

Plural Perspectives in Conservation Conflicts: The Role of Iconic Species

Authors : Jean Hugé, Francisco Benitez-Capistros, Giorgia Camperio-Ciani

Abstract : Addressing conservation conflicts requires the consideration of multiple stakeholders' perspectives and knowledge claims, in order to inform complex and possibly contentious decision-making dilemmas. Hence, a better understanding of why people in particular contexts act in a particular way in a conservation conflict is needed. First, this contribution aims at providing and applying an approach to map and interpret the diversity of subjective viewpoints with regard to iconic species in conservation conflicts. Secondly, this contribution aims to feed the reflection on the possible consequences of the diversity of perspectives for the future management of wildlife (in particular iconic species), based on case studies in Galapagos and Malaysia. The use of the semi-quantitative Q methodology allowed us to identify various perspectives on conservation in different social-ecological contexts. While the presence of iconic species may lead to a more passionate and emotional debate, it may also provide more opportunities for finding common ground and for jointly developing acceptable management solutions that will depolarize emergent, long-lasting or latent conservation conflicts. Based on the research team's experience in the field, and on the integration of ecological and social knowledge, methodological and management recommendations are made with regard to conservation conflicts involving iconic wildlife. The mere presence of iconic wildlife does not guarantee its centrality in conservation conflicts, and comparisons will be drawn between the cases of the giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis spec.*) in Galapagos, Ecuador and the Milky Stork (*Mycteria cinerea*) in western peninsular Malaysia. Acknowledging the diversity of viewpoints, reflecting how different stakeholders see, act and talk about wildlife management, highlights the need to develop pro-active and resilient strategies to deal with these issues.

Keywords : conservation conflicts, Q methodology, Galapagos, Malaysia, giant tortoise, milky stork

Conference Title : ICWMC 2017 : International Conference on Wildlife Management and Conservation

Conference Location : San Francisco, United States

Conference Dates : June 07-08, 2017