



## Wildlife Economy Workshop Report

### The contribution of wildlife ranching to conservation and development – assessing the contribution and the role of governance

15-17 March 2017

Willows Country Lodge, Pretoria, South Africa

#### Overview

The workshop followed on from a previous workshop in March 2016, where the participants identified a need for further applied research and strategic action to develop a sustainable wildlife economy. In this workshop, we focused on two specific themes identified in the earlier workshop:

- the contribution of wildlife ranching to conservation and development; and
- the role of governance in ensuring this contribution.

The workshop included six presentations, discussions around these presentations, and a focused discussion through working groups on critical next steps.

The six presentations and relevant documents are available on the workshop's webpage.<sup>1</sup> In addition, these six presentations are the basis for a set of new working papers from Earthmind that will be available later this year.

In this short report, the presentations are summarised and the priority next steps are presented. A list of the participants is also provided at the end.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://earthmind.org/event/2017-03-wildlife-economy/>

## Introduction

At the introductory session, Michael 't Sas-Rolfes welcomed the delegates, reviewed previous relevant workshops, and set out the objectives of the workshop:

- To fact-find, produce and collate information on the wildlife ranching industry and agree on a research methodology and road-map;
- To better understand the role of governance in ensuring a sustainable wildlife ranching industry within the southern African region;
- To gain insights and learn lessons from the North American experience where wildlife is conserved through a different set of institutional arrangements; and
- To identify the academically sound research that is needed to influence wildlife ranching policy and regulation in South Africa and within the region.

## Presentations

**Professor Brian Child** spoke on the past and present views of private wildlife management and exploitation.

He shared insights from the history of conservation outside protected areas in South Africa, indicating that wildlife managed as a public good does not suit the nature of the resource. In a frontier or open-access economy, wildlife is exploited and often pushed out by 'the cow and the plough', despite being more valuable. There is an opportunity cost to poor management. Legislation focuses on species and fences when it should focus on landscapes; in addition, the fence is not where everything stops and a greater vision is needed. We don't know how to manage complex environments and are more inclined to talk about demand reduction than price and property. Changing the narrative around the wildlife economy is vital.

**Key issues for the industry to consider:** Wildlife must be owned and used commercially and the people living with wildlife must benefit. Paradigms include ownership through fencing (as in South Africa and Namibia), ownership by use of local collective self-regulation (as has been the case in Zimbabwe), or private community-based ownership. How can wildlife become a more competitive land-use option in South Africa? What incentives will drive conservation? How can the economic engines of parks and wildlife be made more powerful still? In South Africa, wildlife is relatively well managed, but there is insufficient capitalisation, which needs to change.

**Dr Francis Vorhies** spoke on recent conflicting economic assessments of the value of trophy hunting to the African economy and on a policy framework for assessing the contributions of wildlife ranching including the contributions of hunting.

Hunting is just one of land-use option for wildlife ranching, and its contribution to economic development is disputed. Recent studies have used different models and statistics to present very different assessments of the contribution of the industry to national economic output and to job creation. Hence there is more work to be done to agree on proper methodologies for assessing hunting and other wildlife ranching activities. In this respect, he proposed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its Sustainable Development Goals and the associated targets as a useful framework for identifying the social, economic and environmental issues to address in assessing the contribution of wildlife ranching. The 2030 Agenda sets out a clear mandate for sustainable use, inclusive economic growth and international trade - all of which are key issues for the wildlife economy.

**Key issues for the industry to consider:** Can the hunting industry in Africa contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Do the Sustainable Development Goals offer us a framework for assessing the contribution of hunting? Well-managed landscapes can support both consumptive and non-consumptive use - a suite of ranching activities can be pursued provided they meet sustainability targets and goals and are financially viable. There is a need to educate the public about the benefits of sustainable use, particularly its role in terms of poverty reduction and nature conservation.

**Mr Michael 't Sas-Rolfes** reviewed the literature on the contributions of wildlife ranching to the sustainable development and the green economy.

Contested issues like the definition of wildlife, 'wild', 'nature' and others were raised with a view to understanding what constitutes wildlife ranching. Examining where ranching ends and where farming begins becomes important when considering the contribution of extensive and intensive ranching to ecosystem and species conservation and to sustainable use. There are research gaps when it comes to intensive and selective breeding vis-à-vis extensive ranching practices. There are also critical knowledge gaps pertaining to the role of market forces, sustainability and conservation concerns such as habitat degradation and fragmentation, predator populations and genetic issues.

**Key issues for the industry to consider:** Wildlife ranching is a combination of conservation, agriculture, ecotourism and trade - ranchers straddle the boundary between intensive breeding and more extensive 'pure' conservation management.

Improved data accumulation and more research is required to better assess wildlife ranching's contribution in sustainable development in Africa.

**Professor Terry Anderson** presented a North American perspective on a property rights approach to wildlife conservation.

Wildlife in the US is a public resource held in trust by the state for the people (*res communis*) and cannot be privatised or monetised through hunting or utilisation markets. The current legal framework emerged in response to a classic case of the tragedy of the commons. Though habitat was abundant in the US, wildlife became scarce through unregulated overexploitation. Thus, seasons and bag limits were introduced for private hunting and all commercial use was prohibited. Unfortunately, the US approach to the public trust doctrine breaks the link in the value chain connecting private land with *res nullius* wildlife and thus landowners have few rights or responsibilities for wildlife conservation. The southern Africa approach, on the other hand, is based more explicitly on property rights and thus encourages markets for hunting and other forms of utilisation such as ecotourism, meat and hides.

**Key issues for the industry to consider:** What do we mean by property rights? Who has jurisdiction over land and the outputs from native resources on the land? How can the industry create a value chain between demand and supply, connecting habitat owners with people who articulate demands? How can private landowners be further incentivised in their role of conserving the public interest? Hunters should be entrepreneurial and find innovative ways to channel money directly into wildlife habitat, which could be integrated directly into hunting market value chains.

**Mr Andrew Blackmore** reviewed the public trust doctrine in South African environmental law and its implications for the wildlife ranching industry.

He noted that there is a growing tendency around the world to incorporate the public trust doctrine into national constitutions or environmental legislation. In South Africa, it can be found in section 24 of the Bill of Rights and in the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 and the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004. The public trust entity acts a buffer area between overuse and the ideal zone of stability and sustainable use. It makes clear that Government has a fiduciary duty to set boundaries and resist encroachment on the trust entity. However, this does not imply public ownership but rather that ownership structures - whether public, private or communal - do not undermine the conservation status of wildlife.

**Key issues for the industry to consider:** The use of wildlife is subject to public trust provisions. The public's role is to ensure that government is doing its job as it's the beneficiary of the trust. AS the public trust does not mean public ownership or

management, what is the nexus between private ownership and a public trust asset? What governance frameworks are best placed to deliver desirable outcomes and how can the industry assist with this ensuring that these frameworks are put in place?

**Professor Dean Lueck** set out a comparative economic institutions approach to wildlife management from a North American perspective.

Open access to wildlife - a theoretically renewable resource - leads to overharvesting, dissipation of the rent of the stocks and damage to habitat. The classic case of the extinction of the passenger pigeon in the US was discussed. The American bison also almost went extinct but was saved through a few privately-managed herds. Today the bison falls under the livestock law regime and individual animals can be privately owned and utilised. In the US, some regulatory approaches have enabled wildlife to be protected and stocks to recover. These include establishing rights to the resource or territory, limiting access with restrictions, and setting quotas. In the US, state agencies limit access through a licence system while in southern Africa there is more reliance on private landowner control.

**Key issues for the industry to consider:** State regulations can help to conserve wildlife, but these may include, as in the US, significantly reduced opportunities to derive economic and social benefits from wildlife. How can wildlife owners in Africa capture the value of the publicly-value resource in ways that benefits society? In addition to wildlife utilisation, can ranchers deliver other values such as scenic views, genetic diversity and population interactions, and ecosystem services? What are effective models of ownership in South Africa? Should nexus between trade and commercialisation and rural development be better understood?

## Next steps

The final workshop sessions involved brainstorming next steps for enhancing our understanding of sustainable wildlife management in southern Africa. Two working groups identified the following set of key goals, strategies and activities:

- Align the wildlife ranching industry in southern Africa with relevant Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets.
- Align the industry in South Africa with national strategies such as South Africa's emerging strategy for enhancing the biodiversity economy.
- Develop social, economic and environmental assessments and case studies of the industry, focusing on actual private and communal ranching operations - identifying what works, what does not work, and how value chains can be created and supported. Such case studies could indicate possible solutions for

enhancing sustainable wildlife management and economic development at the local and community level.

- Create a comprehensive scientific database/library to fill knowledge gaps and facilitate the dissemination of knowledge among stakeholders. This would include peer-reviewed academic literature, scientific research, and grey literature building on contributions from the workshop participants.
- Develop a wildlife economy advocacy forum that will articulate how we can drive rural development and prosperity through the sustainable use of wildlife assets. Such a 'Southern African Wildlife Economy Working Group' could support efforts to influence policy, direct research, drive outreach and advocacy, target higher education and create a community of practice with stakeholders in the private sector, communities, NGOs and government.
- Form strategic partnerships to further develop and transform the commercial wildlife sector and optimise production to ensure maximum sustainable yields. Partnerships are needed to create and promote an enabling environment in which accountability and governance at local, village or community level would be a starting point. This would include addressing the ownership of wildlife assets and regulatory effectiveness and efficiency.
- Identify areas in which capacity building is necessary with the aim of creating strong institutions. This includes strategies to engage the youth - the next generation of wildlife custodians - by 'teaching the teachers' and developing textbook content.
- Develop a co-ordinated, sustained communications strategy that shows how the wildlife economy can enhance local and regional prosperity and alleviate poverty. The wildlife economy is little understood and anti-economic use messages dominate the media - 'fake views' and 'alternative stats.'
- Develop academic structures and operation mechanisms for research and outreach. Mobilise funding and identify and engage individuals that can 'champion the cause'.

## Participants



The 38 participants were mostly from South Africa. They came from academia, the wildlife ranching industry, government, and NGOs.

- **Mr Norman Adami** - Wildlife Ranching South Africa and private game reserve owner, South Africa
- **Ms Erika Alberts** - MLP Media, South Africa
- **Professor Terry Anderson** - Property and Environment Research Center, and Hoover Institution, USA
- **Mr Andrew Blackmore** - Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, South Africa
- **Professor Brian Child** - Florida State University, USA, and Peace Parks Foundation, South Africa
- **Dr Flippie Cloete** - University of the Free State, South Africa
- **Dr Harriet Davies-Mostert** - Endangered Wildlife Trust, South Africa
- **Dr Gert Dry** - Wildlife Ranching South Africa and private game reserve owner, South Africa
- **Mr Christian Gable** - The Rebel Group, South Africa
- **Dr John Hanks** - Independent, WWF and Peace Parks Foundation, South Africa
- **Ms Naledi Hlatshwayo** - Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa
- **Mr Peter Knipe** - Wildlife Producers Association and private game reserve owner, South Africa
- **Mr Abbey Legari** - South Africa National Parks, South Africa
- **Mr Keith Lockwood** - Gordon Institute of Business Science, South Africa
- **Professor Dean Lueck** - Ostrom Workshop, University of Indiana, USA

- **Ms Tseleng Mabunda** - Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa
- **Dr Moscow Marumo** - Peace Parks Foundation, South Africa
- **Ms Ester Michau** - MLP Media, South Africa
- **Mr Tebogo Mogashoa** - Wildlife Ranching South Africa and private game reserve owner, South Africa
- **Mr Tambudzani Mulaudzi** - Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa
- **Ms Lizanne Nel** - South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association, South Africa
- **Dr Peter Oberem** - Wildlife Ranching South Africa and private game reserve owner, South Africa
- **Mr Stephen Palos** - Confederation of Hunting Associations of South Africa, South Africa
- **Mr Arnold Pistorius** - Twin City and private game reserve owner, South Africa
- **Ms Elena Rubino** - University of Florida, USA
- **Professor Melville Saayman** - North-West University, South Africa
- **Dr Jeanetta Selier** - South African National Biodiversity Institute, South Africa
- **Mr Don Stacey** - Wildlife Producers Association of Zambia, Zambia
- **Mr Michael 't Sas-Rolfes** - Oxford University and Earthmind, UK and South Africa
- **Dr Maretha van der Merwe** - Environmental Health and Social Development, City of Tshwane, South Africa
- **Professor Peet van der Merwe** - North-West University, South Africa
- **Mr Meldt van der Spuy** - Original Films and MLP Media, South Africa
- **Ms Carla van der Vyver** - South African Predator Association, South Africa
- **Ms Katharina von Durckheim** - University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
- **Dr Francis Vorhies** - Earthmind, Switzerland
- **Dr Vivienne Williams** - University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
- **Mr Barry York** - Wildlife Producers Association and private game reserve owner, South Africa
- **Ms Fiona Zerbst** - MLP Media, South Africa