

What contribution can tourism make to biodiversity conservation?

Wilderness Safaris



Our Journeys Change Lives



Wilderness Safaris is first and foremost a **conservation organisation**.



Secondly we are a **responsible ecotourism camp and tour operator** since we firmly believe that this is the most effective and practical means to ensure the viability and sustainability of African conservation in the modern era.



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Thus, we view our role in conservation in Africa as:

- Ensuring **sustainable protection of carbon sinks and biodiversity** through the creation of viable ecotourism businesses either within formally protected areas or on community or privately-owned land without formal protection.
- Ensuring that **ecotourism remains the chosen alternative** in an economic sense to less sustainable industries such as mining, agriculture, farming, hydroelectric schemes and others that irrevocably damage biodiversity, wilderness and ecosystem processes.
- Creating a **profitable, ethical and responsible business** that others are able to replicate and implement in regions where we are not active or cannot make a difference ourselves.

We understand this as:

building sustainable conservation economies



Wilderness Safaris – biodiversity overview:

- Traversing over more than 3 million hectares in 7 southern Africa countries
- African Centre of Endemism exposure: 3 (Zambesian; Karoo-Namib; Afro-montane)
- Biome coverage: 8
- Biodiversity footprint: 700 bird species, 250 mammals, 200 reptiles, 50 amphibian
- Endangered species protected:
 - 6% of the global **Black Rhino** population (Critically Endangered – total population in 2007: 4190)
 - 8% of the global **Seychelles White-Eye** population (Endangered – total 2004 population: 350-450)
 - 3% of the global **African Wild Dog** population (Endangered – total 1997 population: 3000-5500)
 - 1.5% of the global **African Lion** population (Vulnerable – total 2004 population: 23 000)
 - 10.5% of the global **Wattled Crane** population (Vulnerable – total population: c.7600)



Biodiversity Conservation

WHAT WE DO

Research biological diversity and ecological processes in our areas of operation

Rehabilitate disturbed and degraded ecosystems

Reconstitute indigenous species compositions

HOW WE DO IT

- Through **daily monitoring** carried out by guides in all of our concession areas and also regular aerial surveys.
- Through **dedicated research projects** conducted by our environmentalists, other field staff and through **partnerships** with academic and conservation institutions.

- Where we choose to operate in areas with disturbed or degraded ecosystems we do so because **we believe we can make a difference.**
- Through concentrated and carefully strategized programmes we invest in robust and credible **anti-poaching and vegetation rehabilitation** programmes.

- Where key fauna and/or flora are locally extinct from particular ecosystems and their absence compromises ecological integrity we **reintroduce** these species.
- These reintroductions are carefully researched, are done in partnership with the state and relevant NGOs and are the subject of **extensive monitoring.**

WHY WE DO IT

We believe we have an obligation as custodians of some of Africa's pristine wilderness areas to understand and manage these areas responsibly and to share our learnings for the benefit of conservation.

To restore ecological processes and integrity, provide habitat for endangered species and corridors for natural migration and dispersal.

To restore ecological processes and integrity, and bolster populations of endangered species.



The example of North Island, Seychelles

North Island



Silhouette
Silhouette



Our Journeys Change Lives





Our Journeys Change People's Lives

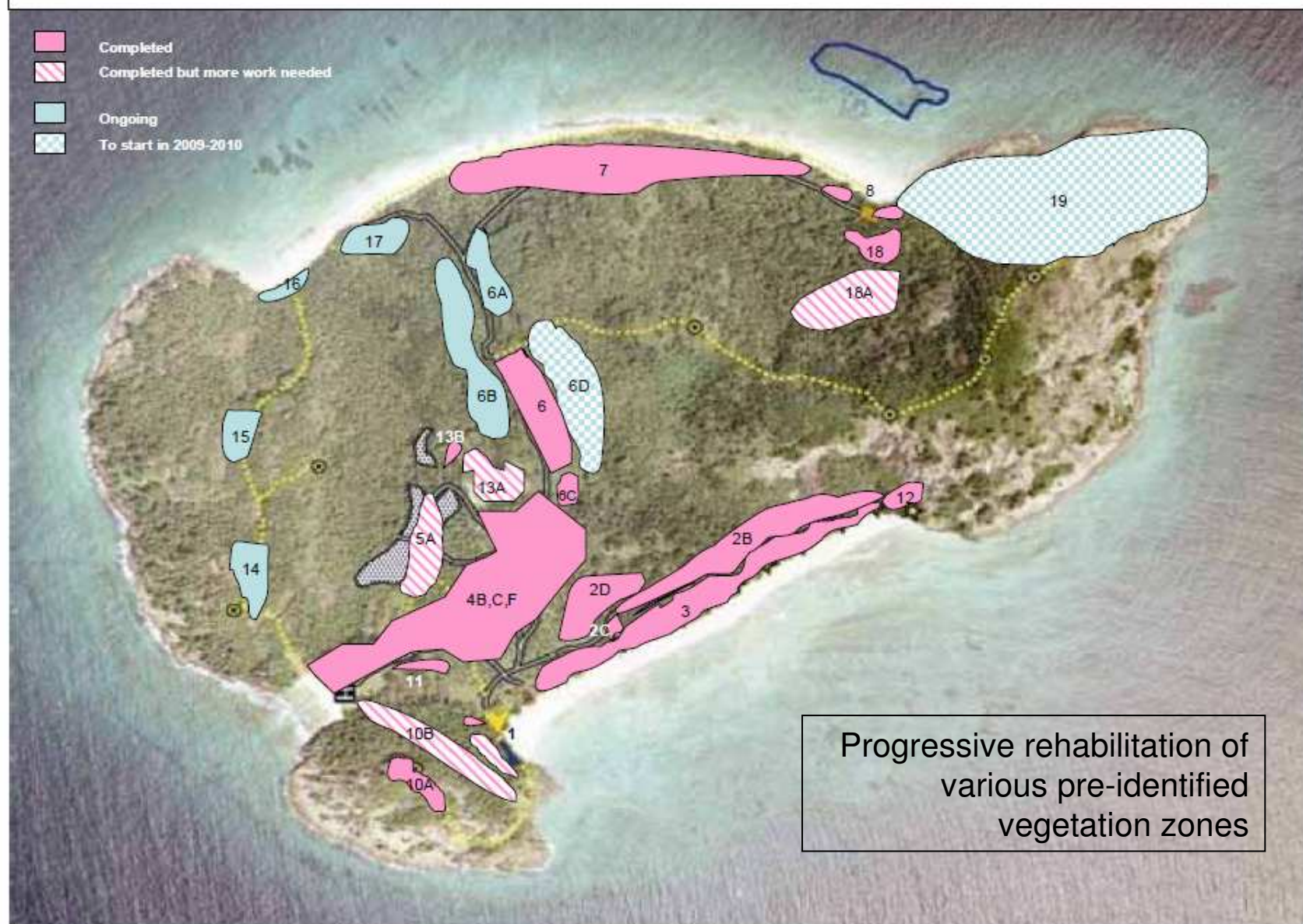




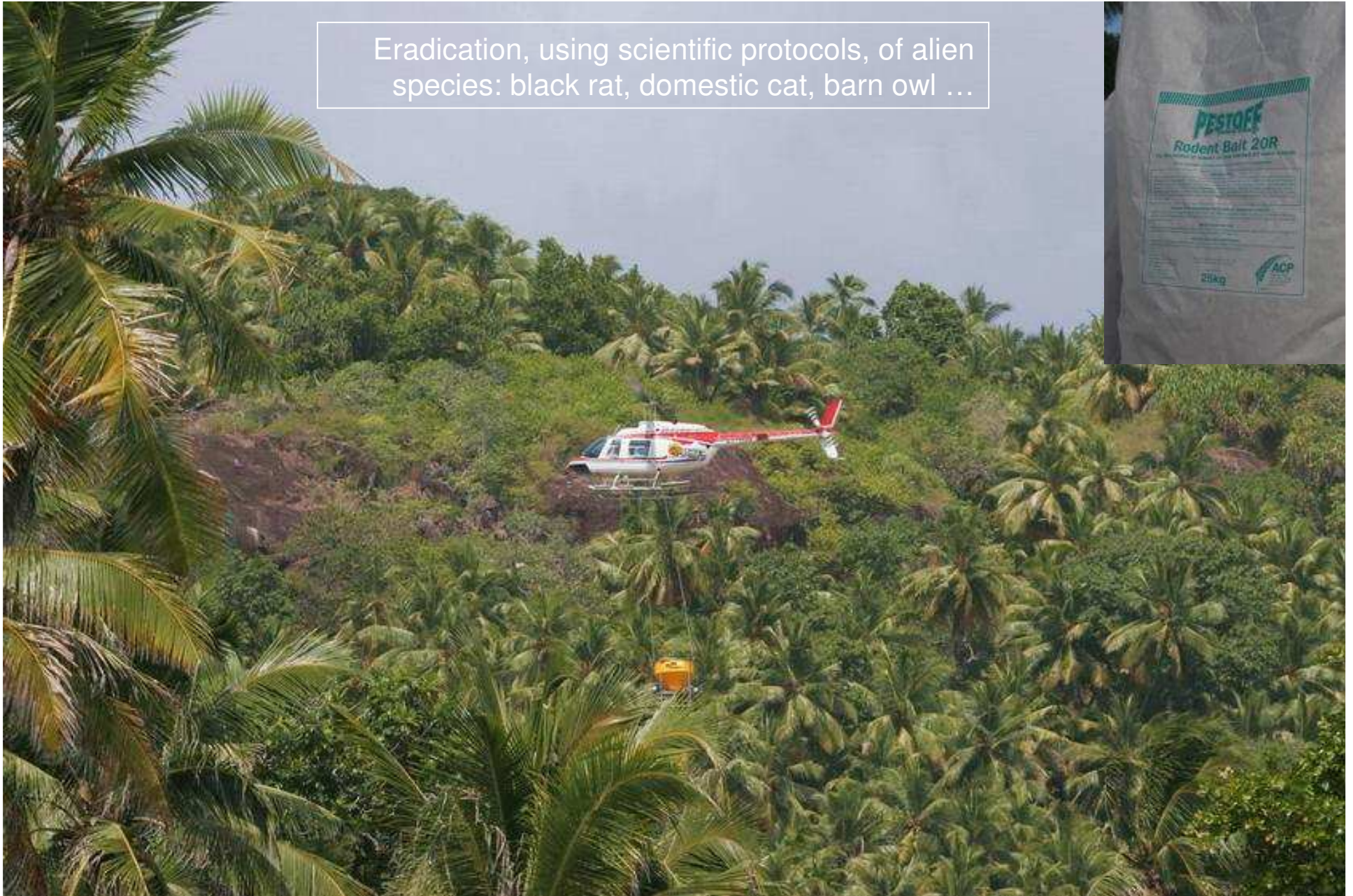
Removal of alien vegetation and establishment of largest indigenous plant nursery in the Seychelles



Progress in Rehabilitation Zones on North Island as at June 2009



Eradication, using scientific protocols, of alien species: black rat, domestic cat, barn owl ...





Return of ground nesting birds





Reintroduction of locally extinct species critical for ecosystem functioning : Giant Tortoise ...

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Reintroduction of locally extinct species
critical for ecosystem functioning :
Seychelles White-Eye ...



Reintroduction of locally extinct species critical for ecosystem functioning : Seychelles Black Mud Terrapin ...



Ongoing monitoring of indicator and endangered species: Green Turtle



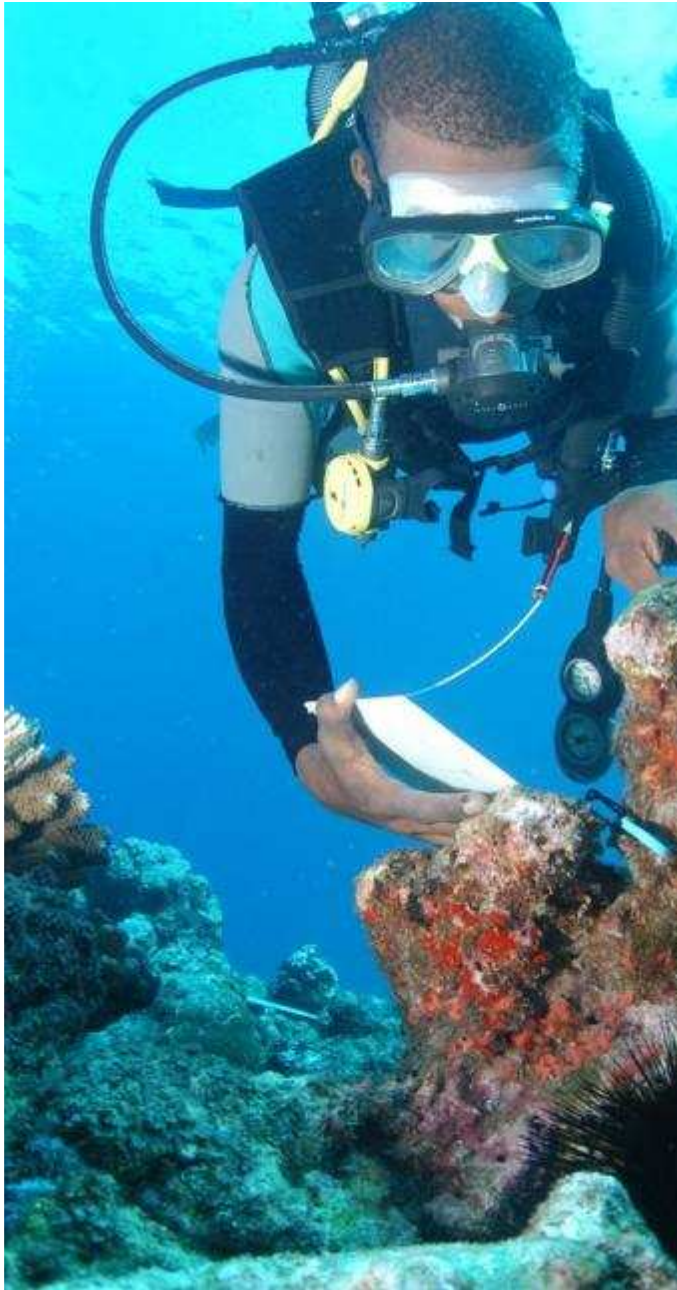


Ongoing monitoring of indicator and endangered species: Seychelles White-Eye

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Ongoing monitoring of indicator and endangered species: coral reefs



Wilderness Safaris – challenges to biodiversity conservation through tourism:

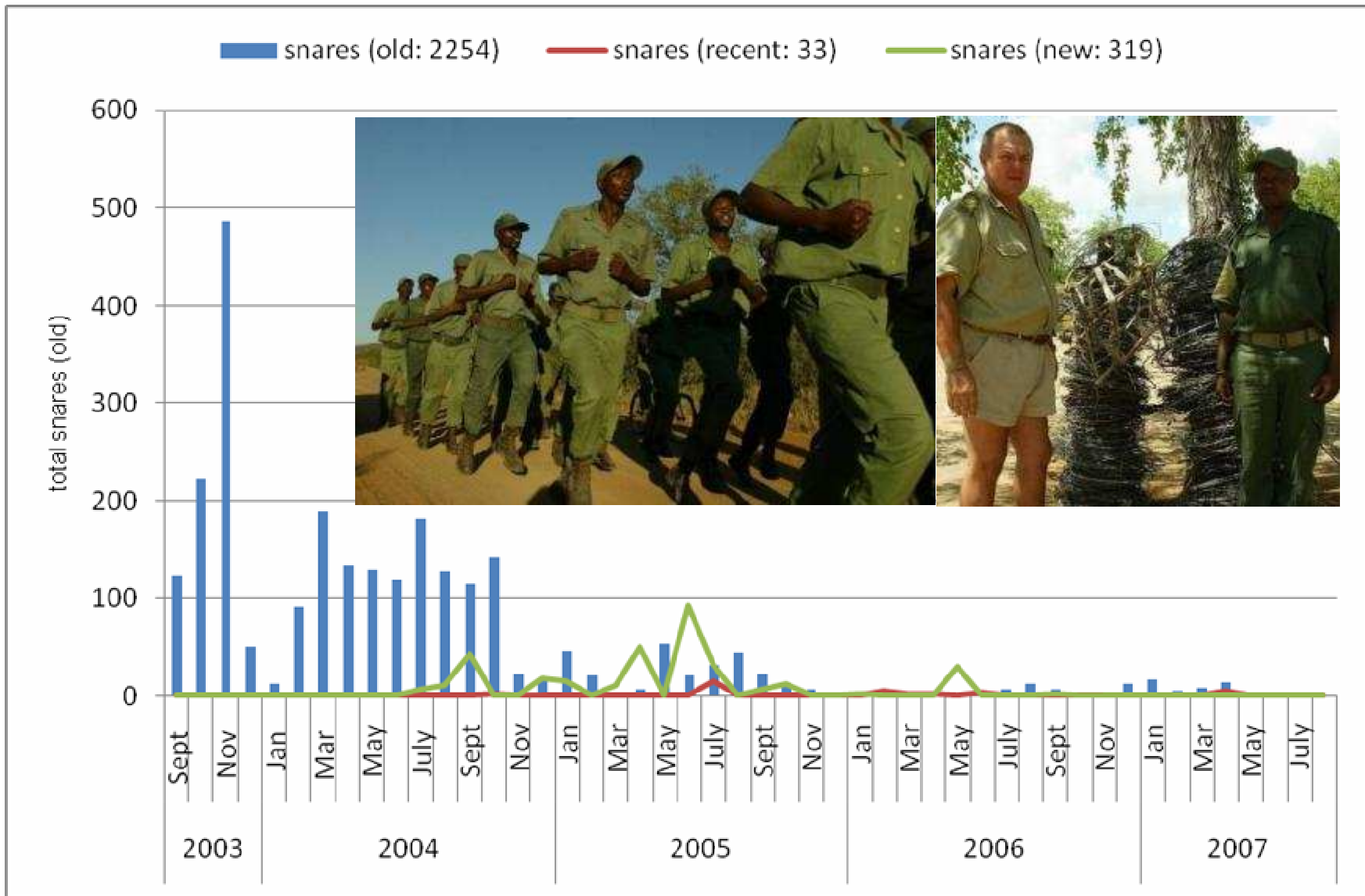
- Access to funds: especially challenging during economic downturn.
- Focus on the savannah to the exclusion of other biomes since this is where viable business is easiest.
- Achieving sufficiently competitive returns in ecotourism to make other less sustainable industries less attractive.
- Tourism is often seen as a beneficiary and not a contributor to biodiversity conservation. This provides a challenge to:
 - efforts to raise funds to accelerate programmes from outside the business
 - the perceived credibility and purpose of programmes
- Achieving sufficient financial returns for communities to ensure continued support for conservation as a land use.



Wilderness Safaris – why biodiversity conservation makes good tourism business sense: The Pafuri example ...

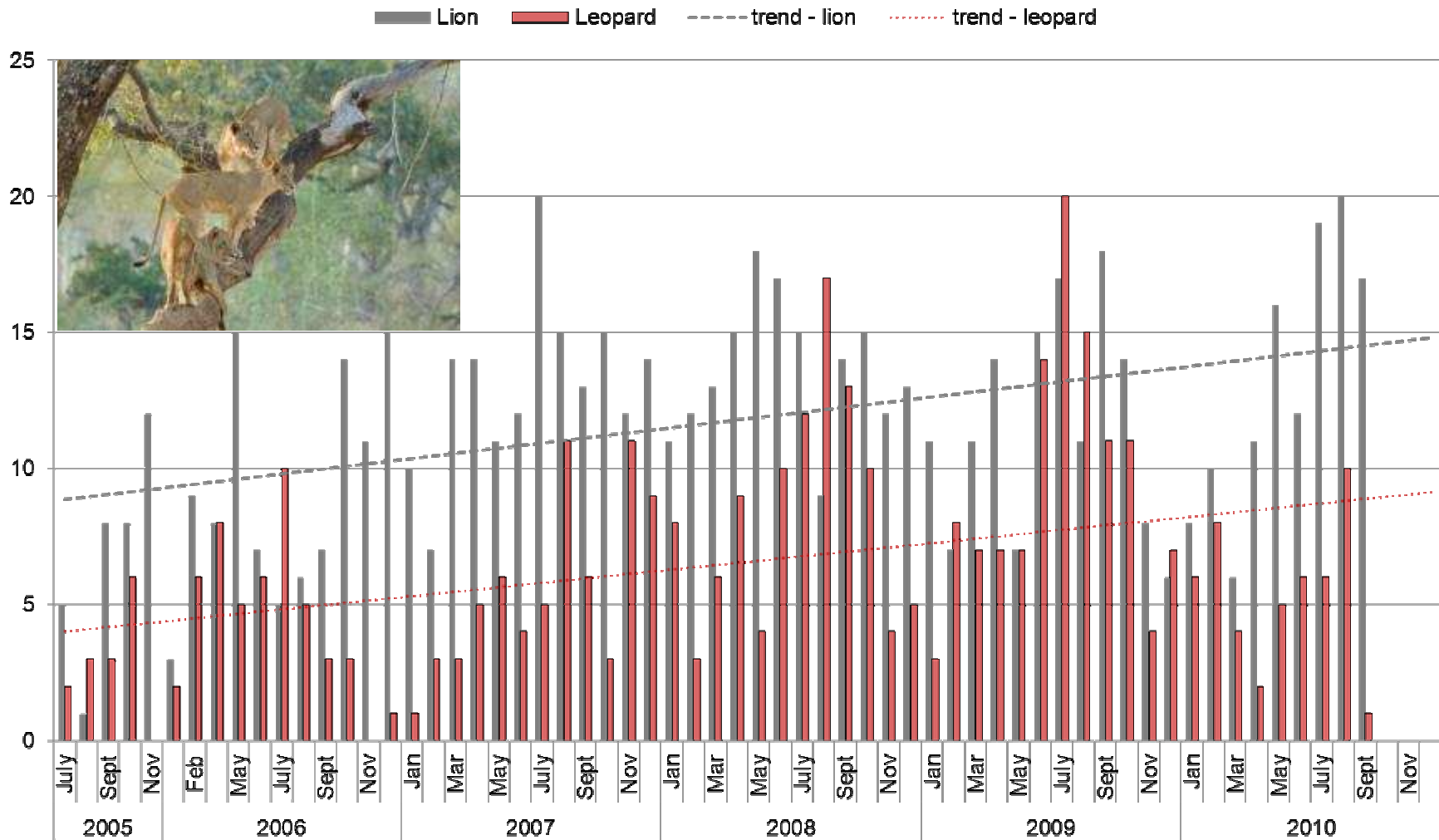
- 2003 & 2004: intensive anti-poaching operations to remove snares and other illegal activity.
- 2005: introduction of game to supplement existing populations (zebra, impala, wildebeest) and introduce long absent charismatic species (white rhino, giraffe).
- 2005 & 2006: MSc project examined viability of white rhino in the area.
- 2003-2005: recolonisation of the area by prey and predator species. Breeding nuclei re-established. Sightings of key species dramatically improved.
- 2005: opening of high end ecotourism lodge to host guests.
- 2005-2010: additional projects (elephant cross-border movements; hippo densities; racket-tailed roller habitat preference; relative abundance of oxpecker species; bat, butterfly and reptile diversity assessments; impacts of off-road driving) pursued.
- 2007: area declared a Ramsar site: wetland of international importance.
- 2005-2010: Recovery of ecosystem achieved. It can now support a high end business model ... As a result of conservation efforts occupancies and thus revenue have grown.





Removal of snares, 2003-2007

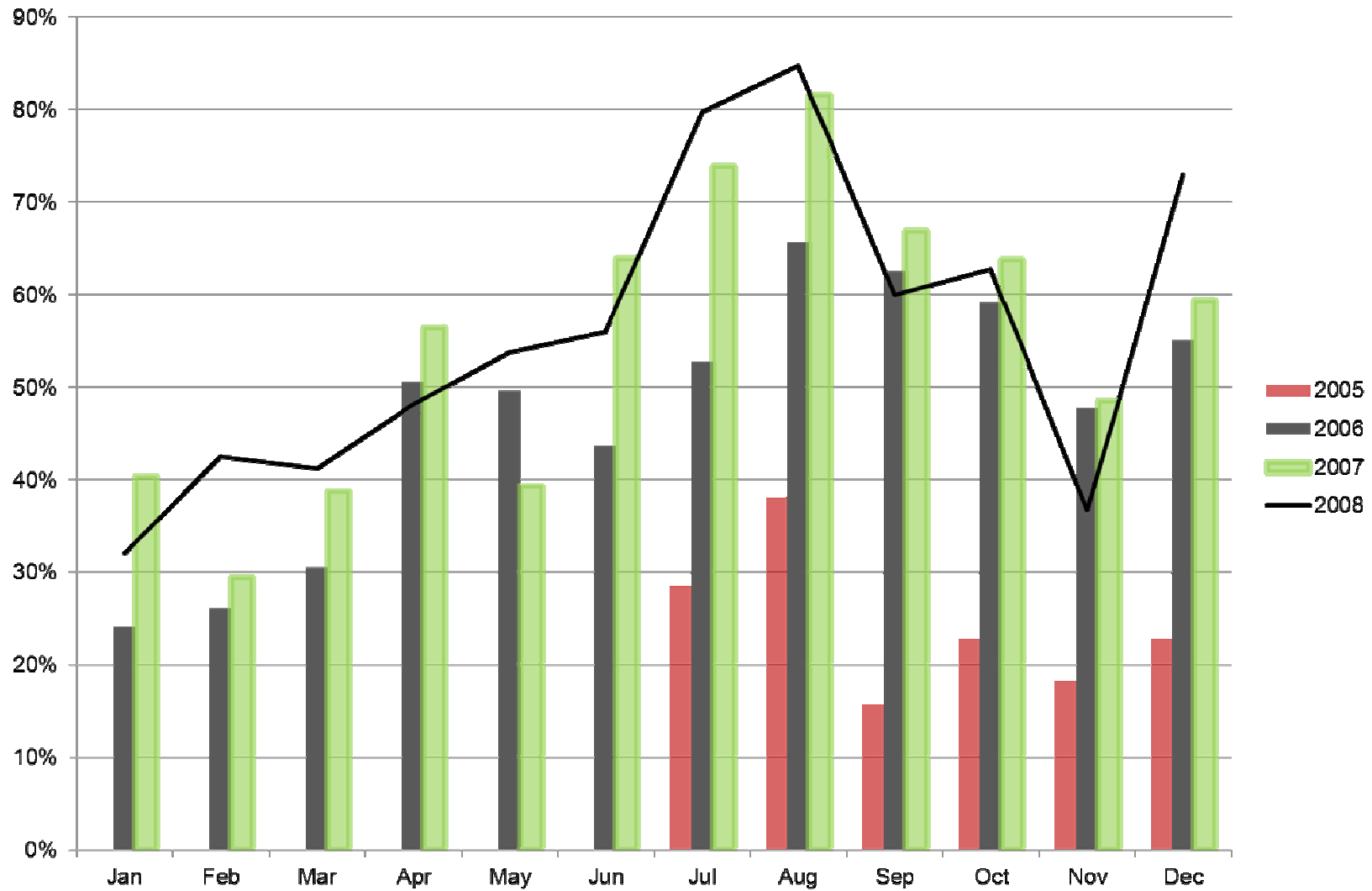




Increase in sightings of lion & leopard, 2005-2008

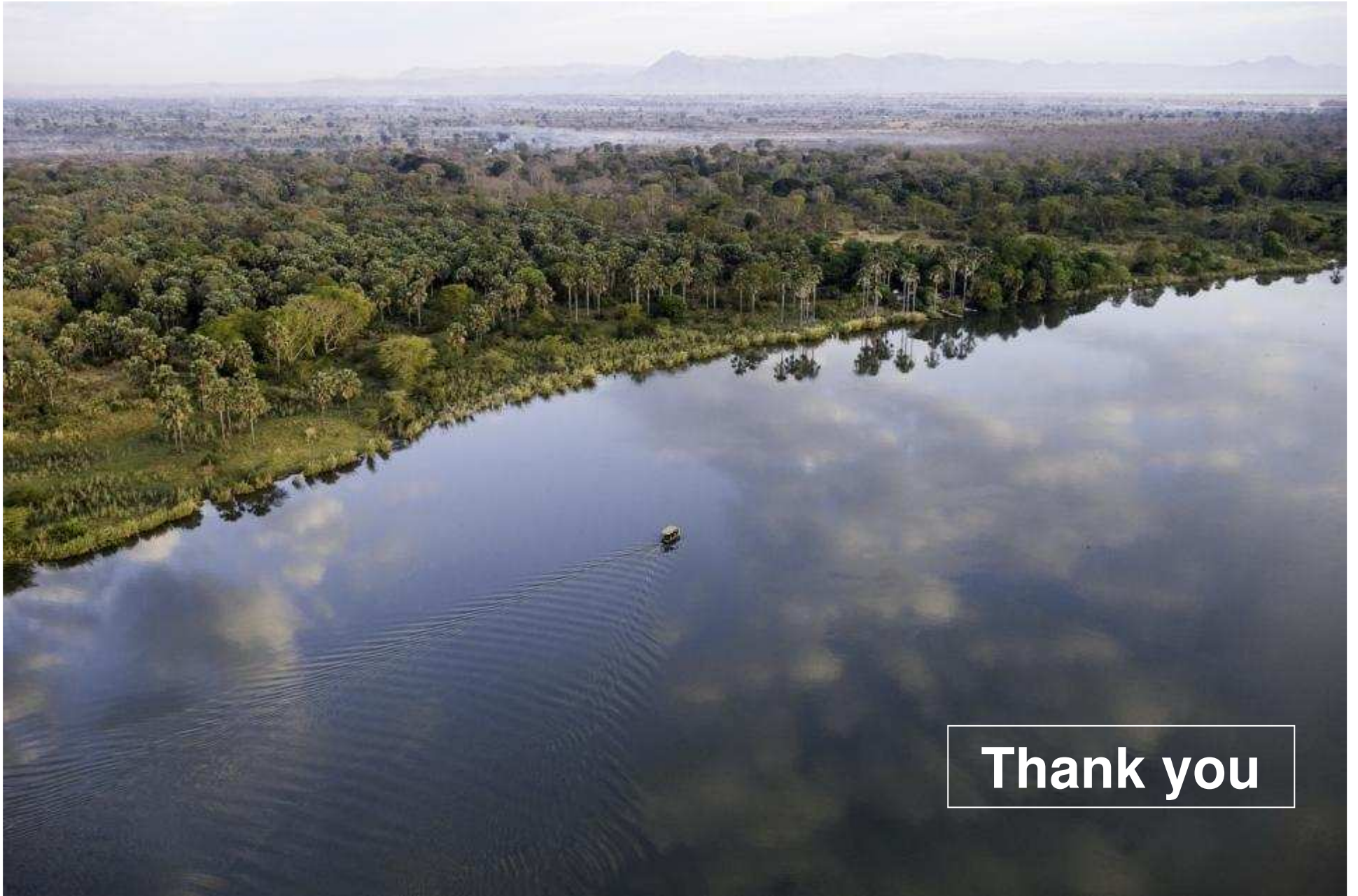






Increase in occupancy, 2005-2008





Thank you

