



# The Conservation

# War...



Top left; A pair of vivverid carnivores (*Cryptoprocta ferox*) mating. They feed on lemurs.  
 Top right; A large green chameleon. Madagascar is home to two-thirds (51 species) of the world's chameleons.  
 Centre left; A brown lemur (*Lemur fulvus rufus*), called gidro in Malagasy.  
 Centre; A sifaka (*Propithecus verreauxi*).  
 Centre right; The tiny lepilemur is nocturnal, but sometimes will wake in the afternoon.  
 Bottom; Ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*) called maki in Malagasy.



Opposite; People collect and sell products by the side of the road, medicine for example, from the dry southern forest.

# ... Kenya and Madagascar Compared

Story and photos by Daniel Stiles



THE RECENT BATTLE TO save the Tana Delta from development activities ended in victory, largely due to the courageous efforts of the East African Wild Life Society. The Delta is slated to become a National Wetland Ramsar site and national park. But as many generals have learned to their dismay, winning a battle does not always mean winning the war. And there already are and will be in future more battles to fight, pitting conservation against economic development, biodiversity versus peoples' needs. Unless a compromise can be found.

Dr Theuri Njoka, chairman of the EAWLS, identified the crux of the problem in his Comment of *Swara* September/October 1993. People who live in or around areas designated for protection feel that their land is being taken from them, and natural resources that they have been using, sometimes for generations, will be denied them. Dr Njoka rightly stated that these communities should participate in the management of protected areas and that tangible benefits should accrue to them in the form of development. This is a strategy already being implemented in Madagascar, where I have done some research and consulting work, and I was curious to see what approach Kenya was taking. If it is not effective, eventually battles for conservation will be lost as peoples' needs for land exceed the benefits of wildlife. Economic development compatible with wildlife conservation is the only long term solution.

The Kenya Wildlife Service is responsible for the management of the country's protected areas and wildlife. KWS published in late 1990 *A Policy Framework and Development Programme 1991-1996* which presents in lucid de-

tail their strategy for protecting wildlife and managing parks and reserves. The document makes clear that KWS considers community development of primary importance in gaining the support of people living in areas peripheral to protected areas, and on private land with significant wildlife resources, but there are some interesting differences from the Madagascar approach. The differences are due mainly to the type of ecosystems and wildlife deemed of priority for conservation.

The KWS strategy emphasises protected areas that are mainly of open savanna type and that contain large, migratory mammals. The elephant is singled out as of top priority, being a charismatic animal symbolizing conservation. The reason for these priorities is sound. There must be an economic basis to longterm conservation, and in Kenya it is tourism. Tourists come to see wild animals and the best parks for this are the open plains such as the Maasai Mara, Amboseli and Nairobi. Thus wildlife management strategy is biased towards these ecosystems, which unfortunately leaves the other protected areas with a somewhat weakened approach because they do not have the same problems. I shall try and explain what I mean by this, and suggest that the Madagascar strategy might have some relevance for Kenya in certain areas.

It is an ecological fact that since many wildlife species migrate with the seasons and availability of forage that they periodically leave or spill-over the boundaries of protected areas. These 'dispersal areas' are occupied by people trying to make a living, and to whom wildlife is not always seen as a blessing. Wild animals destroy crops, compete for grazing with livestock, and sometimes even attack people. KWS policy,

however, is to discourage agricultural development in these dispersal areas because it would degrade wildlife habitats. The approach used to gain public support is to promote benefits to be gained directly from wildlife: a share in park tourist revenues, setting up tourism activities on private land, limited hunting for consumption and game farming. These activities are aimed to provide economic incentive for wildlife conservation.

It remains to be seen whether revenue-sharing and wildlife utilisation will indeed be sufficient to prevent conversion of land to crops, which entails fencing as well. The deleterious effects of this are already being seen around Nairobi National Park and the Maasai Mara, where maize, bean and wheat farming have occupied thousands of hectares of grazing lands formerly used by wildlife, even threatening migration routes. With the subdivision of group ranches in the Aitong area just north of the Maasai Mara reserve, the KWS strategy had better work. Loss of this important spill-over area would be devastating during the annual migration.

What of the other protected areas in Kenya in which dispersal areas are either not so important, or where there is little threat of habitat degradation by farming? These areas are much greater in size than the plains parks. Tsavo East and West, Meru, the Samburu-Buffer Springs-Shaba complex, Kora, and so on. These areas, like the protected forest areas of Arabuko-Sokoke, Kakamega, Boni-Dodori, Marsabit, Aberdares, the Mau, etc., are more analogous to the Madagascar situation. Wildlife utilisation and revenue-sharing in these areas almost certainly will be inadequate to compensate people for opportunity losses associated with conservation.

That was certainly the perception of the Tana Delta communities.

---

Just because the government declares an area protected, that does not mean local people change their attitudes about it overnight.

---

Madagascar does not have the problem of large migratory animals and the need of dispersal areas. Its most important wildlife type, prosimians, conveniently lives in distinct territories in both dry and humid forests. Other unique species of viverrid carnivores, tenrecs, chameleons and so on, live in the same habitats. Flora is also accorded considerable attention in Madagascar, because of its uniqueness, thus conservation emphasises biodiversity in general, not just wildlife as in Kenya. The main problem in Madagascar is encroachment by slash-and-burn cultivators, and secondarily hunting. Malagasy eat lemurs and tenrecs.

There are 50 designated protected areas in Madagascar, representing all of the ecosystem types. The principal strategy to take pressure off high biodiversity forest and dryland areas has been termed Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) by the US Agency for International Development and Eco-Development by UNDP/UNESCO. This common approach is supported by the National Environmental Action Plan, formulated by the Government and several donors under the umbrella of the World Bank (Kenya is now finalizing its own 'NEAP'). A second, traditional strategy, of strengthening the country's institutional, managerial, technical and human resources is also being applied.

USAID takes the position that the ICDP strategy is testing a hypothesis: *'local populations will alter their behaviour from destruction to conservation of their environment if they see a relationship between their economic and social well-being to the conserved area and if they are empowered to make the right decisions.'* Implementation of the strategy involves integrated projects with communities living on land peripheral to - and sometimes in - protected areas promoting agricultural development, other income generating activities, education, health care, conservation

technologies and awareness. Each protected area develops its own plan based on its specific situation and problems.

A non-governmental organization, called the National Association for the Management of Protected Areas, has recently been established to coordinate, manage and monitor the projects and biodiversity changes in the 50 protected areas. It is very similar to the KWS in its overall objectives. Since the parks and reserves generate little tourist income revenue-sharing is not a strategy, though this could change in future with increased tourism. Management of each ICDP is sub-contracted out to a national or international NGO, or both. Some are United Nations supported Eco-Development projects. There are two umbrella NGO associations in Madagascar supported through the NEAP to carry out conservation and development activities, and bodies such as WWF, the Jersey Wildlife Trust, and various US universities are actively engaged.

The areas in which I think Kenya could benefit from the Madagascar approach are:

**Research** - The KWS research objectives focus narrowly on wildlife only. Madagascar sees the importance of learning about the socio-economic factors influencing human land-use practices. Research is carried out on forest utilisation and baseline studies of income generation and disposal, education and health levels, cultural attitudes and beliefs regarding plants and animals, traditional land management practices, etc. How can you plan and implement a wildlife/biodiversity strategy if you don't know what people are doing and why?

**Forest products** - The KWS document briefly mentions the harvesting of bush products as one alternative to agriculture. As I argued in *Swara* September-October 1993, I think this should be given much higher priority than it currently is in Kenya. In Madagascar, some very detailed studies have been done on forest product use (fuel, medicines, ritual, food, construction, etc.), which have greatly helped in the formulation of project objectives and activities. Sustainable utilisation of forest products and income generation are

the goals.

**Monitoring and evaluation** - The system had not yet been developed in the Policy Framework, but it was clear that M&E was going to concentrate on wildlife species' numbers and distribution. While this is of critical importance, I would suggest that M&E be broadened to see if people were benefitting from the management strategy and what their attitudes are. Knowing these, pre-emptive action could be taken to avoid a popular backlash to conservation activities. I can think of specific occasions involving the loss of endangered wildlife species in Kenya that might not have happened if such social monitoring had been going on.

**Local involvement** - KWS makes it clear that they and they alone will decide on wildlife policy and management. They will basically tell local people what they are permitted and not permitted to do, based on their wildlife research and monitoring findings. While this theoretically should result in optimal management results, in practice it might not. In Madagascar local people are brought into the planning phase and have an input into deciding what will be done with the natural resources and what development activities will be carried out. Experience has shown that cooperation increases dramatically when local people feel they are deciding and controlling their own resource management.

I am not trying to deride the KWS Policy Framework, I think it is first rate as far as it goes. I just don't think it goes far enough, though for understandable reasons. If promoting tourism is the priority objective, then the open savanna parks are the priority protected areas. That means concentrating on keeping dispersal areas open and discouraging most development activities. But for the other protected areas mentioned above I would propose that a second strategy be formulated, more along the lines of what has been done in Madagascar. It would, I think, make the people in the Tana Delta much happier with the idea of conservation, and it could prevent future battles in other places. It might even win the war, but that is a hypothesis. ●