




# Sustainability Review 2015



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## Some of the awards received during the year



**March 2014:** Desert Rhino Camp – AFAR Media Experiential Travel Award for Best Walking Trip: Namibia.



**July 2014:** Wilderness Safaris – 4th best Safari Operator in the World in the US Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards.



**September 2014:** Mombo Camp – World Travel Award for Botswana's Leading Tented Safari Camp.

# At a glance Who is Wilderness?

Our **Vision** is to be **Africa's leading ecotourism** organisation, creating **life-changing journeys** in order to build **sustainable conservation economies** and **inspire positive action**.



## Values

Our values provide a moral compass and framework for decision making and day-to-day operations within our organisation.



### Leadership

We have the courage to innovate and are purpose-driven in shaping a better Africa.



### Authenticity

We always remain loyal to the Wilderness Way.



### Integrity

We are respectful, honest and ethical.



### Fun

We enjoy making a difference and changing people's lives.



### Accountability

We take responsibility for our actions.



### Commitment

Our dedication to the environment and our guests is unwavering.



September 2014: North Island – World Travel Award for the Indian Ocean's Leading Green resort.



November 2014: Children in the Wilderness won the PURE Award for Community Engagement.



November 2014: Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp – Won the Out of this World category in the Tatler Travel Awards.

# Wilderness and sustainability



Wilderness Safaris had its formal beginnings in Botswana in 1983. Two young overland safari guides, a South African and a New Zealander, had been working in the remote, wilderness reaches of the country since 1977 and, by the early 1980s, had decided to strike out on their own.

They wanted to somehow ensure that the financial benefits of their safaris flowed to Botswana and its people and thus help to contribute to the conservation of the country's wildlife areas. They also wanted to offer authentic safaris with integrity that catered for people as passionate about nature as they were.

In retrospect, this approach was logical and today forms the cornerstone and central tenet of ecotourism the world over. But in the early 1980s, it was a groundbreaking philosophy and set Wilderness Safaris apart.

At the time, most professional safari outfitters in the photographic side of the industry were not based in Maun, employed mostly expatriates and sourced their supplies in neighbouring South Africa. The Wilderness founders wanted to change this and accordingly registered a Botswana company and based themselves in Maun, south of the Okavango Delta.

From these humble beginnings in Botswana, the business gradually expanded into the rest of southern Africa and Seychelles. Over time, the business has evolved into a specialist luxury safari operation with 52 different safari camps and lodges, comprising a total of 894 beds, in seven African countries and hosting in excess of 30 000 guests per annum – all based on a strong sustainability platform: the 4Cs.

The 4Cs concept, adopted from The Long Run Initiative ([www.thelongrun.com](http://www.thelongrun.com)), is predicated on the belief that a business will not be truly sustainable unless it specifically addresses issues arising under the dimensions of Commerce, Conservation, Community and Culture (the 4Cs). We believe that this framework is the most appropriate sustainability model for our industry and accordingly our Vision and Values are all aligned to these Cs. Our strategic plan is based upon this platform and a set of outcomes have been developed for each C. These outcomes have then been extended into the actions that are required to ensure their achievement. Step by step then, we are making a difference to Africa and ultimately, the planet.

## Blueprint

### C COMMERCE

We create life-changing wilderness journeys for our guests and clients, and work closely with our Government partners, conservation and community stakeholders and shareholders, to ensure the ongoing financial success and sustainability of our business.

### C CONSERVATION

We aim to maximise the positive impact of our operations on biodiversity conservation and to build and manage our camps in the most eco-friendly way possible to minimise any negative impacts.

### C COMMUNITY

People are at the heart of our business. We hope to provide opportunities and growth to inspire our staff and external communities to learn about nature, love and conserve it, and to realise the importance of ecotourism.

### C CULTURE

We respect and promote our unique Wilderness culture, as well as those of all our employees and neighbouring rural communities. We hope to positively impact a global culture of respect and care for the environment.

## Letter from our Chief Sustainability Officer

Dear Guest,

We are committed to ensuring the sustainability of our business. This commitment is part of our DNA and reflects a number of aims and objectives, the most important of which are outlined below:

- Firstly, this is enlightened self-interest. We depend on the health of the ecosystems and species that are the attractions for our guests. Any negative impacts on the environment resulting from our business would reduce their attractiveness and thus the competitiveness of our products. On the other hand, improvements to biodiversity and species will increase the attractiveness of our tourism operations and therefore the success of our business;
- The health of ecosystems in modern Africa is to a large extent dependent on the goodwill of surrounding rural communities and to this end, our fair and equitable engagement of these partners is a critical component of the sustainability of both protected areas and our business;
- In this day of discerning and responsible travellers, it is important to demonstrate the sincerity of our sustainability commitments, and the actions arising therefrom. If this can be achieved, we will differentiate ourselves from our competitors and enhance our reputation in the world of ecotourism;
- Many of our sustainability initiatives have important efficiency by-products and thus result in improved business performance. For example, our investments in renewable energy supplies result in significant reductions in diesel consumption and therefore in our operating costs;
- As a responsible corporate citizen, it is our duty to ensure that any negative impacts resulting from our operations are minimised, and any positive impacts are maximised;
- Many of our staff are themselves personally committed to biodiversity and responsible living and our equivalent value systems enable us to attract and retain the brightest and the best people; and
- Aligned to the previous point is the creation of a culture within our organisation that values and promotes sustainability, not only within our business but in all other aspects of each of our own day-to-day lives.

This review is a high-level summary of our Integrated Report for 2015. Readers seeking further details can download the full report at [www.wilderness-group.com/presentations](http://www.wilderness-group.com/presentations)



*Derek de la Harpe  
Chief Sustainability Officer  
Wilderness Holdings Limited*

*Opposite page: Elephant in front of  
Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp, Namibia.  
Below: Game drive, Hwange, Zimbabwe.*



# Our African footprint

**Seychelles** Wilderness Collection: **22** beds



**1** Managed

**Kenya** Wilderness Collection: **16** beds



**1\***

\* Segera Retreat in Kenya is not reported on in the sustainability chapters as it falls out of the scope and boundaries of this report.

**Congo** Wilderness Collection: **24** beds



**2** Managed

**Zambia** Wilderness Safaris: **88** beds



Victoria Falls  
**1** Owned | **1** Leased  
**6** Owned

**Zimbabwe** Wilderness Safaris: **116** beds



Victoria Falls  
**5** Owned  
**7** Owned

**Namibia** Wilderness Safaris: **270** beds



Windhoek  
**11** Owned | **4** Leased  
**9** Owned | **4** Managed

**Botswana** Wilderness Safaris: **328** beds • Wilderness Collection: **12** beds



Maun | Gaborone  
**14** Owned | **2** Leased  
**20** Owned | **2** Managed

**South Africa** Wilderness Safaris: **34** beds



Johannesburg | Cape Town  
**1** Owned



- Travel Shops and internal sales
- Aircraft
- Camp operations and Explorations

# Key performance indicators

This page provides a snapshot of some of our key performance indicators:

## Commerce

### Occupancy rates, owned beds (%)

2013		56
2014		62
2015		65

Numbers of bednights sold is the most basic determinant of our financial results. However, varying numbers of available beds (due to new camps or closures) distort this result and so occupancy rates in percentage terms are the most useful indicator of capacity utilisation.

### Net profit after tax (P'ooo)

2013		27 704
2014		48 490
2015		76 232

Our after-tax earnings are the figure of most interest to investors. This is the amount that is attributable to the owners of the Company and could theoretically be distributed to them, subject to the need to retain earnings for working capital and capital expenditure.

### Turnover (P'ooo)

2013		744 935
2014		843 288
2015		944 586

Bednight sales, multiplied by the rate achieved per bednight sold (which varies from camp to camp and from season to season), gives us turnover in source currency. This is difficult to illustrate due to the number of currencies involved. Therefore, the turnover, converted into Pula, shows growth of the business.

### Headline earnings per share (thebe)

2013		11.13
2014		16.07
2015		31.66

HEPS is generally accepted as the earnings that relate to the operating/trading of an entity and not those items (such as the revaluation of certain assets) that relate to the capital platform of the business. The operating/trading items are essentially those that reflect performance in the current period (sales, salaries, etc.) and that can be extrapolated (modified or not) into the future.

## Conservation

### Carbon emissions per bednight (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e)

		0.09
		0.085
		0.081

Given concerns about global warming, carbon emissions from the business are of great interest to stakeholders. We report this on a per bednight basis to eliminate the effects of changes in the level of business.

### Bottled water consumption (l/bednight)

		2.16
		2.39
		1.24

Production, transport and disposal of plastic water bottles is a major environmental challenge worldwide. Through the provision of water purified on-site, and the use of recyclable steel bottles, we have significantly reduced the amount of bottled water used in our business.

## Community

### Joint venture and other payments to community partners (P'ooo)

2013		30 851
2014		36 813
2015		43 401

Payments for concessions, in the form of rentals, royalties or profit shares, together with wages paid into local communities, constitute a major contribution to local economies.

### Numbers of staff employed

2013		2 594
2014		2 663
2015		2 436

Wilderness employs staff from the communities in which our camps or operations are located. These are often in the most remote areas where we strive to train and develop local people so they can better take advantage of opportunities.

### Guest satisfaction (%)

2013		n/a
2014		78
2015		83

Our ultimate objective is to satisfy guests and thus encourage repeat visits and word-of-mouth referrals. We therefore track and monitor guest feedback carefully, based on Reichheld's *The Ultimate Question* "Would you recommend the product to friends/family?"

#### Notes:

- Targets for financial KPIs have not been shown in view of stock exchange restrictions on publishing forecast data.
- The Culture C does not lend itself to measurable indicators, at least not at our present stage of implementation. For this reason, no KPIs for Culture are presented here. In the body of the report, quantitative KPIs are however given.

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# Top achievements in sustainability

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## Commerce

### Wilderness flying business in Botswana implements new initiatives

Following the global economic crisis in 2009, our flying business in Botswana was hard hit. Other than lower passenger numbers resulting from reduced demand out of target markets, an additional contributing factor was the higher fuel costs that peaked at nearly US\$130 a barrel in mid-2011 (at the time of going to print around US\$65). This led to the implementation of new initiatives in 2012 that included reduced flying to non-Wilderness products, better usage of empty seats by combining staff movements with guest transfers and a greater focus on eliminating dead or empty legs. The result is that over the last three years total kilometres flown have reduced by 7% with the passenger count remaining relatively flat and EBITDA increasing by 44% over 2014, from a loss in 2013.



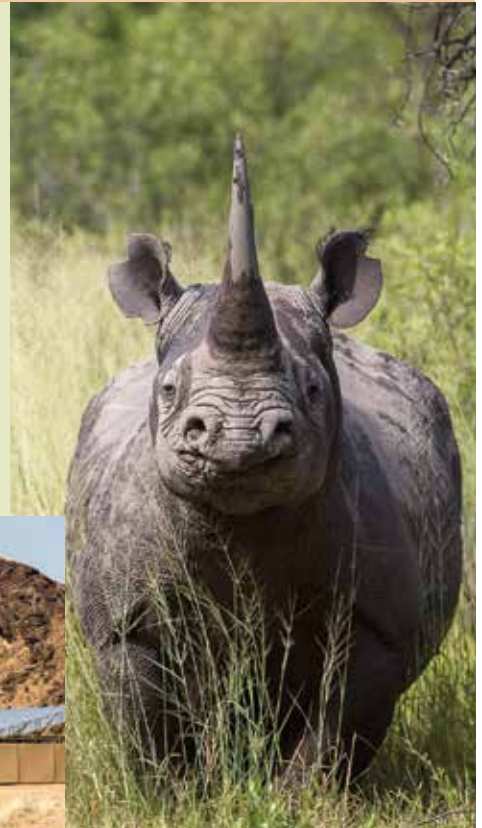
## Conservation

### Black rhino translocated to Botswana

During 2014, Wilderness Safaris successfully translocated a founder population of Critically Endangered black rhino to the Okavango Delta World Heritage Site in a joint collaboration with the Botswana and South African Governments. This is part of an ongoing conservation project to establish a core population of this species in Botswana and will be followed by further translocations from Zimbabwe and South Africa in 2015.

### Namibia solar plant

In Namibia, Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp, situated in the Palmwag Concession, opened on 1 August 2014. This is our first 100% solar-powered camp in Namibia, following on from the success of the solar conversions in Botswana. The camp's diesel consumption since August was only 382 litres, approximately 4% of the 9 623 litres consumed over the same period at Damaraland Camp (which is a similar size to Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp). The carbon emissions are minimal, with Hoanib Skeleton Coast only emitting one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e while Damaraland emitted 25 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.





## Community

### Children in the Wilderness wins PURE Award for Community Engagement

In 2014, Wilderness Safaris' non-profit Children in the Wilderness (CITW) initiative won the PURE Award for Community Engagement.

Now in its second year, the PURE Awards form part of the annual PURE Life Experiences travel trade event in Morocco, celebrating excellence in the field of high-end experiential travel. After the judging panel selected a shortlist of finalists for six categories, PURE attendees voted for the most deserving initiative in each one.

The Community Engagement category was defined by PURE as an initiative that “strategically and sensitively integrates the local community, aligning itself with the values and priorities of the inhabitants and protecting the authenticity of the culture, while enriching the experience of the traveller.”



## Culture

### Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct for Cultural Tourism

During the reporting period we developed and finalised a comprehensive Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct for Cultural Tourism which will be the guide for cultural engagement. The Charter highlights positive behavioural conduct for both staff and guests, and promotes ethical engagements which develop mutual respect.

This document is to be launched on Wilderness' Heritage Day 2015 and will also be available for our guests throughout their journey with us. It is to be incorporated into our training manuals and upholds the values of Wilderness.





The Conservation C is centred on one reality: without the wilderness, there is no Wilderness. This inspires our business to make investments in maximising the positive impacts arising from our activities, while at the same time implementing measures to reduce any negative impacts. This respect and care for the wilderness makes for a better business, and ultimately a better world.

We divide our conservation efforts into two main areas so that we can give each the special attention it requires:

#### BIODIVERSITY

- Ensuring the sustainable conservation of wilderness areas and their biodiversity through the creation of viable ecotourism businesses, and that this use of the land remains the preferred economic alternative to less sustainable industries;
- Creating a profitable, ethical and responsible business, based on conservation, that others can replicate in regions where we are not active; and
- Measuring and understanding our biodiversity footprint, so that we can enhance indigenous species richness.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)

- Minimising any negative impacts that our operations might have on the environment;
- Managing our camps' energy usage and related carbon emissions, water use, and waste production and disposal; and
- By minimising negative impacts on the environments, we are able to create a competitive advantage that enhances guests' experiences.





*Translocated black rhinos released, Botswana.*

# Biodiversity

Wilderness helps conserve a total of 2.6 million hectares (4.9 million acres) across Africa – what we refer to as our biodiversity footprint. This stretches across eight different African biomes (communities comprising plant and animal species best adapted to that environment) and several conservation ‘bridges’ or ‘corridors’ for animals and plants to move across. This also provides our guests with access to areas that host differing arrays of charismatic fauna and flora.

As we have grown, we have extended our contribution to biodiversity conservation to more and varying ecosystems, with camps in five out of the eight African centres of endemism (areas containing ranges of species with restricted distributions, making them high conservation priorities).

More than 1 000 bird, 260 mammal, 190 reptile and 50 amphibian species occur within our biodiversity footprint, and no fewer than 36 of these species are featured on the IUCN Red List. Of these, eight are reptiles or amphibians

(e.g., Seychelles black mud turtle, loggerhead turtle), 12 are mammals (e.g., western lowland gorilla, central chimpanzee, Hartmann’s mountain zebra) and 16 are birds (e.g., hooded vulture, wattled crane). Five of these species are classed as Critically Endangered and we carefully monitor them wherever they occur across Wilderness concessions. In some cases, this extends to active conservation actions such as the reintroduction of species, for example, black rhino translocations in Botswana, and Seychelles black mud turtle introductions.

During 2014-15, we participated in no fewer than 86 active research and conservation projects across seven African countries. This entailed collaboration with more than 81 independent institutions. More than P8.6 million was spent directly on biodiversity conservation. Some of these projects included:

- The reintroduction of threatened species in areas of their former range (e.g., black rhino in Botswana);

- Growth in the populations of threatened species that in some cases have resulted in favourable changes in their IUCN Red Listing status (e.g., loggerhead turtle and green turtle);
- Enhanced understanding of the conservation of threatened species that has resulted in improvement management of the species (e.g., roan antelope and lion);
- The confirmation of extant conservation corridors linking sub-populations (e.g., elephant, zebra, wildebeest and wild dog);
- Efforts to mitigate human-wildlife conflict (e.g., Human-Carnivore Conflict study in Botswana);
- Establishment of biodiversity and population baselines;
- Removal of artificial and anthropogenic causes of wildlife mortality and ecosystem rehabilitation (e.g., Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit and North Island vegetation rehabilitation); and
- An understanding of the potential impacts of ecotourism-related activities.

## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The following have been identified as the key performance indicators for the Biodiversity section of the Conservation C.

Increased <b>33%</b>	Decreased <b>7%</b>	Reduced to <b>8</b>
<b>Conservation contribution:</b> Increased by 33% from P6.6 million in 2014 to P8.7 million in 2015	<b>Biodiversity footprint:</b> Decreased 7% from 2.8 million hectares in 2014 to 2.6 million hectares in 2015	<b>Biomes:</b> Reduced from nine in 2014 to eight in 2015
Decreased by <b>1%</b>	Increased <b>16%</b>	Decreased to <b>37</b>
<b>Number of research projects supported:</b> Decreased by 1% from 87 in 2014 to 86 in 2015	<b>Number of collaborations with institutions and stakeholders:</b> Increased 16% from 70 in 2014 to 81 in 2015	<b>IUCN Red List Species conserved:</b> Decreased from 40 to 37 species



We aim to continually increase our biodiversity footprint through the reintroduction of species and other initiatives, including anti-poaching programmes, fence patrols, snare sweeps, judicious water provisioning and collaboration and logistical support for a wide range of stakeholders. Objectives for the coming year include:

- Increasing the biodiversity footprint of our areas of operation and where commercially viable, expanding our ecotourism operations to fragmented and endangered biomes and ecosystems;
- Increasing the biodiversity inventories in our existing areas and extending these to better understand and conserve these areas. This includes continued efforts to catalogue cryptic small mammals, freshwater fish, amphibians and reptiles;
- The expansion of our monitoring and research initiatives to a greater proportion of IUCN Red List species including specific focus on large birds (e.g., vultures, cranes, Ludwig's bustard, southern ground-hornbill, secretarybird);
- Continued monitoring and conservation of threatened species and ecosystems;
- The re-establishment and reintroduction of locally extinct populations into their former ranges where possible;
- Ongoing monitoring and support of law enforcement efforts in regard to the recently translocated rhinos in Botswana;
- Maintaining bed and vehicle densities at current levels;
- Additional studies on the impacts of roads or footprints of infrastructure and how to mitigate these impacts; and
- The mitigation of anthropogenic impacts on biodiversity – a specific target for this is to install additional turtle-friendly lighting at North Island.

Right: African wild dog, Botswana.  
Below: Turtle monitoring, Seychelles.



# Environmental management systems

As our camps are situated in pristine wilderness areas, we need to ensure that we minimise any negative impacts that our operations might have on the environment. To achieve this, we have established Group Environmental Management Systems (GEMS) to manage our camps' energy usage and related carbon emissions, water consumption, waste production and disposal, and the usage of materials and products. Not only does this enhance the environment, and therefore guests' experiences, it also enables us to operate more efficiently.

Overall in 2015, the Group was 79% compliant with our GEMS, up from 75% in 2014. Our goal is for all our regions' environmental performance to exceed 80% compliance by 2016.

## Reducing and monitoring carbon emissions

As our camps are situated in remote areas, we are required to generate our own electricity. Historically, this has been achieved through diesel-fuelled generators. Reducing our dependence on fossil fuels is a key priority for the business, with the aim of eventually being carbon neutral. This is achieved through converting camps to alternate energies, such as solar power. In 2015, our solar-power investment grew to the point where we can generate 517 kW from plants in

16 camps, of which nine are 100% solar powered and four have hybrid systems which use a combination of solar power and generators. A further 12 camps operate off smaller solar systems that power each guest unit independently, leaving the generator to power only the main area. Finally, 22 camps make use of inverter-battery systems that enable them to reduce generator running times from 24 hours to an average of just nine hours daily. The result is that we consumed 214 239 GJ of energy, a 12% decrease from the 244 614 GJ consumed in 2012. Over the same period, our carbon emissions have reduced by 13% from 17 412 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e to 15 135 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.

## Efficient water usage

Bottled water can create large quantities of plastic waste, not to mention the carbon emissions associated with the production of the bottles and their delivery from source to our camps. To combat this, we have installed on-site water purification systems at our camps, which have resulted in significant reductions in bottled water consumption (49% reduction since 2012), with a Group average of 1.2 litres per bednight during 2015.

## Waste management

Many of our camps are located in areas with high water tables or alongside rivers.

In these situations, we have installed above-ground sewage treatment plants (STPs) to ensure there is no contamination of ground or surface water.

The majority of organic waste is put into pits inaccessible to wildlife where it degrades, while 25% of camps have made alternate arrangements, such as sending it to local pig farmers, or using it in worm farms.



## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The following have been identified as the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the EMS section of the Conservation C.

Down <b>16%</b>	Down <b>49%</b>	Up to <b>79%</b>
Carbon emissions: Down by 16% from 0.097 to 0.081 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per bednight, since 2012	Bottled water per bednight: Down to 1.24 litres from 2.06 litres in 2012	Group Environmental Management Systems (GEMS) performance: Up to 79% compliance from 75% in 2014

Inorganic waste is separated and sent off site and, where possible, is recycled. Our goal is for 60% of our camps to be recycling inorganic waste by 2016, but this is dependent upon suitable recycling opportunities maturing in Namibia (there are presently no recycling options available in Zimbabwe or Zambia).

*Right: Nursery at Toka Leya Camp, Zambia.  
Bottom: Red lechwe in front of solar installation, Botswana.*





People are at the heart of our business. Our Community C engages with all the people who are related to and part of our business, including guests, staff, community partners, shareholders, NGOs, governments and academic researchers.

For management purposes, we divide this C into two groups, namely our internal community and our external community.

#### INTERNAL COMMUNITY

- The internal community is our staff. They are the interface between our Company and our guests – as well as other stakeholders – and therefore fundamental to our operations. We strive to ensure that they are fulfilled, rewarded and are inspired to be valued ambassadors of the Company.

#### EXTERNAL COMMUNITY

- The external community comprises our neighbours, the rural communities that either own the land on which we operate or live adjacent to these areas. (Many of our staff are drawn from these communities and thus form part of both internal and external communities.) We believe in honest, mutually beneficial and dignified relationships with our rural community partners in ways that deliver a meaningful and life-changing share of the proceeds of responsible ecotourism to all stakeholders.
- Our mechanisms include community-centric employment, joint ventures, education and training, social and health benefits, capacity-building and infrastructure development. External community also includes other stakeholders, including NGOs and governments.







Staff at Linkwasha Camp, Zimbabwe.

# Internal Community

The Wilderness Group recognises that our competitive advantage lies in our people; they deliver on our strategy and build and maintain our reputation with stakeholders. In 2015, Wilderness employed 2 436 people from different backgrounds, many from neighbouring communities. Our continuous efforts to upskill local community members into positions that were previously filled by expatriates has resulted in only 7.1% of our employees being non-citizens of the country in which they are employed.

As people are our most important asset, we believe in investing in their future. Over the last year, 2 558 Wilderness employees received training. The first Group Guide Mentor workshop was held in Zimbabwe, with guides from each area of operation getting the opportunity to meet one another, and enhance and share their knowledge. From 2016, the Wilderness Leadership Academy will be launched, providing the company with the opportunity to address specific development needs and capabilities of its future leaders and successors.

Health and safety continues to be a key priority and providing staff with access to preventative healthcare, especially in the remote areas in which our camps are located, is of vital performance. In Botswana, the company has contracted the services of Okavango Air Rescue to provide preventative healthcare service to our staff and camps. This includes two nurses who travel throughout the areas in which we operate, educating staff and assisting them with primary healthcare matters.

We pride ourselves on our commitment to our Human Resource policies which are based on the International Human Rights Charter as well as regional labour standards. This extends to providing an independent anonymous ethics hotline, where employees, suppliers or guests can report any incidents of misconduct, which are then investigated further.

Not only does all of this determine the internal culture of the company, it also plays an important role in our ability to provide a world-class Wilderness experience to our guests. We measure

guests' feedback according to Fred Reichheld's formula in *The Ultimate Question*, "would you recommend the product to friends/family?" Our overall net promoter score (NPS) for 2015 was 83.89%, which compares favourably with the 62% average of other high-end tourism products and represents an increase of nearly 6% from our score in 2014.

## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

### Focus on people strategy

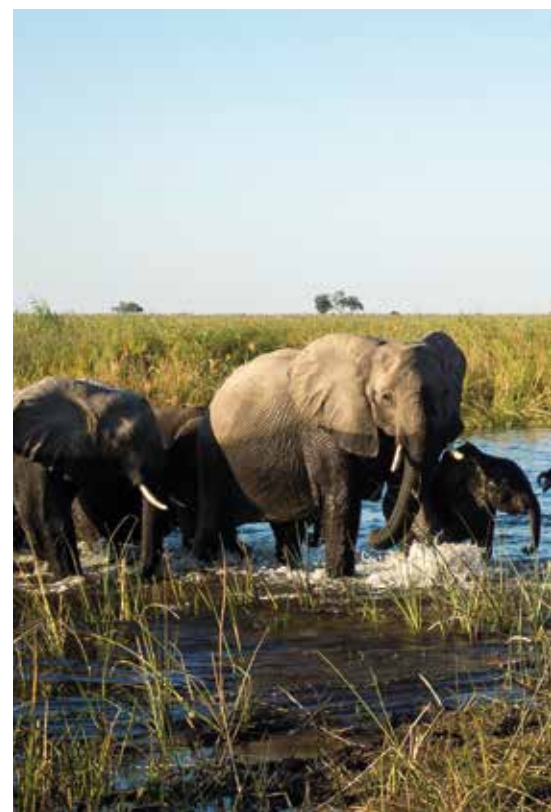
Continued rollout of the Wilderness people strategy with the focus on talent management, people development and empowering HR managers in the regions. During the year a special effort was made to ensure that processes are standardised across the Group but yet tailored to each country's specific needs.

### Staff participation

Group HR focused on increasing the participation of staff across the business in the Employee Relationship Index (ERI) Survey. This was successful and the sample size increased to 1 504 compared with 1 013 in 2014. This equates to an overall 61% participation rate. The level of engagement by staff increased slightly from 59.3% to 59.7%.

### Staff training

Year-on-year increase in numbers of staff trained. All our regions (except for Congo and Seychelles which are both management contracts and not under our complete control) increased the amount of training.





Top: Meet the Himba people, Serra Cafema Camp, Namibia.  
Bottom: Game drive, Linyanti, Botswana.

# External Community

The profitability and sustainability of our business depends on the health of the wilderness areas in which we operate. This is largely determined by the attitudes and behaviour of communities living in, or adjacent to, protected areas, and who often bear the costs of conservation through human-wildlife conflict. Through our community engagement and development activities, we aim to recognise these realities and ensure that neighbouring communities derive socio-economic benefits from conserving the natural environment that surrounds them.

We engage with communities in a number of ways, including:

- Our Children in the Wilderness programme;
- Various formal partnerships;
- Preferred employment of locals;
- The development of various community and social welfare projects; and
- The use of local suppliers of goods and services.

Overall, our donations to communities increased from P2.05 million in 2014 to P2.58 million in 2015. A number of specific projects have been carried out, including the building of infrastructure, such as libraries, managing numerous

school scholarships, assisting with the development of livelihood diversification projects, training and skills development, and various environmental projects.

Research has shown that communities are

generally more positive about ecotourism and conservation when they have some form of vested interest in the business. In 2015, our community partnership contributions amounted to more than P43 million, up from P36.8 million in 2014.



## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

### Education programmes

Supported Children in the Wilderness to ensure the operation of an effective, sustainable environmental education programme

### Community partnerships

Community partnership contributions amounting to more than P43 million

### Community projects

Raised, managed and administered funds amounting to P2.5 million for community development projects

### Community processes

Developed and standardised various community development processes

These partnerships include:

- Joint Ventures, or formal contractual agreements with communities or community trusts – e.g., Rocktail Beach Camp, Damaraland Camp and Vumbura Plains;
- Community as landlords – e.g., Doro Nawas and Serra Cafema;
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) - e.g., Busanga and Shumba in Kafue National Park;
- Pure private sector with philanthropy - e.g., Mombo Camp; and
- Partnerships with NGOs – e.g., Lango and Ngaga in Odzala-Kokoua National Park.



Left: CITW annual camp, Zambia.

Top: Shashe adult Eco-Club crafting project, Botswana.

Bottom: Celebrating World Forest Day, Malawi.

## CASE STUDY: EMPOWERING WOMEN PROJECT

As one of our community development projects, Children in the Wilderness has, together with Wilderness Safaris, initiated an Empowering Women Project in Botswana, assisting a local community women's group with start-up capital and business guidance.

For the pilot project, Wilderness Safaris' Community Development Liaison in Botswana, Mary Hastag, together with Regional CITW Director, Dr Susan Snyman, is working with the already-established Shashe Women's Group at Shashe Primary School in Maun. Through this project, we aim to offer the support and guidance rural women require to lay the foundations of their own businesses, thereby creating sustainable economies in these communities.

The programme consists of applications, discussions as to marketing and distribution of products, etc. as well as Wilderness providing financial guidance and training in business and marketing skills. Ongoing support is also provided to the Shashe Women's Group, with Mary meeting with the team every week to discuss their progress, as well as any challenges they are facing. She also assists them in buying the necessary supplies to get their business off the ground.

Towards the end of 2014, the women received their first big order from Wilderness Safaris Botswana, to supply placemats and various other goods for our camps. They have since received a number of other orders and the programme has been extended to three more villages in Botswana, with plans to introduce it into other regions as well.



Culture is a multifaceted dimension that governs respect for the culture of all our employees, as well as the remote rural communities surrounding the conservation areas in which we operate. To a large degree, Culture gives context to the other three Cs, as it impacts on and is affected by all the other Cs.





Mukuni village, Zambia.

# Culture

By meaningfully incorporating culture into our operations and guest activities, we hope to positively impact a global culture of respect and care for both the environment, as well as Africa's diversity.

We understand culture to be a celebration of the diverse histories and traditions, art, beliefs, languages, clothing, sport, music and dance of various different ethnic groups. Cultural diversity gives character and uniqueness to our camps and guest experiences.

Wilderness engages with more than 40 different ethnic groups, and at least 28 of these are represented in our staff body.

The community engagement projects and experiences entered into by Wilderness must all be sustainable: environmentally, ecologically, ethically and socially. This requires that we identify, effectively engage and consult with all relevant stakeholders, and obtain local communities' support from the outset. It

also means that tourism needs to bring direct, as well as indirect, benefits to host communities providing an important motivation for communities to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices.

Some of the primary methods by which culture is integrated into the guest experience include:

- Traditional nights: The majority of Wilderness camps have traditional evenings where guests experience local culture through dance, singing, storytelling and local food;
- Traditional design and décor: We attempt to use traditional architecture, building methods and materials in camp design and construction, along with local artefacts such as traditional masks and woven basketry in the décor;
- Cultural visits: Where communities are located nearby, local village visits and tours are encouraged;

- San cultural walk: At Kalahari Plains Camp in Botswana, guests are able to go on a walk with a staff member from the local community. During the walk, guests learn about traditional hunting and subsistence methods.

The increasing number of tourists, and their desire to engage with local communities and cultures in the countries they visit, necessitated the development of an Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct for Cultural Tourism. This comprehensive document highlights pre-, during- and post-cultural tour procedures and activities in host communities, including business etiquette. We are also developing cultural maps for each of the countries in which we operate, and a Culture Booklet with more country-specific information relating to cultural activities, practices and diversity.

Our overall aim is to promote positive impacts, while mitigating any negative impacts our cultural exchanges may have on local communities.

## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

### Anthropologist

An anthropologist was appointed as Group Researcher and Culture Coordinator

### Culture maps

Rollout of a culture map for Namibia, and the development of maps for Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe

### Heritage Day

Annual Wilderness Heritage Day celebrated in all countries, camps and offices

### Social media

Publishing various cultural blogs on Wilderness Safaris' website and social media

### Finalisation of Ethics Charter

Finalisation of the Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct for Cultural Tourism





Positive impacts may include:

- Continued interest in local, cultural and historical lifestyle can enhance the cultural aspects of an area;
- Greater awareness and acceptance of other cultures;
- Building self-esteem, confidence and pride in one's community and oneself;
- Strengthening of communities through uniting them in a common cause;
- Internalising local fashions in art, clothing, jewellery, language and music;
- Revitalising unique cultural practices, arts, crafts and stories;
- The promotion of social and rural development through employment creation, income distribution and poverty alleviation; and

- Assisting in keeping rural families together by lessening the migration of youth to urban areas.

Conversely, there are negative socio-cultural impacts that may arise, and Wilderness Safaris constantly attempts to avoid and mitigate these, including:

- Western influence on cultures: language, clothes, behaviour, food, value and interests;
- Negative transitions away from traditional lifestyles and values;
- Economic and social competition between community members; and
- Commodification of cultures.

As cultures change and adapt, Wilderness continuously conducts socio-cultural

surveys in order to gain a better understanding of the different ethnic groups within our regions and how best to integrate these into our guest activities in a mutually respectful and meaningful way.

*Right: Himba, Namibia.*

*Below: Annual Wilderness Heritage Day, Johannesburg office, South Africa.*





The Commerce C gives us the resources to make the interventions under the other three Cs. Without a viable business model, we cannot justify investing in the areas in which we operate. By the same token, even if there is a viable business model, we cannot justify an investment that does not address the other three Cs.





*Linkwasha Camp, Zimbabwe.*

# Commerce



## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Up **12%**

**Revenue:** Increased to P945 million from P843 million in prior year

Up **20%**

**EBITDA:** Increased to P182 million from P151 million

Up **57%**

**Profit after tax:** Increased to P76 million from P48 million in prior year

Up **65%**

**Occupancy:** Increased to 65% from 62%

Down **29%**

**Cash generated by operations:** Declined to P131 million from P184 million

Up **102%**

**HEPS:** Increased to 32 thebe per share from 16 thebe per share in prior year

In 2015, the trading environment continued to improve, mainly as the result of the steady recovery of the economy of the United States, our main source market. Recovery has been slower out of Europe, our second biggest market, which still remains subject to occasional shocks.

On a restated basis, revenue grew by 12% to P945 million. Bednights sold increased by 11%, driven mainly by Namibia and a greater contribution from our lower-end products. Available bednights have increased by 6% from 210 880 to 224 228. The combination of the net currency movement contributed approximately 5% of the revenue growth.

EBITDA margin has improved from 17.9% to 19.2% with operating costs well-contained at a 5% increase despite growth in available bednights, continued investment in information technology and an increase of 35% to P8.3 million in share-based payment charges. The

weakening by 3% of the South African Rand and the Namibian Dollar against the Botswana Pula resulted in a benefit on conversion to our Pula reported results.

All geographical segments reported an improved operational performance, with Namibia now contributing 11% of segmental profit, compared to 2% in the prior year. The closure of loss-making camps, improved service levels and a depreciation of the Namibian Dollar against the US Dollar resulted in high demand for our Namibian offering, with bednights sales increasing by 25% over the prior year.

Wilderness opened two new camps in the year under review. Hoanib Skeleton Coast is the Company's first new development in Namibia following the downsizing of that business in the years following the global financial crisis. Excitement in the market has played a major role in transforming the Namibian business during the current year.

Linkwasha Camp in Hwange's National Park is the first major new development in Zimbabwe in many years and is timed to coincide with improving market perceptions of Zimbabwe. Both camps have been well received by the market.

Looking ahead, the impact of the Ebola virus, together with the new visa requirements that the South African authorities have announced, are expected to have a negative effect on the coming financial year. However, we remain hopeful that the impact on high season will be subdued.

We have announced our investment in two new camps in Rwanda, a country with a unique tourism offering which we believe will provide an experience that complements our existing business.

*Top left: View from Vumbura Plains villa, Botswana..  
Bottom left: Food, North Island, Seychelles.  
Below: Game drive, Okavango Delta, Botswana.*



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# Wilderness Wildlife Trust

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The Wilderness Wildlife Trust, an independent entity supported by the Wilderness Group, was formed in the late 1980s when it was understood that Wilderness Safaris could only do so much for conservation in the course of its day-to-day activities and needed a dedicated vehicle to take matters further. More funds and a greater reach were needed in order for overall conservation activities to be more effective. Accordingly, it was decided that an independent entity that facilitated fundraising and the disbursement of the monies to deserving projects would mean that, both directly and indirectly, Wilderness could reach more people, wildlife and places.

The relationship between Wilderness and the Trust is therefore symbiotic. In many projects supported financially through the Trust, Wilderness also contributes through logistics and

in-kind support (e.g., equipment, manpower, fuel, vehicle servicing, access and accommodation) to ensure the enhanced effectiveness of the work. On the other hand, the fact that the Trust is independent also means that it is able to engage with projects beyond the geographic scope of Wilderness' camps and concessions and ensure that conservation is the driving force.

The Trust focuses its work in three key areas:

- Research and conservation – including species studies and human-animal conflicts;
- Community empowerment and education – such as community upliftment and CITW; and
- Anti-poaching and management – including aerial surveys.



Top: Botswana rhino release, 2014.  
Bottom: Research and monitoring, Zimbabwe.

# Children in the Wilderness

Children in the Wilderness (CITW), a life skills educational and environmental programme for children who live in the villages around conservation areas, is an independent non-profit organisation established and supported by Wilderness. The programme began in 2001 in Botswana and currently operates in seven countries: Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

CITW focuses on the next generation of decision-makers, inspiring them to care for their natural heritage and to become custodians of these areas in the future. This is achieved in a number of ways:

- **Eco-Clubs:** These take place at rural schools and follow a set curriculum, taking place either weekly or monthly. Eco-Clubs give all learners who are interested in the environment a chance to meet, learn, discuss and expand their knowledge of environmental issues. Children participating on the CITW camps (below) are usually selected from Eco-Clubs.
- **Annual Camps:** A Wilderness or partner camp is closed for a few days each year, and 12 to 24 children between 10 and 17 years old are hosted in the camp for an educational and fun-filled programme.
- **Eco-Mentor Training:** This project assists in addressing the critical teaching skills shortage in environmental education in southern Africa and involves developing local community members and Wilderness Safaris camp staff by upgrading skills, increasing environmental awareness and enabling them to better implement projects and initiatives for Eco-Clubs in their villages.
- **Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) Programme:** Children who show commitment and potential on annual camps are invited on smaller camps where the curriculum focuses more on career guidance, leadership and further environmental education. This also enables mentors to spend more time with the children and identify candidates for the scholarship and internship programme.
- **Scholarship Programme:** Through Eco-Clubs and CITW Camps, we are able to identify children who are doing well academically but whose parents are unable to send them on to secondary school. We aim to provide these children with the opportunity to complete their schooling by providing funding for school fees, and where possible, also assist with uniforms, stationery and other schooling needs.



[www.childreninthewilderness.com](http://www.childreninthewilderness.com)



Top: CITW Regional Workshop.  
Bottom: CITW annual camp, Zimbabwe.



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# Thank you

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We would like to thank the many people and organisations who supported us during the year and made our operations possible. We have received enthusiastic support from a wide range of trade and other partners, host governments and their respective agencies, local communities and non-government organisations. And of course the business would not begin to function without the guests who visit our operations from all over the world. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, our staff are at the heart of the business and we would like to acknowledge and thank them for the pivotal role that they have played. We are proud of what we have achieved during the year and the contributions that we have made to conservation and to the societies and economies in which we operate. This has been a joint effort and we thank everyone who has joined us on this journey.

[www.wilderness-group.com](http://www.wilderness-group.com)

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