

## **5. LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS PERTAINING TO RAPTORS CONSERVATION IN KENYA- Gakuya Francis.**

### **Definition and characteristics of raptors**

Raptors are predatory birds (birds of prey) which typically hunt and kill their prey, though a few may occasionally scavenge too. They include eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls. Raptors are equipped with sharp talons (claws) and a hooked beak that assist them in their predatory way of life. Sharp claws assist with the capture and holding of prey, while the beak helps tear flesh and other tissues.

### **Importance of raptors**

- **Aesthetic Values:** Natural beauty and artistic appreciation.
- **Spiritual Values:** A role in human culture.
- **Recreational Values:** Bird watching & falconry.
- **Educational and Scientific Values:** Indicators of environmental change & ecosystem health.
- **Ecological Values:** Regulate prey populations & nutrient cycling.
- **Economic Values:** Tourism revenue & pests control.

### **Safety, conservation and protection laws**

- All birds in Kenya, other than queleas and mouse birds which are regarded as vermins are protected under Wildlife Conservation and Management Act Cap 376.
- Raptors are categorized as protected animals under the Third Schedule of Act
- Raptors are Not Listed as Game Birds in the Second Schedule of the Act. Therefore no license can be issued by KWS to hunt raptors
- In Kenya there is No specific law for Raptors conservation. They are covered under the Wildlife Act together with other avian species.

### **Keeping of raptors in captivity**

- The Wildlife Conservation and Management Act allow the keeping of wild animals in captivity subject to a permit issued by the Kenya Wildlife Service (Section 48 of the Act).
- Keeping Raptors in captivity for whatever reason is subjected to the same regulations.
- Approval to keep raptors in captivity is also subjected to KWS Captive Wildlife Management and Welfare Policy Guidelines
- Other national legislations and internationally accepted best practices in the management of Raptors are also considered during the approval process

- The process of applying to keep Raptors or any other wild animal in captivity is as follows;
  - i. Develop a concept paper, which specifies;
    - The safety, housing and feeding requirements
    - The time/period you want to keep the animals
    - Value to conservation
  - ii. Apply to the Director Kenya Wildlife Service
  - iii. Inspection of facilities by KWS officers
  - iv. Decision – approved or rejected
  - v. Periodic inspections by KWS officers

#### **Research with raptors**

- Any research involving raptors has to be authorized by the Director Kenya Wildlife Service as provided for in the Wildlife Act (Section 3A (g))
- Capture either using physical or chemical methods for treatment, research or otherwise of raptors especially from the wild can only be carried out by KWS veterinary personnel or persons permitted by KWS to do that (*KWS Wildlife Veterinary Practice Guidelines – 2006, KWS Darting and Collaring Guidelines – 2006*)

#### **Conservation challenges**

- Habitat loss
- Diseases such as Aspergillus (*Aspergillus fumigates*), Coccidiosis (*Caryospora spp*), Trichomoniasis (*Trichomonas gallinae*), Helminths (*Capillaria spp*), Clostridial *spp*, Hemoparasites (*Leukocytozoon sp.* and *Hemoproteus*), Newcastle disease – after eating infected birds
- Secondary poisoning by feeding on poisoned animals or birds (occasionally scavage).
- Conflict with humans
- Illegal hunting for food

#### **Recommendations for conservation**

- Need to develop specific laws/policies for raptors conservation and management to address the numerous challenges.
- Conservation education & awareness campaigns required.
- Restrict use of pesticides such as Furadan® and other implicated in carnivorous bird mortalities in Kenya.