

## Book Review

# Proceedings of the July 1982 workshop on the conservation and utilization of wildlife on private land

Edited by P.R.K. Richardson and M.P.S. Berry

Published by the Southern African Wildlife Management Association, Pretoria 1984.

76 pp. A5 size handbook

Price R5,00.

This very useful publication commences with papers concerning the legal aspects of the conservation and utilization of wildlife on private land. Greyling emphasizes the importance of legislation in the role of conservation and explains how game fits in with legal definitions of ownership. Van der Veen considers the veterinary-legal aspects of game utilization. He discusses 'The Animal Diseases and Parasites Act' and 'The Animal Slaughter, Meat and Animal Products Hygiene Act' in detail, and outlines the implications of the principal contagious diseases on the movement of game or game products from one area to another. Brief mention is made of the situation regarding imports and exports. Westcott outlines the history of the venison market in South Africa and discusses the various cropping methods employed. He maintains that the industry is viable but seriously hampered by veterinary regulations imposed locally and by importing countries. He makes suggestions as to how this situation might be rectified. There appears to be a need to reduce the restrictive nature of the legislation and perhaps the situations in South West Africa and Zimbabwe can be used as models in this regard.

Swart presents a paper on the 'Post-capture Handling of Wild Animals'. He explains the nature of stress, how it can cause dehydration, acidosis and death among captured animals; and how it can be reduced. It was recommended that Provincial capture teams should be made more available, that capture operations be subject to examinations and licencing; that farmers be educated in the techniques of game capture and handling, and that the SAWMA should publish guidelines on the transport of wild animals.

Daly outlines the history of hunting in South Africa. He classifies hunters as 'professional', catering for foreign trophy hunters, and 'local'. He emphasizes the neglect of the 'local'

hunter and stresses the need to draw up a code of ethics for all hunting. It is recommended that the 'local' hunter be incorporated more in the commerce of game ranching and culling. Daly also points out the enormous economic significance of hunting and how this contributes to Nature Conservation. Bigalke also makes this point in his overview of the 'Utilization of Game', and then goes on to make a thorough comparison of game and domestic stock in terms of their utilization of the vegetation, aspects of their productivity, and aspects of their management. Game shows some obvious advantages in terms of productivity but domestic stock are more easily managed. Bigalke provides some useful tables for the game rancher.

Skinner describes in detail the reproduction of ungulates, and classifies two types of breeding strategy: 'seasonal' and 'opportunistic'. He discusses the management implications of these strategies concluding that 'opportunistic' breeders such as the springbok can be manipulated to give a higher reproductive rate, but 'seasonal' breeders such as the impala are easier to manage. He recommends a sex ratio and recruitment rate for most antelope and outlines methods of censusing and monitoring populations.

Hes gives a paper entitled 'Photographic Safaris on a Private Game Reserve'. He describes the development of Londolozi from a non-productive area of bushveld into a flourishing commercial enterprise. He explains the methods employed in tracking game and outlines the training of guides. He also gives an example of the value of financial investment in habitat management.

Jooste discusses habitat management in more detail. He defines the terms 'carrying capacity' and 'biomass' and lists the various factors that make the application of these terms to game situations different from that of domestic stock situations. He recommends a method of calculating carrying capacity for game and points out the need to establish research priorities and to put a much greater effort into relevant research.

After general discussion the principal recommendations were that existing knowledge be reviewed and disseminated whilst greater inter-provincial cooperation should be called for. Bigalke in 'summing up' suggested that future workshops should include aspects of sociology, smaller game and possibly game predation.

In covering most aspects of wildlife conservation and utilization on private land, this publication comprises a good background for all interested persons. With the many authoritative recommendations that it contains it is also an excellent guide for the 'game rancher', although to fulfill each and every one of these recommendations might not be feasible. Perhaps more emphasis has been placed on the utilization rather than the conservation of wildlife on private land, but the one leads to the other and utilization of game is certainly a field in which there is a great need for future research. The workshop has made an obvious contribution to this end.

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