

Foreword

Conflicts between humans and wildlife have occurred since the dawn of humanity. They occur on all continents, in developed as well as developing countries, yet the problems vary according to the particular environment and people's way of life. This publication concentrates on Africa, where problems are particularly common and pronounced. Rural and peri-urban communities are affected all over the continent.

Consequences of human-wildlife conflict can be both direct, including injury and death from encounters with dangerous animals, and indirect, including loss of crops and livestock and damaged infrastructure. Crocodiles, hippopotamuses, elephants, lions and baboons are among the main aggressors. However, not only these large animals pose threats to human beings; mass aggregations of birds, rodents or insects can devastate agricultural crops in a short time.

Human-wildlife conflicts have become more frequent and severe over recent decades as a result of human population growth, extension of transport routes and expansion of agricultural and industrial activities which together have led to increased human encroachment on previously wild and uninhabited areas. Competition for the available natural habitats and resources has increased. Moreover, the effects of climate change are exacerbating these conflicts.

In times of progressive loss and degradation of natural habitats and biodiversity, wildlife populations are declining in many areas where human-wildlife conflicts occur – sometimes as a result of indiscriminate retaliation following conflicts with humans, as well as through unregulated hunting exceeding sustainable harvest levels. A decline in populations of prey species of large predators may attract carnivores towards domestic livestock, further aggravating human-wildlife conflict. It is therefore fundamental to monitor wildlife populations and maintain them at adequate levels, and to restore natural habitats and the balance between predator and prey species.

The aim of this publication is to facilitate the coexistence of humans and wildlife and assist affected communities in applying best management practices. There is no simple solution. Different circumstances, beliefs and values are to be taken into account in evaluating which approaches are best.

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Acronyms

AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
AVIGREF	Community Associations for the Management of Wildlife Services (Benin)
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
ECOPAS	Ecosystèmes protégés en Afrique sahélienne (European project)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HACISIS	Human Animal Conflict Self Insurance Scheme (Namibia)
HWCC	Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration
IRDNC	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAC	Problem animal control
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WWF SARPO	WWF Southern Africa Regional Programme Office