

**THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN
KENYA, 1895 - 1975**

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the development of wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya from 1895 to 1975. Started by the colonial state as part of its resource control programme, wildlife conservation in Kenya gradually became an important aspect of the country's economy chiefly because of its significance as the basis of a vibrant tourist industry. The conservation programme was also important to conservationists who viewed Kenya's wildlife as a heritage to humanity. Similarly, local communities, which were affected in various ways by wildlife conservation policies, had their own perceptions of the programme. All this led to the proliferation of groups whose interests were potentially conflicting.

Wildlife conservation in Kenya during the period under examination was thus characterised by various struggles between interest groups such as conservationists, the state, and local communities. The struggles centred around such issues as the costs and benefits of conservation and were manifested through anti-conservation activities like the poaching of wild animals by dissatisfied groups. These struggles changed over time in line with social, economic, political, and ecological developments. International events/processes (such as the two world wars, economic booms/depressions, and decolonisation) triggered local processes which influenced conservationism either positively or negatively. Wildlife conservation in Kenya during the period under study was dynamic. The thesis challenges the myth of a monolithic 'colonial' wildlife policy often implied in many studies on the subject.

The thesis also lays emphasis on the ecological basis of wildlife conservation while recognising the impact of social, political, and economic developments on the evolution of wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya. The country's 'geography' not only provided the foundation for conservation but also influenced the programme over time. Droughts, floods, army worm infestations, and other 'natural' occurrences interacted with social and economic changes, such as population growth and the development of capitalism, to shape conservation policy. The conservation programme was thus influenced by a complex interaction of a variety of factors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
LIST OF FIGURES, MAPS AND TABLES.....	iv
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
II: NATURE, CULTURE, AND CONSERVATION.....	18
The Physical Environment.....	19
Socio-Economic Systems in the Late Nineteenth Century.....	29
Introduction of New Land Policies.....	43
III: ORIGINS OF A CONSERVATION POLICY, CA 1895 - 1925.....	54
Early Concerns for Wildlife.....	58
White Settlement and Wildlife Conservation.....	69
Africans and Wildlife Policies.....	77
Initial Setbacks to Wildlife Conservation.....	85
IV: THE AGE OF TOKEN PRESERVATION, 1926 - 1939	95
Struggles over Wildlife.....	98
Licensed Hunting.....	116
Wildlife Control Measures.....	120
Preserving the Fauna of the Empire.....	130
V: EARLY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES, 1940 - 1952.....	146
National Parks.....	146
Park Adjuncts.....	161
Challenges to Wildlife Conservation.....	178
VI: INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND DEEPENING CRISIS, 1952 - 1959.....	196
Background to the 1956 Game Policy Committee.....	199
The Committee's Recommendations.....	215
Challenges and Developments in the Late 1950s.....	225
VII: WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSITION,	
1960 - 1964.....	243
ADC Game Reserves.....	247
Other Wildlife Conservation Schemes.....	274
Challenges to Wildlife Conservation in the Early 1960s.....	283
VIII: 'COLONIAL' WILDLIFE POLICIES IN INDEPENDENT KENYA,	
1965 - 1975.....	293
County Council Game Reserves.....	295
National Reserves and National Parks.....	308
Other Conservation Programmes.....	313
Challenges to Wildlife Conservation, 1965 - 1975.....	317
IX: CONCLUSION.....	326
APPENDICES.....	332
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	344

LIST OF FIGURES, MAPS AND TABLES

Figures:

1. Ecology of the Main Animals of East Africa.....	28
2. A Liangulu Poacher.....	238
3. Africa's White Gold.....	322

Maps:

1. Location of Kenya.....	20
2. Kenya's Main Physical Regions.....	22
3. Wildlife Conservation Areas in Kenya.....	24
4. Kenya's Peoples and Boundaries.....	30
5. Land Schedules in Kenya by 1940.....	48
6. Early Game Sanctuaries in Kenya, ca 1900.....	66
7. Wildlife Sanctuaries by the Early 1960s.....	253
8. Wildlife Conservation Areas in the 1960s.....	281
9. Settlement Schemes in the 1960s.....	288

Tables:

1. Tourism at Amboseli, 1964 - 1967.....	301
2. Ol Kajuado County Council: Sources of Revenue, 1962 - 1969.....	302

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADC	African District Council
ALDEV	African Land Development Board
ALUS	African Lands Utilisation Board
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
DC	District Commissioner
DO	District Officer
EAPHA	East African Professional Hunters Association
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GSU	General Service Unit
HMSO	His/Her Majesty's Stationery Office
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ISO	Isiolo (District)
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
LNC	Local Native Council
MKS	Machakos (District)
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KAJ	Kajiado (District)
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KNPs	Kenya National Parks (Organisation)
KNPTs	Kenya National Parks Trustees
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Services
MP	Member of Parliament
MUF	Masai United Front
NFD	Northern Frontier District
NFP	Northern Frontier Province
NGO	Ngong
NRK	Narok (District)
PC	Provincial Commissioner

Re	Rupee
RNPK	Royal National Parks of Kenya
Rs	Rupees
SAM	Samburu (District)
Sh(s)	Shilling(s)
SPFE	Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire
TTA	Taita-Taveta (District)
UN	United Nations (Organisation)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

An important effect of colonial rule in Kenya, as in many other parts of the world, was a pervasive change in relations between societies and nature. Through the imposition of various regulations, the colonial state in Kenya initiated processes whose impact on human-nature relationships has persisted to the present. Colonial regulations such as the alienation of land for white settlement, the creation of 'native reserves', the proclamation of crown lands, the establishment of game sanctuaries, and the gazettement of state forests radically altered people's relations with natural resources like wildlife.¹ Colonialism also intensified the integration of Kenya's socio-ecological systems into the international geopolitical system with important consequences for the former. Resources which had previously been the preserve of local communities (like wildlife) came to have national, regional, and international significance as various interest groups made claims on them.² The establishment of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE) in Britain in 1903 is a case in point. This society promoted the idea that wildlife was a universal heritage and not the preserve of the societies or territories that held it. The SPFE was also instrumental in the establishment of wildlife conservation programmes throughout the British empire.³

In Kenya, regulations concerning the preservation of wildlife were first introduced in the early 1890s by the administration of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) - the chartered company in charge of British territories in East Africa from

¹ In this study the term 'wildlife' denotes wild animals, fish, and birds, as well as their respective habitats. The main focus of the study, however, is the conservation (controlled exploitation) of wild animals and their habitat.

² The early stake-holders in Kenya's wildlife were the local communities, the emerging colonial state, settlers, and European hunters. Later on local and international conservation organisations, tour operators, and tourists also became important interest groups.

³ Initially called the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, the organisation changed its name to the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE) in 1919 before becoming the Fauna Protection Society in 1950. It was still in existence in the early 1990s. See Jane Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1995), pp. 27, 126 n. 1.

1888. The regulations were mainly designed to control the activities of white hunters who had begun infiltrating the region in large numbers in the wake of 'colonisation'. When the British government took over the administration of the region from the IBEAC during the 1894-95 period it extended the game regulations introduced by the company concomitant with effective administration. A game reserve was also proclaimed in the southern parts of the East Africa Protectorate (Kenya) in 1896. But it was not until after the first International Conference for the Preservation of the Wild Animals, Birds, and Fishes of the African Continent, held in London in early 1900, that two large game reserves were proclaimed in the southern and northern parts of the protectorate.

Besides the creation of game reserves, the London convention proposed an intensification of wildlife conservation in African territories through the licensing of hunters, limitation of bags, and proclamation of closed seasons. The convention did not consider Africans as hunters and only allowed those communities which 'appeared to be dependent on the flesh of wild animals for their subsistence' to hunt at the discretion of local administrators and under such restrictions as the officers would deem necessary.⁴ Thus many African communities were effectively delinked from a resource they had previously exploited not only for subsistence but also for profit. In Kenya, the administration opted for a total ban on African hunting as there neither was a clear demarcation between hunting for subsistence and hunting for profit nor were there enough officers to supervise African hunting. Africans were only allowed to kill wild animals for food during famines.

Throughout the period under review, wildlife conservation laws exposed Kenyan communities to wildlife as a menace while denying them access to its resources. The production systems of both the African communities and the white settlers were affected by wild animals through depredations on livestock and crops. Wild animals also exposed livestock to diseases like rinderpest, bovine pleuro-pneumonia, trypanosomiasis, east coast fever, foot-and-mouth disease, malignant catarrh, and

⁴ Quoted in Nora Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa: The Preservation of Game in Kenya, 1895 - 1933' (PhD Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1978), p. 131.

rabies. Some wild species also competed with livestock for resources like pasture, water, and salt-licks. As early as 1911 John Ainsworth, a senior administrator in the protectorate, 'warned the government that substantial parts of Maasailand were overrun by various kinds of wild animals which, by consuming considerable quantities of available grazing and water, were "a source of considerable inconvenience" to the people'.⁵ But the communities most affected by wildlife conservation regulations were hunter-gatherers since their production system was entirely dependent on free access to wildlife resources.

Responses to wildlife conservation laws varied from community to community and over time. As conservation intensified and the number of stake-holders increased, interactions among them on the one hand, and between them and nature on the other, became more and more complex. This usually led to conflicts which called for revision of policy in order to accommodate changing social, political, economic, and ecological factors. For example, the national park ideal propagated by the Second International Conference for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa in late 1933 could not be applied to all wildlife areas of Kenya as some of them were also inhabited by pastoral communities. This led to the creation of national reserves which allowed multiple land use in such areas. But escalating conflict between pastoralists and conservationists in the national reserves led to their abolition and the creation of game reserves in which the affected communities had a greater say.⁶ This illustrates the significance of the interaction between external and internal forces in the evolution of wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya.

⁵ Thomas Paul Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation in British East Africa, 1895 - 1963' (PhD Thesis, West Virginia University, 1981), p. 223.

⁶ While national parks in Kenya have remained state-controlled areas devoted to the preservation of wildlife rather than its controlled exploitation (conservation), game and national reserves have changed ownership and control over time. The early game reserves were multiple land-use areas where local communities had little control over the wild animals. But in the late 1940s they were replaced by national reserves from which local communities benefited financially. In the late 1950s the national reserves were succeeded by game reserves controlled by local communities through local authorities (councils). In the 1960s some of the game reserves were transformed into national parks while the rest became national reserves managed by the government on behalf of local communities. Besides these protected areas, local communities and the state have, since the 1950s, shared the revenue emanating from conservation in non-scheduled areas albeit disproportionately. Kenya has had a dynamic conservation programme.

Through colonisation Kenya became part of the international community and was affected not just by international conventions on wildlife conservation but also by 'global' events/processes such as trade booms/depressions, as well as wars. Such events/processes affected wildlife conservation in the country in many ways. The two world wars, for example, led to the intense exploitation of wild animals as part of the war effort. The wars also heightened poaching since most conservation personnel were assigned war-related duties. Indirectly, the two world wars contributed to the outbreak of famine which resulted in both the legal and illegal exploitation of wild animal resources. Swings in international trade also affected wildlife conservation in Kenya as they influenced the price of trophies and therefore the inclination to poach.

Locally, the factors affecting wildlife conservation were many and complex. Kenya's diverse ecological zones influenced not only the variety and population of wild animal species (and thus the distribution of conservation areas) but also the distribution of the human population. Ecology also affected the distribution of the various socio-economic systems and their compatibility with wildlife conservation. For instance, the savanna grasslands were inhabited by pastoralists who tolerated wild animals in their midst, whereas wetter areas were inhabited by agro-pastoralists who were less tolerant to wildlife. Moreover, communities inhabiting areas prone to drought tended to exploit wildlife resources for both subsistence and profit, while those in wetter areas hunted less. The colonial political economy was also an important factor in wildlife conservation since the colonial state allowed settlers to clear game from the white highlands in the name of economic development while insisting on its preservation in African and crown lands partly because of the revenue the government received from hunters and tourists.

The relationship between 'culture' and 'nature' is complex and dynamic. This study attempts to demonstrate that dynamism by examining the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya from 1895 to 1975. The establishment of the Kenyan state in 1895 marked the birth of the most important stake-holder in the conservation programme, although the state's conservation policies were influenced by both local and external forces. But from 1975 the state's strong hold on the conservation

programme slackened when a policy giving communities bordering conservation areas a stake in the resources was inaugurated.⁷ Specifically, the study analyses the various social, political, economic, and ecological factors which influenced changes in wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya during the period under review. It attempts to answer questions such as: What role did various interest groups (agencies) play in the promotion of wildlife conservation in Kenya between 1895 and 1975? What impact did wildlife conservation have on the various socio-ecological systems in the country? What conflicts did wildlife conservation generate and how were they resolved? How rigid were 'colonial' wildlife conservation policies in Kenya? How did perceptions of wildlife change over time?

The history of wildlife conservation in Kenya is of both local and international significance. Locally, the exploitation of wildlife resources was an important feature of the various pre-colonial socio-economic systems. Besides the exploitation of wild animal resources for subsistence, trade in wild animal products (like ivory, rhino horn, and leopard skins) developed between the Kenyan coast and the outside world even before the beginning of the Christian era.⁸ By the eve of colonisation in the late nineteenth century most Kenyan socio-economic systems had been sucked into international trade as suppliers of wild animal trophies. Consequently hunting was crucial in many pre-colonial Kenyan communities as it was not only important for subsistence and trade but also for defence and leisure. Maasai and Samburu warriors (*moran*), for example, hunted lion as part of their rites of passage.

Since the formation of the Kenyan state, utilisation of wildlife resources in one form or another has been a chief source of government revenue. The tourist industry has for a long time competed with tea and coffee for pride of place in terms of foreign-exchange earnings. Sixty-three per cent of Kenya's revenue from tourism is

⁷ See David Western, 'Amboseli National Park: Enlisting Landowners to Conserve Migratory Wildlife', *Ambio*, 11 (1982), p. 306.

⁸ See P O Ndege, 'Trade Since the Early Times', in William R Ochieng' (ed), *Themes in Kenyan History* (Nairobi, 1990), pp. 119, 120, 124.

attributable to the country's wildlife.⁹ Internationally, Kenya's wildlife conservation programme is a success story.¹⁰ Because of the country's varied environment, and the efforts of successive governments to conserve wildlife, the country has 'an incredible variety of wild animals' and 'a very rich bird life'.¹¹ This has made Kenya one of the most popular tourist destinations in sub-Saharan Africa. The country's wildlife conservation programme is also one of the oldest in eastern and southern Africa.¹² Together with South Africa, Kenya served as a model of wildlife conservation among British territories in sub-Saharan Africa.¹³

Despite its significance, wildlife conservation in Kenya has not been the subject of a comprehensive study. Most of the studies on the subject are limited in either socio-ecological extent, time frame, issues covered, or a combination thereof. No existing study examines the socio-ecological context of wildlife conservation in Kenya over a long period of time. This thesis attempts to fill that gap by examining the social, political, economic, and ecological factors which influenced wildlife conservation in

⁹ See S Ericksen *et al*, 'Land Tenure and Wildlife Management', in Calestous Juma and J B Ojwang (eds), *In Land We Trust: Environment, Private Property and Constitutional Change* (Nairobi, 1996), p. 200.

¹⁰ With approximately 10 per cent of its total area of 582 646 square kilometres designated as official wildlife conservation areas, Kenya compares poorly with other African countries such as Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, which have respectively committed 39, 29.8, 25.1, 13.5, and 12.9 per cent of their land to wildlife conservation. However, Kenya rivals these countries in terms of the variety of programmes and animal species. For instance, 65 - 85 per cent of Kenya's wild animal population is not confined to the protected areas. See Ericksen, 'Land Tenure and Wildlife Management', pp. 200, 210; Mutizwa Mukute, 'Wildlife and Protected Areas', in Chenje Munyaradzi and Phyllis Johnson (eds), *State of the Environment in Southern Africa* (Harare, 1994), p. 160.

¹¹ Donald L Capone, 'Wildlife, Man and Competition for Land in Kenya: A Geographical Analysis' (PhD Thesis, Michigan State University, 1972), p. 13.

¹² South Africa's wildlife conservation programme goes back to the 1820s and is therefore the oldest in the region. See Richard Grove, 'Scottish Missionaries, Evangelical Discourses and the Origins of Conservation Thinking in Southern Africa 1820 - 1900', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 2 (1989), pp. 163 - 187.

¹³ Archival records show that Kenya's game officers helped establish Uganda's national parks authority and that their views were often sought by conservation officials in countries such as Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It is also claimed that the officers' input was important in the formulation of the national park ideal promulgated by the Second International Conference on the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa in London in 1933. However, wildlife conservation ideas in eastern and southern Africa largely emerged from the experiences of the various conservation authorities and were adopted by each country according to its situation and needs.

Kenya from 1895 to 1975. Such a 'holistic' approach is necessary for understanding how Kenya's wildlife conservation programme has evolved over time, and the direction it may be taking. The management of wildlife resources in a predominantly rural economy such as Kenya's is plagued with many problems, which may be best understood and resolved through recourse to history. For '[w]hile history cannot be used to predict the future, it can throw light on the root causes of the current problems which face organizations. To some extent, it can also provide clues as to which avenues might be followed in order to solve them.'¹⁴

Some of the works on wildlife conservation in Kenya which have a close affinity with the current one include those by Kelly, Ofcansky, Maforo, Capone, and Western. Kelly's study examines developments in the preservation of wildlife in Kenya between 1895 and 1933.¹⁵ Specifically, she highlights the interaction between internal and external factors in the evolution of a conservation policy in Kenya. Some of the factors she discusses include the importance of wildlife to the various socio-economic systems; the role of white hunters, traders, and settlers; and the international campaign for wildlife conservation. She also examines the importance of wildlife to the early colonial government and the problems faced by the Game Department in its early stages of development. The problems included inadequate personnel, poaching, and wild animal control.

Ofcansky's study is also historical and examines various aspects of wildlife conservation in the three east African countries from 1895 to 1963.¹⁶ It identifies the problems facing wildlife conservation in the three states during that period as conflict between the interests of wildlife conservation and those of settler agriculture in Kenya; the problem of marauding elephants in Uganda; and the problem of tsetse fly in Tanganyika. The evolution of the national park system in the three East African states is also discussed.

¹⁴ Carruthers, *Kruger National Park*, p. 119.

¹⁵ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa'.

¹⁶ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation'.

Using Kenya's Coast Province as a case study, Maforo examines relations between Europeans and Africans in the context of game policy in colonial Kenya.¹⁷ He blames discriminatory game policies for the escalation of poaching in colonial Kenya. In his view, Africans decimated Kenya's wild animals between 1900 and 1945 because the colonial government made no effort to educate them about the need for conservation. He claims that there was a radical change in Africans' attitude to wild animals between 1945 and 1956 because the government began to involve them in the formulation of wildlife policy.

While these studies are significant in many respects, they have limitations which make the current one necessary. Despite its detailed analysis of wildlife conservation in Kenya during the first half of the colonial era, Kelly's study does not relate wildlife conservation to ecology. She does not show how various socio-ecological systems responded to the new wildlife policies and how that response influenced policy formulation in turn. Because of its broad scope, Ofcansky's work is shallow in its coverage of wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya during the period it examines. The only production systems discussed in some detail in the work are those of the white settlers and the Maasai. In addition to its geographical limitation, Maforo's study advances the argument that from 1945 the colonial government inaugurated a pro-African wildlife conservation policy which initiated a pro-conservation attitude among African communities. This argument appears flawed because African involvement in the formulation of wildlife policy was virtually non-existent in Kenya until the late 1970s.¹⁸ Besides, the claim that poaching and other anti-conservation practices subsided in the post-1945 period is contrary to the available evidence.¹⁹ Despite these shortcomings, the three studies provide useful information and insights.

¹⁷ David Dhlalangani Maforo, 'Black-White Relations in Kenya Game Policy: A Case Study of the Coast Province, 1895 - 1963' (PhD Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1979).

¹⁸ See IIED, *Whose Eden? An Overview of Community Approaches to Wildlife Management* (London, 1994), *passim*.

¹⁹ Indeed, poaching in the Coast Province escalated after the Second World War. See Dennis Holman, *The Elephant People* (London, 1967).

Capone's study mainly focuses on competition for land between wildlife conservation and other economic activities *circa* 1970.²⁰ Using the Chyulu region of Machakos District as a case-study, Capone identifies land-use conflict as the most serious long-term threat to the future of wildlife in Kenya. The study attributes this conflict to a high rate of population growth. Of the existing studies on wildlife conservation in Kenya, Capone's work is unique as it emphasises the 'politico-geographical' aspect of conservation. This 'holistic' approach to the study of wildlife conservation is relevant to the current study as it is applicable to the examination of the subject in the context of a broader spatial and time frame.

David Western, a zoologist, has not only studied land-use problems in Amboseli intensively but has also been involved in the search for practical solutions.²¹ His work demonstrates the strong link between social and ecological factors in wildlife conservation. He advocates the incorporation of local communities into wildlife management programmes. This is not entirely a novel idea for it was mooted by the colonial authorities as early as 1930. Since the development of 'community-based' wildlife conservation ideas in Kenya has not been studied, the current study attempts to show how these ideas evolved over time. The current study also puts the Amboseli problem in a wider historical context.

There are also a number of small-scale studies of wildlife conservation in Kenya which have informed this thesis. These, though, are limited in either time frame, the issues discussed, or socio-ecological coverage. They range from 'outline' essays on the development of tourism/wildlife conservation to case-studies on poaching. The

²⁰ Capone, 'Wildlife, Man and Competition for Land in Kenya'.

²¹ David Western, 'The Structure, Dynamics and Change of the Amboseli Ecosystem' (PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1973); Western, 'Amboseli National Park'; David Western, 'Amboseli', *Swara*, 5, 4 (1982), pp. 8 - 14; David Western, 'Ecosystem Conservation and Rural Development: The Case of Amboseli', in David Western and R Michael Wright (eds), *Natural Connections: Perspectives in Community-based Conservation*, (Washington DC, 1994), pp. 15 - 52.

important essays on tourism/wildlife conservation are by Akama,²² Marekia,²³ Ndege,²⁴ and Nyeki,²⁵ while those on poaching are by Dalleo,²⁶ Steinhart,²⁷ and Stone.²⁸ The more localised socio-ecological studies are by Berger,²⁹ Collett,³⁰ Homewood,³¹ Lindsay,³² and Odegi-Awuondo.³³ These and other studies supplement and collate archival data in the present study.

This thesis is based on the perspective of environmental or ecological history. This is history which 'deals with various dialogues over time between people and the rest of nature, focusing on reciprocal impacts'.³⁴ Unlike environmentalism, which

²² John S Akama, 'The Evolution of Wildlife Conservation Policies in Kenya', *Journal of Third World Studies*, xv, 2 (1998), pp. 103 - 117.

²³ E Njeri Marekia, 'Managing Wildlife in Kenya', in Amos Kiriho and Calestous Juma (eds), *Gaining Ground: Institutional Innovations in Land-use Management in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1991), pp. 155 - 176.

²⁴ George Oduor Ndege, 'Tourism in Kenya: Genesis, Growth and Impact', in W R Ochieng' and R M Maxon (eds), *An Economic History of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1992), pp. 327 - 345.

²⁵ Daniel Musili Nyeki, *Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1993).

²⁶ Peter T Dalleo, 'The Somali Role in Organized Poaching in Northeastern Kenya, c. 1909 - 1939', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22, 3 (1979), pp. 472 - 482.

²⁷ E I Steinhart, 'Hunters, Poachers and Gamekeepers: Towards a History of Hunting in Kenya', *Journal of African History*, 30, 1 (1989), pp. 247 - 264; Edward Steinhart, 'National Parks and Anti-poaching in Kenya, 1947 - 1957', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 27, 1 (1994), pp. 59 - 76.

²⁸ Michael L Stone, 'Organized Poaching in Kitui District: A Failure in District Authority, 1900 to 1960', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, v, 3 (1972), pp. 436 - 452.

²⁹ Dhyani J Berger, *Wildlife Extension: Participatory Conservation by the Maasai of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1993).

³⁰ David Collett, 'Pastoralists and Wildlife: Image and Reality in Kenya Maasailand', in David Anderson and Richard Grove (eds), *Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 129 - 148.

³¹ Katherine Homewood, 'Development, Demarcation and Ecological Outcomes in Maasailand', *Africa*, 65, 3 (1995), pp. 331 - 350.

³² W K Lindsay, 'Integrating Parks and Pastoralists: Some Lessons from Amboseli', in Anderson and Grove (eds), *Conservation in Africa*, pp. 149 - 167.

³³ Casper Odegi-Awuondo, 'Wildlife Conservation and Decline in Pastoralism in Kenya', in Casper Odegi-Awuondo (ed), *Essays in Sociology of Politics* (Nairobi, 1985), pp. 31 - 36.

³⁴ William Beinart and Peter Coates, *Environment and History: The Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa* (London, 1995), p. 1.

emphasises the human agency in culture-nature relationships, environmental history 'extends its boundaries beyond human institutions . . . to the ecosystems which provide the context to those institutions'.³⁵ It is also different from environmental determinism since it focuses on 'the point where the natural and the cultural [worlds] intersect and interact with each other'.³⁶ Consequently environmental history is 'total history' because it not only 'deals with the role and place of nature in human life',³⁷ but also 'explore[s] reciprocal interactions between human and natural forces'.³⁸

The sub-discipline of environmental history mainly evolved in North America from the 1960s owing to 'the rise of the modern environmental movement and the emergence of environmental issues as a major public concern'.³⁹ But the sub-discipline has such antecedents and precursors as historical geography, human ecology, frontier history, the 'total history' of the French *Annales* school, and African history/anthropology.⁴⁰ Environmental history is thus an interdisciplinary approach to the past which emphasises 'the reciprocal effects between social and environmental change'.⁴¹ The environmental historian therefore 'tries to blend the analytical traditions of history with ecology, economics, anthropology, and other fields'.⁴² Specifically, the

³⁵ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York, 1983), p. vii - quoted in *ibid.*

³⁶ Richard White, 'Environmental History, Ecology, and Meaning', *Journal of American History*, 76, 4 (1990), p. 1111.

³⁷ Donald Worster, 'Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History', *Journal of American History*, 76, 4 (1990), p. 1089.

³⁸ William Beinart, 'African History and Environmental History', *African Affairs*, 99 (2000), p. 270.

³⁹ Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Also see Peter Coates, 'Clio's New Greenhouse', *History Today*, 46, 8 (1996), 15 - 22; Peter Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes Since Ancient Times* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 17 - 22, 100, 101.

⁴¹ White, 'Environmental History', p. 1114.

⁴² William Cronon, 'A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative', *The Journal of American History*, 78, 4 (1992), p. 1349.

environmental historian examines the dynamic relationship between nature, production systems, and beliefs.⁴³

In the African context, environmental history has mainly developed in response to deepening social and environmental problems. Concerns about the link between colonial capitalism and socio-ecological crises (like land degradation, drought, food shortages, and poverty) provided the initial motivation for the development of environmental history in Africa. In the 1970s Africanist scholars (with their 'essentially corrective and anti-colonial approach which emphasized African initiative in the face of European conquest and capitalist exploitation') linked Africa's socio-ecological problems to the social and environmental control engendered by colonialism.⁴⁴ Although many 'African' environmental historians agree with the view that most of Africa's socio-ecological problems have their roots in colonialism, they criticise the Africanist school for 'the tendency to depict pre-colonial societies inhabiting an idyllic, tranquil "Merrie Africa"'.⁴⁵ The critics point out that even in pre-colonial Africa politics governed the control and distribution of labour and resources.

In an analysis of various approaches to imperial environmental history, MacKenzie criticises the Africanist school not only for exaggerating the impact of imperialism on human-nature relationships in Africa, but also for 'influenc[ing] historians of natural history to concentrate on instances of resistance to European policies, when submission and collaboration may have been just as prominent a part of indigenous

⁴³ See J M Powell, 'Historical Geography and Environmental History: An Australian Interface', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 22, 3 (1996), p. 257; William Cronon, 'Modes of Prophecy and Production: Placing Nature in History', *Journal of American History*, 76, 4 (1990), p. 1123.

⁴⁴ Beinart, 'African History and Environmental History', pp. 270, 273.

⁴⁵ James L Gibling, 'The Precolonial Politics of Disease Control in the Lowlands of Northern Tanzania', in Gregory Maddox *et al* (eds), *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania* (London, 1996), p. 145. Also see James L Gibling and Gregory Maddox, 'Introduction', in Maddox *et al* (eds), *Custodians of the Land*, pp. 1 - 13. Some of the works in this school are: Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika, 1850 - 1950* (Berkeley, 1977); and Leroy Vail, 'Ecology and History: The Example of Eastern Zambia', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 2 (1977), pp. 130 - 155.

responses'.⁴⁶ In the analysis MacKenzie argues that the impact of imperialism on human-nature relationships was complex and diverse because of the variety of indigenous socio-ecological systems and divisions among the agents of imperialism. Under 'the longer-perspective school', MacKenzie demonstrates that 'indigenous' and 'imperial' responses to human-nature relationships varied from situation to situation and over time:

Some colonial authorities in Africa sought to destroy game to try to beat back the incidence of tsetse fly, which used game as a host; others created vast national parks to encourage the regeneration of game stocks. The policy pursued largely depended on whether the territory contained white settlers with cattle to be protected. As always, expert opinion was highly attuned to the political contexts that it served. Towards the end of colonial rule, there were at least the beginnings of a better understanding of the interrelationship between forest peoples and their environment and between pastoralists, their herds and game.⁴⁷

On human-nature relationships in the post-colonial period, MacKenzie observes that 'post-colonial states have been more susceptible to sectional interests than imperial powers. . . . What is more, such states have often proved more responsive to powerful international conservation lobbies which do not always take indigenous needs into account'.⁴⁸

Of the various perspectives of imperial environmental history MacKenzie analyses,⁴⁹ he seems to favour 'the fully integrated cultural school' - which 'deals with constructions of nature as much as the supposed realities. It also attempts to set environmental issues into their full economic, political and cultural contexts'.⁵⁰ In

⁴⁶ John M MacKenzie, 'Empire and Ecological Apocalypse: The Historiography of the Imperial Environment', in Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (eds), *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 219, 220, 224. Also see Beinart, 'African History and Environmental History', p. 271.

⁴⁷ MacKenzie, 'Empire and Ecological Apocalypse', p. 224.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ He calls the fourth school 'neo-Whiggism' because it tends to privilege European sensibilities in producing environmentalist ideas since the seventeenth century. Yet, in his view, environmental enlightenment was not the prerogative of any one side in the imperial relationship.

⁵⁰ MacKenzie, 'Empire and Ecological Apocalypse', p. 224.

MacKenzie's view, the fully integrated cultural perspective is epitomised by Jane Carruthers's book, *The Kruger National Park*.

MacKenzie's fully integrated cultural perspective appears similar to 'political ecology'. The latter is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human-nature interrelationships which 'embrace[s] three critical areas of inquiry: the contextual sources of environmental change; conflict over access [to natural resources]; and the political ramifications of environmental change'.⁵¹ Specifically, political ecology attempts to develop analyses which link local level production processes and decision-making with the larger political economy while keeping in mind the need for contingency and flexibility in explanation.⁵² The perspective explores 'the role of actors - states, multilateral institutions, businesses, environmental non-governmental organisations, poverty-stricken farmers, shifting cultivators, and other "grassroots" actors - in the development of Third World politicised environment'.⁵³

The political ecology perspective emerged among Third World geographers in the 1980s, and was meant to overcome alleged weaknesses in environmental history since the latter's 'primary focus [was] still on human-environmental interaction in North America and Europe'.⁵⁴ The new perspective was thus referred to as Third World political ecology. Over time there has been a convergence between Third World political ecology and environmental history, with the latter giving the former 'a "much needed historical depth" . . . previously often lacking in the field'.⁵⁵ There thus appears to be no difference between political ecology and the fully integrated cultural perspective of environmental history as both aim at providing a holistic view of human-nature interrelationships. Consequently this thesis applies the political ecology perspective to the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya since the

⁵¹ Raymond L Bryant, 'Political Ecology: An Emerging Research Agenda in Third-World Studies', *Political Geography*, 11, 1 (1992), p. 13.

⁵² Raymond L Bryant and Sinead Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology* (London, 1997), p. i.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.19.

approach 'combines the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. Together this encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself.'⁵⁶

The political ecology perspective has been used by Roderick Neumann in his work on wildlife conservation in northeast Tanzania.⁵⁷ Neumann attempts an historical analysis of state conservation policy, especially in so far as it has related to resource control. The factors which influenced policy formulation and implementation included western views on the African environment, peasant struggles over land resources, and Tanzania's place in the global political economy. In other words, Neumann's work traces the various ways in which human-nature relationships in northeast Tanzania were influenced by social structures and processes which extended from the local socio-ecological system to the global political economy.

The aforementioned works provide important information and perspectives for the current study. Other consulted works include those by Beinart,⁵⁸ Bell,⁵⁹ Brooks,⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookfield, *Land Degradation and Society* (London, 1987), p. 17. For more details on the relationship between environmental history and political ecology see James O'Connor, *Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism* (New York, 1998), chapter 2.

⁵⁷ R P Neumann, 'Political Ecology of Wildlife Conservation in the Mt Meru Area of Northeast Tanzania', *Land Degradation & Rehabilitation*, 3, 2 (1992), pp. 85 - 98; Roderick P Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (Berkeley, 1998).

⁵⁸ William Beinart, 'Introduction: The Politics of Colonial Conservation', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 2 (1989), pp. 143 - 162; William Beinart, 'Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Southern and Central Africa', *Past and Present*, 128 (1990), 162 - 186.

⁵⁹ R H V Bell, 'Conservation with a Human Face: Conflict and Reconciliation in African Land Use Planning', in Anderson and Grove (eds), *Conservation in Africa*, pp. 79 - 101.

⁶⁰ Shirley J Brooks, 'Playing the Game: The Struggles for Wildlife Protection in Zululand, 1910 - 1930' (MA Thesis, Queen's University, 1990).

Carruthers,⁶¹ Gibson,⁶² Grove,⁶³ MacKenzie,⁶⁴ Mutwira,⁶⁵ Payne,⁶⁶ Peck,⁶⁷ and Ranger.⁶⁸ Although most of these studies are based on the southern African region, they are important to this thesis for various reasons. First, they deal with areas formerly under British administration and therefore provide useful points of comparison. South African cases, for example, provide useful information on the origins and development of conservation ideas in British Africa. Second, most of the studies emphasise the influence of climate and other environmental factors in the evolution of conservation policies. Grove, for example, shows the important role of drought in the development of conservation policies in southern Africa.⁶⁹ Third, the wide range of issues discussed in these studies provides a broad view of environmental conservation in Africa. The issues range from changing perceptions of wildlife conservation to histories of specific wildlife areas. Finally, the studies emphasise the socio-political aspects of wildlife conservation - an important theme in this thesis.

⁶¹ E J Carruthers, 'Game Protection in the Transvaal, 1846 to 1926' (PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1988); Jane Carruthers, 'Towards an Environmental History of Southern Africa: Some Perspectives', *South African Historical Journal*, 23 (1990), pp. 184 - 195.

⁶² Clark C Gibson, *Politicians and Poachers: The Political Economy of Wildlife Policy in Africa* (Cambridge, 1999).

⁶³ Richard Grove, 'Early Themes in African Conservation: The Cape in the Nineteenth Century', in Anderson and Grove (eds), *Conservation in Africa*, pp. 21 - 39; Grove, 'Scottish Missionaries', *passim*.

⁶⁴ John M MacKenzie, 'Chivalry, Social Darwinism and Ritualised Killing: The Hunting Ethos in Central Africa up to 1914', in Anderson and Grove (eds), *Conservation in Africa*, pp. 41 - 61; John M MacKenzie, 'Hunting in Eastern and Central Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to Zimbabwe', in William J Baker and James A Mangan (eds), *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York, 1987), pp. 172 - 195.

⁶⁵ Roben Mutwira, 'Southern Rhodesian Wildlife Policy (1890 - 1953): A Question of Condoning Game Slaughter?', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 2 (1989), pp. 250 - 262.

⁶⁶ Jill Payne, 'Re-creating Home: British Colonialism, Culture and the Zuurveld Environment in the Nineteenth Century' (MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1998).

⁶⁷ John E Peck, 'From Royal Game to Popular Heritage: Wildlife Policy and Resource Tenure under Colonial and Independence Rule in Zimbabwe' (A Paper Presented at the Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Boston, 4 - 7 December 1993).

⁶⁸ Terence Ranger, 'Whose Heritage? The Case of the Matobo National Park', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 2 (1989), pp. 217 - 249; Terence Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture & History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Harare, 1999).

⁶⁹ Grove, 'Scottish Missionaries', *passim*.

But as this thesis will try to demonstrate, the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya is unique in certain respects. This is because the Kenyan environment, socio-ecological systems, and the process of integration of those systems into the global political economy differ from those of southern Africa in some respects. The study thus contributes to the historiography of wildlife conservation in the former British territories in sub-Saharan Africa.

Owing to the significance of the socio-ecological context of the evolution of wildlife policies and practice, chapter two of this thesis outlines the physical and social environment in Kenya at the outset of colonial rule in the late nineteenth century. The chapter also discusses the introduction of colonial land policies since these were important in transforming human-nature relationships in the country. The issue of new land policies is further discussed in chapter three in the context of the evolution of early game policies. The game policies were influenced by events and processes within and outside the country. The establishment of white settlement and the need to preserve as much wildlife in the country as possible were some of the influential factors.

Chapter four examines the early forms of wildlife conservation and the influence of imperial concerns for wildlife, while chapters five and six examine the proliferation of wildlife conservation areas in the 1940s and 1950s. The problems emanating from the proliferation of game sanctuaries and the attempts to resolve them are also considered. This gives way to a discussion on the politics of wildlife conservation during the transition to independence (1960 - 1964) and the conservation policies of the early independence government (1965 - 1975) in chapters seven and eight respectively.

CHAPTER TWO

NATURE, CULTURE AND CONSERVATION

Kenya is a 'land of contrasts' in many ways. Physically, the land rises from the Indian Ocean to about 5680 metres above sea level at the top of Mount Kenya. Between these two extremes lie diverse physical environments. These range from the coral reefs and islands on the shores of the ocean through plains and plateaus at various altitudes, hills and mountains of varying heights, to valleys and escarpments. Since the climate of Kenya is predominantly influenced by relief and proximity to large water bodies, the country has a wide variety of ecological zones even though it lies astride the equator. Ecological zones vary from desert conditions in some parts of the country to temperate environment in others.

Like the physical environment, Kenya's 'cultural landscape' is diverse. This diversity is as much the product of human-nature interactions over time as it is the outcome of interactions between different cultures. The processes of interaction in the country may be as old as humanity itself since Kenya is believed to be one of the cradles of humankind.¹ Thus from 'the dawn of history' different cultures have interacted with one another and the environment to shape both culture and nature. From the initial human-nature interactions emerged hunter-gatherer communities when they were joined by groups of herders and cultivators from about the beginning of the second millennium of the Christian era.² These immigrants helped intensify human-nature interaction as did the arrival of Arabs, Indians, and other groups on the Kenyan coast - first as traders and later as settlers. The arrival of the Portuguese on the coast from the late fifteenth century also had important effects on culture-nature relationships as they not only introduced new crops into the East African region but also intensified the region's contact with the outside world. However, the most intensive

¹ See Thomas Spear, *Kenya's Past: An Introduction to Historical Method in Africa* (London, 1981), p. 2; R T Ogonia and W R Ochieng', 'Land, Natural and Human Resources', in W R Ochieng' and R M Maxon (eds), *An Economic History of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1992), p.8.

² Some farming and herding communities had emerged in Kenya during the neolithic revolution (2500 BC - 500 AD). See Spear, *Kenya's Past*, pp. 11 - 21.

human-nature interaction in what became Kenya started with the introduction of British colonialism in the late nineteenth century. Colonialism not only engendered European settlement and new land-use regulations but also intensified the incorporation of the country's socio-ecological systems into the global political economy.

This chapter outlines the geographical features of Kenya, its socio-economic systems on the eve of colonisation, and early colonial land policies. This socio-ecological background is important for the understanding of the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya from the late nineteenth century. As Noel Simon asserts, 'human ecology and wild life ecology are so closely inter-related that an understanding of the historical background and the man/land relationship is necessary for a proper appreciation of the present wild life situation'.³

The Physical Environment

Kenya (Map 1) represents an area of some 582 646 square kilometres, of which 13 393 square kilometres are covered by water. The country extends from latitudes 4° 21' north to 4° 28' south, and from longitudes 34° to 42° east. The country's shape and size are largely the result of a series of international boundary agreements which involved Britain, Germany, Italy, and Ethiopia over the 1886 - 1926 period.⁴ The boundaries were eventually gazetted in 1929. However, the boundary between Kenya and the Sudan has been altered in favour of the former in the more recent past.

Geologically, Kenya is part of the pre-Cambrian rock system. However, in most of the western half of the country this 'basement system' is covered by tertiary and more recent volcanic material which was subsequently faulted and rifted. The resultant dome, generally known as the Kenya highlands, is dented by the Great Rift Valley.

³ Noel Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder: The Wildlife of Kenya* (London, 1962), p. 79.

⁴ Ogonda and Ochieng', 'Land, Natural and Human Resources', p.1.

Map 1: Location of Kenya

Source: Ojany and Ogendo, *Kenya*, p. 2.

The Kenyan section of the Rift Valley is a massive depression varying from 304 to 915 metres with a width of 50 to 60 kilometres. It is 'covered with lava flow material and dotted here and there with volcanic cones and lakes'.⁵ In some parts of the highlands, highly metamorphosed pre-Cambrian rocks of the basement system still appear above the volcanic material. Slightly metamorphosed igneous and sedimentary material of the pre-Cambrian system are also found in the area around Lake Victoria. In the rest of the country, the basement system is covered by tertiary and more recent sediments. The differences are therefore the result of earth and mountain-building movements as well as erosion and deposition.

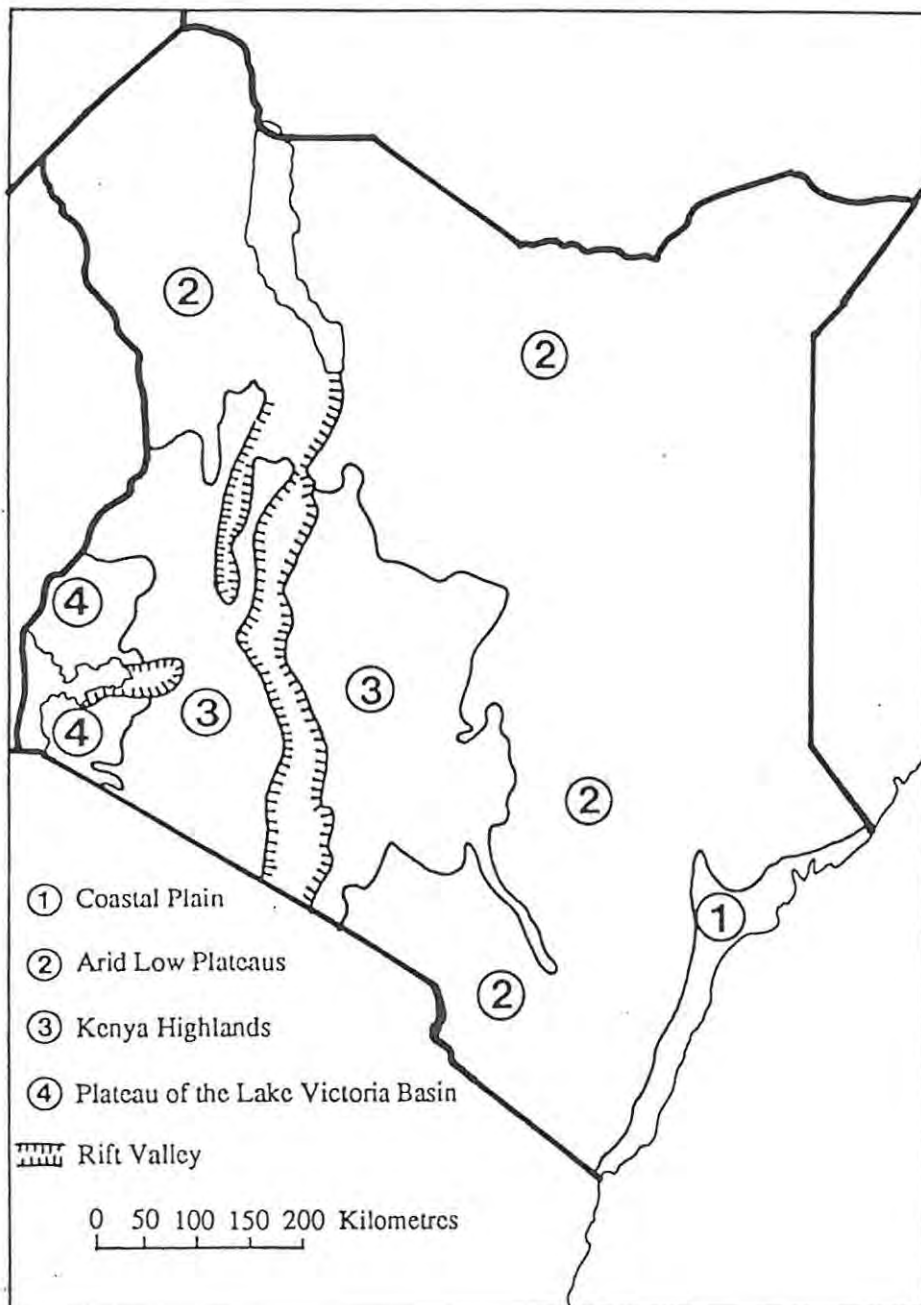
On the basis of altitude, Kenya may be divided into four main physical regions. These are the coastal plain, the arid low plateaus, the Kenya highlands, and the plateau of the Lake Victoria basin (Map 2). While each of these broad geographical regions has certain unique characteristics, some aspects of the environment may exist in different geographical regions. For instance, there are a few high altitude areas in the arid low plateaus which support floral and faunal populations similar to those found in some parts of the Kenya highlands. However, 'Kenya's physical, vegetational, animal and climatic features have changed considerably in the last two centuries. . . . We are, thus, dealing with a constantly changing and evolving environment'.⁶

The coastal plain is a narrow belt of land, generally less than 60 kilometres wide and barely reaching 152 metres above sea level.⁷ The main feature of the region is a plain which fringes the coastline. The other features are the offshore islands of Lamu, Manda, and Pate, coral reefs, and a low-lying inland plateau. Owing to periodic fluctuations of the sea level in the past, the coastline has numerous creeks which form good natural harbours in some areas. The coastline also has sand beaches and dunes.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ *Ibid*.

Map 2: Kenya's Main Physical Regions

Source: Ogonda and Ochieng', 'Land', p. 3.

The coastal region has a modified equatorial climate with an average annual rainfall of 1300 millimetres.⁸ However, the rainfall decreases southwards and northwards from Mombasa (1194 millimetres) due to the deflection of the northeast and southwest monsoon winds. Consequently Vanga in the extreme south receives 1104 millimetres per annum while Kiunga in the far north receives 561 millimetres. The rainfall also diminishes towards the interior. Thus Mariakani, which is only 35 kilometres northwest of Mombasa, receives 873 millimetres.⁹ Temperature and humidity levels in the coastal region are generally high throughout the year.

The combined effect of a fairly high rainfall, high temperatures, and high humidity in some parts of the coastal region has given rise to a lowland rain forest. This type of vegetation gives way to mangrove forest in the tidal estuaries and lagoons. On the drier coastal plateau, as well as in the northern and southern parts of the region, acacia-thorn bush and scattered-tree grassland are prevalent. All these types of vegetation support considerable populations of wild animals and birds while the sea, the creeks, and estuaries support marine life. The main wildlife sanctuaries in the region are Boni and Dodori national reserves. There are also several marine national parks and reserves along the coast (Map 3).

Soils in the coastal region are generally poor and have a low water-storage capacity.¹⁰ This is particularly so in the drier inland areas. Such areas are only suitable for pastoral activities, although tsetse fly is a common problem in the region. In areas of high rainfall, a wide variety of crops are grown. These include cash crops like cotton, sisal, sugar cane, cashew nuts, coconuts, kapok, citrus fruits, and mangoes. Subsistence crops such as maize, cassava and beans are also grown.¹¹

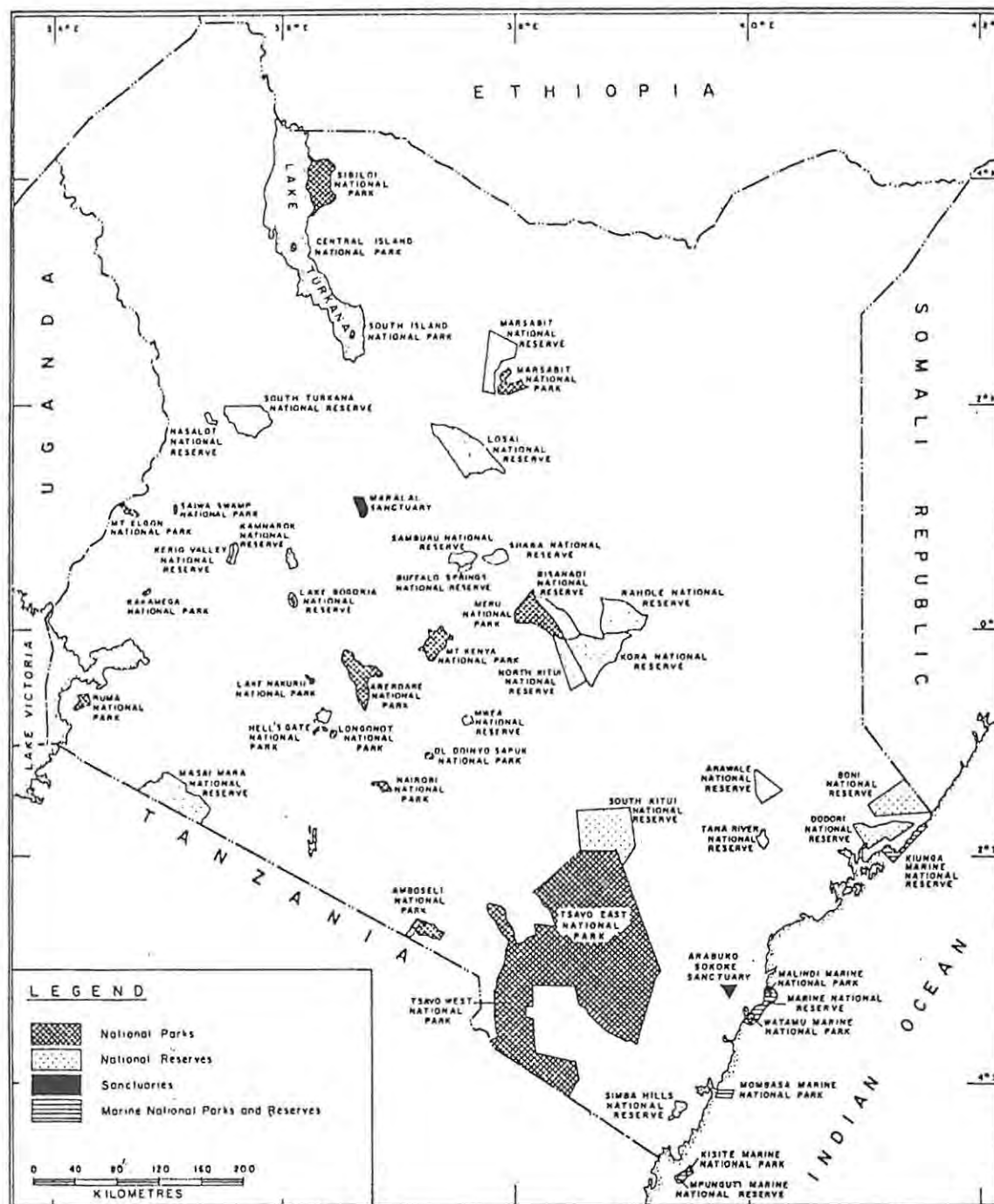
⁸ Spear, *Kenya's Past*, p. xiv.

⁹ Morgan, *East Africa*, pp. 174, 178.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 180.

¹¹ Ogonda and Ochieng', 'Land, Human and Natural Resources', p. 4; Morgan, *East Africa*, p. 180.

Map 3: Wildlife Conservation Areas in Kenya



Source: Ericksen *et al*, 'Land Tenure and Wildlife Management', p. 201.

The arid low plateaus cover about 72 per cent of the driest parts of Kenya. Lying between 152 and 915 metres above sea level, this region covers the southeastern, eastern, and northern parts of the country (Map 2). The generally flat surface is interrupted in some places by residual hills and inselbergs. These include Shimba Hills (443 metres), Jabana (314 metres), Lali (426 metres), Kulalu (443 metres), and Taita Hills (2208 metres). There are also volcanic hills and cones such as the Chyulu Range (2173 metres), Mount Marsabit (1428 metres), and Hurri Hills (1 479 metres). Rivers Athi, Tana, Ewaso Nyiro, Kerio, and Turkwell - which start in the Kenya highlands - are the life-blood of these dry plateaus.¹²

In most parts of this region, rainfall is low while temperatures are high. Most areas receive less than 500 millimetres of rain per annum while potential evaporation is as high as 2600 millimetres per year. However, some of the high altitude areas, such as Mount Marsabit and Mount Kulal, are not only cool but receive as much as 1000 millimetres of rainfall per year. Consequently these high areas have forest cover while most of the lower areas have dry woodland and savanna formation of the *Acacia-Themedat* type. Despite their apparent low economic potential, these plateaus are 'the basis of Kenya's livestock and wildlife economy'.¹³ In this region lie the sprawling Tsavo National Park (20 808 kilometres), Shimba Hills National Reserve, Marsabit National Park/Reserve, among other wildlife sanctuaries (Map 3). The region also has a high potential for irrigation agriculture, especially in the basins of lakes Turkana and Baringo, and rivers Ewaso Nyiro and Tana.

The Kenya highlands consist of plateaus and volcanic landscapes rising from 915 metres in the east and 1520 metres in the west. The Kenya section of the Great Rift Valley traverses this region, thereby creating the eastern and western highlands. In the eastern highlands, the landscape is dominated by Mount Kenya (5680 metres) and the Aberdare Range (4333 metres). On the relatively flat floor of the Rift Valley, volcanic cones such as Shombole (1564 metres), Suswa (2355metres), Longonot

¹² Oganda and Ochieng', 'Land, Human and Natural Resources', pp. 4 and 5.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 5.

(2776 metres), Menengai (2279 metres), and Silali (2355 metres) stand out.¹⁴ The western section of the highlands is dominated by the non-volcanic Cherangani, Mersuk, and Karasuk hills, as well as the volcanic Mau Hills (3098 metres), Mount Elgon (4726 metres), and Tugen Hills.

Most parts of the Kenya highlands receive on average 1000 millimetres of rainfall per year, with the more exposed high slopes getting as much as 2000 millimetres. Temperatures in the highlands are generally low and pleasant. The highlands also have some of the most fertile soils in the world. During the colonial period, the highlands were the core of European settlement in Kenya and came to be known as the white highlands. The montane forests on some of the mountain slopes are wildlife sanctuaries for elephant, bongo, rhinoceros, buffalo, giant forest hog, monkeys, leopard, and other species.¹⁵ These sanctuaries include Mount Kenya National Park (621 square kilometres), Aberdare National Park (759 square kilometres), and Mount Elgon National Park (169 square kilometres). On the lower plateaus and plains of the region are such wildlife sanctuaries as Nairobi National Park (117 square kilometres), Amboseli National Park (392 square kilometres), and Maasai Mara Game Reserve (1672 square kilometres).¹⁶

The Lake Victoria basin is a plateau sloping gently from an altitude of 1520 metres on the western flanks of the Kenya highlands towards the down-warped depression occupied by Lake Victoria. The northern part of the plateau is dominated by Maragoli Hills and other inselbergs while the southern part is dominated by volcanic cones such as Gwasi Hills (2271 metres), Gembe Hills, Ruri Hills, and Homa Bay Hill.¹⁷ Between the volcanic features of the south and the residual ones in the north lies the Kano Plains, which form the floor of a miniature rift valley extending eastwards from the faulted Nyanza Gulf. The plateau is drained by rivers

¹⁴ The floor of the Rift Valley in Kenya is dotted with lakes such as Amboseli, Magadi, Elmentaita, Naivasha, Baringo, Bolgoria and Turkana. Most of these are renowned for their abundant wild animal and bird life. They are therefore an integral part of the conservation programme in Kenya.

¹⁵ Morgan, *East Africa*, pp. 70, 76.

¹⁶ Francis F Ojany and Reuben B Ogendo, *Kenya: A Study in Physical and Human Geography* (Nairobi, 1973), p.203.

¹⁷ Ogonda and Ochieng', 'Land, Human and Natural Resources', p. 7.

Nzoia, Yala, Nyando, Sondu, and Kuria. These rivers have their headwaters in the western highlands and most of them enter the lake through swamps.

Generally the lake basin has high, reliable, and evenly distributed rainfall. The low-lying areas receive over 762 millimetres of rain per annum while the high ones receive over 1200 millimetres. Soils in the region are mainly alluvial and very fertile. The vegetation is *Combretum-Hyparrhenia*, otherwise known as scattered-tree grassland.¹⁸ Because of the region's high potential for intensive agriculture, it has some of the most densely populated areas in Kenya.¹⁹ Consequently there are few wildlife conservation areas in the region. The only wildlife sanctuaries of note in the region are Ruma National Park (120 square kilometres) and Kakamega Forest. The former is on the Lambwe Valley, which, until the mid-1960s, was infested with tsetse fly while the latter is a wildlife sanctuary by virtue of being a gazetted forest.²⁰

The foregoing survey of Kenya's physical environment is important for a number of reasons. First, it is an indication of the country's potential for wildlife conservation. The various physical environments support a huge range of wildlife (Figure 1), making Kenya's fauna among the most diverse in the world.²¹ Second, the survey shows that most of Kenya is dryland which is unsuitable for intensive agriculture. Much of this dryland is used for wildlife conservation since its agricultural potential is low. Third, much of Kenya is susceptible to periodic drought because of the erratic

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Morgan, *East Africa*, p. 264.

²⁰ In Kenya, forests form about 2.5 per cent of the country's 10 per cent designated wildlife conservation land. These forests hold about 40 per cent of the country's animal species, 30 per cent of bird species, and 35 per cent of butterfly species. See Bondi D Ogolla, 'Land Tenure Systems and Natural Resource Management', in Juma and Ojuang (eds), *In Land We Trust*, pp. 89, 91.

²¹ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 2; Capone, 'Wildlife, Man and Competition for Land in Kenya', p. 13.

Figure 1: Habitat of the Main Animals of East Africa

GRASSLAND	OPEN WOODLAND	DENSE WOODLAND
Grant's gazelle Wildebeest Zebra Hartebeest Eland Buffalo Giraffe Impala Warthog Rhino Elephant Waterbuck Dikdik Lesser Kudu Cheetah Hunting dog Lion Leopard		

Source: Morgan, East Africa, p. 73.

rainfall patterns. Van Zwanenberg records that the country experiences a severe drought at least every ten years. He notes that severe droughts occurred in Kenya in 1868, 1878, 1888, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1918, 1928, 1935, 1945, 1946, 1950, 1952, 1960, and 1968.²² Such droughts and the accompanying famines had important consequences for wildlife conservation. Finally, the environmental diversity has given rise to a wide range of conservation areas. These vary from general wildlife sanctuaries to specialised ones for marine and bird life.

Socio-Economic Systems in the Late Nineteenth Century

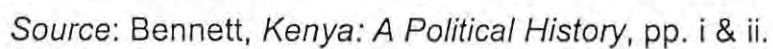
By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, communities in what became Kenya had more or less 'settled down' in their present-day 'homelands' (Map 4). However, these societies were still in a state of flux as some of them were in the process of expanding while others were declining. On the one hand, communities like the Kikuyu were expanding through acquisition of more land and people at the expense of weaker neighbours like the Dorobo (Athi).²³ On the other hand, communities like the Maasai were declining due to civil wars, the ascendancy of other communities, and calamities such as human and livestock diseases.²⁴ More importantly for this study, the communities also exchanged the products of their varying environments and production systems among themselves, with their neighbours, and with the outside world.

While intra- and inter-community trade existed in many parts of eastern Africa before the nineteenth century, trade between the coast and the interior was limited to the immediate hinterland. However, increased demand for East African products in Asia, Europe, and America from around 1820 led to the development of a trade network

²² R M A van Zwanenberg, *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda, 1800 - 1970* (London, 1975), p. 85.

²³ See Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500 - 1900* (Nairobi, 1974), *passim*.

²⁴ The Maasai began to decline in the 1870s and by 1890 the community was a shadow of its former self both in population and territorial extent. See *ibid*, pp. 153, 154; F D Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1893), p. 526, 527.



which had almost engulfed eastern Africa by the eve of colonial conquest in the late nineteenth century. In this international trade, the main exports from eastern Africa were ivory, rhino horn, hippo teeth, copal, rubber, copra, mangrove poles, and orchilla weed, while the chief imports were cloth, beads and wire.²⁵ Although the new trade was grafted on to existing local and regional trade patterns, it had a far-reaching impact on the societies of the region as well as their relations with nature. The increased demand for East Africa's products not only led to the emergence of new forms of leadership,²⁶ but also intensified the exploitation of the region's resources. For instance, ivory exports from Zanzibar, the focal point of this trade, rose from 18 000 kilograms in 1843 to 180 000 kilograms in 1878.²⁷ As a result, elephant herds had been depleted in the coastal belt of Kenya by the early nineteenth century and in Ukambani (further inland) by 1850.²⁸

By the late nineteenth century the main production systems in what became Kenya were hunting/gathering, pastoralism, and agriculture. But within these broad socio-economic systems were many sub-systems based mainly on environmental factors. For instance, the Akamba in the drier parts of Ukambani were predominantly pastoralists while those in the wetter areas were mainly agriculturalists. Similarly, the Pokot and the Tugen were each divided into pastoral and agricultural sections since the two communities inhabited both highland and lowland ecological zones. In the same vein, the late nineteenth-century Maasai community could be divided into primarily pastoral Maasai, agro-pastoral Maasai, primarily agricultural Maasai,

²⁵ Spear, *Kenya's Past*, pp. 116 - 118.

²⁶ Unlike in central and southern Africa where powerful polities with the capacity to control the exploitation of wildlife existed during the second half of the nineteenth century, Kenyan societies were politically decentralised. However, the development of international trade led to the emergence of prominent traders who began building larger socio-political networks around themselves. See Spear, *Kenya's Past*, pp. 128, 129; Ndege, 'Trade Since Early Times', pp. 126, 127; Mackenzie, 'Hunting in Eastern and Central Africa', *passim*.

²⁷ Spear, *Kenya's Past*, p. 117.

²⁸ John Lamphear, 'The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast', in Richard Gray and David Birmingham (eds), *Pre-Colonial African Trade: Essays on Trade in Central and Eastern Africa Before 1900* (London, 1970), p. 80.

primarily hunter-gatherer Maasai, and pastoral-hunter Maasai.²⁹ An ethnic group could not therefore be solely associated with a particular production system since individuals and sections of a community passed from one mode of production to another depending on the prevailing social and environmental circumstances. Individual Maasai who lost their livestock through disease or other causes became hunter-gatherers (Dorobo), while hunter-gatherers in Maasailand became Maasai on acquiring cattle.³⁰ Moreover, most pre-colonial Kenyan societies had a tradition of hunting.

Hunter-gatherer communities in Kenya include the Dorobo (Okiek/Athi/Mukogondo), Elmolo, Boni (Aweera), and Sanye (Dahalo/Liangulu/Waata).³¹ The history of these peoples is complicated for while observers agree that the parent stock of the communities were people related to the Khoisan of southern Africa, the hunter-gatherers of the late nineteenth century were hybrid communities. Authorities on the subject assert that the late nineteenth-century hunter-gatherer communities were dominated by people who had previously been pastoralists or agriculturalists, who had become marginalised either through natural catastrophes or war. This argument is supported by the fact that most hunter-gatherers in late nineteenth-century Kenya spoke the language of the dominant neighbouring community and practised its culture. This was particularly so with the Dorobo who were widely scattered in the Kenya highlands by the turn of the century. Depending on residence, the Dorobo had close cultural ties with the Maasai, Samburu, Kikuyu, Nandi, Kipsigis, and Turkana. Today hunter-gather communities are only found in a few isolated areas. The Dorobo are mainly found on the Kenya highlands above the 2000-metre contour, while the Elmolo live in the eastern shores of Lake Turkana. The Sanye live in the

²⁹ John L. Berntsen, 'Economic Variations among Maa-speaking Peoples', in Bethwell A. Ogot (ed), *Ecology and History in East Africa* (Nairobi, 1979), p. 108.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 109 and 114. A similar social mobility also existed among the Samburu. See Paul Spencer, *The Samburu: A Study of Gerontocracy in a Nomadic Tribe* (London, 1965), p. 286; Paul Spencer, *Nomads in Alliance: Symbiosis and Growth among the Rendille and Samburu of Kenya* (London, 1973), p. 201.

³¹ The Liangulu or Langulo appear to be the dominant section of the Sanye.

dry lowland areas of southeast Kenya, while the Boni are found in the wetter coastal hinterland near Lamu.³²

During the pre-colonial era, hunter-gatherer communities in Kenya interacted in various ways with their pastoral and agricultural neighbours. As the earliest inhabitants of their particular areas, hunter-gatherers performed important rituals for the immigrant communities.³³ However, the most important form of interaction was trade. The Dorobo, for example, supplied the Maasai with shields made from buffalo hides, tobacco containers made of rhino horns, fly-whisks made from giraffe and wildebeest tails, lion manes and ostrich feathers for warrior kits, kudu horns for war or ceremonial trumpets, among other items. In return, the Maasai supplied the Dorobo with livestock and livestock products such as ghee and milk. When trade with the Kenya coast developed, the Dorobo supplied the Akamba, Maasai, and Kikuyu with ivory for trade with the coastal Arabs and Swahili. By the dawn of colonial rule, the Dorobo had become important 'trade intermediaries between the Kikuyu on the one hand and the Maasai or coastal traders on the other. . .'.³⁴ They bought food from the Kikuyu and sold it to the Maasai and passing caravans.

Hunter-gatherers who lived near agricultural communities exchanged their forest products for livestock, grain, and other items. For instance, the Sanye of southeast Kenya supplied the Giriama with ivory, rhino horn, and wild animal meat in exchange for palm wine, grain, and goats.³⁵ This inter-community trade was important to the

³² The Elmololo and the Boni have largely preserved their stone age cultures, including distinctive click sounds in their languages. The former are mainly fishermen. See Spear, *Kenya's Past*, pp. xv, 49 - 53; Spencer, *The Samburu*, 281 - 289; Spencer, *Nomads in Alliance*, pp. 199 - 218; Berntsen, 'Economic Variations among the Maa-speaking Peoples'; Roger M van Zwanenberg, 'Dorobo Hunting and Gathering: A Way of Life or a Mode of Production?', *African Economic History*, 2 (1976), 12 - 22; Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, *passim*; C H Stigand, *The Land of the Zinj: Being an Account of British East Africa, Its Ancient History and Present Inhabitants* (London, 1966), pp. 271 - 274; Charles Eliot, *The East Africa Protectorate* (London, 1905), pp. 107, 108, 148, 149; KNA/DC/NKI/3/2: D G Worthy, 'A Historical and Anthropological Background to the Dorobo of Mukogondo', (Typescript, 1959).

³³ Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p. 40. Also see Spear, *Kenya's Past*, pp. 50, 51.

³⁴ Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p. 101.

³⁵ Spear, *Kenya's Past*, p. 50.

Giriama who were among the first intermediaries between coastal traders and the communities of the interior. In the trade with the coast, the Giriama, and later the Akamba, supplied the Swahili and Arab traders of the coastal towns with ivory and other wildlife trophies in return for exotic goods such as calico and beads.³⁶

Although hunter-gatherers supplied their neighbours with a variety of craft items, wildlife-related produce formed the bulk of their trade.³⁷ Trade in wildlife products not only enabled hunter-gatherers to diversify their production systems through acquisition of livestock but also enabled them to acquire food and 'ostentatious' goods such as cotton cloth.³⁸ But the introduction of wildlife preservation laws from the late nineteenth century put conservationists and hunter-gatherers on a collision course. Colonial administrators and game department personnel generally regarded hunter-gatherers as the chief enemies of wildlife conservation. Consequently a number of programmes were initiated to try and destroy hunting and gathering as a socio-economic system. The most common of these programmes were attempts by various district administrations to induce hunter-gatherers to take up crop cultivation even in areas where the ecological conditions were unfavourable. It was not until the late 1950s that attempts were made to involve some hunter-gatherer communities in the controlled utilisation of wildlife resources (conservation).

Until the onset of colonial rule in Kenya, pastoralism was the most important economic activity. Even predominantly agricultural and hunting communities endeavoured to own some form of livestock because it was perceived to be the highest form of investment, as well as an insurance against drought and other environmental problems. Consequently some form of pastoralism was practised by most communities in the country. Even communities inhabiting fairly wet highland environments such as the Nandi and the Kipsigis were predominantly pastoralists.

³⁶ See Lamphear, 'The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast', p. 75.

³⁷ The Dorobo, for example, 'were proficient in the making of swords, sheaths, necklaces, shields and arrow heads'. See Ndege, 'Trade Since the Early Times', p. 122. They also made wooden stools, baskets, and buckets for watering cattle. See Spencer, *The Samburu*, p. 282.

³⁸ The Dorobo acted as middlemen between the Kikuyu, Maasai, and coastal traders during the second half of the nineteenth century. See Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, pp. 40, 100.

As Zwanenberg observes, nineteenth-century East Africa was a sea of pastoralism with a few islands of agricultural production. This was especially the case in Kenya where 75 per cent of the land is more suitable for pastoralism than crop production.³⁹

Predominantly pastoral communities in Kenya include the Maasai, Samburu, Turkana, Orma, Somali, Rendille, Gabbra, and Boran. Of these communities, only the Maasai and the Samburu live in relatively favourable environments as they inhabit sections of the Kenya highlands. The rest inhabit the dry lowlands of southeastern, eastern, and northern Kenya where they rear camel, cattle, sheep, and goats in ecologically determined mixtures. The Orma, Maasai, and Samburu are, however, predominantly cattle herders.

Kenya's pastoral areas are some of the best wildlife areas in the country. Consequently pastoral communities in the country have interacted with wildlife in various ways in the past. The Maasai and the Samburu, for example, rarely hunted wild animals and therefore co-existed amicably with them. However, in periods of severe famine, like the one caused by the rinderpest epidemic of the early 1890s, the pastoralists exploited wild animals for food. F D Lugard who was in Kenya at the height of the epidemic in 1890 noted:

Few of the pastoral tribes apparently hunt or kill game, and this accounts for the tameness of the animals in Masailand, where the wild antelope and zebra mingle with the herds of tame cattle. Now, however, prompted by hunger, the Masai will eagerly eat any game, or even offal; and on several occasions they ran down and speared wounded zebra which I had shot.⁴⁰

The only hunting tradition these two communities had in the pre-colonial period was that of requiring their young warriors (*moran*) to demonstrate bravery by killing lions. This was perhaps one way of reducing the populations of the carnivores that preyed on their stock. The two communities are also known to have utilised various wildlife trophies acquired mainly through trade with their Dorobo neighbours. It is possible

³⁹ Van Zwanenberg, *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda*, pp. 80, 82.

⁴⁰ Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, p. 559. David Western says that the Maasai have always regarded wild animals as 'second cattle' or an alternative source of sustenance. See Western, 'Ecosystem Conservation and Rural Development', p. 34.

the two communities associated hunting with the 'poverty' of the Dorobo, a people they generally despised.⁴¹ Since the pastoralists considered hunting a demeaning activity, wildlife was relatively safe in their midst.

However, pastoralists living in the drier environment of Kenya's rangelands tended to utilise wildlife more intensively. To the Turkana of northwestern Kenya, hunting was an important aspect of their socio-economic system. In its early stages, hunting among the Turkana was one way of supplementing meagre livestock resources. But in the late nineteenth century, traders from Ethiopia and the East African coast started to enter Turkanaland in search of ivory.⁴² This gave the Turkana an opportunity to expand their livestock economy by invariably demanding livestock in exchange for ivory.⁴³ The ivory trade had become a means of acquiring livestock for most Kenyan communities by the late nineteenth century.

In the eastern and northeastern parts of Kenya, Somali and Orma pastoralists dominated their Boni, Sanye, and Pokomo neighbours. Like most pastoral communities in Kenya in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Orma and the Somali were militarily stronger than their agricultural and hunting neighbours and were therefore able to lord it over them. For instance, arrangements existed whereby Somali and Orma pastoralists allowed Sanye and Boni hunter-gatherers to hunt in their territories in return for ivory. A Boni or Sanye hunter who killed an elephant was required to give one tusk to his Somali or Orma overlord.⁴⁴ The military strength of these communities also enabled them to keep out foreign traders from their areas of

⁴¹ Spencer, *The Samburu*, pp. 287 - 289; Stigand, *The Land of Zinj*, p. 274. The 'Maasai considered people who hunted and ate wild meat as sub-human'. See Spear, *Kenya's Past*, p. 51

⁴² John Lamphear, 'Aspects of Turkana Leadership during the Era of Primary Resistance', *Journal of African History*, 17, 3(1976), pp. 225, 230. Like the hunter-gatherer communities, the Turkana were considered the worst enemies of wildlife conservation in northern Kenya and the colonial administration not only tried to confine them to their district but also frustrated their attempts to exploit wild animal resources.

⁴³ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 43.

⁴⁴ The Liangulu were also subservient to the agricultural Giriama.

influence, thereby creating an environment which enabled them to dictate the terms of trade with their weaker neighbours.⁴⁵ By the late nineteenth century relations between the Somali, the Orma, and their neighbours had graduated from tribute and skewed terms of trade to robbery:

Visitors to the Tana in the 1890s reported that the Somali terrorised the Tana from Ndera, a few days' caravan journey from the coast, to Korokoro, some 300 miles inland, and plundered the ivory stocks of the villages. The Pokomo possessed large stocks of ivory and were anxious to trade, but were fearful of Somali and Galla [Orma] marauders.⁴⁶

But this chaotic situation appears to have been a transitory phase in inter-community relations in the Tana River region. The prevalent situation during most of the nineteenth century, and long afterwards, was one where the various modes of production in the region were dependent on one another. The Boni supplied the Somali with giraffe and oryx hides for making sandals, shields, and containers in return for milk and meat from domestic animals.⁴⁷ Similar trade links existed between the agricultural Pokomo and the hunting and herding communities. To these two groups the Pokomo mainly supplied grain in return for ivory and livestock respectively.

While the Orma seem to have initially dominated trade between the Tana River area and the coast, Somali ascendancy from around 1850 ensured their control of the trade during the second half of the nineteenth century. Their geographical spread at that time also helped them establish trade routes which covered Somalia, southern Ethiopia, and large parts of northern and eastern Kenya.⁴⁸ By the 1880s, therefore, Somali camel caravans operated elaborate trade networks in which they dealt in a wide variety of goods. The 'Somali caravaneers and merchants imported cotton cloth, copper wire, condiments, tea, and firearms', and 'exported livestock and livestock

⁴⁵ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp. 24, 25; Lamphear, 'The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast', p. 78.

⁴⁶ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 25.

⁴⁷ Dalleo, 'The Somali Role in Organized Poaching', p. 477.

⁴⁸ Spear, *Kenya's Past*, pp. 123, 124.

products, perfumed wood, gum, slaves and a considerable volume of game products'.⁴⁹

The Somali trade of the late nineteenth century is important for three reasons. First, the network established survived well into the twentieth century with important implications for game conservation in eastern Africa. The Somali were not only ardent hunters and dealers in wildlife trophies during the late nineteenth century but remained so in the subsequent period. In the early 1930s it was discovered that

... the Somali killed game south of the Tana River. Some Somali were even found with game trophies as far south as present-day Tanzania. ... In the northern sphere, they carried their contraband across an area stretched from Turkana to the eastern NFD [Northern Frontier District of Kenya], and sold it in Ethiopia, Italian Somaliland, and on the Kenyan coast.⁵⁰

Second, the late nineteenth century trade led to the introduction of firearms into the Tana River region where they were used for illegal hunting in the early colonial period. It was alleged in 1932 'that gun-owning Galla [Orma] who did not themselves want to go shooting [elephants] hired out their guns [to Boni] on the basis of receiving half of the ivory'.⁵¹ This was the only region in colonial Kenya where guns were widely used for poaching. Most of these guns were supplied by Somali traders using long-established trade networks. Finally, the trade network helped communities in the region acquire arrow poison from the Boni as well as wire from the coastal towns. Arrow poison and steel gin were widely used for poaching during the colonial era.⁵²

⁴⁹ Dalleo, 'The Somali Role in Organised Poaching', p. 474.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 475.

⁵¹ KNA/KW/23/144: Folio 57, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 2 April 1932.

⁵² As this study shows, the 'Somali factor' is significant in the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya. It involved individual Somali as well as the colonial and post-colonial Somali governments. One authority records that in the 1970s '[m]uch Kenya ivory was illegally smuggled for sale in Somalia where the regime of Siad Barre condoned the traffic'. See Ieuan L L Griffiths, *The Atlas of African Affairs* (London, 1994), p. 154. Also see Jim Bailey, *Kenya: The National Epic* (Nairobi, 1993), p. 297; *Weekly Review*, 30 May 1977, p. 17; Allan Thornton and Dave Currey, *To Save an Elephant: The Undercover Investigation into Illegal Ivory Trade* (Toronto, 1991), p. 81.

Foreigners visiting Kenya in the late nineteenth century were surprised by the paucity of human habitation and the abundance of wildlife.⁵³ Even in the few islands of intense cultivation (such as Taveta, Taita, western Ukambani, Kikuyuland, Ravine, and 'Kavirondo'), there were large uncultivated areas surrounding the cultivated ones. Such areas generally harboured wild animals which threatened the agro-pastoralists' crops and livestock. Most of the communities in these areas therefore organised periodic hunts with a view to keeping wild animals out of settled areas. Most agro-pastoralists also supplemented their predominantly vegetable diet with 'bush' meat. They also needed wild animal skins/hides and trophies for various purposes. Consequently most agro-pastoral communities in Kenya - like the Taita, Taveta, Mijikenda, Akamba, Pokomo, Gusii, Kuria, Luo, and Abaluyia - have a tradition of hunting.⁵⁴ Possibly the only agro-pastoral community in Kenya which despised hunting and hardly ate bush meat were the Kikuyu. However, they trapped animals that threatened their crops and depended on the Dorobo for 'buffalo hides for making shields, ready-made shields, animal horns, rare skins such as colobus monkey skins which were mainly used for making elders' garments and warriors' insignia, [and] also ligaments for sewing skin garments'.⁵⁵ In the late nineteenth century the Kikuyu also depended on the Dorobo for ivory supplies which they sold to Kamba or coastal traders at high profit.⁵⁶

Communities occupying agriculturally marginal environments seem to have been the most affected by the intensification of the ivory trade in the nineteenth century. This was particularly the case with the Giriama section of the Mijikenda and the Kitui section of the Akamba. But while the Giriama largely confined their hunting and trading activities to southeast Kenya, the Akamba traded and hunted over a large

⁵³ See Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, *passim*; E A Loftus, *Thomson: Through Masai Land* (Nairobi, 1951), *passim*.

⁵⁴ The Mijikenda are a group of nine closely-related communities of whom the Giriama are the dominant group. The others are the Chonyi, Digo, Duruma, Jibana, Kambe, Kauma, Rabai, and Ribe.

⁵⁵ Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p. 101. Also see Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, p. 340.

⁵⁶ Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, pp. 100, 101.

area stretching from modern-day northern Tanzania to northern Kenya. 'At its heyday the Kamba commercial empire was extensive; it spread from Unguu and Usagara in northeastern Tanzania to the Mount Kenya region, Baringo and beyond.'⁵⁷ Like the Somali, the Akamba were able to establish social networks which they used to violate wildlife regulations well into the twentieth century.

The Giriama, who by the eighteenth century had established themselves on a relatively dry ridge just to the west of the Swahili coastal settlement of Malindi, were among the first 'interior' communities to be drawn into the Indian Ocean trade. Initially the Giriama and other Mijikenda groups traded among themselves and also with the neighbouring Swahili, Orma, and Sanye. Among the items the Giriama supplied to the Swahili was ivory, which was mainly acquired through trade with the Sanye and the Orma. But towards the end of the eighteenth century local supplies began to dwindle as demand increased. From around 1800 therefore the Giriama began to venture into the interior to trade with the Taita, Taveta, Chagga, and Kitui Akamba.⁵⁸

To be able to trade in Ukambani without problems, the Giriama established kinship ties with some Akamba through the institution of blood-brotherhood.⁵⁹ Through such ties, the Giriama acquired Kamba partners who accorded them security and served as trade brokers. Essentially, the Giriama supplied the Akamba with cloth, beads, and wire in exchange for ivory and cattle. The Giriama then took these 'goods' to the coast for trade with the Swahili and other communities.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p. 102. Also see Lamphear, 'The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast', *passim*.

⁵⁸ Spear, *Kenya's Past*, p.120.

⁵⁹ Blood-brotherhood was a covenant of life-long friendship where the contracting parties sealed the relationship by licking each other's blood. This was one of the methods used by early imperialists to acquire African allies in what became Kenya. See Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, pp. 319, 329, 330.

⁶⁰ Spear, *Kenya's Past*, p. 120.

The Giriama also expanded their trading activities by setting up trading settlements in the interior, especially among the Sanye. In that way they were able to exploit distant supplies of ivory by moving with the Sanye as they followed elephant herds throughout the coastal hinterland. The Orma were however reluctant to allow Giriama traders into their country, preferring to sell their ivory themselves at the coast. At the beginning of each trading season, the two communities would sign a pact to maintain peace.⁶¹ But in the 1830s Giriama trading activities in the interior began to decline as the Akamba started to organise their own caravans to the coast.

Kamba trading activities intensified in the early eighteenth century when some Akamba moved from the relatively wet Machakos hills into the surrounding dry lowlands and Kitui, owing to population pressure on the hills. On the lowlands and in Kitui, pastoralism and hunting were more important than agriculture - which was dominant in the hills. Consequently a system of trade based on the products of the two ecological zones developed between the lowland and highland Akamba. However, Ukambani, being on the margins of the Kenya highlands, was rarely self-sufficient in foodstuffs. A regional trade therefore developed between the Akamba and the Mount Kenya groups - the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru. In this regional trade, the Akamba supplied iron ore, arrow poison, bows and arrows, and livestock in exchange for foodstuffs.⁶²

When Giriama traders arrived in Ukambani in the early nineteenth century, the Akamba simply transformed the existing trade networks to serve the needs of the coastal trade. They quickly established themselves as middlemen between the Mount Kenya groups and the coast. Besides the traditional goods, the Akamba supplied cloth, wire, and beads to the Mount Kenya communities in exchange for foodstuffs, ivory, and livestock. By 1830 Kamba hunters and warriors had begun to organise trading caravans to the coast, where their Giriama partners served as

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.121.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 114. For security reasons, the trade was in the hands of warriors and hunters. These individuals became wealthy and powerful and began to undermine the gerontocratic systems of leadership prevalent in Kenya in the nineteenth century. By the onset of colonial rule, wealthy traders provided leadership in their communities and were subsequently appointed colonial chiefs.

middlemen. Lamphear estimates that by 1850 between 2300 and 2600 *frasilas* of ivory per year were being supplied to Mombasa by Giriama and Kamba traders.⁶³

As ivory supplies in Ukambani and the Mount Kenya region diminished, and the Mount Kenya groups also began to trade direct with the coast, Kamba hunters and traders started to venture further afield in search of ivory. They hunted and traded as far north as Mount Nyiro in Samburuland and as far south as northern Tanzania:

The extent and success of the Kamba commercial activity at its apogee is typified by Kivoi of Kitui. His trading activities extended from the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro to those of Mount Kenya, and further up to Samburu and further north. His caravans, loaded with ivory, had direct access to Mombasa, instead of disposing his goods with the Wanyika [Mijikenda], as was custom. He was personally known to the governor of Mombasa. His village, too, was a hub of trading activities between the Kamba and Kikuyu, the Embu, the Mbeere, as well as other Mount Kenya Peoples.⁶⁴

Bands of Kamba hunters and traders also set up trading colonies in northern Tanzania and in the coastal region of Kenya.⁶⁵ By 1850 Kamba trade with the coast was well organised and supplied Mombasa with most of its ivory. In turn, the Akamba acquired wealth in livestock and coastal goods.⁶⁶

As the demand for ivory mounted, the Swahili started to organise their own trading caravans into the interior from the mid-nineteenth century. This gradually eroded the role of the Giriama, Akamba, and other communities of the interior in the trade with the coast. By the end of the nineteenth century, these communities had been relegated to the role of porters by the Swahili. However, Giriama and Kamba caravans continued to trade albeit on a reduced scale until the early twentieth century.

⁶³ Lamphear, 'The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast', p. 87. A *frasila* is the equivalent of 16 kilograms or 35 pounds (lbs).

⁶⁴ Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p. 102.

⁶⁵ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 45; Lamphear, 'The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast', p. 80.

⁶⁶ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 27. Kamba caravans comprised between 200 and 300 people each and carried as much as 400 *frasilas* of ivory per caravan (*ibid*).

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that utilisation of wild animal products was an important aspect of most socio-economic systems in pre-colonial Kenya. Wildlife provided meat, skins/hides, and trophies for domestic use and for trade. Whether a community hunted game or not, it used wild animal products in one way or another. Wildlife was therefore important for the proper functioning of the various interdependent socio-economic systems. However, some communities were more dependent on wild animals for food or accumulation of wealth than others. This was especially the case for hunter-gatherers and communities inhabiting agriculturally marginal areas like the Giriama, Taita, and Akamba.⁶⁷

It is also clear that trade with the coast in the nineteenth century led to the emergence of inter-community social structures such as blood-brotherhood relationships between the Akamba and the Giriama. It also led to interpenetration through the establishment of 'colonies' outside the normal community boundaries. Furthermore, it led to the opening up of trade routes covering large areas of eastern Africa. These structures were important in the struggle over wild animal resources engendered by colonial wildlife policies.

Introduction of New Land Policies

Although wildlife was abundant in most parts of Kenya during the pre-colonial period, wild animals co-existed with human beings without much conflict. This was possible because there was enough land for both wild animals and human beings.⁶⁸ Even in areas of dense settlement, there were uninhabited areas to which game was forced to withdraw whenever it became a nuisance. This was usually achieved through periodic hunts which also helped to control the population of wild animals in particular areas. Moreover, individuals and groups were free to hunt any animal at

⁶⁷ By the late nineteenth century the Taita inhabited both highland and lowland environments. Herding and hunting were therefore important to their socio-economic system. They hunted for both food and profit. See P G Bostock, *The Peoples of Kenya: The Taita* (London, 1950), pp. 37 - 39.

⁶⁸ See the accounts of late nineteenth-century travellers like Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*; Frederick Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (London, 1969); and Stigand, *The Land of Zinj*. Also see Elliot, *The East Africa Protectorate*, pp. 262, 263.

any time, anywhere, using any method except where local totems prohibited the killing of certain animals.⁶⁹ In that way rational utilisation of wildlife resources was promoted while ensuring that other forms of land use were not compromised.⁷⁰ But the introduction of new land policies following the establishment of colonial rule affected the people's control over wildlife.

Kenya was declared a British sphere of influence in 1886 and placed under the administration of the IBEAC in 1888.⁷¹ From that time to July 1895 when the IBEAC administration was replaced by a protectorate administration, there were no attempts to alienate land from the African population - although the East African Scottish Industrial Mission was given a free grant of 100 square miles of Kamba land at Kibwezi in 1893 by the IBEAC.⁷² The under-capitalised company had done little to develop or exploit the large territory at its disposal. With ivory as its only source of revenue, and faced with poor infrastructure and expensive wars of resistance in Uganda and Kenya, the IBEAC was forced to hand over the two territories to the British government in 1894 and 1895 respectively.

⁶⁹ One exception to this practice was in Taita, where the plains surrounding the hills were divided up into hunting grounds for particular clans. See Bostock, *The People of Kenya*, p. 38. Some Dorobo groups also seem to have had family plots for bee-keeping while hunting was unrestricted. See Spencer, *The Samburu*, pp. 283, 284; IIED, *Whose Eden?*, p. 51. This contrasts with the situation in central and southern Africa where 'chiefs' controlled the exploitation of wildlife in their chiefdoms. See William Beinart, 'Production and the Material Basis of Chieftainship: Pondoland c. 1830 - 80', in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (eds), *Economy and Society in Pre-industrial South Africa* (London, 1980), pp.128, 129.

⁷⁰ The Ila-speaking peoples of Zambia had annual communal hunts (*chilla*) through which they managed the wildlife in their territories in the pre-colonial period. See James Mpinga, 'Learning from History', in Munyaradzi Chenje and Phyllis Johnson (eds), *State of the Environment in Southern Africa* (Harare, 1994), pp. 21 - 38.

⁷¹ During the time of company rule, Kenya, which consisted of a roughly defined territory in the interior and a ten-mile coastal strip (Map 4) ruled by the company on behalf of the Sultan of Zanzibar, was referred to as British East Africa. On 1 July 1895 the British government took over the administration of the territory and administered it through the Foreign Office as East Africa Protectorate. In 1920 the administration of the territory was transferred to the Colonial Office and the country was renamed Kenya Colony and Protectorate, the protectorate territory being the Sultan's ten-mile coastal strip which was administered for him by the British government until it legally became part of Kenya on the eve of independence in 1963.

⁷² See Reuben M Matheka, 'Colonial Capitalism, Ecology and Food Crises in Machakos District, 1889 - 1963' (MA Thesis, Kenyatta University, 1992), pp. 65, 66.

When the British government took over the administration of the two territories its immediate priority was to promote effective administration in the region. This, it was believed, could be achieved by building a railway line from the Kenya coast to the eastern shores of Lake Victoria, which was then part of Uganda Protectorate. The railway would facilitate easy movement of troops in the region and therefore help quell revolts. The railway was also supposed to help suppress the slave trade in the region in addition to promoting legitimate trade. A railway line, which came to be known as the Uganda Railway, was therefore built from May 1896 to December 1901 at a cost of £5.5 million to the British taxpayer.⁷³ Whether by coincidence or design, the 584-mile long railway line from Mombasa on the coast to Port Florence (Kisumu) on Lake Victoria traversed the Kenya highlands (Map 4).⁷⁴

Having built the railway the administration of the East Africa Protectorate (as Kenya was known then) was faced with the problem of making the investment profitable. At that time the region served by the railway had no major exports and the railway was therefore running at a loss.⁷⁵ There was also the question of the grants-in-aid which the British government was giving the protectorate government not only for normal administrative costs but also for expensive military expeditions. Like the railway, the protectorate was viewed as a burden on the British exchequer. For example, in 1909 the annual revenue of the protectorate was £250 000 while annual grants-in-aid were £130 000 and annual expenditure was £500 000.⁷⁶

As the territory had no known mineral wealth, it was decided that the best way to tackle the protectorate's revenue problems would be to encourage commercial

⁷³ William R Ochieng', *A History of Kenya* (London, 1985), pp. 102, 103.

⁷⁴ Most of the labour for the railway was imported from India. This raised the Indian population in Kenya in 1898 to 13 000. After the completion of the railway, the majority of the Indians settled down in Kenya where they opened up businesses in many parts of the country. Many of these businesses engaged in illegal trade in wild animal products/trophies.

⁷⁵ Initially the railway was running at a loss of nearly £50 000 per year. But by 1905 it was running at a profit. The railway reduced the cost of carriage from 7s 6d per ton per mile by caravan to 2½d per ton per mile by rail. See Zoe Marsh and G W Kingsnorth, *An Introduction to the History of East Africa* (Cambridge, 1957), p. 172.

⁷⁶ Errol Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers* (London, 1985), p.146.

agriculture in the country. Commercial farming, it was believed, would not only create wealth for the country but would also keep the railway busy. After toying with various alternatives, it was finally resolved that white settlers would be best placed to carry out commercial farming in the protectorate as Africans did not appear qualified to undertake large scale farming activities.⁷⁷

To attract white settlers into the protectorate it was decided that it was necessary to provide cheap but good agricultural land in large quantities. It is in this light that the British government transferred the Eastern Province of the Uganda Protectorate to the East Africa Protectorate in April 1902, ostensibly to put the railway under one administration. But the truth is that the boundary was moved one hundred miles to the west in order to put the whole of the Kenya highlands within the East Africa Protectorate with a view to opening them up for white settlement (Map 4). The British government also came up with a number of regulations aimed at facilitating land alienation in the protectorate. Among these regulations was the 1902 Crown Lands Ordinance which, among other things, declared any land not under African occupation crown (government) land.⁷⁸

This ordinance did not take into consideration the fact that transhumant pastoralism, nomadism, and shifting cultivation were the main modes of land use in the protectorate at the time and that limiting African land needs to the areas they were effectively occupying at a given time was gross interference with their socio-economic systems. The ordinance also ignored the fact that Africans in the protectorate had recently suffered a series of ecological calamities which had forced many of them to congregate in smaller areas. These calamities, which included human and animal diseases (such as rinderpest, smallpox, jigger flea), drought, locust infestations, and famines, had not only killed many people in the protectorate during the 1880s and 1890s but had also led to the abandonment of many areas by people who had sought refuge elsewhere. A good example was the abandonment

⁷⁷ There were proposals to bring either Indian or Jewish settlers into the protectorate.

⁷⁸ M P K Sorrenson, 'Land Policy in Kenya, 1895 - 1945', in Vincent Harlow *et al* (eds), *History of East Africa*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1965), pp. 672 - 680.

of parts of Kiambu by Kikuyu who withdrew to Murang'a.⁷⁹ Maasai pastoralists, who were affected most by the rinderpest epidemic, vacated some of their grazing grounds and regrouped together in much smaller areas.⁸⁰ Using effective occupation as a basis for allocating land to Africans under such circumstances therefore amounted to denying them access to their basic source of livelihood.

The above problems notwithstanding, the 1902 Crown Lands Ordinance became the basis on which land was allocated to different groups in Kenya for most of the colonial period. The immediate effect of the ordinance was that land not occupied by Africans throughout the protectorate became government property and was out of bounds for Africans. It did not matter whether such land was considered suitable for European settlement or not, for denying Africans access to land was also a way of forcing them to go out and work as labourers in various colonial enterprises. It also did not matter whether the land was used gainfully or just lay idle. From 1904 therefore 'native reserves' were created in order to delineate and delimit the land available to each African community (Map 5).⁸¹

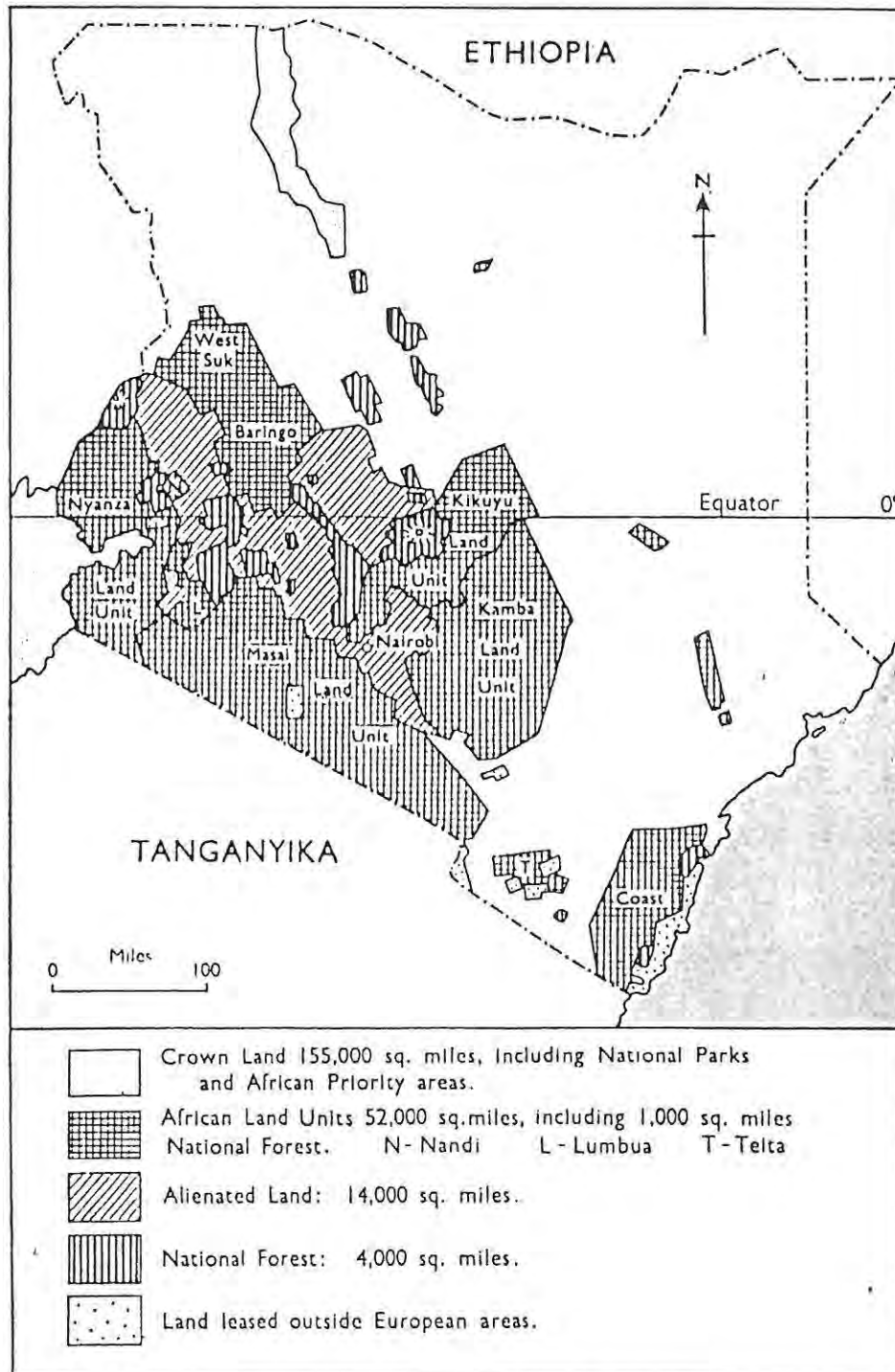
Through the provisions of the Crown Lands Ordinance, the government was able to allocate land vacated by Africans during the ecological disasters to European farmers, especially near the railway in the Kenya highlands. This happened in the areas around Nairobi and on the Uasin Gishu Plateau. The government also used its control over land to negotiate land exchanges with some African communities on behalf of European settlers. For example, in 1904 the government persuaded the Maasai living in the Rift Valley around Naivasha to surrender their land to white

⁷⁹ Edward W Soja, *The Geography of Modernization in Kenya: A Spatial Analysis of Social, Economic, and Political Change* (Syracuse, 1968), p. 17; Marsh and Kingsnorth, *An Introduction to the History of East Africa*, pp. 173, 174; Elspeth Huxley and Arnold Curtis, *Pioneers' Scrapbook: Reminiscences of Kenya 1890 to 1968* (London, 1980), p. 35.

⁸⁰ Richard Waller, 'The Maasai and the British 1895 - 1905: The Origins of an Alliance', *Journal of African History*, 17, 4 (1976), p. 530.

⁸¹ The sparsely populated eastern, southeastern, and northern lowlands were also declared crown lands although the 'natives' were allowed to continue using the land. By the provisions of the 1915 Crown Lands Ordinance, 'native reserves' also became crown land. African communities therefore held land at the mercy of the government. This contrasted with the situation in settler areas where land was privately owned and therefore sacrosanct.

Map 5: Land Schedules in Kenya by 1940



Source: Hickman & Dickins, *The Lands and Peoples of East Africa*, p. 55.

settlers in exchange for the Laikipia Plateau. The territory around Naivasha was not only near the railway but was also some of the best Maasai grazing land.⁸² Through the 'Maasai Agreement' of 1904, the Naivasha Maasai were forced to move to Laikipia, a plateau which, like Uasin Gishu, was earlier evacuated by a section of the Maasai due to the combined effects of civil war and late nineteenth-century ecological calamities.⁸³ The move led to the creation of two Maasai reserves: a southern one roughly bounded by the railway, the eastern escarpment of the Rift Valley and the Tanganyika border, and a northern one in Laikipia. But in 1908 some European settlers began to covet the Laikipia Plateau and urged the government to move the Maasai again to crown land adjoining the southern reserve.⁸⁴ After a lot of argument within and between the imperial and the protectorate governments, the Maasai were moved to an enlarged southern reserve in 1912-13 following the 'Maasai Agreement' of 1911.

The Maasai 'moves' are important in a number of ways. First, they were not voluntary, for they were based on trickery and manipulation. Second, they were strongly resisted by the affected Maasai. The Laikipia Maasai even took the government to court in an attempt to stop their eviction from the plateau.⁸⁵ Third, the moves bred Maasai distrust of the colonial system as the government reneged on its promise during the signing of the first 'agreement' that the two reserves would belong to the Maasai forever. Besides this betrayal, the Maasai suffered loss of human lives and livestock during the second move when a bungled attempt to move them to Narok saw the whole Laikipia group and their livestock camp on the cold Mau Hills for several months.⁸⁶ As Waller points out, Maasai experiences during the moves 'marked the beginning of a long retreat from involvement with the colonial power and replacement of a highly flexible and innovatory response to the advent of colonial

⁸² Soja, *The Geography of Modernization*, p. 19.

⁸³ See Spencer, *Nomads in Alliance*, p. 201.

⁸⁴ Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, pp. 144, 162, 165.

⁸⁵ R M Maxon, *John Ainsworth and the Making of Kenya* (Washington DC, 1980), p. 238.

⁸⁶ Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, p. 163.

rule by a determination to preserve their society intact, which was both rigid and deeply suspicious of further innovation'.⁸⁷ In other words, the Maasai, who had supported the colonial enterprise by allying with the British, developed a deep distrust of the government. Finally, the Maasai lost some of their best land during the moves, a loss which affected their production system greatly in the subsequent period.

Colonial land policies also created large uninhabited areas around 'native reserves'. Most of these crown lands became either official or unofficial wildlife sanctuaries and inconvenienced the surrounding communities in many ways. The animals in these environments, which African communities had no control over, destroyed their crops and livestock. The animals also became reservoirs of human and animal diseases like sleeping sickness and nagana respectively. In colonial Kenya animal diseases associated with wildlife conservation were the bane of African pastoralism.⁸⁸ Loss of control over the land surrounding African communities also led to a process of attrition through which the communities lost land to wildlife, tsetse fly, and bush. In 1943, for instance, the Agricultural Officer in Machakos District warned: '[Such] land as is available [to the Akamba] is steadily decreasing owing to the spread into occupied areas by thorn bush belt with tsetse fly, big game and other pests which follow in its wake'.⁸⁹ In short, colonial policies on land and wildlife impacted negatively on African economies and contributed to the development of a negative attitude to wildlife conservation among Africans.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Waller, 'The Maasai and the British', p. 529.

⁸⁸ See Odegi-Awuondo, 'Wildlife Conservation Decline of Pastoralism in Kenya', *passim*; Van Zwanenberg, *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda*, pp. 94 - 98.

⁸⁹ KNA/DAO/MKS 1/59, quoted in Matheka, 'Colonial Capitalism', p.121.

⁹⁰ For examples of the impact of colonial land policies on African and other production systems see Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development*, *passim*; Vail, 'Ecology and History', *passim*; John McCracken, 'Colonialism, Capitalism and the Ecological Crisis in Malawi: A Reassessment', in Anderson and Grove (eds), *Conservation in Africa*, pp.63 - 76; Brooks, 'Playing the Game', *passim*.

As a result of a vigorous campaign for white settlement pursued by both the protectorate and imperial governments, settlers began taking up land in Kenya from 1903. However, commercial farming developed very slowly because many of the settlers, especially boers from South Africa, had no capital. Consequently the large tracts of land set aside for white settlement remained relatively undeveloped. By 1933 only 12 per cent of the 10,345 square miles of land set aside for European settlers was under cultivation. Of the rest, 40 per cent consisted of grazing land, 20 per cent was occupied by African squatter-labourers, and nearly 48 per cent was unoccupied.⁹¹ Most of the land in the highlands therefore became an illegal hunting ground for settlers who not only held large tracts of it but were also free to kill game on their farms.⁹² Many settlers resorted to illegal hunting as a way of raising money for investment and other needs. Some of them literally lived off the land. One writer has noted that '[t]hough the Afrikaners were virtually self-sufficient they needed ammunition to shoot game otherwise they were without hide, meat and fat and every scrap, from zebra and kongoni carcase, was used for some aspect of their simple life'.⁹³

As the settler population increased over time, especially through the soldier settlement schemes of 1919 and 1946, game was progressively decimated in the white highlands. Government policy for settler-occupied areas from the outset was that wildlife should not stand in the way of development. Consequently settlers were more or less allowed to do as they pleased with the wild animals in the white highlands. This not only led to the disappearance of game from most of the highlands but also made Africans suspicious of the game policy as it tended to favour the whites who could not only kill game freely on their land but could also hunt elsewhere on the basis of cheap licences.⁹⁴ At the same time Africans were

⁹¹ Soja, *The Geography of Modernisation*, p. 21.

⁹² Individual settlers held anything between 500- and 10 000-acre plots.

⁹³ Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, p.136. Hunting subsidised many 'imperial' activities in eastern and southern Africa. See MacKenzie, 'Hunting in Eastern and Central Africa', *passim*; MacKenzie, 'Chivalry, Social Darwinism and Ritualised Killing', *passim*.

⁹⁴ 'Resident Hunting Licences' were usually one-tenth the price of normal hunting licences.



prohibited from any hunting except during severe famines when District Commissioners (DCs) authorised hunting as a form of relief. Africans therefore began to regard wildlife as state property preserved for white hunters at their own expense. Consequently they did not feel obliged to observe game regulations. Africans' negative attitude towards wildlife was further reinforced by the suffering perpetuated by wildlife especially through encroachment on their land. In 1943, for example, the Machakos DC warned:

Either the big game must go, or the people must go. In this District for the last few decades it has been the people who have been giving way. The Akamba think that the Government preserves the big game in this area which is easily accessible and conveniently near Nairobi for [licenced] hunting parties at their expense.⁹⁵

Machakos District had large areas of crown land (such as Yatta and Makueni) which harboured all manner of wild animals. Part of the Kamba 'native reserve' also abutted on the wildlife area that became Tsavo National Park. Unlike in the white highlands, crown lands in African areas, and indeed the African reserves themselves, were regarded as wildlife conservation areas.⁹⁶ Africans were therefore expected to share their land with wild animals despite the obvious consequences of such a policy, especially when Africans had no control over wild animals and the land it occupied. To make matters worse, the government adamantly refused to pay compensation for injury, loss of life, or damage to property by wild animals. This generated a lot of bitterness among Africans who often suffered wildlife-related damage.

In the late 1950s the government introduced schemes aimed at sharing the benefits of wildlife conservation with local communities. Such schemes included controlled hunting areas and the establishment of county council game reserves. Through these schemes, African communities were able to share with the government the money earned through wildlife conservation 'efforts' in their areas through their county councils. Part of the money earned by the county councils was used to compensate victims of wild animal attacks. The rest of it was used to provide social infrastructure such as schools, dispensaries, and cattle dips to communities in

⁹⁵ KNA/DC/MKS/8/3, p. 18, quoted in Matheka, 'Colonial Capitalism', pp 119 - 120.

⁹⁶ KNA/KW/23/171: Report on Game Reserves, 1910, p. 3.

wildlife conservation areas. But as this study shows the schemes were far from successful.

This chapter has highlighted some of the factors that a historical study of wildlife conservation in Kenya should consider. Such issues include the physical environment of the country, the socio-economic systems upon which wildlife conservation was imposed, and the land policies under which wildlife conservation was practised. Other factors which influenced the development of wildlife policies and practice in Kenya during the period under study included locally and internationally generated crises like the two world wars, economic depressions, the Mau Mau Emergency, and the Shifta menace.

Wildlife conservation, like most human activities, is a complex endeavour which is best understood in the context of time and space. The problems of wildlife conservation differ from place to place and over time. While wildlife may not have been consciously preserved in most parts of pre-colonial Kenya, it was not consciously destroyed since its impact on human activities was minimised through hunting, manipulation of the environment using fire, and avoidance of areas heavily infested by wild animals. But new developments from the late nineteenth century changed human-nature relations in what became Kenya. These developments started with increased demand for East Africa's wildlife products especially from the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the century, the demand for ivory had led to the near extermination of elephants in some parts of the region. The human-nature relationship was further complicated by colonial policies which, among other things, affected land-use practices. Colonial policies also emphasised wildlife conservation without due consideration of its negative effects on the various socio-economic systems.

CHAPTER THREE

ORIGINS OF A CONSERVATION POLICY, CA 1895 - 1925

One reason why Kenya had plenty of wildlife in the nineteenth century was because wildlife was mainly utilised for subsistence rather than for commercial purposes. The number of wild animals killed was small since it depended on local demand for game meat, fat, sinews, skins, hides, tails, and trophies. But as the century wore on, rising demand for East African wildlife products in foreign markets, especially ivory, led to increased exploitation of wild animal resources in the region.¹ Large trading parties not only transported more and more ivory to the East African coast for export abroad but also killed large numbers of wild animals for food while trading in the interior. In the 1850s, for example, an average Kamba caravan consisted of 200 to 300 people and would cover as many as 250 leagues (about 1 200 kilometres) in search of ivory. Arab-Swahili caravans were even bigger, more numerous, and covered longer distances.² Such large groups of people were therefore away from home for weeks on end, and, although they bought food in the areas they passed through, game meat generally subsidised their trading activities.

In the closing decades of the century European explorers and their large caravans also joined in the exploitation of East Africa's wildlife resources. Like the trading caravans, explorers not only had large retinues of porters to feed but also hunted for profit and sport. A record of Joseph Thomson's exploratory trip to Kenya in 1883-84, for example, states that 'he gained much valuable knowledge, geographical and scientific, besides having hunting successes to his heart's content'.³ Most explorers were also hunters who killed wildlife not only for the pot and for sport, but also to finance their activities. Discussing the activities of two Hungarian explorers (Count Teleki von Szek and Ludwig von Hohnel) in Kenya in 1886 - 1888, Kelly notes that 'Teleki supported the entire camp by shooting. During the first 50 days after they left

¹ Other important wildlife products at the time were rhino horn and hippo teeth.

² Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp. 27, 39.

³ Loftus, *Thomson*, p. 68.

Njemps, he killed 113 large animals, including 51 buffalo, 21 rhinoceroses, and 10 elephants'.⁴ The need to kill wildlife for food was made more acute by frequent food shortages which afflicted eastern Africa in the late nineteenth century.⁵ These crises often made African communities reluctant to sell food to passing caravans.

Trade and exploration caravans were later joined by agents of European imperialism in exploiting East Africa's wildlife. In the forefront of imperialist activities in eastern Africa was the IBEAC, the trading company which introduced colonial rule to Kenya and Uganda. It was attracted to the region by ivory and other potential sources of wealth. The company's caravans traded alongside other caravans in the region. As early as 1888 IBEAC caravans were searching for ivory in many parts of Kenya and Uganda.⁶ However, competition and hostility from established ivory traders greatly undermined the company's trading activities.⁷ All the same, the IBEAC intensified the exploitation of East Africa's wildlife resources.

Concurrent with the introduction of company rule was the development of the idea that East Africa, especially Kenya, was a sportsman's paradise. This idea, which made Kenya a popular destination for professional hunters from the early 1890s, was propagated through the accounts of traders and travellers.⁸ Joseph Thomson romanticised about East Africa's wildlife at the time of his visit:

⁴ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 37.

⁵ See Loftus, *Thomson*, p. 68; Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp. 36, 37; Matheka, 'Colonial Capitalism', pp. 60, 61.

⁶ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 42.

⁷ Swahili and Arab traders urged African communities not to sell food to the company's caravans while the Somali frustrated the company's efforts to open a steam boat service on River Tana (*ibid*, p.25).

⁸ See R W Beachey, 'The East African Ivory Trade in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History*, viii, 2 (1967), p. 271.

Turn in whatever direction you please, they [different species of wild animals] are seen in astonishing numbers, and so rarely hunted that, unconcernedly, they stand and stare at us within gunshot.⁹

Lieutenant Ludwing von Hohnel also wrote a book in which he 'devotes many pages to descriptions of shooting'.¹⁰ Such accounts no doubt helped to popularise East Africa as a rich hunting region at a time when big-game hunting areas in India and South Africa had been overshoot. As a result, more and more European 'sportsmen' began to visit Kenya from the early 1890s. But as Harry Johnston, Commissioner of Uganda Protectorate and a committed conservationist, told his boss at Whitehall in November 1899, the men were simply ivory-seekers:

Even in regard to persons supposed to be sportsmen pure and simple, who come out to this part of the world to shoot game, I would point out to your Lordship that behind their profession of sport there is often a very practical purpose lurking. Lord Delamere, for instance, left this country last year with £14 000 worth of ivory . . . and his medical officer (Dr Atkinson) who remained behind, has been shooting ever since, apparently without much regard for the provisions of the Uganda Game Regulations.¹¹

These pressures on East Africa's wildlife were aggravated by ecological calamities which struck the region, and indeed large parts of Africa, in the late nineteenth century. These included animal diseases such as rinderpest and contagious pleuro-pneumonia.¹² There were also severe droughts and locust invasions. All these calamities killed large numbers of wild animals and livestock, but the former

⁹ Loftus, *Thomson*, p. 26. Similar accounts appear in Lugard's book (*The Rise of Our East Africa Empire*) where the arch-imperialist devotes several chapters to the economic potential of East Africa's wild animals.

¹⁰ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 85.

¹¹ Quoted in Beachey, 'The East African Ivory Trade', p. 285. Lord Delamere, Dr Atkinson, and their caravan came to Kenya through Somalia on a hunting expedition in August 1897. They entered the country near Marsabit before travelling westwards to Lake Turkana. From the lake they travelled southwards to Baringo through territory which was then part of the Uganda Protectorate. From Baringo they climbed onto the Laikipia Plateau before travelling southwards to Meru, Kikuyuland, and the Kenya coast through Tsavo. See Elspeth Huxley, *White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya*, vol.1 (London, 1935), pp. 5 - 58.

¹² Pleuro-pneumonia epidemics were frequent in the 1870s and 1880s while rinderpest epidemics started occurring in the early 1890s.

recovered faster than the latter.¹³ To rebuild their herds, African communities intensified exploitation of wild animal resources for commercial purposes. This explains why most African communities actively traded in wild animal products in the late nineteenth century and invariably demanded livestock in exchange for trophies, unlike in the earlier period when various trinkets were in high demand.¹⁴ Beachey states that the demand for cattle as a trade item forced ivory traders to raid for it so that they could use it to acquire ivory.¹⁵

By the close of the century therefore East Africa's wildlife was under intense pressure from both human and natural agencies and needed protection if it was to survive. A campaign for the controlled exploitation of wild animal resources was fuelled by the certain concerns. First, the British experience of the uncontrolled exploitation of wildlife in India and South Africa, resulting in the extinction of some mammal species such as the quagga and the bluebuck by the late 1890s, helped to galvanise support for greater control over East Africa's wildlife resources. Second, regulated hunting had the potential of earning the region revenue not only through the sale of wildlife products but also through income from hunting licences and services to foreign hunters. Third, professional hunters agitated for the preservation of wildlife so that they could continue enjoying the 'sport'. Finally, East Africa's wildlife was perceived as nature's gift to humanity, and the need to preserve it for posterity was recognised. Against this background, the emerging colonial state - with the backing of the imperial state - undertook to preserve Kenya's wildlife. This

¹³ Kjekshus (*Ecology Control and Economic Development*, p.131) claims that wildlife recovered faster from the rinderpest epidemics of the 1890s than livestock. This was mainly due to wildlife's ability to move over the unrestricted range available in many areas in nineteenth-century East Africa. It therefore survived droughts and locust invasions better than livestock. Besides, many wildlife species like elephant, hippo, zebra, and rhino are not affected by rinderpest. Moreover, some isolated localities (such as Mount Marsabit and Mount Nyiro) escaped the 1890 rinderpest epidemic and provided sanctuary to both wildlife and livestock. See Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, pp. 71 - 76. In the Transvaal, natural disasters in the 1890s affected livestock more than wildlife. This forced the government to allow burghers to hunt in order to subsist. See Carruthers, 'Game Protection in the Transvaal', p. 69.

¹⁴ In most parts of Kenya in the 1890s, animal products were mainly exchanged for either cattle or goats. See Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp.42, 43.

¹⁵ Beachey, 'The East African Ivory Trade', p. 275.

chapter examines the forces behind the establishment of a wildlife conservation policy in Kenya, the early development of the policy, and the problems emanating from it up to 1925.

Early Concerns for Wildlife

One of the earliest official references to wildlife preservation in British East Africa is in the charter of the IBEAC.¹⁶ The charter, which was granted by the British government in September 1888, authorised the company to license elephant-hunters with a view to 'regulating the hunting of elephants, and for their preservation'.¹⁷ The charter also allowed the IBEAC to levy duty for the capture and killing of elephants as well as for the export of ivory. Experience with tame elephants in India had also convinced the British that East African elephants had great potential as a means of transport for military and other purposes if they could be tamed. The regulations therefore aimed at conserving elephants mainly for empire-building purposes.¹⁸

But the company's attempt to regulate elephant hunting was promptly challenged by European hunters who saw it as an impediment to the exploitation of the newly found sportsman's paradise.¹⁹ The white hunters not only flouted the company's regulations by engaging in the ruthless slaughter of wild animals but also antagonised the African communities they came into contact with.²⁰ This behaviour was particularly distasteful to IBEAC officials who were anxious to establish their authority in the region peacefully.²¹ The company also feared that an uncontrolled inflow of white

¹⁶ British East Africa is used here to denote Kenya and Uganda as both were administered by the IBEAC and shared the same wildlife regulations during the time of company rule.

¹⁷ Quoted in Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 7.

¹⁸ See Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, chapters 19 - 21.

¹⁹ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 94.

²⁰ Lamphear, 'Aspects of Turkana Leadership', p. 230.

²¹ Like Swahili-Arab traders who antagonised African communities by raiding for food, slaves, and ivory, some European hunters raided African villages for food and ivory. This angered company officials who saw the two groups as a threat to law and order. See *ibid*; Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, pp. 444, 445; Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp. 95, 96.

hunters would lead to the spread of firearms among African communities in the region, a development which could compromise British imperial ambitions.²² In June 1891 therefore the company requested the British government to allow it to temporarily ban hunting in its sphere of influence except in areas with excess wildlife. The company was subsequently advised to apply some of the regulations of the 1890 Brussels Act which authorised it to license guns and to suspend big-game hunting at will.²³

The implementation of the Brussels Act had little effect as the understaffed company was unable to control the activities of white hunters in the region. The company's directors then sought to reduce the number of hunters entering British East Africa by imposing a £500 sporting tax. This too proved impracticable because of insufficient personnel to implement the scheme. In June 1894 the company decided to adopt sport-hunting regulations from the British Central Africa Protectorate (Malawi). This resulted in an ordinance whose provisions included a £25 licence for anyone entering British East Africa to hunt elephant, rhinoceros, and the larger antelopes; a 15 per cent duty on all ivory; a 10 per cent duty on rhino horn and hippo teeth; a £100 deposit by every sportsman as surety for good behaviour while in the region; a fine of not less than £50 for hunting without a licence; and adherence to the terms of the Brussels Act concerning the importation and use of firearms.²⁴ In October 1894 the ordinance was further refined to provide for a ban on the killing of cow elephants, an offence whose penalty would be a £10 fine and the confiscation of the offender's ivory haul.²⁵

These regulations caused animosity between the company and interested parties. The 15 per cent duty paid at Mombasa was resisted by ivory traders and by the German East Africa administration. Ivory trading firms (such as Smith, Mackenzie

²² Beachy, 'The East African Ivory Trade', p. 273.

²³ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 5.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 7, 8.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 8.

and Company) complained that they were being forced to pay export duty in Uganda and also in Mombasa. Ivory traders also complained of general harassment by IBEAC officials and the unwarranted confiscation of their ivory.²⁶ For its part, the German East Africa administration claimed that IBEAC caravans were reluctant to pay duties in its territory.

The end of company rule in Kenya in July 1895 gave the British government an opportunity to address fears concerning the territory's wildlife more directly. In May 1896 the British prime minister and foreign secretary, Lord Salisbury, expressed concern about the excessive destruction of the protectorate's wild animals by travellers and others in a dispatch to Arthur Hardinge, the protectorate's first commissioner. The prime minister also wished to know the extent to which the protectorate's wildlife regulations were being enforced. He then proposed the enactment of measures aimed at intensifying wildlife conservation - the proclamation of closed seasons, the creation of game reserves, the specification of bag limits, and an increment in licence fees.²⁷

In response to Salisbury's dispatch, the protectorate administration assured the British government that it was already looking into the possibility of establishing a game reserve in the eastern part of the protectorate. It also proposed new regulations which it believed would protect wildlife while maintaining the protectorate's popularity as a hunting paradise. These included a £25 hunting licence valid for a year; prohibition against the giving, lending, or selling of firearms and ammunition to Africans; higher duty for importing more than three rifles; prohibition against the shooting of females and young of all species, especially elephants with tusks weighing less than ten pounds each; and the outlawing of 'unsportsmanlike' hunting methods such as the use of nets, fire and large drives. The proposed regulations also allowed unrestricted killing of animals regarded as vermin, such as lions, leopards, hyenas, and crocodiles. Furthermore, the proposed

²⁶ Since ivory from female elephants was the most valued because of its softness, prohibition against hunting female elephants must have frustrated many hunters and traders. See Beachey, 'The East African Ivory Trade', p. 275.

²⁷ See Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp. 112, 113.

regulations specified the number of animals that could be shot on a licence and allowed hunters to shoot for food when necessary.²⁸

Although the proposed regulations were not approved in their entirety by the British government, they are important for a number of reasons. First, they led to differences between the two levels of government over the conservation programme. The British government favoured uniform game regulations in its African territories while the protectorate administration insisted on regulations which would not only discourage the smuggling of ivory across borders but would also make the protectorate's hunting industry more competitive than that of its neighbours.²⁹ Such differences remained an important feature of colonial conservation policy. Second, the regulations emphasised the controlled exploitation of wild animal resources rather than strict preservation. This was promoted through sport hunting, an important source of government revenue. Third, the regulations sought to exclude Africans from hunting by denying them access to firearms while outlawing 'traditional' hunting methods. Finally, the classification of some animals as vermin led to their destruction and the proliferation of animals regarded as the farmer's enemies like monkeys and zebra.

As approved by the British government in December 1897, the protectorate's game regulations allowed for the establishment of the first game reserve in the territory. This would be known as Kenia and generally covered the area occupied by the Maasai east of the Rift Valley. It extended from the Tanganyika border in the south to within ten miles around the government station at Kikuyu.³⁰ Apparently, human habitation was not considered when creating the game reserve. Nor were the affected people consulted.

²⁸ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp. 112 & 113.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 114. For instance, while German East Africa was levying one tusk for every pair from hunters, the hunting licence for a whole year in East Africa Protectorate was £25. See Beachy, 'The East African Ivory Trade', p. 285.

³⁰ Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, p. 40.

The 1897 game regulations did not go down well with the white population in the protectorate. In February 1898, barely two months after the regulations came into effect, Hardinge was forced to request an amendment in order to allow employees of the Uganda Railway to shoot without paying the £25 licence fee. A month later he requested permission to allow settlers and missionaries to kill wild animals for food. Both requests were subsequently granted by the Foreign Office which also fixed the hunting licence for colonial officers at £3.³¹

In August 1899 a new game ordinance was promulgated to address a number of issues. The licensing structure, for instance, was elaborated to cater for separate licences for sportsmen, public officers, settlers, and traders. Instead of the £25 licence for non-native hunters, sportsmen would pay 375 Rupees (Rs) for their licences while public officers, settlers, and traders would pay Rs45.³² With their licences, sportsmen and government officers were free to shoot any game but not more than two of each of the following animals: elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, hippopotamus and giraffe. The Rs 45 licence for settlers and traders allowed them to kill four of each of the common antelopes (like gazelle, hartebeest, impala, and wildebeest). Although the ordinance allowed settlers to hunt any game on their farms, their licensed hunting was restricted to their home districts while the other groups were free to hunt anywhere outside the game reserve.

The 1899 Game Ordinance also spelled out the penalties for various game offences. Shooting more animals than stipulated on a licence could attract a fine of up to Rs500. If the maximum number was exceeded with more than two animals, a fine of up to Rs200 per animal could be imposed. The ordinance also raised the fine for hunting in the Kenia Game Reserve from £5 to £50. Furthermore, the ordinance prohibited the hunting of young elephants. In addition to the stated penalties,

³¹ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', pp. 15, 16.

³² The exchange rate then was 15 rupees (Rs) to one pound sterling (£).

violators of this ordinance were liable to imprisonment for a period of up to two months.³³

In October 1899 the British government amended the ordinance further with a view to enhancing control over European hunters. One of the amendments required each licence-holder to submit returns for the animals killed during the year to the protectorate authorities. Another sought to protect rare antelope such as the greater kudu, lesser kudu, and the sable by limiting the allowance on each licence to one animal per species. Further protection was accorded to these antelope through a prohibition on the sale of their heads, horns, and skins.³⁴ By the end of 1899, therefore, British policy on wildlife conservation in its African territories was fairly developed.

Britain's wildlife policy in Africa at the turn of the century emanated from a number of sources. First, many sportsmen and travellers had for some time been expressing concern about the destruction of wildlife in Africa. People like David Livingstone had voiced concern about the disappearance of wildlife in some parts of Africa as early as 1852.³⁵ As the nineteenth century progressed Livingstone's concern became manifest even to career hunters who joined the campaign for the preservation of Africa's wildlife. Some of these sportsmen, such as Clement Lloyd Hill, had by the late nineteenth century joined the public service either in Britain or the protectorates and were using their positions to push for wildlife conservation in Africa.³⁶ A further conservation drive came from officials in the Foreign Office and the protectorates. Men like Alfred Sharpe in the British Central Africa Protectorate, Frederick Jackson in the East Africa Protectorate, and Harry Johnston in the Uganda Protectorate urged

³³ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 16; Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp.118, 119.

³⁴ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p.119.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 110.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 119.

the British government to avoid what had happened in South Africa by conserving wild animals in the new territories.³⁷

Internationally, the preservation of the fauna of Africa was given ardent support by Herman von Wissman, explorer and governor of German East Africa in 1895 - 1896. It was von Wissman who, in 1897, actually proposed the idea of an international conference to discuss the preservation of wildlife in Africa. The idea was supported by, among others, Clement Hill, then the superintendent of the African protectorates in the British government. The efforts of these two men eventually led to the staging of the first International Conference for the Preservation of the Wild Animals, Birds, and Fishes of the African Continent - to which all the powers with interests in Africa were invited. The conference was held in London in April-May 1900 and was characterised by divergence of views among the powers, though out of it came a convention which became the basis of wildlife conservation policy in British African territories until another international conference on the subject was held in 1933.³⁸

The main recommendations of the conference included the categorisation of wild animals and birds according to their perceived importance; the prohibition of unlicensed hunting; the creation of game reserves; the imposition of export duties on trophies; and preventing the spread of disease from livestock to wild animals.³⁹ These principles were immediately applied in the East Africa Protectorate where a new game ordinance was gazetted in October 1900. One of its main provisions was an increment in hunting fees from Rs375 to Rs750 for a sportsman's licence, and Rs45 to Rs150 for a settler's or government official's licence. The ordinance also allowed settlers to kill two hippopotami per year, and up to five smaller animals each month. The penalty for the violation of game regulations was set at Rs1000 and Rs500 per animal in the case of multiple offences. Most important, the

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 121; Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, pp. 40 - 46.

³⁸ There was another international conference on the protection of African rhino and elephant in London in 1914 but the protocol was never signed because of the outbreak of the First World War. Another conference on wildlife conservation in Africa was held in Paris in 1931.

³⁹ Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 'Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds, and Fish in Africa', 19 May 1900, p. 9.

implementation of the convention's principles led to the creation of two game reserves in the protectorate.⁴⁰

In late 1900 the Kenia Game Reserve was abolished and two new ones created in the southern and northern parts of the country. The southern one, initially called Ukamba Game Reserve but later known as the Southern Game Reserve, generally coincided with what became the southern Maasai reserve in 1904. This was the area lying between the Uganda Railway in the north and the protectorate's border with German East Africa in the south. In the southeast, the reserve was bounded by the River Tsavo while the 1895 border with Uganda Protectorate marked its western extent (Map 6). In short, the Southern Game Reserve generally coincided with what is now Kajiado District. The Northern Game Reserve was initially known as Jubaland and lay to the north of the Kenya highlands. It stretched from Marsabit in the east to the 1895 border with Uganda Protectorate where it abutted on the Sugota (Baringo) Game Reserve created by Harry Johnston in 1899 (Map 6).

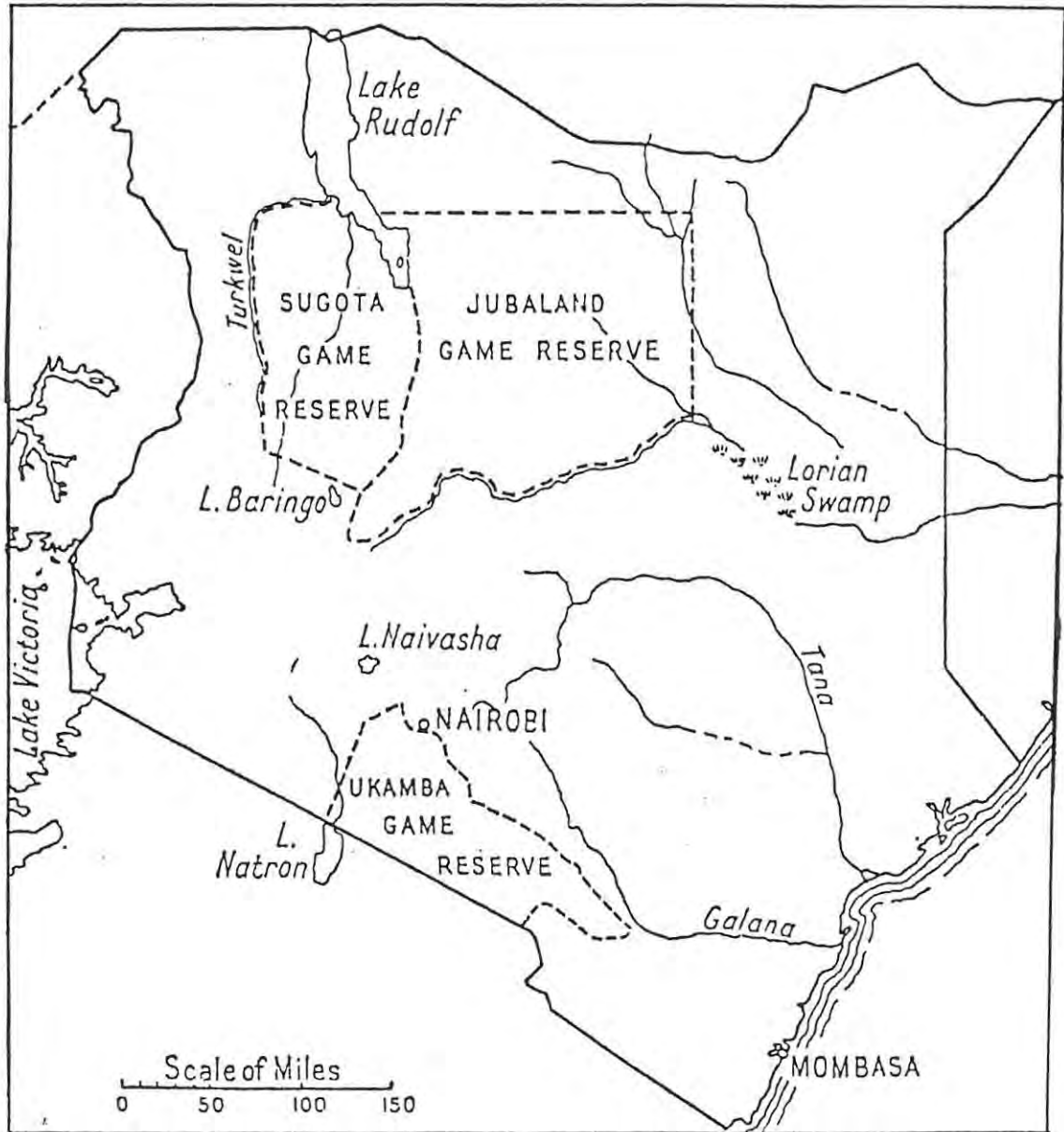
While the Southern Game Reserve generally remained stable (with an area of about 10 695 square miles) until the second half of the 1940s when the structure of wildlife sanctuaries in Kenya changed drastically, the Northern Game Reserve changed several times. Initially the reserve covered an area of about 25 000 square miles, but when the boundary with Uganda was moved westwards in 1902 the Sugota Game Reserve and the Jubaland Game Reserve combined to form a 'protected' area of about 38 300 square miles.⁴¹ This area was too large for the nascent colonial government to protect effectively and therefore remained a game reserve only in name. In 1908 the reserve was reduced to about 13 000 square miles, a size it retained until the reorganisation of Kenya's wildlife conservation areas in the 1940s.⁴² The Southern Game Reserve was also reduced in 1909 by a strip of land lying between the Uganda Railway and the Chyulu Hills from the Kiboko River to

⁴⁰ Ofcansky, 'A History of game Preservation', pp.16, 19, 20.

⁴¹ Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, p. 102.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 104.

Map 6: Early Game Sanctuaries in Kenya, ca 1900



Source: Simon, *Between the Sun and the Thunder*, p. 101.

River Tsavo. This area was required by some companies for the development of a sansevieria fibre industry.⁴³

It is not clear what criteria were used in deciding on the locations of the two reserves. At the time the reserves were created, wildlife was still abundant in many parts of the country and there were more suitable environments for wildlife conservation especially in the Kenya highlands. The Athi-Kapiti plains, the Uasin Gishu Plateau, and the Laikipia Plateau were at the time devoid of human habitation. Yet the reserves were created in relatively dry areas which were also inhabited, albeit by 'nomadic' communities. The decision to create the reserves in their respective areas was most likely based on the need to safeguard the highlands for European agriculture. In 1890 Lugard had commented on the Uasin Gishu Plateau:

This area is uninhabited, and of great extent; it consequently offers unlimited room for the location of agricultural settlements or stock-rearing farms. Here, if anywhere in Central Africa . . . would be the site upon which to attempt the experiment of European settlements. The soil is extremely rich, and is covered with an excellent and luxuriant pasture throughout the year. . . . Game roams over the acres of undulating grass, and the climate is cold and bracing.⁴⁴

The decision may also have been based on the belief that there was no conflict between wildlife conservation and African pastoralism. The early Europeans in Kenya were mesmerised by the apparent harmony between pastoralists and wildlife. In 1890 Lugard recorded:

The Lake Naivasha is covered with water-fowl of all kinds. Myriads of duck, geese, and teal of many varieties flock to its waters, and the great level plain which surrounds it is covered with various kinds of antelope and zebra, also a few ostrich, & c [etc]. These animals mingle fearlessly with the cattle and flocks of the Masai, who do not appear to molest them.⁴⁵

Besides the creation of game reserves, the implementation of the recommendations of the 1900 London Convention in the protectorate involved the establishment of a

⁴³ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p.31.

⁴⁴ Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, pp. 419, 420.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 340. Also see Eliot, *The East Africa Protectorate*, pp. 278, 279.

game department. This was set up in 1901 when A B Percival, a naturalist, was appointed as a game ranger in a one-man department. In 1907 the staff of the department grew to four men when J H Patterson was appointed the game ranger with three assistants. Patterson did not stay for long and Percival was appointed the acting game warden in 1909. In 1910 a new warden restored the department's European staff to four officers. At the same time the department began to recruit African game scouts and had about thirty by the beginning of the First World War. A fifth European officer had also been recruited in 1912. But the outbreak of war in 1914 disrupted the department and its activities until 1925 when it was restored to its pre-war strength.⁴⁶

The staffing situation in the Game Department is just one reflection of its weakness in light of the great responsibility it had as the driving force behind wildlife conservation in colonial Kenya. This weakness mainly emanated from the low priority accorded to the department by the government in terms of financial allocations. This was the case even though the department earned the country a lot of revenue from the sale of trophies, hunting licences, duty on trophies, and other sources. For example, in 1904-05, when the department earned the protectorate £121 692 or 9.5 per cent of its total annual revenue, the department's expenditure was only £115 out of a total government expenditure of £302 560.⁴⁷ 'When the department was organised in 1907, the budget was increased to just over £1800, out of a protectorate total of £691 677, and rose by an average of £300 per year until the First World War.'⁴⁸ In 1925 the department earned the country £17 681 but spent only £7 237.⁴⁹ The game department was starved of resources for most of the colonial period despite its importance in revenue generation.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 151.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 139, 152.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 152.

⁴⁹ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, pp. 5, 6.

⁵⁰ Conservation authorities regarded the Game Department as the Cinderella of the colonial government. Stevenson-Hamilton thought the government of South Africa had a similar attitude towards the Kruger National Park. See J Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*:

British policy on wildlife conservation in Africa during the colonial period was also influenced by the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE). This society was formed by private British citizens in 1903 under the leadership of Edward North Buxton, a former hunter. Its main objective was to pursue throughout the empire awareness of the need to establish wildlife sanctuaries and enforce suitable game laws and regulations.⁵¹ The society had a lot of influence on the British government and was able to exert pressure on both the imperial and colonial governments on issues pertaining to wildlife conservation. Its role as a pressure group was enhanced by confidential reports from its members who included some high-ranking wildlife conservation officials in the colonies. In 1922 the acting game warden in Kenya, who was a member of SPFE, wrote a confidential letter to the society's chairman enumerating the problems afflicting the colony's conservation programmes, including the shortcomings of the colonial government.⁵²

In this section, three of the key players in the early development of Kenya's wildlife policy and practice have been identified - the British government, the colonial government, and the SPFE. But as the next two sections will show, the settlers and Africans also influenced the territory's game policy in various ways. Other important players in the development of wildlife policy and practice in Kenya will be identified as the story unfolds.

White Settlement and Wildlife Conservation

The decision to promote white settlement in Kenya from the beginning of the twentieth century has had a far-reaching influence on the country's political economy. This was especially so during the colonial period when most government

From Sabi Game Reserve to Kruger National Park (London, 1938), *passim*.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp. 20, 21.

⁵² See KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 40a, Keith Caldwell to Edward Buxton, 19 December 1922. Conservationists in South Africa also sought the intervention of the SPFE and other international conservationist organisations when they were faced with demands for the elimination of game in Zululand in the 1920s because of its association with tsetse fly and nagana. See Brooks, 'Playing the Game', pp. 34 - 37.

policies revolved around the needs of a small but politically influential settler community. The need to provide settlers with abundant land and to protect their farming activities from wild animals informed wildlife conservation policy in the country for most of the colonial era. Consequently large numbers of wild animals were deliberately destroyed in order to create room for settler farming. Similarly, many animals were killed through control measures aimed at keeping wild animals from preying upon settler farms. Moreover, the settlers themselves never missed an opportunity to exploit wildlife for subsistence and commercial purposes especially in the early stages of white settlement.

Whites began settling in Kenya in the late 1890s but their number did not increase appreciably until a policy of white settlement was actively promoted from around 1902. From that year, an intensive campaign supported by high-ranking officials in both the imperial and protectorate governments led to an influx of settlers from Britain, America, Australia, South Africa, and other parts of the world.⁵³ The number of white settlers in the protectorate increased from about 200 at the turn of the century to 2000 in 1907.⁵⁴ Although the population of settlers remained small throughout the colonial period, they had significant political and economic clout partly because of the large amount of land reserved for them. For instance, 'about half the land in Kenya that was worth cultivating was in the hands of the whites' by 1939.⁵⁵ This included important wildlife areas such as the Athi-Kapiti plains, the Rift Valley, Laikipia, and Uasin Gishu.

The impact of white settlers on wildlife conservation in Kenya pre-dates the policy of white settlement. The 1899 Game Ordinance, for example, allowed settlers to shoot any game on their land. But the settlers disagreed with a clause which limited them to hunting for food and only within their home districts. Like European

⁵³ In early 1903, for example, Joseph Chamberlain, the then British Secretary of State, travelled to South Africa to publicise white settlement prospects in Kenya. This led to migration of many boer families to Kenya from 1903. See Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, pp. 48, 109 - 111, 133 - 136.

⁵⁴ George Bennett, *Kenya: A Political History: The Colonial Period* (London, 1963), p. 23.

⁵⁵ Ochieng', *A History of Kenya*, p. 105.

missionaries, government officials, and traders in the protectorate at the time, settlers wanted to exploit wild animals for both subsistence and commercial gain.⁵⁶ They therefore argued for a more favourable game law. In 1904 they succeeded in getting the protectorate commissioner, Charles Eliot, to obtain approval from the Foreign Office to amend the law to increase the number of species settlers could kill on licence.⁵⁷

But it was the formal policy of white settlement that changed the direction of wildlife preservation in the protectorate. Up to around 1905 government policy was to preserve game all over the protectorate through restrictions on hunting. But with the introduction of white settlement it became clear that large numbers of wild animals and commercial farming could not co-exist. Wild herbivores not only competed with domestic stock for pasture and water but were also reservoirs for livestock disease. Similarly, carnivores like lion, leopard, wild dog, and hyena destroyed domestic stock. Moreover, animals like giraffe, zebra, and various antelope threatened arable farming. White farmers therefore decried the presence of wild animals in the vicinity of their enterprises, thereby forcing the government to adopt a policy which largely allowed them to deal with wild animals in their surroundings as they deemed fit.⁵⁸

Depending on the farming activity pursued in a given area, farmers singled out certain animals as their chief enemies. Stock-keepers specifically targeted buffalo, eland, wildebeest, and zebra for condemnation. Both buffalo and eland were suspected of spreading rinderpest, while the former was also associated with tsetse fly and tick-borne diseases. Wildebeest and zebra competed with livestock for

⁵⁶ There were 3 175 Europeans in Kenya in 1910. This number increased to 9 651 by 1921 and 25 000 by 1946. But only about a quarter of them were landholders at any given time. See Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 209.

⁵⁷ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Protection', pp. 16 - 18. Eliot was one of the chief architects of white settlement in Kenya and advocated pro-settler game legislation. He argued that 'Europeans ought to be allowed to shoot [game] freely on their land'. Eliot, *The East African Protectorate*, p. 279.

⁵⁸ The 1909 Game Ordinance even authorised settlers to lease shooting rights on their properties or charge a fee for permission to shoot certain animals to holders of cheap travellers' licences. See Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 267.

pasture and water. The latter also destroyed fences and crops. However, ranchers' major enemies were carnivores, which attacked sheep and cattle. Besides the small antelope which destroyed crops like wheat, elephant, warthog, and giraffe bothered arable farmers.

The decision to allow settlers to deal with the wild animals on their land as they pleased was based on various factors. First, wildlife in Kenya in the early decades of the twentieth century, especially plains game, was too abundant to allow efficient farming. In his 1909-1910 annual report, the game warden noted that wild animals in Machakos District were 'too numerous to allow any cultivation of crops'.⁵⁹ Second, the government viewed development in terms of settler agriculture. Moreover, the government had invited the settlers into the country, and was therefore morally bound to support their cause. Third, the poorly developed game department was not in a position to provide any tangible solution to the potential conflict between farming and wildlife. Consequently it turned its focus elsewhere and left the settlers to their own devices. Fourth, most settlers were initially stock-keepers who concentrated their activities on the plains and plateaus where most game was to be found. These rangelands were susceptible to periodic droughts and therefore could not adequately support large numbers of both wild and domestic animals. Conflict between farmers and wild animals became particularly intense in times of drought.⁶⁰ Finally, wild animals harboured various diseases which threatened the evolving settler economy. Farmers like Lord Delamere who were experimenting with new breeds of sheep and cattle supported the elimination of wildlife from their estates.⁶¹

The arguments against wildlife in the white highlands appear plausible, but most settlers were simply looking for excuses to exploit wild animal resources. They exploited wild animal products for subsistence and profit, especially in the period before the First World War when the Game Department was poorly developed.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.9.

⁶¹ Steinhart, 'Hunters, Poachers and Gamekeepers', p.253.

Despite a prohibition against unauthorised hunting on unoccupied land in the white highlands, settlers poached wild animals as a means of subsidising their farming activities. In his 1909-1910 report the game warden commented:

The plateau south of the Nzoia river is now to a large extent settled by Boers and in their neighbourhood the game has suffered severely and there is little doubt that in a year or two it will be scarce⁶²

In 1910 the game department found it necessary to ban 'the export of game hides except in areas where game was a source of trouble to settlers'.⁶³ Such areas were identified as the Athi plains, around Nairobi, and Machakos (to the north of the railway) where farming was fairly advanced in the pre-war period.

In the early 1920s the destruction of game by settlers increased, mainly because of four factors. First, a soldier settlement scheme for British soldiers who had fought in the First World War led to the settlement of some areas of the white highlands which had hitherto been unoccupied, such as the Laikipia Plateau. The scheme also led to 'closer settlement' of the already settled areas. This led to further destruction of wildlife in the highlands. In the annual report for 1920, G H Goldfish, an assistant game warden, lamented:

The Soldier Settlement Scheme of last year has taken up practically the whole of our highland shooting grounds and it is more than ever evident that the only districts where we can preserve game is away from [white] settlement. In settled areas the question of how much game is to be kept is entirely [up] to the local farmers themselves. The question of licences [for hunting in the highlands] thus becomes purely a question of Revenue and so should be looked after by the administration and the police, leaving the Game Department to look after outside districts.⁶⁴

⁶² KNA/KW/23/170, p. 30. Exploitation of wildlife for subsistence and commerce appears to have been a common practice among white settlers in eastern and southern Africa. Kenya was no exception to the 'frontier' mentality witnessed in the Cape, Transvaal, and Southern Rhodesia. Whites who lived in Kenya during the early colonial period recorded widespread exploitation of wild animal products by settlers. See Juniata Carberry, *Child of the Happy Valley: A Memoir* (London, 1999), *passim*; Michael Blundell, *A Love Affair with the Sun: A Memoir of Seventy Years in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1994), *passim*; Elspeth Huxley and Arnold Curtis, *Pioneers' Scrapbook: Reminiscences of Kenya, 1890 to 1968* (London, 1980), p. 142.

⁶³ KNA/KW/23/171, Report on Game Reserves, 1910, p.8.

⁶⁴ KNA/KW/23/173, Game Department Annual Report, 1919-20, p. 1.

This second wave of settlement particularly affected elephant in the Uasin Gishu, Laikipia, and Mount Elgon areas.⁶⁵

The second factor which induced settlers to slaughter animals in large numbers in the immediate post-war period was a sharp increase in the price of wild animal products. The post-war boom induced farmers to kill hartebeest, waterbuck, zebra, rhino, elephant, and practically all forms of wildlife. A rise in the price of zebra hides to Rs5 in 1920 led to the slaughter of thousands of these animals.⁶⁶ In 1922 it was reported:

A buffalo hide is locally £3 and the Dutchmen having discovered that they can be shot in unlimited numbers on a £1 licence have taken out wagons and killed every [buffalo] they could see regardless of sex and age selling the hides and the biltong.⁶⁷

Similarly, a rise in the price of zebra hides from three shillings to between eight and ten shillings in 1925 caused settlers to slaughter so many zebras that by the end of the year the animals had practically disappeared from the Uasin Gishu Plateau. 'Eager hunters then began to shoot on crown land, far from farmlands, and limits were again imposed in 1926.'⁶⁸

The third factor was the enactment of the 1921 Game Ordinance. Drafted by the game warden with the assistance of a sub-committee appointed by the Convention of Associations, the ordinance aimed at persuading settlers to conserve wildlife on their farms.⁶⁹ This was to be achieved through the introduction of a visitor's licence for £10 (one-tenth the price of a normal visitor's licence) which would enable the licensee to lease settler land for shooting or pay a fee in order to shoot particular animals. The cheap licences were supposed to attract more foreign hunters to settler

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*: Appendix iii, p. 2.

⁶⁷ KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 40a, Keith Caldwell to Edward Buxton, 19 December 1922, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 219.

⁶⁹ KNA/KW/173, p. 1. The Convention of Associations united various settler associations such as the colonist and pastoralist associations and was the most powerful settler organisation. It was also known as 'the Settlers' Parliament'. See Bennett, *Kenya*, pp. 31, 32.

farms, thereby earning settlers income from the wildlife on their farms and so inducing them to conserve it.⁷⁰ The ordinance also allowed unrestricted killing of buffalo, zebra, bush pigs, wildebeest, and other animals whose numbers were believed to be inimical to the development of settler agriculture. However, the ordinance was heavily criticised by the SPFE which saw it as a threat to the wild animals of Kenya and so requested the British government to monitor the situation more closely. In April 1922 the society's chairman told the secretary of state:

We have no desire to embarrass your office by pleading that the Ordinance should be recommitted for amendment, but would strongly urge that instructions should be addressed to the Kenya Colony requesting that arrangements should be made to furnish your office a return every six months showing the number of hides of each wild species exported from Kenya, or locally sold for internal use, as a result of the permission to shoot unlimited numbers of certain species.⁷¹

The other major factor affecting the destruction of wildlife was an increase in settler political power after the war. In 1919 Europeans in Kenya obtained the right to elect representatives to the legislative council and the first elections were held in 1920. Out of the eleven Europeans elected, eight represented rural constituencies.⁷² The settlers were therefore able to enact laws that favoured them. This, as the acting game warden discovered during the debate on the 1921 Game Ordinance, included the enactment of laws inimical to wildlife conservation. In a confidential communication to the chairman of the SPFE, the warden reported:

The debate on its provisions was acrimonious in the extreme and the nonofficial members [settler representatives] who are under a party organisation [Convention of Associations] opposed it in a body. They were joined by official members with the result that clause after clause was only carried by the Governor's casting vote. Certain important provisions were lost to wit Buffalo (on all licences) and Hartebeest

⁷⁰ KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 60, Memorandum Prepared by H E Hetcher Frost, Honorary Game Warden, Nairobi, 5 December 1923, p. 4.

⁷¹ KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 32, Chairman SPFE to Secretary of State for Colonies, 20 April 1922.

⁷² Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 210. Since 1907, Europeans had been represented in the Legislative Council by nominated individuals. For most of the colonial period the council consisted mainly of senior government official and non-official members. Africans were initially represented in the council by a missionary until 1944 when the first (nominated) African joined it.

were made 'unlimited', Wildebeest were increased to 20 and lion were declared vermin.⁷³

This legislation rendered the Game Department helpless in the face of game slaughter. In 1924, for example, the government responded to settler complaints about over-abundance of zebra on the Uasin Gishu Plateau by sending five African marksmen and 20 000 rounds of ammunition to the area. As a result 8000 zebra on the plateau were killed. When the price of zebra hides trebled in the following year, the settlers themselves exterminated the zebra herds on the plateau.⁷⁴

Apart from the individual settlers who exploited wildlife for subsistence and profit, European agricultural estates (companies) also used wildlife to subsidise their farming activities. Large-scale coffee, tea, sugar, and sisal estates used game meat for feeding their workers. In 1921 it was discovered that some sisal estates employed 'shooting boys to satisfy the demand for meat by native employees'.⁷⁵ It was also reported in 1926 that Miwani Sugar Company in Nyanza was being supplied with game meat transported by railway from illegal hunters based around Kijabe.⁷⁶ By 1926 the game warden was contemplating the introduction of a meat-seller's licence as a means of providing game meat legally to 'native labour' as well as promoting game control in problem areas.

The need to promote white settlement had far-reaching consequences for the development of wildlife conservation in Kenya. It led to the emergence of a powerful settler community which generally saw game only as a resource to be exploited for personal gain. The settler community comprised people who were heavily dependent

⁷³ *Ibid*, Folio 40a, Keith Caldwell to Edward Buxton, 19 December 1922, p.1

⁷⁴ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', pp. 218, 219; KNA/KW/27/4, Folios 86a, 91. The effects of white settlement on wildlife conservation in Kenya were not very different from the situation in colonial Zimbabwe. See Mutwira, 'Southern Rhodesian Wildlife Policy'. But the situation in the two settler colonies differed from that of Zululand where extermination of game was motivated by its association with tsetse fly. See Brooks, 'Playing the Game'; A de V Minnaar, 'Nagana, Big-game Drives and the Zulu Game Reserves (1890s - 1950s)', *Contree*, 25 (1989), 12 - 21.

⁷⁵ KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1920-21, pp. 1, 2.

⁷⁶ KNA/KW/72, Folio 20, Acting Game Warden to Acting Colonial Secretary, 15 September 1926.

on wildlife for survival. In 1926 the game warden observed: 'Many of the "poor white" class are living on game and finding it very profitable; in fact game killing is rapidly becoming the means of livelihood of the undesirables in the Colony'.⁷⁷ Even among well-to-do settlers, all sorts of excuses were used to justify the exploitation of wildlife resources. In 1927 the editor of *The Times* commented:

It is not difficult for the owner of private land, in the absence of regulations regarding dipping and fencing-in of stock, to justify the killing of buffalo, eland, or zebra on the ground that these beasts carry rinderpest or other disease, whether he owns cross-bred cattle or not. The real reason why extermination goes on is that there is a market value on hides and horns - to say nothing of meat - resulting in hundreds of pounds' benefit to the impecunious settler, who cannot be blamed for taking advantage of this source of profit.⁷⁸

Africans and Wildlife Policies

Game on Crown land, on Native Reserves, in areas unsuitable for [white] settlement, is the real game of Kenya and the game for the future. East Africa is still the greatest Game Reserve in the world today. In variety and number of species Kenya leads East Africa. Let the present head of Game be kept up and the future is assured.⁷⁹

Government wildlife policy in relation to Africans during the early colonial period was generally influenced by the desire to preserve large numbers of wild animals for economic and aesthetic purposes. To achieve this goal, 'native reserves' were generally regarded as wildlife conservation areas and Africans were expected to share their land with wild animals. Unlike in the white highlands where conservation of wildlife was viewed as detrimental to settler farming, the influence of wildlife on African pastoralism and agriculture was generally ignored. To make matters worse, the government also proscribed African hunting, thereby denying many Africans an important source of livelihood as well as a means of defence against destructive

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 115, *The Times* editorial of 29 December 1927. See the caption entitled, 'Can nothing be done to prevent the extermination of game in Kenya and adjacent African colonies?'

⁷⁹ KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 60, Memorandum prepared by H E Hetcher Frost, Honorary Game Warden, 5 December 1923, p. 5.

animals. Government policies therefore exposed Africans to wild animal menace and greatly influenced their attitude towards wildlife.

Apart from the development of negative attitudes towards wildlife, government policies had other far-reaching effects on African societies. For instance, the hunter-gatherer economies of the Boni, Dorobo, Liangulu, and related peoples were severely undermined. Although the early game regulations enjoined DCs to allow these communities to hunt for food, this position had changed by the mid-1920s. The change of policy may have been due to the fact that the line between commercial and subsistence hunting among these people was difficult to draw. In 1910 it was reported that Dorobo hunters were killing elephants in considerable numbers in the Mount Kenya region.⁸⁰ It was also observed that the Dorobo living on the Matthew's Range, which was then part of the Northern Game Reserve, were poaching elephant and rhino.⁸¹ The Dorobo were also accused of killing animals in large numbers on the edges of the Aberdare and Mau forests. In 1925 the game warden lamented that '[t]he number of bongo, waterbuck, blue and colobus monkeys, and other animals killed by them [was] undoubtedly very considerable'.⁸²

In the coastal region, the Boni and the Liangulu continued to hunt elephant and other animals as they had done in the pre-colonial period. In 1925 the game warden reported that the Boni hunted wild animals and used the meat to obtain grain from the Pokomo.⁸³ By the mid-1920s, therefore, conservationists had begun considering how to discourage hunting and gathering as a mode of existence. This resulted in the initiation of schemes which conservationists thought would help the communities involved but instead left them in disarray. As early as 1920 it was reported that 'Good work [had] been done with the Wanderobo in moving them out of forests and giving

⁸⁰ KNA/KW/23/171, Report on Game Reserves, 1910, p.7.

⁸¹ KNA/DC/SAM/1/1, Samburu District Annual Report, 1925, pp. 9, 10.

⁸² KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, p. 9.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p.7.

them a chance to become honest citizens'.⁸⁴ Then in 1925 the game warden proposed that all Boni be collected into one area where they could be gradually weaned from hunting by being taught agriculture.⁸⁵ These and other schemes in the subsequent period only served to intensify the economic and social marginalisation of Kenya's hunter-gatherer communities.

Pastoral communities, especially the Maasai and the Samburu, were also negatively affected by colonial game regulations. Although the two communities occupied areas which were rich in wildlife, their people were not interested in killing wild animals. Conservationists therefore believed that these communities had always co-existed harmoniously with wild animals and would continue to do so. But colonial land policies delimited the rangelands available to these communities, thereby engendering competition for pasture, water, and salt-licks between livestock and wild animals. By the early 1920s this competition had become manifest in the areas occupied by the two communities. In 1920 H E F Frost, the game ranger for the Southern Game Reserve, noted increased competition for water and pasture between Maasai livestock and game in the reserve.⁸⁶

Reports of wildlife-livestock competition for resources in the Southern Game Reserve led to an intense debate on the issue in the early 1920s. The debate, which involved the SPFE, the British government, and the colonial state, centred around the rationale for maintaining the eastern portion of the Maasai Reserve (Kajiado District) as a game reserve. The district administration and the Chief Native Commissioner were of the view that wildlife conservation in the area was detrimental to Maasai pastoralism and that the Southern Game Reserve had to be abolished. But the governor, R T Coryndon, informed his superiors in London that the situation was not

⁸⁴ KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1920, p. 4. Also see the comment by an Okiek (Dorobo) hunter-gatherer under 'African Perceptions' in IIED, *Whose Nature?*, as well as p. 51, *ibid*.

⁸⁵ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, p. 8.

⁸⁶ KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1919-20, Appendix ii, p. 2.

serious enough to warrant any action.⁸⁷ The dishonesty surrounding the wildlife-livestock competition in Maasailand at the time is best illustrated by the words of the game warden:

The game and the Masai cattle get on pretty well together as of old but from our point of view the cattle rather crowd the game. From the point of view of the Officer in Charge, Masai Reserve, the game crowds the cattle!⁸⁸

The main offenders in the competition between livestock and wildlife for pasture and water were plains game such as zebra and wildebeest. The competition was so intense by the mid-1920s that when 'sportsmen' flocked into the western portion of the Masai Reserve (Narok District) to get zebra hides, then in high demand, the DC could not hide his gratitude. He commented:

One does not take exception to the extermination of a species of game which is annually responsible for unwarrantable damage done both to grazing and water in the district, were it possible to do so, there is much to be said in favour of limiting the quantity not only of zebra, but also of wildebeest and perhaps one other species whose numbers tend to be a menace to the grazing and water supplies of the district.⁸⁹

At the time, the 'sportsmen' were killing about 300 zebra each per month and the Dorobo in the area had the DC's permission to kill zebra, wildebeest, and kongoni for food.⁹⁰

Besides the competition for resources, wild animals also infected livestock with diseases. This situation was made worse by the restrictions imposed upon pastoralists by reserve boundaries as they could not prevent their livestock from coming into contact with certain disease-carrying game in the now restricted

⁸⁷ See KNA/KW/27/4 for various correspondence involving the SPFE, Secretary of State for Colonies, the Governor of Kenya, Chief Native Commissioner, Game Warden, and Officer-in-charge of Masai Reserve.

⁸⁸ KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 40a, Keith Caldwell to Edward Buxton, 19 December 1922.

⁸⁹ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/1, Narok District Annual Report, 1926, p. 46.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/1, Narok District Annual Report, 1925, p.30.

rangelands. In 1921 it was claimed that eland had introduced pleuro-pneumonia into the cattle herds of the Siria Maasai.⁹¹ Five years later the Narok DC recorded:

The Masai have maintained for some time that cattle which graze where wildebeest have calved are liable to contract a fatal disease whose most salient feature is marked constipation. The idea was ridiculed for some time, but has now been credited. It appears a similar disease has been recognised in South Africa, where it is known as *Snodziokte*. Little is known of the disease which is said to be incurable.⁹²

The problem of diseases which affected both livestock and wild animals, or were passed from one type of animal to another, was especially serious during the first three decades of colonial rule when large numbers of wild animals existed in many parts of Kenya.

An increase in herbivores meant an increase in carnivores such as lion, leopard, hyena, and wild dog. These animals often harassed pastoralists by attacking their livestock. The problem was made worse by government interference with institutions which helped control these animals like *moranism* among the Maasai and the Samburu.⁹³ In 1925 the game warden noted:

The breaking down of the Moran system, with the consequent racial emasculation to which the Masai has been subjected, has effectively robbed them of the power of dealing with feline marauders in the time-old manner. In consequence the lions in parts of the reserve have lost all respect for man and kill cattle in daylight within a few yards of the herdsman.⁹⁴

⁹¹ KNA/KW/23/172, Annual Report for the Southern Game Reserve, 1921, p. 4. The Maasai word for pleuro-pneumonia is *ol-kipiri*.

⁹² KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/1, Narok District Annual Report, 1926, p. 42.

⁹³ 'Traditional' Maasai and Samburu communities had a military institution for young warriors (*moran*) who not only protected the community and its livestock wealth from human and animal raiders but also raided other communities for livestock and land resources. Heroism among the *moran* involved hunting and killing lions. For obvious reasons, the colonial government did not approve of this traditional military organisation and banned it during the early colonial period. But the institution persisted in the two communities and became a threat to 'law and order' whenever colonial policies on land use threatened the communities' interests. In 1939, for example, the colonial government was forced to suspend a destocking programme planned for the Samburu when the *moran* became agitated.

⁹⁴ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, p. 18.

Other Kenyan communities also suffered from the effects of colonial wildlife and land policies. Agro-pastoral communities suffered from the depredations of wild animals as well as loss of land to wildlife. In 1909-10 the game warden recorded that 'the [bush] pig nuisance [was] practically depopulating the Shimba forest and hills of natives'.⁹⁵ The encroachment on African land by bush and wildlife was mainly caused by the combined effect of colonial land policies and the prohibition on hunting and the burning of bush. The growth of dense bush around African settlements brought an increase in the wild animal population, thereby threatening African farming. In his 1909-10 report the game warden proposed that a number of Dorobo families and their dogs be encouraged to settle among the agricultural communities of the coastal region in order to help them deal with the problem of bush pigs and baboons.⁹⁶ The depredations of wild animals became even worse in the subsequent period.

As the foregoing analysis indicates, Kenyan communities were vulnerable to wildlife in one way or another. This was essentially because of policies about which they were never consulted. Consequently most communities refused to obey game laws and continued to exploit game as they had been doing before the onset of colonialism, albeit discreetly. Wildlife was therefore widely exploited for subsistence and profit, especially in the pre-1925 period when the Game Department and the provincial administration were still too weak to deal effectively with poaching.⁹⁷ In September 1925 the assistant game warden for Meru reported that the Dorobo killed animals for meat as well as for ivory, selling the later to the Samburu for cattle.⁹⁸

One of the most serious cases of poaching in the early 1920s was recorded in the Tana River region. When Captain A T A Ritchie, the game warden, toured the area

⁹⁵ KNA/KW/23/170, Game Department Annual Report, 1909-10, pp. 36, 37.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 35.

⁹⁷ The provincial administration in colonial Kenya consisted of Sub-commissioners or Provincial Commissioners (PCs)/Officers-in-Charge, Collectors or District Commissioners (DCs), and District Officers (DOs). These officers of the central government were in charge of administrative areas such as districts and provinces and were responsible for wildlife conservation activities in their areas especially in the early colonial period when the Game Department was weak.

⁹⁸ KNA/KW/23/17, Folio 1, Report for the Month Ending 30 September 1925.

in 1925 he was surprised that '[g]ame dominated everything and everybody'.⁹⁹ The rich animal life of the area, including elephant, was being decimated at an alarming rate in an intricate social network. Ritchie recorded:

After a short residence in the district I found that game, owing to the cash value of ivory, and the meat value to natives, dominated the district to an extent scarcely credible. Villages had broken up into family settlements near lakes to hunt game coming to the water. Wanyika [Giriama], Wakamba and Arabs roamed the district trading ivory and supplying hunting needs, powder and shot to gun-owning Gallas [Orma], and poison to the bow-and-arrow hunters! Waboni hunters visited villages as 'butchers' bartering meat for grain. Gallas and even village elders and headmen had their official hunters who supplied ivory and meat - giraffe and buffalo - for feasts and ceremonies.¹⁰⁰

Thus the social networks established through pre-colonial trade in the nineteenth century continued to function long after the introduction of colonial rule and the concomitant game regulations. As a number of studies have shown, these networks continued to work against wildlife conservation for a long time.¹⁰¹ Poaching constituted a form of 'passive' resistance and outlasted colonialism.

Poaching during the early colonial period was inadvertently encouraged by the government through such practices as taxation and the buying of 'found' ivory. Taxation was a financial burden on most rural people in Kenya and one way of raising tax money was through poaching, especially of elephant, rhino, and leopard. Consequently communities with traditions of hunting and trading in animal products (such as the Pokomo, Giriama, Orma, Somali, Akamba, and Boni) continued to depend heavily on hunting and the trade in trophies to raise money for tax and to create personal wealth.¹⁰² While communities inhabiting agriculturally favourable environments turned to 'cash' crop production as a means of circumventing the

⁹⁹ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ See Dalleo, 'The Somali Role in Organized Poaching'; Steinhart, 'Hunters, Poachers and Gamekeepers'; Steinhart, 'National Parks and Anti-poaching in Kenya'; Stone, 'Organized Poaching in Kitui District'.

¹⁰² See Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 195; Steinhart, 'Hunters, Poachers and Gamekeepers', p. 249.

colonial political economy's harsh tax and labour laws, those inhabiting marginal environments (such as the Somali, the Orma, and the Boni) seem to have resorted to hunting and ivory smuggling as one way of escaping wage employment.¹⁰³

Up to 1912 the colonial government had a system whereby Africans were encouraged to 'sell' their ivory stocks to the state as 'found' ivory. This was also a way of discouraging the illegal ivory trade as the system rewarded Africans who came across ivory in the bush to sell it to the government rather than to private dealers. However, the system was open to abuse as African hunters killed elephants and sold the ivory to the government. As a result, the government decided to stop buying ivory and instead introduced a system whereby the finder of ivory was given a reward which was much lower than the 'market' price of ivory. But this did not discourage Africans from killing elephants and presenting the ivory as found.¹⁰⁴ This is what Ritchie discovered during his 1925 tour of the Tana River region. He recorded:

Elephants were snared, shot, and hunted at every waterhole and the tusks solemnly brought as 'found' to Government and the amount of reward claimed. This had, through the years, become such an established custom that tusks were even taken to dukas [shops] beforehand and weighed, value at Sh4 per lb [pound] calculated, and credit obtained on the prospective sale. I gathered the Government and its officers were covertly held in contempt as consequence. . . .¹⁰⁵

It is clear that early colonial wildlife policies had many negative effects on African systems of production. Hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, and agro-pastoralists were all affected in one way or another by wildlife and land policies. But the policies did not

¹⁰³ For most of the colonial period, Africans in Kenya were not allowed to grow lucrative cash crops like tea and coffee for fear that this would pose competition for labour and markets to white farming. However, communities inhabiting favourable environments increased their production of crops like maize for sale and subsistence. Taxation was also used as a means of forcing Africans to seek wage employment. But some Africans avoided the harsh labour market by joining the lucrative poaching business. See Holmes, *The Elephant People*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁴ The reward system was popular with some Africans because it was less risky than selling ivory to private traders. Some government officers also encouraged it by accepting ivory they knew had been poached without questions for fear that strictness would encourage Africans to sell such ivory to private dealers and the government would lose the potential revenue.

¹⁰⁵ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, p.7.

stop Africans from exploiting wildlife as they had done in the pre-colonial period. Through established social networks, Africans, like white settlers, used loopholes in government policy to discreetly exploit wildlife for food and for profit. Sometimes the policies did spark off open struggle, as was the case with the Giriama revolt of 1912-13 which was in part caused by government interference in the ivory trade.¹⁰⁶ However, African resistance to wildlife policies for most of the colonial period was generally 'passive'.

Initial Setbacks to Wildlife Conservation

During its early stages, wildlife conservation in Kenya was hampered by many factors. As already indicated, both settlers and Africans spared no opportunity to exploit wildlife resources for personal gain. Licensed and non-licensed white hunters also exploited it illegally. Conservation efforts were also inhibited by natural factors such as drought and disease which killed many wild animals or led to the intensified exploitation of wildlife. There were also political upheavals, such as the First World War, which affected wildlife conservation in various ways. In addition the Game Department was one of the most neglected government departments in the country despite the sizeable revenue that wildlife earned the country. In short, wildlife conservation was beset by many problems during the early colonial period.

Perhaps the most important problem facing the conservation effort before 1925 was the government's reluctance to establish a strong game department. Started as a one-man affair in 1901, the Game Department acquired another three European officers in 1907. Then in 1910 it began recruiting African scouts, of whom there were about thirty by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. In 1912 the department recruited a fifth European officer and maintained that establishment until the First World War when all five European officers joined the war effort. The department did not restore its pre-war establishment until 1925.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p.185.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 150.

With such a small staff who relied mainly on animal transport to tour the country, the department was not in a position to effectively perform its functions. The Northern Game Reserve, for instance, remained virtually unexplored until 1911 when it was inspected by Game Department personnel for the first time. After that it remained poorly protected until the late 1920s. Consequently the reserve was a happy hunting ground for Dorobo, Turkana, and Ethiopian poachers until the late 1920s when the department became more effective. In 1925 the DC for Samburu District, which was part of the reserve, reported:

I regret to say that raiders from Abyssinia [Ethiopia] during the years 1921 - 1923 have completely denuded [Mount] Kulal. I have only recently come from there, and saw no sign or trace of elephant, although a few years ago it was a very good place for them.¹⁰⁸

The problem also affected the Southern Game Reserve which by the mid-1920s had become an easy target for poachers using motor vehicles.¹⁰⁹ Poachers with cars and lorries made short hunting excursions into the reserve with impunity as the few ill-equipped scouts could not easily nab them.¹¹⁰ In his annual report for 1925, the game ranger for the Southern Game Reserve reported:

Within the last month a party of five of them, all well-known poachers (whose sole equipment was one old Ford Lorry) have returned from this area after a comparatively short stay with 700 lb of ivory. How many other elephants were killed and wounded it is impossible to say. This was not an isolated party, moreover their example is being copied by many others.¹¹¹

The Game Department was not only too weak to prevent poaching by Africans and whites (in and outside the game reserves) but was also unable to control the

¹⁰⁸ KNA/KW/174, Folio 12, Notes on the Northern Game Reserve, 1925, by Assistant DC Samburu District, Barsaloi, 3 June 1926.

¹⁰⁹ KNA/KW/23/172, Annual Report for the Southern Game Reserve, 1920-21.

¹¹⁰ By the mid-1920s African game scouts had neither guns nor motorised transport. They generally travelled on foot. Motorised transport became common in Kenya in the early 1920s.

¹¹¹ KNA/KW/174: Annual Report for the Southern Game Reserve, 1925, p. 3.

activities of licensed hunters. Consequently licensed hunters, especially those who hunted for profit rather than for sport or trophies, often abused the licensing system. The following example was recorded in 1925:

Another hunter (who has been convicted of six breaches of the Game Ordinance in the last three years) specializes in the thorn country north of the railway line. Having killed the two elephants allowed by his licence he cannot go on shooting overtly, accordingly he comes to Nairobi - picks up the first "out of work" he can find, buys an elephant licence for him and takes him to his camp. The "out of work" walks [a]round till the hunter shoots a good elephant. The party then returns to Nairobi, the dummy gets a small present, the hunter sells the tusks, collects another "out of work" and the process is repeated.¹¹²

The problem of illegal exploitation of wildlife during this period was compounded by an unsupportive provincial administration, unqualified and corrupt game scouts, and the high prices for wildlife products. From an early stage, the colonial government in Kenya used the provincial administration to promote wildlife conservation activities. DCs were not only expected to create awareness about game laws in their districts but were also expected to work in tandem with the police in enforcing game regulations. They therefore arrested and tried poachers.¹¹³ However, most DCs sympathised with African poachers especially when it came to subsistence hunting. They therefore did little to control African hunting as they either overlooked it or imposed light penalties on culprits brought before them.¹¹⁴ In 1920, when the Game Department had only four officers and relied heavily on the administration and the police for the enforcement of game regulations, the game warden complained about the low fines of Shs30 - 40 imposed by courts for shooting without a licence in a game reserve. This was at a time when the price of rhino horn was Rs14 (Shs28) per pound.¹¹⁵ The fines were therefore too low to serve as a deterrent against poaching.

¹¹² *Ibid.* See Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa*, pp. 375 - 385 for incidences of abuse of game regulations by licensed hunters. The catalogue includes Colonel Roosevelt, a former president of the United States of America, during his visit to Kenya in 1909.

¹¹³ Colonial DOs and DCs were also magistrates in their administrative areas.

¹¹⁴ Provincial administrators in eastern and southern Africa appear to have been favourably disposed towards Africans in matters pertaining to access to natural resources. This had to do with the notion of 'trusteeship' which pervaded British colonial administration.

¹¹⁵ KNA/KW/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1918-19, p. 7; Game Warden's Report, 1920-21.

The high price of wild animal products was a main reason for the extermination of large numbers of wild animals in the early colonial period. This was especially so in the early 1920s when prices for most wildlife products rose dramatically. The price for rhino horn, zebra, buffalo, and giraffe hides, and for bush meat, among other products, increased to unprecedented levels both locally and internationally in the post-war period. In 1925 buffalo hides were fetching Shs120 - 180 while the price for rhino horn was Shs22 per pound (lb). Whips (*sjimboko*) made from rhino hide were also in great demand.¹¹⁶ This boom encouraged Africans and whites in the colony to hunt wild animals illegally in order to cash in on the good prices. Collusion between Africans, Asians, and whites in the illegal exploitation of wildlife became common during this period. In 1919 it was noted that the Akamba were hunting rhino more intensively than before, a development which 'was encouraged by the Indian traders, who were ready to purchase any rhino horn brought to them' without asking any questions.¹¹⁷ In 1926 it was further claimed: 'The profit killer, who is frequently financed by an Indian, makes money on game in three ways: by the sale of ivory, by the sale of hides and by the sale of game meat'.¹¹⁸ Licence holders, mainly white men, were also used as agents for disposing of illegally acquired trophies.¹¹⁹

The illegal exploitation of wildlife during this period also proved difficult to eliminate because the few African scouts available were not only inexperienced but were prone to corruption because of low pay. In the 1920s DCs complained endlessly

¹¹⁶ KNA/KW/23/174, Folio 20, Acting Game Warden to Acting Colonial Secretary, 15 September 1926, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1918-19, p.8.

¹¹⁸ KNA/KW/23/174, Folio 20, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ Collusion between members of different races for purposes of exploiting wildlife illegally also occurred in the Transvaal in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The motivation behind the collusion was the perception among the people involved that wildlife was a common resource. See Roger Wagner, 'Zoutpansberg: The Dynamics of a Hunting Frontier, 1848 - 67', in Marks and Atmore (eds), *Economy and Society in Pre-industrial South Africa*, pp. 313 - 349; Stanley Trapido, 'Poachers, Proletarians and Gentry in Early Twentieth Century Transvaal' (African Studies Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984), *passim*.

about the inefficiency of the few game scouts they had in their districts. The problem was further complicated by the game warden who was generally reluctant to hire Africans with relevant skills, like First World War veterans. His attitude towards skilled African scouts seems to have been stereotyped:

I have come to the conclusion that the employment of highly-paid sophisticated natives as scouts is, in the main, a mistake; for they are very prone to use their official position for their own ends; they may have, usually have indeed, interests of their own here and there which are certain to interfere with their whole-hearted allegiance to their work; and finally, it is in my experience considerably more easy in the main to obtain a plain and unvarnished statement of fact from a 'raw' and untutored native.¹²⁰

This was in spite of the game warden's confession that the employment of African 'individuals of outstanding knowledge and experience' as head scouts in the coast and Nairobi areas had made a positive impact on wildlife conservation activities in the two areas.¹²¹ Instead of building an efficient policing system, the government relied on a much more expensive system based on rewarding informers. In the early 1920s Somali informers, hired to help break the Somali trade in ivory and rhino horn, were paid rewards of up to £200 each.¹²²

In the early 1920s the government also allowed the Game Department to recruit capable volunteer whites and blacks to assist in its work. The white volunteers, popularly known as honorary game wardens, mainly worked among the settler community where they helped protect farmers' property from the depredations of wild animals. African volunteers, otherwise known as agents, worked in African areas where they helped the government deal with poachers by reporting on them. One famous agent was Juma bin Athumani, a Mkamba who had been an *askari* ('Tribal Policeman'), an ivory runner, a criminal investigator, and at intervals a burglar,

¹²⁰ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, p. 3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 60, Memorandum Prepared by H E Hetcher Frost, Honorary Game Warden, 5 December 1923, p. 14.

before joining game work.¹²³ Juma was credited with the recovery of some 2000 pounds (lbs) of ivory in a period of eighteen months, including two big tusks which were preserved in the Coryndon (Nairobi) Museum. He also provided evidence which led to the conviction of numerous African poachers.¹²⁴ It is clear there were many Africans who could help conserve wildlife if the government cared to involve them.

The First World War was an important setback for wildlife conservation in early colonial Kenya. First, the Game Department virtually ceased to exist during the war when all the European officers joined the East African campaign. The war also disrupted the department's finances.¹²⁵ Second, the war led to the slaughter of an estimated 30 000 animals in the Southern Game Reserve to feed the troops on both the German and the British sides.¹²⁶ The species affected most by the slaughter were fringe-eared oryx and giraffe. Third, the war was followed by a soldier settlement scheme which spelled doom to the remaining wildlife in the white highlands. The scheme not only led to the settlement of previously unsettled game areas in the highlands (such as the Laikipia Plateau) but also led to the closer settlement of already occupied areas like the Uasin Gishu Plateau. The settlement scheme brought about the slaughter of large numbers of wild animals and the disappearance of the best hunting areas of the country.¹²⁷ In 1919 the game warden declared:

British East Africa has now reached the stage when the preservation of game must, to a large extent, give way before the settlement of the country. The open highlands, which a few years ago, were purely a game hunter's shooting grounds, where sport of the best kind could be had in comfort, with but little risk of fever, or other tropical diseases, where horses could be used and porters . . . could be freely obtained. Today these tracts of country are farms, some stock farms, where game is not so welcome, others are under cultivation, where the game

¹²³ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, pp. 3, 4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Kelly, 'In Wildest Africa', p. 153.

¹²⁶ KNA/KW/23/173, Game Department Annual Report, 1919-20, Appendix ii, p. 1.

¹²⁷ The two world wars and subsequent soldier-settlement schemes also caused the decimation of game in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). See Peck, 'From Royal Game to Popular Heritage', *passim*.

is a distinct disadvantage. These areas are now lost to [the department].¹²⁸

In the following year the game warden observed that visiting sportsmen would have to go further afield and visit less healthy districts to get good shooting. He feared that this would have negative effects on the colony's revenue.¹²⁹ Finally, the war was followed by a recession which forced the government to abolish most export duties in a bid to encourage trade with the outside world. This, according to the game warden, encouraged the illegal trade in wildlife products as it made it possible for anybody to export such trophies without any questions being asked. In his view, customs requirements had been one of the means through which the country's wildlife had been accorded protection as it not only checked illegal exports of wildlife products but also lowered the profits obtained by trophy dealers. The removal of customs duty therefore disturbed the game warden to the extent that he sought the intervention of the SPFE in getting the British government to force the colonial government to reverse the decision. He also enlisted the support of his counterpart in Tanganyika in trying to get the government there to have the duties reintroduced. The two game wardens recommended to their governments the imposition of a 30 per cent export duty on most trophies and wild animal skins.¹³⁰

The other major setbacks for wildlife conservation in Kenya during this period were animal disease and drought. These ecological crises, which visited the East African region with a vengeance in the late nineteenth century, continued to break out sporadically during the first half of the twentieth century. Usually the onset of drought would lead to an outbreak of disease which would cause the death of many wild and domestic animals. At the end of the drought, heavy rains lasting several days would kill off large numbers of cattle and wild animals. The subsequent young grass would kill off still more of the weakly animals as 'both game and cattle die from surfeit of

¹²⁸ KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1918-19, p. 12.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*; KNA/KW/23/173, Game Department Annual Report, 1919-20, p. 1.

¹³⁰ See various correspondence in KNA/KW/27/4 involving the Game Warden, SPFE, the Foreign Office, and the Colonial Secretary (Nairobi).

young grass'.¹³¹ Wild animals harbour diseases which affect domestic animals more than they do the wild animals. In 1909 it was reported that *gastro-enteritis* was affecting eland, buffalo, greater kudu, giraffe, and impala in many areas of the protectorate but was more virulent among cattle than it was among game.¹³² This was one reason why white settlers were reluctant to allow the existence of game in or near their farms.

Other troublesome diseases in the East African region in the early twentieth century were rinderpest, pleuro-pneumonia, anthrax, nagana, and east coast fever. The most serious of these was rinderpest which had become endemic in Kenya by 1920. Rinderpest is a severe disease affecting ruminants such as cattle and is characterised by fever and diarrhoea. It is highly contagious and causes a mortality rate of up to 90 per cent. The most susceptible wild animals are buffalo, eland, wildebeest, and warthog. Some animals, such as Thomson's gazelle, are healthy carriers while others, like elephant, rhino, hippo, and zebra, are not affected.¹³³

Rinderpest was first introduced into the East African environment in the early 1890s and remained a serious threat to cattle and wild animals right into the 1960s. But by the early 1920s, most game species had developed some immunity to the disease. The Maasai had also learned how to reduce the effects of the disease on their animals. In 1919 it was observed that the Maasai immunised their livestock by sending the young to an infected herd so that they could get infected. Those that survived the infection (about 60 per cent) became immune to the disease.¹³⁴ Besides claiming animal lives from time to time, rinderpest became important in the early 1960s when rational utilisation of wild animal products through the export of wild animal meat to international markets was hampered by the claim that Kenya was an endemic rinderpest country.

¹³¹ KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1919-20, Appendix iii, p. 4.

¹³² KNA/KW/23/170, Game Department Annual Report, 1909-10, p. 5.

¹³³ Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, pp. 71 - 76.

¹³⁴ KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1918-19, p. 8.

Drought too took its toll upon Kenya's wildlife in the early twentieth century. Severe droughts in 1908-09, 1917-18, 1921, and 1925 were disastrous for wild animals in several ways. First, they resulted in increased mortality due to starvation and disease.¹³⁵ Second, they led to intensified conflicts of interest between wildlife conservation and farming as wild animals invaded farms in larger numbers in search of food. This resulted in the destruction of wild animals by farmers trying to protect their crops. In 1925 it was noted that game on the Athi-Kapiti plains migrated seasonally to the foothills and uplands to the north, a phenomenon largely brought about by the severe drought that year, 'with consequent depredations on growing crops, grazing and waterholes'.¹³⁶ Third, drought led to an increase in the hunting of wildlife. During severe droughts the government usually allowed Africans to hunt wild animals for food.¹³⁷ This 'privilege' was sometimes abused by people who used the opportunity to hunt for trophies. The hunting was also difficult to stop once the famine was over.

This chapter has examined various aspects of wildlife conservation in Kenya during the early colonial period. The development of the country's wildlife conservation policy during this period was influenced by a wide range of economic, social, political, and ecological factors. The 1895 - 1925 period was the formative era for Kenya's wildlife policy. By 1925 the main structures of wildlife conservation in Kenya were in place.

One of the main drawbacks to wildlife conservation in Kenya during the early colonial period was the availability of a free market for wildlife products such as game meat, hides, reims, and trophies. This encouraged people to hunt wild animals either legally or illegally. The need to convert social wealth into personal wealth, coupled with the colonial government's reluctance to invest in wildlife conservation,

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ KNA/KW/23/72, Game Department Annual Report, 1925, p. 9.

¹³⁷ See *Ibid.*; KNA/KW/23/172, Game Department Annual Report, 1921.

encouraged individuals of all races to exploit wildlife to an unprecedented level. The following complaint was typical of the era:

The other serious menace is the Dutch settler. . . . A hardy pioneer, he is inclined, like the Somali, to turn the resources of the country to his own use. He is almost always an expert shot and an adept at the art of killing. When on hard times he lives on the game selling ivory and rhino horns through Indian middlemen and Giraffe hide whips and reims to his compatriots.¹³⁸

In the eyes of conservationists, the main dangers to wildlife conservation were African poachers, Somali ivory traders, Dutch settlers, and poachers using motorised transport. But as this chapter has shown, the problems of wildlife conservation during the first three decades of colonial rule in Kenya were complex. They ranged from poaching by different groups of people to international crises such as the First World War. There were also ecological problems such as drought and animal disease.

¹³⁸ KNA/KW/27/4, Folio 60, Memorandum by H E Hetcher Frost, Honorary Game Warden, Nairobi, 15 December 1923. p. 15.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AGE OF TOKEN PRESERVATION, 1926 - 1939

The period under review forms an important watershed in the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya, and was generally characterised by increased local and international efforts to preserve the country's fauna. Locally, there was a marked desire to control the illegal exploitation of wild animals through anti-poaching and anti-smuggling campaigns. There were also efforts to minimise land-use conflicts emanating from the conservation of wildlife through wild animal control measures. These and other conservation-related issues received attention at the highest levels of the colonial state (as manifested in events such as the 1930 conference on the preservation of game in the country).

At the international level, bilateral and multilateral conferences were held in Kenya and elsewhere to promote wildlife conservation in the country, the region, and the continent in general. Perhaps the most important of these was the International Conference for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa, held in London in 1933. Such conferences had important policy implications for colonies like Kenya. Among other things, the London conference recommended the establishment of national parks in African territories. This was partly responsible for the establishment of a game policy committee in Kenya in 1939 and the eventual establishment of national parks from 1946.

The increased desire to conserve wildlife in Kenya during the period under examination occurred against a background of a number of important events and processes. These included the Great Depression (ca 1929 - 35); the increasing demands of the colonial political economy, such as taxation; severe droughts in the late 1920s and the 1930s; widespread locust invasions; and an increasing pressure on land. These events and processes affected the drive for wildlife conservation in various adverse ways. Difficult economic times, compounded by drought and famine, for instance, intensified the exploitation of wild animals both for subsistence and profit at a time when the colonial state had been forced to rationalise its

operations because of harsh global economic conditions. Revenue from the Game Department, for example, fell from £31 170 in 1926 to £13 960 in 1935. Consequently the department's expenditure fell from £12 557 in 1929 to £7112 in 1937.¹ The decline in the department's fortunes was partly due to a fall in the number of foreign hunters from 43 in 1930 to as few as 9 in 1932.² The general decline in the number of hunting licences taken out during the 1929-35 period is an indication that local hunters too were adversely affected by the depression.

One development which adversely affected wildlife conservation in Kenya during this and the subsequent period was an increase in the demand for agricultural land among African communities. This was the reason for the establishment of the Kenya Land Commission (1932-34) which had important short- and long-term effects on wildlife conservation in the country. The commission was appointed by the British government in April 1932 to investigate land problems in Kenya.³ It started its work in 1933 and produced a 600-page report in 1934 after hearing 736 witnesses from various backgrounds and receiving 507 memoranda.⁴ Although not mandated to discuss wildlife conservation issues, the commission did touch on land-use conflicts which had a bearing on the conservation of wildlife. For instance, the commission supported the game warden's proposal to establish a national park on the Nairobi commonage.⁵ It also made recommendations which influenced wildlife conservation in the subsequent period. One such recommendation was that land in African

¹ KNA/KW/23/161, Game Department Annual Report, 1937, p. 8.

² *Ibid*, p. 5.

³ The commission was also known as the Carter Land Commission since it was chaired by Morris Carter, a former Chief Justice of Uganda. It had its origins in increasing land grievances in Kenya which had been noted by the Hilton Young Commission appointed by the British government in 1927 to consider the question of a union for east and central Africa. A committee of the British parliament appointed in 1930 to consider issues emanating from the Hilton Young Commission recommended the appointment of a land commission for Kenya.

⁴ C J Duder and G L Simpson, 'Land and Murder in Colonial Kenya: The Leroghi Land Dispute and Powys "Murder" Case', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 25, 3 (1997), 451. The witnesses consisted of members of all the races resident in Kenya at the time. They included contemporary and previous government officials, missionaries, and African chiefs.

⁵ See KNA/KW/1/79, M H Cowie, 'History of the Kenya National Parks' (Typescript, 21 July 1952), p. 15.

reserves be vested in a trust board independent of the government. This led to the creation of the Native Lands Trust Board which theoretically protected African land from alienation for any purpose, including the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries.⁶

Besides giving Africans more control over their land, the land commission also recommended that more land be added to African reserves from crown land. This additional land was to consist of 1474 square miles as compensation for previously alienated land and another 896 square miles to meet prevailing economic needs. A further 259 square miles were to be provided as temporary reserves (which the government could terminate at will), while a further 939 square miles were to be made available as Native Leasehold Areas in which individuals could obtain leases.⁷ The implementation of these recommendations meant the excision of land from areas nominally regarded as wildlife sanctuaries, and this would have devastating effects on wildlife especially from the late 1930s when the government initiated 'development schemes' to stem increasing land degradation. In Machakos District, for example, large quantities of wild animals were killed in Makueni during the resettlement schemes of the late 1930s and 1940s.

It is against this background of a changing local and international environment that the current chapter analyses developments in wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya during the 1926 - 1939 period. An intricate combination of events and processes during the period initiated policy changes which moved the conservation ideal in new directions. Thus, the legal and illegal exploitation of wildlife resources as well as animal control measures led to concerns about declining wild animal populations which in turn led to conferences to chart new conservation policies. The 1933 London convention, for example, had its origins in fears that game reserves were inadequate as institutions for preserving Africa's diminishing fauna. This led to the emergence of the national park ideal.

⁶ A trust board was also established for the white highlands. But the Northern Frontier District and Turkanaland continued to be regarded as crown land.

⁷ Sorrenson, 'Land Policy in Kenya', p. 688.

Struggles Over Wildlife

The 'illegal' exploitation of wild animal resources noticed by government officers in the early 1920s escalated in the subsequent period despite the government's efforts to curb it. As in the preceding period, poaching and the illegal trade in game trophies involved virtually all the communities resident in the country. Whites using motorised transport poached game, mainly near towns, on weekends, while Africans did it in most parts of the country all the time. Indian and Arab traders disposed of the trophies through various routes. However, it was organised groups of African poachers and trophy dealers that really bothered the conservation authorities. This was especially so in the northern, southern, and eastern parts of the country.

In northern Kenya, the Turkana, the Rendille, the Boran, the Gabbra, and the Dorobo poached wild animals for subsistence as well as for profit.⁸ Both the Rendille and Boran poached on Mount Marsabit and the surrounding lowlands. The Boran also poached along the Uaso Nyiro River and around waterholes in the predominantly dry country. The Dorobo, who inhabited forest areas on the Matthews and Nyiro ranges, the Leroghi Plateau, and the Ndoto Mountains, poached mainly in the Northern Game Reserve. The Turkana, like the Somali, poached all over northern Kenya while the Waata hunter-gatherers living near the Boran subsisted almost entirely on game meat.⁹ However, it was the Turkana, the Dorobo, and the Somali who were considered the arch-enemies of game in northern Kenya by the conservationists: the first two for poaching in the game reserve, and the third for facilitating the disposal of the contraband.

Conflicts between the Dorobo of northern Kenya and the colonial administration over wildlife worsened in the late 1920s when the local administration realised that the Northern Game Reserve was nothing but a happy poaching ground for the Dorobo. In 1928 the Game Department sent Roy Whittet to the area to try and address the

⁸ The Samburu, like the Rendille and Boran, killed giraffe for its hide which they used for making sandals and containers (buckets).

⁹ See KNA/KW/23/17, Annual and Monthly Reports, Meru, 1925-26.

problem of Dorobo poaching.¹⁰ As a result, some Dorobo poachers were arrested and convicted. Prosecution and other preventive measures used by the colonial administration to discourage Dorobo poaching seem to have been fairly successful, for in 1932 Whittet, the assistant game warden for the Northern Frontier District (NFD), reported:

In order to cope with the Wanderobo poachers, the DC Samburu, is engaging certain men to be paid on the reward system, i.e. they are to be given a definite sum for each game trap brought in. It is hoped this will augment the tendency, which has been recently noticeable for the Wandorobo to leave the mountains, abandon game killing and come to settle among the Samburu.¹¹

In his July-August 1934 report, Whittet 'was satisfied that conditions in the Northern Game Reserve had improved - especially in that the Derobo [*sic*] appeared to be evolving a more pastoral, and accordingly more responsible, habit than formerly'.¹² Similar optimism was elicited by the Dorobo settlement started by the government at Wamba to teach some 300 Dorobo arable farming. Referring to the settlement in 1937, the Laikipia-Samburu DC exclaimed that '[t]he Laikipia Wanderobo reaped good crops, and agreed to adopt a system of communal pooling of surplus against a possible bad harvest'.¹³ This was the first attempt at arable farming in an otherwise pastoral region. But these were only sporadic successes in a drawn-out struggle over wildlife between the government and the Dorobo.

¹⁰ KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p. 11. Government records imply that these Dorobo were simply impoverished Samburu. As soon as they acquired enough livestock through the then lucrative but risky hunting business they reverted to the pastoral way of life. See KNA/KW/17, Extracts from Marsabit District Annual Report, 1931.

¹¹ KNA/KW/23/17, Annual and Monthly Reports, Meru, 10 January 1932. A similar transformation was reported among the Dorobo of southwestern Kenya by the Narok DC. Northern Frontier District (NFD) was a term used in reference to the administrative districts of Samburu, Marsabit, Isiolo, Garissa, and Wajir. The region was sometimes referred to as the Northern Frontier Province (NFP). Later it came to be known as the Northern Province.

¹² KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department Annual Reports, 1932-34, p.21.

¹³ KNA/DC/SAM/1/2, Laikipia-Samburu District Annual Report, 1936, pp. 8, 19. The Great Depression (1929-35) forced the government to reduce its staff in most departments. This resulted in the abolition of some administrative posts and the merger of administrative units. This is what happened to the two districts of Laikipia and Samburu. The former was a predominantly white settler area while the later was dominated by the Samburu.

The Turkana, whose homeland is the predominantly dry Turkana District, roamed over large areas of the Northern Frontier District/Province during the first half of the twentieth century. By the early 1930s 'wandering pauper Turkana' or 'Turkana Dorobo' were considered one of the greatest obstacles to wildlife conservation in northwestern Kenya by the administration.¹⁴ Using various hunting methods, such as drop-spear traps, drag traps, or organised groups assisted by dogs, the Turkana killed wildlife for both food and profit. However, the profit motive seems to have been dominant by the late 1930s when reports of large parties of Turkana poachers in possession of large hauls of ivory and rhino horns were reported all over the NFD.¹⁵

The problem of Turkana poaching in the late 1930s received a lot of publicity in Kenya and eventually ended up in Whitehall, courtesy of the SPFE. The furore started in July 1937 when a Kitale resident, A L MacDonald, claimed in the *East African Standard* that he had witnessed widespread destruction of game by Turkana poachers in the country around Isiolo and Archer's Post. Later in the month, the Nairobi secretariat was drawn into the controversy when the member for Kiambu raised the issue in the legislative council. Then in January 1938 Elspeth Huxley toured northern Kenya and later wrote to Julian Huxley of the SPFE secretariat expressing her disappointment about an alleged decrease in the rhino population in the region owing to the activities of Turkana poachers who, in her view, were out of control because the Game Department was 'hopelessly understaffed'.¹⁶ Her letter prompted the SPFE to contact the British government, which in turn contacted Nairobi.

Reacting to the controversy, the colonial government assured the SPFE and the British government that everything was being done to control the activities of Turkana poachers. The government also assured the two authorities that the number of game scouts in northern Kenya had been increased and that poor Turkana were

¹⁴ KNA/DC/SAM/1/2, Isiolo District (NFD) Annual Report, 1933, p. 28.

¹⁵ KNA/KW/23/168, Folio 42, Assistant Game Warden, NFD (Meru): Annual Report, 1936, p. 5.

¹⁶ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 170a, Elspeth Huxley to Dr Julian Huxley, 9 February 1938.

being induced to take up arable farming so as to reduce their dependence on wild animals for food. The government specifically pointed to the establishment of an agricultural project for stockless Turkana in Wamba (similar to the Dorobo one) as evidence that the problem was being addressed.¹⁷ Although the controversy seems to have been fuelled by local and foreign conservationists who wished to see national parks established in the country, it is clear that the problem of poaching in northern Kenya and the rest of the country was serious at the time. In a private and confidential communication to the SPFE secretary, the acting game warden had the following comments on the Turkana poaching controversy:

The whole matter is most terribly regrettable. At the moment this department consists of the Acting Game Warden, one Assistant Game Warden, one Vermin Control Officer and one Fish Warden. You will appreciate that I am not in a position to criticise the policy of the Government of Kenya regarding game preservation. I am therefore unable to reply more fully to your letter.¹⁸

The British government was of the view that the critics of the Kenya government had a *prima facie* case regarding its dismal performance in protecting rare species in the Northern Game Reserve. The imperial government therefore advised the colonial administration to establish national game parks according to the requirements of the 1933 London convention. Whitehall also agreed with the critics' observation that Kenya's game department was underfunded and advised Nairobi to spend more of the department's revenue in strengthening it.¹⁹ Interestingly, none of the parties involved in the poaching controversy paid serious attention to the reasons underlying poaching or how the Turkana and other communities could be induced to conserve wild animals. All the parties viewed strict law enforcement as the most viable method of dealing with the problem of poaching and smuggling of game trophies. Elspeth Huxley's views epitomised conservationist thinking at the time: 'It is obviously an

¹⁷ See KNA/KW/27/2, Folios 119, 121a, 124, 170, 171, 176, 178, 200, 200a, 200b, and KNA/DC/SAM/1/2, Laikipia-Samburu District Annual Report, 1937, p. 19.

¹⁸ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 171, Acting Game Warden (F H Clarke) to Honorary Secretary, SPFE (Henry G Laurie), 8 April 1938.

¹⁹ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 200b, Malcolm MacDonald (Secretary of State) to Sir Robert Brooke-Popham (Governor of Kenya), 9 September 1938.

absurd position having a so-called reserve with no law-enforcement staff inside it, and a tribe of game-eating poachers, plus a good and ready market for rhino horn, with free access to it'.²⁰ The Kenya government even went to the extent of rounding up all the Turkana outside their native reserve in an attempt to repatriate them. But a number of factors kept postponing the repatriation until much later.²¹

The other community which was blamed for the destruction of game in northern Kenya was the Somali. This community (which inhabits Somalia, southeast Ethiopia, northeastern Kenya, and Djibouti) not only hunted over large areas of northern and eastern Kenya but also participated in an illegal trade in wild animal products. During the period under examination the activities of Somali poachers and trophy-smugglers were exacerbated by the fact that the Italian colonial administration in Somalia had little concern for wildlife conservation. Consequently big game had virtually disappeared in Somalia by the early 1930s and the Somali on both sides of the border were increasingly turning their attention to the wildlife in northern and eastern Kenya. In 1930 Kenya's game warden regretted 'that ivory and rhino horn smuggling from Kenya into Italian [Somali] Territory continued unabated'.²²

Somali poaching and the trade in game trophies pre-dated colonisation and expanded during the 1920s and 1930s because of the high price of leopard skin, rhino horn, and ivory in the world market. These activities were also a response to the harsh economic conditions of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The situation was compounded by the inadequacy of government resources and the lack of cooperation from the government of Italian Somaliland. In 1931 the Garissa DC summarised the situation:

Times are bad and young men particularly from Italian Somaliland, must make a living somehow and they have only a lovely long lonely

²⁰ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 170a, Elspeth Huxley to Dr Julian Huxley, 9 February 1938.

²¹ For information on the repatriation of the Turkana from other districts see KNA/KW/13/45, G A G Adamson to M H Cowie, 17 January 1948; KNA/KW/23/135, Folios 257, 466; KNA/KW/23/175, Folios 258, 262; KNA/KW/1/73. The final evacuation appears to have occurred in 1958.

²² KNA/KW/23/145, 'Game Department Annual Report, 1930', p.15.

mythical border to separate them from their paradise. Who can blame them? Who can deal with them? The [provincial] Administration cannot. The Italian Government will not however much it protests its good intentions. There remains only the Game Department and it could only cope with it by appointing a Border Game Warden with a car and lorry and an executive of scouts. The Administration could help and indeed the help could be mutual and at least some Trans Border Poaching could be stopped. I feel it is the only way. There remains internal poaching which is also a difficult matter with which to deal. I personally would prefer to kill the market not the killers. The latter are at least stalwart men. I think a lot of poaching by our natives would cease if the Jubaland [Somalia] door was shut.²³

As a result of these shortcomings Somali poachers and traders continued to collect wildlife trophies in north and eastern Kenya and to dispose of them through Somalia. In 1935 the Garissa DC reported that there were gangs of Somali poachers from Somalia in his district. One gang of 'about 35 Somalis from Italian Somaliland' was reportedly hunting elephants and rhino along the Uaso Nyiro River.²⁴

To facilitate their activities the Somali established numerous trading points (*dukas*) in north and eastern Kenya. These were more trophy-collection points than retail outlets. In his monthly report for December 1931 Whittet observed that '[t]he Somalis in Meru and Isiolo, ostensibly traders, [were] the chief receivers and carriers of rhino horn and the increased price of this [had] developed the activities of these gentlemen to an enormous extent'.²⁵ Two years later Whittet noted that most of the shops in Isiolo and Meru were owned either by Somalis or Indians who served as intelligence agents or collectors of trophies for buyers from Italian Somaliland. He asserted that an examination of the *dukas* or shops clearly indicated that the stock of licensed

²³ KNA/KW/23/146, Folio 4, W A W Clarke (DC, Garissa) - Extracts from 1931 Annual Report.

²⁴ KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, Folio 2, An unsigned note to the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Isiolo, NFP, 6 April 1935. The file contains some correspondence on Somali poaching between DCs in the NFP.

²⁵ KNA/KW/23/17, Assistant Game Warden, NFD (Meru): Report, 10 January 1932.

activities did not exceed Shs100. He concluded that the store-holders had other means of making money besides their licensed business.²⁶

According to Whittet, ivory and rhino horn from Maasailand and Ukambani was transported across the River Tana near Tharaka to Kinna and Garbatulla and thence to Italian Somaliland. Somali traders were also the main buyers of trophies from Dorobo, Turkana and other poachers in northern Kenya. On the basis of trophy exports from Somali ports through Zanzibar, the game warden in Kenya estimated that 81 cwt of ivory and 27 cwt of rhino horn left Kenya through Somalia in 1929. These figures dropped to 62 cwt of ivory and 24 cwt of rhino horn in 1930.²⁷

In the late 1930s the trophy trade through Somalia declined owing to a number of factors. First, tension between Italy and Ethiopia in 1935-36 led to insecurity in Somalia and therefore a lull in the trade in animal trophies.²⁸ Second, the Italo-Ethiopian war led to the recruitment of some of the poachers into the military. In 1936 Whittet attributed a decline in poaching in the NFD to '[t]he fact that several of the old-time poachers who usually led the [poaching and smuggling] parties had been recruited by the Italians'.²⁹ Finally, a ban on the export of Italian currency (Lira) during the war 'hit the poachers' market heavily,³⁰ as it became difficult to obtain payment for trophies in Somalia. However, these problems did not deter the enterprising Somali. Some of the poached ivory and rhino horn was even exported through Mombasa after first going through Somalia where it was certified as legally acquired trophies. 'In seven months in 1938, 1408 lbs of rhino horn from Kismayu

²⁶ KNA/KW/23/27, Folio 15, Assistant Game Warden, NFD (Meru) to Game Warden, 24 January 1933. For more details on poaching and trophy-smuggling in the NFD see Peter Thomas Dalleo, 'Trade and Pastoralism: Economic Factors in the History of the Somali of Northeastern Kenya, 1892 - 1948' (PhD Thesis, Syracuse University, 1975), pp. 185 - 200.

²⁷ KNA/KW/23/145, Game Department Annual Report, 1930, p.15.

²⁸ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 31, D D McGoun (Officer-in-Charge, NFP, Moyale) to Colonial Secretary (Nairobi), 30 December 1936.

²⁹ KNA/KW/23/168, Folio 42, Assistant Game Warden, NFD (Meru), Annual Report, 1936, p. 2.

³⁰ KNA/KW/23/161, Officer-in-Charge, NFP (Isiolo) to Game Warden (Nairobi).

was landed at Mombasa, being the trophies of some 200 animals. The amount of ivory similarly landed during 1938 was 10 176 lbs.³¹ Moreover, the difficulties were short-lived and by August 1938 a 'considerable trade in rhino horn, ivory and leopard skins' was going on in some parts of northeastern Kenya 'with good prices prevailing'.³²

The role of the Somali in the destruction of wildlife in northern and eastern Kenya was the object of several conferences between the administrations of Kenya and Somalia. But these discussions did not resolve the issue due to a number of reasons. First, the trophy trade was important to Somalia as it enabled the country to acquire food from Kenya. Traders in Somalia obtained export papers for their trophies on undertaking to import food into Somalia to the value of the trophies exported.³³ Second, the Somali government benefited from the taxes derived from the trade, while some Italian officials stationed in Somalia benefited personally as they participated in the trade freely.³⁴ Third, the open market policy of the Somali government in respect of trophies made prices there much higher than in Kenya. In 1933 when the Kenya government banned trade in leopard skins, their prices fell to Shs5 a piece while in Somalia they sold at Shs100 - 150.³⁵ Fourth, Somali traders and poachers were ready to take risks because of the potential wealth to be derived from the business. They often shot at government officers who challenged them. Finally, the expansive and poorly administered territory as well as elaborate social networks were a boon to the trophy business. In 1928 Storrs-Fox, the DC for Wajir,

³¹ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, p.8.

³² KNA/KW/23/162, Folio 5, Officer-in-Charge, NFP (Marsabit) to Officer-in-Charge, NFP (Isiolo), 9 August 1938.

³³ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, p. 8.

³⁴ See Dalleo, 'The Somali Role in Organized Poaching', p. 480.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 481.

recorded the existence in the district of Diris Omer, 'a low type, declassé Somali', who lived entirely by hunting and supplied ivory to other Somali 'for next to nothing'.³⁶

In southern and southeastern Kenya, the main exploiters of wildlife were the Akamba, Orma, Liangulu, Pokomo, Boni, and Somali. While the activities of some of these communities were localised, those of groups like the Akamba were wide-ranging. Like the Somali, the Akamba hunted over large areas of Kenya. Kamba hunting groups were to be found among the Maasai, the Orma, the Embu, the Meru, and even among Tanzanian communities. In 1937 the acting game warden reported:

Many Akamba have left their homes, have settled in Tanganyika Territory (apparently welcomed there by the Tanganyika authorities), and are persistently hunting in the [Southern] Kenya Game Reserve with poisoned arrows.³⁷

Inhabiting a relatively dry environment in eastern Kenya, the Akamba generally hunted for subsistence. During food shortages they hunted not only in the crown lands surrounding them but also among neighbouring communities. This was common practice during the late 1920s and 1930s, when drought and famine were frequent. In 1936 the assistant game warden in Meru reported:

Poaching still continues in Thichu and Tharaka areas, also along the rivers near Kinna. As usual the Wakamba are the biggest offenders, and are very difficult to catch. There are a lot of Wakamba living in the Meru District, they came here during the [1933-35] famine, but I understand that they are to be removed soon.³⁸

But as Stone observes, food shortages only served to heighten Kamba poaching and trade in wildlife trophies. During the early decades of the twentieth century the Akamba participated in an elaborate trade network in trophies involving the Meru, Somali, Orma, Arabs, and so on.³⁹

³⁶ KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p.12. See Dalleo, 'Trade and Pastoralism', pp. 189 - 196 for details on the elaborate intra- and inter-community social networks.

³⁷ KNA/KW/23/17, Folio 42, F H Clarke (Acting Game Warden) to Colonial Secretary (Nairobi), p. 2.

³⁸ KNA/KW/23/17, Assistant Game Warden, Meru: Annual Report, 6 April 1936, p. 3.

³⁹ Stone, 'Organized Poaching in Kitui District', pp. 444 - 447.

The extent of Kamba participation in the illegal exploitation of wild animal resources mainly came to light during an anti-poaching and anti-smuggling campaign carried out by C G MacArthur of the Game Department in southeastern Kenya in the early 1930s. MacArthur discovered that the Akamba in the Makindu-Tsavo area were killing elephant and rhino in large numbers using poisoned arrows and selling the loot to either Giriama and Indian traders at Kibwezi and Makindu or to Chagga traders who in turn sold it to Indians in Moshi. He also discovered that some of the ivory from Kitui, Kibwezi, and other parts of southeastern Kenya crossed the border into Tanganyika from where it was shipped to Zanzibar for export.⁴⁰ He further found out that the Akamba were selling poisoned arrows to the Maasai and teaching them to poach wild animals. As a result, the Maasai in Rombo had begun hunting elephant and rhino.⁴¹ MacArthur also discovered many colonies of Kamba hunters in Tsavo, Taita, Taveta, and even in Tanzania. In the Rombo River area he reported:

Here Kenya has a Masai chief, Kisobia, a thorough scoundrel, he employs Wachagga and Wakamba. The latter obtain ivory and horns. They are sold to various Wachagga in and around Moshi, and sold to Indians.⁴²

When he reached River Umba on the Kenya-Tanzania border, MacArthur noted:

This is very fine game country. Living along its banks are Wakamba, poaching hard in Kenya and Tanganyika. General headquarters being a small village called Mwa Kijembe. Some of these Wakamba merely hop across to evade Kenya[n] laws and return when found out in Tanganyika Territory. In this some form of action is really urgently required.⁴³

MacArthur's 1930-33 tours of southeastern Kenya also brought him into contact with other wildlife exploiters and the intricacies of the business. In the Tana River region he encountered the Liangulu, Orma, Pokomo, Somali, and Boni. He particularly noted how the various communities cooperated in exploiting wildlife. At Karawa he

⁴⁰ KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 98, MacArthur to Game Warden, 4 November 1930.

⁴¹ KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 105, MacArthur to Game Warden, 24 January 1931.

⁴² KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 120, MacArthur to Game Warden, 10 December 1931.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

observed that ivory collected by the Orma was sold to Somali traders from Kismayu. He also noted that Karawa was a happy hunting ground for Giriama from Malindi. He recorded:

There is considerable amount of poaching of elephant going on in this area chiefly by Giriama tembo [beer] tappers of Makomo Palm. Bands of ten or more wander over this area tapping and selling tembo to Wagalla [Orma]. They generally receive ivory in exchange. In the interval of brewing the Wagiriama spend their time killing elephant.⁴⁴

In the area between Ngao and Kozi, MacArthur came across more revealing information about the trophy trade. He reported:

Wagalla assisted by Wapokomo [have] commenced running ivory across the [Tana] river on large scale. I have collected witnesses of a more or less public sale of 22 tusks of ivory [and] of 4 rhino horn. Sales of 6 to 10 tusks are quite a common occurrence. Three Galla traders were caught with 8, 4 and 2 tusks respectively. They intended to sell these to Herti Somali of Kismayu, who in turn sell it to a European firm in Kismayu. The trade is carried out as follows: One party with camels carrying cash leave[s] Kismayu and cross[es] the boundary above Gibeyo and camp in the bush about mid-way between Witu and Kozi. Another party leaves Kismayu with cattle, sheep and donkeys following the coast to Lamu. At Lamu they sell their stock and buy provisions others collecting their Wagalla and Waboni agents at Mkunobe. These agents travel among the Wagalla and Wapokomo collecting information and giving news that on such and such a date 'Safari Tayari' [the caravan will arrive]. Date of sale [is] fixed and that day only do the buyers appear, make their purchase, and the Abdulla Somali guide the camels and not wasting a moment the safari returns to Kismayu.⁴⁵

MacArthur was not just interested in documenting the incidence of wildlife exploitation in southeastern Kenya. He also sought to contain it. By giving inducements (rewards) to informers, he managed to penetrate some of the poaching and smuggling rings. Consequently numerous Kamba, Orma, Pokomo, Giriama, Boni, and Liangulu game regulation offenders were arrested and prosecuted in various incidents. The convicts were either fined or imprisoned, or suffered both fine and imprisonment. However, the main dealers - the Somali, Arabs, and Indians -

⁴⁴ KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 110, MacArthur to Game Warden, 28 February 1931.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Although the livestock trade was important in its own right, it served as an important cover-up for the trophy trade. See Dalleo, 'Trade and Pastoralism', chapter 4.

proved difficult to nab. He also found it difficult to win the cooperation of headmen among the Orma and Liangulu.⁴⁶

By 1933 MacArthur had gathered enough intelligence information to be able to inflict decisive blows on the trophy trade along the Kenyan coast. By then he knew which companies and individuals were involved in the business, where they were located, how they acquired trophies, and how they disposed of them. One of the firms dealing in the illegal trophy business was Abdulali Jiwali whose headquarters were in Mombasa and had branches in Kibwezi, Kitui, and Ikutha - all rich rhino areas. The firm used to melt large quantities of wax, hide rhino horn in the melted wax, and then export the wax through Mombasa. MacArthur also suspected that licences for exporting tusks and horns were used dozens of times due to the laxity of customs officers.⁴⁷ He also discovered that a lot of ivory and rhino horn was exported through Tanganyika by Arabs and Indians who covertly used large firms such as Smith Mackenzie.⁴⁸

In 1932 another Game Department official, J T Oulton, who was in the Tana River region on a game control mission, discovered more revealing details of wildlife utilisation in the area. By promising Boni poachers light punishments if they cooperated, Oulton was able to get to the bottom of the Orma role in wildlife exploitation. He discovered that the Orma not only held many muzzle-loading guns but also had a network for getting powder and balls. He learned that powder and caps for the guns were obtained from Indians in Malindi by Giriama traders who hid them in their cloth and maize merchandise. Balls for cartridges were made by specialists among the Pokomo and the Orma and sold at Shs2 for 5 balls. The powder merchants and ball manufacturers also supplied arrows at Sh.1 for 5.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 137, MacArthur to Game Warden, 25 November 1933.

⁴⁷ KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 127, MacArthur to Game Warden, 14 March 1933.

⁴⁸ KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 124, MacArthur to Game Warden, 1 September 1932.

⁴⁹ KNA/KW/23/144, Folio 59, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 4 April 1932.

Oulton estimated that there were about a thousand guns among the Orma, with some people holding as many as four. Orma chiefs and headmen had guns which were used for poaching. Gunyo Bajilla, the 'paramount' chief of the Orma, had a 303 gun while a government headman had two guns.⁵⁰ According to Oulton's informers, individuals like Kodelidida and Shongola had become rich and powerful through the ivory trade. The former was said to have encouraged the Orma to defy game regulations as he could raise any fine imposed on them. The latter impersonated the government by trying cases and collecting fines in ivory. He also had many trade links with the Somali. Oulton's discoveries led him to conclude: 'This part of the country is a cesspool of corruption and almost every single native seems to be incriminated in some breach of the game laws'.⁵¹

According to Kelly, the Orma did not want to have anything to do with the government. They therefore paid their taxes promptly so that they could be left alone. Raising money for taxes was easy for them since 'ivory provided an easy source of income'.⁵² Oulton's activities were therefore unwelcome. Indeed, Gunyo Bijilla organised a large meeting attended by chiefs, headmen, and ivory traders in which a decision to raise money to deal with the menace caused by Oulton and his Boni collaborators was reached.⁵³ No wonder the activities of McArthur and Oulton did not go down well with some DCs. At one point MacArthur suspected that the Kipini DC, Castle-Smith, was serving the interests of the Indian ivory traders in Lamu and had been bribed to say that elephants were destroying crops in order to justify their killing.⁵⁴ In 1932 when the same DC, who had been transferred to Garissa, heard that Oulton was about to tour his district he instructed him to confine his activities to game control. On the issue of investigating game regulation offences, the DC warned Oulton: 'I do not welcome scallywags, spies and informers from other districts

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ KNA/KW/23/144, Folio 40, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 2 July 1932.

⁵² Kelly, 'In the Wildest Africa', p. 195.

⁵³ KNA/KW/23/57, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 2 April 1932.

⁵⁴ KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 107, McArthur to Game Warden, 5 February 1931.

working among my people unless they are duly accredited Game Department Scouts and even then I think their work and methods need very close scrutinising'.⁵⁵

Oulton also discovered that chiefs among the Pokomo, the Kitui Akamba, and the Somali were deeply involved in the illegal exploitation of wildlife. A Pokomo chief called Omari in the Malalu area along River Tana not only allowed his people to trap wild animals but also demanded some of the meat for himself and his council of elders. He also levied tribute on all the ivory crossing the river, arranged sales, and acted as a go-between in the trade. According to Oulton's informers, Omari encouraged people to kill elephant and then reported to the DC that the animals were killed while raiding crops. Omari was further accused of buying his people's silence by promising to pay their taxes for them. Omari also collaborated with Boni poachers.⁵⁶ There were further allegations that Pokomo elders killed wild animals in order to acquire wealth and so be initiated into the *Wakiju* secret society.⁵⁷

Somali chiefs along the Tana, such as Sheikh Asman and Istambula Abdi, also dealt in ivory. The former was from Marubi near Mkunumbi and had an associate called Guro Ali.⁵⁸ Kamba chiefs in southern Kitui worked in tandem with Orma trophy traders such as Kodelidida.⁵⁹ Stone states that in the 1930s some Kamba chiefs and headmen were suspected of involvement in poaching activities by the district administration. Headman Nzuki wa Muliki of Kanziko Location was one of the suspects.⁶⁰

In southwestern Kenya, the Gusii, Luo, Kipsigis, Dorobo, and Kuria also poached wild animals during the period under review. Dorobo groups in this region poached animals perpetually, while Kisii and Kuria poaching parties invaded the Trans-Mara

⁵⁵ KNA/KW/23/144, Folio 48, DC Garissa, NFD to J T Oulton, 13 February 1932.

⁵⁶ KNA/KW/23/144, Folio 31, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 26 January 1932.

⁵⁷ KNA/KW/144, Folio 40, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 2 July 1932.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ KNA/KW/144, Folio 57, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 2 April 32.

⁶⁰ Stone, 'Organized Poaching in Kitui District', p. 441.

area occasionally. In this region the profit motive does not seem to have been as intense as it was in northern, eastern, and southeastern Kenya. However, Kipsigis poachers did sell game meat to their Luo neighbours.⁶¹

The most difficult group to deal with in southwestern Kenya were the Kuria. Like most African communities, the Kuria had no respect for colonial game laws and were ready to defend themselves whenever challenged. In 1933 the assistant game warden in Narok recorded:

These wild and worldly Africans have little respect for law in any form and practically none whatever for the law controlling the destruction of game. It would require the attention of an European with a full staff of Game Scouts to properly restrain the hunting Watende [Kuria]. They encroach many miles into Masai country. They have less fear for the Government than they have of the Masai. A couple of Game Scouts who have had the temerity to interfere with Watende while hunting would certainly be beaten up, if not killed. These charming people are a very difficult problem.⁶²

As in nineteenth-century England, where game in a wild state was not considered the property of any individual,⁶³ Kenyan poachers did not view poaching as a crime. Regarding game as a gift of nature, poachers did not see any justice in the laws that prevented them from exploiting it. This was especially true for Africans who were not even allowed to buy hunting licences. Consequently, poachers used various methods to defy what they saw as skewed game laws. During the 1920s and 1930s, when game scouts were unarmed, Africans used poisoned arrows to evade arrest for breaking game laws. In 1939 the game warden recorded:

Wakamba in bands of anything up to 80 - perhaps more, but that was the greatest number ever seen together by my people - crossed the railway day by day into the Masai reserve [Southern Game Reserve] and spread alarm and despondency among scouts and tribal police no less than among the game. They were all armed with most efficient poisoned arrows, which they showed no compunction whatever in using to avert capture. Difficult folk to deal with accordingly; for while

⁶¹ KNA/KW/23/162, Folio 6, D F Smith (Honorary Game Warden, Muhoroni) to Game Warden, 19 August 1938.

⁶² KNA/KW/23/17, Assistant Game Warden, Narok: Annual Report, 1933, p. 2.

⁶³ Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England, 1750 - 1900* (London, 1996), p.4.

with a bullet wound there is a 3 to 1 chance of recovery, with an arrow wound there is - perhaps - one chance in a hundred only⁶⁴

Poachers also enjoyed sympathy from the general public as they were not perceived as criminals. On the contrary they were viewed as heroes whose only crime was the desire to acquire wealth. They therefore counted on the public to inform them of intended raids by government authorities. As the following record shows, this was possible even outside one's community:

Constant reports have been brought [in] from the Balambala-Ameyo region of the upper [Tana] river of poaching by armed Wakamba. Several strong police patrols were sent out but without success. One of the main difficulties in dealing with these raiders is that they are often in league with the less reputable elements of the Galla [Orma] and River tribes [Pokomo] and consequently news of the approach of a patrol is quickly broadcast to the poachers concerned. Anything but a strong-armed police patrol is of course useless and dangerous owing to the poachers' use of poisoned arrows.⁶⁵

Poaching among the African communities therefore had the status of what Emsley calls a social crime.⁶⁶ It was a form of protest which most members of society could identify with. It was what Taylor classifies as 'contentious theft' and can be compared with sheep rustling in nineteenth-century England, which was viewed as an 'entrepreneurial enterprise'.⁶⁷ In colonial Kenya, communities whose pre-colonial economies had depended on raiding their neighbours for land and cattle tended to turn to poaching as a means of survival after the introduction of *Pax Britannica* made cattle rustling illegal. Under the restricted colonial economy, poaching was one means of survival. This is probably what Keith F T Caldwell had in mind when he said: 'To the native poacher with his poisoned arrow the rhino is "money for jam"'.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, p. 9. Also see Stone, 'Organised Poaching in Kitui District', p. 447.

⁶⁵ KNA/KW/23/162, Folio 13, Extracts from the Provincial Annual Report by Officer-in-Charge of Northern Frontier to Game Warden, 3 April 1939, p. 64. The Somali relied on the Pokomo to hide rifles in their huts. See Dalleo, 'Trade and Pastoralism', p. 192.

⁶⁶ Emsley, *Crime and Society in England*, pp. 39, 82.

⁶⁷ David Taylor, *Crime, Policing and Punishments in England, 1750 - 1914* (London, 1998), p. 43.

⁶⁸ KNA/KW/27/1, Folio 36, Captain Keith F T Caldwell's Memorandum to the *Field*, 28 March 1933, p. 5. Caldwell was a honorary game warden in Kenya in the 1930s.

In 1934 the game warden elaborated further on the causes of poaching among Kenya Africans when he said:

Crops failed far and wide; and the distressed native husbandman too often turned forthwith to hunting as a solution to his troubles: his bodily hunger and the clamour of government for 'kodi' [tax] could both be assuaged if he could slay a fine elephant or rhino or even giraffe, and away into the bush he went forth.⁶⁹

Despite these clear insights into the context of African poaching, conservation authorities continued to see it as a manifestation of primitiveness which could lead to regression if left uncontrolled. This has a parallel in nineteenth-century English society where poaching was generally perceived as the first step towards more serious crimes. As the following comments show, African poaching in colonial Kenya was associated with idleness and lack of initiative:

It is unending in its evil results and tends to increase lawlessness and laziness among the tribes. For a young man buys, begs, or borrows a trap, catches a leopard [,] pays off his debt and catches more and finds he can lead an indolent life of comparative wealth away from the restraint of Government or his tribal authorities.⁷⁰

African poaching was therefore detested not only because of its negative effects on wildlife but also because it was an easy source of wealth which enabled young men to stay out of the colonial labour market. But the need to draw Africans into the colonial system either as suppliers of cheap labour or peasant producers was couched in terms of morality and development. The following statement by the game warden is instructive:

An existence dependent on hunting is obviously the most primitive of all human conditions. Further, as is admitted by those with any experience of natives, until hunting ceases to be a considerable part of the activities of any tribe, no development is possible: the people are scattered, there is no tribal authority, there is no administrative control. The placid pursuits of husbandry commence where hunting ends.⁷¹

⁶⁹ KNA/23/160, Game Department Annual Report, 1932-34, p. 15.

⁷⁰ KNA/KW/23/47, Folio 8, DC, Garissa - Extracts from the Annual Report for 1932, p. 33.

⁷¹ KNA/KW/27/3, Memorandum 1: The Status of Game in Native Reserves, p. 7. The memorandum was one of the two memoranda presented by the game warden to the Kenya Land Commission (1932-34). The myth of the 'lazy native' was also used to justify high tax rates for Africans.

In the game warden's view, 'the hunting life once adopted is hardly relinquished, and it spells retrogression'.⁷² No wonder the government attempted to transform hunter-gatherers like the Dorobo and pastoralists like the Turkana into crop producers.

But Africans were not the only poachers in Kenya during this period. Some whites too exploited wildlife illegally. In 1928 the game warden complained of what he termed the use of motor cars 'in the deflowering of Africa'.⁷³ Some Europeans with cars were accused of entering the Southern Game Reserve near Nairobi at night and shooting animals after dazzling them with the glare of the headlights of their vehicles. Game scouts were no match for these individuals as they were not only armed but very mobile. Besides, it was difficult to identify them by the registration numbers of their cars as they operated at night. By 1930 cases of using motor cars and lorries to chase game were common in areas around townships. The Kendong Valley and Athi-Kapiti plains were most affected by this practice. Although the records do not show how widespread the practice was, it must have been common as it elicited enough concern as to lead to the enactment of regulations prohibiting the use of motor vehicles and aeroplanes for hunting purposes in May 1931.⁷⁴

In 1928 the government also banned the sale of all game products unless permission in writing was obtained from the game warden.⁷⁵ This ban was essentially directed towards individuals such as Swanepoel, De Jager, Botha, and other Dutchmen who had made the shooting of zebra on unoccupied farms their way of life. These boers were allegedly killing over a thousand zebra a week and selling the hides at four to seven shillings a piece.⁷⁶ Dutch poaching, like African poaching, was frowned upon by the colonial authorities in Kenya. This parallels the situation in the Transvaal in the nineteenth century where 'wildlife was being transformed from an economic

⁷² KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department Annual Reports, 1932-34, p. 17.

⁷³ KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p. 10.

⁷⁴ KNA/KW/23/146, Game Department Annual Report, 1931, p. 20.

⁷⁵ KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p. 20.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 27.

resource available to everyone, to a commodity reserved for the enjoyment of the ruling white group. Social status, property holding and wildlife were combining to become the prerogatives of a landed gentry and to be withheld from the poorer sections of society, both white and African'.⁷⁷

During the 1930s white poaching declined because of the following reasons. First, most white poachers killed animals such as zebra and buffalo for their hide. But a fall in the price of cattle hides in the 1930s crowded zebra and buffalo hides off the market.⁷⁸ Second, a government ban on the sale of wild animal products without a licence in 1928 greatly limited the market available to the white poacher who, unlike the African poacher, had little access to the outlets in Somalia and Tanganyika. Third, the economic depression in the 1930s also led to a contraction of the local market for wild animal products. The depression also forced 'many of the "scallywag" type of white man' to leave the country in search of a better life elsewhere.⁷⁹ Fourth, the establishment of the institution of honorary game warden in areas of white settlement in 1922 and their increase over time reduced the incidence of poaching in these areas.⁸⁰ These volunteers helped settlers deal with problem animals and also reported game regulation offences. Fifth, gold prospecting in Lolgorien and Kakamega in the 1930s also diverted many settlers from poaching excursions. Finally, the abolition of the cheap £2 resident private land licences also reduced the incidence of poaching in the white highlands. However, sporadic settler poaching was reported in several areas in the 1930s. In 1932 the Thika DO reported that

⁷⁷ Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, 1995), p.13.

⁷⁸ Previously, zebra and buffalo hides were shipped to Asia where they were used for the manufacture of sandal soles. See KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department Annual Reports, 1932-34, p. 69; KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p. 10.

⁷⁹ KNA/KW/23/146, Folio 6, T H Clarke (Assistant Game Warden, Narok) to Game Warden, 6 April 1932.

⁸⁰ The number of honorary game wardens had risen to 100 in 1937. KNA/KW/23/161, Game Department Annual Report, 1937, p. 1.

settlers on the farms adjoining the Yatta Plateau were poaching there. This led to the prosecution of poachers like Stuart Watt who was fined Shs1200.⁸¹

Licensed Hunting

Kenya's reputation as a sportsman's paradise pre-dated formal colonisation. During the late nineteenth century many foreigners were attracted to the country by its abundant wildlife and benign climate. Hunting was even used to lure white settlers into the country at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result of the hunter's paradise image, a vibrant hunting (safari) industry evolved in the country from the early colonial period. This industry facilitated the development of the country in many ways. It not only led to investment in the hotel industry, for example, but also led to the creation of jobs for porters, guides, cooks, gun-bearers, and guards.⁸² The safari industry also earned the country revenue through hunting licences and various taxes. In 1899 the industry earned the country £5901, or 8.75 per cent of total revenue, through hunting licences and taxes on trophies. In 1904-05 earnings from the industry reached £11 311, or 9.25 of the country's total revenue. In 1909-10 the earnings rose to £13 617, although their contribution to the country's total revenue dropped to 2.75 per cent.⁸³

During the period under examination, licensed hunting in Kenya meant different things to the parties involved. To most resident white hunters, hunting was both a sport and a source of income. Accounts of white hunters living comfortably from hunting during this period are quite common.⁸⁴ To the visiting hunter, the excitement

⁸¹ KNA/KW/23/146, Folio 2, DO in charge of Thika to Game Warden, 8 February 1932; KNA/KW/23/47, Folio 5, DO in charge of Thika - Extracts from 1932 Annual Report, 23 January 1933.

⁸² Theodore Roosevelt's 1909 safari, for instance, had 500 porters and many cooks, personal servants, and gun-bearers. Among the early hotels were Norfolk Hotel, New Stanley Hotel and Muthaiga Club - all of which started before the First World War. See Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, pp.136, 137.

⁸³ Kelly, 'In the Wildest Africa', pp. 138, 139.

⁸⁴ See Blundell, *A Love Affair with the Sun*, p. 12.

and the trophy were equally important. To the government, licensed hunting was an important aspect of wildlife conservation policy as it was a means of culling wild animal populations while earning revenue for the colony. Collections from hunting licences usually formed about a half of the annual revenue the government earned through the Game Department in the late 1920s. In 1926 various hunting licences contributed £16 480 to the Game Department's total earnings of £31 170.⁸⁵

In 1925 revenue from licensed hunting peaked at £17 661 before dropping slightly to £16 490 in 1926 and £15 478 in 1927.⁸⁶ This corresponded with a decline in the number of foreign visitors from 56 in 1925 to 35 in 1926 and 24 in 1927.⁸⁷ In 1928 revenue from game licences declined further to £11 073 (in spite of a slight increase in the number of foreign visitors) due to an increase in the cost of licences. The increase in the cost of licences for hunting elephant to £50 for the first elephant killed and £100 for the second was very effective as it made ivory-hunting unprofitable. Consequently resident full (one-year) licences decreased from 425 in 1927 to 301 in 1928, while resident private land licences fell from 817 to 647 over the same period. In contrast, there was an increase in the number of 14-day resident licences from 108 to 139.⁸⁸ This may have been in response to market conditions, a proof that hunting was more of an economic activity than leisure to most resident hunters.

Somehow there was an increase in both the number of foreign and resident hunters as well as revenue in 1929. But from 1930 the effects of the Great Depression on the industry started to show. Revenue from hunting licences fell from £15 285 in 1929 to £7163 in 1932, while foreign visitors decreased from 43 in 1930 to 9 in 1932.⁸⁹ The government was therefore forced to reduce the fees for licences for hunting elephant

⁸⁵ KNA/KW/23/146, Game Department Annual Report, 1931, p. 5; KNA/KW/23/161, Game Departmental Annual Report, 1937, p. 8.

⁸⁶ KNA/KW/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p. 8.

⁸⁷ KNA/KW/23/146, Game Department Annual Report, 1931, p. 5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*; KNA/KW/23/161, Game Departmental Annual Report, 1937, p. 5.

to £35 for the first elephant and £50 for the second. Fees payable for the one-year visitor and resident licences as well as the 14-day resident licences were also reduced in December 1933. But this did not translate into increased purchase of the licences as the price of ivory was very low.⁹⁰ However, the worst impact of the depression on the safari industry was reached in 1935 when hunting licences earned the Game Department £5923 out of a total revenue of £13 960.⁹¹ After the depression revenue from hunting licences continued to form a big proportion of the earnings of the Game Department. In 1937 game licences contributed £8194 to the department's total revenue of £15 330.⁹²

One important impact of the depression on wildlife conservation in Kenya is that it led to increased poaching. Droughts, locust invasions, and famine conditions in many parts of the country in the early 1930s combined with the difficult economic times to induce many Africans to poach wild animals.⁹³ Even licensed hunters, especially employers who used game meat as rations for their employees, tended to overshoot their licence quotas.⁹⁴ It is also possible that the fall in the number of licences purchased by resident white hunters was matched by increased poaching amongst them. Yet the government reduced allocations to the Game Department during this time when it should have taken the challenges posed to conservation by the depression and concomitant conditions. The department's expenditure was reduced from £12 557 in 1929 to £7112 in 1937. This was in spite of the fact that the

⁹⁰ KNA/KW/23/146, Game Department Annual Report, 1931, p. 23; KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department Annual Reports, 1932-34, p. 93.

⁹¹ KNA/KW/23/161, Game Departmental Annual Report, 1937, pp. 5, 8.

⁹² KNA/KW/23/161, Game Departmental Annual Report, 1937, p. 7.

⁹³ In 1934 the government allowed subsistence hunting in Kilifi, Rumuruti, Embu, Kitui, Machakos and Baringo where zebra provided fairly fat meat despite the drought. But as already indicated, famine usually heightened the need to hunt for profit. See KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department Annual Reports, 1932-34, p. 85; Stone, 'Organized Poaching in Kitui District', p. 442.

⁹⁴ KNA/KW/23/145, Game Department Annual Report, 1930, p. 11.

department's annual earnings exceeded expenditure by more than £5000 each year throughout the depression period.⁹⁵

An important development affecting wildlife conservation in Kenya from 1934 was the formation of the East African Professional Hunters Association (EAPHA) that year. The association, whose patron was the governor, generally aimed at promoting professionalism within the hunting industry. In particular, the EAPHA wanted to work hand in hand with the East African administrations in promoting the preservation of the fauna and flora of the region by insisting on sportsmanlike practices in the hunting industry. The formation of the association was a response to accusations of malpractice (such as overshooting and the unorthodox use of motor cars for hunting) among professional hunters. The association undertook to discipline any of its members, clients, or servants who disturbed, molested, or destroyed fauna and flora while hunting or photographing.⁹⁶

As stake-holders in wildlife conservation, professional hunters helped to check all the forms of poaching they encountered while guiding their clients in the various hunting areas.⁹⁷ In 1936 they drew the attention of the Kenya government to the increased destruction of elephant and rhino in many parts of the country. This prompted the colonial secretary to write to all PCs seeking their views concerning methods of curbing the poaching.⁹⁸ Professional hunters sometimes assisted the poorly-staffed Game Department with game control work. In 1937, when elephants caused destruction in many parts of the country, professional hunters were hired by the department to help reduce the populations of the rampaging herds.⁹⁹ The hunters usually received part of the trophy collected through the culling activities as payment

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 8.

⁹⁶ KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department Annual Report, 1932-34, p. 89.

⁹⁷ The professional hunter in Kenya 'emerged gradually out of the ordinary pioneer farmer who shot well and was attempting to earn extra income'. Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneer*, p. 137.

⁹⁸ KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, Folio 13, 2 December 1936.

⁹⁹ KNA/KW/23/161, Game Department Annual Report, 1937, p. 9.

for their services to the department. Those to be recruited for animal control work were thoroughly scrutinised to minimise the possibilities of attracting opportunists.

Game Control Measures

By the early 1920s the Game Department had realised that conservation of wildlife was bound to attract little sympathy from African and European farmers/pastoralists unless something was done to minimise conflicts emanating from conservation policies. Since the policies did not give individuals much leeway to protect themselves and their property from marauding wild animals, the government undertook to limit the tension between wildlife conservation and other interests. This led to the development of the practice of wild animal control, which essentially entailed the destruction of animals that threatened agricultural activities or human life. Animals which raided crops, preyed on livestock, spread human or livestock disease, competed with livestock for pasture and water, or threatened human life became the responsibility of the government. By reducing such threats the government hoped to win support for its conservation efforts from communities interacting with wildlife.

The realisation that game/vermin control was an essential aspect of wildlife conservation led to the establishment of the institution of honorary game warden in Kenya in 1922.¹⁰⁰ With only a skeleton staff and a whole country to attend to, the game warden in 1921 requested the governor to allow the department to recruit keen sportsmen interested in game preservation as honorary game wardens. This led to the appointment of four such officers in 1922. By 1937, when the Game Department had only six officers and some seventy African scouts, the number of honorary game wardens in the country had risen to one hundred. These wardens mainly worked among white settlers and without pay. 'They enforced regulations, were active in game control, and were of immensurable assistance to the overworked department, freeing the staff to spend most of their time in African areas.'¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ The terms 'game' and 'vermin' varied from one context to another. In the early colonial period all the carnivores were regarded as vermin. 'Game' generally referred to all wild animals.

¹⁰¹ Kelly, 'In the Wildest Africa', p. 160.

In 1928 the Game Department recruited two game officers to undertake animal control work. These officers travelled throughout the country responding to complaints about wild animals. They poisoned, trapped, or shot offending animals in both African and European areas. They also organised game drives aimed at confining wild animals to designated areas. In these activities they worked closely with the emerging African authorities (Local Native Councils) as well as provincial administrators.¹⁰² The former provided some of the funds required for control work while the latter were duty bound to enforce game regulations. Game control officers sometimes also enlisted hunting groups such as the Dorobo in vermin control activities and rewarded them with the resultant meat.¹⁰³

Since Game Department personnel, honorary game wardens, and administrators could not deal with all cases of marauding animals, the government allowed both Africans and whites to kill animals which posed an immediate danger to people or property. Settlers were provided with free ammunition by the government while Africans were largely left to their own devices, except in the Tana River region where a few chiefs were supplied with guns for animal control purposes. Initially the killer of a marauding animal was allowed to keep any part of the animal he deemed useful as compensation for the loss incurred. The government even provided permits to facilitate the disposal of trophies so acquired.¹⁰⁴ However, this policy was reversed in the 1930s under allegations that it promoted poaching among both Africans and whites. In the Tana River region in the 1930s the Game Department accused DCs

¹⁰² Local Native Councils (LNCs) were set up in African reserves in Kenya from 1924 and were made up of a few elected councillors and government-appointed chiefs. The DC of the particular district was the president of the LNC while the PC was free to attend sessions of the council. Where a community - like the Maasai and the Akamba - inhabited more than one administrative district, the community's LNCs sometimes met to discuss matters of importance to the whole community. Such joint LNC meetings were often chaired by the PC of the particular province. From the 1950s LNCs were renamed African District Councils (ADCs). The government required the local authorities in the various African reserves to provide money for the poison for killing vermin such as baboons, hyenas, and bush pigs. They were also required to pay for the ammunition used in culling animals like zebra, wildebeest, and buffalo.

¹⁰³ KNA/KW/23/163, Folio 1, J D Bonham to Game Warden, 15 February 1939.

¹⁰⁴ KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, pp. 20 - 22.

of promoting poaching among Africans by allowing them to kill wild animals on the pretext that they were crop raiders. While DCs in the region sympathised with African farmers and allowed them to kill animals in the vicinity of their farms, Game Department officials saw this as giving Africans *carte blanche* to kill elephant and other game for profit. One game officer commented: 'Government may do anything they like - put up iron barriers or seas around the shambas [farms] - all to no purpose. [Africans] want to continue poaching and doing doodle-em-duck over the [Somali] border'.¹⁰⁵

Since the line between killing in defence of person or property and poaching was difficult to draw, the government changed the policy to make animals killed in game control activities its property. From around 1933 it became mandatory for all the trophies emanating from animal control activities to be handed over to the government. This policy tended to exacerbate anti-conservation feeling amongst the populace as there was now no compensation for damage caused by wildlife. People detested the idea of risking life and limb protecting their property from wild animals only to be told to hand over the trophies to the government when they succeeded in killing the offending animal(s).

To pastoralists and ranchers, offensive animals included plains game which competed with livestock for pasture, water, and salt-licks. Gregarious herbivores such as zebra, wildebeest, and buffalo posed a formidable challenge to pastoral economies especially during periods of low rainfall. Carnivores such as lion, leopard, wild dog, and hyena were also a bother. The elephant too was disliked by pastoralists and ranchers as it fouled water sources during the dry period. Also unpopular with the stock-owners were the many herbivores which transmitted diseases such as nagana, east coast fever, foot-and-mouth disease, pleuropneumonia, rinderpest, and anthrax. Such animals included bush pig, buffalo, wildebeest, and eland.

¹⁰⁵ KNA/KW/23/145, Folio 107, MacArthur to Game Warden, 5 February 1931.

During the period under consideration, ranchers in Laikipia, Uasin Gishu, and the Rift Valley often appealed to the government for game control services. In 1931 buffalo had to be cleared from the Karati Forest near Naivasha as they threatened the fledgeling ranching industry by competing with 'imported pure-bred bulls for favours of domestic stock on the neighbouring farms'.¹⁰⁶ It was also feared that the highly mobile buffalo herds in the area would transmit diseases to the livestock. In 1931 lions also caused problems in Laikipia where a settler near Rumuruti lost 22 head of cattle in the course of one year. The local honorary game warden, G Colville, had problems nabbing the elusive beasts.¹⁰⁷

In April 1935 settlers in the Nanyuki-Naro Moru region 'complained very bitterly that all their grazing was being eaten by game animals [which] left none for their stock'.¹⁰⁸ The chief culprits here were oryx and zebra. These complaints led to culling operations in the affected areas. However, the most extensive game control operations ever undertaken by the Game Department commenced in September 1939 and continued into 1940. The objective of the campaign was to reduce zebra and other plains game in the Laikipia-Nanyuki-southern Samburu area where competition between game and livestock had become acute. By the end of 1939 4700 animals, 90 per cent of them zebra, had been killed. This was just a small fraction of the herds as the game warden believed that ten times that number needed to be killed before the department could consider itself on top of the situation.¹⁰⁹ In the game warden's view, the settlers were partly to blame for this problem:

I cannot here fully review the position or the factors which have contributed to it. Suffice to say that, largely owing to the killing off of carnivora by European pastoralists, the herds of plains game have increased vastly during the last fifteen years.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ KNA/KW/23/146, Game Department Annual Report, 1931, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁸ KNA/KW/23/17, Meru Assistant Game Warden's Annual Report, 6 April 1936, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, p. 10.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* By the early 1930s Africans had hunted the unprotected leopards to near extinction because of the high price of their skins while white hunters concentrated on lions for similar and other reasons. This resulted in an increase in vermin such as baboon and bush pig as

The other cause of the increase in the population of zebra was a fall in the price of their hides in the late 1920s. In 1928 the game warden had declared that zebra had 'ceased to be a pest [,] since the value of their hides [had] completed their virtual extinction in almost all the agricultural areas'.¹¹¹ But the collapse of the zebra hide market during the depression led to a proliferation of these animals in all the pastoral areas.

African pastoral areas had similar problems as settler ranching areas. Hyena, wild dog, and lion preyed on pastoralists' stock while zebra and other plains game competed with livestock for grass and water. In 1928 one of the control officers in the Game Department spent two months in the Southern Game Reserve poisoning hyena which had become a menace to Maasai stock as well as to young wild herbivores.¹¹² Lions were also troublesome in parts of the NFP and Tanaland in 1930.¹¹³ However, the pastoralist's number one enemy during the climatically difficult late 1920s and 1930s was the gregarious herbivore. Competition for pasture between herbivores and cattle led to complaints which forced the Game Department to carry out game extermination campaigns in the Maasai and Samburu districts. In 1938 the government hired John Bonham, a hunter, 'to kill some 8000 zebra and 5000 wildebeest in Narok to provide extra grazing land and to reduce the incidence of malignant catarrh'.¹¹⁴ In the first half of 1939 he killed another 2846 zebra and 1733 wildebeest.¹¹⁵

Samburu District, practically a game reserve, presented a difficult livestock-wildlife problem to the colonial administration. During the 1927-28 drought livestock died in

well as most herbivores.

¹¹¹ KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p. 16.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p. 17.

¹¹³ KNA/KW/23/145, Game Department: Annual Report, 1930, pp. 18, 23.

¹¹⁴ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 224.

¹¹⁵ See KNA/KW/23/163, Folios 1 - 6 dated from 15 February 1939 to 7 July 1939. During the 1934 drought the Narok DC estimated that about 116 700 Maasai head of cattle had died of starvation. See KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/2, Narok District Annual Report, 1934, p. 1.

large numbers from trypanosomiasis because the Samburu were forced by circumstances to graze their animals in areas known to have been heavily infested with tsetse fly: 'The game in the district [also] suffered considerably from the prolonged and severe drought . . .'¹¹⁶ By the early 1930s Samburu cattle could not get enough pasture within the reserve especially during droughts. Consequently a lot of livestock died during droughts and the administration was sometimes forced to allow the Samburu to graze outside their reserve in order to avert catastrophes. During the 1933 drought the PC allowed them to graze temporarily on the southern side of the Uaso Nyiro River. But this did not prevent the death of 20 per cent of the community's livestock.¹¹⁷ By the late 1930s the competition between wildlife and livestock was also hurting the environment. In 1937 Keith Caldwell reported:

. . . doubtless when the Samburu are not using the Horr streams there is a lot of game in the valley. Whilst I was there it was, of course, dry weather and the whole valley was nothing but a dust heap with cattle and goats watering all the time.¹¹⁸

Problems of inadequate pasture and land degradation among the Samburu and other pastoralists like the Maasai were usually viewed in terms of overstocking by the government, settlers, and conservationists. These groups therefore advocated destocking as the solution to the problem of land degradation among pastoralists. Rarely was the presence of large herds of wild herbivores in pastoral areas perceived as part of the problem except by administrative officers who usually defended their charges against accusations of a supposed 'cattle complex'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ KNA/DC/SAM/1/1, Samburu District Annual Report, 1928, p. 20.

¹¹⁷ KNA/DC/SAM/1/2, Isiolo District (NFD) Annual Report, 1933, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 95, Keith J T Caldwell to Game Warden, 19 April 1937.

¹¹⁹ Perhaps one of the strongest defences against accusations that pastoralists had an irrational attachment to cattle and that they contributed little to the development of the Kenyan economy came from the Narok DC in 1928. He said: 'An accusation is frequently brought against the Masai that they produce nothing and take no part in the economic progress of the colony. The value of the exports from this district for the year 1928 amounts to some £52,071.4.6 being £1.14.3 per capita of the estimated population, notwithstanding the fact that owing to the drought the value of the ghee sold was £2,000 below the normal. It must be remembered that the Masai are essentially a cattle owning tribe, yet there is no outlet whatsoever from this district for beasts on the hoof. Any cattle destined for the markets must be trekked to Mbagathi, an East Coast Fever (ECF) area which is some eighty miles from Narok - through large tracts of waterless country infested with lions and hyaenas. It is

Because of land degradation in Samburuland, the government decided in 1937 to cull Samburu cattle during the following year. This agitated the Samburu who insisted that the government should cull the game on their land before they could consider reducing their herds. Consequently the Game Department eliminated some 3000 zebra in 1937. This did not satisfy the governor who ordered that another 5000 zebra be exterminated before he could approve the culling of livestock in Samburuland. But when the governor eventually authorised the destocking, the Samburu refused to cooperate and instead started defying government authority. They began grazing in forest reserves and in areas outside their reserve. They also threatened government chiefs, reinstated *moranship* (warriorhood), and danced forbidden dances.¹²⁰

The government eventually defused the situation by calling off the forced destocking programme. The Samburu were also allowed to graze in the forests in their reserve, although they had to lease the pasture from the government through their LNC.¹²¹ The government also continued with the destruction of game in the region. The Game Department annual report for 1939 reads:

The number of game particularly zebra in Laikipia and Samburu has caused considerable concern during the year. It is held that it is

unreasonable to expect any people, who are by no means in financial straits, to take oxen from Narok to Mbagathi for sale. Having survived the journey the cattle arrive in very poor condition, yet the owners and the prospective buyers know, that unless the beasts are sold within a fortnight of arrival, they will probably contract ECF. With reasonable facilities and careful handling, I am convinced that in very few years the Masai would willingly dispose of most of their surplus stock, thereby helping in no small degree to solve one of the greatest economic disadvantages of the colony - the high cost of living and the increasing cost of rationing labour.' KNA/NRK/1/1/2, Narok District Annual Report, 1928, pp. 13, 14. In 1937 the Samburu DC appealed to the government to allow the Samburu to cull zebra. See Van Zwanenberg, *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda*, chapter 5 for details on how the colonial state in Kenya sabotaged African pastoral economies in order to shield white ranchers from competition.

¹²⁰ See KNA/DC/SAM/1/2, Laikipia-Samburu District Annual Reports for 1938 and 1939. Also see Spencer, *Nomads in Alliance*, p. 162.

¹²¹ Forests in Samburuland were gazetted as state property following the recommendations of the Kenya Land Commission. This was despite their importance to the Samburu during environmental perturbations such as droughts and locust invasions when they became important refuges. The Samburu, like the Maasai were transhumant pastoralists whose grazing patterns depended on both lowland and highland pastures. During a locust invasion in June 1930 the Narok DC observed that the local Maasai moved their herds up the Mau and Loita hills because these areas were too cold for locusts.

impossible for either Europeans or Natives to farm stock in conjunction with vast herds of game. Not only do they destroy grazing and temporary water supplies but they are counted the cause of spreading some of the diseases among cattle.¹²²

Crop producers also experienced wildlife-related problems. In 1928 giraffe in Trans-Nzoia were bothering wheat and maize farmers in the area.¹²³ These animals continued to cause trouble in several areas in the early 1930s. A herd living in the Suams Estates often wandered onto neighbouring farms and some of the giraffe had to be shot.¹²⁴ In 1937 the Game Department found it necessary to grant special permits to farmers in the Uasin Gishu District to enable them to reduce topi and Jackson's hartebeest which were causing a lot of damage to crops in the area. The animals had increased following a period of absolute protection by the state.¹²⁵ Settlers in Laikipia who grew crops such as maize experienced frequent depredations from elephants. Visits by elephants to the Marmanet area of the district from the late 1920s continued throughout the 1930s despite heavy shooting of the herds. The elephant herds visited mainly 'during the drier periods of the year'.¹²⁶

Crop destruction by wild animals was most acute in African reserves. Throughout the country, baboon, bush pig, elephant, and many other animals inhabiting the numerous crown lands descended on crops in African areas each year. The situation was especially serious in areas surrounded by forest, as in Meru, and along water courses, as along the Tana River. Elephant, which were widespread in the country during the period under review, caused the most damage. In 1930 the game warden reported that 'Elephant in Meru District continued to be a menace to cultivation,

¹²² KNA/DC/SAM/1/2, Laikipia-Samburu District Annual Report, 1939, p. 26.

¹²³ KNA/KW/23/142, Game Department Annual Report, 1928, p. 16.

¹²⁴ KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department Annual Report, 1932-34, p. 70.

¹²⁵ KNA/KW/23/161, Game Department Annual Report, 1937, p. 15.

¹²⁶ KNA/KW/23/142, Folio 11, Extracts from the 1928 Laikipia District Annual Report, 25 March 1929. The problem of wild animal depredations in Laikipia District still persists. See *Daily Nation*, 13 February, 2001.

causing destruction to native shambas, and spreading alarm and despondency'.¹²⁷ In the Tana region, where the river is the only main source of water in an otherwise dry area, herds of elephant and other game invaded the riverine cultivation of the Pokomo annually during the dry season.

One of the best documented cases of game depredation during this period was Meru District. Throughout the period under examination the invasion of crops in Meru by elephant provided the Game Department and the district administration with a complex problem. By the late 1920s it had come to the attention of the authorities that despite a favourable agricultural environment the Meru experienced frequent food shortages because of the destruction of their crops by wild animals. This forced the government to initiate measures for minimising the damage. In 1930 the game warden introduced special cheap elephant licences in a bid to persuade hunters to cull the Meru elephant. But this method was not successful since only about 40 elephants were being killed annually by licensed hunters by 1934. In 1935 the government began using hired hunters and the number of elephants killed each year rose to about 70.¹²⁸ By the end of 1939 the work of the hired hunters had 'caused no apparent diminution in the [elephant] numbers or in the damage done'.¹²⁹

Game control in Kenya during the period under discussion presented a complex problem to conservation authorities. On the one hand, it was the government's policy to preserve as many animals in as many parts of the country as possible. On the other hand, the government was categorical that game preservation should not be allowed to interfere with other economic activities.¹³⁰ This ambivalence in policy

¹²⁷ KNA/KW/23/145, Game Department Annual Report, 1930, p. 23.

¹²⁸ See KNA/KW/23/146, Game Department Annual Report, 1931, p.17; KNA/KW/23/17, Two Reports by Roy Whittet, Assistant Game Warden, Meru, dated 10 January 1932 and 6 April 1936.

¹²⁹ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, p.10. Animal depredations were also causing food shortages in parts of Machakos District during this period. See KNA/DC/MKS/14/1, folios 10, 11.

¹³⁰ See KNA/KW/27/1, Folio 46, A Memorandum Submitted to the [Kenya] Land Commission by A T A Ritchie, the Game Warden, 18 March 1933.

made it difficult for the authorities to fully embrace game control. In 1928, for example, the colonial secretary wrote to the game warden wondering whether elephants could not be controlled without destroying some of them. Even the Game Department accepted these policies grudgingly. In 1937, when a total of 281 elephants and numerous rhinoceroses were killed in control operations in various parts of the country, the game warden lamented that '[c]ontrol work [was] the least likeable duty that [had] to be ordered by the officer in charge of the Game Department'.¹³¹ But by 1939 the game warden seems to have embraced culling as an integral part of conservation. On the culling of elephant he commented:

I fear it is inevitable that more extensive control operations, particularly among the Aberdare herd, will become essential in future. It is not perhaps recognised that just as a certain farm can carry so many cattle, so a certain forest and bush can carry so many elephants. Overstocking in either case leads to trouble, which in view of an intense conservatism, the migratory habit does little to mitigate.¹³²

Preserving the Fauna of the Empire

Wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya in the 1920s and 1930s was influenced by developments at both the local and international levels. At the local level, problems such as poaching and land-use conflicts were important determinants of policy. At the international level, the fact that Kenya was a colony of Britain influenced the territory's wildlife policy. However, the line between local and international determinants of policy is not easy to draw as local events elicited responses at the imperial level which in turn influenced local policy. The 1933 international convention in London, for example, was influenced by a perceived threat to Africa's fauna by various processes in the African colonies. The convention in turn came up with recommendations which charted a new path for wildlife conservation in Africa. The events leading to the London convention are worthy of

¹³¹ KNA/KW/23/161, Game Department Annual Report, 1937, p. 9.

¹³² KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, p. 10.

detailed examination since they were partly responsible for the development of conservation in Kenya in the subsequent period.

Spearheading wildlife conservation policy in Africa at the international level during this period was the SPFE. In November 1929, for instance, Lord Onslow, the president of the SPFE, introduced a motion on wildlife conservation in Africa in the British House of Lords with a view to drawing the attention of the British government to the alleged destruction of wild animals in some parts of Africa.¹³³ In the motion, the Earl of Onslow asked the secretary of state for colonies to address three issues. First, he wanted him to tell the house what steps were being taken to enforce the law against hunting in motor cars. Second, he wanted government assurance that no alteration would be made to the game laws of African colonies, protectorates, or mandated territories without allowing those interested in the preservation of the fauna of the empire an opportunity to express their views. Finally, he wanted assurance that the British government would do everything in its power to promote the preservation of wildlife, 'especially by encouraging the establishment of national parks and reserves'.¹³⁴

Onslow underscored the importance of wildlife conservation in Britain and in its dependencies. He emphasised that conservation was important to sportsmen, naturalists, and friends of animal life. He also pointed to the need to avoid the mistakes of the past, such as those which had led to near extinction of the bison in America. To avoid such mistakes, he argued the necessity of establishing national parks in Britain and the dependencies - as had already happened in the USA, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, and the Belgian Congo. This, he said, was the only way to stem the destruction of game, particularly in Africa where great damage was being done by both settlers and Africans. He particularly condemned

¹³³ Richard Onslow, Fifth Earl of Onslow, was the president of SPFE from 1926 to 1945. See Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness*, pp. 127, 128.

¹³⁴ KNA/KW/27/1, Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, Thursday, 21st November 1929, vol. 25, Official Report (Unrevised), Contents: Motion - Preserving Wild Fauna, HMSO, London, p. 623.

settler elements, 'who were too lazy or cowardly to pursue the game in a sportsmanlike fashion', for using motor cars and even aeroplanes in their destructive activities.¹³⁵ While recognising the need for Africans to protect themselves and their property from wild animals, Onslow deplored the indiscriminate slaughter of game by large poaching parties.¹³⁶

Supporting the motion, Viscount Allenby highlighted the importance of wild animals in maintaining and improving the environment. He claimed that wild animals fertilised the soil, controlled vegetation, and improved the soil by trampling on it. His contribution portrayed a pristine Africa where the white man and his technology, and not Africans, were to blame for the destruction of wildlife. He claimed:

The wild animals unmolested will keep up the balance of nature and aboriginal man can hold his own among them and does no great harm unless he gets modern weapons. Even those pits which he digs to trap wild animals, although they are very cruel, do not result in the destruction that is done by the civilised man. Civilised man goes out and upsets the whole balance of nature with his rifle. Now his motor car carries him to places he could not get to before. Places which it took the old hunter a month or more to reach can be reached by the modern-tourist in a day or two. Moreover, the old hunter sought to kill. He shot for trophies or for meat. The modern tourist-hunter in a hurry will shoot sometimes just for fun.¹³⁷

Responding on behalf of the government, Lord Cranworth assured the house that Britain took the issue of wildlife conservation in Africa very seriously and would do everything in its power to promote it. He said:

... there is a very great responsibility in this matter upon the British nation. We have in Africa a country probably richer in the most magnificent forms of animal life than any other part of the world, a region in which so far as we know, from time immemorial - perhaps a million years - all these magnificent animals have lived and survived. Now, in the time in which we are temporarily in charge of these regions ... it will be a very serious thing if, during our brief period of

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 626.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 630, 631.

administration, we allowed all those magnificent forms of life to disappear.¹³⁸

Lord Cranworth however clarified that wildlife should not be allowed to inhibit human development in any way, whether those affected were white or black. Consequently wild animals which destroyed crops, interfered with cattle grazing, or spread disease had to go. He blamed the destruction of wild animals in Africa on improved methods of hunting, hunting for meat, and hunting for profit - with the last being the major cause. He supported the policy of the government of Tanganyika of allowing Africans to kill wild animals which attacked their crops or provided them with meat.¹³⁹

On the issue of national parks, Lord Cranworth praised the Kruger National Park initiative of setting aside land in perpetuity for wildlife under the management of trustees who were independent of the government.¹⁴⁰ He however observed that this was an expensive venture as it required a lot of land, some form of fencing, and guards. He doubted whether the situation in East Africa warranted such expensive ventures. He concluded:

... it is undesirable, perhaps, at this stage of development that these [East African] Governments should tie their hands irrevocably as to particular areas which would have to be set aside in this way, so to say, for ever. I should shrink from having to mark out these national parks because we cannot foresee the future sufficiently yet. We may have to come to that as a way of preventing the extermination of these species; but I think there is not any reasonable chance of those animals being exterminated in the near future.¹⁴¹

Undeterred by this seemingly cautious approach towards the establishment of national parks on the part of the British government, the SPFE sent a delegation to the secretary of state for colonies, Lord Passfield, on 5 March 1930 to discuss wildlife conservation in Africa. The SPFE delegation, which included representatives of the

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 633.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 633, 634, 640.

¹⁴⁰ The Kruger National Park, the first such sanctuary in Africa, was formally established in 1926. Then in 1929 the *Parc National Albert* was established in the then Belgian Congo.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 643.

joint East African Board and was led by Lord Onslow, informed Passfield that there was a general pro-conservation consensus throughout the British empire regarding future game policy in Africa. The deputation also stated its agreement with the British government's policy that wildlife conservation in East Africa should not interfere with human development and that the time for the creation of national parks in the region was not yet ripe.¹⁴² However, the delegation expressed its desire that as much fauna as possible be preserved in East Africa. It therefore proposed to Passfield that a joint conference of East African game wardens be held to discuss the possibility of adopting a common wildlife policy for the region.¹⁴³

Noting that it would be difficult to adopt a common game policy for the East African region as conditions differed from one territory to another, Passfield informed the SPFE delegation that a joint conference of the region's game wardens was not necessary. He further counselled that the question of when and where national parks could be established was the responsibility of the colonial governments and not the game departments. He therefore suggested that the SPFE and the Joint East African Board send a representative to East Africa to discuss game policy with the local governments and game departments and then forward the recommendations to the British government. This suggestion eventually led to the dispatch of Richard W G Hingston, the SPFE African delegate, to East Africa to discuss future wildlife policy with the governors, game wardens, and other interested parties. The five-month tour started on 23 May 1930 and took him to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Nyasaland (Malawi), Tanganyika (Tanzania), Kenya, and Uganda.¹⁴⁴

Hingston's tour of Kenya by design coincided with a conference held at Government House on 31 July 1930 to discuss game preservation policy in the country. The conference, chaired by Governor Edward Griggs and attended by Hingston, brought

¹⁴² The Joint East African Board was formed in 1923 as an organisation for linking British commercial interests in East Africa with their counterparts in England.

¹⁴³ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', pp. 166, 167.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 168, 169.

together high-ranking government officers and representatives of the settler community. The CNC and the PC for the Masai Province apparently represented African interests at the conference. The other participants were the colonial secretary, the chief veterinary officer, the game warden, Lord Francis Scott, H T Martin, Lord Delamere, Major F Joyce, Gilbert Colville, Allen Turner, C W Hayes-Sadler, and Captain R Whittet.¹⁴⁵

The conference was simply a forum for Hingston to sell his society's ideas on the establishment of national parks. Although issues such as the use of motor cars and aeroplanes by hunters, the system of paying rewards for 'found' ivory, and the development of fishing in Lake Naivasha were on the agenda, the establishment of national parks dominated the conference. After the governor's opening remarks, Hingston took the floor to explain his mission. He claimed:

What the people at home [in Britain] are interested in and are particularly anxious to see is the establishment of National Parks in the African Colonies somewhat analogous to the Kruger National Park in Transvaal and the National Parks of Canada, the United States and Australia. We feel that is the most certain way of preserving the natural animal life and vegetable products of the country in perpetuity.¹⁴⁶

Observing that game reserves were inadequate as wildlife sanctuaries as they were established by proclamation and could be abolished in the same manner, Hingston stated the purported wish of the British public:

... what we feel at home is that we have no idea of what kind of administration may exist in 20, 50 or 100 years' time. We are thinking of perpetuity. We feel that we should like to see a sanctuary for the permanent preservation of game put on such a footing that one would scarcely contemplate its removal.¹⁴⁷

Hingston emphasised that wildlife was bound to disappear in most places in the future - hence the need for sanctuaries that were as stable and unalterable as possible. He explained that national parks would be public property, established

¹⁴⁵ Notes on a Conference Held at Government House, at 10 a m of 31 July 1930 for the Purpose of Discussing Policy with Regard to the Preservation of Game, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp.1, 2.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

through legislation, and managed by trustees selected from members of the public who were interested in wildlife preservation. This arrangement would generate public interest and enthusiasm for the parks. Moreover, such places in Africa could draw the attention of the outside world and therefore become a source of public pride. The combination of these factors would make national parks more permanent than game reserves.¹⁴⁸

Referring to his experiences in Zambia and Malawi, Hingston told his audience that there had been 'complete consensus of opinion, both official and unofficial, with respect to the desirability of a National Park' in each of the two countries. He even told the conference that the Kusumbu Reserve in Malawi and a contiguous area in Zambia had been identified as a possible region for a 600-square mile cross-border national park. Hingston then outlined those parts of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania which he thought were suitable for a cross-border national park: 'From the point of view of people at home who are interested in animal preservation, what they would like to see would be either the Southern Reserve or some part of the Southern Reserve turned into a Game Park in contiguity with this area in Tanganyika.'¹⁴⁹ The reason for Hingston's obsession with the idea of cross-border conservation areas is not manifest in the records, but it is possible that he perceived them to be more stable than 'national' parks for once established it would require the consensus of the legislatures of the countries involved to abolish them.¹⁵⁰

Hingston's presentation was well received by the Kenyan authorities. However, the PC for Maasailand, S F Deck, warned that there were conflicting interests in the Southern Game Reserve which were bound to escalate as the Maasai livestock economy developed. This led to the appointment of a committee whose two main terms of reference were: one, to look into '[t]he means of preserving the present

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹⁵⁰ The idea of cross-border sanctuaries has become popular in southern Africa in the recent past.

Southern Game Reserve, or some reasonable part of it, on the present terms for a period of 25 years by agreement with the Masai, to be confirmed by the Native Trust Board', and two, to look into '[t]he desirability of establishing a definite National Park as a permanent game sanctuary in the Colony'.¹⁵¹ The chairman of the committee was the game warden and the members were Hingston (while in the colony), the PC (Masai Province), Lord Delamere, the chief veterinary officer, H T Martin, Gilbert Colville, and Allen Turner.¹⁵²

The committee presented its recommendations to the game policy conference on 30 September 1930. With regard to the Southern Game Reserve the recommendation was that the government should try and reach an agreement with the Maasai for them to let the game reserve remain as constituted for a period of 25 years, in exchange for government-sponsored water and fencing schemes. The agreement would be renewable for subsequent periods of 25 years for as long as both sides were satisfied with the arrangement. On the establishment of national parks, the committee recommended the establishment of permanent sanctuaries in three areas: in the Northern Game Reserve, including Mount Marsabit; in an area north of Sabaki River, between the Kamba and Giriama native reserves; and in a small area on the Aberdare Range essentially for bongo, forest hog, colobus monkey, and other forest-dwelling animals. But while the recommendation on national parks was accepted by the conference, the PC for Masai Province advised that time was not yet ripe for the government to approach the Maasai with regard to permanent measures for the preservation of game within their reserve. The issue of the Southern Game Reserve was therefore left in abeyance.¹⁵³

On his return to London Hingston continued with the SPFE campaign for the establishment of national parks in Africa. In an interview with the *East African*, a London-based newspaper, on 6 November 1930, Hingston observed 'that the

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹⁵² *Ibid*.

¹⁵³ KNA/KW/1/79, Cowie, 'History of the Kenya National Parks', pp. 9, 10.

construction and development of national parks . . . would attract great numbers of visitors and prove not only of instruction and interest to them but of real economic value to the colonies concerned'.¹⁵⁴ Five weeks later, he published an article in the *Illustrated London News* in which he used game photographs to capture readers' support, while castigating the British government's policy of relying on insecure game reserves as a basis for wildlife conservation in East Africa. On 9 March 1931 Hingston presented a paper entitled 'Proposed British National Parks for Africa' at an SPFE meeting and singled out the forces behind wildlife annihilation in the continent - expanding cultivation, the demands of trade, the activities of sportsmen, and the menace of disease. He strongly emphasised the need for the establishment of national parks in East Africa in areas such as Serengeti, Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Marsabit, and the Aberdare Range.¹⁵⁵ On the same evening Hingston gave a report on his recent African tour to the Royal Geographical Society and reiterated that Africa's fauna would soon disappear through the forces of destruction unless national parks were created to separate man and animal completely and permanently.¹⁵⁶

In July 1931 the SPFE campaign for the creation of national parks in Africa received a fillip when the British government decided to send a delegation to the International Congress for the Protection of Nature, held in Paris under the aegis of the French Natural History Museum. The congress was attended by thirteen European nations, and the Earl of Onslow (the SPFE president) was the official representative of the British government at the congress. In his address Onslow stated that the British government regarded itself as the trustee of nature in its territories, not only because of the interests of the current inhabitants of those territories but also because of the interest of future generations and humankind at large. He called for international cooperation in wildlife conservation as most animal species migrate across international borders. The idea of international cooperation was supported by Captain Keith Caldwell, an SPFE delegate from Kenya, who also successfully

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 170.

¹⁵⁵ KNA/KW/1/79, Cowie, 'A History of the Kenya National Parks', p. 11.

¹⁵⁶ Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 170.

lobbied for the convening of another international conference based on the London convention of 1900 to discuss the future of wildlife conservation.¹⁵⁷

At the local level, the creation of national parks remained an important issue for the Kenyan government after the 1930 game conferences. In 1932 the colonial secretary asked the game warden to prepare a memorandum suggesting areas where national parks could be created in the country. In response the game warden enumerated the desiderata for national parks and the areas in Kenya which could meet the criteria. He noted that a national park had to be a self-contained ecosystem supporting a variety of animal species, fairly big in size, healthy from a human standpoint, accessible, free from human habitation, and not taking up land which was essential for the development of the country. Noting that few areas of Kenya had all these qualities, the game warden named the Tsavo region, the area around Mount Marsabit, and southern Narok as the most suitable.¹⁵⁸

On the sensitive issue of the Southern Game Reserve, the game warden informed the colonial secretary that its future was threatened by increasing conflict between wildlife conservationism and community interests:

The Southern Game Reserve is coterminous, over practically the whole area, with a portion of the Masai Reserve. Therein lies the rub. For some time past, each Officer responsible for the Administration of the Masai Reserve, has commented adversely on the existence of a Game Reserve in the area set aside for the natives under his charge.¹⁵⁹

The administrators' complaints included: the competition for pasture and water between large herds of wild animals and Maasai cattle; the transmission of diseases from wild animals to livestock, thereby retarding the development of Maasai pastoralism; and the problem of carnivores preying on stock. The game warden therefore proposed that a compromise be reached with the Maasai as the wildlife in

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 171.

¹⁵⁸ KNA/KW/27/1, Memo II: Game Reserves, and the Possibility of Establishing Permanent Sanctuaries (National Parks), nd, pp. 1 - 4.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 5.

the area was of great economic value to the country. In case of failure to secure the whole of the game reserve, the warden advised that the portion near Nairobi should be retained, and the whole of the Ngong Hills added to it.¹⁶⁰

The Kenya Land Commission (1932-34) presented another opportunity to the game warden to advance the cause of wildlife conservation. On 22 March 1933 he appeared before the commission to give evidence and present two memoranda. One was a copy of the memorandum he had prepared for the colonial secretary, while the second elaborated on the areas suitable for the establishment of national parks and the effects of such a move on African land rights. In its report, the commission supported the game warden's proposal for the establishment of national parks near Nairobi and in the Mount Marsabit region.¹⁶¹

In 1932 the Kenya government also demonstrated its commitment to wildlife conservation by organising a series of meetings with the administration of Italian Somaliland in a bid to get it to cooperate in checking the cross-border movement of illegally acquired game trophies. The meetings started in April 1932 and were attended by representatives of both the colonial and imperial governments. Central to the discussions was the 'practice in Italian Somaliland . . . [of] allow[ing] any person to sell, without let or hindrance other than the auctioneers' percentage to Government, ivory or rhino horn introduced from Kenya'.¹⁶² It was recognised by the two sides that the practice was seriously hurting Kenya's wildlife conservation efforts, and an agreement binding each power to refuse to act as a receiver of property stolen from the other was signed.¹⁶³ However, Somalia never honoured the agreement, which was supposed to take effect from February 1933.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 5 - 9.

¹⁶¹ KNA/KW/1/79, Cowie, 'History of the Kenya National Parks', p. 15.

¹⁶² KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department: Annual Reports, 1932-34, p. 46.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 47.

Following the understanding reached in Paris in 1931, the Second International Conference for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa was held in London in October-November 1933. As at the Paris meeting, the ideas of the SPFE dominated the deliberations.¹⁶⁴ Consequently the establishment of national parks in Africa was high on the agenda. According to the convention signed on 8 November 1933 by Egypt, South Africa, and the European nations with colonies in Africa, the delegates were enjoined to explore the possibilities for establishing national parks in their respective territories. A national park was defined as an area placed under public control whose boundaries could only be altered by a competent legislative authority. Such a park could be established 'for the propagation, protection, and preservation of objects of aesthetic, geological, prehistoric, historical, archaeological, or other scientific interest for the benefit, advantage, and enjoyment of the general public'.¹⁶⁵ The hunting, killing, or capturing of fauna as well as the destruction or collection of flora would not be allowed in a national park except by or under the direction of the park authorities. However, facilities would be provided to the public to enable them to observe the fauna and flora in national parks. The conference also discussed the regulation of trade in animal trophies, the preservation of endangered species, and a prohibition against hunting from motor cars or aircraft. Britain eventually ratified the convention on 9 April 1935, thereby making its terms binding on its African colonies - including Kenya.¹⁶⁶ Kenya was represented at the London conference by William Gowers, advised by Keith Caldwell. According to Kenya's game warden at the time, Arthur A T Ritchie, '[t]he convention was indeed modelled, in its exposition of the theory and practice of Game Preservation, very largely on existent Kenya[n] conception'.¹⁶⁷

Differences between the secretary of state for colonies and Kenya's game warden over the interpretation of the London convention seem to have delayed the creation

¹⁶⁴ Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness*, p. 126.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 173.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ KNA/KW/23/160, Game Department: Annual Reports, 1932-34, p.48.

of national parks in the country. In September 1934 the game warden sought from the secretary of state for colonies some clarification concerning the London convention. In the ensuing communication, the secretary of state pointed out that national parks were not necessarily areas in which an active and possibly expensive policy of development with a view to attracting tourists was pursued. Nor were they areas in which hunting by members of the public was entirely prohibited.¹⁶⁸ Such an interpretation of the London convention did not go down well with the game authorities in East Africa.

In a conference of game wardens from Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and the Sudan held in February 1939 to examine the progress made in implementing the 1933 London convention, the British government's concept of a national park was criticised on several grounds. First, the wardens opposed the idea of economic and industrial development within national parks, as well as allowing African hunting in national parks, as these were a negation of the national park ideal. Second, the wardens insisted that the responsibility and care of national parks be widely distributed in order to secure public confidence and adequate financial support. Finally, the wardens rejected the view that the establishment of national parks would justify the abolition of game reserves and the relaxation of game regulations elsewhere.¹⁶⁹ In short, the imperial government's concept of national parks contradicted that of conservationists who perceived them as sanctuaries whose resources could only be exploited through tourism.

As the Kenyan government's enthusiasm for national parks waned owing to the British government's stance on the subject, Mervwyn Cowie, an honorary game warden appointed in 1937, took it upon himself to mobilise public support for the creation of national parks. He particularly wanted to see a national park created on the Nairobi commonage, an area the game warden had identified as suitable for the purpose. With the support of J Riddell, the elected member for Kiambu on the

¹⁶⁸ KNA/KW/1/79, Cowie, 'History of Kenya National Parks', p.16.

¹⁶⁹ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, Appendix i, p. 11.

legislative council, Cowie challenged the government to protect the Nairobi commonage from encroachment by Somali pastoralists and other groups. Supported by George Kinnear (the editor of the *East African Standard*) and the game warden, Cowie wrote pro-conservation letters and articles to generate enthusiasm for the national park ideal. He took people (including the governor) to Kiserian, within the commonage, to see a pride of lions he had tamed. He even won the support of organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Nairobi District Council, the Kiambu, Thika, Ukamba, and Njoro farmers associations, the Natural History Society, and the Kenya Society - and got them to petition the government on the issue. Finally, on 6 March 1939 Cowie and his supporters organised a large gathering where a resolution demanding the establishment of national parks and adequate game control was passed. A month later the government set up a game policy committee to look into the possibility of establishing game parks, among other issues. However, the outbreak of the Second World War in August 1939 hampered the work of the committee and it was not until 1942 that the committee produced its interim report.¹⁷⁰

While the activities of Cowie and his supporters were important in pressuring the government into establishing a game policy committee to examine the question of wildlife conservation in Kenya, there were many other factors. Indeed the terms of reference for the committee reflect the challenges facing the colonial government with regard to wildlife conservation by 1939. Foremost among the terms of reference was the need to develop policies that would minimise conflict between wildlife conservationism and other economic activities. Although game-related tourism was earning Kenya about £150 000 a year by 1937,¹⁷¹ it was clear that this was at the expense of agriculture and pastoralism, especially in African areas. Consequently there were proposals for the delimitation of the two game reserves so as to reduce conflict between wildlife conservationism and the interests of communities such as the Maasai and the Samburu who were living in the game reserves. The delimitation would also make the wildlife sanctuaries easier to police.

¹⁷⁰ See *ibid*, pp. 22 - 27 and Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', pp. 178, 179.

¹⁷¹ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 103, Colonial Secretary to all PCs and Officers-in-Charge, 22 May 1937.

Another important term of reference was the call to examine the constitution of the Game Department and its capacity to implement wildlife policy. This no doubt sprang from the escalating destruction of wildlife in the 1930s at a time when the Game Department was weak. The department, with only five European officers and about seventy African scouts, was not even strong enough to protect wildlife in one of the two sprawling game reserves.¹⁷² Moreover, the department's personnel did not have transport facilities. The African scouts, with a monthly salary of Shs 18, generally accepted hush money from poachers and smugglers and practised extortion, as was widely reported throughout the country in the 1930s.¹⁷³ There was a need to revitalise the department.

The problems affecting wildlife conservation in Kenya during the 1930s attracted the attention of the SPFE, the British government, and local as well as foreign conservationists - apparent during the Turkana poaching controversy of 1937-38. At the height of the controversy the British government not only advised the Kenya government to revitalise the Game Department but also to establish national parks.¹⁷⁴ The establishment of a game policy committee in Kenya in 1939 was a result of mounting pressure for a re-examination of the country's game policies.

The 1926 - 1939 period was crucial in the evolution of wildlife policy and practice in Kenya. The period was characterised by struggles over wildlife conservation at various levels. The colonial government's desire to conserve wildlife was difficult to pursue as conservation posed a threat to agricultural activities. This resulted in wild animal control programmes which negated the conservation ideal. Wild animals were also perceived as a source of livelihood by some sections of the Kenyan

¹⁷² KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 26, A T A Ritchie (Game Warden) to Colonial Secretary, 16 November 1936.

¹⁷³ See KNA/KW/23/141, Folio 108, Hassan Kitabi (Emali Station) to MacArthur, 11 February 1931; Folio 57, J T Oulton to Game Warden, 2 April 1932; KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Report, 1938-39, p. 9; Stone, 'Organised Poaching in Kitui District', *passim*.

¹⁷⁴ KNA/KW/27/2, Folio 200b, Malcolm MacDonald (Colonial Office) to Sir Robert Brooke-Popham (Governor of Kenya), 9 September 1939.

community who were out to exploit them for food, profit, and even patronage. This contradicted the conservationists' perception of wildlife conservation and led to struggles between them and poachers.

At another level, the British government's national park idea differed markedly from that of the Kenya government. While the latter viewed national parks as inviolable in terms of economic exploitation (other than for tourism), the former saw no point in excluding hunting and even mineral prospecting from such areas. The SPFE too had its own ideas about national parks and wildlife conservation. There were also differences of opinion between the provincial administration and the Game Department. The varying view-points needed to be harmonised. This was one reason why the 1939 Game Policy Committee was set up.

Wildlife conservation in Kenya during the 1920s and 1930s was also affected by environmental and economic factors. Sporadic drought, locust invasions, animal disease, and harsh economic conditions impacted negatively on wildlife conservation. The complex interaction of these factors was captured by the game warden in his 1939 annual report:

The year 1939 was a particularly hard one for the Department: indeed the worst I have known. The excessive drought conditions, prevalent for a long period over virtually all the game areas, increased the incentive to poach and made it easy to do so. Many tribes were hungry and all were short of cash; for crops and grazing, withered and locust ridden, were almost nonexistent. The game which provides the obvious and natural solution to empty purses as well as empty larders, was concentrated on what water remained and thus fell an easy prey to the gamut of destruction - snares, pits, spears and poisoned arrows.¹⁷⁵

Would a game policy committee provide solutions to some of these problems? That is the subject of the following chapter.

¹⁷⁵ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Departmental Annual Report, 1938-39, p. 9.

CHAPTER FIVE

EARLY INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES, 1940 - 1952

The establishment of a game policy committee in Kenya in April-May 1939 was to some extent a turning-point in the history of wildlife conservation in the country. Following the recommendations of the committee, national parks and park adjuncts run by a board of trustees were set up in the country from 1946. These not only provided a firmer foundation for wildlife conservation in the country but also led to diversification in the utilisation of wildlife resources. For the first time in Kenya, special areas were allocated solely for the proliferation of wild fauna and flora. The board of trustees also opened up the national parks and park adjuncts for tourism, thereby initiating the non-consumptive exploitation of wildlife.

However the committee's obsession with establishing of national parks in the country limited its recommendations to that concern, at the expense of a broader conservation policy. Although the committee was also mandated to look into the growing conflict between wildlife conservationism and community interests, the viability of the Game Department as then constituted, and the suitability of existing wildlife legislation, it confined its recommendations to the establishment of national parks. The viability of the Game Department and the suitability of game legislation were largely ignored, and another game policy committee had to be appointed in 1956 to address these issues as well as escalating human-wildlife conflicts in some parts of the country.

Besides the implementation of the recommendation of the 1939 Game Policy Committee, other factors also influenced wildlife conservation in Kenya during the period under discussion. These included the effects of the Second World War and post-war development programmes. The war affected the conservation of wildlife in Kenya in diverse ways while post-war development programmes, which included closer settlement of the white highlands and resettlement schemes in the crown lands surrounding African reserves, generally threatened the game outside the official wildlife sanctuaries. Favourable economic conditions during and after the war

led to an expansion in settler agriculture, which in turn threatened the remaining wildlife in the Kenya highlands. Similarly, land hunger and increasing poverty among African communities, and the government's desire to alleviate these problems by implementing the recommendations of the Kenya Land Commission, intensified conflicts between conservationism and other interests in many parts of the country.

The conservation of wildlife in Kenya during this period was also affected by adverse environmental factors. Intermittent drought, locust invasions, and the incidence of animal disease continued to influence people's attitudes towards wildlife conservation. This chapter therefore examines the multiplicity of factors which influenced wildlife conservation in Kenya during the 1940 - 1952 period. The chapter outlines the establishment of national parks and park adjuncts, the challenges these sanctuaries faced, and how the challenges were met.

National Parks

The game policy committee appointed in 1939 was chaired by Cecil Hoey, a settler and former big game hunter. Its members were the CNC, the game warden, S V Cooke, J C Rammell (as deputy chairman), Vivian Ward, A N Davidson, S G Hassan Shah, A F Ayre, and R P Armitage (as secretary).¹ As announced in April 1939, the committee did not include Mervyn Cowie, at the time the arch-crusader for the establishment of national parks in Kenya. However, protests from the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce led to his inclusion on the committee in May 1939.

Immediately after its formation, the committee called for presentations and began examining memoranda, mainly on the establishment of Nairobi National Park. But the outbreak of the Second World War in August 1939 forced the committee to suspend its work until early 1942. By October 1942 the committee had heard presentations from the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce, the Kenya (Settlers) Association, the Stock Breeders Association, and a number of government agencies. Most of the presentations supported the establishment of a national park comprising the Nairobi

¹ KNA/KW/23/163, Game Department Annual Reports, 1938-39, Appendix ii.

commonage and the contiguous part of the Ngong Forest Reserve. This is what the committee recommended in its interim report in October 1942.²

In 1943 a subcommittee of the game policy committee was appointed to draft a bill for the establishment of national parks in Kenya. Guided by similar legislation in South Africa and elsewhere, and taking into consideration Kenyan land laws and other local factors, the subcommittee drafted a bill which was subsequently enacted by the legislative council. The resultant ordinance was assented to by the governor in January 1945 and became operational in June the same year. A month later the national parks board of trustees was gazetted.³

Essentially the 1945 National Parks Ordinance dealt with the establishment of national parks, park adjuncts, and the board of trustees. It stipulated that the governor could, with the consent of the legislative council and the relevant land board, declare any area of land a national park by proclamation. National parks could only be established in African reserves with the approval of the Native Lands Trust Board, while the consent of the Highlands Board was required before they could be established in the white highlands. No consent was required for the establishment of national parks on crown land and on land temporarily occupied by Africans as such land belonged to the state. In the case of any other land, the owner was entitled to both rent and the profits arising from the establishment of a national park on their land. Once established, a national park could only be altered with the joint consent of the governor, the legislative council, and the board of trustees.⁴

On realising that some important wildlife areas of Kenya (such as the northern and southern game reserves) were also inhabited by people, the game policy committee recommended the establishment of park adjuncts in such areas. The ordinance defined a park adjunct as any area, whether contiguous to a national park or not,

² KNA/KW/1/79, Cowie, 'History of the Kenya National Parks', pp. 27 - 30.

³ *Ibid*, p. 30.

⁴ Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, *Ordinance No. IX of 1945* (Nairobi, 1945), p. 1; Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', pp. 183, 184.

over which the national parks trustees would be granted some control by a 'competent authority'. If a portion of an African reserve was rich in wildlife, for example, the provincial administration, being the competent authority in the area, would, with the consent of the local people, allow the national parks trustees to manage the wildlife resources in the area either as a migrational zone for wildlife from a contiguous national park or as a distinct wildlife unit. The local people would, however, retain control over the land, and any development projects proposed by the parks trustees - such as the construction of roads and the establishment of tourist camps and airstrips - would be subject to their approval. The successful management of a park adjunct would therefore depend on cooperation between the inhabitants of the particular area, the provincial administration, and the national parks trustees.

The main focus of the ordinance was however the board of trustees, officially known as the Kenya National Parks Trustees (KNPTs). The KNPTs was to consist of fourteen people representing various 'national' interests. These would be the CNC, the general manager of the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours, the conservator of forests, the game warden, three appointees of the governor, three nominees of the legislative council, two nominees of the association of the colony's chambers of commerce, a nominee of the Board of Museums Trustees, and a nominee of the EAPHA. In short, the KNPTs was ostensibly representative of the divergent public interests, and was expected to be autonomous and to manage national parks according to the powers bestowed upon it by the legislature council.⁵

In September 1945 the game policy committee submitted a second interim report in which it not only urged the government to implement its 1942 report immediately but also recommended the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries besides Nairobi National Park. It recommended the creation of national parks in the Tsavo, Mount Kenya, and Aberdare areas, and park adjuncts in the Ngong, Amboseli, Mara, Chyulu, and Mount

⁵ Kenya, *Ordinance No. IX of 1945*.

Marsabit areas. The committee further recommended the establishment of national parks around important archaeological sites like Olorgesale and Gedi.⁶

Possibly due to the pressure from the game policy committee, Governor Philip Mitchell inaugurated the KNPTs in October 1945. A year later Mervyn Cowie was appointed the executive officer of the KNPTs and director of the Kenya National Parks (KNPs). Then in December 1946 the Nairobi National Park was gazetted as the first national park in the country.⁷

The establishment of Nairobi National Park was a triumph for conservationists such as Arthur Ritchie, the game warden, who had been lobbying for it from as early as 1930. However, the conservationists had to wrestle with the problem of a group of Somali pastoralists whose presence in the Nairobi commonage had been recognised by the Kenya Land Commission (1932-34). By the early 1940s these Somali squatters had about 3000 head of cattle in the proposed park area. There was also the problem of military interests established in the commonage during the Second World War when it served as a shooting range with a number of military depots.⁸ Somehow the two problems were gradually resolved and a 117 square-kilometre national park was established some eight kilometres southwest of the Nairobi city centre.⁹

Despite its relatively small size, the Nairobi National Park is able to support numerous mammal and bird species because of its varied ecological zones. The forested western part of the park has such species as bushbuck, dikdik, leopard, and rhino. The central area comprises open plains and is the home of lion, wildebeest, hartebeest, zebra, eland, impala, and Thomson's gazelle. The southern and eastern

⁶ KNA/KW/1/79, Cowie, 'History of the Kenya National Parks', pp. 31, 32.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 30; Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', p. 185.

⁸ KNA/KW/1/77, Folio 3, M H Cowie, 'National Parks in Kenya: Policy, Plans and Finance' (Typescript, 13 June 1949), p. 2.

⁹ It is not clear how the two problems were resolved, but by 1949 only 200 head of Somali cattle were still in the national park.

parts have gorges and river valleys which shelter crocodile, hippopotamus, and monkeys. Of the main mammal species found in Kenya, only the elephant is non-existent in the Nairobi National Park.¹⁰

The establishment of the Nairobi National Park was an important milestone in the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya. The park soon acquired worldwide fame, and by 1949 was attracting over 4000 visitors a week.¹¹ It started admitting paying visitors on 1 April 1950 and by 30 June that year 20 000 adults and 5000 children had visited the park. The total takings for that quarter were Shs23 664.50.¹² During the first quarter of 1952 28 842 visitors and 10 618 cars entered the park and a total of Shs31 938 was realised.¹³ By the mid-1960s the park was receiving an average of 100 000 to 120 000 visitors a year. By 1994 Nairobi National Park had 'perhaps the highest visitors rate of any park in Africa'.¹⁴

Wildlife conservation in Kenya received another fillip in April 1948 when the giant Tsavo National Park was gazetted. Covering some 20 812 square kilometres, Tsavo is one of the largest wildlife sanctuaries in Africa. The park is located midway between Nairobi and Mombasa and is traversed by the main communication lines between the two towns. In July 1949 Tsavo was divided into two sections for easy administration. The section east of the Nairobi-Mombasa railway line became Tsavo East National Park (11 747 square kilometres), while the western part became Tsavo West National Park (9065 square kilometres). However, the two sections make one large ecosystem as they are not fenced in. Apart from having most of the mammal species existent in Kenya, Tsavo National Park has been the main elephant and rhino sanctuary.

¹⁰ *Ibid*; Nyeki, *Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Kenya*, pp. 73 - 75.

¹¹ KNA/KW/1/77, Folio 3, National Parks in Kenya, 13 June 1949, p. 2.

¹² KNA/KW/1/78, Nairobi National Park: Warden's Quarterly Report, 1 April - 30 June 1950.

¹³ KNA/KW/1/79, Nairobi National Park: Warden's Quarterly Report, 1 January - 31 March 1952.

¹⁴ Steinhart, 'National Parks and Anti-poaching in Kenya', p. 63.

At the beginning of colonial rule in Kenya, the region occupied by Tsavo National Park was generally uninhabited because of its relative aridity and tsetse fly infestation. Consequently most of the region became crown land and the colonial administration guarded it from encroachment by the Akamba in the northeast, the Mijikenda and Liangulu in the southeast, the Taita and Taveta in the south, and the Maasai in the west. But as the effects of the colonial political economy began to be felt among these communities, the region's wildlife and land resources became a source of conflict between the communities and the colonial authorities. For example, some Kamba families which tried to settle on the upper reaches of the Tsavo River at Ivosya Mwaki, Ndiani, and Mzima in 1913, 1915, and 1918 were removed on each occasion by the colonial authorities.¹⁵ These conflicts over land and wildlife increased in the 1920s and 1930s and escalated after the creation of the Tsavo National Park in 1948.¹⁶

Although the Tsavo National Park occupies a generally dry region, a number of geographical features provide sustenance to its large and varied animal and bird life. The northern part of the park is dominated by the volcanic Chyulu range which not only modifies the rainfall pattern in the region but also acts as a sponge by soaking up water during the rains and releasing it slowly in the form of springs in the surrounding lowland. The most famous of these are the Mzima Springs which not only support aquatic life but also feed River Tsavo, an important lifeline in the region.¹⁷ In the extreme southwest is Lake Jipe which is fed by underground water from the snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro. The lake supports both animal and bird life. In the east is River Athi (or Galana at the lower reaches) which supports aquatic life as well as the animal populations on the Yatta Plateau and the eastern lowland.

¹⁵ Matheka, 'Colonial Capitalism', p. 70.

¹⁶ Addressing a commission appointed to look into land problems in Kenya recently, Members of Parliament and other leaders from Taita-Taveta District (62 per cent of whose area is in the Tsavo National Park) called for the dissolution of the park allegedly because it does not benefit the local people. They also claimed that animals from the park destroyed their constituents' crops, thereby forcing them into a permanent state of food shortage and poverty. See *East Africa Standard* (29 June 2000); *Daily Nation* (5 July 2000).

¹⁷ River Tsavo is also fed by underground water from Mount Kilimanjaro.

The Mudanda Rock between Voi and Manyani has created an important natural dam which supports elephant and other forms of wildlife in the southern part of the park.¹⁸

The proclamation of the Tsavo National Park in April 1948 was an important development in the history of the region. Communities which had previously exploited the resources of the area without much trouble - courtesy of the weak colonial administration - now found their activities circumscribed by the park authorities. This particularly affected Liangulu, Kamba, and Giriama poachers and trophy smugglers.¹⁹ Even pastoralists who previously took their livestock to the wetter parts of the park during the dry period now found it difficult to get access to the refuge areas. These restrictions caused friction between the affected communities and the conservation authorities. The national park ideal, which ruled out other forms of land use within national parks, also caused friction between conservationists and the colonial administration which was now faced with population pressure in the surrounding areas.

One of the areas of early contention was Diandaza. This swamp in an otherwise dry area was an important seasonal refuge for Orma pastoralists on the eastern boundaries of the national park. According to the provincial administration, the pastoralists mainly depended on their livestock for subsistence and hardly disturbed game.²⁰ But in November 1948 the park authorities decided to evacuate the Orma from Diandaza, ostensibly for trafficking in ivory. This decision was contested by the Coast Province PC who wanted the Orma to be allowed to stay in the park on permits.²¹ However, the PC's concern did not save the more than 600 Orma and Liangulu families, as the park authorities could not countenance multiple land use.

¹⁸ Nyeki, *Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Kenya*, pp. 93 - 95.

¹⁹ See Holman, *The Elephant People*.

²⁰ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 29, DO Malindi (W N B Loudon) to PC Coast Province, 29 November 1949. Also see Holman, *The Elephant People*, pp. 14, 21, 59.

²¹ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 27, PC Coast Province to DO Malindi, 18 November 1948.

The eviction of the Orma from Diandaza was only a temporary triumph for the park authorities. During droughts in the subsequent period, groups of Orma and Maasai pastoralists infiltrated the park with or without the authorities' permission. This frustrated conservationists such as Mervyn Cowie who refused to recognise the fact that some parts of the park had previously been refuges for pastoralists (including some Tanganyikan Maasai) during dry periods.²² This struggle over land resources greatly bothered the park authorities. When some Orma pastoralists invaded Diandaza in 1952, Cowie lamented:

My grievance is that in the first place I have put up a case to have an area established as a National Park. After all kinds of people had a cut at it and discussed it backwards and forwards, the park is then proclaimed. Subsequently it seems that I have yet to put up another case to retain the park. I would have thought at this stage it is up to the Orma to put up some sort of a case to why they may be allowed to graze at Ndiandaza.²³

Another contested area was Maktau in Taveta where a settlement of about 453 people was said to fall partly within the national park. The settlement near the Maktau Railway Station was a clear manifestation of the problems of land shortage in African reserves at the time. It was also a manifestation of the extent of rural poverty. Of those living in the park, three families owned among them the 776 head of stock while the rest owned no stock at all. The people had resided in the area for between ten and fifteen years before the park was established.²⁴

Although the provincial administration was ready to ensure that the Maktau community observed game laws, it was opposed to their eviction from the land. It therefore insisted that they be allowed to remain in the park, even if on permits, and continue to graze their animals as well as collect building materials from the park. But the park authorities argued that it would be difficult to formulate any rules under

²² See KNA/KW/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 46 (11 March 1949) in which R O Hennings, the Member (Minister) for Agriculture and Natural Resources, informed Cowie that the government of Kenya was consulting with its Tanganyikan counterpart on the repatriation of Tanganyikan pastoralists who had invaded the Tsavo National Park near Lake Jipe.

²³ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 180, Mervyn Cowie (Director of the Royal National Parks of Kenya) to Desmond O'Hagan (PC Coast Province), 13 May 1952.

²⁴ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 34, DC Voi to PC Coast Province, 29 December 1948; Folio 43, DO Taveta to DC Voi, 1 February 1949.

which these people could live in the park as their activities were bound to conflict with wildlife conservation. The park authorities therefore urged the provincial administration to resettle the people elsewhere. Unable to reach a compromise, the government was eventually forced to excise the area inhabited by the Maktau people from the park.²⁵

The Ndololo settlement on the Voi River also presented a difficult problem to the provincial administration and the park authorities. The settlement consisted of about 200 people, most of whom were Taita and Liangulu with a sprinkling of Kamba and Giriama. There were also Luo, Luyia, and Kisii families. The Liangulu had been living in the area since 1902, while the Taita had moved there in 1912. The rest had settled there from 1918. Most of the families therefore had well-established land rights and '[led] a more settled form of existence by cultivating, and using the flood water of the Voi River'.²⁶

Once again, the provincial administration was in favour of multiple land use in the area under any conditions the KNPTs wished to impose on the inhabitants. The administration was worried that liquidation of the settlement would antagonise the Taita people who were suffering an acute land shortage. But the trustees insisted on the eviction of the people, claiming that their irrigation agriculture threatened the survival of the wildlife downstream.²⁷ Eventually the government decided to evict the Ndololo squatters 'under the Native Authority Ordinance (Cap 97) Section 13 (1) which applied to Natives occupying land outside their own Native Reserves'.²⁸ Explaining the decision to liquidate the settlement to the squatters in March 1952, the CNC said that the government had taken the 'difficult decision' for two reasons: one, Ndololo was not a native land unit but crown land which had been incorporated

²⁵ See KNA/TTA/3/11/3, Folios 29, DC Voi to PC Coast Province, 29 December 1948; Folio 50, DC Voi to PC Coast Province, 3 June 1949; Folio 66, Director Kenya National Parks to DC Voi, 27 February 1950.

²⁶ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 70, DC Voi to PC Coast Province, 17 March 1950.

²⁷ *Ibid.* Ndololo was a fertile area some five miles south of Voi. See Holman, *The Elephant People*, p. 57.

²⁸ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 128, DO Taveta to Chief Kalea Mwakulomba, 23 February 1952.

into a national park; and two, human beings and wild animals could not live in the same area when that area was a national park. He however assured the squatters that the government would pay them compensation at the rate of Shs200 per hut. It would also provide them with transport to their reserves and a subsistence allowance of 75 cents per adult and 40 cents per child for 32 days. The Ndololo settlement was eventually closed in March 1952 and the squatters were dumped in the surrounding districts after receiving the promised 'compensation'.²⁹

Struggles over land between a provincial administration saddled with the problem of land shortage in African reserves and conservationists wishing to claim as much land for wildlife as possible were common in the Tsavo region in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The bone of contention was crown land, which the colonial administration wanted to use to resettle surplus population from the African reserves, while conservationists wanted the same land to be preserved for wildlife. This struggle was most intense in the case of crown land bordering the Taita and Kamba reserves. Both the Taita and the Akamba were mixed agriculturalists and were adversely affected by colonial land policies.

In the Taita-Taveta District, attempts by the director of the KNPs to get the land north of Lake Challa as well as the Kangetchwa and Kasigau sections added to the Tsavo National Park were strongly resisted by the provincial administration. The administration wanted to use the Challa area as relief grazing land for the Taveta while the other two areas would serve as settlement areas for the Taita. Not even attempts by Cowie to reach a personal understanding with the Taita-Taveta DC, Peter E Walters, could persuade the latter to give up his claims over the three areas.³⁰ Eventually the DC won the struggle and the areas were developed for the benefit of his charges.

²⁹ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 145, Record of a Baraza [Public Meeting] held at Ndololo Settlement, Voi District, on 12 March 1952; Folio 141, Details of Compensation Paid to Ndololo Aliens, 14 March 1952.

³⁰ See KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 174, Cowie to Walters, 10 April 1952; Folio 176, Walters to Cowie, 8 May 1952; Folio 180, Cowie to Desmond O'Hagan (PC Coast Province), 13 May 1952.

The provincial administration's stand on land issues was not born out of lack of sympathy for wildlife conservation but rather out of the need to strike some balance between conservation and other interests. The Taita-Taveta District administration, for example, supported wildlife conservation by advising the Game Department on how to go about reducing poaching in the district by creating controlled hunting areas.³¹ However, the administration was also keen to promote the interests of the people under its charge. This desire was shown by the Taita-Taveta DC at the height of the struggles over crown land in the district:

It is my considered opinion that in order to cater for inevitable population increases in the Kasigau Native Land Unit, government must maintain absolute control of the Crown Land surrounding this Native Reserve to a depth of 8 miles, right round Kasigau Mountain. On the hill is a valuable forest reserve which will be destroyed if we confine population to the area already reserved (which is inadequate for any further population increase). . . . My policy has been, and still is, to remove stock and cultivation from the Mountain itself, and to spread out into the surrounding plain.³²

Such foresight was generally lacking among the conservationists.

In Machakos District, struggles over the crown land abutting the Tsavo National Park began long before it was established. Around 1927 some Akamba were removed from the Ngulia-Mukuku area which became part of the then Southern Game Reserve. Some of these people moved to Ngwata and the Chyulu Hills. Ten years later they were ordered to vacate these areas for wildlife. But 'because of the good climate and vegetation of Chyulu Hills, some Kambas would not agree to vacate the

³¹ KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 187, DO Taveta to Game Warden, 21 May 1952.

³² KNA/DC/TTA/3/11/3, Folio 181, DC Taita to PC Coast Province, 20 May 1952.

Hills, even at gun point'.³³ This marked the beginning of a long struggle over the hills pitting conservationists against the Akamba.³⁴

The need to relieve the severely eroded western Kamba reserve of some of its human and livestock population led to the creation of settlement and grazing schemes in the southwestern parts of Machakos District from 1938. Such schemes, which included Makueni, Emali-Tsavo, Simba-Emali, and Kiboko-Makindu, had disastrous effects on wildlife in the crown lands contiguous to Tsavo National Park. For instance, some 1088 rhino were exterminated in Makueni in order to open up an area of 50 000 acres for Kamba settlement.³⁵ This led to an international outcry.³⁶ Attempts by the Game Department and the trustees of the national parks to use the Makueni experience to try and discourage the government from pursuing the other schemes were generally unsuccessful.

The Makindu-Kiboko case is a good example of the struggles over wildlife conservation within the colonial government during this period. On learning that the African Land Utilisation Board (ALUS) was planning to open up the Makindu-Kiboko area for Kamba settlement, the game warden and the executive officer of KNPTs moved quickly to try and stop the implementation of the scheme as they intended to add the area to the Tsavo National Park.³⁷ William Hale, the game warden, first wrote

³³ Philip M Mbithi and Carolyn Barnes, *The Spontaneous Settlement Problem in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1975), pp. 128, 129.

³⁴ Land struggles on the Machakos side of the Chyulu Hills have persisted to the present.

³⁵ Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, p. 289. Also see Holman, *The Elephant People*, P. 156.

³⁶ KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 109, James Kirkpatrick (for Game Warden) to Major Cavendish-Bentick (Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources), 19 February 1951.

³⁷ ALUS was a settlement board established by the colonial government in 1945 to implement the recommendations of the Kenya Land Commission through resettlement and other schemes aimed at alleviating land problems in African reserves. Between 1945 and 1960 the organisation changed its name from African Settlement Board to African Settlement and Land Utilisation Board (ASLUB) before becoming African Land Development Board (ALDEV). It then became Land Development Board (Non-Scheduled Areas) and finally Board of Agriculture (Non-Scheduled Areas). These changes reflected changing perceptions of the African land problem. The board worked under the provincial administration. See Ministry of Agriculture, *African Land Development in Kenya, 1946 - 1962* (Nairobi, 1962).

a strictly confidential and personal letter to the minister entreating him to facilitate dialogue between conservationists and the provincial administration before any development schemes were implemented in areas where wildlife was involved. On the Makindu case he stated:

Here we have an instance of a fair bit of Africa being handed over to a very destructive tribe. It is only a small area and will contribute little towards the solution of the Kamba problem, a drop in the ocean as it were. I would like you to see this area for yourself.³⁸

In response, the minister issued a general circular requesting DCs to bear in mind the views of the game warden when launching development schemes. This did not satisfy the conservationists, for five weeks later James Kirkpatrick, on behalf of the game warden, again appealed to the minister not only to halt the Makindu settlement scheme but to also call a round table conference at which the conservationists could state their case. The game warden argued that Makindu was wonderful game country while downplaying its potential for human settlement. It not only had a rich variety of wild animals but was also within easy reach of Nairobi. Conversely, the area was 'mostly lava rock, bush and [infested with tsetse] fly' and was therefore not suitable for human settlement.³⁹ He urged that the area be made a national park and a sacred trust for all times as he and Cowie intended.

Seemingly the minister did not respond to the second letter, forcing the game warden to appeal directly to the executive officer of the ALUS in March 1951. Once again the game warden warned against turning Makindu into a Kamba settlement area instead of an extension of the Tsavo national Park:

I maintain that the opinion of the civilised world would hold that future generations will find that in the long run the whole community will have derived greater benefit if this area is set aside as a tourist attraction than if it is cleared for a few head of cattle for a tribe that is most destructive in its habits and for whom anyhow there are vast areas that are being and could be developed. . . . If this area is to be developed, it means another slaughter of game, another 'Makueni' that caused a

³⁸ KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 105, W H Hale (Game Warden) to Major Cavendish-Bentinck (Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources), 10 January 1951.

³⁹ KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 109, James Kirkpatrick (for Game Warden) to Major Cavendish-Bentinck, 19 February 1951.

stir throughout the world. As Game Warden I shall be held responsible and have to render account to world opinion, especially American opinion.⁴⁰

These pleas were generally ignored because of the post-war situation. Britain, which had been economically weakened by the Second World War, decided to invest heavily in the colonies as one way of rebuilding her economy. This led to the initiation of the Colonial Development and Welfare programme through which Kenya received £23 million over the 1946-56 period for investment in various sectors, including European and African agriculture.⁴¹ In the African areas, the Colonial Development and Welfare programme translated into land reconditioning and resettlement which resulted in the disbursement of about £4.8 million in grant funds and about £1.1 million in loans through the African Land Development (ALDEV) programme.⁴² The ALDEV programme also aimed at alleviating land problems in Kenya which a British government official had warned in 1942 could lead to civil war if not arrested.⁴³ All this translated into shrinkage of the area under wildlife as more and more crown and other 'idle' land was put to agricultural production.

The Tsavo National Park also experienced poaching by such groups as the Akamba, Liangulu, Taita, Taveta, and Giriama. In October 1949 bands of poachers were reportedly operating in the park. Elephant and rhino carcasses were a common sight in and around the park.⁴⁴ By late 1950 poaching of elephant and infiltration of the park by Tanganyikan and Kenyan Maasai were on the increase.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 111, W H Hale (Game Warden) to Executive Officer ALUS, 2 March 1951.

⁴¹ Tiyaambe Zeleza, 'Kenya and the Second World War, 1939 - 1950', in William R Ochieng' (ed), *A Modern History of Kenya, 1895 - 1980* (Nairobi, 1989), pp. 156 - 158.

⁴² Ministry of Agriculture, *African Land Development in Kenya*, p.1.

⁴³ Zeleza, 'Kenya and the Second World War', p. 146.

⁴⁴ KNA/KW/1/78, Tsavo (East) National Park Report, 1 July - 30 September 1949; Tsavo National Park: Warden's Quarterly Report, 1 October - 31 December 1949. For details of struggles between the park authorities and poachers in the park see Holman, *The Elephant People*.

⁴⁵ KNA/KW/1/78, Tsavo (East) National Park: Warden's Quarterly Report, 1 July - 30 September 1950; Tsavo (West) National Park: Quarterly Report, 1 July - 30 September 1950.

The conservationists were however more fortunate with mountain national parks as there was little competition for mountain land at the time. The first such park was Mount Kenya National Park, which was proclaimed in December 1949. Initially the park covered an area of 224 square miles of mainly forest land lying above the 11 000-foot contour. Then in May 1950 Aberdare National Park, initially covering 228 square miles of the bamboo and moorland zones of the Aberdare range was created. These mountain parks (which are some fifteen miles apart) provided sanctuary for elephant, bongo, giant forest hog, colobus and blue monkeys, and many other animal species.⁴⁶

Park Adjuncts

The realisation that some of the best wildlife areas in Kenya were already under human habitation and therefore could not be made national parks forced the 1939 Game Policy Committee to recommend the establishment of park adjuncts in such areas. Unlike national parks, which precluded most human activities and gave the interests of wildlife precedence, park adjuncts allowed the conservation of wildlife in inhabited areas so long as this did not compromise the interests of the inhabitants of such areas. The idea of park adjuncts was also born out of the realisation that some of the areas which had been recommended as national parks were not self-contained ecosystems as the wild animals in them migrated seasonally into surrounding areas. Where a migrational area could not be included in a national park because of established human interests, then a park adjunct was the best means of providing the animals in the national park with a more complete ecosystem. The idea of park adjuncts also emanated from the need to create more manageable conservation areas in place of the two amorphous game reserves existent in Kenya up to the late 1940s. The two game reserves were therefore to be deproclaimed as soon as the recommended park adjuncts became operational.

Like the national parks, the park adjuncts would be under the KNPTs while the Game Department would protect wildlife outside these two types of sanctuary. The Game Department would deal with such issues as game control and licensed hunting while

⁴⁶ F W Woodley, 'Game Defence Barriers', *East African Wildlife Journal*, 3 (1965), p. 90.

the trustees would develop national parks and park adjuncts for tourism. The trustees were expected to provide such infrastructure as roads, airstrips, and rest houses in national parks and park adjuncts with a view to promoting non-consumptive exploitation of the wildlife resources in these areas. The trustees would also protect the wildlife in designated game sanctuaries.

Since human interests were paramount in park adjuncts, the 1945 National Parks Ordinance required the KNPTs to obtain permission from the affected community before creating a park adjunct on their land. Such permission was to be sought through a 'competent authority', often the PC of the particular province, who in turn had to consult with the affected community - often through their LNC.⁴⁷ It was only after such permission was granted that a park adjunct could be created in a 'native reserve'. A similar process had to be followed whenever the trustees wished to undertake any form of development within the park adjuncts. They had to seek permission to build roads, rest houses, airstrips, and so on.

Although innovative, the idea of park adjuncts proved difficult to implement mainly because of mutual suspicion between the affected communities and conservationists, led by the KNPTs. African communities such as the Maasai feared that they would lose their land through these projects. Such fear was understandable, given the impact of previous land alienation on Africans. For their part, the KNPTs doubted the viability of park adjuncts because they were not only legally insecure but were also weighed down by bureaucracy. The trustees in particular viewed as inimical to successful wildlife conservation the involvement of 'unsympathetic Africans' in making decisions regarding the establishment and development of the adjuncts. The establishment of these sanctuaries was therefore beset by many problems, despite the provincial administration's efforts to mediate between the trustees and the affected African communities.

⁴⁷ Local Native Councils (LNCs) were set up in African reserves from 1924 and were made up of a few elected councillors and government-appointed chiefs. The DC of the particular district was the president of the LNC while the PC was free to attend sessions of the council. Where a community - like the Maasai and the Akamba - inhabited more than one administrative district, the community's LNCs sometimes met to discuss matters of importance to the whole community. Such joint LNC meetings were often chaired by the PC of the particular province. From the 1950s LNCs were renamed African District Councils (ADCs).

One of the main critics of the principles underlying the park adjuncts was Mervyn Cowie, the director of the KNPs. In May 1945 he wrote a memorandum criticising the idea. First, he claimed that the scheme did not accord the trustees security of tenure in the park adjuncts, and so they could not plan for long-term development of the areas. Although the agreement between the trustees and the 'competent authority' for the establishment of park adjuncts was supposed to hold for twenty years, there was no guarantee that it could not be nullified before maturity due to pressure from the owners of the land. Second, the idea '[was] far too complicated, and [would] never be effectively conveyed through interpreters to the shrewd suspicious mentality of the native elders'.⁴⁸ He therefore viewed negotiations with Africans as futile. Finally, he deemed unworkable the notion that trustees' rights in a particular park adjunct be based on effective wildlife control by the Game Department in the areas occupied by the consenting community.

Cowie's solution to these difficulties was that the National Parks Ordinance be amended so as to replace the term 'park adjunct' with 'national reserve'. In his view, a national reserves scheme was likely to transform Africans into proponents of wildlife conservation within a short period of time as they would benefit from the resultant roads, tourism, and trade.⁴⁹ He believed that national reserves could confer more material benefits on Africans than park adjuncts, and were therefore more suited to changing African attitudes towards wildlife conservation. However, he doubted their viability in the long run:

The National Reserves may not remain as such for ever. There will be many conflicting causes. Pastoral tribes may become agriculturalists. Fencing may be introduced on a big scale. . . . The final outcome should be to place some portions of the National Reserves into proper National Parks and deproclaim the remainder.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ KNA/KW/13/45, Kenya National Parks: Memorandum on Park Adjuncts, 24 May 1946.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

As a result of the confusion surrounding the idea of park adjuncts, the KNPTs set up a subcommittee to make recommendations on what the trustees could do and on what terms. The subcommittee consisted of Cowie, the game warden, and two other people. In its report of June 1946, the subcommittee addressed a variety of issues. It reported that the government had excised Leroghi Plateau, an important grazing area for the Samburu, from the Northern Game Reserve and added mounts Kulal and Marsabit to the sanctuary. It recommended that this game sanctuary be taken over by the trustees as Marsabit Park Adjunct under regulations acceptable to the relevant 'competent authority'.⁵¹

The subcommittee further reported that the two Maasai LNCs had rejected a proposal for the establishment of a park adjunct at Mara during their joint meeting in February 1946. It therefore recommended a tactical approach to the issue, as 'the Masai [had] unfortunately gained the false impression that a Park Adjunct involve[d] the immediate excision of their land'.⁵² It advised that the trustees give the Maasai an undertaking that the Southern Game Reserve would be dissolved within five years of the establishment of park adjuncts in specific areas of the game reserve. The trustees also needed to assure the Maasai that the development of the park adjuncts was to their advantage.⁵³

Following these recommendations, the trustees decided to negotiate for the establishment of park adjuncts. In 1947 application was made to the relevant authorities for the acquisition of Marsabit, Ngong, and Amboseli park adjuncts. The Maasai were reluctant to assent to the proposals and the government had to intervene on behalf of the trustees. In August 1947 the acting governor, Gilbert Rennie, assured a meeting of the two Maasai LNCs that the government intended to deproclaim the Southern Game Reserve and leave only two sanctuaries around

⁵¹ KNA/KW/13/45, Folio 8, Kenya National Parks: Park Adjuncts: Report by Sub-committee for Consideration of Trustees, 19 June 1946, pp. 2 - 4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

the Ngong Hills and the Amboseli area. He also assured the LNCs that game would be considerably reduced elsewhere in Maasailand.⁵⁴

The governor's intervention did not win Maasai support for the establishment of park adjuncts on their land. Consequently in December 1947 Eric A Sweatman, the officer-in-charge of the Masai Extra-Provincial District, requested the minister for agriculture and natural resources to convene a meeting for the two to discuss the issue with the game warden and the executive officer of the KNPTs.⁵⁵ When the officers met in January 1948 they recommended the postponement of the establishment of park adjuncts until the National Parks Ordinance was amended to allow the formation of national reserves. They also recommended that the deproclamation of the Southern Game Reserve be timed to coincide with the establishment of national reserves in Maasailand. The officer-in-charge of Maasailand, the game warden, and the executive officer of the KNPTs were then mandated to investigate and recommend areas of Maasailand which could be declared national reserves.

By March 1948 the government had formulated a wildlife policy 'favourable' to the Maasai and the onus of explaining it to them was left to the provincial administration. In May 1948 Sweatman assured the Kajiado LNC of the government's commitment to degazette the Southern Game Reserve and leave only small areas. The councillors were further assured that they 'would be asked to agree in principle to these areas being taken over by the [Kenya] National Parks' Trustees'.⁵⁶ They were also assured that 'the Maasai would in no way be adversely affected and might as well have a large say in the administration of the new National Reserves'.⁵⁷ A month later Sweatman told a meeting of the two Maasai LNCs that the areas required by the

⁵⁴ *East African Standard*, 11 August 1947.

⁵⁵ The Masai Extra-Provincial District consisted of Narok and Kajiado districts, as well as Ngong.

⁵⁶ *East Africa Standard*, 20 May 1948.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

trustees for the establishment of national reserves were Amboseli, Ngong, Western Chyulu, and Mara. He then explained that the Maasai would from time to time be asked to agree to the erection of small rest houses and to the construction of roads in the areas. A committee of Maasai elders under the DC would also be set up for each national reserve to advise the government on all matters affecting the inhabitants of the areas. After assurances that the Maasai would not lose any land through the national reserves scheme, and that fences would not be erected to exclude herdsmen from the reserves, the LNCs approved the scheme.⁵⁸ This facilitated the proclamation of a number of national reserves in late 1948 and 1949.

The first national reserve to be proclaimed was Marsabit in September 1948. It covered about 10 000 square miles mainly in Samburu and Marsabit districts. The sanctuary was simply a transposing of the Northern Game Reserve, involving the excision of the Leroghi Plateau and the inclusion of mounts Marsabit and Kulal.⁵⁹ Although the area was not as rich in fauna as Maasailand, the trustees considered the national reserve a worthwhile investment as it would 'be many years before the needs of the inhabitants force[d] game out of the area'.⁶⁰ The reserve was also home to unique animal species such as the greater kudu, reticulated giraffe, and Grevy's zebra - besides fair numbers of all the major mammals found in Kenya.⁶¹

⁵⁸ KNA/KW/13/45, Extracts from Minutes of the Masai Council Meeting Held on Tuesday, 1st June 1948.

⁵⁹ Leroghi Plateau was at the centre of conflict between the Samburu and the Laikipia settlers during the 1920s with the latter agitating for the eviction of the former as the plateau had been part of the land occupied by the Maasai before their eviction in 1911-12. However, the Kenya Land Commission (1932-34) supported Samburu claims to the land and the 1939 Game Policy Committee recommended its excision from the Northern Game Reserve. See Duder and Simpson, 'Land and Murder in Colonial Kenya'.

⁶⁰ KNA/KW/1/77, Cowie, 'National Parks in Kenya', p. 9.

⁶¹ Grevy's zebra are one and a half times larger than Burchell's (plains) zebra. They have large, round ears and their stripes are fine and even. This rare species is only found in northern Kenya (85 %) and Ethiopia (15 %). Reticulated giraffe are resplendent in their polygonal markings and are probably the most handsome of the family Giraffidae. Other species unique to northern Kenya are oryx beisa and Hunter's antelope (hirola).

Following the recommendations of the 1939 Game Policy Committee, new boundaries for the Northern Game Reserve were proclaimed in September 1946. But in the eyes of the provincial administration, the reserve did not cover all the rich wildlife areas in that part of Kenya. Consequently, the administration advised Cowie to seek the inclusion of more areas in the proposed park adjunct. In a letter forwarded to Cowie by the PC Northern Province in August 1947, the Marsabit DC stated:

In order to protect the giraffe, oryx, gazelle and greater kudu north of the present [game] reserve I recommend the inclusion of an additional piece of country to the north of the present reserve. . . . This additional area will include all the country where the greater kudu wander, and also where considerable giraffe and gazelle are to be found. . . . It will protect all the elephant who wander north of the Marsabit-Gombo road during the drier part of the year.⁶²

The proposed area was subsequently added to the sanctuary gazetted as the Marsabit National Reserve. The administration and the KNPTs now saw the reserve as a perfect ecosystem which would not only provide sanctuary to wildlife but would also promote tourism in the region. However, the reserve's remoteness from Nairobi made it less popular with tourists than the southern Kenya game sanctuaries.⁶³

Attempts by the KNPTs to attract tourists to the Marsabit National Reserve were generally unsuccessful. Despite the establishment of tourist facilities in various parts of the reserve, the region remained more of a wildlife 'conservation area' than a tourist destination. In 1949 the Samburu DC reported:

Out-posts of National Park rangers have been established at Baragoi, Barsaloi, Wamba, Barsaliga and Irer, and the [game] warden has completed a road along the Uaso [Nyiyo River] from Archer's Post to Barsaliga. There has been no noticeable increase in tourists. The only effect the National Reserve has had so far on the administration of the district is to increase the number of petty cases for game offences brought to the DC.⁶⁴

⁶² KNA/KW/13/45, DC Marsabit, Northern Province to PC Northern Province, 14 July 1947.

⁶³ Mount Marsabit is about 560 km from Nairobi by road while the southern reaches of the national reserve were about 325 km from Nairobi.

⁶⁴ KNA/DC/SAM/1/3, Samburu District Annual Report, 1949, p. 16.

In the following year the DC noted that the construction of five tourist cottages (bandas) and a ranger post at Nyama Yangu on the Uaso Nyiro River had increased the number of tourists to the area. But a year later he lamented:

The number of tourists during the year who have come to the National Reserve part of the district to view game can, apart from those going to the Uaso camp, be counted on the fingers of one hand.⁶⁵

This was in contrast to the situation in Amboseli where by 1947 the number of tourists entering the area was causing concern to conservationists. As Cowie observed, Amboseli had become so popular that the 'number of visitors' entering the area was 'causing considerable disturbance to game'.⁶⁶

Amboseli was the most popular of the national reserves created in the late 1940s. As proclaimed in November 1948, the reserve covered some 1259 square miles of the former Southern Game Reserve.⁶⁷ The core area of the Amboseli reserve was the basin of an extinct lake north of Mount Kilimanjaro. The 90 square-mile basin has swamps which are fed by underground water from Kilimanjaro. Around these swamps existed one of Africa's highest concentrations of animal and bird life. In 1946 G H Anderson, who knew Amboseli well, commented:

Having travelled and hunted in many different countries in Africa, I have never seen anything to compare with the variety of game that is to be seen in a radius of 10 miles of Amboseli. I do not believe there is any country in Africa, including National Parks or otherwise, that has such a variety of game in such a small area. It also has the great advantage of a healthy climate, fine scenery, and at most times a magnificent view of Kilimanjaro; cars can travel practically through the country for the purpose of viewing game, and what is more, close up views of all game can be obtained from a car. . . . I know of no country that is so suitable to be turned into a part of the National Park than Amboseli: it is absolutely unique.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ KNA/DC/SAM/1/3, Samburu District Annual Report, 1951, p. 20.

⁶⁶ KNA/KW/13/45, M H Cowie to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 26 August 1947. Also see the Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Trustees, Minute No. EC 112: Amboseli National Reserve, 10 September 1947.

⁶⁷ The abolition of the Southern Game Reserve was approved by the Secretary of State for Colonies in October 1948. This paved the way for the proclamation of national reserves in Maasailand.

⁶⁸ KNA/KW/13/45, 'Amboseli', 21 March 1946.

Amboseli was not just wonderful game country; it was also the lifeline of a number of Maasai groups. Being in the rainshadow of Mount Kilimanjaro, Amboseli generally receives less than 400 millimetres of rainfall per year.⁶⁹ The swamps were thus an important seasonal refuge for the local Maasai as well as other clans/sections during droughts. Proclamation of the national reserve in 1948 and the subsequent development of tourism around the swamps area (popularly known as Ol Tukai) put conservationists and the Maasai on a collision course.

Tourism at Amboseli started a decade before the area became a national reserve. In December 1937 P Gethin sought and obtained permission from the local Maasai and the DC to build a temporary tourist camp in the region.⁷⁰ He then began taking tourists to the area until 'August 1939 when the Southern Brigade was sent out to Ol Tukai and took all the Tentage'.⁷¹ Gethin subsequently joined the military, precipitating a lull in tourism at Ol Tukai until June 1945 when Anderson established a camp there 'for the purpose of showing members of His Majesty's forces some of the wild life of Kenya'.⁷²

In November 1946 Gethin returned to Namanga and requested the provincial administration to allow him to re-establish his Rhino Camp at Ol Tukai in accordance with his 1937 agreement with the local Maasai. After consulting the local Maasai leaders and the KNPTs, who were already contemplating taking over the area as a park adjunct, the administration allowed Gethin to erect temporary tourist structures on the understanding 'that if he wished to construct additional buildings for visitors to his camp he had to ask for permission to do so and the matter would have to be referred back to the Masai for their consent'.⁷³

⁶⁹ David Western, 'Amboseli Ecosystem', p. vi.

⁷⁰ The Maasai made it clear that they 'could not tolerate any iron buildings'. See KNA/KW/13/45, G C M Dowson (DC Kajiado) to Officer-in-charge (Masai District), 25 June 1947.

⁷¹ KNA/KW/13/45, P Gethin (Namanga River Camp) to Officer-in-charge (Masai District), 7 July 1947.

⁷² KNA/KW/13/45, 'Amboseli', 21 March 1946.

⁷³ KNA/KW/13/45, E A Sweatman (Officer-in-charge, Masai District) to DC Kajiado, 1 July 1947.

With the prospect of Amboseli becoming a park adjunct, the KNPTs also started showing interest in the Ol Tukai area in 1947. In February Cowie invited the member (minister) for agriculture and natural resources to join the KNPTs as their guest on a weekend trip to Amboseli so as 'to examine, on the spot, some of the duties and problems that needed to be met in the Park Adjunct proposal and to see how far it might be possible to provide some sort of tourist facility at Amboseli'.⁷⁴ This reconnaissance trip was followed by discussions on the future of tourism at Amboseli between the KNPTs and other interested parties, like Gethin, from May 1947.⁷⁵

The establishment of the Amboseli National Reserve in late 1948 marked the beginning of a long struggle between the Maasai and the provincial administration on the one hand and conservationists led by the KNPTs on the other. Coming at a time when the provincial administration was seeking ways and means to improve Maasai pastoralism, the timing could not have been worse for the KNPTs - for the provincial administration was uncompromising on Maasai land rights. To make matters worse, Cowie had little faith in national reserves and wanted to see Amboseli transformed into a national park.⁷⁶ This not only made him impatient with the Maasai but also caused him to frustrate plans for the multiple use of Amboseli. The situation was further complicated by the Amboseli environment. The area has friable volcanic

⁷⁴ KNA/KW/13/45, M H Cowie (Executive Officer, KNPTs) to Major F W Cavendish-Bentinck (Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources), 25 February 1947.

⁷⁵ KNA/KW/13/45, M H Cowie to Colonel P Gethin.

⁷⁶ Commenting on sentiments which had been expressed by the minister for agriculture and natural resources of Tanganyika Territory concerning wildlife conservation in that country in early 1949, Cowie said: 'I, personally, have little confidence that National Reserves, as such, will survive indefinitely. I believe that they are little different from Game Reserves, and the time is rapidly approaching in Kenya, when the conflict between human interests and the preservation of game will become very great; thus my contention is that whether one endeavours to preserve game under the Game Ordinance as a Game Reserve, or under the National Parks Ordinance as a National Reserve, the demands of the human, with the ever increasing population, will soon render the whole question of preserving game in Kenya insecure and somewhat temporary. This may be an alarming prediction, but if one judges the future on the past, it is the inescapable conclusion. . . . Although possibly not my business, I foresee great difficulties lying in the path of the proposed Serengeti National Park, since I understand the Tanganyika Government, as has been the case in Kenya, is placing the preservation of game far below the ascertained or probable needs of the human inhabitants. This will be a tragedy for Africa. . . .' See KNA/KW/1/76, Folio 33, Colonel Cowie (Director KNPTs) to F W Cavendish-Bentinck (Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kenya Colony and Protectorate), 29 March 1949.

soils and is susceptible to drought. Concentration of livestock, wild animals, and tourist vehicles in the area during the dry season threatened to turn it into a dust bowl, a development the KNPTs and other conservationists largely blamed on Maasai livestock.

The first source of difference between the KNPTs and the provincial administration in Maasailand was the draft regulations for the national reserves. In an effort to assert their authority within the reserves, the KNPTs proposed regulations which would authorise them to close certain areas of the reserves to human activity whenever they deemed it necessary. This undermined the two main principles underlying national reserves: that the interests of the local people would be paramount, and that the KNPTs would operate under the provincial administration. The proposal elicited a swift reaction from the provincial administration which had promised the Maasai that the creation of the national reserves would not hinder their movements, and which also feared the erosion of its own powers.⁷⁷

The trustees were forced to revise the regulations to the satisfaction of the provincial administration. However, the controversy led the administration into rethinking the national reserves issue. Wilkinson, who seems to have been close to Cowie, proposed that the Maasai be induced to give up OI Tukai through an exchange of land and the abolition of the larger Amboseli National Reserve. The KNPTs would then be free to make the OI Tukai area a national park.⁷⁸ This marked the beginning of a drawn-out struggle between the Maasai and conservationists for the OI Tukai swamps.

Besides competition over land and differences over regulations, Amboseli was also vulnerable to poaching. In the 1949 - 52 period the poachers included the local Maasai, Kikuyu, and Akamba living within the reserve, as well as Dutchmen from

⁷⁷ See KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Note Ref: 1st Draft - KNPTs Ordinance: National Reserve Regulations, 1949, 28 June 1949.

⁷⁸ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Roger A Wilkinson (Acting Officer-in-charge, Masai) to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 8 September 1949. E A Sweatman was then on leave.

Tanganyika. The latter caused the most damage as they operated from motor vehicles, and rangers on foot could do little to catch them. However, the KNPTs were soon able to bring the poaching problem under control through close patrols in the reserve and cooperation from the Game Department of Tanganyika. By the end of 1951 the reserve had a warden and eight rangers.⁷⁹

The KNPTs were also fast in developing the tourist potential of Amboseli. By early 1951 they had leased a 50-acre plot from the Kajiado LNC for building temporary tourist accommodation at Ol Tukai at £250 per annum. This plot was to be shared with Gethin and the tourist firms interested in operating in Amboseli. All the tourist enterprises were to share the revenue they collected from tourism in the area with the Maasai. A two-shilling rate was to be paid for every tourist who spent a night at Ol Tukai, while three shillings would be paid for every tourist vehicle entering the area. The Maasai would also earn three shillings from every aeroplane that landed at Ol Tukai.⁸⁰ Revenue to the Kajiado Maasai from these sources increased from Shs2480 during the last quarter of 1951 to Shs6466.50 during the first quarter of 1952.⁸¹ By this time the KNPTs were also in the process of building a road which would connect Amboseli with the Tsavo National Park as part of a tourist circuit stretching from Malindi to Namanga.

Another important national reserve proclaimed in late 1948 was Mara. Unlike the other Maasailand sanctuaries, the Mara area of Narok District was never part of the Southern Game Reserve.⁸² The area's magnificent wildlife was publicised in the early 1920s by F H Clarke, then an assistant game warden based in Narok, who noted that

⁷⁹ KNA/KW/1/78, Folio 78, Amboseli National Reserve: Warden's Quarterly Report, 1st January - 31st March 1950; KNA/KW/1/75, Folio 2, Amboseli National Reserve: Warden's Quarterly Report, 1 October - 31 December 1951.

⁸⁰ At that time the tourist enterprises were earning Shs5 per vehicle, Shs7 per tourist for night accommodation, and Shs10 as landing charges per aeroplane. See various correspondence between Mervyn Cowie and the provincial administration in KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4.

⁸¹ See KNA/KW/1/75, Folio 2 (30 March 1952), and Folio 12 (3 April 1952).

⁸² Before the Laikipia Maasai were moved to Narok in 1912-13 the area was occupied by some white settlers but they moved to Laikipia where they were given three acres for each two they had forfeited in Narok. See Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, p. 144.

white hunters did not venture into the area 'owing to prevalence of horse-sickness and tsetse fly'.⁸³ The provincial administration also noted that the Narok Maasai only took their livestock to the area during severe droughts when losses from starvation were likely to be higher than those caused by nagana. The tsetse fly infested area became known as 'the fly area' in official circles. Since it formed a triangle bound by the River Mara in the east, the Siria Escarpment in the west, and the Kenya-Tanganyika border in the south, its other name was the Mara Triangle.

The move to turn the Mara Triangle into an official wildlife sanctuary was initiated by the 1939 Game Policy Committee. But it was not until 1946 that conservationists started agitating for the establishment of a park adjunct in the area. The DC was particularly vocal about the issue as he did not see why an area that was apparently uninhabited could not be utilised for what suited it best - wildlife conservation:

I think that this area of the Mara triangle should be protected and declared a Game Reserve or Game Adjunct in the near future. The Maasai have so far failed to recommend it as a Game Park Adjunct partly because they did not really appreciate the point of it and their outlook has somewhat been prejudiced against any concessions concerning land and the approach to the problem of Native Settlement areas and leasing land to Wakamba. The decision however rests with the Native Lands Trust Board if the game park trustees wish to take the matter to the board and personally I would recommend that this proposal for a game park adjunct should be approved by the trust board as it is unlikely to injure the interests of the Maasai in this [tsetse] fly area and is obviously important from the game point of view.⁸⁴

The DC was not entirely correct in his estimation of the importance of the Mara region to the local Maasai. The area not only provided a refuge (albeit a risky one) during severe droughts but was also used for small stock. It also had salt-licks which were important to the Maasai pastoral economy.⁸⁵ The DC's views were based on a failure to understand Maasai distrust of the government's intentions and their opposition to the erection of fences. In 1948 the DC reported:

⁸³ KNA/KW/23/172, Assistant Game Warden's Annual Report, Narok, 1921.

⁸⁴ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/5, DC Narok to Officer-in-charge Masai District, 19 March 1946.

⁸⁵ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/5, Mervyn H Cowie to Roger Wilkinson, 23 July 1949.

The Maasai continue to oppose strongly a proposal of the government to create a barrier in the fly country. The object of this barrier was to keep within the tsetse fly country the vast herds, particularly of zebra and wildebeeste, which at certain seasons of the year migrate to the Loita Plains and eat up a large amount of grass available there, at the same time carrying disease. The benefits to the Masai and their stock from the erection of this barrier would be considerable and the refusal of the people to agree is more than usually short-sighted. It is based on the habitual distrust of government and fear of the erection of any fence which they always consider is likely to be put up in order to keep them out of parts of the land reserved for them.⁸⁶

Maasai behaviour in this incident was entirely rational. Being transhumant pastoralists, the Maasai practised an 'open access' land-use system which served their predominantly pastoral economy well by reducing the risks arising from an unpredictable climate.⁸⁷ The erection of a barrier would thus deny them access to resources in the game area during severe drought. Moreover, fencing in the large herds of wild animals would have destroyed the area's value as a dry season refuge.⁸⁸ Maasai distrust of the colonial government on land issues was based on their experience of land alienation earlier in the century.

At the time it was proclaimed a national reserve the Mara triangle was considered 'the last pristine sanctuary of fauna in Kenya' by conservationists.⁸⁹ Because of its varied ecology, relative inaccessibility, and tsetse fly infestation, the Mara triangle was one of the finest wildlife areas in Kenya in the 1940s. Conservationists, led by Cowie and the game warden, were hopeful that the area would be turned into a national park. Like the Narok DC, these conservationists did not appreciate the significance of the area to the Maasai. Shortly after its proclamation Cowie told Wilkinson:

⁸⁶ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/3, Narok District Annual Report, 1948, p. 16.

⁸⁷ See David J Campbell, 'Land as Ours, Land as Mine: Economic, Political and Ecological Marginalization in Kajiado District', in Thomas Spear and Richard Waller (eds), *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (London, 1993).

⁸⁸ Like the Maasai pastoralists, the wild animals in the Mara region moved over large areas according to seasons, thereby avoiding the over-use of any particular area.

⁸⁹ KNA/KW/13/45, Folio 11, Kenya National Parks: Memorandum Embodying the Recommendations of the Executive Committee on the Park Adjuncts, 24 July 1946.

I had a most enjoyable visit to the [Mara] Triangle and was impressed with its possibilities. I believe myself that if we could make some concession for access to salt[-licks], it would be far better to obtain this area on full National Park status. You know my misgivings about the future of National Reserves, and since the Triangle seems to be so little in demand either by natives or by hunting parties, it may be the only area in which we could preserve game for any length of time.⁹⁰

Cowie's drive to transform the Mara triangle into a national park was supported by the game warden who believed that opening the area up for tourism would galvanise public support for the creation of a national park:

I am anxious that the public of all races should be given an opportunity to see this wonderful sight before it is too late. The public then may appreciate this wonderful asset and this appreciation will help towards the preservation of this area as a survival of prehistoric Africa and an unique feature in the world.⁹¹

However, the Mara triangle was more important to the local Maasai than the conservationists were ready to admit. Although the struggle for the area's resources was not as intense as was the case at Ol Tukai, the Maasai could not assent to the establishment of a national park at Mara. They were only ready to sanction a national reserve as this did not entail loss of control over the area and its resources.

Unlike the Amboseli and Mara reserves, which were independent entities, Ngong and West Chyulu were migrational areas for animals in the Nairobi and Tsavo national parks respectively. They were typical 'park adjuncts', although the Ngong Hills were also a wildlife haven in their own right. But this did not make the acquisition of the two 'adjuncts' by the KNPTs any easier. This was particularly so in the Ngong area where the trustees had to contend with various interest groups.

⁹⁰ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/5, Mervyn Cowie (KNPTs) to Roger Wilkinson (Ag Officer-in-charge, Masai), 23 July 1949.

⁹¹ KNA/KW/1/75, Folio 1, Game Warden (W H Hale) to Director, Royal National Parks of Kenya (M H Cowie), 19 November 1952. In 1952 the Kenya National Parks organisation (KNPs) was renamed Royal National Parks of Kenya (RNPks) after the British monarch became its patron. In the previous year the term 'Assistant Game Warden' had been replaced by 'Game Ranger'.

The Ngong Park Adjunct, as proposed by the 1939 Game Policy Committee, consisted of the Ngong Hills and a contiguous strip of land on the Rift Valley floor.⁹² This area was considered by conservationists 'as absolutely essential not only for support of the Nairobi National Park but also for its tremendous intrinsic merits'.⁹³ The Ngong Hills were not only a sanctuary for many animals but also a potential recreational outlet for Nairobi residents.⁹⁴ The trustees were therefore anxious to acquire the proposed park adjunct. But the creation of a park adjunct at Ngong was difficult despite strong support for the project from the Ngong Settlers Association. The main difficulty was the reluctance of the Native Lands Trust Board to accept the boundaries proposed by the trustees. The hills were not only an important dry season grazing area for Kajiado Maasai but had also been encroached on by Kikuyu cultivators who were facing a land shortage in their own reserves. The government was reluctant to evict the cultivators at a time when it was encouraging African communities experiencing land shortage to settle among communities that were not experiencing such shortage, like the Maasai.⁹⁵ The rapid expansion of Kikuyu settlement 'all through the upper reaches of the Kiserian Valley' on the eastern foothills of Ngong in the late 1940s hampered the trustees' efforts to make the area a national reserve.⁹⁶

The interests of Maasai pastoralists were also an important factor. When approached by the trustees to approve the establishment of the Ngong reserve, the CNC and the PC for Maasailand declined to 'give any kind of undertaking that the reserve would not be used for some kind of Masai grazing scheme. . . . Furthermore,

⁹² The boundaries of the proposed Ngong Park Adjunct included the whole of the Ngong Hills, Laisagut, and Olorgesailie.

⁹³ KNA/KW/1/77, Folio 3, Cowie, 'National Parks in Kenya', p. 12.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ In 1951 the Narok DC proposed the resettlement of non-Maasai in the Trans Mara area as one way of relieving 'pressure in neighbouring overcrowded districts'. See KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/3, Narok District Annual Report, 1951, p. 1. There were also plans to settle some Machakos Akamba in Kajiado District in the late 1940s but the Maasai resisted the move.

⁹⁶ KNA/KW/1/75, RNPKs: National Reserves: Tour of the Ngong Reserve by the Director RNPKs, Member for Agriculture and National Resources, Chief Native Commissioner, Officer-in-charge Masai, and Nairobi National Park Game Warden.

they indicated that it would not be feasible to make any roads into the reserve other than for access, since the Masai would not favour the entry of visitors to any part of the reserve.⁹⁷ The trustees were therefore forced to abandon their 'claim' to most of the Ngong Hills despite the area's high potential for conservation and tourism. New boundaries were then drawn to exclude the area under cultivation and to include a portion of the plain south of the Nairobi National Park. This became the Kitengela Conservation Area.⁹⁸

Difficulties in getting the Ngong Hills declared a wildlife conservation area forced conservationists to think seriously about the future of wildlife in the country, especially in Maasailand. Since most of the national reserves were in Maasailand, some conservationists were of the view that the Maasai needed to be induced to lease areas like Amboseli and Ngong to the national parks trustees. But in early 1952 this proposal hit a snag when the PC for Maasailand told Cowie that he 'could see no possible hope of obtaining any concession from the Masai'.⁹⁹ Besides, some conservationists doubted the viability of a wildlife conservation scheme based on land leased from the Maasai, as this was bound to lead other communities to demand rent for their wildlife areas. This led Keith Caldwell, then a national parks trustee, to propose a revenue-sharing scheme as a way of making the Maasai partners in wildlife conservation:

The Ngong National Reserve is held to be an essential reservoir for the Nairobi National Park, and I consider that the cooperation of the Masai is of vital importance to enable a large head of game to be retained in both these areas. Such a result can, I submit, be most easily achieved by paying them a small portion of the Nairobi National Park receipts. I only suggest a token sum, eg 5 cents in the shilling; but I believe that they would be well content with some such payment, and would be willing to cooperate, especially if it was explained to them that we felt that, since much of the National Park game drifted in and out from their land in the Ngong reserve, it is only equitable that they should to some extent share in the financial takings of the park. They would in time realize that it was to their interest to see that the game was not unduly interfered with. One thing certain is that National Reserves or parks situated in, or adjacent to the Masai can never be

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ KNA/KW/1/75, RNPK: Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Trustees' Thirty-first Meeting, 7 April 1952, Minute No. EC 312.

completely successful without the cooperation of the tribe themselves. The easiest, and in the end the most economical way is to make them partners in the enterprise.¹⁰⁰

Progressive as Caldwell's ideas were, it took the Kenyan authorities a long time to embrace and implement them.

As a wildlife conservation area, West Chyulu was of little significance to the national parks trustees. Nor was the 150 square-mile piece of land of much use to the Maasai as it was relatively dry and infested with tsetse fly.¹⁰¹ However, 'the establishment of this [national] reserve was sought' in the hope of winning 'an addition to the Tsavo National Park on the eastern slopes, and so place the whole range and its valuable forest under protection'.¹⁰² Being on the windward side of the range, the eastern slopes of the Chyulu are wetter than the western side and can support heavier biomass. But due to population pressure in the Machakos District, the 1939 Game Policy Committee did not include the eastern Chyulu slopes in the Tsavo National Park although they were crown land and the Game Department had been protecting the wildlife in the area since the 1920s. The establishment of the Western Chyulu National Reserve in 1948 intensified the struggle for the eastern slopes of the Chyulu range between the Akamba and conservationists.¹⁰³

Challenges to Wildlife Conservation

The Second World War and its aftermath were a big challenge to wildlife conservation in Kenya. On the outbreak of the war in August 1939 Kenya was threatened with invasion by the Italians from Somalia and Ethiopia. This led to the

¹⁰⁰ KNA/KW/1/75, Keith Caldwell to Director RNPK, 29 April 1952.

¹⁰¹ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/5, Chief Conservator of Forests to Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 8 February 1957.

¹⁰² KNA/KW/1/77, Folio 3, Cowie, 'National Parks in Kenya', p. 10. The boundary between Kajiado and Machakos districts divides the Chyulu Range into eastern and western sections. Chyulu West is therefore in Maasailand while Chyulu East is in Ukambani.

¹⁰³ See Mbithi and Barnes, *The Spontaneous Settlement Problem in Kenya*, pp. 128 - 134.

secondment of many government officers, including wildlife conservation personnel, to the military.¹⁰⁴ Many of the honorary game wardens also enlisted. As a result there was widespread neglect of game regulations throughout the country. The situation was made worse by such factors as a high demand for wild animal products, the presence of foreign troops in the country, a big population of prisoners of war, and war-related food shortages.

Like the 1914-18 war, the Second World War brought about an acute shortage of animal products in Kenya and elsewhere. The huge supply of livestock to the military and other organisations hardly met the demand for animal products.¹⁰⁵ This provided an incentive for people to kill wild animals. The government actually encouraged the exploitation of wild animal resources for the war effort. In early 1943 the game warden allowed settlers to sell the meat and hides of animals such as buffalo, zebra, wildebeest, oryx, waterbuck, impala, bushbuck, and gazelle. He advised the settlers to turn the meat into biltong which the director of produce was ready to buy at Sh.1 per pound. He also drew their attention to the ready market for game hides and skins that were properly shed-dried. Even zebra tails and manes were needed for brush-making.¹⁰⁶

Many settlers took up the challenge and killed wild animals on their farms and crown land. In Nanyuki District, thousands of wild animals were shot during the war.¹⁰⁷ In Machakos District, war-related food shortages in 1939, 1943, and 1946, caused settlers to kill such animals as wildebeest and zebra 'for sale to hungry natives in the reserve'.¹⁰⁸ This quest for biltong continued throughout the war and into the immediate postwar period. In 1946 the Narok DC reported that '[a] number of parties

¹⁰⁴ The Game Department did not regain its full complement of officers until 1946.

¹⁰⁵ From 1940 to 1945 the Samburu, for example, sold 15 858 head of cattle and 9 865 sheep/goats to the military supply board.

¹⁰⁶ KNA/DC/MKS/14/1, Folio 13, Game Warden to All Concerned with Game Control, 18 February 1943.

¹⁰⁷ See KNA/KW/23/135, Folio 2, A T Archie (Game Warden) to A G Arbuthnot (Naro Moru), 28 February 1948.

¹⁰⁸ KNA/DC/MKS/14/1, Folio 42, DC Machakos to Game Warden, 21 June 1943. Also see folios 52, 61, 79, and Matheka, 'Colonial capitalism', 130 - 139.

visited the district whose aim was obviously butchery in the strict sense of the word; they came to kill game for meat, which they took away in the form of biltong'.¹⁰⁹ Eventually 'schedules of Crown Land Game Licences had to be cut, in the case of some animals by as much as 75%, in order to check the great slaughter of meat bearing game by those living in settled areas which the war years had denuded of game'.¹¹⁰

The government also allowed Africans to kill wild animals for food during the war-time food shortage. This was particularly so during the 1942-43 famine which was perhaps the greatest agrarian crisis of the Second World War.¹¹¹ Permission to hunt for food usually increased the temptation to poach game for profit. George Adamson, an assistant game warden in northern Kenya during the 1940s, recorded:

1943 has been the worst year in my experience for poaching by natives and giraffe have suffered most. Poaching by Mokongodo Dorobo was particularly serious in Tale, Kipsing and Ngare Ndare areas south of the Uaso [Nyiroy River]. The situation was aggravated by the action of the DC, Nyeri, in giving the Dorobo permission to kill game to relieve the food shortage. This, in the minds of the Dorobo legalised the manufacture and use of poisoned arrows. Giraffe and rhino, being easiest prey suffered accordingly.¹¹²

The war also led to the deployment of local and foreign troops in various parts of the country. Most of these soldiers had little respect for game laws and killed wild animals with abandon. Stone notes that '1940 was a famine year which led to the usual increase in poaching, this time complicated by the presence of South African troops in Kitui District, "plentifully supplied with convenient ammunition and petrol".'¹¹³ In the following year Ruth Pentreath of Kaimosi wrote to the game warden saying:

¹⁰⁹ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/3, Narok District Annual Report, 1946, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ KNA/KW/23/159, Game Department, 1946.

¹¹¹ Zeleza, 'Kenya and the Second World War', p. 150.

¹¹² KNA/KW/23/166, Folio 1, Assistant Game Warden's End of Year Report, NFD, 1943.

¹¹³ Stone, 'Organized Poaching in Kitui District', p. 449.

I suppose the Game Department still functions despite this horrible war - I hope so anyhow, with the added dangers to the game in the shape of visiting troops, etc, to deal with. . . . [I]t was worrying when men in training near Eldoret used to come with native askaris [soldiers], and there was quite a lot of indiscriminate slaughter of waterbuck of all types on and under the Nandi Escarpment.¹¹⁴

In April 1942 one Gilbert of Ndabibi near Naivasha requested the game warden to warn the military about shooting game on private land.¹¹⁵ In his 1944 annual report the game warden himself reported:

A good deal of shooting, legal and illegal, was done by the Pioneer Corps units engaged on locust control work, but for most part they confined it to shooting granti and oryx for the pot. Much more serious was the shooting by members of the military convoys coming down from Somalia.¹¹⁶

Apart from the killing of large numbers of wild animals to provision the military and other workers, animal meat was also used to feed a large population of Italian prisoners of war held in the country - mainly in northern Kenya.¹¹⁷ The Italian prisoners were also blamed for destroying game using traps, snares, and pits, and for passing 'on their nefarious proclivities to a vast number of natives'.¹¹⁸ The game warden feared that the bad influence of these prisoners of war would take a long time to eradicate.

During the war the price of wild animal trophies like ivory, rhino horn, and leopard skin rose to unprecedented levels. The price of leopard skins rose from between £¾

¹¹⁴ KNA/KW/23/165, Folio 1, Mrs Ruth Pentreath (Musini, Kaimosi) to Game Warden, 9 February 1941.

¹¹⁵ KNA/KW/23/165, Folio 6, Gilbert at Ndabibi to Archie, 17 April 1942.

¹¹⁶ KNA/KW/23/167, Game Department Annual Report, 1944. Concentration of troops around Mount Marsabit because of the Abyssinian Campaign led to the near extinction of the greater kudu, which is mainly found in this area. The concentration of pastoralists and their stock as a security measure also adversely affected the ecology of the area. See Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, pp. 109, 110.

¹¹⁷ Anthony Cullen and Sydney Downey, *Saving the Game: The Story of Destruction and Attempts at Preservation of Wild Life of East Africa, Under the Stewardship of Mankind* (London, 1960), p. 33; Huxley and Curtis, *Pioneers' Scrapbook*, pp. 88, 90, 91, 154.

¹¹⁸ KNA/KW/23/159, 'Game, 1939 -45'.

and £2 in the pre-war period to £15, with exceptionally good ones fetching as much as £25.¹¹⁹ This encouraged both legal and illegal hunting for trophies. By 1945 the enhanced price of ivory had led to such a high demand for elephant licences that the Game Department had to double their price as one way of reducing the slaughter of elephant.¹²⁰ The price of licences for dealing in leopard skin was also increased. But these measures only tended to promote the black market for trophies.¹²¹

Perhaps the only positive aspect of the war in respect to wildlife conservation in Kenya is that it led to the occupation of Italian Somalia by the British from 1941 to 1950. As a result of this occupation, the smuggling of game trophies through Somalia was greatly reduced. Consequently there was an increase in the population of elephants in northern and eastern Kenya. In 1944 it was reported that elephants had increased greatly in areas such as Kiunga near Lamu due to 'the cessation of poaching from across the Juba [River] and the difficulty of disposing of ivory'.¹²² Unlike the Italians, the British administration in Somalia supported wildlife conservation. This led to the introduction of strict game regulations, such as the rigid protection accorded to leopards from January 1944.¹²³

Another important challenge to wildlife conservation in Kenya during the 1940 - 1952 period was the increasing demand for agricultural land. After the Second World War the need to promote agriculture in both African and European areas led to an unprecedented expansion of the area under cultivation and ranching with adverse effects on wildlife. In the white highlands, where the government went out of its way to support settler farming, initially as part of the war effort and later as part of a wider scheme to rebuild the British economy, agricultural development meant increased

¹¹⁹ KNA/KW/23/159, Game Department Annual Report, 1946.

¹²⁰ KNA/KW/23/167, I D Bonham, Game Control Officer Malindi, 5 June 1945.

¹²¹ KNA/KW/23/159, Game Department Annual Report, 1946.

¹²² KNA/KW/23/167, I D Bonham, Game Control Officer Malindi, 5 June 1945.

¹²³ KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 76, Game Warden (Nairobi) to Director of Game and Tsetse Control (Lusaka), n.d.

crop production as well as mixed farming. These forms of production did not favour the existence of game in the highlands, unlike in the previous period when the predominance of ranching allowed for a sizeable amount of wildlife in the region. The situation was worsened by the introduction of a closer settlement scheme which aimed at putting most of land in the highlands to some form of agricultural production.¹²⁴

The outbreak of the Second World War was a boon to white farming in Kenya. The high demand for foodstuffs during the war induced the Kenyan government to support settler agriculture. In September 1939 the Settlement and Production Board was formed to coordinate aspects of production such as labour supply, acquisition of inputs and credit, and marketing. Consequently white 'farmers moved into mixed farming on an unprecedented scale'.¹²⁵ The 'great demand for meat by the military authorities' also led to an intensification of ranching.¹²⁶ All this translated into an increased intolerance of game in the white highlands. In Laikipia, where the acreage under wheat increased from 6000 in 1941 to 9000 in 1942, zebra and buck were a big nuisance. Local settlers were issued with rifles and ammunition captured from Italians for game control.¹²⁷ The Game Department also hired people to shoot game in the more troubled areas. Firearms were also issued free of charge to people willing to help and to those willing to employ Africans for the work.¹²⁸

The drive to expand settler and corporate agriculture continued in the post-war period mainly in response to an increased demand for food and raw materials in the world market. This resulted in the investment of some £45 million in European farming in Kenya between 1945 and 1960. In 1946 an agricultural settlement board

¹²⁴ See Huxley and Curtis, *Pioneers' Scrapbook*, pp. 91, 92.

¹²⁵ Zeleza, 'Kenya and the Second World War', p. 149.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ See KNA/DC/SAM/1/2, Samburu-Laikipia Annual Reports, 1940-42; KNA/KW/23/165, Game Department Annual Report, 1941, p.2.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

was set up to run European settlement schemes: 'The board bought all the remaining crown land and any uncultivated land that the existing settlers cared to sell, and distributed it to new arrivals', mainly British ex-servicemen.¹²⁹ This increased the number of white farmers in the country from 1700 in 1948-49 to 3600 in 1960.¹³⁰ All this translated into a further squeeze on wildlife in the white highlands. In early 1948, for example, the Nanyuki Farmers Association demanded that all buffalo be cleared from their area and its vicinity. In 1950 ranchers in the newly settled Rumuruti area made a similar demand to the Game Department before starting to shoot the game the following year after the department failed to respond. The latter area harboured such valuable species as Grevy's zebra, rhino, Kenya hartebeest, and reticulated giraffe.¹³¹

Attempts by the game warden to get the minister for agriculture and natural resources to intercede on behalf of wildlife interests largely went unheeded as it was the government's policy to promote settler agriculture at any cost. The Game Department therefore left the settlers to their own devices. In 1950 when the Trans-Nzoia district council requested the game warden to protect *topi* in the district he retorted:

Topi were made Royal Game under schedule 1 at the express wish of the local people who enjoyed seeing game so close to town. But I realise that the district has become more closely settled and fenced so that the presence of these *topi* can possibly be no longer tolerated. . . Royal Game or not, *topi* can be shot by the owner if they do damage.¹³²

¹²⁹ Zeleza, 'Kenya and the Second World War', p. 158.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 159.

¹³¹ See KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 105, W H Hale (Game Warden) to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 10 January 1951; KNA/KW/23/135, Game Warden to DC Baringo, 23 November 1951; KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 416, Raymond (Nanyuki) to Game Warden, 27 December 1952.

¹³² KNA/KW/23/135, Folio 186, Ag Game Warden (WH Hale) to Chairman Trans-Nzoia District Council, 24 June 1950. Giraffe were also a menace in Trans-Nzoia where crops such as wheat, sunflower and maize were grown. They also destroyed fences. Consequently, some farmers wanted them removed from the area. See folio 19 in KNA/KW/23/135.

Other appeals by conservation-minded settlers to the Game Department to save some of the wild animals in the white highlands by translocating them to safer areas largely went unheeded. However, a few settlers did provide sanctuary to the wild animals on their property. One such settler was a Mr Hopf on whose farm in Trans-Nzoia were many sitatunga. Holf went to the extent of employing a scout to look after the sitatunga.¹³³ Some ranchers in Laikipia also spared the game on their ranches. This became the basis of game ranching in Laikipia District.¹³⁴

In African areas post-war development entailed both resettlement and reconditioning of land which had deteriorated due to overgrazing and overcultivation during the pre-1946 period. Through the ALDEV programme, 'betterment schemes' were introduced in some parts of the country with a view to 'reconditioning' land.¹³⁵ In most cases this entailed relieving overpopulated areas of excess human and livestock populations through resettlement to previously unsettled areas. Consequently wildlife on the crown lands surrounding African reserves came under unprecedented pressure. In some instances, as at Makueni in Machakos District in the early 1940s, the government was forced to carry out the systematic destruction of game in order to make room for human settlement.

Development schemes which threatened wildlife were envisaged for Ukambani, Maasailand, and Samburu. In Ukambani the main areas of conflict were the crown lands adjoining the Tsavo National Park in southwestern Machakos.¹³⁶ Resettlement and grazing schemes, such as those at Makueni, Emali-Tsavo, Simba-Emali, and Kiboko-Makindu, were all initiated on crown land which was rich in wildlife. This led to a long struggle between conservationists and the ALUS as the former tried to persuade the government not only to stop the implementation of the schemes but

¹³³ KNA/KW/23/135, Folio 334, W H Hale (Game Warden) to J L Slim (Game Ranger, Kapenguria), 6 November 1951. This is how the two-square kilometre Saiwa Swamp National Park started.

¹³⁴ See Kuki Gallman, *I Dreamed of Africa* (London, 1992).

¹³⁵ To some extent the Second World War helped to reduce the problem of overstocking by providing an outlet for African stock, but increased production of crops due to the high prices prevailing during the war increased the problem of overcultivation.

¹³⁶ See Ministry of Agriculture, *African Land Development in Kenya*, pp. 41 - 52.

also to add the land to the Tsavo National Park. Makindu-Kiboko was the main bone of contention.¹³⁷ However, the government did not halt the schemes because the Machakos Akamba were at the time experiencing serious agrarian crises.¹³⁸ The Yatta Plateau was another important wildlife area which had to be sacrificed for Kamba settlement.

Development schemes in Maasailand mainly involved the development of pasture land through the creation of ranching schemes and the eradication of tsetse fly in areas such as Narok. In 1949 the provincial administration in Maasailand was contemplating 'lay[ing] out the country in ranching units of 50 square miles each; which [would] be divided into large paddocks, and eventually subdivide[d] and fenced'.¹³⁹ Since this would affect national reserves such as Amboseli, the administration suggested that they be reduced into smaller areas. As a result the Amboseli National Reserve was reduced from its initial size of 1259 square miles to 30 square miles before the Maasai were eventually persuaded to extend it to about 200 square miles.

Development also threatened the Mara Triangle as a game sanctuary. In 1951 there were proposals to clear the area of tsetse fly and turn it into a Maasai settlement area as it was well watered. This led the game warden to claim that such a scheme would entail the slaughter of a million head of game. He warned his minister:

The day development invades this wonderful area, the Game Department should pack up and the Nairobi butchers with the Eldoret Dutchmen should take over!¹⁴⁰

Since there was no land shortage in Narok District at the time, the game sanctuary remained intact. But attempts by the government to regulate access to the Mau and

¹³⁷ See folios 105, 106, 109, 111 in KNA/KW/1/74, Preservation of Game and Bird Policy, 1948 - 1958.

¹³⁸ See Matheka, 'Colonial Capitalism', chapters 5, 6. In 1959 the government ruled out the possibility of adding the 113 square-mile Makindu-Kiboko area to the Tsavo National Park. But this did not mean the end of the struggle for the expansion of the park in this area.

¹³⁹ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Roger A Wilkinson (Ag Officer-in-charge, Masai) to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 8 September 1949.

¹⁴⁰ KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 105, W H Hale (Game Warden) to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 10 January 51.

other forests in Narok District led to political agitation which saw the Maasai petition the secretary of state for colonies in 1950.¹⁴¹

In Samburu District controlled grazing was introduced on the Leroghi Plateau in 1943. Only a given number of livestock was allowed on the plateau on permits. Then in 1944 schemes to improve ranching on the plateau through such projects as the development of water resources and controlled grazing were initiated using 'betterment funds'. However, controlled grazing was detested by the Samburu and led to the deliberate burning of 60 square miles of the Leroghi Forest. Controlled grazing also led to political agitation in which competition for pasture between livestock and wildlife featured prominently.¹⁴² The Game Department was thus forced to reduce the number of wild animals on Samburu land. In November 1950 '[t]he Assistant Game Warden, Rumuruti, spent sometime on Leroghi [Plateau] . . . shooting and chasing away zebra which were ravaging closed grazing areas.'¹⁴³

As a result of development schemes in both African and European areas, many wild animals were destroyed in Kenya in the post-war period. This forced the game warden in 1951 to claim that '[d]evelopment schemes [were] the greatest factor in causing the disappearance of game, far more so than the ravages of poachers because while the latter [could] be checked to a certain degree, development move[d] forward like a stream-roller, crushing all in its path'.¹⁴⁴ Having failed to convince the provincial administration and the ALUS to reconcile development schemes with wildlife conservation, the game warden could only tell his minister: 'I

¹⁴¹ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/3, Narok District Annual Report, 1951, p. 1.

¹⁴² In 1943 Adamson noted that the main issue at the meetings of the Samburu LNC was complaints about the destruction of pasture on the Leroghi Plateau by game. See KNA/KW/23/166, Folio 1, Assistant Game Warden's End of Year Report, NFD, 1943.

¹⁴³ KNA/DC/SAM/1/3, Samburu District Annual Report, 1950, p.17.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in KNA/DC/MKS/14/1, Folio 344, 'Development Schemes and Game' - Circular by Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 14 February 1951.

feel the whole of the edifice of game preservation is tottering and that the miners are people who do not understand the true interests of the community'.¹⁴⁵

Another challenge facing wildlife conservation in Kenya during the period under review was the increased demand by Africans for compensation for damage caused by wild animals. Besides demanding that wild animals be removed from their land, Africans also sought compensation for such damage. In 1944, for example, the Machakos LNC proposed to the game warden that a compensation fund be set up from the revenue the Game Department earned from trophies. According to the LNC, 'big game were Government's cattle' and therefore the 'Government [was] liable for damage by their cattle in the same way other herd owners were'.¹⁴⁶ In 1948 the Maasai LNCs too proposed that people injured by wild animals be compensated by the government since it received enormous direct and indirect revenue from the preservation of game.¹⁴⁷ In 1952 the PC for Central Province added his voice to the growing demand for compensation to victims of wild animal depredations:

As a result of the continual depredations by elephants in Chief Muhoya's Location of Nyeri District, which abuts the Aberdare Royal National Park, and which comprises a large number of small holdings, I consider that . . . compensation should be paid from the sale of ivory.¹⁴⁸

Although the government had so far resisted the principle of compensation for damage caused by wild animals, ostensibly because the claims would be beyond its capacity to pay, the issue could no longer be side-stepped. On the one hand, the government needed to stem the increasing anti-conservation feeling among African communities if institutions like national reserves, which depended on the goodwill of

¹⁴⁵ KNA/KW/1/74, Folio 105, W H Hale (Game Warden) to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 10 January 1951.

¹⁴⁶ KNA/DC/MKS/14/1, Folio 43, D G Christie Miller (for DC Machakos) to Game Warden, 24 August 1944.

¹⁴⁷ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/3, Narok District Annual Report, 1948, p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ KNA/KW/1/79, Folio 84, PC Central Province to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 25 September 1952.

local communities, were to survive.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, increasing political consciousness among Africans, especially in the post-war era, made it difficult for the government to overlook their demands. In the late 1930s several African communities in Kenya successfully resisted destocking, while in the late 1940s the Maasai and the Samburu successfully resisted government attempts to keep their livestock out of the forests in their reserves.

As a result of the agitation for compensation, the government initiated a controlled hunting areas scheme in 1951. The scheme, which started in Narok District before spreading to the other game-rich areas, was meant to induce Africans to preserve wildlife outside the game sanctuaries by giving them a share of the revenue from licensed hunting.¹⁵⁰ Hunters operating in controlled areas in African reserves were expected to contribute a small amount of money to the treasury of the LNC in whose area they were hunting. The LNC would use some of the money to compensate victims of wildlife damage, while the rest would finance social amenities like dispensaries, schools, and cattle dips. Initially the scheme had little impact owing to the small revenue accruing to LNCs. In the second half of 1951 the Narok LNC earned a mere Shs4935 from controlled hunting fees.¹⁵¹

Other problems facing wildlife conservationism during this period were drought, locust invasions, poaching, and the poor administration of game laws. There were severe countrywide droughts in 1939, 1943, 1946, and 1949-51. These were usually accompanied by locust invasions and caused the death of large quantities of domestic and wild animals. In March 1951 George Adamson, the game ranger in NFD, recorded:

I arrived at Habaswein on the afternoon of the 18th and was there until the 21st. During these four days, I tried to see as much as possible of

¹⁴⁹ See KNA/KW/1/76, Folio 39, M H Cowie, 'Compensation for Damage by Game' (Typescript, 11 April 1949).

¹⁵⁰ The scheme was also considered a profitable way of culling wild animals through sport hunting as opposed to the 'wasteful' animal control measures. See KNA/KW/1/74, J A Kirkpatrick, 'Review of Game Protection in Kenya Colony' (Typescript, 10 March 1952).

¹⁵¹ KNA/DC/1/1/3, Narok District Annual Report, 1951, p.1.

the conditions caused by the severe drought. It was a truly appalling experience; during all my many years' experience of the country I have never seen anything more grim and pathetic. Everywhere near and around the Lorian [Swamp] the air was heavy with the stench of death and corruption, decaying carcasses and the bodies of dying animals, mostly sheep, goats, cattle and camel lay around, thickest near the Somali bomas [settlements], paths and water holes. . . . Wild animals had also died. Elephants were harassing people in a bid to get water. The situation seemed to be hopeless and all that could be done was for me to wait at the Lorian and protect the people at the wells and collect the ivory of the elephants as they died. Up to this time, eleven elephants had died from which 16 tusks had been recovered, six having been stolen. A police patrol returning from up river brought in 7 tusks of elephants which had died of thirst and reported that gangs of Boran youths had speared several more and stolen the ivory in the neighbourhood of Gubatu.¹⁵²

The droughts had both short- and long-term effects. In the short term, they heightened conflict between human beings and wild animals - leading to the increased slaughter of the latter in their weakened state. In the long term, the heavy loss of livestock resulted in the increased poaching of wild animals as the affected communities sought to rebuild their herds, besides meeting needs previously met through the sale of livestock. Organised poaching by Boran youths became common in the period after the 1949-51 drought.¹⁵³

But conservationists like Adamson did not view poaching in its socio-ecological context. Reporting on what he believed was a resurgence of the tradition of 'spear-blooding' among the Boran, the ranger claimed that Boran youth were killing big game as a substitute for the raids they used to make against neighbouring communities as part of their initiation rites in the pre-colonial era. He noted that those who killed game were feted, just like the successful raiders of yore. Moreover, communities were not only reluctant to inform on game regulation offenders but even venerated those who went to jail for killing game.¹⁵⁴ As the evidence suggests, this

¹⁵² KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 228, George Adamson to Game Warden, 23 March 1951. Also see KNA/KW/23/166, Folio 1, Assistant Game Warden's End of Year Report, NFD, 1943.

¹⁵³ See folios 241, 249c, 288, and 390 in KNA/KW/23/175.

¹⁵⁴ KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 390, George Adamson to Game Warden, 19 October 1952.

behaviour was not atavistic but was born out of economic necessity - though it revolved around an archaic tradition. As in traditional raiding, where the emphasis was on capturing livestock and not spear-blooding, poaching was perceived as a means of accumulating wealth. This explains why the Boran community had taken an oath to protect poachers.¹⁵⁵ It also explains why the poachers were feted. Besides, the Boran were not the only game poaching community in northern Kenya at the time. The Dorobo, Turkana, and Somali were also deeply involved.

Drought and famine were catalysts for poaching, but deeper socio-economic issues were involved. In August 1950 the game warden commented:

I realise that the Wakamba are short of food, but this poaching is something different. Organised gangs are raiding the Masai Reserve near the Kiboko River and are engaged in regular meat trade. . . . I myself was present at the capture of two of this gang. They are not famine stricken destitutes but well clothed and well armed desperadoes.¹⁵⁶

In the following month, George Adamson reported:

I have just received information about heavy poaching gangs of Kamba and others in the neighbourhood of the Tana Ura junction. . . . The situation there is usually that a large gang of Kamba, Tharaka and Meru, sometimes 50 or more, including women congregate and establish a brewery in a dom palm forest. The days are spent in making tembo [beer] and hunting game. The beer and meat, what is not consumed on the spot is sold to Meru who come down from the Jombeni [sic] hill.¹⁵⁷

In the light of the economic crisis Kenyan Africans were facing by 1950, exploitation of natural resources, such as wild animals and palm trees, was one means of survival. Adamson noted that the Kamba beer brewers, like the Pokomo in Garissa who tapped Borass palms, were killing the palm forests as every time a young shoot

¹⁵⁵ KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 241, George Adamson to Game Warden, 8 May 1951.

¹⁵⁶ KNA/DC/MKS/14/1, Folio 166, Ag Game Warden to DC Machakos, 26 August 1950.

¹⁵⁷ KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 140, G A G Adamson to DC Meru, 18 September 1950. The ranger may have been referring to Nyambene Hills.

was bled for the juice it died. He felt that a ban on the practice would not only save the palm forests but also deal a blow to poaching.¹⁵⁸

The problem of poaching was compounded by the perpetual shortage of game rangers and scouts. Although the establishment of national parks and reserves led to a slight increase in the number of rangers and scouts, the total number was still small in relation to the areas they were assigned. The problem was made worse by corruption among African scouts, tribal police, and other 'native authorities'. The majority of the African scouts took bribes and also killed wild animals for meat. In 1944 the justice of peace and game warden at Voi, R W Foster, observed that Giriama tribal authorities were 'hand in glove with ivory poachers' and therefore could not be relied on to control poaching.¹⁵⁹ When George Adamson worked briefly in the Coast Province in the early 1950s he received reports 'of bribery and extortion on the part of the Giriama scouts'.¹⁶⁰

However, the most widespread cases of corruption in respect to game regulations during this period were recorded in the NFD. Adamson's investigations on game offences among the Boran and elsewhere in northern Kenya in 1950-51 revealed how entrenched the problem was. Most of his scouts, the tribal police, and headmen in the region were corrupt. For example, in September 1950 he was informed 'that headman Lekeparu, a Dorobo headman who had a game case against him, had held a meeting with his people . . . and had warned them that anyone who gave information to government concerning any offence would get into serious trouble. Reprisals would be taken by means of witchcraft and "framing" of cases.'¹⁶¹ In another incident, Adamson reported:

¹⁵⁸ Similar patterns of behaviour (such as veneration of poachers, beer-brewing, and poaching) were noted among Liangulu, Kamba, and Griama poachers and trophy-smugglers in and around the Tsavo National Park during this period. See Holman, *The Elephant People*, passim.

¹⁵⁹ KNA/KW/23/167, Folio 12, DC Voi to DC Kilifi, 10 December 1944. Also see folio 11 in the same file.

¹⁶⁰ KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 333, G A G Adamson to Game Warden, 23 April 1952.

¹⁶¹ KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 142, G A G Adamson to DO Mukogodo, 19 September 1950.

From information just received, it would appear that the scouts stationed on the Kinna have been going in for bribery and extortion on a big scale. I understand that two or three Boran or Somalis were caught with ivory and let to go on payment of a bribe. In another case, two scouts took three sheep and 15 [shillings] off two Boran involving the killing of a leopard.¹⁶²

In Adamson's view, bribery and corruption were among the biggest problems facing wildlife conservation in the country and involved most African government personnel - 'be they game scouts, Police or Tribal Police, irrespective of tribe'.¹⁶³

Owing to corruption and related problems, it was difficult to control poaching in northern Kenya during this period. Poachers were usually aware of the schemes of the game ranger, through contacts among his scouts or through their own chiefs. They were therefore able to evade arrest easily. To overcome this problem, Adamson started directing his scouts to carry out surprise raids on villages and settlements suspected of involvement in poaching or trophy-smuggling. But the provincial administration did not like the practice as it was open to abuse by both scouts and villagers. The former could resort to extortion while the latter could allege the same even when nothing of the sort had occurred. He was therefore advised to ensure that his men informed chiefs and sought their assistance when operating in their areas.¹⁶⁴ His practice of using 'secret agents' in his war against poaching and trophy-smuggling also came under attack from administrators who claimed that it had an unsettling effect on Africans from a law and order point of view.¹⁶⁵ The informers were accused of carrying out unauthorised searches, making arrests, and extortion.

Some of the corruption among scouts and the other authorities involved in anti-poaching and anti-smuggling activities during this period resulted from low pay. The best paid scouts in 1952 earned a salary of Shs40 per month and Shs37 in

¹⁶² KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 331, Adamson to DC Isiolo (S I Ellis), 21 April 1952.

¹⁶³ KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 333, G A G Adamson to Game Warden, 23 April 1952.

¹⁶⁴ KNA/KW/1/23/175, Folio 140, G A G Adamson to DC Meru, 18 September 1950.

¹⁶⁵ See folios 371, 372, and 381 in KNA/KW/23/175.

allowances. This pay was low compared to the bribes, often as high as Shs200 - 300, which were common in the then lucrative trophy business.¹⁶⁶ Scouts were also susceptible to corruption as they had no housing and depended on villagers for accommodation. In 1952 the DC Isiolo commended on the problem:

I think it is bad for morale and puts the scouts at a disadvantage if they have to depend on the goodwill of the locals for shelter as acceptance of this also entails a meal. It goes against the grain of most races in the world to "shop" a man whose salt has just been eaten.¹⁶⁷

Most Africans viewed wild animals either as government property or common property which everyone had a right to exploit. As David Western points out, wildlife areas in colonial Tanzania were referred to as *shamba la mama* or the Queen's farms,¹⁶⁸ an indication that Africans viewed wildlife conservation as an aspect of colonialism. No wonder African scouts were so susceptible to game regulations. Scouts who had previously been poachers reverted to the practice immediately an opportunity arose.¹⁶⁹

It is clear that the 1940 - 1952 period was an important phase in the development of wildlife conservation policies and practice in Kenya. During the period wildlife conservation institutions expanded from two loosely managed game reserves to four national parks and five national reserves. Tourism became an important aspect of wildlife conservation during this period, which was also characterised by attempts to involve Africans in wildlife conservation through the establishment of national reserves. By leasing land for the establishment of tourist facilities such as rest houses and airstrips, Africans were expected to share in the benefits of tourism-related activities and thus become more receptive to wildlife conservationism.

¹⁶⁶ See folios 338 and 333 in KNA/KW/1/23/175. A good leopard skin, for example, fetched about Shs500 in the late 1940s. See KNA/KW/23/159, Game Department Annual Report, 1946.

¹⁶⁷ KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 340, DC Isiolo to Game Ranger Isiolo, 26 April 1952.

¹⁶⁸ Western, 'Ecosystem Conservation and Rural Development', p.18.

¹⁶⁹ See KNA/KW/23/175, Folio 339, G A G Adamson to Game Warden, 9 May 1952; Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 90, 219.

However, these changes occurred against a background of struggles revolving mainly around land use. On the one hand, conservationists were eager to have as much 'pristine' land as possible reserved for wildlife. On the other hand, Africans, often with the backing of the provincial administration, were opposed to attempts to subordinate their needs to those of wildlife conservation. These struggles resulted in policy changes which led to further institutional developments, such as the initiation of controlled hunting areas through which Africans were expected to benefit from some of the revenue from licensed hunting. By sharing the benefits of wildlife conservation with the people, the government hoped to convince them of the need to conserve wildlife. But as the next chapter shows, such ideas were not easy to implement because of the diversity of interests involved.

CHAPTER SIX

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND DEEPENING CRISIS, 1953 - 1959

The period under consideration marked the zenith of struggles over wildlife conservation in Kenya. Despite the creation of national parks, national reserves, and the national parks board of trustees in the late 1940s, crises associated with wildlife conservation in the country continued to deepen in the 1950s. The contradictory imperatives of wildlife conservation and activities like pastoralism escalated in areas such as Amboseli and Samburuland against a backdrop of intermittent drought, while poaching reached crisis proportions in some areas, partly owing to high prices for game trophies in the world market. These crises were compounded by the Mau Mau Emergency (1952-56) which not only drew wildlife personnel away from conservation activities but also denuded funds which could have been used to solve some of the problems affecting conservation in the 1950s. In addition, the colonial authorities, under pressure from the British government, continued to subordinate wildlife conservation to agricultural and other forms of economic development.

The drive for economic development led to the establishment of the East African Royal Commission (1953-55) to consider measures for improving the standard of living of a rising East African population. Of the commission's six terms of reference, the first three were concerned with the intensification of land use, especially among African communities. Specifically the commission was mandated to examine and recommend measures for 'the economic development of land already in occupation, the adaptations and modifications of customary tenure necessary for the full development of the land, and the opening for cultivation and settlement of land not fully used'.¹ These concerns were in line with government development programmes in African areas as manifested in projects such as the African Land Development (ALDEV) programme and the Swynnerton Plan (1954), schemes which adversely

¹ Y P Ghai and J P W B McAuslaw, *Public Law and Political Change in Kenya: A Study of the Framework of Government from Colonial Times to the Present* (Nairobi, 1970), p. 102. Also see Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), *East African Royal Commission 1953 - 1955 Report* (London, 1955), p. xi; KNA/KW/87, Secretariat Circular No. 7 of 21 February 1953.

affected wildlife conservation by increasing competition for land and government funding.

After hearing presentations from various interest groups and individuals, some of whom were critical of wildlife conservation policies and practice in Kenya, the East African Royal Commission took the view that 'preservation of game must not be allowed to stand in the way of the urgent need for proper land usage'.² On the delicate issue of wildlife and economic development in African areas, the commission advised that:

The Masai in particular, and other nomadic pastoralists . . . would do well to appreciate that their territories include first-rate ranching land, and that if they were to make proper use of this land, no-one could object to the clearance of game from the area. The European rancher will not tolerate game on his ranch, nor need the African rancher.³

Ambivalent views like these underlay the land-use policies of the Kenyan government by the mid-1950s and frustrated conservationists' attempts to overlook African land rights in their agitation for wildlife conservation. Questions about the impact of wildlife conservation on African communities, especially the Maasai, were also raised in the British parliament. This ensured that the colonial government remained committed to the policy of trusteeship when handling matters pertaining to African land.

In response to the problems afflicting wildlife conservation in Kenya, the colonial government set up a game policy committee in February 1956. The committee was mandated to examine four main issues: the long-term preservation of game; the contradictory interests of conservationists and communities in the Amboseli National Reserve; relations between the national parks organisation and the Game Department; and the viability of existing game legislation. In its interim report of August 1956, the committee not only discussed the crucial issue of wildlife conservation in Amboseli but also made recommendations on three other matters

² HMSO, *East African Royal Commission*, p. 299.

³ *Ibid.*

which it 'considered required urgent attention'.⁴ These were boundary adjustments for the Tsavo National Park, measures to combat poaching, and amendments to existing game legislation so as 'to enhance the penalties for offences' under the legislation.⁵ In the final report the committee mainly discussed policies for the long-term preservation of game and the strengthening of game laws.

Although the government accepted the recommendations of the game policy committee in principle, their implementation was influenced by factors such as community interests and the government's financial priorities. Despite the committee's recommendation that revenue generation be the criterion for determining the best form of land use in areas where there were conflicts between community interests and wildlife conservation, the government continued to uphold the paramountcy of human interests in such areas.⁶ Similarly, financial constraints hampered the implementation of various recommendations, such as the sharing of the benefits of wildlife conservation between the government and African District Councils (ADCs). Sharing of revenue from wildlife conservation would have enabled the ADCs to compensate victims of destructive animals, thereby promoting tolerance for wildlife among African communities. However, the piecemeal implementation of the recommendations did lead to further institutional reforms, such as a redefinition of the roles of the RNPK organisation and the Game Department. The report also led to an intensified involvement by African communities in wildlife conservation. This culminated in the establishment of the first ADC game reserve in 1959, a development which led to the proliferation of such reserves in the 1960s.

⁴ Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58: Report of the 1956 Game Policy Committee* (Nairobi, 1958), p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁶ It was generally assumed in conservation circles that tourism in places like Ol Tukai would be a more lucrative activity than pastoralism. Hence the 1956 Game Policy Committee's insistence that 'proper land usage' be used to determine the best form land use for such areas. The East African Royal Commission had used the same term to denote agricultural development, a conception faulted by the game policy committee which viewed proper land usage in terms of revenue generation.

Background to the 1956 Game Policy Committee

Seeming incompatibility between wildlife conservation and other economic activities in the national reserves was one of the main reasons for the establishment of the 1956 Game Policy Committee. Although doubts concerning the viability of national reserves had been aired in the very committee which recommended their establishment in 1945, and continued to be expressed by conservationists such as Cowie in the subsequent period, matters came to a head during the 1952-55 period.⁷ Against a background of intermittent drought and the development of government-sponsored grazing schemes in Amboseli and Samburu District, conflict between wildlife conservation and community interests became so intense in the early 1950s that the government was forced to reconsider the national reserves issue.⁸

The Amboseli National Reserve (1259 square miles) in southern Kajiado District covered most of the area occupied by the Il Kisongo section of the Maasai.⁹ This section was bounded in the east by the Tsavo National Park, in the north by the Chyulu Hills, and in the south by the Tanganyikan border along the foothills of Kilimanjaro. Traditional pastoralism in this low rainfall area was organised around the seasonal availability of water and pasture. During the rainy season pastoralists would spread out along the range but retreat to the perennial springs around Kilimanjaro when water became scarce. In times of severe drought the system broke down and the few areas of permanent water, such as the Ol Tukai swamps, supported larger numbers of livestock than usual. In a bid to promote the uniform distribution of livestock over the range throughout the year, the colonial government

⁷ By August 1951 the game warden and some other trustees of the NPK had already formed the opinion that only a few areas of the Marsabit National Reserve required that status. The rest could be opened to shooting as a controlled area. See KNA/KW/1/20, W H Hale (Game Warden) to J D Deane-Drummod (Box 30 Nanyuki), 8 August 1951.

⁸ Chyulu, Mara, and Ngong national reserves had little permanent settlement and therefore did not generate as much conflict as did Marsabit and Amboseli.

⁹ The traditional Maasai community was organised into sections, each of which had a number of clans in it. Land use within the community largely centred around this social structure.

and the Kajiado ADC initiated the Il Kisongo grazing scheme in the early 1950s in what was legally a national reserve.¹⁰ This led to struggles which affected wildlife conservation and pastoralism in the area for a long time.

Until the abolition of the Amboseli National Reserve in 1961 the crisis surrounding it had two aspects. There was the problem of the 'larger Amboseli', where the government and the Kajiado ADC were developing grazing schemes for the majority of the clans of the Il Kisongo section. Then there was the issue of OI Tukai, the core wildlife area in the reserve, which belonged to the Laitayok clan but whose ample resources were also exploited by other clans of the Il Kisongo during periods of severe drought. This created the impression that land in the whole section was communally owned and that the Laitayok could be removed from OI Tukai and settled elsewhere in the section without interfering with the land-use pattern. Conservationists therefore insisted on the provision of additional water sources outside OI Tukai so that the Laitayok clan could be persuaded to move elsewhere. But as it turned out, the clan could not be absorbed permanently by the rest of the section and only a suitable land exchange could solve the problem. However, the RNPK trustees were reluctant to exchange a portion of the Tsavo National Park for OI Tukai.

Conflicts between wildlife conservation and pastoralism in the larger Amboseli by the early 1950s were similar to those in the Marsabit National Reserve and were repeatedly denounced by the affected communities and the provincial administration. In a memorandum presented to the East African Royal Commission in 1953 the Il Kisongo Maasai stated the following on Amboseli:

The area occupied by this reserve is of vital importance to us. We feel that our economy is directly affected by the policy which is being applied to this area as a national reserve. Game is increasing at the expense of the Masai and their stock. The danger of disease carried by wild animals and passed on to our cattle is increasing, and loss of

¹⁰ The scheme was planned to cost £25 000, of which £15 000 was a grant from the government while £10 000 was a loan to the ADC. See Ministry of Agriculture, *African Land Development*, p. 75.

life caused by these protected beasts has increased. They also very much decrease our grazing.¹¹

Similar sentiments were expressed before the commission by the Samburu whose district was largely part of the Marsabit National Reserve (10 280 square miles).

The Samburu memorandum, which seems to have been prepared by the DC, not only highlighted the problems caused by wild animals in the district but also proposed solutions. It recommended that the Marsabit National Reserve 'be drastically reduced in size and perhaps confined to the large forest areas'.¹² The memorandum further recommended that wildlife in the newly started Samburu grazing schemes be treated the same way it was treated on European farms as it not only competed with livestock for grazing but also damaged dam walls and water resources in general.¹³ The memorandum also recommended that wildlife outside the national reserve be reduced to a minimum.

The provincial administration in Maasailand could have readily supported the sentiments expressed in the Samburu and Maasai memoranda. Soon after the proclamation of the Amboseli National Reserve in 1948 the provincial administration hinted that dual land use in the area was bound to cause conflicts when Maasai ranching schemes were initiated.¹⁴ The administration then started advocating reduction of the national reserve to its faunal core at Ol Tukai. In 1954 the PC for Southern Province told his superiors:

¹¹ The 1953 memorandum is appended to another one on Ol Tukai addressed to the PC Southern Province by Il Kisongo Sectional Councillors on 4 January 1957. See KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4.

¹² KNA/KW/87, Anon, 'Memorandum on the Position of Game and National Reserves Vis A Vis [sic] the Samburu Pastoral Tribe', n.d.

¹³ Like the Maasai, the Samburu were investing a lot of money - mostly government loans to the ADC - in the development of water resources under the controlled grazing schemes by the early 1950s. But animals like elephant and buffalo did a lot of damage to water resources while others like zebra denuded the grass. See Ministry of Agriculture, *African Land Development in Kenya*, pp. 136 - 146.

¹⁴ See KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Roger A Wilkinson (Acting Officer-in-charge, Masai) to Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 8 September 1949.

The boundaries of Amboseli National Reserve were, I imagine, fixed arbitrarily when the reserve was first gazetted and it is possible that the area could be considerably reduced in size without in any way interfering with the game. I would go further and say that as development plans are worked out for Kajiado District, the Amboseli National Reserve will have to be restricted to an area to include the camp at Ol Tukai and possibly cover about 300 square miles instead of 1000 [?], which is the position today.¹⁵

Although there was a general consensus among the parties concerned with wildlife conservation that national reserves were difficult to sustain because of conflict between the interests of conservationists and those of the affected communities, an amicable solution to the problem was difficult to find. This was especially so during the 1952-55 drought which heightened the conflict. The situation was particularly serious in Amboseli where it was estimated that an average of 50 000 to 80 000 head of cattle congregated around the Ol Tukai swamps during the drought.¹⁶ The concentration of people and livestock in the core area of the national reserve infuriated conservationists who viewed it as inimical to wildlife conservation. Citing problems such as the spearing of problem animals, the outbreak of fires, the exploitation of vegetation for constructing dwellings, and overgrazing, conservationists argued that Maasai pastoralists could not coexist with wildlife within the core area of the national reserve.¹⁷ They therefore called for a development scheme which would provide alternative water sources for Maasai pastoralists outside the main game area so as to leave Ol Tukai solely for wildlife conservation.

¹⁵ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Eric A Sweatman (PC, Southern Province) to Secretary for African Affairs, 7 September 1954.

¹⁶ *East African Standard*, 22 April 1957; RNPk, Part II: Report by the Director, August 1955, p. 44. According to a 1955 survey there were about thirty permanent settlements in the Ol Tukai area and about 30 000 head of cattle relied on the area's resources during normal dry seasons.

¹⁷ The pastoralists were accused of destroying the habitat for water fowl by cutting reeds from the swamps for building houses. They were also blamed for cutting down many thorn trees for fencing in their homesteads. Moreover, their livestock were said to have crowded the game out of the swamps area. See various correspondence in KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4: 'Amboseli National Reserve', and KNA/1/80, 'Amboseli National Reserve: Warden's Quarterly Report', 1 October - 31 December 1955.

But the government was reluctant to exclude the Maasai from Ol Tukai since water was not the only resource which attracted pastoralists to the area. Investigations carried out by the Kajiado DC in October 1952, and again by the provincial veterinary officer in September 1954, revealed that the Amboseli swamps were the only dry weather grazing area for the Laitayok clan of the Il Kisongo section. In times of severe drought the area was 'also used by Masai of other sections in accordance with the Masai custom of pooling their grazing and water resources in times of need'.¹⁸ Moreover, the area had salt-licks which were exploited by the Laitayok clan and their neighbours.¹⁹

Although the provincial administration was willing to persuade the Maasai to set aside a portion of Ol Tukai solely for wildlife conservation, the situation was complicated by conservationists like Cowie who had extremist views. In the midst of the 1952 drought Cowie told the PC for Maasailand:

... I personally think the solution lies in making a decision as to whether or not it is to be the policy of [the] Government to preserve game at Ol Tukai or not. The provision of additional water or alternative water is consequential upon this decision. Unless we ourselves can arrive at a workable solution of this problem, I would like to see it forced upon [the] Government and would willingly take a big hand in provoking it. As you know, I have never been a great supporter of [the] Government [policy] of allowing primitive people to make decisions on questions about which they have little knowledge and certainly no wisdom. This is one of the decisions I think should be made for them, and they should be told what is going to be done. . . . I must sound a note of warning that I am to some extent on the warpath.²⁰

Thus Cowie turned down the provincial administration's proposal to the RNPk trustees to exchange land of similar quality in the Tsavo National Park for a portion

¹⁸ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Anon, 'Notes on Amboseli National Reserve', n.d.

¹⁹ See KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, E A Sweatman (PC, Southern Province) to M H Cowie (Director, RNPk), 7 November 1952; Provincial Veterinary Officer (Southern Province) to PC (Southern Province), 14 September 1954.

²⁰ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Mervyn H Cowie to E A Sweatman, 30 December 1952.

of Ol Tukai, a deal the administration was ready to negotiate with the Maasai.²¹ He also ignored views by the provincial administration and game experts that some Maasai could continue to coexist with wildlife at Ol Tukai if ample water was provided outside the area to minimise the number of pastoralists who invaded the swamps in times of severe drought.²² Instead Cowie insisted on clearing Ol Tukai of its human population through a land lease to the RNPK, a deal the administration knew the Maasai would not accept. This led to a stalemate which conservation authorities blamed on the provincial administration. Meanwhile the Ol Tukai environment continued to deteriorate owing to increased exploitation for tourism and pastoralism.

By late 1955 the Ol Tukai problem had become a 'national' crisis. The issue was widely discussed in the press with some contributors urging the eviction of the Maasai from Ol Tukai and the conversion of the area into a national park.²³ This incensed the provincial administration which feared the press reports would jeopardise discussions on wildlife conservation with the Maasai. The administration then proposed a meeting with conservation authorities to discuss a game policy for Kajiado District in light of 'the conflict between game and agrarian development'.²⁴ The meeting was to decide 'what the future of the Amboseli National Reserve [would] be'.²⁵ The administration also issued a memorandum which elucidated the nature of the Ol Tukai problem while showing why the local people needed to stay on:

It has been represented by authorities on game matters that the Masai should not be removed from Ol Tukai area, but that they should participate in a joint enterprise with the National Parks Trustees to the benefit of all concerned. In this connection it is relevant to note that over the years the Masai both in Narok and Kajiado districts have done

²¹ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Eric A Sweatman to DC Kajiado, 1 November 1955.

²² KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, E A Sweatman (PC, Southern Province) to DC Kajiado, 1 November 1955; E A Sweatman to E H Woodley (Member for African Affairs), 19 November 1955.

²³ See KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, 'Extract from Minutes of the Provincial Agricultural Committee, Southern Province at Ngong, 11 November 1955'.

²⁴ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, E A Sweatman to Secretary for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 12 November 1955.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

little harm to the game and they are considered, by many visitors to the Ol Tukai area, as an added attraction to the game. . . . Some Government officers who have known the Ol Tukai area for many years consider that the present dusty conditions did not come into being until the Ol Tukai Lodge was built and that most of the damage which has been done to the area is due to the countless vehicles moving around making numerous tracks in search of game.²⁶

Apart from the press coverage, the Ol Tukai crisis also received attention from the tourist industry. In November 1955 representatives of tourist groups, some of which had business interests at Ol Tukai, presented a memorandum to the governor endorsing Cowie's view on the crisis. Ignoring the land-use pattern in the area, the tourist groups proposed the provision of additional water outside the core game sanctuary and its proclamation as a national park:

We are . . . of the opinion that . . . the area surrounding Ol Tukai should be declared a National Park in order to prevent further migration of cattle and humans into that area. This would then leave the whole of the remainder of the present Amboseli National Reserve reasonably free for the movement of the Masai and their cattle, but would allow game within the immediate vicinity of Ol Tukai freedom to live a natural life in surroundings which are normal to them.²⁷

Although the governor shared these concerns, he was more realistic about the situation:

I told them that I was as anxious as they were to preserve the game at Amboseli [Ol Tukai]. But I pointed out that the area had already been incorporated in as a grazing control scheme for the Il Kisongo . . . for which the Masai themselves had borrowed £10,000 for water supplies, and that it would not be possible to deprive them of valuable permanent water and a fair amount of grazing without some sort of compensation.²⁸

²⁶ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Anon, 'Notes on Amboseli National Reserve', n.d.

²⁷ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, 'Memorandum on Amboseli National Reserve', 1 November 1955 [signed by J Block (President, Hotelkeepers' Association), Donald Kerr (East African Professional Hunters' Association), Sid Downey (Safari Industry), D O Mathews (General Manager, East African Tourist Travel Association)]. It is evident that Cowie was behind this memorandum. He may have also been behind most of the press coverage on the Ol Tukai crisis. See note 20 above.

²⁸ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, E Baring (Governor) to Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 11 November 1955.

The governor observed that the Ol Tukai problem could be solved in two ways: one, by providing additional water sources in the region in order to ease congestion in the core game area; and two, by negotiating a land exchange between the Laitayok clan and the RNPk trustees. In short, he reiterated the position the provincial administration had held all along.

Perhaps unknown to Cowie and other game enthusiasts, the government's wildlife policy in the 1950s was influenced by many factors. Post-war politics obliged the British government to promote the welfare of its colonial subjects. In Kenya the emphasis was on agricultural development programmes, which competed with wildlife conservation for land. The situation was compounded by questions on land use in Kenya by British MPs. In March 1955 a British MP asked to know "[w]hat areas traditionally regarded as Masai lands [had] been taken for Game Reserves, and what restrictions this impose[d] on the inhabitants".²⁹ About a month later another MP 'asked the Secretary of State for Colonies how much of the land in Kenya reserved for Africans [had] been designated as Game Reserves; and how much within the Masai reserve [had] thus been designated'.³⁰ Answers to these questions came from Nairobi where they served to remind the colonial government that its land policy was under imperial surveillance.

In the post-war period Britain also invested a lot of money in 'development programmes' in Kenya.³¹ These included the ALDEV and Swynnerton Plan projects which were supposed to promote rural development. Although wildlife conservation did benefit from some funding provided under these programmes, the long-held policy of the British government, reiterated by the East African Royal Commission (1953-55), was that 'where the interest of man and game conflict[ed], the need of the former [had to] be considered paramount'.³² No wonder the royal commission

²⁹ Quoted in KNA/KW/87, Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, 5 March 1955.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ For a critique on the Colonial Development and Welfare programme, see Zeleza, 'Kenya and the Second World War', pp. 156 - 158.

³² HMSO, *East African Royal Commission*, p. 299.

emphasised the need to improve African pastoralism and stated that game reserves were not to be regarded as immutable.

Imperial policy on wildlife conservation was faithfully pursued by the secretariat in Nairobi. This translated into seemingly lukewarm support for wildlife conservation despite the importance of wildlife-related tourism to the local economy. The 'indifference' permeated the colonial administration and created a wedge between the wildlife conservation authorities and field administrators. This difference emerged clearly during the visit of the royal commission in 1953 when it was widely feared that the provincial administration would betray the cause of wildlife conservation before the commission.

Fearing betrayal by the administration, the conservation authorities held a series of meetings to plan 'how best the game point of view [was to] be presented' as the royal commission was bound 'to contend with many conflicting opinions expressed to them . . . by people who were not directly concerned with game preservation'.³³ These strategy meetings led to the nomination of a group of people to advise the minister on how 'to put forward a balanced appreciation of the game situation in Kenya and an indication of future preservation'.³⁴ This advisory group did not include provincial administrators despite the first-hand experience of people like Sweatman in wildlife conservation issues. Instead the group consisted of the game warden, the director of the RNPk, two former game wardens, two trustees of the RNPk, two 'permanent' secretaries, and a prominent tour operator (Jack Block). However, the group's efforts do not seem to have had much impact on the royal commission because the game policy remained more or less unchanged.

The government's wildlife conservation policy in Kenya in the early 1950s was also influenced by the Mau Mau Movement. The movement/rebellion arose out of land grievances among such communities as the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru, and led to a

³³ KNA/KW/87, 'Notes of a Discussion Held on Monday, 19th January 1953' [by Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources (F W Cavendish-Bentinck), the Game Warden (H W Hale), Senior Game Ranger (James Kirkpatrick), and Director RNPk (M H Cowie)].

³⁴ *Ibid.*

state of emergency in the country over the 1952-56 period. In its early stages the movement had a sizeable following in Maasailand, especially in areas where there had been extensive intermarriage between the Kikuyu and the Maasai.³⁵ Although the government gradually managed to discourage the Maasai from joining the rebel movement in large numbers, discussions on wildlife conservation had to be suspended because of disquiet within the community.³⁶ The RNPK trustees were particularly careful about approaching the Maasai with wildlife conservation proposals during the Emergency for fear of antagonising the administration if the proposals backfired.³⁷

The Mau Mau Emergency also helped fuel the wildlife conservation crisis by increasing poaching to unprecedented levels. Following the declaration of the emergency in October 1952 most wildlife conservation personnel were seconded to the security forces in a bid to quell the uprising. This saw white officers and African scouts spend most of the 1952-56 period in emergency-related duties. Cowie, for example, was involved in 'directing manpower for a period of two years up to February in 1955'.³⁸ Other officers of both the RNPK and the Game Department were engaged in the war against the Mau Mau rebels in the Mount Kenya region. This led

³⁵ See KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/3, Narok District annual reports for 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955.

³⁶ The memorandum presented to the royal commission by 'Loitokitok Chiefs and People' was indicative of a people agitated by prevailing game policies: 'We are . . . very suspicious that efforts are being made to turn this valuable land into a National Park. There has been unmistakable signs at Ol Tukai to cause us a great concern. We well remember when Major Gethin asked for a temporary plot in 1938. In 1945 the KNP [trustees] made a similar request and in 1950 50 acres of land were set aside. Now we see more permanent buildings going up. . . . We may mention here that the Rift Valley Province had as much game as the present Masai Reserve. If the Settler[s] killed or drove away these animals because they were a nuisance, we cannot see why [the] Government should want to make National Parks or Reserves in the land that it left over so that those very people who destroyed game in their farms should come to our land in order to see animals. We do not see how tourists benefit our country in relation to the large sacrifices the Masai are making in connection with wild animals. . . . The little portion of fees paid to the Masai Council cannot be compared with our losses, both human and material. . . . Although we have always lived in this country with wild animals, we had power to see that these animals did not cause undue interference with our people or stock. Now in these National Reserves we have no such power'. See the appendage to 'Memorandum on Ol Tukai' [presented to the Southern Province PC by Ol Tukai Section Councillors on 4 January 1957] in KNA/KW/1/79.

³⁷ KNA/KW/1/80, Minute 334 of the 28th meeting of the trustees of the RNPK, 7 March 1955.

³⁸ KNA/KW/1/80, Minute 379 of the 31st meeting of the trustees of the RNPK, 12 December 1955.

to a general neglect of anti-poaching activities at a time when prices for trophies were on the rise.³⁹ As a result poaching increased in all the wildlife areas of the country. In the Tsavo East Royal National Park about 600 elephants were killed annually during this period.⁴⁰ In northern Kenya, George Adamson reported in May 1955 that 'a great deal of poaching and illegal trading in trophies, mostly rhino horn, [had] been going on while [he had] been preoccupied on Emergency duty'.⁴¹

The Emergency also led to the closure of most game posts in the Mount Kenya region and in the NFP since the posts were targeted by Mau Mau rebels in their quest for firearms, ammunition, and cash, and also in their war against government loyalists.⁴² Moreover, vehicles meant for wildlife conservation activities were assigned emergency-related duties. All this gave poachers in the affected areas a free rein. Indeed, the period 1953-56 has been labelled the black years of ivory poaching in Kenya. Similarly, a hundred to two hundred rhino were killed annually by poachers during the 1953-57 period.⁴³ The Mau Mau rebels, who operated mainly from the forest of Mount Kenya and the Aberdare range, also killed wild animals for subsistence. The security forces too lived off the land.⁴⁴

In a bid to dislodge the Mau Mau rebels from their forest haunts, the Royal Air Force resorted to bombing possible hideouts. This had far-reaching consequences for wildlife and the surrounding communities. Many animals died in the air raids while others fled into surrounding farm land. This heightened the problem of animal control

³⁹ See KNAKW/1/80, RNPK, Part II: Report by the Director, August 1955, p. 1. By 1954 there was talk of organised trophy-smuggling rings and professional poachers. See KNA/KW/1/80, RNPK: Draft of the Trustees Section of the 1954 Report; KNA/DC/MKS/14/2, DO (Yatta Area, Kithimani) to DC (Machakos), 13 January 1955.

⁴⁰ KNA/KW/1/80, Mervyn Cowie (Director, RNPK) to Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 7 July 1955. Also see Holmes, *The Elephant People*, *passim*.

⁴¹ KNA/KW/23/175, Adamson to Game Warden, 3 May 1955.

⁴² See KNA/KW/23/175, Adamson to Game Warden, 11 August 1955; G A G Adamson, 'Report for September 1955', KNA/KW/1/80, RNPK, Part II: Report by the Director, August 1955, pp. 15 - 17, 41, 42.

⁴³ Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game*, pp. 54, 55.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*; Simon, *Between the Sunlight and the Thunder*, pp. 314, 315.

in areas such as Mweiga and Meru. In the Mweiga white settlement area adjoining the Aberdare Royal National Park, many animals came out of the forest 'wounded, and were causing a great deal of damage to farms and anxiety' among the populace.⁴⁵ In Meru, there were complaints of damage to crops by elephant and buffalo fleeing from bombing in the Mount Kenya forest.⁴⁶

The Mau Mau Emergency also affected government funding for wildlife conservation in both the short and long terms. In the short term, the government not only reduced funding to the trustees of the RNPK as an austerity measure but also requested the organisation to use some of its funds to finance counter-insurgency measures. This, along with insecurity and the shortage of labour and materials, slowed the development of tourist facilities in the national parks and reserves.⁴⁷ In the long term, emergency operations cost the government some £30 million by December 1955 and left it financially weak.⁴⁸ This led to austerity measures which affected most government operations, especially those related to wildlife conservation. The Mau Mau Rebellion also resulted in government-sponsored land reforms which became the financial priority of the government for a long time. A newspaper editorial in October 1955 commented:

Millions of pounds are being found annually to make life more comfortable for rebels and murderers and for the expansion of social services. A few thousands saved from the millions would make all the difference to the task which the [RNPK] Trustees have undertaken.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ KNA/KW/1/80, Minute 375 of the 31st meeting of the trustees of the RNPK, 12 December 1955, p. 10.

⁴⁶ KNA/KW/23/175, G A G Adamson's report for September 1955.

⁴⁷ See KNA/1/80, M H Cowie, 'RNPK: Wild-life Preservation Policy: Summary of Proposals for a New Plan', 3 August 1955, p. 3; KNA/KW/1/80, M H Cowie, 'RNPK: Development Finance, 1957 - 1960', 27 June 1956, p. 3.

⁴⁸ See 'Today in History', *Daily Nation*, 17 February 2000. Another source claims that the rebellion was costing the colonial government upwards of £1 million a year and cost the British government over £55 million to eventually suppress it. See Jeff M Koinange, *Koinange-wa- Mbiyu: Mau Mau's Misunderstood Leader* (Sussex, 2000), pp. 102, 104.

⁴⁹ *East African Standard*, 29 October 1955. Also see Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game*, pp. 49, 50; Cowie, 'RNPK: Wild-life Preservation Policy', p. 2.

Though the expenditure on development in African areas may have been exaggerated for political reasons, the government did confess that it had no money for some of the wildlife conservation projects proposed by the 1956 Game Policy Committee.

Deterioration in wildlife conservation in Kenya in the early 1950s elicited both local and international responses. In 1953 the RNPK trustees invited George Petrides, a professor of wildlife management and zoology at Michigan State University, into the country to carry out an ecological investigation of the main game areas. The study, which was supported by a Fulbright research grant, was carried out between November 1953 and July 1954. While emphasising the importance of wildlife to the Kenyan economy, the study was critical of government wildlife policy, especially on national reserves. Among its recommendations was the establishment of national parks at Ngong, Amboseli, Mara, and Uaso Nyiro. Judging from its conclusion, the 'study' was more of a propaganda tool for the RNPK than an objective investigation:

Mr Mervyn Cowie, the present director of the Royal National Parks seems eminently suited for the position. . . . It would be a far step backward for Kenya if such an able administrator should become discouraged in his attempts to stabilize the national park system through the failure of higher authorities to act in replacing the ineffective national reserve system.⁵⁰

At about the same time, W P Keller, a resident of Konza in Machakos, who claimed to be an 'ardent advocate of National Parks and game sanctuaries' and '[had] not only worked on some, but [had] actually been instrumental in establishing others', came up with what appears to have been an honest assessment of wildlife conservation in Maasailand. Commenting on the high potential for wildlife-based tourism in East Africa, Keller predicted that tourism could become one of the region's most important economic activities if a solution to wildlife-livestock problems in areas such as Maasailand could be found. Basing his arguments on surveys he had carried out in Maasailand, he observed that pastoralism and wildlife could coexist amicably in the region. He believed that the Maasai had exaggerated the competition between game and livestock because they benefited little from the former. He therefore

⁵⁰ George A Petrides, *Kenya's Wild-life Resource and the National Parks* (Nairobi, 1955), p. 22.

argued for a scheme which would give the Maasai a share of the proceeds from tourism:

... we simply must recognise the fact that game as such in Masai[land] represents a very much greater source of revenue to the Colony as a whole than can ever be measured in terms of mere game licences, game fees, etc. The fact that upon the Masai as a tribe falls the lot of sharing their reserve with this game, in order to insure its perpetuation, should warrant some remuneration in the form of a larger share of the revenue which the game produces both directly and indirectly.⁵¹

If this happened, Keller argued, the Maasai would start viewing game as an asset rather than 'The Queen's Cows' which competed with their own.⁵²

Among those who supported Keller's views was Denis Saphiro, a game ranger in Kajiado District. In January 1955 Saphiro wrote a memorandum in which he detailed the problems of wildlife conservation in Maasailand. The memorandum, which was endorsed by the game warden but earned the wrath of the secretary in the ministry, emphasised the sharing of the benefits of wildlife conservation with the people who bore the burdens associated with the enterprise:

The Masai must be shown that the Government of the Colony appreciates the part played by themselves and game in attracting tourists and stimulating business generally. The only way that can be done is by returning to them a large part of the funds otherwise lost to general revenue and emphasising that this money represents the actual cash returns accruing from game. It hardly seems just that the Masai should be expected to share their reserve with game, which in fact will mean less stock than would otherwise be able to keep, and also pay heavily into general revenue. The revenue contribution which they would make in preserving this area as a wildlife paradise of world renown and attractiveness is an adequate share of the colony's burden for such a limited number of people to bear.⁵³

While calling for a meeting of the relevant authorities to discuss wildlife conservation in Kajiado District, Saphiro observed that 'no policy of game conservation in the Masai Reserve [could] be effective without the wholesale cooperation of the Masai

⁵¹ W P Keller, 'A Review of Masai Resources', p. 29. Keller's 'article' is reproduced on pp. 25 - 31 of Petrides's report (*Kenya's Wildlife Resource and National Parks*).

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 30.

⁵³ KNA/KW/1/74, D Saphiro (Game Ranger, Kajiado District) to Game Warden, 7 January 1955.

people themselves'.⁵⁴ He advocated payment of benefits to individual Maasai rather than to their ADC.

Cowie was another important critic of government wildlife policy in the 1950s. He was particularly critical of perceived government empathy for African pastoralism. At one point he commented:

. . . the clash between scrub cattle and game is unbalanced and illogical, yet all emphasis in Government policy swings to the side of the scrub cattle. In evidence of this I quote the millions of pounds made available by the British Government under the Swynnerton Plan in which game in its widest sense obtained not even the smallest allocation.⁵⁵

On government reluctance to 'direct' the Maasai to grant the trustees of the RNPk rights to preserve wildlife on their land through lease or concession, Cowie exclaimed:

Surely it is logical, humane and reasonable for primitive people such as the Masai who contribute so little to the economy of Kenya to be influenced into granting concessions over land, much of which they do not use, for the preservation of wildlife.⁵⁶

After failing to win the support of the colonial administration, Cowie appears to have turned his attention to Britain. In November 1954 he addressed a meeting of the SPFE where he contended that the problems of wildlife conservation in Kenya, and indeed the rest of East Africa, had become so great that the society needed 'to undertake a campaign designed essentially to focus attention on the urgency of a

⁵⁴ Quoting Keller, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ KNA/KW/1/80, Cowie, 'RNPk: Wild-life Preservation Policy', p. 2. There is evidence that the RNPk benefited from the Colonial Development and Welfare programme. See *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Cowie's views were definitely misplaced as pastoralism was the most rational use of the Maasailand ecology at the time and required large tracts of land. It was also the community's chief source of livelihood. Besides, Cowie himself was reluctant to pay the Maasai their rightful share of the revenue from tourist activities at Amboseli despite the provincial administration's pressure to get the trustees to honour their contract with the Maasai. See KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, DC Kajiado to PC Southern Province, 24 August 1953; PC Southern Province to Director RNPk, 31 August 1953; KNA/KW/1/80, Minute 379 of the 31st meeting of the RNPk, 12 December 1955.

change of heart'.⁵⁷ However, the SPFE leadership offered nothing more than advice that he should carry out a propaganda campaign in Britain the following year. This led to a widely-publicised campaign, courtesy of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which saw Cowie deliver lectures in at least thirteen British cities in late 1955. He also featured in a number of radio and television talk shows. He did all this in the belief 'that the people of Britain, once they [could] be interested in this East African problem, however remote it [was] from their daily lives, [would] influence the decisions of colonial governments, as they [had] done throughout the years'.⁵⁸

While in Britain Cowie also had an opportunity to update the colonial secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, on the problems of wildlife conservation in East Africa. As in his lectures, Cowie highlighted the conflict between 'development' and wildlife conservation. He pointed out that some of the best wildlife areas in East Africa were also pastoral areas where game was 'threatened by thousands of useless scrub cattle'.⁵⁹ He argued that there was still room for the establishment of more national parks. Claiming that the colonial governments in East Africa were not doing enough to conserve wildlife, Cowie urged the colonial secretary to send somebody of high regard to the region to assess the situation. In response, the colonial secretary 'undertook to write to the Governor of each of the three East African territories suggesting that a survey of the game situation in each territory should be made by a scientist free of political or racial consideration'.⁶⁰

By late 1955 it was clear to both wildlife conservationists and the government of Kenya that the country's game policy needed review. In July 1955 Cowie called on

⁵⁷ KNA/KW/1/80, 'RNPK: The Director's Report on a Lecture Tour He Made in Britain from Late September 1955', 29 December 1955, p. 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (Appendix, p. 3).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1. It is not clear whether the Colonial Secretary honoured his pledge to Cowie. But the SPFE did sponsor Dr H W Pearsall, Director of the East African Agriculture and Forestry Research Organisation, to carry out an ecological survey of the Serengeti area of Tanganyika where there were conflicts between conservation and other interests more or less like those that were going on in Kenya's Maasailand. A commission was also appointed to inquire into the Serengeti problem in 1957. See Ofcansky, 'A History of Game Preservation', pp. 233 - 237.

the government 'to appoint a commission, especially charged with the duties of examining [wildlife conservation] problems and producing a report which [could] appraise the Government and the public of the position as it really [was]'.⁶¹ He felt that the 1939 Game Policy Committee had not completed its work and needed to be revived in order to look into the best way of conserving wildlife in the country. He believed that such a committee needed to look into such issues as the adequacy of the areas allocated to wildlife conservation, the sufficiency of the finance allocated to conservation activities, and the possibility of leasing land from the Maasai for conservation purposes.⁶²

The Committee's Recommendations

As constituted in late 1955, the 1956 Game Policy Committee was dominated by people dealing with game and excluded members of the provincial administration. This was pointed out by Sweatman, a long-serving administrator in Maasailand, who felt that such a committee would not come up with impartial recommendations and demanded representation for the administration.⁶³ The government seems to have heeded this call for the committee as announced in February 1956 included the PC for the Southern Province - which included Maasailand.⁶⁴ The Committee's chairman was L R Maconochie Welwood and the members were Mervyn Cowie (director of the RNPK), W H Hale (chief game warden), S H Powles, Dr J C Likimani (a Maasai), A P Hume (secretary to the Ministry of Forest Development, Game and Fisheries), K M Cowley (PC Southern Province), W F P Kelly (executive officer of ALDEV) and

⁶¹ KNA/KW/1/80, Mervyn Cowie (Director, RNPK) to Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 7 July 1955.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, E A Sweatman to Secretary for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 30 September 1955.

⁶⁴ Before the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion in October 1952 Maasailand was an extra-provincial administrative unit within the Central Province which encompassed the areas occupied by the Maasai, Akamba, Embu, Meru, and Kikuyu. But in a bid to isolate the communities most involved in the rebellion the Akamba and the Maasai were put together in what became the Southern Province while the other communities remained in Central Province.

F D Corfield (as secretary).⁶⁵ The committee was thus 'representative' of the main interest groups in the wildlife conservation crisis.

The committee travelled widely visiting areas of interest and collecting evidence. It heard evidence from 25 witnesses and interested bodies and received 19 memoranda. Its secretary also visited Uganda and Tanganyika where he conferred with parks and game department officials. He also attended the Serengeti enquiry where conflict between wildlife conservation and pastoralism was being examined. The committee also studied two reports generated by enquiries into the Serengeti problem, which had similarities with conflicts in Kenya's Maasailand.⁶⁶

In August 1956 the game policy committee produced an interim report which not only addressed the burning issue of wildlife conservation at OI Tukai but also considered three other matters which it felt needed urgent attention. These were boundary adjustments in the Tsavo National Park, measures for combatting poaching, and amendments to the wildlife legislation with a view to outlawing the possession of arrow poison.⁶⁷ Of the issues addressed by the interim report, only the OI Tukai crisis was specifically spelled out in the committee's terms of reference.

On the OI Tukai debacle, the game policy committee recommended that additional water supplies be provided on the perimeter of the core game area and that livestock in this area be limited to the land's carrying capacity. This recommendation was discussed and approved by the cabinet in December 1956. The government hydraulic engineer was then instructed to explore the water resources in the area with a view to preparing a plan for the proposed water scheme. The cabinet also recommended the renewal of negotiations with the Maasai.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58*, pp. 1, 2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 2, 3.

⁶⁸ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Extracts from the Seventh (Special Meeting) of the Council of Ministers of 5 December 1956; KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, Loshe (DC) to Ken (PC), 28 December 1956.

The committee recommended adjustments to the Tsavo National Park boundaries at two points. The first was required in the Iltilal area where water springs used by the local Maasai were enclosed within the park's boundaries at its proclamation. Although the Maasai and the provincial administration were ready to negotiate a land exchange with the RNPk trustees, the latter seem to have been reluctant to do so. However, during the drought of the early 1950s the government allowed the Maasai to use the resources in the area under dispute.⁶⁹ This forced the trustees to present the issue before the game policy committee as a matter of urgency. The committee recommended the exchange the Maasai had been proposing and also requested the government to add some 5800 acres of crown land in the area to the national park. These recommendations were approved by the cabinet during its meeting of 5 December 1956.

The second recommended adjustment involved adding the eastern portion of the Chyulu range and the Makindu-Kiboko area to the Tsavo National Park. The former, which consisted of some 113 square miles of unalienated crown land, had for a long time been the envy of conservationists who wanted to see it preserved as a water catchment area. The latter was at the centre of a struggle between the RNPk trustees (who coveted its rich wildlife) and the provincial administration/ALDEV who wanted to develop it for Kamba ranching and settlement. Although the government considered the preservation of the Chyulu range desirable, it regretted that it could not be implemented as it required additional finance - which was not available. The cabinet did not comment on the Makindu-Kiboko issue.⁷⁰

The game policy committee further recommended an amendment to the law to empower all government officers to fight poaching without restrictions. The Royal National Parks Ordinance allowed administrative and police officers to enter national parks in the course of duty but prevented Game Department personnel from doing so despite their being the principal agents for suppressing poaching. The committee

⁶⁹ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, DC Kajiado to PC Southern Province, 19 November 1955.

⁷⁰ See Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58*, pp. 28 - 31; Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1959/60: A Game Policy for Kenya* (Nairobi, 1959), pp. 6, 7.

thus recommended that Game Department officers be permitted to enter national parks in the line of duty.

The interim report proposed that communities like the Liangulu, whose livelihood heavily depended on the exploitation of wild animals, be considered for game management projects. Basing their argument on the idea of 'proper land usage' and experiences with 'controlled cropping' of wild animals in other parts of the world, the committee noted that game cropping was the only viable economic activity in the dry area inhabited by the Liangulu. It therefore recommended the establishment of a game management project to enable the Liangulu to harvest and sell wildlife products in a legally sanctioned manner.⁷¹

Following this interim report, the Ministry of Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, with the full cooperation of the trustees of the RNPK, the provincial administration, and the commissioner of police, launched a vigorous anti-poaching campaign based on a pattern developed by David Sheldrick in the Tsavo Royal National Park in 1955. Using the organisational and intelligence tactics learned during the struggle against Mau Mau rebels, Sheldrick formed an anti-poaching unit at Voi which applied counter-insurgency techniques to poaching:

First, there was the matter of intelligence gathering and its application to the apprehension and prosecution of poachers. Second, there was the tactical application of police and anti-Mau Mau techniques to the need of anti-poaching. And finally, there was the gradual transformation of the African and European personnel from the "lone ranger" to the more romantic but highly effective use of former poachers as local spies, informants, and game rangers.⁷²

The technique was so successful against Kamba and Liangulu poachers in and around Tsavo that an anti-poaching meeting of the leadership of the RNPK, the Game Department, the administration, and the police in October 1956 decided to

⁷¹ See Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58*, pp. 21 - 22, 66 - 69.

⁷² Steinhart, 'National Parks and Anti-poaching in Kenya', pp. 70, 71; Also see Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 115, 135, 143.

organise joint operations and to create two other field forces of 100 men each.⁷³ The forces were based at Hola, Voi, and Makindu but operated in all areas of intensive poaching, such as northern Kenya. These so-called mobile units had ample transport, including a police spotter plane; and the African staff underwent three months in anti-poaching techniques before deployment. Game laws were also changed to allow the units to carry out anti-poaching raids inside and outside parks.⁷⁴

Recognising the existence of a class of professional poachers and middlemen in the country, the interim report recommended a revision of the game laws to enable courts to impose steeper and therefore deterrent penalties. This may have been as a result of constant complaints from conservation authorities that provincial administrators, who presided over courts in their areas of jurisdiction, were often lenient to poachers and related offenders. In December 1955 George Adamson, a ranger in the heavily poached NFP, claimed that the most serious obstacle to wildlife conservation in Kenya at that time was the total inadequacy of sentences imposed for game-related offences since few magistrates imposed anything approaching the maximum sentence.⁷⁵ As a result of the interim report's recommendation the chief justice issued a circular to magistrates in December 1956 urging them to use the law to save Kenya's wildlife from poaching. The attorney general also urged all crown prosecutors to ensure that they assist the courts to arrive at adequate sentences.⁷⁶ In January 1957 Governor Evelyn Baring added weight to the anti-poaching campaign by directing government officers to familiarise themselves with wildlife laws and to take possible measures to curb poaching.⁷⁷

⁷³ Steihart, 'National Parks and Anti-poaching in Kenya', p. 70; KNA/DC/MKS/14/2, Folios 445, 449 and 450. Also see Stone, 'Organized Poaching in Kitui District', p. 451.

⁷⁴ Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game*, p. 61.

⁷⁵ KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, G A G Adamson (Senior Game Ranger, Isiolo) to Game Warden, 4 December 1955; KNA/MKS/14/2, Folio 325, DO (Yatta Area, Kithimani) to DC (Machakos), 13 January 1955.

⁷⁶ Cited in KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, Folio 33, Acting PC (Northern Province) to DCs (Northern Province, Isiolo), 3 December 1959.

⁷⁷ Cited in KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, Folio 44, Directive by His Excellency the Governor (P Renison), 31 January 1961. Also see Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 143, 144.

Although the use of firearms for poaching was not as widespread in Kenya as in Tanganyika, the use of arrow and drop-spear poison in the destruction of game was equally effective.⁷⁸ The situation was made worse by the exclusion of a clause on this poison from the 1951 Wild Animal Protection Ordinance. This omission was condemned all round by conservationists who saw the poison as a factor in the escalation of poaching in the early 1950s.⁷⁹ In the light of such views the interim report called for legislation to prohibit the manufacture and possession of arrow poison. But this was only a small factor in the poaching crisis which was fuelled by other factors such as the need for accumulation among Africans, the existence of a lucrative (albeit illegal) trophy market, and a weak state. It was not until the government initiated a full-scale operation backed by the army that poaching and trophy smuggling were contained.⁸⁰

The final report of the 1956 Game Policy Committee came out in March 1958. It mainly dealt with long-term game preservation policy and relations between the RNPK organisation and the Game Department. It covered issues such as overall government policy on wildlife conservation; expansion of the Game Department; the replacement of national reserves by game reserves; the establishment of more controlled areas; the maintenance of existing national parks and the creation of new ones; the establishment of a standing game advisory committee; and encouraging Africans to conserve wildlife.⁸¹ The report recommended that wildlife conservation in Kenya be based on two principles. First, since wildlife had an aesthetic and cultural value it was the duty of the government and people of Kenya to preserve it for posterity and humankind. Second, 'proper land usage' based on sound ecological knowledge was the best determinant of land-use options as wildlife played an

⁷⁸ Poaching in Tanganyika during this period was widespread due to legal and illegal possession of thousands of muzzle-loaders by the local population. In Handeni District, for example, there were about 3000 legally held muzzle-loaders. See Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game*, p.34.

⁷⁹ See KNA/MKS/14/2, Folio 428, Acting PC (Southern Province, Ngong) to DC Machakos, 11 April 1956; KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, G A G Adamson (Senior Ranger, Isiolo) to Game Warden, 4 December 1955; Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 36, 59 - 62.

⁸⁰ See Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 115 - 145.

⁸¹ See Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58*, pp. 24 - 28.

important role in the country's economic development.⁸² Both of these principles were accepted by the government which conceded that game was not only of aesthetic and cultural value but was also significant to the country's tourist industry. Consequently the government promised 'to preserve game in Kenya to the greatest extent possible', though this would depend on 'human interests and financial priorities'.⁸³

The committee recommended that national reserves be replaced by game reserves. These would be areas of faunal, floral, and scenic interest which could be developed for wildlife conservation and recreation but could not be declared national parks because of existing human interests. Game in the reserves would be controlled by the government, which would ensure maximum conservation while promoting other human activities. However, trustees of the RNPK would be welcome to develop the game reserves for recreational purposes. Each game reserve would have a statutory committee which would not only advise the minister on how to manage it but would also exercise administrative and executive functions in connection with the day-to-day affairs of the reserve.⁸⁴ This recommendation, which appears to have been aimed at ending the conflict between the provincial administration and the RNPK trustees in the national reserves, was endorsed by the government, which promised to establish game reserves in some of the national reserves when funds became available. The government also pledged to strengthen the Game Department to enable it carry out the technically challenging work of wildlife conservation. The head of the department would 'be the principal technical officer to advise the Government on game policy and to carry approved policy into effect'.⁸⁵ The government also promised to 'extend and make use of the "Control Area" system as an instrument of game management and control'.⁸⁶

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁸³ Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1959/60*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58*, pp. 24, 25.

⁸⁵ Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1959/60*, p. 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 3.

The government pledged to give financial support to the RNPK trustees to preserve wildlife in national parks and develop tourist facilities. But such support would be subject to availability of funds. In turn, the trustees would be answerable to the government, especially with respect to wildlife conservation. The government promised to ensure that the policies of ministries and departments were in harmony with wildlife conservation. This was no doubt a reference to previous conflicts between agricultural development and wildlife conservation. The government further agreed to set up a standing game advisory committee to advise the minister on the implementation of game policy. Such a committee would be particularly useful in helping the minister resolve conflicts between wildlife conservationists and local communities.⁸⁷

The government recognised the need to give those Africans whose livelihood was immediately affected by wildlife conservation, as in game reserves, 'a direct financial interest in the economic aspect of such preservation'.⁸⁸ It even accepted the game policy committee's recommendation that a game management scheme be established north of the Galana River for the Liangulu. However, the government refused to take responsibility for damage caused by wildlife, though it recognised its responsibility to control scheduled wild animals. It made it clear that it would not pay any compensation for such damage, but would, within the limits of available finance, endeavour to control game animals. The destruction of vermin would, however, not be the responsibility of the government.⁸⁹

Another important recommendation involved additions to existing national parks and the creation of new ones. Besides the adjustments proposed for Tsavo Royal National Park, additions were proposed for Mount Kenya and Aberdare royal national parks. In both cases, the proposed adjustments involved the excision of crown forest

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 3, 4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

land and its addition to the parks. In the Mount Kenya case, the government rejected the excision of crown forest outright, while in the Aberdare case the decision was deferred pending the recommendations of the Standing Game Advisory Committee.⁹⁰

The new national parks proposed by the game policy committee were Marsabit Royal National Park, Uaso Nyiro Royal National Park, and Mount Elgon Royal National Park. The first would be a 39-square mile park on Mount Marsabit. Though the proposed park encroached on land controlled by the Forest Department and would involve the trustees in additional expenditure, the government approved its establishment on condition that '[t]he duties and responsibilities of both the Forest Department and the Trustees [were] carefully defined in an attempt to avoid the inherent dangers of divided control'.⁹¹ The government also accepted the committee's recommendation that 22 square miles of land around the Nyama Yangu tourist lodge on the banks of the Uaso Nyiro River in Samburu District be turned into a national park. The only condition attached to the venture was that satisfactory arrangements be made for Samburu stock which used the area occasionally. The government was noncommittal about the establishment of a 65-square mile national park on Mount Elgon, doubting the desirability of the park. The area was already a nature reserve under the provisions of the forest ordinance and making it a national park would lead to conflicts between the Forest Department and the RNPK trustees. Moreover, the creation of a national park would require additional finance.

The government accepted the recommendation that the 145-square mile Western Chyulu National Reserve be converted into a game reserve. But it rejected the proposal that game reserves be created in all the forest areas of northern Kenya after the dissolution of the Marsabit National Reserve. Noting the competition between wild animals and livestock within the reserve, the government wished to see the reserve succeeded by a controlled area so that game control measures in the grazing schemes could be effected. The forests on the Ndoto and Matthews mountains within the reserve would however remain under the control of the Forest

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 7

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

Department. The *status quo* would also be maintained on the Shimba Hills where the committee had recommended the establishment of a 74-square mile game reserve on land the Forest Department was already developing for public recreation.⁹² The fate of the proposed Amboseli Game Reserve (200 square miles), Namanga Game Reserve (60 square miles), Ngong Game Reserve (455 square miles), Mara Game Reserve (250 square miles), and Boni Game Reserve (3000 square miles) remained unknown as the government white paper did not discuss them.⁹³ It appears that the government wanted to negotiate with the Maasai rather than impose wildlife conservation in the areas they controlled.

The 1956 Game Policy Committee was established in order to tame the RNPK trustees and reinstate the Game Department as the driving force behind wildlife conservation in Kenya. With the establishment of national parks and national reserves in the late 1940s, the role of the Game Department had diminished as all the major faunal areas were placed under the national parks organisation. The department's role was thus reduced to issuing hunting licences and game control. However, the 1956 Game Policy Committee changed all that as the department was now charged with the important role of negotiating the conservation of wildlife in African areas.

To conservationists like Cowie, who had hoped that the game policy committee would lead to the creation of more national parks, the outcome was disappointing. Indeed, Cowie differed with the committee and issued a 'minority report' in which he expressed reservations about two recommendations. First, he refused to subscribe to the recommendation that the trustees be divested of wildlife conservation roles outside the national parks. He claimed that the trustees had had good working relations with the administration, government departments, and communities involved in the national reserves scheme. Second, he opposed the dissolution of national reserves and their replacement by game reserves, claiming that neither national

⁹² *Ibid*, pp. 8, 9.

⁹³ See Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58*, pp. 34 - 37.

reserves nor game reserves could succeed unless the conservation of wildlife in such areas was the specific objective.⁹⁴

Attempts by the trustees of the RNPK to persuade the government to reverse the decision to divest them of powers over national reserves, which they saw as the beginning of the erosion of their powers, were not successful. Even an audience with the governor could not change matters. The government maintained that it wanted to control the development of the proposed game reserves.⁹⁵

Challenges and Developments in the Late 1950s

In the late 1950s there was growing criticism of government wildlife policy, especially from pastoral communities who were supported by the provincial administration. The conflict between wildlife conservation and 'development' which characterised the early 1950s continued unabated into the late 1950s, largely because of lack of funds for implementing the recommendations of the 1956 Game Policy Committee. As a result of government austerity measures, some of the solutions recommended by the game policy committee and approved by the government were not implemented. The dissolution of national reserves and their replacement by smaller game reserves did not materialise until the early 1960s. This intensified the conflict between conservationism and other activities, while affected communities became more and more suspicious of government intentions.

Government expenditure in the late 1950s, as in the preceding period, was biased towards agricultural development. Wildlife conservation was poorly funded. For every £1 allocated to the RNPK in the late 1950s, £350 was allocated to agricultural development.⁹⁶ The situation was made worse by the financial stringency brought

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 42.

⁹⁵ KNA/KW/1/20, Notes of Discussion Held at Government House on Friday the 28 October 1960 Between the Governor and a Delegation of the Trustees from the RNPK on the Future of National Reserves.

⁹⁶ Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game*, p. 50.

about by the Mau Mau Emergency. In 1956 Cowie lamented that 'the financial position of the Colony [had] changed very considerably due to expenditure on the Mau Mau campaign, and where in the past there were surplus funds available for development, [the trustees had] to scrape and rely on loans for these purposes'.⁹⁷ This partly explains the trustees' reluctance to share the revenue obtained from tourism, in areas such as Amboseli, with the local people.

The Game Department was equally affected by the government's austerity measures. At a time when expanding settlement in the white highlands and elsewhere in the country threatened the habitat of large quantities of animals, the department was unable to finance the translocation of some of these animals to safe places. This was despite the fact that some of the animals involved were rare species - such as the Rothschild giraffe at Endebess and Soy, Thomas's kob at Lugari, Jackson's hartebeeste at Molo, and roan antelope in the Lambwe Valley.⁹⁸ To overcome this problem, the department sometimes contracted trappers to capture and relocate wild animals on the basis of 'one for one'.⁹⁹ This happened in parts of Machakos and Kitui districts where rhino had to be cleared to facilitate human settlement. The department also enlisted the support of the Kenya Wild Life Services (KWLS) which had recently received some £30 000 from America for wildlife conservation activities.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ KNA/KW/1/80, M H Cowie, 'RNPk: Finance', 4 May 1956. Reductions in RNPk funds started in 1955.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*; KNA/KW/13/16, H F Keese (of Box 13 Kitale) to Senior Game Warden, 24 June 1958.

⁹⁹ The 'one to one' contract meant that the trapper kept half the animals he captured as his remuneration. See Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1958/59* (Nairobi, 1961), p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ See KNA/KW/13/16, W H Hale (Chief Game Warden) to A D Shirreff (DC, West Suk), 6 March 1958; KNA/KW/13/16, Chief Game Warden to Chairman KWLS, 15 May 1958; KNA/KW/13/16, A D Shirreff (D C, Suk) to Chief Game Warden, 14 April 1959. The KWLS came into being in 1955.

Lack of finance hindered the implementation of the 1956 Game Policy Committee's recommendations and delayed the resolution of conflicts in national reserves.¹⁰¹ The situation was particularly serious in the pastoral areas. In Samburu District, the continued existence of the Marsabit National Reserve, expansion in controlled grazing schemes, and the government's reluctance to pay compensation for game-related damage agitated the Samburu and infuriated the provincial administration. At one point the Samburu DC lamented:

In Samburu [District] more heat is engendered on the subject of game than anything else. It is producing an increasing anti-Government, anti-European attitude in a tribe which is basically loyal and co-operative. I have fobbed them off for 18 months by hints of financial and other relief when the Game Policy Committee recommendations are implemented. But it now looks as though I must say to them:- "Sorry, nothing doing. You will get no compensation when your husbands and fathers are killed by wild animals; we shall allow no reduction of game in those grazing schemes which will remain parts of the National Parks [*sic*] (i.e. nine-tenths of the district). Our game policy remains, to preserve game for Wazungu [whites] to shoot and photograph, and we shall just put into prison any moran [warrior] who spears a wild animal. So shut up."¹⁰²

The DC's anger was understandable. In the 1950s, Samburu District, like many other parts of Kenya, was subjected to 'land reconditioning' programmes, which involved closing degraded land to livestock or cultivation so as to allow recovery. Grazing was also controlled so that only branded livestock was allowed into specified areas after owners had paid grazing fees. This regimentation was detested by pastoralists like the Samburu who were used to 'free ranging'. The problem was compounded by the presence of large quantities of plains game in such grazing schemes, forcing the Samburu to demand a reduction of the game or compensation:

Until the ADC is paid an adequate annual sum, in the form perhaps of 'grazing fees' for game in controlled grazing schemes, in respect of the

¹⁰¹ In 1959 the permanent Secretary for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries announced that the government had deferred consideration of the main recommendations of the 1956 Game Policy Committee report until there was some financial prospect of carrying them out. See KNA/KW/23/156, Permanent Secretary for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries (J L H Webster) to Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources, 9 April 1959.

¹⁰² KNA/KW/23/156, Chenevix Trench (DC), 'Memorandum on Game Policy, Samburu [District]', n.d., p. 2.

vast herds of game which are supported and protected at their expense; and until the principle is accepted that where cattle are limited to the carrying capacity of the land game must be culled, it is hopeless to expect from the Samburu the smallest co-operation in game preservation.¹⁰³

However, culling of wild animals in most of Samburu District was out of the question as it formed part of the Marsabit National Reserve. Similarly the government had ruled out any compensation for game-related damage. This frustrated the DC as he could not justify to the Samburu the strict limitation on cattle in an area for which they were paying grazing fees yet there was no limitation on zebra.¹⁰⁴

By the late 1950s the population of elephant in the Marsabit National Reserve had greatly increased.¹⁰⁵ In Samburu District, the elephant destroyed fencing around dams and fouled up the water at great expense to the ADC. Elephants were also responsible for the deaths of most of the twenty to thirty people killed annually by wild animals in the district in the late 1950s.¹⁰⁶ Yet the Samburu hardly benefited from the trophy revenue the RNPK trustees collected from the area. Such insensitivity antagonised the Samburu and the provincial administration:

Directly the ADC obtains only £300 a year from the [RNPK trustees]. Indirectly, by far the greater share of the money which the Kenya Government gains in one way or another from Game Preservation is spent, naturally, on the more highly developed parts of the Colony where game has been annihilated: only a minute fraction reaches the people who now bear the burden of wild game.¹⁰⁷

The Samburu DC's views on wildlife conservation were supported by the Rift Valley PC who took up the matter with the relevant ministry. In March 1959 the PC asked the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Water

¹⁰³ KNA/DC/SAM/1/1/4, Samburu District Annual Report, 1959, p.13.

¹⁰⁴ KNA/KW/23/156, Trench, 'Memorandum on Game Policy', p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ 'Overpopulation' of elephant in the national reserve was blamed for destruction of the Marsabit forest and the outbreak of an anthrax epidemic among the herds in the rest of the reserve.

¹⁰⁶ KNA/KW/23/156, Trench, 'Memorandum on Game Policy', p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Resources to explain why the game policy committee's recommendation that an annual sum of £3000 be paid to the Samburu ADC in recognition of their rights to compensation, both for their loss of grazing and for persons killed or injured, was being objected to by the treasury. He also asked the permanent secretary to 'press for the best possible bargain on behalf of the Samburu' during the course of his ministry's negotiations with the treasury.¹⁰⁸ When told that the cabinet had postponed the implementation of the recommendations of the game committee, the PC asked the permanent secretary to consider how a group of white settlers would react if they were in a situation similar to that of the Samburu.¹⁰⁹

When the PC heard a rumour in May 1959 that the government intended to start paying the Kajiado Maasai an annual fee of £20 000 to encourage them to preserve wildlife in Kitengela, he asked the ministry's permanent secretary why a similar scheme had not been planned for the Samburu who had also sacrificed a lot to preserve wildlife. However, the permanent secretary retorted that the information on the proposed scheme was not only highly classified but the government did not have the money to implement it.¹¹⁰ In November 1959 the PC led the Rift Valley Provincial Agricultural Committee in supporting Samburu claims for compensation for the damage caused by wildlife to person and property in their district. The agricultural committee appealed to the ministers for agriculture, African affairs, and tourism to support the Samburu cause as they '[could] hardly be expected to support a policy of game preservation so long as they receive[d] nothing but loss and damage from game'.¹¹¹ When it became apparent that the £3000 annual compensation fee recommended for the Samburu by the 1956 Game Policy Committee had not been allocated, the PC did not hide his feelings from the permanent secretary for African affairs:

¹⁰⁸ KNA/KW/23/156, J A H Wolff (PC, Rift Valley Province) to J L H Webster (Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources), 14 March 1959.

¹⁰⁹ KNA/KW/23/156, J A H Wolff to J L H Webster, 13 April 1959.

¹¹⁰ See KNA/KW/23/156, J A H Wolff to J L H Webster, 18 May 1959; J L Webster to J A H Wolff, 20 May 1959.

¹¹¹ KNA/KW/23/156, 'Game in Samburu' - An attachment to the Provincial Agricultural Committee minutes of 30 November 1959.

There can be no argument about the strong moral obligation for Government to compensate the Samburu for what they have to suffer in the interest of game preservation, and I wish earnestly to request that the Ministers for African Affairs, for Agriculture and for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries should take up the cudgels on behalf of the Samburu when the [1957/58] Sessional Paper is debated by the Legislative Council.¹¹²

Meanwhile the Maasai and their provincial administration were also waging war against government wildlife conservation policy at Amboseli (OI Tukai) and in Maasailand in general. Following the publication of the interim report of the game policy committee, the Loitokitok Section Councillors demanded to know whether the assurances about the security of their land still stood. They complained that the government appeared to have new plans for OI Tukai about which they had not been consulted:

We fear the recommendations of [the] Kenya's Game Policy Committee on OI Tukai just as we fear lightning, and wish to put [it] clear to the Government that we, on behalf of the Masai Community, do not agree with this policy.¹¹³

This tension was eased by assurances by the provincial administration and the governor that the government had no intention of taking the OI Tukai from the Maasai. A committee of local elders was then formed to regulate pastoralism in the area. Good relations between the elders and the administration eventually led to a memorandum of understanding in which the government asserted that its aim was 'the preservation of game at Amboseli [OI Tukai] to the greatest extent possible and the integration of game preservation there with the water and grazing scheme'.¹¹⁴

However, lack of funds hampered the provision of additional water on the fringes of the OI Tukai swamps. Initial investigations in 1956 showed that two schemes

¹¹² KNA/KW/23/156, PC Rift Valley (J A H Wolff) to Permanent Secretary for African Affairs, 2 December 1959.

¹¹³ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, 'Memorandum on OI Tukai', 4 January 1957 - presented to the PC Southern Province by OI Tukai Section Councillors. The outburst may also have been caused by press reports on OI Tukai which the administration suspected were instigated by the RNPk trustees. These were responded to at the highest levels of government. See various documents in KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4.

¹¹⁴ KNA/KW/23/156, 'Draft Agreement with Masai - Amboseli Area', 5 August 1958.

involving the pumping of water from the swamps into the surrounding area as well as the drilling of boreholes would cost about £80 000 each. Both schemes '[were] unacceptable for financial and political reasons, mainly the former'.¹¹⁵ Further investigations showed that the required additional water could be provided at a cost of about £75 000. This too was rejected on the grounds of expense.¹¹⁶ Since the government could only commit £5715 for the water project, an initial phase involving the drilling of boreholes and digging of wells was started in late 1958. But water from some of the boreholes turned out to be either too saline or the fluorine content was too high.¹¹⁷ The OI Tukai problem thus continued to 'defy' solution.

The government was also anxious to induce the Maasai to conserve wildlife in Mara and Kitengela. Since the provincial administration enjoyed the confidence of the Maasai, it was mandated by the government to lead negotiations on wildlife conservation in February 1957.¹¹⁸ Consequently in September 1958 the Narok DC appointed an ADC committee to gauge attitudes to wildlife conservation in the district. The committee reported that the Maasai were not aware of any formal agreement with the government regarding wildlife conservation. It however suggested a policy direction:

We are of the opinion that it would be impossible to reach any permanent and honourable settlement between the Masai and the Government on Game; and so to avoid any bitterness in future we suggest that all matters affecting Game and its future control should be the direct responsibility of the Narok ADC. That will mean all revenue derived therefrom would all go to the Narok ADC and that any

¹¹⁵ KNA/KW/23/156, 'Draft Memorandum to Council of Ministers, Amboseli', n.d. A project costing about £160 000 in an African reserve at this time would have been strongly contested by the settler-dominated Legislative Council.

¹¹⁶ KNA/KW/23/156, Chief Hydraulic Engineer, 'Summary Report of Water Supply Investigation at Amboseli', 26 November 1958.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*; KNA/KW/23/156, D G M Campbell, 'Amboseli Water Supplies Investigation Report No. 5', 23 December 1958.

¹¹⁸ KNA/PC/NGO/1/16/4, 'Notes on a Meeting Held at Government House on Tuesday, February 19, 1957 to Discuss Problems Connected with the Preservation of Game in the Amboseli and Mara Areas'.

employee or employees should be under the direct control of the chairman of the council.¹¹⁹

The committee welcomed the suggestion that the Narok and Kajiado ADCs meet to adopt a common policy on wildlife conservation. This report was eventually adopted by the full council which reiterated the need for the government to hand over the management of wildlife to the ADC. The council expressed its willingness to accept technical and scientific advice from the government.

In May 1959 the African cause received a fillip when a senior officer in the Ministry of African Affairs, N G Hardy, questioned the government's continued refusal to compensate Africans for damage caused by wild animals. Noting that wildlife earned the country revenue from tourism, most of which was concentrated in African areas, Hardy argued that Africans could not be expected to continue supporting a wildlife policy which only brought them misery. He disagreed with the government's refusal to pay compensation for fear that this would open the floodgates for settlers to also demand compensation, for while European farmers were allowed to destroy any animal causing damage Africans were not:

How does a DC answer the following question, which was put to me by Chief ole Kepelian when I was in Kajiado? 'Bwana [sir], we do not understand the Government. If one of our Moran [warriors] spears a lion you either put him in jail or make him pay a fine of two thousand shillings, but if that same lion should have killed one of our young men or children, or our best cows, we get hardly anything. What is the reason?'¹²⁰

Hardy insisted that the government would never achieve anything until it became more generous in its treatment of Africans. He proposed direct compensation for individuals who suffered wildlife-related damage as well as for communities that shared their land with wild animals:

The fact that the Kaputei are to receive, say, £15 000 per annum is of little consolation to an old man in the Il Kisongo who has just had his

¹¹⁹ KNA/KW/23/156, 'Observations and Suggestions of a Committee of the Narok ADC Appointed by the Chairman to Present to Him the Masai Feeling on Game in their District', 14 September 1958.

¹²⁰ KNA/KW/23/156, C M Johnston (Minister for African Affairs) to H E the Governor, 27 April 1959, p. 2.

two best heifers killed by a lion. . . . I would like to stress that there is very little use in telling the Il Kisongo Masai that they should preserve Amboseli because it is helping bring to the country a revenue of £5 million a year, when they know that most of that money is going to the more developed areas, whose inhabitants have eliminated game, and are told, when they ask for a small share of the profits to build a badly-needed hospital at Loitokitok, that there is no money available for them. . . . It is illogical, and although our financial experts in Nairobi may have hundreds of very good reasons why Africans should not have a direct share of the profits from the tourist industry, the fact remains that in the field we will obtain no co-operation from the Africans over game matters unless we can demonstrate the economic value of game.¹²¹

Hardy proposed that all revenue from game licences and game trophies be paid to African ADCs as part of the effort to promote tourism.¹²²

Strategies for inducing the Maasai to conserve wildlife in Kitengela and Mara intensified from April 1959. In Kitengela the government wanted the Kajiado Maasai to consent to the use of some 223 square miles of land abutting on the Nairobi Royal National Park as a migrational zone for the park's wildlife. The area was considered important for the survival of the Nairobi park which was then attracting about 120 000 paying visitors a year. But the area also provided seasonal grazing to the Kaputiei and Kekonyokie Maasai. The area had few permanent settlements as it was susceptible to east coast fever, especially during the wet season.¹²³ But by May 1959 the Maasai were considering building cattle dips which would enable them to overcome the disease, thereby facilitating permanent settlement and possibly intensive ranching. This would mean the loss of the area as a migrational zone for the Nairobi Royal National Park.¹²⁴

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 3.

¹²² *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹²³ The Maasai grasslands have high infestation of ticks. See Stigand, *The Land of the Zinj*, p. 230; *Daily Nation*, 28 January 1999 (Saturday Magazine).

¹²⁴ KNA/KW/23/156, J L H Webster, 'Report of the Working Party Appointed by H E the Governor to Draw up a Plan for Preservation of a Migrational Zone for the Nairobi Royal National Park', 14 May 1959, pp. 1, 2. The threat of east coast fever and pleuro-pneumonia had partly preserved Kitengela, but by the late 1950s this threat was declining as acaricides and drugs became available to pastoralists.

The fear of losing Kitengela to agricultural development led to high-level manoeuvring spearheaded by the governor. A committee appointed to look into the possibility of preserving the area for wildlife conservation recommended that it remain a Maasai seasonal grazing zone on condition that no fences were erected, no ranching schemes were established, no permanent settlement was allowed, no cattle dips were built, and no cultivation was allowed.¹²⁵ The area would then be regarded as a Maasai game reserve though it would not be developed for tourism. If the Maasai agreed to these conditions the government would pay annual grants-in-aid of £25 000 to the Kajiado ADC.¹²⁶ It would also deproclaim the larger Amboseli National Reserve and carry out closer game control in the rest of the district. But this attempt to base wildlife conservation on the traditional Maasai land-use system failed because of the changed conditions of the late 1950s. As the area was of high agricultural potential, the Maasai insisted on developing it for ranching by constructing communal cattle dips. They also intended to open some of the more fertile land for arable agriculture. The Maasai turned down the government offer claiming that they needed the land more than the money and that cattle ranching was incompatible with wildlife conservation.¹²⁷ The government could only urge the Maasai to rethink their decision.

The government also wanted the Maasai to conserve wildlife on the 250-square mile Mara Triangle. Initially the government offered the Maasai a £7000 annual rent for area. But they turned down the proposal, claiming that the area in question was not only too large but was also a refuge during periods of severe drought. They also denounced the policy of non-compensation for injury by game to stock and human beings.¹²⁸ The government then offered to pay an annual grant of £10 000 for twenty

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹²⁶ The government did not have the money but it hoped to solicit funding from the Colonial Development and Welfare fund or from organisations such as the Ford Foundation in the USA. See KNA/KW/23/156, 'Record of a Meeting on Game Preservation Held at Government House at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, 26 May 1959'.

¹²⁷ KNA/KW/23/156, Folio 134, Record of a Meeting on Game Preservation Held at Government House at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday 5 October 1959.

¹²⁸ KNA/KW/23/156, C J Denton (DC, Narok), 'Proposed Masai Game Sanctuary', 23 May 1959.

years to the Narok ADC. In addition, sheep and goats would be allowed in the game reserve for limited periods, while cattle could use it during severe droughts. In return, the Maasai would have to desist from disturbing the animals, undertake not to carry out any development projects in the reserve, discourage any settlement, and form a game management committee under the chairmanship of the DC. The game committee would advise the government on game control measures outside the game reserve.¹²⁹ Despite these offers, the Narok Maasai were reluctant to allow a game reserve to be established at Mara. The government gave them six months to rethink their decision.

The reasons given by the Maasai for rejecting the establishment of game reserves in Kitengela and Mara were more political than economic. Maasai leaders were defiant because the community was not represented in the legislative council like other major African communities.¹³⁰ This marked a turning-point in the politics of wildlife conservation in Kenya. As political independence drew closer, the Maasai began to associate game reserves with the security of their land and became more amenable to government wildlife policies from 1960. They believed that association with wildlife conservation would bring recognition for their land claims and would discourage land alienation under an independent government.

Another challenge to wildlife conservation in Kenya in the late 1950s was the perennial problem of poaching. Despite the establishment of the three field forces and the apparent success of one of them during the 1955-57 period, poaching increased from 1958. A number of factors explain this. First, the two Game Department anti-poaching teams were poorly equipped, and, composing 28 members each, lacked coordination and control.¹³¹ Second, in early 1958 the Voi Field Force 'was divested of its full range of resources, partly on grounds of "economy", and

¹²⁹ KNA/KW/23/156, Record of a Meeting on Game Preservation Held at Government House at 11am on Tuesday, 26 May 1959.

¹³⁰ KNA/KW/23/156, K M Cowley (PC, Southern Province) to H E the Governor, n.d.

¹³¹ KNA/KW/23/156, Chief Game Warden to Permanent Secretary for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 4 December 1958.

partly in expression of what can be construed as fundamental Government indifference'.¹³² Third, the government's austerity measures led to the reduction of wildlife conservation personnel and related resources at a time when the price of trophies was rising. In northern Kenya, for example, one ranger and 32 scouts were in charge of an area of 80 000 square miles.¹³³ Fourth, poaching emerged among some of the traditionally non-hunting communities such as the Samburu and the Maasai. Possibly due to frustration with wildlife policy, commercial poaching arose among the Maasai and Samburu from 1959. In 1958/59 the Maasai were reportedly killing rhino and lion in large numbers.¹³⁴ In 1960 commercial poaching of rhino was also reported among the Samburu.¹³⁵ Finally, a drought in the 1959/60 period led to famine conditions in many parts of the country, a factor which exacerbated poaching. There were even reports of motorised poachers from Tanzania making lightning incursions into the game areas of southern Kenya.¹³⁶ The poaching, especially of rhino, was so serious that Governor Philip Renison directed all government officers to help stamp it out.¹³⁷

The late 1950s also witnessed some positive developments for wildlife conservation in Kenya. These included the establishment of a game management scheme for the Liangulu. The scheme, which started on an experimental basis in late 1958 following a recommendation of the 1956 Game Policy Committee, was developed on land adjoining the Tsavo Royal National Park. Popularly known as the Galana River Scheme, the project had a number of objectives. In the short term it was meant to

¹³² Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game*, p. 54. The government was uncomfortable with the excesses of some of the anti-poaching personnel which sometimes led to bloodshed. See Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 147, 161.

¹³³ KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, G AG Adamson (Senior Game Ranger, Isiolo) to Game Warden, 4 December 1955; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1958/59*, p.4; KNA/KW/23/156, Trench, 'Memorandum on Game Policy', p. 2.

¹³⁴ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1958/59*, pp. 4, 8.

¹³⁵ KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, Folio 34, G AG Adamson to Isiolo and Samburu DCs, 20 January 1960; KNA/DC/SAM/1/1/4, Samburu District Annual Report, 1960, p. 12.

¹³⁶ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1958/59*, pp. 5, 6.

¹³⁷ KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, Folio 44, Directive by His Excellency the Governor, 31 January 1961.

help rehabilitate Liangulu men, most of whom had been imprisoned during the 1955-57 crackdown on poachers around Tsavo (Figure 2).¹³⁸ In the long term it was supposed to provide a livelihood for a community who inhabited a generally hostile environment and whose 'traditional' way of life had been hunting. The scheme was also a means of culling elephant which were threatening the park's fragile ecology.¹³⁹

Another important development was the controlled hunting areas programme. This was first introduced in Narok District in 1951 and spread to other parts of the country during the decade. The programme had three main objectives. First, it aimed at controlling licensed hunting by giving the Game Department the legal means for deciding which animals could be hunted, where, when, and in what numbers. Under the regulations, the department could close certain areas to hunting for any period of time or protect whatever species it pleased.¹⁴⁰ Second, the programme was meant to streamline the exploitation of wild animal resources. Instead of exterminating 'excess' animals in certain areas through game control, licensed hunting served as a means of culling, thereby reducing the need for expensive and wasteful game control programmes. Finally, since controlled areas were mainly in African reserves and the revenue collected from hunting in them was credited to the treasuries of the ADCs in which they were located, the programme was also meant to induce Africans to conserve wild animals as they stood to benefit from compensation for animal damage and social services provided from the revenue.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ See Holmes, *The Elephant People*, p. 213.

¹³⁹ Steinhart, 'National Parks', pp. 75 & 76; KNA/DC/ISO/3/12/3, Folio 200, I S C Parker (Game Warden) to Chief Game Warden, 13 August 1958. Also see Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 213 - 219.

¹⁴⁰ The Game Department delegated some of these responsibilities to provincial administrators.

¹⁴¹ Any area with ample wildlife outside the scheduled game sanctuaries could be gazetted a controlled hunting area. Such areas included crown lands, Native Leaseholds, Native Land Units, and later on gazetted forests.

Figure 2: A Liangulu Hunter in the 1950s



Source: Holman, *The Elephant People*, frontpiece.

The controlled areas concept seems to have started in Northern Rhodesia in 1942 where the underlying idea was to show 'native authorities' that the game in their areas could become a revenue-producing asset if it was exploited rationally. It was also used to initiate black Rhodesians into licensed hunting.¹⁴² But in colonial Kenya, where licensed African hunting was never encouraged, revenue generation for ADCs was the purpose of controlled areas. However, the establishment of controlled areas was slow mainly due to the Mau Mau uprising (1952-56). Narok District, which had the oldest and most lucrative controlled areas programme, remained closed to all forms of hunting throughout the Emergency for security reasons. Preoccupation with the Emergency also prevented the government from expanding the programme. But by 1960 the programme covered almost all areas with ample wildlife.

The late 1950s was a boom period for tourism in Kenya. This resulted in intensive licensed hunting, and more and more controlled areas were opened up for hunting. By 1958 ADCs with lucrative controlled areas, such as Narok, Kajiado, and Machakos, earned about £1537, £1010, and £358 respectively from this source.¹⁴³ This money was used for paying compensation to victims of marauding game. However, revenue from controlled area fees was too small to make an impact on Africans' perception of wildlife. Besides, damage caused by wild animals outweighed benefits from controlled areas revenue. In 1958/59 Kilifi, Kwale, and Taita districts earned a combined total of about £645 while the total value of the damage to cultivation caused by wild animals in these districts amounted to approximately £9000.¹⁴⁴

The desire to make the controlled areas programme more meaningful as sources of revenue to ADCs led to a heated debate in wildlife conservation circles in Kenya from

¹⁴² See KNA/KW/1/73, Folio 2, Office of the Director of Game and Tsetse Control, Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, 25 January 1955; F Fraser Darling, *Wildlife in an African Territory: A Study Made for Game and Tsetse Control Department of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1960), pp. 123 - 126.

¹⁴³ KNA/KW/1/73, N S Sandeman (Acting Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 16 January 1959.

¹⁴⁴ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1958/59*, p. 4. Also see p. 11.

1957. Initially 90 per cent of the revenue from controlled areas went to the government while ADCs were left to share the remaining 10 per cent in proportion to the amount of hunting each attracted. In 1958, when licence fees amounted to about £46 000, ADCs received some £4200 - of which £2500 went to the Narok and Kajiado ADCs. Consequently some conservationists argued that most ADCs got too little money from controlled area fees, a factor which perpetuated lack of enthusiasm for wildlife conservation in many areas.

Leading the campaign for equity in the sharing of benefits from wildlife conservation were provincial administrators and organisations such as the KWLS and the EAPHA. These groups were supported by most Game Department personnel including the acting chief game warden, Neil Sandeman.¹⁴⁵ At one point Sandeman argued that all revenue from hunting licences should go to ADCs so that they could have enough funds to pay compensation for wildlife-related damage since the government itself 'shie[d] from the word "compensation" as [did] the devil from holy water'.¹⁴⁶ Eventually the pressure forced the government to increase revenue to ADCs by pegging controlled area fees to the particular animal(s) hunted.

Another important development affecting wildlife conservation in Kenya in the late 1950s was a boom in tourism, which led to increased revenue from wildlife-related activities. By 1958 the country was earning £5 million per annum from tourism, 90 per cent of which was related to wildlife. The hunting industry alone generated about

¹⁴⁵ See various correspondence in KNA/KW/13/19 and KNA/KW/1/73. Game Department officers were by now unanimous of the need to involve Africans in wildlife conservation. One of them remarked: 'Commissions and committees, official and unofficial, have unanimously agreed that the only way to preserve game and encourage tourism is by getting the local African population sympathetic [to conservation], aesthetic value has no meaning, hard cash and visual benefit does.' See KNA/KW/13/19, K A Smith (Game Warden, Garissa) to Chief Game Warden, 4 August 1959. Also see KNA/KW/13/19, J McKeand (Game Warden, Kapenguria) to Neil S Sandeman, 30 July 1959.

¹⁴⁶ KNA/KW/1/73, N S Sandeman (Ag Chief Game Warden) to D H McCabe (Game Department, Lamu), 20 March 1959. The government's 'philosophy' on compensation in the 1950s was summed up by the game warden in 1952 when he said: 'Damage to crops and stock belonging to the inhabitants of Africa, whether indigenous or immigrant, is a risk innate to Africa' (KNA/KW/1/79, Folio 63, Game Warden to DC Nyeri, 8 September 1952).

£500 000.¹⁴⁷ Although the government did not re-invest enough of this revenue into conservation activities owing to austerity measures, it did attempt to improve wildlife conservation because of its importance to the country's economy. The government's support for the establishment of ADC game reserves and the controlled areas scheme showed its commitment to wildlife conservation.

The birth of the Meru ADC Game Reserve in 1959 was another important development. The reserve, which was established with the encouragement of George Adamson (a senior game ranger in Isiolo), paved the way for the establishment of similar reserves in Amboseli, Mara, Samburu, and Isiolo in the early 1960s. This was a major step towards encouraging African participation in wildlife conservation. By the mid-1960s various communities were freely petitioning the government to allow them to set up such game reserves as they gave the participating community 'pride and profit'.¹⁴⁸

This chapter has examined the various struggles that characterised wildlife conservation in Kenya in the 1950s. On the one hand, African communities such as the Maasai and the Samburu, with the backing of their provincial administrations, protested against the conservation of wildlife at their expense. On the other hand, conservation authorities, especially the RNPK trustees, endeavoured to promote wildlife conservation at all costs. Attempts to harmonise the various interests through the establishment of the 1956 Game Policy Committee were generally unsuccessful as the government did not have the money to implement the recommendations of the committee. This was largely because of the negative impact of the Mau Mau uprising on the economy. Government development programmes were also biased towards agriculture. Consequently land-use conflicts escalated in the country in the late 1950s, while poaching increased to unprecedented levels largely because of high prices for trophies and the impact of a harsh colonial economy.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, KNA/KW/1/73, W H Hale (Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 26 August 1957.

¹⁴⁸ See Julian Huxley, *The Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitants in Central and East Africa* (Paris, 1961), p. 96.

Towards the end of the decade there were genuine efforts by the central government to solve the problems generated by wildlife conservation. Under the leadership of Governor Philip Renison, the government intensified the search for long-term solutions to the problems of wildlife conservation, especially in Maasailand. Although no solution had been found for wildlife-related problems by the close of the decade, the establishment of the Meru ADC Game Reserve in 1959 and the emergence of 'nationalist' politics in 1960 hastened the search for more humane conservation strategies.

The struggles over wildlife conservation in Kenya in the 1950s call into question the myth of a monolithic and immutable colonial wildlife policy. As in the preceding period, wildlife conservation in Kenya in the 1950s continued to change due to pressure on government from such diverse sources as the imperial government, the local communities, the provincial administration, and some conservationists. By the close of the decade it was clear to most interest groups that greater involvement by African communities in wildlife conservation activities was the best way forward. The pragmatic approach to wildlife conservation, long advocated by the provincial administration, now had a sizeable following among local conservationists. As the next chapter will show, African communities were not averse to wildlife conservation if it could be achieved on their own terms.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSITION, 1960 - 1964

The early 1960s was a turbulent period for wildlife conservation in Kenya. The declaration during the first Lancaster House Conference in early 1960 that Kenya would soon be granted independence had diverse implications for wildlife conservation. On the one hand, there were fears about the future of wildlife conservation under an African-dominated government. This made the colonial government and wildlife enthusiasts more aggressive in their endeavours to make conservation in Kenya more secure. On the other hand, the impending independence triggered political agitation which did not subside until December 1964 when the main opposition party dissolved itself ostensibly for the sake of national unity. This agitation was basically anti-conservation.

By the late 1950s conservationists were anxious about the future of wildlife conservation in Kenya. Unsure of what would happen to the wildlife (especially outside the national parks) should an African government come to power, many local conservationists began agitating for a change in policy to facilitate direct involvement of Africans in wildlife management. In April 1958 Denis Saphiro, a game warden in Kajiado, declared:

I am convinced that with the present political trends in the Colony it is very necessary indeed, and a matter of considerable urgency, to start straight away in training the African to regard wild life as an important economic asset. In other words the policy should be directed towards making the wild life of the Colony an *African vested interest*. It matters little how game preservation is achieved as long as it does in fact occur. Without something along these lines, should self-government ever come, the game would suffer the same fate that has overtaken it in the southern Sudan.¹

Saphiro's views were shared by George Adamson who in late 1959 argued for the establishment of a wildlife sanctuary owned and managed by the Meru people

¹ KNA/KW/1/73, D Saphiro (Game Warden, Kajiado) to Chief Game Warden, 14 April 1958. The italics are original.

through their ADC. Adamson believed that ultimately the conservation of wildlife in Kenya would 'largely rest in the hands of the Africans themselves'.²

But the government's attitude to direct African involvement in the management of wildlife remained ambiguous until early in 1960 when 'the certainty of an African-dominated government within a couple of years' appeared to threaten the future of wildlife conservation.³ This perceived threat led the governor to caution that wildlife conservation could not be insulated from politics and that there was a need 'to interest African politicians [in it] and to bring the ADCs into association with wild life policy'.⁴ Consequently from 1960 the government intensified attempts to involve African communities in wildlife conservation through projects such as ADC game reserves and game cropping schemes. Efforts were also made to sensitise the emergent African political class to the need to conserve wildlife.⁵

There were also attempts by individual conservationists, private entrepreneurs, and international organisations to promote wildlife conservation in Kenya during this period. The Galana River Game Management Scheme was partly funded by the Nuffield Trust, while the Samburu ADC Game Reserve received financial support at various stages from conservationist Joy Adamson and entrepreneur Malin Sorsbie. The Meru and Isiolo ADC game reserves too received assistance from non-governmental sources. Such support was either volunteered by parties interested in promoting African participation in wildlife conservation or solicited by the government.

² KNA/KW/1/80, G A G Adamson (Senior Game Warden, Isiolo) to Acting Chief Game Warden, 3 July 1959.

³ KNA/KW/23/156, C P Chevenix Trench (DC, Samburu) to PC Rift Valley Province, 18 February 1960.

⁴ KNA/KW/1/20, Notes on a Discussion Held at Government House on Friday 28 October 1960 Between the Governor and a Delegation of the Trustees of the RNPk on the Future of National Reserves.

⁵ The future of wildlife conservation in Kenya was one of the issues the colonial government and conservation authorities wanted to be discussed by the various political parties during the Lancaster House constitutional talks. See KNA/KW/1/62, Minute No. EC 1183 (iv) of RNPk Trustees Executive Committee meeting of 20 November 1961; KNA/KW/1/62, 'Wildlife Policy: Draft Statement for London Conference', 8 January 1962.

Internationally the campaign for wildlife conservation in Kenya during this period took various forms. First, Kenya was part of a UNESCO-sponsored investigation into the problems of wildlife conservation in central and eastern Africa in the early 1960s. The 'study', undertaken by UNESCO's first director-general and 'eminent biologist', Sir Julian Huxley, recommended the establishment of a number of new national parks and ADC game reserves in the country.⁶ Second, the International Committee on National Parks sought to further wildlife conservation in Kenya and elsewhere by promising to get national parks and equivalent areas listed by the United Nations (UN). The Maasai are said to have been anxious to establish ADC game reserves and to have them registered by the UN, seeing this as an insurance against land alienation under a future African government.⁷ Third, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) held its eighth general assembly and committee meetings in Nairobi in September 1963. During the assembly the newly installed 'responsible' government under Jomo Kenyatta pledged to work with 'other nations and lovers of nature throughout the world' to conserve Kenya's wildlife.⁸ Finally, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) also became involved in conservation activities in Kenya during this period.

The euphoria engendered by the announcement in early 1960 of impending independence (and its arrival in December 1963) had important repercussions for wildlife conservation. The excitement heightened the struggles that had characterised wildlife conservation in the country since the late nineteenth century. Poaching and defiance of game laws increased in many areas because wildlife conservation had all along been perceived as a colonial imposition. This anti-conservation feeling was mainly fuelled by African politicians.

⁶ Huxley, *The Conservation of Wild Life*, pp. 7, 108, 109.

⁷ KNA/KW/1/62, M H Cowie (Director, RNPk) to H J Coolidge (International Committee on National Parks, Washington), 8 March 1961.

⁸ Government of Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963* (Nairobi, 1964), p. 3. Political independence in Kenya was granted in three stages. On 1 June 1963 a 'responsible' (*mandaraka*) self-government was formed. This was followed by 'independence' on 12 December 1963. Finally the country attained 'republic' status on 12 December 1964 when the Queen of England ceased to be Kenya's head of state.

Shortly after the first Lancaster House Conference in January-February 1960 two main political parties were formed in Kenya: the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). The former drew its support mainly from the larger ethnic groups, the Luo and Kikuyu, and favoured the establishment of a centralised system of government. KADU brought together the smaller ethnic groups and espoused regionalism or *majimbo*. The main source of differences between the two parties was the fear that the larger ethnic groups would grab land from the smaller ones after independence as the former were likely to dominate the government. Thus the smaller communities, which were supported by the settlers and Arabs, pressed for a 'federal' constitution during the 1960-63 Lancaster House conferences.⁹ Consequently Kenya attained independence under a 'federal' system of government although the independence elections in early 1963 were won by KANU.

What had partisan politics to do with wildlife conservation? As Clark Gibson observes, most African politicians were opposed to colonial wildlife laws.¹⁰ This was generally so in Kenya in the 1960-63 period.¹¹ But after independence in December 1963 KANU politicians generally supported wildlife conservation, while those in KADU opposed it. For instance, in 1964 KADU held a big rally at Ol Tukai 'to discuss the dispute between the government and the people in respect of the setting aside 200 - 400 square miles as game sanctuary'.¹² The meeting, which was attended by Ronald Ngala and Daniel arap Moi, 'opposed Government request strongly'.¹³

⁹ See Ghai and McAuslaw, *Public Law and Political Change in Kenya*, pp. 190, 201. The Independence constitution in Kenya was meant to entrench regional and ethnic interests rather than federalism. The system came to be known as *majimbo* (regionalism).

¹⁰ Gibson, *Politicians and Poachers* (1999), p. xi.

¹¹ Political organisation in Kenya was banned following the declaration of the Mau Mau Emergency on 20 October 1952, and it was not until March 1960 that the ban on political parties was lifted.

¹² KNA/DC/KAJ/4/1/13, Kajiado District Annual Report, 1964, p. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.* Ngala and Moi were MPs and the president and chairman of KADU respectively.

After the dissolution of KADU in December 1964, and the subsequent incorporation of its leadership into the cabinet, opposition to wildlife policies by high-level politicians in Kenya declined considerably. Instead, the very 'politicians who had decried the punitive and exclusionary nature of colonial wildlife policy [now] passed laws to strengthen and broaden it'.¹⁴ Local communities were left to carry on the struggle against unfair game laws on their own. Even the much-touted ADC game reserves did not embody the aspirations of communities adversely affected by wildlife conservation policies.

ADC Game Reserves

One of the recommendations of the 1956 Game Policy Committee was that national reserves, which had become areas of conflict between conservationists and the resident communities, be replaced by smaller sanctuaries centred around core game areas. This would entail the establishment of two small national parks in place of the sprawling Marsabit National Reserve, while Amboseli and Mara national reserves would be reduced to one game reserve each. Western Chyulu National Reserve, which was largely unaffected by conservation-related conflict, would not be reduced but would now have game reserve status.¹⁵ The future of the Ngong National Reserve, and that of the proposed game reserves, would be determined by discussions between the government and the Maasai. The emphasis in these proposals was the establishment of game reserves which would 'give those Africans whose livelihood [was] immediately affected, a direct financial interest in the economic aspect of such preservation'.¹⁶ But how this would be achieved was not clear.

Attempts by the government to establish game reserves in Maasailand in the 1958-59 period were generally unsuccessful because the Maasai were reluctant to set

¹⁴ Gibson, *Politicians and Poachers*, p. 3.

¹⁵ See Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1957/58*; Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1959/60*.

¹⁶ Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1959/60*, p. 5.

aside land for the purpose. Despite monetary and other offers from the government, the Maasai rejected proposals for conserving wildlife in Mara, Amboseli, and Kitengela, citing the negative effects of prevailing wildlife policy on themselves and their economy. They insisted on being allowed to manage any game sanctuaries established on their land through their ADCs.¹⁷ They also demanded that they be represented in the legislative council by one of their own.¹⁸ The nomination of William ole Ntimama, a Narok Maasai, to the council in February 1959 did not change matters because he 'did not enjoy the confidence of the Masai elders owing to . . . support he was supposed to have given the DC at the end of 1958 over the issue of the Purko Timber Co-operative Society'.¹⁹ The bone of contention, however, appears to have been the government's reluctance to allow the Maasai to manage the proposed game sanctuaries.

The government's policy on the establishment of game reserves was based on the belief that monetary incentives were all that was required to persuade Africans to conserve wildlife. The government's proposals to the Maasai revolved around the payment of annual rents or grants for the conservation areas. But the offers only intensified fears of land alienation. An offer of a £10 000 annual rent for Mara was rejected by the Narok ADC in 1959 'on the ground that the acceptance of the money

¹⁷ See KNA/KW/23/156, 'Observations and Suggestions of a Committee of the Narok ADC Appointed by the Chairman [DC] to Present to Him the Masai Feelings on Game in their District', 14 September 1958; KNA/KW/23/156, 'Report of the Working Party Appointed by HE [His Excellency] the Governor to Draw up a Plan for Preservation of a Migrational Zone for the Nairobi RNP [Royal National Park]', 14 May 1959. The file has a number of other documents on Maasai-government discussions on wildlife conservation during this period.

¹⁸ At the time Maasailand was part of a joint Kipsigis/Masai constituency which was represented in the legislative council by Taita arap Towett, a Kipsigis. The only Maasai in the council, Justus ole Tipis, represented Africans residing on settler farms (squatters) in the Rift Valley. See KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/5, Narok District Annual Report, 1959, pp. 4, 5.

¹⁹ KNA/KW/23/156, A Galton-Fenzi (for Permanent Secretary, Ministry of African Affairs) to J L Webster (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Forest Development, Game and Fisheries), 10 March 1960. The Purko Timber Society was a joint government-Maasai venture for exploiting forests in Narok District for timber. Ordinary Maasai opposed the project because they feared that they would be banned from taking their livestock to the forests during droughts. Attempts by the Forest Department to take control of Mau and other forests in Narok District led to political agitation in 1950-52. See the relevant annual reports in KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/3.

would give [the] Government rights to the land in question'.²⁰ Such fears led to a stalemate which seems to have been broken by two developments: the establishment of a Meru ADC game sanctuary in late 1959 and the announcement of impending independence in early 1960.

The establishment of an ADC game sanctuary by the Meru under the guidance of the local game warden and the provincial administration was a dream come true for a group of officers in the Game Department. By the late 1950s some game officers strongly believed in the need to involve Africans in the management of wildlife.²¹ But no one had a clear idea how this could be done until George Adamson came up with the Meru proposal. Adamson proposed a wildlife sanctuary which would promote the protection accorded to wildlife by national parks while allowing controlled exploitation as in the controlled hunting areas. Such a sanctuary would emphasise the management of wildlife rather than its preservation (as in the case of national parks) or exploitation (as in controlled areas).²² Proponents of such sanctuaries saw them as one means of getting Africans involved directly in wildlife conservation.

The main impediment to the development of game reserves appears to have been the government's policy towards them. The policy was based on the principle '[t]hat nothing must be done to remove from the Game Department ultimate responsibility for the conservation of game in areas other than those under the control of the Royal National Parks [trustees]'.²³ This obsession with centralised control caused some Game Department personnel to oppose schemes 'designed to overcome difficult

²⁰ KNA/DC/1/1/5, Narok District Annual Report, 1959, p. 17.

²¹ See KNA/KW/1/73, D Saphiro (Game Warden, Kajiado) to Chief Game Warden, 14 April 1958; KNA/KW/1/80, G A G Adamson (Senior Game Warden, Isiolo), 3 July 1959; KNA/KW/1/80, N S Sandeman (Game Warden, Headquarters) to Acting Chief Game Warden, 16 July 1959.

²² See KNA/KW/1/80, N S Sandeman to Acting Chief Game Warden, 16 July 1959.

²³ KNA/KW/1/73, N S Sandeman (Acting Chief Game Warden) to Chairman KWLS, 19 December 1958.

situations that [had] arisen in relatively small areas'.²⁴ A senior game warden commented on proposals for the establishment of Liangulu and Maasai schemes:

... Game Management in Kenya is being introduced in a haphazard manner from the bottom upwards. I believe this is wrong. I believe we should start from the top and work downwards by means of a framework on which game management can grow in the manner required by local conditions as the African comes to realise the need for and the value to him of game management.²⁵

Even the Meru scheme was opposed by the Advisory Committee on the Capture of Wild Animals on the grounds that it was 'not yet the time to proclaim a Meru ADC National Park'.²⁶ To most conservationists sharing the proceeds of wildlife conservation with Africans was all that was required to induce them to conserve wildlife.

Despite the opposition, Adamson's ideas about ADC game reserves soon gained the support of the leadership of the Game Department which refined the modalities for their implementation. Through a combined application of game laws pertaining to controlled hunting areas and ADC bylaws relating to land use, it became possible to establish game reserves in areas where residents wanted them. Controlled area regulations prohibited hunting in the designated areas, while ADC bylaws preserved the habitat by prohibiting human settlement, grazing, burning, cultivation, trespass, etc. However, ADC game reserves had no basis in law and could be dissolved if the concerned ADCs lost interest in them and rescinded the bylaws. An area so affected reverted to controlled hunting area status under the Game Department.²⁷

Except for technical and financial support, ADC game reserves were independent of the government. Each reserve was managed by an ADC committee which hired its

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ See KNA/KW/1/80, Ian R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to E Paul Orcutt (IBRD, Washington DC), 9 January 1962; KNA/KW/1/80, Ian R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to Dr F Vollmar (Secretary-General, WWF), 29 April 1963.

own warden, game scouts, and other personnel. The committee also promoted tourism within the reserve. It supervised the management of such tourist facilities as lodges and cottages. In some cases, tourism facilities were contracted out to private enterprise, while in others they were managed jointly with either private enterprise or the government. The motive behind the establishment of ADC game reserves was to maximise revenue for the ADCs so as to justify the existence of the game in African areas.

The Meru ADC Game Reserve was established in a 600 square-mile area bounded by the Bisengurachi River in the north, the Tana River in the east, the Ura River in the south, and the old Meru/Garbatulla road in the west. Two-thirds of the land was Meru refuge grazing, while the rest was occasionally used by Boran pastoralists. Owing to heavy infestation by tsetse fly, the area was hardly settled by 1959. This made it ideal for a game reserve as it was 'exceptionally well-watered and contain[ed] a large variety of wild animals' as well as a prolific birdlife.²⁸ Moreover, the water courses could be exploited for tourism. However, developments in tsetse eradication methods by the late 1950s threatened the continued existence of the area as a wildlife sanctuary.²⁹ This is what prompted Adamson to propose the establishment of a 'Meru ADC Game Park' where the council would improve existing tracks, cut new ones, build a camp for tourists, and generally develop the park. Insisting on the desirability of the project Adamson commented:

It is a step in the right direction and if successful would set an excellent example, which might be followed in other tribal areas such as the Masai for instance. But no African District Council is going to adopt such a scheme, unless it can see some visible material benefit arising from it, in the not too distant future. In order to insure success, it would be necessary for [the] Government to allow all revenues derived from the park and the animals in it, to go direct to the ADC. These would include fees for entrance to the park, for use of the camp, for bird

²⁸ KNA/KW/1/86, G A G Adamson (Senior Game Warden, Isiolo) to Acting Chief Game Warden, 3 July 1959.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

licences, sale of trophies and when control measures become necessary, from meat.³⁰

Popularly known as Kinna, the Meru wildlife area had for a long time been a poachers' paradise. But the establishment of the ADC game reserve towards the end of 1959 changed this. The appointment of a resident warden and subsidiary staff as well as the improvement of communication in the area not only helped control poaching but also promoted tourism. By the end of 1960 100 miles of internal roads as well as an airstrip had been built in the reserve.³¹ This led to the development of tourism in the area, albeit slowly. In 1962 the reserve was visited by 973 people who paid £1128 in fees.³² In the following year the number of visitors declined to 812 but the ADC earned £2487 from entry fees, accommodation, and the hiring out of tourist boats and vehicles.³³

The development of the Meru ADC Game Reserve during the early 1960s was slow owing to its relative remoteness (Map 7). Being some 330 kilometres from Nairobi (the tourist hub of Kenya) and 85 kilometres from the nearest urban area (Meru town), the reserve attracted only the well-to-do tourist.³⁴ The reserve was also ignored by the government whose focus was mainly on wildlife conservation in Maasailand. In 1961 the chief game warden remonstrated:

I must reiterate my opinion that the Meru ADC has received very shabby treatment and I cannot see how [the] Government can justify its gift of a lodge to each of the Masai ADCs, in addition to substantial annual subsidy, while withholding any support for the Meru, who, after all were the pioneers in this field and who have created a complete sanctuary as opposed to the half and half affair in Masailand.³⁵

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1960*, p. 4.

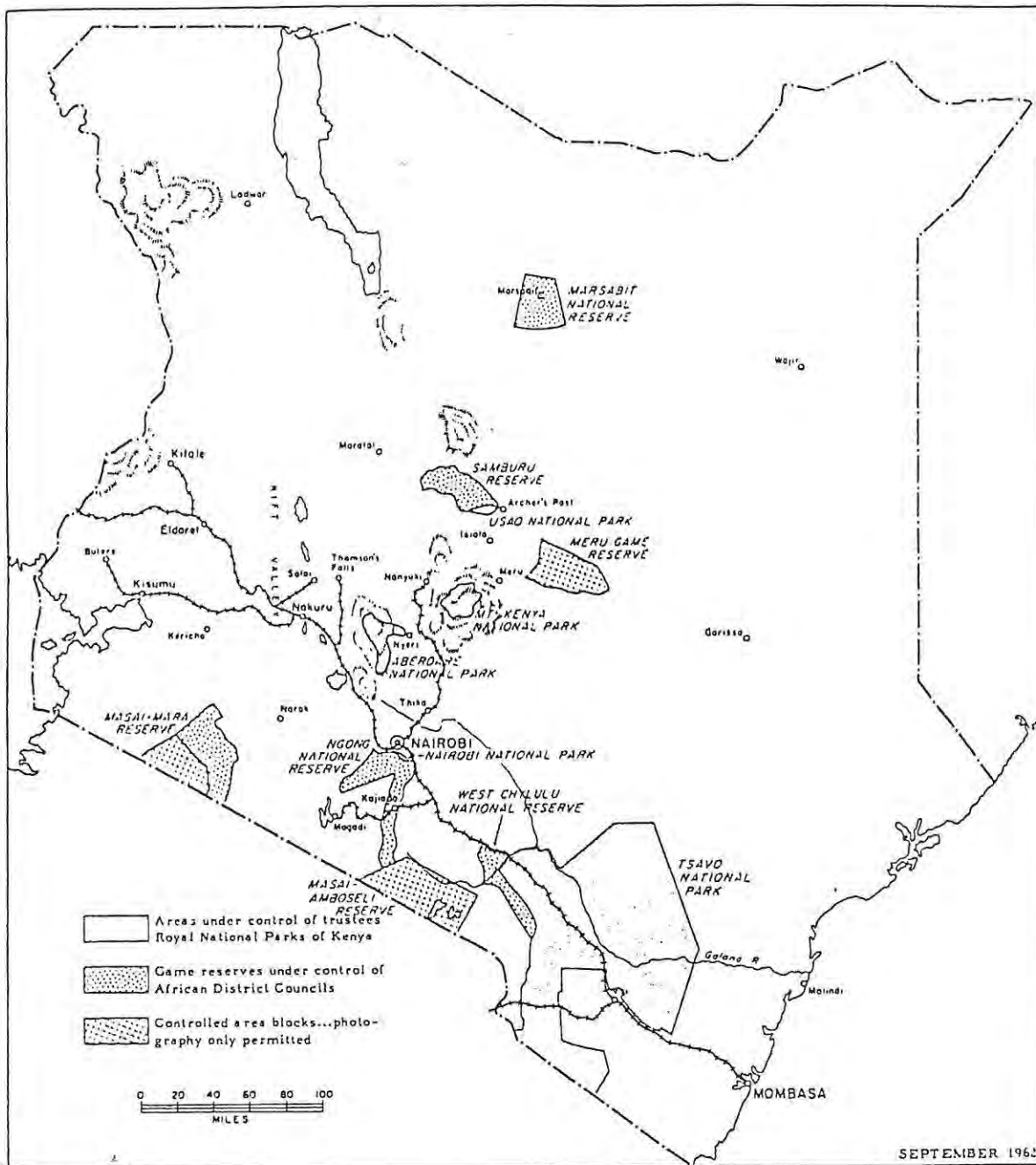
³² Government of Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1962* (Nairobi, 1963), p. 4.

³³ Government of Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963* (Nairobi, 1964), p. 5.

³⁴ See Nyeki, *Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Kenya*, p. 88; *Daily Nation*, 12 August 2000.

³⁵ KNA/KW/1/80, Chief Game Warden to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wildlife), 30 October 1961.

Map 7: Wildlife Sanctuaries by the Early 1960s



Source: IBRD, *The Economic Development of Kenya*, p. 174.

The government's double standards may have been due to the apparent absence of conflicting interests in the Meru reserve.³⁶ Unlike the Maasai ADC game reserves, the Meru reserve did not have pronounced community interests.

The early development of the Meru reserve was facilitated by the ADC and private enterprise. The ADC constructed the road network, while private enterprise provided accommodation (such as Kenmare and Leopard Rock lodges) and also a patrol lorry.³⁷ The government's main role was to help resettle relocated animals such as Uganda kob from Lugari and rhino from the Giaki/Gaitu settlement scheme.³⁸ But in 1963 the financial position of the reserve improved when it received grants of £2000, £1000, and £1500 from the government, the WWF, and Joy Adamson's Elsa Fund respectively.³⁹ Although these donations could not implement major development programmes, they kept the game reserve running by providing money for recurrent expenses. In April 1964 Lady Kenmare helped to raise funds for a £5000 water project in the reserve.⁴⁰

In early 1963 the Meru reserve suffered a setback when the public arbitrator ruled that one-third of the land lay in Boran country. The land in question was subsequently excised and became a Boran emergency grazing reserve.⁴¹ From late 1963 to 1968 the development of the game reserve was hampered by insecurity

³⁶ KNA/KW/1/80, Chief Game Warden to D L U Hodge (DC, Meru), 29 March 1961.

³⁷ KNA/KW/1/87, Chief Game Warden to DC Meru, 27 October 1961. The Meru ADC was setting aside £4000 a year for the reserve in the early 1960s but most of it was swallowed up in recurrent expenditure. See KNA/KW/1/20, Chief Game Warden to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Game, Forests and Fisheries), 2 December 1960.

³⁸ See KNA/KW/1/87, Sanctuaries and Game Reserves: Meru ADC Park.

³⁹ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 5. Joy Adamson, George Adamson's wife, played an important role in wildlife conservation in Kenya in the early 1960s. She founded the Elsa Fund through which she raised funds abroad for wildlife conservation activities in Kenya. The fund was named after a lioness, Elsa, which the Adamsons tamed but later released into the wild. The lioness is the subject of a book: Joy Adamson, *Born Free: A Lioness of Two Worlds* (London, 1960).

⁴⁰ KNA/KW/1/80, I R Grimwood to Lady Kenmare (of Karen), 13 April 1964.

⁴¹ KNA/KW/1/80, I R Grimwood to P R Hill (IUCN, Morges, Switzerland), 4 February 1963.

arising from Somali secessionist activities. Somali guerrillas, popularly known as Shifta, destabilised most of northern and eastern Kenya in an effort to promote pan-Somalism as they felt insecure in Kenya where the new African rulers were culturally and religiously different from them.⁴² In May 1964 E C Goss, the Meru game reserve warden, reported:

I am afraid due to the Shifta activities our tourist trade has been rather poor and my administration of the Game Reserve is badly affected because I am having to concentrate all my Game Rangers at Leopard Rock and Kenmare Lodge[s] doing guard duties. This gives the poachers a great opportunity although I do a considerable amount of flying round the more remote areas to try and deter them.⁴³

Despite counter-insurgency measures by government security forces, the reserve had to be closed to the public between 15 June and 31 July 1964 owing to the security situation.⁴⁴

As predicted by Adamson, the establishment of the Meru game reserve paved the way for the establishment of similar reserves in other parts of the country. On the one hand, the ADC's game reserve bylaws became the model for ADCs wishing to set up similar reserves.⁴⁵ On the other hand, its establishment helped to break the stalemate between the Maasai and the government over the nature of wildlife

⁴² When it became clear in 1960 that Kenya would soon be independent, the Kenya Somali, who had for a long time harboured dreams of uniting with their 'tribesmen' in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti in a 'Greater Somalia', petitioned the British government to allow them to secede. Attempts to resolve the issue during the Lancaster House conferences and through a commission of inquiry did not succeed. Consequently after Kenya attained responsible self-government in June 1963 the Somali and related Muslim groups in northern Kenya started guerrilla activities with the backing of the government of Somalia. This destabilised life in many parts of northern and eastern Kenya until October 1968 when the Arusha Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Somali and Kenyan governments and the former ceased to support the Shifta morally and materially. See Abdirashid Abdullahi, 'Colonial Policies and the Failure of Somali Secessionism in Northern Frontier District of Kenya Colony, c. 1890 - 1968' (MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997); John Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London, 1964); Korwa G Adar, *Kenyan Foreign Policy Behaviour Towards Somalia, 1963 - 1983* (Lanham, 1994).

⁴³ KNA/KW/1/87, E C Goss (Warden, Meru County Council Game Reserve), 'Monthly Report for May 1964'. After independence in December 1963 ADCs were renamed county councils.

⁴⁴ Republic of Kenya, *Game Department Annual Reports, 1964 & 1965* (Nairobi, Government Printer, 1967), p. 3.

⁴⁵ See correspondence between the Chief Game Warden and the DC for West Suk, and between the latter and his Meru counterpart in KNA/KW/1/80.

sanctuaries to be established in Maasailand.⁴⁶ However, the establishment of game sanctuaries in Maasailand was also influenced by political developments in Kenya in the early 1960s.

The announcement after the first Lancaster House constitutional conference in January-February 1960 that Kenya would soon be independent bothered the Maasai for two main reasons. First, they feared that independence would threaten their land as the government was likely to be dominated by the larger ethnic communities like the Kikuyu. So the Maasai began to explore ways of securing their territorial boundaries. They considered 'the desirability of uniting with the Masai of Tanganyika either as a separate state or within one or the other of the two territories'.⁴⁷ When the government warned them of the impracticability of such a step they formed the Masai United Front (MUF) which later joined KADU, a party built around the need for 'tribal' land rights in an independent Kenya.⁴⁸ The need to secure their land against future expropriation also persuaded the Maasai to take negotiations for the establishment of game reserves in their territory more seriously. This was because the government assured them 'that international, possibly UNO, recognition would be given to land

⁴⁶ KNA/KW/1/87, I R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to John Owen (Director of Tanganyika National Parks, Arusha), 1 November 1960; KNA/KW/23/156, W E Crosskill (Minister for Tourism, Game, Forests and Fisheries) to his Permanent Secretary, 20 July 1960.

⁴⁷ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/6, Narok District Annual Report, 1960, p. 1; Kenneth King, 'The Maasai and the Protest Phenomenon, 1900 - 1960', *Journal of African History*, 12, 1 (1971), p. 136. In 1959 Tanganyika Maasai, fearing 'that their land barriers would soon be broken down', proposed the establishment of 'a separate state independent of the rest of Tanganyika'. This proposal is said to have interested 'Narok elders'. See (KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/5, Narok District Annual Report, 1959, p. 5).

⁴⁸ The MUF was in the forefront of Maasai-government discussions on the establishment of game sanctuaries in Maasailand although its elitist leadership did not always speak for the ordinary Maasai and sometimes threatened to wipe out wild animals in Maasailand. See KNA/KW/23/156, W E Crosskill (Chief Secretary's Office) to W F Coutts (Chief Secretary), 30 June 1960; KNA/KW/23/156, G C M Dowson (Acting PC, Southern Province) to Chief Secretary, 26 July 1960; and KNA/KW/23/156.

used for the preservation of game'.⁴⁹ They were also told that they would receive international recognition for 'the sound ecological use of [their] land for game'.⁵⁰

The Maasai were also apprehensive about early independence because they needed more time to catch up with the more socially developed parts of Kenya. The general neglect of their pastoral economy and lack of social infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities, lay behind this anxiety.⁵¹ Believing 'that they [had] in the past subsidised the tourist and game industry, with inadequate recompense to themselves', the Maasai now viewed wildlife conservation as one way of obtaining resources for socio-economic development if the government could allow them to manage their own wildlife.⁵² Thus they continued to demand that the game sanctuaries proposed for Maasailand be placed under the Maasai ADCs, a claim legitimised by the Meru case.

Despite the seemingly favourable conditions for the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries in Maasailand by 1960, negotiations between the government and the Maasai were not easy owing to self-interest on both sides. The Maasai were not eager to allocate as much of their land to wildlife conservation as the government wanted. Moreover, they wanted the wildlife areas to be under the sole control of their ADCs, while the government insisted 'that game in the Masai Reserve [was] a national asset and not solely the property of the Masai'.⁵³ These differences persisted despite discussions between Maasai leaders and the government. It was not until December 1960 that a deal for wildlife conservation in the Mara region was struck.

⁴⁹ KNA/KW/23/156, W E Crosskill (Minister for Tourism, Game, Forests and Fisheries) to W F Coutts (Chief Secretary), 30 June 1960.

⁵⁰ KNA/KW/23/156, W E Crosskill to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Game, Forests and Fisheries), 20 July 1960.

⁵¹ KNA/KW/23/156, R E Wainwright (Chief Commissioner) to His Excellency the Governor, 23 July 1960.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ KNA/KW/23/156, G C M Dowson to Chief Secretary, 26 July 1960; KNA/KW/23/156, F W Goodbody (Chief Secretary's Office) to R Tatton-Brown (Ministry of Local Government), 29 June 1960.

The Mara deal obliged the Maasai to set aside an area measuring 200 square miles solely for wildlife conservation, and a surrounding zone of 400 square miles for multiple use. In return the government offered to construct a safari lodge and roads in the game area at a total cost of £25 000. Thereafter the Narok ADC would receive an annual subsidy of £8000 in order to ensure the success of the project.⁵⁴ The government also undertook to dissolve the Mara National Reserve immediately the game reserve become operational. As in the Meru case, the Mara game reserve would be managed by a committee of the Narok ADC. The ADC would hire its own staff to conserve wildlife and promote tourism in the area. It could also enter into contracts with private enterprise. However, the Game Department would supervise all game matters.

The bylaws for the establishment of the Mara reserve were passed by the Narok ADC in March 1961 and the reserve was officially proclaimed at the beginning of July. This also marked the end of the Mara National Reserve.⁵⁵ Since community pride and prestige were considered as important as profit in the success of ADC game reserves, the Mara reserve was officially named Masai Mara Game Reserve.⁵⁶ This pattern of naming, which started with the Meru case, was applied in two other cases - Amboseli and Samburu.

The Masai Mara Game Reserve is about 275 kilometres west of Nairobi (Map 7). The area comprises rolling grass plains lying at an altitude of about 1650 metres. The plains are intersected by strips of riverine vegetation along drainage lines with intermittent areas of acacia woodland and thicket patches on the hillsides. The

⁵⁴ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/6, Narok District Annual Report, 1960, pp. 6, 12, 13; KNA/KW/1/20, Minutes of a Meeting of Narok African District Councillors and Government Officers Held at Telek on 15 December 1960.

⁵⁵ KNA/KW/1/23, C J Denton (DC, Narok) to PC (Southern Province), 16 March 1961; KNA/KW/1/23, C J Denton to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests, Game and Fisheries), 27 March 1961.

⁵⁶ KNA/KW/1/23, Chief Game Warden, 'Masai Mara Game Reserve', 20 December 1961. The government believed that pride, prestige, and profit for the participating community were the driving forces behind ADC game reserves. 'Pride' in owning the sanctuary, 'prestige' from international recognition of the reserve, and 'profit' from tourism.

reserve is dissected by the perennial Mara River whose tributaries flow most of the year. There are also perennial springs in the reserve. At its inauguration, the reserve had abundant wildlife (including the 'big five') and was the home of the rear roan antelope and topi.⁵⁷

In the early 1960s the core area of the Masai Mara reserve operated as a national park. This inner 'developed area' had a lodge for accommodating visitors and a network of roads for light cars. Revenue came from entry fees and accommodation. The outer area was divided into eight camping blocks and had no roads. This area was hired out to people in search of solitude and earned the council more money than the core area as the charges for camping were higher than those for accommodation.⁵⁸

Owing to government support and its popularity with tourists, Masai Mara was able to develop fairly fast. In March 1963 Governor Malcolm MacDonald handed over to the Narok ADC the Keekorok Safari Lodge which had been built by the government at a cost of £25 000. The government also gave the council £5000 for the improvement of roads in the reserve. This was besides the £8000 annual subvention. The government also spent £200 annually on the Narok game warden's transport during his supervisory trips to Mara. With such support, at a time when most other ADC reserves were receiving little or no help, the Narok ADC was able to hire adequate personnel for the reserve and to initiate a compensation programme.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ KNA/KW/1/23, Chief Game Warden, 'Masai Mara Game Reserve', n.d. The 'big five' wild animals of Africa are elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion, and leopard.

⁵⁸ See *ibid*; KNA/KW/1/23, I R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to Senior Game Warden (Maralal), 10 September 1963.

⁵⁹ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 5; KNA/KW/1/23, C J Denton (DC, Narok) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests, Game and Fisheries), 27 March 1961. In 1962 the Narok ADC set aside £40 000 for a compensation scheme for wildlife-related damage partly from controlled area revenue and partly from 'profits' earned at Mara. See Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1962*, p. 10.

In the early 1960s the development of Masai Mara was affected by a number of factors. First, a severe drought in 1960-61 caused the government to allow a section of the Maasai to graze their cattle in the reserve.⁶⁰ Second, the drought was followed by floods in 1962-63. This led to the closure of the reserve for a long time, thereby denying the council revenue. The floods also damaged the reserve's road network, occasioning heavy expenditure on repairs.⁶¹ Finally, there were management problems which nearly led to the closure of the reserve in 1964.

Under a Maasai game warden, the reserve is alleged to have experienced mismanagement which cost it about £1000 a month by early 1964. This occurred partly because of the game warden's refusal to double as the lodge manager, necessitating the appointment of another officer for the purpose at an annual salary of £700. The game warden is also said to have neglected his duties while concentrating on his own affairs. As a result, the roads deteriorated to a point where few tourists visited the reserve. Neglect of firebreaks led to a fire which burned the whole reserve in September 1963, while neglect of the airstrip led to its closure by the director of civil aviation. There were also complaints about dirty and unreliable scouts and poor service at the lodge.⁶²

Mismanagement not only gave the reserve a bad reputation despite it being one of the best game areas in the country, but also discouraged sponsors from supporting it. In 1964 the government withheld some £25 000 it had set aside for the expansion of Keekorok Lodge, while Cowie stopped soliciting donor funding for water development in the reserve because the game warden had refused to account for funds given through the Water for Wild Animals Fund.⁶³ In an effort to redeem the reserve's image, the ADC was induced to lease the lodge to private enterprise in

⁶⁰ KNA/KW/1/23, C J Denton to Masai Game Warden (ADC, Narok), 26 October 1961.

⁶¹ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1962*, p. 5; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 5.

⁶² KNA/KW/1/23, I R Grimwood to Game Warden (Kajiado), 29 January 1964.

⁶³ *Ibid*; KNA/KW/1/23, I R Grimwood to M H Cowie, 24 March 1964.

mid-1964.⁶⁴ Mara's problems were a manifestation of the consequences of 'Africanisation': the transfer of the economy to indigenous people for its own sake.

After protracted negotiations with the government, the Kajiado Maasai agreed to preserve wildlife in Amboseli (OI Tukai area), West Chyulu, and Kitengela from July 1961. In return, the Kajiado ADC would receive an annual subsidy of £8500 from the government: £5000 for Amboseli, £2000 for Kitengela, and £1500 for West Chyulu. The government would also provide a capital grant of £25 000 for the construction of an ADC lodge at Amboseli.⁶⁵ This agreement marked the end of the activities of the RNPk trustees in the three areas and the trustees' responsibilities and assets were transferred to the Kajiado ADC. Amboseli would be basically an ADC game reserve (run along more or less the same lines as Meru and Mara), while the other two would be 'game conservation areas'.⁶⁶

Inaugurated on 1 July 1961, the Masai Amboseli Game Reserve had no clearly defined area. The government wanted the Maasai to set aside some 200 square miles in the OI Tukai swamp area exclusively for wildlife conservation while the Maasai were prepared to give 30 square miles. This disagreement perpetuated the conflict between wildlife conservationism and community interests which had existed in the area since 1948.

Masai Amboseli, located about 250 kilometres from Nairobi, was the most popular game reserve in the early 1960s (Map 7). It not only had abundant wildlife, which could be viewed against the beauty of Mount Kilimanjaro, but was also on a tourist circuit linking the Kenyan coast and Tsavo National Park to the wildlife areas of Serengeti and Mara. These factors made Amboseli second to Nairobi National Park in popularity. In 1962 the reserve was visited by 13 244 people and earned the

⁶⁴ KNA/KW/1/23, Sorora ole Kiu (Clerk, Narok County Council) to Secretary East African Wildlife Lodges Ltd, 14 May 1964.

⁶⁵ KNA/DC/KAJ/4/1/13, Kajiado District Annual Report, 1961, p. 20.

⁶⁶ Kitengela would serve as both a migrational zone for the Nairobi National Park and grazing land for Maasai pastoralists, while West Chyulu would be mainly a migrational zone for the Tsavo National Park.

Kajiado ADC £8470. In the following year visitors decreased to 10 842 but earnings increased to £23 827.⁶⁷ However, these developments occurred against a background of numerous problems.

One of the main problems affecting Amboseli during the early 1960s was the increasing degradation of the environment, mainly caused by invasion of the Ol Tukai swamps by pastoralists during droughts as well as by increased motoring in the area. Although the provision of water on Ol Tukai's periphery had reduced the livestock dependent on the swamps during the dry season to about 8000 units, severe drought in 1961 and 1963 led to its invasion by much higher numbers.⁶⁸ The situation was worsened by tourist vehicles which were driven over the whole landscape as designated tracks deteriorated fairly fast because of the friable volcanic soil. During the 1961 drought the combined effect of pastoralist invasion and motoring 'reduced [the area] to a dust bowl'.⁶⁹ There was the added problem of competition for resources between wild animals and livestock.

Poaching was another problem at Amboseli during this time. The increased human presence around the swamps during droughts induced some people to kill wild animals in defence of person or property. Moreover, the close proximity of the reserve to Tanganyika, a country where poaching was big business, created opportunities for Tanganyikan poachers. In 1961 the Kajiado DC reported that there had 'been an increased number of poachers coming across the border from Tanganyika, armed with guns including high-powered weapons'.⁷⁰ Finally, the 1961 drought killed about half the population of Maasai cattle in Kajiado District and induced many people to kill wild animals for profit:

⁶⁷ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1962*, p. 5; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 5.

⁶⁸ One stock unit is the equivalent of a head of cattle or five sheep/goats.

⁶⁹ KNA/KW/1/80, Chief Game Warden, 'African District Council Game Reserves in Kenya', 14 August 1962. Also see KNA/KW/1/21, Major Taberer (Masai Amboseli Game Reserve Warden) to Ian Grimwood, 2 November 1961.

⁷⁰ KNA/DC/KAJ/4/1/13, Kajiado District Annual Report, 1961, p. 21.

The drought has also made a number of clans a little money conscious. In some cases the young and the very old have not a lot to eat and rather than sell an ngombe [a cow] they will get money for posho [food] by other methods and rhino horn is as good a way as any.⁷¹

Like Masai Mara, Masai Amboseli also experienced management problems, though of a slightly different nature. During this period the reserve had a rather high turnover of white game wardens. This appears to have been caused by differences between the wardens and the ADC game committee over how the reserve should be managed. While tendering his resignation in January 1962, Taberer, who had previously managed the reserve under the RNPK trustees, stated:

I much regret that the stage has been reached in the management of Amboseli where I can no longer continue as warden. The changes in the methods and system of control are so profound as compared with the period of the administration by the RNPK that I find I cannot adjust myself to them with the result the strains and worries are not doing my health any good. I naturally do not wish to embarrass the ADC unduly....⁷²

Such differences should be viewed against the backdrop of the political mood in the country at the time. This was a time when Kenyans were eager to take control of their affairs even if it meant sacrificing 'efficiency'.

The politics of the early 1960s also bred uncertainty concerning the future of Masai Amboseli. The two most senior politicians in Kajiado District at the time, Stanley Oloitiptip and John Keen, were opposed to wildlife conservation. Oloitiptip, the elected MP for the district, not only obstructed the expansion of the stock-free area of the reserve from 30 square miles to 200 square miles but also threatened to destroy the reserve by encouraging his constituents to settle permanently in its core area. In 1963 a deal between the ADC and a private entrepreneur for the management of the ADC lodge, at a handsome profit to the council, fell apart when

⁷¹ KNA/KW/1/21, Major Taberer to Ian Grimwood, 26 August 1961. During the 1961 drought, which was claimed to have been the worst environmental disaster in Maasailand since 1894, the Kajiado Maasai lost cattle worth about £2.5 million. See KNA/KW/1/80, Chief Game Warden, 'African District Council Game Reserves', 14 August 1962; KNA/DC/KAJ/4/1/13, Kajiado District Annual Report, 1961, p. 14.

⁷² KNA/KW/1/21, Advertisement for the Post of Warden, Amboseli Game Reserve, 11 April 1962.

the MP interfered.⁷³ The deal, which would have earned the council £7000 to £11 000 a month in profits and a further £40 000 in capital development, was conditional on the expansion of the stock free area from 30 square miles to 200 square miles.⁷⁴ Interestingly, Oloitiptip became a proponent of the game reserve's expansion after he and other KADU MPs dissolved their party and joined the government side in December 1964.

The Kitengela Conservation Area, an important adjunct to the Nairobi National Park, was proclaimed in July 1961 from the former Ngong National Reserve. At its proclamation it was agreed that the Kajiado ADC would preserve the range as a migratory zone for the Nairobi National Park. Bylaws were then passed to prevent human settlement, cultivation, fencing, and the construction of cattle dips.⁷⁵ But in 1962 the Kaputuei Section Council, with the support of the Kajiado ADC, began allocating ranches to individuals in the area.⁷⁶ This was a result of the intensification of pastoralism in the area, a development which threatened the existence of the Nairobi National Park as fencing and dip construction were bound to follow.

The Chyulu Conservation Area was gazetted at the same time as Amboseli and Kitengela. It was meant to serve as a reservoir for animals moving between the Chyulu Hills, Tsavo National Park, and Amboseli. As in Kitengela, the Kajiado ADC undertook to protect the Chyulu Conservation Area from human exploitation. But in

⁷³ Conservationists thought the MP justified his existence by opposing the extension. See KNA/KW/1/21, I R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to Thane Riney (IUNC, Morges, Switzerland), 10 December 1963; KNA/KW/1/80, I R Grimwood to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources), 31 July 1963; KNA/KW/1/21, Major Taberer (Masai Amboseli Game Reserve Warden) to Ian Grimwood, 26 August 1961; KNA/KW/23/156, R E Wainwright (Chief Commissioner) to His Excellency the Governor, 23 July 1960.

⁷⁴ KNA/KW/1/21, I R Grimwood to Thane Riney, 10 December 1963.

⁷⁵ KNA/KW/1/21, D R P Saphiro and D W J Brown, 'A Summary of the Conservation and Economic Exploitation of Wild Life in the Kajiado District' (Typescript, 5 January 1964), p. 2. On 1 July 1961 the Ngong National Reserve was dissolved and the southern part of it proclaimed Kitengela Conservation Area. The Ngong Hills reverted to the Game Department as a controlled area where no hunting was allowed. This was done because of the hills' faunal, floral, scenic, and water catchment significance.

⁷⁶ KNA/KW/1/21, Minute 34/62 of the Game Committee Meeting Held on 25 July 1962 at 10.00 am in the Office of the DC, Kajiado.

the early 1960s most of the Chyulu range, including the Kajiado section, was invaded by Kamba squatters whom the government did not want to evict for political reasons. In February 1963 the chief game warden lamented:

. . . the Kamba have invaded the whole area up to the watershed and are hacking down the forest clumps to make shambas [cultivation plots]; the Kamba hold the political balance between KADU and KANU, and no one will risk offending them by evicting the squatters and the position is one of a stalemate while a priceless asset continues to be destroyed.⁷⁷

Thus political expedience for once enabled Kamba squatters to remain on the Chyulu Hills. This was '[d]espite repeated requests by the Game Committee and the District Council of Kajiado for the removal of these squatters, at least from the Masai side of the boundary'.⁷⁸

One of the recommendations of the 1956 Game Policy Committee was that the Marsabit National Reserve be abolished and replaced by two small national parks. These would be a 22 square-mile sanctuary on the north bank of the Uaso Nyiro River near Archer's Post and a 39 square-mile one on Mount Marsabit. The rest of the national reserve would be transformed into controlled areas for Samburu and Marsabit districts. But while this appeared reasonable in view of the incompatibility between wildlife conservation and other economic activities, especially in Samburu District, the proposed national parks were too small for sustainable conservation. The animals in these core areas often migrated into the surrounding countryside and so the continued existence of the proposed parks would have to depend on the goodwill of the people among whom they were to be established. The evolution of the idea of ADC game reserves from 1959 seems to have provided the solution to conservation in these two areas; they could be developed into ADC game reserves rather than

⁷⁷ KNA/KW/1/80, I R Grimwood to P R Hill, 4 February 1963. The colonial government appears to have favoured KADU (which was in league with the white settlers and wished to see Kenya's independence delayed because of fears related to land issues) during the negotiation on Kenya's constitution and the run-up to the mid-1963 general elections. The government therefore did not want to antagonise the Akamba who held a decisive vote as they were neither in KANU or KADU. Evicting members of the community from Chyulu would have caused it to vote for the 'anti-government' side (KANU), while allowing them to stay on would have caused the community to vote for the government's favoured party (KADU).

⁷⁸ KNA/KW/1/21, Saphiro and Brown, 'A Summary of the Conservation', p. 5.

national parks. That way resident communities would easily identify with wildlife conservation and the animals would be free to wander out of the designated areas. Moreover, the communities concerned could be persuaded to set aside more land for wildlife conservation on becoming stakeholders.

In the light of such thinking, negotiations for the establishment of a Samburu ADC game reserve on the north bank of the Uaso Nyiro River opened between conservation authorities and the Samburu (with the provincial administration as mediator) after the dissolution of the Marsabit National Reserve in January 1961. As in the Maasai cases, the negotiations were protracted because the Samburu were suspicious of government intentions. However, assurances concerning financial gains and kudos, and a trip to Masai Amboseli by the Samburu ADC in late 1961, eventually persuaded them to establish an ADC game reserve.⁷⁹ The reserve, now expanded to 40 square miles, was officially launched in July 1962 with the help of a £6000 donation from Joy Adamson's Elsa Fund.⁸⁰ The RNPk trustees also donated their Uaso Nyiro Safari Lodge in the reserve to the ADC.

The land set aside by the Samburu for the game reserve 'include[d] some of their best and most valuable dry weather grazing areas'.⁸¹ This was a river frontage of about eleven miles on the Uaso Nyiro River and constituted 'some of their most regularly used and easiest watering places'.⁸² But being also a wonderful game area, the Samburu were persuaded to set it aside solely for wildlife conservation. This became the Samburu Uaso Nyiro Game Reserve (Map 7).

⁷⁹ See correspondence between the Samburu DC and the Chief Game Warden in KNA/KW/1/2.

⁸⁰ KNA/KW/1/80, IR Grimwood to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wild Life), 14 August 1962. Also see KNA/KW/1/24, Roger G Hosking (DC Samburu District) to Major E W Temple-Boreham (Acting Chief Game Warden), 16 April 1962; KNA/KW/1/24, Minutes of a Meeting of a Special Committee Appointed by the Samburu ADC to consider the Taking-over of the Uaso Game Park [*sic*] Held at Nyama Yangu on Wednesday, 23 May 1962.

⁸¹ KNA/KW/1/24, E W Temple-Boreham to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wild Life), 30 May 1962.

⁸² *Ibid.*

Like the Meru reserve, the Samburu reserve did not receive as generous financial support from the government as the Maasai ones did. Despite the chief game warden's protestations, the government did little to put the game reserve on a sound financial footing.⁸³ Consequently the ADC relied mainly on private enterprise to exploit the reserve's tourist potential. The main entrepreneur here was Malin Sorsbie whose Northern Frontier Safaris Company not only leased the ADC lodge at Nyama Yangu but also advertised northern Kenya's tourism abroad.⁸⁴ In late 1962 Sorsbie signed a lease with the ADC in which he undertook to expand tourist facilities in the reserve 'at an annual rent of Shs27 000 plus a percentage of the net profits earned by [his] company'.⁸⁵ He also donated £5000 to the ADC in 1963. In the following year he donated another £5000 for the construction of a bridge linking the Samburu reserve with Buffalo Springs Game Reserve in Isiolo.⁸⁶

Besides the lukewarm support from the government, the Samburu game reserve faced a number of other problems during this period. First, Sorsbie and his company were not above suspicion despite their seemingly philanthropic mission. Several times the Samburu game warden complained about the company's inability to abide by the terms of the contracts it had signed with the ADC.⁸⁷ The warden's fears that the company was not giving the Samburu their due seem to be confirmed by the low earnings the ADC got from the venture. In 1962 and 1963 the ADC earned £1030 and £2460 respectively despite an increase in the number of visitors to the reserve

⁸³ In 1963 and again in 1964 the government gave the Samburu ADC a £2000 annual grant.

⁸⁴ Northern Frontier Safaris Company, formerly Kenya Mountain Safaris, was later renamed Munitalp Foundation. During the Mau Mau Emergency the company had been forced out of business by insecurity in the Aberdare-Mount Kenya region.

⁸⁵ KNA/KW/1/24, Draft Agreement between the Samburu ADC and the Northern Frontier Safaris Company Ltd, nd.

⁸⁶ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1963, p. 5.

⁸⁷ See KNA/KW/1/24, Rodney Elliott (Senior Game Warden, Maralal) to Chief Game Warden, 5 May 1964; Rodney Elliott to Captain Malin Sorsbie, n.d; KNA/KW/1/24, Malin Sorsbie to Rodney Elliott, 22 May 1964; R A Little (Kenya Mountain Safaris Ltd) to R A Hosking (DC Samburu), 21 September 1962.

from 667 in the second half of 1962 to 4424 in 1963.⁸⁸ Second, tourism in the area grew relatively slowly owing to the area's relative remoteness. This was in spite of the introduction of innovative foot safaris and camel rides. Third, attempts by the government and conservationists to induce the Samburu to add a further 35 square miles to the reserve were frustrated by a new breed of politicians led by MP Paul Rurumban. Discussions on the proposed extension ceased in December 1963 when 'the local politicians decided to throw their whole weight against the idea, and . . . went around whipping up public feeling amongst the manyattas [settlements] most concerned to the boiling point'.⁸⁹ Finally, like most of northern Kenya, Samburu District was adversely affected by Shifta insurgency from August 1963. Wamba Division, the area in which the game reserve was situated, 'remained a guerilla warfare fighting zone' at the end of 1964.⁹⁰

Towards the end of 1963 the Isiolo county council was induced to establish an 80 square-mile game reserve on the southern bank of the Uaso Nyiro River, directly opposite the Samburu reserve. The new reserve 'represente[d] excellent game country, traversed by the Isiolo and Ngaremara Rivers, as well as having a 15-mile frontage on the Uaso Nyiro [River]'.⁹¹ The creation of the reserve was an important step for wildlife conservation in northern Kenya since the Samburu and Isiolo reserves complemented each other and provided sanctuary to a wide variety of animal and bird life - including unique species like reticulated giraffe, Grevy's zebra, oryx beisa, and the blue-necked ostrich.

⁸⁸ See Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 6; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1964*, p.5.

⁸⁹ KNA/KW/13/15, Rodney Elliott to Chief Game Warden, 11 December 1963. Also see KNA/KW/1/24, Rodney Elliott to Chief Game Warden, 29 November 1963; KNA/KW/1/24, Rodney Elliott to Chief Game Warden, 19 November 1963. The chief and headmen supported the proposed extension, while a majority of the elected councillors and the MP opposed it. Elliott felt that the new breed of politicians were not leaders but political agitators who opposed anything initiated by the government for the sake of opposition.

⁹⁰ KNA/KW/13/15, Samburu District Annual Report, 1964, p. 1.

⁹¹ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 7.

Officially known as Buffalo Springs Game Reserve (Map 7), the Isiolo county council reserve depended heavily on donor support. The main sponsor was the Munitalp Foundation which gave the £2500 used for the initial establishment of the reserve and promised an annual grant of £1000 for five years. Most of this money went into the development of the reserve's road network as well as the augmentation of water sources through the construction of surface dams. Some of it was used for construction of staff quarters and the reserve's gates. Sorsbie's company also gave £5000 for the construction of a bridge over the Uaso Nyiro River to link the Samburu and Isiolo game reserves. However, the development of the reserve during this period was hampered by the insecurity perpetuated by Shifta guerillas. As a result of this insecurity, the reserve had not been opened to the public by the end of 1964.⁹²

The future of Mount Marsabit as a conservation area remained undecided throughout the early 1960s despite its faunal, floral, and scenic significance.⁹³ This was for three main reasons. First, the Game Department would have liked the Marsabit ADC to spearhead conservation in the area since the forest and water resources on the mountain were important for the human population in the otherwise dry region. But the ADC did not have money for the purpose and tourism in the area was not yet a lucrative business owing to the area's relative remoteness. Second, the RNPk trustees were reluctant to take on Marsabit as a national park because they did not have the money to run it. However, the Marsabit DC, concerned that an important conservation area like Marsabit could be abandoned, urged the trustees to take it on as a national park provided the local communities were allowed access to water and forest resources. Finally, when the trustees agreed to establish a Marsabit national

⁹² See KNA/KW/13/15, Chief Game Warden, 'Form of Application of Grant from the WWF', 26 January 1963; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 7; KNA/KW/13/14, D W J Brown (Acting Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources), 3 December 1964.

⁹³ The Marsabit National Reserve was degazetted together with the others on 1 January 1961. The mountain and its periphery had abundant wildlife including elephant and greater kudu. The mountain also provided a unique environment in an arid region: crater lakes (such as Lake Paradise), forest, and mountain streams.

park in mid-1963 'regionalism' had already set in. This complicated matters because the regional government was reluctant to approve the establishment of the park.⁹⁴

While most of the conservation programmes examined above were 'imposed' by the government on reluctant communities, an interesting scenario emerged in the Lambwe Valley in South Nyanza in the early 1960s. The ADC, in league with the region's MPs, wanted to establish a game reserve in an area where wildlife had continued to exist owing to the presence of tsetse fly.⁹⁵ But the Game Department was reluctant to support the project despite the area's ample wildlife - including rare species such as roan antelope, Jackson's hartebeest, and oribi. Being on the shores of Lake Victoria, the area also had potential for other tourist attractions. Why then would the Game Department be reluctant to sanction this local initiative?

First, the area had high agricultural potential, and the government intended to clear it of tsetse fly and then introduce either cattle ranching or sugar cane production. But Nyanza leaders favoured the establishment of an ADC game reserve even after tsetse fly was eradicated. This left the Game Department undecided about which side to support.⁹⁶ Second, the Game Department was doubtful about the area's tourist potential as it was located away from the main tourist circuits. Besides, 'the season when cars [could] move in the black cotton soil of the valley was too short and except when it [had] been [burned] off the long grass [made] game difficult to see'.⁹⁷ Moreover, the area lacked spectacular game like elephant, rhino, giraffe, and lion. Third, the game area was surrounded by dense human settlement and would require a considerable outlay on fencing in order to keep the animals enclosed and out of reach for poachers. Finally, and perhaps most important, the area was experiencing

⁹⁴ See various documents in KNA/KW/13/14: 'Marsabit National Reserve, 1961 - 1966'.

⁹⁵ The Lambwe Valley, an area of 127 square miles had not been effectively occupied because of the presence of tsetse fly carrying both human and animal trypanosomiasis.

⁹⁶ KNA/KW/12/3, N S Sandeman (for Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wildlife), 17 September 1962; KNA/KW/12/3, H C F Wilks (Deputy Civil Secretary [Deputy PC], Nyanza Region) to Chief Game Warden, 24 September 1963.

⁹⁷ KNA/KW/12/3, I Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to Civil Secretary [PC] (Nyanza Region), 27 September 1963. The Lake Victoria region has rain for most of the year.

some of the worst poaching in the country at the time. Owing to the euphoria of impending independence, groups of between 'five and six hundred people took part in mob hunts once or twice a week and openly [defied] police, TP [Tribal Police] and game scout patrols sent out to deal with them'.⁹⁸ The hunts, which had become an annual event since 1961, had forced the Game Department to accept that wildlife conservation in the area was doomed. This had led to the withdrawal of game scouts from the area and the employment of professional trappers to translocate as many of the animals as possible.⁹⁹

But the South Nyanza leaders had different views on wildlife conservation in Lambwe Valley. They believed that 'planned preservation of game in the area would be the greatest possible benefit to [their] people' as it would have linkages with other forms of tourism in the region.¹⁰⁰ They therefore protested the translocation of what they considered their wild animals to Masai Mara and elsewhere.¹⁰¹ The leaders even pledged to help the authorities to eliminate poaching in the area and to follow the Game Department's advice in managing the proposed reserve. They also promised to enlist private enterprise if that was necessary for the success of the venture.¹⁰² But it was not until 1966 that the government authorised the establishment of a county council game reserve in the Lambwe valley.

Although economic considerations may have been behind the push for the establishment of an ADC game reserve in the Lambwe Valley by Nyanza leaders, regionalism may also have played a role. Being Luo and KANU supporters, South

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ KNA/KW/12/3, Samson O Ayodo (MLC [Member of the Legislative Council], South Nyanza) to Minister for Tourism and Wildlife, 24 July 1962; E Omolo Agar (Member [of Parliament] for Karachuonyo) to Minister for Natural Resources, Game and Fisheries, 11 September 1963.

¹⁰¹ KNA/KW/12/3, P Mboya (Clerk to County Council of South Nyanza) to Regional Government Agent [DC] (South Nyanza, Homa Bay), 1 July 1963; KNA/KW/12/3, P Mboya to Chief Game Warden, 19 September 1963.

¹⁰² KNA/KW/12/3, E Omolo Agar to Minister for Natural Resources, Game and Fisheries, 11 September 1963.

Nyanza leaders were opposed to the translocation of 'their' wild animals to areas outside their region - including Masai Mara which belonged to the Maasai who were in a different region and political party (KADU). Thus the leaders frustrated government's efforts to turn the area into an agricultural settlement once tsetse fly was eradicated despite the high demand for land in the country at the time. They also ignored the Game Department's assessment that the reserve would be a financial drain. This proved true and the county council eventually turned over the sanctuary to the government which transformed it into Ruma National Park early in 1975.

Another interesting case concerning the establishment of ADC game reserves was an attempt by the West Suk ADC to establish a reserve in the Kapkanyar ADC Forest near Kapenguria in 1960. Under the leadership of the West Suk DC, the ADC proposed to declare two areas of 16 and 35 square miles respectively as sanctuaries for bongo which frequented certain salt-licks in the open areas of the forest. The ADC hoped to make money from people visiting the area to photograph the bongo. Although the conditions for the establishment of the reserve appear to have been optimal, nothing came of the proposal despite the chief game warden's support for it.¹⁰³ The main obstacles to the venture seem to have been the area's remoteness and the lack of variety in animal species.

By the end of 1964 a number of county councils had indicated their wish to establish game reserves. These included Turkana, Machakos, Kitui, and Kwale. The drive for the establishment of county council game reserves was brought about by the expected economic benefits of such ventures and the demand by communities to have control over what they considered their wild animals. The latter motive was particularly strengthened by regionalism, and the government had to warn some

¹⁰³ See KNA/KW/1/80, DC West Suk to PC Rift Valley, 24 June 1960; KNA/KW/1/80, Chief Game Warden to DC West Suk, 4 July 1960; KNA/KW/1/80, D L V Hodge (DC, Meru) to DC West Suk, 23 July 1960; KNA/KW/13/19, Mervyn Cowie (Director, KNP) to Chief Game Warden, n.d.

communities that Kenya's wildlife belonged to the state and not to the communities on whose land it subsisted.¹⁰⁴

Some of the proposed county council reserves, like the one proposed for the Masinga area of Machakos District, were never implemented because of the demand for land for resettlement. Like most former crown lands in Machakos District, Masinga was opened up for Kamba settlement in the early 1960s.¹⁰⁵ In Kwale District, the proposal by the county council to establish a game reserve in the Shimba Hills was put on hold because there was no money for the project. Despite the area's faunal, floral, and scenic significance, coupled with its close proximity to the tourist hub of Mombasa, a game reserve could not be established during this period because neither the county council nor the Game Department could raise the funds for the project.¹⁰⁶ The legal status of the Shimba Hills also delayed the establishment of the reserve because the land legally belonged to the Sultan of Zanzibar as part of the ten-mile coastal strip until it was transferred to the government of Kenya in October 1963.¹⁰⁷ It is not clear why the proposed Turkana County Council game reserve was

¹⁰⁴ KNA/KW/1/23, DC Narok to Chief Game Warden, 16 March 1962; KNA/KW/23/156; F W Goodbody (Chief Secretary's Office) to R Tatton-Brown (Ministry of Local Government), 29 June 1960; KNA/KW/23/156, G C M Dowson (Acting PC, Southern Province) to Chief Secretary, 26 July 1960; KNA/KW/12/3, N S Sandeman (for Chief Game Warden) to Clerk to Council (County Council of South Nyanza), 24 September 1963.

¹⁰⁵ In crown lands in Machakos District (such as Yatta, Makueni and Makindu-Kiboko) wildlife had to give way to human settlement because of population pressure. See Capone, 'Wildlife, Man and Competition for Land in Kenya'.

¹⁰⁶ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 4. The Shimba Hills are some 30 miles south of Mombasa and were 'covered by extensive areas of indigenous rainforest with intervening regions of grassland' in the early 1960s. They not only formed 'an important water catchment area' but '[t]he greater part of Kenya's few sable antelope inhabit[ed] the hills and buffalo, elephant and lion [were] also frequently seen as well as certain smaller animals. The whole range [was] of extra-ordinary scenic beauty and form[ed] a natural recreation area for the inhabitants of Mombasa. It [was] also the nearest and easiest place for passengers on visiting ships to see African big game.' KNA/KW/1/80, I R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to Secretary-General (WWF, Morges, Luasanne, Switzerland), 18 February 1963.

¹⁰⁷ See Ghai and McAuslaw, *Public Law and Political Change in Kenya*, pp. 13, 189 - 202.

never established. But it appears the government was already contemplating establishing a national park in the area.¹⁰⁸

Other Wildlife Conservation Schemes

Besides the ADC game reserves, there were several other schemes aimed at enhancing wildlife conservation Kenya in the early 1960s. These included game cropping, the controlled areas programme, game ranching, and the establishment of nature reserves. Game cropping and the controlled area programmes, like the ADC game reserves, were mainly meant to interest African communities in wildlife conservation - especially in the light of the changing political environment. They were used as ways of controlling wild animal populations while generating income for the communities on whose land the animals subsisted.

Game cropping or culling became increasingly important in Kenya in the early 1960s for two related reasons. First, in the context of the changing political environment there was a need to cultivate support for wildlife conservation among African communities. This called for effective measures to address complaints about the negative effects of wildlife conservation on African production systems. The Galana River Game Management Scheme, for instance, was meant to rehabilitate the Waliangulu whose hunting economy had been adversely affected by colonial wildlife conservation policies. Second, mounting political pressure made it impossible to ignore complaints about the negative effects of wildlife conservation on African economies, especially in pastoral areas where the existence of large numbers of wild herbivores hurt pastoral interests. Game cropping appeared to be a viable way to address these issues as it could reduce conflict arising from wildlife conservation while raising revenue which ADCs could use to pay compensation for wildlife-related damage and to provide social services.

¹⁰⁸ KNA/KW/13/19, Chief Game Warden, 'Game Conservation - Position in Kenya, September 1960'; KNA/KW/1/80, Chairman (County Council of Turkana) to Chief Game Warden, 28 October 1964.

One of the main game cropping schemes during this period was the Galana River Game Management Scheme. The scheme was started in earnest in 1960 on a 3000 square-mile piece of land adjoining Tsavo East Royal National Park. Located astride the River Galana (near the confluence with River Tiva), the scheme was some 90 miles from Mombasa and 45 miles from the nearest railway station at Mackinnon Road. Its main objectives were: first, to demonstrate that marginal agricultural land containing wildlife could yield a sustainable, worthwhile return if the resources were carefully managed; second, to dissuade the Waliangulu from poaching by providing them with a legally sanctioned means of livelihood; third, to control the elephant population of the Tsavo Royal National Park which was 'showing every sign of being too great for the habitat to sustain'.¹⁰⁹

Started with a £10 000 grant from the Nuffield Trust, the Galana scheme initially planned to cull about 300 elephants per year. It would produce ivory, tail hair, feet, ear leather, and meat for sale.¹¹⁰ The scheme employed two European officers to work with some 300 Liangulu hunters and labourers. It was hoped that the scheme would help rehabilitate Liangulu men - most of whom had served varying prison terms in the late 1950s for poaching rhino and elephant in Tsavo.¹¹¹ However, the scheme did not realise its objectives mainly because of problems related to the marketing of its products. While ivory was in high demand, the other products, particularly meat, lacked a stable market. The chief buyers of the meat were a few plantations along the Kenya coast requiring rations for their labourers. Transport difficulties limited access to other local markets, while exportation of the meat abroad as pet food was hampered by claims that Kenya was in an endemic rinderpest zone -

¹⁰⁹ KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden to G Jackson (Oakleigh Animal Products, South Ascott, Berks), 9 February 1962; Also see KNA/KW/1/62, Ministry of Tourism, Game, Forests and Fisheries, 'Draft Memorandum on Game Policy for the Press', January 1961, pp. 3, 4. There were between 10 000 and 15 000 elephant in Tsavo East, about 3000 of them in the Galana area. See Ian R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden) to Sir Hugh Elliott (IUCN Liaison Office, London), 29 September 1962; Holmes, *The Elephant People*, pp. 215 - 217.

¹¹⁰ KNA/KW/1/88, Chief game Warden to G Jackson, 9 February 1962.

¹¹¹ KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden (Kenya) to C W Benson (Department of Game and Fisheries, Chilanga, Northern Rhodesia), 28 July 1961; KNA/KW/1/88, Anon, 'Notes on the Cropping of Game in Kenya', nd.

although elephants are not susceptible to the disease. The situation was made worse by the project's inability to attract private investment for a proposed canning factory. This was partly because of uncertainty concerning the economic viability of the project and partly due to fears about investing in a country that was going through a political transition.¹¹²

Because of these problems, the Galana scheme was not able to cull half the initial envisaged number of elephant per year. Consequently none of its objectives could be achieved. Instead of becoming a Liangulu cooperative or profit-sharing project as originally intended, the scheme's 'revenue was just enough to pay 2 wardens and 72 subordinate staff basic wages. Nothing could be set aside for amortization of the original investment capital or to cover dilapidation of vehicles and other forms of equipment.'¹¹³ By the end of 1963 there were proposals to turn over the land to private enterprise possibly for combined cattle and game ranching. Owing to diminishing returns, the number of participants in the scheme fell from 79 at the beginning of 1964 to 49 by the year's end.¹¹⁴ The land was eventually leased out to a private company as a livestock-cum-wildlife ranch in July 1967.

Game cropping during this period was also important in Samburu, Isiolo, Meru, Kajiado, and Narok districts. As with the Galana scheme, the main objective in these areas was to cull wild animals at a profit. Unlike in Galana, where elephant was the

¹¹² KNA/KW/1/88, Director (Oakleigh Animal Products Ltd) to I R Grimwood (Chief Game Warden, Kenya), 19 February 1962; KNA/KW/1/88, I R Grimwood to G G Watterson (FAO, Rome), 26 March 63. Canned elephant meat could be sold abroad as it would be sterilised. But canning would make the meat too expensive to compete with whale meat which was at the time used as pet meal in the UK and elsewhere in the west. Similar marketing problems were experienced in a contemporary hippo culling scheme in the Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda where about 15 000 hippo were destroying the environment around Lake Albert. Although the people in the region liked hippo meat, only one carcass could be disposed of each day despite the need to crop 5000 hippo in the first year and then 1000 each subsequent year in order to restore the ecological balance. The main problems here were low purchasing power among the local populace, and lack of refrigeration or canning facilities. See KNA/KW/1/88, I Mann, 'Experiments in the Preservation and Utilisation of Hippo and Kob Meat', 5 January 1962.

¹¹³ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 9. See also KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden to C W Benson, 28 July 1961. The Liangulu on the scheme earned a wage of about Shs80 a month.

¹¹⁴ Republic of Kenya, *Game Department Annual Reports, 1964 & 1965* (Nairobi, 1967), p. 10.

main target, these other schemes aimed at culling plains game (such as zebra and wildebeest) which competed with cattle for pasture. Only in Narok District was some culling of elephant undertaken.

The dissolution of the national reserves in January 1961 and their replacement by smaller game reserves left large numbers of wild animals outside the designated game sanctuaries where they continued to threaten agricultural activities. While some of these animals could be culled through the controlled areas programme, others could not because they did not interest licensed hunters. This necessitated game cropping, which was undertaken jointly by the Game Department and ADCs. The department took care of the logistics, while ADCs provided the labour for dressing carcasses and for preparing biltong and skins/hides.¹¹⁵ The department also marketed the products. Where elephant was involved, the government took the ivory as compensation for its role in the culling, while in the other cases costs to the government were recouped from the revenue earned by the marketed products. The rest of the revenue went to the participating ADC.¹¹⁶

As with the Galana River scheme, marketing the products of game cropping was the main obstacle to the development of the programme in Kenya in the early 1960s. Except in periods of famine (such as 1960-61) when biltong or *charqui* was in relatively high demand, game meat, especially of animals like zebra, wildebeest, and elephant, was unpopular owing to cultural norms.¹¹⁷ An attempt to induce Maasai and Kisii butchers to sell the meat of culled elephants in 1962 ended in failure when the butchers indicated that 'they were not prepared to even attempt to sell any sort of game meat and particularly not elephant meat'.¹¹⁸ The problem was exacerbated by

¹¹⁵ The Game Department carried out surveys to determine the species to be culled and their numbers. Its personnel also carried out the actual killing of the animals.

¹¹⁶ See KNA/KW/1/88, A D Graham (Game Warden, Kilgoris) to Chief Game Warden, 25 July 1962; KNA/KW/1/88, A D Graham to Chief Game Warden, 12 December 1962.

¹¹⁷ *Charqui* is a term used in central America to describe meat preserved by salting and drying. It was originally an Indian word but was turned to *xarque* by Portuguese explorers.

¹¹⁸ KNA/KW/1/88, A D Graham to Chief Game Warden, 25 July 1962. Compare with N C Pollock, *Studies in Emerging Africa* (London, 1971), p. 289.

the fact that most of the culling took place among pastoral communities which hardly consumed game meat. This meant transporting the meat to far-flung areas at high costs. Moreover, the cropping programme was introduced at a time when there was a glut of beef in the country owing to a destocking campaign organised by the veterinary department. The campaign involved buying 'excess' cattle from pastoralists and turning them into biltong or pet meal. Since these livestock products were sold at subsidised prices, it was difficult for similar game products to compete effectively.¹¹⁹ Most people were also reluctant to buy the meat because they considered wild animals a 'free' resource.¹²⁰

Recourse to external markets was hindered by the high cost of setting up a canning plant as unsterilised meat could not be exported abroad as Kenya was in a rinderpest zone. The search for markets in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Yemen, did not yield positive results. South Africa had 'a complete embargo on the import of all types of biltong', while Southern Rhodesia was facing more or less the same game cropping problems as Kenya.¹²¹ Yemen requested a sample of the zebra biltong Kenya wanted to export there but does not seem to have imported any.¹²² Nor did attempts to interest international organisations such as the FAO, UNICEF, and the World Bank in Kenya's game cropping schemes as a means to fight hunger and malnutrition provide a solution.¹²³

The 1960-61 food shortage, however, did boost local demand for game meat. The food shortage, which was so serious that the Kenyan military was mobilised to

¹¹⁹ KNA/KW/1/88, Anon, 'Notes on the Cropping of Game in Kenya', nd.

¹²⁰ Although poaching for subsistence was common in Kenya there was hardly any market for game meat. This contrasted with the situation in Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika where relatively high rates of urbanisation provided markets for such meat.

¹²¹ KNA/KW/1/88, D Clegg (Marketing Officer, United Kingdom Trade Commissioner, Johannesburg) to Chief Game Warden (Nairobi), 22 November 1960; KNA/KW/1/88, Dr Archie S Mossman (National Museums of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo), n.d.

¹²² KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden to Game Warden Maralal, 28 November 1960.

¹²³ See KNA/KW/1/88, I Mann to Chief Game Warden, 13 February 1961; KNA/KW/1/88, G G Watterson (FAO, Rome) to Ian Grimwood, 13 March 1963.

distribute foodstuffs, saw ADCs like Samburu earn substantial sums of money from game cropping.¹²⁴ At the start of the food shortage the military contracted the Game Department to supply biltong for famine relief at Shs1.10 per pound (lb). This price made even 'the harvesting of wildebeest worthwhile' and enabled cropping schemes in the country to dispose of biltong without problems.¹²⁵ But the arrival of free relief food from America in late 1961 adversely affected the game cropping schemes. The chief game warden lamented:

Not only have we lost out on price, but it appears that the quantity [of biltong] which will be accepted is now in doubt. I understand that posho [mealie] and milk powder is as good a ration as posho and biltong, and milk powder is available from America in unlimited quantities free.¹²⁶

Hides and skins suffered from spasmodic market responses. Locally, the 1960-61 drought and destocking activities flooded the relatively small market with livestock hides/skins. This lowered the price of wild animal hides/skins, except for Grevy's zebra hides which continued to fetch fair prices. But the local market could only absorb a few zebra skins at a time.¹²⁷ Of the animals cropped, only zebra had exportable hides. However, high transport costs lowered the net revenue from such exports. Thus attempts by the Game Department to crop about 1500 animals (mainly zebra and wildebeest) annually in the early 1960s were frustrated by an inability to dispose of the products profitably. In July 1961 the chief game warden noted that the

¹²⁴ From 1 January to 31 October 1961 the Samburu ADC earned £1094 from the sale of hides and meat compared to £201 from controlled area fees and £604 from animal safaris. KNA/KW/1/24, Chief Game Warden to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wild Life), 12 November 1961. See Matheka, 'Colonial Capitalism', pp. 170 - 181 for some information on the food shortage.

¹²⁵ KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden to Divisional Veterinary Surgeon (Kabete), 4 July 1961; KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden to Senior Game Warden, 14 July 1961.

¹²⁶ KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden to Officer in-charge (Galana River Game Management Scheme), 15 July 1961.

¹²⁷ In 1960 a Grevy's zebra hide fetched Shs400 while those of common zebra fetched Shs50. In 1961 the price was Shs200 and Shs100 respectively. See KNA/13/19, Neil S Sandeman (for Chief Game Warden) to R T Elliott, 7 March 1960; KNA/KW/1/88, I Mann to Chief Game Warden, 29 April 1961.

lesson his department had learned from the various cropping schemes in the country was that such ideas needed to be approached with caution.¹²⁸

The controlled areas programme initiated in the late 1950s expanded substantially in the early 1960s owing to the increased flow of foreign hunters and the abolition of the national reserves in January 1961. The replacement of national reserves by smaller game reserves transformed large areas of Kajiado, Narok, Samburu, and Marsabit districts into controlled areas, while the programme expanded to cover all game areas outside designated sanctuaries. By mid-1961 areas under ADCs had been divided into about 60 hunting blocks. These increased to about 82 by 1965 (Map 8).¹²⁹ Meanwhile the number of visiting hunters rose from 205 in 1961 to 225 and 227 in 1963 and 1964 respectively.¹³⁰ Similarly, revenue from controlled area fees increased from £5864 in 1961 to £6921 in 1962 before rising to £8363 and £14 388 in 1963 and 1964 respectively.¹³¹

Despite the apparent expansion in the controlled areas programme, its impact on conservation in African areas was small because of the low revenue individual ADCs received from it. The Kajiado ADC was the biggest recipient of controlled area fees during this period: £984 in 1961, £1303 in 1962, £1917 in 1963, and £4038 in 1964.¹³² The low revenue to ADCs from controlled areas was due to the government's reluctance to share revenue from licensed hunting with ADCs. 'Of the money accruing from game licences and controlled area fees, [the] Central

¹²⁸ KNA/KW/1/88, Chief Game Warden to C W Benson, 28 July 1961.

¹²⁹ KNA/KW/1/20, N S Sandeman to Game Wardens, 3 June 1961; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Reports, 1964 & 1965*, p. 25. Gazetted forest areas were also regarded as controlled areas and some of them were open to licensed hunting.

¹³⁰ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 7; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Reports, 1964 & 1965*, p. 25.

¹³¹ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1962*, p. 7; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Reports, 1964 & 1965*, p. 6. The increase in the latter years was due to a rise in the scale of controlled area fees.

¹³² See the respective Game Department annual reports.

ny and Ogendo, *Kenya*, p. 200.

Source: Ojany and Ogendo, *Kenya*, p. 200.

Government [took] about 93% and Local Authorities [ADCs] 7%.¹³³ This was in spite of the insistence by the Game Department and conservationists that ADCs were entitled to at least 50 per cent of the revenue from licensed hunting since most of the game was on African land.¹³⁴

Another form of wildlife conservation which became established in Kenya in the early 1960s was game ranching. Encouraged by the success of game ranching ventures in South Africa and Northern Rhodesia, some ranchers in Kenya, with the encouragement of the Game Department, launched into mixed wildlife-livestock ranching in the early 1960s. One such enterprise was Barclays Estates at Menengai near Nakuru. The company, which had 'approximately 1,000 head of low-grade beef cattle permanently in the [Menengai] crater', began stocking the land with various wild species in 1961.¹³⁵ Some of the animals that found refuge at Menengai crater were translocated Jackson's wildebeest from the Lambwe Valley.¹³⁶ As in other parts of the world, game ranching gained popularity in Kenya because of its supposed superiority over pastoralism. Game ranching, particularly when mixed with livestock-keeping, ensures balanced use of land resources while maximising yields.¹³⁷

The first nature reserves in Kenya were proclaimed over small portions of the forests on mounts Kenya and Elgon in 1954. The idea was to preserve these areas of forest in their natural state. But in 1961 a large nature reserve was proclaimed over the

¹³³ Neil S Sandeman to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources), 11 November 1963.

¹³⁴ ADCs, which were renamed county councils after independence, held land in trust for their communities in the colonial and early independence periods although privatisation of land ownership in African areas started in the 1950s and was accelerated after independence. See Ogolla, 'Land Tenure Systems', pp. 99 - 105.

¹³⁵ KNA/KW/1/80, H P Barclay (Barclay Estates Ltd, Menengai) to Chief Game Warden, 16 May 1961. Also see KNA/KW/1/80, Chief Game Warden to H P Barclay, 22 May 1961.

¹³⁶ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1963, p. 15.

¹³⁷ See Pollock, *Studies in Emerging Africa*, pp. 287 - 293; C Gregory Knight, 'Wildlife', in C Gregory and James L Newman (eds), *Contemporary Africa: Geography and Change* (Englewood Cliffs, 1976), pp. 159 - 167; H F Lamprey, 'Wild Life as a Natural Resource', in E W T Russell (ed), *The Natural Resources of East Africa* (Nairobi, 1962), p. 137. Some important livestock-wildlife ranches in Kenya include Ol Jogi, Ol Pejeta, and Ol Ari Nyiro in Laikipia. See Gallman, *I Dreamed of Africa*; Marekia, 'Managing Wildlife in Kenya', p. 161.

southwestern section of the Mau Forest, largely through the efforts of European settlers in the surrounding areas. Officially known as the Southwestern Mau Forest Reserve, the 165 square-mile reserve was meant to preserve the fauna, flora, and scenic beauty of the area while enhancing water conservation. Specifically the reserve was meant to preserve the forest, wild animal species such as bongo and giant forest hog, and mountain streams. The settlers were not only motivated by concern about the country's diminishing fauna and flora but also by the fear that a conservation scheme for the area might not be possible under a future African government.¹³⁸

Challenges to Wildlife Conservation in the early 1960s

The period 1960-61 will go down in the [national] parks' history as tragic! Severe drought, causing the death of thousands of animals, followed by unprecedented floods with consequent washaways, and damage to lodges, roads and bridges - all this - in a time of great uncertainty as to the future, resulted in an increased scarcity of finance with which to maintain and develop the parks and also to combat increasing wholesale poaching.¹³⁹

The early 1960s was a difficult period for wildlife conservation in Kenya because of environmental, economic, social, and political factors. Events and processes such as drought, floods, army worm infestation, resettlement schemes, political 'fever', and an attempted secession, interacted in ways which gave wildlife conservation its greatest challenge. The impact of these factors on wildlife conservation in Kenya seems to validate the claim that '[e]nvironment is not only physical; it is also a social, cultural, religious, economic and political construct. It is an outcome of world perceptions and of community actions. It is generated by a history and a context in

¹³⁸ KNA/KW/1/80, M F Abraham, 'Proposal to Constitute a Nature Reserve in the South-west Mau Forest Reserve, 7 May 1960; KNA/KW/1/80, Chairman (Molo, Mau Summit and Turi Settlers' Association) to W E Crosskill (Minister of Tourism, Game, Forests and Fisheries), 27 October 1960; KNA/KW/1/80, T P W Logie (Chief Conservator of Forests) to Chief Game Warden, 10 January 1961.

¹³⁹ KNA/KW/1/20, Alfred Vincent, 'RNPK Annual Report up to June 1961'.

which physical as well as social relations are established between human beings and nature and among human beings. . .'.¹⁴⁰

Poor rains and army worm infestation in 1960-61 led to a severe drought which affected wildlife conservation in a number of ways. First, it led to the death of large numbers of domestic and wild animals especially in the pastoral areas of the country. By the time the drought ended in late 1961 over 59 per cent of the animal population of some areas had perished.¹⁴¹ Second, the drought fuelled poaching. Maasai and Samburu pastoralists became commercial poachers, partly because of loss of livestock through the drought, while '[a] severe famine in Ukambani led to an increase in "subsistence" poaching for meat . . . [and] also an enormous increase in the illegal hunting of rhinoceros'.¹⁴² Third, the drought caused an unprecedented invasion of wildlife sanctuaries by pastoralists, thereby making nonsense of the sanctity of such areas:

On July 14, 1961 the Il Kisongo Masai requested the Governor to allow them to graze their cattle in the Tsavo National Park. But before the Governor could consult with his council and the trustees the Masai moved into the southern part of the park. Although only a maximum of ten thousand head of cattle were to graze in the park, a minimum of twenty-three thousand were moved into the park. Consequently, thousands of acres of the park were laid waste. . . . The Taita began to demand similar concessions as the Masai.¹⁴³

Finally, the drought had mixed results for the fledgling game cropping schemes. On the one hand, the resultant famine opened a market for biltong, albeit temporarily.

¹⁴⁰ Fatou Sow, 'Gender Relations in the African Environment', in Ayesha Imam *et al* (eds), *Engendering African Social Sciences* (Dakar, 1997), pp. 251 - 270.

¹⁴¹ KNA/KW/1/62, Sub-committee of the RNPK, 'Royal National Parks of Kenya', September 1961; KNA/DC/KAJ/4/1/13, Kajiado District Annual Report, 1961, p. 1.

¹⁴² Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1960*, p. 14. Also see KNA/DC/KAJ/4/13, Kajiado District Annual Report, 1961, p. 20; KNA/KW/1/21, Major Taberer (Masai Amboseli Game Warden) to Ian Grimwood, 26 August 1961; KNA/DC/1/4, Samburu District Annual Report, 1961, pp. 1 & 13.

¹⁴³ KNA/KW/1/62, Sub-committee of the RNPK, 'Royal National Parks of Kenya', September 1961. A similarly severe drought in 2000 played havoc on Kenyan pastoralism and led to invasion of wildlife sanctuaries and state forests. Turkana pastoralists even invaded Kidepo National Park in Uganda. The 2000 crisis sparked off debate among conservationists, politicians, and others concerning the future of both pastoralism and wildlife conservation in Kenya. See *Daily Nation*: 29 June; 1, 2, 5 July; 3, 16 August; 16 September 2000; *East African Standard*: 6, 29 June; 30 July; 3, 14 August 2000.

On the other hand, the death of many wild animals in Kajiado District led to a halt to game cropping activities there just when the ADCs were beginning to appreciate the programme.¹⁴⁴

The drought was followed by floods which wrecked the nascent infrastructure in the game sanctuaries. As a result of flood water and dilapidated infrastructure, Nairobi, Amboseli, and Mara were closed to visitors for long periods in 1962. This led to loss of revenue at a time when money was needed for repairing the damaged infrastructure. The national parks required £18 000 'for urgent repairs', while the Masai Amboseli needed a similar amount for the construction of a more durable road system.¹⁴⁵ Since most of this money could not be raised locally, the conservation authorities turned to external sources for help.

The government's precarious financial position was in itself a major challenge to wildlife conservation. Although government financial support to wildlife conservation had never been satisfactory, the situation deteriorated in the early 1960s because of a number of developments. Possibly due to the 1960-61 ecological disasters, the country experienced an economic downturn in the early 1960s.¹⁴⁶ This was compounded by the demands of the decolonisation process which involved extensive 'public expenditure on the agricultural sector, particularly on land transfers and adjudication, research, veterinary services, training, livestock marketing, crop development, machinery and soil conservation services'.¹⁴⁷ The outbreak of the Somali secessionist movement in 1963 complicated the situation further since the

¹⁴⁴ KNA/KAJ/4/1/13, Kajiado District Annual Report, 1961, p. 21.

¹⁴⁵ KNA/KW/1/62, Charles Markhan (Chairman, Executive Council of Trustees of the RNPK) to Deputy Governor, 6 February 1962; KNA/KW/1/21, Chief Game Warden to E Paul Orcutt (IBRD, Washington), 2 January 1962.

¹⁴⁶ Gary Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonisation: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue, 1960 - 1965* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 146.

¹⁴⁷ William R Ochieng', 'Structural and Political Changes', in B A Ogot and W R Ochieng' (eds), *Decolonisation and Independence in Kenya, 1940 - 93* (London, 1995), p. 88. Also see Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization*, pp. 140-41 & 154-55.

government spent £50 000 a month suppressing the movement.¹⁴⁸ These financial commitments not only led to a reduction in public expenditure on wildlife conservation but also made the government reluctant to share revenue from conservation-related sources with ADCs.

The RNPK trustees were particularly frustrated by the lack of financial support from the government. In January 1961 the frustration drove the director to threaten to mobilise the trustees to demand that their budget be fully financed by the government or else they would expose its reluctance to conserve the country's wildlife to all the interested groups - African politicians, the British government, and the UN.¹⁴⁹ The following June matters got even worse when the national parks' annual subvention of £64 000 was reduced by £10 000. This made it 'impossible to administer the national parks without further deterioration of assets and standards'.¹⁵⁰ Unable to get adequate financial support from the government, the trustees intensified their search for financial help abroad.

The country's precarious financial position also affected the distribution of the benefits of wildlife conservation between the government and ADCs. While it was generally accepted that Africans had a stake in the wildlife in their areas, this was not reflected in the benefits of wildlife conservation to those areas. The government not only retained the bulk of the revenues from controlled hunting areas but also took all the trophies 'collected' from African areas. Since hunting fees and the sale of trophies were the main sources of direct revenue from wildlife conservation, Africans benefited very little from the wildlife they shared their land with. This situation was challenged by the Game Department and conservationists as it was viewed as the

¹⁴⁸ Adar, *Kenyan Policy Behaviour towards Somalia*, p. 69. Another source claims that the guerrilla war cost the government £4 million in 1967 alone. See Abdullahi, 'Colonial Policies and Failure of Somali Secessionism', p. 139.

¹⁴⁹ KNA/KW/1/61, M H Cowie, 'Finance - Operation River Road', 27 January 1961. In this eight-page typescript Cowie outlined how the government, like a 'back street' [River Road] trader, was dishonest in its dealings with the trustees.

¹⁵⁰ KNA/KW/1/62, Sub-committee of the Trustees of RNPK, 'Royal National Parks of Kenya', September 1961.

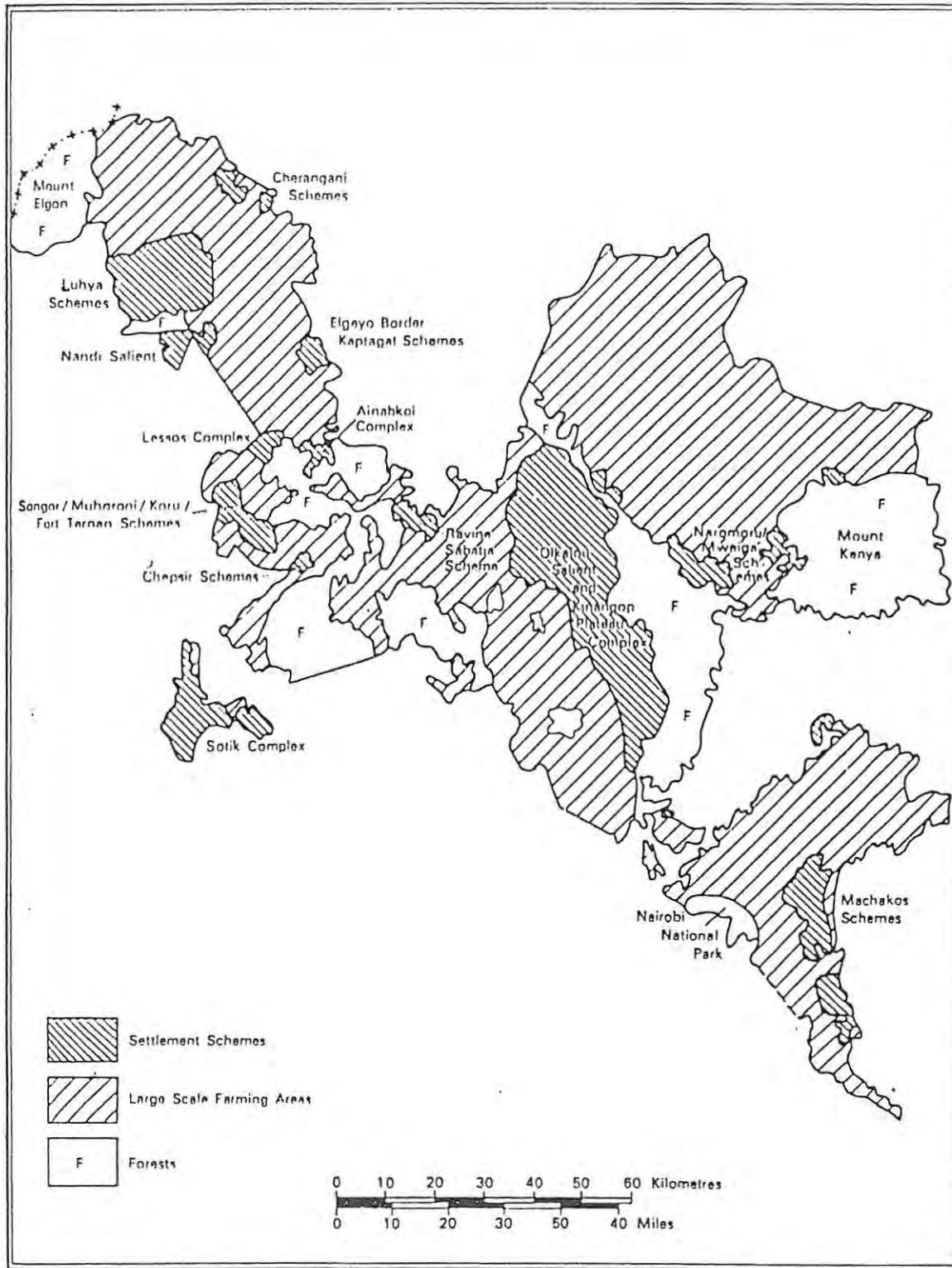
main obstacle to successful wildlife conservation in African areas. From 1960 the Game Department argued that ADCs were entitled to 50 per cent of the revenue collected from hunting and trophies in their areas. But the situation did not change because 'the Treasury refuse[d] to accept any reduction in the total [revenue] due to the central government'.¹⁵¹ Consequently most ADCs were unable to set up viable compensation schemes until a higher scale of controlled area fees was introduced in 1964.

Agricultural transformation in the early 1960s also presented a big challenge to wildlife conservation. The opening of the white highlands to people of all races in 1959 and the intensification of the decolonisation process resulted in extensive resettlement schemes in the early 1960s (Map 9). In areas such as Kitale and Uasin Gishu, the high density settlement schemes threatened the giraffe, kob, and other species still existing on the former white farms. Although some of the animals were translocated to wildlife sanctuaries, many of them were poached out of existence by the new residents. In the Mount Kenya region settlement schemes on the edge of forest reserves encouraged poaching in the forests. Poaching in the former white highlands was made worse by the lack of Game Department personnel in these areas which had previously relied on the now departing honorary game wardens.¹⁵² In the pastoral areas, increasing individualisation of land tenure (enclosure) and the expansion of cultivation in the wetter areas ate into the range available to wildlife. This was particularly so in Loitokitok and Ngong in Kajiado District and some parts of Narok District.¹⁵³ The development of large irrigation schemes along the Tana River was also a threat to wildlife conservation as land-use conflicts were bound to escalate in the area. The Bura-Galole Irrigation Scheme, for example, lay 'in one of

¹⁵¹ KNA/KW/13/19, Neil S Sandemen to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources), 11 November 1963.

¹⁵² See Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1962, p. 1; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1963, pp. 1, 14, 15; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1964, p. 15; KNA/KW/13/16 (various correspondence).

¹⁵³ KNA/DC/NRK/1/1/6, Narok District Annual Report, 1960, p. 11; Campbell, 'Land as Ours, Land as Mine', pp. 258, 263.

Map 9: Settlement Schemes in the 1960s

Source: Ojany and Ogendo, Kenya, p. 145.

the finest game areas in Kenya' where about 15 000 elephants congregated during the dry season.¹⁵⁴

Perhaps the greatest threat to wildlife conservation in Kenya during this period was 'politics'. Emboldened by the announcement of impending political independence, Africans not only criticised wildlife policies and practice but also defied game laws. In 1962 K A Smith, the Isiolo game warden, reported:

Poaching by Boran continues unabated and culminated in an affray between Game Scouts and Boran at Melhalog near Gurbatulla [on] 14 March with an anti-poaching (Government) political flavour thrown in. . . . [A] local Boran . . . organised about 40 Boran men, youths and women to protest against the arrest of game offenders, hurting a scout in the process. . . . [Y]ounger irresponsible elements of the NFPP [Northern Province People's Progressive Party] have involved themselves in the matter and were making wild threats against Sgt Ibrahim in particular and [the] Game Department in general.¹⁵⁵

Such incidents were common and increased poaching to unprecedented levels. The Luo in South Nyanza seem to have reverted to 'traditional' group hunting in total disregard of government authority.¹⁵⁶

Communities like the Samburu sent delegations to Nairobi to present their grievances over wildlife conservation to the government, while others like the Pokomo wrote memoranda.¹⁵⁷ These petitions not only criticised government policy but also demanded redress. Part of the Pokomo memorandum stated:

[Wildlife conservation] has been the greatest obstacle to agricultural development. The present game laws make animals more sacred than human beings. Yet our district is not a Game Reserve nor do we wish it to be one. The Game Department has failed to control these animals, and we feel it is high time it handed game control back to us or

¹⁵⁴ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1963, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵ KNA/KW/1/88, K A Smith (Game Warden, Isiolo), 'Report for First Quarter 1962', 27 April 1962.

¹⁵⁶ KNA/KW/12/3, I R Grimwood to Civil Secretary (Nyanza Region), 27 September 1963.

¹⁵⁷ KNA/KW/1/24, 'Notes of a Meeting with the Samburu ADC Deputation Held in the Conference Room of the Ministry [of Tourism, Forests and Wild Life] on 18 February 1963.'

compensated losses incurred by these animals [*sic*]. Losses connected with game are reaching unbearable pitch.¹⁵⁸

No wonder Game Department officers spearheaded the search for means of ensuring that people who suffered game depredations were adequately compensated. Responding to the memorandum by the Pokomo, the chief game warden noted that '[t]he Tana River District [typified] the mess [the] Government [had] got itself into by its policy of retaining practically all revenue from game for itself'.¹⁵⁹ He stressed that the area was important to both people and wildlife and everything possible needed to be done to promote coexistence.

Complaints against the national parks system seem to have been encapsulated by the Taita. Led by their MP, Dawson Mwanyumba, the Taita in 1962 intensified their struggle with conservation authorities over the Tsavo National Park. They claimed that areas of the park such as Ndololo, Njukini, and Samale were under active cultivation before Europeans came to Kenya. They demanded that such land be given back to them and that charges of trespass into the park cease.¹⁶⁰ Accusing conservation authorities of having 'failed to bring in the human factor in their planning and development of parks', Mwanyumba demanded redress for his people or else he would mobilise them to destroy the wild animals:

If Government makes revenue of some £5 million, why does [it] not give my tribe £500 000? Who is using this money? The main burning factor of the whole issue is that Government had taken all areas containing water in the arid plains, at the foot of the hills and made them national parks. Something must be done to restore confidence in my tribe otherwise I take this opportunity to tell Government that my tribe does not want any national parks. There are many ways of wiping out these wretched creatures and this can be done in a fortnight.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ KNA/KW/13/19, 'Extract of Memoranda from Tana River Africans', 11 November 1961.

¹⁵⁹ KNA/KW/13/19, Chief Game Warden to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wildlife), 8 December 1961.

¹⁶⁰ About 62 per cent of Tsavo National Park lies in Taita-Taveta District and the local people have for a long time complained about the negative impact of the park on their production systems.

¹⁶¹ KNA/KW/1/62, D Mwanyumba (MLC, Taita/Taveta) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wild Life), 22 November 1962.

Such tough talk bothered conservation authorities who feared for the future of wildlife in Kenya, especially in the light of 'regionalism'. A senior game warden, Anthony Cullen, even suggested that the Tsavo National Park be dissolved and the land handed over to the ADCs of Taita-Taveta, Machakos, Kajiado and Kitui for the establishment of game reserves: 'All these new reserves - locally administered for local profit - would benefit primarily from tourist development, bringing money for social services, plus employment and trade'.¹⁶² But neither the colonial government nor its predecessor was willing to take such drastic action in the case of a national park for fear of international condemnation.

The Somali secessionist movement affected wildlife conservation in various ways in Kenya from the second half of 1963. First, game sanctuaries, like other public institutions, were targeted for sabotage. Consequently wildlife sanctuaries like Buffalo Springs, Meru, Samburu, and Tsavo were rendered insecure. This had an adverse effect on tourism. Second, the Shifta poached wild animals for food and trophies - possibly to help finance their activities. Third, the deteriorating security situation in most of northeastern and southeastern Kenya led to the withdrawal of game personnel from those areas, thereby giving poachers greater freedom. Finally, the insecurity which led to the closure of 20 of the 82 controlled area hunting blocks by the end of 1964 adversely affected the programme at a time when hunting visitors had increased to unprecedented levels. This not only denied the affected ADCs revenue but also led to over-hunting in other parts of the country.¹⁶³

This chapter has outlined the dynamics of wildlife conservation in Kenya in the early 1960s in the context of a complex interaction of ecological, economic, political, and social factors. While all these factors influenced the conservation programme in various ways, political factors seem to have been predominant. The expectations and

¹⁶² KNA/KW/1/62, Anthony Cullen (KBC, Nairobi) to D Mwanjumba (MLC), 9 November 1962. Also see KNA/KW/1/62, Dawson Mwanjumba (MLC, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry) to Minister for Tourism, Forests and Wild Life, 15 June 1962.

¹⁶³ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1963, pp. 2, 16, 17, 18; Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report*, 1964, pp. 1, 2, 15.

fears engendered by the country's transition from colonial to independent status had either positive or negative influences on wildlife conservation. In some cases, the prospect for political independence elicited anti-conservation feeling, while in others it increased the desire to conserve wildlife. The unprecedented increase in poaching is an example of the former development, while the establishment of the Maasai game reserves is an example of the latter.

The main fear among conservationists during this period was that an independent government in Kenya would not pursue wildlife conservation. This fear was given credence by the statements of some politicians who seized the opportunity provided by the changed political environment to question 'colonial' wildlife policies. But were these fears justified? Did independence have a major impact on wildlife conservation policies? That is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'COLONIAL' WILDLIFE POLICIES IN INDEPENDENT KENYA, 1965 - 1975

The natural resources of this country - its wildlife which offers such an attraction to visitors from all over the world, the beautiful places in which these animals live, the mighty forests which guard the water catchment areas so vital to the survival of man and beast - are a priceless heritage for the future. . . . The Government of Kenya, fully realising the value of its natural resources pledges itself to conserve them for posterity with all [the] means at its disposal. We are confident of the co-operation of other governments of East Africa in this important task but, at present, we are unable, unaided, to provide the specialist staff and money which are necessary. We therefore invite other nations and lovers of nature throughout the world to assist us in honouring this solemn pledge.¹

Fears that wildlife conservation in Kenya would decline after independence were allayed by the interim government of Prime Minister Kenyatta during the Eighth General Assembly of the IUCN in Nairobi in September 1963. Like its predecessor, the new government recognised the importance of wildlife as a national heritage and the basis of the all-important tourist industry. This position did not change after independence in December 1963, although there was a lull in conservation activities under the regional system of government which lasted until December 1964. However, the dissolution of KADU and the emergence of a centralised system of government under KANU led to a rapid expansion in wildlife conservation activities from 1965. Among other developments, the 1965-75 period was characterised by the establishment of new national parks and game reserves, as well as the re-emergence of a revamped system of national reserves.

Wildlife conservation policy and practice in Kenya during the 1965 - 1975 period generally followed the colonial pattern of centralised decision-making and a peripheral role for the affected communities. This tended to perpetuate the state-society struggles of the colonial period despite a seemingly successful conservation programme. Struggles over land-use and anti-conservation feelings escalated, while

¹ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1963*, p. 3. This pledge was made by the interim African government during the Eighth General Assembly of the IUCN in Nairobi in September 1963.

the game reserves programme failed to attain its intended objectives. The situation was aggravated by patronage and corruption in the emerging neo-colonial society as well as changes in the international arena. By the early 1970s the problems of wildlife conservation in Kenya had become so acute that the government was pressured by Kenyans and the international community to address them. The pressure resulted in the 1975 sessional paper which initiated policy changes in wildlife conservation.² The policy paper paved the way for the enactment of the 1976 Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act which became the basis for community-based wildlife programmes in Kenya.³ The conservation problems also led to bans on all forms of hunting and trade in animal trophies in 1977 and 1978 respectively. In the late 1970s there was also a re-organisation of the state organs involved in wildlife conservation and increased donor support for conservation projects.⁴

Wildlife conservation during the 1965 - 1975 decade mirrored developments during the early colonial period in a number of ways. First, the new government was eager to conserve wildlife and spared no opportunity to do so. However, this often contradicted its desire to promote agricultural development and perpetuated the ambivalence which had characterised development policy since the beginning of the colonial era. Second, reforms leading to the 'privatisation' of land intensified the legal and illegal exploitation of wild animals, especially in the former pastoral areas. A new class of ranchers viewed the wild animals on their land as a source of capital accumulation and exploited them just as the early white settlers had done. Third, bureaucratic disdain towards multiple land use led to land struggles in such areas as Amboseli and east Chyulu. It also aroused anti-conservation feelings which translated into malpractices such as poaching. Finally, there was increased external pressure on the government to conserve wildlife. These combined with ecological,

² Republic of Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1975: Statement on Future Wildlife Management Policy in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1975).

³ Berger, *Wildlife Extension*, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 11 - 13; Akama, 'The Evolution of Wildlife Conservation Policies in Kenya', p. 110; Daniel M Sindiyo and Fred N Pertet, 'Tourism and its Impact on Wildlife Conservation in Kenya', *Swara*, 7 (1984), p.14.

economic, and political developments to give wildlife conservation during this period its special character.

Influencing wildlife conservation during the period under review was the growing significance of the tourist industry in the national economy. Revenue from tourism increased from £7.4 million in 1963 to £24.1 million in 1971, while the number of people directly dependent on the industry for their livelihood increased from about 11 000 in 1966/67 to about 50 000 in 1977. This was due to a rise in the number of tourists visiting the country, from 61 353 in 1963 to 406 000 in 1971.⁵ Since wildlife was the main tourist attraction, the government was under pressure to expand conservation areas in order to cater for more tourists. The expansion of wildlife areas was necessitated by congestion in popular tourist areas such as the Nairobi National Park and Amboseli by the late 1960s.

County Council Game Reserves

The period under review was marked by mixed fortunes for the game reserves programme. Maasai Mara developed into a viable conservation and tourist facility while Meru stagnated and was turned over to the KNPTs who transformed it into a national park. Amboseli, because of its popularity and the intensity of pastoralist interests, became the focus of both local and international attention which contributed immensely to the change in wildlife policy from 1975. Lambwe Valley Game Reserve, the only local authority game sanctuary founded during this era, failed to be self-reliant and was transferred to the KNPTs after almost ten years of its existence. By the end of this period, the Samburu had requested the Game Department to run their reserve for them. In short, the various game reserves faced complex challenges which tended to justify the national park ideal. This tendency was encouraged by the government's preference for state-controlled game sanctuaries, an inclination manifested in the re-emergence of national reserves and the resurgence of the national park ideal.

⁵ Ndege, 'Tourism in Kenya', p. 339; Mbithi and Barnes, *The Spontaneous Settlement Problem in Kenya*, p. 59.

It is not clear why the Meru County Council turned over its game reserve to the KNPTs in December 1966. However, three factors seem to have persuaded the council to accede to a proposal by the government to take over the game sanctuary. First, the sanctuary 'received unfortunate attention from Shifta gangs' during the 1963-66 period and was sometimes closed to the public owing to Shifta attacks. This insecurity hampered the development of the reserve as a tourist destination.⁶ Second, the county council did not have the money to develop the reserve's tourist potential, and donor funding was hardly adequate. In 1965 the 'reserve existed mainly on funds made available by Mrs Adamson's Elsa Appeal [Fund] and a small amount realised from the sale of trophies'.⁷ Third, the area experienced intense poaching in 1965 as a result of Shifta activities and a food shortage in Ukambani.⁸ Against this background the government approached the Meru County Council with a proposal to turn the game reserve into a national park. The sanctuary would be managed by the KNPTs while the council would be allowed to continue running the tourist facilities it had in the area. But later developments left the council feeling that it had been cheated by the government as it did not benefit as much as envisaged.⁹

The Lambwe Valley County Council Game Reserve was eventually gazetted in April 1966, courtesy of Samson Ayodo, the Minister for Natural Resources, who had all along been arguing for its establishment. Ayodo and other Nyanza MPs, as well as the South Nyanza County Council, had been pressuring the government to recognise what they considered the area's tourist potential since 1962.¹⁰ But the government had been reluctant to gazette the wildlife sanctuary mainly because of doubts about its viability. However, under the new political dispensation it was no longer possible

⁶ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Reports, 1964 & 1965*, pp. 2 & 3. Also see KNA/KW/1/87, E C Goss (Warden, Meru Game Reserve) to Clerk (Meru County Council), 11 February 1965.

⁷ Kenya, *Game Department Annual Reports, 1964 & 1965*, p. 27.

⁸ See KNA/KW/1/87, E C Goss, Meru Game Reserve: Monthly Reports for January - December 1965.

⁹ See KNA/BM/12/6, Game Warden (Central Division), Annual Report, 1972, p. 3; KNA/KW/23/156, R T Elliott (Divisional Game Warden, Northern Division) to Chief Game Warden, 25 January 1969.

¹⁰ KNA/KW/23/138, Game Department Annual Report, 1966, p. 7; *East African Standard*, 26 February 1965.

for the Game Department to continue resisting the pressure for the establishment of the reserve. The proposal for the reserve was also advantaged by the fact that Ayodo, a South Nyanza MP, was now in charge of the ministry responsible for wildlife conservation.

The reserve, as proclaimed in 1966, was only 46 square miles of the originally proposed 107 square miles, the rest of the land having been demarcated for settlement. Besides, some 61 families who had already settled within the reserve by the time of its proclamation had to be found alternative land. Other problems facing the reserve at its proclamation included: the need for fencing to separate it from human settlement; the need to develop access roads to facilitate game viewing; the need to undertake some form of drainage within the reserve to overcome the long periods of seasonal water-logging on the valley floor; the need for grass and fire management programmes so as to increase the periods when game was accessible for viewing; and the need to enforce an intensive anti-poaching programme.¹¹ In short, there were more factors militating against the success of the game reserve than favouring it. But its proponents argued that it would form the focal point of a western Kenya tourist circuit.

As a result of the many problems facing the Lambwe Valley reserve very little had been done to develop its tourist potential by the end of 1970. The County Council of South Nyanza did not have money for the development of the reserve and expected the government to provide the necessary funds. The government too did not have the required funds and attempts to attract donor funding were generally unsuccessful. Consequently very little development had been achieved by the early 1970s. Despite the heavy investment required in the development of the game reserve and related tourist facilities, the project had received less than £20 000 in government subsidies by 1973.¹²

¹¹ KNA/KW/23/156, Game Department Annual Report, 1968, p. 14.

¹² See various documents in KNA/KW/13/25: 'Lambwe Valley Game Reserve, 1968 - 1973'.

The two main problems affecting the Lambwe Valley reserve by the early 1970s were poaching and human encroachment. In December 1972 it was reported that poaching by ordinary and 'prominent persons' was rampant in the valley. Well-to-do poachers used powerful vehicle lights at night, whereas ordinary folk netted, shot, or speared the animals. The situation was exacerbated by poachers' capacity to resist arrest. In one incident, '[a] landrover was attacked and speared by [a] Kanyamwa mob when the Game Assistant and his scouts were apprehending a group of armed poachers. It lost its doors and window glasses'.¹³ In the following year people from Kanyamwa Location were reportedly encroaching and settling within the reserve.¹⁴ The majority of ordinary people did not support the establishment of the game reserve despite their leaders' enthusiasm for the project.

Unable to develop the reserve for tourism, the South Nyanza County Council approached the government with a handover proposal in late 1975. The council offered to surrender the reserve to the KNPTs for an annual rent of £30 000. But the trustees were only willing to pay a much smaller once-and-for-all sum since the council had not been making any money out of the reserve. The trustees also argued that they would spend a lot of money developing the reserve for tourism.¹⁵ It is not clear what the payment was but the reserve was taken over by the trustees and gazetted as a national park in late 1975. It later became known as the Ruma National Park, the largest concentration of roan antelopes in the world today.¹⁶

The Isiolo County Council Game Reserve (Buffalo Springs) was formally inaugurated in February 1965. Its initial development was facilitated by financial assistance from Malin Sorsbie's Munitalp Foundation. But the reserve's development was hindered

¹³ KNA/KW/13/25, H K Ochieng (Senior Game Warden) to Chief Game Warden, 21 December 1972.

¹⁴ KNA/KW/13/25, D N Kinyanjui (Game Officer, Nyanza Province) to Chief Game Warden, 5 October 1973.

¹⁵ KNA/KW/13/29, Proceedings of a Joint Meeting of the [South Nyanza County] Council and the KNPs Representatives Held in the Council Chamber at Homa Bay on 11 August 1975.

¹⁶ See KNA/KW/13/29, Benjamin S Ashiundu (Public Relations Officer, KNPs), 'Press Release', 11 October 1975; *Daily Nation*, 16 September 2000.

by the Shifta crisis (1963 - 1968), and further stifled by poor government support. In 1965/66 the projected government subsidy to the reserve was a mere £1000, while in 1966/67 it was £1500. However, the Isiolo County Council remained committed to the project as it considered the reserve a potential revenue-earner in the arid region.¹⁷

In 1966 the senior game warden at Maralal managed to get the Samburu to agree to extend their county council game reserve by 40 square miles by promising them government assistance in developing their district's tourist potential. Although the extension would mean the loss of another 25 miles of river frontage, the county council was willing to turn over the land for wildlife conservation if alternative water could be provided. By this time the council had come to appreciate the development of tourism as one way of diversifying the district's predominantly pastoral economy.¹⁸ However, the exploitation of Samburu District's tourist potential was hampered by Shifta activities which continued even after the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the governments of Kenya and Somalia in 1968:

The mining of the roads and subsequent security precautions prevented all road traffic [to the Samburu reserve] and the visitors had to be flown to the area. Construction and repair operations were virtually paralysed. The number of visitors dropped from 2509 in 1966 to 616 in 1967, and undoubtedly, this meant a great financial loss not only to the lodge management but also to the council.¹⁹

The other problems affecting the Samburu County Council Game Reserve concerned mismanagement and the sharing of revenue with the Isiolo County Council. Since the two game reserves were treated as one entity for purposes of tourism development,

¹⁷ The projected subsidy for the neighbouring Samburu reserve was £4500 in 1965/66 and £4000 1966/67. See KNA/KW/1/23, D W J Brown (Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism), 11 February 1966.

¹⁸ See KNA/KW/1/24, Chairman (Samburu County Council) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism), 1 May 1965; KNA/KW/1/24, D J Brown (Acting Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources and Wildlife), 29 June 1965; KNA/KW/23/156, P D E Clinton (Game Warden, Isiolo) to Chief Game Warden, 31 December 1968.

¹⁹ KNA/KW/23/139, Game Department Annual Report, 1967, p. 5. The number of visitors had fallen from an all-time high of 5280 in 1965 to just over 4000 during 1966. See KNA/KW/23/138, Game Department Annual Report, 1966, p. 6; KNA/KW/1/23, R T Elliott to Chief Game Warden, 25 January 1969.

the Isiolo and Samburu county councils were supposed to share equally the revenue from gate fees. However, each council wanted to charge separate gate fees for its reserve. This was overruled by the government as it would make tourism in the region too expensive. It took the intervention of the minister in charge of tourism to get the two councils to agree to share all gate fees in October 1968.²⁰

Possibly due to insecurity and declining revenue, Sorsbie and his company abandoned their tourist interests in Samburu District in late 1965. This placed the management of the game lodges and the game reserve in the hands of the county council. However, the council was unable to run the facilities efficiently and the Game Department undertook to manage them for the council. The inability of the Samburu County Council to develop the area's tourist potential led a senior game warden to claim that '[c]ounty councils in general [had] been shown not to be the best agents to run, and manage Game Reserves. Meru CC [County Council] [had] wisely accepted this fact, and the wise lead [needed] to be followed by others.'²¹

The county council game reserve with the most complex problem during this period was Maasai Amboseli. The problem mainly centred around conflict between the interests of wildlife conservation and those of local pastoralists, and had its origin in the development of formal conservation and tourism in the area from the late 1940s. Attempts to resolve the conflict by providing additional water resources outside the Ol Tukai swamps failed because the swamps were vital to both tourism and pastoralism. The swamps formed the core game-viewing area and were also the foci of pastoralism during the dry season. The conflict escalated during droughts when pastoralists from surrounding areas invaded the swamps in large numbers. Increasing tourist activities further complicated the situation as motor vehicles tended to churn up the friable volcanic soils (Table 1). This turned the area into a dust bowl during the dry season.

²⁰ *Ibid*; KNA/KW/1/24, Extracts from the Minutes of a Meeting between the Hon Mr S O Oyodo (Minister for Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism) and Councillors and Representatives of Samburu District at Samburu Nyama Yangu Game Reserve on 26 February 1966.

²¹ KNA/KW/23/156, R T Elliott to Chief Game Warden, 25 January 1969, p. 2. Also see correspondence between Elliott and the chairman of the Samburu County Council in KNA/KW/1/24.

Table 1: Tourism at Amboseli, 1964 - 1967

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Visitors</i>	<i>No. of Cars</i>
1964	15 459	3000
1965	17 714	4928
1966	20 834	5507
1967	23 859	6037

Source: KNA/KW/23/156, Game: Annual Reports, 1968, p. 18.

The proclamation of an ill-defined county council game reserve around the Ol Tukai swamps in 1961 perpetuated the Amboseli problem since it did not clearly address the perpetual conflict between tourism and pastoralism. Although the Ol Kejuado County Council agreed to set aside a 30-square mile stock-free area, this was not strictly enforced as no boundaries existed. Consequently the Amboseli environment continued to degenerate, much to the chagrin of conservationists, the government, and the international community. As a result of the increasing hue and cry, the county council in April 1964 resolved to set apart 200 square miles of the Amboseli basin solely for wildlife conservation. Two months later the cabinet lauded the council's resolution as being in the interest of both the Maasai and the nation. The cabinet also recommended that a 400-square mile buffer zone, in which no fencing or allocation of land titles would be allowed, be retained as an outer sanctuary.²² But as subsequent events revealed, the implementation of such resolutions and recommendations would not be easy.

Efforts by the Ol Kejuado County Council to establish a 200 square-mile game sanctuary at Amboseli were strongly resisted by the Loitokitok Maasai who argued that they had always co-existed with wild animals and did not see why an area larger than 30 square miles should be set aside exclusively for wildlife conservation. They

²² KNA/KW/13/28, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 'Outline of a Wildlife Utilization Programme for Kajiado District' (Typescript, 3 December 1966). During this time land issues in rural areas like Amboseli were the preserve of local and regional governments and the central government had little say.

also complained that they had not benefited from the large sums of money derived from Amboseli.²³ Thus the interests of the county council, which benefited immensely from the revenue collected at Amboseli (Table 2), conflicted with those of the community directly affected by conservation in the area. This was the crux of the Amboseli problem.

Table 2: Ol Kejuado County Council: Sources of Revenue, 1962 - 1969

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amboseli(£)</i>	<i>Personal Taxes(£)</i>	<i>Livestock(£)</i>
1962	24 903	7450	6040
1963	22 903	7200	6650
1964	36 200	47 000	5430
1965	33 416	36 896	8894
1966	44 158	37 300	9273
1967	38 898	33 142	8523
1968	45 200	37 900	10 831
1969	52 000	38 500	10 851

Source: KNA/KW/13/21, Folio 10, Masai Amboseli Game Reserve.

In 1965 the rejuvenated Kenyan government started taking serious steps to resolve the Amboseli problem. In order to force the county council to set aside the 200-square mile envisaged game sanctuary, the government froze its £5000 annual subvention to Amboseli during the 1965/66 financial year.²⁴ The government also proposed that 200 square miles of the Amboseli basin be gazetted as a national reserve under the management of the KNPTs. Since the land held in trust by the county council, it would be the competent authority and would receive a portion of the revenue generated by tourism in the reserve 'for translation . . . into practical development assets or services for the district, with initial emphasis on the areas

²³ KNA/KW/23/156, Game: Annual Reports, 1968, p. 18.

²⁴ KNA/KW/1/23, J Barrah (Acting Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources and Wildlife), 27 September 1965.

most adjacent to Amboseli'.²⁵ In early 1966 the government also entered into negotiations with the New York Zoological Society for a \$200 000 grant for the implementation of a water supply scheme at Amboseli.²⁶ But these efforts were largely frustrated by pastoralists' interests.

Attempts to win the cooperation of the Loitokitok Maasai by selecting twelve of their elders as a liaison group for Amboseli affairs in January 1968 were largely fruitless. This became clear later in the year when all senior Ol Kajiado County Council members lost in the general election after reiterating the need to establish the 200-square mile game sanctuary.²⁷ In a memorandum to the chairman of the succeeding council, the Loitokitok Maasai warned it against pursuing the extension to the game sanctuary:

We, the undersigned residents of the Amboseli area wish to bring to your council's notice the fact that after careful consideration of the above mentioned area (which we are given to understand that your council has agreed to allocate exclusively for game and thereby forc[e] us to move out without our consent or knowledge) we absolutely reject as nothing but sheer day-dreaming the idea of extending the Amboseli Game Reserve from 30 square miles to 200 square miles.²⁸

Reiterating that the Maasai had lost a lot of land during the colonial period, the group wondered where the council expected the evicted Maasai to go. They claimed that the council was worse than the KNPTs because during the national reserve days they had co-existed with game in their grazing area and still the reserve was economical. Concerning an offer by the New York Zoological Society to provide development assistance if 200 square miles of land were set aside for game at Amboseli, the group declared:

²⁵ KNA/KW/13/28, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 'Outline of a Wildlife Utilization Programme for Kajiado District', p. 2. Unlike in the past the 'national reserve' concept did not entail multiple land use. Community interests would be compensated through revenue sharing between the state and county councils.

²⁶ KNA/KW/23/156, Game: Annual Reports, 1968, p. 17.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 18.

²⁸ KNA/KW/1/23, D M Sindiyo, 'Masai Amboseli Game Reserve: Annual Report, 1968', p. 4.

With regard to an alleged large sum of money promised by [a] certain American millionaire and which we are given to understand that it was proposed to be used to finance the development of the area adjacent to the 200 square miles, we are notifying him by copy of this letter not to waste his money at all because we are financing the project of water supply, dips, etc ourselves through self-help schemes and our own individual and collective efforts.²⁹

Since lack of benefits from wildlife conservation was one of the complaints repeatedly voiced by the Loitokitok Maasai, the county council offered to give their section council an annual grant of £500 from January 1969. But this does not seem to have won their cooperation. While it was claimed that local leaders, politicians, and chiefs supported the extension, the majority of the population remained adamant.³⁰ Even attempts by the government to use the local MP, Stanley Oloiptip, to persuade his constituents to accede to the extension were fruitless:

In the meeting the Assistant Minister [Oloiptip] made it clear that the local people should not continue to resist government's plans to create the 200 square miles wildlife sanctuary in the Oltukai area. He informed them that whereas he had in the past sided with them, he had now decided that government plans must be implemented in the area, this including the setting aside the 200 square miles sanctuary and the establishment of group ranches. These schemes were to their advantage, he said. The few Masai present and who had known his stand in the matter until that day responded in different ways. Some were very angry because of his change of mind and were ready to accuse him of failing them. Others quickly sided with him immediately. The battle of words went on from 10.00 am to 7.00 pm with no break. The meeting was to continue the following day. . . . There will be another big public meeting on Saturday 14th in which all Masai in the area will be informed. The Hon Oloiptip was going to be in Oltukai area the whole of this week on a mini-campaign for an overwhelming support in the baraza of 14th march.³¹

Owing to government pressure on the Maasai and their leaders, the public meeting on 14 March 1970 agreed to set aside 100 square miles for the extension of the

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 5. Also see KNA/KW/23/156, Game: Annual Reports, 1968, p. 17.

³⁰ KNA/KW/13/21, Folio 10, Masai Amboseli Game Reserve, 14 October 1969, pp. 2, 3.

³¹ KNA/KW/13/21, Folio 34, D M Sindiyo (Game Warden, Headquarters) to Chief Game Warden, 22 March 1970. Also see folios 29 and 33 in the same file. Oloiptip was anti-wildlife conservation when he was in KADU. But as an assistant minister from 1969 there was no way he could oppose government policies without jeopardising his position.

game reserve.³² But the government was not satisfied with this offer because of the increasing popularity of Amboseli as a tourist resort and international pressure on the government to preserve it. Besides, studies had indicated that 200 square miles would be the absolute minimum size for an ecologically-viable Amboseli sanctuary.³³

After failing to obtain the cooperation of the Loitokitok Maasai, the government unilaterally declared the 200-square mile area a national reserve in mid-1970. Although the reserve was later reduced to 150 square miles through President Kenyatta's intervention, the decision angered the Maasai who began a systematic destruction of wild animals despite the intensification of anti-poaching measures.³⁴ The problem was compounded by the seasonal migration of the animals into the surrounding farmland as the reserve was not ecologically self-contained.³⁵ It thus became imperative for the government to look for ways of involving the Maasai in the area adjacent to the reserve in wildlife conservation. This entailed the development of a programme which not only involved sharing the benefits of the reserve with the neighbouring communities but also made these communities partners in the development of tourism by allowing them to set up campsites on their own land. This plan for Amboseli, which was completed in 1973, 'became the model for justifying a similar approach in other [game] reserves in Kenya and . . . negotiations with the World Bank grew into a comprehensive programme for wildlife and tourist development throughout Kenya'.³⁶ The new approach to wildlife conservation in Kenya resulted in Sessional Paper No.3 of 1975 and the 1976 Wildlife (Conservation and management) Act. The Act 'represented an approach to conservation that

³² KNA/KW/13/21, Folio 40, J K Mutinda (Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife), 4 April 1970.

³³ See David Western's research reports in KNA/KW/13/21 as well as his PhD thesis. By 1969 the 30-square mile tourist area had become too small for visitors. See Kajiado District Annual Report, 1969, p. 19.

³⁴ KNA/KW/13/21, Folio 54, J K Mutinda (Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife), 18 July 1970; KNA/KW/13/21, Folio 60, David Western, 'Amboseli - 150 Square Mile Boundaries', 9 September 1970.

³⁵ Western, 'Amboseli', pp. 12, 13; Western, 'Amboseli National Park', p. 304.

³⁶ Western, 'Amboseli', p. 13. Through the programme the Loitokitok Maasai received an annual compensation fee of \$30 000 for accommodating Amboseli's wildlife.

accepted wildlife management as a legitimate form of land use not only in parks and reserves but also in the dispersal areas around parks. It proposed that landowners supporting wildlife should receive sufficient remuneration to enable sustainable wildlife utilization, and it suggested ways of sharing economic benefits from wildlife.³⁷

The only game reserve which did not have many problems during the period under examination was Maasai Mara. After the management and related problems of the early 1960s, things seem to have changed for better during the late 1960s as the game warden, Simon ole Tipis, now in charge of both the reserve and the Keekorok Lodge, was said to undertake 'his duties in his usual thorough and efficient manner'.³⁸ Consequently 'a grand total of over Shs433 500 [£21 675] was received by the Narok County Council from the Keekorok [core] area alone, during 1967'.³⁹ Although this was much lower than what the OI Kejuado County Council earned from Amboseli during that year (£38 898), the government was happy with developments at Mara and continued to assist the Narok County Council in its endeavours to conserve wildlife. The international community was also happy with conservation at Mara and assisted in its development. In May 1967 the New York Zoological Society provided \$22 000 for the construction of a bridge across River Mara not only to facilitate tourism but also to help control poaching.⁴⁰ As a result of such support, revenue from the reserve had reached £64 000 by 1973.⁴¹

³⁷ Berger, *Wildlife Extension*, p. 11. Also see Western, 'Amboseli National Park', p. 306.

³⁸ KNA/KW/23/156, Game: Annual Reports, 1968, p. 16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ KNA/KW/1/23, President of the New York Zoological Society to N Ng'ang'a (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife), 24 May 1967.

⁴¹ KNA/KW/18/8, Simon N ole Tipis, 'Masai Mara Game Reserve: Annual Report for 1973', p. 9. Mara was the focus of government conservationist propaganda during this period. In September 1965 President Kenyatta personally opened the Keekorok Lodge and presented the £7000 government subsidy to the Narok County Council. At the same time he announced the suspension of government subsidies to Amboseli because of the failure of the OI Kejuado County Council to extend the game sanctuary. See various documents in KNA/KW/1/23.

The only problem affecting Maasai Mara in the late 1960s and early 1970s was poaching. In April 1966 the game warden reported increased poaching by game-meat dealers from Tanzania. These commercial poachers were well-armed and organised, and challenged conservation personnel whenever surprised. One 'gang of poachers, complete with tents, were captured in the Mara Triangle opposite Keekorok game sanctuary area'.⁴² This problem persisted into the early 1970s, for in 1973 it was recorded that poaching had 'increased tremendously throughout the district. The main target were elephants whose ivory [was] in great demand. Consequently many local people were induced to poach by the high prices for ivory'.⁴³ The buffer zone of the reserve also began to experience pressure because of the development of modern ranching in the late 1960s. This is one area where the new game policy of the late 1970s seems to have been received enthusiastically.⁴⁴

Partly because of the many problems county council game reserves were facing by the late 1960s, and partly because of the importance of wildlife conservation to the Kenyan economy, the government started contemplating the re-introduction of national reserves in 1966.⁴⁵ Initially intended for Amboseli, the national reserve concept entailed the transformation of land held in trust by county councils into game sanctuaries managed by the government on behalf of the communities it belonged to. The new policy as spelled out in 1975 indicated that the government would manage national reserves at cost on behalf of county councils.⁴⁶ This marked the end of county council-managed game reserves and the birth of national reserves which were like national parks in every respect except that the land and revenue

⁴² KNA/KW/1/23, E W Temple-Boreham (Senior Game Warden, Narok) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism), 28 April 1966.

⁴³ KNA/KW/18/8, Simon N ole Tipis, 'Masai Mara Game Reserve: Annual Report for 1973', p. 12.

⁴⁴ Following the introduction of 'community-based' wildlife conservation policies in the late 1970s many individual and group ranchers in both Narok and Kajiado districts enthusiastically embraced wildlife conservation and began to ranch both livestock and game. See the *Daily Nation* issues of 23 December 1999, 7 January, 13 January, and 8 March 2000.

⁴⁵ KNA/KW/13/28, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 'Outline of a Wildlife Utilization Programme for Kajiado District', pp. 2, 3.

⁴⁶ Kenya, *Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1975*, p. 12.

from national parks belonged to the central government, while that from national reserves was to go to the county councils after the government had recouped management and development costs.

National Reserves and National Parks

The 1965-75 period was characterised by the increased centralisation of conservation activities in the hands of state conservation authorities, particularly the KNPTs. Consequently most of the game sanctuaries established after 1966 were either national reserves or national parks. This depended on whether the land involved belonged to the state or was held in trust by a county council. In the case of state land, a national park was established, while in the case of trust land (former native reserves), a national reserve was proclaimed. In the case of Meru, Lambwe Valley, and Amboseli game reserves, the government negotiated a take-over of the land from the respective county councils and established national parks. There was also a proliferation of conservation areas during this period - possibly to cater for the growing tourist industry whose revenue to the country increased from £7.3 million in 1963 to £9.4 million in 1964 to £24.1 million in 1972.⁴⁷

Increased government control over game sanctuaries and their proliferation seem to have been sparked off by the Bertrand Report. In its proposals for the tourist industry, the report recommended the extension of national park status to game reserves - especially for Amboseli where urgent action was needed to stem competition between game and livestock over grazing and water. The report further emphasised the need to create more game sanctuaries to avoid overloading the existing ones.⁴⁸ These recommendations were embraced by the government, for the 1966-70 national development plan stated that '[t]he Government recognize[d] the need to re-examine the administrative machinery of the Game Reserves with a view to ensuring that development in those areas, including the provision of tourist

⁴⁷ The government's commitment to tourism is also indicated by the amount of money spent on promoting Kenya's tourism abroad. This increased from £70 000 per annum during the 1964-68 period to £320 000 per annum in the 1969-73 period. Ndege, 'Tourism in Kenya', p. 331.

⁴⁸ Republic of Kenya, *Development Plan, 1966 - 1970* (Nairobi, n.d), p. 10.

facilities and amenities and game management schemes, [were] matched with those in the national parks'.⁴⁹ By 1966 the government had abandoned the decentralisation policy of wildlife conservation pursued in the late colonial period in favour of centralisation.

The late 1960s were an important period for wildlife conservation in Kenya. The period not only witnessed the intensified 'Africanisation' of the conservation authorities but also the restructuring of the Game Department with a view to the further decentralisation of its administration. More important, there was the establishment of several national parks and national reserves. In 1968 alone four new national parks were established: Lake Nakuru National Park, Mount Elgon National Park, Marsabit National Park, and Ol Doinyo Sabuk National Park. National reserves were created around Mount Marsabit and on the Shimba Hills, while the Aberdare and Mount Kenya national parks were enlarged. Two marine national parks were gazetted in 1968, and plans to establish a sitatunga sanctuary at Saiwa Swamp were at an advanced stage by the end of the year.⁵⁰ Several other game sanctuaries were established in the early 1970s, while Amboseli became a national park in 1974.⁵¹

The proclamation of the Meru National Park in late 1966 was a boost to wildlife conservation in Kenya. This secured for posterity a game sanctuary with a variety of environments and wildlife. Apart from large numbers of the 'big five' and smaller species, the park was home to northern Kenya's peculiar species - the reticulated giraffe, Grevy's zebra, Kenya hartebeest, oryx beisa, and the blue-necked ostrich. In March 1966 the park acquired three pairs of white rhino from the Umfolozi Game

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Ndege, 'Tourism in Kenya', p. 331; KNA/BM/12/6, Central Division: Annual Report, 1967, p. 3; B M Wangi (Acting Game Warden, Kitale) to Divisional Game Warden (Central Division, Nyeri), 11 January 1969; P M Muange (Game Warden, Embu) to Divisional Game Warden (Central Division), 13 January 1969. The Saiwa Swamp National Park was gazetted in 1972.

⁵¹ Lindsay, 'Integrating Parks and Pastoralists', p. 156.

Reserve in Zululand for a re-introduction project.⁵² By the end of 1968 negotiations for the extension of the 340-square mile sanctuary were at an advanced stage. These proposed extensions included regaining the land the sanctuary had lost to Boran pastoralists soon after its inception.

The establishment of the 70-square mile Mount Elgon National Park in April 1968 was the realisation of a long-held ambition among conservationists. In 1946 the KNPTs, with the backing of the Endebess settlers, proposed the establishment of a park adjunct on the Kenyan section of the mountain. This was in recognition of the area's abundant wildlife. It not only had animal species like elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard, forest-hog, bush-buck, and colobus monkey, but also had 'some of the finest podo trees in Kenya'.⁵³ It contained, too, patches of cedar, olive, makau, and other indigenous trees typical of a mountain forest. The top of the mountain provided a view of both Kenya and Uganda which was indescribable and 'almost unrivalled in East Africa'.⁵⁴ But the colonial government was satisfied with the area's status as a forest and later nature reserve. However, increased tourism in the 1960s made the inclusion of Mount Elgon in an emerging western Kenya tourist circuit imperative.

In 1960 Lake Nakuru became the first bird sanctuary in Africa, and was declared a national park in 1967. The 22-square mile park covered the entire lake and its immediate environs. The shallow and alkaline water provided ideal conditions for the growth of algae which provided sustenance to millions of flamingo. Moreover, the lake had tilapia which supported cormorants, spoonbills, and pelicans. The lake shore vegetation of sedge, reeds, marsh, and wooded grassland, supported a variety of wild animals including black and white rhino. Some of the animals were translocated to the park during the 1960s and early 1970s when resettlement

⁵² KNA/KW/1/87, Director Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board (Pietermaritzburg, Natal) to Chief Game Warden (Nairobi), 18 December 1962. This particular breed of rhino is referred to as 'white' because of their wide (square) lips. ('White' is the Afrikaans term for 'wide'). The main differences between white and black rhino is that the former is larger and a grazer while the latter is smaller and a browser.

⁵³ KNA/KW/1/76, Cowie, 'Report on Proposed Park Adjunct on Mount Elgon', 11 September 1947.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

programmes in the former white highlands threatened the wildlife remaining in those areas.⁵⁵

Oi Doinyo Sabuk National Park was established on land donated to the KNPTs in memory of Lady Macmillan. The park constituted about 4000 acres of the 33 000-acre Muka Mukuu farm formerly owned by Sir Northrup Macmillan. Located some 10 miles southeast of Thika, the farm had been previously used for cattle ranching except for a small portion set aside for coffee and sisal production. The park covered the Kilimambogo Hill which was not only an important water catchment area but also a sanctuary for buffalo, rhino, reed-buck, giraffe, eland, water-buck, and colobus monkey. It formed an important recreational area for the local inhabitants as well as Thika and Nairobi residents and foreign visitors.⁵⁶

A clear indication of the government's commitment to wildlife conservation during this period was the attempt to extend existing national parks despite the high demand for land for human settlement. In 1968 the Aberdare National Park was extended by over 60 square miles, while '[t]hree extensions to the Mount Kenya National Park were also gazetted in June' that year. These extensions were easily achieved because they involved land already preserved as state forest. However, attempts to add 576 square miles of the Machakos portion of the Chyulu Hills to the Tsavo National Park led to a drawn-out struggle between the Akamba and the government. While the government wanted the land preserved for wildlife and as a water catchment area, the Machakos Akamba wanted it for settlement not only because of its high agricultural potential but also because of the shortage of agricultural land in their district. By 1966 there were 400 to 700 squatters on the hills.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Nyeki, *Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Kenya*, p. 78; Ojany and Ogendo, *Kenya*, p. 203; KNA/KW/23/156, J Barrah (Divisional Game Warden, Central Division) to Chief Game Warden, nd.

⁵⁶ KNA/KW/1/23, KNPs: Annual Report, 1966/67, p. 10; KNA/KW/1/23, P M Muange (Game Warden, Embu) to Divisional Game Warden (Central Division), 13 January 1969; Mbithi and Barnes, *The Spontaneous Settlement Problem in Kenya*, pp. 139, 140; Huxley and Curtis, *Pioneers' Scrapbook*, p. 39; Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, pp. 12, 58, 127.

⁵⁷ KNA/KW/23/156, D R P Zaphiro (Divisional Game Warden, Southern Division) to Chief Game Warden, nd; Capone, 'Wildlife, Man and Competition for Land in Kenya', pp. 83 - 91.

Initially the government was willing to negotiate the preservation of the Chyulu Hills as a wildlife sanctuary and water catchment area with the Machakos County Council and Kamba leaders. But by 1967 little had been achieved and the government seemed set to achieve its plans for the area through coercion. This led one Kamba MP to quip:

The use of this land has become highly political vis-a-vis game reserve [sic]. The people feel that our Government has come to regard the white tourists and wild animals far superior beings than the local people, by prohibiting the latter from earning their living from the soil they so hard fought for from the colonialists only to be enshrined for the exclusive use by the colonialists [sic]. . . . [W]hat does Ukambani gain from this pompous tourism?⁵⁸

Such outbursts did not stop the government from pursuing its plans for the Chyulu Hills. Under the influence of the director of the KNPs, Peris Olindo, the government resorted to the use of force to clear the hills of human settlement. One area where the paramilitary General Service Unit (GSU) frequently burned squatter settlements to force people to leave came to be known as 'Kenyatta area'. However, these arm-twisting methods did not deter the squatters who kept on returning to the hills after each eviction. By 1970 the government had enlisted the support of Kamba MPs into luring the squatters out of the Chyulu Hills:

In May [1970], the PC Eastern Province and PC Coast Province and all Kamba MPs met at Kambu Market. . . . At the meeting, it was resolved that the Chyulu Hill dwellers should come down and settle anywhere they pleased off the Mombasa main road but they should leave an unsettled zone of one mile from the Chyulu Hills.⁵⁹

This did little to ameliorate the squatting problem. Even after all the eastern part of the hills was proclaimed part of the Tsavo National Park in the early 1970s, the problem persisted.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ KNA/KW/1/22, Thomas N Malinda (MP, Makueni) to Minister for Economic Planning and Development, 18 May 1967. Also see other documents in the file.

⁵⁹ Mbithi and Barnes, *The Spontaneous Settlement Problem in Kenya*, p. 131. Prior to this meeting, Kamba politicians had been encouraging people to settle on the hills. See KNA/KW/23/156, T K Ngaamba (Game Warden, Kiboko) to Divisional Game Warden (Ngong), 9 January 1969.

⁶⁰ The Chyulu Hills squatter problem persists to this day. See *Daily Nation*, 5 January 2000.

By 1975 the main wildlife conservation areas of Kenya had been established. These varied in such aspects as ecology, size, species, and legal status. The ecology of these sanctuaries varied from marine to montane environment, while size varied from the 20 812-square kilometre Tsavo National Park to the 2-square kilometre Saiwa Swamp National Park. Most of the sanctuaries provided protection to a wide range of animal and bird life, while others, like the marine national parks and reserves, the Lake Nakuru bird sanctuary, and the Saiwa sitatunga park, were more specialised. All the sanctuaries were managed by the government, though local communities (through their county councils) had a stake in the national reserves and conservation areas.

Other Conservation Programmes

The controlled areas programme expanded and reached its zenith during the 1965-75 period. This was concomitant with a boom in the hunting industry. The number of foreign hunters increased from 307 in 1965 to 425 in 1966, while that of residents buying full game licences rose from 636 to 850. The total number of hunting licences increased from 1280 in 1967 to 2347 in 1974. This translated into increased revenue for both the government and county councils. Government revenue from hunting licences, permit fees, and the sale of trophies increased from £99 372 in 1965 to £127 385 in 1966, while controlled areas revenue to county councils rose from £22 022 in 1965 to £26 559 in 1966.⁶¹

Although the overall controlled areas revenue declined slightly in 1967 owing to the closure of some hunting blocks because of increased Shifta activities, unaffected areas continued to earn high income from the programme. This was particularly so for wildlife-rich districts such as Kajiado, Narok, Machakos, Samburu, and Kitui. The Ol Kejuado County Council, for instance, earned Shs2.5 million from controlled areas during the 1975-77 period. County councils used the revenue from controlled areas for compensating victims of game depredations and for development projects such

⁶¹ See Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1964 & 1965*, pp. 25, 29; KNA/KW/23/138, Kenya, *Game Department Annual Report, 1966*, pp. 1, 2; *Weekly Review*, 30 May 1977.

as cattle dips, water development, and the construction of schools and dispensaries.⁶² But by 1973 the hunting industry in Kenya was already in a crisis due to the depletion of game by licensed hunters and poachers - among other factors. The decline in wild animal populations drew in an international outcry which resulted in a ban on hunting in 1977.⁶³ This marked the end of the controlled areas programme.

Game cropping was widely practised during the period under review. Although the Galana Game Management Scheme was closed down in 1967 and the land leased out to private enterprise, game cropping expanded owing to the increasing privatisation of land in pastoral areas. An increase in ranches in the Maasai and Samburu districts, especially after the enactment of the 1968 Land (Group Representatives) Act, placed large quantities of the wild animals in the non-designated game areas of these districts on private land. This resulted in greater culling since it was government policy that landowners should benefit from the wildlife on their land. Besides, the 1968 land act was meant to promote commercial ranching in pastoral areas and therefore wild animals could not be allowed to increase to levels that could hinder agricultural development.⁶⁴

Individual ranchers in Narok and Kajiado districts, just like their white counterparts in Laikipia and elsewhere in the republic, were eager to exploit the wild animals on their land. Initially they were granted permission to crop ten per cent of any resident species in abundance each year. This mainly involved plains game and excluded

⁶² See KNA/KW/23/139, Game Department Annual Report, 1967, pp. 3, 15; Republic of Kenya, *Kajiado District Development Plan, 1979-83*, January 1980, p. 23.

⁶³ See *Weekly Review*, 30 May 1977, pp. 13 - 20: 'Kenya Acts to Conserve Wildlife, Bans all Hunting'.

⁶⁴ After independence, the privatisation of land initiated by the Swynnerton Plan (1954) was accelerated in many parts of the country. In pastoral areas, the elite acquired individual ranches averaging between 1500 and 5000 acres, while the rest of the land was divided into group ranches of between 25 000 and 100 000 acres. The group ranches were owned jointly by small groups of pastoralist families. See Ericksen, *et al*, 'Land Tenure and Wildlife Management', pp. 207, 208; K M Homewood and W A Rodgers, *Maasai Ecology: Pastoralist Development and Wildlife Conservation in Ngorongoro, Tanzania* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 206 - 208; KNA/KW/15/2, David W J Brown (Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife), 27 January 1967.

'royal' game like elephant, rhino, hippo, cheetah, lion, and leopard.⁶⁵ Zebra cropping was particularly popular because of the relatively high price of the hides.

Apart from the allocation of cropping quotas, the Game Department also controlled the programme through authorisation for the sale of skins/hides. Its personnel was involved in the killing of the targeted animals during the initial stages of the scheme. But ranchers were not happy with the department's bureaucratic tendencies and soon acquired their own firearms and game licences. In 1968 it was reported from Narok that four of the original ranchers (Rufus, Koriatta, Ntutu, and Nampaso) were in possession of guns and private land game licences and were permitted to shoot ten zebras each per month. This earned them 'considerable sums of money'.⁶⁶ A similar situation obtained in Kajiado District where the District Agricultural Committee recommended the issue of guns to ranchers in November 1966.⁶⁷

Besides carrying out their own game cropping, ranchers could also lease out hunting rights on their land. This was particularly suitable for group ranches. A survey carried out in the Nguruman area in May 1971 showed that group ranches there could 'earn royalties in the order of £6000 annually from game cropping by putting this out to contract'.⁶⁸ Group ranches could earn additional income by setting up lodges on their ranches to cater for licensed hunters and other tourists. However, the development of private land hunting was delayed by the Game Department which was reluctant to allow the practice. This reluctance earned the chief game warden a warning from the permanent secretary:

⁶⁵ KNA/BM/12/6, Central Division Annual Report, 1967, p. 6.

⁶⁶ KNA/KW/23/156, Evelyn Wood Temple-Boreham (Senior Game Warden, Narok District) to Divisional Game Warden (Southern Division), 14 January 1969.

⁶⁷ KNA/KW/15/2, J N Orumoi (Game Warden, Kajiado) to the Chief Game Warden, 28 November 1966. Also see a profile on the Late Chief Lerionka Ntutu, a renowned conservationist, in the *Daily Nation* of 8 March 2000. In November 1965 a zebra hide fetched Shs 150 in the local market. One Kajiado rancher who shot 125 zebra, 1 leopard, and 1 lion, earned a total of Shs 18 750 in a short span of time. See KNA/KW/15/2, M D Webley (for Acting Chief Game Warden) to Chief Game Warden, 15 November 1965.

⁶⁸ KNA/KW/13/21, 'Agenda for Third Meeting of the Interministerial Working Party on Land Adjudication in the Nguruman Escarpment and Construction of Mara-Magadi Road', 10 May 1971.

My ministry does not encourage the continuation of a hunting practice that denies the private landowners, irrespective of the location of their lands, the legal protection and benefits contained in Section 19 of the Wild Animals Protection Act. Under the law you have no choice but to consult with the private landowners. If this is not done, hunting licences issued for hunting on private land are in fact 'illegal'. Your officers should only issue licences for hunting in formerly Trust Land that has not been adjudicated.⁶⁹

Apart from the Game Department's paternalism, game cropping on private land (and elsewhere) was also hampered by lack of markets for products other than skins/hides. Despite research projects sponsored by organisations such as the FAO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Game Department's enthusiastic search for markets for wild animal meat, no profitable methods for disposing of meat products had been identified by 1975.⁷⁰ Consequently the cropping of animals with low-priced hides/skins, such as wildebeest, continued to be problematic.

Game ranching also continued to prosper during this period especially in Laikipia District. By 1967 the practice had become so widespread that some anti-game farmers were calling upon the government to state 'whether Laikipia [was to] be a purely ranching area or . . . it [was to] be considered an area also for tourist attraction'.⁷¹ The few anti-game elements among the Laikipia ranchers were not able to derail the development of game ranching because a majority of the ranchers supported it and a fairly successful cropping system was in place.⁷² One of the successful game ranches established during this period was the Mount Kenya Game

⁶⁹ KNA/KW/13/21, R Maina (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife) to Chief Game Warden, 6 January 1972. In late 1971 Maasai ranchers had protested against the Game Department's reluctance to share revenue collected through licensed hunting on their ranches as earlier promised. See KNA/KW/13/21, S J Meadows (Head of Range Management Division) to Chief Game Warden, 28 December 1971; KNA/KW/13/21, Ngungi Ng'ang'a (for Chief Game Warden) to Head of Range Management Division, 4 January 1972.

⁷⁰ See Thresher, 'Some Economic Problems of Wildlife Utilisation in Kajiado District'.

⁷¹ KNA/KW/15/2, J C Le Poer Trench (Executive Officer, Laikipia District Agricultural Committee) to Game Warden (Nanyuki), 26 July 1967. See other documents in the file.

⁷² KNA/KW/15/2, D J Brown (Chief Game Warden) responding to Freddie Seed's application to participate in game cropping in Laikipia, 9 June 1967.

Ranch near the Mount Kenya Safari Club. Successful game ranching was also practised by ranchers on the Athi-Kapiti plains.⁷³

Challenges to Wildlife Conservation, 1965 - 1975

The agrarian reforms of this period affected wildlife conservation in various ways. The increasing individualisation of land tenure led to an increase in both the legal and illegal exploitation of wildlife by landowners. This was particularly the case in pastoral areas where ranchers considered the wild animals on their land a source of easy wealth. In Kajiado District, ranchers were assisted by politicians to acquire firearms for culling the wildlife on their ranches.⁷⁴ Despite the Game Department's efforts to control game cropping by ranchers, the system was prone to abuse. In January 1966 the chief firearms licensing officer complained about Kajiado ranchers:

[T]hese local people are pouring in to demand increases of their annual allocations of rifle ammunition. Most of them used up a year's allocation in three months, and one here admitted that he is shooting zebra to make 'a lot of money' but also shoots edible game - probably for sale. . . . Some of these people are already in the 400 [bullets] per annum category, and as this is known to those who have less, some forceful methods are being used by the latter when they come in for an increase.⁷⁵

Malpractice in the game cropping system was well known to Game Department personnel but political pressure prevented the department from stamping it out. Moreover, it was the government's declared policy that wildlife conservation should not hinder agricultural development. This ambivalence in policy, coupled with pressure from ranchers who claimed that 'excess' wildlife hampered the development of their capitalised agriculture, led to increased legal and illegal cropping of wild

⁷³ See KNA/KW/1/23, W H Winter (Game Warden, Nanyuki) to Chief Game Warden, 6 January 1969.

⁷⁴ See KNA/KW/15/2, J N Orumoi (Game Warden, Kajiado) to the Chief Game Warden, 28 November 1966; KNA/KW/15/2, K A Smith (Divisional Game Warden, Ngong) to Chief Game Warden, 6 February 1967.

⁷⁵ KNA/KW/15/2, V H Smith (Chief Licensing Officer, Central Firearm Bureau) to Chief Game Warden, 16 January 1966.

animals.⁷⁶ By 1967 the number of animals cropped illegally in Kajiado District was ten times the legal quotas.⁷⁷ This destruction angered conservationists who wanted it stopped. But it was not until August 1973 that the chief game warden banned zebra cropping 'pending a detailed study and game count. This issue sparked off controversy among the farmers some of whom [were] anti-game'.⁷⁸

The expansion of ranching and other agricultural schemes into former game areas formed another challenge to wildlife conservation. By the late 1960s the Kitengela, West Chyulu, and Ngong conservation areas were threatened by encroachment by ranchers and other farmers. Nguruman, another potential wildlife conservation area on the border between Kajiado and Narok districts near the Tanzanian border was similarly affected. Efforts to preserve some of these areas solely for wildlife conservation proved futile, and multiple land use, with all its supposed attendant problems, was eventually approved for Kitengela and Nguruman. Land on the Ngong Hills was allocated for various uses, while Chyulu West continued to be predominantly a wildlife conservation area.⁷⁹

The main threat to wildlife conservation during this period appears to have been the expansion of arable agriculture in the former pastoral areas and in the former white highlands. In Kajiado District, the expansion of arable agriculture in Loitokitok and Ngong not only reduced the wildlife range but also led to stringent wild animal control measures. By 1974 between two-thirds and three-quarters of the Ngong Hills had been allocated to individuals as farming land.⁸⁰ Similar developments occurred in Narok District where wheat-growing schemes were progressively encroaching on the

⁷⁶ In May 1967 the Kenya National Farmers Union (KNFU) Beef Committee urged the government to limit the amount of game on farms where its presence hampered agricultural pursuits. Maasai ranchers also wanted wildebeest eliminated from their ranches because of the danger of malignant catarrh. By this time African ranchers had started intensive ranching backed by government loans.

⁷⁷ Republic of Kenya, *Kajiado District Annual Report, 1967* (Nairobi, 1968), p. 13.

⁷⁸ KNA/BM/12/6, Central Division Annual Report, 1973, 23 March 1973.

⁷⁹ See various documents in KNA/KW/23/154 and KNA/KW/23/156.

⁸⁰ Republic of Kenya, *Kajiado District Annual Report, 1974* (Nairobi, 1975), p. 10. See also Republic of Kenya, *Kajiado District Annual Report, 1970* (Nairobi, 1971), p. 43.

range by the late 1960s. The wheat schemes compounded the problem of wild animal control.⁸¹ Even the dry northern Kenya rangelands were not spared from agricultural development. In December 1968 the game warden for Isiolo commented:

There is a need to control wildcat cultivation schemes for obviously one cannot destroy game indiscriminately in the name of control work. Isiolo township area is a case in point. For the protection of some scrappily cultivated maize plots the public cries for the destruction of all trespassing game animals. Apart from any other aspect this is surely bad economics.⁸²

Similar problems existed in Samburu District where the game warden reported:

Considerable pressure from the Agricultural Department and also this experience of famine have contributed to make the Samburu shamba-hungry. There are large areas now cleared or cultivated in Losuk area, Suguta and Poro areas. These are good elephant places [*sic*] and I have no doubt we are going to be busy [protecting crops] about July or earlier than that.⁸³

The competing demands of wildlife conservation and agricultural development were also apparent in resettlement schemes in western Kenya and the Mount Kenya-Aberdare region. In Trans-Nzoia District, resettlement threatened the sitatunga in the Saiwa Swamp as well as wild animals in the Lewa Downs Farm at Soy. Rothschild's giraffe in the district were also threatened by resettlement.⁸⁴ On the fringes of the Aberdare and Mount Kenya forests, many animals were killed through control activities aimed at keeping wild animals from the newly settled areas. Both new and old farmers in these areas took the law into their own hands and tried 'to eliminate

⁸¹ See KNA/KW/23/156, Evelyn Wood Temple-Boreham (Senior Game Warden, Narok District) to Divisional Game Warden (Southern Division), 14 January 1969, pp. 10 - 12. Recently elephants were reportedly destroying wheat in Narok District. See *East African Standard*, 29 June 2000; *Daily Nation*, 21 March 2001.

⁸² KNA/KW/23/156, P D E McClinton (Game Warden) to Chief Game Warden, 31 December 1968.

⁸³ KNA/KW/1/24, Rodney T Elliott (Game Warden, Maralal) to Chief Game Warden, 22 February 1966. Also see KNA/KW/1/24, D W J Brown, 'Agricultural Development in Areas of Prime Importance to Tourism based on Game Viewing', 30 March 1965; KNA/KW/1/24, D W J Brown (Chief Game Warden) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism), 27 April 1966.

⁸⁴ See KNA/KW/23/156, B M Wangi (Acting Game Warden, Kitale) to Divisional Game Warden (Central Division, Nyeri), 11 January 1969; KNA/KW/13/16, A J Carn (Game Warden, Kitale) to Divisional Game Warden (Nyeri), 10 October 1966.

our wildlife by any means possible'.⁸⁵ However, construction of moats and other forms of barriers in areas such as Ndaragwa, Marmanent, Shamatta, and Deighton Downs in the late 1960s reduced the conflict between wildlife conservationism and agricultural development in these areas.⁸⁶

Up to around 1970, the Shifta movement posed a threat to Kenya's wildlife, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country. First, the Shifta themselves killed wild animals for food and trophies. Second, the security forces deployed in these areas to deal with the insurgency also engaged in illegal hunting. In January 1968 the game warden at Maralal reported:

Evidence of poaching by the General Service Unit [GSU] on Lorata plains was difficult to substantiate; although there were [*sic*] little doubt that it was going on. A further report of poaching by the GSU in the Serolovi area had yet to be verified. Whether the GSU or Shiftas poached animals to this extent, it remains an unsatisfactory state of affairs to the nation. The fact is that a national asset has been destroyed which is difficult to replace.⁸⁷

A year later it was reported from the same station that members of the Kenya Army had been involved in the illegal shooting of wild animals while on routine operations in Baragoi-Barsaloi and Lotukweny areas.⁸⁸ Third, the insecurity engendered by the insurrection created conditions conducive to poaching and illegal trafficking in animal trophies in the affected areas. Finally, the insurrection led to a proliferation of firearms which became the standard weapons for poachers in the 1970s. Barley

⁸⁵ KNA/KW/23/156, Morris A Andere (Game Warden, Thomson's Falls) to Divisional Game Warden (Central Division, Nyeri), 8 January 1969.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* Also see Woodley, 'Game Defence Barriers'.

⁸⁷ KNA/KW/23/156, J N Orumoi to Chief Game Warden, 13 January 1968. Destruction of wild animals by protagonists in recent conflicts in southern Africa are well documented. See Stephen Ellis, 'Of Elephants and Men: Politics and Nature Conservation in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 1 (1994), 53 - 69; Eddie Koch, "Nature has the Power to Heal Wounds": War, Peace & Changing Patterns of Conservation in Southern Africa', in David Simon (ed.), *South Africa in Southern Africa: Reconstructing the Region* (Oxford, 1998), 54 - 71.

⁸⁸ KNA/KW/23/156, J O Nairi (Acting Game Warden, Maralal) to Divisional Game Warden (Northern Division), 7 January 1969. It was also reported from Garissa District that security forces were not only killing wild animals for meat but were also 'involved in illegal traffic in trophies'. See D H McCabe (Game Warden, North Coast) to Divisional Game Warden (Mombasa), 10 January 1969, and also KNA/KW/23/156, P D E McClinton (Game Warden, Isiolo) to Chief Game Warden, 31 December 1968.

records that '[i]n the mid-1970s a new force of poachers came upon the scene in Tsavo: well-organised gangs of Somalis. These poachers [were] well armed, sometimes with automatic weapons, and supplied with vehicles to haul away the ivory'.⁸⁹

Kenya also experienced an unprecedented poaching problem during the period under review. A main cause of poaching during this period was increasing corruption within government. Owing to this corruption the total number of licences issued to hunters rose from 1569 in 1972 to 2347 in 1974, while the issue of the special 'chief game warden's permits' increased from 156 to 2407 over the same period. The targeted species were animals with highly valued trophies - such as bongo, leopard, rhino, lion, and elephant.⁹⁰ The corruption in the licensing system benefited not just rank-and-file members of the government but also senior government officers, as well as some members of the Kenyatta family. Kenyatta's fourth wife and a daughter were implicated in ivory deals.⁹¹

An increase in the price of trophies contributed to the escalation in poaching and illegal trafficking (Figures 3). The price of ivory rose from £10 per kilogram in the

⁸⁹ Barley, *Kenya*, p. 297. Although the government of Somalia stopped its material and moral support to the Shifita guerrillas in 1968, Shifita-related insecurity in Kenya persisted well into the 1980s. Also see Gallman, *I Dreamed of Africa*, pp. 297, 298; Thorton and Currey, *To Save an Elephant*, p. 81.

⁹⁰ *Weekly Review*, 30 May 1977, p.19

⁹¹ Gibson, *Politicians and Poachers*, p. 73. In 1974 the Kajiado DC reported that the worst poachers in the district were ex-game personnel. See Kenya, *Kajiado District Annual Report, 1974*, p. 10. Allegations of involvement by high-ranking government officials in corrupt trophy deals started in the late 1950s. See Holman, *The Elephant People*, pp. 118, 119, 123.

Figure 3

AFRICA'S WHITE GOLD



A JUBILANT POACHER celebrates his kill. Poaching is endemic in Kenya, with even government officials being involved.

Source: Bailey, Kenya, p. 296.

1960s to £42 a kilogram by 1975.⁹² The high prices of trophies combined with the effects of an economic downturn caused by such factors as the oil crisis of the early 1970s to fuel poaching in all wildlife areas of the country.⁹³ The problem was further compounded by the invasion of Kenya's wildlife areas by poachers from Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia, as well as the perpetual problem of inadequate personnel. In 1969 the Kitale game warden reported:

Bagishu poachers have always been a threat to Mount Elgon generally. They carry food to keep them going and are armed with spears and arrows but mainly spears. . . . Their poaching is based on commercial [needs] generally and according to information gathered they sell dried meat around Mbale at Shs4 per lb. Two elephants were found dead during the year at Mount Elgon and the cause of the deaths was wounds inflicted by spears.⁹⁴

Similarly organised groups of Tanzanians were reportedly operating in the Amboseli and Mara areas where they killed game for profit.⁹⁵

Another factor affecting wildlife conservation was drought. There were several droughts during the period; the severest being 'the killer drought' of 1973-74 which caused the death of thousands of domestic and wild animals including some 6000 elephants.⁹⁶ The drought also heightened land-use conflicts, thereby increasing the destruction of wild animals. In Kajiado District, 'a lot of game, especially buffalo and eland were shot on [animal] control [patrols] because of pressure from the public to save their crops and lives'.⁹⁷ However, the drought had the positive effect of making

⁹² Bailey, *Kenya*, p. 296.

⁹³ See KNA/KW/18/8, Simon N ole Tipis, 'Masai Mara Game Reserve: Annual Report for 1973', p. 12; KNA/KW/18/8, Game Warden Maralal, '1973 Annual Report, Northern Division'; KNA/KW/23/156, T K Ngaamba (Game Warden, Kiboko) to Divisional Game Warden(Ngong), 9 January 1969.

⁹⁴ KNA/KW/23/156, B M Wangi (Acting Game Warden, Kitale) to Divisional Game Warden (Central Division, Nyeri), 11 January 1969.

⁹⁵ KNA/KW/1/23, E W Temple-Boreham (Senior Game Warden, Narok) to Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism), 28 April 1966; Kenya, *Kajiado District Annual Report, 1967*, p. 13.

⁹⁶ Eriksen, *et al*, 'Land Tenure and Wildlife Management', p. 226 n. 34.

⁹⁷ Kenya, *Kajiado District Annual Report, 1974*, p. 10. Also see pp.1, 41.

the Kajiado Maasai more receptive to conservationism as it heightened their perception of tourism as an important complement to pastoralism.⁹⁸

The combined effects of drought, poaching, over-hunting, the Shifta insurgency, population pressure, and wild animal control on wildlife conservation in Kenya by the mid-1970s were drastic. Wild animal populations fell to an all-time low, causing intense local and international pressure on the government to stop the trend. Student demonstrations, agitation from institutions such as the East African Wildlife Society, UNEP and the World Bank forced the government to re-examine its wildlife policies. This culminated in a sessional paper on wildlife conservation policy in 1975 and the enactment of the 1976 Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act. This act not only facilitated the re-organisation of the conservation authorities but also led to the introduction of community-based wildlife conservation projects. These reforms were followed by bans on hunting and the trade in trophies in 1977 and 1978 respectively.⁹⁹

Political independence in Kenya did not result in major changes in conservation policy and practice despite earlier fears that an African government would not be committed to wildlife conservation. The pledge given to the international community in September 1963 by the first African-dominated government was faithfully kept by the independence government, especially from 1965 when political rivalry in the country diminished. The importance of tourism as one of the three chief foreign exchange earners for the country induced the government to intensify wildlife conservation since wild animals were the main tourist attraction in the country. This not only led to the proliferation of conservation areas but also engendered state

⁹⁸ David Western claims that the 1973-74 drought positively changed Maasai attitudes towards wild animals as more and more members of the community came to depend on tourism for a livelihood. They increasingly appreciated wild animals and regarded them as 'second cattle' as they had always done during environmental calamities when they resulted to hunting for survival. This became the basis for the community-based conservation projects of the subsequent period. See Western, 'Ecosystem Conservation and Rural Development', p. 34. Connections between drought and the development of community wildlife conservation programmes have also been identified elsewhere. See Margaret Jacobson, 'The Crucial Link: Conservation and Development', in Jacklyn Cock and Eddie Koch (eds), *Going Green: People, Politics and the Environment in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1991), p. 214.

⁹⁹ See *Weekly Review*, 23 August 1976, pp. 3 - 7; *Weekly Review*, 30 May 1977, pp. 13 - 20.

control over such areas. By 1975 communities in wildlife areas had less control over animal sanctuaries than they had on the eve of independence in 1963.

Crises in the neo-colonial state, coupled with poor weather during the 1965-75 decade, led to a drastic decrease in the country's wild animal population. This in turn intensified pressure on the government to preserve the country's national heritage. Thus in the late 1970s a series of measures aimed at reversing degradation in wildlife conservation were implemented. These included the banning of the lucrative hunting industry, re-organisation of the conservation authorities, and the intensification of community involvement in wildlife conservation. But this did not mean an end to problems related to wildlife conservation. Poaching and the inequitable sharing of the benefits of wildlife conservation between the state and the affected communities persisted in the post-1975 period.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Some studies on wildlife conservation in Africa, especially those devoid of a historical perspective, tend to perpetuate the myth of an immutable 'colonial' wildlife policy. In such studies, wildlife conservation in colonial and post-colonial Africa is perceived as the perpetuation of a 'western' or conventional conservation ethos. The studies also portray African communities as helpless victims of the supposedly changeless 'fences and fines' policy pursued first by colonial administrations and later by independent governments.¹ Consequently community-based wildlife conservation is portrayed as a novel idea which has no antecedents. Some studies also underrate the significance of socio-ecological processes in the evolution of wildlife conservation policy and practice. Wildlife conservation in Africa is thus viewed as the product of a monolithic western ideology. But as this study has demonstrated, the reality in Kenya during the 1895 - 1975 period was different.

While the influence of 'western' ideas on the development of wildlife conservation in Africa cannot be underestimated, there were other equally significant factors. In Kenya, the evolution of conservation policies during the period under examination was influenced by a multiplicity of factors - ranging from trends in international trade and politics to the situation of the African 'peasant'. Global events and processes (such as the two world wars, trade booms/depressions, and decolonisation) had important repercussions for Kenyan society. The world war intensified the legal and illegal exploitation of wildlife, while the international demand for wild animal trophies influenced the rate at which wild animals were hunted. Government policies on land use, the economy, and social change were important factors in the evolution of wildlife policies. The allocation of land for various uses early in the twentieth century was in itself important for the development of conservation, and so was the colonial government's initial policy of preventing Africans from exploiting wildlife resources.

¹ The 'fences and fines' policy denotes the national park ideal which advocates the non-exploitation of wildlife resources in any way other than for tourism. The wildlife areas are protected by fences and by punishments (such as fines) for infringement.

The two policies led to struggles between African communities and conservation authorities which bred the myth that Africans were anti-conservation. Ecological factors such as drought, floods, animal disease, tsetse fly infestation, and locust invasion also had important repercussions for wildlife conservation.² But as this study has shown, the various factors changed over time and their impact varied from place to place within the country.

Formal wildlife conservation in Kenya was introduced by the British in the late nineteenth century. Although the imperial government supported wildlife conservation throughout the colonial period, its policy was that conservation should not be at the expense of other activities, especially agriculture. This policy not only protected European enterprise but also African economies. This is manifest in the records of debates in the British parliament as well as other forums - like the royal commissions which examined land problems in East Africa. The Kenya Land Commission (1933/34), for instance, stated the following concerning the Southern Game Reserve:

It is evident that the presence of large herds of game diminishes the available pasture and might be prejudicial to the development of the Masai Reserve as an efficiently managed pastoral country, which we hope it will ultimately become. . . . If . . . the Masai in future show a disposition toward improved pastoral or agricultural methods, any obstacles which the existence of a Game Reserve presented should not be allowed to stand in the way of useful development and the Game Reserve should be limited or abolished as circumstances dictate.³

The imperial government's policy on wildlife conservation was generally adhered to by the colonial administration. However, the latter modified the policy to suit its need and the local situation. The colonial administration strictly controlled African hunting

² During severe droughts in Kenya the national park ideal was sometimes revoked to allow pastoralists to graze their animals in protected areas. Similarly, some subsistence hunting was allowed during severe food shortages. During the 1896 ecological calamities in Transvaal the government suspended game laws to allow destitute burghers to hunt for food. See Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p. 18.

³ HMSO, *Report of the Kenya Land Commission*, p. 203. Also see KNA/KW/27/1, 'Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, Thursday, 21st November 1929, vol. 75, No. 21'; HMSO, *East Africa Royal Commission (1953 - 1955) Report*, pp. 298 - 300.

(despite the imperial government's liberal stance on the issue) because of the significance of wild animals to the territory's economy. The colonial government also favoured the preservationist ideal intrinsic to the concept of a national park as opposed to the controlled exploitation supported by the imperial government. This led to the removal of human populations in parts of what became Nairobi and Tsavo national parks. However, both the imperial government and the colonial administration subordinated wildlife conservation to agricultural development. This led to the creation of national reserves in areas where community interests prevented the establishment of national parks.

In Kenya the liberal approach to wildlife conservation was best exhibited by the provincial administration. While provincial administrators generally supported wildlife conservation, they were often opposed to projects that interfered with the well-being of their charges. Provincial administrators, especially in Kajiado and Samburu districts, became outspoken about the land rights of their charges from the late 1930s partly due to the growing pressure on land. But where local conditions favoured wildlife conservation (as in the Mara Triangle and Mount Marsabit) provincial administrators helped establish game sanctuaries. Who then perpetuated the 'colonial' (preservationist) view of wildlife conservation in Kenya during the period under review?

In the initial stages, the 'western' concept of wildlife conservation in Kenya was promoted by the SPFE, mainly through its influence on the British government and its followers in the colonial state's conservation authorities. Purporting to speak for the British people, the SPFE used its favoured position in Britain and in the colonies to push for the establishment of national parks.⁴ To the SPFE fraternity, wildlife conservation entailed the preservation of 'pristine Africa' rather than multiple land use. But some of Kenya's best wildlife areas like Amboseli and Mara were also the

⁴ The SPFE enjoyed royal patronage and had close ties with the British government in general. Most of the senior game officers in the colonies were also members of the society. See chapter 4 above.

foci of pastoralist interests and therefore could not be declared national parks. This frustrated preservationists like Cowie, the long-serving director of the KNPs.⁵

By the late 1950s conservationists in Kenya had generally abandoned the preservationist ideal in areas outside the national parks and were seeking ways of sharing the benefits of wildlife conservation with affected groups. This change of strategy was forced on the authorities by communities which had all along complained about the negative impact of skewed conservation policies on their production systems. One programme involving local communities in wildlife conservation was the Galana River Game Management Scheme, which allowed Liangulu hunter-gatherers to engage in legally-sanctioned hunting. This was the culmination of a struggle over wild animals between the Liangulu and conservation authorities and was an admission on the latter's part that conventional conservation policies could not succeed in every situation. Elsewhere, struggles over wildlife led to the birth of ADC-controlled game reserves, controlled (hunting) areas, and even private game ranches. The idea 'that the ownership of the indigenous fauna [in all British territories] [was] vested in the Crown' had been greatly eroded in Kenya by 1960.⁶

The struggles that characterised wildlife conservation during the colonial period persisted into the early independence era. The post-independence government largely perpetuated earlier ambivalent colonial policies as it endeavoured to subordinate wildlife conservation to agricultural development. Large quantities of wild animals were decimated to create room for agricultural development and easy wealth

⁵ In August 1955 Cowie said the following about the Marsabit National Reserve, an area of intense land-use conflict: 'I find it difficult to concede that there can be many places in Africa which hold such interest as the Marsabit National Reserve. If one enjoys the thrills of Darkest Africa, here is a place one finds conditions as they used to be long before even the Arab traders changed the tone and character of the country. Its vast mountain ranges of the Matthews and the Ndotos, the interesting feature of Marsabit Mountain with its volcanoes, forests and crater lakes, and a great variety of big game, all form a remnant of unspoilt Africa. I . . . retain the hope that it may always be a wild place.' KNA/KW/1/80, RNPK, Part II: Report by the Director, August 1955, p. 44.

⁶ KNA/KW/27/1, Folio 46, 'A Memorandum Submitted to the [Kenya] Land Commission, by Capt A T A Ritchie, the Game Warden', 18 March 1933, p. 2.

for the African elite. To the credit of the new government, the number of national parks and other conservation areas increased significantly during the early independence period. But the overall wild animal population was declining fast, leading to conservationist pressure on the government to address the issue. This in turn led to a more elaborate community-based conservation programme from the late 1970s. But this did not mean the end of conservation-related problems. Local as well as cross-border poaching continued, owing to the high price of trophies and regional conflicts.⁷ Like the colonial government, the independent government's commitment to sharing the benefits of wildlife conservation with local communities remained lukewarm.⁸

The main argument of this study has been that wildlife conservation is a complex activity which is influenced by social, political, economic, and ecological developments. Conservationism is therefore best understood in its historical and geographical context. In the Kenyan context, the factors influencing wildlife conservation during the 1895 - 1975 period were diverse and varied over time and space. Some factors were localised, while others fell into a wider context. The situation has not changed much. In a recent analysis, an observer stated that '[t]he single most important threat to Kenya's tourism sector . . . [was] degradation of wildlife habitat, rotten infrastructure, cut-throat competition from other countries, poor government policy on land use, and poaching'. The analyst quoted a resource management specialist claiming that the '[l]ack of appropriate land-use policies, changes in land-use patterns, mismanagement and corruption, coupled with lack of

⁷ See Griffiths, *The Atlas of African Affairs*, pp. 152 - 157. Cross-border poaching has a long history in Africa. In the 1920s Mozambican and Swazi poachers used to invade protected areas in Transvaal. Carruthers, 'Game Protection in the Transvaal', pp. 159, 164.

⁸ See Carol A Drijver, 'People's Participation in Environmental projects', in Elisabeth Croll and David Parkin (eds), *Bush Base: Forest Farm: Culture, Environment and Development* (London, 1992), pp. 137 - 139; Western, 'Amboseli National Park', *passim*. Anti-conservation feelings have increased in Kenya in the recent past. Calls for the allocation of wildlife areas to farmers and threats to decimate offensive wild animals by farming communities are common in the press. See appendices 1 - 10. A cabinet minister from Maasailand was recently reported as saying that it was time his community mapped out its future because the government had done little to develop the areas inhabited by the community despite the large revenue the government collected from wildlife areas in Maasailand. *East African Standard*, 14 August 2000. Also see *East African Standard*, 29 June 2000.

clear policies on wildlife conservation, [were] threatening the ecosystem [of the Maasai Mara National Reserve].⁹

Although reforms such as the establishment of community conservation programmes in parts of the country in the late 1970s, the creation of the paramilitary Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) in 1979, and the international ban on ivory trade in 1989 reduced the problem of poaching, most of the problems associated with wildlife conservation have persisted in one form or another.¹⁰ Land-use conflicts in particular have intensified with time partly as a result of population pressure. The Kenyan state has also been reluctant to embrace community participation in conservation programmes fully by promoting equitable distribution of the benefits of conservation. As appendices 1 - 9 show, amicable solutions to the problems associated with conservation in Kenya are yet to be found. But as appendix 10 shows, conservation is a political issue whose dimensions extend beyond the nation-state.

⁹ Wandera Ojanji, 'New Threat to Kenya Tourism', *Daily Nation*, 21 March 2001. Also see David Western's articles on drought and the crisis confronting pastoralists and wildlife in Kenya in the *Daily Nation* issues of 1 July and 16 August 2000.

¹⁰ See appendices 1 - 10.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Ranchers want more control of 'private' wildlife resources

By MICHAEL NJUGUNA

Private ranchers want more control of their charge before they are pushed out of business by hostile wildlife policies.

Because of these policies, ranchers claim, the population of herbivores has grown to unmanageable high levels while the rates of cropping remain uneconomically low.

Recently a *Horizon* team visited one of the most respected ranchers in the country Lord Hugh Delamere at his 50,000-acre Soysambu ranch in Elmentaita.

The conservationists are fearful that the increasing numbers of herbivores at the park was likely to lead to serious overgrazing in the near future since no culling is carried out. Any killing of wildlife can only be done with the express permission by the Kenya Wildlife Service.

According to the Soysambu ranch ecologist, Mr Ian Marshall the species of wild plants were now replacing vast tracts of grassland within the park, a manifestation of overgrazing.

According to a Laikipia Wildlife economic study, wildlife in private ranches will in future possibly only exist where tourism is viable or landowners have non-economic reasons for conserving wildlife.

About 80 per cent of the country's wildlife live outside the gazetted national parks. Ranchers who have wildlife on their farms cite heavy spending as the major disincentive for carrying on. Such costs include control of diseases such as East Coast Fever and other tick borne diseases.

Even where cropping is done, says the report, landowners have no reliable markets for wildlife products with over 50 per cent wastage in zebra skins in some areas.

"Quotas are not currently tradable and many landowners choose not to harvest despite having quotas," the report further said.

A former Kenya Wildlife Service director, Dr David Western shared this view when he said, "It stands to reason that the size and viability of the current, let alone the future of the wildlife industry rests on extending the benefits of tourism to landowners."

The Soysambu ranch consists of a tourist camp where shooting of animals is not allowed while the rest is range land holding

9,000 Boran - Holstein cross-breeds and 10,492 wild animals.

Out of the 10,492 wild animals, more than 6,000 are herbivores which include 3,247 Thomson's gazelles, 1,221 impala, 703 zebra, 273 buffalo, 154 eland, 269 warthogs, 174 water-bucks, 319 Grant's gazelles and others which compete for pasture with 9,000 beef animals.

Like most other ranches, the Soysambu ranch depends on borehole water to sustain the large number of wild and domestic animals. According to Lord Delamere, an animal such as a zebra requires about 10 litres of water daily.

The wild animals also share the salt licks and other commercial mineral supplements with the domestic animals - at a high cost to the ranch.

Lord Delamere said that the cost of repairing fences which are damaged by wild animals at night is enormous. Hyenas and other carnivores also attack livestock, particularly the calves during the night.

But despite the large number of wild animals, Lord Delamere has over the years been introducing new species such as the Rothschild giraffes whose number has now risen to 14 from the initial three.

One of the recent arrivals at the ranch are some colobus monkeys which were translocated from Miharati area in Nyandarua district.

The sanctuary section had more than 406 bird species including a breeding pelican colony. There are more than 200,000 flamingoes at the shallow saline lake currently and small numbers of fish, egrets, spoon bills, Egyptian geese, and the Cape Widgeon.

A report compiled three years ago by a former Wildlife Manager at Marula Estate Mr Angus Douglas-Hamilton said that the high density of wildlife and cattle at the estate could result in over-grazing.

He said that the farm had 18,380 grazing animals which meant that each animal occupied 1.6 acres of land.

Mr Angus said that Hell's Gate National Park in comparison supports 1,459 animals on 16,000 acres which amounts to 11 acres per animal. At Marula, the wildlife alone occupies 2.3 acres per animal.



The population of herbivores at the ranches is reaching alarming rates. Already the species of wild plants is replacing grass, a sign of overgrazing.

The 1997 game count indicates that Marula had 3,513 Thomson's gazelles, 1,951 impalas, 1,915 zebras, 784 buffaloes, more than 2,000 hares, 361 water-bucks, 479 elands and 209 warthogs, among other herbivores.

Mr Angus argued that the 1997 culling quota of 10 per cent was negligible to the overall wildlife population at the ranch. "We need a temporary relief and solution before the land is totally degraded by overgrazing and we suggest taking 20 percent off each quota species except for warthogs, eland and waterbuck for the desired effect," Mr Angus said.

Marula and Soysambu ranches are members of the Nakuru

Wildlife Forum (NWF) which comprise ranches which have large numbers of wildlife.

The wildlife corridor which

THE ENVIRONMENT

extends from the shores of Lake Nakuru to Suswa south of Naivasha has 13 per cent of Kenya's wildlife.

The report says that by June 1997, the 363,790 acres under the NWF had 40,370 wild animals.

The 188 square kilometre Lake Nakuru National Park which is ringed by a solar powered electric fence has a big population of herbivores which include about 2,000 buffaloes.

Appendix 2

<http://www.eastandard.net/thursday/eahome/story296009.f>

EAST AFRICAN
Standard
ONLINE EDITION

Thursday, June 29, 2000

The Financial
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Call to split Tsavo Park

By Jimmy Mwandighi

Leaders in Taita Taveta district have appealed to the Government to consider converting half of the giant Tsavo National Park into a game reserve of which the proceeds from tourism could benefit the locals.

The leaders said such a programme would assist the local authorities in generating more revenue to benefit the locals.

They were making their submissions before the Charles Mugane Njonjo-led Commission of Inquiry into the Land Law System in Kenya at the Taita Taveta County Council social hall yesterday.

The leaders included Voi MP, Mr Basil Mwakiringo and the former Wundanyi MP, Mr Mashengu wa Mwachofi.

They said since two-thirds of the district was a national park, the Government should devise a way of ensuring that the locals benefited from the money generated by the park.

The leaders further proposed that a truth and reconciliation commission on land issues be formed where all land grabbers will be asked to come to confess and be forgiven after forfeiting the land.

They blamed the Government for all land problems in Coast Province by failing to provide title deeds to the local communities, making it easy for powerful grabbers from outside the region to acquire the land.

Said Mwachofi: "I am lost for words as to why indigenous residents from the district have found it extremely difficult to acquire title deeds, yet grabbers from outside who deprive the locals of their land get these documents so easily."

He asked the commission to ensure that all land acquired through dubious means by private developers in the district is repossessed and their title deeds revoked.

The leaders noted with concern that while 62 per cent of land in the district was national park, farms such as sisal estates had also eaten half of the remaining 38 per cent, leaving the local communities as squatters on their own ancestral land.

Speaking after receiving submissions from a cross-section of leaders and wananchi, Njonjo said all proposals and recommendations raised would be studied carefully and those found relevant would be implemented.

Only Voi MP Mwakiringo was present out of the four local MPs. Local DC Calistus Akelo welcomed Njonjo and his team.

Appendix 3

<http://www.eastandard.net/thursday/cahome/story296004.1>

**EAST AFRICAN
Standard**
ONLINE EDITION
Thursday, June 29, 2000

The Financial
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Mbela to petition KWS

By Christopher Mnene

Former Cabinet Minister Darius Mbela has vowed to have the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Act amended so that people living near national parks can benefit from them.

Mbela said 62 per cent of Taita Taveta District is occupied by a national park, but that revenue from the park does not benefit the local residents who bear the brunt of wildlife menace.

He said residents of the district have suffered untold damage from wildlife and have even been killed, only to be paid meagre amounts of money in compensation.

He was speaking at the Anglican Church of Kenya Ngarighashi Church in Taveta sub-district where over the weekend he helped raise Sh340,000. Mbela, who is also the Taita Taveta Kanu branch chairman, said for the last three months, local residents have had their crops in farms destroyed by jumbos, exposing them to famine.

He added that some farms were wiped out while some farmers were forced to harvest farm produce like onions and maize before they had matured. The most affected areas include Mwakitau and Taveta, especially Kishushe.

Mbela said it is high time the Constitution was changed to give communities living near parks and their respective local authorities a bigger say as far as the parks are concerned.

He called for the compensation for crops destroyed by wildlife and urged that compensation for people killed or injured be raised.

Mbela said Parliament's Departmental Committee on Communication, Energy and Public Works will make a follow-up on the whereabouts of Sh20 million and Sh50 million earmarked for repair of Mwatate-Taveta road.

He said the road has been neglected for long, adversely affecting business and farming activities, the lifeline of the local residents.

Mbela, who is the committee chairman, said early this year, the Government earmarked Sh20 million for the repair of the road and another Sh50 million was allocated later.

He said the Government should urgently repair the road, especially during this famine period to help starving Kenyans get food from the Taveta border market.

Appendix 4

<http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/Today/News/News19.html>

News

Wednesday, July 5, 2000

Allocate park land, urges MP

By MIKE MSAFARI

The government has been urged to allocate part of the giant Tsavo National Park to the landless in Taita Taveta.

Voi MP Basil Mwakiringo said although 62 per cent of land in the district was reserved for wildlife, the residents have not benefited.

Mr Mwakiringo added that the local councils do not receive 25 per cent of the gate collections.

He was speaking during the Njonjo Land Commission of Inquiry meeting where he said majority of residents were landless.

He said that wildlife from the park destroyed crops and no compensation was paid out.

The Democratic Party MP said land distribution in the district was a major problem, explaining that this was the cause of poverty in the region.

Mr Mwakiringo called on the government to overhaul the current mining and prospecting rights so that local residents could benefit from the mines in the district.

He said 70 per cent of mining activities in Kenya are carried out in the district, but added that residents had not benefited.

Mr Mwakiringo said there is need for the residents to be given a chance to exploit the minerals.

The MP called for the abolition of advertisement of land issues in the *Kenya Gazette*, explaining that it was not available to the common mwananchi.

He urged the government to advertise the plots in the daily newspapers which, he said, are available.

[Front Page](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Comment](#) | [Letters](#) | [Features](#) | [Sports](#) | [Cutting Edge](#) | [Feedback](#)

Appendix 5

<http://www.eastandard.net/eahome/story1212007.htm>

EAST AFRICAN
Standard
ONLINE EDITION
Tuesday, December 12, 2000

[News](#) | [The Social Scene](#) | [Horoscopes](#) | [The Financial Standard](#) | [Life magazine](#) | [Profile Magazine](#)

KWS wardens-turned poachers sacked

By Solomon Laboso

SIX Kenya Wildlife Service wardens who turned poachers and killed four elephants have been sacked.

The Samburu District-based wardens were found in possession of 16 ivory tusks at Angata Nanyuki location in Kiricha division.

They had been assigned the task of driving away the elephants from human settlements, but instead shot four of the jumbos, removed their tusks and hid them.

The area KWS boss, Mr John Wanguku, said yesterday that he arrested the six wardens and recovered the tusks. He said KWS is still investigating the killing of wild animals in the district.

Wanguku confirmed that two senior KWS officers had also been interdicted and arrested for being involved in poaching. He said they will soon appear in court.

He told his officers who indulge in poaching that they will not be spared since it is against their professional ethics.

Wanguku said it is in bad taste for KWS officers to abuse the responsibility entrusted to them by the Service to take care of wild animals.

See [Editorial](#)

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The Financial Standard

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Appendix 6

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News

Tuesday, February 13, 2001

Farmers to tackle wildlife menace

By GAKUO MATHENGE

and MUCHEMI WACHIRA

A fund has been set up to finance farmers' court cases for damage caused by stray wildlife from private ranches in Laikipia District.

Speaking during the first meeting to raise money for the fund on Saturday, Laikipia East Member of Parliament Mwangi Kiunjuri said the argument that all wildlife belongs to the Government and not the ranchers on whose land it lives has been used to deny villagers justice when they are attacked, killed and their crops destroyed.

The meeting, at Tigithi, was the seventh organised by the MP in the past month. Mr Kiunjuri has been meeting the people to map out strategies to set up the fund and raise money for legal suits over the perennial wildlife menace in the area. Other meetings have been held in Lamuria, Ngohit, Sirima, Sweet Waters, Marura, and Charua.

At least 10,000 signatures will be collected to support the programme. Village committees have been asked to collect five shillings from each villager for the fund.

Some 13 people have been killed by wildlife in Laikipia since 1996, but no compensation has been paid. Scores of others have been injured and crops destroyed.

Recently, Mr Kiunjuri successfully tabled a motion in Parliament which raised the minimum compensation for people killed by wildlife from Sh30,000 to Sh1 million.

Presently, all powers and controls over wildlife are vested in the Government through the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Meanwhile, farmers in Kieni West, Nyeri District, have complained that monkeys and other wildlife straying from a game lodge are destroying their crops.

The farmers, who claimed that they had lost their harvest for years to destruction by elephants and buffaloes, said the monkeys, warthogs and wild pigs wandering from the neighbouring Aberdare Country Club's game lodge had set on their crops.

They said fields of green maize, potatoes, cabbages and tomatoes had been destroyed and that many farmers have to keep a 24-hour watch to try to ward off the animals.

Appendix 7

<http://www.eastandard.net/saturday/eahome/story140420010012.htm>

EAST AFRICAN
Standard
ONLINE EDITION
Saturday, April 14, 2001

[News](#) | [Social Scene](#) | [Financial Standard](#) | [Life magazine](#) | [Profile Magazine](#)

Tension as farmers told to give way to monkeys

Tana River Reserve, Friday

The future looks bright for the endangered red monkeys in the Tana River Primate Reserve.

Prospects are less rosy, however, for their neighbours in the age-old conflict between animals and humans that festers along the banks of Kenya's longest river.

More than 330 families are dependent on land inside the reserve, and many more live on its fringes. To ensure the survival of the 2,400 rare Red Colobus and Crested Mangabey monkeys in the reserve, the humans are being asked to pack their meagre belongings and leave their ancestral land.

The Kenya Wildlife Service which is implementing a US\$6.2 million World Bank-funded project to protect the primate reserve, says men and monkeys can no longer coexist. And so, a once-peaceful farming community whose members eke out a living growing bananas and corn on tiny plots of land, is now divided.

While 247 families have agreed to move in return for new houses and land, others are incensed and claim the KWS and the bank care more about monkeys than they do about humans. A third group of farmers finally decided they would like to move, but the project has no more money to finance them.

"We are against everything that has happened. We will never leave," said an angry Seth Ablo, a 76-year-old who has farmed on the fertile land all his life.

Controversy has surrounded the 166-square-kilometres reserve since it was established in 1976. With the arrival of the KWS a decade ago, poaching has decreased, but Ablo and his friends resent the restrictions.

In February, several dozen chanting women angrily charged at scientists working on the edge of the reserve, raising their skirts at them in a traditional gesture intended as a curse. -AP

Appendix 8

<http://www.eastandard.net/eahome/story160420019010.htm>

**EAST AFRICAN
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ONLINE EDITION
Monday, April 16, 2001

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KWS entices locals from Tana reserve

By Kurgat Marindany

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) yesterday announced ambitious resettlement packages to peasants who have agreed to surrender ancestral land and farms to monkeys in Tana River District.

KWS wants the 166-square kilometre Tana River Primate National Reserve (TRPNR) to be vacated by humans and left exclusively for the treasured and rare Red Colobus and Crested Mangabey monkeys.

In the KWS resettlement package for each of the 247 out of the 330 families that have voluntarily agreed to relocate from TRPNR to Witu II Settlement Scheme is a residential house worth Sh500,000.

News about the package, comes barely a day after we exclusively published a story last Saturday about the growing tension in the expansive TRPNR. It follows a KWS order to residents that they must vacate it to give room to monkeys.

KWS Corporate Communications Manager, Ms Connie Nkatha-Maina, in a statement, said each family will get 15 acres of farmland with a title deed; a quarter acre land of a housing plot with a title; a Sh500,000-fully constructed house with a latrine, clean water supplies and access road.

The resettlement package will also include compensation for perennial crops foregone in the reserve, transport from TRPNR to Witu and training of the affected people in various aspects of rural development.

Nkatha-Maina said infrastructure that will accompany the resettlement package at Witu II is an equipped primary school, police post, a dispensary and rehabilitation of the nearby Kipini Health Centre.

Before KWS made the announcement, prospects were less rosy for the villagers in the age-old conflict between animals and humans living along the Tana River.

In February, several dozen chanting women angrily charged at scientists working on the edge of the reserve, raising their skirts at them in a traditional gesture intended as a curse. (It takes a great amount of courage and a painful decision for a woman among the Mijikenda people of Coast Province to expose nudity in public).

There are more than 330 families dependent on land inside the reserve, and many more live on the fringes.

To ensure survival of the 2,400 rare Red Colobus and Crested Mangabey monkeys in the reserve KWS, which is implementing a US\$6.2 million World Bank-funded project to protect the primate reserve, said men and monkeys can no longer coexist.

TRPNR is said to be the last vestige of riverine forest system found nowhere else in Kenya and contains plant and animals species that are unique in the world.

Controversy has surrounded the 166-square-kilometre reserve since it was established in 1976. With the arrival of the KWS a decade ago, it is claimed poaching has decreased tremendously, but that the local people resent the restrictions.

Appendix 9

Back Forward Reload Home Search Netscape Print Security Shop Stop

Bookmarks Location: <http://www.eastandard.net/monday/provincial/central.htm>

Instant Message WebMail Radio People Yellow Pages Download Calendar Channels



**EAST AFRICAN
Standard**
 ONLINE EDITION
 Tuesday, April 17, 2001

Provincial News

[Buy Issue](#) | [Face The Facts](#) | [Africa News](#) | [Social Scene](#) | [Horoscopes](#) | [Financial Standard](#) | [Life magazine](#) | [Profile Magazine](#)

Home

National News

Provincial News

Editorial

Obituaries

Letters

Business

Sports News

CENTRAL PROVINCE

Elephants wreak havoc

By Standard Correspondent

Food crops worth millions of shillings have been destroyed by marauding wild animals in Kieni division, Nyeri District.

The destruction has left hundreds of residents on the verge of starvation. Local MP, Dr Chris Murungaru, said yesterday a herd of over 200 elephants have invaded all farms at Thigu, Mwiyo and Kamatongu locations in Kieni.

The animals have destroyed food crops and livestock worth millions of shillings.

[Provincial News](#) | [Home](#)

Document: Done

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Appendix 10

<http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/Today/News/News44.html>

News

Thursday, April 19, 2001

Yesterday in Parliament

State challenged on conservation

BY NJERI RUGENE

MPs demanded greater responsibility from the Government in conserving the environment, particularly forests.

It was accused of irresponsibility and a don't-care attitude to forests, exposing the nation to desertification.

They were contributing to a Motion urging the Government to prepare, within six months, a master plan on forest rehabilitation, protection of rivers and vegetation, supervised by the National Environment Management and Co-ordination Act.

The Motion, brought by Mr Mwangi Kiunjuri (Laikipia East, DP), attracted much interest from members.

Mr Kiunjuri's original Motion called for a five-year plan, but Assistant Minister Stephen ole Ntutu amended it, leaving out the time-frame.

Ms Martha Karua (Gichugu, DP) also proposed an amendment, urging that the plan be finalised within six months. The Government side did not oppose the amendment.

Mr Kiunjuri had said the plan was necessary, given "the alarming rate" of natural resource destruction.

The Mt Kenya Forest, Mr Kiunjuri said, was near extinction because trees were not being replanted even as harvesting continued unabated.

He challenged MPs to organise an Environment Day in their constituencies and dedicate it to planting trees.

The MP lamented that seven rivers in Laikipia District had dried up due to forest destruction and the region was now characterised by hostility among the local communities over water for their animals.

Mr Kiunjuri said there was a serious human-wildlife conflict in three locations in his constituency and that residents were starving because elephants had destroyed their crops.

He said it was shameful for the Kenya Wildlife Service security personnel to harass residents for killing a zebra.

Seconding the amendment, **Dr Mukhisa Kituyi** (Kimilili, Ford-K) said it was ironical that, while the country is hosting the United Nations Environment Programme, the Government was the greatest culprit in abusing the environment.

"The world is outraged about how scientific information is kept out of the country's environmental policies," he said.

He described the recent notice on excision of forests by the Environment Minister as "criminal, an indication that there is a governance crisis".

Dr Kituyi cautioned against forest destruction between Nakuru town and the Menengai Crater, saying the area had a delicate ecological system.

This, the MP said, was the cause of silting and flooding on Nakuru roads.

Moving the amendment, Ms Karua said Parliament was giving the Government time to implement the environmental master plan because, lately, the authorities had become reactive instead of proactive and was "busy causing desertification".

She accused the Government of abdicating its role in forest conservation to the Green Belt Movement and other organisations.

Ms Karua urged Parliament to take the lead in sustainable development. "By passing this Motion and giving the Government a timeframe, Parliament is reclaiming its position of leadership in forest conservation."

She complained that the Government continued to demarcate Hombé Forest, Nyeri, despite a court order barring it from doing so.

Assistant Minister **Kiptum Choge** lamented that the country was "fast becoming a desert".

Mr Choge, who is also the Aldai MP, accused forest officers of colluding with unscrupulous people to harvest trees.

He cautioned that such officers were tainting the Government's image and making it unpopular.

The minister complained of massive destruction of the River Nzoia forest, Cherengany, saying the river was on the verge of drying up.

Leader of Government Business **George Saitoti** called for a change of attitude in managing the environment. The effort, Prof Saitoti said, should be the responsibility of all, not just the Government.

Kenyans, he said, should demand that civic authorities manage the environment, particularly garbage collection, since they are responsible for policy and supervision in the councils.

Mr **Matu Wamae** (Mathira, DP) suggested that the plan ensure that indigenous forests are protected, while exotic trees are replaced when harvested.

Farmers should be encouraged to set aside parts of their farms for trees.

The MP proposed that the Government publish the names of people to be allocated the 167,000 hectares of land to be excised "because there should be no secret in this".

This, he said, would remove "doubts and suspicions in the excision".

He said Hombe forest should not be demarcated until residents are consulted.

Mr Wamae got into trouble with **Mr Peter Maundu** (Kilome, Kanu) when the DP MP asked the Kamba community to stop felling trees to make wooden carvings and curios.

The wood carvers, Mr Wamae said, "were going all over", destroying indigenous trees.

Mr Maundu described the remark as malicious. Mr Wamae was directed by Temporary Speaker **Samuel Poghio** to withdraw the "Kamba" remark.

Mr Basil Mwakiringo (Voi, DP) said excision must be stopped now, for it had reached alarming proportions.

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