
22. WILDLIFE UTILISATION: A JUSTIFIED OPTION FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN AFRICAN SAVANNAS

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THE PROSPECTS OF WILDLIFE UTILIZATION IN SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA

"If you want to make money out of wildlife go to South Africa, if you want to enjoy seeing wildlife, go to Kenya". This statement was made by one of the authors in this book who comes from a country somewhere in between South Africa and Kenya. Why are the financial and economic prospects for wildlife utilization best in a place that appears to many less attractive for the experience of the wild animal splendour of Africa and why are the best areas the least conducive to financial and economic success at the time of writing? In this concluding chapter an attempt is made to explain this paradoxical situation. Land use options in the African savannas are reviewed and the prerequisites for sustainable use of wildlife, which were treated in detail in the various chapters, are examined to assess the consensus among the contributors of this book. Our intention is to assist those people who are dealing with the use of wildlife, those living with wildlife on their land, those who are making a living out of wildlife and those who are, at a distance, determining the fate of people and wildlife by their involvement in policy making at State level or giving financial support, the complex of donor agencies and NGOs.

Over the last few decades there have been striking changes in the socio-

economic conditions of people sharing their livelihood with wildlife on their land. These changes have led governments and their policy making partners, such as NGOs, landholder associations and district development authorities, to examine the best options for land use, especially in the arid and semi-arid lands, the African savannas. The population trends for wildlife and livestock are generally in decline while human populations are increasing (Ottichilo et al., Chapter 10; Gichohi, Chapter 8; de Leeuw et al., 1998). Pastoralists, who traditionally were supported by an autarchic economy, have entered a money economy because of the decreasing ratio between livestock and pastoralist numbers (Prins, 1992) and new financial needs as a result of national developments. Onlookers predict the demise of wildlife as a result. Such people may be proven right if wildlife are not to be given a fair chance to be an asset in the spectrum of natural resources available to the landholder.

Commercial ranching has only marginal benefits (Heath, Chapter 3) and faces an economic crisis worldwide (Prins, 1994). Although pastoralism produces possibly three times the net income per ha as compared to commercial ranching, because of minimal overhead costs, subsistence incomes are no longer made because of the inversely correlated trends of human population growth and livestock population decline (Grandin et al., 1991; Heath, Chapter 3). In this book, conditions are described that have turned wildlife into a valuable financial asset, as for instance in South Africa, where wildlife utilization has become the fastest growing form of land use and has replaced commercial ranching in several areas. Private land under wildlife use now equals the total area of land set aside for conservation and this area is still growing (Bigalke, Chapter 9; Hearne and McKenzie, Chapter 19).

Here we review the main issues discussed in the workshop and to summarize the expert opinion presented on various aspects of wildlife utilization. This collective wisdom allows us to consider;

- the necessary prerequisites for wildlife utilization;
- how wildlife utilization supports conservation; and
- examples of good governance demonstrating the advantages of wildlife utilization over other land use systems.

The concepts which underlie the combined opinion of the authors will be reviewed first. The effectiveness of protected areas in preserving wildlife was shown to be enhanced by the use of wildlife in dispersal areas of national parks and game reserves. This includes new laws and policies for people who have all their lives lived with wildlife but who were marginalized by developments during the last four decades. Some of these people have been able to create the institutional framework recently to benefit directly from wildlife. These developments affect both traditional economies and private land holdings. Although ecological and land tenure systems form complex combinations, the principles governing sustainable use of wildlife are similar in all regions. It is the lack of recognition of such principles, combined with the lack of application of supportive legislation and policy, that causes some of the richer wildlife areas to lag behind in obtaining economic benefit from this natural