

This study examined the nature and the pattern of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in Nyeri County and the effects the management of wildlife resource has on human livelihoods. Nyeri County is rich in wildlife as it is sandwiched between the Aberdares and Mt Kenya National Parks. The objectives of the study were to assess the nature and the pattern of human-wildlife conflict in the study area, its impact on human livelihoods and wildlife conservation efforts with an aim to identify mitigating strategies that can improve the welfare of both. The study held the hypotheses that severity of human-wildlife conflict did not vary from place to place nor from one period of time to another. It also stated that the attitude of residents towards wildlife has no effect on management strategies. Primary and secondary data were collected. A questionnaire was administered to households and government officers in Nyeri County. A total of 686 respondents were sampled in addition to Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) officers in the sampled locations. Data gathered were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Chi-square test was used to examine the intensity of the problem. Satellite images showed land-use changes whereas Time-series analysis was used to identify the pattern of the conflict from 1950 to 2008 with an aim of finding the best ways to address it. An assessment of methods being used to contain HWC in the county was done in order to see their effectiveness, and identify areas that need improvement. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) helped assess the effectiveness of the various strategies used to deal with HWC in the area whereas Likert scale helped in assessing the views of stakeholders towards methods used to cope with wildlife problems and their perceived effectiveness. The study found that that the concept of HWC has different meanings among the respondents. Those who encounter problems from big wildlife experience more severe HWC than those encountering small wildlife. In the newly settled areas such as Thigu, all respondents (10%) reported problems from big wildlife while only 1.1 % reported such problems from Chinga, an old settlement area . . In the newly settled locations, HWC was found to have a great impact on human livelihoods and wildlife conservation than in the southern locations. For instance, 59% of the respondents were unhappy with the way KWS deals with HWC in their areas. Majority of such people with a negative attitude live close to big wildlife hence severe conflicts. With a growing human population migrating to wildlife habitats there will be continued competition of the scarce resources unless serious strategies are used to manage the conflict. Educating the residents on livelihood strategies compatible with wildlife can help improve both human livelihood and wildlife management. There is therefore a need for the government to revise some of the existing policies and practices on wildlife management in Kenya. The study concludes that HWC has an effect on livelihoods sustainability as well as on wildlife management and solution to this problem is necessary.