
<NEWS>

**Wildlife Conferences
in Tanzania,
December 11-15, 2000**

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Two wildlife conferences were held in Tanzania from 11-15, 2000 which I was invited to attend. The theme for the first conference was "Exchanging Information on Wildlife Research and Conservation in Tanzania," organised by Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI). It was held at Impala Hotel in Arusha town, Northern Tanzania, from 11 to 12 December 2000.

Participants included wildlife researchers and managers, veterinary scientists, university students and representatives from research funding agents. The main aim was to share information and experiences on wildlife research and conservation in Tanzania. A total of 25 papers were presented on topics as diverse as wildlife bio-diversity, population dynamics, health monitoring, sustainable exploitation and conservation.

Mr. Liani of TAWIRI reported on a simple, low cost, efficient and easy to use beehive model suitable for rural use that was innovated at TAWIRI. Mr. B. Kissui of the University of Dar es Salaam revealed substantial declines, over the past two decades or so, of lion population in the Ngorongoro crater. Dr. G. Norton of the University of East Anglia observed a similar trend for baboons at Mikumi. However, both researchers were inconclusive as to the exact reasons for these declines.

Prof. Tony Sinclair from Syracuse University and his research team underscored the need for long-term and continuous wildlife

research. Their four-decade's long unbroken research has so far yielded several classic findings on ecosystem processes and functions in the Serengeti. Mr. T. Massawe of TAWIRI revealed a hitherto little known healthy density of chimpanzee beds to the south of Mahale Mountains National Park, signalling a stable population there.

Other papers dealt with human/wildlife conflicts. Human population expansion was reported to threaten wildlife, especially elephants, within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and around Tarangire National Park. A project by Italian researchers that aims to integrate conservation and human needs in the Manyara/Tarangire ecosystem was detailed on a poster. Routine ecological monitoring at Manyara, Arusha, Tarangire, and Udzungwa National Parks respectively was reported as inadequate due mainly to resource limitations.

Five papers dealt with wildlife health and health monitoring. Dr. Titus Mlengeya of Tanzania National Parks gave a four years' overview of wildlife health in Tanzanian National Parks. He called for vigilance and systematic surveillance of wildlife health because disease epidemics is a leading cause of animal mortality.

A challenge to apply molecular-based techniques in tackling the bush-meat crisis was presented by Prof. Mutayoba of Sokoine University. Prof. Kayumbo of the University of Dar es Salaam and his colleague presented a simple field protocol for collecting and preserving invertebrate specimens. They are working on establishing a taxonomic database for Tanzanian invertebrates.

On the final day, participants were given a chance to visit several National Parks in the outskirts of Arusha.

The second meeting was hosted by the Mweka College of African Wildlife Management between 14-15 December at Moshi, Northern Tanzania. The theme was "African Wildlife Management in the New Millenium". It brought together about 300 delegates from within and outside Tanzania.

Participants were drawn from Environmental Organisations especially Bio-diversity Support Programmes, Colleges and Universities, National Parks and Reserves,

Government ministries, and Non-Governmental Organisations. Mweka is one of the only two mid-carrier African wildlife management colleges in Africa. It was thus no wonder that most participants were former graduates of Mweka college! They came from Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar, Tanzania, South Africa, USA, UK, Germany, and Canada.

Topics were diverse and were thus held in parallel sessions. In day one, the following topics were discussed: Conservation and Politics in Africa, Training in Wildlife Management in Africa, Conservation versus Development, Biodiversity or Wildlife and The bush-meat Crisis in Africa. A particularly hot debate centred on whether or not and how development links to conservation. To me, the issue was left unresolved.

In day two the topics were Tourism and Conservation, Reintroduction and Regeneration as Conservation Tools, Conservation Outside Protected Areas, African Conservation and Financial Resources, Wildlife Disease Management in Conservation, and Community-Based Conservation. Most themes had between 4 and 6 papers presented, bringing the total to 48 papers.

A special workshop facilitated by Drs. Ian Redmond and Eve Abe of Ape Alliance and the UK Rhino Group respectively, and attended by Dr. Jane Goodall was conducted entitled "Towards a Strategy for Great Ape Conservation". A need for active lobbying to global environmental and to the UN bodies to place special conservation status and actions for great apes was reiterated.

Overall, most discussions in this meeting centred on the need to realise and empower the local people in wildlife conservation. Mr. L. Severe, the Director of Wildlife in Tanzania, revealed critical changes in the newly proposed wildlife policy of Tanzania. The new policy, the trial implementation of which is already complete, offers more room for the direct management of wildlife by local communities. Under the new policy, local communities in Tanzania will be allowed to own and use wildlife resources as an economic asset.

For more details on these meetings, or information on others planned in future, please write to: 1) The Principal, College of African

Wildlife Management, Mweka, P.O. Box 3021
Moshi, Tanzania; and 2) The Director General,
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