

Assessment of Protected Area Management Practices in Nigeria National Parks

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Abstract:

Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental to effective management of Protected Areas. The study assessed Protected Area Management practices in Nigeria National Parks. There are 7 (seven) National Parks under the National Park Service of Nigeria that are fully operational including Cross River (CRNP), Okomu (ONP), Gashaka Gumti (GGNP), Kainji Lake (KLNP), Chad Basin (CBNP), Old Oyo (OONP) and Kamuku (KNP) and 10 (ten) that are newly established bringing the total number of parks to 17 (seventeen) nationwide. 172 questionnaires were administered to eight purposively selected local communities living close to the 7 selected Parks known as Support Zone Communities (SZC) and 24 questionnaires to field staff in each of the Parks. Focus Group Discussion was also conducted involving community's leaders and key management staff. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables, means, percentages and frequencies. The result of the study revealed that anti-poaching patrols were the major strategies adopted by the management in addressing illegal activities in the park as reflected in the responses of majority of field staff. However the greatest threat to the successful management of the Park was grazing with a record of 1083 persons arrested during the period followed by poaching recording 359 persons, and logging with 229 arrests. Inadequate funding, low staff levels and the operations of the parks without management plans were identified as major management issues. In spite of the enormous challenges the National Park Service has faced right from inception, the service has also witnessed some level of achievements and there are also prospects for a better park system in the future. This is in the area of improving the legal framework of the service, favorable potentials for NGOs and other stakeholders support, commercialization and concessioning programs and a strong drive towards the protection of the existing rear and endangered species.

Keywords:

National Park Service, Protected Area Management, Treats, Management Plan, Local Communities.