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**The Involvement
of Nomadic and
Transhumant
Pastoralists in the
Rehabilitation and
Management of
the Logone Flood
Plain, North
Cameroon**

**Paul Scholte
Saidou Kari
Mark Moritz**

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**The involvement of nomadic and
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and management of the Logone flood plain,
north Cameroon**

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The Waza-Logone project is executed by the Government of Cameroon and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), in cooperation with the Centre of Environmental Studies of the University of Leiden (CML), the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and WWF-Cameroon, with financial support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and WWF-Netherlands. The views expressed in this paper remain, however, the sole responsibility of the authors.

Paul Scholte^{1,2}, Saidou Kari¹ and Mark Moritz¹

1: Waza-Logone project, P.O. Box 284 Maroua, Cameroon.

2: Centre of Environmental Studies, University of Leiden, The Netherlands

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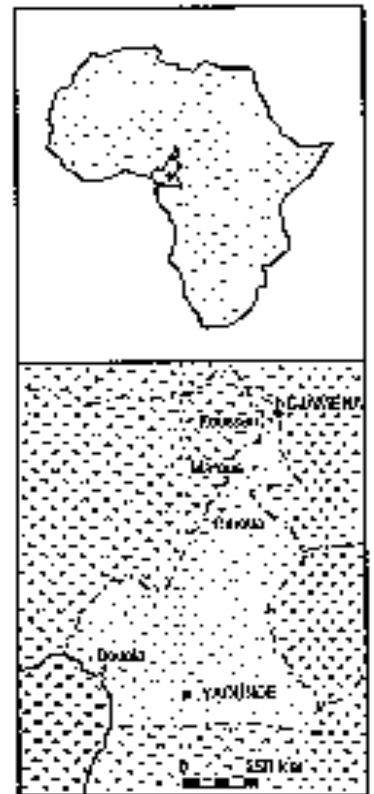
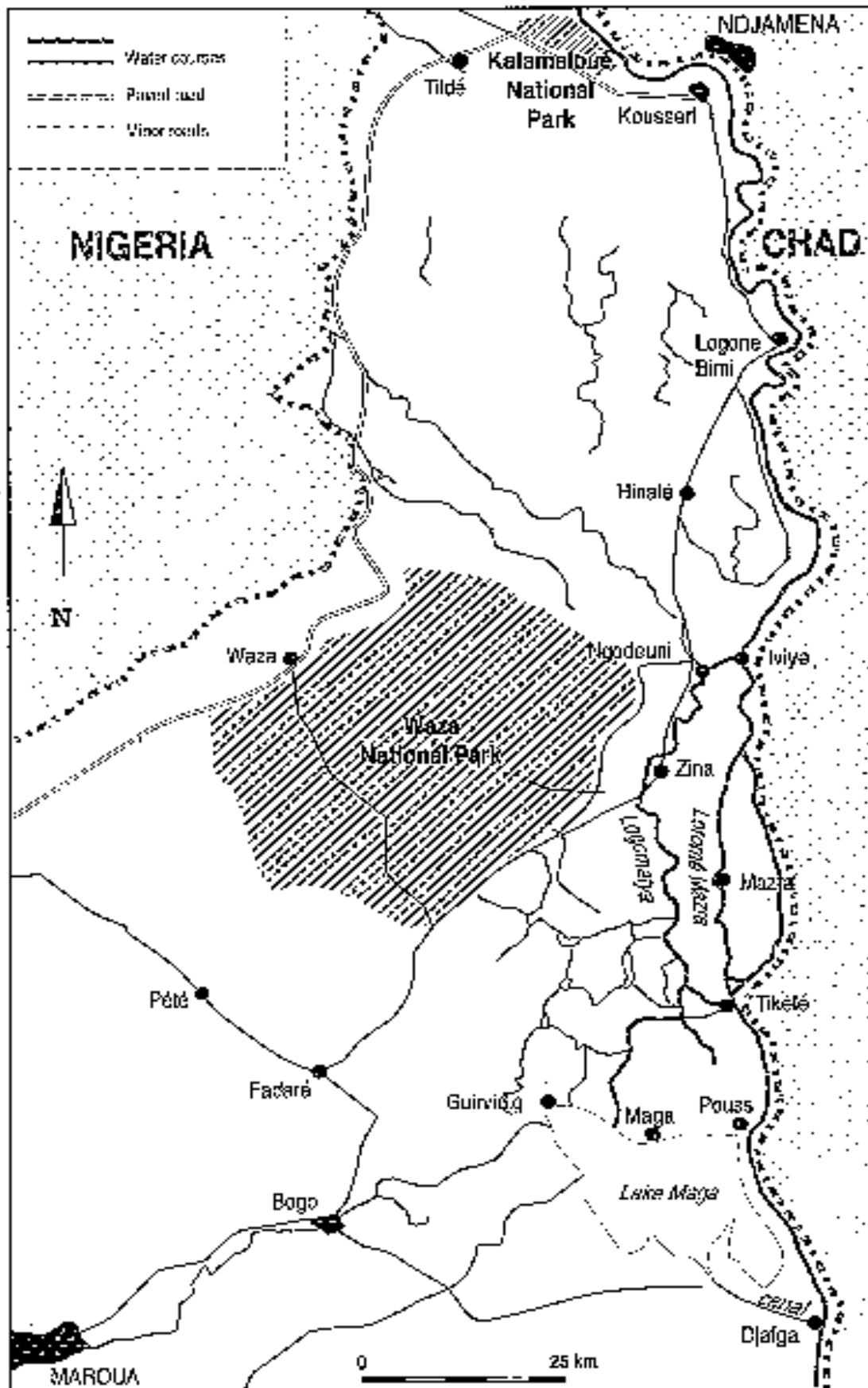
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ABBREVIATIONS:

CML:	Centre of Environmental Studies, University of Leiden, the Netherlands
GIC:	Groupement d'Interêt Commun
IUCN:	World Conservation Union
SEMRY:	Para-statal Rice Project
WL Project/WLP:	Waza-Logone Project
Waza NP:	Waza National Park
WL area:	Waza-Logone area

Map-1: The project area



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We want to thank all pastoralists with whom we have worked the last two years for sharing their experience with us. Our stay in their camps has left its mark and we will always carry this experience with us. Unfortunately the situation at the moment obliges us to keep their names secret. We hope that this work will contribute to improving this situation. We also want to thank all our colleagues and friends for their support, in particular Stephany Kersten for the time she spent commenting on the draft text.

INTRODUCTION

The Waza-Logone project

The Waza-Logone project (WLP) area covers approximately 8000 km² in the Far North Province of Cameroon, between the towns of Pouss and Kousséri (see Map-1). This region includes the floodplain of the Logone river, which is intensively used for fishing and dry season grazing. It comprises two National Parks, Waza and Kalamaloué, which are amongst the most important protected areas in the Sahel. In recent years, however, water flows in the Logone floodplain have been affected by the construction of a dam at Maga and an embankment along the Logone river, as part of the Para-statal irrigated rice scheme, SEMRY II. These structures, in combination with lower than average rainfall, have reduced both the depth and extent of flooding. This has led to serious ecological degradation of the floodplain ecosystem.

The WL project started in 1992 with the objective to plan and implement interventions in the project area to restore the zone's biological diversity, and further the development of the population with the introduction of sustainable systems of resource management (IUCN/CML 1994).

Due to the limited success of irrigated rice cultivation, water has now become available for release from the irrigation basin of Lake Maga and, directly from the Logone river. However, the infrastructural changes necessary to release the water to the flood plain are expected to be expensive (Wesseling *et al.* 1994). A pilot scheme was therefore planned to evaluate the impacts on the ecosystem and the human population. More large-scale changes will be started if results are positive and justify the necessary cost. The former water course, the Petit Goroma, blocked by the embankment along the Logone river (see Map-1), was opened in May 1994. The decision to re-open this water course was reinforced during a meeting where 15 chiefs of the most affected villages were represented as well as a minor fraction of pastoralists¹.

An intensive hydrological monitoring programme has been started in combination with a study of the changing vegetation. Flood plain vegetation changed dramatically in the years after the dam construction from perennials to annuals. The objective of the study was to find out whether the perennial

¹ It should be said that at that particular moment the pastoral programme was only starting up.

vegetation would come back and how soon, or whether the system has been "irreversibly degraded?" (Scholte *et al.* 1995).

The Waza-Logone project conducted a number of rapid rural appraisals (RRAs) in 26 villages (IUCN/CML 1994). These RRAs revealed that changes in the last fifteen years were perceived as being dramatic. Forty percent of the population had left the area, and the remaining population shifted from fisheries and animal husbandry to cultivation. Lack of flooding was seen as the single most important limiting factor. In the area affected by the pilot release, a more intensive appraisal study has been initiated to monitor changes in cultivation, fisheries and animal husbandry.

Project approach towards pastoralists

Although less important than before the construction of the Maga dam, the Logone flood plain, locally called *Yaérés*, is still an important area for pastoralists from Northern Cameroon and neighbouring Chad and Nigeria (Beauvilain 1989). An estimated 100,000 head of cattle exploit the perennial grasslands. At an early stage of the project, the need was felt to develop a flexible approach towards the pastoral population. The often rather negative attitude towards nomadic groups made it difficult to execute the programme in collaboration with government services. The highly suspicious nature of the target groups made a more cautious approach necessary, avoiding directly aimed surveys. Their suspicion is the result of former interventions in the area which have proved to be catastrophic for nomadic groups. First the SEMRY II rice scheme forced two thirds of the population to leave the area for good. Then, the Mindif Moulvoudaye project severely restricted nomadic movements through the creation of grazing blocks in the rainy season, and the expulsion of all nomadic groups from this pasture area, to the benefit of sedentary pastoralists (Berg & van Est 1991).

The pastoral community in the project area

Pastoral groups in the project area differ according to their mobility and the relative importance of agricultural activities. The sedentary agro-pastoralists of the Mousgoum ethnic group have relatively small herds grazing around their villages, and will not be further discussed in this paper. A second group are the

transhumant pastoralists composed of Fulbé² and some Arab Choa³ who visit the floodplain during the dry season, and return to their villages during the rainy season. They originate mainly from the area south of Waza NP (Pété - Fadare, see Map-1), where they cultivate rainfed crops. The majority of animals in this group are the property of absentee owners, who no longer travel with their herds since the 1970's droughts, although close contact between owner and herdsman is maintained. A third group, which we call "nomads"⁴, are the Fulbé⁵ and Arab Choa who visit the floodplain in the dry season, while during the rainy season they move further South. These nomads do not practise cultivation.

INVENTORY OF PASTORAL GROUPS IN THE PROJECT AREA

A data base of all pastoral groups visiting the floodplain was set up and information was collected on group composition, number of households, name of chief, number of herds and migration patterns. We limited ourselves to counting the number of cattle herds which averaged 40-65 animals. We did not ask about the number of animals in any particular herd which was perceived as a highly sensitive subject. In future, however, we will try to estimate the size of sample herds in order to follow fluctuations in herd size. Apart from the sheep herding Peul Oudah, small ruminants constitute less than 10 % of the livestock weight and are of marginal importance for our purpose⁶.

A total of 71 groups were visited. These groups comprised an estimated 410 households and 644 cattle herds (see Table 1). During the rainy season most groups visited the pastures located south of Waza NP (Pété and Fadaré),

² Fulbé is the Cameroonian term of the ethnic group, called Fulani in Anglophone countries and Peul in Francophone countries.

³ Arab Choa is a branch of the Arabophone group, which has its origins further east in the Lake Chad basin.

⁴ Strictly speaking the term "transhumant" would be more appropriate. However we prefer to use the term "nomad" to distinguish the group from the village based pastoralists (called transhumant pastoralists) who have stronger ties with administrative and traditional sedentary leaders.

⁵ This group is often referred to as "Mbororo".

⁶ We do realise that on a household level, small ruminants may play a significant role.

Mindif-Moulvoudaye and Guidiguis (south-east of Maroua) (see Map-1). A limited number of groups spent the rainy season in Nigeria (Table 2).

Table 1. Total number of households and herds per ethnic group counted in the area south of Zina

	<u>Arab Choa</u>	<u>Woila Fulbé</u>	<u>Alijam Fulbé</u>	<u>Addanko Fulbé</u>	<u>Gara'en Fulbé</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Number of households</u>	135	114	89	25	89	410
<u>Number of herds</u>	216	100	43	04	281	644

Table 2. Rainy season destination of nomadic groups visiting the flood plain south of Zina.

	<u>Arab Choa</u>	<u>Woila Fulbé</u>	<u>Alijam Fulbé</u>	<u>Addanko Fulbé</u>	<u>Gara'en Fulbé</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mindif	7	12	4	4	10	37
Pétté	4	3	0	0	18	25
Nigeria	8	0	0	0	0	8

PERCEPTION AND ADAPTATIONS OF PASTORALISTS TO FLOODPLAIN DEGRADATION

The pastoral programme started with an anthropological study of perceptions and adaptations of pastoralists to degradation of the Logone floodplain (Moritz 1994b)⁷. This study revealed that reduced flooding had caused pastoralists severe problems. All informants mentioned a decline in vegetation and decreasing availability and quality of water as direct causes for the deteriorating health of their animals and diminished milk yields. Ecological studies confirmed these observations. Grasses like *Oryza longistaminata*, *Echinochloa stagnina*

⁷ This study can be considered as an update of a similar research carried out in 1985 (Schradler, 1986).

and *Echinochloa pyramidalis* were increasingly replaced by less palatable species such as *Sorghum arundinaceum* (Pamo & Scholte 1995).

The degradation of the floodplain led to an exodus of pastoralists to the North Province of Cameroon, to Nigeria, Chad and the Central African Republic; about three-quarters of the pastoral population left after the construction of the Maga dam⁸. An inventory of migration patterns in four different years revealed much about these adaptations to ecological change⁹. Each of the years selected (1978, 1985, 1988 and 1994) is representative of a particular ecological or climatic condition. The period 1978/79 represents the situation before the Maga dam, 1985/86 was an extremely dry year in contrast to 1988/89, a year with abundant rainfall and 1993/94 represents an average situation after the construction of the Maga dam.

Examination of the itineraries of 1993/94 reveals that pastoralists used the pilot zone in different ways¹⁰; some groups used it as a passage to other rangelands (e.g. floodplain north of Zina)¹¹, while other groups stayed in the pilot zone during the dry season. One of the changes in migration patterns is that nowadays more groups prefer to stay there throughout the dry season, and fewer groups use it as a passage. Competition over scarce natural resources has increased in the northern part of the floodplain, and forced groups to migrate southwards. Some groups that had left the floodplain have moved to the new pastures around Lake Maga.

A comparison of the dry year 1985/6 with the humid year 1988/9, provides further insight into pastoral adaptation to extreme climatic conditions. The migration patterns in 1985/6 showed a desperate search for forage and water. Many pastoralists had to change their itineraries and one third of them left the floodplain. In the dry season of 1988/9, pastoralists migrated northwards more slowly than usual, and many groups stayed in the pilot zone. Thus reflooding of the southern floodplain seems to have led to an increase in the pastoral population of the area.

⁸ The majority of the Arab Choa returned to Nigeria, while Fulbé Wolla moved to Chad, especially to the region south of Kaélé.

⁹ Information based on a survey of 75 pastoral groups with different ethnic backgrounds.

¹⁰ The pilot zone is roughly the floodplain south of Zina.

¹¹ Groups that use the pilot zone as a passage, visit the zone generally only a couple of weeks at the beginning and the end of the dry season (see also Moritz 1994^b).

The study of pastoral perceptions also revealed considerable differences before and after the Maga dam construction with regard to pasture quality. Bad pastures were referred to as "humid" pastures¹², meaning the presence of diseases¹³ or "lack of power of grasses". Many pastoralists considered the newly created pastures around Lake Maga to be "humid" in contrast to pastures lost from elsewhere in the floodplain. Although grasses in that area remained green until the beginning of the rainy season, many dead calves were found. Nevertheless, pastoralists stayed around Lake Maga as they preferred to lose cattle from disease than from theft.

DISCUSSION SESSIONS WITH PASTORALISTS

Preparation

Discussions between the programme team and the pastoral population, showed numerous doubts about the intentions of the Waza-Logone project. We were asked for example: *What does this project want to establish in the region? An increase of rice cultivation (like SEMRY), grazing restriction (like the Mindif-Moulvoudaye project), or some other intervention which could restrict our lives?* Therefore we decided to organise a number of sessions at an early stage of the programme, to inform the pastoral population about the project and to provide opportunities to discuss how they would like to take part in the project.

Short field visits were made prior to the sessions so as to answer the following questions:

1. Who can we invite as "representatives" from the major pastoral groups ?
2. Can we hold one big meeting with representatives from all groups, or would it be better to have discussions with nomadic and transhumant pastoralists separately?
3. Concerning transhumant groups, do we rely on the veterinary services to organise the sessions or on the local elite ?
4. What are the major topics likely to be discussed?
5. What would be the best location and time to organise the session(s) ?

¹² Fulbe pastoralists called the pastures *djoladé* or *badaoudé*.

¹³ The team suspects that the vegetation in "humid" areas contain parasites that are responsible for the bad condition of cattle.

Friction appeared to exist between nomadic and transhumant pastoral groups with regard to access to grazing land in the Pétété-Fadaré area. Should nomads appear in the area, local herders contact the veterinary service which subsequently visit the nomads. Nomads fear to be subjected to a vaccination campaign and usually decide to leave the area as a result. Also in other areas, veterinary services were very much seen as defending interests of transhumants. In the Pétété area, the head of the veterinary service has recently tried to encourage the creation of an association of local livestock owners. Since this person was felt to be highly respected amongst the transhumants, the project staff decided to work with him. In neighbouring Fadaré, the local elite was also seen as a strong defender of the interests of transhumant pastoral groups and, to a lesser extent, of nomadic groups, for whom no real supporters could be found.

During informal discussions, information was gained on the negative connotation of the term "project", the result of damage caused by former projects on people's daily lives, and by the regular "contributions" asked of them by project officials.

Based on these results we decided to organise a session for the nomadic groups at the project headquarters in Maroua. Two subsequent sessions were organised for the transhumant groups in Fadaré and Pétété. The sessions were held before the herders moved from the rainy season pastures back to the floodplain. The session in Maroua was entirely organised by the project staff without involving governmental agents. The Fadaré session was organised under the care of the local elite, whereas the Pétété session was organised by the head of the veterinary service.

Discussion and information sessions

Among the thirty participants invited a month beforehand, about a third arrived by their own means from the area north of Maroua, some by foot. The group coming from 70 Km to the south, was transported by a project car. They were housed at the project headquarters which was completely reorganised for this purpose. Project personnel served the nomads coffee and tea and created a party atmosphere. The meeting started with a number of presentations by project staff, which were simultaneously translated into the Fulbé language. After discussing the general objectives, attention was given to the present activities of the project, notably the pilot reflooding and the accompanying monitoring of hydrology, vegetation and reactions of the population. We also explained our

approach towards the problem of insecurity which we had discussed with individuals before. During the last "comité de gestion"¹⁴, the problem had been discussed in the presence of the traditional leaders of Pouss, Pété and Maga and the police. The governor had asked them during this session to be vigilant towards cattle thieves.

The nomads were subsequently invited to express their opinion. Fourteen of them spoke, each for about five minutes without interruption from others. We cite them below, indicating the part of the flood plain they visit and their sub-ethnic group:

N1: Fulbé Woila, stays around Mazra and Sifna

They are leaving the zone not because of the water problem, but because of the insecurity. Their cattle are stolen and they are in danger themselves. Therefore many of them have left the area. If this situation continues the remaining of the group members will be obliged to leave.

N2: Arab Choa, stays around Araynaba and in the Pouss area near to Lake Maga

He explains the problem of access to rangelands. The village people cultivate on their migration routes and refuse to let them pass. The village people also delimitate certain areas in the plain and declare that as their property. He also talked about the problem of the fish canals. The cultivators accuse them of not controlling their animals. What seems strange to him is that other pastoral groups are not the victims of comparable practices.

N3: Fulbé Alijam, stays near Moukak and Karam

He mentioned the cattle theft and insecurity. He talked about the claims people have made in the plain. What bothers him most is the fact that the traditional authorities and the police are corrupt. When you bring them a thief, they let him go and charge you instead. You then have to pay the authorities between 100,000 and 200,000 FCFA¹⁵.

¹⁴ Literally "management committee". Together with the project, a committee has been formed, headed by the governor of the Far North province and including all top administrative and traditional leaders. It meets bi-annually, to discuss development issues in the area.

¹⁵ equals 200-400\$.

N4: Fulbé Woila, stays near Sarassara and Mazra
As far as he is concerned there is no doubt; the thieves live in the villages Mazra-Holom-Ivy-Guirvidig-Kaykay-Lahay-Barédjéol. According to him, these thieves are protected by the traditional leaders.

N5: Fulbé Woila, stays near Alvakay I and III and South of Lake Maga
He confirmed that the thieves are protected by the traditional leaders. In the very few cases where the pastoralists manage to catch one, the traditional leaders and police demand enormous amounts of money to start the investigations, often without a follow up or sometimes ending even at the expense of the nomads.

N6: Arab Choa, stays near Garlé and Mazra
The major problem for him is the insecurity. The traditional leaders don't listen to them. We get fed up bringing the thieves to the traditional leaders, while they always leave them free. Thieves can kill a nomad without problems, however in case of a nomad killing a thief, the nomad will be brought to prison.

N7: Fulbé Woila, stays near Maskaly, Alaven and Maleïa
According to him, the thieves are based in Massa, Maleïa, Djinibalam, Maskalaye, Gadama and Sifna and the chiefs of these villages are also involved.

N8: Fulbé Woila, stays always near Goromo I and has intensive contacts with the village population. *He explains that the traditional leaders stop and penalise them when they light bush fires in October and November. Bushfires are an important tool to manage the pastures, creating excellent re-growth. He adds that in the dry season the Mousgoum farmers light fire after their harvests, devastating 90% of the pastures in the plain. Yet, they are not penalised. This seems a paradox to him and must be an issue to the Waza-Logone project for a sound cohabitation and good management of the floodplain.*

N9: Arab Choa, stays near Mazra, Gouba and Hinalé
The place they were last year with their cattle has been occupied by cultivators, thus reducing the grazing area. These cultivators also created fields around the water points to prevent the nomads' herds from drinking there.

N10: Fulbé Woodabé, stays near Boderdo, Sifna, Tchédé, Hinalé and Tsi
He declared that the nomads have never done wrong to anybody. They have visited Nigeria and many other countries, but have never encountered problems there. In Cameroon they are marginalised, although they represent an economic power. Cameroon is their country, it is here they pay their taxes.

N11: Fulbé Alijam, stays near Moukak and Koubor

According to him, insecurity reigns in the area. Nobody is safe from the thieves (children, women, men). He expects the project to deal with this problem and thanks for the opening of the Petit Goroma.

N12: Fulbé Alijam, stays near Koubou and Holom

The cattle theft is according to him the principal problem. In addition, the cultivators do not allow them to use the normal livestock passage ways.

N13: Fulbé Woila stays near Araynaba and Lake Maga

According to him three quarters of the nomads have left the area because of the cattle theft and insecurity. He would like to meet the governor to discuss their problems.

N14: Sedentary Fulbé who chose to become nomad, stays near Kazre and Mazra. *He supports what the others have said about the marginalisation of the nomads by the administrative and traditional authorities. He thanks the project for the respect it has shown to the nomads and asks the traditional leaders and the police to stop protecting the thieves and behave responsibly.*

During the discussions following these speeches, the project staff suggested that the nomads present their problems to the "comité de gestion". A group of ten nomads were selected by the participants to follow up this idea and to return to Maroua, after consultation with the people they represent, within three weeks.

Sessions with transhumant pastoralists in Fadaré and Pétté

It should be noted that most of the people invited do not herd their animals themselves any more. Nevertheless, they all know the area intimately from the time where they accompanied their animals. Both in Fadaré and Pétté, we had prepared the meeting by visiting the organisers two weeks in advance, respectively the town chief and the local head of the veterinary service. Friday afternoon was chosen as the meeting time, so we could benefit from the presence of people going to pray. In both localities 80 people assembled, with a core group of about 20 people who had received written invitations. An introduction to the project and its activities from our side was followed by a presentation of the problems that the pastoralists encountered. In Fadaré these problems were reported by the chief whilst in Pétté, they were recounted by several representatives. The people of Fadaré had met earlier that day and had

prepared a list of problems to be submitted to the project, in order of importance:

1. lack of drinking water for livestock;
2. insecurity and cattle theft;
3. predation on domestic animals by lions and hyenas coming from the Waza National Park;
4. poor quality of veterinary products.

The first three problems were also highlighted in the Pétté meeting. There, confrontations with the Waza National Park authorities and the ban on bushfires were also mentioned. People in Pétté added that the cattle thieves were to be found amongst the nomads which confirmed our impressions of tension between nomadic and transhumant pastoralists as described earlier. A short discussion took place on the role that the project could play in finding solutions to the problems raised. In both places, the participants proposed some form of organisation in order to create stronger communication links with the project as well as with others¹⁶.

General sessions with villagers and pastoralists

The project staff organised two sessions (December 1994 - Tekele, April 1995 - Doing) with representatives of nomads and chiefs from the 15 villages most affected by the reflooding, and evaluated the pilot scheme. The measurements confirmed the favourable state of the forage, even in April, at the height of the dry season. The sessions also aimed at informing most decision makers in the plain of the objectives and activities of the Waza-Logone project.

Conclusions on the sessions

1. A strong sense of "group loyalty" was created throughout the meeting in Maroua. Nomadic pastoralists were, for the first time, in their life able to discuss their problems with an outside institution. The group assembled consisted of several fractions who do not normally meet and agree easily. This was for instance reflected in the choice of the two rooms where they slept at the eve of the meeting. The sleeping places were divided according to their geographical position in the rainy season (north and south of Maroua). However during the "coffee break", when they consulted each other to prepare the

¹⁶ Pastoralists from Fadaré took the initiative to form an interest group of livestock keepers. Advice was actively sought from the project to support this initiative.

speeches, they finally sat together. Altogether the session with the nomads in Maroua made a big impression on both nomads and project staff, created an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust and helped transform the way the nomadic population perceives the project.

2. By contrast, the sessions in Fadaré and Pétté seemed less successful. No presentation was made of the various participants. The size of the group (80 persons), and its duration of only two hours had much to do with this. Contacts with the transhumant herdsmen in the plains in the months afterwards, showed a very poor subsequent diffusion of information from herd owners to their herdsmen. When we visited three groups of transhumants from Fadaré, Am Kodje and Ammahajri, it was clear that the herdsmen employed by these pastoralists were not aware of the meetings that had been held. However they were aware of the existence of the Waza-Logone project, most probably via earlier contacts with the pastoral programme team.

3. The general project sessions were very different from the pastoralists' sessions. For the former, the size of the group (an estimated 150 participants) and its heterogeneity made it difficult to have detailed discussions, and to monitor the situation in the floodplain. However, they could provide general information to a larger public and explain the commitment of the project to the various ethnic groups in the project area. By contrast, the discussions held at the nomads' sessions went very well due to the herders being well-prepared.

4. Insecurity was clearly the most important problem for the nomadic population, while for the transhumants this varied according to the specific group, but was always in "the top three". Information obtained later showed that there had been a preliminary discussion amongst the Arab Choa nomads on which problem should be submitted to the project. One pastoralist told us that he considered insecurity beyond the capacity of the project and preferred simpler problems to be submitted. After all, *Europeans also get attacked on the main road and have not been able to solve that problem*¹⁷.

5. It was striking that the lack of flooding was not discussed by the pastoralists in any detail during any of the three meetings (in Maroua, Fadaré and Pétté). This could be attributed to the attention already paid to the subject at an earlier stage.

¹⁷ He refers to the "coupures de route", bandits from various nationalities attacking travelers in the northern part of the Far North province.

INSECURITY, THE FOLLOW UP

The impact of insecurity

Experience from elsewhere, such as Chad and N.Kenya shows that insecurity is often one of the main factors determining the distribution and migration of pastoralists. Fear of conflict creates serious overgrazing due to the concentration of people in safe areas (IPAL 1985). In the Waza-Logone project area, pastoralists tend to gather in bigger groups than normal, to provide greater protection against possible attacks and no longer move alone during the migration period. These changes have led to excessive pressure on grazing, an issue we raised in our discussions with the authorities since this is part of the project mandate, in contrast to the highly politicised issue of insecurity itself.

Preparation of the "insecurity" file for submission to the governor

Three weeks after the session with nomads in Maroua, a second meeting took place to prepare a letter to the governor suggesting the setting up of a committee specialised in insecurity issues. The pastoralists decided to raise a total of 140,000 FCFA¹⁸, based on a contribution of 1000 francs FCFA per herd of the people involved. The project staff decided to spend this money on the organisation of the subsequent "comité de gestion" sessions. Because of the sensitivity of the issues, a detailed file was prepared, including the discussions held at the nomads' meeting, and submitted to the governor at the end of October 1994. The project then persuaded the governor of the Far North province to put the issue of insecurity on the agenda of the next management committee of the Waza-Logone area.

Meeting with the governor

Apart from the governor, most of the administrative and traditional leaders of the area were present for the meeting on 11 April 1995. The governor explained that "insecurity" was not a subject for the "comité de gestion", due to its sensitive character, but in this specific case he would make an exception. Elhadji Lawan subsequently explained the problem of insecurity and cattle theft for pastoralists, but did not specify how the traditional authorities might be

¹⁸ This is the equivalent of about \$300.

involved. Subsequently a debate started on the importance of involving the authorities in these cases¹⁹. Despite the short time reserved to discuss insecurity (about half an hour), and no solution being proposed, the nomads were satisfied to have been heard. As Elhadji Lawan said: *In the thirty years I have lived in Cameroon I have never been received in the provincial house.*

Impact of the attention paid to insecurity

In the period between the meetings of September/October 1994 and April 1995, the security situation in the floodplain seemed to have improved significantly. Several of the group leaders attributed this to increased awareness of the issue amongst the village population. *"They all know we have been in Maroua to discuss the problem"*. Other people attributed the improved security situation to the extensive flooding. *"The thieves are too occupied with fishing to touch our animals"*.

The months after the September session with nomads, brought out the different strategies people use in relation to insecurity. Even some of the most respected leaders once belonged to the "thief clan", only quitting once they rose to higher positions. They still maintain contact with such networks, enabling them to escape from attack.

IMPACT OF THE PILOT FLOOD RELEASE ON PASTORALISTS

Monitoring methods

Pastoralists were informed of possible changes in the flooding regime during the sessions of September and October 1994. Older people remembered well the situation before 1979, when the Petit Goroma still flowed naturally. The opening of this waterway in May 1994 only partially restored this flood regime. Changes were monitored in migration patterns due to the improved flood, especially at the arrival of herds in the plain in October-November. Discussions were held with village chiefs, the nomads' representatives and the large livestock owners in the Pétte-Padaré area. At the end of the dry season and the subsequent rainy season, all groups visiting the floodplain were re-visited, and

¹⁹ This is exactly what pastoralists contest due to the involvement of the traditional authorities in the insecurity issue.

their detailed itinerary for 1994/95 discussed and quantified in terms of number of weeks spent in the pilot zone. This included a repetition of the discussions held the previous year in order to compare patterns of movement between the years 1993/94 and 1994/95.

Results

Pastoralists from the south of Maroua arrived in the Lake Maga area at the same time as usual, which was rather surprising given the abundant rains. Experienced men were sent to inspect the conditions of the floodplain around Massa and the routes leading to it. On their way they divided into two: one group took the traditional path onto the floodplain via Guirvidig. The other group, exclusively Arab Choa, took for the first time a route further west to avoid possible confrontations with cultivators on their way²⁰. Beyond Massa the pastoralists found themselves blocked by the flood water, and unlike previous years, they had to stay rather long, some up to a month, in this unhealthy humid environment with lots of flies. From here many groups went further east, other groups settled down in the pilot zone; all groups spent far more time in the flooded zone than usual. Pastoralists said they were satisfied with the new conditions in the plain and that the increase in fodder availability outweighed the increased humidity, presence of flies and animal diseases.

Pastoralists coming from the Pétte-Fadaré area²¹, were also blocked for a few weeks when they entered the flood plain and complained about the abundant water and shortage of pasture. But during the later dry season they were satisfied to see that their cattle had maintained their weight without supplementary feeding of cotton seed cakes.

Of 50 pastoral groups, eight were visiting the pilot zone for the first time, attracted by the abundant resources in the flood plain. Of the 37 groups for which the precise itinerary was known, 14 spent as much time in the pilot zone as the average recorded the previous year, three spent less time and the

²⁰ Generally Arab's group decisions on migration patterns are taken collectively. The different Fulbé sub-ethnic groups decide on a more individual base.

²¹ Pastoralists from the Pétte-Fadaré area are mainly young men who don't own the herd and aren't accompanied by their families. This makes them more flexible in their migration patterns. Their camp is usually composed of men from the same village. Unexpectedly they do not receive instructions from the herd owner about the migration to be followed.

remaining 20 (including the eight new groups), spent more time in the pilot zone. Expressed in grazing intensity, an increase of about 40 % was recorded²².

New conflicts

Prior to the opening of the Petit Goroma, the water course was almost dry and herds could cross it almost anywhere. This year, herds entering the plain had to cross the watercourse full of water but sedentary people refused to allow the use of the old passage from before 1979. They were worried about the presence of cultivated land and the risk of animals destroying the river banks. With considerable bad feeling, pastoralists used the passage further away to the east, and an attempt to solve the problem during the general April meeting only provoked further outbursts from each side. This problem will probably need to be addressed by the traditional authorities.

PASTORALISTS AND WAZA NATIONAL PARK²³

The Waza-Logone project has the task of drawing up a management plan for the Waza National Park and surrounding areas²⁴. Transhumants and, to a lesser extent, nomadic pastoralists claim important losses of livestock to predators like lions, hyenas and jackals, but they also regularly enter the park with their animals, in search of water and pastures, practices which are strictly forbidden. This causes regular confrontation between game wardens and herdsmen. Irritation exists on both sides caused by the "ignorance and stubbornness of herdsmen entering the park" and "the brutal and corrupt behaviour of the game wardens". The transhumant groups from Fadaré, Andimi, Badadaye and Am Kodje are particularly involved. But it is proved quite difficult to discuss these issues with them because of the poor communication between herd owners based in villages and their hired herdsmen who may be up to 60 km away in the plain. Herd owners blamed the problem of cattle entering the park on their herdsmen who are said to be "young and ignorant". They proposed that the

²² This estimation is based on preliminary calculations on the number of herds present multiplied by the number of weeks spent in the pilot zone.

²³ For more details we refer to a project document about the relationship of Waza NP and its surrounding population (in preparation).

²⁴ We avoid using the term "buffer zone" because of its narrow interpretation in Cameroonian legislation.

park authorities should call them each time rather than shooting an animal, a regular practice, or taking the herdsman into custody²⁵, and they indicated that they did not mind paying the fine (50-100,000 FCFA or more).

THE SPECIAL CASE OF THE PEUL OUDAH

Although belonging to the same linguistic group as the Fulbé pastoralists, the Peul Oudah constitute a special case. They keep sheep almost exclusively in herds of up to 200 animals, and move around with little apparent contact with the "external world". In 1993-94, they provoked strong reaction from the sedentary population by excessive cutting of *Acacia sieberiana* and *A. seyal* trees as fodder for their sheep²⁶ (Kouokam *et al.* 1994). For this reason, plans exist to deny them access to the area. Contacts between the pastoral team and the Peul Oudah were often difficult due to their suspicious nature and extreme mobility. Nevertheless, we managed to visit five groups, each for a couple of days to discuss informally their way of life.

Originally from Sokoto State, Nigeria, the Peul Oudah who visit Cameroon spend the rainy season in the area of Diffa on the border of Nigeria and Niger. During the dry season they spread out into Cameroon and Chad, and enter the Waza-Logone area from the north and the south. They have been visiting the area for about seven years, having been forced to move from areas further north due to friction related to excessive cutting of fodder trees. In the Waza-Logone area they are not allowed to stay around Pétte due to strong resistance from the local chief who says: *Oudah if you want to stay with us do not cut trees, if you want to cut trees do not stay with us*. Elsewhere they are obliged to pay a fee to the traditional leaders²⁷. Peul Oudah see this tax as a licence to exploit the pastures of the area, and thus feel at liberty to cut fodder trees for their sheep.

²⁵ Game guards sometimes take herdsmen into custody, leaving hundreds of cattle unguarded in the park area, vulnerable to lion attacks or theft.

²⁶ Peul Oudah cut complete trees in order to feed the forage to the sheep. Areas they have visited look like a battle field.

²⁷ These taxes vary widely in amount: 250 FCFA per sheep in Logone Birni, 35,000 FCFA per herd in Guirvidig and 15,000 per herd in Zina. In Fadaré and Balda taxes are negotiated individually.

Most of the Oudah groups are composed of young hired herdsmen who are usually contracted for a period of two years. The herdsman is paid in kind with all lambs from five selected ewes and the second born lamb of all twins. The herdsman takes special care of his own animals and will exploit them as little as possible. This is the reason for the saying *Oudahs do not eat their own products*. The period of two years is strictly applied and never extended. In other words, the herdsman has two years to build up his own flock of sheep. These strict rules might explain the excessive cutting of fodder to ensure their sheep are in excellent condition.

Three groups have decided to visit the area no longer because of the continuing insecurity and theft. Project members were recently confronted with a serious case where a group of Oudah was victim of sheep theft. They pursued the thieves, were attacked by them and subsequently were accused of assault themselves. Happily, the police enquiry revealed the truth and more than one hundred sheep were found at the thieves' settlement.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

In a project aimed at several target groups, such as the Waza Logone project, we feel it is necessary to keep the interests of the nomadic pastoral community under continuous review. In future, the project will be involved in a number of initiatives of "gestion des terroirs villageois" (local resource management). As the French term implies, the bias is strongly towards sedentary populations, a bias which the project team aims to re-orient in favour of nomadic groups. We also plan to pay special attention to the role of bushfires, which are currently hampered by restrictions imposed by traditional leaders. At present, it is legal to use early bushfires, but the special conditions of the floodplain have not yet been taken into account²⁸. As for the confrontation between pastoralists and park authorities, no definitive approach has yet been developed. However intensive contact with the major transhumant groups enables ongoing discussions.

Looking back at the first years of this programme, the following elements are considered as having contributed to its success:

* The step by step approach which enabled the programme to adjust its activities in pace with evolving conditions;

²⁸ In contrast to the "rainfed" pastures where bushfires are only allowed from October to December, the optimal time to light bushfires for the floodplain is somewhat later.

* The definition of specific target groups for each planned activity. This proved to be particularly successful for the discussion sessions. The sessions bringing all population groups together (sedentary and nomadic) were useful to provide information, but far less fruitful with regard to frank debate;

* Intensive preparation of the sessions, consisting of informal discussions with several parties prior to each activity;

* The emphasis put on establishing confidence between project and target groups by reducing the involvement of government services and collecting only limited data. The regular visits to the field showed the commitment of the project to the pastoralists and were highly appreciated.

* The informal structures of the project; we considered the choice of representatives as the responsibility of the groups themselves.

* The direct involvement of pastoralists in various project activities such as the evaluation sessions held in the floodplain.

A number of weak points can also be identified, which might pose problems in the coming years:

* Can the Waza-Logone project remain independent? The project could never be a pastoralist's interest group, although for issues such as insecurity, the project was able to take a clear position. However, most problems between pastoralists and cultivators, or with park authorities, are less clear cut.

* It will take a few years for reflooding to bring about a major improvement in pasture availability, due to the slow return of preferred grazing species. This may reduce the initial enthusiasm for the project;

* We have worked mainly with men. However, regular informal contacts during the long periods which we spend in nomad camps may have reduced this bias;

* The pastoral programme is executed by one full-time staff member and a supervisor. Many of the results are based on their personal commitment and contacts, making the programme very vulnerable to staff changes.

Despite these restrictions, the start of the programme has been very rewarding. The work of one full-time person, collecting basic data and concentrating on talking with the target groups, has proved to be an efficient way of involving the different pastoral groups in the rehabilitation and management of the Logone floodplain. For the future, this approach will be continued while identifying ways to ensure activities are maintained in the post-project period. We feel the team should not be afraid to take a pro-pastoral view and to defend this within the project.

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Drylands Programme

The Drylands Programme aims to contribute towards more effective and equitable management of natural resources in semi-arid Africa. It has built up a diverse pattern of collaboration with many organisations. It has a particular focus on: soil conservation and nutrient management; pastoral development; and land tenure and resource access. Key objectives of the programme are to: strengthen communication between English and French speaking parts of Africa; support the development of an effective research and NGO sector; and promote locally-based management of resources, build on local skills, encourage participation and provide firmer rights to local users.

It does this through four main activities: collaborative research, training in participatory methods, information networking and policy advice to donor organisations.

International Institute for
Environment and Development
3 Endsleigh Street
London
WC1H 0DD

Tel: (+44 171) 388 2117
Fax: (+44 171) 388 2826
E-mail: drylands@iied.org

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