

## **Expanding Staff Voice in Protected Area Management Effectiveness Assessments within Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve**

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### **Abstract**

The concept of protected areas (PA) is one of the most widely used policy tools for biodiversity conservation including habitat and wildlife protection. Despite the importance and emphasis placed on protected area management, biodiversity is still in decline and more species are in danger of extinction. Some analyses have indicated that more than 40% of protected areas are poorly managed. To improve management effectiveness, the inclusion of diverse stakeholder information in articulating management strategies has been strongly encouraged; however, stakeholder involvement is often poorly integrated, and an opportunity granted only to select stakeholder groups, with PA staff, especially at lower organizational levels, minimally involved. Further, protected area management effectiveness (PAME) assessments are most frequently used as an aggregated outcome measure of effectiveness but these data should also inform management practice. Thus, for PA managers to obtain a greater understanding of issues impacting their effectiveness, they would benefit from including the voices of staff at all working levels. Therefore, the purpose of this investigation was to survey 135 wardens and rangers at all organizational levels from the two administrative sectors of Maasai Mara National Reserve to determine their perceptions of management effectiveness and to determine if significant differences existed across staff levels and administrative sectors. Significant differences were found to exist across staff levels and administrative authorities supporting the need for expanded staff voice in establishing effective PA management plans.