



An assessment of the impact of the schoolbook “Living with Cheetahs” on Schoolchildren’s knowledge and attitudes towards cheetahs in Bulilima, Mangwe, Gwanda Districts

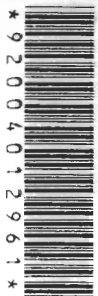
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Abstract

A questionnaire survey on the assessment of the impact of the book “Living with Cheetahs” on the knowledge and attitudes of school children towards cheetahs was conducted in schools of Gwanda, Bulilima and Mangwe districts, between November 2007 and February 2008. In each district 7 schools were randomly selected and in the selected schools 20 questionnaires from each school were randomly selected for analysis. The study sought to investigate the impact of the book “Living with Cheetahs” on school children’s knowledge and attitudes towards cheetahs. Results from all the schools in the three districts indicated an improvement in knowledge and attitudes after the use of the book. Results obtained after the analysis of student’s attitudes showed that cheetahs were less popular among students in rural communities. Experience with cheetah predation is likely to have led to more negative attitudes towards cheetahs. There was a positive relationship between the use of the book and students’ knowledge and attitudes towards cheetahs. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in the knowledge and attitudes between urban and rural schools. There was no relationship between local people’s attitudes and district. Cheetahs were less popular among people in all the three districts. There was also no association between means of deriving income and district. The major source of deriving income in all the three districts was through selling of livestock.