

Two Radically Different Models for Wildlife Ecotourism in Africa

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Abstract

Africa is widely regarded as having the best wildlife ecotourism in the world. Over the past several decades the tourist industry in East and Southern Africa has grown dramatically, but there have been two completely different approaches regarding implementation. The countries that can be regarded as pioneers in this field are Tanzania and Kenya, both of whom adopted a mass tourism approach whereby they tried to attract as many visitors as possible. Later, Botswana began to develop ecotourism but along completely different lines. Instead of the Tanzanian/Kenyan model of high volume tourism, Botswana opted for a low volume, low impact but high value policy.

Based on observations and interviews made during trips to Botswana (2019) as well as to Kenya and Tanzania (2022), together with a review of the literature, this paper will examine the situation and problems affecting safari tourism in Africa in general, and then consider the situation, problems and challenges faced by each of the above nations while comparing and contrasting the positive and negative implications of each of the two tourism models under discussion.

Key Words

Tourism, safari tourism, ecotourism, environmental conservation, African studies, environmental studies

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Introduction

If the average person in the street were asked to name wildlife safari destinations in Africa, it is likely that the predominant answers would be Kenya and Tanzania. This is possibly because these were the countries that pioneered wildlife ecotourism many years ago and which have continued to exert efforts to attract as many tourists as possible in order to maximize profits. They have achieved name recognition, and many of the trips advertised in the tourist literature would indeed be to these locations and would be focused on all types of economic groups, from backpackers on extremely limited budgets to people wishing to stay in five-star luxury lodges.

In contrast, it is probable that Botswana would not occur as an answer to people who are unfamiliar with African wildlife despite the fact that it is often rated by experts as perhaps the best destination for viewing the animals. One reason is that perhaps that Botswana was a relatively late entrant to the wildlife ecotourism market. However, probably another key reason is that, as a result of observing the problems that have emerged with the Kenyan/Tanzanian mass market model, the government in Botswana consciously made the decision to instead adopt a “high value, low impact model” which would be more costly for the visitor (thereby limiting the potential number of tourists) but which would, they hoped, lead to a more sustainable model which would preserve the environment.

Based on literature reviews, discussions with personnel involved in the industry, and personal observations during trips to Botswana (2019) plus Kenya and Tanzania (2022), this paper will describe the details of both of these tourism models, address the problems that have arisen, and suggest possible countermeasures.

The importance of tourism in sub-Saharan Africa

Tourism is a key industry driving the development of sub-Saharan Africa. Although the region attracted only 6.7 million visitors in 1990, this had increased to 33.1 million by 2011, contributing a sum of \$33.5 billion, which represented 2.7% of the region’s GDP. In terms of jobs, this accounted for 5% of all employment, equally split between men and women, and has provided a path towards economic growth and improved livelihoods. (Christie et al 2014: 23-24)

Specifically, the development of tourism can spur economic development; create good jobs; help to build remote and developing regions; accelerate reform; improve infrastructure; increase domestic consumption and diversify exports; empower women, young people and marginalized populations; help to preserve cultural heritage and conserve the environment; and improve the national image. There are, however, also some potential risks such as so-called “leakage” (where the destination receives only a small portion of a tourist’s expenditure); adverse sociocultural impacts such as prostitution; and negative economic impacts such as driving up land prices for local people. (Christie et al 2014: 24-32)

Ecotourism in Africa

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”, where education refers to both the staff and the guests. (TIES, date unknown) In other words, it tries to achieve a balance between conservation and human development in a sustainable manner. It can only achieve the latter goal adequately, though, if the benefits are shared in a manner that is mutually beneficial to all the various actors. The degree to which this has been implemented in practice varies greatly. For example, members of the indigenous Maasai tribe have numerous positions of employment in Kenya’s Maasai Mara Game Reserve, whereas employment opportunities for the Maasai in Tanzania’s Ngorongoro Conservation Area have been extremely limited. (Cheung 2015) However, for sustainable development of ecotourism in Africa, it seems reasonable to argue that for the sake of both the environment (including the wildlife) and the human population, ecotourism is the correct approach to follow as it provides local stakeholders with an economic incentive to protect the wildlife and the environment in general.

Threats common to all African wildlife

First, let us briefly examine the problems that are faced by wildlife across the whole African continent.

a) Poaching

Poaching is a major concern afflicting all wildlife areas in Africa. According to a report issued by the Directorate of Public Prosecutions and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in Botswana together with backing from the United Nations etc., the rewards for criminals are indeed huge, with the illegal trade in wildlife estimated to be worth US\$20 billion per year. Another distressing statistic that illustrates the scale of the problem is that no less than 1,000 rangers lost their lives in a ten-year period while attempting to protect the wildlife. (Directorate of Public Prosecutions, Botswana 2018: 89-90) It has been claimed that wildlife smuggling has become the world’s fourth-biggest criminal enterprise following drugs, human trafficking and counterfeiting. (Makwea 2022: 1, 3)

Much of the focus has been on large iconic species such as elephants and rhinos, killed in huge numbers for their ivory and horns respectively for use in ornaments used as status symbols and as an ingredient in remedies for various illnesses. As a result, rhinos have been reduced to a fraction of their former numbers (during just 2013-2015 the annual slaughter amounted to about 1,200 animals – a

massive increase from just 13 in 2007) and during the period 2007–2014 approximately 20,000 elephants were killed (a decline of about 30%). (Directorate of Public Prosecutions, Botswana 2018: 89–90) The scale and rapidity of the slaughter can be easily comprehended by the data shown in Figures 1–3; at the same time, though, it can be seen that countermeasures can be successful.

In 2020 the world was hit by the global Covid-19 pandemic, with Africa not being an exception. Tourism across the continent ceased as travel restrictions came into force and tourists no longer

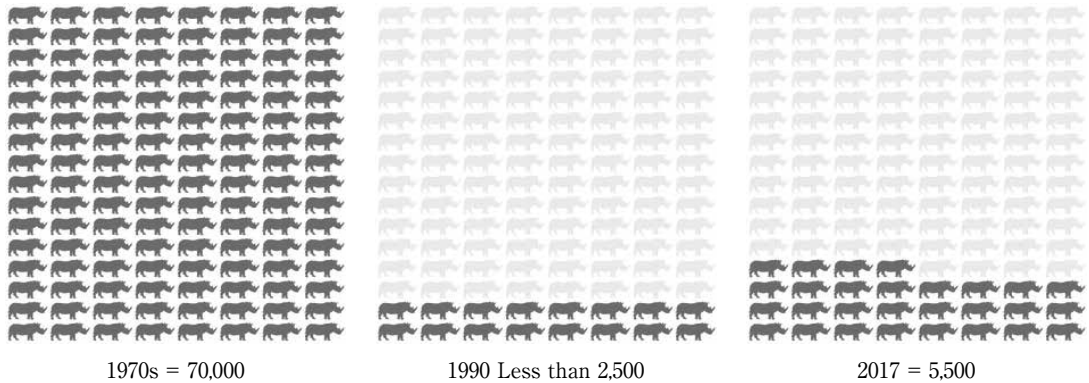


Figure 1 Black rhino numbers in Africa
(Source: Rhino Conservation Botswana)

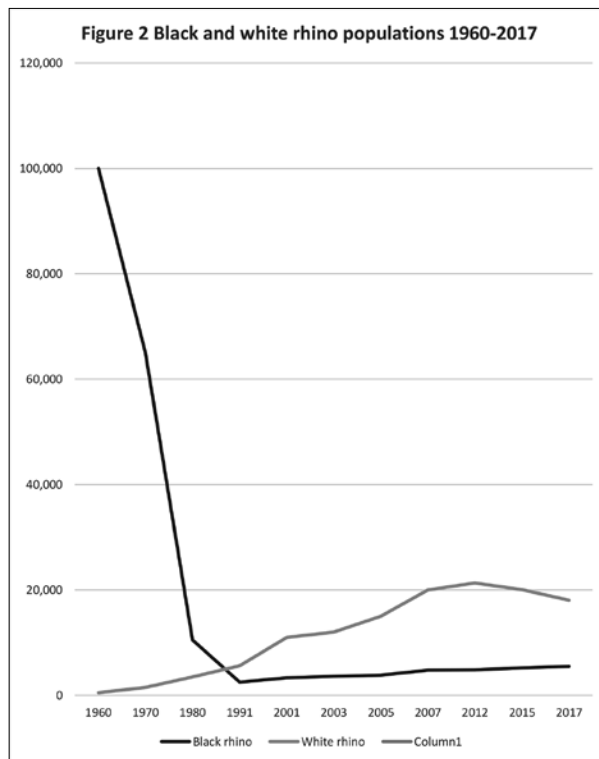


Figure 2 Rhino numbers in Africa
(Source: Rhino Conservation Botswana)

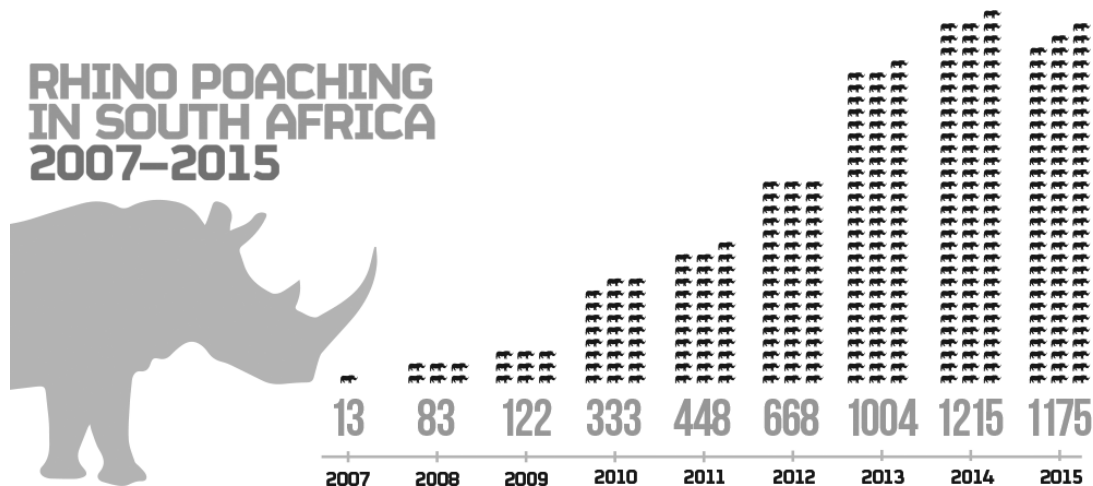


Figure 3 Scale of rhino poaching (Source: Rhino Conservation Botswana)

visited, leading to considerable financial hardship. This meant that funds were no longer sufficient to pay the salaries of rangers whose job was to protect animals such as rhinos from poaching, and the tourist guides and trackers who could tip rangers off about suspicious signs of poaching activity. (Crawford 2021) It was feared that the situation could lead to a massive expansion of poaching, but in fact the opposite was the case, probably because the restrictions on movement also hindered the poachers and the supply chains carrying the looted horns etc. to their customers. There was also the worry that, because of being unable to travel to get fresh meat, local communities might resort to killing animals, even legally protected animals, in order to eat; as one person is quoted as saying, “Empty stomachs have no ears”, spurring efforts to provide food supplies to isolated communities. (John Kahekwa, quoted by Fowlds and Spence 2022: 23) Nevertheless, great fears have remained that the illegal killing and trading may grow phenomenally in the few years following the removal of travel restrictions that accompany the end of the pandemic (Crawford 2021). Unfortunately, in December 2021 there were signs that these fears might indeed be realised. In South Africa, no less than 24 rhinos were killed in just the first 2 weeks of December, including one pregnant female. Cathy Dean, who heads the organisation Save the Rhino International, blamed the killings on the collapse of tourism income during the pandemic. (Greenfield 2021) However, tourist numbers (and therefore income derived from tourists) may be recovering rather quicker than originally anticipated. Guides in the Tanzanian national parks of Lake Manyara and Ngorongoro (Arun Sungeen, a guide for Hoopoe Adventure Tours) and the northern Serengeti (staff at Kirirumu tented lodge) said that they felt tourist numbers had already started to approach pre-Covid levels by late August, 2022 (personal communication).

However, it is not just elephants and rhinos that are being killed in large numbers. For example, over the past three decades, the African giraffe population has plummeted by nearly 40% because of hunting for their meat, habitat loss and habitat degradation, as well as being poached for their tails to be used as fly whisks and as decorative items (besides being an icon, giraffes play an important role in preserving ecosystems for other animals). Pangolins are the world’s most trafficked species, with about 300 poached every day. Because of the rising Far East trade in lion bones (as well as lions’ teeth and

claws), the lion populations have dropped by over 40% in the last 20 years. On top of that, the general bushmeat trade (where the animals are killed for food), the massive amount of forestry crime (the illegal revenue of which is estimated at US\$30–100 billion per year, and which results in major environmental degradation) and illegal grazing also have a massive impact on wildlife. (Directorate of Public Prosecutions, Botswana 2018: 89–90)

There has also been a side-effect on other creatures. Poachers have deliberately used poison to kill elephants, but this has also led to the deaths of hundreds of critically endangered vultures, who consume the poison when they feed on dead carcasses. In one example in Botswana, when there were three dead elephants, officials discovered no less than 537 dead vultures as well as two tawny eagles. (Stubbley 2019)

b) Climate change

As climate changes, so do the weather patterns such as rainfall, as well as changes in habitat composition, access to water and the availability of forage. This can have profound implications, affecting wildlife reproduction, survival rates of the young, and even the competitive relationship between different species. Adequate supplies of water are a requirement for several key species. This does not just simply mean having enough available drinking water. For instance, elephants need water for bathing and spraying on their bodies to cool themselves; black rhinos need water to establish breeding territories, and white rhinos need it (as do hippos) for mud baths for thermoregulation and warding off parasites. (Wasige 2017: 1–2) As for drinking water, climate change can result in droughts such as the devastating one in southern Africa that began in early 2019, with the distressing sights of elephants collapsing and dying just a few dozen metres from water holes.

In 2020 a total of more than 300 elephants were found to have died in Botswana's famed Okavango Delta. At first poaching was suspected, but the ivory had not been removed, probably ruling this cause out. Poisoned water holes seemed to not be the problem since that would presumably lead to the deaths of other animals. Finally the mysterious cause of death was discovered to be the ingestion of cyanobacteria, which are natural toxic bacteria that can occur in standing water. (WHO 2020) Elephants drink large quantities of water, which may explain why only they were affected, with scientists stating that the underlying cause may be climate change since the toxic blooms favour warm water. (WHO 2020)

The Kenya Wildlife Service has warned that climate change also increases the danger that animal diseases will spread as species are forced to migrate to new habitats. Furthermore, as the wild animals spread out in the search for food and water, they can come into contact and cause conflict with humans and domestic farm animals such as sheep and goats. (Abwao 2007: 1–2)

Kupika et al (2017: 1–5) refer to predictions made by the prestigious Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which indicate that rising temperatures will lead to southern Africa experiencing severe weather anomalies and resulting in extreme events of floods, droughts, cyclones and heat waves. Changes in the rainfall and temperature patterns will influence habitat quality and hence the distribution of wildlife, posing a serious threat to the survival of wildlife. Hambira (2017: 1) notes that in Botswana temperatures are likely to rise by 2°C by the year 2050, leading to an increase

in rainfall during the wet season but offset by a decrease in the rest of the year, with the overall result being an increase in aridity.

With regard to the tourist industry, in 2014 the European Climate Foundation stated that higher temperatures would cause species shift, which would inevitably have a major effect on ecotourism activities such as safari operations. They estimate that by 2080 as many as 40% of the species in the national parks in sub-Saharan Africa would probably become endangered unless they were able to migrate. (Hambira 2017: 45)

Under the title “Climate change threatens the survival of Africa’s wild lands, wildlife, and people”, the African Wildlife Foundation (date unknown, pp. 1-5) suggests that mitigation strategies for combatting land degradation due to climate change should include measures to protect forests; the introduction of climate-smart agriculture (i.e. using new sustainable farming techniques) and sustainable energy; and the empowerment of communities to secure their water resources (e.g. by collecting rainfall in containers instead of digging wells and channels which could deprive animals of water). While acknowledging that there is a growing interest and awareness in devising strategies to combat the effect of climate change on tourism, Hambira (2017: 46) suggests that efforts so far are nowhere near sufficient. Calling for more research, she claims that areas that need consideration include the allocation of greater financial resources; deeper knowledge of cultural norms; a need for increased local knowledge and analytical skills; and a general lack of adequate knowledge and information. The Heinz Center for Science, Economics and Environment (2012: 1) suggests that possible adaptation strategies for helping wildlife and their habitats combat climate change include providing water or shade, improving habitat inter-connectivity, captive breeding or game ranching, translocation and reintroduction. The African Wildlife Foundation (date unknown) aims to protect the forests which cover almost 20% of Africa and which can absorb significant amounts of CO₂ from the atmosphere; introduce climate-smart agriculture and sustainable energy solutions; and empower communities to secure their water sources.

c) Negative effects of safari tourism

Terrestrial animal tourism can have adverse effects on wildlife in addition to the obvious dangers of vehicles causing injury or death. In the case of the great apes, since they are genetically similar to humans, there is the danger of the transmission of human diseases being passed to the apes (e.g. influenza and measles). Another potential problem is behavioural disruption; the animals may wish to avoid humans and respond to their presence as if they were predators and might panic and escape, which could affect offspring or eggs. This could result in harm if the animals were engaged in important activities such as foraging, communicating, watching for predators, and caring for their young. Another response by some animals is to freeze, with their immobility mistakenly interpreted by the humans as tameness or even friendliness. One specific instance that was observed in Uganda was that the approach of tourists caused female crocodiles to flee into the water, leaving their nests unguarded and open to being eaten by predators such as baboons. It is believed that this has developed further into a problem whereby certain animals have learned to follow humans around to take advantage of the disruption they occur, thereby altering their normal feeding patterns. (Tablado and D’Amico 2017: 98-102)

When tourists frequently visit one place, the animals may try to avoid them by permanently altering the way they act. In Amboseli National Park in Kenya, for example, naturally diurnal cheetahs have been observed to become more crepuscular. Safaris are designed to give visiting tourists the maximum number of wildlife encounters, so the tour groups frequently go to locations such as water holes, which may caused unintended consequences. For example, in the Masai Mara in Kenya, the migration routes of ungulates (i.e. hoofed animals) have changed their migration patterns and thus caused increased habitat deterioration. Such intrusion into animal domains could cause the animals to live in areas which are not so appropriate for their needs, which could lead to reduced access to necessary resources, in turn resulting in a poorer body condition, interference with reproduction or even a reduced chance of survival. Should the animals remain where they are unwillingly exposed to humans, they could be exposed to high levels of chronic stress, with similar results to how stress harms human health. (Tablado and D'Amico 2017: 102-103)

A further possible result of familiarity with humans is habituation, where the animals learn that the tourists are not a threat; unfortunately this means that they may be more likely to fall victim to poachers through not realising the danger; indeed, this has been observed with gorillas in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the habituated gorillas were more likely to be killed than the non-habituated ones. Habituation can also result in increased human-wildlife conflicts; in Uganda gorillas have sometimes left the park and damaged crops and then becoming aggressive when chased away by humans. (Tablado and D'Amico 2017: 104)

Habitats can be adversely affected by the construction of accommodation and other facilities for the tourists. This can be extremely harmful not only for the animals that used to inhabit those places, but also for the animals that depended on those places during times of severe hardship such as during droughts or while migrating. (Tablado and D'Amico 2017: 105-106)

It is unfortunate that many of the scenarios discussed above probably go unnoticed by the safari tourists. However, since such problems have become known various strategies have been adopted in various areas such as limiting the number of visitors, establishing guidelines for minimum distances from the animals for wildlife viewing, and banning the use of drones. (Tablado and D'Amico 2017: 106-107)

A) Botswana

The importance of tourism to Botswana

Botswana, a landlocked arid nation situated to the north of South Africa which also shares borders with Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia, became independent from British rule on September 30th, 1966. The country, which is about the size of France, has a fairly small population of under 2 million, and is basically a basin of sand and scrub-covered savannah, with an economy dominated by diamond mining and tourism. (Jerry 2015: 8-9, 176-177) It was only in 1990 that the government in Botswana began to encourage tourism, with the initiative soon producing results; between 1993 and 1998 the number of visitors increased by a massive 90%. (Kalikawe 2001: 3) It has been estimated that tourism receipts in

Botswana amount to approximately US\$650 million. (Christie et al 2014: 48) Furthermore, Botswana was identified in 2011 by tour operators as being one of the countries with the greatest potential for tours over the ensuing five years. (Christie et al 2014: 59) Hambira (2017: 8) quotes figures from the Botswana Department of Tourism and World Travel & Tourism showing that tourism contributes 3.3% of GDP, with 90% of all tourists visiting game reserves and national parks. Tourism is indeed seen as a key method of weaning the country off the national dependency on the income from diamond mining. The abundant wildlife and natural resources mean that in Botswana tourism has major potential for creating sustainable growth and jobs. (Hambira 2017: 16) Additionally, Leechor and Fabricius (2002: 18) state that in 2002 tourism accounted for about 5% of GDP and 8% of non-mining GDP, but agreed that tourism is especially suited as a priority sector for economic diversification.

As long ago as the year 2000, the Botswana Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Commission of the European Union (2000: 61) identified Botswana as having major strengths that would be advantageous for the development of the tourism industry, namely abundant wildlife and wilderness; the country's political and economic stability; the friendliness and high educational level of the people with stable inter-racial relations; and a good physical infrastructure. At the same time, however, various weaknesses were acknowledged such as the infancy of the industry in Botswana at the time combined with limited awareness of its potential and a general lack of an entrepreneurial tradition, plus burdensome bureaucratic procedures; there was particular criticism that the overall organisation of tourism was inadequate.

The tourism is centred on wildlife viewing; it is in fact often rated as having the best wilderness and wildlife areas in the whole of Africa (e.g. Boynton 2014; Holahan, date unknown). Indeed, according to safari.com (date unknown) "On safari in remote, untamed Botswana, the only crowds you'll encounter are those that have been there for centuries – the animals" and "Botswana's extensive game reserves are second to none for sheer numbers and variety of wildlife". Indeed, no less than 38% of its total land area has been given the status of national parks, wildlife reserves and wildlife management areas. The majority of them have no fences, which means that the animals can roam wild and free. (Jerry 2015: 89) Consequently it has become the last stronghold for various endangered birds and mammals, including for example the famed wild dogs (occasionally referred to as painted wolves). (Jerry 2015: 90) Jerry continues by describing the lasting impressions of visitors being "vast expanses of uninhabited wilderness stretching from horizon to horizon, the sensation of limitless space, astoundingly rich wildlife and bird viewing, night skies littered with stars and stunning sunsets of unearthly beauty".

The parks are home to vast numbers of wild animals, especially the jewels in the tourism crown represented by the huge Chobe National Park and the spectacular Okavango Delta, the world's largest inland delta. For instance, it is believed that Chobe was home to 120,000 elephants in 2014 (Jerry 2015: 24), a figure rising to 130,451 by 2016 according to the Great Elephant Census (Leithead 2016: 2), and then to 140,000 by 2019 (Taylor 2019: 6), as well as being home to numerous antelopes, buffalo, lions, hyenas etc.. A recent survey stated that Okavango had 122 species of mammals, 71 species of fish, 444 species of birds, 64 species of reptiles, and 1,300 species of flowering plants. (Jerry 2015: 59)

The Botswana Tourism Organisation has recently developed a grading system for accommodation to include so-called "green" credentials, producing Africa's first Eco-Certification scheme, which aims to

ensure that tourism companies follow responsible policies regarding environmental, social and cultural behaviour. Although membership of the scheme is voluntary, many businesses have, or are aiming at, accreditation under this scheme. (Jerry 2015: 92) Indeed, Botswana was one of the first countries to seriously adopt the practices of ecotourism before the term “eco” became a buzz word.

Given all the above facts, it is perhaps surprising that Botswana is not more widely known for its wildlife tourism. Primarily this is probably due to the fact that in order to avoid the problems of mass market tourism found elsewhere on the continent, Botswana deliberately adopted a policy of “high value-low volume,” tourism so that the environment and wildlife would be better protected and sustainable in the long term.

There are also probably other factors involved that affected the decision to have a low volume of tourists. One is the lack of infrastructure such as having a poor road network and a lack of hotels. Another is the limited amount of money spent on developing marketing campaigns to establish a brand image. The target of aiming at the high end of the market has, however, also been hampered by a general lack of qualified staff. (Jerry 2015: 76–78)

National parks and reserves

In order to ensure the continued preservation of the fragile ecosystems in Botswana, the government not only designated large swathes of the country as national parks and reserves, but also limited the construction of tourist accommodations and established regulations for the use of the reserves, such as banning night driving and off-road driving. (Jerry 2015: 91) These restrictions are generally kept to, with rangers carrying out checks, although occasionally there may be exceptions; for instance, I experienced a hair-raising off-road drive through large bushes while we chased a lioness which was chasing down and soon killed a large fleeing kudu (a very large antelope). (Brian Harrison, personal observation)

Inside the national parks, no operation of lodges is permitted. Camping is allowed in specified places but permission is required. Various companies run these campsites but have to follow strict guidelines; they usually also operate game drives but, as indicated, driving off the official paths is strictly forbidden. If the park rangers find a driver/guide who is driving off road, that driver will be given an official warning. If the driver accumulates 3 warnings within a 12-month period, the driver/guide will lose his licence, which means he will automatically lose his job. Although it is theoretically possible to re-qualify later, in practice it is very difficult, with the person needing to pass an extremely difficult examination in which the number of applicants who pass is relatively small. (Sam Kudomo, personal communication; Sam Kudomo is a safari guide employed by the travel company &Beyond)

Outside of the national parks, the government divided the bush into various “concessions”, which were then leased out to one company or one community. The leasee could then use the land for tourism-related operations such as renting out campsites, constructing lodges and organizing activities such as game drives. These areas of land tend to range from 9,000 to 13,000 square kilometres in size (one point taken into consideration would be the proximity to neighbours). The standard lease is for a period of 15 years, after which a review of the activities is conducted. Reasons for possible loss of the right to lease the land could include improper disposal of waste such as garbage (cans, bottles, plastics

etc.) directly into the environment, or allowing oil to leak into the ground (where it could seep into the groundwater and have possibly serious negative effects on the wildlife). In order to leave as much land as possible in its original state, lodges are ideally separated 20 kilometres apart. Furthermore, campsites cannot be permanent; the operators need to change the location at intervals so as to allow rejuvenation of the land. (Sam Kudomo, personal communication)

As mentioned earlier, the building of lodges etc. is not allowed inside the national parks. However, when a long-standing community was located in an area which was to be designated as part of a national park, in Botswana the government would re-classify the area surrounding the community as a “concession” and would not forcibly require the residents to move away. Furthermore, on condition that no hunting of animals would be carried out, they were given the right to operate the concession themselves or allow a private company (either from Botswana, or more often from abroad) to do that; in the latter case, the private company would pay a regular fee for the privilege. That payment would not be made to an individual but to the community as a whole. (Sam Kudomo, personal communication) This matter will be discussed in more detail later.

Strategy of high value, low volume, low impact tourism

As a way to maintain the environment in as pristine a manner as possible, the Department of Tourism has attempted to adopt a “low volume - low impact” model of tourism by maintaining a limited road network that mostly is composed of basic tracks which are only accessible by 4-wheel drive vehicles; imposing substantial park entry fees (especially for foreign visitors who are deemed able to afford them); and providing only a limited number of camping sites and lodges. (Leechor and Fabricius 2004: 58-59)

Morupisi and Leiokwane (2017: 1-4) quote figures from the Botswana Department of Tourism that show the domestic inbound tourist trips in 2010 (1.2 million) were well behind those by international visitors (2.1 million). They speculate that this is because Botswana has a mono product tourism offering which is centred around wildlife, and because it is too highly priced for local residents. Furthermore, many of the inhabitants are unable to leave their farms and cattle posts, and therefore cannot participate in leisure activities that entail travelling. As a result, despite the difficulties that are anticipated, Morupisi and Leiokwane (2017: 6) urge the creation of a diversified policy whereby not all locations adopt the “high value – low volume” approach, with for instance the introduction of concessionary rates for residents during the off-season. They argue that this would help the nation with increased employment and act as an antidote to the seasonality problem experienced by tourism operators.

Relations with the indigenous people: Community-based natural resource management

The early approaches to conservation were essentially top-down approaches, which in general failed to achieve the hoped-for aims. (Stone 2-15: 83) On the other hand, community-based natural resource management is a bottom-up approach which aims at simultaneously achieving the sustainable utilization of natural resources and rural development by involving all the various stakeholders. One definition proposed in 2001 is that community-based ecotourism is “a practice of tourism which the local

community has a significant control over, enjoys participation in its development and management, and a major percentage of the benefits stay within the community". (Zacarias and Loyola 2017: 138) This means that the responsibility for resource management is placed on the rural communities themselves. The policy became important in Africa in the late 1980s, with the first pilot projects in Botswana being established in communities living close to national parks and game reserves in the mid-1990s. The first project was near Chobe in 1993, followed by another at Sankoyo Tshwaragano in the Okavango Delta two years later. Later, other projects began, and in 2007 the policy was adopted in parliament. The programme expanded rapidly, with 83 community trusts set up by 2003 and rising to 105 by 2009. (Mbaiwa 2015: 60–64)

Some of the projects have been successful but others have failed. In some cases (e.g. in Chobe) the programme did not achieve the results that were hoped for due to operational, structural, and cultural limits impeding community participation in the projects. (Stone 2015: 81) When successful, though, one of the major benefits (especially in northern Botswana) has been increased employment which has improved the livelihood of residents. It has thus contributed to the alleviation of poverty and brought social security to the people. Community-based natural resource management has also generated income from a variety of sources e.g. photographic tourism activities such as game drives, *mokoro* safaris (*mokoro* are a common type of canoe used to get around in the shallow waters of the Okavango Delta), camping, land rentals, handicraft production etc.

The money that is generated is often used to provide a range of social services, with the benefits distributed both at the individual/household level and the community level e.g. the provision of housing, micro-credit schemes, funeral expense assistance and the provision of scholarships. (Mbaiwa 2015: 68–71) In addition, community-based natural resource management can contribute to conservation by the establishment of management-oriented monitoring systems; community policing and enforcement of conservation practices; and ensuring the correct practices are followed according to a wildlife quota system for hunting (such as the number of permitted kills) before the activity was banned in 2014. When hunting was made illegal in January 2014, it was realized that photographic tourism would not bring in the same amount of income as hunting, so communities were encouraged to expand their photographic tourism enterprises. (Mbaiwa 2015: 72–76) Stone (2015: 91) notes an instance in which five villages cooperated and used the tourism income to buy a tractor for each village as well as setting up two general shops, which meant that the residents no longer had to make the 100 kilometre journey to Kasane to access shops. Each year a meeting decides how to distribute the year's income amongst the participants. On the negative side, however, was the perception that it was government-controlled departments that still exerted power and control.

One successful example of a community operating a government-granted concession is the village of Khwai, a community of former bushmen who continue their traditional lifestyle just outside the national park at Moremi. Monies they receive are put into the community fund and are distributed to people when they are in need, for example to fund a stay in hospital. Some of the money is given to people who have reached the retirement age of 65. The official government pension is a mere 300 pulas a month (= US\$30), which is not enough to live on. The community fund then contributes a further 600 pulas (US\$60) each month, with the resultant sum of 900 pulas (US\$90) permitting quite a good

standard of living. (Sam Kudomo, personal communication)

One of the most important aspects of community-based natural resource management is that the local people themselves believe they have a personal stake in the tourism activities and that the wildlife resources “belong” to them, and the fact that they share the income amongst the community means that all of them personally benefit. This leads to a positive attitude on the part of residents to conservation efforts. (Mbaiwa 2015: 76) One measure of success in the Okavango Delta in Botswana is that whereas previously there had been no jobs and serious poverty, in 2017 it was estimated that community-based tourism had become the primary source of livelihood for 60% of village residents. (Wood 2017: 78)

The need to have all stakeholders actively involved in tailor-made programmes to address socioeconomic problems was also emphasized by Lephodisa (2016: 42) when examining corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Botswana tourist industry. In his study, Lephodisa (2016: 41-42) criticized the way CSR activities seemed to be carried out on an ad hoc basis, and argued that there was a need to place priority on local human resources development. More specifically, he claimed that there are a series of gaps in the way CSR was implemented, citing the absence of an overall CSR policy, a lack of CSR strategies, a lack of CSR budget allocation by business involved in tourism, and the lack of effort to adequately include the local community in decision making. (Lephodisa 2016: 37)

Problems affecting tourism and wildlife in Botswana

a) Employment of Botswana citizens

In the past (up to early this century) most of the guides tended to be foreigners, and white South Africans in particular. One argument used to justify this state of affairs was that prospective guides in Botswana were not capable linguistically to offer good guidance and explanations in English to the tourists who come on safaris. However, with much of the education system in Botswana carried out in English, this situation no longer applies. Furthermore, many local guides have the advantage of having grown up in contact with wildlife and have a natural instinct concerning what the animals may be doing and where they are located etc., whereas outsiders obtain their knowledge purely from their scholarly studies. (Sam Kudomo, personal communication)

To rectify the situation, in 2005/2006 the government passed a regulation stating that guiding jobs must be given to Botswana citizens. However, being fair, they granted foreigners who had already being employed in such positions the right to continue guiding and operating businesses. (Sam Kudomo, personal communication)

It is not just the guides that used to come from other countries. Despite tourism being important to Botswana's economy, historically the profits from the operations have gone to big and mostly foreign-owned companies. Very few operations were wholly owned and run by local communities, but this did occur in the cases of Santawani Lodge and Kaziikini campsite, which were part of the Sankuyo Tshwaragano Management Trust in the Okavango Delta. This was one of the rare occasions in which a local community organisation benefited directly from tourism. (du Toit 2010: 10-11) In general, due to the dominance of foreign companies, there was not much thought given to the sociocultural, economic

and environmental needs of the tourist destinations, which meant that although local communities might gain income by leasing their land to foreign safari companies, they did so at the cost of their autonomy and with a probable loss of sustainability. When foreign companies are in control, a further consequence is that there is greater dependency on outside capital, skills and managers, which in turn adversely affects the self-reliance of the local communities. In contrast, locally owned operations might not initially bring in so much money, but gradually over time they will be more sustainable and profitable as the local people gain experience and expand their operations. (du Toit 2010: 73–74)

b) Unintended consequences of elephant conservation

As mentioned earlier, by 2016 the elephant population in Botswana had reached over 130,000. This is in stark contrast to what has happened in other African countries, where 30% of the elephants disappeared in just 7 years; in the period 2007–2016 no less than 144,000 elephants were lost. The reason for that catastrophic decline was poaching by criminals who wanted to acquire and sell the valuable ivory tusks. (Leithead 2016: 3) Some of the poachers attempt to justify the slaughter by saying that elephants terrorize their communities and invade their farms, which with the lack of compensation means people have no money, no food and no livelihood. (Leithead 2019a: 6) The above figures were obtained by flying aircraft half a million kilometres over 18 African countries during a two-year period. (Leithead 2016: 3) In one area of the country, whereas there used to be about one instance per month of an elephant causing damage and injuring or killing a person, recently the frequency had become once a week. (Ishihara 2019)

That being the case, why is it that the elephant population in Botswana is booming? First, the government has adopted strict measures against poachers which has limited their range of activities, meaning that elephants have been safe in Botswana, even though that may be beginning to change. In fact, Botswana formed an anti-poaching unit as long ago as 1988. (Gaoswediwe 2019) Certainly, Botswana has adopted a tough stance against poaching, exemplified by their proclamation in 2013 that they were implementing a “shoot-to-kill” policy against suspected poachers; indeed it is believed that more than 50 people may have died in the last two decades during anti-poaching operations. (Somerville Sustainable Conservation 2018: 1–3) It should be mentioned that poaching is not confined to elephants; it occurs with other types of wildlife, and the penalties are severe. The harshest penalty is for crimes against rhinos (up to 15 years in prison and a fine up to US\$10,000), but crimes involving other animals can result in custodial sentences of 5 to 10 years. (Your Botswana.com 2018: 2)

During the summer of 2016, despite the patrols by the military, the first major elephant poaching incident (21 kills) was recorded inside Botswana. Due to the facts that the distances that need to be patrolled are vast and the financial rewards for ivory traffickers are huge, the situation clearly did not bode well for the future (Leithead 2016: 8) Indeed, in 2019 a four-yearly aerial survey carried out by the NGO Elephants Without Borders and the government discovered a 6-fold increase in the number of fresh or recently killed elephant carcasses in the north of the country which showed clear signs of having been due to the actions of poachers. Whilst in the middle of the survey (August 2018) the chief scientist involved in the survey (Dr. Mike Chase) said he had discovered 88 dead elephants in one relatively small area, and 128 in total, and publicly announced that there was a poaching problem and

accused the authorities of ignoring the evidence. The government said that his results were “false and misleading” and the media reports “unsubstantiated and sensational”. Dr. Chase actually received death threats and had one of his two research licences suspended. (Leithead 2019b: 1-2) Afterwards, though, it became clear that the government had made only minimal efforts to clarify the situation, and it became suspected that the controversy was more connected with national politics than the actual situation regarding wildlife.

In April 2018, the president handed power to his deputy, but later the two men fell out with each other. Under the former president hunting was banned, but the damage caused by increased numbers of marauding elephants led to a situation whereby they had to balance lifting the hunting ban to gain electoral votes against potential harm to the country’s reputation as a luxury safari destination. His successor (Masisi) ordered the small anti-poaching units to give up their weapons and also set up a commission which proposed lifting the ban and selling elephant meat as canned pet food. (Leithead 2019b: 6-9) Furthermore, he even gave stools made out of elephants’ feet to visiting dignitaries. (Independent 2019) The scientist who made the accusations (Dr. Chase) was close to the former president, so the timing of his complaint (just before a party congress which would select a leader for the upcoming national elections) was seen as a political attack on the present incumbent. (Leithead 2019b: 6-9) In May 2019, the ban on elephant hunting in Botswana, which had been in place since 2014, was lifted. Although the government stated that the reason was the increasing conflict between humans and the animals, the action was deplored as purely political by conservationists, who pointed out that the measure would impact on the continent’s elephant population, of which approximately one-third were living inside Botswana’s borders. (BBC News 2019) It was widely believed that the reason for the decision to allow the resumption of hunting was an attempt by the ruling party to get votes in the election to enable them to hold on the power they had maintained ever since independence in 1966. Applications for hunting began in September 2019, and by late October had reached a total of 158. (Ishihara 2019) There seemed to be quite a lot of support for the proposal from people in Botswana, firstly because it was perceived that the money was mostly going to white foreigners and the descendants of colonialists, whereas many who live outside the national parks had a struggle to get by on government subsidies. In addition, although government estimates are that tourism in 2019 accounted for approximately 12% of national income, people felt that they received benefits very slowly, whereas the damage caused by the elephants was immediately obvious. (Independent 2019)

An auction for 60 permits to shoot elephants took place in early 2020, raising about \$2.3 million, equivalent to around \$39,000 per animal, and taking the total quota for shootings to 272 elephants for the 2020 hunting season. The actions caused a great outcry, with conservationists warning that it could be a global conservation disaster, and many African organizations who wanted money put towards local community projects becoming angry because they were excluded from the bidding. One reason for the opposition from conservationists was that they feared that licensing the kills might increase demand for elephant body parts, thereby triggering an increase in illegal poaching. A further worry was that by killing the biggest and strongest elephants there would be a degradation in the available gene pool, leading to a greater risk of extinction. In addition, critics claimed that relying on one-off trophy fees to the government would harm the poorest communities by depriving them of income

streams from nature tourism, estimated at about \$2 million over an elephant's lifetime. (Dalton 2020)

Dr. Mike Chase, who is the principal investigator affiliated to the NGO Elephants Without Borders, believes the reason for the increase in the elephant population is perhaps due to the fact that elephants are extremely clever, and also the scale of the threat that they face. He has suggested that the data indicates that the animals actually have a cognitive ability to understand where they are threatened and where they are safe, and they realise that they can have a safe sanctuary in Botswana. (Leithead 2016: 6-7) At the same time, though, he admits that there is simply not enough space for them all, with the concentration of elephants putting pressure on the environment, a situation aggravated by the increase and spread of the human population. Indeed, people have been trampled to death and entire crops have been destroyed in a single day. (Taylor 2019: 6) The situation is further worsened by climate change causing habitat loss, thus intensifying the competition for space (see later). (Leithead 2019a: 20)

Hunting was banned in Botswana in 2014 (Leithead 2019b: 7), but as described, this led to the proliferation of the elephant population, which in turn is causing problems for farmers as they maraud through crops. Some farmers built electric fences, but this did not solve the problem. The elephants, who are extremely intelligent, knocked trees down to break the fences and enter the areas they wished to go. Eventually the farmers took the extreme measure of cutting down all the nearby trees. However, the elephants had their own answer to this – they pushed the logs through the fences. (Sam Kudomo, personal communication)

c) Disappearance of rhinos

Africa has lost most of its rhinos (usually because of poachers killing them to obtain their horns), although some are raised in South Africa. However, a few years ago no less than 1,000 rhinos were killed in just one year in South Africa alone. (Joubert and Kent, date unknown) A few years ago, one travel company called “&Beyond” joined together with an organization known as Great Plains Conservation to form an NGO called “Rhinos Without Borders”, and then worked with the Botswana government on a plan to transport rhinos from South Africa to Botswana and subsequently release them into the wild. By 2019, 87 of the planned population of 100 had been introduced and appear to be doing well, and the scheme is being extended in cooperation with another private tourism company. The whole process is difficult, though. The rhinos can injure themselves by hitting their horns against the side of their containers, which can cause the whole horn to fall out although, rather like a human child losing their first teeth and then growing new ones, the rhino can over a few years grow a new horn. To prevent injury, the horn is removed before transportation and the new horn then can grow following release into the wild. The final stage of releasing transporting the rhino involves carrying the rhino by helicopter and lowering it upside down to the ground. The whole operation is extremely expensive, with the transportation of just one rhino costing \$45,000. (&Beyond, date unknown)

The above plan is set to continue after all the rhinos have been transported by providing post-release assistance (including the establishment of monitoring systems and anti-poaching measures), together with community education (especially in schools) to foster the feeling that local people are partners in the fight for conservation. (&Beyond, date unknown) With this aim, &Beyond arranged for

88 lessons on conservation and biodiversity to be delivered in schools etc. in Botswana in 2017; they have aimed at a total of 50 such lessons at each lodge that they operate within Africa. In East Africa they achieved a total of no less than 2,020 lessons to over 700 people in 2017. (&Beyond 2017: 86)

d) Climate change

Stresses due to climate change can result in the displacement of wildlife because of increased barren areas and decreased tree cover, leading to increased competition for food and forage, and conflict with humans. Warmer temperatures could alter rainfall patterns, with decreased amounts of rainfall causing a decrease in river flow, which in turn could increase evaporation and produce less run off into catchment areas. This could significantly affect key tourist destinations such as the Okavango Delta. For example, the effects on water resources may impact both the animals and also the leisure activities for humans such as fishing. (Hambira 2017: 11-12) The resultant economic blow can easily be imagined when it is realised that over 90% of the people in the Okavango Delta (where the population is over 122,000) are directly or indirectly dependent on the area's natural resources. (du Toit 2010: 6) Unfortunately, there has been little research on climate change and tourism in southern Africa, possibly due to a lack of data. (Hambira 2017: 15) Perhaps partly as a result of this, Hambira (2017: 19-20) laments that some tour operators have been reluctant to accept the existence of climate change or believe that the situation is too uncertain for early countermeasures, although there are signs that there is a growing realisation that the issue needs to be addressed. Indeed, it has been reported that the majority of professionals in the two ecologically distinct tourist areas of Kasane and Maun (respectively the centres for Chobe National Park and the Okavango delta) and Tshabong (the Kalahari desert) have observed high temperatures, erratic rainfall and a shift of seasons during the past few years, which of course could have a significant effect on tourism. (Hambira 2017: 37)

However, Botswana faces a number of potential problems in devising measures to adapt to changing climate. These include inadequate financial resources; cultural norms; a lack of understanding of the issues involved; and the fact that, like other developing countries, there is competition for limited funds with other development needs. This situation therefore demands coordination between all the various involved stakeholders including government, community networks, markets, and concerned businesses. (Hambira 2017: 46-47)

One quite extreme manifestation of climate change has become very evident in recent years, especially in 2019. As stated earlier, one of the major tourism areas is the Okavango delta, with the best season for touring there occurring in July-September. Although this represents the height of the dry season, it is also perversely the season when water levels are at their highest, and tourists travel around the area by *mokoro*, a local type of small canoe. This is because the rains actually fall early in the year in Angola, but it then takes several months for the water to wind its way down to the delta. However, in 2019 the rains failed, and when I visited Okavango expecting to see about 90% of the area covered by water, in fact there was no water to be seen. Later in the year various media reports stated that it was the worst drought for 100 years, and besides having a devastating effect on wildlife (e.g. elephants were walking vast distances searching for water, with some collapsing and dying only 100 metres from a water source), there were also significant effects on other iconic tourist sites. For

instance, at the world famous Victoria Falls, located only an hour's drive from Kasane (the entry point for Chobe National Park), there was a reasonable quantity of water flowing over the Zimbabwean side, but when I went down the Zambesi river to the Zambian side, instead of a cascading waterfall, barely a trickle flowed down. Various tourist-related workers told me that they were extremely worried that a repeat the following year could result in hugely negative consequences both for the wildlife and also the tourist industry, with large drops in visitor numbers already becoming apparent. (Brian Harrison, personal observations)

e) Localized concentrations of tourists

One problem that began occurring many years ago and which has not been adequately addressed is that many people enter the parks as day visitors; indeed, it is not only tourists staying in Botswana – while I was staying at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, I saw numerous advertisements offering day trips to the famous Chobe National Park across the border in Botswana, only about an hour's drive away. (Brian Harrison, personal observation) In addition, many guests go for game drives of a limited distance from their base in lodges located around the parks in Kasane and Maun, both in northern Botswana. Indeed, the Chobe and Moremi parks accounted for 90% of the primary market segments in 2003; Chobe had 64% of the visitor share of parks, and Moremi accounted for 27%. Even as long ago as the turn of the century, a considerable growth in tourist numbers was being observed; for example, the number of day visitors to Chobe rose by 360% during the period 1998-2003. This places considerable pressures on the parks which need to be resolved in order to achieve sustainable growth in the region. (Leechor and Fabricius 2004: 7-8, 56) As a result, Leechor and Fabricius (2002: 11) strongly urge the upgrading of the Okavango Delta and Chobe river plains, regarding them as “national treasures that warrant the stewardship of best leadership and managerial talents the country can afford”. They also urged the introduction of an initiative that brings together the government, private operators and local communities so as to ensure long-term sustainable management; they insisted that this is especially important in the Chobe area. (Leechor and Fabricius 2004: 62) Later, as mentioned earlier, such initiatives were indeed launched.

f) Exploitation of potential oil reserves

In May 2021, the International Energy Agency stated clearly that it was imperative to immediately stop the exploitation and development of new oil and gas reserves if wanting to meet the 2050 goals of net zero CO₂ emissions. Despite this, ReconAfrica (a Canadian oil and gas company) has obtained licences to explore land which is believed to be one of the biggest new oil fields discovered in recent years – and it is the area which could potentially devastate the regional ecosystems and wildlife in addition to the local communities. It could directly threaten the massive pristine area of the Okavango Delta in Botswana by jeopardising the critical water supplies through contamination, creating a life-threatening situation for the huge number of elephants (estimated at 130,000) that live in the region (Taylor 2021).

Unfortunately, the threat to the elephants extends even further. Nnimmo Bassey, chair of Oilwatch Africa, stated that “every element of this process – from new roads to drilling sites, refineries to

terminals – will devastate the ecosystem and the local communities that depend on it for farming and fishing”. (Taylor 2021: 2) Vibrations from exploratory work disturbs elephants; noise causes elephants (especially young ones) to leave the area when noise exists, which they perceive as danger; and on top of all that the roads are likely to make the area more accessible for poachers. The proposed oilfield, which spreads across areas of both Namibia and Botswana, is defended by the company, who argue that they will adopt appropriate countermeasures to the problems outlined, and the government, who stand to gain many billions of dollars. (Taylor 2021).

In conclusion, Botswana is a country with abundant natural resources, especially the native wildlife, together with an educated population and a blossoming tourist industry. Botswana has adopted a “high value, low volume” model with carefully restricted policies for accommodation and game drives etc.. Furthermore, the government has given great consideration to the livelihoods of the people by adopting community-based natural resource management. Consequently, the chances of attaining a fully sustainable tourism industry are good.

Tanzania and Kenya compared

Tanzania and Kenya are by far and away the giants of wildlife tourism in East Africa, and boast national parks that have virtually become household names. In the so-called northern circuit of Tanzania there are such familiar national parks as Lake Manyara, Ngorongoro and the Serengeti, whereas Kenya has the Maasai Mara and the Nairobi National Park just outside the capital. The Serengeti and Maasai Mara can perhaps be considered as one huge area, since the Serengeti in Tanzania continues into Kenya as the Maasai Mara, although perhaps surprisingly, according to Earthlife Expeditions it is not permitted to travel directly across the border (that requires a roundabout journey from, say, Arusha in Tanzania by air – possibly via Dar es Salaam - and then to Nairobi, before travelling back overland to the park; as a result to cross from one side of the Sand River in the Serengeti to the opposite river bank in the Maasai Mara may take up to 8 hours by plane. (Earthlife Expeditions, date unknown) It is not certain, though, that this case still applies. However, it is possible to travel from Arusha (Tanzania) to Nairobi overland with about 4 hours’ driving. There are other national parks elsewhere in the two countries, but it is the northern ones which are the most famous and which have the greatest numbers of big game. (D’Souza 2019a) In particular, the Maasai Mara and Serengeti have the major attraction of being the site of the “Great Migration” of wildebeest, when it is estimated that between 1.5 and 2 million wildebeest migrate at the same time. Certainly I can attest that it is truly a remarkable sight to witness several hundred frightened and panicking wildebeest all plunging together into a river and desperately swimming to the opposite bank before being possibly devoured by lurking crocodiles. (Brian Harrison, personal observation)

In general there are no great differences regarding the wildlife tourism in the two countries; the topography, climate and vegetation are comparable, and in addition the range of animals that can be viewed are also similar. In both countries it is possible to see the so-called “Big Five” animals (it should perhaps be pointed out that many people seem to have the misconception that the “big five” refers to the five biggest animals, but that is not the case; the term derives from the days when hunting was

widespread and refers to the five types of animal that were considered the five most difficult to catch – i.e. lions, elephants, buffalo, rhinos and leopards). [As the list was originally conceived because of shooting animals to kill them, in 2021 about 250 wildlife photographers, conservationists and wildlife charities began a project called “The New Big Five” to encourage shooting with a camera instead as a means of promoting conservation efforts. They polled approximately 50,000 people from all over the world, asking them which animals they most enjoyed seeing photographs of. The top five animals were elephants, lions, polar bears, gorillas and tigers; it should be noted that all these “New Big Five” animals are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s list for being in varying degrees of danger (Weston 2021)]. Since Tanzania is about 150% larger than Kenya, this is reflected in the numbers of animals living there. (Bergstrom 2018) In contrast, although they share the same ecosystem, the Maasai Mara park in Kenya is relatively small compared to the Serengeti (only 20% of the size) and therefore tends to feel much busier with a higher concentration of safari vehicles. (D’Souza 2019b) There is one possible advantage enjoyed by the Masai Mara; in Tanzania all the safari operators are private companies, and it is forbidden for drivers to go off-road for better views of the animals, a policy backed up by strict enforcement (I was told that two transgressions could result in a lifetime ban). On the other hand, if staying on a Maasai conservancy, which is possible in the Maasai Mara in Kenya, since the Maasai control all activities within their jurisdiction, drivers may go off-road at their own discretion. (Staff at Kirurumu tented lodge, Serengeti, personal communication) Certainly, with the greater range and number of accommodation options and smaller parks, crowds are definitely larger than in Tanzania. (Gosheni Safaris, date unknown) In Tanzania, though, one of the most famous parks, Ngorongoro, which is located inside the huge crater of an extinct volcano, can also become extremely crowded, with some warning that visitors may actually see more vehicles than animals. (D’Souza 2019b) Although this may be a bit of an exaggeration, while I was in Ngorongoro word quickly spread that a lion had killed an animal (believed to be a zebra) and within a matter of minutes literally dozens of jeeps had congregated at the spot. (Brian Harrison, personal observation)

Regarding access, Kenya is perhaps more convenient as Nairobi is a much larger hub than Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, with the greater number of international flights resulting in lower airfares. Additionally, Kenya is richer than Tanzania, resulting in a better and more reliable infrastructure. Also, safaris often tend to be cheaper as there are more options available. Balanced against this, though, Tanzania has an advantage in that it has a phenomenal density and diversity of wildlife; in fact it is said to have the greatest concentration.

To summarize, Tanzania and Kenya share many characteristics, but as there are also significant differences, the two countries will be discussed separately, beginning with Tanzania.

B) Tanzania

The importance of tourism to Tanzania

With its famous safari parks, it is not surprising that Tanzania has greatly expanded its tourism industry over the years, with substantial benefits to the country as a whole. The World Bank has stated that the number of tourists to the country rose from 285,000 in 1995 to 1,104,000 in 2015. Figures

from the Tanzanian government show that in the period 2001–2016, arrivals increased from 525,000 to 1,284,279. Regular workers in the industry rose from 4.7% in 2005, but from 2010 onwards the figure was over 7%, with the quality of jobs rising, with higher wages and the majority of the workers being regular and not casual workers, thereby resulting in a much more stable situation. In terms of GDP, the contribution of tourism was only 3.75% in 1995, but 20 years later the figure had shot up to 9.5%. (Pelizzo and Kinyondo 2018: 9–19) Indeed, in 2016 the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) put the value of wildlife in Tanzania as a large 17% of GDP. (IUCN 2016) All these facts demonstrate the important role of tourism in promoting socio-economic development in Tanzania, with income per capita tripling between 2000 and 2016; infant mortality dropping from 81.1 per thousand in 2000 to half that value in 2015; an increase in life expectancy at birth increasing from 51.4 years in 2000 to 64.9 years in 2015; and the literacy rate rising from 69.4% in 2002 to 77.8% by 2015. In addition, over the period 1991–2011, the percentage of the population living below the poverty line decreased from 70.4% to 46.6%. (Pelizzo and Kinyondo 2018: 9–19) Although tourism is clearly of great importance to Tanzania, Lwoga (2013) laments the fact that a full two-thirds of the earnings generated by the industry go to foreign-owned enterprises, especially the high-class tourism entities. (Logwa 2013: 23) As regards the future, Kombo (2012: 263) states clearly that Tanzania has one of the richest tourism potentials in the continent of Africa, but also warns that it is necessary to review red tape and regulations, and argues that it is important to enhance the human and natural assets of the poor.

By 2017, some researchers were referring to Tanzania's tourist industry as "booming", with earnings topping \$1 billion a year in 2015, growing at a steady rate for the previous 7 years and making that sector of the economy the financial leader, overtaking agriculture and accounting for 17.2% of GDP. (Pasape and Mujwiga 2017) Indeed, it had been predicted before the Covid pandemic that Tanzania's tourism industry would grow at the high rate of 6.2% per year by 2025, which compares favourably with the expected world growth of 3.7%. (Mgonja 2017)

Ecotourism in Tanzania

Although tourism in Tanzania has been booming for a number of years, the performance of its ecotourism networks has been described as unsatisfactory and not sustainable due to a significant number of unidentified and unresolved challenges, despite having considerable potential. The major requirement has been regarded as getting the various stakeholders and local people to work together to ensure that sustainable conservation takes place. In addition, infrastructure (e.g. the provision of all-weather roads which are passable all through the year to transport visitors from the international airports to their destinations), finance (e.g. for the marketing of tour activities), and a satisfactory regulatory framework have been identified as having considerable importance for ecotourism. It was recommended that all the main stakeholders should work together under the coordination of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism to address these areas. (Pasape and Mujigwa 2017)

One problem concerning macro tourist initiatives and ecotourism was pointed out a number of years back by Mutch (2011). That is, it is frequently the smaller and independent lodges who are best placed to involve the local communities, but it is the same lodges that experience the most difficulty in achieving proper long-term training, providing secure employment and also monitoring the extent to

which profits are re-invested in the local area due to the fact that these activities are both expensive and labour-intensive. However, success can be achieved, even though considerable time might be necessary; Mutch (2011) notes that it took 8 years of difficult negotiations, but land owned cooperatively by the Maasai and leased via the Tanzania Land Conservation Trust led to the revitalization of a poor area with the locals having a significant impact whilst maintaining the camp's high standards.

In general, it appears that Tanzania has not realized its ecotourism potential, with minimal and only very localized implementation. (Mgonja et al, 2015) Again, the major problems are identified as accessibility, inadequate infrastructure and insufficient marketing and promotion. Mgonja et al (2015) urge the authorities to formulate clear policies, regulations and guidelines as to how to improve ecotourism in the nation.

Relationship with the indigenous people

The indigenous Maasai are a people who have lived in today's Tanzania and Kenya for millennia, and still essentially live a traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle with a strong focus on herding. Long ago, the Maasai in what is Tanzania today would roam the Serengeti, but when the national park of that name was established in 1959 a prohibition was placed on living within the park, and many people were forced to move outside the perimeter. (Friedman-Rudovsky 2015: 1-8) They were first moved to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, but in 1974 they were again evicted as their presence was seen as detrimental to both wildlife and the landscape. In the 1980s the government imposed additional strict regulations limiting their activities. (Salazar 2009: 10) The Maasai would argue that these actions were merely a continuation of their battle during the 20th century to defend their land rights and their traditional livelihoods. (Gardner 2016: 5)

In particular, their complaints were aimed at the activities of two separate foreign organizations and the approach of the Tanzanian rulers. One was the Ortello Business Corporation (OBC), a hunting company connected with the royal family of the United Arab Emirates in Dubai. Beginning in 1992, this group had controversially been given exclusive hunting rights to an area that included Maasai villages. There were widespread accusations that the company was able to ignore many of the legal requirements imposed on them such as hunting quotas, and indeed the local police were employed by the company as security guards. The power of the company was demonstrated on July 4th, 2009, when the Tanzanian police used company vehicles to forcibly evict thousands of Maasai people and tens of thousands of livestock from the village land under the pretext that they were protecting the environment as well as permitting the OBC to exercise their state-sanctioned right to hunt there, in addition to attempting to prevent future conflicts between "people and nature". Although this was nullified as a result of international protests, in 2013 a new protected area was declared which reduced the area available to the Maasai to merely 40% of their previously held land. (Gardner 2016: 3) It should perhaps be pointed out that people versus nature problems are occurring more often, but this is due mainly to humans increasingly encroaching on the edges of the wildlife protected areas; for example, because of this, in 2020 it was announced that 36 lions would be relocated in Tanzania following attacks on cattle and people. (Agence France Presse 2020)

The other company which caused great controversy was an American company called Thomson Safaris, who arranged ecotourism trips to the region, catering mainly to clients from the USA. The perhaps surprising fact is that the company was the recipient of several awards for sustainable travel etc. (Gardner 2016: 8)

As the tourist business grew and droughts occurred, there was a reduction in the areas of good grazing land that was available. In 2006 Thomson Safaris bought a lease to an area they identified as being good for tourism, but unfortunately this was the same land that was good for grazing. In one instance in 2006, when Maasai people living just inside the land newly titled to Thomson Safaris refused to move, their homes were burned down. Various conflicts occurred between the company and the Maasai when grazing was prohibited, with transgressions on to the land drawing frequent dispersal or confiscation of herds, beatings, arrests, detention in jail, and even shootings. Journalists were threatened, and by 2009 there were accusations of collusion between the company and the government. (Friedman-Rudovsky 2015: 1-8) The Maasai could not understand how somebody else could sell their land, and there were a number of questionable practices such as forged minutes from meetings that perhaps never actually took place involving the Maasai. (Gardner 2016: 10) Gradually the land where the Maasai could live became smaller and smaller, with the pattern repeated in various locations. (Friedman-Rudovsky 2015: 1-8)

Although Thomson Safaris claim that they are innocent and produce benefits for the local communities, stories like the above seem to abound and have continued unabated. In 2018, there were further accusations that government officials and foreign tourist companies were taking advantage of laws covering ecotourism and conservation in order to evict the indigenous people and prevent them having access to watering holes and vital grazing land for their livestock. An American think-tank (Oakland Institute) reported that in 2017 some tens of thousands of Maasai had been made homeless when their homes near the famous wildlife destination of Ngorongoro Crater were destroyed when land was burnt, allegedly to preserve the ecosystem and attract more tourists. They also reported increasing violence, arrests and deaths at the time. (Dahir 2018; Oakland Institute 2018)

The accusations were made against both the subsidiary of Thomson Safaris and also the Ortello Business Corporation, including claims that a substantial number of officials are corrupt. In the end, one former president stated that the Maasai would never lose their lands, but despite that the controversy later increased in intensity. (Dahir 2018; Oakland Institute 2018) The process of allocating and monitoring hunting concessions has in particular been alleged to be “riddled with widespread corruption”. This includes some of the nation’s top officials; for instance, even the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism and top Wildlife Department officials were fired because of taking bribes in allocating hunting concessions and shipping live animals abroad. (Library of Congress, date unknown)

In all of this, considerable criticism of the government has been expressed, besides the accusation of corruption. In his study entitled “Selling the Serengeti: The cultural politics of safari tourism”, Gardner (2016: 12) describes how, although the foreign organizations paid money, the payment was to the government and not the local people, and notes that the government had an extremely condescending attitude towards the pastoral Maasai, despite their long association with the land and their knowledge of how to protect it. The general feeling in government seemed to be that the land was too valuable to

be controlled by the villagers who they regarded as being backward, corrupt or naïve. (Gardner 2016: 12) Referring to the Maasai in the Ngorongoro reserve (near the Serengeti), Melubo (2013: 19-20) strongly refutes this suggestion, arguing that it is important to realise that the pastoral population evolved as an integral part of the ecosystem, and that in order to maintain the desired ecological conditions, their continued interaction with the natural environment is necessary. He continues by proposing that an integrated natural and cultural heritage perspective is needed, with a change in approach from top-down and basic needs to a bottom-up approach for rural development that encourages self-sufficiency. Gardner (2016: 13) mentions one apparently successful case where a deal was finalized directly between a foreign-owned company (Dorobo Sagaris) and villagers to the benefit of both parties, but notes how this was very much the exception.

With the title “Losing the Serengeti: The Maasai land that was to run forever”, a report published in May 2018 listed harassment such as the Thomson company deliberately building a camp in the middle of a Maasai village, thereby blocking access to the nearby waterhole. Local herders were then threatened, assaulted, or tied up and driven off by local police, park rangers and security guards. (Watts 2018)

In October 2019, the government released a report entitled “The multiple land use model of Ngorongoro Conservation Area: Achievements and lessons learnt, challenges and options for the future”. In this, they recognised various problems such as the reductions in the number of livestock per capita, resulting in people having to diversify their livelihoods by pursuing activities such as crop production and even poaching, which are both ecologically destructive and unsustainable. (United Republic of Tanzania 2019). In March of that year, Unesco and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had appealed for urgent action to control population growth in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). (Oakland Institute 2021)

With such pressures caused by the population in the NCA, which numbered about 80,000, it would seem that efforts would no longer be aimed at relocating more Maasai to the area. However, the opposite seems to be taking place. In April 2021, the Tanzanian government announced a policy whereby continued evictions of Maasai from their ancestral lands to the NCA would be carried out on an unprecedented scale. An Oakland Institute report entitled “The looming threat of eviction: The continued displacement of the Maasai under the guise of conservation in the NCA” argues that the evictions and the restrictions placed on tens of thousands of people are in fact unrelated to the claimed purpose of environmental conservation but actually are about expanding tourism revenues from the NCA, which is one of the most intensively visited conservation areas in Africa (the number of annual visitors soared from 20,000 in 1979 to 644,155 in 2018). (Oakland Institute 2021) A further article published at the end of February 2022 states that an extra 70,000 Maasai could be forced to relocate from their homeland in Loliondo to the NCA so that the country’s tourism industry can benefit from big game hunting. This may be because the government’s exclusive 25-year contract with the United Arab Emirates’ Otterlo Business Company for hunting expired in 2017, and they wish to create a trophy-hunting corridor for companies like Otterlo. (Al Jazeera 2022a) The situation exploded into violence in June 2022 when police attempted to start demarcating 1,500 sq km of land so that the Otterlo company could have their own luxury reserve, despite a 2018 injunction against such an action

by the East African Court of Justice. Live ammunition was used as well as sharp weapons, causing over 30 seriously injured and one death. Protesters who needed hospital treatment were forced to cross the border into Kenya since the Tanzanians refused to provide medical care to land protesters. Hundreds and possibly thousands of Maasai fled to seek refuge. (McQue and Busby 2022; Al Jazeera 2022b; BBC 2022).

In 2022 construction of new school bathrooms had come to a stop due to the government banning imports of building materials into the region and the only hospital in the area had been threatened with closure. Similar less confrontational but nevertheless effective methods have been adopted by the government to achieve their aim of relocating the Maasai such as cutting off access to water, healthcare and education, with one lawyer claiming that it is in fact a 'war' against the Maasai which attempts to suffocate the communities. In April 2021 the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority announced it would evict many residents, and even though many of the buildings were decades old, called for the destruction of over 100 homes, churches, schools, medical dispensaries and administrative offices, including police stations, on the basis that they had been built without official permits. Following protests from the Maasai these measures were rescinded, but the general approach was very clear. Then in March 2022, government funds for the building or renovation of schools were suddenly halted. After September of the same year, removal of access to water led to the death of significant numbers of cattle. The following month, the only hospital giving medical help to Maasai in the conservation area was told to dramatically reduce the number of staff, with the hospital being downgraded from health centre to a mere clinic, thereby greatly reducing the availability of various services. The overall aim appears to take increasingly harsh measures so that the people decide they have no option but to leave and resettle in areas the government wants them to move to; however, the residents in the areas to which the Maasai are being encouraged to move to were not consulted in advance, and even now there have been clashes between the two groups, with the situation likely to deteriorate further in the future. (Craig 2023: 1-3)

Although the above accounts relate to events in Tanzania, similar actions have taken place in Kenya, where accusations of the mismanagement of title deeds, corruption, increased droughts and various infrastructure projects have led to considerable tension and conflict. (Dahir 2018; Oakland Institute 2018)

In conclusion, it seems that, despite claims by the large companies that they are acting in a benign way, the indigenous Maasai tend to be seen merely as hindrances to maximizing profit margins from ecotourism and hunting activities.

Problems facing the development of ecotourism in Maasai communities in Tanzania

There are various hurdles to ensuring that people can benefit from ecotourism growth. First is the lack of foreign language skills. The villagers rarely speak a foreign language, which causes considerable problems between them and foreign visitors, with the problem exacerbated by the fact that many of the Maasai do not even understand Swahili, the national language; this therefore makes it difficult for

interpreters to perform their job. Furthermore, there are poor transport and communication facilities; indeed, public transport is non-existent, which for example means that the sick may resort to self-medication. The third problem in establishing an ecotourism business is the lack of start-up capital, with the Maasai handicapped by a lack of skills in entrepreneurship and business experience as they traditionally have been herders and not involved in business activities. On top of that, there is the problem that the tourist industry is seasonal, with the low season recording extremely low visitation. A further matter of extreme importance is the shortage of land, remembering that the villagers do not have the legal right to manage the land and resources. (Melubo 2013: 77-85)

As for mitigating the problems, Melubo (2013: 97-98) recommends actions such as charging entrance fees according to number of people rather than numbers of vehicles, with money for safaris going directly to the villages rather than other organizations as this would be critical for engaging people participation and ensuring successful community tourism projects.

Problems affecting tourism and wildlife in Tanzania

a) Poaching

As elsewhere in much of Africa, Tanzania has a serious problem with poaching. In a period of just 5 years (2009-2014) the number of elephants in the country dropped dramatically from 109,000 to only 43,000. In the World Heritage site of the Selous Game Reserve, over the past 40 years the elephant population was decimated by approximately 90%. As one means of combatting the poaching, Tanzania has started imposing heavy custodial sentences on poachers, with a landmark case occurring in 2019 when one notorious Chinese smuggler was sentenced to 15 years in prison. (WWF 2019) A major difficulty in tackling this problem is that few of the laws governing wildlife conservation address wildlife poaching and trafficking, and in addition it is difficult both to collect evidence, which is combined with flaws in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the job of enforcing the existing laws is very fragmented, and it is clear that a reorganization of the system is required. (Library of Congress, date unknown)

b) Other environmental problems

As in many countries that attract large numbers of tourists, one activity of local residents is to make and sell souvenirs such as wood carvings of wildlife etc.. This is true in Tanzania as well, but unfortunately the most popular type of wood used for souvenirs in Tanzania is from ebony trees; however, these trees take a long time to grow and mature, and it is feared that the trees may become extinct if no remedial measures are taken. (Kazuzuru 2014: 128)

c) Non-environmental challenges

Some of the problems that have been pointed out by Kazuzuru (2014: 128-130) are the lack of empirical studies concerning the relationship between promotion efforts and the growth of tourism; how to implement tax policies that maximize revenues for the government without hindering the growth of the industry (especially since tourism charges tend to be higher than in neighbouring countries); competition over natural resources between the industry and the indigenous population;

leakage of revenues back to foreign countries; ensuring that the local population shares in the benefits created by the industry; the avoidance of negative cultural effects such as prostitution; the absence of significant domestic inbound tourism; the failure to compile statistics for analysis and subsequent planning; the poor infrastructure; the problem of communication due to a lack of English language skills; and the existence of diseases such as malaria that can harm visitors.

Mussa (2011) points out that the typical tourist spends most of their time viewing the wildlife but notes also that this is leading to over-congestion in certain areas. As an antidote, he argues that it is necessary to focus on ecotourism, where this includes the input of local people and contributes to ecological and socio-cultural integrity, responsibility and sustainability. It would also ensure that more money enters the village economies than in the present situation where the main benefits go to external companies and only a pittance goes to residents.

C) Kenya

The importance of tourism to Kenya

Although a series of terrorist attacks led to a fall in the number of tourists in the years visiting Kenya after 2011, in 2017 the industry nevertheless accounted for 9.7% of the nation's GDP, with approximately 9% of total employment. It should be noted, of course, that tourism in Kenya is not limited to wildlife tourism as many visitors were also attracted by the various beach resorts. (Buigut 2019) However, the following year a peaceful situation combined with government efforts led to the number of visitors in 2018 rising by 37.7% compared with the year before, translating into a 31.3% increase in revenue. (Tanui 2019) This was, in fact, the first time tourist arrivals had hit the 2 million mark, with the Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary attributing the achievement to improved security, infrastructure development and aggressive marketing campaigns (notably the digital marketing performed by the Kenya Tourist Board). (AllAfrica.com 2019) There was a further small increase in 2019, visitor numbers rising by 1% and revenues increasing by 3.9% to produce an income of \$1.61 billion. (Reuters 2020)

Ecotourism in Kenya

The figures given above for Kenya only refer to the total number of tourists; there seem to be no data for how many of the visitors are connected with ecotourism such as wildlife tourism (as indicated, another tourist attraction of Kenya is that it also has hundreds of kilometres of coastline with beautiful beaches). (Burdett 2018)

As far back as 2002, the Kenya Tourist Board introduced a system called the "Eco-rating scheme" to cover places of accommodation, which was expanded in 2015 with the so-called "Travel Life" rating scheme. More than 100 eco-rated facilities now exist, and awards are given for the best sustainable practitioners; this includes activities that support the local Maasai villages, the use of renewable energy sources etc., and is not limited to wildlife-related activities. In general, Kenya has ecotourism activities that can be cultural (indigenous peoples) and/or environmental (hiking and adventure tourism, as well as wildlife safaris). (Burdett 2018)

The 2002 scheme introduced by “Ecotourism Kenya” has an “Eco-rating Certification” programme with ratings classified as bronze, silver and gold levels according to the degree of best practices that are followed. They also work with various tour operators to ensure that satisfactory standards are reached regarding environmental and social issues by carrying out training and using online reporting and monitoring. The programme now also accepts applicants from outside Kenya. (Ecotourism Kenya, date unknown)

The full range of objectives for such ecotourism projects are providing well-paid, stable jobs for local residents; providing high-quality education and staff training; establishing community development projects and education; supporting local conservation efforts; having sustainable buildings; ensuring good water management systems; generating electricity from sustainable sources (e.g. solar energy); and recycling as much waste as possible. (BBC, date unknown)

In 2011 Okech noted that the ecotourism activities in Kenya needed to evolve because of a combination of tremendous pressure on the natural environment; demands for benefits from local communities; and the increasing desire of foreign visitors for more interactive experiences. (Okech 2011). This still applies today.

Nowhere are the pressures on the natural environment more obvious than in the Nairobi national park. Created as the nation’s first national park in 1946, the wildlife are free to roam right next to the busy city. It has suffered greatly in the past few decades; for example, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) stated that some species declined by as much as 70% within four decades, and the 30,000-strong wildebeest migration that could be observed in the 1960s has collapsed to only about 200 animals in the park. The location adjacent to a major metropolis has led to conflicts between conservation and socioeconomic interests, with pressure from other government departments leading to the construction by Chinese companies of a new highway and railway through the park. The greatest threat, though, is the loss of the wildlife dispersal area; the owners of land around the park’s edge have been tempted by the skyrocketing land prices to sell their land for the building of houses – with the land often being purchased by outsiders who have no interest in conservation.

To mitigate the situation, the KWS has proposed a 10-year plan for managing the park, including finishing off a fence completely surrounding the park in the hope that this will prevent dangerous animals from entering, lessening the escalating conflicts between humans and wildlife as the animals encroach into residential areas, as well as reducing compensation claims. The proposal has, though, become very controversial, with the Maasai community arguing that the fence will block the final migration route for animals. (Muiruri 2020)

On a larger scale, human encroachment into the national parks poses a possibly great problem for the ecosystem as a whole. As mentioned previously, the Maasai Mara and Serengeti are a continuation of each other. In the Maasai language, the name Serengeti means “endless plains”, and the relatively flat area encompassed by the parks is indeed vast. It might therefore be assumed that even considerable encroachment by people could be acceptable as the ecosystem is so large. However, this would be a major error since the viability of the whole gigantic ecosystem depends on its size being maintained. If farmers build fences around their land to protect their animals, this would of course interfere with animal migration; unfortunately this migration is key to the ecosystem’s viability and

hindrances could ultimately result in its collapse. (Attenborough 2020: 33-37)

Take, for example, the annual migration of wildebeest, when several hundreds of thousands of these large creatures cross over the land. The grass that grows there is vital as a food source for the wildebeest, without which the animals would perish. The passage of millions of hooves trampling the grass, and churning up the soil, though, might at first sight seem to be disastrous for the grass. But surprisingly the grass needs the wildebeest as much as the wildebeest need the grass; without the huge numbers of animals grazing on the grass, the grasses would disappear due to shading by other taller plants which would deprive the grasses of their dominance. The grass has evolved to withstand the annual onslaught by the herbivores; the wildebeest remove the top parts of the grass, but leave the underground bases of the plants. The breaking of the soil by the animals' hooves causes the plants to shed their leaves, and the grass becomes replenished, aided by the nourishment provided by the wildebeests' excretions. In other words, there is a relationship of ecological interdependence, with the damage caused being an essential component of the grass life cycle. But this sustainable relationship is only viable if the huge expanse of land is available for the huge herds to move around. Extensive encroachment into these areas by humans could lead to the collapse of the entire ecosystem. (Attenborough 2020: 33-37)

While the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem is indeed large, there have been some very disturbing data becoming available. During the decade from 2010 to 2020, the human population in the adjacent areas has increased four-fold, and larger wildlife populations in key areas in the Kenyan section of the ecosystem have witnessed a decline of over 75%. Because of the rise in population, herders have been taking their livestock further into the protected areas, worsening the problem. Fortunately, there have been some actions taken to combat this. In various locations, conservancies have been established whereby a landowner and a suitable safari operator come to an agreement to stop the grazing and set up safari tours with strict limitations on things such as the number of tents allowed (which become popular since conservancies have higher densities of wildlife), with profits shared between them. One such success story involves the Ol Kinyei that was set up in 2005, and which in 2018 was given the Green List status of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN, because of its good governance. (Miururi 2020)

Ever since independence, the Kenyan government has promoted the private sector for the development of tourism. This has tended to continue to the present time, with the result that mass tourism has occurred with a heavy concentration of visitor numbers in the areas promoted as being "the best", creating a significant impact on the environment there. Although various actors are indeed aware of and follow the practices of ecotourism, it is unfortunately true that their efforts are undermined by those who simply aim at maximizing profits. The end result is that ecotourism activities tend to depend on the same marketing channels and networks that have served the mass tourism operators and agents who have caused damage to the ecologically fragile destinations. The situation becomes slightly murky when some operators employ greenwashing tactics, i.e. only pay lip service to ecotourism ideals to increase their business while actually being uncommitted to the principles of ecotourism. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been some improvement in the situation. (Kariuki-Muriithi 2016)

Relationship with the indigenous people

There are numerous eco-friendly lodges in Kenya, with many of them being collaborations between the local communities (who provide land and labour) and investors (who provide funds and assist with the management of the projects). There are also various cases in which lodges are owned completely by the local community, and which are sometimes built using local materials. A substantial portion of the profits that are generated are then reinvested in other community projects. (Alonso 2018) In some cases, examples have been cited of what are regarded as models of community-driven ecotourism. For instance, Trimble (2018) describes how the Samburu tribe, who are pastoralists that are related to the Maasai and live in northern Kenya, have been funded by individual donors and conservancies, and have partnered with Sarara Camp and Reteti in such a way that ecotourism has been blended with community enrichment and wildlife conservation, with the Samburu in control of both their lands and their futures. As indicated elsewhere in this paper, this is in marked contrast with what has been happening in other East African countries, notably the fate of the Maasai in northern Tanzania, but which can also be observed in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi etc. However, a question remains over how many of the projects like this are in operation.

While studying ecotourism development and the local communities in one area of Kenya (Kimana), Ondicho (2012) noted that instead of ecotourism enabling the Maasai to take over control of their natural resources, it has merely duplicated the values that were already existing, i.e. the values, beliefs and institutional procedures which were to the benefit of the state, foreign tour operators and investors, plus the local elites. Like a number of other scholars, he calls for much greater local participation at all levels, and cites the need to develop local capacity in the areas of management and business skills. (Ondicho 2012) A later study on the same region (Makindi 2016) found considerable support for the concepts of biodiversity conservation and ecotourism but only limited understanding of other important environmental concepts, although benefits accrued in the areas of employment opportunities, service and infrastructural development and support for local community projects. It is clear, therefore, that further efforts are badly needed.

Nevertheless, there have been success stories. Over many years, the international fashion industry has been fascinated by Maasai clothing; indeed, the famous company of Louis Vuitton established an entire collection based on Maasai aesthetics, and the BBC reported that over 800 businesses around the world sell products which were inspired by the Maasai. Unfortunately, most of the companies did not re-invest in the tribes, who then decided to trademark their name. However, Adeigbo and others attempted to right this wrong, with she and local Maasai women working towards achieving ethical fashion production training and execution. (Adeigbo 2017) Unfortunately, in 2020 disaster struck when the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic crisis devastated the award-winning Maasai-led conservancy of Nashulai because all the tourists (the sole source of income) completely stopped coming. (Avaaz 2020, personal communication) Besides having no money (even for food) there was no health care, and with the rangers laid off there were worries that poachers might take advantage of the situation; as a result, their hopes rested on an international appeal for help. (Avaaz 2020, personal communication)

Problems affecting tourism and wildlife in Kenya

a) Poaching

In the last decade the authorities in Kenya and elsewhere have taken the threat of poaching by organized syndicates much more seriously. Laws have been tightened and the capacity of those battling the crimes have been strengthened. Punishments have also been dramatically increased. For example, in 2016 one ivory smuggler was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years in prison plus a fine of \$200,000. The crimes are not limited to actions against elephants; for instance, another man was sentenced to 20 years in prison for possessing hippo teeth. As the smuggling of ivory becomes more difficult, traffickers are also targeting pangolins (Wamukoya 2018: 1-4)

Nevertheless, although conservation efforts had led to respective decreases in rhino and elephant poaching of 85% and 78% in 2017 compared with the peak of five years earlier, in 2018 Kenya's Minister for Tourism and Wildlife declared that the existing deterrents seemed to not be having the desired effect and stated that the country would fast-track a new law under which poachers would be subject to capital punishment. (Dalton 2018) However, it transpired that the law would not go into effect after all as the Supreme Court of Kenya ruled that making the death penalty a mandatory punishment was against the constitution. (Lajka 2019: 1-4) The changes that were brought in during revision of the laws governing poachers and traffickers of endangered species were nevertheless strengthened considerably. Firstly, they applied to a wider range of wildlife than previous legislation, and secondly, fines were eliminated and instead offenders would instead be subject to immediate imprisonment for a period of 3 to 7 years. In addition, trading in bushmeat (the selling of animals for consumption) would bring a minimum of 3 years in jail. Punishment for persons aiding and abetting the import or export of animals (even if it is merely a matter of turning a blind eye) could be subject for a prison sentence of up to 20 years. When grazing is carried out illegally, imprisonment is again the deterrent, with the areas covered by the restrictions including not only the national parks and reserves but all protected areas. While conservationists may be happy at this state of affairs, there is a serious problem in that resources are lacking for proper enforcement, and the fact that the laws still contain loopholes e.g. community service could be used as a substitute for a prison term of over 3 years. (Jayanathan 2019)

In addition, the African Wildlife Foundation has organized discussions among various nations (including both Kenya and Tanzania) with the aim of establishing transboundary legal frameworks as well as communication networks which enhance the ability of investigators to apprehend criminals. Dogs have also been employed widely to detect illegal wildlife products. (Wamukoya 2018: 3-4)

b) Climate change

Even as long ago as 2007, climate change had been identified as a significant problem in Kenya and indeed other areas of East Africa. Abwao (2007) quoted the Kenya Wildlife Service as blaming climate change for an increase in the number of conflicts between humans and wildlife, as well as making it more likely that animal diseases would spread. They claimed that ecosystems were changing as a result of rivers drying up and causing species to migrate to more favourable areas, during which the

animals encroach on nearby villages - with resultant tensions between the inhabitants and crop-destroying animals. Wasige (2017) describes how the 'silent threat' of climate change has altered weather patterns, causing changes in habitat composition, forage availability and access to water, which in turn is affecting wildlife reproduction and reducing the survival of the young, thereby changing the competitive relationship between the various species. For instance, lions are vulnerable to extreme conditions such as droughts whereas species such as cheetahs and leopards are more resilient. Climate change has also resulted in increased conflicts between humans and wildlife. Regarding mitigation measures, Wasige (2017) recommends securing natural water resources and habitats, and protecting wildlife migration routes so as to ensure that those species which are more vulnerable can find more suitable habitats, as well as enabling genetic exchange between the different populations. She notes that the African Wildlife Foundation is managing to protect the vital wildlife corridors through schemes that minimize human-wildlife conflict and incentivize land protection.

c) "Islandization" of Amboseli

Amboseli national park lies in south-west Kenya and is relatively small at 39,200 hectares. (Muiruri 2021: 1-4) Nevertheless, although not included on many safari maps, it is well known because it has one of the most photographed scenes in Africa, where elephants and other animals can be viewed against the backdrop of the magnificent Mt Kilimanjaro. Indeed, the renowned wildlife photographer, David Yarrow, claims it is the best location in the world for viewing elephants simply being elephants, describing the area as being "an amphitheatre nestling under Mount Kilimanjaro" which "offers a generously uncluttered canvas on which to work with elephants and light". (Yarrow: 2016: 206-208). Unfortunately, these particular elephants are facing a rather uncertain and bleak future, as are several other inhabitants of Amboseli that are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of threatened species. (Muiruri 2021: 1-4)

Like the other national parks in the region, Amboseli is grazed by animals tended by the nomadic Maasai. In recent years, though, the Maasai are gradually adopting a more sedentary lifestyle, and landowners are selling off areas for development; in addition, local Maasai people often feel that they have not received much benefit from tourism (despite the wildlife being on their land), and are leasing the land to investors, who often surround their land with fences which act as a block to animal migration. The result of all this is that there tends to be increasing and unregulated grazing which harms plant and animal diversity, aggravates human-wildlife conflicts, and results in flooding and drought over and above the effects of climate change. (Muiruri 2021: 1-4)

These problems exist in other national parks as well, but the issues are especially urgent and critical in Amboseli national park because, as the land is gradually broken up into ever-smaller parcels, there is a strong apprehension that the essential migration corridors to adjacent wildlife areas may be lost, in particular a narrow strip of land known as the Kitenden Corridors, which allows animals to move between Amboseli and the other protected area on the Tanzanian side of the border. This would be devastating for wildlife in general but especially for the elephants, who in effect would be left in an "ecological island" with an unsustainable density of five times their basic survival threshold. Making everything worse is the fact that the Covid-19 epidemic brought a complete cessation of income from

tourism, which accelerated the various above-mentioned negative trends. (Muiruri 2021: 1-4)

The hope is that an organization known as the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, which fights for the 27,000 landowners on the basis of maintaining sustainability, in February 2021 began bringing conservation officials and landowners together in order to agree arrangements that would not just preserve the animals but also improve the livelihoods of the Maasai. Specific proposals are to identify separate blocks for grazing, conservation and tourism, human settlement and infrastructure. The idea has gained the provisional approval of other environmental groups such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Certainly, if nothing is done, the elephants will probably be unable to survive. (Muiruri 2021: 1-4)

d) Terrorism

Between 2011 and 2017 an average of 60 terrorist attacks occurred in Kenya each year, and not surprisingly this led to a poor performance of the tourism industry. Hopes to transform Kenya into a middle-income country (envisaged in their “Kenya vision 2030” plan for development) by initially increasing tourist arrivals from 1.7 million in 2012 to 3 million by 2017 were met with failure, with the actual number below half of this at 1.45 million; that is a significant decrease, with the blame attributed to terrorist activity. The effect was magnified, of course, by the international attention focused on some of these attacks, such as the Westgate shopping mall attack of 2013. The majority of the attacks are believed to have been carried out by the extreme Islamic group going by the name of al-Shabaab, who are based in the neighbouring country of Somalia, where the rule of law is essentially non-existent. It is therefore difficult to see how the situation, which other nations are unaffected by, can be remedied. (Buigut 2019)

However, fortunately for Kenya, the tourist industry did exhibit a recovery in 2018 due to a calm political climate in 2017, with an increase in foreign visitors of 37.7% (up to 2.03 million from 1.47 million). Other factors that contributed to the rise were said to be rigorous marketing campaigns and more coordination between different sections of government. The increase resulted in revenues in 2018 rising by 31.3% compared to the previous year. (Tanui 2019)

Discussion and conclusion

Africa is generally regarded as the world’s predominant region for viewing wildlife, and has attracted tourists in large numbers over several decades. The tourism has continued to grow, with the increasing number of visitors and development representing a serious threat to the environment, especially in those countries that have adopted policies aimed at mass tourism. In East Africa, pastoralists such as the Maasai use a full 70% of the total land in Kenya and 50% in Tanzania (Drughi 2018), although the areas used for ecotourism in these countries tend to be under the control of tourism corporations (often foreign-owned), with the large corporations merely using ecotourism as a marketing strategy and a sales pitch, with very little of the benefits trickling down to the local communities.

Previously virgin territory has been transformed by road construction and the building of infrastructure and lodges in general, which has fragmented wildlife habitats, and permanently scarred the environment. Tanzania and Kenya have continued with privatization as the means of promoting

tourism, leaving many of the indigenous groups in poverty as they lose their livestock and grazing grounds (although admittedly Kenya has a less odious record). The Maasai Mara is a world-famous destination for safaris and has for a few decades witnessed continued growth, but the emphasis by Tanzania and Kenya on mass tourism (which is high-volume but low-revenue tourism) has meant that the local communities have seen little benefit accruing. Indeed, the situation is worse than this as the Maasai, for example, have been evicted and must live in permanent but fragmented settlements instead of following their traditional nomadic lifestyle; this in turn has an effect on wildlife because when the animals can no longer roam freely, there is a resultant imbalance with the wildlife.

One argument used to justify ignoring the Maasai is that the government knows better than them about the best way to utilize the natural resources of the region for the national benefit. However, this must be called into question. The Maasai have lived and worked on the land for many generations, and presumably have deep knowledge about how to maintain harmony with nature, and it thus seems reasonable to assume that such knowledge could be extremely valuable, not only for people, but with respect to maintaining a balance with the wildlife. At the same time, a weak point is that climate change is tending to cause problems such as droughts, resulting in the Maasai being forced to overgraze the land. However, in such a scenario, droughts could in themselves cause the wildlife to move away in search of more suitable habitats, thereby rendering the government approach unviable.

The approach in Botswana has been markedly different. Admittedly the growth of tourism there started rather later than in Tanzania and Kenya, thereby allowing the government in Botswana to witness the problems with the growth model adopted by those countries, but credit must be given to the Botswana authorities for making the wise choice of listening to the advice of conservationists in the 1980s and deciding to develop a different strategy for tourism, i.e. to focus on high-revenue, low-volume tourism, with the profits (via leasehold payments) going into the local economy rather than distant entities. A further wise move was to only agree lease contracts for a limited period of time (15 years), which encouraged operators to invest in the future so as to be able to renew their contracts.

There is another significant difference in approach between Botswana and Tanzania and Kenya, and that is the attitude towards dealing with the indigenous peoples living in what became safari destinations. Tanzania in particular seemed to regard the indigenous people as a hindrance to development and frequently demonstrated a condescending attitude and tended to ignore the Maasai, who have continued to suffer the consequences. Of course, as was discussed, this stemmed not just from openly expressed government policies, but also the greed and corruption of officials.

This is in marked contrast to the approach adopted in Botswana, where the livelihood and prospects of the indigenous residents were taken fully into consideration, and efforts made to incorporate them into the decision-making process and ensure that the communities benefited considerably from the development. Besides empowerment and the benefits accruing to the residents, this also gave the people a strong stake in ensuring the survival and well-being of the wildlife as the latter were regarded by everyone as vital to their achieving a better life.

In the longer term, the approach of Botswana seems to be eminently wise, both for the people and the animals, and the industry in general. Tanzania has pursued more short-term goals, but for a sustainable future it would be advisable for them to learn from what people in Botswana have done

and attempt to increase the share of companies that genuinely believe in sustainable policies. It will certainly require a change in mindset regarding how they deal with the indigenous people, whose knowledge of the land should be seen as an asset. Although growth in the short to medium term might be assured, to protect the environment and guarantee the survival of the industry, surely regulatory changes need to be made.

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