DOES HUNTING HAVE A FUTURE?

HUNTING, CONSERVATION INCENTIVES AND COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Report of a workshop held on 4 September 2016 at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Honolulu, Hawai‘i

Convened by the IUCN CEESP/SSC Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (SULi), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Fondation Internationale pour la Gestion de la Faune (France), Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt (Colombia), International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (United States of America), International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (Hungary), International Institute for Environment and Development (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (Canada), Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Namibia), World Commission on Protected Areas 2013-2016, IUCN Regional Office for Asia (ARO), IUCN Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), IUCN Species Programme, Members of the CPW: TRAFFIC, CIC, ITC, CITES; WCPA Tourism in Protected Areas Specialist Group, SSC Bear Specialist Group, SSC Deer Specialist Group, SSC African Elephant Specialist Group, SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, SSC Caprinae Specialist Group, Maliasili Initiatives, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (Namibia), CAMPFIRE Association (Zimbabwe).
Summary

This workshop brought together different “human” aspects of hunting - political, cultural, livelihood, and economic - and of course its conservation impact. Examples from Hawai’i’s Moloka’i, Tajikistan, North America, the Canadian Arctic, Namibia and the Brazilian Amazon highlighted the diverse and important roles hunting plays in many contexts, and the need for governance models to be built on this understanding.

Background

Hunting is a culturally or economically important pursuit for many human populations, across both developing and developed regions of the world. It provides an important food for human populations from the Congo Basin to Canada, from the Amazon to Scandinavia. It may be rooted in cultural tradition, involve customary rights, generate jobs, income, or broader development benefits for local people, raise critical funding for conservation and management, or be a highly valued recreational experience. There are crucial governance issues involved, particularly rights of indigenous peoples and local communities to choose how to manage their wild resources and meet their livelihood needs.

However, much hunting is unsustainable and/or illegal, and some (particularly some “trophy” hunting) raises ethical concerns. Hunting for bushmeat and for illegal trade in body parts pose increasingly severe threats to many taxa. Patterns of use are changing as hunting in some areas becomes increasingly driven by market needs; human populations grow and/or become more urbanized; pressure on land use – particularly for agricultural production – intensifies; some species’ populations decline due to poaching, habitat loss or other factors; while others grow and become overabundant. At the same time, social attitudes to hunting are changing, particularly in more industrialised populations. Trophy hunting is an increasingly controversial activity, with high profile celebrity campaigns calling for indiscriminate bans.

Governance of hunting is weak and/or inequitable in many countries. The promise of community-based, devolved wildlife management models remains in most cases tantalisingly unrealised, while “top down” models of centralised command and control often offer little promise of long term sustainability and/or ignore or override indigenous or local rights and livelihood needs.

This raises the question - under what conditions can hunting lead to positive outcomes for both wildlife and people?

This workshop sought to move beyond the rhetoric on hunting - examining its real world impacts on wildlife populations, habitat conservation and on community livelihoods; what management models and governance frameworks work in practice; the influence of frameworks regulating hunting on indigenous peoples and local communities’ and other stakeholders’ incentives and abilities to protect, manage and benefit from wildlife resources; and the key constraints and challenges facing different governance models across both developing and developed countries.

Objective of the workshop

The objective of this workshop was to examine how, and specifically under what governance models, hunting can provide effective incentives for conservation and support community rights and livelihoods. We asked this question against a backdrop of growing human populations, increased
pressure on land, rampant poaching and illegal wildlife trade in many areas, and changing social attitudes toward hunting in many countries.

Presentations

A range of speakers from across the globe were brought together to present case studies on hunting, conservation and livelihoods.

Rosie Cooney (Chair IUCN SULI) opened the workshop and introduced Sakhile Koketso (Programme Officer on Dry and Subhumid Lands, Convention on Biological Diversity), who gave a brief introduction on the importance of the continuation of hunting for conservation.

Walter Ritte (Native Hawai’ian activist, Molokai, Hawai’i) was introduced with a traditional Hawai’ian song performed by a member of his community. Walter spoke passionately about his home island and the struggle of his people to maintain hunting for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes. He argued that increasing regulation of hunting was threatening customary practices and described ongoing community efforts to protect hunting rights. This included the formation of a community-based body, ‘Aha Kiole o Molokai’, that is currently developing an island wide hunting management plan.

Helder Queiroz (Instituto de Desenvolvimento Sustentável Mamirauá, Brazil) discussed key challenges and considerations for future governance of hunting in the Brazilian Amazon. He described hunting as a cultural practice and a necessity for people living on the poverty line who hunt for subsistence. The wildlife law is ambiguous on the legality of this hunting and requires reform. Helder outlined the need for future policies to recognise the rights of local communities who hunt, provide more local infrastructure and better access to basic services, and enable the implementation of participatory governance systems to manage wildlife use.
Shane Mahoney (Conservation Visions, Canada), speaking on behalf of himself and Deb Hahn (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, USA) described the importance of hunting for conservation in the North American context. He pointed to hunting as humankind’s oldest profession and argued that hunting is embedded in the fabric and tradition of cultures across the globe and is at the heart of conservation in North America. He emphasised the important role hunting can and does play in inspiring concern for wildlife, as a tool for managing wildlife, and as a mechanism to raise funding for wildlife and habitat conservation. Shane argued that hunting is critical in North America in building a wildlife-centred economy that puts conservation and resource sustainability first, reduces extinction risk and combats resource depletion.

Dana Yermolyonok (GIZ, Central Asia) introduced a case study from Tajikistan, where the conservation of mountain ungulates and snow leopards is financed by income generated by regulated trophy hunting. Dana highlighted that community-based participatory conservation is possible and can be successful when cash income is directly dependent on the condition of a wildlife population and directly supplements local livelihoods. She explained that this model then reduces the need for protection against poaching and motivates habitat conservation via a virtuous cycle.

Angus Middleton (Namibia Nature Foundation, Namibia) introduced the experience of Namibia with successful community based conservation through communal conservancies and community forests. He highlighted the dual role of hunting and tourism in supporting livelihoods and maintaining incentives for conservation. He described the flow of benefits, highlighting the importance of revenues from hunting in supporting management of conservancies, with meat being an important additional tangible household benefit. While tourism brings a lot more employment, without hunting most conservancies in Namibia would not be viable as businesses. Despite many challenges the proof of success lies in the incredible rise in protected areas and expansion of wildlife in terms of numbers and range, including the only truly free ranging population of black rhino in the world, and the dramatic increases in revenue to communities. These successes bring new challenges and the programme continues to adapt to meet them. Finally, he stated the caveat that whilst livelihoods are critical, it is important not to lose sight of the bigger picture of conservation in state protected areas and importantly on private land. The latter is most often the basis for creating critical mass in
the hunting and tourism markets, from which community conservation enterprises benefit.

**Larry Carpenter** (Inuvialuit Wildlife Management Advisory Council, NW Territories, Canada) spoke on the ingrained role of hunting in Indigenous Canadian communities, as a means of maintaining cultural, spiritual and ancestral obligations to conserve and sustainably use wildlife. He mapped out the governance of wildlife in Inuvialuit, based on co-management with First Nations and the full integration of Traditional Knowledge alongside science. He also highlighted the impact of over-regulation on local people through infringement of customary rights and undermining local livelihoods.

[CLICK HERE for copies of presentations](#)

Following the talks, participants were taken on a journey to the invisible world of ancestors and ancient heroes, reminding us about the importance of maintaining balance. We had the privilege of a recital from an Indigenous Cultural Practitioner from Kyrgyzstan, the renowned Manaschi (reciter of the Manus epic) Kamil Mamadaliev. Kamal recited part of a traditional Kyrgyzstani song about the great hunter Kozhozhash, who overstepped the bounds and took too much game, and was chastised by the Mother Goat spirit.

**Questions and discussion**

The audience was invited to participate in a question and discussion session with the speakers moderated by Rosie Cooney (SULi). Key points raised included:

- Legislation, regulation and restrictions on hunting need to be considerate of sustainable use and livelihoods based on wildlife and should not undermine locally-driven conservation efforts.
  - What about traditional cultures and sustainable use? What happens when subsistence harvest is negatively impacting a population? In the Arctic, if use is impacting a species other harvests are reduced or ended before subsistence hunting gets impacted.
- Different countries have different approaches:
  - Commercialization of hunting works in Namibia but might not be the approach that is effective everywhere. We need to use all tools in our tool box so that we are effective conserving wildlife.
  - Economic gains from hunting in developed countries are massive. In America this equates to almost 40million USD per state.
• Terminology is important. Legal well-regulated hunting is not the same as poaching/illegal killing, but both are often called "hunting" - do we need to change the use of terminology so the two are not conflated?
• Does hunting lead to poaching? Yes, it can, but with good governance this doesn’t have to be the case. Good governance includes participation, giving local people a voice, and having good biological information and law enforcement.
• How can we address negative publicity for hunting? We need governments to stop pursuing hunting from a negative, protectionist framework. There is a need to reveal the links between hunting and conservation, for example in Mexico, where much of the money for conservation comes from 7 hunted species.
• We need to learn how to organize and communicate in a way that can move us towards more sustainable hunting, and more recognition of the role of sustainable hunting. We need to share information and share it throughout different countries.
• There is a need for more people to be involved other than governments and local communities in the decision-making process. There also needs to be research and monitoring that is done independently via a transparent process.