

LAWS AND CARBON OFFSET GIVE NEW START TO LOST TANZANIAN TRIBE

Through a range of local initiatives and collaborations developed over the past 15 years, Tanzania's Yaeda Valley, the primary remaining home territory for the last community of Hadzabe hunter-gatherers, has become a model for community-based conservation.

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In the annals of human ecology, there is antiquity, and then there are the Hadzabe. These Tanzanian hunter-gatherers, who today number only about thirteen hundred individuals, are truly of ancient lineage. The Hadzabe and their predecessors are legitimately East Africa's- and in many

respects the world's- last remaining 'first people', representatives of the original cultures that once occupied all of the region but have been largely displaced by later waves of farmers, herders, and ultimately industrial society.

Tanzania's Yaeda Valley, running south of Lake Eyasi and abutted by the Mbulu Highlands, provides not only the last remaining territory for the Hadzabe, but a unique window into East Africa's social, ethnic, and linguistic history. The Hadzabe have been living in Yaeda and the surrounding area for at least 40,000 years, where up until about 3,000 years ago they were the dominant ethnic group in the region. Their endurance is a testament to the environmental sustainability of their

hunter-gatherer lifestyle, which relies on wildlife as well as honey and a vast array of wild plants, from baobabs to numerous edible tubers and berries.

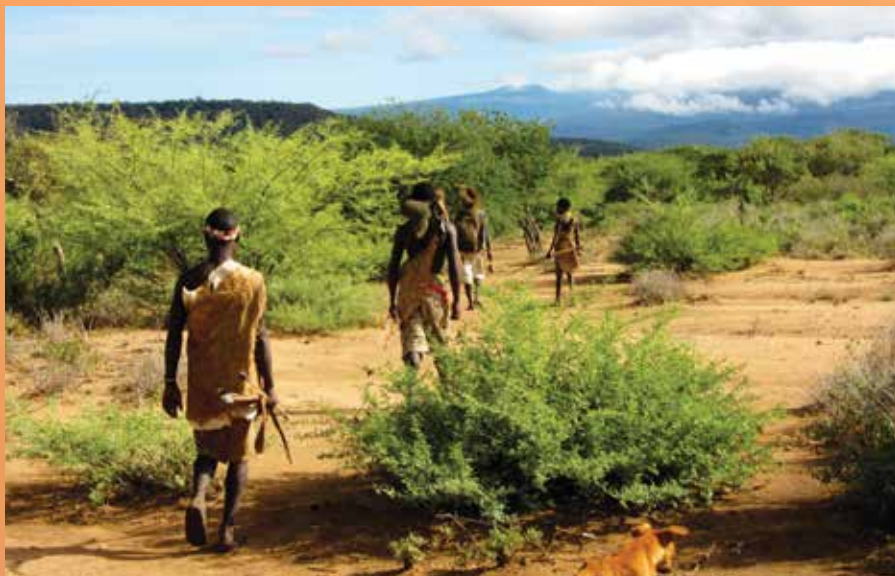
About 3,000 years ago, Cushitic groups moved into what is now Tanzania and Kenya from the Horn of Africa to the northeast. The Iraqw, today's dominant ethnic group across the Mbulu highlands, are the descendants of these first iron-age immigrants. Later waves of iron-wielding Bantu farmers moved in from the west, and others, such as the Iramba, migrated to the region. Later still, only around the seventeenth century, Nilotic pastoralists such as the Datoga (Barabaig) moved down the Nile Valley into East Africa. The Datoga ended up in Yaeda Valley and



PHOTO BY: DAUDI PETERSON

A forest carbon offsetting project is paying the community to keep their forest and ecosystem intact.

PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES



Top: The Hadzabe way of life and their existence is under threat.

Right: The Hadzabe rely on wildlife, honey and a vast array of wild plants, from baobabs to numerous edible tubers and berries.



PHOTOS BY: DAUDI PETERSON

its surroundings after being pushed out of much of north-central Tanzania by the Maasai, who took over rich grazing territories in the Ngorongoro highlands by the early nineteenth century.

The defining aspect of the Hadzabe's hunter-gatherer lifestyle and social ecology is that their livelihood is based on 'immediate returns', rather than storing and accumulating resources. Hunter-gatherers such as the Hadzabe do not grow and store their food; when they are hungry, they go and find something to eat in the bush. Because they have such deep knowledge about their environment, refined and developed over thousands of years, food is virtually always available. This non-accumulative lifestyle stands in

direct contrast to the dominant aspect of human social evolution following the adoption of agricultural cultivation and domestication of livestock roughly 10,000 years ago. This is that the accumulation of surplus food supplies in agricultural or pastoralist societies, which enabled people to free up surplus labor, allowing for the development of specialized skills, including everything from crafting pottery and other goods, to the collection and eventually transcription (writing) of knowledge. The accumulation of food supplies and other goods created by specialized producers also led to the generation of stored forms of wealth, which created the basis for, among other things, societal inequality and more violent competition over the control or seizure of that wealth. The need and rationale

for governments and armies, among other things, evolved directly from humanity's agricultural history.

The Hadzabe never passed through those stages of human history. Because the Hadzabe never stored and accumulated goods, they never developed hierarchical social structures. In essence, the Hadzabe have never had anything to fight over. One outcome is a remarkably harmonious and egalitarian social structure; sharing, not individual acquisition, is internalized as a core cultural value, as it is a critical element of the ability of hunter-gatherer communities to survive together.

However, another outcome of the Hadzabe's unique cultural history, social structure, and values is that they have been rendered totally unprepared to confront external encroachment

Thanks to the low impact hunter-gatherer lifestyle, the Yaeda Valley landscape continues to support the Hadzabe community in the same way it did 40,000 years ago.



PHOTOS BY DAVID PETERSON

Hadzabe - Cultural resilience, sustainable living and modern day community based conservation have all contributed to the survival of one of world's last remaining 'first people,' the Hadzabe.



PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES

Top: A Hadzabe man begins his hunting day early in the Yaeda Valley. Below: Hadzabe hunters cooking a squirrel and bird on the fire.

and appropriation of the lands and resources their livelihoods depend on. For thousands of years, pastoralist and agricultural groups have gradually moved into Hadzabe lands. The Hadzabe, without any centralized social structures, or means of mobilizing analogous to the warrior youth age classes of pastoralist societies, nor any clear notion of territorial property, have simply moved off to somewhere else.

But by the late twentieth century the Hadza were running out of places

to move off to. Their last remaining territory of any significant extent comprised the Kidero Hills, a ridge and hill system roughly 30 km long and 10 km wide, running east to west to the south of Lake Eyasi and north of the Yaeda Valley and Mbulu escarpment.

The Yaeda Valley, like nearby savannah landscapes throughout northern Tanzania, was once a rich area for wildlife, with large herds of wildebeest roaming the valley floor and large numbers of Black rhinos and

elephants in the baobab woodlands. But by the 1980s wildlife was depleted from uncontrolled poaching. As more and more newcomers pushed the Hadzabe into the rocky hills, the ancient community was running out of both space to live and the natural resources their livelihood depended on.

The tide began to change in the mid 1990s. Dorobo Safaris, a leading ecotourism company, pioneered the first joint venture tourism agreements with communities in northern Tanzania in 1991 by forming contracts with two Maasai villages- one in Simanjiro adjacent to Tarangire National Park, and one next to Serengeti National Park in the Loliondo area. These contracts provided the communities with set annual and bed night payments in exchange for setting aside concession areas for low-impact camping tourism and walking safaris, mixed with traditional livestock grazing and other non-agricultural resource uses.

Dorobo began operating in Yaeda Valley in the early 1990s, carrying out cultural tourism with the Hadzabe and

PHOTOS BY DAVID PETERSON



Top: Richard Baallow, a UCRT Field Officer, was born Hadzabe and played a key role in helping the Hadzabe community secure rights to their land.

Below: With the territory back under Hadzabe control, wildlife, such as these Impala, are recovering in the area.

making set payments into a number of established community funds. In Yaeda, Dorobo and the community worked together to carefully control and regulate tourism. They coordinated and managed visits from all tourism companies, ensuring payments were made to agreed accounts, sharing guiding opportunities among a broad group of residents, and restricting stays to designated campsites.

While community-based tourism was proving successful, Dorobo recognised that the Maasai and Hadzabe faced growing pressures on their land and natural resources. In response they founded a U.S. non-profit Dorobo Fund for Tanzania in the 1990s, and shortly thereafter helped establish the community-based organization, Ujamma Community Resource Team (UCRT). UCRT formed to facilitate community land use planning and natural resource management capacity building among pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities across northern Tanzania. It began working with the Hadzabe community to develop stronger community level institutions

for governing land use and resource access. The main objective was to secure Hadzabe control over their own village, ensuring the community could control the land area and decision-making processes within that village (the 'village', with its governing Village Council and Village Assembly, is the lowest tier of local governance in Tanzania and the institutional basis for tenure over the 'village land'). Village land use plans and supporting by laws for Mongo wa Mono village were facilitated by UCRT between 2000 – 2002. At the time Mongo wa Mono was under Hadzabe majority control. These plans included setting aside roughly 20,000 hectares of the Kidero hill system as a 'conservation zone', prohibiting cultivation and livestock grazing in that area, in order to protect the wildlife and other resources the Hadzabe depended on in that best remaining stretch of habitat.

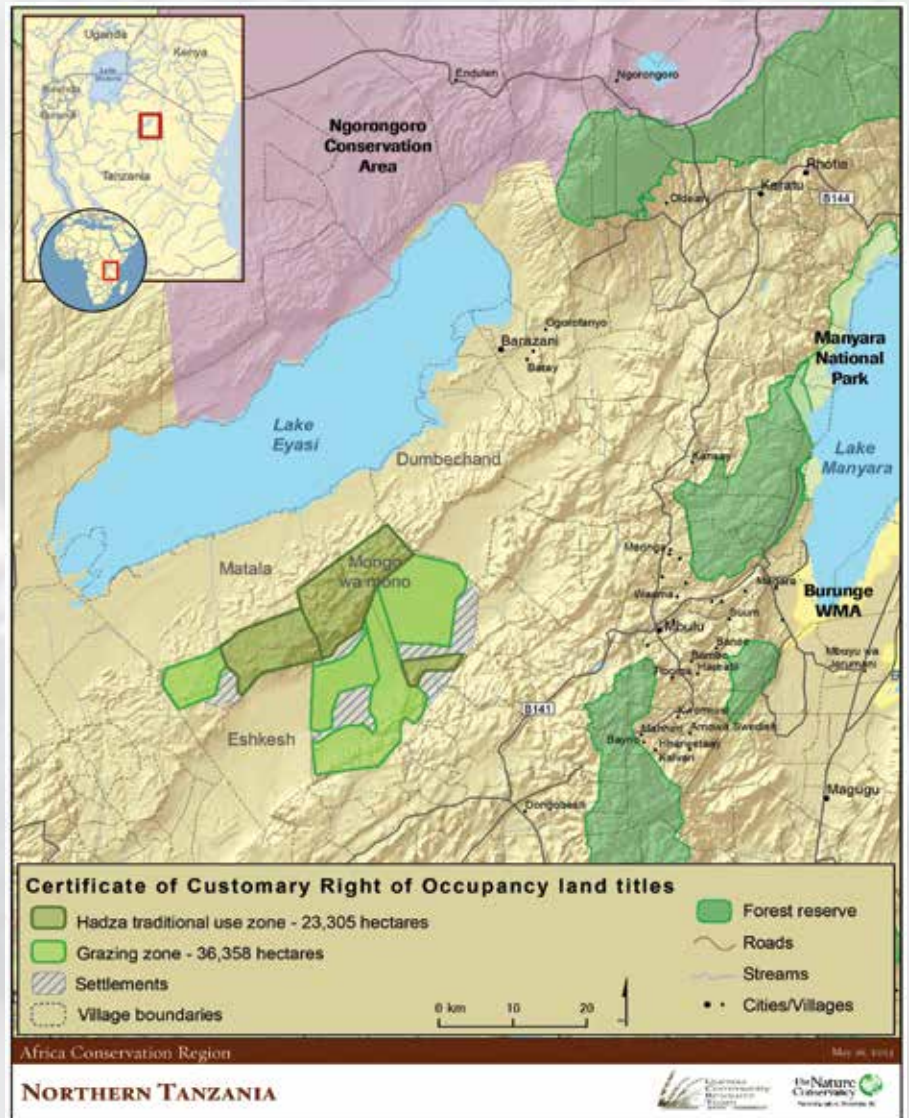
Almost 3,000 years later, the Hadzabe were finally able to control and protect their (much reduced) territory again. Large mammals such as greater kudu, impala, zebra, and



giraffe began to recover, and predators such as lion and even wild dog began to be seen and heard again. This nascent recovery was threatened in 2005, when government proposals emerged to turn Yaeda Valley over to a recreational hunting concession held by a prospective investor from the Middle East. Local advocacy, based largely on Hadzabe rights to their land and self-determination, and supported by civil society groups such as the Pastoralist Indigenous NGOs Forum (PINGOs), led to the eventual withdrawal of this proposal after several years of debate.

In 2009, a new threat emerged. Increasing immigration from adjacent areas, notably the densely populated Mbulu highlands, meant that the Hadzabe were becoming a minority in Mongo wa Mono and would no longer be in charge of village government decisions about land and resource use.

In response, UCRT, with financial support from the Dorobo Fund and The Nature Conservancy, began work with the Hadzabe community and the Tanzanian Ministry of Lands to facilitate the issuance of a 'Certificate of Customary Right of Occupancy' (CCRO) under Tanzania's Village Land Act for the core conservation zone and a number of other smaller parcels. These CCROs are basically a communal title issued in the name of the Hadzabe community. The key legal innovation of this certificate is that these titles are indivisible through village governance processes, i.e. the land cannot be subdivided at the local level. This provides a much stronger legal basis for Hadzabe protection of their territory and its conservation in perpetuity. In 2011 a CCRO was issued covering nearly the entire 20,000 hectare Hadzabe conservation zone, effectively giving it legal status as a Hadzabe-owned, community conservation area. In 2012, UCRT also extended this work to surrounding Datoga grazing lands, helping these pastoralists obtain roughly 36,000 hectares of grazing land



Map of Yaeda Valley showing Certificates of Customary Rights of Occupancy obtained in recent years for Hadzabe and Datoga communities.

in their own CCROs, which serve as a buffer to the Hadzabe land.

Another innovation during the past several years is a carbon offsetting project, using the emerging 'REDD'¹ market for carbon storage and avoided deforestation. This project, developed by Carbon Tanzania- the country's first carbon project developer focused on community-based forest conservation- and executed in partnership with UCRT, effectively reinforces the Hadzabe's existing conservation regulations. The project pays the community, using

revenue generated from the sale of carbon offsets, to protect their forests. It also provides resources for community scouts to patrol, enforce local regulations, monitor forest condition, and help prevent encroachment by agriculture or livestock. It is estimated that 268,939 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions will be avoided over the next twenty years.

Carbon Tanzania is marketing these carbon offsets both internationally, through various intermediaries in the United States and Europe, as well as

¹Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

PHOTO BY: DAUDI PETERSON



In 2011, the Hadzabe gained legal status to a 20,000 hectare conservation zone, which can be used to support their traditional hunter-gatherer way of life.

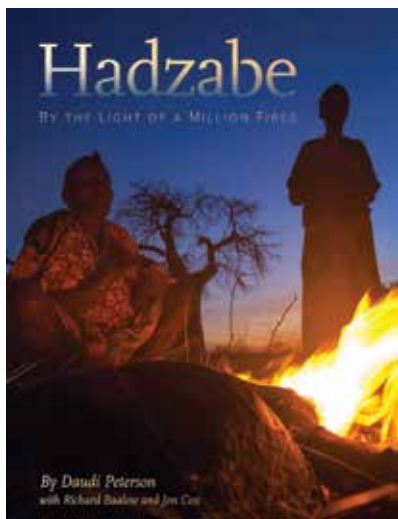
to Tanzania’s local tourism market. A number of leading Tanzanian tourism companies, seeking to market themselves as ‘carbon neutral’ or low-impact eco-operators, have purchased offsets for several years running.

Last year the Plan Vivo Standards, a carbon offset project certification body, approved Carbon Tanzania’s Yaeda Valley project. Initial sales have already resulted in over \$30,000 being paid into the Hadzabe community accounts, with more than twice that amount in annual payments to the community possible, if all offsets are sold.

Against all odds and, with some committed and skillful external supporters and new conservation innovations, it seems the Hadzabe have managed to strengthen their hold over their last remaining home range. Today, national level policy support for the Hadzabe and other hunter-gatherers appears to be growing in Tanzania, with the ongoing constitutional reform process adopting a number of proposals specifically geared towards better protecting the rights of these indigenous groups. Globally, the Hadzabe, among the oldest communities of people on the planet, seem to have been rediscovered as well. In addition to a prominent new illustrated volume on the Hadzabe produced within Tanzania (see Box below), a documentary on the Hadzabe, *Last of the First*, recently premiered

at an environmental film festival in Washington, DC.

As pressures on both natural landscapes and the human communities and cultures that depend on them increase across East Africa, the experience of Yaeda Valley provides an inspiring example of grassroots conservation that blends ancient traditional knowledge with modern markets and institutions. After decades of being squeezed out of their territory and being derided by many in Tanzania as an antiquated relic in need of modernization, the Hadzabe have secured a significant proportion of their lands and seem to have also secured some measure of respect for their culture and lifestyle. New efforts by UCRT and other collaborators are pursuing the possibility of extending the existing Hadzabe conservation zone by connecting it to Hadzabe communities closer to Lake Eyasi and Ngorongoro. While all existing gains bear some level of fragility, there is now hope that a community that has survived for millennia has a more promising future of its own. ●



The Hadzabe have recently received a flurry of attention, from various publications to media coverage, but one clear standout product is Daudi Peterson's new book, *Hadzabe: By the Light*

of a Million Fires. Daudi Peterson, of Dorobo Safaris and the Dorobo Fund for Tanzania, produced the book together with Richard Baalow, a leading Hadzabe social activist, and Jon Cox, who contributed artwork and photographs.

The book is a unique and hard-to-classify product- part illustrated field guide, part ethnology, part social history, and part coffee table book. The result is a volume that is both visually engrossing and intellectually enlightening, covering subjects ranging from Hadzabe linguistics (with a contribution on that subject from the renowned anthropologist and Hadzabe expert, James Woodburn), hunter-gatherer behavioral ecology, to current challenges around land rights and natural resource management, which both Peterson and Baalow have been centrally involved in for decades.

The book, rather unique for such a high-quality publication, is also an attempt to capture, document, and preserve the Hadzabe’s unique

cultural knowledge and customs, which have been central to their survival for thousands of years. This builds on earlier efforts that Peterson, Baalow, and others were involved with, including a Hadzabe cultural mapping project that documented important sites and resources within the community’s landscape in the Yaeda Valley. This more recent book was produced together with an ‘editorial team’ that contributed much of the information and local knowledge documented in the volume. An earlier special hardcover edition of the book was used to raise funds for protecting Hadzabe land rights. By helping the Hadzabe themselves document and preserve their unique knowledge, customs, and lifestyle, and raise awareness both within Tanzania and in the wider world about the community and the Yaeda Valley, the book is one more milestone in efforts to help the Hadzabe shape their own future in today’s world.