

# **HOW SUSTAINABLE IS SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE TOURISM?**

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# INTRODUCTION

First national park established in 1872.

First game reserve established in South Africa in 1894.





# **The first African protected area – Pongola Game Reserve 13 June 1894 – 17,500 ha**







Ranger Wolluter and a friend, Bowden, at their camp at Pretoriuskop, with Manungu Hill in the background



# **The first South African national park**

Kruger National Park proclaimed in 1926.

It soon became a unifying icon in a country where Afrikaners and English-speakers were divided after the Anglo-Boer War.



# The first tourist facilities

From 1930 white rangers, with very limited funds, copied Zulu, Shangaan and Swazi housing styles and created a unique “game reserve architecture” using local thatching grass, bricks and timber.





# THE WOLHUTER HUT

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BUILT IN 1930, THIS IS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL HUTS  
BUILT TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION. KNOWN  
AS A "SELBY" HUT, THIS PARTICULAR ONE WAS  
NAMED AFTER HARRY WOLHUTER, ONE OF THE FIRST  
RANGERS APPOINTED BY STEVENSON-HAMILTON.

# DIE WOLHUTER HUT

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GEBOU IN 1930, DIT IS EEN VAN DIE OORSPRONKLIKE  
HUTTE WAT GEBOU IS OM VERBLYF TE VERSKAF AAN  
BESOEKERS EN WAS BEKEND AS N' "SELBY HUT".  
HIERDIE HUT IS VERNOEM NA HARRY WOLHUTER,  
EEN VAN DIE EERSTE VELDWAGTERS WAT DEUR  
STEVENSON-HAMILTON AANGESTEL IS.



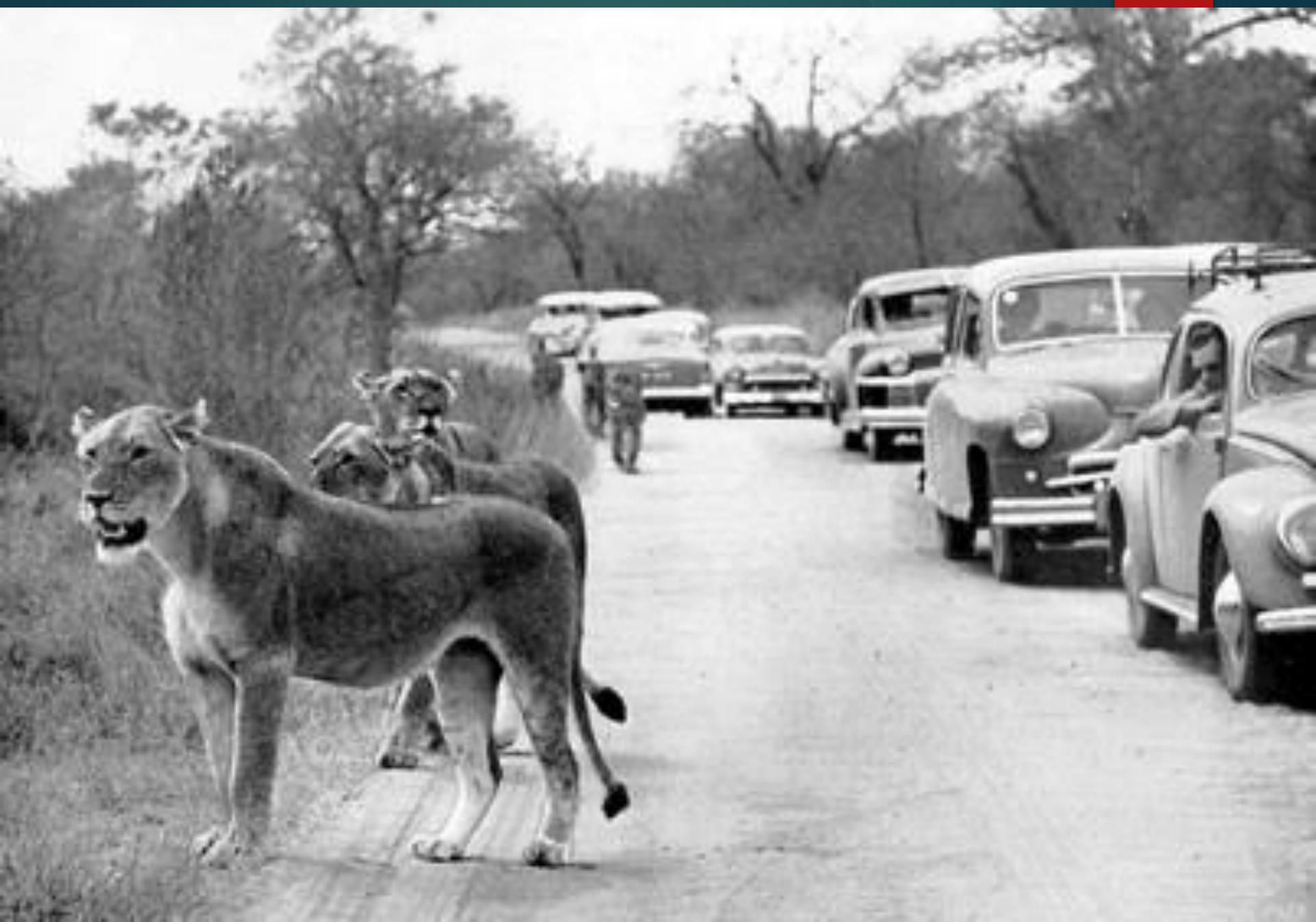


**Kruger Park soon captures the imagination of urban whites with a cultural attachment to the African veld**

<b>1927</b>	<b>27</b>	
<b>1928</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>2307.4%</b>
<b>1929</b>	<b>2 500</b>	<b>284.6%</b>
<b>1930</b>	<b>5 000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>





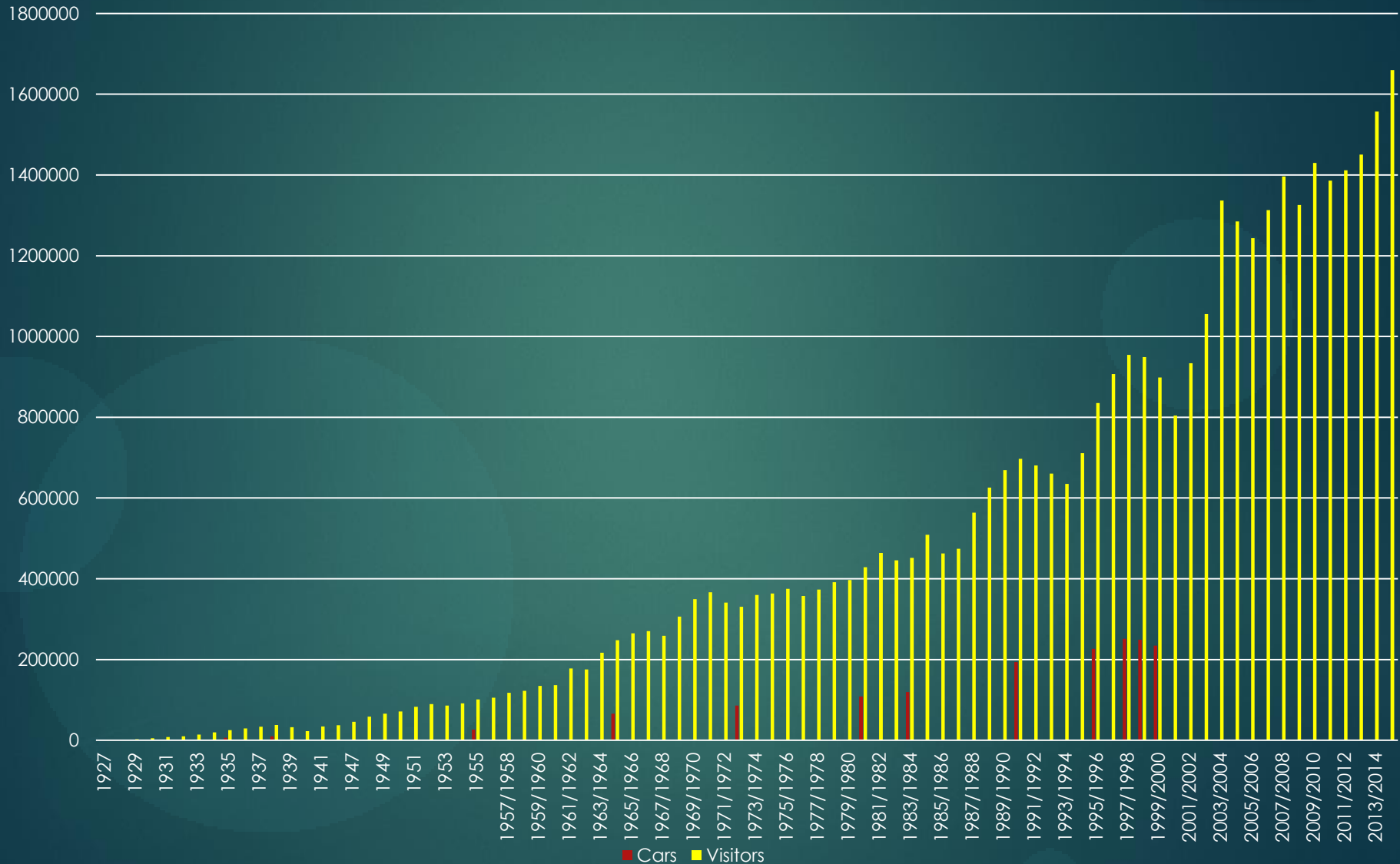


# Letaba 1954





# Visitors to the Kruger National Park - 1927 to 2014



1928	
1929	
1930	First formal tourist accommodation is developed and opened. This includes Skukuza, Pretoriuskop, Letaba, Satara, Balule, Gorge, Malopeni, Malelane, Crocodile Bridge & Rabelais.
1931	
1932	
1933	
1934	Shingwedzi Camp opened
1936	Lower Sabie budget units opened
1949	Only Pretoriuskop area open to public during summer months
1954	Orpen Camp opened 1954
1958	13 huts in Skukuza opened during summer months
1960	Olifants Camp opened on 3 June 1960 (274 beds)
1963	From 15 October 1963 area up to Tshokwane was opened during summer months. Only Skukuza, Pretoriuskop & Crocodile Bridge camps open though.
1964	From 1964 area south of Letaba River was opened during summer months (including Phalaborwa Gate and Olifants Camp.
1968	Lower Sabie Camp remained open during summer months for first time
1977	Area north of the Letaba River remains open during summer months for the first time
1984	Berg-en-Dal Camp opened on 25 February 1984 (779 overnight guest capacity)
1988	Bateleur Camp opened (32 beds)
1990	Sirheni, Shimuwini, Talamati & Biyamiti Camps opened (320 beds)
1991	Mopani Camp opened (506 beds)
1995	Tamboti Tented Camp opened (60 beds)
2002	First of 18 concession lodges opened in 7 concession areas (334 beds)
2006	30-stand Tsendze camping camp opened. The second exclusive camping camp.
2014	Franchises such as Mugg and Bean, Wimpy, Debonairs open in main camps



# How we imagine a visit to an African national park





**And how we, at times,  
experience a visit to a  
national park**





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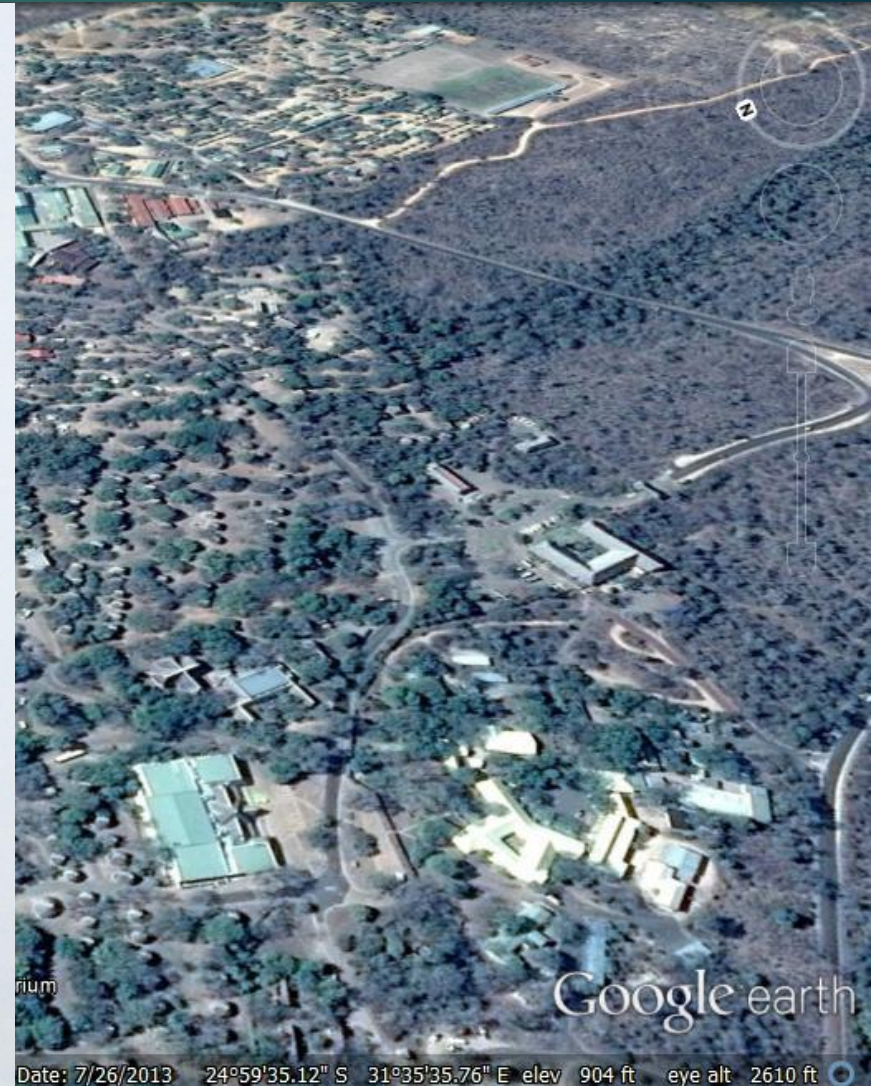




# Skukuza – 634 chalet beds and 280 campers



**SKUKUZA INSET**



# VITAL STATISTICS

Entrance gates	9
Border posts	2
Picnic sites	15
Hides	9
Rest camps	12
Bushveld camps	5
Private/small camps	5
Tented camps	1
Camping camps	2
Overnight hides	2
Concession lodges	19
Number of beds	4066
Number of campsites	653
Concession lodge beds	362







**2002**

19 concession lodges  
have added 362 beds



2013/2014	1 556 916	7.3%
2014/2015	1 659 793	6.6%
2015/2016	1 767 218	6.5%
2016/2017	1 882 087	6.5%
2017/2018	2 004 423	6.5%
2018/2019	2 134 710	6.5%
2019/2020	2 273 466	6.5%
2020/2021	2 421 242	6.5%
2021/2022	2 578 623	6.5%
2022/2023	2 746 233	6.5%
2023/2024	2 924 738	6.5%
2024/2025	3 114 846	6.5%
2025/2026	3 317 311	6.5%

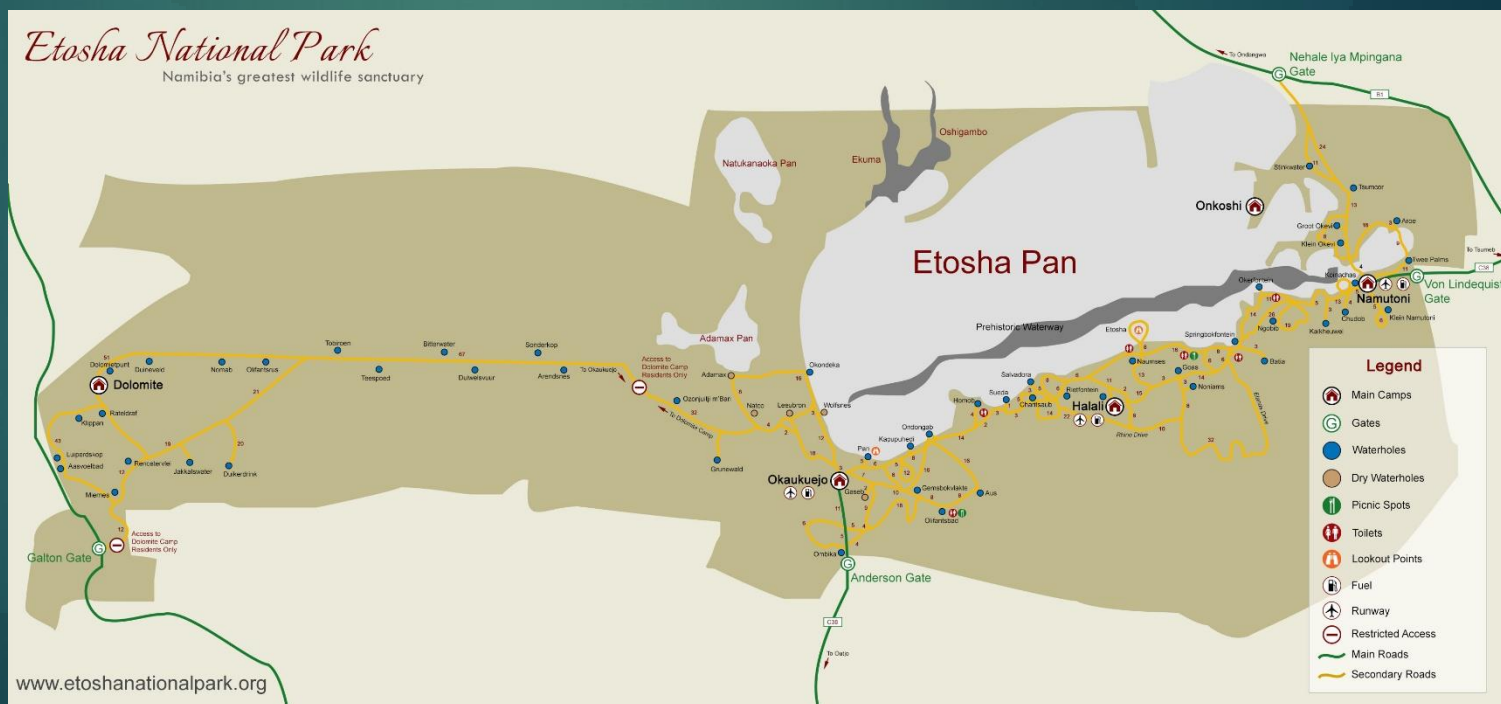




Concessions granted to  
Mugg and Bean,  
Cattle Baron, Wimpy  
and Debonairs



Park	Area in ha	% of total	Total visitors	% of total	Ha/visitor	Bed nights	% of total	No of beds	No of campers	Ha/overnight visitor
<b>Kruger</b>	1 966 362	<b>48.05</b>	1 767 218	29.86	<b>1.11</b>	949 725	<b>70.11</b>	4428	1796	<b>316</b>
<b>Kgalagadi</b>	960 029	<b>23.46</b>	44 211	0.75	<b>21.71</b>	72 575	<b>5.36</b>	467	193	<b>1456</b>
<b>Addo Elephant</b>	163 297	<b>3.99</b>	231 464	3.91	<b>0.71</b>	63 035	<b>4.65</b>	355	83	<b>373</b>
<b>Golden Gate</b>	34 062	<b>0.83</b>	58 665	0.99	<b>0.58</b>	49 084	<b>3.62</b>	368	124	<b>69</b>
<b>Etosha</b>	2 293 500		200 000		<b>11.4</b>			534	327	<b>2664</b>
<b>Sabi Sand</b>	65 000							730	0	<b>89</b>
<b>Yellowstone</b>	898 300		4 100 000		<b>0.22</b>					





Park	Km of roads	Beds	Camping	Overnight visitors per km of road
Kruger	2525	4066	1796	2.3
Hluhluwe-iMfolozi	245	346	0	1.4
Ithala	139	254	55	2.2
uMkhuze	97	96	100	2.0
Etosha	985	534	327	0.9

Southern half of Kruger - 63% of accommodation and 59% of roads  
= 2.5 overnight visitors per km

Day visitors – 77% of total (98.6% of OSVs in southern half)

## OSVs

25,005 entries (2014/2015)

173,718 visitors

6.9 visitors per vehicle

16% increase on previous year







**At least 200 lodges on border of Kruger.**  
**Sabi Sand Game Reserve – 730 beds**

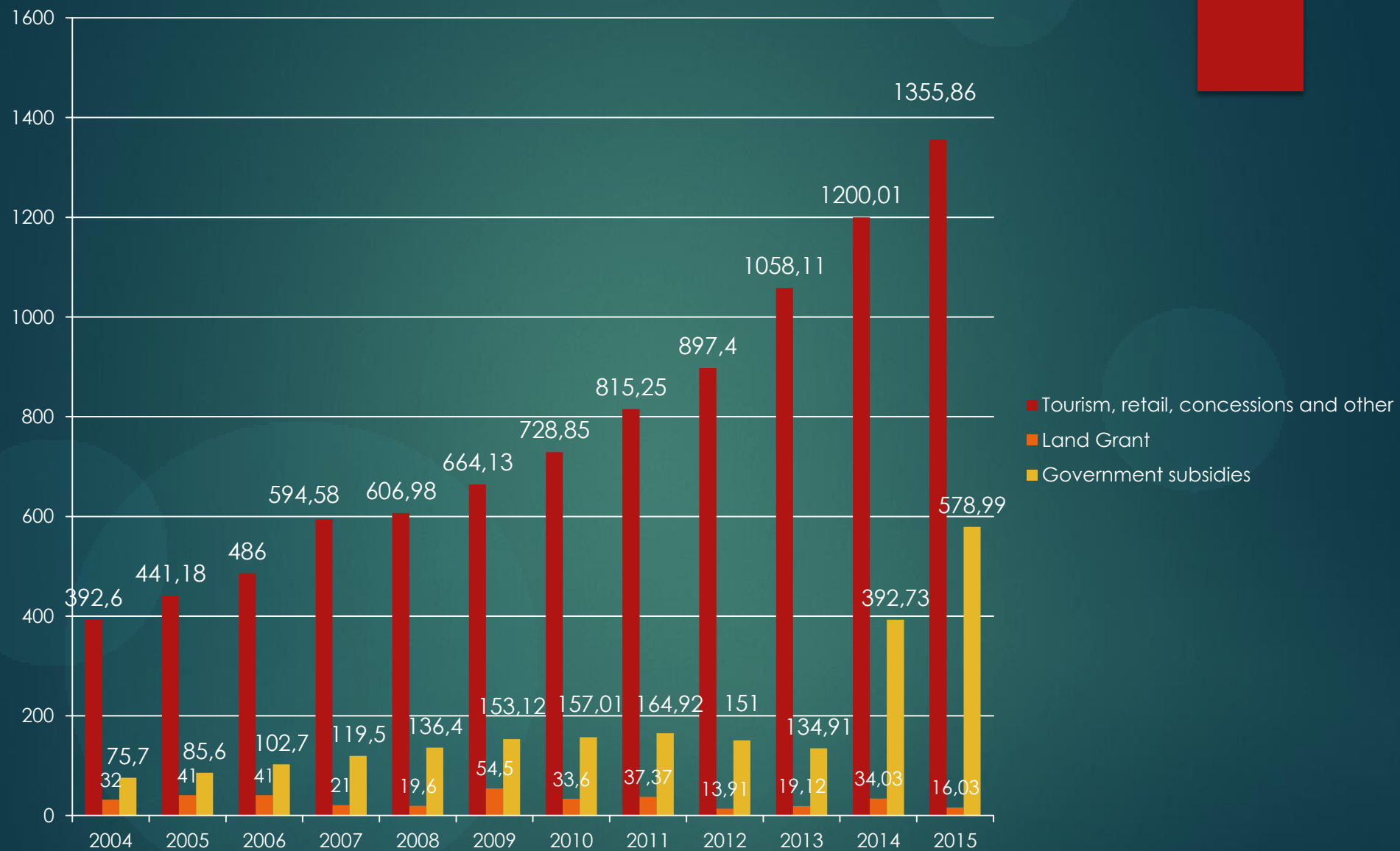




**Lots of  
opposition  
on social  
media pages**













Many other parks far from major cities, too small, or in arid environments where water is limited. Also environmental impact of tourist developments.





Extending facilities requires new roads, rest camps and facilities such as hides and picnic sites in a semi-arid environment



# Pressures for growth

## Increase in all visitors

Doubling in 11 years.

## Increase in foreign visitors

Visitors from Germany up 14.5%. Five main foreign sources up 6.6%.

## Need to increase black visitors

Black day visitors 35.7% of SA total and only 8.5% of SA overnight visitors.

## Increase in OSVs from 200 lodges bordering the Park

25,005 carrying 173,718 or 6.9 people per vehicle. 16% increase and 16.8% increase in occupants.

## Need to generate funds

# The limits to growth

Environment cannot sustain indefinite expansion of tourist facilities

Bad publicity in social media

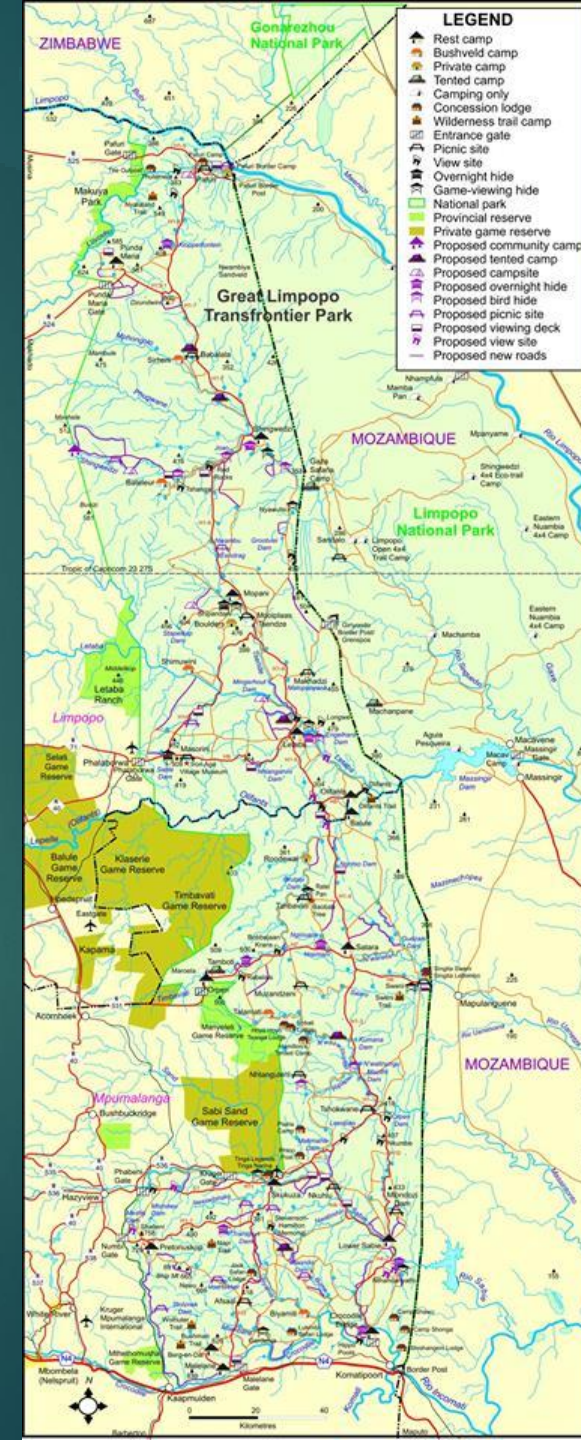
Water resources



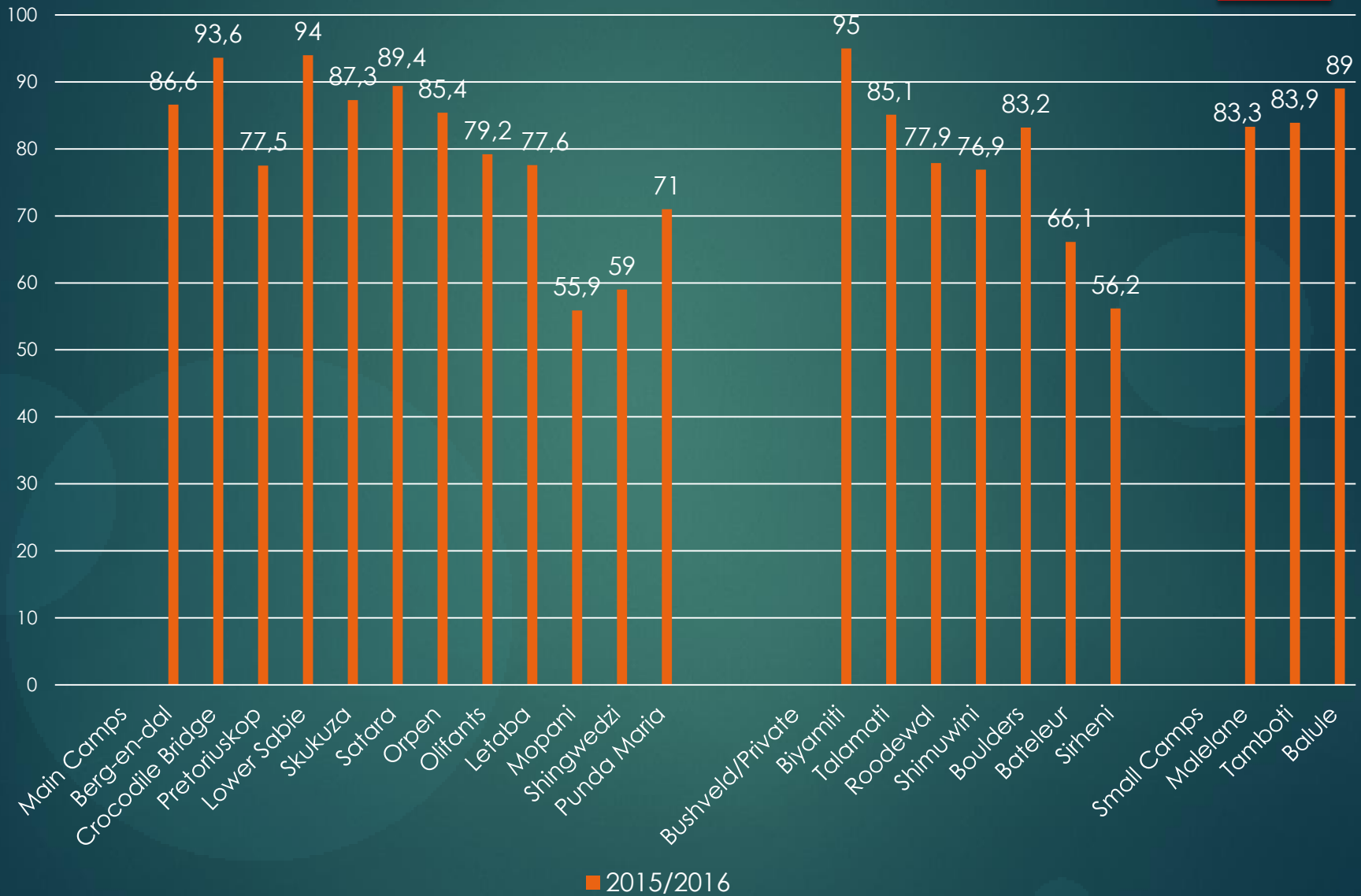


# Revised Development Plan

Entrance gates	9	1
Border posts	2	
Picnic sites	15	9
Hides	9	6
Large rest camps	12	1
Bushveld camps	5	
Private/small camps	5	
Tented camps	1	5
Camping camps	2	3
Overnight hides	2	8
Concession lodges	18	
Number of beds	4066	
Number of campsites	653	
Concession lodge beds	334	



## Unit Occupancy





# Possible solutions

Government commitment to increase protected areas to 8% of country (38% increase)

Has taken 45 years to increase national park estate by 39%

- by then visitors will have increased 16 fold!

Tax incentives for private land owners

Open to abuse and unlikely to gain political support

Market forces

Will most likely favour top end of the market

Open private lodges with 4x4 access only along rivers  
with no tourist roads

Unlikely to absorb high numbers

Will not appease the “big five” sub-culture





Restrict access during holiday periods to guided drives along popular routes, such as the Sabie River

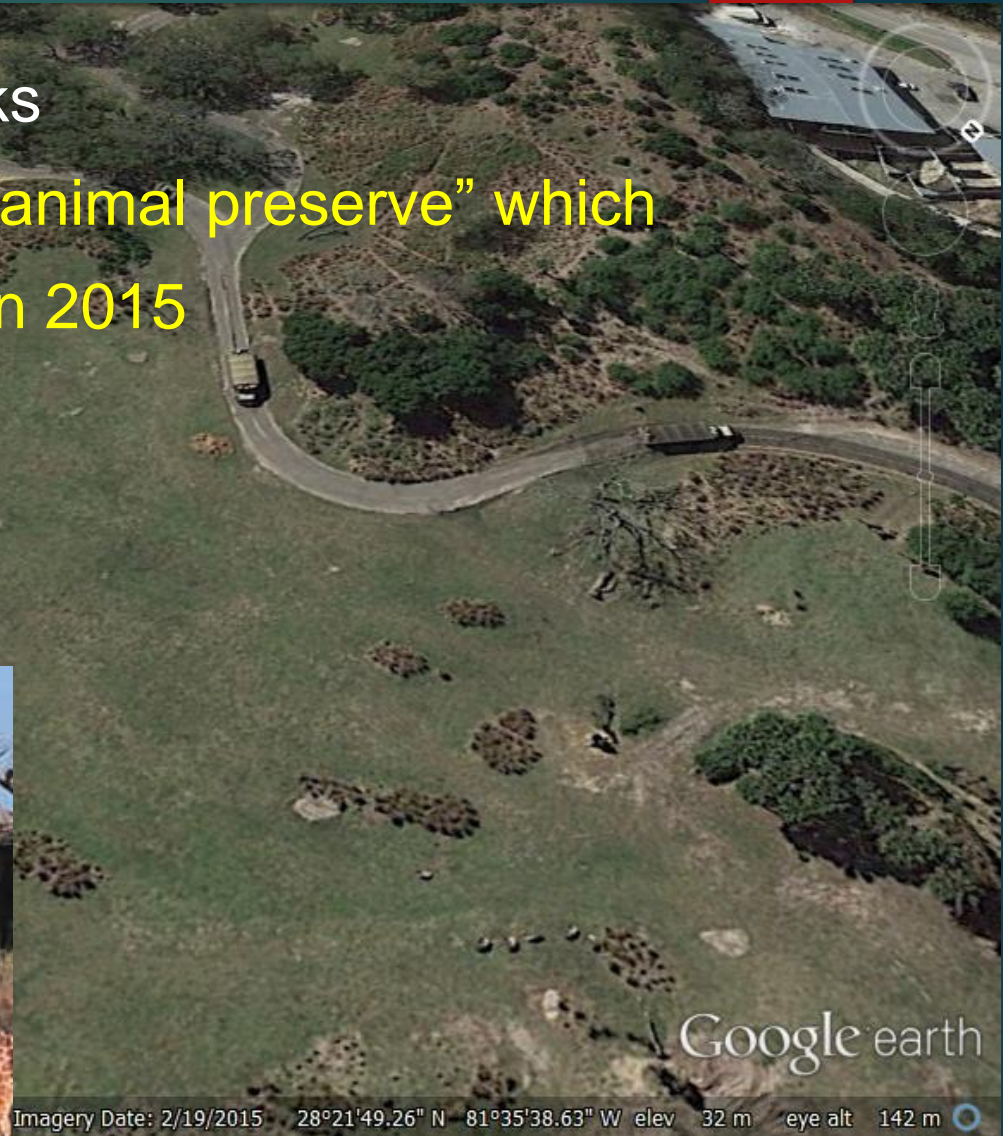
27 passengers – versus 3.8 per vehicle and 6.9 per OSV





## Disneyization of national parks

Animal Kingdom – a 200 ha “animal preserve” which hosted 10.92 million visitors in 2015





Disneyization II –

sacrifice smaller reserves and allow them to be developed  
as “tasteful safari parks”













“sit and wait” game lodge developments on periphery

Animal Kingdom Lodge – 1307 bedrooms





## CONCLUSION

- \* With continued growth of human populations and economies, demand for wildlife tourism will most certainly increase.
- \* Can there be a shift in visitors' values?
- \* Are the days of the self-drive trip to a national park endangered?
- \* Is the problem one of too many visitors, or is it rather a problem of inadequate management of tourist numbers?



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