

**Case Study:** Namibia CBRM case study


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## KEY MESSAGES

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- Dependence on a single source of revenue like tourism presents major risks for communities when disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic lead to restrictions on the movement of tourists. Communities need to explore opportunities to diversify their income sources
  - Sustainable use contributes to ecosystem integrity and species conservation while generating income and diversified livelihood options. Ownership and conferring rights to own and manage wildlife and other resources can create a healthy balance for land uses.
  - Sustainable use depends on the national and local context. For a dry country like Namibia devolving ownership rights to local communities to manage wildlife and other resources has proven a viable livelihoods alternative to crop production.
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## Background

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) has developed during the past 22 years into a cornerstone of Namibia’s conservation, rural development, and economic policies and practices. CBNRM is a foundation of Namibia’s role as a global leader in biodiversity conservation, of a growing national tourism industry, and in diversifying rural livelihoods through income and employment. NACSO has played a key role since its founding as the key coordinating body for Namibian organisations working on CBNRM, as well as building strong partnerships between Namibian NGOs, the government, and international organizations such as WWF. Today, CBNRM in Namibia is undergoing a process of change and confronting a range of new challenges. Emergent threats include the resurgence of elephant and rhino poaching, new policy developments related to sectors such as land tenure and agriculture, and a recent increase in threats to sustainable trophy hunting as a result of international media and policy pressures.

The Conservancies have been given the rights by government to retain 100% of the trophy fees that they negotiate with the Hunting Operators when awarding the hunting concession. The awarding is done based on a tender procedure and contractual arrangements that are endorsed and supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and Tourism. The Hunting Operators generate their own income from the daily rates they charge their clients which is in addition to the Trophy fees that are paid.

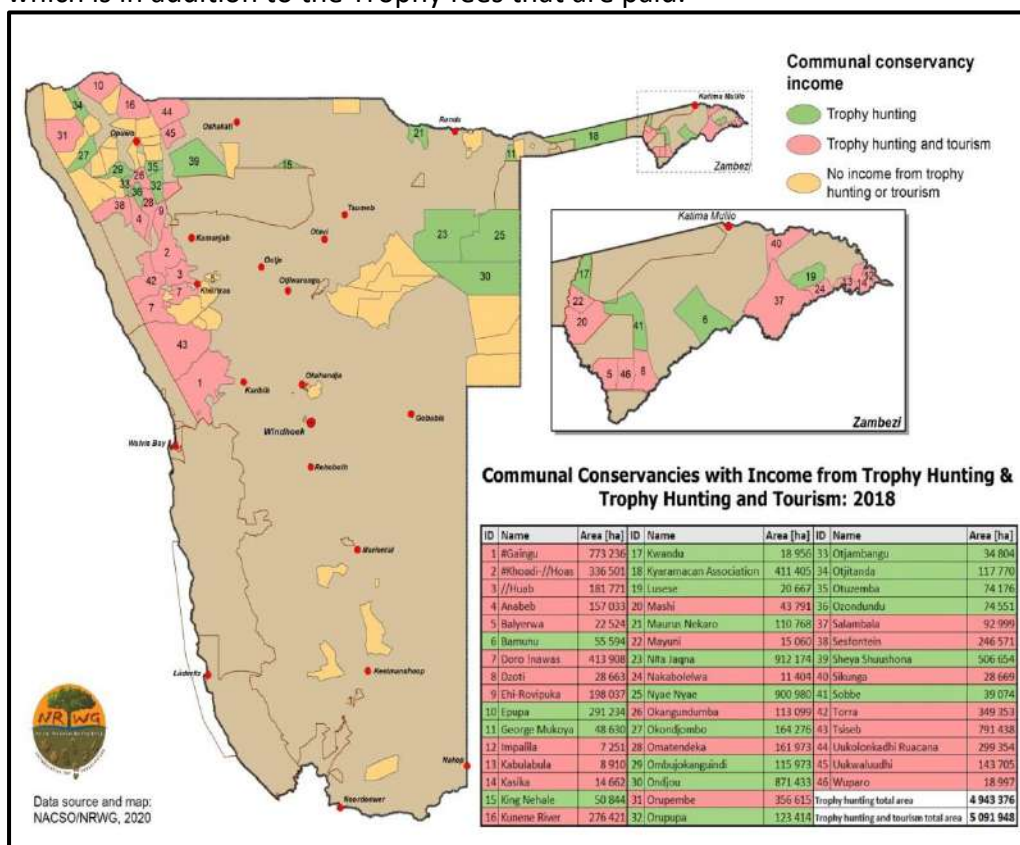


Figure 1: Map of Conservancies with conservation hunting 2018

In 2018, of the 86 communal conservancies and one community association 20 are entirely dependent on trophy fees generated from conservation hunting and further 28 conservancies generate fees from both hunting and tourism. Annex 1 shows a map of conservancies with

conservation hunting. The trophy fees generated from conservation hunting (for 2018 that was GBP 1,5 million) cover amongst other conservation and social development efforts, salaries and field costs of 446 community game guards hired by the conservancies. Their job is to assist communities to deal with the human wildlife conflict, particularly from elephants and lions that destroy crops and kill cattle in the communal areas. The game guards conduct patrols to monitor and protect wildlife and they also prevent commercial and subsistence poaching in their conservancies.

A significant number of species in Namibia occurs permanently outside the state managed areas, particularly in communal conservancies that often buffer the National Parks. Underpinned by legislation that grants conservancies the management and use over wildlife, there are now 86 conservancies on communal land, with about 225,000 rural Namibians and extending over 20.2% of the country. This is an area larger than the State Protected Area network (19% of the country). Furthermore, a significant number of our communal conservancies are conducting conservation hunting.

### *The Primary Beneficiaries*

- 86 Conservancies in Communal Areas representing around 300,000 communal area communities
- Seven Conservancy Regional Conservancy Associations

### *Stakeholders*

- Ministry of Environment Forestry and Tourism (MEFT)
- Namibian Hunting Association (NAPHA)
- NACSO Network members: (Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF), Namibia Development Trust (NDT), Nyae- Nyae Foundation (NNDFN), Omba Trust, University of Namibia (UNAM), Safe the Rhino Trust Namibia (SRT), Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)

## **1. The key outcomes**

In terms of financial contribution from trophy fees to conservation and social development efforts of the conservancies there are significant differences between the species. As Table 1 shows 70% of the trophy values that were hunted in 2017 in communal conservancies were generated from elephant and buffalo hunts. Figure 2 also provides information of what the species conservation status are under the classification of the IUCN and CITIES.

While of the top five, two are classified globally as vulnerable, one as near threatened. Namibia as we have pointed out in the previous question, many of our species populations are healthy and, in some cases, growing.

- ✓ Namibia's elephant population has grown from an estimated 7,500 animals in 1995 to around 22,000 today – a large percentage occurs outside parks and in the communal conservancies
- ✓ Namibia has healthy lion populations in several national parks, and an expanding lion population outside parks (in communal conservancies between Etosha and Skeleton National Parks), which has grown in north-western Namibia from an estimated 25 animals in 1995 to around 150 by 2018.
- ✓ Namibia has the largest free-roaming black rhino population outside parks and in the communal conservancies.
- ✓ Namibia has the largest population of free-roaming cheetahs in the world – the vast majority of which live outside parks including the communal conservancies.
- ✓ Namibia has healthy giraffe populations in several national parks and an expanding giraffe population outside parks including communal conservancies.
- ✓ Namibia has healthy leopard populations in several national parks and leopards occur across much of Namibia's freehold and communal conservancies.
- ✓ Namibia has a healthy crocodile population with a large percentage occurring outside parks including communal areas.

*Table 1: Trophy Value and Conservation Status of Species Hunted: 2017*

Species	Conservation Status IUCN & CITES	Trophy Value per animal: GBP	Trophy Offtake: 2017	Value of Trophy Hunted: 2017	Value % of total
Elephant	Vulnerable (CITES II)	12,750	37	471,750.00	45.9%
Buffalo	Secure	4,500	68	306,000.00	29.8%
Hippopotamus	Vulnerable (CITES II)	1,875	23	43,125.00	4.2%
Leopard	Near threatened (CITES I)	3,000	13	39,000.00	3.8%
Roan	Secure	4,500	7	31,500.00	3.1%
Lion	Vulnerable (CITES II)	7,500	3	22,500.00	2.2%
Zebra, Hartmann's	Vulnerable (CITES II)	300	48	14,400.00	1.4%
Sable	Secure	4,500	3	13,500.00	1.3%
Springbok	Secure	173	76	13,110.00	1.3%
Zebra, Burchells	Near threatened	300	37	11,100.00	1.1%
Crocodile	Secure (CITES II)	1,125	9	10,125.00	1.0%
Lechwe	Near threatened (CITES II)	825	12	9,900.00	1.0%
Gemsbok	Secure	278	35	9,712.50	0.9%
Kudu	Secure	323	24	7,740.00	0.8%
Giraffe	Vulnerable	638	6	3,825.00	0.4%
Reedbuck	Secure	450	8	3,600.00	0.4%
Eland	Secure	488	6	2,925.00	0.3%
Impala, Black-faced	Vulnerable	525	5	2,625.00	0.3%
Hyaena, spotted	Secure	338	7	2,362.50	0.2%
Wildebeest, blue	Secure	300	7	2,100.00	0.2%

## 2. What were the key challenges?

Many of these significant conservation achievements would be severely jeopardized by undermining the income generation from conservation hunting which is particularly important in remote areas that have no tourism potential. If hunting is compromised, many conservancies will be economically worse off, and significant areas of wildlife habitat will be lost to other, less environmentally sustainable forms of land use. Notably, three communities that are entirely dependent on conservation hunting are in areas occupied by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, with the trophy fees being essential to their livelihoods.

## 3. Lessons Learned

It is therefore clear that while a major contributor to financing conservation in conservancies, tourism does have i) a far higher negative impact on our environment for a far small contribution to local conservation and social projects, and ii) tourism dependence on long haul flights will come under similar increasing scrutiny and pressure by the public and policy makers in the northern hemisphere that is currently being generated on hunters. In the African context, and especially the Namibian context, the big losers will be conservation and local communities, as wildlife becomes an increasingly less viable land use option in communal areas. This is compound in being at the time that these options are going to be more resilient to climate change than more conventional farming options, particularly in the arid climate of Namibia.

In light of the above, the Namibian Conservancy Programme is exploring other income opportunities there might cover the management of wildlife, particularly those that come at a significant cost to local communities. One initiative that is being pursued is Wildlife Credits ([www.wildlifecredits.com](http://www.wildlifecredits.com)) that rewards and incentives communities that live with and protect wildlife. However, the challenge is to find enough performance payers that equates, if not exceeds, the current fees returned from hunting and tourism.

## 4. Insight for strengthening the Post-2020 Framework

**“Wildlife will only remain on the land if land stewards benefit from it”**

Most countries in the world have different mechanisms towards successful conservation approaches.

- ✓ **A differentiation between countries with successful conservation approaches and those without is essential** (Conservation is a science-based management and successful approaches should not be undermined by generalized emotional responses and inappropriate actions.)

- ✓ **Conservation by people for the people can be extremely successful – Namibia is one example** (Ownership and conferring rights to own and manage wildlife and other resources can create a healthy balance for land uses.)
- ✓ **By Embracing wildlife and other natural resources, we are safeguarding the wildlife habitat.** (Sustainable harvesting has proven key in documenting significant wildlife recoveries in parks and communal areas in Namibia and can be replicated elsewhere.)

#### **Videos Supporting Hunting Case Study**

[www.nacso.org.na/films/talking-about-hunting-02](http://www.nacso.org.na/films/talking-about-hunting-02)

<http://www.nacso.org.na/films/talking-about-hunting-04>

<http://www.nacso.org.na/films/talking-about-hunting-05>