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COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CBNRM) AND CONSERVATION

WHAT IS CBNRM?

CBNRM aims to create the right incentives and conditions for an identified group of resource users within defined areas to use natural resources sustainably. This means enabling the resource users to benefit from resource management and providing strong rights and tenure over land and the resources. CBNRM also supports the development of accountable, decision-making bodies that can represent community members and act in their interests.

CBNRM in southern Africa is being implemented as a strategy for the conservation of wildlife and wild habitats, forests, and inland fisheries. **Where policy and legislation provide the right conditions, local communities are actively conserving their resources.**



The Namibian Government has re-introduced endangered black rhino into communities practicing CBNRM. Photo credit: Jasper van der Meij

WILDLIFE AND WILD HABITATS

In **Zambia**, elephant have more than doubled in the Luangwa Valley since the 1980s, from around 9,000 to about 18,600. The Luangwa Valley—the focus of CBNRM activities for many years—has also seen increases in the numbers of some other species, such as impala and puku.

Wildlife populations have also recovered in the northwestern and northeastern parts of **Namibia**, where communal area conservancies have been established as part of a national CBNRM program. In the northwest, these increases include elephant and predator species in addition to black rhino, which the Namibian government is reintroducing into the communal conservancies.

In **Zimbabwe**, the CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources) Program led to a major decline in poaching and increases in populations of various species including elephant. Along with the wildlife, the natural habitats in the main communal areas were maintained.



In an attempt to ward off hungry elephants, some farmers string pieces of cloth soaked in oil and crushed chillies around their crop fields.
Photo credit: Mark Atkinson, WCS

In **Botswana**, poaching was noted to be lower in CBNRM areas compared to non-CBNRM areas in the Ngamiland District between 1998 and 2006, and human-wildlife conflict seems to have been reduced. In **Malawi**, poaching has decreased in areas where there are co-management agreements between local communities and Protected Areas. Wildlife populations have increased in these areas, including in the Majete Reserve.

Across the region, conservation successes have brought increased human-wildlife conflict, particularly with increases in elephant numbers and predator populations. CBNRM programs are focusing considerable attention on managing human-wildlife conflict.

The best conservation results are achieved when communities have the **right to make management decisions** about their resources and where they have the **right to keep income** from the sustainable use of resources. These rights provide important conditions that enable active management of wildlife by communities.

Active management of wildlife by local communities means that they can use their wildlife in different ways to best suit their needs. Across the region, communities use their wildlife for trophy hunting, sport hunting, meat production, photographic tourism, and, in **Namibia**, live sale of game to game ranchers. Management activities such as monitoring, game counts, and quota setting ensure that use is sustainable.



Community forestry activities promote conservation and sustainable economic development. Photo credit: Andrew Tobiason, USAID

FORESTS

Community forestry is an important CBNRM activity across the region. Namibia has 13 registered Community Forests covering 4,652 km. In Mozambique and Malawi, community forestry is the main CBNRM activity. While Zimbabwe is probably best known for wildlife conservation through the CAMPFIRE project, it has also achieved considerable success with community forestry.

MANAGING HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Communities are being assisted by CBNRM programs to:

- ◆ Protect water points from elephants
- ◆ Protect livestock from predators
- ◆ Build electric fences to protect crops
- ◆ Build crocodile-proof fences in rivers
- ◆ Use chili to keep elephants out of fields
- ◆ Compensate farmers for losses

ACTIVE MANAGEMENT BY COMMUNITIES

Across the region communities are:

- ◆ Setting aside land for wildlife and tourism
- ◆ Monitoring game numbers, human-wildlife conflict incidents, and poaching incidents
- ◆ Monitoring trophy hunts
- ◆ Conducting annual game counts
- ◆ Carrying out antipoaching patrols
- ◆ Managing human-wildlife conflict
- ◆ Helping to set hunting quotas

COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN ZIMBABWE

Communities manage approximately 57,000 ha of woodlands outside of the Forest Reserve network. In addition, 40,000 ha of bee forage woodlands were established and have been sustainably managed during the past 20 years. Overall, beekeeping activities constitute an incentive for woodland maintenance and effective management. Similarly, incidents of overharvesting in woodlands were reduced by more than 50 percent during this period.



A fisherman in Mozambique's Lake Niassa surveys his catch.
Photo credit: Caroline Simmonds, WWF

INLAND FISHERIES

Local communities are also involved in managing inland fisheries. There are indications that fish stocks have increased in traditionally protected fisheries in **Zambia** where community participation is robust (for example, in Barotse and Kariba). In **Malawi**, Beach Village Committees and traditional authorities have developed and enforce bylaws with respect to open and closed seasons, fishing gear, and mesh sizes. Fish stocks are recovering in Lakes Malombe, Chilwa, and Chiuta and in some parts of Lake Malawi.

HOW CAN YOU ENSURE THAT CBNRM CONTRIBUTES TO CONSERVATION?

There are many ways that decision makers can improve CBNRM's contribution to conservation:

- 1 Recognize that wildlife and tourism can be important, **additional productive land uses** on communal land and develop policies and legislation that support their development.
- 2 Ensure that communities **have land and resource rights** that are clearly defined in legislation and that communities can retain income from resource use.
- 3 Ensure that government conservation agencies provide **good technical support** in natural resource management to local communities.
- 4 Ensure that government commits sufficient **human and financial resources** to support CBNRM.
- 5 **Encourage collaborative management partnerships** with local communities in wildlife management, particularly anti-poaching, human-wildlife conflict management, game counts, and monitoring.

The findings and recommendations provided in this set of Policy Briefs are based on stocktaking assessments of nearly three decades of CBNRM implementation in southern Africa. A report summarizing the findings of assessments carried out in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as detailed country assessments can be found at www.frameweb.org/SASstocktakingReports.html.