

Pre-colonial and colonial conservation practices in southern Africa and their legacy today

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Introduction

Pre-colonial conservation practices have tended to be romanticized by most contemporary commentators. There is a dearth of information about these practices, although available evidence does indicate that as pre-colonial society became first regimented then stratified, access to and use of natural resources also came to be stratified, and conservation practices to reflect the attempts to balance competing interests. Such recorded pre-colonial conservation practices as the demarcation of sacred areas, the allocation of totems, the expropriation of labor for conservation etc, did not necessarily reflect egalitarian and consensual conservation, but rather the exercise of power over people and resources by dominant clans or classes, as the case would have been.

Very little is known and has been written about pre-colonial conservation practices in the region. The general belief is that low population densities, unsophisticated agricultural and hunting practices, and immobile populations meant that ecological conservation tended to be built into the routine economic, social and religious activities of the era. Consequently, pre-colonial societies did not need to develop sophisticated conservation mechanisms. The reality tends to be very different. Existing evidence suggests that settlements typically were consolidated with very high population densities. Agricultural and other resource extraction activities were very sophisticated and adapted to the requirements of specific resources and ecosystems over time, while the societies themselves developed sometimes very sophisticated mechanisms to regulate resource use.

However, much evidence of pre-colonial conservation practice has been obliterated by colonial conservation practices. While a significant number of contemporary protected areas in southern Africa were protected under one pre-colonial regime or other. Examples of such pre-colonial conservation areas include Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Moremi Game Reserve and Chief's Island in Botswana; Mavhuradonha, Matopos, and Gonarezhou National Parks in Zimbabwe, Tsidilo Hills, Mamili National Park, and Salambala in Namibia; Hluhluwe, Umfolozi National Parks in South Africa. However, the imposition of colonial conservation regimes on these landscapes led to top conscious efforts to obliterate these pre-existing land uses and their long term impacts (Adams, 2003).

Moreover, the assumption of stable pre-colonial populations is wrong. In very early times, evidence exists to suggest that when resources came under pressure from, say, increased human populations, or economic activity, a typical response was for whole populations to move to new uncolonised and resource abundant areas. These political responses to ecological phenomena resulted in the several waves of migrations from central into southern Africa and back, including the Luba-Lunda dispersions and the Mfecane of the late 18th century. As this response became restricted by widespread settlements, new political, religious and technological innovations were developed to deal with ecological concerns. These included such innovations as pastoralism, slash and burn agriculture, water harvesting, and the development of institutional regulation of resource use.

In the area of wildlife, for instance, numerous evidence exists to demonstrate that because of technological limitations, indigenous hunter gatherers did not adversely affect the populations especially of big game. Although meat constituted an important part of local diets, and wildlife products constituted important commodities, trading did not deplete existing wildlife populations. Thus by the time the "great adventurers" (essentially European hunter gatherers) in the mould of Henry Morton Stanley, or the missionaries in the form of the Moffats and Livingstone arrived in the region, they could report that the region was teeming with wildlife, that the forest were dense and unscathed, and that the landscape was generally pristine.

Nhira and Fortman (1992) detail various other ways, including the setting up of sacred groves, ritual and myth, by which scarce resources were managed by local communities. Schoffeleers (1979) discusses the complex relationship between communities and their environment, and the various institutional mechanisms developed by these communities to manage natural resources. Matowanyika (1991) describes some important aspects of Shona ethnography and environmental management and concludes that while colonialism attempted to replace African institutions with European ones for environmental management, African institutions did not dissipate but continued to function because of basic and fundamental differences in perceptions and uses of the environment between the colonizers and the colonized.

This paper will explore the evolution and development of pre-colonial and colonial conservation practices, and attempt to demonstrate their influences on contemporary conservation policies and practices. A long term historical approach is used, and for the most part the case of Zimbabwe will be the primary point of reference, although examples from other parts of the region will be adduced wherever necessary. This is because the history of conservation in most of southern Africa followed broadly similar trajectories, with differences only in the detail.

Pre-colonial Conservation Practices

Because of obvious problems of the predominant historical methodologies, it is difficult to describe with any precision the conservation practices that could have existed in pre-colonial times. However, as Matowanyika (1991) argues, certain important elements of pre-colonial ethnography and environmental management survived into the colonial period because of their continued relevance to the environmental management practices of the colonised peoples. Historians, sociologists, anthropologists and other students of non-industrial societies have emphasized the close relationship between social organization and the environment (Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard). They have also observed that the process of ecological transformation of nature forms a major element in the religious systems of any society with a subsistence economy (Binsbergen, 1979).

A great deal has been written about the notion of 'sacredness', and the role that sacredness plays in conservation. Sacred groves are seen as representing important pre-colonial forest conservation; sacred pools are related to wetlands conservation, and so on. While there can be no doubt that religion was certainly deployed to conserve critical resources, particularly in times of crisis, it appears that sacred places represented much more broader religious goals and functions than conservation. Sacred places represent different scales of conservation, from the individual hunters shrine, for instance, to large sacred territories managed by several religious and political authorities. The most widespread ecological shrines in central Africa were village shrines, presumably because it is at the village level that ecological pressure is most keenly felt. According to Binsbergen (1979: 56), "in a subsistence economy, the landscape is never completely humanised - everywhere places remain which have never been subjected to man's ecological transformations or which, once used, have been abandoned again. These places are of great significance: they tend to represent hidden forces on which man draws for his survival but which, on the other hand, are only too prone to harm him. 'Wild' places play a prominent part in the religions of peoples engaged in a subsistence economy." Wild places become important foci of religious places if they are somehow prominent in the landscape. "Hills, pools, imposing trees, caves, streams, falls and rapids become associated with invisible entities, and thus become objects of veneration" (ibid).

Perhaps the most comprehensive studies of pre-colonial conservation practices as they existed during the colonial era in central and southern Africa have occurred in the context of studies of religion. This is not surprising, since conservation would not have existed as a separate discipline per se, but as part of general social organization. As Schoffeleers (1979:2) states, "[T]he prevalent idiom used by central African societies for the articulation and application of their earth philosophies is religion." Schoffeleers further notes that territorial cults are distinct from other religious organizations in society in terms of their high degree of institutionalization, their reflection of the power and primacy of political organizations over kin groups, and historical continuity.

Given that population densities were generally low compared to resources, and also that resource exploitation was designed to fulfil immediate consumption needs and only limited exchange values, natural resources were not commoditized in the pre-colonial era. Consequently, early conservation ideals were developed to deal with crisis situations arising out of natural disasters, rather than from the extractive activities of humans. Thus most regulation of resource use revolved around the implications of particular forms of resource extraction for, say, droughts, floods and pestilence.

Schoffeleers (ibid) notes that cults function to regulate the production and distribution of food, the protection of natural resources, and the control of human migratory movements. Ecological functions are distributed through a number of these religious institutions, including lineage cults concerned inter alia with land and livestock issues, professional cults of hunters, fishermen and others, and territorial cults which are profoundly ecological in function. "Territorial cults function in respect of the well being of the community, its fields, livestock, fishing, hunting and general economic interests." They achieve these objectives through ritual as well as issuing and enforcing directives. Territorial cults function to control the use of fire (Malawi); agricultural production methods and practices - e.g. cult leadership of opposition to the introduction of certain crops in the colonial era; fishing and grazing. Cults also played an important role in determining settlement patterns, population movements and the acceptance or non-acceptance of immigrants. Schoffeleers notes that the Mbona cult of Malawi's reaction to perennial flooding of the marshlands of the lower Shire Valley in the late 1930s was to exert pressure on the population to emigrate to relieve pressure on the land (ibid:4)

As colonialism progressed, territorial cults came under various challenges, which eventually led to their breakdown. These challenges included:

- Land expropriation and wage labour which drastically changed the structure of social organization;
- Christianity, which questioned the religious bases the cults;
- The colonial administration itself; the rationalist interpretations of ecology in the form of land conservation and animal husbandry;
- The bureaucratization of the chieftainship which weakened political support for the cults.

As a consequence of these pressures, by the 1950s, the territorial cults had greatly diminished in importance (Schoffeleers, 1979).

The role of indigenous technical knowledge systems in pre-colonial conservation has also been considerably studied (Matowanyika, 1989). Local communities developed intimate knowledge of their ecosystems and used this knowledge to tailor systems of sustainable resource use and management that were appropriate to these systems. Local resource users developed intimate knowledge of the ecological status of the resources, rates of reproduction, rates of sustainable off-take, as well as forms of sustainable off-take. Numerous examples can be adduced from local myths and religions to demonstrate the ways in which indigenous knowledge was deployed and reinforced in religion to regulate resource use. Thus traditional healers developed regulations around the harvesting of medicinal plants, some of which are still in force to this day, hunters, fishers and pastoralists all developed highly complex resource use regulatory systems based on the productive and reproductive capacities of the resources in question.

However, pre-colonial conservation practices were not only regulated in the religious realm with reference to local use. The pre-colonial state also took steps to regulate resource use by outsiders, especially where such use was perceived to be affecting sustainability. King Shaka set up a royal hunting reserve in present day Hluhluwe Game reserve as a preserve for the ruling political and military class. In response to the destruction of wildlife by the early European adventurer hunter gatherers, some African rulers set up rudimentary management systems in an effort to save wild animals from extinction. Thus Mzilikazi introduced a permit system for all European hunter gatherers in his kingdom. Under this system, gifts and other presents were given to the king in return for permission to hunt in his territory. The king also levied a percentage of the spoils of the hunt as payment for the permission (Masona, 1987; Mackenzie, 1988). Mzilikazi also set up a game reserve in Matabeleland known as Maduguza, west and north west of his capital, Bulawayo, where no one was allowed to kill except with the king's permission (national Museums and Monuments, undated pamphlet, quoted in Masona, 1987). The hunting Shangaans of the South Eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe set up a royal wildlife preserve in the area around present day Gonarezhou National

Park (Nduku, 1987). Thus perceptions of resource degradation were not limited to the colonizing whites, the indigenous people were also acutely aware of the problem and devised appropriate responses.

"As these processes [of wildlife destruction by European hunter-gatherers] accelerated in the latter nineteenth century, it was not just the Africans who found it increasingly difficult to gain access to the faunal resource... By this time whites had become acutely aware of the decline of big game stocks. Two species, the blaubok and the quagga, had become extinct while others no longer survived in vast tracts of Southern Africa where formerly they had been abundant" (MacKenzie, 1991:21).

It is significant that pre-colonial conservation, based as it was on the unity of humanity and nature, did not create separate categories for conservation, but rather devised strategies for conserving nature while at the same time guaranteeing access to it. Although this access and use may have been mitigated by policy, religion, custom and practice to reflect existing stratification and other imbalances in pre-colonial society, the motivation for conservation was to guarantee human access to nature. This was in direct contrast with the colonial model of conservation, which has led to the development of nature conservation areas as areas cleared of all human influence and settlement, with highly restricted access to resources. Colonial conservation was based on a myth of nature which emerged from the scientific processes of exploration, mapping, documentation, classification and analysis. Nature came to be defined as the absence of human impact, especially European human impact. Nature thus came to define regions that were not dominated by Europeans (Adams, 2003:33)

Colonialism and Conservation

According to Adams, 2003, colonialism can be seen as an outworking of bureaucratic rationalization. This rationality has four dimensions, all of which were features of colonial states:

- The development of science and technology and its deployment to manipulate nature
- The expansion of the capitalist economy
- Formal hierarchical organization (the creation of executive government, transforming social action into rationally organised action)
- The elaboration of a formal legal system (p22)

This rationality, assumed that the cultural and the social could be uncoupled from nature, since reason had allowed humanity to escape from nature and to remake it. "The acquisition of colonies was accompanied by, and to a large extent enabled by, a profound belief in the possibility of restructuring nature and re-ordering it to serve human needs and desires" (Adams, 2003: 23). Science was the mechanisms by which this could be achieved, and science and conservation developed hand in hand.

It is now generally agreed that European colonization colonised not only humans, but nature as well (Plumwood, 2003; Grove, 1995; MacKenzie, 1991). In direct contrast to the African intuition regarding the unity between nature and society, colonial ideas about nature were based in the European Enlightenment's dualism between humans and nature. In this construction, nature is seen as a resource for human use, and wildness as a challenge for the rational mind to conquer (Adams, 2003). European colonization itself was based on the application of rationalist ideology to both humans and nature. In this ideology, indigenous peoples and their lands are portrayed as areas of rational deficit - unused, empty, and underused. Thus the imposition of European rationality on this irrational landscape is justified through a form of anthropocentrism which sees indigenous cultures as primitive and less rational. The colonization of nature thus relies on a range of conceptual strategies that are employed also within the human sphere to support supremacism of nation, gender (the white male) and race (Plumwood, 2003). These human/nature dualist anthropocentric conceptual strategies which exaggerate differences while at the same time denying commonalities between humans and nature, include (pp54-59, *en passim*):

- **Radical exclusion:** This functions to mark out the 'Other' for separate and inferior treatment. Nature is treated as Other, and humans are separated from nature and animals. Nature is a separate lower

order, lacking any real continuity with the human. At the same time, the colonizing groups associate themselves with mastery of nature.

- **Homogenization/stereotyping:** The Other is not an individual, but a member of a stereotyped class, thus making it interchangeable, replaceable and homogenous. Nature is treated as interchangeable units, as resources. Radical exclusion and homogenization work together to produce a polarized understanding in which human and non-human spheres correspond to two quite different substances or orders of being in the world.
- **Polarization:** Radical exclusion and homogenization work together to produce a polarised understanding in which overlap between the human and non-human spheres are denied and discouraged. Nature is only nature if it is 'pure', uncontaminated by human influence, as untouched 'wilderness', while human identity is separate from and outside of nature.
- **Denial, backgrounding:** Once the Other is marked as separated and inferior, there is strong motivation to represent them as inessential. In ecology, the colonised are firstly denied as uncivilised. Their prior ownership of the land is denied, and their land is seen as *terra nullius* - with no pre-existing regimes of rights to it. Nature is seen as a basically inessential constituent of the universe
- **Assimilation:** The colonized are devalued as lacking the colonizer's essential quality - reason. Differences are judged as deficiencies, and therefore as grounds of inferiority. The order of the colonized is represented as disorder. Thus the colonized and their disorderly space are available for assimilation and use by the colonizer. Similarly, the intricate order of nature is presented as disorder, to be replaced by human order in development.
- **Instrumentalism:** The colonised Other is reduced to being a means of the coloniser's ends. The extent to which indigenous peoples were ecological agents who actively managed the land is denied, and they are presented as largely passive in the face of nature. In ecology, nature's agency and independence are denied, subsumed in, or remade to coincide with human interests. Since the non human sphere is empty of purpose and devoid of agency of its own, it is appropriate that the human colonizer impose his own purposes.

Thus, it is significant that the definition of places as wild played an equally important part in pre- and post-colonial conservation. While pre-colonial notions of 'wild' were applied to abandoned places or places untouched by human use, the same notion was used in colonial conservation through the suppression of knowledge of the extent and scope of human occupation in a process of creating ideologically significant landscapes (Adams, 2003). In colonial conservation, ideology replaced religion as the basis of conservation practices. "The colonial period saw a distinctive pattern of engagement with nature: a destructive, utilitarian and cornucopian view of the feasibility of yoking nature to economic gain" (Adams, 2003:22). Discussing the declaration of Matopos National Park in Rhodesia from 1926, Adams demonstrates how, by recognizing ancient hunter gatherer occupations of Matopos but dismissing contemporary agricultural activity, depopulating the park and restricting access to tourists and officials, a white Rhodesian shrine, sacred to the memory of Cecil John Rhodes who was buried there, was created in a place that was formerly a shrine of the Mwari cult.

While early colonial ideas about nature conservation grew partially out of a desire to tame the wild (Adams, 2003), as exemplified by the collection, naming and deposition of specimens in museums and other attempts to master wildness (Griffiths, 1996), as well as social reaction against technology and industrialization, environmental historians have noted that the major impetus for colonial conservation has its origins in the general opposition to the impacts of the excesses of utilitarian resource exploitation as well as perceptions of rapid environmental degradation in the colonies (Grove, 1995). Thus colonial conservation has its origins in both a romantic tradition opposed to 'modernization', as well as a scientific rational tradition that sought to manage nature for human enjoyment and benefit (Adams, 2003:8).

Hughes (pers. comm. 2003) notes how this myth of the wild continues to be used to justify contemporary conservation policies and practices, even when they are applied to landscapes that are themselves the result of human agency. Citing the examples of Lake Kariba, a massive man made lake on the Zambezi valley, and the Chewore/ Mana Pools National Park complex downstream of it, Hughes observes how these recent human creations are managed and legitimated as wilderness in contemporary Zimbabwe.

Conservation and the Evolution of Wildlife Policy in Southern Rhodesia and the Cape Colony

This section will trace the historical development of game legislation in the Cape Colony and Southern Rhodesia as the basis for subsequent wildlife and natural resource conservation policies and practices throughout the region. The case of Southern Rhodesia is presented, with examples adduced from elsewhere as appropriate. Early colonial game legislation was based on the creation of separate spaces for conservation.

"the Development of notions of preservation and conservation marked the final stages of the appropriation of nature. The concept of land segregation has usually been studied in terms of its human and racial dimensions. But it should be remembered that racial segregation was preceded by efforts to separate animal habitat from human settlement... the only hope for survival of game - and for the 'civilization' of Africans - lay in the provision of separate territory where it would be protected. Elite White hunting could continue to take place in remote regions or in hunting controlled areas... The task was of course to transform these [African] hunters into 'poachers' in order to frustrate their hunting activities... The development of national parks introduced a new phase to the white appropriation of nature. The 'preservation' phase,... , was part of the transformation of hunting into a sport of the elite" (MacKenzie, 1991; 22-23 passim).

While historians have written exhaustively about the role of land in the advance of imperialism in Zimbabwe, especially after the failure to find a 'second rand', as well as the role of the early hunters, missionaries and adventurers in facilitating settler colonialism, little has been said about the role of natural resources, especially wildlife, in this process. Recently, however, historians have come to recognize the important role that wild animals played in subsidizing the nascent settler economies of the British Indian and African colonies. Historians have also begun to document the role of wildlife in the evolution and development of colonial land and conservation policies. In settler colonial societies of southern Africa in particular, wildlife has increasingly come to be seen as having played a pivotal part in the tripartite division of land use: between white, black and game (MacKenzie, 1988, 1991).

Game legislation in the colonies was essentially a reaction to the depletion of the hitherto abundant game resources of these areas by white hunters, missionaries, adventurers and engineers armed with high precision rifles (MacKenzie, 1988, 1991; Mapuvire, 1987). Stories of the early adventurers abound with tales of huge bags of trophies collected for sale in Europe (Mason, 1987). Initially, ivory was the primary object of the chase. Ostrich feathers, rhino horn, hippo teeth and meat and hides were of secondary importance. In the 1800s, hunting came to focus on the collection of specimens for sale to natural museums and zoological gardens in Europe (Tabler, 1955; Mapuvire, 1987; MacKenzie, 1988). Adams (2003) observes that the plundering of nature was a widespread feature of colonization, particularly in its pioneer form (p29).

Hunting and early colonial game legislation

As detailed by MacKenzie, (1991), hunting subsidized the advance of imperialism in different phases. In the first phase mentioned above, hunting was undertaken by professional hunter-traders, adventurers and explorers for trade in trophies in Europe. In this phase, hunting was also undertaken by missionaries, prospectors, explorers and engineers (particularly railway builders) to subsidize their activities. The famous missionary, David Livingstone, built his church at Kolobeng and paid his followers with the gun (MacKenzie, 1991).

In the second phase of the imperial advance, hunting subsidized the activities of the early settlers. According to MacKenzie (1991, 20), "All settlers are, initially, asset strippers. In the second phase game constituted a vital expansionist resource, a ready source of meat, a means of paying labour as well as offering trade items to supplement other forms of economic activity." Moreover, as the settlers built up livestock herds, the

balance between pastoralism and hunting changed to the advantage of the former. It was no longer in the settlers' interest to have competition for grazing, and wildlife was shot out as 'vermin'.

As the perceptions of the depletion of game stocks became increasingly more acute, game legislation, aimed primarily at preserving the remaining species and also providing limited access to these species by the white elite, was introduced. "Access to game progressively became a marker of class status among whites. The disappearance of hunting opportunities may well have furthered the impoverishment of poor whites in the Transvaal and thus developed social differentiation among the Boers (Trapido, [1980] in MacKenzie, 1991:21).

Early game legislation established proprietary rights to wild animals in relation to land ownership and introduced a licensing system which 'increasingly turned hunting into an elite recreation' (MacKenzie, 1991:21). Game laws were also passed for aesthetic and moral reasons, and the need to preserve flora and fauna for posterity (Street, 1970, in Masona, 1987). "Colonial conservation allowed resources to be appropriated, both for the use of private capital as a source of revenue for and the state itself" (Adams, 2003). Early colonial legislation in Rhodesia was imported from the Cape of Good Hope, which in turn had been exported from Britain. British game legislation was itself based on the Magna Carta of 1215, itself based on Roman Common law which established that game was *res nullius*, i.e. the property of no one, not even the state (Farquharson, 1992). Thus in the Magna Carta, game was held by the king "in his sovereign capacity in sacred trust for the people. Therefore, .. it follows that an individual cannot obtain an absolute property right in such game except upon such conditions, restrictions and limitations as may be permitted by the state" (Leopold, A, quoted in Masona, 1987). This was the basis of the 'King's Game' or 'Royal Game' concept that was to become such a pervasive feature of game policies in southern Africa.

Colonial game legislation in the Rhodesias incorporated intact and without regard to local conditions game legislation which had been passed in the Cape in response to the depletion of species, which was ascribed to African hunters (MacKenzie, 1988), and for the restriction of access to game (Masona, 1987). Although African hunting was blamed for the depletion of game in these early days MacKenzie (1988; 1991), convincingly argues that given the means at their disposal, as well as their needs it is highly unlikely that Africans could have hunted game to the brink of extinction. On the other hand, armed with high precision rifles and leading an obviously precarious frontier existence which necessarily had to be subsidized by hunting, white settlers saw game as a wasting asset and hunted excessively.

Game legislation in southern Rhodesia began in 1889 with the granting of the "Charter of Incorporation" to the British South Africa Company (BSAC) by the British government. Seeking to streamline the chain of command between the former and the later, the Charter made the laws of the Cape of Good Hope applicable to the colony of Southern Rhodesia (Masona, 1987). The policy of game preservation was written into the Charter. Initially these laws applied only to Matabeleland but were extended to Mashonaland in 1898 when the colony of southern Rhodesia was proclaimed (Masona, 1987). Owners and occupiers of alienated land were exempt from these laws. From the outset, colonial game legislation introduced a class and racial character to the exploitation of game by limiting access to owners of land, who could only be the European settlers. Game legislation was imposed on the BSAC in the Charter by the imperial state. The policy was not the result of the experiences of the BSAC in Southern Rhodesia neither did it in any way reflect the aspirations of the indigenous population of the colony (Mapuvire, 1987).

By Proclamation of the High Commissioner on June 10, 1891, the law in force in the Cape of Good Hope became the Law of the colony of Southern Rhodesia. Thus "the Game Law Amendment Act of 1886" of the Cape of Good Hope became the official game law of Southern Rhodesia in terms of this proclamation. This law detailed the process of acquiring licenses and permits and their use on privately owned or occupied land. It further sought to curtail the export of game from the Cape and to prevent the commercialization of game exploitation (Masona, 1987). The beginnings of a preservationist game policy in Southern Rhodesia were contained in this early legislation.

In 1899, a "Game Preservation Ordinance No. 6" was passed to "... consolidate and amend the Game Laws for the better preservation of game in Southern Rhodesia"^{1[5]}. The Ordinance marked the introduction of profound changes in colonial game policy and these are outlined and discussed below. The Ordinance divided game into two classes, 'A' and 'B' for purposes of licensing. A class 'A' license cost 1 pound and was valid during a shooting season, (a closed season having been set at 1st October to 30th April of the following year). For the shooting of class 'B' game, permission of the Administrator was necessary and this was granted only to holders of game licenses.

The Ordinance further empowered the Administrators of Matabeleland and Mashonaland to:

- 1) *declare as to any part of Southern Rhodesia that any bird or wild animal to be herein specified shall be protected and not hunted or destroyed for a number of years not exceeding five;*
- 2) *suspend the operation of the Ordinance or parts of it either as to the whole territory or certain districts or portions of districts or protect certain game for a period of time stated;*
- 3) *declare or provide that certain game or descriptions of game mentioned in classes A and B shall be transferred from one class to another and again change or alter such provision;*
- 4) *exempt from any of the provisions of the Ordinance prospectors, farmers, police or persons travelling in the country and permit them to shoot or capture game for actual consumption as food at places more than 20 miles from a township; but no game obtained under such exemption shall be brought to any town or be sold or bartered and provided that nothing in any such exemption shall be deemed to authorize the killing or capture of game on the land of private owners;*
- 5) *fix and prescribe a close time or fence season within which it shall not be lawful to kill, pursue, hunt or shoot at game either with or without a game license^{2[6]}.*

The ordinance further declared elephant, giraffe, hippopotamus, white rhino, eland, zebra, Burchell's zebra, quagga, kudu or ostrich royal game and prohibited their killing, hunting pursuit or capture, unless they were *bona fide* required for scientific or farming purposes. A game license would cost ten pounds and would be sold to holders of a magistrate's certificate that the applicant was suitable to hold such license. The privileges of owners or occupiers of alienated land were left intact.

For the first time, the Ordinance provided for the legal protection of species from hunting. Albeit this protection was for a limited period of time (five years), the guiding principle was that a threatened species could be protected for sufficiently long periods of time, within designated areas, to allow for population to build up after which exploitation could resume. Secondly, the Ordinance also provided for the suspension of all protection of wildlife species in certain instances.

Coming as it did after the devastation of the rinderspest epizootic of 1886 - 1887, this provision was principally aimed at protecting the nascent cattle industry from the depredations of diseases believed to be transmitted by wild animals. It was further aimed at facilitating the operation of the tsetse eradication programme, which was based on the assumption that wild animals were an important trypanosomiasis

^{1[5]} *Southern Rhodesia, Reports of Debates - Legislative Council, 1899-1903.*

^{2[6]} Ordinance No. 6 of 1899: in BSAC Government Gazette, 9/8/1899.

vector, and that the destruction of wild animals in cattle country was therefore the only legitimate means of protecting domestic stock from the disease (Tarutira, 1988).

The protection of the cattle industry from wildlife, particularly from predation by carnivorous wild animals, is evidenced by the fact that in 1903, in terms of the 1899 Act, the government introduced a scheme whereby settlers were paid to kill certain species anywhere in the colony, payment being made on the production of skin or some other identifiable part of the animal. The scheme lasted until 1914. The 1921 'Memorandum on the Cattle Industry of Southern Rhodesia' noted *inter alia* that less than half the total livestock deaths in the colony were due to disease, while more than half were attributable to wild animals, particularly lion, leopards and snakes but especially to wild dogs. Wild animals were also notorious for destroying fences. 'The effect ... was to instil a hostile attitude towards game preservation among ranchers. This in turn made the implementation of colonial game policy difficult' (Masona, 1987:56). Table 1 shows the number of rewards paid by the government for the destruction of Carnivora during part of this period.

The provision for the transfer of game between classes A and B was built in to allow for the hunting of certain species as and when it was felt that their populations had sufficiently built up for such exploitation after the protection granted in clause 1, i.e. after the five year hunting prohibition period. The exemption of farmers was further aimed at protecting livestock as well as crops from wildlife, while the exemption of police was primarily because game was also exploited for practical purposes in times of war and hunting was considered an important aspect of military training (MacKenzie, 1988;1991). It is also important to note that in spite of these exemptions of certain classes of people from provisions of the Ordinance, the commercialization of game remained tightly controlled.

TABLE 1: Annual Reward offered by Government for the Destruction of Carnivora: 1909 - 1912

SPECIES	1909	1910	1911	1912
Lion	53	39	88	177
Leopard	134	197	255	312
Cheetah	26	20	50	43
Hyena/Wild dog	35	45	123	271
Crocodile	14	17	43	94
Crocodile eggs	-	-	-	287
Baboons	-	-	1062	1876

Source: Adapted from Masona, 1987:56

The fixing of a closed or fence season was probably timed to coincide with breeding seasons of most species, and was thus another attempt to allow populations to build up. Current arguments against a closed season maintain that it was initially meant to coincide with the wet season and thus was set purely in order to guarantee the comfort of the hunters (Taylor, 1990). The closed season did coincide with the wet season, during which crop cultivation is undertaken. However, although owners or occupiers of alienated land were exempt from the provisions of the Ordinance, and therefore could shoot wild animals on their land to protect crops and livestock, the population of the reserves was not exempted from these provisions. They could not shoot wild animals in the reserves, even if they were crop raiders or livestock predators. The Act did, however make provisions for the Native Commissioners or some licensed chiefs to shoot crop or livestock raiding animals, although administration of this provision was haphazard, and therefore did not provide adequate protection to the indigenous population.

The effect of this provision, therefore, was that these people could not shoot or kill crop raiding wild animals during this season. This obviously would have profound implications for the development of negative attitudes towards wildlife by the indigenous population. The impact of licensing, close season and other

provisions of the Ordinance on African access to wild animals is aptly captured by MacKenzie who observes:

"A licensing system was introduced which increasingly turned hunting into an elite recreation and exemptions for bona fide travellers were eventually removed.... As the utilitarian aspects of hunting declined, its status as the perquisite of the elite became increasingly important. As with most sports a 'code' now came into operation; 'clean kills' became the order of the day and all methods adjudged to be cruel, like the use of spears, poison, traps, snares and pits were banned. Thus Europeans created a set of legal and moral criteria which specifically excluded Africans. Africans were also excluded by the operation of gun laws and the decline of iron-working crafts associated with hunting' (1191;21).

It is also significant to note that certain species were placed in class B for the first time specifically protected from hunting. Although there had been no comprehensive census of game populations in the colony at the time, this declaration was based on the perceptions of serious declines in these species and of the need to protect. Thus the tone of the Ordinance, like preceding game legislation, remained largely preservationist and protective of the nascent settler agriculture from wild animals.

The "Game Law Consolidation Ordinance No. 13 of 1906" amended Ordinance No. 6 of 1899. The 1906 Ordinance created a distinct class of 'Royal Game', class C, and further provided for the issuing of game licenses in three separate categories; for persons domiciled in Southern Rhodesia, for persons not so domiciled and for class A game. Ordinance No. 13 was amended three times. The first amendment, the Game Law Amendment Ordinance No. 21 of 1914, provided that the owner or occupier of alienated land, or any European person authorized by him, could kill or take game, including ostriches but excluding all other birds, on such land at any time. It further provided that any person taking or killing such game take out a special one pound license, to expire on the 31st of December following the date of issue. Thus the license was designed to be no more than an annual license. Moreover, Administrators could grant permission to any person to take or kill game for his own use, but not for sale, or export for sale. This last provision was obviously intended to benefit prospectors and miners who continued to subsidize their activities with game meat (MacKenzie, 1988).

The provision that the owner or occupier of alienated land could take or shoot game on the property at any time, subject only to the possession of a one pound annual license, resulted in great abuses of authority by the land owners and their agents. Abuses were likely because, as Style (1987) observed: "Game animals were considered by many landowners to be in direct competition for grazing". Moreover, the regulation prohibited any commercial gain from the hunting of game on any land. Thus barely a year after the passing of the Ordinance, the authorities were beginning to note instances of abuse of authority by land owners. Newton, (1915) cites one example of the gross abuse occasioned by the provision:

"In one case a party obtained permission from the land owner to shoot, and the party shot one elephant, 11 giraffe, and 70 head of game under the one pound license... Practical experience of [the amendment's] working had convinced government that if something was not done soon the consequences to the big game of the country would be very serious"³¹⁷¹ (Quoted in Masona, 1987).

Such abuses were because wildlife continued to be regarded by the settler farmers as vermin that constituted a threat to cattle and agriculture and that must therefore be destroyed. To remedy the situation, the rights to shoot were withdrawn from landowners by the Game Law Further Amendment Ordinance No.2 of 1917, hardly three years after the rights had been granted in 1914.

This was the state of game legislation in Southern Rhodesia in 1923 when BSAC rule came to an end following the granting of Responsible Government to the colony. Summarizing the policy guiding this legislation, Masona (1987:24) observes that during BSAC rule, the company representatives in the colony had taken a conservative stand regarding wildlife legislation. Where the legislation was in conflict with

³¹⁷¹ F.J. Newton N3/24/5-7/No. K-46-15-NC (Mazoe) to Superintendent of Natives (Salisbury) 16/03/1915

settler interests, they sided with the settler farmers. "They were especially opposed to the establishment of game reserves which, they argued, would contravene the land rights of the BSAC."^{4[8]}

The Game Preservation Phase (1923 - 1960)

"The 'preservation' phase, associated with the early attempts at game legislation and the establishment of (game) reserves, was part of the transformation of hunting into the sport of an elite. Species would survive and game would be protected in order to supply recreation to those qualified [by race and class] to pursue it" (MacKenzie, 1988: 23).

The Game Law Consolidation Ordinance, 1906, Amending Act, 1926 was the first amendment to the pre - 1923 game legislation and already contained elements of the racial 'appropriation of nature" by the new settler regime (Masona, 1987). The amendment was occasioned by an application by a white landowner for a permit for his African employees to shoot game on his ranch. The permit was refused on the grounds that an African employee could not be the agent of a white landowner as intended in the legislation. The amendment also prohibited the shooting of game at night. This resulted in serious opposition from the settler community who argued: "We must make up our minds whether we are going to keep this colony as a game reserve or whether we are going to make it a colony of white people" (Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, vol 5 (1926) col. 411; quoted in Masona, 1987:34). Again this opposition by landowners stemmed from the perception of wildlife as a nuisance and a cost to agriculture that could not be tolerated.

In 1929, the colonial government shifted its efforts to preserve wildlife into higher gear through the promulgation of the Game and Fish Preservation Act (No. 35 of 1929). The Act was passed to ".. Consolidate and amend the law for the better preservation of game and fish and the protection of certain of the fauna of Southern Rhodesia" (Act No. 35 of 1929, emphasis added). In terms of this Act, the Governor of the colony could establish game reserves and appoint game wardens and rangers to manage these reserves. The granting of hunting licenses and permits was now to be done by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands. The Act also provided for the owners and occupiers of alienated land to preserve wildlife on their land by gazetting their intention to undertake such preservation. The Act, however, still prohibited the commercial exploitation of game.

In the same year, the Southern Rhodesia government also established the first game reserve and national park in the country. Government Notice No. 690 of 19th November, 1929 established the Matopo Game Reserve and National Park. This was intended to preserve all species of flora and fauna occurring in the designated area, which would be protected for scientific, educational and aesthetic purposes.

The first officers of government employed full time for the preservation and control of wildlife were appointed in the Division of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands in 1929 (Masona, 1987). It is significant to note that although numerous game regulations had been passed since 1898, there had been no personnel specifically tasked with their administration until 1929. The result was that implementation of these regulations had been at best haphazard. The regulations were also frequently broken by those charged with their administration, while the settlers, travellers and prospectors frequently ignored them with impunity (Mapuvire, 1987; MacKenzie, 1988).

Moreover, game laws were frequently suspended, especially to allow the shooting of game for food in draught years, for crop and livestock protection and in the tsetse eradication programme. In the cattle industry, game continued to be regarded as vermin by the cattle farmers because of the threat posed, especially by predators, to the industry. Thus in 1945, regulations were promulgated to facilitate the destruction of 'vermin' from the country. Wild dogs, hyenas, leopards and lion were classified as vermin and in addition to employing 'Vermin Rangers', the government also offered rewards for the destruction of these species (Masona, 1989). However, it was the tsetse eradication programme, undertaken to protect the cattle industry, that accounted for the massive destruction of wildlife during this period. As Tarutira (1988) observed, "perhaps tsetse control was the single greatest factor leading to game destruction in the period up to 1955."

^{4[8]} Tarutira (1988) also emphasizes this relationship between policy makers and the BSAC.

Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control and Wildlife Policy

The greatest single threat to the emerging colonial cattle industry was posed by trypanosomiasis. Early control measures were based on the theory that African game was a trypanosomiasis reservoir and immune to it. This theory was strengthened by the rinderpest epizootic of 1896 which resulted in a significant decline in wildlife populations in the colony. With the decline of wildlife, tsetse fly also receded to marginal uninhabited lands. Despite the existence of evidence demonstrating that the trypanosome survived in the blood of almost any vertebrate, this result of the rinderpest epizootic was used as evidence that wild animals were responsible for the spread of trypanosomiasis to domestic stock.

It was believed that two factors were essential for the spread of trypanosomiasis; '...a reservoir and a vector. Without a reservoir the vectors are harmless and vice versa and the disappearance of the natural reservoir is generally followed by the disappearance of the vector and the disease amongst domestic animals'^{5[9]} (quoted in Tarutira, 1988). Thus wild animals were considered a trypanosome reservoir, whose eradication was essential to control the spread of trypanosomiasis.

There were basically two different types of methods used in the colonial period to combat tsetse and the threat posed by trypanosomiasis to the cattle industry, direct and indirect tsetse fly control methods. The direct methods included game shooting, bush clearing and controlled burning, and spraying. The indirect method that came to be applied by the 1930s, starting with the promulgation of the Matopo Game Reserve, was the creation of game reserves to control the interface between livestock and wildlife.

The federal Report on Trypanosomiasis (1955:10) noted that game eradication was the major control measure in operation although other methods were employed from time to time and then only to supplement game shooting. This control method was first mooted in 1900 when a motion to suspend the operation of Game Laws in the Hartley District and in the Zambezi valley was moved before the first session of the first council. This motion succeeded and game laws were suspended in these districts to allow game eradication. The retreat of tsetse in these districts as a result of the eradication of game was used as further evidence for the efficacy of the vector-reservoir theory, and therefore as a basis to suspend game laws and allow free game shooting in other cattle producing district.

The game eradication program involved the designation of free shooting areas in which game laws were suspended to allow for the eradication of all wild animals in those areas. The actual shooting was carried out by European hunters in alienated land, or by African hunters supervised by a European in the reserves. Free shooting areas were usually declared after the outbreak of trypanosomiasis in domestic stock. Large areas were cleared of game in this way. Thus, for instance, Game Laws were suspended in 1914 in Sinoia District, in 1916 in Sebungwe District, in 1927 in Lomagundi, Darwin, Sebungwe, Bubi and Wankie districts, in 1929 in Melsetter, Darwin, Lomagundi, Hartley, Bubi and Wankie districts.

Thus by 1914 the Director of Agriculture could report that:

"The easiest way to attain this objective [of trypanosomiasis control] appears to be by the destruction of the fly, and of several ways recommended to get rid of the fly, the one that appeals most to students of South African history is to cut off its natural food supply. To this end, a large area has been thrown open to free shooting, and reports to hand indicate that the shooting has not been sufficiently extensive or persistent to make any appreciable diminution in the number of the big game present."^{6[10]}

This was a call to extend the free shooting policy to allow for the eradication of big game in cattle producing areas. In the conflict between wildlife and domestic stock, wildlife clearly emerged second best. Wildlife policy in the colony was designed to protect the interest of the settler economy, and because wildlife did not have any economic value for the settler then, it was low status and consideration in the identification of land

^{5[9]} G1/3/2/1: Tsetse Fly: General, September 21, 1905 - December 1921. Acting Administrator, Southern Rhodesia, to the Secretary, BSAC, 9 October, 1909.

^{6[10]} Southern Rhodesia: Report of the Director of Agriculture for the Year 1914, p4.

use options. Because of the economic status of cattle, on the other hand, domestic stock were a priority land use option. The intensification of the free shooting policy, coupled with the wanton elimination of game on alienated land by landowners, the 'poaching' in the reserves and the difficulties of implementing game laws, soon led to a significant decline in the big game population of the colony. According to Taylor and Martin (1987), widespread indiscriminate hunting in the course of tsetse control operations during the 1940s and 1950s destroyed some 700 000 indigenous animals.

Wild animals were also destroyed as part of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) control programme. Although the mode of transmission of FMD is not yet clearly understood, existing evidence has implicated the buffalo as the most important host, responsible for transmitting FMD to domestic stock (Taylor and Martin, 1987). This has led to the virtual extermination of buffalo from all cattle producing areas of the country, and the implementation of a fencing strategy designed to eliminate contact between domestic stock and buffalo. Fences have also contributed directly and indirectly to the deaths of large numbers of wild animals (Taylor and Martin, 1987). The fencing strategy continues to be emphasized as a veterinary control against the transmission of FMD, especially to protect the country's beef exports to the European Union which are a major source of foreign exchange.

Rethinking the Excesses of the 'Vermin' Policy and Free Shooting: Game Protection and the Establishment of Game Reserves

According to MacKenzie (1988; 1991) the idea of game reserves was based on the several premises:

- that humans and animals were incompatible;
 - that African hunting was inadmissible" - in Darwinian terms it was regressive and in any case the methods adopted by Africans were unacceptable" (1991:22);
 - that the only hope for the survival of wildlife lay in the provision of separate territory for the animals, with elite white hunting occurring in remote areas and controlled hunting areas; and
 - those animals transmitted diseases, especially rinderpest, East Coast fever and harbour tsetse.
- For these reasons, it was found to be necessary to create separate game reserves for wild animals. The movement for the establishment of game reserves started in the 1890s and was later taken up by the British throughout their colonies (MacKenzie, 1991:22).

"as civilization advances, so the game, unless protected, must vanish, particularly such as are harmful. Simultaneous with their disappearance, the desire increases to preserve specimens in their native haunts for all time."^{7[11]}

While in the early years of colonial rule game had been shot to make way for the developing cattle industry, this soon resulted in declines in the game populations. Game policies were designed to preserve wildlife to sustain the 'sport' hunting activities of the settler elite. However, as the statement by the Director of Agriculture in 1912 clearly shows, even such activities were threatened by the eradication of game. Thus it became necessary to enforce game protection measures that would ensure the survival of a pool of wild animals to sustain these activities. However, as has already been stated, initial game preservation laws were aimed at protecting specific species in designated areas for limited periods of time.

In 1923 after the granting of responsible government to the colony, a research programme was set up to determine trends in the population dynamics of the game population of the colony. The actual surveys were carried out by the Native Commissioners who assessed the populations of the various species of wildlife in their areas. Not surprisingly, in most districts the game populations were found to be extremely low, with some species being reported to have disappeared altogether (Tarutira, 1988).

By this time, pressure was increasing for the establishment of a game reserve in the colony to halt the fast disappearance of flora and fauna. The Conservationist lobby, represented by the Wildlife Protection Society of Southern Rhodesia, were a major pressure group for the establishment of game reserves. The main objective of this society was the preservation of wildlife with due regard to the economic and agricultural

^{7[11]} Southern Rhodesia: Report of the Director of Agriculture for the Year 1912, p27.

interests of the country (Tarutira, 1988). The economic and agricultural interests of the country obviously referred to the economic and agricultural interests of the settler economy (to the exclusion of the indigenous population) and therefore to the protection of these interests where they conflicted with wildlife. The Society generally agreed with the game laws in force, but were dissatisfied with the administration and enforcement of the legislation. Commenting on the occurrence of night shooting, trapping and fish dynamiting, all banned activities which nonetheless were continuing unabated, the honorary secretary of the society wrote:

"... the whole thing forces one to ask if we have any feelings, aspirations or thoughts beyond tobacco, gold, mines, mealies, base metals commerce or LSD" (in Tarutira, 1988).^{8[12]}

It was this same Society which "... set about insisting that game meat was not an appropriate foodstuff for Africans, despite the assiduous use of it for precisely that purpose by hunters, explores missionaries, prospectors, railway builders, miners and farmers" (MacKenzie, 1991:23). Thus the primary motivation of the Society in agitating for a tightening of the game laws and preservation was precisely in order to preserve wild animals for the benefit of the Europeans. Thus the enjoyment of game meat had to be a by product of 'sport hunting' which the game laws were specifically designed to exclude the African from. "In effect, game meat was to be subjected to sumptuary laws; it could be eaten only by those who treated hunting as sport; African labour time was not to be devoted to its pursuit" (MacKenzie, 1988:23)

A change in government policy soon occurred with the passing of the 1929 Game and Fish preservation Act which inter alia granted the government power to establish game parks. Thus the original game reserves were established by gubernatorial or ministerial decree and could also be de-proclaimed, and most people thought they would be temporary (MacKenzie, 1991:23). However, by 1931, a total of 5 780 square miles of land had been declared permanent game sanctuaries in the following areas:

- Matopo National Park (reserved in 1926); 350 square miles.
- Wankie Game Reserve (reserved in 1928); 5 142 square miles.
- Victoria Falls Game Reserve (reserved in 1930); 210 square miles.
- Kazuma Pan Game Reserve (reserved in 1931); 76 square miles.

There was, however, also considerable opposition to the establishment of game reserves, especially from the 'cattle lobby', i.e. the representatives of the cattle farmers of the colony. Thus, for example, the establishment of a game reserve at Chipinda Pools in the south eastern lowveld was opposed by farmers in that area for fear that it would engender the spread of tsetse and thereby threaten the viability of the cattle industry there. However, the Victoria Publicity Association strongly campaigned for the game reserve on the basis that it would stimulate tourism in the province. They were strongly supported by the Umtali Publicity Association who figured that the game reserve would attract tourists to the town of Mutare. The Gona-Re-Zhou Game Reserve was eventually proclaimed in 1934 in the Chipinda Pools area. Smallholders also resisted the establishment of game reserves, especially since most entailed their relocation from areas designated game reserves. Boundary disputes between the smallholders and the Department of National Parks still occur to this day, with colonial and pre-colonial claims to land designated National Parks being reasserted in many areas.^{9[13]}

These original game reserves were under funded and understaffed, being designated to inhibit rather than facilitate human access. The rangers appointed were usually ex-hunters who treated some game, especially lion, wild dogs and crocodiles, as 'vermin' and shot these at will (MacKenzie, 1991). While the initial game reserves were established solely for game preservation purposes and thus tended to restrict human access, those established after the Second World War were given legislative sanction and designed to be economically self sufficient. According to MacKenzie (1988:24)

"They were to be a vast outdoor zoo, an African rural idyll, designed to show a combination of urbanized whites and international tourists what the 'real' Africa was like. They were dependent

^{8[12]} S1193/92/1/ Ref: PE/2642 - Circular letter by the honorary Secretary of the Wildlife Society of Southern Rhodesia, 23, 23/5/1928.

^{9[13]} Donald Moore's (1992) study of the Nyanga National park demonstrates conflicts over the Parks land with surrounding communal lands.

upon the internal combustion engine and could scarcely have developed without it. Criteria of animal value now took a dramatic shift representing this change of function. Whereas the practical hunter judges animals according to edibility, the sportsman judges them according to sporting characteristics, the excellence of the chase they provide and their pluck in resisting death. The notion of vermin is invariably a sportsman's category; 'vermin' being the predators who deny him 'sport' ... The national parks introduced a wholly new criterion - 'viewability'. Animals underwent somersaults in reputation. The lion, formerly vermin, was the most notable case of this. Viewers of the 'real' Africa wanted lions and lots of them. Rangers, almost overnight, gave up shooting them and started protecting them."

Thus as tourism began to rise with an increasing number of visitors (white) coming to the reserves, the idea of turning the reserves into viable economic units started gaining currency. As the reserves popularity as tourist attractions increased, so too did the pressures for the establishment of new game reserves in different provinces. Thus after 1945 the establishment of game reserves in Southern Rhodesia gained momentum and this period saw the proclamation of most of the reserves still in existence today (Tarutira, 1988). Needless to say, Africans were excluded from these game reserves by their inability to own the combustion engine and could hardly be expected to pay for the chance to view the 'real' Africa in which they had lived all their lives.

Moreover, the establishment of these game reserves was not without cost. Numerous numbers of Africans were displaced by the new game reserves and relocated into the already crowded reserves. Thus, for instance, the proclamation of the Gona-Re-Zhou game reserve in 1934 led to the displacement of 1 500 families and their subsequent relocation in the overcrowded Matibi 2 reserve in Natural region 5 (Tarutira, 1988).

The period after the Second World War to 1960 was characterized by an intensification of the preservation policies. The promulgation of the National Parks Act in 1949 led to the establishment of the Department of National Parks in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. For the first time a department responsible for the administration and management of wildlife in the country came into existence. However, the department was from the outset beset with problems associated with the shortage of funds, which severely curtailed their ability to effectively implement the existing game laws (Mason, 1987). This original wildlife agency was fundamentally protective of wildlife in outlook, in line with the preservationist policies. It was also inward looking and had a strong enforcement (essentially policing) capacity and the development of tourism infrastructure in the protected areas (Cumming, 1987). The department was also directly responsible for the management of wildlife outside protected areas, and as such the policing function tended to extend outside the protected areas into the communal areas. The staff recruited into the department were often untrained former hunters expected to be jacks of all trades.

During the inter war years, more National Parks were proclaimed and by 1960 some 4 524 400 hectares of land had been alienated for the parks and wildlife estate. This includes 6 land use categories - National Parks, botanical reserves, botanical gardens, wildlife sanctuaries, safari areas and recreational parks - designed for the protection of higher plants and animals, and is partially developed for tourism (Nduku, 1987). Land owners as well as peasant farmers continued to be denied the opportunity to benefit from the wildlife resources of their areas by the preservationist policies and legislation which proscribed the commercialization of wild animals. As Style observes; "Prior to 1960 the marketing of any game product in the then Rhodesia was prohibited by law and regulations promulgated in this regard were strictly enforced" (1987:181).

Therefore, for the period from the onslaught of imperialism in the mid nineteenth century to 1960, successive colonial regimes did not consider wildlife as a legitimate form of land use. Initially, wild animals were seen as a 'wasting asset', to be hunted for a lucrative trophy trade in Europe (MacKenzie, 1988). With the establishment of more settled forms of colonialism and a settler economy based on agriculture, wild animals came to be viewed as competitors with cattle for grazing and also as transmitters of a variety of diseases to cattle and were thus to be eradicated to make way for the development of the cattle industry. Both the colonial state and settlers adopted a preservationist attitude towards wild animals when the shooting out of game had depleted the game resources of the country. The preservation of wild animals was, however, designed for the benefit of only elite. These preservationist policies did not save wild animals on private

land and in the reserves. In the reserves, as population pressure increased, wild animals were pushed out. On alienated land, as land owners sought to increase their livestock herds and to reduce competition and diseases from wildlife, wild animals were shot out.

Besides being a function of the conflict between settler agriculture and wildlife, colonial game policies also reflected the racially structured political economy of the society. Thus the expropriation of land from the indigenous population was also accompanied by the expropriation of environmental resources, including wild animals. For these peasant populations who had no access at all to wildlife, "wildlife could no longer be regarded as a resource but only as a liability - someone else's legal property to either be tolerated with resignation, stolen (cropped, poached) or destroyed, covertly if possible" (Murphree, 1988:2).

Woodland policies in Zimbabwe went through a similar trajectory with wildlife management policies. Concerns over woodland management were first voiced in the early colonial period over timber extraction for mining activities and for tobacco curing. During this period, given the overriding mining objective of the colonization process, miners' rights superseded all other legislative controls, resulting in widespread removal of timber from many parts of the country (Scoones and Matose, 1992). The expansion of the tobacco industry, and the attendant need for fuelwood used in the curing of tobacco, had a similar effect on woodland (Fortmann and Nhira, 1992).

Legislative controls on woodland were first established with the passing of the Native Reserves Forest Produce Act (1928), later to be replaced by the Natural Resources Act (1942) and the Forest Act (1948). These Acts were intended to preserve woodland and reflected the declining influence of the mining sector and the corresponding need to establish a regulatory framework for the emerging agricultural sector (Scoones and Matose, 1992). Like wildlife legislation before it, the Native Reserves Forest Act (1928) contained dualistic provisions for the African and European sectors of the population. Voluntary regulation was encouraged for the white farmers while a strict regulatory emphasis was placed on the African population. "This inherited dualism in legislative provision for resource management is still apparent in amended acts today. In the communal areas, the emphasis remains on regulatory control by the state with limited options for active participation by local populations" (Scoones and Matose, 1992:4).

However, Scoones and Matose (1992) contend that the major influence on woodland management in the communal areas emerged not from forestry legislation but from state land use planning and administration interventions. The centralization policies of the 1920s led to the establishment of planned settlements away from the water sources in blocks on the wooded top land areas. This resulted in the clearing of woodland areas in the top lands for arable agriculture, with the previously settled and often unwooded lowland areas allocated to grazing (McGregor, 1991).

From Game Preservation to Wildlife Utilization

The promulgation of the Wildlife Conservation Act (1960) indicated a significant shift in wildlife policy in Rhodesia. The policy shift was in response to a number of factors, the most salient of which was the need to give economic value to wildlife and wildlife products. The Rhodesian economy in 1960 was small, underdeveloped and heavily dependent on a narrow range of products, with tobacco alone generating about 30% of exports (Cross, undated). With the imminent breakup of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the need to diversify the economy, particularly the need to expand the foreign exchange earning capacity of the economy, became increasingly evident. In the wildlife conservation field, the preservationist policies of the pre-1960 period had failed to curb the decline of the wildlife populations outside parks estate. Part of the cause of this decline was that land owners did not derive any economic benefit from the wildlife on their land. Wild animals constituted a liability rather than an asset to the landowners. The costs of wild animals included crop destruction, livestock predation, competition for grazing and the transmission of diseases to domestic stock. To eliminate these costs, landowners were inclined to eliminate wild animals from their land.

The 1960 Wildlife Conservation Act marked a significant shift from previous preservationist wildlife legislation in that it allowed licensed owners and occupiers of alienated land to commercially utilize wildlife on their lands. It did not, however, apply to the reserves, where wildlife remained state property with no

local proprietorship. While previous legislation had allowed owners and occupiers of alienated land to utilize wildlife on their land, it had proscribed the commercial utilization of wild animals.

In 1960, the Rhodesian government commissioned a consultancy study to advise on the economic feasibility of game ranching. The consultants initiated feasibility work at Doddieburn ranch from which they set up cropping quotas and obtained special permits for the marketing of meat, hides and skins (Style, 1987). The study concluded that wildlife was probably a more efficient producer of meat than cattle because of the ability of wild animals to utilize a greater variety of flora than cattle (Child, 1988). The experiment was later extended to the Buffalo Range ranch in 1961.

As a result of the two experiments, game ranching expanded rapidly between 1961 and 1965. During this period, game ranching was based on the cropping of wildlife for venison. The Buffalo Range game ranching experiment between 1961 and 1982 demonstrated that game produced a possible meat yield of 4.47 kilogrammes cold dressed mass (C. D. M) of meat per hectare, while cattle produced a CDM of 6 kilogrammes per hectare of beef (Style, 1987:183). Because game meat is marketed at relatively lower prices than beef (Style, 1987), by 1965 it had become apparent that game ranching for meat production would not be successful on its own (Child, 1988). However, in the mid 1960s the international safari industry experienced a boom and the commercial activities of game ranches shifted to safari hunting as the major form of wildlife exploitation. The industry steadily expanded in the 1970s and 1980s. By 1974, some 179 ranchers had acquired permits to utilize wildlife on their ranches (Child, 1988:775). Between 1975 and 1984, the safari hunting industry grew at an annual rate of about 6% (Child and Child, 1986)

The early experiences of game ranching and the increasing number of farmers entering into the wildlife industry, as well as the capacity of the safari industry to earn valuable foreign exchange during a time of sanctions against the Rhodesian regime and the need to diversify agriculture (Cross, undated) led to the promulgation of the Parks and Wild Life Act in 1975. A specific objective of the Act was "to confer privileges on the owners and occupiers of alienated land as custodians of wildlife" (Parks and Wildlife Act, 1975:5). The Act differed from the 1960 Wildlife Conservation Act in that it allowed the owners and occupiers of alienated land to utilize wildlife on their land without a permit, provided the privilege was not abused (Child, 1988).

The 1975 Parks and Wildlife Act was designed to improve the efficiency of wildlife utilization by enhancing local proprietorship (Murphree, 1988:3). In terms of the Act, while wildlife remained state property, the owners and occupiers of alienated land became the proprietors of the wild animals on their land and could thus legally utilize these animals. Game ranching expanded even further with the promulgation of this Act (Child, 1988). By 1987, the safari industry yielded estimated direct revenue of Z\$10 million, most of it in foreign currency (Murphree, 1988).

The Wildlife Producers Association (WPA) - a commodity association under the umbrella of the Commercial Farmers' Union - was registered in 1986 and had a membership approaching 500 in 1987. According to Townsend (1987:63), this membership is more significant when one considers that the sizes of some of the members' holdings are larger than 100 000 hectares. Under the Parks and Wild Life Act (1975), game ranching has expanded to include at least three basic categories of operation. The first category is a multispecies cattle and wildlife production operation, undertaken mostly by the earliest game ranchers of the South Eastern Lowveld operating on properties which already had significant wildlife populations when they ventured into game ranching. In some of the cases, however, there have been significant purchases of wild animals from the DNPWLM by the ranchers (Townsend, 1987). Wild animals in this category of game ranching are used mainly through trophy hunting and some venison cropping.

The second category of game ranching operations involves the intensively cropped mixed farms of the high veld. These farmers had to introduce wild animals onto their properties because stocks had been depleted. The properties tend to be smaller ranches and they seldom have the dangerous wildlife species. Wildlife marketing in this category is largely through game viewing safaris (walking or riding), and bow hunting has now been introduced (Townsend, 1987).

Because of the salience of the land issue in Zimbabwe today, game ranching on the high veld has been the bone of contention between the large scale commercial farmers engaging in the practice, the CFU and WPA on the one hand who argue that game ranching is a legitimate land use which produces significantly larger returns per unit area than other land uses; and the smallholders, the Zimbabwe Farmers Union and the Ministry of Agriculture on the other who see the practice as being designed to disguise the under utilization of land by the large scale farmers. It is further argued by the latter group that in any case the benefits of game ranching accrue to the individual landowner while the cost to the macro-economy in terms of reduced food security due to the removal from production of land suitable for food production is considerable (Moyo, 1992).

Because of the smaller size of the high veld ranches, wildlife conservancies formed by a group of contiguous farmers pooling their land together, erecting a single perimeter fence and pulling down all internal fences, have also become a feature of game ranching. In the South Eastern Lowveld, wildlife conservancies, starting off as safe havens for the heavily poached black rhino, have also developed into common wildlife management units.

The third category of game ranching in Zimbabwe consists of specialized operations, usually focussing on single species. The nature, size and location of the operation are determined by the species farmed. Examples of current operations in this category are crocodile and ostrich farming. Eland and zebra have also been considered for specialization (Hutton, 1987; Townsend, 1987).

The most fundamental conclusions drawn from the success of game ranching on alienated land in Zimbabwe were that the devolution of proprietorship to landowners resulted in them developing the economic potential of the resource, which in turn led to sustainable utilization of wildlife. Previous game management practices on alienated land were designed to exterminate the resource because wild animals produced no significant economic benefits for the landowners but actually constituted a significant cost (Child, 1988; Child and Child, 1986). Thus changes in the attitudes of the landowners to wildlife occurred because of two fundamental factors; proprietorship of the resource and the ability to earn direct economic benefit from the utilization of the resource.

Conclusions: The Legacies of Colonial Conservation

This paper has demonstrated that land use policies generally, but particularly wildlife management policies of the colonial regimes tended to be accommodations of the conflict between settler agriculture and wildlife. Wildlife, because it did not have any commercial values until the promulgation of the 1960 Wildlife Conservation Act, but also because landowners had rights to utilize the wildlife on their properties, was almost eliminated from alienated land. In the communal areas, on the other hand, the resident populations had no legal access to the resource, although it constituted a cost to their agriculture in the same ways as on alienated land. In these areas, the decline of the wildlife resource is attributed to the system of communal tenure which potentially leads to a 'tragedy of the commons', as well as to the lack of legitimate benefits from wildlife. Proprietorship and the rights to utilize wildlife were not seen as the causes of the decline of wildlife populations in this land tenure category

The post colonial/neo-colonial governments of southern Africa have continued with, sometimes even strengthened, the colonial conservation practices. In many case conservation has increased in the post-colonial era, with many new protected areas being proclaimed on the same bases as colonial protected areas, and with little or no regard for the conservation and livelihood practices of the local populations. In the post colonial era/neo-colonial era, conservation continues to be imposed, alien and arbitrary, barring people from their lands and denying their understanding of non-human nature (Adams, 2003:9).

Although there has been a general ideological shift towards a view of conservation as sustainable resource use (e.g. IUCN, WWF), the dominant Western ideology regarding conservation has remained preservationist (Ibid). The CBD's language of biodiversity has come to drive a protectionist programme, including reinforcing the protected area strategy based largely upon a US model of national parks and wilderness reserves, a tradition which fosters a conceptual separation between humans and nature., and between nature

and culture (Ibid). This creates moral and practical dilemmas, especially in poor countries, where human needs are sometimes dependent on access to nature.

While colonial conservation policies were in part justified on the basis of the need to achieve ecological equilibrium through the exclusion of human impact, contemporary science appears to discredit this notion. Non-equilibrium ecology (Scoones, 1998; Leach) has demonstrated that dryland ecosystems in particular exist in different states of disequilibria. This finding creates new opportunities for overcoming the colonial model of nature conservation, especially by allowing for resource extraction while recognizing the impacts that human use may impose on the ecosystem.

There are also significant moves to privatise conservation and to grant the private sector greater access to existing Protected Areas. While most protected areas in the region are state protected areas, it is significant that most states in southern Africa have very limited financial, human and other material resources necessary to manage the conservation estate. Yet the model of conservation pursued has tended to exclude other potential partners, with the result that most protected areas in the region are experiencing enormous management problems. In some instances, it has emerged that there is greater biodiversity outside of protected areas than inside. As a consequence of its incapacity to manage the protected areas, the state in southern Africa is coming under increasing pressure to private the management of these areas to private sector entities who have the resources for their management. Given the current dominance of the neo-liberal market agenda, it is quite clear that some important protected areas in the region will be privatised in the coming years. It is not clear what the private sector's agenda is in these initiatives, and care needs to be taken to ensure that conservation does not become subordinated to short term profit motives as conservation inexorably gets privatised.

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