

# Journalism and Wildlife

**The Pandemic Poachers**

**InfoNile Webinar June 24, 2021**

Observations on Opportunity and challenges

**Prosper Laurent Kwigize**

**Journalist**

**InfoNile Fellow**

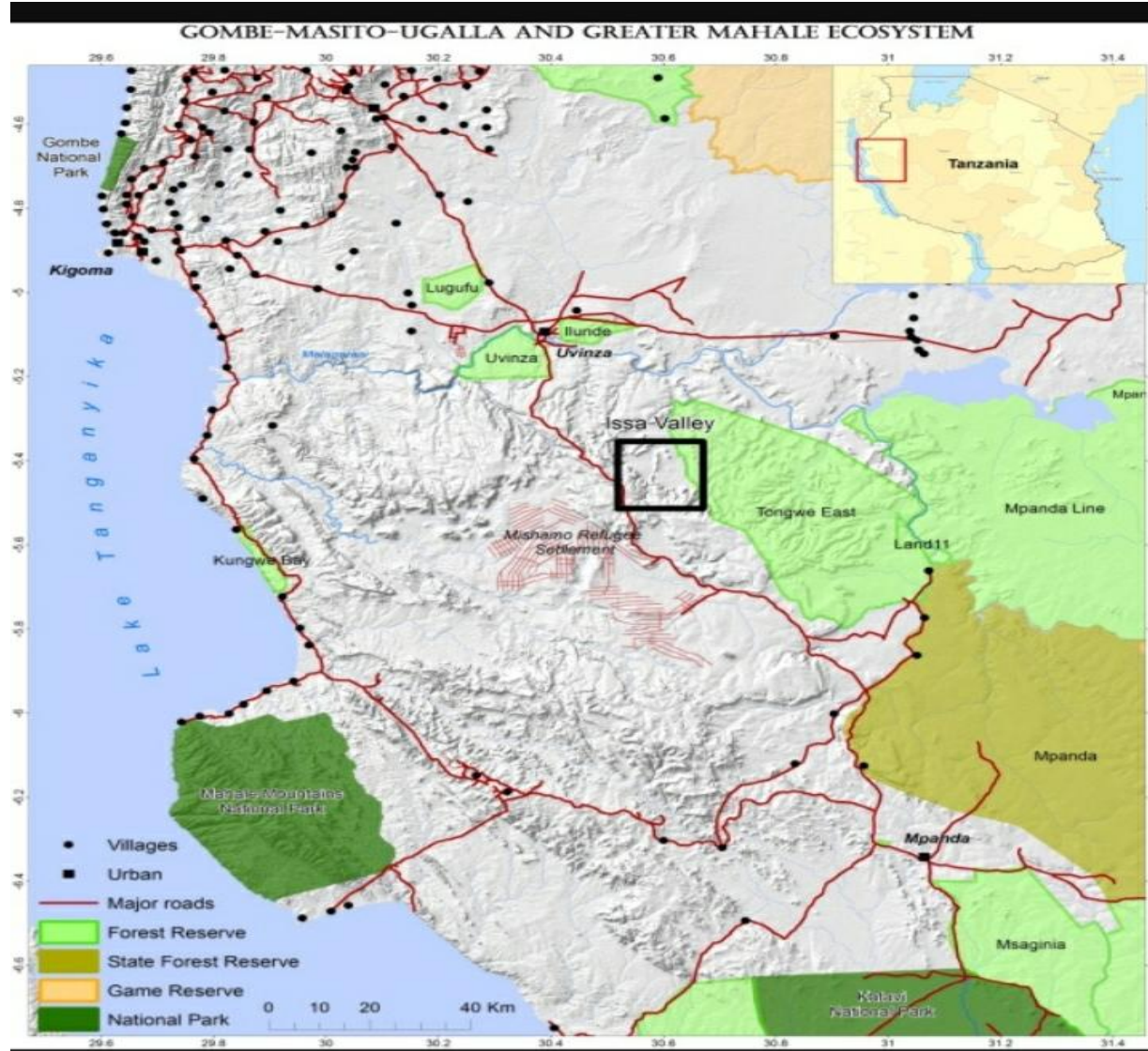
# Introduction

Tanzania is one of the few countries in Africa that has the most resources, especially forests, water and wildlife. The existence of wildlife reserves makes Tanzania a special place for the survival and breeding of animals, however the community's desire to preserve it faces many challenges such as poaching. According to conservation authorities, Tanzania has a total of 16 game reserve and more than 14 national parks with many species of animals that, if not protected, will disappear in the next few years.

<https://www.tawa.go.tz/conservation/protected-areas/game-reserves/>

<https://www.safaribookings.com/tanzania/parks>

# Wildlife Conservation in Western Tanzania



The western and southwestern regions of Tanzania are among the most protected and attractive areas that are nevertheless threatened by extinction due to human activities, poaching and environmental degradation.

The human similar chimpanzees in the Mahale and Gombe reserves in Kigoma make the Lake Tanganyika basin an attraction.

Map source: JGI

# Wildlife Tourism

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the sector contributes 17 per cent of the annual local revenue and 25% of all foreign exchange revenues. The sector, which provides direct employment for more than 600,000 people, generated approximately \$2.4 billion in 2018, government statistics.

# Human understanding and behavior impact



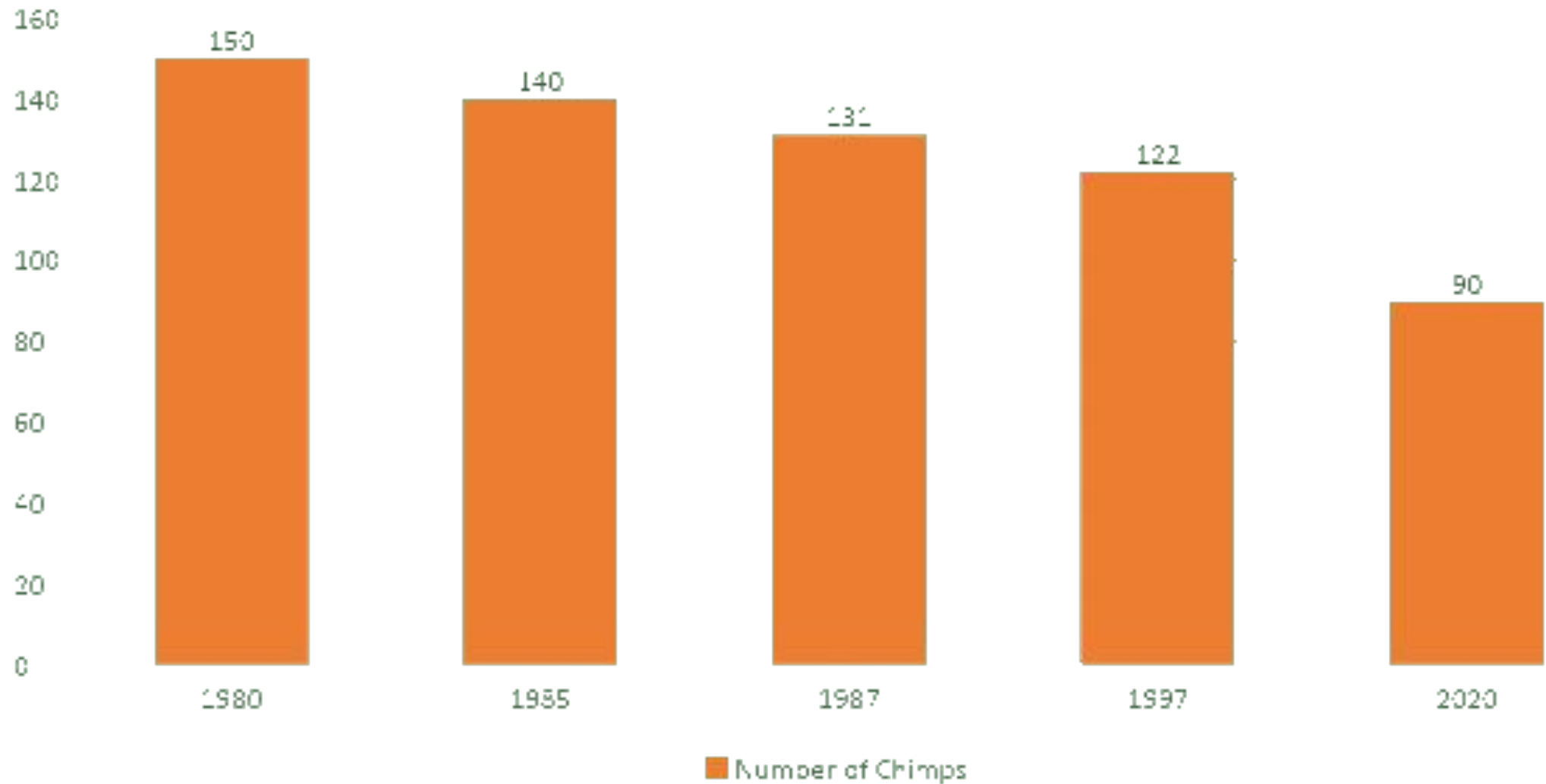
While working between 2017-2020 in, Kigoma, Katavi and Rukwa I have seen a decline in the forest size that preserve wildlife and biodiversity. Unfortunately many media pay less attention to reporting such news that remind our communities of the effects of climate change caused by our own behavior towards nature.

In Gombe National Park the Chimpanzees have declined to an extent that they may become extinct if there is no participatory conservation approach in line with community and animal friendly policies.

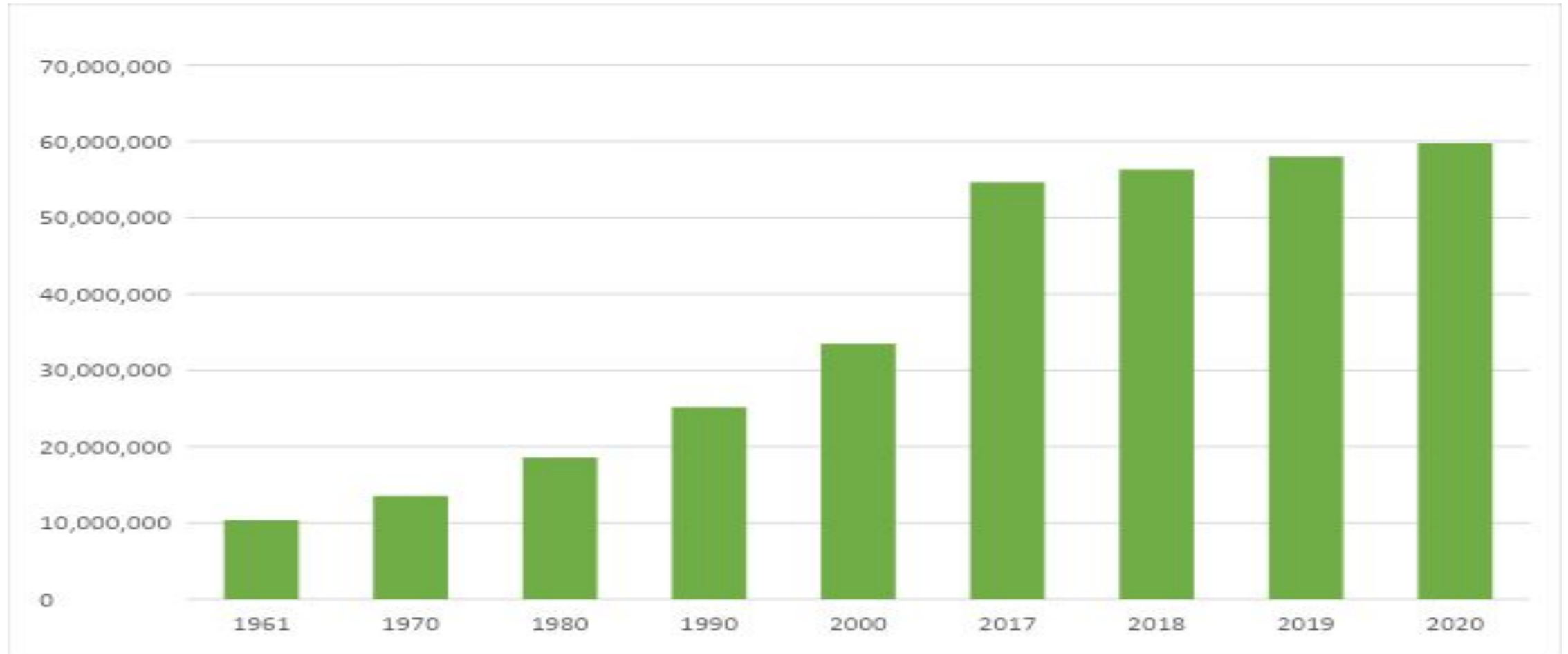
<https://www.infonile.org/en/2021/02/tanzania-famous-chimpanzee-in-danger-of-extinction/>

<https://www.dw.com/sw/hofu-ya-kupotea-kwa-sokwe-mtu-tanzania/av-54974482?maca=sw-Whatsapp-sharing>

# Deforestation and Poaching Impact



# Human population



## Human population .....cont..

While there is a significant increase in population in Tanzania, Kigoma Region is said to have the highest annual birth rate with the highest level of poverty. According to the National Bureau of Statistics Kigoma had a poverty rate of 34.5 in 2017/2018 where the main source of income for the people is nomadic agriculture that require large tracts of land and thus the situation leads to environmental degradation and even invasion of forest reserves such as Moyowosi (Makare, Uvinza, Kifura and Kagerankanda forest area) and Gombe and Mahale wildlife national parks



# Human Habitat and agriculture



The destruction of food chambers and breeding grounds for chimpanzees has been a major factor leading some chimpanzees to move to informal forests where they rush to find shelter and food. While in uncontrolled areas encounters human settlements or farms where they are attacked and possibly killed.

Either, the expansion of settlements and agricultural areas around the reserve is one of the factors affecting indigenous wildlife habitats, inciting poaching that leads to the killing of animals instead of conservation..

***Mkatanga Village in Kigoma, surrounding Lake Tanganyika and at the border of the Gombe National Park in Tanzania***

# Deforestation in Kigoma (western Tanzania)

According to the Global Forest Watch In 2010, Kigoma Region had 2.04Mha of tree cover, extending over 46% of its land area. In 2020 it lost 8.96kha of tree cover, equivalent to 3.26Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>e of emissions. <https://gfw.global/2SLW4IF>,

This is ample evidence that population growth, poor land use management systems, poor education and personal behavior are contributing to the demise of forest reserves which also serve as habitats and food sources for wildlife.

This evidence calls for greater efforts especially for stakeholders and the government to partner with the media to educate the public on the impact.

# Agreed Reality

Environmental degradation caused by human activities is said to be caused by citizens who do not see the value of the existence of forests as well as wildlife. Most of the villagers living surrounding national parks believes that animals cannot be extinct and thus be encouraged to involve in illegal hunting and deforestation.

During my coverage in Katavi and Kigoma, some citizens questioned who benefits from the existence of national parks? who eats wild meat? How is the money from tourists and hunters spent? who plans the use and how do we get it? These arguments are the catalyst for poaching and deforestation.

# COVID 19 Effects

The advent of COVID 19 virus, has also had a significant impact on the conservation, tourism and economic sectors, since April 2020 when the first patient was reported in Tanzania the number of tourists who visited the country had sharply declined by 76-80% from 1.9 million in 2019 to approximately 437,000.

During my coverage I also discovered that, despite COVID causing a decline in tourists and a slowdown in the economy, it also raised fears of the possibility of the virus infecting animals, especially chimpanzees, increased and forced to increase control for the few tourists who could visit Mahale, Gombe and Katavi reserves.

*"Despite the decline of human chimpanzees in the Gombe reserve due to other factors including influenza, the advent of corona has prompted greater caution."* Dr. Athony Collins explained in an interview with InfoNile / DW

# The role of the media in conservation

The media has a huge responsibility to inform the community, educate them and cooperate with the relevant authorities in ensuring the environment is safe and friendly to biodiversity.

However If you look at the many reasons for the persistence of environmental degradation, poaching, deaths and declining wildlife in many parts of Tanzania, you see the weak contribution of the media as well as the journalists themselves. Many private media outlets currently do not set aside time for environmental and wildlife conservation content. This is due to various reasons including the following; -

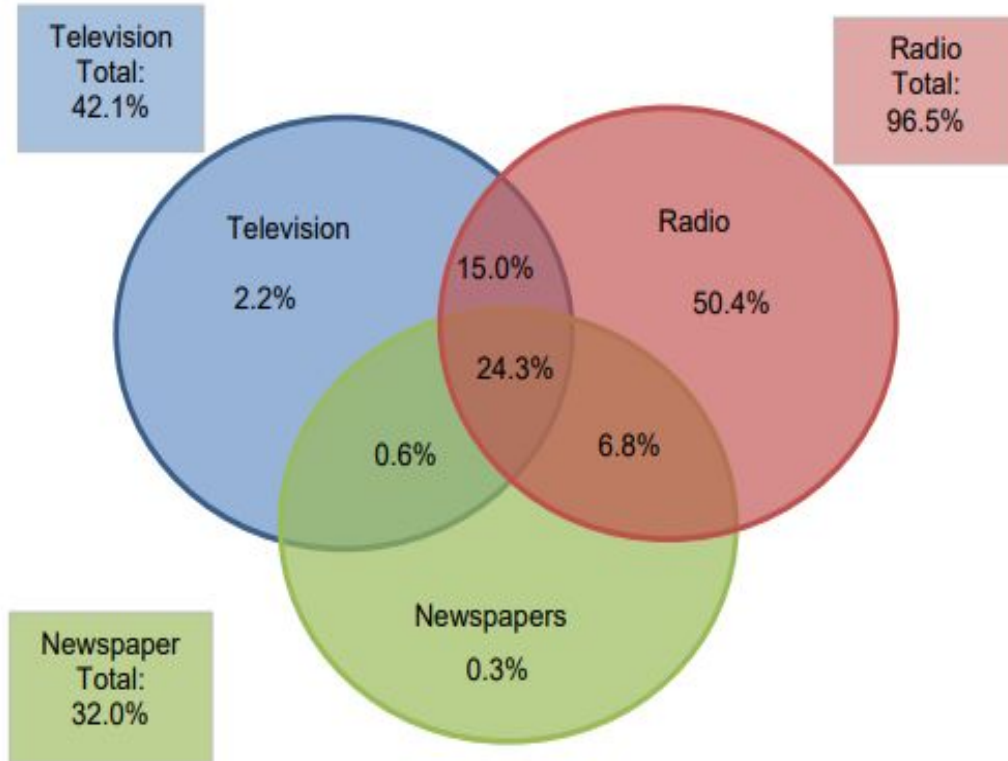
- ❖ Lack of specialization in environmental journalism among the journalists

# Reasons of lack of conservation coverage

- ❖ Media lack of budget for media research and rural coverage
- ❖ Limited knowledge and scarcity of professional equipment, in line with the environment and wildlife not being given priority by journalists
- ❖ Government and its institutions do not provide subsidies and appropriate co-operation to journalists
- ❖ Environmental journalism as part of Investigative Journalism takes a long time especially in data collection
- ❖ Long distances to reach forest reserves and wildlife parks
- ❖ Low wages for journalists, and some not being paid at all by the stations they work for.

# Importance of the Media

Figure 3.1: Overall percentage reach and usage of media types (n=2000)

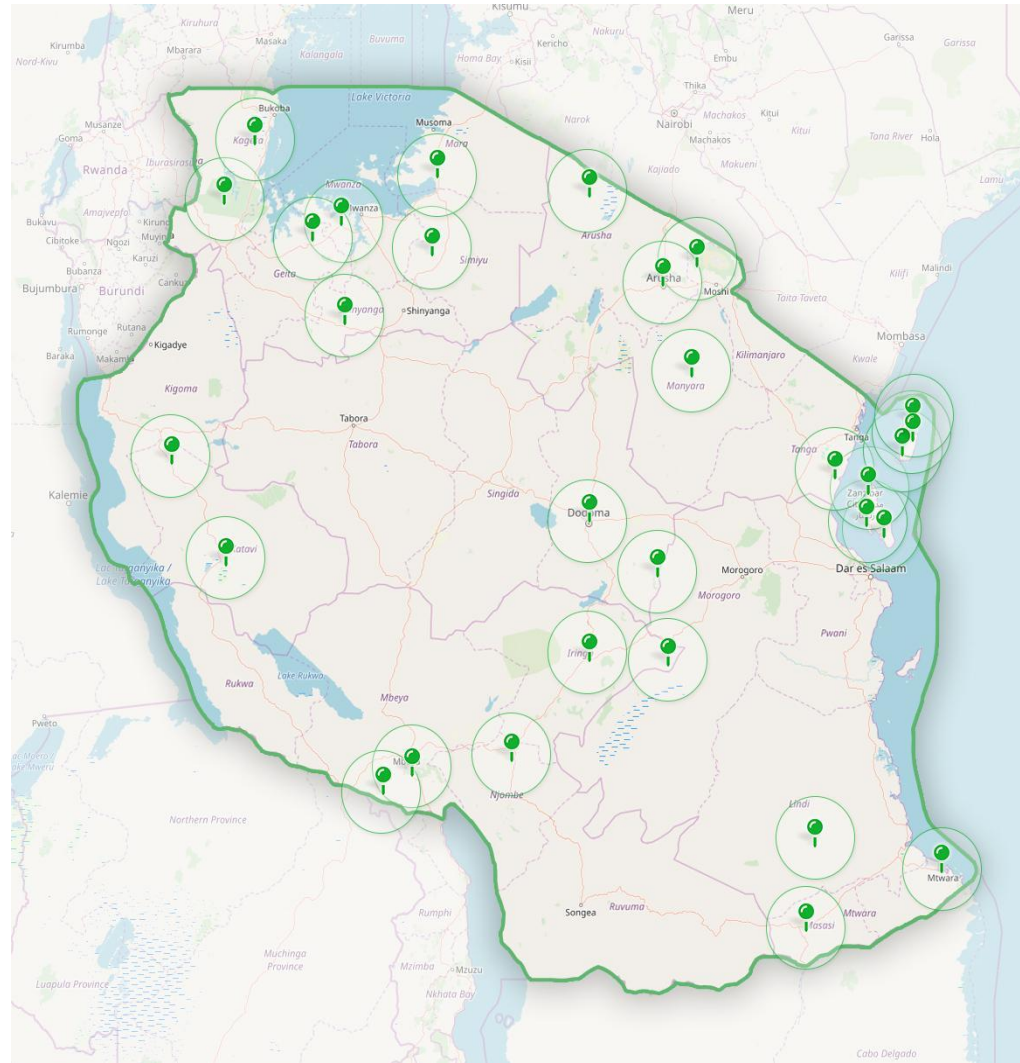


According to a study conducted by the Tanzania media foundation in collaboration with the research institute Ipsos, the media is the right way to reach out to the public and convey the message of change.

The use of radio is the main source, especially in rural areas where forest and wildlife reserves are located.

Therefore, in order to engage the community in conservation, we must use the media, especially radio and the internet through social networks.

# Presence of the Community Radio Network



<https://www.tadio.co.tz>

In the East African region there are many radio stations that are close to the community, they write and broadcast community issues for the community itself, these radios are more reliable than even national and state-owned radio stations. Tanzania is one of the fastest growing countries in the east Africa in local media, we have a strong community Radio network with more than 35 members countrywide, and its radio stations are integrated into a common system that enables the voice of the rural community to be heard.

The community radio is a guarantee that the community will have access to conservation education, sustainable use of land and forests and stimulate a sense of change in behavior.

<https://tadio.co.tz/www/en/>

Also the network has developed an online broadcast room for every radio to air its local content, we wish if researchers, parks authorities, regulators and others can use them to reach to the communities. <https://radio.tadio.co.tz/en/>

**Select station and Listen live**

<https://radio.tadio.co.tz/en/stations/>



# What should Journalist do?

- Plan for environmental content coverage in their newsroom
- Engage local communities in content production instead of relay on expert only
- Use multimedia broadcast
- Engage data journalism
- Include science in story writing
- Use multi format that can influence more readers, viewers and listeners
- Make sure you produce follow up stories on the same topics

# What should stakeholders do?

For environmental institutions, researchers and governments to be successful in protecting and conserving resources (environment and wildlife) there must be direct participation of the community living in the vicinity of national parks, prioritizing public awareness of the importance of such reserves and actively involved in the composition of conservation policies.

It is also important to engage the media by budgeting and financing the monitoring, writing and dissemination of information on the environment and wildlife conservation.

# Recommendations

The forest, wildlife, tourism and research authorities must agree to work with the media so that education and awareness reach the public through the media.

Either, due to the fact that many television and radio television stations do not have a sustainable economy, it is important that these conservation institutions set aside budgets and build the capacity of journalists to monitor, report and publish in-depth information on environmental and wildlife conservation.

# Use Radio to save the environment and wildlife

## Thank you - Asante

**Prosper L. Kwigize**

**InfoNile fellow 2019/2020**

**RNTC and DW Academy Alumni**

**DW Tanzania Correspondent**

**Chairperson of the Tanzania Development Information Organization (TADIO) The Community Radio Network**

**Founder of BUHA FM RADIO in Kigoma (to be on-air soon)**

**+255786200518, [kwigizebaraka@gmail.com](mailto:kwigizebaraka@gmail.com), [www.tadio.co.tz](http://www.tadio.co.tz), [www.buhafmradio.co.tz](http://www.buhafmradio.co.tz)**