

# How to become to become a top wildlife journalist

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# What is the story?

- What is the story? What is the hypothesis? You need to frame the story. Craft catchy headlines.
- The story should answer questions, “So what? What is at stake? Who are the stakeholders? What are the questions to put to the different stakeholders? Is this the first story? Or there is a trend?”
- You need to do research to establish the facts. Written report, interviews with activists. Case studies.

# What is environmental journalism?

- Environmental journalism is about two things- investigation and interpretation.
- What is investigation? It means uncovering, searching and getting details.
- What is interpretation? Simplifying without distorting the meaning. Act as step down transformers. Get complicated concepts like biodiversity, ecological system, sustainable development, green growth and making them simpler.

# Definition (cont)

- Environment management is about power relations. It is about rights and responsibilities.
- Power is derived from culture or the law (Constitution, sectoral laws).
- Culture is what people know best. They do this through a system of rules and laws based on "dos and dont's" They also have elders and cultural leaders who are well respected and enforce the rules- examples-the forest where the tree called damula on Bugala has been protected. Where culture is very strong nature has been conserved and where culture has been eroded nature is being degraded.
- The laws-sectoral laws on forests, wildlife, fisheries, the environment Act and the Constitution-They apply a carrot and stick approach-penalties and incentives.

# Key issues

- Who sits at the round table when decisions are being made? The communities will be affected most in case of degazettement or concessions are granted but they will be engaged.
- The colonial gov'ts created protected areas but ended up creating conflicts. Protected areas-from who and why? They excluded people from protected areas yet you cant conserve without people.
- Protected areas-were they created because of big game? Was it b'se of sleeping sickness? Was it done deliberately to disadvantage Bunyoro? Was it b'se of extractives-oil and other minerals?
- The communities around protected areas are among the poorest in the country-reports. A case poverty amidst plenty.

# Key issues (cont)

- Equitable sharing of benefits from protected areas. The wealth should not fly over the heads of the communities. Share of revenue from national parks. Is it fair to share only gate collections? This should be extended to concessions. NFA does not share revenue from protected areas. We need co-management, conservancies where communities have highest stake.
- Change of land use-degazettment or land grab-The communities are better off with the protected areas even in their current state of economic status. They get rain, water and bees, butterflies that pollinate their crops.

# Key issues

- Where are women in this environment/climate debate? They carry the burden-carry water, firewood, look after the children as men go for one for the road, get other wives.
- Active citizens that are informed will participate in sustainable use of the environment. This will should go hand in hand with strong institutions. The operating environment (policies, laws and practice in terms of respecting the Constitution and the rule of law) should be favourable.
- The doctrine of public trust in the Constitution and laws-it empowers citizens to consent and participate in natural resources management



# Key sources

- Stakeholder analysis
- Duty bearers-Government ministries, authorities (NEMA, NFA, UWA) or agencies, departments-wetlands, climate change Unit, Forest Sector Support dept, directorate of water resources management. Parliament, Prime Ministers office. Local Govt-environment
- International and regional agencies-UNDP, Nile Basin Initiative, Global Water Partnership, IUCN-World Conservation Union, Lake Basin organisations and programmes-LVEMP.

# Key sources

- Beneficiaries and victims
- People around protected areas
- Researchers and academia
- Reports and journals on science
- Past publications in the papers, broadcast
- Social media networks-facebook, twitter
- Talks, debates, symposiums, workshops, field visits
- Other journalists-supervisors, trusted journalists

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# Tips and tools

- Never say never. Do not close doors against an editor who has refused to run your story or who is not seeing sense in your story. Never say never to sources and PROs or managers at institutions you will need them in your journey to the truth.
- Never ignore the small men and women in big offices-cleaners, secretaries, drivers, messengers, photocopiers.

# Tips and tools

- Interact productively, get lessons even when you have no immediate story to turn in.
- Ask questions, double check, think through what you have written, engage your neighbours to read through your intro.
- Engage in networks as a journalist, media associations on environment at national, regional and global level

# Tips and tools

- Read ahead in case of international meetings such as climate change-what are the global issues, regional issues, national issues and get what is new.
- Use case studies to package the stories.
- Be ethical-objective (balance the story), do not pick money from sources and trade in facts.
- Writes chatty stories and also take advantage of the digital revolution-take photographs, videos, documentaries, data journalism, as well as rich text

# Tips and tools

- Take advantage of available funding-Info Nile, ACME grants and IJNET.
- Rome was not build in one day so is an environmental journalist. Take advantage of trainings within media houses, ACME and international arrangements within your country and outside and apply the knowledge.

# Ends

- So little done and much more to do. Thank you