

# Managing human wildlife interaction: comparative study of kenya, canada and south...

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## Abstract

Watching wildlife draws thousands of tourists each year to Kenya, Canada and South Africa. The combination of this large number of tourists and wildlife leads to a variety of wildlife human interactions. The nature and implications of this interaction is the focus of this essay. This essay will further explore some solutions to pervasive problems of conflict between human and endangered animals. There can be no doubt that human wildlife conflict has brought a decline to many species, Woodroffe et al (2005) and these endangered species can equally cause serious damage to human lives and livestock (Woodroffe et al (2005), therefore, examination of the nature of human wildlife interaction using the ideologies of sustainable tourism in form of economic, environmental and social impacts will be carried out. The essay goes on to evaluate the sustainable management tools being used in these areas of the case study to reduce these human wildlife conflicts. It shall also concisely treat the benefits of wildlife tourism to the local communities, the tourists, the country and the global tourism industry at large.

More than that, In the conclusion part, the Environmental, Economic and the Social impact of wildlife tourism will be discussed in a way that sustainable tourism could be better implemented in these areas (Kenya, Canada and South Africa).

## Introduction

Kenya, South Africa and Canada are all considered to be well established and successful as tourism destinations, Irandu. M. E, (2004), Hudson. S and Lang. N. (2001), and Heath, E. (1992). Tourism is defined according to World Trade

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Organisation as “ travelling to and staying in places outside ones’ usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (WTO, 1995). There are several forms of tourism which include eco-tourism, ski-tourism, whale watching, leisure travelling, winter tourism, mass tourism and wildlife tourism.

To the developing world, “ tourism is one of the fastest growing industries, and wildlife tourism is the fastest growing component of this industry”, Gossling, (2000). Wildlife tourism is seen as a driving force for developing countries where many live in abject poverty, especially in the rural areas, Ashley and Roe, (1998). Tourism is vital to economy development in terms of the employment opportunities it creates and the huge foreign exchange it generates for those communities which rely on it. Sinclair. T. M (1998).

In recent years tourists have developed an increasing desire to watch wildlife in their natural environments, Reynolds & Braithwaite, (2001), This captivation and fascination has led to the creation of a sub-sector of tourism known as wildlife tourism. Duffus & Dearden, (1990), Reynolds & Braithwaite, (2001)

Wildlife tourism is a form of tourism that encompasses the watching of fauna and flora in their natural habitat. It is distinct to both eco-tourism and nature based tourism as it is about tourism that flourishes on specific interest in wildlife. Although in the general terms wildlife refers to both fauna (Animals) and flora (Plants), in the tourism sector it is generally understood to strictly

mean fauna (animals), Braithwaite & Reynolds, (2002), Higginbottom et al., (2001), and Shackley, (1996).

Roe et al, (1997) added that Wildlife tourism is becoming an increasingly important component of tourism worldwide, while Duffus & Dearden, (1990), Reynolds & Braithwaite, (2001), further added that tourists have developed an increasing desire for the interaction with the natural environment and wildlife. Wildlife benefits has a direct impact on a country's economy. For example, revenues generated from wildlife tourism are partly responsible for the development of wildlife as a major land use on private land in South Africa. Hearne & Mackenzie, (2000).

However, in spite the growing benefits of wildlife tourism, the close proximity of people and wildlife led to interactions that can pose threats which directly or indirectly cause injury to wildlife people have travelled from far and near to watch. Consequences of human wildlife conflict can be both direct, including injury and death from encounters with dangerous animals, and indirect, including loss of crops, livestock and damaged infrastructure, Okello and Kiringe, (2004). Example of Human wildlife conflict can be seen in Massai Mara, Kenya, where elephants destroy crops, killing and injuring human and livestock, Thouless, (1994). In South Africa; according to the research carried out by Anthony, Scott, and Antypas, (2010), 482 human wildlife conflict incidents were recorded from 1998 to 2004, and the most problematic species are buffalo, lion, elephant, hippopotamus and crocodile, again Frump, (2006) reported that between December 1996 and August 1997, 11 (possibly more) tourists making their way on foot from Mozambique

across the Kruger National Park were reportedly killed by lions, and lastly, in Alberta, Canada, wolves caused 2, 806 deaths among domestic animals, mainly, cattle and to a lesser extent dogs, horses, sheep, chickens, bison, goats, geese and turkeys in just within a period of 14 years (1982-1996), Musiani et al., (2003), and further research showed that polar bears have injured or killed people living and working in the Arctic region, Fleck and Herrero (1988: 155).

The basis of this conflict started from an increase in human population through reproduction and immigration, coupled with increasing land conversion from forest to farming (agriculture), Barnes (1996), Campbell et al. (1999), Gachago and Waithaka (1995). Concurrently, the wildlife populations in the ecosystem are growing as well, Carl-Erik and Anders, (1996), while outside protected areas wildlife are becoming constrained to smaller areas of the forest fragment. Moreover, due to the danger that most of these wildlife pose to people and the catastrophic damage that they inflict on crops, human wildlife conflict is more frequently reported and less easily tolerated by the local community, but “ Wildlife tourism provides revenue to the local community, which is sufficient for local people to value, and therefore protect their wildlife heritage as a source of income”. Godwin (1996: 288).

## **BODY**

Sustainable Tourism is defined by the World Commission on the Environment and Development (WCED, (1998)) as “ Tourism that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs”, furthermore, Mowforth, (2008: 102) discussed about the <https://assignbuster.com/managing-human-wildlife-interaction-comparative-study-of-kenya-canada-and-south-africa/>

issues of sustainability, he said, sustainable tourism can be seen in several facets; low impacts, responsible, green, and environmentally friendly.

Sustainability can be seen in the following forms; Area Protection (AP), Carrying Capacity Calculator (CCC), Visitor Management Techniques (VMT), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Sustainability Indicators (SI) and Code of Conduct. Out of these tools afore listed, only three will be further discussed and scrutinized in the later paragraphs, including, the Area Protection, Carrying Capacity, and lastly, Consultation and Participation Techniques (CPT).

Area Protection also known as protected areas, simply means “ a geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives, this is a form of legislation by the Government to protecting parks and reserves in other to aid sustainability. Protected areas can be in the form of Country parks, Biosphere reserves, wildlife refuge and reserves, biological reserves, areas of outstanding natural beauty and National Parks” Green and Paine (1997). The Importance of Protected Areas in Kenya, Canada and South Africa is basically to strictly shield wildlife from all commercial extractive activities such as Poaching, lumbering, hydroelectric projects, resource extraction, and hunting. Further more, it provides and supports the followings; scientific research, natural resources, educational opportunities and recreational activities. Arguing the success of, the implementation of this sustainable tool in Kenya, it has denied the Maasai their traditional access to, and use of their land, Talbot and Olindo, (1990). Secondly, the increase in the population of wildlife within

Maasai Mara has increased the cost of livestock and agricultural production. For example, the migratory wildbeast, zebra and gazelle compete directly with the Maasai livestock for food and water, Croze et. al., (1978), Caughley and Sinclair, (1994) they also spread diseases, and wildlife are dangerous because they kill livestock and people. In response to these human-wildlife conflicts, the Maasai can destroy wildlife by killing in immediate defence of life and property, they can influence wildlife numbers and distributions through bush burning, and farming, by fencing around properties, waterholes and fields, and by erecting new infrastructures. Furthermore, they could actively deny access to tourists as opposed to passive denial following agricultural developments, Norton-Griffiths, (1995). In South Africa, Problems of animal and crop damages are minimal because most of the protected areas are fenced and hunters are been sent for training by the Department of Nature Conservation, to instruct them in the care and use of hounds and other methods of predator control, Allison, (1961).

Carrying Capacity, Baud-Bovy (1977, p. 184) quote a definition of carrying capacity as the “ number of user-unit use-periods that a recreation site can provide each year without permanent biological and physical degradation of the site’s ability to support recreation and without seriously hampering the quality of the recreation experience”. Mathieson and Wall (1982, p. 184) also define carrying capacity by considering the physical impact of tourism on a destination from the experience and environmental aspects as “ the maximum number of people who can use a recreational environment and without an unacceptable decline in the quality of the recreational experience”. For the sake of this essay, Carrying Capacity will be defined as

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the capacity of the destination area to absorb tourism before negative impacts of tourism are felt by the host country. In other words, this capacity is based on how many tourists are wanted rather than how many visitors can be attracted. Invariably, attention is placed more on the host community and the population of wildlife than the tourist. Carrying Capacity can be subdivided into seven parts, which are: physical carrying capacity; ecological carrying capacity, social carrying capacity, environmental carrying capacity, limits of acceptable change, real carrying capacity and effective or permissible carrying capacity. (Mowforth, 1998. P. 116), but in this essay, only the physical carrying capacity and social carrying capacity will be discussed.

Physical carrying capacity (PCC), Hovinen (1982) defines physical carrying capacity as the maximum number of visitors that can be accommodated without causing excessive environmental deterioration and without leading to a decline in visitor satisfaction. In the case of an individual tourist attraction, it is the maximum number that can fit on the site at any given time and still allow people to be able to move. This is normally assumed to be around 1m per person.

“ PCC per day = area (in metres squared) x visitors per metre x daily duration” (Mofworth, 2008. P. 102)

For South Africa, the Physical Carrying Capacity was implemented and adopted in 1960s to determine the maximum number of people who could use recreational area without hampering its essential qualities (Wager, 1964). Again, South Africa’s National Parks Act (South Africa 1976, as

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amended) makes provision for the utilization of national parks for the sustained benefit and enjoyment of the public while simultaneously maintaining their natural qualities and their potentials to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations (National Parks Board 1980. P. 143), in short, this has helped and is still helping in the significant reduction of the number of tourists. In Kenya, the same tool was adopted around 1960s. This stated definitions reinforces that there is no host population to consider when carrying capacity is to be used, the increase in price could be a way to limit the number of visitors in these areas. The following problems are associated with carrying capacity in the Kenya and South africa; inadequate Government funding, deforestation, indiscriminate hunting, and lack of management plans, but compared to Canada which is a more developed country, the Government has theresponsibilityof financing wildlife projects and ensuring a qualitative management plan. (sound of vehicles, alters reproduction levle of wildlife, it is seen that the followings affect physical carrying capacity calculation; area size, accessible space, visual impact, climate, aesthetics, accommodation quality, availability of facilities, transportation, number of people that can be accommodated, just to mention a few.

Effective carrying capacity (ECC) “ is the real carrying capacity corrected to allow for the difference between the actual management capacity and the ideal management capacity. The actual management capacity of the monument is given by the number of personnel e. g. administrative staff, park guards, and guides employed. The ideal management capacity is given

by the number that would be required to fulfil all functions allocated to the staff of the monument." Mowforth, (2009). The formular is given bellow.

ECC= RCC? FM. - Mowforth, (1998. P. 108)

Social carrying capacity, " capacity thresholds are reached when the number of tourists approaches level which strain the ability of the host area to provide a good visitor experience. The scale and pace of tourism development should therefore respect the character of the area, Value formoney, and a high-quality tourist experience should be promoted", Elwyn Owen (1993: 463). Again, Socio cultural carrying capacity relates to the negative socio cultural activities peculiar to tourism development. its indicators include the followings; reduced local tolerance for tourism, Reduced visitor enjoyment and lastly, increased crime. For example, Steven, (1998) said " In December 1996, the capacity quotas (per entrance gate) were not strictly applied on public holidays, which resulted in a flooding of amenities, conflict between tourists and widespread littering at KNP in South Africa due to poor management of this sustainable tool. Although the policy of the KNP in the past was to control tourist numbers by using vehicle/road ratio and the zoning system which has been unsuccessful in preventing overcrowding in the Skukuza area (South Africa). The guideline of 0. 75 vehicles per kilometre of road cannot be regarded as a scientific guideline to control tourist numbers, as the spatial variation of traffic in the park, as well as the preference of motorists for tarred roads, makes it an unusable criterion. Venter et al. (1998) proposed the idea of developing day visitor facilities at the camp to reduce the overnight visitors, providing

environmental education and entertainment on the borders of the KNP could relieve the tourist pressure on picnic spots and day-visitor facilities at the main camps.

Lastly, Consultations and participation techniques, Stewart and Hams (1991) said " Sustainable development must be built by, through, and with the commitment of local communities. The requirements of sustainable development can not merely be imposed; active participation by local communities is needed." In the tourism industry, sustainable development include the participation of the host communities as one essential element or principle of that sustainability. Therefore, consultation and participation has a lot to do with the Stakeholders, NGO's, local community/host community, government, and the local authorities, just to mention a few. Consultation can be in the form of meetings, public attitude survey, stated preference survey, contingent valuation method and delphi technique, but for the sake of this essay, Meetings/ consultation will be explored in the next paragraph.

Meetings, When delegates are being sent to meet over the issue of sustainability, they deliberate, brainstorm and conclude on the way forward to better implement some essential tools of sustainability. In Kenya, KWS believes that conservation of wildlife outside the protected areas cannot be achieved by protecting animals and avoiding issues of people's needs, rights and their conflicts with wildlife. Furthermore, conflicts cannot be eliminated without incurring a double loss: destruction of the animals that are the cause and maintenance of expensive control (shooting operations). A sustainable strategy of integrating wildlife management with landowners' common

objectives is preferable, and KWS aims to establish wildlife as a land-use alternative in areas outside the protected national parks and reserves.

Toward this end, KWS has started the Community Wildlife Service (CWS), a pilot extension service, to establish modalities for community partnership and management of wildlife. CWS encourages landowners in selected conservation units (COUs) to allow wildlife to inhabit their land and also to accept training and certain responsibilities delegated by KWS. In return, landowners receive certain wildlife-related revenue-sharing and consumptive-utilization enterprises. In Canada, the Canada Wildlife Service (CWS) “ manages wildlife matters that are the responsibility of the federal government. These include the protection and management of migratory birds, nationally significant habitat and species at risk, as well as work on other wildlife issues of national and international importance. In addition, the department does research in many fields of wildlife biology and provides incentive programs for wildlife and habitat stewardship.” Canadian website, (2011b). CWS enforces a law against poachers after brainstorming and deliberating over a way of resolving the human wildlife conflict, most especially, conflicts regarding the grizzly bears.

In South Africa, Southern African Development Community (SADC) are responsible for the conservation of wildlife. They too partner with the local community toward the anti poaching exercise going on with the grizzly bears and the geese but this is done in a well developed way.

Conclusion.

Of all matters, through the afore-discussed ways and sustainable management tools, Kenya, South Africa and Canada are striving to manage the resultant issues and challenges in their peculiar human wildlife interactions. These conflicts can be continually managed through constant review and restructuring of these sustainable tools to meet their peculiarities. Kenya and South Africa should educate the locals on the conservation philosophy which is changing from the traditional approach of strictly managing reserves in order to give absolute protection to wildlife and moving to replacing it with a more realistic alternative that provides tangible benefits to local communities and empowering the locals in order to manage the resources. Martin, (1984), Lewis et al., (1990). but before alternatives can be designed, the relationship between protected area and local people must be clearly understood, the Government should brainstorm with all the stakeholders involved before concluding on a policy for protecting these areas. To succeed today, conservationists should take into account the needs of the locals who share their land with wildlife. This essay has examined some of the ways in which wildlife can be valuable to local people and made to pay for its own conservation.

According to Eltringham (1994), the locals are the one paying for the cost of wildlife conservation, for example in Kenya, the peasant farmer whose crops are destroyed by elephants becomes destitute while visitors from overseas enjoy watching wildlife at minimal cost. One can not expect the animals to be conserved and tolerated under such circumstances and it is now generally accepted that in the long term, wildlife will survive only if those people living in close contact with it want it to. The local are unlikely to do so unless they

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receive some benefits, this is not necessarily to be in cash terms because wildlife can pay its way, for example, through the supply of meat to a community, Hudson et al, (1989), Robinson and Redford, (1991).

This essay also notes the lack of wildlife knowledge on the part of local community operators, a lack of consumer awareness on the part of the tourists and an underutilization of potentially advantageous partnerships between local product suppliers and tour operators. And the conflict rate is severe where reserves are surrounded by high densities of people. Harcourt et al. (2001). Most significantly, Kenya lacks adequate and experienced manpower in wildlife tourism management, wildlife in this area can be better managed if the assistance from the government and an international aid can be increased towards educating (sponsoring staff for national and international training), sophisticated gadgets like investing in guarding weapons, helicopters and medicines.

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