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ZIMBABWE'S PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY: CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:
Over the centuries, there has been a widespread destruction of wildlife species at the global level. Some of the causes of wildlife extinctions have been the loss of habitats due to global population growth rates. Some areas which used to be habitats for wildlife have been turned into commercial farms, towns and cities. In traditional Africa wildlife co-existed peacefully with human populations. Although some animals were occasionally hunted for meat and ivory, this practice could never upset the ecological balance due to the primitive nature of the weapons which were employed. However, with the advent of colonialism, many animal species were driven to extinction due to the efficiency of the weapons which were used. The use of fire arms in hunting expeditions became a major threat to animals such as elephants, rhinos, buffaloes, lions and impalas. While in North America many species such as the passenger pigeon disappeared, in Africa many have survived although they are still under threat from poachers. This paper examines the challenges which confront the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) in the conservation of wildlife species such as elephants, lions, rhinos, buffaloes and impala. It focuses on the challenges which have occurred since 2000 during the 'Fast Track Land Reform Programme' (FTLRP). It is based on information which was collected in October, 2017. This involved the use of secondary and primary sources of information including interviews and questionnaires.

Keywords: wildlife, threats, challenges, solutions, Zimbabwe

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1. Introduction

The term 'wildlife' embraces all living organisms which occur naturally in the wild. This includes plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates (Miller, 1994). Research has shown that southern Africa contains a wide range of plant and animal species which is greater than that of most countries in the world (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). During the first decade after independence in 1980, Zimbabwe had a total of 88.000 elephants (*ZTV Evening News*, 24 July, 2017). However, over the years the figure has declined to 85-000. Some of the causes of this decline in numbers include: deforestation, and grazing, water pollution, uncontrolled fires, human wildlife conflicts, elephant overpopulation, wildlife-borne diseases and wildlife poaching. For example, in recent years poachers have employed cyanide poisoning in order to kill elephants and rhinos in the Hwange Game Reserve (Mapira, 2014). Media reports suggest that some top government officials have been involved in this scandal. Ivory and rhino horns have been smuggled out of the country to China, India and South Africa. Other areas of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe include the Gonarezhou Game Reserve, Save Conservancy and Mana Pools. In addition, there are several national parks which are scattered throughout the country. Examples include the Lion Park, Snake Park and Kyle National Park.

Although there were no clearly defined land-use divisions during the pre-colonial era, there were no serious threats to wildlife (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). In fact people and wildlife maintained a balanced co-existence within the ecosystem. While animals were hunted for meat or ivory, this practice did not pose a major threat due to the primitive weapons which were employed such as bows and arrows, spears and pits. However, colonialism brought highly lethal weapons such as guns which decimated some animals such as elephants, rhinos, buffaloes and impalas. However, the creation of game reserves, national parks and conservancies brought a sustainable solution for the preservation of wildlife. In more recent years Zimbabwe's Local Resources Management (LRM) was established in order to address issues of wildlife management. It is based on three major principles.

Firstly, it recognizes the role of the local community to the ownership of wildlife resources. During the 1990s, a new approach to the conservation of natural resources was developed in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare. It came to be known as the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE). In this new approach, local people in communal areas have a strong impact in the management and protection of wildlife resources. For example, the regular culling of wildlife is conducted. Animal products such as ivory are

sold in order to generate income for the protection of wildlife. Over the years, this approach has proved to be successful in the management of wildlife. In some rural communities, people now view wildlife as an important resource which has direct benefits to them. This is in sharp contrast with the traditional view which saw wildlife as either a threat or a nuisance to the surrounding community.

Secondly, formal and informal structures facilitate community participation in wildlife management. Finally, it creates the operation of sharing of the benefits of wildlife resources with communities. This paper examines the challenge of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. It focuses on the conservation of mammals only. Previous research has shown that the country faces three major challenges. These, according to Gratwicke and Stapelkamp (2006) include: the threat from poachers especially on privately owned conservatives and game farms, the catastrophic loss of endangered species such as black rhinos and painted dogs and finally numerous risks of animal populations in communal areas and national parks.

2. Research Methods

This article is based on primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary sources included the perusal of textbooks, journals and government documents such as Acts of parliament. Questionnaires which constituted primary sources of information were targeted at the parks and wildlife organizations in Zimbabwe. In addition, some interviews were done with key officials in the department of parks and wildlife in the city of Masvingo. The collection of data for this article was done in October, 2017. Information collected from the above methods was analyzed and it yielded the views that are expressed in this paper.

3. Wildlife Management at the Global Level

During the last three decades, the conservation of wildlife species has been a topical issue at the global level (Miller, 1994). Human beings have been responsible for the extinction and disappearance of various wildlife species. For example, by the early 1800s the passenger pigeon was one of the most common birds in North America. However, due to the human impact by 1914 it had disappeared for ever. This was mainly due to uncontrolled commercial hunting and the massive loss of habitat and food as forests were cleared for farms, towns and cities. Although the extinction of some wildlife species has always occurred in the past, in recent years it has been accelerated by human beings. For instance, passenger pigeons were good to eat while

their feathers made good pillows. On the other hand their bones were widely used for fertilizer. However, biologists claim that over the centuries millions of species have vanished during the earth's long history (Miller, 1994).

4. Causes of Wildlife Extinctions at the Global Level

Several causes account for the disappearances and extinction of wild animal species. They include: habitat loss and fragmentation, commercial hunting and poaching, pollution, climate change, introduced species and human population growth (Miller, 1994). A major cause of animal extinctions is the loss of habitat. Human activities frequently interrupt migration routes; destroy breeding areas, and food sources. For example, about 50% of the world's land area is now directly or indirectly devoted to agriculture. Some 20% has now been turned into commercial forests while 25% is devoted to human settlements. As a result, only 5% is reserved for all wild terrestrial resources.

A major killer of species is tropical deforestation followed by the destruction of coral reefs. In the USA 98% of the tall-grass prairies has been ploughed while half of the wetlands have been drained. On the other hand, some 95% of old-growth forests have been cut leading to the reduction of forest cover by 33%. About 500 species have been driven to extinction while others (10-16) are now near extinction. Several threatened species live in vulnerable and specialized habitats such as islands or single trees in tropical forests (Miller, 1994). Any disturbance of such unique habitats is likely to drive some species into extinction.

Commercial hunting has also been blamed for causing animal extinctions. It involves the killing of animals in order to sell their meat, fur and other parts. On the other hand, illegal commercial hunting is known as poaching. In North America, legal and illegal hunting have driven species such as bison to near extinction. In Asia, the Bengal tiger is under threat of extinction due to its expensive fur coat. Tigers are also killed for their bones which are ground up into powder to be used in Chinese medicines. Poachers know that their activities far outweigh the risk of fines and jail sentences.

Pollution is another cause of wildlife extinction. For example, the use of DDT and dieldrin, have led to the extinction of some bird species. On the other hand, climate change and global warming tend to damage some natural habitats leading to the destruction of wildlife in a few decades. However, a major cause of wildlife extinction is the rapid population growth at the global scale. Population growth tends to promote

economic systems and policies which ignore the value of the natural environment and its ecosystems.

5. Wildlife Conservation in the SADC Region

The SADC region contains one of the richest wildlife species in the world (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). It enjoys a variety of habitats for a diversity of animals. Within the savanna and sub-tropical ecozones, there is a variety of vegetation types which support various mammals such as elephants, rhinos, wildebeests, buffaloes, giraffes and impala. These wild animals co-exist with predators such as lions, leopards, cheetahs and hyenas. Due to the diversity of wildlife in this region, some of the wildlife areas have been declared as heritage sites. However, the SADC region experiences a variety of conservation challenges which call for immediate attention. These include, first of all, safeguarding the region as a repository of biological diversity. Secondly, there is a need to sustain the extensive network of protected areas. Thirdly, there has been a call to foster other conservation measures outside protected areas for maintaining species diversity. Fourthly, the region should deal with increasing threats to biodiversity. Finally, there is an urgent call to ensure that southern African countries can afford to maintain wildlife through income which is generated from wildlife resources.

6. Factors Influencing the Distribution of Wildlife Varieties

Several factors influence the distribution of wildlife in the region. More than 40% of large mammals inhabit the SADC region (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). While five species are carnivores, the rest are herbivores. Since animals require food and water to survive, the availability of both influences their distribution. Consequently, different animals have different habitat preferences. Research suggests that where soils are fertile and rainfall is plenty, there is a greater concentration of animals. In the dry savanna animals such as the white rhino, nyala, oryx, springbok, Thompson's gazelle and the lesser kudu are found. In moist savanna areas kob, waterbuck, sable, roan and bushbuck prevail.

On the other hand, in both the dry and moist savannas the largest mammals such as elephant, buffalo and hippopotamus are common. While browsers such as giraffe and kudu are found in woodlands, grazers including zebra and wildebeest occupy grasslands. On the other hand, impala and eland which are mixed feeders are found in both habitats. Patches of different vegetation types within an ecozone tend to attract a

rich diversity of animals. The larger herbivores migrate between ecozones in search of greener pastures.

7. History of Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife conservation within the SADC region dates back to the colonial era. The first protected areas during the colonial era were set aside in the 19th century (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). During this era, game reserves were established where high concentrations of large mammals were found. Later on game reserves were established in tsetse-infested areas which had fewer people or were of poor agricultural potential. The 1933 London Convention ushered in a new approach to the conservation of wildlife. This convention resulted in the establishment of many of the region's national parks for the protection and conservation of wildlife. The convention also catered for controlled hunting areas and recreational parks. Under the convention, all the different types of plants and animals and the different varieties of species should be protected.

The state owned all wildlife although hunting was allowed outside national parks. Controlled hunting was permitted in safari areas. For example, in Tanzania in 1947 permission to hunt in these areas was granted. This was the beginning of conservation with elements of utilization. The SADC region covers nearly seven million square kilometers and over one million square kilometers is devoted to wildlife conservation. This area amounts to 15.66% of the total land in the region. This is above 10% recommended by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The rich diversity of wildlife in the SADC region provides a huge opportunity for tourism. It has been noted that tourism is the second fastest growing industry in the world just next to the petroleum industry (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). Since it is a labor-intensive industry, it provides numerous job opportunities in the region.

8. Biodiversity Threats in the SADC Region

Several factors pose threats to the biodiversity in the region. Rural poverty is a major threat. This is because rural land-hungry people have been known to encroach on wildlife habitats in many parts of the region. It has been noted that half of Tanzania's protected areas have been affected in the past. For example, the size of Maswa Game Reserve has been reduced at least three times within a period of 25 years. Another treat to biodiversity in the region is habitat change due to grazing, agriculture, mining and human settlement. Once their habitats have changed, wildlife fail to adjust to the new

ecosystem. On the other hand, grazing does not only disrupt the plant species composition, it also displaces wild animals in the area.

For example, by selecting the most palatable species, livestock causes non-palatable grasses to increase. The construction of dams also has negative effects on wildlife habitats. This is because they submerge some plant species, modify flood and nutrient regimes and have a negative impact on downstream species. Urbanization and industrialization have had some negative impacts on wildlife through pollution, removal of vegetation and displacement of animals. Cultivation has had the strongest negative impact since it completely changes the landscape.

9. Wildlife Conservation Legislation in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a wide variety of wildlife which consists of 76 mammal and 650 bird species (www.zimparks.org). Due to this abundance of wildlife species, it is an attractive destination for tourists. Tourism constitutes 10% to the national economy. Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife was established in 2001 by an Act of Parliament. The country comprises National Parks, Recreational Parks, Sanctuaries, Safari areas, Botanical Reserves and Botanic Gardens. Wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe is governed by three Acts of parliament, which include: the Natural Resources Act (CAP 20:13) of 1996, the Parks and Wildlife Act (CAP 20: 14) of 1996 and the Environmental Management Act (CAP 20:27) of 2002. The Parks and Wildlife Act was first promulgated in 1975 during the colonial era. It has been revised numerous times over the decades. It deals with national parks, sanctuaries, safaris, recreational parks and botanical reserves/botanical gardens. In this Act, the Minister is empowered to grant individuals or corporates the powers to:

a) undertake scientific investigations within a national park;
b) take or collect and remove for export or otherwise any specimen of wildlife, fish or plant from a national park;
c) set aside any area of a national park for special purposes;
d) sell, donate or otherwise dispose of any specimen of wildlife taken from a national park;
e) introduce into a national park any specimen of wildlife;
f) do all such things and to take all such steps as he may consider necessary or desirable;
g) authorize the removal of any wildlife which may be captured, killed or picked;
h) construct air strips, roads, bridges, soil conservation works and water installations as he may consider necessary or desirable;

i) authorize such measures as he may consider necessary or desirable;
j) set aside areas within a national park as development areas;
k) regulate or restrict the construction and design of any building that may be constructed within a national park;
l) restrict the use of vehicles and the speed at which vehicles may travel within a national park, and
m) construct, maintain and operate hotels, restaurants, rest camps, caravan parks, camping grounds, shops, service stations and other buildings and facilities and let accommodation therein.

On the other hand, the Natural Resources Act dates back to the colonial era, having been promulgated for the first time in 1941 (GoZ, 1996 and Lopes, 1996). It deals mainly with conservation areas in communal and commercial areas. It addresses several issues such as: the protection of despoiled or deteriorated areas, destocking, and setting aside areas for the protection of natural resources. As such, it prohibits the poaching of some animals such as bush bucks, elephants, rhinos and antelopes. However, challenges are confronted when it comes to the enforcement of these laws especially in the newly resettled areas. The Environmental Management Act was promulgated in 2002 (Gandiwa, 2004). It seeks to protect the natural environment together with its ecosystems. Five years later in 2007 an Environmental Management Agency (EMA) was enacted (Chimhowu, Manjengwa and Feresu, 2010). EMA became the Environmental watch dog agency at local, district, provincial and national levels. However, it is limited in its operations by staff shortages at national, provincial and district levels. The shortage of vehicles for transport has drastically reduced its operations especially at the district level. In some parts of Zimbabwe EMA is hardly visible especially in the remote areas (Mapira, 2014).

10. The Role of the National Parks and Wildlife Authority

The Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) dates back to the colonial era. Its objectives include: wildlife conservation, environmental protection, protection and management of wildlife, and administration of wildlife in Zimbabwe. Targeting communities, which are involved in national parks management and their stakeholders, its main activities include: conducting research on wildlife and environmental issues, generating technical information in order to support wildlife management, conducting EIAs, assisting planning on wildlife development projects, and providing technical and scientific advice to wildlife stakeholders. These activities are conducted at national and provincial levels. For example in 2012 the Masvingo Provincial Branch made three

significant achievements including: conducting research in more than five wildlife areas, carrying out more than 20 EIAs, and assisting more than 20 wildlife stakeholders on development projects (Mapira, 2014).

However, in spite of these achievements, the department has experienced several challenges, such as: inadequate funds for operations, research and outreach programmes, shortage of vehicles for transport, and policy makers who do not prioritize environmental education (EE) and environmental education for sustainable development (ESD), lack of publicity on EE/ESD issues, and general lack of cooperation between stakeholders on EE/ESD. Solutions which were suggested for these challenges include: the need to form EE/ESD partnerships among stakeholders, soliciting for funds from donors, and the need for government to prioritize EE/ESD issues through adequate funding. According to Fien (1993), EE/ESD is an effective way of educating the public on the conservation of natural resources. The PWMA is affiliated to colleges, which train some of its manpower. For example, the Mushandike College of Wildlife Management in Masvingo Province trains parks and wildlife employees and provides capacity building to all stakeholders. Other activities include: training students and employees on wildlife management, carrying out researches on wildlife, and conducting EIAs (Mapira, 2014).

11. Challenges Confronting Wildlife Conservation in Zimbabwe

During the colonial era, game reserves were established in tsetse- infested areas which had fewer people or were of poor agricultural potential (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). Examples in southern Africa were Hwange of Zimbabwe, Kruger of South Africa and Luangwa of Zambia. In addition, national parks and conservancies were also established in order to provide habitats for wildlife. In 2000, Zimbabwe embarked on the FTLRP which resulted in the repossession of land from some 4 500 former white commercial farmers (Bond and Manyanya, 2003). Dubbed as '*jambanja*' (or chaotic), it attracted attention at local, national and global levels (Chibisa and Mapira, 2013). As a chaotic programme, it spread from former white farms to game reserves, protected forests, national parks, safaris and conservancies. Led by armed liberation war veterans, it posed a major threat to the conservation of wildlife. It is ironical to note that although EIAs have been mandatory since 1996, none was ever conducted before the implementation of the FTLRP (Chimhowu, et.al, 2010). This confirms the belief that Zimbabwe does not take environmental issues seriously when it comes to issues of development (Lopes, 1996). Several challenges have occurred in various parts of the country. Most whites who had lost their farms through this programme fled to South

Africa, Zambia, Nigeria, Australia, USA and the United Kingdom. This section examines some of the challenges that have been experienced since then.

Some people who live close to game reserves and national parks have cut open the fences that protected these areas. The main aim was to settle or poach in these areas. Once the fences had been broken, some wild animals escaped and started roaming in nearby villages thereby endangering themselves from the villagers. Recently, a pride of lions escaped from the Save Conservancy and posed danger to livestock and villagers in the Mhakwe area of Chimanimani (*ZTV Morning News*, 17 August, 2017). Although national park guards were informed, it was difficult for them to catch the lions since they travelled at night while hiding during the day. The first challenge which has been encountered since 2000 is the demise of wildlife due to the destruction of their habitants. Due to numerous incidents of game poaching in these areas, there is a danger of possible extinction of some of the wild animals in these areas. Although the government did not support the invasion of game reserves, national parks and conservancies, this problem has become so widespread that it is no longer easy to control. Several efforts have been made by law-enforcement agents to stop these illegal invasions but to no avail.

Secondly, in 2013 some 300 elephants and rhinos in the Hwange Game Reserve were poisoned with cyanide (Mapira, 2014). Major suspects of this scandal are top government officials who were working together with poachers. This was supported by the discovery of one Indian citizen who was caught at the Harare (now Robert Mugabe) Airport in possession of a rhino horn. Reports have suggested that ivory and rhino horns have been smuggled out of the country to destinations in Asian countries such as India and China where they find a ready market. On the 12th of December, 2017 some 200kgs of ivory destined for Malaysia were intercepted at the Robert Mugabe airport. Between January and December, 2017 at least 42 elephants were killed in Matebeleland North. During the same period, some 442 poachers were arrested (*ZTV Evening News*, 12th December, 2017). Thirdly studies that were conducted several years after the land reform programme indicated the catastrophic loss of endangered species such as rhinos and painted dogs in some national parks where villagers were engaged in the poaching business. It was feared that if this practice continued, it would result in the extinction of some wild life species (Gratwicke and Stapelkamp, 2006).

Fourthly, it has been noted that in some communal areas and national parks there is a risk of animal populations which are rapidly declining due to the loss of habitats. This is particularly so in newly settled areas and in those national parks where some villagers have gained access. Although most occupations are illegal in nature, the new settlers are encouraged by the fact that in the past the government and state agents

have turned a blind eye to these activities. Hence, the failure to act by state agents is interpreted as approval of the activities. Another challenge is that of deforestation and grazing. Bush clearance has been fueled by the need for both timber and the need to cultivate the land. On the other hand, former national parks have been invaded by livestock from neighboring villages.

These activities increase human and wildlife conflicts which inevitably result in the killing of animals especially for meat. On the other hand, such activities tend to destroy animal habitats leading to either migration or disappearance. Research also shows that there has been an increase in the prevalence of veldt fires in many communal and commercial farming areas (EMA Annual Report, 2010). Finally, there have been outbreaks of wildlife-borne diseases in newly resettled areas. Such diseases include anthrax and the foot and mouth, which are contracted from wild buffaloes.

12. Challenges for Sustainable Wildlife Management in Zimbabwe

In order for the survival of wild animal species in Zimbabwe, there is a need to pursue sustainable development (SD) as a national policy. SD dates back to 1987 when the concept was coined by the Brndtland Commission (WCED, 1991). Since then it has spread across the globe to become a household term. SD has been defined as a concept which '*seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of those of the future*' WCED, 1991: 40). In Zimbabwe environmental management and conservation has been based on Western '*scientific*' practices (Chandiwana and Moyo-Mhlanga, 1996). Land degradation in the form of deforestation, agricultural malpractices and poor land-use management has been identified as major problems in both commercial and communal areas (Mapira, 2017b).

Measures that have been proposed in order to curb these challenges have included destocking, afforestation, land use management, land reclamation and EE/ESD. Most of these strategies have been spear headed by government agencies as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Local communities have hardly featured in the formulation of these strategies. Instead, they have been labeled as a part of the problem. National laws and policies have been designed in order to prohibit these practices. There are numerous government agents which, seek to enforce these laws (Chandiwana and Moyo-Mhlanga, 1996). However, although the CAMPFIRE programme has proved to be quite effective in wildlife management, it has not been adopted throughout the country. In many parts of Zimbabwe wildlife management still heavily depends on the traditional colonial approach where poaching is considered as a punishable offence. In some areas, wildlife resources such as elephants have grown to

un-sustainable levels which lead to environmental degradation. Since culling is prohibited, there is a danger of over-population in some areas which has the potential to lead to the demise of the same wildlife resource. Realizing this problem, the global community has recently lifted the ban on ivory exports from Zimbabwe (*ZTV Evening News*, 21 September, 2017). Such developments will promote wildlife management in the country.

Some ecological regions such as 4 and 5 are not ideal for rain –fed crop farming (Whingwiri, Mashingaidze, and Rukuni, 1992). Before the fast track land reform programme such areas specialized in either commercial ranching or wildlife management (Bond and Manyanya, 2003). However, since then some land-hungry peasants have cleared these areas in order to embark on crop production. At the same time they have decimated wildlife populations in these areas through illegal poaching. However, it is hoped that with the coming of a new government such practices will be curbed as sanity returns to Zimbabwe. Failure to do so will spell disaster in the management and conservation of wildlife resources.

13. Possible Solutions

In the light of the above challenges, Gratwicke and Stapelkamp (2006) have recommended several possible solutions to this crisis. Firstly, there is a need to encourage the access to conservation information and materials in the country. This is possible through the dissemination of EE/ESD (Fien, 1993). Secondly, the government should prioritize the conservation needs of the country and seek to promote sustainable means of wildlife exploitation at the national level. Thirdly, there is a need to applaud the positive actions and innovations which have been developed by the remaining conservation related organizations. There is also a need to promote Zimbabwe's remaining conservation skills base with a view to retaining what has been left after the land reform crisis. In addition, both domestic and foreign tourists should be supplied with balanced information concerning the risks and benefits associated with wildlife tourism. There is also a need for local NGOs to continue to explore and implement pragmatic solutions to conservation problems.

Furthermore, they should forge local alliances in order to communicate lessons learned through local forums. Efforts should also be made in order to establish close contact with multi-lateral and international organizations which seek to promote wildlife conservation. There is a need to identify and prioritize the environmental problems which have been confronted under the current regime. Efforts should be directed at maintaining relationships with reform-minded government officials. On the

other hand, there is a need to keep detailed records of both past and present wildlife populations. The government of Zimbabwe should adopt several strategies. Firstly, it should strengthen democratic institutions. Secondly, efforts should be directed at resolving land-tenure disputes in a fair, professional and legally sound manner.

Thirdly, it should facilitate the visits of international resources, NGOs and multi-national institutions. Fourthly, it should continue to co-operate with neighboring southern African nations on trans-boundary conservation issues. Furthermore, it should increase funding to wildlife management and protection departments. There is also a need to reduce population pressure in rural areas by encouraging rural-urban migration. However, this cannot happen unless there is massive industrialization in towns and cities so that they can offer more employment opportunities to urban dwellers. In the present scenario, there has been dis-industrialization in the major urban centres owing to the un-favorable economic conditions in the country. On the other hand, both foreign and local journalists should be granted free access to rural areas, national parks and conservancies.

Finally, government should implement constitutional reforms that protect the wildlife environment and bio-diversity found in the country. Opposition political parties should strive to de-politicize wildlife conservation issues. They should consult with locally-based professionals and stakeholders to form a comprehensive wildlife policy and recovery plan which they can use as part of the election platform. Firstly, the shadow Minister for Environment and Natural Resources should convene conservation meetings and conferences in order to promote dialogue among conservation groups.

14. Conclusions

This paper has examined challenges which have confronted the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority since the implementation of the FTLRP in 2000. It began by examining wildlife management challenges at the global level. This was followed by a discussion on the causes of wildlife extinctions at the global level. It then examined challenges confronting wildlife conservation within the SADC region. A discussion of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe followed. It was noted that wildlife conservation is based on three Acts of parliament, namely: the Parks and Wildlife Act, the Natural Resources Act and the Environmental Management Act. Challenges which have confronted wildlife management in Zimbabwe were also examined with a view to providing possible solutions. Some of the causes of wildlife extinctions include the loss of habitat due to rapid population growth and the need for land to cultivate crops. There is a need to reduce rural populations in order to open more areas for wildlife

habitats. Hence, there is a need to embark on urban industrialization in order to encourage rural-urban migration as new jobs will be created through this process. Some of the stakeholders involved in these solutions include: government, NGOs and opposition political parties. The need for the design of new constitutional reforms directed at sustainable wildlife management was considered. All the recommendations seek to promote the development of healthy and sustainable wildlife resources in the country.

About the Author

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