

The power of poison: Study examines pesticide poisoning of Africa's wildlife

19 March 2014

Poisons are silent, effective and cheap, making the especially dangerous in Africa where they are used for both pest control and illegal poaching. However, as a new study in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* reveals, they also kill un-intended wildlife.

Africa has a long history of using poison, both for early tribal warfare and for hunting. Synthetic poisons however were introduced, like so many things, by European colonialists in the 19th century. In southern Africa colonial administrators sanctioned the [poisoning](#) of predators and scavengers, a practice which would continue far into the 20th century.

Dr. Darcy Ogada, from The Peregrine Fund, Nairobi, explores the impact of these campaigns and the proliferation of [wildlife](#) poisoning in the 1980's and 1990's as the commodification of Africa's natural resources continued to rise. The study reviews legislation across the continent, but finds that legal loopholes and lax enforcement remain barriers to wildlife protection.

After reviewing a breakdown of species whose populations have been ravaged by poisoning, Dr Ogada calls for the establishment of regional pesticide centers across Africa that can identify pesticide hotspots and hold a mandate for chemical testing, education and public engagement.

More information: Darcy Ogada, The Power of Poison: Pesticide poisoning of Africa's wildlife, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, doi.wiley.com/10.1002/etc.2522

Provided by Wiley

APA citation: The power of poison: Study examines pesticide poisoning of Africa's wildlife (2014, March 19) retrieved 17 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-03-power-poison-pesticide-poisoning-africa.html>

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