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"A Political-Ecology Approach to Wildlife Conservation in Kenya"

Akama, John S., Christopher L. Lant, and G. Wesley Burnett

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Kenya has one of the highest remaining concentrations of tropical savanna wildlife in the world. It has been recognised by the state and international community as a 'unique world heritage' which should be preserved for posterity. However, the wildlife conservation efforts of the Kenya government confront complex and often persistent social and ecological problems, including land-use conflicts between the local people and wildlife, local people's suspicions and hostilities toward state policies of wildlife conservation, and accelerated destruction of wildlife habitats. This essay uses a political-ecological framework in the analysis of the social factors of wildlife conservation in Kenya. It postulates that the overriding socioeconomic issue impacting wildlife conservation in Kenya is underdevelopment. The problem of underdevelopment is manifested in forms of increasing levels of poverty, famine and malnutrition. The long term survival of Kenya's wildlife depends on social and ecological solutions to the problems of underdevelopment.

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