

Living on the Edge: Humans, Carnivores & Herbivores around Niokolo-Koba (Senegal)

Exploring ecological & social dynamics for coexistence around Senegal's largest protected area

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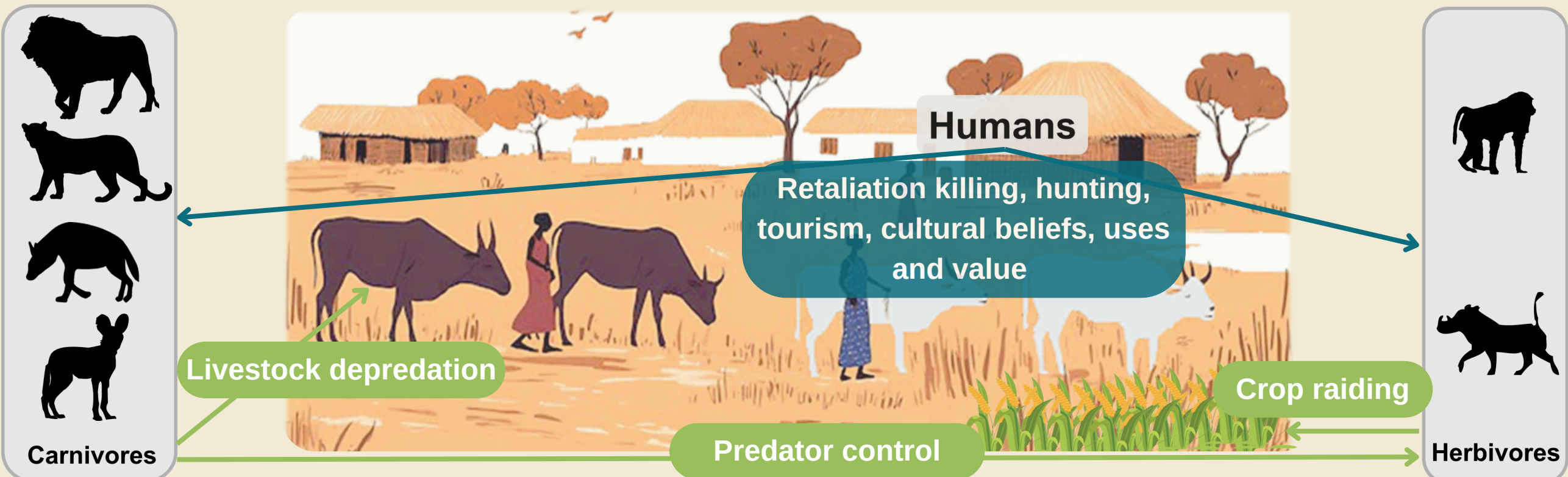
Background

At the edge of Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, 200+ villages live alongside a very rich wildlife community from lions and leopards to baboons and warthogs.

This is one of the **last strongholds of West African lions**, now slowly recovering after decades of decline.

As **people and wildlife increasingly share space**, interactions bring **risks** (crop & livestock losses) and **opportunities** (ecosystem regulation, cultural & symbolic values, tourism).

Yet, **coexistence is not only about ecology** — it is shaped by **people's perceptions, attitudes, and lived experiences** that determine whether interactions lead to **conflict or tolerance**.



Interlinked ecological (predator–herbivore) and social (perceptions–values) pathways shaping coexistence outcomes.

Understanding these interactions, values, and trade-offs is essential to promote inclusive and sustainable coexistence — not only by mitigating conflict, but by recognizing positive relationships and cultural values that can foster conservation.

Can cultural values foster tolerance?

Lion recovery → prey control? and/or Livestock losses?

Method

Objective 1 — People & Society
perceptions • attitudes • lived experiences • cultural values • gendered roles
through social survey in selected villages and weekly follow-up with local investigators

Objective 2 — Ecological monitoring
• 150 camera traps on the village/park interface → occupancy & activity overlap; comparison with park core
• Scat DNA analysis → determine carnivore diet (wild prey vs livestock)

Expected Insights

- Pathways linking ecology & perceptions
- Coexistence “hotspots” & risk areas
- Gendered understanding of tolerance & exposure
- Community-informed coexistence strategies

Combining ecology & perceptions to guide coexistence-based conservation and community wellbeing.

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