Bringing Serengeti partners together for coordinated action

2nd Greater Serengeti Ecosystem Stakeholder Forum

April 26-28, 2019
Ngorognoro Conservation Area

Conclusions & Recommendations

Spirit of Collaboration & Partnership

We, the collective managers responsible for the protection of the natural resources of the Greater Serengeti-Ecosystem (GSE) in the interests of the Nations (Tanzania and Kenya) have identified the following successes and key threats to the long-term security and well-being of the GSE. In recognition of these success and threats we make the following recommendations.

SUCCESS STORIES

Anti-poaching and law enforcement

Thanks to dedicated teams and extraordinary cross-border coordination and partner support over the last two years, the GSE has become one of the most secure multi-jurisdictional protected areas in Africa with growing elephant and rhino populations. Committed to constant vigilance against ivory and rhino horn poaching, we are focusing on combatting commercial bushmeat poaching.

We call for:

- **continued close inter-agency collaboration, coordinated intelligence and versatility in adapting new anti-poaching strategies and tools to stay ahead of ivory and bush meat poaching gangs;**
- **continued investment of financial resources to maintain the security of the GSE.**

Inter-agency Collaboration & Partnerships

The inter-agency collaboration between government institutions, across the Kenya-Tanzania border, and including public-private/NGO partnerships and investment have greatly improved the security of the ecosystem. Our continued dialogue optimizes synergies and reduces redundancies.

We call for:

- **strengthening the *Greater Serengeti Conservation Society* to act as a communication platform and think-tank to share knowledge, resources and good practice across the ecosystem.**

THREATS

Livestock

Unregulated and unsustainable livestock numbers and consequent habitat degradation and wildlife displacement pose the greatest present threat to GSE integrity and resilience. Cattle, sheep and goats outnumber wildlife grazers in GSE. Domestic livestock, upon overgrazing the buffer areas, are rapidly collapsing the GSE borders and increasingly making incursions into protected areas. Livestock has displaced poaching as the greatest disturbance to migration and sustainable resource use.

The costs incurred by livestock include:

- displacing wildlife and hindering its movement;
- degrading rangeland and land-use conversion of natural habitat along the boundaries;
- reduced ecosystem resilience due to increased grazing pressure
- diverting conservation actions and efforts inside protected areas to herd livestock out;
- increased potential for disease transmission.

We call for:

- ⇨ **consistent application of national laws and policies across the entire GSE;**
- ⇨ **strong national support from political and social leaders to execute their national law and policies;**
- ⇨ **identify and implement progressive penalties that change human behaviour and are in-line with the cost of the offence particularly for habitual and repeat violations;**
- ⇨ **promoting conservation policies that do not incentivize livestock on the boundaries or within the ecosystem;**
- ⇨ **a multi-agency panel to address conservation and livestock in the GSE and to identify interventions that increase livestock value, reduce its threat to wildlife and improve livelihoods of GSE neighboring communities (i.e. moving towards regulated, sustainable livestock management and welfare of surrounding communities);**
- ⇨ **continued learning on actions that identify and curb unregulated and unsustainable livestock numbers and management;**

Borders, Fences & Land-Use

The human population on the perimeter of the GSE is growing at double the national average – resulting in rapid land transformation along GSE borders. Close juxtaposition of human activities and settlement and GSE boundaries is leading to frequent intrusions into the protected area and a surge in human-wildlife conflicts. Changes occurring on boundary have cascading impacts on the ecological sustainability in the core protected area; the long-term future of the GSME is dependent on the security of the boundary. Hard borders currently characterize the western edge of the GSE in both, Tanzania and Kenya. Whereas along north and east of Mara reserve proliferation of fences has resulted in the collapse of Loita wildebeest migrating populations from 140,000 to about 23,000. Ill positioned fences on private lands across open rangelands where wildlife migrate compromise the GSE's ecological integrity and diminish its tourism value as wilderness experience.

We call for:

- ⇨ **Ensuring village land-use plans along GSE are compatible with conservation and shift from conflict towards co-existence between humans & wildlife**
- ⇨ **Ensuring village land-use plans are in consort with regional and national Land Use Planning Commissions and that their implementation follows the tenets of adaptive management with periodic audits and accountability**
- ⇨ **Review land-use policies that allow fencing of freehold land in critical wildlife corridors, particularly in areas that are of national and global interest given their natural wealth and tourism value;**

Promote policies that incentivise and facilitate conservation as specific land-use category facilitating wildlife friendly investments and discouraging fencing of rangelands within the GSE;

- **Exploring range of incentives and policies for improved border management including increasing investment opportunities for tourism and hoteliers;**
- **In the most extreme cases, where other practicable solutions to minimize human-wildlife conflict are not forthcoming, and where livestock and poaching intrusions into GSE are incessant, and where continued erosion and de-gazettement of GSE boundaries is imminent, careful evaluation of wildlife fences could be considered. Such an evaluation requires great forethought including a thorough and comprehensive review of unintended consequences of any such action.**

Mass Tourism

GSE is flagship destination and tourism propels the sector to be the leading foreign currency earner and economic contributor to the GDP of Tanzania and Kenya. There is great potential to diversify and grow a year-round tourism industry in GSE. However, poorly planned and crowded tourism facilities have a detrimental impact on GSE's ecological resilience and visitor experience. Research shows the migration avoids areas of concentrated tourism.

We call for:

- **Reaffirm and promote Tanzania tourism principles and strategy of low volume and high value;**
- **Enforce tourism guidelines in the General Management Plan of GSE as agreed by the stakeholders;**
- **Prohibit high concentration & fixed/permanent structures in high quality habitat and prime wildlife use areas;**
- **Encourage tourist development & infrastructure in surrounding communities to fuel local economies;**
- **Diversify year-round tourism experiences by innovative approaches across all regions & attractions of GSE including wildlife, palaeontology, geology, anthropology etc.**
- **Industry benchmarks & growth targets be based on economic return, not on the numbers of tourists;**
- **Analyse the environmental-economic trade offs between tourism and other land uses in the GSE.**

Mara River

Deforestation in the Mau highlands coupled with agriculture dams & diversions threaten the flow of the Mara River. This river is the only perennial source of water in GSE and integral to annual wildebeest migration. With reduced flows the migration would decline by at least 40 % with dramatic impact on ecosystem resilience and undermines the economic foundation of tourism industry in Kenya and Tanzania. This will a central topic of GSCS meeting in May 2020.

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Annex

What is the Greater Serengeti Ecosystem?

The Greater Serengeti Ecosystem refers to the contiguous wildlife and forest protected areas and associated watersheds surrounded by the lakes Eyasi, Manyara, Natron and Victoria shared by Tanzania and Kenya.

What is the Greater Serengeti Conservation Society?

The Greater Serengeti Conservation Society is dedicated to preserving the integrity and resilience of the Greater Serengeti Ecosystem. Its vision is to ensure a resilient and thriving Greater Serengeti Ecosystem to the benefit of the local and global community. Its mission and motto is '*Serengeti Forever*'.

To ensure that open inter-agency dialogues and partnerships exist between all stakeholders, managers and scientists and these continue to form the basis for unifying conservation strategies that will ensure the preservation of the Greater Serengeti Ecosystem, its ecological processes and its intrinsic national and international value into the future.

Participants of the 2nd Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem Stakeholder Forum

Collectively we represent:

- Tanzania National Parks
- Tanzania Wildlife Authority
- Tanzania Wildlife Division
- Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute
- Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority
- Kenya Wildlife Service
- Narok County Council
- Tourism Confederation of Tanzania
- Hoteliers Association of Tanzania
- Frankfurt Zoological Society
- Friedkin Conservation Fund
- Grumeti Fund

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