



UN FAO's efforts towards sustainable wildlife management and improved food security and livelihoods

Report by Kristina Rodina

INTRODUCTION

In many tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world, wild meat provides an important source of protein and nutrients for rural communities. It has been estimated that, for example, in the Congo Basin some 4.9 million tonnes of wild meat are consumed annually (Fa *et al.*, 2002). If hunting wildlife for food is not reduced to sustainable levels, not only will species be threatened with extinction, but many communities will suffer rising levels of food insecurity.

In the 1960s, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was pioneering internationally funded field projects on wildlife and protected areas management, a role that has been evolving and which, between 1975 and 1996, involved assisting some 85 member countries with their activities relating to wildlife and protected areas management across more than 200 projects. By the 1990s, FAO's field activities had reduced in response to requests by FAO member countries to focus more on policy and legislation consultative work (Baldus *et al.*, 2008).

Today, FAO's work relating to wildlife and protected areas management forms an integral part of the FAO Forestry Programme, and contributes to one of the organisation's five Strategic Priorities: *making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable*. The FAO Forestry Department's Wildlife and Protected Area Management Programme (referred to here as the "Programme") works to conserve terrestrial fauna and its natural habitats, and to improve the livelihoods of rural communities, particularly in developing countries, through normative work and field programme activities, in collaboration with major international partners.

FAO has been contributing to sustainable wildlife and protected areas management in Africa since these issues

were placed on the agenda of the first session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) in 1960. Since its entry into force in 1993, FAO has had a history of collaborating with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as evidenced by a number of decisions (e.g. CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/8) and joint work programmes (i.e. on sustainable use through the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management). This paper highlights some of the work undertaken by FAO and partners during 2017 to date in relation to its programme on wildlife and protected area management.

Central Africa: Sustainable management of the wildlife and wild meat sector

In June 2017, FAO completed a five-year project entitled *Sustainable management of the wildlife and wild meat sector in Central Africa* in four countries in Central Africa (Congo, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Gabon). Undertaken in collaboration with the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the French Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and with the financial support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the project demonstrated that participatory community-based approaches to wildlife management and control of wild meat production helps to address issues related to the control of access to wildlife resources, weak governance and ineffective institutions at the national level.

The project was implemented in response to the request of the 19th Session of the FAO's African Forestry and Wildlife Commission in 2013 to support member countries in their efforts to design and implement community-based

Top, clockwise: monitoring wildlife use in Liouesso, D.R. Congo; participants at the ninth meeting of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), Rome, June 2018; rhinoceros and wildebeest, Zimbabwe.

forest and wildlife management programmes. Outputs from this project include a book providing insight into the lessons learnt on community-based wildlife management and sustainable hunting practices in Central Africa, and two guides relating to implementation of community hunting management and the development of a management plan (FAO, CIFOR, CIRAD, 2017).

Global: Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme

In October 2017, FAO and partners launched the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme. This is a seven-year initiative involving a group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium of partners including FAO, CIRAD, CIFOR and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The aim is to work initially with 12 ACP countries to tackle unsustainable levels of wild meat hunting, conserve their biodiversity and natural heritage, and to strengthen people's livelihoods and food security.

The SWM Programme activities are taking place in a wide variety of forest, savannah and wetland ecosystems. The emphasis is on developing new and innovative approaches to regulate wildlife hunting, strengthen the management capacities of indigenous and rural communities and increase the supply of sustainably produced meat products and farmed fish. The SWM Programme is also working in close collaboration with the national authorities in each country to develop policies and strengthen legal frameworks to reduce wild meat consumption to sustainable levels without compromising the food security of people who depend on wildlife hunting.

The participating ACP countries are Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Congo, Senegal, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The experiences from these pilot countries will be developed into models that can be adapted and replicated in other ACP countries with similar contexts and challenges.

Partnerships: Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW)

In recent years, wildlife management has been the focus of considerable international debate because of its importance for conservation, human safety, livelihoods and food security. The CPW was established in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2013 in response to CBD Decision XI/25¹. It is a voluntary partnership of 14 organisations² with substantive mandates and programmes for the sustainable use and conservation of wildlife resources and an important forum for the discussion of key global issues related to sustainable use, management, and conservation of terrestrial and semi-terrestrial vertebrate wildlife. It works together with its members and local players worldwide to generate a better understanding of the multiple benefits and values of wildlife, and to support the development of strategies and policies to conserve wildlife and benefit the people who depend on wild resources for their survival and livelihoods (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/48).

As a member of the CPW, FAO is currently involved in the preparation of the second Wildlife Forum in the margins of the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference to be held in Egypt in November 2018. The purpose of the Forum is to advance policy dialogues and define priorities on sustainable wildlife management post-2020, including the increased participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. The meeting will build on the first Wildlife Forum³ held in 2015, which featured a series of multidisciplinary debates on key issues and opportunities pertinent to sustainable use of wildlife across geographical regions.

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Kristina Rodina, Forestry Officer, Wildlife and Protected Area Management, Forestry Policy and Resources Division, Forestry Department, UN FAO, Rome, Italy.
E-mail: Kristina.Rodina@fao.org

¹<https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=13186>; ²CPW members: CBD Secretariat (Chair); Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat; Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC); International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB); International Trade Centre (ITC); International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO); TRAFFIC (Vice-chair); United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment); World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).³<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/world-forestry-congress/programme/special-events/wildlife-forum/en/>