Bridging the gap: Making Amphibian Biodiversity Data Relatable in South Africa

This research project forms the community/ecotourism element of a FBIP small project focusing on amphibian biodiversity.
Background

- The larger project is near completion, with some results already published or in-press.
Introduction

- This project is a researched-based MSc currently in the write-up phase with some outputs already in-press.
- Pressure from dense human population associated with increased threat to biodiversity and cited as contributor to global amphibian declines.
- High biodiversity areas tend to exclude surrounding communities, this is criticized as unsustainable due to pressure from those communities.
- Ndumo Game Reserve (NGR) presents an ideal model of the conflict between conservation and development objectives.
- Community-based Ecotourism (CBE) initiatives emerge as a good tool for solving both conservation and development issues, but it is not a fool proof plan.
Introduction

- The project serves as a pilot for methods of increasing knowledge and understanding of amphibians.
  - Conservation initiatives stand a greater chance of success when people relate better to biodiversity.
  - Better relation to biodiversity required for building bio-economy.
- Contributes to on-going monitoring.
- It also tests the viability of amphibians as tourist attractions.
Methods

- Study Zululand frog biodiversity (literature reviews, historic data, survey and monitoring data).
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• Hold a series of workshops and consultations with Zululand community members and safari guides:
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- Hold a series of workshops and consultations with Zululand community members and safari guides:
  - Understand their cultural and personal perceptions of frogs,
  - To inform how we present Zululand amphibian data. (language to use, tone of language to use, who are we talking to?, etc.).
  - Find out if naming rules are used for IsiZulu frog names.
  - Formulate new isiZulu frog names.
  - Survey interest in frogging (i.e. frogs as a tourist attraction).
Findings

• Entry requirements for safari guides in most of South Africa’s major reserves mean that a lot less community members can benefit from CBE initiatives.

• The above challenge can be overcome through crafts and curios outside reserves as more people stand to benefit.
Findings

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  - Working to include frogs into the list of tourist attractions at NGR and monitor tourist interest based on bookings.
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  - Working to include frogs into the list of tourist attractions at NGR and monitor tourist interest based on bookings.

- Frogs are unlikely to be sole tourist attractions for reserves, but can be add-ons to existing attractions.
Findings

- Zululand community members have expressed interest in learning about frogs, provided it is on their terms.
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