

Poverty, livelihoods and the conservation of nature in biodiversity hotspots around the world

*JETSKE BOUMA, K. J. JOY AND MARONEL STEYN**

CSIR. Natural Resources and the Environment

*Corresponding author: MSteyn@csir.co.za

Abstract

The high incidence of poverty in biodiversity hotspots around the world has given rise to a debate about the potential of integrated development-conservation approaches to help alleviate poverty and protect biodiversity at the same time. Specifically, involving local communities in the management of protected areas is expected to improve biodiversity protection and reduce poverty and possible adverse livelihood effects assuming that there are poverty-nature linkages and that local communities are willing to cooperate in rule enforcement and control. Using data from four biodiversity hotspots; around the world (South Africa, Costa Rica, Vietnam and India) the analysis in this paper indicates that livelihoods in biodiversity hotspots do not necessarily depend on nature and that for households to contribute to rule enforcement some conditions have to be met. In order to effectively improve biodiversity protection and alleviate poverty; specific attention needs to be paid to local community characteristics, household livelihood strategies, the organization of protected area management and the wider context in which decision-making takes place.