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**Master's degree in
Climate Change, Biodiversity, Policy
and Practice**

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Savanna Dynamics and Conservation Challenges: Assessing the Status of Lions and Other Carnivores and Policy Gaps in Nigeria's Yankari Game Reserve

Introduction and problem statement

- ✓ Carnivores are keystone species maintaining ecosystem balance in savannas.
- ✓ The Yankari Game Reserve (YGR), located in Nigeria's savanna, faces habitat degradation, human pressures, and weak policy enforcement.
- ✓ These threats significantly influence carnivores' existence. As a result, lions may be locally extinct, and populations of other carnivores are declining.

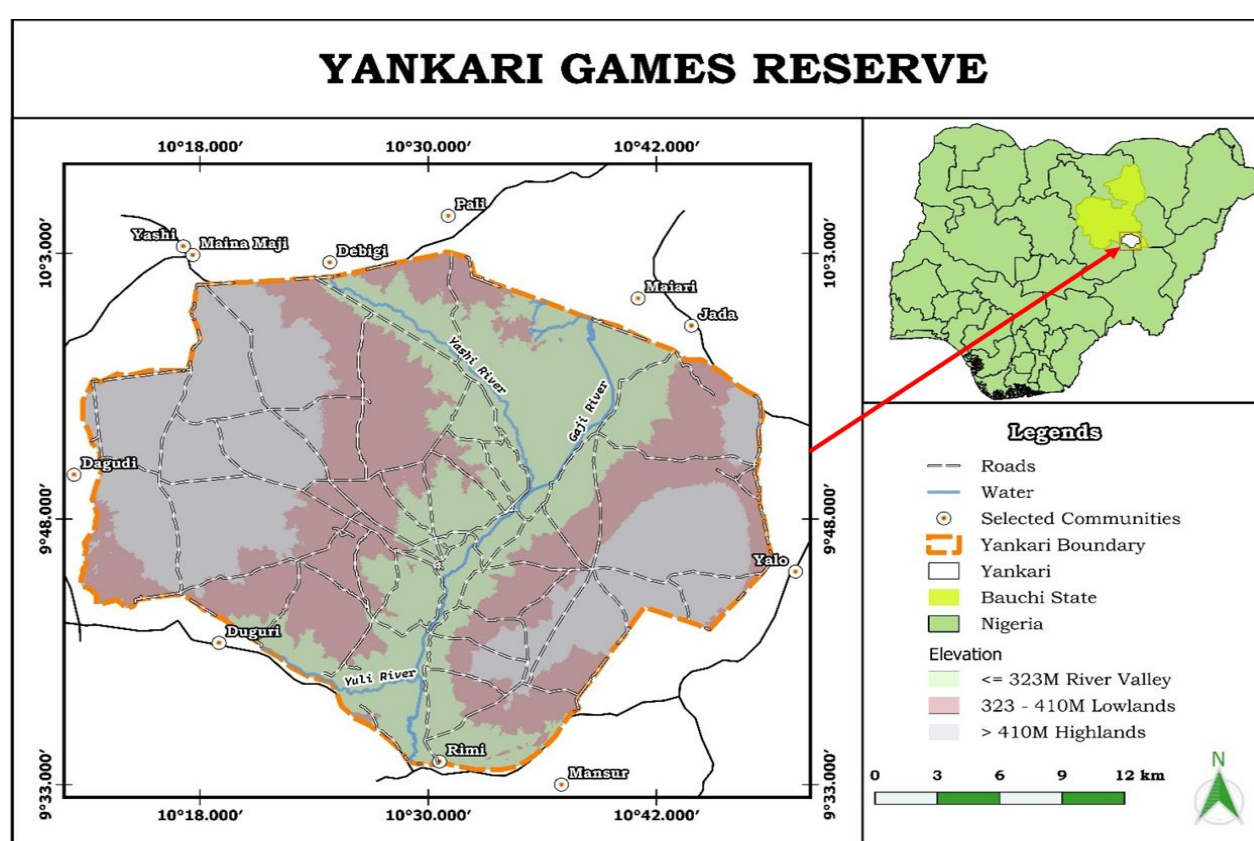


Fig. 1: Map showing the location of YGR in Bauchi State, Nigeria (Kabir Adelokun via QGIS)

- **Problem statement:** the continuous decline signifies a biodiversity crisis necessitating a need to determine the carnivore status and identify appropriate conservation actions.

Objectives

1. Assess the status of lions and other carnivores YGR.
2. Determine drivers of human-wildlife conflict.
3. Examine policy frameworks supporting human-carnivore coexistence in YGR.

Methods

Design: Mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative).

Data Collection:

Objective 1: Camera traps, Transect and callup survey.

Objective 2: Community engagement through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion.

Objective 3: SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis of policy documents.



Fig. 1: Images by author from field survey and stakeholder meetings

Results

Objective 1: Summary of carnivores detection in YGR

Common name	Scientific name	Status	Means of Observation
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Not observed	--
African Civet	<i>Civettictis Civetta</i>	Observed	Camera trap, call up response
Side-striped Jackal	<i>Canis adustus</i>	Observed	Camera trap, call-up response, prints
Large spotted genet	<i>Genetta thierryi</i>	Observed	Camera trap
Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	Observed	Camera trap
Caracal	<i>Caracal caracal</i>	Observed	Camera trap
Spotted Hyena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Observed	Camera trap, scat, prints
African Wild Dog	<i>Lycaon pictus</i>	Observed	Camera trap

Objective 2: Drivers of human-wildlife conflict

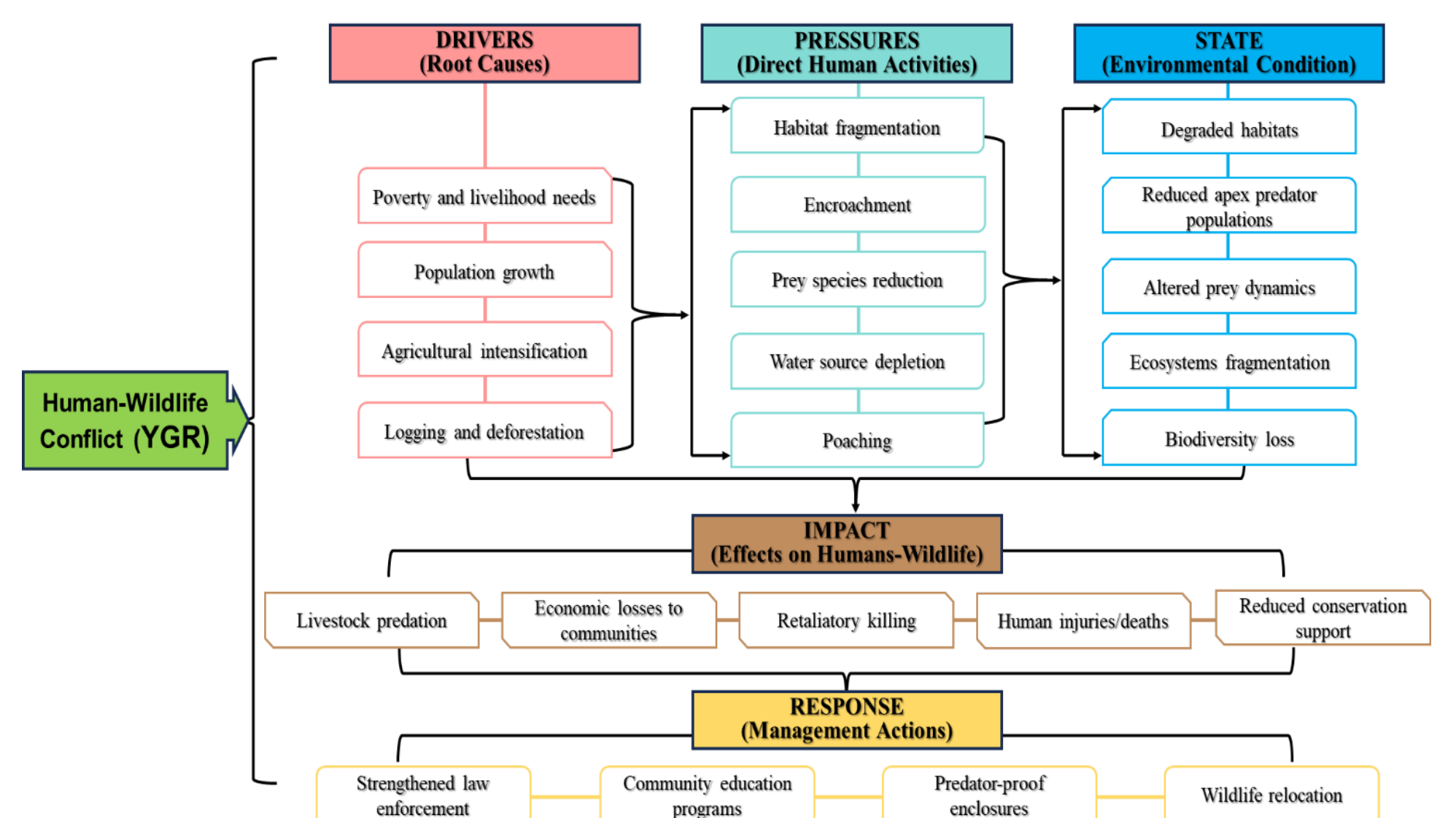


Fig. 2: The Drive-Pressure-State-Impact-Response framework illustrating the causal pathways of human-wildlife conflict in YGR.

Objective 3: Policy framework assessed reflects governance gaps, including weak enforcement and limited community benefit-sharing.

Conclusion and recommendations

Over the past three decades, YGR has undergone ecological and institutional decline, threatening carnivore persistence.

Recommendations for sustainable conservation:

1. Reinforce protected area boundaries before reintroduction plans
2. Integrate community collaboration to foster sustainable coexistence
3. Strengthen policy & management through review of policy and current managerial system.

Key stakeholders: Federal Ministry of Environment, Bauchi State Government, IUCN, WCS Nigeria, and YGR local communities.

Partner institutions:

