Chiefs, Hunters and San in the Creation of the Moremi Game Reserve, Okavango Delta

Maitseo M. M. Bolaane

Journal or publication title: Senri Ethnological Studies

Volume: 83

Page Range: 1-259

Year: 2013-06-10

URL: http://doi.org/10.15021/00002455

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>著者(英)</th>
<th>Maitseo M. M. Bolaane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>研究分野</td>
<td>未提供</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>研究機関</td>
<td>未提供</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>論文種類</td>
<td>未提供</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>頻度</td>
<td>未提供</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出版年月日</td>
<td>2013-06-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>著作権</td>
<td>未提供</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="http://doi.org/10.15021/00002455">http://doi.org/10.15021/00002455</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

1. Introduction

This book is about the complex issues and considerable politics that surrounded the establishment of a game reserve in the Okavango Delta in Botswana in the early 1960s. The area of Botswana is approximately 581,730 square kilometres. Situated in southern Africa, it is a landlocked country, bordered by Zambia and Zimbabwe to the north and northeast, Namibia to the north and west, and South Africa to the south and southeast. At Kanzungula, four countries—Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia—meet at a single point mid-stream in the Zambezi River (see Map 1).

Formerly known as the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Botswana became an independent country in 1966 and prior to independence and the discovery of diamonds it was one of the poorest countries in the world. Today Botswana has the distinction of being one of the most rapidly developing countries in Africa and is renowned for having a rich cultural heritage and some of the largest wildlife populations on the continent (Photos 1 and 2). A large proportion of the country, seventeen per cent of the land, has been set aside for game parks and reserves and another twenty-two per cent of the country is included in Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)1). According to a recent study, Prospects for Export Diversification in Botswana by the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) and the World Bank, apart from its mineral resources and beef Botswana’s major comparative advantage is its diverse and abundant wildlife and natural resources. These resources are sought after by tourists globally and strongly compliment the global tourism trend towards greater environmental awareness 2).

Among the largest protected areas are the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (the second largest protected area in the world), and the jointly managed Trans-Frontier Park (Botswana’s Gemsbok National Park and South African Kalahari Gemsbok Park), which spans the southern border of Botswana with South Africa (see Map 2)3). In the north, Chobe National Park is 117,000 sq km and Moremi Game Reserve 4,875 sq km4). The latter, protecting some of the Okavango Delta, is part of a larger geographical network, which includes the Mababe Depression and the Makgadikgadi and Nxai Pans.

2. Historiographic Contribution

A rich literature is developing on the history of game reserves and national parks in Africa. Major arguments in the historiography suggest that the ideas and policies on their establishment came from outside Africa, either from the United States Yellowstone model, or from British imperial reactions to the predatory hunting of the nineteenth century5). Preservationist...
policies are usually cast as the product of European ideas, as are related notions of the ‘wilderness’ value of African landscapes. Many studies from the late 1980s and mid–1990s have emphasized the negative effects of such ideas and policies in a colonial context: they have drawn attention to the way in which they devalued local African practices, undermined local management strategies, and criminalized access to important economic and cultural resources. These analyses have portrayed local African populations as the victims of land reservation for conservation purposes. While this may be the case in both South Africa and Kenya where the role of settler populations as protagonists of game conservation is well highlighted in the literature, the case discussed here suggests that this dominant interpretation needs closer scrutiny. The meaning and impact of global ideas and policies of wildlife conservation depends on how they are localized in particular places. In this book (Chapter 1), I will outline some major features of this literature and the processes it describes, and proceed to show how the experience of Botswana, a country with one of the largest percentages of land reserved for wildlife, is an important and distinctive case.

My research analyses the intricate process involved and the complex relations around the formation of a major game reserve in the Okavango Delta, northwest Botswana (Ngamiland) (Map 1 and Photo 3). In particular it explores the role of local African communities and their involvement in the establishment of the reserve. Significantly, the key actors in the foundation of Botswana’s Okavango and Moremi Game Reserve in the 1960s were not state officials but BaTawana chiefs and a network of hunters and adventurers turned conservationists. The initiative was conceived as a means of protecting wildlife from the depredations of illegal South African hunting parties and ensuring future local use. The proposal to establish a wildlife sanctuary was initially opposed by the colonial state. The book discusses why the formation of Moremi was an exception to that of other parks, and why the initial coalition of African and local settler interests came to see the preservationist policies as being in their interests.

This was probably one of the few wildlife sanctuaries in southern Africa created through an African local initiative on their own land. On 15 March 1963, the local people of Ngamiland agreed in a kgotla village meeting in Maun to set aside 700 sq miles of their tribal territory as a game reserve. The area selected was of long-standing importance for game conservation. It included the richest area of the Okavango Swamps, with a wide and plentiful variety of grasses and woodland coverage that supported a wide range of carnivores, over 50 herbivores and hundreds of birds. Recent ecological studies have estimated the total mammal biomass for Moremi Game Reserve at being 12,000kg/km. Some research has even concluded that the figure is much higher than for most wildlife areas in southern Africa and comparable to the savannas of the East African Rift valley.

The Moremi Game Reserve, stretching up to the Chobe National Park, was traditionally seen by the BaTawana as their royal hunting ground and the participation of the BaTawana chieftaincy was critical in setting land aside. The Maun kgotla was essential in the decision to establish a game reserve in the Okavango. African authorities also made a significant contribution towards managing it through the Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society. The Society included African notables and through the establishment of the park, Africans asserted their control over land. The game reserve, which is today 4,875 sq km (after an
extension was made to include Chief’s Island was given the Tawana royal name, Moremi. Groups subject to the Tawana inhabited the area and in the long run San communities were removed, but especially in the earlier years of the reserve, key members of the San (BaSarwa) group were mobilised in favour of it and employed by park authorities. The Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society also employed some of the Yei (Wayeyi, BaYei) people, especially those who came from the vicinity of the park.

A central argument of this book is that the Moremi Park was not a direct product of colonial conservationism and the actions of the colonial state. In the establishment of Moremi, Africans had a role in the shaping of the Okavango landscape. They were not excluded and marginalised, as was the case with the creation of Kruger National Park in South Africa. The Okavango wildlife conservation project became centred on local people and was driven by them.

My book will contribute to the historiography in a number of respects. First, while there is good ecological literature on this area, there is very little historical writing on the relationship between people, animals, and conservation. Second, the book charts the involvement of different groups of African people in the formation and management of a game reserve, and also shows the divisions between them. Third, it shows that the white population also had very divergent interests in this area, and that it can be assumed that colonial officials always favoured game conservation. Fourth, it analyses the complex changes in management and local participation as the area became a significant centre for tourism. At the same time, this case study can be used at a broader level to contribute to the comparative history of trans-boundary national parks in Africa. In a wider sense I also wish to contribute to the debates on the increasingly contested notions of conservation and development, especially among indigenous people.

My research also moves away from the ethnographic style that has dominated the Khoesan climate of southern African research and broader global research. There is an emerging consciousness of the necessity to exercise sensitivity towards ‘the researched’, more so if they are members of marginalized groups. This obviously can mean many things. The position adopted in this study is that this research should enhance our collective understanding of the cultural histories of the San (BaSarwa) communities of the Ngamiland region by highlighting both their uniqueness and areas of cultural interrelatedness in Botswana’s changing cultural landscape. Therefore by means of this research I aim as far as possible to present a reading of the history of the communities in ways that also reflects their authorship.

3. Community Management and Moremi

In discussions of wildlife conservation there is now an extensive literature on community management. It is conceived as a new development, and a shift away from the old preservationist policies pursued by colonial states. Yet the establishment of the Moremi game park shows a similar set of players and interests were involved more than forty years ago: chiefs, hunters, white adventurers and international organizations. Moremi’s history shows that the concept of local people managing wildlife resources in newly created reserves
did not begin with the recent flood of interest in community management. This history may distinguish it from many other national parks in Africa, but also suggests that some re-examination of the history of other parks would be valuable. An exploration of this diverse group of actors’ ideas about wildlife conservation, and an investigation of the ways in which they mobilised and sought to find common ground can make an important contribution to an understanding of the relationship between local and global discourses and practices of conservation.

Several aspects of the colonial context in Bechuanaland were exceptional in the southern African context and help to explain why the interests of chiefs, white adventurers and others could converge in the early 1960s. First, in the areas of Bechuanaland reserved for African occupation, the tribal authorities had the legal right to benefit from wildlife and some rights of management. Although game was the ultimate property of the state, they derived some financial benefit from hunting concessions because a proportion of the concessionaires’ fees accrued to the tribal coffers. This was unusual since, in other parts of the region, the Game Laws enacted at the turn of the century not only made all wildlife the property of the state, but also denied African authorities any right to benefit from or manage game\(^{15}\). Second, Bechuanaland did not have the same strict laws and practices of racial segregation as other countries in the region. In the northern part of the country, which is my focus here, many local settlers married African women, and some came to identify themselves not as European or white, but as BaTawana. Local ideas about conservation were debated in the context of these specific property relations with wildlife, and an exceptional degree of cross-racial communication.

4. National Parks vs. Game Reserves: the Botswana Context

In this context I should add that the terms ‘park’ and ‘reserve’ are used interchangeably in this book. Moremi was not started as a national park and was not proclaimed by the highest legislative body of the country. But it has since been managed like a national park, serving the same purpose as the Chobe National Park, aiming at attracting tourists and capital, and in many ways bears comparison with the national parks in South Africa. No hunting was allowed in the Moremi Game Reserve\(^{16}\). Generally, game reserves and national parks do not enjoy the same status since the latter receives ‘exclusive’ protection. Officially Chobe is a national park because it was declared by national statute on state land. The Moremi Game Reserve is situated on Tribal Land, but in practice there is little difference in their degree of protection: in both, there is no hunting, no removal of specimens and there are controls on tourists and game viewing\(^{17}\). According to the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act (1992), both national parks and game reserves resources fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP). However, in game reserves only certain species are protected and not the vegetation. In national parks, the whole habitat is protected. In the case of Moremi therefore its vegetation does not fall under the DWNP’s direct control. Although in theory it is possible to hunt in a game reserve with the appropriate permit, and prospecting and mining are easier than in a national park, but practically that is not the case with Moremi, which is managed as an ecological unit. In
the recently published *Okavango Delta Management Plan*, Botswana Parks confirms that the Moremi Game Reserve (now managed by DWNP) provides for total preservation and protection of wildlife resources while sustainable utilization of wildlife resources is encouraged in WMAs\(^{18}\).

Given the context in which Moremi was conceived by the FCS, it would have qualified as a national park had it not been established on Tribal Land. According to the Act, it is possible to declare Moremi a national park. However, in terms of the Botswana wildlife conservation legislation, the President can only declare Moremi a national park if the BaTawana agree to it\(^{19}\). The BaTawana, however, want to retain at least legal control of the land.

### 5. Tourism in the Okavango Delta and Moremi

The Moremi Game Reserve become of great importance to Botswana for wildlife viewing and photographic safari tourism as well as commercial hunting in the vicinity. The Okavango Delta is now a major tourist destination for visitors to northern Botswana and provides employment and income which has transformed Ngamiland from an essentially pre-capitalist traditional livestock economy. The importance of wildlife in the history of the Ngamiland district therefore cannot be underrated, and the growth has been surprisingly fast, over about four decades. Today Maun, the gateway to the Okavango Delta, is the operational centre for both tourism and hunting, and the base for safari companies\(^{20}\). There is hardly a business in Maun that is not somehow connected to tourism and this is largely the result of the establishment of Moremi in the Okavango. In 1995, Ngamiland cattle were infected with lung disease and in 1996 the government decreed that they all had to be killed. As in the case of foot-and-mouth disease, the Botswana government requires the killing of all cattle in an infected area as one of the best ways to protect Botswana’s European Union beef market\(^{21}\). Therefore when I began conducting fieldwork in 1997, the Ngamiland community had no cattle in an area where there was hardly any cultivation yet Maun was booming as a result of tourism. According to recent research today wildlife and tourism employs about 60% of the total labour force in Ngamiland\(^{22}\). Botswana tourism studies have noted that the growth of tourism in the Okavango Delta has stimulated the development of a variety of modern infrastructure and facilities such as luxury hotels, safari lodges and camps, shopping centres, travel agencies, the Maun airport and airstrips. Other additions to the new developments since independence are the Maun Educational Park and the Nhabe Museum\(^{23}\). The CBNRM projects have also promoted income-generating natural resource-based activities including the collection of reeds, thatching grass, wild fruits, medicinal plants and fishing and basket-making.

Tourism plays an important role in the diversification of the Botswana economy and is therefore considered a long-term component in its development. By 2000, it had become the second largest economic sector in the country after diamonds and according to Mbaiwa many of Botswana’s holiday tourists visit the Okavango Delta\(^{24}\). Therefore, in pursuing low-volume-high-cost tourism, the government has produced a range of high quality policy statements and development frameworks which have assisted in guiding the fledging tourism
industry. The Botswana Tourism Organization has been tasked with marketing and promoting Botswana as a tourism investment and in their portfolio the Okavango Delta and the Chobe are presented as brand assets, and global destinations of choice.

Notes


3) The Kgalagadi Trans-Frontier (37,000 sq km) is a shared protected area and jointly managed as a single ecological unit since 2002 to allow for wildlife to move freely along migration routes. See Travel Companion: Kgalagadi/Central. 2008. Gaborone: Botswana Tourism Board. 18.

4) The wildlife and wilderness in the north of Botswana have met the celebrity status of a destination attracting visitors such as Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton (from the Hollywood film industry); Dereck and Beverly Joubert (National Geographic Explorers); Bill Clinton, former US President and Hillary Clinton, current USA Secretary of State; Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands; renowned wildlife commentator Roger Attenborough; and US First Lady Michelle Obama and her daughters, to name a few. See Mmegi online, 7 June 2011 and http://chobe.botswana.co.za/celebrities-in-chobe; Bajanala: A Tourist Guide to Botswana, 2001: 10–12 and Discover Botswana. 2003, 2009, 2011 and 2012. Gaborone: Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism: 39.


7) Botswana official records use both Ngamiland and North West District of Botswana simultaneously.


10) It was founded as the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland in 1962 and became the Fauna Conservation Society after the establishment of the game reserve.


12) The San or BaSarwa are the indigenous minority people of southern Africa and in some literature are still referred to as Bushmen. The Botswana official records use the term BaSarwa, although academics tend to prefer San as do educated San. However the San people in Botswana are divided in different language groups, for example, Bugakhwe, G|ui, G||ana, Shua, Naro, ||Anikhw, Tsi’xa and Ju’|hoansi. This study will use San and BaSarwa interchangeably and where necessary identify a language group as Bugakhwe or ||Anikhw.


15) On game laws in the region, see, for example, Carruthers, The Kruger National Park: 89–101. B. Jones and M. Murphree have also noted that in Zimbabwe and Namibia, blacks were alienated from wildlife as a resource by law: see The Evolution of Policy on Community Conservation in Namibia and Zimbabwe. In D. Hulme and M. Murphree (eds.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: 41.


20) See the Leechor and Fabricus report on Developing Tourism in Botswana.

21) See details on cattle lung diseases in Ngamiland in D. Malepa and C. Nkala, 2005. Summary of the Report on Environmental Risk Assessment Study of CBPP Burial Sites in Ngamiland District. Gaborone: Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism: 2 and Daily News, 18 July 2003. 5,200 herds of cattle were later introduced during the restocking exercise. Mmegi on line, 7 July 2011 reported about 45,000 head of cattle in Zone 6 (Matsiloje) were to be killed in efforts to contain foot and mouth disease.


revenue generated by tourism and highlight tourism economic value in Ngamiland.


26) Travel Companion: 1–2; From Botswana Tourism Board to Tourism Organisation. The Voice, Gaborone, 11 June 2010 and BIDPA and World Bank, Prospects for Export Diversification in Botswana: x.
Map 1  Ngamiland (Northwest District). Main research area. Source: Taylor, 2000
Map 2  Botswana National Parks and Game Reserves. Source: DWNP, 1994
Photo 1  Giraffes of Moremi-Okavango. Source: Mbaiwa, 2007

Photo 2  Elephants of Moremi-Okavango. Source: KCS, 2010
Photograph 3  Okavango biodiversity. Source: Mbaiwa, 2007
Chapter 1

The History of Wildlife Conservation and Management in Africa and in the Context of BOTSWANA

1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the background literature and introduces the Moremi situation. It is widely accepted that there was a link between ‘sporting’ hunting and imperialism, which went through several stages of development, tending increasingly toward preservation of ‘pristine’ reserves, while African hunting was increasingly excluded and delegitimized.

Moremi, however, shows interesting differences from this pattern. The area is ethnically diverse, though dominated by the BaTawana minority. Hunting has always been an important part of the establishment and maintenance of authority by this group. The Bechuanaland Protectorate was unusual for its low level of colonial intervention, relying mainly on the major chiefs for administration and indeed local legislation. These chiefs had regulated hunting since the nineteenth century, when game had been an important economic resource, and in the twentieth century they followed broadly conservationist policies.

2. The Evolution of Game Conservation

In this chapter, I will analyse some of the literature on colonial conservationism as a means of contextualising the Moremi case (Map 1.1). John Mackenzie identifies the origins of game conservation in southern Africa at the end of the nineteenth century when hunting and natural history ‘metropolitan elites’ expressed alarm at the extent of game depletion caused by over hunting and rinderpest 1). Mackenzie has shown the importance of the ‘hunt’ or ‘sport’ in the ideology of late nineteenth century imperialism, shifting hunting towards the centre of imperial adventure. Explorers, prospectors, missionaries and pioneers, as well as the majority of colonial administrators and European settlers were hunters. In their quest for ivory, hunters were the marker for white advance in central and southern Africa.

According to Mackenzie during this period, ‘gentlemen’ hunters and ‘sportsmen’ like Fredrick Selous, Denis Lyell or wealthy international hunters like Theodore ‘Teddy’ Roosevelt pursued hunting from a philosophical or ideological standpoint. They indulged in hunting as a symbol of white racial dominance, a marker of ‘masculine training’ and the moral value of ‘sportsmanship’. The growing interest in natural history enabled hunters to justify their hunting on scientific grounds: the collecting of trophies and natural history specimens, as well as the establishment of records 2). Hunters combined pleasure with profit from the sales of skins and trophies, which were displayed in Britain and other parts of Europe.
Prominent museums such as the Natural History Museum in London and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC competed with each other for stuffed specimens shot by celebrity hunters like Selous and Roosevelt. Big-game hunters such as R.G. Cumming, Selous and Lyell are counted among the most prolific writers on African wildlife and their works formed ‘classics of hunting literature’ that captivated the reading public. The hunter-writers were ‘adept at turning their exploits to literary and financial gain’. African hunting books, supplying the most spectacular evidence of that destruction, were sold in the United States as well as Europe.

Mackenzie and others argue that hunting became the symbol of European power and African access to wildlife was progressively reduced. The hunt became the preserve of famous travellers, high-ranking officers, politicians, royalty and aristocrats. There was a need to maintain hunting as a pleasure pursuit. Conservation was promoted in part because hunters came close to destroying the wealth of species in the African landscape. Elite hunters tried increasingly to establish a monopoly over game resources, discouraging subsistence and commercial hunting. In Kenya the gentlemen hunters organised a trade association, the East African Professional Hunters Association, exclusively for ‘sportsmen’—wealthy clients who contracted their services as safari guides, organisers and entertainers.

In the Cape, Grove argues that ‘essentially aesthetically derived environmental thinking’ dates from the mid-nineteenth century. The idea was promoted by John Croumbie Brown. This was first connected to the preservation of plant species and the protection of forests. Deforestation had been linked to a decrease in rainfall in India, where forests were protected partly for fear of famine. This led to possibly the first state reserves in Africa with protection of the Knysna and Tsitsikamma forests. The disappearance of large mammals in the Cape from hunting was also noted at the time; elephants in the Cape were practically exterminated in the early nineteenth century and by the 1850s the hunting frontier had moved to the Transvaal. The Afrikaner state in the Transvaal also tried to regulate hunting.

In the United States, ideas about the preservation of areas of scenic beauty were mobilised to promote American national feeling and to emphasize the distinction between North America and Europe. According to Carruthers game reserves were established in both British and Afrikaner states of South Africa from the 1880s for slightly different reasons. The Umfolozi, one of the four set up in Zululand (after the British annexation to Natal in 1897), was specifically mandated to protect the remaining white rhino. In 1898, the Transvaal government established the Sabi Reserve (an area later greatly extended) in the east of the Republic where there was a wide range of animal species. Game reserves were initially delicate entities, limited in scope and aspiration. Another limitation of the game reserve from the modern environmentalist standpoint was the absence of an ecological grounding that recognised the value of the whole range of species. The definition of species such as leopards, lion, cheetah, hyenas, jackals, wild dogs and reptiles such as the crocodile as vermin to some extent traversed the boundaries of the game reserves. Similarly, the American mountain lion and wolf were attacked in their National Parks. In some cases in Africa, animals which attacked man or their crops could be shot inside a Reserve.

Conservationist concerns were transplanted to central Africa with the earliest administrators. Harry Johnston, the first British Commissioner arrived in colonial Malawi in 1891 as a...
keen conservationist. His official report of the administration of British Central Africa in 1894 included a summary account of the fauna and an assessment of its economic value. Johnston reported on the ivory exported from present-day Zambia and Malawi by Arab traders. In his opinion Africans and Arabs should not be allowed to use guns and ammunition but Europeans could hunt on licence. He also believed in protecting hunting marshes and forests.

In the late nineteenth century, a variety of organizations espoused both hunting and preservation in reserves of big game species including the exclusive Boone and Crockett Club in the United States and the Transvaal Game Protection Association. The 1900 Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa planned legislative action by the imperial powers. Pressure groups of ‘penitent butchers’, for example the Society for the Preservation of Wild Fauna of the Empire (SPWFE 1903), ‘consisted of the cream of the colonial establishment’ and succeeded in spreading the ethos of conservation as a distinctive quality of European empires. The immediate concern was to prevent any more extinction of large mammals and to ensure no depredation of elephant populations would occur in east Africa along the lines of the southern African experience.

On the ground, the form protection took reflected the established European pattern and the perceptions of empire. Game regulations were designed to limit access to hunting, targeting African hunting in particular as cruel and unsustainable, and an example of the colonial tendency to attribute blame for faunal depredations to indigenous people. Animal snares were confiscated from Africans and they were forbidden by game law to use what were considered barbaric mode of hunting. The rules for ‘white’ hunting included the exclusive use of firearms. Historians such as Mackenzie, Carruthers, Beinart and Steinhart have suggested that racial prejudice and ethno-centrism influenced many white hunters who saw themselves as the only ‘true sportsmen’ in deprecating African skill in tracking and bush-craft and deploring their lack of interest in the aesthetics of hunting as a sport. The European poacher must have influenced official perceptions of indigenous techniques. Game Reserves would also emerge in part from colonial policy in which rigidly separate areas were designated for settlement and ‘nature’.

Carruthers, who explores the conservation trends in the Transvaal, links the establishment of the Kruger National Park in South Africa in the 1920s both with English-speaking conservationists and growing class consciousness among Afrikaners. The National Park therefore aimed to weld together different cultural groups and create a common identity between the English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking whites. Afrikaner nationalism could also mobilise poor Afrikaners through a new sentimental revision of history and the idea of ‘volkspark’. According to Carruthers: ‘Whereas before Union poor Afrikaners were often accused of hunting game to supply meat to urban markets, now their role was recast. Having been a divisive class issue, game saving served to unite factions and classes within Afrikaner society.’ In the process whites excluded Africans and more systematically dominated the African landscape. The National Park constitutes yet another strand in the consolidation of white interests over blacks in the struggle between black and white over land and labour. The white heritage was commemorated through the National Park and sentimental and aesthetic views of wildlife were promoted. Carruthers further argues that early commercial
hunting by whites was ignored and the functions that the Africans had earlier played in hunting as partners of whites were in this way completely overshadowed by their new roles as poachers or labourers\(^{19}\). The idea of the National Park encompassed the feelings of possession, and trusteeship over the African landscape, as a special kind of Eden.

In Southern Rhodesia, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) game laws were ‘sufficiently elastic’, according to the Surveyor-General, for a ‘new country’\(^{20}\). Under pressure from commercial farmers, the BSAC allowed unlimited hunting on Crown Land and private property. White farmers were given special game licenses for ‘organised game slaughter’ and they saw hunting as a right\(^{21}\). Gradually there was a shift towards a state and settler monopoly on hunting combined with a desire to disarm Africans. In 1926, the settler government of Southern Rhodesia established the Matopo (Matobo) National Park, followed by the demarcation of Wankie (Hwange), Victoria Falls, Kazuma Pan, and the Gonarezhou in the 1930s\(^{22}\). In this decade also a new generation of colonial administrators took over wildlife conservation from the earlier ex-soldiers and ex-hunters. These technocrats believed in clearing National Parks of almost any sign of human interaction to restore an Africa that never was. But wholesale game slaughter continued on private land to combat tsetse and to clear land for British ex-combatants on subsidized settlement schemes after the Second World War\(^{23}\).

These developments both shaped and reflected wider imperial initiatives. The 1930 SPWFE expedition publicised an apocalyptic vision of game depletion through over-hunting, disease and the expansion of cultivation. A ‘permanent solution’ was demanded, a state within a state, requiring total separation and total protection from humans. In imperial circles conservation was becoming an ‘almost unopposable creed’\(^{24}\). The 1933 Agreement for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa contained a provision for the creation of National Parks, the key to International Conservation Policy\(^{25}\). In Kenya, the post-Second World War era saw the re-emergence of a conservation effort focusing on the creation of national parks as the enterprise of wildlife and wilderness preservation strategies. As in South Africa, Kenya’s new programme was modelled on the experiences of the United States conservation movement and aimed at the preservation of wildlife and wilderness habitats required for their survival\(^{26}\). Like the Yellowstone Park in the Unites States, National Parks in Africa were considered ‘total sanctuaries’; nature preserves, free from human interference. The Parks were envisioned as wilderness areas, pristine and undisturbed. The focus was on the preservation of total environments or habitats within what were imagined to be self-contained ecological systems, rather than the conservation of game animals as a natural resource.

The historiography also expands on African opposition to the formation of exclusive colonial reserves. Ranger has shown that Africans struggled to resist eviction from Matobo park and appealed variously on the basis of Mwari cult shrines there, on the area’s role as a focus for Ndebele and cultural nationalism (due to the presence of the grave of the state founder, Mzilikazi) and to the promises made by Cecil Rhodes at the famous ‘indabas’ after the Chimurenga uprising in 1896\(^{27}\). Matobo illustrates the effects on Africans of changing conservationists’ theories. In 1926, 224,000 acres were demarcated. The Director of Agriculture, Eric Nobbs, initially saw African kraals as part of an idealisation of the landscape so a small pocket of African farming remained. But Charles Murray, the agricultural scientist,
wanted evictions to protect watersheds. From the mid–1940s, Murray’s plans were put into effect with the result that the 1949 Native Affairs Department feared ‘open defiance, amounting to rebellion’\textsuperscript{28}). The Matopos became a centre of African opposition that found focus in the ‘Sofasonke’ society (‘we will die together’) in the 1940s and the nationalist movement of the 1960s.

Game Reserves formed an important part of the colonial redefinition of space and land use. Sir Charles Eliot in Kenya saw colonialism as ending pre-European chaos\textsuperscript{29}). This made the justification of white alienation and control of land easier. The colonial image of the Maasai as wasteful, violent and reliant purely on cattle enabled the British colonial administrator Fredrick Lugard to depict them as ‘an obstacle to peaceful development’\textsuperscript{30}). The energies of the Kenyan Game Department were initially divided between serving a nascent tourist industry and the protection of farmland from vermin\textsuperscript{31}). Game utilization and management could be financially remunerative: East African governments sold £665,000 of culled ivory from 1926 to 1935. Conservation at this stage was paid little more than lip service. But colonial views of the Maasai facilitated the prioritisation of wildlife protection on Maasai rangelands\textsuperscript{32}). While reserves were not the major motive for alienation of Maasai land, it is striking that some of the most important East African National Parks, such as Amboseli and Mara in Kenya, and Serengeti and Ngongoro in Tanzania were developed on land they had occupied.

The creation of game reserves became an element in colonial control of Africa’s resources of land, water and animals. Between the 1920s and 1940s in South Africa the veterinary discourse was preoccupied with enforcing a broadly spelt out policy of segregating wildlife from domestic animals. There was a call for eradicating certain species of wildlife for fear of disease such as foot and mouth and trypanosomosis; diseases which were disadvantageous to the ranchers’ stock. South Africa’s prestigious veterinary department played a role in trying to eradicate rinderpest by extending its influence in the 1940s to an anti-rinderpest campaign in east Africa. The attitude embodied in reducing the population of animals such as buffalo associated with transmission of foot and mouth sometimes brought about conflicts between veterinarians and conservationists. There was a ‘highly charged relationship’ between wildlife management and animal disease control management on the need for wild life to be segregated in national parks as was demonstrated by the ‘bitter exchange’ of letters between Steven-Hamilton of the Kruger National Park and the officials at the veterinary service\textsuperscript{33}). Similar conflicts were played out in northern Botswana.

The gradual transformation from the rifle to the camera was part of a new age of tourism, made possible by the motor car and air travel\textsuperscript{34}). That certain ecosystems were underrepresented in the National Parks which were created is a reflection not only of the colonial idea of what sort of Africa should be protected, but also of what tourists wanted to see, i.e. large mammals and birds\textsuperscript{35}). Bunn observes an obsession with the art of wildlife photography in the 1930s. Individuals such as P.W. Willis, awarded the administrative contract for photographing the animals of the Kruger National Park marketed his artwork internationally, in magazines like The Field, at exhibitions, and in calendars\textsuperscript{36}). These outlets were new places through which to advertise African nature and reshape views of it. The philosophy of wildlife preservation was increasingly based on a new economic rationale.
linked to wildlife tourism.

By the 1950s, the new conservation strategy of creating National Parks in Kenya posed a direct challenge to the Game Department’s monopoly of control over the hunting. In formulating a new conservation consensus, control of national parks was vested in a Board of Trustees through legislation. The Royal National Parks of Kenya with its own staff of senior (white) wardens (former ‘gentlemen’ hunters and safari guides), and subordinate (black) rangers operated outside the varying policies of government. Conservation created a tension. ‘Organized poaching’, especially of elephant and rhinoceros for ivory and horn, and the marketing of the trophies through illegal network of smuggling and trafficking became the responsibility of this new body-national parks board. It spelled the end of African hunting. In colonial Zimbabwe and South Africa, white National Park authorities also gradually assumed wider powers as the protector of ‘our heritage’, denying blacks access as visitors and excluding them from power, authority and influence in decision making.

The expansion of tourism in Africa continued in the 1960s when transport improved and commercial tour operators, like the United Touring Company, emerged. The safari empire was seen through its offices at Nairobi, Mombasa, Malindi, Kampala and Arusha and with outstanding stations at Samburu, Ngongoro and Lake Manyara. The exclusive pattern of deluxe private safaris slowly gave way to more mass tourism. Publicity about African wildlife was greatly increased by hunting literature and film. It is in this period that individuals like George Michael of South Africa emerged as a professional hunter, film producer and a naturalist who accompanied parties of rich men on shooting trips (including the Okavango region). The story of Kenya and its wildlife was publicised through Joy Adamson’s book *Born Free* and the subsequent film. Through Joy Adamson’s appeals for donations from the international community, she helped to establish one of the most popular parks - Samburu Reserve - in Kenya.

In the 1960s, an increasing world interest in wildlife was marked by strong advocacy in international conservation agencies such as the International Union of the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) encouraging the ‘strict nature reserves’ status of National Parks to be maintained. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was in favour of conservation efforts in the developing world. IUCN was a UNESCO initiative. But the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) very strongly favoured utilization and not strict protection. International discourse on wildlife was marked by conferences held in the US (Seattle, 1962), Europe (Athens, 1953 and Warsaw, 1960) and Africa (Belgian Congo, 1953 and Arusha, 1961) to monitor progress in the protection of the natural environment. Broader debates on conserving ‘natural heritage’ centred on ethical, aesthetic, scientific and economic issues. There was a call for specialized knowledge and trained manpower for guardianship in the African Parks in particular. New sources of finance became available for conservation development as well as related ecological, zoological and biological research. At the beginning of the 1960s, a group of distinguished scientists, conservationists and businessmen including Peter Scott and Julian Huxley founded yet another organization that would support conservation efforts - the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Among the key members of WWF were the Director-General of the British Nature Conservancy, E.M. Nicholson, Bernhardt Grzimek, Director of the
Frankfurt Zoological Gardens and international personalities like Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, who became the President of the WWF UK Appeal. The leading advocate of ecology in the British Empire, E.B. Worthington, as well as Eugene Black, President of World Bank and Presidents of Deutsche Bank and Shell International Petroleum also became associated with WWF. Donors were mobilised into accepting the trusteeship of wildlife and to hand on to posterity, as source of wonder and interest, knowledge and enjoyment. Ian MacPhail (UK) was engaged to plan and conduct the campaign to guard against cruelty to wildlife. During its first three years the WWF raised and donated $1.9 million to conservation projects. Part of its first grants went to Kenya’s Masaai Mara Game Reserve and the Ngorongoro project. The recently founded WWF became of particular importance in the history of Moremi in the early 1960s.

3. Local Involvement in Conservation-related Activity: A Humanistic Perspective?

Since the 1970s, the role of local participation has been an important focus of both rural development programmes and academic work on natural resource management. Many have noted that the development and conservation policies pursued by colonial and post-colonial governments and their ‘experts’ have not been successful in many respects. Brockington has distilled much of this literature in his critique of ‘fortress conservation’. He argues that the dominant approach to wildlife conservation in Africa has had more to do with Western views of the environment than with what is appropriate for African people and herds. He notes particularly the continuities between the colonial and post-colonial eras by focusing on the Tanzanian government’s decision to evict people and cattle from the Mkomazi Game Reserve in 1988. Brockington also assesses competing explanations of the environmental dynamics of the reserve, and shows the negative effects of exclusion on local populations and the regional economy.

The implications are that greater attention should be paid to the problem of local involvement in conservation-related activity. The current trend is towards representation of ‘all’ interested parties, that is the government, national parks boards, tourist entrepreneurs and the local community. Zimbabwe made a start in 1975 with its local wildlife boards and owner’s control of wildlife on private land. The CAMPFIRE proposal (Communal Area Management Plan for Indigenous Resources) grew out of the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Act in an attempt to create a social link with its economic and ecological objectives. It was envisaged that residents in communal lands could control the use of natural resources on a communal basis, within limits laid down by the government. A similar proposal was considered by governments in Zambia and Botswana for Luangwa valley and in the Chobe/Okavango region respectively. The Botswanan government’s experience in Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) as formalised in the 1990s Land Use and Development Plan for Kwando and Okavango Wildlife Management Areas and the Management Plans for Controlled Hunting Areas allocated to communities in Ngamiland. The CAMPFIRE-style approach has been hailed internationally for its participatory approach and its innovative strategies for confronting the developmental and environmental problems.
of some of Africa’s most marginal rural areas through the promotion of local control over
wildlife management\textsuperscript{54}).

Local participation’s utility for development and conservation has drawn enthusiastic
praise in certain quarters and wary criticism from others. Some have questioned whether
participatory methods have achieved both community empowerment and conservation
goals\textsuperscript{55}). Alexander and McGregor have used the case of Nkayi and Lupane districts in
Zimbabwe to explore why such a potentially positive programme went so badly wrong.
Their case study raises points of wider significance for comparable initiatives and they
argue that local histories and institutional politics need careful examination\textsuperscript{56}). Duffy has
shown how the politically controversial policy agenda of wildlife utilization by local
communities and commercial farmers is part of the wider realm of global environmental
politics\textsuperscript{57}).

This discussion of some key new sources on the history of wildlife conservation in
Africa prepares the route for an analysis of the establishment of Moremi reserve. At certain
points there are similarities to the pattern outlined above, but there are also major differences.
In order to understand these differences, it is important to provide a general social and
political context for the developments in northern Botswana during the 1950s and 1960s.

4. Settlement and Political Control of Okavango

The Okavango Delta environment shaped settlement in the area. On the one hand, the
wetland area of the Delta sets a sharp contrast to the generally arid lands of the rest of the
country, which are dominated by the Kalahari sands (Map 1.1). On the other hand, the
abundance of the tsetse fly shielded the region against large-scale habitation and livestock
numbers. Settlement was thus relatively sparse and tended to concentrate along stretches
of permanent water and away from areas infested by the tsetse fly and the parasitic
trypanosomes. In the late 1950s, at the time when the Moremi reserve was first conceived,
the population of Ngamiland as a whole, calculated on the basis of tax returns, was said to
be about 41,600\textsuperscript{58}). The great majority were Africans, representing one-seventh of the total
population of the Protectorate, with a sprinkling of whites mainly in the administrative
headquarters of Maun\textsuperscript{59}).

The Okavango River rises in the highlands of Angola and enters Ngamiland in the
north-western part of Botswana via the Caprivi Strip\textsuperscript{60}). The Okavango River system is the
third largest in southern Africa. Its flow depends more on the amount of precipitation in
the Angolan highlands than in Botswana itself. The river divides and its channels fan out
forming an inland delta of about 15,000 square kilometres. The countless islands between
the waterways give rise to several diverse ecosystems which in turn form the resource base
not only for large populations of African mammals, birds and other small animals but also
for the livelihood of people.

Ethnically, Ngamiland presents a mosaic of cultures and languages, each placing
importance on different resources. Aside from the Tawana there are Yei (Wayei, BaYei),
HaMbukushu (BaMbukushu), Dzeriku (BaGcereku), Bugakhwe, ||Anikhwe and Ts’ixa\textsuperscript{61}). The Yei, HaMbukushu, and Dzeriku, are Bantu speaking people who have traditionally
engaged in mixed economies of millet and sorghum agriculture, fishing, hunting and the collection of wild plant foods and limited pastoralism. Such groups are also found in northern Namibia and southern Angola. The Bugakhwe (Khwe, River Bushmen), ||Anekhwé (Xanekwe, River Bushmen, Swamp Bushmen) and Ts’ixa (Ts’exa, Khwe, Sand Bushmen) are people of San origin who have traditionally practised hunting, the collection of wild plant foods and fishing. The Bugakhwe utilised both forest and riverine resources while the ||Anekhwé mostly focused on riverine resources. The Ts’ixa were confined to the Mababe depression and utilised the Savuti forest resources.

For centuries before the colonial era, southern Africa was inhabited by hunter-gatherers. They were the earliest inhabitants of the Okavango Delta, and survive there to the present. There is no universally accepted term for the earliest modern inhabitants of southern Africa and historically marginalized people of Khoesan-speaking origins. International scholarly work adopted the term San in the 1960s, but recently there has been partial reversion to Bushmen because San is also an imposed name and is not always a clear category. The Government of Botswana still considers the use of such term derogatory and the term BaSarwa is used officially to refer to people of Bushman/San/Khoesan origin. In 2001, southern African San language, oral history and education specialists challenged the use of term Bushman as discriminative and negative label. The standardization of names and Khoesan languages is still subject to on going debate. In this book the terms BaSarwa and San will be used interchangeably since the Bugakhwe people of Khwai (the focus study group) refer to themselves variously as Bugakhwe, San or BaSarwa. Since this book is on the history of the establishment of Moremi Game Reserve, the discussion of BaSarwa communities will largely focus on the Bugakhwe, some of whom lived in the reserve, and the area now called Khwai.

The Okavango Delta has been under the political control of the BaTswana (Tswana group) since the early nineteenth century and they have been the dominant group over all the groups in Ngamiland, including the San. The BaTswana, however, have traditionally lived on the edges of the delta, practicing crop cultivation and large-scale pastoralism. In 1785 a major split took place in the Ngwato chiefdom, one of the well-established Tswana speaking groups to the south. A quarrel developed between two brothers, Khama 1 and Tawana, over the succession to chieftainship. Tawana seceded and founded his own state in Ngamiland where his followers took the name BaTswana, while the Khama’s people retained BaNgwato. The BaTswana still consider themselves BaNgwato by origin and use the Ngwato totem, phuti (duiker), and readily accept the seniority of BaNgwato whom they occasionally consult on important matters.

As a Tswana subgroup, they considered themselves superior to the BaSarwa, BaYei and BaKgalagadi living in the region. Although they were a comparatively small group, because of their strong political and administrative system which included monarchy, as well as courts of laws and an economy based upon large scale animal husbandry, the BaTswana were able to dominate the people they found already settled in Ngamiland with little difficulty. The Tawana chief became the paramount chief in the region, with other ethnic groups incorporated into the Tswana political structure. Such groups were generally organized into small-scale, independent settlements. Although the BaYei were the most
numerous people of the region, when Livingstone visited Lake Ngami in 1849, the BaTawana had claimed all the land southwards to Ghanzi, northwards to the Mababe Depression and Gabamukuni area, and eastwards to Boteti. At the time of BaTawana arrival in Ngamiland, they found BaKgalagadi groups in the Kgwebe hills, south of the delta. Kgwebe was considered good for pastures and water, which was found in water holes. Although the Okavango had abundant surface water, the BaTawana and BaKgalagadi refrained from settling in the delta for fear of malaria and tsetse. BaKgalagadi, moved to the delta in the nineteenth century, partly as a result of the incursions of the BaTawana and the Bakololo of Sebetwane who had fled the nineteenth century Shakan wars in the Zulu area of what became South Africa. Between 1820 and 1840 a large number of BaKgalagadi settled on both sides of the delta as far north as the Tsodilo hills and Shakawe, and Gabamukuni to the northeast.

During the mid-eighteenth century, Bantu-speaking people from the middle Zambezi moved into the area from the north. The expansion of the Lozi State in north-western Zambia in the 1750s caused the Yei, and Hambukushu to migrate southwards from their homes along the Zambezi River into the Okavango-Chobe region. The BaYei, who came first are credited with introducing the traditional hand-carved canoe (mokoro), which has become a common feature in the Okavango Delta because of the tourism industry. The migration of the HaMbukushu from Katima Mulilo on the Kwando/Zambezi into Ngamiland occurred during the reign of the Tawana chief Moremi II (1876–1890). There has been continuous migration from the Caprivi Strip and Angola to Ngamiland since that time.

The German-Herero war of 1904–1905 (in present Namibia) resulted in OvaHerero and Mbanderu refugees entering Botswana in considerable numbers. Most of them joined groups already settled around Makakung and Sehithwa and although they brought virtually no cattle with them, they gradually built up their herds by serving the BaTawana and they are today amongst the area’s largest cattle owners. Their traditional system provided a strong link with their original homes and when Namibia became independent some returned to their land of birth. Today the settlements are becoming less distinct ethnically and culturally.

In the Tawana hierarchical system of government, the whole area under their thralldom was divided into ‘counties’ with senior Tawana in charge of each as chief’s representatives. These were subdivided and were nominally under the charge of the senior local headman. Especially in Yei areas these would be Yei men of royal descent. The chief’s representatives would supervise their areas and ensure that Tawana property such as cattle, ivory, and furs, was properly guarded. Several times a year they would visit their ‘counties’; then the local Yei headman had to give a reckoning of the property under their charge, and take instructions for the following months. As a result of Tawana expansion, many Yei and Kgalagadi fled to the remoter areas of northern delta and to Shakawe to escape bondage. To make the administration effective, at the beginning of the twentieth century the Tawana began to station their own people in distant places such as Qangwa area to keep control. Although BaTawana imposed their rule on the subservient BaYei, BaKgalagadi and BaSarwa, unlike BaNgwato, they did not interfere too greatly in the traditional local social system.

The BaTawana lived mainly in one large central town, first located at Kgwebe, then
Toteng, then Tsau and finally they established Maun as their capital in 1915. The chief and the bulk of the population, including members of the royal family and other notables, moved there and it became the local centre for administration and cattle ranching. The town was divided into wards, the chief’s being in the centre and others surrounding it; wards of incorporated groups were usually at the greatest distance from the centre. Hunting was also of great importance to the Tawana, and in establishing relations of authority in the area. Before the 1920s, the BaTawana presence in the area of the delta itself, west of present-day Khwai, was largely through hunting parties. The BaSarwa acted as guides for these expeditions, as they knew the land best and they were paid in kind with items such as clothes and blankets. However, subject groups such as BaSarwa and BaYei were expected to surrender elephant tusks as *sehuba* (tribute) to the Tawana royalty. Symbolic tribute paid in the form of precious skins from carnivores like lions and leopards (considered royal animals), reinforced Tawana and Ngwato kingship. Also the select portions of game meat such as the brisket (tribute/sehuba) of a duiker or bush buck were presented periodically as gifts to the paramount chief. Honey could also be paid as tribute to the chief. On some occasions in the past, the Khwai, Mababe and Sankuyo people did not render hunting trophies as tribute but sold ivory and skins themselves to earn money and goods. The BaTawana chiefs asserted their presence more strongly in the 1920s by building a kraal at ‘old Khwai’, about 10 km west of where the present village of Khwai is. Built by regiments, including the BaSarwa, under chief Mathiba, that used to move around the whole region of Ngamiland and Chobe on hunting and tax collecting expeditions, it became known as *Mapako a ga Moremi*, after Mathiba’s successor. Moremi was a minor at the time of constructing this kraal, which enclosed houses that served as temporary residence for the royalty. Many of the elders in the village still remember where the Moremi’s camp was located and identify themselves as among the people who were grouped together with Hambukushu and Yei as subject people (*batlhanka*) to build Moremi’s kraal prior to the creation of Moremi Game Reserve. The visible thick poles of the buildings symbolized Tawana power in the region.

The ascendency of BaTawana control in northern Ngamiland coincided with the increased presence of the colonial government. Many of the elders in the village (at the time of the interviews) still remembered some of the young BaSarwa women who were taken to Maun and trained in the Tawana households; in other cases young attractive women were taken as concubines by the BaTawana men. Such was the frequency of concubinage with BaSarwa women in Ga-Tawana (Tawana land) and Ga-MmaNgwato (Ngwato land) that a Setswana proverb arose: ‘Mosarwa ke wa monna, yo monamagadi ke mosadi’ (‘Mosarwa is the male one, the female is our countrywoman’). In Ngamiland, some of the children became Tawana by right of descent through their father. Later a few men born of mothers of commoner status achieved status of importance within society. The Tawana rulers used them as advisors and they performed official political and social functions, which will be demonstrated later in the book.

Ngamiland has become increasingly diverse since independence in 1966. In the late 1960s and early 1970s over 4,000 HaMbukushu refugees from Angola were settled in the area around Etsha in the western Panhandle. Within the past 20 years many people from all over the Okavango have migrated to Maun, the headquarters of the district of Ngamiland,
and its success as a tourist centre has attracted foreign businesses. But up to the present, the region is still traditionally referred to as ‘Goo Tawana’, meaning Tawanaland and the population is often referred to as BaTawana. Although the modern state of Botswana makes no distinction between the ethnic groups in the country—all being referred to as BaTswana—the people of Ngamiland do have different cultural and economic interests, and speak different languages (Setswana or English serve as the lingua-franca.)

5. Historical Controls over Hunting and Wildlife

The review of the literature above has shown that there has long been contestation over the intellectual and ethical right to determine the future of Africa’s wildlife. Conservationists and colonial officials typically tried to down play the crucial importance of control of resources by African local communities. But Botswana is an unusual case. The peculiar status of its chiefs under colonial rule and land tenure system differentiates it from settler colonies. Even more than in colonial Malawi and Zambia, a policy of ‘indirect rule’ was implemented. Bechuanaland was annexed as a Protectorate, and the administration was generally cautious about upsetting traditional systems because the chiefs were understood ‘not to be desirous of parting with their rights of sovereignty’80). The task of governing Bechuanaland, a territory perceived to be poor in resources, was a secondary and burdensome undertaking, compared to others in southern and central Africa. Together with Swaziland and Basutoland (now Lesotho), Bechuanaland became the responsibility of the British High Commissioner to South Africa, residing in Cape Town81). In Bechuanaland, it became recognised official practice to encourage chiefs to use their traditional powers to make laws, rather than for the colonial government to legislate by enactment. As a result, chiefs on several occasions made their own laws for the protection of wildlife in their areas. Subsequent legislation provided for tribal treasuries for receiving the tax money from hunting licenses. The control and management of wildlife resources in African Reserves remained indigenous in orientation.

The administration of the Protectorate was organised at a provincial level under a Divisional Commissioner who reported to the Secretariat in Mafikeng. Provinces were divided into districts, each administered by a District Commissioner, assisted by District Officers and clerical staff. The District staff worked through the tribal authorities and with their assistance toured districts, held meetings with villagers and submitted their tour reports to the Secretariat82). Especially in Ngamiland, white officials were few in number and their duties were limited to controlling disorder, collecting revenue and introducing small-scale improvement projects. Within this colonial structure the chiefs were delegated the tasks of controlling their people, collecting tax and implementing changes introduced from above. The African Reserves (Map 1.2) were isolated from each other by distance and poor roads. Chiefs, as representatives of large tribal groupings, met with each other as the ‘Native’ Advisory Council at least once a year in Mafikeng to discuss a wide number of issues including hunting control.

It is against this background that we can understand the evolution of wildlife conservation in colonial Botswana. Clive Spinage, who has laid the foundation for research on the history
and evolution of the fauna conservation laws, observes that Botswana was an exception to
the rule in many other African countries: ‘…the Statutory game law introduced by the
Protectorate Administration applied to foreigners (i.e. Europeans) only, at the same time it
reinforced the customary (traditional) law’83). The chiefs introduced and enforced game laws
within their tribal territories. It was not until 1979 that the statutory game laws were
universally applied in the country.

Customary law on the subject of wildlife existed prior to the formal establishment of
the Protectorate in 1895. Game had long played an important role in the economy, providing
meat to all levels of society from royalty to the BaSarwa, the most marginalised. Reliance
was even greater on the fringes of the Kalahari where drought was a regular occurrence,
and crops failed. Apart from the protein value of meat it provided, hunting traditionally had
considerable social significance. Two of the Tswana calendar months are named after
animals—Phalane (October), meaning little impala, denoting the month in which impalas
calve, and Poane (September), referring to the month when young male antelopes are
expelled from family herds84).

Schapera’s research in the 1940s showed that hunting was subject to a number of
conventions that discouraged destruction. Females and the young of antelope species were
protected. Closed hunting seasons were normally observed for some species, for example,
during the summer months when they were breeding. The BaNgwato and BaTawana
recognised certain hunting preserves from pre-colonial period. Qualifications also existed
concerning hunters: age regiments were significant as hunting groups and members of junior
regiments at cattle posts or in the veld theoretically could not eat game birds, small antelopes,
hares or tortoise, without first offering them to elders. The offering was passed on until it
reached the oldest member, unless anyone gave the junior permission to eat the meat. Among
the Ngwato, the head and neck of large game, and the marrow of certain species like kudu
and hartebeest, had to be handed to the elders85). These regimental and seniority obligations
were still customary law in 1940 and some are still strictly enforced.

Tswana chiefs claimed control over wildlife in their territories. They were entitled to
a share in the proceeds of every hunting expedition86). The chief received all animals killed
in a collective hunt (letsholo), which he had organised. In most cases the meat would be
divided amongst the members of the community. But the brisket of large game, the skins
of lion and leopard, one tusk of an elephant and the feathers of an ostrich would go to the
chief. The BaKgalagadi, San, Yei and other subordinate groups were obliged to hand over
all hunting spoils such as ivory, ostrich feathers and skins. Chapter Seven on the BaSarwa
will demonstrate that such tribute persisted among the BaNgwato and BaTawana overseers,
with respect to the San, until the late 1930s and the tributary relationship was significant
in the history of the Moremi Game Reserve87). Schapera observes that tribute was disappearing
by the end of the 1930s, but the chiefs, with support of the Administration still tried to
protect big game88).

In the nineteenth century elephant hunts were organised under Lewanika of the Lozi
State and the Ndebele under Mzilikazi and Lobengula89). African leaders controlled the
trade in valuable trophies. They also tried to control the activities of the white hunters, as
well as enhance their power through the acquisition of firearms. In Ngamiland, BaTawana
chiefs participated in the killing of elephants for their ivory. The products of hunting provided the core of economic growth and political expansion of the Tswana states between about 1840 and 1870 due to the demand in Europe and America. Guns, powder and European clothing were the most important trade goods bartered for ivory and feathers. Guns and powder were sought for defense and territorial expansion, especially in the view of the memories of the Difaqane and the fact that the Ndebele still posed a threat. The spread of firearms, together with the depredations of white hunters, resulted in the shrinking of game stocks and many tons of ivory were exported from the Zambezi/Bechuanaland region. The elimination of species such as the rhinoceros was noticeable.

As the decline of the game could be seen in terms of direct economic loss, the chiefs made some attempts to protect the endangered species through royal hunting reserves and hunting restrictions. In 1856 Sechele forbade hunting on Sundays among the BaKwena and soon after tried to stop strangers from coming into his country to hunt. Khama of the BaNgwato tried to restrict hunting within his country, forbidding hunters from shooting cow elephants. In 1875 Frederick Barber was prevented from hunting in the Ngwato territory on the grounds that it was a reserve for ostriches and Khama had given strict instructions that no hunters be allowed to camp in the Makwa area south of Sua Pan. When in 1877, Barber asked if he could collect young ostriches at Lake Ngami for stocking farms in South Africa, Khama emphatically refused, on the grounds that so few were left. A hunter in the previous year had taken out some young ostriches chicks, which very much annoyed Khama and he warned traders and hunters not to do so again. This prohibition is still enforced with few exceptions. Khama had particular reasons to distrust the Afrikaners from the Transvaal. Having granted one group permission to hunt for ivory, they slaughtered 700 buffaloes for their skins and meat. Armed with a sausage-making machine, the safari continued killing gemsbok, tsessebe, springbok, wildebeest, duiker, eland and impala. Khama drove them out and sent a messenger to all the Ngwato farms to inform them that no hunters should remain at any watering-place for more than three days. In 1878 Khama prohibited commercial hunting by Europeans but allowed sport hunters upon personal application—for example a friend of Reverend John Mackenzie. Mackenzie had recommended Gillmore as someone who had no desire to exterminate the game.

It was not only the Tswana who wanted to exercise protection. Lobengula forbade any Afrikaner from hunting in the Matebele territory under penalty of confiscation of all his property. It was said that if Lobengula saw anyone eating ostrich eggs, he asked how one could expect to get feathers if he ate the eggs. In an attempt to limit the entry of white hunters in his kingdom he also denounced the killing of cow and juvenile elephants. In some cases he issued hunting regulations restricting white hunters to a particular route and charged a licence fee for a gun and ammunition. In the 1880s Lewanika kept the Linyati on the northern bank, at least, as an elephant preserve for himself, and in 1884 King Lebuse held the Caprivi Strip, north of Namibia, where elephants were plentiful, as a private preserve.

In the early twentieth century, a number of decrees extended and formalized such regulation. Among them were the prohibition of hunting of giraffe, rhinoceros, buffalo, eland, hippopotamus and ostrich, without permission of the chief and prohibition of the use
of deadfalls, staked pits and trapping of roads. The setting of traps in other peoples’ fields was also prohibited. Immigrants were obliged to obey the chief’s laws concerning the destruction of game. In 1913, a BaNgwato decree prohibited the killing of white storks and secretary birds. Hyrax and guinea-fowl were totally protected on Serowe Hill. In the same year BaNgwaketse issued the decree, ‘We must no longer kill big game animals’, and it was reported that the Tswana chief gave very limited permission to people to hunt, except in respect of the smaller and more numerous species such as steenbuck, duiker, impala and lechwe. By 1916 the hunting of large game was universally forbidden unless authorised by the respective chief. In 1936 BaKwena prohibited the sale of lion and leopard skins to traders.\textsuperscript{98} There is considerable evidence of enforcement of these provisions, largely through fines.\textsuperscript{99} Chiefs, who continued to have hunting rights, agreed to observe a closed season and certain hunters would be nominated each year and issued hunting licenses. Spinage notes that this became the foundation for the tribal hunting legislation, which was instituted in 1967 after independence, and remained in force until 1979 when all hunting legislation was finally amalgamated.\textsuperscript{100}

In the 1920s and 1930s, game affairs were discussed between Tswana representatives, the Protectorate officials and representative members of the white community through the ‘Native’ and European Advisory Councils meetings held in Mafikeng.\textsuperscript{101} Some of the Advisory Councils debates were particularly illuminating with respect to attitudes towards game. One of the discussions in the 1930s concerned restricting the killing of fur-bearing animals by season, age and sex. But the proposal met some opposition from some BaTswana councillors. Tshekedi Khama, who was always a thorn in the side of the colonial administration, was among those who opposed the proposal. He argued that they did not see a point in protecting a jackal from dogs because it destroyed their rams. Tshekedi was opposed to the law not because of a failure to see the importance of conservation, but ‘because it takes that, which is our own, putting it in the control of Government’.\textsuperscript{102} To Chief Bathoen II of BaNgwaketse the principle was an important one. ‘We maintain that our fathers have always protected game up to the present’.\textsuperscript{103} BaNwaketse had enforced a close season to be observed in respect of rare species.

Charles Rey, the Resident Commissioner, felt the house was divided and no new law was subsequently issued on the matter. At the Advisory Councils session in March 1938, chaired by Resident Commissioner Arden Clarke, discussion centred upon proposed limitation upon the export of biltong (dry meat). Again Tshekedi opposed this motion claiming that Africans did not export biltong for commercial ends, but gave it as gifts to friends. Whites in the Tuli Block and the Kalahari District were blamed for the massacre of game there. The councillors also debated the prohibition on sale of giraffe hides and tails. As will be further demonstrated in the next chapter, the interventions of the African members showed a much greater concern for the conservation of game than they have been given credit for.

6. Summary

As I have illustrated much of the literature on the history of game reserves and national parks in Africa suggests that colonial officials were in favour of this form of land use and
animal conservation. In respect of the Chobe National Park, to the northeast of Moremi Game Reserve, this general argument is applicable (see Chapter 2). However, in the case of Moremi Game Reserve, the local colonial officials were very reluctant to support the establishment of a game reserve in a tribal area. Some still believed that the livestock economy could expand in parts of Ngamiland. Moreover, this area was increasingly popular with safari hunters in the post-World War II period. Game safari tour operators, mainly from East Africa, were searching for remote areas as the hunting grounds in East Africa were getting crowded. They began to move into what they saw as the "untapped wilderness of the Okavango Delta". Colonial officials saw this as a way of bringing revenue to the territory and improving the local economy. In this late colonial period, the government was keen to see the territory generate its own revenue. The main source of income was labour migration. A game reserve would clash with the interests of the safari firms. The history of Moremi thus provides an alternative example, which may also have relevance to other cases in Africa.

The Moremi Game Reserve has since become of great importance to Botswana. Its establishment shows that the concept of local people managing wildlife resources according to modern conservation precepts did not begin with the recent advocacy of community management, which has now become so popular in Africa. A local non-governmental organisation, the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland (from 1963 Fauna Conservation Society), administered the Reserve under a mandate issued by the kgotla, with local people represented on the management committee. This management coordinated the activities of the reserve including raising funds, the development of access to the reserve, the network of tracks in the reserve itself, appointment of Game Guards and establishment of a guard camp at the main gate. They supervised the prohibition of hunting and the use of snares and steel traps.

In respect to the treatment of African people who lived within the park, however, Moremi proved to be more typical. As illustrated, a number of sources point to the exclusion of indigenous people from reserves and parks in the colonial period. Brockington, studying post-colonial Tanzania, has coined the term Fortress Conservation to describe this process and outcome. His work is particularly interesting because he shows that the exclusion of local people was not only a feature of the colonial period. African governments, international organizations and conservation lobbies continued to advocate parks without people. The latest example in Botswana is the case of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, which was originally envisaged both as a game reserve and a BaSarwa reservation. The protagonists of Moremi, who included the BaTawana ruling group, moved the BaSarwa who lived there within the first few years of the reserve. Despite the evidence of a long BaSarwa link to the Okavango, and some acknowledgement by BaTawana that the BaSarwa were there first, the latter were excluded and denied access to this land. The priority was to protect resources that the BaTawana saw as belonging to them. Their decision was also made with full realization that there was an immediate and pressing danger of game in Ngamiland being wiped out, as happened in other parts of Africa. They created Moremi ‘chiefly as a “reservoir” or “breeding area” for game of all species’ and not for people. The final chapter 7 deals with BaSarwa memories of their history in the park, and their subsequent claims to land.
Wildlife has always been a major resource for human populations in this area, and remained so throughout the colonial period and beyond. This book will contribute to the historiography in a number of respects. First, while there is good ecological literature on this area, there is very little historical writing on the relationship between people, animals, and conservation. Second, it charts the involvement of different groups of African people in the formation and management of a game reserve, and also shows the divisions between them. Third, it shows that the white population also had very divergent interests in this area, and that it can be assumed that colonial officials always favoured game conservation. Fourth, it analyses the complex changes in management and local participation, as the area became significant centre for tourism. At the same time I hope that my case study can be used at a broader level to contribute to the comparative history of national parks in Africa. In a wider sense I also wish to contribute to debates on the increasingly contested notions of conservation and development, especially among indigenous people.

My research also moves away from the ethnographic style that has dominated Khoesan studies. In the changing political climate of southern African research and broader global research, there is an emerging consciousness to exercise sensitivity to ‘the researched’, especially marginalized or disadvantaged ethnic groups. This obviously can mean many things. Academic research institutes (including the University of Botswana) across the world have included ethics oversight as one of their priorities, promoting research that requires due diligence and adherence to internationally accepted ethical principles. The position adopted in this study is that this research should enhance our collective understanding of the cultural histories of the BaSarwa communities of the Ngamiland region by highlighting both their uniqueness and areas of cultural interrelatedness in Botswana’s changing cultural landscape. Therefore through this research I aim as much as possible to present a reading of the history of the communities in ways that reflect their authorship.

Notes


4) W. Beinart and P. Coates, 1995. Environment and History: The Taming of Nature in the USA
17) In 1926, the Sabi Game Reserve as the Kruger National Park. For details about the history of the park: see J. Carruthers, 1995. The Kruger National Park.


Johannesburg, 26 May 1962: 3.
42) IUCN was founded in 1948 as International Union for the Protection of Nature. See IUCN Bulletin. 1952. 1 (1).
43) From the late 1960s there was an effort to train Rangers at Mweka College (FAO School in Tanzania) and wildlife biologists at various African Universities. By 2000 FAO was supporting social forestry conservation projects in different parts of Africa (telephone conversation with W.L. Astle, UK, 25 May 2004).
45) WWF objectives and national appeals in Section I, World Wildlife Fund Report. 1961–1964. At the time of the founding of the IUCN, Julian Huxley was the head of UNESCO.
48) WWF website: http://www.wwf-uk.org


58) BNAS. 500/5, Annual Report, Ngamiland District (1947).


64) Groups are scattered over different countries including South Africa, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe. San in Botswana are estimated at 50,000 and 35,000 in Namibia. For detailed work on San studies, see for example A. Barnard, 1992. *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comprehensive Ethnography of Khoisan Peoples*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. See also R.B. Lee, 1965. *Subsistence ecology of the !Kung Bushmen*, Ph.D. University of California.


67) The text to a large degree will follow local usage by adding the prefix Ba to ethnic group names: BaTswana, BaNgwato, BaTawana, BaKgalagadi, BaYei, BaSarwa, etc. However, in some contexts where reference is made to many ethnic groups, the English convention of using only the stem of the word is followed, for better clarity: Tswana, Yei, Sarwa. On the founding of the Tawana state: see T. Tlou, 1985. *History of Ngamiland*, 2 and 38–50.


75) K. Ikeya discusses the similar kind of socio-economic relationships at three levels between Bakwena, Kgalagadi and the San of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve where game skins were carried by the |Gui and ||Gana to Letlhakeng as payment of tax to the Bakwena chief. See Socioeconomic Relationships between herders and Hunters: A Comparison of the Kalahari desert and Northeastern Siberia. In K. Ikeya and E. Fratkin, 2005. *Pastoralists and Their Neighbors in Asia and Africa*. Senri Ethnological Studies 69: 31–44.


77) Amos Xako, an elder in Khwai, remembers that when he was leaving for the mines in the 1940s, the poles of the Moremi kraal still looked strong, and the corners of the kraal were visible. Interviewed at Khwai, 20 June 2000. The structures of Moremi’s kraal are slightly visible today.

90) Difaqane (Mfecane): The process of Zulu state building, and the effects of the creation of the Zulu Kingdom.
92) BNA 159/4, letter: Chief Sebele (BaKwena) to Assistant Commissioner W.H. Surmon, 1 October 1894 and Surmon to Sir Francis Newton, Colonial Secretary, Vryburg, 4 October 1894. Spinage cites the same archival source in *History and Evolution of the Fauna Laws of Botswana*: 11–12.
93) Colonial officials were in sympathy with Khama’s concerns. The South African Van Rooyen who made excursions over the Shashe River, towards Ndebele land in 1894 was accused of killing much game including giraffe. See BNA 159/4, letter: Major Grey of Bechuanaland Border Police to Administrator Sidney Shippard, 21 April 1894 and letter: Assistant Commissioner
Reverend J.S. Moffat to Major Grey, 3 July 1894.


95) The indiscriminate destruction of game including giraffes in western part of BaNgwato country by the Afrikaners was confirmed by BNA S. 601/2, Reverend J.S. Moffat, Assistant Commissioner, to Government Secretary, Mafikeng, 3 July 1894. See also A.J. Dachs, 1975. *Papers of John Mackenzie.* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press. Discussions on indiscriminate killing of game by South Africans will be expanded in Chapter 2.


97) Chiefs issued written permits annually for their people to hunt a limited number of some larger species.

98) BNA S. 601/2, letter: G.A. Stigand, Resident Magistrate to Govt Sec, Mafikeng, November 1913.

99) BNA S. 601/2 and S. 203/11, several reports on ‘hunting control and tribal court fines for poaching’ from Residents Magistrates to Govt. Sec. Mafikeng, 1913 to 1937.


101) The Native Advisory Council and European Advisory Council were formed in 1920 and 1921 respectively and at the beginning of the 1960s the two separate Councils amalgamated as Joint Advisory Council. The ninth meeting of the Native Advisory Council, 12 to 13 March 1929 was the first to discuss game matters at official level.

102) BNA S. 601/2–5, Minutes of the Fourteenth Session of the Bechuanaland Native Advisory Council, Mafikeng, 18 November 1932.

103) BNA S. 601/2–5, Minutes of the Fourteenth Session of the Bechuanaland Native Advisory Council, Mafikeng, 18 November 1932.


107) BNA S. 228/4, Moremi Wildlife Reserve- Description and Policy, 1963.

108) According to my colleagues in the area of San research, the word ‘Khoesan’ is supposedly a
more modern (linguistically correct) transcription than ‘Khoisan’. To many international academics ‘Khoisan’ is outdated. Email with Andy Chebanne (Linguistics), University of Botswana, 28 June 2011 and Sidsel Saugestad (Social Anthropology), University of Tromsø, 28 June 2011.
Map 1.1 The Okavango Delta and northern sandveld. Source: Taylor, 2000
Map 1.2  Demarcation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Source: Gumbo, 1986
Chapter 2

**Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Control in the Okavango Delta: 1930s–1960s**

1. Introduction

There is a long history of the study of the tsetse fly in Botswana. A key factor is that the tsetse is entirely dependent on the blood of suitable animals. In the nineteenth century the destruction of game by large-scale hunting reduced their range somewhat, and the rinderpest outbreak of 1894–1898 largely removed them over a large area. However, from this starting-point tsetse began a seemingly unstoppable return during the twentieth century.

The colonial government attempted various strategies usually based on destruction or control of wildlife, but eventually doubts arose as to whether these policies were economically viable even if they succeeded: the Ngamiland cattle industry was of only moderate value, and it also suffered from other problems such as foot and mouth disease.

In the late colonial period, although there were some successes with the new insecticides, the possibility of tourism as an alternative economic base was being suggested, which implied the priority of game rather than cattle. By and large, African members of the Legislative Council tended to be more sympathetic to game protection than the Europeans. However Seretse Khama, one of the cattle barons, sided with European farmers on this.

2. Cause and Effects of Disease

The Moremi Game Reserve in the Okavango was established in an area where the tsetse fly had long been prevalent. Tsetse flies are one hundred per cent dependent on blood, unlike mosquitoes, which also eat plant sap. They are common in the Sub-Saharan region as far as the northern parts of South Africa, and millions of Africans in tsetse-infested areas live with the threat as do many millions of their livestock: cattle, goats, sheep, horses and camels. The life cycle of the trypanosomes (parasites) involves an intermediate host, which is the tsetse fly. The tsetse fly transmits the parasites from wild animal reservoirs, of which the favourites are reedbuck, kudu, buffalo, bushbuck, and above all, warthog to cattle or humans. The game sources are not adversely affected by trypanosomes. The converse, however, applies to cattle, to which **nagana** can be fatal. According to John Ford, because many (though not all) game animals are reservoirs of pathogenic trypanosomes, early parasitologists advocated the extermination of wildlife.

The advance of tsetse fly was viewed by the colonial state as the major hindrance to the economic development of the Okavango Delta and the North West District at large.
The post-war economic development of the Protectorate depended principally on the protection of the cattle industry, and efforts were made to improve conditions related to the production and marketing of livestock (Photos 2.1). The adoption of anti-tsetse measures such as game control became an important part of colonial policy in Ngamiland. Tsetse fly encroachment and control was closely associated with policy towards wildlife in Botswana and is therefore of great significance to the establishment of game parks in northern Botswana, particularly Moremi. The aim of this chapter is to examine the historical relationship between tsetse fly control, the cattle industry and wildlife conservation in northern Botswana.

3. Tsetse Fly Patterns in Northern Botswana

Tsetse fly infestation became severe in northern Botswana, particularly in Ngamiland, from the 1930s and the Protectorate government adopted drastic measures for control. Much of the revenue spent in Ngamiland by the government through the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund (CD & W) was directed at this project[^6]. Specialist officials, mainly entomologists, veterinarians and plant ecologists were recruited to come up with plans for tsetse fly control which later had an impact on wildlife conservation in northern Botswana. Experts were drawn from other African colonies such as Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Kenya, Tanganyika (Tanzania), Nigeria and Nyasaland (Malawi) where tsetse fly control measures were in place. Medical expertise in preventing and treating sleeping sickness was drawn mainly from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Tsetse thus drew experts, who applied a wide range of European knowledge to the problem, and intensified the colonial presence in Northern Botswana.

The population distribution of Ngamiland, and especially the delta, was deeply affected by both the availability of water and the incidence of tsetse. Farmers cultivated the land near the riverine channels, but expansion into the swampland for additional ‘moist’ farming was obstructed by the presence of tsetse and trypanosomosis. There was an abundance of wildlife in and around the delta to maintain a population of the flies and act as a reservoir of trypanosomes[^7]. While some families would venture into the fly area to cultivate and plant crops and many hunted and collected honey there, the tsetse restricted and shaped settlement patterns.

Reference to the occurrence of tsetse flies in Ngamiland is made in various official reports and publications. The problem of tsetse fly control has generated a large archive. About twenty consultants and advisors visited Botswana to give their views, and members of the Tsetse Control Department did a good deal of unpublished research work[^8]. The annual reports (1940s–1970s) for the Department of Veterinary Services, later Veterinary Services and Tsetse Fly Control, carry a significant amount of information, especially on tsetse control and the cattle industry. International organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have also investigated the problem[^9]. This material cannot all be covered here; the paper focuses on the history of encroachment and control with particularly reference to its links with wildlife.
4. Incidence of Disease

The area infested with tsetse in Botswana was, in fact, quite small compared with that of many other African countries. Davies observes, however, that its importance is underlined by the inclusion of the only wet environments (Okavango and Chobe) in an otherwise arid country. Moreover, only *Glossina morsitans* Westwood has ever been found in Botswana (out of 22 African species) in 40 years of tsetse research and control. This is a particularly dangerous species of tsetse fly that transmits both sleeping sickness to humans and nagana to livestock. The problem was also compounded by the fact that wildlife was also concentrated around this wetland environment. Thus the control of tsetse has long been related to the eradication of wildlife in Botswana.

Before the rinderpest outbreak of 1894/1898, the tsetse infested large parts of Ngamiland. With game animals destroyed by the epidemic the fly retreated. However, it gradually re-appeared during the 1920s and posed a serious threat to Ngamiland’s settled areas. The tsetse belts shifted with changes in wildlife population and distribution, as well as other ecological factors, a point that is important for the history of Ngamiland.

A number of travel and hunting texts and diaries of missionaries made frequent references to tsetse. In June 1852, David Livingstone left Cape Town, reaching Linyanti on the Chobe in May 1853 with the objective of finding a healthy high land for a new London Missionary Society mission station. He could not find a suitable place free from tsetse on his journey to the Zambezi River. During his journey he had observed tsetse with interest and in his accounts describe the symptoms of sick animals, suggesting the theory of a ‘poison germ’ capable of reproducing itself. Livingstone who combined Christianity with commerce concluded that, ‘The destruction of all game by the advance of civilization is the only chance of getting rid of the tsetse’.

Travellers, explorers and hunters, such as Andersson (1857), Livingstone (1858), Chapman (1868), and Selous (1890s and 1908) recorded tsetse fly in northern Botswana but tended to skirt rather than penetrate the Okavango Delta. They were, however, already aware of the fluctuations of tsetse incidence. Chapman, for example, reported on the encroachment of heavy fly around Mababe, stretching from the Victoria Falls to the Chobe River, noting that it was confined to the rivers. Selous (1893) made remarks about Sua and Mababe and noted that the corridor of infestation between Rhodesia and Bechuanaland had disappeared and attributed this to the absence of buffalo through hunting pressures. The second half of the nineteenth century saw a shrinking of the fly belts as hunting reduced game, which also moved away from heavily travelled areas south of Kanzungula and Victoria Falls. The shrinking of the fly belts was also noted in South Africa and Rhodesia where climatic changes were implicated as well as changes in land use. Selous records that by the 1880s tsetse had disappeared from the Pandamatenga road. The evidence suggests that fly belts were largely determined by wildlife movements in the above mentioned areas. According to J.K. Chorley, the Southern Rhodesian entomologist, this is quite understandable in the case of *G. morsitans*, which depends on game.

Tsetse fly belts were reduced further by the virulent wave of rinderpest, which swept through East Africa in the 1890s, crossed the Zambezi and continued southwards through...
Botswana and Zimbabwe into South Africa. Rinderpest reduced the number of both cattle and wildlife. Observers at that time pointed out that not all game animals were badly affected by the disease but two of the favoured hosts of *G. morsitans*, kudu and buffalo were reduced. In Northern Rhodesia, a great recession of tsetse distribution occurred. In Rhodesia the whole southern belt disappeared. The tsetse disappeared altogether in the north and eastern Transvaal. In Botswana, the tsetse survived in small pockets in the northwest.

The recovery of both wildlife and cattle in the early decades of the twentieth century was accompanied by the re-emergence of tsetse. In August 1916 the Acting Resident Magistrate at Maun wrote: ‘In recent years the tsetse fly has increased in Ngamiland and it is becoming a menace to the country; apart from the losses sustained by cattle holders, some of the best grazing is entirely cut off...The fly is now within 20 miles from Maun’.

Captain A.G. Stigand, Resident Magistrate of Ngamiland from 1910–1923, travelled by ox cart and *mokoro* (canoe) through the swamps between 1912–1922 making a very creditable map, recording place names, measuring river depths and velocities and making brief notes on vegetation. In 1922 he demarcated the extent of the areas infested by flies on a map; they were clearly extending back to their nineteenth century range. This included the Khwai area near Sankuyo - one of my areas of detailed research - and Chief’s Island in the middle of the delta. Stigand’s articles and map help considerably to improve our knowledge of the delta.

Africans were also aware of such changes. H.J. Heinz, who conducted ethnological studies on the people of the Okavango River Delta, recorded stories of the BaYei and BaSarwa in and around the delta, which mentioned the tsetse spreading into areas at this time where they had not been before. Elders mentioned their attempts to reduce tsetse numbers by lighting bush-fires. Before the establishment of effective colonial rule, Africans cleared adjacent tracts of land to achieve local tsetse eradication. According to the BaYei elders of Sankuyo:

> When the lands were infested by tsetse, some were burnt and God destroyed some. We made certain that tsetse was destroyed by fire and we found firewood at Kurube, which made the fire and killed the fly. That particular tsetse moved away (withdrew) with the buffalo and reached /abauro or Chibauro (Chief’s Island) and stayed there in a pocket (obviously a pocket of retreat for *Glossina*).

Heinz recorded oral testimony that suggests tsetse was repeatedly confined to pockets and then re-spread. Fire destroyed adult flies, burnt the essential shade trees for *G. morsitans* and created barriers across which the fly was temporarily incapable of migrating. Fire did not destroy the pupa buried under the ground, stones and logs, so this was not an overall solution.

I have also recorded stories from elders of BaYei and BaSarwa groups who expressed similar views. The tsetse was a major reason for the disappearance of the ||Anikhwe San within the swamps and other changes in settlement. The older people interviewed had extensive historical knowledge of their local environment. When explaining the Bugakhwe movement down the Okavango panhandle into the vicinity of the Moremi Game Reserve...
(Chapter 7), they noted that ‘The fly came from the East and spread West. The buffalo, warthog and baboon were coming from the South and with tsetse’, and their people kept on moving, fleeing from the fly.  

When one BaYei elder was asked by Heinz what disease his forefathers feared more, malaria or sleeping sickness, he laughed and said, “We have been with malaria all our existence, we do not fear malaria, and it is a part of us, but tsetse - that is a different matter. We fear that very much, and the animals we are always concerned with are the buffalo, the warthog and baboon. They bring tsetse and ‘kotselo’. The inhabitants in the vicinity of |abauro (Chief’s Island) were bitten by ‘red’ tsetse which injected ‘kotselo’ (slumbering/drowsiness). The word kotselo is used here because it is indigenous to the area of study. Neighbouring communities thought it was the eating of honey which induced slumber, whereas it was the tsetse. The BaYei, too, left the area and retreated to the west of Gomaren-Nokaneng where they and their cattle were safe. Gomare was not in the fly belt area at the time of the withdrawal of the BaYei from N/abexa, west of Chief’s Island. Around the Moremi Game Reserve many people were killed by the tsetse. Heinz concludes that the ||Anikhwe in the vicinity of |abauro were ‘wiped out’ by tsetse. Okavango oral history suggests that the San (BaSarwa) communities, particularly ||Anikhwe and Bugakhwe, were formerly widespread in the Okavango and the map of the swamps prepared by Stigand (1923) is evidence of that fact since San names are found throughout the entire region.

According to oral Tawana tradition, the people saved their cattle by repeatedly driving them into the swamps after rinderpest in 1898, when tsetse had retreated. But the fly soon reconquered the area. Moshaga Moremi, the son of chief Moremi II established a cattle-post at the south end of Chief’s Island in 1912 and stated that the tsetse occurred further north. By 1917 his cattle began to die of nagana and it was apparent that this residual focus of fly was spreading. Like the San and Yei, the Tawana characterised sleeping sickness as kotselo and many of them attributed it to the consumption of wild honey (usually found in heavily infested fly country).

Some elders thought that kotselo reached epidemic proportions at this time. Officials were not yet sure whether kotselo was sleeping sickness, but acting Magistrate of Ngamiland Lieut. H.D. Hanney was aware of the terrible epidemics that had recently occurred in Uganda where some 200,000 people died between 1901 and 1906. Cases were also reported in Southern Rhodesia where some seven Europeans and fifty Africans were infected in 1911. Hanney arranged for Dr. R.U. Moffat to visit from Bulawayo. After visiting a few villages, Moffat wrote a report on the suspected outbreak of sleeping sickness in Ngamiland. In 1911, the tsetse was noted in the Khwai/ Moremi Game Reserve area. From 1909 to 1918, the records show infestation along the old wagon road to the west of Mogohelo towards Boro and Tsau.

5. Expanding Fly Belts: Tsetse Becomes a ‘colonial matter’: 1920s–1940s

A central dilemma for the colonial state was that development in Ngamiland involved cattle while the tsetse fly belts slowly recovered and expanded towards their previous limits. By the 1930s the spread of the fly had approached the proportions of a catastrophe for
Ngamiland and caused considerable anxiety. When the tsetse fly re-infested the Nxaragha Valley, Khwai, Kunyere and the Jao Flats in the late 1930s, cattle had to be moved. Consequently valuable grazing areas were lost. The advance of tsetse fly had a profound impact on the economic development of the delta and officials felt that the control of trypanosomosis was a prerequisite of successful cattle ranching.

In 1916 chief Mathiba of the BaTawana urged that a game drive and bush burning be carried out in the Boro area near Maun to prevent the tsetse from expanding to Maun. When cattle began to be exported to Northern Rhodesia via Kazungula in 1920, the route was already threatened by tsetse. A new road that followed the east bank of the Mogohelo was cut in 1921, but even there the fly was encountered and cattle had to be taken through the Xusa area by night. Stigand’s map shows the bulge in the tsetse fly distribution in the Mababe depression area which threatened the highway and stock route to the north. In 1924, Riley’s Road bypassed this bulge and the government forbade the use of the old road. But soon the fly moved south to threaten the area where Riley’s road left the Mogohelo, and people and cattle began to move towards Maun. The Bechuanaland Administration did not engage in reclamation or attack on a large scale, which was the policy used in Tanganyika. Retreat was the main alternative. Colonial scientific understanding of the disease at this time was minimal; in Botswana no research was carried out. In 1925 and 1926 efforts were made to widen and clear the stock routes together with game destruction, but the tsetse remained. Tsetse control was considered too expensive by the authorities, but in 1928 a track was cut to the east of the Xusa fly belt by the Suzman Brothers, and cattle traders of Livingstone and Imperial Secretary Capt. Clifford arrived in Maun to investigate the tsetse situation in connection with cattle exports. This led to a recommendation by the High Commissioner that a buffer zone free of cattle and game be established between the fly and non-fly areas in Ngamiland, but no action followed. In 1929 the High Commissioner, the Earl of Athlone, visited Ngamiland and was confronted by a deputation of local white traders. The extent of the fly-infested areas in the district increased concern among the African farmers as well.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies asked Dr. Guy Marshall, a key scientific authority, to discuss the tsetse in Ngamiland with the High Commissioner when he attended the 6th Pan African Veterinary Conference in Pretoria in August 1929. The outcome of their discussion was a full investigation by Dr. G.D. Hale-Carpenter who had been part of the sleeping sickness operations of the Uganda Medical Services. Professor H.H. Curson, a veterinary research officer at Onderstepoort, was seconded to join Hale-Carpenter and both men arrived in Maun in November 1930, financed by a grant from the Colonial Development Fund. Curson had been instructed to ‘Make observations on every possible factor, which would benefit the cattle industry’. Despite the tsetse, trading operations were expanding and during the 1920s, export numbers increased to nearly 10,000 annually.

Curson considered the BaTawana cattle to be well built and to yield a good carcass. He found very little cattle disease and thought that losses from nagana were exaggerated. The highest mortality seemed to be caused by poverty and much of the pasture outside the fly belt was overgrazed. He gave a list of detailed recommendations and to reduce the risks of nagana he suggested determining the fly limits and preventing cattle from grazing near
fly areas, plus the treatment of infected cattle with tartar emetic. This was difficult to administer and was no reliable cure. He suggested that local and European hunters clear the bush on the northern cattle route and destroy the game in the areas of fly advance north of Maun and north of Tsau. He thought that a radical reduction of game in the defined zones had proved to be the most effective method of controlling the tsetse fly in Southern Rhodesia: ‘All that is required is the driving back of game at least ten miles so as to maintain the present state of affairs’.

Between the 1930s and 1960s, the tsetse fly was discussed in scientific forums in the Southern African region, especially in Southern Rhodesia where white settlers suffered losses. In 1909, an entomologist had been appointed there, and the destruction of game as a defensive measure against the encroachment of the tsetse was first tried as an experiment in the Wankie District in 1918. This measure was based on the knowledge of the dependence of *G. morsitans* on the blood of big game. The results of this experiment were satisfactory to the officials, as the fly was driven back and animal trypanosomosis eradicated from Shangani/Gwaai area. When the belts slowly began to expand in other parts of the country, the same measures were carried out between 1925 and 1929, and reinforced by the provision of fences in the 1930s when there had been some cases of sleeping sickness. Game-free buffer zones were created. Wildlife extermination was practised widely in Zimbabwe, as this was a policy pursued by entomologists. But in South Africa there was intense debate as to whether this was useful and game culls occurred sporadically (often in response to high death levels among settler cattle in certain seasons) rather than being a definite long-term disease control strategy.

However, it was the Rhodesian strategies that informed the approaches in Botswana. In 1934, a regiment composed of older men was ordered by the BaTawana Tribal Administration to destroy baboons in the direction of Sedie (north of Maun) because these animals travelled into the tsetse area and were thought to be bringing back the fly. Acting Chief Dibolaeng declared: ‘I feel sorry that tsetse is so small that it cannot be shot at with a gun, as we would shoot it; however, we will try to diminish its food, or chase it away from near us’. For his part, the Resident Commissioner reminded a *kgotla* that ‘One way of keeping tsetse fly back is by pushing forward cultivation’. Licences were issued to Africans to purchase ammunition ‘to enable them to obtain food and at the same time to reduce and drive back the game’ which, noted the veterinary officer, ‘we hold are largely responsible for the spread of tsetse fly’. Clearing bush was encouraged in northern Botswana. This was the beginning of a connection between bush clearance and game culls. Some villages in and around the Okavango Swamps and the Chobe/Linyati Swamps were evacuated as a result of the Africans dying.

By the 1930s the occurrences of the *Rhodesiense* form of sleeping sickness (which was especially nasty as it was far more virulent than the chronic *Gambiense*) in sparsely populated savannah regions had become evident. In northern Botswana definite evidence of the disease in man was obtained. In 1934 two local police constables made a foot patrol to the Diyei towards the Caprivi region (Namibia) and later became ill; one man died. In 1935, another local patrol reported to Sergeant Fox that they had found many people sick and dying at Diyei and people wished to leave the area. It was arranged that Dr. W.A.S
Lamborn, a medical entomologist from Nyasaland Protectorate (Malawi), should visit Diyei and in June 1935 he travelled by lorry from Maun via the Khwai. He produced a report to the Bechuanaland Government recommending the evacuation of the remaining population from the northern belt, which should be declared a prohibited area for settlement. Lamborn’s report was taken seriously by the colonial government. The total evacuation of the population did not involve large numbers of people: a survey revealed 14 villages with a total of 470 people of the BaTawana, BaYei and HaMbukushu groups. In the 1920s similar measures had been taken in Nyasaland and in the Luangwa Valley, Northern Zambia.

In 1938, the young wife of a European Government official, Mrs. Langley, was admitted to hospital in Pretoria after having suffered a miscarriage; she been ill in Maun for some time. Trypanosomosis was found in her blood and it transpired that she had been camping in the fly belt 40 miles northwest of Maun the previous September. A young white boy passed through the fly belt on his way home from school in Mafikeng. He became ill and trypanosomosis was found in his blood at Maun hospital. These two cases were the first to be definitely identified from the Okavango as opposed to the Chobe fly belt and all four cases were the first from Bechuanaland to have the causal agent fairly definitely recognised as *Trypanosoma rhodesiense*.

At the same time, sleeping sickness was identified in a 30-year-old Okavango worker in the South African mines. The Maun Medical Officer who visited this village found another case there. Reports of delta people dying of tsetse confirmed suspicions of a more widespread infection in the African population. The incidence of animal trypanosomosis was also causing concern, and it was becoming increasingly evident that the disease was spreading in the herds of local cattle indicating that the fly belt was extending into some of the more densely populated and highly productive areas of district.

In 1939 the Nxaragha area was thrown open to free shooting, which attracted large numbers of shooting parties to Ngamiland. The theory was that hunting parties should be spaced along the fly limit so that game and tsetse could be driven back along a broad front. However, due to lack of supervision, all the parties went to an area where most game occurred and the scattered game retreated down the Nxaragha valley distributing tsetse five miles further than it had ever been recorded before. As in Nyasaland, the shooting of game could make things worse. The scheme was therefore abandoned. More successful operations started on the western front between Tsau and Nokaneng where tsetse seemed poised to cross into inhabited cattle farming areas. African workers began to remove the woodland from Thaoghe area. The aim was to make a 1.5–mile wide clearing across which tsetse would be reluctant to pass. A third move by the District Commissioner was to order deflying chambers or smudge huts which would be erected on the edge of the fly belt so that vehicles and pedestrians passing from tsetse to grazing areas could be disinfected.

The threat of a sleeping sickness epidemic led to Sir Walter Johnson being invited from Nigeria to advise on a specific course of action. He suggested that application be made to the Colonial Development Advisory Committee for funds to engage a medical officer to do a sleeping sickness survey and a veterinary officer to survey the tsetse and cattle trypanosomosis. The Bechuanaland Administration sent an application through and was granted £4000 for a sleeping sickness survey. Dr I.W. MacKichan was seconded
from the Colonial Medical Service, Uganda, along with Dr J.W. Macaulay, from the Kenya Veterinary Department. MacKichan received assistance from chief’s representatives in each area that he visited in Ngamiland to obtain blood samples from people. By 1940 he had travelled over much of Ngamiland and Chobe up to the Caprivi and obtained samples of a large proportion of the population. He found nine positive smears and three other cases with definite sleeping sickness symptoms mostly among adult males.

MacKichan concluded that sleeping sickness occurred in areas where tsetse were spreading and man-fly contact was increasing, such as the Nkaragha Valley and the area north of Tsau, towards the southwest of the delta. MacKichan found little evidence of infection in the few antelopes he had examined, and therefore concluded that sub-clinical human carriers, rather than wildlife, must be important but stressed that he had found no evidence for this. Nevertheless, game destruction continued to be enforced for tsetse fly control after the Second World War. In South Africa scientists still were debating whether killing the game would lead to an intensified trypanosomosis reservoir amongst domestic cattle, but these debates only occurred in Botswana in the post-war period.

Macaulay became most important in guiding a long-term policy on tsetse fly control and in relation to wildlife. By 1943 he was concerned that tsetse threatened to engulf almost the whole of the naturally watered pastoral area of the BaTawana Tribal Reserve, especially the southern and more developed area. He was able to assemble a staff of a European Overseer, an African clerk/microscopist, as well as hunters. Macaulay recommended a number of practical administrative measures, including game control, which would help control the fly. In 1941/42 as a result of a serious outbreak of sleeping sickness in the Nokaneng-Tsau area, over 300 Africans were reported admitted to the hospital for treatment in Maun, 100 miles away. Macaulay suggested clearing vegetation from the bank of the Thaoghe River. The encroachment of the fly in this section led to serious losses of cattle and consequent evacuation of the area: perhaps as many as 2,500 people and 10,000 cattle moved out of a total Ngamiland population of about 41,600 people and 123,500 cattle. The area was also said to have been one of the best for crop production in the district. Macaulay’s project was considered a model—‘the first major piece of tsetse work to come out of Botswana’.

Macaulay collected a large amount of environmental and meteorological data on the Okavango Delta. He was impressed by the complexity of the situation, including the unpredictability of annual flooding and rainfall, both of which affect tsetse incidence. He was convinced that it was the humidity caused by the annual floods that enabled the fly to find Nash’s suggested climatic optima. He made further reference to the extensive flooding of the intricate system of molapo—one of the peculiar conditions of the central swampland which he argued affected the vegetation and thus the distribution of the fly. It also had an influence on the distribution and movement of game with which Macaulay connected the outward spread of the tsetse but which, like the floods, did not always take the same direction. Macaulay’s report became significant especially in undermining wildlife preservation and conservation in northern Botswana.

Macaulay noted that expenditure on tsetse control should be related to economic factors. He calculated that cattle worth £96,000 were at risk from trypanosomosis and quoted a
figure of £25,000 as the annual value of Ngamiland cattle exports, mostly to the Northern Rhodesian copper belt. The sparse human population and the low economic level of Ngamiland did not justify major short-term expenditure. After some experimental bush clearing by cutting down and burning the undergrowth of thickets, he recommended game control as practiced in Southern Rhodesia. A scheme was drawn up for immediate implementation of organised game destruction in the two main danger areas of Ngamiland, namely Nokaneng and the section threatening Maun including the Nxaragha Valley. Macaulay recommended the encouragement of hunters and sportsmen who would also provide meat for labourers employed on bush clearing. Game, he considered, was a luxury that could not be afforded and he discouraged game reserves. He wished his recommendations to be fully publicised especially to the local people. A £90,000 grant from the CD & W was voted for this purpose to cover a period of five years from 1943. A major motive was to protect Maun, the administrative capital of Ngamiland.

The Veterinary Department fully supported these strategies as part of its attempt to expand the livestock industry and improve ‘methods of management, feeding, breeding and disease control’. Disease control was enforced through the rebuilding of border fences (cordons) and inoculation campaigns against the increased dangers of spread of infectious diseases particularly foot and mouth, trypanosomosis, bovine pleuropneumonia and rabies. Foot and mouth and trypanosomosis were considered more of a threat because of the continuous outbreaks of these diseases. Foot and mouth, a problem in most parts of the Protectorate, threatened livestock export to the main market in South Africa. There was an outbreak of foot and mouth at the end of 1949 in South West Africa (now Namibia) and its presence in neighbouring areas in Angola necessitated a special series of inspections and other precautions in Ngamiland which was also seen as a major focus. These diseases brought more veterinary services into Ngamiland and in the late 1940s, and treatment of cattle for trypanosomosis increased greatly. The spread of both trypanosomosis and foot and mouth was linked to wandering game.

6. The Tsetse Control Department and its Operations

In 1943, the Tsetse Fly Control Department (TFC) was established on the basis of the CD & W grant (Photo 2.2). By 1949 it employed six whites and 429 Africans; the range of activities shows that the department intended to involve Africans in the control operations. The department was important for its impact on wildlife. The first work done was the cutting of poles for game fences and the surveying of the area from the air. By 1945, 150 hunters were operating on the Maun front. Boreholes were sunk so that cattle could be moved away from the tsetse control areas but this effort proved unsuccessful as only one of seven boreholes produced water. Clearing also continued and people were encouraged to settle and plough the cleared area. In 1945, the game fence was completed from Toteng (in the south) to Shorobe (in the north), a distance of about 700 miles. Game drives were organised while the wire was going up so that as much game as possible would be outside the fence. The fence enclosed an area of about 1,000 square miles to the west of Maun (toward the delta area), and game destruction—‘Nature’s own method of tsetse fly control’—continued.
By the end of 1945, according to one tsetse fly control officer, the fly situation had improved to such a degree that Africans "were moving back to the areas from which they were driven by the fly advance". The threat to Maun had been removed, and no cases of nagana had been reported for a considerable time. A Local Tsetse Committee was set up, chaired by the District Commissioner (DC), to communicate with and explain the tsetse control policy to the local people. By 1946 tsetse control had cost £43,178 leaving a balance of £46,822 from the original sum voted under the CD & W scheme.

In 1946 P.A. Buxton, Professor of Entomology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, reported optimistically: ‘The problems of control in Ngamiland appear relatively simple’. Only one species of fly was involved occupying a limited variety of vegetation types and probably just able to maintain itself in many areas, being at the limits of its distribution in Africa. His visit led to a further Colonial Development and Welfare Grant of £78,575 over ten years. Yet the period 1946 to 1953 seemed to have been the start of a reverse in the fortunes of the TFC. The 1948 floods were more extensive than usual and hindered the building of the fence. Camps became inaccessible and game reinvaded the areas previously almost cleared. The incidence of sleeping sickness increased among the African staff; MacGiles and another European were also affected. In 1947 all tsetse staff were started on a course of Pentamidine. In 1947 in Shorobe (north of Maun) 2,000 blood smears from cattle showed a 5 percent incidence of trypanosomosis and 7 percent was shown in 700 cattle at Kanzungula in the Chobe near the border with Zambia. A correspondent for the Sunday Times described the determination of the senior officials involved but they now realized that they were ‘up against a tremendous proposition’.

The Africans became disillusioned. Speaking at a kgotla meeting in 1948 attended by, among others, the Resident Commissioner, Rammina Raditladi argued that ‘the tsetse has bitten the Government, and its doctors’. Another speaker, Kebepilwe, expressed a slightly different view, saying: ‘I think that tsetse beats us both; Africans and Europeans’.

When the High Commissioner visited Ngamiland in 1949, the tsetse fly had driven the people and cattle away from the fertile Nxaragha Valley. Molefi demonstrates that among the consequences of the migrations was a decline in food production. Overgrazing, soil erosion and the invasion of thorn scrub in some areas were reported. This was followed by ‘…general deterioration of the physique of Ngamiland stock’.

During the 1950s, it became clear that the situation remained unsatisfactory. The tsetse was still persistent in control areas and spread on occasion outside them. In 1950 MacGiles left when he succumbed to another bout of sleeping sickness. Responsibility for tsetse control then rested with the District Commissioner, who could not give it his full attention. In 1951 Macaulay came back three times to assess the situation after his departure nearly ten years before and advocated better fences, more hunters with better transport, bigger bonuses, more ammunition and closer supervision. The fences gradually proved to be ineffective. In Zululand they tried electric fences—but they were useless as herds of game just barged through (only the first animals in the herds suffered any electric shocks). The idea of eradication of the sleeping sickness and nagana by the destruction of their vectors continued to dominate some colonial thinking in northern Botswana.

In 1953 John Ford, the Director of the East African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Research
and Reclamation Organisation (EATTRRO) in Nairobi was brought in to give advice. Ford reported that although the Kalahari was unsuitable for *G. morsitans*, ‘The abundant soil water provided by the Ngamiland swamps … permits the existence of localized vegetation far more mesophytic in character than the climate would otherwise allow. The limits of this peculiar vegetation are also the limits of the permanent habitat of the tsetse’ 80). He explained that a narrow band of gallery forest normally bordered the *molapo* system and was dominated by large trees; and below them was a dense coverage of shrubs that provided the morsitans’ key habitat. However, Ford was another optimistic visitor. His opinion was that total eradication of the whole fly belt was possible without wholesale destruction of habitat or game. He was an advocate of the new technique of discriminative clearing of particular habitats using aerial photographs 81). The key to this approach, employed in East and West Africa, was identifying the specific sites of tsetse concentration 82). Discriminative research was also carried out in South Africa and they employed DDT spraying based on destroying pupa/breeding sites only 83). Aerial and soil surveys were used to gather this information.

Ford was convinced that vegetation not game determined the distribution of the tsetse in the Okavango and that vegetation manipulation held the key to eradication. He thought that the Okavango fly belt was near its geographical limits and would not expand much more 84). However he was conscious of economic considerations and considered that the cost of tsetse control in Ngamiland in the last ten years had been far too high in relation to the benefits gained. He suggested rice growing, as cattle farming was not a good defence against re-encroachment of fly. The alternative to such combined operations would be to reduce tsetse control to a minimum and leave the delta much as it was. The new Tsetse Fly Control Officer was charged with the responsibility of doing a detailed survey of the whole fly belt. He noted that the cold winters of Ngamiland restricted the period of emergence of fly pupae to August and September. This phenomenon, suggested earlier by Macaulay, could make air spraying more efficient 85). In 1953 a laboratory was completed at the Maun hospital for trypanosomosis testing.

### 7. The Period of Discriminative Bush Clearing

Ford’s report was accepted, with some reservations, as the new foundation for planning. In 1953 Ivor J. Lewis was recruited as the Tsetse Fly Control Officer. Lewis, a South African with a B.Sc. in Biology from Rhodes University, had worked for nearly three years as a survey officer with the Nyasaland Tsetse Department. Like Ford he thought game destruction had never completely eliminated the tsetse around Maun, and his assessment was that there had been considerable re-invasion. He suggested a two-year period of minimum defence during which small-scale discriminative clearing would be done experimentally to determine its effectiveness and cost 86). The Maun DC, Allison, was concerned that Lewis proposed to abandon practical control work for two years, even though the fly belt was bulging westwards between Tsau and Nokaneng. It is important to observe that shooting did not stop during the period 1953–1956 and beyond.

During the 1950s control operations became a matter of concern at the Government headquarters as well as the regional office of WHO for Africa. The Resident Commissioner
and Government Secretary in Mafikeng, the Chief Secretary in Pretoria and the Divisional Commissioner for Northern Protectorate, J.F. Millard, all expressed an interest in the matter. Millard agreed with Ford that too much had already been spent for the benefits gained. He argued that ‘An inordinate amount of interest appears to focus on this very inaccessible and unproductive area of the Protectorate. Crop yields even in the most fertile molapo and ancient water courses are far below the average of some of the vast still undeveloped river basins of Central Africa’{87}). He suggested that if the fly was near its limits why not sink wells or pipe out water to the ‘magnificent pastures’ outside the fly belt. Cattle, he felt, were the only proven economic resource of Ngamiland{88}).

Lewis agreed that tsetse control should be economically worthwhile and began more intensive monitoring of results. Deaths attributed to trypanosomosis were uneven: in 1954, 563; in 1955, 278; and in 1956, 473{89}). Vegetation mapping proceeded with an EATTRRO ecologist. R.D. Pilson considered the staff position at TFC ‘totally inadequate’ for the proposed work of clearing on two fronts, making vegetation maps, surveying and intensive fly round observations and costing. He did however believe that game destruction had “up to now succeeded in keeping G. morsitans under fair control”{90}). His views on game destruction contradicted both Ford and Lewis.

Lewis revived the local tsetse committee in 1955, which included Medical and Veterinary Officers at Maun as well as BaTawana Regent Pulane Moremi. Mrs. Moremi later became one of the important figures during the discussions that surrounded the establishment of Moremi Wildlife Reserve in the Okavango. In the subsequent years white traders and tribal representatives were incorporated. This extended the knowledge being fed into the clearance programme and in 1957 the committee was alerted to the presence of heavy fly along the settled Mogohelo River and towards Sankuyo as well as the most populated Tsau/Nokaneng areas which most urgently needed a survey. Lionel Palmer, the traders’ representative, also became central in the issues surrounding safari business in Ngamiland{91}).

Despite the doubts about the economic value of game clearance, a CD & W scheme for £56,335 was approved for two years and after 1957 the staff was expanded{92}). British aid for Bechuanaland was rapidly increasing in order to raise the standard of administration to a level comparable with that of neighbouring countries. The Commonwealth Relations Office reported grants from the CD & W Fund totalling £1,300,000 between 1955 and 1960. Schemes included soil conservation, geological survey of surface and underground water supplies, and improvements in medical, educational, veterinary and transport services{93}).

In July 1955, Dr. E.A. Lewis, the director of EATTRRO, was invited to visit Ngamiland as a WHO consultant. Like Ford and Ivor Lewis, E.A. Lewis thought that game destruction had not been effective and advocated discriminative clearing in conjunction with game control. Cronje Wilmot had collected numerous pupal shells and his theory was that the most favoured sites were under fallen or leaning trunks or at the foot of ‘buttressed’ trees locally known as mogotlho (acacia erioloba), mokoba (acacia nigrescens) and mooxa. Ford and Lewis agreed that a large percentage of the sites found were in the forest under tall trees with undergrowth ‘so dense that no sunlight could enter’{94}). On the basis of such data, E.A. Lewis considered the survey of the plant communities of considerable value in the policy on tsetse control{95}). Lewis called for active collaboration with Tribal Authorities, not
least to attract workers for bush clearance, with the promise that land freed of the fly would be allocated to people in the near future with permanent water supply in the form of wells.

E.A. Lewis saw renewed energy in the tsetse control under Ivor Lewis and reported an overall reduction of game, except warthog, which had increased. But he also received alarming reports that in some areas, tsetse encroachment had caused serious new outbreaks of disease. This deterioration was confirmed on a second visit in 1956, financed by WHO. According to official records figures, cattle in Makakung had declined from 10,512 to 6,666 in one year. The discriminative clearing policy seemed to be failing.

All this was noted by the government. The feeling at the headquarters in Mafikeng was that the struggle against the tsetse on the edges of the delta was probably not economically justifiable. When the Chief Medical Officer and advisor to the Colonial Office, Sir Eric D. Pristie visited Bechuanaland in 1953 he had already raised questions about large scale clearance and the recurrent expenditure that would be required: ‘The position seems different to that of other parts of Africa where population pressure is often the driving force of tsetse fly reclamation schemes’. A water development programme outside the fly belt was probably a better answer to the problem. The geophysical surveys showed that the spread of the tsetse was not confined to the west side of the swamp. Flies could now be found only two miles north of Shorobe (not far from Maun) whereas in 1953 they only occurred to the north of Sankuyo. In 1957, Dr. K. Unsworth, the Director of the Veterinary Services, argued that legislation would be necessary to prevent certain areas of the swampy ground from being used by livestock.

Increasingly, expert opinion was divided. Professor Davey of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, who visited Maun in 1957, believed that cattle exports were undervalued and argued that to abandon the area to the fly would mean losing much arable land as well as grazing. Food would have to be found elsewhere in Bechuanaland for most of the Ngamiland population and their cattle. The administrative centre in Maun would probably have to be moved as well. If, however, tsetse control was accompanied by organised agricultural and livestock schemes the resulting economic development would eventually make it all worthwhile.

Ivor Lewis was not yet prepared to concede that discriminative clearing had failed and submitted a new application to the CD & W Fund for £98,000. The Resident Commissioner in Maun suggested improved liaison with the BaTawana as a method of improving recruitment and securing more interest from Mrs. Moremi. Local people were seen to have an ‘obstructive outlook’ towards the government controlled scheme. Lewis was still confident that a detailed study of tsetse habitat requirements would give sufficient knowledge to further refine discriminative clearing. The focus was now on mogotlho (Acacia giraffae) as the most important part of the tsetse habitat. Extra funds for tsetse control began to be supplied by the Bechuanaland Protectorate from its annual budget.

8. Tsetse Control and Wider Development Planning in Ngamiland

Even the cattle trade was hampered by restrictions. In the early 1950s, cattle of this area had been banned from herding to the railway line, which lies over 300 miles east of the
district border. Consequently, Ngamiland traders had to herd cattle to the north and all cattle in Ngamiland were sold to Northern Rhodesia where prices were low. By the time the traders delivered their cattle at Kanzungula, they were often in poor condition. Before leaving Ngamiland, the cattle were vaccinated against anthrax and also treated with ethidium chloride for trypanosomosis. In 1958 foot and mouth disease outbreaks in Caprivi Strip, South West Africa prompted Bechuanaland officials to prevent its spread into their territory. A new outbreak of the foot and mouth SAT III type virus led to the closure of exports from the area for the whole year.

Co-operation and liaison with neighbouring veterinary services was of importance in the control of disease. South African personnel were stationed in the Caprivi for the investigation of foot and mouth. A conference was held in Bulawayo and Bechuanaland was seen as a particular threat to neighbouring countries. The Bechuanaland Director of Veterinary Services warned that the disease could only be suppressed at great expense, and the mobility of people and animals, especially mine workers from the Copperbelt, were likely to undermine controls. Nevertheless controls were imposed on canoe traffic across the Chobe as well as other transport routes, including airports. The prevalence of foot and mouth further undermined attempts to establish a flourishing livestock industry in Ngamiland. It is obvious from the above that at this period the cattle economy was failing.

By the late 1950s a change started to occur in the nature of the struggle against the tsetse in Ngamiland. In particular, game elimination was to give way to game control. Davies judged the earlier strategies as ‘often unorganised and ineffectual and muddled by lack of clear ideas on the best methods to use and the scale on which to apply them. This lasted from the last years of MacGiles to the frantic first years of Ivor Lewis, when much was planned but little done’. In 1957, with new finance and a clear goal of large-scale discriminative clearing, the TFC began to find its feet. The control measures expanded through felling of trees by mechanical saws, ring barking and treatment with dieseline. An average of 44 hunters operated per month killing 2,972 animals in the year. The number of human sleeping sickness cases continued to be small, though, and affected cattle were usually sold quickly to traders who treated them in Maun before movement and thus kept the death rate low.

In July 1957 the first meeting of the Central Policy Committee of Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Control took place in Francistown. Legislative Councillors J.G. Haskins and Tsheko Tsheko represented Ngamiland. Discussions during the central policy meetings show yet another phase of determination to intensify control. Renewed interest was shown in resettlement programmes, particularly in the Nxaragha valley. This was approved in principle by the Committee and a detailed proposal for the Nxaragha valley was prepared by the Maun Agricultural Officer.

The first moves towards control by insecticides were also made during this period. As early as 1953, Ford mentioned that ‘since much of the *Glossina morsitans* habitat in Ngamiland is linear because of its dependence on *molapo* systems… there might be a field for cheap use of insecticide applied from the ground’. Ivor Lewis noted that the South Africans had only cleared fly with insecticide ‘at great cost and after a long time’. However, by 1958 much experience with ground application of insecticides had been gained...
in Nigeria and Uganda and the Central Policy Committee recognised that although
discriminative clearing and resettlement were useful methods against stationary fly belts,
only game control and ground spraying with insecticides could stop an advancing belt.\(^\text{114}\)
Ivor Lewis visited UK research institutions and saw ground spraying in Uganda and aerial
spraying in Tanganyika, both organised by the Colonial Pesticides Unit at Arusha. By the
time Lewis returned in 1960 the enthusiasm for insecticides was such that an application
was made to the WHO for funds to do preliminary trials (Photo 2.3). A 99% reduction with
insecticides had been achieved in Uganda at a low cost and \textit{G. morsitans} was eradicated
from some parts of Nigeria.

In the early 1960s, the total annual recurrent expenditure of TFC was estimated at
£100,000 or about 2.4% of the whole budget of the Protectorate although it benefited less
than 10% of the population.\(^\text{115}\) A visitor wrote ‘the expenditure of money on tsetse control
in the area is staggering in relation to the permanent results achieved or likely to be
achieved’\(^\text{116}\). However, Ngamiland was regarded as a ‘crisis area’ that also threatened
Rhodesia and the Caprivi Strip.\(^\text{117}\) Bechuanaland had an international obligation to control
its tsetse fly.

9. Game Reserves, Hunting and Tsetse Eradication

As has been demonstrated, tsetse control was closely linked to game conservation and
hunting. Botswana was one of the few African countries that did not have a national park
until after independence, but some areas were protected by statute.

The proposal for the creation of the Chobe Game Reserve met opposition from officials
such as the Veterinary Officer, H.H. Webb, who felt that it would encourage the spread of
tsetse fly. The Director of Veterinary Services argued, ‘…our cattle industry can never be
put onto a proper footing if we are going to consider the game’\(^\text{118}\). Some local people in
the Chobe also raised concern because they wanted to be allowed to carry guns to protect
themselves from lions. Nevertheless, the area was officially closed to hunting between 1932
and 1943. After 1943 no more notices were issued due to the eastward spread of tsetse fly
and an increase in the incidence of sleeping sickness in the Maun area which resulted in
more definite plans being instituted for tsetse control in 1943.

Some officials felt that no restrictions should be placed upon African hunting and that
they should have opportunity to defend themselves against game encroachment. Advocates
of this position argued that: ‘However fond we may be for the preservation of wildlife,
surely we cannot hold to such an idea in the face of increased human suffering and poverty’\(^\text{119}\).
Other officials maintained that hunting by tsetse fly controllers had been expensive and
‘that the game population could be severely reduced if European hunters were allowed in
the swamps throughout the year, recouping their expenses by the export of \textit{biltong}’\(^\text{120}\). From
1943 until 1956, a total of more than 30,287 animals had been recorded as shot in the area
of fewer than 1,000 square miles.\(^\text{121}\) Between 1945 and 1964 60,638 game animals were
killed in the process of tsetse fly control. Although there are no records for individual years,
the total number suggest a gradual intensification of this game destruction programme.\(^\text{122}\).

In Bechuanaland, the CDC, which had initiated cattle ranch schemes, was accused of
not sticking to the agreement they had with the government in regard to the shooting of game. Their permit allowed them to shoot game, such as wildebeest and buffalo, which were likely to encroach on open water supplies and grazing surrounding the CDC white freehold ranching and farming blocks in northern Bechuanaland. The destruction of Royal game by CDC employees was also a matter of concern to the Bechuanaland Police. According to Millard, the CDC were under the impression that they had an open permit from the government to ‘knock-off everything including Royal game, large or small’ in their leased area. They would permit people outside the territory to come and hunt in the Chobe, to assist in ‘vermin control’.

Millard, aware of changing attitudes towards wildlife, proposed that ‘an area could be set aside in the territory as a national park in order that at least some of the disappearing species may be preserved’. He had been closely connected with such developments in the Congo, Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika. While appreciating that preservation of wildlife could not be run hand in hand with other developments such as the livestock industry, which he considered the ‘sheet-anchor of the territory’, he suggested preservation of large mammals such as giraffe, eland, cheetah, leopard and lion in the Okavango swamps. A long-term view was necessary even if hunting was to be sustained.

Millard, proposed legislation to establish a game reserve. Like the Resident Commissioner, Charles Rey, Millard viewed Kasane as a suitable place for viewing and photographing game and bird life; a holiday resort for tourists could bring in considerable revenue. He also observed that many of the tourists who visited the Wankie Game Reserve in increasing numbers would be prepared to continue via Victoria Falls to the Chobe area, ‘Where game, such as hippo, the Chobe bush-buck, lechwe and other river dwelling fauna can be seen’. The idea of photo-tourism, which had been promoted elsewhere, was discussed along with a reserve in northern Botswana at this time.

In 1957, the newly appointed Game Ranger Pat Bromfield took up this idea. He enforced the game laws more rigorously, undertook elephant control and advised the government on matters connected with game as well as conditions prevailing within the African Reserves. Prior to the 1961 Fauna Conservation Proclamation, preservation of game in tribal lands was partly the responsibility of African authorities, which, in varying degrees, had imposed some restrictions on hunting. While working in collaboration with chiefs, Bromfield found the Ngwaketse and Tawana authorities very interested in game preservation. In one of his monthly reports to Mafikeng, Bromfield was positive about the Batawana Regent Pulane Moremi’s co-operation in matters of game laws. Since the chiefs were equally concerned about game law offenders, they agreed with some government officials that in their territories there had been excessive killing of game for their valuable skins. In 1957 Chief Bathoen of BaNgwaketse decided there would be total prohibition of shooting of springbok for five years. In 1956 an elephant control unit was formed to police hunting on private land in the Tuli Block along the border with South Africa.

At the African Advisory Council, Bathoen emphasized, ‘We want to protect game as much as we can’. A draft was produced for regulations to control indiscriminate game hunting. Under Section 24 of the African Administration Proclamation the chiefs could enforce these either in full or in part. The discussions of such orders with the African
Advisory Council led to the proposal of a new Game Proclamation. This was intended as a general law throughout the country for the complete protection of some animals, either because of their rarity or their lack of natural ability to protect themselves\textsuperscript{138). Thus local African people were not left out in these discussions.

Part of Bromfield’s responsibilities was to assist in the policing of poaching along the western side boundary of the Wankie Game Reserve, especially of elephant\textsuperscript{139). He noted that the Chobe bush-buck and the \textit{puku}, once plentiful, were now rarely seen. According to his report, he had evidence of the overshooting of game by the District Administration and Police alike to supply meat to the Kasane camp. Bromfield’s reports show that the hunting and shooting of game continued in close proximity to the area eyed for potential photo-tourism\textsuperscript{141).}

Thus during this period there were conflicts within the state over game preservation and control policy. Those advocating hunting for tsetse control or licence revenues were being challenged by a few officials who restated the dangers to wildlife. The Administrative Secretary (upgrading of Government Secretary and Assistant Resident Commissioner post), who was interested in promoting safari hunting, approved parties from Johannesburg and Bulawayo to shoot animals such as zebra, lion, buffalo and elephant. On another occasion, a party of Americans in the company of a white hunter from Kenya were also given permission to hunt at Joberega/Tsotsoroga in northern Bechuanaland\textsuperscript{142).}

Bromfield therefore increasingly backed Millard’s view that, ‘all game should be protected in the Chobe area’. He was also critical of the tsetse fly control policy to kill all game between the Sand River and the Chobe River\textsuperscript{143). Quickly, the Chobe Game Reserve was established. In 1959, it was gazetted, and in 1961 the Fauna Conservation Proclamation was declared in the Bechuanaland Protectorate\textsuperscript{144). The gazetting of the Chobe Game Reserve was followed in February 1961 by the declaration of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve totalling an estimated 581,730 square km, one of the largest in Africa. The establishment of the reserve resulted from the recommendations of a survey of the San. It was proposed that an extensive area of Crown land be set aside to enable the San to follow their traditional hunting and gathering way of life. George Silberbauer’s \textit{Report to the Government of Bechuanaland on the Bushman Survey} recommended that the San be given full hunting and occupation rights within the reserve\textsuperscript{145). The Chobe no-hunting area was elevated finally to national park status in 1968. Wildlife tourism appeared to be more lucrative than cattle ranching in these environments. Game reserves in Zululand in particular were means of coming to terms with the tsetse rather than trying to eradicate \textit{nagana} at was the case in Ngamiland.}

The control of tsetse fly by game extermination increasingly became a controversial issue in the 1960s. Through the wildlife societies, the IUCN and publications, conservationists expressed concern about the destruction of wild animals as a method of controlling tsetse-borne trypanosomosis. The concern was that the environmental and ecological implications of eradication were not fully appreciated and that adequate measures were not always taken to minimize damage. The WWF, for instance, maintained the position that tsetse eradication was not the only means of improving rural living standards. In their view an alternative form of rational, sustainable land-use was the development of the potential of species wildlife
The destruction of one natural resource in the apparent interest of another did not commend itself within the international conservation community. Moreover, this was a period of a greater recognition of the importance of wildlife as a natural resource, particularly in Africa. Sir Julian Huxley observed in his report to UNESCO in 1960 that:

> The superiority of wild game over domestic stock as a method of utilizing the resources of the habitat is very pronounced in the vast areas of the African continent, which are infested by tsetse, and where cattle therefore succumb to the trypanosome infection to which wild game are immune. Such areas can be rendered tsetse-free, and various methods have been and are being employed for this purpose-selective bush clearance, spraying, and even game-slaughter aimed at eliminating the vectors of the trypanosome parasite. This method was tried on large scale in Southern Rhodesia before the last war, but there is now general agreement that it is not merely destructive of a valuable resource but often inefficient, since various small species may survive and continue to act as vectors....

John Ford also believed that large scale game destruction was a wasteful and wrong method of trypanosomosis control in the 1960s, but he acknowledged that other techniques, especially bush clearing and insecticide spraying were not entirely effective and supported the idea of culling some species.

It is easy to understand why the temptation to revert to game destruction sometimes seemed to be irresistible to hard-pressed veterinarians. Experience showed that rapid, wholesale elimination of the wild animals, in many areas the principal host, was followed by a decrease in the fly population. This was demonstrated again by a game elimination experiment carried out during 1962–1963, the main target being warthog, which was increasingly recognized as an important, perhaps the most important, host-species. But the evidence for long term success was less strong and during the 1960s it was frequently challenged. P.E. Glover, of the Tanzania National Parks, cited an example of an intensive hunting experiment in Zimbabwe that wastefully killed species that should not have been included in the cull. He argued that zebra, impala and duiker were seldom hosts for tsetse and Thompson’s gazelles tended to keep out of tsetse habitats. The critics argued that no instance was known where game elimination by itself had provided a complete and final answer to the tsetse problem. A residue of tsetse had contrived to adapt itself to more elusive hosts, ready to make a ‘comeback’ if conditions became more favourable—including those provided by a build up of domestic stock. Fraser Darling argued that the Rhodesian slaughter policy was ineffective because the warthog, kudu and duiker could survive and infiltrate once more. DDT, banned in Europe, North America, Scandinavia and South Africa was also increasingly controversial.

By contrast, some now saw the tsetse as guaranteeing the safety of wildlife. The European Economic Community (EEC), which is now European Union (EU) was even challenged for its intention to fund the Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia tsetse eradication schemes. The protagonists of game farming pursued a thesis that wildlife was less destructive of the environment than cattle, which comparatively were likely to produce bad effects from overstocking. Overstocking as a result of removal of the tsetse belts
had been a key concern and critique of veterinarians since the 1930s. Despite the criticism Southern Rhodesia faced regarding its policy of game destruction in the 1960s, there were already game reserves, forest reserves and national parks created in areas regarded as not occupied and not scheduled for development.  

10. Game Policy and Promotion of the Safari Industry and the Creation of Game Reserves

In 1961 the Legislative Council had to consider the question of the game policy in relation to all of these contending interests and priorities. Chobe in particular promised to be a basis for a major tourist development. Interestingly, Arthur Douglas, the Administrative Secretary, was careful not to promote the preservation of wildlife against the interests of agriculture and particularly the cattle industry on which the country so largely depended. Up until the discovery of diamonds after independence, the nation’s major capital asset was its cattle. He assured the Council that if the presence of game was inconsistent with good farming and with exports, then something would be done to control or reduce game.

During Legislative Council debates, members were made aware of an announcement made by the CCTA that the establishment of extensive national parks in East Africa made it possible to promote tourism which had brought in large revenue to the respective countries. The Star newspaper had reported that at this conference, South Africa was considered the most advanced country in Africa in the field of profitable conservation. In the white farming blocks such as the Tuli Block, the government prohibited the establishment of private game reserves because they were seen to have no public benefit. The same approach was not to be extended to African Reserves, where the government felt that apart from the threat to veterinary disease control, game did not constitute quite the same threat to farming.

A suggestion was made that local campaigns of game destruction in the Tribal Territories could be practicable in areas where it had been shown that cattle were frequently under risk of infection because of this proximity to areas of high game density. Periodic thinning out of the game population would take place by opening areas up to hunters especially along veterinary fences and cattle routes. It was proposed that the hunting be done by concessionaires who would also produce revenue in the form of hunting licenses and export duties on hides and skins. This was seen as a way of killing two birds with one stone.

Another element in the debate was the interests and claims for special treatment by local white residents. While the majority of the elected members of the Legislative Council acknowledged that many countries of the world had laid down a code of wildlife protection and accepted the ideals behind it, they wanted the government to know that they subscribed to such a policy only to a limited extent. It became important in the debates to relate the question of game preservation to the economy of the country. The question of transmission of livestock diseases became particularly controversial. Haskins, a prominent businessman in Francistown and a Cabinet member, appreciated wildlife as a valuable asset for the ‘financial, economic and Tourist point of view’. But ranching operations could not be continued successfully and efficiently if game was not controlled. He proposed that the CDC Bushman Pits cattle scheme receive top priority with respect to game control as an
outlet for Ngamiland cattle export. Foot and mouth, malignant catarrh, wildebeest eye disease and trypanosomosis remained problems and areas with high densities of wildlife near the cattle population were seen regionally as the key trouble spots. This resulted in the decision to erect fences around the Kruger National Park in South Africa and, in part, around the Wankie Game Reserve in Rhodesia. Prior to the independence of Botswana, there was no major break-through in relation to the production of the vaccine for different strains of foot and mouth in Southern African territories. Other white members argued that the expenditure involved in disease control and quarantine fences weighed against fauna protection.

Haskins also complained about the increase in fees for hunting licenses to white residents in his constituency, Ngamiland. He obviously wanted the white residents to enjoy greater privileges than non-residents. Dr. Meriweather, a former medical doctor at the Scottish Livingstone hospital in Molepolole, 50 kms west of Gaborone, and other members also strongly supported the idea of reducing the license fee to enable white residents to hunt in the territory. Many of the contributors to the motion on game policy viewed Ngamiland as a ‘hunters’ paradise’. But Haskins agreed that if a game reserve was to be sustained, Chobe was an ideal place. It was ‘practically uninhabited by human beings’ and ‘only suitable for the preservation of wild life in view of encroachment by Tsetse Fly’.

Perhaps most important, Seretse Khama referred to the difficulties of selling Bechuanaland beef to France, Italy and the Scandinavian countries because of foot and mouth disease. Foot and mouth was dangerous because of commercial protectionism as much as contagion, whereas nagana was not the subject of trade embargoes. Britain was the only country in Europe willing to import Bechuanaland beef. Seretse Khama was a major cattle rancher who supplied the newly established Lobatse meat freezing plant. He was not sentimental about the protection of wildlife; and argued that the cattle industry had to take priority.

Another African member, L.D. Raditladi, who had been Tribal Secretary at Maun (1944–1953) recognised wildlife as ‘African heritage’, and opposed the reckless slaughtering of any game species, but focused attention on foot and mouth in Ngamiland. The disease was far worse in the north than in the south of the country. While he supported the idea of establishing national parks, ‘where game will be systematically protected with the resultant promotion of tourism which will increase the finances of the Territory’, disease control had to remain a priority. Maun resident Tsheko Tsheko took a similar position, which emphasized Africans’ right to hunt. On the one hand there were ‘vast areas where the life of cattle is not possible’; ‘we have natural game reserves, such as for example Chibauro (Chief’s Island)’. On the other hand, he proposed that Africans be given enough arms and ammunition not ‘to destroy game totally but to control movement of game in ranching areas’. Tsheko highlighted a contradiction within colonial policy whereby Ngamiland residents were not permitted to use. 303 rifles, when dozens of such rifles were in use by those employed by the government in the Tsetse Fly Control Department.

The debate as a whole demonstrated clearly the conflicts between livestock production and wildlife conservation. African members were, on the whole, more sympathetic to wildlife preservation than whites, even though some had considerable reservations.
argued:

I do not think if we suggest that to the Veterinary Department and to the Game Department that our wildlife should be destroyed we would be wise. We know that our young generation who are born today, in 10 years time will not know what is meant by an eland or hartebeest or kudu. I think our Veterinary Department will still devise ways and means of how to control these animals and how to control foot and mouth disease, not by destroying wildlife but by devising some means whereby animals could be kept in their game reserves.

All the white members of the Legislative Council were traders wanting to maximize cattle purchase for export. Bathoen and Goareng Mosinyi like Princes Philip of England and Bernhardt (Holland) pushed wildlife conservation from the aristocratic position of wanting to maintain private hunting. The Legislative Council debate in 1961 demonstrated significant African support for wildlife preservation and this development proved to be critical in the foundation of Moremi.

Notes


8) See J.E. Davies, 1981. *The History of Tsetse Fly Control in Botswana*. Davies worked in Botswana as an entomologist from April 1975 to March 1980. His work draws heavily from details of events in Botswana provided by different officials who came to Ngamiland between 1930s and 1960s. These details form the bulk of the records at the Tsetse Control Department in Maun.


10) Other species found elsewhere in Africa: *rhodesiense*, *t. congolense*, *t. brucei* and *vivax*.


13) D. Livingstone, 1865. *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries*: 424.


19) BNA S. 203/1, letter: Acting Resident Magistrate, Maun to Acting Govt. Sec., Mafikeng, 7 August 1916.


23) The San and Yei of the delta region call Chief’s Island ‘ABAURO’ ([|A|ni Khwe pronunciation) and the BaTawana pronounced it CHIBAULO, which is how it appears on official records today. To the local people ‘ABAURO incorporates Bobo Island.


25) Most of the 1950s and 1960s archival records have used BAYEI and YEI interchangeably as does the literature after Botswana’s independence (1966). However, the activists in the Kamanakau
cultural organization prefer Wayeyi or Yei. Email with Lydia Saleshando, a professor at the University of Botswana and Kamanakau key member, 11 Jun 2011.


27) Cited in H.J. Heinz, 1968. Trypanosomiasis in Ngamiland. 99. *Kotselo* is mentioned quite often in the oral material that has been used to build the chapter on the BaSarwa pattern of movement in the Okavango Delta. See R.K.K. Molefi, 1996. *A Medical History of Botswana, 1885–1966*. Gaborone: The Botswana Society: 138 and 143 on *kotselo*. Tsetse and *nagana* have become standardised terms to refer to the fly and the disease. *Kotselo* has the same meaning as *nagana*.


29) Interview with Pete Smith, Maun, 11 December 1997; See also group interviews at Khwai, 1997–2001.

30) Oral interviews with elders in both the Gudigwa/Kabamukuni area and Khwai show the pattern movement of the people as they were moving along the panhandle of the Okavango and also in and out of what is the Moremi Game Reserve in avoidance of the tsetse fly plague.

31) Acting Resident Magistrate, Maun to Acting Govt. Sec., Mafikeng, 7 August 1916.


36) BNA S. 35/1/6, letter from G.E. Nettleton, Resident Commissioner to Government Secretary, Mafikeng, 15 June 1917 and RHO 626. s. 20, BP, *Veterinary Services, Annual Report* 1948.

37) The road was named after the founder of Riley’s Hotel, Maun.


39) BNA S. 208/1, H.H. Curson. Report Preliminary: *Nagana* in Ngamiland and Chobe Magisterial Districts. (BP Govt. 1932). Imperial Secretary, then title of Secretary to High Commissioner.

40) Guy Marshall had a farm in Zimbabwe which Swynnerton (as in the Tanzania anti-tsetse campaign) managed in the 1910s colonial networks.


42) Original emphasis in Curson’s Report (1932).


45) For the more subtle arguments of Stevenson Hamilton (not all game die in culls therefore reservoirs for trypanosomosis will always remain and game killing considered a waste of time. It was viewed as butchery rather than scientific disease control strategy), see J. Stevenson Hamilton, 1911. The Relation between Game and Tsetse Flies. Bulletin of Entomology Research 2 (2): 50–90.

46) BNA S. 218/14, Minutes of kgotla meeting, Maun, 3 September 1934.


52) BNA S. 219/2, BP Medical Report, 29 June 1939. This is confirmed by the Khwai/Gudigwa interviews, 1997–2001.


61) *The Problem of Tsetse and Trypanosomiais in Ngamiland*.


66) See BP. *Veterinary Divisional Annual Reports*, 1947–1963. This is a policy that was carried through to independence period.


68) BNB 433, Expedition on Tsetse Fly Control (Mafikeng: BP, 1940s–1950s). See also M. Crawshaw. Notes and Recommendations for the Purpose of Discussion of Plans to be Adopted to Deal with the Tsetse Fly Menace in Ngamiland. 1945. BP Vet. Dept.


75) BNA S. 219/7, minutes of kgotla meeting, Maun 1948.

76) BNA S. 219/7, High Commissioner’s tour of Ngamiland, 19 September 1949.


78) BNA S. 219/7, Ngamiland Annual Report 1946.


87) BNA S. 283/4, Div Com (N) Report to the Gov. Sec., 11 August 1953.


89) Report: Control of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis. 1957.


91) Div. Com. (N) 7/2, Minutes of the Local Committee meeting, Maun, 31 July and 11 October 1957.


93) The Commonwealth Relations Office Report is cited in the London *Times* articles: British Aid for Bechuanaland Raising Standard of Administration. 21 March 1958; Message of Hope. 27


97) Div. Com. (N) 7/2, letter from E. Wright to E. Lewis. In 1962 E. Wright became a member of the Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society. In the 1960s, they were part of the Ngamiland cattle traders and their business spread to trading stores. Today the Wright, like the Welio are among the prominent business families of Ngamiland. See Sunday Standard, Gaborone, 11 June 2011.

98) Div. Com. (N) 7/2, minutes of Central Policy of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control, Francistown, 3 July 1957. See also BP Veterinary Records, 1956.


102) See Ngamiland Report: Control of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis.


105) Div. Com. (N) 3/2, letter from Director of Vet. Services, Northern Rhodesia to Director of Vet. Services, Pretoria, 23 August 1956. Also cited in Savingram, ‘Foot and Mouth Disease-Northern Rhodesia and Caprivi Strip’ from the Director of Vet. Services, Mafikeng to Directors of Vet. and Agric. Services, Pretoria and Northern Rhodesia, 11 September 1956.


111) Div. Com. (N), minutes of the Committee of Tsetse Control, Francistown, 3 July 1957.


113) See Lewis’ Report, 1957.

114) Minutes of the Local Tsetse Fly Control Committee meeting, Maun, 31 July 1957; Tsetse Fly Control Officer Report, October 1957.
115) Willet’s Report: Trypanosomiasis Problem in BP.
117) Quoted in the ‘Local Development Committee report’, minutes of Tsetse Fly Central Policy Committee, 8 October 1963.
119) BNA Med. 5/3/2, DMS to D. Atkins, 27 October 1948.
120) BNA S. 222/2/1. minutes, 29 June 1957.
123) Div. Com. (N) 2/8 on the correspondence between some Govt. officials showing this concern, for example, from the to Div Com (N), 26 March, 1953 and from Mafikeng to DC, Kasane, 23 March, 1953.
126) Div. Com. (N) 2/8, letter Millard, Div Com (N), 1 April, 1953. See also permit to shoot game, authorised by S.V. Lawrenson, Resident Commissioner, Mafikeng, 9 February 1954. Further information of abuse was received at Mafikeng office: see Memo by D.A.T. Atkins, Mafikeng to Manager of the CDC project with copies to Divisional Commissioners and District Commissioners, 14 January 1956.
135) S.415/1, ‘Note on draft Game Hunting Control Orders for Tribal Territories’, 20 March, 1957.
136) Div. Com. (N) 5/9. A record of a meeting between representatives of the BP and Southern Rhodesia on problems of game control along the common border of the two Territories, Plumtree, 29 June 1959. Other related correspondence from Game Ranger to the Secretariat, Mafikeng on
137) Bathoen, chief of BaNgwaketse and a member of the African Advisory Council.
142) Div. Com. (N) 5/9, Savingram from Div. Com. (N) to Govt. Sec. Mafikeng, 10 April 1959; Fax from Div Com. (N) to Game officers, Kasane, 1 April 1959 and 4 July 1959.
145) See G. Silberbauer, Report to the Government of Bechuanaland on the Bushman Survey. Gaborone: Government Printer, 1965. The Botswana Government has since relocated the San/ BaSarwa communities outside CKGR (to New Xade and Kaudwane) and the resettlement process has attracted protests from local and international human rights groups. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7.
147) Quoted in J. Ford, 1965. Control of Tsetse-Fly by ‘Game’ Extermination. IUCN Bulletin 5: 7. Huxley was the first director of UNESCO. For further observation: see Ford’s ISCTR paper: Game Conservation and Farming in Relation to Cattle Farming and Bovine Trypanosomiasis. 1962.
153) See the Introductory speech by the Administrative Secretary, ‘Game Policy’, Legislative Council, 1961.
154) See the Admin. Sec.’s speech on ‘Game Policy’. The Johannesburg Star, 24 March 1962 reported that Douglas was encouraging big game safari firms to operate in BP.
155) See also The Star, 25 February and 7 October 1961 and 9 and 16 September 1961.
156) See A.J. Douglas’s introductory remarks on the motion ‘Game Policy’.
157) See the debates by members of the BP Legislative Council, 1961.
158) Shaw’s contribution on ‘Game Policy’, Legislative Council.
160) Unsworth on ‘Game Policy’.
161) See Legislative Council debates, ‘Game Policy’.
162) Haskins on the motion ‘Game Policy’.
163) The *Guardian* (UK) reported Seretse and his uncle Tshekedi Khama amassing considerable wealth through selling their cattle to the Lobatse abattoir, 3 March 1958 and 4 February 1959.
165) See Raditladi on ‘Game Policy’, The Disease Control Project Report highlighted that foot and mouth was endemic in Ngamiland.
166) See Raditladi on ‘Game Policy’.
167) Prior to the establishment of a park (Moremi) in the Okavango, Chief’s Island and its proximity were regarded as the BaTswana’s chief’s hunting ground. See also Tsheko on ‘Game Policy’.
168) See individual contributions by Chief Bathoen and Mosinyi to the motion, ‘Game Policy’.
169) Mosinyi’s contribution to the debate on ‘Game Policy’.
Chapter 2
Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Control in the Okavango Delta

Photo 2.1  The cattle industry in Botswana. Source: Young, 1966

Photo 2.3  Spraying Tsetsefly at Shokomuko Experimental Station near Maun, August 1963. Source: BNA ILLUS 375, originally Central Office of Information, London, D. 104562
Chapter 3

Key Players: Achieving Consensus on the Fauna Conservation Society and Moremi Game Reserve

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on the individuals directly involved in establishing the park, and on the political context of the early 1960s. As previously mentioned, the central argument of my book is that the Moremi Game Reserve was not a product of colonial conservationism and the actions of the colonial state. This distinguishes it from many national parks in Africa, and in fact the Moremi case may suggest that some re-examination of the history of other parks would be valuable.

In discussions on wildlife conservation there is now extensive literature on community management, which is presented as a contemporary innovation. Yet the establishment of the Moremi Game Reserve shows a similar set of players and interests involved more than forty years ago: chiefs, hunters, white adventurers and international organizations. This chapter examines first the most important whites involved, Robert and June Kay, and then their African co-workers, the local whites, and the position of the BaTawana chiefs. It describes how consensus was achieved in the area in the formation of a Fauna Conservation Society, which in turn generated the idea of a wildlife reserve.

2. June and Robert Kay—White Hunters Turned Conservationists

In a number of studies, such as Jane Carruthers’s work on the Kruger National Park, the role of key individuals has been highlighted. James Stevenson-Hamilton, the first warden of the Kruger National Park turned from hunter to conservationist. In Kenya, colonial officials Archie Ritchie and Mervyn Cowie were deeply involved in the concept of the first national park project in 1945. The efforts of individuals such as Noel Simon, founder of the Kenya Wildlife Society, have been noted. Joy Adamson, celebrated internationally as an author and conservationist, launched the Elsa Wild Animal Appeal for wildlife conservation. Bernhard Grzimek, Director of Frankfurt Zoo, cast himself as the guardian of the Serengeti in Tanzania. In the book *Serengeti Shall Not Die* and films such as *No Room for Wild Animals* he appealed to large audiences of conservationists and raised significant sums of money in Germany for wildlife conservation in Tanzania.

There were comparable individuals in northern Botswana, and their activities illustrate yet a further complication in the politics behind the foundation of the park. Robert and June Kay (Photo 3.1) came to Botswana in 1958 by chance, travelling down from Southern
Rhodesia through the Zambezi valley. June was born in India and her father (a consulting engineer to an Indian Maharajah) moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1928 looking for work. He invested his money in an engineering business in Bulawayo. According to June, she was brought up like a frontier child who ‘was then destined to live in Africa for forty years and, inevitably …adopted the full canon of Colonial beliefs and customs’ 4. Her writing reflects colonial attitudes and a race hierarchy where Africans were usually the servants, and a white person was generally addressed by an African servant as ‘morena’ or ‘bwana’, making the fact that the Kays learned to work with Africans somewhat surprising 5.

Robert Kay, the son of a British colonel, met June when he was 24 and she was 16. He had joined the Royal Air Force in Britain during the Second World War and was sent to Southern Rhodesia for training 6. Initially they bought a farm and June started acquiring wild animals as pets. Robert supplemented their income by hunting and June worked as a secretary at her father’s company. However, they had constant financial difficulties and in 1957 sold their farm. They preferred to spend a few years on safari, to provide June with material for writing travel books 7. Robert had come across an article from The Surplus Register, a journal published in London, advertising the sale of amphibious DUKWs from war surplus. The DUKWs were built as lighterage craft for ferrying men and ammunitions. Having bought the amphibious boat-cum-lorry, they equipped it as a safari vehicle, planning to cross Africa (a fashionable activity at the time). Robert had read some African history and named his DUKW, ‘Shaka Zulu’ 8. The DUKW was a huge unwieldy vehicle, over thirty feet long by twelve feet wide, with a net weight of over seven tons. It was expensive to run but it was distinctive and many people whom I have interviewed remember it. The DUKW is mentioned by several elders in the Okavango 9. In his book Jeremy Mallinson recounts his adventures on his expedition in the Okavango and amongst his photos is the DUKW 10.

The Kays headed for the Zambezi for three weeks before moving on to the banks of the Chobe River. When they reached the Chobe area, following the ‘old hunters’ road travelled by Fredrick Selous and Gordon Cumming, they met Jack Chase, the owner of a small hotel in Mahalapye, Central district (then Ngwato), who introduced them to hunting in Bechuanaland 11. The Kays hoped to regain their feet financially through the sale of crocodile skins, photography and June’s books. Robert was keen to venture into film.

During their first safari in northern Bechuanaland they encountered poaching in which poachers would sometimes kill cow elephants not carrying enough ivory to make a billiard ball. When they returned to Bulawayo after their short stay in Bechuanaland, their DUKW vehicle had attracted attention, and the Bulawayo Chronicle carried a story about their experience with charging elephants. The Rhodesian game department became critical, accusing them of provoking the wild animals into charging. The story spread throughout the colonial government network of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland. According to June, the official harassment, which continued until Robert was forced to quit the Protectorate thirteen years later, originated with this episode 12. Due to their unpleasant relationship with the Game Department in Southern Rhodesia, the Kays decided to spend two months in Central Africa across the Zambezi, and then drive the DUKW through Africa to Cairo, heading for Britain. First of all, however, they decided to look once more at the
Okavango Swamps before they moved to England. On this and subsequent trips June began to keep a comprehensive safari log, which formed the basis of her first book, *Okavango*\(^1\). Like Marjorie Michael and Joy Adamson, she was fond of giving sentimental, dramatic descriptions of rivers, water and landscape in Africa\(^2\).

Upon the Kays arrival in the late 1950s, Bechuanaland was still a very poor country, particularly the north, which was ravaged by tsetse fly and endemic foot and mouth disease. Maun had very few facilities and no telephone link with the rest of the world\(^3\). Riley’s Hotel was the hub of white village social life. Since the 1920s it had served thirsty travellers arriving after the two-day trip from Francistown. According to one of the regular visitors to Riley’s, Lionel Palmer, most of the discussions in the bar in the 1950s had to do with lion hunting\(^4\). B.A. Young (Theatre Critic of the *Financial Times*) observes in his book *Bechuanaland*, published in 1966, that the Riley’s Hotel bar was the most obviously multi-racial he saw anywhere in the Southern African region. Maun local residents Isaac Tudor and Ronnie Kays made the same observation on the tendency of races to mix indiscriminately and unselfconsciously at the Maun bar\(^5\). June Kay describes a similar scenario in Okavango\(^6\). The first meeting to form the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland in November 1962 was held at Riley’s Hotel\(^7\).

When the Kays made their second safari to northern Bechuanaland, they were already aware of the history of the region, and knew that the BaTawana were in control of the legendary delta where there was a small scattered population in an area with abundant wildlife. At the time the population of the region was approximately 50,000\(^8\).

### 3. Crocodile Hunting

The Kays first camped at Matlapaneng where Crocodile Camp Safaris is located today (near the University of Botswana Okavango Research Institute), on the main road leading to Moremi Game Reserve from Maun. It was common for friends who once visited Ngamiland to recommend Matlapaneng, the shady spot along the Thamalakane River banks for new white arrivals. This was a good camp for fishing and a base for many hunters who were on safari trips to Khwai, Savuti and Linyati\(^9\). Upon their arrival in Ngamiland, they introduced themselves to the District Commissioner (DC) in Maun and the paramount chief of BaTawana as protocol required visitors to report to the relevant authorities\(^10\). June Kay notes that the DC had been warned by way of a discreet note from the Game Department that ‘Robert was a molester of helpless elephants, a man who needed to be discouraged’. The Kays moved camp from Matlapaneng to an island on Thamalakane River, where they camped by permission. Today the tourist ‘Island Safari Lodge is located at this site (Photo 3.2)\(^11\). It was here that June Kay started working on her book.

The Kays’ marriage, which was troubled and did not last, is discussed in *Starlings Laughing: A Memoir of Africa*. Nevertheless, like the Adamsons’ troubled relationship in Kenya, it did produce some remarkable outcomes.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the belly skins of crocodiles from East, Central and Southern Africa were exploited for their commercial value in manufacturing handbags, shoes and other luxury items\(^12\). From 1956 until 1962 the colonial administration granted concessions
for crocodile hunting in Ngamiland and the western part of Chobe which proved attractive to commercial hunters such as Bobbie Wilmot, Herbert Brinkman and K. MacDonald of Lourie and Co. The government imposed an export duty of R1.00 per crocodile hide and a royalty of R2.00 for Tawana tribal treasuries for each skin exported from Ngamiland. Over this period, the value of crocodile skins exported from northern Bechuanaland was £88,976.

The Kays became acquainted with Bobbie Wilmot who had lived in Maun since 1945 and held the exclusive concession to kill crocodiles in the Okavango swamps. He had originally shared the concession with a South African hide-and-skin merchant, and between them they were allowed 5,000 (later reduced to 2,000) crocodiles a year. According to Wilmot himself, close to 40,000 crocodiles were killed in the swamps in eleven years. On some occasions he was engaged for crocodile trapping on behalf of South African zoos, which wanted live exhibits. According to Cowley, author of Fabled Tribe, the Witwatersrand Kalahari Research team made their expedition into the Okavango swamps under the guidance of crocodile hunters and some BaSarwa/San individuals. Bobbie introduced Robert and June to crocodile hunting. In her books June gives clear descriptions of the techniques used for hunting crocodile with an outboard motor boat and high-powered rifles. Precision shooting was essential to avoid the belly skin, which was the only saleable part of the entire hide. Such hunting together with June’s freelance writing sustained their livelihood. The interconnecting waterways of the Chitabe and Khwai became important spots for crocodile hunting. In 1960, the Kays extended their hunting to the Botletli River, an extension of the Thamalakane. Lanting observes that because of their crocodile hunting operation in the Okavango Wilmot and the Kays came to know the landscapes intimately and animals individually.

4. The Local Skills and Knowledge of the ‘River San/BaSarwa’

The Wilmots used ethnic San/BaSarwa individuals such as Mogau Xhauwe, who had extensive knowledge of the swamps and was adept at finding crocodile nests, as guides. The Kays got to know and work with key San intermediaries like Kwere Seriri who in 1958 introduced them to a lucrative crocodile hunting spot, the Magweqhana lagoons in the Khwai area. ‘Without Kwere, there was no hope of reaching Magweqhana’, June wrote, ‘and without hunting the Magweqhana lagoons, there would be no hope of raising money, somehow, to pay off our debts in Bulawayo’. June Kay further affirms that Kwere ‘knew the southern Okavango like the palm of his hand’.

The Kays described Kwere as a brave man and someone who would save a hunter’s life, at the risk of his own. June had her own personal experience to relate when Kwere saved them from the ‘man-eating’ lions of Mababe Flats.

White hunters turned to individuals such as Kwere for assistance because of their reputation as hunters, trackers, guides and their knowledge of the landscape. In the 1920s Seriri, Kwere’s father, was well known in the region as a guide and tracker to different groups of big game hunting parties in the Khwai environs. Interviews with Bugakhwe have confirmed that Robert and June Kay met Kwere Seriri prior to the founding of the Ngamiland
Fauna Conservation Society\textsuperscript{34}. As his father had done, in the 1950s, Kwere often hunted and acted as guide for members of the BaTawana royal family\textsuperscript{35}. According to several of the Khwai informants, Kwere frequently travelled in the bush with his father Seriri. He was taught about the area, showed around and told the names of places, rivers, and pools and names of animals, big and small, and names of birds and plants. This is how the knowledge of the terrain was transferred to the son, who later transferred the knowledge to his children and grandchildren some of whom were working for lodges in the Khwai area as guides and trackers. Several of his descendants took pride in relating what they claimed to have acquired from him as local knowledge and this is reflected in the interviews held in Khwai with Area Kwere (29 June 1998), K.B. Kwere and Keraetse Brown Kwere (28 June 1997).

Kwere, like most of the indigenous people, was noted for his understanding of wind and the scent, sound and spoor of animals. June noted that he could interpret the age and sex of an animal from tracks and could tell how fast it was moving, whether it was lightly or badly wounded, and if it was dying\textsuperscript{36}. Harry Selby, who had also worked with Kwere Seriri and Mogau Xhauwe, described the BaSarwa as ‘marvellous hunters and good trackers, when they set off trotting along the animal spoor in front of the vehicle’\textsuperscript{37}. Selby was the founder of Ker, Downey and Selby Safari Company in Botswana and had the opportunity of navigating the Chobe and Okavango waterways (late 1950s–1960s) and on several occasions met ‘River Bushmen’ [\[Anikhwe and Bugakhwe\]]. Other hunters such as the Maun residents Douglas Wright, Lionel Palmer, Ronnie Kays and Fred Duckworth of Mafikeng recognize the BaSarwa ‘genius’, as the ‘best trackers and companions’\textsuperscript{38}.

Kwere Seriri, Lekgoa Mabejane (Photo 3.3) and Morotsi Molomo, the first game guides of the reserve are still remembered today by some of the former members of the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland for their intensive knowledge of the Chitabe/Khwai area. Pete Smith, for whom Kwere had also worked as a guide in the 1960s, observed the local knowledge of the BaSarwa. Kwere told Smith names of ‘all’ the plants and rivers that he recorded on the Bodumatau area: ‘I think there is no Hambukushu nor Yei who knew the area as Kwere did’\textsuperscript{39}. Many Bugakhwe informants related to me their extensive knowledge on behavioural patterns of particular animals that can be of use in anti-poaching measures. Clearly the indigenous people had their own unique knowledge of the terrain, environment and vegetation as well as the behaviour of animals in the local environment.

5. The Relationship between the Kays and the Officials

June and Robert Kay followed the fashion of fostering wild animals and their first pets in Ngamiland were lion cubs named Chinky and Cubby, which they bought from Jack Chase. According to June the arrival of the cubs made her start a long career as foster-mother to a number of animal orphans, as did the Michaels of South Africa, the Adamsons of Kenya and Norman Carr in Zambia. Contact with these orphans advanced her knowledge of animal behaviour\textsuperscript{40}.

The Kays’s appearance in Ngamiland created a stir amongst the white community in Maun. Robert’s association with individuals like Jack Chase, who was known to indiscriminately wound cow elephants on the Chobe, blackened his name in the eyes of the Bechuanaland
Game Department. Robert was also friendly with Mitch Spencer, a crocodile businessman at the Victoria Falls, whose licence, which gave him permission to hunt lion in the Colonial Development Corporation property in northern Bechuanaland, was withdrawn in 1959 for failing to observe the laws. The Chief Game Warden of Wankie Game Reserve had alerted the Bechuanaland game authorities about Spencer who was photographed on both sides of the border hunting lion without a licence. Between August and October 1959 there was correspondence between the officials in northern Bechuanaland and the Government Secretary’s Office in Mafikeng about the Kays’ prolonged visit to Maun and its environs, their DUKW and the two lion cubs. Robert was seen accompanied by Chinky (Photo 3.4) on walks in the Khwai.

At the time in Bechuanaland various District Commissioners and District Officers had the authority to issue a generous ‘pot licence’ to government officers working in the bush for a period of more than a week. This free licence to hunt game for the camp cooking pot might include such animals as buffalo, kudu, gemsbok, hartebeest, springbok and impala. There was a tendency to abuse the licence. Individuals such as Lionel Palmer benefited from a ‘pot licence’ when he was working as a government livestock officer in the north and west of Bechuanaland. According to his testimony, this gave him an early grounding in lion hunting: by the age of twenty-one, he had shot thirteen.

June Kay had approached the DC’s office for a ‘pot licence’ to feed the cubs when the shooting season was closed. The officials would not grant such a licence nor did they approve of wild animals being kept in captivity. Concern was expressed to the Mafikeng office by both the Maun District Commissioner and Francistown Divisional Commissioner that the Kays intended to release the cubs when they were grown up. The Game Ranger in Francistown had earlier warned that such lions might become man-eaters. In his response to the DC’s report on the Kays, S.J.O. Henn at the Mafikeng office concurred in refusing the Kays a ‘pot licence’ and ensuring that they did not carry the intention into effect. In his report the DC had provided detailed information about the Kays to the Mafikeng office, e.g. their background, where the cubs were captured, when and where it was proposed to release them. The government suggested that the cubs be given away to a zoo or be destroyed. In 1959 the Kays were served with a prohibition notice from the Game Ranger, Pat Bromfield, banning them from keeping the lion as a pet. Eventually, in 1962 Jeremy Mallinson took Chinky in a cage to the Jersey Zoo (UK) because the authorities wanted the lion to be taken out of Ngamiland. The other lion, Cubby, had died.

6. The Kays and the Tawana Tribal Authority

As mentioned previously, the BaTawana had a Queen Regent, Mohumagadi Pulane Elizabeth Moremi. June Kay described her as ‘a black Victoria’, dressed in a simple cotton print dress and a headscarf. The simplicity ended there however, because ‘behind the sweet smile and soft voice were an iron resolve and a mind sharp as a scalpel’. Pulane (Photo 3.5) knew about everything that went on in the region. She was known to be a good listener, always channelling her actions through the body of elected elders who made up the kgotla or tribal parliament. Her deputy was an elder, Badirwang Sekao. He was a power in the kgotla, but
the power behind him was *Mohumagadi* Pulane Moremi. Once in a while she would invite local white visitors to have hot tea with her—a colonial custom which had become a tradition in Batswana\(^{49}\). Interestingly, the elders enjoyed formal tea drinking which they found refreshing in the hot summer. June Kay had the privilege of receiving an invitation for tea at Pulane’s home. In return for such courtesy June would occasionally supply Pulane with her home grown tomatoes but their friendship focused on issues of wildlife conservation\(^{50}\). According to Isaac Tudor, Pulane was ‘a woman of strength, she loved cattle and farming and showed enthusiasm on issues of development’\(^{51}\). As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, the architects of the Moremi Game Reserve capitalised on Pulane’s consultative networks to reach the wider community of Ngamiland to canvass the idea of a game reserve in the Okavango.

At the time when the Kays got to know the regent, her eldest son Letsholathebe, the heir apparent, was studying in south west England. Over their period of stay in Maun, they came to know a small number of the Maun people well: key Tawana influential figures, long-time white residents as well as safari operators.

### 7. Concerns about Illicit Hunting Activities in the Khwai Region

As they continued setting up camps at different places in the Okavango Delta, the Kays realised that it held an enormous population of game, rich in the variety and number of species. June’s memories and varied experiences of her days in the delta gave her the title of her second book, *Wild Eden*. She had become ‘addicted’ to the Delta as a ‘wild nursery’\(^{52}\). Her writings by the early 1960s increasingly become a story of two people, Robert and June, fighting to save the wildlife of the Okavango Delta. June showed extensive knowledge of the unique ecology and species in the area acquired in three-and-a-half years of swamp travel and hunting, and regarded the remoteness of the area and the presence of tsetse fly-belts as natural protection for the fauna\(^{53}\).

The Kays’s camp became a centre of white social life in the Okavango and they invited people on DUKW trips. Jeremy Mallinson, a British zoologist who came to collect wild animals for Gerald Durrell’s Jersey Zoo was one of these; others were from South Africa, the United States and England with assignments to film wildlife or collect specimens for zoos, or to go on safari\(^{54}\). Mallinson recorded their amphibious exploration together with the big game hunter Miles Smeeton in his book *Okavango Adventure*. He and his wife Beryl Smeeton at some point owned a vehicle named *Tzung Hang* and also had a life of adventure that shows how popular cross-Africa safaris were\(^{55}\). During this period June started to write about and publicize seriously ‘the unchecked slaughter of game’ of Ngamiland. Gradually June and Robert had come to recognise the cruelties that were being inflicted on the animal population by unrestricted foreign hunting parties. June, like Joy Adamson, ‘drew a veil over her previous shooting’ and launched a crusade on the need for game conservation in Ngamiland by writing for newspapers in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Namibia and Mozambique. Titles such as ‘Decimation of Wildlife in Ngamiland’ or ‘A Paradise in Danger’ were common\(^{56}\). Mallinson and Smeeton became strong advocates of a game reserve. Mallinson observes that while Miles Smeeton was pleased with his hunting
achievements in the Okavango, in the course of their travels both men had seen the consequences of indiscriminate slaughter. Smeeton remarked: ‘At the very least it was necessary that a close season should strictly be observed, so that the game would be able to breed in peace, and if some area like the Okavango could be set aside as a reserve, so much the better’. Mallinson and Smeeton pledged themselves to support such a scheme 57).

June, however, recognized that hunting was essential for local African people in the area and that some hunting had to continue as part of the rural economy 58). But she attacked such hunting techniques as steel jaw-traps sold by white traders in Maun and accused both the local people and white ‘sportsmen’ of using of such traps 59). White hunting parties from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were considered the most irresponsible, because they disregarded the game laws by slaughtering animals during the closed season and without licenses. Those who had licenses would abuse them, overshooting, shooting females and immature animals. They would shoot at night with spot lamps and failed to follow up wounded animals. She cited the case of a notorious South African poacher who used to pretend to photograph along the banks of Khwai River when he actually had rifles, snare wires, traps and poison 60). In the mid–1950s Harry Riley, the first owner of Riley’s Hotel in Maun, referred to lions in the Okavango area being shot and exterminated by gangs of lorry-borne hunters 61). According to Lionel Palmer, from the late 1950s up to the early 1960s ‘Maun young bloods’ used to go out on weekend hunts in the Okavango Delta. He himself owned a powerful V–8 vehicle, which he refashioned into a shooting brake 62).

Ronnie Kays (no relation to June and Robert), the current owner of Riley’s Garage, was in his twenties in the 1950s 63). He would be invited by tsetse fly rangers (control officers), Bruce Austen and Paul Finch-Smiles, to assist in shooting buffalo. His years of hunting with Paul Finch-Smiles introduced him to visiting white South African hunters who asked him to accompany them as a guide into Chitabe, a good hunting area for lions and leopards. In the early to the mid–1960s, white traders at Maun were paying up to £40 for good leopard skins. In one of her books, June accuses one such hunter and trader of being ‘trigger happy’. Hunting was not only widespread but provided the networks for growth of conservation. Through their years of hunting together in the heart of the Delta, Ronnie Kays, Jack Ramsden and Morotsi Molomo became long-term friends and later associates in promoting conservation and making the game reserve a reality 64). When the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland was formed in 1963, both Ronnie Kays and Jack Ramsden became its executive members and when Moremi was established as a game reserve, Morotsi Molomo became one of the scouts.

On his return from the 1961 Arusha wildlife conservation conference, Game Ranger Pat Bromfield, who was well aware of the wanton slaughtering of game, reported to the Mafikeng office that the Okavango was not policed effectively because of lack of funds and the small number of Game Department officers on the ground. Government employees were on several occasions caught by Game Scouts with large quantities of game meat in government vehicles. Such bold hunters were more often ‘profit-seekers’ than ‘pot-hunters’ 65). The Game Ranger observed that there were certain members of the white communities who did not take kindly to African Game Scouts asking for licenses. Some were obviously transferring the South African racist culture at the time into the Bechuanaland territory.
Despite the misdeeds of certain licensed and unlicensed hunters, the colonial administration encouraged hunting because they argued that fees paid by non-residents benefited both the Government and BaTawana Tribal Administration revenues. Although they had no evidence to back their argument, they believed there were still large enough numbers of animals and that many parts of the Okavango were still inaccessible by vehicle. The colonial office in Mafikeng wanted areas such as Khwai and Chitabe in the Delta to be reserved especially for the ‘top brass’ like Dr. M.G. Hearn of Anglovaal House, Fox Street in Johannesburg. It was this area, Khwai, which was chosen by the kgotla and the Fauna Conservation of Ngamiland for a Game Reserve in 1963.

According to June Kay, external hunting parties not infrequently arrived in Maun complete with all their equipment and supplies, so that apart from the tribal levy on licenses and the local purchase of alcohol and cigarettes, Ngamiland benefited little if at all from these visitors while losing substantial quantities of fauna. Africans were simultaneously voicing concern to the tribal authorities about illicit hunting activities. A local politician, John Benn observes that prior to the safari operation of firms such as Ker, Downey and Selby (Photo 3.6) in the Okavango in the 1960s, most hunters were the Afrikaners from South Africa:

Such hunters were not professional hunters, they were casual hunters; the holiday makers, coming to pass time in Botswana. It was their hobby to come here and hunt with families. Their sole ambition was to kill the maximum number of the animals allowed by their licenses or even exceed it before they returned to South Africa.

In theory, the issue of a license in a tribal territory was dependent on the chief’s permission, which had to be obtained before application was made to the District Commissioner, but it seemed that this rule was hardly ever observed by some hunters from outside. Benn further argues that before the inception of the Fauna Conservation Proclamation in 1961 and safari hunting concessions in 1963 some of these South African hunters had already surveyed the area for potential hunting:

Although as non-residents they did not qualify for a ‘pot license’, some white South Africans used their friendship with District Commissioners in the Protectorate to obtain them. The official records confirm that such hunters abused the licenses to market fresh game meat from places such as the Tuli Block to supply to the butcheries in Johannesburg. At the time in terms of the law, British subjects and South African nationals, provided they were not prohibited immigrants, might enter the Territory without formality, but were required to report to the nearest Immigration officer or Police officer. In the case of Ngamiland, the immigration officer was stationed together with the game officer in Francistown and those who were not good at respecting the law could easily by-pass them and avoid producing permits for inspection. Immigration regulations into Bechuanaland Protectorate from South Africa were only enforced after May 1961 in theory, but in practice there was no border control at all until 1963/64 except for entry from Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia (Central African Federation until 1963).

Benn further notes the role of African people in such hunting expeditions. In the past
Africans did not use licenses for a hunting quota. The chief declared a hunting period at a specific time.

We were not allowed to hunt certain animals, especially the eland and the giraffe. Other animals were not included in the group that could be hunted, particularly those which were small in numbers. We thought that if we continued on killing them, they would be depleted in our area.72)

He remembers names such as Jutas Mokhawa, Ndiane and the BaSarwa man, Pekenene Jambo, who at the time of the interview were still alive. Such men were assigned at kgotla level to accompany white hunters as guides [bomasupatsela]. ‘They were chosen on the basis of their knowledge about the environment, skinning and in tracing the spoor of a shot or wounded animal [ha tau e tlhabilwe ba kgona go bona ka motlhala]’73). According to Gaselemogwe Segadimo who has worked in the government and private sector, Pekenene of Khwai could take hunters ‘anywhere in the Okavango, this is how good he was as guide’74).

Prior to the inception of the Fauna Conservation Act/ Proclamation, No. 22 of 1961 and the founding of the Ngamiland Fauna Preservation Society at the beginning of September 1962, there was no effective machinery to safeguard the fauna of Ngamiland. It was not easy to impose direct surveillance upon hunting parties of whites or Africans penetrating into game areas on shooting forays. The financial resources of the Protectorate and the size of the territory militated against extensive and continuous patrolling. The headquarters of the Game Department were situated in Francistown over 400 miles from Ngamiland’s game country. Both the police and Game Department had numerous duties over and above anti-poaching measures75). The BaTswana themselves raised the alarm and complained about the decimation of game in the region, and the kgotla clearly was under pressure to approve this76).

8. The Formation of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland

Among the best-known wildlife conservation oriented societies were the Zoological Society of London, (1826), the New York Zoological Society (1895), the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire and the Frankfurt Zoological Society. By the 1960s the South African Wildlife Society, the East African Wildlife Society and the Kenya Wildlife Society had been established. At the time they were formed, whites dominated them and their membership did not take cognizance of African participation in wildlife conservation. Indeed there was a general tendency to view all Africans as potential poachers, as demonstrated in Chapter One77). It is therefore of interest to examine the founding of a Fauna Preservation Society in Ngamiland (later to become the Conservation Society), because of the genuine interest of the Tribal Council in creating a method of preserving the wildlife in northern Botswana.

The new trend in wildlife conservation can be discerned at the beginning of the 1960s, when IUCN and the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa (CCTA)—with the
support of FAO and UNESCO—arranged an international conference in Arusha in 1961. This was a year of reorganization and planning following the transfer of IUCN headquarters to Morges, Switzerland, and an African Special Project was launched to promote the principles and practice of conservation of natural resources in tropical Africa. Two IUCN consultants, T. Riney and P.R. Hill, visited countries such as Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Dahomey, Nigeria, Chad, Kenya, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland on a wildlife conservation mission. At the same time, the African Wildlife Leadership was founded in the United States as an organisation devoted to raising funds to save African game. The US showed new interest in Africa because the countries in Africa were gaining their independence during the late 1950s and the 1960s; Francophone Africa, Ghana (1958), Nigeria (1960) Tanganyika, (1961) Uganda (1962) and Kenya (1963).

During this period, conservation groups in Africa, big game hunters’ clubs, zoologists, and travellers were sending alarming propaganda reports for publication in the international wildlife magazines and calling for the New York Zoological Society to focus on the plight of ‘the magnificent African fauna’. According to Julian Huxley’s report to UNESCO, prospects for African wildlife looked bleak and he warned that much of East African region’s wildlife could disappear within twenty years. The press that covered his tour of Africa reported on ‘saving some of Africa’s dying game’. Much was said concerning the increasing value of tourism to East Africa and the advancement of South Africa in economic conservation. When addressing the Arusha conference in 1961, Noel Simon argued that, if wild animals were reduced to negligible proportions, Kenya would lose its principal tourist attraction, and consequently its finances would suffer.

Using scientific calculations about carrying capacity of land needed by wildlife, advocates argued that national parks should be spacious and also be a good representative sample of Africa’s diverse ecological systems. This became important particularly in respect not only of the American tourists but also because of grazing patterns and seasonal movements of game. For example, when the Serengeti Park of Tanganyika was established in 1940 it covered 5,600 square miles, extended in 1959. The Kruger National Park of South Africa, Albert (now Virunga) of Congo, Queen Elizabeth of Uganda and Amboseli of Kenya were described as ‘national show pieces of Africa’ and the Kruger National Park (now covering nearly 2 million hectares of savannah biome) was equated with the size of Massachusetts. The value of scientific research and tourism were emphasized.

The Arusha Manifesto is considered a landmark in nature conservation in Africa for it was the first of its kind to have a large input from African delegates. The new African leadership accepted responsibility for conservation of wildlife and pronounced that tourism was of vital importance. For example, A.L. Adu, the Director of General East Africa Common Services noted that, ‘Everything possible should be done to preserve the wildlife of East Africa because it is an asset, which, if we are not careful, may be lost to mankind for ever’.

Jomo Kenyatta, the new Prime Minister of Kenya in 1964 affirmed that his government was determined to take care of and protect wild game: ‘I think the burden of responsibility of protecting wild animals is a responsibility for all of us. I think this is something which all of us ought to be interested in. They are a national asset and as such we must take care
Despite the political strife surrounding independence movements, African leaders responded to the concerns of conservationists including those of the white-dominated fauna preservation societies, about what they considered a ‘world heritage’. However, the international community as well as the Fauna Preservation Society did not have much faith in the ability or will of African leadership to govern wisely or to put in place effective conservation machinery. This can be illustrated by the criticism that was delivered by Mervyn Cowie of Kenya Royal National Parks, who accused the government of Kenya of having betrayed the cause of conservation. He described Kenyan game policy as a ‘gigantic hoax’ and thought it was important to ‘inform’ the administrations of the new states of the importance of conserving wildlife and how to make it pay\(^\text{87}\).

The Arusha Manifesto was to recognize the responsibilities of the new governments and call upon international bodies for financial help\(^\text{88}\). The African leadership of the newly independent countries then pledged not merely to pay lip service in implementing game policies, but to actively expand such efforts. In the case of East Africa, Northern Rhodesia and South Africa, wildlife societies continued to be dominated by white residents. What makes the Botswana case so significant and interesting, by contrast, is that the chieftaincy in Ngamiland became part of a preservation society right from the beginning.

We have seen how some white settlers became protagonists for African wildlife conservation and for the establishment of game parks. June and Robert Kay were part of this group. That their ideas resulted from their experiences in Southern Rhodesia and from their understanding of the situation of wildlife in Kenya and South Africa cannot be ruled out.

John Benn speaking for the BaTawana however argues that whereas parks in East Africa and South Africa were set up through the initiative of white people, this was not the case in Ngamiland. In the Okavango there was no official colonial interest in the creation of a wildlife reserve. It was the BaTawana’s ‘friend’, Robert Kay, who acted as their personal advisor on how to go about establishing a park in their area. ‘The whole thing was done by Batswana, given the tribal concern over South African hunters overshooting wildlife in the Okavango. Robert brought an idea of a National Park but local people already had a concept for sustainable use’, emphasized Benn\(^\text{89}\). Isaac Tudor (Photo 3.7) maintains that, as a tribe they ‘worked with an Englishman, Robert Kay, working from outside [Zimbabwe], and together we formed the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland\(^\text{90}\). When addressing the BaTawana Tribal Council on 12 March 1963, Jack Ramsden went on to explain that the Fauna Preservation Society had been formed by a group of Africans and some white people and sanctioned by Mohumagadi Moremi, as a result of the tribal kgotla meeting on 10 September 1962. Ramsden described Robert Kay as the ‘leading spirit behind the whole work of the Fauna Preservation Society; he advised us against wasting what is ours; the formation of the Society had stemmed from the local African inhabitants of this place having accepted Mr. Kay’s idea as being a good one\(^\text{91}\).
9. Official Response—Getting the Africans and White Residents of Maun to Accept the Fauna Preservation Society in Ngamiland

The idea of a Fauna Conservation Society in Ngamiland originated with two white people with the dual idea of educating themselves and of educating Africans on the necessity of preserving local fauna (92). Pete Smith, who was born in Zimbabwe and came to Maun in 1958 at the same time as the Kays, acknowledged that the history of Moremi Game Reserve started in 1962, with Robert and June Kay of Bulawayo as the primary movers. Smith, who in 1959 worked for the government in the Department of Water Affairs, describes Robert as a controversial person. He argues that Robert’s ideas were rooted in self-interest: to deal with the problem of handling the overgrown house-bred lions, he ‘started talking about a game reserve. He wanted a place where he could release his animals’ (93). This happened at a time when Joy and George Adamson of Kenya had just released their lion into the wild, so they started the ‘fashion’. The Kays wanted to do a similar thing in Botswana.

In May 1962, Robert Kay circulated a note inviting individuals like Pete Smith to a further meeting in the lounge of the Riley’s Hotel on 4 June 1962 (94). Ruth Hakin volunteered to take the minutes. The Agenda included an inaugural speech by Robert Kay; the adoption of the constitution of the society modelled on that of the Fauna Preservation Society of London; the election of a committee and the definition of its aims and objectives. The intention was then to notify the Bechuanaland Protectorate Government of the founding of the society (95). The meeting was not successful, according to Pete Smith, owing to the absence of potentially interested members. The absence of the Tawana key influential figures was noted at this meeting, and according to Gaselemogwe Segadimo, known just as ‘Gas’ among his contemporaries, ‘this hampered progress regarding the founding of a Fauna Society in Ngamiland’ (96).

Colonial officials were sceptical. ‘Create an African-sponsored game reserve?’ they asked. ‘Impossible! Try teaching them to grow rice in the swamps instead’. ‘Teach an African hunting people to preserve the very animals off which they live?’ jeered some of the white community. ‘Not in this day and age!’ ‘Who wants the hunting to stop anyway?’ June recreated their language in this way her book, Thirteenth Moon (97). Given the conditions in the territory, officials in the Game Department could not visualise a Game Reserve in Ngamiland being anything more than a financial handicap to the Tribal Administration, since the difficulties of transportation were immense and no finances were available to improve or build roads. They preferred to encourage the introduction of Controlled Hunting areas for licensed sport hunters to accrue revenue for tribal treasuries (98). The Kays and their friends such as Mallinson were reminded that Ngamiland was a Tribal Territory and as the game was African property such an approach to the BaTswana was not likely to be welcome. The District Commissioner Eustace Clark emphasized that Africans must be approached at least as much as the white community (99).

Faced with official opposition, the Kays and their associates reformulated their idea and considered how the co-operation of the indigenous population could be demonstrated. They felt that wildlife conservation could be achieved if there were direct financial benefits to Africans and they worked harder to incorporate African support. Robert Kay’s ideas
shifted as he interacted with the key African founders of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland. Their contributions to the meetings helped shape the ideas of the society. Initially it was a few progressive spirits like Isaac Tudor (born in 1928) a typist and clerk with other tribal administrative jobs, who supported Kay, soliciting more information and who ended up doing serious campaigning among the BaTawana people. He was the son of a !Kung San woman and a white trader. Since he was brought up within the Tawana Royal ward, he identified himself ethnically as a Motawana and was a member of the main Kgotla/Kgosing [chief’s] ward in Maun. At the time of interviews with him, Tudor (now deceased) was married to a Motawana woman, and was a member of the Tawana Land Board and a former chair of the North West District Council. For a long time he was and remained part of the Tawana elite.

Amongst the first Maun blacks and whites to be mobilized to become the architects of Moremi Game Reserve were members of the informal network associated with hunting. Some were old acquaintances. Jack Ramsden and Ronnie Kays had been hunting companions; Pete Smith, who by then was working for tssetse fly control, had met John Benn, the regional game warden and had become friendly with him. Jack Ramsden, the son of a white man and a Herero woman, was an established hunter who had handled firearms from an early age. The Ramsden family were traders who had lived in Ghanzi, in the west of Bechuanaland since 1899, but Jack Ramsden, like Isaac Tudor, preferred to identify himself as ‘Motawana’. B. A. Young met the two Ramsden brothers in Ghanzi at the time of doing his fieldwork research for his book Bechuanaland. One of them was the biological father to Jack. There is a tendency in Maun for children born out of wedlock to use their father’s surnames. Many of the Maun families such as Tudor, Ramsden, Benn, Wellio and Wright (with non-Tswana surnames) identify themselves as BaTawana because of assimilation.

In his work on the ‘ethnic composition’ of the Tswana wards, Isaac Schapera demonstrates that many headmen were not Tswana by origin. Among the non-Tawana were headmen such as Monwela, a Molete from the western Transvaal and Ledimo, a Kubung mercenary, also from South Africa. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, Letsholathebe I’s leadership is associated with the rise of BaTawana power and the associated development of the ivory trade; it was during his reign that some of the newly conquered land was placed under non-Tawana provincial governors. The Monwela family for instance, gained control of a huge area of the Seronga plains in the Okavango area. The Tawana chief therefore gave them considerable patronage and he always consulted the headmen of such enlarged new wards before any important decision was made. They were also involved in other forms of elaborate political protocol. These headmen, who for reasons of merit had been given preferment, did not only emerge as a set of wealthy families but were associated with the Tawana royalty by marriage alliances and elephant hunting. They occasionally forwarded sehuba, the ‘treasure trove’, such as elephant tusks and recognized part of earnings and voluntary gifts to the paramount chief.

Members of such families, including some royal Tawana with tribal administrative experience, became key players in the creation of a game reserve in Ngamiland. The elite, prestigious foreigners (not indigenous) adopted Tawana ethnicity as a means of separating themselves from the non-Tawana commoners in Ngamiland. In his doctoral thesis, Barry
Morton has demonstrated that during the colonial era, some of the wealth of the elite was eroded. However, although its material base withered, the members of the elite never lost their sense of privilege and senior rank. Tlou notes that rank and status determined a man’s position in society. ‘The more elevated a man’s rank in the hierarchy, the more important he was in the affairs of the morafe (ethnic group or nation). His position was enhanced if he was also “an able man”’. Men of lower rank such as Tudor and Ramsden could not inherit prestige, but acquired it through loyalty and service to the king or chief (Kgosi) as is demonstrated by their position in Ngamiland society in the 1950s and 1960s. They owned cattle and were charged with important administrative tasks. Individuals like Isaac Tudor, Mosimane wa Kgosi (the king/chief’s servant), who before 1962 had often raised concern about and brought the attention of MmaKgosi (Regent) to the indiscriminate slaughtering of wildlife by some hunting parties, welcomed the general policy and endorsed the founding of the Fauna Society in Ngamiland. The focal point of the informal meetings of the key players of the Fauna Society was the Kay’s camp on the island along Thamalakane River (Photo 3.2). During these meetings, Segadimo found June Kay ‘an intelligent woman who had some knowledge on wild animals’.

10. Second Formal Meeting of the Society at Riley’s Hotel: African Support

The second formal meeting at the Riley’s Hotel was held on 2 July 1962. Among the fifteen whites who attended were the Maun District Commissioner Eustace Clark, Ivor Lewis of Tsetse Fly Control, Dr. Don King of Maun Hospital, Pete Smith and Lionel Palmer. Among the thirty Africans present were key figures such as Isaac Tudor, Jack Ramsden and Rocks Ledimo. Robert Kay was the main speaker and the interpreter was Jack Ramsden. In his inaugural speech, Robert outlined his proposals for a Fauna Preservation Society, similar to those founded elsewhere in the world, whose object was to bring home to the community at large the urgent need for preserving the heritage of their fauna. His proposals included the creation of a national park. He stated that certain of the local residents had long expressed their belief in the urgent need for the formation of such a society in Bechuanaland to check the further destruction of game. Those who strongly supported the idea thought such a society would be in a position to lend help to the work of the Game Department in preserving the fauna of the territory from extinction. The audience was informed that Jeremy Mallinson of the Jersey Zoological Park had put Robert Kay in touch with Colonel Boyle of the Fauna Preservation Society of London, which had offered assistance. ‘The game belongs to posterity and unless steps are taken to preserve the fauna of Africa our children may only know of what a giraffe looked like from a picture book’, Kay reminded the audience.

The DC queried the intention of starting a Fauna Preservation Society for the Bechuanaland Protectorate in general. Clark expressed concern over the absence of the Game Ranger Bromfield from the meeting (who he hoped would lend support) and reminded the audience that game in Crown Lands (non-tribal land) belonged to the government and could be controlled by the government, and that the state alone could constitute game reserves and enforce edicts against poaching. He further reiterated that, in tribal areas game belonged to the tribe and they would make their own rules and went on to say,
No Society at all should be formed in a tribal area unless the leaders of the tribe think it is a good idea for the benefit of their people. Any question of interference with game, e.g. preservation of females as opposed to males or preserving vanishing species of fauna, the skins of which were used in the manufacture of clothes, went very deeply into the life of the Batawana. Inclusion of meat in a diet is essential to health and well being. One can hardly expect any Society or Government to lay down laws as to how that meat is to be obtained. No such scheme should be started without the approval of the leaders of the tribe and long discussions with them.

Robert Kay recognized the problem of food supply: ‘We must realize that the whole country cannot be turned into a Game Reserve, for to do so would be to cut off food and the only source of revenue from those who have no other income’. His strategy was to be sensitive to tribal needs.

BaTawana delegates also expressed their concern. Rocks Ledimo, one of the senior tribal representatives, crystallized these feelings:

In Ngamiland especially, we live on fauna and domestic animals, and we respect the latter more than the former, as their meat is more readily available both as food and source of revenue. Our domestic animals cannot get good prices on account of fauna. We are told that fauna carry disease to domestic livestock and therefore we do not find it sensible to maintain fauna. We feel it would be better to destroy fauna in order to preserve our economy.

In Botswana, cattle are valued highly and take precedence over wildlife. While taking note of the concern of the local community, Robert Kay emphasized that the world would not pay to come and see a cow but would pay to see the territory’s fauna; he therefore called for a nucleus of game animals to be preserved in order to attract revenue-producing tourists. In response to Kay’s speech, another African speaker, Jack Ramsden, spoke on behalf of individual owners:

In the past our country was well wide, with adequate grazing for cattle, but this has now been circumscribed by the tsetse, and we have been driven further and further back. If we allow the Fauna Preservation Society to be formed, it will create difficulties for cattle owners, whose total economy is based on their stock. If adequate facilities were made available for grazing cattle, we could give the matter a second thought. We can sell a cow - we cannot sell a buffalo. Tourist revenue goes into the tribal treasury - the individual stockowner is not compensated. Let the Government solve this problem of the individual and we will think differently.

Tsheko Tsheko, a Botswana nationalist and member of the Tsetse Fly Central Policy Making Committee had expressed similar sentiments in the 1961 Legislative Council game policy debates relating to the problem of cattle disease, cattle being the backbone of rural economy, and to game preservation, particularly in his constituency of Ngamiland.

The issue of ethnic minorities and their position was also raised by Michael Dithapo
who discussed this in the context of a brief history of BaTawana’s conquest of BaYei people:

But even if you could somehow win BaTawana hunters, what about BaYei? They love the BaTawana like a mouse loves cats, so anything that we want is going to be turned down. Don’t forget there are twice as many of them as there are of us. You need to brush up on your tribal history before you get yourselves into a fix. Ngamiland is not made of one tribe. I should not forget to mention the 5,000 Herero and the 15,000 Masarwa, and all the other little tribes in Ngamiland. They all have to be converted, because even the smallest of them has a voice in the tribal kgotla. Try telling Kwere [Seriri] that he and his precious Masarwa will not be permitted to hunt in the Khwai valley and you will hear that voice, very loudly.

Interestingly, as will be seen in the subsequent chapters, when the park was created in 1963, the BaSarwa communities did not have a strong representative either in the kgotla meeting on 10 September 1962 or the March 1963 annual kgotla meetings.

Thus during the July 1962 meeting substantial opposition was expressed. The Maun District Commissioner had tried to convince morafe against the idea of creating a game reserve by relating it to the Ngamiland rural economy. He argued that, if they were to embrace the idea of a game park, they would not be able to export their cattle because they would be infected by foot and mouth disease. The DC opposed the game reserve and personally disliked Robert Kay. The Game Ranger, Pat Bromfield, also disliked Robert Kay who had been in trouble for various contraventions including unauthorised shooting of wildebeest for his fostered lions. Official letters from local officials in the Protectorate to the Secretariat in Mafikeng took on a less cordial tone, cables flew back and forth with the subject matter of ‘the Kays’ politics in Maun’.

Some of the white residents expressed reservations on the aims and objectives of the Fauna Society proposed by Robert Kay. Some simply made a show of walking out of the meeting. Robert, who had previously been their companion on safari, was now viewed as betraying their cause by implying they were overshooting game in the country. They benefited from hunting safaris; hence they contested the new idea. African spokesmen also registered their concerns.

As illustrated however, there was already a group of African protagonists for the park. As Gas Segadimo recalled:

We support the idea of the game reserve because we have seen how the safari companies are over-shooting our animals and this has made us realize that this could go on for years; our young generation [bana ba rona], will be born to find no animals, except in pictures. We want to look after our wildlife.

Gradually many of the local people came to support the idea. This group comprised people like Montsho Mogalakwe, an elder and family member of the ruling BaTawana community. The Mogalakwes had become famous for their influence and prosperity from the 1920s. Morton argues that in general they could be counted as one of the Protectorate’s wealthiest families, white or black. Such families owned cattle posts and some of the family members
used to organize hunting expeditions to obtain meat and game trophies on the land under their control. Male family members spent much of their time engaged in public roles as headmen and influential figures. In the 1950s they controlled the Hainaveldt region of Ngamiland as a private grazing sanctuary. Other figures who constituted the influential hard core of the BaTawana elders included Michael Dithapo, a clerk at the District Commissioner’s office. The Dithapo family, who in 1876–1877 and 1890–1891 assumed regency, was one of the leading BaTawana clans in Maun and like the Mogalakwes and Dibolayangs their political influence was great in the region. There were also members of the tribal nobility such as Rocks Ledimo, the BaTawana National School head; David Monwela, Deputy Chairperson of the BaTawana Tribal Council; Gaselemogwe Segadimo, former tax collector and Education Secretary; and L.M. Sethoko who in 2001 was the Chair of the Tawana Land Board. These members of the tribal nobility were the most ardent proponents of the game reserve. Most of the African key players were in their late twenties and early thirties, but Montsho Mogalakwe and Badirwang Sekao were much older. The group was increasingly lent strength by the Regent Mohumagadi Pulane Moremi, and her deputy Badirwang Sekao. The tribal member for the Legislative Council for Ngamiland, Tsheko Tsheko also changed his position in 1962–1963 and backed the interest group. It was they who forged the spearhead.

The first key people vital in the founding of the Fauna Preservation Society and finally the creation of the Moremi Game Reserve were not only among the influential sector of the African community but were described by June Kay as a ‘big and very sharp thorn in the DC’s side’\(^{120}\). These Tawana supporters of the reserve were influential not just because of their ‘traditional’ credentials but also because they had also grown up in Maun. They had been educated initially at the BaTawana National School and some had later (in the 1940s) been sent to South Africa to attend secondary schools. Among such institutions was Tiger Kloof, which in the 1920s had established itself as the school of Batswana elite and chiefs such as Moremi III of BaTawana, Bathoen II of BaNgwaketse and Neale Sechele of BaKwena all attended school there. At Tiger Kloof, the national high school for Bechuanaland Protectorate until the 1950s, Tsheko’s classmates included the second President of Botswana, Ketumile Masire and the former Speaker of the National Assembly, Moutlwakgolo Ngwako. According to Jeff Ramsay, during the 1940s, there was a notable pre-eminence of ‘Bechuanalanders’ in what was a London Missionary Society (LMS) boarding school that attracted wealthy blacks and ‘coloureds’ from across southern Africa\(^{121}\).

The ‘Bechuanalanders’ years at Tiger Kloof coincided with the end of the Second World War, the coming of apartheid, and an upsurge of anti-colonial struggle. As was the case with many of his peers, Tsheko’s early politics were partially motivated by these external events which had been the subject of much school-time debate. Many BaTswna of the 1950s used pseudonyms when making their contributions to the press to avoid political retribution. They kept their fellow activists of their generation who were located elsewhere in the Protectorate informed through articles they wrote for newspapers such as Naledi Ya Batswana and Africa Echo after they left Tiger Kloof. Occasional inter-school sports competitions also provided an additional forum for the young progressives\(^{122}\). Tsheko, Monwela and Tudor were among a group of young educated Ga-Tawana (Tawanaland)
progressives who called for political reform in their region. Tsheko is seen as a wild young man in the Maun DC reports of 1950s. Individuals like Monwela gained experience in public affairs and practical politics when serving in tribal treasuries. Tsheko, like many of the former Bechuanaland Tiger Kloof students including Seretse Khama, and female leaders such as Gaositwe Chiepe were among the builders of modern Botswana and from 1966 onwards held careers of public service, occupying cabinet portfolios. He was the Minister of Agriculture (1965–1969) and died in office. George Winstanley, who was stationed in Maun first as a District Officer and then as District Commissioner between 1957 and 1959 noted Tsheko Tsheko and Jack Ramsden’s public service in Ngamiland 123). The Maun township major roads and streets bear names such as Tsheko, Pulane, Mogalakwe and Letsholathebe. These individuals are central to the history of Moremi Game Reserve 124).

What is striking about the architects of Moremi Game Reserve is not only their influence in tribal affairs and their dominance of the politics of Ngamiland but also a sense of staunch alliance and their command of English. They interacted with the local white community of Maun at a cordial level and were ‘modern’ in their own way as is demonstrated by their regular visits to the main elite entertainment ‘hot spot’ of Maun, Riley’s Hotel bar. For them, especially when they realised that the unpopular DC Clark opposed the Fauna Preservation Society, the project increasingly became a matter of national pride.

After the long debate, Clark was surprised that the ideas were well received by the Africans present. This was probably the most significant of the meetings held on the initiative of the Kays. At the end of the meeting it was decided, however, that the matter should be discussed in the kgotla. The outcome was not left to chance. Influential people would be circulated to launch the campaign and approach Mohumagadi Pulane Moremi and the BaTawana kgotla to officially introduce the idea of the Fauna Preservation Society and a game park project. It was important to solicit Pulane’s support first and foremost. Isaac Tudor, a strong and resolute ally of the Kays, someone who wielded enormous influence among the BaTawana, led a deputation to meet Pulane for an informal and private meeting (khuduthamaga) in September 1962. The Regent advised the male group delegation that an issue on wildlife conservation warranted a tribal public debate 125).

Notes


5) Both June Kay and Marjorie Michael (George Michael’s wife) clearly show this hierarchy in their writing. ‘Morena’ in Tswana and ‘bwana’, which is widespread and not just used in Kiswahili but also in Chichewa and meaning master. See J. Kay, *Okavango*, 1961 and M. Michael, 1958. *I Married a Hunter*. London: The Popular Book Club.


Young’s observation of the social interaction between black and white people at Rileys Hotel.


19) BNA: Div. Com. (N) 5/9, Savingram from C.E. Clark, Maun DC to Member for Tribal Affairs and Social Services, 11 November 1962.


31) Interviews with Khwai and Xakanare cattle post (along Buffalo fence) elders on Kwere Seriri, Mogau Xhauwe hunting crocodiles with Bobbie Wilmot in the Okavango pools, 27 February 1998.


34) For example, Lekgoa Mabejane, Maun, 5 July 1997 and Diamond Ikaegeng, Khwai 22 June 1997.

35) Amos Xako was later in the 1960s introduced to the white hunters by Kwere to act as guide
for buffalo hunting in the Xuku area. See interview with Amos, 28 June 97.


38) See Lionel Palmer and Duckworth’s personal accounts in T. Sanchez-Arino (ed.), 1994. *Hunting in Botswana*: 253, 274 and 307. Palmer was the founder of Safari South and at the time of his death (2002) was a share holder in the Ker and Downey Safari Company. The current name is Ker and Downey and no longer, Ker, Downey and Selby.

39) Interview with Pete Smith, Maun, 11 December 1997 and the Gudigwa group interview, 17 July 1998 confirmed Kwere’s local knowledge of Delta plant lore. Pete Smith began the study of the Okavango flora in the early 1960s, the time when Moremi Game Reserve was being established. The Smith Herbarium is accessed by researchers from all over the world. Email communication with Ben Thupe, ORI librarian, 13 June 2011. It is worth noting that in their analysis of the Species Diversity of the Okavango Delta, Ramberg et al: 316 acknowledge Pete Smith for his enormous knowledge and the best floristic information on the Okavango Delta but Kwere Seriri is hardly acknowledged in academic publications.


45) In Kenya the authorities were complaining about the Adamson’s lion. See G. Adamson, 1986. *My Pride and Joy* and *Bwana Game*. In Northern Rhodesia, Norman Karr reared two lion cubs and four years later returned them to the wild. See ‘Return to the Wild’, *The Star*, Johannesburg, 26 May 1962.


158.
49) Interview with P. Smith, Maun, 11 December 1997.
51) Interview with Isaac Tudor, a founding member of the Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society, Maun, 2 August 2001. See Tudor in Photo 3.6 and 3.7.
63) Ronnie (Ronald) Kays (interviewed 23 August 2001) was one of the first white children born in Maun in the 1920s. His grandfather was born in London in 1893 and immigrated to the German South West Africa (Namibia) where he started operating a trading store in Windhoek. During the 1914–18 war he moved his family to Ghanzi (see Map 1.2) but was not successful in cattle ranching. He moved to Tsau, the then administrative headquarters of Ngamiland, where he opened a trading store. In 1931 Thomas Kays (Ronnie’s father), started the first transport business with his first Chevrolet vehicle.
69) See S. 414/2/6, Notice to Non-Resident on Game Licensing in BP. 1963/4 Season.
72) John Benn, North West District Council Chairman, Maun, 31 August 2001.
73) Interview with Benn, 31 August 2001. Ndiane who lives 12 kms from Maun and Pekeneke Jambo (ethnic BaSarwa) were interviewed, 30 August 2001. On the African guides: see also ‘Notice to Non-Residents on Game Licensing in BP’: 3.
76) Benn, 31 August 2001.
82) Julian Huxley was investigating the problem of game conservation. A summary of his report is covered in the WWF website: www.wwf.org.uk. While reporting on Huxley’s trip, The Star, 11 and 25 February 1961 and 7 October 1961 also reported on the poaching of the Kenyan rhinoceros, their horns smuggled up to the Red Sea where they fetched a high price from agents buying them for Asian countries for aphrodisiacs.
Chapter 3
Key Players

87) Cowie carried his campaign to Britain by means of lecture and films on Kenya fauna, *IUCN Bulletin*, 1965. IV (5) and (6). *The Star*, 11 and 25 February and 7 October 1961 widely publicized the trend of movement of Kenya’s famous white hunters out of East Africa, alleging that it was because of political uncertainty.
89) Benn, Maun, 31 August 2001.
93) Interview with P. Smith, 11 December 1997. He was giving his own personal view and not an official response. On the issue of releasing the animals, also see Div. Com. (N) 5/9, letter from Robert Kay of Bulawayo to the Maun DC, 11 October 1959.
94) Pete Smith Collection (hereafter PSC): A typed note by Robert Kay inviting some people to an inaugural meeting to found a Fauna Preservation Society in BP, dated 26 May 1962.
95) See a note by Robert Kay about the meeting for the founding of a Fauna Preservation Society, 26 May 1962.
96) Interview with Segadimo, 12 August 2001 and Smith, 11 December 1997.
101) Isaac Tudor born in Ngamiland was not open (during interviews) about his mother and this
probably has to do with the social stigma of being identified with a parent of San/BaSarwa origin. It is alleged that through servitude (botlhanka) his mother lived amongst the Tawana Royalty and hence Tudor was assimilated as a Motawana and resided at the Kgosing (chief’s) ward in Maun. On the history of servitude in Ngamiland, see Morton. A Social and Economic History of Southern African Native Reserve: Ngamiland.

102) Young met the two British-born Ramsden brothers in Ghanzi at the time he was doing his fieldwork research: see Bechuanaland. 29–31. The youngest is the biological father of Jack Ramsden who is the father of Frank Ramsden, former Botswana Minister of Transport and Communications and currently (2012) a member of Parliament for Maun East. Several of the Maun families such as Tudor, Ramsden, Wellio, Benn, Wright (with non-Tawana surnames) identify themselves as BaTawana because of assimilation. Mo Tawana singular, and Ba Tawana, plural.


108) See also Maun interviews with Segadimo and Tudor, 2 August 2001.

109) PSC, minutes for the Inaugural meeting: Fauna Preservation Society, Riley’s Hotel, Maun, 2 July 1962.

110) PSC, Robert Kay’s speech at the Fauna Preservation Society inaugural meeting, 2 July 1962.


112) Fauna Preservation Society meeting, 2 July 1962.

113) Fauna Preservation Society meeting, 2 July 1962, 2.

114) Fauna Preservation Society meeting, 2 July 1962.


117) According to June, some of the white residents in Maun accused Robert, who had his mouth filled with a new set of ivory teeth, of being hypocritical on matters of wildlife preservation. J. Vendall-Clark: 20 and J. Kay, 1970. The Thirteenth Moon: 137. See also interview with L.

118) Maun interviews with Segadimo, 12 August 2001; Tudor 2 August 2001.


124) The BaTawana chieftainship translated their history into the Maun physical landscape planning.

Photo 3.1  Robert and June Kay with one of their African servants. Source: J. Mallinson, 1961/1962

Photo 3.2  The Thamalakane River. Source: J. Mallinson, 1961/1962
Chapter 3
Key Players

Photo 3.3 The Lekgoa Mabejane of Khwai. Source: M.M. Bolaane, 1998


Photo 3.6  Ker and Downey, Maun. Source: M.M. Bolaane, 2001
Photo 3.7  Isaac Tudor holding a file with archives on Moremi, 1960s–1970s. Source: M.M. Bolaane, 2001
Chapter 4

The Fauna Conservation Society, the Kgotla and the Government

1. Introduction

This chapter assesses the relationship between white protagonists, African leaders, the Fauna Conservation Society, and local officials in achieving consensus by means of the kgotla in the creation of a game reserve in tribal land. When establishing their power in Ngamiland in the 19th century, BaTawana introduced Tswana institutions of governance such as bogosi (chieftainship) and the kgotla system. As with other Tswana groups in the Bechuanaland Protectorate one important feature of the Tawana tribal administration was the use of tribal assemblies or kgotlas and the conduct of public affairs took place through the kgotla (see Photo 4.1).

2. The kgotla

It is important to appreciate the role and significance of the kgotla as an institution in approving the formation of the Fauna Preservation Society and the creation of Moremi Game Reserve in Ngamiland. Prior to the creation of the BaTawana Tribal Council in the 1950s, the kgotla at which the nation (usually elders) gathered existed as an institution of decision-making in Tswana tradition.

Earlier studies suggested that the kgotla had been a central element in the traditional machinery of Tswana government. Isaac Schapera has outlined changes, which have taken place since the pre-colonial period\(^1\). K. Darkwah argues that before 1966, the kgotla may be said to have been not just a public meeting place but also the seat of the government or administration of the community\(^2\). The central kgotla of the Kgosi was the public assembly which not only delivered judgments and laws but which also listened to the people when matters of public interest were discussed\(^3\). Chiefs (dikgosi) presided in large kgotla meetings (pitso or phuthego), where after lengthy discussion, in which ‘all’ could participate, the Kgosi had the right to make final decisions on all matters. The chief exercised authority through a hierarchy of relatives and officials, including close advisers and ward headmen\(^4\).

Representatives (baemedi ba Kgosi) of the constituent wards expressed their opinions at the kgotla on behalf of their charges. Each group also had its own small kgotla that gave a degree of semi-autonomy from the chief and invested the group with the authority to regulate some of its affairs and to address the chief. Although the subordinate kgotla did not have the power to legislate, they formed part of the government machinery in the sense
that they were part of the administrative and judicial system of the community.

Early accounts of the Tswana chief portray him as relying a great deal on consultation with the leading men, both agnates and commoners; hence the Tswana aphorism, ‘Kgosi ke Kgosi ka batho [The chief is the chief by the grace of the people]’. Gulbrandsen points out that on the one hand, the Tswana strongly felt the need for an effective ruler and on the other hand there was a strong awareness of the need to place a check upon the powers entrusted to him as expressed in the above proverb. Peters argues that the kgotla embodied the consultative aspect of ruling authority, thus playing the role of counter-weight to central power. The great kgotla was the arena where the chief promulgated laws that had been discussed in detail at prior meetings, and where the many not included in the select circle around the chief were able to express their opinions. In theory all those who attended the kgotla had the right to air their views without fear of reprimand. The dicta, ‘mmualebe o bua la gagwe’ and ‘mahoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe’ meant that no one could be debarred from voicing his or her opinion, no matter how unpopular. In a recent article, the Botswana political scientist Z. Maundeni assesses Tswana social values in the promotion of diversity of opinions. He argues that the Batswana are accustomed to being consulted and allowed to debate even things that they do not understand, ‘Where even the most irrelevant and the most uninformed are given repeated chances to speak (mmua lebe gore mua lentle a ntshe la gagwe)’, believing that bad ideas create room for good ideas to emerge. This argument is relevant to the importance of the kgotla within the Botswana context.

In defining the contemporary kgotla, Isaac Tudor (Photo 3.7), founding member of Moremi park describes it as:

…a democratic institution, you are free to say anything from your mind, it’s your freedom of speech, and nobody will send you to court for talking nonsense. Everyone deserves to be heard. You are bound to have endless kgotla meetings, depending on the seriousness of the subject discussed.

It was common in the past that each male speaker randomly stood up to speak. In what was considered Tswana custom and tradition respectable adult men wore hats (which they had to remove at kgotla); by contrast female adults had to cover their heads with scarves when attending the kgotla.

The result was a government with certain openness and the whole idea of debate was recognized as an important part of policy-making. While all major decisions and pronouncements appear to have been subjected to public appraisal, it also seems clear that once a decision was made, it was expected to be observed by all. Peters has described the kgotla therefore, as an open forum where consensus politics decided the outcomes of debate. Although the powers of the kgotla were advisory only, the chief and his officials could use that forum to generate a consensus before taking action and to sense opposition to particular proposals.

There were exceptions to this openness. L.D. Ngcongco has cited the example of exclusions in Kweneng where BaKgalagadi were not as a rule expected to speak at a kgotla, even though they were free to attend. In the case of Ngamiland, likewise, subordinate groups such as the BaSarwa felt intimidated and thus found it difficult to stand up and
speak at the Maun kgotla. Tswana societies, like other African societies, did not consider public affairs a domain for women. Like other subordinates, women were treated as children. Thus as a rule they did not participate in kgotla debates. The aggregate functions of the kgotla constitute it into a space that was historically a male domain. Only during the colonial period were western-educated women such as Pulane Moremi of BaTawana [1947–1964] and Ntebogang Ratshosa of BaNgwaketse [1924–1928] made regents. Gradually after the Second World War non-royal women found their place in the kgotla and could speak in meetings.

June Kay as a white woman used her friendship with Regent Pulane Moremi to gain access to BaTawana royalty and the kgotla. The role of the literate Pulane Moremi (Photo 3.5) is also significant. By virtue of her position of authority in Ngamiland, she was able to wield her influence in the kgotla, subsequently establishing support for conservationists. Both Pulane and Kay gained access to the kgotla in a way that most Tswana women could not. In this context, it is particularly interesting in Chapter 7 to examine the participation of groups such as the BaSarwa at the March 1963 annual kgotla when the Moremi Game Reserve was created.

3. The BaTawana Tribal Council

In the 1950s, the colonial administration felt the only way to succeed in winning the confidence and co-operation of Africans for new policies was to discard the old approach. J.F. Millard the Divisional commissioner designate, Northern Protectorate, based at Francistown had observed the absence of free expression and the exclusion of a considerable proportion of the population from participation in the affairs of the Africans and argued that the Tribal Council system should lend itself to reform along modern lines and should be representative. Millard further argued that if Africans themselves, including those who were not traditional leaders, could participate in a plan for the future of the territory then such a plan would have more hope of success. The colonial authorities also felt it was no longer viable to continue recognizing and fostering the domination of one tribe, or one section of the community over another, for example, BaNgwato over the Kalanga in Central District or the BaTawana over the BaYei in Ngamiland. While there was fear on the part of some chiefs like Molefi of BaKgatla in South Central that the councils would detract from their authority, Pulane Moremi is reported to have been helpful and ‘progressive’ in trying to associate the allied tribal people with the new ‘legislative council’.

Through the 1954 African Local Councils Proclamation, the administrative centre, Maun received a local council with some elected district representatives and some nominated by the Regent. The BaTawana Tribal Council system developed from the existing committee of administration for development, finance and schools and was accepted at the annual dikgotla in the late 1950s. The introduction of African local councils placed Pulane in high politics, dealing with a series of top officials like the Resident Commissioner. One of the officials described her as ‘a very astute and able African woman’, who ‘in normal circumstances is very capable of running her show well’. As a female ruler facing opposition from some reactionary BaTawana she had to be cautious. However, although vulnerable, Pulane had
the potential to build a good relationship with colonial authorities, which was valuable to them\(^\text{17}\). Pulane Moremi incurred criticism from the traditionalist BaTswana, particularly the big *kgameloa*-holders of royal cattle, for going so far as making some reforms. At the same time subject groups such as the BaYei criticized her for not doing enough on behalf of their interests\(^\text{18}\). At the time the Ngamiland Tribal Council was formed, BaTswana representatives were in the majority and there was only one MoSarwa [a San] nominee\(^\text{19}\). But one can safely argue that the subordinate ethnic groups, except the BaSarwa, were represented and had the right of free speech.

The late 1950s were marked by a certain amount of separatist agitation by two subordinate groups, the BaYei and OvaHerero/ Mbanderu\(^\text{20}\). In 1952, the BaYei people, whose separatist agitation can be traced as far back as the late 1940s, took their claims to a leading liberal firm of lawyers in Bulawayo, Messrs. Ben Baron and Partners, and their representations were made by that firm to Government. The leading figures were Moeti Samotsoko, Chombo Saudi and Bahiti Temane (now a retired politician residing in Maun), who became, by 2003, Botswana’s deputy speaker of the National Assembly. Throughout 1952 and 1953 there were many deputations by the BaYei to the District Commissioners, the Resident Commissioner and even to the High Commissioner with the persistent demand for some form of separate status within the Reserve, and for relief from ‘oppression’ by the BaTswana. The main source of grievance was dispossession of land, which they claimed, was parcelled out and placed under Tawana royal control. Up to the early 1960s, some BaYei still displayed separatist tendencies\(^\text{21}\). The separatists were confronted also by the nationalist political ideas popularized by the key Yei figure, Motsamai Mpho, the veteran Botswana politician and member of the newly formed Kamanakao, a Wayei/ Yei cultural organisation. In the late 1940s Mpho worked as a social worker in the South African Mines and in 1954 as a clerk to Rev. A.W. Blaxall, the General Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa, Roodepoort, Transvaal. Mpho, a member of the African National Congress (ANC), was one of the Treason Trial detainees and was deported back to the BechuanaLand Protectorate by the South Africa regime. He organized the BechuanaLand People’s Party (BPP) but split from Philip Matante and in 1962 renamed his section of BPP the Botswana Independence Party (BIP). Mpho lobbied British Labour party MP, Fenner Brockway, to exert pressure on the British Government for Yei interests. According to Murray, time and again the Protectorate administration had to justify and explain their actions, or rather their inaction, in Ngamiland\(^\text{22}\).

The BaYei complaints aroused concern within official circles and prompted a study of the general position of subordinate *merafe* within the Tawana reserve. Like the BaKalanga who outnumbered BaNgwato, the BaYei outnumbered the BaTswana and for the purposes of practical administration could not be ignored. The official view was that to regard the subordinate ethnic groups as separate entities would bring a chaotic and unjust re-division of land holdings. It would also require dividing the already small treasury into smaller units\(^\text{23}\). In the process of introducing a more inclusive tribal structure, the colonial government recorded 12 ethnic groups in Ngamiland:
Table 4.1  The ethnic composition of Ngamiland (1950s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BaYei</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>BaKgalagadi</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaTawana</td>
<td>8,100</td>
<td>BaDxeriku</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OvaHerero/Mbanderu</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>BaRotse (Lozi)</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HaMbukushu</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>BaSubiya</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaSarwa</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>Ndebele</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total = 43,650

To the official mind, the solution was to enhance the status of the BaYei and others and give them the ‘right’ to speak in dikgotla and to exercise it in full. Subordinate groups (excluding the BaSarwa) were to be listened to with the same measure of respect and attention accorded to the BaTawana speakers and not be regarded as members of outside communities. However, the lack of inclusion in the inner circle of the Regent was noted as one of the problems. To the BaTawana rulers, the inclusion of subordinate peoples in their traditional inner circles created serious opposition amongst the rank and file. In these circumstances the literate and leading members of the subordinate groups felt uneasy at being excluded from matters that might seriously affect them. During Pulane Moremi’s regency, the old system had been gradually changing; she consulted the inner councils less and less, and tended to rely increasingly on her own judgment or on general reference to dikgotla. Her inner councillors were divided, and probably less influential.

In governing, the morafe Pulane sought the advice of trusted men [bagakolodi] with knowledge of BaTawana law and customs. She re-established the traditional basimane ba Kgosi (those of high social standing but who still took orders from the chief) through whom the commoners were in a sense represented. In this way, she hoped to contain the BaTawana overlords. For instance, in 1954 she made a bold decision to dismiss two of her Tawana advisers for incompetence. The concessions she made to the BaYei and OvaHerero in the 1950s symbolized her independent stand and progressiveness. In her attempt to help develop a democratic form of representative local government, Pulane Moremi co-opted members of the Finance Committee individuals such as Saxho Goipatabotho and Saudí Chombo, who in the early 1950s were part of the influential group that demanded independent Yei dikgotla in Ngamiland. Together with the BaTawana, they played a significant role in the regional constitutional development of Ngamiland. Sanyedi Samagala, a member of the School Committee and a MoYei headman of Shorobe is cited as someone for whom the Regent entertained respect and had been known to consult; another was the OvaHerero/ Mbanderu member of the Finance Committee, Frinkie [no surname]. Moaparankwe Mpho, a MoYei who was related to the nationalist Motsamai Mpho, was appointed in the 1960s to the reconstituted and important Tsetse Fly Control Committee; others were employed as tax collectors. Their opinions were sought and carried considerable weight.

Names of such confidential advisers from the ethnic minorities appeared among the speakers during the kgotla debates on the creation of a game park in Ngamiland. Pulane Moremi was noted for bringing any matter that affected the morafe as a whole to the open kgotla, where the subordinate tribes had ample opportunity to offer advice and criticism.
One of the political reforms Pulane made was to make it a practice that the BaTawana delegation to the highest African body in the Protectorate, namely, the African Advisory Council, included one member of the subordinate groups (excluding the BaSarwa). Such members were not to represent their separate tribal groups, but to represent the interests of all people in Ngamiland.

A kgosi who did not take this broad approach of balancing or playing off different interests often had little actual power, and politics degenerated into oligarchy and opposition. On the other hand, a kgosi who acted in the interests of the group as a whole was likely to retain their allegiance and respect. It is in this context that the authorization for the founding of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland and the creation of a game reserve must be understood.

The BaTawana Tribal Council (Photo 4.2), which had been reformed in the 1950s to make it more representative and inclusive, was still composed entirely of influential tribal elders and headmen. It acted as a steering committee between the paramount kgosi and the wishes of the people and it also had the power, in certain circumstances, to overrule the kgosi. At the time of the evolution of the idea of creating a game park in Ngamiland, the Chairperson of this Council was Badirwang Sekao, who was also the Deputy Regent and an influential cattle owner. In the early 1950s some of the cattle owners had attempted to undermine Pulane’s authority so she also had to be cautious in balancing wildlife conservation with their interests.

4. The kgotla and Tribal Council Approval of the Fauna Preservation Society in Ngamiland

On the 10 September 1962 the kgotla was consulted on the idea of forming a Fauna Conservation Society. The meeting was held under some large trees at the Maun kgotla outside the BaTawana Administrative offices where the issue was presented for public debate. Pulane Moremi provided a chalkboard to the founders of a Fauna Conservation Society in Ngamiland for map drawing to guide discussions. June Kay recorded the minutes, which she later used to produce part of her third book, *The Thirteenth Moon* (1970). Over 200 Africans and the District Commissioner, C.E. Clark, were present.

The object of the proposed Society was to make all sections of the Bechuanaland Protectorate community conscious of the urgent need to preserve the heritage of fauna by promoting the establishment of national parks and reserves, and the enactment and enforcement of laws for the protection of wild animals. The Society would establish relations with others having similar interests throughout the world and cooperate with the authorities in the curbing of the abuse of wild animals. The kgotla was reminded that the unique fauna of Africa were diminishing at an increasingly rapid rate, and that the Okavango swamps was one of the limited areas where a wide variety of fauna could still be found. Acting in an advisory capacity, Robert Kay quoted a Chinese proverb, ‘He who plants a tree thinks of others’, and so the Ngamiland community was urged to think of the generations to come and work hard to preserve the fauna.

Robert Kay took the kgotla through a history of systematic wildlife eradication, mainly
in Europe and America, and argued that people from such countries would come to a place like Ngamiland and pay considerable sums of money for the privilege of seeing rich fauna which they could see nowhere else in the world. Speaker after speaker related their experiences of the variety of fauna to be found around the Okavango Swamps. Many elders present at the kgotla had personally witnessed some South African hunting parties who would overshoot their licences and leave the carcasses of buffalo for the hyena and vultures. The elders were told that the purpose of forming a fauna society was to counter such abuse by employing trained Africans to accompany each hunting party as a witness to what they shot.

The local Africans who attended the meetings were understandably suspicious at the outset, especially in view of the fact that some of them detested the idea of outsiders interfering with their hunting rights. The strategy of the founders of the Fauna Society was to inculcate the financial message to the moara, emphasizing that game was a more valuable asset than livestock. Joy Adamson spread a similar campaign message, that tourism could attract revenue and be a better economic investment than agriculture for Kenya. Robert Kay adapted the Kenya Wildlife Society message: ‘Let us avoid the mistake of killing the goose which, properly nourished and husbanded, may be induced to lay Kenya’s golden eggs’.

Robert pointed out that decimation of fauna was against tribal economic interest. If they allowed it to happen they could be faced with a situation where their territory would lose its greatest natural assets.

One elder remarked, ‘Well, there might be something in the idea, but it will never work. If we stop hunting we will starve’. Robert’s response to this was, ‘I don’t ask you to stop hunting altogether’. He explained that he wanted them to set aside one area as a complete reserve, a sanctuary where game might breed undisturbed, from which the natural increase of wildlife would feed out into the hunting areas and ensure a supply of animals in perpetuity. Tudor noted the problem of tsetse, the constraints on crop production and pastoral farming and explained the economic potential of wildlife. He reminded the gathering that Ngamiland had no mineral wealth like ‘Ga-mangwato’ (Ngwato land), and therefore it was incumbent upon them to look into the future and preserve at least something that would yield an income. The gathering was assured that control of the proposed Society and the Game Reserve would be vested in the kgotla’s hands, and that outsiders like Robert and June Kay would only assist using their experience to offer advice and external contacts, both financial and otherwise. The metaphorical message that the people at the kgotla carried back to their people was, ‘Kill the cow that bears the calf and tomorrow you’ll have no meat’.

Interestingly, Robert Kay and his associates made reference to Julius Nyerere’s emphasis on the importance of Africa’s natural fauna and that Tanzania had started benefiting financially as a direct result of an enlightened policy towards fauna. Nyerere had elaborated this message in the Arusha Manifesto:

The survival of our wildlife is a matter of grave concern to all of us in Africa. These wild creatures amid the wild places they inhabit are not only important as source of wonder and inspiration but are an integral part of our natural resources and of our future livelihood and well-being. In accepting trusteeship of our wildlife we solemnly declare that we will do
everything in our power to make sure that our children’s grandchildren will be able to enjoy this rich and precious inheritance. The conservation of wildlife and wild places calls for specialist knowledge, trained manpower and money and we look to other nations to co-operate in this important task—the success or failure of which not only affects the continent of Africa but the rest of the world.

Nyerere’s address had been translated into Setswana by some of the founders of the Fauna Society and copies were made available at that moment to help demonstrate to the Ngamiland kgotla that an enlightened African leader considered the fauna of Africa to be of such paramount importance to his people. Nyerere’s words became a valuable text for Robert and his associates such as Isaac Tudor, Jack Ramsden, Montsho Mogalakwe and Michael Dithapo who worked hard to inaugurate the Fauna Preservation Society. It helped convince Jack Ramsden, who had initially opposed the scheme. Nyerere’s message made sense to many people and was passed on by word of mouth.

The presence of the Chief Designate, young Letsholathebe Moremi, at the meeting was important, as it was common at the kgotla for a group of the more influential tribesmen to gather and jostle for power around the heir. Prior to the September kgotla, District Commissioner Clark had used his official position in an attempt to discredit June and Robert Kay in the eyes of the young man. He linked them with the United Federal Party in Southern Rhodesia that was very much against a coalition government embodying strong representation from tribal chiefs. Letsholathebe was warned not to trust the Kays or their idea of creating a park. It was alleged in official circles that the Kays were hoping to personally benefit from the establishment of a game park. Pulane had already informed her son Letsholathebe that a delegation was due to address the kgotla on preservation of fauna and she was quite careful of not to make any decisions or shoulder any responsibility that would affect his future and status.

Prior to this meeting Letsholathebe had decided to visit the Kays at their campsite along Thamalakane river and investigate the official allegations for himself. Before he crossed the river back to the Tawana Royal residence, Letsholathebe had assured the architects of the game park that he was on their side but had yet to win over the tribal elders. The DC, who still did not think the elders would approve the park, had earlier remarked about the September kgotla:

There is a remote possibility that the tribe may agree to the formation of a Fauna Conservation Society. Their agreeing to the creation of a tribal Game Reserve is as impossible as the thirteenth moon.

At this kgotla meeting Letsholathebe said:

In a few days time I am going back to England to continue studies until I can rejoin you as your chief. I am leaving you with a priceless heritage of game animals in your care - on my return, I expect to see that that heritage has been preserved.
He reiterated the key idea: ‘Do not kill the cow that bears the calf’. When addressing the BaTawana Tribal Council in March 1963, Ramsden, who became first Chairman of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland, reminded the audience of the Chief Designate’s message prior to his departure as a way of soliciting their support\(^{46}\).

The preparatory campaign was clearly successful and tribal elders agreed to the inauguration of a Fauna Preservation Society. The request for a National Park was to remain under discussion until the full kgotla meeting scheduled for March 1963. Traditional consultation took place through scheduled meetings and when anything involving new policy was discussed, it was customary to do so at the ‘full’ annual kgotla in March, not at the ‘small’ kgotla in September. The March meetings were observed just as the parliamentary sittings. They needed more time to consider the matter of a game reserve and the banning of all hunting in the Khwai valley, the richest game area of Ngamiland. The key point however, was that the multi-racial Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland was inaugurated through the Africans’ own support and approval\(^{47}\). Ronnie Kays observes that, despite lots of arguments and discussions during the kgotla meeting, ‘local people were far more convinced that there was need to save wildlife in their hunting area; eager to getting the project into gear’\(^{48}\). It should be noted that the appreciation of wildlife conservation was not just confined to Ngamiland. During one of the Ngwato Tribal Executive Committee meetings, Moutlwakgolo Ngwako, one of the political architects of modern Botswana, objected to the idea that elephants should be exterminated, ‘because other countries made money through what they offered to tourists’\(^{49}\).

5. Official Launching of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland and the Plan of Action

Meetings of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland began in November 1962 at Riley’s Hotel, with Michael Dithapo acting as interpreter. Lengthy discussions developed and a considerable number of ordinary members attended, as well as representatives of the BaTawana Tribal Council\(^{50}\). Clark suggested that a Motawana be elected as Chairperson; that the Tribal Authority and the Tribal Council each appoint representative members; and that the Ex-officio members consist of the District Commissioner and a Game Officer\(^{51}\). The Colonial Administration obviously wanted to have a say in the running of the affairs of the Society. To some degree, this was accepted but the committee’s composition reflected those who had initiated the idea.

The new Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland received a cheque for US $1,000 from George Bates, an American hunter then in Ngamiland to ‘kick off’ their campaign. Other small donations were received and the Committee aimed to raise £20,000\(^{52}\). The government position was to commit neither its own nor the tribal resources to assist with the project. The DC’s office was worried about probable future implications for the Tribal Treasury and suggested that the Society administer the fund solely through its own bank account and not through the Tribal Administration\(^{53}\).

The first ordinary meeting, chaired by Jack Ramsden, was on 7 November 1962. Present were the Maun medical officer, Dr. D. King (Vice Chairman), June Kay, (Secretary),
Isaac Tudor (Assistant Secretary), Michael Dithapo (Treasurer), Pete Smith (Assistant Treasurer), Tsheko Tsheko (the representative for the BaTswana Tribal Council), and Committee Members M. Mogalakwe, G. Segadimo, D. Culver, Ronnie Kays, Robert Kay, L. Setlhoko, as well as ex-officio members, P. Bromfield (Game Department) and C.E. Clark (District Commissioner). Chombo Saudi, Sauxho Goipatabotho and P. Seidisa of the BaYei and C.E. Kipande of the Herero were co-opted as new committee members. The number of Committee members excluding office-bearers increased from six to ten in order to allow multi-tribal group representation, except for the BaSarwa.

The Fauna Preservation Society Committee invited the visiting IUCN African Special Project guests to one of their meetings. Thane Riney, the American biologist and Peter Hill, the British agriculturist outlined some of the work of the IUCN, mentioning the 1960 Warsaw conference where the matter of taking a comprehensive look at wildlife in Africa was discussed. They had already been invited by the Bechuanaland Protectorate Government to give advice on wildlife management. ‘We have found tremendous lack of both inter-territorial and territorial communication and insufficient liaison between various Governments Departments’, said Hill. They suggested that wildlife should be integrated into the development strategy of the country possessing it. Hill and Riney also talked about Kenya benefiting from the possession of wildlife largely through Reserves. To conclude, they reiterated the increasing world interest in wildlife and the great need for research into diseases prevalent amongst both wild and domestic animals. They promised to give advice on the technical side, particularly for an ecological survey in the projected National Park.

There were significant tensions in the Fauna Conservation Society. When June Kay proposed that the Committee appoint her as Public Relations Officer to work on fund raising appeals and the writing of articles on Fauna Preservation, a topic she had been writing about since the Society was first mooted, ex-officio member District Commissioner Clark opposed this move. Clark, who in some of his confidential correspondence with his seniors described the Kays as ‘utterly unscrupulous’ and ‘dangerous agents provocateurs’, did not trust the Kays and expressed doubts about their role in the new Society. He accused them of being deceitful in winning the support of many of the Africans by inviting them to their camp for alcoholic drinks. As far as the officials were concerned, the Kay’s continued presence in Ngamiland was likely to cause great damage to the morafe: They were getting mixed up in local politics and were joining the malcontents, deliberately perverting the facts of white hunting; fostering and acquiescing an anti-European and anti-government feeling to make themselves popular. Some members of the Tswana nobility such as Setlhoko were accused of having ANC communistic leanings.

The DC even circulated a rumour to Mafikeng accusing the Kays of being agitators, bent on starting some form of Mau Mau in Ngamiland. During this period the South African press reported about the remnants of the Mau Mau movement as still constituting a great threat to the security of Kenya. Clark used Bobby Wilmot, the crocodile hunter, as his ‘chief informer’, to spy on the Kays, and he further accused them of corresponding with people overseas about the game reserve behind the backs of the government and the Committee of the Fauna Preservation Society. At the November meeting Clark called upon June Kay to produce a full report on what she had done on behalf of the Fauna
Preservation Society of Ngamiland\textsuperscript{62}. The majority of the Committee members did not welcome his remarks. Clark implied that she had responded to letters without having the authority to do so. The feeling was that some of June Kay’s correspondence was urgent and the Kays did not feel it was fair to the people concerned, people who had shown a very active interest in the work of the Society as a result of June’s correspondence with them, to expect them to wait for replies to their urgent letters until the matter was discussed at the next meeting\textsuperscript{63}.

Dithapo viewed Clark as ‘an all-round trouble maker and spreader of disaffection’\textsuperscript{64}, reminded the Committee that, ‘the big question was whether we shall be granted a National Park’. He proposed that June continue with her work of appealing for funds while they were still waiting for the outcome of the annual March kgotla\textsuperscript{65}. It was agreed however that in the interest of transparency June’s public relations reports would be read in Committee meetings and copies would be filed for the Society’s records.

Although not given a mandate by the general membership, June and Robert Kay had already made contacts on behalf of the Fauna Preservation Society, one of which resulted in a cheque from an American hunter. As a follow-up the Kays approached the Bechuanaland Game Ranger Bromfield and the Wild Life Protection Society of South Africa with information leaflets such as ‘Preservation of African Fauna’, ‘Conditions of Game on Khwai’ and ‘Overshooting on Khwai’. The Kays, Jeremy Mallinson and others became strong advocates of a game reserve and worked with key advisors to the Tawana authorities and members of the Ngamiland Tribal Council. ‘Africa’s last Eden’ became a common phrase in June Kay’s writing. The Kays emphasized the fact that the local people had taken the first courageous steps, and that there was now a vital moral responsibility on the shoulders of game conservationists in Southern Africa, elsewhere in Africa and in the world at large ‘to ensure that the BaTawana are not let down’\textsuperscript{66}. Together with Jeremy Mallinson, they sent out an appeal in the form of articles published in wildlife journals such as \textit{Oryx} and \textit{African Wildlife}. Copies of the 1962 \textit{Oryx} articles were circulated in one of the Committee meetings.

Clark was not happy with these appeals that always included photographs of harmed young animals, such as a lion with its foot caught in a steel trap. He had been most troubled by a \textit{Gauntlet} article also published in South Africa under the title, ‘Killers of the Okavango’. The article on poaching had filtered through to the Maun white community and they were disturbed. This was equally a matter of concern to the Secretariat in Mafikeng, who worried that great harm would be done among the Wildlife Preservation Societies abroad if the Kays were not stopped. To the officials, the article implied that the British Administration had been neglecting Maun in allowing such atrocities to be perpetrated, and the Game Department and the Police had not been doing their job. The pictures were also implicitly critical of safari hunting. To the officials in Ngamiland, ‘the worst thing about it is that some of the safari firms are so suspicious of him [Robert] and his aims that, if he is not curbed, they may withdraw from Ngamiland’. Private meetings were held between officials and the Kays with the aim of ‘nipping those [Kays] smartly in the bud’\textsuperscript{67}. Government officials went to the extent of demanding that the Kays’ private correspondence with their ‘friends’ in England be made available to them, a request the couple declined.

Tudor, Segadimo and Mogalakwe, alerted by the unhappy mood of the white community
Maitseo M. M. BOLAANE

at Riley’s Hotel bar, translated a copy of the story on illicit shooting of game into Setswana for their kinsmen. June had prepared yet another article, ‘Lion cub curfew’ based on the notes she prepared on the use of steel jaw traps in the River Khwai. Some of the Maun whites and other residents such as Colin Blackbeard and Tom Shaw were implicated in this article. June accused them of hunting lions and leopards to take skins to their wives, and of trapping hyenas for the reward of 10/- per tail. Those who had worked wholeheartedly to establish a game reserve were simply not bothered by the officials’ antagonism. ‘To us Africans, June’s articles were a revelation of what we witnessed on regular a basis. We knew who had shot what, and when, where and why’, affirms Tudor (68). Basically it was not just the outsiders doing the damage; the local whites were equally guilty as demonstrated above in June’s notes.

The Kays and Mallinson argued that in East Africa, profits of safari firms had gone to the firms themselves and that although governments received considerable revenue from the sale of game licenses, there had been little direct or obvious benefit to the indigenous population from money coming to the country as a result of safari firms. June noted that although the morafe derived some benefit from the 50 per cent levy imposed on hunting licenses, the benefit ended there. There was no arrangement where professional safari firms operating within the area might be constrained to pay a portion of their profits into tribal coffers in compensation for the game shot (69). To attract revenue-producing tourists the Society would dedicate itself to the preservation of fauna and to ensure that at least a nucleus of breeding animals survived.

In May 1962, Mallinson visited the World Wildlife Fund’s Headquarters in London. Anticipating the likelihood that the tribal community would accept a reserve of some sort, money for such a project would be required. Mallinson’s conversation with a key World Wildlife Fund (WWF) official, Ian MacPhail, was taped and was in full support of the Kays’ conservation objectives in the establishment of Moremi Reserve (70). According to Pete Smith, Robert and June Kay had direct contact with London and the Netherlands which they used to solicit funds. Robert confirmed that at the initial stage they used an influential member of the British press with the idea of appealing for funds for an African sponsored Game Park. Joy Adamson was also launching a successful fund raising campaign for Kenyan wildlife during the several visits she made to England, USA, Australia and New Zealand at this time.

At the beginning of 1963, June Kay, the Public Relations Officer and Secretary of the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland, was advised by WWF Chairman Peter Scott and the Campaigns Adviser, Ian MacPhail, to soft-pedal any press publicity in the United Kingdom on Ngamiland’s faunal problems until the contents of the IUCN ecological survey report had been made public. It was therefore not possible at this stage to assess what financial support there may be from the WWF and allied organizations. What lay ahead was a fairly lengthy and bureaucratic procedure involving Government recommendations on the findings of Hill and Riney.

Further work was initiated through several Committee meetings. Membership cards and appeal forms were designed and printed for the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland in Setswana and English. The Setswana version of Nyerere’s printed article was distributed
widely in Maun and the outlying villages. Both the Fauna Preservation Society in London and the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa in Johannesburg were contacted for a suitable film on game preservation that could be made available for general showing in Ngamiland. School children were particularly targeted for this film show, and a question of giving prizes to the school children for the best essays on fauna preservation was raised. The Committee resolved that Montsho Mogalakwe, a chief’s representative at Sehithwa and member of the BaTawana Tribal Council—a man well known to the public—would be a good emissary. They nominated Mogalakwe to act as the ‘Chief Local Propaganda’ officer. He did a considerable amount of travelling in the region and helped produce a series of Setswana leaflets entitled ‘Know Your Animals’, and ‘Preservation of Fauna for our Children’.

The input of the Game Ranger Pat Bromfield was of particular importance prior to the March 1963 Tribal Council and kgotla meeting. His commitment to wildlife conservation is noted above through his support for the creation of Chobe Game Reserve in the Crown lands. Although he had his reservations about the Kay family, Bromfield expressed his willingness verbally in meetings and through correspondence to assist the Fauna Society in such matters as the training of game scouts by his Department and the possibility of sending Game Department scouts to help in appeals. He was also supportive of the intention to circulate as widely as possible photographs of dead and dying animals. At the same time, however, staff in the Game Department felt that the establishment of a national park in Ngamiland was ‘impracticable at the moment owing to the unsuitability of the area and the lack of funds to construct approaches, etc’.

6. Local Government Officials, Safari Firms and the Park

In January 1963, District Commissioner Clark issued a controversial Memorandum in which he raised his concern about the idea of a National Park. He argued that before the people of the Tawana Reserve give permission to the Society to start a game reserve, they should be convinced that it would be in the best interest of the game, the country and the local people. He himself was convinced that the scheme was likely not to benefit any of them and would do more harm than good. Having met and consulted ‘various people concerned with wildlife’, Clark also questioned the value of a park in relation to wildlife preservation. He argued against the idea that the best method of preserving game was to declare an area a game reserve and forbid all shooting in it apart from culling. ‘In theory’, he further argued, ‘the quantity of game will find its own level, the grazing will not be damaged and the land and game will be exactly as it was 100 or 200 years ago’. But Clark suggested that a visit to Wankie or Kruger showed that this was not the case at all. According to him, there were plenty of tsessebe when the Wankie game park was opened and there were none in the early 1960s, and that there were so many impala in Kruger National Park that there was a danger that other species might die out. As far as he was concerned, Game Reserves were overstocked with game causing ecological problems.

Clark also questioned the objective of the Society to preserve game when he felt that the real objective should be the conservation of all natural resources. The proposed game
reserve might preserve some species but would in the long run not conserve all species or the natural habitats around them. He felt it was too early to push the idea of a national park and insisted that they take into consideration the advice of any ecological survey. He reminded the Society that they could only confine their activities to the tribal land, Ngamiland, and not expect to extend them to Crown Lands.

The Society membership had an opportunity to discuss Clark’s memorandum in the Committee and general meetings. Their petition entitled ‘Preservation of Ngamiland’s Faunal Assets’ clearly demonstrates their dissatisfaction with the District Commissioner’s views on the Society’s principle objective. Dithapo, Ramsden, Tudor, Monwela and Mogalakwe were reported to be ‘all furious’. The Society’s executive became worried that the DC’s Memorandum could be destructive and that it was likely to have the effect of confusing both African people and officials in Mafikeng and throw doubt upon whether the Society executive really knew what it was talking about. They saw the DC’s letter as an act aimed at preventing the project being realized especially with the March kgotla so close.

It was therefore felt that an attempt should be made to refute the Memorandum in the strongest possible terms. The Committee argued that the opinions of the DC and his allies were at variance with those held by wildlife conservation authorities such as Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, the IUCN, the WWF, Stevenson-Hamilton of the Kruger National Park, James Fisher the British ornithologist, and other well known figures such as Julian Huxley. Extracts from speeches made by important international figures such as Stevenson-Hamilton, and Julius Nyerere on the vital necessity for the creation of National Parks were circulated as a counter measure. The Society expressed regret that Clark was mainly depending on the advice from some members of the South African Hunters and Game Preservation Society who had not been the most rigorous in their acceptance of regulations. As demonstrated above, such members had several times been reported for wounding elephants and failing to report to relevant authorities in the country. The DC seemed keener to promote a safari hunting enterprise in Ngamiland rather than a National Park.

The Society reiterated that their principal objective was the preservation of the natural fauna of Ngamiland from extinction. A reserve constituted a reservoir of game, with unmolested breeding population. As far as the Society was concerned Clark was acting inconsistently and had not been open with them in their Committee meetings. The Fauna Preservation Society’s view was that there was absolutely no doubt that Ngamiland contained an area suitable for a national park. Ramsden reminded the District Commissioner that, ‘No one ever suggested that the Society could or would declare a Game Reserve without the sanction of the morafe. We are still waiting for the report of Messrs. Hill and Riney but even so, we cannot embark on this work without tribal sanction and cannot allocate an area without ecological advice’. The exact location of the area and the regulations under which it would operate were all a matter for deliberation in the light of the advice and experience offered by competent authorities, particularly the findings of Hill and Riney.

Jack Ramsden admitted at the Fauna Society’s executive and public meetings that he was a hunter, and that in his experience hunting licenses were often abused. As far as he was concerned if the DC’s word was anything to go by, ‘there will be no fauna to speak
of on the Khwai and environs in ten years time if the present rate of shooting, trapping etc.
is allowed to continue unchecked’. Ramsden also remarked, ‘We shall find that we have
no leopards left at all if steps are not taken to preserve them’\(^{82}\). At the beginning of the
1960s, leopards’ skins were fetching up to £25 each from traders and Ngamiland alone
exported 2,000 leopard skins. This in itself could cause an ecological imbalance. Tudor,
Ramsden and Dithapo agreed with Robert and June Kay that hunting should be banned in
the Khwai valley, the richest game area of Ngamiland.

As far as the Society was concerned, the theory that had been advanced that National
Parks were undesirable was unproven\(^{83}\). There was no detailed data produced on the matter.

If National Parks and Game Reserves are against the national interest, it would appear that
the Government created Game Reserve which runs from the Chobe River south to the Mababe
depression on Crown lands should be abolished immediately and the persons who, according
to the Game Ranger, are carrying out considerable poaching activities be allowed free rein
which action would, of course be the height of folly\(^{84}\).

There were already strong suspicions that some safari firms had influence over the government
and hence they could run trophy hunting without regulation, killing animals without leaving
females for further breeding. One of the leading safari businessmen in northern Botswana,
Lionel Palmer, explained further that what bothered the Society was that ‘once the hunter
had filled his trophy den there was little left to interest him; he could even abandon a pile
of fresh meat to rot in the bush’\(^{85}\). Tribal elders were also not particularly happy with the
idea of bringing in many firearms into the country\(^{86}\). It was considered a danger to peace
and good order. The Society had a vision, and it had the drive and will power to challenge
central authority. They postulated that if the National Park was created in Ngamiland, the
surplus game would be controlled by means of ‘hunting groups’ composed of members of
the indigenous population and guided by experienced personnel with suitable high-powered
modern rifles. In the course of game cropping, the carcasses of the game shot would be
turned into salted meat and retailed as *biltong* at cost for the benefit, in the first instance,
of the inhabitants of Ngamiland and secondly the Bechuanaland Protectorate as a whole.
They were not dismissing the idea of engaging safari firms in game cropping but only
wanted more organized and disciplined groups of safari parties. These ideas are parallel to
the thinking today. Botswana’s Community Based Natural Resource Management, particularly
in the Chobe/Okavango area, is geared towards rural community involvement in hunting
and the photographic safari industry\(^{87}\).

The Society emphasized that the country and its fauna belonged to the indigenous
population, and ‘it is to these people and not to the safari firms that the future of the unique
fauna of Ngamiland is entrusted’\(^{88}\). This was a nationalist discourse. In their petition against
Clark’s Memorandum, the Society signatories reiterated, ‘the fauna of Ngamiland is not to
be bargained for in terms of money’\(^{89}\). Outside commercial interests would take at least
second place.

Clark pointed out that any curtailment of shooting areas would automatically reduce
the number of safari parties that could be accommodated in a season. This would affect the
net profit. Three safari firms were already seeking permission to bring safari-hunting parties and operate in Ngamiland and the Crown Lands for as many years as the morafe and the Government would allow. Two of them came from East Africa and the third one from Johannesburg. This was at a time when the Game Department officials were anxious to build up the tourist industry through export duty on game trophies.

A Game and Tourism Committee was set up to discuss tourism, safari companies, game hunting and related matters in the Protectorate. Officials welcomed the possibility of inaugurating a professional hunters association. Safari entrepreneurs such as J.H. Selby cited examples of species such as sable and zebra, shot by his clients, which were larger and different than those seen in East Africa. The black-maned lion, which was found in a few places in Africa, was an attraction to sports hunters.

J.H. Selby of the Ker Downey and Selby safari outfit was assigned by the government to prepare a paper on the difference between the East Africa model of ‘block’ system and the Indian/Mozambican model of ‘concessions’. Copies in Setswana were issued to members of the Tawana Tribal Council. The government felt that if hunting parties were only allowed in for a short time in the ‘block’ system, it was natural that they would try to go in for intensive exploitation. According to Steinhart in a ‘block’ system, hunters spend a short, sharp and often ruthless period of a few weeks to a few months of intense slaughter. The government therefore promoted the long-term ‘concession’ agreements over the ‘block’ system, whereby such a firm would be given the sole right to bring hunting parties into that area.

While recognizing the demerits of the ‘block’ system and not wanting intensive hunting in Ngamiland, the local people did not feel comfortable with the ‘concession’ system. They wanted hunting to be restricted to a very few areas, and only a limited number of parties to be permitted to hunt. To many it seemed that the country was being handed over to an outside firm by concessions, possibly forever. Tudor affirmed, ‘The morafe did not want a long term agreement which as far as they were concerned denied Batswana the right to participate in the control and management of natural resources’. He further argued that they as the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland were more far-sighted in wildlife management than was the government, which encouraged commercialization of wildlife exploitation in the Okavango by bringing in more hunters. The local people commercialisation could do a lot of damage to Moremi. Key political figures such as Isaac Tudor and Dave Monwela were anti-colonial in their politics and they saw this issue as a question of the control of local resources.

This debate gave the Society a chance to present their critical views about safari operations in the country. To the executive members of the Society such as Dave Monwela there was an urgent need to call safari firms to the kgotla for the tribal elders to air their views and thrash out the matter further. There were already complaints that the BaTswana had not been refunded their share of hunting licenses. The people of Ngamiland were upset that this revenue had not been forthcoming and the government was aware that this had reflected unfavourably on the safari companies. In this situation even those Batswana sufficiently informed about government strategies perceived few benefits from foreign-run safari operations. Those seemed to be a step towards white domination in the familiar South
The Fauna Conservation Society, the Kgotala and the Government

African pattern. They concluded that government officials did not support the Reserve project because their personal hunting rights would be affected, as well as due to perks from South African friends, such as fresh oranges. The relationship between some members of the Transvaal Hunters’ Association and some government officials was a matter of concern to them. Their hunting business was reported to be ‘unbelievable and frightening’, and the warning: ‘beware of the Transvaal Hunters Association’ was common amongst black and white residents of Maun at the Riley’s Hotel bar.

The Fauna Preservation Society argued that established safari operations such as Safari South, which was a partnership business of the local whites, Lionel Palmer and Kenny Kays (brother of Ronnie Kays) and the South African Bill Siebert, should bring Batswana on board as shareholders. The District Commissioner was reminded that there was no safari firm willing to have adequate representation of responsible members of the indigenous population on their boards of directors in order that they might learn the safari business. Although Northern Protectorate members of the Legislative Council such as Tsheko Tsheko and J.G. Haskins were appointed as members of the newly established Game and Tourism Committee, the colonial government was not yet willing to encourage Africans as shareholders in the operations of safari industry.

Clark saw no place for Africans in managing safari hunting. He pointed out in confidential correspondence that safari hunting ‘is a highly skilled job needing considerable capital and more experience’. Officials further argued that ‘a tribal or amateur African company would certainly not have sufficient experience and would not be likely to attract the best type of professional hunter…it would not be possible to use African professional hunters for many years to come (if ever). The colonial administration was definitely backing the white safari firms against the new set-up. What is interesting here is the relevance of these debates to the current Batswana concerns on lack of state confidence in local community participation and poor representation of Batswana in the tourism industry. The government may now advocate local control of safari firms, but the firms are still largely owned by whites. Government officials are still sceptical about locally managed firms, and the safari firms themselves do not employ enough local people.

External companies were accused of employing African staff from outside the country and few, if any, of the indigenous population. The local people wanted conditions to be imposed on all safari firms such that they must employ Africans from the Protectorate. Interviews among the local communities in Khwai, Sankuyo and Maun confirm the presence of the KiSwahili speaking people who were engaged by East African safari firms for hunting operations in the Okavango. ‘They were hunting with the Swahili speaking people…. a certain ethnic group with pierced ears and big ear rings and they were all men’, affirmed Lesie Kwere. Harry Selby, who built the Khwai River lodge at the beginning of the 1960s, brought in experienced East Africans employed as gun-bearers, skinners, drivers, camp cooks and on other safari related chores. East African experience on how to put up a camp, what it should look like, and how it should operate were followed. The local people questioned the attitude of some white safari businessmen in Africa, as illustrated by an extract from an anonymous letter that circulated among the members of the Society:
...believe me, I have had the opportunity to see East Africa professional hunters in operation and God forbid that we should have a repetition of the rat-race in the Kenyan and Tanganyikan game fields. ...there are some 80 registered hunters in Kenya alone and as a result of their depredations they have to range further afield each year. Last year it was Portuguese East Africa, now it’s Bechuanaland Protectorate. True, individually they are fine fellows - a number are good friends of mine - but I am afraid they are too commercially-minded for the BP. They are in fact not particularly interested in anything except ...in direct proportion to the quantity/quality of the client’s bag...given a chance, they will spoil Ngamiland within a year or two.105.

An East African safari firm approached a friend in Southern Rhodesia in 1962 with the query: “How long would you estimate a concession in Ngamiland... until the area is cleared out? Would you say five years?”106 One hunter was reported to have said, “If I don’t hurry up and get in and wipe out the game someone else will”107. These words were not taken lightly by the executive of the Fauna Conservation Society and the matter reached Mafikeng.


Largely as a result of the groundwork done by the key supporters, permission for the founding of the Fauna Preservation Society was received from tribal authorities. Isaac Tudor notes from then until the March 1963 kgotla, most of the active and indispensable members of the Society continued doing a considerable amount of propaganda and hard work and campaigning ‘house-to-house’.108 There were still dissenters as Ramsden reported to Robert and June, ‘but we will win them over to our way of thinking’109. Tudor emphasizes their commitment to the project:

Mind you, we used to walk long distances without payment, campaigning for the creation of Moremi national park up to the time the project was sanctioned by the morafe. After the March kgotla we continued walking long distances in the Okavango wilderness [mo dikgweng] of lions, marking trees as bearings, and making boundaries within the projected area; between the Khwai and Nxaragha rivers.110

A former colonial officer, Hugh Murray-Hudson argues that the concept of a Game Reserve was certainly foreign but to some extent ‘Moremi’ was an exception, ‘because it was “invented” by, drawn up by, and organized by the local people at a time we didn’t have a fully fledged game department’.111 The Reserve was created through working with local communities in Ngamiland.

Social meetings in the form of ‘braai’ (barbecue) and drinking gatherings continued to be held at different spots along the Thamalakane River. Camping nights were held around an open fire at the Khwai valley, with the aim of studying the area further as well as discussing the future of establishing a national park project. Elders such as Mogalakwe, Sekao and Dibolayang of the Tawana and Saudi of the Yei who were more responsive to
the ideas of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland, were invited. African members of the Society were concerned that the BaYei might oppose anything that came from the BaTawana. The warning earlier raised by Dithapo and Tudor on the politics of ethnic minorities was important and was taken seriously by those who championed the cause of a Game Reserve. It was at this time, prior to the ‘great’ March kgotla, that some of key important elders were co-opted into the Fauna Society executive.

The Society was still facing what Tudor describes as, ‘a tremendous uphill battle with the DC’. Clark accused the office-bearers of the Fauna Preservation Society who included government employees, such as Jack Ramsden and Michael Dithapo, of disloyalty to the government and threatened to transfer them out of their home region. Although the September 1962 kgotla meeting, including important BaYei elders who were present, was solidly behind the project, Eustace Clark used divide and conquer tactics by encouraging influential BaYei elders and headmen to oppose the proposals for a game reserve. According to Pete Smith, the DC ‘had continued trying to persuade some of the minority ethnic groups, particularly, the BaYei and the pastoralists OvaHerero against the Game Reserve by saying if they had a game reserve, they would not be able to export their cattle, that no one would buy Ngamiland cattle because they would be affected by foot and mouth and nagana diseases through contact with wildlife’. He thought the interest would gradually fall off and that the project would not pass at the annual March kgotla, especially if the BaYei opposed it. By contrast, Tudor had every reason to hope that it would go through because voices of the most influential elders were heard in support. Their house-to-house campaign strategy prior to the annual kgotla was aimed at winning the support of the very people that the DC thought were on his side.

The kgotla was set for March, and the month April was the opening of the hunting season with the threat of intensified hunting. In a reflective mood, one of the key members of the Society recalls how they went about mobilizing the grassroots level people: ‘The message was about the first reserve to be created by Africans for Africans. We talked about conservation for future generations and conservation was not beyond their level of thinking. This is how we gradually won them to our side’. They also talked about local employment opportunities, which might be opened up by a game reserve. During the many meetings held with tribal elders and other power brokers, Tudor and Dithapo made a point of introducing Robert and June Kay, as their ‘friends to those elders, because they were the men who would, in the end, tip the balance one way or the other’. They stressed that whereas in Crown lands game belonged to the government, in Tribal areas game belonged to the African people.

By February 1963, the District Commissioner was fairly certain that the kgotla would accept the idea of a Game Reserve. The Regent and the morafe had given permission for the formation of the Society. A resumé of the Riney/Hill ecological survey report, which was favourable to the formation of the game reserve, reached the executive of the Fauna Society before the government authorised its publication.

Clark now recognized in his official correspondence with Mafikeng that it would no longer be easy to attempt to persuade the kgotla otherwise, especially because of their earnest protestation of overshooting of wild animals in Ngamiland. He also noted that ‘many
of the Committee are men of standing in the tribe and can exert great influence\(^{122}\). He warned the officials in Mafikeng that failure to renew Robert and June Kay’s temporary residence permit, which was due to expire in May 1963, would further antagonize the BaTawana, who at that particular time had great faith in the couple\(^{123}\). The acting Resident Commissioner instructed Clark to cut through the impasse that had developed in Maun for the sake of progress and provide room for reconciliation with the morafe and the Kays and make preparations for a game reserve on the basis of a declared government policy. The officials in Mafikeng were concerned that the wrath between the local government officials and tribal authority over the Kays matter might interfere with approved safari hunting operations. As far as they were concerned the revenue from organized hunting would be a ‘permanent’ source of income to the least accessible in Bechuanaland Protectorate and remote Ngamiland district\(^{124}\).

In this context, Clark started making official preparations well ahead of the March 1963 kgotla, anticipating a positive signal from the Ngamiland Tribal Council. He suggested Africans should be congratulated on their great step forward to wish to set aside an area where they themselves were not allowed to shoot, as a permanent-breeding place for game\(^{125}\). He even added that such matters as the indiscriminate use of traps and preservation of leopards could be brought before both the Tribal Council and the kgotla\(^{126}\). When approved by the Tribal Council, the Park would be established and operated under rules published under the African Administration Proclamation, Cap 67 and gazetted in terms of Section 8 of the Fauna Conservation Proclamation\(^{127}\). Government officials in Maun proposed to visit the area together with the game ranger and executive members of the Fauna Society. Further ecological surveys were proposed\(^{128}\). Although having its own reservations, the central government respected local people’s wishes to police their own resources at a time when decolonisation was being projected.

### 8. The Riney/Hill FAO/IUCN Report

The IUCN’s purpose was to ensure active conservation programmes ‘for the wise use of natural resources in areas where flora and fauna are of particular importance’\(^{129}\). Although the IUCN was not a United Nations body it enjoyed the support and consultative status with UN agencies such as FAO and UNESCO. They sponsored special research and survey projects. As part of their mission in promoting fauna conservation in the world they had launched the African Special Project (ASP) after their 1960 general assembly in Warsaw and the September 1961 Uganda conference. The purpose of the 1962/63 ASP was mainly to stress that the application of conservation practices was in the interests of African states and should be based on ecological knowledge\(^{130}\). The first part of the FAO/IUCN African Special Project Stage III took the team of the two consultants to West Africa. Riney and Hill spent the second part of their consultancy period in Southern Africa, and they visited northern Bechuanaland in 1962. Their report focused on traditional conservation of renewable natural resources by Africans\(^{131}\).

Prior to the March 1963 kgotla, the Ngamiland people had indicated in a meeting with Riney and Hill that they would eventually want to run the reserve themselves, after they
had been instructed on how to do it. In preparation for their report the IUCN consultants had interviewed several BaTawana who were members of the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland and according to the report they appeared to be sincere supporters of the reserve. The IUCN consultants called for any information regarding traditional methods amongst African peoples touching upon conservation of natural resources and proposed that a sub-committee be formed with the task of endeavouring to ascertain traditional-sponsored Game Laws and methods for the conservation of natural resources. The African members of the Fauna Conservation Society were very happy with this approach. Dithapo and Mogalakwe cited Tsobaora (Chief’s Island), which was a traditional game reserve where only the Kgosi might kill game. There was also mention of a law preventing any person from cutting or damaging in any way any edible fruit-bearing trees such as mochaba or wild fig tree. Montsho Mogalakwe, E. Wright and C. Saudu were nominated to extend enquiries.

According to the FAO/IUCN African Special Project report, it was common in many parts of Central, East and West Africa to hear from administrators that resource conservation was an entirely foreign concept to African populations. In fact the consultants had come across several instances of traditional conservation practices applied to renewable natural resources in West Africa. The effect was controlled utilization within the African tradition. Some protection involved prescribed systems of collecting, pruning, felling, hunting, trapping or other types of controlled harvesting. Some known examples involved the setting aside of areas where grazing was taboo, closing seasons for hunting or collecting, the total or partial protection of certain individual species such as the hunting of immature female animals and the felling of some type of immature trees. Kreike’s recent article confirms the idea of African traditional methods for the planting, conservation and utilization of indigenous trees/fruits in colonial Namibia. In critiquing the Western notion, the IUCN consultants argued that such positive approaches by the Africans themselves were worth stressing and developing.

In their report about Ngamiland, they felt that the formation of a Fauna Society, which was done particularly within the framework of the BaTawana Tribal Authority, was a realistic way of promoting and maintaining local interest in conservation. They argued that such efforts were commendable, and there was no question that the formation of a tribal reserve in Ngamiland was most desirable, as was the formation of reserves in each of the other tribal areas. Although the Chobe Game Reserve and the Botswana section of the Gemsbok National Park covered in Chapter 2 were viewed as great contributions to conservation for the country, the report further suggested the establishment of game reserves within tribal areas, particularly the Kgalagadi District, BamaNgwato and BaKwena tribal areas. An example was given of Kgosi Bathoen of the BaNgwaketse who did not allow shooting in his area and protected game, even springbok that were extremely abundant. Riney and Hill suggested that training conservation programmes be introduced and reach to rural community.

The consultants also emphasized the paramount need to establish the most appropriate form of land use and according to their report there was a case for using game animals as a source of revenue for land. Riney and Hill accepted that the cattle industry would continue for an indefinite period as the main prop of the territory’s economy. But the report concluded
that the natural pastures of Bechuanaland were deteriorating and warned that if the trend was not reversed, it could lead to the eventual collapse of the business\textsuperscript{136}. Arising out of this was the urgent need to assess the responsibility of game animals for the spread of epizootic disease among cattle. At this time cattle/wildlife disease inter-relations were not clearly defined and the government felt it was essential to have ‘complete and reliable knowledge’ of this subject. Amongst the IUCN consultants’ recommendations, Mafikeng’s top priority was the ecological surveys of the Chobe Game Reserve, which according to the report had an outstanding concentration of mammals, particularly elephants and had potential for attracting tourists in the northern territory\textsuperscript{137}. But although the Riney/Hill IUCN report approved of the creation of Moremi Park, the interim report was only discussed at official level towards the end of 1963 and its publication was delayed. This, as it will be demonstrated in the next chapter, stifled progress at the Okavango.

9. ‘Weight Carriers’ and the Projected Game Reserve

On 12 and 15 March 1963, an executive of the Fauna Society of Ngamiland was invited to attend both the tribal council and the annual kgotla meetings. March was reserved for the Ngamiland District’s annual kgotla meetings as it fell after the ploughing season. Chief Representatives (governors appointed by chief) came for the meeting which in theory meant every ethnic group was represented except the San groups of ||Anikhwe and Bugakhwe of Khwai who in the 1950s and 1960s had no recognized headman nor a Chief’s Representative appointed for them.

The purpose of the March meetings was to review and discuss suggestions from the Tribal Council and to update the main [Maun] kgotla on tribal issues and discuss problems across the region/district. In preparation for the March kgotlas, the Chief Representatives sounded out people in their wards through local kgotla meetings on the issues to be discussed, to familiarize them with the agenda of the day; at the same time they tried to reach a consensus. ‘This is keeping people informed, to avoid suspicion amongst local people’, Isaac Tudor affirmed\textsuperscript{138}. At the main Maun kgotla meeting the Chief’s Representatives were to participate in the discussions and decisions made representing his ward. After an issue was decided at the kgotla, the Chief’s Representatives returned to the villages to communicate the decisions made in Maun. The Fauna Society of Ngamiland took advantage of such a forum to consult the local community once more for the creation of a Game Reserve in the area south west of the Khwai River.

The matter of the creation of a National Park had been discussed at the Tribal Council but referred to the general kgotla meeting for further discussion by the chief’s ‘weight carriers’ of all sections. It was essential to bring the matter to the main kgotla, because the land identified as a game breeding ground belonged to the tribe. As Tudor recalled in 2001:

Land was central to people’s life. They had to be informed of everything that had to do with land under their control. Our plan was to consult the grassroots people, whom to us were an important audience, hence the need to reach many in the outlying villages of Ngamiland through this meeting. Ours was not a top-down strategy like it is nowadays with state controlled
Through the kgotla, the Fauna Society established a broader consultative basis on the wildlife project.

During the annual March kgotla, the Chairman of the Society, Jack Ramsden, reiterated his contrition at having been an unrelenting hunter. He read out a speech in Setswana detailing the principals of the said Society and once more reminding the audience that Ngamiland was uniquely rich in fauna. He talked about the poor conditions of the region:

Conditions in the territory are largely unsuitable for agriculture and Ngamiland has no mineral wealth, it is a poor country. Just as we get money from selling cattle, which is one of our assets, so shall we derive revenue from preserving our only other asset, which is game. There were at one time a lot of rhinoceros roaming our country - today, they are nowhere to be found, and we should regard this as a warning of what may well happen to the rest of our fauna. In the Republic of South Africa the whole country was teeming with game but there are none there now except at such places as the Kruger National Park, where they have been preserved. Our reasons for choosing this particular area of the southwest Khwai are both because of its remarkable variety of fauna, and because it is easily accessible for revenue-producing tourists. Some people have suggested Tsobaora (Chief’s Island) as an alternative area but we feel that this is too remote to be reached easily, nor does it compare with the Khwai in the variety of fauna to be found there. We believe that you will see our point of view, and help us with carrying on with our plans for preserving our national heritage of game.

When the questions for clarification were coming from the elders, other members of the executive such as Tudor and Dithapo backed him up and used a map to show the projected area for a game sanctuary. Michael Dithapo, treasurer of the Fauna Preservation Society, quoted part of High Commissioner Sir John Maud’s farewell speech in Bechuanaland, in which he pointed out to Batswana that ‘you cannot shoot an animal twice but can photograph it twice’. Dithapo cited examples of species of game found within the confines of the projected Park that could attract photo tourism for the African’s benefit. In a word of encouragement to the elders, he said:

If you find that no benefit accrues from this Park, or that it proves to be deleterious to the morafe, you can always cancel it. But if you do not create a Park, it may well be too late ever to do so in a few years time. Please give us your views on this matter.

‘The money from professional safari firms may be good’, Tudor continued ‘but it is also possible the damage could be bad. One can pay too high a price for money that accrues through exploitation of wildlife. I caution care and proper supervision and management.

In his appreciation of the value of fauna, a BaYei headman, Chombo Saudi, affirmed: ‘God has created countries in different forms. Some countries have mineral wealth - ours has none. Here our wild animals are our gold mine. I can see nothing irresponsible in preserving
them\textsuperscript{144}.

When the elder Mathula wanted to know if the project would not interfere with the people’s hunting rights outside the prescribed area, the response was that the Society would not discourage subsistence hunting but aimed to stop wanton and wasteful killing. Dithapo immediately cited a recent case at Chitabe, where seventeen impala were trapped in the wire snares, fourteen of which were left to rot. Ramsden on the other hand emphasized that the no-shooting ban would extend only to the projected area. Elders such as Santudu of the Yei expressed his fear of the safari firms, which he accused of having reduced the number of some game in Ngamiland, and he wanted to be assured that Robert Kay had no link with the safari firms. There was a good deal of roundabout questioning by some members of the kgotla, an obtuse probe, to find out whether Robert had any personal axe to grind. If they thought he had, opposition towards the park would have stiffened\textsuperscript{145}. They were suspicious of the safari companies, partly because they were thought to be representing ‘European’ vested interests and partly because the government was in favour of them. When the ecological issue was debated at the kgotla, one speaker, Rra Mooketsi, who was anti-white in politics, delivered a scathing criticism of the Kays reminding them about their overshooting of crocodiles between 1959 and 1961, which might also have upset the balance of nature\textsuperscript{146}. Some people wanted to know if Africans would be expected to refund money coming from organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund\textsuperscript{147}. In recognition of the role played by the Kays in the Committee, Ramsden explained that:

\begin{quote}
He [Robert] is our only shield against the assegais that are trying to reach us. Mr. and Mrs. Kay have agreed to help us run the Society for ourselves and it is only through them that we can contact overseas Societies. Mr. Kay has been our advisor throughout\textsuperscript{148}.
\end{quote}

In retrospect, perhaps the most important question came from the Chief’s Representative for Shorobe, Dingalo, born of a Motawana father and Yei mother. He asked ‘if the projected area will belong to the morafe forever, or will the government wish, in time, to claim it from us’\textsuperscript{149}. Modisaemang, an influential Tawana elder, and councillor in Maun, expressed his concern about the revenues collected through licenses going to the government coffers and not reaching the local people. He also wanted assurances that the government would not have power over the Reserve. The question about government control proved to be fully justified and this later proved to be the most sensitive issue in relation to the Reserve. The local community was assured of ownership and control of this area with the hope that they could only seek government advice on its administration, but in 1979 it was taken out of their control. Today although Moremi is located on tribal land, the central government manages and runs it and collects for itself all the revenue it generates from the Reserve. In the 1990s, the BaTawana Tribal Administration attempted to renew their claim over Moremi, but the government would not let go of its control (Chapter 6)\textsuperscript{150}.

To many in the kgotla, the writing was already on the wall, that if the state of affairs were allowed to continue unchecked, the effect on more game species would be disastrous. Mpho, a Yei elder, illustrates this:
This area will be our asset, and will belong to us. But it should be made big enough to contain much game, so that it may accommodate those animals that have fled from the guns of the hunters. Such an area should be under the control of the BaTawana...

It is interesting that Mpho used the term ‘BaTawana’ as an umbrella for all the residents of Ngamiland, without considering his ethnic affiliation to BaYei.

During the kgotla debate, June observed smiles from some tribal elders who murmured Robert’s Setswana nickname, ‘Rra Tau’, Father of Lion (having acquired this name as foster-father of the two lion cubs). Jack Ramsden whispered to the non-Setswana speaking Robert and June, keeping them informed of the trend of the mood on the topic under discussion. ‘Don’t worry so much’ said Ramsden. ‘The opposition always speaks first. It is the way the kgotla operates here. We fight now for our heritage, and we will win’.

Despite the earlier opposition from some members, the Tribal Council members stood up in turn and said: ‘I support the Reserve...I support the Reserve fully’.

Towards the end of the meeting, the Regent Pulane Moremi stood up to address her subjects. She gave a common Tswana kgotla salutation for summing up the discussions of the day: ‘I heard the words of the people’, she spoke ‘The majority were in favour. The game reserve will be sanctioned - we have saved the Khwai’. The Society was empowered to run the Game Park and collect fees. Pulane reasserted the authority of Tswana chiefs over wildlife.

In May, the Tawana Tribal Authority and some tribal elders in the company of the members of the Society went to the Khwai River, moved all the way to Maqxhwee, the Southern side of the park. Pete Smith, who was among the group that fixed the park boundaries, remembered those who were present including the delta people who knew the Okavango intimately.

The old man Kwere Seriri was our guide. We had with us the headman of Mababe called Kebuemeng Kgosietsile, a headman from Sankuyo and we had Badirwang Sekao who represented the Regent to go to Khwai. There were also important tribal people. Kwere’s village was located where we first marked the park, inside the park.

The architects of Moremi set up the first boundary beacons and erected ‘No Shooting’ signs. Tudor recalls that initially they had no maps to guide them and most of the time used ‘our indigenous knowledge of direction. Kwere’s sense of direction was sharp, he guided us to water places such as Bodumatau and Xakanaka which attracted a concentration of wildlife.

The area of the park was chosen, based on such knowledge. Concrete posts were erected to identify the boundaries and the committee considered the map for the newly established park. It was proposed that a map be prepared giving the boundaries together with local place names and sent to the Tribal office for public information. To a certain extent such maps had an influence in the production of subsequent maps on the Okavango. Today most popular tourist and government maps bear Sarwa and Yei name places, particularly lagoons, which are historically associated with such local community’s pattern of settlement.

June sums up this mood of achievement in saving wildlife species of the Okavango...
with a short envoi, *the Song of Solomon*:

Sing, Solomon. Sing for every lion that walks the valley of the Khwai tonight sing and tell him or her that we fought to free them from bondage, and that in the end we won. Sing the Song of Solomon, the song of the free night, for your island lies within the confines of Moremi Wildlife Reserve, and there will be no traps here now.  

**Notes**


2) K. Darkwah, 1996. The Kgoha as an Institution of Government. UB: 27 pgs. Although unpublished, the research manuscript is based on extensive archival and oral source material.


9) Isaac Tudor, Maun, 23 August 2001.


12) For the first time in the history of independent Botswana, two women (Rebecca Banika (ethnic San) of the Chobe and Mosadi Seboko of BaMalete) were enthroned as chiefs rather than regents in 1999 and 2003. In recognition of ‘talent, capability and composure over gender’ Kgosi Mosadi Seboko was appointed the Chairperson of the House of Chiefs [*Ntlo ya Dikgosi*] in 2003. See ‘Botswana Caucus for Women in Politics’, *Daily News*, 31 January 2003.


14) S. 543/2, Extract: original in 9750/2, Administrative Conference, 13 July 1953; Notes of discussion with MacKenzie, 11 August 1955; Div. Com. (N) 1/9. See also letters on the same subject from
Maun DC to Mafikeng, 7 November 1951 and 19 April 1952 and from Mafikeng to Maun DC, 21 April 1953.

15) Through the High Com’s Notice No. 3 of 1960 and 61, ‘BP: African Local Councils’, the Council established in Ngamiland was to be known as BaTawana Tribal Council.


19) S. 543/2, Annexure 1, ‘Batawana Reserve District 1953’. There was emphasis on the redistribution of members of the Council in favour of groups such as the OvaHerero and BaYeI but there was no mention of the BaSarwa: see Savingram: Maun DC to Mafikeng, 22 August 1962.

20) In the early 1950s, the population of the BaTawana was estimated at 8,128 and the BaYeI at 13,261. See Div. Com. (N). 1/9, Annual Report Ngamiland District, 14 April 1954. The OvaHerero/Mbanderu have been simply referred to as Herero in many sources.

21) Div. Com. (N) 1/9, letters on ‘Bayei Affairs’ from Maun DC to Mafikeng, 7 April 1953; 22 September 1953; 24 November 1953; 13 July 1960 and 5 April 1961. See also letters from Moeti Samotsoko, Maun presenting YeI grievances to Ben Baron and Partners, Bulawayo, 5 October 1953 and 22 December 1954. Ben Baron and Leo Baron were prominent lawyers in Southern Africa. They were champions of the nationalist cause and defended many blacks, among whom was Joshua Nkomo of Zimbabwe. Leo represented him before his exile to Zambia where he was later appointed Deputy Chief Justice before returning to Zimbabwe in 1980 where he also became Deputy Chief Justice. Still, on the YeI and OvaHerero grievances: See S. 543/2, Memo on ‘Ngamiland Tribal Dispute: Grievances of Herero/Damara and Bayei’ from Warren and Coulson, Zeerust, South Africa to Ben Baron and Partners, 12 October 1953; letter from Mafikeng to Ben Baron and Partners, 10 November 1952; letters from Ben Baron and Partners to Maun DC, 22 May 1952 and to Resident Com., 1 September 1952; Savingram: Resident Com. to Deputy High Com., 25 February 1958.


24) The white population was estimated at 140 including 10 children who were at boarding school in South Africa and the mixed race population did not form a separate community because they identified as BaTawana. See Report, ‘The position of subordinate tribes in Ngamiland’.


30) See S. 543/2, minutes: BaTawana Tribal Council meeting, 12 March 1963.
35) Speech: 12 September 1962 Maun kgotla.
38) Maun kgotla, 12 September 1962.
40) PSC, Minutes: Fauna Society of Ngamiland meeting, Riley’s Hotel, Maun, 12 November 1962.
41) Minutes: Maun kgotla meeting, 12 September 1962.
44) During an interview with Tudor he affirmed that he treasures the title of June Kay’s book, *The Thirteenth Moon*, which according to him captures the complexity of the issues surrounding the creation of the game park. This book opens with the above statement made by the Maun DC in 1962.
45) S. 543/2, minutes: BaTawana Tribal Council meeting, Maun, 12 March 1963.
47) Interview with Tudor, 23 August 2001. See also Vendall-Clark, *Starlings Laughing*: 254–256.
49) Div. Com. (N) 5/9, Extract From Minutes of Tribal Executive Committee on Control of Elephants,

50) PSC, Minutes: Fauna Preservation Society in Ngamiland meeting, 1 November 1962 and annual meeting, Riley’s Hotel, Maun, 30 January and 9 March 1963.


55) The Africa Special Project was a joint IUCN-DAO project with Riney as leader, at the time the staff ecologist at IUCN. The money came from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).


57) Minutes: Fauna Society Committee meeting, 7 and 12 November 1962.


59) Div. Com. (N) 5/9, Confidential letters, ‘Robert and June Kay’ from Clark, Maun, to A.N.W. Matthews, Mafikeng, 25 March 1963; Div. Com. (N) 5/11, 1 May 1963. The word ‘malcontents’ was used in Ngamiland DC reports since the 1950s.


61) Div. Com. (N) 5/9, letters: Clark to Mafikeng, 23 February 25 March, 20 April and 1 May 1963. See also Chief Immigration Officer’s Memo, 2 April 1963 about the renewal of Robert and June Kay’s permit.


63) Minutes: Fauna Society Committee meeting, 7 November 1962.

64) Clark’s letter to Mafikeng, 23 February 1963.

65) Vendall-Clark, *Starlings Laughing*: 175.


68) Interview with Tudor, 2 August 2001.


70) E-mail communication with J. Mallinson (Jersey, UK), 26 February 2001. See also Div. Com. (N) 5/11, Minutes: BaTawana Tribal Council, 12 March 1963.

PSC, letter from Bromfield to Ngamiland Fauna Society, 9 October 1962.


Memo from Clark, 1 January 1963.

Div. Com. 5/9, letter from Mafikeng to Maun DC, 19 February 1963. DC Clark was representing the views in Mafikeng.

PSC, a response by DC Clark to the 3 February petition ‘Preservation of Ngamiland’s Faunal Assets’ Maun, 18 February 1963.


Div. Com. (N) 5/9, a document prepared by Robert and June was circulated and read during the committee meeting. This document was endorsed by the Committee, Maun, 29 January 1963. Copies of this document were sent to international wildlife conservation organizations; letter from Robert Kay to Bromfield, 29 January 1963.


See DC Clark’s Memo, 1 January 1963 and Fauna Society in repose to this Memo, 19 January 1963.


Interview with Palmer, 22 August 2001.


Minutes: Fauna Society meeting, 19 January 1963 in response to the DC’s Memo on Game Reserve.

DC Clark’s response letter to the 3 February petition, 18 February 1963.


Div. Com. (N) 5/9, Memo from Maun DC to Game Ranger, ‘Safari Industry’, 21 July 1963. John Harry was Selby born in Kenya joined Ker and Downey Company in 1948 as a professional hunter. According to his testimony (25 February 1998 and 23 August 2001), he had been in the safari business for 53 years, in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Sudan, before he set up a subsidiary company in Bechuanaland at the beginning of the 1960s. Ker, Downey and Selby was later sold
to Safari South owned by Lionel Palmer.


94) Interview with Tudor, Maun, 2 August 2001.

95) Interview with Tudor, 23 August 2001 and Benn, 22 August 2001.


103) Interview with Selby, 25 August 2001. See also Khwai interviews with Keamogetswe Kwere, Lekgoa Mabejane and Banda Jacob, 30 June 1998. It is not clear from the interviews if these Kiswahili speaking people were Kikuyu or Maasai.


106) Bromfield, Game Ranger’s letter to Clark, Maun DC, 12 May 1963.

107) Bromfield to Clark, 12 May 1963.

108) House -to- house campaign is a popular strategy in the Botswana politics where campaigners are deployed in an area and visit each housing unit to explain their party program and manifesto with the intention to win votes: email communication with Zibani Maundeni, UB political scientist, 13 June 2011. House-to house campaign is also effective in the Botswana census enumeration where enumerators visit every household within the boundaries of a designated area to collect required information for population census. See major activities, for Central Statics Office, 20 March 2007; 23 October 2007 and 10 June 2011, www.cso.gov.bw

109) See interview with Tudor, 23 August 2001. He is also quoted in Kay, The Thirteenth Moon: 123. The ‘house-to-house’ campaign strategy is viewed as an effective method of lobbying local communities within a constituency.

111) Interview with H. Murray-Hudson, Mookolodi/Gaborone, 27 September 2001. The late Murray-Hudson is the father of Mike Murray-Hudson, the Okavango Research Institute ecologist.


113) Interview with L. Setlhoko, 2 August 2001.

114) Interview with Tudor, 2 August 2001.


116) Interview with Smith, 11 December 1997.


118) Benn, 31 August 2001.


Chapter 4
The Fauna Conservation Society, the Kgotla and the Government


137) See Report, ‘Summary of Ecological and other surveys recommended by IUCN consultants’. The Star (3 November 1962) reported on the Tiney/Hill advice on the exploitation of game resources in the Chobe.

138) Interview with Tudor, 23 August 2001.

139) Tudor, 23 August 2001.

140) Quoted in S. 543/2, minutes: BaTawana Tribal Council and the kgotla meeting, 12 and 15 March 1963.

141) BaTawana Tribal Council and the kgotla, 12 and 15 March 1963.

142) Michael Dithapo quoted in the minutes of the Tribal Council, 12 March 1963.

143) Isaac Tudor quoted in the minutes of Tribal Council Meeting, 12 March 1963.


146) Kay, Thirteenth Moon, p. 123. Mothibi, Oageng, Gabakelwe and Moalolasilo Dithapo of the Tawana expressed their reservations about the safari firms, see minutes: Tribal Council Meeting, 12 March 1963.

147) Mothibi’s contribution to the debates, minutes: Tribal Council, 12 March 1963.


149) Minutes: BaTawana Tribal Council, 12 March 1963. Dingalo used to hunt with Kwere of Khwai.


156) Tudor, 12 December 1997, Bodumatau (place of birth of Kwere of Khwai) and Xakanaka are today popular tourists spots within Moremi.


159) This song ends June Kay’s *Thirteenth Moon*: 192.
Chapter 4
The Fauna Conservation Society, the Kgolla and the Government

**Photo 4.1** Botswana Kgolla. Mochudi meeting. Source: S. Grant, 1968

**Photo 4.2** The BaTawana Tribal Council, Maun. Source: Tawana Royal Archives, 1979–84
Photo 4.3  Jack Ramsden, One of the founding members of Moremi Game Reserve.  
Source: Ramsden Family Archives, 1960s

Photo 4.4  The installation of Letsholathebe as Kgosi of BaTawana by Seretse Khama of BaNgwato.  
Source: Tawana Royal Archives, 1964
Chapter 4
The Fauna Conservation Society, the Kgotta and the Government

Photo 4.5 Kgosi Letsholathebe’s inauguration speech. Source: Tawana Royal Archives, 1964
Chapter 5

Control and Management of the Moremi Game Reserve in the Early 1960s

1. Introduction

The Moremi Game Reserve is the protected area within the Okavango Delta, and as such it is of enormous scientific and environmental importance. The Okavango Delta itself has been designated one of Ramsar’s core wetlands of international importance and is considered highly significant, both from the standpoint of its geomorphology and hydrology and its biological richness. That the environment of the Okavango is unique in the world is recognised nationally (Okavango Delta Ramsar Site and Botswana Vision 2016) and internationally. When it was created in March 1963, the main objective of the Okavango project was to provide a total shield for the fauna inhabiting the area and at the same time to develop a tourist attraction which would possibly earn revenue for further game preservation projects. This strategy was sanctioned by the BaTawana Tribal Council and the kgotla, to whom the territory belonged. When the position of the Game Reserve and the possibility of extending the boundaries of the park was under discussion, the kgotla considered the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland necessary for the efficient running of the wildlife reserve to which they gave the BaTawana Royal name, ‘Moremi’. The name Moremi stood for cultural heritage as well as the BaTawana’s reinforcement of control of the Okavango landscape and political dominance in the region. Similarly, in South Africa, the Kruger National Park, one of Africa’s largest national parks was named after Paul Kruger, the last president of the independent republic of the Transvaal and the Kruger National Park became a famous symbol both nationally and internationally.

Conservation of wildlife in Moremi called for specialist knowledge, trained manpower and money and this became an important task facing the Fauna Conservation Society during its period of management. Funds were urgently needed for demarcating boundaries, for maintenance, for developing the area as a tourist attraction and for policing the newly created Game Reserve with game guards as a deterrent to poachers.

The aim of this chapter therefore, is to examine these developments and their financial implications, as well as policy towards tour operators, safari firms and other visitors.

2. The Physical Environment of Moremi

Moremi was initially an area of approximately 700 square miles (Map 5.1). The northern and southern boundaries of this triangular game reserve were already defined by a series
of lakes and waterways collectively known as the Khwai and Xharagha (also called N’gogha) Rivers. Pylons made of concrete marked the eastern boundary. The two waterways have a common source in the Okavango River which rises in the Angolan highlands, and they diverge at the western end of the apex of the triangle forming the reserve (see Map 1.1). The Khwai, Santadibe and Gomoti end in single channels. The Moremi Game Reserve covers a total area of 4,871 km² and southern entrance gate is 99 km from Maun.

As an inland river delta, Okavango is a unique area in Southern Africa. In terms of its soils and climate, however, it has a great deal in common with the Kalahari sand belt, with average annual precipitation of approximately 550 mm; the main rainfalls are concentrated between the months of November and March. The Okavango Delta consists of several rivers and associated floodplains, and is a wetland ecosystem of environmental and economic importance due to its abundant natural resources. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, it also embraces a rich tapestry of human cultures. Physically, it varies from dry sand veld and scrub to mopane forest of varying density, light acacia growth, savannah woodland, riverine forest, swamp, lake, papyrus, water channel and floating vegetation. Among the distinct types of vegetation characterising the delta are the jackal berries (Diospyros mespiliformis)—one of the Okavango’s largest trees, commonly used in the manufacturing of traditional dugout canoes (mokoro). Another species is the fan palm (Hyphaene petersiania), locally known as mokolwane, the leaves of which are used for weaving mats and the exported Botswana basketware. Some local people use them for roofing huts and they also tap sap from palm trees for a wine locally known as mochema. Some islands are dominated by spike grass (Sporobolus spicatus), which the Khwai San community often harvest and sell to the neighbouring tourist lodges for thatching.

Much of the area is mopane woodland, home to large numbers of animals, especially during the wet season. At this time, rainwater pans appear throughout the woodland. According to Bailey, during the rains the availability of both new mopane leaves and sweet palatable grasses accounts for the presence of large concentrations of wildlife. He suggests that rainwater pans hold water long into the dry season and often host herds of wallowing and drinking buffalo and elephant. The latter are partial to mopane trees and their presence often hinders the progress of vehicles in areas where these trees are common: elephant tend to follow vehicle tracks for easy passage through mopane veld, and will often push trees into the road or simply loiter on the track. Bailey further argues that during the dry season (October), relatively large breeding herds congregate around the remaining permanent watercourses, and on the outskirts of the seasonal flood area, with the Khwai River and Santawani regions being favourite haunts. At this time of the year the animals wade out into the channels and lagoons to feed on Phragmites reed roots and to drink.

The ecologist K.L. Tinley has argued that the combination of wetland and dryland creates a remarkable diversity of plant and animal species. According to the record list kept by the Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society, most game species typical of the wider region move regularly between different ecological zones at different seasons, notably elephant, hippo, buffalo, crocodile, zebra, eland, gemsbuck, sable, roan, kudu, lechwe, tsessebe and sitatunga, and most of the larger mammals, including predators such as lion and leopard. In 1963 and 1964, the Divisional Commissioner’s office in Francistown with
the assistance of the Game Department prepared an official list to guide the licensing for
trophy hunting which confirm a variety of habitat species of the northern territory\(^{(13)}\).
According to the former Director of Wildlife and National Parks, Alec Campbell, bird life
was especially profuse and a critical aspect of the visitors’ experiences of the Okavango.
He affirms that in the early and mid–1960s, the delta was becoming increasingly important
to rich tourists who were more interested in bird watching than shooting\(^{(14)}\). The Khwai and
Xakanaxa floodplain and riverine forests were exceptional sites for wildlife viewing.

3. The Park Regulations

The government agreed that a ‘Form Order’ signed by the Regent would give legal effect
to the reserve. This was to be followed by an order affecting the Europeans. Clark proposed
that game laws and regulations should apply equally to Africans and Europeans and that
the Regent would issue orders in connection with the preservation of game. Control over
the administration and finance would be embodied in orders issued by the Regent and
published as a Notice in the High Commissioner’s \textit{Gazette}\(^{(15)}\). Her orders had to be obeyed
by Africans within and outside her jurisdiction but were not binding upon Europeans. If
the Tribal Authority declared a game reserve, the government would ‘catch Europeans who
poach in it by endorsing their hunting licenses’\(^{(16)}\). The \textit{kgotla} was made to understand that
the Regent could not make laws that were binding upon Europeans within African territory,
a notion contested by some African elders.

The March 1963 \textit{kgotla} agreed that since members of the Fauna Conservation Society
were themselves largely African, its committee would be the Managing Body for the reserve,
with powers to delegate its detailed operations to a sub-committee. Revenue from the reserve
would accrue to the society, and the society, through the Executive Committee, would be
responsible for expenditure. The government had no direct control over the finances of the
society or the administration of the reserve. During the first annual general meeting of the
society the Deputy Regent and Chair of the Tribal Council, reminded the audience:

\begin{quote}
As our tribal custom, the final decision rests with the local people and the chief is only a
messenger. She will be drawing up the regulations for running the Reserve, which she would
not do without consulting the Committee of the Fauna Society and the Tribal Council. These
orders would have the effect of Law, and offenders would be punishable\(^{(17)}\).
\end{quote}

The committee meetings were open to the public; it was required to report to the government
on all matters it decided. The interim regulations were approved and submitted in draft
form to the new District Commissioner Irving Gass, who revised them, with a view to their
being gazetted by the government. The Chobe Reserve was gazetted in June 1964 and in
1967 was declared a national park\(^{(18)}\).

At the society’s general meeting in June 1963, the Chair, Jack Ramsden, assured the
membership that ‘the governing body would do their level best to look after the indigenous
fauna; priceless heritage belonging to the BaTawana. We want our children to see moving
animals—alive!’\(^{(19)}\). The society wanted the regulations of the park to be flexible, to allow
for appropriate alteration in the light of experience. They also wanted Moremi to be administered initially by suitable BaTawana together with experienced Europeans and by game guards who had hunted in the Khwai and its environs. This explains their preference for Kwere Seriri and Morotsi Molomo as the first game guards since they were considered to know the area well.

The system of running the Chobe National Park was in marked contrast to the administration of the Moremi Game Reserve. A committee chaired by Divisional Commissioner North ran the Chobe. It included the District Commissioners for Chobe and Maun, the Game Ranger, and the Members for Northern Protectorate of the Legislative Council, Jimmy Haskins and Tsheko Tsheko. The Executive Committee of the Legislative Council laid down the policy for the Chobe Game Reserve. The government created this committee in the process of laying down rules and procedures to apply to Government Reserves and wanted the same rules to apply on the Tribal Reserves. The government was also in the process of learning about tourism and the rules and procedures applicable to wildlife sanctuaries. Lessons were learnt from the East African safari entrepreneurs and a policy was developed along the lines of Wankie. The Ngamiland Fauna Society’s executive wished to a have membership in the Committee that ran the Chobe to enable them to have say in rules and procedures applying to wildlife sanctuaries in the Protectorate. Only Tsheko was a member of the Chobe committee by virtue of his being the African member for the Legislative Council.

Despite Clark’s newfound co-operation in early 1963, the committee meetings of the Society gave both him and Game Ranger Bromfield opportunities to continue undermining plans for a game reserve in the Okavango Delta. Bromfield expressed doubts about finance. He argued that ‘letters and press appeals will bring money from those who are sentimental about animals but the first flush of this money will soon dry up’. He reported that the Game Department was trying to obtain money from international organizations, which would enable them to help the whole of Bechuanaland Protectorate. The Game Department at the time felt that the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland was addressing fauna conservation more as a regional than a national project and might undermine government efforts. However when the society expressed the desire to address fauna conservation at the national level, Clark warned them to confine their interests to BaTawana tribal land and reminded them that game in Crown Lands was the responsibility of the state. Clearly officials saw the possibility of some competition. Bromfield affirmed:

We are not against Khwai Reserve [Moremi] but willing to offer a hand. We are only considering the financial aspect. We must pull together on this and I am willing to help you in working out your estimates. We must estimate for at least five years ahead. The bulk of the money is likely to be in charitable contributions.

The Chobe National Park, created on Crown/State land and run by central government, was financed by the Colonial and Development Welfare Scheme and the Game Department’s own vote. Some of these funds were used to control the tsetse fly in the Okavango swamps but they could not be diverted to the running of the Moremi Wildlife Reserve [renamed the
Moremi Game Reserve in 1963], which was not under state control. Chobe National Park had been operating for three years, but the Game Department only received money for two. Clark reiterated that the funds available for developing Game Reserves were grossly inadequate and insufficient for their purpose. According to the DC, 'money available so far (£14,000) covered a little road and wages of a couple of game guards.' The society was further informed that the government was not anticipating money from IUCN except for paying survey teams.

At this time the attention of international conservation organizations was focused on spectacular tourist sites such as the Serengeti and Ngorongoro in Tanzania and on the Kenyan parks. Such places were comparatively well marketed through a series of books and films on wildlife based on the East African experience. While the boards of trustees of funding bodies considered several potential projects around the world, East African wildlife conservation and tourism were prioritised. In 1963, the prospects for the tourism industry in that region looked especially promising and visitor numbers were increasing.

Botswana was in many ways disadvantaged in the competition for funding. It was an impoverished Protectorate with little white settlement; Kenya had a significant British presence and much capital was invested there. At the time of independence the only tarmac roads existing in Botswana were a few miles from Lobatse station to the High Court in the south of the country, plus half a mile in Francistown and some in the new capital, Gaborone. Furthermore, the country could not balance its own budget and was sustained by grant aid from the UK. But it is also worth noting that Kenya, which had received large grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare fund, and incurred large security and military expenditure over Mau Mau, was an even greater drain on the coffers of the colonial authority.

While agreeing with the principle of cooperation with the government, the Fauna Committee wanted to emphasise that they were not a branch of the government. They still wanted to find independent sources of finance, which depended on the IUCN report. Robert Kay emphasized that 'the keystone of the new project is that it has been African-sponsored - the commitment of the people of Ngamiland to preserve their fauna is likely to attract the attention of many people in the UK and USA, who would support the project.' Peter Scott of WWF had already expressed this view.

Government officials, Bromfield in particular, were concerned that some of the articles written by June and Robert Kay and published in the South African press, gave the impression that a game reserve had been created in Ngamiland and that cattle buyers were asking why they were being sold cattle from a game area. This threatened to disrupt cattle exports. He warned, 'Rhodesia will not buy our cattle if they go through any form of Game Reserve.' Since 1956 Bromfield had been campaigning to make Nye Pan a sanctuary, but so important was the economic argument against it that the idea did not materialize before independence. Nye Pan is now Nxai Pan National Park, declared after independence.

Bromfield was viewed by members of the Fauna Society as contradicting his earlier position after the 1961 Arusha conference, when he had raised concerns about the overshooting of wildlife in the country. He now seemed to welcome the safari business especially along the Bushman Pits-Kazungula cattle route as advocated by J. Haskins, a member of the
European Advisory Council, and of the Tsetse Fly Control and the Tourism, Safari and Hunting committees. The government was encouraged by a report prepared by one of the East African safari entrepreneurs on the variety of game species found in the Okavango. David Coleman, a director of the British Travel Association also reported favourably on the potential for safari hunting in the Northern Protectorate. This fitted in with tsetse control. African authorities in tribal territories with large game populations were encouraged to issue a greater number of licenses and hunters were directed to any area where game-cattle contact was considered particularly high or where there were large herds of game. Chobe was not seen as interfering with the cattle economy as it existed in an area that would otherwise remain underdeveloped.

In response to Bromfield’s concerns June Kay argued that Moremi was far from the nearest cattle route. Jack Ramsden supported her:

> We were told by our District Commissioner at the kgotla that we could not look to the Government for help. Therefore, we had to look elsewhere for financial aid, which has been the reason behind our Press appeals. Major Bromfield sat in Committee with us when Messrs. Hill and Riney were here, and forbore to mention any of the matters he has brought up tonight.

The Committee still insisted that appeals should continue since there were other funds available not channeled through IUCN, but June Kay was advised that she should always wait for the committee to endorse appeals before they could be launched abroad. Some members of the society agreed with government officials that appeal money might not be plentiful: donations had only come thus far in small amounts from private individuals. The largest lump sum came from the American hunter, Bates, already mentioned. Those who thought the money they had was not enough to establish and maintain a game reserve therefore supported Bromfield’s suggestion that the society and government should pool their resources as they could not depend solely on donations from such bodies as IUCN. Other members of the committee felt that Bromfield as well as Clark were obstructing progress. Together with Robert and June Kay, committee members such as Jack Ramsden, Pete Smith, Michael Dithapo and Ronnie Kays began financing Moremi Wildlife Reserve from their own pockets.

Letsholathebe, at the time still Chief Designate and attending a college in England, was in 1963 invited to give a speech at a press conference in London on behalf of his people. Together with June Kay, Peter Scott and Ian MacPhail of WWF, he helped to raise donations of just over £1,000, which the society hoped would sustain the reserve. In addition, the WWF arranged for June Kay to meet with numerous other institutions and individuals in England, and persuaded a photographer from *Life Magazine*, an important illustrated magazine (1940s–1960s) published by *Time-Life Inc.* to visit Moremi. June Kay emphasised the support of the African people for the wildlife-based project. She appealed for contributions to the project with a message that their battle was half won and their allies (the local people of Ngamiland) had for centuries hunted game as a means of living. June’s appeal message was that with the creation of the Moremi Wildlife Reserve, game would be safe from
decimation, “but only if sufficient finance is forthcoming to ensure that it is properly policed”.

In order to cover the immediate requirements a special fund-raising campaign was launched. The chairperson of the WWF, Peter Scott, stated that the Trustees were ‘considering’ trying to raise money for the Okavango project providing that this course of action had the approval of the government of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and that of the IUCN Africa Special Report on Bechuanaland. In addition it was felt that an ecological survey of the whole of the Okavango swamps was necessary to get the full picture before taking any further decision. The Moremi project was therefore not given the highest priority, especially as Joy Adamson had already won WWF support for Kenyan initiatives.

At the same time a southern African funding society was launched, entitled ‘Friends of Okavango’, with a small branch in Maun. Donations were sufficient for the Fauna Conservation Society to be able to appoint their first game guards in May 1963. The society was in possession of a second-hand Land Rover (Photo 5.3) which had been obtained by Robert Kay in Bulawayo, and the Friends of the Okavango donated £100 for five new tyres for this vehicle and a second hand duplicator. In the meantime photographic firms were beginning to register interest in operating in the new park. The objectives and agendas of the general meetings of the Fauna Conservation Society, and its dealings with professional safari firms, were translated into Setswana. A typewriter was purchased and a newsletter published at home and abroad.

In August 1963, the Fauna Conservation Society invited Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, a joint president of the WWF, to visit Ngamiland. He addressed the Maun kgotla meeting and expressed his pleasure at the interest shown by the local people in fauna conservation. In her welcoming speech, Mohumagadi Pulane Moremi reminded the tribal gathering that their game reserve followed on the time when chief Sekgoma of the BaTawana closed shooting on Chief’s Island (part of Moremi) in 1900. She talked about the previous chiefs who had preserved fauna from time to time and remarked that:

In those days, the killing was not so great, nor were there any modern weapons. Even so, our fathers prevented slaughter. We are pleased with our people who founded the Fauna Preservation Society of Ngamiland and the Moremi Wildlife Reserve, and also with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kay, who were responsible for giving us this idea. It is through them that people overseas have heard of us.

Prince Bernhard saw the project as a ‘good example to the rest of Africa’ and promised to send out experts to conduct an ecological survey of the Moremi. He emphasized that the formation of a game reserve marked the beginning of conservation and not the end of it. People of different ethnic groups attended this meeting as was reflected in the minutes of the kgotla.

Towards the end of 1963 both the Secretariat in Mafikeng and the district administration in Maun were becoming concerned about the financial aspect of Moremi. In correspondence between officials of the WWF and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the WWF Trustees clearly assumed that any fund raising for the Okavango project would have the approval of the
government of the Protectorate and of the district administration in particular. E.B. Worthington, the scientist and Chair of the IUCN Africa Special Project III Committee, had agreed\(^{51}\). The Kays had requested a grant of £25,000 which was to be spread over three years. In correspondence with Peter Scott, government officials questioned the estimates ‘drawn up by the Kays on the spur of the moment in London and not even submitted for scrutiny by the Committee of the Society’. Assistant Development Secretary, Mike Hawkins argued that the government was being bypassed and the Kays were ignoring Bromfield’s offer of help\(^{52}\). Although the Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society thought that they should control the reserve, they were in reality left with little option but to operate within the framework shaped by the state.

Reay Smithers, the Director of Southern Rhodesia National Museums, had suggested to the District Administration in Ngamiland that if the basic idea of setting land aside as a game reserve was coming from the Tribal Authority, it was an issue well worth consideration by the WWF. He believed that Moremi might encourage other tribal authorities in the Protectorate to look after wildlife better\(^{53}\). The Secretariat, however was concerned about its viability ‘on a most slender income’. Officials were concerned that the kgotla would be tempted to raid the Tribal Treasury to keep the project going\(^{54}\). Clark had been corresponding with Smithers, who had close links with some of the IUCN and WWF top officials, with the aim of soliciting his support against what he termed, the ‘Kays’ Okavango Reserve venture’\(^{55}\).

It lies some 900 miles from Johannesburg, some 540 miles from Bulawayo and some 320 miles from Francistown, the nearest rail head, while the road from Francistown to Maun is so bad that it can only be negotiated by trucks. This also applies to the 98 miles of road from Maun to the Reserve. In addition to this it is in tsetse-fly country. All these factors mean that the Reserve will never have the family-party sort of visitor in a small car and thus the numbers of visitors will be restricted\(^{56}\).

Once again Clark contradicted his earlier position when he had complimented the March 1963 kgotla in public on the wisdom of its decision to recommend the creation of the park. It was painful and surprising to members of the society that as soon as the park was established Clark expressed doubts about the commitment of Africans to wildlife conservation on a long-term basis. On many occasions in official correspondence in September-October 1963 Clark expressed the opinion that Africans and not Europeans caused the greatest damage to the fauna of Ngamiland. He argued: ‘As elsewhere in Africa, the African considers that he has an inalienable right to kill any wildlife for himself…obviously this will not remain the position for ever and the time can be foreseen when game in Ngamiland will either be wiped out or become dangerously low. If this does take place, it will be by an African not the European’\(^{57}\). The Society repeatedly challenged these allegations.

In the meantime, the government envisaged an expansion of tourism in Chobe. Independence was in the cards and officials were looking to economic development of the Protectorate. Brochures with supporting photographs were produced to appeal to tourists who were keen on fishing and game viewing. Their advice was based on the report of the
United Nations-financed experts on wildlife ecology who had surveyed Bechuanaland’s game resources in 1962\textsuperscript{58}. The government encouraged the local hotel owner, in the Chobe area, E. Sussen, to construct ‘modern’ amenities such as a playground and shallow swimming pool for children, a tennis court, a billiard room and dance floor for tourists. Sussen was also encouraged to obtain items such as frozen foods, ice cream and meat, fresh vegetables, fruit, films, suntan lotion, insect repellent, straw hats, sunglasses, post cards and souvenirs. The provision of facilities for honeymoon visitors was also suggested\textsuperscript{59}. Chobe, which also had a large concentration of plains game, particularly elephants, was promoted as easily accessible by way of a 38–mile 1.5 hour route from Livingstone. The 1962 IUCN consultants had advised for funds to be allocated for the improvement of the road to make it more accessible to Rhodesians. Chobe was still difficult for South Africans to access by road from the south because of the 300–mile road journey across the sandy tracks from Francistown\textsuperscript{60}. According to the brochure, tourists would disembark at the historic memorial to David Livingstone at Victoria Falls before crossing the Chobe-Zambezi River by ferry into Bechuanaland close to Chobe Park. A weekly scheduled air service to Kasane, the administrative centre of the Chobe region, was available and tourists were given the option of making a joint trip to four countries with shared boundaries, namely Bechuanaland Protectorate, Northern Rhodesia, South-West Africa and Southern Rhodesia\textsuperscript{61}. To the government this option (which was anticipated in the 1930s by Resident Commissioner Charles Rey) seemed far more attractive than the Moremi Reserve.

4. The Boundaries and Policing

Despite the lack of international funding, members of the Fauna Society still wanted to go ahead with preparations for administering the park. The boundaries of the Moremi Game Reserve were extended to incorporate the sand island now popularly known to tourists as Chief’s Island. With this addition and a further extension made in 1991 the reserve now covers over 4871 square kilometres and is almost a third of the entire Okavango Delta area (Map 1.1)\textsuperscript{62}. According to Isaac Tudor, they thought it would be ecologically beneficial to incorporate Chief’s Island, more than 1,000 sq. kms of the central delta and used by Tawana Royalty as a principal hunting ground. Its acacia thorn scrub woodlands provided cover to a concentration of buffalo. This was confirmed by ecological reports. It was believed that there were still black rhino left on the island, seen by the guides of Moremi and sighted from the air by hunting concessionaires. Some of the San Bugakhwe elders remember seeing the black and white rhinos in the vicinity of Khwai. These were no longer found anywhere else in the country. After independence, rhinos in the country were saved by means of the creation of small sanctuaries such as the Mokolodi Nature Reserve, 10 kms south west of Gaborone, the Khama Rhino Sanctuary (KRS) situated on the Serowe-Orapa - Maun Road approximately 20 kms from the historically village of Serowe and the Gaborone Nature Reserve\textsuperscript{63}.

The government Surveyor-General agreed to assist in the demarcation of boundaries and the fixing of the positions of the beacons defining the reserve, in such a way that its limits were clearly defined on the ground. This was considered important for controlling
Maitseo M. M. BOLAANE

entry into the reserve and future mapping\(^64\). A sub-committee consisting of Jack Ramsden, Dave Monwela, Gas Segadimo, Pete Smith and Robert Kay was appointed to make recommendations, and the Tribal Authority played a central role in working out how far into the swamps the reserve should go. To show the reserve extension, a boundary line was accurately marked on a large-scale map. The final map was endorsed by Tawana Tribal Authority, Tribal Council and the Game Warden confirming that the area so demarcated was agreed as representing an area set aside as the Moremi Game Reserve, to be gazetted in accordance with boundary definitions as recommended by the Surveyor-General\(^65\).

In the light of further knowledge about movements of fauna in the area, the interim Committee engaged several of the Delta people to assist in the drawing up of boundaries. The expedition to place the beacons of the game reserve had wide ethnic representation with 27 people involved\(^66\). The headmen of Sankuyo, as well as Mababe (Photo 5.4) and Kwere of Khwai, served as guides when demarcating boundaries at the main channels of the rivers Khwai and N’goha. Smith remembered that ‘although the official surveyors possessed the modern compasses, Kwere was a better compass, because the architects of Moremi Game Reserve still relied on him, showing them where the ‘cut-lines’ could be marked, by pointing at directions’\(^67\). Lekgoa Mabejane (Photo 3.3), a Bugakhwe elder who now lives in Maun, confirms their involvement in helping to survey the land, marking boundaries and building roads for the game park. ‘We even opened the road from Khwai to Maqxwee (the southern gate) then from Maqxwee to Maun’, which now facilitates tourist travel to and from the game reserve\(^68\). Lekgoa, like other BaSarwa, (Bugakhwe) who now reside in Maun, still has very strong links with Khwai, where most of his relatives are. According to Pete Smith, the presence of the Sankuyo and Mababe headmen was also designed to prevent their people from incursions on the hunting areas but as far as the neglect of BaSarwa interests was concerned, Smith argued. ‘In those days, Bugakhwe’s perception of land was different from what it is now’\(^69\).

A non-committee member, Sebati Maruping (born at Motohelo in the park), was helpful in the demarcation of the boundary between the Khwai and Motohelo Rivers, especially in connexion with the incorporation of Chief’s Island. At the time of extending the boundaries, artificial salt licks were erected to enhance game viewing. Some of the delta people provided labour for bush clearing\(^70\).

The two game guards employed were seconded to the Game Ranger’s department for training. The suggestion was made that Morotsi and Kwere be employed as ‘caretakers’ at the reserve on three months probation at £9 per month, plus a £2 ration allowance and a uniform. Kwere Seriri, who had a home in the park at the time of its establishment, was the first of the game guards to be employed in June 1963. The society considered purchasing a rifle for the Moremi Wildlife Reserve game guards, its use to be controlled by issuing limited ammunition. To supply themselves with meat the guards would shoot outside the boundaries of the park. The guards were required to give a monthly report and return all used bullet shells to the sub-committee of the society. It was agreed that whether for meat or in self-defence, the hides of all animals shot should remain the property of the society, to be sold and the money obtained thereby put into the society’s funds\(^71\). The government hospital in Maun was asked to assist with sleeping sickness checks, by taking blood samples
from the guards on a monthly basis, since the fortnightly clinic service available at the nearest village Shorobe was quite a distance on foot from Moremi. The Fauna Society had established a good relationship with the hospital through their Committee member Dr. Don King.

Morotsi and Kwere were described by some of the members of the Committee of the Society as ‘first class guides’ and ‘enthusiastic about their work’. Time and again they reported allegations that some of the safari firms had attempted to bribe them with a payment of £1 each if they were to let them know whenever they saw either lion or kudu spoor leaving the reserve for the hunting area [72]. They reported incidents of fires started within the park and a party of BaSarwa women discovered in the Moremi Reserve removing various edible and medicinal plants and roots. Footprints along the Khwai River had been observed within the reserve and poaching, particularly by the the BaSarwa who lived in the vicinity of the park area, became a matter of concern to the society’s executive. One such San poacher was brought to the Maun kgotla where he was fined £15 for having shot a giraffe without a licence. In one incident, a relative of Kwere demanded to know why the game scouts of Moremi interfered with what he regarded as the legitimate pursuits of the BaSarwa. This man even went to the extent of physically assaulting one of the game scouts asserting that game scouts had no power to take him to Maun.

Subsequent to this incident, clarification was required regarding the legal status of the game scouts employed by the society, and whether they should have powers to arrest those who had committed statutory offences. Another question addressed by the society was whether their game scouts could arrest or investigate matters connected with game outside the confines of Moremi Wildlife Reserve [73]. In his capacity as a government representative, DC Irving Gass stated that the scouts of the Moremi game park had no legal powers of arrest outside the reserve though they had limited powers within it. A resolution was adopted and submitted to the Tribal Authority and the District Commissioner requesting that the game scouts of Moremi should have temporary powers as tribal police [74]. In 1964, the number of African game guards operating in Moremi had increased to five, and Morotsi had been promoted to the position of senior game guard, earning £11 a month, while the others earned £10 [75]. Kwere was probably not considered for promotion because of the social stigma of being San or perhaps because some of his relatives had been caught either hunting or searching for edible fruits in the park area.

Leading Tawana figures such as Segadimo maintain that the BaSarwa who occupied the Reserve area were consulted and agreed to move and give way for the conservation project. However, the Bugakhwe of Khwai have always maintained that things were not explained fully, and they did not realise that people would be excluded from the reserve including the BaSarwa who subsisted on game meat. The Bugakhwe access to the reserve area might have been compromised by their trust in Kwere. Kwere, the Bugakhwe interpreter and spokesperson, was consulted and the assumption was that he consulted his people accordingly and the deal was sealed. Although Kwere, who was a popular guide for the BaTawana and the white hunters, did attend some kgotla meetings occasionally, it is not clear from the interviews if he attended and spoke at the March annual kgotla meeting. This could have been the opportunity to raise queries regarding their access to Xuku flood
plains (within Moremi), but instead the negotiations were held in the bush and not in Maun. The establishment of the game park and extension of its boundaries meant denying access to the delta people including the ‘River BaSarwa’, although this area, rich in natural resources, was essential to their livelihood. (Chapter 7). Despite the rules and regulations of the game park, some like Mogau Xhauwe, who together with his family were living inside the park, felt the removal of the San from their traditional homes such as Chief’s Island completely altered their way of life. They considered much of the area of the reserve to be theirs, even if they did not occupy all of it continuously, but the Fauna Society rules denied them traditional rights over the food available in the reserve.

Moremi was adjacent to a number of hunting areas. From the 1960s onwards Ngamiland attracted hunting and safari firms; each concession varying from 4,000 to 6,000 square miles and obtained on a three-year lease at the cost of R40,000 per annum. As far as the government officials were concerned the Moremi park had two functions: first, to preserve game for one’s children’s children to see as one’s forefathers saw it and second, “to form a reservoir of game to be cropped by safari parties hunting in the surrounding concession/ block areas”.

In October 1963 the Divisional Commissioner Norman Rutherford asked the people of Ngamiland to agree on the area that could be allocated to the safari companies and to non-resident hunters for the next three years. He promised that such decisions would ‘naturally consider first and foremost the interests of the Africans both in regard to the amount of income accruing to them and to the preservation of the game that is their heritage’. The areas considered for safari operations were clearly shown on maps in meetings held between government officials, the committee of the society, the Tribal Council and Tribal Authority. Ker, Downey and Selby and Holmberg’s Tours and Safaris were to operate three parties at a time in the area enclosed by the north bank of Khwai, the Magweghana Spillway, the south bank of the Chobe River and the BaTawana/Crown (State) lands border. Safari South Ltd. was allowed to operate in the area west of Maun. This was amended to the area east of Sepopa/Tsau road and the area north of the Tsau-Seiththa-Maun road, with areas adjacent to the Nxaraghga Valley excluded on the advice of the Chief Tsetse Officer, to avoid interfering with tsetse fly operations. Hunting parties had access to Chief’s Island prior to the extension of the Moremi park borders. The areas of Chitabe, Maqxwee and Kunanaragha, good for such desert game as kudu, eland, gemsbok and springbok, attracted hunting parties from Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, Malawi and the Republic of South Africa. From 1964 onwards big game catching companies such as Safari Ventures from England expressed interest in a hunting concession towards the south-eastern boundary of Moremi, running down towards Maqxwee.

In the agreement between Pulane Moremi on behalf of her subjects as the Grantor and the Safari Company as the Grantee, the Grantor granted to the Grantee the right to conduct hunting or photographic parties in particular areas of Ngamiland for three years from October 1964. The rights of African residents of Ngamiland to hunt outside the park were to be protected and only Africans indigenous to the Protectorate would be employed on hunting safaris. In most cases this rule was not observed since some safari companies preferred to bring their own ‘trained’ African labour from places in East and Central Africa where
they were already operating. Although local people were still largely suspicious of safari operators, ironically the reserve was creating a long term future for them also.

A year after the creation of the reserve, the Maun kgotla met again in March 1964 and agreed to ban the use of wire snares throughout the 42,000 square mile territory of Ngamiland. All forms of hunting had been prohibited in the Moremi Reserve since its inception, but the morafe had now carried the principles of conservation outside hunting areas as well. Ramsden (Photo 5.5) argued with conviction:

Our Fathers and our Mother! A year ago, this kgotla agreed to set aside an area as a game reserve. We did this because we had realised that the wildlife of other countries was fast nearing extinction. Game was exterminated through the agency of Man. With spread of civilization, this programme of killing has been speeded up, and many methods of slaughtering wild animals are employed. Some of our fathers will remember that our previous chieftainship put a stop to the digging of game pits, and with this move a merciless method of hunting stopped. We ask you now to put an end to an equally merciless method-to wit, the use of steel snare wires... I will put it to you in the form of an equation-6 impalas killed and wasted by one man, plus 6 more killed and wasted by his brother, equal the destruction of a national asset. If we are not careful, we ourselves will become a laughing stock to other nations, because we have permitted indiscriminate killing to pass unchecked.

Ramsden did not, however, oppose limited killing for the pot.

Tudor, Segadimo, Monwela and Dithapo also spoke of how the use of wire snares in hunting had proved destructive to an appalling degree. The Moremi guards spoke of the snares that had been used during the season and left in situ, and on patrol, they had occasionally found skeletons of animals in snares strangled to death. Morotse noted that when the safari firms were shooting in the previous winter season, animals fled from the guns and took refuge in Moremi. When the rains came, and the shooting ceased, they fed outwards again into the hunting areas:

I have watched the game carefully in my patrols. You all know that the Sankuyo [southeast of the park] wood was long denuded of game. Now, thanks to the presence of our Reserve, villagers have an adequate supply of meat at hand and are no longer forced to go to the Khwai River for their requirements. For the first time in many years there are buffalo in the Sankuyo area, and the subsistence hunting there is better than it was before.

Morotsi further observed that animals that wandered out of the reserve during the rainy season were now re-entering it, including the elephant. ‘Only rhino are missing in most parts of Moremi, and the last surviving pocket of this species is to be found on the adjacent territory of Chief’s Island’. A BaTawana headman, Oageng, drew a parallel with livestock: ‘In our own kgotla we are asked to deal with case after case of cattle and goats that have died of snares. But snare wires are the worst enemy of our indigenous fauna’. One speaker after another repeated the sorry tale. The concern was that the practice of snaring, instead of boosting the tribal economy, was taking a heavy toll of the domesticated animals as well.
as the country’s wildlife. Yei elder, Mandozi recalled:

My grandfather killed both elephant and buffalo with pit. Then, during the reign of Mathiba, he bought a musket and stopped using trenches, which Tawana Tribal Authority banned. In 1927 my father was still shooting buffalo with the same musket. He also hunted the red antelope from a boat. In my view this was even more destructive than snare wires- and perhaps the setters of snares cannot afford to buy rifles. A wire snare is to the African what a rifle and fishhooks are to the European. Yet I say that wire snares should be banned, and so should shotguns. Ban the lot!

The Herero elders present at the kgotla also agreed that ‘the snares must go’. Muhumagadi Pulane Moremi noted that throughout the discussions, the key words were ‘tshomarelo’ (conservation), ‘diphologolo’ (fauna), and ‘boswa’ (our national heritage). She would submit a request to the Legislative Council that “a Law be made whereby a heavy sentence shall be imposed upon anyone found to have set snares in our country of Ngamiland”.

The meeting’s commitment to conservation was noted by the Zambian government Wildlife Committee on which some Africans served. In an article published in its journal, the Black Lechwe, R.M. Nabulyato, who had been following June Kay’s articles on the ‘decimation of wildlife’, saw the move on conservation in Ngamiland as significant to both black and white communities in southern Africa. ‘Thus, when the time comes for the British Administration to relinquish its guiding hand, there will be an established group of indigenous population trained in the technique of fauna conservation and adhering to its traditions’.

He commended the society for the campaign against the use of snare traps and then called upon government officials, chiefs and Africans at large in Northern Rhodesia to begin to take stock of their attitude towards fauna conservation. He therefore saw the policy in Ngamiland on snares as a challenge to European and African hunters as well.

5. From ‘preservation’ to ‘conservation’, and the Tourism Policy

Towards the end of 1963, the society’s name changed from ‘preservation’ to ‘conservation’. According to Segadimo, conservation had more strength in meaning than ‘preservation’. The change from ‘preservation’ to ‘conservation’ was a universal trend where conservation often called for wise usage; the management and utilization of a resource in such a way as to ensure its perpetuation. The Moremi Reserve Regulations were amended by the deletion of ‘Preservation’ and by the substitution of ‘Conservation’. According to Carruthers, ‘It is the modern doctrine of sustainable yield’. Preservation on the other hand, demanded the prevention of any active interference whatsoever and the practice was considered to be conservative and wasteful. In Ngamiland the conservation argument in the 1960s promoted careful utilization of wildlife on account of economic value. In Mafikeng too there was an official transformation with matters of game hunting, license export fees and wildlife conservation being no longer handled by the Member for Tribal Affairs and Social Services but by the Member for Natural Resources and Industries. As the country moved towards independence the Ministry of Mines, Commerce and Industry became the responsible
During this period, the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland (FCS) considered applying for IUCN corporate membership while awaiting the official publication of the Riney-Hill African Special Project Stage III report. The letterhead of the correspondence bore the head of a leopard, which not only symbolised fauna conservation but was an insignia of all Tswana chiefs. As a gesture, the committee hosted a ‘beer tankard party’ for the outgoing DC Eustace Clark, who they hoped would visit Moremi Park after his retirement. Ramsden, remarked, ‘Take an example from Sir Hugh Gaitskell of Labour and Mr. Macmillan of Conservative in Britain, they differed in the House of Commons but together had the interest of Britain at heart. No movement is entirely free of disagreements; the farewell party is to commemorate the Battle of the Khwai, 1961–1963’. The new DC, Irving Gass, was keen on birds and animals and knowledgeable about them.

Most game reserves in Africa relied for their running and administrative costs upon grants, entrance fees, and charges on accommodation. Attracting visitors implies expenditure on roads and bridges, the erection of suitable buildings, and commercialization, even the destruction of habitats due to the erection of fences across the lines of migration. The Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society tried to guard against activities that might produce a ‘glorified zoo’. The intention was not to develop the Moremi Reserve along conventional lines, but to keep it, as far as possible, in its natural pristine state. It followed that the cost of this reserve would be far below the cost of others. The FCS believed that a section of the public preferred ‘unspoiled’ game reserves with few facilities, rather than the over-commercialized type of reserve. Buildings would be kept to a minimum, and designed to harmonize with the surroundings. A long bridge constructed entirely from roughly hewn wooden mopane poles lain flat and secured to a framework of larger wooden posts and crossbars formed the picturesque entrance to the reserve for visitors arriving from the north. This bridge, which rattles and shakes as vehicles pass over it, must be one of the most photographed structures in the northern areas of Botswana and is so much a part of the character of Moremi. As part of the tourism oriented activity, virtually every day of the year, in the mornings depending on the season, open-sided, four wheel drive game-viewing vehicles carry tourists to roll through, rumbling across the bridge into Khwai village. Damn, Lane and Bolaane observe that to the tourists the bridge presents an image of rusticity, reinforcing the sense of being close to nature (see Chapter 7). A ‘Treetops’ type hotel and game viewing platforms were deemed desirable for the more exclusive clients, with perhaps one rest camp for tourists and a cleared camping site for the use of people carrying their own tent equipment. After all, Hollywood stars and royalty patronized the famous upmarket Treetops Hotel in Kenya, in which Princess Elizabeth of England heard of the death of her father (King George VI) in 1952.

When tourist firms such as H. de Villiers of Pretoria, World Wide Safaris and Leomarin Safaris of Johannesburg expressed interest in the Moremi Reserve, it was stipulated that while they could maintain base camps in the park, only tents were to be erected. The Society refused to construct an airstrip within the boundaries of the reserve and advised the photographic safari groups wishing to fly clients into the Okavango Delta to approach Ker, Downey and Selby and obtain permission to utilize the airstrip already created in their
Commercial safari firms required a licence issued by the government which enabled the holder to be in sole charge of and conduct photographic safaris. A permit would authorize individuals to enter the reserve with a form of indemnity, to be signed and returned to an office-bearer of the Governing Body (FCS). Photographic safari companies were responsible for comprehensive insurance of their clients. Conditions governing the use of the Okavango waters became necessary. Permission was needed for the use of a boat in the waters of the reserve and fishing was limited to areas specified by the governing body. The destruction or removal of fauna and flora as well as chasing game was strictly prohibited. There was regulation of traffic and the carriage of passengers in the reserve. Roads were to be constructed but they were not anticipating routes for private cars. A visitor with a motor vehicle not capable of four-wheel drive operation was not permitted in the game reserve. Main highways were not envisaged, and ‘bush tracks considered preferable in order to retain the wild atmosphere of the area’.

This approach was supported by individuals such as David Sandenbergh, son of Colonel Sandenbergh, second Warden of the Kruger National Park after Stevenson-Hamilton. Sandenbergh, who wanted to bring tourists into Moremi, had written a letter to the Committee of the Society expressing concern about the state of Kruger National Park, which according to him was becoming:

> …a dusty, littered, tourist infested, dirty, glorified zoo. All the rare species like roan, sable, eland and tsessebe are slowly dwindling in numbers. Authorities continue allowing more and more tourists every year, opening up miles upon miles of new roads through feeding areas, fencing off migration routes, etc. Gorongoza does not have the variety of game that Ngamiland has and all other territories are forgetting their game in the political melee, while their game laws are ineffectual and impossible to enforce. It is extremely fortunate that your Reserve is not very accessible to the man in the street. Rather let it be the exclusive preserve of those that are genuinely fond of wildlife and will save for years to afford a trip, and those that are wealthy. You will have little disturbance and the source of tribal revenue and wildlife will be preserved.

Sandenbergh requested that the Fauna Conservation Society enter into a contract to build ‘African huts’ for him in his controlled hunting area as a way of helping with funds the society desperately needed to run the Moremi park. The DC opposed the move arguing that the society was not a building contractor: its objectives were conserving game.

The FCS agreed that Moremi Game Reserve would give the public the opportunity of ‘visiting the Africa of bygone eras…to get on close terms with the game’. Tourists were to have freedom of walking accompanied by a trained, armed game guard. The scenic beauty of the Okavango has been captured for many years by photographers, film-makers, painters and writers. George Michael’s film, *Drums of Destiny*, advertised in London in 1961 included footage of the Okavango. A film was produced (1988) based on a BBC book, *Okavango: Jewel of the Kalahari*, describing the ecology of this complex wetland system. The delta became a frequent subject in scientific and geographic journals. Those conservationists who were captured by the spectacular beauty of the Okavango followed the developments in...
Ngamiland with interest³⁰³. They viewed Moremi as a challenge and an adventure for those who had the spirit of the early hunters, travellers and explorers such as Livingstone, Selous and others³⁰⁴.

Although the policy of the park was to forbid all hunting, special arrangements were called for in one particular instance, as the Wilmot crocodile hunting concession had been negotiated with the BaTawana Tribal Council before the declaration of the Reserve in March 1963. The society had to allow Wilmot to operate within specified areas of the reserve but tried to restrain him from carrying out further crocodile hunting activities. The society and Tribal Authority decided not to renew Wilmot’s lease for a period of months.

As the governing body of the Moremi game park, the society was empowered to collect gate fees and regulate admission. It was agreed that tour operators be advised that once the regulations governing the reserve had been passed by the authorities in Mafikeng, the entrance fee for tourists wishing to visit the reserve would be statutory³⁰⁵. The entry charge was set at the rate of £2 per car plus 10 Shillings per head per day, and in the meantime, under special circumstances, entrance fees for professional photographic safaris could be negotiated. The tourist season stretched from 1 April to 31 October every year. The society closed the reserve during the rainy season (November to March), not only on the grounds of inaccessibility by vehicle, but also because game was scattered during this period along the permanent or semi-permanent waterways such as the Khwai and Mogohelo Rivers. There was fear amongst some of the society committee members that the paucity of animal life might earn the Moremi an unfavourable reputation if tourists visited it during this season³⁰⁶. During my field work trips in December 2000, I noticed the unusual scarcity of elephants. The Khwai and Mababe BaSarwa elders reminded me that it was a rainy period and some animals such as the elephant tend to disperse and move away from the slippery grey clay road tracks³⁰⁷.

The Riley’s Garage owner in Maun, Ronnie Kays, was assigned to inspect vehicles in Maun before they were allowed to take off for the reserve, and entrance was limited to five vehicles per day. Safari companies wishing to do legal game cropping were to be charged £10 per party. Rifles were to be sealed by the chair of the committee and another member of the executive, Ronnie Kays, and the sealing checked on return³⁰⁸. A suggestion was made for the thorough inspection of vehicles entering the reserve filled with arms, and vehicles owned by the Moremi Game Reserve would have logbooks. Such vehicles were to be used only for the business of the Conservation Society³⁰⁹.

6. South African and International Interest

Towards the end of 1963, South Africa’s tourism entrepreneurs, conservationists, researchers, charity organizations and the press were becoming increasingly interested in the Okavango. The government received applications to capture game for game farm stocking and to film game privately and commercially. The South African Bill Siebert, co-founder of Safari South in Ngamiland in the 1960s, was among those interested in capturing the Okavango animals alive for zoos and for scientific institutions. Reptiles were in demand for their venom. Other interests in the territory included the studying local pottery, visiting and
photographing the San people. At the same time there were advertisements for single reflex cameras such as Minolta and the Asahi Pentax SV promoting African wildlife photography and film. The more affluent domestic tourists in South Africa and Zimbabwe were already flocking to the Kruger and Wankie and other local attractions. The South Africa Tourist Board engaged a public relations firm in New York to produce colourful brochures with ‘superb’ photographs of ‘the big five’: lion, elephant, buffalo, leopard and rhino for launching a campaign for the British and American holiday makers. Carruthers has demonstrated that for the white South African middle class public, Kruger was also a place of recreation and a romanticized reminder of how the landscape might have looked before the twentieth century modernization. To the tourist operators, the Okavango landscape in a territory just north of South Africa was likely to provide an escape from the pressures of South African urban living.

During this period, Messrs. Brian Glynn of World Wide Safaris and C. Pienaar and R. Barker of the Argus Group newspaper, The Star, Johannesburg paid a visit to the society. Barker told the society’s committee that the idea of the reserve was ‘excellent’ and that they were impressed that it had been started with the participation of local communities on the ground.

I know of no other place where I have seen so many species of animals and this is one of its main attractions. But I have doubts that money will be forthcoming quickly, in view of the inaccessible of the area. Where visitors are concerned the Reserve is limited to people with money who can fly in here or people with 4-wheel-drive vehicles…. I endorse the idea of keeping the Reserve as wild as possible and not over-commercializing it but at the same time better accommodation should be made available to tourists in the shape of small semi-permanent camps complete with showers and latrines, as well as observation platforms from which the game may be seen. The main source of revenue will obviously be from photographic-safari companies. We will certainly go back to Johannesburg and make every endeavour to publicize the Moremi Wildlife Reserve and we ask you to keep in touch.

Pienaar advised the Conservation Society that their main need was publicity. He also impressed upon the society that they had many problems to attend to before the reserve could draw tourists from countries such as South Africa. He suggested a small shop in the vicinity of the game reserve where tourists could buy basic essentials such as cigarettes, petrol, etc. Second, they needed one or two permanent campsites and observation platforms, ‘these to be so constructed as to harmonize with the undeniably beautiful surroundings’. He recommended that June Kay be sent to South Africa. Reay Smithers, who had observed her during the WWF appeals, had described June as being ‘very persuasive’. They would undertake to introduce her to various personalities who had interest, influence and money, and to other members of the media, with the idea of putting into effect a fund-raising campaign. The committee agreed to fund June Kay’s trip to Johannesburg.

At the same time, the World Wide Safaris Company from South Africa proposed to bring ten to sixteen tourists to the reserve per month from March 1964 onwards. Their representative, Brian Glynn, asked for permission to establish a permanent campsite from
November 1963, erecting tents, log-cabin-style storehouses, showers and latrines. He intended operating two Land Rovers and a 16-seater bus in the reserve. He wanted to improve the existing bush tracks, cutting new ones where necessary and building small bridges across the waterways where access to certain of the islands was otherwise impossible. ‘I intend to promote the fishing potential of the Reserve’, Glynn continued, ‘and seek permission to put up a small fishing camp in the northern part of the Reserve. Once people have driven over the truly frightful road between Francistown and Maun they will be in need of a clean, well organized camp’. A few tented base campsites in the Reserve were approved.

While in South Africa appealing for funds for Moremi, June Kay received assistance from Renia de Lorm, Secretary of the Johannesburg-based Okavango Wildlife Society (established 1964). She acted as a coordinating agent in Johannesburg and undertook some of the secretarial work. de Lorm introduced June Kay to the South Africa National Council of Women who promised to help collect funds at their informal tea meetings and commissioned an article on the aesthetic beauty of the Okavango in \textit{Femina} magazine. Trish Collins formed a Johannesburg Committee for fund-raising for Moremi. The mayor of Johannesburg, J.F. Oberholzer, had an interest in nature preservation and his involvement in the Suikerbosrand scheme helped to sponsor a ‘Save the Animals’ movement after Renia and June had lobbied him. At the South African Museum in Cape Town, June Kay spoke on the ‘astonishing wildlife of the Okavango Swamps’. Colour films including \textit{South African Game Parks}, \textit{Bring Forth Every Living Thing} and Norman Carr’s \textit{Return to the Wild} were shown. A 30–cent admission fee was collected for the Okavango project. The press, including \textit{The Star}, \textit{The Cape Argus}, \textit{Rustenburg Herald}, \textit{Rand Daily Mail} and \textit{Sunday Express} all covered the society and some broadcasts were made. Anton Steyn, the agriculture editor of \textit{Die Transvaler}, was contacted for further publicity for the reserve. June continued publishing sentimental animal photos (like the pet genet she held sucking milk from a baby bottle) as a way of attracting South African attention to the Okavango.

In the mid–1960s Queenie Lardner Burke, wife of a Rhodesian cabinet minister and Olga Allen of the South African Anti-Cruelty League often sent articles to the Johannesburg \textit{Star} expressing disgust and horror at ‘the brutal manner in which a crocodile in the Okavango swamps was killed’. The controversy forced the South African Broadcasting Corporation and its sponsors - General Motors - to take the ‘On Safari’ programme off Springbok Radio.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, influential individuals such as Professor Philip V. Tobias, Emeritus Professor Raymond Dart, Glynn Thomas (Vice Principal of the University and Chairman of the Research Committee) and the ecologist Garth James showed interest in the Okavango. Tobias was requested by some members of the Okavango Wildlife Society to put a request to the committee for funds to support the conservation purposes of Moremi. This would ensure that wildlife was maintained on a long-term basis for the ultimate purpose of scientific research. In 1963, Richard van Hoogstraten led the Kalahari Research Committee team of Medical School students from Witwatersrand University to the Okavango. The expedition had a particular interest in research on the Okavango-Khwai BaSarwa people and was financed by the Nuffield Foundation and the Institute for the Study of Man in Africa.
In the 1950s Tobias, among others, was interested in the disappearance of the independent ‘Bushmen’ (San/BaSarwa)\textsuperscript{123}. He was also increasingly interested in San rock paintings. The Witwatersrand group believed that the remaining BaSarwa might tell them something about the distant past. The research of the team from the University of the Witwatersrand focused on physical rather than social anthropology. The San studies included investigations of bone structure, genetics, serology, child rearing, hunting methods and sexual mores. Anthropological debates looked at the extent to which the San were isolated from other people and whether culture exchange did take place between them. Some accounts tended to romanticize the San, portraying them as ‘pure’, ‘primitive man in his original state’. One of the aims of the 1960s Kalahari Research Committee was to unravel whether ‘pure’ San existed in the swamps, or whether they were a ‘lost tribe’\textsuperscript{124}. Tobias’s earlier interest was one factor in the appointment of the South African George Silberbauer by the Bechuanaland government to carry out the Bushmen Survey, which in turn advocated their protection as part of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve\textsuperscript{125}.

A follow up study on the anatomy and orthodontics of the San of the Okavango was made by van Hoogstraten and his Kalahari Research team in 1966, confirming the existence of the ‘Swamp Bushmen’. Among the researchers was Fiona Barber, an ethnologist from the Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum, Kimberley. A Johannesburg Star reporter, Clive Cowley, produced the book \textit{Fabled Tribe} out of this expedition. Many of the people that they studied were in fact very much engaged in Ngamiland society. Among them were individuals who not only played an important role in the hunting of crocodiles with Bobbie Wilmot but also in the creation of Moremi as a game reserve\textsuperscript{126}.

The University of Witwatersrand had already set a precedent through sponsoring the Gorilla Scheme in Central Africa and to some extent the Lake Kariba Project. The campaigners for Moremi in South Africa had hoped that such conservation interest would be extended to the Okavango, and that Tobias might undertake to approach universities and scientific research Foundations in the US and Europe for help. Before he could act, Tobias needed the Moremi project to be fully documented. Both Tobias and Raymond Dart (one of the key people in physical anthropology) advised June Kay and Renia de Lorm to stress the unique significance of Moremi Game Reserve, its unparalleled value for scientific research, the radical effect that the ecology of the Bechuanaland Protectorate might have on that of the Republic of South Africa, and the fact that the Okavango could prove a reservoir which could be tapped, possibly on a reciprocal basis, by South Africa, for such species as sable antelope and tsessebe, both of which species were reported to be failing in numbers in South Africa\textsuperscript{127}. Bechuanaland once again was to be reservoir or resource for South Africa.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s individuals such as Jeremy Mallinson were coming from England with assignments to film wildlife or collect specimens for zoos\textsuperscript{128}. After the creation of Moremi, scientific and educational institutions in the region, the US and Europe wishing to collect species in Bechuanaland made requests to the government. Towards the end of 1964, five museums in the United States and South Africa, which had been collecting in several other African countries, requested a permit to collect four of every mammal species in Bechuanaland not on the protection list. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Wildlife in Tanzania advised that fees should be collected for this and reflect the market
value of game species. In Ngamiland, the kgotla proposed that in the case of the rare species the fee should be raised in order to discourage capture. A.C. Hoffman, of the National Museum in Bloemfontein, collected specimens from the Kurunaragha area in the Delta, which he described as ‘very valuable for comparative studies’. Hoffman advised on methods of protecting sable, roan, kudu, lion and leopard to increase the scientific value of Moremi and its vicinity129).

Through the South African network, June Kay was introduced to the Bio-Probe Scientific Field Research Unit in London. This organization discussed the possibility of carrying out a scientific investigation in Moremi, a programme that would result in creating both interest in and support for the reserve. In order to advance their plans, Bio-Probe asked the Secretariat in Mafikeng to assist them with a survey on the possibilities of fish farming in Ngamiland, as well as statistical information from the Department of Veterinary Services on the exports of pelts from Bechuanaland, and information on geological surveys130).

Several businesses were lobbied to support Moremi. British Petroleum (BP) Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd showed interest in subsidizing the making of a film. Total Oil and Anglo American Corporation in Johannesburg were approached for subsidy but they too required full documentation including copies of financial estimates drawn up for the WWF and a report on the current financial position of Moremi. The Okavango Wildlife Society hoped that if Anglo American contributed, other mining houses would follow, however modestly. In 1964 Anglo American donated £250 to the Johannesburg based Friends of the Okavango131).

The Director of National Parks in Pretoria, Rocco Knobel (who came from a Molepolole family in Botswana), as well as the Wild Life Protection Society of South Africa, showed interest in a project outside the borders of South Africa. The Chief Game Warden for the Zululand Reserves, Ian Player, helped in submitting a report on Moremi project to Dr. Werner Schaurte, a German industrialist who had a special interest in rhino and was in charge of the German Appeal for the WWF. The Okavango Wildlife Society approached Datsun, Land Rover Co., Toyota Pet and Willys Jeeps, to supply vehicles for the reserve in return for publicity132). By the mid–1960s Toyota Land-Cruisers were beginning to compete with Land Rovers for bush work. A rental car firm also expressed interest and promised to attract international visitors to Moremi.

The Okavango game conservation project attracted the attention of the South African radiologist, Captain Colenbrander, who was keenly interested in the incidence of tuberculosis among African people. Dr. Hans-Joachin Heinz, a German pathologist and anthropologist, was interested in hookworm among the BaSarwa in north and western Botswana. Heinz’s research on San nutrition started soon after the Moremi Reserve was created while he was still based at the University of Witwatersrand Medical School. In 1964 together with a colleague, B. Maguire, Heinz published the Ethno-Biology of the !Ko Bushmen: Their Knowledge and Plant Lore133). Heinz became renowned for his contribution to research on Southern African San knowledge of plants and moved to Maun.

Professors J.H. Wellington, the geographer of South West Africa (Namibia) and Isaac Schapera, Social Anthropologist at the London School of Economics, were approached by members of the Okavango Wildlife Society to support the project. Schapera was an authority on Tswana law and custom134). The society used such contacts to obtain a worldwide list
of individual who were already connected with game conservation with the hope that they might be able to suggest fresh avenues for funds to keep the Moremi on its feet. American sources had hardly been tapped. Raymond Dart of the University of Witwatersrand suggested that the Society’s Executive contact Seretse and Ruth Khama to lobby for their support. This was at a time when Seretse Khama, the founder of the Botswana Democratic Party, was involved in campaigning for independent constitutional development of Botswana. Seretse Khama was more concerned with marketing beef. According to Spinage, his ‘less benign attitude towards game was to influence Government policy’ from 1966 to 1980 (the year of his death), a policy not of ‘benign neglect but of deliberate neglect’.

Sandenbergh, despite his support for wilderness wished to lease an area in Ngamiland with sole rights of camping, boating, game observation and some hunting in Moremi. The society turned down his offer of an annual rental of £1,250. Some of the Kenyan Africans brought to Ngamiland as labourers by safari firms had explained to members of the society that as Africans they had lost power and ownership over their wildlife. Kenya was cited as an example, where the colonial government for many years made laws for the protection of the fauna, but which benefited Europeans. As the country was obtaining independence, given the racial tensions, the game laws were likely to be identified with the white settlers and were therefore likely to be disregarded more than ever before. ‘The failure of the Kenya government to give this understanding to the African population’, argued the Ngamiland Fauna Society’s executive ‘is nothing short of high tragedy, for which posterity will demand an account’. Moremi was viewed as a wildlife reserve that could win African support and the society refused to change principles for a small group of South African entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, the society felt that Sandenbergh could be valuable in general policy and suggested another area within the BaTawana Tribal boundaries for his scheme.

During this period a certain U.W.M. Campbell from South Africa proposed to lease the reserve during July and August in order to bring his family and friends. He wanted Moremi Wildlife Reserve to be closed to the public during that period, offering to pay R2000–00. The Committee acknowledged that they were facing financial problems, but they were not enticed by the money offered by Campbell. Speaker after speaker reiterated the fact that the reserve was first formed to conserve game and not to promote the sole rights of individuals to the reserve. Campbell’s proposal for renting exclusive rights over Moremi was therefore seen as a selfish monopoly. The Maun businessman E.W. Wright warned the committee that if they were to accept this proposal, similar claims would follow. He advised that the reserve existed not only for wealthy people alone. Tudor warned that it was not wise to reserve certain spots in Moremi for VIPs and suggested that any party on photographic safaris should camp at any desirable place. On the other hand, DC Gass advised the committee to give a careful consideration to the Campbell proposal for financial reasons. If the reserve ran out of funds the society might cease running. The majority of the committee agreed to reject the application. They pointed out to the officials that many people outside the country who had subscribed considerable sums of money towards the capitalization and running costs of the reserve would not be happy to learn that the game park would be closed to the general public during the two best months of the season for the sole benefit of one individual and his family. Further public appeals or approaches to
international bodies could be undermined.

During one of the Committee meetings, Robert Kay introduced Gordon Pethwick, originally from Kenya, who expressed interest in bringing in tourists and promised to attract people from all over the world to visit the Reserve. Pethwick also had connections with an American television company which was expressing interest in making a film in the reserve. The committee was becoming increasingly uneasy about the lack of detailed reports on the Kays’ travels – despite their success in raising money. There was further dissatisfaction that Kay had made private arrangements for Pethwick’s visit to the park without the consent of the committee whereupon Kay apparently responded, ‘If his suggestion was not accepted, he would resign and write a letter to his wife to stop all appeal fund activities’. He was asked to apologize to the committee members for making this threat.

In July 1964, Pethwick presented a written proposal for a photographic safari company in which the Fauna Conservation Society could enjoy 50 per cent of the profits. Together with a member of the society, he would represent the proposed joint venture in South Africa and organize client bookings and advertising. The company would run safaris exclusively for the Moremi Reserve. Pethwick promised that the society would have access to the accounts of the company and suggested Robert Kay as a ‘reliable’ and ‘conscientious’ representative agent. He also promised that local Africans would participate and be trained. Pethwick hoped to stay in Ngamiland for two years and establish a permanent camp in the reserve but members of the Committee were against the idea of building permanent structures.

DC Gass pointed out that the Fauna Conservation Society was not a photographic safari company but a conservation body. He now contradicted his earlier position when he asked the society to consider Campbell’s application in order to raise money, advising that the society should not involve itself in money making and suggested that Pethwick, whom he described as ‘an idealist’, could run safaris on his own and not as a joint venture with the local community. David Monwela challenged this advice by affirming that if the application submitted by Pethwick was constitutional, the society should be advised to accept it as the reserve was formed partly to raise money through the promotion of tourism. Others preferred the modified idea of a photographic safari company with a multiracial board of directors and Africans becoming shareholders.

Thus during 1964, the society was presented with a variety of propositions, most of which entailed changing their approach to conservation in exchange for significant payments, but they generally refused to pursue these. In 1964 Chief Letsholathebe returned from the UK after completing his studies in Public Administration at Torquay and from then on participated actively in the meetings of the society. Letsholathebe, the rightful successor to the Tawana chiefdom, had spent very little of his life in Ngamiland apart from brief visits, having been in England since 1957, after his high school days in South Africa. His presence added weight to the politics of control and management of the game park in Ngamiland, as he appeared enthusiastic about the developments during his absence. Morton and Ramsay have argued that after the South African War, Protectorate Dikgosi such as Tshediki Khama of BaNgwato, Seepapitso II of BaNgwaketse, Sebele II of BaKwena and Isang Pilane of BaKgatla emerged as mediators between their people and a whole series of external forces. Two generations later chiefs such as Letsholathebe II of BaTawana,
Linchwe II of BaKgatla, Seepapitso IV and Leapetswe Khama of BaNgwato had the education to deal directly with the colonial government and outside bodies as independence approached and his presence increasingly became important.

A number of film companies made proposals to the FCS Committee. In South Africa film-making was seen as wonderful propaganda in the area of wildlife conservation. The society thought this would benefit the reserve, as it would involve not only a payment to the reserve for the use of the area as a location but would also help to put the swamps firmly on to the map. Glynn Thomas, who helped June Kay in raising funds on behalf of the Society in South Africa, also informed the committee of his interest in making a film on Moremi, as did Dave Millan who had shot *Where No Vultures Fly* in Kenya. Ray Hartman of Cape Town offered to sell a copy of his proposed film to the society at £78. The cost of making a film was about £3,000. Richard de H. Burton and M.J.G. Fancy introduced themselves at the Maun DC’s office as amateurs wishing to do a wildlife film. After they had been allowed to visit the Moremi, it transpired that they were under contract to the New Realm Film Co. of London and they were subsequently fined for importing undeclared rifles.

Ex-officio members of the society’s executive were becoming uneasy about some of the Kays’ associates and what they saw as a conflict of interests. The executive committee agreed to David Attenborough’s visit for the purpose of making a film for BBC television but at the same time the Kays were making separate attempts to promote an American television company that had proposed visiting in July 1964. The Maun District Commissioner expressed fears that the Kays’ interest in the reserve was increasingly proprietorial. June Kay had sold the film rights of *Wild Eden* to John Cross Productions for £500 plus 5% of the profits. The film was intended to be shot in the reserve with local people, that is, members of the society executive, the Tribal Council and Tribal Authority. The question was whether profits should also accrue to the BaTawana Tribal Administration and the Fauna Conservation Society. John Cross Productions had approached the WWF to operate under their umbrella and asked them for funds and ‘physical assistance’; the WWF was also promised a share of the producer’s profits. Aubrey Buxton of Anglia Television advised the WWF on the project. He did not approve of Cross’s plan to launch a public appeal as part of the project. He did not think the film could be made in less than two years, and he did not like the script outline. Cross accused him of blocking the film in competition with Anglia Television’s ‘Survival Films’ series.

John Cross Productions went ahead, setting up their own board of trustees and planned to launch ‘The Okavango Film Fund Appeal’. Their enthusiasm was directed to wealthy British nature lovers and conservationists. They secured promises from Sir Nevil Brownjohn and his wife, who was on the organising committee, and approached three retired British Second World War army and air force generals, Lord Harding, Lord Downing and General Slim. Lord Snowdon was asked to become the patron, with Christopher Cadbury of the ‘cocoa’ family. Peter Scott of the WWF thought that the whole story, particularly the decisions taken at the BaTawana kgotla, would ‘easily catch the imagination, and the raising of funds, which could help to get the project launched, does not seem impossible’. This was the story the film makers hoped to capture. The film producers were hoping to raise
£60,000 through appeals. They planned a 120 minute colour film with world distribution, and profits at anything from £20,000 to £100,000. June Kay offered publicity material for use in the press campaign. The aim during the publicity campaign was first, to raise enough money for the budget, and secondly to build up a mass public interest in the film itself. This would ensure an audience when the film was released. The film *Born Free* was being made in Kenya at this time. Joy Adamson wrote a book of this title telling a story of how she and her husband George Adamson, raised the lion cub Elsa and later returned her to the wild. The Kays had a similar experience of raising lion cubs in the Okavango (see Chapter 3).

In short, this was to be far more than the short documentary or educational film proposed by South African companies but had implications for development. The producers had secured the support of the Colonial Office, which was intrigued at the prospect of large funds going into the Okavango area. They were talking about the possibility of an improved airstrip, a small hotel, road making and a game ranch. The second Secretary for the Protectorate, visiting London, confirmed government approval. The Colonial Office in London emphasized the necessity for the submission of the script to the Maun District Commissioner and the BaTawana Regent before filming took place. Both the elected Committee members and District Commissioner Gass agreed that whatever film was made on Moremi, Ngamiland should share the proceeds with the Film Company. The DC wanted the shares of the film to be distributed between the reserve, Ngamiland District and the Central Government. Member of Legislative Council Tsheko Tsheko suggested that the matter be tabled for discussion at the Tribal Council meeting, as he feared opposition if the profits were used outside Ngamiland. The Tribal Council was likely to agree to a portion of the profits being used outside Ngamiland only on condition that the film was made in their tribal territory.

**7. The Tinley/Deane Ecological Survey**

Towards the end of 1963, no major research on wildlife had been done in Moremi or on the effects of safari company activities around it. According to the Development Secretary’s report on wildlife conservation, in view of the early stage of wildlife work in the Protectorate it had not yet been possible to finance the assignment of a biologist to the Game Department. In 1963 Reay Smithers advised the Bechuanaland Protectorate officials on the need to engage an expert to carry out a fauna survey and the compilation of the checklist of mammals in the Territory. In the country’s first draft Development Plan (1963/1968), provision was made for a fauna survey to be funded from C.D and W. However, the Development Secretary felt at that stage it would not be possible to give high priority to the survey in view of the ‘Territory’s many other pressing needs’. No funds were available under the territorial estimates.

The IUCN consultants, Riney and Hill, advocated a full ecological survey. During the course of 1964 the society recognized the importance of this both in their dealings with officials and for fundraising. Gazetting of the regulations for the Moremi Reserve was a matter of urgency to FCS as demonstrated by their Secretary’s correspondence with
Government Headquarters in Mafikeng. The government delayed publishing the regulations and the absence of an ecological survey of the reserve would hamstring the society’s efforts in raising funds for Moremi. Michael Dithapo, the treasurer of FCS had raised concern that they were still unable to charge tourists an entrance fee for visiting Moremi because regulations had yet to be passed by the Legislative Council\(^{164}\). In July 1964, the Okavango Wildlife Society in Johannesburg arranged for Ken Tinley, an ecologist at the University of Natal, and Norman Deane to undertake an ecological survey of the wildlife reserve\(^{165}\). Trustee members such as Ian Player of the Natal Parks Board, together with Lou Rijnink and Dr. Werner T. Schaarte in Johannesburg and Peter Herbert in Cape Town, made sure the survey became a reality. The aim was to put the Moremi on the map by means of the ecological survey.

Tinley’s ecological report offered proof of the value of Moremi as a reservoir of wildlife, ‘which if properly developed could become a nature reserve of considerable scientific and recreational importance’. To justify the creation of Moremi he argued that tourism, hunting, camera safaris, and game utilization on a sustained yield basis could play an increasing role in land use, and would probably become a major factor in the economy of the Protectorate. He further demonstrated that Moremi wildlife reserve had requirements for a wide spectrum of the large mammals and allowed for seasonal migrations. Deane focused more on administrative requirements for the control and management of Moremi\(^{166}\).

In separate reports Tinley and Deane acknowledged the ‘enthusiastic’ discussions the research team had with members of the Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society and its executive, who made maps and aerial photographs of Ngamiland available to them. Tinley further points out that he found the discussions with Committee and tribal members such as Kgosi Letsholathebe, Ramsden, Dithapo and Tudor valuable, especially in regard to the problems of their territory and the movements of big game. He commented that, many of the tribal people made perceptive remarks about the ecology of their land:

> They spoke conversantly of wrong burning practices, over-concentration of their cattle, and the disappearance of wildlife—and knew how these could be rectified. They seemed to understand logical reasoned thinking on land use better than the white man, as they are more directly dependent on the substrate. The Batawana tribe deserve the respect and admiration of the peoples of Botswana and Southern Africa, since they have had the foresight and courage to attempt to obtain wise use and maintenance of their semi-arid habitat with its oasis of permanent surface water, and the wildlife it supports, and in leading tribes towards proclaiming a conservation area\(^{167}\).

He also noted that they were eagerly open to additional knowledge, guidance or advice.

Deane also observed the ‘pride’ African members of the committee took in their Moremi Game Reserve, as the achievement of creating it had not come about without opposition: ‘The interest that Pulane Moremi showed was encouraging. Were it not for their enthusiasm, the whole project would have failed’. Both Tinley and Deane commented on race relations in Maun, which appeared to be very good.

The team explained the meaning of ecology and told the committee that some game
reserves or sanctuaries were not ecologically surveyed and explained the difficulties that they were facing over a Provincial reserve in South Africa because the then South African Government wanted the land for other purposes. Deane further stated that there were four game reserves in Zululand, one of which was given up because it was not managed well. He noted that over 2,000 overseas tourists a year were coming to southern Africa and would bring in money. Most were going to Kenya and visits from wealthy Europeans and Americans, as well as Indian aristocrats were still giving the country a persistent allure and reputation as the best place for the leisured classes.

Tinley recommended that fences not be used and explained that seasonal movement would enable a good cropping of animals outside the reserve\(^{168}\). He advised that proper methods of burning must be adopted when some of the committee members explained that the reason for burning in the reserve was to attract animals to green grass. The notion of keeping Moremi ‘natural’ was reiterated by Tinley\(^{169}\). The Tinley/Deane ecological report resulted in the official gazetting of Moremi, which would automatically take legal effect, binding Europeans as well as Africans\(^{170}\).

The increasing South African scientific research interest in the project was highlighted in the Tinley report. Both Tinley and Deane relied on P.R. Hitchins and B. Oatley’s photos of the Okavango. Dr. I.E.W. Codd and Mrs. E. van Hoepen of the National Herbarium, Pretoria, with the guidance and assistance of the delta local people, helped the ecological study in identifying plant specimens collected in Moremi. J.H. Ross, acacia specialist from the University of Natal, helped by identifying characteristics of the different acacia species collected in Botswana. The Moremi game guards, Morotsi Molomo, Kwere Seriri and Seabelo Nkatogang provided valuable counsel in the field to the South African researchers\(^{171}\). Some of the people interviewed at Khwai 1997–2001 worked with Pete Smith when he collected the specimens for his herbarium (established in 1995), which was donated to the Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre (now Okavango Research Institute) in Maun and after his death in 1998 was officially known as the Pete Smith University of Botswana Herbarium. The Pete Smith collection which has ready been referred to in this chapter and the earlier ones was catalogued in October 2005\(^{172}\).

Notes

1) According to the Botswana Tourism Board’s *Travel Companion*: 10, in 2008 Moremi was voted the best game reserve in Africa by the prestigious African Travel and Tourism Association at the South Africa’s premier tourism fair, *indaba*. Moremi and the Okavango are given a wide coverage by the Botswana tourism literature, for example *Bajanala*, 20: 14–17 and *Discover Botswana*, 2009, 2011 and 2012.

2) The Okavango is unique in the world is recognised nationally through the Botswana Vision 2016 (national strategy) and internationally (Okavango Delta R Site). See photo 5.1.

4) The late BaTawana chief Moremi III (Pulane’s husband and father to Letsholathebe). On BaTawana Royal figures also see Tlou, A History of Ngamiland. The late Letsholathebe is the father of Kgosi Tawana Moremi and Kgosi Keleatile Moremi, currently one of the few women who sit in Ntlo Ya Dikgosi (Botswana House of Chiefs).


13) WWF Project Full Projects and Deane. Report on Recent Ecological Survey and Administrative Requirements of the Moremi Wildlife Reserve: 6–7. See also S. 199/4, Savingram on ‘Hunting Areas for Safari Companies’ from Div. Com. (N) to Mafikeng, 14 November 1963 and Attached Annexure "A", Notes For Ad Hoc Policy Committee on Tourism, Safari Companies and Game Hunting: 1–4. ODMP: xvii, 30 and 36–43 also provide the figures of various species of the fauna.


21) Minutes: FCS, 9 March 1963. According to Young, Bechuanaland: 29, the Maun DC had responsibility for the Chobe game reserve which the government was developing as a tourist attraction.


24) Minutes: FCS meeting, 4 April 1963.

26) Minutes: FCS meeting, 4 April 1963.
27) Minutes; FCS meeting, 4 April 1963.
30) The Mau Mau uprising (also known as Mau Mau revolt or rebellion) was a military conflict that took place in Kenya between 1952 and 1960. There is an enormous amount of publications regarding the uprising available online.
31) Minutes: FCS meeting, 4 April 1963.
33) Minutes: FCS meeting, 4 April 1963. Similar concern raised by Clark in his letter to Scott of WWF, 1 July 1963.
34) Minutes: FCS meeting, 4 April 1963.
36) Coleman, as well as the Ker, Downey and Selby Safari Company carried intensive advertising campaigns to attract tourists. See for example, ‘Big Game Hunters’ Plan’ and ‘Bechuanaland Project: Hunting Parties Wanted’, *The Star* 25 November 1961 and 2 June 1962.
38) Minutes: FCS meeting, 4 April 1963.
39) Minutes: FCS meeting, 3 June 1963.
40) Minutes: FCS meeting, 4 April 1963.
41) Minutes: FCS meetings, 4 November and 27 December 1963.
43) PSC, minutes: FCS Committee and General meetings, 29 July, 12 August and 5 September 1963.
45) According to Carl Jeppe, Chairman of the Okavango Wildlife Society (1999), the society, Friends of Okavango was started by June and Robert Kay after the establishment of Moremi Park. He said that there not enough potential members in Botswana. See *Okavango Wildlife Society News Letter*, 1999: 2.
47) Minutes: FCS meetings, 9 March, 4 April, 5 July, 12 August and 5 September 1963 and also 3
April 1965. Copies of Newsletters sent abroad were in English.


49) PSC, Minutes: BaTawana Tribal kgotla meeting during the visit by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, 19 August 1963.

50) See Minutes: BaTawana Tribal kgotla meeting for the visit of Bernhard of the Netherlands, 19 August 1963 and FSC meeting, 12 August 1963. See also Clark’s letter to Smithers, 20 August 1963.


55) Letter: Smithers, S. Rhodesia to Clark, Maun, 10 August 1963 and from Clark to Smithers with copies to Div Com (N) and Game Officer, August 1963. Smithers served as a confidant to WWF officials in matters that concerned the Okavango project.


59) Div. Com. (N) 5/11, Savingram: Div. Com. (N) to Chief Information Officer, Mafikeng, 4 August 1964 and from Chief Information Officer to Member for Natural Resources and Industries, Mafikeng, copied to Div. Com. (N), Game Officer, Francistown and Kasane DC, 15 July 1964.


63) Interviews with Tudor, Maun, 12 December 1997 and Khwai male group interview, 16 July 1997. See also Deane’s Report on *Moremi Wildlife Reserve*: 4. According to *Travel Companion: Kgaladi/Central*: 22 to date KRS has 35 white rhino, and is serving as a source for their introduction back to MGR See also, *ODMP*: 41 on rhino.

On the gazettement of the Moremi extension, see BNB 1271, Memo from J.L. Birch, Director of Wildlife, National Parks and Tourism to Game Warden (Moremi), 29 January 1974 and letter from Game Warden to Director of Wildlife, National Parks and Tourism, 23 January 1974.

Minutes: FCS meetings, 13 May; 3 June and 7 July 1963. See also interview with Tudor, 12 December 1997.

Interview with Smith, Maun, 11 December 1997 and 20 May 1998.

Lekgoa Mabejane, interviewed 5 July 1997; 20 May 1998 and 22 August 2001 has a cattle post towards the Buffalo fence – the borderline that separates the wildlife area from the cattle area.

Interviews with Smith, Maun, 11 December 1997 and Mababe chief, Kebualemang Kgosietsile, 23 June 1997 and 25 August 2001 confirms his participation in marking of the borders of Moremi.

See Div. Com. (N) 5/11, Bromfield’s letter to Clark, 12 May 1963 and Clark’s Memo to the Chair of Fauna Society, 19 June 1963. See also PSC, Pete Smith’s personal notes prepared from interviews with the Okavango Delta people, 28 September 1990.

Minutes: FCS meeting, 12 August 1963 and interview with Segadimo, 12 August 2001.

Minutes: FCS meeting, 9 March, 29 July and 12 August 1963. On Game Guards Kwere and Morotsi, see also Div. Com. (N) 5/11, Bromfield’s letter to Clark, 12 May 1963.

PSC, minutes: FCS meeting on general administration of Moremi Wildlife Reserve, 27 August 1964. On San access rights, see interviews with Lesie Kwere and Diamond Ikaegeng Khwai, 28 June 1998.

PSC, minutes: FCS meeting, 19 August 1964.

PSC, letter from June Kay to Tessa Rowland, WWF, London, 1 June 1964.

PSC, letter: P.A. Smith, Maun to DC Maun, 2 April 1984.


See interview with Segadimo, 12 August 2001.

Quoted in S. 228/4, minutes: BaTawana annual kgotla meeting, 19 March 1964.

Minutes: BaTawana annual kgotla, 19 March 1964.

Minutes: BaTawana kgotla, 19 March 1964.


Interview with Segadimo, 12 August 2001; see Bechuanaland Government Gazette, Legal Notice No. 33 of 1965: 30 July 1965.
89) Minutes: FCS meeting, 27 December 1963. The installation of a Tswana chief in Botswana is still marked by draping a leopard skin around his or her shoulders.
91) S. 228/3/2, Moremi Reserve: Photographic Safaris 14 April 1964.
94) The visit of Princess Elizabeth of England to Kenya in 1952 is covered in several online sites e.g. www.mndb.com/People and www.oldcambrians.com/Photos-Princess Elizabeth Photo 1952.
95) PSC, Minutes: FCS Committee meetings, 27 December 1963 and 7 January 1964. Her coronation service as the Queen of England was in 1953.
99) PSC, Minutes: FCS meeting, 28 April 1964.
101) See Majorie Michael (George’s wife). *I Married a Hunter*.
102) Film produced by Ross, *Okavango: Jewel of the Kalahari*.
106) Minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 4 November 1963.
107) Tinley has made a similar observation in his ecological report, *Moremi Wildlife Reserve*.
108) Minutes: FCS meeting, 8 April and 4 November 1963.
109) PSC, Minutes: FCS meeting, 24 June 1964.
110) S. 199/4, Savingram: Div. Com (N) to Mafikeng, Notes for Ad Hoc Committee, Tourism, Natural Resources, Game and Safari Companies, 14 November 1963. See also *The Star*, 5 November 1963.
111) Jonas Bros. Ltd. is one such example advertising their craftsmanship in African trophies, and


114) Minutes: FCS meeting, 31 October 1963.

115) Letter from Smithers, S. Rhodesia to Clark, Maun DC, 10 August 1963.


118) At the time the South African National Council was predominantly a white women’s association and *Femina* is still a popular magazine.


Chapter 5
Control and Management of the Moremi Game Reserve in the Early 1960s


134) Schapera was held in considerable regard in Botswana where he received the UB D. Litt. See his obituary in UK Botswana Society Newsletter. August 2003: 89 and gleanings from the Botswana newspapers on line: Daily News, Mmegi. The Gazette, April–July 2003.

135) June Kay’s Progress Report, November/December 1963 and S. 228/3/2, letter: June Kay to Werner Schaurte, Johannesburg with copies to Mike Hawkins, Mafikeng and Mrs. H. de Lorm, Johannesburg, 5 May 1964. On Seretse Khama and dawn of independence, see Parsons et al.


137) PSC, minutes: FCS meetings, 19 August 1964 and Application by Safari Companies, DC’s office, Maun, 27 October 1963


139) Document produced at the FCS meeting, 26 October 1964 and meeting held on 19 August 1964.

140) Minutes: FCS meeting, 24 June 1964.

141) PSC: letter written by Letsholathebe Moremi on behalf of FCS to Maun DC, 17 July 1964.

142) S. 228/3/2, letter: Robert Kay, Johannesburg to Maun DC, 6 May 1964.

143) Minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 19 August 1964.

144) S. 228/3/2 and PSC, letter ‘Photographic Safaris: Moremi Wildlife Reserve’ from G. Pethwick to FCS, 13 July 1964.

145) Minutes: FCS meeting, 19 and 31 August 1964.


149) S. 228/3/2, letter: June Kay, Johannesburg to Mike Hawkins, Mafeking, 5 May 1964.

150) PSC, minutes: FCS meeting, 13 July 1964.

151) Div. Com. (N) 5/11, Savingram, ‘Cinematograph Photographs’ from Mafikeng to Clark, Maun


156) John Cross’s letter to June Kay, 6 June 1964.


158) John Cross’s letter to June Kay, 6 June 1964.

159) John Cross’s letter to June Kay, 6 June 1964.

160) John Cross’s letter to June Kay, 6 June 1964.


164) Several letter correspondences confirm this delay: see Div. Com. (N) 5/9, June Kay, Cape Town to Mafikeng, 5 and 22 May 1964; Noel Redman, Mafikeng to June Kay, 22 May 1964; June Kay to Werner Schaurte, 5 May 1964; Rinia de Lorma, OWLS, 25 October 1964 to Mafeking and from Mike Hawkins to Attorney General, 22 May 1964.

165) S.228/3/2, minutes: FCS meetings, 24 June 1964. See also letters from Robert Kay to K. Tinley and Maun DC, 6 May and 2 June 1964.

166) See S. 228/3/2, ‘Preface’ by Chairman of OWLS in Tinley, *Moremi Wildlife Reserve* and Deane, *Moremi Wildlife Reserve*. Tinley and Deane’s interim reports were submitted to the Mafikeng in July 1964 and final reports in December 1964: see letters from Redman and Morgan, Mafikeng, 5 and 21 October 1964.


168) Today the Botswana game parks are still not fenced except for the small sanctuaries in Central District and the vicinity of Gaborone.

169) PSC, minutes: FCS meeting, 13 July 1964.
170) S. 228/3/2, letter: Mafikeng to Dr. Werner Schaurte, Johannesburg, 11 May 1964; letter: June to Schaurte, 5 May 1964 and Memo: Mafikeng to June Kay, Cape Town, 3 June 1964.


172) E-mail with Ben Thupe, Librarian, ORI, UB, 13 June 2011.
Map 5.1  Moremi Park (extension to include Chief’s Island). Source: BNB 3449, 1976
Chapter 5
Control and Management of the Moremi Game Reserve in the Early 1960s

Photo 5.1  The Okavango Delta. Source: KCS, 2010

Photo 5.2  A Khwai resident. Source: M.M. Bolaane, 1998
Photo 5.3  Vehicle acquired through the Okavango Appeal Project. 1960s. Tudor’s scrap yard. Source: M.M. Bolaane, 2001

Photo 5.4  Mababe chief. Source: M.M. Bolaane, 1998
Chapter 5
Control and Management of the Moremi Game Reserve in the Early 1960s

Photo 5.5 Jack Ramsden. Source: Ramsden Family Archives, 1960s
Chapter 6

Conflicts over Financial and Technical Control:
the Kays, the WWF, the Fauna Conservation Society
and the Government

1. Introduction

Financial arrangements were never clear or really satisfactory, yet despite suspicions all round there was enough co-operation and goodwill that the project progressed. Problems included the issue of whether large outside funding from the WWF would undermine local control, and the fragmentation and duplication of organizations.

The role of the Kays was problematic. As even their opponents reluctantly recognized, they had played an essential role and were still important; but their personal vested interests, cavalier attitude and loose-cannon status were increasingly in conflict with the development of regularized financial structures.

In 1979 the government of independent Botswana took over the Reserve. This was partly an instance of the general policy of centralization, but also reflected the FCS’s loss of energy in the 1970s, as a result of which it was finding it less and less able to cope with its financial responsibilities.

2. Financial Problems

There had always been unease between the government and the Fauna Conservation Society. By the end of 1964 tensions were becoming more marked and the role of the Kays particularly problematic. Financial shortages were at the heart of the Society’s problems. In April 1964, the Chair of the Society, Jack Ramsden raised concerns about the shortfall from subscription revenues: very few of the 509 members had paid their subscriptions. Goipatabotho of the Yei thought that some members were unable to subscribe because of foot-and-mouth disease and poor crop harvests in the region. He suggested that a committee member be appointed to tour Ngamiland district to encourage members to pay their arrears and to distribute the Setswana version of the Newsletter widely.

The Society was still awaiting a response from the WWF regarding their funding of the Moremi Game Reserve. Ian MacPhail confirmed that the WWF’s technical adviser, the IUCN, had given the Okavango project a high rating and WWF international Trustees had considered an application from the Fauna Conservation Society for financial assistance but as they were ‘over-committed’ in Africa, financial assistance would not be immediate. In June 1963, MacPhail and the WWF did assist June Kay and Letsholathebe Moremi to raise
donations in London and meet officials of the Colonial Office. June was put in touch with Lord Lansdowne whose wife was a Trustee of the WWF British Appeal. WWF officials in London were also able to get the attention of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, and the President of the British Appeal, who on a number of occasions asked for a progress report on the Okavango project\(^3\). The London Fauna Preservation Society pledged through the authorities in Mafikeng to assist where there were less adequate conservation measures in force such as northern Bechuanaland\(^4\).

In mid–1964, there was £272 in the Okavango appeal account in London but the incoming stream was failing. The WWF wanted details as to how the money would be spent to prove that it was for charitable purposes. The WWF reminded the Society that the items they were allowed to spend money on were first and foremost promoting education and research and secondly, expenditures for the preservation of fauna\(^5\). Clearly, the Fauna Conservation Society’s main item of expenditure, the retention of game guards, and African labour engaged for public works such as road work, fell outside the WWF remit. To some members of the Committee, by the time the ‘WWF woke up’, wildlife would be non-existent in Ngamiland: ‘There will be no conservation if there is no reserve’. June Kay tried to short-cut procedures by submitting estimates herself. A Society sub-committee was elected to re-draw these: they requested £25,000 to be spread over three years to 1966\(^6\).

Towards the end of 1964 Russell Bailey, who had become associated with Moremi through June’s publicity in 1963, planned to visit Mafikeng and Maun as an unofficial representative of the WWF in England. He had called for preliminary discussions with officials in Mafikeng about his proposal to establish a Committee in Gaborone for administering funds, to be raised by his friends and himself, and making them available for Moremi through the WWF\(^7\). Long years of colonial neglect had been symbolized by Britain’s use of Mafikeng, outside the territory, as the Protectorate’s seat of administration. Following the 1961 debate in the Legislative Council, the Resident Commissioner advised the Secretary of State that a new seat of government should be established within the Territory’s borders in Gaborone\(^8\). Bailey and his group therefore preferred the new capital of the country, Gaborone for the establishment of the WWF Finance Committee. Botswana achieved self-government in March 1965, to be followed in 1966 by independence.

Bailey anticipated that income from fund monies invested might amount to several thousand pounds a year. The Development Secretary in Mafikeng, Michael Hawkins, expressed fears that the effect of this would be to relieve the people of Ngamiland and Conservation Society of most, if not all, responsibility for financing the Reserve and might eventually lead to control passing to ‘those holding the purse strings’. This in turn might lead to Africans losing interest in the game reserve and game conservation in general. Bailey had been informed about these apprehensions and intended to discuss them with the kgotla\(^9\).

The District Commissioner, Irving Gass, warned that the kgotla would reject any proposal that entailed the Fauna Conservation Society ceasing to be the Managing Body of the Reserve with no final say as to how funds raised for the Reserve should be spent. The DC argued that an income of thousands of pounds a year was not required by the Reserve which only needed enough funds to ensure adequate control and payment of sufficient game guards and to maintain two vehicles. He further argued that no high degree of capitalization...
was required or desirable and he was still suspicious of the role of the Kays\(^{10}\). In November 1964, Russell Bailey held a meeting with the officials in Mafikeng and discussed his proposal to subscribe funds to the Moremi Game Reserve. He extended these meetings to the District Commissioner’s office in Maun. He was particularly anxious to ascertain official views regarding Robert and June Kay. The officials assured him that, contrary to what he might have heard in some quarters, they were not opposed to the Kays although it had to be acknowledged that the Kays had aroused a good deal of antagonism among certain government officers\(^{11}\). During this period, WWF officials such as Ian MacPhail were dismayed to learn that Robert Kay was being charged for shooting an immature wildebeest in Ngamiland. The hunting regulations specifically allowed shooting only during the season, and then of mature males only. Bechuanaland officials confirmed that Robert came to court in October 1963 and was found guilty and fined R25 or one month imprisonment. The WWF officials considered this matter serious\(^{12}\).

Bailey suggested that individuals in the UK, including himself, were prepared to subscribe substantial sums. For convenience the funds would be channelled through the World Wildlife Fund to ensure a permanent and regular income, to be devoted to the running of the Reserve, and to enable certain controlled development. Bailey reported that they had the figure of £150,000 in mind, and that it was their intention to invest this capital sum to ensure an annual income to the Reserve of between £6,000 and £7,000. In order to control the expenditure, Bailey stated that he had certain mandatory powers from WWF to make proposals as to ways and means of helping the running of the Moremi Wildlife Reserve. These included the setting up of a WWF Finance/Administration Committee, preferably sitting in Gaborone and consisting of a government representative as chairperson plus four members: the local bank manager to supervise funds, a lawyer or a conservationist, the Game Officer, and a representative of the Fauna Conservation Society. Bailey was suggesting that Robert Kay should become the representative of the Society\(^{13}\).

The most important aspect of the discussion was the effect of this guaranteed income on the people of Ngamiland, the Conservation Society and the Reserve. Hawkins believed that an annual income of £7,000 was ‘beyond the wildest dreams of most people connected with the Reserve’. In his opinion, there was no question that that sort of income would relieve the kgotla and the Fauna Conservation Society of most of the responsibility for financing the Reserve. While it would form a large proportion of the annual income of the Reserve, Hawkins expressed the fear that, contrary to whatever Bailey might say, control of the Reserve would pass substantially to the funding Committee in Gaborone. The presence of the tribal representative would be little more than a face-saver. The colonial officials predicted that this proposal would not be welcomed.

There is an out-dated air of paternalism about this extent of financial assistance, and I believe that to be a success the Reserve has got to stand on its own feet and meet its recurrent commitments out of its own resources. The sort of development that is likely to follow massive injections of financial aid like this will almost inevitably mean that the Moremi Reserve will lose its present character of unspoiled charm\(^{14}\).
Hawkins believed this was contrary to the wishes of the kgotla. He suggested assistance in providing capital equipment, in financing ecological and other surveys, and perhaps in providing salaries or honoraria for a ‘European’ adviser and a non-resident ecologist to visit periodically. He doubted very much whether the ‘take-over bid’ was in the long-term interests of the local community and the Reserve. However, he realized that if the WWF made monies available for the running and development of the Reserve, it should have a say as to the manner in which the funds were expended.

The Maun District Commissioner suggested that there should be two categories in which monies would be available for expenditure: the routine running and maintenance of the Reserve (wages and salaries of permanent staff) and second, special development and projects. The first category should be the responsibility of the Managing Body and the second the responsibility of the Finance/Administrative Committee. He noted that it would be impossible for the proposed Committee to run the day to day administration of the reserve from Mafikeng or Gaborone: ‘The line adopted here is that the Reserve was created by Africans, for Africans, and must be run by Africans’.

When Bailey met the Society’s Executive he pointed out that the ultimate aim of the WWF was to form a trust fund of £100,000 with the help of Okavango Wildlife Society in South Africa. He made it clear that whatever funds were specially raised would be used for specific and restricted purposes. Vehicles were the biggest drain on financial resources. At the time of his visit to Ngamiland, the Conservation Society owned two Land Rovers, the first purchased on sale in Bulawayo through Robert Kay with funds derived from subscriptions and donations, and the second bought by the Friends of Okavango branch in Cape Town. Bailey reported that donors in the UK had already considered supplying a reconditioned Bedford 5-ton lorry and a Land Rover station wagon for the Reserve through the Okavango Film Fund Trust. These were the same donors initially approached during June Kay’s lecture tour in the UK to guarantee the film budget. Bailey himself contributed £260.

Bailey raised doubts as to the administrative ability of the FCS to carry out the degree of administrative and financial control that WWF would insist upon. He argued for the setting up of an office in Maun for this purpose while the Committee of the Fauna Conservation Society would act as the policy making body. He insisted on the establishment of three posts to ensure that projects were pursued and funds expended in the desired manner. Such posts would be an African game warden (at £60 per month), an expatriate assistant warden on a temporary basis and a part-time ecologist from one of the South African universities. He suggested the appointment of Robert Kay as assistant warden (at £80 a month). FCS members were astonished at what they saw as racial discrimination, the senior warden receiving less pay than his assistant.

During this period June and Robert Kay were facing financial difficulties. June had sold the film rights of her book, *Okavango* to John Cross Productions. She thought she had more or less flooded the South African markets with stories of her ‘animal friends’ and explaining that ‘being only a poor struggling writer, I too have to live’, she appealed to Werner Schaurte to link her with German publications which might be interested in accepting feature stories on animals. June requested an increase in her allowance from the FCS and
Bailey supported her.

June worked hard and through her books and her work has put the reserve on the map. She has been an active funds raiser in the past. It would be premature, even foolish to dispense with her services at the present juncture. She is passionately dedicated to the reserve and should be allowed to continue. But she can’t do it for nothing, so some arrangements should be made whereby she is paid a salary, or a share of her takings.

The Committee welcomed the idea of paying June a salary but sensed an uneven power relationship between the donors and recipients. They pointed out that Bailey was interfering with the internal affairs of the Committee. He was also enquiring into the authorisation of thatched huts for Sanderbergh at his leased concession area and the use of the tent at Maqxwee, south of the park, for sheltering scouts during the rainy season. They also resented his naming two government representatives for the Finance Committee. Committee member K.B. Motai echoed the general feeling:

We are too young at present. Although we appreciate the conditions laid out for us by the World Wildlife Fund, but we are scared of the suggestions made by Bailey. And on the other hand, people mentioned [to constitute the Finance Committee] are not acquainted with our difficulties.

Ramsden wanted to know whether it was the usual practice of WWF to establish a finance committee before any allocations of funds were made. This outside funding seemed to have many strings attached. The Committee was beginning to grasp the implications of WWF funding of conservation projects. This was a learning curve for both the local community and the District Administration.

The message reiterated by several members of the Committee was that they did not want the Gaborone-based finance committee to interfere with the Society’s sources of revenue and its fund-raising campaign. The executive members of FCS, Segadimo and Smith, suggested that as soon as the Finance Committee was formed, WWF should be asked to transfer to Maun. Moitai felt that if the proposed Committee failed to serve a useful purpose to the Society it should be dissolved. When Ramsden asked if WWF would still give them financial assistance if they were to turn down Bailey’s proposals, the latter responded that in that case no money could be expected from WWF. The Committee thus accepted Bailey’s proposal in principle. Bailey assured them that the WWF would not encroach on the Society’s authority in maintaining the day to day administration of the Reserve.

3. Anti-Kay Sentiment

Despite being faced with a great deal of scepticism and distrust on occasions, the Kays persevered with their campaign for Moremi. A key difficulty was that their aims for the Reserve were intermingled with their own personal financial interests. Official opposition
was one problem but increasingly they found that their actions were criticized by local people. In some cases, at least, they may have been misunderstood because they did not take enough trouble to explain their activities.

Robert Kay in particular continued to be ‘a headache’ both to government and safari hunting firms operating in Bechuanaland, although they could not “kick him out” without the approval of the Tribal Authority of Ngamiland. In mid–1963 the Regent and her councillors with the kgotla were reported to be solidly behind the Kays but that seemed to change towards the end of the year\(^{23}\). The incident of the immature wildebeest shot by Robert Kay was a matter of concern to the Tribal Authority, Tribal Council and the Conservation Society. He was accused by the Game Department of shooting a wildebeest at a hunting camp leased by Simon Holmes a Court ‘for lion bait to photograph lions’ and for trying to bribe the game scout Andrew Tshwene in connection with the safari companies. At the same time he wrote an article, ‘Trigger Happy Professional Hunters’ for the South African \textit{Sunday News Magazine}.

Instead of reporting the wildebeest incident, which implicated him directly, Kay mentioned another incident when a government game guard from a neighbouring hunting concession had persuaded the Moremi game scout Kwere to shoot a tsessebe for him\(^{24}\). Robert Kay was accused of maintaining a double standard on wildlife matters. Ramsden, who was reported to be ‘furious on this fuss made in public’, wanted the matter to be dealt with internally. Kay was accused of undermining the activities of some employees of the Park and also not working with other members of the Executive\(^{25}\). The Kays, whose long absences from Ngamiland were becoming a matter of concern at the Committee meetings, were obviously no longer seen by their colleagues as ‘the only shields against the assegais that were trying to reach us’, as once declared publicly by Jack Ramsden\(^{26}\). The Society’s Executive in particular was less worried about the government, which, after Eustace Clark’s departure from Ngamiland, had been more supportive. The Kays were now viewed by some members of the Committee as a hindrance against achieving African control. Government officials observed the rift developing between the Kays and some members of the Society, and were pleased that the local community had begun to see through Robert Kay in particular. Bromfield reiterated that he had repeatedly warned the government about the Kays’ allegations in the newspapers and wanted the Government Information Officer to retaliate with its own press releases\(^{27}\).

The Fauna Conservation Society found a champion in DC Gass who felt that it must control the development projects carried out in the Reserve and avoid long term commitments that it could not finance. However, like his predecessor, he was concerned that the Kays were exercising undue influence, not least over Bailey’s insistence of control over the three posts on the Reserve’s staff\(^{28}\). If Bailey’s proposal were to be accepted, the FCS Committee should be completely re-organised first, reducing the Kays’ involvement\(^{29}\). Reay Smithers also alleged that the inclusion of European supervisors in the 1963 Okavango project estimates submitted to WWF by June Kay was an indication that the couple wanted to become Managing Directors of the park, ‘presumably with a large salary’. The Kays were accused of spreading propaganda about ‘kicking out’ the East African safari firms whom they described as ‘blood suckers’ in relation to game hunting. He recognized the Kays’
contribution: ‘It is a curious thing, in issues of conservation, how so often rather difficult people seem to become involved yet I suppose that one must concede that, however misdirected their efforts, they sometimes lead to the establishment of things that are worthwhile’.

He advised the Protectorate officials that if WWF was going to give the BaTawana financial assistance, it should not be given to the Kays but either to the colonial administration or the governing body of Moremi. He also suggested that African staff training be done by the Game Department and not by the Kays.

In November 1964 June Kay approached DC Gass with doubts on the ability of the Society to carry out the day to day running of the Reserve, citing two examples: the alleged misuse of transport; and the inability of Smith (the Treasurer) and Ramsden (the Chair) to conduct routine duties during her and her husband’s absence. While there may have been some basis to the allegations, it was difficult for the DC to rely on June Kay’s word given the fact that, during some of the trips she made to the UK on behalf of the Moremi project, she had left the Society in the dark regarding her movements. Members of FCS, in turn, complained of the accumulation of letters left unanswered by June, the Secretary. Amongst them, it was alleged, were some from a donor who had not received acknowledgement of receipt of postal money orders. The majority of the unanswered letters were addressed to the Secretary of the Friends of the Okavango and were therefore outside the jurisdiction of the FCS.

Resident white members of the FCS were equally suspicious of the Kays’ intentions. In November 1964, Pete Smith expressed his concerns to the committee members in a detailed letter. Since the beginning of 1964, he had often mentioned to Ramsden his misgivings about the way in which fundraising by the Friends of the Okavango was being organized. The FCS Committee was not officially informed about their meetings, which he said took place privately in Maun. Their constitution was not officially laid out nor were their minutes disclosed while in contrast, the Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society often sent their regulations, constitution and minutes for distribution to members of Friends of the Okavango. June and Robert Kay were committee members of the Friends of the Okavango and received an honorarium for this, but the FCS had no officially appointed representative on this Committee. Smith recommended that reports, constitutions, minutes and a list of all monies received by way of donations by the Friends of the Okavango branches and kindred societies such as the Okavango Wildlife Society of Johannesburg be published.

Pete Smith pointed to a conflict of interest between FCS and the Friends of the Okavango. The two Societies used a similar form to attract both life and ordinary members. Members of the FCS Committee argued it would create confusion in the minds of the public, who might ask if it was necessary to have two societies, both collecting funds for fauna conservation in Ngamiland. To members such as Smith, the active involvement of the Kays in the activities of the Johannesburg-based Friends of the Okavango would help to gradually push the Maun-based FCS out of the market for membership fees, particularly in South Africa, which had previously been the FCS’s biggest source of members. Unlike the FCS, which was based in a rather remote corner of Bechuanaland, the Friends of the Okavango had much greater access to those markets and also had the advantage of making personal
contacts with would-be members and donors. If the recruitment of members outside Ngamiland was left entirely to the Friends of the Okavango, the FCS would be completely at their mercy. Smith emphasized the need to exercise strict control of the activities of those who collected money on their behalf:

We must watch that any funds collected are not falsely misappropriated; we must ensure that those who collect money for us are fully informed about the Reserve, so that the facts on which their appeals are based and presented to the public are authentic. We have already suffered harm this year (both to our funds and reputation) as a result of outdated facts being presented to the public. We must also ensure that those who are authorized by us to collect funds on our behalf run their affairs efficiently and properly.

He cited an example of a donor who on three occasions sent letters complaining about the failure of the Secretary of the Friends of the Okavango to send receipts for the money she sent for the Okavango project. Smith also made reference to the Dean/Tinley ecological survey of Moremi, which according to him made no reference to the Society’s role in the running of the Reserve. Smith could only suspect that the Okavango Wildlife Society in Johannesburg misrepresented their role. However, when the Tinley Report was published, the role of the Fauna Conservation Society was recognised.

The question of whether the Maun-based FCS could run its own affairs was a pertinent one as far as the WWF was concerned. Gass was of the opinion that the Society should be given a reasonable chance, arguing that the majority of difficulties resulted directly from actions taken by the Kays. The DC warned that the Kays were under the impression that no action could take place unless they initiated and agreed to it. Their ‘general tactlessness’ was resulting in less co-operation or support from the people. On her lecture tour in South Africa June Kay publically stated that a subscription of ten cents would ensure the protection of game in an acre of the Reserve. This had not been agreed upon. The District Commissioner felt the contractual agreement with Pethwick, which Robert Kay attempted to arrange, was suspect. He also noted that the Friends of the Okavango and the Okavango Wildlife Society, both Johannesburg-based, paid the Kays an honorarium of £300 as well as various expenses amounting to £342.74. The Kays, in response, suspected that everyone else and especially the government was sabotaging their efforts.

The concern of the FCS Committee about the activities of those who raised money in the name of the Moremi Game Reserve resulted in the submission by the Friends of the Okavango of their constitution and statement of accounts. The statistics prepared by the Chartered Accountants, Geo. Mackenzie and Co. of Bulawayo, show that considerable sums of money accruing to the Moremi Game Reserve resulted from the publicity, promotion and fund-raising, particularly by June Kay. It is clear that before its collapse in 1965, the Friends of the Okavango Society was running like a full-fledged organization with its own internal expenditures. During the 1963–1964 fiscal year, there were direct contributions to the Moremi Wildlife Reserve for wages for African game guards for £531.39, equipment such as tyres for the Land Rover, a duplicating machine for £151.05 and motor vehicles and transport for £928.13. The total including maintenance for the Reserve was £3,286.11.
Among the contributions was £250 from Harry Oppenheimer, chairman of the Anglo American Corporation. Oppenheimer later provided funding to set up the University of Botswana Harry Oppenheimer Research Centre in Maun. The Centre (now Okavango Research Institute) officially opened in 2001 and focuses primarily on development and conservation in the Okavango Delta Region. The April–May 1964 trip to Johannesburg raised £500 which was put in the Okavango Wildlife Society books to meet the costs of the ecological survey of the Moremi Reserve.

The South African Museum of Cape Town had donated the free use of their auditorium and office space, plus the use of their duplicating machine. The lecture was carried out with borrowed films. A genet kitten was used as a fund-raising adjunct to this series of lectures. The total raised as a result of this trip was £1,756.09. June still generally managed to find external funders for her projects. For example when she visited the UK in November 1964 for the Okavango Film negotiations, John Cross Productions and R.H. Bailey paid her air ticket. She also raised £510.11 for the Friends of the Okavango.

However, in their report on the finances of the Friends of the Okavango, the accountants indicated that they were not able to establish if the FCS had received funds which they understood were due to it amounting to £1,611.11. It is difficult to judge now where this money went. There are copies of the balance sheets and income and expenditure accounts for the Society for the period of November 1962 (when the Society was formed) until 1968 (when Smith handed over the books to Tudor). The accounts from 1962–1967 were printed for distribution to members of the FCS in 1968. It is certainly not clear, from the amounts recorded as FCS income that all the money due from Friends of the Okavango was being put through to the FCS. The fears of government officials and the Society executive may have been justified. Money was also accruing in 1964–1965 in the WWF account in London but its disbursement awaited the projected Central Committee in Gaborone.

4. The FCS and the WWF

Russell Bailey, on his return to London, briefed WWF officials on the meetings he had held with the Fauna Conservation Society and recorded his favourable impressions of the Moremi Reserve. In 1965 an extended correspondence continued between Southern Africa and the UK. Ian MacPhail of the WWF impressed upon E.J. Smith (not Pete Smith of FCS) of the Okavango Wildlife Society in Johannesburg and Jack Ramsden, the Chairman of the FCS, that the WWF had no desire to interfere with the technical running of the Reserve. However, since Moremi was ‘so important and likely to become more so, they felt that more expert handling and accounting for monies would be desirable. They advised that a separate organization was required, as the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland was too involved in the actual task of managing the Reserve ‘to be sufficiently impartial’. ‘If Moremi is to go on, then a new chapter must be started’, reiterated MacPhail. The new organization would be required to control expenditures and to satisfy everyone concerned that the Reserve was being managed on the best conservation principles. Yearly accounts would be essential to the WWF. The Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society would be responsible for ensuring that the correct policies were carried out with regard to the Reserve.
There were already funds available for the Moremi from the British Appeal of WWF, but MacPhail felt it was important to establish ‘a proper procedure for handling all money’\textsuperscript{41).} Drawing on Bailey’s proposals, he suggested the formation of a WWF Group in Bechuanaland (BP) for this purpose. The WWF also required that the FCS provide copies of the annual budget for 1965–1966.

The WWF also wished to initiate the employment of an African game warden and a European adviser and they accepted Bailey’s proposal that since Robert Kay had done so much for the Reserve in the past, he could be appointed as the interim adviser. WWF suggested that Michael Hawkins, Assistant Development Secretary, should head the proposed WWF Group (BP). Bailey advised further that the following persons should form the nucleus of the group: Jimmy Haskins, of Bechuanaland’s white trading community, and Minchin of Minchin and Kelly, a long established firm of attorneys who had done business in the Protectorate, including for the government, since the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Minchin was a member of the Mafikeng Rotary Club and had links with the Johannesburg Okavango Wildlife Society. The group could then be expanded to include Gass, the Maun DC and the Manager of the Standard Chartered Bank when the administrative Headquarters moved to Gaborone\textsuperscript{42).} Such plans were obviously pre-empting involvement by officials and the FCS. It was clear that the WWF (BP) would include almost entirely white members.

The FCS Committee met in January 1965 to revisit Bailey’s proposals. Among those present were Kgosi Letsholathebe (Photo 6), Gass and J. van Riet Lowe who was due to take over as the new District Commissioner of Ngamiland. The estimates of expenditure for Moremi covering 12 months were prepared with the assistance of Gass who promised to pass them to the WWF. The budget was kept purely to the Society’s administration of the Reserve. Expenditure on advisors and special projects for which restricted funds would be made available by WWF were the subject of supplementary estimates, which were also enclosed\textsuperscript{43).}

The Fauna Conservation Society had little option but to accept the WWF’s proposals but it was difficult to negotiate the details or responsibility. The Society would have to meet stringent financial requirements and account carefully for expenditure. External fund raising on a large scale would be left to the Gaborone Committee. For that reason organizations such as the South African-based Friends of the Okavango and Okavango Wildlife Society working in aid of Moremi would be asked to forward funds to the WWF (BP) Committee in Gaborone. The Committee would be required to earmark such funds for prescribed purposes when this was requested and was appropriate\textsuperscript{44).}

This did not debar the FCS from receiving subscriptions, donations, park entry fees, etc. from private individuals acting on their own accord. Such smaller contributions would naturally accrue to the Society’s funds and would be administered in conjunction with bulk subscriptions received via the Gaborone WWF (BP) Committee. These smaller resources could be taken into account when requesting a grant from Gaborone earmarked for special minor projects. Procedures to deal with individual contributions sent directly to the Society were adopted at the Committee meeting in April 1965 and they agreed to constantly pass on to the Gaborone Committee information about revenue from such sources. A constitutional amendment was proposed at that meeting for the establishment of a smaller Executive
Committee’ noting that the existing FCS Committee was too large to cope with day-to-day administration efficiently. This, on paper, appeared a little complicated but the FCS was faced with a situation where it ran a Game Reserve that could not exist unless there was adequate tribal representation on the Governing Committee and for this reason, the membership had to be large. However, in the cause of efficiency, it was proposed that the already existing Committee should be re-named the ‘General Purpose Committee’ (GP) and should be responsible for overall, long-term policy. It, in turn, should elect an ‘Executive Committee’ to control administration within the general policy framework, reporting back to the GP Committee.

In January 1965, Ramsden (Photo 5.5) was unanimously elected to be the FCS liaison officer for the WWF Gaborone Committee and the Chief Game Warden of Moremi game reserve. The Society had suggested that the adjective ‘African’ was to be deleted and the post become ‘Chief Game Warden’. The post in the future would be paid at the rates set down in accompanying estimates, but Ramsden would occupy the post until such a time as he would be in a position to take up paid employment. This would be after his termination of a year of gratuity and pension with the government as a clerk and a driver, but there would be no pension or gratuity payable to the post of a Chief Warden of Moremi. The suggestion that Robert Kay be taken on as an Assistant at a salary of £90 per month, while the Chief Warden would be receiving only £60 per month caused dissension in the meeting. Letsholathebe Moremi (Photo 6) in particular was disappointed that Robert Kay, who had been campaigning for a multi-racial FCS since 1961, would want a salary higher than that of his African senior. The WWF had initially rejected the word ‘adviser’ in favour of ‘assistant’ for Robert Kay if he were to be appointed because they felt Africans might feel insulted at having to accept European advice but it turned out that they were wrong because given the nature of the salary structure proposed by WWF for the two game warden posts, to the majority African membership of the Committee, the word ‘adviser’ was preferable.

A fully qualified ecologist would carry out the basic research on which future development of the reserve could be based. Letsholathebe, with the backing of District Commissioners, Gass and van Riet Lowe, pointed out that the ecologist should not interfere in the day by day administration work of the Reserve (as his would be seen as a separate project). The Society, however, did not consider that Robert Kay had neither the qualifications nor the experience required to fill the post. It was considered that, while Ramsden was acting in an honorary capacity he would gain experience and afterwards when working full time as game warden, would be eminently suitable and qualified for the post. Nevertheless, they considered Kay for the position of assistant game warden should the Society consider that development of the Reserve warranted the additional expenditure. A suggestion was made by Ramsden that since June Kay’s remuneration as Public Relations Officer was paid by Friends of the Okavango, then the Society could cut costs through the appointment of a part time Secretary or a clerk. His or her duties would be to receive and issue receipts for money received; do the transactions in the cashbook, as well as filing, typing and replying to letters.

The departure of Irving Gass from Maun and a postal mixup in which letters from the WWF were held in the mail for the research team from the Smithsonian Institute delayed
negotiations in early 1965. The Moremi outline budget for 1965 did not reach WWF London in time and WWF officials were still waiting for a ‘positive’ response regarding the names of an FCS liaison member of the Gaborone Committee and of the European adviser. WWF were still hoping that Robert would be the name considered for the European adviser. Bailey continued to work with June Kay. According to a letter from Bailey addressed to Irving Gass who by then was no longer the District Commissioner in Maun, June had intimated the Society’s anti-European feeling. Certainly in retrospect some of the tensions on both sides could be interpreted through a racial lens but it is interesting that the new DC van Riet Lowe viewed this explanation as an exaggeration.

Bailey’s correspondence indicates impatience with the FCS, their cautiousness about accepting technical assistance, and doubts about Robert Kay. While recognizing the concerns that might be still lingering in the minds of some government officials, Bailey still argued that Robert could be used as ‘the thin end of a wedge to establish the efficacy of employing a technical adviser’. A grant of £80 per month was already available for him. While the FCS agreed to the Gaborone Committee, there were also differences about its composition. Jack Ramsden was surprised to read about the names of those who had been suggested to constitute the WWF Gaborone Committee in the Mafikeng Mail newspaper, before either the Maun DC or the Society was officially informed on this matter. The FCS felt that the government member for the WWF Gaborone Committee should be Pat Reardon an FCS ex-officio member who had become Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Mines, Commerce and Industry, and was familiar with their project. The Fauna Society was also becoming concerned that WWF money channelled through the Gaborone Committee might be used elsewhere in Bechuanaland.

By March 1965 neither local officials nor the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland were keen to have the Kays close to the finances and administration of Moremi. Their prolonged absence from Ngamiland made it difficult for the Committee to retain contact with them. In his correspondence with WWF, van Riet Lowe reported the differences that existed between the Kays and other members of the Committee and alleged further that they were the only Committee members who had derived financial benefits and personal publicity from it: ‘The greater the glory of Moremi, the greater the glory of the Kays.’ Both officials and the FCS now wanted to exclude the Kays as major intermediaries with Friends of the Okavango, Okavango Wildlife Society, the WWF and Bailey without proper co-ordination and adequate reference to FCS.

The Kays in turn, on a brief visit to Maun, noted that the only available funds for Moremi were the ones resulting from June Kay’s 1963 tour in the UK, and implied that the FCS should not expect further funding from the WWF if they were excluded. They attributed the lack of communication from the FCS to the WWF as inefficiency, although at least some of it arose from postal difficulties and lack of co-ordination in government offices. To many members of the Committee, the Kays displayed sheer arrogance, suggesting that without them the Moremi could not exist; for that reason, the Committee no longer wanted the Kays to have the authority to act on behalf of the FCS or Moremi.

Robert Kay approached Kgosi Letsholathebe privately with ideas of reconstituting the FCS Committee. When the Tawana chief referred the matter to the Committee their response
was predictably hostile. Kay seemed to have ceased co-operation with his former colleagues and appeared to be insensitive to the public discontent about funding and the couples’ personal vested interests in the Moremi Reserve.

Official delays, including delay of the publication of the Moremi Game Reserve regulations in the government Gazette certainly stifled progress. Given such reports both the regional and international organizations became critical of FCS’s ability to administer Moremi. The withdrawal of a subsidy in respect of game scout salaries by the Cape Town Friends of the Okavango was attributed to this. The Friends of the Okavango, whose Chairman was Robert Kay and Secretary, June Kay, was in any case running short of money and unable to channel to the FCS the donated sum of £290, from the UK, for rifles for the game scouts. The Friends of the Okavango effectively collapsed. June, who was largely in South Africa or Zimbabwe at this time, was further accused by the Maun DC of having cabled Bailey asking him to release whatever money accumulated in the Moremi name into the Friends of the Okavango account.

In view of such an alarming state of affairs Jack Ramsden decided to call an urgent Committee meeting to address what he considered a grave danger of losing WWF support in establishing the WWF Gaborone Committee. Ramsden took members of the Committee through a detailed record of how communications had broken down. With the collapse of the Friends of the Okavango Society, and the inability of the Okavango Wildlife Society to provide any assistance, the FCS was more anxious than ever to ensure that the WWF Gaborone Committee was established. The FCS explained the problems they had experienced during the course of the year, their wish to co-operate with WWF officials, and acknowledged that they had made mistakes. They also promised to make a strenuous effort to collect subscriptions and donations from their own members.

The FCS faced an acute dilemma. They now depended largely on the WWF, but WWF officials were still thinking in terms of Robert Kay as the technical advisor. The FCS Committee refused to employ him although they were willing to engage another specialist, preferably from the Zoology Department, University of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland (UBBS); the ancestor of the later Universities of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Ramsden affirmed:

We would rather be poor and know where we stand and being able to plan accordingly than to be wealthy and fraught with uncertainty and sudden disappointment. Anyway whatever happens at least Moremi Reserve will always be there.

Given the growing tension between the Kays and the influential members of the Tribal Council, the Kays offered to resign. Their offer was accepted in the FCS Committee. However, as a token of gratitude for their efforts in helping realize the creation of Moremi Game Reserve, the couple was invited to become Honorary Life Members of the Society. Tudor affirmed that the Committee bore no grudge and whatever difficulties they might have experienced in the past he wanted to say, ‘let bygones be bygones’ and henceforward concern themselves with the sound administration of Moremi and its future. The FCS Newsletter would continue publishing a brief summary of the history of the founding of
the Reserve with the names of the Kays highlighted.

Isaac Tudor became the Treasurer and K.B. Moitai the Secretary. June Kay’s position as Public Relations Officer was left vacant temporarily as it was envisaged that the need for such a post might fall away with time in view of the Society’s change in policy towards active fund-raising. Paramount Chief Lecholathebe II (Photo 6) accepted the position of President of the Society.

The local conflicts had been resolved but this did not clear the way to a new relationship with the WWF. By May 1965 the WWF in London had become concerned about the lack of progress and response to letters and cables. Hawkins, who the WWF in 1964 had suggested to be the Chair of the WWF (BP), seemed to have faded from the picture, largely through pressure of government business and the headquarters’ movement from Mafikeng to Gaborone. In June 1965, the WWF Botswana was established in Francistown (and not Gaborone as was earlier suggested) with four Committee members: Jimmy Haskins; the manager of Standard Bank, Francistown; the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Gaborone; and Ramsden as a liaison officer from FCS. An account was opened at Standard Bank in Francistown to deposit money received from the WWF London for the immediate needs of Moremi. D. J. C. Morgen of the Ministry of Mines, Commerce and Industry was appointed Chair of the WWF Botswana and the signatory to the money deposited at the Standard Bank.

Despite the WWF officials’ loss of confidence in the FCS, they accepted Graham Child’s view that Moremi was an integral part of a far larger ecological unit and felt Moremi was sufficiently important to the cause of fauna conservation in Africa to warrant continued support. Fritz Vollmar, Secretary General of the WWF, was keen to see progress and there were still some wealthy British supporters. Towards the end of 1965, the total FCS local, regional and international honorary, life and ordinary membership was 668. The largest membership was drawn from Bechuanaland, the Transvaal and Cape Town. The Society also drew members from as far as the United Kingdom, West Germany, Belgium, Denmark Austria, Canada, and the US. The establishment of an efficient working relationship with the WWF Group in Botswana became important to London. A first cheque for R300 was sent to the WWF Botswana for disbursement to the FCS in accordance with their approved estimates. The FCS had already applied for a bank overdraft of £150 as a temporary measure as they needed funds to prepare for the commencement of the 1966 tourist season. But the WWF Botswana delayed arranging with the bank for release of funds to the FCS, and Committee members such as Ramsden, Tudor, Moitai, Smith and Ronnie Kays had to repay the overdraft from their own personal resources.

Bailey remained the main figure behind financial aid for Moremi in Britain. In March 1966, he wrote van Riet Lowe, Maun DC a 3–paged detailed letter outlining his proposals for Moremi with copies to the main stakeholders, interestingly excluding the FCS. Bailey, who at the time was based in Cape Town, had earlier in January visited Maun to discuss his proposal with government officials Hawkins and van Riet Lowe. Firstly, he suggested the establishment of a full-time paid manager-warden of the Reserve to carry out general administrative responsibilities with regard to Moremi, both in the office and in the field, working under the FCS and carrying out its general instructions and policy. One important
aspect of installing a manager was that the WWF London Appeal would be able to present Moremi Reserve to potential financial supporters ‘as a project that was managed on recognised conservation lines and in a businesslike manner’\(^\text{63}\). The WWF would then turn their attention to the possibility of making a top quality documentary film on Moremi, with the added attraction of the Botswana independence celebrations in September. According to Bailey, people who in 1965 had pledged money for the unsuccessful John Cross film would be willing to take the financial risk once the management of the Reserve was established on a more business-like footing. With the appointment of a suitable manager, the £1,500 held in the Okavango account of the WWF in London would immediately be released through the WWF Botswana for the use of the FCS. This would pay the manager’s salary and the basic running expenses of the Reserve and for future needs WWF would continue raising money from other quarters. The revitalisation of the managing body was likely to attract annual membership subscriptions.

Bailey’s second approach was to establish a private company to conduct photographic safaris in the Moremi. This company would not have a formal association with the Governing Body and would be financed separately by Russell Bailey and his associates. It would supply its own equipment or hire from the FCS whatever the FCS could provide. Bailey intended to buy Gordon Pethick’s equipment. Any profits over 5% from its operations would accrue to the FCS. The photographic safari company would use the services of the installed warden to cater parties of clients visiting Moremi, thus controlling their behaviour and ensuring their safety\(^\text{64}\). In Bailey’s vision the success of a photographic safari would depend on the competence and enthusiasm of the management, and the ability to attract clients. Bailey would initiate the appointment of agents in Johannesburg, Harare, London and New York to generate as much publicity for the camera safari as possible\(^\text{65}\). Safari parties would get to the Khwai by Bechuanaland Airways Dakota and would be picked up at the airstrip in the FCS Land Rover. The plan was proposed as a way of extricating the Reserve from its financial predicament as the FCS was at the time very short of money. In addition to any share of the profits, there were prospects of gate money. The Reserve could not possibly survive the delay because of bankruptcy.

In May 1966, Bailey attended a Committee meeting of the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland. The purpose of the meeting was to answer queries relating to his proposals of installing a salaried warden to manage the Reserve. The matter had already been discussed at length at previous FCS Committee meetings towards the end of April. Bailey’s preference for a warden and the manager of a camera safari company was R. Bateman who was willing to take up residence with his wife and child in the Reserve. Bailey thought Mrs Bateman could take on the clerical and accounting duties. A combined salary of £80 was suggested for the couple for an initial period. Bailey suggested the necessity of cutting down operating expenditures for several months for the safari enterprise to become established. It was imperative that the number of game scouts be reduced in order to reduce their bill to a maximum of £50 per month. The use of transport would also have to be cut drastically, allowing 1,000 miles per month for one Land Rover only; the 5–ton truck and the second Land Rover would have to be put off the road and used only for hiring out at a profit. Bailey was concerned that although the FCS Committee understood that the prospect of
outside support was slipping away, some members still would not accept his plan. He saw Pete Smith as an obstructionist but Ramsden saw the logic of the argument in spite of the obvious threat to his aspirations of becoming a liaison officer himself. The problem for the FCS was that Bailey seemed to be trying to take control in a way not dissimilar to that of Robert Kay.

The World Wildlife Fund would still not release further funds for the support of Moremi Reserve until they were satisfied that responsible management had been installed. WWF London principal funders planned a visit to Moremi in September 1966, at the time when Botswana would celebrate its first independence. Russell Bailey, James Maconochie, Christopher Cadbury, and Mrs. Jill Houlder formed the team visiting Moremi Game Reserve. During the visit, the FCS Committee allowed them to use the Land Rovers and the tent equipment for camping out at Maqxwee south gate for five days. The Committee was asked to arrange a meeting in Maun with the UK visitors and also arrange for their travel by government scheduled aircraft from Maun to Gaborone. Bailey suggested that Robert Kay, who was no longer associated with FCS, be their guide during the visit.

Bailey had hoped to get a documentary made in 1966. He wanted June Kay to be central in the film but this endangered the relationship with the FCS. Bailey, who described the FCS Committee attitude as ‘unsound’ and ‘incomprehensible’, argued that ‘the larger the public image of the individual fund-raiser, the greater the benefit to the cause, and raising funds for animal conservation is very arduous and thankless work’. He warned that failure to accept the scheme would deny them funding from the WWF and OWLS. For such a venture to have the possibility of succeeding, the WWF, government and FCS urgently needed to pull together. Bailey had hoped with the existence of new and ‘efficient’ management of the Reserve WWF could rally a number of sympathetic potential supporters, so that the funds might become available to support the manager through to the following year’s safari season starting in June-July. An exhibition in Johannesburg, ‘Call of the Okavango’, using David Shepherd’s paintings, was to be one initial focus point for a further appeal.

The FCS agreed to the Bailey scheme, although some members were concerned that once again Bailey’s preference was for a white face (Bateman) to be in the forefront, despite the imminence of independence. When the treasurer presented four sets of annual accounts, they showed the FCS to be in deficit and operating on credit. At this time, Bailey visited the Game Reserve with his friend Robin Halse from Cape Town, who expressed interest in studying the aerial photographs of the swamp area immediately adjacent to the Reserve. Their observation of the Reserve was not encouraging. Both men felt Moremi was far from offering such facilities as sophisticated camps, which would be enjoyed by wealthy tourists and that therefore such visitors could not savour a feeling of recuperation and spiritual regeneration in Moremi. Although the scouts of Moremi had apprehended several poachers during this period, Bailey felt the function, conditions and discipline of game guards did not meet the required standards. He complained that the expenses of paying the nine game scouts’ wages had not been justified by revenue obtained directly as a result of their anti-poaching activities. As far as he was concerned the FCS management had not been providing full time supervision of the scouts, hence their negligible contribution to physical improvements.
in the reserve, including road building, camp fixtures, bush clearing, the building of huts for accommodation and game viewing ‘hides’.

Bailey was envisaging Moremi as a commercial draw to tourists, and he was therefore concerned about the shyness of the Moremi mammals, particularly the elephant and lion, which most tourists wanted to see. Camera safaris on any scale seemed at least two years away. There was a risk that if they went ahead too soon, dissatisfaction on the part of clients from the relatively small group of wealthy people they hoped to attract could be damaging. Bailey therefore withdrew from this scheme and advised against releasing the London money until the FCS could improve reporting and management. The WWF funding proved to be very elusive, but this episode is important to analyse in detail because it reflects many of the problems that can arise between international funders and local community resource management groups. International agencies often have their own clear agendas and aims, and it is instructive to see how difficult it was for the FCS to satisfy these. The failure to secure WWF funding narrowed the options of the FCS.

5. The Tinley Report

In 1966, the Tinley ecological report was published. Fundamentally it confirmed Moremi’s ecological importance. On the one hand, he described the Reserve as an integral part of the swamp system. On the other hand, it was the only representative portion of the Okavango Swamps (a unique drainage system in Africa) to be left relatively undisturbed. Moreover, Okavango ensured protection for part of the main permanent surface water in the whole country. The Tinley report reinforced the idea of protecting space for the seasonal migrations of large animals. Moremi was seen as the only sector of the Okavango swamps still open to game migration. In the winter dry season (6–9 months in duration) large populations of wildlife moved in from the north, northeast, and east (Makgadikgadi area) to the life-giving water of the swamps. In these months particularly, a whole variety of wildlife was found in large numbers, ‘all in excellent condition’.

Tinley also affirmed Moremi’s significance as a centre from which dispersion of game took place, opening up opportunities for cropping or game ranching in surrounding areas. Again unhindered seasonal movements of wildlife to and from the Reserve were particularly important if this role was to be maintained. Tinley observed, however, that the main breeding season was during the summer months when many game species were widely dispersed outside the Reserve. Thus care had also to be taken to give some protection across a wide area. According to Tinley, the northeastern corner, the triangle of land around the Khwai and Mogohelo rivers, were particularly important as a route for game influx from the north, east and southeast during the dry season. To the northeast of Moremi on the east side of the Mababe Depression were several large pans in the mopane veld known as Joveroga. These are usually perennial, but in times of extreme drought as in 1963–1964, they were dry. Therefore the only reliably perennial and abundant water sources were in the swamps and on the outer margins of the Khwai and Mogohelo Flood Plains. This was close to the site of human settlement as well.

Habitats as well as mammal species were becoming increasingly central in ecological
thinking and Tinley placed emphasis on water systems, soil and vegetation as well as the
animals. Using the study of J. le Roux, soil scientist at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg
he identified mopane gray clay-pan soil in the Khwai area of Moremi Reserve. The clay-pan
soil typically supports stands of mopane in the tree and shrub form. The mopane’s shallow,
lateral root system utilizes the water-retaining clay-pan horizon at 1–4 ft. depth. This area
was especially valuable for elephants where, according to Tinley, they dug holes in the
mopane clay in some areas, especially near ephemeral water pans, to obtain the salt. Africans
also made clay pots from the soil of this area.

Twenty-seven large mammals had been seen in the reserve. Carnivores included the
black-backed jackal, side striped jackal, wild dog, spotted hyena, leopard, lion and cheetah.
Other large carnivores said to occur were brown hyena and caracal. The skin of a serval
was seen at a BaSarwa encampment at the lower end of the Khwai Flood Plain. Primates
included moholi galago seen in the open acacia tree cover south of the Khwai Flood plain,
vervet monkeys and a surfeit of chacma baboons. The overpopulation of baboons was
attributed to the rarity of leopards, killed for their skins, and to the hunting of crocodiles.
Herd mammal species especially numerous on the Khwai flood plain included elephant,
zebra, warthog, hippo, giraffe, grey duiker, steenbuck, reed buck, waterbuck, red lechwe,
impala, roan antelope, sable antelope, tsessebe, blue wildebeest, Chobe bushbuck, sitatunga,
greater kudu, and buffalo. Gemsbok and hartebeest were occasional visitors from the
Kalahari, largely to the south to the Mababe depression and the lower end of the Khwai
drainage system, north east of Moremi. In July 1964 only one black rhino was known to
be in Ngamiland: moving between Moremi and the Savuti channel.

According to Tinley it had been noted by local people that there had been a marked
increase in most large game mammal species. Ramsden of the FCS chiefly provided
information on movements and migration of game, some information was provided by the
government game ranger Simon Holmes a Court and the Moremi game guards. Lions were
frequently heard and seen on the Khwai Flood Plain margins and jackal, wild dog and hyena
were apparently increasing in number. Tinley argued that the presence of predators was
especially valuable to maintain prey-predator relationships and to keep ungulates on the
move, albeit over relatively small distances. He was, however, concerned about the illicit
trade in some carnivore skins. Wild dog and hyena were still shot as vermin for a bounty
paid by government. He accused the BaSarwa in the Okavango of killing not only for
subsistence but also for the income from the illicit trade of large and small carnivore skins.
The FCS was aware of this.

Elephant were found between the Khwai and Mogohelo flood plains in the dry season
and migrated out of the game reserve at the beginning of the rains. They also moved on a
daily basis to the flood plains at night, and back into the wooded and scrub areas between
the two flood plains during the day. This may have been to cope with tsetse and other ‘biting’
flies. In northeast Zululand, Tinley had watched elephant continually and violently stamping
their feet and moving their ears, head and trunk when worried by persistent biting flies. The
Moremi game guards were recorded in 1964 as confirming the problems of tsetse in
the Okavango Swamp, which in summer months were more abundant and active, and were
followed at night by an onslaught of mosquitoes. Elephants seemed to avoid tsetse wherever
Zebras were found throughout the Reserve in small groups during the dry season and moved out of the area during the wet season. In the dry season they utilized the floodplain grassland, Acacia veld and mopane woodland. They are mainly grazers on short grasses. Groups of giraffe and buffalo were also encountered in the Reserve. Tinley noted that warthogs were especially valuable ecologically. During the dry season they rooted up large acres of floodplain grassland to feed on grass and sedge rhizomes. They made this food easily available to baboon and zebra and probably other species. Understanding the movements of warthogs was of importance because of the distribution and control of the tsetse Glossina morsitans, as warthogs were recognized as the main supply of the blood meal for the tsetse in most of Africa.

Tinley also considered the settlement history of northern Botswana, which he felt was important in understanding the ecosystems and landscape of Moremi as they were in the 1960s. He accepted that historical accounts confirm the presence of the River Bushmen/BaSarwa in the swamps as well as the sandveld, and made reference to material showing that from about 1942 to 1962, the tsetse fly belt in the Okavango swamps had expanded, forcing the retreat of people and their stock. This drove back communities that had expanded into the Khwai floodplain from the time of rinderpest to about 1940 (as confirmed in my Khwai interviews). Tinley felt this had important consequences on the appearance of the vegetation (‘marginal floodplain woodland and parkland’) at the time he conducted the survey. Stigand had noted in 1923 that swamp and reed beds were burnt annually in preparation for ploughing. Both the sandy loams above the flood level, where the crops were dependent on local rains, and floodplain soils, cultivated after the floods had receded, had been used.

There is, however, considerable ambivalence in Tinley’s report. He made reference not only to the history of settlement but also to the Hill-Riney records of traditional African conservation practices; he also argued that prior to the establishment of the park, the BaSarwa frequented only some parts of Moremi, and had temporary villages outside as well as inside the park area. He also noted the extent to which they hunted and sold game meat and skins. Tinley therefore concluded that the clearing of Moremi did not interfere with any settled human occupation or farming and ‘except for a few Bushmen it is entirely uninhabited by other tribes with stock’. Tinley concluded that the reserve offered an invaluable form of land use: tourism and the hunting safaris in the surrounding country would ensure a large steady income from undeveloped ‘wild lands’. In fact, he remarked that the only form of sustained land use in Botswana which could maintain ecological health and bring wealth to the country at the same time was the management of its wildlife. For this to work the wild mammals must be able to continue their seasonal migrations. This, he observed was part of the ecological rhythm or balance of a semi-arid region with a brittle cover. He suggested the reduction in cattle to below the safe carrying capacity of the veld and emphasized that the management of wildlife as a form of land use for the purposes of tourism, game ranching, hunting and camera safaris best suited the Okavango region. Thus the Tinley Report confirmed the importance of Moremi, provided an argument for extending it, and also for preventing any
settlement that might interfere with wildlife movement.

6. Postscript: the FCS after Independence

When Botswana became independent, the financial possibilities changed again and the state proved to be the most secure new source of funds. The BaTawana Tribal Council was re-constituted to be North West District Council (NWDC). In view of the importance of fauna conservation matters in Ngamiland, the NWDC set up a special committee solely to consider wildlife matters in conjunction with the FCS. It agreed that the FCS was to continue administering the Reserve and NWDC to subsidize it. R1000 of annual subsidies was received from the Tribal Treasuries but game guard strength and vehicle usage was drastically reduced in an attempt to resolve the Reserve’s financial crisis. The number of game guards was reduced to four and the main entrance of Moremi was moved from the North Gate (Khwai) to the South Gate (Maqxwee) to reduce the distance from Maun for tourists. As the Maqxwee game guards’ camp was susceptible to high floods, temporary accommodation for the guards had to be built away from the flood plain. The Society agreed to rent their 5-ton Bedford BJ 75 to the Ngamiland Cattle Export Committee and the Ipelegeng project for carting sand for road construction. The best roadworthy Land Rovers would be reserved for hire to tourists.

Nevertheless there was also increasing reason for optimism. A sizeable number of visitors came as a result of the Sanderbergh and Crocodile safaris and in the 1966 winter season entrance fee revenue totalled a record of R785. In 1967, the North West District Council increased the subsidy granted to the FCS to R2000 and with this money the Committee decided to re-employ the game guards who had been re-trenched. The number of game guards gradually increased as the Reserve entrance fee revenue accumulated and the number of guards reached eight. The BaSarwa guards Kwere and Lekgoa remained on post and one senior game guard position was given to Morotsi. By increasing the number of guards and labour engaged for roadwork, the building of five huts for entrance gates and camp constructions, the Society created rural employment. During the colonial period, even the more sympathetic officials had refused access to state funds or even sanctioned expenditure of local tribal treasury funds. More independent control over the local state provided the FCS with a new lease on life.

In 1967 the FCS decided to sell their lorry and their duplicator machine to clear its debts, and engage two labourers to open the Smiti (named after Pete Smith) road of the Moremi Reserve. Lionel Palmer of Safari South offered to pay to open more roads in the Reserve and Jack Ramsden volunteered to work with those labourers as he was on a long leave. Harry Selby of Ker and Downey paid the salary of two of Moremi’s game guards, thus increasing their number to six. While the FCS had in part been set up in opposition to the hunting safari companies, the relationship between them had greatly improved. They were becoming well-established locally, and committed to the area, compared with both late colonial government officials and WWF agents.

Robert Kay, operating from Zimbabwe and South Africa, made an application to the FCS Committee to take a photographic safari through the Moremi Reserve. Some of the
Committee members first wanted an explanation of the recent press articles in which he alleged he was ‘driven away from Moremi by the “tsetse” (sarcastically referring to FCS Committee)’\(^{78}\). But some, including the Chair, Ramsden, felt that his past services should be recognized and the application approved\(^{79}\). Kgosi argued that if Robert were to be allowed to take photographic parties through the Moremi, this might restore his faith in the Reserve, and moreover, the Society badly needed the revenue he was likely to bring; the application was approved. It was agreed that all safari companies wishing to take parties through the reserve make a deposit of R100 by cheque. There had been problems in collecting money at the gate and some tourists who had promised to settle their dues in Maun after visiting Moremi had failed to do so.

Ramsden, drawing on Kenyan and South African experience, proposed a pictorial motif portraying the head of a lechwe, the most common wetland animal in Moremi. Crocodile Camp Safaris which had applied to establish a fishing camp at Xakanaxa lagoon inside the Reserve printed 10,000 car stickers\(^{80}\). Ian Player of the Natal Parks Board, and the OWLS chair, visited Maun and the Moremi Reserve and reaffirmed their support through a flyer with a map locating the Okavango in Southern Africa and also depicting the vegetation and different species found in the Delta region. OWLS suggested the employment of Tinley for a minimum period of three years carrying out the basic necessary ecological research on which future developments of the Reserve could be based. Natal parks personnel suggested introducing a rhino into Moremi only after a survey had been carried out\(^{81}\).

Between 1967 and 1968, World Wildlife Fund had several animal conservation projects in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Ceylon, Trinidad and Ecuador supported by national appeals from UK, USA, Switzerland, West Germany, Belgium, France, Canada, New Zealand, Brazil, Pakistan and India. During this period WWF and IUCN jointly recommended the further establishment of National Parks and the carrying out of ecological surveys of very rare and endangered wildlife species such as rhinos in Africa and the tiger in India\(^{82}\). But Botswana was not completely ignored by the WWF. They helped to broker funding, through Coca Cola, of a new documentary by Graham Parker of Mithras Films, London. This was less ambitious than some previous projects and the FCS authorised use of its Land Rovers. The proceeds after deduction of costs were to be handled by WWF in London on behalf of the Reserve for its development. The film was also more comfortable for the FCS in its approach. It aimed at publicizing independent Botswana, concentrating on Moremi as a reservoir of game and showing the particular difficulties faced by the local people in the running of the reserve\(^{83}\). Jack Ramsden would be a central figure and he was released from his official duties at Maun to guide the film company in the Reserve and assist them in compilation of their script shots. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Water Affairs assigned an official to accompany the film unit and it was agreed that Moleleki Mokama, the Botswana High Commissioner in London, would be shown the film on completion, prior to its publication\(^{84}\). A letter from the film company confirms that the film was shot and would be ready in 1968. I have not been able to establish what happened to this film. No further communication took place between Maun and London on this film\(^{85}\).

The reputation of the reserve was spreading with new safari companies applying for
permanent camp sites and new research teams interested in its wildlife. Philip Crowe, Director of World Wildlife Fund, visited with a delegation, and was received by the chief. The South African film Board also called. A canopy type boat for easier patrols was bought and Dr. Robbel employed as an associate expert Game Ranger.

In 1968 the Botswana Parliament debated and passed an Act reforming the tribal system of land tenure. Through the Tribal Land Act, Land Boards were created in the country at district level to take charge of tribal land in place of the chiefs. The new President argued about the need for reforms of the existing system of customary land administration which were necessary because it could no longer readily accommodate private tenure. The Boards were empowered to allocate land. But through the House of Chiefs (now Ntlo ya Dikgosi) the chiefs advised the elective National Assembly on cultural issues.

The North West District Council and Tawana Land Board were important in resolving the problems of Moremi Game Reserve and monitoring the management and administration of the Reserve. The Minister of Local Government and Lands was responsible for both the District Council and Land Board. Some of the influential members of the BaTawana such as Letsholathebe II, Mogalakwe, Tudor, Segadimo, Dithapalo, Monwela, Ramsden, Setlhoko, and Kwerepe served in post-independence North West District Administration, the District Council and Tawana Land Board. Their authority in the local government structures gave them also a national voice and gradually had an impact in the running of Moremi affairs. In 1973 Letsholathebe became the Deputy Chair of the House of Chiefs and in 1978 he was elected the Chair. Tsheko became the Minister of Agriculture, based in Gaborone.

Although in 1962–1963 these key figures had worked as a team and used their influence in the pre-independence BaTawana Tribal Council and the kgotla to campaign for Moremi, in the 1970s they differed in their approach to the management of the Reserve.

During the course of the 1970s the management of Moremi was raised in the National Assembly. According to Segadimo, members such as Moutlwakgolo Ngwako of Central District wanted to understand the question of the ‘real’ functions of the Fauna Society. Some of the members felt that Moremi was becoming mismanaged and control over financial affairs was disputed. Tudor, the treasurer, was responsible for paying workers and collected monies raised through the gate and clients. According to Gaselemogwe Segadimo, there was mismanagement of such funds and lack of accountability. The accounts of the Society had been last audited in 1968 and employees such as game guards were owed wages. The Commissioner of Labour in Gaborone received a complaint that the Society owed the Moremi workers the sum of P595–00. Some had stopped working when they were not receiving their monthly wages. This created a problem in the repair of Reserve roads that had been closed by elephant traffic. The small number and poor condition of vehicles and boats made it difficult to fight poaching effectively in areas where accessibility was difficult. The problems with the finances meant they could not afford to replace their old road-grader for grading roads during the rainy season and the FCS could not cope with bridge maintenance.

By the mid–1970s the administration and management of Moremi was becoming a matter of considerable concern both in Maun and Gaborone. Time and again the attention of the Minister of Local Government and Lands was drawn to the inactivity of the Fauna
Conservation Society, the management body of the Reserve. Tudor claimed that the Society was still in existence with a membership of 100 people but in effect the FCS had found it difficult to bureaucratize itself and sustain the enthusiasm and organization of the early years. Some of its key members had been drawn into other time-consuming responsibilities in local government. They did not seem to be able to inspire a new generation of young people to take up the project.

The government approached the kgotla with the suggestion that the reorganized Department of Wildlife, National Parks and Tourism could manage the FCS on their behalf and discussion began in 1976. Towards the end of 1977, Jack Ramsden, representing the NWD Council and the FCS Society Senior Game Warden, met the Director of Wildlife and Tourism in Gaborone. On his return in Maun, he discussed the matter with all key parties concerned, mainly Kgosi Letsholathebe, the Chair of the Tawana Land Board and President of the Fauna Conservation Society; Isaac Tudor, the Chairman of the North West District Council and Treasurer of the Fauna Conservation Society; and Mr. Motse, the Council Secretary.

In August 1979 Kgosi Letsholathebe (Photo 4.2 and 4.3) called a kgotla meeting to get the views of his people on this matter; it was also attended by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, and the Director of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks96). The chief expressed concern that there was a lack of progress and Botswana was no longer benefiting from the project under the management of the FCS. The idea of the Moremi Game Reserve was an African vision but he suggested that the lack of accountability had led to the disintegration of the Batswana traditional spirit of self-help (ipelegeng) embraced in the Botswana constitution. Tudor fought for the FCS to the end. He argued that any decision to transfer the management of the Reserve to government would result in the local people losing control of Moremi and that according to the constitution of the FCS, in the event of the Society being disbanded; the District Council would be the beneficiary. Tudor quoted this clause arguing for the handover of the Reserve to North West District that he chaired.

The former Member of Parliament for Maun/Chobe, Bahiti Temane, challenged Tudor’s claims and affirmed that the rightful institution in this instance was the Land Board, as successor of the Tawana Tribal Council. Temane used his political influence, advising BaTawana to identify with the central government and understand that it was gradually taking charge of wildlife conservation and management nationally. He cited the case of Kweneng district where BaKwena handed over the administration of their wildlife to the department of Wildlife, National Parks and Tourism. In 1979, the National Assembly debated the amendment of the Fauna Conservation Bill, to introduce a unified hunting system in Botswana97).

In response to Tudor, Ramsden informed the kgotla that it was not the intention of the Department of Wildlife to take away the Reserve from the BaTawana, but to help them in administering the Reserve. The Department pledged to pay the salaries of the Moremi staff and carry out day-to-day administration of the Reserve and all the development required98).

Kgosi Letsholathebe, together with Temane and Monwela, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party politicians, won the argument but warned the government that it should
appreciate the efforts of morafe in creating the Reserve and keep local people in touch with developments in the Reserve. Failure to administer the Reserve properly could still force the people of Ngamiland to hold another kgotla meeting and denounce the Department of Wildlife in the same way as they denounced the Fauna Conservation Society. The constitution of the FCS of Ngamiland was temporarily suspended without prejudice to their longer-term rights. Moremi remained the property of morafe.

In the process of working out the logistics of control of Moremi, members of the Land Board, accompanied by Ramsden, the senior Game Warden, visited the Reserve directly after the kgotla meeting in August 1979. They found that although many tourists were entering Moremi, the conditions were deteriorating. Trees pushed down by elephants blocked roads. Camping sites were no longer in a suitable state, and littering was becoming a problem. Staff working in the park was instructed to give the collected revenue to Ramsden and not to Tudor - as they had done before - and to take all instructions from him and the Department of Wildlife. Ramsden advised that although most of the Reserve employees were illiterate, individuals like Morotsi Molomo did have valuable skills and experience in areas such as bridge and hut construction. The BaSarwa were not mentioned.

Financial management proved particularly difficult under community control, a question that had hampered Moremi’s development from the start. A Ministry directive asked Tudor to update the books of the Society in preparation for the handover. The Minister then appointed an accountant to examine the operations of Moremi Reserve since 1968 in an attempt to straighten their records. There was soon a dispute as to which authority had the right to collect gate money. The District Council questioned the right of the Land Board to take revenue from entrance and camping fees, since the Board did not incur expenses in the running of the Reserve. But the Land Board argued that it had authority over the land and were currently receiving the hunting concession fees from wildlife utilization through the Department of Wildlife. The dispute became very complex, and reflected the continuing tensions between District Council, Land Board and National Government.

In October 1979, a Presidential Directive was issued to the Maun DC stating that the administration of the Moremi Wildlife Reserve would no longer be vested in the FCS of Ngamiland and that the Moremi Game Reserve Regulations be published to enable the government to administer the reserve. The Moremi Game Reserve Regulations then came into effect from 9 October 1979. According to Spinage, the intent of Statutory Instrument Number 102 of 1979 was to apply new regulations to the Moremi Game Reserve, as this would not be possible if the designation of ‘Wildlife Reserve’ was reinstated, since this category did not exist in the Botswana Fauna Conservation Act.

It increasingly became national policy to centralize control over wildlife management as the government took over Moremi in 1979. The FCS ceased to exist. Although there was much rhetoric about the importance of local interests, the transfer of control of Moremi undermined a major experiment in local, community-based wildlife management in Ngamiland.
Notes

1) PSC, Minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 28 April 1964.
2) PSC, Air letter (Telegram), from Ian MacPhail, WWF, London to Irving Gass, Maun DC, 4 July 1964.
6) See the estimates drawn up for financing Moremi with a total of £25,000 attached to the minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 5 September 1963.
13) PSC, minutes: meeting held between Russell Bailey and the Maun DC, 16 November 1964.
18) Minutes: meeting held between Bailey and Maun DC, 16 November 1964.
19) S. 228/3/2, letter from June to Werner, 5 May 1964.
20) See minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 24 November 1964.
21) FCS meeting, 24 November 1964.
22) FCS meeting, 24 November 1964.
26) S. 543/2, Minutes: BaTawana Tribal Council, 12 March 1963. See also, S. 228/3/2, Savingram: Maun DC to Mafikeng, 6 June 1964; in one of his letters to the Maun DC, Robert wanted any correspondence in the Kays’ name to be forwarded to an address in Cape Town, 6 May 1964 and June’s letter to Hawkins, Mafikeng, 5 May 1964.
31) Smithers’s letter to Clark, 10 August 1963 and Savingram: Clark to Mafikeng, 20 April 1963. Robert Kay’s letter, 6 May 1964 confirms that he intended to start a safari company with Pethwick who would raise £1,500 for equipment.
33) See S. 228/3/2, letters by June Kay, Johannesburg to Mike Hawkins, Mafikeng, 5 May 1964; Schaurte, Johannesburg, 5 May 1964; Maun DC, 6 May 1964 and Robert Kay, Johannesburg to K. Tinley, Pietermaritzburg, 2 June 1964.
34) S. 228/3/2, letter: Rinia de Lorm, Friends of the Okavango to Mafikeng, 28 October 1964.
35) PSC, Pete Smith’s letter to FCS, Maun, 11 November 1964.
39) PSC, FCS income and expenditure accounts/balance sheet: from 1 November 1962 to 31 December 1963; 31 December 1964; draft estimates of expenditure for 1965 and 1968. These accounts were circulated in the meetings during the treasurer’s report.
45) Minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 3 April, 1965.
48) Minutes: FCS Committee, 25 January 1965 and Savingram: Gass to Min. of Mines, Commerce,
30 January 1965. A suggestion was made for the appointment of a short hand typist at the rate of R50 per month.

49) Letters: MacPhail to Irving Gass, Maun DC, 15 January 1965 and Bailey to Gass (copied to Cadbury, Maconochie, Houlder, Scott and Vollmar), 14 February 1965. See also S. 228/3/2, Air mail, Kalahari, Mafikeng to Discom, Maun, 16 November 1964. The Wenela (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) plane carried mail and migrant workers to the depot and airfield at Francistown, and from there the men went by train to the Witwatersrand.

50) See Bailey’s letter to Gass, 14 February 1965.

51) Letter: van Riet Lowe to R. Bailey, 26 March 1965. See also minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 3 April 1965.


54) Minutes: FCS meeting, 3 April 1965.

55) S. 228/3/2, Savingram: Maun DC to Member for Natural Resources and Industries, Mafikeng, 9 July 1964; letter: Mafikeng to June Kay, Cape Town, 3 June 1964 and a response from June Kay to Mafikeng, 22 May 1964.

56) PSC, letter: Ramsden to MacPhail, 7 April 1965; minutes: FCS meeting, 3 April 1965 and van Riet Lowe’s letter, 26 March 1965.

57) Ramsden’s letters to MacPhail, 7 April 1965 and to Bailey, 19 May 1965. See also Ramsden’s letter to Hawkins, Gaborone, 6 May 1965 and Michael Dithapo Treasurer’s report for the period ending 31 December 1963 in which he summarised some of the problems they were experiencing.


59) Minutes: FCS meeting, 3 April 1965.

60) Several letters refer to Child’s ecological statement: Child’s research was on wildlife utilization and land use in Zimbabwe and Botswana. See for example from Hawkins, Gaborone, 8 February 1966 to Maun DC; from Ramsden to Hawkins, 15 December 1966 and from Bailey, Cape Town to Hawkins, 29 March 1966.

61) PSC, FCS Membership list as at 31 December 1965. See also letter from MacPhail to Bailey, Cape Town, 18 July 1966.


64) Minutes: FCS meeting, 30 July 1966.

65) Bailey assumed great importance as he was part of the Abe Bailey SA gold mining family, some of whom were brought up in the UK. Jim Bailey, another son, was famous for financing the South African Drum magazine in the 1950s and 1960s.

66) PSC, Letter: Bailey to J. Ramsden, FCS Chairman, 30 June 1965 and WWF monthly report by F. Vollmar, 29 February 1968. See also Bailey’s several telegraphic messages to Maun DC sent from Claremont and Stellenbosch, Cape Town, 26 April; 29 April; 25 May; 23 August and 6 September 1966. James Maconochie also sent a telegram to Maun DC, 16 September 1966.
68) Letter: MacPhail to Bailey (copied to FCS, Maun DC, WWF Switzerland, OWLS and the principal funders: Cadbury, Parker and Shepherd), 18 July 1966. Bailey’s warning letters are quoted in letters from Hawkins, Min. of Mines, Commerce and Industry to van Riet Lowe, Maun DC, 8 February 1966 and from van Riet Lowe to Hawkins, 7 March 1966. See also letter from Ramsden to Bailey (copied to Houlder, Cadbury and Maconochie; Hawkins, Gaborone and Maun DC; June and Robert Kay, OWLS), 19 May 1965.
69) Letters from Bailey, Cape Town to MacPhail, WWF, 30 May 1966 and to Ramsden, 30 May 1966 expressed distress at the turn of events in Maun. See also minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 11 May 1966. On FCS financial difficulties: see a note for the FCS Committee meeting from K.B. Moitai, FCS Sec, 20 April, 1966 and minutes: FCS Committee meeting, 13 July 1967.
72) FCS meeting, 24 November 1964.
73) Minutes: FCS meetings, 7 January and 12 November 1969.
74) Ibid: 1–6 and 103–4. His published report has several black and white photos as illustration of the physical landscape of Moremi.
76) PSC, Minutes: FCS meeting and NWDC Development Committee, 19 December 1966 and minutes: FCS meetings, 11 May 1967; 9 May 1968 and 21 June 1968. See also Minutes: of NWDC meeting and FCS meeting, 19 December 1968.
77) PSC, Minutes: FCS meetings, 4 June 1966 and 13 July 1967.
78) SPA, minutes: FCS meeting, 8 August 1966.
80) Minutes: FCS, 13 July and 4 December 1967.
81) Telegraphic message: E.D. Fox, Min. of Commerce and Industry to Ramsden, FCS, 8 July 1965. FCS was being notified of the OWLS visit and the idea of introducing a rhino in the Reserve.
83) PSC, Minutes: FCS meeting, 20 September 1967.
84) PSC, Radio message: Game Miscom, Gaborone to Discom Game, Maun, 15 September 1967 and Savingram: A.C. Campbell, Min. of Commerce, Industry to Fox, Min. of Local Govt. and Lands (copied to Maun DC, FCS Game Warden and Min. of Home Affairs), 19 September 1967. See also Copy Savingram: Fox to Campbell, 22 September 1967 and Campbell to Fox, 29 September 1967.
86) Notice of agenda for FCS Committee meeting from Gas Segadimo, Vice Sec, 21 June 1968.
87) Minutes: FCS meetings, 7 January and 12 November 1969.
Chapter 6
Conflicts over Financial and Technical Control

88) Tribal Land Act, No. 54 of 1968, now Cap 32: 2, Laws of Botswana.
91) Interview with Segadimo, 12 August 2001. See also Hansard 46, 15–17 August 1976.
92) The details of the Society’s accounts appear in their balance sheet covering the period November 1962 to December 1967. See also FCS, Balance Sheets, 1 November 1962–1931; December 1967 and minutes: FCS meetings, 29 April; 13 and 17 May; 13 July and 4 December 1965.
93) S.228/3/2. Savingram: Commissioner of Labour to Min of Local Govt. and Lands, 16 May 1979 and from Maun DC to Commissioner of Labour, Gaborone, 6 February 1979; Savingram: Ramsden to Acting Director, DWNP, Gaborone, 27 August 1979 and interview with Segadimo, 12 August 2001.
95) Interview with Segadimo, 12 August 2001.
98) S. 228/3/2. Savingram: Ramsden to NWDC Sec, 22 May 1978.
99) S.228/3/2, Minutes: Tawana Land Board special meeting, 23 August 1979 and Savingram: M.P. Dlodlo, Tawana Land Board Sec to K.T. Ngwamotsoko, Director, DWNP, 27 August 1979. See also Savingram: Ramsden to DWNP Director, 12 September 1979.
101) Div. Com. (N) 7/4, Savingram: Ramsden to Director, DWNP, 12 December 1977. See also S. 228/3/2, Savingram: NWDC to DWNP, 1 August 1977.
102) Savingram: Ramsden to Min. of Local Govt. and Lands, 12 September 1979.
103) Letter: Land Administrative Sec, Tawana Land Board to DWNP Director, 11 August 1981. See also letters: DWNP to Tawana Land Board, 29 May 1981 and 20 August 1981.
104) CAB 25/7 is a CAB Memorandum number recording Cabinet decision prior to the Presidential Directive.
Photo 6  Kgosi Letsholathebe (BaTawana Chief).
Chapter 7

The Basarwa of the Okavango Delta and the Park: the Case of the Bugakhwe

1. Introduction

The foundation of Moremi Park differed from others in the African context, but there are some similarities in its effects. By the time Moremi was founded, it was not uncommon for indigenous people to be removed from wildlife reserves and national parks. Carruthers describes this process in the Kruger National Park in South Africa during the 1930s and 1940s, and Ranger discusses the way in which officials changed their minds about allowing local settlement in the Matopos in Zimbabwe. In East Africa, several scholars discuss the indigenous residents’ removal from the Kenyan/Tanzanian parks. Such removals had not always been the norm, and there were exceptions. The San (BaSarwa) people were initially allowed to stay within the boundaries of Central Kalahari Reserve that was, in fact established in order to provide a refuge in which they could practice their traditional life style. In Moremi, the BaSarwa communities were removed from the outset, despite the involvement of Kwere Seriri in assisting the park’s founders.

The BaSarwa have the unenviable distinction of being perceived and depicted as the most marginalised of all groups of people in Botswana. Like the Hadzabe of Tanzania, oppression, discrimination and dispossession have marked the BaSarwa people’s history. Over the last two centuries, the pressure on land from farmers, other ethnic groups, conservationists and mining companies have cut off the BaSarwa from their traditional lands and the new occupants have been more successful in obtaining legally recognised ownership, a concept unknown in San/BaSarwa culture. Their political representation has been limited and as a result they have scarcely been visible on the political map of the southern Africa region. Nevertheless, concern about the status and the political and economic position of BaSarwa in Botswana has been expressed in numerous official and unofficial reports and writings, and at various conferences, seminars and gatherings, both national and international. The question of land, or ‘securing land rights for the BaSarwa’, has been identified as a critical component in programmes for raising and improving the position of the BaSarwa. The 1997 and 2002 government-initiated resettlement of the BaSarwa outside the boundaries of the 581,730 km² Central Kalahari Game Reserve has provoked a great deal of national and international debate. It is within this context that the impact of a wildlife management area on the people of Khwai in particular should be understood.

This chapter aims first to understand the history of the Bugakhwe, or the ‘River BaSarwa’, especially those now settled at Khwai, and their migration patterns and settlement
history within the Okavango Delta. Khwai is situated just outside of the north gate entrance to Moremi on the northern side of the Khwai River (Photos 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3). The population, which is comprised mostly, although not exclusively, of Bugakhwe is approximately 400 inhabitants. Second, this chapter discusses the response of the BaSarwa to the establishment of the game reserve, and third, it highlights the impact of the park on the BaSarwa.

This chapter discusses the BaSarwa of the Okavango Delta and the impact of the establishment of the park on them. It looks back at the history of the park from the perspective of the Bugakhwe, as related in interviews. Aspects of their settlement history, their role as guides for hunters and in the formation of the park have been noted in preceding chapters.

As the question of removals from national parks has become such a major and controversial international issue in recent years, it is important to establish first that BaSarwa communities were settled in the area that became part of Moremi Park, and that the natural resources of this area were central to their way of life. They were, to some degree, perceived by both the Tswana and colonial officials as nomadic, without fixed rights in land or an attachment to a particular area, but the evidence presented here demonstrates that this was not the case. It is interesting that even current maps of Botswana recognize this to a degree by retaining BaSarwa place names in this area. The relationship of the BaSarwa people to the Okavango and their mode of life there has become all the more important in recent years because they have gradually asserted claims over the area. Their memories about settlement form a major part of this chapter because these have become part of the debate about their claims, and their past.

Reference to the published authorities on the history of Ngamiland gives little information directly on the area encompassed by the Moremi Game Reserve. In contrast to the BaSarwa in other parts of Botswana, little historical and ethnographic work has been undertaken among the BaSarwa of eastern Ngamiland, including the Bugakhwe, Tsi’xa and ||Anekhwe, all of whom speak central Khoesan languages. The Khoesan languages are categorised into three family names: Ju (Northern Khoesan for example, Ju|’hoansi), Central and Southern Khoesan, with sub-groups such as Naro, G|wi, G||ana, Tsi’xa, ||Anikhwe and Bugakhwe that belong to the Central Khoesan. Their history and culture are poorly understood. This study together with Taylor’s 2000 doctoral thesis indicates that the BaSarwa within the Okavango have had a historical experience different from that typically associated with the BaSarwa. Most significantly, they do not seem to have been dominated to the same extent as the BaSarwa elsewhere in Botswana. Many have retained a sense of cohesion, despite extensive intermarriage with neighbours, especially with the BaYei. Taylor’s comparative ethnography of the BaSarwa in the region tends to focus on what it means to carry the label Mosarwa in eastern Ngamiland in contemporary Botswana and the connotations of being Mosarwa.

2. The BaSarwa Concept of Territoriality and their Occupation of the Okavango

All the people I have spoken to, whatever their ethnic affiliation, have emphasized that the BaSarwa were the first in the land, that is (as is commonly expressed), they were the first
created by God. The interviews show that BaSarwa traditionally lived in bands of extended families that moved around following animals, and collecting veld foods. Those whose lives were associated with the sandveld (mostly Ts’ixa groups of the Mababe Depression) congregated in a large village in the summer, and dispersed as family units to waterholes in the winter when there was not enough water to sustain a large village. The ‘BaSarwa ba noka’ (River BaSarwa) who lived around the rivers and islands of the swamps (||Anekhwe and many Bugakhwe) did not follow such a defined annual cycle, as they were unregulated by water shortages. The settlement history of the BaSarwa in the Okavango Delta shows a tension between the value of being close to stretches of permanent water and the desire to avoid areas infested by the tsetse fly. The Bugakhwe utilised both forest and riverine resources while the ||Anekhwe mostly focused on riverine resources. Oral data show that the people of ||Anekhwe of the swampland and of Mababe, who identify themselves as Ts’exa (‘Sand BaSarwa’), are the earliest inhabitants of this large territory under consideration. Both the Bugakhwe of Khwai and the BaYei of Sankuyo state that they found the ||Anekhwe, who have since disappeared from the swamps, and the Ts’exa of Mababe when they arrived in the area.

Throughout my fieldwork (1997–2001), the San concept of territoriality has shown itself to be in conflict with that understood by other ethnic groups and even more by government officials and tourist operators. This conflict of perception is manifested in the history of Moremi Game Reserve and the lack of knowledge about the Khoesan geographical locations in what my informants refer to as ‘Khwai’ (meaning the Moremi Game Reserve and its vicinity). There are two spellings of Khwai (i.e. Khwai and Khwaai). The official records use the spelling Khwai in reference to the current settlement but most people associated with the history of the Moremi Game Reserve use the second spelling in their pronunciation for the older settlements. In this paper, I will use ‘old Khwai’, and Khwai in reference to the Bugakgwe settlements of which the game reserve is part. Some of the problems encountered today by the BaSarwa of Khwai are a result of a prolonged conflict over territory. To understand what the people of San origin say in interviews in Khwai, one has to constantly bear in mind that the area they talk about and claim as their territory is much larger than the village to which they have been confined over the last thirty odd years. It embraces, in addition to the present settlements (NG/19), large parts of the conservation areas known today as the Moremi Game Reserve, the Controlled Hunting and Wildlife Management Areas marked as NG/18, 20, 21 (Map 7.1) and also the area towards the panhandle of the Okavango Delta (NG 22 and 23).

It is within this context that the concept of ‘old Khwai’ or just Khwai which keeps coming up in interviews among the Bugakgwe, should be understood. Within this large territory there was little restriction on their mobility beyond what was imposed by the terrain, seasons and tsetse fly; therefore constant movement and seasonal migration characterised the life of these communities. Although the BaTawana imposed their rule on the BaSarwa, unlike the BaNgwato in Central District, they did not interfere too greatly in their traditional social system, at least when it was not to their advantage to do so. The BaTawana lived mainly in one large central town, finally established at Maun in 1915. Their attempts to establish cattle posts and settlements within the Okavango largely failed
The dispersion of some subject groups in the remote areas of the Okavango helps to explain their relative independence. The riverine environment made regular communications especially difficult for the BaTawana who did not know how to use canoes to disperse themselves among subjects in these parts of Ngamiland.  

Similarly the concept of ‘old Mababe’ for the Tsi’xa group of BaSarwa covers an area larger than the present village of that name. It stretches from where the village is today as far as present day Savuti, Gubatsha and Gooha in the Chobe area, a distance of roughly 100km. Informants talk about seasonal movement within this general area and remember the names of several old sites. In the dry season they would move north towards Xanxo to areas rich in game and good for hunting, and in the rainy season they would move back south to settle in ecological zones rich in veld products and good for the cultivation of crops. For them all this large area was Mababe, their territory. People of San origin in both Khwai and Mababe talk about and claim as their territory an area that embraces, in addition to the present settlements, large parts of the Moremi Game Reserve and Chobe National Park. It was emphasized by the informants that the original Khoisan territory stretches into what is today Namibia and Angola and that many of the Okavango San have relatives in Namibia, especially in the Caprivi area; that within this vast stretch of territory seasonal movement was the main feature of their life style. These territorial notions are not shared or recognized by others in the area (Map 7.2).

BaSarwa ideas of territoriality, of ‘old Khwai’ and ‘old Mababe’, although not tightly fixed, imply a claim to a certain area or piece of land and a claim to have full access to its resources. Heinz, the anthropologist of different groups of BaSarwa in Botswana has argued that BaSarwa territoriality is intimately associated with their social organization. The band, consisting of a cluster of perhaps three or four extended families, possesses land and all its natural resources such as game, veld food, firewood, and water. The band identifies itself within a certain piece of land, well defined and limited in extent. Heinz notes that the BaSarwa traditionally move within the area they consider as their land, typically up to about 50km. In the interviews, the BaSarwa affirm they are not nomadic as portrayed in the literature.

The ecosystem shapes the size of territories and the distribution of social groups. Each band required a nutritional base. Their very existence depended on an intimate knowledge of the land and the capacity to use its resources. All band members were corporate owners with full access to all resources, even those who joined it because of marriage, adoption or as orphans. Richard Lee’s work concurs with Heinz’s analysis and both suggest that the ‘right’ to land is basic, because it is synonymous with the very means of existence. The Bugakhwe of Khwai and Tsi’xa of Mababe affirm they lived in small groups in the past and their elders were leaders of bands. ‘Our elders and parents were leaders of bands. The leader settled family disputes and was highly respected. We didn’t call him Kgosi (chief), like you people do (BaTswana); we called him rra a rona (our father)”.

The Bugakhwe moved to ‘old Khwai’ prior to the 1920s. The dates and sequence of migration as well as the order in which the various sites in ‘old Khwai’ were settled cannot yet be established with any degree of certainty, but it is clear that the migration involved different families moving in waves over an extended period of time. Some like Seriri (father
of Kwere) are said to have moved in the nineteenth century and others in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Bugakhwe say they moved from the Gudigwa/Beetsha/ Gabamukuni (NG 12 and north of NGs 22 and 23) area for two reasons: first, maltreatment and oppression by their neighbours, the BaKgalagadi, who, as they put it, wanted to enslave the Bugakhwe; and second, the prevalence in the area of the ‘tsetse fly disease’ (trypanosomiasis) which took a heavy death toll. Clientship, or serfdom, called locally bothanka or bolata was common in Botswana but the BaKgalagadi are remembered for the brutal manner in which they coerced BaSarwa labour and kidnapped women and children. Bugakhwe informants bristled with anger when recounting how their families had been treated in the past. Bugakhwe bands moved to the northeast fringe of the delta along the Khwai River. Permanent settlements were often attached to pools.

Isaac Tudor, one of the local architects of Moremi Game Reserve, who has BaSarwa antecedents, affirmed that most of the BaSarwa communities moved into the swamp area before tsetse fly became so great a problem. He observed that, ‘a group of River BaSarwa, like the ||Anikhwe had homes in the swamps prior to the establishment of Moremi Game Reserve’. When Stigand produced his map showing tsetse limits in 1921, the lower Mogohelo and the top of Chief’s Island were still free of the fly. An interview by Pete Smith with an old Tawana chief in 1991 confirmed that although visitors to the island had to get the Tawana chief’s permission, and although it was in theory reserved as the chief’s hunting ground, many BaSarwa lived in that area at the time. The custodian of the island was the ||Anikhwe Thamagae of Xumokau. I had the opportunity to refer to Smith’s personal notes prepared from interviews with several surviving ||Anikhwe and Bugakhwe of the Okavango Delta. Smith did also interview some of the figures who later played a role in the demarcation of the boundaries of Moremi Game Reserve. Stigand marked on a map a BaSarwa village north of Nxabega not far from one that was removed in 1963 when the boundaries of the Game Reserve were created.

Some of the BaSarwa settlements were vulnerable to the spreading tsetse fly. Amos Xhwagae Xako, one of the few surviving eyewitnesses (at the time of field work), confirmed the movement of people in relation to the advance and retreat of the tsetse fly. Amos, who was born at Xwaara in ‘old Khwai’ territory, recalls that the Bugakhwe had a ‘big’ settlement of beehive huts there. Like most elders in the village, he remembered his place of birth but not his exact date of birth. He has been working for the Khwai River Lodge owners for a very long time, and his name was changed when he was recruited to work in the South African mines in the 1940s. (Several of the Bugakhwe of Khwai bear either English names or Setswana names but they still retain their San names although these are seldom on official documents such as the Botswana National Identity card: Omang). The Bugakhwe of Khwai communicate in Setswana to non-BaSarwa groups and they do raise concerns about their language which is gradually fading away because their school going children and those working in places such as Maun tend to speak Setswana most of the time.

Recalling what he witnessed during the Bugakhwe movement in the Okavango delta, Amos said, ‘I do remember that our people used to cultivate sorghum, magapu (watermelons) and sweet reeds, but we had to move and abandon our crops before harvesting because of the tsetse. We moved temporarily to the drylands of the Delta’.
Like many of the Khwai elders during the interview, the illiterate Amos used a stick to draw and map the Bugakhwe migration and settlement on the ground, indicating how people filtered down the Delta and locating people’s movement along the Thaoghe River. Through oral testimonies and sketches on the soil, the Bugakhwe recounted family-lineage history and explained their movement from one place to another and their reasons for moving. The dates and sequence of migration as well as the order in which the various sites in ‘old Khwai’ were settled cannot yet be established with any degree of certainty but it is clear that the migration involved different families moving in waves over an extended period of time. They kept close to the south of the panhandle, along the Magweqhana, Ngoha and Khwai rivers in the north-eastern delta. Amos described ‘old Khwai’ as ‘an area extending south, east and west with so many settlements’

The Bugakhwe community documented Khwai’s geographical locations and their relationship with lagoons/pools within the Delta; these were up to 100km from the present village of Khwai.

My research was influenced by the concept of ‘counter-mapping’. Peter Poole, an advocate of counter-mapping techniques, suggests that counter-maps can serve several critical functions in addressing the related problems of protecting indigenous land rights and maintaining high levels of biodiversity. Ecological and geographical research has ignored much of the San knowledge. Counter-mapping inexpensively and accurately demonstrates that indigenous peoples can make a contribution. Ikeya has relied heavily on interviews to present a map on traditional territories within the CKGR, and the Albertson coordinated Kalahari mapping project also involved knowledgeable informants for the delineation of San traditional territories. This study employed modern technology including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to advance the production of maps of traditional territories. The strategy of interviewing showed that informants had a clear ecological picture of their former area of settlement. Veronica Roodt who writes popular books on the flora of the Okavago Delta is an interesting part of the processes I discuss since she makes constant reference to San uses and names for plant lore in her books, and yet she in some ways ‘represents’ the tourist’s consumption of the Moremi to a large degree. Her use of San people as informants for ‘bush’ knowledge of flora in many ways backs up the argument in this chapter about claims to the usage of the territory.

Prominent among the waves of migrants was the Seriri family. Kwere Seriri, who has been mentioned in earlier chapters, was born in about 1926, on the Bodumatau flood plain—an island further into the park, and exhibited strong leadership qualities from an early age. He was recognised as a leader by the community long before he was formally installed as a Kgosi of Khwai village, when the concept of chieftainship developed among the BaSarwa of this area. Kwere’s niece describes her uncle as, well-known by the BaTawana; a man who enjoyed wandering in the wilderness because his parents conceived him in the wilderness, so the BaTawana who came to know him first knew his father Seriri, and came to know Kwere as well. The BaTawana heard about Seriri while in their areas - those who heard about him came here for hunting purposes. Seriri would take this hunting expedition and show them areas where they would find plenty...
of game. Then after the hunting mission these people would tell others about their hunting expedition and the man they met, the man being Seriri. This is how Seriri came to be known by the BaTawana. Seriri had a rifle. My uncle, Kwere Seriri inherited this area after the death of his father—this is Khwai/Xainga/Khweega³⁰).

When the reserve boundaries were being plotted in April 1963 Kwere and his village were occupying an island between Dumbo and Oyi and had to be resettled on the north bank of the Khwai (near the reserve’s north gate). (Photo 7.3).

3. Traditional Subsistence Strategies: Movements between the Riverine Area and Sandveld

The northern and eastern parts of Ngamiland are noted for their abundant wildlife. A wide range of sources has dealt with the traditional lifestyles of the San who relied on a specialized knowledge of their natural resources³¹). Amos elaborated on their way of life prior to the 1940s.

\[\text{We ate most of the wildlife and trapped impalas, but we did not eat baboons, hyenas [\textit{uha}], monkeys, lions [\textit{qaam}] and wild dogs [\textit{hauba}]. We did not hunt big animals such as elephants [\textit{twaa}] and no predators such as lions, leopards and cheetahs for meat, not because we were afraid of them, but because we venerated them. When the white men came here to hunt lions, we sometimes did the skinning for them but were cautious not to eat the meat.}³²\]

Male informants described different hunting methods while mapping their territorial area. At a young age BaSarwa boys were taught to follow their fathers into the bush to acquire early knowledge about hunting. They had different ways of hunting an animal, such as the use of spears, digging of holes to trap some animals and catching animals like kudu, wild pigs, impala, duiker and bush-buck with ropes. Arrows were not used to kill animals. My informants were at pains to emphasize the difference between their traditional hunting strategy and that of the BaSarwa who live in the non-riverine areas of Botswana, particularly those of the Ghanzi region. The terrain dictated their mode of hunting. The Bugakhwe further distinguish themselves from the San communities in the sandveld and Kalahari in that they did not use dogs for hunting.

Hunting helped to define territory: ‘For us, hunting was our farming area’, said one of the elderly men³³). Men organised hunting bands in the local area and would be away from their communities for days while hunting. The tracking of animals in the delta environment was a challenging task. Footprints might leave clear demarcations in the sand of a floodplain and then the trail seemed to end with the start of open grassland or wooded island. A successful hunter needed to know enough about the behaviour of his prey to anticipate their movement and be so familiar with the environment as to detect the slightest alteration in the soil or vegetation that would indicate the distance and direction the prey had travelled. The hunter had to have knowledge of predators to guard against these animals becoming a danger to him and also the preying upon the animals that formed a part of its
Direct observation, reading and interpretation of animal spoor began at an early age. Indigenous knowledge and craft skills passed through generations were an integral part of the culture; a sense of self-reliance characterised this type of livelihood.

Group work was required to stalk large animals like *njabe* (a giraffe). The men would chase a giraffe until it got exhausted and they would kill it with a spear. This would often take a whole day or half a day for a good hunter. ‘A spear was our rifle’ According to my informants, the right period to hunt a giraffe is during the wet season; this is because the giraffe gets tired easily when chased in a wet area. The plant *mokwa* was mixed as an herb-charm to help the young able-bodied men to track and chase an animal like a giraffe. While the young men were chasing the giraffe, one of the elderly men would be following their footsteps, with his mouth full of herbs prepared specifically for the hunting of a giraffe. He would spit them on the ground or just throw the mixture of herbs along both the giraffe spoor and the footprints of the young men on a chase. The elderly man would curse in the Bugakhwe language and call for the animal to be killed. He would scoop soil from the tracks of the animal the hunters were in pursuit of, and mix it with the herbs. The herbs were believed to be effective in making the animal lose stamina. ‘They were only casting spells on wild animals to weaken them during hunting. Security was very important. Herbs (*ditlhare*) were necessary to make the animal weak and powerless’.

Both the hunting and consumption of large animals such as giraffe necessitated mobility, and it was such movement that led the BaTawana to negate the idea of BaSarwa territorial claims. When someone killed a giraffe, he would inform the others and the households would then move to put up temporary home structures where the animal had been killed. There was group singing and dancing (*gantsho*) so as to share happiness with ancestors. According to Sango,

> Since a giraffe is a big animal and we did not have fridges to store the meat, families would spend weeks out there, eating, as well as cutting and chopping meat. When we killed an animal, the place became a temporary home because we had no transport to take animal meat to our permanent settlement. That is why we would spend some days drying meat for *digwapa [biltong]*. This was to make the load of meat light. However, BaTswana used this idea that we build homes where we killed animals as a way of despising us and making fun of us. BaTswana regard BaSarwa as people led by stomach. Wherever he makes a kill is his home.

This stereotype is deeply resented by the BaSarwa.

Informants confirm that they no longer use harpoon spears and traps because the hunting policy is against the use of such items. They use *matseapani/kgobela* (muzzle loading rifles) which came into the area in the late nineteenth century. Most men I interviewed in Khwai are still in possession of muzzle loaders. Giraffe, sitatunga and puff-adders were the preferred meat. The majority of males interviewed said giraffe neck was their favourite portion of meat. In Khwai the fat of the python, an animal that is now protected, was applied to improve hearing.

Informants highlighted the movement of the Bugakhwe between the riverine area and the sandveld. The hunting of animals such as the sitatunga was always done in the riverine...
area. From the riverine area they caught different types of fish and also obtained reeds for making building structures and mats. Species such as *motsaudi* (*Garcinia livingstonei*, African mangosteen) and *tsaro* (*Phoenix reclinata*, wild date palm), valued for their fruit, are water dependent and thrive mostly where there is permanent high water. According to one of the female Khwai community leaders:

> The river is important to us because we drink water from the river; we catch fish from the river; and we get various vegetables such as *tswii*. Women used hand made aloe plant baskets [*moxhwee*] and nets, in shallow water to trap fish. Sometimes they weave baskets from grass. They also used reeds, harvested from the river to make sleeping mats [*moseme*].

Today reeds are popular in making homes and courtyards amongst the delta people and this includes the Bugakhwe of Khwai. To avoid danger women had to spot and observe the *komoti* (water fig) carefully when gathering riverine produce because it is said to provide perfect cover for sitatunga, hippo and crocodile. The plant is well distributed in permanent watercourses and a familiar sight for observation while travelling in a *mokoro*.

The Bugakhwe men emphasise that, unlike the Tswana, their women were also involved in ‘hunting’ activities. Interestingly they use the terms hunting and gathering interchangeably. According to Joseph Sango, “When the word ‘hunting’ is used with reference to women what they really mean is ‘gathering’”.

Our women do hunt in Bugakhwe culture, while a woman is out in the bush to gather veld fruits like *motsentsela* and *mogwana* [different types of wild berries]. If she sees a small animal such as tortoise, she would bring it home with its eggs and cook it as a meal for the family. The tortoise shell was a plate. They often dug and uncovered roots and vegetables to use as food and medicine.

Many of these plants are still to be found in the bush, particularly in the protected Moremi area.

Hunting took the Bugakhwe men and women into the sandveld. In addition to meat, the skins of animals such as springbok, duiker, kudu and impala were dried, tanned and softened to make ‘*mojamboro*’ (aprons and skirts for women) and pants for men and bags for storage of hunting items. Jackal skins would make blankets (*karosses*) and were also useful for mothers to carry their babies. According to their custom the The BaSarwa did not pay a bride price (*lobola*) like the Tswana groups, but skins were beautifully tanned for the bride’s aprons. Sandals were made from buffalo hide. The python skin is said to have been good for wrapping around a long stick with a hooked end (*sekweke*) that was used to catch small animals like springhares (*bontole*), iguana (*kgwate*), monitor lizards (*gopane*) and ant-bear (*kwalate*). According to one informant, “The python skin was tough and durable and would survive all the adverse weather conditions even the rain”. Some skins were used to make bags for storing items needed for hunting, while skins from small animals like wild cats and springhares were useful as trade items. BaSarwa men like Kwere used their great hunting skill to acquire the pelts of leopards, cheetah, zebras, and other animals.
to trade for consumer goods such as three-legged iron-ware pots, axes, knives, clothing and glass beads. On several occasions they brought the tanned skins of impala and duiker for sale at the Ngamiland trading stores owned mainly by people of Jewish and Greek origin. The skins would be exchanged for items such as tea and sugar and not ‘shillings’.

Bugakhwe women foraged in the savanna as well as the swamps: they collected *mongongo* and *marula* nuts. They made wine from honey and wild berries could be used for the local brew *khadi*, which is now popular even among non-Sarwa groups. The use of this range of resources may explain why Heinz has argued that while the ||Anekhwe live inside the delta, the Bugakhwe live on the fringe or periphery of the delta. He maintains that there are very few ‘pure’ ||Anikhwe surviving because most of them have either died from tsetse or intermarried.

This pattern of movement is still apparent. When an owner of a concession in the neighbourhood of Khwai, for example, in NG/20 invites the villagers to come and have a share of the meat of an elephant that has been killed by sport hunters, men and women with their small children camp out overnight to cut and slice some of it for *biltong*. During the Botswana winters (June/July) the cutting of grass for thatching is a major activity as it can be sold to lodge owners. When it is time to cut the grass, at the village meeting (*kgotla*) the community announces the date to go to the bush. They go for up to two months, with dogs, chickens and small babies to particular scattered camps on the periphery of the swamps which are still linked with their traditional sites in ‘old Khwai’. Some of my interviews were actually conducted out there at the grass cutting camps, 35 kms west of Khwai village (Photo 7.2). When the group go for grass cutting they resort to their earlier lifestyle as in the case of the old hunting band. They sleep as an extended family in the open space by the fire to keep predators away. Whenever it is time for cutting the grass, Joseph Sango puts up a camp at Khweega, the name of a pool, which is where his father used to live (part of ‘old Khwai’). The rest of the villagers also attach themselves to the area of the pool that is linked to their family lineage. This is partly reclaiming the territory.

Thus, when from time to time the villagers move away, the village appears abandoned. However, at the end of the grass-cutting or *biltong*-making, they return to the permanent settlement. Today, due to the wildlife conservation policies, the BaSarwa do not have access to their traditional hunting grounds. It is therefore common to find some of the people in Khwai feeding on elephant or even lion meat—this is if the elephant is killed at one of the hunting concession areas, or a lion that has been declared a ‘problem animal’ is killed by the DWNP staff. This information is based on personal experience in both Khwai and Mababe, 1997 and 1998. The removal of Bugakhwe families from what is now the Moremi Game Reserve was partly justified by the idea that they did not have fixed sites. It is quite clear that although they both migrated and moved around for resources, they did have a clear notion of their territory.

4. Bugakhwe Neighbours in ‘old Khwai’ and Tsetse

There appears to have been no Yei settlement of any permanence in the Moremi Game Reserve area. According to Amos Xako, who was a few years younger than Kwere, while
the Bugakhwe were still in their ‘old Khwai’ sites, they had the Yei as their neighbours who were residing in the western side of the Bugakhwe sites called Xwaara and ||Xam (towards the northern part of the park). This was before they moved back to settle in Sankuyo. The oral information affirms that there was close interaction between the BaYei of Sankuyo and their BaSarwa neighbours in the old settlements.

We ate mokutsomu, mogwana [berries]—we collected tswii from the river. We also got fish. We learnt to eat tswii and other methods of catching fish from BaYei—but tswii was not part of our diet; when we started interacting with BaYei we ate tswii and used mokoro [dugout canoe], the BaYei traditional mode of transport. Traditionally we gathered thobo and honey and would offer the veld produce with meat to the BaYei. We were not selling these items to them. They used to give us grains.

There are some jokes that they share when they meet which are related to their hunting experiences in the Khwai region. Sharing was a survival technique but was carried out in accordance with defined rules of social relationship; it was also a way of appeasing one another and avoiding conflicts.

‘Old Khwai’ was therefore more commonly used by non-BaSarwa groups as a hunting ground, rather than as an area of permanent settlement. The BaYei often joined their BaSarwa neighbours on hunting trips in the winter months, after having harvested their crops. Most informants in Khwai and Sankuyo speak of their relationship in terms of an egalitarian friendship. One does not get a sense of a hierarchy in the Yei-Sarwa relationships, in which the group members often refer to one another as cousins. Not surprisingly, these interactions gave rise to cultural borrowing as well as to intermarriage. As Amos was using a piece of stick to make sketches of a map on the soil to guide me, he emphasised this interaction, which was strengthened by friendship, and the sharing of food and trade. This explains why some places like Njakamakata (see Map 7.1) have SeYei names. It was at such a place that the Bugakhwe of Khwai and the ancestors of the BaYei who now live at Sankuyo often spent the winter together. The Khwai elders maintain that the place commonly referred to as Njakamakata, a Yei name, was originally known as Xainga, and also that Four Rivers area was known as Gubathsu before its name was changed. They say that both were changed by those who could write in English at the time that safari companies were allocated concessions in the Khwai region.

There is also mention of the Bugakhwe taking refuge in the old site of the village of Sankuyo prior to the creation of the park in an attempt to flee the ravages of trypnosomiasis. By the 1940s, tsetse had spread to the Bugakwe settlements and some families moved to Maqxwee, towards Moremi’s southern gate, ‘old Sankuyo’. ‘Our parents came together and decided that families should move to places such as Sankuyo so that we can avoid the disease that was finishing our families’. Later some moved on to Xaane, Karabara and Gubanjo. The latter two areas have since become a well-known hunting concession called Seflesh or NG/20 (Map 7.1). The movement is further traced to Njakamakata. When Amos’s family was at Njakamakata, Kwere’s family was in one settlement known as Kabojane while Sango was still at Gubanjo. All these families had to vacate those places. The main
reason for this constant movement was the tsetse fly:

People were moving away from tsetse, as they were settled, they would find tsetse and would move to another place with the hope that the new place would be safe from tsetse. … They moved on while others died on the way until they reached Khweega pool. Their number dramatically plummeted [Bane bantse ba fokotsega]. They later moved constantly from the eastern belt to the western belt, which is the park area, and vice versa. People moved on and were migrating along the river. We continued our life style in a small settlement. Neither the colonial government nor the Tawana authority was able to handle the problem of the tsetse. Tsetse control became more effective during the time of Seretse Khama  

The tsetse were concentrated in the swamps and wooded islands throughout the delta. As the BaSarwa did not depend on cattle, they could risk settling on the delta itself, and some settled on the island. But the death rates were probably always significant. From the 1940s, the tsetse fly started forcing people out of the delta and the wildlife came back. Local communities were forced to move from one place to another, as the tsetse fly became more rampant in the area. The village of Sankuyo fell outside of the worst tsetse areas but food was short there and some people left the new settlements and returned to the fly belts in search of new food supplies. They risked further infection. Interviews with the few surviving elders of the village affirm that most of their elderly people died of the disease they identified with the bite of the tsetse.

The government’s tsetse control measure was to move people further from the fly belt to new settlements free of tsetse, as was the case with some villages in the Chobe and Ngamiland. But it appears such measures were not extended to the San settlements around the pools of the delta. According to Amos, because of the fly belt expansion, the government moved groups of Yei, Subiya and others out of the delta, and the Bugakhwe who had maintained a separate camp from others remained behind. Interviews confirm the Bugakhwe’s reluctance to move out of their traditional hunting grounds. The BaSarwa were not officially restricted from entering the fly belt possibly because of government’s interpretation of the San mode of life. To both the Tawana authority and colonial administration, Khwai was like ‘an empty region’ in relation to BaSarwa settlements. Although the BaSarwa moved in and out of the settlements of old Khwai during the 1950s, the team demarcating the boundaries of Moremi in 1963 found some villages which they felt had been deserted for some time. This helped to justify the removal but Pete Smith confirmed that at the time Kwere and his small extended family were residing inside the park.

5. Significance of the Xuku Floodplains (Hippo pools)

While at Sankuyo, the BaSarwa continued visiting their traditional hunting grounds at Xuku from the 1940s to the early 1960s. The Xuku flood plain is a particularly big pool known in popular tourist literature as Hippo Pool. When the father of Joseph Sango died at Sankuyo, he left behind Kwere and Amos in charge. Kwere left to work in the mines in South Africa
when they were settled at Sankuyo. Men from all the different ethnic groups of Ngamiland participated in migratory labour to South Africa and Zimbabwe. According to Amos, Kwere returned from the mines at the time when chief Moremi of BaTawana was still gathering soldiers in Ngamiland for the Second World War; at this time Amos left Kwere in charge of the families so that he could go and work in the mines too.

Sankuyo is in a slightly different ecological zone from the riverine ‘old Khwai’ and lacked its rich resources for hunting and gathering. One way of emphasising this dependence upon the river is what is often repeated in the oral tradition of the temporary sojourn in Sankuyo in the 1940s and 1950s: We stayed there [Sankuyo] two to three years, a very difficult life. The reason why we eventually left Sankuyo was because of lack of good quality water and there were no plentiful game species to hunt. The Sankuyo people had sunk a well [sediba] and the baboons used to urinate and defecate in the water. We Bugakhwe don’t drink dirty water. So we had to move to Xuku for clean, fresh and crystal water, plenty of game and our adaptation in wetlands.

From Sankuyo the place most attractive to the Bugakhwe was the Xuku flood plain which fell within the area that became the park. A similar picturesque description of the water in this area comes in several books on the Okavango. Kay describes the water of Khwai River and other lagoons in the park area as ‘crystal and clear water’. The move from Sankuyo was to enable them to take advantage of the wetland riverbanks at Xuku. A key factor in being near water was the quantity of game species.

Xuku is so central to the generation that was born in the late 1940s to early 1950s and the impact of the establishment of the game reserve should be understood in the context of resource utilisation at Xuku. This is the generation that is so articulate about the history of Moremi Game Reserve and the impact of wildlife conservation on the community of Khwai. Many have links with the tourism industry. The bulk of the Bugakhwe population moved to the area of the Xuku flood plain. Xuku is remembered in the oral data as a place not only good for agriculture but also rich in different types of veld resources that the Bugakhwe had traditionally subsisted on. So valuable was this hunting ground that they could generate a surplus. One informant dramatises how he grew up in this area: I grew up in this area not drinking tea in my father’s house but fed on animal meat. This is the time when I didn’t know Maun. We were taught that whenever we see someone dressed in ‘smart’ western clothes, like the way we dress now, we should run away to the bush to hide ourselves, for fear of kidnap. We were told people dressed in western clothes were people coming for us young boys to take us to their homes for looking after their livestock; to make us their servants. This is the time when our parents would also run away to avoid paying tax and getting vaccinated against diseases. We didn’t know nor understood what people were vaccinated for because nobody ever explained anything to them.

Keamogetswe Kwere (Photo 7.4) who was also a child growing up in the park at the time,
recalled how Xuku also became important in the relationship between the BaYei and the Bugakhwe.

BaYei followed my uncle [Kwere] because they could get game meat from him. Their friendship started on this basis. There were things, which Bugakhwe were getting from BaYei and vice versa. For instance, my uncle got bullets [mosidi] from BaYei for his matseapane rifle [muzzle loader].

Keamogetswe Kwere’s older sister Lesie (Photo 7.4) who was also an eyewitness of the movement of the people out of the park in the early 1960s reminisces about how her uncle Kwere continued to receive people from all over the region:

BaTswana and white people who often visited Xuku for hunting liked my uncle, because he was a good marksman. He had a rifle, which he bought from the mines in Johannesburg. Before owning his he used to shoot for BaTawana whom he accompanied during a hunting expedition. The BaYei people too were attracted to us - they frequently visited Kwere at Xuku. We supplied them with fresh meat. After the kill, the BaYei would come and eat with us. They would also bring sorghum and give it to friends. This is how our friendship was solidified.

Bayei Dikgosana of Sankuyo recalls their hunting expedition with the Bugakhwe ‘before the inception of wildlife policies’. After a good harvest the BaYei would brew mberere (sorghum alcohol brew) inviting their ‘cousins’ for a beer party and cannabis (motokwane) smoking at Sankuyo. Some key figures from the Yei community came to shoot for meat and trap for skins and according to Lekgoa Mabejane, such men used to travel three days to reach the swamps for hippo hunting for fresh meat. A Yei man balanced in a dugout canoe (mokoro) would harpoon an animal, holding it while his hunting companions attacked the animal with their spears. Moporota (Kigelia Africana, sausage tree) was a favourite wood for mokoro among the Yei, for it was said to be strong, tough and did not split easily. The BaSarwa used its fruit, which contain antibiotic properties, for disorders of the intestinal track, wounds and sores, while its seeds were roasted, pounded and eaten.

The interviews show that not all Bugakhwe families moved into Xuku. Some, like July Mparanyane’s family, remained at other lagoons and pools in the vicinity of the larger lagoon. The river and pools provided them with an assured drinking water supply. They did not have to move for water supplies like many other Sarwa groups. The oral data suggests the importance of various named pools and the movement of people between them. In such favourable conditions, the Bugakhwe at Xuku had ‘reasonably sized’ gardens with sorghum, millet, watermelons, maize, beans and pumpkin as their main crops. They took advantage of the moisture to plough along the banks of the river and the pool.

In the oral interviews, the movement of people within the Xuku/‘old Khwai’ area is linked with water, the river, lagoons and pools. What the community of Khwai refers to as ‘the river’ is Khwai River (Map 7.3 and Photo 7.5), which is a tributary of the Okavango. This is the tributary, which today forms the border between Moremi Game Reserve and the
current Khwai settlement. The three lodges in the Khwai area (NG/19) are strategically located along the Khwai River. In the late afternoon various species of game come to drink from the river and provide spectacular scenery for the enjoyment of tourists.

During the 1940s and 1950s, more Bugakhwe arrived from the Gudikwa-Gabamkuni area, while at the same time the existing community split into smaller sections, settling around different pools in the ‘old Khwai’ area. According to those in the older families, the new Bugakhwe arrivals were mainly attracted to Khwai by the employment opportunities offered by the booming tourism business in the area and the market available for traditional baskets and other curios between the 1960s and 1990s.

6. BaSarwa Perceptions and Memories of the Foundation of Moremi

The Bugakhwe of Khwai played a role in the establishment of the Moremi Game Reserve, but have yet to be given recognition for this. Their removal from the park was a sacrifice they were persuaded to make in order to secure this area for wildlife, which is today a national asset of Botswana. Although other communities lost some access to wildlife for hunting, there is no doubt that the BaSarwa lost the most in the foundation of the park. This lack of recognition is evident in other areas. Over the years the Department of Wildlife and National Parks have tended to depend on the BaSarwa’s knowledge of animals and employed them temporarily as guides and resource people. This was confirmed in an interview with one of the game guards based at the wildlife camp of northern Moremi gate: ‘When our new recruits come out of a theoretical training in Maun, they are brought in to areas such as Khwai, and Bugakhwe are temporarily employed to teach them animal habits, various kinds of game, how different animals behave, and how to protect oneself against dangerous animals like buffalo, lions’. Interestingly, after acquiring such knowledge officials tend to ignore their ‘teachers’, the BaSarwa. Another example is the herbarium collection of the late Pete Smith, who acknowledged his debt to Kwere. The Smith Herbarium already mentioned in the biographical note was donated in his name to the University of Botswana for a research institute in Maun, but there is no collection in the name of Kwere.

The details of BaSarwa involvement as guides and assistants to some of those involved in establishing the park has been illustrated in earlier chapters. While there are some written records on these issues, there are few which directly comment on Kwere’s motivation or debates within the BaSarwa community about the park. My interview research with the Bugakhwe of Khwai throws some light on this but there are competing versions and different emphases in BaSarwa memory. It is difficult to separate present politics and attitudes about the park from memories of BaSarwa migration and their exclusion from the park.

What does seem clear is that Kwere was central to these events. Through his interactions with outsiders, he was regarded as the intermediary. Because of the authority he had achieved, legitimised by the wider power structures under which the BaSarwa lived, his people chose to follow him. Thus he came to be regarded as a chief. Negotiations over removal from the reserve were done through Kwere. From Xuku the Bugakhwe were transported by the Selby’s vehicle to the Segagame pool site and a year after the creation of the park they
were moved for a second time when the boundaries of the reserve were extended. This time they were asked to cross the Khwai River (Map 7.3 and Photo 7.5), which now forms the boundary line between the reserve and the village. In the process they lost access to all the resources within the reserve. I met Kwere in June 1997, but he was already gravely ill, so I could not conduct a formal interview with him.

However, he also expressed the common frustration at seeing foreign tourists ‘enjoying the fruits of our land’, while ‘we sit on the fence [the Khwai River] watching the tourists on the other side’ (Photo 7.5).

The primary concern of the Delta BaSarwa who I interviewed is the way that the park and the burgeoning tourism industry has restricted their traditional access to the land and its resources. They lament the loss of an area that has become a lucrative resource for the government of Botswana, not only from tourist fees from the game reserve, but also from tourism-related activities in the wildlife areas around the reserve. The BaSarwa feel they have been discriminated against, especially in access to land, which has since been leased to the white operators, generating a large amount of money for the government. Ironically, participation in the cash economy stimulated by tourism has not been difficult for many of the BaSarwa in the region. They have been able to earn money and goods by working in the many lodges in the region. Young BaSarwa who find their way through formal education are not usually attracted to the city lights but prefer instead to look for jobs that are related to wildlife utilisation and the tourism industry. The BaSarwa have engaged in many ways with tourist operators, tourists, and the many local faces of the government (the Wildlife Department, District Council, Rural Development Programme, Land Board, and Botswana Defence Force), and these experiences have influenced their perception of the history of Moremi.

From the interviews conducted among local communities the sequence and details of the steps taken towards the establishment of the Moremi Game Reserve were clear. To the BaSarwa of both Khwai and Mababe, conservation policies brought severe restrictions on access to land and their traditional mode of life. The Khwai community in particular, argues that relocating their families out of Moremi detached them from natural resources. The history of Moremi is thus used for asserting land rights. There is a bond to the land and there is economic value in it. The BaSarwa articulate this history and speak with a gleam of nostalgia in their eyes as they define and seek an economic and social status within the broader Botswana society. Their articulation of history through an ethnic discourse is evidence of a desire to project a specific identity among communities of the Khwai and Mababe villages. This identity is that of ‘BoSarwa’ (being Sarwa).

The Bugakhwe generation which traces their origins to the park area have their own perception about the role of Kwere and Lekgoa in these developments. This is the group who feel that they have been disadvantaged by their movement from the Xuku flood plains to make way for the park. This group argues that the BaTawana decided on their own, in Maun, in the absence of the BaSarwa to create a park. The Tawana Tribal Administration and the Fauna Society’s consultation process in establishing a game park in the Okavango Delta is also questioned in the interviews with some of the Yei elders of Sankuyo. According to Salepito Baphare and Dipuo Moarabe, elders of Sankuyo,
The idea of the game reserve was formulated in the Maun kgotla and we in Sankuyo and the Khwai people were not necessarily part of it. Remember historically, BaTawana administrators have not always looked at the land rights of other people. They had control over this land. Moremi was an area they utilized prior to the creation of the park.

Those who hold this view feel they were not consulted properly, ‘They came here, got some of our elders from Sankuyo to help in demarcation of boundary lines of this park’, pointing in the direction of the Moremi Game Reserve. The creation of the park was viewed by some subject groups as ‘a source of tribute to Kgosi Moremi [Pulane]’; hence groups such as the Bugakhwe of Khwai had to give way to the establishment of a park. The Bugakhwe of Khwai therefore cannot be seen as active participants in the creation of the park. They interpret the foundation of Moremi as enforced alienation from their land and as part of a pattern of displacement and oppression. Among these articulate voices are Joseph Sango, Keamogetswe Kwere and Leslie Kwere, who were young adults at the time their people were moved. The Kwere sisters (Photo 7.4) are heads of households who are noted by many for their active involvement in village affairs and demonstrate a strong sense of BaSarwa social identity.

Leslie Kwere (niece of Kwere) recalled:

While we were here in the bush, in our land, the BaTawana Tribal Authority and Fauna (Ngamiland Fauna Society) came with a decision that they wanted to protect/preserve our wildlife, to create a game reserve. We were told if we do not reserve land to protect wildlife we were likely to face the problem faced by other African countries. A white man, Robert Kay talked about foreign safari companies who caused a lot of game destruction in countries like Kenya, already approaching our country, coming to shoot and make money out of them. The main issue was to conserve wild animals for posterity because masafari [safari companies] threatened their existence. The people who were in the forefront of this proposal were Jack Ramsden, Isaac Tudor, John Benn and the grey haired Montsho Mogalakwe. There was also Gaselemogwe Segadimo, also Tawana. The secretary of the District Commissioner’s office accompanied them. They came to Kwere’s place, Xuku, where there were many animals and introduced the idea of protecting wildlife. They suggested dividing this area into two parts, the western part of Khwai River would be protected for the Xuku wildlife and the other side would be a place where they would create employment for us BaSarwa.

The elders agreed to this proposal since they were enticed by the idea of employment opportunities in the area.

Keamogetswe Kwere (sister of Leslie, see above) gives a similar synopsis:

BaTawana and a white man called Robert Kay, nicknamed Rra tau [father of lions] came to Xuku. They told us their main interest was to protect the wildlife. Kwere’s response was that he does not have the powers to guarantee his wishes because the land belonged to chiefs Moremi and Mathiba - that he was only a guard or a caretaker. He would therefore refer them back to the Regent, to place their request. So Isaac Tudor, Jack Ramsden, Peter Smith,
Gas Segadimo and Robert went back to report to Pulane Moremi. The delegation later came back to brief Kwere about what had been discussed in Maun. So Kwere showed them the land and asked them to choose. They told him they would like to start with where he was, Xuku. In this case, the emphasis is less on employment, and more on Kwere’s acknowledgement of BaTawana political authority. He had acquired his position and authority through service and playing a cautious role in respect to the authorities. Keamogetse directly interpreted events in this light in regard to the second move: ‘...still Kwere did not resist the Fauna Conservation Society. We agreed to move not because we were happy to move but were rather scared of the law. Kwere thought the law [molao] had decided and therefore we couldn’t disagree with them. We lacked knowledge that we could refuse as we do at the moment’. At that stage, the BaSarwa were isolated from outside assistance.

It is clear from the accounts given above that there were two main visits made by the executive of the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland and representatives of Tawana tribal authority at the beginning, mainly to explain to Kwere the idea of the creation of a park. This is confirmed in an interview with Pete Smith, one of the members of the delegation, which later conveyed their discussion with Kwere at the Maun kgotla meeting. The members of the Fauna Society on one hand and the BaSarwa on the other hand had a different way of understanding the consultation process. Tudor insists they ‘did not force BaSarwa of Khwai out of the park area’ but at the same time confirms that the first time they talked to Kwere ‘at the fire place in Xuku, presenting our proposal, he was suspicious for fear that they were going to lose their rights. But they agreed to move, however reluctant they were, they appreciated the importance of setting land aside as game breeding ground’. Segadimo affirms that, ‘At first, Kwere wanted to be given a chance to think. In the end he agreed to move’. Those who are critical of the discussions held between Kwere and the members of the Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland and the representative of Tawana tribal administration maintain that:

Kwere was not aware that Fauna Society meant that he would later have to leave Xuku. He understood them as saying, they conserve the area so that no hunting is done within the Xuku area, but would be done outside the area. He did not know that it meant he should move completely out of the area, otherwise he would not have allowed the project to take off. He was not aware that he was being evacuated from the area completely.

The emphasis in this version is that Kwere misunderstood the implications of the proposals. On a similar note another informant argues that he doesn’t think that “they even had a long conversation or clear negotiations. The Tawana Tribal Authority was there at the time of introducing the idea of the Game Reserve to the BaSarwa. We were not really following the proposal but only to understand later on. We were moved to Segagama on Selby’s truck to give way for the creation of the park”. Harry Selby at the time was the owner of the former Khwai River Lodge (Map 7.3), now called Game Trackers under different management.
In an interview with Selby, he confirmed that his vehicle was used to transport the Kwere’s people from Xuku to Segagame\(^87\).

Kemaogetswe Kwere thought that it was more than a misunderstanding: ‘My uncle was cheated by Fauna Society. No one could read and write at that time amongst Bugakhwe. If Kwere was literate, he could have written down our agreement and this could have been a testimony [bosupi] for our young generation’\(^88\).

Then there was the direct threat of force. Joseph Sango affirms that Kwere was further warned ‘If he dares cross the river to the park side, they would come back to move him again’\(^89\). They also raise the issue of having not been compensated for their huts which were set on fire prior to their movement from Xuku. This is viewed by some members of the community as a ‘forced removal’. To those who do not appreciate the BaSarwa modes of shelter, the BaSarwa did not have proper houses but beehive shelters, which therefore could be moved easily\(^90\).

Lesie spoke of the second move in this context:

When they came to us for the second time they told us that they were going to move us again. We had spent a year at Segagama. On the second year they told us to move out of the place because they had expanded the park to where we were. We were told to cross the river and that this river would be a boundary (molelwane) between the people and the park. We moved again carrying our belongings, this time not transported by Selby. When we settled here in new Khwai, we settled in two separate camps, some came here (Kwere’s ward) and some like families of Lekgoa and Amos were there beyond Khwai No. 2 along the road to the Game Trackers lodge. It was only later that the two merged to form the current Khwai village\(^91\).

The Fauna Conservation Society assured the Bugakhwe that they would not be moved again in the future. However, when the management of the Game Reserve was transferred to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in 1979, the government considered relocating them completely away from the wildlife area. The choice was between moving to Mababe or Sankuyo (Map 7.2). This they adamantly refused to do on the grounds that the area of ‘Khwai’ was ‘their’ territory. This seems to be the reason why the government was for a very long time reluctant to gazette the village, despite the local authority having recognised the kgotla and the village development committee within NG/19 where the village is currently located. At the time of my fieldwork, part of NG/19 was leased by the government to three lodges as a photographic safari area, and this partly explains the problem of gazetting Khwai. This means that the village could not officially be provided with government facilities, such as water reticulation, schools and clinics, through the Remote Area Dweller Programme\(^92\). Khwai village was gazetted in 2003.

Joseph Sango remembered that as soon as the park was established there was law enforcement:
1964 brought changes and problems started; they took all our rights over wildlife. In 1969, during Seretse Khama’s government, we were told we can only have access to wildlife through paper (special game license), this paper gave 10 kudu, 10 duiker, 10 wild pig, 10 impala, etc. for a whole year of subsistence. We were also told not to use traps or wire but could use *digwele* [ropes] or rifles for hunting. We were told some hunting methods subjected animals to pain. Then the 1970s we saw Ramsden, the Game Warden, paying visits to our homestead, pretending to be our friend while he was assessing poaching. This led to more changes after his report that BaSarwa were finishing wild animals. The use of ropes for hunting was forbidden. Ready-made laws were imposed on us.93.

Following the creation of the Moremi, he, and other young BaSarwa men, left the area to seek employment in Francistown and elsewhere. He remembers the events of the 1960s and 1970s as part of a continuous process of exclusion. ‘The animals now belong to the government, the trees, and all the land. We have to get paper to cut a tree down, and these things burden us’.94.

They have since developed new survival strategies in order to be able to stay on in this area. Aside from limited job opportunities within the tourist industry, the people of Khwai were selling thatching grass to the lodges as well as selling baskets and other curios to tourists. Towards the end of the 1990s, Community Based Natural Resource Management opened up a major new strategy to improve their livelihoods.95. The Khwai community has since started their own wildlife based project in NG/18, an area that falls within the Bugakhwe mapping of ‘old Khwai’. Their hunting and photographic safari camp is situated within the riverine area of Khwai. The potential of this development, to some degree recognizing them as custodians of land and natural resources, is significant to the BaSarwa. NG/20, which also used to be part of ‘old Khwai’ has also been leased for private safari hunting. When CBNRM was introduced, Special Game Licences for the BaSarwa were replaced by the quota system which entitles communities found in the wildlife management areas like Sankuyo, Mababe and Khwai to manage and utilise wildlife for their benefit.96.

Mention has been made of the pattern of migration from the Gudikwa-Gabamkuni region to ‘old Khwai’. This pattern is more or less reflected in that of settlement in Khwai village. When the Bugakhwe families moved from the park area, they did not crowd together as a big group but maintained a rather traditional life style in separate bands. The earliest families to arrive see themselves as ‘owners’ of the territory and live in the central parts of what is loosely referred to as Khwai I, that is, west of the main road passing through the village of Khwai (to the Chobe National Park). The Kwere Seriri family are probably the most prominent of this group. To the east of the main road is Khwai II and includes the Amos and Sango extended families. While I and II are related to each other and have a common history, those that live in Khwai III, west of the village, between Khwai I and the Tsaro Game Lodge area (Map 7.3), are mainly the later arrivals. I discovered throughout my interviews that some of the ‘new arrivals’ came to Khwai (NG 19) from Gudigwa and the Caprivi Strip (Namibia) in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. This was also confirmed in an interview with Patrick Mosweu, the Gudigwa VDC Chairman, who, like many of the Gudigwa people, frequently visited Khwai.97.
The members of Khwai III are often singled out as ‘visitors’ or ‘outsiders’ irrespective of their Bugakhwe ethnicity, partly because they came from Gudigwa, and even the Caprivi Strip, long after the establishment of ‘new Khwai’. Interviews were also conducted among the newcomers to corroborate information provided by the veterans of Khwai\(^{98}\). At the time of the interview, Sabadimo, who was of Yei ethnic origin, was working as a cleaning lady for Bird Safaris and Banda, who married a Yei woman, settled in the Khwai at the time when the Khwai River Lodge was built in the early 1960s. He was originally from Angola and was attracted to Khwai by the offer of a job of thatching the roofs of the lodges. They were attracted by employment opportunities with safari companies and the market for baskets. The members of Khwai III have little representation on either the Village Development Committee or the Khwai Community Development Trust.

The other small group of people who arrived recently to settle in Khwai are of Yei origin, and are also attracted by employment and business opportunities. Some of them, who came from the villages of Sankuyo and Shorobe, have set up small kiosks in Khwai. This factor helps to explain the way in which various members of the Khwai community perceive their history. The original Bugakhwe migrants, who were pressing for their rights when I interviewed them, were also resisting the incorporation of new immigrant groups that might achieve entitlement to the resources or become a threat to the demographic carrying capacity of the territory.

The earliest families perceive the history of Khwai as more or less a continuation of the history of their original homeland and emphasize the migration-settlement story and their ‘leadership’ role in it. Among them were a number of individuals (at the time of our fieldwork) who considered themselves ‘enlightened’ by virtue of having travelled and worked for varying lengths of time outside the ‘old Khwai’ territory. As a group they are shrewd and vociferous, and articulate a perception of local history that may be said to have a political function in so far as it enables them to portray ‘old Khwai’ as the only homeland the community ever had and the only territory the Bugakhwe have ever ‘owned’. Their children are the most educated in the area and form part of the emerging elite of Khwai. Divisions seem to have become more pronounced with the inflow of money from tourist-related activities. This is further demonstrated by the exclusive deed of trust Khwai produced when organizing itself into a ‘Sarwa only’ Community Based Organisation (CBO) in 1998. Khwai had a long battle with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks during the course of the 1990s. Although the people of Khwai were among the first of the Okavango villages encouraged by government to participate in the CBNRM programme for both safari hunting and photographic tourism, their wildlife-based enterprise only started operating in 2000. Their request for the land lease of NG 18 from Tawana Land Board and wildlife quota and photographic rights from the DWNP Parks was granted only after the deed was revised in line with the government’s wish for inclusion of other groups\(^{99}\). The Tawana Tribal land administration and government would not allow a deed of trust that excluded non-BaSarwa households residing in Khwai. The government officials affirmed that under the Botswana Constitution, ‘everybody is Motswana [a citizen of Botswana]’ and therefore, ‘all communities, found in the adjacent areas of a park were entitled to become members of a CBO’ to enable households to derive benefits from a wildlife-based enterprise\(^{100}\). The
Khwai community was allowed to enter into a joint agreement with the safari companies only after amending their constitution. The community of Khwai formed a local institution: the Khwai Development Trust (KDT) to enable them to benefit wildlife resources through consumptive and non-consumptive tourism in NG18/19. Since its establishment, KDT has carried out several projects to promote the livelihood of Khwai residents, including campsites, cultural heritage centre and houses built for pensioners.

Such a portrayal of the history, while it clearly includes strong memories of the period up to the 1960s, appears to have been crafted partly to counteract the view articulated by some of the players in the conservationist, tourist and wildlife industries, to the effect that the Bugakhwe as a group came to the area only recently, attracted by the opportunities that the industry offered. While some have come to the village since the early 1960s, these families also had more distant roots in ‘old Khwai’, and they are not the majority.

In broad terms, wildlife and tourism interests tend to portray this part of the Okavango Delta as relatively unoccupied wilderness area where ‘Nature’ rules supreme. This strategy is economically important, since it denies the legitimacy of any claim to ancestral rights made by the BaSarwa. Although the local non-BaSarwa communities are more ready to recognise the primacy of BaSarwa settlements in the area and may even acknowledge the social and economic ties in the past, control of access to the land has become increasingly important to them. For them, the issue of the ‘permanency’ of settlement rather than the antiquity of occupation has assumed greater rhetorical significance. Once again, the BaSarwa are disadvantaged in this debate since they are perceived as having been naturally nomadic and so could be said to have never really settled anywhere.

Clearly, the role of history in the present has social and ideological significance within the area. Different communities have different perceptions of the past, and for economic reasons as much as any other, are more likely to favour certain interpretations of historical events over others. In short ‘the past’ is very much a contested issue for the diverse set of people who live in the Okavango Delta and utilise its resources.

The BaSarwa themselves do not necessarily see their history in a unified way. A significant number of people with the label Sarwa live in Maun, and some have either assimilated or live under the label Tawana or Yei which disguises their origins. The Bugakwe themselves still extend to the Gudikwa settlements, beyond Mohembo and into the Caprivi Strip. The Tse’xa are centred at Mababe. Although a large concentration of ||Anekhwe descendants are now no longer traceable in the swamp area, some villages in the region seem to have some pockets of ||Anekhwe residents. All of these groups, particularly the ||Anekhwe, have intermarried extensively with the BaYei, and so often do not physiologically have the stereotypical BaSarwa look.

The unique historical experience of being BaSarwa in this region undoubtedly contributes to the complex issues surrounding the establishment of the game reserve. The BaSarwa communities of Khwai and Mababe and their BaYei neighbours at Sankuyo are located some 40–50 kms from one another. Khwai and Mababe are in this sense distinctive communities with separate settlements, whose members are quite politicized, and who strongly identify as BaSarwa. Gudikwa is a more recent village created under the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP), and does not seem to have the same level of
Chapter 7
The Basarwa of the Okavango Delta and the Park

politicization. Although Bugakhwe and Tsi’xa are related San languages and as kin groups share a culture history, it is clear that the people of Khwai and Mababe see their identity differently, as is evidenced by the difference in their dialects. Both communities, who relied on hunting and gathering strategies of food procurement in the past, are now sedentary as a result of the establishment of northern parks. There is no doubt that they have been displaced from what they regard as vital resources. Those who are demanding collective ownership rights in Moremi, argue that since the introduction of controlled hunting areas and wildlife management areas they have become a dependent society. The question of BaSarwa dependence on government handouts has been used elsewhere, for example in the case of the Central Kalahari, as an argument against granting them land rights.

However, some non-BaSarwa groups living and operating in the region are also influenced by information and presentations they encounter outside the park and the immediate surroundings. Tourists, safari-operators, people now settling in Maun, and other groups in Botswana all receive information and impressions of the BaSarwa and of the history of the region and the country as a whole via numerous channels. The tourist brochures produced by safari companies operating in the Moremi/Okavango area present general and sometimes stereotypical information about the history of settlement in the area under study, which often result in negative perceptions. According to Alec Campbell, some safari operators have a history of not treating their BaSarwa casual labour well because they wanted to exclude people from the land. The BaSarwa were outlawed because of their social status and their small population depriving them of the possibility of access to land.

7. Summary

The effects of wildlife conservation measures on the local BaSarwa people are fairly clear and, as a community living adjacent to a controlled hunting area, the BaSarwa of Khwai seem to be quite knowledgeable about the current boundaries of the Controlled Hunting Areas within the Okavango. The locations of previous settlements and foraging areas, however, are remembered by people within these communities, and particularly by the older generation.

With the creation of the Moremi Game Reserve in the 1960s, the small community of Khwai was moved twice so that it would be outside the park boundaries, and access to areas of accustomed use was limited. Through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s three safari lodges were also established in the area outside the park owing to a growing interest in Botswana’s wildlife and tourism. This caused great resentment, especially when the government attempted to move the Khwai community from its current settlement to relocate it either in Mababe or in Sankuyo village. Several reasons have been advanced by officials since independence as to why the resettlement of the Khwai community was necessary. First, they noted that the move would help ensure the conservation of the resource base, mainly wildlife, in the reserve; second, the move was supposed to enhance the tourism potential of the region and create jobs for the rural communities.

Over a relatively short period of time people have reconstructed their identity as ‘Bo-Sarwa’ that is closely tied to the Moremi Game Reserve, in response to changes within
their local environment, such as changing policies governing access to land, wildlife resources
and government-aided resources. The Bugakhwe of Khwai stay just outside the reserve in
view of the northern gate as a way of politicising the settlement and making a highly
contentious point about what they consider today as their ‘forced removal’. There is an
emphasis on having a connection to Kwere and the park. This is important since the
Bugakhwe social and spatial relations within the park landscape have been historically tied
to Kwere’s leadership and a knowledge of the Khwai environs.

During the creation of the game reserve, an influential class of BaTawana saw to the
continuance of their own influence and respectability. The park creators did benefit from
San local knowledge, but took insufficient account of their views when the relocation
exercise took place. When the Botswana government took over the management of Moremi
in 1979 they continued this dominance over the Moremi landscape and the BaSarwa and
further denounced the BaSarwa’s customary rights in the area. The oral accounts demonstrate
that promises were undermined by a failure to recognize the position of the Khwai community
in relation to the park. The community’s sense of threat is equally a desire for a better
quality of life and greater control of their destiny within the wildlife management areas.
They have used their history of displacement and resettlement to acquire a voice for their
rights.

Access to land by the BaSarwa (among others) in eastern Ngamiland has largely been
restricted through the creation of government-controlled game reserves as well as wildlife
management areas and this makes the current move to community-controlled hunting areas
(CCHAs)—as well as how these are received and used by the BaSarwa—also significant.
The government, through Botswana’s Community-based Natural Resource Management
Policy, is to allow communities control over wildlife and other natural resources. While
several non-BaSarwa communities have collaborated with the government and tourism
operators in the setting-up of CCHAs in the mid–1990s, the two established BaSarwa
villages in the area, Khwai and Mababe, for a while resisted this policy, indicating a profound
distrust of the government. The government-sponsored Joint Venture Agreement (JVA)
model encouraged communities such as the BaYei of Sankuyo to sub-lease their hunting
area (NG 32) and sell their hunting quota to a commercial safari operator. The BaSarwa
feared that this government JVA model would not allow them greater autonomy and control
over productive use of their natural resources. But the Botswana government was not willing
to encourage a different community wildlife based model.

The case of Khwai has shown that community experiences, perceptions and desires
need to be understood better in order to design more appropriate institutional support for
alternative joint venture options. To them the government model was not likely to give
them greater control of their destiny. They opted for a model that would protect their interests
as well as enable them to voice their concerns and aspirations. The history of BaSarwa in
the Okavango has shown that community-based wildlife management in the Okavango Delta
needs to be analysed and understood within the broader political, ecological and economic
trends affecting Botswana as a whole. A whole range of issues including global economics,
competing land use strategies, tenure regimes, village institutions and settlement patterns,
the role of donor agencies and the economic and political transformation of Botswana
society since independence, all impact the prospects for community based wildlife management. The relocation exercise of indigenous communities outside park areas has been critiqued at international non-governmental and academic meetings for having been done without adequate consultation. The ‘development’ model of BaSarwa remains contentious within the Botswana polity.

Notes

1) A version of this chapter was published 2004. The Impact of Game Reserve Policy on the River Basarwa/Bushman of Botswana. Social Policy and Administration 38 (4): 399–417. Another publication was devoted to the voices of the Khwai women and their perspective on land rights and access within the protected areas. See M.M. Bolaane, 2003. The Keamogetswe and Leslie Kwere of Khwai Community Wildlife-Based Project, ‘We Will Be Leasing for Ourselves’. In Margaret Daymond et al. (eds.) Women Writing Africa: Southern Africa. pp.484–488. New York. Feminist Press.


6) See Maps: GOB. Okavango Delta and Moremi Game Reserve. See also. Roodt, *Shell Map of Moremi Game Reserve*.


14) Ngamiland/North West District has been divided geographically into Controlled Hunting Areas. NG refers to Ngamiland. See *Land Use and Development Plan: Kwando and Okavango Wildlife Management Areas*.

15) T.J. Larson, 1965. The Political Structure of the N’gamiland Mbukushu under the Rule of the
Tawana *Anthropos* 60: 164–176.


17) H.J. Heinz, Territoriality and the BaSarwa.


19) Khwai male group interview, 4 June 1998.

20) Although in the interviews elders use the spelling Gabamukuni, official records on the other hand, tend to use Kabamukuni, the Setswana corrupted spelling, but in this work I will maintain the ‘people’’s spelling.

21) Interview with Lesie Kwere, 18 September 1997 and Joseph Sango, 21 September 1997. See also T. Tlou’s chapter on ‘Clientship and Botlhanka’, In *History of Ngamiland*.

22) Interview with Isaac Tudor in Maun, 12 February 1997.


28) In many ways, the description of the Okavango Delta by the Khwai elders correlates with the descriptions in the tourist literature that has already been cited in this book.


30) Keamogetswe Kwere, 3 July 1997 and 12 June 2001.


32) Interview with Amos Xako, 11 June 2001.

33) Thoromo Motlhala, born 1942, Khwai, 20 June 1998. At the time of field work, Thoromo was a member of the Khwai Development Trust.


35) Amos Xako gives names of wildlife in both Tswana and Bugakhwe languages. A giraffe is *thuthwa* in Tswana and *njabe* in Bugakhwe. Lion is *tau* in Tswana and *qaam* in Bugakhwe. Bugakhwe names for hyena (*uha*), wild dogs (*hauba*), buffalo (*xao*) and hare (*uwa*) are also given.

36) From the group interview in Khwai elders, 24 September 1999.

37) Interview with Diamond, Ikaegeng, Khwai Village Development Committee (VDC) member.


41) Leslie Kwere and Motsewabalo Kwere (Kwere Seriri’s wife), Khwai, 3 July 1997. See also Kelatlhilwe Kebualemang, Mababe, 3 July 1997. The rivers and certain peripheral areas of the delta are said to have been well stocked with fish.


44) Kelatlhilwe Kebualemang, 3 July 1997. See also the female Bugakhwe group interview at the Shokomoka cattle post (at the Ngamiland buffalo fence), 4 July 1997.

45) Interview with H.J. Heinz, 81 years old, 12 December 1997, Maun.

46) The concession adjacent to the Khwai Community area (NG/18 and 19). Ngamiland/ North West District has been divided geographically into Controlled Hunting Areas. NG stands for Ngamiland, for example, NG/18, which is today designated as a community controlled hunting area for Khwai.

47) Several photos were taken of the Khwai people cutting an elephant carcass at NG 20.


49) According to T. Tlou, *A History of Ngamiland*. 3, the aquatic grassland which covers the delta area itself abounds with edible plants chiefly papyrus, water lilies and date palm called *koma*, *tswi* and *tsita* respectively by the local people.

50) Interview with Amos Xako, 27 June 1998. The BaYeI also exchanged tobacco and grains for game meat with the BaSarwa of Mababe: see Kelatlhilwe Kebualemang, 3 July 1997.


53) Leslie Kwere, Khwai, 3 July 1997.
54) These two sites are now commonly known as Four Rivers and are located outside the game reserve.
57) A.C. Campbell. Traditional Utilization of the Okavango Delta: 163. For a detailed discussion of tsetse flies and their habits, see Chapter 2.
59) For examples, see the interviews with Tudor and Nkwane, Maun 26 February 1998.
60) Interview with Smith, 30 June 1998 (see Chapter 4).
62) Khwai interviews: Leslie and Keamogetswe Kwere, 3 July 1997 and 4 July 1997.
64) Joseph Sango was born around the 1940s. His father Sango (an uncle of Kwere and Amos) and Diamonds’ father died when the Bugakhwe had gone to seek refugee in Sankuyo from their old settlements. His male generation has either worked for the safari business people or at some stage in their life employed by the Greeks and Jews who formed the Ngamiland Traders group to herd cattle from Ngamiland to the north at Kazungula (Chobe) for the market in Northern Rhodesia and the Congo.
65) Joseph Sango, Khwai, 24 June 1997. The Mababe interviews also confirm that BaSarwa children used to be encouraged to run away and hide whenever they spotted strange faces in their home area.
66) Interview with Keamogetse Kwere, Khwai, 4 July 1997.
67) Leslie Kwere remembers that she was born at Khweega, beyond Xuku and that she was born a day before Diamond Ikaegeng (also known as Dice). See Dice Ikaegeng in Photo 7.5.
68) The issue of intertribal links between the BaSarwa and Bayei and cousinship also comes up in the Sankuyo interviews, for example, Bayei Dikgosana, 20 June 1997.
70) This was echoed by many of the Khwai informants in 1997 and 2001.
72) See also interviews with Joseph Diketo, Moremi Game Guard, 20 June 1998; T. Thakadu, Senior Wildlife Officer, Maun, 22 June 1997 and Richard Bell, at the time a SADC consultant in community wildlife management and utilization, interviewed at his office in Maun, 27 August 2001. Bell is late. See also Chapter 3, for interviews with Maun whites associated with the

73) Smith had an interest in exploring the Okavango Delta channels studying plants as is demonstrated by his collection.


75) Kwere died in November 1997.

76) See for example, interview with Joseph Sango, 29 June 1998.


80) Interviewed in Khwai, 3 July 1997. At the time of my field work Lesie and Keamogetswe Kwere and Joseph Sango were the key elderly members of the Khwai Community Development Trust; this is a body charged with implementation of the policy on community based natural resource management. The committee also consisted of other vocal young people who were in their mid-twenties, such as Merafhe Amos, Keraetswe Brown and KB Kwere. Some of the informants are late. The young generation was as vocal as the elders on issues of wildlife and land resources. Merafhe Amos is now the chief of Khwai.

81) Interviewed in Khwai. 4 July 1997.

82) For further conceptualization of molao, see M. Taylor, 2000.

83) Interview with Smith, 11 December 1997.

84) Interview with Tudor, 26 February/1998.


86) Keamogetswe, Lesie and other women were once employed at the Khwai River lodge in the early 1960s to do hand laundry; and Keamogetswe, like many other women in the Khwai environs acquired a new middle name, Lucy. This is the time when Amos Xako was also employed for manual work at the lodge.


90) Such sentiments were echoed by those involved in the creation of the park, see for example interview with Tudor and Nkwane, 26 February 1998. See photo of ‘BaSarwa homes in flames’ in Kay, The Thirteenth Moon 128. According to June Kay’s understanding of the burning of BaSarwa’s homes, this was a sign of the BaSarwa willing to give way to the park.

91) Lesie Kwere, 4 July 1997.


95) During my 2001 field work I visited the Khwai CBNRM project at NG 18 and conducted some interviews there.

96) Joseph Sango, Mababe, 25 June 1997 and 12 June 2001. I have interviewed Joseph and other
elders at different places, including Maun.

99) For a detailed study: see M.M. Bolaane. Fear of the Marginalized ‘Minorities’: the Khwai San Community Determining Their Boundary in the Okavango, Botswana through a Deed of Trust. In A. Barnard and J. Kenrick (eds.) Africa’s Indigenous Peoples: 78–96.
100) Interview with T. Thakadu, Game Warden (Northern Parks), Gaborone, 2 September 2001 and M. Ntigana, Wildlife Administrative Officer, Maun, 25 February 1998. Thakadu is now an academic at ORI.
102) This section has benefitted from Mbaïwa. Wildlife Resource Utilisation at Moremi Game Reserve and Khwai Community Area in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. 144–156. Further on Khwai Development Trust, see also field notes by my research assistant, Molemogi Makgoba, September 2010.
104) Interview with Tumelo Sejwara 27 February 1998.
105) Interview with Campbell 3 September 2001.
106) See 1998, National Development Plan 8 for the implementation of this policy.
Map 7.1 Khwai environs and the Moremi Game Reserve (with extensions). Source: M. Taylor, 2000
Map 7.2 The Moremi Game Reserve Area: Khwai (NG19), Mababe (NG 41) and Sankuyo (NG 34). Source: M.M. Bolaane, 2001
Map 7.3 Khwai and neighbouring safari lodges (NG/19). Source: M. Taylor, 2000
Photo 7.1  Khwai wooden bridge (the border between Moremi and Khwai village): Source: P. Lane, 1997

Photo 7.2  Khwai village along the River Khwai. Source: P. Lane, 1997
Photo 7.3  Moremi northern gate. Source: P. Lane, 1997

Photo 7.4  Khwai women (first and second from the left: Kwere sisters) in a meeting with government officials. Source: M. Taylor, 2000
Chapter 7
The Basarwa of the Okavango Delta and the Park

Photo 7.5  Khwai resident (Diamond) fishing in the Khwai River. Source: P. Lane, 1997
Conclusion

As I have illustrated in the introduction chapter, much of the literature on the history of game reserves and national parks suggests that they were the creation of colonial officials or settler elites in Africa. In consequence, indigenous resources were often formally made state property and managed by wildlife and forestry departments. Clearly the history of the Moremi Game Reserve differs from that of other game parks as has been demonstrated throughout this book.

I have tried to show how my case study is different and how local people promoted a conservation project through the founding of a fauna society and finally a game reserve. The history of Moremi demonstrates the participation of the African people in the broader environmental agenda. In the case of Moremi, Africans were not only consulted but also incorporated into developments. Local people were not alienated from the management of natural resources. Instead Tawana royalty and notables asserted control of the Okavango Delta landscape partly as a way of ensuring that the resources were not taken or destroyed by others. Not all local communities, however, gained equal access or benefit and the BaSarwa of Khwai, in particular were displaced. However, most of the regional interests represented at the Maun kgotla were in favour of the creation of a park.

This book is a history of a significant park in Botswana, Moremi, and gives a detailed account of the intricate process of the creation of the game reserve by Africans. The Ngamiland Fauna Preservation Society was founded in November 1962 with the principle objective of getting the BaTawana to set aside part of the Okavango Swamp as a sanctuary for wild animals. The idea for creating a game reserve in Ngamiland came from Robert and June and Kay and their immediate supporters. However, there was already a long history of protecting some wildlife in the area so once the ideas were presented to a few key BaTawana individuals such as Tudor, Mogalakwe, Ramsden, Dithapo and Pulane, they supported the idea of conservation and helped re-formulate it to suit the local context. Prior to the creation of Moremi there was tremendous amount of discussion and networking in order to lobby the kgotla. This objective was achieved within the first five months of the Society’s existence, with the support of the Regent, when in March 1963 the people of Ngamiland sitting in a full kgotla agreed to establish some 700 square miles of the land between the Khwai and Mogohelo Rivers as the Moremi Game Reserve. The idea of the park was realised by the local people: they planted the seed, and nurtured it.

Both the Kays and the local people recognised the threat of extermination of wildlife populations by unrestricted hunting parties, especially those coming from South Africa. Local people were persuaded to set part of their tribal land aside as a no-shooting area and key people who wielded great influence among BaTawana became champions for the park. The arrival of foreign hunting safari firms made the local community fear that Okavango would be thrown open by the government giving concessions to the hunting safari firms.
The formation of the FCS and the reserve convinced them that their rights would be guaranteed in the long term.

Although the Protectorate Government of Bechuanaland had founded game reserves elsewhere such as at Chobe, FCS efforts met opposition from government, particularly from officials on the ground such as DC Clark. The official plan for Moremi involved tsetse control for the development of the cattle industry, combined with revenue from safari hunting licences and export fees. The government felt that Ngamiland, heavily subsidized, needed revenue and shooting licences were one potential source. East African firms were deeply interested in seeking sporting concessions. There was constant conflict in the Okavango between the priorities for cattle economy and wildlife conservation. The history of tsetse fly control in Ngamiland clearly shows that the colonial administration was faced with the difficult task of deciding which economic sector should be developed.

Various Tawana power brokers increasingly realized that the tsetse stopped them from cattle-ranching and agriculture was not that productive in Ngamiland; the game reserve promised good revenue for the tribal treasuries. It became very clear that Okavango had a range of species found in few other places. The Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society took certain functions of the colonial state at a time when the Bechuanaland administration was operating on a very small scale.

When the kgotla proclaimed the Moremi Game Reserve a sanctuary, it was done with full realization that there was a danger of game in Ngamiland being wiped out, as had happened elsewhere in Africa. Today in many parts of Botswana, where wildlife has clashed with the cattle industry and agricultural pursuits, the wildlife has been destroyed. Moremi was conceptualized as a place where animals could breed and be viewed and then moved into the hunting areas of Ngamiland. To the local people the concept of Moremi was like a farmer and his cattle: the farmer would not want kill them or sell them all, but would only want occasionally to crop them on a sustainable basis.

During the 1950s and 1960s the idea of national parks was beginning to spread all over the sub-Saharan region, but the process by which the FCS and Moremi were founded seems somewhat unusual. In South Africa and Zimbabwe, conservation organizations and reserves were white controlled and largely reflected the prevalent philosophy of exclusion and domination. Black attitudes and interests were ignored altogether in the creation of national parks. In Ngamiland, however, local people were not excluded from power, authority and influence in decision making and policy formulation.

Although the idea of launching the Society and establishing a Game Reserve met with some success, money was still a problem. June Kay, the secretary, was authorised to negotiate for financial assistance with the WWF and other institutions and individuals within a few weeks of formation of the Society. Neither the Protectorate government nor the tribal treasury provided financial support. Kay made appeals in the South African press and the flow of donations was sufficient to allow for the appointment of the first game guards in May 1963, as well as to set up a camp at the main entrance to the Reserve. In April 1963 the Secretary went to London to appeal for funds. Peter Scott of the WWF was able to help organise a press conference to launch a special ‘Okavango Appeal’ in London and Letsholathebe Chief Designate spoke about the local community wildlife project. This appeal resulted in donations
of just over £1,000 for the campaign. As soon as the park became a reality, the Okavango began to attract the support of English-speaking South Africans from privileged backgrounds who were critical of the indiscriminate killing of wildlife. It is interesting to note that this seems to have been largely a network of women. Some revenue began to come from these Friends as well as visitors.

The links with the WWF seemed very promising but the FCS had great difficulty in meeting the WWF’s financial requirements in order to receive the monies earmarked for use in the Moremi. There were conflicts over the position of the Kays and the fact that they were deriving some income by publicizing the reserve. The Society had fallen heavily in debt by the end of 1965. The people of Ngamiland recognised the importance of external funding but at the same time wanted to have the project as their own, as an income generator for the local community. Their opinions were not heard because WWF had its own agenda, a form of intervention. In the mid–1960s it was too early to expect the WWF to trust local management. Perhaps those linked with the WWF were suspicious of the mixed racial composition of the FCS and the prominent role of Africans. They preferred to have their own ‘effective’ management of Moremi and of external funds. The WWF funding was coming through a settler mentality and a white connection, so the relationship broke down. Ironically, however, the difficulty of getting funding undermined the control of tribal authority over the park.

Relationships between the races were difficult in southern Africa in the early 1960s. Ngamiland was unusual in its degree of multi-racial mixing, but even there they could not escape wider attitudes and tensions. June and Robert Kay were able to work with Africans but were not blessed with patience or diplomacy. Botswana was moving towards independence and the Tawana elite were becoming increasingly assertive of their authority. BaTawana society is noteworthy for its ethnic and racial inclusiveness. But the Kays’ links to South Africans did not help sustain their credibility with the local African leaders. The British officials were uneasy both about white outsiders and about the emerging African elite. All of these tensions surfaced on occasion both within the FCS and between it and other parties. In this context, the FCS can be seen, despite the political ramifications and petty trivialities, to have achieved a great deal in difficult circumstances. Despite their marital crisis in the 1960s, June and Robert managed to work together with a wide range of people on what became a personal mission.

On the Tawana side, African rulers to a certain extent showed their symbolic dominance over the environment to assert territorial control. But African people and their white counterparts were moving onto new ground, thinking globally about conservation and acting locally. It is important to stress that the Tawana were guided by a (South African born) woman regent, Pulane Moremi, which was unusual in itself. It required someone with her skills and attitudes to guide the kgotla to a new openness and more inclusive approach to policy making. This was part of the movement towards a more democratic politics in Botswana. A real achievement of the Regent and the FCS was that they were able to get across to the local communities the importance of imposing some rules on themselves in order to conserve wildlife in a way that the colonial government was not doing.

The FCS as a local, community based management group also had a different approach
to wildlife management. Since the time Moremi was established, the policy has always been ‘trying to keep Moremi, as much as possible at least, in its natural state and safeguard the wilderness of the park, as it is much more desirable to the tourists and this makes Botswana different from other African countries’\(^1\). This is an important legacy from Moremi. The ‘tourist product’ in East Africa, particularly Kenya, is high density, with many large hotels, while in Botswana numbers are restricted based on sound value principles that acknowledge the environmental value and vulnerability of the resource base—the Okavango Delta. The principle is pronounced through low volume-high value tourism. According to the former Game Warden, David Peacock, partly as a result of the creation of Moremi, Botswana has been a leader in one approach to international conservation. Certainly the country now attracts important external funding such as the EC-funded programme for Moremi, Nxai Pan\(^2\) and the Makgadikgadi Pans. This has assisted the government in capital investment, infrastructure and is a component in training for expertise in this area\(^3\). In the long term, Moremi may also be considered vital as a sanctuary which will ensure the survival of an amazingly large variety of game animals and plant life.

I have emphasized the exceptionality of the Botswana context: not only had African leaders maintained the rights to use and manage wildlife, but there was also an exceptional degree of cultural exchange between white settlers and the Tawana elite. The book further suggests that there were links between the BaTawana leadership’s impetus towards a conservation policy and the move towards independence. African nationalism is not usually associated with conservationism, although the speeches of Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere in the early 1960s opened the way to such links. The Tawana elite in a remote corner of Botswana were linked to currents of conservationist thought and practice being debated in Arusha, London and elsewhere. They were also linked to nationalist thinking and approaches. Perhaps there are other examples similar to Moremi which have not yet been fully explored in the literature. This apparently exceptional case may inform revisionist histories of wildlife conservation in other contexts.

The Moremi example questions typical assumptions about the power of colonial rulers and international organizations in conservation and shows the potential for the localisation of global conservation policies where the flow of ideas goes as much from periphery to the centre. It is an illuminating case of the contrapuntal dynamics of colonial cultural exchange. The complexities of the interactions between local chiefs, the diverse communities over which they presided, colonial officials, African and white women, international organizations, conservationists and white hunters is particularly significant because it exposes a much more nuanced politics around land issues in southern Africa than is usually considered. Community Based Natural Resource Management is now extensively researched and advocated as an alternative to colonial imposed exclusive wildlife management. This study shows that local involvement preceded the recent global concern about this issue, which might have a longer, if unacknowledged, history. The FCS was not, however, exceptional in excluding occupation of the reserve by people, and in this respect it was the BaSarwa in particular who were displaced to give way to a wildlife conservation project.

The concept of the FCS of Ngamiland did not die in 1979 when the park was handed over to the Botswana Government. Since the 1990s, the people of Ngamiland with the
support of Kgosi Tawana II have organised themselves once again as a non-governmental organisation through the formation of Tshomarelo [safeguard] Okavango Conservation Trust⁴. Isaac Tudor explains that it was ‘to make sure we carry the 1960s ideas forward’. Their hope is that parks such as Moremi can be run by park boards and a local advisory committee with policies that are community driven: ‘indigenous people have to be involved’, says Tudor⁵. The Tshomarelo Okavango Trust, framed on the model of the former Ngamiland Fauna Conservation Society, has used national conservation forums, to advocate that DWNP work with grassroots social organisations. In one instance they cited the failure of those who prepared conservation management plans such as the Kwando and Okavango Land-Use to understand the relationship between the local indigenous people and their environment. The government has also been constantly criticized for the veterinary fences, which were killing the game, particularly giraffe. Tshomarelo Okavango Trust’s objective is broader than environmental conservation: it promotes and markets Botswana culture and traditions with the aim of diversifying tourism largely based on wildlife and wilderness. It seems that unlike in the case of the earlier plans, when the Okavango Management Plan (2008) was being developed there was some recognition of the need to ensure that local Okavango communities contribute as much as possible. Various river-based livelihood activities were identified during the study⁶. However the studies on the Botswana community-based natural resource management programme are still calling for a review of the model to ensure that the philosophy is not a ‘top down’ approach to development. Mbaiwa has argued that foreign safari companies and investors dominate the tourism industry in the Okavango⁷.

Notes

1) E-mail communication with Jan Broekhuis, Assistant Director (Parks), DWNP, Gaborone, 7 July 2003 and 30 July 2000.
2) At independence the old spelling, Nye, was dropped from official records and the extensive grass plain in the Makgadikgadi salt pans region was designated a national park. Nxai lies north of the Maun-Nata main road and adjoins the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park.
4) Unlike the FCS, the Tshomarelo has members from the BaSarwa, e.g. Joseph Sango of Khwai.
6) ODMP: vii, 58