



The Chunkurchak¹ Recommendations on Community-based Wildlife Management in the broader Central Asian region

Community-based wildlife management

Community based wildlife² management is the management of wild plants and animals in a way that empowers key stakeholders of local communities to play a role in management, and enables them to gain benefits (cultural, social and economic) from conserving wildlife.

Benefits may be derived from a range of activities including tourism, hunting (national or foreign), and wild plant or animal collection and trade. Different approaches may be appropriate and successful across different countries, species and ecosystems, and according on local circumstances.

Local communities are those who live in or near wildlife areas and are historically dependent on their use. Key stakeholders include local hunters and fishermen, livestock owners and herders, farmers, village foresters, reserve rangers, and all those who appreciate wildlife or are involved in its use.

A. Why is community-based wildlife management important?

This form of wild life management can deliver a range of important benefits both for conservation and for local communities.

Because CBWM engages communities to value wild species and landscapes, it can lead to:

1. increased community awareness of wildlife conservation and ecosystem health, and reduced motivation for illegal or unsustainable uses.
2. healthier land, pastures and forests through reduced reliance on intensive agriculture, lower livestock densities and adoption of more sustainable grazing practices, and active engagement of communities in addressing land degradation.
3. a pro-active community involvement in anti-poaching, monitoring and other conservation activities, leading to more effective law enforcement
4. enhanced ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change and climate change resilience through healthier ecosystems and associated local livelihoods.
5. species recovery and reduced threat of extinction, including increased carnivore numbers through increasing the prey base.

Because CBWM engages the community in wildlife management activities, it can:

¹ IUCN CEESP/SSC Sustainable Use and Livelihood Specialist Group regional meeting for Central Asia, held at Supara Chunkurchak, Kyrgyzstan, 4-6 September 2018

² Throughout we use the term “wildlife” to refer to wild plants, animals and fungi.



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6. build on and strengthen traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices involving wildlife, and support their long term persistence.
7. generate sources of employment and income within remote, poor and often neglected rural communities.
8. support the self-esteem and social standing of traditional hunters, who are often criminalized under hunting bans, and support their valuable social role as wildlife stewards.

Because CBWM generates income streams and other benefits from wild species and healthy landscapes, it can:

9. diversify local income streams and thereby improve local livelihood resilience, food security, and access to education and health services, and improve people’s wellbeing.
10. help create a range of constituencies at national level that actively advocate for and support nature conservation, such as hunting organizations, tourism bodies, and private sector organizations involved in sustainable trade of wild plants.

B. What are the key challenges?

CBWM is a new approach in the wider Central Asian region – in several countries there are promising initiatives, while it remains almost absent in others. The establishment and growth of community-based wildlife management faces many challenges:

1. In some countries in the region, relevant legal and regulatory frameworks are absent, obsolete, inadequate or are not supportive of including communities in wildlife management.
2. Many government agencies, conservation NGOs, as well as the general public are unaware, misinformed or unsupportive of CBWM and sustainable use of wild resources.
3. In some countries, local community wildlife management initiatives face unfair competition and conflict with more powerful private commercial interests and lobbies, which may monopolize resources and deter communities from engaging in wildlife management.
4. Typically, communities face significant capacity or regulatory barriers to acquiring the rights (concessions, land-leasing, permits etc.) to use wildlife resources.
5. In some countries there is corruption in decision-making on the distribution of benefits from use of wild species and the allocation of rights to use resources, and government agency personnel themselves may be involved in illegal use.
6. Communities typically lack capacity and knowledge to carry out science-based wildlife management, to establish well-functioning local management institutions, and to promote and market their wildlife products.



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7. Communities have little or no voice in wildlife management decisions at national and international levels.
8. Reliable, in-depth information on the conservation and community dimensions of community-based wildlife use is often not visible or accessible to donors, NGOs, regulatory agencies, wildlife end-users (such as international hunters), and the general public.
9. Wildlife monitoring is sometimes absent or insufficient, and may have inadequate quality control and/or independence.
10. Anticipated national and regional plans (particularly China's Belt and Road Initiative) for large-scale infrastructure development and expanded transport and trade links connecting Central Asia to major wildlife markets could dramatically intensify harvesting and other pressures on wildlife populations and destabilize conservation initiatives.

C. Recommendations: what needs to happen?

This meeting calls on governments, donors, conservation organizations, local communities and other key stakeholders (as relevant) to:

1. Recognize and strengthen the role of community-based wildlife management as a key element in initiatives aimed at reducing the key threats of land degradation (from overgrazing, fuelwood extraction and other causes) and of illegal wildlife use; and promoting ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change; in ways that are adapted and sensitive to varying local cultural, political and social contexts and support and integrate local knowledge and cultural practices.
2. Support and promote the development of diverse local livelihood options based on sustainable use of wild resources – plants, animals, and landscapes – in ways that incentivize conservation. In particular, well-managed hunting (local and international) has proved to be successful, while responsibly managed tourism and trade in wild products (plant and animal) offers considerable potential.
3. Revising or establish legislative and regulatory frameworks that enable and support community management of wildlife.
4. Support the establishment of physical or virtual platforms for meaningful dialogue, information exchange and practical coordination in the wider Central Asia region on community wildlife management, bringing together all relevant stakeholders – particularly national government agencies, community organizations, conservation and development organizations, private sector entities and hunting organizations.
5. Establish robust conservation finance mechanisms through which a proportion of wildlife management revenues are held in conservation funds and invested in community-based conservation activities.
6. Assist community wildlife management organizations to document their wildlife management practices and communicate nationally and internationally



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on the community, conservation and ecosystem management benefits, and to exercise voice and influence at national and international level.

7. Establish and support targeted training and capacity building for government agencies, local community organizations and other relevant stakeholders in necessary skills including wildlife monitoring.

8. Strengthen the understanding of conservation and community dimensions among wildlife user groups including international hunters, hunting operators and hunting brokers, and private sector entities involved in wildlife trade, and promote best practice in their decision-making and operations.

9. Consider the development of broadly agreed Central Asian principles and criteria to provide a framework for the development of sustainable wildlife uses and their management

10. Support the development and strengthening of community-based wildlife management through translation/dissemination of best practices, case studies of successful initiatives, and relevant IUCN policies and technical documents



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