



Wildlife Division Policy for Collaborative Community Based Wildlife Management

Accra, September 2000

1. Preamble

Ghana is richly endowed with natural resources. These resources served an important role in the cultural history, national development and economic prosperity of Ghana. Wildlife resources have been especially important for the livelihood of people living in rural areas. However, in the process of utilising resources to meet a range of socio-economic needs the wildlife resources of Ghana have been severely depleted. The depletion of wildlife resources raises serious concerns for future economic development and sustained rural livelihoods.

The decline in wildlife is in part due to the following factors and it is recognised that a reversal of the current trend is dependent on addressing these factors:

- Previous wildlife management systems that have relied on the state to restrict and control access to wildlife have been unable to contain unsustainable wildlife use especially outside of protected areas.
- The tenure status of wildlife resources that has failed to create an incentive for responsible use and management by those living with these resources and society at large.

These factors are recognised in the National Land Policy, The Forest and Wildlife Policy and the National Wildlife Policy. To address these factors in respect of rural communities this policy recognises that there is a compelling need for the devolution of management authority and tenure to appropriately defined and constituted community institutions with the concomitant rights and responsibilities that such devolution entails.

2. Background

Historical and Traditional Wildlife Management

Historically wildlife has been important economically and socially in Ghana and the broader West African region. Wildlife products such as ivory played a significant role in the economies of early West African civilisations. Recognising the value of

wildlife, traditional Ghanaian societies established systems to regulate and control access to wildlife resources, some of these systems included:

- The establishment of laws and practices to protect specific ecosystems like riverine forests, headwaters, burial grounds, sacred groves and other traditional/religious places.
- Within various ethnic groups the use of clan animal totems which have been and still are revered and protected by traditional law with religious and spiritual underpinnings.
- Many tree and animal species were also conserved through traditional closed seasons, which were imposed to give some respite to the resources and allow for recruitment.
- In some localities hunting or fishing was tabooed for certain periods prior to the celebration of annual festivals or sacrifices.

However the efficacy or value of these practices as conservation tools was limited to specific localities and therefore observance of these strategies differed significantly from one locality to another.

In more recent times traditional authorities have continued to influence the conservation of wildlife and many of the old taboos are still adhered to. Some notable conservation interventions by traditional authorities include:

- The Asanteman Council created Game Sanctuaries to conserve wildlife in a more organised manner. Under section 15 (1) of Ashanti Native Authority Ordinance of 1946, the Kumawuhene enacted rules that governed the creation and management of the Boumfum Sanctuary with the approval of the then Governor.
- Since the early 1970's the Wildlife Division has supported Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary (a traditional initiative) to preserve some primates believed to have been bequeathed to the twin community.

Colonial Wildlife Management

Formal conservation of wildlife began in the colonial era (1909) when the first game reserves were established within the Forestry Division (in the Ministry of Agriculture) which had been

established in 1908. The first wildlife laws (Game Preservation Ordinance) were promulgated in 1901. In 1953, wildlife conservation was transferred to the Tsetse Control Unit whose policy was to eradicate tsetse flies through game shooting and habitat clearing along river and stream courses. This policy initiated a dramatic decline of Ghana's wildlife resources.

Post Independence Wildlife Management

Soon after independence the Tsetse Control Unit was disbanded and a Game branch was established within the Forestry Division to assume responsibility for the enforcement of the Game Preservation Ordinance. The enforcement was however dependent largely on the interest and concern of the individual officer who incidentally was occupied with other duties. Enforcement was therefore ineffective and the decline of wildlife resources continued to pose a threat to future development. The immediate post independence era saw the most significant institutional and legislative changes in the management of wildlife in Ghana:

- In 1961 the Wild Animal Preservation Act, 1961 (Act 43) was formulated to more firmly secure wildlife by conserving representative samples of the varied ecosystems of Ghana.
- In 1965 the Game Branch of the Forestry Division was given a full departmental status.
- In 1967 a Department of Game and Wildlife was established.
- Wildlife Reserves Regulations L.I.710 of 1971 and Wildlife Conservation Regulations L.I. 685 of 1971 were gazetted.
- The Wildlife Conservation Policy was published in 1974. The policy recognised the socio-economic and cultural importance of wildlife resources to the local people, the role of Protected Areas in meeting the demand for bushmeat and the importance of engaging local communities in Protected Areas development.

Recent Developments, Programmes and Initiatives

The 1990's initiated considerable activity in the development of projects and programmes in the wildlife sector. In particular attention was focussed on community involvement in wildlife management:

- From 1990-1994 the Government of Ghana through an IDA supported Forest Resources Management Project (FRMP) undertook a systematic evaluation of its Forest and Wildlife resources and to assess the capacity of the sector departments to face the challenges of the time and those perceived for the future. The FRMP culminated in the formulation of a

Forest and Wildlife Policy of 1994 that clearly recognised more strongly the role of local communities and indigenous knowledge in the conservation of Forest and Wildlife resources.

- A System Plan and Management Plans for eight Protected Areas that are under the management authority of the Wildlife Division were also formulated. Provision was made in the management plans for the involvement of the local people in management through the formation of Management Advisory Board(s) (MABs) eg. Shai Hills Management Advisory Board and Community Resource Management Committees (CRMCM).
- The management plans were however Protected Areas specific and lacked specific investment needs and broad strategic plans for wildlife management in general to provide the economic and institutional foundation for the sector's long term prospects. Consequently the World Bank funded (1997-98) Protected Areas Management and Wildlife Conservation Project (PAMWCP) was implemented. The project did a strategic review of the wildlife sector as a whole and developed a comprehensive financing proposal (action Plan) for investment in the sector. One of the products of the PAMWCP was an action plan for community conservation of wildlife resources both within and without protected areas.

Additional projects and programmes in this sector are:

- Coastal Wetlands Management Project (1993-1999) in five designated RAMSAR sites along a section of the coast of Ghana.
- Community Outreach Programme (1989-1999) in selected communities around Kakum National Park, supported by Conservation International (CI) and USAID.
- UNESCO assisted programme (1996-1999) around Bia National Park under the Biosphere Reserves for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in Anglophone Africa Programme (BRAAF).
- A European Union funded (1997-2001) Protected Areas Development Programme (PADP) for Bia and Ankasa protected areas.
- Dutch Government funded Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) assisted Kyabobo Area Management Participatory Programme (KAMPP) at Kyabobo National Park; another programme is intended for Mole National Park.
- World Bank/IDA funded (1999- 2008) Natural Resources Management Programme (NRMP) for the Forest and Wildlife sector.

The above projects/programmes have been formulated and have been or are being implemented without a specific policy and the appropriate legislation for the involvement of local people in wildlife conservation. This policy seeks to address the need for a guiding policy in this sector.

3. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of this policy are based on national convictions, current national policies and Ghana's commitment to international conventions and guidelines. This policy seeks to incorporate where appropriate new ideas and approaches involving communities in wildlife management. In this respect this policy recognises Ghana's commitment under Articles 6, 10 and 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the principles outlined in World Conservation Strategy this policy therefore confirms the following principles:

- 3.1. Effective management of wildlife is best achieved by giving it focussed value for those who live with it.
- 3.2. Those who live with and bear the cost of wildlife must be the primary beneficiaries of its management.
- 3.3. The control of access and benefit from wildlife whether by the individual or collectively must be determined by those who live with the resource.
- 3.4. Wildlife should be recognised in its own right as an integral and viable component of national land use policy.
- 3.5. Wildlife is a unique natural resource offering various opportunities for sustainable rural development and economic utilisation.
- 3.6. To create the incentive for sustainable wildlife management at community level the authority to manage and benefit from wildlife must be devolved to an appropriate representative community institution.
- 3.7. The role of traditional authorities, traditional knowledge and other cultural aspects in wildlife management be recognised and encouraged. Such appropriate traditional institutions, knowledge and forms of management should be enhanced and incorporated into national strategies and wildlife management techniques.
- 3.8. The role of women is central to achieving sustainable wildlife use. Women must be integrated into the development and implementation of wildlife management programmes at all levels.

- 3.9. The role of the Wildlife Division as the national authority for wildlife be recognised and accepted that it may in certain cases, control levels or modes of use even where authority is devolved, if it is in the national interest to do so.

4. Policy Statement

This policy aims to enable the devolution of management authority to defined user communities and encourage the participation of other stakeholders, to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the nation's wildlife for the maintenance of environmental quality and a perpetual flow of optimum benefits to all segments of society.

- 4.1. The objectives of this policy are to:

In respect of protected areas

- 4.1.1. Secure Ghana's network of protected areas by developing wildlife management as a legitimate and viable land-use option in neighbouring communities.
- 4.1.2. Involve and develop a working partnership between the protected areas and people living in and around them to each other's benefit.

In respect of communities

- 4.1.3. Promote wildlife as a viable complement to existing agricultural practices through the sustainable production of bushmeat and other wildlife products.
- 4.1.4. Develop and maintain an effective institutional capacity for wildlife management at district and community level.
- 4.1.5. Facilitate and create the enabling environment for the equitable access to wildlife resources and benefits by rural communities.
- 4.1.6. Better understand the role of women in wildlife management and that their participation in the decision making process is ensured.

In respect of public awareness

- 4.1.7. Promote awareness in all segments of society of the value and the importance of wildlife to the national economy.

In respect of cultural heritage

- 4.1.8. Retain the cultural value of wildlife and create an awareness of past values and traditional knowledge.

In respect of co-ordination

- 4.1.9. Ensure that there is effective co-operation, information exchange and co-ordination between agencies of the Forestry Commission, Government Departments, NGOs and Development Partners .

5. Strategies

In pursuing each stated policy objective the Wildlife Division will focus on priority issues by employing the strategies outlined in the following points. These strategies place considerable emphasis on the devolution of authority to rural communities as a mechanism for creating the incentive and responsibility for wildlife conservation to those who are its users and beneficiaries. The strategies are in line with other current policies and national plans particularly the Forest and Wildlife Policy and the National Wildlife Policy. The implementation of these strategies will be closely monitored and follow the principles of adaptive management.

Securing Protected Areas

- 5.1. Management plans have or will be prepared for each protected area in Ghana. These plans will consider those circumstances that may be unique to the protected area in respect of its relationship with neighbouring communities and in some cases communities that are resident within the protected area boundary. Where communities are resident within the protected area the protected area plan will have to address the type of relationship with the community and if appropriate how settlement and the needs of the community can be accommodated within the protected area objectives.
- 5.2. In addition to the preparation of protected area plans each protected area will have a Protected Area Management Advisory Board (PAMAB). This structure will be the primary interface between the protected area, its surrounding neighbours and principal stakeholders. It provides a forum for conflict resolution and a mechanism to allow for the conditional access to the resources of the protected area.

Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs)

- 5.3. Globally there has been a trend to move away from strict regulatory conservation to adopt approaches that recognise the importance of rural people in the conservation of

wildlife. In Africa, this has resulted in several national programmes aimed at conserving wildlife through the empowerment of rural communities. In Ghana as the national authority for wildlife, the Wildlife Division is implementing the establishment of Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs). The development of CREMAs in Ghana applies the same principles used elsewhere to Ghanaian conditions. The CREMA concept is based on the establishment of areas where wildlife management is incorporated into existing landuse. The concept is based on the “community” as the management unit but due to the diversity of circumstance, the definition of community will be determined in each case by the people themselves.

- 5.4. The responsibility for establishing the CREMAs will fall to the Collaborative Resource Management Unit within the Wildlife Division. This unit will have a network of Community Wildlife Officers based in the field with locally selected Field Walkers in each community. With support from development partners and NGOs the unit will co-ordinate the identification and implementation of CREMAs throughout Ghana.
- 5.5. To ensure a consistency of approach and to avoid duplication of effort the Unit will work to establish a collaborating forum of Government, NGOs and development partners.
- 5.6. Land adjacent to the protected area network is seen as the highest priority for the establishment of CREMAs. However, CREMAs may be established anywhere in Ghana and communities will be encouraged to establish CREMAs on their own initiative.
- 5.7. The devolution of authority to the CREMA entails the following conditional points:
 - 5.7.1. The Wildlife Division in co-operation with the District Assembly and Traditional Authorities (where appropriate) will give the authority to a community represented by a locally elected Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC) to regulate and control access to wildlife in the area defined as the CREMA.
 - 5.7.2. In devolving the authority to regulate, the Wildlife Division will no longer issue or require hunting permits/licences for the area defined as the CREMA. The regulation of hunting and other uses will be the responsibility of the CREMA

within a framework agreed to by the Wildlife Division and in accordance with national legislation safeguarding in particular any specially protected, rare or endangered species. The CREMA will be held accountable for the protection, conservation and sustainable use of all wildlife in its own area of jurisdiction.

5.7.3. Each CREMA will have a constitution that will define the area, membership, access, rules and regulations of the CREMA.

5.7.4. Permits will be required for the trading in wildlife. This function is already decentralised to the District Assembly and the District Assembly will work with the CREMA to establish a system for issuance of trading permits. Revenues generated by the sale of these permits will be shared by the CREMA, District Assembly and Wildlife Division.

5.8. CREMAs will be encouraged to work with each other to share new ideas and approaches. Exchange visits with other community wildlife management programmes in Africa will be encouraged and funding sought.

The Involvement of Women

5.9. This policy recognises the critical role-played by women in the management of wildlife and in many cases women are more directly involved in the collection and use of wildlife. Without imposing external values this policy supports the active participation of women at all levels of decision making in wildlife management. To achieve this:

- Women will be encouraged to take active positions in CREMAs and PAMABs.
- Men and traditional authorities will be encouraged and sensitised on the need to ensure the involvement of women in the decision making process.
- The Wildlife Division will review the representation of women in its staff working on community wildlife management

Public Awareness

5.10. Heightened public awareness of wildlife conservation through the CREMA approach will be achieved by:

- The development and interaction with the community by Community Wildlife Officers (CWO).

- Internal awareness within the Division staff of the approach and importance of community involvement and co-operation in conservation.
- The training and use of Field Walkers in each community.
- The use of Exploration Bases in the Protected Area by community members to learn about the protected area.
- The use of public media to highlight issues and expose the general public to the CREMA programme and the principles involved.

Monitoring And Evaluation

5.11. The monitoring and evaluation of the CREMA programme is recognised as an important aspect of its implementation and development.

- At the CREMA and individual level Production Monitoring i.e. the monitoring of wildlife population, trends and levels of off-take will be of primary importance. The NRMCC will be responsible for this function – initially Field Walkers supported by the CWO will conduct data collection.
- At the District and CREMA level, Trade Monitoring will be the priority. The principal instrument for the monitoring of trade will be the bushmeat-trading permit. Receipts for this will be monitored at both CREMA and District Assembly levels. The establishment of a robust permitting system is a priority for development.
- At regional and national levels, the emphasis is on Trend Monitoring. This will involve a synthesis of data from districts and CREMAs to examine trends and identify common weaknesses and strengths. This information will be used to make overall management decisions (WMIS) and used as a guide for external interventions.

Traditional Authorities

5.12. The role of traditional authorities is viewed as critical and often essential in many communities. The Wildlife Division will work with the traditional authorities to:

- Identifying appropriate management structure for NRMCCs.
- Where appropriate develop the structure and participation in PAMABs.
- Resolve disputes especially those involving land under traditional tenure.
- Promote appropriate traditional management practices.
- Develop an increased understanding of traditional knowledge.

Integration With Other Organisations

- 5.13. To achieve the objectives and strategies outlined in this policy the Wildlife Division recognises the important role that all stakeholders have in the field of communities and resource management. For this reason, a major component of achieving the objectives and strategies of this policy is the need to develop a strong collaborative approach with all-relevant Ministries, Government Departments, District Assemblies, Traditional Authorities, NGOs and Development Partners.