



Country Focus: **Kenya, Southern Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda** **Partnerships and Co-Management For Wildlife Conservation**



- ▶ **Wildlife is essential to East Africa's ecology, economics and culture.**
- ▶ **Conservation-development-community partnerships must scale-up effectiveness of wildlife conservation efforts by directly targeting the bushmeat trade.**
- ▶ **Effectively managing the bushmeat trade requires protecting wildlife from illegal hunting while facilitating protein and income alternative development.**
- ▶ **Capacity and resources for protecting wildlife while creating livelihood alternatives are extremely limited and should be committed as a conservation-development priority.**

Wildlife in East Africa

East Africa is the birthplace of human existence on this planet which took place in a landscape dominated by wildlife and natural ecosystems. Today that landscape is largely human-dominated and impacted. Still, wildlife is a keystone component of the ecology, economics, and culture of the East Africa region. Its absence would have dramatic and decidedly negative impacts not only for the people of East Africa but also citizens throughout the globe. The trends show continuous declines in wildlife density, diversity and distribution throughout the region; in some cases local extinctions have occurred. While the value of wildlife is undisputed its future is uncertain. Choosing between human and wildlife needs leaves decision-makers in a challenging position. The result is the current short-term solution to exploit wildlife for the bushmeat trade to meet immediate needs for food and income.

Photo: RARE



Training on bushmeat awareness tools for conservation-development-community partnerships.

Once the wildlife is depleted, human needs will still continue with demands coming from an even larger population. How will those growing needs be met? If they will have to be met in the future once there only remains an impoverished wildlife resource of 'weedy'¹ species then why can we not join together to establish long-term solutions today? With this vision in mind, more effective partnerships among human development and conservation institutions are essential in co-management planning together with communities living with wildlife. The result will be human needs being met in a landscape that supports diverse and ecologically viable wildlife populations for generations to come. The birthplace of humans can be the model for a system of long-term coexistence with ecologically viable and diverse wildlife populations in the modern world. To achieve this a targeted, dedicated, widespread effort to address the unsustainable use of bushmeat and fulfill the livelihood needs driving it is essential.

Photo: Ephraim Mwangomo



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.

Partnerships and Co-Management for Bushmeat

The natural resources co-management concept has been evolving on the African continent for decades. The initial agro-forestry systems of the 1970's and 1980's evolved into integrated conservation and development projects in the 1980's and 1990's which then further advanced toward community based natural resources management systems. Finally, biodiversity conservation efforts supported by development initiatives incorporated landscape level planning into the 2000's. Despite progress in some areas for both conservation and development goals, there has continued to be a steady decline of wildlife populations amidst a steady increase in human populations. Tradeoffs in these conservation – development efforts have not been successful at mitigating the increasing direct pressures on wildlife populations. Although there are extensive efforts in biodiversity and natural resources management the direct focus on wildlife requires increased attention, professional capacity, and resources.

Key to effective conservation-development partnerships is a simultaneous and parallel set of efforts that includes both protection of the wildlife resource from illegal hunting as well as targeted and locally relevant income and protein alternatives for human communities living with wildlife. It is the unmet needs for protein and income that are the main drivers of the bushmeat trade and are an immediate priority action. The unsustainable bushmeat trade emerges from this human livelihood crisis and is facilitated by limited law enforcement capacity to protect the wildlife. The path forward requires a scaling up of the important developments in partnership-building to a more effective set of outcomes for both wildlife conservation and meeting human livelihood needs.

BEAN and Partnerships

Building on the important evolution of conservation and development initiatives for biodiversity conservation, there is an imperative to focus attention on the wildlife resource. Given the variety of stakeholders engaged in the dynamic bushmeat scene playing out in and around protected areas across East Africa, it is essential that a partnership process be employed. Where partnerships exist, strategies should assure that the bushmeat dynamic is included as a priority focus. It is essential to logically link existing efforts to provide protein and income alternatives as replacements for illegally hunted wildlife and to reinforce such efforts with adequate awareness and law enforcement. Where no partnerships exist, it is necessary to identify those stakeholders that can effectively influence change and leaders that can develop the partnership-building process to assure all stakeholders are included.

For more effective wildlife conservation and human livelihoods outcomes to unfold, there is need for improved partnerships to establish consensus on gaps in knowledge based on shared information and lessons-learned, expanding attention, improved capacity, increased resources, and dedicated action in the region on the bushmeat issue. The Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network (BEAN) is established to facilitate such outcomes. Bringing together expertise on the bushmeat issue in a centralized network and providing support to ongoing conservation and development efforts can improve effectiveness in meeting wildlife conservation goals.



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.



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].



Sources: Borrini-Feyerabend, G., M. Pimbert, M. T. Farvar, A. Kothari and Y. Renard, 2004. Sharing Power. Learning by doing in co-management of natural resources throughout the world, IIED and IUCN/ CEESP/ CMWG, Cenesta, Tehran. Accessed May 2009: http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/ceesp_publications/sharing_power.cfm

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1 Weedy species describes those that can persist in a human-dominated landscape. They are generally small and fast-reproducing (e.g. rodents), see Meyer 2006 in Sources list