

## **EMERGING ISSUES: WORKSHOP STREAM V: EVALUATING MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

### **COLLAPSE FROM THE INSIDE: THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF PROTECTED AREAS FROM UNSUSTAINABLE HUNTING FOR SUBSISTENCE AND TRADE.**

- Hunting and commercial trade in wildlife<sup>1</sup> from protected areas across the tropics and sub-tropics are rapidly increasing, unsustainable, and many aspects are illegal.
- Demand for wildlife is increasing rapidly due to increases in the number of consumers, increasing buying power amongst urban consumers, and increasing commercialization of the hunt.
- The ability to meet the demand is facilitated by increased access to protected areas, and greatly improved hunting technologies.
- Supply of wildlife both inside and outside protected areas is diminishing due to unsustainable hunting and decreasing areas of habitat; this is often reflected by an increase in price.
- The problem is exacerbated by inadequate management capacity (personnel, training, infrastructure and budgets), whether the management authorities are the local communities, governments or other agencies.
- An unintended consequence of some international and national development programmes and resource extraction activities has contributed to the magnitude of the problem, as have political instability and deteriorating economic conditions in many tropical countries.

Hence:

- Hunting and wildlife trade pose significant immediate threats to wildlife populations in many protected areas throughout the tropics, especially in systems where wildlife productivity is low.
- A wide range of species, even those not currently identified as threatened, are at risk of local extinction as a result of hunting across a significant proportion of protected areas across the tropics.
- The loss of wildlife from protected areas due to hunting has adverse effects on the biodiversity and ecological functioning of those areas, and hence of their conservation role.
- Such loss often has adverse impacts on rural peoples living in and around protected areas, many of whom depend on wildlife for their livelihoods. The people most affected are often the poorest, and most marginalized sectors of society.
- Solutions must be scientifically based, and specific to the local biological, social and political conditions.
- Unsustainable hunting can be addressed either by restricting hunting to certain species and/or zones, or by providing alternative incentives for protection, e.g., through ecotourism, or safari hunting of certain species.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined in this context as terrestrial and semi-terrestrial vertebrates > 2 kg body weight.

- Commercial wildlife trade must be curtailed because it is extirpating wildlife from many protected areas throughout the tropics and sub-tropics.
- Participation of local communities is crucial to seek solutions most likely to succeed in conserving wildlife, and in meeting peoples' subsistence and economic needs.
- Capacity building of protected area managers is crucial, whether they be local communities, governments or other agencies, to develop and implement strategies to manage hunting in protected areas. Considerable financial and technical resources from many national and international agencies are required to build that capacity.