



CLIMATE CROWD

Crowdsourcing to help people and nature in a changing climate

ZIMBABWE SUMMARY REPORT

April, 2019

Context

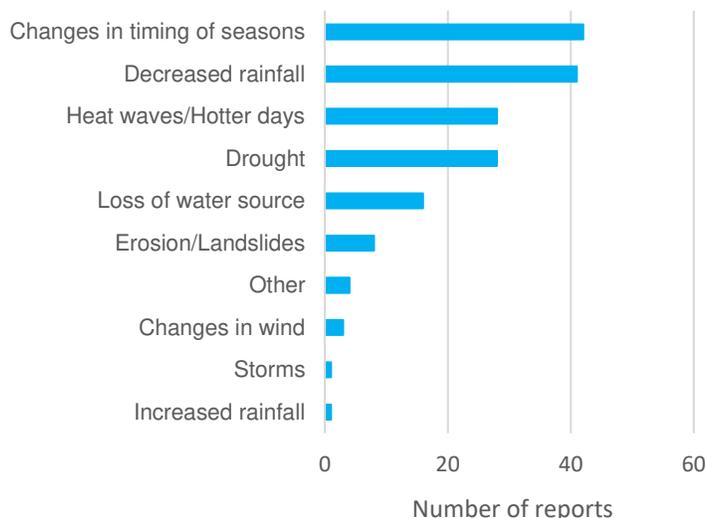
[Climate Crowd](#) is a crowdsourcing initiative that convenes and supports a network of partners to gather data on how climate change is impacting people and nature, and supports on-the-ground [projects](#) that help rural communities adapt while reducing pressure on biodiversity.

As a part of this initiative, WWF partnered with staff from Greenline Africa, a local community-based organization, to conduct 44 interviews (25 women, 19 men) near Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland North province. This part of the country lies within the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area. Established in 2011, it is the largest transboundary conservation area in the world, spanning five countries in southern Africa. KAZA is home to the largest population of African elephants. As a result, human-wildlife conflict is an ongoing problem for the farming communities that live here — one which is exacerbated by climate related shocks and stressors.



Figure 1. Green indicates KAZA area. Black marker indicates location of Climate Crowd interviews. Source: World Wildlife Magazine, Spring 2016.

Reported changes in weather/climate



Direct impacts on natural resources

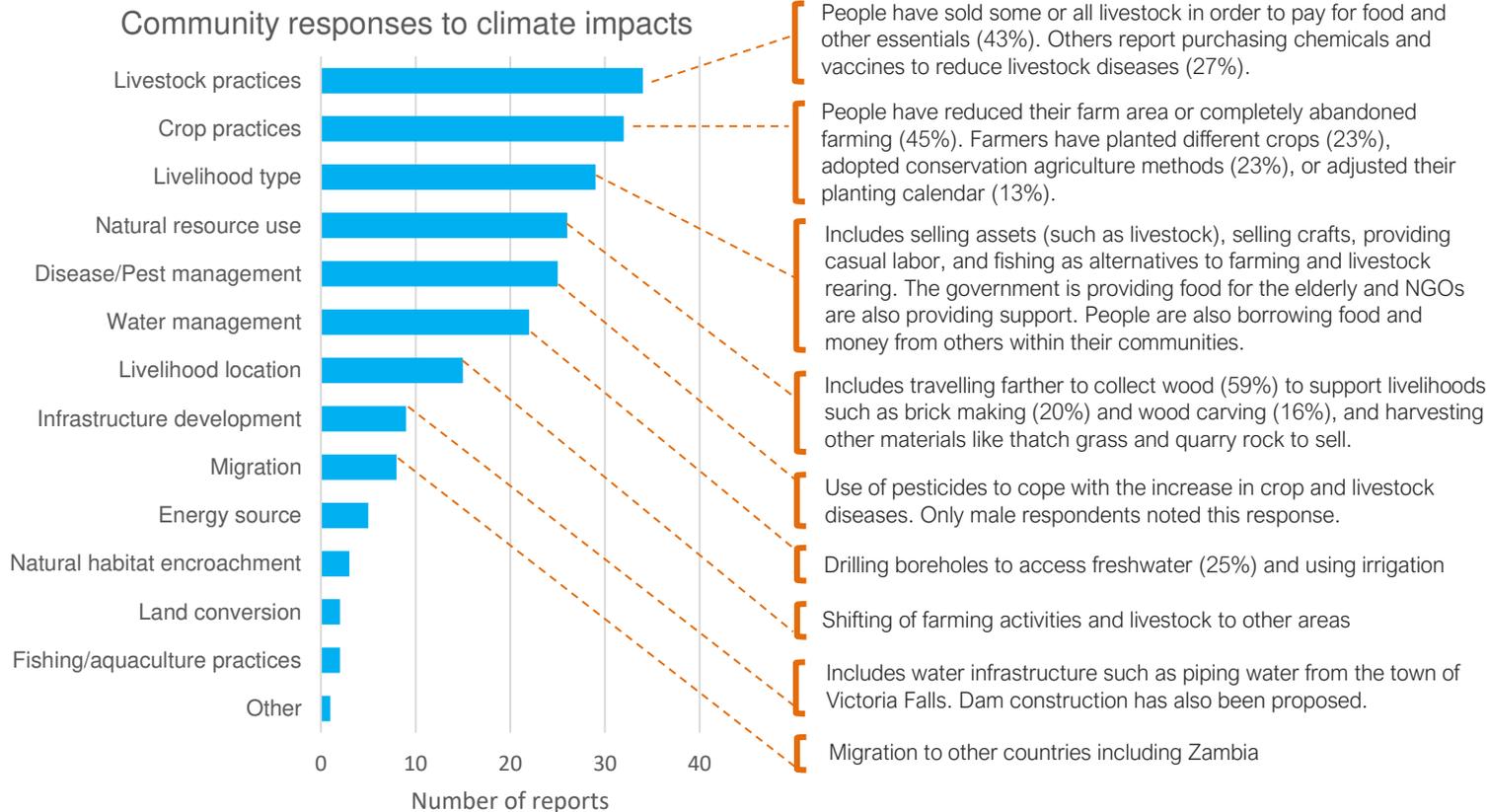
The majority of those interviewed noted that there was less (and delayed) rainfall in recent years and hotter temperatures. These changes have resulted in depleted freshwater supplies as noted by two-thirds of respondents. Local vegetation has also been affected. Half of all respondents observed a decline in the availability of wild fruits, with the majority citing either decreased rainfall or hotter temperatures as the direct cause. Several explain that while these trees themselves are intact, they no longer produce fruit.

Impacts on communities

Prolonged drought and changes in rainfall patterns have greatly impacted the livelihoods of people living in the area. Insufficient water combined with an increase in prevalence of pests (reported by 57% of respondents), has contributed to crop failure or very limited production according to roughly half of farmers surveyed. Moreover, 61% noted declines in livestock health (e.g. high mortality rates, weight loss, disease and decreased production), due in part to the lack of sufficient grazing area.

Increased human wildlife conflict has exacerbated impacts on both farming and livestock. **Respondents (61%) described more frequent conflicts with wildlife**, which compete with livestock for water and enter farms and villages in search of food, resulting in crop damage and attacks on livestock. With the growing scarcity of wild foods further undermining food security, and multiple respondents noting heat-related illness, there is significant cause for concern with regards to human health.

Community responses to climate impacts



Impacts on biodiversity

Close to a third of respondents reported that many wild animals are no longer seen in the area. One major stressor to local biodiversity is the intensive use of natural resources to support alternative livelihoods. A little over a third of those interviewed noted some form of habitat loss or degradation as a result of various coping strategies. **Brick-making, for example, requires large quantities of firewood during the firing process resulting in deforestation as described in eight interviews.** Two respondents also described how brick-making has caused siltation and land degradation along the riverbanks. According to one individual, wood carving, another common source of alternative income, has contributed to the depletion of specific tree species like bushwillow and mopane. Two people also noted declines in fish stocks as more people venture into fishing for subsistence.

Competition over natural resources such as pasture and water have also led to more conflicts between people and wildlife according to a little over two-thirds of respondents. Those species most frequently mentioned include elephants, baboons and hyenas (20%, 23% and 25% of respondents, respectively).

Strategies that can help improve crop yields, such as conservation agriculture and irrigation, and other interventions

like reforestation and use of fuel-efficient cookstoves can help to reduce pressure on natural ecosystems and help people adapt.



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Photos: Spotted hyena cubs on a burrow © Ola Jennersten / WWF-Sweden
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