



COMMUNICATING BIODIVERSITY

Action research in studying northern Botswana's conservation community of practice



Monica Morrison
Stellenbosch, 31 October 2016

Uptake of wildlife research data in northern Botswana: research questions

- How is research uptake to be understood in the context of wildlife survey data?
- How, and in what ways, does the production and collection of wildlife survey data affect policy and practice related to wildlife management in northern Botswana?
- **Do the processes of collection, stewardship, sharing and analysis of wildlife survey data affect uptake of the data?**
- **What methods and tools are used to support uptake of evidence provided by wildlife survey data?**
- How can the results of the study be used to inform and adapt current frameworks of research uptake?

“... the use of scientific evidence is limited by the fact that the management of natural resources involves much more than science. The social context within which decisions are made, which includes organizational structure, priorities and capacity, plays an important part in the extent to which science informs practice.” Ntshotsho, P. et al., 2015.



Why organise a Meetup?

- a) To have a **point of contact** with the research community I was studying, since I was not myself a wildlife researcher
- b) To encourage **conversations** about production, sharing, and use of research findings
- c) To observe **interactions** among producers and users of research to provide context for other data I was collecting

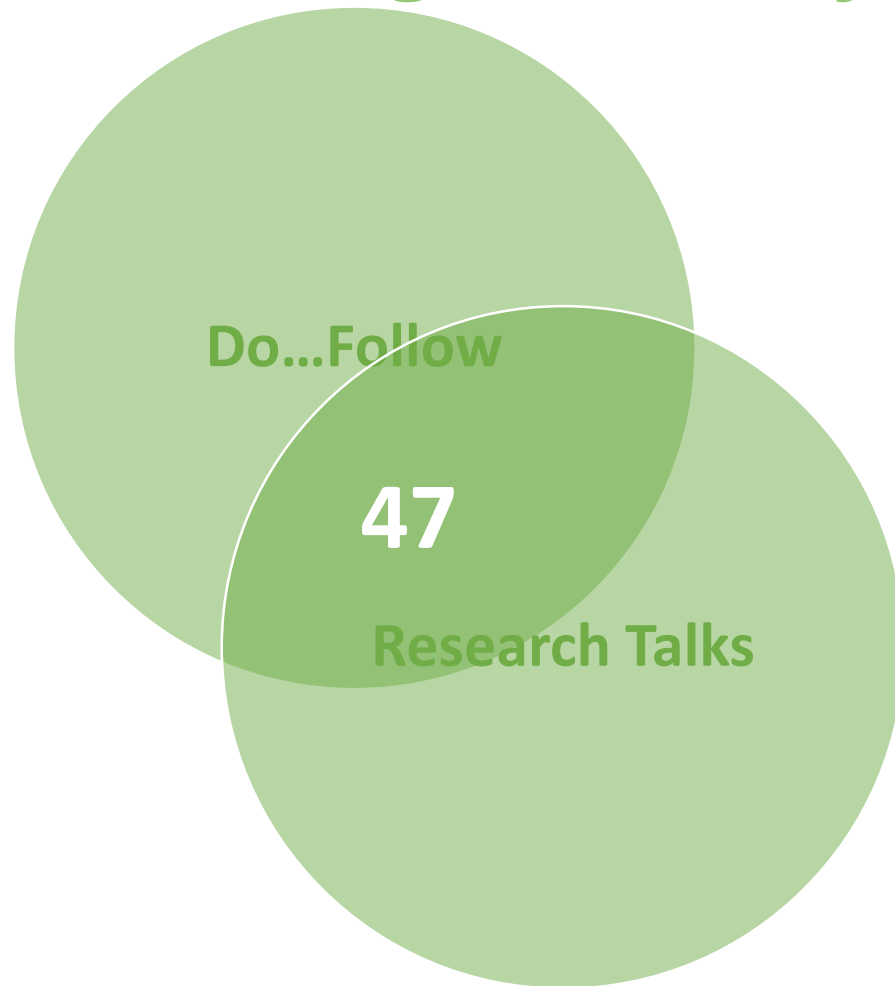
A parallel development

Research Talks for Everyone

- Monthly
- 15 minute presentations by researchers for a general audience
- Q&A session



Creating boundary spaces



47 of *Do ... Follow* members have also attended at least one of the *Research Talks for Everyone*. There are also people who have attended both *Research Talks* and *Do...Follow* meetups but have not registered as members on the *Do ... Follow* site. My perception is that these could be considered a **core engaged group** of the COP.

Needed for research uptake

Can knowledge mediation help create these conditions?

- **Awareness:** do potential users know the research exists?
- **Relevance:** do potential users think the research relates to what is important to them?
- **Trust:** do potential users think that the research findings are believable and legitimate?
- **Understanding:** do the research findings make sense to potential users?

Creating boundary spaces

Formats

The screenshot shows a Meetup page for 'Maun Research Fieldwork Meetup'. The page includes a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Members', 'Sponsors', 'Photos', 'Pages', 'Discussions', and 'More'. The main content area features a 'Welcome!' section with a 'Schedule a new Meetup' button and a 'What's new' section with a photo of a meeting. The 'Upcoming' section lists a meeting on October 19 at 6:00 PM, titled 'Hear about the recent CITES meeting from Debbie Peake'. The 'Recent Meetups' section shows a meeting on September 14 at 6:00 PM, titled 'Chat with Tico McNutt about the Botswana Conservation Parliamentary Caucus'. The page also includes an 'About us...' section, an 'Invite friends' button, and a list of organizers: Monica Morrison, Gail Potgieter, and Wame K.

- Web application supplemented by email
- Invitation only; private discussion
- Informal venue
- Focus on active researchers
- Presenters selected
- Discussion with presenter
- Topic related to research data
- Email list, Facebook community bulletin board
- Open to all
- Formal venue
- Focus on broad community audience
- Presenters volunteer
- Three brief presentations
- Any formal research project

The screenshot shows a research talk announcement. At the top, it features the logos of the University of Botswana and Kwando Safaris. The text reads: 'The University of Botswana, in collaboration with Kwando Safaris, would like to present the second in a series of RESEARCH TALKS By researchers for everyone'. Below this, there are two call-to-action buttons: 'Find out about research going on in Botswana' and 'Give your comments and feedback'. The main content lists 'This month's topics:' including 'Fine scale habitat use by African wild dogs', 'The movements of zebra and buffalo in relation to the availability of resources in the Savuti-Mababe-Linyanti Ecosystems, northern Botswana', and 'A study of vultures in Botswana: status, ecology and key threats'. At the bottom, there is a box with the venue 'Maun Lodge', date '24th August 2015', time '17:30 for 18:00 - 19:00', and 'Cash Bar available'. There is also an 'Ask questions' button and a 'DO NOT FOLLOW' button.

Do .. Follow Meetup

Meetings

Welcome!

+ Schedule a new Meetup

Upcoming 1 Past Calendar

Meetup Round Table: What is causing high levels of lead in Botswana's vultures?

Old Bridge Backpackers

Old Bridge Backpackers, Maun ([map](#))



Vultures, increasingly endangered, are an essential part of Botswana's wilderness
Oct 7, 2015 6:00 PM

Talk Monitoring Data with Dr Mike Murray-Hudson



8 Maun Researchers

Did you know that the University of Botswana's Okavango Research Institute collects and shares data about climate, groundwater, rainfall, flooding and fire in northern... [LEARN MORE](#)

October 19 · 6:00 PM

[Rate this Meetup](#)

Hear about the recent CITES meeting from Debbie Peake



12 Maun Researchers | [8 Photos](#)

Needs a
Got one?

The 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) - the largest
June 8 · 5:00 PM

Chat with Tico McNutt about the Botswana Conservation Parliamentary Caucus

[Rate this Meetup](#)

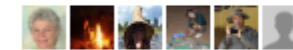
[16 Photos](#)

makers have access to trustworthy
communicating through a variety of cl
became the 11th... [LEARN MORE](#)

Dec 16, 2015 · 6:00 PM

[Rate this Meetup](#)

Talk with Dr Chris Brooks about the new monitoring resource for safari guides



6 Maun Researchers | [★★★★★](#) | [6 Photos](#)

Ongoing monitoring of the condition of plants, animals and landscape is needed to inform good planning and management of northern Botswana's wilderness areas. Tourism... [LEARN MORE](#)

Chat with Dikeme Kgaodi, DEA about redesigned EIS



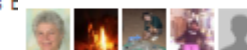
4 Maun Researchers | [3](#)

JUL 10, 2015 · 6:00 PM

[Rate this Meetup](#)

Access to good informa
conditions in Botswana
their work. Botswana's E

Talk with MEWT about recent review of procedures for research permits



7 Maun Researchers

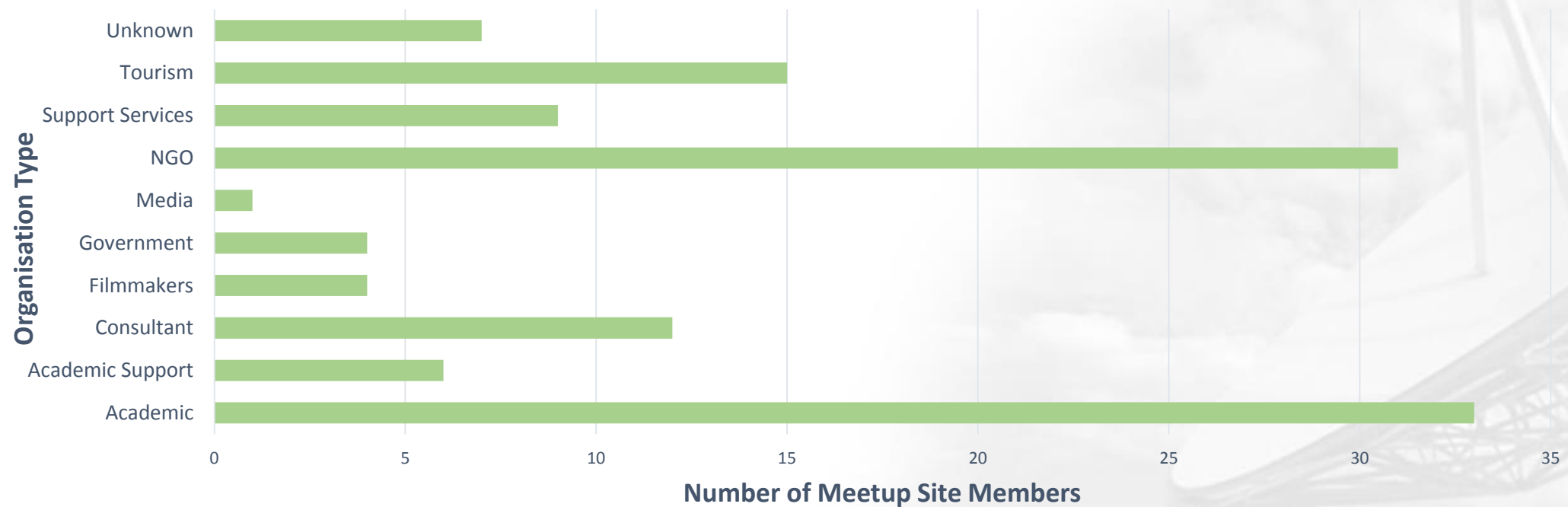
Mr. Gaoakanye Tapeng, Research Coordinator at MEWT, will be in town and plans to join us to share upcoming initiatives such as

Do .. Follow Meetup

Membership

- 87% of online members are based in Botswana
- 58% online visits come from Botswana

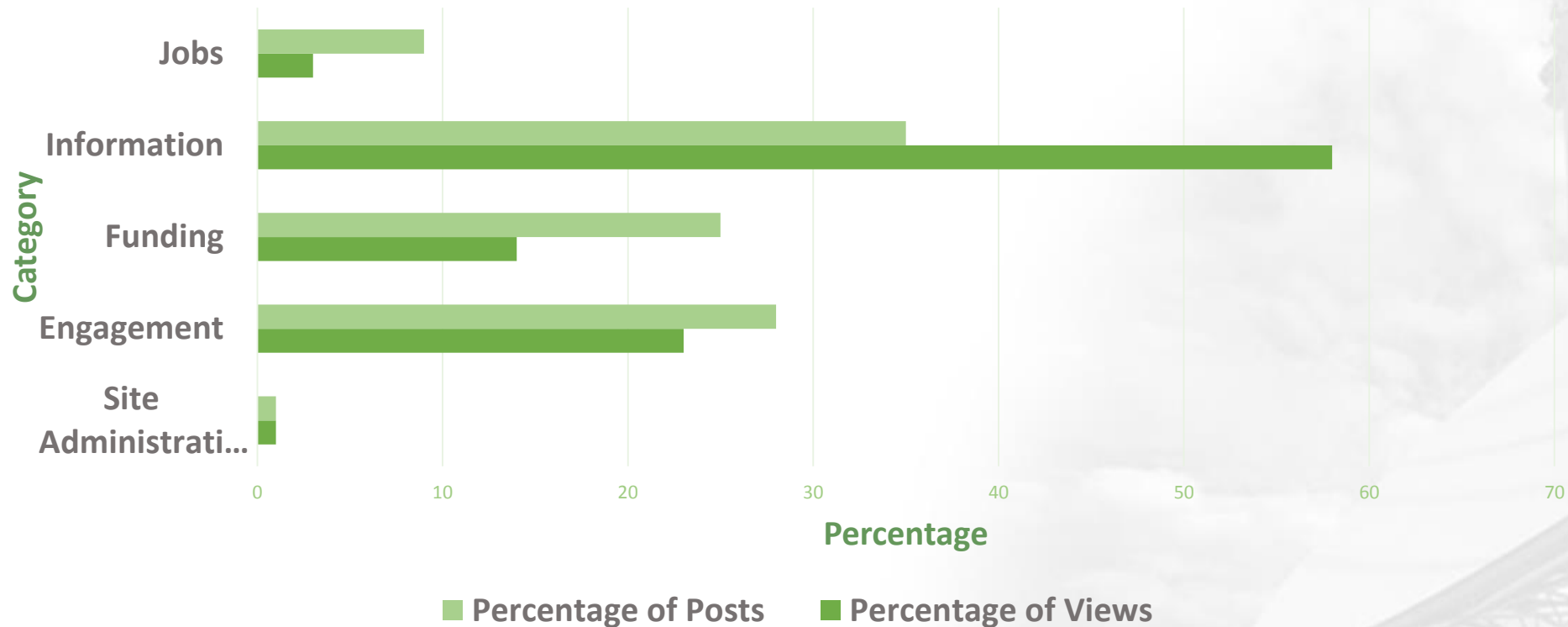
Organisational affiliation



Do .. Follow Meetup

What site content members chose

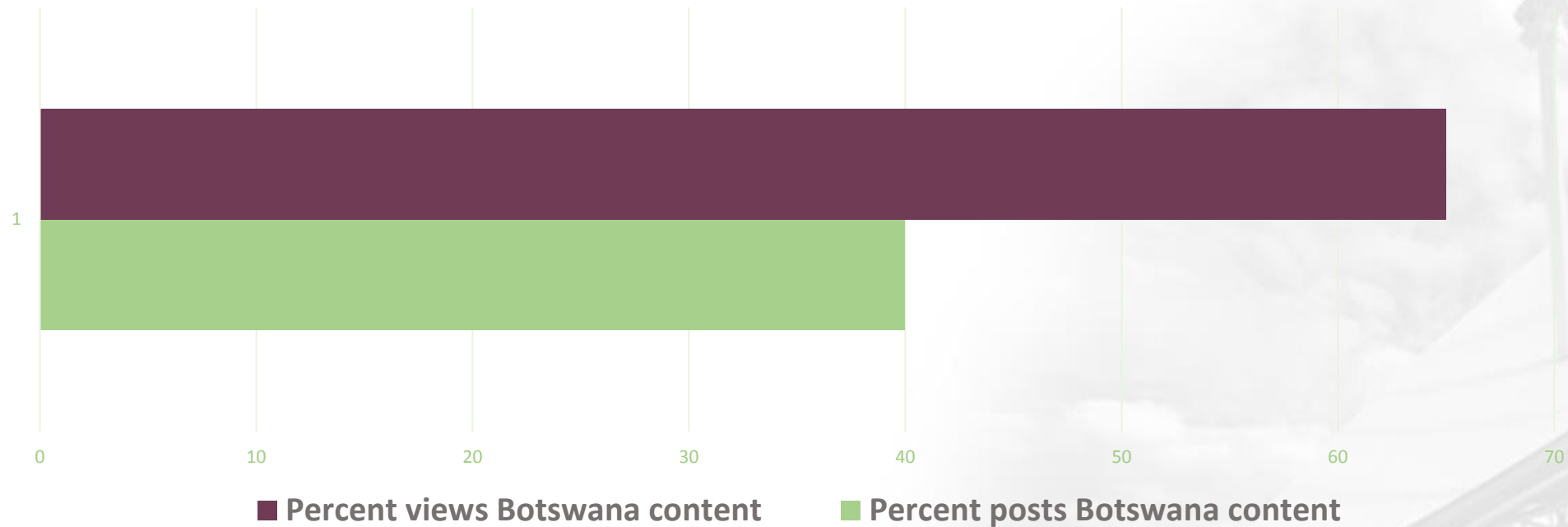
Do...Follow Meetup web site Comparison of Posts and Views by Category



Do .. Follow Meetup

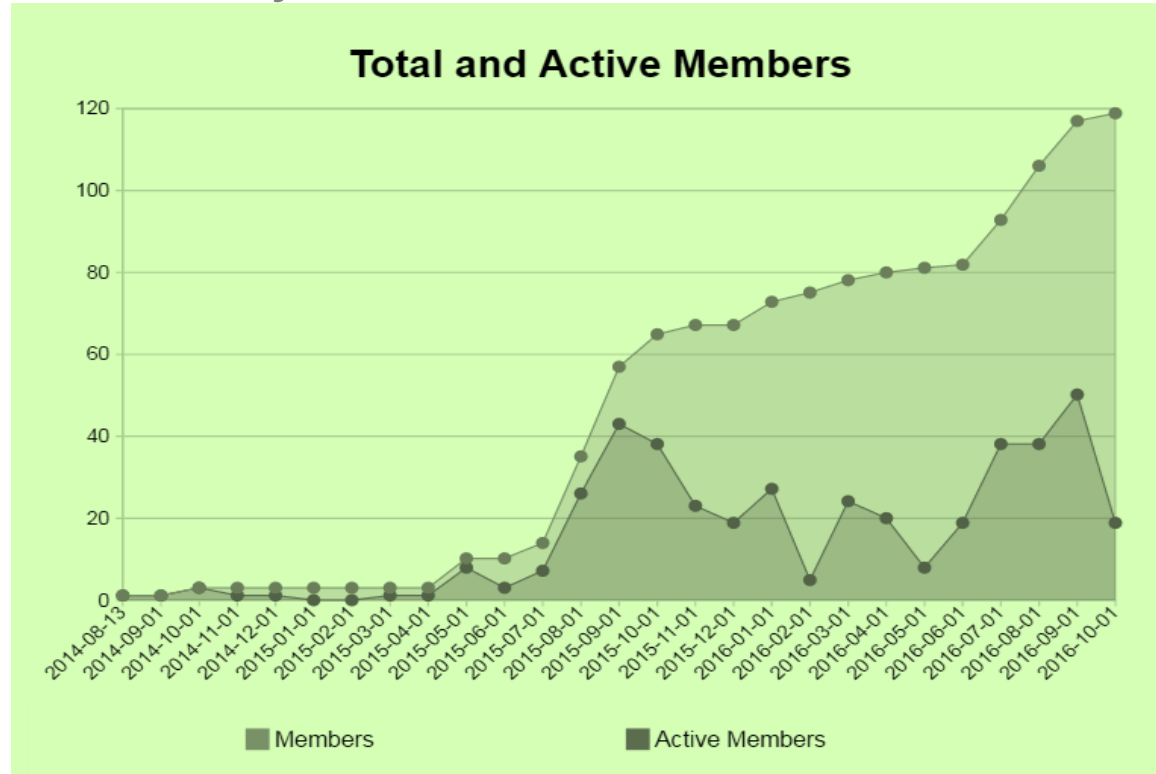
Local content

Botswana Content Posts compared with Botswana Content Views



Do ... Follow Meetup

Web activity



*An active member is one who has visited the Meetup group's page **within the past 30 days***

55% described their **work**
 47% posted a **photo** of themselves
 27% used the online **RSVP** function
 < 17% posted a **question or comment**

Sessions

2,966

Users

1,225

Pageviews

8,917

Pages / Session

3.01

Avg. Session Duration

00:05:08

Bounce Rate

63.35%

Google Analytics, 28/10/2016

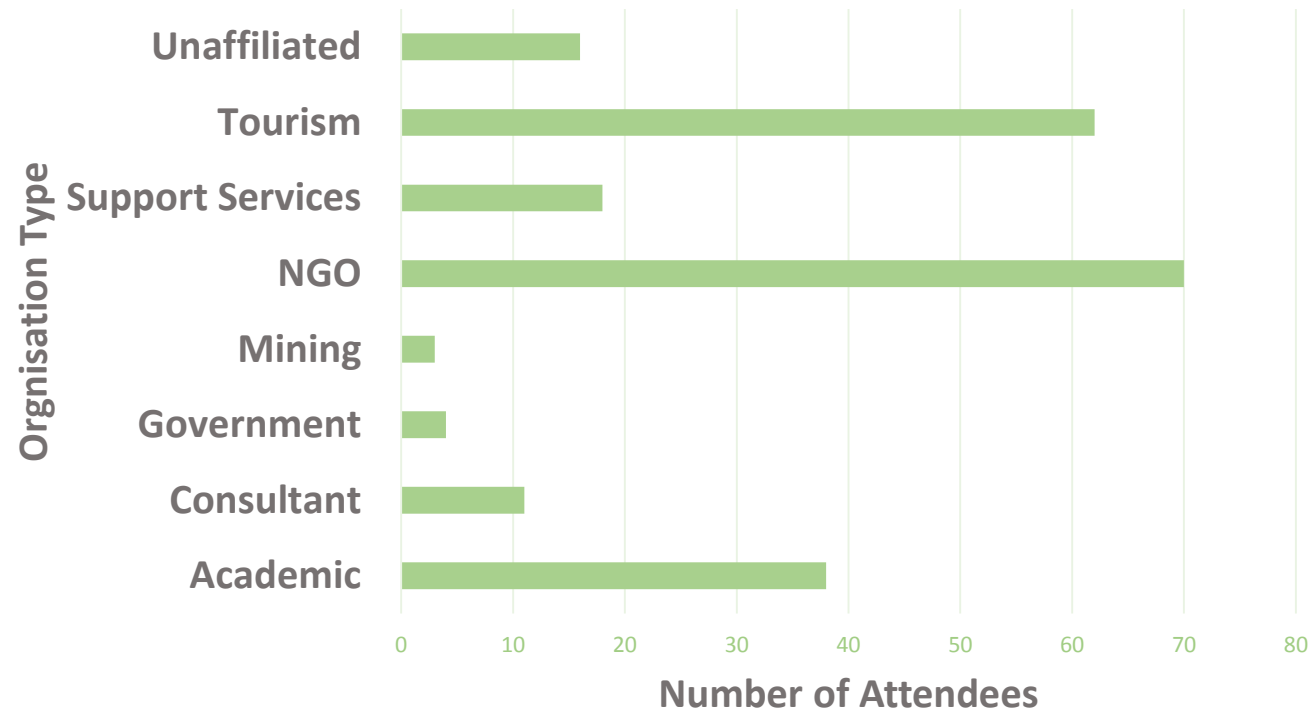
Do .. Follow Meetup

Meeting attendance: **High: 21-40, Medium: 11-20, or Low: 1-10**

Topic		Presenter
Building awareness of government's wildlife research needs among researchers	H	Chief Wildlife Officer
Preservation of legacy wildlife research data for reuse	H	Hunting Association Rep.
Current wildlife issues with research priorities and processes	H	Regional Wildlife Officer
Research permit processes	H	National Research Coordinator
Research permit processes	H	National Research Coordinator
Discussion of international decisions for wildlife trade that affect Botswana	M	Hunting Association Rep.
Building awareness of wildlife research data among policymakers	M	NGO Manager
Collection, preservation and use of vegetation biodiversity data	M	University Herbarium Researcher
Collection and sharing of wildlife monitoring data	M	Project Manager
Interventions to resolve land-use problems in Ngamiland, including human-wildlife conflict	M	Project Manager
Preservation and access for government environmental grey literature	L	Natural Resource Officer
Preservation and use of vegetation biodiversity data	L	Consultant
Production, preservation and re-use of monitoring data	L	University Researcher
General discussion	L	n/a
General discussion	L	n/a

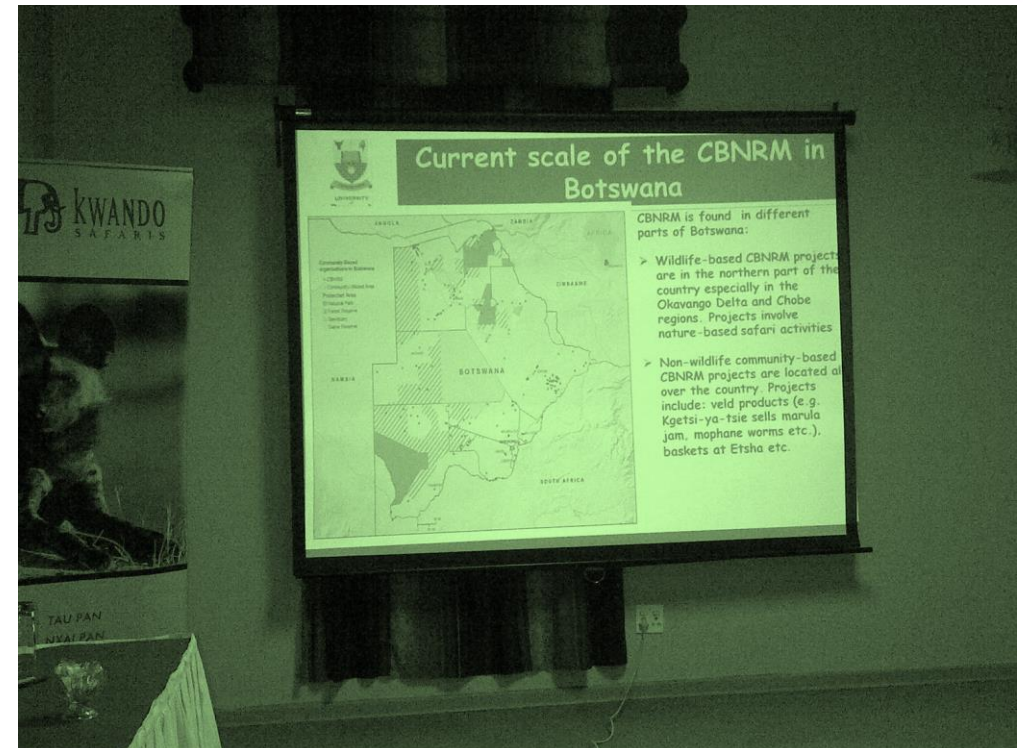
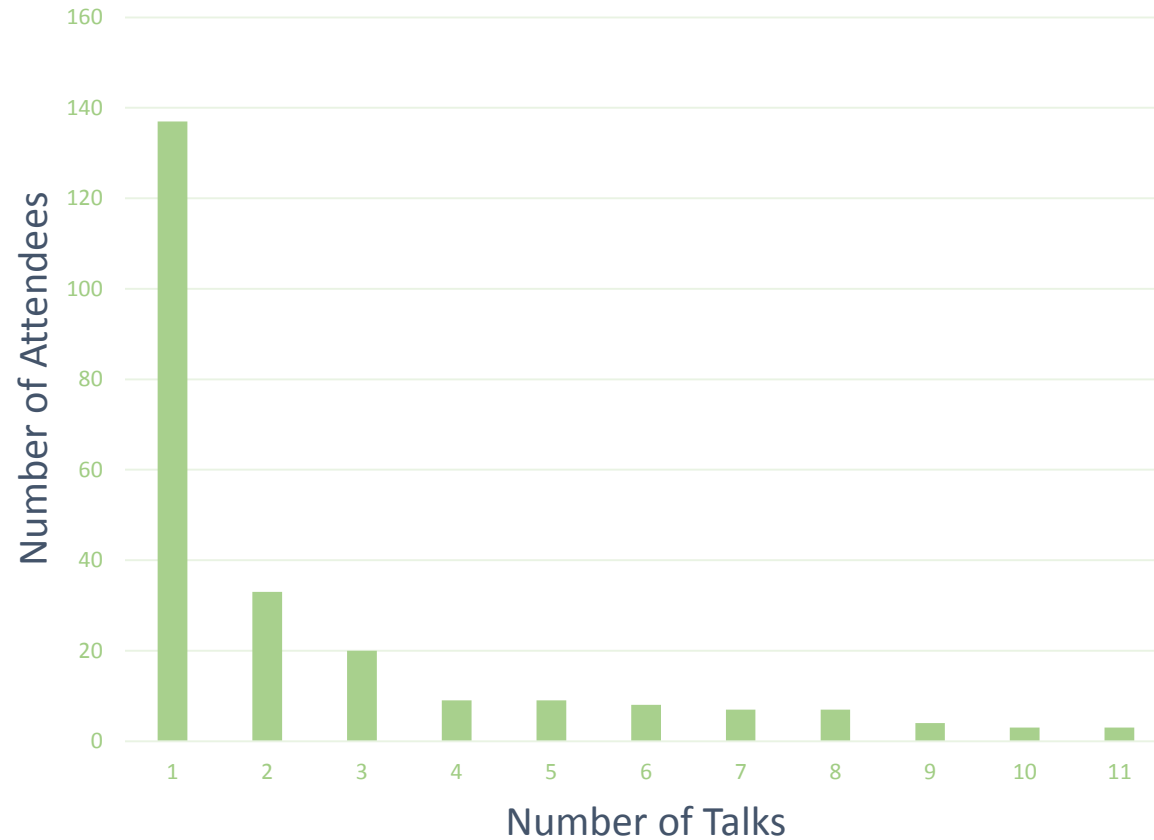
Research Talks for Everyone

Affiliations of attendees



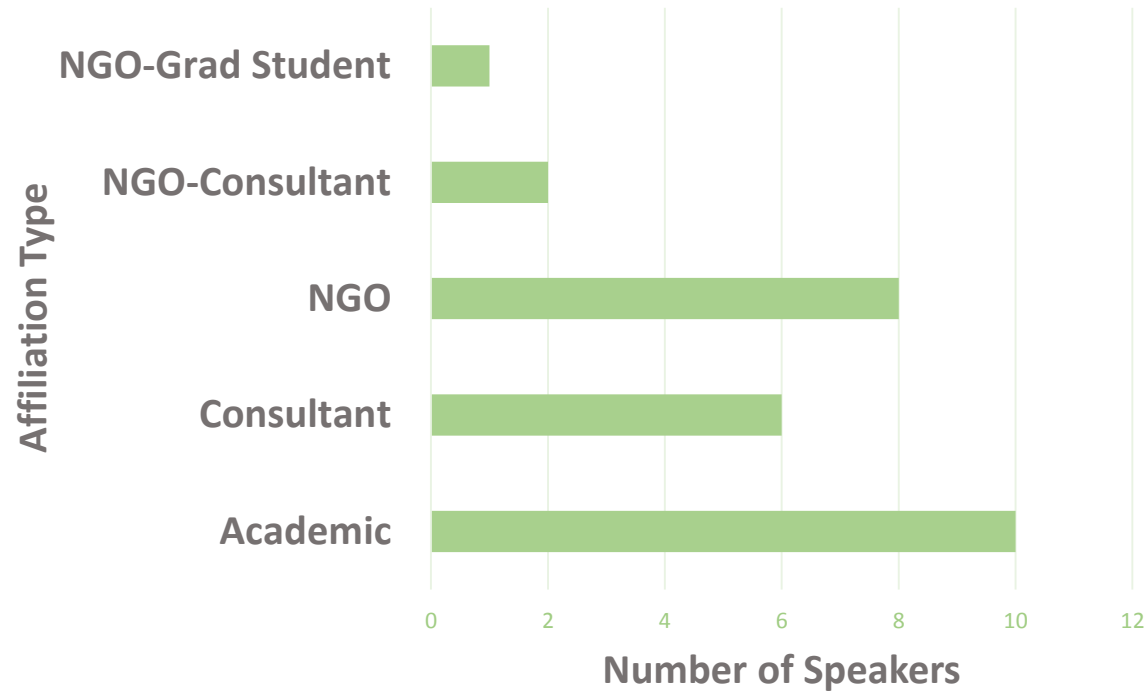
Research Talks for Everyone

Number of times attendees returned



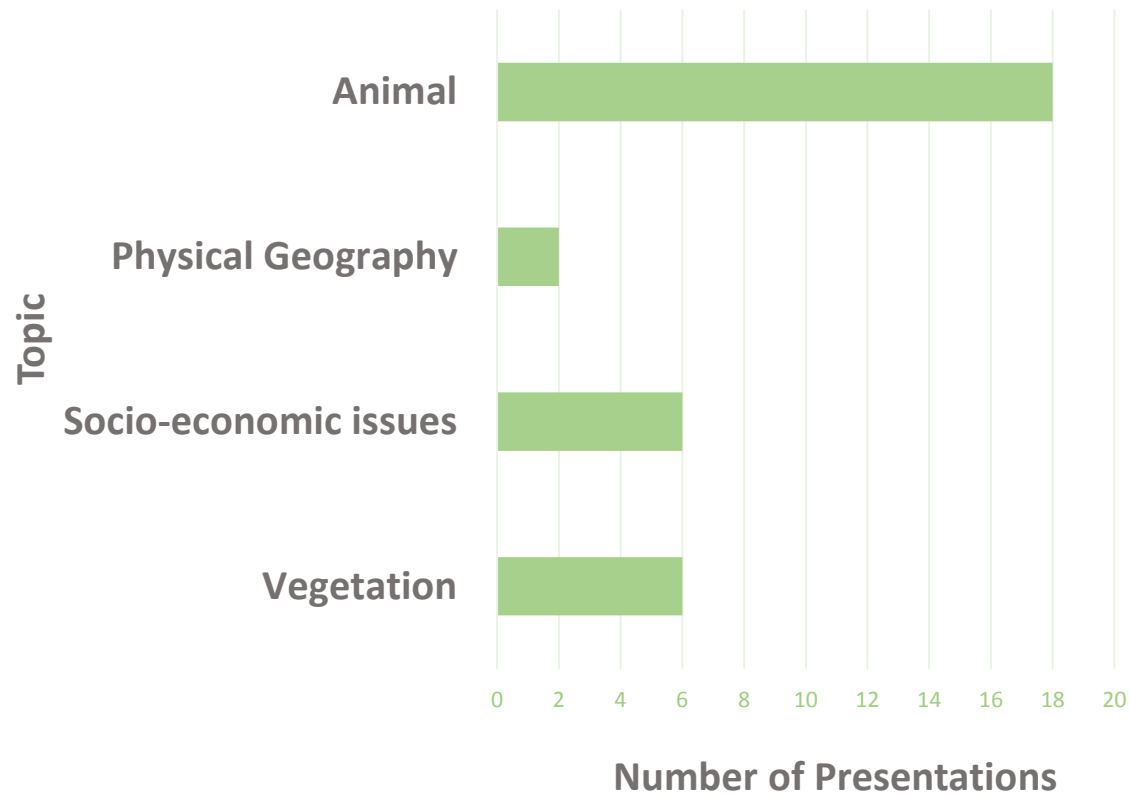
Research Talks for Everyone

Affiliation of presenters



Research Talks for Everyone

Topics of talks



Reactions

“ Always a pleasure to meet with like minded people struggling with same problems... indeed it keeps things in perspective. Look forward to hearing more of what other folk are up to/thinking about /need more information on. ”

“The whole group is in your debt for organising these meetings”

“i will appreciate it much to always keep in touch with what is going on. The "Do... Follow Meetup" is one the set-ups I really enjoy in that regard and keep the good work you are doing.”

“Can I have info on previous talks!”

“Love these talks!”

“Very interesting – thank-you!”

“Could also film talks and post online or post summaries.”



Insights

What these knowledge mediation spaces are doing to increase:

- **Awareness:** helping potential users know the research exists, and exposing opportunities for collaboration
- **Relevance:** helping researchers learn what potential users think is important to them
- **Trust:** building relationships, and exposing researchers to public policy concerns
- **Understanding:** giving researchers practice in communicating to non-scientists



THANK YOU

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