

Misitu Yetu Project: Pande Game Reserve

Participatory Forest Management

Summary

The Tanzania Forest Conservation Group has been working with the communities surrounding Pande Game Reserve as part of the Misitu Yetu Project. Pande has populations of 12 vertebrates endemic to the East African Coastal Forests including one endangered primate. The reserve is managed by the Wildlife Division. Over the last 50 years most of the mature forest in Pande has been lost due to timber harvesting and charcoal production. Since 2000 TFCG has been promoting environmental awareness and advocacy amongst the surrounding communities in an effort to improve the conservation of the reserve.

Introduction

Pande Game Reserve is an area of East African Coastal Forest in Dar es Salaam Region. The Game Reserve was gazetted in 1990. It covers 1,226 ha between 80 – 126 metres above sea level encompassing forest, thicket, grassland and woodland.

Pande Game Reserve is part of the Eastern Arc / Coastal Forest Biodiversity Hotspot, one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the world. Pande has also been classified as an important bird area.

History

Until the 1950s, few people were living around Pande. There were isolated Zaramo clan dwellings scattered amidst a landscape of dense bushed woodland in which lions, warthogs and wild pigs roamed freely.

During the 1950s the population began to increase as people were attracted to the area, in part by the resources within the Pande forest. This included people from the Makonde tribe of Southern Tanzania and Northern Mozambique who are famous for their woodworking skills and were attracted by the valuable timbers within the forest.

In 1952, Pande was gazetted as a Forest Reserve. When the reserve was gazetted areas of scrubland were left out of the reserve to meet the needs of the growing communities. Between 1950s – 1970s harvesting within Pande increased. The rare ebonies were removed and there was widespread pole cutting (Lupala 1997).

During villagisation in the 1970s, there was an informal relaxation of laws regarding cutting in the reserve so that people could harvest building poles to construct the new villages. Also during villagisation many of the Zaramo people migrated away from the forest while the Makonde, Ngindo and Matumbi people opted to stay so that they would have continued access to the wood resources of the reserve. Lupala (1997) notes that between 1970 and 1980 approximately 273 ha of woodland were depleted within the reserve.

In 1987 a private developer, John Msembelera, initiated a proposal to turn the Pande Forest Reserve into a zoo through his company Pande Game Reserve Limited. This gained support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and from the District Council and in 1988 the Ministry of Natural

Site Details

Location: Coastal, Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam Region

Area: 1,226 ha

Biodiversity: 12 endemic vertebrates to the East Africa Coastal Forests; one endangered primate.

Status: Threatened by charcoal production, fire, and firewood collection.

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Resources and Tourism issued a revocation order (18.10.1988) and in 1990 the reserve was regazetted as a Game Reserve (GN 461). During the same year a title deed was issued to Pande Game Reserve Limited for the area.

The transfer of ownership from State to Private developer met with resistance from local NGOs concerned at whether a private developer would have the capacity to conserve the unique biodiversity of the reserve. Illegal extraction continued within the reserve although it is difficult to assess the extent of this. The developer prepared a network of fire control lines that also facilitated access for charcoal producers, pole cutters and grass cutters. Shortly after gaining ownership of the reserve the private developer died and the concession for the management of the reserve was revoked in 1996.

Once returned to the Wildlife Division, the WD staff managed the reserve according to standard practices for a game reserve with a focus on law enforcement. Boundaries were cleared using a bulldozer and guards were stationed at the northern gate. A Project Manager equipped with a 4WD vehicle was appointed for the reserve. Despite this, disturbance within the reserve continued amongst other things to supply charcoal and poles to the nearby army camp. No management plan was written.

In the eleven years between 1989 and 2001 much of the centre of the reserve was completely cleared of forest (Burgess and Hipkiss 2002).

Biological Importance

Pande has one endangered, one vulnerable and five near-threatened animal species based on IUCN threat classifications. Plants of conservation concern include the three taxa which are thought to be strictly endemic to Pande: *Tricalysia bridsoniana* var. *pandensis*, *Sapium* sp. nov. and *Leptactina* FTEA sp. A. The reserve has a high diversity of bats.

Pande is part of the Pande and Dondwe Coastal Forest Important Bird Area (Baker and Baker 2002).

TFCG's Conservation Activities

In 2001 the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group began to work with communities around the reserve in an attempt to promote greater community support for the sustainable management of the reserve. Initially this met with little support from the Wildlife Division concerned that the villages would develop expectations of Joint Management as is being practiced in some Tanzanian Forest Reserves. At the time (and to date) neither the Wildlife Policy (1998) nor the Wildlife Act (1974) support joint management for Game Reserves.

Recognising this, the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group focused on raising awareness within the surrounding villages on the importance of forest conservation and good governance. The project also assisted the villages to organise active village environmental committees and a 'Local Area Conservation Network' known as MWAPA (Mtandao wa Wanamazingira Pande). The communities have approached the Wildlife Division to urge them to halt the illegal activities that continue within the reserve.

Since the start of the project there has been a gradual improvement of relations and cooperation between the communities and the Wildlife Division. The Wildlife Division has begun to employ members of the Village Environmental Committees to clear the reserve boundaries rather than using a bulldozer; the newly appointed Project Manager (since April 2003) has attended MWAPA meetings and there has been closer follow up by WD staff on illegalities reported by villagers. The Wildlife Division and the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group are now looking to see how a management plan can be developed for the reserve with input from the communities.

References

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