

Running the gauntlet of honest elephant management

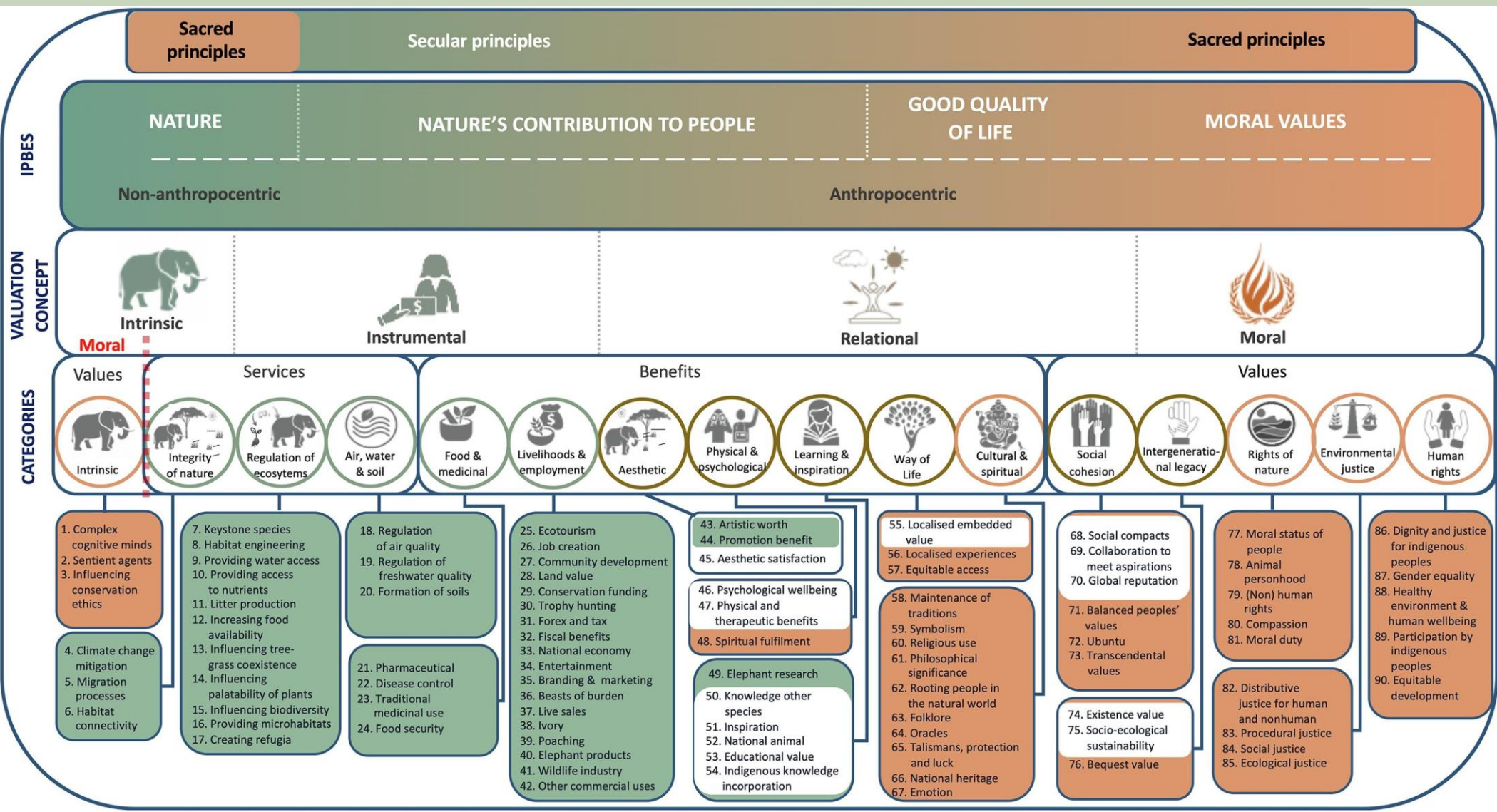
Sam Ferreira

Savanna Science Network Meeting, 2025



Whose values should matter most?

Do you have skin in the game?



Strong believe that values are morally right

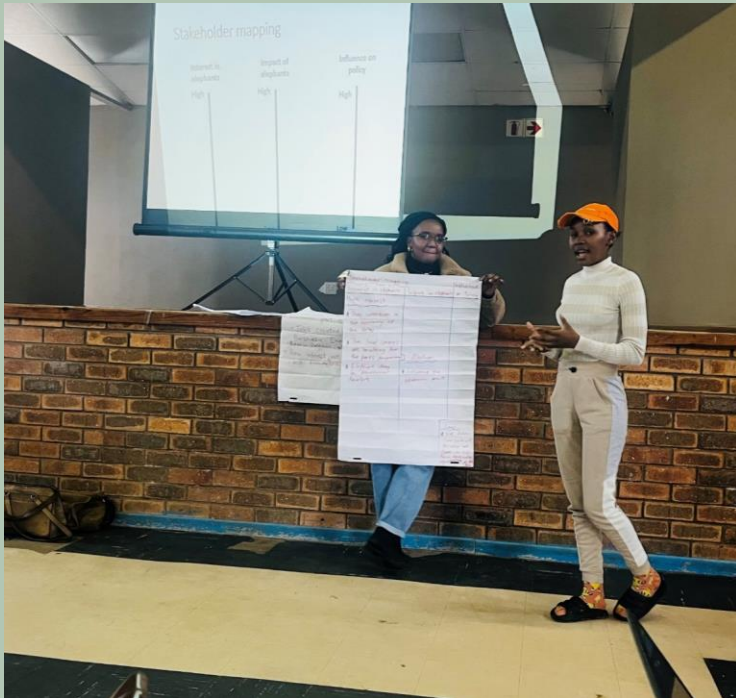
Prioritizing community well-being and shared benefits

Prioritizing personal benefits and individual well-being

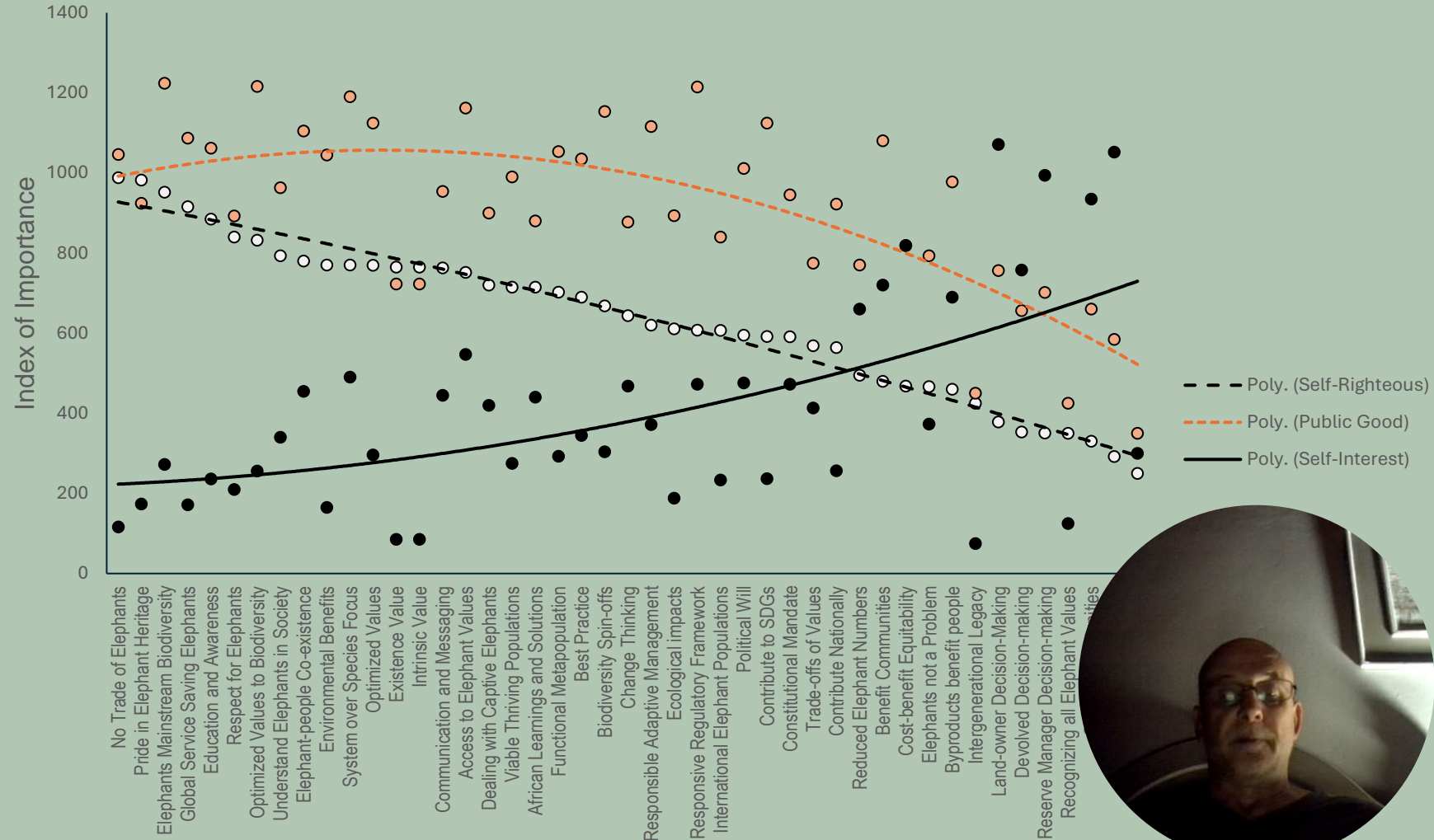
Self-righteous

Public Good

Self-interest



DFFE 2025. Draft National Elephant Heritage Strategy. For public comment.



An elephant has the same rights as us

planet care
animal welfare
rights
free
wild forest
farm protection
testing paper
vegetarian
fur



- **Animal rights** sentient animals have moral worth independent from their use by people, and they should be afforded the same consideration as similar interests of human beings.
- **Animal well-being** means an animal is in a good state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, have innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from pain, fear, and distress.
- **Animal welfare** is the well-being of non-human animals.

STOP
KILLING

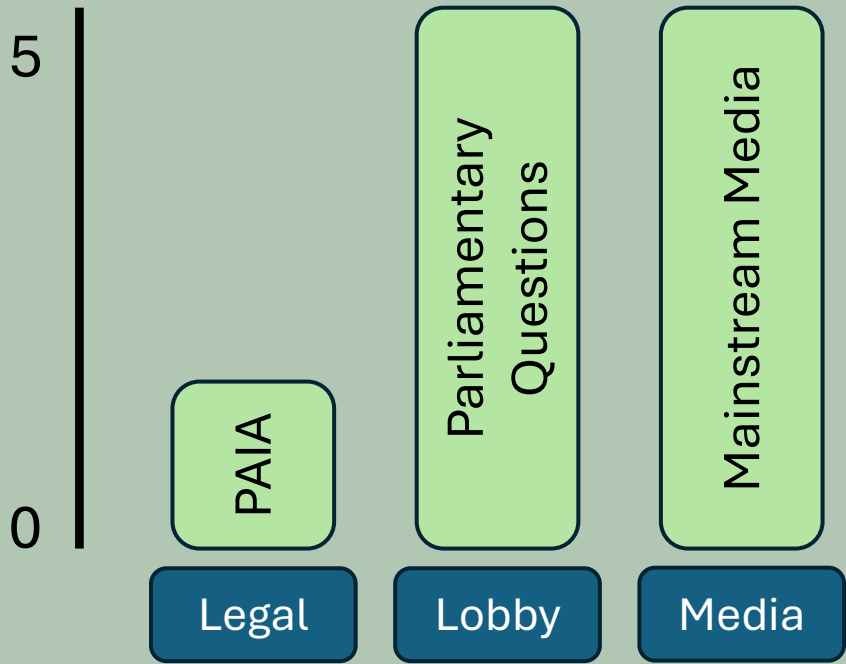


If a species pays, it stays

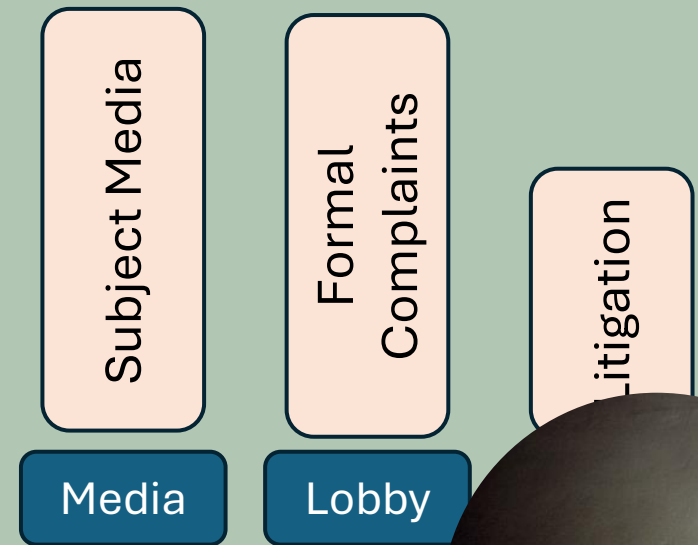
A species is valued and
protected if it provides
economic benefits



Throwing out the Gauntlet



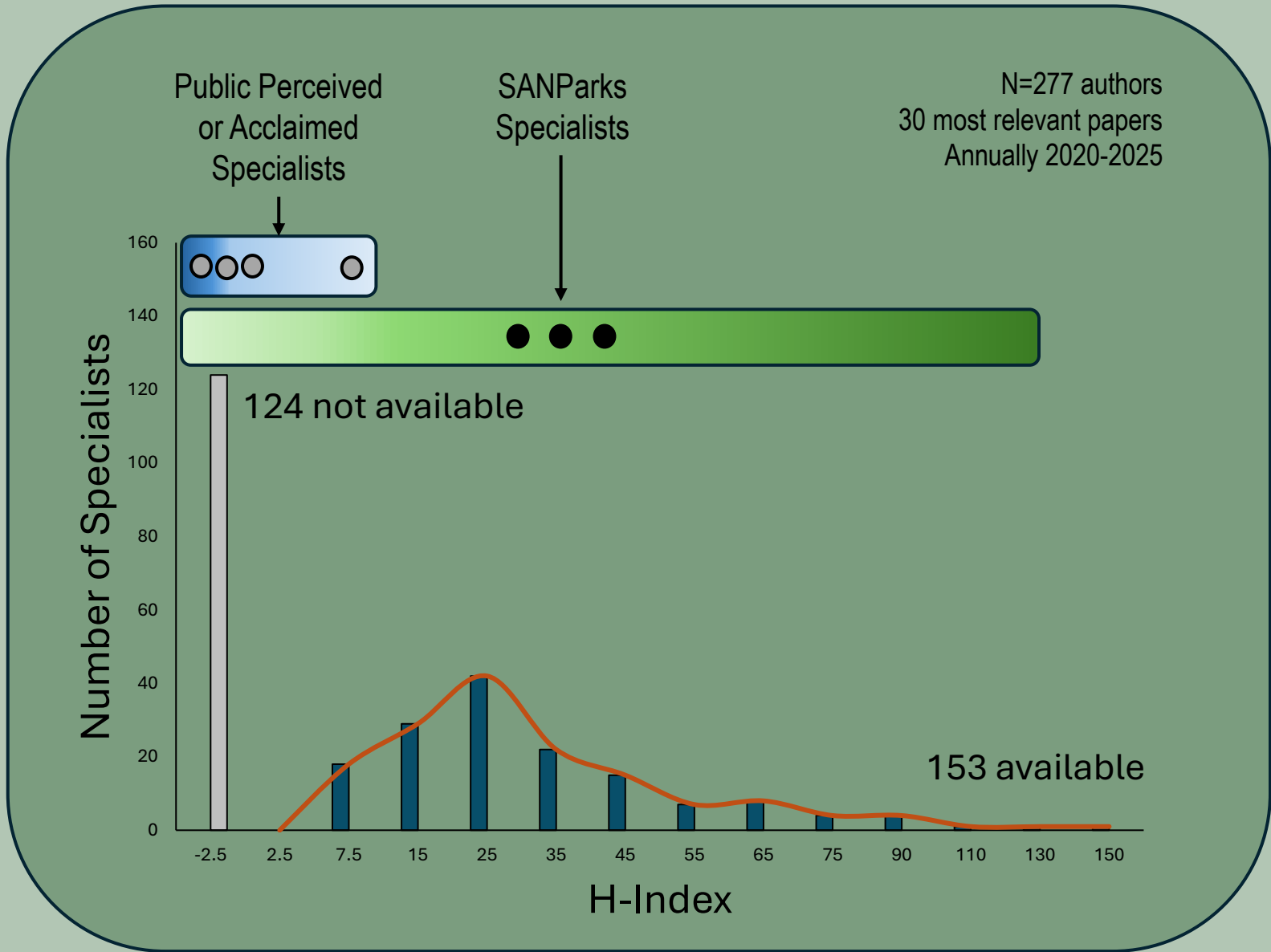
An elephant has the same rights as us



If a species stays



Elephant Expertise – Perceptions, Fables and Facts



**Environment Sector
Research, Development and
Evidence framework**

An approach to enhance sector science-policy in

Approved by MINMEC 08 June 2012

environmental affairs
Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A circular inset photo shows a man with glasses speaking.

Information that those throwing out the gauntlet provides

An elephant has the same rights as us

- Tuskers are declining in size
- Because of trophy hunting
- In adjacent reserves
- 1-3 elephants a year




If a species pays, it stays

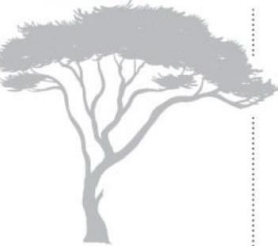
Impak van oorbevolking van olifante op biodiversiteit in die Krugerwildtuin



Grasbedekking het van 70% tot 30% grondoppervlakte afgeneem.



Struik het van 30% tot 48% grondoppervlakte bedekking toegeneem.



Boomdigtheid het van 14 000 tot 2 200 per hektaar afgeneem.



Bedreigde kameelperde het van ses tot drie per 1 000 ha afgeneem.



Vlakvarke het van nege tot drie per 1 000 ha afgeneem..



Gewone **duikers** het van 17 tot nege per 1 000 ha afgeneem.



Steenbokke het van 0,9 tot 0,4 per 1 000 ha afgeneem.



Rooibokke het van 290 tot 140 per 1 000 ha afgeneem.



Sebras het van 16 tot ses per 1 000 ha afgeneem.

Bron: Afriwild

THEUNS KRUGER



Both want to control elephant numbers

WE SCRAP
CONTRACEPTION
IDEA

Elephant report
advises culling



Ecological Concerns

Changes in threatened vegetation

Changes along perennial rivers

Changes close to seasonal rivers

Interaction with elephants and fire



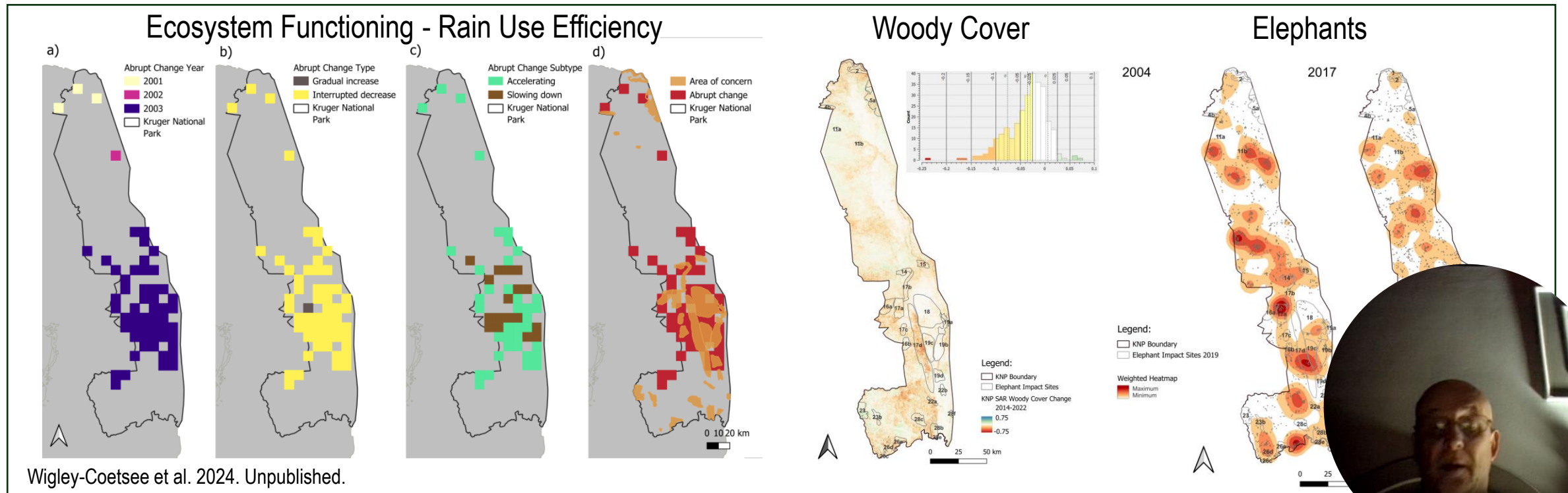
Social Concerns

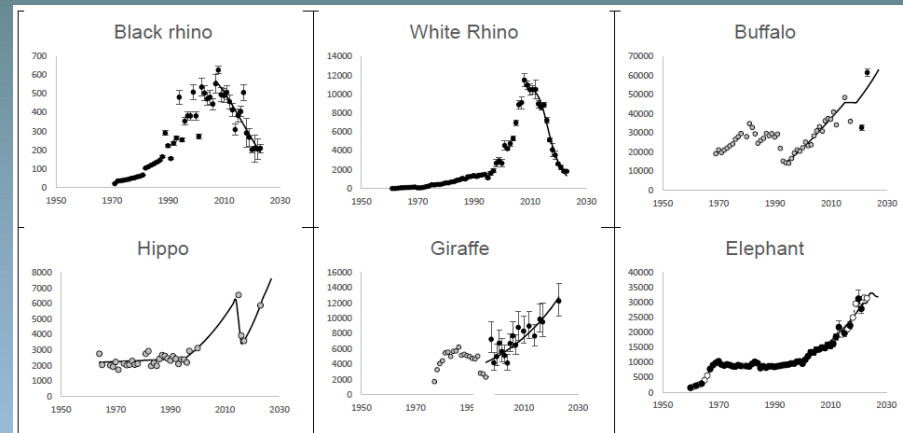
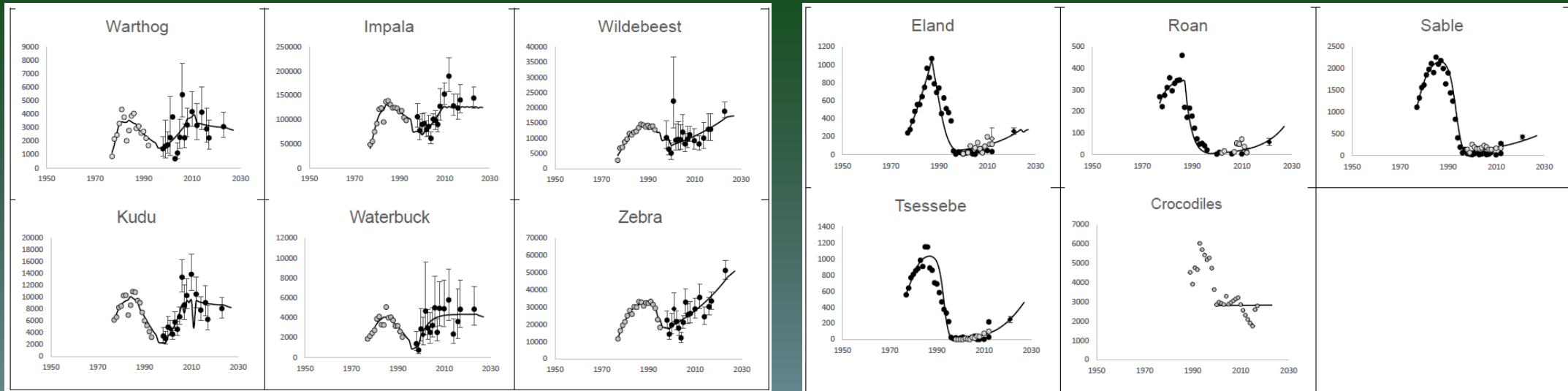
Damage causing animals

Damage to infrastructure

Poaching hotspots

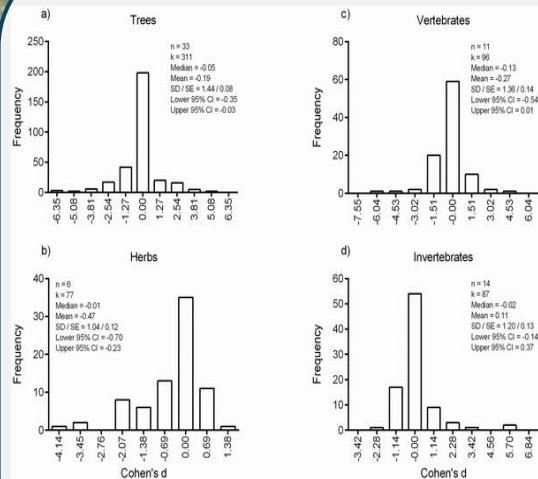
Pressure from external stakeholders





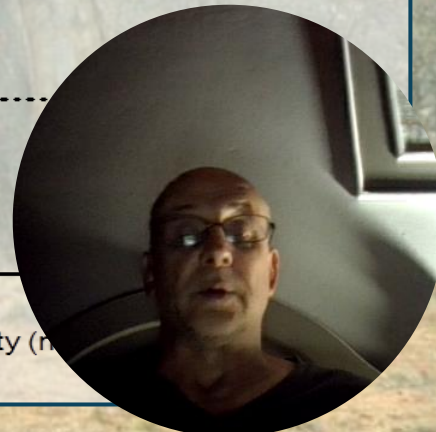
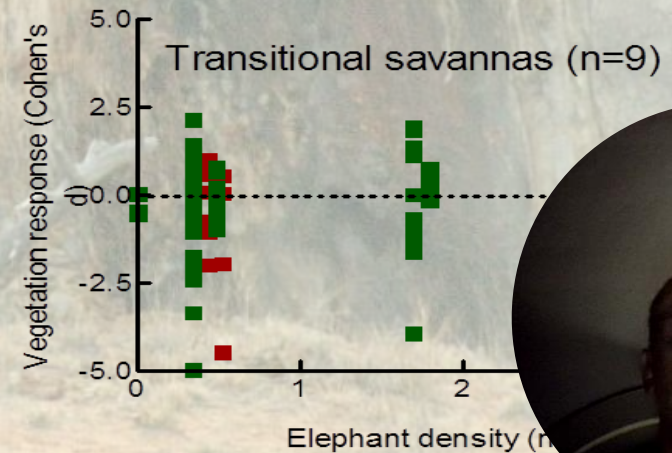
Elephant impact does not clearly link to how many elephants there are

It is about where elephants are, what type of place they at, what kind of elephant is there and what they are doing when they there based on food, water, comfort and safety



Published data do not support calls to reduce numbers to mitigate influences

68 years, 367 peer-reviewed papers
51 had credible data on elephant effects



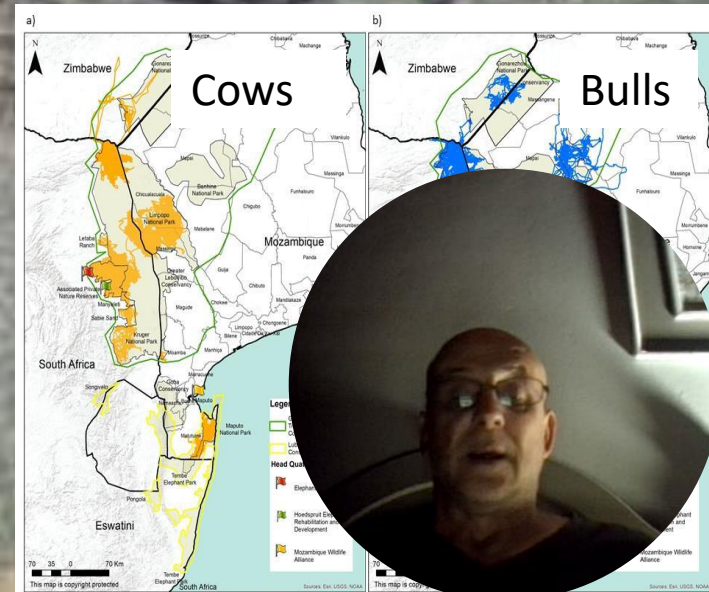
Elephant conflict is also about where they are, what type of place they at, what kind of elephant is there and what they are doing based on food, water, comfort and safety



Identify the hotspots

Define the reasons why elephants are there

Codesign and implement responses focusing on the reason



Need for trade-offs

- Persistence of species
- Mitigating ecological impacts
- Minimising conflict with people
- Maximising benefits for people and ecosystems
- Being compassionate while doing above



Speaking your mind

- What values do elephants have for you?
- What kind of challenges does Kruger have with elephants?
- How do you think these challenges come about?
 - What are the underlying mechanisms?
- What do you think is a good way to address these challenges?

