

## Oral presentation

### Forest resource utilization in Zimbabwe, Africa: tree poaching and curio carving.

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**Introduction.** Ndebele and Shona live in the Savanna woodland in northern Zimbabwe, Africa. They have used forest resources for wood carvings throughout their history. However, as a weak economy makes earning a living more and more difficult, more people are turning to “curio” carving as a form of livelihood, thus increasing pressure on the tree populations.

**Objectives.** To understand current use of forest resources, and the sustainability of these endeavors.

**Methods.** Thirty five wood carvers and vendors were interviewed about their collection methods, resource availability and economic outcomes. Semi-formal qualitative interview methods were utilized.

**Results.** Locals are illegally utilizing trees, and are now poaching even low grade wood. The communal lands and those of the national park and even along public roads are now suffering tree loss as a result. Some people in the area are attempting to alter practices towards more sustainable methods of carving wood that is collected.

**Conclusion.** The current use of the forest resources for curio carving is currently unsustainable. In an effort to make this practice more viable, some people are attempting to carve with renewable parts of the tree, make smaller items from all pieces, reduce the middlemen and take advantage of lumber scraps.

Keywords: Sustainability, artisans, rural, renewable resources

#### Selected References

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