Animal Welfare in Wildlife Conservation

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Outline

• Importance of wildlife conservation
• Challenges facing wildlife conservation
• Factors that affect animal welfare in wildlife conservation
• Mitigation measures towards animal welfare violations in wildlife conservation
• Conclusion
Importance of wildlife conservation

• Wildlife forms part of Kenya’s biodiversity and heritage.
• It is important source of tourism revenue – 15% of Kenyan GDP with wildlife viewing contributing 75% of this.
• Source of income & employment to Kenyans.
• However wildlife conservation is facing several challenges
Challenges of Wildlife Conservation

- Decline in Wildlife population numbers
  - Habitat loss
  - Cultivation in Wildlife areas
  - Problem Animal Control
  - Human -wildlife conflict
  - Poaching
    - Poaching
    - Loss of genetic biodiversity
  - Drought and diseases
  - Increased Poverty
  - High population growth
Factors that affect animal welfare in wildlife conservation

- Human-wildlife conflicts – crop destruction, predation
- Poaching for trophies and bushmeat
- Retaliatory poisoning of carnivores that raid livestock
- Illegal trade in live wild animals – squeezed cages, over-crowding, starvation, deprivation of water
- Illegal keeping of wildlife – squeezed cages, indoor rearing (lack of sunlight)
- Myths – leads to persecution of certain species such as hyenas, owls, wild dogs (“T9”)
- Diseases especially chronic – if left unattended – believe that diseases are a natural phenomenon and no intervention is required
Mitigation measures towards animal welfare violations in wildlife conservation

- Clinical interventions – injuries and diseases
- Capture and translocations
- Rescue of animals in distress – orphans, injured animals
- Human-wildlife conflict control/resolution – especially through engaging communities, compensation/consolation for loses
- Forensic science – bushmeat, trophies (rhino horns, ivory) – evidence to support prosecution
Clinical interventions to wildlife injuries

- Involves capture and treatment of injured wild animals within their natural habitats
- Objective is to alleviate pain & suffering
- Mostly target human-inflicted injuries arising from HWC and Poaching
- Most encountered injuries include snare wounds, gun-shot wounds, arrow-head and spear wounds
- For endangered – treat for natural injuries such as fight wounds, predator-inflicted/prey-inflicted wounds
Giraffe with a spear injury
Lion with a spear injury
Rescue of a lion cub with spear injury and another with arrow-head injury
Arrow-head injuries in elephants
Gun-shot Injury in elephant
Rescue of snared zebra and eland
Rescue of a snared buffalo
Treatment of traumatic injury (prey-inflicted) in lions
Same lion after treatment
Clinical interventions to wildlife diseases

- Clinical diseases - mostly in carnivores and large herbivores especially endangered species
- Some diseases treated include mange infestation in cheetahs & lions, trypanosomosis in rhinos (naive populations), clostridial infections (rhino)
Wildlife translocations

- To mitigate human-wildlife conflicts
- To stop or reduce habitat destruction.
- To re-colonise former habitats of species.
- Introduce certain species in new environments.
- To augment local population through increased genetic diversity and numbers.
Rescue of wild animals in distress

- **Orphaned animals** - mostly of endangered species e.g. rhinos, elephants, lions & cheetahs rescued to be reared in captivity

- **Injured/sick** animals which require intensive treatment in clinic and later released back to the wild e.g. in cases of bone fractures or dislocations.
Wildlife forensics

- Trophies identification – ivory, rhino horns – trace their origin
- Species identification of bush meat samples
- Forensic pathology - PM
- Link evidence with suspect and crime scene
- To provide water-tight evidence for more convictions of wildlife crime and to combat illegal bush-meat trade
Human-wildlife conflict control/resolution

- Involves community engagement – sensitization against retaliatory attacks
- Problem animal control – mostly scaring animals out of farms/households, translocation, elimination of problem animals (rare & only if it kills a person)
- Consolation programs
- Compensation programs – in the new Wildlife Act – regulations and guidelines being developed
Legislation

- Provisions of wild animal welfare in Cap 360 are weak and needs to be strengthened during its revision
- Provision for compensation for crop/property damages and livestock predation to curb retaliatory injuries/killing – provided for in Wildlife Conservation & Management Act, 2013
- Punitive penalties for killing/injuring wild animals – provided for in Wildlife Conservation & Management Act, 2013
- Provisions of penalties for bushmeat handling/consumption be included in Meat Control Act Cap 356
Conclusion

• Most of wild animal welfare abuses go unreported – reporting be encouraged
• There is need for enhanced community education and awareness towards animal welfare in wildlife conservation
• Provisions of wild animal welfare be strengthened during revision of Cap 360
• Poaching and HWC which poses the greatest challenge to animal welfare be discouraged and punished severely when they occurs
• Need for more veterinary professionals in wildlife conservation to take care of animal welfare issues
• Partnership with animal welfare agencies be strengthened
THANK YOU