

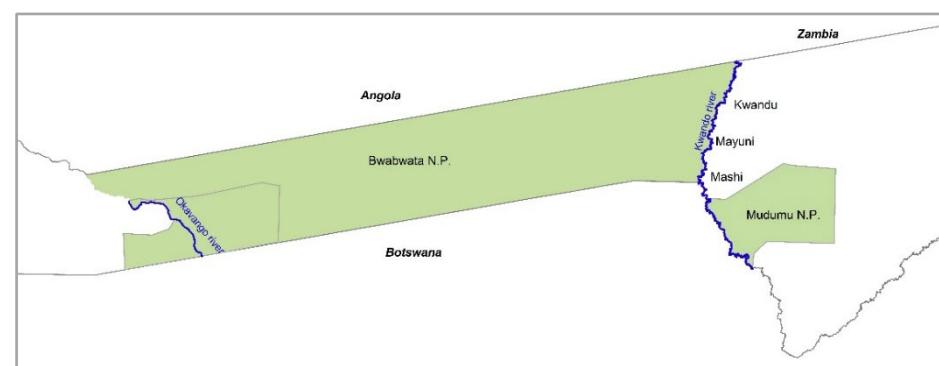
RIVER COUNTS-ZAMBEZI & KAVANGO

August 2024

A collaboration between NACSO, MEFT and environmental NGOs

The fundamental purpose of these annual game counts is to inform MEFT of general wildlife trends in the parks and conservancies.

Boat counts were undertaken along the Kwando River from the Angolan border to the southern boundary of Mudumu National Park (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024) and along the Okavango River from the northern part of the Buffalo core area to the Botswana border (2023, 2024). Total river length counted is approximately 190 km. Within Namibia, animals on each side of the river were counted while, in the case of hippo, animals in the river were also counted.



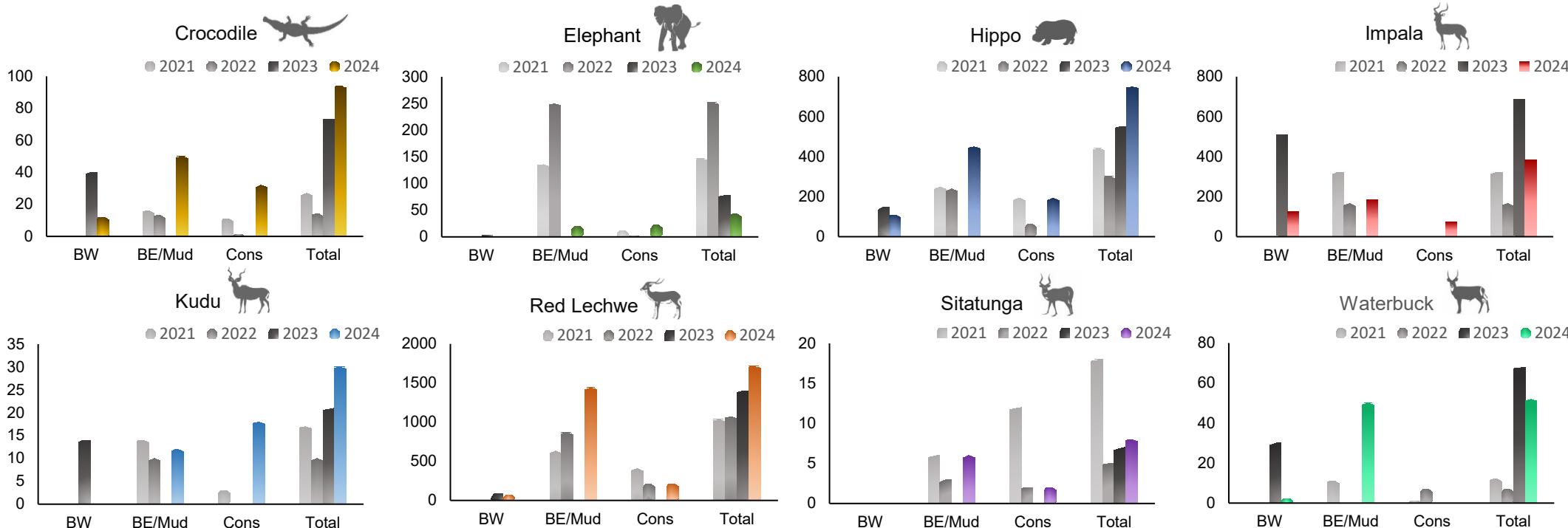
Numbers seen by river section (2024)

Species	Okavango		Kwando				Total
	Bwabwata West	Kwando	Mashi	Mayuni	Bwabwata East	Mudumu N.P.	
Baboon				10	18	28	
Buffalo	1,285				20	1,305	
Bushbuck	1			1		2	
Crocodile	12	10	6	16	35	15	94
Elephant	1		22			20	43
Giraffe							
Hippo	108	44	97	51	304	147	751
Impala	125		68	6	35	150	384
Kudu			16	2		3	30
Lechwe, red	63	33	53	125	128	153	1,715
Reedbuck				3			3
Sitatunga				2	5	1	8
Tsessebe						13	13
Vervet Monkey							
Warthog	6					2	8
Waterbuck	2				9	41	52
Wildebeest, blue							
Zebra, Burchell's							

Species	Okavango		Bwabwata West		Bwabwata East & conservancies		Mudumu N.P.	
			2024		2023			
	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Baboon	10				22	68		
Buffalo	1,285	34			16	143	170	
Bushbuck	1	14			1	1		
Crocodile	12	40			67	26	9	22
Elephant	1	3			22	36	230	105
Giraffe							5	
Hippo	108	146			496	158	151	313
Impala	125	508			109	101	159	214
Kudu					21	6	10	15
Lechwe, red	63	83			1,499	1,139	907	952
Reedbuck		5			3	7	8	13
Sitatunga					7	3	5	18
Tsessebe		6					7	8
Vervet Monkey								
Warthog	6	21					1	1
Waterbuck	2	30			9	17	7	9
Wildebeest, blue							2	
Zebra, Burchell's								8

Boat count trends

In 2023 sightings were not attributed to conservancy/park in the Bwabwata East section so only totals are displayed. BW = Bwabwata West, BE = Bwabwata East, Mud = Mudumu N.P., Cons = conservancies



Boat counts versus aerial counts: Kwando river section

Species	Fixed wing			Heli-copter 2014	Fixed wing 2017	Heli-copter 2019
	2004	2007	2009			
Baboon	138	90	0	0	3	36
Buffalo	1,297	2,942	6,556	957	6,045	3,182
Bushbuck	2	1	0	40	0	0
Crocodile	77	88	45	335	4	73
Elephant	740	2,388	2,703	1,043	2,035	1,813
Giraffe	13	0	2	0	11	5
Hippo	868	733	482	2,330	868	1,255
Impala	214	404	980	921	368	208
Kudu	37	39	92	208	0	6
Lechwe, red	269	487	516	4,008	1,602	5,205
Ostrich	0	0	2	0	0	0
Reedbuck	44	135	40	263	123	211
Roan	0	0	0	32	2	0
Sable	0	22	7	13	5	69
Sitatunga	2	7	19	54	0	0
Tsessebe	4	31	16	8	0	22
Warthog	199	153	143	726	44	121
Waterbuck	7	3	10	128	82	80
Wildebeest, blue	0	21	64	36	23	49
Zebra, Burchell's	13	57	49	29	31	88

Boat				
2021	2022	2023	2024	
111	22	0	28	
226	204	227	20	
0	1	2	1	
27	14	33	82	
147	252	75	42	
0	5	0	0	
442	301	405	643	
321	165	180	259	
17	10	7	30	
1,035	1,072	1,316	1,652	
0	0	0	3	
13	8	7	8	
0	0	0	13	
0	0	0	0	
18	5	7	2	
8	7	6	50	
5	1	0	28	
12	7	38	20	
2	0	0	0	
8	0	0	0	

The entire Kwando River and the Linyanti River zone is irregularly counted by MEFT using a helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft. When comparing these counts with boat counts, we expect wildlife numbers to be higher than the boat counts because:

- 1) The boat section counted is only half the extent of the aerial count
- 2) Aerial counts include Nkasa Ruparo N.P. which contains many of the main wetland species. Generally, around half or more of the lechwe and Hippo seen in aerial counts are animals located in the Nkasa Ruparo park section.

Numbers from boat counts show positive trends for many species including, red lechwe, hippo and impala.

The most abundant species were red lechwe, followed by hippo and impala. The remainder of species were much fewer in number.

The river length counted by boat contains approximately two thirds of all red lechwe and half of all hippo in the Kwando River section within Namibia.

