Crocodile Specialist Group Steering Committee Meeting
Agadir, Morocco
(12 May 2026)

East and Southern Africa

Summary:

Ethiopia

Research and Publications:
Utele, M., Gebeyehu, A. and Kaba, T. (2025). Gastrointestinal helminth of Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*), in Arba Minch Crocodile Ranch, Ethiopia. Scientific Reports 15(1): 3749.

Kenya

Dr. M.N. Mosse reported that one crocodile farm which practices both captive breeding and ranching of crocodiles is operational. Two crocodile ranches closed operations in the course of the last five years. The last egg collection activity along the Tana River was done in 2019 by two crocodile ranches. Human-crocodile conflict is an important area of concern in the conservation and management of Nile crocodiles, the livelihoods of local communities and should be a focal area for research. Some local communities are known to have indigenous and traditional knowledge on human-crocodile co-existence. This is a possible area for research and outreach/ management programme. The impact of the absence of crocodile egg collection along the River Tana since 2020 on the crocodile populations, crocodile habitats and local communities should be an area of interest for researchers and management institutions. Official information indicates that there were 79 human fatalities and 129 human injuries in different parts of Kenya between 2019 and 2024. There is need to determine the extent of loss of livestock to crocodiles. The national wildlife law provides for compensation for human fatalities, human injuries and loss of livestock caused by crocodiles and specific other wild animal species.

Research and Publications:
Mosse, M., Kibue, G. and Odadi, W. (2023). Nile crocodile nesting ecology under varying human disturbance intensities along lower River Tana, Kenya. Current Trends in Natural Sciences 12(24): 110-126.

Mosse, M.N., Odadi, W.O. and Kibue, G.W. (2024). Anthropogenic Threats to Crocodiles, and the Level and Sociodemographic Determinants of their Utilization in Lower River Tana Basin, Kenya. Tropical Conservation Science, 17, 19400829241241457.

South Africa

Kruger National Park: Dr. Sam Ferreira (large mammal ecologist SANParks) reported that no active fieldwork was conducted on Nile crocodiles for the last few years and no crocodile aerial surveys for 2025. Dr. Stefan Woodborne presented a paper at the 14th Oppenheimer Research Conference in October 2025 on how core body temperature of Nile crocodiles as well as changes in the water level in the Olifants Gorge at the time of the pansteatitis pandemic may have contributed to the pansteatitis mortalities. Stefan is planning more fieldwork for 2026 on core body temperature both at commercial farms as well as in Kruger National Park.

Pongolapoort Dam: Rickert Van Der Westhuizen (Ecological Advice Northwest, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife) reported that 236 crocodiles were counted from a helicopter on 12 November 2025. It is recommended to count crocodiles in winter, but for most of 2025 the dam was at full capacity. When the dam is full, the floodplains are inundated and the shoreline extends into the trees, making it impossible to spot basking crocodiles from the air. The survey only became possible after the release of water by the Department of Water and Sanitation, which lowered the dam level to 81.56% capacity on the day of the count. About a third of all crocodiles counted were sub-adult or juveniles indicating good recruitment, despite extremely high dam and river levels in 2024 and 2025. High river levels could flood nest sites and lead to no recruitment.

Amatikulu Nature Reserve: Since 2013, Nile crocodile nests are counted in the Amatikulu Nature Reserve. Wild populations extend only as far south as the Tugela River in KwaZulu-Natal, thus making the wild population within Amatikulu Nature Reserve a population at its southern most limits of distribution. Crocodiles are confined to the iNyoni River, which runs parallel to the coast for approximately 11 km within the protected area. Only a single active nest was found compared to six in 2014 which was the highest nest count. The management of Amatikulu Nature Reserve have faced significant challenges in recent years. Illegal activities continue unabated with little regard for Ezemvelo and the management of Amatikulu Nature Reserve. The greatest threats faced by the Nile crocodile population at Amatikulu

Nature Reserve are illegal cattle grazing (nest site disturbance), alien invasive plant species (nest site habitat modification), gillnetting (poaching) and arson fires (bush encroachment).

Crocodile Conservation South Africa: Following a three day worship at Loskop Dam in 2024 consisting of crocodile specialists from all conservation agencies in South Africa with Nile crocodile populations, a Non-Profit Company was registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission of South Africa. The next step is to register the NPC as a Public Benefit Organisation so that the organisation will be able to issue tax certificates, allowing donating companies to contribute up to 10% of their annual taxable income to CCSA and claim it back from SARS. Our initial funding strategy will focus on crocodile farms in South Africa. All donations will be used exclusively to support conservation interventions, monitoring and research, practical projects promoting Nile crocodile conservation, management, and human–crocodile conflict mitigation in South Africa and research projects on wild populations or crocodile farms. During a 2023 workshop at Pongolapoort Dam and the 2024 meeting at Loskop Dam Nature Reserve, delegates discussed the development of a South African Nile Crocodile Assessment to evaluate the current conservation status, threats, and management measures for Nile crocodile populations in South Africa. This national assessment will serve as a foundation for the Biodiversity Management Plan for the species and will help identify information gaps that need to be addressed. A workshop is planned at Ndumo Game Reserve in June where discussions on the structure and format of assessments will be held followed by workshops to review some of the initial provincial assessment documents.

Non-Detriment Finding for Nile Crocodile in South Africa: Dr. Jeanetta Selier (Senior Scientist, Scientific Authority & Wildlife Economy Biodiversity Research, Assessments and Monitoring, South African National Biodiversity Institute) reported that the NDF for Nile crocodile in South Africa has been approved by the Scientific Authority and is expected to be gazetted by DFFE in early 2026 for public comment.

HCC and public awareness:

a) In early 2024, a 10-year-old boy was attacked by a crocodile in the Phalala River and disappeared; his remains were never found despite extensive search efforts.
b) In March 2024, a Middelburg man survived a serious crocodile attack while near a river in Mpumalanga Province; he is recovering in hospital after being bitten and dragged by a crocodile.
c) In February 2025, a man was found dead in the Mogalakwena River (Limpopo Province) after a suspected crocodile attack while fishing. His body was recovered with severe mutilations consistent with crocodile predation.
d) In June 2025, a 56-year-old man died in a crocodile attack at Bonamanzi Game Reserve near Hluhluwe, KwaZulu-Natal Province. Local media (The Citizen/Zululand Observer) reported the attack occurred at a dam within the reserve, prompting warnings to be careful near wildlife water sources.
e) Following numerous rumours and videos suggesting the presence of Nile crocodiles at Olifantsnek Dam, Northwest Province, a popular tourist facility including swimming and triathlons, myself and Masters student Fortunate Davhana and Ms. Vasti Botha from the Northwest Province Conservation Agency conducted a spotlight count in November 2025 and managed to capture three juvenile crocodiles. It is unclear how the crocodiles ended up in the dam. More searches will be conducted to see if there are more crocodiles in the dam.
f) In February 2026, a fatal crocodile attack was reported from the Sabie River. A man fetching water from the Sabie River near Kruger National Park was killed by a crocodile, with his body recovered from the riverbank after community members saw the incident unfold.

Research and Publications:

- Pooley, S. (2024). Research and management of the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) in Ndumo Game Reserve. African Journal of Wildlife Research.
- Zdunek, P., de Wit, T., Toh, A.K.J., Harold, G. and Seah, B. (2024). Predation of an adult Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus* Linnaeus, 1758) by a Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus* Laurenti, 1768) in South Africa with other records of interactions between monitor lizards and crocodilians. Biawak 16(1): 20-23.
- Fourie, M., de Freitas, A., Myburgh, A. and Myburgh, H.C. (2025). Automated crocodile detection using deep learning and synthetic data. Ecological Informatics.
- Viljoen, D., Webb, E., Myburgh, J., Truter, C., van Wyk, H. and Myburgh, A. (2025). Thermal profiles associated with nest site selection of Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*) on a commercial crocodile farm. Journal of Thermal Biology (doi: 10.1016/j. jtherbio.2025.104179).
- Davhana, F., Humphries, M., Hunter, G., Seoraj-Pillai, N. and Combrink, X. (2025). Exposure of sub-adult Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*) to extreme lead concentrations: a 48-week experimental study with implications for wild populations. Research Square (doi: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-6966105/v1).
- Soto, D.X., Radloff, F.G.T., Bond, A.L., Hobson, K.A. and Leslie, A.J. (2025). In the quest of isotope equilibrium for trophic discrimination estimation: Diet-tissue dynamics in Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*). Isotopes in Environmental and Health Studies (doi: 10.1080/10256016.2025.2535762).
- Gila, A., Maina, A.N. and Mnisi, C.M. (2025). Utilisation of Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) offal meal waste by-products as a novel protein substrate in the formulation of diets for Jumbo quail. Discover Agriculture 3: 59.
- Rachuene, P., Nemutandani, K.R., Mugwabana, J.T. and Tyasi, T.L. (2025). Prediction of total skin length in Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*) using measurable skin traits. Research Square (doi: https:// doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-6810779/v1).

a) Fortunate Davhana from the Department Nature Conservation of the Tshwane University of Technology has finished her Masters study (Cum laude) with the title "*Experimental study investigating the effect of ingested lead (Pb) in*

captive Nile crocodiles (Crocodylus niloticus): significance for wild Nile crocodiles". She is in the process of registering for a PhD in Nile crocodile ecotoxicology.

b) Prof. Jan Myburgh from the Department of Paraclinical Sciences at the University of Pretoria, based at the Faculty of Veterinary Science (Onderstepoort campus) has retired in 2025. Jan was involved in numerous projects on Nile crocodiles over decades both commercially as well as wild populations and has published extensively through local and international collaborations. Jan also attended numerous CSG working meetings and he will be greatly missed.

Zambia

Paul Reilly reports that Zambia continues to support widespread populations of the Nile crocodiles across major river systems and wetlands, including the Zambezi, Kafue, Luangwa, Chambeshi, Bangweulu, and associated floodplains. At a national scale, populations are considered generally stable, although localized pressures persist in areas experiencing increasing human settlement, fishing activity, and riverine agriculture. No comprehensive national population census was undertaken during the reporting period; assessments remain largely site-specific and observational, based primarily on Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) records and partner observations.

Human-crocodile conflict remains a significant and ongoing management challenge, particularly along the Luangwa and Zambezi river systems. Incidents are commonly associated with subsistence fishing, domestic water collection, and livestock watering points. DNPW continues to respond through problem animal control, community sensitisation, and targeted removals where necessary. However, financial, logistical, and staffing constraints limit the consistency of response and the consolidation of national-level incident data.

Zambia maintains a small but globally relevant Nile crocodile farming sector operating under national wildlife legislation and CITES requirements. Commercial production is primarily oriented toward the international luxury skin market, with limited domestic utilisation of meat and by-products. During the reporting period, industry focus through the Zambia Crocodile Farmers Association (ZaCFA) has been placed on:

- Continuous optimisation of animal welfare, biosecurity, and traceability systems.
- Maintaining high compliance with CITES, veterinary regulations, and occupational health standards.
- Proactive involvement in crocodile conservation and human crocodile conflict actions in partnership with DNPW.
- Third party certification. 85% of Zambian farms are third party certified or affiliate members currently working toward full certification. Of these, 57% have been certified for several years and 28% are aiming to be certified in 2026. 15% are in the process of winding down so Zambian farms are expected to be 100% certified by 2027.

Zambia remains compliant with its CITES obligations for *Crocodylus niloticus*. Exports are administered through well-established permitting systems, with no compliance breaches reported during the period.

Research on wild crocodilian ecology and population dynamics in Zambia remains limited and largely opportunistic. Funding constraints continue to limit targeted field investigations into the current existence and distribution of the African slender-snouted crocodile (*Mecistops leptorhynchus*) within its historical range in Zambia. While historical records suggest past occurrence within parts of the Congo–Zambezi watershed systems, no systematic surveys were undertaken during the reporting period to confirm persistence or extirpation.

Conservation outcomes are therefore currently driven more by protected area management and law enforcement than by species-specific research programmes. Increased engagement between private crocodile farming operators, regulators, and technical advisors has nevertheless contributed to improved awareness of welfare and sustainability standards, and to strengthened dialogue between conservation, tourism and commercial stakeholders.

Key challenges identified for the coming period include:
- Limited national level crocodilian population monitoring and data consolidation.
- Persistent human crocodile conflict in high-risk riverine communities.
- Capacity and funding constraints within regulatory agencies.
- The need for continued technical support to ensure long-term sustainability, welfare standards, and social licence within the crocodile farming sector.

Priority actions include improved data collection on HCC incidents, targeted community risk-reduction initiatives, and mobilisation of resources to support field surveys for *C. niloticus* and within the historical range of *M. leptorhynchus*.

Tanzania

Research and Publications:
Murhula, G.B., Shadrack, M., Rehema, M.M., Muhamba, F., Mrema, E.M. and Mghase, A.E. (2025). Crocodile bite scalp avulsion and hand extensor tendons injury: A rare case reconstructed in a tertiary hospital, in Tanzania. International Journal of Surgery Case Reports 134(2025): 111721.

Gayo, L. and Ngonyoka, A. (2025). Do wildlife management areas help to mitigate negative human-wildlife interactions? A case of eastern bufferzone of Selous Game Reserve, Tanzania. Tropical Conservation Science (https://doi.org/10.1177/194008292513405).

Zimbabwe

Sue Childes (Executive Manager, CFAZ) reports that CFAZ continue to work closely with the Zimbabwean CITES focal office, the Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority, on the collation of trade data which is submitted to the WCMC/UNEP. Assoc. Prof. Sally Isberg was guest speaker at our annual AGM meeting in Harare in July 2025 and stimulated discussion and research into skin defects. CFAZ have supported veterinary research work on crocodiles through Dr. Norman Mukarati at the Veterinary Faculty, University of Zimbabwe. HCC is a growing concern amongst CFAZ members and ZPWMA and, in an effort to raise awareness, a series of posters and warnings were printed and circulated to sites in known croc conflict areas around the country. The impact of world trade depression and market uncertainty coupled with rising input costs in Zimbabwe has resulted in the closure of one large farm and moth-balling of four other farms. The temporary closure is in the hope that the skin markets will improve soon. The serious knock-on effect of this decreased production is decreased revenue for conservation and local economies, decreased employment and support to schools and clinics in rural communities.

Research and Publications

Utete, B. and Mabika, N. (2025). Evolution of fisheries, aquaculture, and crocodile farming governance in Zimbabwe within the Southern African policy context. Frontiers in Conservation Science 6: 1704218.

Kavhu, B., Mutema, C., Mpakairi, K.S., Gandiwa, E. and Muvengwi, J. (2025). Mapping human fatalities from megafauna to inform coexistence strategies. Scientific Reports 15(1): 33856.

Hungwe, B., Utete, B. and Madamombe, H.K. (2026, in press). Assessing human-crocodile conflicts in fragmented wetlands in an arid area: data on potential human-water-wildlife conflict mitigation strategies. European Journal of Wildlife Research.

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