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Latest Research: Summary 3

Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on the Future of Community-Based Wildlife Conservation

From Stefan Carpenter, *Conservation Science and Practice*, Vol. 4, Iss. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.585>.

Context

Rural populations with local, small-scale agricultural economies across southern and eastern Africa have adopted community-based conservation (CBC) as their wildlife governance approach. This approach is based on the idea that communities will sustainably govern their wildlife resources when they “receive an enduring interest in and are able control and profit from those resources” (p. 1). The key to the success of this approach is the people within those communities need to believe that the benefit from CBC outweighs the costs associated with living with human-wildlife conflicts (HWC). Human-wildlife conflicts include killing of crops or livestock, destruction of infrastructure, and human injuries or fatalities.

However, with rising global temperatures, these communities are projected to experience prolonged drought. Will change in the region’s climate impact the positive opinion of the CBC approach within these communities?

To answer this question, Carpenter asked questions of residents in four CBC areas: Puros, Anabeb, Sesfontein, and Omatendeka. Carpenter then analyzed their responses using logistic regression, which shows the relationship between certain variables and whether the area embraced CBC.



Key Takeaways

- Over 90% of surveyed residents voiced that in the past 5 years there had been an increase in HWCs.
- Over 75% of surveyed community members responded that the wildlife benefits did not match the costs of HWCs.
- A majority (52.66%) of surveyed participants believe their conservancy made life better.
 - 45.16% stated the conservancy made life worse.
 - 13.44% said the conservancy had not changed their life (p. 4).

Results

The findings concluded that participants felt both that HWC had increased during the period of the drought and the benefits of the conservancy did not adequately compensate for the cost of these HWCs. As the foundation of the CBC programs are to provide economic gains in the event of HWC, the outcome of this research shows that long-term success of these programs is threatened.

To create CBC success, there needs to be investment in additional research to help understand and predict possible economic impacts from HWC as a result of climate change. Additional research can also help determine other sources of income such as direct payments that can be positively linked to CBC. These efforts, alongside nonprofits working to decrease HWCs, will help promote tolerance of wildlife.