



## Municipality dumpsite as a cause for Human-Wildlife Conflict: A case study of Victoria Falls municipality dumpsite

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## ABSTRACT

Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) or negative interaction between people and wildlife is one of the most widespread and complex challenge currently being faced by the conservationists around the world. There are many causes of human wildlife conflict globally. Dumpsites are some of the areas that have necessitated wild animals to be at interface with humans. Dumpsites are not environmentally friendly. Properly engineered sanitary landfills are proper structures for waste management and disposal. There could be many studies that have been carried out within the dumpsite but this study looked intrinsically at human wildlife conflicts at the dumpsite and immediate surrounding areas. The study probes further as to which wild animals cause human-wildlife conflict and the gravity of this conflict as well as the best ways to control it. The study established that surely the Victoria Falls dumpsite was a major cause of human wildlife conflict as respondents highlighted many conflicts happening at the dumpsite and surrounding areas. Four data collection techniques were used these were household questionnaires, Focus group discussions, key informant interviews and wild animals' observations at the dumpsite. Wild animals were observed at different time intervals. These included elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) which came to the dumpsite mostly during the night, baboons and marabou stork were present early in the morning and spend the better part of the day at the dumpsite and lastly were buffalos which were present at the dumpsite during early morning. Key informants mentioned various stakeholders being involved in the mitigation measures to contain conflict at the dumpsite mainly from elephants and baboons. Elephants and baboons have caused death and discomfort to human beings in Victoria Falls, respectively. Data was analyzed using SPSS Ver21. Electric fence has somewhat played a positive role in closing out elephants but some people continue to dump waste outside the electrified area thereby exacerbating human-wildlife conflict within the dumpsite area. From the findings highlighted in the study, recommendations were also made to combat human-wildlife conflict. These included the abandonment of the dumpsite to a properly engineered sanitary land fill which is the best option for the municipality, waste separation at source where colour coded bins are to be used biodegradable (green) and non-degradable waste (red). Only non-degradable waste will reach the dumpsite, while the rest is recycled and composted. Awareness campaigns by the municipality on the dangers of scavenging at the dumpsite where individuals pick discarded chickens and other food stuffs for re-sale were also recommended. Best practices by other hotels that recycle and re-use water bottles should be replicated by other players in the hotel industry. There are of course many areas that need further research within the municipality dumpsite.

