

CHANGING PLANET



Hadza hunter-gatherer tribe in Tanzania celebrate recognition of their land rights

In [Changing Planet](#) November 7, 2011 [0 Comments](#)



[Joanna Eede](#)



HADZA BOY EATING A FRESH
HONEYCOMB, YAEDA CHINI,
TANZANIA. © JOANNA EEDE

A couple of years ago, I sat with a group of Hadza hunters on a rocky outcrop in the bushland of north-west Tanzania, and listened to them talk about their homeland.

It was just after dawn in Yaeda Chini, an area that lies to the south of the Serengeti plains. The Hadza men were hunting for warthog in the relative cool of the day; the *kopje* afforded them a good vantage point across their territory. *'This is my home,'* one of the men said, making a sweeping gesture across the acacia

woodland, deep green from the recent rains, as far as the soda waters of Lake Eyasi. Beyond the lay the ramparts of the Great Rift Valley, and the red earth of the Iraqw people. *'Our grandparents lived here'*, he continued. *'I am part of the land. Without the land, there is no life.'*

The area he was talking about had, in fact, been the Hadza people's home for up to 40,000 years. Until the 1950s, they had survived entirely by hunting and gathering; the men hunting with bows and arrows made from giraffe tendons, the women gather roots and tubers from the arid ground. Recently, however, their very survival has been threatened by the encroachment of pastoralist tribes, who have destroyed much of the wildlife and plants on which the Hadza rely.

Now, in a victory for the Hadza and for tribal peoples across the world, two communities are celebrating the recognition by the Tanzanian government of their land rights. Land titles were formally handed over in a ceremony held in the Hadza community of Domongo. *'We are very happy,'* said one Hadza man. *'Now we need to make sure we get land titles for other Hadza communities.'*





MEET THE AUTHOR

Joanna Eede was an editorial consultant to Survival International with a particular interest in the relationship between man and nature and tribal peoples. She has created and edited three environmental books, including *Portrait of England* (Think Publishing, 2006) and *We are One: A Celebration of Tribal Peoples* (Quadrille, 2009). Joanna writes for newspapers and magazines on subjects such as the repatriation of wild Przewalski horses to Mongolia, the whales of the Alboran sea, the chimpanzees of the Mahale rainforest, uncontacted tribes of the Amazon rainforest and the Hadza hunter gatherer people of Tanzania. Future ideas include a book about Tibet's nomads.

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