



The general trend evident from this table is that there have been increased sightings for nearly all species recorded. The implications of such increases have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand more wildlife adds considerably to the tourism potential of conservancies. This is particularly the case with charismatic wildlife species such as rhino and elephant. In addition the increasing number of huntable game also adds value and provides for the possibility of community harvests, live sales and more trophy hunting. On the other hand the increase in wildlife may make people's livelihoods more vulnerable as they face increasing pressures from competition over water resources, and sometimes grazing, and may lose crops and increasing numbers of stock to herbivores and predators.

The foregoing discussion highlighted, from a macro perspective, the considerable amount of development that has taken place in the communal areas during the last few years. It is in the context of the explosion in the number of conservancies, increased income generation, possibilities for employment and the recovery and growth of wildlife populations that research for this report was conducted. Further information relating to these developments and achievements are presented in Chapter 4. The implications of these are considered in other chapters of this report. To contextualise the findings presented later, the next section of this introduction provides an overview of the current vision and challenges for CBNRM.

## Vision and Challenges for CBNRM

**The current vision for CBNRM is to:**

“promote, support and further the development of community-based approaches to the wise and sustainable use of natural resources, thereby striving to advance rural development and livelihoods, to promote bio-diversity conservation and to empower communities through capacity building and good governance, to determine their own long-term destinies” (cited in Jones *et al.* 2001)

To achieve this vision, the CBNRM programme is currently working towards improving NRM and conservation, enhancing rural development and empowerment and capacity building.

Many of the achievements toward these ends have largely been directed at working with conservancy institutions. CBNRM practitioners in Namibia would agree that there is still much more that can be done to strengthen these institutions and to develop their capacities. To address this issue and others a visioning exercise was carried out by the

NACSO partnership in 2001. The aim of this exercise was to provide a series of targets for the coming five years and to identify strategies to meet these. Key objectives included: ensuring that community-based organisations have the capacity to manage natural, human and other resources effectively; promoting sustainable and integrated NRM; increasing the income and benefits to community-based organisations and the community; increasing the capacity of the support organisations to meet the other objectives; and improving public support for the CBNRM programme (Jones *et al.* 2001).

These alone are necessary but not sufficient to meet truly the vision shared of CBNRM practitioners and rural communities. The issue of addressing household livelihoods through CBNRM remains a substantial challenge. A number of steps that are required to meet this challenge were also identified by the visioning exercise that was conducted and other programme-level evaluations highlighted some of these. The 2001 mid-term review of LIFE II and the assessment of the national CBNRM programme (Child *et al.* 2001), for example, emphasised the need to strengthen participatory democracy as a corner stone of the programme. There is also a need to place more emphasis on ways to link CBNRM directly to improving the livelihoods of rural people, and to place more emphasis on rural productivity (not only through wildlife) to address poverty reduction (SASUSG 2003).<sup>11</sup>

The dual challenges of improving participation and addressing development have implications at a number of different levels. There are local community issues, relating to the distribution of power, accountability and equity (local social dynamics) that affect the extent to which the conservancy institutions can address their objectives and those of the broader community. That there is still strong support for conservancies among rural communities is testament to their success to date. The extent to which rural people will continue to support the conservancies, however, not only depends on them gaining a stronger voice in local decision-making, but also being able to genuinely receive the benefits of improvements in resource management (for example continued access to natural resources for household use) and to access the incomes earned from tourism to improve livelihood security and support community development. There remain policy constraints and issues of institutional integration (linking with other government initiatives) that also have an impact on the extent to which CBNRM can address livelihoods. To contextualise the materials and discussion presented in this report it is worth considering these in more detail.

<sup>11</sup> Consensus was reached on these issues at the southern African regional workshop on best practices for CBNRM, held in Windhoek in March 2003.



### Participation and livelihoods

The recommendation for improving bottom-up accountability and participation and placing people at centre stage as the 'clients' of CBNRM stemmed from the fact that the devolution of decision-making within the Namibian programme had, through the legislation, extended only as far as the legal institutions representing communities and conservancy members. It had not, however, been based on more localised units of decision-making that could promote a more participatory form of governance (see Chapter 3). This has resulted in a situation in which some people feel marginalised and discriminated against and others have found opportunities to capture a greater share of the fringe benefits that come from conservancy development. In addition, it has resulted in separate use and management approaches. One at a collective or conservancy level, the other at farm, village and household levels (this latter issue has consequences for wildlife management and is discussed in Chapter 6).

The recommendation from the LIFE II (Child *et al.* 2001) evaluation also stemmed from the fact that while there was very good evidence to suggest that, at the time of the review, some conservancies had in fact earned large incomes, these had mostly not been distributed to residents in the conservancies.<sup>12</sup> Participation remains a pivotal issue, since in the context of common property resource management, decision-making and planning that may affect the livelihoods of communal area residents require the support and endorsement of local people. Improving governance to address issues relating to participation in decision-making and planning and to improve accountability between the conservancy institutions and the broader community are prerequisites to addressing local development priorities (see Chapters 6 and 8).

Improving participation to ensure accountability of the conservancy institutions to their members, however, is only part of the equation. There also needs to be a focus on participation in the sense of enabling the broader community to draw on the resources of the conservancy to address directly their livelihood priorities and security issues. Of central importance here is the recognition that participation concerns a process of dialogue between interested parties and negotiating the outcomes of decision-making. This issue is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 9. The research material presented in this report illustrates that while participation in the decisions and activities of the conservancies in terms of their current focus of support is desired, participation is also a necessary step in creating better synergy between existing livelihoods and any future opportunities that may be developed by the conservancies.

The extent of participation, however, varies across conservancies and between regions. It also varies according to the focus of service delivery by support organisations (including MET), with some organisations and individuals focusing more on fostering participation than others. Generally, with the exception of AGMs and specific planning exercises (e.g. tourism and NRM planning in Caprivi and visioning exercises in Torra Conservancy), there have been few opportunities for conservancy residents to incorporate their primary livelihood concerns and priorities into the planning activities of the conservancies. Until very recently, institutional development activities have focused on building the capacities of the conservancy institutions themselves, and not on supporting the conservancies to develop lower tier organisational links with their membership and communities. A number of practical recommendations are made in this report relating to assisting to achieve this. In addition, the methodologies recorded here (see Annex 3) provide some useful examples of tools that can be used to improve participation in local planning and to conduct local-level livelihoods analysis.

### Policy, legislation and institutions

As discussed in Chapter 3, it is clear that the rights that devolved through the legislation are legally only vested in the conservancy institutions' committees, and not with the broader membership. The focus on institutional development and establishing conservancies has played an important role in providing a legitimate context within which certain groups and individuals can lobby Government and seek to enjoy the rights they have gained, but this has largely been limited to addressing wildlife and tourism issues. Issues relating to land and the inability in law of the conservancies to enforce exclusion, and therefore to enforce decisions, is also important. Related to this is the issue of policy as it currently relates to existing and proposed tourism concessions and leaseholds. It remains unclear how and if conservancies will be able to benefit meaningfully from these. The lack of group tenure in conservancies is also significant. This particular issue and that relating to the position of the concessions and leaseholds may be addressed under the Communal Lands Act, which will allow for Communal Lands Boards to make decisions regarding the allocation and designation of lands. The position of the conservancies and in fact the traditional authorities with respect to their representation on these boards, however, remains unclear.

The question of whether or not the intentions of policy are currently being met is also important. A key issue here relates to the 'gap' between the intention of policy in terms of devolving rights and benefits to a *rural community* and the focus on building the capacity of the legal *institutions* to achieve these rights. This has led to a lack of 'internal legitimacy' within the conservancies. The issue of confusion

<sup>12</sup> For details relating to the distribution of cash benefits see Mulonga and Murphy 2003 and Vaughan *et al.* 2003d.



over membership highlights the problem (see Chapter 3). This issue has important implications for ownership and empowerment in the context of the management and use of resources.

The legislation providing for rights is given to conservancy committees and not the community; this breaks the chain of accountability. Conservancy committees are legally accountable upwards to the Government, but not downwards to their constituents. Evidence for this is provided in a number of places throughout this report.

A strength of the legislation is that it gives communities rights over wildlife and to a lesser extent tourism. This rights-based approach strengthens the position of conservancies and their communities considerably. However, the legislation gives some rights to communities, but these rights are limited. Local communities can make very few of the crucial management decisions over wildlife and tourism themselves without obtaining the permission of the Government. This has had the effect of giving the responsibility to conservancies but no authority to act. This has been described in relation to the role of conservancies in the context of HWC, in terms of their control and management of land and water, and in terms of issues relating to the utilisation of wildlife and protecting and controlling tourism.

At an institutional level there are challenges. These co-exist at both conservancy level and the level of support organisations. In the case of the latter, the challenge relates to shifting attention away from conservation *per se* and focusing more specifically on addressing livelihood and rural development at a household level, and not simply as a means to achieve conservation, but an important objective in its own right. Here the challenge is to identify ways in which to expand the professional skills base and capacities of support organisations to include the specialist professional competencies required in fields of social and community development and planning. This has previously been alluded to through various evaluations and reports (Child *et al.* 2001, and Jones *et al.* 2001 for example), but explicitly recognising that to tackle rural development requires specialist inputs has not yet been addressed. This issue is essentially one of methods and approach.

At the conservancy level, the challenges relate to continuing to support further the development of capacities to manage and to run conservancies. There are also institutional challenges relating to improving accountability and transparency. Chapters 6 and 9 take up these challenges.

### **Issues of integration and links with other development initiatives**

While improving participation will go some way to identifying what are the critical household livelihood issues, addressing these is not only a focus of work by the conservancies and CBNRM. Other government initiatives

and programmes are also addressing poverty reduction and rural development. Creating practical alliances with other national development initiatives is important. In addition to improving effectiveness and complementarity, this would make CBNRM more acceptable to the broader public and to the donor community. Currently there are a number of initiatives and policies being promoted by the Government that aim to link planning for development at a number of levels. The Government's policy of decentralisation is one such. Underpinning this is the devolution of planning to the regional level, but linked to constituency and village levels through various committees. The extent of decentralisation is varied and in some areas it has only recently begun to be implemented formally. This policy may go some way towards achieving better coordination between the various government sectors (for example, in forestry, lands, agriculture, water and wildlife). Other stakeholders will also be required to engage with the processes for them to become effective, but they offer promise.

### **Improving incomes and addressing livelihood security and diversification**

Until recently, the conservancy programme focused almost exclusively on the management of wildlife and tourism, and not on ways to address better household development and livelihood issues. Some argue that wildlife and tourism offer opportunities for improving livelihoods by generating income for rural areas. The economic gains that have been made at an aggregate level certainly contribute to economic development regionally, and most residents of those conservancies who have earned substantial incomes are aware of the potential value of this income. Although the gains have been substantial, translating these into tangible benefits at the household level has proved more elusive. How far the distribution of benefits has been able to contribute to improved livelihood security and diversification is the subject of much material presented in this report.

Based on the detailed livelihoods research conducted by WILD, there are clearly important implications for different people within the conservancies. How best to target the distribution of benefits in terms of employment and money are important questions and challenges facing conservancies. Any further diversification of livelihood support also needs to consider the implications for different groups within the communities. It is often the case that the poorest members of these communities are more concerned with achieving livelihood security than they are with seeking livelihood with diversification opportunities. Again materials presented in this report aim to contribute to addressing this challenge.

### **Contributing to future developments and directions**

To address these challenges and achieve the vision for CBNRM, there are several practical issues which arise in relation to the objectives of WILD. One is the challenge of enhancing bottom-up participation and particularly inclusion in decision-making and planning. Improving participation



in conservancy development and designing approaches to facilitate this will undoubtedly go some way towards meeting these objectives, but a shift in focus is also required. CBNRM support organisations and local community-based organisations have built a strong platform and have demonstrated that improving NRM, addressing institutional development, developing new progressive policies and capturing tourism revenues can contribute to social and economic development at an aggregate level. The next steps will involve building into conservancy development and CBNRM a strong community and household livelihood development component.

In the context of WILD research, it is clear the conservancies, with support from the Government and the CBNRM support organisations, now need to build on their achievements and give more attention to those areas that are currently weaknesses. The requirement now is to shift attention to supporting local capacity to address improved participation and in so doing develop a more inclusive approach to planning that specifically addresses issues of livelihood security and diversification at a household level, particularly for poorer groups within conservancies. In doing this CBNRM would become more of a rural development strategy that it is in its current manifestation.

The key challenges then are to continue to support the conservancy institutions to address resource management, to address broader participation, to focus more significantly on the development and livelihood priorities of conservancies and their residents, and to improve integration to create alliances with other government and non-government development initiatives in the context of decentralisation. This report picks up these challenges and offers a perspective based on an understanding of issues as they relate directly to livelihoods at the household level.

### **Achievements and Limitations of the Study**

The study presented in this report does not claim to be a fully comprehensive and conclusive examination of all the implications for livelihoods of changing NRM practice in Namibia. It has focused solely on the implications of changing approaches to wildlife management and capturing tourism revenues at the household level. WILD recognises that CBNRM in its broadest sense is being approached from a number of perspectives and within different sectors. The Directorate of Forestry (DoF) within MET is working on a CBNRM approach very similar to that being implemented in the wildlife sector. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD) has also been addressing CBNRM through its approach to community-based water management within the Directorate of Rural Water Supply (DRWS). These initiatives have not been the focus of WILD research.

Social and economic research within the CBNRM programme is underdeveloped, and there is currently no monitoring and evaluation (M and E) system to track the development of conservancies from a livelihoods and developmental perspective. WILD research was conducted in this context. There was very little in the way of baseline household socio-economic data and virtually no specific materials relating to the impacts of CBNRM at household level. WILD research therefore is unique and offers a body of data that can be used for future reference. In-depth research was conducted in four of the 31 registered conservancies and focused on the southern Kunene and Caprivi Regions. Targeted research on specific topics and some surveys were conducted in other conservancies in these regions, but not all the findings presented here will be of direct relevance to all conservancies. The general conclusions have aimed to address issues that are specific to the CBNRM approach and rural livelihoods, but there will also be some features of the analysis which will not 'fit' with specific conservancies. In addition WILD recognises that the analysis and research materials present in this report and other project documents represent the implications for livelihoods at an early stage in the development of the conservancies. However, precisely because of this, the findings provided here will be all the more pertinent since they should assist decision makers to address better the fit between wildlife conservation and support for livelihoods over the longer term.

WILD has been implemented during a period of rapid growth in the number of conservancies. It has also been implemented in the context of conservancies undergoing internal change and development. WILD has played a role in stimulating discussion at local and wider levels, and in some cases has had a direct and immediate impact on the activities of conservancies (for example assisting in identifying problems and redirecting practices associated with meat distribution in ≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy). In other cases the impact of WILD research is more difficult to assess, and its significance will only emerge over time. To some extent, while WILD has sought to be as dynamic and iterative as possible, research of this nature will always be something of a 'snap shot'. In the context of applied research it is critical that research findings be closely linked to processes of implementation. Recommendations made by CBNRM stakeholders following the first WILD Project Output to Purpose Review (OPR, 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> November 2001) insisted that WILD should not be involved in implementation, as there was a greater need for focused research and the dissemination of findings on the implications of CBNRM at household level. The data on household livelihoods and other issues collected by the project aims to provide a baseline data set for future research and for monitoring and evaluation.

The next chapter provides a discussion of the research framework and methods.