



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

SECOND AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE WEEK

Cotonou, Republic of Benin, 16 to 20 January 2012

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNANCE AND BENEFIT SHARING IN THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF AFRICA'S FORESTS, TREES AND WILDLIFE

Experiences in the Implementation of Human and Wildlife Conflict Prevention and Mitigation

I. CONTEXT

- Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as “any human-wildlife interaction which results in negative effects on human social, economic or cultural life, on wildlife conservation or on the environment”. HWC is a growing global problem. It is not restricted to a particular geographical region or climatic condition, but is common to all areas where wildlife and human populations coexist and share limited resources. In addition, HWC will likely be exacerbated by climate change.
- The HWC is particularly pronounced in Africa, where large numbers of big mammals, including several hundred thousand wild elephants and more than 20,000 lions, still roam freely, particularly in rangeland areas. The pastoralists who live in these regions, the agro-pastoralists as well as other settled small and large scale farmers and their families who live around the peripheries of rangelands and protected areas, have to cope with the consequences of HWC. These consequences include: damage to and destruction of crops; competition for grazing and water; livestock predation; increased risk of certain livestock diseases; various inconveniences, such as loss of sleep due to the need to protect crops at night, and even direct threats to human life.
- As human population rapidly increases in Africa (having almost tripled in the four decades from 1960 to 2000) and settled agriculture spreads to more marginal rangelands, conflict between wildlife and people inevitably increases as well. It is unlikely that these population trends will change over the next years. According to the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)/UN forecast, human population in Africa will increase from 820 million people in 2000 to some 1,831 million people in 2040. It is obvious that HWC incidents will increase with this scenario.
- Nowadays, much of the African wildlife still lives outside protected areas; for example, across the continent, 80% of the elephants' range is outside such areas (Muruthi, 2005). This raises a fundamental

question: is it reasonable to expect people, many of whom are amongst the poorest on the planet, to co-exist with wild animals such as large predators, elephants, hippos, buffalos and herds of antelope, to absorb the ensuing economic losses and tolerate the inconveniences and threats to lives and livelihoods that can result? Many conservationists would argue that co-existence is possible, even desirable, and indeed, if properly managed, the occurrence of wildlife represents an opportunity for diversifying and improving livelihoods.

5. The onus is firmly on those responsible for the management of wildlife to put in place policies and measures that at least reduce the threats posed by wildlife and preferably enable local people to reap benefits – such as revenues from wildlife-based tourism enterprises. Without such policies and measures in place, local people will, understandably, often take action to defend their interests – even their lives – including through harassing and killing wild animals. Some of these wildlife species are endangered, others are keystone species. Therefore, the repercussions of such local actions or lack of action on the side of the wildlife authorities can be felt at national and international levels.

6. Conflicts between people and wildlife today – alongside habitat destruction and large-scale commercial hunting to satisfy the growing demands for bushmeat – undoubtedly ranks amongst the main threats to conservation in Africa. These represent real challenges to local, national and regional governments, wildlife managers, conservation and development agencies and local communities alike (Kangwana 1993, Conover 2002, Treves and Karanth 2003).

II. FAO ASSISTANCE TO MEMBER COUNTRIES ON HWC

7. Given the above challenges, the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC), at its 15th session in Maputo, identified HWC as the major problem for both sustainable wildlife management and rural development. The Commission therefore requested FAO to provide technical assistance to member countries to better manage HWC. Based on this request, some analyses of HWC were undertaken by FAO and the results presented at the 16th session of the AFWC in Khartoum. The results of this first review of the causes and consequences of HWC and possible prevention and mitigation strategies were well received by member countries and FAO was requested to undertake further work on the HWC issues. A series of technical publications on HWC was produced ranging from a general overview of HWC in Africa to more specific reports on elephant, lion, baboon and crocodile conflicts. These publications were presented and distributed at the 17th session of the AFWC in Brazzaville. The experience gained during the preparation of these technical publications clearly showed the need for a practical and comprehensive HWC Toolkit for use by the people directly affected by HWC.

8. Human and wildlife conflict has many underlying and deep rooted causes that need a better understanding of the human dimension of the phenomenon. Sometimes the motivation to report a case as HWC can be driven by the need for protein by local populations, with the hope that the animal reported as problematic will be shot by the Problem Animal Control Unit and the meat distributed to the community.

9. HWC is a problem primarily for farmers, and ultimately it must be tackled by the farmers themselves with the support of the relevant government authorities. Although numerous research articles, reports, recommendations, guidelines and training manuals have been produced in recent years to address the problem, most have aimed at technical support agencies, government wildlife departments, and conservation and/or development oriented non-governmental organizations. Few tools have been developed for and adopted by rural farmers and communities to help them address HWC at the grass roots level.

10. In view of the above, FAO teamed up with numerous partners (CIRAD, BIO-HUB, WWF, CAMPFIRE, and others) to develop a handy toolkit designed for use by extension workers offering to local communities a range of simple and practical solutions that can have great success when used properly and in combination. The toolkit is designed not only to help protect people, their livestock and crops from wild animals but, just as important, to also safeguard wild animals from people.

11. The HWC Toolkit is now being tested in several countries, mainly in Southern Africa. The results are very encouraging, local farmers and wildlife managers find it helpful and are implementing some of the recommended measures and providing feedback on efficiency and implementation challenges.

12. Projects on HWC are currently being implemented by FAO in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. They are partly successful, but have also identified several challenges, the main ones being:

- ensuring solid support from all levels of government;
- developing and implementing clear policies and legal frameworks at the local, district and national levels;
- ensuring strong local participation;
- integrating wildlife, as an asset, in land use planning;
- reporting, monitoring of, and rapid response to HWC.

13. Reporting is a very important part of HWC management. However, difficulties remain particularly in remote areas of Africa where conflicts occur most. In the framework of the Technical Cooperation Projects in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, FAO developed a tool for reporting on, analysis of, and early reaction to HWC via a SMS-based national database management. The system is able to receive information from a field-based officer, confirm receipt of the message, insert the data into a national database and, depending on the importance of the problem, alert, by SMS, the relevant services at national, provincial or local levels so that they can immediately react.

14. First experiences with the HWC Toolkit and the SMS-based HWC reporting are very promising, however, they need both further testing and adaptation to local situations to be effective and help the farmers and wildlife managers deal with HWC at the local level.

15. The toolkit is designed in a way that more information can be added. Funding permitting, the toolkit will be reviewed and updated with more information. Field testing in different countries and circumstances would help improve the prevention and mitigation methods for better efficiency and assistance to the farmers and wildlife managers.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

16. Based on the above experiences and challenges in the implementation of human and wildlife conflict prevention and mitigation, it is obvious that collaboration with member countries is needed to further field-test the HWC prevention and mitigation methods under field conditions, and to discuss, develop and implement national policies and strategies for HWC management, as well as systems of reporting, monitoring and early reaction.

17. HWC spreads across country borders, requiring coordination of wildlife policies and legal frameworks as well as cross-boundary law enforcement and collaboration, to address the challenges of prevention and mitigation at the regional level.

18. The member countries affected by HWC are therefore encouraged to collaborate with FAO in the development of national and regional HWC strategies, and testing of the HWC prevention and mitigation methods and respective reporting and monitoring systems.

19. FAO stands ready to facilitate the exchange of experiences on HWC among member countries, to receive further guidance to develop the toolkit further, and to support the development of national and regional strategies and tools for effective prevention and mitigation of HWC in Africa.