

## THE STATUS OF NATURE CONSERVATION IN THE DEVELOPING TERRITORIES OF SOUTH AND SOUTH WEST AFRICA

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Comments on the status of nature conservation in an area require an evaluation of progress. Apart from *ad hoc* nature conservation actions taken in the past by the agricultural and administrative staff of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (hereafter called the Department) and of the governments of the various developing territories, or homelands, the more formal and specialised nature conservation action by these bodies started almost exactly three years ago. At that time the Transkei already had a nature conservation section for about a year. Three years ago, under the guidance of a senior agriculturalist, the Department made its first appointment of a professional conservationist in Pretoria, as well as of a number of nature conservation officers. These last-named officials were immediately seconded to some of the developing territories to fill vacancies in newly established nature conservation sections. Since these "sections" frequently consisted and still consist of only one or two posts, it has not yet been possible to fill all these posts because of a scarcity of suitable applicants, and since the nature conservation section in the Department itself has subsequently only grown from one to two officials, the question arises whether this is at all the correct time for stocktaking and evaluation. To see the matter in perspective it is necessary also to consider the diversity and distribution of the vast areas involved, scattered as they are from the northernmost boundaries of South West Africa down to the eastern Cape and covering a surface of more than 45 million hectares. Table 1 provides a more complete picture.

Weighing available facilities and personnel against the scope of the task, there can be no doubt that insufficient time has passed for the achievement of much more than preliminary objectives. On the other hand, a stocktaking at this stage will provide the general public with a clearer picture of the extent of the task, the nature of the obstacles and of such progress as has been made. Understandably, progress at this stage will be mainly in the fields of planning and organisation.

TABLE 1

Territories where nature conservation is controlled by the homelands and the Department of Bantu Administration and Development

Territories responsible for nature conservation				Territories where the Department* <sup>2</sup> is still responsible for nature conservation			
South Africa* <sup>1</sup>		South West Africa		South Africa* <sup>3</sup>		South West Africa	
Territory	Area (ha)	Territory	Area (ha)	Territory	Area (ha)	Territory	Area (ha)
Transkei	4 168 000	Kavango	4 170 050	Swazi	372 000	Kaokoland	5 525 129
Ciskei	533 000	Owambo	5 607 200	Ndebele	75 000	Damaraland	4 779 021
Bophuthatswana	3 826 000	Eastern Caprivi	1 153 387			Bushmanland	1 837 000
Lebowa	2 268 000					Hereroland	5 899 680
Venda	650 000					Other	863 350
Gazankulu	675 000						
KwaZulu	3 174 000						
Qwaqwa	48 000						
Total	15 342 000		10 930 637		447 000		18 904 180

\*<sup>1</sup> A small portion of the land classified here still falls under the jurisdiction of the Department.

\*<sup>2</sup> The Department of Bantu Administration and Development.

\*<sup>3</sup> In these territories provincial nature conservation legislation is still applicable and law enforcement rests with the provincial authorities.

The total area involved (i.e. about 45 million ha) has already been mentioned. The Transkei will be discussed in a separate paper on this Symposium. If its area is subtracted we are still left with about 41 million ha, which should be comparable with and probably exceeds that under the jurisdiction of many conservation organisations in southern Africa. There are other factors to consider. These territories are variable, ranging from mountainland to plain, from rain forest to desert. According to Acocks (1975) the territories falling within the Republic of South Africa (RSA) include no fewer than 34 of its 70 main veld types. Endemicity of plant and animal life occurs, and scenic beauty unsurpassed anywhere in southern Africa.

With the transfer of nature conservation to homeland authorities at the required level of self-government, this enormous task is being broken down into more manageable portions, but this also necessitates a certain amount of organisational and functional replication. Viewed against the background of political evolution towards self-government, however, this is to be welcomed and the sooner all the peoples concerned make a start with their own conservation programmes, the better. This is being done with the assistance of the Department.

#### Legal background

Until recently the nature conservation organisations of the provinces and of South West Africa provided the necessary legislation and general executive functions for all the territories under discussion. The complexity of a situation where large tracts of populated land were either under state control or undergoing political evolution at varying rates and where cultural diversity required different approaches to legislation, law-enforcement and executive conservation action in general, necessitated a more specialised approach. Although occasional regulatory functions such as the issue of permits for hunting or plant collection had been undertaken by the Department or local authorities within the homelands, the central government decided to establish the legal framework for more efficient action. Today this is to be found in the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act (Act No. 21 of 1971) which provides for the transfer of wildlife management and the conservation function to the developing territories inside the Republic of South Africa. For South West Africa it is to be found in the Development of Self-government for Native Nations in South West Africa Act (Act No. 54 of 1968). The responsibility for nature conservation has already been assumed by the Transkei, Ciskei, KwaZulu, Lebowa, Gazankulu, Venda, Bophuthatswana, Qwaqwa, Owambo, Kavango and the Eastern Caprivi. All of these, with the exception of the Eastern Caprivi, have already adopted the necessary legislation. Admittedly this legislation has in most instances been based largely on the ordinances of the provinces and may eventually have to be refined and adjusted more specifically to condi-

tions within each territory. At present, however, it provides a suitable basis for the management functions required at this stage. Until the Eastern Caprivi adopts its own nature conservation legislation the South West African Ordinance, number 5 of 1927, remains in force there. All the above-mentioned homelands are responsible for law-enforcement and the implementation of legislation within their territories.

In terms of Act No. 54 of 1968 the Department has also prepared regulations on nature conservation to replace the relevant South West African ordinance in respect of Kaokoland, Damaraland, Hereroland and Bushmanland. All actions in terms of these regulations, which are now being promulgated, are the Department's responsibility.

The various provincial ordinances still apply to all land of the South African Bantu Trust within the RSA which has not yet been allocated to a specific homeland. Law enforcement there is still the duty of the relevant provincial nature conservation authority. The same holds true for territories not yet at the required level of self-government such as those of the Swazi and Southern Ndebele. The only exception here is the Manyeleti Game Reserve, which was established on Trust land in terms of the Bantu Administration Act (Act No. 38 of 1929) and the Bantu Trust and Land Act (Act No. 18 of 1936) and which is being maintained by the Department. These acts of course allow the future establishment of similar conservation areas on Trust land.

### Organisational development

The first specialised nature conservation staff needs in the Department itself arose with the establishment of the Manyeleti Game Reserve in 1967. Since its inception this reserve has been manned nearly exclusively by black people. With the exception of the manager and one assistant the present staff of approximately 60 and including the clerks, a public relations officer and game rangers, are all black people. All are Departmental officials. The manager and his assistant are responsible for supervision and the training of staff, apart from supervisory assistance on other Trust land situated nearby. Control over Manyeleti still rests with the Department.

During June 1972 a start was made with the appointment of nature conservation staff in the homelands. The first appointments were made in the Transkei and other territories followed in 1973. Because of a shortage of suitably qualified blacks, the Department requested and obtained the approval of homeland governments to appoint and delegate for homeland service a number of white officials. They were to initiate the new conservation organisations and hold their positions until these are taken over by black people with the appropriate training and experience. Since homeland organisations necessarily had to grow from small beginnings, they were attached to the only existing government departments involved in the utilisation of biological resources, namely

forestry and agriculture. At present nature conservation staff in all cases are attached to the departments of agriculture.

Through the kind co-operation of the KwaZulu Government Service training facilities for black nature conservation officers from all developing territories inside the RSA now exist at the Cwaka Agricultural College. The first students obtained their two-year post standard 8 diplomas at the end of 1975 and have already assumed duty in their respective homelands. As they gain in experience and prove their mettle they can be expected to gradually fill the more senior positions. Until that happens and for as long as they are needed, the Department will assist by appointing white nature conservationists for homeland service. Unfortunately our advertisements for nature conservationists have been drawing a poor response, at least from suitably qualified and experienced people. Although nature conservation sections in the developing territories have to parallel all functions normally undertaken by a division or department of nature conservation, it has already been mentioned that in many instances these sections started with only one post. Fortunately, nature conservation received sympathetic treatment from the various government service commissions and quite a number of new posts have subsequently been created. At present the available posts for all our developing territories are as follows (The Transkei is not included, although one senior nature conservation officer of the Department still does duty there):

TABLE 2

Nature conservation posts in developing territories

Territory	Professional staff (University qualifications)	Nature Conservation Officers (College diploma or extensive experience)		Rangers (Limited formal education In-service training)
		Senior ranks	Ordinary	
Ciskei	0	1	4	4
KwaZulu	1	3	5	14
Gazankulu	0	1	4	0
Venda	0	1	4	17
Bophuthatswana	0	3	21	48
Lebowa	0	3	4	25
Qwaqwa	0	0	0	0
Eastern Caprivi	2	1	3	14
Kavango	0	1	2	19
Owambo	1	1	2	1
Total	4	15	49	142

At least three more territories are expected to have professional posts in the near future. Of the four professional posts in homelands, only one (in the Eastern Caprivi) is filled at the moment. Of the 15 posts for nature conservation officers of senior or higher rank, only 10 are filled at the time of writing. This shortage of staff is the greatest single obstacle in the way of progress.

The Department's own nature conservation section started with the appointment of the first professional conservationist in Pretoria in 1973. At present this section consists of four posts, of which two are filled. The function of this Departmental section is to take direct charge of conservation management on land of the South African Bantu Trust not yet under the jurisdiction of a specific homeland and on the land of the Swazi and Southern Ndebele, as well as the areas known as Kaokoland, Damaraland, Bushmanland and Hereroland in South West Africa. Because of their distance from Pretoria steps have been taken to establish a nature conservation section for these territories in South West Africa. At present this South West African section consists of one senior and three ordinary nature conservation posts to which the first appointments are now being made. Use is also being made of a professional post created for agriculture. This section will be assisted by the nature conservation staff in Pretoria who also carry out the centralised control and administration and give advice and aid to all homelands undertaking nature conservation themselves. This assistance could cover any conceivable aspect of conservation management on the combined 26 million hectares. Because of the extent of this task the present two officials understandably are concentrating on the more basic aspects such as the improvement of staff structures in the homelands, assistance with draft legislation, assistance with work programmes and assistance with broad planning, in addition to becoming better acquainted with their area of operations.

### Conservation action

Much of our progress has been made possible by the generous assistance received from other conservation organisations in the RSA and South West Africa. Not a single request for advice or help has yet been turned down. This is sincerely appreciated. Secondly, the magnificent work done by the totally inadequate homelands' staff deserves the highest praise and is mainly responsible for what has been achieved.

The task of training rangers has rested fully on the senior conservation staff in the homelands. A number of short courses have been held and in-service training was done. Manyeleti Game Reserve was made available to officials and rangers from developing territories to allow them to obtain practical experience. The progress here is considered to be satisfactory, with the exception of those territories which have had no senior staff to do the necessary training.



An important prerequisite for progress is thorough planning. It is indeed fortunate that nature conservation and tourism form part of the planning projects now being undertaken on a national scale in the Ciskei, KwaZulu, Lebowa, Gazankulu, Venda, Bophuthatswana, Qwaqwa and Owambo. Population pressure and political and other factors sometimes prevent wise land-use, but such national plans will at least provide guidelines to follow up with more specific and detailed conservation plans. Only sound planning will accord nature conservation and tourism their rightful places. Only through sound planning can tourism dependent on natural areas be prevented from eroding its underlying resource. Detailed management and conservation plans of wildlife resources for every homeland deserve priority recommendation to his cabinet by every minister of agriculture and forestry.

A master plan for nature conservation and tourism for Kaokoland and Damaraland has been commissioned by the Department and is now nearing completion. This will be followed by a detailed plan for conservation management and tourism development which will be completed during 1977.

Fair progress can also be reported in respect of law-enforcement, the use of mass media and meetings for extension purposes, and the identification of potential conservation areas. The situation varies from territory to territory, but in general the approach has been to consider the less sophisticated rural population as more in need of education than law-enforcement. This view is supported by the fact that when wild animal and plant life are destroyed, it mostly takes place in an effort to obtain necessary food or to meet demands from outside the homeland, rather than as the result of vandalism, recreational activities or the pursuit of luxuries. Some use has been made of Radio Bantu, while schools and colleges have been lectured and the meetings of headmen attended. It is of the greatest importance, however, that the concrete advantages of wildlife conservation should be practically demonstrated for the benefit of the general public as well as the decision-makers in homeland policy and land-use. For this more time is needed, although a start has been made. Bophuthatswana's revenue from this source during the previous financial year was R12 000, mostly from hunting and fishing permits, confiscated articles and fines. Since a start has now been made with the sale of live game and the amounts paid for permits can with justification be made more realistic, this source of income should grow substantially in future. The Department itself is making good progress with projects which should eventually provide work-opportunities and a high income from tourism.

It is hoped that the national conservation plans which I referred to previously will identify the major conservation areas. In addition, the nature conservation staff of the homelands and of the Department have all proceeded with the identification of areas that for fairly obvious reasons should be devoted to conservation and tourism. In some cases

cabinet approval has already been obtained and negotiations for compensatory land and the actual establishment of reserves have reached and advanced stage. Examples (my list is not complete) include a major portion of about 32 000 ha of the Pilanesberg complex in Bophuthatswana where only the lack of co-operation of one tribe is preventing the conservation of the whole complex; the Klipvoordam area, also in Bophuthatswana, where a game reserve of approximately 10 000 ha is being established as part of a complex which will also include the dam, a recreation resort and a fish production unit; the Blouberg complex of 4 900 ha in Lebowa which it is hoped will eventually include a scenic area of high botanical value adjoining a large game reserve. In Kavango an already game-proof fenced area of about 40 000 ha in the Mangetti, and another of about 700 000 ha in the Khaudum, are presently under consideration as nature reserves. Negotiations to safeguard an estimated 40 000 ha of the Andonivlakte in Owambo have also been initiated. This last-named area adjoins the Etosha National Park. The Department itself has also made satisfactory progress. The establishment of conservation areas (Eloff 1975) covering an estimated 34 000 km<sup>2</sup> for the peoples of Kaokoland and Damaraland was approved in principle on 7 May 1975. This has subsequently been announced by the Prime Minister. Another 3 423 ha has also been added to the Manyeleti Game Reserve this year bringing it to a total area of 20 629 hectare.

In addition to the above-mentioned, some other possible conservation areas were identified and brought to the notice of the various planning groups. As work progresses, increasing attention will be paid to the extent to which different veld types and ecosystems are being safeguarded.

At present the Department does not have the staff and facilities to undertake research. Until now available knowledge was sufficient to allow for considerable progress. As research becomes imperative, the homelands and the Department can be expected to approach research institutions to undertake specific projects. Some work on fresh water fish and limnology has already been done by a Departmental official at Lake Liambezi in the Eastern Caprivi. Lebowa has the benefit of research done by the Zoology Department of the University of the North on dams in that territory, while a botanist from the same university is doing plant surveys in Manyeleti. Periodic investigations have also been undertaken by the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa and private individuals in a number of territories. It is hoped that the black universities will play an increasingly important role as the need for applied research in the field of wildlife management grows.

### Problems and obstacles

Many of the obstacles we encounter are not exclusive to the nature conservation movement, but also frustrate other efforts towards home-



land development. Examples are population size in relation to available resources and traditional forms of land-use and occupation. People do not move easily from a place they consider to be an ancestral abode and a repository for holy objects. Such a place above all other places is considered to be *theirs* on the basis of a complexity of values relating to ownership, tradition and religion. If conservationists demand evacuation of such a piece of land in the interests of a very rare species of plant or animal, conflict is likely. Extension work, financial assistance, agricultural planning, rotational grazing and stock reduction might alleviate the problem. It should be borne in mind, however, that traditionally livestock numbers are more important than livestock quality. Stock reduction therefore, does not come easily either. Should one decide to move the people, alternative land will first have to be found. This is frequently not possible. If such land is available, one tries to obtain the co-operation of the people concerned. If they agree, the problem is solved. If not, the obvious alternative appears to be force. A government consists of politicians. Unpopularity with your own people means political suicide in any language. I see no solution to such a dilemma other than to convince local decision-makers of the advantages to be had, either on the alternative land, or from the specific conservation project. This takes time.

Such conflicts do not arise very often, although they do occur. It remains a fact, however, that within most of the developing territories land for conservation is scarce. Forestry, agriculture and other forms of land-use with an apparently more immediate or short term survival value or potential for profit take priority. The very sympathetic treatment conservation proposals are accorded at cabinet level in the homelands is highly encouraging. It is also very fortunate that the present steps of the South African government towards better consolidation of the developing territories sometimes make available land which can either be used as compensation for other land that has to be specially conserved, or which itself merits conservation or tourism projects.

Conservationists from the homelands consider as a major problem the fact that decision-makers at all levels of homeland development are insufficiently informed about the nature, motives and advantages of nature conservation. They believe that specialised, full-time extension workers are required. Such appointments have not yet been made. Although their youth and ethnic grouping may sometimes be a drawback, the newly trained black conservationists should find it much easier to overcome communication problems arising from differences in cultural background and language. What is needed here is not the usual promotional or informative type of work done by nature conservation organisations in the RSA, but carefully planned and programmed activities that will change attitudes.

In one or two developing territories military operations in the interests of national security represent occasional practical hindrances. In South

West Africa the political future is hard to predict and therefore dictates the highest priority to our efforts there.

Until now homeland conservationists have made only modest financial demands and received no grounds for complaint. Inevitably these demands will have to increase. This happens at a time when the general financial climate is not exactly favourable. We can only hope that these conservationists will be provided with the means to prove the substantial contribution which nature conservation, inland fisheries and tourism can make towards homeland development.

### Conclusion

It is sometimes said that the extent to which a nation practises conservation indicates its level of civilisation. Although we should have preferred more time before having to report on progress, I think enough has been achieved to indicate the direction which has been taken and the support the conservation movement is receiving from the governments of all the developing territories. May their actions in this respect, now and in future, bear witness on their behalf.

### REFERENCES

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