

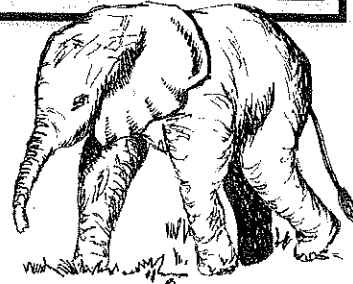
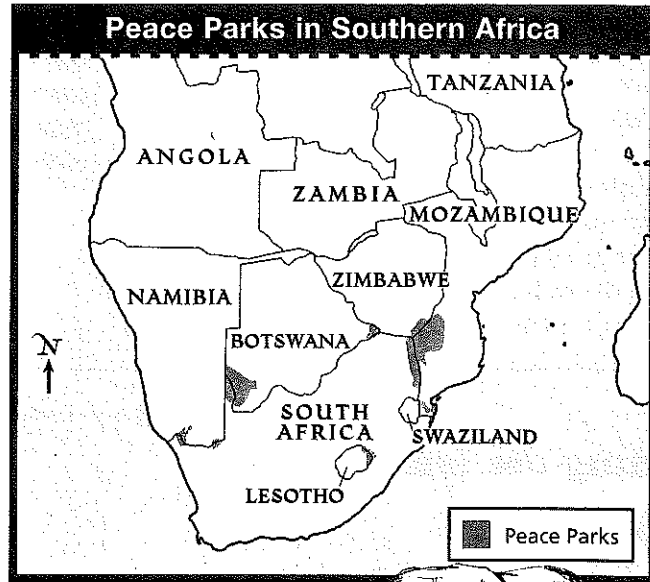
Environmental Issues

Case Studies

Balancing Economic Needs and Conservation: International Peace Parks

Several neighboring southern African countries recently began working together to create and care for immense international wildlife parks. The parks are formed by merging the adjacent national parks of two or more countries. The Kruger/Banhine-Zinave/Gonarezhou park straddles the borders of South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. It encompasses an area larger than Portugal. Because such parks represent peaceful cooperation between neighbors, they are called Peace Parks.

The parks were established, in part, to coordinate efforts to combat poaching, or illegal hunting, of endangered African animals. Hunting and poaching threaten many of Africa's animals with extinction. However, hunting—both legal and illegal—provides income to local residents who have few other economic options. Animal skins, furs, hides, and tusks command high prices in world markets. The establishment of Peace Parks has resulted in conflict between environmentalists, who are working to preserve Africa's wildlife, and local residents, who are trying to earn a living. Disagreement over the new parks is worsened by the fact that rural populations were given no voice in the parks' locations, management, or hunting restrictions.



DIRECTIONS: Read the pro and con arguments below. Then answer the questions under **Examining the Issue**. Use another sheet of paper for your answers if necessary.

PRO

The creation and maintenance of international Peace Parks will help preserve Africa's many endangered animal species—not only rhinoceroses, lions, and elephants, but many smaller and less well-known species as well. These animals must be protected from poachers and other hunters. We should ban all hunting within the parks. When African countries work together to maintain their wildlife parks, policies will be consistent, the parks will prosper, and diverse species will flourish.

"The creation of the KTP [the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, crossing the South Africa/Botswana border] is a triumph for transfrontier conservation. It will undoubtedly encourage tourism development (and thereby job creation in these often impoverished and undeveloped areas), and promote a culture of peace between participating nations."

—Peace Parks Foundation press release
May 12, 2000

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GON

The rural populations that surround the Peace Parks depend on a certain amount of hunting for their livelihood. These indigenous people understandably oppose conservation policies that threaten their incomes. Their survival could depend on hunting animals in the parks. When subsistence farming fails, as it often does in a drought, farmers in a traditional economy have nothing to rely on except hunting. Restrictions on hunting in the parks would hurt the local population and increase a climate of lawlessness in the region

as people break the law in order to survive.

"Africa has paid a heavy price for overlooking the social realities determining the interaction between its people and wildlife. In the process we have turned our own people into dispossessed onlookers to wild resources and eventually trespassers and poachers."

—India Musokotwane, Regional Director, IUCN Regional Office for Southern Africa, in *Sharing the Land: Wildlife, People and Development in Africa*, ed. Kudzai Makombe, 1994

A. Examining the Issue

Recalling Facts

1. What is a Peace Park? _____

2. Why do so many rural Africans disagree with the rules of the wildlife parks?

B. Critical Thinking Skills

3. **Drawing Conclusions** Which argument do you think makes better sense—that of the rural people who live near the parks or that of the conservationists? Explain your answer.

4. **Making Inferences** Why do you think that impoverished rural residents were not consulted by their governments and conservationists when wildlife parks were being planned and established?

C. After watching the film *Madagascar II*, compare what you know about Africa to what is shown in the film. Identify three similarities and three differences between the film and Africa in real life. In other words, what did the film get right and wrong about Africa?