

Moderated Debate on Contentious Conservation Issue

Overview: Biodiversity/wildlife conservation lies at the nexus of myriad issues spanning socioeconomics and human poverty, Indigenous rights, asymmetries in GDP & wealth among nations, climate change, pollution, international trade, human wildlife conflict, industrial agriculture, tourism, and emerging zoonotic and human diseases. I will not pretend that this is a complete list. Potential solutions to these problems come neither easily nor without controversy – and no plan of action will please all stakeholders. I have chosen 5 focal ‘propositions’ related to conservation for debate – most of these directly relevant to tropical conservation. These are not clean, simple, dichotomous issues and you will have to discuss with your group mates how you wish to approach them. You must also ensure that both sides of the argument pro and con are well covered even if you all agree that one is more supportable than the other. Worth 25% of your final grade.

For each topic, we have provided a few key articles, but you are, of course, permitted/strongly encouraged to add more – especially ones relevant to Kenya or East Africa. You should also seek to be creative in the arguments that you make pro and con the proposition, and be entertaining in your presentation. The debates will be done without visual aids.

We have assigned students to groups and these are indicated below. For each group there are three roles: moderator (which we have assigned a priori), proponent for the proposition, opponent of the proposition. In advance of the trip, you should discuss among yourselves who will be pro and who will be con (in person, email, Zoom, whatever works for you). You should work together to find material on your assigned topic, but thereafter there will be some independent work that each of you must do. However, we would like you to work together on this as these debate topics sometimes tap into some emotional issues and we wish to ensure that the person taking the ‘less popular’ side has lots of room to shine (and it can be fun to play devil’s advocate). As we are an odd number, a professor may act as moderator for one debate.

Please note that we will also poll everyone before the debate and afterward to see of opinions have shifted.

Format:

- Introduction – approx. 2-3 minutes. Set up the debate with an overview of the issue
- Opening arguments – approx. 2 minutes per participant
- Point-counterpoint debate – approx. 10 minutes
- Class discussion (all) – approx. 10 minutes
- Summation (moderator) – approx. 4-5 minutes

Team A. Solas, Grace. Moderator. Andrea

Proposition: Ex situ strategies (zoos, seed banks, botanical gardens) can be a positive force for conservation of significant components of extant biodiversity.

Key references: Tabley et al. 2015. Amphibians and conservation breeding programmes: do all threatened amphibians belong on the ark? *Biodivers Conserv.* 24: 2625-2646. Cannon & Kua. 2017. Botanic gardens should lead the way to create a “Garden Earth” in the Anthropocene *Plant Diversity.* 39: 331-337. Stokes. 2018. Why conserving species in the wild still matters. *Biodivers Conserv* 27: 1539–1544. Useful website: https://www.bgci.org/resources/bgs_in_conservation/

Team B. Kaida, Alyssa Moderator. Meghan

Proposition: Trophy hunting is a useful tool for providing monies to enhance local conservation and the well-being of local communities?

Key references: Lindsey et al. 2007. Trophy hunting and conservation in Africa: Problems and one potential solution. *Cons. Biol.* 21(3): 880-883. Creel et al. 2016. Assessing the sustainability of African lion trophy hunting, with recommendations for policy. *Ecol. Appl.* 26: 2347-2357. Adhikari et al. 2021. Community-based trophy hunting programs secure biodiversity and livelihoods: Learnings from Asia’s high mountain communities and landscapes. *Env. Challenges.* 4: 100175. Useful on-line article: <http://www.conservationmagazine.org/2014/01/can-trophy-hunting-reconciled-conservation/>

Team C. May, Rachael Moderator. Allen

Proposition: International programs like ‘debt for nature swaps’ are powerful and effective instruments to enhance conservation in developing nations.

Key references: Cassimon et al. 2011. The pitfalls and potential of debt-for-nature swaps: A US-Indonesian case study. *Global. Env. Change* 21: 93-102. Macekura. 2016. Crisis and Opportunity: Environmental NGOs, Debt-for-Nature Swaps, and the Rise of ‘People-Centred’ Conservation. *Environment and History.* 22: 49-73. Useful article: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/press-releases/central-africa-s-first-debt-for-nature-swap-invests-25-million-for-tropical-forest-conservation-in-cameroon>

Team D. Moderator. Arjun, Madeleine. TBA (possibly Loughheed)

Proposition: International treaties and conventions are effective tools in diminishing illegal trade in wildlife and wild plants and enhancing conservation

Key references: Dickinson. 2012. International conservation treaties, poverty and development. *Natural Resource Perspectives Series.* Overseas Development Institute 74. pp. 1-4. Njogu. 2012. Wildlife management and conservation in view of international conventions. *The George Wright Forum.* 29: 109–117. Trouwborst et al. 2017. International wildlife law: Understanding and enhancing its role in conservation.

BioScience 67: 784-790 Some useful web sites: <https://www.cbd.int/brc>
<https://www.wcs.org/our-work/solutions/international-policy>