

CHALLENGES OF FUNDING PROTECTED AREAS: THE CASE OF CROSS RIVER NATIONAL PARK, NIGERIA

NCHOR A. A¹, OGOGO, A. U² & OGAR, T. O³

^{1,2}Research Scholar, Department of Forestry and Wildlife Resources Management, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

³Research Scholar, Department of Geography, College of Education, Akamkpa, Cross River State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The National Park Service of Nigeria presently has seven (7) National Parks established for the purpose of the protection of the country's biodiversity. These include Kainji Lake National Park, Cross River National Park, Chad Basin National Park, Kamuku National Park, Gashaka-Gumti National Park, Old Oyo National Park and Okomu National Park. In spite of the enormous resources in terms of flora and fauna, unique cultural attributes as well as spectacular landscapes, these parks have not been adequately funded. This paper therefore assesses the status of funding in Cross River National Park to meet the enormous challenges of protected area management. Data for the study was obtained through questionnaires as well as park records and past studies and analyzed using descriptive statistics as well as tables and graphs. Inadequate funding was considered as a major management problem in the park during the study. Underfunding of the park also led to the park's inability to conduct critical management activities. Inappropriate staff numbers was also attributed to lack of funds leading directly to the eruption of other management problems, including inadequate field equipments and basic facilities to support park protection programmes. A variety of potential financing mechanisms for protected areas have been identified as measures to address these challenges.

KEYWORDS: National Park, Biodiversity, Funding, Challenges, Protected Area, Critical Management Activities, Financing Mechanisms