

## The Future of Traditional Customary Uses of Wildlife in Modern Africa: A Case Study of Kenya and Botswana

PDF (Size: 76KB) PP. 31-38 DOI: 10.4236/aa.2012.21004

### Author(s)

Nixon Sifuna

### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the future of traditional customary uses of wildlife in Africa. The continent's wildlife is as old as humanity or perhaps even older. Indeed wildlife has through the ages remained a valuable resource for the African society; both in its traditional setting and in its modern form. While wildlife has some conventional and universal uses to society, there are some uses that are anthropologically unique to the African traditional way of life and therefore warrant special consideration. Such uses, for instance, manifest the inextricable attachment of the African peoples to the continent's wildlife. Indeed there is a crucial link between wildlife and many traditional African cultural values and practices. One way in which these values manifest themselves is through the traditional customary uses of wildlife by the people. These uses are consumptive in nature and largely geared towards meeting the basic needs of humankind such as food, health and clothing. Research for this study was conducted in the Laikipia region of Kenya and the Okavango Delta region of Botswana. Information was obtained by the use of semistructured interviews, self-administered questionnaires, focus group discussions, and literature survey. The respondents included government officials, NGOs, experts as well as local communities. A total of 44 respondents were interviewed from each country, comprising households from the local communities within wildlife areas, senior ranking government officials, leaders of NGOs that actually work on wildlife issues, experts in natural resource management as well as eminent scholars in environmental and natural resources law and policy. The study established that these traditional uses continue to be either relegated by modern (or rather Western) way of life especially Christianity or restricted by the laws that are fashioned on American and European perceptions. This state of affairs has been largely engendered by western values as a result of colonialism, modern lifestyles as well as religious transformation from traditional African religions to Islam, Christianity and other present day religions. Admittedly, traditional wildlife uses are not necessarily undesirable and there is need for them to be recognized and promoted by the existing policies and laws. The paper recommends that African governments should, through their policies and laws, recognize and promote these traditional uses of wildlife. This is one way of ensuring that wildlife contributes to the day to day life of the people. It is only when this is achieved that the people of this needy continent of Africa will begin to appreciate the value of wildlife as a valuable resource to the present and future generations. Notably, the value of wildlife in western societies differs radically from its value in the traditional African context. While in western societies the importance of wildlife is perceived from its intrinsic value, in the traditional African context it is perceived from its direct uses—consumptive uses.

### KEYWORDS

Wildlife Values; Traditional Customary Wildlife Uses; Socio-Cultural Uses; Totems; Traditional African Values

### Cite this paper

Sifuna, N. (2012). The Future of Traditional Customary Uses of Wildlife in Modern Africa: A Case Study of Kenya and Botswana. *Advances in Anthropology*, 2, 31-38. doi: 10.4236/aa.2012.21004.

### References

- [1] Akama, J. S. (1995). Wildlife conservation in Kenya: A political-ecological analysis of Nairobi and Tsavo regions. Washington DC: African Development Foundation Research.
- [2] Allen, D. L. (1978). The enjoyment of Wildlife. In H. P. Brokaw, (Ed.), *Wildlife and America*, Penguin.

- [Open Special Issues](#)
- [Published Special Issues](#)
- [Special Issues Guideline](#)

[AA Subscription](#)
[Most popular papers in AA](#)
[About AA News](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[Recommend to Peers](#)
[Recommend to Library](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Downloads:	29,578
------------	--------

Visits:	137,127
---------	---------

[Sponsors, Associates, and Links >>](#)

- [3] Atiyah, P. S. (1983). *Law and modern society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [4] Bolen, E. G. and Robinson, W. L. (1995). *Wildlife ecology and management*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.
- [5] Caldecott, J. (1988). *Hunting and wildlife management in Sarawak*. Gland: International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- [6] Chardonnet, P., des Clers, B., Fischer, J., Gierhold, R., Jori, F., & Lamarque, F., (2002). The value of wildlife. *Revue Scientifique et Technique*, 21, 15-51.
- [7] Colchester, M. (1997). *Salvaging nature: Indigenous peoples and protected areas*. In K. Ghimire and M. P. Pimbert (Eds.), *Social Change and conservation*, Oxford: Earthscan Ltd.
- [8] Dasman, P. (1964). *Wildlife biology*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- [9] Giles, R. H. Jr. (1978). *Wildlife management*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.
- [10] Government of Botswana (2012). The official website of the Ministry of Tourism. Last checked 17 January 2012. [http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism\\_s/tourism.html](http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism_s/tourism.html)
- [11] Government of Botswana (2003). *National Development Plan 9*. Gaborone: Botswana Government Printer.
- [12] Government of Botswana (2005). *Wildlife Statistics 2004*. Gaborone: Botswana Government Printer.
- [13] Government of Botswana (2010). *National Development Plan 10*. Gaborone: Botswana Government Printer.
- [14] Government of Kenya (2012). The official website of the Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism, Last checked 17 January 2012. [http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/pages/facts\\_figures](http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/pages/facts_figures)
- [15] Government of Kenya (2002). *Effective environmental management for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction*. The National Development Plan 10. 2002-2008.
- [16] Government of Kenya (2007). *Draft Wildlife Policy*. Nairobi: Kenya Government Printer.
- [17] Green, B. (1992). *Countryside conservation: The protection and management of amenity ecosystems*. Crows Nest: G. Allen & Unwin.
- [18] Hakimzumwami, E. (2000). *Community wildlife management in central africa: A regional review*. Evaluating Eden Series, Last checked 17 January 2012.
- [19] <http://www.oie.int/eng/publication/rt/2101/ph.%CHARDONNET.pdf> Last checked 17 January 2012
- [20] <http://www.kws.org/about/training/manyani.html> Last checked 17 January 2012
- [21] <http://www.sci-cites-talking-points-southern-africa-intl-webpage.Pdf>> Last checked 17 January 2012
- [22] Ipara, H. (2004). *Indigenous wildlife resources management systems: A study of the isukha community of western Kenya*. D. Phil Thesis, Eldoret: Moi University, 2004.
- [23] Kameri-Mbote, P. (2002). *Property rights and biodiversity management in Kenya*. Nairobi: ACTS Press.
- [24] Kasere, S. (1996). *Campfire: Zimbabwe's tradition of caring*. United nations-non governmental Liason service (UN-NGLS). *Voices of Africa No. 6: Sustainable Development Part 2*. <http://www.unsystem.org/ngls/documents.en/voices.africa/number6/vfab.08.htm>
- [25] Kenya Wildlife Service (1990). *A policy framework and five-year investment programme 1990/91-1995/96 Report*.
- [26] King, S., & Burgess, A. (2000). *Nutrition for developing countries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [27] Krunk, H. (2002). *Hunter and hunted: Relationships between carnivores and people*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [28] Lindsey, P. (2010). *The future of wildlife-based land uses in Botswana*. Last checked 17 January 2012. <http://www.africanwildlifeconservationfund.org>
- [29] Miller, N. N. (1982). *Wildlife: Wild death*. New York: State University of New York Press.

- [30] Mungatana, E. D. (1992). Recreational value of wildlife viewing: A case study of Lake Nakuru national park Kenya. M.Sc Thesis, Oslo City: Agricultural University of Norway.
- [31] Muriuki, J. N. (1996). Cooperation or conflict: Managing scarce resources of Africa: A case for community wildlife conservation in Kenya. New York: Mimeo.
- [32] Ojwang J. B., & Kabeberi, J. W. (Eds.) (1998). Law and the public interest. Nairobi: Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi.
- [33] Omondi, P. (1994). Wildlife-human conflict in Kenya: integrating wildlife conservation with human needs in the maasai mara region. D. Phil Thesis, New York: McGill University.
- [34] Overseas Development Administration (ODA) (1996). Africa wildlife policy consultation. Final report of the consultation. London: ODA.
- [35] Plog, F., Bates, D.G., & Acocella, J. R. (1980). Cultural anthropology. Wadsworth: HHT Prins.
- [36] Republic of Kenya (1977). The wildlife (Conservation and management) (Prohibition on Hunting of Game animals) Regulations.
- [37] Shaw, J. (1985). Introduction to wildlife. New York: McGraw-Hill Science.
- [38] Sifuna, N. (2006). Using eminent domain powers to acquire private lands for protected area wildlife conservation. Law, Environment and Development Journal, 2, 84-105.
- [39] Sifuna, N. (2009). Legal and Institutional Arrangements for Wildlife Damage in Kenya and Botswana.