

SUSTAINING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH REED HARVESTING: A CASE STUDY FROM UMLALAZI NATURE RESERVE

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INTRODUCTION

- As a biodiversity conservation entity, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife aims to ensure that the resources we have privilege to today are available for future generations to enjoy. However, this can only be achieved if natural resources are used sustainably.
- Protected areas by nature, change the rights of use and access to land and resources.
- Ezemvelo has over a hundred Protected Areas (PA's) that house several natural resources and plays an important role in supporting livelihoods through resource use harvesting.



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- It is important that communities located adjacent to protected areas are awarded the opportunity to be able to make a living from natural resources.
- Protected areas don't only protect natural resources but also provide access to food, drinking water, flood defense and indigenous flora and endemic fauna.

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uMLALAZI REED HARVEST 2022

- The Umlalazi Nature Reserve is one of 4 Protected Areas in KwaZulu-Natal where large *juncus kraussii* (incema) stands are located.
- Grows all year round and is adapted to growing in saline conditions.
- *Juncus kraussii* has a coastal distribution.
- Flowers in the summer season
- Hosted 26 times in the last 38 years.
- Sustainable harvesting.

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THE HARVESTERS



Buthelezi, T. (2022) The Harvesters.

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Sibiya, N. (2022). *Juncus kraussii* and *phragmites australis*

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Sibiya, N. (2022). Designated incema weighing stations

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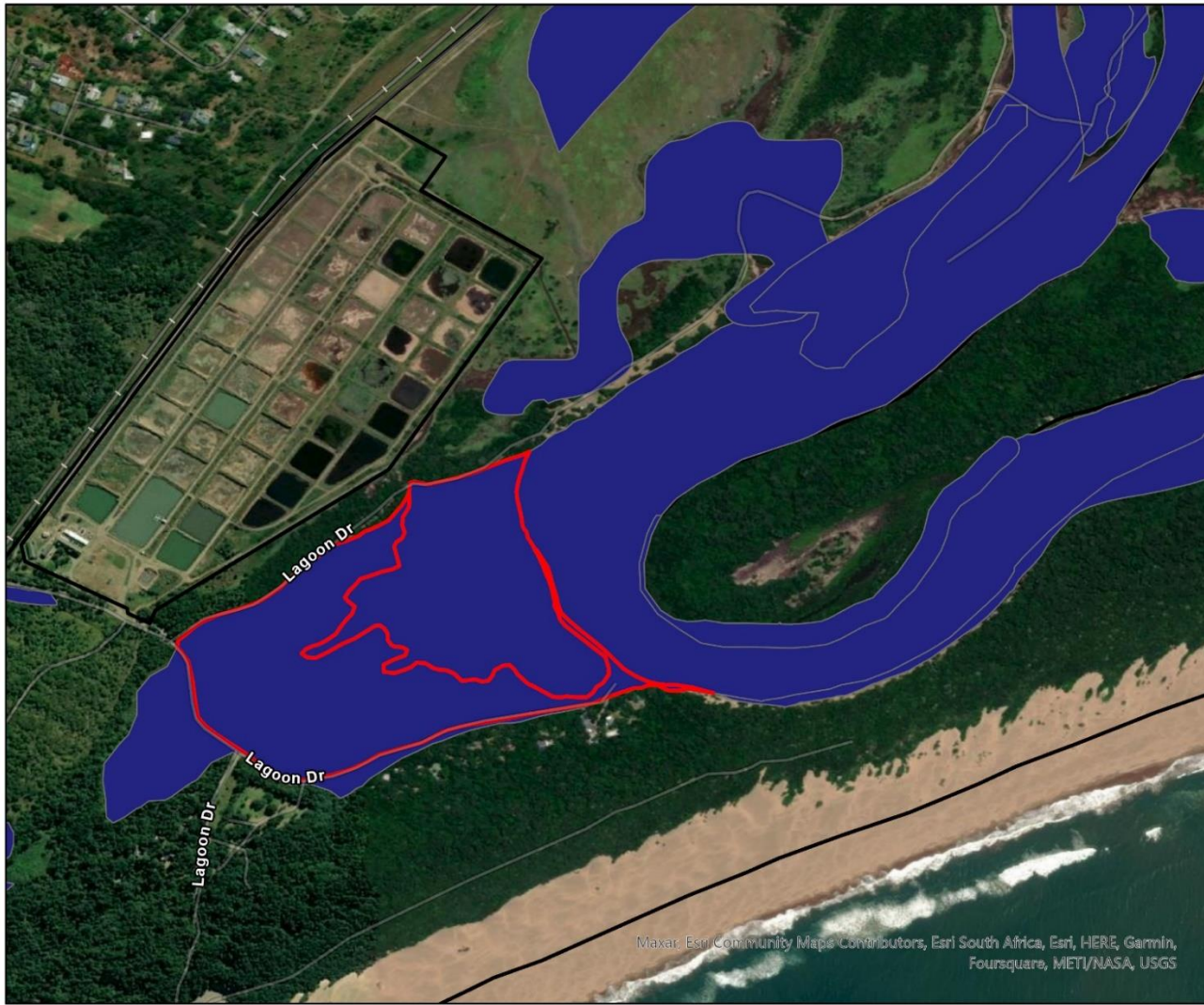
Sibiya, N. (2022). Harvesters receiving warburgisa trees.

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UMLALAZI STUDY AREA



Legend

- Wetland_study_area
- KZN_wetland
- Umlalazi_NR

N

0 0.08.15 0.31 Kilometers

Map by: Nhlakanipho Kweyama, GIS Technician,
EKZNW

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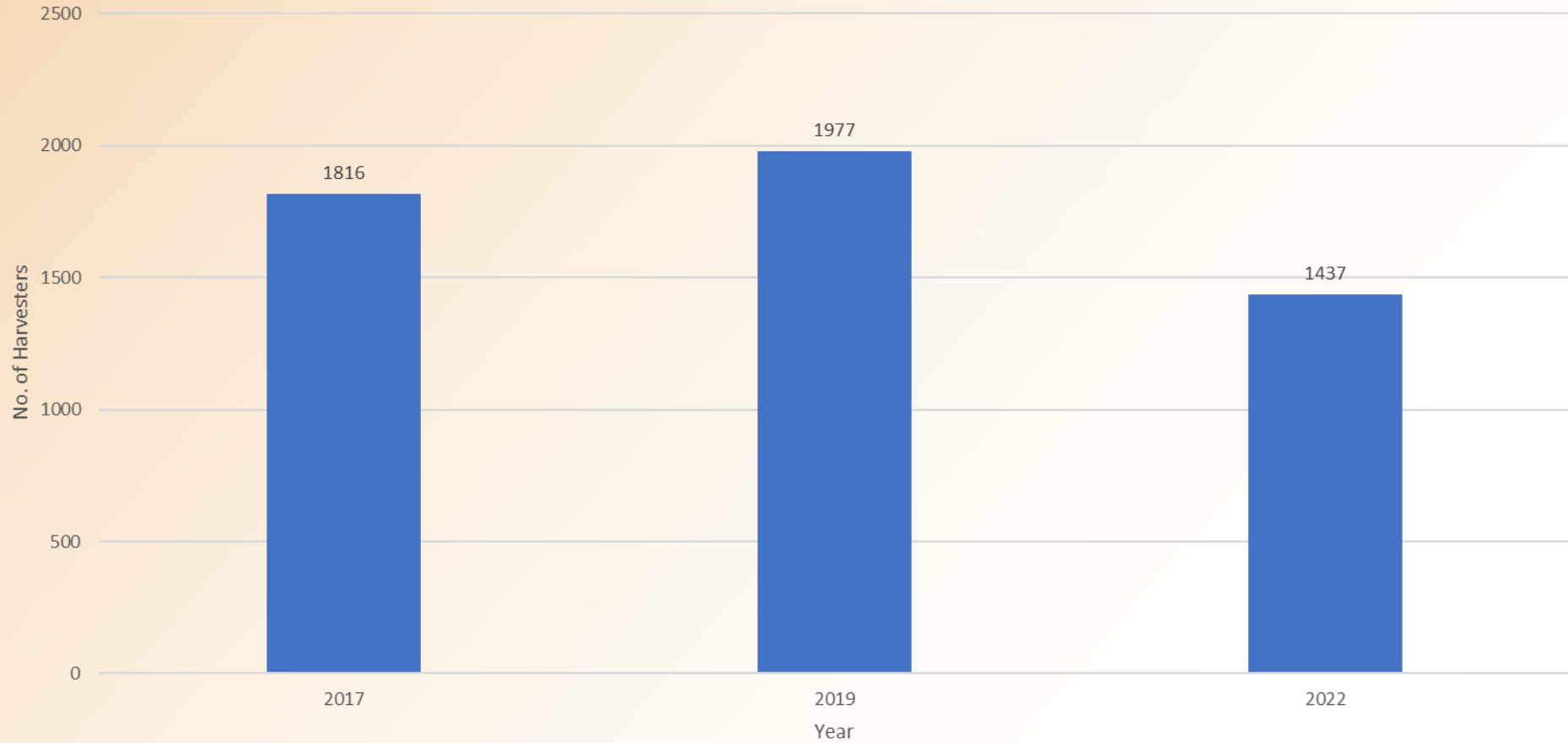
METHODS

Qualitative approach was used in the collection of data

- A survey was formulated and consisted of three sections namely; demographics, resources use and ecosystem goods and services valuation.
- The survey was uploaded onto an App called KoboToolBox. The app was installed onto 4 android devices.

RESULTS

Graph showing of harvesters from 2017 to 2022



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RESULTS CONTINUED...

- **Two prominent areas:**

1. Ulundi

2. Mpangeni

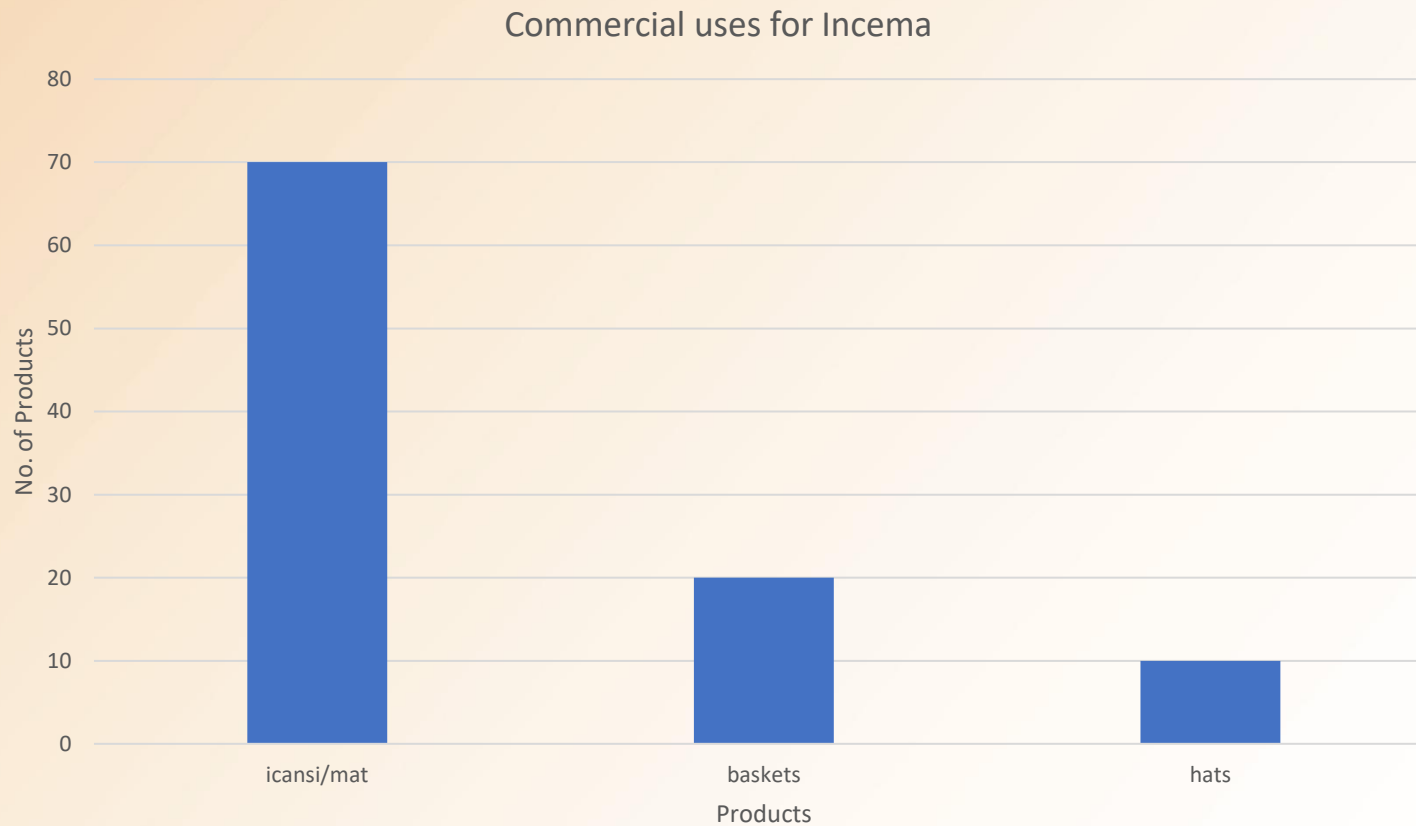
- 92% female, 6% male

- 60% over the age 57

- 31% never attended school, 37% been to primary school and 8% degree of tertiary education.

RESULTS CONTINUED...

Commercial and Subsistence harvesting



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RESULTS CONTINUED...

- Mats at R350 each
- Baskets at R200 each
- Hats at R60-R80
- For 67%-only means of income aside from government social grants.
- Part of gift-giving for wedding ceremony.



Image sourced from google



HARVESTERS PERCEPTIONS

- They are assisting Ezemvelo get rid of unwanted incema within the park.
- Impact on the wetland: they are doing their part by cutting above the root to allow for regeneration.
- The debris and litter left behind doesn't affect the growth rate of the new incema.
- Ikhwane and umhlanga.

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CHALLENGES

- The harvest period is too short
- The harvest doesn't get the funding and support it requires to be truly successful and beneficial.
- The uMlalazi Nature Reserve compromises reserve funds to host harvest.
- The money required for all the services provided by uMlalazi Nature Reserve are too high for the harvesters.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implementation of learning programs
- Road shows prior the harvest to better educate people about the benefits of harvesting incema and the impact it has on the wetland.
- Widespread distribution of learning materials that can reach the appropriate market. Break language barriers through communities.
- The harvest should be held annually.
- Other external partners such as the municipality should be involved in the provision of resources for the harvest.
- More blocks should be made assessable as a means of rotational

harvesting.

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CONCLUSION

- Parks contribute significantly towards developing mechanisms that contribute to livelihood sustainability whilst ensuring that conservation efforts are met.
- The harvest is a collaborative effort.
- Means of building trust with community and build protected environment value.
- Sustainable resource use management.

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References

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