



SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



Conference 2024

MAIN THEME

Thinking Big: Landscape Level and Transboundary Perspectives on Southern African Conservation

Wildlife management in southern Africa faces numerous challenges, including habitat fragmentation and loss, human-wildlife conflict, and climate change. To address these issues, a landscape-level approach that considers ecological, social, and economic factors is essential. This approach involves integrating various management strategies, such as habitat restoration, community engagement, and adaptive management, to promote the conservation of wildlife and their habitats while supporting local livelihoods.

During the SAWMA Namibia 2024 conference, we will showcase studies from different regions in southern Africa, highlighting successful landscape-level approaches to wildlife management and conservation. We urge the participants to discuss the challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned from these approaches and explore ways to scale up these efforts to achieve greater impact. Four sub-themes will enable presenters to share their experiences on topics such as community-based natural resource management, connectivity, green economy, and conservation health. Our goal is to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to guide improved wildlife management and promote sustainable development in southern Africa.

SUBTHEMES

1. Community-Based Natural Resource Management

Fostering community-led conservation and resource management in Southern African landscapes: successes, challenges, and opportunities

The global pursuit of sustainable development has led to an increasing recognition of the crucial role that local communities play in managing and conserving natural resources. Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is a dynamic approach that empowers communities to collaboratively manage their local ecosystems while fostering social and economic well-being. This theme delves into the multifaceted dimensions of CBNRM, exploring its principles, successes, challenges, and potential for steering communities towards a future of environmental economic resilience. We suggest the following ideas (but not limited to) with some examples:

Empowerment and Local Governance

- Examining how CBNRM empowers local communities to take ownership of their natural resources and make decisions aligned with their cultural values and aspirations.
- Discussing the role of decentralized governance structures in fostering participatory decision-making processes and ensuring equitable resource distribution.

Biodiversity Conservation

- Showcasing case studies that highlight the effectiveness of CBNRM in conserving biodiversity, restoring degraded ecosystems, and safeguarding endangered species.
- Exploring the integration of traditional ecological knowledge with scientific approaches for enhanced ecosystem management.

Sustainable Livelihoods and Socioeconomic Development

- Analysing how CBNRM contributes to sustainable livelihoods by promoting ecotourism, agroforestry, non-timber forest products, and other income-generating activities.
- Assessing the economic resilience and poverty alleviation potential of CBNRM in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Collaborative Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange

- Exploring the significance of collaboration among governments, NGOs, academia, and communities in fostering successful CBNRM initiatives.
- Highlighting innovative approaches for sharing indigenous knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned across regions and communities.

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

- Investigating how CBNRM can enhance community resilience against climate change impacts through adaptive resource management strategies.
- Discussing the role of CBNRM in carbon sequestration, climate-smart agriculture, and mitigating environmental vulnerabilities.

Conflict Resolution and Social Equity

- Addressing conflicts arising from resource scarcity and access rights, and how CBNRM models contribute to resolving disputes and promoting social equity.
- Analysing gender dynamics within CBNRM, and the role of women in resource management and decision-making.

Scaling Up and Policy Implications

- Exploring pathways for scaling up successful CBNRM initiatives from local to regional and national levels.
- Evaluating policy frameworks that recognize and support the integration of CBNRM into broader sustainable development agendas.

2. A Greener Economy for Wildlife Conservation: Public/Private Partnerships

Unlocking the potential of public-private partnerships for sustainable wildlife management and a green economy in southern African landscapes

The conservation of Southern Africa's rich biodiversity requires a synergistic approach that integrates green economies and fosters strategic public/private partnerships. This session explores the pivotal role of these relationships in advancing conservation efforts, driving economic growth, and ensuring the long-term viability of the region's unique wildlife and ecosystems. We suggest the following ideas (but not limited to) with some examples:

Green Economies and Biodiversity Conservation

- Investigating how green economic models can support wildlife conservation by valuing natural resources, promoting ecotourism, and generating sustainable income for local communities.
- Showcasing examples of successful green economy initiatives that simultaneously protect wildlife habitats and enhance economic opportunities.
- Exploring the role of working lands and how these can contribute to socio-economic development and conservation.

Public/Private Collaboration for Conservation

- Examining the critical role of partnerships between governments, private sector entities, NGOs, wildlife ranching, and local communities in conserving wildlife and ecosystems.
- Discussing strategies to align diverse interests, pool resources, and jointly implement conservation projects.

Innovative Financing for Conservation

- Exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as conservation bonds, impact investments, and corporate social responsibility initiatives, to fund wildlife conservation projects.
- Highlighting successful case studies of projects that have leveraged private sector funding for conservation efforts.

Community Involvement and Livelihoods

- Showcasing community-based approaches that empower local populations to actively participate in wildlife conservation and derive sustainable livelihoods from eco-friendly activities.
- Discussing the potential of ecotourism, responsible hunting, and non-timber forest products as avenues for community engagement.

Technological Advancements in Wildlife Protection and Monitoring

- Analysing how technology, including remote sensing, data analytics, and AI-based monitoring systems, enhances wildlife protection, monitoring, anti-poaching efforts, and habitat restoration.
- Sharing success stories of technology-driven initiatives that have yielded measurable conservation outcomes.

Policy Frameworks and Legal Instruments

- Examining policy and legal frameworks that facilitate public/private partnerships for wildlife conservation, encourage sustainable land use, and deter illegal wildlife trade.
- Discussing the importance of international cooperation in combatting transboundary wildlife crime.

Measuring Impact and Adaptive Management

- Evaluating methodologies for assessing the impact of public/private partnership projects on biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development.
- Discussing adaptive management approaches that allow for flexible strategies based on monitoring and evaluation outcomes.

Policy Harmonization and Legal Frameworks

- Analysing the role of harmonized policies, international agreements, and legal instruments in facilitating effective transboundary management and cooperation.
- Discussing the challenges of aligning diverse national regulations for seamless conservation efforts.

3. Connectivity Across Diverse Ecosystems

Landscape-Level Ecology and Transboundary Management for Wildlife Conservation in Southern Africa

The diverse ecosystems that span Southern Africa transcend political, administrative and landuse boundaries across different spatial scales, underscoring the need for landscape-level ecological approaches and collaborative transboundary management strategies. This session addresses these interconnected themes in safeguarding the region's diverse wildlife with landscape level and transboundary research/management. We suggest the following ideas (but not limited to) with some examples:

Landscape-Level Ecology and Connectivity

- Exploring the importance of viewing ecosystems as interconnected landscapes, analysing how habitat fragmentation impacts wildlife movement and genetic diversity.
- Showcasing research on corridors and other connectivity strategies that enable species to navigate across fragmented habitats.

Learning from a lack of connectivity – wildlife in confined and/or isolated space.

- Evaluating how wildlife reacts and interact in confined space? What are the challenges and opportunities related to conservation in areas smaller <100,000 ha?
- Understanding how small reserves contribute to landscape-level conservation efforts and how can that contribution be maximized?
- Showcasing wildlife management actions in confined space – dealing with movement constraints? What works and what not?
- Highlighting the importance of conservation genetics in conservation management of wildlife - from small reserves to large landscapes.

Ecosystem Management and Resilience

- Analysing how landscape-level approaches contribute to maintaining ecosystem health, promoting ecological resilience against climate change, and preventing ecological degradation.
- Discussing the role of fire management, invasive species control, and ecosystem restoration in bolstering landscape resilience.

Wildlife Migration and Transboundary Challenges

- Examining the importance of wildlife migration in maintaining genetic diversity and ecosystem functioning.
- Addressing the challenges posed by cross-border migration, including habitat loss, conflicts with human activities, and the potential spread of diseases.

Data Sharing and Technology in Transboundary Conservation

- Exploring the role of data sharing, remote sensing, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in supporting transboundary conservation planning and decision-making.
- Highlighting technological advancements that enhance monitoring, research, and collaborative efforts.

4. Conservation Health

Promoting wildlife health and welfare through physiological understanding and veterinary interventions in southern African landscape

Wildlife conservation continues to be an ever-advancing field; with newer GPS satellite technology, management strategies to better conserve small or isolated populations and inevitable human-wildlife conflict, the wildlife veterinarian provides key guidance and support to all conservation initiatives. This session discusses the intricacies of the role a wildlife veterinarian can play not only in supporting the management and research of wildlife species but also guiding when and how interventions should take place and how to harmonise the human-livestock-wildlife interface. We suggest the following ideas (but not limited to) with some examples:

Veterinary interventions

- Exploring when veterinary interventions should be performed, to what extent treatment should be pursued and what the ultimate goal should be for injured/escaped/orphaned wildlife.
- Outlining best field practices for veterinary interventions including considerations on the impact on a species or ecosystem level e.g. antimicrobial resistance, NSAID therapy in wildlife, and practical protocols for day-to-day use. What should we be doing that is best for the animal and the ecosystem?

Epidemiology and its role in conservation management

- Discussing practical approaches to disease surveillance and pre-translocation testing considerations.

- Evaluating the use of online platforms like EarthRanger to track and document disease outbreaks across natural habitats for better disease surveillance and emergency response.
- Discussing what should be considered/implemented around wildlife translocations and wildlife-livestock interface.

Veterinarian's role in wildlife conservation

- Exploring the ethical and welfare considerations for wildlife conservation around collarings, translocations, dehorning and human-wildlife conflict.
- Considering advancing technology and the impact on wildlife species e.g. impacts of various GPS collar/unit designs.
- Evaluating the impact of dehorning on wild rhino population dynamics and social interactions. A study of unintended consequences? And updates on improved welfare for rhino with improved dehorning protocols.

More than collaring - what should veterinarians/researchers be combining with wildlife immobilisations?

- Elaborating on what samples/biologic data/measurements can be taken during wildlife immobilisations that will enhance our understanding of wildlife physiology and the impact of the immobilisation process?
- Understanding the pharmacology of wildlife immobilisations - what protocols are best for different scenarios of wildlife capture? From boma vs free-range to individual vs highly social species, discussions highlighting that one size does not fit all and veterinarians should be tailoring their approach every time and to every individual.

Unique species - what do we know and what we do not know

- Learning lessons from pangolin, vulture, reptile, etc. - updates on species conservation efforts for the less iconic species and what has been learned to work/not work.
- Considering species that may be overlooked in typical management strategies.