

Conservancy Movement Reaps Benefits in Namibia

Challenge

Salamabala, an area of Namibia's northeastern Caprivi region, had once been rich in wildlife diversity. Game levels declined, however, after more than 20 years of conflict as Namibia wrestled its freedom from apartheid South Africa. An informal survey counted 7 impala, 20 kudu, and 20 warthogs. No elephants, zebras or other large game was resident in the area.



Photo: WWF/Chris Weaver

Prince George Mutwa addressing conservancy members at the Salambala Conservancy launch.

“Namibia’s CBNRM program generates its success from a high sense of ownership and stewardship”

– Minister of Environment and Tourism, Philemon Malima.

Results

Namibia's Chief Moraliswani and his son, Prince George, shared a dream that wildlife numbers would return to Salambala and that community members would benefit from game as they had in the past. In 1998, Salambala was the second conservancy registered in Namibia. Today, with the Conservancy drawing in tourists with a campsite and a lucrative trophy hunting deal that netted \$34,000 last year, conservancy members are benefiting from the wildlife and have an incentive to protect it from poachers.

As a result, elephant, buffalo and migratory zebras have returned to the Salambala Forest and sable antelope, wildebeest, and lion are also found. Prince George passed away in 2002 but the dream he shared with his father has been realized. Prince George was named the Namibia Nature Foundation's Conservationist of the Year in 2002.

Initiative

With USAID support in a number of areas related to conservancy management, Salambala has become one of Namibia's most successful national conservancies. USAID has helped finance a program, implemented by the World Wildlife Fund, to assist communities in Namibia to form conservancies.

Under Namibian law, conservancies are given rights to the game in their areas. With these rights, conservancies are positioned to benefit from tourism through camp sites, trophy hunting, handicraft sales, and upscale lodges operated in joint venture with the private sector. They are also able to sell live game to other tourist attractions and distribute game meat from culled herds to supplement the diets of conservancy members.