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## CASCA Salisbury Award (2018) follow up report

**Introduction**

My Ph.D. project focused on the relationships between communities and conservation areas in the Maasai Steppe, a vast grassland ecosystem in northern Tanzania that supports some of the greatest variety of wildlife in the world. The question that my research sought to address was: what are the most appropriate institutional arrangements for managing a complex and interconnected social-ecological system in a manner that is equitable for people and wildlife? This question was particularly pressing in the face of convergent sociopolitical, economic, and climatic stressors. Rather than simply critiquing conservation on theoretical grounds following literature in political ecology, my research wrestled with the task of identifying management features that showed promise for reducing fragmentation, securing pastoralist livelihoods and tenure, and promoting co-existence between people, livestock, and wildlife.

**Methodology**

With support from a Salisbury Award from the Canadian Anthropology Society, I carried out twelve months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in twelve administrative villages surrounding Manyara Ranch and Randilen Wildlife Management Area, two community-based conservation areas in the Maasai Steppe that protect vital wildlife habit for numerous species. Each was distinct in its legislative and institutional frameworks for governance, and thus provided an opportunity for analytical comparison of the efficacy of each's respective approach to managing rangelands. I carried out a mixed methods assessment of community attitudes towards these conservation areas, local livelihood practices, conservation institutions, and people's perceptions of human-wildlife conflict. This included 240 in-depth qualitative interviews with villagers (120 males and 120 females), 75 key stakeholder interviews, a large-scale quantitative household survey (n=1059), and participant observation of everyday interactions between people and wildlife. Together, these methods contributed to a well-rounded understanding of community-conservation relations in the Maasai Steppe.

**Conclusion**

By using community attitudes and perceptions as a research lens, I was able to identify whether particular governance and management arrangements for conserving rangeland ecosystems were equitable from the perspectives of local communities. Ultimately, my dissertation will reveal whether community-based conservation areas in the Maasai Steppe constitute effective tools for strengthening pastoralist livelihoods and protecting migratory wildlife. It will also highlight the importance of utilizing anthropological methods to understand complex conservation issues at the interface of nature and society.