



## **CALL FOR PAPERS for a thematic issue on 'Conservation Implications of Social-ecological Change in Africa South of the Equator'**

**Submission deadline 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021**

The southern half of the African continent is home to enormous biological and cultural diversity. Spanning 11.3 million km<sup>2</sup> it is home to nearly half a billion people and dozens of ethnic groups in 20 countries. From the dense tropical forests to the teeming savannas and the arid deserts it faces innumerable ecological and social challenges, yet it boasts immense ecological, human and mineral resources to meet them. Inevitably the capacity to define and pursue sustainable futures varies enormously across these vast and extremely dynamic landscapes, and the external and local-scale forces that drive the processes of change, transition and transformation. The policies and choices made in the past have moulded the land-use patterns and lived realities of today, and the choices made today will shape the legacies inherited by future generations. This is particularly so for the wealth of biological diversity located in wild, protected and also human-dominated landscapes, challenged by local and larger-scale dynamics such as increasing resource demands, land transformation, climate change, cultural and dietary shifts, invasive species and human population growth. Whilst renowned for its wildlife and national parks, conservation visions, policies, strategies and landscapes will need to diversify and localise to meet these challenges, moving into strategies and sites for land-sharing, urban parks, agro-ecosystems and ex-situ conservation. This is the focus of this special issue.

This thematic issue invites ecological, social and inter- and trans-disciplinary researchers and policy analysts in, or working in, Africa south of the equator to submit papers examining one or more dimensions of the thematic issue. The analysis of such change can be at any scale from local to sub-continental, and from genes to populations and landscapes. The conservation implications can cover one or more social and ecological dimensions. Example questions that the theme might consider are provided below, but submissions need not be restricted to these.

### **A. Effective conservation management:**

- How effective is the current conservation estate (public and private) for protecting biodiversity into the future, especially, but not restricted to, in the face of climate change?
- What approaches to landscape planning and management can be developed that will enable optimisation of sustainability of ecosystem services and biodiversity in transformed and production landscapes in a changing world?
- How can fire be managed in a responsive manner in a changing world?
- To what extent are species conservation efforts nullified by the increasing spread of invasive species?
- How can nuanced and responsive approaches be developed to integrated invasive species management in a changing world?
- Under what conditions might land sharing be a better option than land sparing in southern and central African contexts?

### **B. Detecting and understanding change: monitoring, indicators and thresholds:**

- What impacts does global or local change have on ecosystem services and livelihoods highly dependent on biodiversity and what adaptations or mitigations will be required?
- How do attitudes towards conservation of African diversity change with increasing urbanisation and globalisation?
- Are there critical interactions and thresholds for potentially irreversible biodiversity change?
- How can biodiversity conservation be best monitored in variable and changing social-ecological systems?
- How can sustainable guidelines for harvesting or consumptive use of indigenous species be developed?

- What are the implications of growing urbanisation on the demand for culturally important species (much as medicines or bushmeat) and their conservation?

#### **C. Improving governance and action for effective conservation**

- In changing southern and central African contexts and in an environment of limited financial resources, how are ecosystem-based concerns best integrated into environmental decision-making?
- What biodiversity research outputs are required to influence conservation management and decision-making at different scales and across different sectors?
- What role can spiritual or cultural beliefs and practices play in combating biodiversity loss?

#### **D. Making the case that biodiversity supports critical ecosystem services**

- How can conservation of local landraces of indigenous crops be incorporated into modern food systems?
- How does biodiversity contribute to human wellbeing in the region, and how is it changing?
- Is the increasing dominance of western knowledge and culture undermining local ecological knowledge to the detriment of species conservation?

#### **E. Making biodiversity a shared concern**

- How do different worldviews of nature and biodiversity support conservation behaviours?
- Are models of community-based conservation suitably adaptable for the changing dynamics of the region?

**Managing Editors:** Charlie Shackleton (Rhodes University, [c.shackleton@ru.ac.za](mailto:c.shackleton@ru.ac.za)) and Karen Esler (Stellenbosch University, [kje@sun.ac.za](mailto:kje@sun.ac.za))

**Submission Guidelines:** Research Papers (max 6,000 words) and Reports (max 4,000 words) presenting new information are of particular interest, but systematic Subject Reviews (max 8,000 words), and Comments (max 2,000 words) may also be relevant. It is essential to abide by the Instructions for Contributors ([www.cambridge.org/core/journals/environmental-conservation/information/instructions-contributors](http://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/environmental-conservation/information/instructions-contributors)), submit via the web site (<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/envcon>) and indicate a paper is for the 'Conservation Implications of Social-ecological Change in Southern Africa' theme. All papers are subject to rigorous screening and peer-review. Abiding by the schedule of dates below will facilitate access to the thematic issue, otherwise they may be stand-alone papers.

**Important Dates:** manuscript submission deadline 1st May 2021; submission of final revised paper 1st November 2021