
11. THE EFFECTS OF A CENTURY OF POLICY AND LEGAL CHANGE ON WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND UTILISATION IN TANZANIA

NIGEL LEADER-WILLIAMS*

Planning and Assessment for Wildlife Management, P O Box 63150, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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SUMMARY

This chapter examines the history of the past century and current practice of conservation in Tanzania. In pre-colonial times, conservation was achieved through culture and traditions, and without any written decrees or formal institutional framework. German and British colonialists successively began the process of reserving protected areas and of promulgating legislation that instituted central control over wildlife resources. The process of reserving protected areas continued after Independence, and these efforts were helped considerably by other national policies such as villagisation that drew people into more centralised settlements. Tanzania now has one of the most extensive protected area networks in Africa, and some unrivalled wildlife resources. However, it also has a very complex sector with several wildlife authorities managing different categories of protected area and different types of wildlife utilisation.

Game viewing is an important economic use of protected areas, primarily national

* Present address: Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology, Department of Anthropology, University of Kent, Canterbury CT2 7NJ, UK.

parks, in the north. Hunting by tourists is an important economic use of game reserves and other areas across the country. These forms of wildlife use bring fees to wildlife authorities and central government and greatly benefit the private sector. They also provide direct benefit to local communities from land on which they co-exist with the wildlife that is being utilised. Hunting by residents is an important activity for urban Tanzanians but provides little revenue to central government and no benefit to local communities. Trade in live animals and use of products from animals killed on control provide some legal benefits to local communities. However, most local communities now use wildlife illegally or convert land to other uses. Therefore, the Tanzanian government requested advice on policy formulation in the early 1990s. The policies recommended include retaining the unsettled, protected areas as the core of conservation activity, instituting a programme of community-based conservation where humans and wildlife co-exist, and rationalising the institutions involved in the wildlife sector.

INTRODUCTION

As one of Africa's most wildlife-rich countries (see Kingdon, 1989; Stuart and Adams, 1990; Lovett and Wasser, 1993; Pomeroy, 1993), Tanzania provides an important case study for the theme of sustainable use, biological conservation and institutional management of conservation. This chapter aims to show a) how previous conservation policies have removed the control of wildlife resources from rural people to central or regional authorities; b) the current forms of wildlife use and their value, and their lack of benefit to rural people; and, c) the policies that have been recommended to ensure the effective and long-term conservation of Tanzania's unequalled wildlife resources.

The perspective of this chapter derives from the Planning and Assessment for Wildlife Management project, which ran from 1991 to 1996. The lack of coherent policies and plans, and the lack of data, in Tanzania's wildlife sector was realised by the Department of Wildlife in 1990 when this project was initiated. The project was funded and co-managed by two international non-government organisations and was given broad terms of reference by the Department of Wildlife, and Ministry of Tourism, Natural Resources and Environment. These included: the brief to tackle the current key planning issues and to draw up national plans for the wildlife sector; to organise a more efficient, workable system of information storage and retrieval, and to undertake a study of the complex structure of institutions involved in the wildlife sector and suggest ways to enhance their combined effectiveness. The goal of the overall programme was to conserve the wildlife of Tanzania by promoting the sustainable economic development of the wildlife sector.

The project produced several plans and policies that were accepted by government, and others that are still under consideration. Furthermore, the project has also published reports of some of its key workshops. These policies and workshop reports form the basis of the current chapter.