

Collaboration with local communities to manage protected areas in Zimbabwe and Zambia

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In Zimbabwe and Zambia, the fundamental choice on more than 90% of the land is the cow and the plough, or wildlife-based systems.

- Cow-based systems involve heavy subsidies, marketing, the necessity for veterinary systems, and the landholder keeps all of the benefits.
- Wildlife-based systems are heavily taxed, produce State trophy fees and community revenue, and ownership is centralized; conventionally, the landholder gets no benefits.

Since 1985, shifts in underlying values have favoured wildlife-based systems. But is this being translated into real conservation incentives? A comparison of cattle and wildlife profits in Zimbabwe drew its results from a survey of 239,559ha cattle/game ranches and 131,484 mainly cattle ranches in Zimbabwe's south-east Lowveld from 1984 to 1986. Results showed that profits from wildlife clearly outweigh those from cattle. The comparative advantage, however, is not felt at the level of landholders; thus, they are not investing in wildlife. Wildlife is potentially more profitable, but it remains largely a State managed asset. This makes it uncompetitive in the eyes of local stakeholders who, therefore, opt to invest in agri-business.

One potential way to overcome this would be by changing the context of prices and proprietorship of wildlife-based systems. This would involve removing artificial constraints to markets, and allowing for product development. It would also allow landowners the right to retain benefits, to manage the wildlife resource, and to use and sell it. This equates to removing red tape and bureaucratic interference, artificial restrictions on use, and licence fees and other taxes which are not imposed on livestock use.

Tools for making hunting work as a powerful conservation tool

Core components of using hunting as a powerful conservation tool include ensuring that its value is high through effective marketing, ensuring that its value is captured at the level of the landholder, and ensuring sustainability through quota setting and quality trophies.

To ensure profitability, people must have rights to sell their property, and marketing must be open and competitive. Communities should select a joint venture partner who decides what to sell, advertises/tenders, shortlists, conducts interviews, and issues contracts. Collectively, these measures greatly improve prices and strengthen relationships with the private sector.

Improved marketing during the CAMPFIRE Programme in Zimbabwe meant that from 1990 to 1993, average income increased from Z\$1,000 to Z\$ 9,000. Similar results have been shown in Namibia and Botswana. Rules of thumb are that a successful programme needs a 33% hunting turnover, and a 10% tourism turnover of \$1,500/bed/year. The benefits derived from the process include organizational development, household benefits and community projects.

Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Programme depends heavily on safari hunting, with more than 60% of revenues coming from elephants. In the face of a doubling human population, elephant populations have doubled from 4,000 to 8-12,000. Elephants benefit 90,000 households, but trophy quality is maintained. To ensure rapidly increasing household income and also increasing wildlife populations, it is essential to monitor trophy quality.

Incentive-based conservation has led to a rapid increase in wildlife populations: Zimbabwe has had a four-fold increase in the number of animals hunted in the 15 years from 1984 to 1999. Between 1991 and 1999, Namibia has had a steady increase to 27,000 trophies.

Land ownership considerations

Considerably more land in South Africa is conserved by private than state landholders; this is driven by incentives as 61% of protected land is private. Communal Lands conserve almost as much land as state protected areas.

In the past 20 years, on private land in southern Africa:

- wildlife-based enterprises have replaced livestock monocultures on most non-agricultural land;
- wildlife numbers of the species concerned have quadrupled;
- the number of species involved has doubled;
- some species have been re-introduced to areas, including elephant, lions and rhinos;
- habitats have recovered.

Increasing the area of land available to wildlife is leading to increased wildlife populations. This has included springbok in north-west Namibia; the most recent surveys conducted in July 2001 confirmed that there are at least 75,000 springbok, higher than expected. Densities are still relatively low, approximately 75 animals per 5000ha, making harvesting problematic. The population of black rhinos has also increased from 1986 to 2000.

Conclusion

Hunting is a powerful conservation tool if benefits go to the landholders. Safari hunting is robust; there is little risk of over-use, since clients avoid areas that are over-used and where trophy quality is low.