



Country Focus: **Kenya**

Kenya Wildlife Policy, Game Ranching and Bushmeat Field Assessment



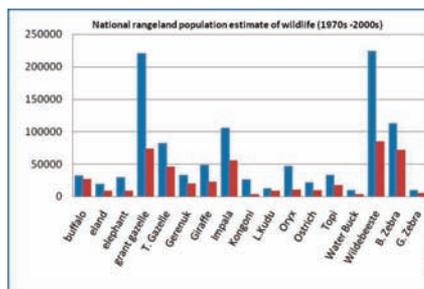
- ▶ **Most large mammals have been reduced by at least 50% in the last 30 years in Kenya**
- ▶ **Illegal hunting for bushmeat is a significant cause of wildlife loss in the country and supports unmet needs mostly for income and also protein among the poor**
- ▶ **Protected areas alone cannot support viable wildlife populations in Kenya in the long-term**
- ▶ **Management outside protected areas and on private land with incentives that support wildlife presence is essential**
- ▶ **Kenya's non-utilization wildlife policy and process has contributed to wildlife declines on private lands and other areas where benefits from non-use tourism are not accrued**
- ▶ **Improvements in wildlife policy and its implementation are needed to support wildlife conservation and human development needs**

Wildlife Trends in Kenya

Over the last thirty years populations of most large mammal species have declined significantly in Kenya. In the twenty years between 1977 and 1997 wildlife declined by 38% nationally in all areas surveyed and by 36% within nationally protected areas. Trends reported more recently (1997-2007) suggest an even higher rate of loss between 5% and 8% per year depending on the species. Generally speaking, for many large mammal species in Kenya there has been an estimated 50% decline in the last thirty years. The declines for most species are beyond expected losses due to drought and land use change alone with over-hunting being an identified contributor.

During the same time period, Kenya's human populations have increased dramatically from 14.5 million in 1977 to an estimated 40 million by the end of 2009. Human needs for protein, income, and land for farming and development are not only very high but increasing annually.

Thirty years ago in Kenya wildlife was twice as abundant as it is today. Kenya is dependent upon its wildlife not only for important revenue from tourism but also for important cultural, social and ecological services. Studies on wildlife declines have focused on climate (drought cycles) and land-use changes as well as trade (ivory and other wildlife products). Studies on bushmeat are relatively limited in the country but indications are that commercial bushmeat trade is increasing nationwide.



Data Source: Wargute et al. 2006

Overview of the Kenya Wildlife Policy Assessment

A major goal of this assessment was to evaluate illegal bushmeat utilization in Kenya including a bushmeat stakeholder's assessment, analysis of bushmeat and wildlife trends over several decades and review of Kenya wildlife use policy from 1989 – 2008. Data were collected using a multi-method approach including library and internet research as well as key-informant interviews. A total of 15 interviews were conducted with professionals in the wildlife sector (n=7) and Game ranches owners/Managers (n=8). Another major goal of this study was to evaluate conditions prior to and following the 2003 moratorium on game cropping in Machakos District to determine impacts of the ban including levels of illegal offtake, wildlife density and diversity and land-use tenure and policy 5 years before and after the ban. A multi-method approach was again employed including direct visits to game ranches in Machakos District (n=8), key-informant interviews with game ranch owners/managers (n=8), and review of census and land-use policy reports over ten years.

BUSHMEAT

The bushmeat trade is the illegal, over-hunting of wildlife for meat and income. Already in West and Central Africa this trade has resulted in declines and local extinctions of many wildlife species and the economic, cultural and ecosystem services they provide. In addition, a number of human health threats have emerged from the trade in bushmeat including linkages with HIV/AIDS, ebola and the threat of anthrax. Bushmeat trade is not regulated or managed by any authority. Economic benefits from the trade go mainly to hunters and traders. If current trends continue, future generations of citizens in Africa will not have the opportunity to access benefits from wildlife. Using wildlife to meet protein and income demands cannot be supported in the long term. The immediate threat of loss of economic opportunity, cultural and ecological services, and other values to a wider community must be addressed today.

Results and Findings

Bushmeat consumption in Kenya is common in seven “Bushmeat Hotspots” namely; Machakos/Kajiado, Taita/Taveta, Kitui/Mwingi, Trans Mara, Laikipia, Meru/Tharaka and Tana River/Malindi. These are wildlife rich areas adjacent to key protected areas or within game ranches characterized by high levels of poverty and landlessness. It is largely unregulated and poses a significant threat to wildlife populations both inside and outside protected areas. A single de-snaring team operating in a single area can lift 450 snares in two weeks of operations. There are numerous stakeholders including communities living with wildlife, wildlife conservation, social development, private and government sectors working to address negative impacts of commercial bushmeat. Wildlife hunting and trade is increasingly becoming commercial as a poverty mitigation strategy. Additional drivers identified by professionals in the wildlife sector are protein, culture and human wildlife conflict. Among 17 bushmeat mitigation projects, efforts include education and awareness (n=5), law enforcement (n=4), legislation and policy (n=3), bushmeat research (n=3), alternative livelihoods (n=1) and wildlife human-health (n=1). Ranking of solutions included education and awareness (n=5), protein alternatives (n=3), law enforcement (n=3), legislation and policy (n=3), deterrent sentences and poverty alleviation (both n=2). Although tourism is a leading industry for the national economy, benefits from tourism accrue only to limited locations and sectors of society in the country degrading potential for broad public support of wildlife conservation – particularly among private landowners.

Wildlife use policy has undergone a series of changes since the 1960’s when landowners were granted permission for sale of hides and trophies but not meat. In the mid to late 1970’s legislation was enacted to enable landowners to consumptively utilize wildlife but capacity did not exist for adequate management and in 1977 consumptive use of wildlife, including sport hunting, was banned. In the early 1990’s a policy was established to enable pilot initiatives to carry out consumptive utilization of wildlife through cropping for game meat but a moratorium was put into place in 2003 by Kenya Wildlife Service due to unsatisfactory implementation of the cropping policy. Lengthy stakeholder meetings and a policy review process began in 2006 to try to update the policy and make it responsive to present day needs and challenges. A final official policy is yet to be achieved that would enable private landowners to again consumptively utilize wildlife. Data reviewed show that private landowners inherit a high cost for wildlife remaining on the land and bushmeat hunting is widespread. In addition, without the ability to earn income from wildlife many group ranches are being subdivided to smaller agricultural use with an estimated loss of 24% of land for wildlife in Machakos by 2004 and even greater subdivisions occurring in the last few years.

Recommendations

Poor mechanisms for monitoring and information management on wildlife hunting and trade disables informed discussions that could establish an improved wildlife policy with enabling legislation toward regulated consumptive use. In addition to support for parks and reserves it is essential to develop community-private-public sector partnerships that encourage co-management. For private land-owners and communities to maintain a diversity of wildlife and not sub-divide ranches for long-term sustainability of wildlife, they have to benefit economically from wildlife in order to meet their livelihood needs. Such policy would improve resilience of the landscape to drought and support improved ecosystem and economic functions. Integrated policy and actions are immediately necessary to support biodiversity conservation and improved livelihood strategies to mitigate both protein and food security challenges. Partnerships for co-management, monitoring and information management and effective policy are essential for future generations of wildlife and people in Kenya.

For more information about BEAN and bushmeat in eastern Africa please visit: www.bushmeatnetwork.org

The Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network (BEAN) is an interdisciplinary and multi-institutional network consisting of stakeholders (wildlife professionals, human development experts, government representatives, private industry personnel, academic experts, local community leadership and citizens etc.) who work collaboratively to raise awareness, focus attention, share information, analyze, evaluate and report on trends, and leverage resources to build local partnerships and capacity to implement grassroots solutions that directly address bushmeat exploitation problems affecting protected and surrounding areas in eastern Africa.



Sources: Mwenja, I. 2008. The Effects of the Ban on Game Meat Cropping on Bushmeat Poaching and Game Ranching in Kenya: A Focus on Machakos District. Draft Report. Mweka Wildlife College, Mweka, Tanzania. 69 Pages.

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MENTOR

BEAN emerged from the USFWS MENTOR Fellowship Program [www.mentorfellowshipprogram.org] a funded cooperative agreement from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service [www.fws.gov/international/DIC/regional%20programs/africa/Africa.html] to the College of African Wildlife Management- Mweka, Tanzania [www.mwekawildlife.org] and the Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group [www.abcg.org].

