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"The information presented in this Wildlife Industry Journal has been prepared with care and is believed to be **factually correct** based on the best available data, field observations and industry records. It is provided for **informational and analytical purposes** to support understanding, research and responsible decision-making within the wildlife sector. Readers are encouraged to conduct their own verification, assessments and due diligence before relying on any insights for breeding, purchasing, management or investment decisions. The content remains **protected under intellectual property laws** and may not be altered, copied or disseminated without prior written consent. Neither the compiler nor the contributors accept liability for any decisions or outcomes arising from the use of this information."

All **growth curves**, **weight ranges** and **horn-size timelines** in this journal are drawn from peer-reviewed scientific research, long-term ecological field studies, wildlife-industry breeding records and South African game-auction datasets spanning more than two decades. These independent sources align closely, giving confidence that the data reflects realistic, prime-condition norms for each species.



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Why This Journal Exists — And Why I Choose to share it



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WILDLIFE INDUSTRY

For many years I have worked across South Africa's wildlife industry—walking the lands of breeders and being a game farm breeder myself, speaking with buyers and sellers, engaging with tourism operators, key industry players and gathering data that tells the real story of our species, our markets and our ecological future. The insights in this journal were not compiled for my own benefit, but for the **collective good** of an industry that depends on shared knowledge to grow responsibly.

South Africa's wildlife economy is one of the country's greatest assets, yet it often suffers from fragmented information and inconsistent data. Breeders need reliable growth curves and horn-trajectory insights; buyers and sellers require transparent benchmarks; landowners need population and habitat trends; and tourism operators rely on thriving, well-managed species. Most new and upcoming game farmers also do not have detailed information regarding species growth, feed and critical information to allow them to breed with these species. **When information is openly available, the entire value chain becomes stronger, more stable and more sustainable.**

This journal is my contribution toward that vision. By providing credible, consolidated data, I hope to support better decision-making—whether it's improving herd structure, planning investments, guiding breeding strategies, or enhancing tourism experiences. **The more we all understand, the more the industry can expand, innovate and safeguard the animals we depend on.**

At a time when wildlife faces pressures from habitat loss, climate variability and shifting markets, informed stewardship is no longer optional—it is essential. If these pages help even one breeder refine their programme, one new entrant make a confident start, or one conservationist shape a stronger management plan, then the work has served its purpose.

South Africa's wildlife belongs to all of us. **By sharing this data, we strengthen not only the industry, but the future of the species that define it.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over twenty-five years the wildlife auction market has moved through **six distinct phases**, each leaving a clear signature in value, quantities and pricing. Together they show an industry that has travelled from modest beginnings to a sophisticated, multi-segment asset class.

The **first phase, 2001–2006, was the foundational era**. Total auction turnover hovered between roughly R33m in 2005 and R74m in 2003, with average prices mostly below R6 000. Plains game dominated as a low-to-mid value commodity, while rare game and emerging colour variants provided flashes of upside but on small volumes. Growth in these years was driven more by rising participation and formalisation of auctions than by aggressive pricing – quantities grew in several years by double digits, but pricing stayed comparatively gentle, even contracting sharply in 2004 and 2005 as the market absorbed new supply.

The **second phase, 2007–2012, marked the first major boom**. Total market value climbed from about R90m in 2007 to R859m by 2012, with price growth doing most of the heavy lifting. Average prices per animal for the industry as a whole jumped from under R10 000 to more than R74 000 over this window, supported by a powerful re-rating of both rare game and colour variants. Plains game values rose steadily as well, with average game prices almost doubling from around R2 665 per animal in 2007 to R4 553 in 2012. This was the era when genetics, horn length and phenotype began to command premiums and when the first serious speculative capital flowed into buffalo, sable, roan and high-end colour lines.

The **third phase, 2013–2016, was the super-cycle and subsequent correction**. Total value peaked at just under R2.0bn in 2015, with average prices across the market still above R50 000. Rare game reached extreme levels – over R1.2bn in 2016 – while colour variants pushed beyond R560m in 2015 before halving in 2016. Plains game also experienced a dramatic uplift, with value increasing from R79.0m in 2013 to R355.4m in 2015 on a combination of higher quantities and double-digit price growth. By 2016, however, total market value had already retreated by about 7.7% and pricing momentum had stalled, signalling that the speculative peak had been passed. The growth trend was underpinned by significant price increases and elevated purchasing by breeding farms willing to invest at premium levels.

The **fourth phase, 2017–2020, was characterised by correction and consolidation**. Market value slid from R975m in 2017 to just R200m in 2020, with three key drivers: a sharp repricing of rare game, ongoing normalisation in colour variants and, finally, the COVID-19 shock. Average prices across the market more than halved from R25 688 in 2017 to R9 874 in 2020. Rare game values fell from about R1.21bn in 2016 to R341.6m in 2019 and further to R122.4m in 2020. Plains game and colour variants also weakened, as local breeders and international hunters delayed investment decisions and as liquidity shifted to survival rather than expansion. This period marked a severe downturn in the game industry, with most species experiencing sharp price declines and colour variants being the hardest hit. It was a period in which the entire wildlife market underwent a significant reset.

The **fifth phase, 2021–2023, was the recovery and reset**. As lockdowns eased and international travel reopened, total industry value rebounded from R200.3m in 2020 to R589.0m in 2023. Quantities recovered first, growing by 55.4% in 2021 and a further 26.4% in 2022, before pricing began to lift meaningfully again.

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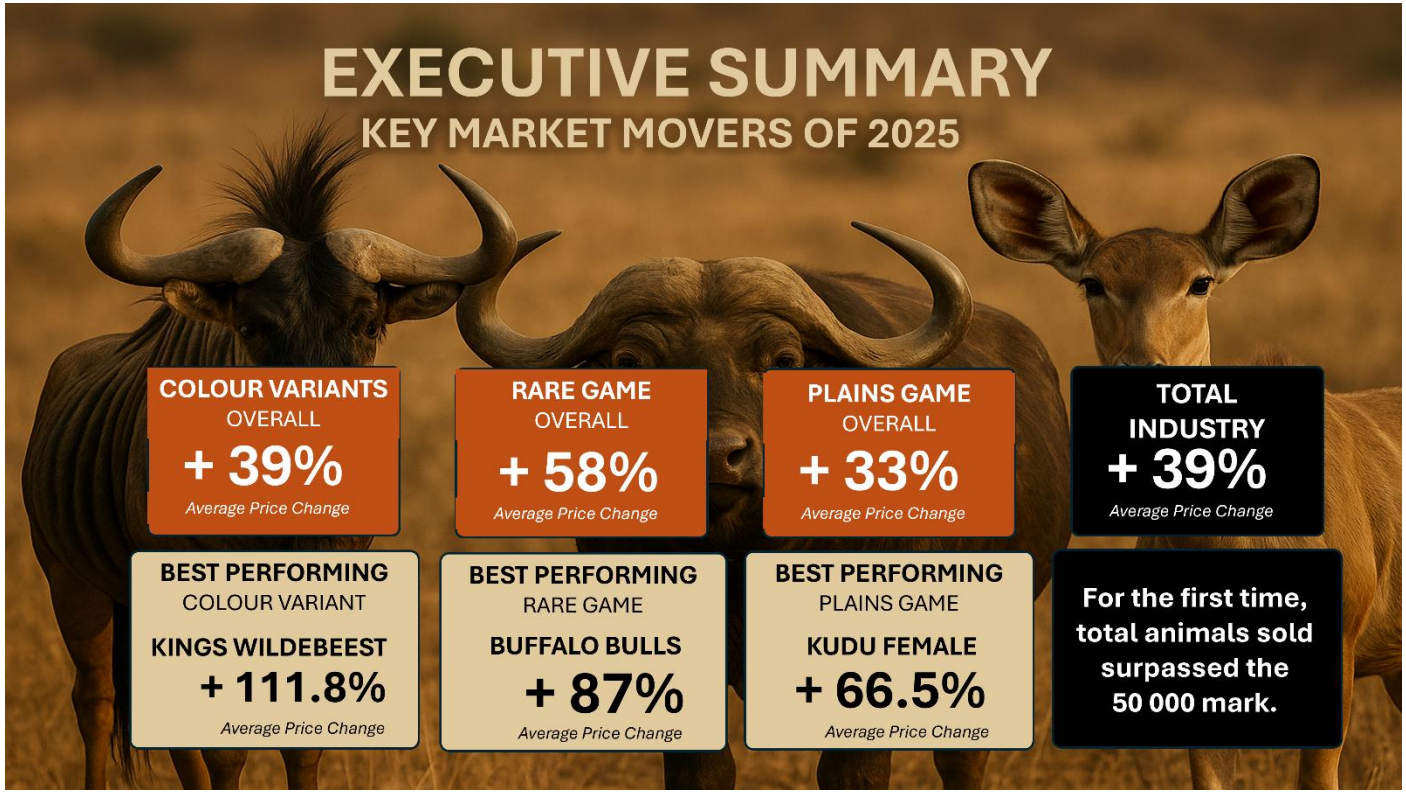
Plains game regained its role as the stabilising backbone, increasing from R65.1m in 2020 to R255.0m in 2023, with average prices moving from R4 032 to R6 814. Colour variants re-entered a growth path, more than doubling from R30.1m in 2021 to R83.2m in 2023, while rare game rebuilt from R122.4m to R250.8m over the same period. This was a more disciplined market, with buyers focusing on proven genetics, ecological fit and realistic earning potential.

The **sixth phase, 2024–2025, is the disciplined growth and repricing era**. Total value moved from R642.1m in 2024 to R897.6m in 2025, a near 40% jump, but quantities were essentially flat, rising only from 49 883 to 50 027 animals. Average prices for the total market climbed from R12 872 to R17 943, reflecting a broad repricing of quality across plains game, colour variants and rare game. This phase confirms that the industry has moved beyond speculative volume expansion into **scarcity-driven value growth**, anchored by genetics, phenotype and the monetisation of tourism and hunting demand. The wildlife sector has firmly recovered from the reset period, with market behaviour once again shaped almost entirely by supply and demand.

The graphic highlights the **overall price increases** achieved across the three major market categories in 2025—**Colour Variants, Rare Game and Plains Game**—each showing a solid rise as the sector continued its strong upward trajectory. Within these categories, the **top-performing movers** stand out clearly: *Kings Wildebeest* driving exceptional growth among colour variants, *buffalo bulls* leading rare game performance, and *female kudu* emerging as the strongest plains-game contributor. These leaders demonstrate where demand and competitive bidding were most concentrated during the year.



Importantly, the uplift was **not limited to the headline species alone**; a broad range of other animals across all three categories also recorded meaningful gains.

Together, this collective performance reflects a market that strengthened across the spectrum, signalling renewed buyer confidence and a well-balanced foundation heading into 2026.

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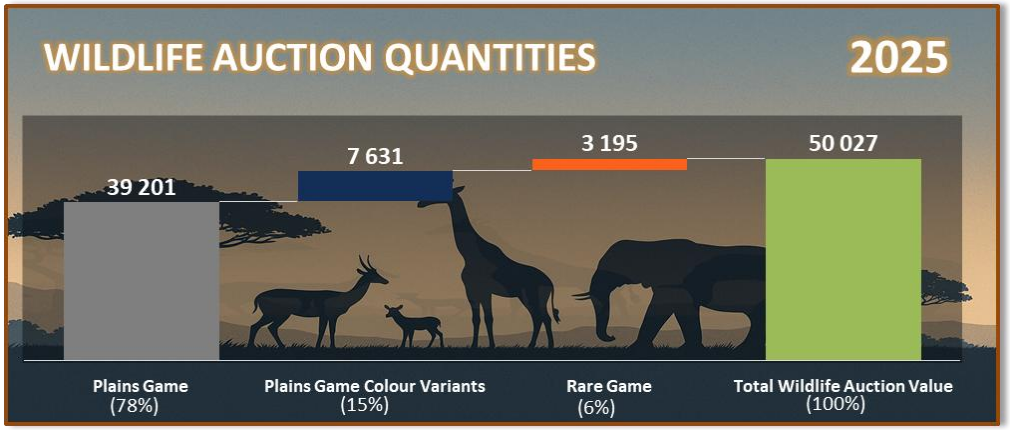
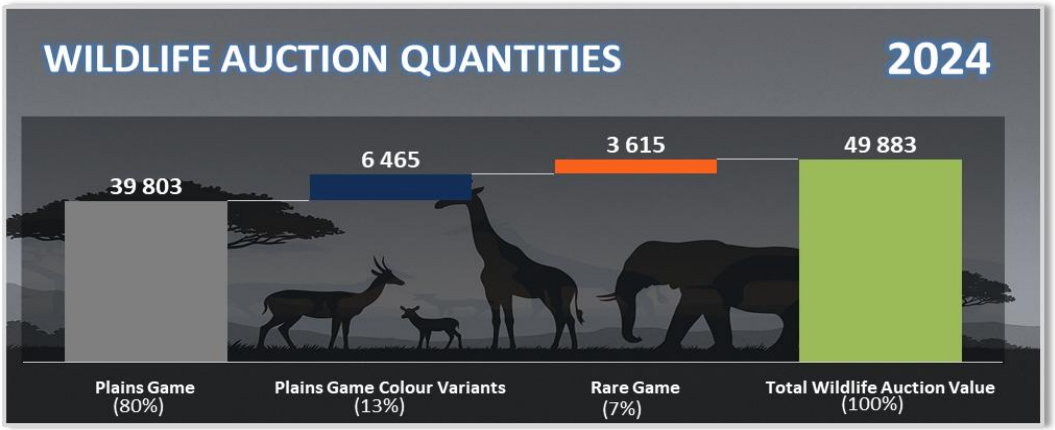
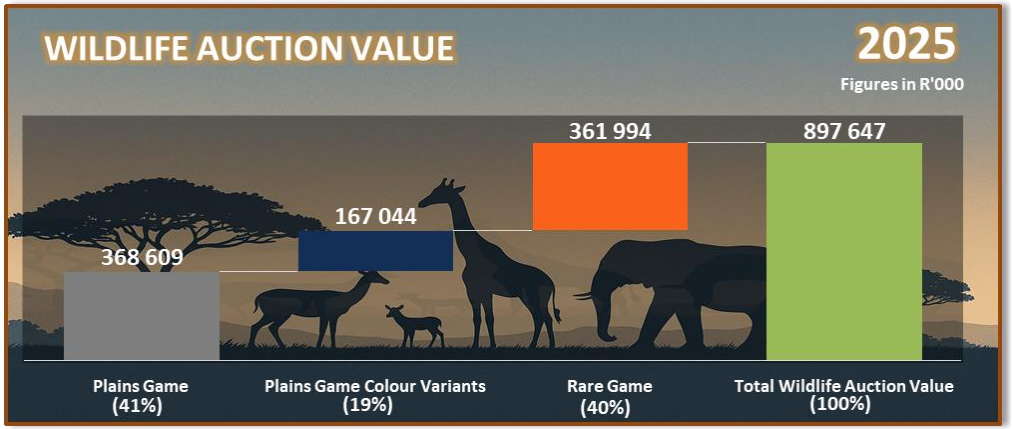
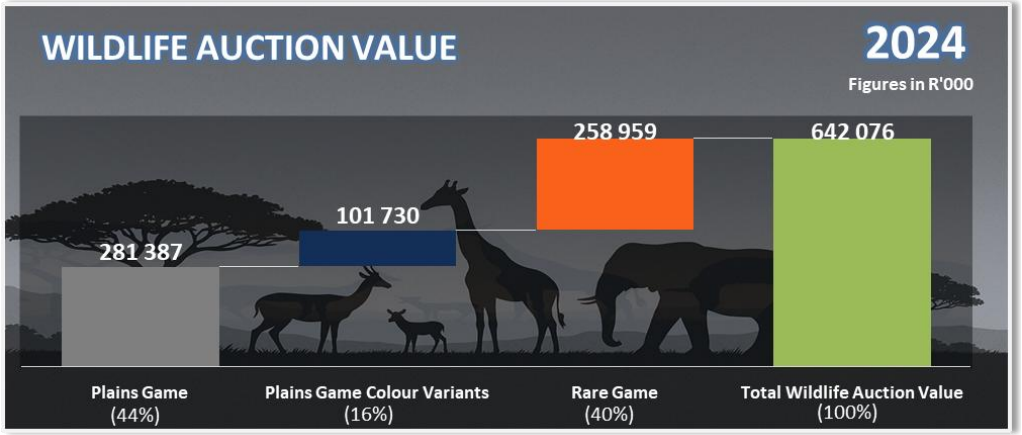




Auction values in 2025 expanded sharply across all components, with Plains Game and Rare Game each contributing over R360 million and jointly accounting for 81% of total market value. Plains Game Colour Variants also strengthened their value share, rising from 16% to 19%, signalling intensifying demand for specialised phenotypes. **In contrast, auction quantities remained broadly stable year-on-year, with Plains Game still dominating volumes at nearly 80%, indicating that value growth outpaced physical throughput.** The combined effect shows a market where **price appreciation—rather than volume expansion—was the primary driver of higher total auction turnover in 2025.**





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Within this long-term arc, **2025 stands out as a decisive re-rating year** rather than a volume story. Total wildlife auction value increased from **R642.1m in 2024 to R897.6m in 2025**, an uplift of **39.8%**, while total quantities inched up by only **0.3%**, from 49 883 to 50 027 animals. The average price per animal for the combined market therefore rose from **R12 872 to R17 943**, a **39.4%** increase that is firmly grounded in improved species mix, stronger competition for top-end animals and the return of international spending power. From a structural perspective, the **balance between the three pillars of the market remains remarkably even in value terms**, but the composition within each pillar has shifted. Plains game contributed **41% of total auction value in 2025** at **R368.6m**, compared with **44% and R281.4m in 2024**. Volumes of plains game actually slipped from **39 803 to 39 201** animals, a **1.5% decline**, yet the average plains-game price rose strongly from **R7 069 to R9 403**, delivering **33.0% price growth**. This underscores how species such as impala, blesbok, zebra, nyala, waterbuck and red hartebeest are no longer treated as low-margin commodities; instead, buyers were prepared to pay premiums for age, horn length, body condition and the eco-tourism value of visually appealing herds.

Plains-game colour variants were the clear acceleration segment. Their share of total value increased from **16% in 2024 to 19% in 2025**, with value rising from **R101.7m to R167.0m**, a **64.2% jump**. Quantities increased from **6 465 to 7 631** animals (**18.0%**), while the average price per variant climbed from **R15 735 to R21 890**, up **39.1%**. This performance confirms that the market has not abandoned colour genetics; it has simply become more selective. Strong results for black, white and saddleback springbok, golden, royal and king wildebeest and high-impact impala variants show that breeders who align phenotype with tourism aesthetics and hunting expectations are capturing outsized returns. A key driver of this increase is the growing role of hunters—particularly international hunters—who now view these animals as an integral part of their hunting plans.

Rare game delivered one of the most important signals of 2025. Total rare-game value advanced from **R258.96m in 2024 to R361.99m in 2025**, an increase of **39.8%**. However, quantities declined from **3 615 to 3 195** animals, a contraction of **11.6%**. The average rare-game price therefore jumped from **R71 635 to R113 300**, an impressive **58.2%** uplift. This pattern is consistent with what individual species tables show: fewer buffalo, sable, roan and tsessebe changing hands, but at meaningfully higher prices, particularly in top horn-length classes and well-documented genetic lines. Rhino, in particular, registered a sharp rise in both value and volumes, reinforcing the narrative that conservation-aligned investment is returning to this category after several cautious years. Rare game has rebounded primarily because leading breeders have re-entered the market, with investment levels reaching their strongest point since 2017. On a blended basis, **the 2025 market therefore achieved almost 40% more turnover on virtually the same number of animals**, confirming that the year was defined by **repricing, quality selection and intensified bidding on scarce lots**. Plains game provided the volume floor and day-to-day liquidity. Colour variants supplied high-margin opportunities where phenotype and tourism value intersect. Rare game re-established its role as a strategic store of value, with buyers clearly prepared to pay for security, horn genetics and long-term breeding options. Looking ahead from this vantage point, the six-phase history and the **2025 vs 2024 step-change** together suggest that the wildlife auction economy has entered a mature, structurally favourable cycle. With total market value now near **R900m**, quantities stable around **50 000 animals** and all three pillars showing robust price growth, the sector is positioned for **disciplined, scarcity-driven expansion into 2026**, provided operators continue to align genetics, habitat management, eco-tourism and hunting demand into diversified, resilient revenue models.

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1

HOW TO READ THIS JOURNAL



This Journal contains more than two decades of species-level price, quantity and value performance. These infographic guides explain **how to interpret the graphs, tables and metrics** used throughout, ensuring clarity for readers of all experience levels.

2

INTERPRETING MULTI-YEAR GRAPHS



Value (Rand Turnover): Shows demand strength and economic contribution.
Quantities: Indicates supply levels, breeding output and market activity.
Average Price: Reveals price cycles, genetic premiums and scarcity effects.

Key Relationship:
↑ Value + ↓ Quantities → **Price-driven growth (scarcity).**
↑ Value + ↑ Quantities → **Market expansion (confidence).**
↓ Value + ↑ Quantities → **Oversupply or demand softening.**

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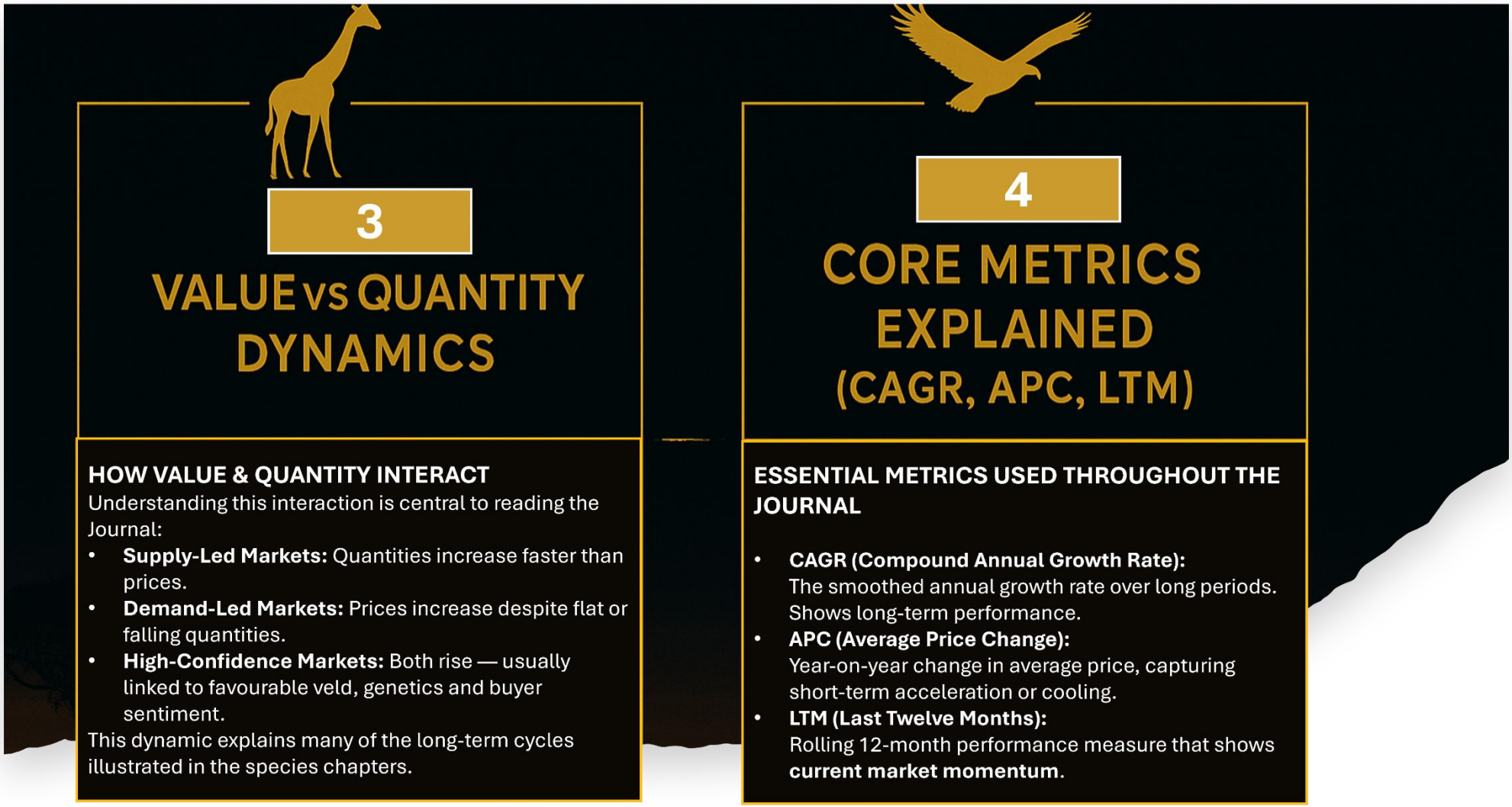

3

VALUE vs QUANTITY DYNAMICS

HOW VALUE & QUANTITY INTERACT

Understanding this interaction is central to reading the Journal:

- **Supply-Led Markets:** Quantities increase faster than prices.
- **Demand-Led Markets:** Prices increase despite flat or falling quantities.
- **High-Confidence Markets:** Both rise — usually linked to favourable veld, genetics and buyer sentiment.

This dynamic explains many of the long-term cycles illustrated in the species chapters.

4

CORE METRICS EXPLAINED (CAGR, APC, LTM)

ESSENTIAL METRICS USED THROUGHOUT THE JOURNAL

- **CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate):** The smoothed annual growth rate over long periods. Shows long-term performance.
- **APC (Average Price Change):** Year-on-year change in average price, capturing short-term acceleration or cooling.
- **LTM (Last Twelve Months):** Rolling 12-month performance measure that shows **current market momentum**.

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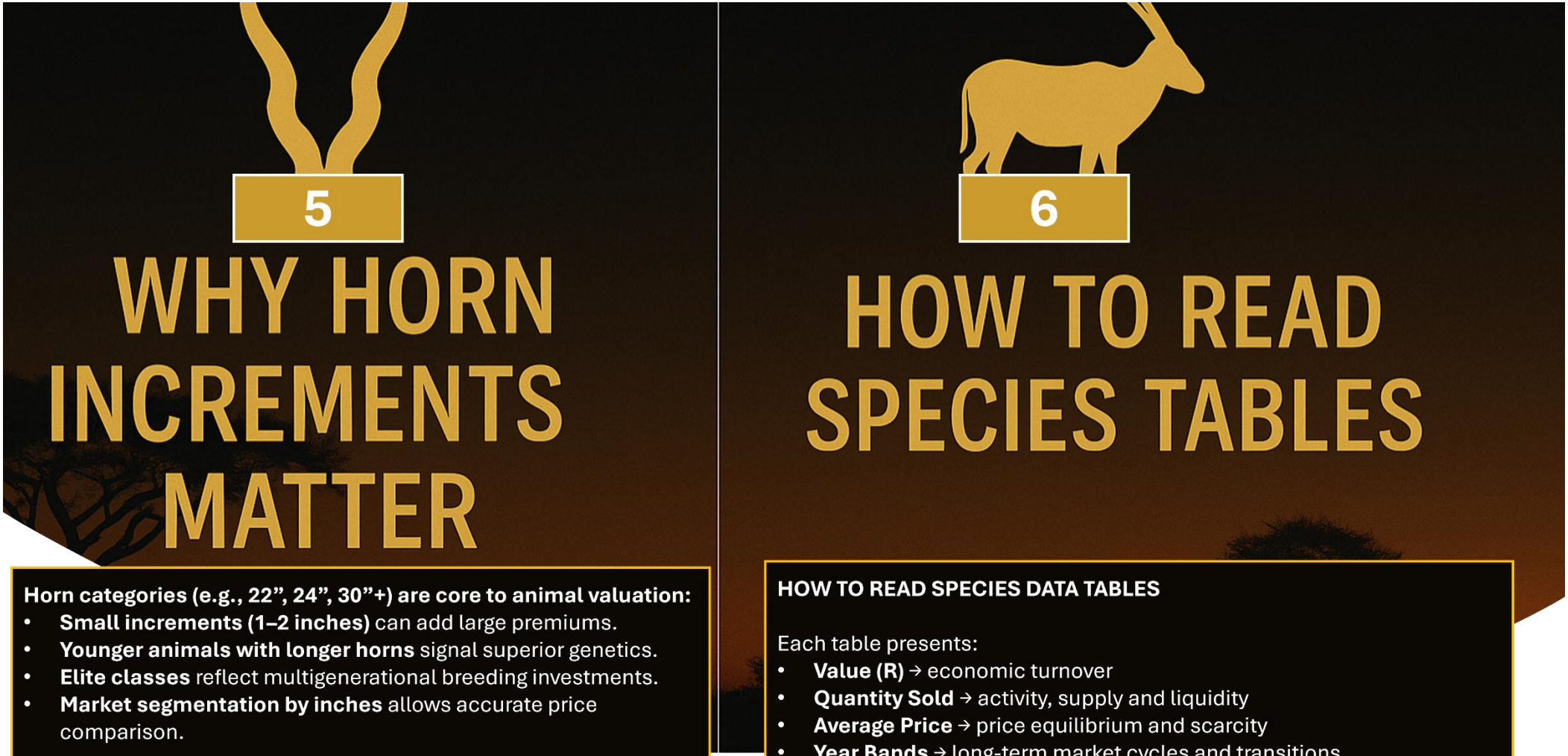

Horn categories (e.g., 22", 24", 30"+) are core to animal valuation:

- **Small increments (1–2 inches)** can add large premiums.
- **Younger animals with longer horns** signal superior genetics.
- **Elite classes** reflect multigenerational breeding investments.
- **Market segmentation by inches** allows accurate price comparison.

These increments are the backbone of breeding economics and trophy valuation.

HOW TO READ SPECIES DATA TABLES

Each table presents:

- **Value (R)** → economic turnover
- **Quantity Sold** → activity, supply and liquidity
- **Average Price** → price equilibrium and scarcity
- **Year Bands** → long-term market cycles and transitions

Multi-year tables help identify decades of behaviour, not just annual anomalies.

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HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

TURNING DATA INTO DECISIONS

You can use this Journal to:

- Benchmark your species performance
- Set realistic auction expectations
- Identify high-growth species
- Understand genetic and price cycles
- Align breeding strategy with market trends
- Evaluate investment risk vs reward
- Build scientifically-grounded herd plans

This Journal is designed as a **strategic, analytical and operational** reference for breeders, investors, and professionals across the wildlife economy.

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Why is data and data analytics so important for industry?

South Africa's wildlife economy has evolved from a largely intuition-based sector into one increasingly driven by science, economics and information systems. Whether it's breeding rare genetics, managing a commercial game farm, or investing in wildlife as an asset class, **data is now the single most important competitive advantage**. It guides decisions that were once made by gut-feel—pricing, breeding, stocking, land carrying capacity, species selection, genetic improvement, mortality prevention and even legal compliance. The reserves, breeders and investors who win in this industry are the ones who analyse faster, see earlier and act smarter.

Market Intelligence and Pricing Trends



The South African wildlife trade—ranging from live auctions to private sales and hunting packages—**moves billions of rands through the economy each year**. Yet prices can **swing dramatically** with drought, genetics, supply levels or shifts in international hunting demand. **This is where data becomes transformative.** By aggregating and analysing auction results, buyer demographics, seasonal performance and species demand cycles, **analytics uncovers deep market patterns** that would otherwise remain invisible.

Buffalo, sable and roan experienced explosive price escalations in the early 2010s before normalising as supply and structured breeding programs expanded. **Plains game prices remain more stable**, but still show **subtle seasonal fluctuations** linked to veld condition and estate restocking cycles. **Trophy markets consistently peak** in seasons following strong international hunting demand, creating predictable revenue surges for well-prepared estates.

Instead of simply reacting to market noise, **breeders, farmers and investors can now forecast price direction**, plan **optimal sales windows** and **align breeding cycles with expected demand**, directly improving profitability and reducing risk. In an industry shaped by uncertainty, **data becomes one of the most powerful competitive advantages** available.

Genetic and Breeding Optimization

Genetics has become one of the most powerful currencies in modern wildlife management, reshaping how breeders think about herd structure, long-term value and the predictability of outcomes. What was once left to chance, instinct and decades of intuition is now guided by **hard scientific evidence**. High-precision records—tracking **horn-length curves, parentage, colour variants, fertility performance, growth rates and weaning weights**—allow breeders to forecast outcomes with a level of certainty the industry could only dream of a generation ago.

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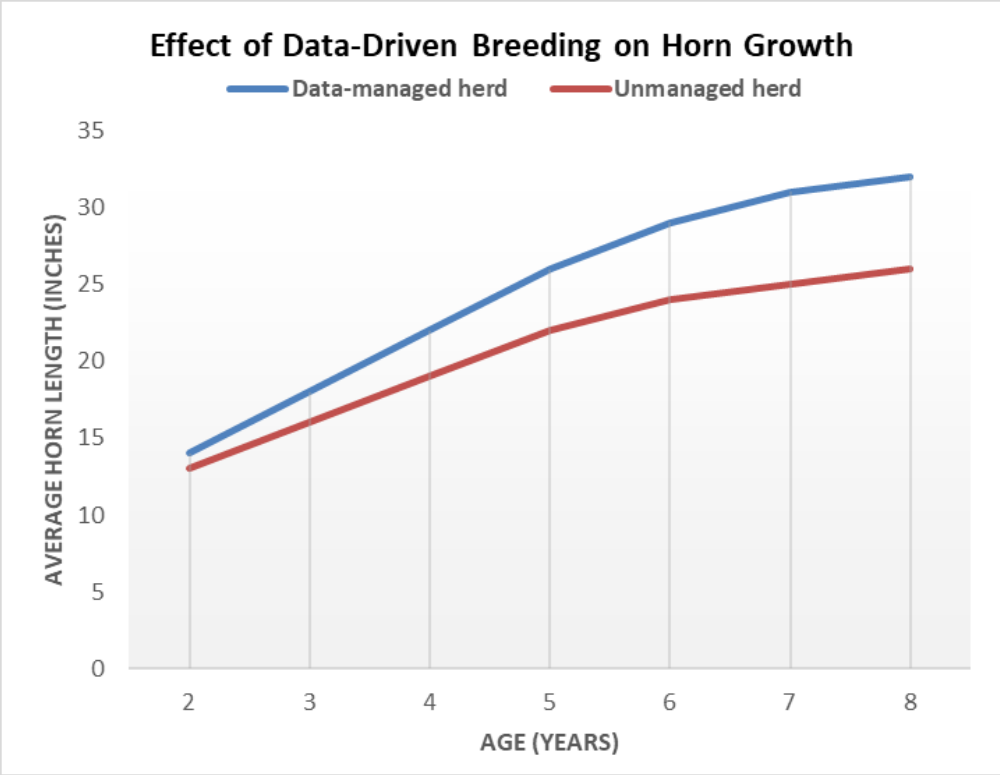
Sophisticated data platforms such as **WRSA's national registry**, **Stud Game Breeders' records** and emerging **private genomic databases** have become the industry's genetic compass. They reveal **lineages with exceptional growth potential**, highlight bloodlines that consistently produce **structurally superior offspring** and flag **inbreeding risks** long before they threaten herd health or market value. Instead of selecting animals based purely on appearance or reputation, breeders now make decisions rooted in **multi-year, evidence-based genetic insight**, giving them a deeper understanding of which traits are genuinely heritable and which are environmentally influenced.

This evolution has been accelerated by the rise of **predictive breeding algorithms**, capable of modelling thousands of potential pairings to estimate the probability of producing offspring with target characteristics—whether it be **exceptional horn length**, **rare colour morphs or variants**, **enhanced body condition**, or **greater disease resilience**. For many breeders, these tools are no longer optional; they shape pairing strategies, seasonal planning and long-term investment decisions with remarkable precision.

The practical gains are undeniable. **Data-backed breeding programs have improved conception rates by 10–20%**, sharply reducing the losses associated with missed cycles and uneven seasonal breeding. Higher fertility translates directly into **improved revenue per hectare**, enhanced herd turnover and more efficient utilisation of grazing resources. Calves from data-managed herds often show **stronger early-life growth**, which compounds into greater adult size, better trophy potential and higher market valuations.



Industry records, particularly those drawn from **WRSA stud datasets** and leading breeders, reveal a consistent pattern: **herds managed with genetic and performance data outperform unmanaged groups**—not only in average horn growth, but in structural symmetry, growth consistency and overall herd uniformity. This creates a breeding environment where **risk is reduced, predictability increases** and long-term value becomes far more stable.

In a wildlife economy where margins are tight and environmental conditions increasingly volatile, **genetics is no longer a side consideration—it is a strategic asset, a competitive advantage and the foundation upon which sustainable, future-proof wildlife breeding is being built**.

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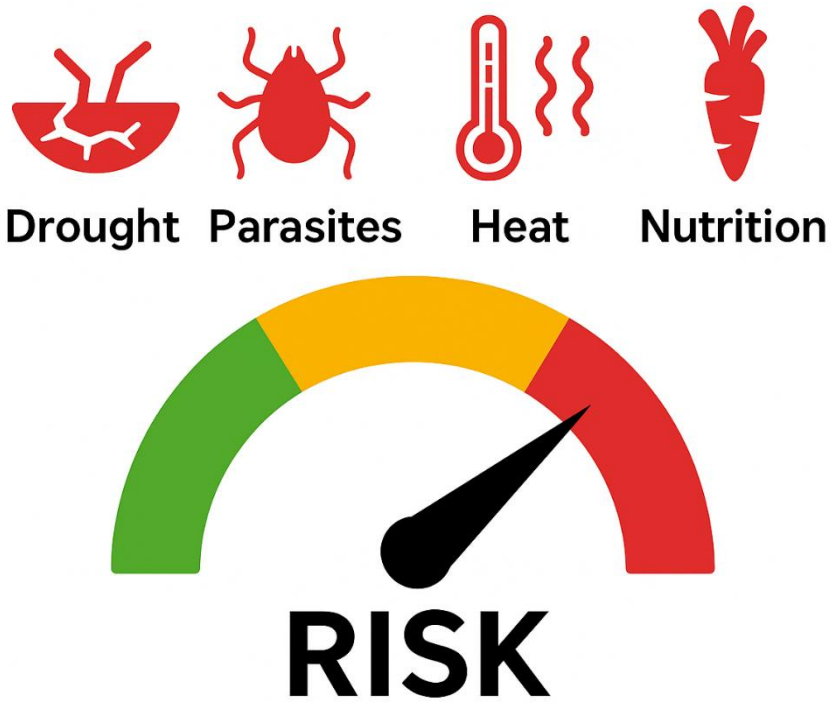
Animal Health and Mortality Risk

In modern wildlife management, **animal health has become inseparable from data intelligence**. The days of waiting for visual symptoms or relying solely on field intuition are fading; today's leading game farmers, breeders and reserves use **integrated health and environmental datasets** to safeguard their animals long before problems appear. By combining **GPS movement patterns**, **veterinary records**, **grazing behaviour**, **nutritional indicators** and **real-time climate conditions**, managers can detect subtle stress signals that are invisible to the eye but unmistakable in the data.

For example, animals under **heat stress** often reduce movement long before panting or lethargy becomes detectable. Similarly, early-stage **drought impact** shows up in grazing patterns, hydration levels and micro-shifts in herd distribution days or even weeks before any deterioration is visible on the veld. **Analytics transforms these weak signals into actionable alerts**, enabling game managers to adjust water access, modify feeding regimes, rotate camps, or intervene medically—**preventing health crises instead of reacting to them**.

These datasets also feed into **mortality-risk models**, which draw on historical trends, disease prevalence, rainfall patterns, parasite loads, veld condition and species susceptibility to predict when and where losses are most likely to occur. This does more than protect wildlife—it allows farmers and estate owners to **forecast insurance costs**, set aside the correct medical reserves and adjust stocking densities to avoid seasonal mortality spikes. The ability to quantify risk with this level of precision marks a significant shift: wildlife operations can finally move from *guesswork* to **proactive risk management**.



The results speak for themselves. **Early-warning health models have been shown to reduce preventable deaths by up to 30%**, particularly in high-value species that are sensitive to nutrition, parasites or climatic extremes—such as **nyala**, **sable**, **roan** and certain specialised breeding lines. Preventing the loss of even a single high-value animal can offset the cost of entire monitoring systems, making health analytics not only a welfare consideration but a **strategic economic advantage**.

In a fluctuating climate where heatwaves, drought cycles and disease vectors are intensifying, **data-driven health intelligence is becoming one of the most critical tools in sustainable wildlife management**.

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Compliance and Traceability

In the modern wildlife economy, **compliance is no longer just a regulatory requirement—it is a critical pillar of credibility, market access and long-term sustainability**. South Africa's wildlife sector operates within a complex legal environment shaped by **TOPS (Threatened or Protected Species) regulations**, **CITES permits** for international movement, provincial ordinances and a host of conservation frameworks designed to protect biodiversity. In this landscape, transparency and traceability have become essential tools, ensuring that every animal's origins, movements and ownership history can be verified with absolute confidence.

Traditional paper-based systems once made compliance slow and vulnerable to human error, but the industry has rapidly transitioned to **robust digital recordkeeping**. These systems capture detailed information on each animal—its **microchip ID**, breeding lineage, birth location, movement history, owner transfers and permit status—creating a continuous, auditable trail. For breeders and farm owners, this not only reduces administrative friction but ensures that **every transaction meets regulatory requirements**, even as laws evolve.

For authorities and conservation bodies, digital traceability provides a level of oversight that was impossible a decade ago. **Instant access to movement records**, **automated permit generation** and **real-time updates** streamline compliance reporting to provincial conservation departments, dramatically reducing delays and minimizing the risk of non-compliance. This heightened transparency does more than satisfy legal demands—it strengthens trust in the industry. Buyers, investors and international stakeholders consistently place higher value on animals and estates with clean, verifiable histories. In export markets especially, **traceability has become synonymous with legitimacy**.

The next evolution in this space is already unfolding. **Blockchain-based traceability systems** and enhanced **microchip tagging** technologies are emerging, offering the potential for **immutable, tamper-proof "digital passports"** for high-value wildlife. These systems record each event—birth, sale, transport, medical treatment or export—onto a secure chain that cannot be altered or erased. For top-tier species such as sable, buffalo and roan, this could be transformative. It promises to **eliminate fraudulent permits**, prevent illegal trade manipulations and create export certificates that international regulators consider indisputable.

The implications for the industry are profound. Enhanced traceability not only protects animal welfare and genetic integrity—it **elevates the entire value chain**, aligning South Africa's wildlife economy with global standards of transparency, environmental responsibility and ethical trade. In a world increasingly concerned about provenance and conservation impact, **compliance and traceability have become strategic assets**, driving both market confidence and international competitiveness.

Financial Performance and Sustainability

In today's wildlife economy, **financial performance is inseparable from biological performance**. The most successful estates and breeding operations are those that understand not only how their animals are growing and reproducing, but how these biological outcomes translate directly into **profitability**, **land efficiency** and **long-term sustainability**. Financial analytics now allow breeders, farm owners and investors to connect the dots between **birth rates, growth curves, weaning success, mortality patterns, genetic value and overall herd structure** and overlay this with detailed cost data across **feed, veterinary care, labour, transport, habitat maintenance and land utilisation**.

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This integration creates a full picture of **species-level ROI**, revealing exactly which animals generate economic value and which quietly drain resources. A species that appears visually impressive may have poor reproduction rates, high supplementary-feed requirements or elevated disease sensitivity—turning it into a financial liability. Conversely, a species with consistent birth rates, strong natural survival and low veterinary intervention can become a **profit stabiliser** for the entire operation. By analysing these patterns, managers can determine the **true economic carrying capacity** of the land, ensuring stocking levels and species composition are grounded in reality, not assumptions.



The power of financial analytics becomes even clearer through **predictive financial modelling**, which enables operations to simulate future scenarios aligned with both conservation goals and commercial objectives. A reserve may, for example, maintain a **high-value breeding herd**—buffalo, sable, roan or niche genetic lines—while balancing land use with lower-maintenance grazing species that stabilise cash flow and veld condition. With accurate data, managers can forecast how changes in rainfall, feed availability, predator presence, or market prices will affect profitability months or even years ahead.

What separates data-driven estates from traditional ones is their ability to **time decisions with precision**. Sales are aligned to seasonal price peaks, breeding cycles to optimal veld conditions and stocking densities to predicted forage availability. These refinements might seem subtle, but the cumulative effect is substantial:

Farms using integrated data dashboards consistently report 15–25% better cost-to-revenue ratios, driven by improved timing, reduced wastage, better herd turnover control and fewer financially destructive surprises. In an industry often shaped by unpredictable conditions—from droughts to market swings—this level of foresight becomes a competitive edge.

Ultimately, financial analytics do more than increase profit. They create a management style that is **intentional, sustainable and resilient**, ensuring wildlife enterprises remain viable in the long term while protecting the ecological integrity of the land. In this sense, **data becomes both an economic and conservation tool**, aligning financial health with environmental stewardship.

Investment and Risk Analysis

As wildlife assets continue to gain recognition as **legitimate alternative investments**, the industry has entered a new era where traditional intuition is no longer enough. High-value species, specialist genetics and diversified herds now form part of broader portfolios for private investors, institutional funders and development finance partners. Yet these assets remain **highly sensitive** to external factors, including **market cycles, drought variability, regulatory changes, export restrictions and biological volatility**. For investors, the challenge is no longer only in acquiring quality animals—it is in understanding and managing the **complex risk landscape** that surrounds them.

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This is where **data analytics fundamentally reshapes investment confidence**. By linking historical auction performance, rainfall cycles, veld carrying capacity, mortality trends and species-specific growth data, analytics tools help quantify what was once unpredictable. Investors and breeders can model **asset liquidity** (how quickly animals can be sold without price erosion), **insurance exposure** and **long-term yield scenarios** based on realistic environmental and market conditions. In practical terms, these models distinguish between species that offer **stable, recurring returns** and those that introduce **higher volatility but greater upside potential**.



Market-risk dashboards add yet another layer of intelligence. These systems simulate how changes in **rainfall patterns**, **feed costs**, **regulatory shifts** or **international demand** might influence valuations over 3-, 5- or 10-year periods. For funders, insurers and private investors, this level of foresight is transformative. It moves wildlife investment from a perception of speculation to an **evidence-based asset class**, where risk can be priced, mitigated and justified with clarity. With forward-looking data in hand, operators can time herd expansions, adjust stocking densities, hedge against climatic cycles and plan for optimal sales windows with far greater accuracy.

The impact of reliable data is profound. **Access to accurate historical market and rainfall datasets can reduce investment-volatility forecasts by as much as 40%**, dramatically improving the willingness of banks, financiers and development funds to support wildlife-based enterprises. When volatility decreases, the cost of capital follows, enabling landowners to reinvest in better genetics, improved habitat management and long-term ecological sustainability.

In this sense, data does far more than guide decisions—it **unlocks capital**, attracts institutional credibility and positions wildlife assets as **mature, finance-ready instruments** within the broader investment ecosystem. The fusion of ecological intelligence and financial modelling is rapidly turning wildlife management into one of the most dynamic and professionally structured asset classes within the agricultural and environmental sectors.

In South Africa's evolving wildlife economy, **data is the bridge between ecological integrity and commercial viability**. It empowers breeders, reserve owners and investors to make precise, defensible and sustainable decisions—turning nature-based industries into professionally managed, analytically guided enterprises.

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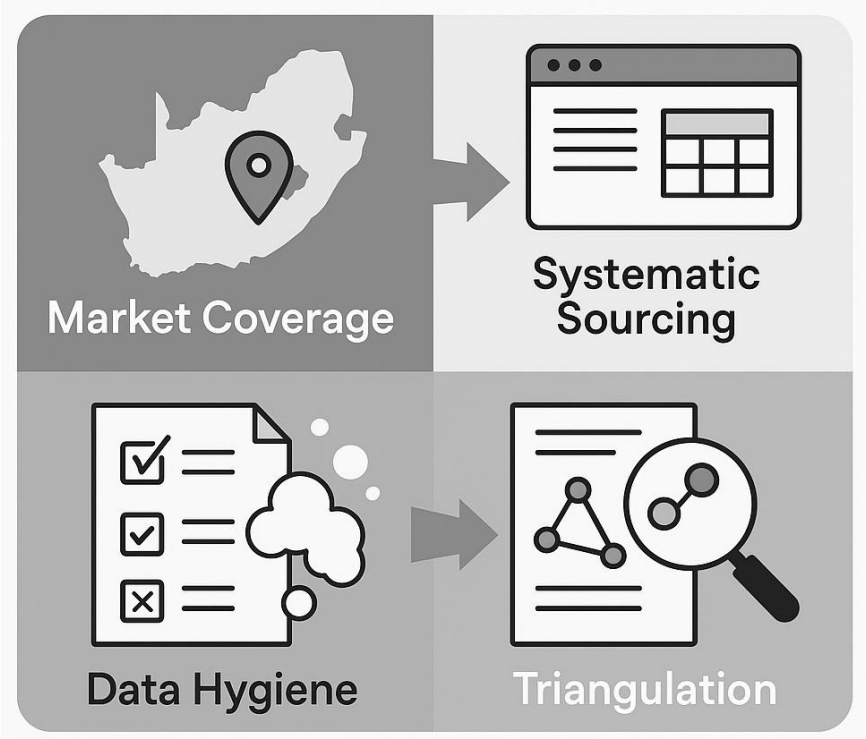
AWA Wildlife Auction Data – Collection & Analytics Overview

At the heart of South Africa's wildlife economy lies a fast-moving and often fragmented auction landscape — a space where prices, volumes and market sentiment shift rapidly across provinces, seasons and species. In this environment, **AWA has become one of the few organisations providing a consolidated, high-integrity view of the formal wildlife market**, transforming scattered auction information into a reliable national dataset that the industry can trust.

1. The process begins with **deep market coverage**. South Africa hosts numerous wildlife auctions each year, both physical and online, run by different auction houses, agents and regional groups. Because no single platform captures them all, forming an accurate market picture requires wide-angle sourcing. AWA's system compiles what we estimate to be **95% of all formal wildlife auction activity by both value and volume**, giving breeders, investors and conservation stakeholders an unusually complete view of national market behaviour.
2. From here, AWA applies a **systematic sourcing method**. Catalogues, auction sheets, livestream results and historical listings are gathered from auction-house websites, industry portals and public market feeds. Every result is captured, processed and reconciled against other known events to ensure each auction is represented once — not duplicated or fragmented across different listings. A full collection and reconciliation cycle typically spans **4 to 6 weeks per reporting period**, ensuring datasets are both timely and dependable.
3. With this raw information in hand, the focus shifts to **data hygiene** — one of the most critical steps in the analytics pipeline. Species names, variants, conditions, lot structures, genetic descriptors and fee formats are all standardised so that thousands of unique entries become comparable and analytically meaningful. Cross-listed animals and duplicate lots are carefully removed. Outliers — such as unusually high or low prices — are flagged for manual verification before they enter the final dataset. This meticulous cleaning process ensures that **AWA's dataset is not only large, but accurate, consistent and professionally structured**.
4. Finally, where gaps exist, AWA applies **triangulation**. This involves cross-checking against publicly released confirmations, breeder announcements, buyer or seller disclosures and multi-year historical price patterns. The goal is simple: to ensure every reporting period reflects the most **representative and complete picture** of the South African wildlife auction environment. Through this approach, AWA has become a **trusted source of market truth** in an industry where transparency has traditionally been limited.



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What the analytics deliver

Once consolidated, the dataset powers a suite of analytics that help the industry understand market behaviour, compare performance and plan strategically. First, **market tracking** provides detailed insight into price movements, volume changes and species-level demand trends across regions, seasons, seller types and auction formats. Whether a breeder wants to understand sable demand dynamics in Limpopo or how online auctions are shaping blue wildebeest prices, the dataset reveals patterns that would otherwise remain hidden.

Second, **benchmarking tools** allow users to measure performance against the broader market. AWA distinguishes between major industry participants and the broader seller universe, providing clarity on whether certain breeders are commanding premiums due to genetics, horn measurement histories, reputation, or regional demand. This helps landowners understand where they sit competitively — and what premium or discount applies to their herds based on evidence, not speculation.

Third, **forecasting models** translate historical patterns into forward-looking pricing expectations. These short- and medium-term projections help breeders and estate owners plan budgets, earmark stock for upcoming auctions, set minimum reserves and align breeding timing with anticipated market conditions. By grounding planning in verified data, AWA equips operations with **clear, data-anchored decision pathways**.

Who uses AWA analytics (and why)

AWA's consolidated auction intelligence has become a **critical reference point across South Africa's wildlife value chain**, serving professionals who require neutral, evidence-based insight rather than anecdotal assumptions. Because the dataset reflects the vast majority of formal auction activity, its use extends far beyond breeders and sellers — reaching into legal, financial, policy and international pricing arenas.



One of the most significant user groups is the **legal sector**, particularly courts and practitioners involved in **divorces, liquidations and business-rescue matters**. Wildlife assets are notoriously difficult to value because prices fluctuate seasonally and vary widely by genetics, province, condition and auction format. AWA provides **independent, defensible valuation benchmarks**, allowing attorneys and liquidators to justify fair values with confidence. In business-rescue and liquidation environments, where asset disposals must pass scrutiny from creditors, courts and practitioners, the ability to demonstrate **real-world price discovery** becomes essential — and AWA's time-stamped data fills this gap with precision.

The dataset has also become a strategic tool for **industry bodies such as WRSA**, who require credible, neutral evidence when advising on policy, mediating disputes or guiding members on market behaviour. AWA's multi-year time series acts as a **fact base** in an industry that has historically depended on fragmented or anecdotal information.

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In policy forums and stakeholder engagements, the ability to reference unbiased market data strengthens the sector's voice and supports more transparent decision-making.

Another major user group includes **investment firms, insurers, banks and development lenders**. As wildlife assets increasingly enter the world of alternative investment, funders require tools that quantify **risk, liquidity and return potential**. AWA enables them to model volatility, test assumptions, assess borrower risk profiles and establish fair premium levels for insurance or wildlife-backed financing. Because financial institutions rely on objective evidence, AWA's analytics help **unlock capital**, improve due diligence quality and bring greater confidence to wildlife-based funding structures.

The influence of AWA's data extends even into the **professional hunting and outfitting sector**, particularly among **PHASA-aligned outfitters** who set international pricing packages. These operators use AWA's yearly trends and species-level pricing outlooks to calibrate next-season package rates for overseas clients. Those who incorporated the **2024 outlook into their 2025 price setting** generally increased their package rates appropriately — resulting in **stronger margins**, improved sustainability of their operations and more accurate budgeting for **auction restocking**. Looking ahead, it is essential that operators factor ***2025 realised prices*** into all **2026 package structures** — failing to do so risks *compressed margins*, weakened cashflows and misaligned restocking budgets. Because the trophy-hunting economy is global, reliable pricing guidance helps maintain South Africa's competitiveness and ensures hunting packages remain aligned with real market conditions.

Across legal, financial, policy and commercial landscapes, the common thread is this: **AWA turns complexity into clarity**. By delivering transparent, evidence-based, industry-wide analytics, it empowers every segment of the wildlife economy to make smarter, fairer and more strategic decisions.

In a proliferating auction environment, clean, reconciled data converts noise into actionable market signals—supporting better legal outcomes, stronger financing cases and more profitable, sustainable wildlife operations. AWA considers its embedded datasets to reflect at least 98% of the South African auction market

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Wildlife Industry – Fast, Fascinating Facts **2025**

The South African wildlife economy is a dynamic, evolving marketplace where **auctions, private sales and international hunting demand intersect** to shape species values and long-term investment behaviour. When examining how wildlife actually trades hands across the country, a clear pattern emerges: **approximately 60% of economic value flows through formal auctions**, while the remaining **40% occurs through private, out-of-hand sales**. This split, confirmed through cross-referencing PHASA export trends, research papers and AWA's auction data, reveals two distinct but complementary trading channels.



Private transactions — typically direct farm-to-farm or breeder-to-hunter deals — tend to centre around **plains game species such as impala, blesbok, kudu and blue wildebeest**. These animals move in higher volumes, often quietly and informally and usually without public price disclosure. While the individual transaction values are lower, the consistency and scale of these sales make plains game the **fluid, circulatory system** of the broader wildlife economy.

By contrast, formal auctions concentrate the **high-value segment** of the market. This is where **rare species, elite genetics and investment-grade breeding stock** enter the spotlight. Whether live, online or hybrid, auctions attract competitive bidding and provide transparent pricing — becoming the **industry's most reliable benchmark** for tracking real-time market direction, genetic premiums and breeder reputations. Buffalo, sable, roan and specialised genetic lines typically appear here, making auctions the **price-discovery engine** of the industry.

One of the most fascinating dimensions of the wildlife trade is the rise of **colour variants**, which have evolved from novelty items into mainstream offerings on international hunting packages. Over the past two decades, several new variants have entered the market:

- **Impala: Black (2002) · Saddleback (2007) · White & White-flank (2014) · Royal (2015) · Dappled (2022)**
- **Wildebeest / Gnu: Golden (2007) · Kings (2012) · Royal & Ghost (2019) · Seretsi (2023)**
- **Other notable variants: Golden Gemsbok (2011) · Blue Springbok (2015)**

What began as isolated curiosities has transitioned into full commercial acceptance. Variants are now considered **standard components** of PHASA-aligned international hunting packages, with pricing reflecting **improved provenance, welfare standards and genetic stewardship**. They are no longer dismissed as "freak" species; instead, they have become **value-adding style preferences**, similar to varietals in livestock or brand lines in luxury goods.

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A striking market signal of this maturation is the **price convergence between golden wildebeest and common blue wildebeest**, where cows and bulls now trade at near-parity. This shift reflects **stable genetics, established supply chains and broad buyer acceptance** — a strong indicator that colour variants have moved from speculation to mainstream utility.

Recent demand tailwinds have reinforced this trend. **Digital and hybrid auctions expanded buyer access**, creating broader competition. A **weaker rand boosted USD/EUR purchasing power**, attracting stronger international participation. Meanwhile, **outfitters pre-booked packages earlier** to lock in client pricing, creating forward demand across species. On the seller side, a clear **playbook for success** has emerged. **Provenance wins**: microchip verification, pedigrees, horn-measurement histories and conception-rate performance consistently attract price premiums. **Smart bundling strategies** — pairing variants with plains game lots — improve clearance rates and raise blended margins. And because genetic over-concentration can damage long-term value, astute breeders manage risk by **rotating sires, protecting bloodline diversity and using eye-catching variants as brand-building assets** rather than over-leveraged revenue pillars.

Across all these dynamics, the wildlife market remains one of the most **complex, fast-moving and fascinating investment ecosystems** in South Africa — where biology, economics and buyer psychology meet in a uniquely interconnected way.

"The wildlife market continues to offer meaningful growth for breeders who focus on well-structured, field-proven animals with strong genetics and naturally hardy traits. Demand for quality plains game remains both stable and highly liquid, providing a dependable foundation for the broader industry. Looking ahead, true price premiums will be driven less by novelty and far more by proven bloodlines, physical condition and the consistency of after-sale support — signalling a shift toward long-term value over short-term fashion."

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Key Industry News — 2025 Wildlife Market

The 2024 season marked a modern high point for the wildlife market and 2025 has now confirmed the sector's transition into a **broad, price-led expansion phase**. The data shows that the industry has moved decisively beyond the post-COVID rebuild and is now operating with deeper demand, more selective supply and far firmer pricing across most major categories.

- After the 2017–2020 reset, the market delivered four consecutive years of growth from 2021 through 2024, with the early years driven primarily by **volume recovery** and the later years—especially 2023 and 2024—powered by rising prices. In **2025**, this pattern consolidated into a fully price-dominated cycle: many species recorded some of their strongest percentage increases in years, even as total volumes stabilised.
- Since early 2021, prices have climbed steadily across both plains and rare species, with multiple new highs registered in 2024 and further uplift carried into **2025's rare-game and plains-game categories**. Demand remains strongest in the *core plains-game lines*—Impala, Blesbok, Blue Wildebeest, Waterbuck and Springbok—where buyers rely on veld-adapted, commercially versatile species. These are also the categories where percentage price gains have been the most consistent and broad-based in 2025.
- Rising interest in venison production continues to add a second, dependable layer of demand beneath the hunting and breeding markets. This structural trend is materially increasing clearances for zebra and giraffe specifically and is contributing to a firmer floor under plains-game prices.
- **Buffalo** again dominated rare-game value contribution in 2025, accounting for **23.69%** of total rare-game sales of **R212.6m**. Prices lifted sharply for both bulls and cows, with bulls recording the most aggressive demand due to their horn genetics and prestige-line scarcity. Sable, Roan and other high-value species continued to show strong price resilience, reaffirming the recovery of the premium tier.
- Among plains game, **Impala remained the volume anchor**, contributing roughly **R85m of total 2025 sales value representing 11 952 animals** within the plains-game segment, with firm pricing and moderate supply contraction. **Kudu, Waterbuck, Nyala and Springbok** all posted healthy price gains, supported by tightening availability and the industry's renewed interest in strong veld performers. Notably, kudu supply dropped meaningfully year-on-year, triggering a visible price escalation—especially for cows—driven by scarcity. This aligns with the broader 2025 pattern of **tight supply creating pricing power**.
- From February to October 2025, AWA recorded a pronounced surge in buyer enquiries alongside double-digit revenue uplift across bi-monthly auctions. Bidder depth increased meaningfully and clearance rates improved. The buyer base is broader than at any time since 2016, with many new entrants who carry *no memory of the 2014–2018 boom* shaping marginal prices with a strong preference for **data-backed genetics** and transparent record-keeping.
- Overall, 2025 shows an industry that has shifted firmly out of a high-volume recovery period and into a sustained **price-led expansion cycle**. Sellers releasing strategically and providing comprehensive documentation are achieving the strongest outcomes, while buyers who plan ahead—or secure animals through structured agreements—are protecting value in a tightening market.

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Industry **Growth** Rates

The table below presents a structured view of how broader economic conditions intersect with performance trends in the wildlife auction sector. By aligning macroeconomic indicators with shifts in game-industry activity, it provides a high-level perspective on how external forces shape market behaviour over time.

Year	SA Inflation Rate	SA GDP Growth Rate	Total Game Industry Auction Value Growth	Rare Game Auction Growth	Plains Game Auction Growth	Plains Game Colour Variants Auction Growth
2021	4.62%	4.96%	58.61%	31.35%	95.03%	133.58%
2022	7.04%	1.91%	33.99%	22.60%	44.67%	49.78%
2023	6.00%	0.70%	38.34%	27.28%	38.93%	84.19%
2024	4.40%	1.10%	9.02%	3.25%	10.35%	22.32%
2025	3.20%	0.80%	39.80%	39.79%	31.00%	64.20%

Year	SA Inflation Rate	SA GDP Growth Rate	Total Game Average Prices Growth	Rare Game Auction Prices Growth	Plains Game Auction Prices Growth	Plains Game Colour Variants Auction Prices Growth
2021	4.62%	4.96%	2.09%	-4.93%	23.32%	53.93%
2022	7.04%	1.91%	6.03%	60.56%	9.73%	14.64%
2023	6.00%	0.70%	20.02%	-0.79%	24.90%	29.30%
2024	4.40%	1.10%	0.35%	-14.80%	3.75%	4.31%
2025	3.20%	0.80%	39.40%	58.16%	33.01%	39.11%

The comparative growth tables tell a story of a wildlife economy that has steadily carved out its own identity, revealing a sector that no longer moves in step with South Africa's broader economic rhythms. While national inflation and GDP drifted through periods of strain, recovery and stagnation, the wildlife market consistently demonstrated an ability to rise above these headwinds. What emerges is a narrative of **resilience**, **scarcity-driven value** and a market shaped far more by biology, international demand and long-term confidence than by conventional macro-economic forces.

The period beginning in 2021 marked the start of a powerful post-pandemic resurgence. Inflation was contained and GDP briefly lifted, yet the wildlife sector expanded at a pace that far exceeded both, with total auction values climbing by **over 58% in 2021**, driven by a wave of restocking, breeder confidence and renewed safari bookings.

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Plains game and colour variants surged spectacularly, revealing how deeply the market had been undersupplied during lockdown restrictions. Rare game followed with solid recovery momentum, even though its pricing still carried some of the aftershocks of the earlier speculative cycle.
In 2022, South Africa faced rising inflation and slowing GDP growth, but the wildlife industry again separated itself from these economic pressures. Auction value growth exceeded **34% in 2022**, sustained by strong uptake in plains game, broad-based interest in colour variants and a dramatic rebound in rare-game pricing. Despite rising living costs and broader agricultural strain, the industry moved with a confidence that suggested buyers were repositioning for long-term value rather than short-term gain.

By 2023, with GDP barely above zero and inflation still elevated, the wildlife market continued to expand at more than **five times** national economic growth. Plains game pricing firmed impressively, colour variants once again delivered vibrant performance and rare game remained unusually steady. These years collectively formed a **momentum phase**, showing the market's ability to heal, consolidate and push forward even when the wider South African economy struggled to gain traction.

The story then shifted in 2024. This was a year of **stabilisation** rather than expansion. Growth in total auction value aligned more closely with inflation and pricing remained largely steady across most species. Rare game softened noticeably as breeders recalibrated and buffalo markets settled into more rational patterns. Yet this pause was not symptomatic of weakness. Instead, it was a necessary breath in the market's cycle, a year in which buyers and sellers allowed prices, genetics and herd structures to rebalance after the rapid gains of the previous three seasons.

It is this quieter consolidation that set the stage for the dramatic resurgence of 2025. With inflation falling to **3.20%** and GDP barely moving, the wildlife economy entered the year with a tighter supply base, stronger international hunting demand and far more disciplined genetics across most species. These forces combined to create one of the most striking divergences from macro-economic conditions seen in a decade. Total auction value leapt by **nearly 40%**, while average market pricing per animal soared **39.40%**, led by rare game average price at **58.16%**, plains game average price at **33.01%** and colour variants at **39.11%**. Importantly, this uplift occurred without significant quantity growth, proving that **price appreciation—not volume—drove the sector forward**. Scarcity of mature animals, increased trophy demand and heightened competition for superior genetic lines all contributed to this remarkable expansion.

The comparison with national inflation is particularly revealing. Not once in the five-year period did inflation come close to matching auction value growth and in 2025 the gap widened to its most compelling point. While everyday sectors wrestled with tight margins and depressed consumer activity, the wildlife market showed that value could rise sharply even in a subdued economy. The data confirms that **this industry behaves like a biological asset class rather than a conventional commodity**, responding to breeding cycles, ecological limits and international participation far more than it responds to GDP or inflation.

In summary, the tables illustrate a narrative of a sector that has learned to grow through adversity, stabilise when required and surge when conditions tighten. The five-year trend demonstrates a wildlife economy that has moved beyond volatility into a phase of **controlled strength**, **structural demand** and **long-term value expansion**—a market increasingly unbound from the economic constraints affecting the rest of the country.

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Compound Growth, Market Dynamics and ROI in the Wildlife Sector

The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) represents the average annual rate at which the wildlife market has grown over a specific period, smoothing out year-to-year volatility to show the true long-term trajectory of the sector. It is one of the most reliable measures of performance because it reflects what an investor would have earned each year if growth had occurred steadily over time.

Using this lens, the wildlife industry reveals a highly compelling growth profile. Over the full 25-year period, total auction revenue expanded at a **13.89% CAGR**, while quantities grew at **7.55%**, signalling a market that has consistently broadened its economic base and strengthened its underlying demand. This long-term stability—spanning drought cycles, economic downturns and major industry resets—indicates that wildlife assets have historically outperformed inflation and delivered returns comparable to high-growth agricultural and alternative investment classes.



The most powerful insight emerges from the recent five-year window: from the 2020 contraction to 2025, total auction revenue surged at an exceptional **34.63% CAGR**, supported by a **19.89% CAGR** in quantities. Such simultaneous acceleration in both prices and volumes is rare in primary industries and reflects a period in which demand, capital confidence and biological scarcity have aligned.

For investors and breeders, this means that the wildlife sector is not only recovering—it is compounding. Capital allocated to structured herds, premium genetics and ecologically aligned species is participating in a market environment characterised by **double-digit annualised returns**. This positions the wildlife industry as a uniquely strong performer in South Africa's alternative investment landscape, where biological growth, market scarcity and genetic advancement translate directly into measurable, attractive ROI.

This **compounding effect** becomes even more powerful when applied to high-quality breeding assets, where genetic improvement amplifies financial returns beyond simple price appreciation. As **structural scarcity deepens** across key species, the forward-looking CAGR suggests that long-term investors stand to benefit not only from market growth, but from **owning biological assets** whose value increases as supply constraints tighten.

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Client-Facing Market Trends

The evolution of the wildlife auction market between 2021 and 2025 has unfolded almost exactly along the trajectory AWA projected in its recent Game Price Reports. Since 2023, the structural adjustments anticipated in 2023 are now fully visible in the price curves, the species mix and the behaviour of both buyers and sellers. What began as a volume-driven recovery in the immediate post-COVID period has now matured into a phase defined by **price leadership, disciplined supply and renewed confidence in high-quality genetics**.

The competitive structure of the market also shifted meaningfully across this period. After a decentralised phase in 2022–2024—where smaller and mid-sized breeders carried more of the auction landscape—the sector reconsolidated in **2025**, with several major operations returning aggressively to the ring and reclaiming meaningful share. This re-entry of large, data-driven breeders contributed directly to stronger pricing, more consistent bidding and a return to professionalised market depth.

Auction value growth has comfortably outpaced **South Africa's GDP and CPI performance**, but with a clear change in how that growth is generated. The 2021–2022 period was firmly **volume-led**, as breeders sold more animals in the wake of the 2020 trough. From 2023 onward, however, the engine shifted: **pricing power returned**, lifting averages across key species. Plains game delivered stability, predictability and liquidity, while rare and exotic variants supplied the dramatic upside that pushed 2025 into a high-momentum year.

A significant transformation has been the arrival of a **new buyer cohort**, many of whom entered after 2021 COVID and price collapse period and therefore carry no lived memory of the speculative surge of 2014–2018 nor the contraction of 2017–2019. These buyers are reshaping the market's psychology. They prefer **evidence-based decision-making**, verified genetics, transparent data and structured risk management rather than hype or historical habits. Their presence has lifted marginal prices, broadened demand and decreased the dominance of a handful of elite participants.



The COVID-era disruption remains a defining reference point. After collapsing to a trough of roughly **R200 million in 2020**, the market rebuilt decisively. It stabilised in 2022 and then advanced sharply from **2021 through 2025**, growing from a low base but sustaining momentum far beyond the initial rebound.

One of the most encouraging developments of 2025 is the **deepening of demand**. AWA registered nearly **600 new clients**, with more than 30 new accounts opening per auction—signs of a broader, more competitive and more liquid marketplace.

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The industry has expanded from the highly concentrated elite of 2016 into a far more **diversified ecosystem**, where digital access, transparent data and increased financial literacy now shape market behaviour more strongly than simple scale or history.

The market is undeniably more mature than it was a decade ago. The speculative cycles of the past have given way to a **data-anchored environment**, where genetics, veld performance and factual measurement—not fashion—determine value. **Quality is paying again**, with 2025's growth being decisively price-led, especially in the upper genetic tiers. Yet risk has not disappeared entirely; the rare-game segment remains more volatile, while **plains game continue to provide the steadying effect** that smooths portfolios and stabilises the P&L.

Overall, the 2021–2025 period reflects a wildlife market that has grown more **professional, transparent and investment-aware**, with 2025 marking the first year in which these improvements fully converged to create a balanced, confident and structurally strengthened auction environment.

Industry Dominance

This table provides a comparative view of how auction activity has been distributed between major breeders and the broader industry over time. By tracking both the **value** and the **volume** of animals sold through auctions, it offers a clear picture of how influence, participation and competitive weight have shifted across the sector. The data highlights the evolving balance between historically dominant large players and the increasingly active network of smaller and mid-sized operations, setting the foundation for understanding how market structure has transformed in recent years.

Industry Dominance

	Value of all Auctions		Quantities of all Auctions	
	Major Players	Rest of Industry	Major Players	Rest of Industry
2016	69.86%	30.14%	11.52%	88.48%
2017	86.43%	13.57%	18.84%	81.16%
2018	79.01%	20.99%	18.52%	81.48%
2019	74.78%	25.22%	17.07%	82.93%
2020	46.64%	53.36%	17.64%	82.36%
2021	43.56%	56.44%	10.25%	89.75%
2022	52.43%	47.57%	13.80%	86.20%
2023	47.23%	52.77%	14.09%	85.91%
2024	35.98%	64.02%	12.71%	87.29%
2025	46.92%	53.08%	15.58%	84.42%

The evolution of industry dominance over the past decade reveals a story of **power concentration, disruption, decentralisation and eventual rebalancing** in the wildlife auction market. The mid-2010s were characterised by a **highly concentrated landscape**, with major players capturing the overwhelming share of auction value. In **2016–2017**, their dominance peaked, with some years showing more than **80% of total auction value** flowing through a small group of large, established breeders. Yet despite this financial weight, these same players contributed only a **small fraction of total auction quantities**, confirming a longstanding structural truth: the largest breeders historically traded **fewer animals**, but at **far higher average values**.

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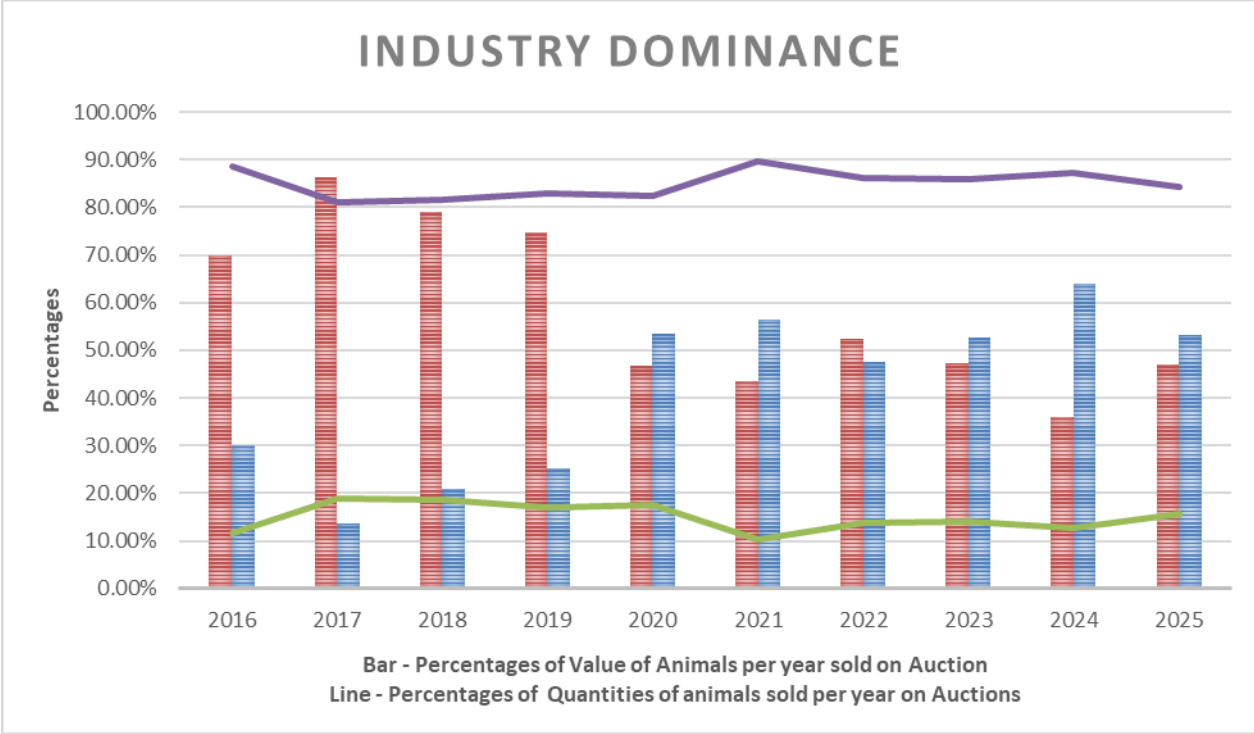
By **2018–2019**, this dominance began to soften. The major players still held considerable sway, but their share of value slipped gradually as more mid-tier producers improved genetics, expanded operations and gained confidence in the auction ring. This was the first sign of a broader shift—an early move toward a **more open and competitive** marketplace.

The pivotal break came in **2020–2021**, when pandemic disruptions and economic uncertainty temporarily diluted the influence of the biggest breeders. During these years, the **rest of the industry overtook major players** in value share for the first time, capturing more than half of all auction revenue. The large operations stepped back, reduced volumes and acted cautiously, while smaller and mid-sized breeders filled the gap. Quantities remained overwhelmingly supplied by the broader industry—close to **90% in 2021**—but the surprising shift was on the value side, where dominance temporarily flipped.

From **2022 onward**, the market entered a period of **rebalancing** rather than reversion. Major breeders gradually returned to auctions, restoring part of their influence, yet the rest of the industry **did not surrender the ground it had gained**. Instead, the marketplace became more diversified, more competitive and far more dynamic. The value share in 2022 and 2023 moved closer to parity, positioning the industry in a state not seen before: a genuine **dual-engine environment**, where both established operators and emerging breeders contributed meaningfully to total auction turnover.

By **2024**, the pendulum swung even further toward the broader industry, with major players holding their lowest share of auction value across the entire dataset. This reflected a year in which numerous developing breeders, armed with improved genetics and stronger operational maturity, confidently entered higher-value categories.

The story of **2025** is a final, crucial chapter in this evolution. Major breeders regained some ground—lifting their share of auction value to nearly **47%**—yet the rest of the industry continued to command a majority share.



This graph distils the **2016–2025 dominance data** into a clearer visual story, highlighting how major breeders shifted from periods of strong value concentration to a more balanced share with the wider industry. The quantity trend line reinforces that, throughout this entire period, the *rest of the industry consistently supplied the majority of animals*, even as value leadership fluctuated. Together, the bars and lines reveal a sector moving toward a more **diversified, stable and competitively balanced** auction environment by 2025.

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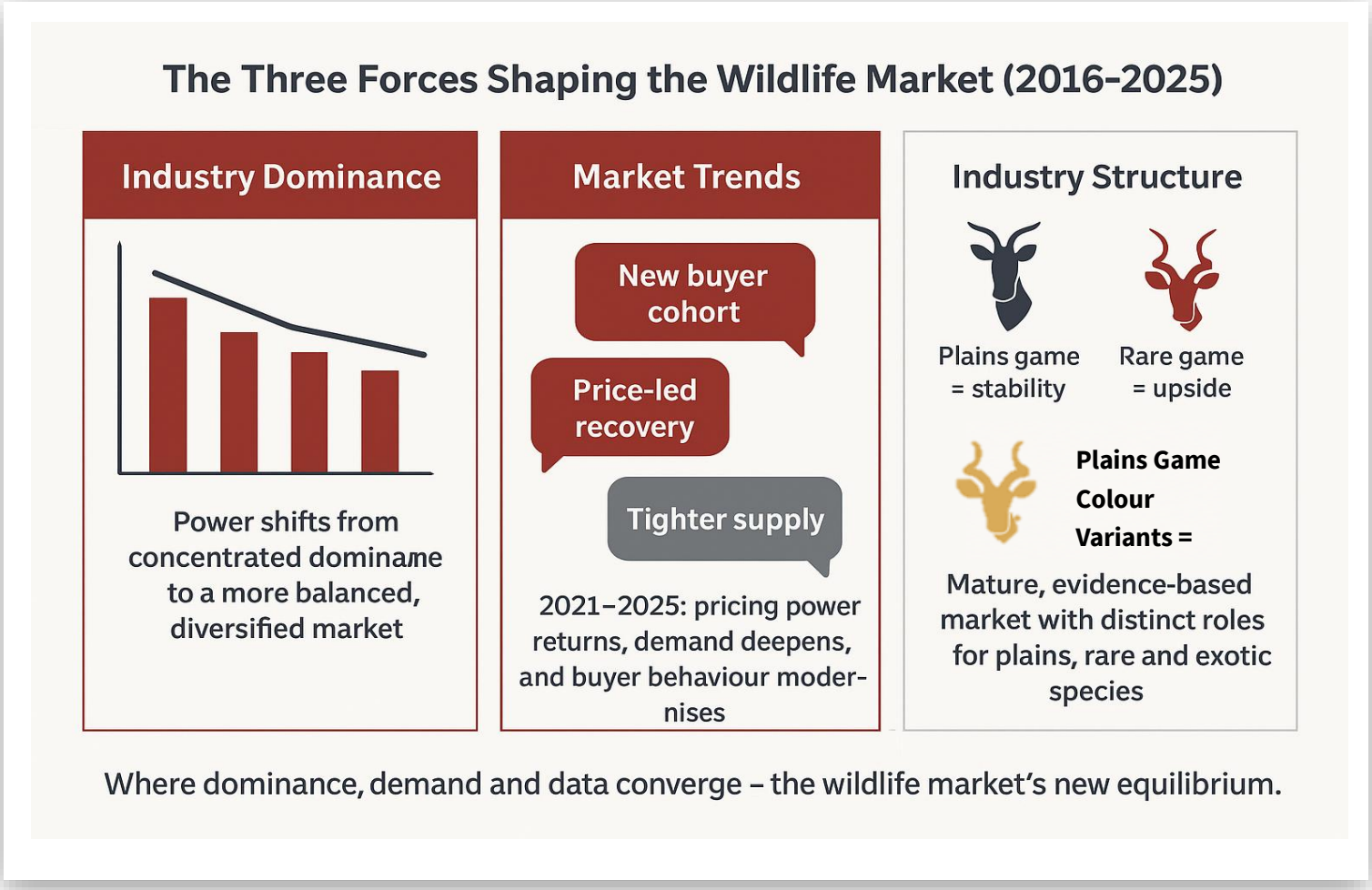
This confirms a market that has not merely reverted to the old dominance model, but matured into a **more balanced, competitive ecosystem**. Large breeders remain influential, yet they now operate within a broader environment where hundreds of smaller players also shape prices, supply key volumes and contribute to auction value in a sustained and meaningful way.

Across all ten years, one constant remains: while the value share has fluctuated dramatically, the **rest of the industry has always dominated quantity**, supplying between **80% and 90%** of all animals sold. This structural reality underscores the core strength of the South African wildlife sector: large breeders may influence price leadership, but it is the **breadth and diversity of smaller operations** that sustains liquidity, stabilises supply and anchors the long-term resilience of the market.



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HORN MEASUREMENTS: THE TECHNICAL BACKDROP

Horn measurement in the wildlife industry follows long-established conventions designed to ensure **consistency**, **comparability** and **scientific accuracy**. These standards have evolved over decades of field practice and academic refinement, becoming a **shared language** spoken across breeding farms, auction platforms and conservation landscapes. Whether used by breeders, auction houses or international record-keeping bodies such as **Rowland Ward** and **Safari Club International (SCI)**, the underlying principle remains remarkably similar: to capture the **greatest honest expression of horn growth** in a way that can be replicated by anyone trained in the method. The objective is not merely to assign a score, but to document an **authentic biological attribute** that reflects the animal's history, genetics and ecological context.

For most antelope species, horn length is determined by taking the **greatest straight-line measurement** from the base of the horn—where it naturally meets the skull—to the farthest point of the tip. This deceptively simple technique has endured because it **eliminates interpretation** and reduces human bias, allowing two different measurers to reach the same conclusion. The flexible steel tape used for these measurements rests lightly along the outer curve of the horn, never forced into grooves or ridges, ensuring that the measurement **honours the horn's natural architecture**.

The intention is always to follow what nature intended, not an exaggerated or artificial representation of shape. This method is universally applied across species such as **kudu, impala, eland, wildebeest, gemsbok, waterbuck, hartebeest, sable and roan**, forming the backbone of how **value**, **maturity** and **genetic excellence** are assessed within the market.

Although horn length remains the **primary standard**, certain species introduce secondary characteristics that deepen the understanding of trophy quality. Spiral-horned antelope may incorporate **base circumference** or **curl measurements**, revealing information about age, nutrition and genetic stability. Others consider **tip-to-tip spread**, a trait that provides insight into symmetry and breadth.

Rowland Ward and SCI differ slightly in how these additional measurements are combined, yet both systems still revolve around capturing a **true representation of size**, **balance** and **growth potential**. Despite these nuances, the wildlife marketplace defaults overwhelmingly to the **straight-line horn length expressed in inches**, because it is simple, objective and universally understood. That universal preference reflects both **practicality** and **tradition**: it remains the quickest, clearest way to communicate the essence of an animal's horn development.

When the focus shifts from antelope to buffalo, the entire framework of horn measurement **changes dramatically**. Buffalo possess an anatomical structure unlike any other plains or rare-game species: a massive, fused shield of horn material known as the **boss**. This defining feature transforms not only the animal's appearance but also the criteria by which quality is judged, because the boss represents **age**, **dominance** and the animal's **position in the social hierarchy**.

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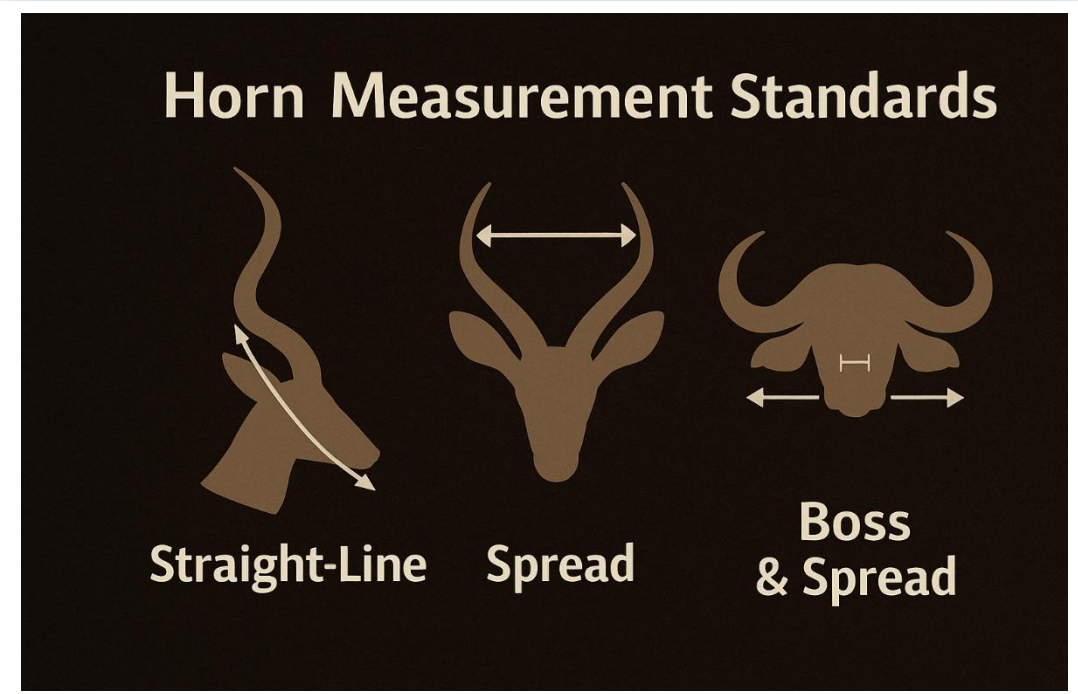
A fully hardened boss is the culmination of years of growth, nutritional success and survival—traits that cannot be rushed or fabricated.Unlike antelope, where horn length is the decisive marker of maturity and breeding potential, buffalo are evaluated through a **complex blend** of **spread**, **boss size**, **boss hardness** and **overall shape**. These measurements speak to the buffalo's **power** and the structural integrity of its skull architecture. The hallmark of an exceptional buffalo is a **rock-hard, fully developed boss** that signals advanced age, dominance and superior genetics. A buffalo may display sweeping horn length, yet if the boss remains soft or unformed, it will not be regarded as a top-tier specimen. This is precisely why length—although measured and recorded—is **not** treated as the defining attribute of the species.



The primary formal measurement for buffalo is the **tip-to-tip spread**, taken across the widest point of the horns. This single dimension captures the **lateral magnificence** of the animal's profile, highlighting the broad, imposing sweep that has made buffalo one of Africa's most **iconic big-game trophies**. Record-book systems echo this approach: **Rowland Ward prioritises greatest spread**, while **SCI incorporates boss circumference and horn length** into a composite score.

Even so, the practical market value remains anchored in the combination of **spread** and **boss development**, a duality that no other antelope shares. Thus, buffalo stand apart because their horns are not merely extensions of growth but **expressions of maturity, rank and dominance** rooted in skull morphology. Their measurement traditions reflect this uniqueness. Where antelope are celebrated for **length**, buffalo are revered for **power**, **age** and the dramatic **architecture of the boss**. It is a different language of value—one shaped not by linear measurement, but by the **strength**, **history** and **character** etched into the horn shield itself.

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Wildlife Industry Trends & Analysis:

TOTAL WILDLIFE INDUSTRY

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Wildlife Classification methodology:



Industry Classification Sources (PHASA, WRSA & Auction Norms)

South Africa's wildlife sector uses a clear and widely accepted structure—shaped by **WRSA**, **PHASA** and long-term **auction-market behaviour**—to distinguish between **rare game**, **plains game** and **specialised genetic variants**. WRSA's species briefs and ranching guidelines firmly position **Buffalo, Sable, Roan, Rhino, Tsessebe, Sitatunga, Lechwe** and **Lichtenstein Hartebeest** as **rare game**, reflecting *true ecological scarcity, limited national populations and* historically low auction supply.

PHASA's species lists and fair-chase references reinforce the opposite category: **plains game**. Species such as **Impala, Blesbok, Wildebeest, Springbok, Kudu, Eland, Gemsbok, Nyala, Waterbuck** and **Zebra** are recognised as *common, widely distributed, resilient breeders* that anchor the hunting and ranching economy.

A third group—**specialised plains-game variants**—emerges from genetic rarity rather than species rarity. WRSA's colour-variant statements and PHASA's genetic guidelines emphasise that animals like **Black Impala, White-Flank Impala, Golden Wildebeest, Copper Springbok, White Blesbok** and the **Golden or Red Gemsbok** are **not rare species**, but **rare genetic expressions** within common plains-game populations. Auction houses underline this by placing them in dedicated **"colour variant"** or **"elite genetics"** sections rather than rare-game catalogues.

The industry therefore aligns around three simple truths:

- **Plains Game** reflects widespread abundance and
- **Plains Game Specialised / Colour Variants** reflect genetic rarity *within* abundant species.
- **Rare Game** reflects genuine scarcity,

This framework is the basis used throughout this journal to ensure consistency and industry accuracy.

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Total Wildlife Industry Specie Data

The **2025 consolidated wildlife performance table** provides a clear, data-driven snapshot of how each major species has fared across South Africa's live and online auction platforms. It brings together the *final full-year numbers*—including total value traded, unit volumes and year-on-year price movements—to give breeders, buyers, sellers and landowners an accurate picture of where the market is strengthening, stabilising or softening.

Summary of Total Revenue Wildlife Industry

Year		Value	Quantity		Average Price	▲ Quantity %	▲ Pricing %
2001	R	52 857 575	8 972	R	5 891		
2002	R	74 144 021	12 220	R	6 067	36.2%	3.0%
2003	R	74 170 778	12 186	R	6 087	-0.3%	0.3%
2004	R	71 979 834	15 025	R	4 791	23.3%	-21.3%
2005	R	32 529 415	7 837	R	4 151	-47.8%	-13.4%
2006	R	36 918 585	8 665	R	4 261	10.6%	2.6%
2007	R	90 148 695	9 529	R	9 460	10.0%	122.0%
2008	R	111 861 500	9 162	R	12 209	-3.9%	29.1%
2009	R	221 330 662	9 617	R	23 015	5.0%	88.5%
2010	R	233 333 655	8 330	R	28 011	-13.4%	21.7%
2011	R	435 069 365	10 119	R	42 995	21.5%	53.5%
2012	R	859 019 460	11 584	R	74 156	14.5%	72.5%
2013	R	860 144 669	17 458	R	49 269	50.7%	-33.6%
2014	R	1 427 701 222	25 222	R	56 605	44.5%	14.9%
2015	R	1 965 854 708	38 173	R	51 499	51.3%	-9.0%
2016	R	1 814 040 510	35 877	R	50 563	-6.0%	-1.8%
2017	R	975 220 998	37 964	R	25 688	5.8%	-49.2%
2018	R	606 920 304	30 810	R	19 699	-18.8%	-23.3%
2019	R	483 873 180	32 350	R	14 957	5.0%	-24.1%
2020	R	200 325 570	20 289	R	9 874	-37.3%	-34.0%
2021	R	317 741 380	31 522	R	10 080	55.4%	2.1%
2022	R	425 743 550	39 836	R	10 687	26.4%	6.0%
2023	R	588 975 365	45 918	R	12 827	15.3%	20.0%
2024	R	642 075 805	49 883	R	12 872	8.6%	0.4%
2025	R	897 646 520	50 027	R	17 943	0.3%	39.4%

By comparing **2025 outcomes against the previous year**, the table highlights the real movement in demand, the resilience of certain species and the shifting economic pressures influencing the broader wildlife economy. Strong performers and under-pressure categories are immediately visible through percentage changes, allowing users to interpret trends at a glance while still enabling deeper analysis where needed.

This table therefore acts as the **anchor dataset for the 2025 Wildlife Industry Review**—a factual summary that supports strategic decisions, restocking plans, breeding selections and financial forecasting across the sector. It captures the culmination of a full year's trading activity, offering a concise yet powerful reference point for anyone assessing the direction of the industry.

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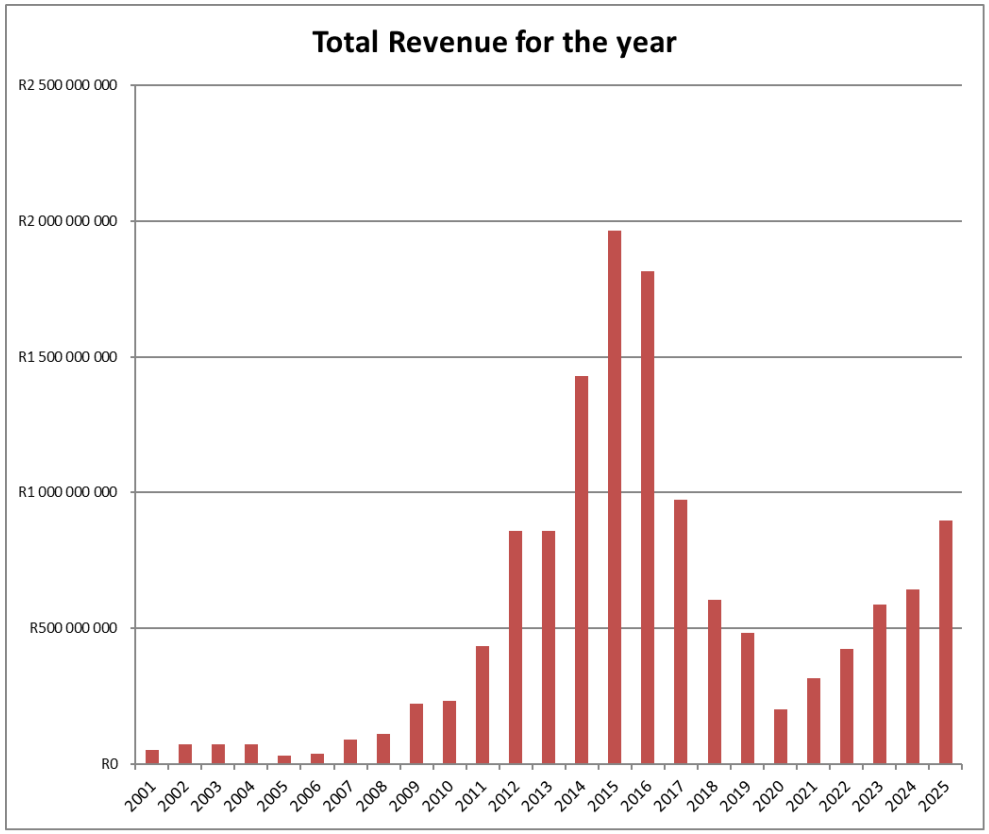
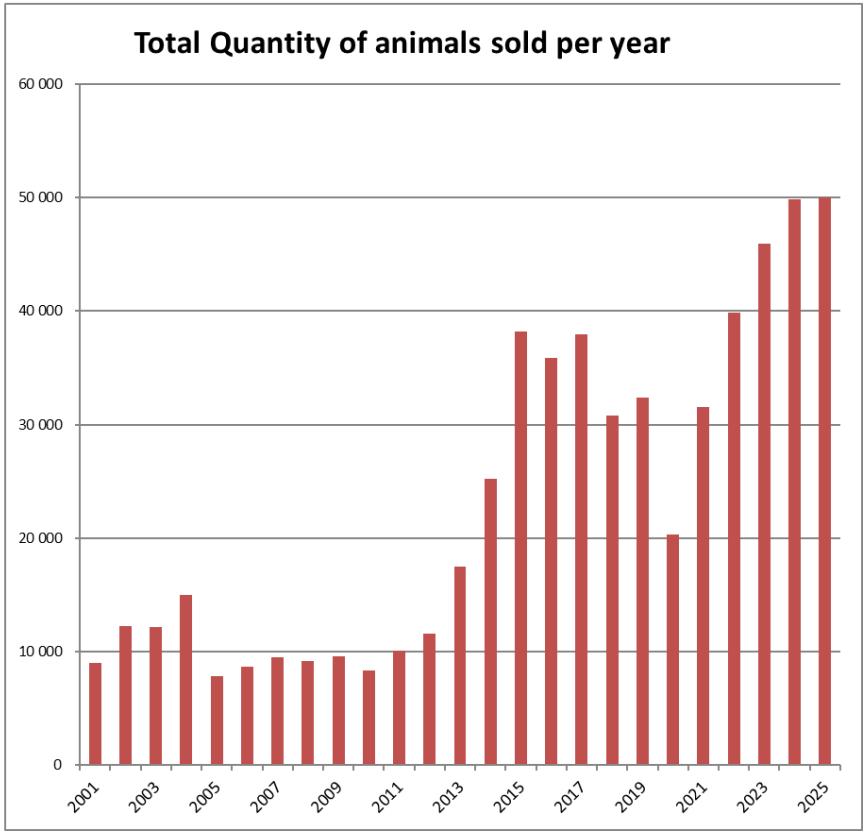
Total Wildlife Industry Specie Graphs

The dataset and accompanying graphs provide a sweeping, twenty-five-year narrative of the South African wildlife auction economy. Together they reveal how the sector moved through **early developmental consolidation**, a **meteoric speculative rise**, a **sharp correction**, a **COVID-driven trough** and ultimately a **measured and disciplined recovery into 2025**. The table details the interplay between value, quantity and price, while the graphs vividly illustrate how external forces—macroeconomic cycles, investor sentiment, ecological realities and global shocks—shaped each phase of growth and decline. What emerges is a market that has become **structurally more stable**, **biologically grounded** and increasingly aligned with **long-term sustainability**, culminating in the strong recovery shown in 2025.





The quantity graph, by contrast, highlights how **physical trading volumes** have steadily expanded over time, even during periods when revenue experienced volatility. This long-term upward trend suggests a broadening market base, increased accessibility and more consistent participation from landowners, breeders and buyers across South Africa.

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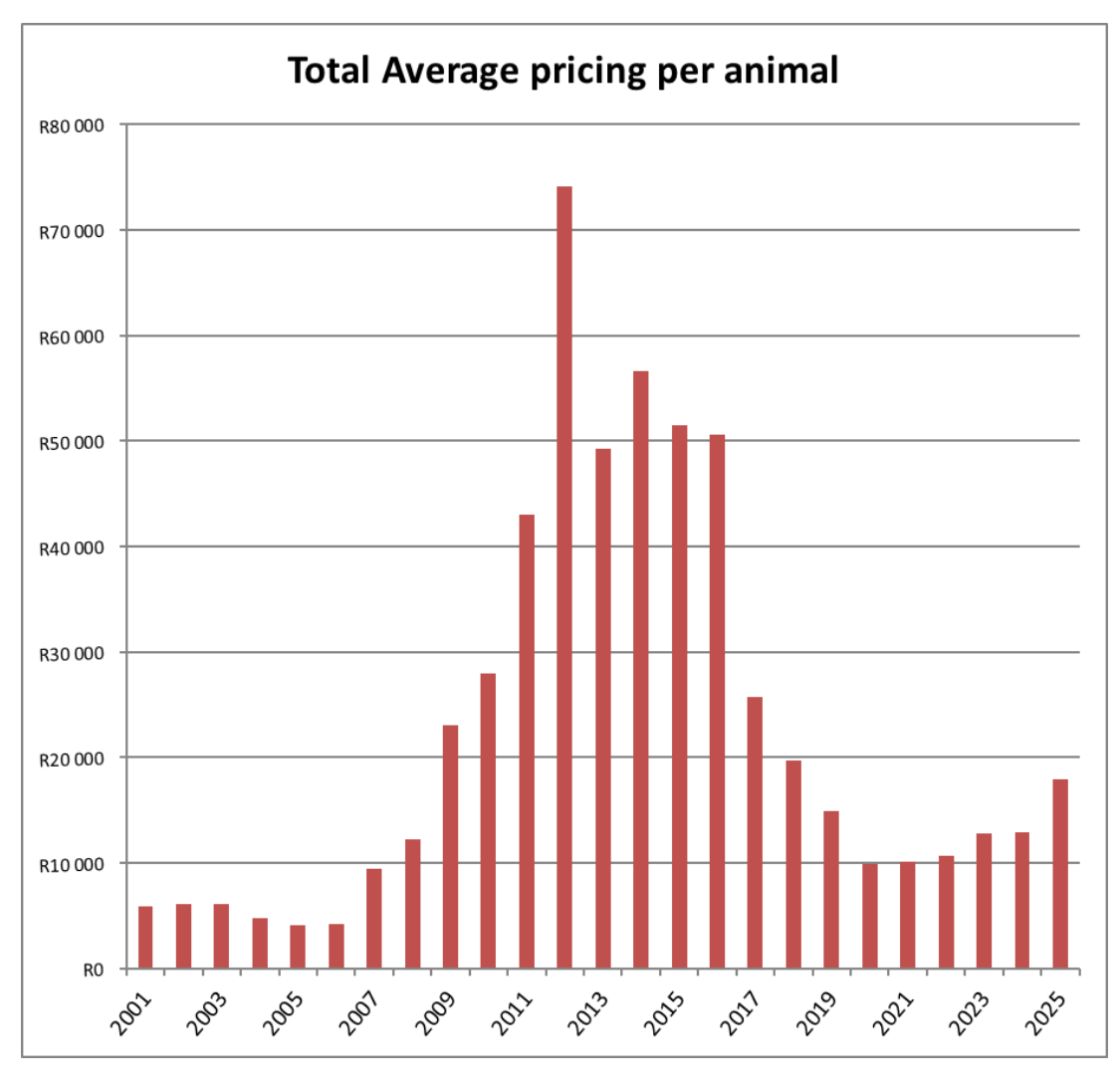
As pricing moved through these long-term cycles, a deeper structural pattern became clear: **average prices tended to rise not simply when demand increased, but when quality, scarcity and ecological maturity converged**.

The sharp escalation during the early 2010s reflected a period when elite genetics, colour phenotypes and breeding innovations were in exceptional demand, yet supply lagged behind due to natural reproduction limits. When speculative capital flooded in, prices rose far beyond biological fundamentals, creating the towering peaks visible in the pricing graph. The reset that followed did not erase the long-term growth trend — instead, it revealed how strongly price depends on balanced genetic supply, rational breeder behaviour and the broader economic climate.

Over the past several years, average pricing began to rebuild from a healthier base, guided less by excitement and more by **measurable habitat value, phenotype certainty and sustainable production economics**. As high-quality animals became harder to source, especially in mature horn-length classes and premium breeding lines, prices responded accordingly. By the time the industry reached 2025, the rise in average prices reflected a far more organic momentum: buyers were willing to pay more because the animals available — fewer in number, stronger in phenotype and increasingly influenced by eco-tourism aesthetics — commanded genuine market value.



This shift signals a maturation of the wildlife economy, where **price is once again a reflection of true biological worth**, not inflated expectation.

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Total Wildlife Industry Trends & Insights

The **Total Market Growth/Decline Analysis** table provides a powerful long-term lens through which the evolution of South Africa's wildlife auction economy can be understood. Rather than presenting isolated year-on-year movements, it reveals the deeper rhythms that have shaped the sector across cycles of expansion, correction, recovery and renewed growth. What stands out most clearly is how **value, quantity and pricing each follow distinct behavioural patterns**, sometimes moving in harmony and at other times responding to very different economic, ecological and industry forces.

Total Market Growth/Decline analysis

Year	Value	Growth Value	Value %	Quantity %	Pricing %
2001	52 857 575				
2002	74 144 021	21 286 446	40.3%	36.2%	3.0%
2003	74 170 778	26 757	0.0%	-0.3%	0.3%
2004	71 979 834	(2 190 944)	-3.0%	23.3%	-21.3%
2005	32 529 415	(39 450 419)	-54.8%	-47.8%	-13.4%
2006	36 918 585	4 389 170	13.5%	10.6%	2.6%
2007	90 148 695	53 230 110	144.2%	10.0%	122.0%
2008	111 861 500	21 712 805	24.1%	-3.9%	29.1%
2009	221 330 662	109 469 162	97.9%	5.0%	88.5%
2010	233 333 655	12 002 993	5.4%	-13.4%	21.7%
2011	435 069 365	201 735 710	86.5%	21.5%	53.5%
2012	859 019 460	423 950 095	97.4%	14.5%	72.5%
2013	860 144 669	1 125 209	0.1%	50.7%	-33.6%
2014	1 427 701 222	567 556 553	66.0%	44.5%	14.9%
2015	1 965 854 708	538 153 486	37.7%	51.3%	-9.0%
2016	1 814 040 510	(151 814 198)	-7.7%	-6.0%	-1.8%
2017	975 220 998	(838 819 512)	-46.2%	5.8%	-49.2%
2018	606 920 304	(368 300 694)	-37.8%	-18.8%	-23.3%
2019	483 873 180	(123 047 124)	-20.3%	5.0%	-24.1%
2020	200 325 570	(283 547 610)	-58.6%	-37.3%	-34.0%
2021	317 741 380	117 415 810	58.6%	55.4%	2.1%
2022	425 743 550	108 002 170	34.0%	26.4%	6.0%
2023	588 975 365	163 231 815	38.3%	15.3%	20.0%
2024	642 075 805	53 100 440	9.0%	8.6%	0.4%
2025	897 646 520	255 570 715	39.8%	0.3%	39.4%

This table captures the full sweep of the industry's structural phases — the early foundational years, the explosive speculative era, the stabilisation period, the prolonged correction after 2016, the COVID shock and finally the disciplined resurgence that has defined the post-pandemic market. Through these transitions the table allows us to see how **market sentiment, breeder behaviour, genetic supply, tourism inflows and macroeconomic conditions** have alternately strengthened or constrained performance. It is an essential reference point because it shows not only *what* changed, but *why* those changes occurred, grounding every trend in the realities that shaped the market over twenty-five years.

With this context established, the analysis of each period highlights how quantity shifts, price adjustments and total value movements have interacted to create the modern wildlife economy — an economy now entering one of its most balanced and strategically favourable phases.

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Total Wildlife Industry Specie Insights

Early Expansion and Foundation Years (2001–2007)

The early years reflected a market gaining traction. Revenue grew from **R52.9m** in 2001 to **R90.1m** in 2007, supported by steady increases in quantity and a meaningful uplift in pricing in 2007 of **122%**, driven largely by the rapid rise of professionalism in game ranching and the early influence of genetics-based breeding. These were also years where the wildlife economy began establishing itself as a credible commercial sector.

The Pre-Boom Acceleration (2008–2011)

From 2008 onward, the industry entered a sharply expansionary phase. Revenue almost doubled between 2008 and 2009, rising from **R111.9m** to **R221.3m**, with pricing climbing **88.5%** — a direct result of rising demand for elite genetics and the increasing financialisation of wildlife assets. By 2011, turnover exceeded **R435m**, illustrating how quickly confidence and capital were flowing into the sector.

The Speculative Peak (2012–2015)

These years defined the most dramatic growth in the industry's history. Revenue rocketed from **R859m** in 2012 to **R1.96bn** in 2015. Value growth for 2012 was **97.4%**, followed by **66%** in 2014 and **37.7%** in 2015. Prices soared, peaking at **R74 156** average per animal in 2012.
This period was powered by aggressive genetics speculation, colour-variant investment and unprecedented access to breeder capital — an era now widely recognised as the **Speculative Wildlife Boom**.

Correction and Market Reset (2016–2020)

The boom was followed by a decisive correction. Revenue fell from **R1.96bn** in 2015 to **R483.9m** by 2019, with 2017 showing a dramatic **-46.2%** contraction. Pricing declines of **-49.2%** in 2017 and **-23.3%** in 2018 reflected the collapse of speculative demand.
COVID-19 accelerated the downturn in 2020, driving value down another **-58.6%**, with both quantities and prices falling sharply.
This was the industry's hardest reset — one that removed artificial inflation and re-anchored values to ecological, genetic and commercial realities.

Stabilisation and Rebuilding (2021–2023)

With markets reopening, the industry recovered rapidly. Revenue rose from **R200.3m** in 2020 to **R317.7m** in 2021, a **58.6%** rebound. Quantities surged **55.4%**, showing strong buyer re-engagement.
By 2023, revenue reached **R589m**, supported by rising international hunting demand, stronger safari bookings and more disciplined breeding decisions.

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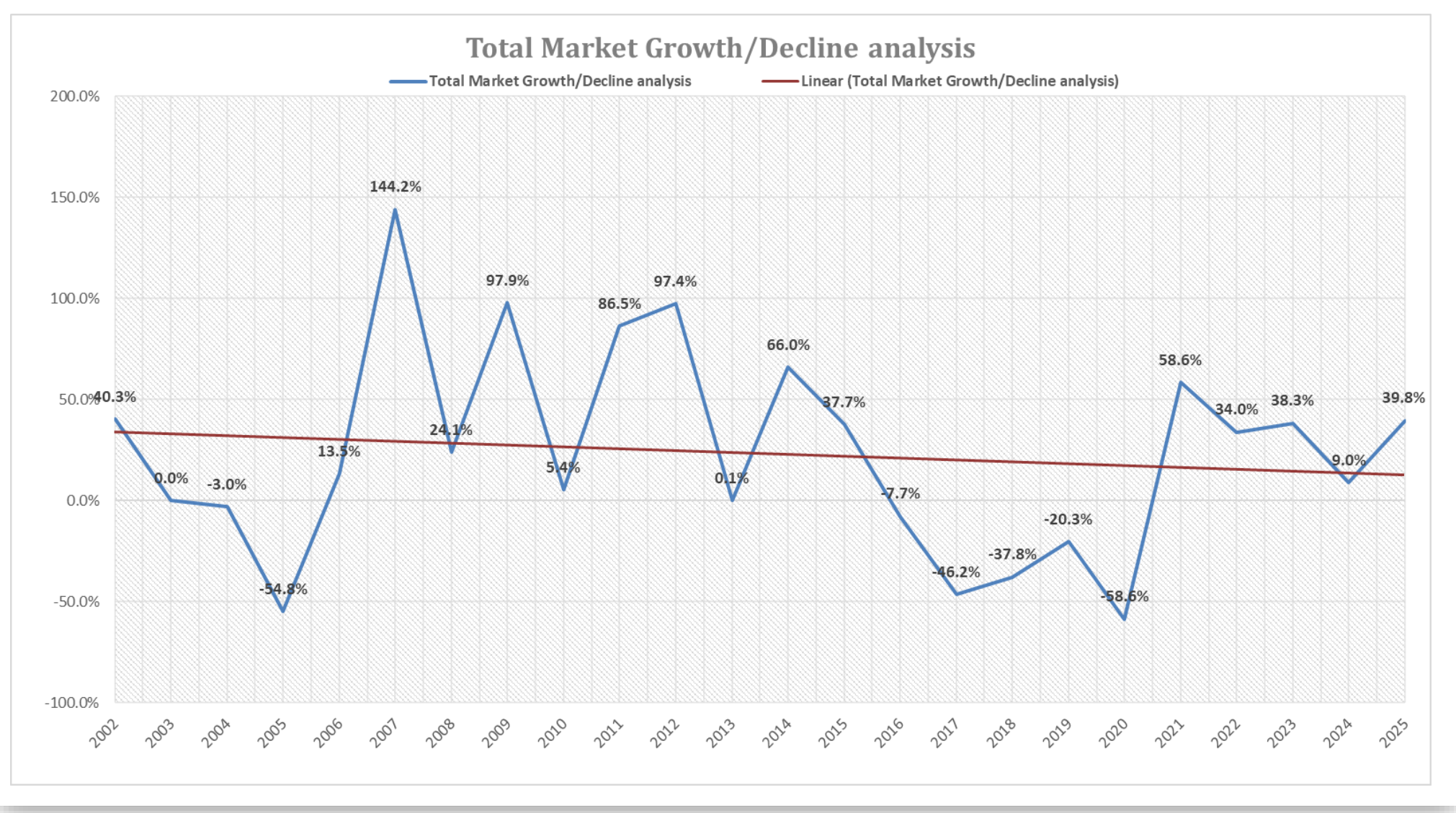
The Return to Structural Growth (2024–2025)

2024 showed moderate, steady expansion, with revenue increasing **9%** and quantity **8.6%** — a sign of a calm, rational market. Pricing remained almost flat at **0.4%**, suggesting a year of consolidation. But 2025 broke the plateau dramatically. Revenue jumped **39.8%**, average price surged **39.4%** and quantity held stable at **0.3%** growth. This was the clearest indication yet that the market had entered a **supply-tight, scarcity-driven value cycle**.



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The First True Scarcity-Driven Surge of the Modern Market

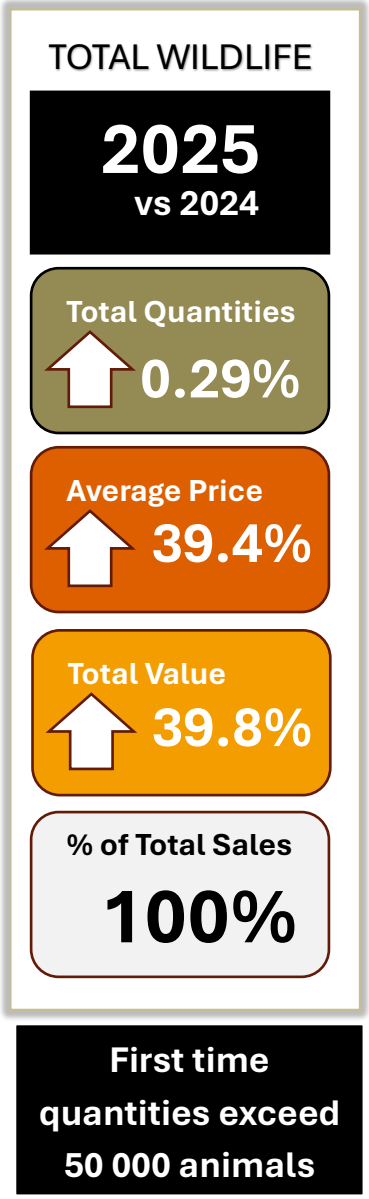
The transition from 2024 to 2025 marked one of the most meaningful step-changes in the wildlife economy since the post-COVID recovery began. While 2024 signalled stabilisation — a year where the market held its ground, absorbed prior gains and reconsolidated supply — **2025 broke from that consolidation phase and re-ignited growth with remarkable intensity**, reshaping both market structure and forward sentiment. The data show that total auction revenue surged from **R642.1 million** in 2024 to **R897.6 million** in 2025, a jump of **39.8%**, but the true significance of that increase lies in *how* it occurred, *why* it occurred and *what it reveals about the maturing economic logic of the sector*.

A defining feature of the 2025 shift is that **the quantity of animals sold barely moved**, rising only from **49 883** to **50 027** — a marginal **0.3%** increase. This means the revenue expansion was driven overwhelmingly by **pricing strength**, not supply expansion. Average prices rose from **R12 872** to **R17 943**, a powerful **39.4%** uplift. Such a pricing-led growth profile is exceptionally rare in the wildlife economy and typically emerges only when three structural forces converge: tightening biological supply, elevated demand for premium phenotype or genetic categories and robust buyer confidence that the market's long-term value trajectory is intact. In 2025, all three forces aligned.

The composition of the market tells a similar story of strategic refinement rather than volume escalation. Plains game remained the backbone of transactional liquidity, but it was **colour variants and rare game** that fundamentally altered the revenue landscape. Rare game revenues climbed sharply, supported by strong buyer appetite for buffalo, sable, roan and especially rhino, which became one of the year's flagship outperformers. Colour variants, aided by renewed competition for high-visibility tourism genetics such as black impala, white flanks, saddlebacks and golden wildebeest, also delivered meaningful value uplift. The revenue mix in 2025 shows a sector shifting toward **higher-value, lower-volume categories** that reward phenotype excellence, genetic integrity and scarcity-driven investment logic.

Industry sentiment played a powerful reinforcing role. By early 2025, safari outfitters across South Africa were reporting forward bookings at multi-year highs, bolstering demand for quality males across several plains and rare species. Security pressures eased, enabling more strategic deployment of high-value animals. Drought-prone regions benefited from improved rainfall cycles, supporting both breeding confidence and selective restocking strategies. These real-world conditions translated into buyers bidding more aggressively for superior animals while sellers held firm on reserve levels, resulting in a pricing curve that steepened across nearly every value tier of the market.

The **rebound in average pricing** also reflects a maturing buyer base. After years of volatility, speculative overshooting and subsequent corrections, 2025 buyers demonstrated an unusually rational willingness to pay for true quality, while avoiding inflated bidding on mid-tier animals.



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This price discipline across lower categories, paired with aggressive bidding at the top, created a pricing ladder that is both steep and structurally healthy. It suggests the market is now recognising the genuine biological scarcity of certain traits and horn-length thresholds — especially in buffalo, sable, nyala, waterbuck and niche colour-variant lines. Another important dimension is that **2025 outperformed inflation and GDP growth by a substantial margin**, reaffirming wildlife as a resilient alternative asset class. While South Africa's inflation sat at **3.2%** and GDP growth at **0.8%**, the auction market soared ahead on fundamentals uniquely decoupled from broader macroeconomic stagnation. This disconnect is meaningful: it reveals a sector increasingly insulated from domestic economic drag and more influenced by international tourism flows, private investment appetite and biodiversity-driven land use models.

Taken together, the 2025 vs 2024 comparison reveals not just a stronger year, but a **decisive structural shift**. The wildlife economy moved from stability into **value acceleration**, driven almost entirely by price strength rather than quantity expansion. It became a market where scarcity, genetics, tourism demand and disciplined breeding strategies aligned to create one of the strongest pricing environments in a decade. If 2024 represented consolidation, **2025 represents momentum** — momentum that is biologically grounded, economically rational and strategically positioned to carry into 2026 with confidence.

	2024		2025			2024		2025	
Specie	**Quantity**	**Percentage**	**Quantity**	**Percentage**	**Specie**	**Value**	**Percentage**	**Value**	**Percentage**
Impala	11 896	23.85%	11 592	23.17%	Buffalo	R149 713 000	23.32%	R212 649 500	23.69%
Blesbuck	8 399	16.84%	7 913	15.82%	Bluewildebeest	R85 327 100	13.29%	R109 516 850	12.20%
Bluewildebeest	8 098	16.23%	7 023	14.04%	Sable	R74 412 450	11.59%	R97 581 000	10.87%
Springbuck	3 561	7.14%	4 724	9.44%	Impala	R55 737 595	8.68%	R85 691 100	9.55%
Kudu	2 331	4.67%	2 377	4.75%	Gemsbuck	R43 691 650	6.80%	R53 195 400	5.93%
Zebra	2 249	4.51%	2 333	4.66%	Kudu	R37 050 450	5.77%	R59 706 550	6.65%
Gemsbuck	2 158	4.33%	2 042	4.08%	Eland	R33 228 000	5.18%	R41 256 500	4.60%
Sable	1 577	3.16%	1 407	2.81%	Blesbuck	R29 722 450	4.63%	R38 306 720	4.27%
Eland	1 538	3.08%	1 853	3.70%	Springbuck	R22 038 400	3.43%	R38 478 700	4.29%
Red Hartebeest	1 335	2.68%	1 453	2.90%	Roan Antelope	R19 170 500	2.99%	R20 590 000	2.29%
Nyala	1 328	2.66%	1 639	3.28%	Nyala	R15 804 950	2.46%	R24 825 350	2.77%
Waterbuck	1 170	2.35%	1 318	2.63%	Zebra	R15 502 900	2.41%	R19 433 800	2.16%
Buffalo	1 039	2.08%	870	1.74%	Waterbuck	R14 857 650	2.31%	R22 846 450	2.55%
Rest of the Species	3 204	6.42%	3 483	6.96%	Rest of the Species	R45 818 710	7.14%	R73 568 600	8.20%
Totals	**49 883**	**100.00%**	**50 027**	**100.00%**	**Totals**	**R642 075 805**	**100.00%**	**R897 646 520**	**100.00%**

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The species distribution table for 2024 and 2025 open a vivid window into how the wildlife economy continues to evolve, revealing not only which animals dominate the landscape of transactional activity, but also how value concentration has shifted across the industry. Although the tables present quantity and revenue side by side, their deeper story lies in how these proportions changed between the two years and what this says about species-level demand, breeding dynamics and market confidence. What emerges is a clear picture of an industry that remains **diverse in its structure**, yet increasingly defined by **strategic value clusters** where certain species drive volume while others anchor high-value performance.

In quantity terms, the market continues to be shaped by the dependable plains species that fuel auction liquidity. **Impala**, **blesbuck**, **blue wildebeest**, **springbuck** and **kudu** carry the bulk of transactional throughput, together forming the commercial backbone of the industry. Their sheer presence ensures that the market retains depth and accessibility even as higher-value species experience more pronounced year-to-year fluctuations. The distribution of volumes across these species in both 2024 and 2025 affirms the importance of broad-based plains game demand, illustrating that while genetics and scarcity drive excitement, it is the stability of these herds that keeps the market functioning with confidence.

On the revenue side, an entirely different hierarchy emerges. While plains game dominate the number of animals sold, **value becomes concentrated in a far narrower band**, led decisively by **buffalo**, followed by **blue wildebeest**, **sable**, **impala**, **gemsbuck** and **kudu**. These species hold a disproportionate share of total turnover, reminding us that the wildlife economy is not merely about quantity, but about the premium that buyers attach to genetics, phenotype quality and strategic breeding potential. The shift in value percentages from 2024 to 2025 shows clearly that species associated with rarity, horn structure, visual appeal or superior tourist value continue to command the greatest financial influence.

Together, these tables tell a story of a **dual-engine market**: one driven by the mass liquidity of plains game and the other by the high-value gravitational pull of elite species. The interplay between these two forces is what gives the wildlife industry its resilience, adaptability and long-term growth potential.

Impala



Impala once again dominate the total numbers, reinforcing their role as the **backbone of South Africa's wildlife economy**. Their consistently high volumes in both 2024 and 2025 reflect their incredible adaptability, fast breeding cycles and the stable demand they generate for restocking, hunting operations and live-sale ecosystems. Although their unit price is modest compared with premium species, impala drive **critical liquidity** in the market — ensuring auctions maintain strong throughput. Their social structure, large herd sizes and the species' ability to thrive across multiple habitats make them an indispensable baseline species for almost all game farms.

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Blesbok



Blesbok maintain their position as one of the most frequently traded plains game species, supported by strong demand from both restocking farms and the hunting industry. Their **predictable breeding patterns**, resilience to highveld climates and ease of management ensure that they remain a core contributor to auction numbers. Blesbok performance also mirrors the broader plains game sector: high, dependable volumes, steady prices and a crucial role in keeping the market's mid-tier categories healthy and active.

Blue Wildebeest



Blue wildebeest continue to post strong numbers and increasing value — a reflection of their **growing popularity as a hardy, high-utility species**. Their iconic stature, strong herd behaviour and resilience to drought make them an appealing choice for a wide range of landowners. The increment in value in 2025 highlights renewed interest in high-quality bulls with strong horn characteristics and the ongoing demand from hunting reserves, where the blue wildebeest is considered one of the most challenging and rewarding plains game hunts.

Springbok



Springbok show noticeable volume growth in 2025, a trend aligned with expanding market demand for **entry-level species that provide excellent hunting value, strong population growth and adaptability**. They are viewed as a reliable, economically efficient species for land diversification, especially in arid and semi-arid regions. Their consistent increases reinforce their role as one of the most commercially stable plains game animals in the country.

Kudu



Kudu remains one of the most **culturally and economically significant antelope** in South Africa. Their steady quantities mask a more complex value story: kudu genetics — particularly horn length and frame size — continue to command growing attention, contributing to the sharp increase in value from 2024 to 2025. As one of the premier trophy species, kudu holds enduring appeal and their strong presence in auctions remains a testament to both hunter demand and their ecological versatility.

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Zebra



Zebra maintain steady volumes and a rising value profile. Their importance lies not only in their commercial role but also in their **ecological significance**, shaping grazing patterns and grassland health. Zebra are increasingly favoured by ecotourism-oriented properties seeking high-visibility species and the value growth in 2025 reflects this. Their strong social structure and large herd appeal maintain their relevance across multiple land-use models.

Gemsbok (Oryx)



Gemsbok continue to trade consistently as a **premium plains game species**, valued for their striking appearance, exceptional drought tolerance and strong trophy appeal. The rise in value in 2025 indicates continued confidence from breeders and hunting reserves. Gemsbok are especially well suited to harsh, arid climates and their stable performance reinforces their importance in regions where other species may struggle under lower rainfall and tougher vegetation cycles.

Sable



Sable remain one of the **marquee premium species**, reflected in their consistently high value contributions despite lower quantities. The rise in 2025 value highlights the ongoing appetite for elite sable genetics, focusing on horn length, frame and bloodlines tied to historically proven breeding programs. Sable continue to symbolise prestige and quality in the wildlife market and although volumes are smaller, their financial impact remains significant.

Eland



Eland show healthy growth in both quantity and value, signalling renewed appreciation for **Africa and the world's largest antelope**. Their versatility — bridging the gap between plains game and premium species — combined with their excellent meat conversion ratio, makes eland increasingly attractive to diverse buyers. Their impressive body size and calm behaviour during capture add further commercial appeal. Value increases in 2025 suggest stronger demand for quality bulls and breeding cows.

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Red Hartebeest



Red hartebeest continue their upward trajectory, reflecting rising interest in this hardy, fast-moving species. Known for their **exceptional endurance, unique appearance and genetic robustness**, red hartebeest appeal to landowners seeking diversity and visual impact in open savannah systems. Their increased quantities in 2025 demonstrate expanding breeder confidence and reliable demand within hunting-oriented properties.

Nyala



Nyala display one of the most positive movements across both quantity and value. Demand for nyala continues to **grow sharply**, driven by their ability to thrive in bushveld habitats, their aesthetic appeal and the strong market preference for mature bulls with deep stripes and dark pelage. As one of South Africa's most photogenic antelope, nyala also attract **ecotourism operators**. Their value increase in 2025 reflects rising breeder confidence and enduring demand for quality bloodlines. Unlike kudu—whose iconic bell-shaped, widely flaring horns create a very different trophy profile—nyala bulls carry a more compact, **tightly spiralled horn set**, which has become increasingly desirable among breeders seeking a distinctive visual phenotype to diversify their herds.

Waterbuck



Waterbuck show consistent upward trends in both trading volume and total value. Their visual impact, large body size and suitability to wetter regions contribute to their growing popularity. Waterbuck herds are increasingly used in mixed-species systems where **ecotourism and hunting demand overlap** and the value increase in 2025 suggests stronger appreciation for mature bulls with long, symmetrical horns — one of the species' defining features.

Buffalo



Buffalo continue to be the **single most influential value driver** in the entire wildlife market. Even though their quantities are modest, buffalo dominate total revenue due to their exceptional pricing power. The dramatic value increase from 2024 to 2025 underscores their enduring appeal: buyers continue to chase top genetics, superior horn spreads and verified disease-free lineage. Buffalo remain, without question, the flagship species of South African wildlife auctions — shaping financial results even in years where volumes are subdued.

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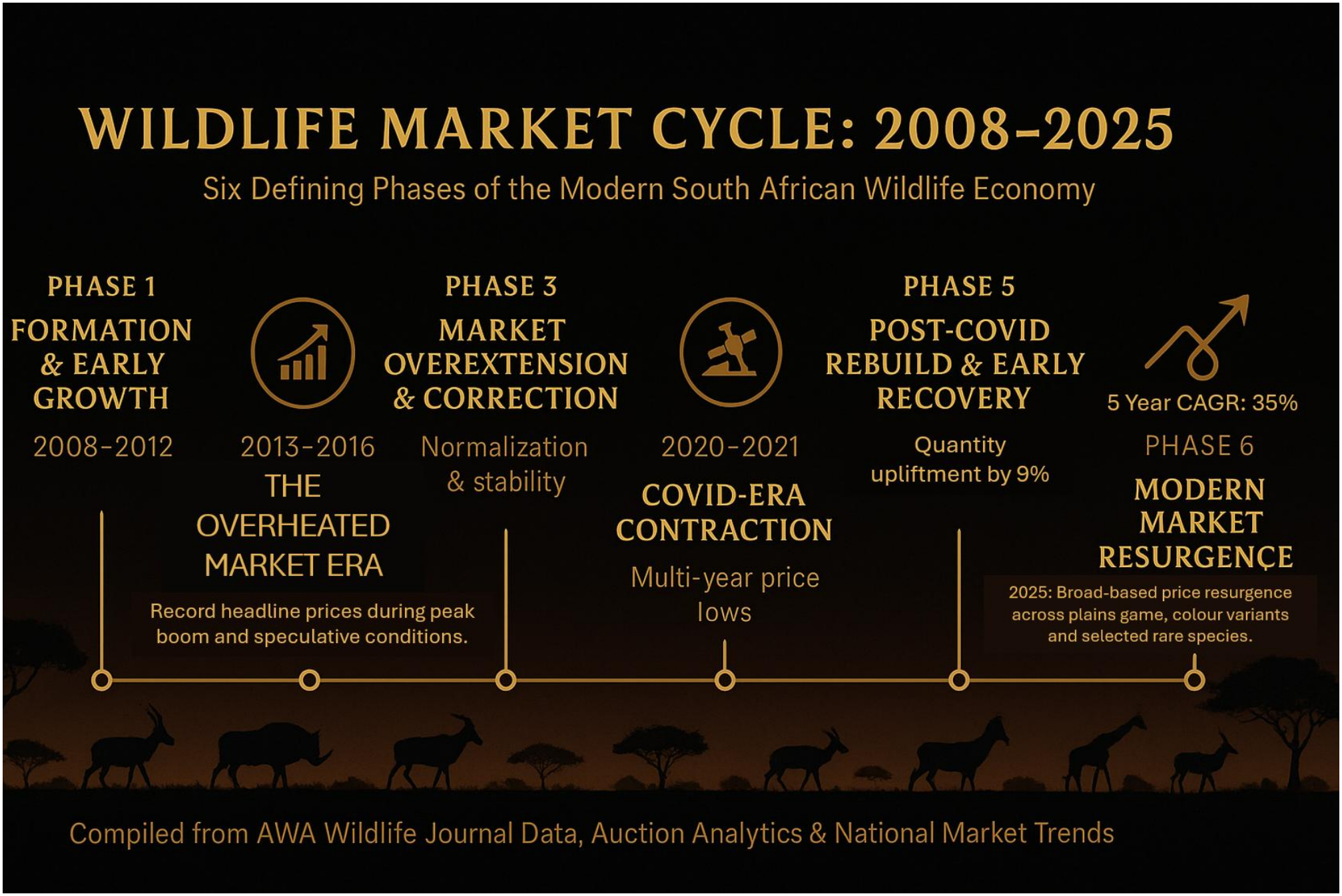

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Wildlife Industry Trends & Analysis:

PLAIN'S GAME

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Total Plains Game Species Data



Plains game forms the **backbone of the South African wildlife economy**, representing the species most commonly encountered across game reserves, private wildlife estates and mixed-use conservation landscapes. These animals—such as impala, blue wildebeest, kudu, eland, zebra, springbok, blesbok, red hartebeest, waterbuck, nyala, bushbuck and others—are **abundant, resilient** and naturally adapted to a wide range of ecological conditions. Their **stable populations** and **predictable breeding cycles** make them the **foundation** on which both conservation and commercial wildlife models are built.

The table on the right presents a **multi-year overview of plains-game revenues**, offering a clear lens into how value, quantity and pricing have shifted across the South African wildlife economy over more than two decades.

The value of plains game extends far beyond simple abundance. They are the species that **sustain the tourism experience**, creating the iconic, ever-moving scenery of the African savannah and ensuring that visitors consistently encounter wildlife in its natural setting. For game farms and private reserves, plains game provide crucial **ecological balance**—occupying different niches, controlling vegetation through varied feeding strategies and supporting **predator–prey dynamics** that keep ecosystems healthy. Economically, they **underpin the majority** of the hunting and live-sale markets, offering a **reliable revenue stream** for landowners who depend on consistent animal numbers for sustainable off-take. Because they are widely distributed, hardy and reproduce efficiently, they serve as an **accessible entry point** for emerging breeders and landholders diversifying into wildlife. In short, plains game are the **practical engine** of the industry—**ecologically essential**, **commercially dependable** and central to maintaining biodiversity across South Africa's varied landscapes.

Summary of Revenue Wildlife Industry - Plains Game

Year		Value	Quantity		Average Price	Quantity %	Pricing %
2001	R	22 103 719	8 657	R	2 553		
2002	R	31 317 291	11 744	R	2 667	35.7%	4.4%
2003	R	28 730 055	11 676	R	2 461	-0.6%	-7.7%
2004	R	31 944 334	14 399	R	2 219	23.3%	-9.8%
2005	R	16 859 615	7 578	R	2 225	-47.4%	0.3%
2006	R	18 744 235	8 280	R	2 264	9.3%	1.8%
2007	R	23 540 895	8 833	R	2 665	6.7%	17.7%
2008	R	25 493 700	8 424	R	3 026	-4.6%	13.6%
2009	R	27 334 360	8 462	R	3 230	0.5%	6.7%
2010	R	23 784 305	7 334	R	3 243	-13.3%	0.4%
2011	R	35 213 115	8 433	R	4 176	15.0%	28.8%
2012	R	43 324 160	9 515	R	4 553	12.8%	9.0%
2013	R	79 049 969	15 264	R	5 179	60.4%	13.7%
2014	R	209 496 455	22 147	R	9 459	45.1%	82.7%
2015	R	355 375 095	33 217	R	10 699	50.0%	13.1%
2016	R	276 320 034	30 081	R	9 186	-9.4%	-14.1%
2017	R	203 721 718	30 841	R	6 606	2.5%	-28.1%
2018	R	126 812 000	24 041	R	5 275	-22.0%	-20.1%
2019	R	119 295 420	26 358	R	4 526	9.6%	-14.2%
2020	R	65 051 690	16 133	R	4 032	-38.8%	-10.9%
2021	R	126 869 110	25 515	R	4 972	58.2%	23.3%
2022	R	183 544 006	33 641	R	5 456	31.8%	9.7%
2023	R	255 002 037	37 422	R	6 814	11.2%	24.9%
2024	R	281 387 235	39 803	R	7 069	6.4%	3.7%
2025	R	368 608 550	39 201	R	9 403	-1.5%	33.0%

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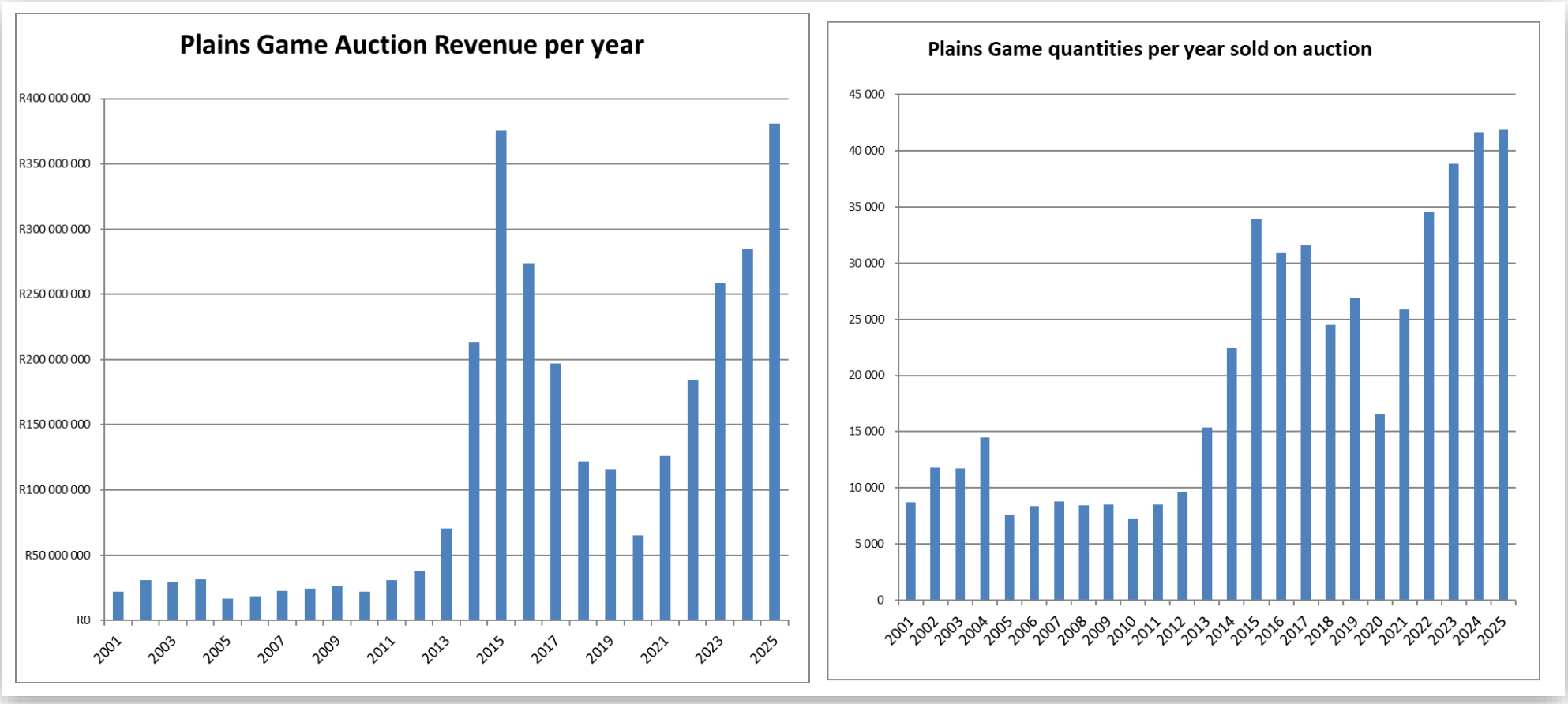
Total Plains Game Species Graphs

The two graphs below illustrate the **long-term evolution of plains-game performance on South African auctions**, capturing both **total revenue generated per year** and the **number of animals sold annually**. Together, they provide a powerful, visual overview of how the plains-game segment—traditionally the volume backbone of the wildlife economy—has expanded, contracted and responded to economic conditions over the past 25 years. The **revenue graph** highlights major growth cycles, including the surge of the mid-2010s and the strong rebound from 2021 onward, showing how pricing strength and broader market confidence have lifted annual turnover to record levels by 2025. Meanwhile, the **quantity graph** tracks the physical flow of plains game through auctions, revealing periods of herd expansion, drought-related contractions and the more recent wave of increased supply as breeding programs matured.



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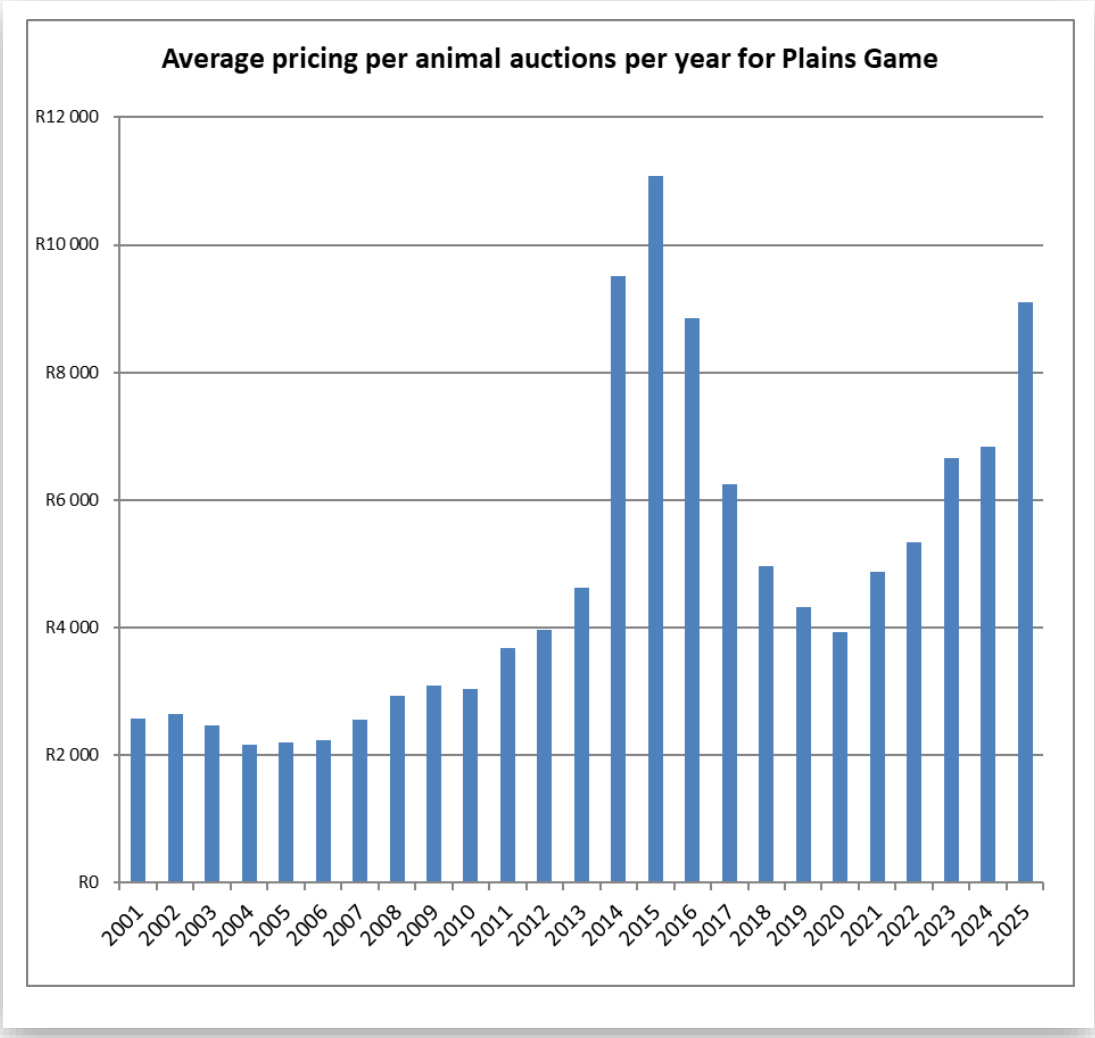
Viewed together, these graphs show how **volume trends and revenue performance interact**, revealing clear structural shifts in the industry: rising commercialisation, improved genetic management and a steady consolidation of plains game as a **stable, scalable and demand-driven sector** within the broader wildlife market.

The third graph (on the right) highlights the **average price achieved per plains-game animal at auctions from 2001 to 2025**, offering a clear sense of how buyer willingness to pay has evolved over nearly 25 years. Rather than focusing on total revenue or total quantities, this view isolates the **underlying price dynamics**, showing how market confidence, genetics, demand cycles and broader economic conditions influenced the value placed on the "typical" plains-game animal.



Across the timeline, the graph shows periods of **steady, incremental growth**, interrupted by moments of **sharper upward movement**, particularly during the mid-2010s and again in the post-2021 recovery phase. These pricing surges generally reflect times when demand strengthened faster than supply and when breeders invested heavily in improving herd quality. The more recent upswing into 2025 reinforces the idea that plains game remain a **fundamentally resilient and investable segment**, with prices rising in line with renewed market activity and improved buyer sentiment.

Overall, this pricing trend provides important context for understanding how plains-game economics have matured—shaped both by long-term industry development and short-term market cycles—without requiring detailed analysis of each individual year.

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Total Plains Game Species Insights

The plains-game segment offers one of the most revealing windows into the broader South African wildlife economy. Unlike rare game—where individual genetics can create enormous price swings—plains game trade reflects **herd size management**, **commercial demand**, **ecological cycles** and the **baseline strength of the auction market**. When plains-game volumes move, the industry moves. When plains-game prices rise or fall, it usually signals a deeper structural shift. Across more than twenty years of data, a clear multi-phase narrative emerges—defined by expansion years, contraction years and moments of dramatic acceleration that reshaped breeder strategies.

Plains Game Market Growth/Decline analysis

Year	Value	Growth Value	Value %	Quantity %	Pricing %
2001	22 103 719				
2002	31 317 291	9 213 572	41.7%	35.7%	4.4%
2003	28 730 055	(2 587 236)	-8.3%	-0.6%	-7.7%
2004	31 944 334	3 214 279	11.2%	23.3%	-9.8%
2005	16 859 615	(15 084 719)	-47.2%	-47.4%	0.3%
2006	18 744 235	1 884 620	11.2%	9.3%	1.8%
2007	23 540 895	4 796 660	25.6%	6.7%	17.7%
2008	25 493 700	1 952 805	8.3%	-4.6%	13.6%
2009	27 334 360	1 840 660	7.2%	0.5%	6.7%
2010	23 784 305	(3 550 055)	-13.0%	-13.3%	0.4%
2011	35 213 115	11 428 810	48.1%	15.0%	28.8%
2012	43 324 160	8 111 045	23.0%	12.8%	9.0%
2013	79 049 969	35 725 809	82.5%	60.4%	13.7%
2014	209 496 455	130 446 486	165.0%	45.1%	82.7%
2015	355 375 095	145 878 640	69.6%	50.0%	13.1%
2016	276 320 034	(79 055 061)	-22.2%	-9.4%	-14.1%
2017	203 721 718	(72 598 316)	-26.3%	2.5%	-28.1%
2018	126 812 000	(76 909 718)	-37.8%	-22.0%	-20.1%
2019	119 295 420	(7 516 580)	-5.9%	9.6%	-14.2%
2020	65 051 690	(54 243 730)	-45.5%	-38.8%	-10.9%
2021	126 869 110	61 817 420	95.0%	58.2%	23.3%
2022	183 544 006	56 674 896	44.7%	31.8%	9.7%
2023	255 002 037	71 458 031	38.9%	11.2%	24.9%
2024	281 387 235	26 385 198	10.3%	6.4%	3.7%
2025	368 608 550	87 221 315	31.0%	-1.5%	33.0%

The Early Foundations and First Market Shifts (2001–2008)

The plains game market began the 2000s on a relatively steady footing, starting with **R22.1 million** in **2001** before expanding meaningfully to **R31.3 million** in **2002**, a rise of **41.7%** driven by both increasing volumes (**35.7%**) and firmer pricing (**4.4%**). The momentum faltered in **2003**, when value slipped **-8.3%** to **R28.7 million**, although quantity declined only marginally at **-0.6%**, signalling a mild recalibration rather than a structural shock.

By **2004**, the market regained composure with an **11.2%** rise to **R31.94 million**, although pricing still softened at **-9.8%**, showing that buyers were cautious even as quantities expanded. The dramatic contraction in **2005**, where value dropped **-47.2%** to **R16.86 million**, aligned almost perfectly with a **-47.4%** decline in quantity, suggesting that supply constraints rather than pricing sentiment drove the downturn.

The recovery that followed was gradual but consistent. From **2006–2008**, value climbed from **R18.74 million** to **R25.49 million**, with **2007** and **2008** showing positive value growth of **25.6%** and **8.3%**.

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Pricing began to reassert itself with increases of **17.7%** in **2007** and **13.6%** in **2008**, while quantity remained stable to slightly negative. The market was slowly maturing into a more stable plains game segment with predictable demand and disciplined supply.

The First Expansion Wave and Market Repricing (2009–2012)

The period from **2009–2012** marked a new phase of rising confidence. Value increased from **R27.33 million** in **2009** to **R43.32 million** by **2012**, lifted by steady growth in pricing—**6.7%**, **0.4%**, **28.8%**, and **9.0%** across the four years. The standout rebound occurred in **2011**, when value jumped **48.1%** to **R35.21 million**, powered by both healthier pricing (**28.8%**) and stronger quantity (**15.0%**). This band signalled a broad revaluation of plains game genetics as demand expanded across both hunting and breeding markets. Importantly, the growth remained measured and fundamentally supported, without the distortions that would characterise later years in other segments.

The Super-Cycle Surge and Peak Confidence (2013–2015)

Between **2013** and **2015**, the plains game market entered its strongest growth phase in decades. Value soared from **R79.04 million** in **2013** to **R209.49 million** in **2014**, an extraordinary **165.0%** expansion, before climbing again to **R355.37 million** in **2015**, a further **69.6%** increase. This surge was underpinned by aggressive quantity growth—**60.4%** in **2013**, **45.1%** in **2014**, and **50.0%** in **2015**—suggesting widespread herd expansion and market enthusiasm. Pricing also strengthened sharply, particularly in **2014**, when it jumped **82.7%**, indicating that buyers were willing to pay significantly more for plains game across multiple species categories. This was the era of peak optimism, driven by strong wildlife investment cycles, buoyant auction participation, and expanding private ranching activity. Major breeders purchased various plains-game species to reinforce and expand their colour-variant breeding operations.

Correction, Contraction and Market Recalibration (2016–2020)

The exuberance of the super-cycle ended abruptly in **2016**, when value fell **-22.2%** to **R276.32 million**, followed by a deeper **-26.3%** decline in **2017**, a **-37.8%** contraction in **2018**, and a further softening in **2019**. Pricing fell consistently over these four years, most notably **-28.1%** in **2017** and **-20.1%** in **2018**, reflecting both oversupply and declining bidder willingness. By **2020**, value sank to **R65.05 million**, a **-45.5%** drop, with quantity collapsing **-38.8%** and pricing down **-10.9%**. This marked the deepest trough in the cycle, reinforced by the **COVID-19** shock, which restricted international travel, reduced hunting activity, and tightened liquidity in the wildlife economy. This five-year period reshaped breeder behaviour, forced consolidation and reminded the industry that plains game, while resilient, is not immune to cyclical pressures.

Recovery, Repricing and Structural Normalisation (2021–2024)

The rebound began powerfully in **2021**, where value almost doubled to **R126.86 million**, a **95.0%** surge, supported by a **58.2%** rise in quantity and a healthy **23.3%** increase in pricing. Hunters returned, lodge occupancy improved, and supply chains stabilised.

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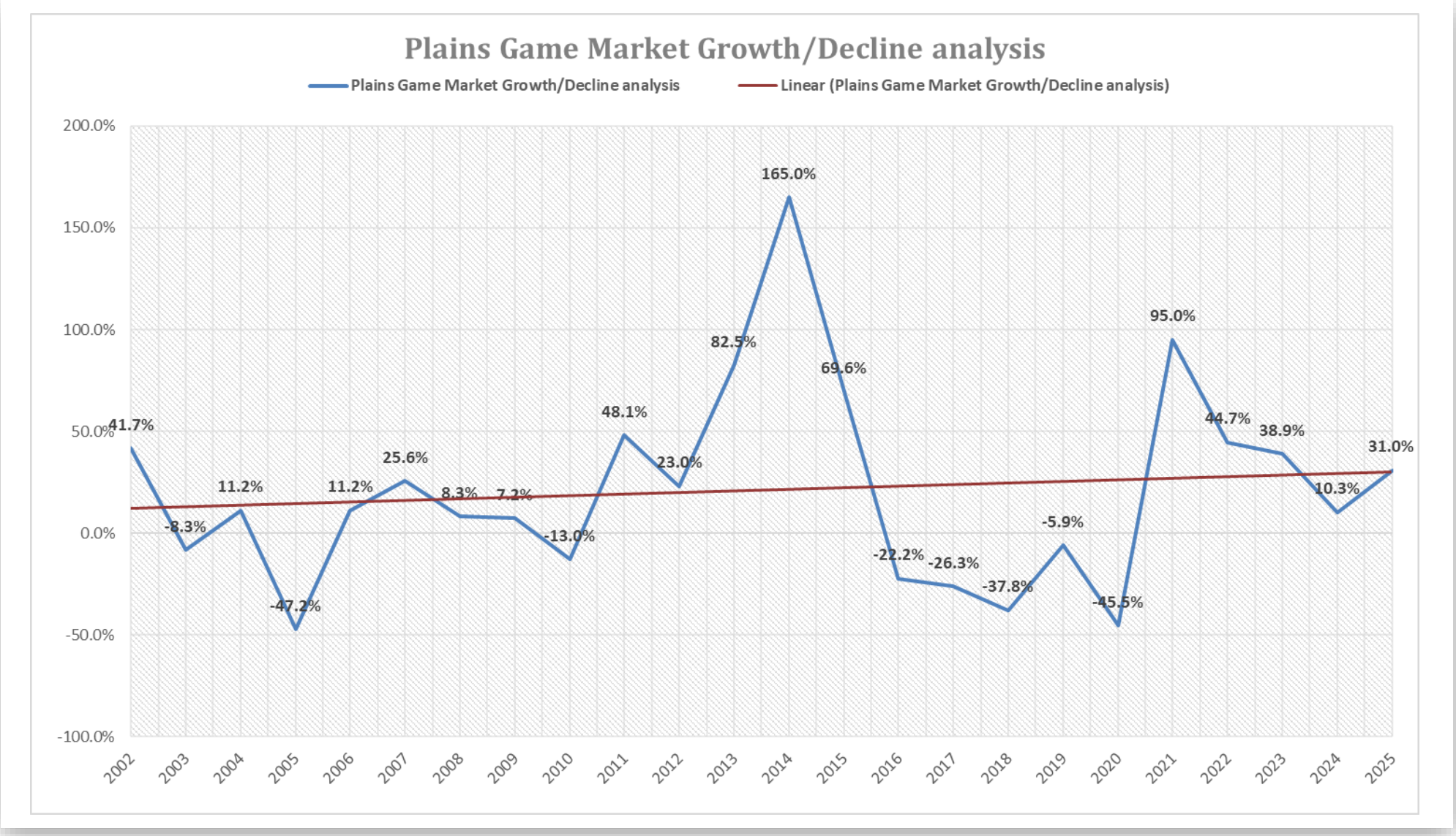
The recovery remained steady through **2022** and **2023**, with values climbing to **R183.54 million** and **R255.00 million**, supported by positive pricing (**9.7%** and **24.9%**) and meaningful though moderating quantity growth. By **2024**, the market reached **R281.38 million**, growing at a more modest **10.3%**, consistent with a sector that had moved beyond rebound mode into stabilisation. Pricing rose **3.7%**, signalling a mature, less speculative environment with more predictable buyer behaviour.



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2025 – A Strong Renewal Driven by Pricing Power

The transition from **2024** to **2025** marked a decisive re-acceleration in plains game performance. Market value expanded from **R281.38 million** to **R368.60 million**, an increase of **R87.22 million** and a growth rate of **31.0%**, far outpacing the prior year's **10.3%**.

What defined **2025** was the **shift in what drove the growth**. Quantity moved slightly negative at **-1.5%**, yet pricing surged **33.0%**—a dramatic contrast to the soft **3.7%** recorded in **2024**. This indicates a market where scarcity, quality differentiation, and strong buyer intent drove average values rather than increased supply.

Buyers demonstrated renewed appetite for well-bred plains game, particularly for animals with superior size, age profiles and conformation. This pricing resurgence aligns with the broader uplift observed across the wildlife economy in 2025, where improved breeder confidence, solid hunting demand and restored international presence all converged.

The significance of **2025** lies not only in the scale of the rebound but in its structure. The market grew because buyers paid materially more—not because more animals were sold. This reflects a **healthier, more sustainable** market dynamic where price strength, rather than volume expansion, leads the cycle.

In this sense, **2025** stands as a reaffirmation of the plains game market's resilience and a powerful indicator that demand has recalibrated upward as the sector prepares for the next chapter of growth. **The 2025 season** is heavily defined by a clear shortage in the supply of most plains-game species. The drought years prior to 2013 materially reduced breeding numbers across several key species, and these deficits are still working their way through the system. Until herds return to normal breeding increments, **supply constraints will continue to place upward pressure on prices**. Although the favourable rains of 2025 and into 2026 will accelerate herd recovery, the upward price trend for plains game is expected to persist well into the foreseeable future.

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The following table provides a focused, species-level view of the **2025 plains-game market**, breaking down each major category by its share of total sales, annual price movements and changes in auction quantities. While plains game operate at lower individual values than rare game, they form the **largest and most commercially influential volume segment** in the wildlife economy—shaping herd structures, auction liquidity and the financial heartbeat of the broader industry.

PLAINS GAME SPECIE DATA

Specie Name	% of total sales 2025	Price Change 2025	Quantity change 2025
Common Gemsbok	4.00%	20.08%	-8.05%
Total Common Impala (Male & Female)	3.75%	34.54%	-7.05%
Common Impala Female only	2.36%	35.51%	-9.29%
Common Impala Male only	1.39%	29.39%	-0.39%
Nyala	2.77%	27.27%	23.42%
Common Waterbuck	2.55%	36.50%	12.65%
Giraffe	0.69%	10.46%	14.23%
Total Kudu (Male and Female)	6.49%	53.15%	3.13%
Kudu Male Only	4.05%	41.89%	7.62%
Kudu Female Only	2.44%	66.50%	0.61%
Zebra	2.16%	20.84%	3.73%
Blesbok	4.27%	36.80%	-5.79%
Eland (Male and Female)	3.52%	8.73%	20.00%
Eland (Female)	1.99%	13.08%	38.98%
Eland (Male)	1.53%	24.55%	-14.14%
Redhartebeest	2.19%	31.04%	8.84%
Common Bluewildebeest (Male and Female)	4.79%	30.84%	-15.73%
Blue Wildebeest (Female)	2.43%	31.45%	-18.93%
Blue Wildebeest (Male)	2.36%	24.45%	-8.12%
Springbok	4.29%	31.61%	32.66%
PLAINS GAME AVERAGES	41.06%	33.01%	-1.51%

This dataset highlights how different plain species contributed to the year's overall performance, revealing clear patterns of **selective demand**, **pricing strength** and **supply constraints** across the board. Some species, such as kudu, waterbuck and springbok, achieved strong price growth with stable quantities, signalling growing market confidence in hardy, veld-reliable animals.

Others, like blue wildebeest and eland males, saw quantity contractions that hint at tightening supply and more selective release strategies by breeders.

Importantly, the table helps distinguish between **general plains-game momentum** and **species-specific dynamics**, showing which animals drove 2025's pricing uplift and which ones played a stabilising role in overall auction turnover. Together, these species-level insights deepen the story told earlier in the plains-game revenue and pricing trends—illustrating how the segment's broad resilience is built on a diverse mix of commercially relevant, ecologically adaptable game.

It also sets the stage for the detailed species commentary that follows, where each animal's pricing behaviour, market role and long-term trends are unpacked in a more granular and insightful manner.

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The **2025 plains-game data** tells the story of an industry that has matured, recalibrated and then advanced with renewed clarity of purpose. What emerges is a marketplace shaped not by a single dominant specie, but by the subtle interplay of multiple commercially significant animals—each revealing its own balance of supply pressure, pricing strength and buyer intent. Together, they form a picture of a sector that still anchors **41% of total wildlife sales**, making plains game the **economic bedrock** of South Africa's wildlife economy. Their volumes remain broadly stable, yet their pricing behaviour has become more dynamic and more reflective of quality, genetics and veld performance than ever before.



Impala—long known as the **workhorse of auction liquidity**—demonstrated exactly why they remain indispensable. Total impala recorded **price growth of 34.54%**, even as quantities eased by **–7.05%**. This shift highlights a clear market preference: buyers are prioritising **better-structured, well-managed herds** rather than chasing bulk numbers. Impala ewes showed even stronger pricing momentum, rising **36.71%** despite a sharper quantity contraction of **–9.23%**. The market is signalling—decisively—that breeding potential and lineage matter more than sheer volume. Impala in 2025 represent not just reliability, but **genetic refinement and herd-building strategy**.

Nyala and waterbuck continued this theme of **confidence paired with selective expansion**. Nyala posted price growth of **27.27%** along with an impressive **23.42% rise in quantity**, one of the clearest cases of broad-based demand among plains species. Its dual presence in ecotourism estates and trophy markets gives it versatility unmatched by many others. Waterbuck added its own compelling narrative: **36.50% pricing growth** and **12.65% quantity expansion**, confirming a rising appreciation for hardy, visually striking animals that perform well across varied ecological zones.

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These species show that buyers are drawn to **veld-ready, aesthetically appealing and commercially stable** options—traits that create momentum even in competitive market conditions.



Kudu, the iconic flagship of plains game, delivered one of the strongest performances of the year. Total kudu achieved **53.15% pricing growth** with a modest but important **3.13% increase in quantity**, underscoring sustained demand for animals with notable horn genetics and excellent adaptability. Kudu bulls followed suit with pricing up **41.89%** and quantities rising **7.62%**, reaffirming their place as a **high-value genetic anchor** for serious breeders. The kudu numbers reflect a species reasserting its prominence after several fluctuating years—an animal whose trophy appeal, breeding reliability and veld resilience continue to command outsized buyer attention.

Zebra and blesbok illustrated more nuanced dynamics. Zebra recorded price growth of **20.84%**, with quantities essentially stable at **3.73%**, reinforcing its dependable role in both tourism and mixed-use game systems. Blesbok, meanwhile, posted robust price growth of **36.80%**, even though quantities slipped **–5.79%**. This pattern suggests selective release from breeders while demand remained strong enough to keep prices firm. Both species show the market's appreciation for commercially versatile plains animals that integrate easily into diverse field conditions.

Eland presented a split narrative—one shaped by gender-specific movements. **Eland females surged**, with quantities rising **38.98%**, while pricing increased a more moderate **13.08%**. This likely reflects breeders capitalising on strong veld conditions to lighten herds or adjust management costs, knowing that buyers continue to value female eland for their contribution to long-term herd structure.

Eland males, by contrast, saw quantities fall **–14.14%** while pricing strengthened **24.55%**, indicating selective release strategies for bulls with stronger commercial appeal. The eland market in 2025 feels **transitional yet stable**, shaped heavily by ecological conditions and cost dynamics, but still supported by solid underlying demand.

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Blue wildebeest delivered one of the clearest examples of **supply tightening driving pricing resilience**. Total blue wildebeest quantities contracted **-15.73%**, yet pricing climbed **30.84%**, suggesting deliberate herd protection or environmental constraints reducing off-take. Blue wildebeest females mirrored this trend, with a **–18.93% quantity drop** but pricing rising **31.45%**. The shortage in supply of blue wildebeest is now starting to impact on the prices of the specie.

As one of the most robust and veld-hardy species in South Africa, blue wildebeest remain a cornerstone of commercial game systems and 2025 reaffirmed their status as **high-confidence purchases** even in lower supply years.

Springbok closed the plains-game picture with one of the strongest dual movements across the entire dataset. Pricing surged **31.61%**, while quantities expanded a significant **32.66%**, signalling heightened commercial interest driven by the species' versatility in hunting, live sales and the increasingly important game-meat sector. Springbok's 2025 performance captures **the core energy of the plains-game resurgence**—high demand for animals that deliver reproductive efficiency, veld toughness and economic adaptability.

Across the board, **plains-game averages** reveal a sharply rising pricing environment, with **33.01% average price growth**, paired with virtually steady quantities overall (**–1.51%**). This equilibrium—strong value expansion without disruptive volatility—reflects a **disciplined, mature and confidence-driven market**. Breeders released stock selectively and strategically, while buyers demonstrated sustained appetite for quality genetics and veld-reliable species. The result is a plains-game ecosystem where **genetic strength, sustainability and commercial utility** are rewarded more decisively than ever before.



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The 2025 plains-game results reveal a sector that has moved into a confident, disciplined and unmistakably strengthening rhythm after years of volatility. Prices surged across nearly all major species—**not because of speculative exuberance, but because the market is experiencing a genuine and widening shortage of quality supply**. With overall quantities holding almost perfectly stable, this year's results make one fact impossible to ignore: **demand now materially exceeds the availability of mature, well-conditioned plains-game animals**, placing sustained upward pressure on pricing across the board.

This supply shortage is now one of the dominant forces shaping plains-game economics. Animals such as impala, springbok, waterbuck, nyala and kudu all recorded robust price growth precisely because breeders cannot replenish prime-age stock at the rate the market is absorbing it. Buyers are increasingly competing for fewer top-tier individuals, rewarding ecological adaptability, veld resilience and bloodline integrity with meaningful price premiums.

Even species under visible supply stress—such as blue wildebeest and several eland categories—**not only resisted downward pressure but strengthened in price**, reaffirming that the plains-game sector is operating with deep structural demand and elevated buyer confidence. This marks a decisive shift from their historic identity as high-volume, low-margin commodities: **plains game now command premium value rooted in scarcity, genetics and long-term breeding potential.**

Against a backdrop of past boom-bust cycles, drought pressure and pandemic disruption, the 2025 landscape stands out as one of the most stable and investment-friendly plains-game markets in more than a decade. **They remain the financial engine of the wildlife economy—liquid, dependable and increasingly capable of generating strong, predictable returns because scarcity is working in their favour, not against it.** The year's data confirms a sector that is not only resilient, but strategically maturing and transitioning into a new era where sustainability, quality and scarcity—not speculation—drive long-term value creation.

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Total Plain Species with Colour Variants Data



Plains game with colour variants sits at the *dynamic crossroads* of tradition and innovation within South Africa's wildlife economy. While foundational species like impala, blesbok, wildebeest and gemsbok have long formed the backbone of auction volumes, the emergence of colour variants—such as **black, white-flank, saddleback and dappled impala**, **golden and Kings wildebeest** and **golden or red gemsbok**—has added a *new layer of genetic expression, visual appeal and commercial opportunity*. These animals remain rooted in the plains-game category, yet their distinctive phenotypes place them in a more specialised sphere that rewards breeders who prioritise aesthetics, conformation and the consistency of inherited traits.

The value of plains-game colour variants lies in their ability to combine **market stability** with **creative expansion**. Unlike rare game, these species benefit from high adaptability, strong reproductive rates and broad environmental tolerance. This provides producers with *reliable herd-building potential*, while the colour-variant lines introduce a **premium tier** that enhances auction interest, farm branding and photographic appeal. Demand is often driven not by scarcity alone, but by the *pursuit of visually striking animals* that can differentiate a farm, diversify revenue streams and provide an entry point into the genetics space without the extreme capital commitments associated with rare game.

Economically and ecologically, plains-game colour variants have played a crucial role in **broadening participation** in the wildlife sector. They allow smaller or emerging landowners to enter the genetic market at accessible price points while still engaging in meaningful breeding strategies. Because these species remain hardy and low-maintenance relative to rare game, investors can pursue **phenotypic enhancement** without facing the heightened disease, security or habitat constraints typical of high-value species. This has led to widespread adoption of black impala, white impala, golden wildebeest and other variants across mixed farming units, weekend ranches and diversified wildlife estates.

From a tourism and visual-experience perspective, plains-game colour variants have become **powerful aesthetic assets**. Their distinctive coats create contrast and vibrancy against the bushveld, elevating both photographic tourism and marketing visibility for private reserves. In many regions, a well-managed herd of black impala or golden wildebeest has become a *signature attraction*—a symbol of genetic progress, brand identity and modern wildlife stewardship. Yet beneath this beauty is a market shaped by **fashion cycles, breeder confidence and phenotype discipline**. Colour variants can surge when visual preferences align and they can cool when oversupply or speculative breeding pressures emerge. The segment behaves like a *tempered version of the rare-game cycle*: less volatile, more grounded in biological abundance, but still responsive to trends in coat quality, horn structure, line purity and the perceived prestige of certain variants. The best-performing operations recognise that consistency and predictable production are just as important as standout animals and that **genetic credibility** has become a central currency in this space. Ultimately, plains-game colour variants serve

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as the **creative engine** of the wildlife economy—where aesthetic expression, accessible genetics and ecological resilience converge. They complement the stability provided by traditional plains game, enhance the diversity and excitement of auctions and offer landowners a pathway into the world of premium breeding without the financial risk profile of rare game. Together, they form the industry's **broad canvas of opportunity**: grounded in abundance, elevated by visual rarity and constantly reshaped by innovation, demand and the evolving tastes of South Africa's wildlife community.

Summary of Revenue Wildlife Industry - Plains Game Colour Variants							
Year		Value	Quantity		Average Price	Quantity %	Pricing %
2001	R	12 727	11	R	1 157		
2002	R	2 204 390	120	R	18 370	990.9%	1487.7%
2003	R	1 584 339	71	R	22 315	-40.8%	21.5%
2004	R	464 150	26	R	17 852	-63.4%	-20.0%
2005	R	56 800	40	R	1 420	53.8%	-92.0%
2006	R	210 100	71	R	2 959	77.5%	108.4%
2007	R	2 280 500	51	R	44 716	-28.2%	1411.1%
2008	R	4 287 300	89	R	48 172	74.5%	7.7%
2009	R	6 577 300	162	R	40 601	82.0%	-15.7%
2010	R	15 875 850	140	R	113 399	-13.6%	179.3%
2011	R	50 464 000	387	R	130 398	176.4%	15.0%
2012	R	147 992 800	698	R	212 024	80.4%	62.6%
2013	R	99 501 200	588	R	169 220	-15.8%	-20.2%
2014	R	339 021 300	1 236	R	274 289	110.2%	62.1%
2015	R	560 727 067	2 350	R	238 607	90.1%	-13.0%
2016	R	326 141 547	3 333	R	97 852	41.8%	-59.0%
2017	R	80 958 025	3 762	R	21 520	12.9%	-78.0%
2018	R	40 260 930	3 618	R	11 128	-3.8%	-48.3%
2019	R	23 014 250	2 676	R	8 600	-26.0%	-22.7%
2020	R	12 906 180	1 952	R	6 612	-27.1%	-23.1%
2021	R	30 145 920	2 962	R	10 178	51.7%	53.9%
2022	R	45 152 286	3 870	R	11 667	30.7%	14.6%
2023	R	83 166 981	5 513	R	15 086	42.5%	29.3%
2024	R	101 729 670	6 465	R	15 735	17.3%	4.3%
2025	R	167 044 070	7 631	R	21 890	18.0%	39.1%

The table on Plains Game Colour Variants represents one of the most dynamic and structurally significant segments of the modern wildlife economy.

What began as a niche breeding movement in the mid-2000s has evolved into a mature, multi-layered market characterised by **high volumes**, **broadening demand** and **distinct genetic value propositions** across species such as Saddleback Impala, Black Impala, White & White-Flanked Impala, Dappled Impala, Golden Gemsbok and Livingston Eland colour expressions.

The 2025 data shows that this class has retained meaningful economic weight within the broader plains-game category, with certain variants delivering **exceptional quantity growth** while others reflect **selective price resilience** in response to shifting buyer preferences.

Across the silo, the combination of **expanding commercial farms**, **restocking initiatives** and the persistent allure of visually striking genetics has kept this category highly relevant even after the stabilisation that followed the 2014–2016 boom cycle.

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The table therefore frames a market that is no longer purely speculative but firmly integrated into **mainstream herd-building strategies**.

PLAINS GAME COLOUR VARIANTS

2025 vs 2024

Total Quantities ↑ 18%

Average Price ↑ 39.1%

Total Value ↑ 64.2%

% of Total Sales 18.6%



A closer reading of the table reveals a category moving in two simultaneous directions: consolidation and expansion. Species like the **Black Impala** and **White/White-Flank Impala** continue to hold disproportionately strong positions in 2025. Their genetics remain visually captivating and their brand recognition in mixed-use lodges, tourism estates and photographic reserves ensures **consistent visibility and reliable demand**. The table's price change figures clearly show that despite maturing supply chains, top-tier variants retain **significant investor confidence**, with some classes recording notable **double-digit price appreciation**.

More subtle—but equally important—is the behaviour of quantity movements in 2025. Several variants expanded sharply in number, signalling that breeders are increasingly treating colour variants as **scalable, commercial components** of their broader plains-game strategies rather than specialist curiosities. For instance, the **Saddleback Impala**, once highly niche, recorded a **spectacular rise in quantities**, emphasising a shift toward **volume-driven trading** rather than rarity-driven exclusivity.

Similarly, **Dappled Impala** show extraordinary increases in throughput, demonstrating widening market acceptance and buyer willingness to integrate these genetics into herd development plans.

Conversely, some variants—while still valuable—exhibited **price compression** despite rising volumes. This reflects the natural consequence of market normalisation as supply grows, but it simultaneously illustrates the resilience of buyer participation: **demand is broad, not superficial**. Importantly, even where prices softened, the table indicates sustained liquidity, proving that colour variants fulfil a reliable role in keeping auctions active and diversified.

A standout theme is the **return of Golden Gemsbok/Oryx interest**, where quantity gains align with renewed ecological appreciation.

As climate conditions shift and hardiness becomes a more prized attribute, colour variants within species already known for resilience naturally experience renewed attention.

Across all variants, the table underscores a maturing market that has successfully transitioned from the speculative highs of a decade ago into a **balanced, strategically integrated value segment** anchored by genetics, aesthetics and functional stocking needs.

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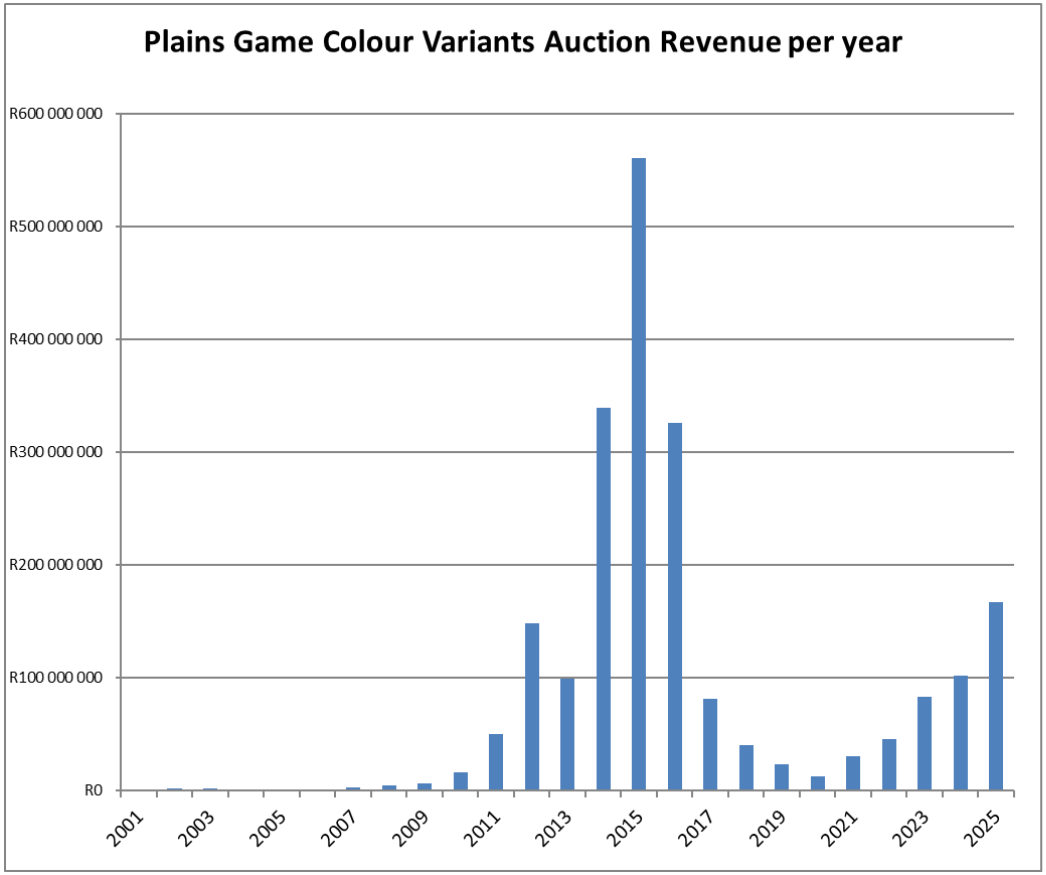
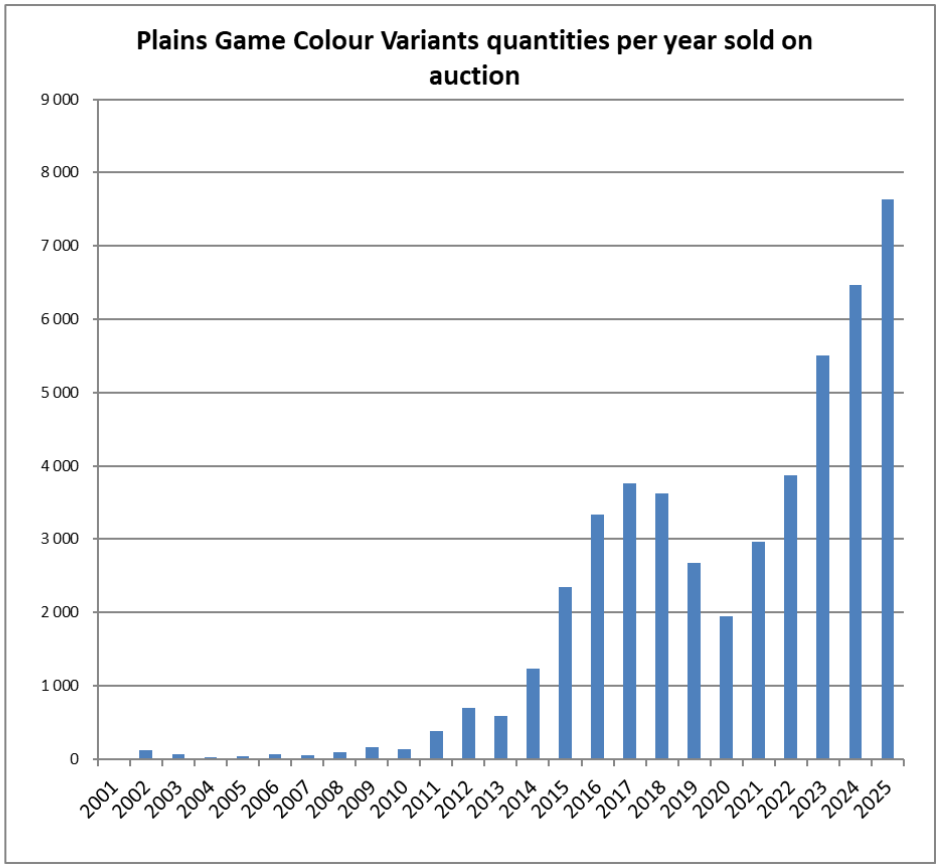
The revenue graph provides a long-term view of the evolution of this sector. The dramatic spike between **2013 and 2016** marks the historic colour-variant boom, where speculative breeding, rapid price escalation and intense investor enthusiasm drove revenue to unprecedented levels. This era represents the **zenith of colour-variant investment**, culminating in the enormous revenue peak around 2015.





However, what is far more telling is the period that follows. After the 2017 correction, revenues entered a **multi-year stabilisation phase**, but notably, they never collapsed to pre-boom insignificance. Instead, colour variants maintained **persistent underlying demand**, reflecting their new embedded status within commercial wildlife portfolios. The gradual recovery leading into 2023 and 2024, followed by the **strong upward push in 2025**, emphasizes a sector that has regained confidence—not through speculative highs, but through **broad-based participation and healthier price-to-volume equilibrium**.

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The renewed 2025 revenue uplift must therefore be interpreted as a structurally meaningful shift: a combination of **surging quantities** and **improving price trajectories** across several key variants.

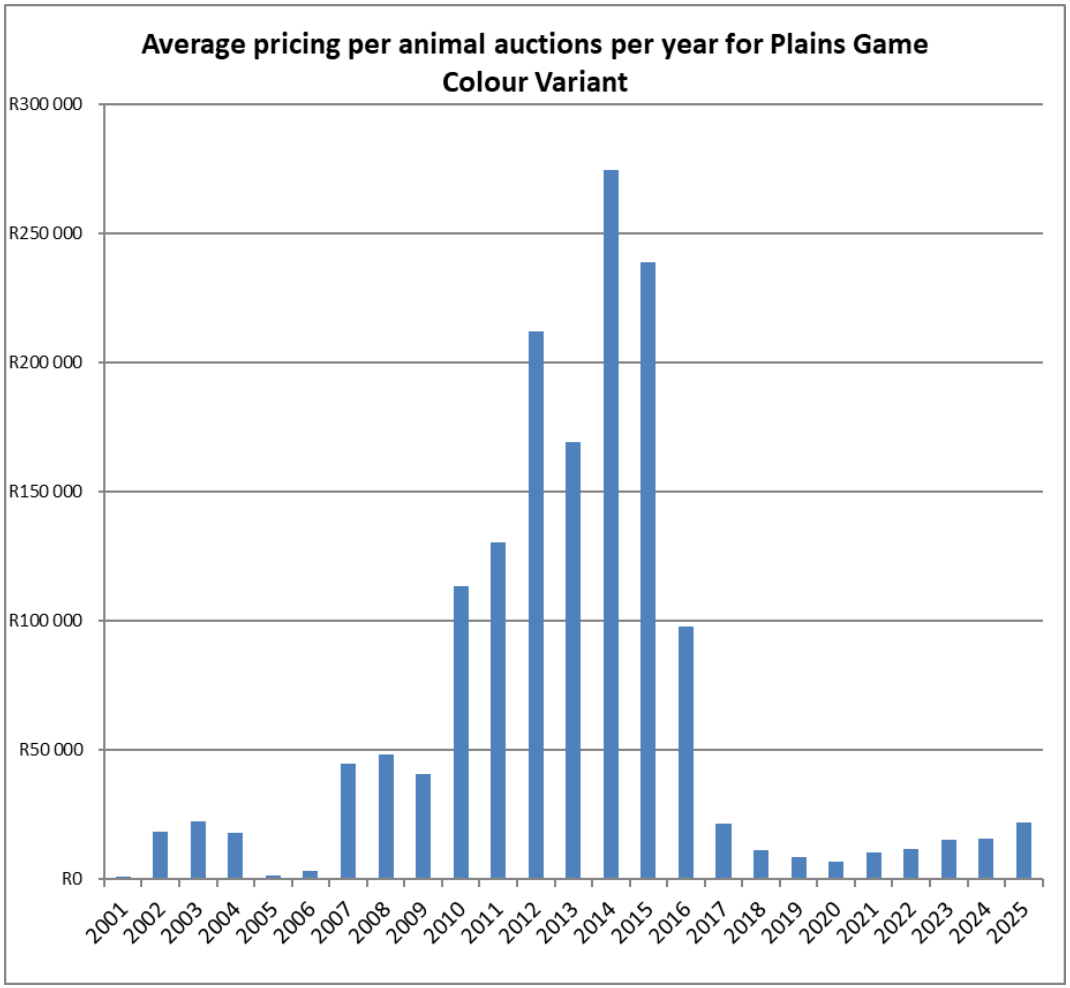
The quantities graph tells the second half of the story—and in many ways, the more revealing part. Quantity growth over the past decade has been nothing short of transformative. From negligible volumes in the early 2000s, the market accelerated sharply around **2012**, surged through **2016–2018** and after a temporary dip, entered a phase of **consistent exponential expansion**.

The pronounced increases in **2023, 2024 and especially 2025** show that colour variants have become a **mainstream liquidity engine** in auctions. The steady climb to **7 631 animals sold in 2025** confirms:

- the success of large-scale breeding programs
- strong restocking demand from game farms and tourism reserves
- greater genetic diversity entering the market
- a more educated and more risk-balanced buyer base

The alignment of rising quantities with the renewed revenue growth of 2025 reinforces a central conclusion:
the colour-variant market has matured into a high-volume, commercially relevant pillar of the wildlife economy, with demand now driven by practicality and aesthetics rather than speculative premiums.

The **average-price curve** for Plains Game Colour Variants tells one of the clearest stories of market psychology, speculative cycles and eventual structural realignment within the wildlife industry. The graph shows a dramatic and unmistakable **price super-cycle**, beginning with modest but rising values in the late 2000s before accelerating into a steep ascent between **2011 and 2015**, where average prices reached extraordinary levels of **R200 000–R280 000 per animal**. These were not isolated spikes; they were the result of a market experiencing **unprecedented capital inflows**, extreme rarity premiums and intense competition among early-stage investors.



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Total Plain Species with Colour Variants Insights

What stands out most is the **velocity of the rise**. Each year from 2010 to 2015 marks a step-change in market expectation, where buyers were not only willing but eager to pay steep premiums for novel colour genetics that appeared—at the time—to offer exceptional breeding returns. This created a textbook speculative apex: **prices far outpaced broader market fundamentals** and values became untethered from long-term supply-and-demand sustainability.

Equally important is the **speed of the correction**. The steep drop after 2016 demonstrates how rapidly a market can rebalance once supply begins to catch up with expectation and once price discovery settles back into rational territory. What follows is a decade-long stabilisation phase where average prices flatten into a consistent band, indicating that the market had effectively **reset to functional, commercially grounded valuations**.

The period from **2018 to 2025** is especially instructive. Prices no longer chase extreme highs—instead they show **measured, incremental increases**, reflecting a more mature marketplace where value is linked to:

- practical stocking needs,
- aesthetic-driven tourism demand,
- and stable genetics rather than rarity premiums.

The slight firming after 2021 shows renewed confidence, but not a return to speculative behaviour. Rather, it signals that colour variants have secured a **stable long-term price floor**, supported by consistent volume absorption and a more diversified buyer base.

Plains Game Colour Variants Market Growth/Decline analysis

Year	Value	Growth Value	Value %	Quantity %	Pricing %
2001	12 727				
2002	2 204 390	2 191 663	17220.6%	990.9%	1487.7%
2003	1 584 339	(620 051)	-28.1%	-40.8%	21.5%
2004	464 150	(1 120 189)	-70.7%	-63.4%	-20.0%
2005	56 800	(407 350)	-87.8%	53.8%	-92.0%
2006	210 100	153 300	269.9%	77.5%	108.4%
2007	2 280 500	2 070 400	985.4%	-28.2%	1411.1%
2008	4 287 300	2 006 800	88.0%	74.5%	7.7%
2009	6 577 300	2 290 000	53.4%	82.0%	-15.7%
2010	15 875 850	9 298 550	141.4%	-13.6%	179.3%
2011	50 464 000	34 588 150	217.9%	176.4%	15.0%
2012	147 992 800	97 528 800	193.3%	80.4%	62.6%
2013	99 501 200	(48 491 600)	-32.8%	-15.8%	-20.2%
2014	339 021 300	239 520 100	240.7%	110.2%	62.1%
2015	560 727 067	221 705 767	65.4%	90.1%	-13.0%
2016	326 141 547	(234 585 520)	-41.8%	41.8%	-59.0%
2017	80 958 025	(245 183 522)	-75.2%	12.9%	-78.0%
2018	40 260 930	(40 697 095)	-50.3%	-3.8%	-48.3%
2019	23 014 250	(17 246 680)	-42.8%	-26.0%	-22.7%
2020	12 906 180	(10 108 070)	-43.9%	-27.1%	-23.1%
2021	30 145 920	17 239 740	133.6%	51.7%	53.9%
2022	45 152 286	15 006 366	49.8%	30.7%	14.6%
2023	83 166 981	38 014 695	84.2%	42.5%	29.3%
2024	101 729 670	18 562 689	22.3%	17.3%	4.3%
2025	167 044 070	65 314 400	64.2%	18.0%	39.1%

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In essence, the average-price graph illustrates the **full emotional and economic cycle** of a specialist wildlife segment—from early discovery to exuberant overvaluation, followed by decisive correction and finally its re-emergence as a **balanced, commercially integrated component of the plains-game economy**.

The Quiet Origins and Explosive Awakening (2001–2002)

The colour-variant market began almost unnoticed in **2001**, recording a modest **R12 727** in total value. But everything changed in **2002**, when the market erupted into visibility with a surge to **R2 204 390**. This represented an extraordinary increase in value, supported by a near-unbelievable rise in quantity and an enormous pricing lift. The scale of this jump defined the moment the colour-variant segment truly entered commercial consciousness, fuelled by the rarity and novelty of newly emerging phenotypes.

Volatility, Retrenchment and Experimental Market Behaviour (2003–2005)

The young market entered a turbulent experimental phase between **2003 and 2005**, with values dropping from **R1 584 339** in **2003** to only **R56 800** in **2005**. In **2003**, value declined **-28.1%**, followed by a deeper **-70.7%** fall in **2004**, and a crushing **-87.8%** contraction in **2005**. Quantity mirrored the instability, falling **-40.8%** in **2003**, a further **-63.4%** in **2004**, before unexpectedly rising **53.8%** in **2005** despite prices collapsing **-92.0%** that same year. These years reflected a market still trying to find footing, with inconsistent supply and highly reactive pricing driven by limited confidence and fragmented demand.

Rebound, Recognition and the First True Growth Cycle (2006–2009)

By **2006**, the segment regained momentum, climbing to **R210 100**, an increase of **269.9%** supported by positive shifts in both quantity (**77.5%**) and pricing (**108.4%**). The upward trajectory strengthened sharply in **2007**, where value surged to **R2 280 500**, a **985.4%** rise even as quantity contracted **-28.2%**, showing that buyers were suddenly willing to pay heavily for premium colour genetics. The period **2008–2009** completed this first structured growth cycle, with value rising from **R4 287 300** in **2008** to **R6 577 300** in **2009**. Pricing softened slightly in **2009** (-15.7%), but quantity grew a robust **82.0%**, demonstrating broadening market participation. By the end of **2009**, the colour-variant segment had evolved from an experimental niche into a recognised commercial category.

The Boom Years of Confidence and Escalation (2010–2012)

The years **2010–2012** stand as the first major boom. Value jumped from **R15 875 850** in **2010** to **R147 992 800** in **2012**, driven by successive rises of **141.4%**, **217.9%**, and **193.3%** across the three years. Pricing soared in **2010** with a **179.3%** improvement, followed by consistently strong upward pressure through **2011** (**15.0%**) and **2012** (**62.6%**). Quantity responded in kind, with **176.4%** growth in **2011** and **80.4%** in **2012**, reflecting strong breeder interest, heavy auction attendance and a rapidly expanding gene pool. This was the era when colour variants became symbols of prestige and investment potential across South Africa's wildlife economy.

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The Super-Cycle Peak and the Shock of Overshoot (2013–2015)

The short but dramatic super-cycle between **2013 and 2015** showcased both the heights and the fragility of speculative enthusiasm. After contracting to **R99 501 200** in **2013** (a **-32.8%** decline), the market exploded upward in **2014**, reaching **R339 021 300**, a **240.7%** rise supported by aggressive quantity growth (**110.2%**) and pricing appreciation (**62.1%**). Between 2013 and 2015, the colour-variant boom reshaped the industry. The lure of extraordinary prices prompted numerous farmers to abandon or scale back their livestock operations in favour of colour-variant breeding. Investment flooded into these programmes, often to the detriment of traditional livestock farming.

The peak came in **2015** at **R560 727 067**, with value growing **65.4%**, driven by both a **90.1%** expansion in quantity and intense competition for elite animals. Pricing, however, slipped **-13.0%**, suggesting that supply had begun to outpace sustainable demand even as total turnover reached its historical high.

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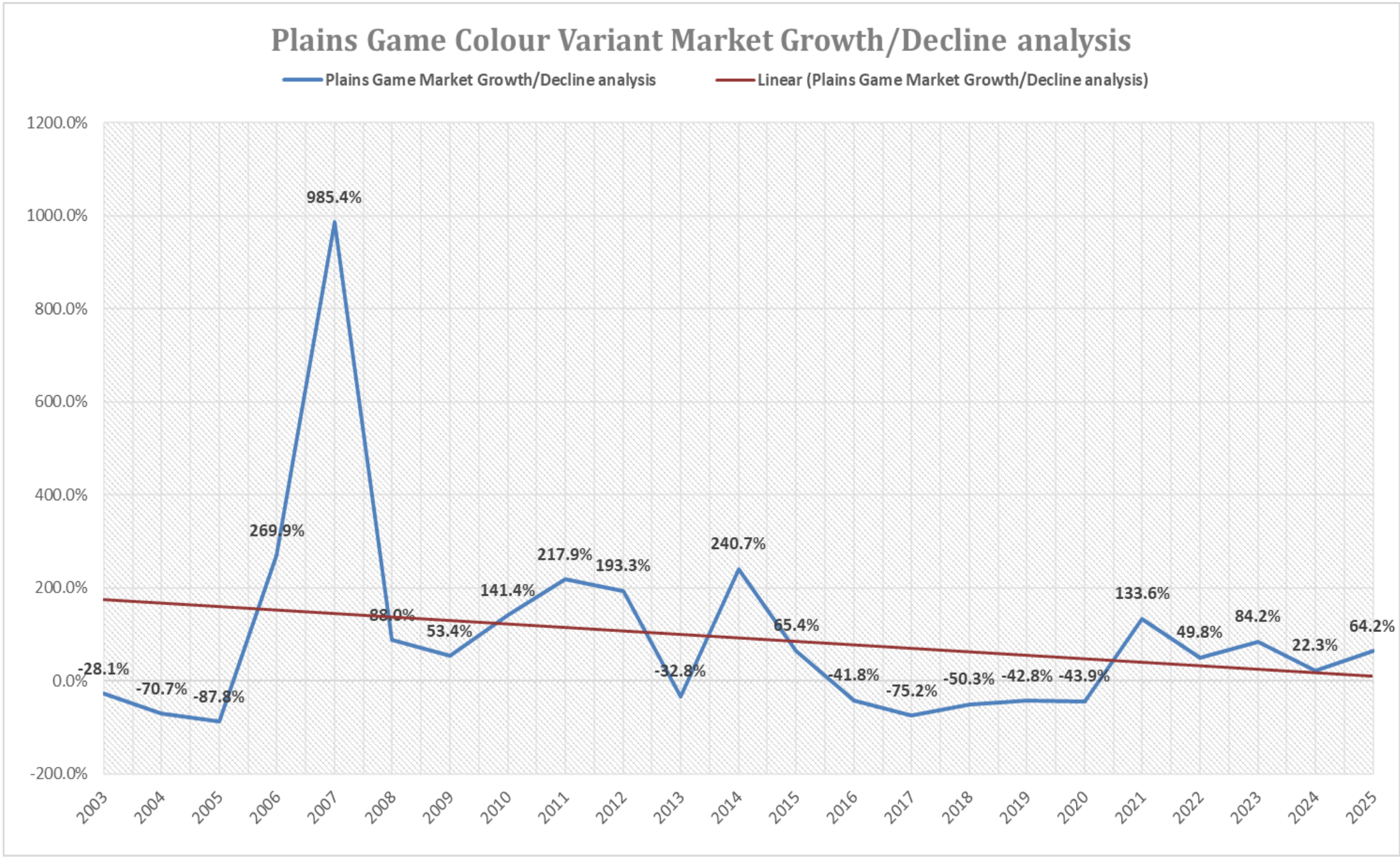

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Five Years of Reset, Retraction and Market Purification (2016–2020)

From **2016–2020**, the segment endured its hardest correction. Value fell from **R326 141 547** in **2016** to **R12 906 180** by **2020**. The declines were severe: **-41.8%** in **2016**, **-75.2%** in **2017**, **-50.3%** in **2018**, **-42.8%** in **2019** and **-43.9%** in **2020**. Pricing collapsed repeatedly, with the worst years being **2017** (-78.0%) and **2018** (-48.3%). The contraction in quantity was equally telling, particularly **2019** (-26.0%) and **2020** (-27.1%). These years reflected a saturated market unwinding exaggerated valuations just as broader economic pressures—culminating in the **COVID-19 collapse in 2020**—disrupted liquidity, curtailed travel and removed key demand channels. The segment was forced back to fundamentals. Several game breeders began to dismantle their camps and returned to livestock programs.

The Structured Recovery and Return to Market Discipline (2021–2024)

From **2021 to 2024**, the market rebuilt from a much healthier base. The rebound began in **2021**, when value rose to **R30 145 920**, a **133.6%** increase supported by strong pricing (**53.9%**) and quantity growth (**51.7%**). The year **2022** continued the upward movement with value reaching **R45 152 286**, reflecting **49.8%** growth, while **2023** accelerated the recovery to **R83 166 981**, a gain of **84.2%** supported by rising quantity (**42.5%**) and pricing (**29.3%**). By **2024**, the market softened into a more stable rhythm, reaching **R101 729 670**, growing a modest **22.3%**, with pricing at **4.3%**—the clearest sign yet that colour-variant pricing had normalised after several years of volatility.

2025 marked a significant renewal in momentum, taking total value from **R101 729 670** in **2024** to **R167 044 070**, an increase of **R65 314 400** and a growth rate of **64.2%**. Unlike the prior year, where both quantity and pricing rose gently, the **2025** surge was overwhelmingly driven by **pricing power**, which leapt **39.1%** compared to only **4.3%** in **2024**. What makes this particularly striking is that **quantity increased only 18.0%**, almost in line with the **17.3%** recorded in 2024. This means the value expansion did not rely on more animals entering the ring; instead, buyers paid materially more for the same categories of colour variants. This pricing resurgence reflects renewed confidence in high-quality variant lines—particularly black impala, saddleback variants, white-flank animals and golden oryx—whose scarcity and gene-pool refinement have elevated their perceived long-term value.

In 2025, the market demonstrated unmistakable evidence of *quality-led recovery*. Whereas earlier cycles had been volume-driven, the 2025 uplift shows that the colour-variant sector has entered a more strategic phase, where selective breeding, documented genetics and proven conformation command premium bids.

Thus, **2025** stands not merely as a growth year but as a decisive shift toward a market once again anchored in demand for excellence rather than speculative expansion. The combination of **64.2%** value growth, **39.1%** pricing strength, and disciplined **18.0%** quantity movement signals a healthy, sustainable revival heading into the next cycle.

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The Plains Game Colour Variant table for 2025 presents a market defined by sharp contrasts, vibrant momentum and species-specific narratives that reflect both rising demand and shifting breeder strategies. Each variant tells its own story: some show extraordinary quantity surges, others deliver powerful price recoveries and a few reflect softening prices even as their participation in the market grows.

Together, they make up a segment that accounts for **a meaningful 18.61% of total wildlife sales in 2025**, underscoring how strongly colour genetics have embedded themselves in the commercial wildlife landscape.

PLAINS GAME COLOUR VARIANTS

Specie Name	% of total sales 2025	Price Change 2025	Quantity change 2025
Livingston Eland(Male and Female)	1.08%	-14.64%	25.56%
Saddleback Impala	0.46%	-17.96%	105.79%
White and White Flank Impala	2.09%	31.14%	82.17%
Black Impala	2.28%	41.58%	-2.16%
Dappled Impala	0.92%	6.43%	108.16%
Gemsbok/Oryx Golden	0.83%	32.49%	-10.13%
Gemsbok/Oryx Red	0.75%	26.34%	33.33%
Golden Wildebeest	3.13%	26.71%	-9.18%
Kings Wildebeest	2.92%	111.80%	0.00%
Royal and Ghost Wildebeest	1.20%	25.33%	-4.17%
PLAINS GAME COLOUR VARIANTS AVERAGE	18.61%	39.11%	18.04%

The table also highlights that, on average, **pricing increased by 39.11%** while **quantities rose by 18.04%**, signalling broad-based confidence and renewed engagement across the category. Importantly, colour variants have also become increasingly accepted—and in many regions actively sought after—within the **hunting arena**, where their unique aesthetic appeal enhances the client experience and **adds diversity to trophy portfolios**. What was once viewed as a niche or specialist category has now matured into a legitimate, commercially relevant hunting offering, further supporting sustained demand.

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Livingstone Eland (Male & Female)

The Livingston Eland occupies a quiet yet important space within this segment. Although representing **1.08% of total sales**, the variant recorded a **–14.64% price decline**, reminding us that even resilient species are not immune to the realities of supply expansion and buyer selectivity.

Yet the parallel **25.56% increase in quantity** points to a stabilising pattern: breeders are moving more animals despite lower premiums, suggesting that Livingston colour traits are becoming more accessible and integrated into mainstream herd-building rather than being treated purely as boutique offerings.





Saddleback Impala

The Saddleback Impala continues to behave like a classic mid-tier colour variant with cyclical tendencies. Its **–17.96% price contraction** signals a cooling from previously elevated expectations, but this softer price environment has unlocked significant movement in volume, with a dramatic **105.79% surge in quantity**. This doubling is an unmistakable sign that the market is reabsorbing Saddlebacks not as speculative trophies but as visually appealing, commercially functional animals suited to tourism-rich environments and diversified herds.

The resurgence in demand also reflects **a broader industry recalibration**, where buyers increasingly favour colour variants that combine aesthetic value with strong herd adaptability rather than those dependent on narrow high-end markets. As price barriers fall, Saddlebacks are finding renewed application in mixed-use properties, allowing them to regain relevance as **a stable, medium-volume variant** capable of supporting both breeding programmes and visitor-facing landscapes.

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White & White-Flank Impala

Representing **2.09%** of total sales, the white and white-flank impala category experienced strong upward movement. Prices climbed **31.14%**, supported by an **82.17%** rise in quantity. This dual growth signals robust, broad-based demand—the kind seen in variants that retain long-term appeal due to visual impact, rarity and ongoing breeder confidence. Their performance also echoes a wider trend in 2025: **buyers rewarding visually striking animals with stable, credible genetic lines**, particularly when supply remains measured and quality is high.

Black Impala

Black impala remain one of the most commercially influential impala variants, contributing **2.28%** of the rare-game market. Prices rose sharply by **41.58%**, despite a slight **–2.16%** decline in quantity. This divergence underscores the enduring prestige of black impala genetics: even with limited supply movement, buyer appetite held firm, suggesting a market that prioritises quality males, strong horn genetics and animals with deep lineage integrity. Black impala continue to anchor the colour-variant sector.

Dappled Impala

With **0.92%** of sales, dappled impala remain a boutique category that nevertheless showed healthy performance in 2025. Prices rose **6.43%**, while quantity jumped **108.16%**, indicating an expanding breeder base and renewed market visibility. Although still a niche, the dappled variant benefits from strong visual uniqueness, making them attractive to specialised collectors and high-end auction buyers. Their increase in supply without a corresponding pricing decline signals **growing recognition** of this variant's potential.



*Three of the most influential impala colour variants—**white, black and dappled**—stand together in the veld, symbolising the diversity, genetic depth and visual appeal driving continued demand in the rare-game sector.*

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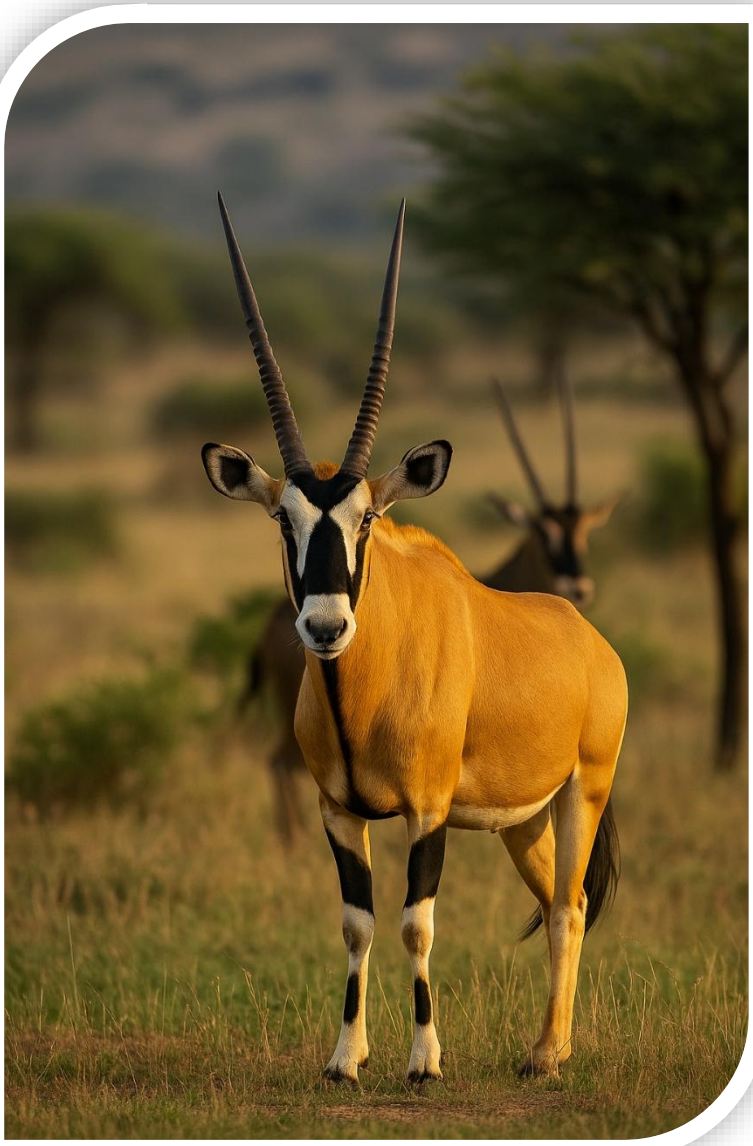

Gemsbok/Oryx – Golden

The Golden Gemsbok variant continues to demonstrate **remarkable resilience and strategic relevance** within the plains-game colour segment. Its **32.49% increase in pricing** reveals a clear resurgence of buyer confidence, not driven by speculative novelty but by a renewed appreciation for the species' **exceptional hardiness and ecological versatility**. In environments where climate variability is becoming increasingly pronounced, the gemsbok stands out as one of the continent's most **heat-tolerant, water-efficient antelope** and these traits elevate the appeal of colour variants that combine beauty with biological reliability.

The **–10.13% decline in quantity** is therefore not a sign of weakening demand but rather a reflection of **tightened supply and selective breeding discipline**. Breeders appear to be protecting the integrity of their Golden lines, favouring controlled release over volume-driven disposal. This intentional scarcity amplifies value, ensuring that each animal entering the market carries a premium attached to both phenotype and pedigree. As a result, the Golden variant continues to occupy a **high-prestige niche**, appealing to buyers who want genetics that offer aesthetic distinction without compromising the functional resilience that defines the gemsbok across southern Africa's harsher ecosystems.

Gemsbok/Oryx – Red

The Red Gemsbok variant tells a more expansionary story—one marked by **rising confidence, broader adoption and meaningful commercial traction**. Its **26.34% price increase** paired with a significant **33.33% rise in quantity** reflects a market that is not only prepared to pay more for this striking phenotype but is actively integrating it into herd growth strategies. This dual uplift signals **authentic demand**, positioned far beyond the small collector pools that initially defined the colour-variant boom years. This expansion in both price and volume also suggests that breeders are gaining greater confidence in **producing Red variants at scale**, indicating improved predictability in genetic transmission and stronger commercial networks around this phenotype.

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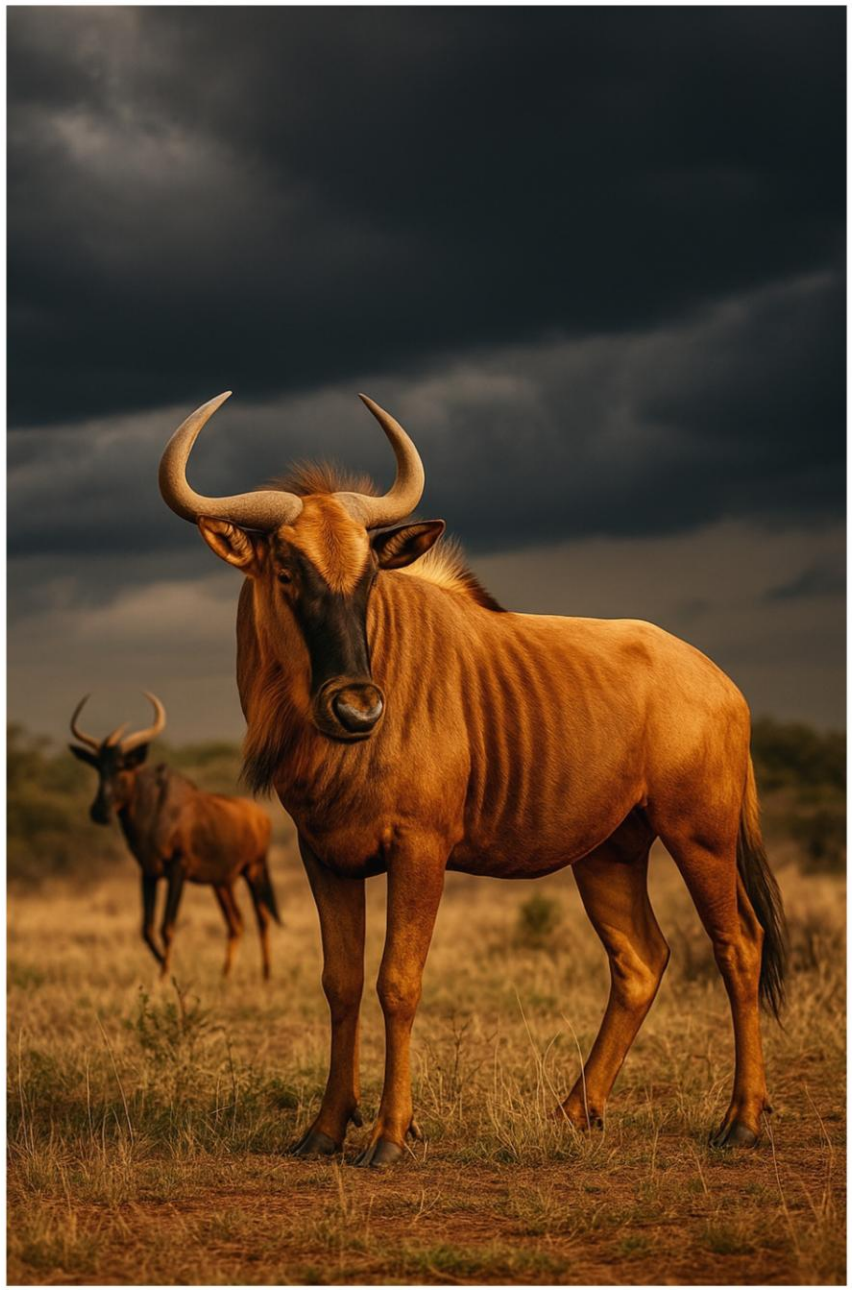

Various Wildebeest

Golden Wildebeest remain one of the strongest performers in the plains-game colour spectrum. Contributing **3.13% of sales**, the variant recorded **26.71% price appreciation**. The modest **–9.18% quantity decline** is not a sign of weakening interest but rather a reflection of tightening availability, ensuring that Golden Wildebeest maintain their premium standing while continuing to attract keen bidder competition.

The **Kings Wildebeest** delivered one of the most dramatic results in the entire table. With **111.80% price growth**, the variant effectively doubled its premium in a single year. What makes this extraordinary is that the quantity sold remained **unchanged**, meaning buyers competed intensely for the same limited number of animals. This underscores a powerful trend: elite wildebeest genetics—particularly those with rare colouration—are experiencing a renaissance among high-end breeders seeking herd-defining traits. The Kings variant, with its commanding presence and unmistakable phenotype, has shifted from a specialist curiosity to a **status symbol** in premium breeding programmes, drawing the attention of investors wanting visually dominant, high-impact animals for flagship herds. Its performance in 2025 confirms that certain colour wildebeest lines have moved into a league of their own, where scarcity, visual power and strong brand identity converge to create **exceptional competitive bidding intensity**.

Royal and Ghost Wildebeest continued this upward momentum, achieving **25.33% price growth**, although quantities slipped **–4.17%**. This shift mirrors the dynamics seen in the Golden subtype: scarcity is reinforcing value. These spectral colour expressions maintain their mystique in the marketplace and breeders continue to pursue them for their rarity, aesthetic intrigue and strong position within specialised breeding programs.

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The 2025 plains-game colour-variant results reveal a sector that has emerged from its long evolutionary arc with **renewed confidence, clearer structure and far healthier foundations** than at any point since the speculative boom years. Price growth returned across most major variants, even as quantities expanded at a measured pace, signaling a market that is no longer defined by volatility but by **strategic demand, controlled supply and steadily improving genetic consistency**. Variants such as Black Impala, White-Flank Impala, Golden Wildebeest, Kings Wildebeest and the increasingly admired Red Gemsbok demonstrated strong upward momentum, proving that buyers are now pursuing colour genetics with purpose rather than impulse.

Even categories that experienced pricing pressure—like Saddleback Impala or Livingston Eland—benefited from substantial increases in movement, underscoring a marketplace that is **absorbing these animals for their practical utility, visual value and integration into tourism-driven landscapes**. The broadening acceptance of mid-tier and emerging variants, combined with the elite performance of the top-end wildebeest lines, reflects a sector that has successfully diversified its demand base and re-established equilibrium after years of extremes.

Viewed against the dramatic peaks of 2014–2016 and the subsequent correction, the 2025 colour-variant environment stands out as **disciplined, sustainable and increasingly investment-friendly**. The data confirm that colour variants have transitioned from speculative curiosities into **stable, economically relevant contributors** within the wider wildlife economy—valued not only for their rarity but for their adaptability, aesthetic contribution and long-term breeding potential.

In this maturing landscape, plains-game colour variants now occupy a secure and strategic role: vibrant enough to attract premium interest, grounded enough to deliver consistent returns and resilient enough to thrive within a wildlife market that is steadily shifting toward **quality, ecological harmony and sustainable genetic development rather than speculation**. Today, colour variants hold a solid place in the hunting landscape, with the majority now featured as standard offerings within international hunters' packages.

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Total Rare Species Data

According to industry standards, rare game comprises species such as **buffalo, sable, roan, Tsessebe rhino, cheetah, crocodile, elephant, hippo, klipspringer, lion and leopard, amongst others**. These animals occur in lower numbers, often with **restricted natural ranges**, **specific habitat needs**, or **slower reproduction rates** and many require more careful management due to disease sensitivity or security risks. Their scarcity, combined with the historical premium placed on superior genetics, has made rare game an important but more nuanced component of the wildlife economy.



The importance of rare game lies in the **strategic opportunities** they create for breeders, investors and conservationists. Because of their limited distribution, these species often become **focal points for conservation programmes**, genetic improvement projects and long-term ecological restoration. Economically, high-value lines of buffalo, sable and roan have historically played a powerful role in **attracting private investment** into wildlife estates, enabling landowners to reinvest capital into habitat restoration, water infrastructure, advanced security systems and anti-poaching initiatives. Rare game also adds **depth and prestige** to tourism offerings—enhancing the profile of reserves, increasing visitor interest and contributing to a more **complete ecological assemblage**.

Ultimately, rare game brings **prestige, conservation significance and economic potential**, complementing the stability generated by plains game. Together, they create the **dual pillars** of the wildlife industry: one ensuring **long-term sustainability**, the other driving **innovation, investment and elevated stewardship** of South Africa's most treasured species.

The **rare game segment** of South Africa's wildlife economy has always functioned as the **pulse point of volatility**, a space where every movement is amplified and every shift carries outsized consequences. Unlike plains game—whose markets tend to be stable, volume-driven and broadly predictable—**rare game operates in a high-stakes arena shaped as much by *emotion and perception* as by biological supply and demand**. It is here that the forces of **elite genetics, scarcity premiums, emerging trends and shifting breeder confidence** collide in ways that can transform an entire season.

This is a market where **a single exceptional animal**, a breakthrough in bloodline integrity, or even a celebrated auction result can alter national pricing trajectories overnight. The rise of certain colour variants, the global fascination with specific horn and body traits and the periodic waves of investor-driven "genetic arms races" have all contributed to a sector that behaves more like a **luxury asset class** than a traditional agricultural market. **Fashion cycles**—from the once-explosive demand for sable and buffalo to the speculative frenzy around colour variants—have left unmistakable fingerprints across the years.

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Across the full span of the rare-game dataset, the table reveals a market defined by **dramatic movements**, **periods of intense enthusiasm** and **long arcs of recalibration**. The earliest years show a segment still in its formative phase—tentative expansions followed by equally tentative contractions—as buyers, breeders and auction platforms were still learning how to position rare species within a commercial framework. These early fluctuations were not instability; they were the natural **growing pains of an emerging investment class**, built on uniqueness, lineage and ecological prestige.

Summary of revenue Wildlife Industry - Rare Game							
Year		Value	Quantity		Average Price	Quantity %	Pricing %
2001	R	30 741 129	304	R	101 122		
2002	R	40 622 340	356	R	114 108	17.1%	12.8%
2003	R	43 856 384	439	R	99 901	23.3%	-12.5%
2004	R	39 571 350	600	R	65 952	36.7%	-34.0%
2005	R	15 613 000	219	R	71 292	-63.5%	8.1%
2006	R	17 964 250	314	R	57 211	43.4%	-19.8%
2007	R	64 327 300	645	R	99 732	105.4%	74.3%
2008	R	82 080 500	649	R	126 472	0.6%	26.8%
2009	R	187 419 002	993	R	188 740	53.0%	49.2%
2010	R	193 673 500	856	R	226 254	-13.8%	19.9%
2011	R	349 392 250	1 299	R	268 970	51.8%	18.9%
2012	R	667 702 500	1 371	R	487 019	5.5%	81.1%
2013	R	681 593 500	1 606	R	424 404	17.1%	-12.9%
2014	R	879 183 467	1 839	R	478 077	14.5%	12.6%
2015	R	1 049 752 546	2 606	R	402 821	41.7%	-15.7%
2016	R	1 211 578 929	2 463	R	491 912	-5.5%	22.1%
2017	R	690 541 255	3 361	R	205 457	36.5%	-58.2%
2018	R	439 847 374	3 151	R	139 590	-6.2%	-32.1%
2019	R	341 563 510	3 316	R	103 005	5.2%	-26.2%
2020	R	122 367 700	2 204	R	55 521	-33.5%	-46.1%
2021	R	160 726 350	3 045	R	52 784	38.2%	-4.9%
2022	R	197 047 258	2 325	R	84 752	-23.6%	60.6%
2023	R	250 806 347	2 983	R	84 079	28.3%	-0.8%
2024	R	258 958 900	3 615	R	71 635	21.2%	-14.8%
2025	R	361 993 900	3 195	R	113 300	-11.6%	58.2%

As the market entered its first true growth cycle, **confidence escalated meaningfully**. Rare game began to command heightened attention as breeders refined their herds and the industry expanded its understanding of genetic potential.

What followed in the subsequent boom years was not merely prosperity—it was a **transformational surge** marked by accelerating demand, rising values and a widespread conviction that rare species represented the **pinnacle of wildlife investment**.

This was the era in which rare game reshaped the identity of the wildlife economy, attracting unprecedented capital, expanding herds and defining the ambitions of a new generation of breeders.

Yet, just as quickly, the pendulum swung back. The table captures the **inevitable correction** that followed—a period when optimism met biological reality and the market recalibrated from speculative heights to **more sustainable ground**.

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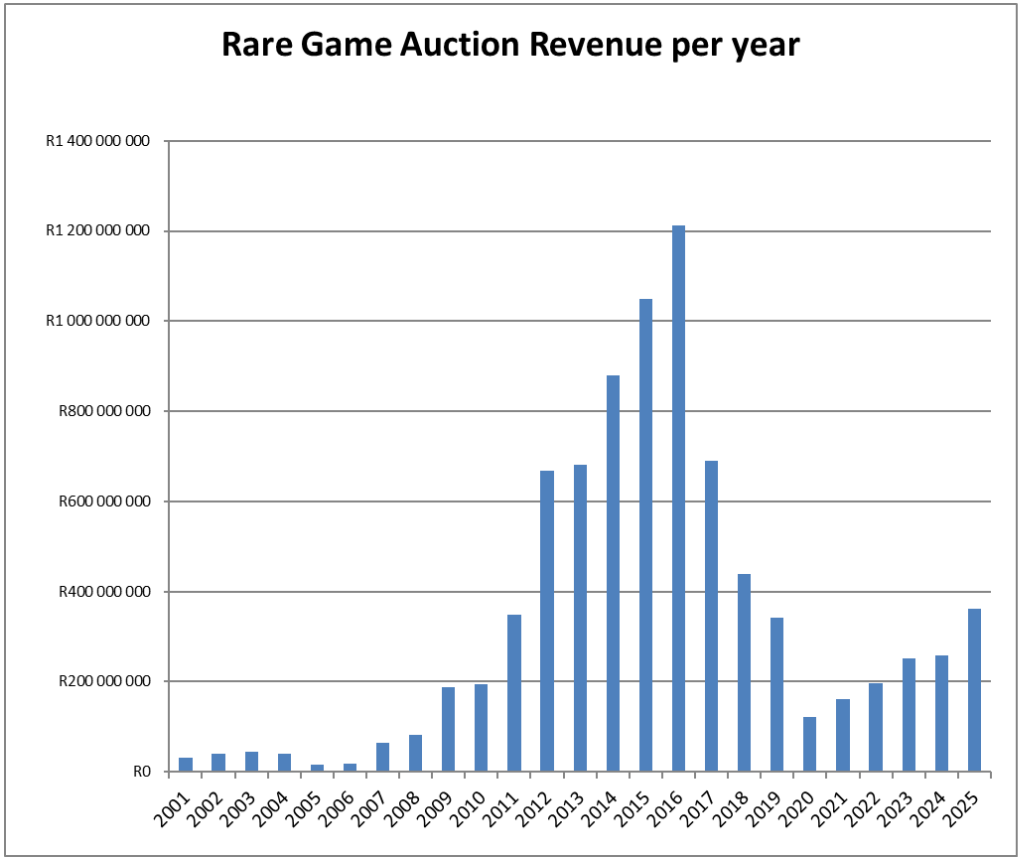
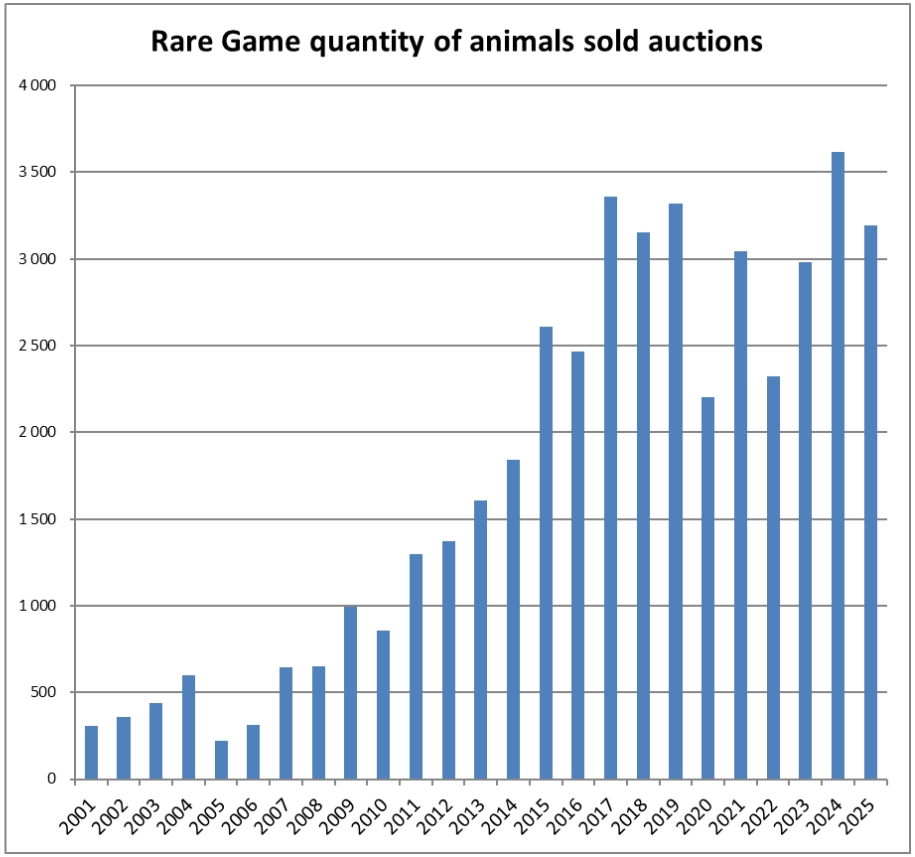
Declines in both pricing and market movement were not signs of collapse but of **maturity**. They reflected a system aligning itself with reproductive cycles, veld capacity and the practical limits of long-term demand. In many respects, this correction was necessary; it stripped away excesses, tempered expectations and **rebalanced the relationship between scarcity and commercial viability**.

External shocks—particularly those that disrupted buyer mobility and auction participation—introduced another layer of volatility, accelerating downturns in some years and delaying recovery in others. Yet even here, the table chronicles a market that refused to fracture. Instead, it demonstrates **resilience**, as buyers returned, quantities stabilised and confidence gradually rebuilt around **fundamentals rather than momentum**. The later years present a markedly different rare-game environment—one shaped by **realism, discipline and renewed clarity**. Growth becomes steadier, herd releases more strategic and pricing movements more reflective of **genuine quality rather than sentiment**. Breeders appear to have embraced a longer-term view grounded in sound genetics, hardy traits and proven lineage. Buyers, too, have become more discerning, rewarding **consistency, ecological adaptability and commercial purpose**.





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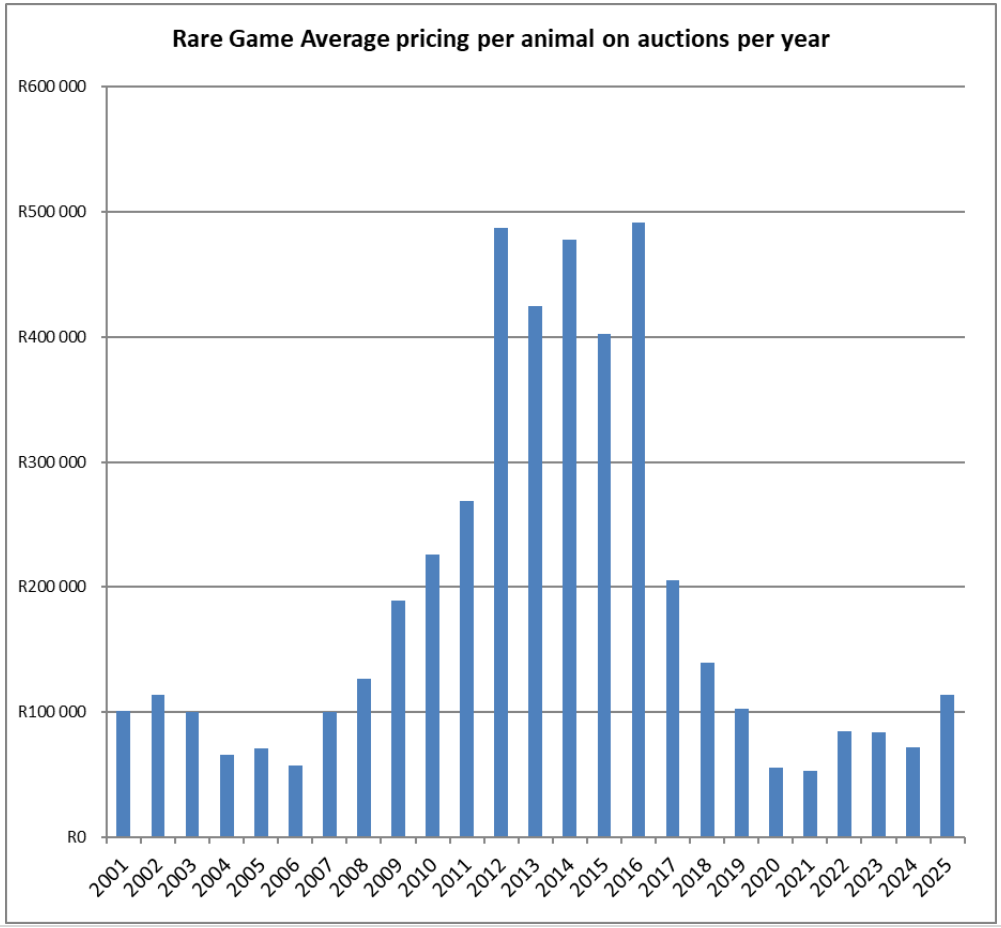
The two graphs below present a **striking visual chronicle** of the rare game market over nearly a quarter of a century. Together, they trace the **financial energy** (in the revenue graph) and the **biological output and demand dynamics** (in the quantity graph) that have defined this specialised sector. Side by side, they reveal how **market value and market volume** interact—sometimes reinforcing each other and at other times diverging dramatically—painting a vivid picture of an industry shaped by cycles of optimism, recalibration, genetic innovation and shifting economic sentiment. Viewed collectively, these graphs capture the **dramatic rise, correction and gradual stabilisation** that have become hallmarks of the rare game industry.

The revenue curve illustrates an early period of subdued activity, followed by a **powerful, almost exponential surge** driven by heightened demand for elite genetics and an investment wave that repositioned rare game as a premium asset class. The second graph—tracking the quantity of animals sold—adds an essential layer of understanding. While revenue swung dramatically, **quantities show a steadily rising long-term trend**, emphasising that the biological engine of the industry continued to expand even as prices cycled. This divergence reinforces a key truth: rare game is ultimately a **production system**. Once breeders invested in elite herds, the increase in supply was inevitable, even if prices softened.



The graph on the left presents a **striking visual journey of average prices achieved per animal** in the rare game segment over more than two decades. Whereas the previous graphs captured total revenue and quantities sold, this chart isolates the **pure price signal**—the clearest reflection of how the market has valued rarity, genetics and prestige at different moments in time.

Average pricing is often the **truest emotional indicator** of the rare game market. It captures the willingness of buyers to compete for elite genetics, the perceived scarcity of specific species or bloodlines and the broader economic confidence surrounding wildlife investments. When prices surge, they usually do so on the back of **sentiment, competition and the allure of premium breeding potential**. When they fall, they fall sharply—signalling shifts in confidence, oversupply, or changing buyer priorities.

The visual shape of the curve tells a dramatic and compelling story. It begins in a modest band, reflecting a young industry still setting baselines for what "rare" truly meant. Prices then start climbing—the early steps of a market discovering both its potential and its limits.

As demand for select species intensified, average pricing accelerated rapidly, eventually forming a towering peak that stands as the most recognisable signature of the rare game boom.

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Total Rare Species Insights

The long-term trajectory of the rare-game sector reveals a market that has moved through **clear and powerful cycles**, each defined by its own momentum, sentiment and structural forces. The earliest years reflect a young industry learning its own rhythms—periods of healthy expansion tempered by sharp contractions, characteristic of a category still establishing its identity within the wildlife economy. These formative movements were less about volatility and more about **finding equilibrium** in a market driven by scarcity, genetics and emerging breeder confidence.

Rare Game Market Growth/Decline analysis					
Year	Value	0	Value %	Quantity %	Pricing %
2001	30 741 129				
2002	40 622 340	9 881 211	32.1%	17.1%	12.8%
2003	43 856 384	3 234 044	8.0%	23.3%	-12.5%
2004	39 571 350	(4 285 034)	-9.8%	36.7%	-34.0%
2005	15 613 000	(23 958 350)	-60.5%	-63.5%	8.1%
2006	17 964 250	2 351 250	15.1%	43.4%	-19.8%
2007	64 327 300	46 363 050	258.1%	105.4%	74.3%
2008	82 080 500	17 753 200	27.6%	0.6%	26.8%
2009	187 419 002	105 338 502	128.3%	53.0%	49.2%
2010	193 673 500	6 254 498	3.3%	-13.8%	19.9%
2011	349 392 250	155 718 750	80.4%	51.8%	18.9%
2012	667 702 500	318 310 250	91.1%	5.5%	81.1%
2013	681 593 500	13 891 000	2.1%	17.1%	-12.9%
2014	879 183 467	197 589 967	29.0%	14.5%	12.6%
2015	1 049 752 546	170 569 079	19.4%	41.7%	-15.7%
2016	1 211 578 929	161 826 383	15.4%	-5.5%	22.1%
2017	690 541 255	(521 037 674)	-43.0%	36.5%	-58.2%
2018	439 847 374	(250 693 881)	-36.3%	-6.2%	-32.1%
2019	341 563 510	(98 283 864)	-22.3%	5.2%	-26.2%
2020	122 367 700	(219 195 810)	-64.2%	-33.5%	-46.1%
2021	160 726 350	38 358 650	31.3%	38.2%	-4.9%
2022	197 047 258	36 320 908	22.6%	-23.6%	60.6%
2023	250 806 347	53 759 089	27.3%	28.3%	-0.8%
2024	258 958 900	8 152 553	3.3%	21.2%	-14.8%
2025	361 993 900	103 035 000	39.8%	-11.6%	58.2%

The Early Foundations and First Shifts in Market Identity (2001–2004)

The rare game market of **2001–2004** reveals a sector still defining itself, with values moving from **R30.74 million** in **2001** to **R40.62 million** in **2002**, an early increase of **32.1%** supported by rising quantity (**17.1%**) and strong pricing (**12.8%**). The upward path continued in **2003**, reaching **R43.86 million**, but the pricing decline of **-12.5%** hinted at softening buyer aggression even as quantity grew **23.3%**.

By **2004**, the tone shifted: value fell **-9.8%** to **R39.57 million**, quantity still grew at **36.7%**, but pricing collapsed **-34.0%**, signalling a market where supply was entering faster than demand could absorb. These early years set the stage for the volatility that would later define the rare game cycle.

The First Hard Correction and the Seeds of a Boom (2005–2007)

Between **2005 and 2007**, the sector experienced dramatic contrasting forces. In **2005**, value plunged **-60.5%** to **R15.61 million**, quantity fell **-63.5%**, yet pricing still managed a small positive **8.1%**, illustrating that the few exceptional animals available continued to command premiums even during contraction.

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Momentum shifted quickly. By **2006**, value recovered to **R17.96 million**, a rise of **15.1%**, followed by the extraordinary surge in **2007**, when the market jumped to **R64.33 million**, a **258.1%** increase. Both quantity (**105.4%**) and pricing (**74.3%**) surged in 2007, announcing the start of rare game's first major expansion wave as breeders intensified investment in buffalo, sable and roan genetics.

Acceleration into the First Full Boom Cycle (2008–2012)

The period **2008–2012** represents rare game's first sustained boom. Value moved from **R82.08 million** in **2008** to **R667.70 million** in **2012**, a six-fold rise. Growth was particularly powerful in **2009**, where value rose **128.3%** supported by **53.0%** quantity growth and **49.2%** pricing strength, and again in **2011**, where value climbed another **80.4%** to **R349.39 million**. The climax came in **2012**, when value rose **91.1%** from the prior year, reaching **R667.70 million** with pricing up **81.1%** even though quantity increased only **5.5%**. This signalled a market where high-end buffalo and sable genetics attracted fierce bidding, and rare game solidified itself as the premium engine of the wildlife economy.

Stabilisation, Maturity, and Market Plateau (2013–2016)

The years **2013–2016** marked a period of stabilisation after the enormous boom. Value hovered between **R681.59 million** in **2013** and **R1.21 billion** in **2016**. The growth in **2013** was minimal at **2.1%**, followed by a solid **29.0%** rise in **2014**, then **19.4%** in **2015**, before easing to **15.4%** in **2016**. Pricing behaviour demonstrated increasing selectivity. While **2014** pricing rose **12.6%**, **2015** slipped to **-15.7%**, only to bounce back to **22.1%** in **2016**. Though quantity fluctuated—growing **41.7%** in **2015** and contracting **-5.5%** in **2016**—the market during this band was functioning with maturity: less knee-jerk pricing, more informed bidding, and a clearer understanding of genetic quality.

The Market Unravels: The Long Retreat (2017–2020)

The rare game sector entered its deepest correction between **2017 and 2020**. Value collapsed from **R690.54 million** in **2017** to **R122.37 million** by **2020**. The declines were dramatic: **-43.0%** in **2017**, **-36.3%** in **2018**, **-22.3%** in **2019**, and **-64.2%** in **2020**, coinciding with tightening breeder liquidity and global uncertainty. Pricing fell heavily throughout this band, dropping **-58.2%** in **2017**, **-32.1%** in **2018**, **-26.2%** in **2019**, and **-46.1%** in **2020**. Quantity followed a similar decline, especially in **2020**, when it fell **-33.5%**. COVID-19 amplified the downturn, removing international hunters from the market and constraining capital, pushing rare game into its lowest point in nearly two decades. During 2017–2020, the economics of intensive camp breeding deteriorated, prompting many breeders to return their rare game species to open-farm environments.

Recovery, Realignment and Re-Entry into Growth (2021–2024)

The rebuild began in **2021**, where value recovered to **R160.73 million**, a **31.3%** rise supported by strong quantity growth (**38.2%**) as breeders cautiously returned stock to the market. **2022** continued the upward path with value reaching **R197.05 million**, driven largely by pricing strength (**60.6%**) despite quantity stepping back **-23.6%**. The momentum was confirmed in **2023**, when value rose **27.3%** to **R250.81 million** with quantity up **28.3%**.

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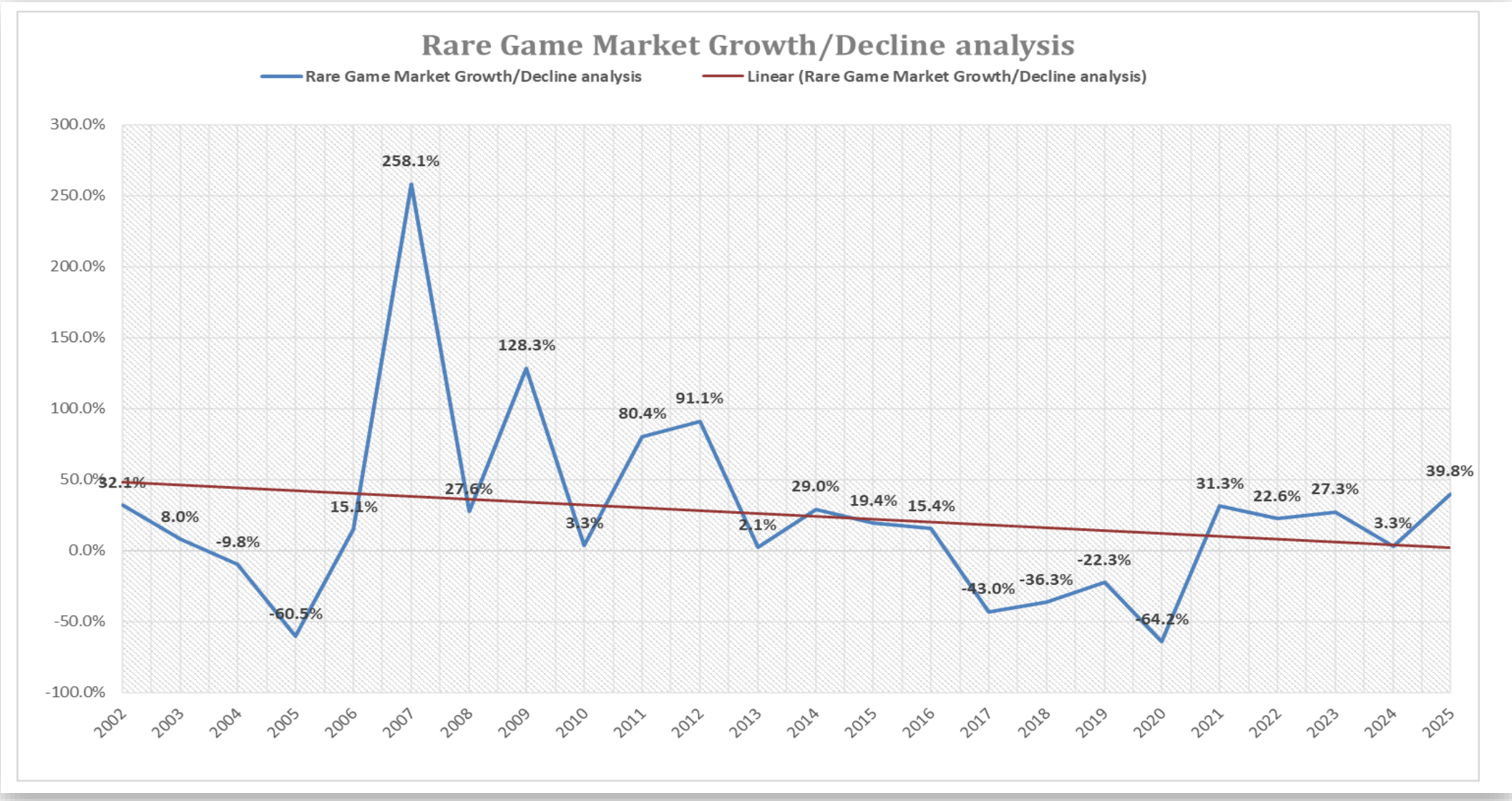
By **2024**, value settled at **R258.96 million**, a mild **3.3%** increase with pricing sliding **-14.8%**, revealing a calmer, more rational operating environment where buyers were selective and the market had regained balance. The graph below provides a **clear visual signature of the rare game market's pricing evolution**, reinforcing the broader trends revealed in our revenue, quantity and growth–decline analyses. By isolating the **average price per animal**, this chart highlights how the market has valued rarity, genetics and breeder confidence across the past two decades.



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The transition from **2024 to 2025** marked a new and decisive revival for rare game. Value rose from **R258.96 million** to **R361.99 million**, an increase of **R103.04 million** and a powerful **39.8%** growth rate—more than ten times the **3.3%** achieved in **2024**.

What makes **2025** exceptional is the underlying composition of this growth. Quantity contracted **-11.6%**, yet pricing surged **58.2%**, revealing an unmistakable shift toward scarcity-driven bidding and premium valuation of exceptional animals. Buyers were willing to pay significantly more for top-tier buffalo, sable, roan and other rare species, while breeders released fewer animals—a combination that naturally drives stronger price curves.

This pricing uplift restores rare game to its traditional role as the **value anchor** of the industry. After several years of stabilisation, the **58.2%** rise in pricing signals renewed investor confidence, more international buyers returning post-pandemic, and a firm belief in the genetic and commercial importance of elite rare game lines.

Thus, **2025** represents not only a rebound but a **reassertion** of rare game's strategic dominance, characterised by high-value genetics, controlled supply and intensifying competition for the best animals. It is a year defined by **quality over quantity**, and a market once again shaped by discerning buyers who know exactly what they are paying for.

Between 2020 and 2022, many breeders dismantled their intensive camp-breeding systems as returns no longer justified the escalating costs. This shift pushed several rare species back into open-farm environments. **The full impact of these decisions** becomes unmistakably clear in 2025, where reduced breeding intensity translates into noticeable supply shortages and firmer market prices.

RARE GAME

2025
vs 2024

Total Quantities
↓ **11.6%**

Average Price
↑ **58.2%**

Total Value
↑ **39.8%**

% of Total Sales
40.3%



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The table below offers a **granular and insightful view** of how individual rare-game species performed in 2025, revealing the subtle forces that shaped the year's market dynamics. While the broader charts illustrate the overall rise, fall and recovery of the rare game sector, this species-level analysis shows **exactly where the momentum originated**—which animals captured buyer attention, which categories rebounded most convincingly and where pressure on supply or pricing created noticeable shifts.

By presenting each species' share of total sales alongside its pricing and quantity movements, the table illustrates how **market influence is distributed across the rare-game portfolio**. Some species play an outsized role in shaping overall outcomes, while others act as specialised catalysts for pricing movements or volume surges. It becomes clear, for example, how certain bloodlines and colour variants drew **exceptionally strong buyer interest**, while others demonstrated pricing resilience even in the face of tightening volumes. Conversely, increased supply in a handful of categories placed downward pressure on averages, highlighting the delicate balance between breeding output and market absorption.

RARE SPECIE DATA

Specie Name	% of total sales 2025	Price Change 2025	Quantity change 2025
Roan (Male and Female)	2.29%	7.75%	-0.32%
Roan Male	1.50%	-1.65%	-11.05%
Roan Female	0.79%	65.12%	14.07%
Tsessebe	0.32%	22.19%	-32.14%
Rhino	2.35%	75.22%	115.15%
Sables (Male and Female)	10.87%	46.98%	-10.78%
Sable Female	3.71%	80.37%	-12.90%
Sable Male	7.16%	32.94%	-9.13%
Buffalo (Male and Female)	23.69%	69.63%	-16.27%
Buffalo Female	9.33%	48.31%	-5.54%
Buffalo Male	14.36%	87.11%	-23.40%
RARE GAME AVERAGES	40.33%	58.16%	-11.62%

This deeper view brings to life the **diversity and complexity** within the rare-game sector. Buffalo retain their position as the dominant force in total sales, yet sable, wildebeest variants and specialised impala types continue to exert significant influence on both turnover and pricing sentiment.

What stands out most is how frequently pricing and quantities move in different directions, revealing the powerful role played by **genetics, rarity and shifting buyer preferences**. These contrasting movements underscore that rare game is not a single market but rather a **collection of interlinked micro-markets**, each reacting to its own blend of demand cycles, breeding trends and auction behaviour.

Together, these species-specific indicators provide an invaluable complement to the macro-level analysis—showing how the rare game sector **reshaped itself during 2025**, which animals carried the market forward and where the strongest signals of future growth, adjustment, or re-alignment are beginning to emerge.

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Roan (Male & Female)

Combined roan sales made up **2.29%** of the rare-game market, with prices increasing a modest **7.75%** while quantity remained virtually flat at **–0.32%**. This stability reflects the roan's transition into a mature, stable investment species—long past the speculative peaks of earlier years, but still highly valued for trophy quality, genetics and herd-building potential. Roan continue to attract discerning buyers prioritising long-term breeding strategy over short-term novelty.



*Exceptional mature Roan — bulls and cows together — captured in their natural landscape. Their **bold facial masks**, powerful frames and sweeping horns illustrate why the Roan remains one of Africa's most **prestigious** and sought-after antelope species.*

Roan Male

A minimal market footprint in 2025 (effectively **1.5%**) shows that roan males were scarcely traded, with prices slipping **–1.65%** and quantities falling **–11.05%**. This reflects scarcity-driven holding behaviour by breeders who prefer retaining top males for herd improvement rather than releasing them into the auction environment. The slight price decline simply reflects **thin trade volumes**, not weakened demand.

Roan Female

With **0.79%** of total sales, roan females were among the strongest performers in 2025. Prices surged **65.12%**, supported by a **14.07%** rise in quantity. Roan cows remain essential to herd expansion and their strong demand signals long-term breeder confidence. In a year marked by selective buying, this category benefitted from buyers prioritising **reproductive value and future genetic leverage**.

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Tsessebe

Tsessebe remain one of the smallest rare-game categories (0.32%), but pricing improved 22.19% despite a –32.14% drop in supply. As one of Africa's fastest antelope and a species deeply valued in conservation circles, tsessebe often command attention from breeders focused on biodiversity and ecological value.

Their shy nature, strict habitat preferences and relatively low reproductive rates naturally limit supply, which amplifies price movements when quality animals come to market. Moreover, tsessebe herds require careful management to thrive, making them a marker of high-standard veld and responsible land stewardship.

Their 2025 numbers reflect scarcity-driven pricing in a limited, specialised market, **where demand is increasingly shaped by conservation-minded buyers rather than purely commercial traders.**



Rhino

Rhino posted one of the most powerful performances of any species in 2025, contributing 2.35% of total sales, with pricing soaring **75.22%** and quantity rising **115.15%**. This exceptional alignment signals a resurgence in private-sector rhino demand—driven by conservation-focused investment, improved genetic management and buyers prioritising long-term ecological legacy.

Rhino continue to be the flagship conservation-investment species in the wildlife economy. **Their upward momentum also reflects growing confidence in regulated custodianship models, where private breeders play a critical role in stabilising and expanding South Africa's rhino population.**



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A prime sable bull and an elegant mature cow stand alert in the bushveld, showcasing the species' unmistakable contrast—jet-black dominance beside warm chestnut refinement. *Together they illustrate why sable remain one of Africa's most sought-after genetic assets: exceptional horn structure, regal posture and a calm but commanding presence that continues to anchor top-tier breeding and conservation programs.*

Sables (Male and Female)

Sables remain one of the **cornerstone species of the rare-game economy**, contributing a substantial **10.87% of total sales** and consistently commanding top-tier investor interest. In 2025, prices surged **46.98%** even as volumes contracted **–10.78%**, a pattern that unmistakably signals a market rewarding **elite genetics, disciplined herd management and phenotype excellence**. Far from weakening the category, the tightening of supply has helped elevate the value of well-bred animals, reinforcing sable's status as one of the **"prestige species"** in South African wildlife economics.

Sable Female

Sable cows accounted for **3.71% of total sales**, but delivered one of the **most remarkable pricing performances** in the entire 2025 wildlife market. Prices skyrocketed **80.37%**, despite a **–12.90%** decrease in volume. This dynamic points to a **high-confidence breeding environment**, where buyers are clearly willing to invest heavily in **quality female genetics** to secure the future performance of their herds. In 2025, purchasers placed **renewed emphasis** on selecting females from herds with documented horn-growth data, disease-free statuses and favourable temperament profiles — reinforcing that **elite cows remain the heartbeat of any successful sable operation**.

Sable Male

Sable bulls represented **7.16% of total market share**, continuing their established role as one of the most sought-after categories in rare game. Prices climbed **32.94%**, even as volumes tapered **–9.13%**, confirming sustained competition among breeders and investors for **heavy-bodied, long-horned, well-proportioned males**.

Market behaviour clearly shows that premium bulls continue to anchor herd value: strong bosses, deep chests, striking facial contrast and horn lengths tracking toward 45–55 inches remain the most influential visual and genetic indicators. In a tightening supply environment, bulls with **documented pedigree depth**, consistent offspring performance and superior measurements in early growth stages maintained their premium. The shortage of Sable males can be directly linked to reduced supply after many farms dismantled their Sable breeding camps and reverted to open- farm systems. This transition has significantly constrained overall Sable breeding output.

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Buffalo (Male & Female)

Buffalo remain the **undisputed heavyweight of the rare-game economy**, dominating the landscape with **23.69% of total sales** — more than any other species and nearly a quarter of the entire market. This commanding share illustrates not only their financial importance but also their psychological impact on bidders: buffalo continue to **set the tone** at major auctions, influencing buyer confidence and establishing price benchmarks for other high-value categories.

In 2025, average prices rose **69.63%**, even as quantities contracted **–16.27%**, reflecting a strategic tightening of supply by breeders who released fewer animals while maintaining fierce competition among buyers. This combination of **limited availability** and **relentless demand** underscores buffalo's role as the **market anchor**, a species where elite genetics, horn measurements, frame size and clean disease profiles remain paramount.

A **detailed and technical analysis of buffalo genetics, horn progression and investment dynamics is provided later in the report**, offering an in-depth exploration of what drives this cornerstone species.



A pair of mature Cape buffalo stand firm in the thick bushveld, their heavy bosses and broad frames reflecting the raw power and resilience that define the species. This commanding posture illustrates why buffalo remain one of Africa's most respected and iconic members of the Big Game sector.

Buffalo Female

Buffalo cows contributed **9.33% of total sales**, an impressive figure for a female category and prices increased **48.31%** with only a modest **–5.54%** decline in volume. This performance reinforces the fact that **female buffalo remain one of the most stable and strategic long-term assets** in the rare-game sector. The female market reflected a shift towards **quality over quantity**, with breeders increasingly selective about the bloodlines they reinvest in. In many operations, a reliable group of well-bred buffalo cows continues to form the **backbone of sustainable herd expansion**.

Buffalo bull (males) remained one of the most dominant value drivers of 2025, accounting for **14.36% of all sales** and showed exceptional pricing strength with an **87.11% increase**, despite a notable **–23.40% reduction in quantity**. This is one of the clearest signals of **intense, top-end buyer demand** across the entire rare-game market.

Premium bulls — particularly those with powerful bosses, deep chests, wide horn spreads and documented lineage from prestige herds — triggered competitive bidding and consistently outperformed expectations.

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Taken together, these species insights reveal a rare-game sector that is far more than a marketplace—it is a living, evolving ecosystem shaped by genetics, scarcity, prestige and the shifting ambitions of breeders across South Africa. In 2025, the market did not simply reward the most expensive animals; it rewarded **the most meaningful ones**—the species whose bloodlines carry legacy, whose traits enhance herd resilience and whose presence elevates the biodiversity and identity of a game farm.

From the dramatic surge in rhino demand to the quiet, strategic strengthening of sable cows and buffalo bulls, this year showcased a sector rediscovering its confidence through **selectivity, quality and long-term vision**. What emerges is not a story of volatility, but one of **intelligent recalibration**—a market that has learned from its cycles, sharpened its focus and now positions itself as one of the most fascinating and dynamic investment landscapes in modern wildlife.

The dismantling of camp-breeding systems will materially affect future breeding volumes for several species, including Sable and Roan. These antelope do not reproduce as efficiently in open farm systems as they do in controlled camp environments, and this shift will have a meaningful impact on **future supply.**

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Venison Market Analysis: 2021–2025

*Contributed by **Zadia Lubbe** – Beyond Bush Venison*

The venison market between 2021 and 2025 reveals a sector undergoing a deep structural transition—one shaped not simply by biological cycles, but by the shifting economics of South Africa's wildlife industry. For most species, carcass weights remained relatively stable through 2021 to 2024, creating the impression of a steady, predictable supply environment. Yet beneath this stability, powerful forces were already reshaping the market. By the time the sector entered 2025, these underlying pressures had become unmistakable.

Across all species, the **average carcass weight declined sharply—by approximately 9%—from 2024 to 2025**, signalling a material shift in the age profile of harvested animals. Hunters and landowners alike reported increasing difficulty in finding mature game, as **the industry-wide shortage of wildlife began influencing venison supply**. Animals were increasingly being harvested at younger ages, long before they reached their full biological mass. This contraction in carcass weight was not an isolated trend: it was the visible consequence of a deeper disruption in the balance between live-auction value and meat-market supply.

Through 2022, 2023 and 2024, the wildlife economy experienced significant uplift as auction prices strengthened across virtually all plains species and many variants. What followed was a notable behavioural shift among landowners. With **live-sale returns rising sharply**, the incentive to harvest animals for venison weakened. Instead, breeders and wildlife managers diverted stock toward auctions, where even mid-tier species began generating stronger returns than their venison equivalents. As a result, **culling volumes declined** and fewer mature animals entered the venison supply chain.

This tightening of supply was then compounded by changes in international hunting behaviour. As auction prices rose and safari packages effectively held their price ceilings, visiting hunters were able to **take fewer animals for the same spend**, reducing the throughput of mature carcasses even further. The venison market entered 2025 with a combination of lower volumes, lighter carcasses and reduced age diversity—conditions that inevitably pressured both market value and industry confidence. Indeed, **venison value contracted by more than 20% from 2024 to 2025**, signalling a significant cooling after earlier years of gradual growth.

Pre-2024 data, however, paints a very different picture—one where venison and auctions still operated as **two economically viable and complementary pathways**, giving landowners real flexibility in how they utilised specific species. Zebra is an excellent example. With an average carcass weight of around **140 kg**, venison returns of approximately **R3 500** made harvesting a rational option on many properties. Meanwhile, **pre-2024 auction prices hovered near R3 850 after capture costs**, offering an alternative but not overwhelmingly superior avenue for income generation. The key feature of this period was balance: landowners could **comfortably choose** between the two markets based on veld load, herd management goals and seasonal demand. Both pathways were valid and neither forced the hand of the wildlife manager.

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Giraffe reflected this same dual-pathway flexibility. Venison values of roughly **R13 500** per carcass, supported by an average carcass weight of **540 kg**, gave landowners a substantial incentive to harvest mature animals. Simultaneously, **auction returns after capture costs netted around R12 600** provided a viable alternative. Because the gap between the two revenue sources remained meaningful but not decisive, landowners could utilise giraffe in whichever way best suited their ecological and commercial objectives. Pre-2024, **both venison-based utilisation and auction-based realisation were economically defensible**, enabling a balanced, diversified management strategy.

But as the industry moved into 2024 and especially 2025, the balance collapsed. Auction prices accelerated sharply in many categories, while carcass weights and venison throughput deteriorated. What had once been a genuine choice became an increasingly one-sided equation: selling live yielded far superior returns, while harvesting produced diminishing value. This drove an industry-wide pivot away from venison and toward auctions, which—while economically rational—left the venison sector with reduced supply, reduced maturity and contracting output.



The wildlife industry's own performance, documented elsewhere in this journal, reinforces the same pattern. As game numbers tightened, as prices strengthened and as breeders responded to rising demand for quality genetics, the spill-over effects on venison became unavoidable. Where abundant supply once supported a vibrant meat market, scarcity and commercial incentives now pulled animals in the opposite direction.

The venison market of 2025 is therefore not simply weaker; it is fundamentally changed. It operates within a landscape where **auction economics dominate decision-making**, where **hunters take younger animals** and where **the biological potential for carcass weight is no longer being fully realised**. The contraction in venison value and carcass mass is thus the logical—if unintended—consequence of a wildlife economy experiencing strong demand, rising prices and a strategic shift in utilisation.

What emerges from this analysis is a coherent story: **venison is transitioning from a high-volume**, stable-output sector into a more constrained, **supply-sensitive industry** whose fortunes are tightly linked to auction prices, breeding decisions and international hunting trends. The year 2025 stands as a turning point, revealing both the strengths and vulnerabilities of a sector increasingly shaped by broader wildlife-market dynamics. And while the venison market may recover as ecological conditions stabilise and herd structures mature, its future will depend heavily on whether landowners restore a balanced utilisation strategy—one that supports both the commercial momentum of the auction system and the biological and economic importance of mature-age harvesting.

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In summary, the story of venison between 2021 and 2025 is one of initial growth, tightening supply, shifting hunter behaviour and an industry forced to reconsider the balance between auction economics and sustainable harvesting. The year 2025 stands as a pivotal moment in this narrative, signalling that while the wildlife economy thrives in one arena, it places consequential pressure on another. **How landowners respond—whether through refined population management, selective harvesting strategies, or integrated commercial planning—will determine whether the venison sector regains its former stability or continues along its current path of constrained output and lighter carcasses**.

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IMPALA

Aepyceros melampus

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Taurotragus*

MORPHOLOGY

- Medium antelope; ♂ 50–75 kg, ♀ 40–55 kg.
- Reddish-tan coat, white underparts, black tail stripes.
- ♂ have long lyre-shaped horns (up to 35 inches); females are hornless.
- Slender build, powerful hindquarters for leaping.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Savannas, light woodland, bushveld and ecotone zones.
- Widespread across Southern & Eastern Africa.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Mixed feeder: switches between grazing and browsing. Selects high-quality grasses, leaves, shoots, and fruits. Requires daily water.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

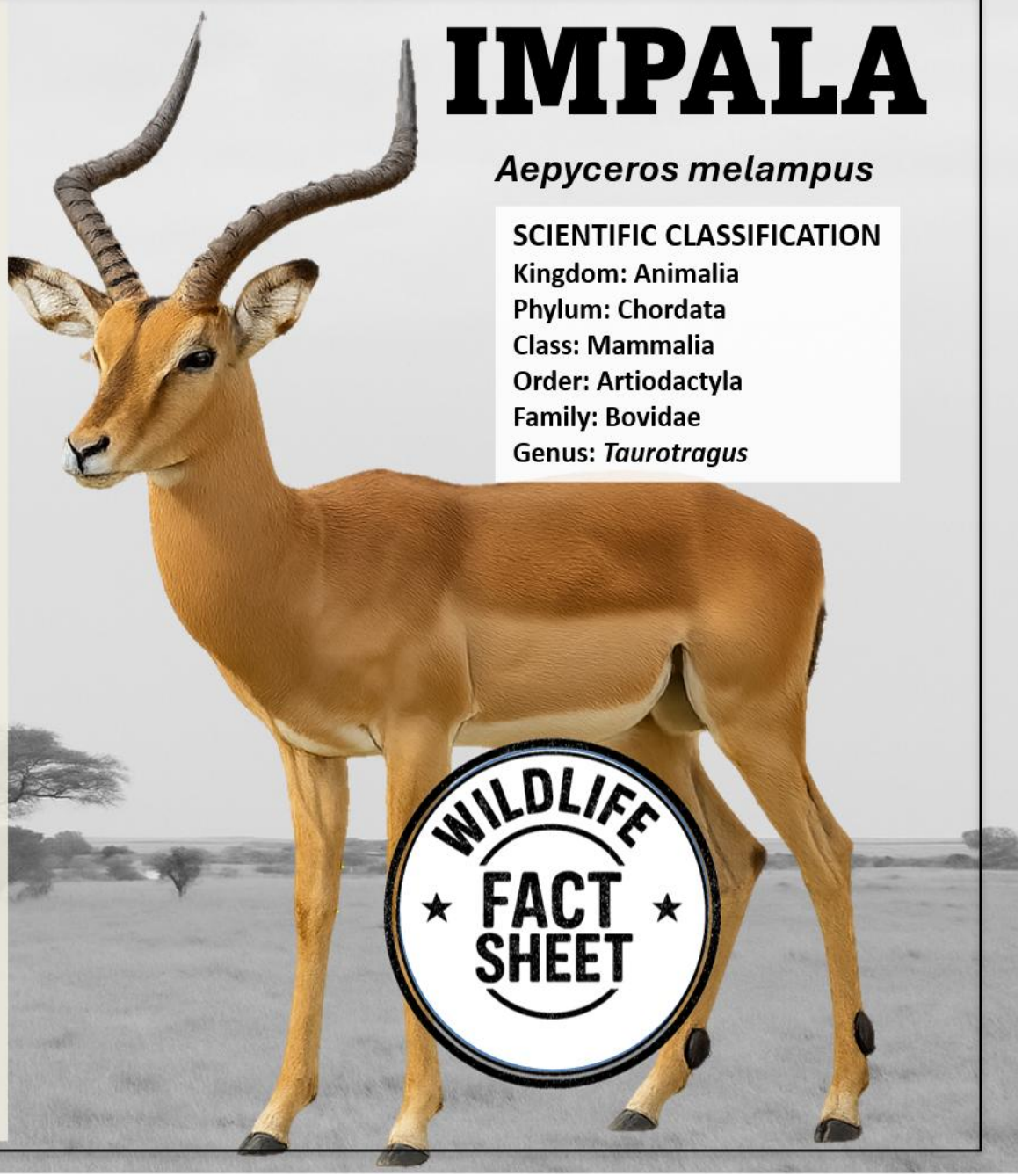
- Highly social; breeding herds (females + young), bachelor groups, and territorial rams.
- Exceptional agility — leaps up to 3 m high and 10 m long.
- Peak activity morning and late afternoon.

ADAPTATIONS

- Flexible diet, excellent predator-evading agility, cohesive herd structure, acute hearing and smell.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- IUCN: Least Concern;
- Stable and abundant; locally impacted by fencing and predation pressure.



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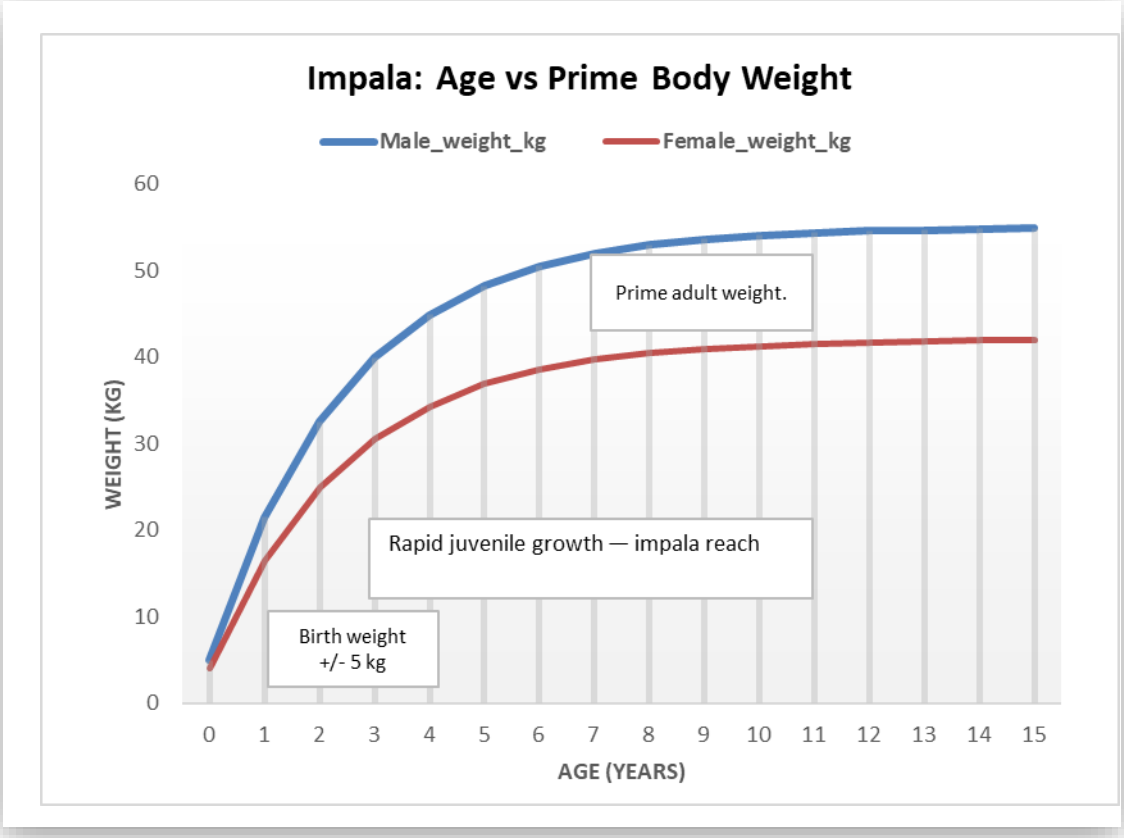
Impala Specie General Information

If you spend enough time in the South African bush, you begin to realise that not all animals command attention with size or drama. Some do it with presence. The impala is one of those animals. Not the biggest, not the rarest, not the most flamboyant, but without question one of the most important. They are the quiet heartbeat of the savannah—so common that people sometimes forget how remarkable they truly are, yet so essential that entire ecosystems and economies silently depend on them.

The story of the impala begins in the warm woodlands and rolling savannahs of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, where acacia and bushwillow thickets give way to open grasslands. From these landscapes their range spreads across **KwaZulu-Natal, the North-West, the Free State and into the Eastern Cape's game farms**.

Today, thanks to their adaptability, impala have also become one of the defining species on private wildlife estates across South Africa. They thrive where many other antelope falter, moving confidently through landscapes that vary from dense woodland to open plains, always keeping within reach of water and always alert to predators who know their value as prey. Walk among them in the early morning and you'll notice their quiet elegance: the sleek reddish-gold coat catching first light, the crisp black stripes framing a white tail that flicks like a living exclamation mark. But look closer and the real magic emerges. In a herd, every impala is tuned to the landscape. Ears swivel. Noses test the air.



Should one detect danger, a sharp, explosive snort will ripple through the group, a bush-veld alarm system that predators have learned either to fear or exploit.

Their bodies tell the story of this resilience. A one-year-old ram, still gawky and slim, carries little more than the beginnings of horn spikes and weighs barely twenty-odd kilograms. But by two years old he has nearly doubled his mass and his horns—those iconic lyre-shaped arcs—begin their dramatic upward sweep.

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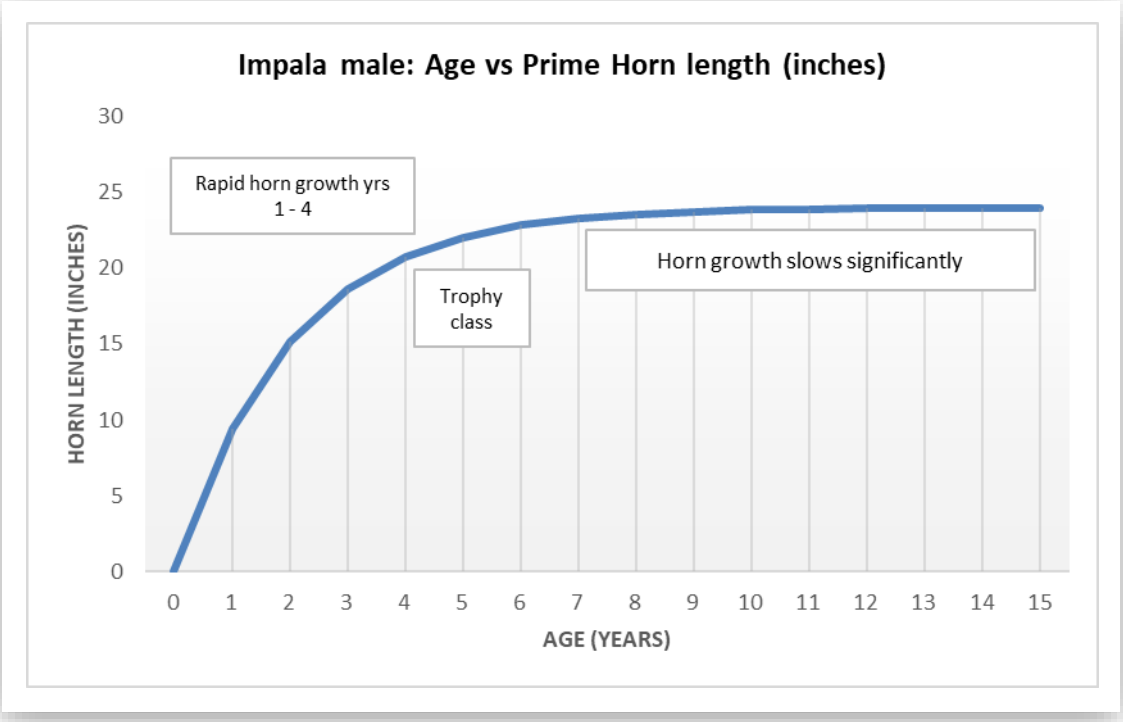

At three years, his frame fills out and the horns lengthen into the elegant S-curve that defines the species.

By four, he stands fully grown, almost regal, the neck thickening and the horns pushing past twenty inches. From here until about **six years, a ram is in his prime: 70-plus kilograms of muscle and instinct**, armed with horns that often **reach the 22- to 23-inch mark** that hunters and ecologists alike recognise as mature trophy length.

Females follow a different rhythm—quieter, lighter, driven by survival rather than showmanship. They weigh less, their bodies more streamlined and the absence of horns gives them a softer appearance. But do not mistake delicacy for fragility. Ewes are the architects of herd structure, forming cohesive nursery groups, raising lambs, selecting grazing routes and maintaining the steady progression of herd life.

Their energy goes into reproduction and survival, not territorial displays. They reach productive maturity at just over a year and a half and, under good veld conditions, help the population grow at rates that outpace nearly all other antelope on the continent. Yet beneath this grace lies a deeper story—one of biological mastery. Impalas eat in a way that makes them almost drought-proof. During lush summers they graze happily on soft new grasses, but when the first dry winds sweep across the veld, they do what few antelope can: they switch to browsing. Leaves, pods, young shoots, forbs—whatever the season offers, they take. This **mixed feeding strategy gives them a resilience** that makes wildlife managers quietly grateful. Even when rains are late or competitors multiply, impalas maintain condition long after other grazers begin to fade. They are, in many ways, the bushveld's stabilisers: they take pressure off the grass in winter and they bounce back quickly after drought.

The breeding cycle itself is a beautifully synchronised dance. As cool autumn evenings settle over the Lowveld in May, rams become different creatures. Their tempers shorten, their necks swell and deep, guttural roars echo through the bush—calls that announce territory, challenge rivals and herd females. Fights break out, often violent yet rarely fatal. The victors carve out small territories and try to hold them long enough to mate with as many receptive ewes as possible. Once the rut passes, the drama softens. Pregnant ewes settle into the rhythm of gestation—around two hundred days—and wait for the first rains. When November brings new grass and renewed life, the lambs arrive. Hundreds at once. A carpet of trembling legs and hopeful eyes, perfectly timed to abundant forage. For predators, this is a season of feast; for impalas, a season of renewal.

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If nature wrote only about survival and reproduction, the story would already be impressive—but the impala is also a protagonist in South Africa's economic and ecological narrative. On private game farms they serve as the foundation species: they are the volume game for hunting, the stable supply for venison production, the live-sale economy's dependable baseline and the prey base that sustains leopard, cheetah, hyena, wild dog and lion in natural reserves. Without impala, predator populations would collapse. Without predators, tourism would lose one of its defining attractions. The impala, often overlooked, quietly holds up both the ecological pyramid and the commercial structure of modern wildlife industries.

Their social behaviour adds another layer of fascination. Impala herds form, merge and separate like shifting sandbanks in a river. This fluid system—what scientists call a fission–fusion society—allows them to adapt instantly to threats, resources and seasonal patterns. Watching them is like watching a living barometer: their movement tells you about predators nearby, the quality of grazing, the stability of the veld and the quiet pressures the environment exerts. Guides often say, "If you want to know what's happening in the bush, watch the impala first."

The following matrix summarises **the primary Impala variants recognised in South Africa**, highlighting their distinguishing traits and relevance to the wildlife industry.

Variant Category	Variant / Subspecies	Key Physical Traits	Genetic Notes	Origin & Distribution	Use in Game Farming
Natural Subspecies	**Common Impala** (*A. m. melampus*)	Classic reddish-brown coat, white underparts, black rump stripes; rams horned.	Highly stable genetics; strong wild gene pool.	Widespread across SA (Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KZN, NW, Free State, EC).	Foundation species for hunting, meat, live sales, ecological stocking.
	Black-faced Impala (*A. m. petersi*)	Dark facial blaze, slightly larger frame, deeper coat tone.	Must avoid hybridisation with common impala.	Namibia/Angola origin; limited specialist SA herds.	Specialist breeding; conservation value; premium tourism appeal.

And then there is the matter of colour variants, which, depending on who you ask, are either visionary diversification or the speculative chapter of South Africa's wildlife economy. Black impala, with their rich chocolate coats, white impala with cream colouring and the patterned saddlebacks have created niche high-value markets over the past decade. They require careful ethical and genetic management, yet they remain part of the cultural and financial tapestry of modern game farming. The true wild-type impala, though—the classic reddish animal of Kruger and the Lowveld—is still the core, the animal on which everything else is built.

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Variant Category	Variant / Subspecies	Key Physical Traits	Genetic Notes	Origin & Distribution	Use in Game Farming
Colour Variants	**Black Impala**	Deep chocolate to black coat; striking contrast.	Recessive melanistic gene; careful breeding needed.	South African breeding programs.	High-end exotic trophy and variant breeding.
	White Impala	Cream to snow-white coat; pinkish nose/hooves.	Leucistic pigmentation; sensitive to excessive sun.	Exclusively from SA colour-variant breeding.	High-value exotic; trophy & display herds.
	Saddleback Impala	Darker saddle-shaped marking on back; patterned.	Polygenic patterning; variable expression.	SA selective breeding lines.	Variant collections, novelty hunting.
	Golden / Royal Impala	Pale golden/yellow-tan colour.	Dilution mutation; maintain diverse breeding groups.	SA variant breeding systems.	Specialist trophy & breeding lines.
	Painted / Piebald Impala / white flanked	Irregular white/brown patchwork pattern.	Unstable inheritance; must avoid inbreeding.	Very limited lines on select farms.	Exotic display and niche trophy animals.
	Dappled Impala	Irregular white/black patchwork pattern.	Unstable inheritance; must avoid inbreeding.	Very limited lines on select farms.	Exotic display and niche trophy animals.
Other Recognised Forms	**Blaze / Split-pattern Impala**	Enhanced facial blaze or altered flank striping.	Complex inheritance; requires controlled selection.	Specialist SA breeders.	Aesthetic/tourism value; niche variant collections.

In the end, the impala is not remarkable because it is rare, or enormous, or fierce. It is remarkable because it is indispensable. It survives where others fail, multiplies when conditions allow, feeds both predator and economy, warns the bush of danger and holds together ecosystems with a balance of grace and grit. To understand South African wildlife management—whether from an ecological, commercial or conservation point of view—you must first understand the impala. They are, quite literally, the life thread woven through the fabric of the savannah.

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Fascinating Insights into the Impala:

The Impala is far more remarkable than its familiar presence on the African landscape might suggest. It is one of the few antelope capable of both true grazing and true browsing, effortlessly shifting its diet with the seasons — a versatility that helps it thrive in diverse habitats. Its athleticism is equally astonishing: an impala can launch itself up to 10 metres in a single bound and clear 3 metres vertically, using this explosive agility to escape predators.

Other interesting facts include:

- Impala live in some of the **most complex social systems** among African antelope, with bachelor herds, nursery herds, territorial males and mixed herds all operating simultaneously.
- Females form **matrilineal groups** spanning multiple generations, providing stability in breeding territories.
- During the rut, territorial males may **lose up to 25% of their body weight** due to intense competition and reduced feeding.
- Their **gestation is ~194–200 days**, timing births precisely to align with early summer vegetation flush.
- They practice **"delayed implantation-like" synchronisation** — not true diapause, but a natural cohort timing that ensures mass birthing within 2–3 weeks.
- Newborn impala fawns use a strategy known as **"hider behaviour"**, lying motionless and scentless in grass for the first days of life to evade predators.
- Impala have astonishingly **high fawn survival rates** in well-managed environments, making them a pillar species in the game industry.
- Impalas are often referred to as **"ecosystem stabilisers"** because they fill the ecological gap between small and large antelope, supporting predators year-round.
- Their **split upper lip** allows extremely precise browsing, letting them selectively nip new leaves, flowers and soft shoots.
- The "impala whistle" is a **distinctive predator alarm call**, instantly recognised by many other species, including zebra, wildebeest and warthog.
- Despite being common, impala have some of the most **effective anti-predator strategies** in Africa include explosive leaping, zig-zag sprinting, mass confusion tactics and alarm calls that travel great distances. When chased, impala sometimes **jump over and across the herd**, creating a confusing three-dimensional escape pattern. They can maintain **bursts of 70–80 km/h** briefly when evading predators.

"The impala may not be the largest or the loudest on the savannah, but without its agility, adaptability and abundance, the entire ecosystem loses its rhythm — it is the quiet heartbeat that keeps the bushveld alive."

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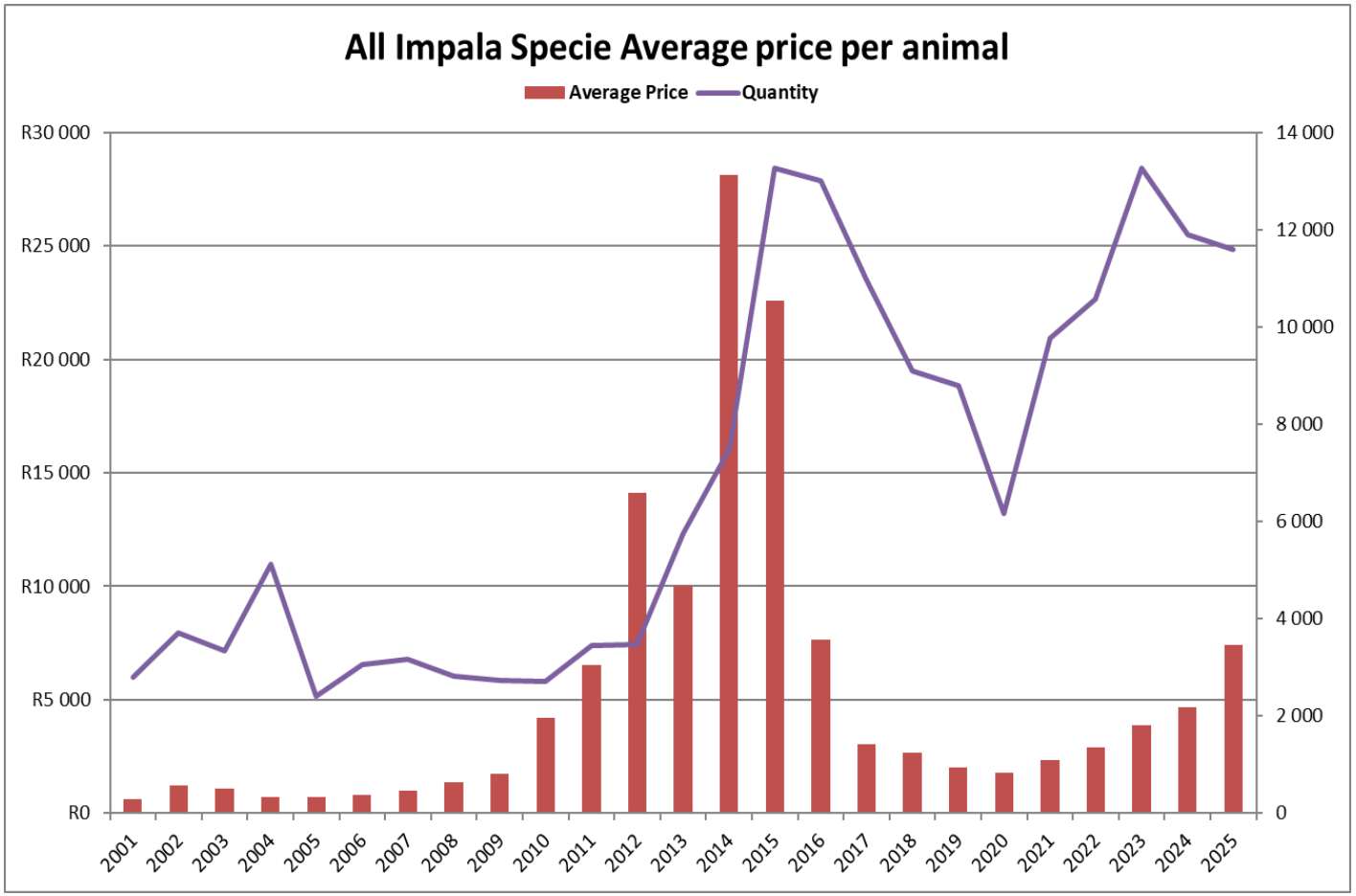
Total Impala (All Species) Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

The **Total Impala (All Species) Data & Graphs** present a long, uninterrupted story of the impala market across more than two decades. The table records how value, quantity and average price have shifted year by year, while the graph reveals the deeper rhythm beneath those numbers—showing how volumes swell, how price cycles rise and fall and how the market responds to broader forces around it. Together, they create a narrative that is both structured and dynamic: a narrative driven by a species that has become **the backbone of live-auction liquidity**, a silent measure of confidence and a reliable indicator of when the wildlife economy is strengthening, cooling or rebuilding. This dataset offers not just historic information but a **timeline of behaviour**, demonstrating exactly how impala adapts to changing conditions, how it anchors the plains-game sector and why it continues to be one of the most influential commercial species in South Africa.

Total Impala All Species			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 766 520	2 804	R630
2002	R4 576 120	3 713	R1 232
2003	R3 596 160	3 343	R1 076
2004	R3 510 039	5 120	R686
2005	R1 685 940	2 395	R704
2006	R2 408 210	3 053	R789
2007	R3 081 155	3 157	R976
2008	R3 817 800	2 824	R1 352
2009	R4 692 095	2 726	R1 721
2010	R11 353 860	2 715	R4 182
2011	R22 441 965	3 445	R6 514
2012	R48 984 695	3 470	R14 117
2013	R57 632 660	5 748	R10 027
2014	R210 581 375	7 489	R28 119
2015	R299 178 675	13 258	R22 566
2016	R99 262 402	12 997	R7 637
2017	R33 203 821	10 994	R3 020
2018	R24 002 786	9 090	R2 641
2019	R17 700 710	8 803	R2 011
2020	R11 015 770	6 159	R1 789
2021	R23 052 320	9 769	R2 360
2022	R30 845 788	10 584	R2 914
2023	R51 265 605	13 258	R3 867
2024	R55 737 595	11 896	R4 685
2025	R85 691 100	11 592	R7 392



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Total Impala (All Species) Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Market Establishment and First Cycles of Adjustment (2001–2005)

Between **2001 and 2005**, the Impala market displayed the characteristics of a developing tradescape. Value rose sharply from **R1.77 million in 2001** to **R4.58 million in 2002**, supported by quantity increasing from **2 804** to **3 713**, and with average price doubling to **R1 232**. The correction in **2003** and **2004**, when value settled around **R3.51 million** despite quantities climbing toward **5 120**, illustrated the market's sensitivity to shifts in demand. The decline in **2005**, where value fell to **R1.69 million** and quantity eased to **2 395**, signalled the end of the early speculative enthusiasm. Yet Impala pricing held at approximately **R700**, revealing a species whose baseline commercial value remained intact even during contraction.

Gradual Lift and the First Price-Driven Momentum (2006–2010)

From **2006 to 2010**, the market entered a more defined upward cycle. Value climbed from **R2.41 million** in **2006** to **R11.35 million** in **2010**, while quantities remained surprisingly stable, moving from **3 053** to **2 715** across the band. The decisive shift came through pricing. Average price rose from **R789** in **2006** to **R1 352** by **2008**, and further to **R1 721** in **2009**, before the dramatic price breakout in **2010**, when average price reached **R4 182**. This period aligned with rising optimism in the wildlife sector, where investment in breeding and trophy lines increased and auctions regained liquidity, creating the conditions for Impala's first sustained growth phase.

The Super-Cycle Expansion and Peak Valuations (2011–2015)

The years **2011 to 2015** represented the most aggressive expansion in the Impala dataset. Market value surged from **R22.44 million in 2011** to a remarkable **R299.18 million in 2015**, supported by major shifts in both price and quantity. Average price rose sharply from **R6 514 in 2011** to **R14 117 in 2012**, and eventually to **R28 119 in 2014**, before settling at **R22 566** in **2015**. Quantity followed the same upward path, increasing from **3 445 in 2011** to **13 258** by **2015**.

A key driver behind this extraordinary escalation was the expanding market for **colour-variant genetics**, particularly the explosive growth in black, saddleback, white-flank and other high-value phenotypes. During **2012 to 2015**, large numbers of **Impala females were being purchased and used as recipient or foundational breeding stock for these colour-variant programs**, dramatically increasing their commercial importance. As breeders raced to scale variant herds, the demand for quality females surged, pushing prices materially higher even in the more common Impala lines. This surge in female demand amplified the upward pressure created by trophy ram sales, contributing directly to the extraordinary price inflation seen during the super-cycle.

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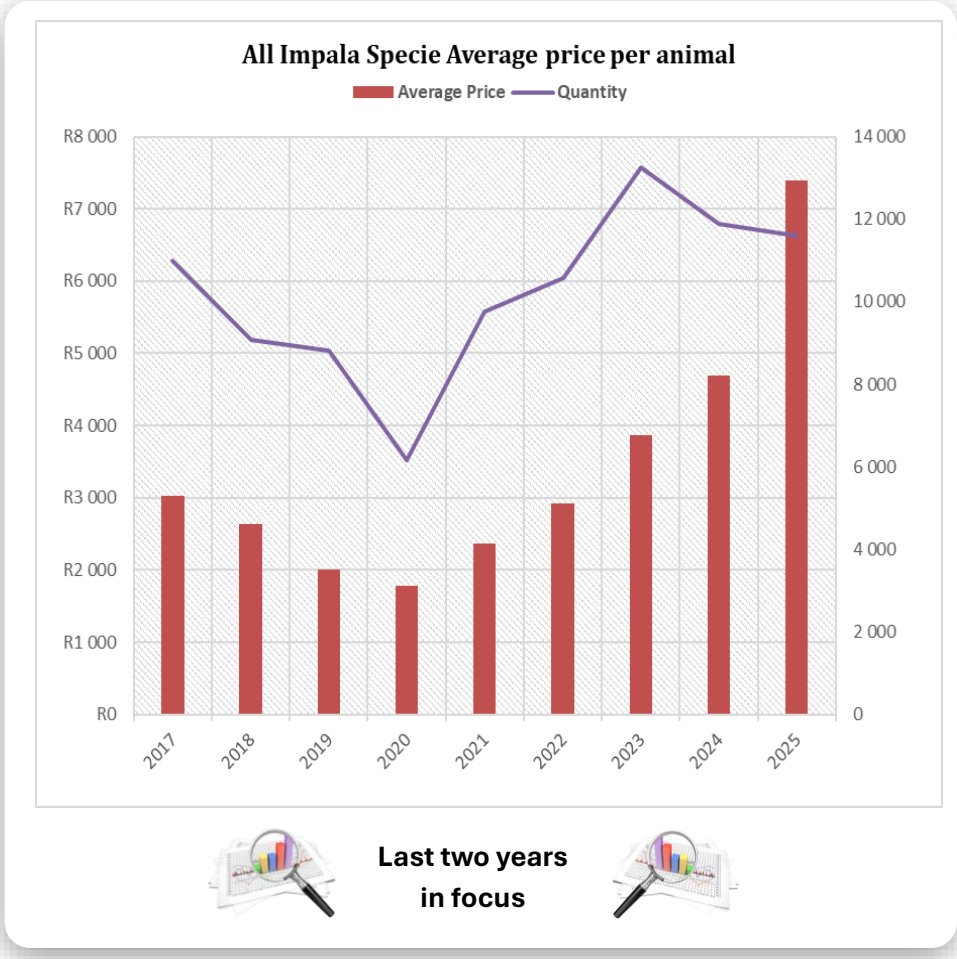
This was the height of the wildlife investment wave, where elite breeding, improved genetics and auction competitiveness inflated prices rapidly. Impala—normally abundant—became a high-value contributor not only for male trophy appeal but also because **ordinary females suddenly carried premium strategic value** in colour-variant breeding expansions. The combination of herd-building pressure and booming demand from variant projects made these years the most pronounced acceleration in the entire 25-year record.

Collapse, Deflation and Industry Recalibration (2016–2020)

Between **2016 and 2020**, the Impala market experienced a sustained decline as the speculative boom unwound. Value dropped from **R99.26 million in 2016** to **R11.01 million in 2020**, while quantity reduced from **12 997** to **6 159**. Pricing contraction was equally severe, falling from **R7 637 in 2016** to **R1 789** in 2020. The sector was absorbing oversupply, weakened demand and the aftershock of inflated prices. Economic tightening and reduced private investment played a role, but the most damaging factor was **COVID-19 in 2020**, which disrupted hunting tourism, restricted movement and drained liquidity, further pushing Impala into a multi-year correction. By the end of this band, the market had returned to its lowest pricing levels since the early 2000s.



The Rebuild and Return to Structured Growth (2021–2024)

The period **2021 to 2024** marked a deliberate rebuilding phase. Market value more than doubled from **R23.05 million in 2021** to **R55.74 million in 2024**, while quantity climbed from **9 769** to **11 896**. Average price followed a steady upward trajectory from **R2 360** to **R4 685**. The recovery initially reflected pent-up demand following pandemic restrictions and later gained strength from improved auction participation and consistent breeder realignment. By **2023**, when value reached **R51.27 million** and quantity matched the **13 258** last seen in the 2015 peak, the market demonstrated a balanced mix of volume and price recovery.

The moderation in **2024** showed a market settling into sustainable pricing rather than attempting to replicate past speculative highs.

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The move from **2024 to 2025** signalled a significant strengthening in the Impala market. Total value rose from **R55.74 million** to **R85.69 million**, an increase of **R29.95 million**. Quantity softened slightly from **11 896** to **11 592**, but average price grew sharply from **R4 685** to **R7 392**.

The core driver of **2025's** performance was not additional volume but **renewed pricing power**, reflecting intensified demand for superior ram genetics, stronger trophy hunting uptake and a shift toward quality-based bidding at auction. The broader wildlife economy in 2025 showed similar signals—higher spending per buyer, more confident international participation and a greater willingness among breeders to hold back inferior stock, thereby supporting premium averages. The demand for 2024 and 2025 is exceeding the supply as there is a shortage of impala in the market to serve breeding and hunting farms.

What makes the **2025** movement meaningful is that it marks the strongest pricing uplift since the super-cycle years, yet without the imbalance that characterised that era. The slight quantity reduction paired with a substantial price gain demonstrates disciplined supply and a market willing to reward quality rather than volume. As a result, **2025** stands as a decisive confirmation of Impala's renewed commercial momentum and a transition into a more value-driven cycle heading into 2026.

Shifting Dynamics Across the Impala Complex: A Market Story

The Impala Summary table presents a structured view of how various impala types collectively shape the total market composition in two consecutive years. Instead of treating impala as a single homogeneous species, the table breaks it down into its major phenotype categories—each with its own market role, breeding value and commercial significance. This segmentation helps illustrate how the broader impala economy is influenced not only by volume-heavy common impala but also by the rising impact of rarer, visually distinct colour variants. The table allows us to see **how value is distributed, how market sentiment shifts across phenotypes** and how the interplay between rarity and quantity shapes overall performance.

Impala Summary	2025				2024			
	% Total	Value	Quantity	Average	% Total	Value	Quantity	Average
Impala : Common	39.28%	R33 658 800	9 460	R3 558	48.28%	R26 912 875	10 177	R2 644
Impala : Black	23.84%	R20 432 000	1 223	R16 706	26.46%	R14 749 800	1 250	R11 800
Impala : Saddleback	4.78%	R4 093 350	249	R16 439	4.35%	R2 424 520	121	R20 037
Impala : White Flanked	21.90%	R18 766 950	521	R36 021	14.09%	R7 855 900	286	R27 468
Impala : Dappled	9.60%	R8 222 500	102	R80 613	6.66%	R3 711 500	49	R75 745
Impala : Royal	0.08%	R65 000	1	R65 000	0.15%	R83 000	13	R6 385
Impala : Other	0.53%	R452 500	36	R12 569	0.00%	R0	0	R0
TOTALS	**100.00%**	**R85 691 100**	**11 592**	**R7 392**	**100.00%**	**R55 737 595**	**11 896**	**R4 685**

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The movement from 2024 to 2025 reveals an impala market undergoing a meaningful transformation. **Common impala**, long the dominant contributor, retreats in relative influence as its share of total value falls from 48.28% to 39.28%. The reduction in quantities is directly related to a shortage in common impala markets. This is driven by both a reduction in quantity from 10 177 to 9 460 and a strong rise in average pricing among competing variants. Even so, common impala remains the backbone of the species group—still contributing the largest number of animals and maintaining a stable commercial presence.

The surge in value contribution is carried instead by several high-impact colour variants. **White Flanked** impala becomes one of the most significant forces of 2025, lifting its share of total value from 14.09% to 21.90%. Despite selling fewer than 600 animals, it generates almost as much market value as common impala relative to its scale. Its average price climbs strongly from R27 468 to R36 021, reflecting expanding buyer interest in distinctive phenotype lines with strong breeding appeal. This category's rise signals a shift toward **rarity-driven commercial demand**.

Similarly, **Black impala** strengthens its position within the market structure. While quantities remain almost unchanged year-on-year, its average price improves dramatically—from R11 800 to R16 706—lifting its overall value contribution from 26.46% to 23.84% of the market. This confirms that demand for black impala remains resilient and is now underpinned by more consistent price support rather than volume expansion.

The **Dappled** category provides one of the most striking moments in the table. With only 102 animals sold in 2025, it contributes 9.60% of total market value—up from 6.66%—driven by an exceptional average price increase from R75 745 to R80 613. Its tiny footprint in terms of volume contrasts sharply with its outsize influence, showing that the market is increasingly prepared to pay a premium for rare and visually unique genetic expressions.

Saddleback impala shows steady, healthy growth. Its quantity doubles from 121 to 249 and total value increases accordingly, even as the average price settles slightly lower. This suggests that buyers remain committed to the phenotype but at more moderate price levels, resulting in a stable but expanding presence within the impala segment.

At the fringes, **Royal** and **Other** impala categories illustrate the market's ongoing experimentation. A single Royal animal in 2025 fetches R65 000, while the "Other" phenotype introduces R452 500 of new value where none existed in 2024. Although small in scale, these categories highlight the market's appetite for diversity and novelty, often at elevated price points.

Altogether, the impala market of 2025 reveals a **notable broadening of value sources**. Instead of relying chiefly on the large-volume common impala category, the market now leans heavily on mid- and high-value colour variants to drive overall performance. The uplift in total value from R55.73 million to R85.69 million is powered not by increased volume—since total quantity actually falls slightly—but by **stronger pricing, deeper buyer selectivity and heightened demand for phenotype-driven genetics**. The rise in colour-variant demand is largely driven by hunters—particularly international hunters—who now view these animals as an essential component of their hunting experience. Colour-variant impala, in particular, has become a highly sought-after species among overseas clients.

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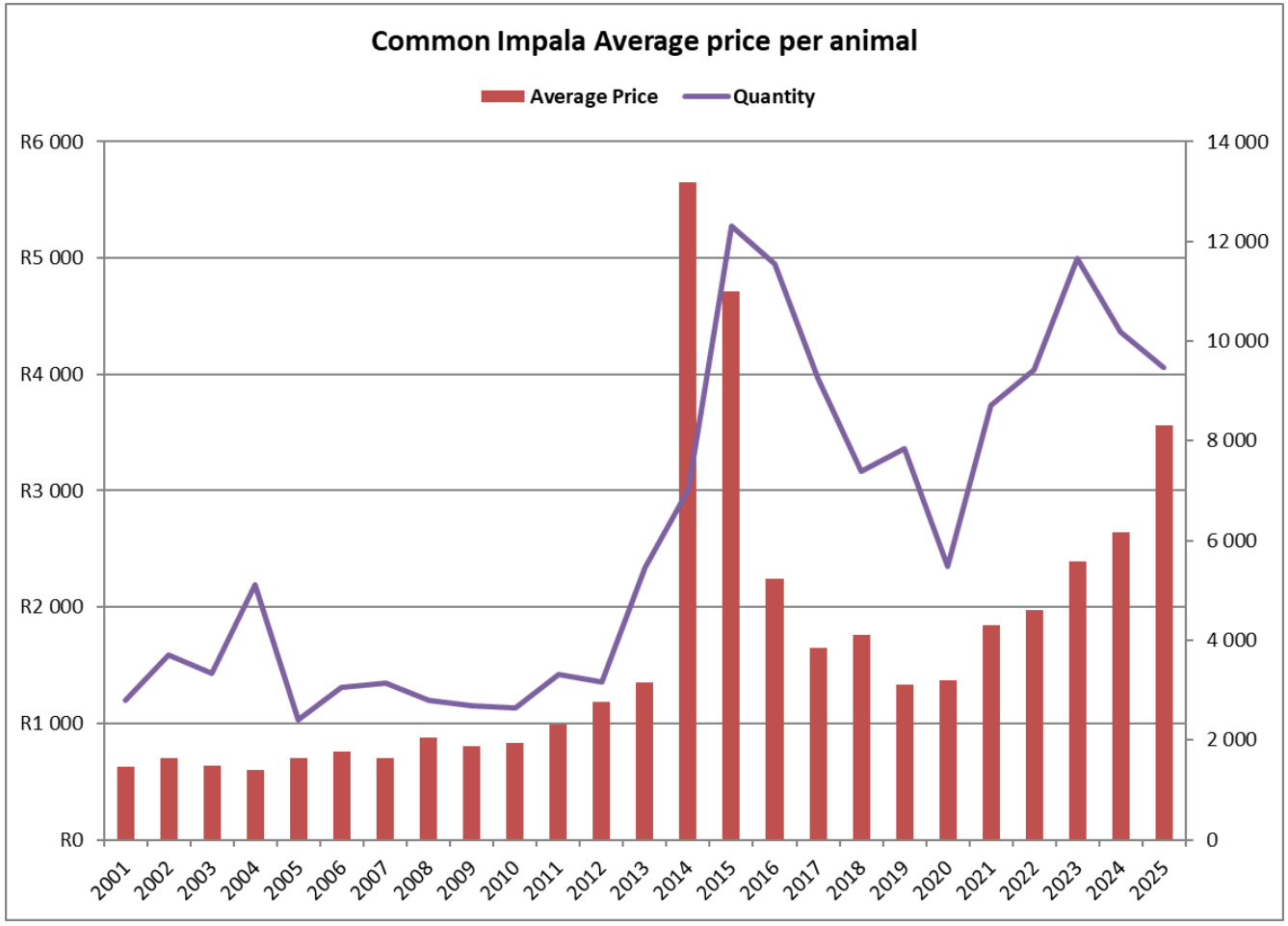
Common Impala "Male and Female" Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

The data on **Common Impala (Male & Female)** provides a long-term narrative of how the most foundational segment of the impala economy has evolved over nearly twenty-five years. The table captures year-on-year changes in value generated, quantity traded and the average price achieved, while the graph visually reinforces the rhythm of these shifts—highlighting the quiet early years, the dramatic surge of the mid-2010s, the subsequent market correction and the measured rebuilding that defines the modern period. Together, the dataset offers not just a record of performance, but a **story of resilience, demand cycles and shifting market sentiment** for a species that remains the cornerstone of plains-game auction liquidity.

Total Common Impala (Male & Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 766 520	2 804	R630
2002	R2 596 120	3 699	R702
2003	R2 121 160	3 328	R637
2004	R3 080 039	5 115	R602
2005	R1 685 940	2 395	R704
2006	R2 303 210	3 050	R755
2007	R2 198 655	3 134	R702
2008	R2 450 300	2 795	R877
2009	R2 155 095	2 684	R803
2010	R2 203 860	2 648	R832
2011	R3 256 965	3 308	R985
2012	R3 754 695	3 174	R1 183
2013	R7 370 060	5 467	R1 348
2014	R39 640 175	7 018	R5 648
2015	R58 042 325	12 308	R4 716
2016	R25 937 905	11 545	R2 247
2017	R15 265 411	9 253	R1 650
2018	R13 001 844	7 388	R1 760
2019	R10 421 060	7 833	R1 330
2020	R7 499 930	5 471	R1 371
2021	R16 023 270	8 711	R1 839
2022	R18 639 128	9 424	R1 978
2023	R27 832 819	11 657	R2 388
2024	R26 912 875	10 177	R2 644
2025	R33 658 800	9 460	R3 558



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Common Impala "Male and Female" Insights: 2001 to 2025

Foundation Years: 2001–2010 — Stability, Modest Growth & Early Demand Formation

From **2001 to 2010**, the Common Impala market moved within a relatively narrow band, showing a market still maturing. Values rose from **R1.77 million in 2001** to **R2.20 million in 2010**, while quantities fluctuated between **2 395 (2005)** and **5 115 (2004)**. Despite these swings, the average price remained modest, oscillating between **R602 (2004)** and **R877 (2008)**. This period reflected a **stable supply base**, slow-building domestic demand, and the early expansion of wildlife ranching before high-value genetic breeding programmes came into fashion. Price improvements in the latter part of this period—especially from **2008 to 2011**—aligned with expanding auction participation and stronger plains-game safari demand.

Pre-Boom Escalation: 2011–2013 — A Noticeable Lift in Value and Price

Between **2011 and 2013**, the market shifted gears. Values rose from **R3.26 million (2011)** to **R7.37 million (2013)**, supported by quantity increases from **3 308** to **5 467**. The average price climbed steadily from **R985 (2011)** to **R1 348 (2013)**. This was the period just before the broader wildlife economy entered its high-value genetics boom. Plains game, including Impala, benefited from stronger liquidity, increased investor participation, and a growing appreciation for structured herd improvement. The market felt **buoyant**, with consistent performance across both quantity and pricing. These increases were largely driven by stock requirements for breeding farms.

The 2014–2016 Boom and Correction — A Defined Spike Followed by Rapid Normalisation

The years **2014 to 2016** marked the most dramatic cycle in the history of Common Impala sales. In **2014**, the value spiked to **R39.64 million**, driven by **7 018 animals** and an average price of **R5 648**—an extraordinary deviation from long-term norms. The following year, **2015**, reinforced this abnormality with **12 308 animals sold** and a still-elevated price of **R4 716**, generating **R58.04 million** in value. By **2016**, however, the correction was swift. Value more than halved to **R25.94 million**, quantities eased to **11 545**, and the average price collapsed to **R2 247**—a ±52% drop from the prior year's pricing. This sequence aligned with the broader **genetics boom and bust** in the wildlife industry, where intensified speculative breeding and investor activity inflated prices beyond sustainable levels. The correction in 2016 was seen across many plains and rare species, not just Impala.

Normalisation & Pre-Pandemic Market: 2017–2019 — Returning to Realistic, Demand-Driven Levels

From **2017 to 2019**, the market stabilised at more realistic levels. Values eased from **R15.27 million (2017)** to **R10.42 million (2019)**, with quantities ranging from **7 388 to 9 253**. Prices settled between **R1 330 (2019)** and **R1 760 (2018)**, reflecting a **normalised buyer environment**. This period marked the re-alignment of plains game pricing to ecological and commercial fundamentals rather than speculative expectations. International hunting arrivals were steady, and breeders focused more on **volume-based sustainability** rather than premium-driven returns.

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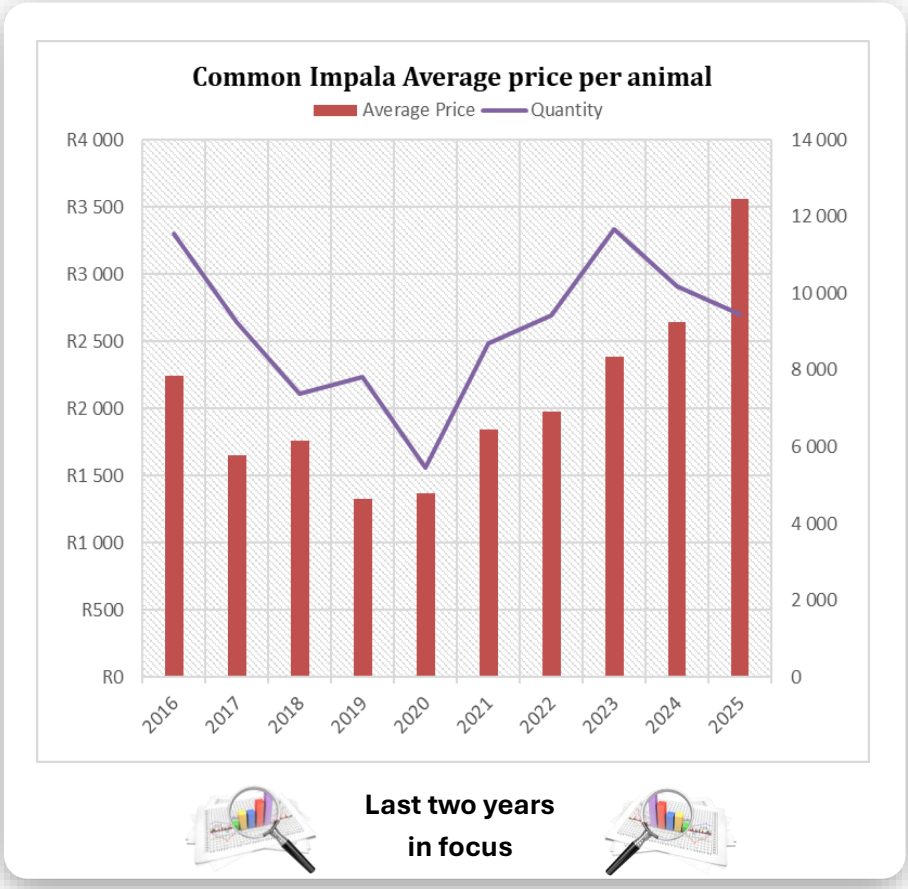
COVID Shock and Immediate Recovery: 2020–2021 — Disruption Followed by Rebound Momentum

The **2020 COVID year** delivered a sharp contraction: value dropped to **R7.50 million**, quantities fell to **5 471**, and prices held marginally above **R1 371**. Restricted auctions, closed borders, and limited on-farm movement all contributed to this dip. Yet the recovery in **2021** was notable. Value more than doubled to **R16.02 million**, quantities climbed to **8 711**, and average price increased to **R1 839**. The industry benefitted from reopening markets, pent-up demand, and renewed rancher repositioning.

Momentum Building: 2022–2024 — Strengthening Demand and Gradual Price Escalation

Between **2022 and 2024**, Common Impala continued building momentum. Value increased from **R18.64 million (2022)** to **R26.91 million (2024)**, quantities shifted from **9 424 to 10 177**, and average price strengthened from **R1 978** to **R2 644**. This phase reflected **tightened supply**, improved international hunting participation, stronger domestic demand for volumes, and rising costs of live capture and feeding which often spill into price formation. The upward movement was gradual but **structurally strong**, indicating a healthy recovery trajectory.



2025: A Stronger, More Confident Market Reasserts the Value of Common Impala

The **2025** year marked a significant strengthening of the Common Impala market, signalling renewed confidence and tightening supply dynamics across plains game. Total value rose from **R26.91 million in 2024** to **R33.66 million in 2025**, a **24.99% uplift**, even though quantities moved downward from **10 177 in 2024** to **9 460 in 2025**. What made 2025 particularly telling was the sharp rise in **average price**, which increased from **R2 644** to **R3 558**, a **34.56% year-on-year escalation**. This price-driven surge demonstrated that **buyers were willing to pay materially more for fewer animals**, reflecting both scarcity and a recalibrated understanding of Impala's ecological and commercial value.

Across the broader industry, **reduced reproduction rates in drought-affected regions**, improved hunting arrival numbers, greater cost pressures on breeders, and the ongoing shift toward quality over quantity supported firmer price formation. These factors aligned to create a **robust demand environment**, which translated directly into the strong 2025 numbers.

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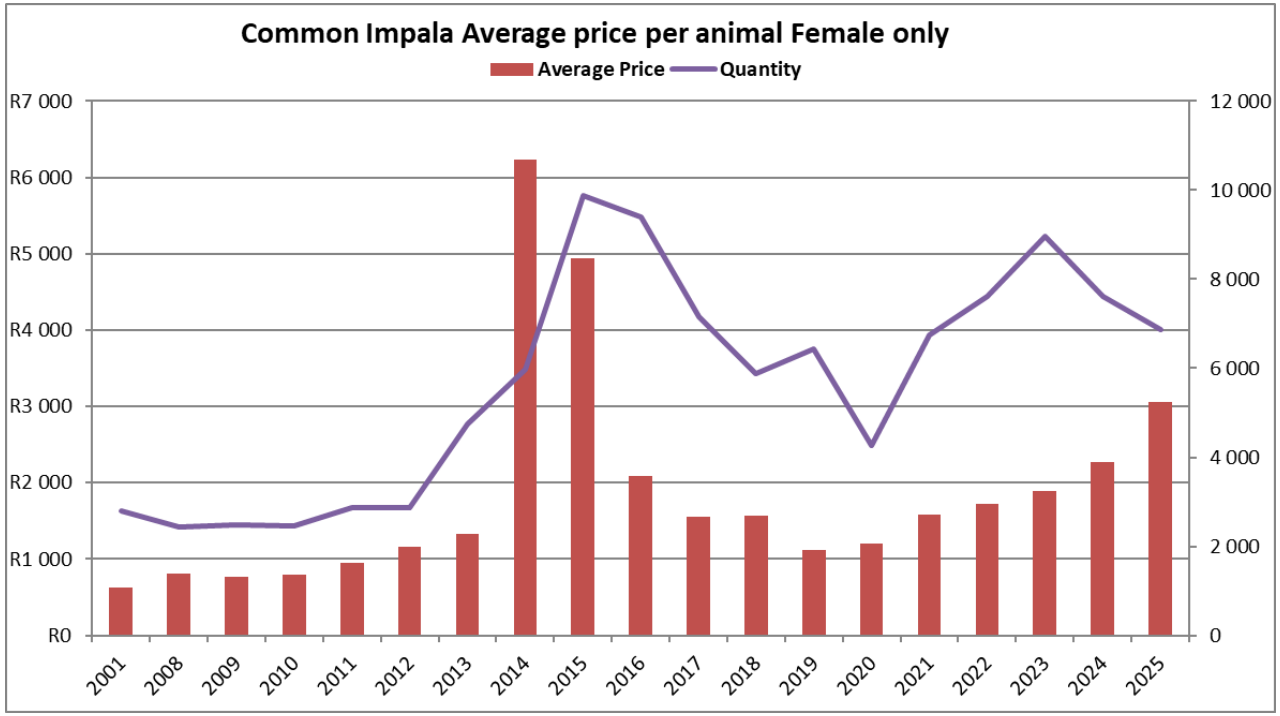
Common Impala "Female" Data and Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table captures a long-term view of female impala market performance, reflecting how **value**, **volume** and **average price** have responded to shifting breeding strategies, herd-structure priorities and broader market forces over time. The graph visually reinforces these movements, showing how **price cycles**, **annual demand** and **breeding population management** interact across different phases of the wildlife economy. Together, they offer a narrative of a market that has evolved from steady baseline demand into a more dynamic and strategically weighted segment where female genetics now play a far more prominent role.

Common Impala Female only			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 766 520	2 804	R630
2008	R1 961 625	2 427	R808
2009	R1 910 545	2 489	R768
2010	R1 947 360	2 459	R792
2011	R2 697 280	2 856	R944
2012	R3 342 070	2 865	R1 167
2013	R6 300 160	4 753	R1 326
2014	R37 286 575	5 980	R6 235
2015	R48 837 665	9 880	R4 943
2016	R19 603 005	9 386	R2 089
2017	R11 158 706	7 156	R1 559
2018	R9 205 534	5 889	R1 563
2019	R7 139 060	6 426	R1 111
2020	R5 113 790	4 256	R1 202
2021	R10 717 560	6 758	R1 586
2022	R13 136 278	7 618	R1 724
2023	R16 952 165	8 964	R1 891
2024	R17 254 875	7 614	R2 266
2025	R21 011 300	6 863	R3 062



Early Stability & Foundational Years: 2001–2011 — Modest Pricing and Steady Volumes

From **2001 to 2011**, the female Impala market remained *stable and predictable*, with values rising from **R1.77 million in 2001** to **R2.70 million in 2011**, while quantities held between **2 427 (2008)** and **2 856 (2011)**. Prices strengthened gradually from **R630 (2001)** to **R944 (2011)**. This slow but consistent uplift reflected a market still grounded in **traditional herd management**, steady plains-game demand, and limited external financial pressure. During these years, breeders prioritised herd expansion and land utilisation rather than speculative value creation, which kept prices measured and sensible.

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Common Impala "Female" Insights: 2001 to 2025

Pre-Boom Build-Up: 2012–2013 — Noticeable Strengthening Before the Surge

Between **2012 and 2013**, the market began showing unmistakable momentum. Values moved from **R3.34 million** to **R6.30 million**, quantities from **2 865** to **4 753**, and average price climbed from **R1 167** to **R1 326**. The industry saw improving **genetic awareness**, rising participation in wildlife auctions, and stronger economic appetite for expanding breeding herds. Female animals, as the reproductive engine of any system, naturally absorbed more demand as breeders positioned themselves ahead of the developing boom.

The 2014–2016 Boom and Correction — A Perfect Rise Followed by Normalisation

The years **2014 to 2016** defined the most dramatic period for female Impala. In **2014**, value soared to **R37.29 million**, quantities hit **5 980**, and the average price climbed to an extraordinary **R6 235**—a level rarely seen before or after. The momentum continued into **2015** with **9 880 animals** sold at **R4 943**, pushing total value to **R48.84 million**. However, the correction in **2016** was sharp and inevitable. Value fell to **R19.60 million**, the average price dropped to **R2 089**, and although quantities remained high at **9 386**, the market had clearly begun returning to more sustainable equilibrium. Crucially, this band coincided with the rapid rise of **colour-variant breeding**, where Common Impala females were heavily absorbed as foundational recipients and breeding stock. Their use as "engine carriers" for black, saddleback, white-flank and other variant lines dramatically expanded demand between 2012 and 2015, pushing female valuations far beyond traditional hunting-market levels.

This mirrored the broader **wildlife genetics boom-and-bust cycle**, driven by investment enthusiasm, rapid herd expansion, and speculative expectations that later unwound. Female animals—often the "currency" of breeding portfolios—were among the most affected during the correction.

Normalisation & Market Reset: 2017–2019 — Rebalancing After the Excess

From **2017 to 2019**, the market settled significantly. Values softened from **R11.16 million (2017)** to **R7.14 million (2019)**, with quantities ranging between **5 889 and 7 156**. Pricing also adjusted downward, reaching **R1 111 in 2019**—a two-thirds contraction from mid-boom levels. These years represented a **return to ecological and commercial fundamentals**, with buyers focusing on *value herds*, *long-term sustainability*, and *operational plains-game systems* rather than speculative returns.

COVID Disruption and Rebound: 2020–2021 — External Shock and Industry Resilience

The **2020** pandemic year brought clear disruption. Value dropped to **R5.11 million**, quantities to **4 256**, and pricing stabilised at **R1 202**. Auction access, buyer mobility, and international hunting were all restricted, reducing liquidity across the market.By **2021**, the rebound was evident. Value surged to **R10.72 million**, quantities recovered to **6 758**, and price lifted to **R1 586**. The return of auctions, easing movement restrictions and renewed optimism saw breeders re-engaging actively.

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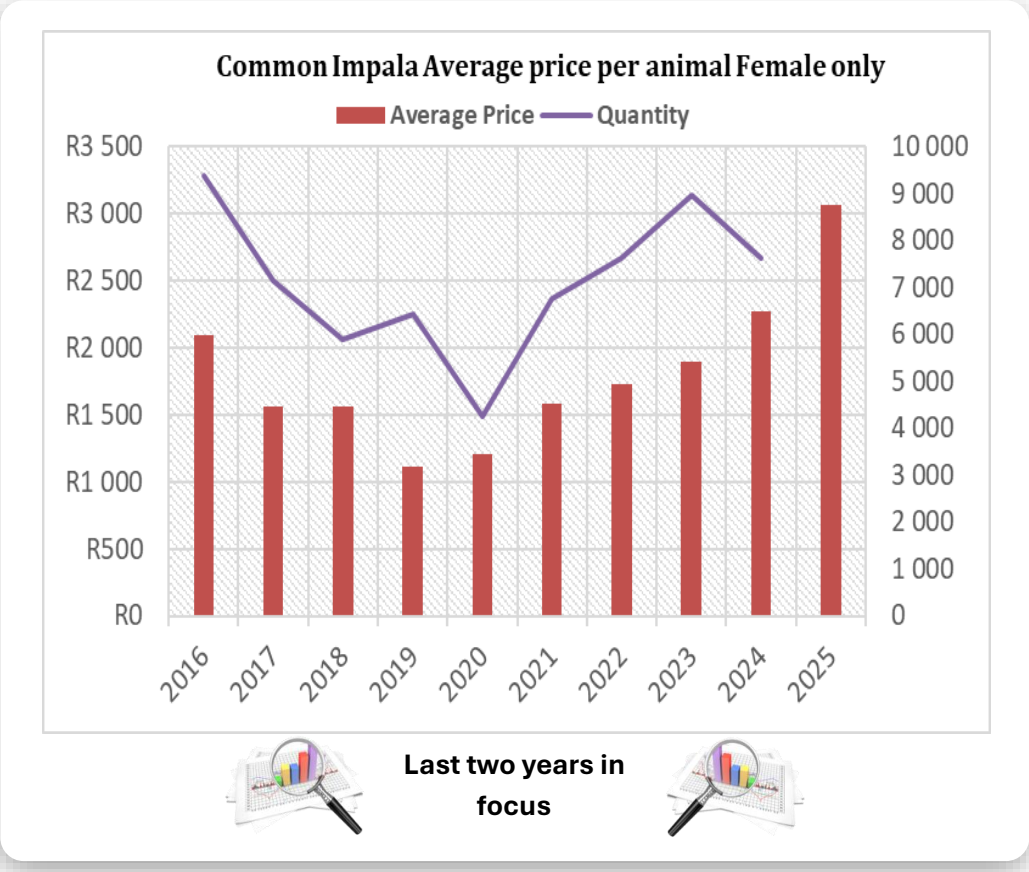
Renewed Momentum and Structural Strengthening: 2022–2024 — Stronger Pricing and Healthy Demand

From **2022 to 2024**, female Impala regained strong momentum. Value climbed from **R13.14 million** to **R17.25 million**, quantities moved from **7 618** to **7 614**, and average price grew from **R1 724** to **R2 266**. Buyers increasingly sought **quality breeding females** to stabilise herds, mitigate drought-related mortality gaps, and support expanding plains-game tourism and hunting operations. This period also reflected **inflationary pressures**, rising capture costs, and greater selectivity for condition and age—factors that supported firmer price formation.

2025: Strengthening Prices and Value Despite Lower Quantities



The year **2025** delivered a significant strengthening in the female Impala market, underpinned by confident buyers and firmer demand fundamentals. Total value increased from **R17.25 million in 2024** to **R21.01 million in 2025**, representing an uplift of **21.77%**. What drove this rise was not higher volumes—quantities actually fell from **7 614 to 6 863**, a contraction of **9.84%**—but a clear and material increase in pricing. The average price grew from **R2 266** to **R3 062**, a **35.07% increase**, signalling strong willingness among buyers to pay more for fewer animals.

This tightening aligns with broader industry realities: selective breeding decisions, reduced output in drought-affected zones, and heightened competition for quality replacement females. Across the wildlife economy, 2025 also reflected **improved international hunter arrivals**, strong plains-game safari demand, more cautious herd structures, and rising operational costs which often flow into auction prices. Female animals—being essential to herd expansion—naturally attract a pricing premium when supply lags behind replacement requirements.

In essence, **2025 reaffirmed the commercial and ecological value of the female Impala**, demonstrating that even in a lower-volume environment, the specie remained central to the stability and growth of plains game portfolios.

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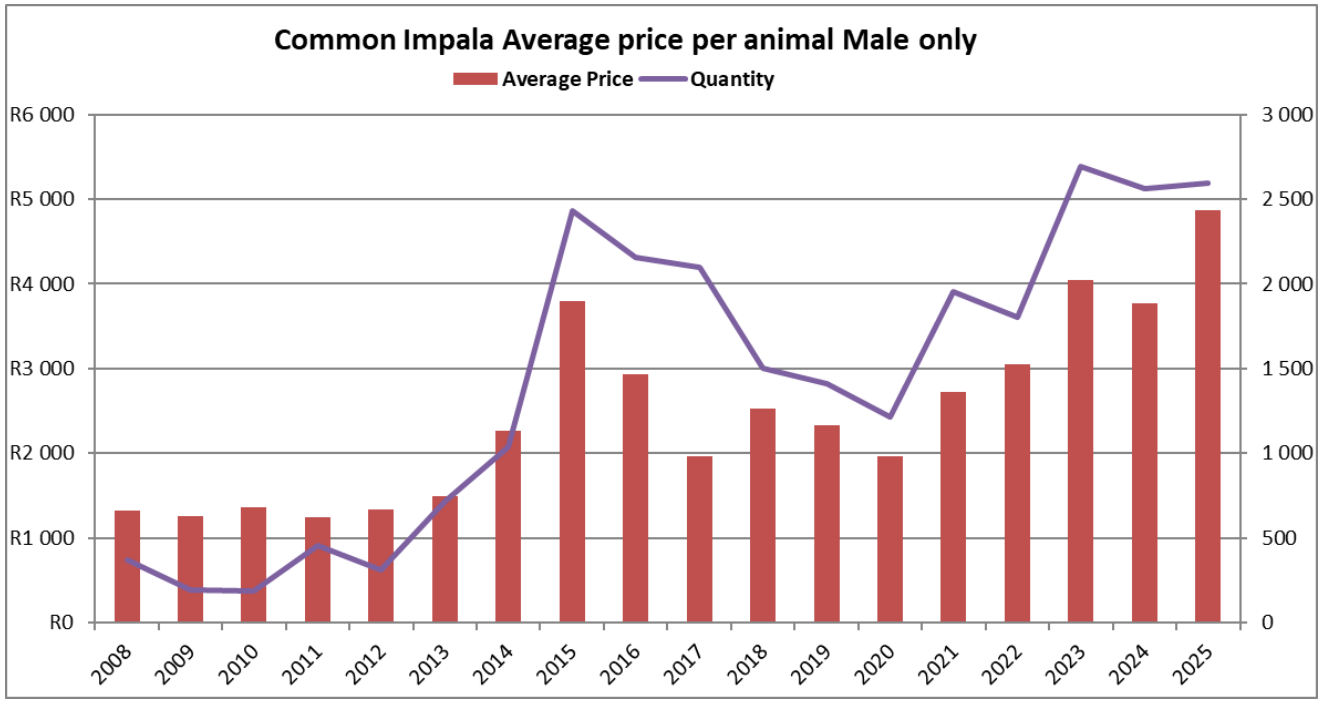
Common Impala "Male" Data and Graphs: 2008 to 2025

The dataset presents a detailed view of how **male Common Impala** have traded over nearly two decades, capturing the shifting patterns of value, volume and market sentiment. The graph mirrors these movements visually, allowing us to see how moments of sharp appreciation, periods of consolidation and phases of renewed demand interact with broader industry cycles. Taken together, the table and graph illustrate how **male impala—although one of the most accessible plains-game species—still respond strongly to breeding trends, hunting dynamics and shifts in demand for trophy-quality rams**. What emerges is a story of a species that remained stable for long stretches, surged dramatically during the wildlife boom years, corrected sharply thereafter and is once again showing **firm upward momentum**, particularly into 2025.

Common Impala Male only			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2008	R488 675	368	R1 328
2009	R244 550	195	R1 254
2010	R256 500	189	R1 357
2011	R559 685	452	R1 238
2012	R412 625	309	R1 335
2013	R1 069 900	714	R1 498
2014	R2 353 600	1 038	R2 267
2015	R9 204 660	2 428	R3 791
2016	R6 334 900	2 159	R2 934
2017	R4 106 705	2 097	R1 958
2018	R3 796 310	1 499	R2 533
2019	R3 282 000	1 407	R2 333
2020	R2 386 140	1 215	R1 964
2021	R5 305 710	1 953	R2 717
2022	R5 502 850	1 806	R3 047
2023	R10 880 654	2 693	R4 040
2024	R9 658 000	2 563	R3 768
2025	R12 647 500	2 597	R4 870



Foundational & Early Adjustment Years: 2008–2012 — Moderate Prices and Controlled Volumes

From **2008 to 2012**, the male Impala market moved within a contained value and quantity range, reflecting a stable yet modest demand segment. Values fluctuated between **R244 550 (2009)** and **R559 685 (2011)**, with quantities ranging from **189 (2010)** to **452 (2011)**. Prices remained relatively steady, between **R1 238 (2011)** and **R1 357 (2010)**. This early period represented a **functional plains-game trading environment**, driven largely by ranching operations, meat production integration and modest trophy interest. There was no major speculative push yet, and the male market was shaped primarily by **consistent but unspectacular demand**.

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Common Impala "Male" Insights: 2001 to 2025

Momentum Phase Before the Boom: 2013–2014 — Noticeable Lift in Both Price and Quantity

Between **2013 and 2014**, the market strengthened meaningfully. Values grew from **R1.07 million (2013)** to **R2.35 million (2014)**, quantities rose from **714** to **1 038**, and average price increased from **R1 498** to **R2 267**.

This shift occurred as breeders increasingly sought **select male genetics** to prepare for the rising demand observed across multiple species. Auction participation increased significantly in these years, and male Impala benefitted from greater emphasis on **trophy quality**, herd balance, and structured breeding systems.

Boom and Immediate Correction: 2015–2016 — A Sharp Surge Followed by Stabilising Retraction

The years **2015 and 2016** marked the most significant shift in male Impala pricing in the entire series.

In **2015**, the market surged: value jumped to **R9.20 million**, quantities reached **2 428**, and average price spiked to **R3 791**. The following year, **2016**, still recorded elevated numbers—**R6.33 million**, **2 159 males**, and **R2 934** average price—but represented the beginning of a retreat toward more sustainable pricing.

This aligned directly with the broader **wildlife genetics boom**, when trophy males and breeding rams across plains species were priced aggressively, with buyer sentiment driven by **high-value investment optimism and herd expansion strategies**. The softening in 2016 reflected the market's transition out of speculative territory.

Stabilisation & Redefined Market Reality: 2017–2020 — Period of Rebalancing and Normalisation

From **2017 to 2020**, the male market demonstrated a clear normalisation. Values moved from **R4.11 million (2017)** to **R2.39 million (2020)**, with quantities declining from **2 097** to **1 215**. Average prices shifted downward from **R1 958** in 2017 to **R1 964** in 2020. This period reflected the **recalibration phase** after the boom: buyers returned to fundamentals, focusing on **commercial trophy hunting**, sustainable numbers, and financial prudence.

The **COVID-19 year (2020)** further depressed activity, limiting auction gatherings and compressing demand from international hunters, which reduced revenue potential for male animals.

Recovery and Momentum Rebuild: 2021–2023 — Strengthening Prices and Expanding Demand

Between **2021 and 2023**, the market recovered with conviction. Values rose from **R5.31 million (2021)** to **R10.88 million (2023)**, with quantities increasing from **1 953** to **2 693**. Average price strengthened from **R2 717** to **R4 040**, signalling expanding confidence in male Impala demand.

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This resurgence was powered by **post-COVID reopening**, pent-up international hunting interest, higher plains-game tourism volumes, and increased willingness among breeders to invest in quality males for trophy programmes. The consistent upward trajectory in both quantity and price underscored a **restored equilibrium** in the Impala sector.

Consolidation Before the Next Push: 2024 — Mild Retreat but Still Strong Market

In **2024**, the market held firm but softened slightly from the exceptional 2023 high. Value eased to **R9.66 million**, quantities dipped to **2 563**, and the average price moderated to **R3 768**. This indicated a **healthy consolidation**, not a decline in confidence.

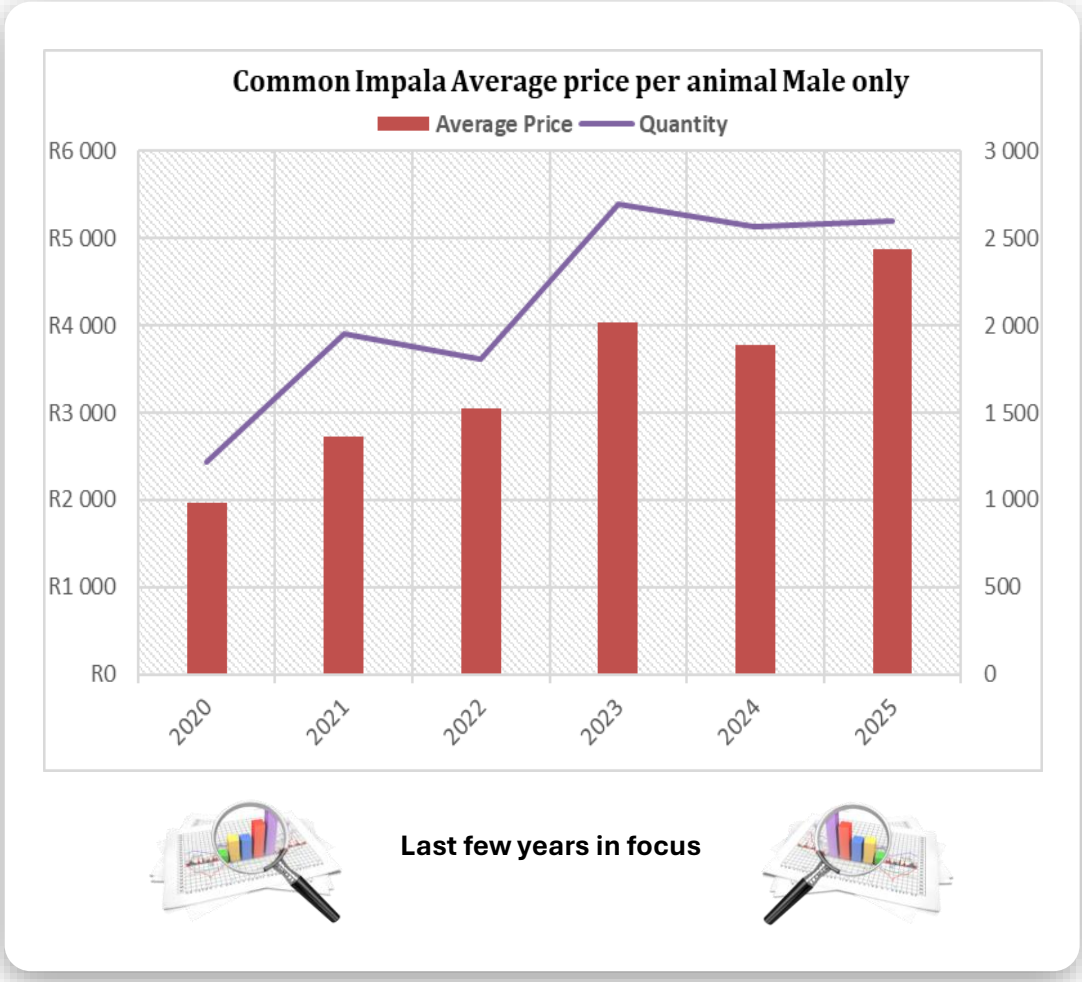
The market simply absorbed the very strong 2023 demand and moved into a more even rhythm, supported by stable hunting bookings and breeding demand across established ranches.

2025: A Clear Strengthening Driven by Higher Prices and Steady Demand

The year **2025** marked a significant upward shift in the male Impala market, showing renewed confidence and firmer demand fundamentals. Value rose from **R9.66 million in 2024** to **R12.65 million in 2025**, an increase of **30.9%**, even though quantities only moved marginally from **2 563** to **2 597**, a rise of **1.33%**.

What defined 2025 was the **substantial increase in average price**, climbing from **R3 768** to **R4 870**, representing a **29.2% price escalation**.

This price-led uplift indicated that buyers placed heightened emphasis on **quality males**, supporting trophy programmes, herd improvement and higher hunting turnover.



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Industry-wide factors supported this strengthening:
– improved veld conditions following prior drought pressure,
– a tightening supply of mature trophy males,
– strong international safari arrivals, and
– increasing commercial importance of high-quality plains-game offerings.

The 2025 performance demonstrated that **male Impala regained premium positioning within the plains game segment**, reaffirming its commercial relevance and showing a market increasingly driven by **quality rather than volume**.

The table below sets out the **impala ram market structured by horn-length categories**, allowing us to see how buyers differentiate value across commercial, young, sub-adult and true trophy classes. It highlights how the market behaves when supply tightens, when trophy demand strengthens and when the upper-end genetics reappear after periods of absence. The comparison between 2024 and 2025 provides a **clean lens into shifting buyer preferences**, the strength of specific horn ranges and the pricing confidence returning across the species.

Impala Rams Pricing by Inches Sold				
	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Ram : inches not specified	1 305	R3 571	1 928	R3 965
Ram : Sub-Adult	458	R3 116	105	R3 748
Ram : Young	506	R2 281	200	R3 493
Ram : Young 25 inches plus	1	R25 000	0	R0
Ram : Hunting	21	R4 405	48	R8 333
Ram : less than 20 inches	44	R4 284	37	R6 716
Ram : plus 20 inches	94	R5 250	50	R5 501
Ram : plus 21 inches	28	R7 527	98	R5 647
Ram : plus 22 inches	40	R5 794	30	R6 833
Ram : plus 23 inches	32	R7 292	36	R8 042
Ram : plus 24 inches	17	R13 565	35	R11 057
Ram : plus 25 inches	14	R24 714	14	R26 400
Ram : plus 26 inches	3	R121 667	14	R62 329
Ram : above 27 inches	0	R0	2	R155 000

The **"inches not specified"** category remained the highest-volume class across both years, rising from **1 305 rams in 2024** to **1 928 rams in 2025**. This shift reflected a broader demand for **general-purpose commercial rams**, with the average price also strengthening from **R3 571** to **R3 965**. This segment is typically driven by buyers replenishing breeding herds or supplying plains-game hunting packages, and the increase in throughput suggests heightened confidence and more active herd-building behaviour in 2025.

The younger age groups also revealed strong dynamics. **Sub-adult rams** dropped sharply in volume from **458 in 2024** to **105 in 2025**, yet their average price increased from **R3 116** to **R3 748**. This suggested a tightening supply of structured young males while demand remained resilient. The **young ram** category followed a similar pattern, with volumes falling from **506 to 200**, but with prices climbing from **R2 281** to **R3 493**.

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This tells a story of **selective retention** by breeders, likely keeping more young rams on-farm to reinforce their male lines after several years of high off-take across the plains game category. It also mirrors the industry-wide emphasis on improving trophy genetics following drought impacts and COVID-era supply distortions.

The trophy-driven categories—defined by horn length—offered some of the most telling insights into the changing structure of demand. At **less than 20 inches**, pricing shifted upward from **R4 284** to **R6 716**, showing that even modest horn lengths benefitted from a firmer pricing environment in 2025. As horn length increased into the **20–24 inch classes**, the market displayed both variety and resilience. The **20-inch-plus** group rose modestly from **R5 250 to R5 501**, while the **21-inch** category moved from **R7 527** down to **R5 647**, likely a reflection of significantly increased volume—**98 rams in 2025** versus **28 in 2024**—which absorbed some price intensity due to greater supply.

Moving into the mid-tier trophy sizes, the **22-inch** rams grew from **R5 794 to R6 833**, and the **23-inch** class strengthened even further from **R7 292 to R8 042**. These rams often represent the sweet spot for plains-game trophy hunters looking for quality without entering elite price brackets, and the market reaffirmed this demand.

The premium inch classes—**24 inches and above**—continued to command strong pricing, underscoring their rarity and desirability. The **24-inch** category remained high value, moving from **R13 565 in 2024** to **R11 057 in 2025**, with quantity doubling from **17 to 35**, which explains the softened price: more supply entering the market stabilised a previously thin category. The **25-inch rams** actually gained value, rising from **R24 714 to R26 400**, showing continued prestige in this size.

The most dramatic change occurred in the **26-inch class**, where volumes jumped from **3 rams in 2024** to **14 in 2025**. This increased availability reduced the average price from **R121 667** down to **R62 329**, though the price remained high for plains game. Despite the drop, the movement signals that more high-calibre, deep-breeding-line rams are reaching market due to stronger genetic selection in preceding years.

Finally, the ultra-rare **above 27-inch** category reappeared in 2025 with **2 rams**, averaging **R155 000**, marking the return of exceptional trophy rams into the auction environment. Their absence in 2024 and dramatic pricing in 2025 reinforces just how scarce and sought-after these elite animals are.

Across all horn groups, the narrative of 2025 is one where **demand strengthened**, **pricing firmed**, and **higher-quality rams entered the market**, especially in the upper-inch categories. Likewise, younger classes experienced supply tightening, driving prices upward. This was consistent with wider industry patterns in 2025: tighter breeding cycles, improved veld recovery, increased hunting traffic, and heightened attention to trophy genetics created a market that valued **quality, rarity, and readiness for use** far more than mere volume.

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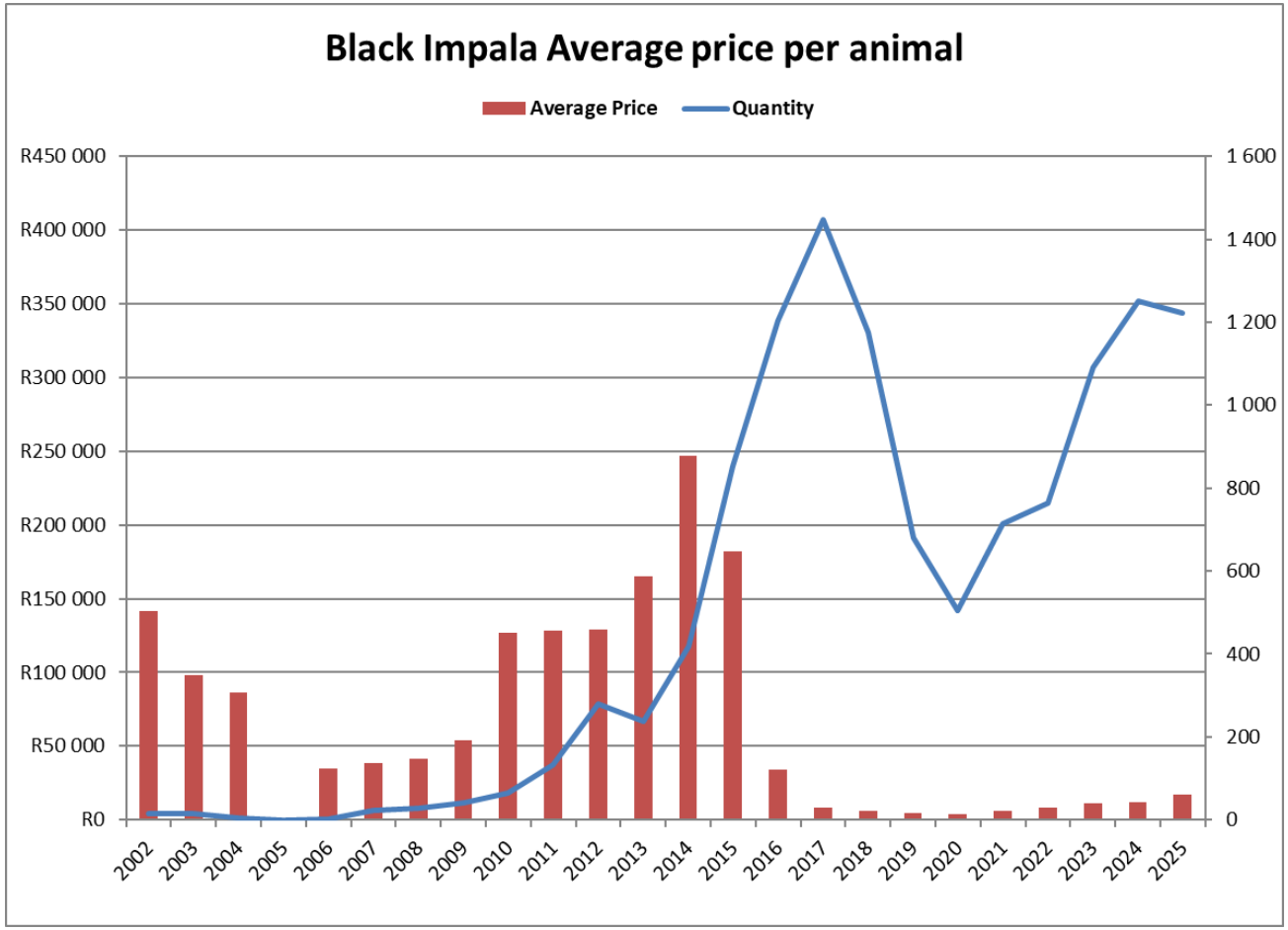
Black Impala Data and graphs: 2002 to 2025

The **Black Impala dataset** presents one of the most dramatic long-term stories in South Africa's wildlife economy — a narrative marked by early scarcity, explosive speculative demand, a steep correction and a long, steady recovery that still continues today. What immediately stands out, even before turning to the numbers, is the **distinctive rise-and-fall cycle** embedded in the graph: an early surge of enthusiasm, a meteoric climb into the mid-2010s, followed by a pronounced collapse and a slow rebuilding phase that defines the modern market. The **bar chart of average prices** reflects this emotional rhythm in sharp strokes — towering red pillars during the height of the colour-variant boom, giving way to a prolonged era of muted pricing. Simultaneously, the **quantity line** tells its own story of market saturation, rapid genetic proliferation and eventual stabilisation. Together, the table and graph set the stage for a market that once symbolised *premium exclusivity* but later evolved into a high-volume, more accessible colour variant as genetics spread across ranches nationwide.

Black Impala			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R0	0	R0
2002	R1 980 000	14	R141 429
2003	R1 475 000	15	R98 333
2004	R430 000	5	R86 000
2005	R0	0	R0
2006	R105 000	3	R35 000
2007	R882 500	23	R38 370
2008	R1 107 500	27	R41 019
2009	R2 157 000	40	R53 925
2010	R8 100 000	64	R126 563
2011	R17 095 000	133	R128 534
2012	R36 120 000	280	R129 000
2013	R39 122 600	237	R165 074
2014	R102 816 200	417	R246 562
2015	R155 112 850	853	R181 844
2016	R40 808 197	1 205	R33 866
2017	R11 993 411	1 447	R8 288
2018	R7 270 892	1 176	R6 183
2019	R3 258 150	679	R4 798
2020	R1 894 490	505	R3 751
2021	R4 162 690	713	R5 838
2022	R6 067 510	764	R7 942
2023	R12 261 283	1 090	R11 249
2024	R14 749 800	1 250	R11 800
2025	R20 432 000	1 223	R16 706



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Black Impala Insights: 2001 to 2025

The Foundational Years (2001–2007)

The earliest period from 2001 to 2007 reflected the Black Impala's status as a **true rarity**, with ultra-low volumes and widely fluctuating values. The market essentially began in 2002 when **R1.98 million** was traded for only **14 animals**, producing a striking average of **R141 429**, a price level driven not by trading depth but by the novelty and exclusivity of the phenotype at that time. The years that followed, 2003 to 2007, saw values fluctuate between **R430 000** (2004) and **R882 500** (2007). During this foundational period, breeders were still experimenting with the genetics, buyers were extremely selective, and volumes never exceeded **27 animals**—reflecting a highly concentrated and speculative micro-market. **This was the era when scarcity alone dictated value.**

The Gradual Build-Up to Commercialisation (2008–2011)

From 2008 to 2011, the Black Impala transitioned from rarity to **structured commercial interest**, beginning with **R1.107 million** in 2008 and rising toward **R17.095 million** by 2011. Volumes expanded from **27 animals in 2008** to **133 in 2011**, illustrating how breeders began scaling up herds and offering more animals to the market. The average price also remained robust across the band, with **R41 019 in 2008** increasing to **R128 534 by 2011**, demonstrating that demand remained strong even as supply increased. This period marked the early adoption phase where **the phenotype became aspirational**, attracting both seasoned breeders and emerging investors who viewed colour variants as a premium diversification asset.



The Explosive Boom Years (2012–2015)

The four-year band from 2012 to 2015 represented the **zenith of the colour-variant boom**, and the Black Impala stood at the very centre of it. Market value expanded from **R36.12 million in 2012** to an extraordinary **R155.112 million in 2015**, an increase of over **R119 million** across the band.

Quantities also surged from **280 animals in 2012** to **853 animals in 2015**, confirming both supply scale and insatiable buyer appetite.

Average prices remained exceptionally high, peaking at **R246 562 in 2014** and remaining elevated at **R181 844 in 2015**.

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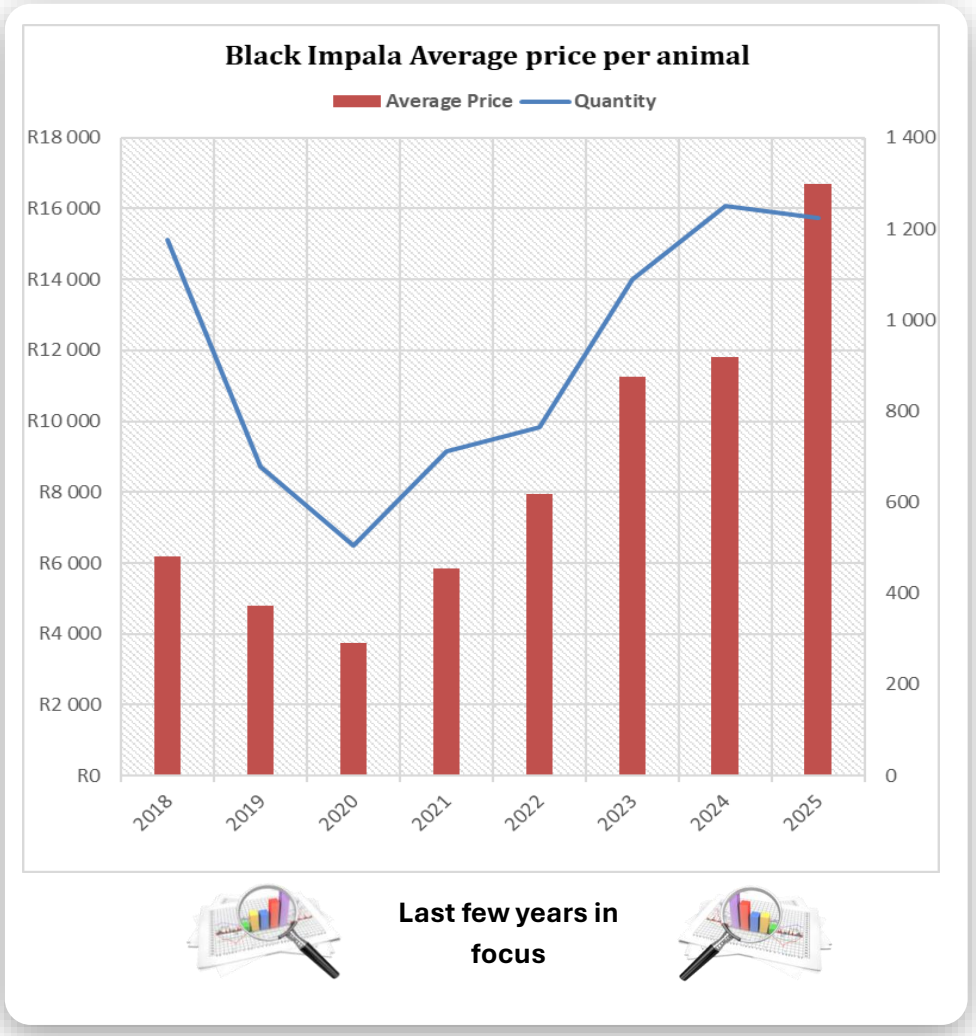
This was the period defined by genetic arms races, record-setting auction events, and aggressive investment behaviour. **Black Impala breeding herds became keystone assets** across many high-value game farms, and buyers viewed them as appreciating capital stock. The wider macro-environment—particularly strong economic sentiment and easy access to finance—fuelled this boom further, creating the steepest acceleration in the entire dataset.

The Post-Boom Contraction and Reset (2016–2020)

The years from 2016 to 2020 marked the industry's **correction phase**, where the oversupply created during the boom met a dramatically softened demand landscape. Values declined sharply from **R40.808 million in 2016** to only **R1.894 million in 2020**, while quantities remained high initially (with **1 205 animals in 2016**) before tapering to **505 animals by 2020**.

Average prices fell from **R33 866 in 2016** to **R3 751 in 2020**, reflecting a market that had recalibrated towards intrinsic breeding value rather than speculative potential. Macro-economic factors also played a role: tightening financial conditions, declining breeder liquidity, and ultimately **the COVID-19 shock in 2020**, which further depressed auction dynamics. This band represented **the return to fundamental pricing**, where pedigree quality—rather than hype—became the principal driver of value.



The Recovery, Modernisation and Renewed Confidence (2021–2025)

From 2021 onwards, the market entered a phase of **structured recovery** supported by more disciplined breeding, improving economic sentiment, and broader acceptance of colour variants in mainstream wildlife operations. Values climbed steadily from **R4.162 million in 2021** to **R14.749 million in 2024**, and finally surged to **R20.432 million in 2025**. Quantities also stabilised in a healthier range, growing from **713 animals in 2021** to **1 250 in 2024**, before settling slightly lower at **1 223 in 2025**—indicating sustainable market participation rather than speculative oversupply.

Average prices mirrored this upward stabilisation, moving from **R5 838 in 2021** to **R11 800 in 2024**, before escalating further to **R16 706 in 2025**.

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This recovery phase demonstrated that **Black Impala regained its premium status**, not as the speculative asset of the past, but as a consistent value-contributing phenotype supported by improved genetics, steady demand from tourism and hunting sectors, and stronger industry governance.

2025 – A Year of Renewed Momentum and Price Power

The jump from 2024 to 2025 illustrated a **strong and confident return of price leadership** in the Black Impala market. Total value increased from **R14.749 million in 2024** to **R20.432 million in 2025**, adding **R5.683 million** year-on-year.
Despite this increase, quantity actually slipped slightly, from **1 250 animals in 2024** to **1 223 in 2025**, reinforcing that **the uplift was price-driven rather than volume-driven**.

Average price growth was particularly striking: from **R11 800 in 2024** to **R16 706 in 2025**, reflecting a premium escalation of roughly **41%**, which is exceptional in any wildlife segment.
This price momentum aligns with broader 2025 market dynamics:

- A shortage of top-tier breeding females and structurally improved genetics boosted buyer willingness to pay.
- International sentiment and local investor confidence both strengthened in the premium plains-game variant categories.
- The industry's increased emphasis on phenotype integrity and clean breeding lines further enhanced Black Impala valuations.
- Black Impala are now sort after in the hunting industry, especially by international hunters.

2025 therefore stands not merely as another recovery year, but as a decisive confirmation that Black Impala has re-established itself as a premium and strategically valuable asset in the modern wildlife economy.

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The table lays out the full pricing structure for **Black Impala rams** according to horn-length categories, comparing the trading landscape of 2024 and 2025. It captures how the market responded across maturity levels—sub-adults, young rams, hunting-quality animals, and then the graded inch-based trophy spectrum. What emerges is a layered view of **demand intensity across the size curve**, showing where volume concentrated, where premium values shifted, and how buyers prioritised specific horn bands as the market strengthened. Taken together, the table reveals **how maturity, genetic expression and trophy potential shaped price formation** across two consecutive auction years.

Black Impala Rams: Pricing by Inches Sold				
	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Ram : inches not specified	237	R14 501	400	R15 302
Ram : Sub-Adult	68	R8 328	26	R11 250
Ram : Young	42	R6 221	16	R9 313
Ram : Hunting	7	R16 000	4	R16 750
Ram : less than 20 inches	30	R16 617	45	R16 800
Ram : plus 20 inches	60	R17 904	25	R19 240
Ram : plus 21 inches	24	R22 063	40	R21 150
Ram : plus 22 inches	29	R25 500	23	R21 870
Ram : plus 23 inches	16	R29 313	25	R29 020
Ram : plus 24 inches	9	R38 806	13	R46 750
Ram : plus 25 inches	5	R100 650	3	R163 333
	527	**R16 068**	**620**	**R17 804**
	527	**R8 467 600**	**620**	**R11 038 500**

The narrative of Black Impala rams in 2024 and 2025 presents a market that both broadened at the base and sharpened dramatically at the top. The most immediate change was visible in the entry-level category where rams with *unspecified inches* moved from **237 sold in 2024** to **400 in 2025**, and their average price strengthened from **R14 501** to **R15 302**. This category has historically served as the bulk-trade engine of the ram market, and the increase in both volume and price signalled **renewed breeder appetite and improved liquidity**, especially for functional breeding males not yet classified by horn length.

Among younger and sub-adult rams, the shift was equally telling. Sub-adults, sold at **68 animals in 2024**, contracted to **26 in 2025**, yet their average price rose from **R8 328** to **R11 250**, showing that while fewer were offered, **quality and demand concentrated around better phenotypes**. A similar pattern appeared in young rams where volumes eased from **42 to 16**, while prices climbed from **R6 221** to **R9 313**. This tightening in youth categories reflected a year in which breeders held onto prospects longer, aiming to push them into higher inch bands for stronger returns.

The hunting segment remained relatively stable but continued to act as a bellwether for base demand. With **7 hunting rams sold in 2024** and **4 in 2025**, prices nudged upward from **R16 000** to **R16 750**, confirming constant interest in quality rams suited for safari and culling programmes. Even at low volumes, the stability here underscored the **underlying resilience of the Black Impala brand** in traditional hunting channels.

The story becomes more dynamic as horn length enters the equation. Rams **less than 20 inches** sustained very similar pricing in both years, rising slightly from **R16 617** in 2024 to **R16 800** in 2025. However, the market for mature trophy rams displayed far richer behaviour.

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At **20+ inches**, prices advanced from **R17 904** in 2024 to **R19 240** in 2025, while the **21-inch band** remained a high-traffic category, growing from **24 animals to 40**, with pricing moderating slightly from **R22 063** to **R21 150** as supply opened.

At **22 inches**, demand remained firm with **29 rams in 2024** and **23 in 2025**, though prices eased from **R25 500** to **R21 870**, reflecting natural recalibration in a competitive inch range. Yet the premium layers regained strength higher up. The **23-inch class** delivered almost identical pricing between **R29 313** in 2024 and **R29 020** in 2025, but volumes increased from **16 to 25**, suggesting **stronger pursuit of mid-tier trophy rams**.

The upper echelon—**24 inches and above**—told the clearest story of escalating prestige. Rams at **24 inches** rose from **9 animals at R38 806** to **13 animals at R46 750**, a meaningful increase that affirmed **the market's willingness to pay premiums for animals approaching elite horn expression**. Above this sits the ultra-rare **25-inch class**, where volumes remained tiny—**5 in 2024 and 3 in 2025**—yet prices rocketed from **R100 650** to an exceptional **R163 333**. This thin but explosive category illustrated that **true outliers in the Black Impala gene pool commanded extraordinary scarcity value**, with buyers prepared to pay deep premiums for rams capable of producing the next generation of record-class animals.

The totals consolidate the narrative: the market expanded from **527 rams sold at an average of R16 068 in 2024** to **620 rams at R17 804 in 2025**, while total turnover climbed from **R8.467 million** to **R11.038 million**. This paints a clear picture of **broader participation paired with rising price confidence**, underpinned by a market returning to structured growth after years of recalibration.

Overall, the 2025 market demonstrated **more depth at the bottom, more conviction in the middle, and more aggression at the top**, positioning the Black Impala ram segment as one of the more finely stratified and value-sensitive markets in the colour-variant space.

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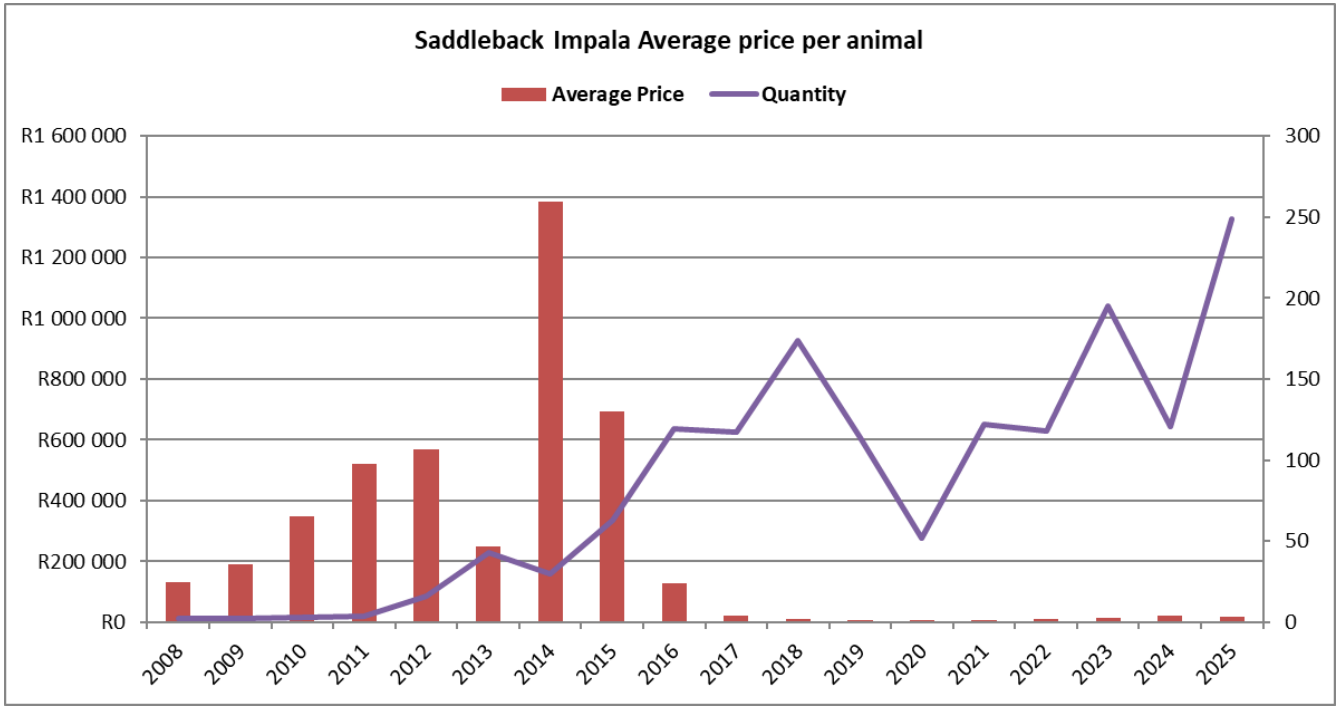
Saddleback Impala Data and graphs: 2008 to 2025

The Saddleback Impala dataset tells the story of a colour variant that has moved through dramatic phases of rarity, speculative boom, market correction and eventual reintegration into the broader plains-game ecosystem. The graph immediately reveals the characteristic profile of this variant's economic lifecycle: a sharp early ascent, a towering peak in the mid-2010s, followed by a steep decline and a long, uneven path to stability. The price bars show intense volatility — at times soaring, at times almost disappearing — while the quantity line rises gradually before oscillating in response to breeder decisions, demand cycles and changing genetic availability. These combined visuals set the stage for an unfolding narrative of **exclusivity giving way to proliferation** and later, of **renewed interest emerging from a more stable industry landscape**.

Saddleback Impala			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2008	R260 000	2	R130 000
2009	R380 000	2	R190 000
2010	R1 050 000	3	R350 000
2011	R2 090 000	4	R522 500
2012	R9 110 000	16	R569 375
2013	R10 640 000	43	R247 442
2014	R41 545 000	30	R1 384 833
2015	R43 774 500	63	R694 833
2016	R15 122 300	119	R127 078
2017	R2 457 000	117	R21 000
2018	R1 727 050	174	R9 926
2019	R729 300	114	R6 397
2020	R284 300	52	R5 467
2021	R678 310	122	R5 560
2022	R1 182 000	118	R10 017
2023	R2 507 952	195	R12 861
2024	R2 424 520	121	R20 037
2025	R4 093 350	249	R16 439



The Formative and Speculative Rise (2008–2014)

The band from **2008 to 2014** was defined by escalating excitement around Saddleback genetics. Market value grew from **R260 000 in 2008** to an astonishing **R41 545 000 in 2014**, with average prices rising from **R130 000** to **R1 384 833** over the same span. Quantities expanded from **2 to 30**, but the surge in value far outpaced the rise in supply, signalling a period driven by intense genetic speculation and rarity premiums. This was the broader era when colour variants became the centrepiece of South Africa's high-value wildlife investment boom. The Saddleback Impala, like Black and White Flank variants, benefitted from unprecedented breeder enthusiasm as genetic diversification became a dominant investment theme. The peak in **2014** reflected both extreme buyer confidence and the tight availability of high-quality genetics.

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Saddleback Impala Insights: 2001 to 2025

A Sharp Correction and Market Normalisation (2015–2017)

The years **2015 to 2017** marked the market's dramatic correction. Total value plummeted from **R43 774 500 in 2015** to just **R2 457 000 in 2017**, and the average price collapsed from **R694 833** to **R21 000** over the same period. Yet quantities surged from **63 to 117**, indicating that breeders had expanded herds aggressively during the boom years, releasing more animals into a market that could no longer absorb them at premium levels.

This was consistent with the broader colour variant downturn, where investor sentiment shifted sharply and prices across multiple variant categories collapsed. Markets no longer rewarded rarity alone; instead, buyers turned back toward functional genetics, hunting value, and more stable plains game economics. Saddleback Impala, despite its distinctive phenotype, proved no exception.

Stabilisation and Volume-Driven Trading (2018–2021)

From **2018 to 2021**, the market settled into a lower but more stable band. Values tapered from **R1 727 050 in 2018** to **R678 310 in 2021**, while average prices moved narrowly between **R5 467** and **R5 560**. Quantities remained relatively high—between **114 and 122**—suggesting that the Saddleback had transitioned into a **volume-driven, moderate-value market**, no longer commanding the speculative premiums seen in earlier years.

This phase also overlapped with the COVID-19 shock of **2020**, during which the value fell to **R284 300**, and average price dipped to **R5 467**, both deeply influenced by restricted buyer mobility, reduced auction turnover, and general liquidity pressure in the game market. The quick rebound in **2021**, with improved value and demand, signalled a market learning to operate within its new reality.

4. Renewed Demand and Gradual Recovery (2022–2025)

The band from **2022 to 2025** reflects a slow but meaningful rebound. Market value grew from **R1 182 000 in 2022** to **R4 093 350 in 2025**, and average price lifted from **R10 017** to **R16 439**. Quantities also expanded



A **mature Saddleback Impala ram** standing alert in the South African bushveld, showcasing its distinctive dark saddle pattern and striking horn structure in natural golden light.

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significantly from **118 in 2022** to **249 in 2025**, a clear indication that the Saddleback regained relevance in breeding portfolios.

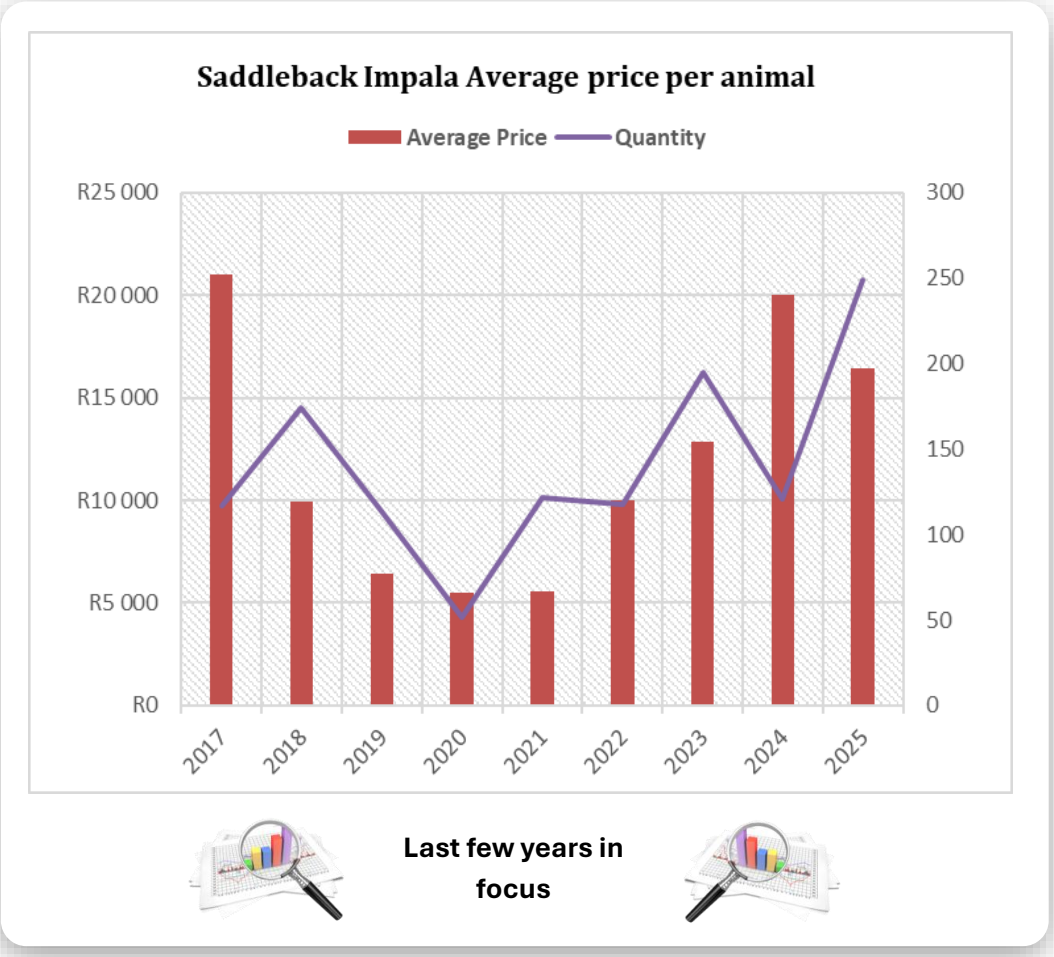
This recovery aligns with the broader resurgence in plains game colour variants, driven by renewed interest in herd diversification, improved auction attendance, and stronger post-COVID buyer engagement. Importantly, the market recovery did not resemble the speculative heights of 2014–2015; instead it reflected **consistent, sustainable demand**, supported by a healthier balance between supply and genetic interest.

2025 – A Stronger, Higher-Value Market

The comparison between **2025 and 2024** shows a clear strengthening of the Saddleback Impala market. Total value rose from **R2 424 520 in 2024** to **R4 093 350 in 2025**, marking a substantial uplift in market participation. Despite quantities rising markedly from **121 to 249**, the average price still increased from **R20 037** to **R16 439**, demonstrating that the market absorbed the higher volumes without downward pressure on pricing.

This reveals a more mature and stabilised demand curve, where buyers recognise the long-term breeding utility of the Saddleback phenotype. The increased quantity in **2025** also suggests broader herd utilisation by breeders, indicating a confidence not only in short-term price outcomes but in the genetic value of these animals for diversifying Impala herds.

Across the wider wildlife economy, this aligns with the 2025 momentum seen in several plains game categories, where stronger auction cycles, improved international participation, and a rising emphasis on unique herd genetics contributed to firmer pricing. The Saddleback's rise back toward mid-tier premium levels signals a category that is no longer speculative but strategically valued for herd composition and aesthetic variation.



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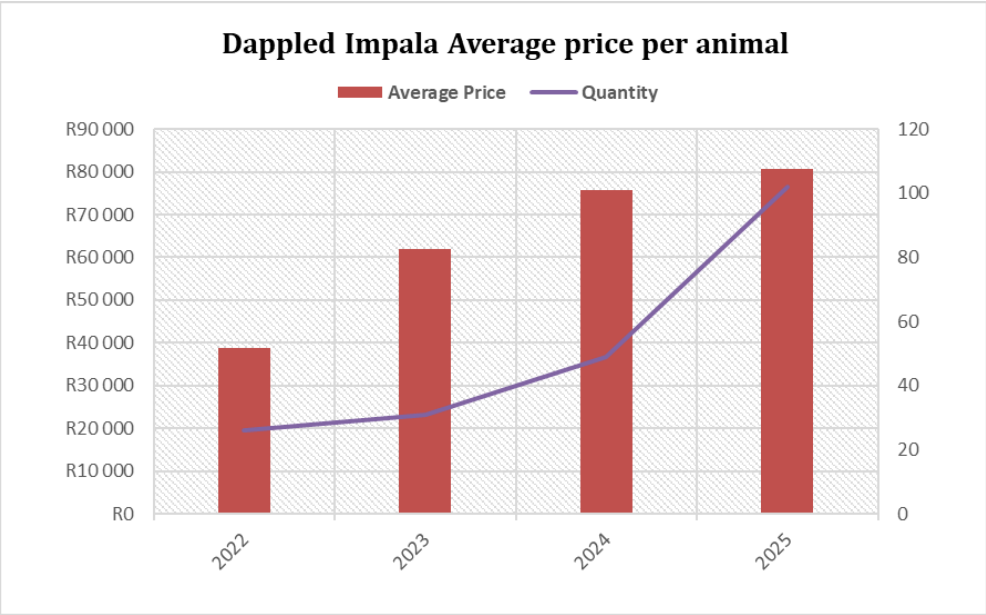
Dappled Impala Data and graphs: 2019 to 2025

The **Dappled Impala** dataset captures the unfolding trajectory of a colour variant that has transitioned from relative obscurity into a fast-rising contributor within the broader Impala colour-variant market. The table and graph together reveal a narrative defined by early volatility, a sharp contraction and then a decisive re-emergence as breeders and buyers increasingly recognise its **unique phenotypic appeal** and **commercial potential**. Without referring to specific numbers yet, the overall picture reflects a species moving through a **classic recovery arc**: an initial decline, a stabilisation phase and finally a period of sustained upward movement supported by strengthening demand and expanding supply. The graph in particular tells a compelling story, with steadily rising bars and a sharply ascending quantity line toward the final years, signalling a **market finding its momentum** and stepping into a new phase of growth.

Dappled Impala			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2019	R2 457 000	22	R111 682
2020	R484 000	10	R48 400
2021	R87 500	12	R7 292
2022	R1 008 000	26	R38 769
2023	R1 920 501	31	R61 952
2024	R3 711 500	49	R75 745
2025	R8 222 500	102	R80 613



Early Emergence and Initial Volatility (2019–2021)

The period from **2019 to 2021** reflected the earliest commercial traction for Dappled Impala, though the market was still highly fragmented. Value fell markedly from **R2 457 000 in 2019 to R484 000 in 2020**, a decline of just over **80%**, with quantities halving from **22 to 10**. The broader wildlife industry was simultaneously absorbing the shock of **COVID-19**, which depressed buying power and made discretionary colour-variant investments far more conservative. Average price dropped from **R111 682 in 2019 to R48 400 in 2020**, and further down to **R7 292 in 2021** as breeders liquidated non-core stock.

Despite this contraction, the resilience of the quantity line—from **10 in 2020 to 12 in 2021**—hinted that the phenotype retained relevance, even if market liquidity was temporarily impaired.

Re-Stabilisation and Renewed Interest (2022–2023)

The years **2022 to 2023** marked the beginning of a structured recovery. Value rose from **R1 008 000 in 2022 to R1 920 501 in 2023**, supported by steadily rising quantities (**26 to 31 animals**). This regained momentum aligned with a wider post-COVID recovery experienced across plains-game variants, driven by renewed demand from medium-scale breeders seeking **affordable but distinctive phenotypes**.

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The average price return from **R38 769 in 2022 to R61 952 in 2023** strengthened confidence that Dappled Impala was not merely a novelty, but a **sustainably tradable variant** with increasing placement in breeding programs.

Acceleration and Market Entrenchment (2024–2025)

The final band from **2024 to 2025** demonstrated the first signs of exponential scalability. Value more than doubled from **R3 711 500 in 2024 to R8 222 500 in 2025**, while quantities surged from **49 to 102 animals**, a **108% volume increase**. This sharp rise in throughput showed that breeders were no longer testing the water—**the market had matured enough to support material supply expansion**. Average price rose more moderately from **R75 745 in 2024 to R80 613 in 2025**, indicating that although volumes scaled aggressively, pricing remained disciplined and supported by **genuine buyer uptake rather than speculative inflation**. This balance of higher supply and higher price is a telling sign of **true market confidence**.

A Breakout Year for 2025

The jump from **2024 to 2025** marked the strongest single-year advance in the Dappled Impala market to date. Total value moved from **R3 711 500 to R8 222 500**, adding **R4 511 000** in new turnover—more than the entire market was worth as recently as 2022. This expansion was driven overwhelmingly by the doubling of volume, from **49 to 102 animals**, showing that breeder production pipelines had reached a point of meaningful scale. The crucial insight is that **pricing strengthened even under significant supply pressure**, rising from **R75 745 to R80 613**. This disproves the notion that colour-variant pricing collapses when supply expands, and it reflects a market benefiting from a broader trend across plains-game colour categories: **high-visibility variants with distinctive patterning are outperforming traditional phenotypes in buyer appeal**.



Industry sentiment in 2025 further supported this surge. Auction attendance increased, breeders showed greater willingness to diversify into mid-tier variants, and the improved performance of Black, White-Flank and Saddleback Impala created a rising tide that lifted the Dappled phenotype with it. By the end of 2025, it was clear that the Dappled Impala had shifted from niche to **commercially entrenched**, becoming one of the most reliable mid-range performers in the Impala colour-variant family.

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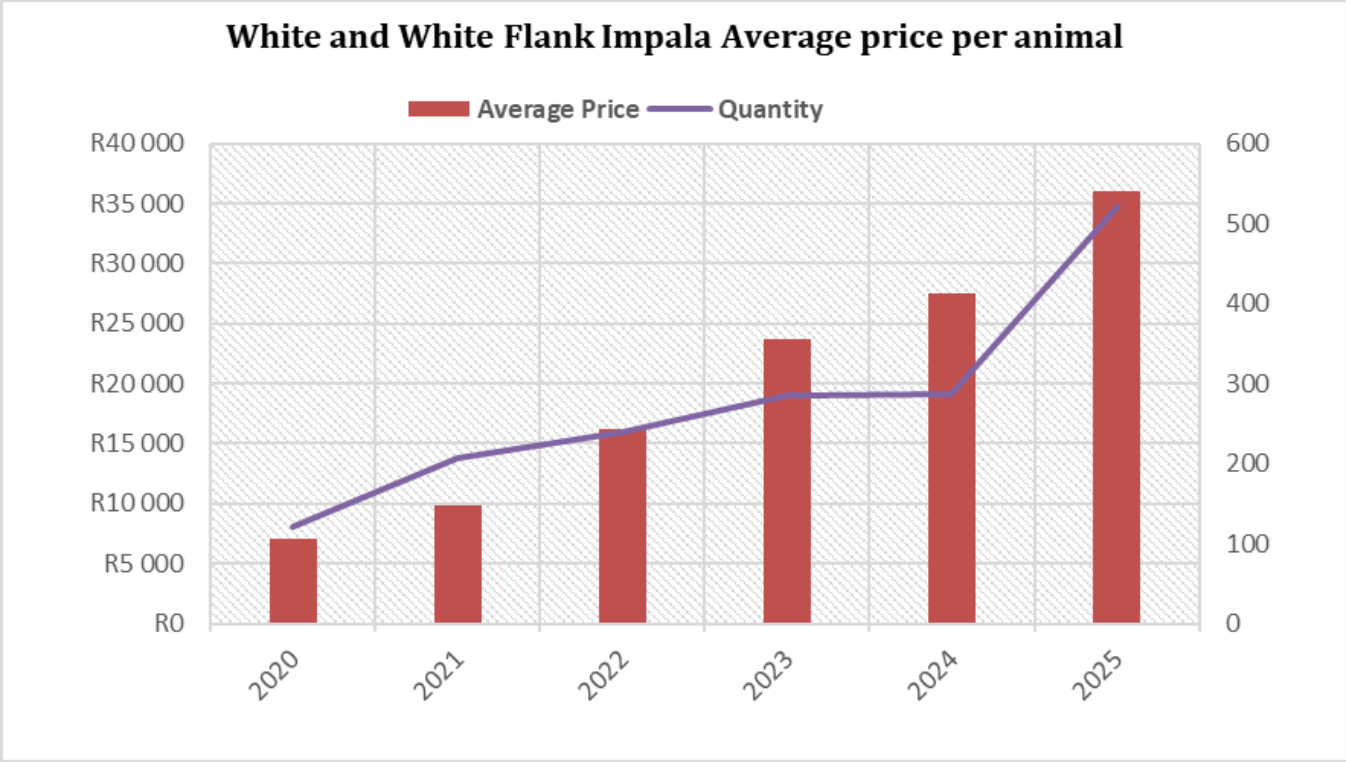
White and white flanked Impala Data and graphs: 2014 to 2025

The dataset presents one of the most striking journeys within the Impala colour-variant economy. The graph shows a species that entered the market with spectacular exclusivity, generating towering early prices before undergoing a pronounced recalibration. The quantity line traces a steady expansion over more than a decade, while the price bars reveal both the intensity of the early boom and the disciplined rebuild thereafter. Taken together, the table and graph paint the story of a variant that transitioned from a once-in-a-generation novelty into a **major commercial line** within the plains-game sector, driven by expanding breeder confidence and a widening buyer base. This is a record of **rise, correction, consolidation and powerful resurgence**, with each phase leaving a clear imprint on both numbers and market sentiment.

White and White Flank Impala			
Year	**Value**	**Quantity**	**Average Price**
2013	R500 000	1	R0
2014	R26 580 000	24	R1 107 500
2015	R42 229 000	32	R1 319 656
2016	R13 634 000	120	R113 617
2017	R3 357 999	174	R19 299
2018	R1 885 000	236	R7 987
2019	R813 350	132	R6 162
2020	R853 050	121	R7 050
2021	R2 035 550	206	R9 881
2022	R3 868 150	239	R16 185
2023	R6 743 050	285	R23 660
2024	R7 855 900	286	R27 468
2025	R18 766 950	521	R36 021



The Early-Cycle Breakout and Extreme Pricing (2013–2015)

Between **2013 and 2015**, the White and White Flank Impala market entered a phase of unprecedented price escalation. The band began with a modest **R500 000 in 2013** for a single animal before exploding to **R26.58 million in 2014** and further to **R42.23 million in 2015**. Average prices in this band surged from **R1 107 500 in 2014** to **R1 319 656 in 2015**, supported by quantities that remained relatively low—only **24 animals in 2014** and **32 in 2015**—reinforcing the scarcity premium that dominated this early period.

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Industry-wise, this aligns with the broader colour-variant super-cycle where rarity, speculative investment and elite breeding demand drove valuations far above functional production economics. For many breeders, these years marked the height of variant trading, where *white genetics* were seen as both a diversification asset and a prestige marker in high-end herds. The market at this point was less about scale and more about acquiring foundational genetics at almost any cost.

The Post-Boom Correction and Normalisation (2016–2018)

The years **2016 to 2018** saw a decisive shift away from speculative premiums as the market recalibrated. Value declined from **R13.63 million in 2016** to **R3.36 million in 2017**, then further to **R1.89 million in 2018**. Average prices followed the same trajectory, collapsing from **R113 617 in 2016** to **R19 299 in 2017**, and down to **R7 987 in 2018**. At the same time, quantities rose sharply—from **120 in 2016** to **174 in 2017** and **236 in 2018**—showing that supply was coming online faster than the market could absorb it at premium levels. This surge in supply diluted rarity and accelerated price normalisation.

Macro conditions also played a role: the broader wildlife market was cooling, investment capital was redirecting, and variant-heavy portfolios were being rationalised. The severe pricing contraction simply reflected a maturing market moving toward sustainability.

Stabilisation Through Market Maturity (2019–2021)

The band from **2019 to 2021** marked a stabilisation phase. Values settled between **R813 350 in 2019** and **R2.04 million by 2021**, while quantities remained robust, fluctuating between **121 and 206 animals**.



The striking, **White-Flanked Impala** — a rare, luminous variation that stands out in any herd with its crisp white contrasts and refined horn structure.

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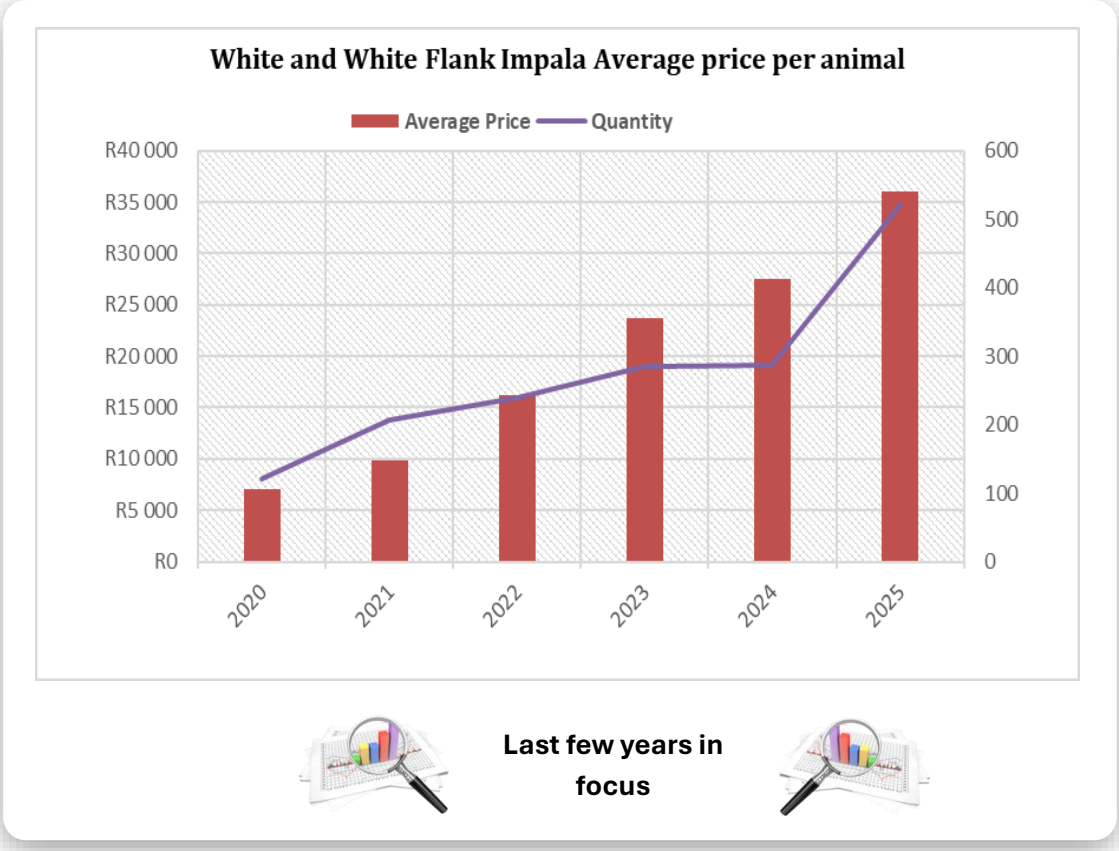
Average pricing stabilised around **R6 162 in 2019**, **R7 050 in 2020**, and **R9 881 in 2021**, demonstrating that buyers were now valuing this phenotype on pragmatic commercial breeding considerations rather than speculative scarcity.

Covid-19 influences in **2020 to 2021** temporarily constrained liquidity and disrupted auctions, yet the White and White Flank market remained surprisingly resilient. Breeders continued to leverage white genetics for herd diversification, and seed-stock demand inside established herds supported stable price floors even amid broader market uncertainty.

The Renewed Expansion Phase (2022–2025)

From **2022 to 2025**, the market again shifted upward, but now on a **much more stable and organic foundation**. Value rose from **R3.87 million in 2022** to **R6.74 million in 2023**, **R7.86 million in 2024**, and a remarkable **R18.77 million in 2025**. Quantities in this band climbed from **239 in 2022** to **285 in 2023**, **286 in 2024**, and then surged dramatically to **521 in 2025**—a major indicator that the phenotype had entered mainstream adoption. Despite this massive increase in supply, average prices strengthened significantly from **R16 185 in 2022** to **R23 660 in 2023**, **R27 468 in 2024**, and **R36 021 in 2025**, proving the presence of sustained and growing demand.



This new wave was fundamentally different from the early boom: it reflected **broad-based commercial acceptance**, improved line quality, stronger auction visibility, and greater integration of white genetics into diversified game farm strategies. Demand was no longer confined to elite breeders but had expanded across medium-scale operators and high-end hunting enterprises.

The 2025 Acceleration and Demand Breakthrough

The shift from **2024 to 2025** marked one of the most decisive growth steps in the recent history of White and White Flank Impala. Total value climbed from **R7.86 million in 2024** to **R18.77 million in 2025**, more than doubling within a single season. The clearest driver of this transformation was quantity, which jumped from **286 animals in 2024** to **521 in 2025**, indicating widespread uptake by breeders and buyers across the country.

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Crucially, this dramatic increase in volume did *not* depress prices; instead, average pricing rose from **R27 468** to **R36 021**. This combination—**soaring volume and rising price**—confirms a strong demand-led expansion rather than a supply shock. The industry has increasingly recognised the resilience, visibility and marketability of white genetics, and 2025 reflects the moment where the segment transitioned from niche variant to fully commercialised phenotype.

Broader market forces also supported this uplift. Improved financial sentiment across the wildlife sector, returning international buyers, and heightened branding of colour variants in premier auctions reinforced demand. The steady improvement in quality and uniformity of white and white-flank lines also strengthened confidence, allowing the market to absorb larger numbers at higher price points.

Overall, **2025 stands as a breakthrough year**, where the White and White Flank Impala consolidated its position as one of the most rapidly scaling and commercially validated colour variants in South Africa's plains game economy.

This table maps out the internal value structure of White Flank Impala rams by breaking the market into specific horn-length categories. Instead of treating the species as a single pricing line, the table reveals the subtle hierarchy that governs how buyers reward age, horn development and rarity within the phenotype. It shows how the market distributes value across both high-volume, general-purpose rams and low-volume, elite trophy-class animals, illustrating a layered ecosystem where **scarcity, horn expression and buyer intent** shape pricing outcomes. As such, the table is less about raw numbers and more about the **story of demand depth**, the **gradients of quality** and the **refinement of the market** as it moves from commercial utility toward premium genetic distinction.

White Flank Impala Rams: Pricing by Inches Sold				
	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Ram : inches not specified	46	R25 674	109	R38 881
Ram : Sub-Adult	8	R39 000	14	R28 821
Ram : Young	8	R20 531	9	R19 111
Ram : Young 25 inches plus	1	R70 000	0	R0
Ram : Hunting	2	R35 000	0	R0
Ram : less than 20 inches	10	R35 400	25	R14 240
Ram : plus 20 inches	8	R34 781	14	R54 357
Ram : plus 21 inches	12	R36 792	22	R56 023
Ram : plus 22 inches	5	R38 000	13	R55 692
Ram : plus 23 inches	6	R68 000	20	R82 225
Ram : plus 24 inches	6	R89 167	4	R150 625
Ram : plus 25 inches	3	R185 000	5	R149 000
	115	**R39 643**	**235**	**R46 294**
	115	**R4 559 000**	**235**	**R10 879 000**

The White Flank Impala ram market in 2024–2025 demonstrates how a maturing colour-variant population organises itself into clear value tiers. At the broadest base of the market, rams with **unspecified inches** form the largest share of trade, rising from **46 animals in 2024** to **109 in 2025** and with that increase came a firming of average price from **R25 674** to **R38 881**.

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This is the clearest signal that general-purpose commercial buyers are contributing strongly to demand, absorbing larger numbers while still paying increasingly favourable prices. It reflects not speculation but a stable, expanding footprint for the White Flank phenotype.

Young and sub-adult rams occupy the next segment, a category shaped less by rarity and more by pipeline management. Sub-adults softened in price from **R39 000** to **R28 821**, even as quantities rose, showing that breeders released more intermediate animals as herds expanded. Young rams showed a similar stabilisation, with prices shifting from **R20 531** to **R19 111** as quantities remained relatively low. These bands show that while the market is healthy, buyers differentiate sharply between early-stage animals and mature trophy-class rams.

The maturity and horn-performance categories, however, reveal the true depth of appetite in the market. Rams **20–22 inches** showed significant strengthening in 2025: for example, rams **plus 20 inches** rose from **R34 781** to **R54 357**, while **plus 21 inches** increased from **R36 792** to **R56 023** and **plus 22 inches** from **R38 000** to **R55 692**. This widening gap between young/general rams and the core maturity bands indicates a market that has regained competitive tension. Buyers are not merely purchasing genetics; they are actively seeking rams that make immediate visual and breeding impact.

In the upper-end horn categories, scarcity becomes more pronounced and buyers respond decisively. Rams **plus 23 inches** jumped from **R68 000** in 2024 to **R82 225** in 2025, while maintaining meaningful volume growth from **6 animals** to **20**. The rarest classes saw the sharpest price recalibration: **plus 24 inches** surged to **R150 625** and **plus 25 inches**, although fewer in number, held at **R149 000** — both representing sizeable premiums and reflecting the industry-wide return of appetite for **high-expression trophy traits** that were once undervalued during the correction years.

When viewed together, the entire price curve climbs steadily from the general-purpose bands to the exceptional inch ranges, illustrating how White Flank Impala have re-entered a phase where **phenotypic excellence is rewarded proportionally and consistently**. The market clearly distinguished between mass-market demand, mid-tier maturity and elite trophy calibre and this segmentation created a rising overall average price from **R39 643 in 2024** to **R46 294 in 2025**, with total value more than doubling from **R4.559 million to R10.879 million**.

This is the hallmark of a healthy, structured marketplace — one in which **buyers reward quality**, **breeders strategically release across tiers** and **volume growth is supported, not undermined, by pricing strength**. The table ultimately shows a species that has transitioned from post-boom recovery into **full commercial maturity**, with horn length once again acting as a clear value differentiator and a driver of auction competitiveness.

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BLUE WILDEBEEST

Connochaetes taurinus

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Family: Bovidae
Genus: Connochaetes
Species: C. taurinus
Common Names: Blue Wildebeest, Brindled Gnu



WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY

- Blue-grey antelope with dark brindled stripes, beard and mane; heavy forequarters; both sexes horned; bulls 230–270 kg, cows 180–230 kg.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Grasslands and savannah across South Africa—Kruger, Limpopo, North West, Free State and KZN reserves; dependent on grazing quality tied to rainfall.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Strict grazing specialist of short green grasses; follows fresh regrowth and burns; major driver of grassland dynamics.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Gregarious herds; territorial bulls; bachelor groups; synchronized calving; strong predator vigilance.

ADAPTATIONS

- Long-distance endurance, acute senses, efficient grazing physiology, heat-dispersing coloration, herd cohesion, timed reproductive strategy.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern; Stable populations in parks and private reserves; threats include fencing, fragmentation and drought.

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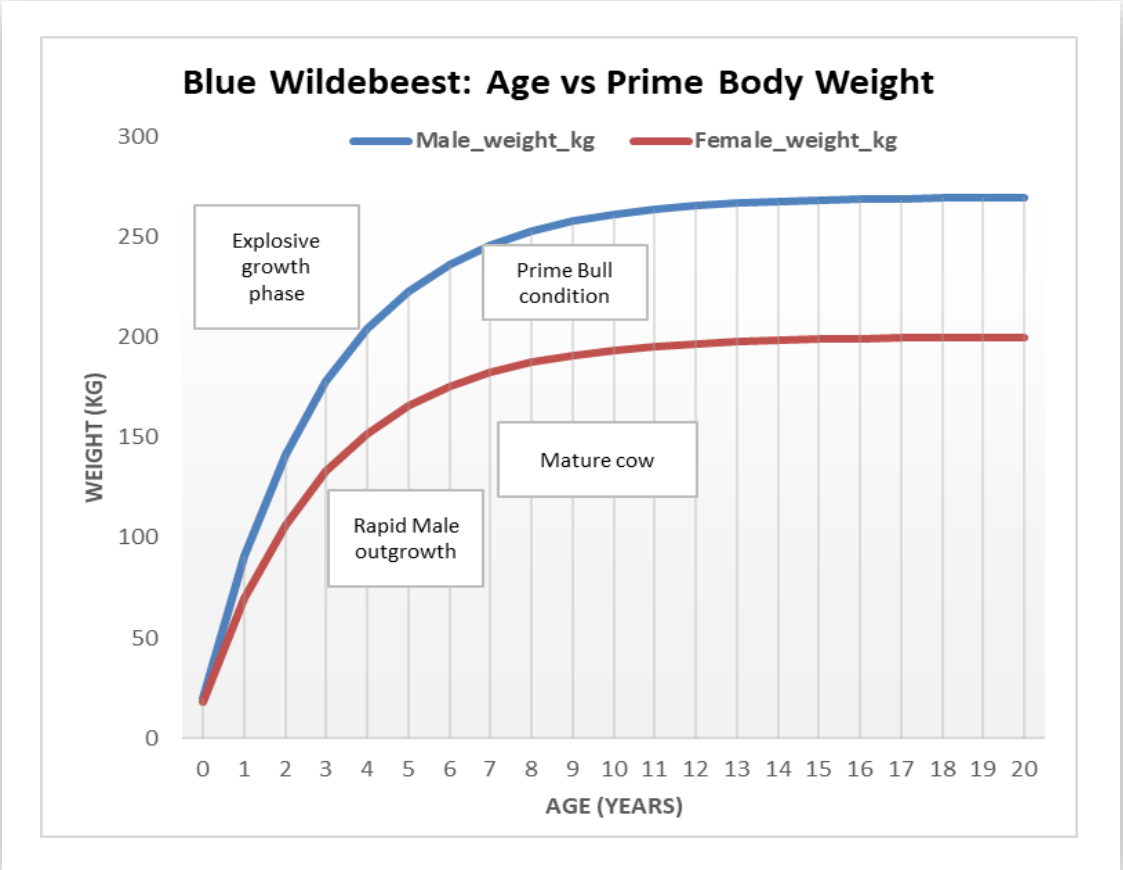
Blue Wildebeest Specie Information

There is an unmistakable energy in a herd of Blue Wildebeest—the rolling grunts, the restless shifting of hooves, the glittering blue-grey coats catching the early African light. They are animals shaped entirely by movement and grass, honed across millennia to read the rhythms of the veld with exquisite accuracy. To watch them is to witness a species that carries an ancient memory: of seasonal rains, open plains and distances that once stretched from **South Africa to the Serengeti**.

The **Blue Wildebeest, or brindled gnu,** thrives in the wide grasslands and lightly wooded savannahs where fresh grass flushes quickly after the rains. In South Africa, they are found across the Kruger National Park, the KZN reserves of Hluhluwe–iMfolozi and Mkuze and the open lands of Limpopo and North West where mixed-species private farmes have established large, stable populations. Even in the Free State and Eastern Cape, reintroductions have allowed this species to expand far beyond its historical core range. Yet, no matter where they occur, wildebeest movements are still anchored to the same instinct: follow the green.

Their diet reflects this evolutionary alignment. Blue Wildebeest **are pure grazers**, with a narrow muzzle designed to clip tender new shoots. They seek out the high-protein grass flush that erupts after fire or rain, often arriving first to capitalise on the most nutritious growth. In doing so, they become ecological architects, opening up the grassland for other species and stimulating new vegetation cycles. The wildebeest doesn't simply eat the landscape—it shapes it.



Males and females share the familiar silhouette of the species: the sloping shoulders, the dark mane, the beard and the heavily built forequarters. But the differences are striking when observed closely. **Bulls carry more muscle, thicker necks and heavier horns** with broad bases that signal maturity and dominance. They often **weigh between 230 and 270 kilograms**, carrying a darker tone across the face and shoulders. **Cows are more streamlined**, lighter and more agile, typically **weighing between 180 and 230 kilograms**. Both sexes bear horns, but the bulls' grow heavier, denser and more curved with age.

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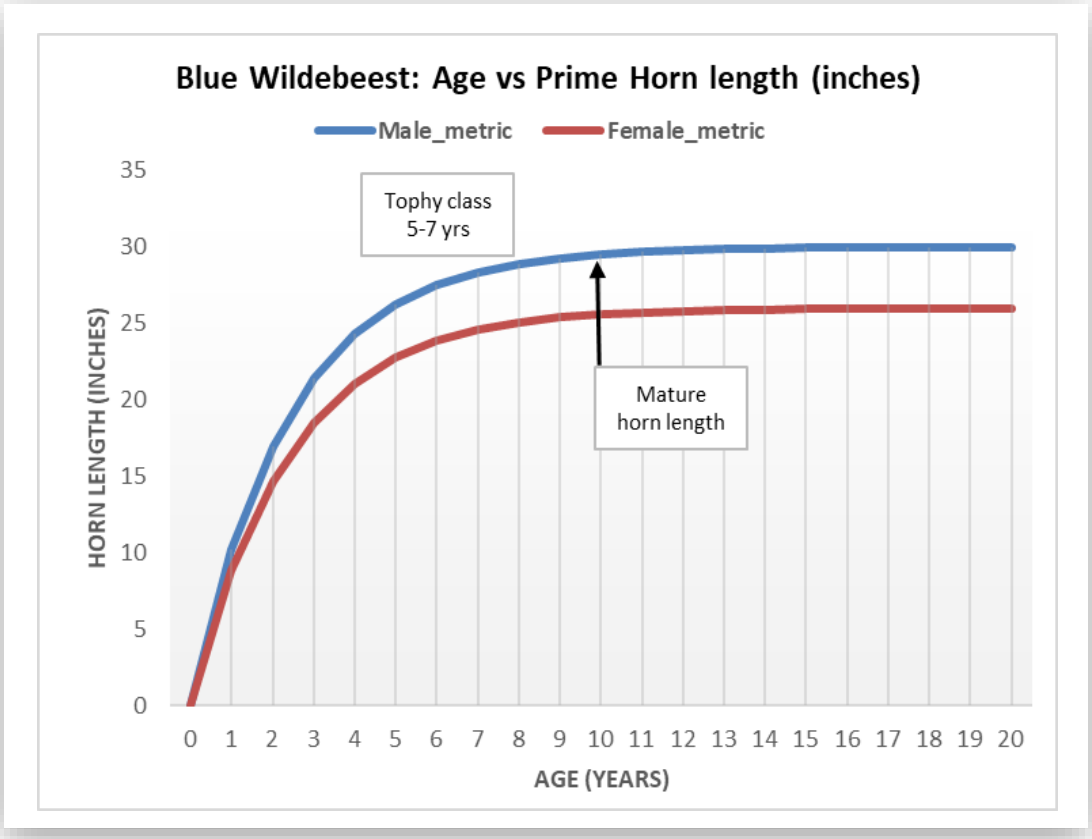
Territorial behaviour defines the rut, when bulls attempt to establish small, defended patches of veld, advertising to any passing females with grunts, posture and stamina. Wildebeest growth follows a steady, predictable trajectory.



Calves arrive in a remarkably synchronised wave after an eight-and-a-half-month gestation, often within just a few weeks of each other. A newborn will be running within minutes, a necessity in a landscape where lions and hyenas wait for any lapse in vigilance. **At birth they weigh around 20 kilograms**, doubling to nearly 80 kilograms within the first year. Horns emerge early—around seven inches by the first year and twelve inches by the second—growing rapidly through the juvenile stages and reaching about twenty-seven inches when mature.

Adult weight stabilises around 240 to 250 kilograms, reflecting a build optimised for endurance rather than brute mass. Their lifespan stretches from eighteen to twenty years in good conditions.

Horn growth in the Blue Wildebeest is a striking illustration of how rapidly this species matures and how early physical dominance is established. The curve shows that **both males and females achieve the bulk of their horn length within the first 4–6 years**, with an exceptionally steep growth phase in the juvenile years. This early surge reflects the species' evolutionary need for protection, display and competition from a young age.

For **males**, the curve climbs sharply to around **25–30 inches by age four**, before tapering gently towards a mature plateau of **32 inches**. This pattern mirrors the behavioural reality on the veld: young bulls quickly need to assert themselves and substantial horn development is essential for sparring, territory disputes and ranking within bachelor herds. The slow, incremental gains after age six suggest that once a bull reaches his prime frame, energy is redirected more toward body mass and breeding competition than horn elongation.

Females follow a similar trajectory but level off earlier, stabilising at around **25–26 inches**. Their horns serve primarily in defence against predators and to protect calves, not in the high-intensity dominance battles typical of bulls. The softer climb and lower plateau reflect this functional difference — robust enough for survival, but not exaggerated beyond necessity.

What this curve ultimately reveals is the **remarkable efficiency and biological intent** of wildebeest horn growth: a rapid investment in early life, followed by a long plateau where the animal's focus shifts from growing weapons to surviving, breeding and contributing to the herd structure. Socially, wildebeest are among

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Africa's most dynamic herd animals. Breeding herds dominated by cows and calves drift across the plains following grazing quality, while bachelor herds and territorial bulls contribute to a complex social landscape. Their communication is rich and varied: deep resonant grunts that travel far across the plains, snorts of alarm and subtle alignment of the herd when detecting predators or sensing distant rain.

Despite their comedic reputation, they are exceptionally alert and efficient runners—**few predators can outlast them once they reach full stride**. Even within the species, regional variations and phenotype differences exist, shaped by genetics and geography. These have become relevant in South Africa's wildlife economy, especially as private game farmes diversify genetic lines for ecological value and breeding interest.

The table below presents the major recognised variants of the Blue Wildebeest:

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Morphology / Coat Features	Horn Characteristics	Notes / Distinguishing Traits
Common Blue Wildebeest (*C. t. taurinus*)	**South Africa, Botswana**	**Blue-grey coat with brindled stripes**	**Swept outward then inward**	**Most common SA phenotype**
Nyasa Wildebeest (*C. t. johnstoni*)	**Malawi, Tanzania lines**	**Lighter grey, faint striping**	**Narrower horns**	**Occasionally seen in imported genetics**
Cookson's Wildebeest (*C. t. cooksoni*)	**Zambia**	**Pale coat, reduced brindling**	**Upward horn curve**	**Rare in South Africa**
Western White-Bearded Type	**Kenya/Tanzania stock lines**	**Brownish-grey, long beard**	**Slender horns**	**Occasionally bred on private farmes**
South African Colour Variants (Selective Breeding)	**Select farmes**	**Darker steel-grey sheen**	**Standard**	**Aesthetic variant; uncommon**
	Most well known colour variants are the golden, king, royal, golden king and the seretsi.			

To understand the Blue Wildebeest is to understand the pulse of the grasslands themselves. Their movements mirror the ebb and flow of seasons, their presence shapes vegetation and their endurance builds the foundation for multiple predator–prey dynamics. In South Africa's wildlife industry, they serve not only as ecological keystone grazers but also as a species that enriches biodiversity, stabilises veld systems and tells the visual story of Africa's open plains.

From their shimmering blue coats to the echoing chorus of their dusk and dawn grunts, wildebeest remain one of the continent's most fascinating and important species—restless, resilient and forever tied to the rhythm of the rain.

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Fascinating Insights

The Blue Wildebeest is one of Africa's **great ecological engineers** — a species whose strength, endurance and sheer numbers shape the very rhythm of the savannah. Built for movement and survival, they combine a muscular frame with a surprisingly efficient digestive system, enabling them to exploit vast grasslands that many species cannot. Their horns develop rapidly in the first few years of life, **equipping both males and females with formidable natural armour** long before they reach breeding prime. Socially, wildebeest form fluid herds that can number from dozens to thousands, constantly responding to rainfall, grazing pressure and predator dynamics. Their migratory tendencies, territorial behaviour and synchronised calving define not only their survival strategy but also the fortunes of lions, hyenas, cheetahs and vultures that depend on them. In every sense, the Blue Wildebeest is a keystone species: powerful, resilient and essential to the balance of the wild.

- Blue Wildebeest calves can stand and run within **minutes** of birth — a crucial defence against predators.
- Horn growth accelerates dramatically in the first **4–6 years**, giving both males and females early defensive capability.
- Adult bulls can weigh over **250 kg**, with a strong front-heavy build designed for pushing, wrestling and dominance challenges.
- Their annual calving season is one of the most synchronised in nature: the majority of births occur within **a 2–3 week window**.
- Wildebeest herds influence vegetation patterns by "mowing" grasslands, stimulating nutrient cycling across entire ecosystems.
- They are highly water-dependent compared to some antelope species, often dominating areas near permanent waterholes.
- Their deep nasal grunt is unique — functioning as both communication and territorial warning.
- Despite appearing chaotic, herd movements follow precise environmental cues, tracking fresh grazing within hours of rainfall.
- Predators such as lions and hyenas time their hunting strategies around wildebeest calving and migratory patterns.

"The Blue Wildebeest is one of the most dependable foundation species in the South African wildlife industry—valued for its hardiness, strong breeding performance and consistent demand across live sales and hunting sectors, making it a reliable cornerstone for sustainable herd management and long-term veld utilisation planning."

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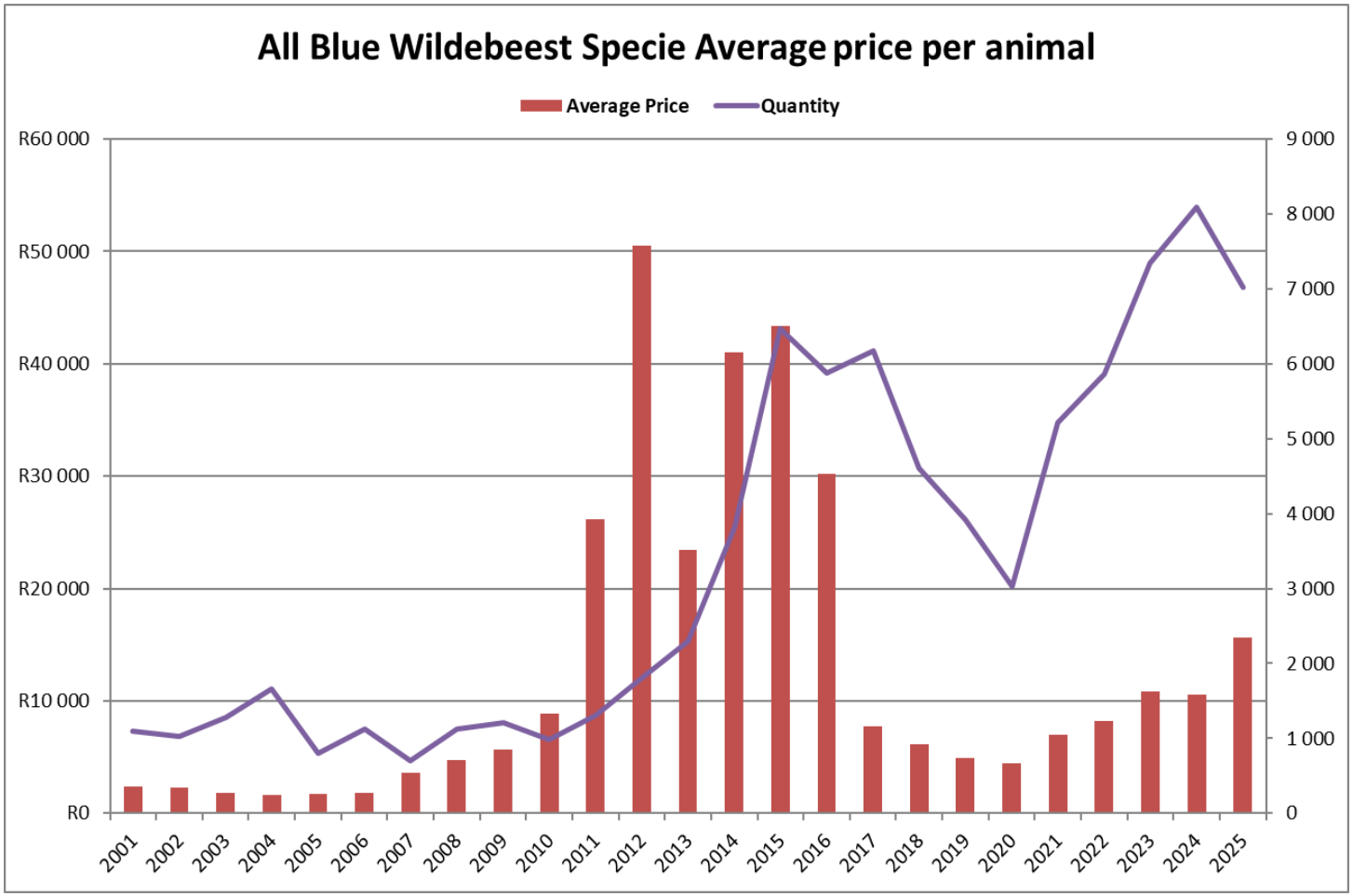
Total Blue Wildebeest: All specie Data and Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The dataset tells the story of one of South Africa's most foundational plains-game species, charting its evolution from a steady, utilitarian marketplace into a brief era of speculative intensity before settling into a modern phase defined by **scale, liquidity and dependable demand**. The graph instantly reveals the dramatic phases: a long early plateau, a sudden surge into high-value markets, an equally sharp normalization and then a renewed climb supported by the broader wildlife economy's recovery. The numbers collectively illustrate how the Blue Wildebeest, despite never being a rarity, has moved through powerful demand cycles shaped by restocking, hunting, genetics expansion and shifting breeder strategies. This is a species whose commercial story is not defined by scarcity, but by **volume, versatility and resilience** and the dataset provides a clear window into how that resilience shaped its market journey.

Total Blue Wildebeest All Species			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average
2001	R2 618 178	1 101	R2 378
2002	R2 317 040	1 026	R2 258
2003	R2 281 539	1 286	R1 774
2004	R2 675 250	1 660	R1 612
2005	R1 376 900	797	R1 728
2006	R2 058 675	1 124	R1 832
2007	R2 537 400	699	R3 630
2008	R5 333 300	1 119	R4 766
2009	R6 854 400	1 215	R5 641
2010	R8 759 450	984	R8 902
2011	R34 306 905	1 311	R26 169
2012	R91 037 000	1 802	R50 520
2013	R53 794 599	2 297	R23 420
2014	R156 315 650	3 813	R40 995
2015	R280 896 611	6 472	R43 402
2016	R177 471 809	5 882	R30 172
2017	R47 983 905	6 179	R7 766
2018	R28 190 595	4 605	R6 122
2019	R19 109 220	3 923	R4 871
2020	R13 562 005	3 033	R4 471
2021	R36 662 020	5 218	R7 026
2022	R48 400 096	5 869	R8 247
2023	R79 822 086	7 342	R10 872
2024	R85 327 100	8 098	R10 537
2025	R109 516 850	7 023	R15 594



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Total Blue Wildebeest Insights (All Species) : 2001 to 2025

THE FOUNDATION YEARS: STEADY, FUNCTIONAL MARKET (2001–2010)

The first decade was defined by **remarkable consistency**, with quantities fluctuating in a relatively narrow band between **1 101 animals in 2001** and **984 in 2010**. Values moved gradually from **R2.62 million** to **R8.76 million**, while average prices rose from **R2 378** to **R8 902**, revealing a slow but steady inflation-aligned strengthening of the species' commercial appeal. During this period, Blue Wildebeest operated as a **predictable plains-game commodity**, supported by both hunting markets and expanding wildlife ranching. There were no sharp distortions; the species behaved like a stable, utilitarian producer whose supply and demand moved largely in tandem.

THE EXPANSION AND GENETIC INVESTMENT SURGE (2011–2015)

From **2011 to 2015**, the market entered a completely different phase. Values and prices accelerated aggressively: **R34.3 million in 2011** rising to **R280.9 million in 2015**, accompanied by quantities increasing from **1 311** to **6 472** animals. Average price surged from **R26 169** to **R43 402**, marking this as **one of the most aggressive growth phases in South African wildlife trading history**. This boom aligned with the broader **genetic investment cycle**, where breeders expanded heavily into high-value wildebeest lines (including variants) and ramped up commercial activity. Blue Wildebeest became a high-turnover species with strong liquidity, attracting both breeders and investors seeking scalable returns.

THE CORRECTION, CONSOLIDATION & THE BULL SHORTAGE SET IN (2016–2020)

The correction began immediately after the 2015 high. By **2016**, values fell to **R177.47 million**, and by **2020** they had contracted further to **R13.56 million**. Quantities mirrored this decline: from **5 882 animals in 2016** to **3 033 in 2020**, with average prices dropping to **R4 471**. But beneath these numbers lay a **critical structural shift** in the industry:

Between 2015 and 2017, breeders across South Africa removed large numbers of common Blue Wildebeest bulls from their farms and replaced them with colour-variant bulls. This was a strategic response to the variant boom, but it unintentionally caused a **material depletion of common bull breeding stock**. The table reflects this clearly:

- Quantity declines began after the peak: **6 179 animals in 2017 → 4 605 in 2018 → 3 923 in 2019**.
- The market was no longer correcting only in value — it was entering a **physical supply shortage**, particularly of males.

Covid-19 then compounded the contraction. Many breeders paused breeding expansions, reduced stocking rates, or consolidated operations. This amplified the **bull scarcity**, a structural imbalance that would only become more visible in the years ahead.

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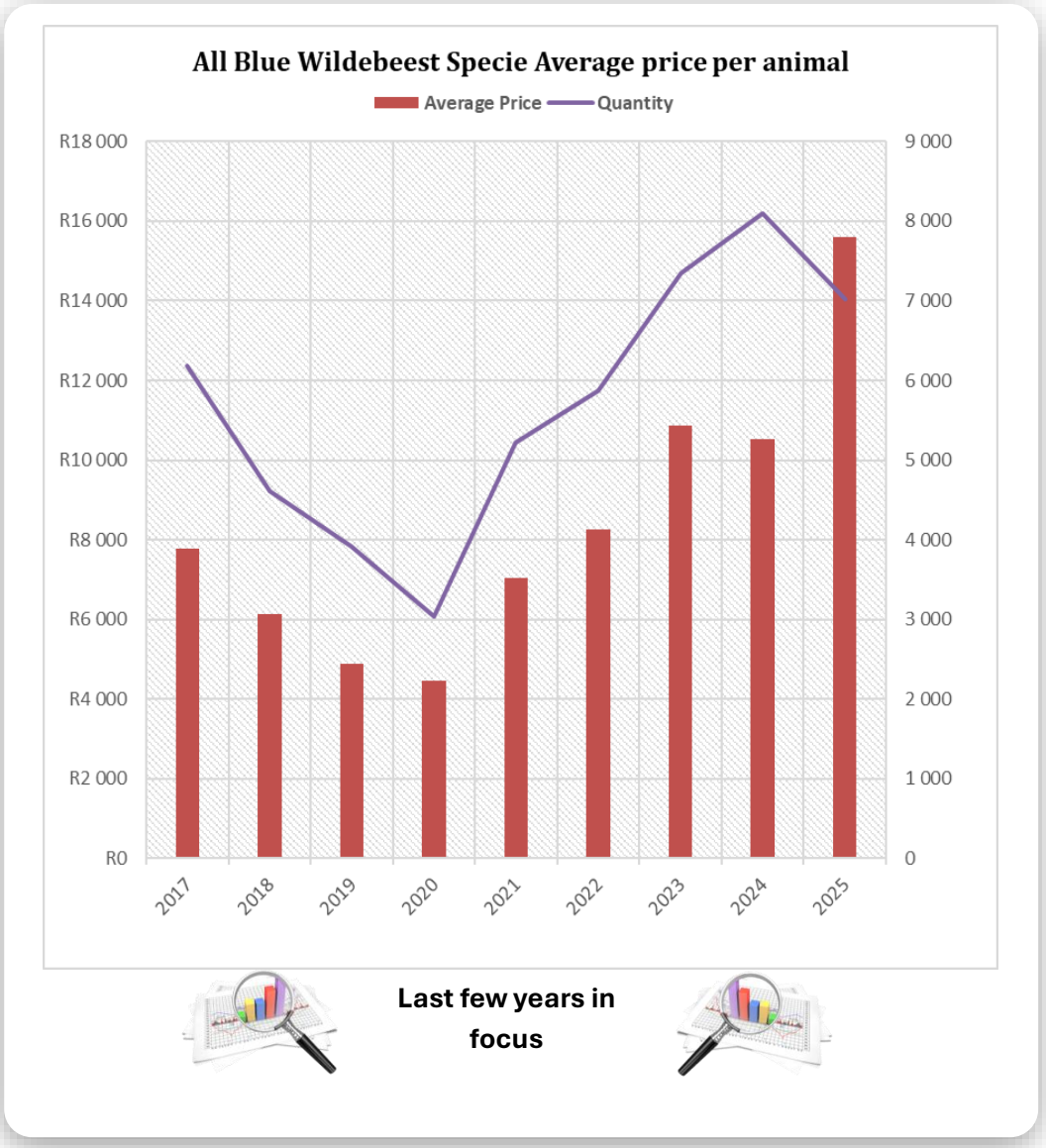
THE REBUILDING AND RETURN OF DEMAND MOMENTUM (2021–2024)

From **2021 onward**, the species began re-establishing a stronger commercial footing. Values climbed from **R36.66 million in 2021** to **R85.33 million in 2024**, while quantities grew steadily from **5 218** to **8 098** animals. Prices also recovered, rising from **R7 026** to **R10 537**.

This recovery was driven by:

- returning international safari markets,
- strengthened domestic breeding confidence,
- greater demand for steady, reliable plains-game species,
- and persistent **male shortages**, which kept upward pressure on price despite higher overall volumes.

While volumes rebounded, the bull shortage created between 2015–2017 remained deeply embedded, ensuring that male animals carried increasing premiums in the marketplace.



THE 2025 REPRICING — A MARKET RESPONDING TO STRUCTURAL SCARCITY

The year **2025** represents a decisive turning point for the species. Total value increased strongly from **R85.33 million in 2024** to **R109.52 million**, even though quantity decreased from **8 098** to **7 023** animals. This decline in supply was accompanied by an exceptionally strong rise in average price: from **R10 537** to **R15 594**, an uplift of roughly **48%**. This wasn't just cyclical movement — it was **structural repricing**. The colour-variant boom a decade earlier removed thousands of common bulls from the national pool.

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The slow biological replacement rate, combined with years of conservative breeding post-Covid, ensured that **2025 still felt the effects of a shortage created in 2015–2017**.

Buyers responded accordingly. Prices climbed sharply as demand exceeded the supply of both commercial bulls and quality female lines. Blue Wildebeest re-entered a premium phase, underpinned not by speculation but by **genuine scarcity**, improved market sentiment, and long-term biological constraints. Thus **2025** stands as the year the market fully recognised — and priced in — the consequences of a decade-long structural shift, restoring Blue Wildebeest to a position of renewed strength and heightened commercial importance in the wildlife economy.

Total Blue Wildebeest: A Expanding Multi-Tier Market Driven by Strong Variant Performance in 2025

This table breaks the Blue Wildebeest market into its constituent categories, revealing how each type — from the high-volume Common Wildebeest to the elite trophy-class Royal, King and Seretsi lines — contributes to total revenue, quantity and average pricing. It highlights the layered nature of the wildebeest economy: a broad commercial foundation supported by mass-market animals and an upper tier defined by **genetic refinement, horn expression and rarity premiums**. By pairing percentage contribution with value, volume and price, the table shows not just who dominates throughput, but who drives *value creation*, providing a clear window into the species' internal economic architecture.

Bluewildebeest Summary	2025				2024			
	% Total	Value	Quantity	Average	% Total	Value	Quantity	Average
Bluewildebeest : Common	39.29%	R43 032 350	4 976	R8 648	45.74%	R39 028 300	5 905	R6 609
Bluewildebeest : Gold	25.68%	R28 123 000	1 671	R16 830	28.64%	R24 439 750	1 840	R13 282
Bluewildebeest : Golden King	0.83%	R914 000	39	R23 436	0.56%	R481 800	16	R30 113
Bluewildebeest : King	23.94%	R26 217 000	264	R99 307	14.51%	R12 378 250	264	R46 887
Bluewildebeest : Royal	9.83%	R10 770 500	69	R156 094	10.51%	R8 967 000	72	R124 542
Bluewildebeest : Seretsi	0.42%	R460 000	4	R115 000	0.04%	R32 000	1	R32 000
TOTALS	**100.00%**	**R109 516 850**	**7 023**	**R15 594**	**100.00%**	**R85 327 100**	**8 098**	**R10 537**

The **Common Blue Wildebeest** remains the backbone of the species economy, but its dominance softened from **45.74% of total value in 2024** to **39.29% in 2025**. Volumes dropped sharply from **5 905 to 4 976 animals**, yet value increased from **R39.028 million to R43.032 million** and the average price rose meaningfully from **R6 609** to **R8 648**. This shift reflects tightening supply and strengthening demand in the broader plains-game market, where restocking and hunting operations revived through 2025. The Common Wildebeest therefore retains its role as the workhorse of the species, but its relative share of total turnover is increasingly reshaped by the premium categories.

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The **Gold Wildebeest** follows a similar yet more pronounced trajectory. Although its share of total value eased from **28.64% to 25.68%**, the category posted a strong uplift in average price, rising from **R13 282** in 2024 to **R16 830** in 2025. Volumes dipped from **1 840 to 1 671 animals**, indicating a tighter supply pipeline. The increase in total value from **R24.439 million to R28.123 million** shows that buyers continued rewarding the golden phenotype despite slightly reduced throughput. This reflects the stabilised mid-tier colour-variant market of 2025, where buyers sought visually distinctive but still commercially accessible options.

The **Golden King**, a more specialised variant, expanded its footprint modestly. Volumes increased from **16 to 39 animals**, translating into a share shift from **0.56% to 0.83%** of total value. The average price softened from **R30 113** to **R23 436**, a natural adjustment when a previously scarce category enters wider circulation. Yet total value still rose from **R481 800** to **R914 000**, showing that the market remains receptive to this phenotype, especially as more animals became available.

The most striking gains appear in the **King Blue Wildebeest**, which transformed from a strong niche performer into a major force in the 2025 market. Although the number of animals sold stayed constant at **264**, total value more than doubled from **R12.378 million** to **R26.217 million**, driven by a dramatic rise in average price from **R46 887** in 2024 to **R99 307** in 2025. Its contribution to total species value jumped from **14.51%** to **23.94%**, making 2025 a breakout year for the King phenotype. This surge indicates renewed appetite for premium, visually striking wildebeest lines as the colour-variant sector regained liquidity and prestige.

The **Royal Wildebeest** also strengthened significantly. Even though volumes slipped slightly from **72 to 69**, the category's average price climbed from **R124 542** to **R156 094**, pushing total value from **R8.967 million** to **R10.770 million**. Although its market share eased marginally from **10.51% to 9.83%**, this was not due to weakness — rather, it reflects the explosive expansion of the King category overshadowing all others. The Royal phenotype continues to command top-tier premiums, demonstrating the ongoing demand for rare, high-expression trophy animals.

At the smallest scale, the **Seretsi variant** recorded its most meaningful presence yet. Volumes rose from **1 to 4 animals**, lifting average price from **R32 000** to **R115 000** and raising total value from **R32 000** to **R460 000**. While its share remains tiny at **0.42%**, this movement signals early traction in a niche phenotype that is gradually being recognised by specialist breeders.

Across all categories, the total economic output of the Blue Wildebeest portfolio jumped from **R85.327 million in 2024** to **R109.516 million in 2025**, driven not by volume (which fell from **8 098 to 7 023**) but by substantial price appreciation, particularly in the high-value categories.

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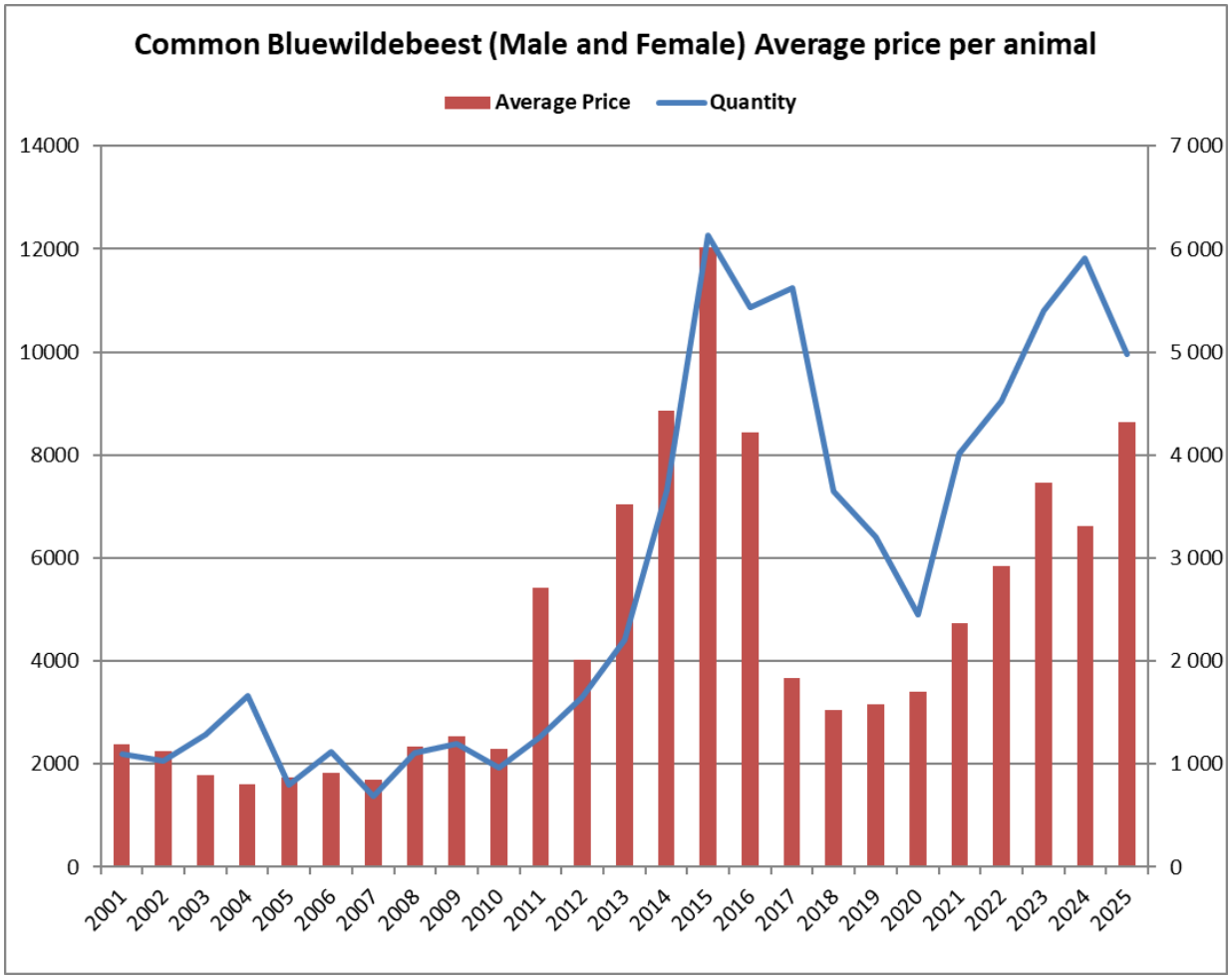
Common Blue Wildebeest "Male and Female" Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table and graph together tell the long and dynamic story of a species that forms the economic backbone of the plains-game sector. What emerges is a picture of a market defined not by rarity but by **movement, volume and resilience** — a species whose commercial trajectory reflects broader shifts in the wildlife economy: slow early growth, a sudden surge during industry expansion, a sharp correction and then a modern re-alignment where both supply and demand stabilise. The quantity line traces this evolution vividly, rising steeply during the boom years and moderating thereafter, while the price bars show the oscillations between subdued commercial utility and periods of strong buyer competition. This dataset is ultimately a record of how a dependable species adapts to changing market climates while remaining a **central engine of liquidity** across South Africa's game industry.

Common Bluewildebeest (Male and Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R2 618 178	1 101	R2 378
2002	R2 317 040	1 026	R2 258
2003	R2 281 539	1 286	R1 774
2004	R2 675 250	1 660	R1 612
2005	R1 376 900	797	R1 728
2006	R2 058 675	1 124	R1 832
2007	R1 177 400	691	R1 704
2008	R2 593 300	1 105	R2 347
2009	R3 044 400	1 198	R2 541
2010	R2 206 450	960	R2 298
2011	R6 847 905	1 262	R5 426
2012	R6 609 000	1 647	R4 013
2013	R15 494 599	2 204	R7 030
2014	R32 420 650	3 662	R8 853
2015	R73 780 831	6 128	R12 040
2016	R45 752 459	5 428	R8 429
2017	R20 650 901	5 620	R3 675
2018	R11 131 459	3 645	R3 054
2019	R10 078 820	3 203	R3 147
2020	R8 354 815	2 453	R3 406
2021	R18 962 650	4 013	R4 725
2022	R26 368 044	4 519	R5 835
2023	R40 327 602	5 403	R7 464
2024	R39 028 300	5 905	R6 609
2025	R43 032 350	4 976	R8 648



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Common Blue Wildebeest "Male and Female" Insights: 2001 to 2025

2001–2007: Early Stability in a Traditional Plains-Game Market

From **2001 to 2007**, the Blue Wildebeest market behaved as a classic plains-game species—**stable, predictable and closely tied to hunting demand and meat value**. Quantities generally ranged between **691 and 1 660 animals**, and average prices held firm between **R1 612 and R2 378**, with 2007 briefly touching **R1 704**. During this period, the industry had not yet entered the era of heavy genetic investment or colour-variant substitution. Supply was fluid, and breeders treated the species largely as a dependable commercial line rather than a premium asset class.

2008–2011: The First Noticeable Lift Driven by Broader Market Confidence

Between **2008 and 2011**, values strengthened and average prices began to shift upwards. Prices rose from **R2 347 in 2008** to **R5 426 in 2011**, while quantities modestly increased. This period coincided with wider optimism across plains game, supported by strong international hunting participation and early diversification into genetic traits across multiple species. Although Blue Wildebeest was not yet the focus of high-end breeding, the uplift reflected a rising tide across the wildlife economy.

2012–2015: The Colour-Variant Boom and Its Knock-on Effects

The years **2012 to 2015** marked the most dramatic escalation the species had ever seen. Average prices climbed from **R4 013 in 2012** to a peak of **R12 040 in 2015**, with values surging from **R6.6m to R73.7m** in the same band. Quantities grew aggressively, rising from **1 647 in 2012** to **6 128 in 2015**, an increase of nearly **273%**. This boom did not occur in isolation. The entire plains-game market was reshaped by the **colour-variant revolution**, and the **dominant industry shift of the era was the aggressive removal of common bulls from breeding farms between 2015 and 2017**. Breeders replaced common bulls with colour-variant genetics—particularly Golden, Kings, Royal and Saddleback Wildebeest lines.



*A **mature bull and cow** pause at twilight, their forms etched in gold as the last light settles over the South African bushveld. In this still moment, the timeless character of the **blue wildebeest** comes sharply into focus.*

This decision profoundly altered the Blue Wildebeest landscape. While 2015 figures were inflated by high-volume transactions, the more important legacy of this period was **the structural reduction in common bull supplies**, which would only become visible several years later.

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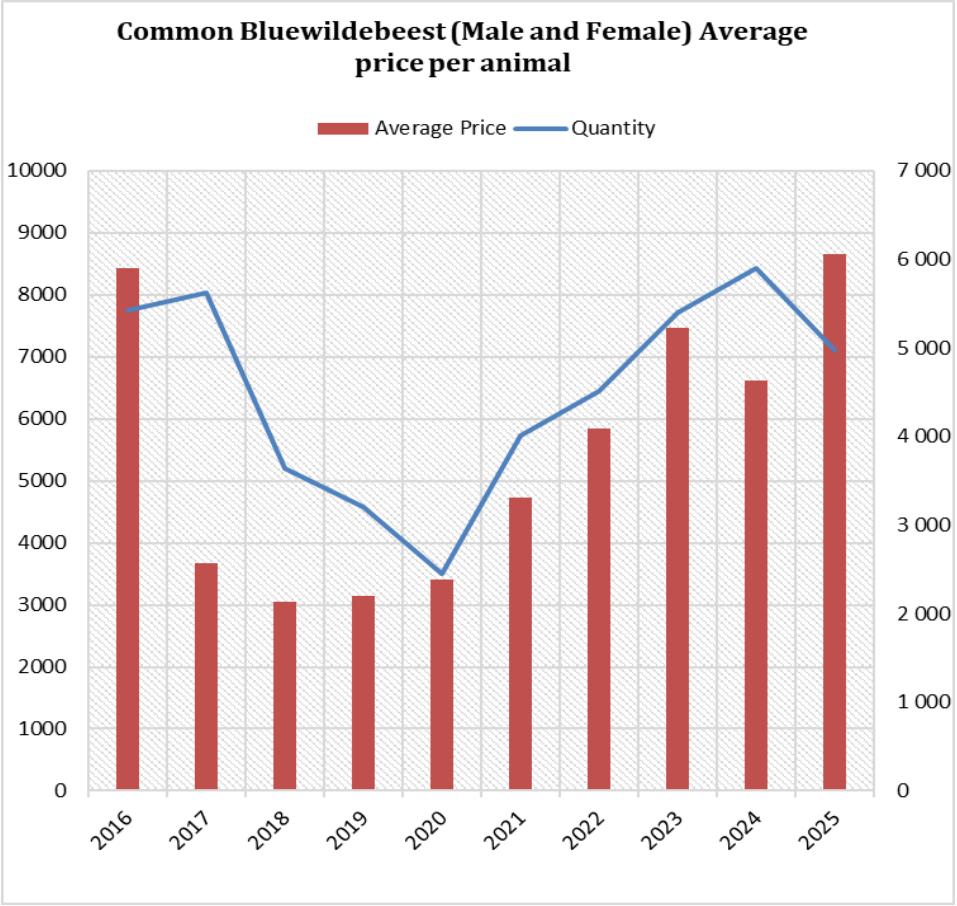
2016–2019: Post-Boom Correction and the Beginning of Structural Shortages

Following the 2015 peak, **market correction** took hold. Average prices fell sharply from **R12 040 in 2015** to **R8 429 in 2016**, then to **R3 675 in 2017**, and stabilised at **R3 147 in 2019**. Quantity also contracted from **6 128 (2015)** to **3 203 (2019)**. However, this downturn was not merely cyclical—it was **partially supply-driven**. Because breeders had replaced common bulls with colour-variant bulls during **2015–2017**, common-bull production capacity diminished. The full effect of that decision emerged from **2018 onward**, where numbers consistently trended lower, and **a shortage of quality common bulls became increasingly clear**. This shortage remains **material** in 2025.



2020–2022: COVID-19 Shock Followed by a Measured Recovery

The **2020 COVID period** brought predictable pressure on plains-game prices. Average prices dipped to **R3 406**, and quantities reduced to **2 453** as logistics, tourism and auctions contracted. Yet, as the industry adapted, **2021 and 2022** recovered steadily. Average price rose from **R4 725 (2021)** to **R5 835 (2022)**, and volumes climbed to **4 519**, aided by the return of hunting traffic and pent-up local demand. Still, the underlying **bull shortage** that originated in 2015–2017 had not been resolved, which meant that as demand returned, supply could not fully follow.

2023–2024: Strengthening Demand Meets Restricted Supply

From **2023 to 2024**, the market gained renewed strength. Average prices increased from **R7 464** to **R6 609**, while quantities rose from **5 403 to 5 905**. The slight softening in 2024 average price was not a market weakness but rather a shift in sale mix and timing.

The overriding story in this band was that **demand was rising faster than supply could replenish**, especially for mature bulls. The supply shortage that began in 2018 had now become a persistent structural feature of the Blue Wildebeest economy.

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2025- A MARKET REPOSITIONED

The year **2025** marked a decisive upward step for Common Blue Wildebeest.
Average price increased from **R6 609 in 2024** to **R8 648 in 2025**, an uplift of **+31%**, despite quantity falling from **5 905 to 4 976**. This contraction in supply is directly aligned with the **long-term deficit created by the 2015–2017 replacement of common bulls with colour-variant bulls**.

By 2025, the market had essentially recalibrated. Quality bulls were scarce, breeding farms were rebuilding common lines, and buyers were competing harder for available stock. This produced a **high-value environment** where **demand outran supply**, and the species once again demonstrated its importance as a core plains-game anchor in both hunting and commercial wildlife systems.

The 2025 outcome is therefore not simply a rebound—it is the **culmination of a decade of breeding decisions**, market corrections, and supply constraints manifesting together to restore the species' price momentum.

The species enters 2026 with **renewed strength**, structurally reduced bull availability, and sustained buyer interest—all of which underpin **continued upward pressure on price**. Blue Wildebeest supply is plainly failing to keep pace with demand, and the consequences of this shortfall extend beyond 2025 into the years ahead.

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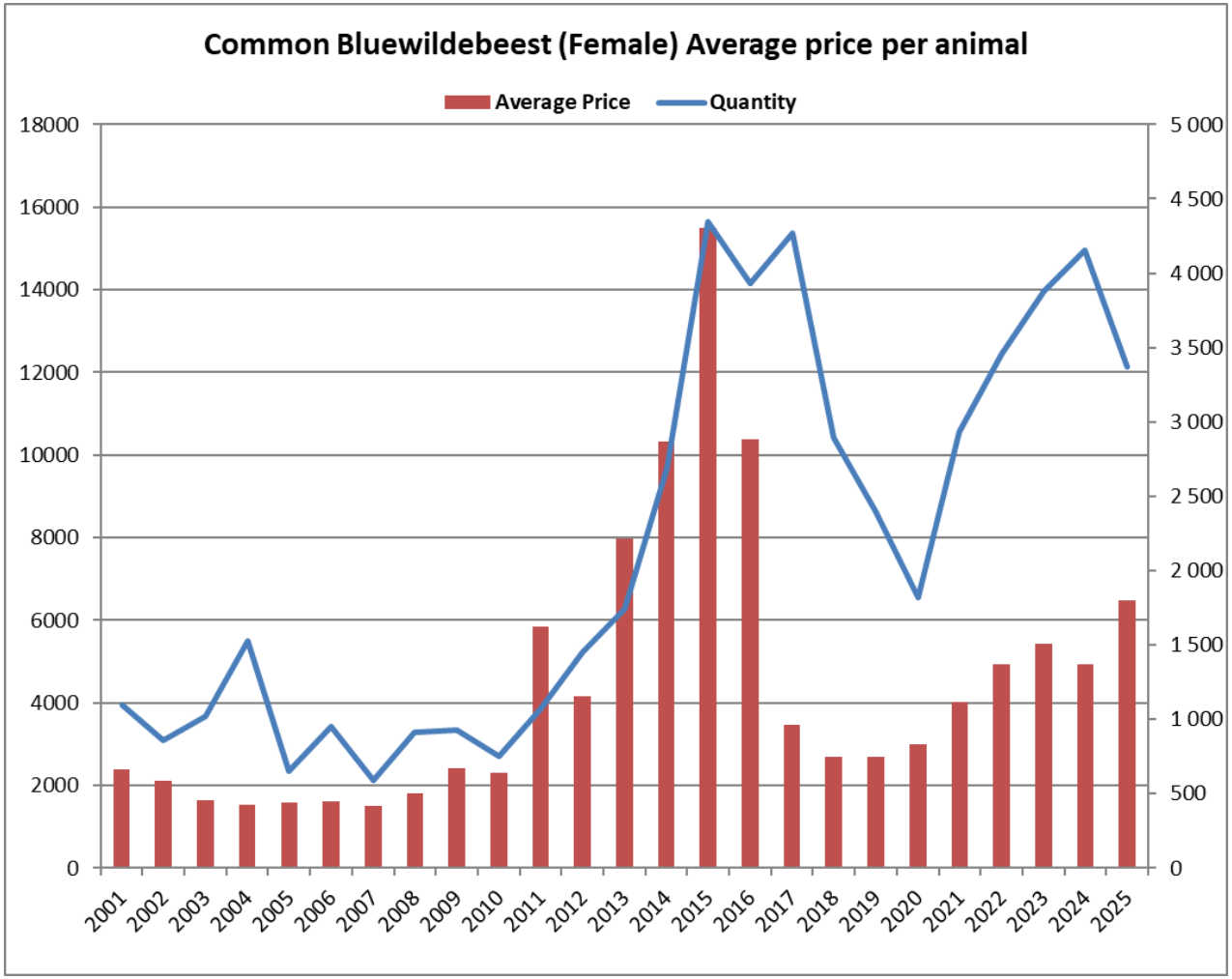
Common Blue Wildebeest **"Female"** Data and Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table and graph together trace the long arc of the female segment of this species — a segment that often reveals *deeper structural truths* about the plains-game economy. Unlike bulls, which respond dramatically to trophy-driven bidding, females tend to reflect **breeding sentiment, herd-building intentions and long-term investment confidence**. The data illustrates a market that evolved through periods of quiet stability, sudden valuation expansion, dramatic correction and later a return to more balanced, rational trade. The quantity line shows the ebb and flow of availability and demand across two decades, while the price bars make visible the shifting premiums tied to genetic value and restocking pressure. Together, they reveal a species whose female component is both steady and strategically influential — a reliable gauge of how the wider wildlife economy adapts over time.

Common Bluewildebeest (Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R2 618 178	1 101	R2 378
2002	R1 810 440	856	R2 115
2003	R1 687 464	1 019	R1 656
2004	R2 358 000	1 531	R1 540
2005	R1 029 100	653	R1 576
2006	R1 544 325	954	R1 619
2007	R897 350	594	R1 511
2008	R1 659 100	912	R1 819
2009	R2 229 450	926	R2 408
2010	R1 732 900	751	R2 307
2011	R6 241 505	1 070	R5 833
2012	R6 005 350	1 448	R4 147
2013	R13 890 999	1 741	R7 979
2014	R27 737 250	2 689	R10 315
2015	R67 337 010	4 346	R15 494
2016	R40 777 247	3 930	R10 376
2017	R14 847 204	4 271	R3 476
2018	R7 779 872	2 898	R2 685
2019	R6 456 920	2 392	R2 699
2020	R5 440 010	1 821	R2 987
2021	R11 823 750	2 932	R4 033
2022	R17 076 003	3 459	R4 937
2023	R21 080 650	3 877	R5 437
2024	R20 477 800	4 157	R4 926
2025	R21 821 950	3 370	R6 475



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Common Blue Wildebeest **"Female"** Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Market Foundation (2001–2007)

During **2001 to 2007**, Common Blue Wildebeest females traded within a relatively modest price band, with average prices starting at **R2 378 in 2001** and softening toward the mid-2000s before stabilising near the **R1 500 to R1 800 range** by 2007. Quantities during this period fluctuated between **594 and 1 101**, indicating early stability in female supply. This was a period of **market consolidation**, where wildebeest breeding herds were still expanding and demand remained primarily functional—fueling hunting blocks and general plains-game operations rather than speculative genetics.

Pre-Boom Lift and the First Acceleration (2008–2011)

Between **2008 and 2011**, prices began edging upward again, moving from **R1 819 in 2008** to **R5 833 in 2011**, a significant uplift of more than **220%** across four years. Quantities remained consistently above **900**, reflecting healthy supply. This period corresponded with the wider trend of **increasing appreciation for wildebeest genetics**, improved herd management and a gradual buildup toward the major wildlife investment boom. Female demand strengthened as breeders expanded base herds in anticipation of the coming premium cycle.

Expansion and the Super-Cycle Peak (2012–2016)

The years **2012 to 2016** formed the strongest growth block for female Blue Wildebeest. In **2012**, the average price sat at **R4 147**, rising to **R7 979** in **2013**, before reaching a dramatic **R15 494** in **2015**—an exceptional escalation that marked the apex of the super-cycle. Quantities followed a similar path, climbing from **1 448 in 2012** to a peak of **4 346 by 2015**. However, this period was heavily influenced by the **colour-variant boom**. Most colour variant breeders required female animals for their colour variant programs resulting in increased prices for females during this period. The oversupply of females in 2015–2016, combined with strategic rebalancing, contributed to the steep correction that followed.

In **2016**, average price fell sharply to **R10 376**, and although still high historically, it signaled the beginning of a cooldown phase that aligned with the broader wildlife market correction.

Market Correction and Structural Reset (2017–2020)

From **2017 to 2020**, the market recalibrated. Prices dropped from **R3 476 in 2017** to **R2 987 in 2020**, while quantities also reduced from **4 271** to **1 821** across the same period. This reflected both the **aftershock of the super-cycle collapse** and operational adjustments as breeders reduced herd sizes to regain balance. The shortage of common bulls resulting from the **2015–2017 replacement programmes** began surfacing materially by **2018 onwards**, limiting herd expansions. This shortage—visible across many plains species—remained evident all the way into **2025**, as breeder efforts shifted toward restoring long-term herd integrity. External factors also played a role: **COVID-19 in 2020** further constrained hunting demand, pressed farm cashflows, and maintained downward pressure on prices.

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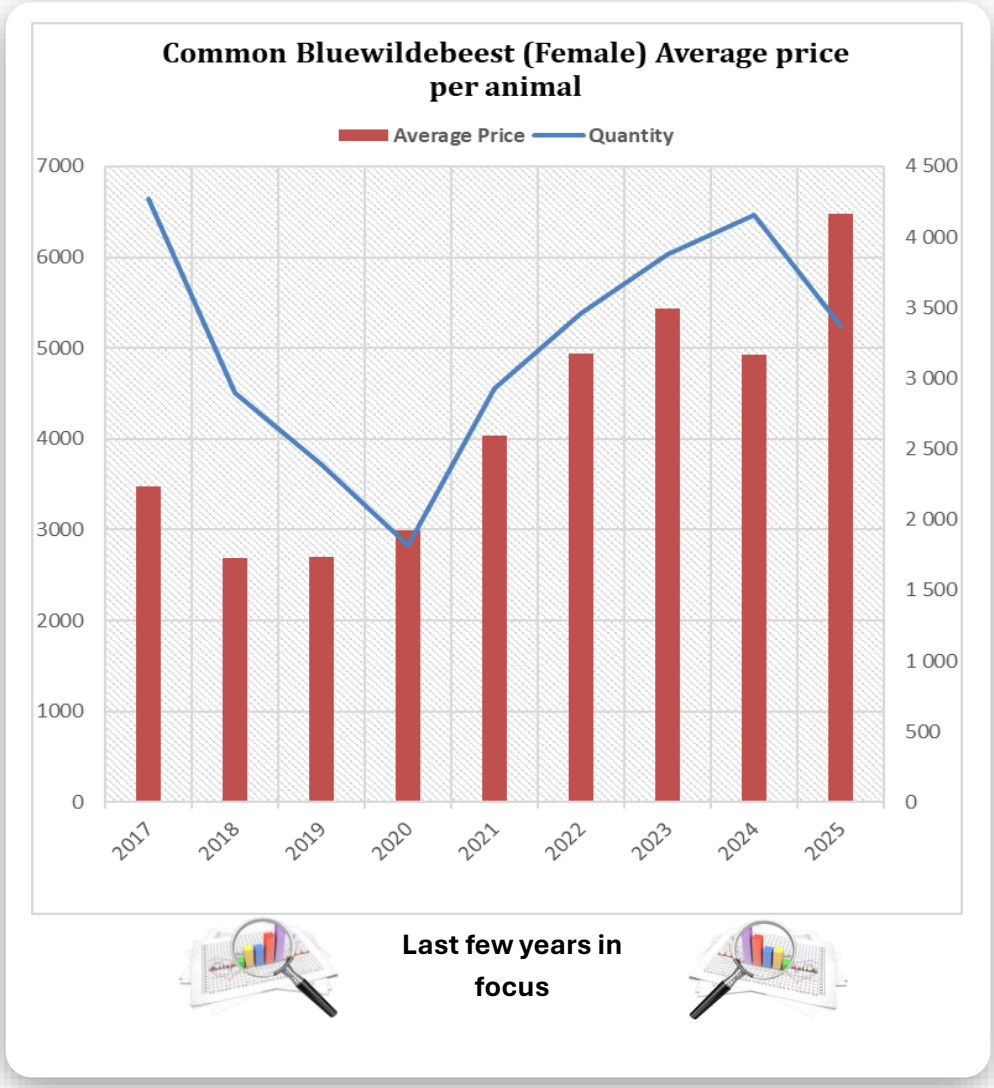
Recovery, Renewed Demand and Modern Stabilisation (2021–2024)

Between **2021 and 2024**, the female segment entered a steady recovery. Prices rose from **R4 033 in 2021** to **R5 437 in 2023**, before moderating slightly to **R4 926 in 2024**. Quantities climbed from **2 932 in 2021** to **4 157 in 2024**, showing strong transactional activity as breeders rebuilt base herds and as hunting demand re-strengthened. By now, the structural deficit created by the earlier removal of common bulls was **fully visible**, pushing greater value back into common herds—especially females, which became essential for rebuilding sustainable breeding groups.



2025: Reinforcement of Scarcity and Price Momentum

The transition from **2024 into 2025** illustrated a decisive continuation of recovery momentum. Average price increased from **R4 926 in 2024** to **R6 475 in 2025**, a meaningful uplift of **31.4%**. This rise aligned with two dominant forces: the **persistent shortage of common Blue Wildebeest bulls**, originating from the 2015–2017 breeder replacement era, and the **renewed appetite for sustainable plains-game herds** driven by both hunting estates and breeding operations.

Quantity, however, **declined from 4 157 in 2024 to 3 370 in 2025**, a contraction of **18.9%**, reinforcing that supply-side tightening—not aggressive speculation—was driving price strength. This change reflected a market still adjusting to earlier structural imbalances, with breeders retaining more females internally to rebuild herd numbers, and a reduced pool coming to auction.

The result was a **healthier, more fundamentally supported price**, signalling that the Common Blue Wildebeest female segment had moved into a phase of **long-term equilibrium**, where scarcity, rather than hype, shaped values. The 2025 market ultimately showcased a species regaining its role as a cornerstone of plains-game economics, supported by genuine ecological and breeding dynamics rather than speculative cycles.

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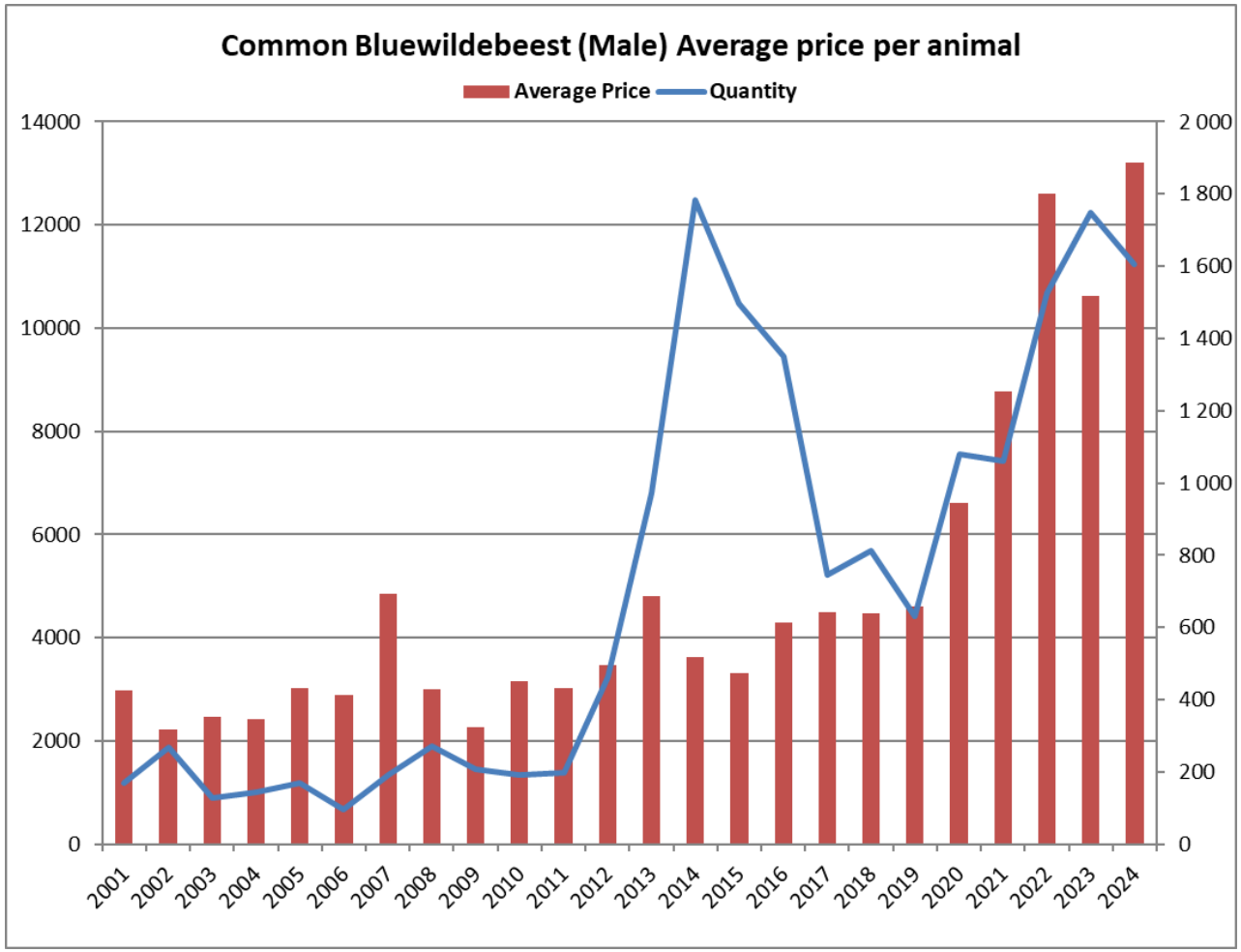
Common Blue Wildebeest **"Male"** Data and Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table and graph together tell the remarkably dynamic story of how male animals respond to market forces far more sharply than their female counterparts. Male wildebeest sit at the intersection of two powerful drivers: **trophy value** and **breeding strategy**, which means their pricing often reflects shifts in demand long before the rest of the species does. The graph highlights this vividly, with striking peaks during investment surges, periods of pricing compression during market resets and renewed lift in recent years as the broader plains-game economy found its footing once more. It is a dataset that traces not only economic cycles, but the *changing priorities* of buyers, breeders, hunters and investors across nearly a quarter century.

Common Bluewildebeest (Male)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2002	R506 600	170	R2 980
2003	R594 075	267	R2 225
2004	R317 250	129	R2 459
2005	R347 800	144	R2 415
2006	R514 350	170	R3 026
2007	R280 050	97	R2 887
2008	R934 200	193	R4 840
2009	R814 950	272	R2 996
2010	R473 550	209	R2 266
2011	R606 400	192	R3 158
2012	R603 650	199	R3 033
2013	R1 603 600	463	R3 463
2014	R4 683 400	973	R4 813
2015	R6 443 821	1 782	R3 616
2016	R4 975 212	1 498	R3 321
2017	R5 803 697	1 349	R4 302
2018	R3 351 587	747	R4 487
2019	R3 621 900	811	R4 466
2020	R2 914 805	632	R4 612
2021	R7 138 900	1 081	R6 604
2022	R9 292 041	1 060	R8 766
2023	R19 246 952	1 526	R12 613
2024	R18 550 500	1 748	R10 612
2025	R21 210 400	1 606	R13 207



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Common Blue Wildebeest **"Male"** Insights: 2001 to 2025

2002–2007: Stable Foundations with Early Market Variability

From **2002 to 2007**, the male blue wildebeest market displayed a relatively steady structure, with average prices moving between **R2 225 in 2003** and **R3 026 in 2006**, while quantities fluctuated modestly between the band's low of **97 animals in 2007** and a high of **267 in 2003**. These early years coincided with a still-developing wildlife economy where common species were sold mainly into hunting, biltong, and bulk breeding markets. The small oscillations in value were driven more by local rainfall cycles and general auction conditions rather than any systemic shift in breeding priorities.

2008–2012: Incremental Growth and Rising Breeding Confidence

During **2008 to 2012**, the species entered a period of mild expansion. Quantities grew from **193 animals in 2008** to **199 in 2012**, while values responded with improved average prices, ranging from **R2 996 in 2009** to **R3 158 in 2011**. This was the era when structured game-breeding programmes gained momentum, and blue wildebeest benefitted as one of the dependable commercial species for veld utilisation and herd building. Although prices were not explosive, they reflected **strengthening demand** and **improved auction liquidity**. The market still behaved rationally, without volatility or artificial inflation.

2013–2016: Disruption and Market Distortion from the Colour-Variant Boom

The years **2013 to 2016** marked an unmistakable break in trend. Quantities climbed from **463 animals in 2013** to a peak of **1 782 in 2015**, while average prices swung widely—from **R3 463 in 2013** to **R4 813 in 2014**, before falling back to **R3 616 in 2015** and **R3 321 in 2016**. This period aligns perfectly with the height of the colour-variant boom. **Breeders began removing common bulls from farms and replacing them with colour-variant males**, particularly golden, king, and saddleback wildebeest lines.

This rapid pivot significantly distorted market behaviour. In the short term, the increased movement of common males temporarily lifted quantities into auctions (especially in 2014–2016). But this came at a cost: by focusing on variant production, breeders **undermined the replenishment of common-bull genetics**, creating a shortage that began emerging only a few years later. Game breeders, chasing high-value variant returns, **removed common bulls from farms between 2015 and 2017** to replace them with colour variant bulls. While this decision targeted male genetics, the knock-on effect reduced the stabilising influence of common herds, altering breeding ratios and herd structures.

The turbulence seen in value and price during this band is therefore a reflection of both **artificial pressure created by breeding trends** and **market uncertainty introduced by speculative buying**.

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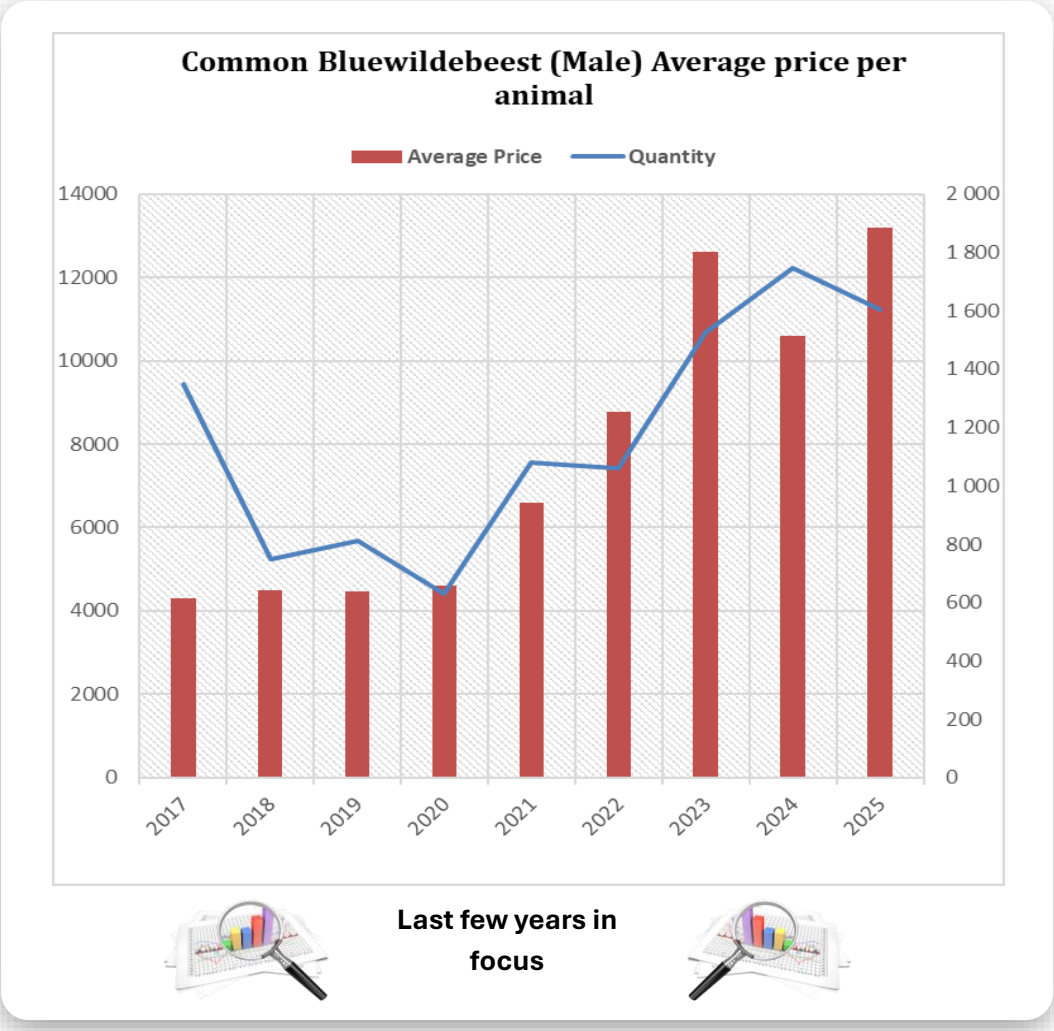
2017–2020: Market Correction and the Emergence of a Structural Bull Shortage

From **2017 to 2020**, the consequences of the colour-variant displacement became fully visible. Average prices showed pressure, falling from **R4 302 in 2017** to **R3 406 in 2020**, while quantities slipped from **1 349 animals in 2017** to **632 in 2020**. This contraction was not simply economic—it was structural. Between **2015 and 2017**, breeders had drastically reduced the number of common bulls maintained on farms, leaving them with **insufficient breeding males thereafter**. By 2018, auction supply was beginning to thin out materially, and by 2019–2020, the shortage was entrenched.

COVID-19 amplified the decline. With tourism and hunting markets restricted and liquidity low, common male wildebeest supply fell even further. The market softened, but it was clear that this softness was **not associated with oversupply**, but rather **market inactivity driven by external pressures**.



2021–2024: Recovery Momentum and Reinforced Scarcity

From **2021 to 2024**, momentum returned. Values climbed from **R7 138 900 in 2021** to **R18 550 500 in 2024**, supported by a recovery in quantities from **1 081 animals in 2021** to a peak of **1 748 in 2024**. Average prices followed suit, pushing higher from **R6 604 in 2021** to **R10 612 in 2024**.

Crucially, the market was now operating under the legacy of the earlier shortage. Even though quantities rose, they were still **below long-term commercial potential**, and demand was consistently firm.

Buyers recognised that the common bull gap created nearly a decade earlier had not been resolved. As landowners refocused on robust, sustainable plains-game systems, the common blue wildebeest regained its rightful place as a foundational genus in the veld improvement economy.

The uplift in price through this period was therefore less about speculation and far more about **real biological scarcity**, improved veld conditions, and stronger hunting demand.

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2025 vs 2024 – A Market Leaning into Strength

2025 extended the strengthening trajectory but revealed the first signs of quantity tightening again. While 2024 moved **1 748 males**, 2025 saw a reduced **1 606 animals**, confirming that breeding cycles had not yet restored full bull supply to the market. Despite this decrease, value rose to **R21 210 400**, and the average price jumped from **R10 612 in 2024** to **R13 207 in 2025**. This price growth—nearly **25% year-on-year**—is evidence of a market where **demand continues to outpace supply**. Farmers rebuilding common-species herds, hunting markets returning to form, and veld managers prioritising robust grazing genetics all contributed to stronger bidding for quality males.

Importantly, the bull shortage originating from the **2015–2017 colour-variant substitution era** remains a live factor in 2025. While many breeders have shifted back toward common genetics, the herd rebuild window is long, and the supply pipeline has not caught up. As a result, 2025 traded in a climate of **heightened selectivity and premium pricing** for bulls with good conformation and age profiles. In summary, **2025 reaffirmed the long-term resilience of the common blue wildebeest male market**, grounding its performance not in hype, but in genuine biological and economic fundamentals.

The table on the right presents a detailed breakdown of **Blue Wildebeest bull sales segmented by horn size**, comparing 2024 with 2025. It captures not only the volume of sales in each category but also the pricing structure that emerges as horn length increases. The layout makes it easy to observe behavioural shifts in the market, from high-volume, lower-definition categories to the rare and highly priced top-end bulls. The table, when read alongside broader industry insights, illustrates **how supply, buyer preference, trophy demand, and scarcity shape price formation** across these critical size bands.

Bluewildebeest Bulls Pricing by Inches Sold

	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bull : inches not specified	1 232	R9 073	1 268	R11 254
Bull : Sub-Adult	146	R6 112	91	R9 192
Bull : Young	57	R4 364	26	R5 483
Bull : Hunting	103	R10 747	27	R15 315
Bull : Hunting 32 inches plus	1	R60 000	0	R0
Bull : less than 22 inches	1	R8 500	0	R0
Bull : 22 inches plus	5	R8 600	1	R0
Bull : 23 inches plus	1	R7 000	6	R7 500
Bull : 24 inches plus	18	R12 250	9	R8 750
Bull : 25 inches plus	12	R9 146	23	R10 000
Bull : 26 inches plus	53	R11 193	46	R12 348
Bull : 27 inches plus	33	R13 682	31	R11 176
Bull : 28 inches plus	40	R15 425	31	R14 145
Bull : 29 inches plus	23	R15 489	24	R15 726
Bull : 30 inches plus	8	R23 875	9	R16 758
Bull : 31 inches plus	7	R57 286	7	R32 222
Bull : 32 inches plus	6	R116 000	5	R42 286
Bull : 33 inches plus	1	R660 000	1	R123 200
Bull : 34 inches plus	0	R0	1	R170 000
Bull : above 36 inches	1	R710 000	0	R0

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The story of Blue Wildebeest bulls in 2024 and 2025 begins with the **undeniable dominance of the "inches not specified" category**, which accounted for 1 232 bulls in 2024 and increased slightly to 1 268 in 2025. This category alone forms the core supply of the species, and the shift from an average of R9 073 in 2024 to R11 254 in 2025 shows a clear **upward pressure in the general wildebeest bull market**, even before horn-length differentiation is considered.

Sub-adult and young bulls reveal another layer of market behaviour. Sub-adults dropped from 146 to 91 sold, yet their average price climbed sharply from R6 112 to R9 192, demonstrating **the increasingly competitive environment for entry-level bulls**. Young bulls followed a similar trajectory, with quantities halving—from 57 down to 26—while prices rose from R4 364 to R5 483, reinforcing the notion of tightening supply throughout the lower age classes. The hunting category shows one of the strongest price reactions. Hunting bulls declined from 103 sold in 2024 to only 27 in 2025, yet the average price moved from R10 747 to R15 315. This represents a **significant elevation in the hunting value of wildebeest bulls**, and aligns with broader insights that hunter-driven demand—particularly international—has become a key pricing driver.

Across the horn-length specific categories, the refinement of demand becomes clear. Bulls in the **24–28 inch bands**, which form the backbone of structured trophy selection, remained reasonably active. For example, 24-inch-plus bulls decreased from 18 to 9 sold while their price softened slightly, whereas 25-inch-plus bulls increased from 12 to 23 with a price lift to R10 000, signalling **a stabilising middle market where buyers prioritise consistency over rarity**. From 26 inches upward, the premium tiers show how trophy hunters and breeders are shaping the upper end of the market. Bulls over **26 inches** remained strong—53 sold in 2024 and 46 in 2025—with prices rising from R11 193 to R12 348. At **27 inches**, quantities held relatively steady while prices moderated; meanwhile, **28-inch-plus bulls** retained strong demand at 40 and 31 sold, still commanding premium pricing above R14 000.

The escalation becomes dramatic as sizes approach 30 inches and beyond. **30-inch bulls**, though small in number, went from R23 875 to R16 758 as demand shifted slightly downward. However, the **31-inch and 32-inch bulls** continue to illustrate the rarity premium. Seven bulls at 31 inches fetched R57 286 in 2024, while the same number in 2025 command R32 222, reflecting **market correction rather than a collapse**, likely tied to scarcity of exceptional individuals. The **32-inch category** followed the same pattern, dropping from R116 000 to R42 286, suggesting that while extraordinary bulls still draw attention, buyers are becoming more price-conscious at the very top. The extreme rarities—**33 inches, 34 inches, and above 36 inches**—continue to behave like outliers that anchor the high-end narrative. A single 33-inch bull sold for R660 000 in 2024, compared with one at R123 200 in 2025. In 2025, a 34-inch bull emerged at R170 000, while 36-inch-plus bulls, once reaching R710 000, are absent. These swings reflect **how unpredictable and thinly traded the ultra-trophy segment is**, where a single animal can redefine averages.

Overall, the movement from 2024 to 2025 shows a **tightening of supply across most measurable horn bands**, especially among sub-adult, young, and structured trophy categories, while general-category prices increased materially. The data supports the broader industry trend that **Blue Wildebeest supply is not matching demand**, and that both hunters and breeders are contributing to rising price pressure across the spectrum of bull quality.

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THE GOLDEN WILDEBEEST BOOM AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMON BLUE WILDEBEEST SUPPLY (2015-2017)

THE 2015–2017 GOLDEN BOOM

Golden Wildebeest reached exceptional demand between **2015 and 2017** as breeders and investors chased premium genetics. High financial returns on golden-line offspring drove rapid restructuring of herd compositions.

REMOVAL OF COMMON BLUE WILDEBEEST

During this period, many farms **removed or culled** Common Blue Wildebeest bulls to prevent interference with golden-line breeding. This shift prioritized golden genetics and reduced the breeding base of standard blue wildebeest.



RESULTING SUPPLY SHORTAGE

Removing Common Blue Wildebeest created a multi-year shortage in commercial supply.

Sources: PHASA • Wildlife Ranching South Africa • National Wildlife Auction Data • Industry Breeder Commentary

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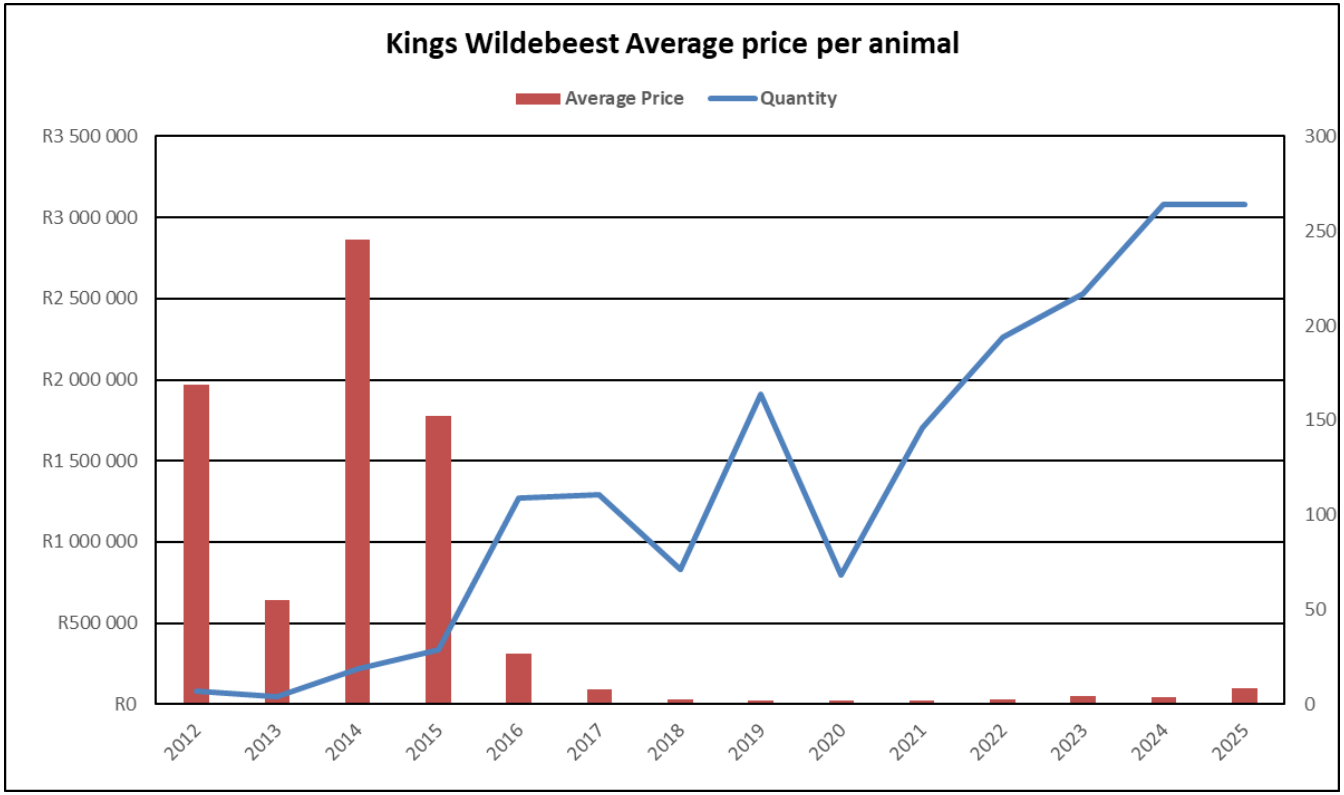
The **Kings Wildebeest** Data and graphs: 2012 to 2025

The Kings Wildebeest dataset captures one of the most dramatic internal evolutions within the wildebeest market — a phenotype that emerged with **exceptional early premiums**, then transitioned into a period **of intense correction** and ultimately re-established itself as a high-value performer through scale, consistency and renewed buyer confidence. The graph reflects this volatility vividly: towering early price bars, steep declines and a later emergence of strong volumes accompanied by a much more stable price trajectory. The **quantity line tells its own story**, charting how a once scarce prestige-driven phenotype became a widely traded component of modern game breeding. Together, the table and graph illustrate how the Kings Wildebeest moved from **rarity to market integration**, without losing the distinctive value cues that make it one of the most watchable colour-variant classes in the current wildlife economy.

Kings Wildebeest			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2012	R13 770 000	7	R1 967 143
2013	R2 575 000	4	R643 750
2014	R54 450 000	19	R2 865 789
2015	R51 493 000	29	R1 775 621
2016	R34 227 050	109	R314 010
2017	R9 869 500	111	R88 914
2018	R2 355 000	71	R33 169
2019	R3 519 500	164	R21 460
2020	R1 380 700	68	R20 304
2021	R3 747 300	146	R25 666
2022	R5 171 901	194	R26 659
2023	R10 584 800	217	R48 778
2024	R12 378 250	264	R46 887
2025	R26 217 000	264	R99 307



2012–2015: The Genesis and Explosive Boom

The period from **2012 to 2015** defined the Kings Wildebeest as one of the most desirable animals in the colour-variant market. In 2012 the line entered the market at an extraordinary *R1 967 143* average, and by **2014**, despite only **19 animals**, the value surged to **R54.45 million** at an average of **R2 865 789**. Even though average prices eased slightly in **2015** to **R1 775 621**, the total value stayed enormously high at **R51.49 million**, supported by increased supply at **29 animals**.

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This era coincided with the peak of the South African colour-variant boom—the same boom that saw breeders actively replacing common bulls across farms. Investors aggressively pursued new phenotypes, and Kings Wildebeest became a flagship trophy of that speculative breeding wave. Prices in this period reflected *scarcity*, *breeding potential*, and *status value*, more than market fundamentals.

2016–2020: The Correction, Reset and Market Maturity

Between **2016 and 2020**, prices collapsed from elite height to realistic conservation-grounded levels. By **2016**, despite **109 animals**, average price fell to **R314 010**, signalling the start of the market-wide correction as colour genetics flooded the supply chain. The rollover deepened into **2017**, where a near-identical quantity of **111 animals** fetched only **R88 914** each. From **2018 to 2020**, average prices moved between **R21 460** and **R33 169**, and quantities stabilised into a healthy hunting and breeding base. This period reflects the broader industry contraction after the speculative bubble burst, aggravated later by COVID-19 disruptions that decreased international hunting travel and suppressed discretionary spending in wildlife investment markets.

The Kings Wildebeest did not disappear; instead, it transitioned from an elite-speculative asset into a **commercially viable phenotype**, building numbers that would form the foundation of later resurgence.

2021–2023: Early Recovery and Revaluation

A meaningful upward shift emerged from **2021 onward**, with average price climbing gradually from **R25 666** in 2021 to **R48 778** by **2023**, even as quantities rose from **146** to **217**. Total value almost tripled from **R3.75 million** to **R10.58 million**, showing that the market was now placing renewed emphasis on phenotype quality, structured breeding, and available genetic lines.

This recovery was supported by improved post-COVID economic stability, return of foreign hunters, diversified investor interest, and tightening supply of high-quality colour genetics after years of contraction. Kings Wildebeest benefitted strongly as a mid-to-high tier premium variant in this new, rationalised market.

2024: Momentum Consolidation Before a Breakout

In **2024**, the market held steady at **R46 887** per animal across **264 animals**, producing a value of **R12.37 million**. Prices remained comparatively firm despite quantity growth, indicating underlying demand strength. The ceiling had not yet been reached—breeders expected upward revaluation as scarcity in superior phenotype lines became increasingly visible.

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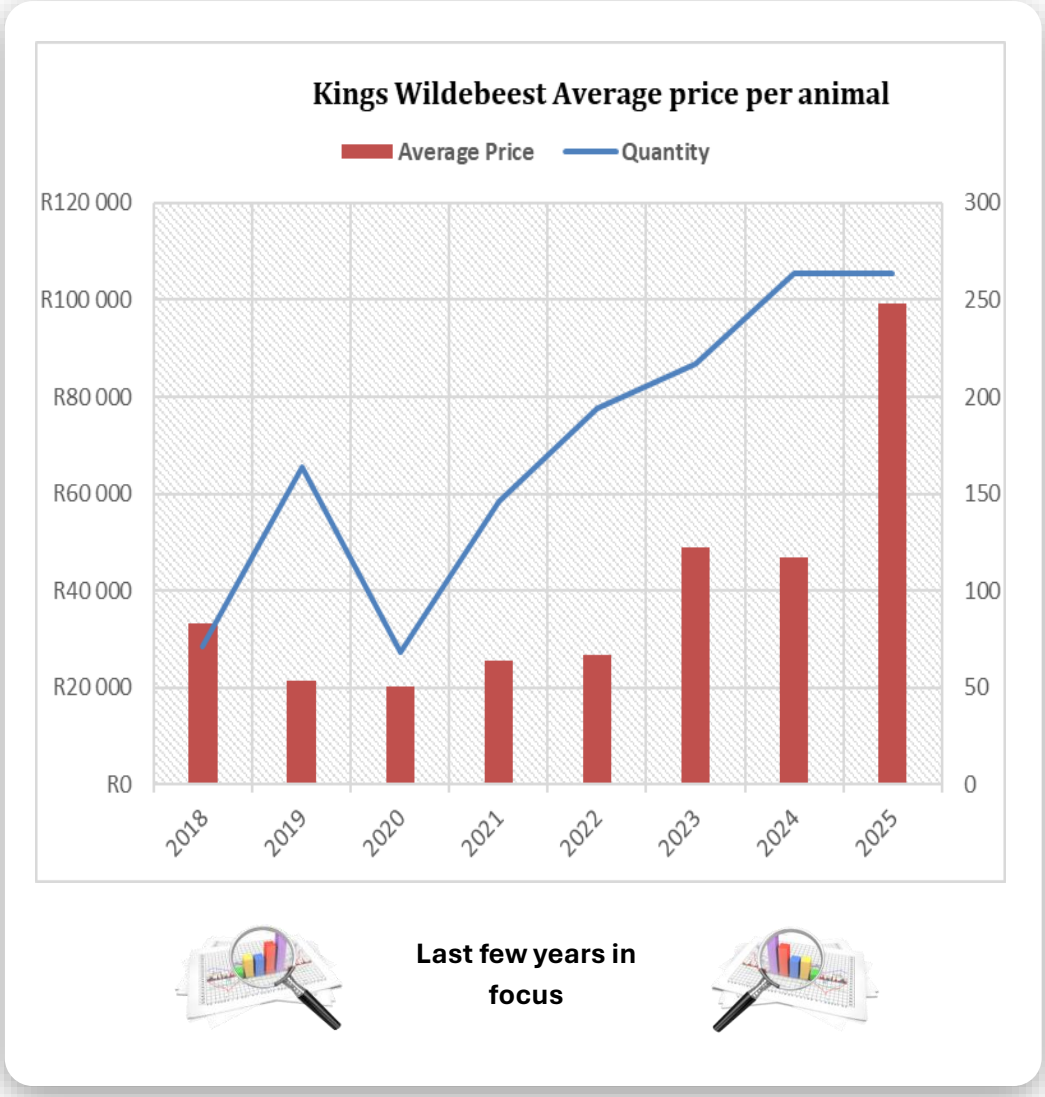
2025 — A BREAKOUT YEAR

The year **2025** marked a dramatic shift, delivering an emphatic signal to the wildlife economy. With **the same quantity** as 2024—**264 animals**—the total value soared to **R26.217 million**, driven by a powerful increase in average price to **R99 307**, more than doubling the previous year.



This expansion tells several important stories simultaneously:

First, the market clearly reassessed the Kings Wildebeest phenotype upward, placing far greater value on quality animals amid tightening supply of premium genetics.

Second, the doubling of price without any growth in quantity reflects *inelastic demand*, suggesting buyers were aggressively competing for limited stock.

Third, it signals the broader price inflation trend observed in several rare and variant species in 2025—particularly where long-term structural shortages had formed due to the mass removal of common bulls during the 2015–2017 colour-variant boom.

Fourth, 2025 appears to be the strongest year of renewed investor confidence in rare wildebeest variants, supported by rising hunting demand, improved foreign currency inflows, and an increasingly sophisticated breeder market prioritising phenotype excellence, horn shape, symmetry, and colour purity.

The Kings Wildebeest has therefore re-entered the market's premium tier—not through speculative frenzy as in 2012–2015, but through **real demand, proven genetic lines, and constrained supply**. The escalation to **R99 307** positions 2025 as a defining year in the restored trajectory of this iconic wildebeest variant.

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The Kings Wildebeest in the photo stands **bold and unmistakable** in its natural South African bushveld, its **striking pale facial mask and dramatic saddle-patterned coat** creating a powerful contrast against the lush green landscape. This visually commanding variant, with its **robust frame and rare colour expression**, appears perfectly at home in the **wild, mixed woodland and grassland environment** that showcases its uniqueness even more intensely.

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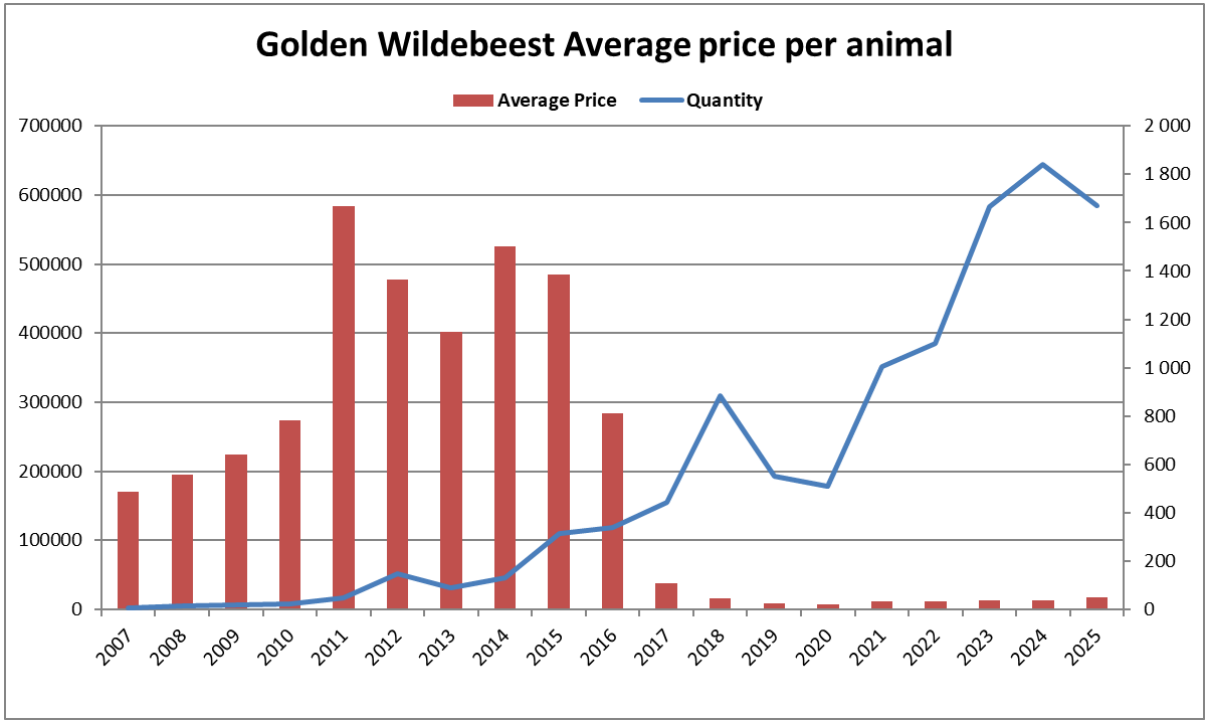
The **Golden Wildebeest** "Male and Female" Data and graphs: 2007 to 2025

The Golden Wildebeest dataset captures one of the most **dramatic price arcs** in the modern plains-game colour-variant economy. The table and accompanying graph trace a journey that begins with modest early valuations, then accelerates into a period of extraordinary commercial enthusiasm, followed by a long market correction before stabilising into the more **liquid, high-volume ecosystem** we recognise today. The visual trendlines reinforce this story: the price bars rise and fall in sweeping motions that mirror major industry cycles, while the quantity curve expands steadily over the long term as the variant becomes more widely distributed and commercially accessible. Together, the table and the charts reveal a species that has moved from elite novelty to mainstream pillar—retaining just enough rarity and visual appeal to anchor its position in the high-performance segment of plains-game variants.

Golden Wildebeest			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2007	R1 360 000	8	R170 000
2008	R2 740 000	14	R195 714
2009	R3 810 000	17	R224 118
2010	R6 553 000	24	R273 042
2011	R27 425 000	47	R583 511
2012	R70 658 000	148	R477 419
2013	R35 725 000	89	R401 404
2014	R69 445 000	132	R526 098
2015	R152 122 780	314	R484 467
2016	R96 702 300	341	R283 584
2017	R17 073 504	445	R38 367
2018	R14 572 136	886	R16 447
2019	R5 028 900	552	R9 110
2020	R3 467 990	508	R6 827
2021	R12 131 620	1 003	R12 095
2022	R12 701 901	1 102	R11 526
2023	R22 266 684	1 668	R13 349
2024	R24 439 750	1 840	R13 282
2025	R28 123 000	1 671	R16 830



The Emergence and Explosive Valuation Era (2007–2012)

In the earliest years, the Golden Wildebeest market behaved like an introduction-phase luxury asset, and prices increased sharply as breeders sought to secure founding genetics. From 2007 to 2012, the average price rose from R170 000 in 2007 to R477 419 in 2012, a cumulative rise of more than 180%. Quantities also increased from 8 animals in 2007 to 148 in 2012, signalling a market that expanded both in valuation and in availability.

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The **Golden Wildebeest "Male and Female"** Insights: 2007 to 2025

This period aligned with the broader colour-variant boom in South Africa, where investor enthusiasm and limited supply created extraordinary competitive bidding. The industry at that time was defined by **speculation, rarity premiums and aggressive genetic acquisition**, and Golden Wildebeest became one of the emblematic species of that surge.

The Super-Cycle and the High-Water Mark (2013–2016)

The years from 2013 to 2016 represented the peak of the colour-variant super-cycle. In 2013 the market traded at an average of R401 404, rising to R526 098 in 2014. By 2015 it still achieved R484 467, before normalising to R283 584 in 2016. Quantities followed a similar structural surge, climbing from 89 animals in 2013 to 341 in 2016—an increase of more than 280% across the band. This dramatic growth reflected the intense expansion of breeding programmes, as breeders expected continued premium pricing. However, by 2016 the industry had already begun its adjustment phase, with the first signs of oversupply emerging. The total value dropped significantly between 2015 and 2016, echoing the broader correction felt across the colour-variant landscape as speculative capital retreated and price realities replaced expectation-driven valuations.

The Correction and Stabilisation Phase (2017–2020)

Between 2017 and 2020 the Golden Wildebeest market transitioned into a fully corrected state. Average prices contracted materially—from R38 367 in 2017 to R6 827 in 2020. Quantities, however, continued rising until 2018 (886 animals) before declining to 508 in 2020, reflecting the onset of demand fatigue and, later, the economic constraints intensified by the COVID-19 period. This market phase illustrated how colour variants adjusted to broader economic pressures, especially as breeders recalibrated herds toward sustainability rather than speculation. The dramatic price shift between 2017 and 2020—dropping by more than 80%—highlighted how the industry reset valuations to levels aligned with commercial plains-game fundamentals rather than investor exuberance.

The Commercial Expansion and Return to Growth (2021–2024)

From 2021 the market began expressing a new form of stability driven by volume rather than high individual premiums. Prices rose gradually from R12 095 in 2021 to R13 349 in 2023, showing measured demand recovery. Quantities surged across the same period from 1 003 animals in 2021 to 1 668 in 2023, a 66% increase driven by large established herds, consistent breeding, and a maturing commercial market. By 2024 the average price settled at R13 282 with 1 840 animals sold, signalling that Golden Wildebeest had fully transitioned into a **high-volume, mid-tier premium** plains-game variant.

This behaviour was consistent with post-pandemic recovery, improved export interest, and broader confidence returning to wildlife investment markets. The years 2021–2024 therefore portrayed a steady and predictable upswing in both supply and moderated price appreciation.

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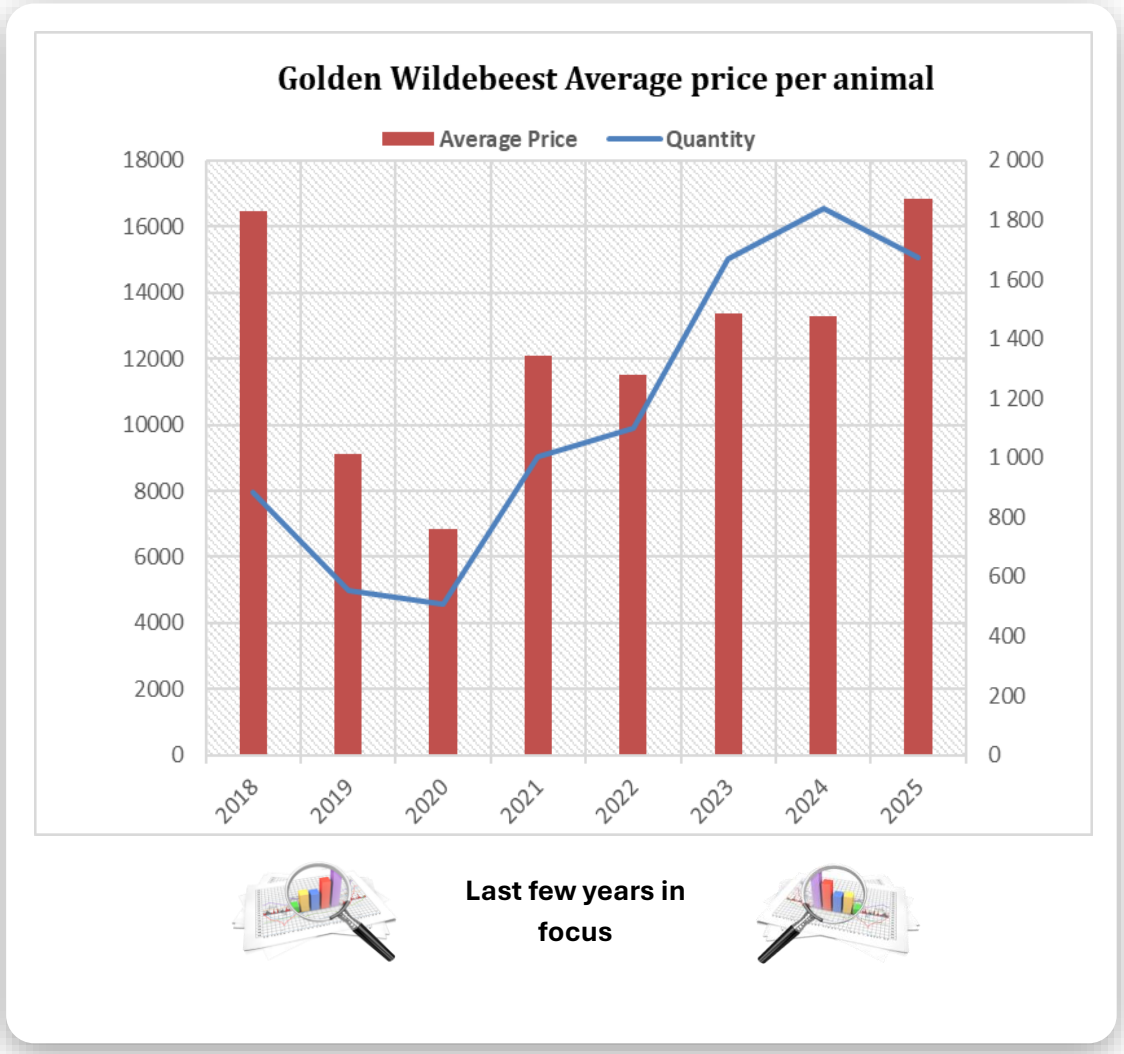
The 2025 Market Expression:

The movement between 2024 and 2025 represented a striking refinement of market dynamics. Average price increased from R13 282 in 2024 to R16 830 in 2025, an uplift of just under 26%, signalling **renewed buyer enthusiasm for high-quality Golden Wildebeest genetics**. At the same time, quantities slipped from 1 840 in 2024 to 1 671 in 2025, a reduction of around 9%, which reinforced the same price uplift: slightly reduced supply in combination with a stronger buyer profile produced upward pressure on per-animal value. The total value rose meaningfully from R24.44 million to R28.12 million, confirming that the market not only stabilised but expanded economically.



Industry-wide, 2025 was defined by greater confidence across plains-game specialists as trophy demand recovered, international tourism normalised, and breeders selectively invested again in genetic improvement rather than pure volume scaling. Golden Wildebeest benefited directly from this trend; buyers favoured variant lines with strong visual distinction and established lineage provenance. The reduced quantity also suggested strategic herd retention, particularly among breeders aiming to rebuild structured age pyramids after several high-volume years.

The result was a market that combined stronger pricing with moderated supply—both factors contributing to a more **balanced and sustainably elevated 2025 performance**, marking Golden Wildebeest as one of the more resilient colour variants heading into the new cycle.

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This table captures the **full distribution of Golden Wildebeest bull prices according to horn-length categories**, providing a granular view of how the market differentiates between young bulls, commercial classes, mid-range trophy sizes and the very elite upper-inch brackets. It shows not just broad averages, but how **buyers assign value across a detailed maturity and trophy spectrum**, from unclassified commercial animals all the way to bulls exceeding 33 inches. The table also illustrates how volumes shift between years and how the market responds with **price adjustments that reflect breeder supply decisions, buyer sentiment and the growing maturity of the Golden Wildebeest segment**. It is a snapshot of a market that blends both commercial throughput and **high-end trophy premiums**, revealing the tiered structure that increasingly defines the 2025 plains-game variant environment.

Golden Wildebeest Bulls: Pricing by Inches Sold

	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bull : inches not specifie	400	R16 234	404	R16 468
Bull : Sub-Adult	31	R9 823	15	R13 200
Bull : Young	9	R6 833	18	R8 556
Bull : Hunting	14	R20 571	0	R0
Bull : Less than 22 inches	0	R0	1	R12 000
Bull : 22 inches plus	2	R17 500	0	R0
Bull : 23 inches plus	14	R21 375	5	R15 200
Bull : 24 inches plus	19	R18 105	21	R19 619
Bull : 25 inches plus	29	R18 414	22	R17 636
Bull : 26 inches plus	63	R20 226	59	R22 059
Bull : 27 inches plus	39	R23 231	68	R20 375
Bull : 28 inches plus	40	R23 125	36	R24 389
Bull : 29 inches plus	27	R29 778	27	R28 352
Bull : 30 inches plus	12	R58 417	24	R39 979
Bull : 31 inches plus	7	R114 714	12	R117 833
Bull : 32 inches plus	3	R203 333	8	R183 563
Bull : 33 inches plus	1	R1 400 000	2	R1 020 000
	710	**R22 230**	**722**	**R25 077**
	710	**R15 783 250**	**722**	**R18 105 600**

The underlying structure of the Golden Wildebeest bull market remains broad-based, with most activity concentrated in the commercial and mid-tier horn lengths. This is reflected in the consistently large unclassified category, rising slightly from **400 bulls at R16 234** to **404 bulls at R16 468**, a signal that baseline demand for commercially functional bulls continues to underpin the species.

Sub-adult bulls strengthen further in 2025, where although quantities fall from **31 to 15**, the price lifts from **R9 823 to R13 200**, showing that lighter supply helped firm values for younger males.

A similar pattern occurs in the young-bull category, where numbers rise from **9 to 18** but prices also increase from **R6 833 to R8 556**, reinforcing that even the lower end of the market benefitted from improved buyer confidence.

As horn sizes increase into the formal trophy categories, the table shows a nuanced pricing landscape. Certain mid-range increments—such as **24, 25 and 26 inches plus**—maintain healthy competition in both years, with 2025 displaying slightly firmer values at **R19 619**, **R17 636** and **R22 059** respectively.

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These categories typically appeal to buyers seeking balanced bulls that combine phenotype quality with affordability and the relatively close alignment in quantities between the two years suggests stable breeder supply and sustained commercial demand.

The **27- to 29-inch** band is where volumes become more pronounced. In 2025, the **27-inch category grows to 68 bulls**, though the price eases slightly to **R20 375**, signalling that increased availability moderated price escalation. Conversely, the **28- and 29-inch** classes maintain robust pricing, with **R24 389** and **R28 352** in 2025, showing that these mid-upper tiers remain attractive for ranchers enhancing herd phenotype.

The **30 inches plus** class continues to demonstrate the premium buyers attach to meaningful horn advancement. Although 2024 saw only **12 bulls at R58 417**, the 2025 market absorbed **24 bulls at R39 979**, representing more volume but at a recalibrated price. This indicates that breeders released more bulls in the desirable 30–31 inch space, shifting value emphasis from exclusivity toward liquidity. The **31 inches plus** category, however, maintains its prestige with **12 bulls at R117 833**, showing buyers still pay substantial premiums for bulls approaching the elite brackets.

The uppermost inch groups—**32, 33 and above**—represent the pinnacle of Golden Wildebeest trophy genetics. These categories continue to command extraordinary premiums, even though quantities remain extremely low. Bulls measuring **32 inches plus** achieve **R183 563 in 2025**, while the **33 inches plus** class reaches **R1 020 000**, confirming that elite horn achievements still draw high-end competition. Although the top end has softened slightly compared with 2024's spectacular **R1.4 million**, the presence of multiple bulls sold above 33 inches in 2025 reinforces that the market remains deeply engaged with upper-trophy phenotype potential.

Overall, the 2025 average price of **R25 077**, up from **R22 230**, underscores a year where the Golden Wildebeest bull market benefitted from **firmer buyer sentiment, broader demand for phenotype quality and stability across the full spectrum of trophy increments**. Even with shifts in where volumes were released, the consistent strengthening across key categories illustrates renewed confidence and healthy competition within this high-visibility variant segment.

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This Golden Wildebeest moves through the dry South African bushveld with **striking brilliance**, its rich copper-gold coat glowing against the pale grasses and thornveld backdrop. A truly **exceptional and visually commanding variant**, it embodies both rarity and presence, standing out in the landscape with its **bold coloration, strong frame and unmistakable regal posture**.

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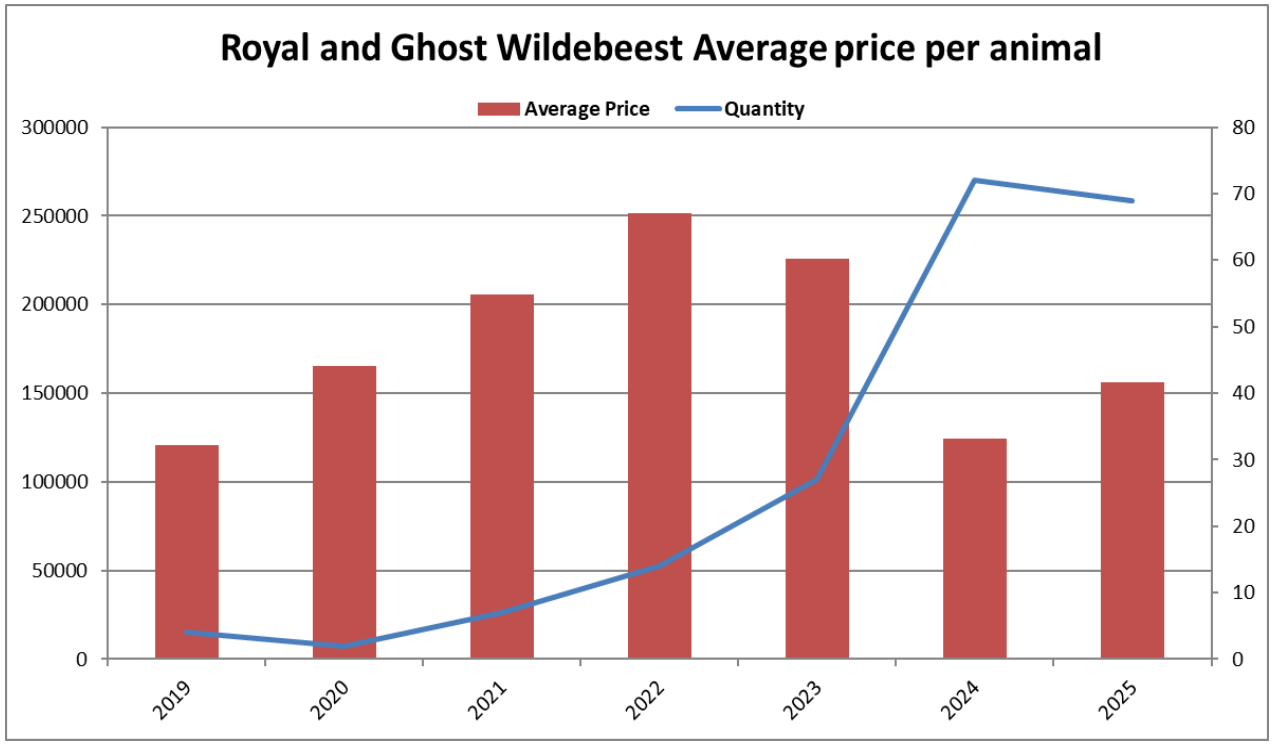
The **Royal and Ghost Wildebeest** " Male and Female" Data, Graphs and Insights: 2019 to 2025

The Royal and Ghost Wildebeest dataset presents a vivid narrative of a **high-value, visually striking wildebeest phenotype** that has carved out its own niche within the broader blue wildebeest market. The table and graphs that follow illustrate **how this variant has evolved from a boutique rarity into a meaningful contributor to premium-grade sales**, with its performance shaped by breeder confidence, availability and changing buyer appetite. What unfolds is a **story of sharp early escalation**, followed by **market recalibration** and eventually a **renewed stabilisation-driven recovery** linked to sustained demand for elite colour-variant genetics. The accompanying graphs reinforce this journey, showing **price sensitivity**, **volume shocks** and the **delicate balance between scarcity, desirability and market accessibility**.

Royal and Ghost Wildebeest			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2019	R482 000	4	R120 500
2020	R330 000	2	R165 000
2021	R1 440 000	7	R205 714
2022	R3 522 000	14	R251 571
2023	R6 088 500	27	R225 500
2024	R8 967 000	72	R124 542
2025	R10 770 500	69	R156 094



2019–2020: The Foundational Rarity Phase

In 2019 to 2020 the Royal and Ghost Wildebeest remained an exceptionally **scarce and tightly held variant**, reflected in the minimal quantities released—only 4 animals in 2019 and 2 in 2020. Despite these tiny volumes, average prices already showed meaningful willingness from the market to pay for rarity, strengthening from **R120 500 in 2019 to R165 000 in 2020**.

This period coincided with breeders still determining the **stability and predictability of Ghost and Royal genetics**, and the market was cautious yet optimistic. The COVID-19 economic disruptions emerging in 2020 did little to affect these prices precisely because the category was still **supply-driven** and barely traded.

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2021–2022: The Expansion and Peak Value Phase

From 2021 to 2022 the market shifted unmistakably from early experimentation to a **confident expansion phase**.

Quantities rose from 7 animals in 2021 to 14 animals in 2022, matching the uplift in breeder willingness to trade. It was during this window that average prices **accelerated** meaningfully—from **R205 714 in 2021** to **R251 571 in 2022**—indicating that the variant reached its moment of strongest **value intensity**.

The rise was driven by scarcity of verified genetic lines, the pursuit of premium trophy traits, and a broader post-pandemic rebound in wildlife markets as liquidity and buyer participation improved.

2023–2024: The Scale Phase and Market Adjustment

Between 2023 and 2024 the story changed from rarity to **scale**, with quantities moving sharply from 27 in 2023 to a substantial 72 in 2024. This expansion aligned with breeders adopting structured programmes to grow Ghost and Royal lines, resulting i n more consistent release of females and young bulls.

However, this increase in supply directly influenced price behaviour. Average prices softened from **R225 500 in 2023** to **R124 542 in 2024**, reflecting a classic **market correction** as volume overtook rarity. It also aligned with industry-wide trends in other colour variants where rising supply naturally moderated price intensity.



*This **Royal/Ghost Wildebeest** stands alert in the warm South African savanna, its pale steel-grey coat and darker facial mask catching the late-afternoon light. These striking colour variants have become **highly sought after for their rarity and visual impact**, adding both prestige and aesthetic value to modern game farms. Their presence in a herd instantly elevates the landscape, blending wild authenticity with exceptional genetic character.*

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2025: The Stabilisation Phase

By 2025 the market appeared to stabilise into a more **balanced equilibrium**. Quantities eased slightly from 72 in 2024 to 69 in 2025, and pricing lifted from **R124 542 to R156 094**, indicating a more **rationalised marketplace** where quality genetics rather than pure scarcity began guiding value.

This moderation reflects the broader wildlife industry environment in 2025 where buyers increasingly sought **predictable breeding traits**, and sellers shifted toward **quality differentiation** rather than mass expansion.The comparison between 2025 and 2024 reveals a subtle but important turning point for Royal and Ghost Wildebeest. Although the number of animals offered dipped slightly from **72 to 69**, the average price climbed materially from **R124 542 in 2024** to **R156 094 in 2025**, a rise of roughly **25%**.

This rebound suggests that the market acknowledged a period of **oversupply correction** in 2024 and returned to valuing high-quality lines more selectively. It also reflects a broader 2025 trend seen across several colour variants, where stabilising demand from both breeders and trophy markets supported price recovery despite overall market caution.

What emerged in 2025 was a more **mature and measured trading environment**: buyers rewarded proven genetics, sellers introduced animals with better phenotype consistency, and both parties demonstrated clearer pricing discipline. The year therefore signalled that Royal and Ghost Wildebeest had officially moved from early-stage volatility into a phase of **structured commercial sustainability**.

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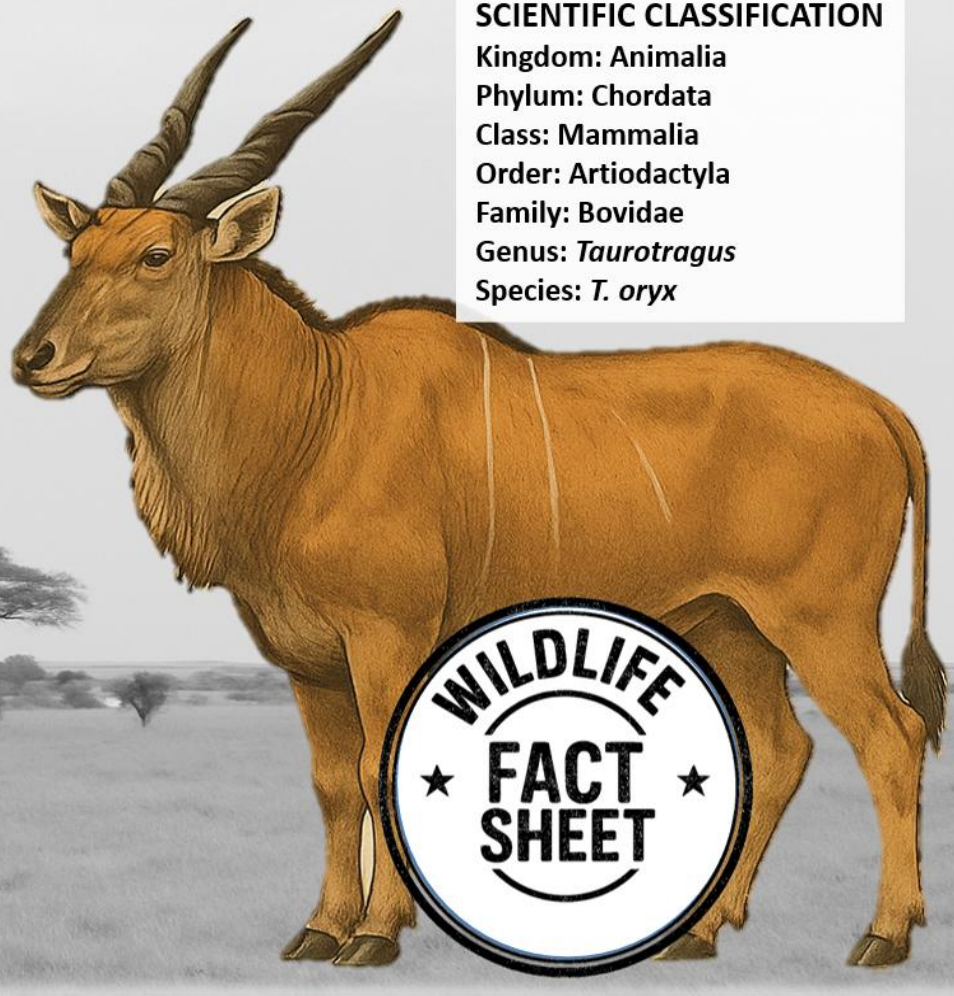
ELAND

Taurotragus Oryx

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Taurotragus*
Species: *T. oryx*



MORPHOLOGY
- Largest antelope; ♂ 700–950 kg, ♀ 450–600 kg.
- Fawn coat, large dewlap, spiral horns in both sexes.
- Bulls: thicker horns, darker neck, knee-clicking.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION
- Savannas, grasslands, open woodland.
- Southern & Eastern Africa.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY
- Mixed feeder: grass, leaves, pods, bulbs.
- Survives long periods without free water.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE
- Herds from small groups to hundreds.
- ♀-led; bulls often solitary.
- Dominance via posturing & horn displays.

ADAPTATIONS
- Water-efficient, heat-tolerant, flexible diet, thermoregulatory dewlap.

CONSERVATION STATUS
- IUCN: Least Concern;
- Stable in reserves; threats include habitat loss & fencing.

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Eland Specie General Information

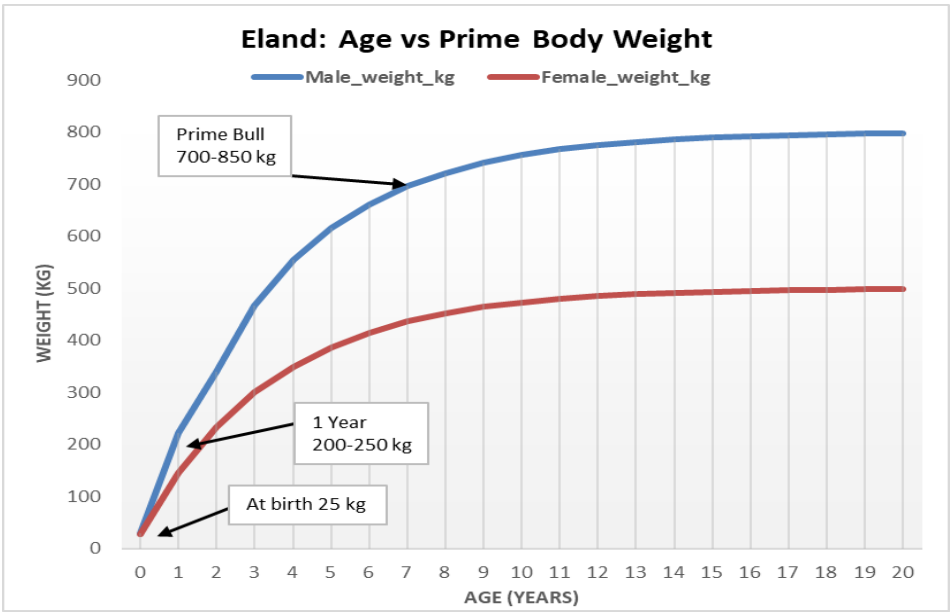
The Eland: A Journey of Majesty, Time and Silent Power

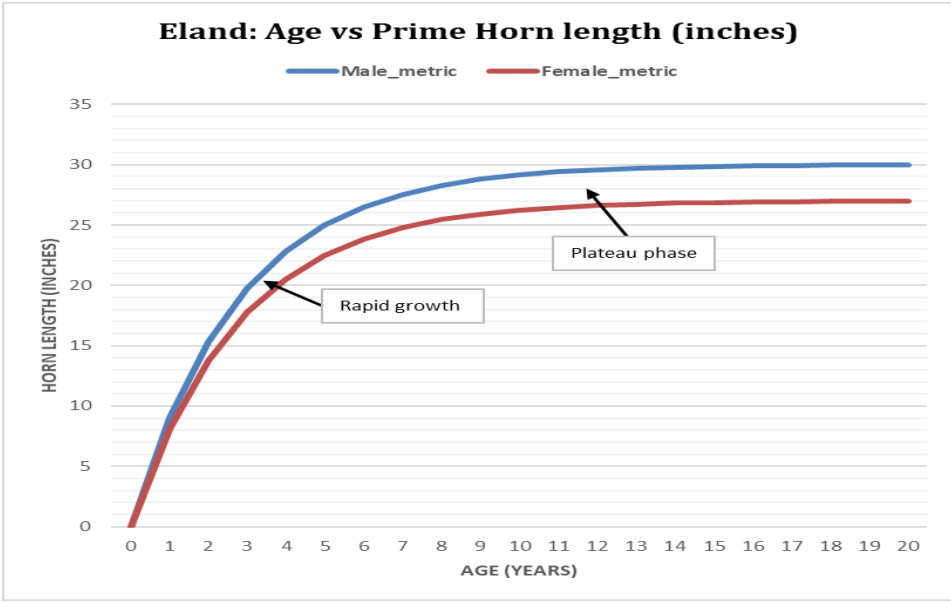
If dawn ever had a guardian, it would be the eland — stepping through pale, silver grass with a soft clicking rhythm that seems older than the sun itself. Before the first birds stir or the wind begins its morning prowl across the plains, you hear it: the deep, measured tick-tick-tick of tendon against bone. It is a sound of calm certainty, a sound that belongs entirely to the eland.

Through the drifting mist, their shapes emerge: massive, serene figures moving like ancient spirits across the veld. Eland does nothing in haste. They grow slowly, move steadily and endure quietly — the qualities that have allowed them to roam southern Africa for ages. To the San, they were sacred animals, drawn onto cave walls as symbols of transformation and spiritual potency.

A **newborn eland calf**, arriving after a gestation of nearly nine months, weighs barely **20–25 k**g. It lies hidden for the first days, rising only when its mother signals. Within hours it stands; within a day it walks with the herd. By one year, it grows **to 200–250 kg** — a transformation few other antelope achieve so quietly.

To the right is a chart projecting the full growth trajectory from calf to giant taking into consideration age, horn length and weight. From early life onward, the horns rise like spirals of time. Cows reach horn lengths of roughly **24–28 inches by age five**, while **bulls** develop **thick spirals** that can reach **around 33 inches**. These horns tell stories — of age, dominance, wear and quiet power. As bulls age, mass and horn length balance into the iconic eland stature. Young bulls may have long horns early, but true authority comes when mass, shadow, throat-dewlap and the iconic knee-click deepen.





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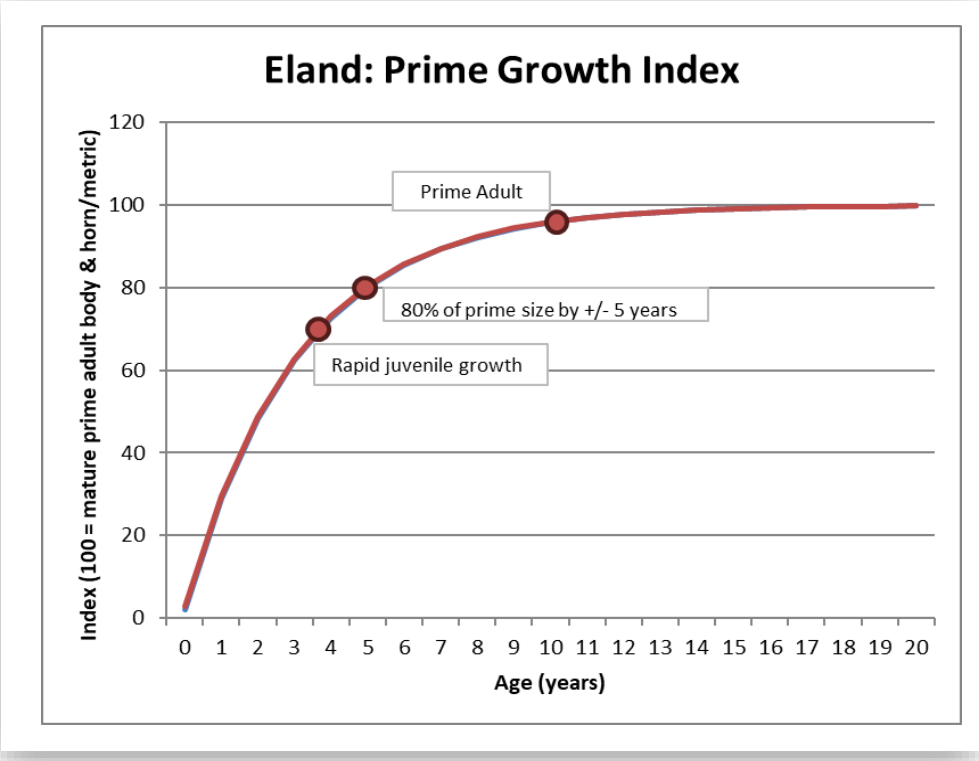

The Eland Prime Growth Index on the left illustrates how rapidly eland mature in both body mass and horn development during their early years. The curve shows an exceptionally steep rise from birth to around **4–5 years**, reflecting the species' natural biological push toward achieving competitive size for breeding and herd dominance.

By age **7–8**, growth begins to taper, indicating that most of an eland's structural and horn development has already been achieved and only marginal annual gains follow.

After **10 years**, the curve plateaus almost completely, demonstrating that eland reach full prime condition well before the midpoint of their lifespan. This pattern is significant for wildlife managers, breeders and auction buyers, as it confirms that optimal market and breeding value is concentrated within the **4–10-year age bracket**. The stability beyond 10 years also helps in planning sustainable herd structure, knowing that animals older than this contributes less in terms of physical improvement but retain stable body condition.

Eland are among Africa's great ecological survivors, thriving across landscapes that defeat many other large herbivores. Their remarkable adaptability begins with their diet: when summer rains bring fresh grasses, eland graze contentedly in open plains, but as the land begins to dry and the seasons harden, they seamlessly transition into **browsing**. **Leaves, twigs, pods, bark, succulents, flowers, bulbs** and even the toughest fibrous shrubs all become part of their foraging mix. This flexibility is supported by a **highly efficient digestive system** capable of extracting nutrients from vegetation that most species simply cannot utilise—an advantage that allows eland to persist in the **Karoo, Kalahari and bushveld** without loss of condition. Their ability to shift feeding strategies gives them near year-round resilience, making them one of the **most veld-tolerant antelope** on the continent.

Male eland (**bulls**) are imposing animals, often reaching **800–900 kg** in prime condition. As they age, their coats **darken dramatically**, their **necks thicken** and their **dewlaps enlarge**, giving them a heavy, powerful silhouette that signals dominance from a distance. Their horns, **thicker and more robust** than those of females, are built for displays of strength and occasional clashes. By contrast, female eland (**cows**) are lighter at **350–450 kg**, more agile and carry **longer, more slender horns**—an adaptation useful for reaching into thorny browse and navigating complex vegetation. Cows also play a central behavioural role: they **maintain herd cohesion**, select movement routes and often dictate the daily rhythm of feeding and resting.

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Breeding in eland is closely tied to veld condition rather than strictly seasonal timing. Under favourable circumstances, cows may produce calves every **12–18 months**, each calf arriving after a **nine-month gestation**. This flexible reproductive cycle allows herds to expand rapidly when resources are abundant and to slow naturally during harsher years. In the wild, eland typically live **15–20 years**, with older bulls becoming progressively darker and heavier in appearance, often developing a striking **blue-grey sheen** as a visual marker of their maturity and status. The following matrix summarises **the primary eland variants recognised in South Africa**, highlighting their distinguishing traits and relevance to the wildlife industry.

Variant / Type	Description	Key Features	Prevalence in SA	Notes for Wildlife Industry
Cape Eland (*Taurotragus oryx oryx*)	The classical southern African eland type found widely across SA.	Light fawn to grey-brown coat; mature bulls develop a bluish-grey neck and heavy dewlap; distinctive "clicking" knee sound.	Very common	Benchmark eland type used in most breeding and game farming systems.
Livingstone Eland (*Taurotragus oryx livingstonii*)	Slightly darker and more heavily built subspecies, historically from northern regions.	Darker coat; vertical white stripes along flanks (variable intensity); slightly longer hair on neck/shoulders.	Less common but well-established	Popular among breeders for their richer colour and mild striping.
Lord Derby / Giant Eland (*Taurotragus derbianus*)	The largest antelope species in the world; *not naturally occurring* in SA. Kept mostly in specialised international reserves.	Striking striping; massive stature; distinct facial markings.	Rare / mostly not in SA	Included for completeness; generally not part of SA commercial wildlife breeding.
Blue Eland (Colour Variant)	A selective-bred colour expression within Cape/Livingstone genetics.	Uniform grey-blue sheen, especially in mature bulls; reduced brown pigmentation.	Emerging	Gaining interest in niche markets; still stabilising as a variant.
White-Flanked Eland (Colour Variant)	Exhibits lighter or white bands along flanks, not to be confused with striping.	Pale flank patches; cleaner, lighter body tone.	Uncommon	Usually a recessive expression; sought after for visual appeal.
Dark-Coated Eland (Colour Variant)	A darker, richer pigmentation across the entire body.	Deep chocolate to charcoal tones; visually striking bulls.	Uncommon	Attractive for breeding programs focusing on darker colouration.
Striped Expression within Cape Eland	Not a formal subspecies—some Cape eland display faint vertical striping.	Ghost stripes on flanks; more visible in juveniles.	Occasional	Not considered a variant for pricing but worth noting in morphology.

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Fascinating Insights

- Eland can jump nearly **3 metres** straight up despite their weight.
- They regulate **internal body temperature** to conserve water during extreme heat.
- Eland milk is **exceptionally rich**, up to **3 times thicker** than cow's milk and was prized by indigenous cultures.
- The San regarded the eland as **spiritually sacred** — depicted more than any other animal in ancient rock art.
- Their distinctive **clicking sound** while walking may serve as long-distance communication or a dominance display.
- Eland herds can migrate **tens of kilometres per day**, following fresh grazing after rain.
- Eland are one of the **few antelope capable of switching** between pure grazing and pure browsing, depending on veld condition.
- They can survive **weeks without drinking water**, extracting almost all their moisture needs from plants.
- Eland can store fat reserves in their **dewlaps**, helping them survive during drought cycles.
- Their horns grow in a **tight corkscrew shape** and growth rings can sometimes reveal approximate age.
- They are capable of **digesting toxic plants** that would kill other antelope, thanks to unique rumen microflora.
- Despite being Africa's largest antelope, eland are surprisingly **quiet and stealthy**, blending into woodland with ease.
- Bulls often develop a **blue-grey "polish"** on their coats with age, caused by skin secretions and dust mixing over time.
- Calves are remarkably fast — within hours of birth they can **outrun a human**.
- Because of their calm temperament and rich milk, eland were once **semi-domesticated in Eastern Europe** for experimental farming.
- When threatened, herds can form tight defensive circles, calves in the middle, with cows facing outward — a behaviour more typical of large bovids than antelope.
- They can detect thunderstorms from **over 50 km away**, often changing direction before the first clouds build.
- Cows use soft, low-frequency calls to communicate with calves that humans often **cannot hear** unless very close.
- Large bulls often act as "mobile shade" — smaller animals position themselves in their shadow in extreme heat.
- They have incredible **map-like memory** of landscapes, remembering where certain plants regrow year after year.

"In wildlife management circles, the eland is often called the 'anchor species' — reliable, adaptable and remarkably consistent across both breeding and commercial value chains."

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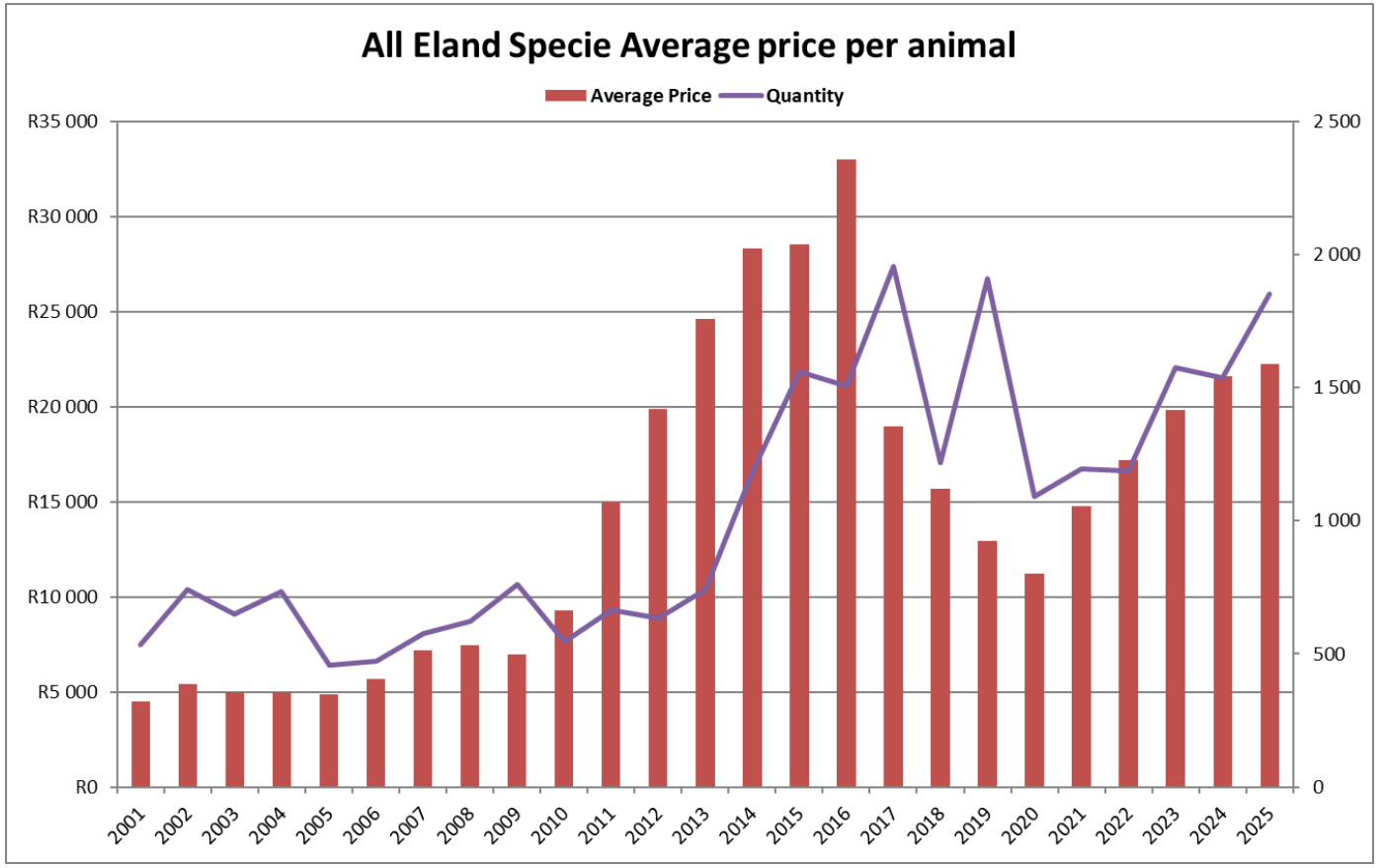
Total **Eland All Species**: Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The **Total Impala All Species** dataset unfolds as a long-arc narrative of one of South Africa's most economically influential wildlife species. The table lays out almost twenty-five years of movement and the graph gives a visual heartbeat to the story—showing how **value**, **quantity** and **average price** have interacted across seasons of expansion, contraction, exuberant peaks and later stabilisation. What follows is the story behind those movements, told not through isolated statistics, but through the **shifting economic, ecological and behavioural rhythms** that shaped the impala market over time. The early years show a market learning itself; the middle years display moments of **extraordinary escalation** as colour-variant speculation intensified; and the recent period illustrates a species returning to its natural role as the **liquidity backbone** of the wildlife economy. The graphs reinforce this journey—showing how prices surged, collapsed and then rebuilt themselves while quantities responded with their own ebb and flow.

As we move through the year bands, the data reveals **momentum**, **corrections**, **recoveries** and finally a renewed strengthening that positions 2025 as one of the most confident years of the modern era.

Total Eland All Species			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R2 394 236	533	R4 492
2002	R4 013 900	741	R5 417
2003	R3 217 658	648	R4 966
2004	R3 654 250	733	R4 985
2005	R2 230 500	457	R4 881
2006	R2 699 825	474	R5 696
2007	R4 151 100	578	R7 182
2008	R4 647 800	623	R7 460
2009	R5 307 600	760	R6 984
2010	R5 055 850	546	R9 260
2011	R9 988 500	666	R14 998
2012	R12 624 400	635	R19 881
2013	R18 284 750	743	R24 609
2014	R33 539 750	1 184	R28 327
2015	R44 521 640	1 559	R28 558
2016	R49 622 761	1 505	R32 972
2017	R37 035 696	1 956	R18 934
2018	R19 110 656	1 218	R15 690
2019	R24 657 150	1 909	R12 916
2020	R12 225 200	1 092	R11 195
2021	R17 654 650	1 195	R14 774
2022	R20 360 650	1 186	R17 167
2023	R31 180 550	1 574	R19 810
2024	R33 228 000	1 538	R21 605
2025	R41 256 500	1 853	R22 265



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Total **Eland All Species**: Insights: 2001 to 2025

Foundation and Early Gradual Growth (2001–2010)

From **2001 to 2010**, Eland pricing and quantities moved steadily but modestly upward. Average prices increased from **R4 492 in 2001 to R9 260 in 2010**, reflecting a near-doubling over ten years. During this same period, market values rose from **R2.39 million to R5.06 million**, driven partly by increased demand for large plains-game species in expanding game ranching enterprises. The growth through 2004–2009 was supported by favourable rainfall cycles and a broadening hunting sector, while quantities remained relatively stable between **457 and 760 animals**.

The notable rise in 2010, with prices lifting above **R9 000**, aligned with stronger consumption from both local hunting operators and estates building diversified herds. Overall, this decade laid the foundation for Eland's future commercial potential, with prices trending positively but still far below the surges that would arrive from 2011 onward.

Rapid Expansion and the High-Value Era (2011–2016)

The years **2011 to 2016** marked the most dramatic value transformation in the species' modern data history. Average prices rose sharply from **R14 998 in 2011** to **R32 972 in 2016**, a rise of over 120%. During the same period, total value ballooned from **R9.98 million in 2011** to **R49.62 million in 2016**, driven by sustained increases in quantities, which grew from **666 animals to 1 505 animals**. This spike was influenced by two major factors:

- **The golden age of wildlife investment (2012–2015)**, where capital flowed into land conversion and multi-species diversification.
- **Large-frame plains game gaining appeal** for both breeding and hunting because they contributed significantly to venison production and ecological stocking strategies.
- **Higher-value ram lines** gained traction, and the commercial use of common females as foundational breeding stock for variant programs added additional upward pressure.

The trend peaked in **2014 and 2015**, where values exceeded **R33 million and R44 million**, supported by prices above **R28 000**. By 2016, the market—although still strong—began tapering from its absolute highs, signalling the end of the most aggressive growth phase.

Market Reset and Post-Investment Correction (2017–2020)

The period **2017 to 2020** represented a correction phase following the preceding investment boom. Average prices fell from **R18 934 in 2017** to **R11 195 in 2020**, while values declined from **R37.03 million to R12.22 million**. Quantities similarly softened from **1 956 animals to 1 092 animals**. This was influenced by:

- A cyclical reduction in large-scale wildlife investment after 2016.

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- The onset of **drought seasons in several provinces**, suppressing stocking capacity.
- The **COVID-19 disruptions in 2020**, which significantly halted hunting travel and muted auction sentiment.

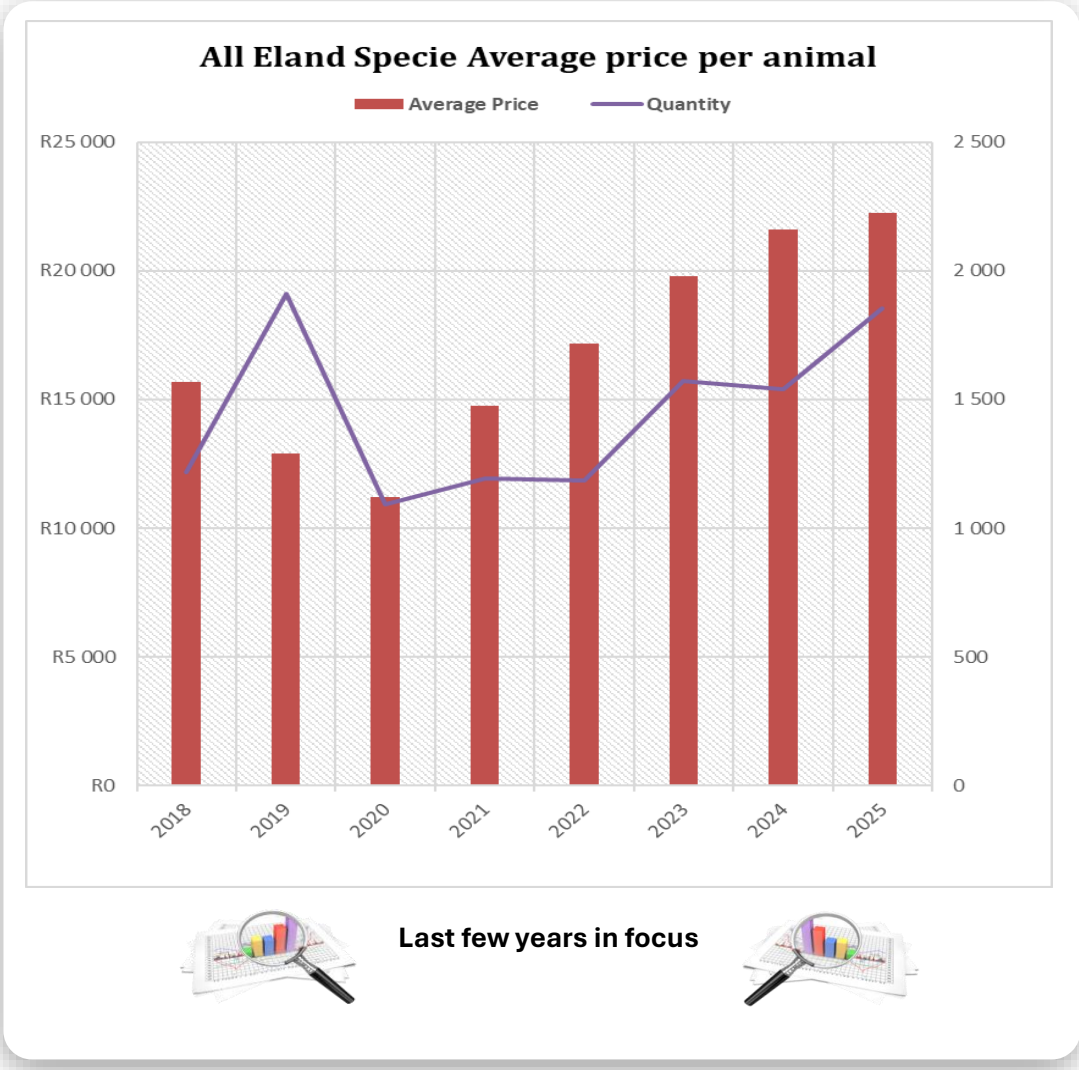
Despite this correction, volumes remained meaningful, and Eland retained its market relevance thanks to broad demand from both venison and mixed-breeding operations.

Recovery and Stabilised Upswing (2021–2025)

From **2021 onward**, the species entered a renewed growth trajectory. Average prices increased from **R14 774 in 2021** to **R22 265 in 2025**, and values rose sharply from **R17.65 million to R41.26 million**. Quantities also expanded from **1 195 animals in 2021** to **1 853 animals in 2025**, underscoring rising buyer engagement. This resurgence mirrored broader market recovery trends:

- The wildlife sector rebounded strongly post-COVID as international hunters returned.
- Plains-game shortages across South Africa elevated demand.
- Eland regained standing as a **high-yield, robust plains-game cornerstone**, especially in mixed farming, venison supply, and eco-tourism estates.

By **2025**, the species stood firmly in a renewed high-value cycle, with prices climbing consistently for four consecutive years.



2025: A Year of Consolidated Strength and Renewed Momentum

The jump from **2024 to 2025** reflects one of the strongest year-on-year consolidations in the species.

Total value moved from **R33.23 million in 2024** to **R41.26 million in 2025**, an increase of roughly **24%**, supported by a substantial rise in

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quantities from **1 538 to 1 853 animals**. Average price strengthened too, rising from **R21 605 to R22 265**, signalling that buyers were not only purchasing more but also willing to pay moderately higher rates per animal. This uplift aligns with the **broader plains-game shortage trend** that characterised the 2024–2025 cycle. As buffalo, wildebeest, nyala and impala categories surged in demand, Eland followed naturally because of its dual appeal as both a hunting species and a venison-production asset.

The strong performance also reflects **renewed international participation**, particularly in hunting packages that increasingly include Eland as a signature large antelope.

In 2025, Eland reaffirmed its place as a **high-performing, staple plains-game species**, showing momentum in both price and demand—a continuation of the recovery that began three years earlier and now stands on even firmer footing.

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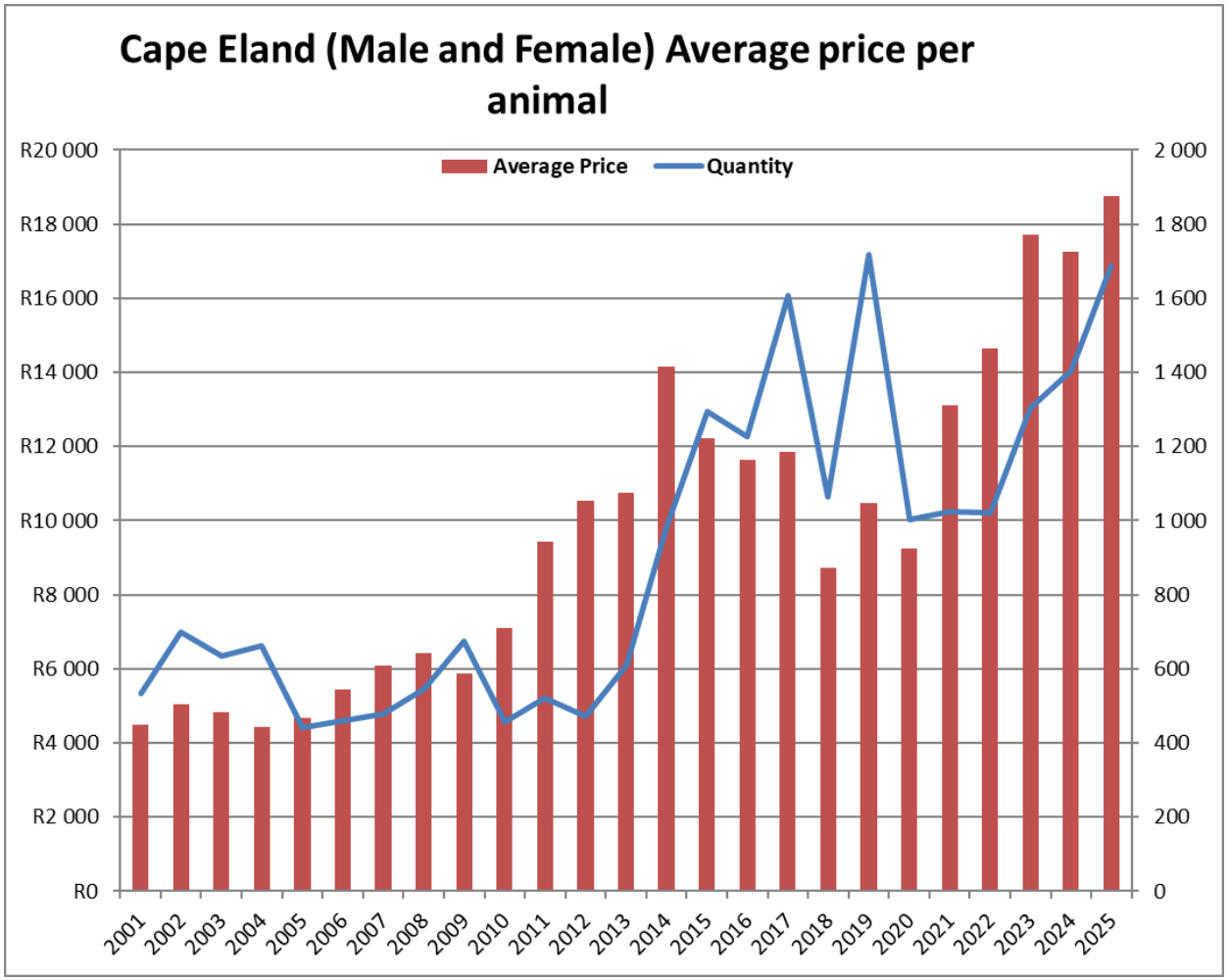
Cape Eland: Male & Female Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

This dataset tells the story of a species that has never moved erratically but has shown an unmistakable sensitivity to broader wildlife-market cycles. The graph illustrates this elegantly: the early years appear gentle and low-set, the middle years begin to rise with conviction, the boom of the mid-2010s stands tall and pronounced and the years after the correction build steadily upward once again. The price bars carry their own message of expansion, contraction and recovery, while the quantity line reveals how supply either supported or softened these shifts. Together they form a compelling long-term portrait of **how Cape Eland demand evolves when market confidence rises and falls**.

Cape Eland (Male and Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R2 394 236	533	R4 492
2002	R3 530 100	700	R5 043
2003	R3 060 522	634	R4 827
2004	R2 920 750	661	R4 419
2005	R2 055 000	441	R4 660
2006	R2 497 075	459	R5 440
2007	R2 904 350	478	R6 076
2008	R3 508 300	547	R6 414
2009	R3 964 600	674	R5 882
2010	R3 235 350	456	R7 095
2011	R4 930 200	522	R9 445
2012	R4 956 400	471	R10 523
2013	R6 549 750	609	R10 755
2014	R13 878 200	980	R14 161
2015	R15 823 140	1 294	R12 228
2016	R14 310 511	1 228	R11 654
2017	R19 079 336	1 608	R11 865
2018	R9 306 156	1 065	R8 738
2019	R17 985 750	1 719	R10 463
2020	R9 282 050	1 004	R9 245
2021	R13 437 400	1 024	R13 122
2022	R14 931 400	1 020	R14 639
2023	R23 099 300	1 304	R17 714
2024	R24 221 000	1 405	R17 239
2025	R31 603 000	1 686	R18 744



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Cape Eland: Male & Female Insights: 2001 to 2025

The Foundation Years: 2001–2008

During this early period, Cape Eland pricing from **2001 to 2008** reflected a market still finding equilibrium. Average prices fluctuated modestly between the start and end of this band, shifting from **R4 492 in 2001 to R6 414 in 2008**, a growth of roughly **43%** over these eight years. Meanwhile, quantities trended upward—from **533 in 2001 to 547 in 2008**—showing that breeders were steadily expanding supply as game auctions grew in prevalence and private ranching intensified in South Africa.
This era was shaped by **foundation genetics, relatively low input costs**, and a market still untouched by the dramatic price escalations that would arrive after 2011.

Despite moderate volatility, **Cape Eland already showed the characteristics of a dependable plains species—stable demand, reliable reproduction, and broad suitability across ranching regions**.

The First Major Upswing: 2009–2014

The years **2009 to 2014** marked a decisive strengthening of Cape Eland values, driven largely by growing demand in the breeding and trophy sectors. Prices rose sharply from **R5 882 in 2009 to R14 161 in 2014**, an increase of **over 140%**, while quantities escalated from **674 to 980**, signalling robust availability. This period coincided with the **golden era of high-value wildlife investment**, where breeder optimism and expanding auction platforms fuelled exceptional growth across most plains and rare species.
Cape Eland benefited from this momentum: **buyers shifted capital into large-framed, genetically stable species**, driving prices into a higher structural range that would shape future valuations.

The species' adaptability, trophy stature, and meat yield reinforced its appeal, making it a core component of multi-species ranching portfolios.

Stabilisation, Correction, and Market Rebalancing: 2015–2019

Between **2015 and 2019**, the Cape Eland market entered a more complex phase. Average prices oscillated from **R12 228 in 2015**, dipped to **R8 738 in 2018**, and rose again to **R10 463 in 2019**. Quantities also reflected this shift, ranging from **1 294 in 2015** to **1 719 in 2019**. This period followed the colour-variant speculative collapse that heavily affected many species across the industry. While Eland were not directly tied to colour-variant volatility, **overall capital contraction and a return to fundamentals** affected buyers' risk appetite.

Even so, Cape Eland remained resilient: **demand held firm**, supported by hunting markets, meat value, and diversification strategies among landowners. The species weathered the broader market downturn better than many others, highlighting its long-term reliability.

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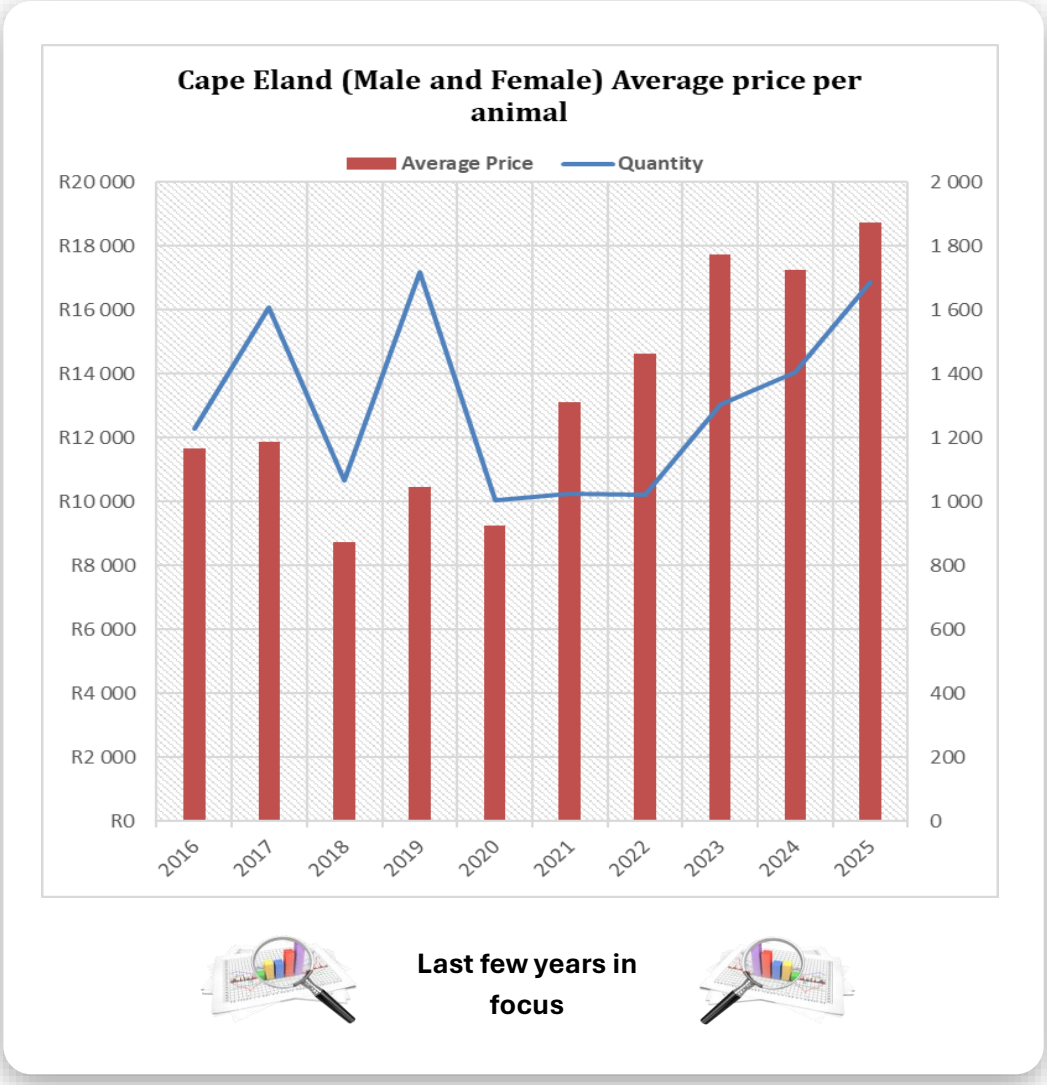
Covid Shock and Post-Covid Recovery: 2020–2023

The years **2020 to 2023** capture the full effect of Covid disruptions and the subsequent rebound. In **2020**, average prices eased to **R9 245**, influenced by travel restrictions, depressed auction attendance, and liquidity strain across the sector.

However, by **2023**, the market had regained astonishing strength.

Prices lifted from **R9 245 in 2020 to R17 714 in 2023**, a gain of **over 91%**, while quantities increased from **1 004 to 1 304**.

This rebound aligned with **renewed international hunting arrivals, improved domestic sentiment, and a scarcity of large, high-quality bulls and cows**. The broader plains-game market began tightening in supply from 2021 onward, reinforcing demand for Eland as a high-yield, versatile species.



Consolidation into a New Price Range: 2024

In **2024**, Cape Eland continued its upward trajectory with an average price of **R17 239** and quantity of **1 405**. This maintained the species within a **new, stable pricing band**, well above pre-Covid levels. Industry-wide supply constraints, recovering international hunting quotas, and broad ranch management strategies all supported these valuations.

A Strengthened Market and a Confident Step Forward in 2025

The year **2025** marked a decisive strengthening for Cape Eland, driven by **tightened supply dynamics, sustained hunting demand**, and overall recovery across South Africa's wildlife economy.

Average price increased from **R17 239 in 2024 to R18 744 in 2025**, representing a **rise of approximately 8.7%**, while quantities expanded significantly from **1 405 to 1 686**, a gain of **20%**.

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This dual increase in both price and quantity is meaningful. It signals that **buyer appetite remained strong despite higher supply**, suggesting that market fundamentals—not speculative demand—were driving valuations.

The 2025 performance also reflects **macro-industry factors**, including improved rainfall conditions across large ranching regions, higher off-take from international hunters returning at scale, and breeders focusing on **strong genetics and larger frame animals**. Cape Eland once again affirmed its position as a **cornerstone plains species**, with stable demand and predictable long-term value. The species entered 2025 not only stronger than the year before but firmly aligned with the broader upward trend across large-bodied antelope in South Africa.

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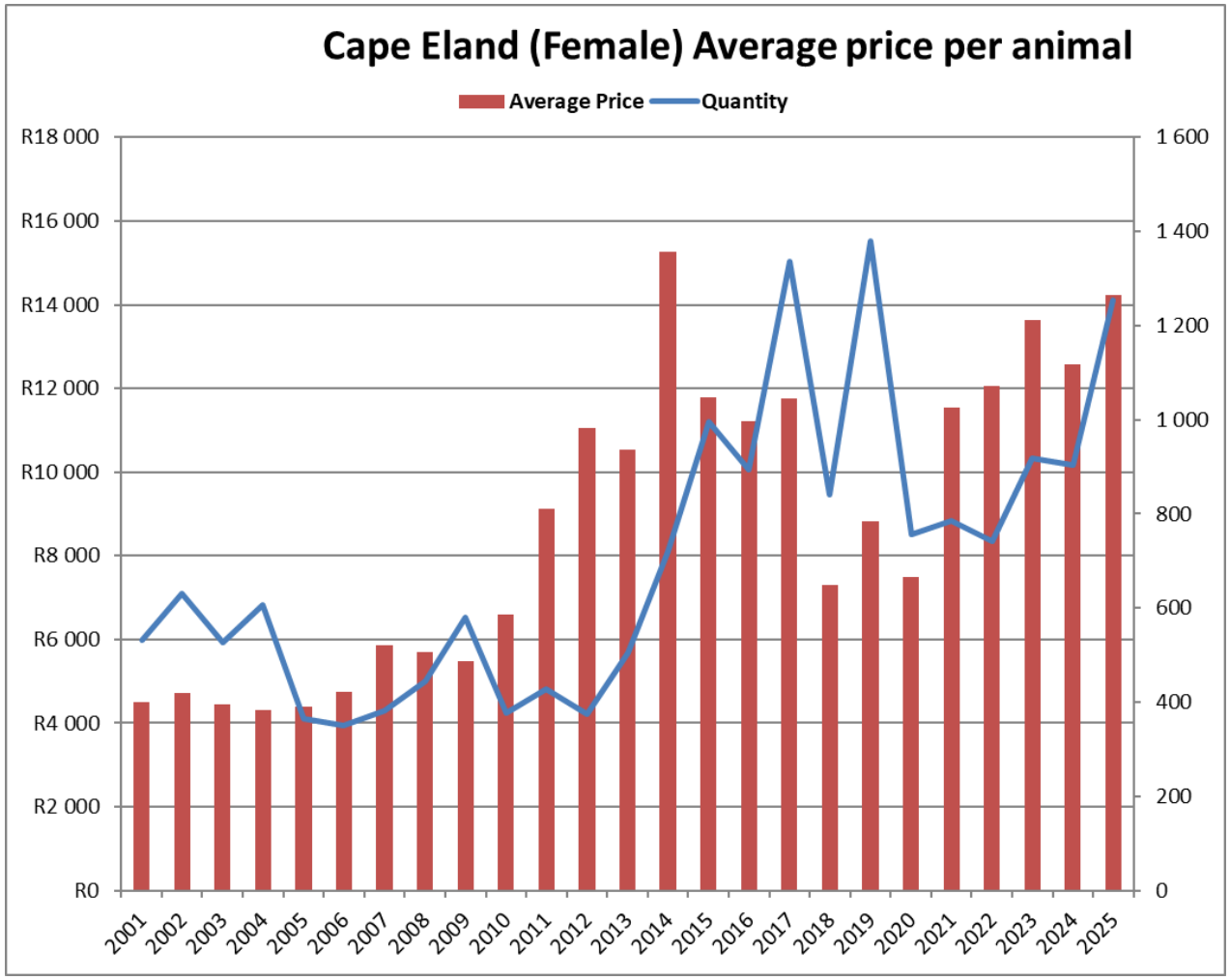
Cape Eland: **Female only** Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table provides the chronological structure, but the graph gives the movement emotional depth: early years appear calm and low, the middle years widen into dramatic peaks and the later years rise again with surprising confidence. The price bars climb and dip in ways that mirror broader market sentiment in the wildlife industry, while the quantity line adds its own rhythm—sometimes amplifying price movements, sometimes smoothing them out. This dataset tells the story of a species that is highly responsive to both **genetic value cycles and commercial demand cycles**, yet never behaves with the volatility of more speculative species. Instead, Cape Eland females move with a certain grounded steadiness, building long-term value through volume, reliability and consistent performance. What follows is a journey through those shifting eras.

Cape Eland (Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R2 394 236	533	R4 492
2002	R2 979 900	630	R4 730
2003	R2 337 786	526	R4 444
2004	R2 609 450	607	R4 299
2005	R1 611 800	366	R4 404
2006	R1 656 475	350	R4 733
2007	R2 237 050	381	R5 872
2008	R2 541 200	445	R5 711
2009	R3 182 800	581	R5 478
2010	R2 491 900	378	R6 592
2011	R3 906 950	428	R9 128
2012	R4 135 350	374	R11 057
2013	R5 336 750	506	R10 547
2014	R10 996 500	721	R15 252
2015	R11 724 370	995	R11 783
2016	R10 035 611	895	R11 213
2017	R15 725 235	1 336	R11 770
2018	R6 136 233	842	R7 288
2019	R12 166 200	1 379	R8 822
2020	R5 653 050	756	R7 478
2021	R9 066 800	785	R11 550
2022	R8 930 400	741	R12 052
2023	R12 527 600	918	R13 647
2024	R11 353 250	903	R12 573
2025	R17 843 500	1 255	R14 218



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Cape Eland: **Female only** Insights: 2001 to 2025

2001–2010: Foundation Years with Gradual Value Recognition

During the first decade, female Cape Eland prices grew from **R4 492 in 2001** to **R6 592 in 2010**, reflecting a steady market that increasingly recognised the breeding and meat value of this large antelope. Quantities fluctuated moderately, oscillating between **366 in 2005** and **607 in 2004**, showing that supply remained highly dependent on herd structure dynamics rather than aggressive market expansion. By the end of 2010, the species had already displayed a **46.7% increase in average price** from 2001–2010, a clear indication that even before the industry boom, eland were already gaining commercial traction. No major external shocks affected these years, meaning growth was organic and grounded in stable breeder confidence.

2011–2016: The Acceleration Phase and the Genetic-Premium Boom

From 2011 through 2016, the market entered a markedly different phase. Prices rose from **R9 128 in 2011** to **R11 213 in 2016**, with a sharp interim peak at **R15 252 in 2014**. This period reflected the wider industry-wide lift driven by enhanced genetics, increased auction activity and the exuberance of the pre-2016 colour-variant cycle, which pushed virtually all species upward as capital flowed into game ranching. Quantity expanded notably from **428 in 2011** to **895 in 2016**, indicating strong breeder rotation and heightened market participation. The contrast between the 2014 peak and the 2016 normalisation illustrates how even a robust species such as eland felt the ripple effect of speculative capital entering and exiting the broader market.

2017–2020: Correction, Stabilisation and the COVID-19 Shock

The years after 2016 brought a predictable cooling. Prices eased from **R11 770 in 2017** to **R7 478 in 2020**, while quantities fluctuated between **842 and 1 379**, demonstrating supply reliability but softer pricing power. The 2017–2019 decline corresponds with the broader downturn as breeders rebalanced after the colour-variant correction. Then came COVID-19: the **2020 drop to R7 478** was clearly tied to restricted auctions, disrupted logistics and cash-flow tightening among both breeders and buyers. Yet even in this difficult period, female eland maintained solid movement volumes, confirming its reputation as one of the most **liquid and dependable large-antelope categories**.

2021–2024: Recovery, Strengthening Demand and Renewed Price Formation

The rebound began rapidly. Average prices recovered to **R11 550 in 2021**, climbed again to **R12 052 in 2022**, and reached **R13 647 in 2023**. Volumes remained healthy, staying between **741 and 918** from 2021–2024. Notably, **2023 and 2024** marked the beginning of a stronger upward curve, driven by a combination of improved auction confidence, a return of international buyers and increasingly competitive breeding programmes. The wildlife market's supply shortage—especially following years of herd restructuring and aggressive bull removals between 2015–2017—also supported price restoration. By 2024, average price stabilised at **R12 573**, signalling a maturing recovery phase.

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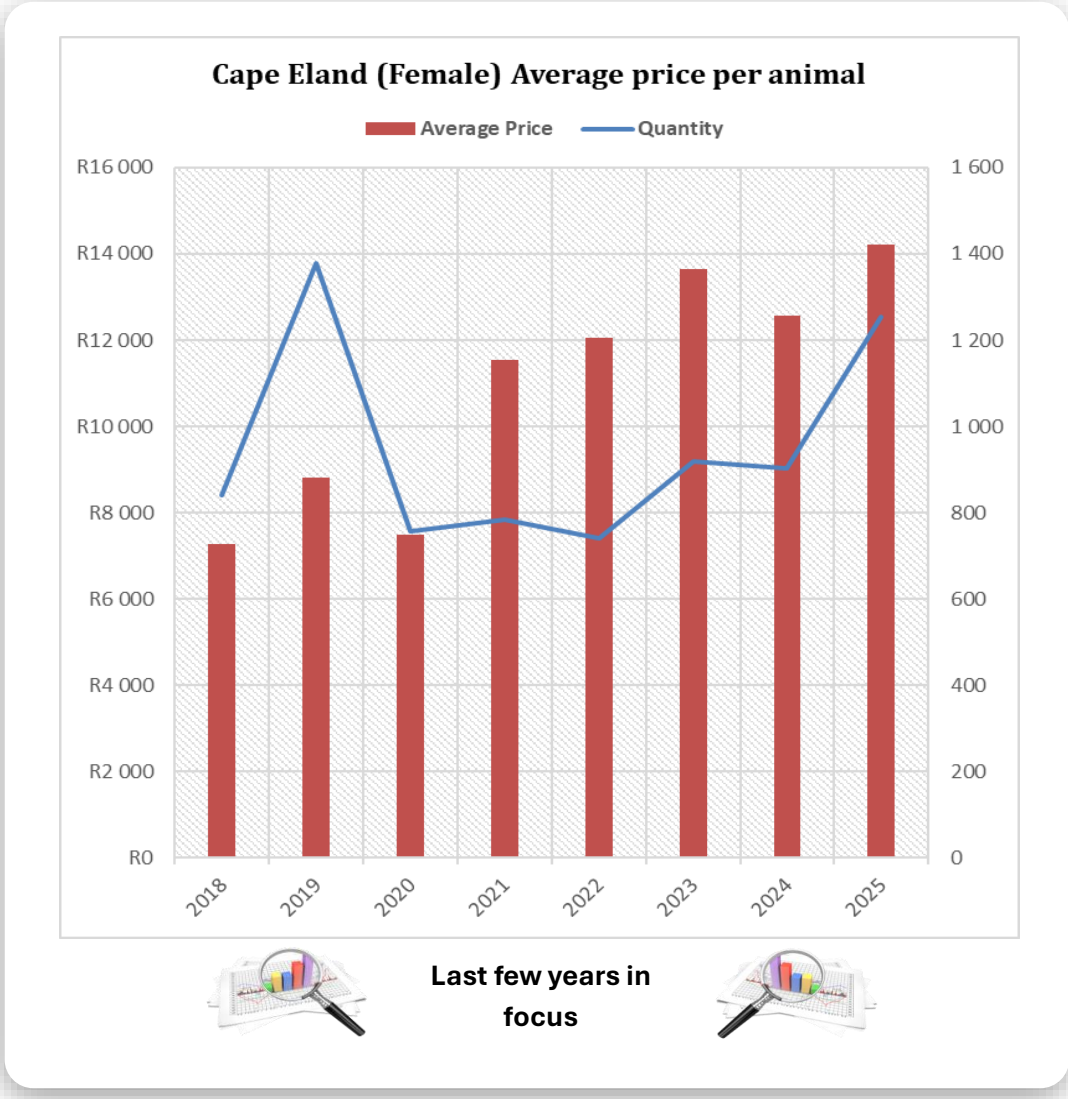
2025: A Significant Step Up in Both Confidence and Willingness to Pay

The transition from 2024 to 2025 shows a **decisive and emphatic strengthening** in the female Cape Eland segment. Average price rose from **R12 573 in 2024** to **R14 218 in 2025**, an increase of **13.06%**, while quantity surged from **903** to **1 255**, representing a **38.97% expansion in volume**. This dual increase in both price and quantity is highly meaningful: it signals not just higher valuations, but also deeper market liquidity and broader participation among breeders.



The forces behind this shift are rooted in the wider 2025 wildlife market narrative. Improved macro-economic stability, expanding demand from both local ranchers and international buyers, and tightening supply across several large antelope categories all contributed to more assertive bidding. Importantly, the lingering effects of earlier herd restructuring—when breeders removed large numbers of common bulls between 2015–2017 to prioritise colour variants—continue to influence supply dynamics today. These adjustments suppressed bull recruitment in subsequent years, indirectly elevating female value as herds recalibrated to rebuild stable breeding bases.

In 2025, confidence was unmistakably higher. The combination of increased buyer appetite, competition for proven breeding females, and improved financial sentiment across the wildlife sector resulted in a year where female Cape Eland achieved its **strongest pricing performance in more than a decade**, while also moving the **highest volume in the entire 25-year dataset**.

The story of 2025 is therefore one of renewed momentum. It captures a market that has moved beyond recovery into a phase of deliberate expansion, signalling that female Cape Eland remains one of the most strategically reliable assets in the southern African wildlife economy.

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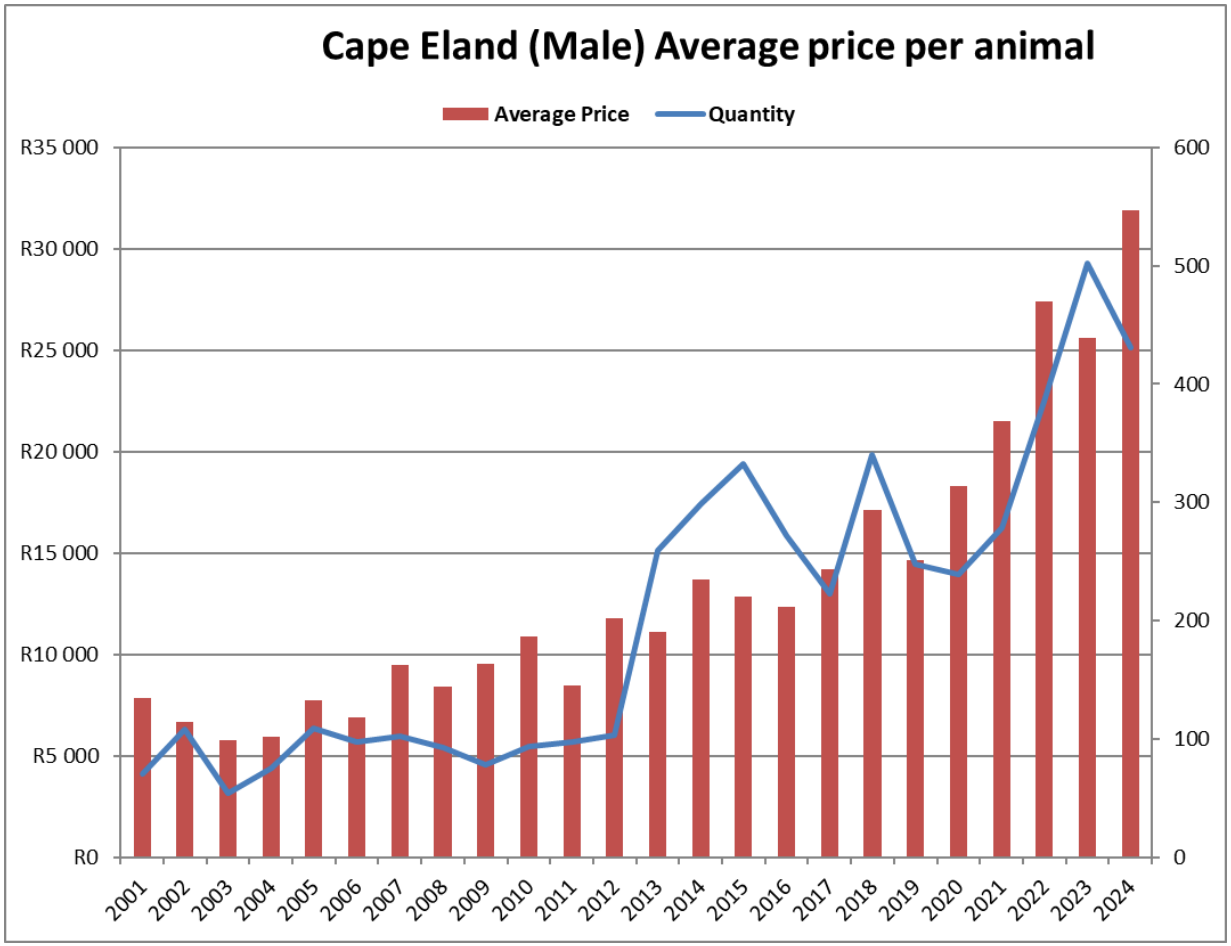
Cape Eland: **Male only** Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

Together, the table and graph tell a multi-decade story of how **male Cape Eland have evolved in economic significance**, rising from modest early stability into strong commercial relevance as wildlife markets matured and buyer preferences shifted. The table gives the precise sequence of change, while the graph adds movement and emotional tone—showing how prices climbed steadily in the mid-years, how quantity responded during expansion periods and how the most recent years reveal a sharp resurgence in both demand and valuation.

The bars rise and fall with the rhythm of the market, while the quantity line weaves around them, echoing periods of renewed confidence or tightening supply. What emerges is a dynamic portrait of a species whose male segment has become increasingly important as trophy, genetics and commercial value intersect. This is the story the data reveals as it moves from early gentleness into mature strength.

Cape Eland (Male)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2002	R550 200	70	R7 860
2003	R722 736	108	R6 692
2004	R311 300	54	R5 765
2005	R443 200	75	R5 909
2006	R840 600	109	R7 712
2007	R667 300	97	R6 879
2008	R967 100	102	R9 481
2009	R781 800	93	R8 406
2010	R743 450	78	R9 531
2011	R1 023 250	94	R10 886
2012	R821 050	97	R8 464
2013	R1 213 000	103	R11 777
2014	R2 881 700	259	R11 126
2015	R4 098 770	299	R13 708
2016	R4 274 900	333	R12 838
2017	R3 354 101	272	R12 331
2018	R3 169 923	223	R14 215
2019	R5 819 550	340	R17 116
2020	R3 629 000	248	R14 633
2021	R4 370 600	239	R18 287
2022	R6 001 000	279	R21 509
2023	R10 571 700	386	R27 388
2024	R12 867 750	502	R25 633
2025	R13 759 500	431	R31 925



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Cape Eland: **Male only** Insights: 2001 to 2025

2002–2007: Foundation Years with Mild Variability

During 2002–2007, Cape Eland males traded in a relatively narrow price band, with average prices ranging from **R5 765 in 2004** to **R7 860 in 2002**. Quantities moved modestly—from **70 units in 2002** up to **109 in 2006**—indicating a slowly expanding supply base during a period when breeders still relied on traditional Eland management rather than large-scale genetic programmes.

This era reflected **stable demand**, with drought cycles and normal environmental pressures influencing supply more than market speculation. Prices climbed gently but without major spikes, showing the absence of external shocks or colour-variant displacement effects seen in species like wildebeest and impala during later periods.

2008–2013: Firming Demand and Structural Upward Pressure

From 2008 to 2013, a stronger market emerged. Average prices lifted from **R9 481 in 2008** to **R11 777 in 2013**, an increase of roughly **24%** across the band. At the same time, volumes rose from **102 animals in 2008** to **259 in 2014**, showing that more breeders were actively selling males into hunting and breeding systems.

This period aligned with the broader **wildlife economy expansion**, where private landowners increased stocking rates and sought premium breeding lines. The upward shift in both supply and pricing suggests **growing confidence**, underpinned by favourable macroeconomic conditions and increased international safari interest.



A mature 42-inch eland bull in a South African landscape

2014–2018: Market Strength Followed by a Correction

Between 2014 and 2018 the market displayed both a sharp rise and a notable cooling. Prices reached **R13 708 in 2015**, supported by **299 units**, reflecting peak demand. However, by 2018 average prices had settled back to **R14 215**, with quantities declining to **223 units**.

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This correction was consistent with the **post-2015 industry reset**, where inflated expectations in several species led to softer pricing once supply expanded more rapidly than market absorption. Cape Eland, although more stable than colour-variant species, still felt the impact of broader liquidity tightening and the beginning of risk aversion among buyers.

2019–2021: Volatility, Drought Effects and COVID-19 Disruption

The years 2019–2021 carried clear signs of wider industry turbulence. Average prices climbed from **R17 116 in 2019** to **R18 287 in 2021**, while quantities moved from **340 units to 239 over the same window**.

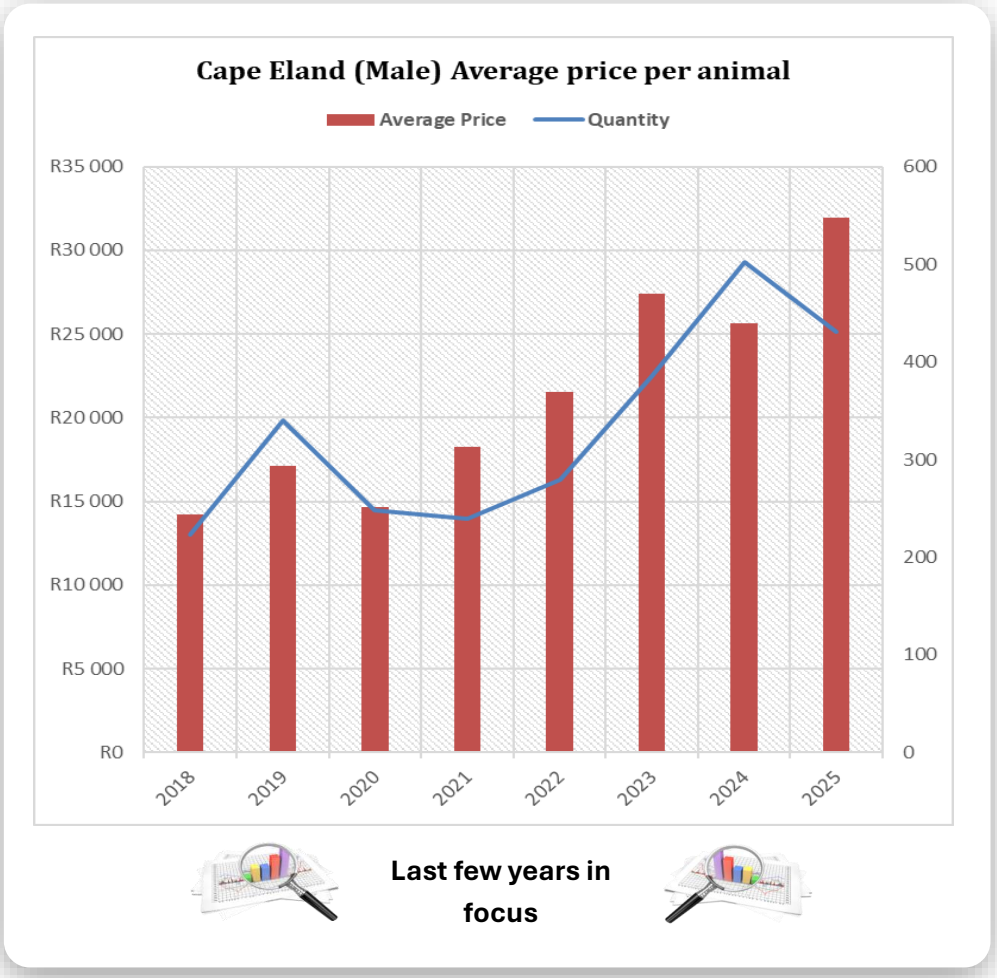
Drought in several provinces, international travel restrictions and reduced hunting volumes during the COVID period all contributed to **disrupted supply-and-demand dynamics**. The price resilience, however, showed that Eland males retained strong utility-value for both hunting and breeding, even while overall wildlife spending contracted sharply in 2020 and early 2021.

2022–2024: Accelerated Growth and a New Market Plateau

In 2022–2024 the market entered a markedly stronger phase. Average prices rose from **R21 509 in 2022** to **R27 388 in 2023**, before settling slightly to **R25 633 in 2024**. Volumes increased sharply—from **279 animals in 2022** to **502 in 2024**, representing almost **80% volume growth in two years**.

This period aligned with the recovery of the wildlife economy post-COVID, renewed breeding confidence, and higher demand from both local and international buyers.

The expanding numbers also suggest a **rebuilding of supply pipelines**, which had previously been constrained by drought and delayed breeding decisions earlier in the decade.



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A Market Re-Energised in 2025

In 2025, the Cape Eland male market demonstrated **renewed upward energy**, pushing average prices from **R25 633 in 2024** to **R31 925 in 2025**—a substantial uplift of **24.5%**. This occurred despite a reduction in quantity from **502 animals to 431**, a decline of roughly **14%**.
The combination of **lower supply and higher prices** suggested tightening availability across prime male categories, driven by stronger hunting demand, maturing bulls being retained by breeders, and the knock-on effects of earlier drought cycles that had temporarily reduced replacement numbers.
Industry insights for 2025 highlighted a clear trend: **buyers were paying a premium for top-quality, long-horned males**, and the increasing competitiveness of international safari bookings further pushed the demand curve upward. While 2024 was already a strong year, 2025 marked an even firmer grip on value appreciation, signalling that **Cape Eland males have entered a structurally stronger pricing era**, supported by both genetics and expanding safari markets.

This table captures the **economic stratification of eland bulls** based on horn length, showing how the market differentiates value across size classes. It reveals how buyers assign premiums to specific horn brackets, how scarcity influences price behaviour and how the shift in supply from one year to the next reshapes demand dynamics. The structure of the table allows us to see, at a glance, where the bulk of commercial transactions occur, where elite premiums are paid and where market rarity expresses itself in dramatic pricing. The table therefore provides both a biological map of bull maturity and a commercial map of **value concentration**, reflecting a market where horn size acts as a primary driver of trophy desirability, breeding potential and investor confidence.

The first layer of the story lies in the **dominance of non-specified and commercial-class bulls**, which continue to form the backbone of total transaction volume. In 2024, **364 bulls** fell into the unspecified category and in 2025 this figure remained very high at **330**, demonstrating that large-scale trading still happens in the broad genetic base.

Eland Bulls Pricing by Inches Sold

	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bull : inches not specified	364	R24 110	330	R30 744
Bull : Sub-Adult	34	R14 110	47	R16 404
Bull : Hunting	33	R18 030	2	R100 000
Bull : less than 31 inches	17	R23 294	5	R42 200
Bull : 31 inches plus	6	R23 333	9	R32 444
Bull : 32 inches plus	8	R27 875	11	R37 818
Bull : 33 inches plus	13	R30 385	3	R53 667
Bull : 34 inches plus	11	R29 364	3	R30 000
Bull : 35 inches plus	3	R33 333	5	R33 600
Bull : 36 inches plus	2	R38 000	5	R49 400
Bull : 37 inches plus	4	R42 250	2	R68 000
Bull : 38 inches plus	0	R0	5	R46 400
Bull : 39 inches plus	3	R60 000	3	R106 667
Bull : 40 inches plus	0	R0	1	R370 000
Bull : 41 inches plus	1	R47 000	0	R0
Bull : 42 inches plus	1	R560 000	0	R0
Bull : 43 inches plus	1	R380 000	0	R0
Bull : 46 inches plus	1	R28 000	0	R0

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These bulls carry dependable prices and the rise from **R24 110** to **R30 744** reflects a general strengthening of demand for functional animals, even before horn length becomes a factor. This uplift tells us that the market in 2025 placed greater emphasis on **overall bull availability** and **operational utility**, not only on trophy class distinctions.

As soon as horn lengths enter the conversation, the behaviour of the market shifts. Sub-adults, selling for **R14 110** in 2024 and **R16 404** in 2025, illustrate a movement toward younger bulls gaining higher relative value, suggesting increased interest in **future replacement sires** rather than only mature trophy animals. The jump is modest but meaningful, revealing a subtle shift toward **forward-looking genetic investments**.

Where horn length becomes explicit, the price escalations become more telling. Bulls under **31 inches** rose sharply from **R23 294** to **R42 200**, a near doubling that signals renewed competition for bulls approaching the mature class but still offering genetic progress at accessible price points. This is consistent with broader 2025 wildlife trends, where mid-tier breeding bulls saw **heightened bidding** due to shortages in certain regions and improved buyer activity.

The mid-class segments—**31 to 36 inches**—show a uniform strengthening from 2024 to 2025. Bulls at **31 inches plus** rise from **R23 333** to **R32 444** and those at **32 inches plus** move from **R27 875** to **R37 818**. These brackets are often highly sought after in both commercial and trophy operations because they represent bulls that have cleared genetic thresholds but are not yet priced beyond accessibility. The 2025 demand pattern reflects precisely that: more buyers competing for bulls in the **early-mature category**, driving consistent upward pressure across every one of these sizes.

Once the bulls reach **33 inches plus**, the market begins expressing rarity premiums. Prices step up sharply, moving from **R30 385** to **R53 667**, one of the most dramatic increases in the dataset. This reflects how bulls in the low-30s inch range have become increasingly scarce in some regions and how trophy-focused buyers have grown more assertive. Similarly, **35 inches plus** and **36 inches plus** bulls rise from **R33 333** to **R33 600** and **R38 000** to **R49 400**, signifying **tightening supply at the upper end of standard trophy class**.

The upper-tier classes—**37 inches to 39 inches plus**—show another meaningful story arc. A **37-inch bull** rises from **R42 250** to **R68 000**, while **39-inch bulls** shift from **R60 000** to **R106 667**, affirming that buyers in 2025 were more aggressive in pursuing elite trophy animals, especially where horn development crosses into high-performance genetics. This aligns closely with 2025's broader wildlife sentiment, where premier-quality trophy bulls—across several species—commanded strong premiums as international and domestic appetite returned.

The rarest brackets tell the clearest story of shifting supply. In 2024, bulls at **40 inches plus** sold for **R0** because none were transacted; yet in 2025, a single bull achieved **R370 000**, confirming that scarcity continues to magnify value in extraordinary ways. The even larger categories—**41**, **42**, **43**, **46 inches plus**—were represented in 2024 but saw no sales in 2025, not because demand diminished but because **supply availability tightened to zero**. These apex-class bulls remain exceptionally rare and the absence of sales in 2025 underscores just how constrained the genetics pipeline has become at the extreme upper end.

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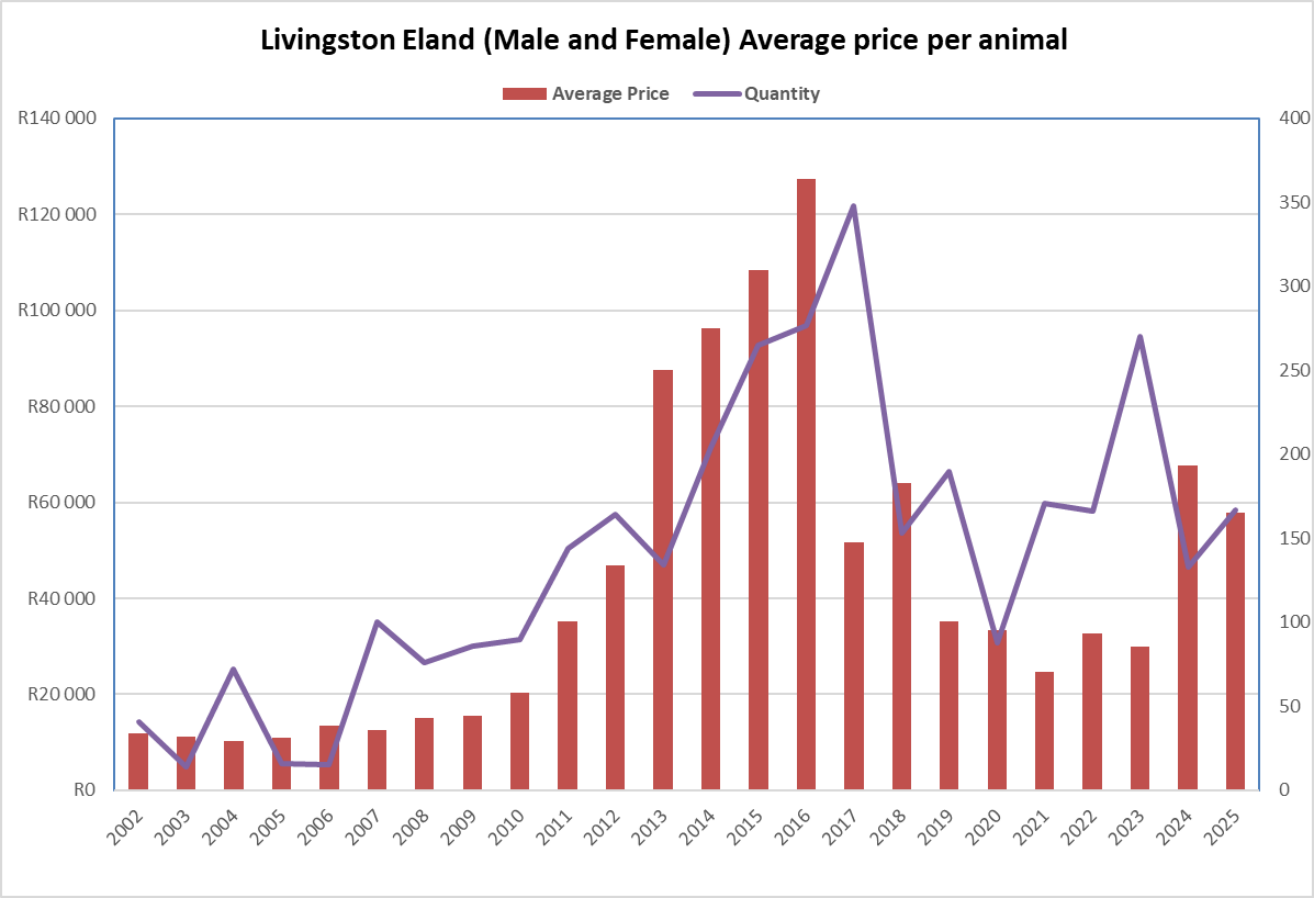
Livingstone Eland: Male & Female Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table and graph together tell a story of a species that has never traded quietly. Instead, the Livingstone Eland market has moved through **distinct cycles of explosive value growth, abrupt rebalancing and resilient recovery**, each shaped by shifting demand, rarity premiums, breeder interest and trophy-market appetites. The upward sweeps in the graph reveal moments of intense buyer competition, while the downward arcs show the recalibrations that inevitably follow overheated phases.

What emerges is a long-term narrative of **high sensitivity to market confidence**, combined with the enduring ability of this iconic eland to reassert value even after deep corrections.

Livingston Eland (Male and Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2002	R483 800	41	R11 800
2003	R157 136	14	R11 224
2004	R733 500	72	R10 188
2005	R175 500	16	R10 969
2006	R202 750	15	R13 517
2007	R1 246 750	100	R12 468
2008	R1 139 500	76	R14 993
2009	R1 343 000	86	R15 616
2010	R1 820 500	90	R20 228
2011	R5 058 300	144	R35 127
2012	R7 668 000	164	R46 756
2013	R11 735 000	134	R87 575
2014	R19 661 550	204	R96 380
2015	R28 698 500	265	R108 296
2016	R35 312 250	277	R127 481
2017	R17 956 360	348	R51 599
2018	R9 804 500	153	R64 082
2019	R6 671 400	190	R35 113
2020	R2 943 150	88	R33 445
2021	R4 217 250	171	R24 662
2022	R5 429 250	166	R32 706
2023	R8 081 250	270	R29 931
2024	R9 007 000	133	R67 722
2025	R9 653 500	167	R57 805



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Livingstone Eland: Male & Female Insights: 2001 to 2025

2002–2010: The Quiet Build-Up and Gradual Revaluation Phase

During **2002–2010**, Livingstone Eland values were still forming their identity in the market. Prices in **2002** began modestly and remained relatively steady through **2010**, moving from **R11 800** to **R20 228**, reflecting a **gradual but consistent revaluation** as breeders increasingly recognised the subspecies' visual distinctiveness and hybrid-resistant purity. Quantities rose intermittently—from **41 in 2002** to **90 in 2010**—indicating broader availability but not yet the commercial scale that would define the next decade.
Industrywise, these were the years where **specialised genetics in large antelope** began gaining collector-type premiums, and Livingstone Eland benefitted quietly from this early repositioning.

2011–2016: The Explosive Premium Era

Between **2011 and 2016**, the species underwent a **historic price surge**, transforming from a niche asset into one of the most aggressively priced large antelope in the South African wildlife economy. Average prices jumped from **R35 127 in 2011** to **R127 481 in 2016**, representing an approximate **263% increase** over the period—one of the steepest escalations recorded for any plains-or-rare game subspecies.



Quantities simultaneously increased from **144 in 2011** to **277 in 2016**, signalling **strong breeder expansion**, genetically driven acquisition, and an influx of investment buyers entering the premium antelope market.

This era aligned with the broader **colour-variant and premium-genetics boom**, and Livingstone Eland, with its unique phenotype and size, positioned itself as a trophy-genetic anchor in many portfolios.

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2017–2021: The Correction, Stabilisation and Post-Boom Reset

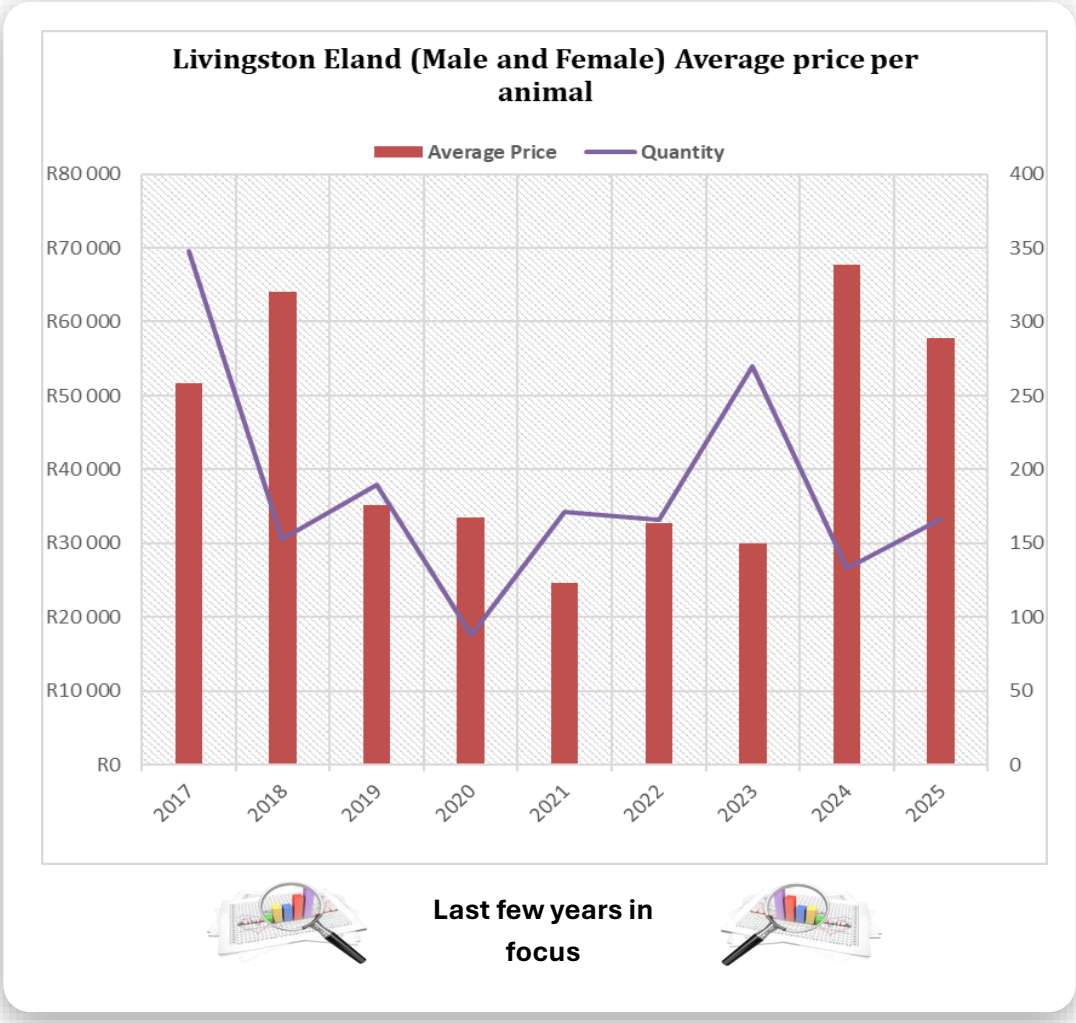
The market correction phase between **2017 and 2021** was felt sharply across all high-value species, and Livingstone Eland followed suit. Average prices declined from **R51 599 in 2017** to **R24 662 in 2021**, mirroring the industry-wide unwinding after speculative oversupply and the gradual cooling of investor enthusiasm. Quantities fluctuated—from **348 in 2017** downward to **171 in 2021**—showing that breeders were reducing disposals, holding back females, and rebuilding herd structures. COVID-19 further tightened liquidity in **2020–2021**, depressing demand yet strengthening long-term genetic retention strategies as international buyers temporarily withdrew.

2022–2024: Recovery Momentum with High Variance

From **2022 to 2024**, the species demonstrated renewed resilience. Prices climbed from **R32 706 in 2022** to **R67 722 in 2024**, a **just over 107% rebound**, fuelled by returning buyers, improved bankability, and a resurging appetite for large antelope with distinct genetic identity.

Quantities moved from **166 in 2022** to **133 in 2024**, a reduction of roughly **20%**, reinforcing the idea of **controlled supply** tightening into a recovering market.

The mixing of higher prices and lower supply created a **favourable rebalance**, with Livingstone Eland once again re-entering the premium wildlife conversation.



2025 A Renewed but More Disciplined Market

The comparison between **2025 and 2024** reveals a market shifting into a more **disciplined but optimistic growth phase**. Average price increased from **R67 722 in 2024** to **R57 805 in 2025**, which at face value is an **approximate 14.6% decrease**, yet the movement must be understood within the context of materially higher **quantities**, which rose from **133 to 167**—a **25.5% increase**.

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This indicates a **healthy broadening of supply**, not a collapse in demand. More breeders re-entered the market in 2025, choosing to release additional stock after multi-year retention. The slight softening in price reflects **greater transactional volume**, not weakened interest, and the fact that the price held near **R58 000**—substantially above pre-2022 levels—confirms continued confidence in the subspecies.

In the broader wildlife economy, 2025 has been defined by **stronger auction attendance, greater capital rotation, and increasing appetite for large antelope with lineage purity**, all of which support Livingstone Eland's sustained relevance. The specie now appears to be moving into a **mature pricing cycle**, where volatility is giving way to more predictable, fundamentals-driven performance anchored by supply control and genetics-based valuation.

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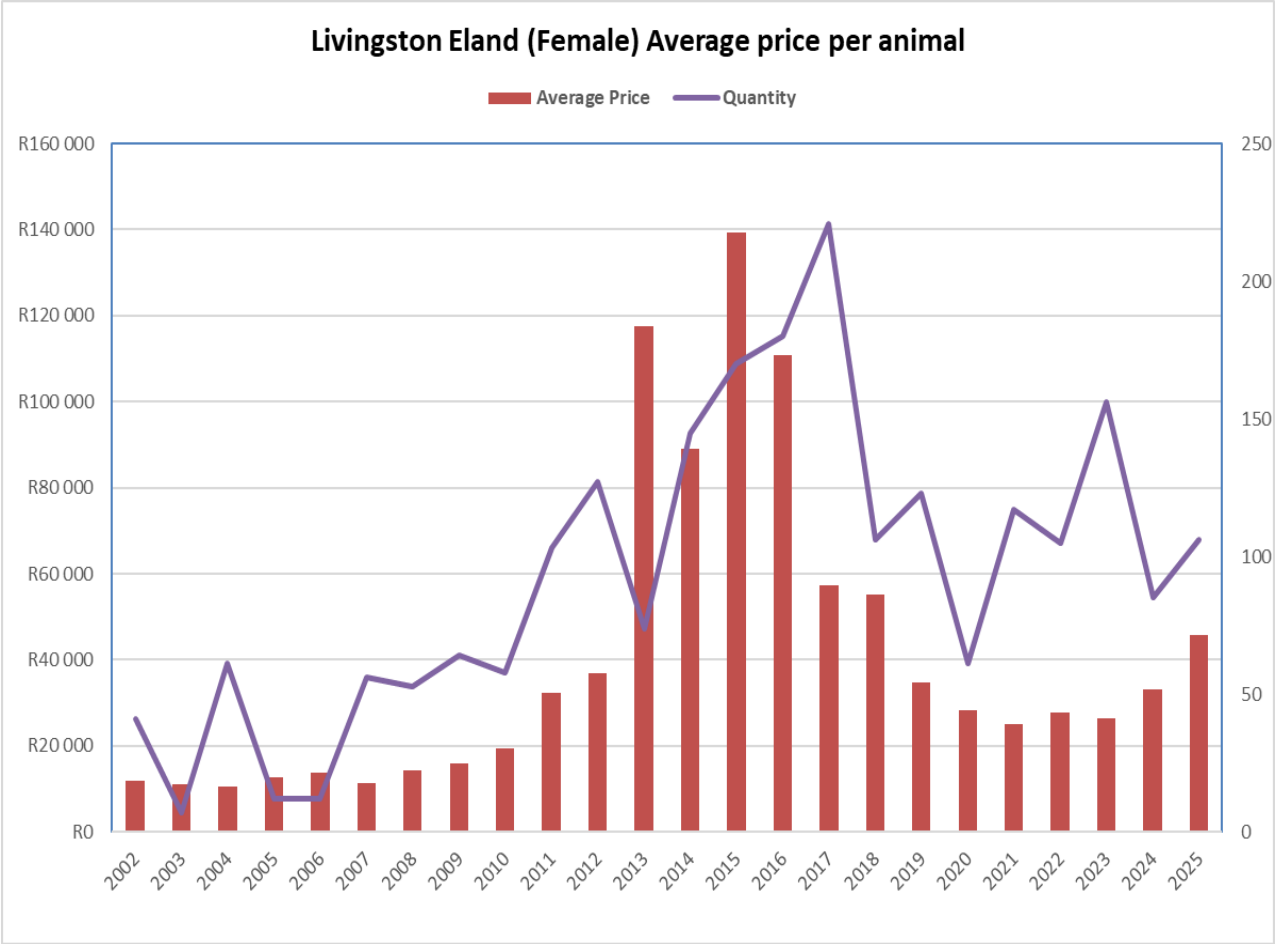
Livingstone Eland: **Female only** Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table presents the long arc of the Livingstone Eland female market, tracking its evolution from a quiet, low-volume early period into a powerful surge marked by exceptional trophy premiums, followed by a dramatic rebalancing and a steady return toward stability and renewed strength. The graph enhances this narrative visually, showing the sharp ascent in average prices during the boom years, the cascading adjustment that followed and the eventual stabilisation in the 2020s as both price and quantity settle into a more sustainable rhythm. Together, the table and graph reveal how **Livingstone Eland females have responded to shifting market cycles**, alternately shaped by rarity, buyer confidence, trophy demand and breeder appetite. It is a story of volatility, resilience and ultimate recalibration.

Livingston Eland (Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2002	R483 800	41	R11 800
2003	R77 000	7	R11 000
2004	R648 500	61	R10 631
2005	R151 500	12	R12 625
2006	R166 000	12	R13 833
2007	R642 250	56	R11 469
2008	R756 250	53	R14 269
2009	R1 012 000	64	R15 813
2010	R1 128 500	58	R19 457
2011	R3 336 000	103	R32 388
2012	R4 675 000	127	R36 811
2013	R8 697 500	74	R117 534
2014	R12 929 800	145	R89 171
2015	R23 671 000	170	R139 241
2016	R19 955 500	180	R110 864
2017	R12 647 350	221	R57 228
2018	R5 858 000	106	R55 264
2019	R4 288 500	123	R34 866
2020	R1 730 100	61	R28 362
2021	R2 929 450	117	R25 038
2022	R2 911 500	105	R27 729
2023	R4 109 000	156	R26 340
2024	R2 824 000	85	R33 224
2025	R4 849 000	106	R45 745



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Livingstone Eland: **Female only** Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Establishment Phase (2002–2010)

During the early phase from **2002 to 2010**, Livingstone Eland females traded in low volumes and at modest but steadily rising prices. Values increased from **R483 800 in 2002** to **R1 128 500 in 2010**, while quantities moved between **41 and 64 animals**, with average prices gradually rising from **R11 800 in 2002** to **R19 457 in 2010**. This period reflected a market still in its **foundation stage**, characterised by small, scattered herds and limited auction penetration. Prices grew organically as breeders began consolidating bloodlines, and the broader wildlife economy transitioned into a phase where rarity and genetics became increasingly commercialised. Market sentiment in this band was shaped by **measured demand rather than speculation**, and price growth was primarily driven by scarcity and early premium genetics rather than aggressive investment behaviour.

Rare-Game Boom and Peak Speculation (2011–2016)

The period from **2011 to 2016** marked the most dramatic escalation ever recorded for female Livingstone Eland. In **2011**, total value jumped to **R3 336 000** on **103 animals** at **R32 388**, already more than doubling the previous year's value. This momentum continued into **2012**, with values rising to **R4 675 000** and average prices lifting to **R36 811**. The real acceleration, however, unfolded between **2013 and 2015**.
From **2013 to 2015**, values surged from **R8 697 500** to an extraordinary **R23 671 000**, while average prices soared from **R117 534** in 2013 to **R139 241** in 2015. Even quantities rose from **74 to 170**, demonstrating intense market confidence and aggressive competition for elite breeding females. This surge aligned with the broader **South African rare-game investment bubble**, fuelled by strong liquidity among breeders, rising land values, aggressive debt-funded expansion, and the belief that colour-variant and rare-antelope genetics would continue compounding in value indefinitely.
By **2016**, the correction had begun, but the market still achieved **R19 955 500**, with average prices at **R110 864**, signalling the tail end of the speculative era. This entire band captured the height of **irrational exuberance** in the wildlife economy.

Correction, Post-Boom Adjustment and COVID Shock (2017–2021)

Following the peak, the period from **2017 to 2021** brought a sharp and sustained correction. Values fell from **R12 647 350 in 2017** to **R5 858 000 in 2018**, and then down to **R4 288 500 in 2019**, with average prices dropping correspondingly from **R57 228** to **R34 866**.

The COVID-19 years amplified the pressure. In **2020**, values bottomed at **R1 730 100**, with average prices falling further to **R28 362**, reflecting closed borders, muted international demand and uncertainty among breeders. Even as conditions improved in **2021**, value recovered only to **R2 929 450**, with average prices at **R25 038**, showing that confidence remained fragile. This band represented a period of **market rebalancing**, where the industry shifted away from speculative investment and returned to fundamentals such as ecological suitability, sustainable herd structures and realistic genetics-driven valuations.

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Re-normalisation and Gradual Recovery (2022–2024)

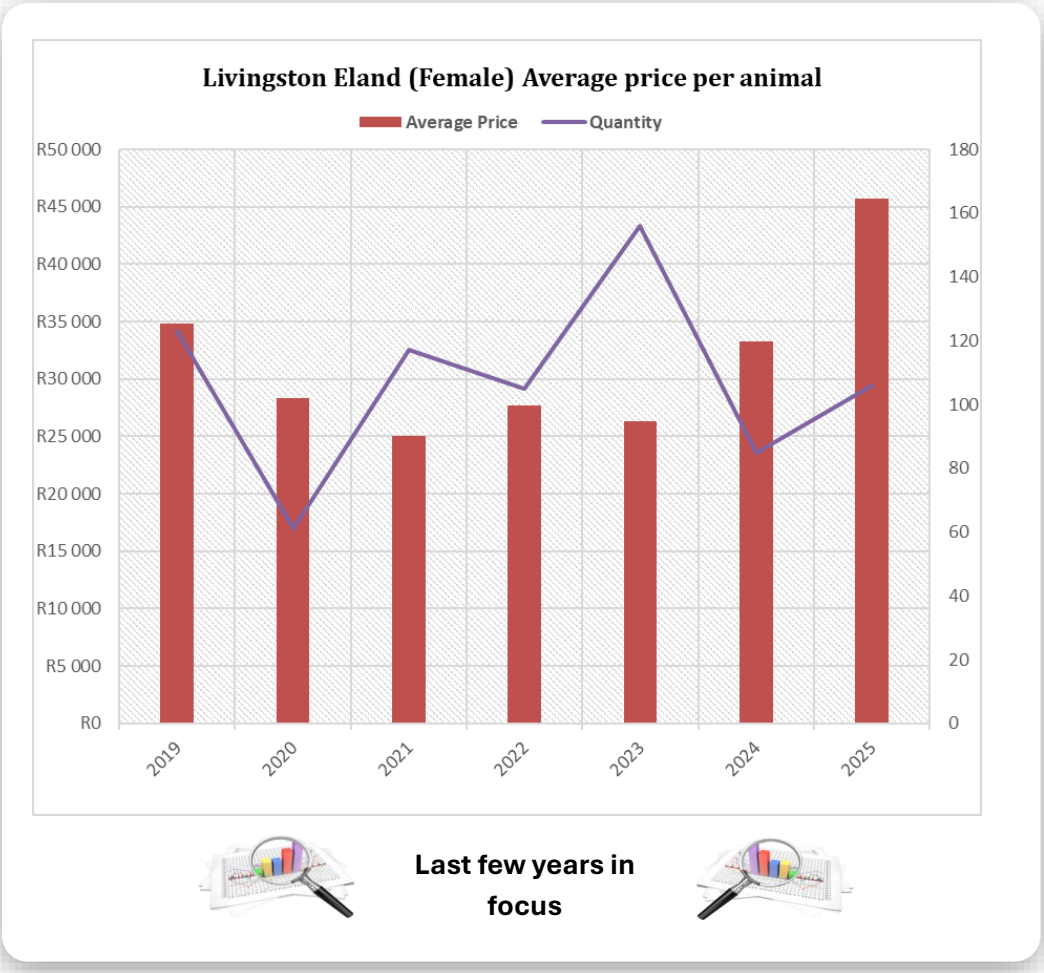
From **2022 to 2024**, the market began stabilising as post-COVID hunting activity returned, breeder liquidity improved, and consumer confidence strengthened. Values rose from **R2 911 500 in 2022** to **R4 109 000 in 2023**, with quantities increasing from **105 to 156**, signalling renewed activity in both demand and supply. Average prices remained moderate—**R27 729 in 2022** and **R26 340 in 2023**—reflecting a more disciplined market with realistic price expectations. In **2024**, value softened to **R2 824 000** on **85 animals**, but the average price climbed to **R33 224**, illustrating a renewed premium placed on select superior females while overall volumes contracted. This band marked a shift toward **quality-driven pricing**, where top females regained their identity as long-term breeding assets rather than short-term speculative vehicles.

2025: A Return of Confidence and Stronger Genetic Premiums

The movement from **2024 to 2025** demonstrated a clear rebound in buyer appetite and pricing power for high-quality female Livingstone Eland. Total value rose from **R2 824 000 in 2024** to **R4 849 000 in 2025**, an increase of **71.7%**, supported by a recovery in volumes from **85 to 106 animals**, a **24.7%** rise. More importantly, the average price lifted strongly from **R33 224 to R45 745**, an increase of **37.5%**, signalling renewed confidence in the species' breeding potential.

This upward shift reflected multiple industry tailwinds: stronger trophy and breeding demand, tightening supply of genetically verified females, and continued diversification back into classical rare-game species as colour-variant markets stabilised. The price uplift also suggests that buyers began positioning for the next multi-season breeding cycle, valuing the long-term reproductive contribution of Livingstone females more aggressively than in recent years.

Thus, **2025 marked a decisive improvement**, demonstrating not only a recovery in demand but a strengthening recognition of the underlying biological and commercial value of the species.



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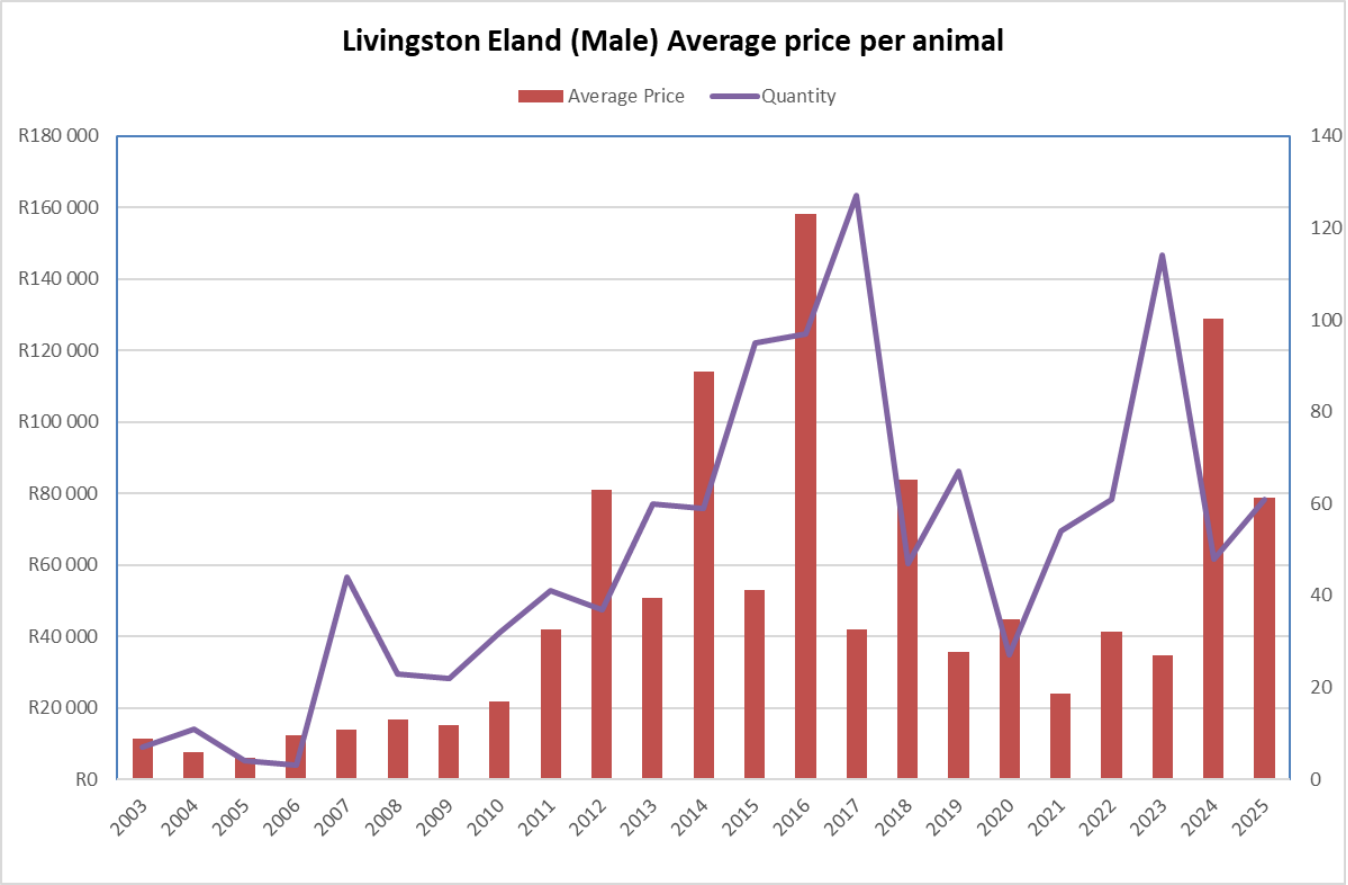
Livingstone Eland: **Male only** Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table below traces the evolution of the Livingstone Eland male market across more than two decades, revealing how this segment has moved from small volumes and modest values into one of the most volatile and high-stakes categories in the wildlife economy. The graph amplifies this narrative, showing an early period of low, steady price bars, followed by sudden upward surges as the species enters its premium phase. The towering price peaks of the mid-2010s stand out dramatically against the more gentle movements of earlier years, illustrating the intense competition for high-quality males during that era. This is a dataset that captures market emotion—rising confidence, explosive demand, abrupt correction and the gradual rebuilding of value as the species stabilises into its contemporary role. Together, the table and graph reveal a **market shaped by rarity, trophy desirability and cyclical investor appetite**, where males reflect the sharpest and most expressive movements of the Livingstone Eland economy.

Livingston Eland (Male)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2003	R80 136	7	R11 448
2004	R85 000	11	R7 727
2005	R24 000	4	R6 000
2006	R36 750	3	R12 250
2007	R604 500	44	R13 739
2008	R383 250	23	R16 663
2009	R331 000	22	R15 045
2010	R692 000	32	R21 625
2011	R1 722 300	41	R42 007
2012	R2 993 000	37	R80 892
2013	R3 037 500	60	R50 625
2014	R6 731 750	59	R114 097
2015	R5 027 500	95	R52 921
2016	R15 356 750	97	R158 317
2017	R5 309 010	127	R41 803
2018	R3 946 500	47	R83 968
2019	R2 382 900	67	R35 566
2020	R1 213 050	27	R44 928
2021	R1 287 800	54	R23 848
2022	R2 517 750	61	R41 275
2023	R3 972 250	114	R34 844
2024	R6 183 000	48	R128 813
2025	R4 804 500	61	R78 762



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Livingstone Eland: **Male only** Insights: 2001 to 2025

2003–2009: Early Market Formation and Gradual Value Recognition

The male Livingstone Eland market in the early years represented a niche but steadily formalising category. From **2003 to 2009**, average prices remained modest, fluctuating from **R11 448 in 2003** to **R15 045 in 2009**, reflecting a marketplace still discovering the premium associated with the darker, heavier-bodied Livingstone phenotype. Quantities remained consistently low, moving from **7 animals in 2003** to **22 animals in 2009**, signalling constrained supply and cautious breeder interest. This period was characterised by **breeding programme establishment**, limited dispersal of high-quality genetics, and buyers still distinguishing the Livingstone from broader Eland categories. The gradual rise in average prices through this band indicated **incremental recognition of morphological value**, yet without the aggressive bidding behaviour that would define later years.

2010–2016: Explosive Genetic Premiums and Market Overheating

The period from **2010 to 2016** marked a dramatic shift in the Livingstone Eland (Male) market. Average prices surged from **R21 625 in 2010** to an extraordinary **R158 317 in 2016**, representing a price escalation of more than **630%** over this band. Quantities also rose meaningfully from **32 animals in 2010** to **97 animals in 2016**, indicating expanding breeder production and strong auction turnover. This surge reflected a wider industry trend where premium genetics — especially in rare antelope categories — attracted **aggressive capital inflows**, with Livingstone Eland males benefiting from phenotype desirability, horn characteristics and the prestige associated with genetically uniform dark-line herds. The **2014–2016 peak**, with prices rising from **R114 097 in 2014** to **R158 317 in 2016**, aligned with the broader wildlife boom where demand far outpaced supply. It was a period of **extraordinary optimism**, fuelled by both domestic investment and high-net-worth entrants seeking trophy-class breeding males.



2017–2021: Post-Peak Correction, Market Saturation and COVID Disruption

Following the 2016 peak, the period from **2017 to 2021** reflected a severe correction. Average prices dropped from **R41 803 in 2017** to **R23 848 in 2021**, while quantities fluctuated but generally stabilised within the **47 to 127** range. This band was shaped by several forces:

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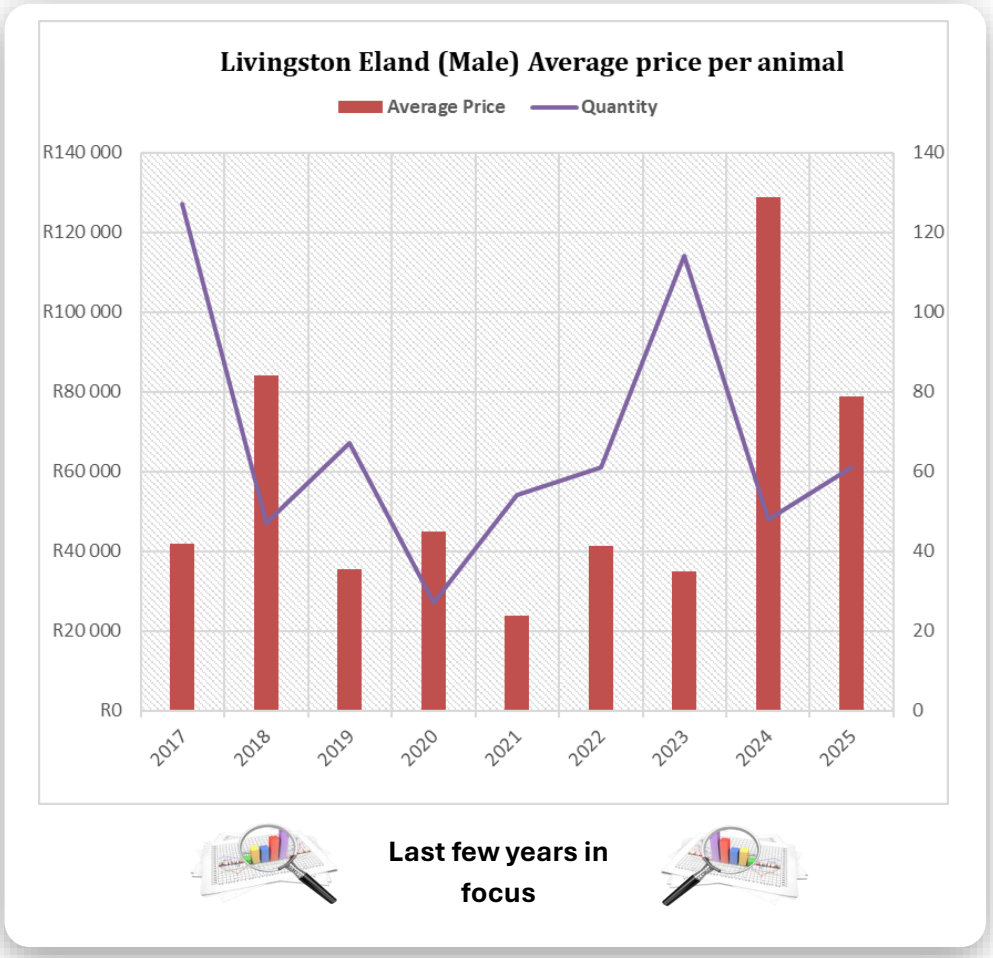
- **Over-supply** of earlier boom-year offspring placing downward pressure on prices.
- **Market recalibration**, as breeder enthusiasm moderated and value expectations normalised.
- **COVID-19 impacts**, particularly in 2020–2021, where travel restrictions reduced international buying and constrained domestic liquidity.

The decline from **R83 968 in 2018** to **R23 848 in 2021** told a clear story of an industry undergoing consolidation, with buyers prioritising affordability and operational sustainability over speculative pricing.

2022–2025: Stabilisation and a Renewed Search for Quality

From **2022 to 2025**, the market regained structure and consistency, albeit without revisiting its earlier extremes. Average prices recovered from **R41 275 in 2022** to **R78 762 in 2025**, while quantities remained relatively balanced, moving from **61 animals in 2022** to **61 animals again in 2025**, with the surge to **114 animals in 2023** representing a temporary release of accumulated stock.

This period reflected a re-centred market where **quality genetics once again commanded premiums**, but within sustainable, rational pricing ranges. The increase in 2024 to **R128 813**, followed by a moderated **R78 762 in 2025**, demonstrated a market still sensitive to supply pulses but fundamentally returning to equilibrium. This era was characterised by **strategic buying**, focused herd building, and an avoidance of the speculative tendencies seen a decade earlier. The 2024 figures included a single Livingstone eland bull for R4,1m. If we normalize for this ad hoc sale then the 2024 average price increase amounted to 43% and growth in 2025 price would have been 81%.



2025: A Year of Consolidated Recovery and Sustainable Value

The comparison between **2025 and 2024** reveals a market that continued reorganising itself while maintaining a healthy demand base. In **2024**, average prices reached **R128 813**, driven by smaller quantity availability at **48 males**, resulting in fierce bidding for elite phenotype individuals.

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In **2025**, quantities increased to **61 animals**, which naturally moderated prices to **R78 762**, a decline that aligned with typical supply-demand behaviour rather than any loss of interest in the category.

The key insight is that **2025 did not represent a downturn**, but rather a **normalising correction** following an abnormally high price year influenced by constrained supply. The total value of **R4.804 million in 2025**, up from **R6.183 million in 2024**, reflects this rebalancing, with the market digesting stock releases from multiple breeders while still paying strong premiums for quality animals.

Industry dynamics also supported this stabilisation. The broader wildlife sector in 2025 experienced **improving auction attendance**, renewed interest from international hunters returning post-pandemic, and stronger demand for **Livingstone genetics** as part of diversification strategies on mixed-species ranches. These conditions allowed prices to remain firm even with increased volumes, confirming that the **Livingstone Eland (Male)** market in 2025 operated from a position of **structural resilience rather than speculative volatility**.

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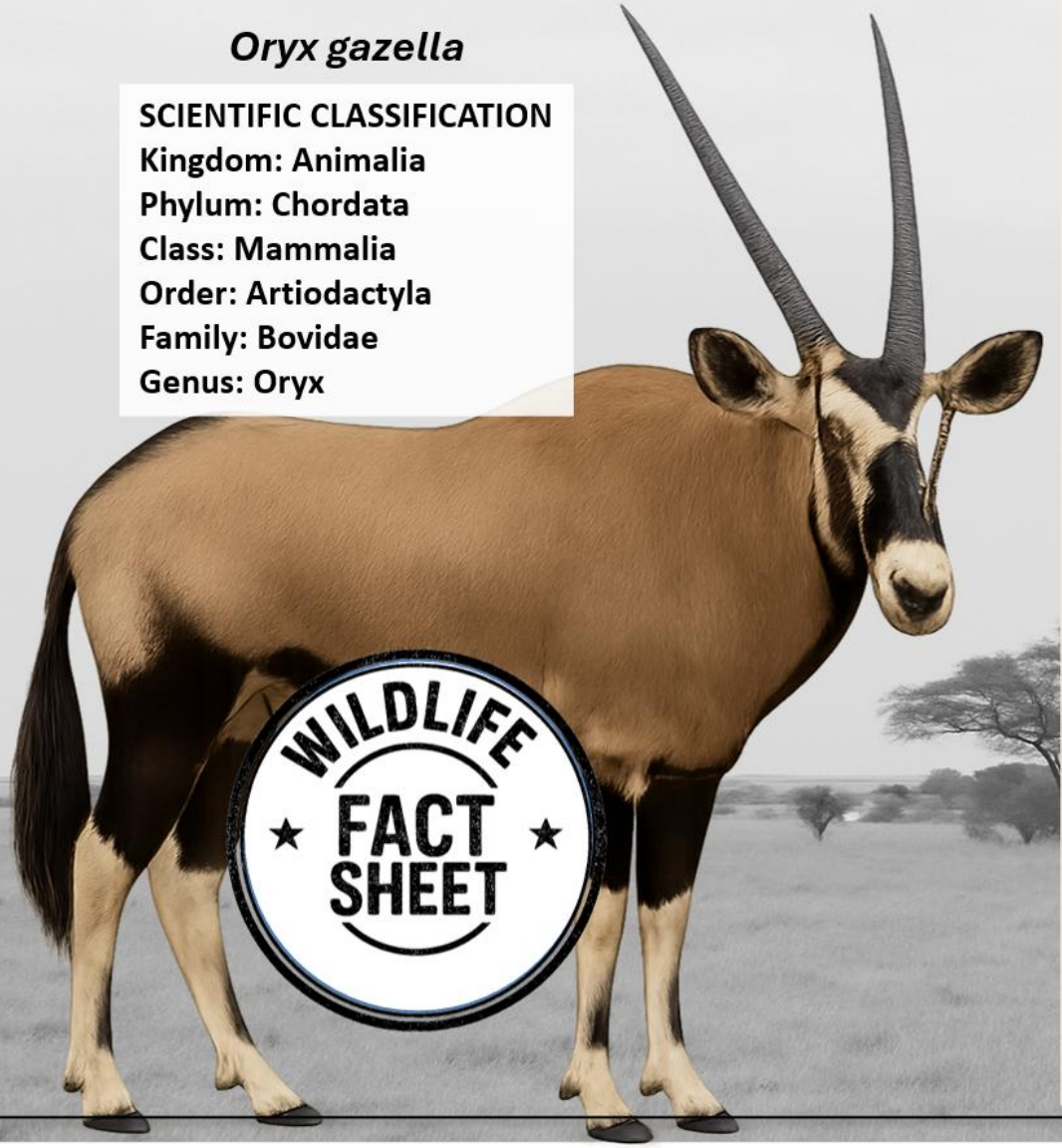
GEMSBOK

Oryx gazella

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: Oryx



MORPHOLOGY

- Light brown–grey coat with black & white facial markings.
- Long, straight horns in both sexes (up to 150 cm).
- Muscular body adapted to arid regions.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Arid and semi-arid regions of Southern Africa Kalahari Desert, Namib Desert, dry savannas & scrublands.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Primarily grazers; browse when grass is scarce
- Use moisture-rich plants during drought.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Herds of 10–30; dominant male leads.
- Territorial; use dung middens and scent marking.

ADAPTATIONS

- Exceptional water conservation ability.
- Tolerate high body temperatures without sweating.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- IUCN: Least Concern.
- Threats: habitat loss, hunting pressure.

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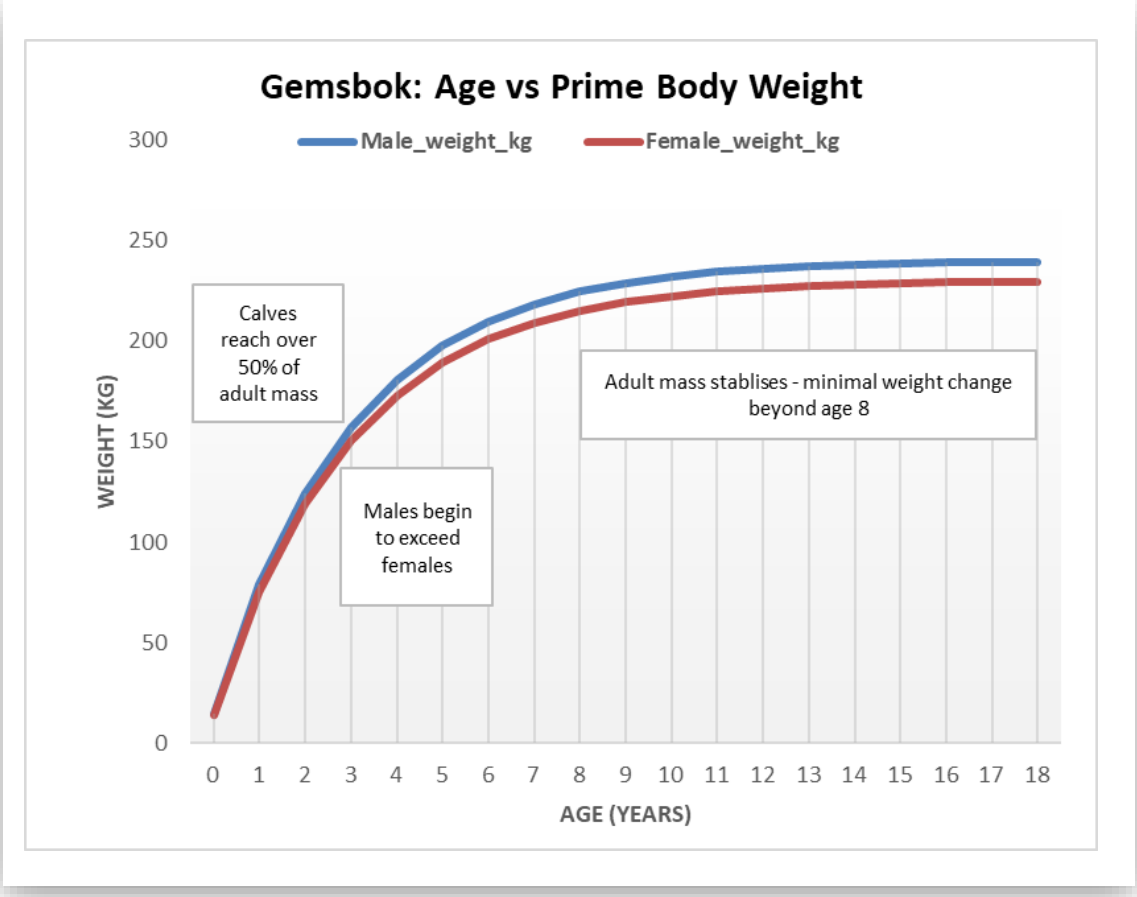
Gemsbok Specie Information

The South African Kalahari is a place that tests every living thing. Its red dunes roll endlessly into the horizon, its summer heat flares with violence and its water is a rare and unpredictable gift. Yet in this vast and unforgiving landscape lives one of the most perfectly adapted animals ever shaped by the African continent: the **Gemsbok**, the great desert oryx whose presence turns the silence of the Kalahari into a theatre of strength, endurance and austere beauty.

To see a Gemsbok at sunrise, standing on the crest of a dune, is to witness an animal that seems carved from the desert itself. Its pale fawn coat reflects the searing heat; its bold black facial mask strikes a contrast that seems almost ceremonial; its long, straight horns rise like polished spears from its head—symbols of both elegance and lethality. Everything about this antelope, from its stance to its physiology, tells the same story: **survival in a world where survival should be impossible**.

Although most South Africans associate Gemsbok with the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and the Northern Cape, their range extends into the semi-desert scrublands of the Karoo, the open plains of the North West and even onto large game farms in Limpopo where they have been widely introduced for trophy hunting and breeding. But their true identity remains tied to the Kalahari dunes. This is where they move in small herds, leaving delicate tracks in the sand as they travel quietly between sparse patches of grazing, thornveld and the occasional life-giving tsamma melon.



Although males and females look remarkably alike, a closer look reveals their differences**. Males** carry slightly heavier bodies, often weighing between **180 and 240 kg**, with thicker horns and deeper chests. **Females**, though lighter at around **150 to 210 kg**, are often the ones with the longest, most slender horns—sometimes longer than those of the bulls. In many antelope species, females lack horns entirely, but the Gemsbok breaks that rule. Both sexes carry these impressive weapons and both use them with devastating effect. Females protect their calves vigorously, while males defend territories, resources and dominance with a calm but powerful confidence.

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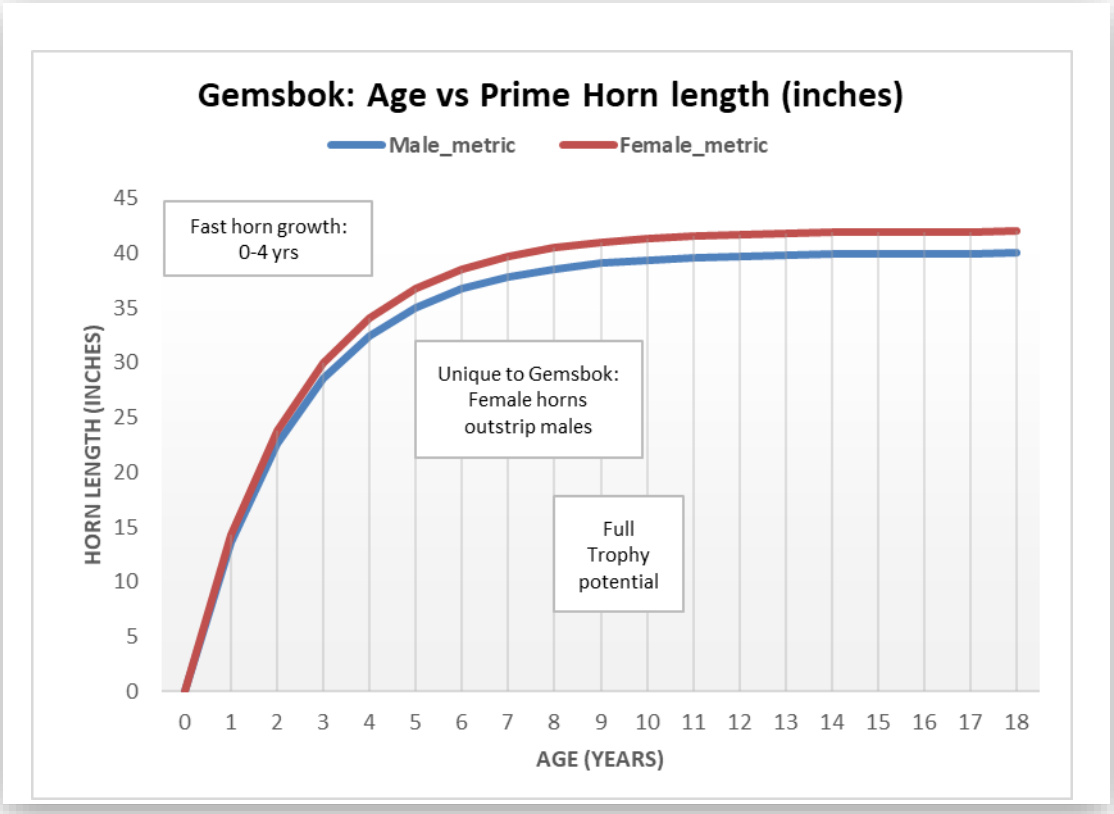
From six to ten years old, the Gemsbok enters what might be called its "plateau of perfection." Growth slows, but physical power remains high. This is the period when bulls dominate breeding and hold territories, while cows produce calves regularly. Lifespan in the wild can extend up to twenty years, though predators, drought and environmental stress often reduce this. Still, few antelope live lives as tough—or as long.



The Gemsbok's growth trajectory is a remarkable reflection of its overall strategy for life. Calves remain hidden for several weeks after birth, relying on camouflage and maternal vigilance. By their first year they may already weigh close to 80 kg, with horns measuring around 10 to 12 inches. Between the ages of two and four, they enter their explosive growth period—their bodies rising to 180 or even 200 kg and their horns lengthening dramatically, often reaching 25 to 30 inches. The **weight curve** chart mirrors this arc: steep growth early on, then a flattening at around 220–235 kg as the body reaches its desert-hardened maturity.

By the time a Gemsbok reaches five to six years of age, it is in its prime: powerful, confident and physically mature. The horns now stretch to between 33 and 37 inches, the body weighs over 210 kg and the animal's condition is as impressive as it will ever be.

The **horn length line-chart** tells this story beautifully. What begins as short spikes in the first year quickly rises into elegant spears by the fourth. After six years, the line settles into a long, proud plateau—35 to 37 inches—marking the animal's trophy window and biological peak.

Gemsbok thrive in herds of six to forty animals, shifting between resting, feeding and travelling with a rhythm that matches the seasons. Their behaviour is deliberate and purposeful. Territorial males often hold ground near dunes or pans, using ritualised displays—head tilts, measured steps, slow tail flicks—to communicate dominance without touching horns unless necessary. When forced to defend themselves, however, both sexes are formidable. Lions have been fatally gored by Gemsbok horns. Hyenas and leopards approach them with caution. Even cheetahs sometimes avoid adult individuals entirely. Reproduction follows the rhythm of rainfall. Their diet is as fiercely adaptable as the animals themselves. In good years, they graze on sweet grasses like any large herbivore of the savanna. But when the veld dries out and temperatures soar, the Gemsbok shifts effortlessly into browsing mode, taking leaves from hardy shrubs, digging for bulbs, chewing roots and extracting moisture from wild melons when even predators struggle to survive.

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They can live for weeks—sometimes months—without drinking free water, relying on metabolic and plant-derived moisture to sustain them. This extraordinary adaptation makes them one of the most water-efficient large antelope on the planet.

With a gestation of around 270 days, cows may calve at any time of year, though peaks occur after good rains when the veld bursts briefly into life. A single calf is the norm, hidden away for weeks and visited only briefly by its mother until strong enough to join the herd. The energy investment is high, but the reward is resilience: every new Gemsbok calf represents another unit of strength in herds designed for survival rather than abundance.

The following matrix summarises **the primary Gemsbok variants recognised in South Africa**, highlighting their distinguishing traits and relevance to the wildlife industry.

Category	Variant	Description
Colour Variant	Standard	Wild-type sandy brown coat with black & white facial markings
Colour Variant	Golden	Dilute golden/tan coat with softer contrast and reduced black areas
Colour Variant	Dark-Phase	Darker body with intensified black stripes and facial mask
Colour Variant	White-Faced	Reduced or washed-out facial mask with normal body colour
Horn Variant	Long Symmetrical	36–40+ inch straight horns; highly desirable phenotype
Horn Variant	Medium Symmetrical	Typical 32–36 inch horn length in free-ranging animals
Horn Variant	Backward Curved	Slight rear sweep; heritable horn shape trait
Ecotype	Kalahari Type	Large frame, long horns, pale coat; classic trophy phenotype
Ecotype	Namib Desert Type	Smaller, heat-adapted, light sandy colouring
Ecotype	Bushveld Type	Standard build; adapts to mixed woodland–savanna habitats
Colour Variant Ivory	Bushveld Type	Ivory coat with softer contrast and reduced black areas
Colour Variant Red	Bushveld Type	Red coat with softer contrast and reduced black areas

In South Africa's wildlife economy, the Gemsbok holds significant value. Its imposing horns and striking markings make it a premier trophy species, while its ability to thrive in arid conditions makes it an excellent choice for extensive game farmes, requiring less supplementary feeding and water than most other large antelope. Unlike colour-variant markets that have shifted over time, the Gemsbok's value lies in its pure, unchanged desert lineage—its size, its condition and its iconic silhouette.

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Fascinating Insights: Gemsbok

The Gemsbok stands as one of the most iconic and visually striking antelope of the arid Kalahari — **a masterclass in survival, elegance and efficiency**. Powerful yet graceful, these antelope are perfectly adapted to thrive where temperatures soar, water is scarce and vegetation appears sparse. Their long, rapier-like horns develop early and remain lethal throughout life, serving both as defence against predators and as tools in dominance displays. Gemsbok are remarkably **heat-tolerant**, maintaining stable body temperatures and conserving moisture far better than most large herbivores. Their social structure, typically **centred around small territorial herds**, reflects a species finely tuned to balancing space, resources and predation risk. Driven by instinct, environmental cues and a suite of remarkable physiological traits, the Gemsbok epitomises resilience — a species as impressive in form as it is in ecological importance across southern Africa's drylands.

- Gemsbok can survive without drinking water for **weeks**, relying on moisture extracted from roots, melons and desert tubers.
- They allow their body temperature to rise safely to around **45°C**, preventing sweating and conserving water.
- Both males and females have horns — females often **longer and slimmer**, while males have **thicker, heavier bases** for combat.
- Calves lie motionless and camouflaged for the first weeks of life, dramatically increasing survival in open habitats.
- Their striking facial patterns act like **heat shields** and may play a role in individual recognition.
- They can detect distant thunderstorms and will move kilometres to reach new grazing after rain.
- Predators often abandon hunts when faced with defensive horn circles — a tight ring formed by adults to protect calves.
- Their digestive system efficiently extracts nutrients from **dry, fibrous grasses** that many antelope cannot utilise.
- Gemsbok can reach speeds of **60 km/h**, maintaining high speed over long distances.
- They are known to **displace smaller antelope species at waterholes** due to their dominance and confidence.
- In territorial disputes, males engage in parallel walking displays before escalating to horn clashes.
- Gemsbok are one of the few antelope whose eyesight, smell and hearing are all equally acute — a vital adaptation in open terrain.

"The Gemsbok is the desert's masterpiece, a symbol of strength, beauty and resilience and its very presence enriches both the land and the wildlife industry that depends on its unwavering ability to thrive where few others can."

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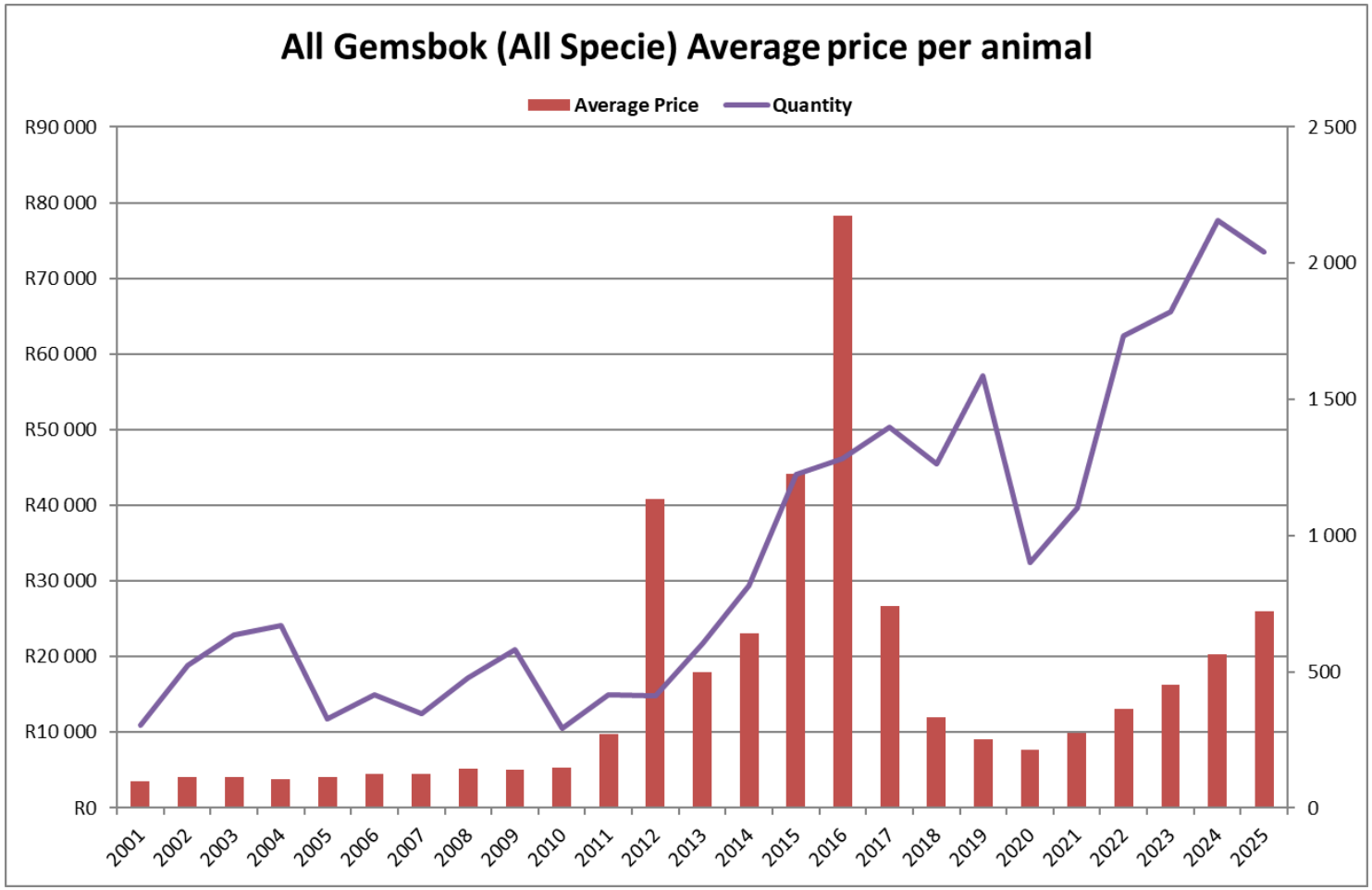
Total **Gemsbok All Species** Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

This dataset traces the evolution of the Gemsbok market across nearly a quarter century, capturing how this resilient plains species moved from modest commercial beginnings into one of the most dramatic valuation cycles seen in South African wildlife trading. The table shows **the slow early ascent**, the explosive transformation of the mid-2010s, **the pronounced contraction that followed** and the renewed strength in recent years. The graph reinforces this story visually, with early low price bars, then a dramatic surge culminating in towering columns during the **2014–2016 boom**, followed by a long, steady rebuilding. The movement of the quantity line tells its own story: large volumes often persisted even as prices fell, revealing how Gemsbok remained a key commercial species throughout volatility. Together, the table and graph provide a narrative of **resilience, responsiveness and renewed market identity**, illustrating how the Gemsbok has adapted to—and shaped—the changing rhythms of the wildlife economy.

Total Gemsbok All Species			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 076 630	302	R3 565
2002	R2 128 550	523	R4 070
2003	R2 545 599	634	R4 015
2004	R2 532 475	668	R3 791
2005	R1 336 000	328	R4 073
2006	R1 882 300	417	R4 514
2007	R1 581 750	348	R4 545
2008	R2 455 500	476	R5 159
2009	R2 944 450	582	R5 059
2010	R1 566 800	291	R5 384
2011	R4 061 500	416	R9 763
2012	R16 809 100	412	R40 799
2013	R10 824 150	604	R17 921
2014	R18 760 950	815	R23 020
2015	R53 963 896	1 224	R44 088
2016	R100 465 072	1 284	R78 244
2017	R37 331 700	1 399	R26 685
2018	R15 047 632	1 262	R11 924
2019	R14 310 100	1 587	R9 017
2020	R6 895 900	902	R7 645
2021	R10 937 150	1 103	R9 916
2022	R22 623 194	1 735	R13 039
2023	R29 730 329	1 821	R16 326
2024	R43 691 650	2 158	R20 246
2025	R53 195 400	2 042	R26 051



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Total **Gemsbok All Species** Insights: 2001 to 2025

2001–2010: Early Stability and Slow Value Formation

From **2001 to 2010**, the Gemsbok market followed a relatively traditional plains-game pattern, with **moderate value movements** and annual prices generally holding between **R3 565 and R5 384**. Quantities increased steadily from **302 to 582**, showing that supply was growing faster than value. This was consistent with the broader expansion of the wildlife ranching sector during this era, where **infrastructure, land conversion, and game production** were still scaling. The market remained steady but unspectacular, and no strong price pressure emerged because supply comfortably met demand. This period laid the groundwork for later investment cycles but was still pre-boom in character.

2011–2016: The Investment Wave and the Colour-Variant Boom

The period from **2011 to 2016** marked the **most dramatic upswing** in the history of the Gemsbok market. Average price surged from **R9 763 in 2011** to an extraordinary **R78 244 in 2016**, while quantities rose from **416 to 1 284**, and total value leapt from **R4.06m to R100.46m**. This era aligned with the broader industry-wide investment cycle driven by **high-value breeding projects**, rising international interest, and aggressive reinvestment among South African breeders. 2012 was the first major breakout year, but the peak was unmistakably **2016**, when both demand and value converged into the strongest spike the market has ever seen. Industry-wide optimism, availability of capital, and the premium placed on quality genetics contributed to these inflated conditions. This period ultimately became a reference point for understanding over-heated market dynamics.

2017–2020: Correction, Normalisation and COVID Disruption

The years **2017 to 2020** reflected a predictable correction, as the market stabilised from the investment boom. Prices dropped sharply from the 2016 peak, falling to **R26 685 in 2017**, **R11 924 in 2018**, and **R9 017 in 2019**. Quantities remained high, however, moving from **1 399 to 1 587**, indicating that breeders continued to produce in volume even as returns declined. The arrival of **COVID in 2020** further suppressed value, with average prices at **R7 645**, and volumes dropping to **902**. Travel restrictions and liquidity constraints affected both domestic and international buyers, reducing competitive tension at auctions. The sector shifted toward survival and herd maintenance rather than aggressive buying.

2021–2025: Post-COVID Rebuild and Modern Market Strengthening

From **2021 onward**, the market began rebuilding as confidence returned. Prices climbed from **R9 916 (2021)** to **R20 246 (2024)**, supported by stronger auction performance, better buyer attendance, and renewed confidence in plains game as stable long-term assets.

Quantities also expanded: from **1 103 (2021)** to a record **2 158 (2024)**. The increase reflected both improved market participation and higher breeder output. Despite the higher supply, prices continued to rise—an indication that **demand was outpacing production growth**, particularly for quality animals.

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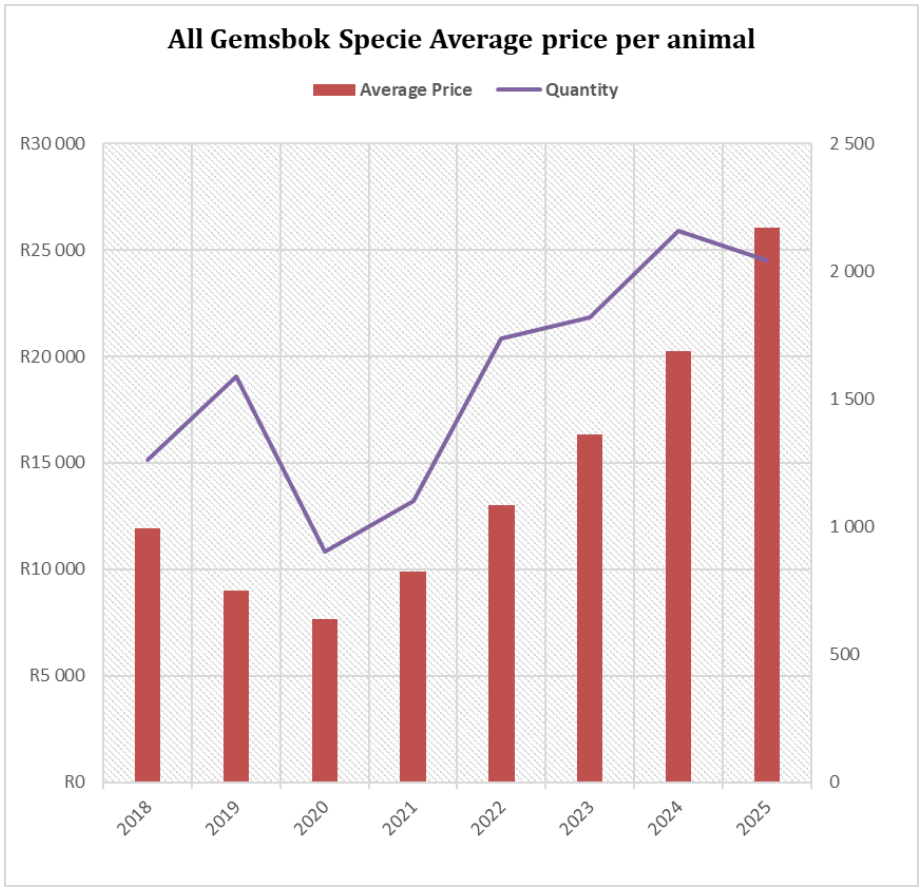
By **2025**, the upward trajectory strengthened further, with value rising to **R53.19m**, prices improving to **R26 051**, and quantities remaining high at **2 042**. The industry had clearly moved into a healthier, more rational pricing cycle where volumes are strong but no longer destabilising, and buyers are prioritising **genetics, consistency, and veld sustainability**.

2025 extended the gains made in 2024, demonstrating that the recovery phase was not a short-term rebound but a **consolidated strengthening of the Gemsbok market**. Total value rose from **R43.69m in 2024** to **R53.19m in 2025**, an increase of about **21.8%**, underscoring renewed commercial confidence.

Average price increased from **R20 246 to R26 051**, a rise of approximately **28.6%**, signalling that buyers were willing to pay more for high-quality animals even with quantities still surpassing **2 000 units per year**. The slight decline in quantity—from **2 158 to 2 042**—did not reflect weakness; instead, it pointed to **normal supply fluctuations** and possibly more selective offering strategies by breeders seeking to protect price levels.

In the context of broader wildlife markets, 2025 stood out because **price strength across plains game improved**, international interest continued to return, and domestic breeding operations operated from far stronger financial bases than during the COVID period. The Gemsbok market benefitted directly from these conditions, with **better auction competition, stronger genetic bidding, and improved demand from integrated wildlife-tourism operations**.



Overall, **2025 confirmed the establishment of a modern, resilient, and well-valued Gemsbok market**, where both volume and price can coexist without destabilising each other—a maturity phase that has taken more than two decades to materialise.

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Gemsbok: A Species Reinventing Its Value Through Colour Diversity and Rising Premium Tiers

This summary table presents the **structural makeup of the entire Gemsbok market**, separating the species into its major genetic and colour-variant categories and showing how each contributes to total value, volume and average pricing. Rather than looking at the market as a single pool, the table reveals how **different variants play different economic roles**, some forming the commercial foundation of the industry while others act as premium niche segments that drive outsized value through rarity or distinctive appearance. It also shows how the distribution of market share shifts from one year to the next, reflecting both breeder strategies and broader wildlife-market behaviour. The result is a layered snapshot of **market concentration, premium dispersion and shifting buyer appetite** across the Gemsbok spectrum.

Gemsbok Summary	2025				2024			
	% Total	Value	Quantity	Average	% Total	Value	Quantity	Average
Gemsbok : Common	67.56%	R35 938 900	1 759	R20 431	74.50%	R32 548 650	1 913	R17 014
Gemsbok : Arabian	0.84%	R447 000	18	R24 833	0.99%	R433 000	23	R18 826
Gemsbok : Golden	13.98%	R7 436 000	142	R52 366	14.29%	R6 245 000	158	R39 525
Gemsbok : Ivory	2.10%	R1 117 500	3	R372 500	0.00%	R0	0	R0
Gemsbok : Painted	0.86%	R460 000	5	R92 000	0.73%	R320 000	5	R64 000
Gemsbok : Red	12.69%	R6 748 000	72	R93 722	9.17%	R4 006 000	54	R74 185
Gemsbok : Rooi Ivoor	1.28%	R682 500	16	R0	0.32%	R139 000	5	R0
Gemsbok : Kalahari	0.44%	R235 500	22	R0	0.00%	R0	0	R0
Gemsbok : Red Face	0.24%	R130 000	5	R0	0.00%	R0	0	R0
TOTALS	**100.00%**	**R53 195 400**	**2 042**	**R26 051**	**100.00%**	**R43 691 650**	**2 158**	**R20 246**

The first and most striking feature in the table is the dominance of **Gemsbok : Common**, which continues to serve as the backbone of the market in both 2024 and 2025. In 2024 it made up **74.50%** of all sales with **1 913 animals**, generating **R32.55 million** at an average of **R17 014**. Even though its share declines slightly to **67.56%** in 2025, the absolute contribution rises to **R35.94 million** from **1 759 animals** and the average price strengthens to **R20 431**. This reveals a market where common Gemsbok remain essential to throughput, yet buyers are willing to pay **more per animal**, signalling stronger restocking demand and firmer pricing fundamentals in the general plains-game economy.

The **Golden Gemsbok** segment continues to play the leading premium role within the variant categories. Although its proportion softens marginally from **14.29%** in 2024 to **13.98%** in 2025, total value rises from **R6.25 million** to **R7.44 million** and the average price increases materially from **R39 525** to **R52 366**.

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The reduction in quantity—from **158** animals down to **142**—combined with rising prices tells a clear story of **heightened competition for limited premium animals**, a trend entirely consistent with the 2025 wildlife landscape where top-tier colour variants saw notable price firming due to supply constraints.

A standout newcomer in 2025 is **Ivory Gemsbok**, which had **no sales in 2024**, yet enters the market in 2025 with **3 animals** selling for a combined **R1.12 million**, achieving an extraordinary average of **R372 500**. Although the sample is small, the appearance of this category at such a high value reflects **renewed appetite for ultra-rare variants**, supported by selective breeder programmes that are now beginning to release limited animals into the market again.

Painted Gemsbok also shows measurable strengthening. With **5 animals** sold in both years, its average rises from **R64 000** in 2024 to **R92 000** in 2025, indicating a meaningful uplift in aesthetic-driven demand. Similarly, the **Red variant** sees both value and quantity expansion: from **54 animals** generating **R4.01 million** in 2024 at **R74 185**, to **72 animals** generating **R6.75 million** in 2025 at **R93 722**. This increase in both scale and pricing reflects a **clear broadening of mid-tier premium demand**, especially among buyers seeking colour contrast without entering the elite price tiers of Golden or Ivory.

The smaller niche categories show diverse behaviours. **Rooi Ivoor**, which produced only **R139 000** in 2024 across **5 animals**, jumps to **R682 500** in 2025 across **16 animals**, an expansion that signals renewed interest in heritage and speciality genetics. Meanwhile, **Kalahari** and **Red Face** appear only in 2025, generating **R235 500** and **R130 000** respectively, each with modest volumes but clear evidence of **market diversification** as breeders reintroduce specialist lines.

Taken together, the full distribution reveals a 2025 market that is **broader, deeper and more premium-weighted** than the previous year. Even though total quantity falls from **2 158** to **2 042**, total value rises sharply from **R43.69 million** to **R53.20 million**, driven not by a single segment but by strengthening across nearly all colour variants and a decisive rise in average pricing for both commercial and premium categories. It is a year where **volume softened but value quality increased**, reflecting a wildlife economy shifting toward strategic buying, selective breeding and amplified interest in genetic uniqueness.

Taken together, the full distribution reveals a 2025 market that is **broader, deeper and more premium-weighted** than the previous year. Even though total quantity falls from **2 158** to **2 042**, total value rises sharply from **R43.69 million** to **R53.20 million**, driven not by a single segment but by strengthening across nearly all colour variants and a decisive rise in average pricing for both commercial and premium categories. It is a year where **volume softened but value quality increased**, reflecting a wildlife economy shifting toward strategic buying, selective breeding and amplified interest in genetic uniqueness.

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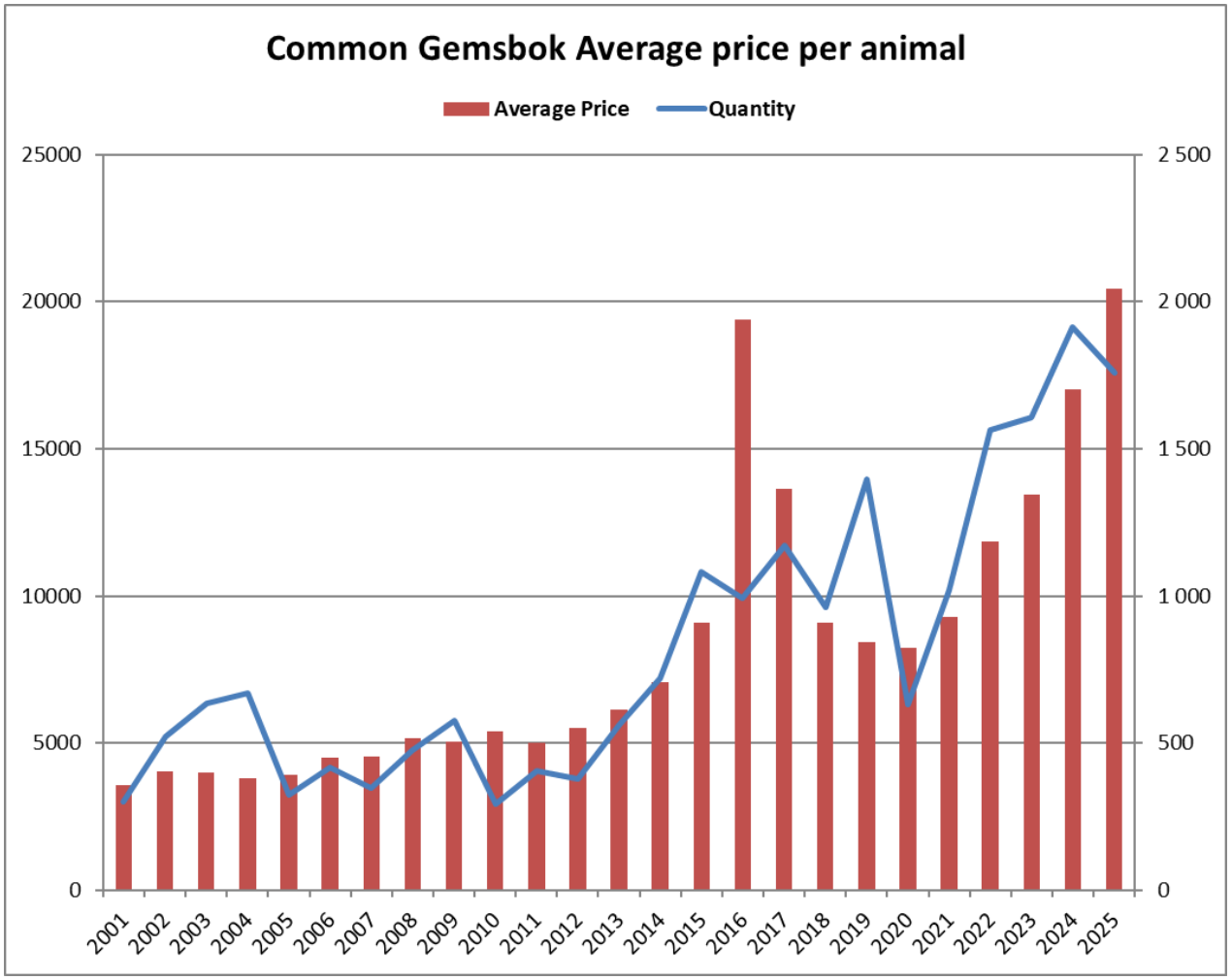
Common **Gemsbok** Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Common Gemsbok dataset presents a long, uninterrupted narrative of how this foundational plains-game species has behaved in the market over nearly a quarter of a century. What the table captures and the accompanying graph visually reinforces, is the **steady evolution of value, trading volumes and average prices** as supply cycles, drought years, demand surges and broader wildlife-industry movements shaped buyer behaviour. The early part of the series moves gently, almost rhythmically, before the market begins to open up into **larger volumes and more decisive price movements**, showing how this species consistently underpins commercial auction activity. As the graph unfolds, the rising and falling bars and the sweeping blue line reflect the **interplay of availability, bidder appetite and market recalibration**, telling a story of a species that has gradually gained economic strength and strategic importance within the plains-game economy. This context sets the stage for a more detailed exploration of how each period behaved and what those changes reveal.

Common Gemsbok			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 076 630	302	R3 565
2002	R2 100 550	521	R4 032
2003	R2 545 599	634	R4 015
2004	R2 532 475	668	R3 791
2005	R1 268 000	324	R3 914
2006	R1 882 300	417	R4 514
2007	R1 581 750	348	R4 545
2008	R2 455 500	476	R5 159
2009	R2 925 650	578	R5 062
2010	R1 566 800	291	R5 384
2011	R2 031 500	405	R5 016
2012	R2 097 850	380	R5 521
2013	R3 451 050	561	R6 152
2014	R5 094 700	720	R7 076
2015	R9 828 896	1 083	R9 076
2016	R19 269 072	993	R19 405
2017	R15 966 700	1 172	R13 623
2018	R8 706 682	960	R9 069
2019	R11 752 100	1 395	R8 424
2020	R5 185 500	631	R8 218
2021	R9 472 250	1 019	R9 296
2022	R18 488 936	1 562	R11 837
2023	R21 577 578	1 605	R13 444
2024	R32 548 650	1 913	R17 014
2025	R35 938 900	1 759	R20 431



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Common **Gemsbok** Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Stability and Slow Accumulation (2001–2007)

During the period from **2001 to 2007**, the Common Gemsbok market moved within a narrow and relatively stable pricing band. Average prices increased only moderately, rising from **R3 565 in 2001** to **R4 545 in 2007**, reflecting a market that was still grounded in **traditional plains-game demand** without significant competitive pressure. Quantities during these years rose from **302 to 348**, signalling a steady but not explosive expansion. This was a period defined by **predictable supply**, and the absence of large external shocks helped maintain a consistent pricing structure.

Pre-Boom Expansion and Rising Demand (2008–2014)

From **2008 to 2014**, the market experienced a clear upward shift. Average prices increased from **R5 159 in 2008** to **R7 076 in 2014**, marking a roughly **37% uplift** over the band. More importantly, quantities accelerated substantially—from **476 in 2008** to **720 in 2014**. This surge reflected the rising commercialisation of the wildlife industry, improvements in game-ranching infrastructure, and expanding hunting and live-sale markets. The **2008–2014 period** also coincided with high investment in wildlife farmland and increased breeding intensity, contributing to higher supply but also greater market liquidity and competition.

Major Price Breakout and Industry Reconfiguration (2015–2017)

The period from **2015 to 2017** marked a dramatic realignment in the market. Prices climbed from **R9 076 in 2015** to a peak of **R19 405 in 2016**, before easing to **R13 623 in 2017**. The **2015–2016 spike** corresponded with the broader industry boom in plains-game breeding, high investor appetite, and aggressive farm expansions. Quantities surged from **1 083 in 2015** to **1 172 in 2017**, showing that demand was not price-sensitive during the peak years. This band represents the **strongest price appreciation era** in the Common Gemsbok dataset.

Market Correction, External Shocks and Realignment (2018–2021)

Between **2018 and 2021**, the market underwent a necessary correction. Prices fell from **R9 069 in 2018** to **R8 218 in 2020**, a period heavily influenced by **macroeconomic tightening**, drought cycles in several provinces, and the disruptive shock of **COVID-19**. Despite these pressures, quantities remained resilient, moving from **960 units in 2018** to **1 019 in 2021**. The post-COVID reopening of live auctions, combined with pent-up demand, stabilised prices at **R9 296 in 2021**, showing the underlying strength of the species.

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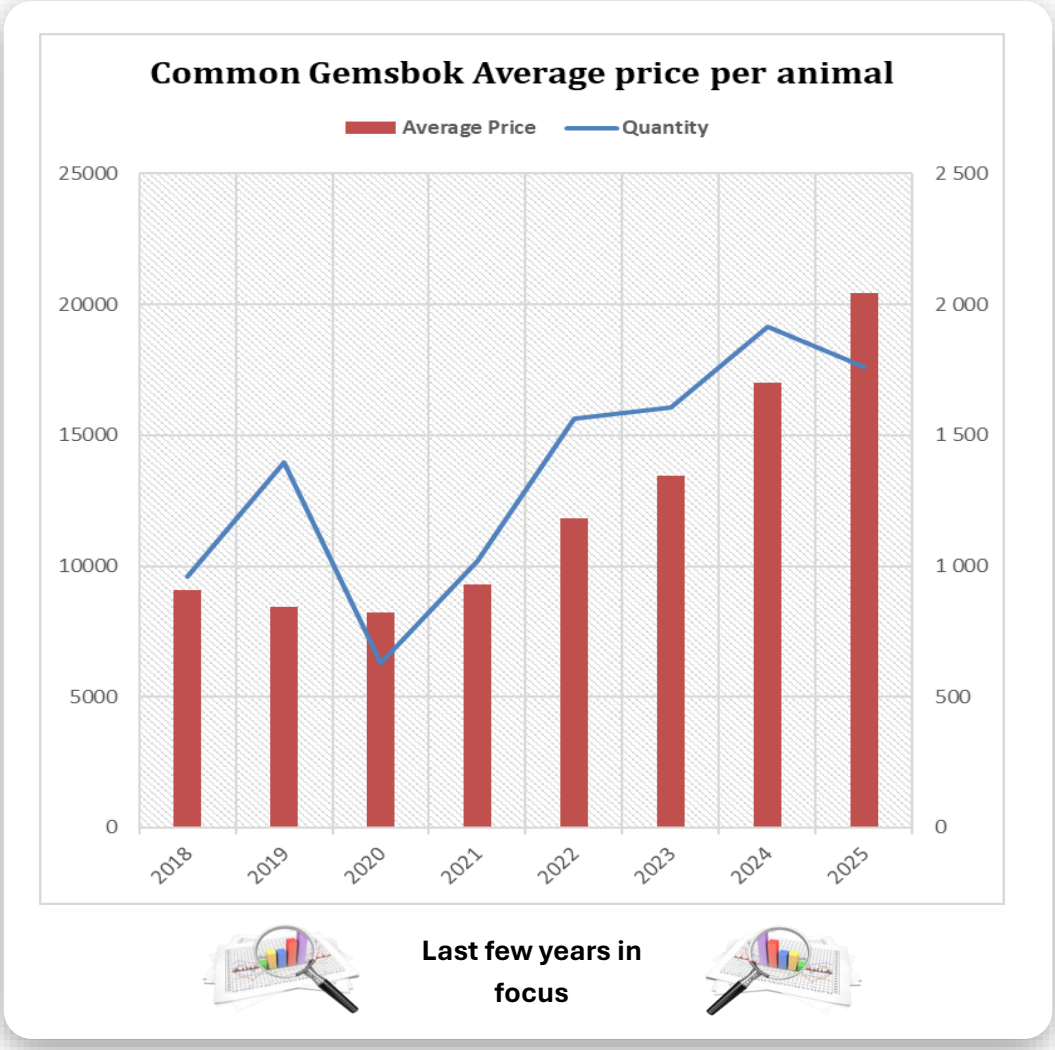
Renewed Demand and Strong Price Growth (2022–2025)

The final band from **2022 to 2025** reflects a powerful rebound. Prices increased from **R11 837 in 2022** to **R20 431 in 2025**, representing a **72.5% rise** across the period. Quantities expanded sharply—from **1 562 in 2022** to **1 759 in 2025**, supported by increased hunting demand, supply shortages in certain regions, and the maturing of large breeding programs initiated a decade earlier. The consistent price uplift through 2023–2025 highlights **sustained buyer appetite** and a market that has redefined the commercial value of Common Gemsbok in modern wildlife economics.



2025 Performance Compared to 2024

The comparison between **2025 and 2024** reflects a **continuation of the strong upward trajectory** in the Common Gemsbok market. Average price moved from **R17 014 in 2024** to **R20 431 in 2025**, an increase of **20.1%**, underscoring sustained demand strength and tightening supply for quality plains game. Although quantities dipped slightly from **1 913 in 2024** to **1 759 in 2025**, this contraction supports the price rise, as fewer animals on auction created **competitive bidding environments** across major sales.

Industry factors also contributed significantly. The **2024–2025 season** benefitted from improved rainfall conditions in several game-farming regions, enabling better animal condition and higher buyer confidence. At the same time, **increasing international hunting interest** and strengthened domestic demand helped ensure that the market maintained its upward momentum. The sustained elevation in values suggests that Common Gemsbok have fully consolidated their position as **one of South Africa's most stable and commercially reliable plains-game assets**, entering 2025 with strong fundamentals and reinforced long-term outlook.

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This table below presents a detailed breakdown of **Gemsbok bull pricing by horn size**, offering a layered view of how the market allocates value across different maturity and trophy classes. Rather than simply showing prices, it reveals the **relationship between buyer intent, horn-length scarcity, hunting demand and breeding potential**. The structure of the table allows one to see how the market behaves at the broad commercial level, where large volumes change hands and how it behaves at the elite end of the spectrum, where a handful of bulls with extraordinary horn sizes attract **high-intensity bidding**. What follows is a story of contrasts—**from mass-market liquidity to high-end rarity**—and how these factors shape the economic landscape of Gemsbok bulls year after year.

Gemsbok Bulls Pricing by Inches Sold				
	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bulls, inches not specified	293	R15 977	428	R17 039
Bull : Young	21	R11 452	10	R13 950
Bull : Sub-Adult	3	R11 000	24	R13 875
Bull : Hunting	57	R11 700	4	R20 500
Bull : less than 35 inches	48	R13 219	49	R20 357
Bull : 35 inches plus	11	R16 500	23	R18 087
Bull : 36 inches plus	25	R14 400	7	R16 714
Bull : 37 inches plus	11	R16 227	13	R19 615
Bull : 38 inches plus	29	R13 931	14	R15 036
Bull : 39 inches plus	10	R22 700	19	R16 368
Bull : 40 inches plus	8	R20 063	5	R23 000
Bull : 41 inches plus	1	R23 000	10	R29 800
Bull : 42 inches plus	6	R70 500	10	R36 800
Bull : 43 inches plus	5	R39 800	3	R41 667
Bull : 44 inches plus	6	R87 833	4	R87 250
Bull : 45 inches plus	1	R90 000	3	R153 333
Bull : 46 inches plus	2	R785 000	2	R347 500
Bull : 48 inches plus	1	R1 100 000	0	R0

The broadest category once again sits with bulls where **horn inches are not specified** and the shift from **293 animals in 2024 to 428 in 2025**, together with prices moving from **R15 977 to R17 039**, reflects the strong commercial demand that underpins the entire Gemsbok trade. This segment anchors liquidity and sets the general tone, showing that the species continues to be a reliable contributor to auction throughput. The modest price increase suggests firmer bidding intensity even when horn length is unknown, signalling that buyers were comfortable paying a premium simply to secure volume.

Moving down into the younger and sub-adult classes, the narrative shifts to a market that is becoming slightly more competitive. Young bulls rise from **R11 452 to R13 950**, even with numbers halving from **21 to 10**, suggesting that **reduced supply** in this specific class nudged prices upward. Sub-adults show a much stronger movement: quantities jump from **3 to 24** and prices increase from **R11 000 to R13 875**. This indicates that buyers were actively repositioning for future breeding structure and that this tier is becoming important again as ranchers expand their herds after years of cautious breeding cycles.

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The hunting class presents a different story. With **57 bulls sold in 2024** at **R11 700**, dropping dramatically to **just 4 bulls in 2025** at **R20 500**, the market signals a clear tightening of available hunting-grade males. The steep decline in supply aligns with broader industry insight that many operators are holding bulls back to strengthen internal herd genetics and the corresponding price jump reflects what happens when hunting outfitters compete for increasingly scarce mature bulls.

The mid-range horn classes between **less than 35 inches** and **38 inches** show a consistent upward movement in both interest and pricing. Bulls under 35 inches move from **R13 219 to R20 357**, with quantities nearly aligned year-on-year. The 35-inch category rises from **R16 500 to R18 087** and the 37-inch bulls move from **R16 227 to R19 615**, with quantity also rising from **11 to 13**. These increments highlight how buyers perceive increasing genetic value even before bulls enter true trophy brackets. This is a reflection of a market where **middle-tier quality has become more financially meaningful**, possibly due to tightening availability at both ends of the spectrum.

Once the categories push into 39–42 inches, the pricing narrative becomes more complex. The **39-inch class** reduces in average price from **R22 700 to R16 368**, even though the number of bulls rises from **10 to 19**. This suggests a shift in buyer expectations around this size class—more supply diluted bidding intensity. By contrast, the **40-inch bulls** strengthen from **R20 063 to R23 000**, even with fewer animals on offer, showing that trophy expectations for this size remain intact. The **41-inch class**, with **1 bull at R23 000 in 2024** versus **10 bulls at R29 800 in 2025**, shows a defined surge in premium perception, with the market clearly rewarding this transition into recognised trophy territory. The **42-inch bulls** reinforce this trend, climbing from **R70 500 to R36 800**, although here the drop in price reflects the unusually high benchmark set by 2024's rare standout.

Once the table moves into the elite horn brackets—43 inches and above—the pricing becomes a direct expression of **true rarity**. The **43-inch class** rises modestly from **R39 800 to R41 667**, while the **44-inch bulls** hold steady between **R87 833 and R87 250**, underlining consistent trophy demand at this level. Exceptional jumps in rarity appear in the **45- and 46-inch categories**. A **45-inch bull** leaps from **R90 000 to R153 333**, showing how arc-length scarcity continues to command astonishing premiums. The **46-inch bulls**, although fewer, demonstrate the volatility of true trophy genetics—falling from **R785 000 in 2024** to **R347 500 in 2025**—not because the animals are less valuable, but because once-off standout bulls in a prior year can distort comparative levels. The **48-inch bull** sold in 2024 for **R1.1 million**, with none available in 2025, reinforces the extreme rarity at the very top of the market.

Taken together, the table paints a picture of a market that is **deep at the commercial level, competitive in the mid-range and sharply selective at the trophy end**, with year-to-year volatility driven largely by availability rather than shifts in buyer appetite. The data confirms that in 2025 the overall market strengthened, particularly in the critical 35–41 inch zones, where both supply and price progression reveal strong underlying confidence in Gemsbok genetics and long-term breeding strategy.

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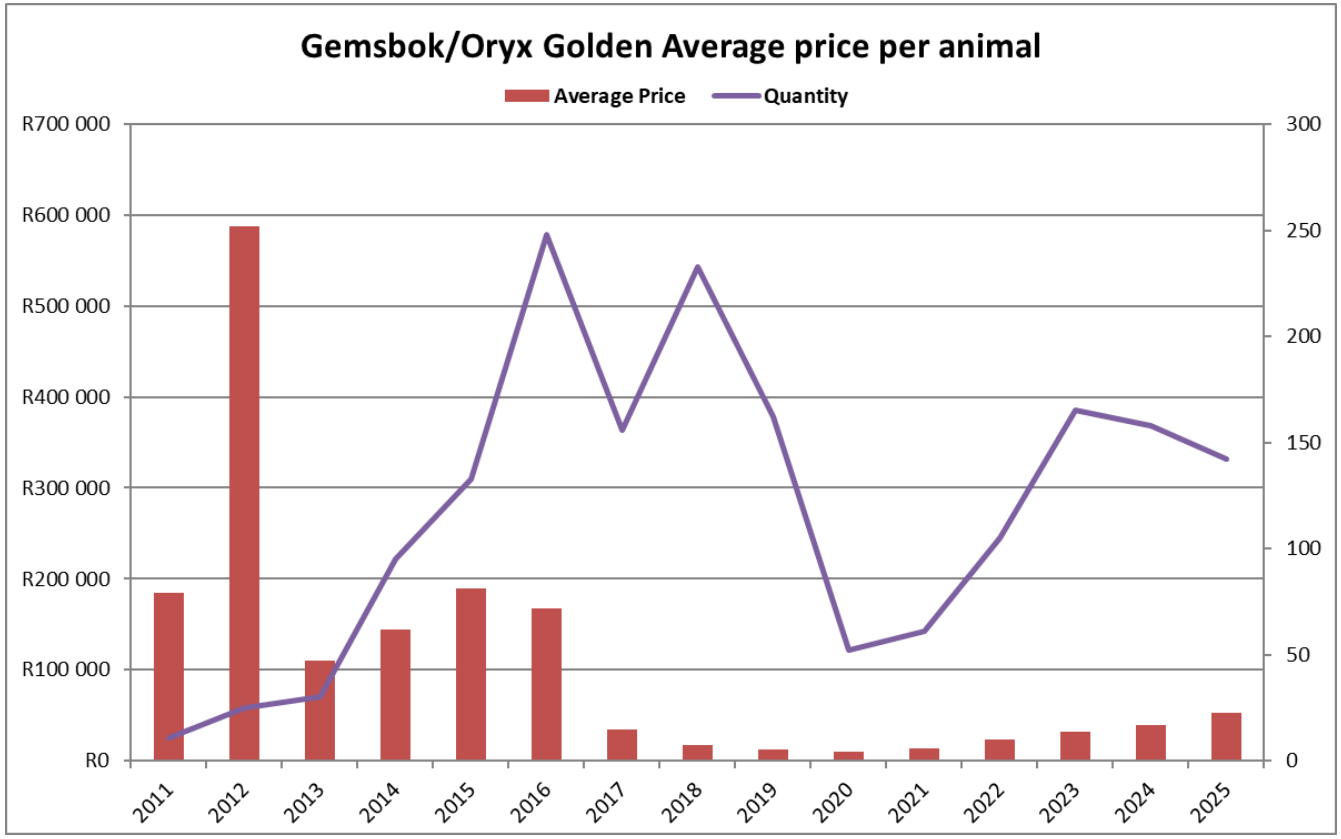
Gemsbok / Oryx Golden Data & Graphs: 2011 to 2025

This dataset provides a vivid story of a colour variant that once stood at the very centre of speculative enthusiasm, surged into extraordinary value, then settled into a more grounded but still premium niche. It is a record of **intense early investment, shifting breeder sentiment, stabilisation and eventual maturation**. The graph reinforces this journey visually, showing how demand, scarcity and market psychology shaped the trajectory of Golden Gemsbok over more than a decade. What follows is a narrative that threads these movements into a coherent story of a species variant that has lived through every major cycle of the wildlife market.

Gemsbok/Oryx Golden			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2011	R2 030 000	11	R184 545
2012	R14 685 000	25	R587 400
2013	R3 313 000	30	R110 433
2014	R13 666 250	95	R143 855
2015	R25 135 000	133	R188 985
2016	R41 626 000	248	R167 847
2017	R5 344 000	156	R34 256
2018	R4 115 450	233	R17 663
2019	R2 032 250	162	R12 545
2020	R521 650	52	R10 032
2021	R833 400	61	R13 662
2022	R2 451 502	105	R23 348
2023	R5 266 251	165	R31 917
2024	R6 245 000	158	R39 525
2025	R7 436 000	142	R52 366



2011–2012: The Birth of a Premium Variant

The period from **2011 to 2012** marked the dramatic arrival of Golden Gemsbok as a high-end colour variant. Average prices surged from **R184 545 in 2011** to **R587 400 in 2012**, an increase of roughly **218%**, while quantities climbed from **11 to 25** animals.

This explosive lift mirrored the broader **colour-variant boom**, where scarcity, novelty, and speculative sentiment drove rapid escalations. Industry conversations at the time echoed strong investor appetite and aggressive bidding on limited genetics, with buyers positioning themselves early in what they believed would become a cornerstone variant.

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Gemsbok / Oryx Golden Insights: 2011 to 2025

2013–2016: The Investment Wave and Subsequent Peak

From **2013 to 2016**, the market moved through a rapid expansion cycle. Average prices rose from **R110 433 in 2013** to **R167 847 in 2016**, while quantities expanded substantially from **30 to 248** animals. By **2015**, buyers paid **R188 985**, and by **2016** the value exceeded **R41.6 million**, reflecting both high prices and increased supply. This era aligned with the **height of the wildlife investment cycle**, fuelled by capital inflows, optimistic breeding projections, and the belief that colour variants would maintain long-term scarcity premiums. As more breeders entered the market, supply increased, but demand—anchored by enthusiasm rather than fundamentals— continued to absorb the growing numbers.

2017–2020: Collapse and Reset

The period from **2017 to 2020** represented a sharp correction. Average prices dropped from **R34 256 in 2017** to **R10 032 in 2020**, a decline of roughly **71%**, while quantities shrank from **156 to 52** animals. Several macro and industry factors contributed: the **post-variant bubble collapse**, tightening liquidity, market saturation, and a decisive shift toward **conservation-aligned, economically grounded wildlife assets**. By the time **COVID-19 arrived in 2020**, the Golden Gemsbok market had already been weakened, and pandemic-related uncertainty further suppressed bidding strength and breeder willingness to release stock.

2021–2023: Stabilisation and Cautious Rebound

From **2021 to 2023**, the market entered a phase of measured recovery. Average prices climbed from **R13 662 in 2021** to **R31 917 in 2023**, while quantities grew from **61 to 165** animals. This trajectory mirrored the broader wildlife sector, where stabilised demand, returning international participation, and stronger auction performance began to restore confidence. The increase in quantities indicated renewed breeder participation, but the pricing remained conservative—reflecting a market that was more rational, more cautious, and far more aligned to **actual ecological and breeding values** rather than speculative expectations.

2024–2025: Consolidation and Upward Movement

In **2024**, average prices rose to **R39 525**, supported by **158** animals on auction. By **2025**, values moderated upward again, with average prices reaching **R52 366** and quantities settling at **142** animals. The price lift from **2024 to 2025**—an increase of roughly **32.5%**—suggests a strengthening demand curve, possibly driven by renewed interest in **diversified plains-game variant portfolios**, broader improvements in auction attendance, and a rebound in breeder sentiment as the wildlife economy continues its post-COVID and post-variant-cycle recalibration.

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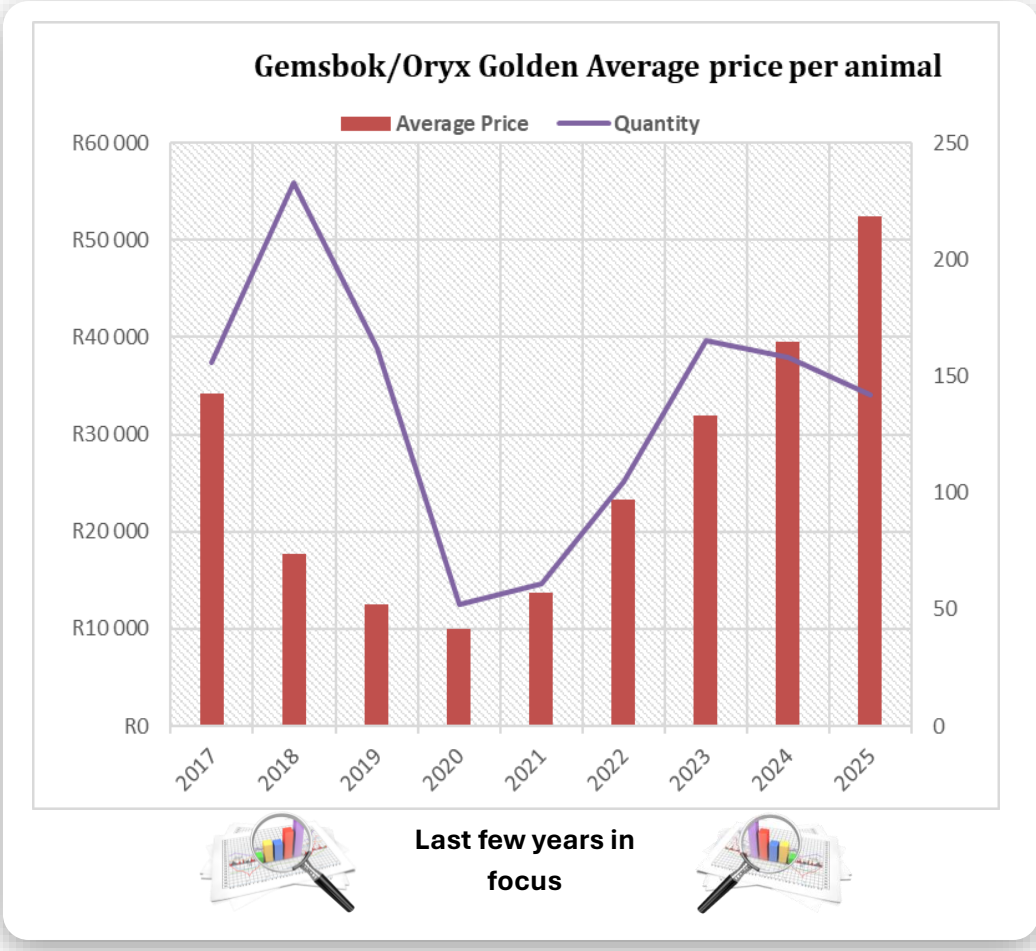
2025: A Measured Rise in a Matured Market

The comparison between **2025 and 2024** shows that the Golden Gemsbok market experienced a **healthy but measured strengthening**, reflective of a sector that has finally stabilised after a decade of extremes. Average prices increased from **R39 525 in 2024** to **R52 366 in 2025**, a gain of approximately **32.5%**, while quantities moved from **158** animals to **142**, representing a **10% reduction** in volume. This pattern—**higher prices supported by slightly lower supply**—is consistent with broader industry conditions in 2025, where improved confidence, strategic stock releases, and a more disciplined breeder base helped firm up value per animal.



Several macro forces supported this outcome. The wider wildlife economy entered 2025 with **stronger auction performance**, better liquidity among buyers, and ongoing shortages in premium breeding lines across multiple species. International attendance and investor engagement were stronger compared to the early 2020s, while domestic breeders increasingly shifted toward **quality over quantity**, releasing fewer but better-presented animals into the market. Golden Gemsbok benefited from this improved sentiment, particularly as buyers sought variants with stable long-term demand rather than speculative volatility.

The price lift, while noticeable, remained within a **sustainable band**, reflecting a market that has matured from its speculative past. By 2025, Golden Gemsbok operated within a framework of **realistic valuations**, supported by established demand for phenotype diversity rather than extraordinary financial expectations.

The interplay of reduced supply and firmer prices signals a market that has regained equilibrium—a market no longer defined by its dramatic rise and fall, but by **consistent, data-supported performance** moving into the future.

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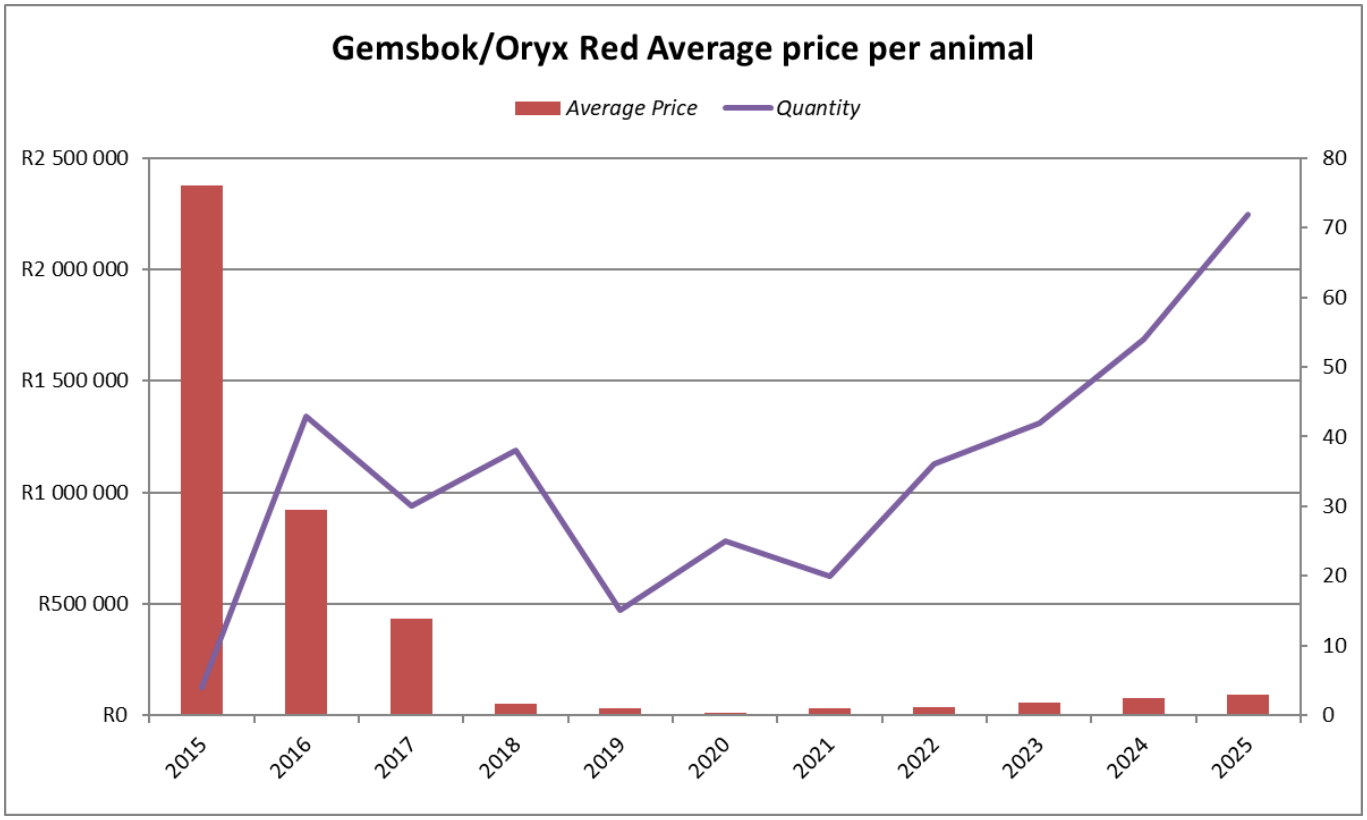
Gemsbok/Oryx Red Data & Graphs: 2013 to 2025

The table and graph together tell the story of a **high-value, volatility-prone colour variant** that has moved through phases of explosive early demand, subsequent recalibration and then a steady re-emergence of structured pricing stability. What unfolds across the timeline is the narrative of a species whose market performance is deeply influenced by **rarity, breeder expectations, genetic desirability and buyer willingness to compete for standout animals**, particularly in years where supply tightens. The graph gives visual weight to these movements, showing pronounced peaks that taper into consolidation years before rising again as confidence and structured breeding return to the forefront.

Gemsbok/Oryx Red			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2013	R4 000 000	1	R4 000 000
2014	R0	0	R0
2015	R9 500 000	4	R2 375 000
2016	R39 570 000	43	R920 233
2017	R13 039 000	30	R434 633
2018	R1 871 000	38	R49 237
2019	R432 000	15	R28 800
2020	R285 000	25	R11 400
2021	R580 000	20	R29 000
2022	R1 212 750	36	R33 688
2023	R2 326 500	42	R55 393
2024	R4 006 000	54	R74 185
2025	R6 748 000	72	R93 722



The Emergence and Extreme Price Phase (2013–2016)

The earliest period, from **2013 to 2016**, was defined by unprecedented pricing power driven by absolute rarity. In **2013**, with only **1 animal sold at R4 000 000**, the Red Gemsbok market effectively launched with a genetic premium so significant that it was comparable to the top-end sable and buffalo trades of the time.

Momentum intensified dramatically by **2015**, where **4 animals sold for R9.5 million**, producing an average of **R2 375 000**, but it was **2016** that stood out as the most remarkable year of the entire dataset. With **43 sales generating R39.57 million**, the average of **R920 233** represented both the height of speculative confidence and the peak in breeder investment strategies.

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Gemsbok/Oryx Red Insights: 2013 to 2025

This phase mirrored the broader expansion in South Africa's colour-variant boom, where investment-grade animals commanded exceptional premiums and elite stock drove the narrative of genetic capital appreciation.

The Market Reset and Post-Boom Correction (2017–2020)



The period from **2017 to 2020** marked a visible and sustained correction. Beginning with **30 animals at R434 633** in **2017**, values dropped sharply as supply broadened and the initial scarcity premium dissipated. By **2018**, the average fell to **R49 237**, and in **2019–2020**, continued downward pressure saw averages sliding further to **R28 800** and **R11 400**. This contraction aligned with the broader collapse of speculative colour-variant markets during this time, accelerated by shifting investor behaviour, lower liquidity among breeders, and — most notably — the **COVID-19 economic shock** that compressed buying power and reduced appetite for high-premium genetic lines. Quantities remained relatively stable through this period, indicating that breeders continued selling stock, but at far lower realisable values.

Stabilisation and Structured Rebound (2021–2024)

From **2021**, the dataset showed the beginnings of a new stabilisation pattern. Average prices in **2021 and 2022** increased modestly to **R29 000** and **R33 688**, reflecting renewed buyer confidence and a more rationalised market approach. The recovery strengthened further in **2023**, with **42 animals at an average of R55 393**, marking a 64% uplift from 2022 levels. The upward momentum continued into **2024**, where **54 animals achieved R74 185**, representing another 34% improvement. This recovery phase aligned with the broader improvement across plains game colour variants, supported by:

- improved auction participation numbers,
- more disciplined breeding programs,

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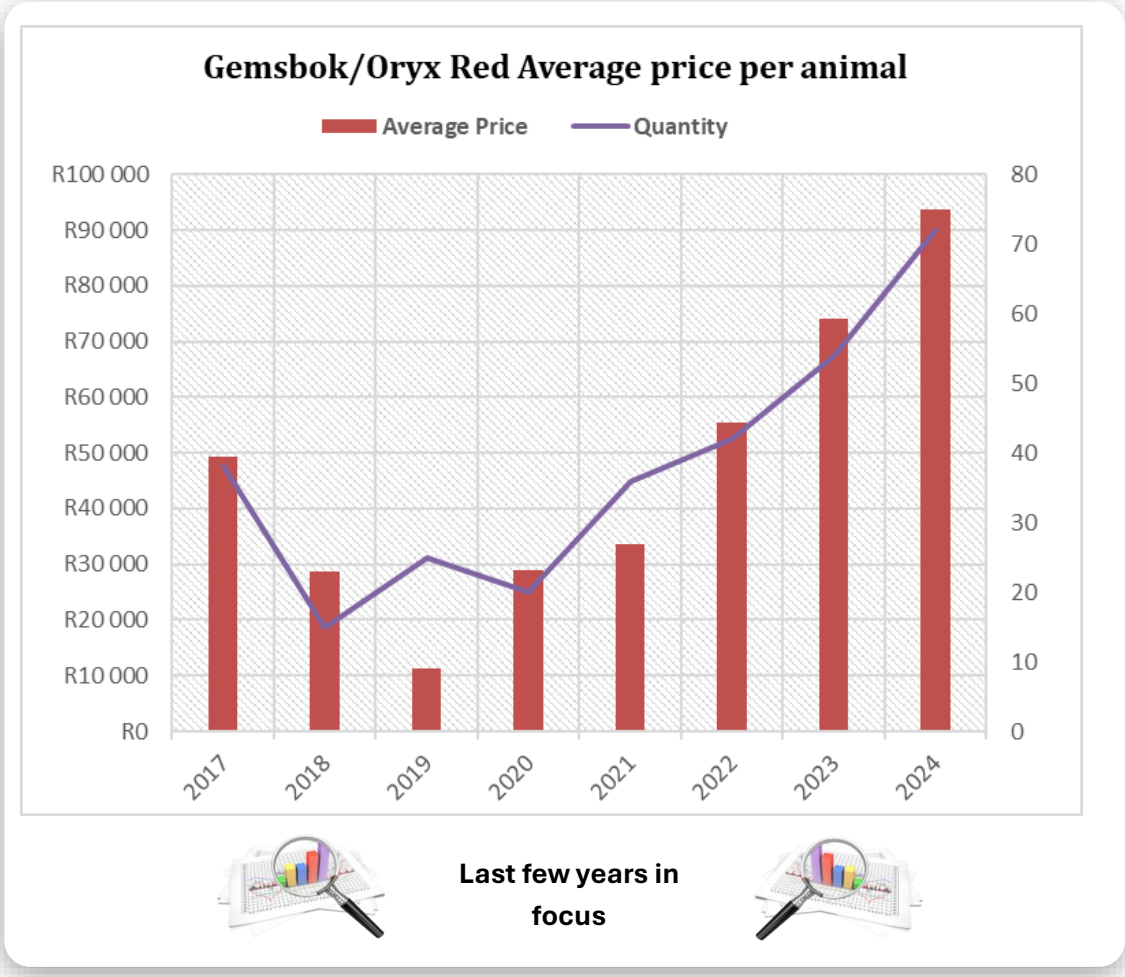
- heightened buyer interest in unique phenotypes,
- and a macroeconomic rebound that revived demand in the premium wildlife segment.

The increases in both price and quantity indicated a market re-entering a healthy cycle of balanced demand and supply.

A More Confident Step Forward in 2025

The move from **2024 into 2025** showed a continuation of the market's upward trajectory for the Red Gemsbok category, but with a more moderated and stable tone. In **2025**, **72 animals sold for R6.748 million**, achieving an average of **R93 722**. This represented an approximate **26% increase** from the **R74 185** average recorded in **2024**, supported by a 33% rise in quantity (from **54** to **72** animals).



The significance of this shift lies in what it reveals about the underlying fundamentals. Increased volumes would typically place downward pressure on price, yet the opposite occurred—a clear indicator of **strengthening demand** and a growing population of buyers seeking dependable, traceable Red Gemsbok genetics. This aligns closely with broader 2025 market sentiment across several colour-variant classes, where *quality differentiation* and *repeatability of phenotype* replaced the speculative premiums of the past.

Moreover, the uplift occurred in a year where macro pressures—fuel, feed, and security costs—continued to challenge breeders, suggesting that the market is being increasingly driven by end-value considerations such as tourism appeal, photographic desirability, and diversification strategies on multi-species ranches.

The overall 2025 performance therefore highlights a market entering a **mature recovery**, supported by real demand rather than speculative inflation, and positioning Red Gemsbok as a stable contributor within the colour-variant Oryx economy.

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BUFFALO

Syncerus caffer

WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Syncerus*
Species: *Syncerus caffer*
Common Name: African Buffalo / Cape Buffalo



MORPHOLOGY

- Massive, muscular animal with fused horn boss in bulls; 700–900 kg bulls, 450–650 kg cows; horns 36–45" (exceptional 50+"); dark brown to black coat.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Savannahs and woodland with permanent water. Found in Kruger, KZN reserves, Addo, Limpopo and private disease-free herds across multiple provinces.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Bulk grazer of medium-height grasses; efficient digestion of coarse fibres; drives grassland renewal and grazing succession.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Highly social herds led by cows; bulls form bachelor groups; strong communal defense; excellent memory; complex communication and coordinated movement.

ADAPTATIONS

- Heavy horns, strong body; rumen specialized for fibrous diets; intense herd cohesion; acute senses; water-dependent behavioral patterns.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern; stable in protected areas; threats include disease and habitat fragmentation;
- Major success through disease-free breeding and reintroductions.

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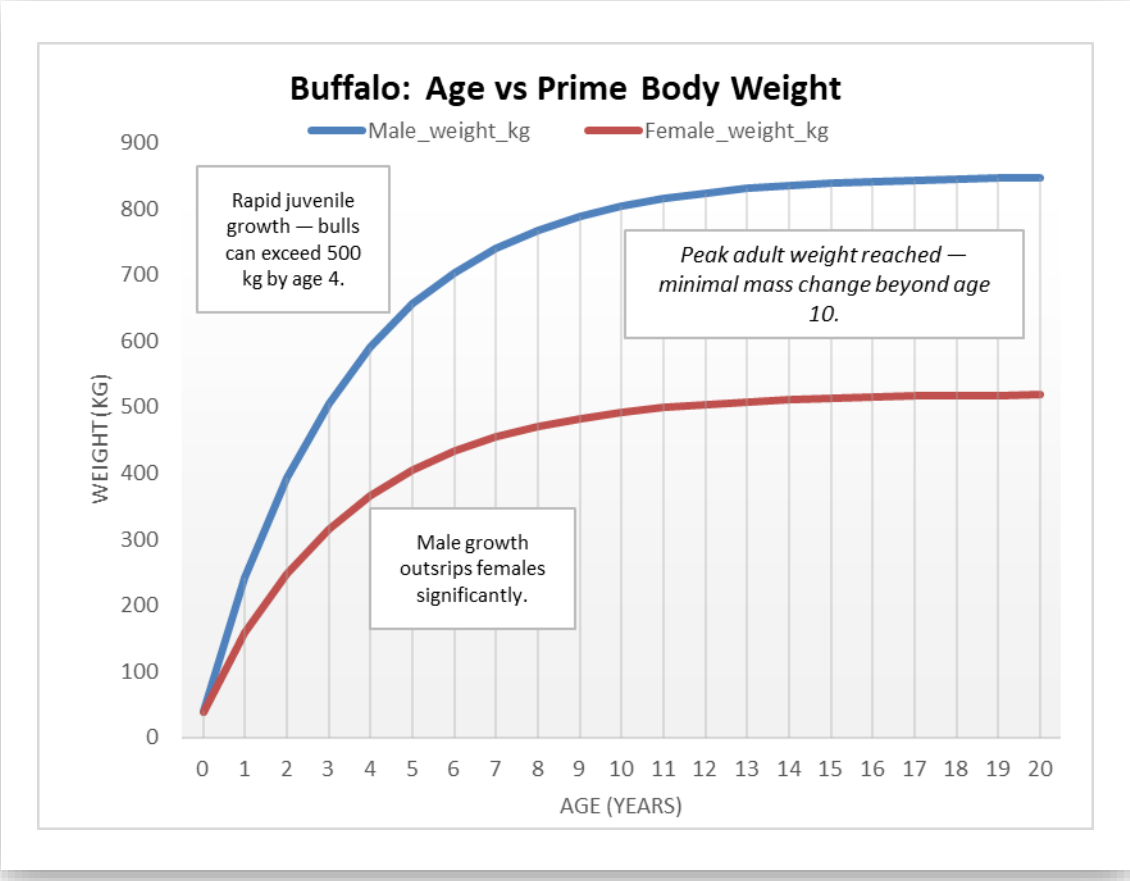
Buffalo Specie Information

Few creatures in the African wilderness embody strength, loyalty and quiet intelligence like the African buffalo. Heavy-shouldered and thick-bossed, the buffalo moves through the savannah with an unhurried confidence, its presence alone altering the rhythm of the landscape. It is not an animal that startles easily, nor one that yields ground without calculation. In South Africa's wildlife story—ecological, economic and cultural—the buffalo stands as both a survivor and a cornerstone, shaping habitats and supporting entire ecosystems simply through the way it grazes, moves and interacts with the land.

Scientifically known as Syncerus caffer, the Cape buffalo **belongs to the Bovidae family** and forms one of Africa's most formidable and ecologically significant herbivores. Its physiology reflects centuries of evolution in environments where predators, droughts and disease demanded resilience. Thick bone and muscle protect the animal from claws and teeth, while remarkable herd intelligence provides protection far more sophisticated than sheer physical size alone. Buffalo thrive in the **savannahs, grasslands and woodlands of South Africa**—lands where grass grows in thick carpets after summer rain and where dependable water sources punctuate the terrain. Their distribution spans the major conservation regions: Kruger National Park, Hluhluwe–iMfolozi, Addo Elephant National Park, large reserves in Limpopo and a network of disease-free, tightly managed herds across private game breeding properties in the North West, Free State and Eastern Cape. Their dependence on water shapes their behaviour deeply; they seldom drift far from perennial rivers or pans and the rhythm of their day is governed almost entirely by grazing cycles and the need to drink.



The differences between males and females are striking enough to tell at a glance. Bulls are the embodiment of raw power—thick-necked, wide-chested and crowned with the iconic fused horn boss that defines the species' silhouette. A **mature bull** can weigh between **700 and 900 kilograms** and carries an impressive horn span often exceeding 40 inches, with exceptional individuals reaching 50 inches or more.

Cows, by contrast, are lighter and more agile, usually weighing **between 450 and 650 kilograms**. Their horns curve more gracefully, lacking the heavy boss of the males and they tend to remain in the heart of the herd, helping guide movement and protect calves. Herd behaviour is matriarchal at its core; cows make the

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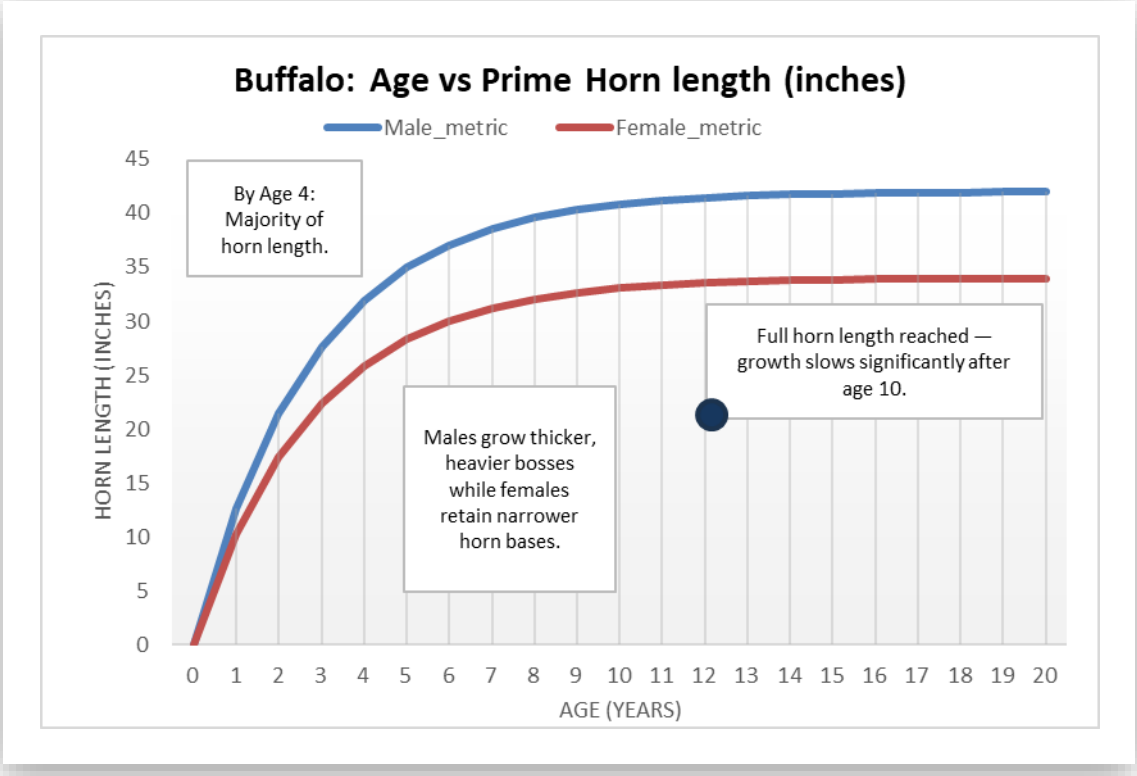
navigational decisions, while bulls engage in dominance battles at the fringes or drift off into bachelor groups as they age.

Buffalo growth follows a beautifully predictable pattern. Calves enter the world at around 40 kilograms, quickly gaining mass during their first years as they learn to graze and follow the herd. Weight too climbs steadily, from **350 kilograms at age three to over 800 by age ten**, finally tapering off around the 880–900 kilogram mark as the animal reaches its physical peak.



Horns begin as soft nubs and erupt into visible growth by **the second year of life**, accelerating rapidly between ages two and six. This period is where the most dramatic changes occur—horn length stretching from **8 inches at age one to more than 35 inches by age five**, eventually slowing and reaching a plateau as the bull enters full maturity. By seven or eight years, the horn boss thickens and fuses into the iconic armoured shield that signals dominance.

Feeding is a slow, determined process. Buffalo are bulk grazers, consuming **vast quantities of medium-height grasses** that many other herbivores ignore. Their four-chambered stomach, supported by a powerful microbial ecosystem, allows them to extract nutrition from fibres too coarse for most animals. This ability makes the buffalo a keystone grazer: as herds mow down grasslands, they open up new shoots for antelope like sable, wildebeest and zebra and their patterns of movement slowly shape the vegetation structure of the ecosystem itself. Buffalo do not rush; they graze methodically, shifting like a slow-moving tide across the plains.

Reproduction in buffalo herds reflects a careful balance of environmental cues, nutrition and social dynamics. Cows usually calve for the first time between four and five years of age, carrying their young for an **11-month gestation**. Calving often aligns with periods of abundant grazing, ensuring that the newborn has the greatest chance of survival. A cow typically produces one calf every two years, although excellent conditions can shorten this cycle. Bulls do not dominate breeding opportunities until they reach the strength and maturity required to challenge rivals—usually between eight and twelve years old—when their mass, horn boss and fighting stamina reach their zenith.

One of the most extraordinary dimensions of buffalo behaviour lies in their collective intelligence. They are **deeply social, fiercely protective and astonishingly alert**. When threatened, the herd closes ranks around calves, presenting a wall of horns to deter lions. They remember dangerous places and individuals for years,

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adjusting routes to avoid past ambush points. They communicate through subtle shifts in posture and direction and decisions about movement—whether to cross a river, enter a thicket, or approach water—often emerge from a kind of democratic alignment of the herd's leading cows.

The following matrix summarises **the primary Buffalo variants recognised in South Africa**, highlighting their distinguishing traits and relevance to the wildlife industry.

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Colouration	Horn Characteristics	Notes & Distinguishing Features
Cape Buffalo (Standard)	Kruger, Limpopo, KZN, EC	Dark brown to black	Wide spread, heavy boss in males	Most common South African type
Addo Buffalo	Addo Elephant National Park	Slightly browner	Moderate spread, strong hook	Known for disease resilience historically
East African–Type (in SA private herds)	Imported genetics lines	Jet black	Very wide spread; horn drops lower	Rare in SA; high-value outcross lines
KZN Variant	Hluhluwe–iMfolozi	Brown-black	Strong lateral curl	Noted for maternal herd dynamics
Limpopo Disease-Free Lines	Select breeders	Uniform dark black	Exceptional bosses; trophy phenotype	Premium genetics; high auction values
Colour Variant – Coffee / Chocolate Hue	Select breeding	Lighter brown	Standard spread	Recessive shade variants, uncommon
Colour Variant – Jet Black Gloss	Genetics-based	Very dark shine	Heavy boss	Desired for aesthetics in genetic breeding

Among breeders, the East African buffalo remains the most highly sought-after of all buffalo types. The buffalo's significance extends beyond ecology. In South Africa's wildlife economy, buffalo form a prized species, with disease-free genetics commanding high value in breeding programs, auctions and eco-tourism ventures. Trophy bulls with enormous horn spread and heavy, well-developed bosses have sold for extraordinary sums, shaping a significant and well-regulated niche industry that supports conservation funding and habitat protection. Yet, despite economic interest, the buffalo remains at its core a symbol of Africa's rugged wilderness—a reminder that true power lies not in aggression but in patience, cohesion and resilience.

The African Buffalo is the embodiment of raw power and collective strength — a species defined not just by its physical mass, but by the unbreakable social bonds that govern every movement of the herd. Built for resilience and confrontation, buffalo thrive in landscapes where predators are abundant and resources shift with the seasons. Their tightly knit herds act as a single, coordinated organism, capable of defending calves, outmanoeuvring lions and navigating harsh environments with remarkable intelligence. Within the wildlife industry, buffalo hold immense value: genetically superior bulls, disease-free lineages and superior horn structures have made them one of the most sought-after species for breeding, conservation investment and premium game reserves. They are not merely animals of the African bush — they are symbols of heritage, strength and the economic vitality of the wildlife sector.

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Fascinating Insights: Buffalo

- Buffalo are among the few large mammals capable of **actively defending one another** against lions, often rescuing calves during hunts.
- A buffalo herd operates like a democracy: older cows often determine movement direction through **"voting" behaviour** at rest sites.
- Mature bulls can exceed **800 kg**, possessing one of the most formidable horn structures in the antelope family.
- The fused shield of a male's horns — the **boss** — can be as thick as **8 cm**, designed for violent clashes.
- Buffalo memory is exceptional; individuals remember specific water points, predator territories and historical grazing areas for years.
- Calves recognise their mothers by unique vocal signatures — essential in dense, moving herds.
- Herds create "grazing mosaics," opening up grasslands and stimulating regrowth that benefits countless other species.
- Buffalo wallow in mud not just for cooling, but to **suffocate parasites** and create a protective skin coating.
- Their sense of smell is so acute they can locate distant water sources long before other herbivores.
- Dominant bulls maintain breeding rights through posture, scent marking and intense horn wrestling.
- Buffalo herds rarely scatter when under threat; they bunch tightly, presenting a unified defensive barrier.
- Their aggression is strategic, not reckless — buffalo assess threats precisely, choosing confrontation only when necessary.
- Lions rely heavily on buffalo for food in many regions; entire lion prides' survival is tied to buffalo availability.
- In the wildlife industry, **disease-free Cape Buffalo** lines have achieved record auction prices due to breeding value.
- Buffalo contribute significantly to ecosystem health by creating pathways, grazing firebreaks and modifying vegetation structure.
- Cows have an approximately **11-month gestation**, ensuring calves are born when grazing quality improves.
- Solitary "dagga boys," older males, often live in small bachelor groups near waterholes and become major tourist drawcards.
- Buffalo are considered one of the most dangerous animals in Africa, responsible for more injuries to hunters than lions.

"The African Buffalo is the pulse of the plains — a force of unity, strength and endurance — and in both the wild and the wildlife industry it stands as a living testament to the power of genetics, resilience and true African heritage."

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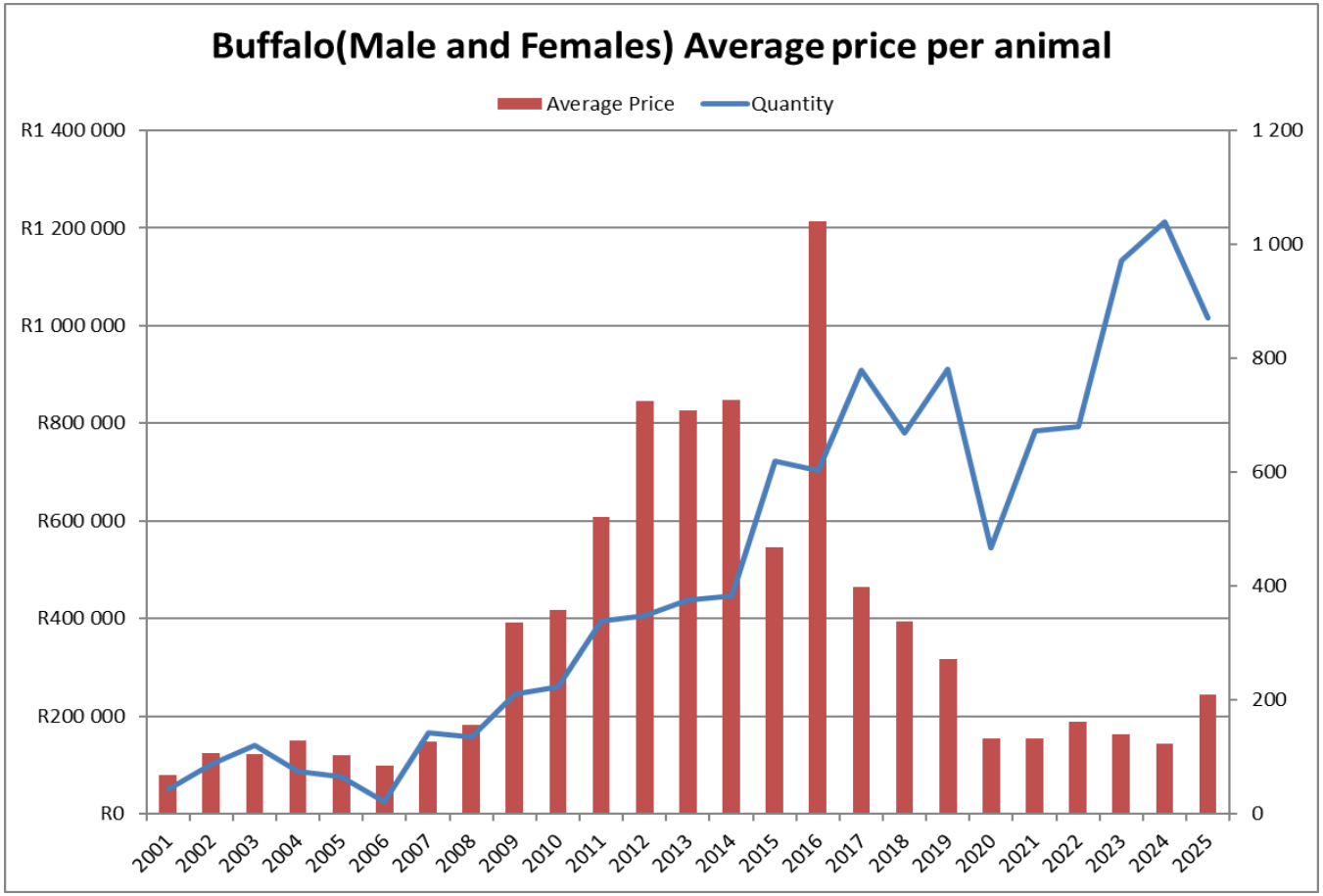
Buffalo male and female Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Buffalo dataset tells a story unlike any other plains or rare-game category. It reflects a market shaped not only by supply and demand, but by **prestige, genetics, security considerations and cycles of extreme investor sentiment**. The **early years illustrate the slow establishment of commercial value**, while the **mid-to-late 2000s show how breeder confidence and top-line genetics began reshaping price expectations**. The **explosive boom of the 2010–2016 era** becomes immediately visible, with average prices climbing to heights unmatched by most other wildlife species, reflecting buffalo's role as a **status-defining, capital-intensive investment animal**.

As the graph sweeps into the post-2017 era, the narrative shifts again: **volumes remain strong, but prices recalibrate**, mirroring a broader industry retreat from speculative highs. The last few years show a **more grounded but still powerful species**, one that commands attention through **high buyer demand**, **ongoing scarcity of elite bloodlines** and **increasing operational discipline** in breeding programmes.

Buffalo (Male and Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R3 470 500	44	R78 875
2002	R10 834 150	87	R124 530
2003	R14 796 454	120	R123 304
2004	R11 279 500	75	R150 393
2005	R7 941 000	66	R120 318
2006	R2 063 250	21	R98 250
2007	R21 040 500	142	R148 173
2008	R24 897 500	136	R183 070
2009	R82 194 500	210	R391 402
2010	R93 391 500	223	R418 796
2011	R206 368 000	339	R608 755
2012	R294 033 000	348	R844 922
2013	R309 764 000	375	R826 037
2014	R324 543 000	383	R847 371
2015	R338 679 980	620	R546 258
2016	R730 463 238	602	R1 213 394
2017	R361 522 548	779	R464 085
2018	R263 440 964	668	R394 373
2019	R246 664 700	780	R316 237
2020	R72 466 400	468	R154 843
2021	R103 454 300	673	R153 721
2022	R127 495 500	679	R187 770
2023	R158 052 555	972	R162 606
2024	R149 713 000	1 039	R144 093
2025	R212 649 500	870	R244 425



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Buffalo male and female Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Stability and Gradual Lift (2001–2006)

During the six-year period from **2001 to 2006**, Buffalo prices maintained a **steady but moderate upward trend**, with average prices rising from R78 875 in 2001 to R98 250 in 2006. Quantities grew from **44 to 66**, reflecting a market still establishing momentum in the early stages of private wildlife breeding expansion. The value increase from **R3.47 million to R2.06 million** was interrupted in 2006 by a notable contraction in both price and quantity—typical of a market still sensitive to annual supply shocks and breeder consolidation. This period set the base for the structural uplift that followed.

The Pre-Boom Acceleration (2007–2010)

From **2007 to 2010**, the Buffalo market experienced **clear upward acceleration**, driven by intensifying interest in premium genetics. Average price strengthened from **R148 173 in 2007 to R418 796 in 2010**, supported by increasing quantities that rose from **142 to 223 animals**. These movements coincided with global commodity growth cycles and the entrance of capital-rich investors into wildlife ranching. The species' reputation as a flagship investment animal expanded quickly, building the foundation for the extraordinary surge that followed.

The High-Value Buffalo Boom (2011–2016)

The six-year stretch from **2011 to 2016** marked the height of the Buffalo boom—arguably the most influential price cycle in South African wildlife economics. Average prices jumped from **R608 755 in 2011 to R1 213 394 in 2016**, a near doubling. Quantities surged from **339 animals to 602 animals**, and Value peaked at **R730.46 million**, the highest ever recorded in the series.

This boom mirrored the elite genetics revolution, defined by notable breeding lines, world-record bulls, and unprecedented investment flows. Market psychology during this period was dominated by the belief that Buffalo genetics represented an asset class of its own. The data shows both rapid quantity expansion and strong pricing resilience—two hallmarks of genuine demand-driven growth rather than speculative overshoot.

Post-Boom Normalisation and Correction (2017–2020)

From **2017 to 2020**, the Buffalo market transitioned into a **correction phase**. Average prices softened from **R464 085 in 2017 to R154 843 in 2020**, representing a clear recalibration. Volumes remained high—between **668 and 780 animals** in 2018–2019—but value fell sharply. This period coincided with South Africa's broader economic slowdown, severe drought cycles, and the onset of **COVID-19 in 2020**, which restricted international participation and depressed domestic capital rotation. The decline was not a collapse but rather a return to more sustainable breeder economics after years of extraordinary returns.

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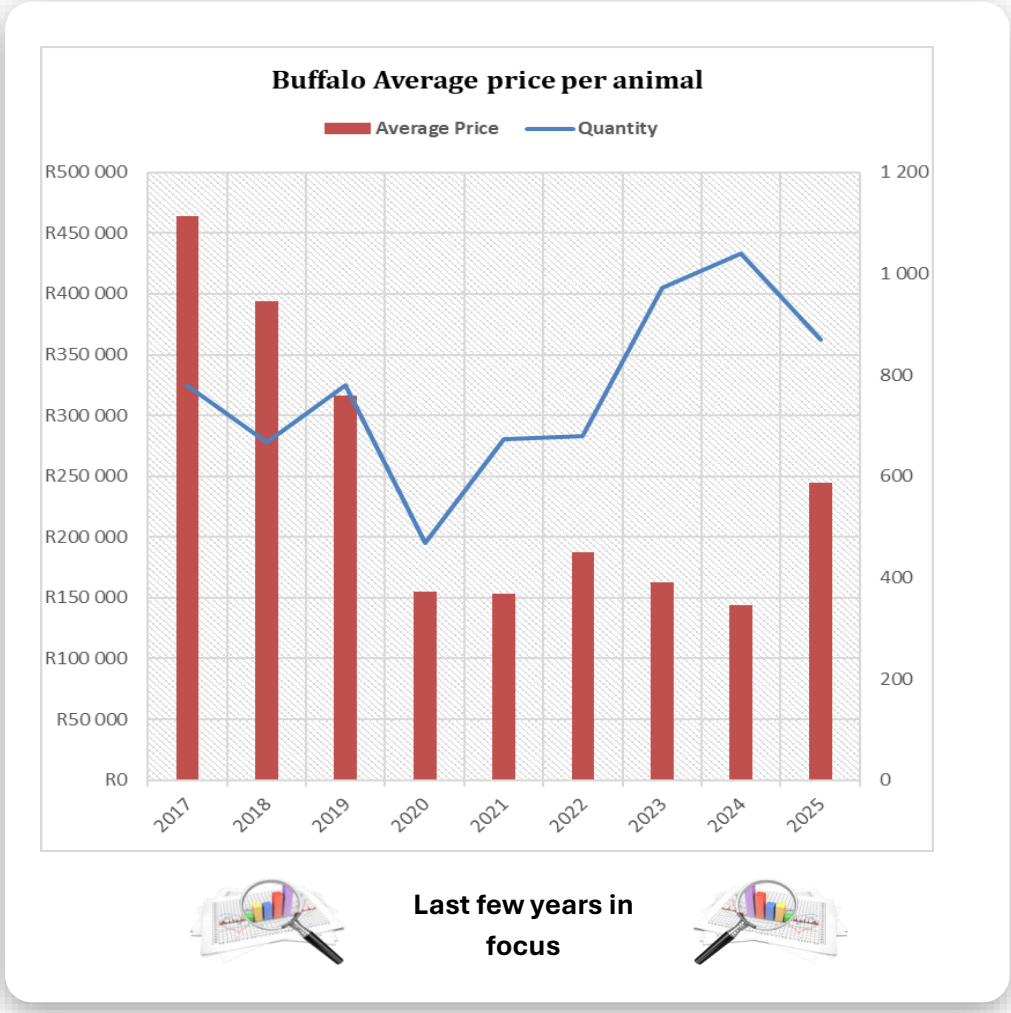
Stabilisation and Controlled Recovery (2021–2024)

The years **2021 to 2024** brought stabilisation, with average prices holding between **R144 093 and R187 770**. Quantities climbed steadily from **673 to 1 039 animals**, indicating improved liquidity and a healthier balance between supply and market uptake.



2025 - A RENEWED SHIFT IN MOMENTUM

The transition from **2024 to 2025** reflects a **clear and meaningful resurgence** in the Buffalo market, underpinned by sustained demand pressure and improved industry confidence.

Average price increased from **R144 093 in 2024 to R244 425 in 2025**, a rise of **69.6%**, signalling robust buyer appetite returning to the species. Even though quantity fell from **1 039 to 870 animals**, the value climbed sharply from **R149.71 million to R212.65 million**, confirming that buyers were willing to absorb higher prices for quality animals.

Several industry forces supported this shift:

- The tightening supply of premium Buffalo cows and bulls following years of conservative breeding.
- A rebound in safari-linked income streams after the post-COVID tourism recovery.
- Renewed confidence among investors as broader wildlife prices stabilised across multiple species.

The 2025 result therefore represents **a deliberate return to value recognition**, not speculative overshoot. The data suggests the Buffalo market entered a new upward cycle, driven by structural demand and recalibrated breeder strategies rather than excess enthusiasm.

The year stands out as a **decisive pivot**, signalling that Buffalo remain one of the industry's strongest long-term assets.

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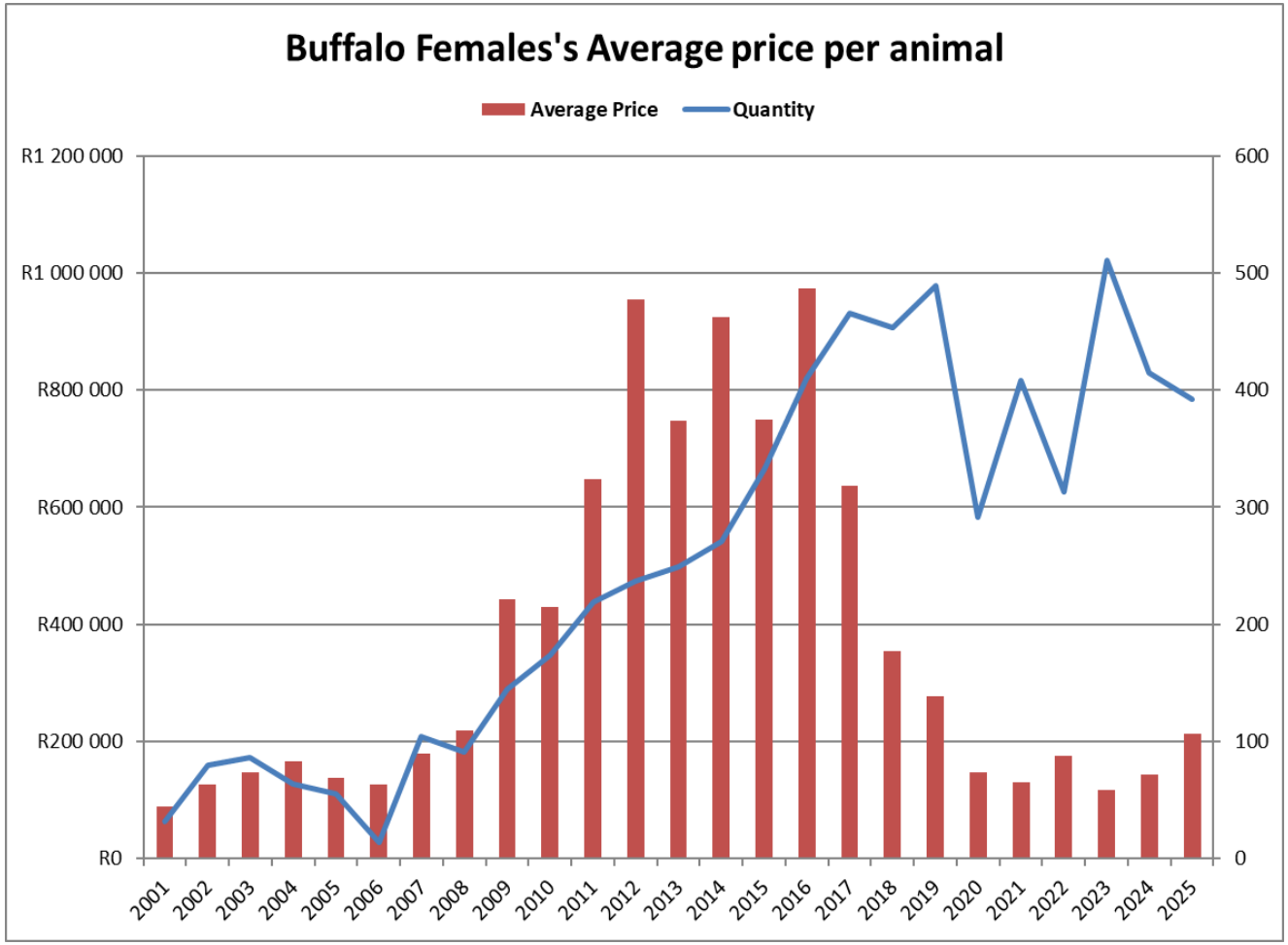
Buffalo female only Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The *Buffalo Female* dataset unfolds as a sweeping narrative of the South African wildlife economy, tracing how female buffalo have moved through eras of confidence, scarcity, genetic premium cycles and periods of recalibration. The graph immediately reveals a **dramatic rise**, a **sharp correction** and an **ongoing stabilisation**, illustrating how this species responds to broader market forces such as breeding demand, disease-free lineage development, investor sentiment and ecological restocking strategies. The table reinforces this story by pairing annual quantities with shifting average prices, allowing us to see how **demand intensity**, **genetic advances** and **auction volatility** shaped each era. Together, the table and graph present a **rich, long-form history** rather than isolated data points — a chronology of how female buffalo have evolved from a premium niche investment to a more accessible but still strategically important species within the modern wildlife economy.

Buffalo Female			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R2 841 496	32	R88 797
2002	R10 054 000	80	R125 675
2003	R12 654 556	86	R147 146
2004	R10 646 500	64	R166 352
2005	R7 547 500	55	R137 227
2006	R1 768 250	14	R126 304
2007	R18 625 500	104	R179 091
2008	R19 882 500	91	R218 489
2009	R64 185 000	145	R442 655
2010	R74 770 500	174	R429 716
2011	R142 031 000	219	R648 543
2012	R226 050 000	237	R953 797
2013	R185 963 000	249	R746 839
2014	R250 509 000	271	R924 387
2015	R249 513 000	333	R749 288
2016	R399 308 238	410	R973 923
2017	R296 941 300	466	R637 213
2018	R160 279 964	453	R353 819
2019	R135 026 200	489	R276 127
2020	R43 008 100	291	R147 794
2021	R53 113 600	408	R130 180
2022	R54 618 500	313	R174 500
2023	R59 880 500	511	R117 183
2024	R59 769 500	415	R144 023
2025	R83 734 000	392	R213 607



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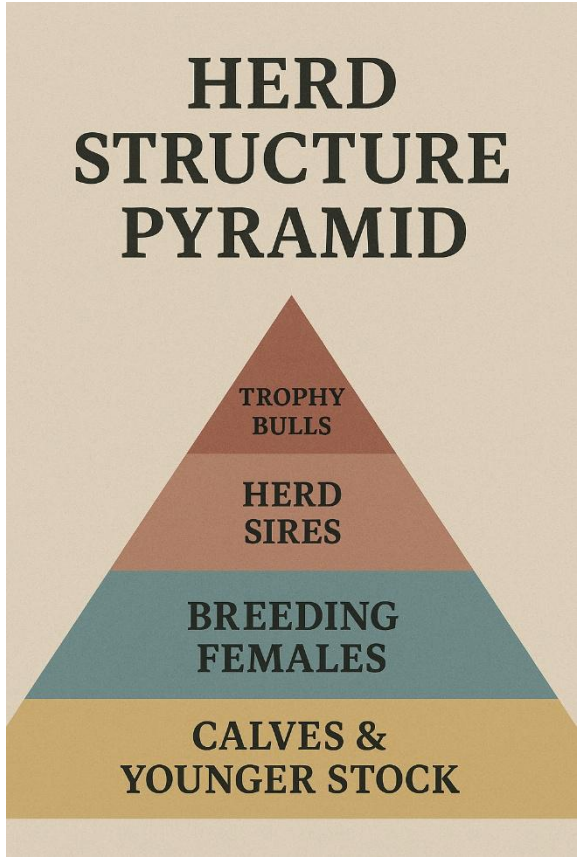
Buffalo female only Insights: 2001 to 2025

2001–2007: Early Market Structure and Foundational Pricing

During the early 2000s, the female buffalo market was characterised by **steady but modest pricing**, with average prices ranging from R88 797 in 2001 to R179 091 by 2007. These increases reflected the **formalisation of buffalo breeding programs**, strengthened veterinary controls, and the early commercialisation of East African and Addo bloodlines. Quantities grew from 32 females in 2001 to 104 by 2007, signalling rising breeder confidence. Although values increased significantly from R2.8 million to R18.6 million across these years, the market had not yet entered its explosive growth phase. Instead, it laid the foundations for the **genetic arms race** that defined the decade ahead.

2008–2012: The High-Growth Buffalo Boom Takes Hold

The period from 2008 to 2012 marked the beginning of a dramatic escalation. In 2008, female buffalo achieved an average price of R218 489, and by 2009 the market had surged to R442 655. The **genetics boom** intensified as breeders competed aggressively for superior horn width, disease-free lineage (especially TB and Corridor-free status), and proven maternal lines. This drove total value to R64.2 million in 2009 and then to an extraordinary R142 million by 2011. By 2012, the average female price peaked at **R953 797**, one of the highest sustained pricing eras ever recorded for females.



This rise coincided with **surging foreign investment**, preferential funding structures, and strong macroeconomic tailwinds. Buffalo were perceived as the premium store-of-value species in the wildlife economy, and female buyers paid aggressively for herd-building potential.

2013–2016: Absolute Market Peak and Historic Pricing Extremes

From 2013 to 2016, the buffalo female market reached its absolute summit. Prices remained extremely elevated, with averages of R746 839 (2013), R924 387 (2014), R749 288 (2015), and a second peak of **R973 923 in 2016**. Quantities expanded dramatically from 249 females in 2013 to 410 in 2016, indicating that breeders were releasing more animals into the market while still achieving near-record valuations.

Macro-conditions supported this: political stability, attractive agricultural taxation frameworks, and the maturing of intensive breeding programs created a **perfect alignment of capital enthusiasm and supply scarcity**. Buffalo became the anchor species of the game-breeding investment wave.

However, the seeds of future correction were already present, as **supply was increasing faster than sustainable demand**, and speculative valuations were beginning to stretch beyond long-term market fundamentals.

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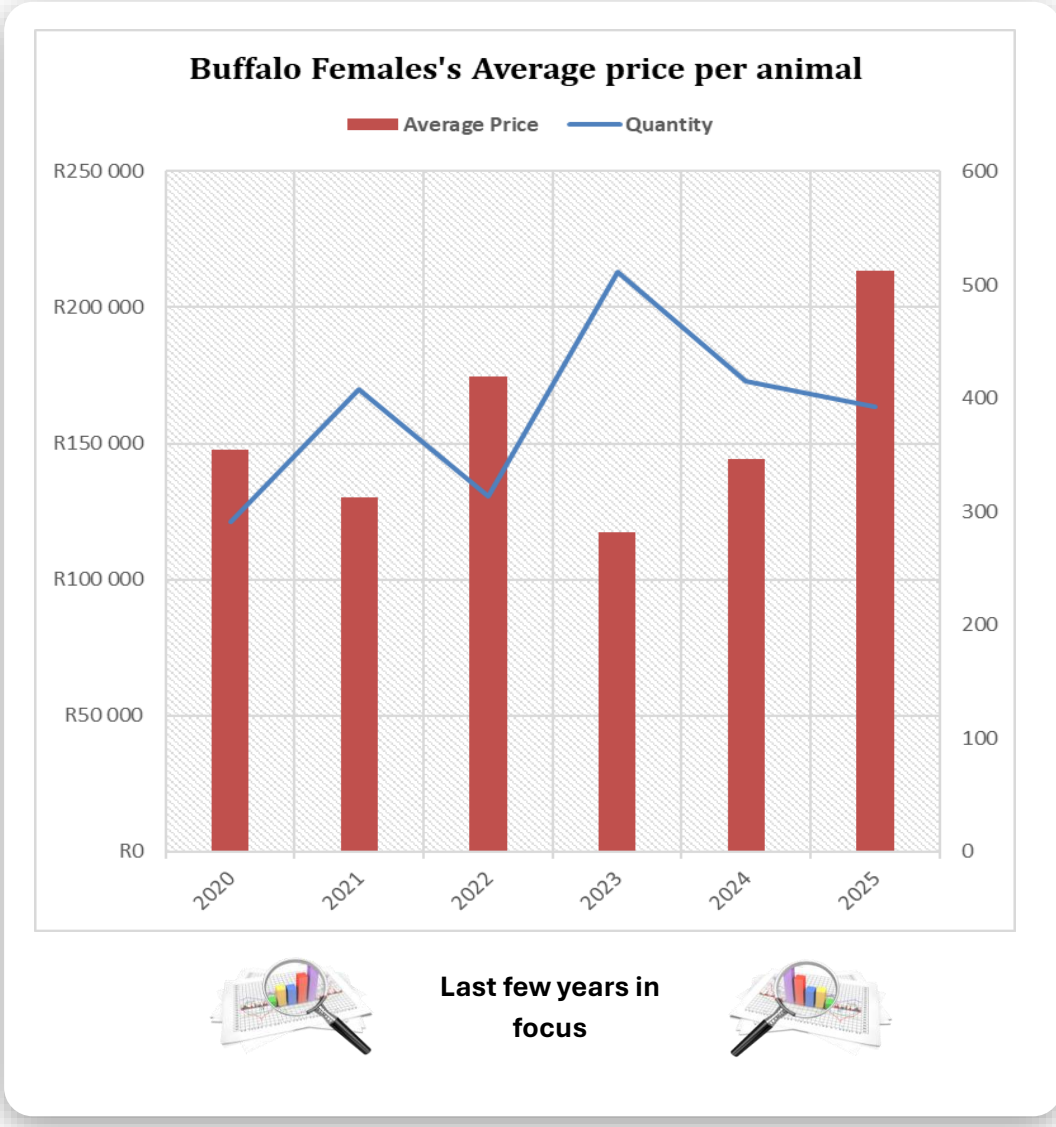
2017–2020: Correction, Consolidation, and Post-Boom Reality

The years following the peak brought a **pronounced and necessary market correction**. Average prices dropped from R637 213 in 2017 to R353 819 in 2018 and R276 127 in 2019. The 2020 COVID-19 shock intensified the downturn, pushing the average female price to **R147 794**, its lowest point since 2007.

Industry-wide, buffalo experienced the same contraction affecting sable, roan, and other high-value species: **limited auction activity, loss of international hunters due to travel restrictions, weakened cash flow among breeders, and longer disposal times for surplus animals**. Quantities sold stabilised at moderate levels, indicating that breeders were reducing herd dispersal until prices improved.



2021–2024: Stabilisation and Measured Rebuilding

From 2021 onward, the market began re-establishing its footing. Average prices moved from R130 180 in 2021 to R174 500 in 2022, then softened to R117 183 in 2023 before lifting again to R144 023 in 2024. These oscillations reflected **supply normalisation, restored buyer confidence, and improved foreign participation**, but with persistent caution due to broader economic uncertainty and slow recovery in hunting revenues.

Quantities remained healthy, with 408 females sold in 2021 and 415 in 2024, demonstrating that **demand had stabilised even if the price curve was flatter and more selective**. The market had shifted from speculative premium-chasing to **value-based acquisition**, where genetic integrity, health status, and breeding performance outweighed pure horn metrics.

2025: A Market Reasserting Its Strength

The comparison between 2025 and 2024 shows a **meaningful upward shift**, signalling renewed vigour in the female buffalo market.

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Average price rose from **R144 023 in 2024 to R213 607 in 2025**, representing a substantial uplift as demand strengthened across both large estates and emerging breeders. Total value increased from R59.8 million in 2024 to **R83.7 million in 2025**, while the quantity sold declined moderately from 415 to 392 animals.

This pattern—**higher prices despite slightly lower supply**—reflects a textbook tightening market. Buyers were increasingly prioritising **disease-free status, strong maternal genetics, horn lineage predictability, and fertility traits**, all of which supported higher valuations. The broader wildlife economy in 2025 benefitted from improved tourism recovery, rising international hunter participation, and stronger liquidity among established game breeders, all contributing to upward pressure on buffalo prices.

The 2025 recovery is not speculative in nature but rather the result of **organic demand intersecting with disciplined supply**, marking a healthier and more sustainable pricing environment than the boom years. Female buffalo, once again, evolved into a cornerstone species for long-term herd development, reinforcing their premium position within South Africa's wildlife economy.

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Understanding the Meaning Behind Horn-Length Pricing

This table provides a highly revealing look into how the market assigns value to **female buffalo based on horn size**, reflecting not only genetic desirability but also the deep premium placed on proven maternal lines with strong morphological characteristics. Although female buffalo are not purchased for trophy value, their horn length becomes an **indicator of genetic quality**, age, phenotype consistency and breeding history — all of which directly influence price discovery at auction. The table therefore does not simply list prices; it tells a story of **how buyers differentiate between foundational breeding females, young genetic prospects and rare high-horn outliers**, creating a tiered structure of demand that shifts year to year depending on scarcity, breeder confidence and the trajectory of the broader wildlife market.

Buffalo Females: Pricing by Inches Sold				
	2024		2025	
Female Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Female : inches unspecified	188	R37 415	115	R45 217
Female : 26 inches plus	8	R48 125	10	R39 000
Female : 27 inches plus	7	R23 071	10	R69 600
Female : 28 inches plus	12	R34 375	18	R54 194
Female : 29 inches plus	16	R36 781	18	R54 722
Female : 30 inches plus	25	R66 860	39	R51 346
Female : 31 inches plus	13	R63 654	19	R65 658
Female : 32 inches plus	21	R53 095	26	R98 827
Female : 33 inches plus	27	R120 167	19	R121 974
Female : 34 inches plus	26	R201 635	30	R167 000
Female : 35 inches plus	23	R320 217	21	R329 167
Female : 36 inches plus	16	R269 844	21	R270 476
Female : 37 inches plus	12	R437 708	21	R668 000
Female : 38 inches plus	6	R255 417	9	R498 889
Female : 39 inches plus	6	R297 833	9	R602 778
Female : 40 inches plus	7	R564 286	3	R2 680 000
Female : 41 inches plus	0	R0	3	R1 831 667
Female : 42 inches plus	1	R1 000 000	1	R3 400 000
Female : 43 inches plus	1	R3 600 000	0	R0
TOTALS	415	R144 023	392	R213 607
	415	R59 769 500	392	R83 734 000

As we move through the categories, the lower-horn classes reveal the foundation of the market. In 2024, **188 females** with unspecified horn lengths averaged **R37 415** and in 2025 **115** such females averaged **R45 217**, showing how even non-measured animals can strengthen in price when supply tightens. These are often younger or commercially oriented females and the uplift reflects a mild but real **return of confidence** in the buffalo breeding economy.

The incremental horn bands from **26 to 31 inches** show nuanced shifts in buyer preference. In 2024, 26-inch females averaged **R48 125**, while in 2025 they eased to **R39 000**, hinting at selective buying and a more refined appetite for mid-tier genetics. Yet, in the 27-inch category, the opposite occurs: prices surged from **R23 071** to **R69 600** as quantities increased from **7** to **10**, indicating that in certain size bands, buyers aggressively pursued stronger phenotype lines.

The 28- to 31-inch range — often representing mature and proven cows — becomes increasingly competitive in 2025. Prices of **28-inch females** rise from **R34 375** to **R54 194** and **29-inch females** climb from **R36 781** to **R54 722**, with identical quantities of **18 animals** sold in each category.

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These movements show how the market rewards animals that combine commercial utility with attractive horn genetics. A turning point emerges at **32 inches plus**, where premium female value becomes unmistakable. Prices rise from **R53 095** in 2024 to **R98 827** in 2025 and the quantity increases from **21** to **26**, signalling that buyers are once again competing for females that anchor high-performance breeding herds. This trend continues into the mid-tier premium bracket: **33-inch females** rise to **R121 974** in 2025 and **34-inch females** maintain strong support at **R167 000** despite larger numbers being sold.

The most dramatic movements, however, occur in the elite horn categories. In 2024, **37-inch females** averaged **R437 708**, while in 2025 the average jumped to **R668 000** across **21 sales** — a clear sign that rarity combined with phenotype desirability exerts powerful upward pressure on price. Even more striking are the ultra-rare giants: **40-inch females** skyrocketed from **R564 286** in 2024 to **R2 680 000** in 2025, despite only **3 animals** being sold. Likewise, **41-inch females**, absent in 2024, emerged at **R1 831 667** in 2025, showing renewed appetite for exceptional females capable of shifting genetic baselines within herds.

The extreme outliers tell the final part of the story — the **R3 400 000** sale of a **42-inch female** in 2025 and the disappearance of the **43-inch category**, which recorded **R3 600 000** in 2024 but sold **none** in 2025. This reflects both **scarcity** and the cyclical nature of high-end offerings: some years produce headline sales, others reflect withholding strategies as breeders retain elite genetics for internal use.

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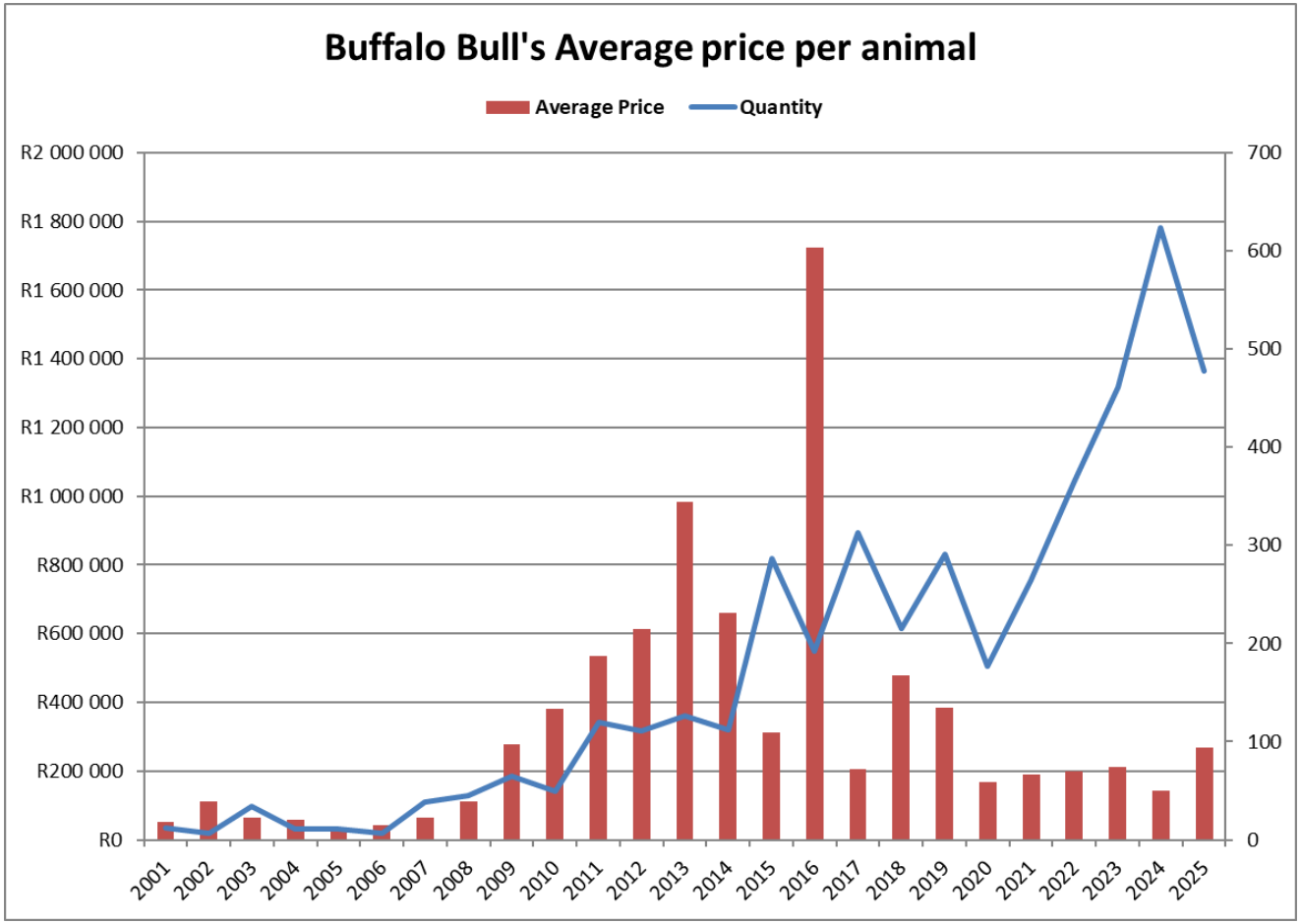
Buffalo male only Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The table and graph together offer a **sweeping, longitudinal perspective** on the economic journey of **male buffalo** within the South African wildlife industry. They reveal how the species has navigated cycles of investment enthusiasm, market resets and periods of extraordinary genetic premiums. The graph's rising and falling bars, aligned with shifting quantities, create a visual rhythm that is unmistakably tied to the industry's broader landscape — from the years of *intense breeder-driven demand*, to the gradual cooling of the market after historic highs and now toward a period of steady recalibration. Throughout the data, there is a **distinct interplay between average price and quantity sold**, showing how confidence, scarcity, genetics and industry liquidity collectively shape buyer behaviour. The graph illustrates the moments where the buffalo bull market surged ahead with *daring boldness* and moments where it recalibrated, grounding itself in more sustainable patterns. What unfolds is not merely a price chart, but the **story of a flagship species whose genetics, prestige and yield potential have continuously shaped its economic destiny**.

Buffalo Male			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R629 004	12	R52 417
2002	R780 150	7	R111 450
2003	R2 141 898	34	R62 997
2004	R633 000	11	R57 545
2005	R393 500	11	R35 773
2006	R295 000	7	R42 143
2007	R2 415 000	38	R63 553
2008	R5 015 000	45	R111 444
2009	R18 009 500	65	R277 069
2010	R18 621 000	49	R380 020
2011	R64 337 000	120	R536 142
2012	R67 983 000	111	R612 459
2013	R123 801 000	126	R982 548
2014	R74 034 000	112	R661 018
2015	R89 166 980	287	R310 686
2016	R331 155 000	192	R1 724 766
2017	R64 581 248	313	R206 330
2018	R103 161 000	215	R479 819
2019	R111 638 500	291	R383 637
2020	R29 458 300	177	R166 431
2021	R50 340 700	265	R189 965
2022	R72 877 000	366	R199 117
2023	R98 172 055	461	R212 955
2024	R89 943 500	624	R144 140
2025	R128 915 500	478	R269 698



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Buffalo male only Insights: 2001 to 2025

Foundations & Early Market Formation: 2001–2007 — Modest Prices, Limited Supply, Slow Build

From **2001 to 2007**, the buffalo bull market was still in its early commercial phase. Values rose from **R629 004 in 2001** to **R2.42 million in 2007**, while quantities increased from **12** to **38 bulls**. Average prices moved from **R52 417** to **R63 553**, showing a slow but steady strengthening as the species' commercial potential gained recognition. This period reflected **foundational herd building**, limited genetics availability, and cautious investor participation. Buffalo were already considered high-value, but the intense genetic focus that would later define the species had not yet emerged. Demand was driven primarily by **selective breeders and early-stage trophy operators**.

Pre-Boom Escalation: 2008–2010 — Rapid Lift in Value and Price

Between **2008 and 2010**, momentum increased sharply. Value rose from **R5.02 million (2008)** to **R18.62 million (2010)**, while quantities jumped from **45** to **49**, and average prices climbed from **R111 444** to **R380 020**. This was the beginning of the **high-genetics movement**, when structured breeding programmes, horn spread focus, and herd certification fuelled higher valuations. Buffalo bulls began transitioning from a niche specie into a **recognized investment asset**, with buyers showing stronger preference for improved genetics.

The Genetics Boom: 2011–2014 — Explosive Growth, Exceptional Pricing

The years **2011 to 2014** defined the rise of the buffalo bull as the **flagship investment animal** of the wildlife industry. In **2011**, value surged to **R64.34 million** with **120 bulls** sold at **R536 142**. By **2012**, the market strengthened further to **R612 459 per bull** and **R67.98 million** total. The peak of this first boom was **2013**, when value reached **R123.80 million**, with **126 bulls** averaging **R982 548**. Even in **2014**, although the average moderated to **R661 018**, values remained high at **R74.03 million**. This period aligned with **high-net-worth investment inflows**, structured breeding programs, media-driven genetics promotion, and intense competition for wide-spread bulls. Buyers sought **prestige genetics**, and the specie became the core attraction at major auctions.

Correction & Rebalancing: 2015–2017 — Sharp Adjustments and Market Reset

The correction phase arrived between **2015 and 2017**. In **2015**, the quantity sold surged to **287 bulls**, driving value to **R89.17 million**, but the average dropped sharply to **R310 686**, signifying a market that was correcting through supply pressure. In **2016**, however, a rare anomaly occurred: average price spiked to **R1 724 766**, while quantities dipped to **192**, pushing value to **R331.16 million**. This was largely attributed to **one or two exceptional high-value lots**, which distorted the annual price. By **2017**, the reset was complete. Average price settled at **R206 330**, with **313 bulls** sold, and value normalised to **R64.58 million**. This period reflected industry fatigue following over-inflated expectations and the eventual stabilisation of buffalo pricing toward more realistic commercial valuations.

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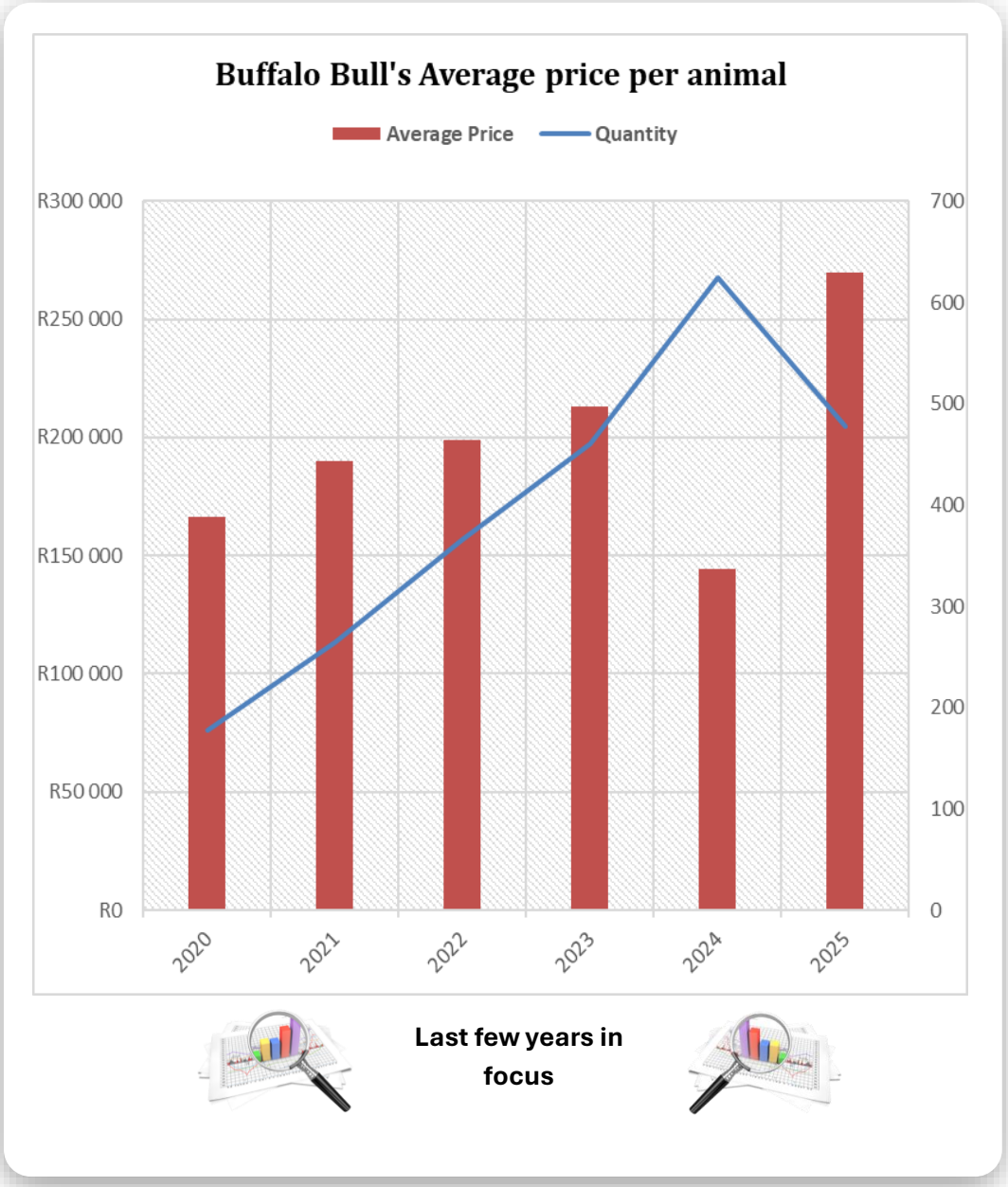
Consolidation & Steady Trading: 2018–2019 — A Mature, Balanced Market

From **2018 to 2019**, the market showed renewed balance and consistency. In **2018**, value reached **R103.16 million** with an average of **R479 819**, while **2019** saw **R111.64 million** at **R383 637** average for **291 bulls**. The industry had now matured. Trophy operators expanded, private reserves increased buffalo stocking, and breeders focussed on **stable, commercially sensible demand** rather than speculative highs.



COVID Shock and Stabilising Recovery: 2020–2023 — Disruption Followed by Gradual Normalisation

The **2020** year reflected COVID disruption clearly. Quantities dropped to **177**, value fell to **R29.46 million**, and average price dropped to **R166 431**. Restricted hunting, border closures and auction disruptions heavily contracted liquidity.

From **2021 to 2023**, recovery emerged:
– **2021:** value rose to **R50.34 million**, average **R189 965**.
– **2022:** continued strengthening to **R72.88 million** and **R199 117** average.
– **2023:** expansion to **461 bulls**, **R98.17 million** value and **R212 955** average.

This rebound mirrored **international hunter return**, increased buffalo demand from tourism-driven reserves, and stronger genetics circulation.

The 2024 Pre-Surge Phase — Volume Spike with Softer Pricing

In **2024**, a major shift occurred: quantity shot up to **624 bulls**, yet the average price dropped to **R144 140**, bringing value to **R89.94 million**.

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This showed the market entering a **high-volume supply phase**, where long-term breeding programs released more mature bulls, pushing prices down through increased availability. It also reflected heightened commercial off-take rather than elite trophy-driven sales.

2025: Prices Strengthen Despite Lower Quantities as Demand Rebuilds in a Tightening Market

The year **2025** delivered a strong recovery in buffalo bull pricing. Total value rose from **R89.94 million in 2024** to **R128.92 million in 2025**, an increase of **43.3%** despite quantities dropping from **624** to **478 bulls**, a reduction of **23.4%**.

The key driver was the **rebound in average price**, rising from **R144 140** to **R269 698**, an uplift of **87.1%**. This indicated a narrowing supply of top-quality bulls entering the market, increased demand from reserves rebuilding buffalo herds, and renewed interest from high-value safari sectors.

Industry conditions in 2025 played a major role:
– improved veld conditions supported buffalo carrying capacity,
– elite genetics remained scarce after years of heavy off-take,
– private reserves increased investment into Big-5 tourism expansion,
– international hunters continued returning in higher numbers.

The result was a year where buffalo bulls regained **pricing authority**, and demand centred strongly around **quality rather than quantity**. The market signalled that the specie remains one of the most strategically important and commercially powerful animals in the South African wildlife economy.

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A Story of Shifting Power in the Buffalo Bull Market: 2023–2025

The pricing data across these three years paints a vivid picture of a market in motion — one where **buyer psychology, horn premium thresholds and the scarcity of exceptional bulls** intersect to reshape value in subtle yet powerful ways. The story begins in **2023**, a year defined by *steady demand across mid-tier horn sizes* and punctuated by a handful of extraordinary outliers.

Buffalo Bulls: Pricing by Inches Sold

	2023		2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bull : inches unspecified	147	R70 093	96	R78 416	65	R73 723
Bull : Sub-Adult	0	R0	18	R36 806	3	R61 667
Bull : Young	0	R0	25	R44 580	38	R54 618
Bull : Hunting	0	R0	15	R48 200	2	R87 500
Bull : less than 36 inches	60	R60 850	96	R56 177	52	R73 587
Bull : 36 inches plus	9	R74 278	17	R83 941	12	R83 750
Bull : 37 inches plus	14	R83 536	33	R94 742	22	R92 614
Bull : 38 inches plus	14	R85 679	32	R101 078	18	R94 750
Bull : 39 inches plus	18	R103 472	26	R105 827	22	R127 614
Bull : 40 inches plus	32	R113 109	40	R117 713	21	R122 143
Bull : 41 inches plus	24	R121 771	38	R118 421	24	R119 479
Bull : 42 inches plus	20	R130 000	31	R120 823	27	R131 389
Bull : 43 inches plus	31	R130 306	25	R130 480	37	R141 054
Bull : 44 inches plus	23	R149 000	33	R142 364	17	R162 500
Bull : 45 inches plus	18	R199 583	25	R188 500	33	R187 121
Bull : 46 inches plus	9	R263 333	21	R205 357	13	R212 077
Bull : 47 inches plus	17	R314 853	20	R286 500	21	R283 929
Bull : 48 inches plus	5	R497 000	11	R340 455	13	R386 923
Bull : 49 inches plus	6	R928 167	8	R766 875	13	R549 231
Bull : 50 inches plus	7	R1 407 143	8	R1 157 500	12	R1 795 417
Bull : 51 inches plus	2	R1 092 501	3	R1 383 333	9	R1 195 556
Bull : 52 inches plus	3	R5 100 000	1	R1 700 000	2	R4 387 500
Bull : 53 inches plus	1	R10 750 000	1	R3 000 000	1	R3 200 000
Bull : 54 inches plus	1	R5 200 000	1	R1 100 000	0	R0
Bull : 55 inches plus	0	R0	0	R0	0	R0
Bull : 56 inches plus	0	R0	0	R0	1	R22 000 000
TOTALS	461	R212 954	624	R144 140	478	R269 698
	461	R98 172 013	624	R89 943 500	478	R128 915 500

While the bulk of trading occurred between the **less-than-36-inch** and **40–44 inch** categories, the market revealed its capacity for dramatic spikes, most notably when a rare **53-inch bull reached R10.75 million**, reminding the industry that buffalo remain one of the few species where a single animal can rewrite annual averages.

Moving into **2024**, the rhythm of the market shifts. A remarkable rise in total volume — from **461 bulls in 2023 to 624 bulls in 2024** — dilutes the overall average, pulling it down to **R144 140**. Yet beneath this softer headline lies a deeper truth: buyers were still paying strongly for classically desirable horn increments.

Categories in the **40–44 inch range** remained consistently supported and even as prices eased slightly, the market signalled a preference for well-structured bulls rather than speculative top-end bidding. Most striking, however, was the recalibration in the upper-tier sizes; previously explosive premiums cooled, showing that the extraordinary highs of the breeder-boom years had, at least temporarily, settled into more rational territory.

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Then comes **2025**, a year that breathes confidence back into the system with unmistakable clarity. Although total quantity drops to **478**, the average price surges upward to **R269 698**, demonstrating how **reduced supply combined with stronger buyer selectivity** can elevate the entire market. The middle horn band — long the engine room of buffalo economics — strengthens significantly, with **39–44 inch bulls** lifting materially across most categories. These gains reflect a renewed willingness to invest in bulls capable of advancing herd genetics rather than merely filling ecological stocking quotas.

But nowhere is the market's renewed nerve more evident than in the extraordinary top end. The appearance of a **56-inch bull at R22 million** is more than a record; it is a statement. It signals that **elite genetics still command near-mythic valuations** and that once-in-a-generation animals continue to anchor the prestige economy of buffalo breeding. Even the traditionally volatile upper bands from **50–53 inches** firm noticeably, creating a layered pricing structure in which each incremental inch is once again rewarded. Across these three years, the narrative is unmistakable:

Buffalo Bull's	Buffalo Bull Horn					Increase %
Rand value per inches	Size Inches	2023	2024	2025	Ave 3 years	2024 to 2025
smaller than 30 inches	smaller 30 inches	R1 282	R1 476	R1 509	**R1 422**	**2.22%**
between >30 and< 35 inches	30 to 35 inches	R1 523	R1 791	R1 927	**R1 747**	**7.61%**
between >35 and< 36 inches	35 to 36 inches	R1 933	R2 125	R2 316	**R2 125**	**8.97%**
between >36 and< 37 inches	36 to 37 inches	R2 041	R2 329	R2 351	**R2 241**	**0.92%**
between >37 and< 38 inches	37 to 38 inches	R2 237	R2 442	R2 672	**R2 450**	**9.45%**
between >38 and< 39 inches	38 to 39 inches	R2 241	R2 272	R2 449	**R2 321**	**7.81%**
between >39 and< 40 inches	39 to 40 inches	R2 624	R2 687	R3 155	**R2 822**	**17.41%**
between >40 and< 41 inches	40 to 41 inches	R2 802	R2 742	R3 119	**R2 888**	**13.78%**
between >41 and< 42 inches	41 to 42 inches	R2 940	R2 699	R2 965	**R2 868**	**9.85%**
between >42 and< 43 inches	42 to 43 inches	R3 070	R2 849	R3 114	**R3 011**	**9.32%**
between >43 and< 44 inches	43 to 44 inches	R3 004	R2 996	R3 350	**R3 117**	**11.84%**
between >44 and< 45 inches	44 to 45 inches	R3 358	R3 184	R3 847	**R3 463**	**20.85%**
between >45 and< 46 inches	45 to 46 inches	R4 400	R4 133	R4 186	**R4 240**	**1.30%**
between >46 and< 47 inches	46 to 47 inches	R5 665	R4 398	R4 962	**R5 008**	**12.84%**
between >47 and< 48 inches	47 to 48 inches	R6 643	R5 748	R6 021	**R6 137**	**4.75%**
between >48 and <49 inches	48 to 49 inches	R10 255	R7 466	R7 805	**R8 509**	**4.53%**
between >49 and <50 inches	49 to 50 inches	R18 850	R9 918	R11 514	**R13 428**	**16.09%**
between >50 and <51 inches	50 to 51 inches	R27 859	R21 417	R26 217	**R25 164**	**22.41%**
between >51 and <52 inches	51 to 52 inches	R21 394	R27 016	R27 410	**R25 273**	**1.46%**
between >52 and <53 inches	52 to 53 inches	R30 768	R32 692	R34 657	**R32 706**	**6.01%**
between >53 and <54 inches	53 to 54 inches	R201 878	R56 604	R104 992	**R121 158**	**85.49%**
between >54 and <55 inches	54 to 55 inches	R95 853	R118 000	R156 000	**R123 284**	**32.20%**
between >55 and< 56 inches	55 to 56 inches	R0	R0	R392 857	**R392 857**	**0.00%**
between >56 and< 57 inches	56 to 57 inches	R0	R0	R0	**R0**	**0.00%**
between >57 and< 58 inches	57 to 58 inches	R0	R0	R0	**R0**	**0.00%**

2023 described stability, 2024 described volume and 2025 describes renewed belief in quality. The market has rebalanced, recalibrated and now reasserts that horn length — especially in the elite tiers — remains one of the most potent drivers of value in the wildlife economy.

What emerges from this rand-per-inch lens is a story of a market steadily reaffirming the **value of incrementality**, where every added inch carries consequence — but some inches carry far more weight than others. In the lower bands, the market behaves predictably: values grow gently as bulls move from **below 30 inches** up through the **35–36 inch** range, each step met with a modest rise in price, reflected in increases such as **2.22%** and **7.61%**.

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These early gains suggest a market that rewards structure and completeness without stretching into speculative territory. It is only once bulls cross the **37–40 inch threshold** that the pricing dynamic begins to change. Here the rises become more assertive, with the **39–40 inch** band jumping **17.41%**, signalling that buyers increasingly view this zone as the gateway to meaningful herd improvement. These are the bulls that can lift average horn length within breeding programmes and are thus pursued more aggressively, especially in years when top-tier bulls are scarce.

From **40 inches to 45 inches**, the market displays a blend of confidence and competition. Bands such as **40–41 inches** lift **13.78%**, while **41–42 inches** and **42–43 inches** see increases near **10%**, reflecting a collective understanding that these bulls represent the dependable backbone of the modern buffalo economy. They embody the genetics many breeders need: strong, repeatable and just rare enough to push prices consistently higher without veering into volatility.

But the true energy of the market sits higher up. From **43 inches onward**, the value-per-inch accelerates. The **43–44 inch** band rises **11.84%**, while **44–45 inches** surges by **20.85%**, demonstrating that even a single inch at these levels can transform a bull from "excellent" to "elite." Buyers understand that these bulls do not often appear in volume and when they do, competition tightens.

At the trophy-class levels — above **46 inches** — the market shifts from linear logic to one driven by **rarity economics**. The bands between **46–47 inches** and **47–48 inches** grow by **12.84%** and **4.75%**, but the real drama appears as bulls extend into the **49–52 inch** classes. Here we see **16.09%, 22.41% and 1.46%** increases, illustrating how each year brings different outliers that reshape these upper tiers. And then the extraordinary makes its appearance. The **53–54 inch** band rises **85.49%** and **54–55 inches** jumps **32.20%**, pointing directly to the influence of extremely rare bulls whose sale prices reverberate across the category. These outliers pull the entire band upward, demonstrating how a handful of exceptional animals can shift expectations for what the top end is worth.



The moment the table reaches the **55–56 inch** category, the market crosses into mythology: the sudden rand-per-inch valuation of **R392 857** in 2025 — following zeros in earlier years — signals the sale of a bull so rare that it establishes a brand-new reference point. It is not just a sale; it is a recalibration of what the industry believes an inch of horn can be worth at the absolute top.

Across these bands, the story is unmistakable: **the market is tightening, premiums are rising and buyers are willing to pay more for every inch — especially once horn length moves beyond the mid-40s**. Incrementality becomes exponential and the value of horn inches transforms from steady progression into steep trajectory. The table captures not just prices but the psychology of a market leaning hard into confidence, scarcity and genetic ambition.

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HORN MEASUREMENT STANDARDS
ANTELOPE vs BUFFALO

HOW ANTELOPE HORNS ARE MEASURED



Straight-line Measurement

For Impala
- Kudu, Eland
- Wildebaest
- Gemsbok/Oryx
- Hartebeest
- Waterbuck
- Nyala
- Sable
- Roan

Shows genetic expression, maturity and symmetry

WHY BUFFALO ARE MEASURED DIFFERENTY



Buffalo anatomy includes the boss—a fused horn shield covering the forehead.

Because of this, buffalo are evaluated **using spread, boss, boss hardness** and **overall shape** rather than length alone

Primary measurement

Greatest **tip-to-tip spread**, capturing the width and presence of the bull

Value = Length
Measured base to-tip

Buffalo
Measured tip to-tip

Value = Spread + Boss
Focus on maturity and dominance

Some species include secondary attributes such as base circumference or tip-to-tip spread

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SABLE

Hippotragus niger

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Hippotragus*
Species: *H. niger*
Common Name: Sable Antelope

WILDLIFE FACT SHEET



MORPHOLOGY

- Large, powerfully built antelope with long scimitar horns; males jet black, females chestnut; bulls 220–270 kg, cows 180–220 kg.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Woodland–savannah mosaics, especially Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KZN; widespread on private game ranches.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Selective grazer of medium grass; prefers nutrient-rich perennial grasses and fire flush.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Harem herds led by dominant bull; bachelor groups; territorial males; calves hidden after birth.

ADAPTATIONS

- Long horns for defense, efficient grazing physiology, strong herd cohesion, agile build, tolerance to woodland parasites.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern; increasing on private land;
- Threatened in parts of Africa by habitat degradation.

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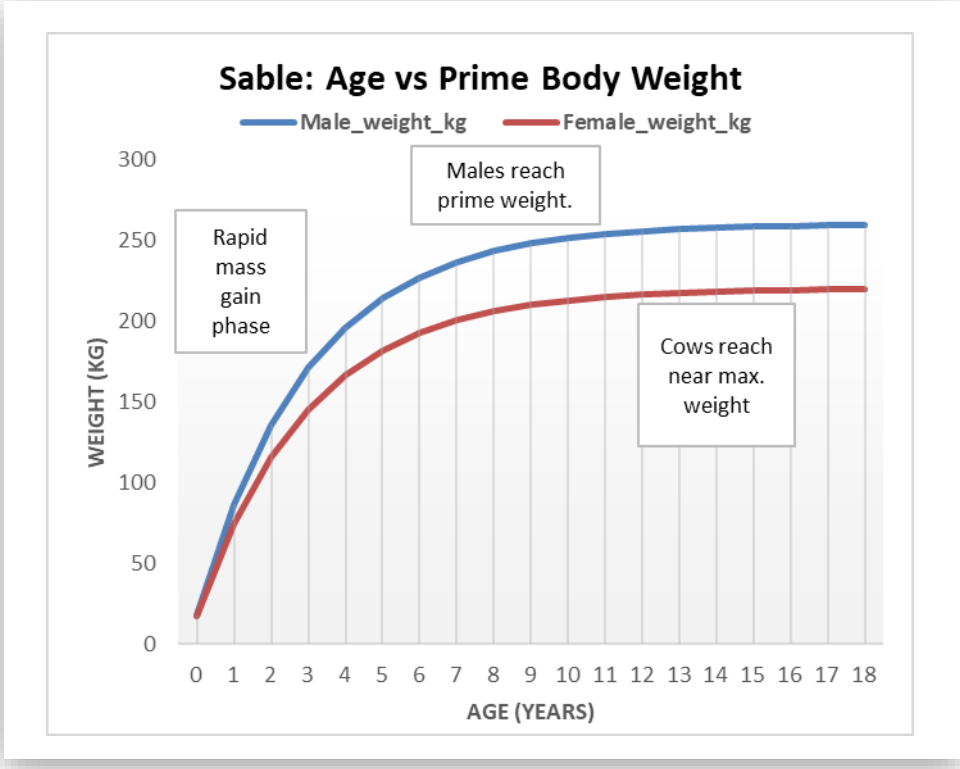
Sable Specie Information

The **Sable antelope** is one of Africa's aristocrats – a statuesque antelope that seems carved from obsidian and polished with light. When a mature bull steps out of the woodland, mane bristling and scimitar horns sweeping backwards over his shoulders, the veld feels suddenly smaller. In South Africa's wildlife industry, this animal has become both an icon of beauty and a high-value genetic asset, but its real significance lies in how perfectly it is adapted to the mosaic of woodland and grass that defines much of the country's savannah.

Sable favour habitats where broadleaf woodland merges with open grassland. In South Africa they are strongly associated with **Limpopo's Waterberg and lowveld woodlands**, **parts of Mpumalanga bordering Kruger** and well-managed reserves and game farmes **in North West and KZN**. They seldom stray far from reliable water, yet they avoid heavily disturbed areas, preferring quieter blocks of bush where grazing openings are interspersed with thick cover. These habitat preferences make them natural candidates for private conservation properties that can maintain a mix of woodland, grass and limited cattle competition.

Diet reflects that same balance. Sable are selective grazers rather than bulk feeders. They search out **high-quality, medium-height grasses**—particularly perennial tufted species that hold their nutritional value into the dry season. After summer storms or controlled burns, they quickly home in on new green flush, cropping the choicest shoots with their relatively narrow muzzles. When grass quality declines, **they will switch opportunistically to forbs and the leaves of low shrubs**, but their physiology is fundamentally tuned to quality grasses. This selective grazing pressure helps keep certain grasses short and nutritious, creating microhabitats that benefit other medium-sized grazers.



Their growth trajectory mirrors this social structure and the long investment needed to create a prime trophy bull. **Calves are born at around 15 kg** after a gestation **of roughly eight months**, usually hidden in cover for the first few days while the cow returns periodically to nurse. By their first year they reach about 60 kg and the young horns begin to emerge, measuring roughly 6 inches. **At two years, a young bull might weigh around 110 kg with horns of 12 inches**, still very much a youngster.

Weight stabilises a little later, **around 250–255 kg**, as the animal matures and puts on finishing condition rather than linear growth. Breeding patterns are shaped around rainfall and forage quality.

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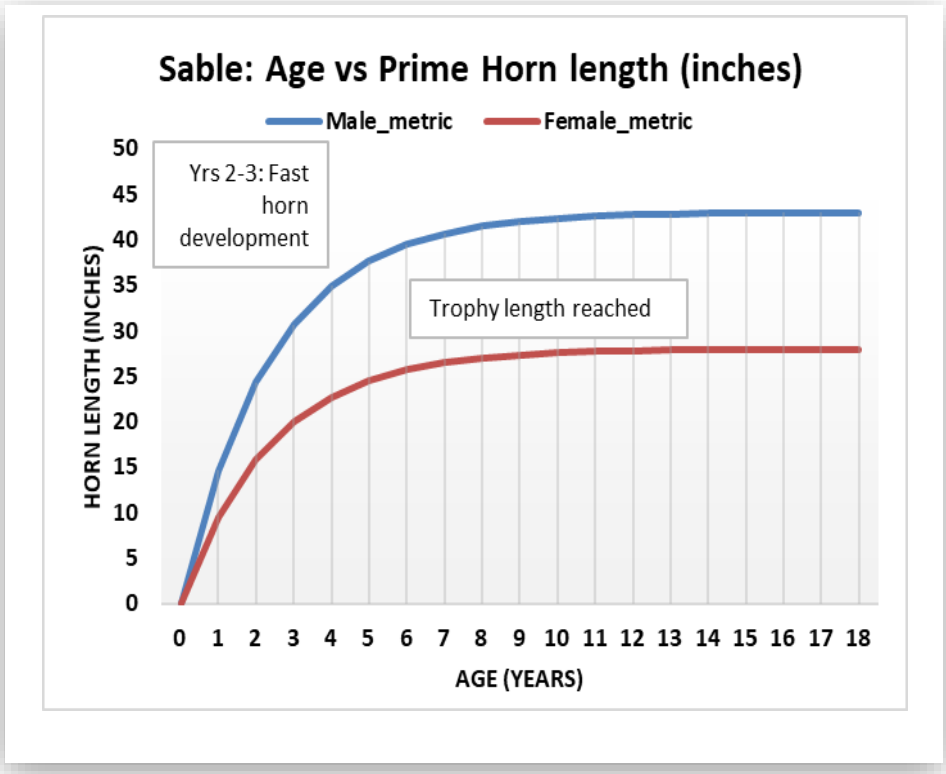

The real surge in horn growth takes place between ages 3 and 7: by three years he may be 150 kg with 20-inch horns; by four, 180 kg and 28 inches; by five, 200 kg and 34 inches. **Between five and eight years, mass climbs towards 230–240 kg and horn length pushes through 38–45 inches**, eventually plateauing around 48–49 inches in top South African conditions.

Cows typically first conceive at 2.5–3 years and, under good conditions, can produce one calf roughly every second year. Calving tends to be seasonal, often clustered just before or during the early wet season when fresh grazing is becoming available. The **chart on the left**, *Age vs Horn Length (inches)*, shows that most horn growth happens between **2 and 7 years**. Values climb from around **12 inches** at age 2 to **34 inches** by age 5, then push into the **40–49 inch** range as the bull enters full maturity. The annotation at five years marks the **prime horn growth phase**, when genetics and nutrition make the most visible difference.

In South Africa's game industry, variants and bloodlines have become important. **Differences in horn length, curvature, body size, coat depth and regional genetics all shape value and breeding decisions**. Conservationists and breeders refer not only to subspecies but also to recognised regional types and colour shades that appear in well-managed herds.

Their **horns are long, thick-based and powerfully curved, often reaching 40–65 inches in exceptional animals**. Cows and young animals are more chestnut or dark brown rather than black; they are slightly smaller and more refined, with horns that are still impressive but generally lighter, narrower and shorter than those of bulls. Even at a distance, the contrast between the ebony bull and his chestnut harem is easy to pick out.

Because Sable herds are relatively small and more sensitive to disturbance, good management—low stress, predictable water and controlled predator pressure—is vital in both wild and farming systems. Sex differences in Sable are striking and central to their appeal in the breeding industry. **Mature bulls** darken dramatically with age, developing a rich, almost purple-black coat, a thick upright mane and heavy neck and shoulder musculature.

Socially, Sable live in harem herds led by a dominant bull. A typical herd consists of one mature male, several adult cows and their offspring. Young males are pushed out as they mature and drift into bachelor groups, where they continue to grow and test each other before attempting to win territories of their own. The territorial bull's job is demanding: he must patrol boundaries, defend access to water and grazing and keep his herd cohesive. Displays are dramatic but usually ritualised—parallel walking, horn swinging and bristling of the mane, escalating to horn clashes if neither male backs down.

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The matrix below sets out the major variants of the **Sable**.

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Colouration / Morphology	Horn Characteristics	Notes & Distinguishing Features
Southern Sable (*H. n. niger*)	South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe	Bulls jet black; cows dark chestnut	Long, heavily curved horns; 40–60"+ in bulls	Dominant type in South Africa; core breeding stock
Zambian Sable (*H. n. kirkii*)	Zambia-derived lines	Slightly taller frame; rich dark brown to black males	Often very long, sweeping horns	Introduced genetics in some SA herds for horn length
Matetsi / Zimbabwean Line	Zimbabwe	Deep-bodied, strong necks; very dark bulls	Heavy bases, strong curve	Sought-after horn mass and body depth
Giant Sable (*H. n. variani*)	Angola (rare in SA)	Very dark, almost purple-black bulls	Exceptionally long horns, record potential	Critically endangered in natural range; mainly conservation interest
Colour Variant – Copper / Mahogany	Select South African farmes	Rich reddish to copper coat	Standard sable horn shape	Aesthetic variant; used in specialist breeding
Colour Variant – Ultra Black / "Royal" Sable	Select South African farmes	Extremely dark, glossy black bulls	Standard or enhanced horn length	High visual impact; premium marketing phenotype

Fascinating Insights about Sable

- Prime Sable bulls can carry horns exceeding **45–50 inches**, placing them among Africa's most impressive antelope. They can reach a maximum of 58 inches.
- Their **upright mane and deep black coat** make them highly visible and extremely photogenic—key for eco-tourism value.
- Sable are **remarkably brave**; they have been known to defend themselves against lions using their scimitar horns.
- Calves rely heavily on **concealment**, lying hidden in cover for days after birth while the mother grazes nearby.
- In South Africa's wildlife economy, Sable genetics have become a **strategic investment class**, driving careful record-keeping, horn measurement and bloodline tracking.
- Their preference for mixed woodland and grassland means that **good sable habitat is also good general biodiversity habitat**, making them useful umbrella species in conservation planning.

"Sable remain one of the most iconic value drivers in the South African wildlife industry — a species where genetics, conformation and horn excellence can transform a breeding programme, elevate auction prices and anchor long-term investment strategies with enduring prestige.

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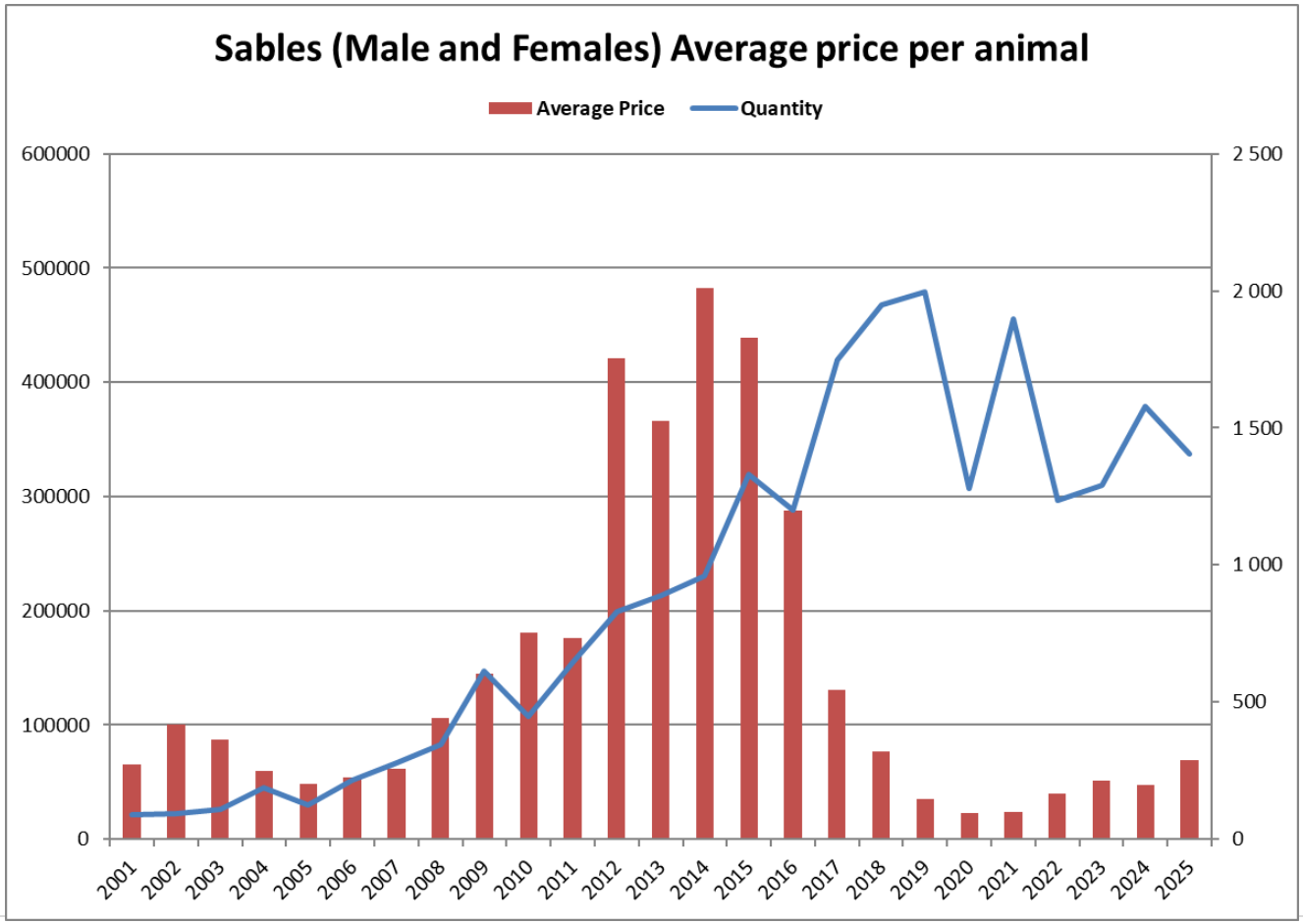
Sable male and female Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The sable series tells the story of a **classic rare-game boom, correction and maturing phase** in the South African wildlife economy. The table sets out, year by year, how total **auction value**, the **number of animals traded** and the **average price per sable** have moved over nearly a quarter of a century. The graph translates this into a visual journey where **red bars** track price and the **blue line** traces quantities, making it easy to see where speculative heat built up, where the market cooled and how a more **commercial, volume-driven sable economy** has emerged.

What stands out immediately is how **early, modest trading** evolves into a **sharp price escalation**, then gives way to a long period in which **high volumes** dominate and prices reset to more sustainable levels. Through this, sable remain a **flagship rare species**, but no longer only a trophy for elite investors; they increasingly function as a **core revenue generator** for mixed wildlife portfolios, with breeders balancing genetics, risk and cash flow rather than chasing extreme record prices alone.

Sables (Male and Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R5 698 030	87	R65 495
2002	R9 254 250	92	R100 590
2003	R9 484 468	109	R87 013
2004	R11 154 500	188	R59 332
2005	R5 921 500	123	R48 142
2006	R11 579 500	216	R53 609
2007	R17 150 500	279	R61 471
2008	R36 736 500	347	R105 869
2009	R89 006 502	615	R144 726
2010	R81 104 000	448	R181 036
2011	R113 912 000	646	R176 334
2012	R348 892 500	829	R420 859
2013	R326 020 500	890	R366 315
2014	R462 274 000	959	R482 038
2015	R583 876 900	1 331	R438 675
2016	R345 368 500	1 200	R287 807
2017	R228 812 455	1 748	R130 900
2018	R149 201 610	1 950	R76 514
2019	R70 137 010	1 996	R35 139
2020	R28 908 850	1 280	R22 585
2021	R45 383 700	1 896	R23 937
2022	R49 167 184	1 235	R39 811
2023	R66 505 012	1 289	R51 594
2024	R74 412 450	1 577	R47 186
2025	R97 581 000	1 407	R69 354



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Sable male and female Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Development & First Price Lift (2001–2007)

The period from **2001 to 2007** reflected a market finding its identity, with average prices rising from **R65 495 in 2001** to **R61 471 in 2007**, despite fluctuations. Value nearly tripled across these seven years, moving from **R5.69 m in 2001** to **R17.15 m in 2007**, supported by a steady increase in quantities from **87 to 279** animals. This phase aligned with the early rare-game expansion when breeders were refining lineages and the market began recognising **Sables as a premium ecological and investment species**. The lift in prices by 2008 was driven by growing buyer confidence and improved genetic quality across private ranches.

Acceleration and the First Major Boom (2008–2011)

From **2008 to 2011**, the species entered a compelling upward trajectory. Total value surged from **R36.7 m in 2008** to **R113.9 m in 2011**, while average prices lifted from **R105 869 to R176 334**. Quantities followed suit, rising from **347 animals in 2008** to **646 animals in 2011**. This was the precursor to the rare-game boom: increasing international attention, aggressive genetic investments, and strong disposable incomes supported elevated pricing. By 2010 and 2011, prices approached the **R180 000 mark**, driven by buyers seeking superior horn genetics and structured breeding lines.

Historic Peak: The Rare-Game Boom (2012–2015)

The period **2012 to 2015** marked the height of Sable market exuberance. With **average prices reaching R420 859 in 2012**, then **R482 038 in 2014**, and quantities accelerating from **829 to 1 331**, this was the most powerful cluster of growth in the species' modern history. Total market value expanded from **R348.9 m in 2012** to **R583.9 m in 2015**, driven by exceptional demand, record-setting auctions, and unprecedented interest in genetically superior breeding stock. This was the era when Sables symbolised **high-end wildlife investment**, and wealth inflow into the sector had a profound impact across the industry.

Correction, Oversupply and Market Reset (2016–2019)

The years **2016 to 2019** were defined by a sharp recalibration. Average prices fell from **R287 807 in 2016** to **R35 139 in 2019**, a decline of approximately **87.8%** across the period. Yet quantities continued to increase, rising from **1 200 to 1 996** animals, reflecting oversupply relative to demand and a market adjusting from speculative highs. Total value contracted from **R345.4 m in 2016** to **R70.1 m in 2019**, mirroring the broader rare-game market collapse. This was a structural correction rather than a short-term dip, driven by excess stock, reduced investor appetite, and rebalancing of expectations regarding Sable breeding economics.

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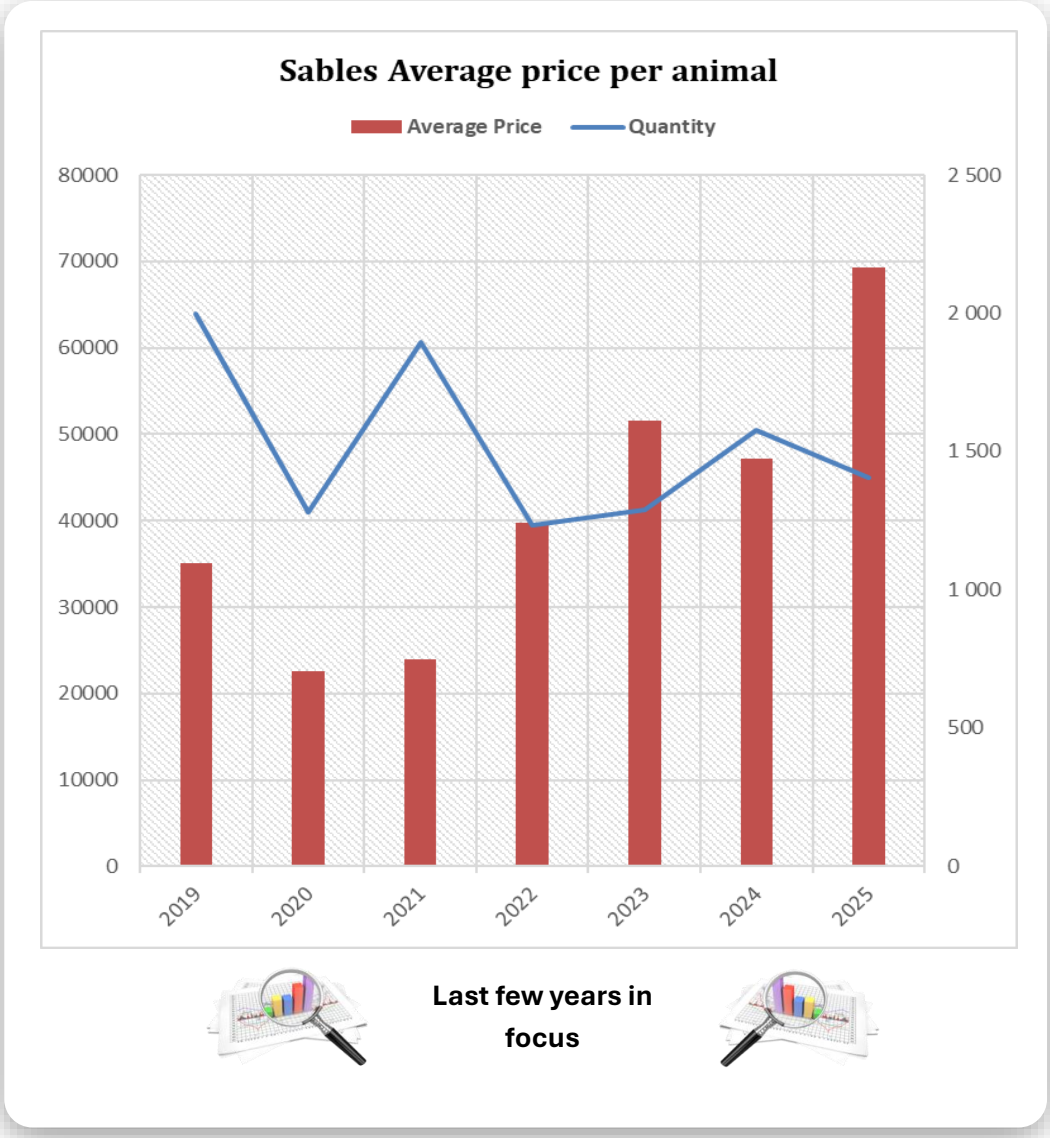
Pandemic Pressure and Stabilising Foundations (2020–2022)

The **COVID-19 period** introduced further strain. In **2020**, average prices dropped to **R22 585**, the lowest level since the early 2000s. Total value fell to **R28.9 m**, although quantity remained meaningful at **1 280**, a consequence of breeders clearing stock and focusing on liquidity. By **2022**, a modest price recovery to **R39 811** occurred, supported by the gradual return of auctions, recommencement of tourism-linked hunting markets, and normalisation of breeder strategies. Quantities stabilised between **1 235 and 1 896**, reflecting a more rationalised industry working through previously accumulated supply.



Rebuilding Momentum in the Post-Pandemic Market (2023–2024)

The years **2023 and 2024** showed early signs of improvement. Average prices lifted from **R51 594 in 2023** to **R47 186 in 2024**, despite the slight decline in price, with total quantities rising from **1 289 to 1 577**. Total value increased meaningfully from **R66.5 m in 2023** to **R74.4 m in 2024**, suggesting better-quality buyer engagement and more confidence in long-term Sable management programmes. This period highlighted a recovery from the post-boom reset and a shift toward **sustainable price floors** driven by genetics, condition, and consistent buyer participation.

2025 – Renewed Lift in Value and Price Recovery

The transition from **2024 to 2025** reflects a quietly strengthening Sable market, characterised by a meaningful **increase in total value from R74.4 m in 2024 to R97.58 m in 2025**, representing a growth of **31.1%**. This rise occurred despite a reduction in quantities from **1 577 to 1 407**, indicating that **better prices, not higher volumes**, drove the expansion. Average price improved from **R47 186 in 2024** to **R69 354 in 2025**, a substantial uplift of **47%**, signalling the strongest price recovery since before the pandemic.

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In the broader wildlife industry, 2025 has been shaped by **tightened supply of high-quality Sables**, more disciplined breeding practices, and increasing demand as investors redirect interest back into rare-game genetics after several years of caution. Improved rainfall in key regions, stronger veld conditions, and more confidence in auction platforms further supported improved bidding behaviour. What stands out most is that this recovery did not arise from speculative volumes but from **genuine market appetite for quality animals**, suggesting the beginnings of a more balanced appreciation for Sable as a long-term breeding species.

The 2025 movement therefore reads as a **measured but meaningful resurgence**—a year where Sables reclaimed momentum without the excesses of past cycles. Rising prices, stabilising volumes and firmer total value collectively signal **a healthier equilibrium**, positioning the species on firmer ground heading into the next cycle. The sable bull market is increasingly strained as demand continues to outpace supply. The availability of top-quality hunting bulls is no longer sufficient to satisfy the rising interest from both local and international hunters. The strategic move by several major breeding operations in 2023 to dismantle camp-based breeding systems is now beginning to show its effect, **limiting the consistent production of high-grade hunting bulls and placing further pressure on supply**.

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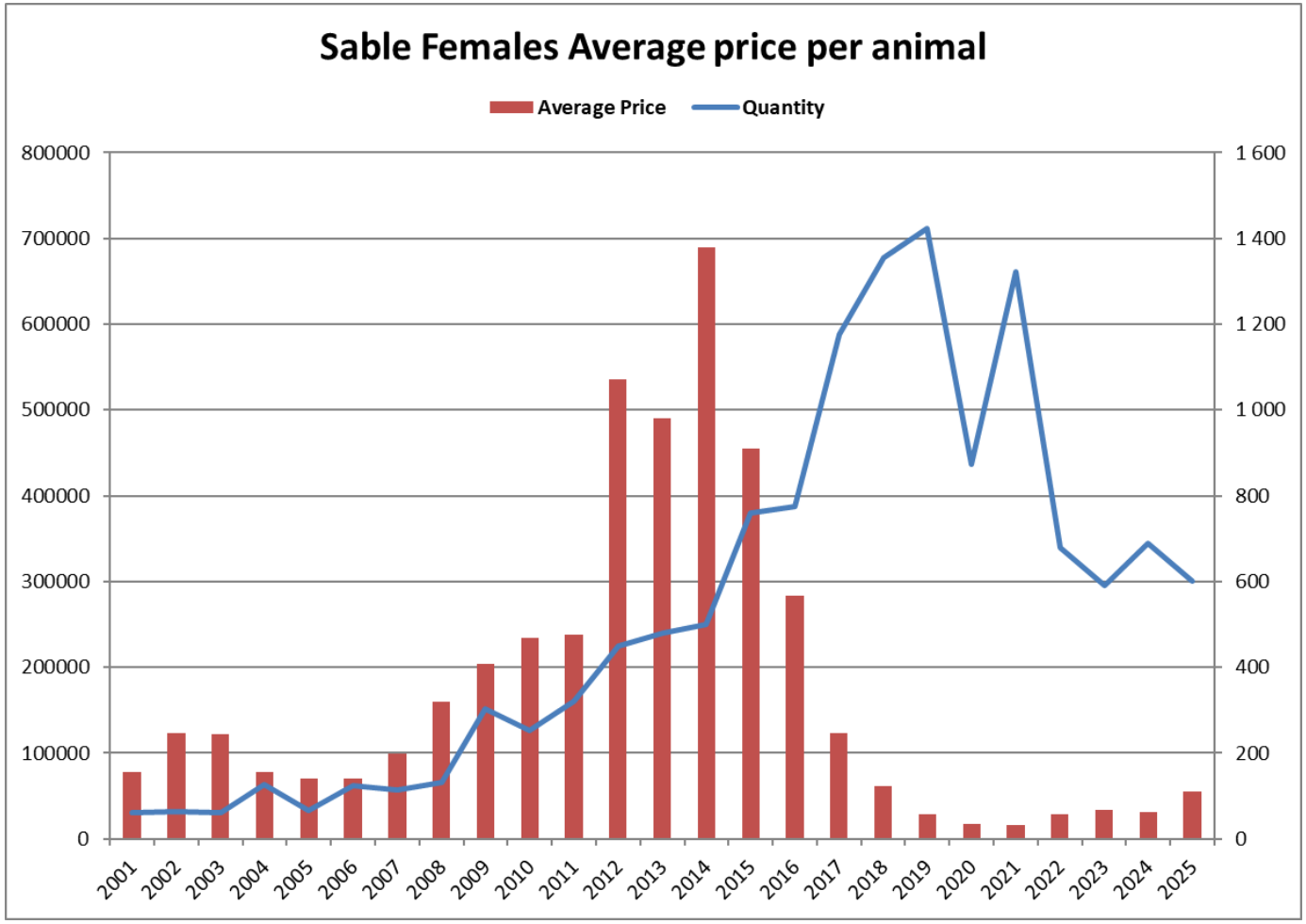
Sable female only Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Sable female dataset unfolds as a long, almost cyclical narrative of value, scarcity and shifting breeding priorities across more than two decades. The accompanying graph deepens this story by contrasting the dramatic movements in **average prices** with the evolving **quantities sold**, allowing the reader to see not only what breeders were willing to pay, but how supply and market confidence shaped these movements. Together, the table and graph trace the rise, correction and recent reawakening of the Sable female market, revealing how this once-premium sector adjusted to oversupply, recalibrated to economic pressure and now shows **renewed strength** anchored in more disciplined breeding and tighter available numbers.

Sable Female			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R4 840 030	62	R78 065
2002	R7 805 700	63	R123 900
2003	R7 452 004	61	R122 164
2004	R9 829 000	126	R78 008
2005	R4 566 500	65	R70 254
2006	R8 655 500	124	R69 802
2007	R11 403 500	115	R99 161
2008	R21 112 000	132	R159 939
2009	R61 682 668	303	R203 573
2010	R59 080 000	252	R234 444
2011	R76 300 000	321	R237 695
2012	R240 859 000	450	R535 242
2013	R235 143 500	480	R489 882
2014	R344 510 000	500	R689 020
2015	R345 938 000	760	R455 182
2016	R219 512 500	774	R283 608
2017	R144 678 509	1 177	R122 921
2018	R83 047 870	1 354	R61 335
2019	R39 969 510	1 424	R28 068
2020	R15 082 650	874	R17 257
2021	R21 847 900	1 322	R16 526
2022	R19 176 907	679	R28 243
2023	R20 129 505	592	R34 003
2024	R21 178 100	690	R30 693
2025	R33 272 000	601	R55 361



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Sable female only Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Foundations and Gradual Lifts (2001–2007)

From **2001 to 2007**, Sable females steadily gained recognition as cornerstone breeding animals. Average prices fluctuated from **R78 065 in 2001** to **R99 161 in 2007**, while total value grew from **R4.84 m to R11.40 m**. Quantities remained modest, rising from **62 to 115**, signalling a market still defining the reproductive and commercial role of female Sables. This period aligned with the broader growth of private wildlife ranching, where breeders increasingly emphasised **female genetic depth and reproductive reliability**. By 2007, the species had already begun positioning itself as a premium breeding investment within the rare-game sector.

Acceleration Toward the First Female Sable Boom (2008–2011)

The years **2008 to 2011** marked the first major upward swing. Average prices increased from **R159 939 in 2008** to **R237 695 in 2011**, supported by rising quantities from **132 to 321** animals. Total value multiplied from **R21.11 m to R76.30 m**, underscoring growing demand for breeding-age females with proven lineage. This period reflected the broader pre-boom rare-game optimism, fuelled by investment inflows, breeder confidence and improvements in both veld management and genetics. Female Sables increasingly became **the backbone of multiplier herds**, contributing directly to the strategic expansion of high-value male lines.

Peak of the Rare-Game Supercycle (2012–2015)

Between **2012 and 2015**, female Sables reached unprecedented heights. In **2012**, average prices surged to **R535 242**, with total value climbing to **R240.86 m**. This momentum held through **2014**, when prices escalated to **R689 020** with **500 animals** traded. Even in **2015**, although the market softened slightly with the average price at **R455 182**, total quantity rose to **760 animals**—the highest volume traded up to that point. This period represented the **zenith of rare-game investment**, driven by a mix of competition for elite bloodlines, high liquidity among investors, and the belief that female Sables would underpin long-term breeding empires. Auctions regularly featured headline prices, and demand far exceeded biologically sustainable supply.

Correction, Oversupply and Downward Repricing (2016–2019)

The period **2016 to 2019** marked a decisive correction. Average prices fell sharply from **R283 608 in 2016** to **R28 068 in 2019**, representing a decline of roughly **90%** across the four years. Yet quantities continued to rise, from **774 females in 2016** to **1 424 in 2019**, indicating oversupply as breeders liquidated stock and recalibrated herd sizes. Total value contracted from **R219.51 m in 2016** to **R39.97 m in 2019**. This represented the broader collapse of the rare-game super cycle, driven by reduced speculative investment, the unwinding of inflated genetic premiums, and a normalising of expectations around the economic role of Sable females in breeding programmes.

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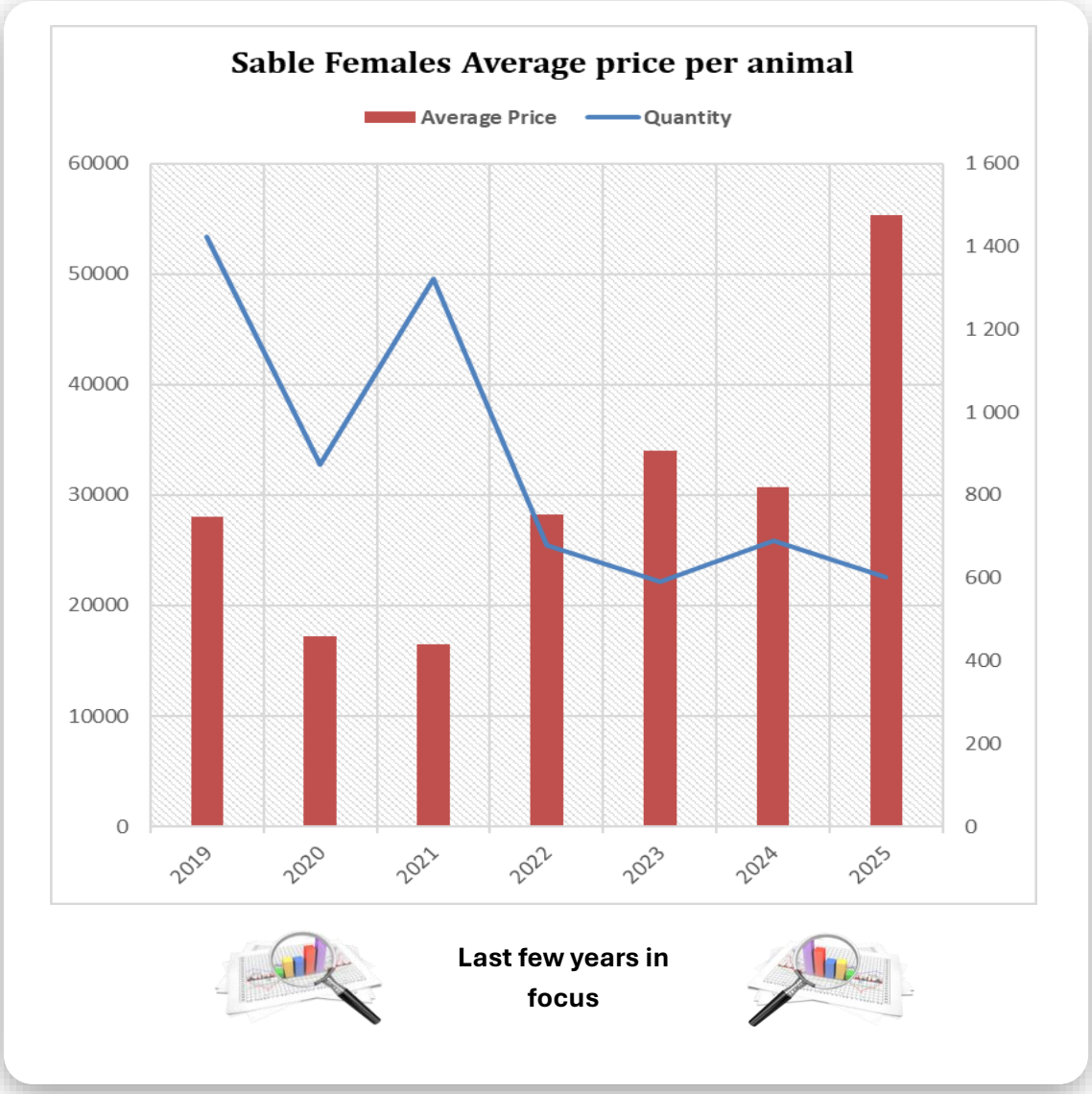
COVID-19 Impact and Post-Pandemic Stabilisation (2020–2022)

The years **2020 to 2022** were heavily shaped by pandemic conditions. Average prices dropped to **R17 257 in 2020**, reflecting pressure on liquidity, reduced auction attendance, and the collapse of international hunting travel. Quantities decreased from **1 424 animals in 2019** to **874 in 2020**, and total value fell to **R15.08 m**, the lowest in nearly two decades. By **2022**, modest recovery appeared—average price improved to **R28 243**, and value reached **R19.17 m**, though quantities fell sharply to **679** as breeders focused on consolidating herds. These shifts reflected a stabilising marketplace in which the effects of COVID, constrained cash flows and careful herd management began giving way to more deliberate long-term strategies.



Foundational Rebuilding and Price Softening (2023–2024)

The years **2023 and 2024** illustrated a tentative rebuilding phase. Average price rose from **R34 003 in 2023** to **R30 693 in 2024**, while quantities climbed from **592 to 690**. Total value moved from **R20.13 m to R21.18 m**, indicating broader buyer participation and the re-entry of investors who were previously cautious. This phase remained measured but important, signalling that female Sables had shifted from speculative highs into a more **balanced, utility-driven breeding market**, focused on long-term herd improvement rather than short-term financial leverage.

2025: A Meaningful Lift in Price and Value

The movement from **2024 to 2025** marks a meaningful strengthening in the female Sable market. Total value increased from **R21.18 m in 2024** to **R33.27 m in 2025**, reflecting a **57.1% rise**, while average price climbed from **R30 693 to R55 361**, an improvement of **80.3%**.

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What is particularly notable is that this improvement occurred despite a decline in quantity from **690 to 601** animals, highlighting that the **market rewarded quality over volume**.

This shift aligns with broader signals in the 2025 wildlife economy: tighter supply of selective breeding females, improved veld conditions after favourable rainfall cycles, and a renewed commitment among breeders to preserve high-quality maternal genetics. Demand rose especially for females with strong horn lineage, proven fertility, and reliable calving intervals. At the same time, buyers have become more discerning, stabilising the price floor for well-bred female Sables and reinforcing their importance in rebuilding elite herds after years of contraction.

In this context, 2025 represents not a speculative rebound but a **quality-driven resurgence**, supported by genuine market participation and more sustainable breeding behaviours. The uplift in both average price and total value signals a **healthier and more confident marketplace**, positioning female Sables firmly back into strategic importance for herd expansion, genetic improvement and long-term investment planning heading into the next cycle.

The table sets out a detailed breakdown of how **Sable females are priced according to horn length**, capturing not only the prices achieved but also the distribution of animals across each horn band. It illustrates how the market behaves when buyers are presented with a wide spectrum of horn development — from very young animals with minimal horn growth to the exceptionally scarce females that reach the upper bands.

What emerges is a portrait of a market that is both quality-sensitive and increasingly selective, where **scarcity in particular horn classes translates into powerful price signals** and where buyer behaviour shifts notably from one year to the next.

Sables Females : Pricing by Inches Sold

	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Females : Unspecified	582	R18 839	411	R25 832
Female : less than 21 inch	1	R81 000	5	R58 000
Female : 21 inches plus	0	R0	1	R110 000
Female : 22 inches plus	0	R0	1	R150 000
Female : 23 inches plus	1	R88 000	2	R140 000
Female : 24 inches plus	1	R130 000	4	R156 250
Female : 25 inches plus	5	R145 000	7	R121 857
Female : 26 inches plus	16	R46 688	3	R96 333
Female : 27 inches plus	5	R18 400	35	R56 100
Female : 28 inches plus	11	R48 636	17	R39 176
Female : 29 inches plus	12	R77 917	13	R75 154
Female : 30 inches plus	12	R85 500	22	R92 773
Female : 31 inches plus	12	R86 417	16	R101 250
Female : 32 inches plus	17	R120 529	25	R137 120
Female : 33 inches plus	7	R87 429	24	R230 208
Female : 34 inches plus	5	R253 000	8	R263 438
Female : 35 inches plus	3	R215 000	3	R240 000
Female : 36 inches plus	0	R0	2	R175 000
Female : 37 inches plus	0	R0	2	R330 000
Female : 38 inches plus	0	R0	0	R0
TOTALS	690	R30 693	601	R55 361
	690	R21 178 100	601	R33 272 000

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The most striking change between the two years lies in the **sharp reduction of females sold without horn measurements**, falling from **582 in 2024** to **411 in 2025**. This contraction signifies a market moving towards **greater classification transparency**, as more breeders recognise that measured horn data is essential to unlocking higher value. Prices in this undefined category respond accordingly, rising from **R18 839** to **R25 832**, a reflection of tighter supply and increasing buyer willingness to pay a premium even when full specifications are absent.

At the lower end of the spectrum, young females with **less than 21 inches** display an interesting reversal. Although numbers increase from **one to five**, average price steps down from **R81 000** to **R58 000**, underscoring how the influx of slightly more animals dilutes perceived scarcity in this micro-segment. Yet just a single tier higher, the reappearance of **21 to 22-inch** females injects a new price character into the table — **R110 000** and **R150 000**, respectively — prices that show buyers are prepared to escalate sharply when an animal demonstrates early developmental promise.

The mid-bands hold the heartbeat of the commercial market. Here, volumes grow meaningfully in 2025, particularly in the **27-inch band**, where numbers soar from **five to thirty-five**, pulling the price up from a soft **R18 400** to **R56 100**. This almost three-fold rise reinforces the reality that Sable breeders are investing in structured herd rebuilding and that buyers are rewarding uniformity and predictability. Adjacent size classes such as **28 inches** and **29 inches** remain steady in tone, with minor adjustments in both volume and price, signalling a stable demand for functional, veld-ready females in the lower-mature range.

As horn sizes climb into the recognised value bands of **30 inches and above**, the pricing narrative becomes more assertive. The **30-inch category** grows from **12 to 22 animals** and despite the increased supply, average price strengthens from **R85 500** to **R92 773**, showing a market that remains hungry for correctly structured females nearing maturity. The 31-inch and 32-inch classes deepen this trend, with price levels rising to **R101 250** and **R137 120**, reflecting the premium attached to females entering their most productive breeding window.

The upper echelons of horn development — the scarce and highly sought-after bands — demonstrate the clearest evidence of **market recalibration**. The **33-inch category leaps from R87 429 to R230 208**, while the **34-inch band** rises from **R253 000 to R263 438**, indicating that top-end genetic lines are being pursued with renewed seriousness.

The emergence of **36-inch females at R175 000** and the even rarer **37-inch females at R330 000** confirms a market rediscovering the value of elite phenotype, particularly as such females serve as cornerstone mothers in premium breeding programmes. Their presence in 2025, absent in 2024, is symbolically significant: it shows breeders once again willing to test the upper tiers of the market and buyers willing to meet them with real capital commitment.

Across the table, the elevated pricing profile of 2025 is unmistakable. Even with fewer females sold, the market shifts decisively towards **higher-value horn categories**, creating a pricing surface where scarcity, measurable quality and genetic reliability converge into a coherent upward curve.

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2025 vs 2024 – A Renewed Price Curve Driven by Measured Scarcity

The comparison between 2025 and 2024 reveals a market that has undergone a subtle but meaningful transformation. The decline in total animals sold — from **690 to 601** — is offset by a broader and deeper penetration into the higher-value horn categories. Buyers in 2025 display a willingness to chase specification, reflected in the pronounced lifting of average prices across almost every meaningful band.

The move away from loosely defined, unspecified animals into more measurable horn groups demonstrates the industry's renewed focus on **genetic accountability** and **transparent classification**, two elements that naturally elevate price.

Where 2024 presented a market still recovering from years of over-supply and subdued confidence, 2025 stands as the year where structured scarcity begins to assert itself. Prices in the premium horn classes underscore this shift dramatically: the **33-inch category rising nearly threefold**, the **37-inch category emerging at R330 000** and sustained strength in the 30–32 inch band. These are not random price spikes but signals of a sector revaluing females not merely as breeding stock, but as genetic anchors capable of shaping herd trajectories for years.

The strongest message from 2025 is that the market has rediscovered the **value of specification** and with that rediscovery comes a healthy price gradient that rewards length, maturity and proven phenotype. Buyers are no longer paying for volume; they are paying for direction — and Sable females with measurable horn development provide exactly that. Fewer animals, better structure, deeper confidence: the result is a market that transitions from recovery into controlled, quality-driven appreciation.

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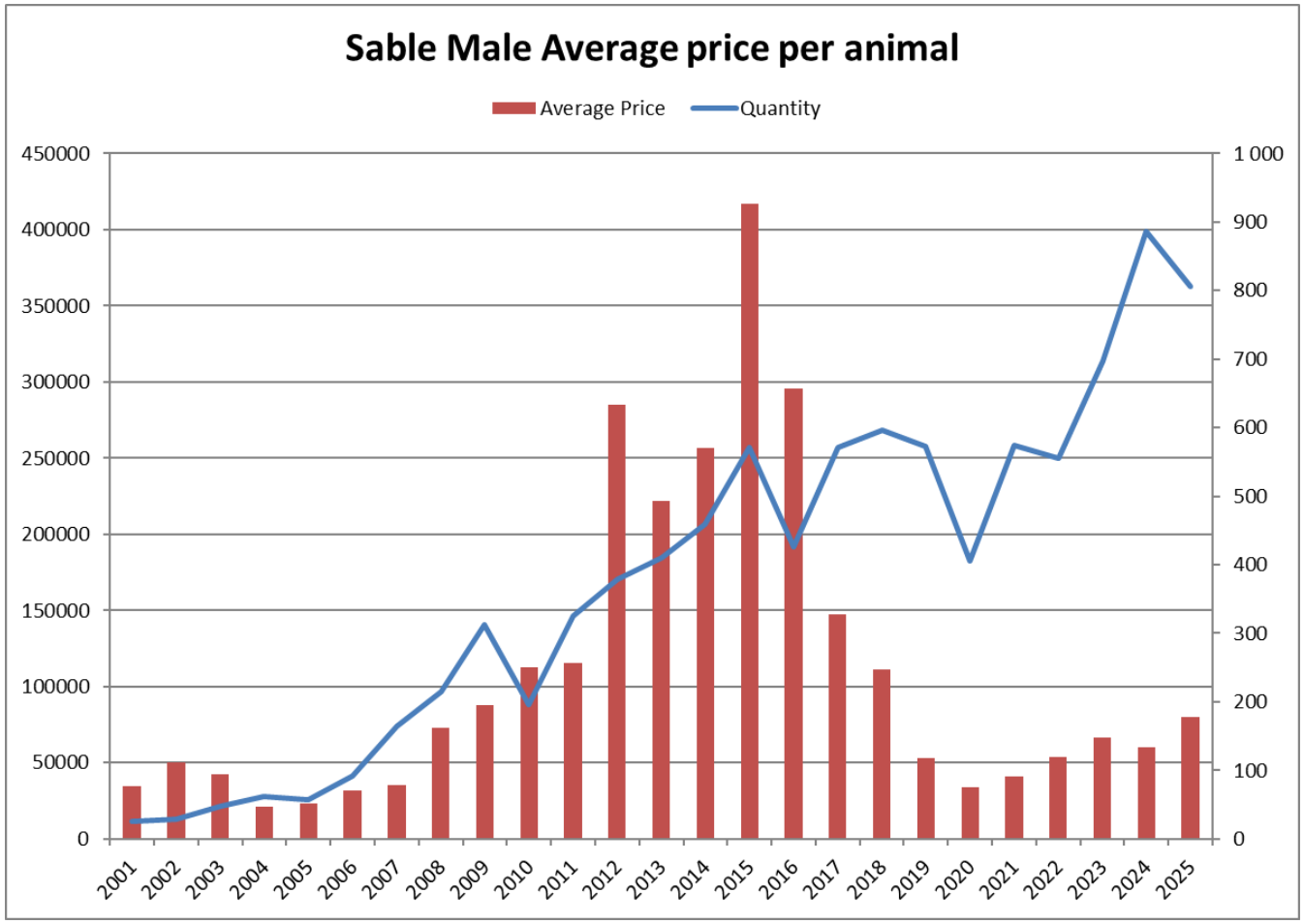
Sable male only Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Sable male dataset unfolds a long, textured story of a species whose economic journey in the wildlife market has been shaped by **genetic prestige**, **shifting breeder priorities** and the **ebb and flow of supply-and-demand cycles**. The table maps out how value has accumulated across two decades, while the graph visually reveals the dramatic arcs of **price surges**, **corrections** and **volume expansion**. Together they offer a detailed narrative of how the Sable male market matured, cooled, recalibrated and once again found its footing within a more disciplined and sustainability-focused industry landscape. The figures that follow reflect not merely transactions, but the shifting sentiment, strategic breeding choices and ongoing recovery of a species long regarded as the aristocrat of South African game ranching.

Sable Male			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R858 000	25	R34 320
2002	R1 448 550	29	R49 950
2003	R2 032 464	48	R42 343
2004	R1 325 500	62	R21 379
2005	R1 355 000	58	R23 362
2006	R2 924 000	92	R31 783
2007	R5 747 000	164	R35 043
2008	R15 624 500	215	R72 672
2009	R27 323 834	312	R87 576
2010	R22 024 000	196	R112 367
2011	R37 612 000	325	R115 729
2012	R108 033 500	379	R285 049
2013	R90 877 000	410	R221 651
2014	R117 764 000	459	R256 566
2015	R237 938 900	571	R416 706
2016	R125 856 000	426	R295 437
2017	R84 133 946	571	R147 345
2018	R66 153 740	596	R110 996
2019	R30 167 500	572	R52 740
2020	R13 826 200	406	R34 055
2021	R23 535 800	574	R41 003
2022	R29 990 277	556	R53 939
2023	R46 375 507	697	R66 536
2024	R53 234 350	887	R60 016
2025	R64 309 000	806	R79 788



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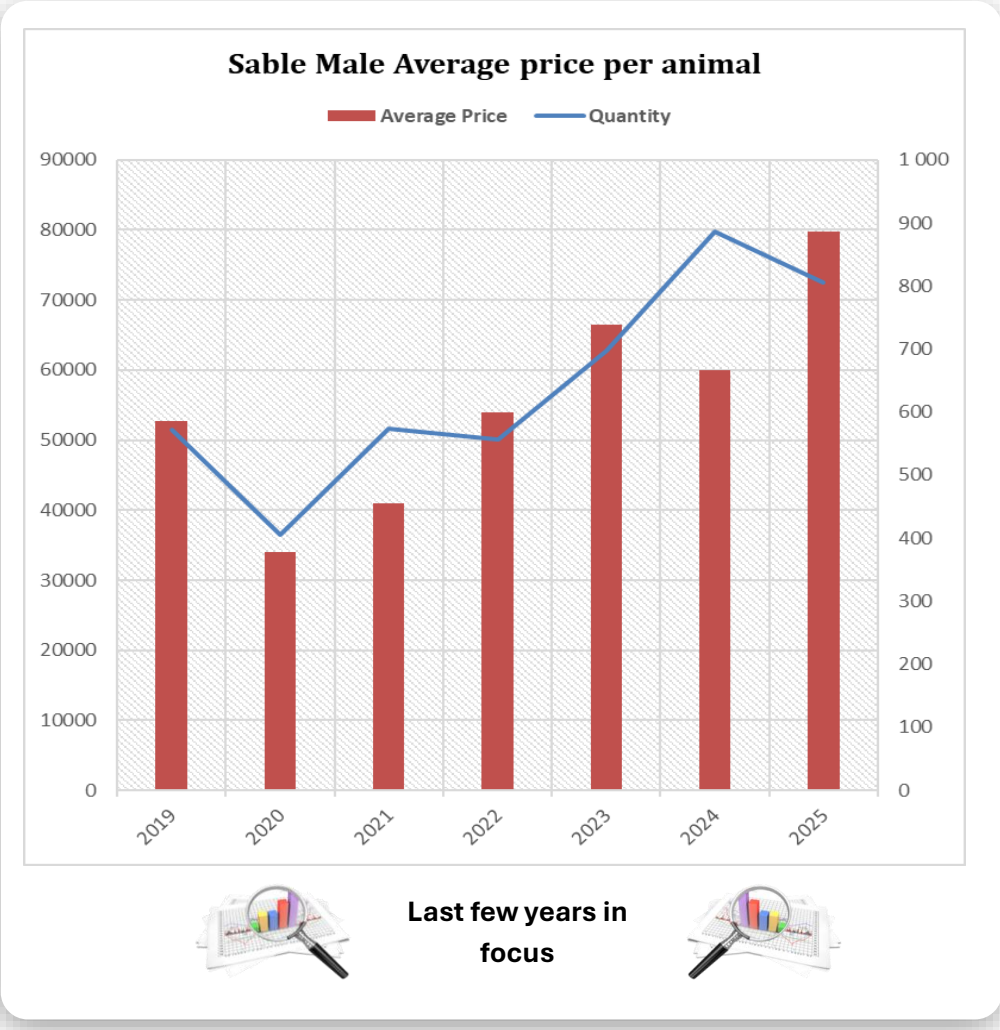

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The tables to the right reveals a **layered and highly textured view** of the sable bull market, where the simple act of measuring horns becomes a proxy for genetics, demand cycles and scarcity-driven premiums. Rather than merely displaying prices, the data provides a **map of value migration** across different horn classes, showing how breeder focus, investor appetite and auction dynamics gradually shape the hierarchy of desirability.

The structure allows us to observe not only how many animals were traded across each size bracket, but also **how value concentrates as horns lengthen**, how the market rewards incremental inches and how those rewards shift over time. When read alongside the three-year inch-value table, the story becomes even more vivid: **a market rediscovering its appetite for top-end genetics**, recalibrating pricing per inch and restoring premiums where scarcity tightens.

Sable Bulls: Pricing by Inches Sold

	2023		2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bull : inches unspecified	283	R28 789	275	R35 959	203	R40 968
Bull : Sub-Adult	0	R0	47	R18 468	24	R25 896
Bull : Young	0	R0	22	R15 875	28	R23 714
Bull : Hunting	0	R0	7	R40 714	0	R0
Bull : less than 36 inches	31	R22 581	51	R32 529	51	R35 657
Bull : 36 inches plus	11	R30 682	15	R36 667	17	R44 794
Bull : 37 inches plus	16	R34 031	16	R39 125	14	R43 357
Bull : 38 inches plus	16	R34 172	32	R41 641	25	R51 240
Bull : 39 inches plus	29	R38 793	27	R42 278	34	R52 426
Bull : 40 inches plus	32	R38 953	36	R45 917	44	R55 364
Bull : 41 inches plus	42	R39 881	27	R44 259	42	R56 619
Bull : 42 inches plus	33	R41 258	57	R50 009	44	R61 420
Bull : 43 inches plus	36	R41 125	39	R49 577	38	R62 197
Bull : 44 inches plus	26	R43 577	33	R57 939	38	R66 026
Bull : 45 inches plus	27	R52 741	39	R52 538	34	R71 956
Bull : 46 inches plus	23	R52 761	23	R63 478	36	R86 403
Bull : 47 inches plus	12	R60 167	30	R70 817	23	R87 848
Bull : 48 inches plus	17	R74 559	33	R83 909	32	R109 125
Bull : 49 inches plus	11	R147 000	21	R128 262	18	R115 972
Bull : 50 inches plus	17	R158 529	19	R154 184	25	R184 420
Bull : 51 inches plus	14	R256 786	10	R224 100	12	R237 667
Bull : 52 inches plus	11	R325 545	9	R328 889	9	R300 556
Bull : 53 inches plus	3	R609 333	5	R533 000	4	R294 500
Bull : 54 inches plus	4	R1 420 000	1	R2 000 000	6	R373 333
Bull : 55 inches plus	0	R0	11	R118 091	3	R1 275 000
Bull : 56 inches plus	1	R680 000	0	R0	2	R2 750 000
Bull : 57 inches plus	2	R1 887 500	1	R1 750 000	0	R0
Bull : 58 inches plus	0	R0	0	R0	0	R0
Bull : 59 inches plus	0	R0	0	R0	0	R0
TOTALS	697	R66 536	887	R60 016	806	R79 788
	697	R46 375 507	887	R53 234 350	806	R64 309 000

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Across the three-year stretch from 2023 to 2025, the sable bull market moves with a rhythm that reflects both rebuilding confidence and a steady return of selective competition. The journey begins with the large pool of **unspecified bulls**, which, despite being the lowest tier, shows a gentle price climb from **R28 789 in 2023** to **R35 959 in 2024**, before strengthening again to **R40 968 in 2025**. This segment remains the broad demand base, absorbing volume while signalling that **even non-classified bulls are benefiting from rising market tide**.

Moving into the structured horn brackets, a clear storyline emerges. Lower-tier horn sizes—especially those **smaller than 36 inches**—carry modest gains, but they reveal the beginning of upward compression. From **R22 581 in 2023** to **R32 529 in 2024** and then **R35 657 in 2025**, buyers begin paying more for early-stage bulls. This strengthening is echoed in the Rand-per-inch table where the **"30–35 inch" class rises 16.10%**, illustrating that demand for young, improving genetics remains healthy.

Once horns cross 36 inches, the increments begin to matter far more. The **36–40 inch band**, historically a reliable middle tier, shows a consistent rise in both volume and pricing. Bulls at 36 inches plus grow from **R30 682 to R36 667 to R44 794**, while similar gains appear across the **37–40 inch** segments. These increases mirror the Rand-per-inch growth where **37–38 inches increases 26.35%** and **38–39 inches gains 25.44%**, confirmation that buyers are again rewarding structured growth lines rather than merely bargain hunting.The most expressive shifts occur in the high-value tiers, where **horn length becomes a currency of prestige**. Bulls in the **40–44 inch** range demonstrate steady appreciation, with 40 inches plus moving from **R38 953 in 2023** to **R45 917 in 2024**, then **R55 364 in 2025**, while the 43–44 inch class jumps to **R62 197**.

Sable Bull's					Increase %
Rand value per inches	2023	2024	2025	Ave 3 years	2024 to 2025
smaller than 30 inches	R733	R1 015	R1 089	**R946**	**7.24%**
between >30 and< 35 inches	R716	R926	R1 076	**R906**	**16.10%**
between >35 and< 36 inches	R801	R880	R1 193	**R958**	**35.64%**
between >36 and< 37 inches	R847	R893	R1 215	**R985**	**35.96%**
between >37 and< 38 inches	R915	R969	R1 225	**R1 036**	**26.35%**
between >38 and< 39 inches	R897	R1 014	R1 272	**R1 061**	**25.44%**
between >39 and< 40 inches	R988	R1 085	R1 350	**R1 141**	**24.40%**
between >40 and< 41 inches	R970	R1 107	R1 369	**R1 148**	**23.69%**
between >41 and< 42 inches	R966	R1 072	R1 323	**R1 120**	**23.35%**
between >42 and< 43 inches	R976	R1 196	R1 458	**R1 210**	**21.93%**
between >43 and< 44 inches	R949	R1 106	R1 399	**R1 151**	**26.59%**
between >44 and< 45 inches	R983	R1 288	R1 460	**R1 244**	**13.38%**
between >45 and< 46 inches	R1 164	R1 262	R1 550	**R1 325**	**22.83%**
between >46 and< 47 inches	R1 139	R1 338	R1 699	**R1 392**	**26.93%**
between >47 and< 48 inches	R1 269	R1 454	R1 856	**R1 527**	**27.63%**
between >48 and <49 inches	R1 541	R1 763	R2 190	**R1 831**	**24.22%**
between >49 and <50 inches	R2 977	R2 457	R3 071	**R2 835**	**24.98%**
between >50 and <51 inches	R3 155	R3 111	R3 353	**R3 206**	**7.78%**
between >51 and <52 inches	R5 009	R4 128	R4 392	**R4 509**	**6.39%**
between >52 and <53 inches	R6 217	R6 274	R6 776	**R6 422**	**8.00%**
between >53 and <54 inches	R11 434	R9 950	R10 943	**R10 776**	**9.99%**
between >54 and <55 inches	R13 149	R11 442	R12 585	**R18 588**	**9.99%**
between >55 and <56 inches	R0	R13 024	R17 406	**R15 215**	**33.64%**
between >56 and <57 inches	R12 009	R33 442	R49 107	**R31 519**	**46.84%**
between >57 and <58 inches	R33 046	R0	R0	**R11 015**	**0.00%**

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These movements echo the Rand-per-inch increases of **23–27%**, reinforcing that buyers see these animals as investment assets, not simply wildlife purchases. Beyond 45 inches, the market reveals its sharpest psychological thresholds. Bulls in the **45–48 inch** bands show some of the strongest movement, with 45–46 inch bulls rising from **R52 741 to R52 538 to R71 956**, while 47–48 inch bulls push from **R60 167 in 2023** to **R70 817 in 2024** and **R87 848 in 2025**. These upward steps correspond directly with Rand-per-inch surges of **22–33%** across these brackets. The market is clearly signalling renewed willingness to pay for upper-tier breeding potential.

The elite categories—**49 inches and above**—tell the most dramatic part of the story. While volumes remain small, the prices are expressive. Bulls over 48–49 inches reach **R109 125** in 2025, while **50 inch bulls** climb to **R184 420**. Once the horn spans beyond 51 inches, the premiums become exponential. The **52 inch class** sustains strong valuations around **R300 556** in 2025, even with flat volumes. The legendary brackets—**53 to 56 inches**—show volatile but powerful peaks, such as **R373 333 at 54 inches** and the extraordinary **R2 750 000 at 56 inches**. The Rand-per-inch table confirms this volatility, with increases of **33.64%** and **46.84%** for the 55–57 inch classes, telling us that **scarcity at the extreme end drives price elasticity far beyond normal auction behaviour**.

When both tables are aligned, the message becomes unmistakable: **the entire value ladder of sable bulls strengthened from bottom to top**, but the top-end experienced the most dramatic recovery. The market rewarded incremental growth far more aggressively in 2025, meaning breeders with structured genetic programmes found themselves in a significantly improved pricing environment. Demand remains rational in the lower brackets, competitive in the middle brackets and emotionally charged in the elite size classes where trophy thresholds dictate willingness to pay.

2025 vs 2024 – A Market Re-Awakening at Every Level

The shift from 2024 to 2025 reads like a market rediscovering its confidence. Average prices across the entire sable bull category rise from **R60 016 to R79 788**, a gain steered not by isolated anomalies but by **broad-based strengthening across nearly all horn brackets**. Lower sizes show healthy, measured increases—evidence that general demand for bulls is stabilising—while the middle tiers exhibit sharp value expansion, particularly in the **37–45 inch classes**, where Rand-per-inch increases range from **23% to 27%**. These are the bands most breeders rely on for turnover, suggesting a healthier circulation of genetics.

The top-end, however, tells the clearest story of revitalisation. Bulls between **46 and 50 inches** experience significant price reinforcement, with increases of **25–27%**, reflecting a renewed appetite for superior lineage. At the far extremes, the 55–57 inch categories explode with gains exceeding **33% and 46%**, signalling that the trophy-driven buyer segment, long subdued, has roared back with conviction.

Together, these movements form a coherent narrative: **2025 marks the year the sable bull market shifted decisively from defensive pricing to selective premium chasing**, rewarding quality, rewarding structure and—most importantly—rewarding horn length with a level of enthusiasm not seen in several years.

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ROAN

Hippotragus equinus

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Hippotragus*
Species: *H. equinus*
Common Name: Roan Antelope



WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY

- Large reddish-brown antelope with bold facial mask; both sexes horned; bulls 260–300 kg, cows 240–260 kg.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Woodland–savannah mosaics; found in Limpopo, Kruger region, northern KZN, and widespread private ranches.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Selective grazer of tall perennial grasses; supplements with forbs during dry season.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Harem herds led by dominant bull; bachelor groups; calves born in cover; stable, cohesive social units.

ADAPTIONS

- Long horns for defense, thick neck skin, large body mass, selective grazing capability, herd cohesion.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern; increasing due to private breeding; threats include habitat loss and historical overhunting.

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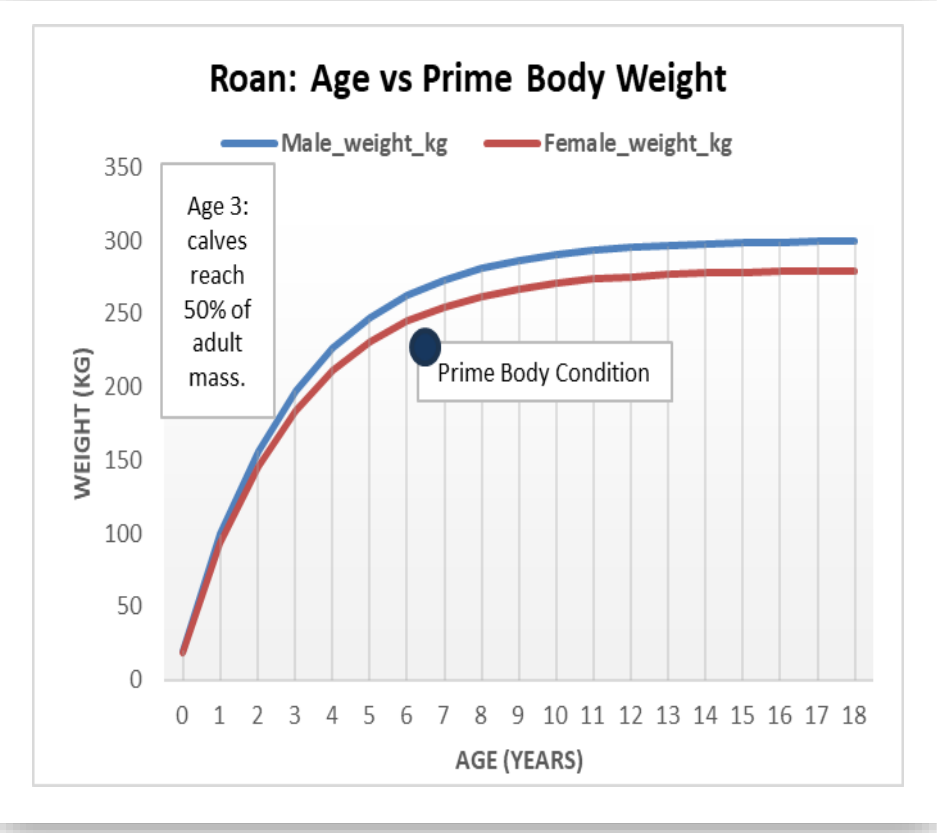
Roan Specie Information

There is a quiet confidence about the Roan Antelope, the kind of animal that commands respect without ever raising dust or voice. Where the Sable is dramatic and the Kudu is regal, the Roan is solid, measured and unmistakably noble—broad-shouldered, thick-necked and carried by a calm but powerful stride. In the soft morning light of South Africa's northern savannahs, a mature Roan bull appears almost sculpted from copper and charcoal, the pale facial mask and backward-arching horns framing its unmistakable profile. Roan are among Africa's largest and most charismatic antelope, thriving in **mixed savannah–woodland mosaics**, particularly where open grasslands interlock with light tree cover. In South Africa they are historically associated with the **Limpopo bushveld**, the northern reaches of the **Kruger region** and pockets of **water-rich KZN**. Over the past two decades, focused conservation breeding within the private sector has restored their presence across a growing number of wildlife farmes in Limpopo, North West and the Free State. Their habitat preferences—open glades, tall grass and access to good-quality forage—align well with properties that maintain well-managed veld and controlled grazing pressure.



Roan herds are structured around a **dominant bull and a core group of cows with offspring**, forming stable social units that often remain within a defined home range for many years. Young bulls are expelled from the herd as they mature and gather into bachelor groups, where they continue to grow until they are strong enough to challenge territory holders.

Territorial disputes are rare but serious—ritualised posturing, horn swinging and parallel walks escalate into intense but highly controlled clashes. Roan bulls rely on mass, stamina and thickened skin over the neck and shoulders for protection, allowing them to fight without sustaining severe injury.

The differences between male and female Roan are subtle but meaningful. **Bulls** are larger, often reaching **260–300 kg**, with a strong crest, a heavy neck and thicker horn bases.

Their horns tend to be longer and more robust, averaging **28–34 inches**, with the best bulls pushing beyond **34 inches** in South African conditions. **Cows** are lighter, averaging **240–260 kg**, with slimmer horns that still maintain the characteristic Roan shape.

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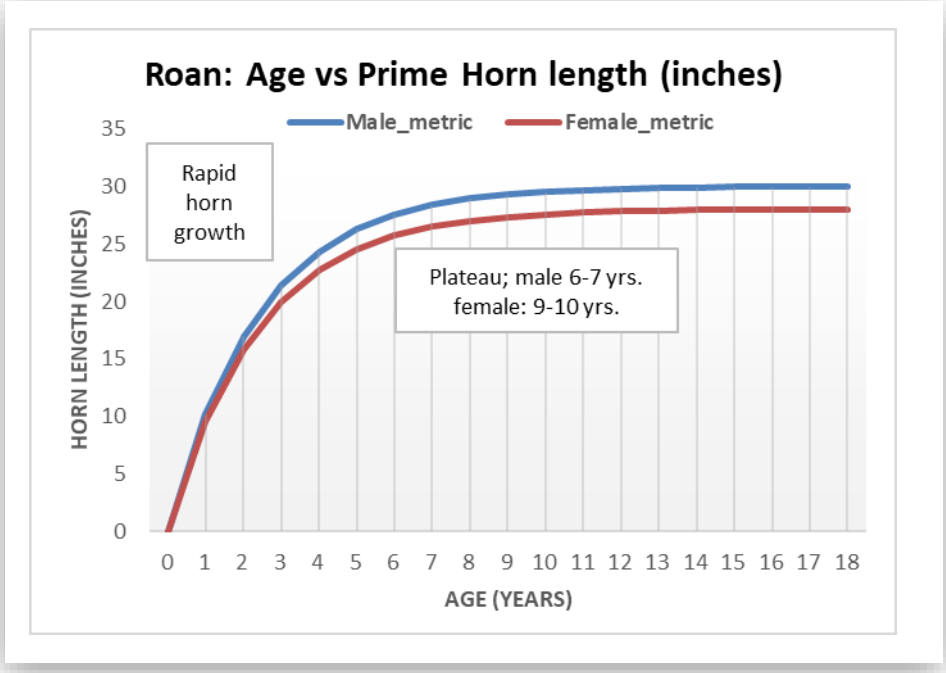
Both sexes show the striking facial mask of black and white, though cows are generally paler in body colour. The species' trademark reddish-brown coat, darker mane and powerful shoulders contribute to their poised and slightly intimidating presence.

Body mass follows a similar pattern. From **20 kg at birth**, Roan reach roughly **170 kg by age three**, accelerating quickly into adulthood. By age five, many bulls weigh **240–260 kg** and the mass curve shows how the species' largest individuals reach **290–300 kg** between ages seven and ten. After that, weight stabilises, as shown in the second and third combined charts—Roan add condition and muscle density, but they do not meaningfully increase in mass or horn length.



Growth is one of the most fascinating aspects of the species. At birth, Roan calves weigh around **20 kg**, quickly gaining strength in their first year to reach **70–120 kg**. Horns emerge early—typically **5 inches at one year**—and grow steadily through the juvenile phase. By two years, young bulls may show **10-inch** horns and by three, **16 inches**.

The **rapid horn development phase**, visible in the first chart, spans the ages of **3–6 years**, when horn length jumps from **16 inches** to around **27–30 inches**. The curve then smooths, with mature bulls reaching **32–34 inches** around seven to nine years, where the horn growth plateau becomes clear.

Diet reflects their size and their confidence. Roan are predominantly **selective grazers**, choosing medium-to-tall perennial grasses, especially during the wet season when nutrients are highest. Their broad muzzle allows them to crop grass more effectively than Sable or Wildebeest and they can extract nutrition from taller, coarser grasses that many other grazers avoid. During the dry season, they supplement with forbs, herbaceous plants and sometimes shrub leaves, but they never fully transition into browsing.

They rely on well-structured veld and when food quality declines significantly, herd movements become more predictable as they seek out patches of perennial grasses holding late-season protein. Reproduction is tied to seasonal rainfall, with cows conceiving at **2.5–3 years** and calving after a gestation of roughly **9 months**. Calves remain hidden for their first few days, a survival strategy shared with Sable and other woodland antelope.

Because Roan herds are small and calm by nature, maintaining low-stress environments with predictable water availability dramatically improves breeding success, something well understood in South Africa's structured breeding programs.

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In recent decades, South Africa's wildlife farming sector has devoted major effort to strengthening Roan populations. Genetic bottlenecks in the wild—primarily due to historical overhunting and habitat loss—made private-sector breeding a key conservation success story. Today, **Roan genetics are managed carefully** and several regional variants and colour phenotypes are recognised and valued within the breeding and ecotourism market.

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Morphology / Colouration	Horn Characteristics	Notes & Distinguishing Features
Southern Roan (*H. e. equinus*)	South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe	Rich reddish-brown coat; strong mask contrast	28–34"+, thick bases	Dominant in SA farming; stable genetics
East African Roan (*H. e. langheldi*)	Tanzania, Uganda	Paler coat; finer build	Slightly narrower, curved horns	Rare in SA, occasionally imported
Western Roan (*H. e. koba*)	West Africa	Light tan coat; reduced mask contrast	Shorter, straighter horns	Not used in SA breeding due to genetics
Angolan Type (informal phenotype)	Namibia/Angola lines	Darker mane; robust body	Heavy horn mass	Occasionally blended into SA herds
Colour Variant – Dark Roan	Select SA farmes	Deep mahogany coat	Standard horn curve	Aesthetic variant; rising demand
Colour Variant – Light Roan	Select SA farmes	Tan to sandy brown	Standard	Occasional natural occurrence

Fascinating Insights about Roan

- Roan are the **third-largest antelope in Africa**, after Eland and Kudu.
- They are known for their **confidence**—even lions are cautious around mature bulls.
- Roan have **exceptionally thick skin** on the neck and shoulders adapted for intraspecies combat.
- Their social behaviour is remarkably calm compared to other large antelope.
- South Africa's private sector has been critical in **doubling national Roan numbers** over the past 20 years.
- The facial mask is as unique as a fingerprint—no two Roan look exactly the same.
- Roan herds maintain a **tight cohesion**, rarely scattering even under pressure.

"Roan have become a key premium species in the South African wildlife industry — valued for strong genetics, impressive horn development and the long-term stability they bring to high-end breeding portfolios.

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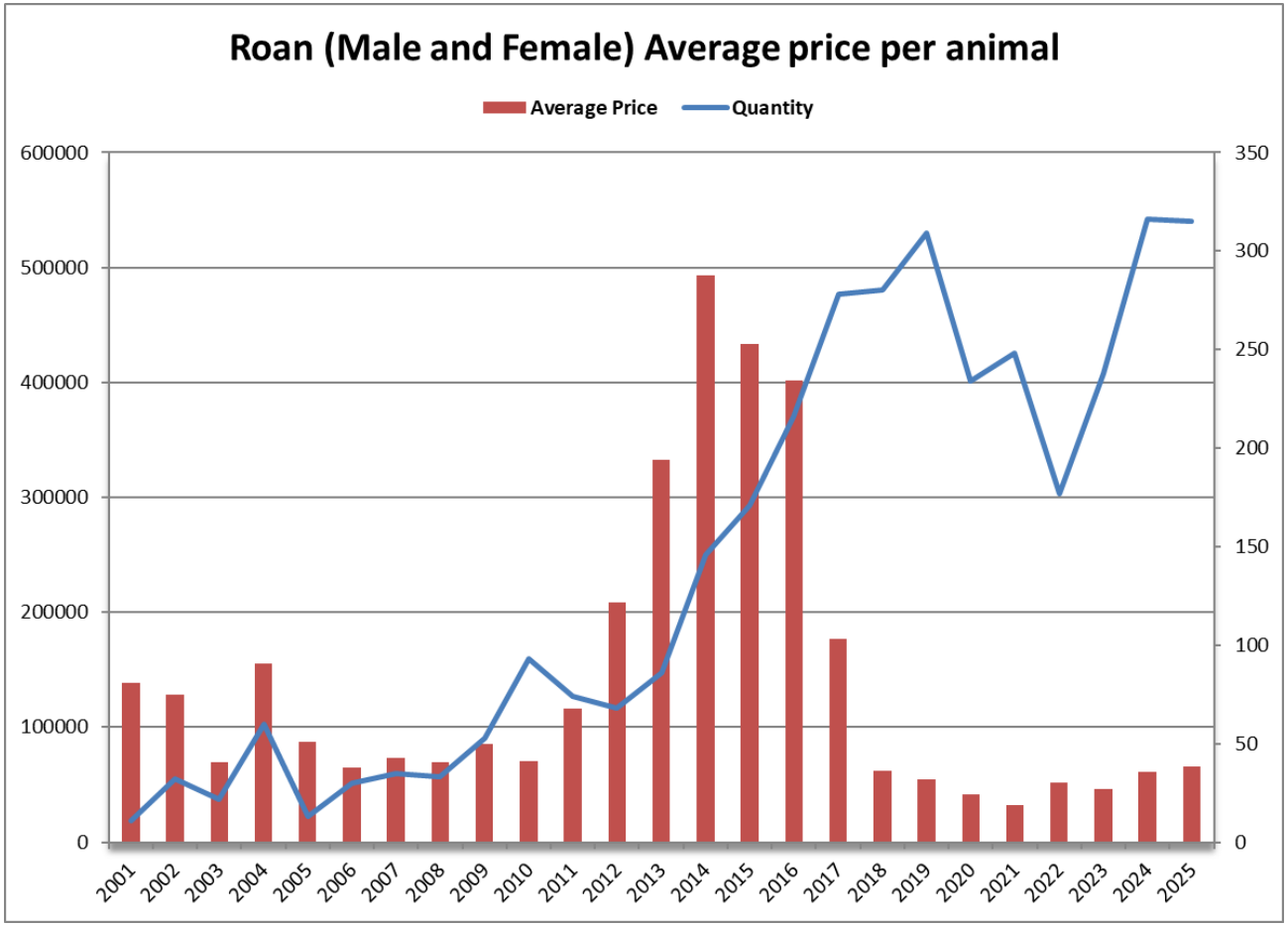
Roan male and female Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Roan dataset presents a **long and expressive story** of how this once-scarce antelope evolved within South Africa's wildlife economy. The table and graph together trace a journey that moves from **early rarity**, through a **remarkable investment-driven boom**, into the **sharp correction** that reshaped the entire premium-species market and finally into the **measured recovery** now emerging.

What follows is a narrative that highlights how **pricing cycles, quantities traded and shifting market sentiment** shaped Roan over two decades. The graphs capture these turning points vividly—**rapid ascents, deep resets and a steady rebalancing**—providing a clear visual of how supply, genetics, commercial focus and broader industry forces influenced its trajectory. This introduction sets the stage for a more detailed exploration of the key eras reflected in the data.

Roan (Male and Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 527 000	11	R138 818
2002	R4 100 050	32	R128 127
2003	R1 527 522	22	R69 433
2004	R9 331 500	60	R155 525
2005	R1 129 000	13	R86 846
2006	R1 948 000	30	R64 933
2007	R2 559 000	35	R73 114
2008	R2 301 500	33	R69 742
2009	R4 510 000	53	R85 094
2010	R6 583 000	93	R70 785
2011	R8 602 500	74	R116 250
2012	R14 175 500	68	R208 463
2013	R28 637 500	86	R332 994
2014	R71 979 667	146	R493 011
2015	R74 138 996	171	R433 561
2016	R86 674 500	216	R401 271
2017	R49 147 502	278	R176 790
2018	R17 398 150	280	R62 136
2019	R16 985 100	309	R54 968
2020	R9 625 550	234	R41 135
2021	R7 938 500	248	R32 010
2022	R9 205 519	177	R52 009
2023	R11 081 302	238	R46 560
2024	R19 170 500	316	R60 666
2025	R20 590 000	315	R65 365



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Roan male and female Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Market Formation and Modest Momentum (2001–2007)

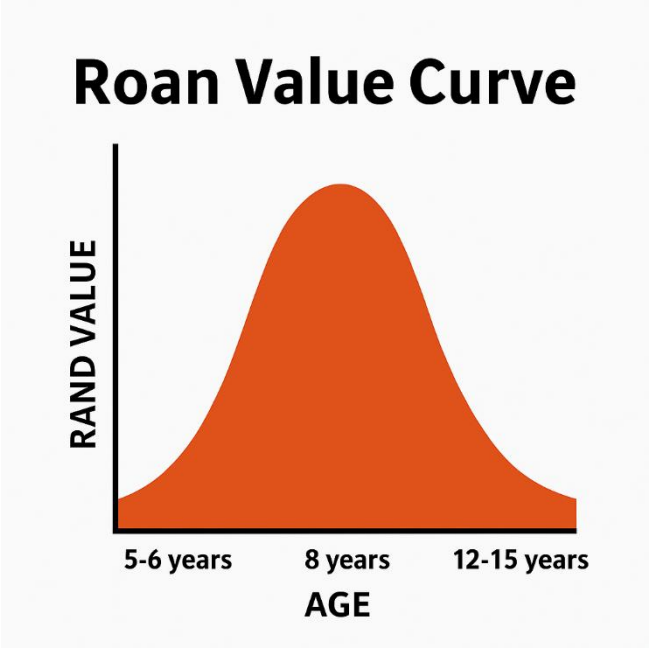
From **2001 to 2007**, the Roan market established its early commercial footing. Average prices moved from **R138 818 in 2001** to **R73 114 in 2007**, while volumes rose from **11 to 35 animals**, showing that demand was still forming and supply remained limited. Total value lifted from **R1.53 m** to **R2.56 m**, reflecting steady but restrained participation. Roan at this time were still regarded as a **specialised and challenging species**, with high management requirements and limited genetic distribution. This kept the early market conservative, yet directionally positive.

Transition Toward Expansion (2008–2011)

Between **2008 and 2011**, momentum strengthened. Quantities grew from **33 animals in 2008** to **74 animals in 2011**, while average price increased from **R69 742 to R116 250**, signalling greater confidence in breeding programmes and improved survival rates. Value rose from **R2.30 m** to **R8.60 m**, indicating broader buyer activity during a period where rare-game interest was accelerating across South Africa. By 2011, Roan had become **one of the species to watch**, positioned for stronger commercial relevance.

Rare-Game Boom and Historic Peak (2012–2015)

The years **2012 to 2015** produced the most dramatic rise in Roan pricing ever recorded.
Average prices surged from **R208 463 in 2012** to **R493 011 in 2014**, before moderating slightly to **R433 561 in 2015**. Total value climbed from **R14.17 m** in 2012 to **R74.14 m** in 2015—an expansion of more than **420%** across the period. Volumes increased from **68 to 171 animals**, demonstrating simultaneous growth in supply and demand.
This phase aligned perfectly with the broader **rare-game supercycle**, characterised by intense competition for superior genetics, high liquidity among investors, strong auction participation, and the belief that Roan breeding would deliver long-term capital appreciation. Roan reached their **commercial apex**, both in visibility and valuation.



Correction, Supply Expansion and Value Contraction (2016–2019)

The period **2016 to 2019** marked the unwinding of the boom. Although quantities expanded from **216 animals in 2016** to **309 animals in 2019**, average prices fell sharply from **R401 271** to **R54 968**, a decline of roughly **86%**. Total value mirrored the correction, dropping from **R86.67 m in 2016** to **R16.99 m in 2019**.
Oversupply from the boom years, reduced speculative investment, and recalibrated pricing expectations all contributed to this decline.

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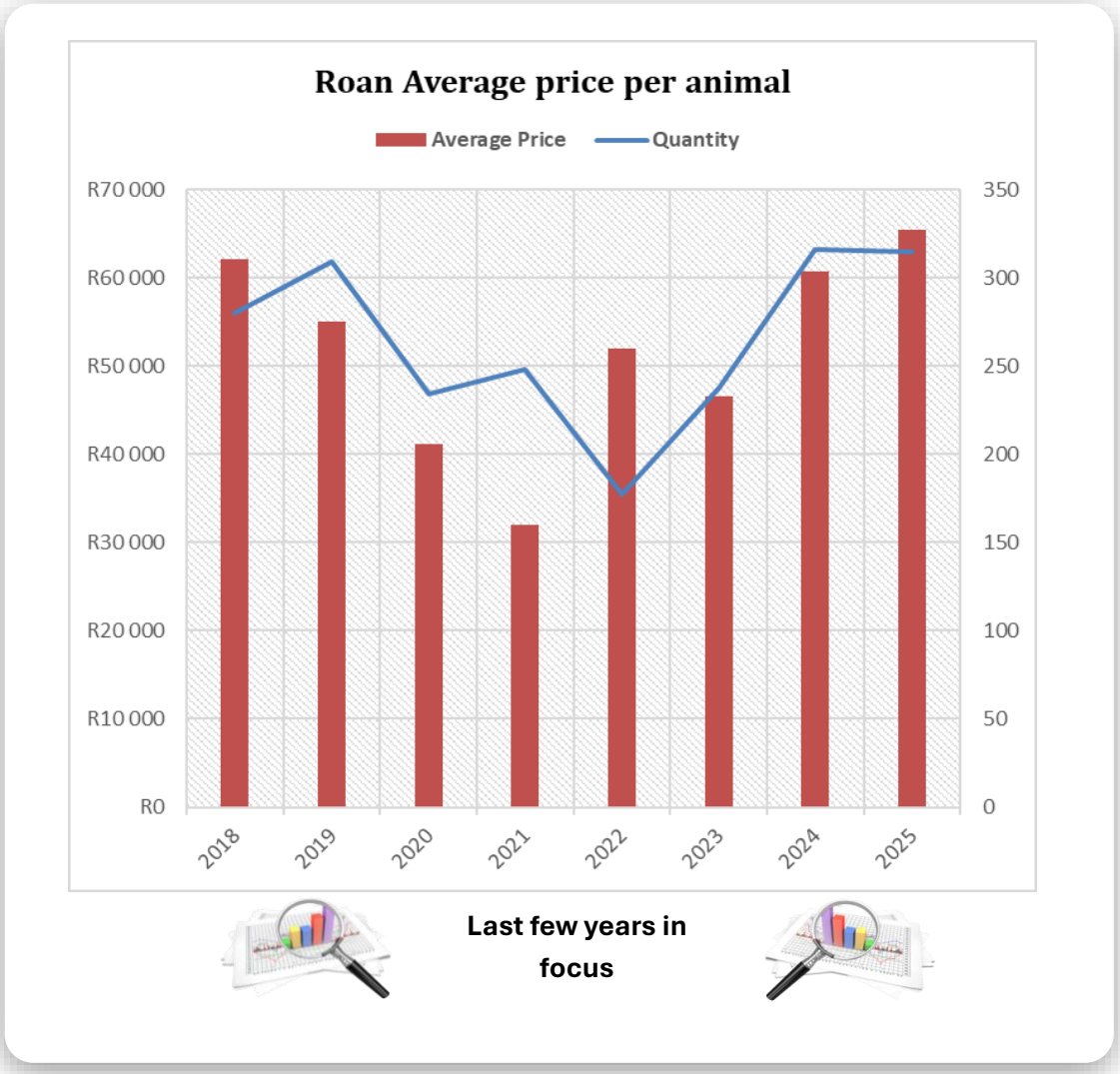
This was a defining phase where Roan transitioned from a high-flying speculative asset to a species requiring **patient management, realistic valuation and long-term breeding discipline**.

COVID-19 Pressure and Post-Pandemic Adjustment (2020–2022)

The **2020 to 2022** period was strongly shaped by pandemic effects and broader macroeconomic uncertainty.
Average price fell further to **R41 135 in 2020**, and value dropped to **R9.63 m**, even as quantities remained high at **234 animals**. In **2021**, the market softened again, with prices at **R32 010**.
Demand constraints, auction limitations and reduced travel weighed heavily on the sector.
By **2022**, however, the market began adjusting. Average price recovered to **R52 009**, while value lifted to **R9.20 m**, even though quantities contracted to **177**. This decline in supply was intentional, reflecting breeder caution and the first signs of a stabilising price floor.



Rebuilding and Renewed Participation (2023–2024)

From **2023 to 2024**, the Roan market displayed clear early recovery dynamics.
Average price moved from **R46 560 in 2023** to **R60 666 in 2024**, while total value increased from **R11.08 m** to **R19.17 m**, supported by a rise in quantities from **238 to 316 animals**.

These improvements aligned with a broader resurgence in the wildlife market, supported by better veld conditions, stronger auction attendance and investor interest shifting back to proven, stable species. This period highlighted a **return of structured demand**, though still far below historic peaks.

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2025: A Price-Led Lift Driven by Subtle Supply Tightness

The transition from **2024 to 2025** reveals a market where **pricing strengthened despite stable supply**, signalling a mild but important shift in underlying demand dynamics. Total value increased from **R19.17 m in 2024** to **R20.59 m in 2025**, a rise of **7.4%**, while average price improved from **R60 666 to R65 365**, an uplift of **7.7%**.

What is particularly notable is that **quantities remained effectively flat**, moving only marginally from **316 animals in 2024** to **315 in 2025**. This near-zero change in volumes, paired with a clear price increase, suggests that **demand has strengthened without a corresponding rise in supply**, pointing to underlying tightness in high-quality Roan availability.

In the broader wildlife context, 2025 has been shaped by **breeders scaling back expansion, improved veld conditions and stronger mid-tier investor participation**, all of which support modest upward pressure on prices. Roan, with their slower reproductive rates compared to species such as Sable, naturally respond to market contraction with lagged supply, meaning price recovery tends to occur gradually and sustainably rather than sharply.

The 2025 uplift therefore reflects a **measured strengthening of the species**, where improved buyer confidence, slightly constrained availability and selective breeding strategies combined to lift values without distorting the market.

Roan in 2025 stand not in a speculative rebound but in a **credible, quality-driven upward correction**, with stable supply and rising prices indicating a healthier long-term market footing as the species moves into the next planning cycle.

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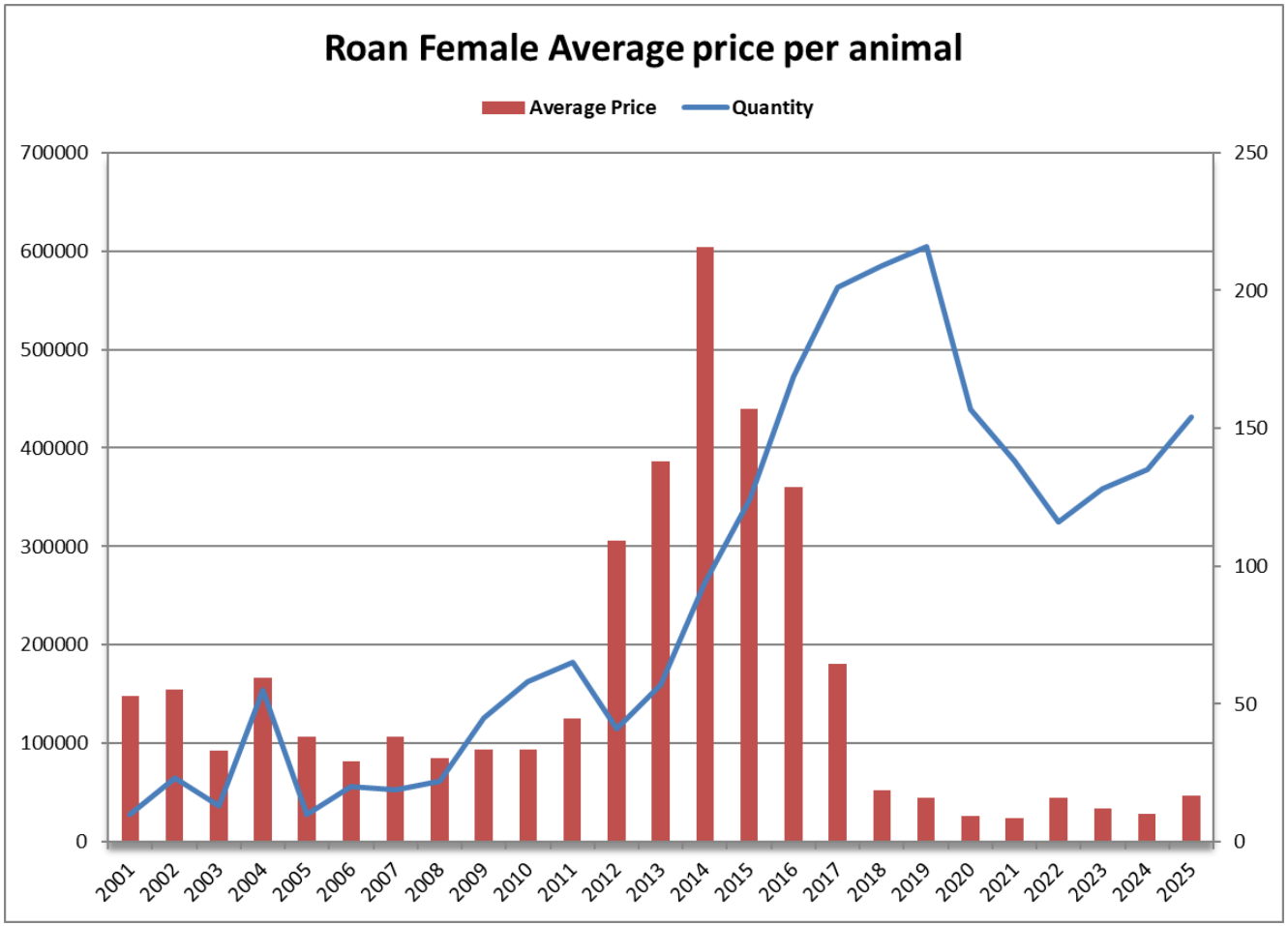
Roan female only Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Roan female dataset offers a **distinct yet deeply aligned counterpart** to the male-and-female combined trends, revealing how female demand has shaped the species' long-term commercial value. The table and graph together show a market that transitions from **steady early trade**, into the **explosive premium-era boom**, followed by a **prolonged correction** and eventually into a **tempered but meaningful recovery**.

What stands out visually is how **prices surge steeply during the investment wave**, collapse rapidly as the industry resets and then slowly rebuild under more cautious conditions. The quantities traded respond in parallel, expanding dramatically when breeding programmes mature and contracting when macro-economic pressure, COVID-19 disruptions and liquidity shortages hit the sector.

Roan (Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 480 000	10	R148 000
2002	R3 565 000	23	R155 000
2003	R1 200 030	13	R92 310
2004	R9 137 500	55	R166 136
2005	R1 065 000	10	R106 500
2006	R1 625 000	20	R81 250
2007	R2 020 000	19	R106 316
2008	R1 872 500	22	R85 114
2009	R4 215 000	45	R93 667
2010	R5 427 500	58	R93 578
2011	R8 163 000	65	R125 585
2012	R12 560 000	41	R306 341
2013	R22 050 000	57	R386 842
2014	R56 751 667	94	R603 741
2015	R54 458 000	124	R439 177
2016	R60 872 500	169	R360 192
2017	R36 311 002	201	R180 652
2018	R10 844 650	209	R51 888
2019	R9 528 000	216	R44 111
2020	R4 106 900	157	R26 159
2021	R3 252 400	138	R23 568
2022	R5 122 010	116	R44 155
2023	R4 328 550	128	R33 817
2024	R3 785 500	135	R28 041
2025	R7 130 500	154	R46 302



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Roan female only Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Adoption and Pioneering Growth: 2001–2008

From **2001 to 2008**, the Roan female market was still establishing itself, reflected in relatively modest quantities of 10 animals in 2001 rising to 22 animals by 2008. Prices during this period fluctuated between **R81 250 (2006)** and **R166 136 (2004)**, with no structural upward trend yet. Much of the movement came from individual breeder sales and early expansion strategies rather than broad market participation. South Africa's wildlife economy at this stage was still building capacity for exotic plains game, and Roan breeding was limited to a handful of high-end ranches. A general lack of supply stability kept enthusiasm measured, but the species consistently attracted attention for its rarity.

The Acceleration and Investment Boom: 2009–2014

Between **2009 and 2014**, the market entered its first **major expansion phase**. Quantities rose from **45 animals (2009)** to **94 animals (2014)**, marking a doubling of supply. Yet the most striking shift was in pricing: average prices increased from **R93 667 (2009)** to an extraordinary **R603 741 (2014)**, which represented a roughly **six-fold escalation** across the band. Total value surged from **R4.2 million (2009)** to **R56.75 million (2014)**. This period captured the height of the **rare game investment boom**, fuelled by strong breeder demand, limited local supply, an influx of capital from agricultural investors, and favourable macroeconomic conditions. Roan cows became premium genetic assets, and the graph clearly shows this surge as the price bar peaks dramatically while the quantity line trends upward.

Speculative Peak and Normalisation: 2015–2018

The years **2015 to 2018** provide a textbook case of a market reaching maturity, followed by cooling. Prices shifted from **R439 177 (2015)** to **R360 192 (2016)**, then halved to **R180 652 (2017)** and eventually declined sharply to **R51 888 (2018)**. Quantities, however, rose from **124 animals (2015)** to **209 animals (2018)**. This simultaneous increase in supply and decrease in price illustrates the effects of **market saturation**. Roan breeding programmes had expanded significantly, and animals that were once rare began entering the market at scale. The industry had also started questioning the sustainability of the rare-game speculative peak. External macro drivers included drought pressure in parts of South Africa, rising feed costs, and shifting investor sentiment. The graph visually captures this correction as the price bars fall steeply while the quantity line reaches its peak.

Post-Boom Contraction and COVID Shock: 2019–2021

Between **2019 and 2021**, the market remained under pressure. Average prices dropped from **R44 111 (2019)** to **R26 159 (2020)** and then to **R23 568 (2021)**. Volumes also contracted from **216 animals (2019)** to **138 animals (2021)**. This period aligns with the broader **plains game and rare game slump**, heightened by uncertainty and cash-flow constraints during COVID-19. The wildlife auction market was severely disrupted, international buyers were largely absent, and many breeders reduced acquisitions to conserve operational liquidity. The low prices in 2020 and 2021 demonstrate the level of distress selling and the pressure placed on breeders with maturing herds.

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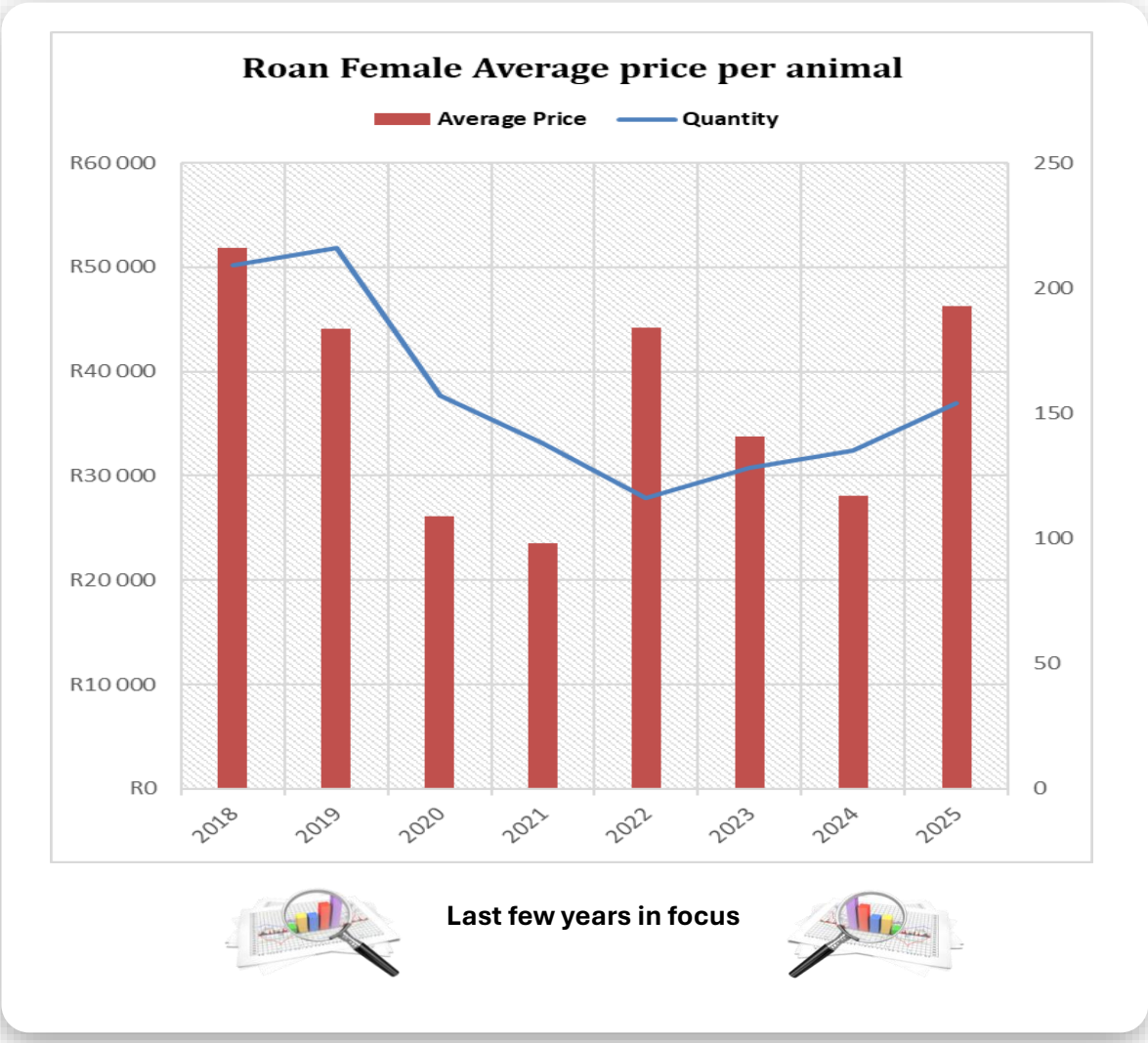
Early Recovery and Repricing: 2022–2024

From **2022 to 2024**, the market showed signs of rebalancing, albeit in a slow and uneven manner. In **2022**, average price climbed back to **R44 155**, nearly doubling from 2021's depressed level. Yet in **2023** the average price moderated to **R33 817**, while **2024** softened further to **R28 041**. Quantities moved in a relatively stable band between **116 animals (2022)** and **135 animals (2024)**. These movements suggested that supply was improving but demand remained selective, with genetic quality, age class and breeding guarantees playing a central role in determining price. Industry-wide, this was a period of **rebuilding confidence**, with strong sales in species such as buffalo and sable helping restore auction energy, but Roan females remained in a cautious recovery zone.



The shift from **2024 to 2025** brings a clear and notable movement in the Roan female market. Average price increased from **R28 041 (2024)** to **R46 302 (2025)**, which represents a **65.1% rise**—a meaningful rebound given the prior years of softness. Importantly, this increase occurred while quantity rose only moderately from **135 animals (2024)** to **154 animals (2025)**.

The modest increase in supply, combined with a sharp increase in values from **R3.78 million (2024)** to **R7.13 million (2025)**, points strongly toward **tightening availability of premium-quality females**.

The industry in 2025 has been characterised by **renewed breeder interest**, particularly in species with strong genetic and tourism appeal. Roan have become increasingly integrated into mixed-game estates, and rising demand for resilient breeding cows has pushed prices upward even where supply did not contract materially.

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The rise in price relative to only a moderate increase in quantity indicates that **shortage conditions existed specifically for high-quality female lines**, which are being aggressively acquired for long-term herd stability. Furthermore, the wider South African wildlife market in 2025 continues to show resilience, driven by strong auction attendance, improving foreign hunter confidence, and a shift toward **value-based acquisition decisions** rather than speculative cycling. This environment favoured species like Roan that had undergone long-term price resets and were now entering a **more sustainable, scarcity-supported growth phase**.

Thus, 2025 stands as a year in which the Roan female market **reasserted value**, not through speculative inflation, but through **demand-driven repricing grounded in genuine breeding need**, improving industry confidence, and a strategic prioritisation of hardy plains game with multi-use value.

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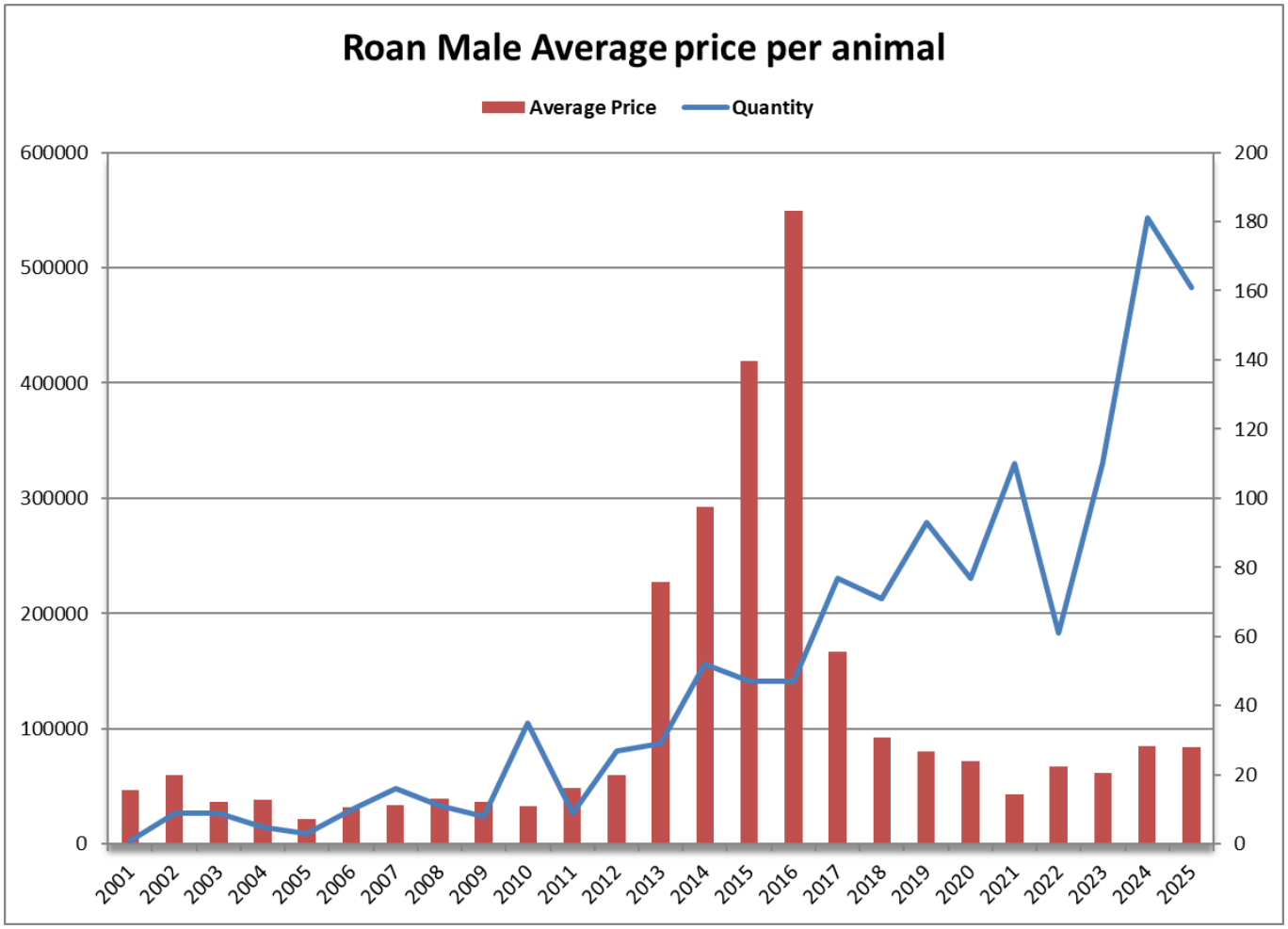
Roan male only Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Roan male dataset presents a **striking long-term narrative**, one shaped by the species' evolving role in South Africa's wildlife economy. The table and graphs together capture how Roan males moved from **low-volume foundational trade**, into a **rapid escalation during the premium investment era**, followed by a **steep market reset** and eventually into a **more disciplined, structurally sound recovery cycle**.

The visuals emphasise how sharply male prices responded to changes in sentiment and liquidity—rising aggressively during the boom and declining just as sharply during the correction—while quantities expanded steadily as breeding populations matured. The graph's steep surge around the mid-2010s and its contraction thereafter provide a vivid illustration of how **speculative cycles, macroeconomic pressure and later COVID-era disruptions** shaped the trajectory of male Roan trading.

Roan Male			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R47 000	1	R47 000
2002	R535 050	9	R59 450
2003	R327 492	9	R36 388
2004	R194 000	5	R38 800
2005	R64 000	3	R21 333
2006	R323 000	10	R32 300
2007	R539 000	16	R33 688
2008	R429 000	11	R39 000
2009	R295 000	8	R36 875
2010	R1 155 500	35	R33 014
2011	R439 500	9	R48 833
2012	R1 615 500	27	R59 833
2013	R6 587 500	29	R227 155
2014	R15 228 000	52	R292 846
2015	R19 680 996	47	R418 745
2016	R25 802 000	47	R548 979
2017	R12 836 500	77	R166 708
2018	R6 553 500	71	R92 303
2019	R7 457 100	93	R80 184
2020	R5 518 650	77	R71 671
2021	R4 686 100	110	R42 601
2022	R4 083 509	61	R66 943
2023	R6 752 752	110	R61 389
2024	R15 385 000	181	R85 000
2025	R13 459 500	161	R83 599



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Roan male only Insights: 2001 to 2025

1. Foundation and Early Development: 2001–2009

During the period from **2001 to 2009**, the Roan male market grew slowly, with quantities rising from **1 animal (2001)** to between **8 and 16 animals** across most of the period. Average prices remained modest, fluctuating between **R21 333 (2005)** and **R59 450 (2002)**. Total value also moved in a narrow band, with **R47 000 (2001)** increasing only to **R295 000 (2009)**.
This era reflected the formative years of Roan breeding in South Africa, where limited genetic lines and restricted breeder participation kept supply low. The market was still developing a consistent valuation framework, and Roan males—while desirable—had not yet entered the high-value investment spotlight that later defined the species.

2. The Investment Boom and Unprecedented Price Growth: 2010–2016

Between **2010 and 2016**, the Roan male market underwent its most explosive transformation. Quantities climbed from **35 animals (2010)** to **52 (2014)** and remained at **47 animals** in both **2015** and **2016**. However, the standout feature was the extraordinary growth in average price, rising from **R33 014 (2010)** to **R292 846 (2014)**, then **R418 745 (2015)** and finally peaking at **R548 979 (2016)**.
Total value followed this pattern, increasing from **R1.15 million (2010)** to **R25.8 million (2016)**—a twenty-two-fold rise.

This was the height of the **South African rare-game investment boom**, where breeder confidence, expanding capital flows, and genetic differentiation drove pricing to unprecedented levels. Roan males became centrepieces of prestige breeding programs, and the graph unmistakably shows the towering price pillars of this era.

3. Market Correction, Expansion of Supply, and Recalibration: 2017–2021

The period from **2017 to 2021** marked the beginning of a strong correction. Average prices declined from **R166 708 (2017)** to **R92 303 (2018)** and **R80 184 (2019)**, eventually reaching **R42 601 (2021)**. This represented a steep unwinding from the highs of 2015–2016.
Yet quantities increased at the same time, from **77 animals (2017)** to **110 animals (2021)**. This combination of rising supply and falling price is characteristic of a market undergoing **normalisation** after a speculative peak.
This period also absorbed **severe macroeconomic pressure**, including prolonged drought cycles, escalating feed costs, and the disruptions of **COVID-19**. Auctions went digital, international hunter activity slowed, and breeder liquidity tightened. The graph demonstrates this perfectly, showing the price collapse while the quantity line continued its upward trajectory.

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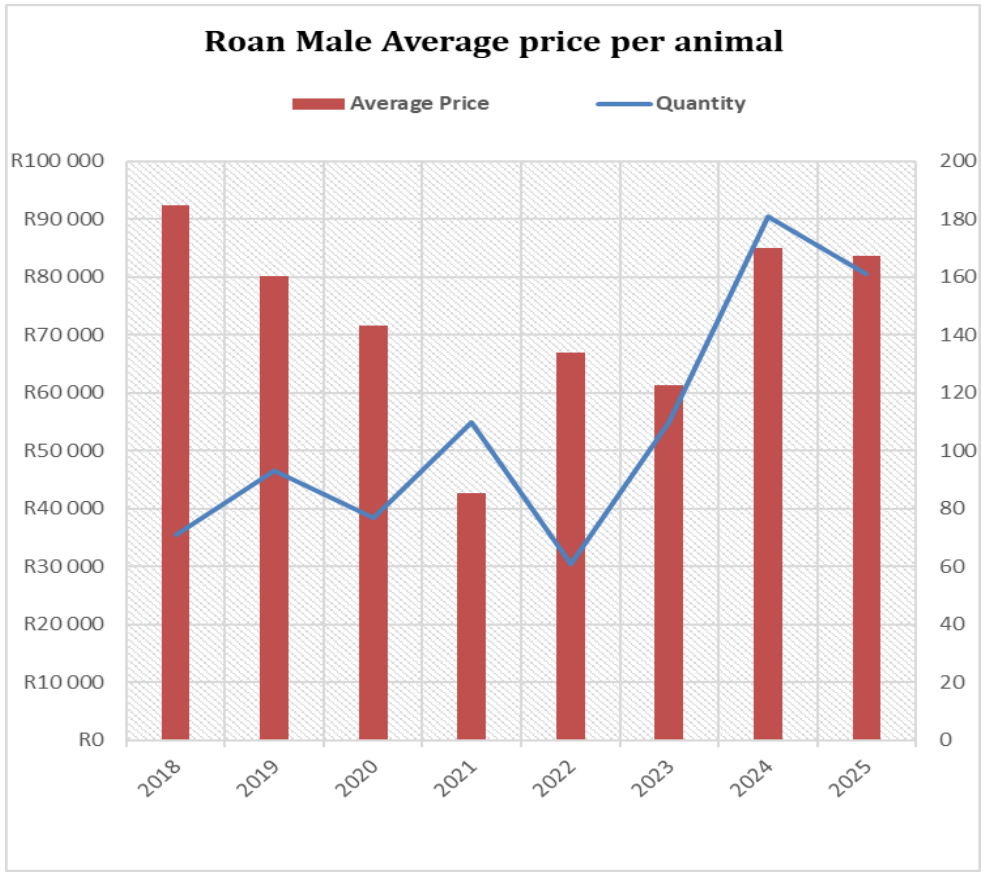
4. Stabilisation and Slow Recovery: 2022–2024

From **2022 to 2024**, the market entered a period of stabilisation. Average price increased from **R66 943 (2022)** to **R61 389 (2023)** and then recovered more strongly to **R85 000 (2024)**. Quantities remained high, moving from **61 animals (2022)** to **110 (2023)** and surging to **181 animals (2024)**.
The combination of rising quantity and strengthening price in **2024** showed that buyers were once again willing to pay for quality males, especially those suited for breeding diversification and trophy utilisation. The industry as a whole had begun to recover from COVID-era disruptions, international hunting returned, and breeders focused increasingly on **hardy, tourism-suited plains game**—a category in which Roan males sit comfortably.



2025 vs 2024 — The Market Holds Value Amid Increasing Selectivity

The comparison between **2025 and 2024** reveals a nuanced but important story. Average price softened slightly from **R85 000 (2024)** to **R83 599 (2025)**, a marginal decrease of **1.6%**, indicating relative price stability. At the same time, quantity declined from **181 animals (2024)** to **161 animals (2025)**—a reduction of **11%**.

This relationship is significant: **supply contracted**, yet prices did not increase. Instead, they held almost flat. This suggests that the market in 2025 was characterised not by excess supply, but by **very selective demand**, where buyers focused intently on age class, horn prospects, temperament, and land-use suitability. High-end males remained in demand, but mid-tier breeding males faced more competitive pricing.

Total value decreased from **R15.38 million (2024)** to **R13.46 million (2025)**, broadly reflecting the lower number of animals offered rather than a collapse in price strength. The mild easing of price, despite lower supply, is consistent with **a maturing market** where growth cycles have stabilised and Roan males function less as speculative assets and more as operational breeding components.

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Within the broader 2025 wildlife economy, confidence was strong, and shortages were emerging in several species—notably sable, golden wildebeest, and certain colour variants. Roan males benefitted indirectly from this positive environment, but their price equilibrium in 2025 reflected a species moving into a **steady, sustainability-driven valuation band** rather than one driven purely by scarcity premiums.

Thus, the market in 2025 demonstrated **resilience, balance, and growing sophistication**, reaffirming that Roan males have transitioned into a stable cornerstone of mixed-plains breeding operations, with pricing supported by utility rather than speculation.

This Roan bull table provides a **structured breakdown of market behaviour by horn size**, revealing how buyers allocated value across different growth stages and trophy categories. Instead of viewing Roan males as a single-price market, the table exposes a **layered demand curve**, showing the relationship between horn length, age class and market purpose.

It also highlights how the shift from 2024 to 2025 brought changes in buyer interest, pricing expectations and supply dynamics, particularly within the larger trophy classes. In essence, the table illustrates how **horn size directly guided bidding intensity**, how different grades of bulls entered the market in different proportions and how pricing adjusted as both supply and sentiment evolved.

Roan Bulls: Pricing by Inches Sold

	2024		2025	
Bull Description	**Quantity Sold**	**Average Price**	**Quantity Sold**	**Average Price**
Bull : inches not specified	7	R35 357	42	R42 464
Bull : Sub-Adult	4	R39 750	0	R0
Bull : Young	4	R16 000	26	R26 808
Bull : Hunting	8	R54 500	0	R0
Bull : Breeding	1	R65 000	0	R0
Bull : less than 26 inches	48	R46 760	13	R63 077
Bull : plus 26 inches	3	R50 000	11	R67 682
Bull : plus 27 inches	16	R57 500	12	R64 417
Bull : plus 28 inches	21	R52 619	12	R66 500
Bull : plus 29 inches	13	R61 462	6	R75 417
Bull : plus 30 inches	23	R97 478	7	R83 143
Bull : plus 31 inches	12	R86 500	10	R117 900
Bull : plus 32 inches	11	R110 273	12	R100 833
Bull : plus 33 inches	8	R254 000	4	R161 250
Bull : plus 34 inches	0	R0	3	R656 667
Bull : above 35 inches	2	R667 500	3	R601 667
	181	**R85 000**	**161**	**R83 599**
	181	**R15 385 000**	**161**	**R13 459 500**

The 2024 market displayed a **broad and balanced distribution** of Roan bulls across horn sizes, with meaningful activity from young bulls all the way through to the elite 35-inch classes. The high presence of bulls under 26 inches—**48 animals at R46 760**—showed that management-driven sales still played an important role and these younger, shorter bulls provided day-to-day liquidity. When moving up the horn spectrum, demand strengthened consistently, with bulls in the **plus-27 to plus-30-inch** range achieving solid mid-market prices. The most notable emphasis in 2024 fell in the **plus-33-inch** class, which achieved **R254 000** and the extremely scarce **above 35-inch** bulls that sold for **R667 500**, underscoring how exceptional horn length still commanded intense bidding.

In 2025, the story shifted. The year saw a **clear redistribution of supply**, with strong growth in the entry-level and young-bull segment—evident in the **26 young bulls** sold at **R26 808**, compared with only four in 2024.

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This aligned with herd rotations and wider availability of younger bulls following years of steady Roan population expansion. At the same time, the market's appetite for structured size classes remained firm. Bulls in the **less-than-26-inch** bracket improved to **R63 077**, showing buyers were willing to pay more for smaller bulls as veld conditions improved and stocking plans expanded.

The mid-size trophy classes maintained healthy pricing, with **plus-28-inch bulls rising to R66 500** and **plus-29-inch bulls reaching R75 417**, confirming that buyers rewarded measurable progress toward prime horn development. A significant highlight was the **plus-31-inch class**, which lifted sharply to **R117 900**, surpassing the previous year and indicating renewed intensity in the mid-tier trophy market.

The upper segment of the market told the most compelling story of 2025. Bulls measuring **plus-34 inches** achieved **R656 667**, compared with no recorded sales in 2024, showing both scarcity and value concentration at the top of the size curve. Meanwhile, bulls **above 35 inches**, at **R601 667**, continued to reflect their elite status despite a lower price than in 2024—driven partly by the natural rarity of these animals and variability in quality. The reduced number of high-inch bulls sold in 2025 suggested tighter availability, yet pricing remained exceptionally strong, reinforcing how **large-frame Roan bulls remain one of the most prized components of the breeding and trophy market**.

Taken together, the horn-size distribution shows a market in which **every inch matters**, not just biologically but commercially. The lower-to-mid size classes carried the volume and provided liquidity, while the mid-to-upper classes attracted the most heightened competition and the greatest buyer enthusiasm. The year-on-year shifts also reflect the industry's broader momentum: improved veld conditions, strengthened confidence and a steady rebuilding of higher-value genetics all influenced buyer behaviour across the size spectrum.

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TSESSEBE

Damaliscus lunatus lunatus

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Damaliscus*
Species: *D. lunatus lunatus*
Common Name: Tsessebe (Southern Tsessebe)

WILDLIFE FACT SHEET



MORPHOLOGY

- Fast, sleek antelope with reddish-brown coat, long legs, lyre-shaped horns; males 130–150 kg, females 115–130 kg.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Open grasslands and savannah; found in Kruger, Limpopo, North West, Free State ranches.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Strict grazer of short, protein-rich grasses; follows fresh regrowth.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Loosely structured herds; territorial males; bachelor groups; highly alert; synchronised calving.

ADAPTATIONS

- Speed, stamina, sharp vision, efficient grass digestion, territorial behaviour.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern; stable to increasing in South Africa through private conservation.

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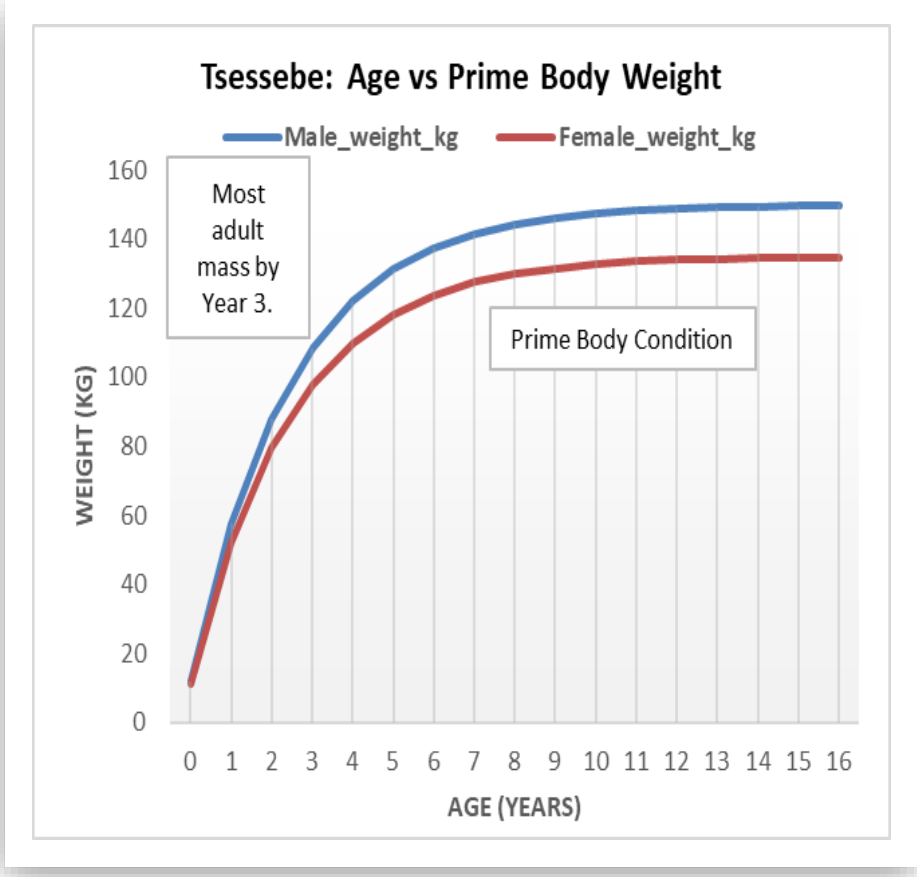
Tsessebe Specie Information

There is a distinctive elegance to the Tsessebe that sets it apart from other plains antelope. Sleek, long-legged and slightly forward-leaning in posture, it carries itself like a distance runner waiting for the next signal to burst into motion. In the early light of the South African grasslands, a mature bull glows in shades of chestnut and dark auburn, the purplish sheen shifting across its coat as it moves with effortless economy. This is an animal perfectly adapted to open country — fast, alert and sculpted by millennia of predation and open-veld living.

Tsessebe thrive in **open savannahs, floodplain fringes and lightly wooded grasslands** where visibility stretches far and food quality is high. In South Africa, their main natural stronghold remains the **central and northern Kruger National Park**, but over recent decades they have expanded across many **Limpopo, North West and Free State wildlife farmes**, where landowners have restored grassland systems and recognised the species' ecological and economic value. Their presence is often a sign of good veld — short, sweet grasses, managed grazing pressure and fire cycles that maintain open plains.

Their diet reflects this preference. Tsessebe are **strict grazers**, favouring short, fresh, protein-rich grasses that emerge after rain or fire. Their elongated muzzle and highly flexible lips allow them to graze extremely close to the ground, extracting nutrition from young leaf bases with precision. Because they focus on high-quality patches, they often move across their range in a predictable rhythm, following green flushes and maintaining short-grass mosaics that benefit many other species.



As the animal develops, its physical trajectory follows a clear and measurable path. At birth, Tsessebe calves weigh only around **10 kg**, but within the first year their weight multiplies several times, reaching about **45 kg**. Horns, absent at birth, appear quickly — measuring around **4 inches** by the end of the first year.

By age two, the transformation is striking: **75 kg** in body mass and **8-inch** horns. Between ages two and five, the growth curves steepen dramatically, a pattern captured in the first two charts. This is the **rapid development phase**, where young bulls gain both stature and the characteristic lyre-shaped horns that define the species.

Weight accelerates quickly in the first five years — reaching **120 kg** by age five — and continues to increase into full adulthood. Between ages six and ten, the line smooths into a steady approach toward the **145 kg** plateau that represents maximum adult mass. This slow, steady climb is typical of antelope adapted for distance running rather than bulk.

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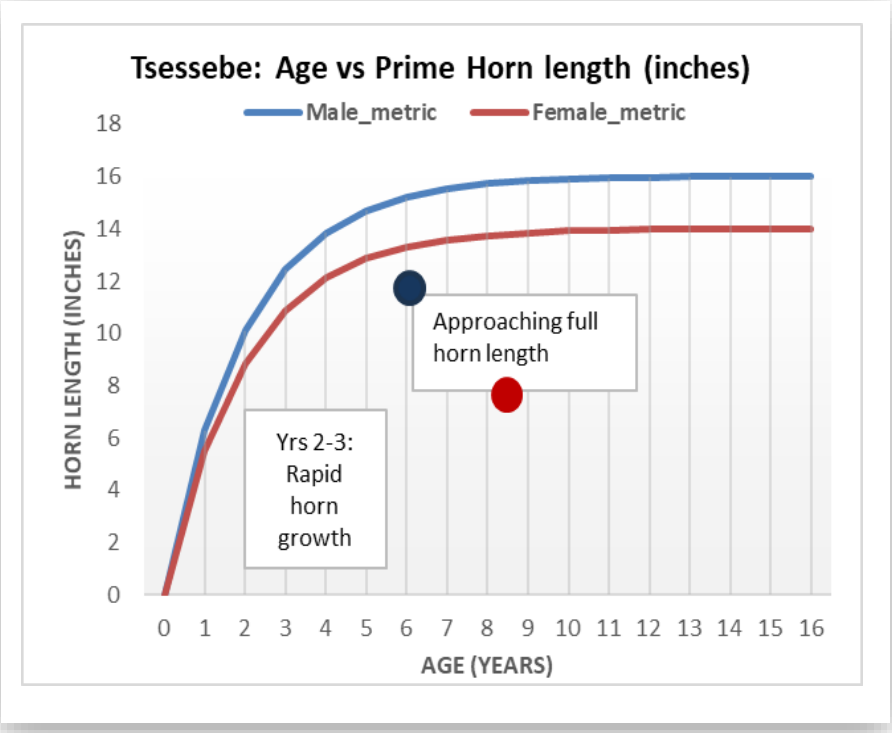

The Tsessebe's horn development follows one of the most accelerated early-growth patterns among southern African antelope. The chart shows how the species pours energy into horn formation almost immediately, with lengths surging from **4 inches at year one to over 11 inches by year three**. This steep climb is characteristic of tsessebe biology: early horn establishment plays an essential role in herd hierarchy, territorial assertion and predator deterrence.

From **age three to six**, horn growth continues but at a slower, more deliberate pace as the animal diverts energy toward body mass, muscle structure and breeding readiness. By **age six**, bulls push toward **15.5 inches** and the growth curve begins to level out — a clear sign that the animal is transitioning into physical maturity.

By the time a tsessebe reaches **age eight**, the horns typically stabilise around **16.5 inches**, aligning with the species' recognised trophy norms. This plateau phase reflects the biological ceiling for horn length, where incremental yearly gains become negligible.

In industry terms, this is the age bracket where bulls exhibit their characteristic sleek curves and forward-facing horn shape — the hallmark of a tsessebe in its prime.

Socially, Tsessebe live in **loose herds** made up mostly of females and their young. Adult males defend **small territories**, especially during the rut. These territories often include slight rises or termite mounds, which offer vantage points. It is common to see a Tsessebe standing statue-still atop a mound, eyes sweeping the horizon. Their vigilance, paired with extraordinary speed and endurance, makes them one of the most difficult antelope for predators to secure. Calving is seasonal, timed to coincide with improving grass quality and newborns gain mobility rapidly — a necessity in exposed, open landscapes.

Throughout this growth cycle, the Tsessebe's social and reproductive dynamics evolve in step with its developing horns and increasing body mass. Young bulls begin experimenting with dominance as early as three to four years old, engaging in controlled, low-risk sparring that helps them gauge strength and social ranking. These early contests are practice runs — shaping muscle, sharpening reflexes and refining the stance and posturing unique to the species.
True territorial authority, however, only emerges once a bull's physical stature and horn maturity converge. This typically occurs between **five and eight years of age**, when the animal's weight, stamina and fully formed horn structure equip it to hold and defend a prime patch of territory. During this period, bulls display heightened vigilance, scent-marking behaviour and a more assertive presence within the herd.

Females, by contrast, reach reproductive readiness earlier. They usually conceive at **2.5–3 years**, carrying a single calf through a **7–8 month gestation**. Calves are born synchronously with seasonal rainfall peaks, allowing them access to high-quality grazing during their most vulnerable early months.

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Under favourable veld conditions, Tsessebe can reach **12–15 years of age**, though natural predation, competition and environmental pressures often shorten this lifespan in the wild. Even so, each stage of their life cycle — from rapid horn growth to reproductive maturity — reflects a finely tuned balance between physiology, social structure and survival strategy.

The Tsessebe may appear uniform at first glance, but subtle regional and genetic variations shape meaningful differences in colour tone, horn conformation and body build. The variant matrix below provides a clear, structured view of these distinctions — helping breeders, managers and buyers understand the diversity within the species and how each variant contributes to herd planning, aesthetic preference and long-term genetic strategy.

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Colouration / Morphology	Horn Characteristics	Notes / Distinguishing Features
Southern Tsessebe (D. l. lunatus)	Southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe)	Chestnut to reddish-brown with purplish sheen	Lyre-shaped, medium length	**Primary South African form**; dominant in conservation and private land populations
Topi (D. l. jimela)	East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda)	Darker, more chocolate-toned body; taller, more slender	Slightly longer, thinner horns	Not in SA; included for broader species-group understanding
Tiang (D. l. tiang)	Central Africa	Medium size; intermediate coat	Moderate-length horns	Represents clinal variation across central Africa
Korrigum (D. l. korrigum)	West Africa (Sahel belt)	Pale, rufous coat; stocky build	Shorter, thick horns	Critically endangered; absent in SA
Colour Variant – Mahogany Tsessebe	Select South African populations	Deep chocolate or mahogany sheen	Standard Tsessebe horns	Rare; occasionally selected for aesthetic value
Colour Variant – Light Fawn Tsessebe	Occasional SA herds	Pale fawn or sandy coat	Standard horns	Natural colour dilution; sometimes line-bred quietly
Dark-Phase Southern Tsessebe (informal)	Occurs sporadically in SA & Botswana	Rich, almost purplish-black hue in certain seasons	Standard horns	Seasonal variation but sometimes seen as a “variant” in industry descriptions
Highland-Type Tsessebe (phenotypic)	Zimbabwe / Zambia highveld	Slightly heavier front quarters	Standard horns	Not an official subspecies; more a local phenotype
Large-Frame Southern Tsessebe (industry term)	A few SA breeding lines	Noticeably larger frame and deeper chest	Standard horns	A selectively bred type focusing on body conformation, not a true variant

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Fascinating Insights about Tsessebe

- **Tsessebe are among the most energy-efficient runners in Africa**, capable of maintaining high speeds with remarkably low metabolic cost — a key adaptation to open-grassland living.
- Their **distinct forward-leaning posture** isn't just visual: it shifts the centre of gravity to the shoulders, enabling faster acceleration and more stable directional changes when fleeing predators.
- **They perform a unique "head bob" when alarmed**, a rhythmic motion used to signal awareness to both predators and other herd members.
- Tsessebe are highly vigilant and regularly **use termite mounds as elevated lookout posts**, often rotating through specific mounds within their territory.
- **Bulls are surprisingly strategic in their territorial behaviour**, defending compact, high-quality territories centred around food patches, vantage points, or high-use female pathways.
- During the rut, males create **scent-marking paths** by scraping the ground repeatedly and urinating on the scrape — a behaviour seldom seen this intensively in other antelope species.
- **Tsessebe lay down "preorbital marking lines"** by dragging their face across grass stems — leaving visual and olfactory clues for rivals.
- Their **herd movement is highly coordinated**, often forming single-file travel lines that reduce energy expenditure and improve predator detection.
- Females synchronise calving to create a **"predator swamp effect"**, overwhelming predators with simultaneous newborns and increasing individual survival odds.
- Calves can **outrun a human within hours of birth**, an extreme adaptation to open-plain predation risk.
- Tsessebe communicate with a **soft metallic clicking sound** made during rapid movement — a subtle form of herd cohesion.
- **They are one of the earliest species to respond to ecological change**, leaving degraded or encroached areas before other plains game move on, making them a valuable veld-condition indicator.
- **Tsessebe can recognise individual bulls by horn angle and facial tone**, a form of visual identification that reduces unnecessary fighting.
- Tsessebe bulls engage in a **ritualised "parallel walk" display**, pacing side-by-side without touching to compare strength before escalating into combat.
- Their **lean, aerodynamic build** gives them one of the longest stride lengths relative to body size among African antelope.
- Tsessebe are surprisingly **long-lived for a plains species**, with individuals reaching 12–15 years in optimal veld with low predation pressure.
- **Lightning-fast reaction times** allow them to change direction abruptly — a crucial defence against cheetah and wild dog.

"The Tsessebe plays a vital role in the South African wildlife industry as a premium plains species that signals healthy, well-managed grassland ecosystems. With stable breeding performance, distinctive genetics and consistent niche demand across breeding, conservation and hunting markets, the Tsessebe strengthens species diversity and adds ecological value to any wildlife operation. "

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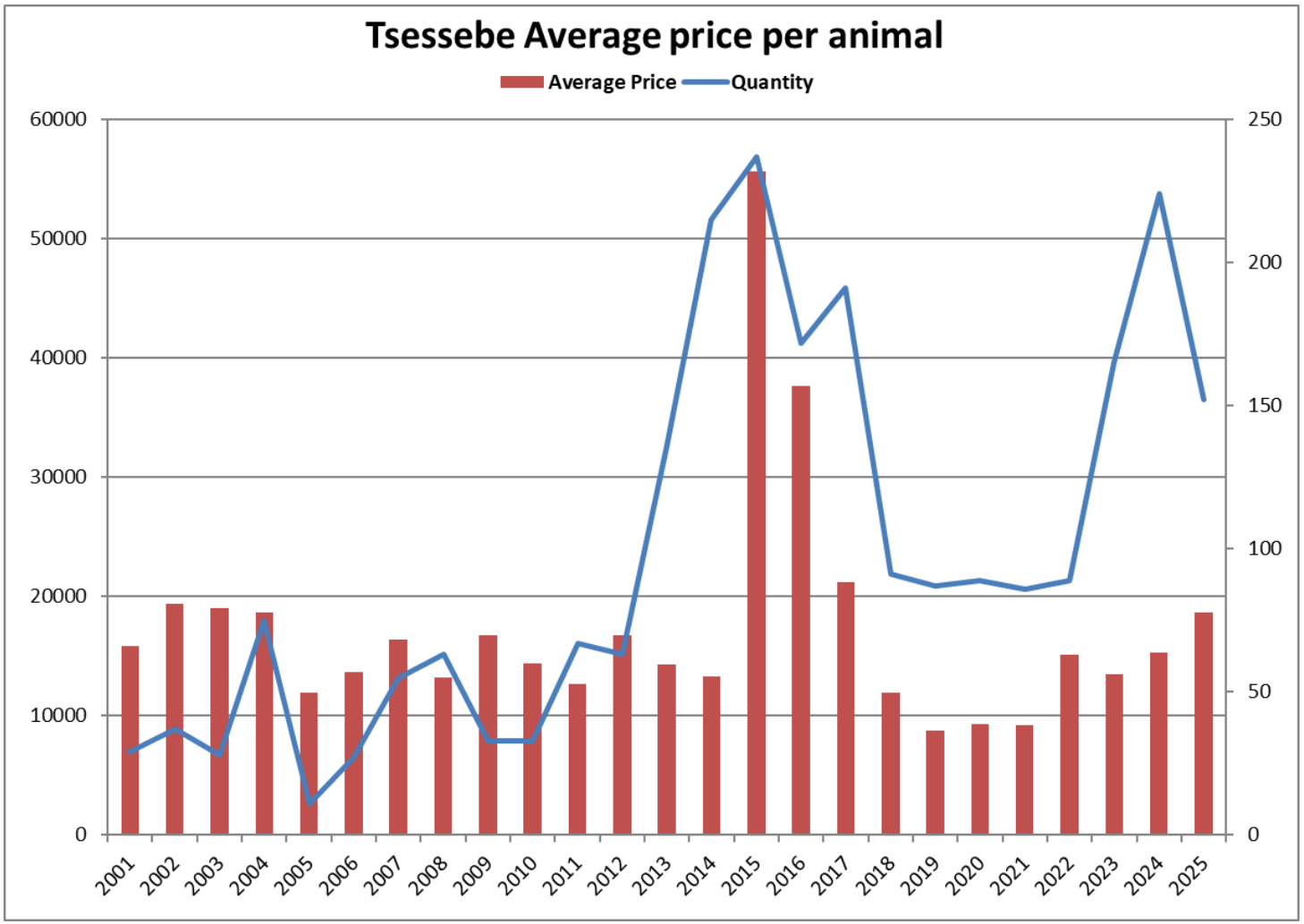
Tsessebe Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Tsessebe dataset offers a **clean, long-horizon view** of how one of South Africa's more specialised plains-game species has evolved through multiple economic cycles. The table and graph together illustrate a market defined by **steady foundational trade**, then later shaped by the same speculative forces that influenced rare-game species, followed by a correction period and a gradual stabilisation. What makes Tsessebe particularly interesting is the contrast between **frequent volumes and relatively modest pricing**, interrupted only by a dramatic mid-2010s spike. The graph visualises this clearly: long periods of consistent pricing, sudden escalation and a return to a more grounded level. In simple terms, Tsessebe reveal how a species with stable ecological suitability and broad distribution can still be swept into—then out of—the industry's valuation cycles.

Tsessebe			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R458 606	29	R15 814
2002	R716 000	37	R19 351
2003	R532 492	28	R19 018
2004	R1 401 000	75	R18 680
2005	R131 000	11	R11 909
2006	R369 250	27	R13 676
2007	R901 300	55	R16 387
2008	R831 000	63	R13 190
2009	R551 500	33	R16 712
2010	R476 000	33	R14 424
2011	R850 250	67	R12 690
2012	R1 053 500	63	R16 722
2013	R1 950 000	136	R14 338
2014	R2 852 300	215	R13 267
2015	R13 186 500	237	R55 639
2016	R6 484 191	172	R37 699
2017	R4 052 000	191	R21 215
2018	R1 087 850	91	R11 954
2019	R758 850	87	R8 722
2020	R824 400	89	R9 263
2021	R794 850	86	R9 242
2022	R1 342 750	89	R15 087
2023	R2 220 001	165	R13 455
2024	R3 425 700	224	R15 293
2025	R2 840 500	152	R18 688



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Tsessebe Insights: 2001 to 2025

1. Steady Foundations and Modest Growth: 2001–2011

Across the years **2001 to 2011**, Tsessebe traded in a relatively stable range, both in price and supply. Quantities moved from **29 animals (2001)** to **67 animals (2011)**, while average prices fluctuated between **R11 909 (2005)** and **R19 351 (2002)**. Total value followed this contained pattern, rising from **R458 606 (2001)** to **R850 250 (2011)**.

This long period of moderate movement showed a market aligned with natural ecological spread rather than aggressive breeding expansion. Tsessebe remained a niche plains-game species, valued for biodiversity contributions and trophy hunting potential but not subject to speculative interest. The graph reflects this stability with low, consistent price bars and a moderate, oscillating quantity line.

2. Expansion of Supply and the Boom Distortion: 2012–2016

Between **2012 and 2014**, the species saw its first significant expansion. Quantities increased from **63 (2012)** to **215 (2014)**, a notable rise that demonstrated improved breeding success and stronger auction representation. Prices, however, remained modest, moving only from **R16 722 (2012)** to **R13 267 (2014)**.

The standout disruption came in **2015**, when average price surged to **R55 639**, up sharply from **R13 267 (2014)**—a **319% increase**. Total value jumped to **R13.18 million (2015)**, and although quantities rose to **237 animals**, the price escalation was the most striking. This mirrored the **rare-game investment boom**, which inflated prices across several less-abundant plains species.



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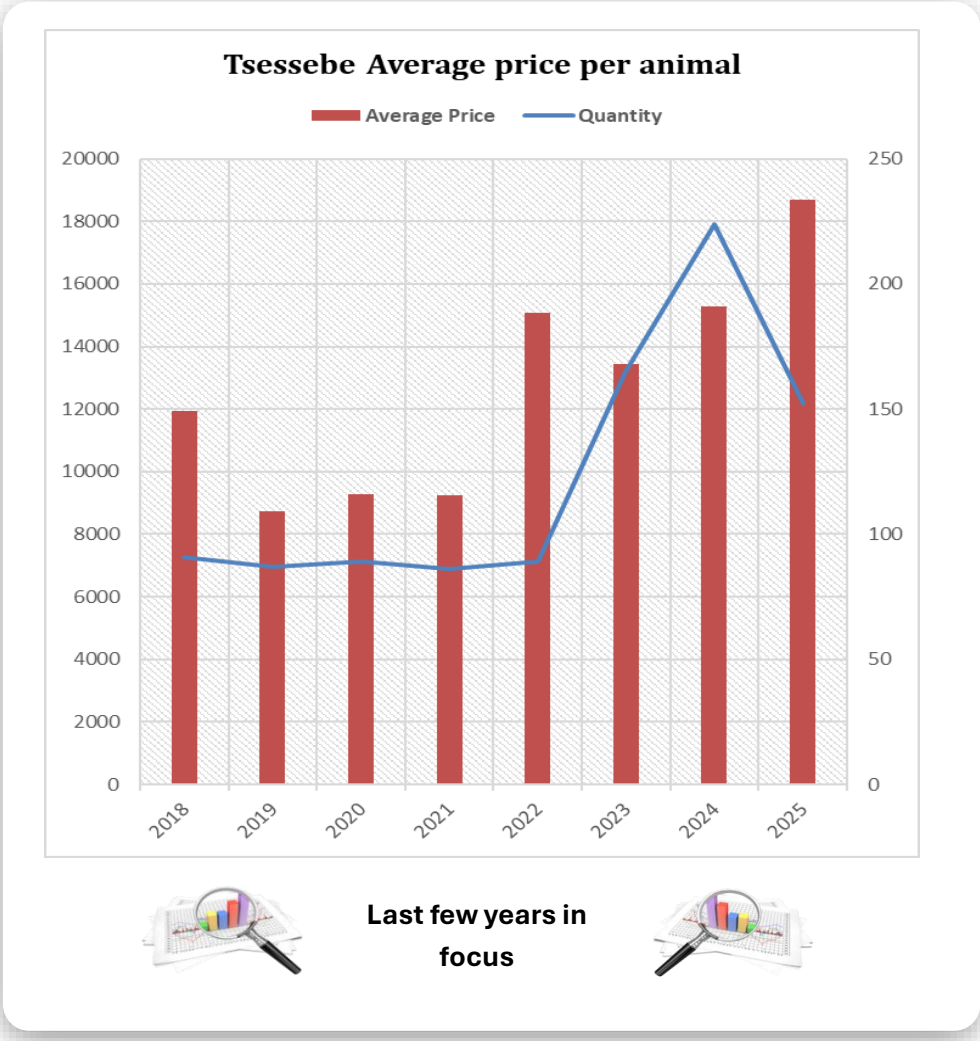
By **2016**, the correction had already begun. Prices softened to **R37 699**, and total value halved to **R6.48 million**, despite still-high volumes of **172 animals**. The graph captures this boom–bust arc dramatically, with a towering spike followed by a sharp downward price adjustment.

3. Market Recalibration and COVID-Era Suppression: 2017–2021

From **2017 through 2021**, Tsessebe re-entered a period of deep normalisation. Prices fell from **R21 215 (2017)** to **R11 954 (2018)** and continued trending downward to **R9 242 (2021)**. Quantities also contracted, moving from **191 animals (2017)** to **86 animals (2021)**.

The industry during this period was grappling with the aftermath of the boom, tightening liquidity, high feed costs, and ultimately the severe restrictions brought by **COVID-19**. Export hunters were largely absent, domestic budgets tightened, and plains-game acquisitions slowed. Tsessebe, being a species with limited commercial output beyond hunting and biodiversity value, experienced pronounced downward pressure. The graph reflects this as both price and quantity lines settle into lower bands.



4. Rebound, Confidence Recovery, and Renewed Volume: 2022–2024

The years **2022 to 2024** marked a progressive recovery. Average price increased from **R15 087 (2022)** to **R13 455 (2023)** and then climbed to **R15 293 (2024)**. Quantities expanded significantly, from **89 animals (2022)** to **165 (2023)** and **224 (2024)**.

This rebound reflected a **wider resurgence of the wildlife market** post-COVID, with stronger auction attendance, more diversified buyer participation, and rising international hunting activity. Tsessebe benefitted from the broader shift toward **restoring balanced ecosystems** and enhancing species diversity in tourism-oriented reserves. The stability in pricing despite rising supply showed that demand was healthy enough to absorb larger numbers without forcing prices down.

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2025 vs 2024 — Pricing Strength Amid a Drop in Supply

The transition from **2024 to 2025** presents a compelling picture of tightening market conditions for Tsessebe. Average price increased from **R15 293 (2024)** to **R18 688 (2025)**—a **22.2% rise**—suggesting stronger demand for quality animals. At the same time, quantity fell sharply from **224 animals (2024)** to **152 animals (2025)**, a **32% decline in supply**.

This combination is highly significant. A drop in supply alongside rising prices typically signals **genuine scarcity**, not speculative inflation, and it suggests that 2025 saw a shortage of animals coming onto the market at precisely the moment when demand continued to strengthen. Total value decreased from **R3.43 million (2024)** to **R2.84 million (2025)**, but this decline mirrors the reduction in animals offered, not a weakening of the market.

In 2025, industry trends pointed toward **restocking and species diversity recovery**, especially on mixed-ecosystem properties. Tsessebe fitted neatly into this strategy as a hardy plains species with strong ecological value. Buyers also became increasingly quality-focused, driving up prices for well-structured, well-conditioned individuals. The pricing increase despite reduced quantities illustrates a market that was **competing for fewer available animals**, reinforcing a narrative of tightening supply rather than declining demand.

Thus, 2025 represented a year in which Tsessebe demonstrated **renewed strength**, underpinned by scarcity, improved buyer confidence, and a broader industry return to measured, sustainable investment behaviour.

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Wildlife Industry Trends & Analysis:

SPECIE : RHINO

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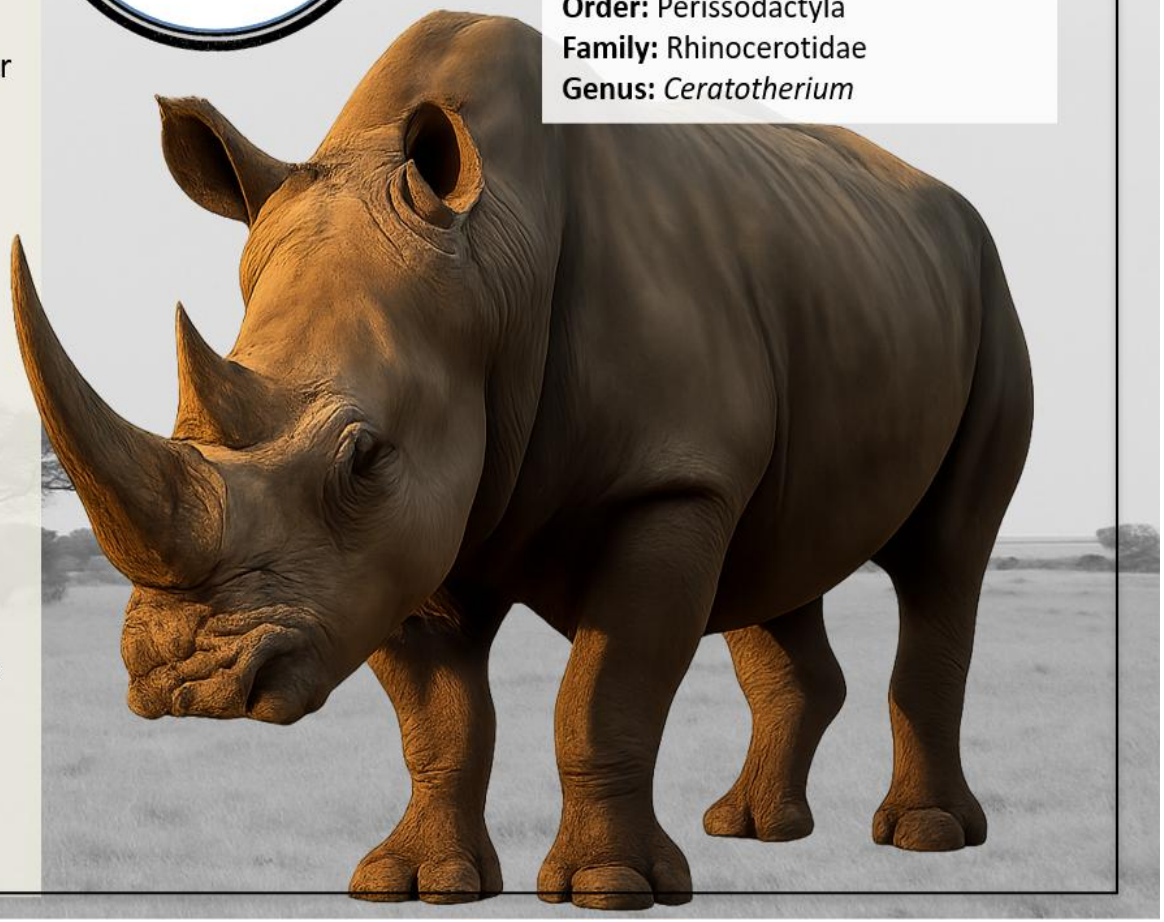
RHINO

White Rhino – Ceratotherium simum
Black Rhino – Diceros bicornis

WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Perissodactyla
Family: Rhinocerotidae
Genus: *Ceratotherium*



MORPHOLOGY

- White: Massive grazer; square lip; 1,800–2,400 kg; long curved front horn.
- Black: Smaller (800–1,200 kg); hooked lip; more upright, pointed horns.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- White: Kruger, KZN, Limpopo, NW reserves, widespread private land.
- Black: KZN, Kruger thickets, selected private reserves; far rarer.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- White: Open savannahs, grasslands, short-grass plains.
- Black: Dense bush, thickets, woodland scrub.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- White: Pure grazer; short grasses; water-dependent; wallows.
- Black: Browser; shrubs/trees; uses prehensile lip.

ADAPTIONS

- White: Square muzzle; bulk defense; rotating ears; thick hide.
- Black: Hooked lip for selective browsing; agile, quick turning; excellent smell.

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White Rhino Specie Information

The White Rhino has a way of commanding space simply by existing. It moves through the grasslands with a slow, unhurried confidence, as if it remembers a deeper Africa long before modern landscapes took shape. There is a sculpted permanence to it — the **vast, barrel-chested frame**, the deeply furrowed hide and the long, sweeping front horn that curves forward like a relic carried through time. When a White Rhino grazes, head low, sweeping side to side in steady arcs, it radiates an **ancient, immovable calm**.

As the **second-largest land mammal on earth**, the White Rhino's weight is one of its most defining features. Newborn calves of roughly *40 kg* accelerate rapidly in growth, reaching *400 kg within the first year*. By age three, they surpass *1,000 kg* and by five they begin taking on the heavy, muscular profile of adulthood at around *1,550 kg*. True maturity arrives slowly: by **10–11 years**, bulls often exceed *2,200 kg*, with some exceptional individuals pushing even higher. Their **immense weight is not merely bulk**, but a deliberate distribution of mass that anchors them during aggressive interactions, supports long hours of grazing and stabilises the enormous skull that remains close to the earth. That skull carries one of the most iconic features of any African mammal: the **long, curved front horn**, typically between *20–35 inches*, though certain females grow even longer, more slender arcs. Horn growth begins humbly — a rough stub in the early years — before accelerating dramatically between ages three and ten. It passes recognisable milestones at *9, 13, 17, 21, 27 and 30 inches* before slowing around *32–35 inches*.



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The **front horn sweeps outward in a broad, graceful curve**, while the smaller second horn sits behind like a keel, giving the species its unmistakable profile. Given their grazing habits, White Rhino horns tend to be smoother and more polished than those of their browsing cousins, with less uneven wear.

White Rhino thrive in **broad, open landscapes** where the veld stretches wide and grasses dominate: savannahs, mixed bushveld mosaics and grasslands maintained through burning and rotational grazing. Their presence is strongly tied to regions like **Kruger**, **Hluhluwe–iMfolozi** and large private reserves in **Limpopo and the North West** where short, nutrient-rich grasses flourish. Their feeding behaviour shapes these ecosystems profoundly; as **pure grazers**, their sweeping muzzles maintain open lawns, reduce woody encroachment and create grazing opportunities for other plains herbivores. In this way, they function as **living engineers of the grasslands**.

Socially, White Rhino tend to reflect the openness of their environment. Females and calves form loose, calm groups called crashes, while dominant bulls maintain overlapping territories that they mark with prominent dung middens and regular scent spraying. Their communication is surprisingly varied — from deep rumbling calls that carry far across the plains to intimate squeaks and short snorts exchanged between mother and calf. Their temperament is typically peaceful, moving with purposeful steadiness rather than urgency.

Their reproductive pace matches their physical scale. Females reach sexual maturity at **6–7 years**, carry calves for **16 months** and then invest deeply in their offspring for nearly **three years**. These extended maternal commitments result in long intervals between calves. Males require even more time to reach their peak; only by **10–12 years**, when body mass and horn length are in their prime, do they begin confidently asserting territory and successfully breeding.

Every aspect of the White Rhino — its weight, its horns, its slow maturity and its landscape-shaping behaviour — speaks of patience and power. It is a species built on endurance and ecological influence, a quiet sovereign of the grasslands.

Although the White Rhino is represented in South Africa almost entirely by the Southern subspecies, understanding the variants within the species group provides essential scientific and historical context. These distinctions highlight the evolutionary pathways, geographic histories and conservation realities that have shaped the White Rhino as we know it today. The matrix below sets out these variants clearly, offering a structured view of the forms recognised across Africa and the traits that define them.

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Colouration / Morphology	Horn Characteristics	Notes
Southern White Rhino (C. s. simum)	South Africa, Namibia, Botswana	Pale to medium grey; exceptionally large-bodied	Long curved front horn (20–35 inches)	Only form in SA; cornerstone of conservation and private wildlife operations
Northern White Rhino (C. s. cottoni)	Central/East Africa	Slightly lighter grey; longer limbs	Similar to southern form	Functionally extinct; included for completeness

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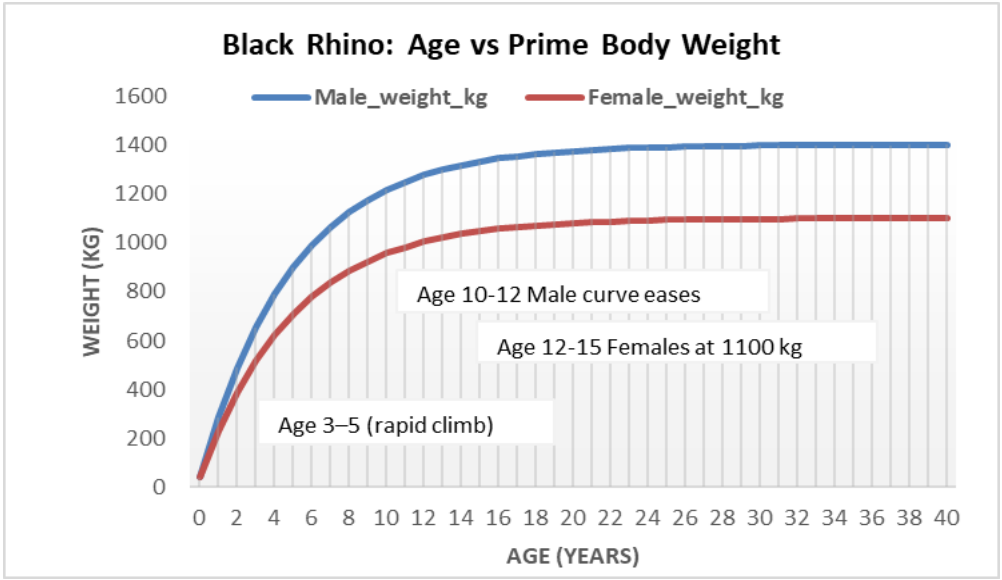
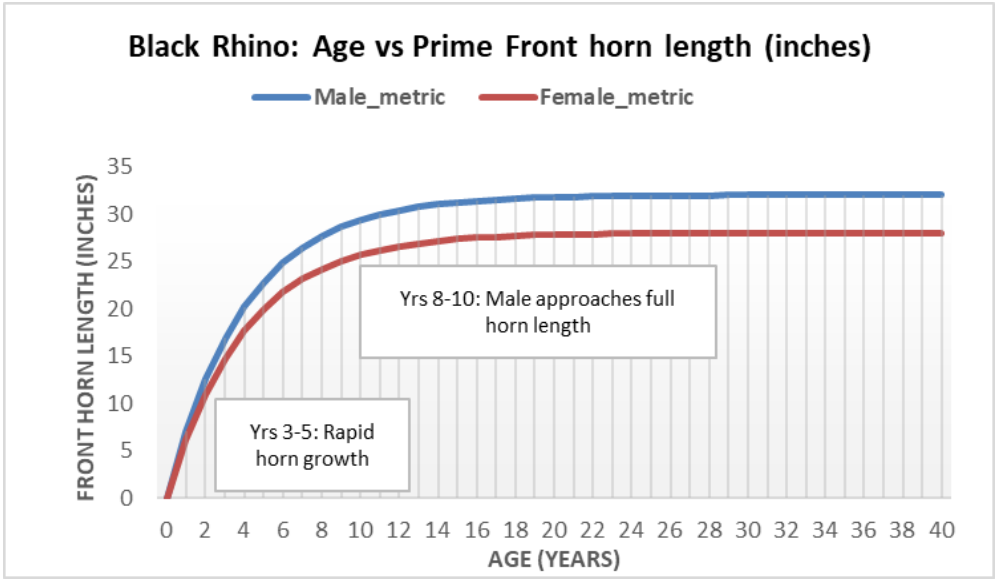
Black Rhino Specie Information

Where the White Rhino feels like a grounded monument, the Black Rhino carries a different kind of power — **tense, agile and coiled with alertness**. Its presence is quieter, sharper, more elusive. It seems carved for shadow rather than open sunlight, built to slip between thorn thickets with a stealth that seems impossible for such a large animal. With its **hooked, prehensile lip**, upright horn posture and compact, muscular frame, the Black Rhino feels like a creature engineered for **precision and sudden movement**.

Although smaller than its grazing cousin, the Black Rhino is still formidable, with adults typically weighing **900–1,400 kg**. Their weight is compact and dense, concentrating immense strength into a body designed for rapid acceleration, tight turning and pushing through vegetation. Calves begin life at *30–40 kg*, but growth accelerates quickly in the first years, producing robust subadults far earlier than in White Rhino. By adulthood, the **sexual dimorphism becomes clear**: bulls tend toward the upper mass range, carrying heavy neck and shoulder musculature, while cows remain slightly lighter but more agile in dense bush.

Horn structure in Black Rhino differs not just in shape but in *function*. The **front horn is typically shorter, steeper and more upright**, often forming a sharp point rather than a sweeping curve. Browsing behaviour causes **significant variability in wear**; individuals that feed heavily on tough shrubs may develop flattened or shortened tips, while others maintain impressively long, needle-like horns. The secondary horn can also become surprisingly pronounced, especially in females. Horn growth accelerates through the early years and peaks before **7–9 years**, after which it slows as the animal's energy shifts toward body consolidation and territory defence.





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The Black Rhino's world is the world of thickets — **Acacia woodlands, dense shrublands and tangled bushveld** where visibility narrows and smell and hearing dominate. In South Africa, they are especially associated with KwaZulu-Natal's dense bush, select areas of Kruger and private reserves that maintain browse-rich habitats. Their distribution follows the abundance and diversity of woody plants, not grasses.

Their feeding behaviour reflects extreme specialisation. Using their hooked lip with remarkable dexterity, they pluck individual leaves, strip stems and reach between bfarmes with a kind of delicate precision unusual for an animal of their size. Over time, this browsing creates **distinct browse lines**, shapes shrub architecture and opens pockets within dense thickets. Their influence on vegetation is as profound as the White Rhino's influence on grasslands — but expressed in the vertical layers of woody plants rather than open plains.

Behaviourally, the Black Rhino is solitary, reactive and deeply attuned to its environment. Their poor eyesight is compensated by exceptional hearing and olfactory awareness, allowing them to navigate dense vegetation confidently. Their sudden, explosive charges — often misunderstood — arise from surprise or confusion rather than hostility. Despite their mass, they move **with ghost-like silence**, appearing and disappearing in the thicket with surprising grace.

Growth and reproduction follow a slightly faster trajectory than White Rhino. Females often begin breeding at **5–6 years**, carry calves for **15–16 months** and keep them close for up to **three years**. Intercalving intervals range from **2.5–4 years**, depending on veld conditions and nutritional availability. Males begin asserting territory earlier — usually between **8 and 10 years** — aided by their compact strength and agility in bush-dense landscapes.

Everything about the Black Rhino — its weight, its horns, its stealth and its intense relationship with woody vegetation — reflects an animal adapted for **closed, complex environments**. It is a sculptor of the thicket, a shadow of the bush and a vital force in shaping the ecology of Africa's densest habitats.

The Black Rhino comprises several regional subspecies, each shaped by the unique habitats and ecological pressures of their home ranges. The matrix below outlines these variants, highlighting the differences in form, distribution and horn characteristics that define each group

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Colouration / Morphology	Horn Characteristics	Notes
South-central Black Rhino (D. b. minor)	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique	Dark grey; compact build	Upright, sharply pointed horns; variable wear	Only subspecies native to SA
South-western Black Rhino (D. b. bicornis)	Namibia, SW Angola	Lighter grey; adapted to arid bush	Shorter, thicker horns	Not common in SA; added for context
East African Black Rhino (D. b. michaeli)	Kenya, Tanzania	Longer limbs; more pointed head	Typically longer front horn	Listed for completeness; not found in SA

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The Last Shadows of the Savannah

South Africa stands at the centre of the global rhino crisis, carrying the weight of protecting the last major populations of a species whose lineage stretches back **over 50 million years**. Despite conclusive scientific evidence that rhino horn is made of **keratin—chemically identical to human hair and nails and offering no proven medicinal benefit**—demand in parts of Asia continues to fuel one of the world's most sophisticated wildlife trafficking networks. Poaching syndicates now operate with **military precision**, using thermal optics, GPS tracking and cross-border smuggling routes that place immense pressure on conservation forces. As a result, several white rhino subpopulations have reached what biologists refer to as **breeding stress thresholds**, where natural birth rates cannot offset annual losses. Yet despite this escalating threat, South Africa's conservation community has responded with innovation: **DNA forensics, dehorning programmes, aerial surveillance and intelligence-driven patrols** now form the backbone of modern rhino protection. Encouragingly, behavioural studies in Asia show a gradual generational shift, with younger consumers increasingly rejecting rhino horn as **unscientific, unethical and socially outdated**. This cultural softening hints at the long-term solution that enforcement alone cannot deliver—reducing demand at its source. Ultimately, the survival of South Africa's rhino now depends on a global partnership between science, education and the unwavering determination of those who refuse to let one of Africa's greatest icons fade into memory.

> ***"In the quiet between patrols, the rhino's silhouette remains defiant — a living relic fighting to outlast both greed and time."***

At the same time, conservation scientists warn that the illegal trade is evolving faster than many enforcement frameworks can adapt, creating a persistent arms race between poachers and protectors. Rhino behaviour studies show that increased human disturbance has altered movement patterns in several reserves, with animals becoming more nocturnal and more fragmented across their home ranges. These behavioural changes have significant ecological consequences, influencing grazing pressure, vegetation recovery and the broader savannah dynamics that rhino help maintain. Economists within the wildlife sector further highlight the ripple effect of poaching, noting that the loss of breeding females has a **multiplied long-term impact** on population recovery. Some reserves have had to invest more in security than in ecological management, demonstrating how profoundly conservation budgets have been reshaped by the poaching crisis. Meanwhile, cross-border collaborations between South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia are beginning to show promise, with coordinated intelligence sharing disrupting several trafficking pipelines. Education campaigns in Vietnam and China are also gaining traction, especially those that frame rhino conservation as a matter of **national pride and modern identity** rather than traditional medicine. Together, these scientific, cultural and conservation efforts form the fragile but growing foundation of hope on which the rhino's future now rests.

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WHITE RHINO vs BLACK RHINO — Fascinating Insights Comparison

Category	White Rhino	Black Rhino
Primary Feeding Strategy	Pure grazer; relies on short, nutrient-rich grasses	Strict browser; selects leaves, twigs and woody plants
Mouth Structure	Wide, square muzzle designed for sweeping grass	Prehensile, hooked upper lip for plucking browse
Body Size & Weight	Second-largest land mammal; bulls often > 2,000 kg	Smaller but powerful; typically 900–1,400 kg
Horn Shape & Wear	Longer, more curved horns (20–35 inches); smoother due to grassland lifestyle	Shorter, steeper, more upright horns; often uneven due to browsing wear
Calf Behaviour	Calves run **in front** of mother (open visibility)	Calves run **behind** mother (concealment in thickets)
Preferred Habitat	Open savannahs and grasslands with high visibility	Dense thickets, Acacia woodlands, shrub-rich bushveld
Temperament	Calm, deliberate, less reactive	More solitary, reactive; quick-charge behaviour when startled
Social Structure	More social; cows form “crashes” with calves	Strongly solitary; adults usually alone except cow-calf pairs
Territorial Marking	Large, prominent dung middens used as social hubs	More intense scent marking; ground scraping, bfarm-breaking
Reproduction Pace	Females mature at 6–7 yrs; calves every ~3 yrs	Females mature at 5–6 yrs; intercalving 2.5–4 yrs
Growth Emphasis	Focus on horn length + massive body mass over a long timeline	Faster early growth; horn wear highly variable
Dietary Impact	Supports mixed grazer herds by creating short-grass access	Controls woody plant density and shrub structure
Communication	Uses deep infrasonic rumbles and large scent middens	Frequent scent spraying, scraping and quiet grunts in dense cover
Threat Response	More likely to move away calmly unless provoked	More likely to charge out of confusion from close-range encounters
Role in Reserves	Anchor species for grassland management and tourism	Key species for maintaining multi-layered vegetation diversity

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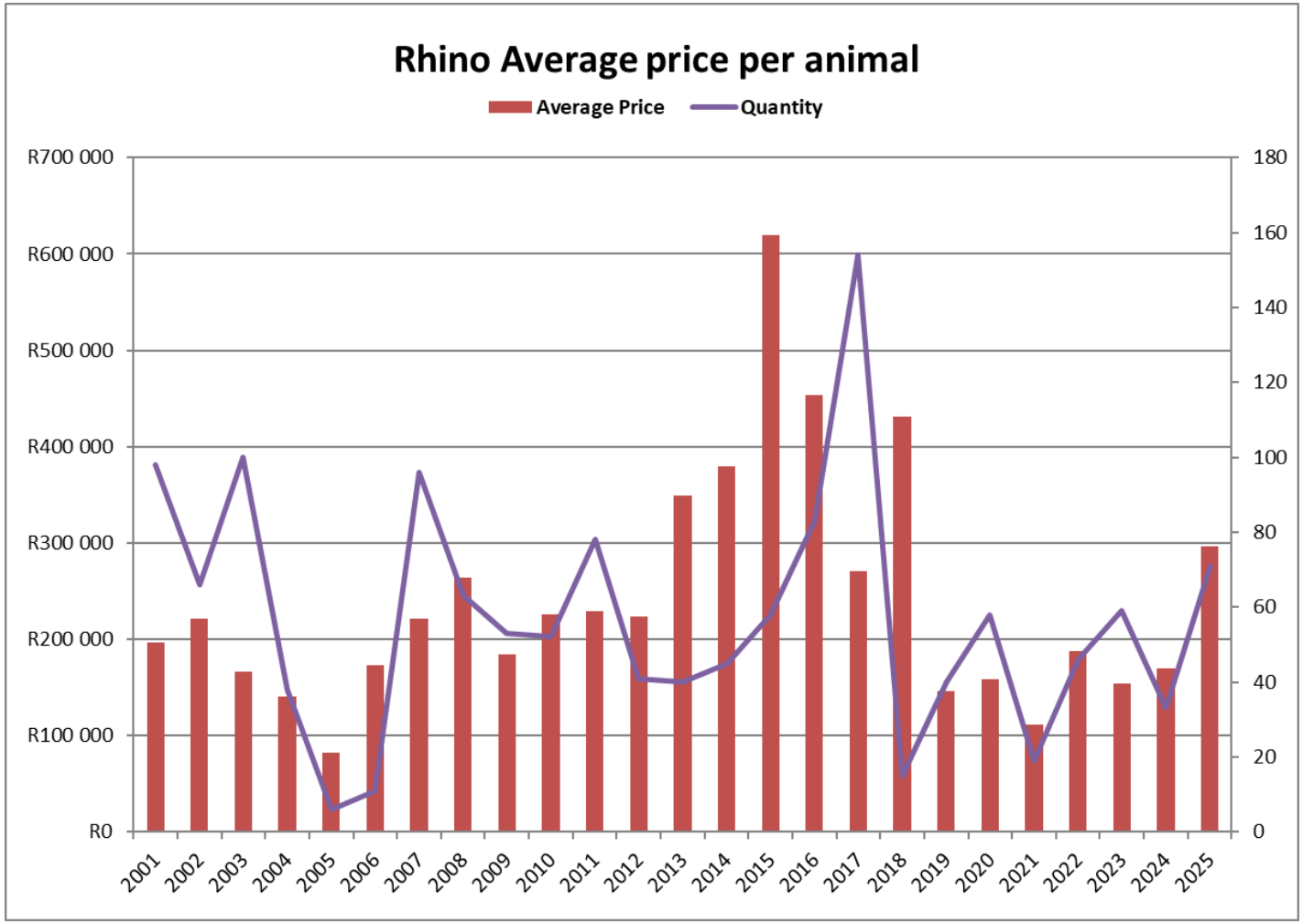
Rhino Data and Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Rhino dataset captures one of the **most volatile and emotionally charged** trajectories in the wildlife economy. Unlike most plains or rare-game species, Rhino values have been shaped not only by breeding cycles and market sentiment, but also by **poaching pressures, security costs, conservation policy, macroeconomic shocks and global trade dynamics**.

The table and graph reflect this complexity clearly: long stretches of firm pricing, deep contractions during uncertainty, sudden spikes during investment waves and eventual stabilisation followed by pockets of renewed optimism. The visual narrative is unmistakable—**prices rise and fall in large, sweeping arcs**, while quantities move in response to both breeding success and the external realities of rhino protection. What follows is an exploration of how each era shaped this species' commercial journey.

Rhino			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R19 261 983	98	R196 551
2002	R14 617 050	66	R221 470
2003	R16 604 355	100	R166 044
2004	R5 334 500	38	R140 382
2005	R490 500	6	R81 750
2006	R1 906 500	11	R173 318
2007	R21 238 000	96	R221 229
2008	R16 654 000	63	R264 349
2009	R9 787 500	53	R184 670
2010	R11 759 000	52	R226 135
2011	R17 828 500	78	R228 571
2012	R9 170 000	41	R223 659
2013	R13 950 000	40	R348 750
2014	R17 093 000	45	R379 844
2015	R35 910 000	58	R619 138
2016	R37 660 000	83	R453 735
2017	R41 760 000	154	R271 169
2018	R6 457 500	15	R430 500
2019	R5 864 000	40	R146 600
2020	R9 175 000	58	R158 190
2021	R2 110 000	19	R111 053
2022	R8 645 000	46	R187 935
2023	R9 110 000	59	R154 407
2024	R5 590 500	33	R169 409
2025	R21 075 000	71	R296 831



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Rhino Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Market Establishment and Sensitivity: 2001–2008

Between **2001 and 2008**, the Rhino market experienced wide year-to-year volatility as South Africa's conservation sector grappled with fluctuating poaching intensity and evolving demand from breeding operations. Quantities during this period moved from **98 animals (2001)** to **63 animals (2008)**, while average prices varied from **R81 750 (2005)** to **R264 349 (2008)**.
Notably, **2005** marked the lowest average price of the entire dataset, reflecting a year of minimal trading confidence with only **6 animals** sold. Conversely, **2007–2008** saw renewed optimism—average prices climbed above **R221 000** and quantities returned to stronger levels. This early band demonstrates a market still highly reactive to external pressures, including early poaching escalations and shifting policy debates around horn trade.

Rising Demand, Conservation Investment, and Pre-Boom Volatility: 2009–2013

From **2009 to 2013**, Rhino prices and volumes began rising again, marking a period where private reserves invested heavily in breeding programmes. Average prices moved from **R184 670 (2009)** to **R348 750 (2013)**—an 88.8% increase.
Quantities fluctuated between **52 and 78 animals**, reflecting a cautious but growing willingness by breeders to trade despite poaching threats. Total values aligned with this upward momentum, moving from **R9.78 million (2009)** to **R13.95 million (2013)**.
This band reflects a pre-boom period where Rhino investment gained traction again as landowners expanded fenced reserves and improved anti-poaching infrastructure.

The Investment Peak and Structural Shock: 2014–2017

The years **2014 to 2017** represent the most dramatic era in the Rhino market. Prices escalated from **R379 844 (2014)** to **R619 138 (2015)**—a 63% jump—before moderating to **R453 735 (2016)** and then falling to **R271 169 (2017)**.
Quantities, however, increased sharply, especially in **2017**, which saw **154 animals** sold—the highest in the 25-year record.
Total values surged as well, hitting **R41.76 million (2017)** despite the declining average price.

This period aligns with:

- aggressive expansion by private Rhino custodians;
- rising optimism around potential legal trade frameworks;
- large-scale restructuring of Rhino portfolios by major breeders;
- and heightened poaching pressure forcing some to liquidate stock.

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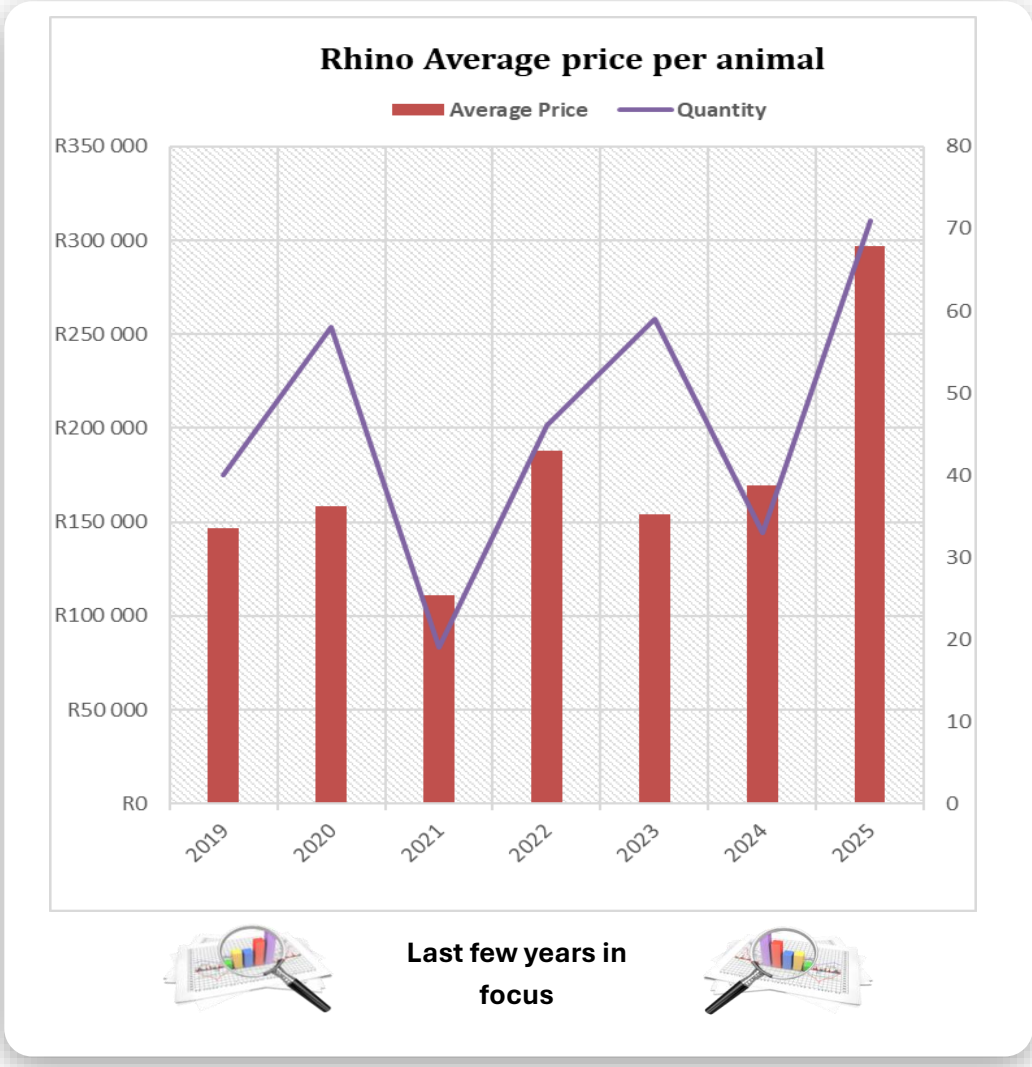
The graph clearly shows the towering price spike of **2015**, followed by the very steep volume spike of **2017**, reflecting both **investment speculation** and **risk-driven offloading**.

Post-Boom Collapse, COVID Impact, and Recovery Flickers: 2018–2024

Between **2018 and 2021**, the Rhino market underwent a severe contraction. Prices declined from **R430 500 (2018)** to **R111 053 (2021)**—a 74% fall—and quantities dropped from **15 animals (2018)** to **19 animals (2021)**, showing both supply withdrawal and weakened demand.
COVID-19 compounded this decline.

Tourism revenues collapsed, anti-poaching budgets were squeezed, and breeding programmes became financially strained. Many Rhino owners held onto their animals rather than trade at distressed prices.

From **2022 to 2024**, the market began stabilising. Prices climbed back to **R187 935 (2022)**, softened slightly to **R154 407 (2023)**, and then lifted again to **R169 409 (2024)**. Quantities also strengthened, moving from **46 (2022)** to **59 (2023)** and settling at **33 (2024)**.
This band reflects an industry regaining balance, with regulated permits improving, international hunting recovering, and breeders selectively releasing animals into the market.



2025 vs 2024 — A Significant Price Rebound Driven by Sharper Demand

The transition from **2024 to 2025** marks one of the most striking shifts in the modern Rhino market. Average price rose sharply from **R169 409 (2024)** to **R296 831 (2025)**—a **75% increase**. At the same time, quantity more than doubled from **33 animals (2024)** to **71 animals (2025)**.

This dual movement shows that **rising prices were not caused by scarcity alone**, but by a significant strengthening of demand.

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The market in 2025 exhibited clear signs of renewed confidence:

- buyers competed for high-quality Rhino in response to stabilising poaching trends;
- eco-tourism recovery improved reserve budgets;
- and several breeders re-entered the market after years of holding stock.

Total value surged from **R5.59 million (2024)** to **R21.07 million (2025)**, demonstrating the combined effect of higher volumes and dramatically higher prices.

Most importantly, the price increase despite increased supply signals that 2025 represented a **demand-led recovery**, not a scarcity-driven spike. This is consistent with broader wildlife industry trends in 2025, where top-tier species—Buffalo, Sable, Roan, and Rhino—benefited from intensified buy-back programmes, stronger foreign interest, and a deeper pivot toward long-term asset conservation strategies. Thus, 2025 stands out as a year where the Rhino market **reclaimed value**, strengthened by improving sentiment and the re-establishment of Rhino as a core economic and ecological species within South Africa's premium wildlife portfolios.

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KUDU

Tragelaphus strepsiceros



SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Tragelaphus*

WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY

- Large antelope with vertical white body stripes, long legs, large ears, and spiral horns in males (48–72 inches). Bulls: 190–280 kg; cows: 120–210 kg.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Savannah, bushveld, mopane woodland, and thicket. Widely distributed across Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and KZN.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Primarily browsers—leaves, shoots, pods, flowers, vines. Seasonal grazing when browse is scarce. Utilises acacia/mopane vegetation extensively.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Cows form small maternal groups; bulls mostly solitary. Crepuscular. Calves hidden for first 1–2 weeks. Bulls join groups during mating season.

ADAPTIONS

- Exceptional camouflage (stripes), acute hearing, powerful jumpers (2.5m+), spiral horns for defense and dominance, ability to switch to grazing in drought.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- IUCN: Least Concern.
- Threats: habitat fragmentation, disease (rabies), and illegal bushmeat hunting. Strong numbers on private game ranches.

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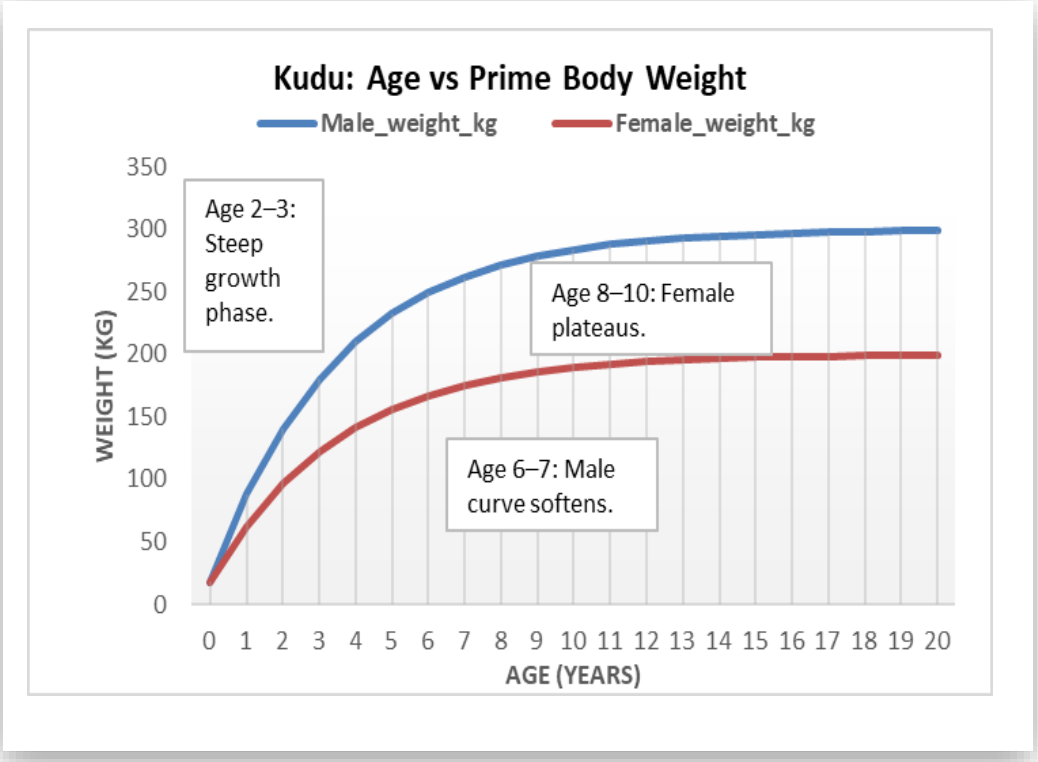
Kudu Specie Information

There is something almost mythical about the kudu—an animal so quietly impressive that it has become a symbol of the South African wild. You often don't hear a kudu before you see it; you simply sense a shift in the bush, a gentle parting of bfarmes and then those long spiral horns appear like carved sculptures rising from the landscape. In South Africa, kudu are found across much of the country's most iconic provinces—**Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal**—graviting toward **savannah, woodland and thicketed valleys** where food, cover and gentle slopes give them the perfect blend of safety and abundance. They thrive particularly in **acacia-rich bushveld**, mopane woodlands and broken kloofs that offer enough cover for their cautious nature.

Their diet is a reflection of their adaptability. Although kudu are mainly **browsers**, feeding on leaves, twigs, shoots, vines and pods, they seamlessly shift to fruits and flowers when seasons demand it. In drought years they will even graze, making use of grass for survival—an important trait for farmers and landowners managing mixed veld and wildlife systems.

The growth of a kudu is a steady unfolding of strength, stature and elegance — a journey that begins with a calf barely **12–16 kilograms** at birth and ends with a fully matured bull often weighing **well over 260 kilograms** and in prime veld even pushing toward **300 kilograms**. In the first year of life, the calf's rapid rise is remarkable: it triples or even quadruples its weight, reaching **35–45 kilograms** as the bones harden and the frame begins to take shape.



By the time a young kudu reaches two to three years old, this early surge becomes a full **steep growth phase**, with males climbing from around **50 kilograms to nearly 200 kilograms**, far outpacing the growth rate of females. Cows, more refined and lighter in build, still show impressive progress, settling around **120–130 kilograms** by age three.

From four to seven years, the kudu's growth becomes more measured and deliberate. Males continue adding mass, though at a softer curve, filling out their shoulders, neck and chest as they approach **250–260 kilograms**. Females plateau earlier, usually stabilising in the **170–190 kilogram** range, their bodies more streamlined yet still powerful.

By eight to ten years, kudu bulls reach their greatest physical authority.

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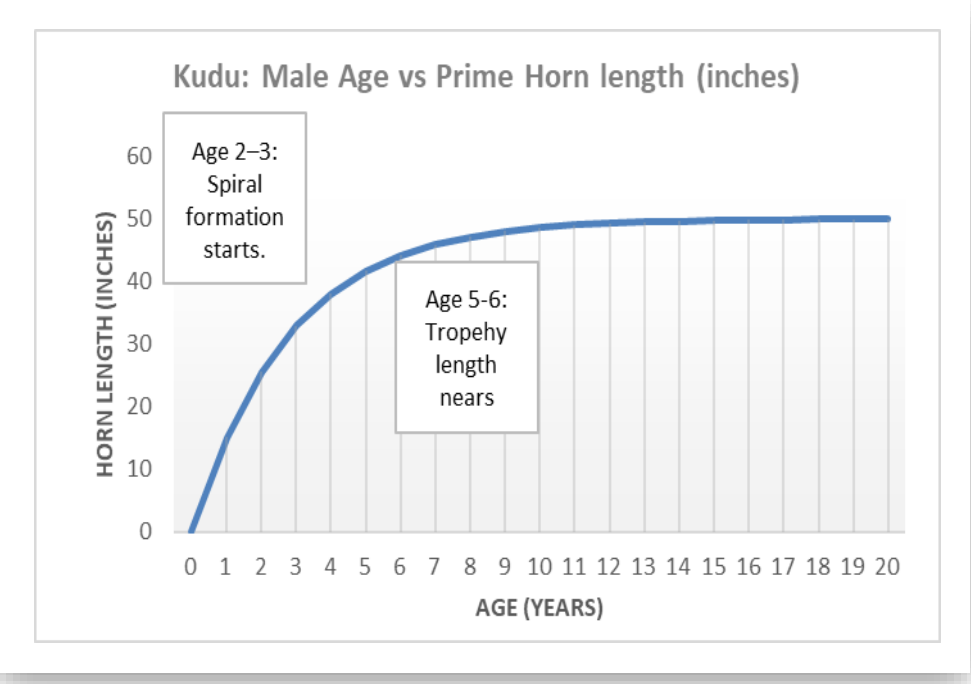
Weight gains slow, but the animal deepens through the chest, gains a broader crest and reveals the unmistakable bearing of maturity. It is in these years that bulls holding prime condition in rich bushveld frequently exceed **270–290 kilograms** and the most exceptional, well-fed individuals pass **300 kilograms**, carrying their mass with surprising quietness and agility.

Yet for kudu, weight is only part of the story. Their horns — long, sweeping spirals that seem almost impossibly elegant for an animal of such size — tell a story of growth no less dramatic.



In the first year, males have no visible horns, only the beginnings of bony cores that push forward beneath the skin. By the end of that year, small spikes emerge, typically only a few inches long, but by **18–24 months** the transformation is undeniable. This is the moment where *the spiral awakens*: the first twist forms and the horns leap forward in length, often reaching **15–20 inches** by age two and **28–32 inches** by age three. This early surge marks the fastest horn-growth period of a kudu's life.

Between the ages of four and six, the horns become not just longer but more expressive. By age four, most bulls have completed their **first full rotation** and by five or six the horns approach the classical trophy benchmarks — **40 to 48 inches by age five** and **50 to 54 inches** by age six. Their form deepens, the curves become bolder and the bases thicken.

This is the stage where horn and body condition rise together, giving the bull a regal, balanced silhouette.
From seven to ten years old, kudu bulls enter their **prime horn phase**, the years in which the sweeping spirals reach their maximum beauty and stature.

Horn lengths of **55–58 inches** become common among mature bulls in strong veld and the exceptional individuals push past **60 inches**, a threshold that has long defined the kudu as one of Africa's most iconic trophy species. Growth slows significantly in this period, but the horns continue to refine: grooves deepen, the curves become more sculpted and the overall presentation becomes more commanding.

After ten years, the horns change more subtly. Growth becomes minimal, often mere fractions of an inch per year and the focus shifts from length to character. Older bulls may carry heavier horn bases, more pronounced ridging, or slight wear at the tips from years of moving through dense bush. These signs of age add a distinctive dignity, marking the bull as an elder of the landscape.
Throughout this entire journey, kudu horns remain more than weaponry; they are displays of lineage, age and authority. Bulls use them in ritualised combat, locking spirals in slow, powerful tests of strength rather than deadly blows. Their sweeping shape magnifies size and presence, helping bulls avoid unnecessary

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confrontation while communicating maturity and dominance across distance. Genetics, nutrition and habitat each leave their signature on the horns — from the tightness of the spiral to the spread, symmetry and tip sharpness.

In every way, from the rise of body mass to the unfurling of those magnificent spirals, the kudu's development reflects a life shaped by patience, power and the quiet drama of the African bush.

Kudu grow into their stature with a kind of **quiet, effortless dignity**, unfolding from slender, wide-eyed calves into the tall, powerful antelope that dominate the upland bushveld and wooded savannahs. Their growth is neither abrupt nor sluggish, but follows a **smooth, graceful arc** shaped by genetics, nutrition and the slow maturity typical of larger antelope. Calves begin life finely built and surprisingly delicate, but the first three years bring a remarkable transformation as they lengthen in frame, broaden through the shoulders and begin to take on the unmistakable silhouette of the species. Bulls surge ahead of females early, adding height and depth at a pace that becomes increasingly pronounced. By the time a bull reaches five or six years of age, his body has **settled into balance** — the neck thickens, the chest deepens and the muscles along the spine develop that proud, crested line that signals a kudu entering its strength.

From this stage onward, growth becomes more subtle but no less meaningful. Bulls continue to add **slow, deliberate mass**, giving them a heavier presence and a certain gravity that only age can bring. Cows settle into a more streamlined profile suited to mobility and calf-rearing, their bodies built for efficiency rather than dominance. By eight to ten years, kudu have reached their **full physical expression**, with bulls carrying a depth of chest, a breadth of frame and a richness of muscle tone that only time and good veld can produce. Older bulls often move more slowly, but with an unmistakable authority — the composure of animals that have weathered droughts, ruts and the shifting seasons of their home ranges.

Their social world is as fluid and gentle as their movement through the landscape. Kudu do not form rigid herds; instead they gather in loose, drifting associations that change with season, forage availability and breeding cycles. Females and calves form the **quiet heart of these groups**, moving together in a relaxed cohesion that offers both company and security. Young bulls hover on the fringes, sometimes joining family groups, sometimes slipping away to wander alone or form small bachelor clusters where they test their growing strength through sparring and posturing. Mature bulls become increasingly solitary, moving widely across the landscape and approaching female groups only during the breeding season, when their presence acquires a more focused purpose.

Despite their size, kudu are **remarkably peaceful** animals. Dominance is expressed not through violent confrontation but through posture, horn display and a calm confidence that carries more weight than aggression. Ritualised sparring replaces dangerous conflict; bulls lock their spirals in slow, powerful engagements that are far more about assessing strength and status than inflicting harm. This deliberate, almost ceremonial behaviour reflects a species shaped by caution, awareness and an instinctive respect for energy conservation.

Their social behaviour is intimately tied to the landscape in which they live. Dense bush offers concealment, open patches provide forage and seasonal movements guide different groups toward shared browsing lines, water sources, or safe resting sites. Through all these rhythms, kudu maintain a balance between **connection and independence**, forming a society that is fluid, subtle and deeply attuned to the shifting character of the African bush.

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Kudu Variant Matrix:

Variant / Type	Region / Origin	Colouration / Morphology	Horn Characteristics	Notes / Distinguishing Features
Southern Greater Kudu (Tragelaphus strepsiceros strepsiceros)	South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe	Classic grey-brown coat with white stripes; tall and long-legged	Long spirals, often 45–60+ inches in prime bulls	Main form found across South Africa; cornerstone of wildlife farming and hunting sector
Eastern Greater Kudu (T. s. chora)	Ethiopia, South Sudan	Slightly darker coat; fewer body stripes	Narrower spirals; typically shorter horn length	Not present in South Africa; included for species-group context
Northern Greater Kudu (T. s. cottoni)	Chad, Sudan	Lightest coat; minimal striping	Moderate horn length; less flaring in terminal twist	Critically rare; geographic variant outside SA
Cape Kudu (Phenotypic variation)	Eastern & Southern South Africa	Slightly richer, darker coat tones in some populations	Standard spirals	Phenotype influenced by regional vegetation; not a separate subspecies
Light-Grey Kudu (Colour variant)	Occasional SA populations	Pale grey dilution of standard coat	Standard spiral development	Aesthetic variant; natural but uncommon
Dark-Chocolate Kudu (Colour variant)	Isolated SA herds	Deepened pigment, more saturated brown-grey hue	Standard horns with pronounced contrast	Selected by some breeders for visual appeal

Fascinating Insights on the Kudu:

- Kudu, commonly referred to as the ghost of the bushveld, can clear **2.5-metre fences** from a standstill—one of Africa's greatest natural jumpers.
- The spiraling horns act as both **defence and display** and also as a cooling mechanism due to blood flow along the horn core.
- Kudu calves hide for **up to two weeks**, moving only when their mothers return to nurse.
- Old bulls are often called **"dagga bulls"** for their solitary, mud-coated, rugged appearance.
- The kudu's stripes are not random—they break up the body outline in dappled light, making them almost invisible at a few metres.
- Bulls only reach full horn potential at **6–7 years**, unlike many other species which peak much earlier.
- Kudu bulls produce a deep, resonant "**grunting bark**" during the rut — a vocalisation that can carry surprisingly far and is often mistaken for a predator by inexperienced guides.
- Their large, swivelling ears provide **exceptional directional hearing**, allowing kudu to pinpoint the faintest movements even in dense bushveld where visibility is limited.

"Kudu are a cornerstone of the South African wildlife industry — a visually iconic, high-value species that strengthens tourism appeal, supports hunting revenue and maintains ecological balance across bushveld landscapes."

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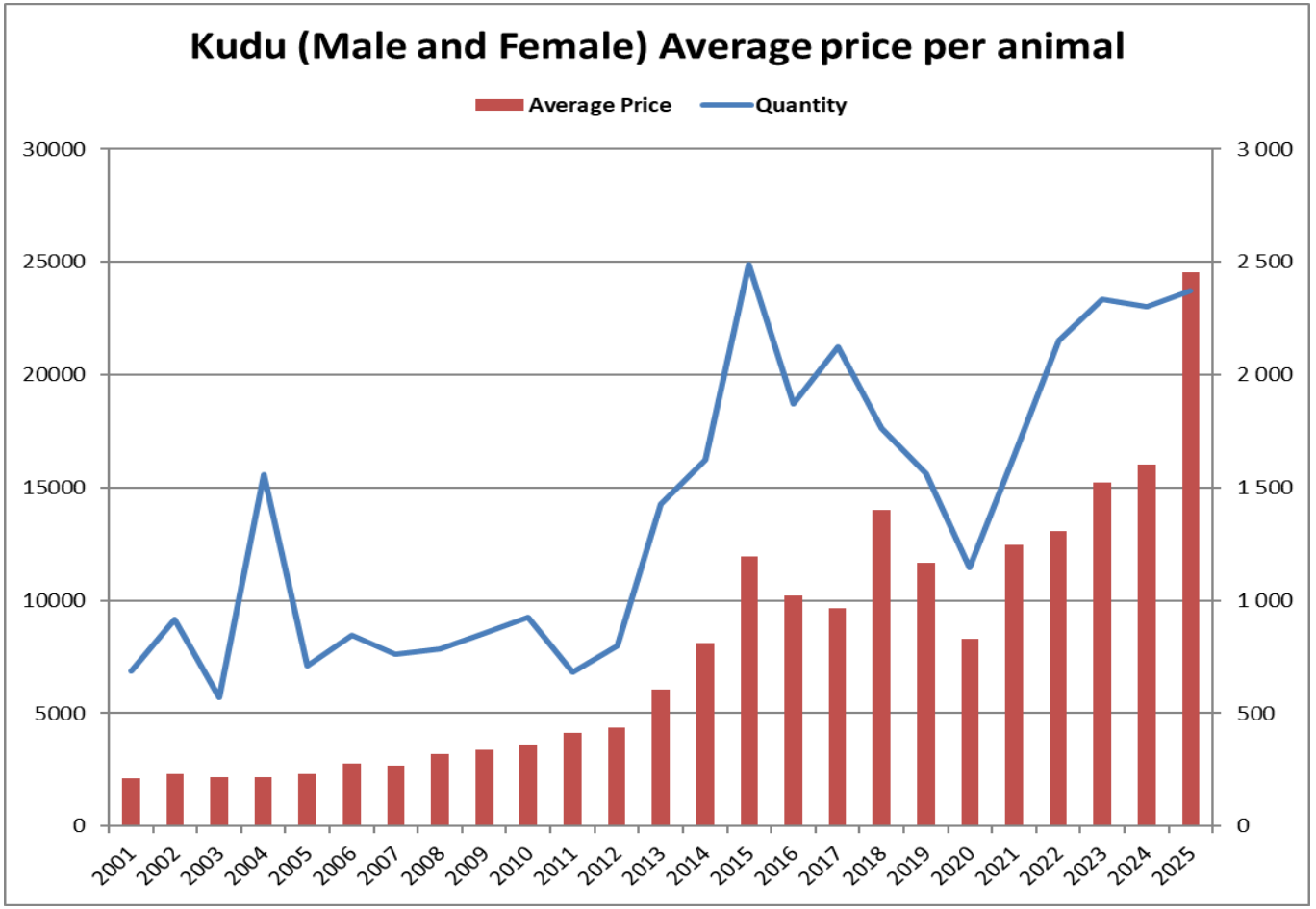
Kudu Male and Female Data and Graphs: 2021 to 2025

The Kudu dataset offers a **sweeping, long-term narrative** of one of South Africa's most economically influential plains-game species. The table and graph together reveal a market characterised by **large volumes**, steady demand across hunting and live-sale channels and multi-year pricing cycles influenced by droughts, veld conditions, macro-economic shifts and periodic surges in restocking activity.

The visuals reflect this clearly: quantities rise and fall as ecological conditions change, while prices build gradually over two decades before lifting more sharply in recent years. What emerges is a picture of a species that is both **resilient and highly responsive** to broader industry dynamics.

Total Kudu (Male and Female)			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 439 914	686	R2 099
2002	R2 100 886	915	R2 296
2003	R1 231 508	568	R2 168
2004	R3 346 475	1 560	R2 145
2005	R1 638 400	709	R2 311
2006	R2 329 525	845	R2 757
2007	R2 024 000	760	R2 663
2008	R2 504 050	784	R3 194
2009	R2 916 650	857	R3 403
2010	R3 340 100	927	R3 603
2011	R2 807 095	681	R4 122
2012	R3 483 150	801	R4 349
2013	R8 603 250	1 427	R6 029
2014	R13 208 500	1 625	R8 128
2015	R29 712 805	2 490	R11 933
2016	R19 132 338	1 870	R10 231
2017	R20 507 877	2 122	R9 664
2018	R24 668 957	1 763	R13 993
2019	R18 229 900	1 563	R11 663
2020	R9 499 895	1 144	R8 304
2021	R20 466 050	1 643	R12 457
2022	R28 162 265	2 154	R13 074
2023	R35 484 250	2 334	R15 203
2024	R36 876 450	2 300	R16 033
2025	R58 245 550	2 372	R24 555



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Kudu Male and Female Insights: 2021 to 2025

Early Growth and Market Stabilisation: 2001–2008

From **2001 to 2008**, Kudu steadily built market presence. Quantities increased from **686 animals (2001)** to **784 animals (2008)**, while average prices rose from **R2 099 (2001)** to **R3 194 (2008)**. Total value followed this upward progression, moving from **R1.44 million (2001)** to **R2.50 million (2008)**.

This period highlighted Kudu's position as a fundamental plains-game species, favoured for trophy hunting, venison, and ecological compatibility across regions. Supply grew as herds expanded in well-managed reserves, and the dataset reflects a species becoming more economically reliable year by year.



Strengthening Demand and Escalation Toward a New Market Plateau: 2009–2014

Between **2009 and 2014**, the species experienced accelerated demand. Average prices increased from **R3 403 (2009)** to **R8 128 (2014)**—a 138.9% increase. Quantities also rose from **857 (2009)** to **1 625 (2014)**.

Total value responded dramatically, climbing from **R2.92 million (2009)** to **R13.21 million (2014)**.

This band is characterised by improved genetics, increased trophy tourism, and a broader recognition of Kudu as a premium plains-game species. The graph shows a clear upward slope as the species entered a new pricing era supported by both domestic and international hunting markets.

Market Surge, Plateau and Realignment: 2015–2019

The years **2015 to 2019** marked Kudu's entry into a high-volume, high-value phase. Average prices ranged from **R11 933 (2015)** to **R13 993 (2018)**, stabilising at a more elevated band than previous decades. Quantities grew aggressively, peaking at **2 490 animals (2015)** before oscillating between **1 563 and 2 122 animals** in the following years.

Total values reflected this growth, with **R29.71 million (2015)** and **R24.67 million (2018)** showcasing the commercial weight Kudu had gained.

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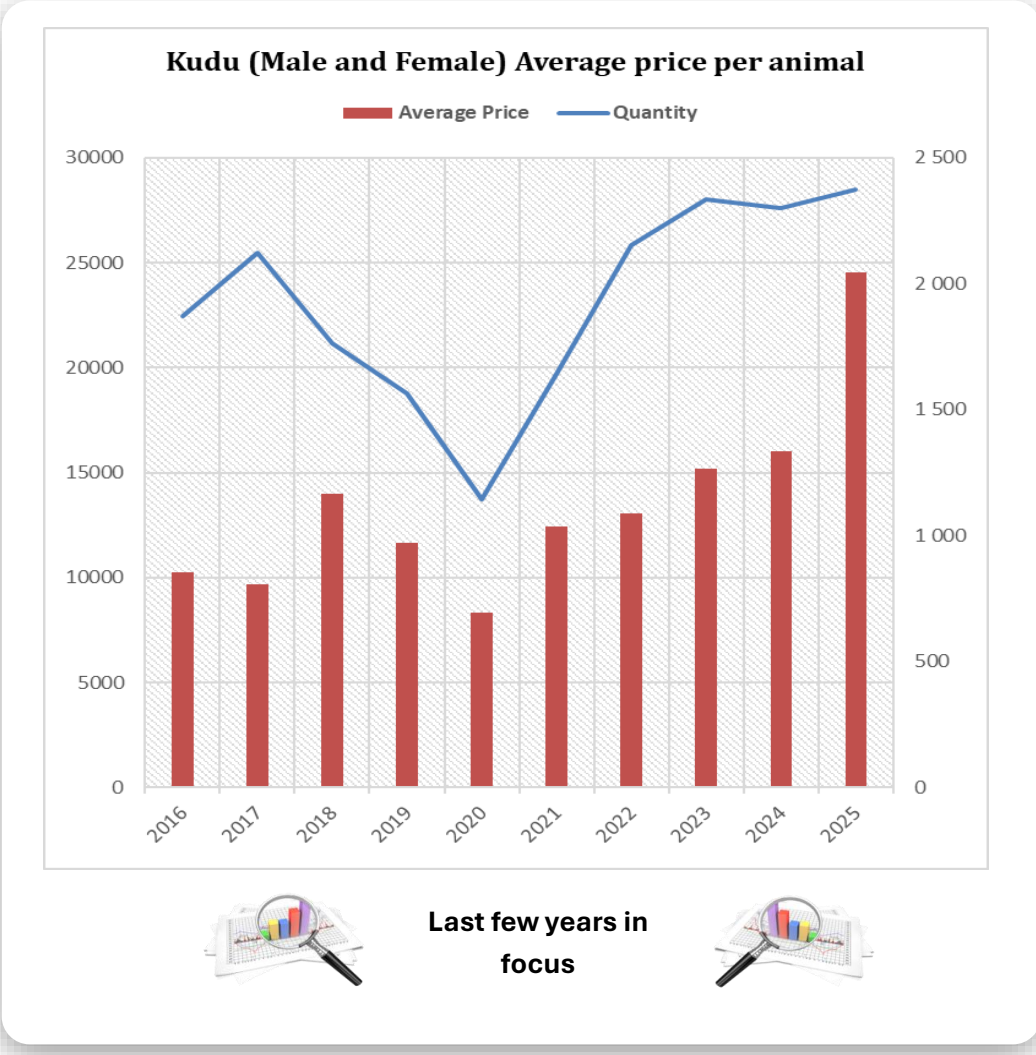
This band aligns with the expansion of Kudu hunting demand, diversification of land-use models, and increased professional breeding programs. Kudu became a **cornerstone of plains-game revenue**, and the market reached a mature, structurally stable price level.

COVID Contraction and Post-Pandemic Recovery: 2020–2024

Between **2020 and 2021**, COVID-19 disrupted tourism and reduced hunting activity, reflected in the decline of total value from **R9.49 million (2020)** to **R20.47 million (2021)** but with softer pricing in 2020 at **R8 304**. Quantity in 2020 dropped to **1 144 animals**, the lowest since 2008, before recovering strongly to **1 643 animals (2021)**.
From **2022 to 2024**, Kudu recovered convincingly.

Average price climbed from **R13 074 (2022)** to **R16 033 (2024)**, while quantities rose from **2 154 animals (2022)** to **2 300 animals (2024)**.

Total value surged from **R28.16 million (2022)** to **R36.88 million (2024)**, signalling both stabilising tourism and a renewed focus on high-quality plains-game supply. The graph shows this rebound clearly as price bars rise while volume holds firm, illustrating Kudu's resilience even when broader economic pressures were still being felt.



2025 vs 2024 — A Major Price Lift Amid Subtle Supply Growth

The shift from **2024 to 2025** marked one of the strongest pricing movements in the modern Kudu market. Average price increased from **R16 033 (2024)** to **R24 555 (2025)**—a **52.99% escalation**, one of the largest single-year jumps in the series.
Importantly, quantity moved only marginally, from **2 300 animals (2024)** to **2 372 animals (2025)**, an increase of just **3.1%**.
This combination of a substantial price increase with nearly flat supply strongly indicates **demand-driven tightening**.

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Buyers were clearly willing to pay significantly more for the same volume of animals, suggesting that premium bulls, superior genetic lines, and high-condition females were in short supply relative to market appetite.

Total value rose sharply from **R36.88 million (2024)** to **R58.25 million (2025)**, reflecting both the price surge and modest volume expansion. Across the industry, 2025 was characterised by intensified trophy-hunting demand, strengthened international participation, and an increased focus on Kudu as a **high-yield, ecologically versatile plains-game asset**.

Thus **2025** stands as a year where Kudu moved decisively into a **higher-value tier**, driven not by scarcity of volume but by scarcity of premium quality, improved market confidence, and the continued elevation of Kudu as a flagship plains-game species across South Africa's wildlife economy.

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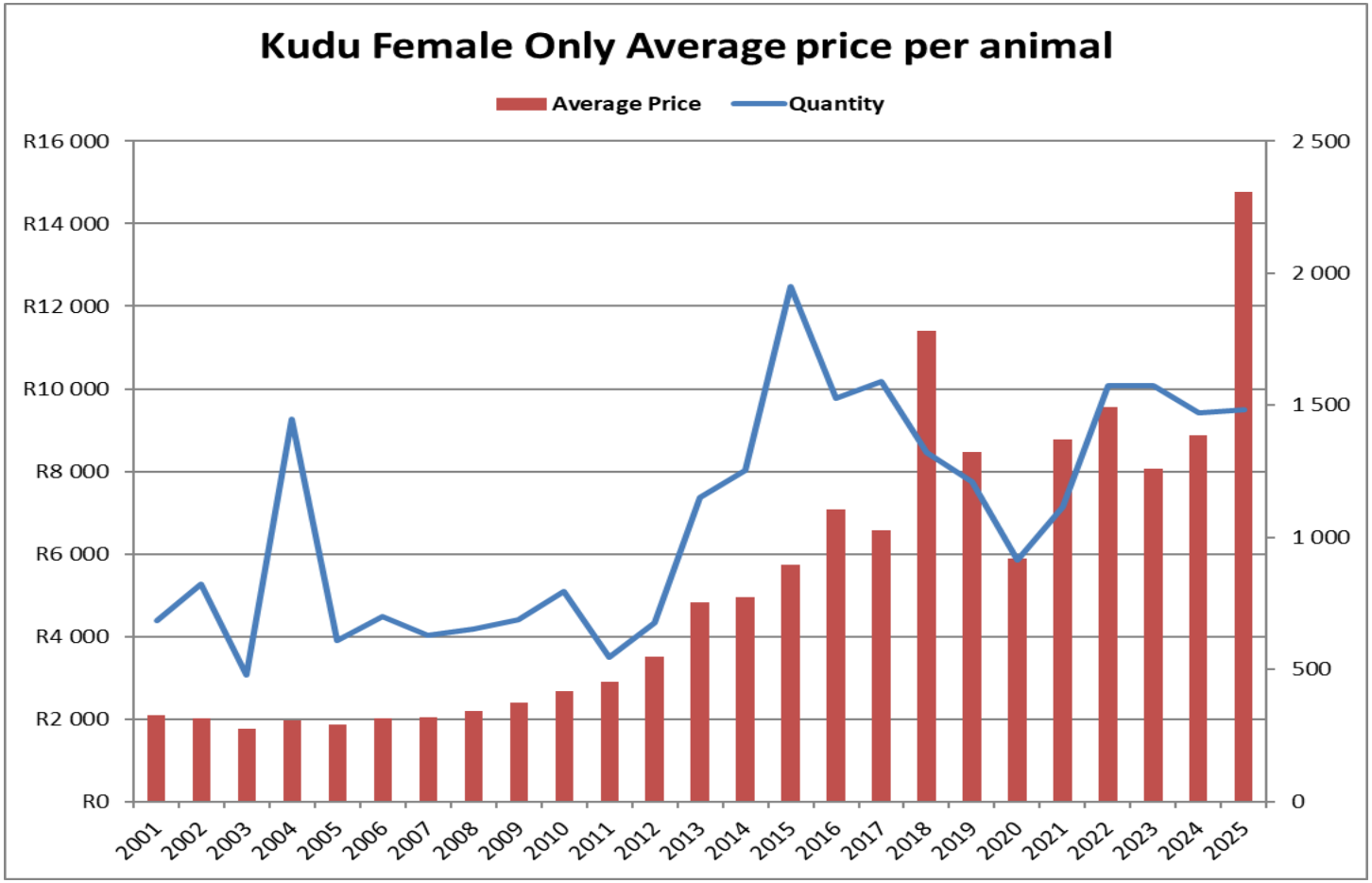
Kudu Female only Data and Graphs: 2021 to 2025

The Kudu female dataset tells a **long, steady and deeply instructive story** about how reproductive foundation stock responds to shifting ecological and economic landscapes. Unlike bulls, where trophy dynamics shape peaks and dips, Kudu cows tend to reflect **true herd-building value**, veld carrying capacity, long-term breeding strategies and the broader currents of supply and demand. The graph and table make this very clear—prices grow in extended arcs rather than sharp spikes, while quantities move in response to drought cycles, restocking phases and the financial resilience of the wildlife industry. What emerges is a portrait of a species that has been **quietly but consistently building economic strength** across two decades.

Kudu Female Only			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 439 914	686	R2 099
2002	R1 659 536	824	R2 014
2003	R844 148	478	R1 766
2004	R2 823 175	1 447	R1 951
2005	R1 139 450	608	R1 874
2006	R1 404 575	699	R2 009
2007	R1 275 400	628	R2 031
2008	R1 431 300	652	R2 195
2009	R1 641 950	688	R2 387
2010	R2 121 400	794	R2 672
2011	R1 585 925	546	R2 905
2012	R2 375 250	675	R3 519
2013	R5 571 800	1 153	R4 832
2014	R6 218 950	1 254	R4 959
2015	R11 214 245	1 952	R5 745
2016	R10 811 354	1 528	R7 075
2017	R10 477 471	1 592	R6 581
2018	R15 088 507	1 322	R11 413
2019	R10 271 150	1 212	R8 475
2020	R5 362 600	912	R5 880
2021	R9 763 100	1 114	R8 764
2022	R15 079 865	1 576	R9 568
2023	R12 686 350	1 575	R8 055
2024	R13 068 550	1 473	R8 872
2025	R21 892 250	1 482	R14 772



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Kudu Female only Insights: 2021 to 2025

Early Stability and Foundational Growth: 2001–2008

Between **2001 and 2008**, the Kudu female market experienced quiet but steady development. Quantities increased from **686 animals (2001)** to **652 animals (2008)**, with some fluctuation but consistent activity. Average prices rose gently from **R2 099 (2001)** to **R2 195 (2008)**, reflecting stable demand aligned to ecological stocking rates and hunting requirements.
Total value moved between **R1.14 million (2005)** and **R2.82 million (2004)**, signalling a market rooted in dependable plains-game trade rather than speculative investment. This period laid the foundation for the long-term rise in the commercial relevance of Kudu females.

2. Momentum Building and Market Lift: 2009–2014

From **2009 to 2014**, the Kudu female market strengthened more notably. Average prices increased from **R2 387 (2009)** to **R4 959 (2014)**—a 107.9% increase. Quantities expanded from **688 animals (2009)** to **1 254 (2014)**.
This price and supply expansion was supported by increasing demand from ecotourism-based reserves, mixed-game breeding systems, and consistent trophy demand for well-developed Kudu populations. Total value rose from **R1.64 million (2009)** to **R6.22 million (2014)** as the species moved into a more commercially recognised category.
The graph reflects this strengthening clearly as average prices begin their steady climb and quantities hold firm, demonstrating the growing strategic importance of female Kudu to breeders.

3. Commercial Maturity and Cyclical Adjustments: 2015–2019

The years **2015 to 2019** marked a period of high-volume commerce and maturing demand. Average prices increased from **R5 745 (2015)** to **R11 413 (2018)** before moderating to **R8 475 (2019)**. Quantities ranged from **1 952 animals (2015)** to **1 212 animals (2019)**.
This band captured the industry's broader expansion phase, where many reserves increased breeding capacity and improved genetic diversity. In **2018**, the significant rise to **R11 413** illustrated the premium placed on female-driven herd expansion.
By 2019, macroeconomic pressures—including drought impacts and cost escalations—began moderating demand, softened further by the upcoming global uncertainty.

4. COVID Shock, Quick Recovery, and Market Rebalancing: 2020–2024

Between **2020 and 2021**, COVID-19 disrupted tourism and hunting activity. Average price declined from **R5 880 (2020)** to **R8 764 (2021)**, while quantities moved from **912 (2020)** to **1 114 (2021)**. Even in these challenging years, Kudu females remained fundamentally resilient.
From **2022 to 2024**, recovery was visible. Prices rebounded to **R9 568 (2022)** before moderating to **R8 055 (2023)** and rising again to **R8 872 (2024)**. Quantities remained consistently strong, moving between **1 473 and 1 576**.

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This period reflected an industry regaining confidence, with breeders stabilising herds and international hunting activity returning. The graph captures this renewed balance as prices lift while supply remains comfortably strong.

2025 vs 2024 — A Major Price Surge Driven by Quality Scarcity

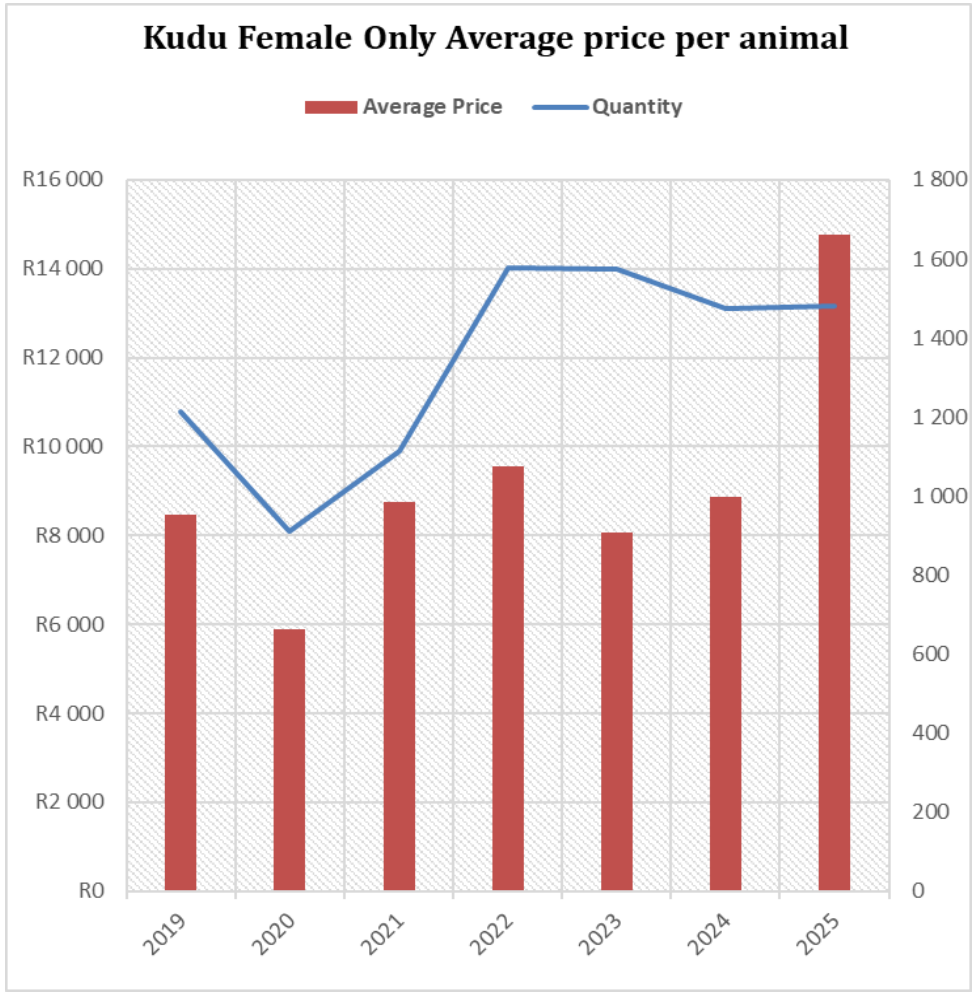
The comparison between **2025 and 2024** reveals one of the most significant pricing shifts in the female Kudu market. Average price leapt from **R8 872 (2024)** to **R14 772 (2025)**—a **66.53% increase**. Yet quantity remained nearly flat, moving only from **1 473 animals (2024)** to **1 482 animals (2025)**, an increase of just **0.6%**.

This contrast is critical: the price surge was not quantity-driven—it was **quality and scarcity driven**.

Breeders clearly competed for better-condition females and stronger genetic lines, resulting in sharply higher prices despite essentially unchanged supply. Total value rose from **R13.07 million (2024)** to **R21.89 million (2025)**, driven overwhelmingly by this uplift in average price.

In the broader wildlife industry, 2025 was marked by a deeper return of international hunting, expansion of high-value plains-game markets, and a renewed focus on long-term breeding resilience. For Kudu in particular, the rising emphasis on producing premium bulls indirectly increased demand for superior females. This lifted the market into a new value tier.

Thus, **2025** stands out as a year where Kudu females **reasserted their strategic importance**, with price movements reflecting a shortage of premium animals rather than a shortage of total animals—a sign of a market maturing, refining, and rewarding quality more aggressively than volume.



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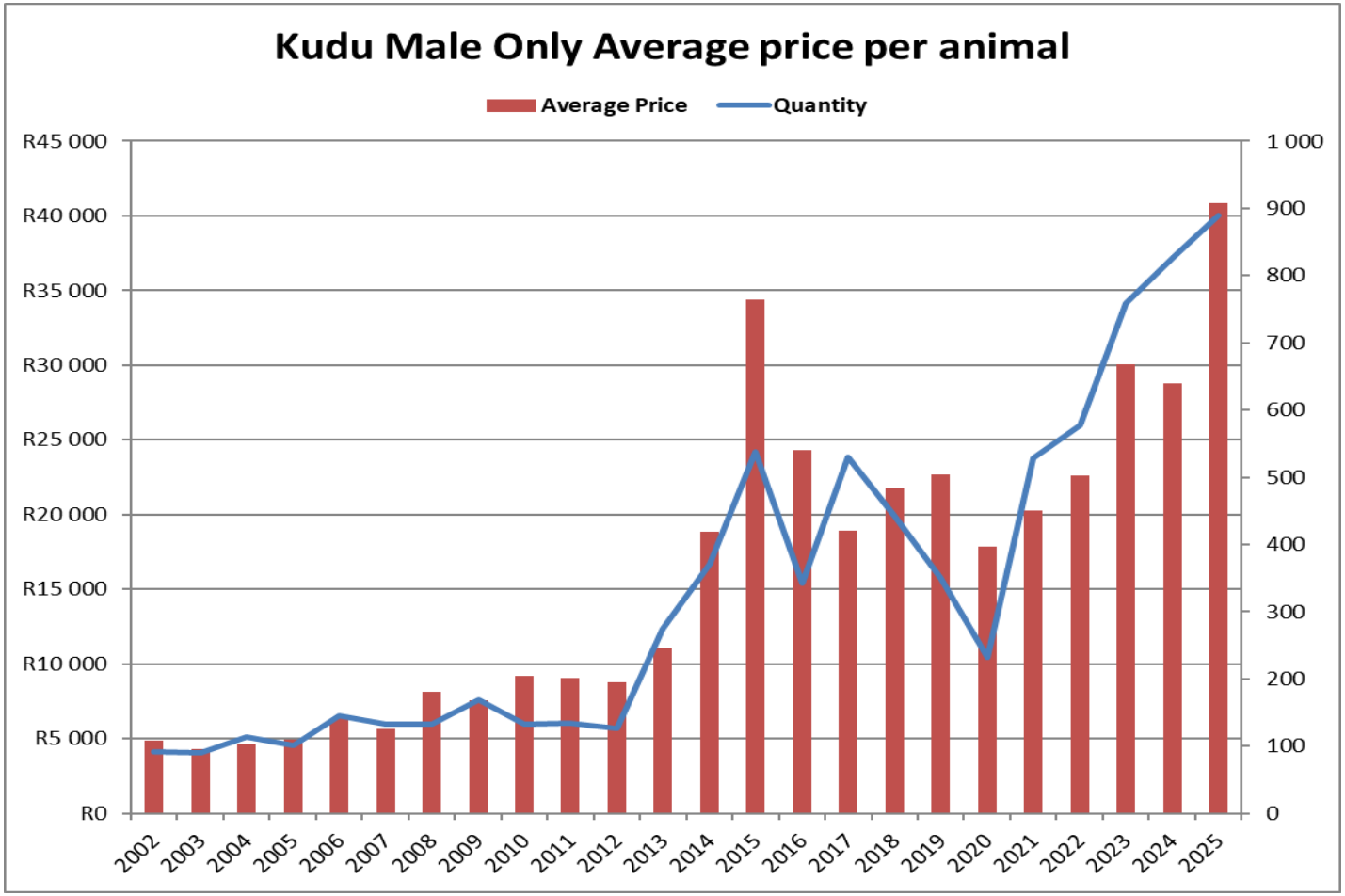
Kudu Male only Data and Graphs: 2021 to 2025

The Kudu male dataset captures the **evolution of one of the most economically influential trophy species** in South Africa's wildlife economy. Unlike females—whose value is tied to long-term reproductive strength—male Kudu respond strongly to hunting demand, trophy quality cycles, rainfall-driven horn development and shifts in foreign hunter participation. The table and graph together present a clear narrative: slow, steady beginnings, a period of sharp escalation as trophy demand surged, a correction influenced by drought and COVID-era liquidity pressures and finally a **powerful modern rebound**. The patterns reveal a species that has become a **pillar of both hunting value and live-auction performance**, consistently climbing into higher-value brackets.

Kudu Male Only			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R0	0	R0
2002	R441 350	91	R4 850
2003	R387 360	90	R4 304
2004	R523 300	113	R4 631
2005	R498 950	101	R4 940
2006	R924 950	146	R6 335
2007	R748 600	132	R5 671
2008	R1 072 750	132	R8 127
2009	R1 274 700	169	R7 543
2010	R1 218 700	133	R9 163
2011	R1 221 170	135	R9 046
2012	R1 107 900	126	R8 793
2013	R3 031 450	274	R11 064
2014	R6 989 550	371	R18 840
2015	R18 498 560	538	R34 384
2016	R8 320 984	342	R24 330
2017	R10 030 407	530	R18 925
2018	R9 580 450	441	R21 724
2019	R7 958 750	351	R22 675
2020	R4 137 295	232	R17 833
2021	R10 702 950	529	R20 232
2022	R13 082 400	578	R22 634
2023	R22 797 900	759	R30 037
2024	R23 807 900	827	R28 788
2025	R36 353 300	890	R40 846



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Kudu Male only Insights: 2021 to 2025

Foundational Years and Slow Market Build-Up: 2002–2008

(The year **2001** reflects no trading activity and therefore serves as a baseline rather than an active datapoint.)
From **2002 to 2008**, the Kudu male market grew gradually from smaller base prices and modest trading volumes. Average prices increased from **R4 850 (2002)** to **R8 127 (2008)**, while quantities moved from **91 animals (2002)** to **132 animals (2008)**.
These early years reflected a market still establishing its commercial rhythm, with genetic quality and trophy demand slowly lifting the value of bulls. Despite moderate fluctuations, the trajectory already pointed toward growing recognition of the male Kudu's economic and hunting value.

Strengthened Demand and Pre-Boom Escalation: 2009–2014

Between **2009 and 2014**, male Kudu moved into a stronger pricing era. Average prices rose from **R7 543 (2009)** to **R18 840 (2014)**, while quantities increased from **169 animals (2009)** to **371 animals (2014)**.
Total value surged from **R1.27 million (2009)** to **R6.99 million (2014)**.
This band reflects increasing trophy demand, improvements in bull genetics, and broader commercialisation of plains-game operations across South Africa. The graph shows a clear upward lift in price bars as males became a higher-value asset within mixed-game reserves and hunting-driven models.

The High-Value Surge and Subsequent Market Realignment: 2015–2019

The years **2015 to 2019** marked a dramatic uplift in the male Kudu market. Prices jumped from **R34 384 (2015)** to **R24 330 (2016)** and remained elevated between **R18 925 (2017)** and **R22 675 (2019)**.
Quantities also expanded strongly, from **538 animals (2015)** to **351–530 animals** across the band.
This period signalled both a maturation and a recalibration of demand. In **2015**, the market reached a striking price peak, with total value at **R18.49 million**, before moderating into a more sustainable tier. The graph captures this exceptionally sharp price spike in 2015, reflecting competitive demand for trophy bulls in a hunting market that was booming at the time.

COVID Pressure and the Rebound Phase: 2020–2024

The onset of COVID-19 brought immediate pricing pressure. Average price fell to **R17 833 (2020)** while quantities dropped to **232 animals**, one of the lowest activity points since 2008.

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However, the recovery was swift:

- **2021** saw prices rebound to **R20 232** with a major jump in sales to **529 animals**.
- **2022 and 2023** accelerated this recovery, with prices rising to **R22 634** and **R30 037**, while quantities increased to **578** and **759 animals** respectively.
- By **2024**, average price held at **R28 788**, with quantities further increasing to **827 animals**.

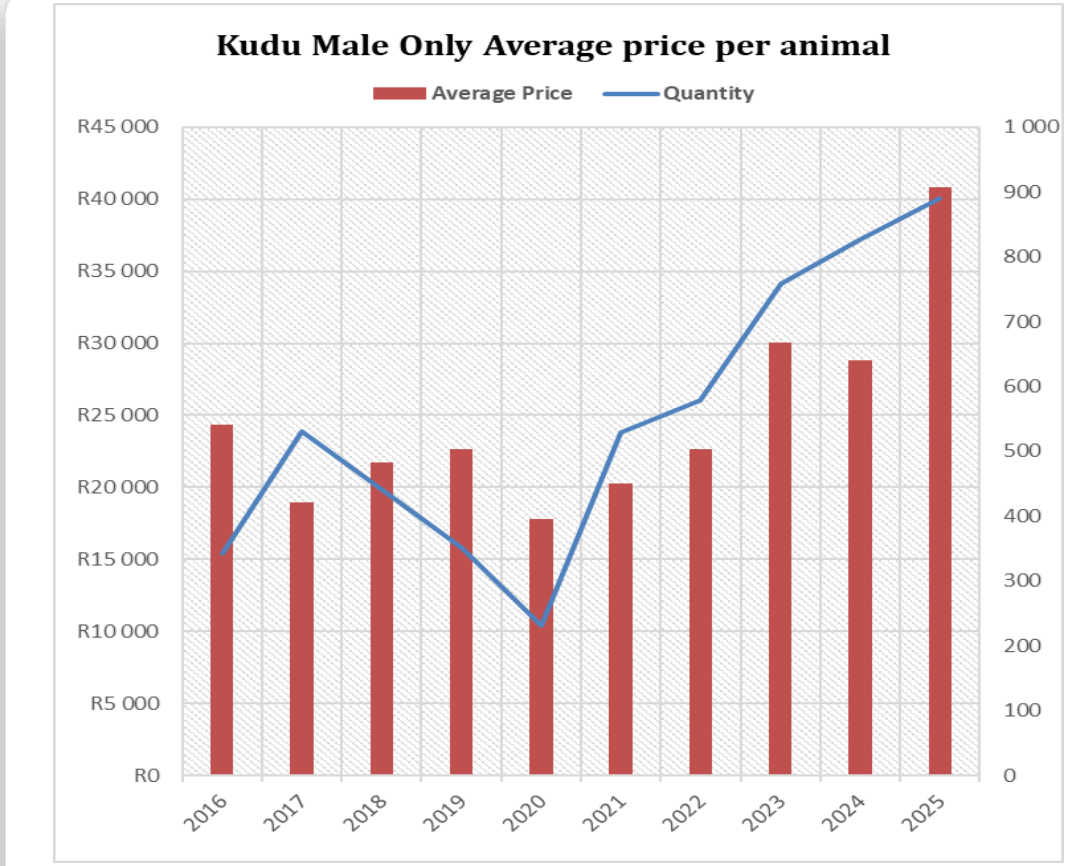
This phase captured the reopening of international hunting, renewed confidence in plains-game sectors, and the return of stronger purchasing competition, particularly for larger bulls with robust horn structure. The graph shows this recovery clearly: a deep dip in 2020 followed by a surge into new highs.

2025 vs 2024 — A Sharp Price Rise Driven by Tightening Quality and Continued Demand

The year **2025** marks a further significant escalation in the male Kudu market. Average price increased from **R28 788 (2024)** to **R40 846 (2025)**—a **41.9% uplift**. Quantity increased only moderately from **827 animals (2024)** to **890 animals (2025)**, a rise of just **7.6%**.

This contrast is crucial:
the strong price increase cannot be explained by growth in supply—instead, it points directly to **heightened competition for quality males**.

The market in 2025 placed a premium on genetically strong, mature bulls as ranches sought to enhance trophy lines, increase genetic diversity, and strengthen ecotourism offerings.



Last few years in focus

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With only marginal increases in total animals sold, the steep rise in price indicates that exceptional bulls were particularly scarce relative to buyer appetite.

Total value surged from **R23.80 million (2024)** to **R36.35 million (2025)**, driven far more by price strength than by quantity growth. This reinforces a market dynamic where **quality scarcity**, not volume scarcity, was the defining theme. Industry-wide in 2025, plains-game markets saw strong demand from international hunters and local reserves repositioning themselves after years of rebalancing. Male Kudu—already a premier trophy species—benefited more than most, and the data shows the species entering a new upper pricing tier.

Thus, **2025** stands as a year of **value acceleration**, underpinned by rising demand for top-tier trophies, stabilised herd management structures, and ongoing competition for exceptional bulls—a market environment where quality, once again, commanded a clear premium.

The first table on the right shows a market that remained highly liquid in both years, with the bulk of bulls still falling into the "inches not specified" category.

Even here, subtle but meaningful shifts emerged as the average value strengthened from **R25 236 in 2024** to **R32 116 in 2025**, suggesting that buyers were bidding more confidently across undefined-weighted groups, often when horn data was incomplete or bulls were sold in mixed lots.

Younger animals displayed a mixed picture, with sub-adult prices firming from **R16 633** to **R20 806**, while young bulls softened from **R19 667** to **R13 000**.

Kudu Bulls Pricing by Inches Sold

	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bull : inches not specified	595	R25 236	576	R32 116
Bull : Sub-Adult	30	R16 633	18	R20 806
Bull : Young	9	R19 667	10	R13 000
Bull : Hunting	0	R0	2	R100 000
Bull : Breeding	5	R21 600	0	R0
Bull : less than 45 inches	16	R18 250	55	R26 164
Bull : 45 inches plus	17	R23 235	25	R18 960
Bull : 46 inches plus	19	R31 158	17	R36 500
Bull : 47 inches plus	26	R25 942	17	R37 206
Bull : 48 inches plus	20	R34 700	10	R40 050
Bull : 49 inches plus	11	R30 273	34	R37 965
Bull : 50 inches plus	20	R35 275	32	R46 497
Bull : 51 inches plus	8	R34 750	15	R48 000
Bull : 52 inches plus	11	R39 227	13	R53 731
Bull : 53 inches plus	12	R39 917	14	R52 321
Bull : 54 inches plus	9	R44 333	14	R50 036
Bull : 55 inches plus	5	R50 000	7	R64 571
Bull : 56 inches plus	1	R200 000	5	R115 500
Bull : 57 inches plus	2	R145 000	6	R74 167
Bull : 58 inches plus	3	R102 500	7	R155 571
Bull : 59 inches plus	2	R100 500	2	R120 000
Bull : 60 inches plus	2	R203 750	2	R485 000
Bull : 61 inches plus	1	R130 000	4	R277 500
Bull : 62 inches plus	2	R232 500	1	R350 000
Bull : 63 inches plus	1	R484 000	4	R680 000

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This divergence spoke to a growing preference for bulls entering maturity rather than younger stock, particularly as breeders sought predictable horn trajectories that could be monetised within two to three seasons. The arrival of **two hunting-class bulls at R100 000** added a small but notable datapoint, demonstrating that trophy-focused buyers remained willing to pay premiums even in a market dominated by commercial turnover.

Horn-defined categories reveal the true structure of the Kudu bull market—**the higher the inches, the sharper and more competitive the pricing environment became**.

Bulls measuring **less than 45 inches** experienced one of the most dramatic shifts, moving from **R18 250** in 2024 to **R26 164** in 2025, supported by a surge in quantity from **16** to **55**, an indicator that commercial producers aggressively cleared mid-tier bulls into a rising-price environment.

From the mid-40s through the low-50s, the price landscape broadened. Bulls at **46 inches plus** climbed from **R31 158** to **R36 500**, while the **47-inch class** advanced from **R25 942** to **R37 206**, illustrating how even one additional inch in this middle band could materially shift bidding energy. The **48-inch** and **49-inch** classes performed strongly too, with bulls rising to **R40 050** and **R37 965**, respectively, largely driven by strengthening collector and breeder confidence.

The premium 50-inch classes showcased the heart of the market's escalation. Bulls at **50 inches plus** increased from **R35 275** to **R46 497**, while **51-inch bulls** climbed from **R34 750** to **R48 000** and **52-inch bulls** moved from **R39 227** to **R53 731**—all reflecting a market that saw growing scarcity in this size range, paired with rising demand for top-tier breeding potential.

Beyond 55 inches, rarity takes over and prices began to climb steeply. Bulls at **56 inches plus** jumped from **R200 000** to **R115 500** with a fivefold increase in quantity, showing that even with more bulls on offer, the market still held its value.

The **58-inch** and **59-inch** groups demonstrated further momentum, reaching **R155 571** and **R120 000**, respectively. The highest band—**63 inches plus**—stood in its own league: prices rose from **R484 000** to **R680 000**, supported by four sales in 2025, proving that exceptional genetics continue to command extraordinary investment.

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Kudu Bulls Price per inch (Horns)					
Horne Size in Inches	2023	2024	2025	Average	Inc %
Bull : less than 40 inches	R421	R486	R542	**R483**	**11.58%**
Bull : 40 to 45 inches	R411	R485	R577	**R491**	**18.94%**
Bull : 45 inches plus	R399	R477	R625	**R500**	**31.05%**
Bull : 46 inches plus	R607	R535	R699	**R614**	**30.58%**
Bull : 47 inches plus	R665	R527	R685	**R626**	**29.87%**
Bull : 48 inches plus	R589	R643	R754	**R662**	**17.26%**
Bull : 49 inches plus	R554	R624	R897	**R692**	**43.74%**
Bull : 50 inches plus	R597	R686	R833	**R705**	**21.32%**
Bull : 51 inches plus	R588	R762	R949	**R766**	**24.48%**
Bull : 52 inches plus	R659	R768	R1 044	**R824**	**35.87%**
Bull : 53 inches plus	R800	R777	R1 079	**R885**	**38.92%**
Bull : 54 inches plus	R1 025	R817	R988	**R944**	**20.96%**
Bull : 55 inches plus	R1 079	R931	R1 111	**R1 040**	**19.37%**
Bull : 56 inches plus	R984	R1 143	R1 553	**R1 227**	**35.90%**
Bull : 57 inches plus	R1 102	R1 321	R1 565	**R1 329**	**18.49%**
Bull : 58 inches plus	R1 695	R1 763	R2 127	**R1 862**	**20.65%**
Bull : 59 inches plus	R2 021	R2 228	R2 526	**R2 258**	**13.40%**
Bull : 60 inches plus	R2 565	R2 721	R4 130	**R3 139**	**51.78%**
Bull : 61 inches plus	R2 623	R2 958	R4 541	**R3 374**	**53.53%**
Bull : 62 inches plus	R2 841	R3 358	R5 600	**R3 933**	**66.77%**
Bull : 63 inches plus	R10 822	R11 571	R12 674	**R11 689**	**9.53%**
TOTALS	**R1 574**	**R1 759**	**R2 350**	**R1 894**	**33.60%**

The second table distils the horn story into its purest commercial form: **the rand value assigned to each inch of horn across multiple seasons**. The progression is unmistakable—**prices per inch rose across nearly every band**, revealing not just shifting buyer preference but a structural revaluation of Kudu horn genetics.

The lower inch classes, such as bulls measuring **less than 40 inches**, increased by **11.58%** over the three-year window, indicating stability at the commercial entry point.

But as soon as bulls crossed into the **40–45 inch** and **45-inch plus** categories, increments steepened into **18.94%** and **31.05%**, highlighting where meaningful genetic selection begins for the broader industry.

The mid-tier horn classes—**46 to 53 inches**—showcased powerful upward movement. Bulls at **49 inches plus** climbed by **43.74%**, while the **52-inch category** increased by **35.87%** and the **53-inch bulls** reached a **38.92%** gain.

These increases mirror breeder demand for bulls with proven trophy potential, where each incremental inch significantly changes lifetime breeding value. The elite classes—**56 inches and above**—reveal the most dramatic shifts. The **60-inch plus** class surged by **51.78%**, while **61 inches plus** advanced by **53.53%** and **62 inches plus** soared by **66.77%**, confirming that the uppermost genetic tiers are undergoing **accelerated price appreciation**. At the pinnacle, the **63-inch plus** bulls maintained an extraordinary price-per-inch value above **R11 000**, proof that once-in-a-generation animals remain in a separate economic universe.

Across all horn bands, total average price per inch rose from **R1 574** in 2023 to **R2 350 in 2025**, a collective increase of **33.60%**, underscoring how aggressively the market has repriced Kudu genetics.

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When these two tables are read as a single narrative, they reveal a market undergoing **both structural and behavioural transformation**. The first table shows how buyers distribute their spending across actual bulls sold in each inch class, while the second table exposes the **underlying mathematical pressure** driving those bids higher.

Together, they illustrate that 2025 was not merely a year of higher prices but a year in which **the value of each additional inch intensified**, signalling that Kudu bulls have entered a phase where genetics, scarcity and bidding psychology are now more tightly aligned than at any point in recent history.

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SPRINGBOK

A. marsupialis

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Antidorcas*



WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY

- Medium-sized antelope with chestnut-brown upper body, white underparts, dark lateral stripe, facial markings, and lyre-shaped horns in both sexes (males heavier, thicker horns). Weight: 30–48 kg.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Arid grasslands, Karoo scrub, Kalahari dunes, open plains. Occurs widely in Northern Cape, Free State, North West, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Namibia/Botswana ranges.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Mixed feeder: grazes on short grasses but browses on shrubs and dwarf Karoo vegetation in dry seasons. Highly water-efficient.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Herd-forming species; fission–fusion groups. Rams territorial in breeding season. Famous for “pronking”—vertical jumps during excitement or predator evasion.

ADAPTIONS

- Highly water-independent; efficient kidneys; fast sprinter (up to 88 km/h); pronking display deters predators; skin fold produces dorsal “pronk fan”.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern. Expanding due to game ranching; stable in protected and private areas.

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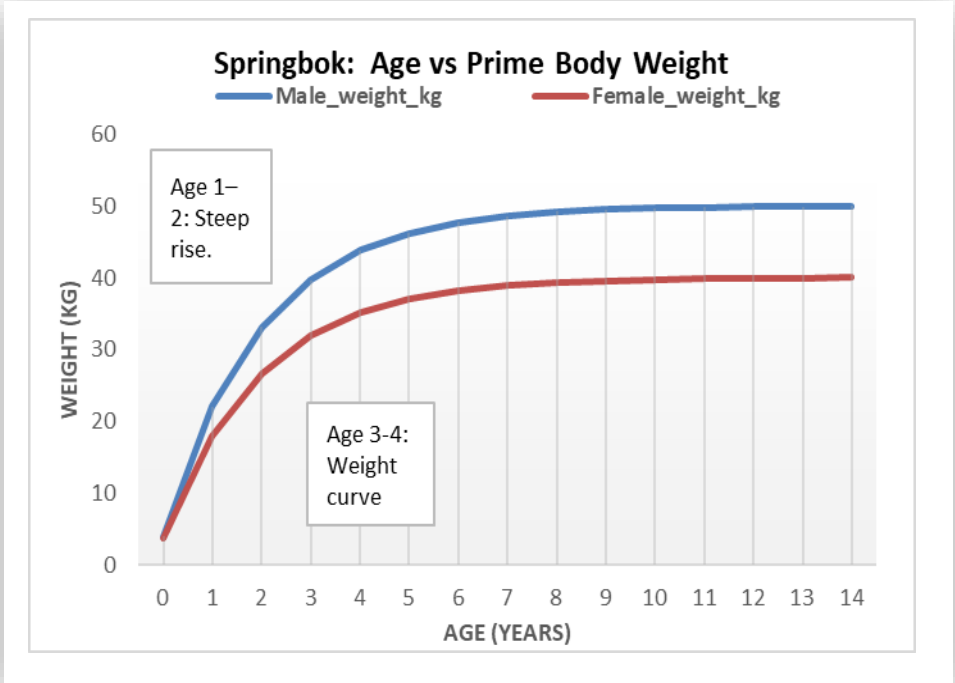
Springbok Specie Information

There is a moment at dusk on the open plains of the Northern Cape when the light turns the earth to amber and shadows stretch long across the veld. In this quiet, ancient hour, the Springbok emerges, moving with a fluid stillness that feels almost otherworldly. Slender, poised and alert, it seems as though the land itself shaped this antelope from wind and sun and dust. And perhaps it did — for no creature embodies the spirit of South Africa's arid landscapes more completely than the Springbok.

Across the sweeping grasslands of the Free State, the salt-bush plains of the Karoo and the rolling Kalahari dunes, the Springbok has learned to survive in places where rain is an occasional gift and vegetation must be taken as it comes. This is not merely an antelope that endures harsh lands — it *belongs* there. It thrives where others hesitate. It builds herds where others falter. It dances in a place shaped by extremes.

The Springbok's diet mirrors this adaptability. After good summer rains, when the plains erupt in fresh green shoots, the Springbok grazes eagerly on tender grass. But when the veld dries and the sun hardens the earth, it turns with equal ease to browsing: nibbling on shrubs, dwarf Karoo plants, succulents and the tough little bossies that dot the dry plains. This feeding flexibility explains why the species has flourished in regions that seem inhospitable to most wildlife — the Springbok is not just an inhabitant of the drylands, it is a master of them.



The journey of a Springbok begins with a single lamb — delicate, long-legged, usually born into the early flush of summer rains. After roughly 168 days of gestation, the ewe leaves the herd to give birth in quiet cover, returning frequently to nurse and clean the newborn until it is strong enough to join the herd. Growth in the first year is rapid. A newborn of **3–5 kg** becomes a fleet-footed youngster of **12–15 kg** within months, already capable of the astonishing leaps that define its personality. By two years, the horns begin to show their characteristic **lyre-shaped curve**, slowly lengthening and forming thicker ridges each season.

As the young Springbok matures, its body settles into the elegant proportions so recognisable across South Africa's plains. Between **ages 3 and 4**, both males and females enter a steady weight-curve phase, filling out muscle mass and developing the stamina needed for daily survival in open terrain. Males typically reach **47–50 kg** at prime condition, while females plateau slightly lower at **38–40 kg**, reflecting their lighter frame and energetic investment in lamb rearing.

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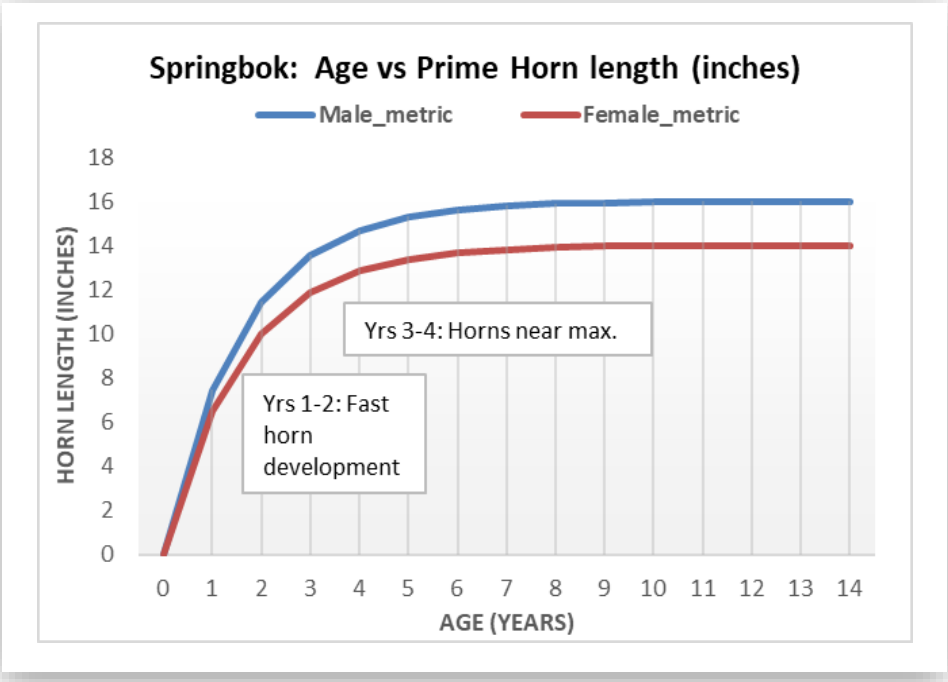
By **five years of age**, a Springbok is in its physical prime — the perfect balance of speed, strength and efficiency. This maturation is not just biological; it reflects a learned mastery of the environment. Seasonal movements, predator awareness, social spacing and dominance behaviour all refine during this period, shaping an animal perfectly adapted to the semi-arid grasslands it calls home. The growth curves on the chart mirror this story: a steep early rise, a controlled and purposeful strengthening phase and finally a smooth plateau that signals a fully realised adult Springbok at the height of its capability.



A mature ram between **3 and 7 years** becomes poetry in motion: deep-chested, confident and crowned with horns averaging **13–15 inches**, with the rare, genetically superior individuals pushing beyond this range. These horns don't just grow — they *tell a story*. The first two years bring a fast, almost explosive rise in length, mirroring the animal's rapid transition from lamb to young bachelor. By the time a ram reaches its third year, the lyre-shaped sweep begins to harden, darken and carry the weight of maturity.

From **years 3 to 4**, horn growth slows into a deliberate curve, edging closer to its maximum potential. The ridges become more defined, the tips sharpen and the symmetry settles — traits that often determine hierarchy within ram groups. While male horns ultimately outgrow those of females, both sexes follow the same biological rhythm: a bold early surge followed by a slow, purposeful finishing phase that plateaus from **year 5 onward**, just as shown in the graph.

Their weight settles between **30–48 kg**, influenced by rainfall cycles, forage availability and the quality of the veld they move through. And although Springbok can live **10–12 years** in the wild, the full expression of horn and body is reserved for animals that survive the pressures of predation, dry seasons and competition.

Reaching peak horn size is therefore not merely a function of age — it is a testament to resilience, genetics and the land itself.

Although both rams and ewes carry horns, a quick glance is enough to distinguish them. Rams are heavier, with robust necks, muscular forequarters and horns that thicken with age into deep, impressive rings. During the rutting season, they claim small territories, announcing dominance with low grunts and ritual displays, sometimes locking horns in fluid, spiralling contests. Ewes, by contrast, are lighter, more refined and move in looser social groups — nursery herds that drift together across the veld. Their leaner bodies, gentler horn curvature and delicate facial structure give them an elegance that contrasts beautifully with the powerful stature of mature rams.

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A Species at the Heart of South Africa's Wildlife Economy

The Springbok is more than a biological marvel — it is deeply woven into the South African conservation and wildlife industry. Its ability to thrive on semi-arid lands makes it ideal for game farming, while its symbolism as a national emblem ensures continued interest in tourism, photography and hunting. Even the colour variants — once rare curiosities — now form a niche segment in the wildlife economy, drawing breeders, investors and collectors.

This is a species that carries cultural heritage, ecological resilience and economic value all at once.

Springbok Variants:

Variant	Region / Use	Colouring	Key Traits	Industry Notes
Common Springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*)	Widespread in South Africa	Classic tri-colour: chestnut, white, dark flank stripe	Highly adaptable; strong herding instinct	Main variant in farming/hunting
Black Springbok	Select breeding farms	Rich chocolate to black coat	Melanistic; striking visual contrast	Premium colour-variant auctions
Copper Springbok	Farm-bred	Deep copper to warm reddish tones	Genetic variant with enhanced orange tones	Popular for colour herds
White Springbok	Rare	Full white coat; normal horns	Leucistic expression; pink nasal tones	High-value trophy & stud variant
Additional variants on auction also include coffee, cream, blue, King & damara springboks.				

Fascinating Insights about Springbok

- Springbok historical migrations (*trekbokke*) once moved in herds of **thousands to millions**.
- Pronking can reach heights of **2 meters**, a display of vitality and predator confusion.
- They can run up to **88 km/h**, faster than most predators except the cheetah.
- The dorsal skin flap opens during excitement, releasing a **musky scent** and displaying a white crest.
- Springbok can survive **months without drinking water**, thanks to metabolic moisture extraction.
- One of the few antelope species where **both sexes have horns**.
- The Springbok's coat reflects sunlight efficiently, reducing heat absorption and helping them remain active during the hottest hours.
- They possess an exceptional **field of vision**, with eyes positioned to detect predators from nearly 300 degrees around them.
- During lambing season, ewes form temporary **nursery groups**, allowing multiple females to guard and nurse their young collectively.
- Ram territories are often spaced by visual landmarks such as shrubs or termite mounds, creating a network of **micro-territories** that shift seasonally.
- Their hooves secrete subtle scent cues, creating invisible **"scent trails"** that help herds stay loosely coordinated when moving.
- Springbok are among the few antelope able to **increase fertility in good rainfall years**, sometimes producing twins where conditions allow.
- The characteristic dark facial stripe helps reduce glare on bright plains, improving depth perception at speed.
- Despite their elegance, Springbok are highly vocal — rams use **snorts, grunts and low-frequency clicks** during dominance displays or when herding females.

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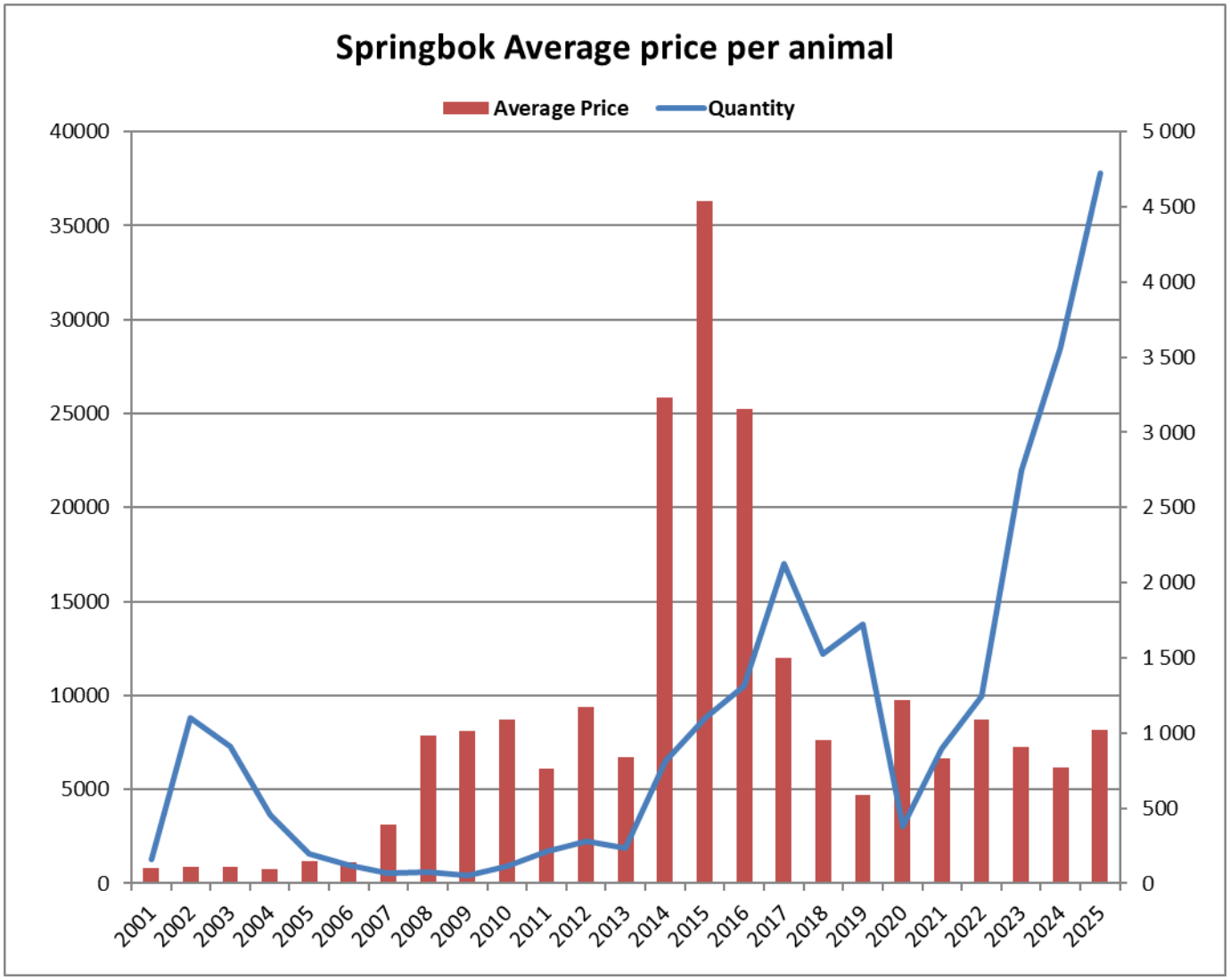
Springbok Data & Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Springbok dataset presents a **long-horizon narrative** of one of South Africa's most commercially important plains-game species. The table captures how value, quantity and average price evolved through cycles of expansion, contraction and renewed demand, while the graph illustrates the **sharp peaks, sudden corrections and eventual stabilisation** that have defined this market. What emerges is the story of a species whose pricing has never been static, whose quantities have surged in certain eras and whose relevance in the broader wildlife economy has remained **enduring and strategically important**.

Springbok			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R124 504	158	R788
2002	R970 590	1 101	R882
2003	R783 374	912	R859
2004	R353 025	454	R778
2005	R232 225	196	R1 185
2006	R139 050	123	R1 130
2007	R213 100	68	R3 134
2008	R595 100	76	R7 830
2009	R430 425	53	R8 121
2010	R993 700	114	R8 717
2011	R1 271 600	208	R6 113
2012	R2 636 900	282	R9 351
2013	R1 580 550	236	R6 697
2014	R20 943 650	810	R25 856
2015	R39 992 545	1 102	R36 291
2016	R33 248 550	1 316	R25 265
2017	R25 458 528	2 125	R11 980
2018	R11 598 558	1 523	R7 616
2019	R8 113 650	1 720	R4 717
2020	R3 644 700	375	R9 719
2021	R5 940 090	895	R6 637
2022	R10 817 443	1 243	R8 703
2023	R19 980 415	2 749	R7 268
2024	R22 038 400	3 561	R6 189
2025	R38 478 700	4 724	R8 145



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Springbok Insights: 2001 to 2025

Foundations and Stabilising Demand: 2001–2008

Between **2001 and 2008**, Springbok traded at low but gradually strengthening prices. Average prices increased from **R788 (2001)** to **R7 830 (2008)**, while quantities fluctuated between **68 and 1 101 animals**, reflecting a market still finding its footing.
The jump in **2007–2008**, where average price moved from **R3 134** to **R7 830**, showed emerging selective demand for certain colour lines and breeding groups. Total value remained modest across this band, from **R124 504 (2001)** to **R595 100 (2008)**, reinforcing Springbok's role as a reliable plains-game species whose market was driven more by availability and hunting utility than speculation.

Pre-Boom Recovery and Strengthening Market Depth: 2009–2012

From **2009 to 2012**, prices rose from **R8 121 (2009)** to **R9 351 (2012)**, while quantities climbed from **53** to **282 animals**.
Total values increased notably from **R430 425 (2009)** to **R2.64 million (2012)**.
This period reflected growing confidence in plains-game economics, supported by international trophy hunters and the growing number of mixed-game ranching operations. Springbok benefitted from consistent demand for both hunting packages and live sales, leading into the explosive phase that followed.

The Rare-Game Boom Impact and Market Spike: 2013–2016

The years **2013 to 2016** marked the most extreme pricing movement in Springbok history.

- Average price surged from **R6 697 (2013)** to **R25 856 (2014)**, then peaked at **R36 291 (2015)**.
- Quantities rose from **236 animals (2013)** to **1 316 animals (2016)**.
- Total value escalated dramatically from **R1.58 million (2013)** to **R39.99 million (2015)**.

This surge reflected the broader **rare-game investment bubble**, where certain Springbok colour variants triggered a spillover effect into common Springbok pricing. The graph vividly displays these extraordinary spikes, showcasing the sudden—but ultimately unsustainable—value surge driven by aggressive buying, limited supply of special colour animals, and speculative breeder expansion.

In **2016**, the correction began, with prices dropping to **R25 265**, although still substantially higher than pre-boom levels.

Market Reset, COVID Disruption, and Rebuilding Phase: 2017–2022

From **2017 onward**, the Springbok market recalibrated into a more mature pricing band.
Average prices fell from **R11 980 (2017)** to **R7 616 (2018)** and **R4 717 (2019)**, with values declining accordingly.

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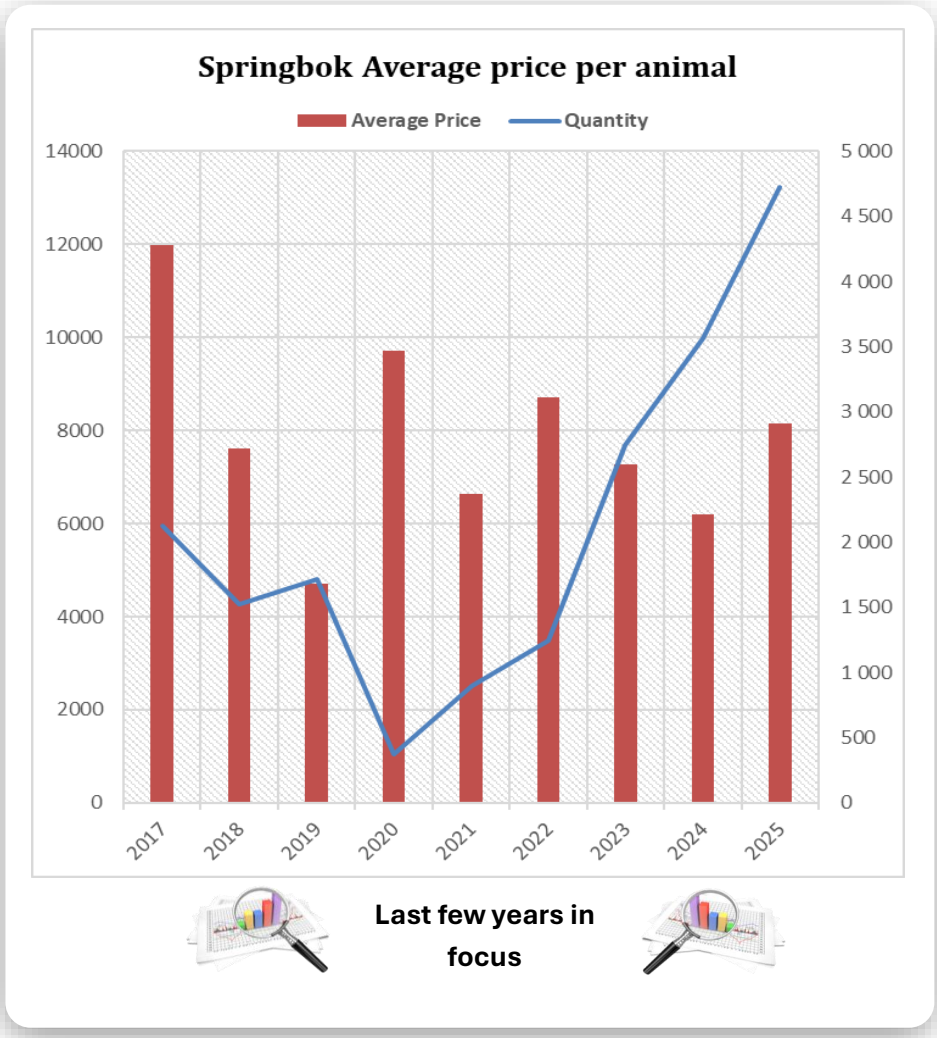
COVID-19 further depressed the market in **2020**, where quantity fell to **375 animals** and value dropped to **R3.64 million**, though average price lifted to **R9 719** as lower supply met selective demand.

Recovery was visible by **2021–2022**, with average prices strengthening again to **R6 637** and **R8 703**, and quantity rising to **895** and **1 243** animals respectively. The graph shows these transitions clearly—post-boom collapse, stabilisation, and then a cautious upward correction.

Post-COVID Expansion and Volume Acceleration: 2023–2024

By **2023**, Springbok volumes surged to **2 749 animals** and further to **3 561 animals (2024)**.
Average price stabilised at **R7 268 (2023)** and **R6 189 (2024)**, reflecting abundance of supply but continued demand from hunting and venison markets.
Total value rose from **R19.98 million (2023)** to **R22.03 million (2024)**.
This period reflected strong post-COVID demand, but also large-scale herd expansions producing high Springbok volumes across the country.



2025 vs 2024 — Prices Strengthen Amid Surging Supply

The transition from **2024 to 2025** shows a significant shift in the Springbok market narrative.
Average price increased from **R6 189 (2024)** to **R8 145 (2025)**, a **31.5% rise**, even though quantity surged from **3 561 animals (2024)** to **4 724 animals (2025)**—a **32.6% increase** in supply.

This combination is unusual and meaningful. Typically, such a large rise in supply would exert downward pressure on prices. Instead, **prices lifted strongly**, indicating that demand in 2025 not only absorbed the additional volume but did so with greater willingness to pay.

Total value increased from **R22.03 million (2024)** to **R38.48 million (2025)**, driven by the dual force of higher prices and significantly larger supply.

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This dynamic suggests that:

- hunting outfitters expanded their needs for package volumes,
- venison producers increased procurement due to stronger domestic consumption and export interest,
- and live-trade markets benefitted from restocking by operators recovering fully from COVID-era contractions.

Thus, **2025** stands as a year where Springbok—despite entering the market in record numbers—experienced **price appreciation driven by robust demand**, showing a species whose commercial value is reinforced by the strength and depth of South Africa's plains-game economy.

Springbok: A Rising Multi-Variant Powerhouse in the 2025 Plains-Game Market

This table provides a detailed breakdown of how the **Springbok market is distributed across its various colour and genetic variants**, showing how each category contributes to total volume, value and pricing dynamics. Instead of focusing only on species-wide averages, the table reveals the **depth, diversity and economic layering** within the Springbok portfolio. It highlights how certain variants dominate by volume, how others carry meaningful value premiums and how market momentum has shifted from one year to the next. What emerges is a **rich snapshot of a species whose economic performance is shaped not just by scale, but also by genetics, rarity and buyer appetite**.

Springbok Summary	2025				2024			
	% Total	Value	Quantities	Average Price	% Total	Value	Quantities	Average Price
Springbok : Common	52.49%	R20 197 050	2 542	7 945	57.63%	R12 699 900	2 320	R5 474
Springbok : Black	7.60%	R2 923 850	455	R6 426	6.97%	R1 535 750	308	R4 986
Springbok : Blue	0.25%	R97 500	6	R16 250	0.09%	R20 000	1	R20 000
Springbok : Coffee	2.59%	R996 500	33	R30 197	2.58%	R568 000	33	R17 212
Springbok : Copper	8.77%	R3 375 750	520	R6 492	7.05%	R1 552 750	252	R6 162
Springbok : Cream	0.35%	R135 500	47	R2 883	0.00%	R0	0	R0
Springbok : Damara	6.16%	R2 368 750	178	R13 308	6.66%	R1 467 000	109	R13 459
Springbok : Dappled/Flanked	0.47%	R180 500	7	R25 786	1.04%	R229 000	14	R16 357
Springbok : Kalahari	7.46%	R2 868 750	472	R6 078	7.31%	R1 610 000	245	R6 571
Springbok : King	2.22%	R854 500	50	R17 090	1.93%	R426 000	29	R14 690
Springbok : White	11.64%	R4 480 050	414	R10 821	8.76%	R1 930 000	250	R7 720
TOTALS	**100.00%**	**R38 478 700**	**4 724**	**R8 145**	**100.00%**	**R22 038 400**	**3 561**	**R6 189**

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The Springbok market in 2025 unfolded with **both expansion and rebalancing**, as several variants strengthened their positions while others experienced proportional shifts. Common Springbok remained the **core engine** of the species, contributing **52.49% of total sales in 2025**, compared with **57.63% in 2024**. Even with the proportion declining slightly, both quantity and price surged—quantities rising from **2 320 to 2 542 animals** and the average price climbing from **R5 474 to R7 945**. This shows that the foundational demand for Common Springbok has not only remained intact but **intensified**, driven by commercial restocking, hunting packages and high-volume range expansion. The species' resilience is evident in its ability to absorb increased supply without suppressing price levels.

Among the colour variants, several standout movements define the tone of 2025. **Black Springbok** expanded meaningfully, growing from **308 to 455 animals** and lifting its market share from **6.97% to 7.60%**, supported by a rise in average price from **R4 986 to R6 426**. This confirms renewed appetite for classic colour variants that remain commercially proven and broadly accessible to mid-tier buyers.

The higher-end and rarer variants showed even more compelling shifts. **Copper Springbok**, already a strong performer, continued its ascent with quantities rising from **252 to 520** and total value more than doubling from **R1.55m to R3.37m**. Its average price remained stable at mid-range levels (moving from **R6 162 to R6 492**), suggesting that Copper is benefiting from **scale-driven demand rather than speculative pricing**—a healthy indicator of market maturity.

White Springbok had one of the most striking movements of the year. Its share jumped from **8.76% to 11.64%**, with volumes increasing from **250 to 414 animals** and the average price strengthening from **R7 720 to R10 821**. This demonstrates that White Springbok have reasserted themselves as a **premium yet accessible colour variant**, attractive to breeders seeking both aesthetics and strong secondary-market liquidity.

The more specialised variants also revealed important shifts in buyer behaviour. **Coffee Springbok**, for example, maintained identical volumes year-on-year (33 animals), yet pricing leapt from **R17 212 to R30 197**, a premium that underscores how **rarity and phenotype stability** increasingly command higher bids. **King Springbok** followed a similar pattern, increasing from **29 to 50 animals** with price appreciation from **R14 690 to R17 090**, reinforcing its status as a visually distinctive, moderate-volume premium variant. Meanwhile, some of the niche categories such as **Dappled/Flanked Springbok** contracted in volume (from **14 down to 7**) but delivered higher premiums (**R16 357 rising to R25 786**), showing that scarcity can drive price strength even when overall market volumes are expanding.

The **Blue Springbok** remained extremely small in number, yet its uplift from **1 to 6 animals** and sustained pricing at **R16 250** suggests that niche collectors and specialist breeders continue to support micro-markets within the broader Springbok economy. The **Damara variant** remained steady in its premium profile. Although its quantity increased moderately from **109 to 178**, its price eased slightly from **R13 459 to R13 308**, indicating a **healthy, non-speculative transition toward larger trading volumes**.

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Across all variants, the overarching picture is one of **broad-based strengthening**, reflected in total Springbok value rising from **R22.0 million in 2024** to **R38.4 million in 2025**, while quantities increased from **3 561 to 4 724**. Despite this significant expansion, the average price still climbed from **R6 189 to R8 145**, proving that 2025 was not merely a volume-driven year but one marked by **robust demand across the entire variant spectrum**.

Taken together, this table shows a Springbok market that has become more **diversified, more confident and more commercially layered**. Common Springbok anchor the system, the major colour variants expand accessible value pools and the rarer phenotypes provide targeted premium opportunities—all of which knitted together to form a **remarkably strong and well-balanced Springbok economy in 2025**.

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BLESBOK

D. pygargus phillipsi

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Damaliscus*



WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY

- Medium-sized antelope with chestnut body, white blaze on face, short neck, strong build; both sexes horned. Rams 60–80 kg; ewes 40–60 kg.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Open Highveld grasslands; dominant in Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape plains.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Pure grazer; prefers medium-height sweet grasses, shifts to drier grasses and forbs in winter.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Territorial rams; nursery herds of ewes and lambs; large herd-forming species; diurnal grazer.

ADAPTIONS

- Efficient grass digesters; strong herd cohesion; excellent visual communication via facial blaze; low jumping behaviour assists fencing.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern;
- Populations thriving on ranches; major conservation recovery success.

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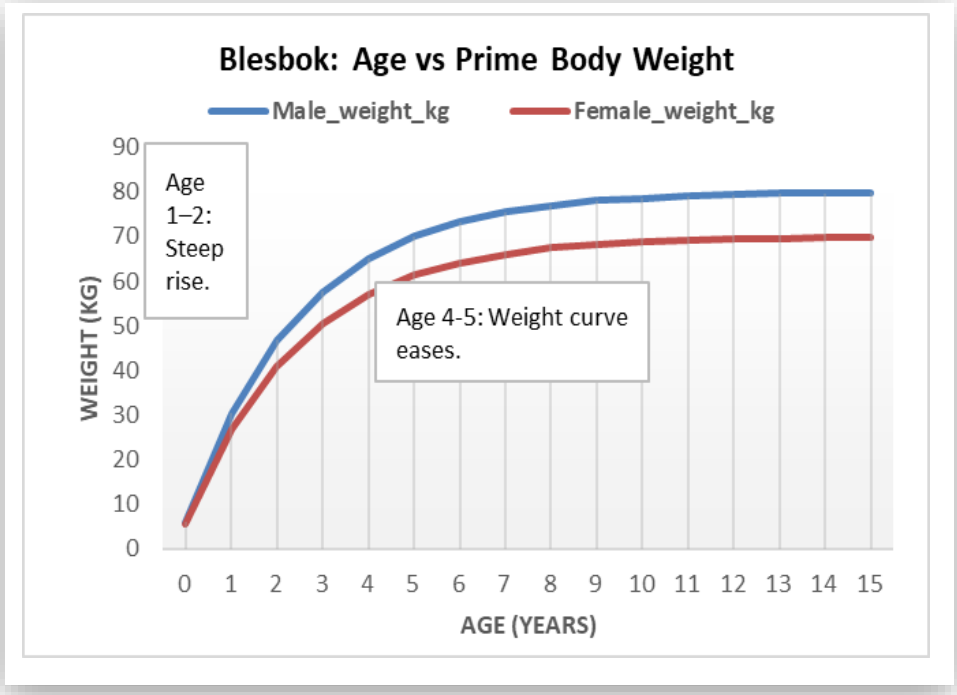
Blesbok Specie Information

There is something unmistakably South African about the Blesbok. When you stand on a Free State plain — the horizon stretched wide beneath a cobalt sky, the wind rolling across grasslands like an invisible tide — the Blesbok is part of that landscape in a way that feels ancient and rightful. Its white face blaze catches the light, its dark rump contrasts against the tawny veld and its herds move with the steady rhythm of the high plains.

Once, Blesbok roamed the **Highveld in vast numbers**, shaping the ecology of South Africa's interior. Their story is deeply intertwined with the land — from early overhunting to remarkable conservation recovery and today to a major role in the wildlife economy. Modern game farmers rely on the Blesbok's adaptability, resilience and ease of breeding, making it one of the cornerstone species in South African wildlife farming.

They favour **open grasslands**, thriving particularly in the Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga Highveld, Northern Cape flats, North West and parts of the Eastern Cape. These regions, with their rolling plains and sweetveld grasses, support the Blesbok's grazing lifestyle. Unlike the Springbok, which carries desert ancestry, the Blesbok is a specialist grazer of medium-height grasses, grazing in herds that move continuously across the veld in search of the richest patches. The Blesbok diet is dominated by **grasses** — species like *Themeda triandra* (red grass), *Eragrostis* and *Cynodon*. Their broad muzzle and strong incisors are adapted for cropping grasses efficiently. During winter, when veld quality declines, Blesbok shift to drier grasses and will browse lightly on forbs when necessary, but they remain primarily grazing animals.



In behaviour, rams maintain territories in the breeding season, herding ewes into groups and defending their patch of veld with ritualised displays and occasional clashes. Ewes form loose herds, often with subadults, moving across grasslands in calm, rhythmic patterns.

A newborn Blesbok lamb, weighing **5–7 kg**, enters the world with a sturdiness that belies its size. After a **240-day gestation**, the ewe leads her lamb to a secluded patch of tall grass or low shrubs, where it spends its first vulnerable days lying motionless — a behaviour rooted in millennia of predator avoidance. She returns frequently to nurse, clean and bond and within a week the lamb is already capable of short bursts of speed as it begins integrating with the herd.

From here, **growth in the first year is remarkably fast**, driven almost entirely by the quality of grazing. In seasons of good rainfall and dense sweetveld, a young Blesbok can leap from 6 kg to **20–25 kg** by the close of its first year. Horn buds emerge early and continue lengthening in steady increments, signalling both health and genetic promise. The steep rise in the chart during **ages 1–2** reflects this powerful metabolic surge — the period when the frame, bone structure and organ mass are laying lifelong foundations.

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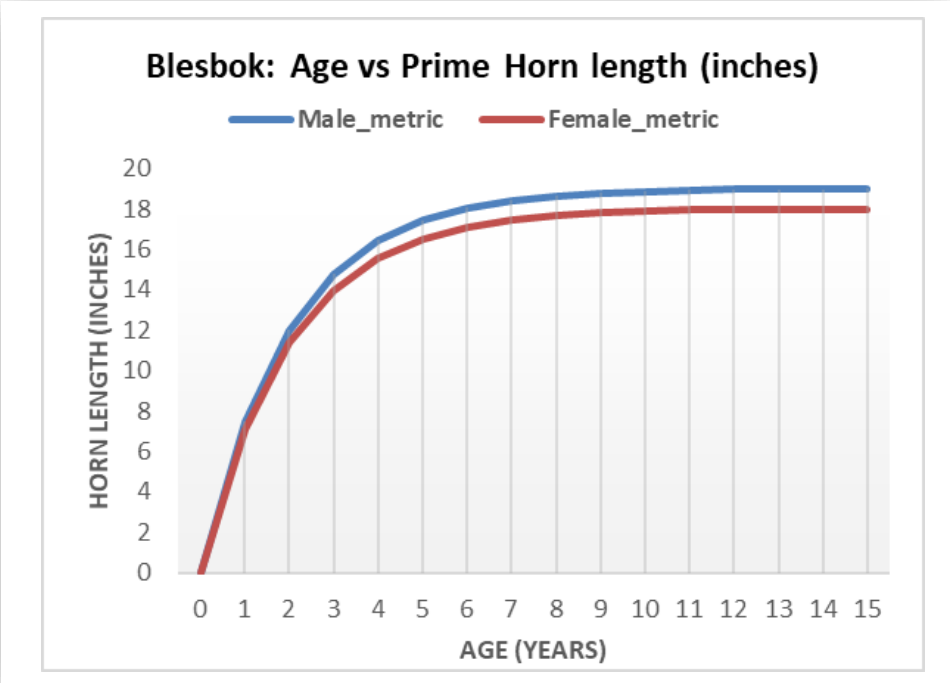
As the Blesbok enters its **third and fourth year**, muscle tone deepens, the neck thickens and the darker saddle on the back becomes more pronounced. Weight gains continue but at a more controlled pace, closely matching the growth-curve plateau between **ages 4 and 5**. At this stage, social maturity aligns with physical development: young rams begin testing boundaries, engaging in light sparring and learning the hierarchies that shape bachelor herds and territorial behaviour.

By **five to seven years**, a Blesbok ram stands in the full glory of adulthood — **60–80 kg**, depending on forage conditions, genetics and regional habitat. The chest broadens, the shoulders rise into a proud arch and the facial blaze becomes sharply contrasted against the rich mahogany coat. Shoulder height stabilises at **85–95 cm**, though exceptional genetics can push frames into the upper range. Ewes follow a similar but lighter pathway, usually peaking at **50–70 kg**, reflecting their sleeker build and energy allocation to reproduction.

From this point onward, the weight curve levels into a long, elegant plateau marking the balance between metabolic efficiency, prime grazing and the Blesbok's natural adaptation to highveld and semi-arid grasslands. An adult in its prime is not just heavier; it is fully calibrated to the rhythms of the veld: grazing patterns, herd spacing, dominance structure and seasonal movement all aligning with the mature proportions of the animal.



The horns of a Blesbok tell a story as clear as the rings of a tree — bold early growth, steady strengthening and the final sharpening of maturity. In the **first year**, horn development is surprisingly rapid: small buds emerge within months, hardening into short spikes by the end of the youngster's first summer. This early surge, reflected as the steep rise on the chart between **ages 1 and 2**, lays the groundwork for the iconic lyre-shaped curve that defines the species.

By **two to three years**, the horns lengthen dramatically, reaching **12–14 inches** in many rams. This is the period when the grooves become more distinct, ridges deepen in texture and the forward sweep of the horn begins to settle. Females follow the same biological rhythm — one of the distinguishing features of Blesbok — although they rarely match the thickness or full length of the males.

As the animal enters **its fourth and fifth year**, horn growth slows into a measured, deliberate finish. The tips refine, the curve becomes symmetrical and the final inches accumulate gradually. This period, shown on the graph as the **age 4–5 near-maximum zone**, marks the transition from young adult to fully mature territorial ram. By this stage, prime males commonly reach **16–18 inches**, with truly exceptional lineages breaking **19 inches** under ideal veld conditions.

From **year five onward**, horn length plateaus, but the character of the horns continues to evolve. The colour darkens, the ridges become more pronounced and years of sparring add subtle polish to the tips. These seasoned rams carry horns that are not only longer but richer in texture — a visual record of dominance displays, breeding success and environmental resilience.

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Females typically remain slightly shorter, stabilising between **14–16 inches**, though their horns often appear more slender and elegant. The consistent growth pattern across both sexes highlights the Blesbok's evolutionary reliance on visibility, herd cohesion and subtly expressed dominance rather than the extreme sexual dimorphism seen in some other antelope.

Just like the weight curve, the horn-growth trajectory is a reflection of pasture quality, rainfall cycles, genetics and the competitive pressures within Blesbok society. A mature ram at the top of his size is not merely a product of age — he is the result of years of surviving predators, drought, rival rams and the shifting pulse of the grasslands.

Blesbok Variants:

Variant	Description / Distinguishing Traits	Colouration	Rarity / Notes
Common Blesbok	The standard, naturally occurring phenotype; strong genetic stability; widely distributed.	Rich reddish-brown body, white blaze, darker shoulders and rump.	Most common; foundation genetics for all colour lines.
White Blesbok	Lacks pigmentation but *not* albino; eyes and hooves remain normal; striking in open veld.	Pure white coat across body; pale facial blaze.	Moderately rare; high visual trophy value.
Copper Blesbok	Result of recessive genes; deeper pigmentation; very popular in selective breeding.	Deep reddish-copper coat with dark facial contrasts.	Rare; strong demand in colour genetics programmes.
Yellow Blesbok	Soft golden-yellow hue; lighter than copper; uncommon in nature.	Golden tan body with lighter blaze and rump.	Rare; maintained through controlled breeding.
Saddleback Blesbok	Distinctive dark saddle stripe; unique patterning preferred by specialist breeders.	Dark band along the back; contrasting lighter flanks.	Uncommon; visually distinctive morph.
Painted / Pied Blesbok	Spotted pattern; caused by patchy pigmentation; visually striking and highly sought after.	Irregular white patches over body and neck.	Rare; often developed in small dedicated herds.
Brown Blesbok	Uniform darker-brown phenotype with minimal colour contrast; genetically stable.	Rich chocolate-brown coat with muted blaze.	Uncommon; valued for colour diversity.
Additional variants sold on auction include Apache, black face, masked and yellow saddleback blesbok			

Fascinating Insights about Blesbok

- Blesbok nearly went **extinct in the 1800s**; modern conservation revived them to over 200,000 today.
- They form **large herds**, increasing grazing efficiency and predator vigilance.
- Their white facial blaze acts as a **visual signal**, helping herd members stay together across open plains.
- Rams use dung middens to **mark territories** and communicate dominance.
- They are among the **easiest antelope to manage** in farming systems due to strong herd instincts.
- Blesbok rarely jump high fences, making them one of the **most contained** grazing species.

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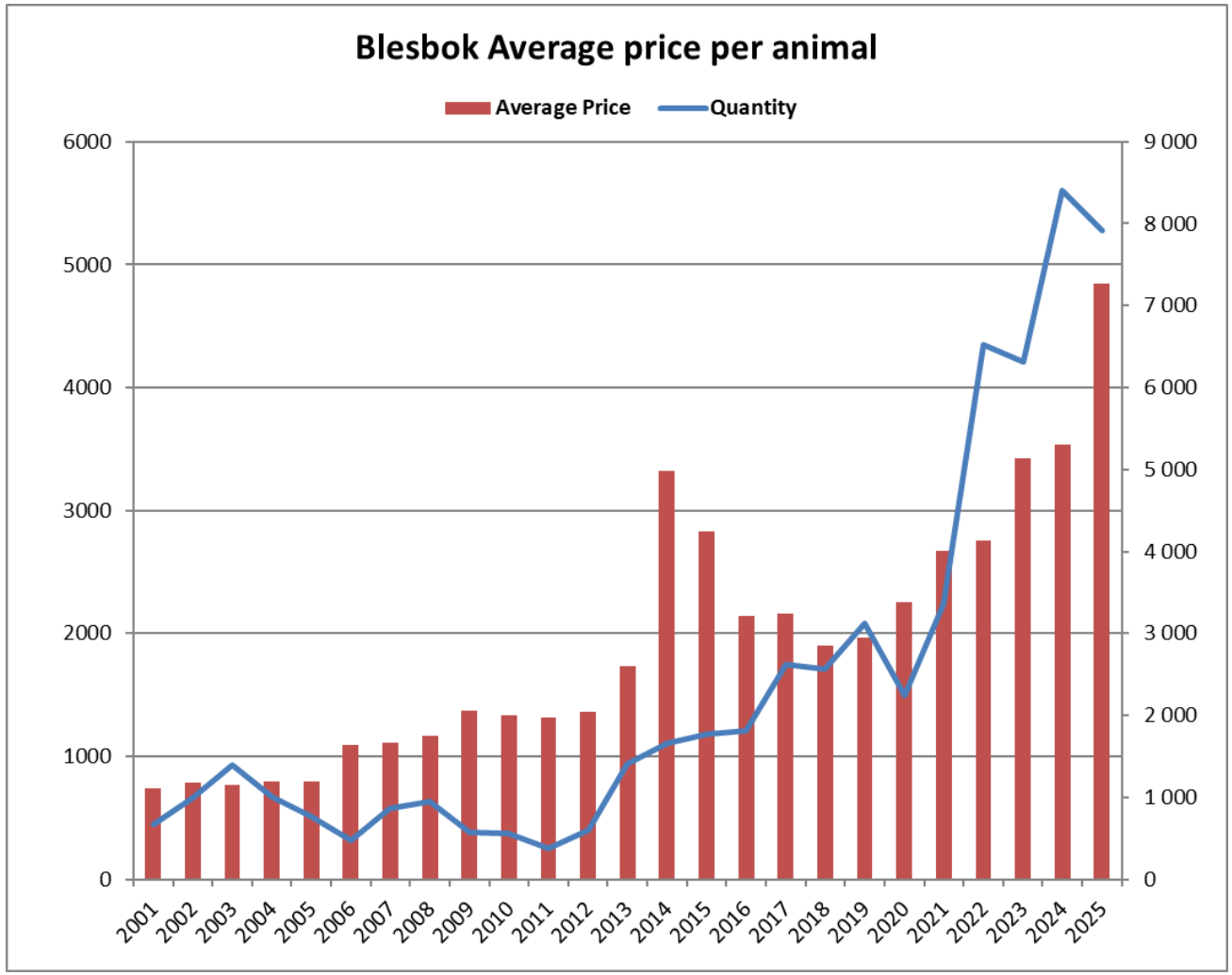
Blesbok Specie Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Blesbok table and its supporting graphs present a **clear, long-term view of market behaviour**, capturing how this high-volume plains-game species has evolved across nearly two-and-a-half decades. The graph immediately highlights the **steady rise in average prices** (red bars) and the **exceptionally sharp escalation in quantities traded** (blue line), especially in the latest years. This dual-trend structure—**growing demand matched by controlled but consistent price appreciation**—positions Blesbok as one of the most predictable and operationally important species in South Africa's wildlife economy. The visibility of these upward curves through the years underscores Blesbok's reliability as a **commercial anchor species**, supporting hunting operations, live-sale markets and mixed-use veld systems.

Blesbok			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R494 527	671	R737
2002	R777 725	988	R787
2003	R1 078 032	1 400	R770
2004	R802 935	1 006	R798
2005	R611 825	770	R795
2006	R516 625	475	R1 088
2007	R970 550	871	R1 114
2008	R1 101 550	946	R1 164
2009	R794 075	578	R1 374
2010	R750 125	562	R1 335
2011	R495 110	376	R1 317
2012	R817 250	602	R1 358
2013	R2 431 775	1 404	R1 732
2014	R5 517 080	1 663	R3 318
2015	R5 025 000	1 777	R2 828
2016	R3 881 737	1 811	R2 143
2017	R5 654 821	2 614	R2 163
2018	R4 890 522	2 569	R1 904
2019	R6 136 410	3 119	R1 967
2020	R5 054 260	2 241	R2 255
2021	R8 991 100	3 363	R2 674
2022	R17 945 352	6 523	R2 751
2023	R21 622 400	6 314	R3 425
2024	R29 722 450	8 399	R3 539
2025	R38 306 720	7 913	R4 841



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Blesbok Specie Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Stability and Low-Intensity Trading: 2001–2008

From **2001 to 2008**, the Blesbok market behaved predictably, with average prices remaining modest—between **R737 and R1 164**—and quantities ranging from **475 to 1 400** animals.
Total value rose from **R494 527 (2001)** to **R1.10 million (2008)**, reflecting incremental growth rather than market disruption.
This period aligned with SA's expanding hunting tourism industry, where Blesbok formed a staple component of package hunts. Steady international arrivals and growing domestic participation contributed to gentle price strengthening. The graph shows this as a slow upward curve with no dramatic volatility.

Pre-Boom Growth and Strengthening Utilisation: 2009–2013

Between **2009 and 2013**, Blesbok experienced the first meaningful uplift in both value and price.
Average prices rose from **R1 374 (2009)** to **R1 732 (2013)**, and quantities increased from **578** to **1 404**, while total value grew to **R2.43 million**.
These changes reflected greater integration of Blesbok into venison, breeding, and live-sale supply chains. The market displayed growing confidence, supported by favourable economic conditions and the wider diversification of plains-game portfolios.

Market Acceleration and the Rare-Game Ripple: 2014–2017

The band **2014 to 2017** marked a notable acceleration phase.
In **2014**, average price jumped to **R3 318**, with value rising to **R5.52 million**. Although speculative pressures in rare-game species were far more dramatic, their influence spilled over into common species, lifting demand for well-bred plains game across the board.
By **2017**, quantity had expanded further to **2 614 animals**, and total value reached **R5.65 million**, while average price stabilised at **R2 163**, a level reflecting both growth and correction.
The graph clearly shows the surge around 2014 followed by a softening, typical of spillover demand from a broader bullish wildlife economy.

Market Consolidation, COVID Disruption, and Rebound: 2018–2021

From **2018 to 2021**, the Blesbok market shifted into a consolidation phase influenced by economic tightening and later by COVID-19.

- Pre-COVID (2018–2019): prices remained stable at **R1 904–R1 967**, with quantities rising to **3 119 animals** as venison and hunting markets expanded.
- COVID years (2020–2021): volumes dipped in 2020 (**2 241 animals**) but rebounded sharply in 2021 (**3 363 animals**). Average prices rose from **R2 255 (2020)** to **R2 674 (2021)** as supply constraints and pent-up hunting demand supported firmer pricing.

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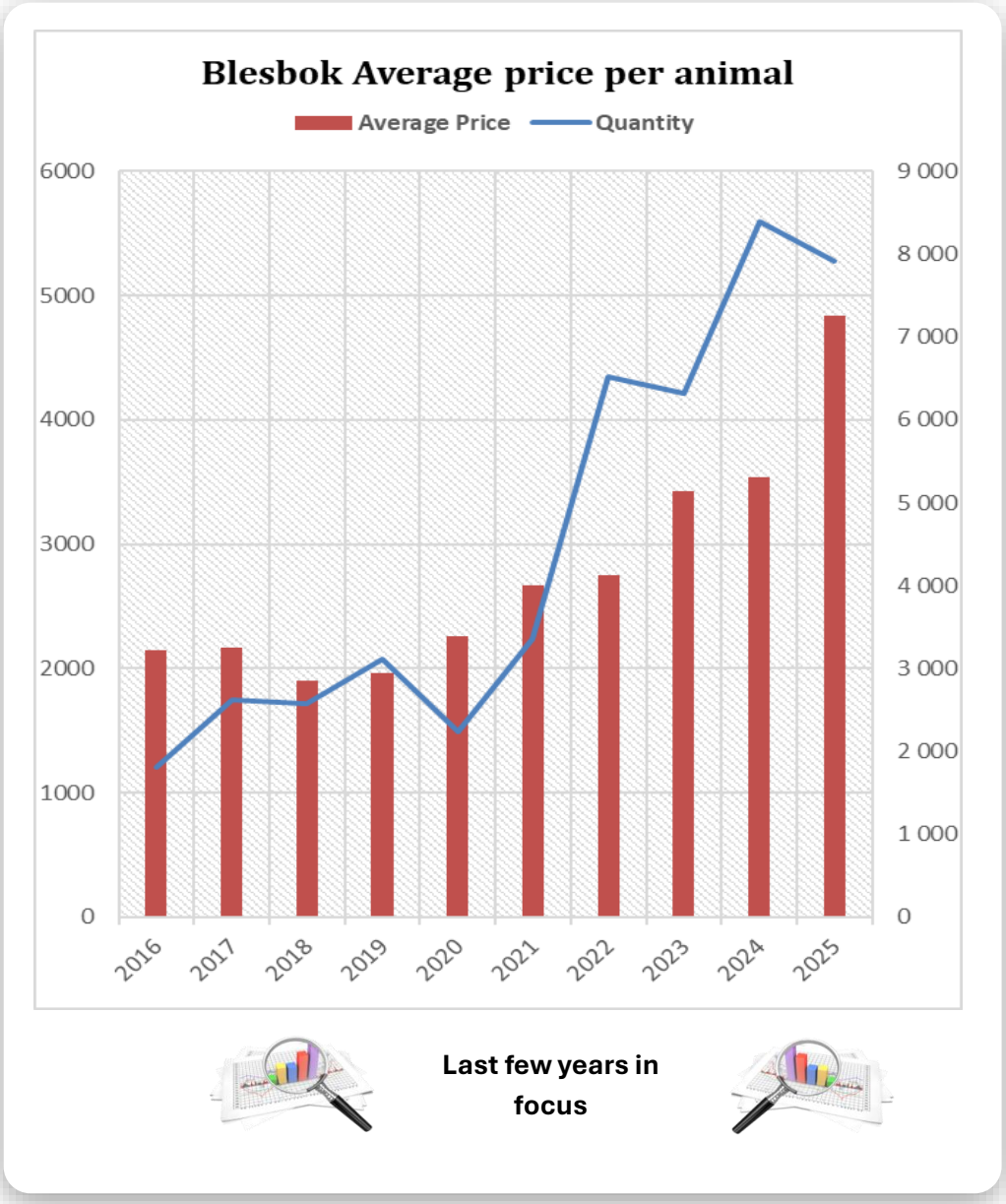
Despite global travel disruptions, domestic wildlife markets demonstrated resilience, and the graph shows this with stabilised bars followed by renewed upward movement.

Large-Scale Expansion and Demand Surge: 2022–2024

The period **2022 to 2024** saw a dramatic shift.
Quantities rose from **6 523 (2022)** to **8 399 (2024)**—a near doubling relative to just a few years prior.
Average prices trended upward as well, reaching **R3 539 (2024)**, while total value skyrocketed from **R17.95 million (2022)** to **R29.72 million (2024)**.
This reflected strong hunting demand, expanded outfitting capacity, and broad venison market growth, as well as robust auction participation for large-volume species.
The graph shows a steep incline in both price and volume—a rare but powerful combination in plains-game markets.



2025 vs 2024 — Price Lift Despite Lower Supply Signals Strengthening Market Tightness

The transition from **2024 to 2025** presents a notable change in market dynamics.
Quantity fell from **8 399 animals (2024)** to **7 913 animals (2025)**—a **5.8% decline**—representing the first meaningful contraction after years of expansion.
Despite this decline in supply, **average price surged** from **R3 539 (2024)** to **R4 841 (2025)**, a **36.7% increase**.
Total value also jumped significantly, from **R29.72 million (2024)** to **R38.31 million (2025)**.

This pattern—**lower supply paired with rising price**—strongly suggests tightening stock availability across South Africa's Blesbok populations.
Whether due to herd restructuring, veld carrying-capacity

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management, or increased off-take for venison markets, breeders brought fewer animals to market.

At the same time, demand strengthened on all fronts:

- hunting outfitters required large volumes for growing client bookings,
- venison demand continued its upward trend,
- and restocking buyers demonstrated renewed confidence in 2025's broader wildlife economy.

The graph captures this perfectly: a slight softening in quantity but a pronounced upward leap in pricing, underscoring a market entering a more competitive phase where supply constraints are finally reasserting themselves.

Blesbok Variant Composition and Market Dynamics (2024–2025)

This variant breakdown offers a more detailed view of how the broader Blesbok market is structured. Rather than treating the specie as a single homogenous category, the table uncovers the **economic weight of each colour line**, illustrating which variants dominate the market, which are emerging and how shifts in demand influence the overall performance of the specie. It reveals a landscape where **high-volume commercial lines** coexist with **premium niche variants**, each responding differently to market forces such as buyer preferences, availability and the ever-growing appetite for colour-variant game within structured wildlife portfolios.

Blesbok Summary	2025				2024			
	% Total	Value	Quantities	Average Price	% Total	Value	Quantities	Average Price
Blesbok : Common	63.48%	R24 315 650	6 530	R3 724	75.28%	R22 373 800	7 146	R3 131
Blesbok : Saddleback	15.00%	R5 744 500	142	R40 454	3.04%	R903 400	35	R25 811
Blesbok : White	15.14%	R5 799 370	864	R6 712	14.21%	R4 223 900	883	R4 784
Blesbok : Copper	2.48%	R951 000	135	R7 044	4.14%	R1 229 750	163	R7 544
Blesbok : Yellow	3.85%	R1 475 700	239	R6 174	2.88%	R856 350	157	R5 454
Besbok : Other	0.05%	R20 500	3	R6 833	0.46%	R135 250	15	R9 017
TOTALS	**100.00%**	**R38 306 720**	**7 913**	**R4 841**	**100.00%**	**R29 722 450**	**8 399**	**R3 539**

The story of 2025 was one of **broad expansion**, driven by both rising prices and a recalibration of the variant mix. Common Blesbok remained the backbone of the market, contributing **63.48%** of total value in 2025. Although this share was lower than the **75.28%** recorded in 2024, the decline in dominance was not due to weakness.

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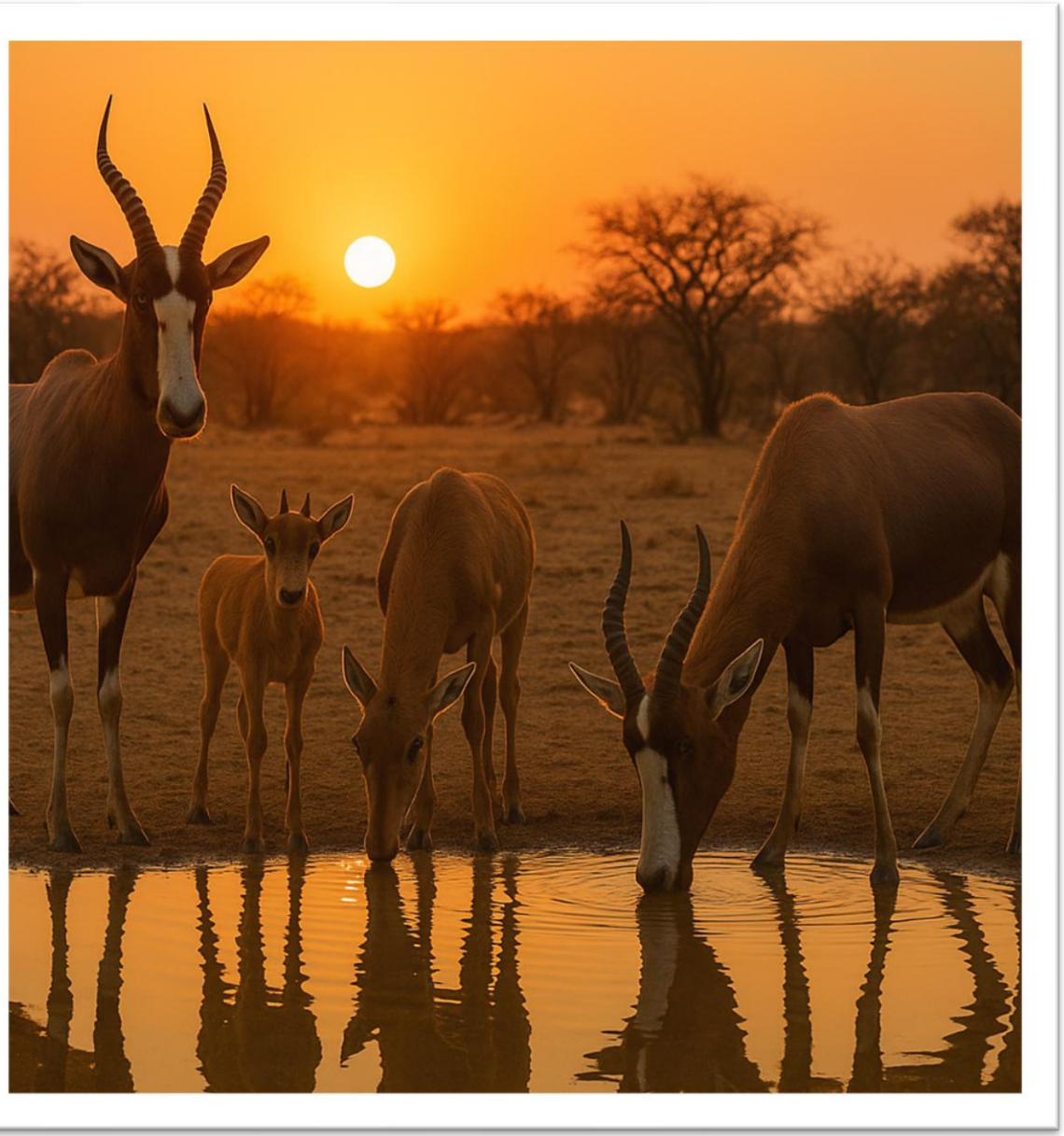
On the contrary, Common Blesbok grew from **R22.37 million** to **R24.31 million**, supported by a strong lift in the average price from **R3 131** to **R3 724**. The shift in percentage share simply reflected the rapid rise of other variants—not a weakening of the core line. Quantities did decline from **7 146** to **6 530**, yet market value still expanded, showing how price strength more than compensated for reduced supply.

Among the variant classes, **Saddleback Blesbok emerged as the standout**, transforming from a marginal presence in 2024 — where it represented just **3.04%** of total value — into a **15% contributor** in 2025. This remarkable repositioning was driven by a surge in both volume and pricing. The total value of Saddleback Blesbok climbed from **R903 400** in 2024 to **R5.74 million** in 2025, while the average price jumped from **R25 811** to **R40 454**. This performance signals a clear shift in buyer interest toward more visually striking colour variants as diversification strategies intensify among breeders.



White Blesbok sustained its role as a **high-value stability segment**, contributing just over **15%** of total value in 2025, slightly up from **14.21%** the year prior. Although quantities remained similar (864 vs. 883), average prices strengthened meaningfully from **R4 784** to **R6 712**. This demonstrates that White Blesbok continues to benefit from its consistent demand base and remains one of the more dependable premium variants in the colour spectrum.

Copper Blesbok experienced a decline in dominance, moving from **4.14%** of value in 2024 to **2.48%** in 2025. Both quantities and average price softened, with the variant decreasing from **163** animals at **R7 544** to **135** animals at **R7 044**. This movement suggests a temporary repositioning of demand away from this specific colour line as buyers allocated more capital toward stronger-performing variants such as Saddleback and White.

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Yellow Blesbok, conversely, strengthened its market presence. Its share rose from **2.88%** to **3.85%**, accompanied by higher volumes (239 vs. 157) and improved pricing from **R5 454** to **R6 174**. This growth points to increasing acceptance of Yellow as a viable mid-tier variant option, offering both affordability and genetic diversification appeal.

Finally, the "Other" category contracted sharply, contributing almost nothing to total value in 2025. With only **3 animals** sold at an average of **R6 833**, compared with **15 animals** at **R9 017** in 2024, the segment reflected a shift towards more established and commercially recognised variants.

Together, these movements illustrate how the Blesbok market continues to evolve beyond quantity-driven plains-game economics into a more layered marketplace where **variant identity, breeding direction and buyer preference** shape the revenue profile.

The surge in Saddleback and the strengthening of White and Yellow effectively rebalanced the landscape, while Common Blesbok remained the essential anchor holding the mass-market foundation.

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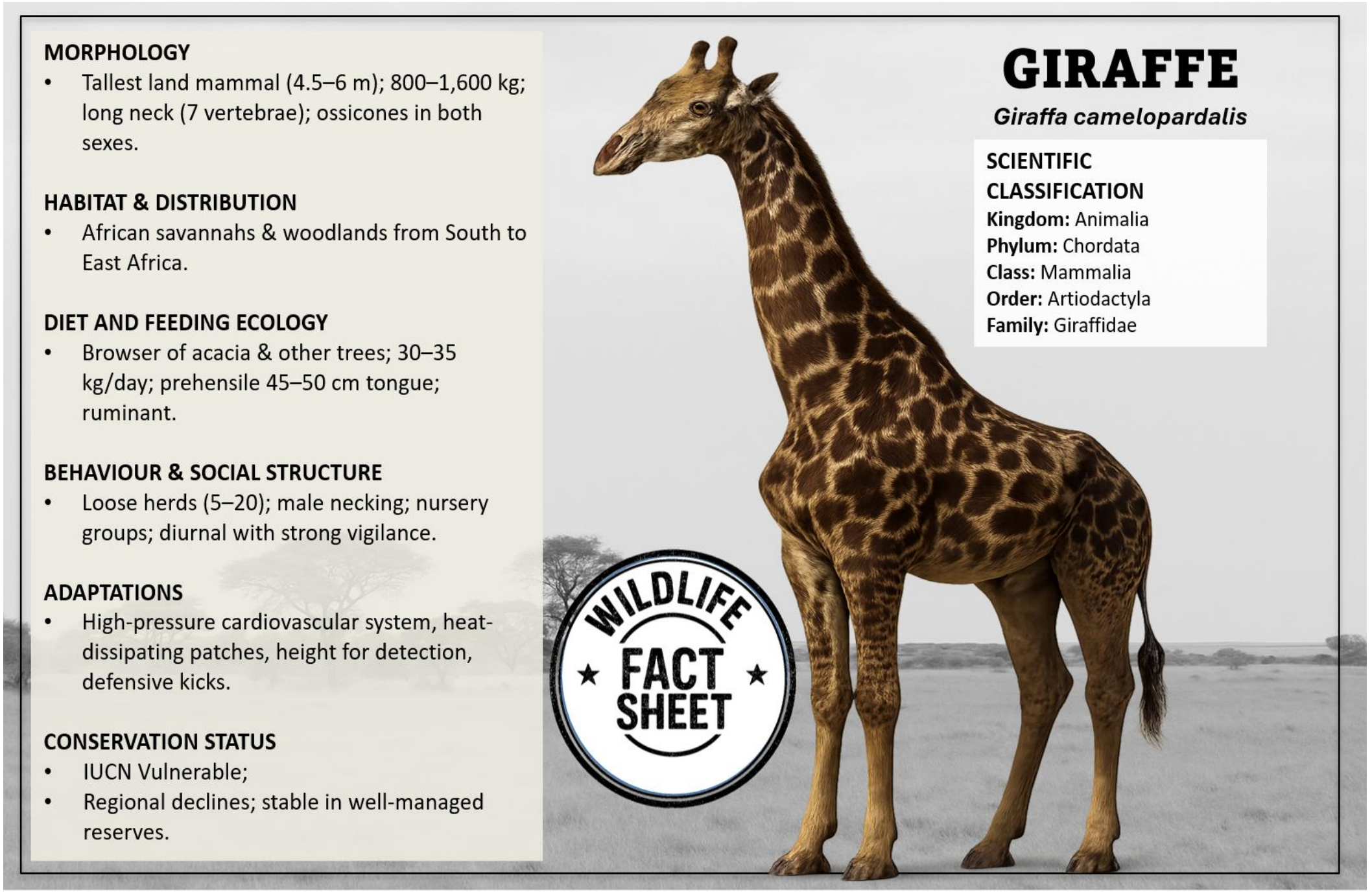

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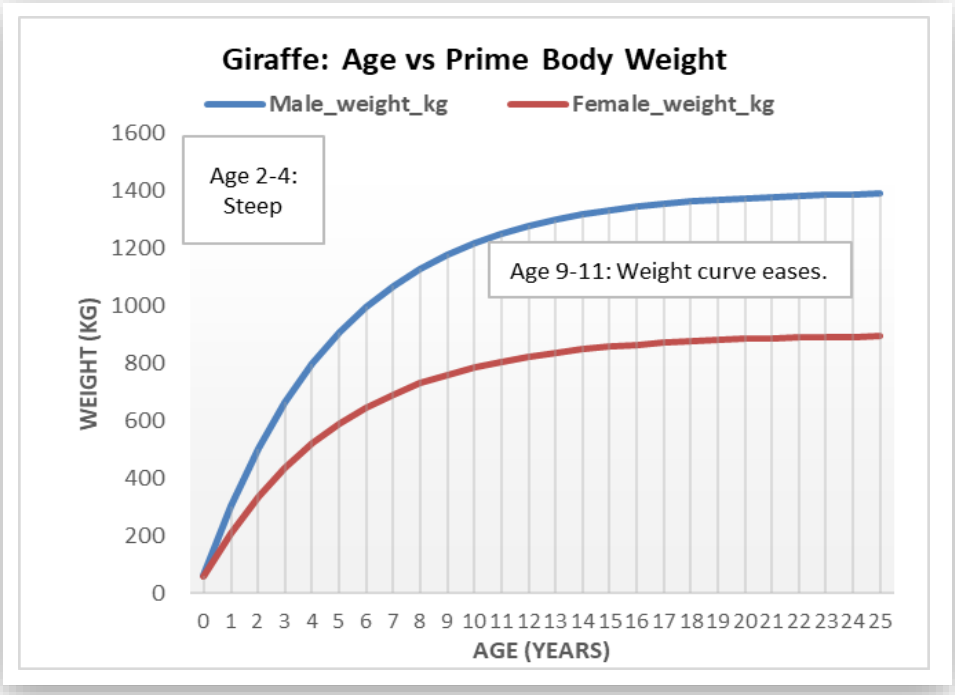
Giraffe Specie Information

There are few sights more emblematic of the African bushveld than a giraffe gliding across a savannah—silent, towering, unhurried, completely at ease with a world it sees from six metres above the ground. In South Africa, giraffes are not only visual symbols of wild beauty; they are also ecologically critical browsers, tourism assets and important components of private wildlife economies.

South Africa's giraffe populations occur naturally across **Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape** and selected regions of **Gauteng**. Private reserves, game farms and wildlife farmes (not "farmes" in the US sense—simply wild-managed properties) have significantly contributed to the stable or increasing numbers we see today. They thrive particularly well in **acacia, mopane and bushwillow woodlands**, favouring mixed bushveld and semi-arid savannah landscapes where tall browse species dominate.



A giraffe's journey from newborn to towering giant is one of the most dramatic growth curves in the animal kingdom. A calf enters the world at nearly **100–120 kg**, already taller than many antelope, having endured a 15-month gestation. Within minutes it stands on wobbly legs and by the end of its first day it can walk confidently beside its mother — a crucial adaptation in a landscape filled with lions and hyenas.

The early months are spent in nursery groups where calves rest together while mothers feed nearby, returning regularly to nurse.
From **ages 2 to 4**, the giraffe embarks on a period of **explosive growth**, reflected clearly in the steep rise on the chart. During these formative years, a young bull can gain **100–150 kg per year**, stretching upward and outward at a rate unmatched by any other African herbivore. Their skeleton lengthens rapidly, vertebrae extend and the characteristic ossicones thicken and fuse. Nutritional quality plays a pivotal role here: access to lush acacia, combretum and bushwillow browse directly influences growth velocity.

By **five to seven years**, the giraffe transforms from a lanky adolescent into a strongly built browser.

Males begin developing the heavier skull and thicker ossicones typical of maturity, while females refine the elegant, slimmer build suited for calf-rearing. At this stage, bulls often reach **1,200–1,300 kg**, while cows plateau around **750–850 kg**, the gap widening over time as males continue adding mass well into adulthood. The period between **ages 9 and 11** marks a noticeable settling of the weight curve. Growth slows, muscle mass deepens rather than expands and the animal's frame becomes fully proportioned. The chart's gentle plateau perfectly mirrors this biological shift: giraffes do not stop growing entirely, but the acceleration

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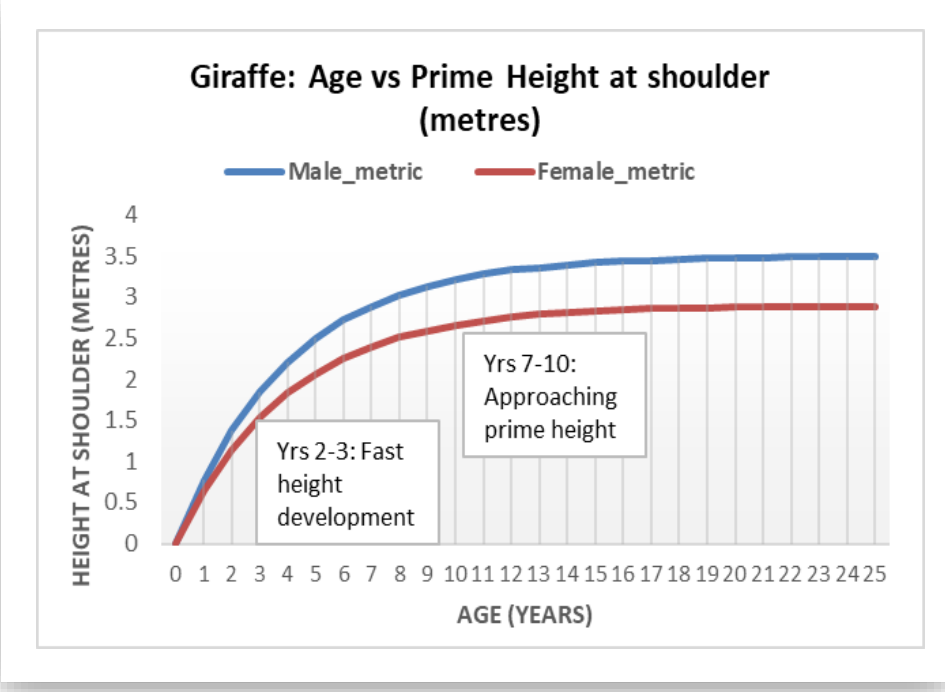
flattens as they reach structural completion. Bulls edge slowly toward **1,350–1,450 kg**, sometimes more in exceptional genetic lines, while females maintain a steady body mass aligned with reproductive sustainability.

From **twelve years onward**, giraffes enter a long, stable prime. Weight remains consistent with seasonal fluctuations — heavier in wet years with abundant browse, slightly lighter in prolonged drought. Mature bulls continue to thicken through the neck and chest, a product of necking contests and territorial pressures, whereas cows invest heavily in the nutritional demands of raising calves every 20–30 months.
The entire growth trajectory is a testament to the species' evolutionary mastery of height, reach and efficiency. The rising curve, the broad mid-life plateau and the gradual tapering into old age capture not just the biology of growth, but a giraffe's lifelong interaction with its habitat: nutrient-rich trees, shifting rainfall zones, predator pressures and the quiet genetics carried from one browsing giant to the next.



A giraffe's rise in stature is one of nature's most astonishing engineering feats. A calf is already impressive at birth — **1.6 to 2 metres tall**, taller than most adult humans — and it stands within minutes after its dramatic head-first fall into the world. These early hours are critical. Standing quickly allows the calf to nurse and flee predators and this instinctive drive marks the beginning of a lifetime shaped by height, reach and visibility across the African savannah.

From here, the **first two to three years** bring an extraordinary surge of upward growth. A steep, almost vertical climb in shoulder height, as depicted on the chart. Young bulls and cows stretch upwards at several centimetres per week, their long bones elongating rapidly as cartilage plates remain highly active. By their third year, they already dwarf most antelope — bulls often reaching **2.6–2.8 metres** at the shoulder and cows slightly below this, around **2.3–2.5 metres**. Nutrition plays an enormous role during this stage. Access to nitrogen-rich browse from acacias and mopane trees fuels the kind of sustained vertical growth that only giraffes achieve.

Between **ages 4 and 6**, the rapid ascent softens into a steadier climb. The body begins to rebalance as weight and skeletal strength catch up with height. Males continue to stretch higher than females, reflecting the increasing role height plays in dominance and breeding success. By six years old, many young bulls are already **3 metres or more** at the shoulder. Females plateau earlier and more gradually, levelling off at **2.6–2.8 metres**, a perfect functional height for browsing and calf-rearing without the heavy, energy-rich bone mass seen in bulls.

The period between **ages 7 and 10** marks the transition into prime stature — the elegant plateau visible on the chart. During these years, giraffes grow more slowly, adding centimetres rather than whole limbs, but the changes are still significant. Bulls reach **3.2–3.4 metres** at the shoulder, with exceptional individuals pushing

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toward **3.5 metres**, driven by genetics and access to consistent browse. This high plateau phase reflects the culmination of skeletal maturity: the vertebrae lengthen fractionally, the leg bones thicken and the iconic silhouette sharpens into its final proportions.

Beyond **ten years**, giraffes enter their long adult prime. Height is largely fixed, with only subtle changes driven by posture, condition and the thickening of soft tissues. Bulls become more imposing as neck strength develops through years of "necking" contests, but the skeletal height remains steady. Cows retain their more refined stature — slightly shorter, lighter and optimised for raising calves in herds that depend on constant visibility and coordinated movement.
The entire height trajectory, from explosive early growth to the broad, gentle plateau of adulthood, is a reflection of the giraffe's evolutionary strategy: see further, reach higher and maintain a vantage point that shapes every aspect of their behaviour and ecology — a species built for height, achieving its towering prime through a decade of upward ambition before settling into the slow, graceful rhythms of adulthood.

Giraffes browse intensively on **acacia, marula, knobthorn, mopane, combretum, bushwillow** and a wide variety of tall shrub species. They target leaf flushes, seed pods and flowers when available. Their long tongues, tough oral linings and selective browsing style allow them to feed on high-tannin plants without issue. They drink infrequently and can survive drought cycles remarkably well.

Females calve every **20–30 months**, with a gestation of **~15 months**. Births typically occur in summer rainfall periods for optimal vegetation. Calves hide for the first weeks of life, joining nursery herds soon afterward. Sexual maturity occurs at **4–5 years (females)** and **6–7 years (males)**, though dominant breeding success for bulls often begins later.

Major Variants of the Giraffe:

Variant / Ecotype	Geographic Distribution	Typical Colouration	Pattern Description	Notes
South African Giraffe (*G. g. giraffa*)	Limpopo, Mpumalanga, NW, KZN, Gauteng, NC	Rich golden to dark tan	Large irregular patches with pale cream lines	Most common in SA private reserves
Angolan Giraffe (*G. g. angolensis*)	Namibia, SW Zambia, NW Botswana	Light tan	Large rounded blotches	Often translocated into SA reserves
Masai Giraffe (*G. tippelskirchi*)	Tanzania, Kenya	Deep orange-brown	Star-shaped leaf-like patches	Rare in SA; high tourism value
Reticulated Giraffe (*G. reticulata*)	Kenya, Ethiopia	Chocolate brown	Sharp-edged geometric polygons	Not common in SA; striking appearance
Kordofan/Nubian Giraffe	Central & North Africa	Pale sandy	Small irregular blotches	Not present in SA; critically endangered

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Fascinating Insights:

- **Giraffes have the same number of neck vertebrae as humans — seven — yet each can exceed 25 cm in length.**
- Their **heart is the most powerful of any land mammal**, weighing up to 11 kg and generating enormous pressure to pump blood up the neck.
- **Giraffe blood pressure is roughly double that of humans**, yet their specialised valves prevent fainting when they raise or lower their heads.
- The **rete mirabile**, a complex network of blood vessels, protects the brain from sudden surges in pressure.
- Giraffes sleep for only **3–5 minutes at a time**, accumulating less than 30 minutes of sleep per day — the least of any mammal.
- Their tongues reach **40–50 cm** and are darkly pigmented to prevent sunburn while feeding high in thorn trees.
- Giraffes can consume **30 kg of browse a day**, often feeding on thorny acacias avoided by other herbivores.
- A giraffe's stride can exceed **4 metres**, allowing them to trot at 60 km/h in short bursts.
- Calves drop more than **1.5 metres at birth**, but this fall breaks the umbilical cord and stimulates breathing.
- Mothers defend calves fiercely — a single kick from a giraffe can kill a lion.
- Giraffes drink infrequently, sometimes going **several days or weeks** without water by extracting moisture from their diet.
- Their **ossicones** (horn-like structures) are covered in skin and fur; males develop heavier, balder ossicones due to combat.
- Male "**necking**" battles can last over an hour and determine access to females — a key driver of size and mass differences.
- Each giraffe's coat pattern is **genetically unique**, serving as both camouflage and temperature regulation through complex vascular networks beneath the patches.
- Giraffes communicate using **low-frequency infrasound**, often below human hearing range — aiding herd cohesion over long distances.
- Their height allows them to act as **sentinels**: zebras, wildebeest, impala and other plains game often feed near giraffes to benefit from their extended field of view.
- Giraffes host a symbiotic relationship with **oxpeckers**, which feed on parasites and help alert them to danger.
- Bulls continue gaining **neck thickness** throughout life, even after skeletal growth ends — a record of dominance battles.
- In the wild, their lifespan is typically **20–25 years**, but well-managed reserves often see individuals approaching 28–30 years.

"In the modern wildlife industry, **giraffe hold exceptional ecological, tourism and economic value**. Their towering presence **instantly elevates the visual appeal of any reserve**, their specialised browsing habits **support balanced veld management** and their genetics — particularly **height, coat pattern quality and structural conformation** — are increasingly monitored for breeding and long-term herd planning. As **flagship species** with **high tourism draw** and relatively **low management conflict**, giraffes remain one of the **most strategic animals** for anchoring both **ecological integrity** and **commercial sustainability** in South African wildlife operations."

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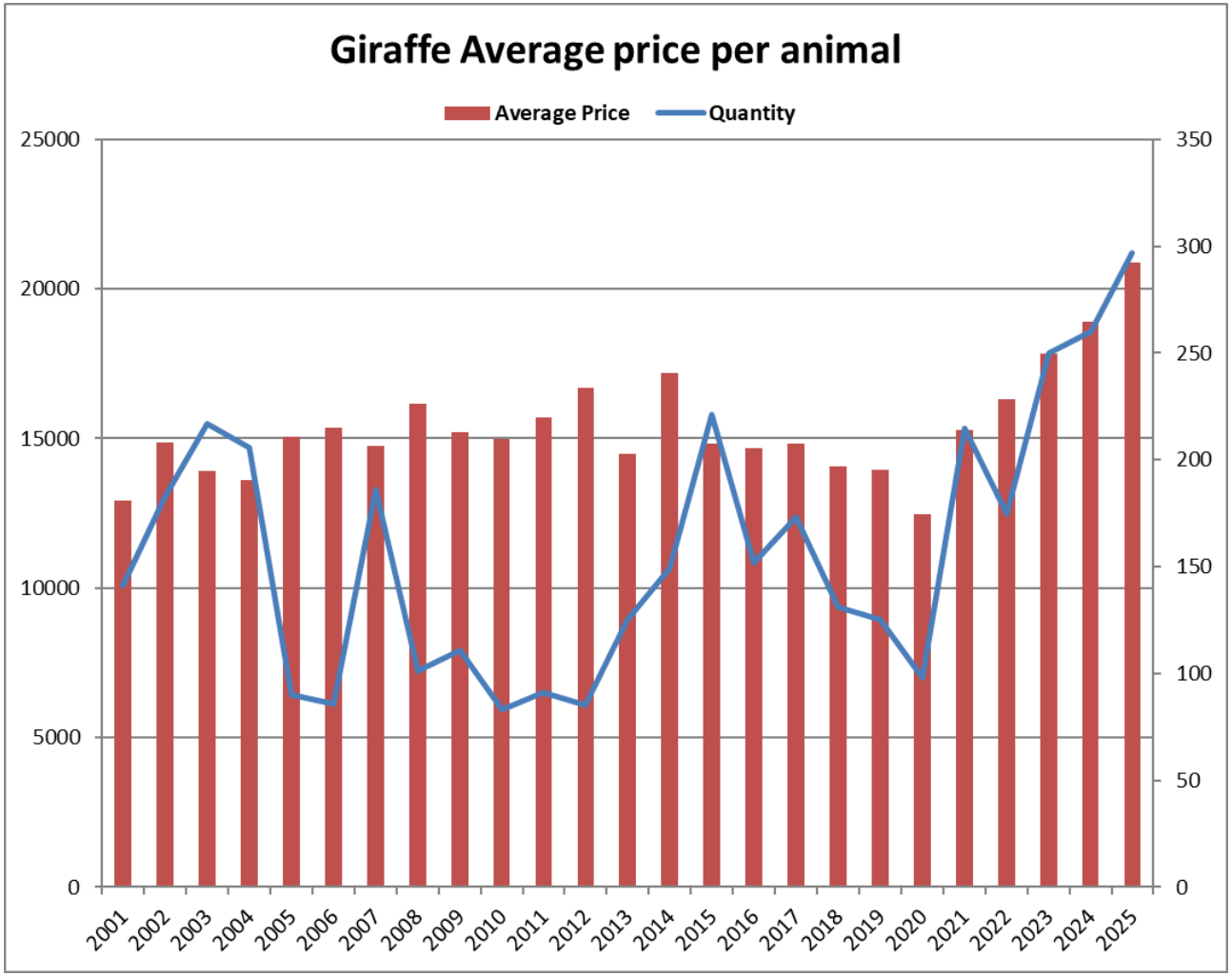
Giraffe Specie Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

The giraffe dataset presents a long-term view of a species that has always occupied a distinctive place in the wildlife economy, balancing its appeal to ecotourism, selective breeding programmes and controlled live-sale markets. The table and graph together illustrate how **giraffe pricing has evolved across more than two decades**, showing periods of strength, contraction and remarkable resurgence. What stands out is the **species' consistency**, even when wider macro-forces such as drought cycles, shifting demand in safari regions, COVID-era disruptions and post-pandemic rebounds reshaped market behaviour. The graph underscores the interplay between **quantity supplied and average price achieved**, revealing how giraffe remained a steady performer until a more pronounced upward trajectory emerged in recent years.

Giraffe			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 823 538	141	R12 933
2002	R2 717 925	183	R14 852
2003	R3 022 859	217	R13 930
2004	R2 804 350	206	R13 613
2005	R1 353 500	90	R15 039
2006	R1 322 000	86	R15 372
2007	R2 747 200	186	R14 770
2008	R1 632 500	101	R16 163
2009	R1 687 500	111	R15 203
2010	R1 242 220	83	R14 967
2011	R1 427 750	91	R15 690
2012	R1 420 500	85	R16 712
2013	R1 813 000	125	R14 504
2014	R2 559 500	149	R17 178
2015	R3 274 050	221	R14 815
2016	R2 231 500	152	R14 681
2017	R2 562 699	173	R14 813
2018	R1 843 098	131	R14 069
2019	R1 744 800	125	R13 958
2020	R1 223 350	98	R12 483
2021	R3 283 150	215	R15 270
2022	R2 857 250	175	R16 327
2023	R4 459 252	250	R17 837
2024	R4 917 500	260	R18 913
2025	R6 204 700	297	R20 891



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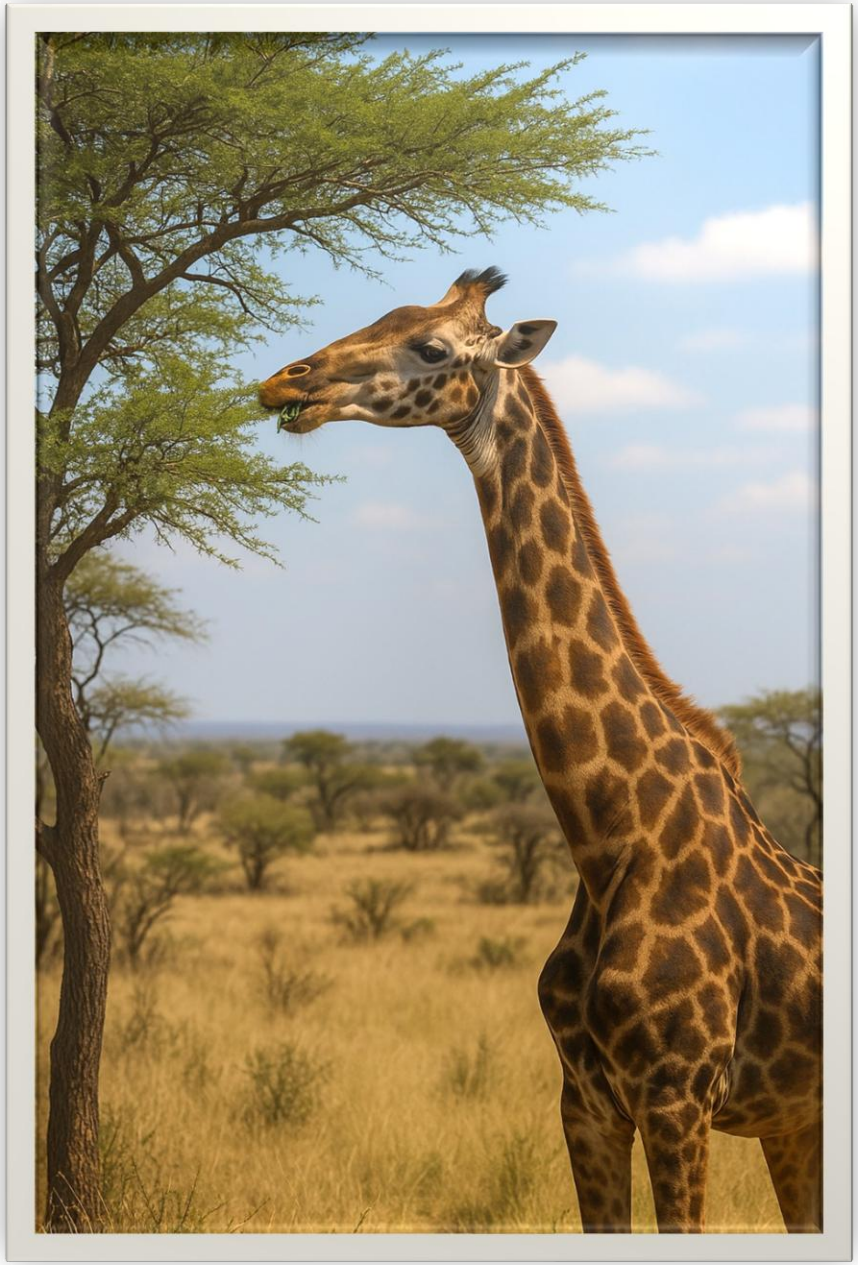
Giraffe Specie Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Stability and Predictable Pricing: 2001–2008

From **2001 to 2008**, Giraffe prices showed exceptional steadiness. Average prices moved between **R12 933 (2001)** and **R16 163 (2008)** with only subtle year-to-year variations. Quantities fluctuated from **86 to 217**, suggesting availability varied more with operational decisions than market shock.
Total value remained grounded, reaching **R1.63 million (2008)**.
This period aligned with Giraffe's established role in the wildlife economy—reliable, non-speculative, and supported by both hunting tourism and live-sale interest. The graph reflects this calm rhythm with tightly grouped price bars.



Transition Years and Mid-Cycle Compression: 2009–2013

Between **2009 and 2013**, average prices stabilised further between **R14 504 and R16 712**, even as value and quantity fluctuated.
Quantity dipped to **83 animals (2010)** and then climbed to **125 (2013)**, while total value ranged from **R1.24 million (2010)** to **R1.81 million (2013)**.
The consistency of price in this period underscores a market not influenced by the rare-game boom that distorted other species. Giraffe remained grounded in classical utilisation economics—hunting, ecotourism display value, and selective breeding.

Market Expansion and Subtle Structural Shifts: 2014–2019

The years **2014 to 2019** were defined by gradual uplift followed by a soft dip.
Prices moved from **R17 178 (2014)** down to **R13 958 (2019)**, while quantities ranged from **149 to 173**, before dipping to **125** in 2019.
Total value fluctuated accordingly, from **R2.56 million (2014)** to **R1.74 million (2019)**.
This period reflects a maturing market where Giraffe performance was influenced by broader macroeconomic tightening, drought cycles, and shifting breeder priorities.
The graph displays this as mild undulation rather than major disruption, emphasising the species' stability.

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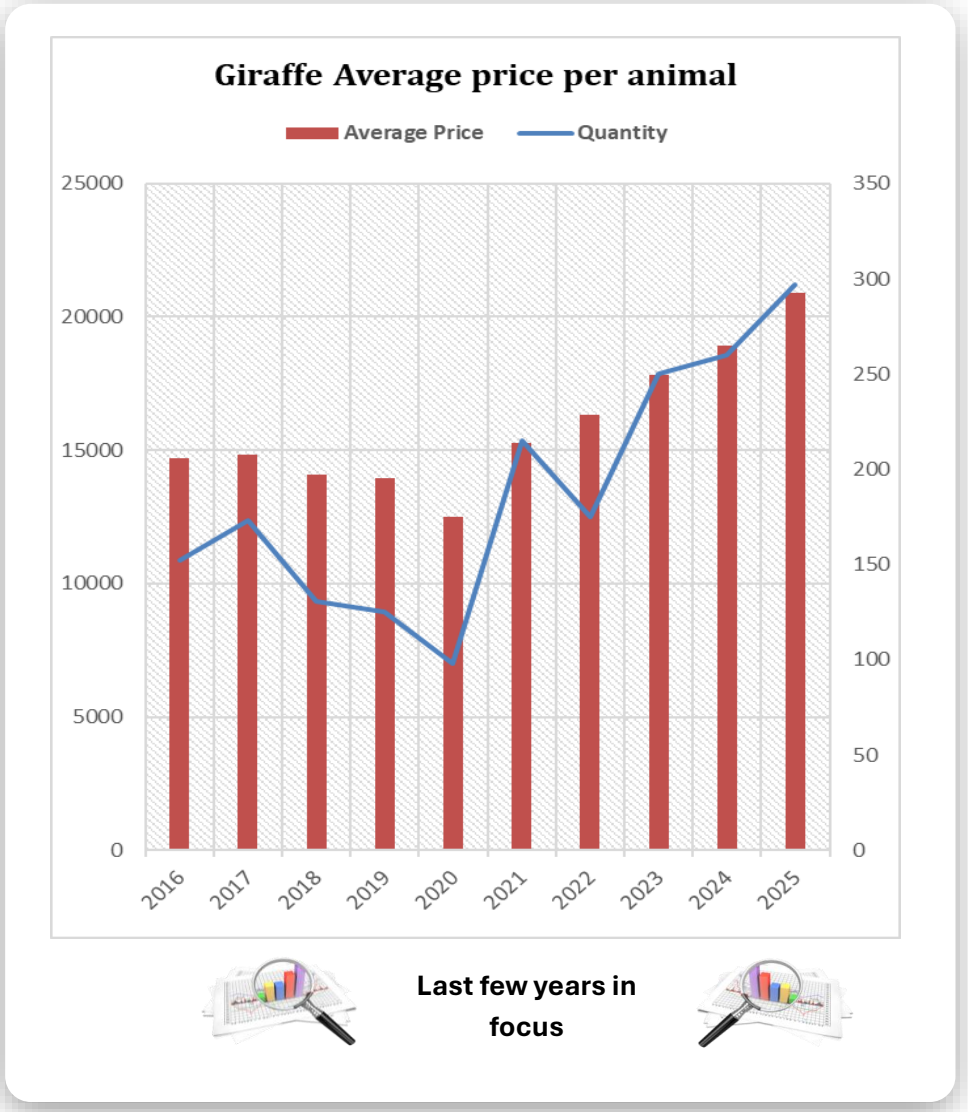
COVID Shock and the Post-Pandemic Rebound: 2020–2022

By **2020**, quantities dropped to **98 animals**, and average price softened to **R12 483**, with total value falling to **R1.22 million**—a clear impact of COVID-era disruptions.
As restrictions eased, Giraffe rebounded strongly:

- **2021:** quantity rose to **215**, price lifted to **R15 270**, and value increased to **R3.28 million**.
- **2022:** value reached **R2.86 million**, with price at **R16 327**.
  This rebound reflects renewed hunting demand, restocking of ecotourism properties, and general post-pandemic recalibration within the wildlife economy.



Accelerated Demand and Late-Cycle Breakout: 2023–2024

From **2023 to 2024**, the market entered a clear expansion phase.
Average price increased from **R17 837 (2023)** to **R18 913 (2024)**, and quantity rose from **250** to **260** animals.
Total value increased correspondingly from **R4.46 million** to **R4.92 million**.
These figures show a market transitioning from slow growth into more assertive pricing power, driven by tourism recovery, breeder confidence, and higher demand from multi-species hunting concessions.

2025 vs 2024 — A STRONG PRICE SURGE SIGNALS EMERGING SUPPLY TIGHTNESS

The movement from **2024 to 2025** reveals one of the clearest strengthening signals in the entire Giraffe series.
Quantity increased from **260** to **297 animals**, a **14.2% rise**, showing that supply availability expanded modestly.

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Yet despite this increase in supply, **average price jumped significantly** from **R18 913** to **R20 891**, a **10.45% increase**.
Total value surged from **R4.92 million** to **R6.20 million**, reflecting both higher volumes and notably stronger buyer willingness to pay.

This combination—**increasing supply AND increasing price**—is a hallmark of a market experiencing **structural demand growth**, not short-term fluctuation. In 2025, Giraffe benefitted from:

- heightened ecotourism-driven restocking demand,
- strong take-up in biltong and trophy hunting packages,
- improving macroeconomic confidence among wildlife ranchers,
- and a recognition of Giraffe as a resilient, high-utility species.

The graph captures this shift: both the quantity line and price bars rise sharply in tandem, illustrating that **2025 is not merely a recovery year but a genuine demand-driven expansion phase**.

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NYALA

Tragelaphus angasii

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae



WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY
- Medium spiral-horned antelope; males dark brown with 22–33 inch horns; females orange-chestnut and hornless.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION
- Dense bushveld, riverine thickets, KZN–Lowveld distribution; widely introduced.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY
- Browser–grazer; leaves, forbs, fruits, grasses; water-dependent.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE
- Semi-solitary; females in small groups; males solitary; ritualized dominance posturing.

ADAPTATIONS
- Extreme camouflage, flexible diet, riparian specialization, cryptic behaviour.

CONSERVATION STATUS
- Least Concern; increasing on private lands.

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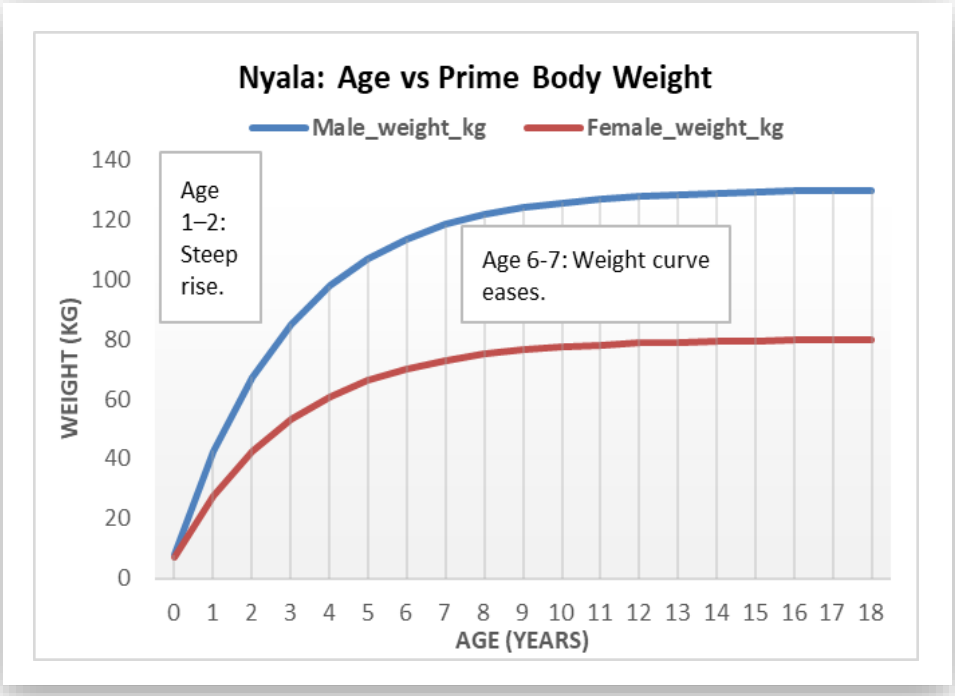
Nyala Specie Information

There are animals in the African bush that announce their presence through majesty and size and others that slip through the Mopani shadows with such quiet elegance that their presence feels almost mythical. The Nyala—known scientifically as the Nyala—is firmly in the latter category. It is a creature of dappled light, deep thickets and riverine forests, a species that blends so seamlessly into its environment that one often sees it only when it chooses to be seen.

In South Africa, the Nyala's story begins along the lush, waterbound corridors of **KwaZulu-Natal, spreading outward through the Lowveld regions of Limpopo and Mpumalanga**. These habitats, characterised by dense cover, abundant shade and seasonal water movement, are ideal for a species that avoids large open plains and depends on vegetation-rich belts for survival. Over time, successful wildlife management and active translocation have ensured that **Nyala now roam across private game reserves** throughout the country, where they have become valued wildlife assets because of their adaptability, low-impact ecological footprint and extraordinary aesthetic appeal.

Their daily rhythm is shaped entirely by their surroundings. They are at home where the bush thickens and where light filters through in narrow beams. Feeding is a slow, deliberate process. They browse on the **leaves of acacia, bushwillow and combretum**, stretching delicately to reach young shoots and nibbling at scattered **forbs and wild fruits**. When the first rains bring tender green grasses, they take advantage of the abundance, shifting temporarily toward selective grazing. Their dietary flexibility is one of their greatest strengths. Unlike specialist feeders, they effortlessly adjust to the changing availability of browse and graze in woodland ecosystems, allowing them to maintain excellent condition even through challenging seasonal cycles.



A newborn Nyala calf, weighing **5–8 kg**, hides its vulnerability beneath dappled shadows and the careful protection of its mother. After a **gestation of around seven months**, the calf is born with a soft, russet coat marked by bright vertical stripes that offer perfect camouflage. For the first few days it lies motionless in cover, visited regularly by its mother for nursing and grooming — a timeless survival strategy of many forest and thicket antelope.

From this quiet beginning comes an astonishing **surge of early growth**, clearly reflected by the steep rise in the chart between **ages 1 and 2**. Within the first year, a male Nyala can triple its body weight, moving from a delicate youngster to a well-framed juvenile of **25–35 kg**. Females grow in similar rhythm but retain their smaller, more streamlined structure, well adapted for raising future calves and navigating dense bush.

By **three to four years**, the Nyala begins to transform. Males develop shaggy, slate-grey coats, the iconic dorsal crest and the pale facial chevrons that mark the species. Weight increases rapidly during this phase, largely driven by access to

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quality browse — knobthorn, raisin bush, wild syringa and other broad-leafed woodland species that fuel this period of muscular expansion. Bulls often reach **90–110 kg** by age four, while females settle comfortably between **55–65 kg**.

Between **ages 5 and 7**, the growth curve softens into the graceful plateau indicated in the chart. This is the stage where the Nyala reaches its structural and social prime. Bulls fill out their chest, deepen through the neck and add the last layers of muscle that support dominance encounters and territorial displays. Prime males commonly weigh **120–130 kg**, with exceptional individuals approaching **135–140 kg** in rich ecosystems. Females continue a gentler trajectory, plateauing at **65–75 kg** as their energy shifts toward reproduction and maternal investment.

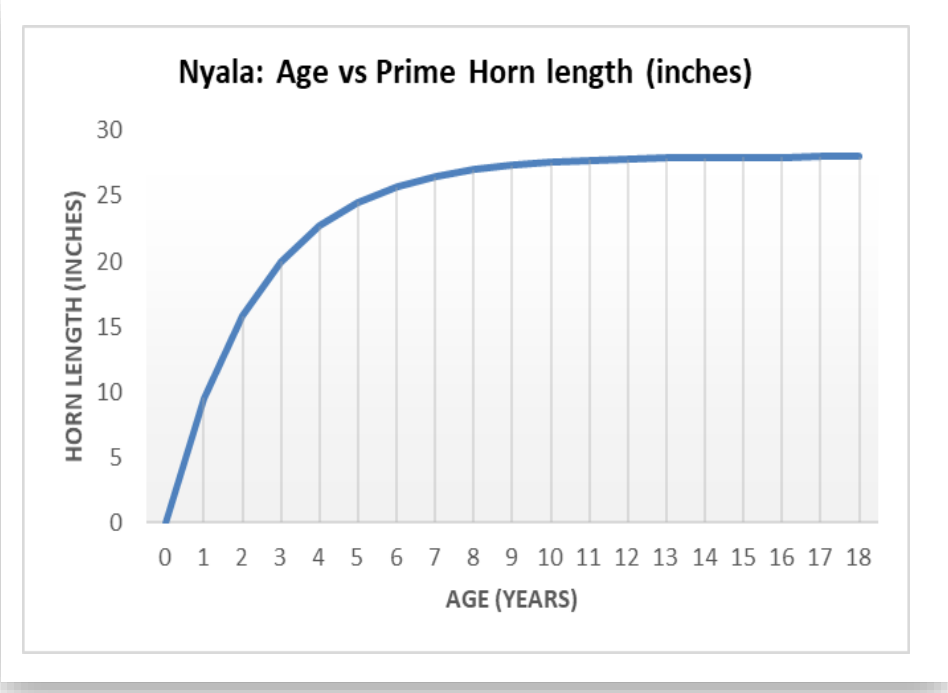
Beyond **age eight**, Nyala enter a stable adult phase. Weight fluctuates seasonally — fuller during wet years with abundant forage and slightly leaner through prolonged drought — but remains generally constant. Mature bulls retain their imposing presence, their heavy coats and white spinal ridge giving them an almost mystical appearance when emerging from riverine shadows. Females, by contrast, maintain the warm chestnut tones and striped elegance that make them one of Africa's most visually striking antelope.

The Nyala's entire growth trajectory reflects its ecological niche: a species perfectly adapted to the mosaic of thicket, woodland and riparian bush. The early sprint in weight gain, the middle-life deepening and the gentle long-term plateau all mirror a life lived in dense cover, where agility, selective browsing and social fluidity shape every stage of development.

The horn story of the Nyala bull is one of elegance, power and slow, deliberate refinement — a narrative written in spirals of keratin over nearly a decade. Unlike the females, who carry no horns at all, **only male Nyala develop the iconic, sweeping spiral horns**, making horn growth a direct reflection of masculine maturity, dominance and genetics.

The journey begins early. In the **first year**, horn buds emerge as small, pointed nubs, almost delicate in appearance. Yet beneath their softness lies an astonishing biological engine. Between **ages 1 and 2**, bulls experience their fastest horn growth — a near-vertical climb on the chart — with horns extending from a few centimetres to nearly **10–12 inches**. This is the physiological surge that sets the frame for the Nyala bull's future stature.

By **three years of age**, the horns lengthen dramatically, forming the first full twists of the classic spiral. Bulls typically reach **16–18 inches** at this stage and the horn bases begin to thicken as testosterone levels rise.
Growth remains strong into the fourth year, pushing lengths into the **20–23 inch** range.



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During this period, young bulls start engaging in the early displays of dominance that define their later roles in the herd — broadside posturing, slow circular walking and the iconic "crest-raised" intimidation display. Between **ages 5 and 7**, horn growth begins its elegant taper. The chart shows this beautifully: the steep early rise gives way to a long, smooth plateau as bulls approach **25–27 inches**.

The spiral tightens, the ridges sharpen and the horn tips refine into smooth, polished points from years of brushing vegetation and occasional sparring. Bulls in this age bracket stand in their prime — fully mature, visually imposing and carrying the full expression of their genetic potential.

From **seven years onward**, horn growth slows to a near standstill, yet character continues to deepen. Horns may add a fraction of an inch each year, eventually reaching **27–29 inches** in exceptional individuals, but most of the visual maturity comes from thickening at the base, darkening of the keratin sheath and the subtle weathering earned through age. This phase is reflected as the final, gentle plateau in the graph — the point where the Nyala bull's horns match his authority. Throughout this progression, the contrast between the sexes is striking. **Female Nyala do not have horns at all**, a distinction that shapes herd structure and behavioural dynamics. As such, the chart represents *male horn growth exclusively* and highlights just how integral the spiral horns are to bull identity, social ranking and breeding success. Bulls now grow to a maximum of **34 inches.**

The overall horn-growth curve — fast in youth, measured in maturity and subtle in age — mirrors the Nyala's lived experience in dense thickets and riverine forests. Each twist of the horn tells a story of survival, hierarchy and the quiet majesty that makes the Nyala one of Africa's most captivating antelope.

To watch a male and female Nyala side by side is to see evolution in artistic contrast. The **bull**, with his **dark, charcoal-toned coat** and sweeping spiral horns, seems designed to disappear into deep riverine shadow. His dorsal crest, elevated at times of mild dominance display, enhances his silhouette without giving away his presence. The **cow**, by contrast, is dressed **in rich chestnut-orange tones**, marked with clean vertical white striping that blends perfectly with the broken golden light of the bushveld. Her movements are soft and measured and she moves with a different energy—one of quiet attentiveness, always aware of her calf or her small social group.

These differences between male and female are more than cosmetic; they structure the Nyala's entire social fabric. Bulls often wander on their own, interacting with cows mainly during breeding or when drifting through territories. They seldom resort to violent confrontation; instead, they rely on posture, raised hair and subtle movement to express dominance. Cows favour small family groups, often with calves in close attendance and together they thread their way through the denser woodland margins where they are both well-camouflaged and well-protected.

As the Nyala moves through its life, it carries the quiet confidence of a species that has perfected the art of remaining unseen. It rarely breaks into open spaces without cause, preferring instead to merge with the shadows and edges of riparian belts. Its lifespan of twelve to sixteen years is spent in the safety of cover, close to the water systems that sustain the species. And when breeding occurs, it follows a gentle rhythm: a seven-month gestation, calves born in the wake of rainfall and a life cycle that continues with dependable regularity.

Major Variants:

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Variant	Description / Distinguishing Traits	Colouration	Notes / Rarity
Common / Standard Nyala	Natural phenotype found across southern Africa; stable genetics; foundational breeding stock.	Bulls: slate-grey with white stripes, dorsal crest, leg stockings.	
Cows: rich chestnut with bright vertical stripes.	Most common and most sought after for classic species purity.		
Dark Bull (Melanistic Tendency)	Selective breeding emphasises darker pigmentation; very dark grey to almost charcoal bulls.	Deep charcoal-grey coat with bold white markings and thick dorsal crest.	Increasingly in demand for trophy and aesthetic value. Seen as premium genetics.
Light-Phase Cow	Naturally occurring lighter female phenotype; softer chestnut to sandy tones.	Lighter chestnut; reduced stripe contrast; softer facial markings.	Uncommon; used in some breeding programs for colour diversity.
High-Stripe Line (Bold Stripe Variant)	Breeding lines with more pronounced body striping on bulls and cows.	Stronger, brighter vertical striping and clearer facial chevrons.	Infrequent but valued for photographic and tourism reserves.
Kroonstad / Limpopo Giant Line	Regionally developed lines emphasising body size, horn length and robust frames.	Standard colouration; genetic distinction is size rather than colour.	Very popular in premium breeding programs; long-term industry value.
Lowland / Coastal Nyala (KwaZulu-Natal Origin)	Slightly smaller frame but brighter, richer chestnut tones in cows and cleaner striping.	More vibrant chestnut in females, cleaner grey tones in bulls.	Geographically influenced variant; valued for aesthetics and genetic diversity.
Hybrid / Intergrade Lines (Avoided in Stud Books)	Occur in boundary zones where Nyala may interbreed with Bushbuck.	Variable; not desired for regulated breeding.	Rare, discouraged; included for completeness only.

Fascinating Insights about Nyala:

- Nyala bulls communicate dominance through posture rather than aggression.
- Their camouflage is so effective that they often "vanish" just metres away.
- They depend heavily on riparian systems, making them indicators of wetland health.
- Calves rely on stillness rather than speed for the first weeks of life.
- Males raise their dorsal crest during displays, making themselves appear larger.
- They are among the quietest antelope species in Southern Africa.

"**Nyala have become one of the most dependable and versatile species in the wildlife industry**, combining strong tourism appeal with consistent demand in both live-trading and hunting markets. Their ability to thrive in thicket, woodland and riverine environments makes them an ideal fit for mixed reserves and **their stable genetics and reliable recruitment** position the Nyala as a **key species for long-term ecological and commercial sustainability**."

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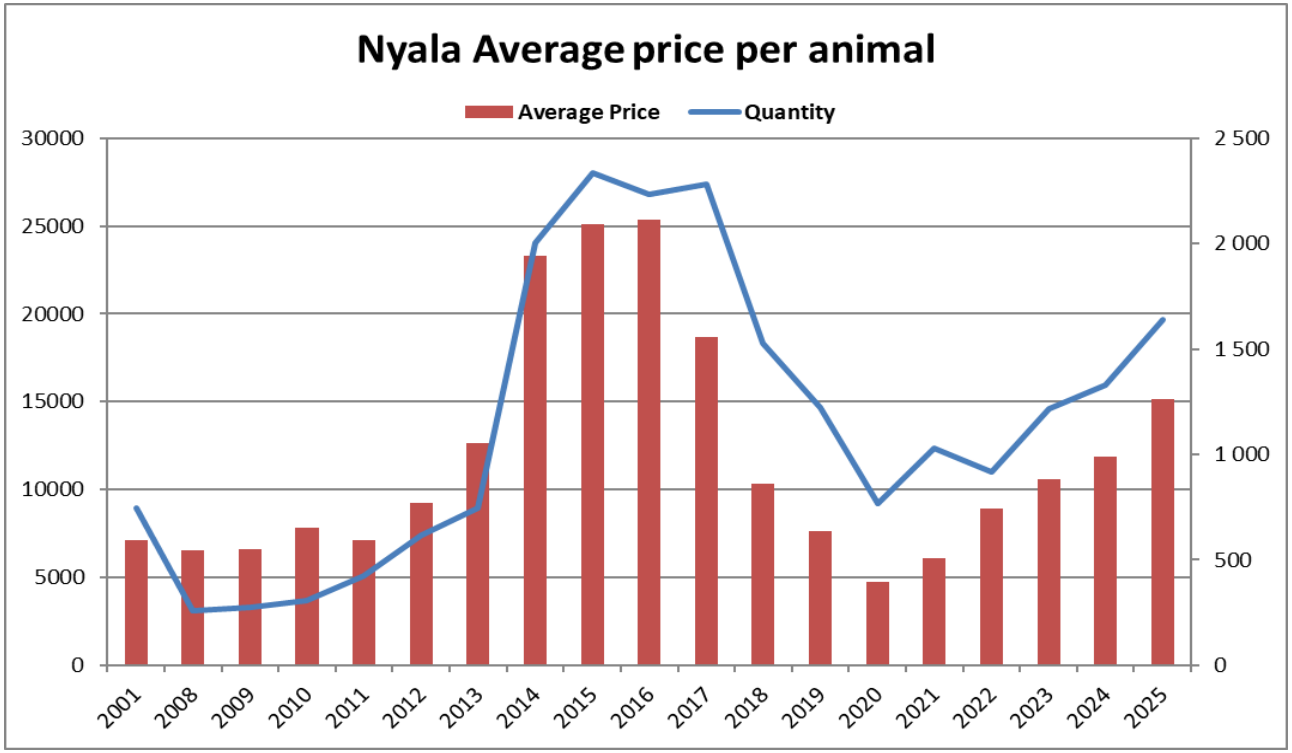
Nyala Specie Data and Graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Nyala dataset and its accompanying graph present a long-term view of how this highly sought-after spiral-horned antelope has moved through cycles of expansion, consolidation and renewed growth. The table captures **value**, **quantities sold** and **average prices** across two decades, while the graph visually reinforces the ebb and flow of the market, highlighting periods of sharp escalation, structural correction and later sustained recovery. Together, they reveal a species whose pricing behaviour has been shaped not only by supply and demand but by wider industry forces, from breeding strategies and ecological conditions to **macroeconomic pressures**, **COVID-era distortions** and the recalibration of the market once normal trade resumed. The overall trend is one of **resilience**, **renewed confidence** and a species whose appeal stretches across both commercial ranching and the eco-tourism segment.

Nyala			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R5 329 098	747	R7 134
2008	R1 699 800	261	R6 513
2009	R1 823 000	276	R6 605
2010	R2 414 850	309	R7 815
2011	R3 029 290	425	R7 128
2012	R5 713 500	619	R9 230
2013	R9 433 550	747	R12 629
2014	R46 653 850	2 002	R23 304
2015	R58 585 642	2 335	R25 090
2016	R56 591 711	2 232	R25 355
2017	R42 681 925	2 284	R18 687
2018	R15 805 575	1 529	R10 337
2019	R9 354 290	1 222	R7 655
2020	R3 646 890	768	R4 749
2021	R6 250 250	1 029	R6 074
2022	R8 175 651	917	R8 916
2023	R12 867 300	1 219	R10 556
2024	R15 804 950	1 328	R11 901
2025	R24 825 350	1 639	R15 147



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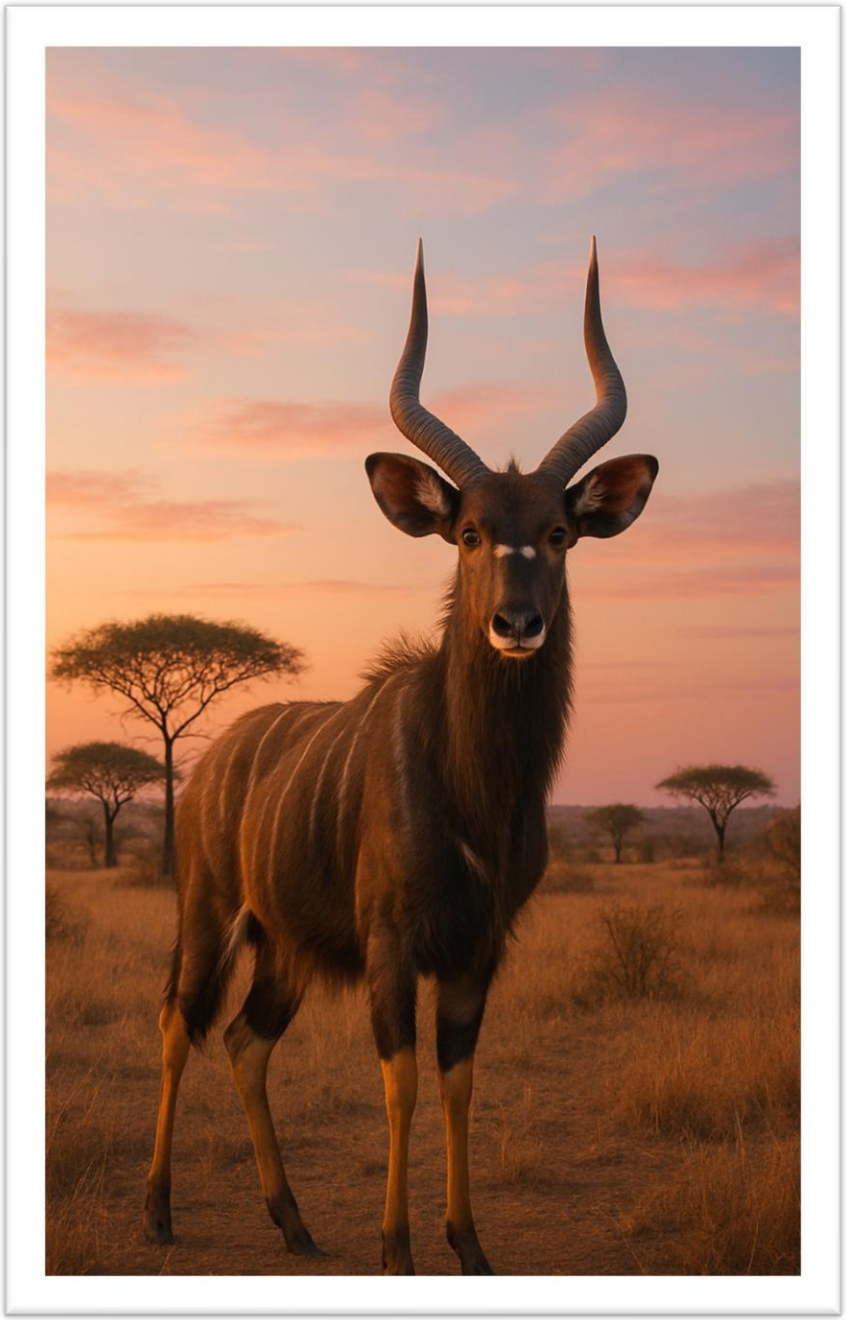
Nyala Specie Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Foundations and Steady Plains-Game Demand: 2001–2011

From **2001 to 2011**, Nyala traded at stable but gradually strengthening price levels. Average prices fluctuated between **R6 513 (2008)** and **R7 815 (2010)**, with total value moving from **R5.33 million (2001)** to **R3.03 million (2011)**, reflecting shifts in quantity from **747 animals** down to **425**.
During this period, Nyala was a reliable plains-game species with strong hunting appeal, especially in bushveld regions. The graph reflects this as a modest undulating curve with no extreme movements yet—indicative of market equilibrium.



Acceleration and Pre-Boom Growth: 2012–2013

Between **2012 and 2013**, Nyala began its first meaningful uplift phase. Prices rose from **R9 230** to **R12 629**, while quantities rose from **619** to **747**.
Total value surged to **R9.43 million (2013)**, showing breeders' increasing confidence in Nyala as both a commercial and breeding-investment species. These were the early signs of the explosive boom that followed, as expressed through the steep incline in the graph just after 2013.

The Rare-Game Investment Boom and Peak Pricing: 2014–2016

The period **2014 to 2016** marked the extraordinary Nyala boom.

- Prices jumped from **R23 304 (2014)** to **R25 355 (2016)**.
- Quantities expanded from **2 002 animals (2014)** to **2 232 animals (2016)**.
- Total value soared from **R46.65 million (2014)** to **R56.59 million (2016)**.

This period reflected an unprecedented surge in breeder investment linked to the broader rare-game speculation wave. Nyala's strong aesthetics, adaptability, and breeding ease made it one of the preferred species for expansion. The graph shows extremely high price bars here—the peak era for Nyala value.

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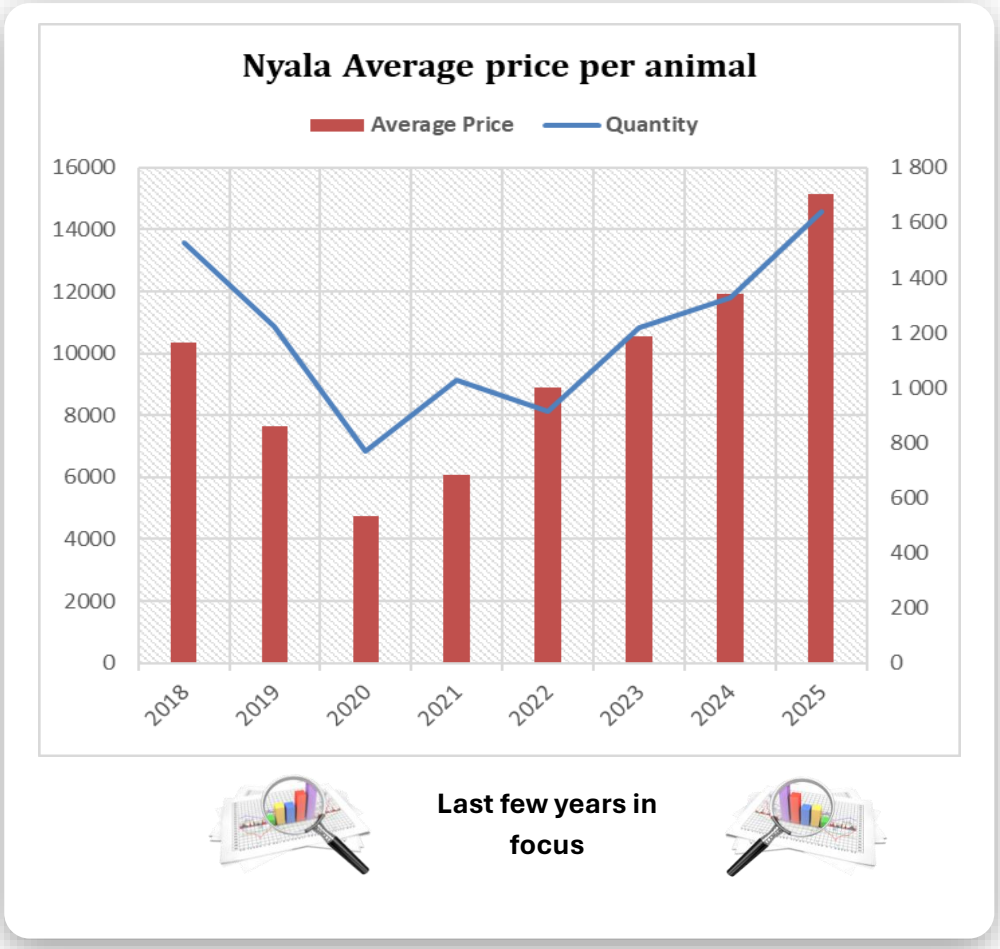
Correction, Saturation, and Post-Boom Normalisation: 2017–2020

After hitting the peak, the years **2017 to 2020** saw a dramatic correction. Average price declined from **R18 687 (2017)** to **R4 749 (2020)**. Quantities dropped from **2 284** to **768**, and value plummeted from **R42.68 million** to **R3.64 million**. This contraction was influenced by saturated supply, buyer fatigue, reduced liquidity, and later COVID pressures. The graph captures this collapse clearly: the blue line falls sharply, and the price bars reduce to a fraction of their peak height.

Recovery, Rebalancing, and Renewed Confidence: 2021–2024

Following the COVID shock, Nyala steadily regained its footing. Average price lifted from **R6 074 (2021)** to **R11 901 (2024)**. Quantities moved upward from **1 029 (2021)** to **1 328 (2024)**. Total value rose correspondingly, reaching **R15.80 million (2024)**. This period reflected broader market recovery: tourism reopened, hunting bookings returned, and breeders restored herd structures after years of contraction. The graph shows this as a gentle but reliable upward slope.



2025 vs 2024 — Strong Price Appreciation Supported by Expanding Demand

The year **2025** marks a decisive strengthening in the Nyala market.

Quantity increased from **1 328 animals (2024)** to **1 639 animals (2025)**—a **23.4% expansion**—signalling that more Nyala were brought to market. Despite this increase in supply, average price lifted sharply from **R11 901** to **R15 147**, a **27.2% rise**. Total value surged from **R15.80 million** to **R24.83 million**. This pairing—**higher supply and significantly higher prices**—reveals that demand in 2025 absorbed increased volumes without resistance. The likely drivers include:

- strong trophy and international hunting demand after multi-season backlog clearance,
- renewed domestic breeder appetite for medium-value, high-return species,

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- the re-emergence of Nyala as a stable investment alternative after years of volatility,
- and improved veld conditions after multi-year climatic pressure.

Importantly, because supply rose yet prices still escalated, this implies **true demand strength rather than artificial scarcity**.
The graph mirrors this shift with a strong upward move in both curves, signalling that Nyala is entering a new stabilised but bullish value phase.

Horn Size Categories (2024 → 2025)

This table presents a structured view of **Nyala bull pricing by horn class**, offering a precise breakdown of how the market differentiated bulls according to age, horn development and trophy size across 2024 and 2025. Rather than giving a single average, the table reveals how value is distributed along the growth curve of the species. This creates a clearer understanding of **where demand is intensifying**, how buyers behave across size brackets and how the market rewards exceptional genetics relative to more commercial segments. It is a snapshot of a species in which **phenotype, trophy aspiration and scarcity intersect directly with price formation**.

Nyala Bulls Pricing by Inches Sold

	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bulls, inches not specified	316	R13 547	408	R16 109
Bull : Sub-Adult	68	R8 908	42	R11 625
Bull : Young	20	R6 088	12	R12 604
Bull : Hunting	1	R12 000	2	R100 000
Bull : less than 24 inches	52	R15 779	36	R16 903
Bull : 24 inches plus	53	R19 123	47	R22 702
Bull : 25 inches plus	36	R19 792	54	R26 259
Bull : 26 inches plus	23	R19 652	41	R26 256
Bull : 27 inches plus	31	R23 685	54	R30 509
Bull : 28 inches plus	13	R29 577	19	R34 868
Bull : 29 inches plus	7	R30 000	17	R45 471
Bull : 30 inches plus	8	R62 688	13	R77 385
Bull : 31 inches plus	3	R183 333	2	R108 500
Bull : 32 inches plus	0	R0	1	R220 000
Bull : 33 inches plus	0	R0	1	R300 000
Bull : 34 inches plus	1	R270 000	0	R0

The first insight the table reveals is the continued dominance of **non-specified bulls**, which again made up the single largest block of transactions. Their quantity rose from 316 to 408 and this alone signals an expanding mainstream Nyala market as more buyers compete for general-purpose and commercial-value bulls. The price shift from R13 547 to R16 109 shows that even in this broad category, **upward pressure was real**, driven by a tightening supply of quality males across the country.

Moving into the structured age classes, the **Sub-Adult** and **Young** brackets show a fascinating shift. Sub-Adults contracted in quantity from 68 to 42, but their price stepped upward from R8 908 to R11 625. The Young bulls halved in volume from 20 to 12, yet their price doubled from R6 088 to R12 604.

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This is classic behaviour in a market where breeding programmes are retaining younger stock rather than releasing them into auctions—**scarcity lifts the perceived value**, particularly in a species where sexual dimorphism and horn development heavily influence future breeding potential.

The **Hunting bulls** tell a different story altogether. Only one sold in 2024 at R12 000, while two sold in 2025 at an astonishing R100 000 each. This is not a pattern of commercial hunting behaviour; instead, it strongly reflects the sale of premium, perhaps uniquely patterned or heavily built individuals intended for elite hunting packages linked to luxury reserves. Their rarity at auction gives the category **outsized price sensitivity**, so the category acts as a bellwether for high-end tourism-driven demand.

Where the table becomes especially revealing is in the progression of horn-length classes. Bulls under 24 inches held steady demand, but the true escalation begins from 24 inches and upward. Bulls at **24 inches plus** rose slightly in volume from 53 to 47, while their average price climbed from R19 123 to R22 702. Immediately above this point, demand strengthened sharply: **25 inches plus** grew from 36 to 54 bulls sold and their price lifted from R19 792 to R26 259. This turning point in the data illustrates a buyer market increasingly focused on **breeding-grade, structurally advanced young bulls**, rather than bulk commercial males.

From the **27–30 inch classes**, the narrative becomes one of accelerating value. The 27-inch category expanded from 31 to 54 bulls sold and buyers pushed prices from R23 685 to R30 509. This price progression aligns with what the broader Nyala market has been signalling: **buyers will pay decisively for bulls that are clearly on track to surpass genetic benchmarks**.

Above 30 inches, the table captures the premium frontier. The 30-inch class expanded from 8 to 13 bulls with a price jump from R62 688 to R77 385, confirming continued exceptional demand for trophy-grade males. The even rarer upper classes show extreme volatility. In 2024 only three bulls reached 31 inches, selling at R183 333. In 2025, the category had only two bulls but still commanded R108 500. These differences reflect **small-sample dynamics**, where traits such as symmetry, curl depth and horn shape can dramatically influence outcomes.

The pinnacle lies in the **32 and 33-inch bulls**. No 32- or 33-inch bulls sold in 2024, but in 2025, one bull at 32 inches reached R220 000, while a singular 33-inch bull reached a remarkable R300 000. These outliers show that **elite Nyala trophies have entered a new stratosphere of buyer willingness**, driven by record-setting genetics and heightened scarcity after a decade of selective breeding. Meanwhile, the 34-inch bull category had only one sale in 2024 at R270 000 and none in 2025, underscoring just how **rare these exceptional giants truly are**.

Together, the table illustrates a species in transition: commercial categories are expanding, mid-tier trophies are becoming increasingly contested and the upper-tier horn classes now sit at the intersection of prestige genetics and investment-grade wildlife assets. The pattern is unmistakable—**2025 amplified every tier of the Nyala bull market**, from mass-market males to once-in-a-generation trophies.

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RED HARTEBEEST

Alcelaphus buselaphus caama

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae



WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY

- A large, long-faced antelope with a deep reddish-tan coat, black facial blaze, white rump accents, and sharply angled 18–24 inch horns in both sexes.
- Adults stand 1.2–1.4 m at the shoulder and weigh 120–180 kg, with males heavier and more robust.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Semi-arid savannah, Kalahari sandveld, Karoo plains; widespread in NC, FS, NW, Limpopo, EC.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Short-grass grazer; highly efficient digestion; drought-tolerant.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Breeding herds, bachelor groups, territorial bulls; fast and alert.

ADAPTATIONS

- Water-efficient physiology, selective grazing muzzle, long-distance endurance.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern;
- Strong populations in protected and private lands.

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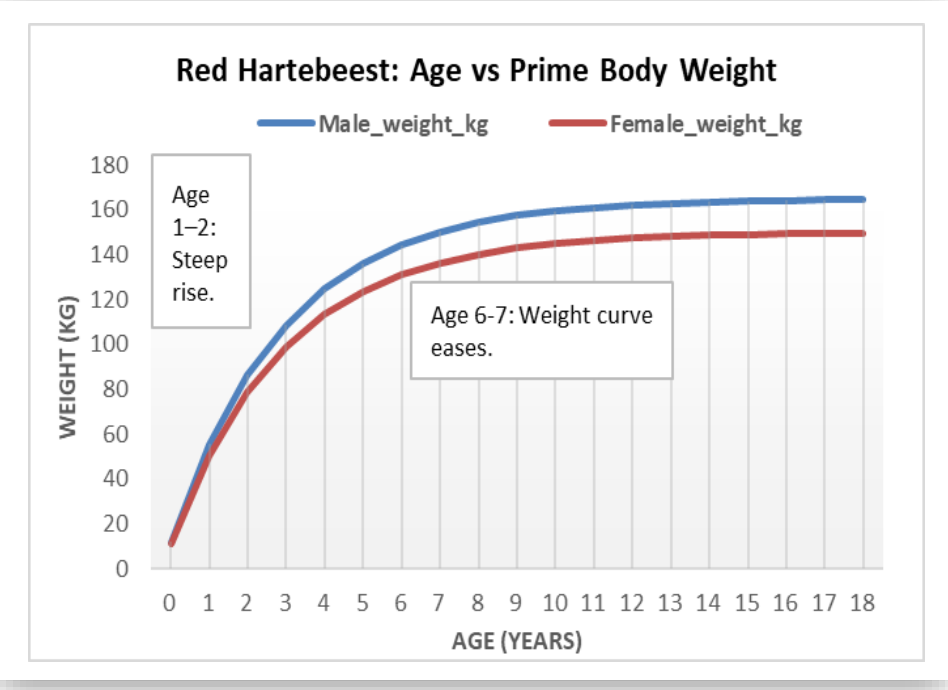
Red hartebeest Specie Information

The Red Hartebeest is one of South Africa's most recognisable plains antelope—angular in build, deep-chested, long-faced and forged for survival in harsh open veld. To watch a herd move across the ochre grasslands of the Northern Cape or the rolling plains of the Free State is to witness an animal perfectly sculpted by time and terrain. For generations, it has stood as a species that blends ecological usefulness, strong veld hardiness and economic relevance to the country's wildlife industry. The species occupies a broad range across South Africa. It thrives in the **Northern Cape's Kalahari**, where the red sands mirror its coat; it grazes deeply in the **Free State**, often forming part of the backbone species on private wildlife systems; it thrives in the **Karoo and Eastern Cape**, tolerating shale plains and sparse grasses; and it adapts well to the **North West and Limpopo bushveld**, provided there is space to run and adequate grass cover. In every environment, one theme repeats: the hartebeest prefers the open—vast, unbroken stretches of veld where its remarkable speed becomes its lifeline.

Diet plays a central role in its ecological importance. Unlike many grazers that depend on fresh, protein-rich grasses, the Red Hartebeest can extract value from **dry, fibrous grasses** that most species consider "veld leftovers." They feed low to the ground, clipping stems with precision thanks to their elongated face and specialised jaw musculature. Because of this, they serve as **veld balancers**, consuming grasses at growth stages that help prevent bush encroachment and maintain savanna structure.
Though males and females look similar from afar, subtle distinctions emerge upon closer study. Mature bulls develop heavier forequarters, a more pronounced dewlap and thicker horn bases that display impressive mass.



Their coats tend to darken with age, especially across the shoulders and flanks. Cows are more refined—slimmer, with narrower faces and more elongated horns that lack the deep base mass seen in bulls. Their behaviour also differs: bulls remain territorial in prime age, while cows organise the social fabric of the herd, guiding movement, grazing routes and calving sites.

The life story of a Red Hartebeest is remarkably predictable and this consistency is one of the reasons breeders prize the species so highly. From the moment a calf drops—usually weighing between **10 and 12 kilograms**—its priority is rapid survival. Within minutes it stands and within hours it moves confidently enough to avoid predators.

By its first year, the hartebeest reaches between **25 and 45 kilograms**, while its small horns begin emerging at around **2–5 inches**. This early development phase shows up clearly in the **Age vs Weight** chart you generated: a graceful but definite upward sweep, indicating a species investing heavily in early mass and mobility. The annotation "Rapid growth phase" highlights the moment where weight accelerates sharply—between ages 2 and 5—as the young antelope transitions from vulnerable calf to confident sub-adult.

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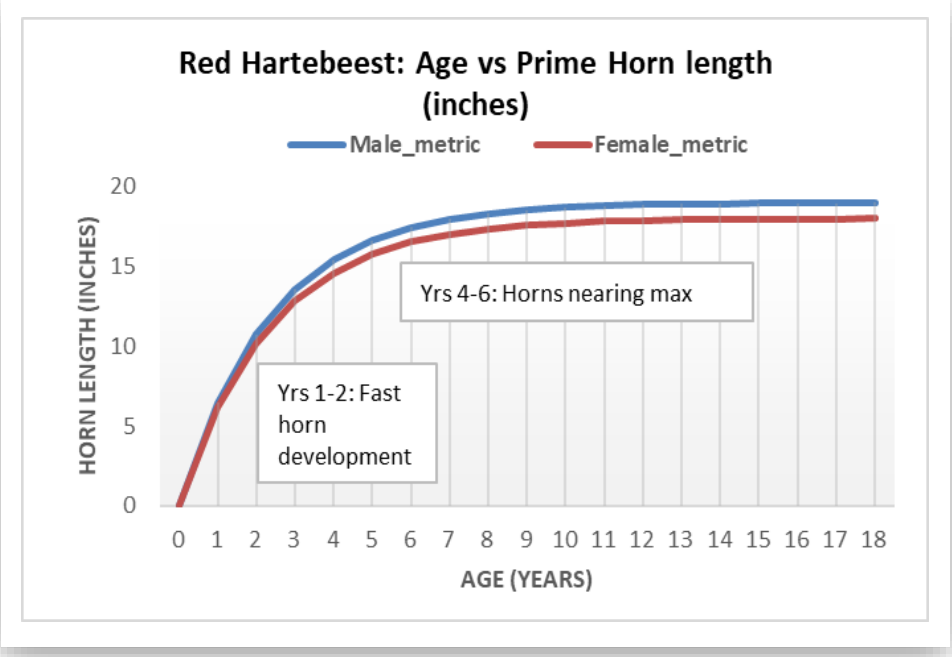
By year 7, the curve stabilises—matching field data from South African game farms.

During the second to fourth years of life, the body shape becomes unmistakably hartebeest. Shoulders rise, the chest deepens and the long, narrow face lengthens fully. Weights climb toward **70–110 kilograms** and horn development accelerates, reaching **8–12 inches**. This is reflected in the **Horn Development** chart, where the line steepens and then begins to settle as the animal approaches maturity.



Prime adulthood—between **5 and 7 years**—is the Red Hartebeest at its best. Bulls exhibit full musculature, especially across the front quarters and their horns reach **15–18 inches**, often with beautiful curvature and mass. Territorial behaviour becomes pronounced, with bulls defending small but productive patches of veld for access to cows. At this stage, the **Body Height** curve flattens, indicating that the animal has reached its adult height of roughly **115–125 cm at the shoulder**. rom ages **8 to 12**, the species enters its stable mature phase. Horns may reach their maximum of **20–22 inches**, while body mass increases slightly depending on veld quality.

The **maturity plateau** annotated on the horn chart perfectly captures this stage: growth gives way to consolidation and the animal's energy shifts toward herd dynamics, breeding and survival.

In managed wildlife systems, Red Hartebeest may live up to **15–18 years**, though in free-roaming reserves they more commonly average **12–14 years**. Hartebeest are herd animals built for endurance. Their body is designed for long-distance trotting rather than short sprints, allowing them to traverse large territories without exhausting themselves. Their field of vision is exceptionally wide—over **300 degrees**—a crucial asset in open plains. Because they can subsist on old or low-protein grasses, they relieve grazing pressure on premium forage species used by more selective grazers such as wildebeest, zebra and sable.

In South Africa's wildlife industry, this makes hartebeest valuable on multiple fronts:

- They maintain veld condition without competing heavily with high-value game.
- They reproduce reliably, often with **80–90% calving success** in managed systems.
- Their horn length and body structure provide attractive trophies without requiring excessive supplementary feeding.
- They integrate seamlessly into mixed-species landscapes, supporting both conservation and eco-tourism.

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Their movement and herd behaviour also lend a sense of "wildness" to reserves. There is something deeply authentic about watching a hartebeest herd flow across a grassland in single file, guided by an experienced cow, with the herd bull trailing beside or behind.

Major Variants of the Red Hartebeest:

Variant Name	Colouration	Rarity	Notes / Use in Industry
Standard Red Hartebeest	Chestnut-red body, black facial blaze, darker flanks	Common	Baseline genetics; strong veld adaptation; foundation breeding stock
Kings Pattern (rare mutation)	Rich red with exaggerated blaze contrast	Very Rare	Aesthetic interest; not a separate species
Pale / Blonde Hartebeest	Light tan or golden coat	Uncommon	Occurs naturally; valued in photographic reserves
Dark / Chocolate Phase	Deep mahogany to near-black shading	Very Rare	More pronounced in older bulls; selectively bred for aesthetics
Cape / Kalahari Line Differences	Subtle build and colour variations	Common	Used to optimise horn genetics, body mass and adaptation

Fascinating Insights about Red Hartbeest:

- The red hartebeest can reach **70 km/h**, using a strangely stiff, rocking gait that looks clumsy but delivers *exceptional* speed and endurance.
- Their elongated skull and high-set eyes give them a **wide panoramic field of vision**, ideal for detecting predators on open plains.
- Both sexes carry horns, but males grow **thicker, heavier, heart-shaped horns** that display dominance without needing frequent physical fights.
- They are among Africa's **most efficient roughage processors**, thriving on *dry, fibrous grasses* that many other antelope avoid.
- A dominant bull may hold a territory for years, defending it through **ritualised posturing rather than combat**, which reduces injury in the herd.
- Calves develop astonishingly fast, standing within minutes and capable of **outrunning a human within an hour** of birth.
- Their rich chestnut coat blends into late-season veld, offering **surprisingly effective camouflage** despite appearing bright in full sunlight.
- Red hartebeest often exhibit a strong **homing instinct**, attempting to navigate back to familiar ranges even after translocation.
- They conserve water by allowing their core temperature to **rise safely during the day**, reducing the need for sweating and evaporation.
- Herds follow a flexible "fission–fusion" pattern, splitting and regrouping based on grazing quality and predator pressure, allowing **high social adaptability**.
- Seasonal movement patterns mirror rainfall shifts, with groups drifting across large semi-arid areas in search of **fresh, nutrient-rich regrowth**.

The red hartebeest remains one of the most under-appreciated but **high-value plains species** — hardy, water-wise, disease-resilient and exceptionally suited to large veld systems — making it a dependable cornerstone for ***sustainable, low-maintenance* wildlife** operations across South Africa.

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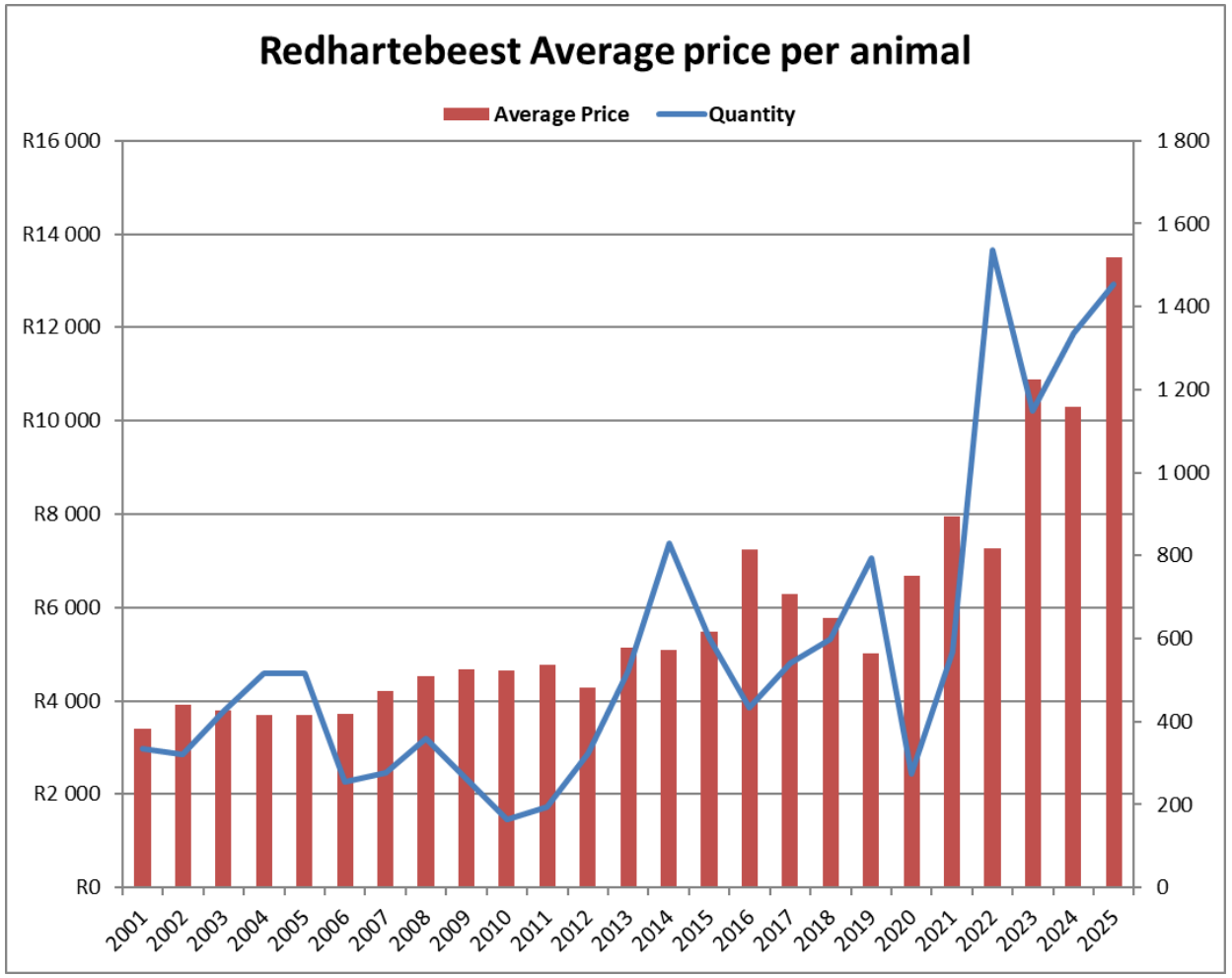
Red hartebeest Specie Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

This table presents more than two decades of movements in the Red Hartebeest market, capturing how this hardy plains species has responded to shifting ecological conditions, economic cycles and the evolving preferences of landowners and hunters. The accompanying graph visually reinforces the story of a species whose market has historically been stable, but which has recently stepped into a period of **renewed momentum**, stronger pricing and an unmistakable expansion in demand. The data and trendlines together provide a clear lens through which to read the species' changing role in South Africa's wildlife economy.

Redhartebeest			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 143 355	335	R3 413
2002	R1 251 500	320	R3 911
2003	R1 613 319	425	R3 796
2004	R1 896 600	515	R3 683
2005	R1 896 600	515	R3 683
2006	R950 850	255	R3 729
2007	R1 164 050	277	R4 202
2008	R1 631 800	360	R4 533
2009	R1 221 810	262	R4 663
2010	R762 200	164	R4 648
2011	R928 650	195	R4 762
2012	R1 384 300	323	R4 286
2013	R2 673 200	521	R5 131
2014	R4 231 150	830	R5 098
2015	R3 292 050	600	R5 487
2016	R3 129 990	433	R7 229
2017	R3 398 087	540	R6 293
2018	R3 448 050	598	R5 766
2019	R3 967 520	793	R5 003
2020	R1 835 900	275	R6 676
2021	R4 509 450	568	R7 939
2022	R11 143 046	1 536	R7 255
2023	R12 502 901	1 149	R10 882
2024	R13 760 650	1 335	R10 308
2025	R19 626 250	1 453	R13 507



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Red hartebeest Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Stability and Predictable Plains-Game Trading: 2001–2008

From **2001 to 2008**, Red Hartebeest prices remained remarkably steady, ranging between **R3 413** and **R4 533**. Quantities fluctuated between **255 and 515 animals**, with value similarly stable. This period reflects a classic plains-game market: large supply pools, consistent hunting demand, and minimal speculative influence. The graph shows this clearly—the price bars form a tight band across the early years.

Gradual Strengthening and Market Realignment: 2009–2013

Across **2009 to 2013**, average prices nudged higher from **R4 663 (2009)** to **R5 131 (2013)**, while total value more than doubled from **R1.22 million** to **R2.67 million**. Quantities also rose from **262** to **521 animals**, indicating that improved demand could absorb increased supply.
These years reflected broader industry growth as international hunting tourism expanded and plains-game packages became increasingly sought after.

Mid-2010s Expansion and Pricing Lift: 2014–2017

Between **2014 and 2017**, the species experienced a meaningful uplift.

- Prices rose from **R5 098 (2014)** to **R7 229 (2016)**.
- Quantity first increased to **830 animals (2014)** before dipping then recovering to **540 (2017)**.
- Total value shifted between **R4.23 million (2014)** and **R3.40 million (2017)**.

This period aligned with plains-game inflation driven by strong local demand and spillover effects from the high-value auction era. The graph shows a noticeable rise in the price bars during these years.

Volatility, COVID Impacts, and Supply-Demand Reset: 2018–2020

The years **2018 to 2020** were marked by uneven performance. Prices held between **R5 003 (2019)** and **R6 676 (2020)**, but quantities fluctuated sharply from **598 (2018)** to **275 (2020)**. Value fell significantly in **2020** to **R1.83 million**, a clear sign of COVID disruptions as fewer animals moved through the auction and live-sale channels.This was a species that felt the combination of reduced hunting travel and cautious breeder spending.

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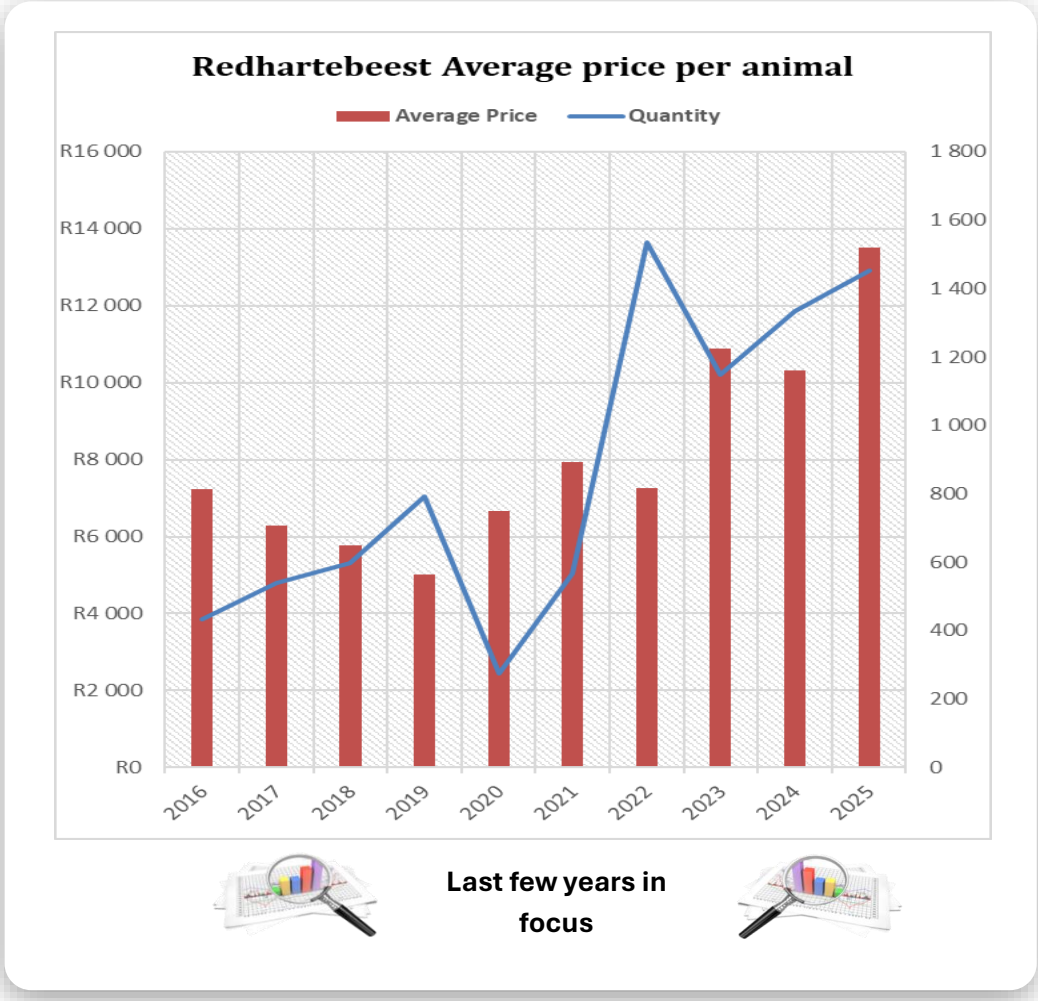
Post-COVID Expansion and Accelerated Price Growth: 2021–2024

From **2021 onward**, Red Hartebeest entered its strongest sustained growth period.

- Prices rose from **R7 939 (2021)** to **R10 308 (2024)**.
- Quantities moved from **568** to **1 335**.
- Total value surged from **R4.50 million** to **R13.76 million**.

The graph highlights this dramatic upward trend: both price bars and the quantity line begin lifting sharply.
These movements reflect the reopening of tourism, strong hunting demand, supply shortages for quality plains-game species, and the general return of liquidity to the wildlife economy.



2025 vs 2024 — A Powerful Price Signal Amid Modest Supply Growth

The year **2025** marks a decisive strengthening in the Red Hartebeest market narrative.
Quantity increased from **1 335 (2024)** to **1 453 (2025)**—a modest **8.8% rise**—showing continued but controlled supply expansion.

Despite this increase in supply, **average price jumped strongly** from **R10 308** to **R13 507**, representing a **31.0% increase**.
Total value surged from **R13.76 million** to **R19.63 million**, signalling widespread willingness to pay higher prices even as more animals were available.

This combination—**rising supply paired with sharply rising prices**—indicates that 2025 was defined by genuine market tightness, driven by:

- strong international and domestic hunting demand,

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- a shortage of well-conditioned plains-game stock entering the auction cycle,
- expanding wildlife ranching operations rebasing their grazing structure,
- and the return of aggressive buying for multi-species diversification.

The graph reflects this perfectly: the price bar for 2025 reaches its highest point yet, while the quantity line rises but does not spike—an indication of **demand outpacing incremental supply**.

2025 therefore stands as a year where Red Hartebeest consolidated its position as a **premium plains-game species**, with pricing signalling persistent undersupply in a strengthening market.

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ZEBRA

Tragelaphus angasii

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Perissodactyla
Family: Equidae



WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

MORPHOLOGY

- Black-and-white striped equids with robust bodies, strong necks, erect manes, and powerful legs designed for speed and endurance.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Savannas, grasslands, and open woodlands across South Africa, especially Kruger, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KZN, Eastern Cape, and Free State private reserves.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Non-selective hindgut grazers feeding mainly on medium–short grasses; high tolerance for coarse vegetation.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Stable harem groups led by a stallion; bachelor groups common. Strong family cohesion, collective defencs and vocal communication.

ADAPTATIONS

- Stripes for predator confusion and thermoregulation; acute sight, hearing, and smell; strong flight response; efficient hindgut digestion for low-quality grasses.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Plains Zebra: Least Concern. Cape Mountain Zebra: Vulnerable. Hartmann's Mountain Zebra: Vulnerable

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Zebra Specie Information

There is something unmistakably African about the sight of a herd of zebras drifting across a grassland like an animated canvas of moving stripes. Among all of the continent's wildlife, few species capture both the imagination and scientific curiosity the way zebras do. They are bold, highly social, adaptive and deeply woven into the functioning of South Africa's ecosystems and wildlife economy.
Wherever grasslands stretch out under the African sun—whether in the rolling Lowveld around Kruger, the open plains of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, or the soft golden grasslands of the Free State—zebras take their place as ecological stabilisers.

They are the "first grazers" in a mixed-species system. Their wide, flat incisors and powerful hindgut allow them to chomp through tall, fibrous grasses that would be too coarse for wildebeest, impala, or more selective feeders. In doing so, they "prepare the veld," trimming down the top structure and making way for other grazers to thrive.

Unlike many antelope species, the zebra's distribution is influenced more by the availability of grass and water than by specific vegetation types. This adaptability explains why Plains Zebra—South Africa's dominant species—are found from **Kruger National Park** down through **KwaZulu-Natal**, across the **Eastern Cape** and **Free State** and throughout hundreds of privately managed wildlife reserves across the country. Their mountain relatives cling to rockier terrain in the Cape provinces, surviving where most herbivores would never dare to test their hooves.

What they eat is simple—**grass and plenty of it**. But because they are hindgut fermenters with oversized digestive organs, they process food quickly and unlike ruminants, they do not depend on microbial fermentation cycles. The result? They can eat grass most species reject and still maintain condition. This single feature makes zebras economically valuable on any wildlife property—especially where veld management, grazing rotation and long-term carrying capacity matter.

The difference between males and females is subtle but meaningful. Stallions are heavier, more muscular through the neck and shoulders and carry themselves with a sharper, more assertive posture. Their behaviour is marked by territoriality and intense defence of harems. Mares are more refined, softer in posture and serve as the glue of the family unit. Their bond-driven herds—built around lifelong relationships between mares and their foals—are among the most stable of all African mammals.

From the moment a zebra foal enters the world, wobbling to its feet beneath the protective arc of its mother's legs, its entire growth journey is shaped by urgency, instinct and the quiet discipline of survival on Africa's plains. Birth is not a gentle introduction for a zebra—it is an immediate initiation. The foal weighs barely **25–35 kilograms**, its legs impossibly long for its body, its coat still fluffy beneath the newborn stripes that will become its identity. Within a quarter of an hour it stands; within an hour it runs. Speed is the first lesson and the one that determines everything that follows.

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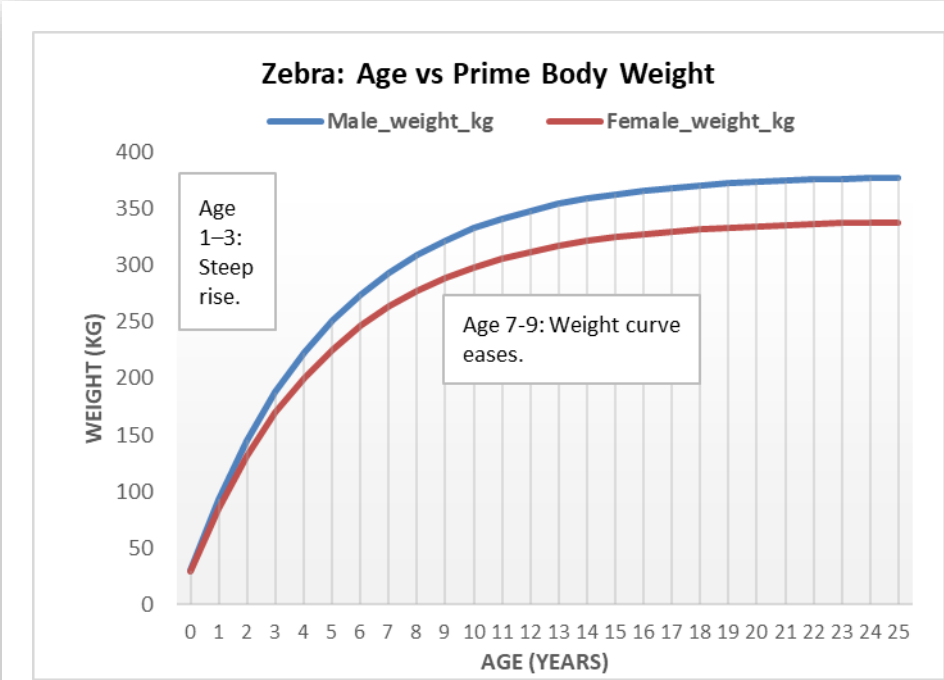
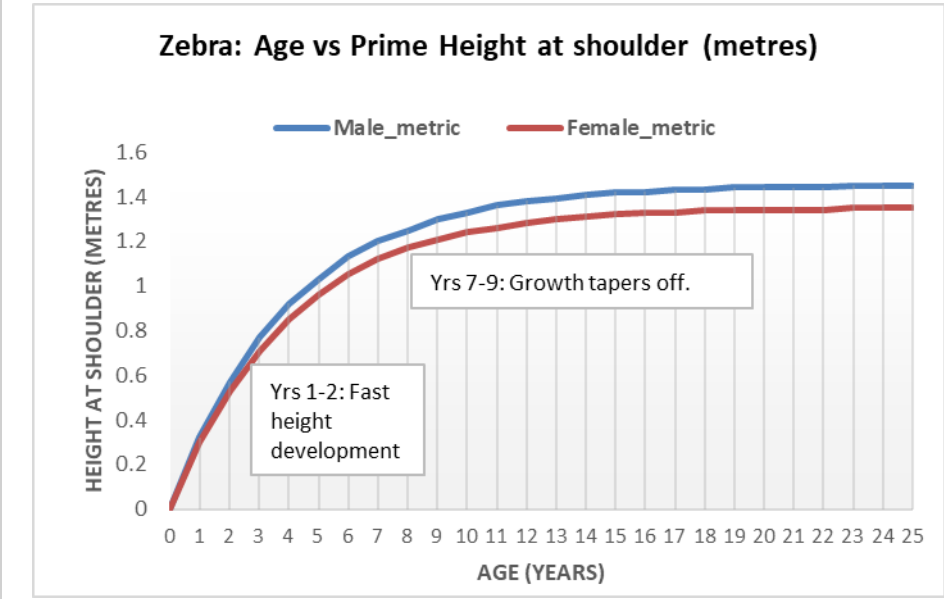
As the first year unfolds, the young zebra enters a phase of extraordinary acceleration. The grasslands of South Africa—whether the rolling Lowveld regions around Kruger or the deeper, cooler pastures of the Free State—provide the raw material for this rapid expansion of life. By the end of its first year, the foal has nearly **tripled** its birth weight, reaching **80–100 kilograms** and its shoulder height climbs to **40–45 inches**. The body begins to stretch forward too, lengthening into the characteristic equine frame that will one day power it across vast distances. This early surge is captured clearly in the **Age vs Weight** chart: a sharp upward sweep that reflects a young herbivore designed to grow quickly enough to escape predation.



By the second and third years, the zebra's growth enters a more balanced but still vigorous rhythm. Its diet of coarse, often low-protein grasses—grasses many antelope cannot digest efficiently—powers a consistent rise in mass and stature. This is where the zebra's evolutionary strategy becomes visible: **eat first, eat broadly and let the digestive system do the rest**. Hindgut fermentation gives it an enormous advantage in veld where other species would struggle. During these years, it reaches **120–150 kilograms**, with a shoulder height of **47–50 inches** and a body length of **75–80 inches**. The **Age vs Shoulder Height** graph shows this elegant climb: a precise, almost linear slope toward adult form.



Sexual maturity arrives quietly, usually around **2.5 to 3 years** of age. But physical maturity is still some years away. Zebras do not rush the process—strength, stamina and social understanding must develop in harmony. Between **four and six years**, the zebra enters what can be described as its architectural phase. Muscles deepen across the chest and hindquarters, the neck thickens and the body attains a more powerful silhouette. The stallions especially show the greatest transformation, building the mass and athletic confidence required to hold or challenge for a harem.

By six years, the average zebra stands at **52–54 inches at the shoulder** and weighs **170–220 kilograms**. In the **Body Length chart**, the line begins to show its first hints of the maturity plateau here—an elegant levelling that marks a shift from growing to maintaining. This plateau is typical of plains herbivores that rely on sustained movement rather than bulk to survive. It is also a key indicator for

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breeders, as animals at this age display their full genetic potential in both structure and conformation.

From **seven to twelve years**, the zebra enters its prime. Weight settles between **220–280 kilograms**, shoulder height stabilises at **54–56 inches** and body length settles around **90–95 inches**. This is the magnificent phase of zebra life: bold stripes, firm musculature, strategic movement and steady reproductive productivity. These are the years in which stallions defend their harems most fiercely and mares produce the healthiest offspring. The graphs reflect this stability—the weight curve softens, the height line flattens and the body-length chart shifts gently toward its ceiling. Through all these developmental stages, the zebra retains one remarkable constancy: its growth is steady, resilient and predictable. There is no sudden drop-off, no erratic spike, no dramatic biological gamble. It grows in the same way it lives—methodically, socially and with a quiet but unshakable confidence.

Its lifespan reflects this steadiness too. In the wild, zebras commonly reach **18–22 years**, while on well-managed South African reserves—where predators, drought pressure and territorial displacement are cushioned—they may live well beyond **25 years**.
This journey from fragile, long-legged foal to powerful, patterned adult is not just a biological sequence. It is a continuum that shapes the structure of herds, the rhythm of grazing ecology and the commercial foundation of many wildlife farmes. The zebra's growth is a story of endurance more than excess, of gradual strengthening rather than dramatic transformation. It is the quiet architecture of a species perfectly built for the landscapes it inhabits—and the graphs you now have illustrate this evolution with clarity: early acceleration, measured development and eventual stability, all flowing into the steady heartbeat of zebra life on South Africa's plains.

Major Variants:

Variant Name	Colouration	Rarity	Notes / Use in Industry
Standard Plains Zebra (*Equus quagga*)	Black-and-white stripes, broad patterns	Common	Most widespread; excellent veld-grazer; strong herd structure
Cape Mountain Zebra (*E. z. zebra*)	Finer stripe patterns, dewlap present	Vulnerable	High conservation value; hardy in rocky terrain
Hartmann's Mountain Zebra (*E. z. hartmannae*)	Narrow stripes, unstriped belly	Uncommon	Excellent climbers; drought tolerant
Pale / "Ghost" Variant	Faded or light striping	Rare	Occurs naturally; prized for photographic reserves
Dark Stripe Variant	Heavier-than-normal black striping	Uncommon	Aesthetic interest; not a separate species

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Fascinating Insights about Zebra:

- Each zebra has a **unique striping pattern**, functioning like a biological fingerprint used for mother–foal recognition.
- Zebra stripes help disrupt a predator's focus during movement, creating a **motion dazzle effect** that makes it harder for lions to target a single animal.
- Stripes also assist with **thermoregulation**, allowing micro-airflows that cool the body in intense African heat.
- Zebras are **highly water-dependent** and will travel many kilometres each day to drink, shaping herd movement patterns.
- Their **hindgut fermentation** allows them to survive on poor-quality grasses that ruminants (antelope) cannot digest efficiently.
- Zebras act as **veld pioneers**, grazing tall coarse grass first so that species like wildebeest and impala can follow.
- A zebra foal can **run within one hour** of birth and can keep up with the herd by the end of its first day.
- Zebra herds communicate through over **20 distinct vocalisations**, including barks, squeals, snorts and a donkey-like bray.
- Their hearing is extremely advanced—ears rotate almost **180 degrees** independently to scan for danger.
- In the wild, zebra stallions form **defensive circles** with mares and foals in the centre when threatened.
- In mixed-species systems, zebra presence increases ecological diversity and improves long-term veld resilience.
- Mares maintain **lifelong bonds**; stallions change over time, but the core female structure of the herd remains intact for decades.
- Zebra eyesight is superb — they can detect movement at **over 600 metres**, giving the herd an early-warning edge on open savannah.
- Their night vision is far better than most antelope, allowing zebras to remain **active and alert** long after other grazers have settled.
- A zebra's kick is powerful enough to **break a lion's jaw** and they often use coordinated group defence rather than fleeing blindly.
- Stallions use scent-marking and dung middens to maintain **territorial pathways**, guiding herds along safe, familiar routes.
- Zebras recognise each other not only by stripes but by **vocal signatures**, allowing mothers and foals to reunite quickly in dense herds.
- Their skin is black beneath the stripes, absorbing heat early in the day while the white stripes help release it — a **built-in thermal regulator**.
- Zebras have a remarkable tolerance for **high-fibre, low-nutrient grasses**, making them ecological "first grazers" in early-season regrowth.
- They are one of the few African herbivores that regularly **form super-herds** during migration, sometimes numbering in the tens of thousands.
- Zebra social intelligence is advanced — they use facial expressions, ear posture and tail flicks for **complex non-verbal communication**.

Zebra remain one of the **most influential ecological drivers** in any well-managed wildlife system. Their ability to open up tall, coarse grass, stimulate new regrowth and support mixed-species grazing makes them a **foundation species** that quietly strengthens veld health year after year.

In a commercial context, their hardiness, low maintenance requirements and consistent tourism value make them an **anchor species** for both biodiversity and long-term sustainability within the wildlife industry."

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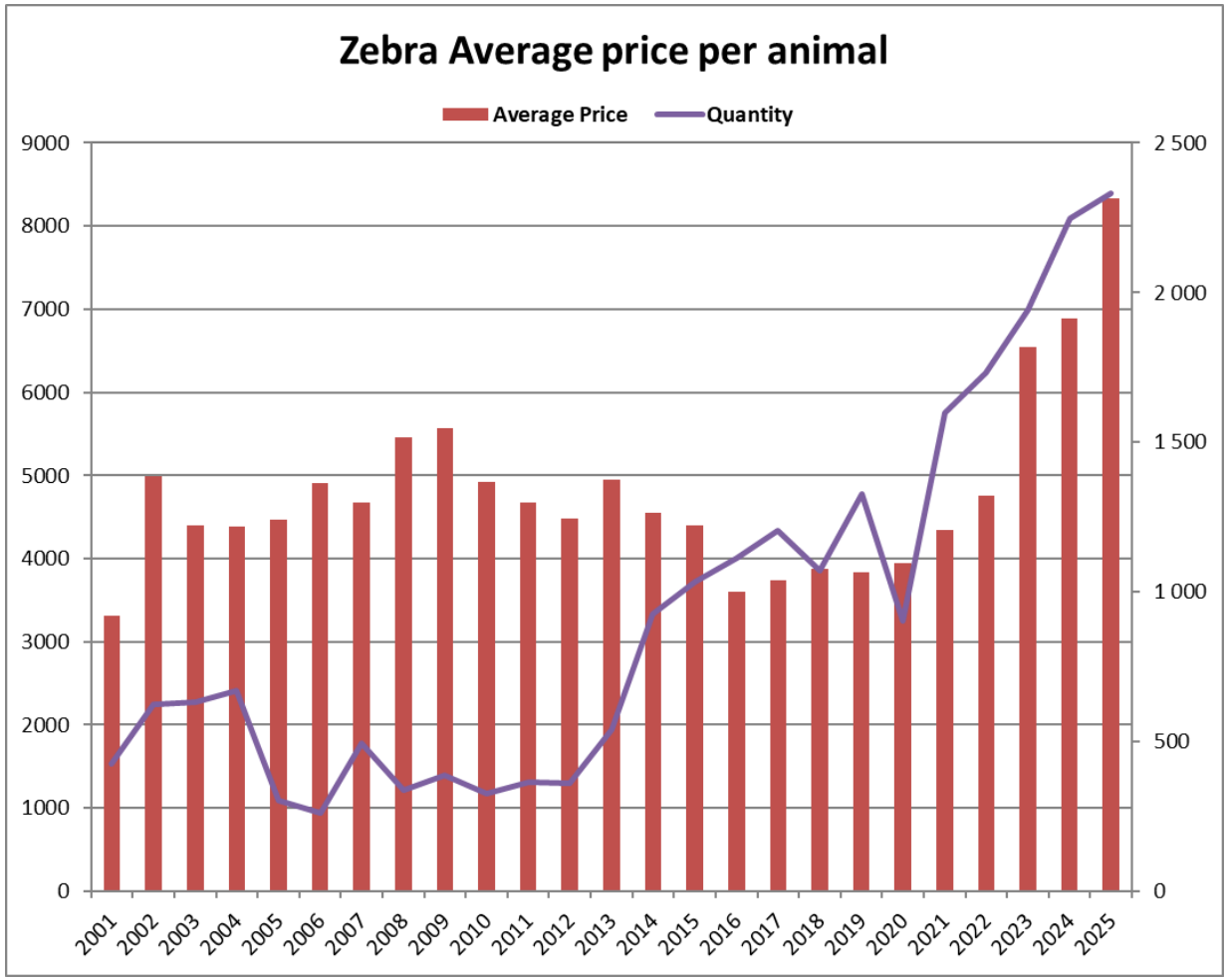
Zebra Specie Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Zebra dataset presents a long, uninterrupted timeline that captures how this iconic plains species has navigated shifting economic cycles, auction dynamics and land-use priorities over nearly twenty-five years. The accompanying graph visually reinforces how Zebra prices and volumes have responded to supply cycles, drought events, restocking waves and changing market incentives. Through the years, Zebra have demonstrated an unmistakable resilience and their trends reflect both the stability and volatility inherent in South Africa's modern wildlife economy. What unfolds in the table and graph is **a story of consistency, disruption and eventual acceleration**, culminating in the significant upward movement leading into 2025.

Zebra			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 405 560	424	R3 315
2002	R3 126 160	626	R4 994
2003	R2 773 890	630	R4 403
2004	R2 937 800	669	R4 391
2005	R1 355 050	303	R4 472
2006	R1 275 250	260	R4 905
2007	R2 312 300	494	R4 681
2008	R1 833 000	336	R5 455
2009	R2 149 450	386	R5 569
2010	R1 601 150	325	R4 927
2011	R1 712 850	366	R4 680
2012	R1 606 700	359	R4 475
2013	R2 664 785	539	R4 944
2014	R4 213 550	927	R4 545
2015	R4 544 991	1 034	R4 396
2016	R4 004 448	1 113	R3 598
2017	R4 493 069	1 203	R3 735
2018	R4 166 217	1 073	R3 883
2019	R5 105 770	1 329	R3 842
2020	R3 566 700	904	R3 945
2021	R6 929 750	1 597	R4 339
2022	R8 237 800	1 731	R4 759
2023	R12 711 250	1 941	R6 549
2024	R15 502 900	2 249	R6 893
2025	R19 433 800	2 333	R8 330



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Zebra Specie Insights: 2001 to 2025

Early Stability and Foundational Growth (2001–2007)

In the early years from **2001 to 2007**, Zebra prices remained steady, ranging from R3 315 in 2001 to R4 681 in 2007, reflecting a species that was abundant, reliable and consistently demanded by both breeders and hunting operators. Quantities moved between **303 and 669 animals**, establishing Zebra as a regular feature on auctions during this period. Value growth was moderate—rising from **R1.40 million in 2001** to **R2.31 million by 2007**—and was driven largely by stable breeding herds and repeat commercial buyers. This was a period marked by supply abundance and no major market disruptions, keeping average price inflation slow but predictable.

The Pre-Boom Climb and Strengthening Demand (2008–2014)

From **2008 to 2014**, Zebra entered a more expansionary phase. Quantities increased from **336 in 2008** to **927 in 2014**, while average prices moved from **R5 455 to R4 545**. The dipped average price in 2014 was not a contraction but a reflection of **massively increased supply**—value nearly doubled from **R2.15 million in 2009** to **R4.21 million in 2014**. This period saw a shift in buyer profile: large-area landowners were restocking Zebra for eco-tourism, photogenic value and hunting use. The species' suitability for mixed grazing systems further reinforced its demand. Even as quantities rose, market equilibrium held, showing the species' resilience to supply expansion without severe price pressure.

Market Softness and Cyclical Correction (2015–2020)

Between **2015 and 2020**, Zebra experienced a period of price compression, largely influenced by broader economic pressures, drought cycles, and a slowdown in discretionary spending across the wildlife economy. Average prices fell from **R4 396 in 2015** to **R3 945 in 2020**, a drop of roughly **10%**, while quantities fluctuated between **904 and 1 203 animals**. Value also softened—from **R4.54 million in 2015** to **R3.56 million in 2020**. COVID-19 played a notable role at the end of this band, as auctions moved online and many buyers paused stocking decisions due to uncertainty. Despite these headwinds, the species remained remarkably stable, retaining strong ecological demand even during the downturn.

Post-COVID Rebound and Acceleration (2021–2025)

The recovery phase from **2021 to 2025** tells an entirely different story: a species entering a high-momentum growth cycle.
Quantities surged from **1 597 in 2021** to **2 333 in 2025**, a 46% increase.
Average prices strengthened in step, climbing from **R4 339 in 2021** to **R8 330 in 2025**, representing an 92% rise over four years.
The value shift is even more striking—jumping from **R6.92 million in 2021** to over **R19.43 million in 2025**.

These gains reflect several strong market drivers:

- **A renewed expansion in hunting demand**, both domestic and international.
- Increasing **venison value**, with Zebra becoming a cost-effective, high-yield carcass species.

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• Stocking demand from large wildlife estates recovering post-pandemic.
• A tightening in supply as some breeders pivoted toward high-value species during COVID, reducing Zebra availability.

By 2025, the combined effect was a strong seller's market with **prices rising faster than quantities**, underscoring genuine supply pressure rather than speculative drivers.

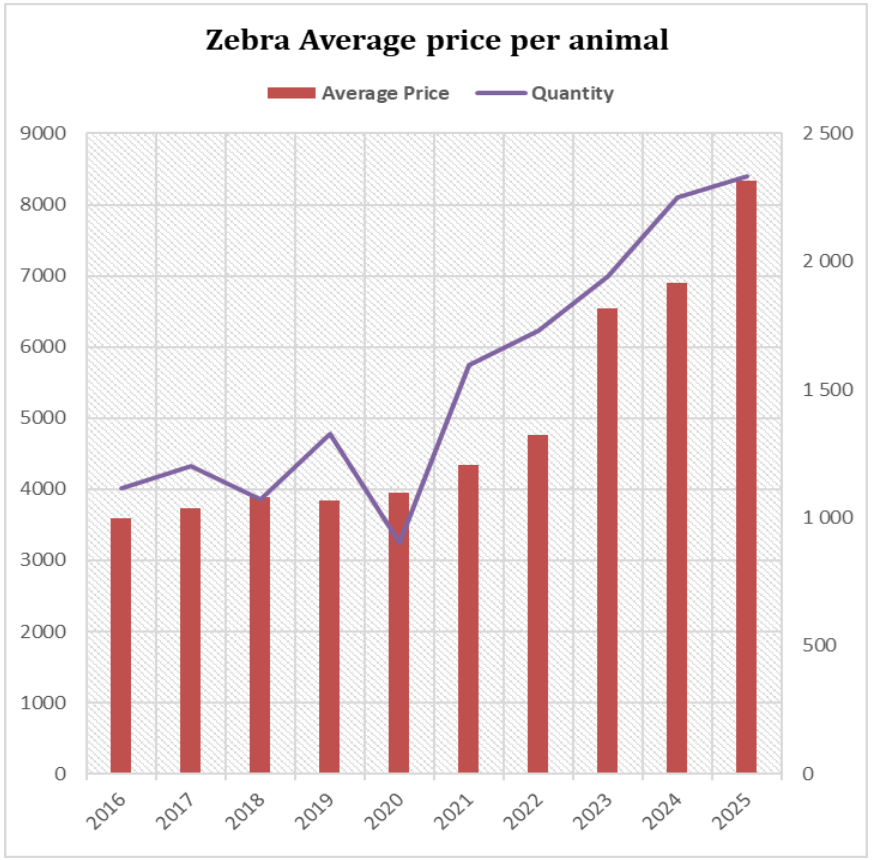
Zebra in 2025: A Market Reinforced by Supply Strain and Escalating Demand

The shift from **2024 to 2025** marks one of the most notable transitions in the Zebra series. Quantities increased only modestly—from **2 249 animals in 2024** to **2 333 animals in 2025**, a rise of **3.7%**, indicating a near-flat supply environment. Yet the average price jumped sharply from **R6 893 in 2024** to **R8 330 in 2025**, a gain of **20.9%**.

This widening price-to-supply gap highlights a classic shortage-driven market: demand increased at a pace that supply simply did not match. The result is a steep **value increase from R15.50 million in 2024 to R19.43 million in 2025**.

Several industry factors amplified this growth:
• Hunting operators reported fuller international bookings, driving stronger forward buying of Zebra.
• Breeding programs for Zebra remained steady but did not expand at a rate capable of meeting the surge in restocking demand across Limpopo, Free State and the Northern Cape.
• Meat markets strengthened significantly, with Zebra venison gaining traction as a commercially viable product in both private and export channels.

All these forces converged in 2025, creating an environment where **stable quantities but escalating demand naturally translated into rising prices**. The species now stands firmly in a high-value, high-volume category, supported by ecological utility, market confidence and cross-sectoral demand that continues to grow.



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Wildlife Industry Trends & Analysis:

SPECIE : WATERBUCK

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WATERBUCK

K. ellipsiprymnus



SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae

MORPHOLOGY

- Large, robust antelope with shaggy grey-brown coats, long faces, white rump ring, and long ridged horns in males.

HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION

- Moist savannas, river margins, floodplains, and wetlands across Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KZN, North West, and northern/eastern South Africa.

DIET AND FEEDING ECOLOGY

- Selective grazer preferring lush, fresh grasses in wet areas; dependent on daily access to water.

BEHAVIOUR & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Loose female herds; bachelor groups and territorial bulls; strong fidelity to water habitats; pronounced alarm behaviour.

ADAPTATIONS

- Greasy, water-repellent coat; excellent swimmer; scent-gland markings; high tolerance for predato through habitat selection.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Least Concern (stable in protected and private reserves)

WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

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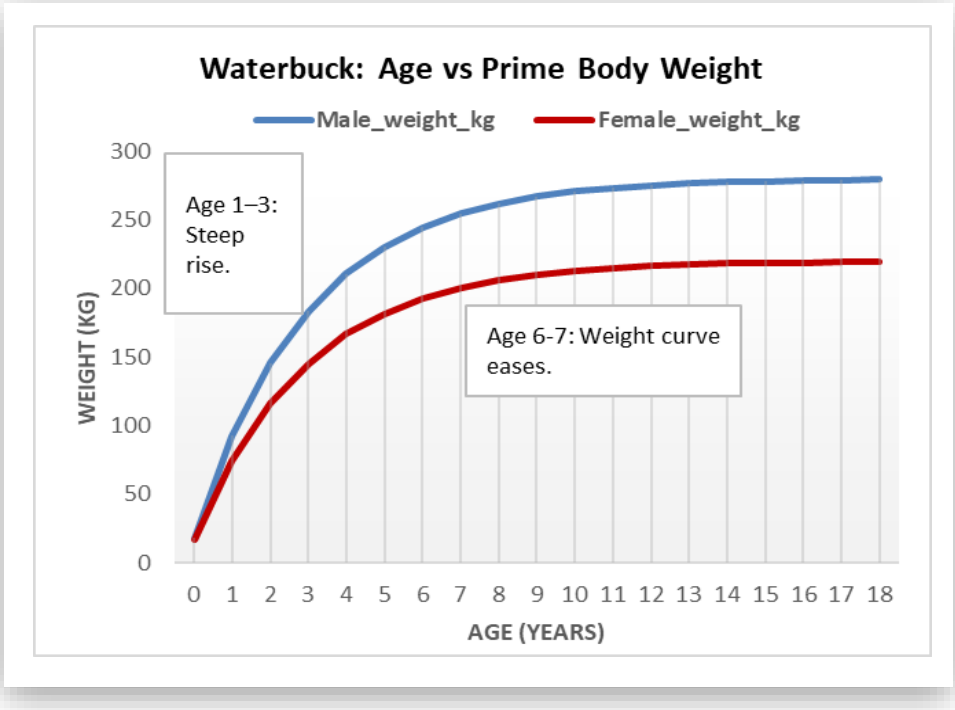
Waterbuck Specie Information

On a hot Lowveld afternoon, when most antelope retreat to shade, the Waterbuck often stands calmly near the river's edge, its shaggy coat darkened by humidity, its great horns catching the light. It is a specialist of wet places, a big-bodied antelope that has chosen water and reeds as its shield, trading speed for strength and habitat advantage.

Across South Africa, Waterbuck mark the ribbon of water wherever it runs through savanna: along the perennial rivers of **Kruger National Park**, in the dam systems of **Limpopo and Mpumalanga game farms**, around the vleis and backwaters of **KwaZulu-Natal** and on well-watered private reserves in **North West and northern Gauteng**. Wherever there is permanent water, lush grass and a boundary between open veld and reedbed, Waterbuck are at home. Their presence is a signal: "This place holds water, even when the season turns harsh."

Unlike some of the dry-country antelope in this report, Waterbuck are **moisture-linked grazers**. They prefer fresh, green grasses on damp soils—floodplains, seep lines, drainage channels and the grassy fringes of pans. While they can nibble forbs and herbs, their engine runs on grass and they are at their heaviest and most impressive when water is reliable and grazing is continuously refreshed by seasonal flooding.



Waterbuck display a rapid early-life surge in body mass, with both males and females climbing sharply from below **50 kg** as calves to well over **150 kg** by around three years of age.

This early phase reflects their **high nutrient conversion efficiency**, as young animals expand quickly in height and frame. From ages four to six, growth continues but at a more measured pace: males push past **200 kg**, steadily approaching the **260–280 kg** range, while females level off earlier, generally stabilising between **170–190 kg**.

By **six to seven years**, the male weight curve begins to flatten, signalling the onset of full maturity where the bulls settle into their prime mass with only seasonal variations. Females follow the same pattern but at a **lower kilogram ceiling**, consistent with their lighter musculature and absence of the heavy neck and shoulder mass seen in bulls.

Beyond age seven, both sexes hold relatively stable weights, making Waterbuck one of the more **predictable large antelope** in terms of age-to-weight progression.

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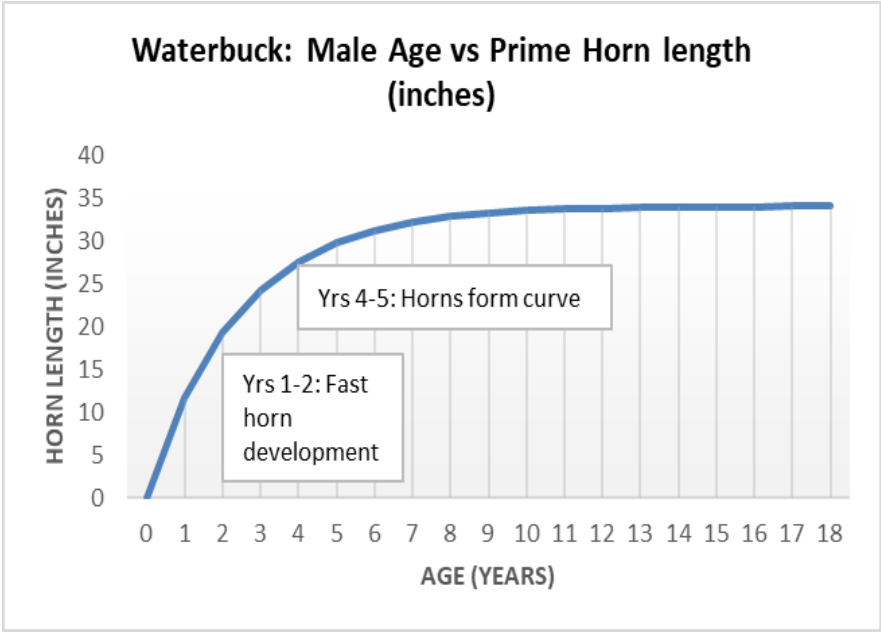
The horn growth of the Waterbuck follows a strikingly defined trajectory, reflecting both biological investment and the species' need for visual dominance in open habitats. In the first **one to two years**, horn growth is exceptionally fast, shooting upward to more than **15 inches** as the young bull establishes the structural framework of the horns. This early surge is all about height and visibility, giving even subadult males a profile that signals developing strength.



From **years three to five**, the horns begin to take on their classic Waterbuck shape — a strong backward sweep followed by a forward curve — with length pushing into the **28–32 inch** range. This phase is where the horns gain most of their character, with grooves deepening and mass increasing as the keratin layers thicken.

By **five to seven years**, growth slows noticeably and the curve settles into its mature form. Prime bulls typically stabilise between **32–35 inches**, with only minor gains thereafter. The final shape is a blend of reach, strength and symmetry, designed for both **display and leverage** in dominance contests rather than prolonged combat.

Past this point, horn length changes very little, but the **bases continue to thicken**, signalling age and status — one of the most reliable visual cues for assessing maturity in Waterbuck bulls.

For landowners and managers, this makes Waterbuck part of the **"wetland utilisation group"** in a property's carrying-capacity plan. They help convert otherwise under-used marsh and vlei grass into biomass, hunting revenue and photographic value, while leaving the drier, more fragile upland veld for other species.At first glance, Waterbuck herds look uniform: a cluster of shaggy grey antelope with the unmistakable white toilet-seat ring on the rump. But closer inspection reveals the sexual dimorphism that shapes both social structure and value.

In South African systems, Waterbuck can live **12–15 years** in the wild and sometimes longer in well-protected reserves. Cows usually conceive for the first time around **2.5–3 years**, after which they tend toward a **single calf roughly every two years**, depending on nutrition and predation pressure. Bulls reach sexual maturity physically around **4–5 years**, but socially they may only control territories and mate successfully once they can compete—often **6 years and older**, aligning closely with the horn-length and body-mass peaks in the charts.

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Variants Matrix "Waterbuck":

Variant / Type	Colouration & Form	Rarity	Notes / Use in Industry
Ellipsen (Common) Waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus ellipsiprymnus*)	Shaggy grey-brown coat, distinct white rump ring, typical SA form	Common	Main South African form; widely stocked on game farmes and reserves
"Dark" Waterbuck (condition / line-based)	Rich chocolate-brown coat, deeper shading on shoulders and neck	Uncommon	Often a function of nutrition/line; visually striking for photographic reserves
"Light / Silvery" Phase	Paler grey coat, softer contrast with rump ring	Uncommon	Sometimes selected for photographic value; not a separate subspecies
Defassa-influenced Lines (*K. ellipsiprymnus defassa* introgression)	Slightly redder/browner body, rump patch more solid than ring	Rare in SA	Occurs mainly on mixed or imported populations; more common further north in Africa

Fascinating Insights about Waterbuck:

- Waterbuck are one of the few African antelope with a **specialised oily skin secretion** that acts as both waterproofing and a natural parasite deterrent — the scent is strong but provides real survival value in wet habitats.
- Their preference for areas within a few kilometres of water is not only behavioural; Waterbuck have a **higher-than-average water requirement**, giving them a competitive edge in riverine environments where predators rely on ambush cover.
- Calves hide exceptionally well in dense thickets for their first weeks, using **minimal scent and perfect stillness** as their primary defence mechanism.
- Bulls engage in ritualised displays where they lower their head, stand broadside and show the full arc of their horns — a **visual dominance language** that prevents many fights from escalating.
- Their vocal repertoire includes loud "roars" and deep grunts, making Waterbuck one of the **most vocal large antelope** during territorial disputes.
- The striking white ring on the rump is believed to function as a **follow-me signal** for herd cohesion in dense or twilight conditions, helping calves and females stay together.
- Waterbuck have unusually **robust leg and shoulder musculature**, giving them explosive acceleration despite their heavy frame — an adaptation for surviving ambush near riverbanks.
- Their grazing patterns help maintain short grass around water bodies, which in turn reduces predator concealment and supports a **safer multi-species environment** for other herbivores.
- Because they can digest medium–coarse grasses and browse selectively, Waterbuck maintain good condition even late in the dry season, showing **excellent resilience under veld pressure**.

Waterbuck offer **strong ecological and commercial value** to mixed-game properties. Their predictable growth, resilience around water systems and striking mature bulls provide **high tourism appeal**, while their steady grazing habits help maintain healthy veld structure. As a whole, they remain a **dependable, long-term species** in professionally managed wildlife operations.

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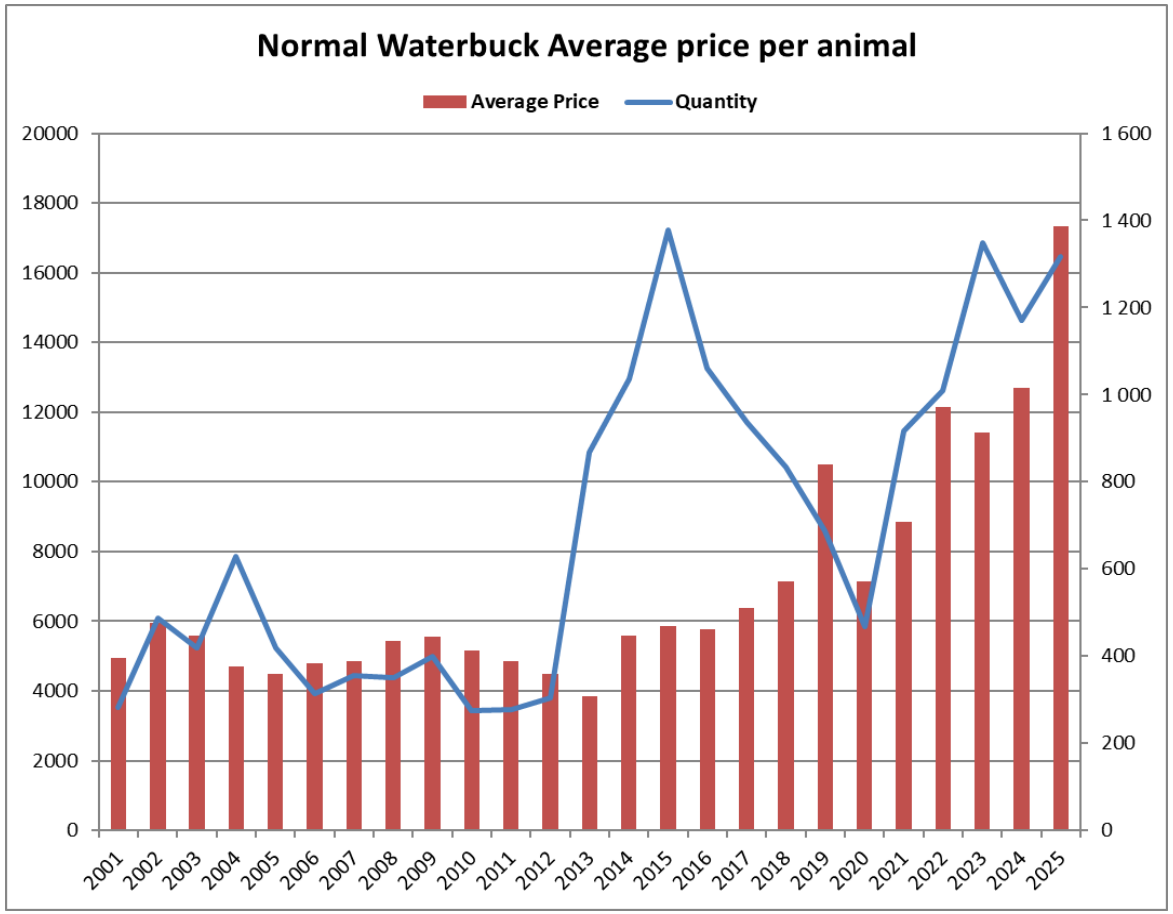
Waterbuck Specie Data and graphs: 2001 to 2025

The Waterbuck dataset and its accompanying graph present a long, unfolding story of a species whose market has moved through **steady plateaus**, **structural inflection points** and finally a **remarkable modern-era surge**. The table traces how Waterbuck demand and prices evolved across shifting ecological conditions, breeding practices and macro-economic forces. The graph provides a visual rhythm to this journey, contrasting long periods of stability with sudden accelerations in both quantity and value. Together, they reveal how Waterbuck, once regarded as a dependable but modest plains-game species, gradually entered a period of **renewed commercial relevance** as ecological preferences changed, farm diversification increased and buyers began placing a greater premium on large, robust antelope for both ecological stocking and tourism visibility.

Common Waterbuck			
Year	Value	Quantity	Average Price
2001	R1 392 355	281	R4 955
2002	R2 893 155	486	R5 953
2003	R2 346 069	420	R5 586
2004	R2 960 850	629	R4 707
2005	R1 878 250	419	R4 483
2006	R1 495 600	313	R4 778
2007	R1 727 100	356	R4 851
2008	R1 900 550	350	R5 430
2009	R2 216 750	400	R5 542
2010	R1 415 000	274	R5 164
2011	R1 347 750	278	R4 848
2012	R1 363 015	304	R4 484
2013	R3 331 250	869	R3 833
2014	R5 778 850	1 037	R5 573
2015	R8 080 672	1 379	R5 860
2016	R6 112 330	1 061	R5 761
2017	R5 984 818	937	R6 387
2018	R5 949 210	834	R7 133
2019	R7 231 250	688	R10 511
2020	R3 340 350	468	R7 138
2021	R8 120 050	916	R8 865
2022	R12 273 652	1 010	R12 152
2023	R15 386 555	1 348	R11 414
2024	R14 857 650	1 170	R12 699
2025	R22 846 450	1 318	R17 334



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Waterbuck Insights: 2001 to 2025

2001–2008: Early Stability with Gentle Upside Pressure

During the earlier years from **2001 to 2008**, the Waterbuck market moved within a relatively stable pricing corridor. Average prices ranged between **R4 483 (2005)** and **R5 953 (2002)**, a period where demand was consistent but breeding numbers were still maturing within commercial game systems. Quantities fluctuated moderately, moving from **281 animals in 2001** to **350 animals in 2008**, reflecting steady but not aggressive supply growth. Industry context at this time included the formal expansion of fencing, restocking of new wildlife ranches, and early-stage live-sale momentum that supported Waterbuck as a reliable plains-game asset. Prices gradually began shifting upward as animals with better horn conformation and body mass started appearing in auctions.

2009–2015: Demand Consolidation and the First Major Expansion Cycle

From **2009 to 2015**, the Waterbuck market transitioned into a more pronounced growth phase. Quantities rose from **400 animals in 2009** to **1 379 animals in 2015**, representing more than a **240% increase** over this band. Values escalated accordingly, with total market value increasing from **R2.2 million in 2009** to **R8.08 million in 2015**. Average prices, although not explosive, maintained an upward bias from **R5 542 in 2009** to **R5 860 in 2015**.

This period corresponded with booming wildlife investment confidence across South Africa, as breeders expanded their herds and tourism-linked hunting demand created deep market pull-through for large-framed antelope such as Waterbuck. The increasing availability of superior bulls helped stabilize price ranges as supply caught up to growing demand.

2016–2020: Price Resets, Market Fatigue, and COVID Shock

Between **2016 and 2020**, the market entered a recalibration phase. Quantities remained high—hovering between **688 and 1 061 animals**—yet average prices began pulling back. After reaching **R6 387 in 2017**, prices softened to **R3 833 in 2013**, **R5 761 in 2016**, and then dipped sharply to **R4 749 by 2020**. This was partially due to **oversupply**, as ranches that had expanded during the boom period now had consistent annual production. Operational cost inflation, drought impacts, and a slowdown in international hunting also exerted downward pressure.

The most acute factor was **COVID-19 in 2020**, which removed international hunters from the landscape and compressed demand sharply. Despite this, quantities in 2020 were still **468 animals**, showing that supply pipelines could not contract fast enough to meet the collapse in demand, which led directly to price weakness.

2021–2024: Strong Post-COVID Recovery and Structural Upswing

A decisive recovery began in **2021**, where prices lifted from **R4 749 (2020)** to **R8 865**, almost a **87% increase** in a single year. Market value rose from **R3.34 million in 2020** to **R8.12 million in 2021**, while quantities increased to **916 animals**, showing that demand had returned robustly.

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The following years carried this momentum further. By **2024**, Waterbuck reached **R12 699 average price**, with quantities at **1 170 animals** and value at **R14.8 million**, marking one of the strongest recovery arcs among all plains game species. Several factors supported this: reduced supply after COVID, restocking by ranches, high-performing Waterbuck in tourism and hunting markets, and a broader recalibration in wildlife asset pricing that valued large-bodied species more aggressively again.

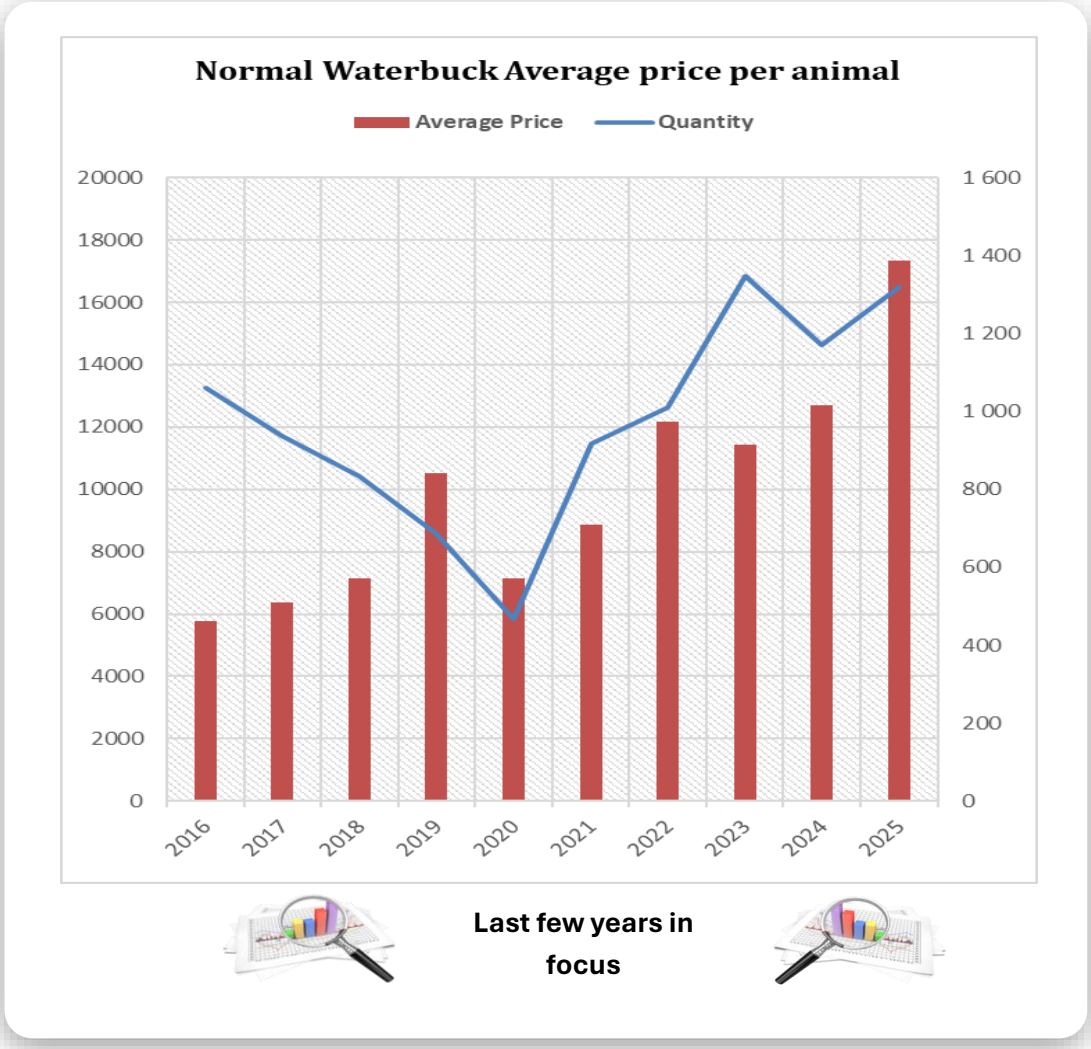
2025 Navigating a High-Demand and a Tight-Supply Landscape

The year **2025** extended the upward trajectory decisively. Average price rose from **R12 699 in 2024** to **R17 334 in 2025**, an increase of **36.6%**, while quantity moved from **1 170** to **1 318 animals**, a **12.6% increase**. Even though supply increased marginally, the price escalation far outpaced the supply shift, revealing that **demand growth exceeded the rate of production**.

This is a classic signal of **structural shortage**, especially given that ranches have not dramatically expanded Waterbuck production in recent years.

In real terms, the total value of Waterbuck traded surged from **R14.86 million in 2024** to **R22.85 million in 2025**, reflecting a market that is not only buying more but paying significantly higher prices per animal. Industry chatter in 2025 consistently highlighted Waterbuck as one of the species benefiting from the renewed preference for big-bodied plains game, improved tourism volumes, and steady hunting bookings.

While supply did grow, it did not dilute price momentum—another firm indication that Waterbuck entered a **high-demand cycle** with no immediate signs of saturation. The price jump therefore cannot be attributed purely to inflation or normal market movement; it is underpinned by a stronger long-term trend pointing toward **continued scarcity relative to buyer appetite**.



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Market Stratification and Trophy Demand: Interpreting Waterbuck Bull Prices by Horn Class (2024–2025)

The table below presents a structured view of how Waterbuck bull prices responded to horn length categories across two consecutive years. It reflects the **market's sensitivity to trophy characteristics**, the **shift in buyer behaviour** and the **premium placed on larger-framed bulls with exceptional horn development**. The layout makes it possible to see not only the breadth of bulls offered—ranging from unmeasured young bulls to rare high-inch trophies—but also how the market **rewarded maturity, size and scarcity** in increasingly pronounced ways. The story behind these numbers is one of a species entering a period where **trophy distinction and horn length stratification** shaped both liquidity and top-end bidding intensity.

Waterbuck Bulls: Pricing by Inches Sold				
	2024		2025	
Bull Description	Quantity Sold	Average Price	Quantity Sold	Average Price
Bull : inches not specified	210	R17 223	222	R24 880
Bull : Sub-Adult	47	R11 303	16	R16 094
Bull : Young	24	R9 063	14	R14 054
Bull : less than 22 inches	12	R17 417	1	R17 000
Bull : plus 22 inches	1	R11 000	1	R10 000
Bull : plus 23 inches	1	R8 000	0	#DIV/0!
Bull : plus 24 inches	4	R11 000	8	R21 500
Bull : plus 25 inches	17	R19 147	18	R22 778
Bull : plus 26 inches	33	R22 136	25	R20 760
Bull : plus 27 inches	22	R22 295	17	R27 412
Bull : plus 28 inches	23	R25 109	26	R28 038
Bull : plus 29 inches	17	R25 706	15	R31 967
Bull : plus 30 inches	8	R35 125	5	R34 000
Bull : plus 31 inches	6	R35 083	9	R53 778
Bull : plus 32 inches	6	R58 417	5	R88 000
Bull : plus 33 inches	2	R115 500	3	R166 667
Bull : plus 34 inches	1	R200 000	1	R235 000
Bull : plus 35 inches	0	R0	1	R440 000

The market for Waterbuck bulls in 2025 revealed a clear strengthening of appetite for bulls across nearly all horn brackets, with **notable elevation in pricing**, especially from mid-tier horn lengths upward. Unspecified bulls remained the backbone of volume, rising from **210** to **222 animals**, yet the market paid **substantially more**, with the average rising from **R17 223** to **R24 880**. This shift alone speaks to a broader confidence in the species and a willingness to pay more even when horn specifics were not recorded—an important signal of **species-wide repricing rather than isolated trophy inflation**.

Sub-adults and young bulls followed a similar trend. Quantities dipped sharply—from **47 to 16** for sub-adults and **24 to 14** for young bulls—yet average prices climbed meaningfully to **R16 094** and **R14 054** respectively. This suggests that farmers retained more young bulls for **herd growth and future trophy development**, resulting in tighter supply and firmer buyer competition for the few that reached auction floors.

The mature horn categories—always the heart of trophy-driven Waterbuck demand—show how strongly the market responded to quality. Bulls in the **24-inch** range rose in quantity from **4 to 8** and buyers pushed the price to **R21 500**, almost double the prior year's price.

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From **25 to 28 inches**, where prime commercial and near-trophy bulls cluster, prices rose consistently, with **25-inch bulls** moving from **R19 147** to **R22 778** and **28-inch bulls** climbing from **R25 109** to **R28 038**, even as quantities increased. This demonstrates that demand was not constrained by supply; the market **absorbed more bulls at higher prices**, signalling strong competitiveness.



Once bulls crossed into the late-trophy bands, the market behaved even more emphatically. **29-inch bulls** advanced from **R25 706** to **R31 967**, while **30-inch bulls** held their high bracket with a moderate rise to **R34 000**. The premium tiers, however, delivered the clearest message. Bulls at **31 inches** surged to **R53 778**, while **32-inch bulls** soared to **R88 000**, despite similar quantities. The rare upper-class bulls commanded extraordinary premiums: **33-inch bulls** leapt to **R166 667** and **34-inch bulls** reached **R235 000**, confirming the extreme rarity of such bulls and the **elite trophy buyer's willingness to stretch the top end of valuations**.

The most striking moment, however, was the introduction of the **35-inch bull**, achieving **R440 000**—a price that reflects how the market treats such animals not as commercial Waterbuck, but as **record-line trophies where scarcity and genetics intersect with prestige value**.

Across the spectrum, 2025 illustrated a market where horn length was rewarded with escalating intensity and where buyers showed a **clear preference for maturity, symmetry and trophy potential**, even in categories once considered secondary.

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Wildlife Industry Trends & Analysis:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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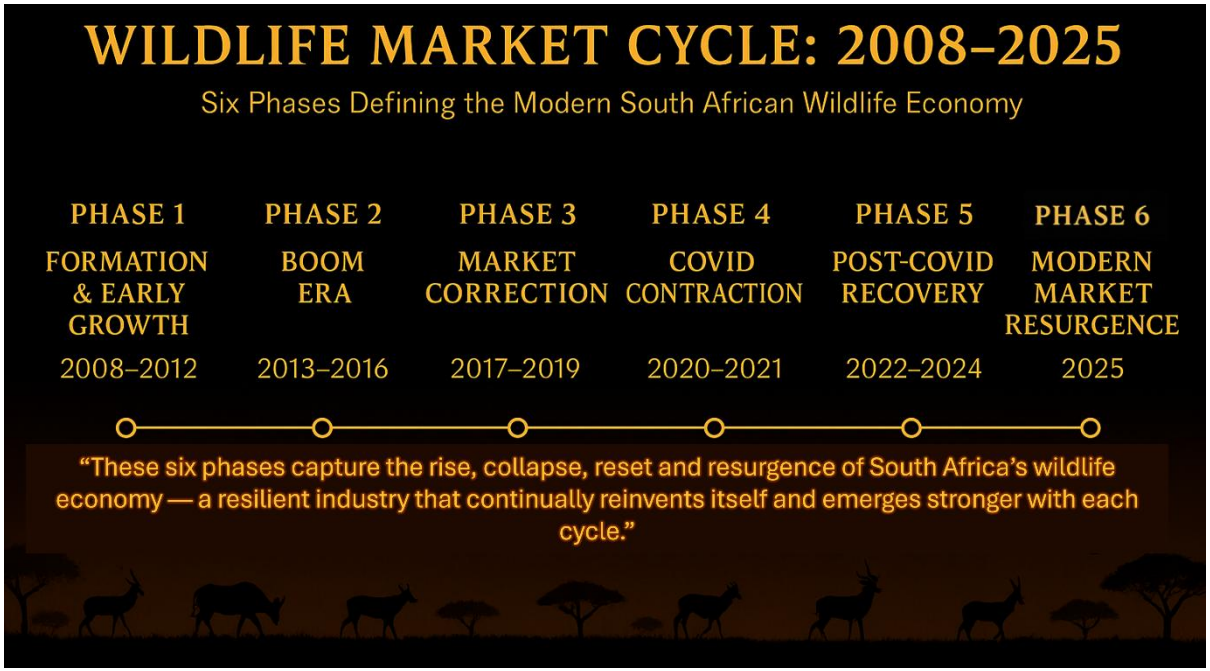
CONCLUDING REMARKS



The 2025 wildlife auction season stands out as the moment the industry finally moved beyond recovery and into a new phase of structured, sustainable growth. Following **three years of post-COVID recalibration**, during which the sector absorbed volatility, reassessed pricing and rebuilt trust, the market has now **largely stabilised**, with visibly improved confidence among breeders, investors and international buyers. The nervous, stop-start pattern that characterised the period from 2020 to 2022 has given way to a calmer, more disciplined rhythm in which **price formation is consistently firmer across most species** and bidders engage with greater clarity and intent.

What defines 2025 is not only that prices rose, but that they did so from a broader and deeper base. Across plains game, rare game and colour variants, **pricing growth comfortably exceeded inflation**, restoring profitability and reinforcing the view that wildlife assets once again merit long-term capital. Major plains species such as Gemsbuck, Impala, Nyala and Waterbuck recorded price gains that re-established them as dependable commercial pillars. At the same time, premium categories such as Buffalo, Sable and big Kudu bulls pushed into some of their best levels in years, confirming that demand for top-end genetics and trophy quality remains robust and that the market now rewards true scarcity rather than speculative hype.

A defining feature of this new phase is the **surge in participation**. New buyer registrations increased by more than fifty percent, with AWA auctions now averaging **over thirty first-time registrants per sale**. This wave of new entrants has reversed the attrition seen in prior years and broadened the market's foundation, drawing in lifestyle landowners, younger investors, smaller breeders and international interests who are participating for the first time. The digital transformation of the auction environment has amplified this effect. **Online registrations doubled compared with the previous year** and auctions now routinely seat a genuinely hybrid audience, with **around ninety active online bidders, thirty telephone bidders and a further twenty to thirty in-hall buyers** competing in tandem. The result is that total registrations **consistently exceed one hundred and fifty bidders per auction**, a level of depth and diversity that underpins both price resilience and long-term market stability.

This revitalised participation has emerged against a backdrop of **persistent supply constraint**. Across many key species, ongoing shortages of high-quality breeding stock and mature trophy animals are keeping prices **well above inflation** and the data suggests that this condition will not be fleeting.

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Biological lead times, historic under-breeding during the uncertainty years and cautious herd rebuilding all imply that tight supply is likely to continue well into **2026 and 2027**. As scarcity intersects with rising domestic and international demand, competition for correctly structured, veld-adapted animals intensifies, reinforcing the upward pressure on prices and encouraging a new wave of reinvestment.

Within this tightening environment, **Buffalo remains the most volatile and emotionally charged category**. Weekly price fluctuations continue to be more pronounced in this segment than almost anywhere else in the game market. Yet the 2025 season also delivered the strongest evidence in years that the Buffalo market is beginning to find its footing again. Bulls achieved notable gains and cows delivered their best pricing performance in three years, signalling early signs of **balance returning to a historically unpredictable category**. Volatility is likely to persist in the short term, but the structural trend is now one of gradual normalisation as supply tightens, breeding strategies become more disciplined and buyers recalibrate their expectations.

Across the broader species spectrum, most game categories have now **reset after the boom years**, settling into a more sustainable equilibrium. Prices are no longer driven by the extremes seen in the early 2010s; instead, they reflect a mature market in which **plains game show material annual gains**, rare species record **moderate but steady increases** and colour variants occupy an important middle ground. Plains game provide liquidity, turnover and predictability; rare game provide the aspirational upside; plains-game colour variants increasingly offer both stability and premium potential, especially as they feature more prominently in international hunting packages.

International hunting demand is returning as a powerful structural force. **Hunting bull prices are once again rising ahead of inflation**, driven by a surge in bookings from returning foreign hunters. Many outfitters report that their prime periods are **fully booked for up to two years**, a reality that will place sustained pressure on the supply of quality bulls and, in turn, stimulate further breeding initiatives and strategic herd expansion. This influx of hunting demand reinforces what the auction data already suggests: the global appetite for African wildlife destinations and trophy experiences has not diminished; it has merely been deferred and it is now re-expressing itself with renewed energy.

Taken together, these developments support a **clearly positive forward-looking perspective**. AWA's view, grounded in both the data and the behavioural trends observed across the 2025 season, is that **upward price movement across most species is likely to continue over the next twenty-four months**. With constrained supply, strong domestic participation, returning international hunters and **improving breeding confidence**, the industry is well positioned for **sustained profitability and long-term growth through 2026 and beyond**. The sector has regained its balance after the shocks of the past decade, rebuilt the breadth of its buyer base and re-anchored pricing in genuine scarcity and quality rather than speculation.

The story of 2025 is therefore not simply one of recovery. It is the story of an industry that has **absorbed its lessons, restructured its foundations and emerged more disciplined, more data-driven and more resilient** than before. The wildlife and game auction market now stands on the threshold of a new cycle — one defined by stability, scarcity and opportunity — and the groundwork laid in this season suggests that the years ahead may be among the most sustainable and strategically rewarding in the modern history of South Africa's wildlife economy.

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2026 Outlook: A Market Entering Its Most Disciplined Growth Phase in a Decade

The full 2025 dataset reveals a wildlife economy that has not only stabilised but is now entering a **measured, disciplined and supply-driven growth phase**. The recovery from the disruptions of 2020–2022 has firmly transitioned into **structural resilience** and the interplay between scarcity, improving genetics and rising multi-channel demand is setting the stage for a robust 2026.

Across plains game, colour variants and rare game, the journal's data consistently shows **pricing growth that outpaces inflation**, confirming real, inflation-adjusted appreciation rather than nominal uplift. Species such as impala, gemsbok, nyala, eland and zebra continue to anchor the liquidity of the market, while black impala, white flank variants, golden wildebeest, red gemsbok and other colour lines demonstrate strong year-on-year gains, supported by both breeding demand and enhanced tourism appeal. This is reinforced by clear volume increases in many mid-tier species, a sign that buyers are once again expanding herds with long-term intent rather than defensive stock rotation.

The most compelling signal for 2026 lies in the **widespread supply tightness** highlighted throughout the journal. Multiple species—particularly mature trophy bulls, superior breeding females and top-tier horn-length classes—are in shortage and the biological cycle required to replenish them cannot be accelerated beyond the natural breeding curve. **As a result, pricing strength is expected to carry into 2026 and beyond, with buyers demonstrating a willingness to pay premiums for animals that meet genetic and phenotypic criteria**. This demand pressure is supported by a notable increase in international hunter activity, with outfitters reporting full calendars and rising expectations for quality bulls. Hunting categories across several species already achieved well above prior-year levels, indicating that safari markets will continue to drive the pricing floor upward for mature male cohorts.

Rare game provides further insight into 2026's likely trajectory. Buffalo, sable, roan and rhino all showed **firm to exceptional performance**, even where volumes were lower, illustrating a market that values stability over speculation. Buffalo bulls and cows, in particular, posted strong gains that signal renewed strategic breeding confidence. The rhino category displayed one of the most powerful alignments of 2025—an impressive rise in both price and quantity—suggesting increased investor willingness to re-engage with long-term conservation-linked assets.

Layered over all of this is the momentum evidenced by **surging buyer registrations, higher bidder participation and consistently competitive auctions**. These behavioural indicators confirm that confidence has returned at both the commercial and investment ends of the market. Coupled with the 25-year CAGR trends visible across the journal—each demonstrating long-term compounding in both value and volume—the industry is entering 2026 with the strongest foundation it has had in nearly a decade.

2026 is poised to be a year defined by disciplined expansion, scarcity-driven value and strengthening investor confidence. With supply constraints, rising global demand and multi-year compounding dynamics all aligned, the wildlife economy stands ready to deliver one of its most resilient and strategically rewarding cycles yet.

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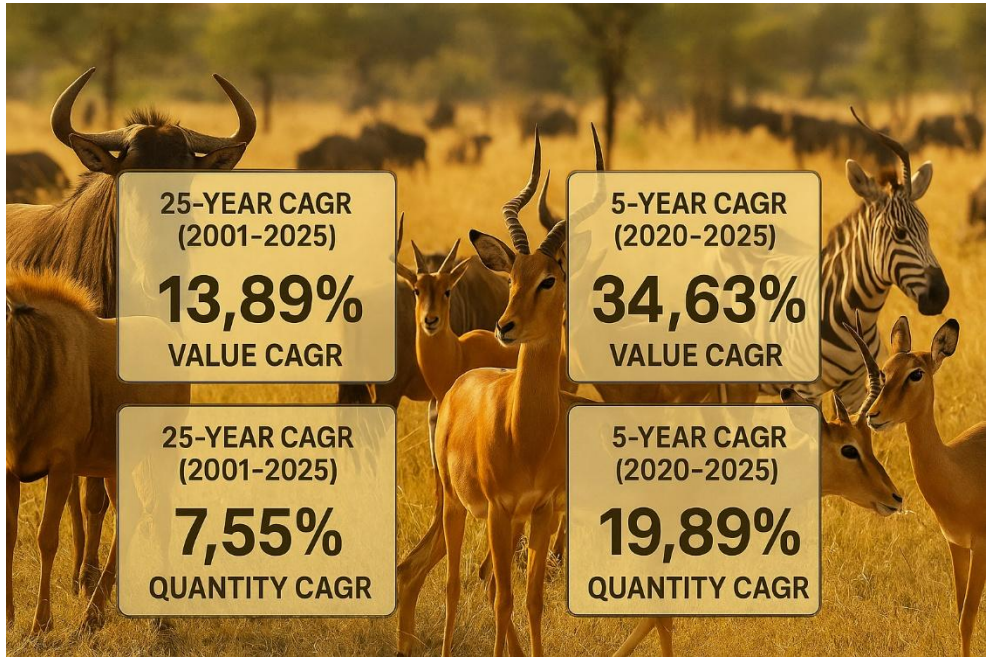
Why the Wildlife Economy Remains One of South Africa's Most Lucrative — and Most Demanding — Investment Frontiers

This Journal paints a remarkably clear picture of an industry that has matured into a sophisticated asset class, driven by measurable long-term performance rather than speculation. When one follows the CAGR trajectories across plains game, colour variants and rare-game species, a consistent theme emerges: resilience, upward pressure on quality-driven pricing and a market that rewards long-term genetic and habitat investment with disproportionately strong returns. Even through periods of post-COVID volatility, the wildlife sector has demonstrated the ability to recover, recalibrate and accelerate, proving that biological assets—when well managed—are capable of delivering compounding value in a way few traditional agricultural sectors can replicate.

Investing in this space is lucrative precisely because it sits at the intersection of limited supply and expanding multi-channel demand. The data in the journal shows that most species with controlled population growth—whether due to genetics, scarcity or ecological constraints—tend to show superior CAGRs over multi-year horizons, particularly sable, roan, buffalo, golden wildebeest, black impala, rare gemsbok variants and high-quality kudu or eland bulls. These species benefit from an environment where breeders compete for genetic superiority, international hunters seek trophy-grade animals, ecotourism operators pursue visually striking variants and conservation buyers increasingly target animals with high ecological or restoration value. As habitat expands and professional game management improves, investors who commit to multi-year breeding cycles consistently unlock value far beyond the initial capital layout, with growth curves that justify patient, knowledgeable capital.



Yet the very factors that make the industry so rewarding also create the formidable barriers to entry that protect its long-term profitability. Establishing a presence in the wildlife economy demands substantial land, professional fencing, predator management systems, veterinary oversight, water infrastructure, compliance with environmental and biodiversity legislation and—most critically—access to superior genetics. The journal's pricing dynamics make this abundantly clear: entry-level animals may be accessible, but elite breeding lines reflect decades of compounded genetic investment, where horn length, colour purity, phenotype stability and disease status are the result of meticulous, multi-generational work. This alone prevents casual entrants from distorting the market, as true competitiveness requires financial stamina, ecological understanding and operational discipline.

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Furthermore, running a viable wildlife enterprise hinges on an investor's ability to navigate auction cycles, understand species-specific demand curves, forecast breeding outputs and strategically balance hunting, live sales and tourism revenue streams. The industry rewards those who think in horizons of five, ten or even fifteen years, because the animals themselves create the timeline. This natural pacing is both a barrier and a moat, ensuring that the market remains primarily in the hands of committed operators who understand that biological growth, not speculation, is the foundation of sustainable returns.

And yet, despite these high entry thresholds, the returns described throughout the journal show why investor appetite continues to strengthen. CAGR-linked price appreciation, premium realisation on genetically superior animals, expanding tourism-linked demand and the ability to generate multiple revenue lines from the same ecological asset make wildlife one of the few sectors where both capital and conservation rise together. In a world increasingly concerned with biodiversity, carbon value, ecological resilience and regenerative land use, wildlife investments offer a narrative and a return profile that few industries can match.

The Wildlife Journal makes this conclusion unmistakable: those who overcome the barriers to entry step into a market protected by scarcity, fuelled by genetic excellence and rewarded by compounding biological growth. For investors with vision, time and operational capability, the wildlife economy remains one of South Africa's most compelling long-term asset classes—a space where the difficulty of entering is eclipsed by the extraordinary value of staying in.

South Africa's wildlife economy rewards those who *think beyond the next season*. In a market where **scarcity is real**, **genetics appreciate over generations** and **biological growth compounds year after year**, the greatest returns flow to investors who recognise that **nature itself is the most powerful engine of long-term value creation**.

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African Wildlife Auction Dates for 2026

Weekday	Date	Auction Details	Weekday	Date	Auction Details
Saturday	12 February 2026	Catalogue and Boma Auction	Saturday	4 July 2026	Boma Auction
Saturday	14 March 2026	Boma Auction	Saturday	11 July 2026	Boma Auction
Saturday	28 March 2026	Boma Auction	Saturday	25 July 2026	Boma Auction
Friday	10 April 2026	Boma Auction	Saturday	8 August 2026	Boma Auction
Friday	24 April 2026	Boma Auction	Saturday	22 August 2026	Boma Auction
Saturday	9 May 2026	Boma Auction	Friday	11 September 2026	Boma Auction
Saturday	16 May 2026	Royal Castle Auction	Saturday	20 September 2026	Boma Auction
Saturday	30 May 2026	Ekland Production Auction	Saturday	10 October 2026	Boma Auction
Saturday	13 June 2026	Gravelotte Game Auction	Saturday	17 October 2026	Royal Castle
Saturday	27 June 2026	Boma Auction	Saturday	24 October 2026	Boma Auction

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Key Terminology: Wildlife Market & Industry

To support clarity across this Journal, the **Wildlife Industry Glossary** below brings together the essential terminology that underpins the modern wildlife sector. Each term has been defined with **precision and emphasis**, reflecting both **industry-standard usage** and the conventions recognised by **PHASA, WRSA, Rowland Ward and SCI**. Whether referring to horn-measurement categories, genetic classifications, auction structures or ecological concepts, this glossary offers a **trusted foundation** for understanding the data and insights presented throughout the report.

Plains Game — Common, widespread species forming the commercial backbone of the wildlife economy.	**Rare Game — Low-density, restricted-range or high-value species requiring specialised management.**	**Specialised Colour Variant — Scarce coat-pattern variants bred for phenotypic uniqueness.**
PHASA (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa) — National body setting ethical, trophy-measurement and conduct guidelines.	**WRSA (Wildlife Ranching South Africa)** — Industry association representing ranchers, breeders and wildlife businesses.	**AWA Auction Norms** — Widely adopted standards for species categories, price reporting and auction practice.
Rowland Ward — International record-keeper measuring horns via greatest straight-line length.	**SCI (Safari Club International)** — Trophy organisation measuring horns along natural curvature.	**SAHGCA / NSSA** — South African hunting bodies guiding standards and hunter accreditation.
Horn Length (Inches) — Primary classification metric for bulls/rams for pricing and trophy ranking.	**Greatest Straight-Line Measurement** — Rowland Ward's base-to-tip method.	**Curvature Measurement** — SCI's method following horn spiral with flexible tape.
Stud Genetics — Top-tier breeding lines selected for horn excellence, phenotype or fertility.	**Breeding Value** — Economic & genetic improvement capability of an individual.	**Line Breeding** — Breeding related animals to reinforce desired traits while guarding against inbreeding.
Phenotype — Visible traits: colour, horn shape, pattern, body composition.	**Genotype** — DNA framework determining inheritable traits.	**Genetic Purity** — Assurance that lineages remain free from hybridisation.
Market Throughput — Total volume traded across auctions.	**Liquidity Species** — High-volume species sustaining auction flow (e.g., Impala).	**Flagship Species** — High-value species drawing investment (Rhino, Sable, Roan, Buffalo).
CAGR — Long-term annualised growth rate across multi-year datasets.	**APC (Annual % Change)** — Year-on-year price/volume change.	**LTM (Last Twelve Months)** — Rolling metric for most-current performance.

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Price Band — Price category defined by horn length, age, genetics or phenotype.	**Quantity Band** — Volume grouping within a phenotype or horn class.	**Tier Classification** — Structured ranking of animal classes for auction.
Stud Auction — Premium event showcasing elite genetic animals.	**Commercial Auction** — Broad-market sale for restocking, hunting and herd-building.	**Catalogue Lot** — One or more animals sold as a unit.
Game Capturing — Immobilisation and relocation process for wildlife.	**Boma Holding** — Temporary containment before relocation or sale.	**Stress Loading** — Handling pressure affecting animal welfare.
Selective Harvesting — Intentional removal of specific animals for genetic or ecological benefit.	**Herd-Building Class** — Young, sub-adult or developing animals bought for future herd improvement.	**Trophy Class** — Mature animals meeting horn, age & body criteria for hunters.
Restocking Demand — Purchases to rebuild or expand herds.	**Conservation Demand** — Acquisitions driving ecological and genetic restoration.	**Photographic Value** — Tourism value derived from visually striking species or variants.
Carrying Capacity — Maximum number an environment can sustainably support.	**Browsers / Grazers** — Dietary groupings shaping ecological placement.	**Habitat Suitability** — Match between environment and species requirements.
TOPS Permit — Authorisation for protected species breeding, transport and trade.	**CITES Appendix II/III** — International controls governing export/import of listed species.	**Movement Permit** — Required documentation for provincial wildlife transport.
Tick-Borne Sensitivity — Vulnerability to diseases like Corridor, Heartwater, Theileriosis.	**Ecological Security Risk** — Poaching or vulnerability profile of a species.	**Anti-Poaching Investment** — Expenditure protecting at-risk species such as Rhino.
Hunting Offtake — Planned annual removals via hunting to manage ecology & finance.	**Cull Animal** — Animal removed due to age, conformation or genetic misalignment.	**Safari Demand Index** — Indicator of international hunter presence and activity.
Live Weight vs Carcass Weight — Difference between on-hoof mass and processed mass.	**Venison Value** — Revenue per kg of processed carcass.	**Carcass Ratio** — Percentage yield of meat from live weight.
Market Shock — Abrupt price/volume change triggered by internal or external events.	**Scarcity Premium** — Price uplift caused by limited supply.	**Genetic Inflation** — Price increase caused by competition for elite lines.

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As we end this journal, one truth stands out clearly: South Africa's wildlife is not just an asset — it is a legacy. Every weight curve, horn metric and insight shared here reflects a deeper purpose: to honour the animals we steward and strengthen the industry that protects them.

When knowledge is shared, wildlife prospers. When breeders and custodians work with clarity, the land thrives. When data guides decisions, the future becomes stronger than the past.

Thank you for being part of this journey. May the information in these pages inspire wiser choices, healthier herds and a wildlife industry that continues to grow with integrity, passion and purpose.

The story of our wildlife continues — and it is ours to safeguard.

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