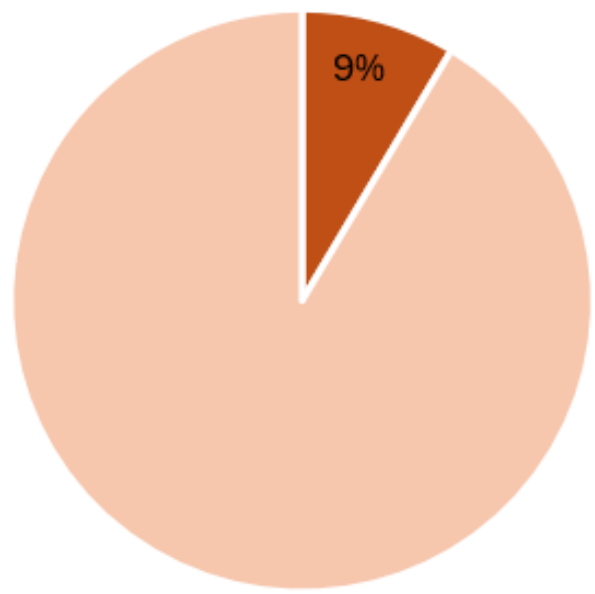


Botswana's Fire Regime

An analysis from 2001 to 2025

Botswana Average Annual
Area burned: 54,418 km²



Wildfire Trends in Botswana

According to satellite-based MODIS MCD64A1 version 6.1 burnt area fire data from 2001 to 2025, an average of around 9 % of Botswana's surface area, corresponding to around 54 000 km², burns every year due to naturally occurring wildfires or anthropogenic actions. This is considerably less than observed with countries north of Botswana, with Angola, burning an annual average of just under 364 000 km², and Zambia, with an average of just over 227 000 km² every year.

Between 2001 and 2025, the years 2008, 2010 and 2011 were the most catastrophic for Botswana with about 110 000, 133 000 and 165 000 km² burning for those years, respectively. It does appear that years with above average annual burns may coincide with above average annual rainfall periods, most likely due to higher fuel loads.

After a prolonged drought, that started during the 2022/23 rainfall year, and coupled with above average burning in 2023, the vegetation condition was poor, and accordingly, fuel loads were low and consequently, the extent of burning in Botswana was also low in 2024. Even though above average rainfall fell in the 2024/25 rainfall year, the area burned in 2025 remained well below average.

Areas vulnerable to repeat burning

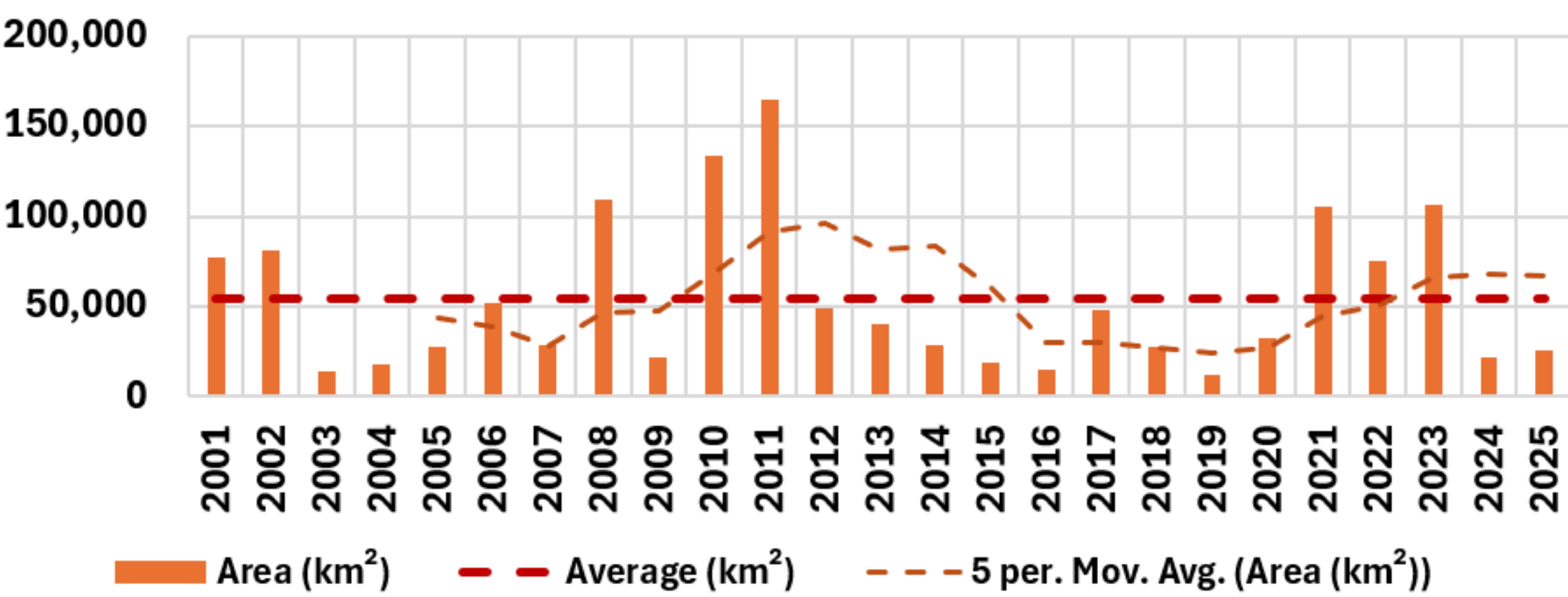
Areas with a high frequency of burning, with one area on the north-western border of Botswana having burned 25 consecutive years, do cause concern for Botswana's biodiversity hotspots and unique wildlife and flora species. Areas particularly affected by high frequencies of burning are the north-eastern part including the Chobe National Park, the Kasane Forest Reserve, the Kazuma Forest Reserve, the northern part of the Okavango Ramsar site and the north-western part of Botswana. In more recent years, a higher incidence (annually from 2021 to 2023) occurred over much of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

Annual fire season

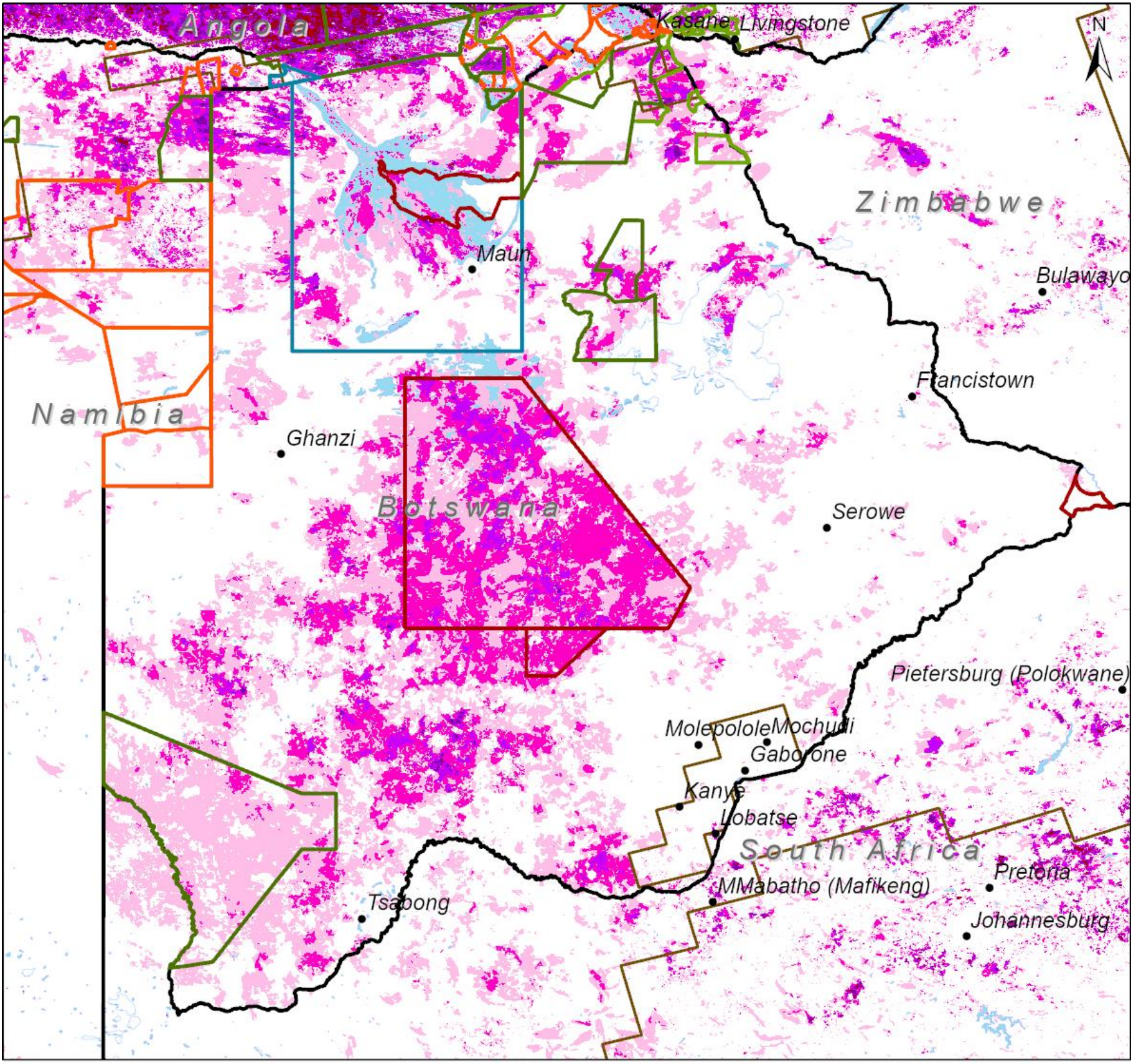
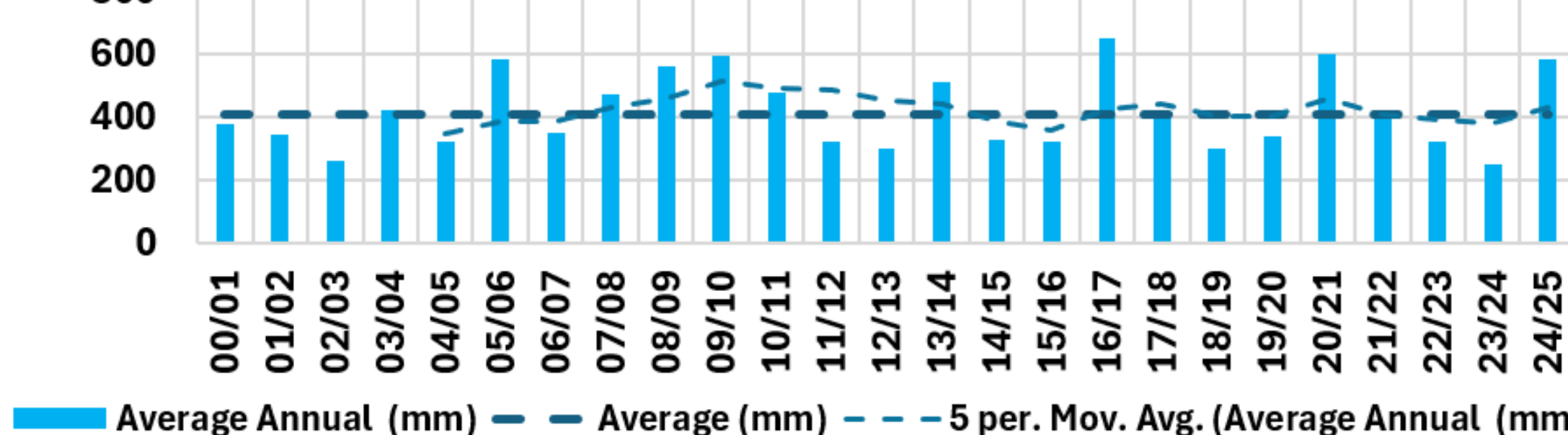
The main months of the fire season in Botswana are from July to November, generally peaking in the drier winter months, and highest in September.

Botswana

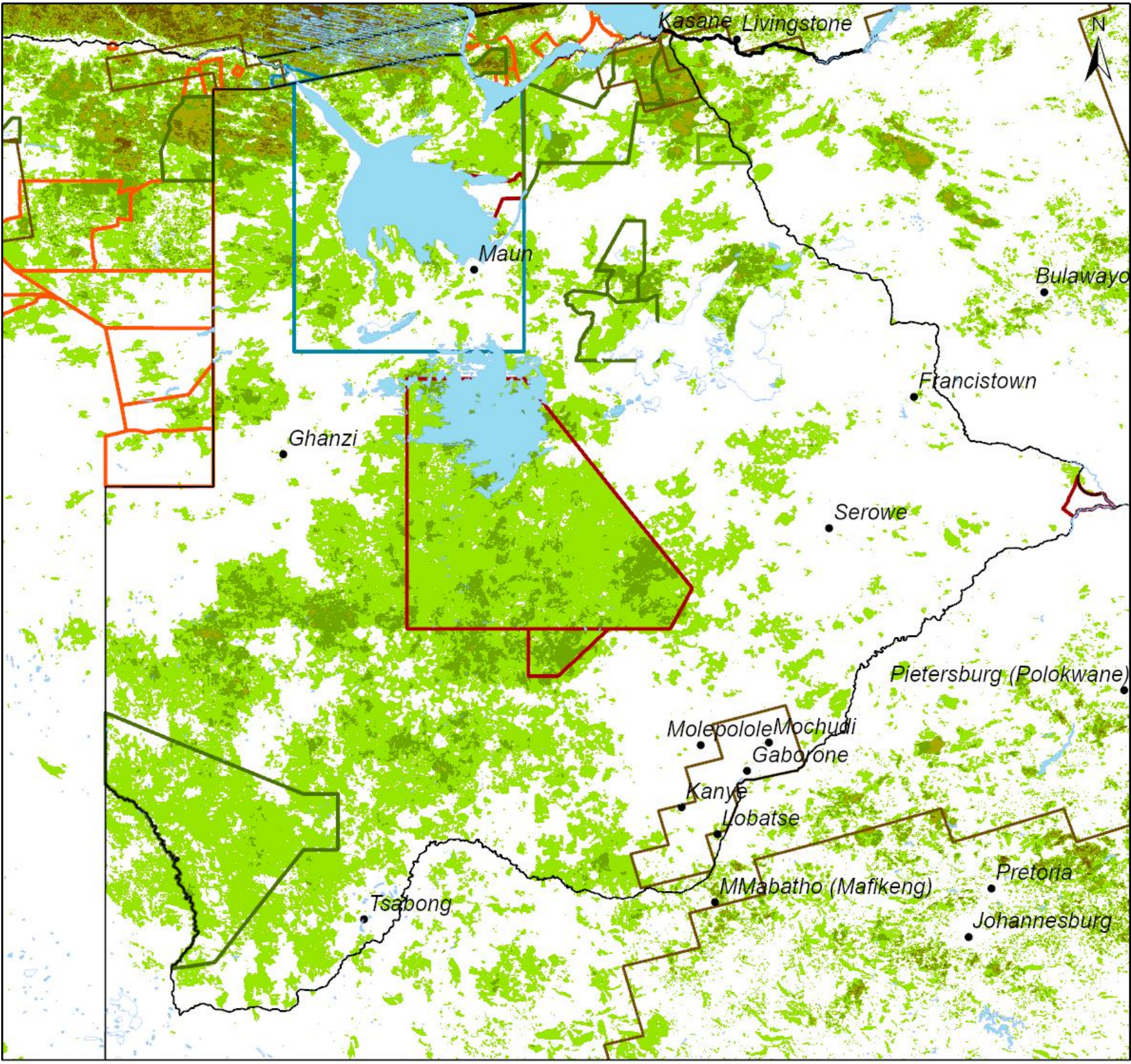
Annual Area burned



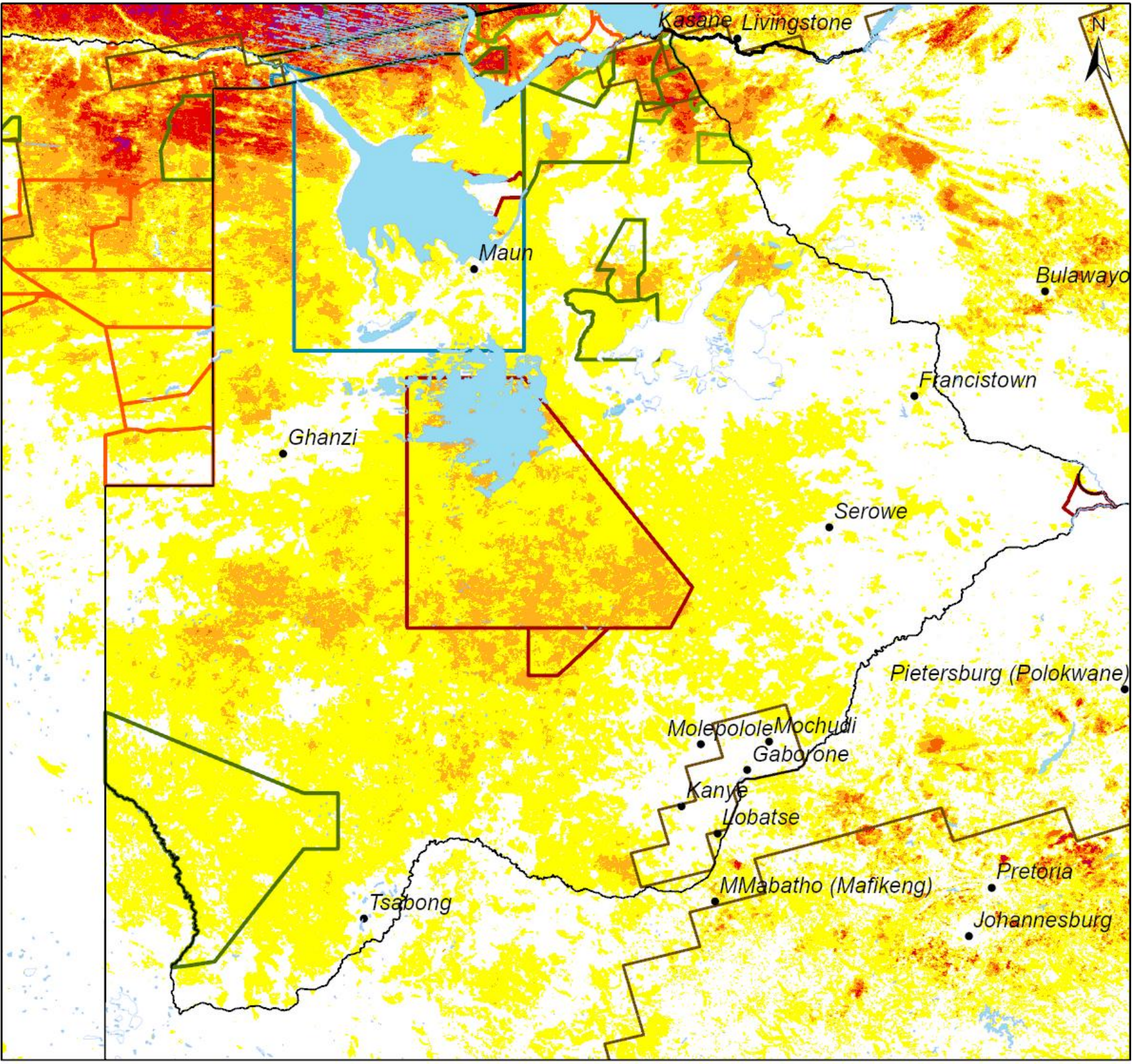
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)



Number of Years Burned in 5 Years 2021 to 2025



Number of Years Burned in 10 Years 2015 to 2024



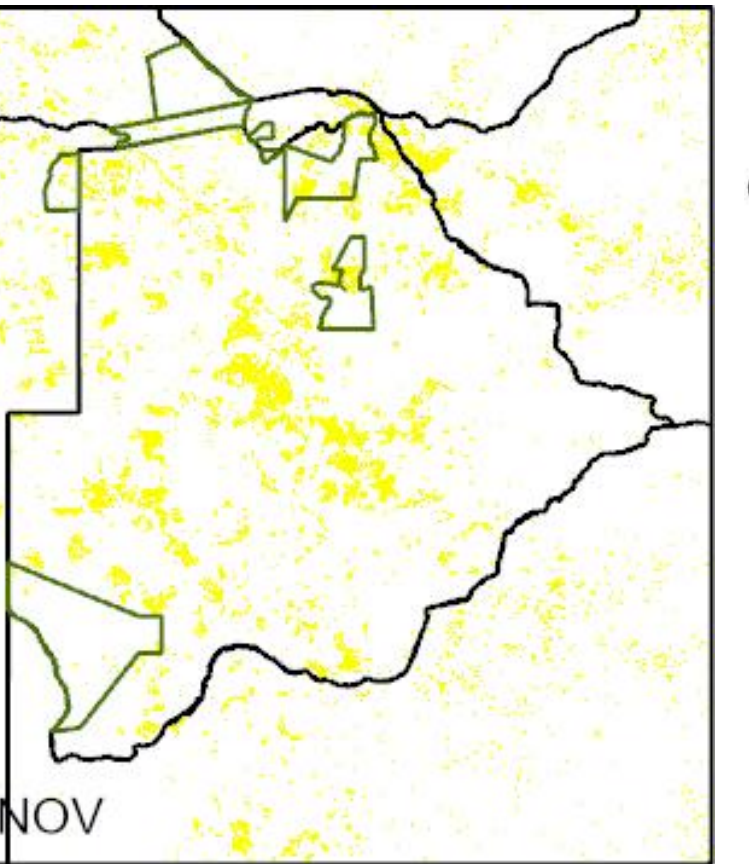
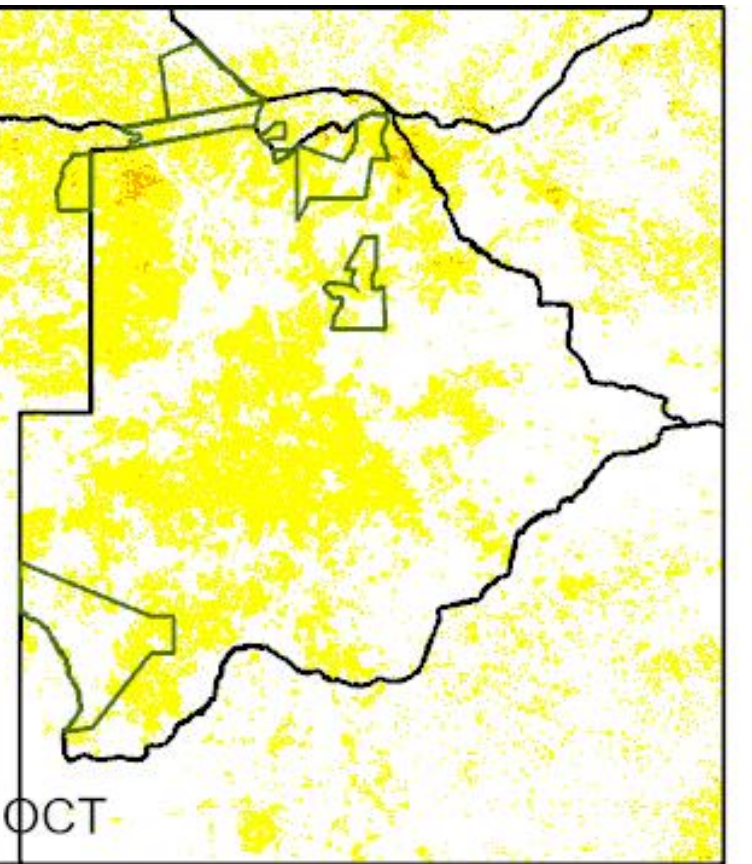
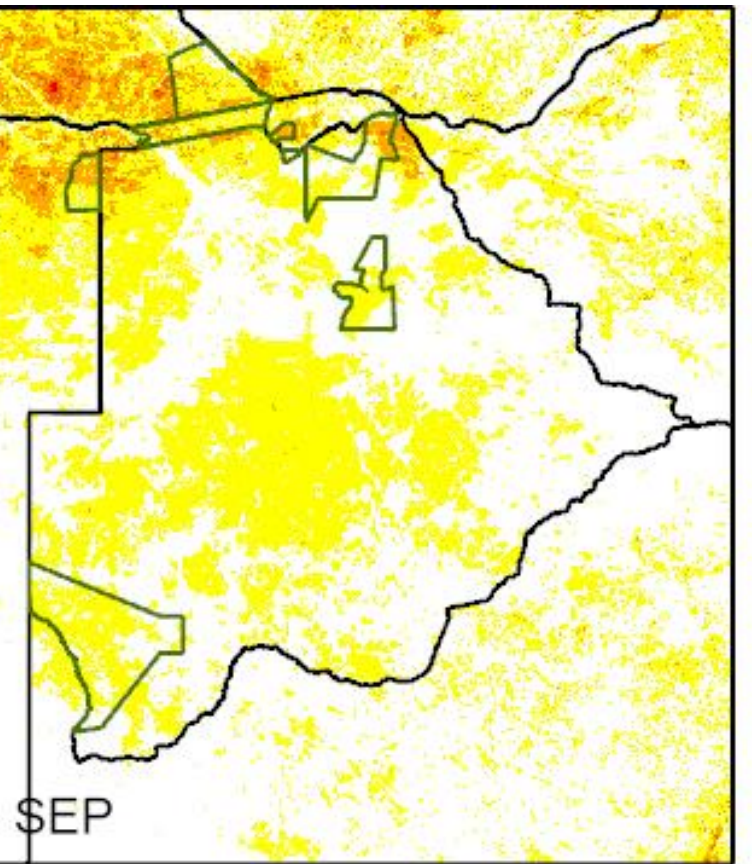
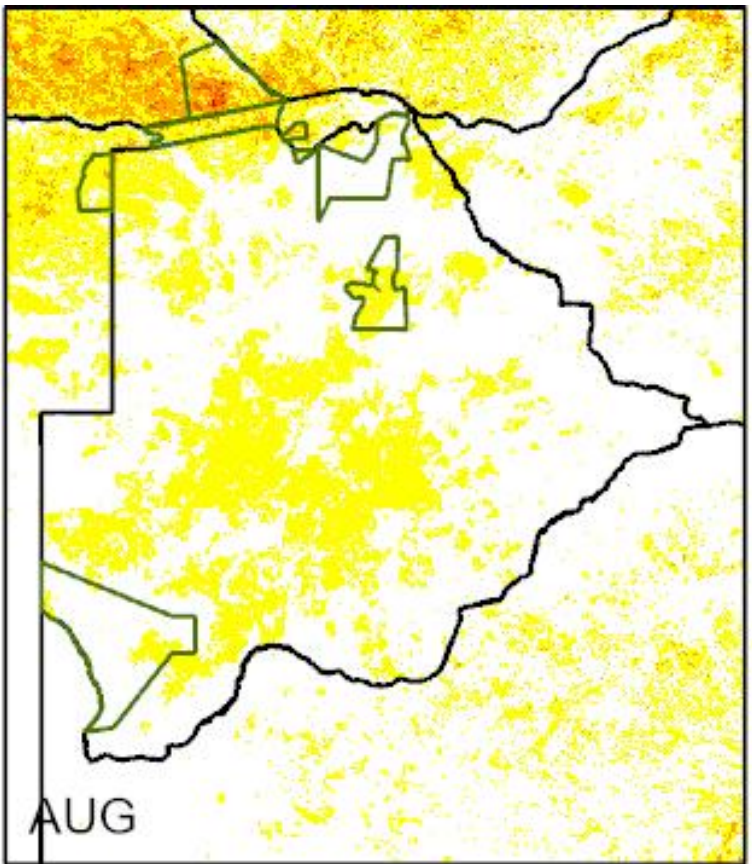
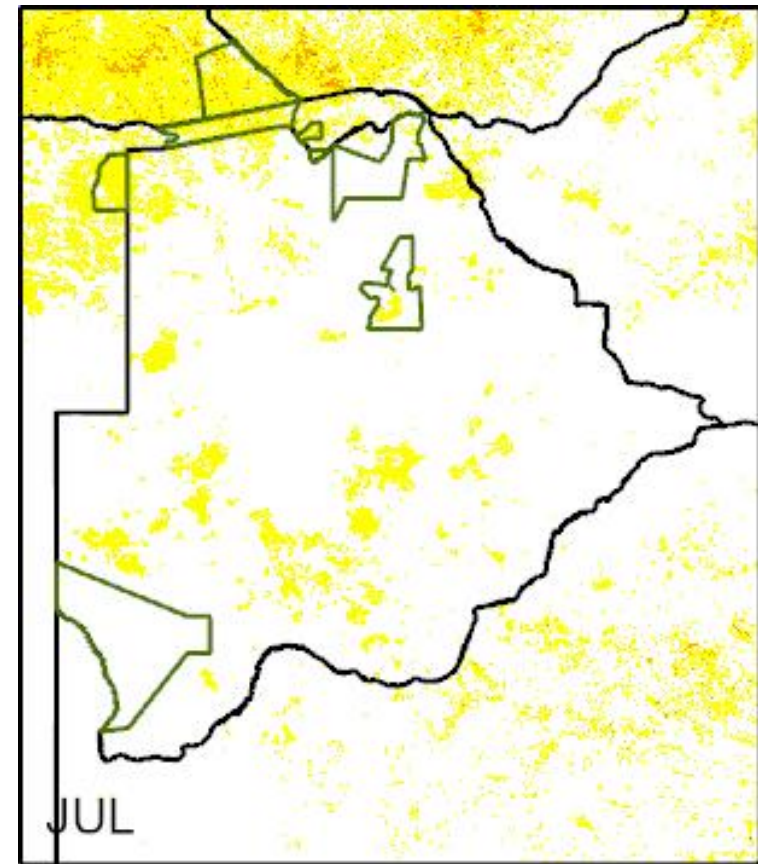
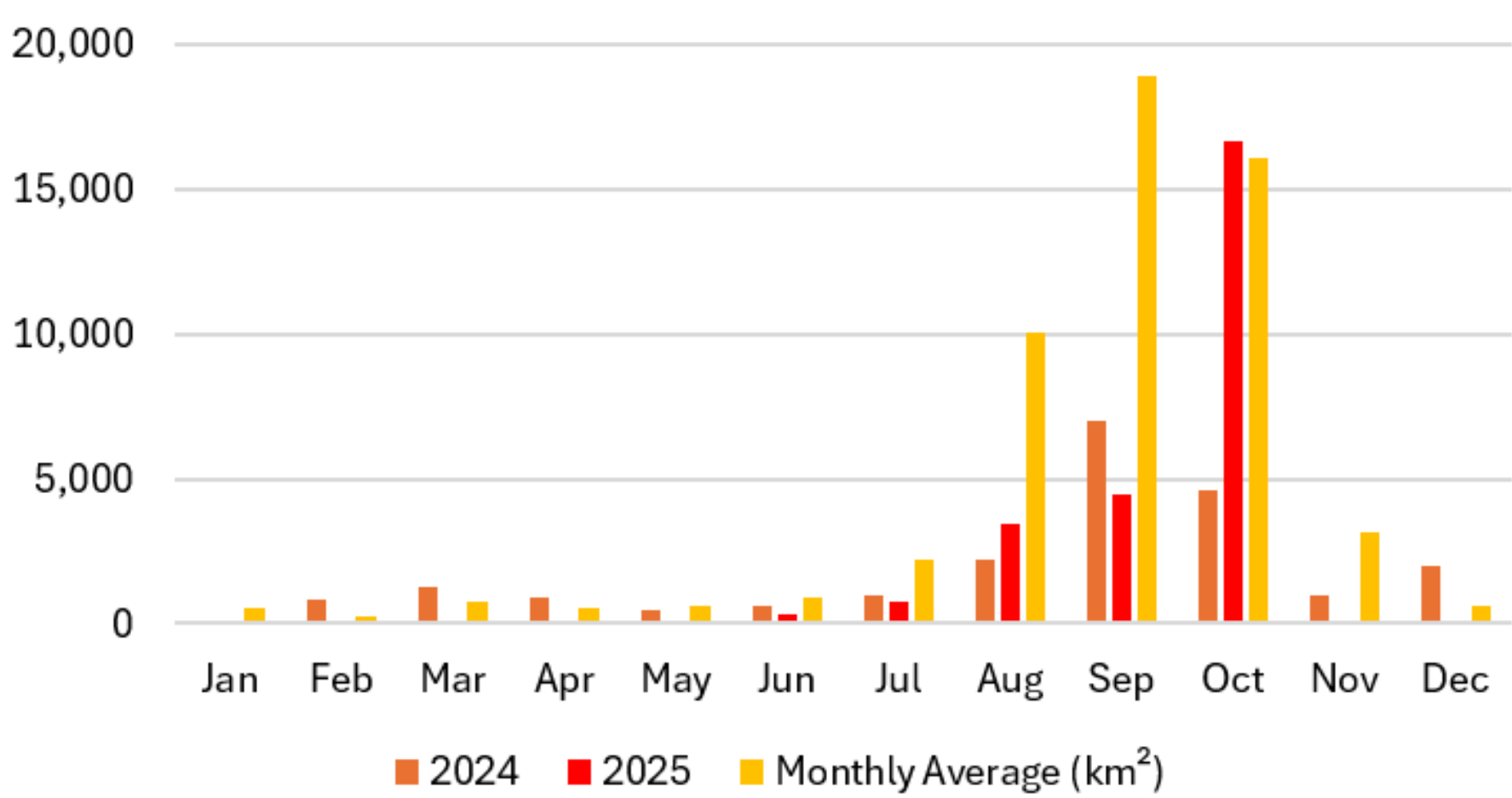
Number of Years Burned in 25 Years 2001 to 2025



On average, just under 19 000 km² burn in Botswana during the month of September. The biggest areas that burned in a month were in September 2008, with 51 300 km², mainly in the central parts of Botswana (Ghanzi, Central Kgalagadi) and October 2011, with 80 400 km², mainly in Ngamiland, Ghanzi and Kgatleng.

In 2025, the largest areas were not burned during the month of September, but in October 2025, with around 16 500 km² burning during that month.

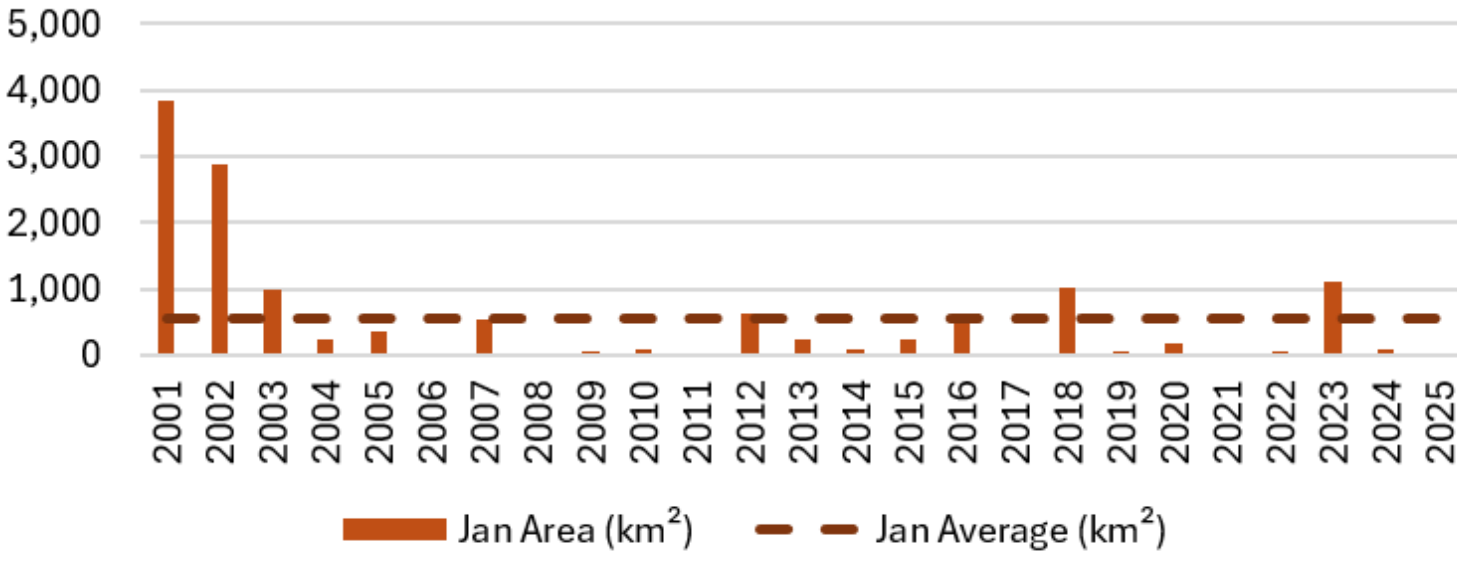
Botswana Monthly Areas Burned (km²) 2021 to 2025



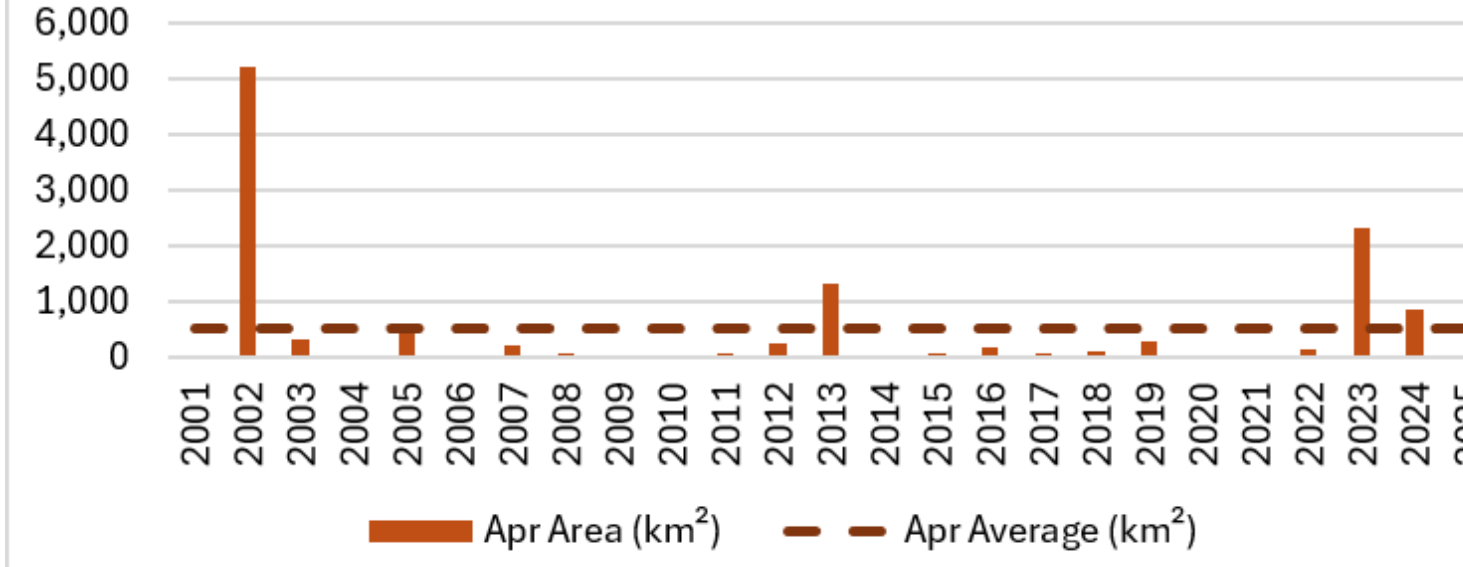
The data indicates that September is the month with the highest likelihood of wildfires, while February experiences the lowest incidence.

Botswana fire season occurs from July to November

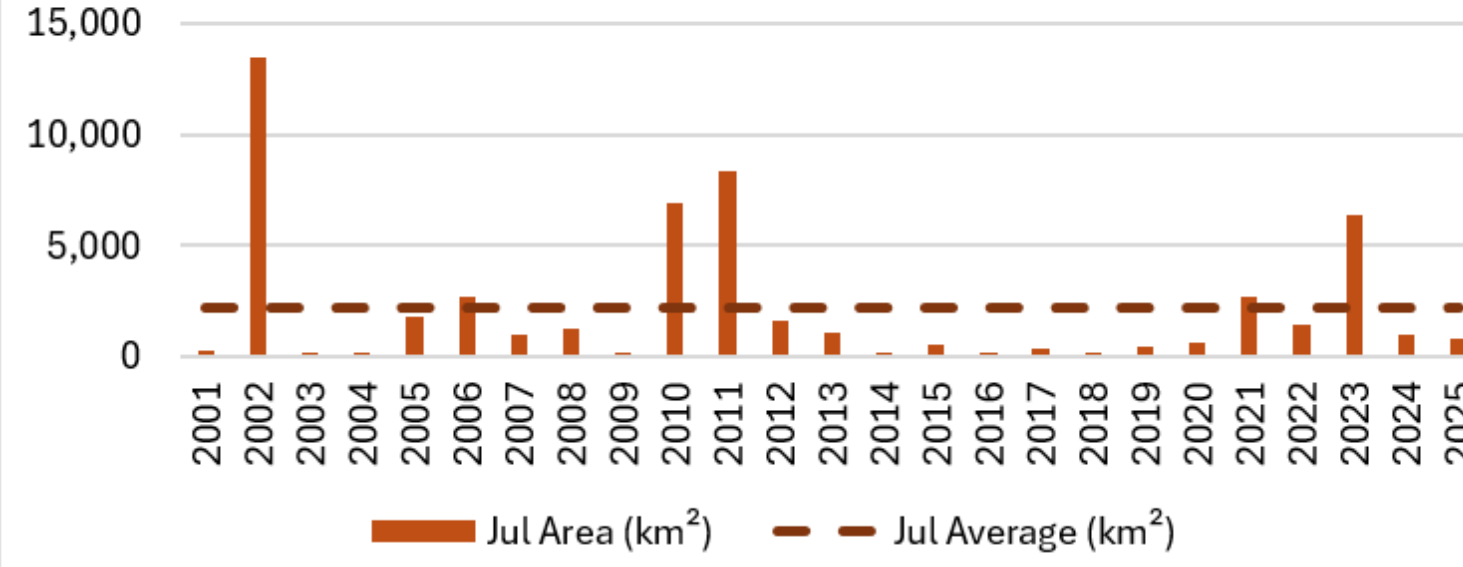
January Burned Areas (km²)



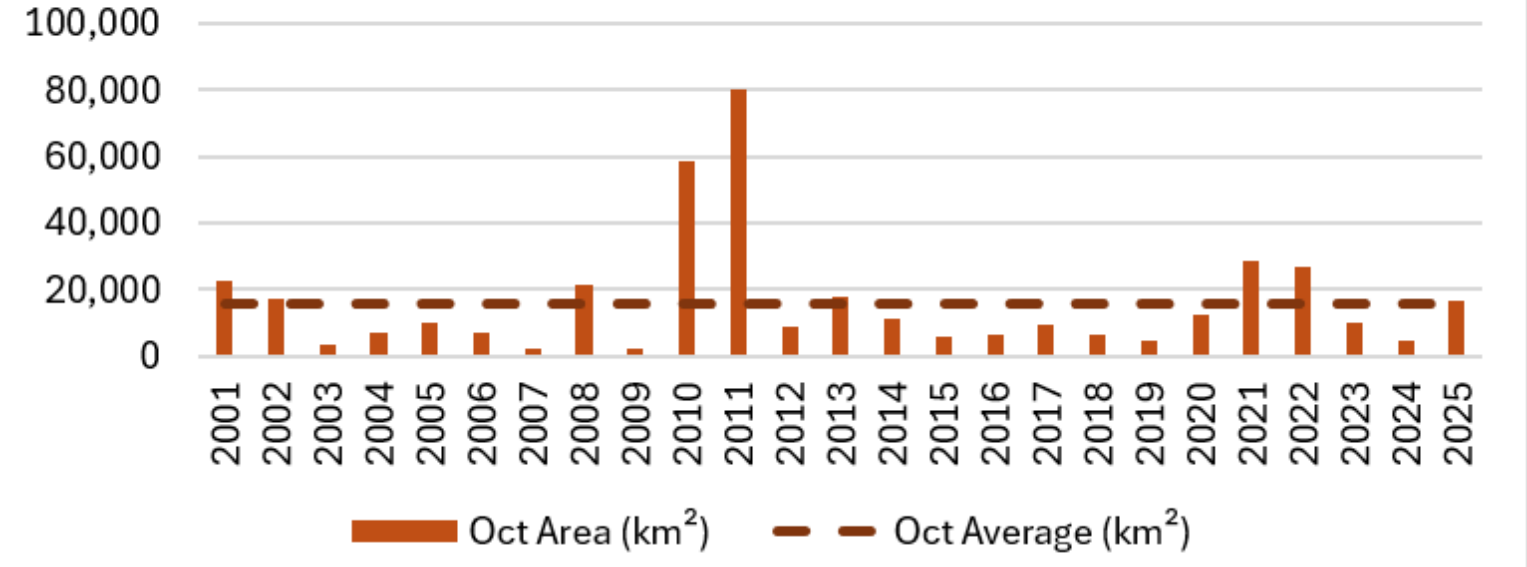
April Burned Areas (km²)



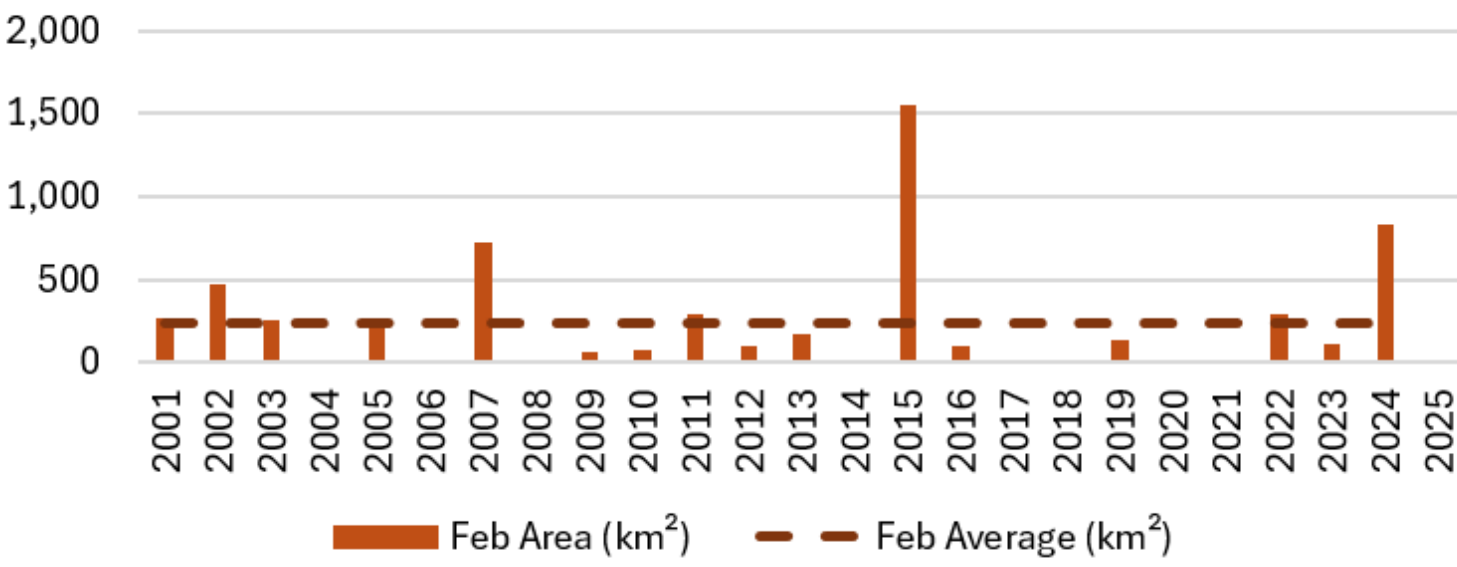
July Burned Areas (km²)



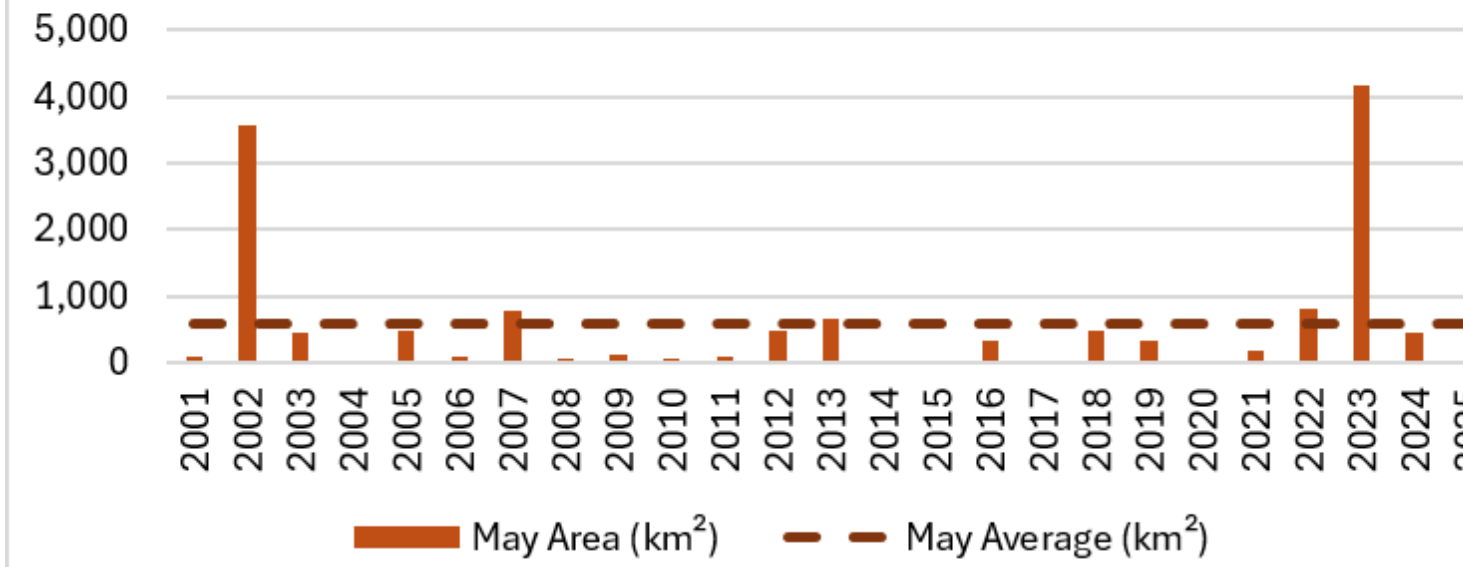
October Burned Areas (km²)



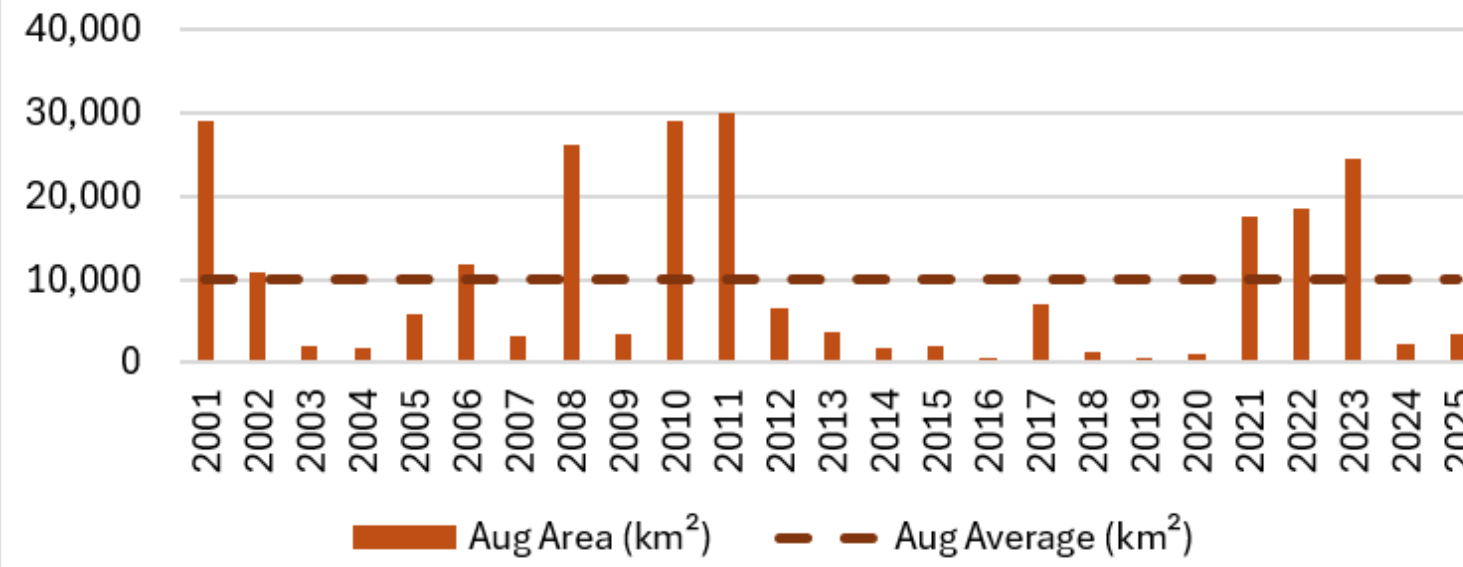
February Burned Areas (km²)



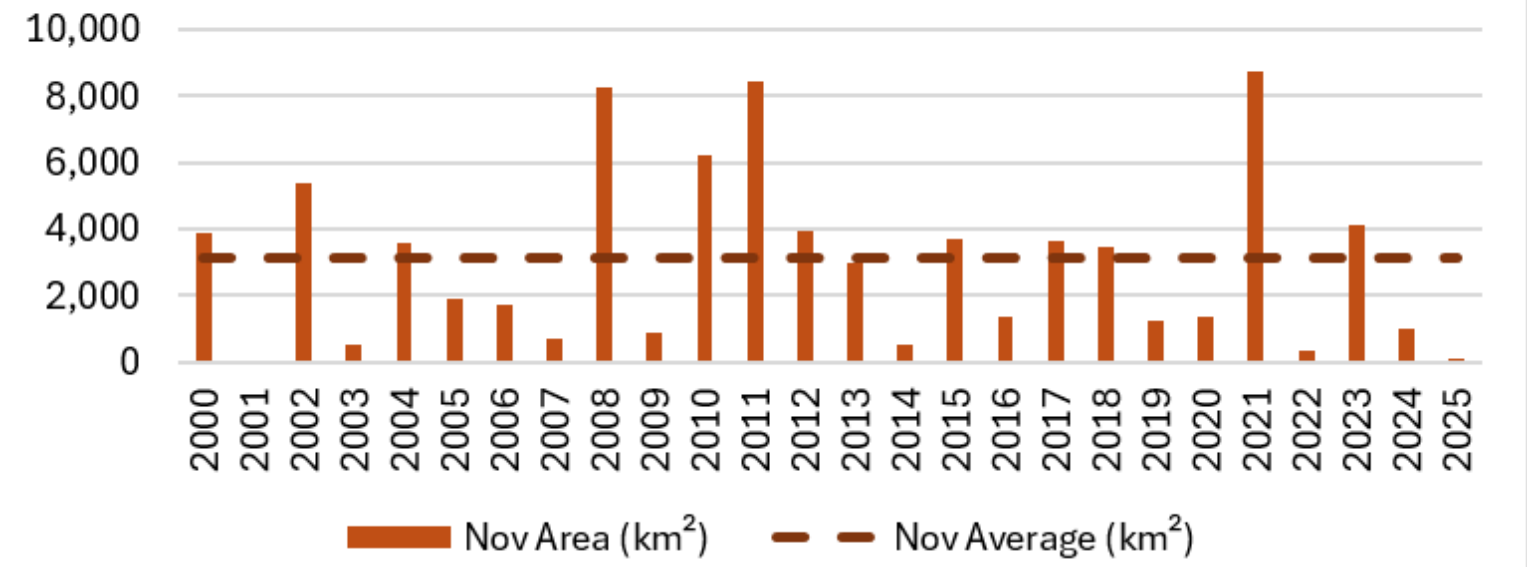
May Burned Areas (km²)



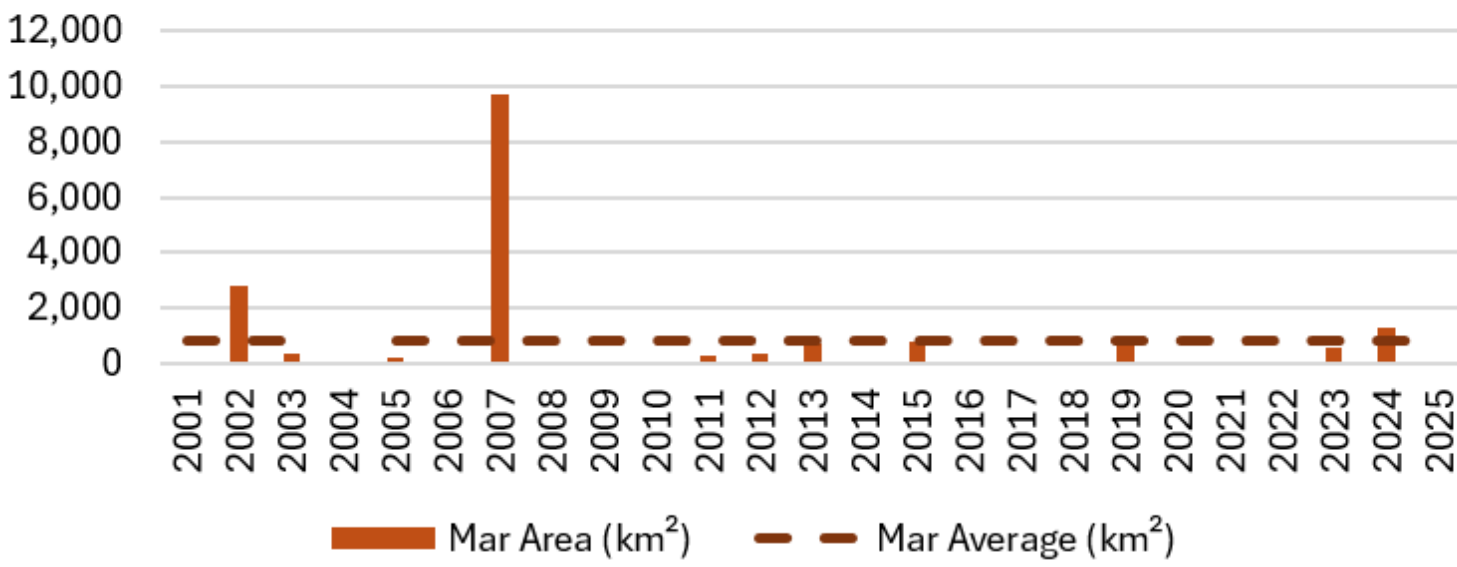
August Burned Areas (km²)



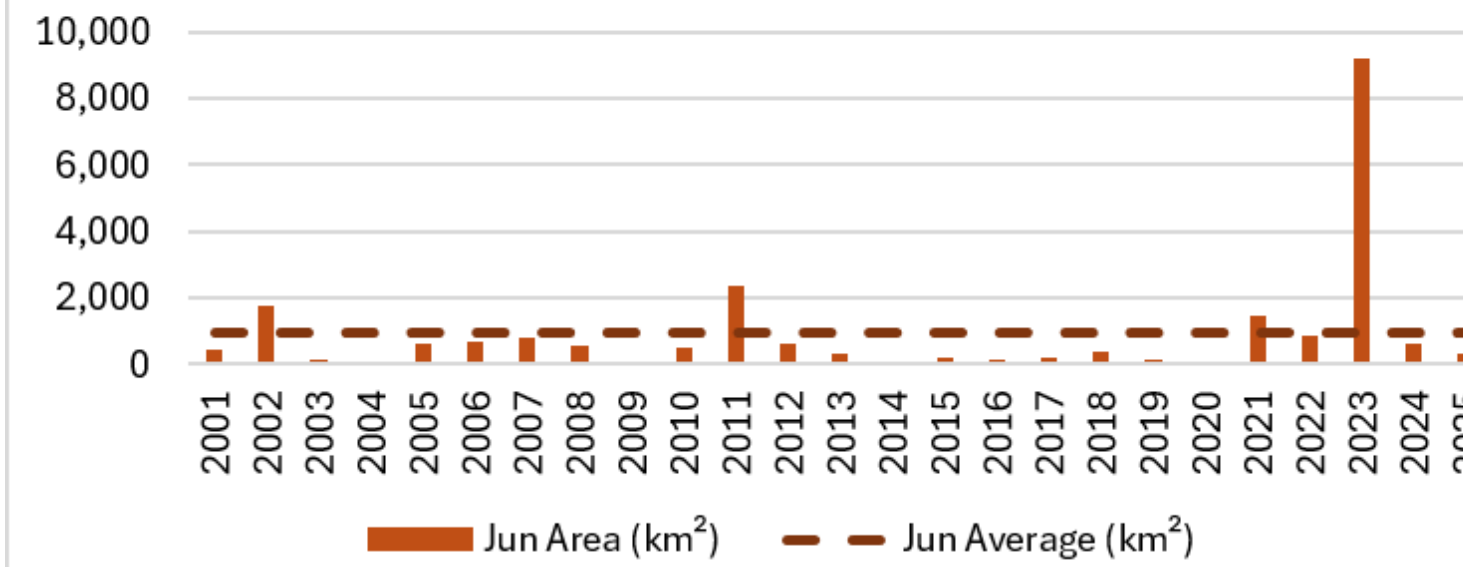
November Burned Areas (km²)



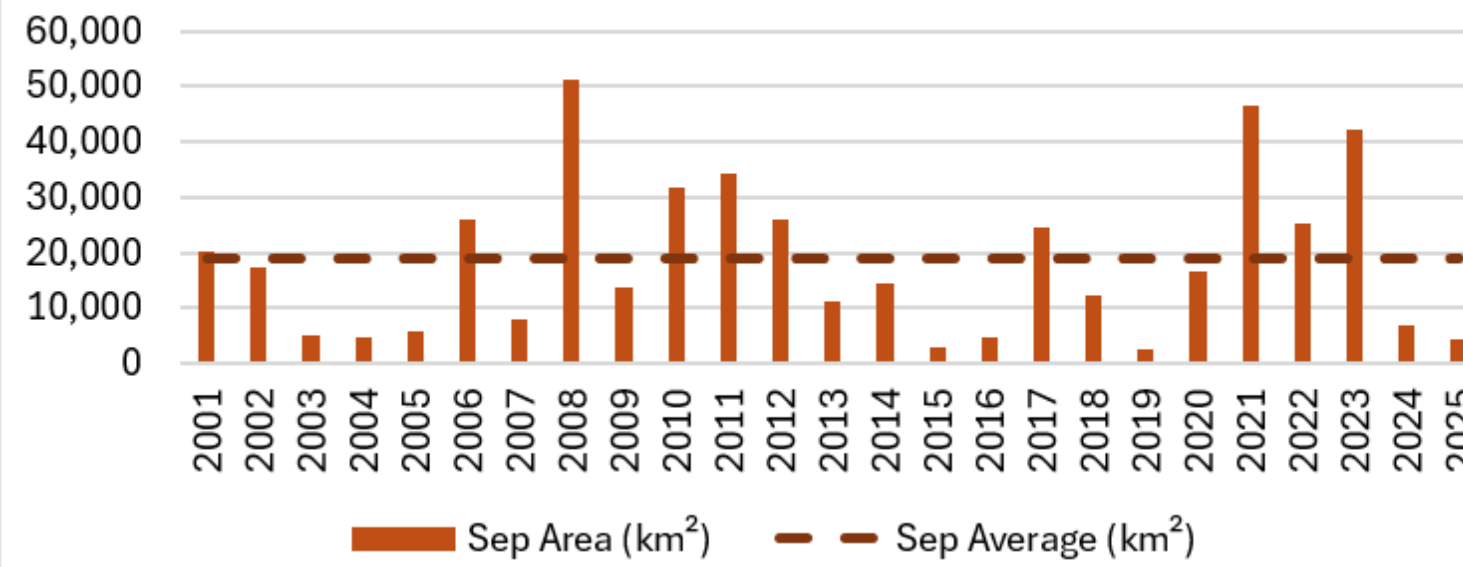
March Burned Areas (km²)



June Burned Areas (km²)



September Burned Areas (km²)



December Burned Areas (km²)

