Rural District Council to be termed successful there has to be a social service infrastructure and service achieved and employed hence the need for this paper. Results herein show that pricing varies with RDCs as a direct influence of factors stated above, although other factors could be debated and examined by other scholars. In this paper it is concluded that geographical pricing is the strategy that Councils use in marketing elephant trophies.