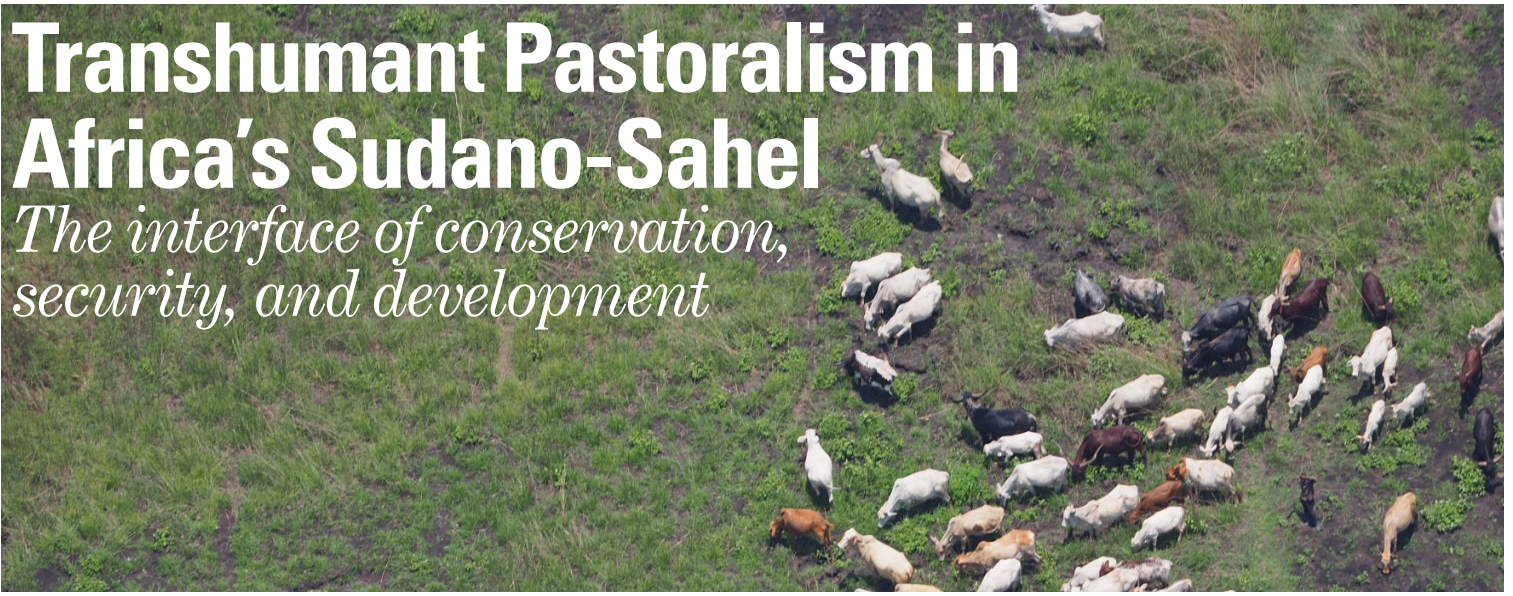


Transhumant Pastoralism in Africa's Sudano-Sahel

The interface of conservation, security, and development



Mbororo pastoralists illegally grazing cattle in Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Credit: Naftali Honig/African Parks

Africa's Sudano-Sahel is a distinct bioclimatic and ecological zone made up of savanna and savanna-forest transition habitat that covers approximately 7.7 million square kilometers of the continent. Rich in species diversity, the Sudano-Sahel region represents one of the last remaining intact wilderness areas in the world, and is a high priority for wildlife conservation. It is home to an array of antelope species such as giant eland and greater kudu, in addition to African wild dog, Kordofan giraffe, African elephant, African lion, leopard, and giant pangolin.

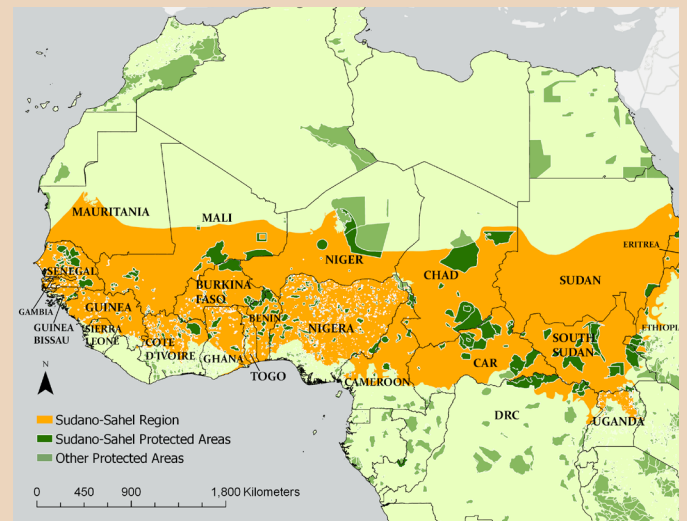
This region is also home to many rural communities who rely on the landscape's natural resources, including pastoralists, whose livelihoods and cultural identity are centered around strategic mobility to access seasonally available grazing resources and water. Instability, climate change, and increasing pressures from unsustainable land use activities pose growing threats to the resilience of the Sudano-Sahel's iconic wildlife and rural people.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has supported projects in the Sudano-Sahel region since 1990. In recent years, the long-distance seasonal movement of livestock, also known as transhumance, has posed a growing challenge to protected area management, with a rising number of pastoralists and their herds illegally entering protected areas in search of resources and/or refuge from armed conflict. Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo, or DRC) and Chinko Protected Area (Central African Republic, or CAR) are two examples of protected areas where iconic wildlife populations have been decimated by insecurity and poaching and now face increasing threats from transhumance.

Transhumant pastoralism across national borders occurs within a landscape of escalating violent conflict, and has local and global implications for both human and environmental security.

Program Priorities

- Increased data gathering and assessment of core natural resource assets across the Sudano-Sahel region.
- Efficient data-sharing, analysis, and dissemination between relevant stakeholders spanning conservation, security, and development sectors, and in collaboration with rural agriculturalists and pastoralists.
- Enhancement and promotion of multi-level governance approaches to resolve conflict and stabilize transhumance corridors.
- Continuation and expansion of strategic investments in the network of priority protected areas and their buffer zones across the Sudano-Sahel, in order to improve security for both wildlife and surrounding communities.



Africa's Sudano-Sahel region.
Credit: Matthew Luizza/USFWS



Mbororo pastoralist, DRC.
Credit: Naftali Honig/African Parks



Mbororo pastoralists sharing lunch, CAR.
Credit: Kasper Agger/Creative Commons



Elephants in Pendjari National Park, Benin.
Credit: Matthew Luizza/USFWS

Strategic Objectives

The USFWS supports initiatives that address emerging regional conservation challenges associated with transboundary cattle movements in Africa's Sudano-Sahel (i.e., transnational transhumance), leading to the following desired results:

- Improved understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of transhumant pastoralism on wildlife and people in and around high-value conservation areas.
- Improved understanding of transhumant pastoralist seasonal movements, demographics, drivers, and economics.
- Promotion of effective and sustainable governance strategies that improve security for humans and wildlife and the compatibility between transhumant herding, livelihood practices of other local communities, and protected areas.

On-the-Ground Investments

- In partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USFWS supports efforts to understand the threats posed by transhumance to wildlife populations in priority landscapes in Chad's Zakouma National Park and CAR's Manovo-Gounda-St. Floris National Park and Chinko Protected Area. Goals of the project include analysis of transhumance governance structures in southern Chad and CAR in relation to those in West Africa, a Chadian transhumant pastoralism mobility analysis, and geospatial analysis of pastoral resources in both countries.
- In partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society, USFWS supports efforts to improve conservation management and security for people, livestock, and wildlife through engagement on transhumance in four transboundary areas in the Sudano-Sahel, spanning Yankari Game Reserve (Nigeria), Boubia-N'djida and Sena Oura National Parks (Cameroon and Chad), Bamingui-Bangoran and Manovo-Gounda-St. Floris National Parks (CAR), and Southern National Park (South Sudan).
- In partnership with Jerry Kirensky Mbi, USFWS supports efforts to reduce the threats posed by transhumance to wildlife in Kimbi Fungom National Park (Cameroon), by strengthening capacity within the park and through outreach and engagement with pastoralists.
- In partnership with African Parks, USFWS supports the development of a transhumance strategy for protected area management in the Chinko Protected Area (CAR), including recruiting, training, and equipping herder sensitization teams to engage incoming cattle herds identified through aerial surveillance and fire monitoring, and lead them along designated transhumance corridors outside of the core conservation zone.

Key Definitions

Transhumant pastoralism is the regular movement of pastoralists and their livestock between fixed points in order to exploit seasonally available grazing resources.

Transnational transhumance is the same migration process, but across national boundaries and primarily involving cattle, which require greater quality and quantity of forage than other livestock species.



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