

POACHING BEGINS TO HAMPER SWAZILAND TOURISM MORE THAN BEFORE



Poachers are devastating the wildlife of Swaziland's nature reserves more than ever before and tourists are turning their backs on the wildlife due to the lack of animals. In some places, for instance, just a few impalas remain.

Nobody needs tourism more than poor countries and Swaziland, landlocked by South Africa, fits right into this category. **Currently the traditional problems of AIDS and security have been set aside by an even bigger problem: poaching.** Swaziland relies heavily on its game reserves yet the poachers have created a situation whereby the only confrontation tourists are likely to have with baboons and large game is where they hear huge screams from them being caught in traps.

The locals have been quick to point out that the animals have started behaving in a strange manner by running away from humans at any opportunity. This is not how the animals used to behave and their fears are almost certainly a result of recent experience with people. **The poachers may be earning for themselves yet they are crippling tourism.** A few remaining impalas and plants are very unlikely to attract visitors from afar.

The Mlawula reserve has had an increasing number of poaching cases to deal with. One may ask how such secret incidents can be monitored? The answer lies with the increasing screams of entrapped wildlife, their plummeting numbers and the amount of carcasses with traps around them. Indeed, many animals are unfortunate enough to decompose in snares if the poachers are not quick enough to find their prey. Even plants, which are used to make traditional medicines have recently fallen victim to the increasing numbers of Mlawula poachers.

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