

AN OVERVIEW OF WILDLIFE AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN KENYA

**A PRESENTATION TO THE 3RD II PT AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON PEACE
THROUGH TOURISM AT THE HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL,
LUSAKA ZAMBIA**

FEBRUARY 6TH – 11TH 2005

PRESENTED BY

**JACOB M. MWANJALA
HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT RESOLUTION OFFICER
KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE**

Abstract

Kenya is endowed with a wide variety of biodiversity resources ranging from the marine and coastal areas to Savannah woodlands, arid and semi arid, wetlands, forests and mountain ecosystems.

There are currently 46 protected areas that represent the key ecosystems all covering approximately 8% of the national land area. There are also many other areas that are designated for wildlife conservation as the principal land use system outside the gazetted protected areas network. Currently there are 17 community sanctuaries and private conservancies covering a total area of 300,000 ha.

Conservation of wildlife, especially through tourism accounts for over 20% of the National Gross product. The quality and quantity of biodiversity in Kenya is being affected by the general environment degradation that arise from increasing human population and unsustainable land use and development practices. For quite some time the management of wildlife in Kenya was mandated to one semi autonomous department – Kenya wildlife service. Presently there are hundreds of NGO's, landowners, private sector and local community institutions that are involved in wildlife conservation.

National parks, the only area under the direct jurisdiction of Kenya wildlife service, only occupy 4.9 % of Kenya's land service and contain about 10% of Kenya's biological diversity. Over 90% of Kenya's animal and plant population are found on land vested in other government agencies, local authority or private ownership, none of which is mandated exclusively or specifically to conserve biodiversity.

Further, many of the mammals which are found within parks regularly move onto surrounding areas not under KWS direct jurisdiction .As such biodiversity could only be sustained effectively if the competent authorities and stakeholders supporting this diversity subscribe to its conservation. Hence KWS is realizing of this, brought on board all stakeholders to address wildlife management in Kenya.Landowners, groups, ranches

and private game ranches were brought together under one umbrella body – A conservancy. Currently 13 wildlife conservancies have been established countrywide. At national level the conservancies are represented by the Kenya wildlife working group.

To enhance the goodwill of the Kenyan people, KWS has instituted human wildlife conflict management through animal problem control, game barriers, buffer crops and other preventive measures including those taken by stakeholders. This also includes education training and deterrence.

Incentives to conserve include all forms of use both direct and indirect, which tend to perpetuate rather than destroy biodiversity. Currently consumptive utilization of wildlife is restricted to game bird shooting, while non consumptive uses include ecotourism, science and education and what can be dubbed green hunting. Green hunting is fee paying hunting for the privilege of immobilizing or capturing animals being handled in the course of relocation or disease control.

Kenya practices both eco and mass tourism with the bulk of tourism coming from Europe U.S.A. Due to the travel advisories against Kenya by the U.S government, tourism has suffered a big blow for the past two years. While holding discussions with the U.S government for a possible lift in the embargo, Kenyans marketing focus is now targeting the Asian market and which has given positive results.

Intensive internal marketing through park open day's program, community conservation education and schools conservation and outdoor Programme has seen more Kenyans visiting parks whose number would soon surpass that of non residents.

KWS community wildlife service has effectively guided the formation of community sanctuaries and cultural villages. Many tourists now visit such areas and this has reduced human wildlife conflicts.

2.1 Parks and Reserve

Kenya is endowed with a wide variety of biodiversity resources ranging from the marine and coastal areas to Savannah woodlands, arid and semi arid, wetlands, forests and mountain ecosystems.

Currently, Kenya has a total of 27 national parks, 34 national reserves and 4 wildlife sanctuaries. These cover an area of 47,674 km² and 8% of the total Kenya's landmass of more than 580,000sq km.

The returns from the conservation of habitats and the wildlife they contain are broadly defined to include aesthetic, cultural, scientific and economic gains. On the other hand, the management of wildlife in Kenya focuses on the core conservation areas. These include Lake Nakuru National Park the haven for both lesser and greater flamingoes and the rare black rhino. Aberdare ranges the main source of Kenyas rivers and water for most of the urban centers, the Tsavo with the largest elephant population and Mt. Kenya the tallest mountain in Kenya and home for rare bongo among others.

While the value of biodiversity is more widely appreciated now than in the past, the pressure on wild animals and their habitat are also rising rapidly due to encroaching human population and intensified resource extraction. Other threats to wildlife and its habitat include change in land tenure, fragmentation, agricultural expansion, political and economic liberalization, a greater awareness of property rights and a deepening antipathy towards wildlife among land owners suffering depredations. These and other factors have contributed to greater intolerance of wildlife.

Liaison with local authorities who manage Kenya's national reserves was considered paramount to safeguard the welfare of wildlife in those areas.

National parks, the only areas under the direct jurisdiction of Kenya wildlife service, occupy 4.9% of Kenya's land surface and contain about 10% of Kenya's biological

diversity. About 90% of Kenyas wildlife population are found on land vested in other government agencies, local authorities or private ownership, none of which is mandated exclusively or specifically to conserve biodiversity.

Kenya also has taken to implement decisions and resolutions of international protocols as well as take a role in trans-boundary conservation issues.

Kenya wildlife service plays a central role in educating the general public in matters of biodiversity and the importance and value of its conservation. Education programs include support in getting Kenyans to visit national parks through assistance with transportation and hostel accommodation. Youth education and curriculum development had been achieved through the wildlife clubs of Kenya's school programs.

The overall aim is to build a land national constituency for biodiversity conservation in collaboration with other government and non-government agencies.

Management of parks has adhered to the principle of maintaining biological diversity. This includes reintroduction of species and restoration of habitats. Other programmes include infrastructure development and tourism promotion.

3.0 Tourism

Tourism is one of Kenyas largest and most important industries, creating jobs, earning foreign exchange, yielding government reserves and acting as an important base for rural development. This sector contributes 1% of the nations GDP

Wildlife is at the heart of Kenyas tourism. In terms of bed nights alone, our beaches are more popular but wildlife provides the main point of difference for Kenya versus other beach destinations.

Outside protected areas, tourism represents the biggest single economic incentive to landowners to sustain wildlife on their land. With over half the wildlife in Kenya outside protected areas, tourism development is a critical component in the quest to encourage landowners to conserve and benefit from wildlife.

Political upheavals among neighbor states has greatly affected tourism in Kenya due to the proliferation of small arms and which has seen an increase in crime along tourist circuits. Long periods of discussions and the eventual signing of peace agreements in Sudan and the election of a new government of Somalia in Nairobi recently will see the improvement of security for our visitors.

2. AREAS OUTSIDE THE PARKS AND RESERVES

Recognizing that wildlife needs space outside the park as well as inside it is to flourish without intensive management or ecological impoverishment. This space would be secured as a result of landowners willing to accommodate wildlife in their properties. Such an accommodation would arise from policies encouraging landowners to incorporate wildlife with other forms of land use and reaping the benefits through tourism and game bird shooting.

Game hunting, live animal trade and game cropping were banned in the country pending policy and wildlife act review. To implement this long term strategy, it became necessary for wildlife officers to be facilitators and advisors to land owners and the local community.

The value of biodiversity is more widely appreciated now than in the past, the pressures on wild animals and their habitats are rising rapidly due to the encroaching human population and intensified resources extraction. Other threats to wildlife and its habitats include changes in the land tenure, land fragmentation, agriculture expansion, political and economic liberalization, a greater awareness of property rights and a deepening antipathy towards wildlife among landowners suffering life and property damage. These and other factors have contributed to greater intolerance of wildlife.

The foregoing changes and mounting threats to wildlife called for broader mission for biological diversity and more effective conservation policies. Emphases had to be placed on conserving biological diversity not only within the protected areas, but outside. Reduction of human wildlife conflicts in all areas of biological importance took center stage. This implied moving beyond approaches based on the separation of people and wildlife to those seeking accommodation and coexistence.

This was a great extent achieved by KWS' support of community based conservation and income generating projects. This saw the establishment of 17 community wildlife sanctuaries covering an area of 300,000 ha. Others include game farming, Agro forestry projects, eco- friendly curios and community ecotourism ventures.

KWS also initiated and supported wildlife conservation on private large scale ranches. These were regionally headed through forums and conservancies. To date, there are a total of 13 wildlife conservancies spread countrywide and headed nationally by the Kenya Wildlife working group.

KWWG is among other community based institutions that oversee the management of wildlife outside P.'A's