

The Impact of Animal Rights on Wildlife Conservation and Management in Kenya

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Abstract: This dissertation explains the role of the animal rights movement in Kenya's wildlife conservation and management. The research proposes that animal rights principles are a major driver in the formation of Kenya's wildlife policy and management protocol. The dissertation begins with a discussion on the animal rights agenda and how this overlaps with Kenya's wildlife management policies in a way that places Kenya on the international stage as one of Africa's leaders in wildlife conservation. The second and third chapters address the history of the animal rights movement and the history of wildlife conservation in Kenya with a categorical analysis of the non-government wildlife organizations active in the country. Over the last few centuries, the animal rights movement gained momentum and expanded from animals in captive settings to animals in non-captive settings. The question in reference to animals' condition: "can they suffer?" posited by Jeremy Bentham in 1781, remains at the core of the movement. Initially applied to animal-use scenarios such as medical testing, the concept of suffering has expanded to address sustainable and traditional hunting practices, habitat loss, and even predator-prey relationships. Kenya's colonial wildlife management relied on concepts of suffering and cruelty to develop early hunting and land access laws. Policies in recent decades expanded on the idea that Kenya's wildlife was in danger of extinction and initiated policies that banned hunting and promoted the care of individual animals. In the 1989, Kenya was recognized for taking a lead role in the ban on ivory, a move that branded the country as a vanguard in the protection of wildlife. The fourth and fifth chapters use case studies and an analysis of NGO activities to show how animal rights principles unfold in wildlife conservation protocol and in the strategies and tactics of organizations that focus on wildlife protection. Profiles of areas including Meru National Park, and the greater Tsavo region show the geography of the animal rights movement in everything from park creation to regional management. These case studies are followed by a set of management scenarios and organizational practices that embody animal rights principles. By focusing on specific trends in management protocols and organizational strategies, this work highlights the impacts of the animal rights movement in action. The dissertation concludes by drawing on Kenya's unique characteristics from a regional geography perspective and calls into question the future of Kenya's wildlife without the active movement.