



Chapter 6

Wildlife Use¹ and Livelihoods

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Introduction

The previous chapter raised a number of key issues that are discussed further in this chapter. The first of which relates to the importance of providing support for household livelihoods by building on existing strategies. A second concerns the extent to which these vary in importance for different people within the conservancies (rich and poor) and the implications of such difference in terms of targeting benefits or support. A third issue raised in the previous chapter focused on the need to build specifically on current household natural resource use and management strategies and to link these to conservancy planning processes. These issues are discussed further in this chapter as they relate to wildlife use and management within conservancies.

The chapter is organised in the following manner. Firstly, the remainder of the introduction provides a brief background placing current wildlife use in the context of its cultural and historical importance and the current legislation as this relates to the use of huntable game within communal area conservancies. The chapter is then divided into three further sections and the conclusions. The first section considers the role of household wildlife use in terms of providing livelihood food and income security. The discussion also focuses on a better understanding of the types of households that currently use wildlife (the rich or the poor), the species they use and hunting methods employed. The next section then presents material relating to how household wildlife use is currently governed in the context of local political and social relations. Here the discussion focuses on the perspectives of CCGs and issues relating to their roles, responsibilities and authority. The final section of this chapter presents research material relating to the community harvesting of wildlife and meat distribution. The discussion here assesses the livelihood significance of these

meat distributions and the processes involved. Then follow the conclusions.

Throughout a distinction is drawn between two different perspectives on wildlife use. One is the legal perspective, which is addressed below; the other is a local perspective, which relates to the role of wildlife in terms of livelihood security. WILD addresses the latter because in recognising the need for conservancies to develop their own rules and procedures for managing huntable game at a local level, the presentation of information on local utilisation and governance may offer some useful guidance when assisting conservancies to develop their own rules and policies focused on local use should they wish to include this as a sustainable use option.

The next chapter continues with the theme of wildlife and livelihoods and explores the costs of HWC and various efforts to mitigate the problem through the activities of the conservancies.

There are a number of limitations to the analysis presented in this chapter that require some clarification. Hunting is a sensitive issue for a variety of reasons. Research on hunting was extremely difficult to conduct since people were suspicious of the research teams and feared either prosecution or other possible negative consequences from other community members or conservancy staff. The research team dedicated a lot of time to convincing individuals that any information recorded was to be used strictly for research purposes and was not going to be used in anyway against respondents. That it was difficult to obtain information on hunting does not, however, mean an absence of hunting at the household level. Rather it reflects the fact that people were fearful of discussing the issue openly. It was decided therefore that a sampling technique that

¹ Wildlife is used in a narrow sense to refer to mammals and terrestrial vertebrates. This follows the definitions used in a recent study by DFID (2002), but also stems from the fact that mammals and terrestrial vertebrates are focal species for the CBNRM programme.



involved working with a small number of interviewees, known to be involved in hunting activities and willing to discuss them would provide the best way to access information relating directly to hunting. In most cases once respondents had gained the trust of the researchers they gave information quite freely. The materials presented here were collected through the use of survey techniques, informal interviews and participatory workshops. These involved working with conservancy and non-conservancy members, CGGs and Community Rangers and other conservancy staff, NGO and regional MET staff. This cross-section of sources adds to the robustness of the research findings. While only a small number of individuals were interviewed about their hunting activities they share very similar livelihood characteristic, ethnic backgrounds and traditions to other members of the communities where they lived, so we can assume that the practices they revealed are more widespread and not limited simply to those who were interviewed. This assertion is supported by the fact that the large scale socio-economic household survey that WILD/EEU conducted involved more than 1,000 households. Data from this source supports the findings of small sample surveys. Thus, the researchers have a high level of confidence in the data collected.

Background, legality and the use of huntable game

People in the communal areas of Namibia have a long history of utilising wildlife. This varies from region to region, and conservancy to conservancy. In many cases wildlife and natural resources are a significant aspect of people's cultural heritage². There is an intrinsic link between culture and the management and utilisation of wild resources. Recent historical research by Hinz (2003) provides an overview of these linkages for a number of ethnic groups. Some of these linkages between culture and wildlife include communion with ancestors, prohibitions relating to sexual behaviours and ritual practices associated with hunting (see Hinz 2003: 16-21). While many of the religious and ritual practices associated with hunting and wildlife may have been eroded over time they have played an important role in shaping the way in which people manage and use their wild resources at farm and household levels. A number of factors have contributed to changing how wildlife resources are managed. These include the influence of colonial and postcolonial administrations, human population movements and increases (particularly those associated with the creation of ethnic homelands in the early 1970s), cycles of drought, the presence of military forces and political instability brought about as a result of the struggle for independence. Similar factors have also had an impact on the abundance and

distribution of wildlife populations (see Chapter 3). More recently, the conservancy programme and new legislation, the presence of tourists, and processes of wildlife commoditisation³ have also played a role in changing local-level management practice. This chapter is not concerned with the historical aspects of wild resource use *per se*, but it is nevertheless important to consider not only the changes that have been brought about by these factors, but also the extent to which there is continuity in terms of people's practices (the latter is dealt with under the section relating to governing wildlife).

While local human populations have been subject to considerable social, economic and political change (including forced relocations and resettlements), often core aspects of local social organisation practice and the management institutions that accompany such practice (rules and practices) endure through time. An example of this from Caprivi is the continued role of the *khuta* in adjudicating cases of small-scale poaching incidents. Since the institutions and resource management practices of the conservancies are relatively new institutional forms, it would be expected that these have not entirely replaced older traditional and social forms of wildlife management at farm and household levels.

To place the following discussion of wildlife use at farm and household level in a contemporary legal context it is useful to provide an overview of the current legislation and its interpretation as this relates to the utilisation of wildlife within conservancies.

The Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 gives limited rights to groups of people to benefit from their wildlife through the formation of conservancies. These rights are vested in conservancy committees to be able to manage the sustainable utilisation of wildlife in their conservancies through both consumptive and non-consumptive use (for details on the intentions of policy see Chapter 3). The utilisation of wildlife includes trophy hunting, live sale of game and the own-use of huntable game. Currently the only legitimate form of own-use hunting that occurs in conservancies is that which is organised through the conservancy institutions, the quotas for which are issued by MET. Although the intention of the legislation allows for own use without the need to request a quota from the Government, it is only recently that explicit clarity on this issue has been given by MET. One of the reasons for the lack of clarity on the legislation with respect to own-use hunting relates to issues of political will, and adjustments

² It is important to note that these historical and cultural associations vary considerably between and within regions. In some areas this is due to the different cultural and ethnic origins of people, while in others the forcible resettlement that took place under the apartheid system and the Odendaal plan had an impact. In areas of resettlement, people's relationship to wildlife and the local practices associated with its use and management have been adapted to local environmental and socio-political circumstances during the last 30 years.

³ Commoditisation refers to the process associated with the establishment of market and exchange values.



and interpretation in accepting the new legislation at regional level. In April 2003, the Director of DPWM issued a memo to the conservancy chairpersons providing clarity on the issue. The relevant section is quoted below:

“In order for communal conservancies to control and manage the utilisation of huntable game, conservancy committees will be responsible for setting their own quotas for each species and for issuing their own conservancy permits. A description of this management system (quotas and permits) must be included in the Game Utilisation Plan submitted to the MET. The MET is prepared to assist the conservancies in setting up this system.” (Paragraph 4, MET memo, 2003)

The key issue relating to the directive from MET is that the interpretation makes it clear that it is entirely permissible for conservancies to utilise their huntable game species and set their own quotas. The memo also makes it clear that the management system which the conservancy develops to monitor own use must be included in the Game Utilisation Plan; there is no legal requirement, however, for the actual utilisation strategy (i.e. numbers of species to be used) to be included in the Plan⁴. The circulation of this MET memo aimed to clarify the legislative position with respect to own use of huntable game, and here serves to clarify the context within which farm and household use must be considered. It is interesting to note that discussion with CGGs and Community Rangers revealed that they themselves remained unclear as to the legal situation and their rights despite the circulation of this memo to their conservancy chairs.

Despite the above directive, household and farm-level utilisation is, strictly speaking, illegal. This rests on the fact that the rights to manage and make decisions concerning the use of huntable game come under the jurisdiction of the conservancy committees and not individual householders. The only way in which household use of huntable game would be legitimate is for the conservancy committees to recognise and endorse it and then to issue quotas, monitor off-takes and submit this data to MET. In light of the opportunity that the MET directive offers to conservancies they have a number of different courses which they could take to maximise the sustainable use of their wildlife. The various options available to them, however, have a range of implications for livelihoods. The options available to them will to a large extent be determined by the status of the resources in the conservancy and the priorities of the committee. In those areas where there is sufficient game, one option would be to continue to work within the system

they currently operate – that is the committee and CGGs organise hunting and the distribution of meat. The other possible course of action they could take is to devolve this hunting to farm and household levels based on any appropriate set of rules, procedures and policies developed, endorsed and enforced by the conservancies themselves. In some cases this would be viable, due to the low number of people in the conservancies and the high number of game (in parts of the north-west for example).

Wildlife Use and Livelihoods in Conservancies

The following presentation of material focuses on addressing the questions:

- What contribution do wild animals and other wild resources make in terms of food and income security?
- Who among the community hunts?
- What species are being hunted?
- What methods are primarily being used?

In Chapter 5, the presentation of research materials identified that wildlife provides a complement to people's other livelihood activities and strategies. How significant are these resources and for whom are they important is the subject of discussion here. The discussion also provides an understanding of the role of wildlife in terms of food and incomes in comparison to other natural resources and considers wildlife use in relation to issues of differentiation and wealth. This is followed in the next section by the presentation of research materials relating to the species used and the methods employed.

The role of wildlife for food and incomes

In both Caprivi and Kunene wildlife provides an important safety net; its use allows people to supplement their foods and to save their own livestock and other resources for future use when money or food is needed. The extent to which wildlife is important can be assessed by comparing the different natural resources and the number of interviewees who ranked the resources as important for their livelihoods (both overall and in terms of incomes). The following two tables provide the results of the WILD/EEU survey for Kunene, Erongo and Caprivi (n=1,192, see Annex 3, Table 1, Section A3.3.1, for further details).

⁴ Neither is this a legal required for the freehold farmers.



Table 15: Kunene and Erongo Regions: Natural resources – contribution to incomes and livelihoods (n=619)

Resource	Livelihood No. hhs	Livelihood % hhs	Cash income No. hhs	Cash income % hhs
Thatch grass harvesting	10	1.6%	-	-
Building poles	123	19.8%	11	0.16%
Craft making	40	6.4%	32	5.1%
Wildlife utilisation	180	29%	26	4.2%

Table 16: Caprivi Region: Natural resources – contribution to income and livelihoods (n=496)

Resource	Livelihood No. hhs	Livelihood % hhs	Cash income No. hhs	Cash income % hhs
Reed harvesting	245	49.3%	197	39.7%
Thatch grass harvesting	336	67.7%	253	51%
Building poles	202	40%	99	40.7%
Fishing	178	35.8%	133	26.8%
Craft making	32	6.4%	36	7.2%
Wildlife utilisation	127	24.1%	3	0.6%

What is interesting about these findings is that although there are a number of differences between the regions, wildlife is reported to be an important livelihood resource for approximately one quarter of all households interviewed. In the Kunene Region, only a limited number of natural resources were reported as being important to livelihoods. Wildlife appears to be one of the most important of these. The data presented above suggests that for only a few households was wildlife important as a source of income.

In the Caprivi Region there is a wider range of natural resources available and wildlife would appear to be less important overall to livelihoods than other resources. It is, for example, less important than reeds, thatch grass, building poles and fish. The sale of these natural resources contributes to cash income, which is then used to purchase food items. Data from the WILD/EEU survey suggests that in Caprivi wildlife was very rarely sold, as indicated by the low number of households reporting its importance in terms of cash incomes (0.6%). Other sources (for example, Mulonga 2003) report that there is some trade in wildlife, but there are no formal markets and trade is an exclusively ‘underground’ practice. While informants were cautious about revealing whether or not they sold wildlife, 24% of households still reported that wildlife was important overall. In addition, Murphy and Mulonga 2003 report that the Community Rangers in Caprivi stated that the poor hunt to earn money, and the wealthier people hunt because they like the taste of bushmeat.

In addition to the WILD/EUU household survey that was carried out, a second smaller purposive sample survey was conducted by WILD in both Kunene and Caprivi (see Annex 3, Table 1, Section A3.3.2). In Kunene this sample included a total of 37 individuals who were known hunters from Torra and ≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancies (n=13 and n=24 respectively). In Caprivi the sample involved 39 individual informants in Salambala (n=15) and Mayuni (n=11)

Conservancies and an area outside of the conservancy boundaries in Linyanti (n=13) who were known hunters and wild food harvesters. The selection of respondents was done in a ‘snowball’ fashion with one willing participant suggesting another and so on. The data derived from these purposive samples are interesting and, although small, provide a further layer of understanding in terms of identifying the contribution that wildlife make to household livelihoods.

Data relating to the number of wildlife species hunted over a six-week period in Caprivi and whether these were consumed or sold is provided in Figure 23 opposite.

In 69% of cases the animals were consumed within the household or shared within people’s immediate kin networks as a form of remittance. This compares with only 31% of known cases where the animals were sold. The survey data presented above indicates that it is primarily small game and game birds which are sold in Caprivi. Mulonga 2003 reports that other larger antelope species were also sold (following butchering) in pieces to those with salaries (teachers and other government workers for example).

In the Kunene sample, in 84% of responses the reasons given for hunting were for food. In 16% of responses reasons were reported as both for food and for sales. These research materials suggest that wildlife is important for consumption purposes and to a lesser extent for incomes. Other data collected as part of the same sample survey in Kunene provides some indication of the way in which particular species are regarded in terms of their food security value. Interviewees from ≠Khoadi //Hôas and Torra Conservancies were asked to rank (on a scale of 1-5) the importance of various wildlife species in terms of their value as a resource during times of household shortages. In Torra, springbok were ranked first, followed by springhares, then oryx. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas, the species ranked first was kudu, followed