

Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK) is a national organization that coordinates activities of individual wildlife clubs in Kenya's schools, colleges, and universities. Established in 1966, WCK is the oldest and largest conservation organization for youths in Africa. Goals of WCK include spreading knowledge and interest among Kenya's youth about wildlife and the environment, creating awareness about diverse values of wildlife, and developing understanding of the need for wildlife conservation. Membership in wildlife clubs is voluntary and not restricted to students of biology or any other major. Not all schools and colleges in Kenya, however, have wildlife clubs. Kenya's commitment to wildlife conservation for monetary gains continues to draw criticism, especially among those who argue that wildlife has other non-economic values for why it should be conserved. WCK is thought to instill pro-conservation and pro-environmental beliefs among its membership but this view remains largely untested. This finding abstract uses data obtained from Kenyan youth to test the influence of WCK on beliefs about wildlife. Between May and August 2007, self-administered questionnaires were delivered to 400 (200 boys, 200 girls) randomly selected students in their final year of secondary school in Bungoma district of Kenya. Of these students, 200 were confirmed WCK members (from wildlife clubs in 10 schools) and 200 were non-members (from 10 schools without wildlife clubs). Respondents returned completed questionnaires to their class teachers who then delivered the questionnaires to the researchers. To ensure relatively equal spatial distribution of respondents, sampling was geographically dispersed by selecting schools throughout the district. The final sample size was $n = 378$ (192 WCK members, 186 non-WCK members) with a 95% response rate. To measure beliefs about wildlife, respondents rated the extent to which they agreed with five statements: (a) "you are proud of Kenya's wildlife"; (b) "you regard Kenya's wildlife as a prestigious national asset"; (c) "you consider Kenya's wildlife as nature's unique gift to the country"; (d) "you are happy that Kenya's wildlife has earned the country international recognition"; and (e) "you are proud that Kenya's wildlife includes all the 'big five' (elephant, lion, leopard, rhino, buffalo) of Africa." Responses were coded on 5-point scales of 1 "strongly agree" to 5 "strongly disagree" with 3 representing "neutral."