

Book Review

THE IMPERIAL LION, Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management in Central Africa, by Stuart A. Marks. Published in 1984 by Westview Press, 196 pages. Cost \$18.00.

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Editor's Note: This review was written for Horizons, the U.S. AID magazine for the developmental professional.

Marks promotes one overriding theme in this monograph, which is largely derived from his work in Zambia coupled with documents relating to wildlife conservation and management in central and eastern Africa: That development is a totality which cannot be properly understood by its separation into convenient parts; and that development objectives of large(r) organizational units must be based on initiatives organized at the local level.

This is not a novel theme, particularly as it regards wildlife management in Africa. The problem, however, is that neither is it a practice. Marks spends a considerable amount of effort and space in taking to task the colonial approach to wildlife management introduced and practiced in most African countries, i.e., protection, regulation, establishment of national parks, curtailment of local rural utilization of game species, government controls, and political and economic interests prevalent at central administration and management levels. He points out that such practices do not consider the well being of the majority of people, the dependence upon wildlife resources by rural people, or the reason for such practices other than that they "work" in Europe and North America.

Mark's main contention is that unless social and cultural concerns are integrated with biological, economic and political considerations, wildlife management as currently practiced will not succeed. He argues that "decisions affecting wildlife survival and the welfare of small-scale rural societies, often existing on the same terrain, are increasingly made in bureaucratic institutions far removed from the consequences of their actions;" what I call technology transfer by armchair ecologists, who usually neither visit with nor listen to Africans who are affected by their ideas, plans, and programs, and when they do, listen to the wrong ones.

To support his theme, Marks goes into considerable detail which may be of interest to the serious scholar or development expert regarding such topics as the sort of scientific knowledge, the wildlife management paradigm, the process of paradigmatic change, resource systems and change, and problems associated with interdependence in a changing world. He also describes the evolution of wildlife management practices in Zambia, backed by discussions of resource utilization not necessarily considered by such management.

As one who supports Marks' theme, and would go beyond it to question whether many current wildlife management practices are either necessary or sound (how often were traditional "management" or uses of wildlife examined before imposing the colonial systems?), I feel this book is important reading for the serious student of African wildlife, for development assistance experts who will affect wildlife resources by their decisions, and for anyone who feels he can depend upon traditional wildlife literature to under-