

## **‘Complex Crisis’ and the rise of Collaborative Environmental Governance: Institutional Trajectory of a Wildlife Governance Experience in Ghana**

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How do we explain the phenomenon where most natural resources get depleted and destroyed whilst others have become largely sustained over time? Natural resources governance is underpinned by institutions and structures which evolve “circumstantially” over time in order to remain sustainable. An attempt at understanding the contemporary institutions and governance structure of a resource requires an in-depth ethnographic enquiry. Adapting a four-phase institutional analysis framework, this study discusses the adaptation and evolution of wildlife governance structures and institutions using the unique experience of Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary in Ghana. The study adopted a transdisciplinary research approach which was participatory and consultative with key stakeholders. The key observations are that: wildlife institutions have gone through three main evolutionary phases, a pre-collaborative phase, which was exclusively underpinned by informal institutions [local or indigenous knowledge]; a critical juncture stage [local knowledge and systems proved unsustainable], where contextual challenges led to an adaptive response; the third and contemporary phase is a collaborative governance regime, where the erstwhile informal institutions have been complemented by formal state structures and institutions to synergistically enhance viability of the wildlife species. A major finding is that although monkey species in this study context faced hunting threats in the 1970s, the adaptive response strategies by indigenous people helped revamp or rejuvenate the system which has seen monkeys and their natural habitat [forest] remaining sustainable over time till date which continues to attract tourists from Africa and beyond. In spite of the problems posed to community members by the monkeys (wildlife), the study still observes a cordial human-wildlife relationship which is explained by the robust nature of local people’s approach to sustainable wildlife governance. The study provides four key conclusions which have implications for indigenous knowledge and approaches to sustainable development.