

Namibia King of the Animals in Danger Video – English Translation.

On the market this calf would have been worth about 450 Euros – a multiple of Solomon Christian's monthly earnings.

"It's not the first time that this has happened; 2 - 3 weeks ago, the lions moved onto farmland from Hobatere or Etosha; they killed 4 cattle, over there on the other side." Christian Solomon

The farmer has lost 5 cattle in a few weeks. As the owner of only 34 animals, the stock breeder cannot afford this, setting leg-hold traps in retaliation. Once trapped, the animals die or are killed by the farmers. In Namibia, dozens of Carnivores die this way each year.

The Human-Wildlife Conflict on farmland bordering the Protected areas of Etosha National Park and Hobatere Concession Area, exists due to livestock loss to lion and spotted hyaena (as well as other predators), that break through the porous fences in search of easy prey. The elephants push over the poles, providing an easy passage for the lions. The repair of the fence lies in the hands of the authorities but most-often the farmers are forced to solve their own problems, assisted by Tammy Hoth, Director of the AfriCat Foundation. Hoth and their initiative have been fighting to conserve the Big Cats for the past 15 years. She is familiar with the long-standing conflict between livestock farmers and the predators who have always lived and hunted in these wilderness areas. Etosha National Park is home to approx. 400-450 adult and sub-adult lions, with the most recent estimates of Namibia's total lion population at 1113-1644 (Large Carnivore Atlas 2012, MET website); for the local tourism, Etosha with its wealth of wildlife, is a gold mine.

"We want to protect and conserve the lions but we also have to find solutions for this conflict. The farmers here have a real problem. The Hobatere fence is not maintained as no-one really knows who is responsible for it; the farmers don't do it so, in the past, we have taken the initiative to repair and maintain, this is however, too costly for a small organisation such as AfriCat." Tammy Hoth

For several years, AfriCat improved the so-called "Hotspots" on the southern boundary of the Etosha NP. Here, using a car tyre which let the small animals through, but keep the lions and spotted hyaenas out. This helps the farmers somewhat, but the fence is old and approx. 800 km long and once one section has been repaired another section already has a new hole.

"This is the fresh track of a Warthog, since the last rainfall. It looks as if the animal came from Etosha and has since returned to the Park. The Warthog seems to have dug the hole and moves back and forth from Etosha in order to find water and/or food; this hole is an invitation to predators to move onto farmland." Tammy Hoth

However, predators still manage to migrate onto adjacent farmland, so AfriCat has another strategy: Hoth cooperates closely with farmers, such as the 51 year old communal farmer, Jeremias Urub. Tammy & her husband were once livestock farmers along Etosha's periphery, so she is familiar with the threats posed by predators. AfriCat supported Urub and his community with the construction of a

so-called 'Kraal', which is a small enclosure where domestic animals should be held for protection, especially at night when the lions and other predators are active!

"This is the eighth Kraal which AfriCat has built for the !Khoa di //Hoas Conservancy communities in the last 1 ½ years. The farmers who pen (kraal) their animals at night have minimal losses. Generally, the damage takes place when they leave the animals out in the field at night." Tammy Hoth

Jeremias and his wife had their own goat-kraal, but the fence was too low. One night they lost 47 goats.

"The lions came from there (pointing to the Hobatere Concession fence). They jumped over the low kraal fence and killed all my goats. Some animals were even dragged out." Jeremias Urib

"It was 4 am in the morning when they came. We made a fire and my husband fired shots into the air, lucky for us, the lions ran away. It was a terrible day for me. I cried a lot for my goats." Maria Urib

With AfriCat's help, Jeremias and Maria have increased their herd and their kraal fence was heightened; since then, no further losses have occurred.

"If we really want to solve the conflict between humans and predators, then we must start with the local farmers; we have to convince the farmers and local communities of the value of their wildlife. However, it is also obvious that their animals must be protected." Tammy Hoth

"We have to protect our animals. We must keep them in kraals at night. That's the only way. For me and my family that is no problem. We can live with predators." Jeremias Urib

A small victory for AfriCat and Tammy Hoth but a mammoth task lies ahead to convince more farmers that they can live with the predators.