

© Kamla-Raj 2003

PRINT: ISSN 0972-0073 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6802

Anthropologist, 5 (2): 79-87 (2003)

DOI: 10.31901/24566802.2003/05.02.03

Traditional Range Condition and Trend Assessment: Lessons from Pokot and Il Chamus Pastoralists of Kenya

Vivian O. Wasonga and Robinson K. Ngugi and Aichi Kitalyi

KEY WORDS Indigenous. Technical Knowledge. Range Condition and Trend. Range Resource Management. Il Chamus; Pokot, Kenya

ABSTRACT This paper provides the results of a case study of some traditional range management methods of the Pokot and Il Chamus pastoralists of northwestern Kenya. The study focused on the factors used in monitoring and evaluating range condition and range condition trend, and seasonal range suitability to grazing by these communities. It is clear that these pastoralists have an intimate traditional and cultural attachment to resources at their disposal. They have, over time, devised techniques that ensure their survival under the highly vagarious environments; they are cognizant of changes and correlations in their rangelands, but may not understand causality. The study demonstrates that there are fundamental differences in the way these pastoral communities monitor and assess rangelands, compared to the western-oriented range scientists. For instance, pastoralists use livestock performance and ecological parameters as important indicators of range condition, while range scientists use plants. The results of this study support the theory of complementarity of modern scientific knowledge and traditional pastoral knowledge in pastoral development.

Authors' Addresses: **Vivian O. Wasonga and Robinson K. Nangi***, Department of Range Management, University of Nairobi, P.O. Box 29053, Nairobi, Kenya
Achi Kitalyi, Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA), P.O. Box 63403, Nairobi, Kenya