

Park management planning in Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, a considerable portion of bilateral and multilateral assistance to conservation over the last decade has gone to the development of formal national park management plans. Typically, such plans cost around \$US0.25 million, yet it is becoming clear that many are subsequently unused and are possibly unusable.

In Kenya, a World Bank evaluation of the Protected Area and Wildlife Services project in 1998 concluded that the majority of the plans prepared under the project required further development before they could be of any use. In Uganda, a Queen Elizabeth National Park management plan, prepared under European Union (EU) funding in 1990, has been much unimplemented and is shortly to be replaced by one supported by the United States Agency for International Development. In Zambia, an IUCN-supported plan for South Luangwa National Park is similarly about to be replaced by one supported by the EU. Yet it is hard to be confident that these new plans will fare any better than the old ones.

Several weaknesses recur frequently. First, budgets are frequently not included or, if they are, bear little relationship to the means that are likely to be available. A plan that does not reconcile resources with objectives is hardly a plan. Second, plan objectives are poorly formulated. They may be very generic, failing to bring out the particular features of the park, or mix up the ends and the means. Third, much of the details are left to later study, with calls for a 'tourism development plan, an infrastructure plan, a threatened and endangered species plan'. In sub-Saharan Africa, the preparation of a park plan is, unfortunately, the major planning effort and there simply will not be the resources available to fill in these details later on. Fourth, plans do not summarize actions or allocate responsibilities. This makes it difficult to monitor progress and to engage those other than the park staff (e.g. the protected-area authority headquarters, or local District Administrators, or the neighbouring communities). It also makes it difficult to prepare more detailed annual plans. Fifth, the plans tend to place undue emphasis on one aspect, such as tourism or research. This is acceptable up to a point—a partial solution is better than no solution—provided that it does not lead to the allocation of resources away from other important aspects.

These weaknesses make the plans difficult to use, but even good plans can remain unused as a result of lack of commitment or support from those responsible

for their implementation. One chief park warden told me that all of the actions of the plan that were under his control and responsibility had been carried out, while those falling under headquarters responsibility had been ignored. A more common problem is that the warden may feel that the plan is not his or hers but belongs to a group of consultants or a diffuse group of 'stakeholders'.

Several underlying problems lead to this situation. Donors may support park planning as a preparatory phase. This can lead to 'wish lists'. Planning often takes place without the framework of a protected-area systems plan. The problem here is not so much that it is difficult to identify the special features of the park, but it is difficult to identify those that are better represented and addressed in other parks. Planning can take place in times of great institutional change. This is happening in Zambia at present with the creation of the Zambian Wildlife Authority, and happened in Uganda during the formation of the Uganda Wildlife Authority in 1996. This makes it difficult to involve effectively those who will be in charge of headquarters during the actual implementation of the plan. A particularly delicate problem arises from dilemmas as to whether the primary objective of park-planning projects is to prepare plans or to build up park-planning departments. While it is hard to argue against capacity building, the fact is that planning departments have a habit of falling apart following the cessation of donor-supported assistance. The Kenya Wildlife Service park-planning section was dissolved in 1996. Earlier efforts to build planning capacity in Kenya under the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department left little trace. Key staff have left planning departments in Uganda and Tanzania at the end of projects or project phases.

I recognize that it is easy to criticize plans, and that some of the problems listed are intractable. Nevertheless, three preliminary conclusions emerge. First, there are grounds for believing that park planning is only really worthwhile if certain conditions are met. These include having: a clear process to integrate park planning with budgets and budgeting; clear agreement by the protected-area authority on the objectives of the park-planning process; reasonable institutional stability; and park wardens who can make sufficient important contributions to the plan in order to take ownership of it. Second, more modest efforts are likely to be more cost-effective than more elaborate ones (and would allow much greater coverage of the protected-area network). And finally, if parks are to be less isolated, their

plans need to have recognizable links with the processes of local development.

The whole matter has not been studied systematically. If park management plans are evaluated at all, it tends to be shortly after they have been written, and not later when it is possible to assess what use has been made of them. A review of park-planning experiences across the region would surely help future efforts to be considerably more efficient and effective. I would welcome feedback from readers with their perspectives and experiences in the use of park plans.

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A reply to Martin

Martin (1999), in his reply to Spinage (1998), states that those whose views I question (whom he terms 'radicals') would not disagree with the postulate that game laws were promulgated at all times with good intent. But few of the 'radicals' whose works I have read seem to agree with this point of view. If the object, as they seem to assert, was to deny rights to the Africans in order to benefit colonialist oppressors, then this cannot be construed as good intent.

Of course laws alienate those who do not wish to abide by them, and of course they are not wholly enforceable: they are only deterrents. And it is to our advantage that state bureaucracies have inertia, for this protects against rushing headlong into rash decisions. There are many clever minds in the higher echelons of governments and legal systems—I would hesitate to call them mindless.

Wildlife populations are decreasing everywhere, although minor pockets may be increasing, but Martin ignores the fact that these are probably the result of increased rainfall following southern Africa's prolonged drought. Also, populations can be increased on commercial farms by the destruction of large predators. I have no quarrel with the CAMPFIRE programme concept, as long as it is outside national parks.

It is not weapons and human population increases alone that pose problems, but, as I stated, technological man. Easily obtainable wire is just one other example of the widespread use of technological advance that has caused great destruction to game in some areas.

I did not state that anyone who disagreed with the radicals' views was a Marxist 'spouting left-wing political dogma' and misrepresenting the truth, and I did not state that what the contributors to Ghimire &

Pimbert (1997) said was new. As to Parker, Sheldrick and Woodley proposing that the Wata be allowed to hunt elephants lawfully in Tsavo National Park, then Martin's edition of Parker & Amin (1983) must be different to mine, in which no such reference appears. Martin seems to have confused this with the Galana River Game Management Scheme outside the park (Parker & Amin, 1983). Parker (1964) argued that poaching in the area should be stopped: 'Further plans [for the Galana River Game Management Scheme] must include measures to eradicate these [poaching] activities with priority over other considerations'. It is mischievous to state that I agree with Sandeman's statement (Parker & Amin [1983] do not mention Sandeman by name), but I repeat that no government would allow a minority group such rights. I never implied that there was any intention of suggesting that the Wata should exercise 'unbridled' rights over Tsavo. They did not afterwards exercise *de facto* rights over the park effectively; their activities were completely halted by Sheldrick and Woodley. Later Somali incursions reduced the elephant population.

Martin cited Graham (1973), Martin (1978) and Bell (1987) as being early proponents of the concept of local people managing wildlife resources, but this concept did not begin with these authors. The 1958 Regional Meeting of the British East Africa Fauna Conference, Nairobi, noted that in Uganda a local game committee was being established in each district, composed of the District Commissioner, a Game Ranger and local Africans: 'It was the intention eventually to place responsibility for game management on these committees with the object of persuading Africans not to destroy their own game resources' (Anon., 1958). In 1959 came the creation of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area with its multiple-land-use concept and subsequent management plans beginning in 1960 (Dirschl, 1966). In 1960, the Luangwa Valley policy statement asserted '... to utilize the fauna of the Luangwa Valley for the economic benefits of the local inhabitants, provided such utilization conforms to accepted conservation practices to maintain the maximum number of species at optimum levels consistent with the protection of the habitat and with due regard to human rights.' The proposed management plan (1960) recognized the need for game cropping and hunting, and that absolute sanctuary within parks and reserves was not desirable (Dodds & Patton, 1968). In 1967, a contributor to a symposium in Kenya on exploiting wildlife stated: '... it is none too early to embark on modernizing sociological, legislative, and technological tools' (Casebeer, 1968).

Martin stated that the Moremi Wildlife Reserve Project 'was run by a local NGO (The Fauna Conservation Society) with local people represented on the manage-

ment committee'. According to Kay (1963), all of the management committee were local people and non-European, 'The Batawana tribe, to whom the territory belongs, have created the Moremi Wildlife Reserve ...'. So it was a tribal NGO. A European, Pete Smith, as Martin shows, became treasurer 2 years later, and in 1979 the reserve was taken over by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. The Batawana tribe owned the territory and had full control over it, and had any profits been generated they would have been tribal profits. I doubt that it is true that the Government would not allow the collection of fees (no such obstacle is mentioned by Kay, 1963), but it is possible that complications arose with Botswana gaining independence in 1966, when the tribal authorities forfeited their autonomy to a central government. Under the new Constitution, revenues would have had to go to central government unless they were payable under law into some other fund established for a specific purpose. The politicians would, understandably, not have been prepared to create a unified state and immediately follow this with tribal exceptions.

I have not condoned capital punishment for poaching, but I do defend the right of the authorities to protect themselves from aggression and to meet aggression with aggression. The quote (I. Parker, in litt.) appears to be an attack on the General Service Unit of the Kenya Police for shooting a Somali and claiming he was a shifta (an armed bandit). But what evidence is there to back up this statement and for Martin's cry as to how many people have to be killed before discontent with the practice sets in?

It is unfortunate that Martin chose to raise the old chestnut of the 1.3 million elephants. Readers should be aware that the rejection of Douglas-Hamilton's (1979) tentative estimate was motivated by the hostility of Zimbabwe to the halting of the ivory trade. At the August 1981 Hwange meeting of the IUCN/SSC African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Groups, a figure of 1.19 million was accepted, of which 509,744 were classed as 'Informed guesses and extrapolations' or 'Figures based on informed guesses and extrapolations from better known or surveyed areas' (Anon, 1981). Among these 'unconfirmed reports and speculation' was listed a total of 31,000 elephants for the Central African Republic, as against my estimated figure of 71,000 in Douglas-Hamilton (1979). My original elephant counts, on which the country-wide extrapolation was based, were fully explained in Spinage *et al.* (1977) and Loevinsohn *et al.* (1978), and I am confident that the aerial surveys were conducted just as competently as the majority of those classed as 'Those figures which were derived from sample surveys ...'. I have seen nothing since 1979 to suggest that the 1.3 million figure

was widely in error. As I stated (Spinage, 1999), few would agree that the decline in elephants in the 1970s and the 1980s was the result of a loss of elephant range. It is unfortunate that credence has been given in some quarters to Parker & Graham (1989), who argued a spurious relationship from a half-truth. The destruction of elephants in protected areas was not followed by settlement of the areas, and there was a clear attempt by the Japanese to stockpile as much ivory as possible before controls were introduced.

Martin misses the point with his 'example after example' of colonial conservationists not being very conscious of local peoples' rights. What I stressed was that it was not British government colonial policy, regardless of the manner in which individuals conducted themselves on the ground. And I did not represent colonialists as a single unified community with good intent: the people making the rules in Whitehall were not colonialists. Although Martin is proposing alternatives to present systems, these same alternatives have not necessarily been outlined by those whom I have taken to task. I did not say that sociologists and anthropologists should not become involved in the management of protected areas but that they should not control it: obviously their advice could be helpful, indeed desirable.

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This communication has been cut for reasons of space. Editor.

Oriole rescue not on hold—the real story of the endangered wildlife of Montserrat

A recent issue of *Oryx* (**33**, 207) contained a short news item taken from *Wildlife Conservation* claiming that indecision on the part of the Montserrat Government was preventing conservation measures for the Montserrat oriole *Icterus oberi*, an endemic bird threatened by the recent volcanic activity on the island. As a member of the consortium of international organizations who have been working with the Montserrat Government on an emergency plan for the wildlife of the island, I wish to set the record straight.

In 1997, at the height of the volcano emergency, the Montserrat Government invited the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (DWCT) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to undertake an assess-

ment of the emergency conservation needs for the orioles and other wildlife threatened by the volcanic activity. This resulted in an emergency plan involving these organizations together with WWF, the Royal Botanic Gardens—Kew, FFI and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry, which, with funding from the UK Government, RSPB, DWCT and the American Bird Conservancy, has been implemented over the last 2 years. At the time the Montserrat Government refused a request from Sustainable Ecosystems Institute to mount a rescue mission for orioles adjacent to the volcano on the basis that it would have been extremely dangerous to venture into this zone and was probably unnecessary.

Our consortium has worked with the Montserrat Government and local rangers over the last 2 years to implement the original plan. The orioles have been counted in an extensive sample survey and there are now known to be more in the Centre Hills than earlier total population estimates for the whole island. Local rangers have monitored oriole numbers every 3 months and there has been a 4-month study of their breeding success. Mountain chickens *Leptodactylus fallax* and a range of reptile species have been monitored and the health of the vegetation has been assessed and monitored. As a bonus the endemic galliwasp lizard *Diploglossus montiserrati* has been rediscovered on the island. In the last few months small numbers of orioles and mountain chickens have been taken to Jersey Zoo for captive-breeding trials in case this becomes necessary after some future emergency.

Thankfully the volcanic activity on the island is now much reduced but this project remains an outstanding example of a group of diverse organizations from around the world working with local officials to bring together resources and expertise in response to an emergency situation. Perhaps we are to blame for not publicizing our work sufficiently widely but it would be a pity if our efforts were not recognized by the international conservation community.

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