



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

NAMIBIA

CASE STUDY

Wildlife Returns to the Plains

Conservancy brings back wildlife and creates jobs in one of Namibia's poorest areas



Photo: USAID/Brian Jones

King Taapopi of the Uukwaluudhi region spoke at the launch of the Uukwaluudhi Conservancy.

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Challenge

The flat plains and small hills of Uukwaluudhi, one of the poorest areas of Namibia, once supported abundant wildlife. But an increasing population and Namibia's war for independence reduced the country's wildlife to a few springbok antelope, some ostriches and the occasional elephant. King Hosea Taapopi of Uukwaluudhi had long dreamed that wildlife would one day return to his community's land and bring with it economic growth. Under the King's urging, the country passed legislation in 1996 that enabled the people of Uukwaluudhi to form a conservancy to manage wildlife, tourism and hunting. But to create local jobs and other income-generating opportunities, first the wildlife had to come back.

Initiative

In August 2004, USAID used \$120,000 to help launch the Uukwaluudhi Conservancy, supporting the return of wildlife to the plains north of Etosha National Park. The conservancy developed a core protected area where wildlife could be reintroduced, and the Namibian government relocated 400 head of game to the area, including 47 rare black-faced impala and four endangered black rhinoceros.

Results

The conservancy has employed local residents as game guards, who manage the wildlife and maintain the core area in cooperation with federal game rangers. Plans are being developed to create a tourist lodge where visitors can be accommodated close to the conservancy's burgeoning wildlife populations. The lodge will provide increased income in surrounding communities by hiring staff and creating opportunities for local women to sell crafts. With a relatively small investment USAID was able to stimulate the local economy, promote conservation and develop partnerships between the government and local residents. It also created a promising and fertile environment for people to reconnect with their wildlife heritage.