

Biodiversity mainstreaming at Wilderness Holdings Limited

Wilderness Holdings Limited is the holding company for the ecotourism brands of Wilderness Safaris and Wilderness Collection, and the non-profit trusts of Children in the Wilderness and Wilderness Wildlife Trust. The company is dedicated to responsible tourism throughout the areas in which it operates in Africa. Its goal is to share these wild areas with guests from all over the world, while at the same time helping to ensure the future protection of Africa's spectacular wildlife heritage and sharing the benefits of tourism with local communities.

What is the business case for biodiversity at Wilderness Holdings Limited?

Wilderness believes that the sustainability of businesses in its sector are dependent on how well they address the issues arising under the dimensions of Commerce, Community, Culture and Conservation (The 4Cs concept). Accordingly, the company's Vision and Values are all aligned to this platform.

What are the biodiversity impacts and dependencies of Wilderness Holdings Limited?

Wilderness recognises that its business depends on the health of the ecosystems and species that are the attractions for its guests. Any negative impacts on the environment resulting from their operations would reduce their attractiveness and thus the competitiveness of their business. Thus, they manage their camps in the most eco-friendly way possible to minimise any negative impacts and conduct research to understand potential impacts of ecotourism-related activities (e.g. ecological monitoring in Botswana and Zimbabwe concessions). Conversely, improvements to biodiversity and species will increase the attractiveness of our tourism operations and thus the success of the business.



Does the company value its biodiversity dependencies and impacts?

The company values the faunal species in the areas in which it operates in terms of their conservation status as per the IUCN Red List. No fewer than 34 species that occur in their operational areas fall into the three most threatened categories of the IUCN Red List. Of these, three are reptiles or amphibians, 11 are mammals and 20 are birds. Five of these species are classed as Critically Endangered, nine as Endangered and 20 as Vulnerable.

What strategy and action plan have Wilderness Holdings Limited adopted towards biodiversity?

Wilderness have a strategic plan in place, which is based on the platform of the 4Cs with a set of outcomes having been developed for each C. These outcomes have then been extended into the actions that are required to ensure their achievement.

With respect to biodiversity, the company's approach is to invest in maximising the positive impacts arising from its activities while at the same time implementing measures to reduce any negative impacts.

The biodiversity coverage of the Wilderness Group is the area of land on which it operates. Their current ecotourism model supports the conservation of a total of 2.3 million hectares (5.8 million acres). Wilderness supports the conservation of these land units in the following ways:

- By *de facto* protection through presence and monitoring;

- By contributing lease or traversing fees that aid the viability of the existing use/s of the area and prevent changes in land use; and
- Through active conservation activities such as anti-poaching, vegetation rehabilitation, reintroduction of indigenous species and/or research, as well as supporting other NGOs and partners in their conservation projects.



Some of the biodiversity projects that Wilderness is involved in include:

- Reintroduction of threatened species in areas of their former range (e.g. black and white rhino in Botswana);
- Growth of threatened species populations (e.g. black and white rhino in the Okavango Delta);
- Enhanced understanding of the conservation ecology of threatened species, resulting in improved management of the species in situ or in external areas (e.g. lion in Botswana and Namibia);
- Confirmation of extant conservation corridors linking sub-populations (e.g. elephant and zebra movement studies in Botswana);
- Efforts to mitigate human-wildlife conflict (e.g. Human-carnivore conflict study in Botswana);

- Establishment of biodiversity and population baselines (e.g. wildlife monitoring indices in all regions);
- Removal of artificial and anthropogenic causes of wildlife mortality and ecosystem rehabilitation (e.g. Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit and Hwange Anti- Poaching Unit in Zimbabwe);
- Understanding potential impacts of ecotourism-related activities (e.g. ecological monitoring in Botswana and Zimbabwe concessions).

Does Wilderness Holdings Limited have a biodiversity monitoring system in place and does it disclose its biodiversity risks and performance?

Wilderness monitors its biodiversity performance according to the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against which it reports annually in its Sustainability Report:

- Conservation contribution;
- Biodiversity coverage;
- Biomes within which it operates;
- Number of research projects supported;
- Number of collaborations with institutes and stakeholders; and
- IUCN Red List species conserved.

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