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BUSHMEAT CRISIS TASK FORCE

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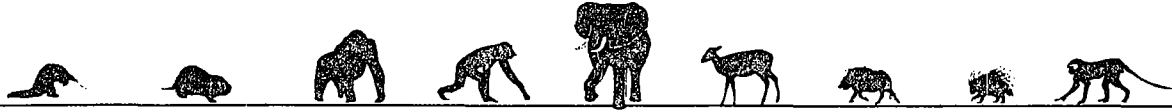
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BUSHMEAT

A WILDLIFE CRISIS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA AND AROUND THE WORLD



In Africa, the forest and shrub land is often referred to as 'the bush', thus wildlife and the meat derived from that wildlife is locally called 'bushmeat' (in French – *viande de brousse*). This term applies to all wildlife species including: elephant, gorilla, chimpanzee and other primates, forest antelope (duikers), porcupine, bush pig, cane rat, pangolin, monitor lizard, guinea fowl, etc.

Over 24 million people live within the forested regions of Central Africa, 40-60% live in cities and towns, and most rely on the meat of wildlife as a primary source of animal protein. Forest antelope (duikers), pigs, and primates are most often eaten, and as much as 1 million metric tons of wildlife is killed for food in Central Africa each year. In West African nations human population densities are high (25-78 persons per square kilometer) compared to countries in the Congo Basin (5-20 persons per square kilometer). West African wildlife populations have been so depleted by years of unsustainable hunting for meat, that bushmeat is no longer the most important source of protein in families' diets. When bushmeat is eaten, ungulates and primates have been replaced by rodents as the most commonly eaten wild animals.

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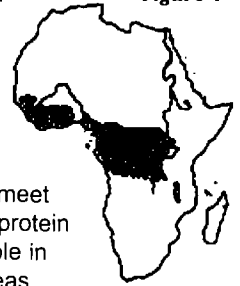


What is the Bushmeat Crisis and Why is it Important to Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation?

Though deforestation and habitat loss are often cited as the primary causes of local wildlife extinction, hunting for both local consumption and large commercial markets has become the most immediate threat to the future of wildlife in the Congo Basin in the next 5-15 years. It has already resulted in widespread local extinctions throughout the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem of

West Africa (Figure 1: Map of West and Central Africa highlighting Congo Basin and Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem).

Figure 1



Hunting of wildlife to meet people's demand for protein may still be sustainable in the few remaining areas where population densities are less than 2people/ km², trade routes are poorly established, and human population growth rates are low. The scale of the commercial bushmeat trade now occurring in West and Central Africa, is driven by markets with high human densities and growth rates. This commercial market threatens the survival of many species, including several unique to the dense

forested regions of Africa. While deforestation is an obvious menace to wildlife dependent on these habitats, hunting constitutes a comparable threat to the ecosystem itself. Even where tree cover is relatively intact, we find forests with no large animals – this is known as **Empty Forest Syndrome**.

(continued on p. 2)

The commercial bushmeat trade threatens wildlife populations across West and Central Africa.

Why is it a Crisis?

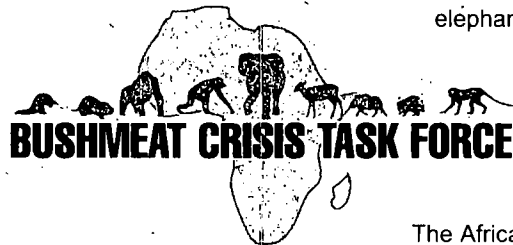
Wildlife has been hunted for food ever since humans first evolved, and wildlife is still viewed as a resource 'free' for the taking in many areas. Today in West and Central Africa, bushmeat continues to be an economically important food and trade item for thousands of poor rural and urban families, and it's a status symbol for urban elites trying to retain links to 'the village' – often commanding extremely high prices in city restaurants. Virtually uncontrolled access to forest wildlife (i.e., almost anyone can go hunting anywhere), rising demand for bushmeat, lack of economic options for rural and urban communities, the absence of affordable substitutes, the opening up of 'frontier' forests by logging and mining companies, and the complicity of government law makers and law enforcers, are the most important factors driving commercial hunting and militating against wildlife conservation. (See BCTF Fact Sheet on Logging).



CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS, ZOOLOGICAL PARKS, ANIMAL WELFARE ADVOCATES, AND MEDICAL RESEARCHERS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ADDRESS THE COMMERCIAL BUSHMEAT CRISIS IN TROPICAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES

On 19 February 1999, 34 experts, representing 28 different organizations and agencies, assembled at the offices of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) in Silver Spring, Maryland to discuss the commercial bushmeat crisis in tropical African countries and its impact on threatened and endangered species, particularly great apes. Participants in this meeting and many others in a growing worldwide network of concerned conservationists, zoo biologists, animal welfare advocates, and medical researchers, have developed the following consensus statement:

While we have our differences in approach, there is strong consensus that the commercial bushmeat trade in tropical African countries is having dire consequences, not only for wildlife, but also for people in Africa and throughout the world. If current unsustainable rates of exploitation continue, the commercial bushmeat trade will decimate, if not eliminate, some endangered species, such as great apes, forest elephants, and other fauna upon which the health of forest ecosystems depend. Indeed, it may have already caused the extinction of Miss Waldron's red colobus monkey, which formerly existed in the forested zones of Ivory Coast and Ghana.



The African great apes—chimpanzees, gorillas, and bonobos—are at particular risk. In fact, this illegal trade is destroying free-ranging populations of chimpanzees just when a proposal has been made that their protection in the wild may be important for understanding how to control the spread of HIV and other emerging infectious diseases in humans. Moreover, the killing and dressing of chimpanzee meat in the bush may present a human health risk for those engaged in this trade and is a potential point of entry for new diseases into the global human population.

Therefore, this group of concerned organizations and individuals is united in calling for immediate steps to halt the negative consequences of the illegal commercial trade in endangered and threatened species. The most pressing of these steps is the need for a wide array of mechanisms for public education in Africa and throughout the world as to the causes, consequences, and appropriate solutions to this crisis. This public education campaign should begin as soon as possible.

The governments of developed nations and, in particular, multilateral aid agencies, should redouble their commitment to conservation and sustainable development in tropical African countries. They, along with corporate donors and foundations, should provide the human and financial resources necessary to seek workable solutions. Central and West African governments and conservation organizations have helped to establish a network of protected areas. However, there is presently inadequate political will and financial support to maintain a viable protected area system. Until responsible environmental action is a condition

for international development loans and financing, until African governments take full responsibility for enforcing existing laws and maintaining vigilance against corruption, and until policy makers put the value of protecting wildlife ahead of immediate financial gain, there will be no way to stem the loss of tropical Africa's irreplaceable biological heritage, including our closest living relatives, the great apes. Logging companies, mining firms, and other extractive industries bear a significant responsibility for the growth of the unregulated commercial bushmeat trade. They must ensure that illegal hunting of threatened and endangered species is prohibited in their concessions and minimize their impact on wildlife by providing alternative sources of food for their employees. They should also do all they can to contribute to equitable, transparent, and lasting solutions.

All of the organizations and individuals endorsing this statement will ensure that a common response to both the conservation and medical challenges is built upon a foundation of respect for the people who live in the areas in question. Solutions to the current bushmeat crisis must be developed in cooperation with the citizens of Africa, with their needs and aspirations in mind. This is especially important given that bushmeat has provided and continues to provide an important food source for the rural inhabitants of bushmeat trade countries.

Over the next several weeks and months, a Task Force will be formed work with others to better define both the immediate, as well as the medium and long-term components of this important campaign. In the meantime, we will be working with like-minded organizations throughout the world to help respond to this crisis. **There is hope for a solution but action must be taken soon.**

ORGANIZATIONAL SIGNATORIES

African Wildlife Foundation
American Society of Primatologists
American Zoo and Aquarium Association
Biosynergy Institute - Bushmeat Project
Bonobo Conservation Initiative
Bonobo Protection Fund
Center for Applied Biodiversity Science
Conservation International
The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
ECOFAC
European Association of Zoos and Aquaria
Fauna and Flora International
The Fund for Animals
The Gorilla Foundation
Greenpeace International

The Humane Society of the United States/Humane Society International
International Fund for Animal Welfare
International Gorilla Conservation Programme
Jane Goodall Institute
Nederlandse Vereniging voor Hulp aan Dieren
The Oakland Zoo
The Primate Society of Great Britain
Rainforest Action Network
Society for Conservation Biology
Tierhilfswerk Austria
Wildlife Conservation Society
World Society for the Protection of Animals
World Wildlife Fund, U.S.

This Consensus Statement was also signed by numerous conservation experts and professionals. For a complete list of the individual signatories, please contact the BCTF office or visit our website: www.bushmeat.org

The primary goal of the **Bushmeat Crisis Task Force (BCTF)** is to facilitate the work of its members in identifying and implementing effective and appropriate controls over the commercial exploitation of endangered and threatened species.

BUSHMEAT FOCUS ISSUE: HEALTH and DISEASE

SPECIES INVOLVED: Non-human Primates, Humans

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED: Rural and urban communities in Africa, World Population, Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health (USA), University and Government Health Researchers around the Globe.

KEY CONCEPTS

◆ Wildlife, particularly primates, harbor diseases which can jump between species (i.e. between humans and non-human primates) and cause new and potentially lethal diseases such as AIDS and Ebola.

◆ Hunting, butchering and eating bushmeat places people

at increased risk of contracting virulent animal borne diseases

◆ Logging has opened up new areas of forest to commercial hunting, increasing the risk that humans will be exposed to new animal borne diseases

◆ Bushmeat is an important source of dietary protein for most Central Africans, and they

are unlikely to stop eating bushmeat unless other cheaper substitutes are available

◆ Increasing our understanding of the factors likely to promote transmission of diseases from wildlife to humans is critical to evaluating the public health risks associated with the commercial trade in bushmeat



Researchers have identified a link between viruses in primates, including chimpanzees and AIDS in humans

RUGGIERO

SUMMARY: Bushmeat provides an important source of protein for many rural and urban families in Central Africa. However, studies are beginning to indicate considerable health risks associated with the processing and consumption of wildlife. Evidence of simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) infection has been reported for 26 different species of African non-human primates, many of them are regularly hunted and sold as bushmeat. Two of these viruses, SIVcpz from chimpanzees and SIVsm from sooty mangabeys, are the cause of AIDS in humans. Together, they have been transmitted to humans on at least seven occasions. This has scientific as well as public health implications. Additional reports are beginning to emerge connecting non-human primates with Ebola virus as well. Deaths have also resulted from outbreaks of diarrhea linked with the consumption of bushmeat.

BACKGROUND: Emerging infectious diseases are a major threat to global human health. While dramatic outbreaks of Ebola virus or Sin Nombre (hanta) virus have attracted widespread media attention, the disease with the greatest global impact to have emerged recently is the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). First recognized in 1981, AIDS represents the endstage of infection with one of two lentiviruses (human immunodeficiency virus types 1 or 2) of zoonotic (animal) origin. HIV-1 has spread to most parts of the world, while HIV-2 has remained largely restricted to West Africa. On a global scale, HIV/AIDS represents the most important public health threat of the new millennium. These recent research results emerge at a time when in many places human populations are increasing and availability of resources to meet basic nutritional needs are decreasing. Finding ways to reduce human health threats potentially caused by the bushmeat trade while addressing protein needs for millions of people is an urgent and a global imperative. Bushmeat, in Central Africa, constitutes ~80% of all meat consumed and provides poor rural and

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What is the Bushmeat Crisis?

In Africa, forest is often referred to as 'the bush', thus wildlife and the meat derived from it is referred to as 'bushmeat' (in French - viande de brousse). This term applies to all wildlife species, a number of which are threatened or endangered species, used for meat including: elephant; gorilla; chimpanzee and other primates; forest antelope (duikers); porcupine; bush pig; cane rat; pangolin; monitor lizard; guinea fowl; etc. Though habitat loss is often cited as the primary cause of wildlife extinction, commercial hunting for the meat of wild animals has become the most immediate threat to the future of wildlife in the Congo Basin in the next 5-10 years and has already resulted in widespread local extinctions throughout West Africa.



urban families with as much as 50% of daily protein requirements. Forest antelope (duikers) are the most popular species to hunt because they are relatively large and abundant, and are easily trapped, at little cost, using wire snares. As antelope numbers decline hunters shift to primates, which are easy but more expensive to hunt as each animal costs a shotgun shell. Eventually as all large animals are depleted people resort to hunting and selling rodents. Given the greater genetic proximity of apes and monkeys to humans, people are most at risk of contracting animal borne diseases when bushmeat markets have a high ratio of primates.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING AND ACTIVITIES:

Commercial logging of tropical forests represents an important economic activity for several African countries. Logging operations facilitate commercial hunting by building roads into once relatively inaccessible areas of forest with abundant wildlife, and by allowing hunters to travel on logging vehicles and to transport their bushmeat to urban markets. This increased penetration of tropical forest has the potential to increase human exposure to new infectious agents. In west central Africa alone, numerous primate species known to harbor SIV, including colobus, sun-tailed and DeBrazza monkeys as well as mandrills, drills, chimpanzees, and red-capped mangabeys, are regularly hunted and sold at local bushmeat markets. Certain of the simian viruses have properties that render them at least candidates for natural transmission. Thus, although there is no evidence that zoonotic transmissions have occurred as a direct result of this commercialized bushmeat trade, the potential for human exposure has increased, as have the conditions that might support the emergence of new zoonotic infections. A number of studies are currently being undertaken to investigate the linkages between wildlife diseases and human health. Such research is essential in addressing many important questions concerning wildlife – human interactions. Equally important are projects to develop and test approaches to meeting Central Africans' basic nutritional and protein needs, whilst shifting consumer preferences away from eating bushmeat.

SOLUTIONS:

The events that brought about the HIV-1 pandemic may never be fully elucidated, but regardless of what ultimately caused its explosive spread, conditions that promote and sustain zoonotic disease emergence have likely increased rather than decreased in the past two decades. Studies are thus needed to determine whether transmission of SIVs to humans is presently occurring, and if so, what the prevalence of infection and associated risk factors are. Studies of this kind will require the development of diagnostic assays capable of recognizing a wide range of lentiviral infections in both humans and primates, including the development and application of noninvasive approaches to screen primate populations in the wild for evidence of SIV infection. Addressing the convergence of issues such as environmental change, conservation of endangered primate species, commercial deforestation, and the origins of HIV will also require interdisciplinary collaboration of scientists with expertise in anthropology, primatology, epidemiology, virology and conservation biology. It will demand an emphasis on institution development and training in the areas concerned, sensitivity to feelings of stigma and to different attitudes about some of these issues, and rational discussions concerning resource allocations based on scientific and public health priorities.



Handling and eating bushmeat, particularly primates, may place people at increased risk of contracting a lethal zoonotic disease.

What Can You Do?

Governments and Donors: Support further research focusing on links between human health and the bushmeat trade – including both disease transmission and nutritional needs. Assist the private sector to develop viable alternatives to bushmeat and mechanisms for making these protein sources available and affordable to rural and urban communities.

Private Sector: Work with government and donors to increase consumer access to alternative sources of protein, and halt the facilitation of hunting within logging and mining concessions.

If you are interested in this bushmeat focus issue, you may also be interested in the following BCTF Fact Sheets: **Logging • Economics • Social Ecology**

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BUSHMEAT FOCUS ISSUE: ECO-ECONOMICS

SPECIES INVOLVED: Rodents to Elephants

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED: Rural Communities, Urban Communities, Hunters, Traders, Market Sellers, Logging Companies, Development Agencies and Donors

KEY CONCEPTS

❖ Lack of economic options and the value of bushmeat relative to its production and transportation costs make participation in the commercial bushmeat trade attractive to poor rural and urban people. Moreover, profits from the bushmeat trade attract non-local, commercial hunters who are less likely to practice restraint when hunting.

❖ In Africa, as in much of the rest of the world, growing urban populations and rising household incomes drive the increasing demand for meat. With wildlife "free for the taking," and inadequate production and marketing of alternative protein sources, bushmeat will continue to fill this growing consumer demand for meat.

❖ Most people eat bushmeat because it is the cheapest and most readily available source of meat. Some are willing to use scarce financial resources to eat a bushmeat meal. In other parts of the world people shift away from eating bushmeat as soon as other sources of protein become both reliably available and cheaper.



Fresh and smoked bushmeat is available every day in markets across West and Central Africa and plays an increasingly important role in the economies of families and communities.

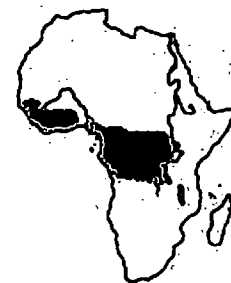
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SUMMARY: Economics drives the bushmeat crisis, although cultural preferences may also play a role. Growing demand for meat in most cities provides new economic opportunities for people whose traditional sources of income have withered as agricultural prices have fallen and jobs have become increasingly scarce. Although wealthier people will pay high prices for gorilla, snake, and porcupine in the capital cities, most bushmeat is eaten by families who cannot afford the more costly beef, chicken and pork. Economics can also be a key component in developing solutions to the bushmeat crisis. Cooperative efforts to increase law enforcements and to tax commercial trade in wildlife will contribute to solving the bushmeat crisis. Such activities would reduce the supply and increase the price of bushmeat. This would encourage consumers to seek alternatives, and thus help protect wildlife populations. Local production of economically affordable alternatives is vital, but may need to be subsidized initially to encourage production and keep alternative protein prices significantly lower than that for bushmeat. Reducing supply and shifting demand to locally produced alternatives are the keys to curbing the commercial trade in bushmeat without jeopardizing the health and welfare of Central Africans.

BACKGROUND: Evidence from other parts of the world suggests that poor families initially consume more bushmeat as their incomes rise. Consumption only begins to drop when families become wealthy enough to switch to eating more expensive cultivated sources of protein. Bushmeat consumption, therefore, appears to follow an inverted U pattern with income. If this pattern is also true for Central and West Africa, then changes in livelihoods of rural and urban families may increase or decrease their consumption of bushmeat, depending on where they are on the income axis:

Though people have eaten bushmeat on a subsistence basis for millennia, only recently has it become such an important source of income for so many people.

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In rural areas, people once made money growing and selling a variety of products, including: rice, cotton, cacao, coffee and peanuts. Over the past 20 years, livelihoods have collapsed as infrastructure has decayed, prices fluctuated and the currency devalued. With farming unprofitable and limited off-farm jobs available, many rural people have turned to commercial hunting and trading of bushmeat. This is an attractive option at present because high returns can be made from a relatively small investment, there are only limited controls on hunting and trading of bushmeat, and logging companies provide hunters with access to once isolated regions of the forest, and traders with the means to transport bushmeat to markets. Urban populations fuel the demand for bushmeat. These communities have grown substantially since the 1960s and their buying power has fluctuated with the unstable economy. Bushmeat is meeting urban demand for meat because it is relatively cheap and available, particularly since logging roads and vehicles have increased hunters access to once isolated forests and their wildlife populations.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING AND ACTIVITIES:

Central Africans typically eat as much meat as many Europeans and North Americans (30-70 kg/person/year). Most of this meat comes from wildlife. Approximately 30 million people live in the forests of Central Africa, and they eat approximately 1.1 million metric tons of wildlife each year – the equivalent of almost 4 million cattle. The estimated annual value of the bushmeat trade in West and Central Africa could exceed 1 billion US dollars. A hunter can make \$300-1000 per year from commercial hunting. This is more than the average annual household income for the region and is comparable to the salaries of those responsible for controlling the bushmeat trade. Hunters regularly reinvest their profits on improved technologies, which makes killing wildlife easier, more profitable and less sustainable. The difference between subsistence and commercial hunting is becoming less clear as marketing opportunities increase. Traders, transporters, market sellers, restaurateurs, and their families all benefit from the commercial trade in bushmeat – and we must recognize that all of their incomes would be affected if laws against the trade were strictly enforced. As demand for bushmeat increases, more people will be encouraged to become involved in the trade, increasing the pressure on wildlife populations, threatening the survival of rare species, and jeopardizing future access to ecological, nutritional and income benefits from wildlife. A few pilot projects have begun in West and Central Africa to assess the extent and impacts of the bushmeat trade, to place controls on the commercial trade, and to develop alternative sources of protein. Widespread collaborative efforts are necessary to develop and implement bushmeat control and wildlife management activities and to share the lessons learned from such activities.

RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS:

Efforts to constrain the supply of bushmeat and enforce laws that prohibit the commercial trade in bushmeat will, in the short-term, decrease the amount of bushmeat available in markets. However, if demand for bushmeat is strong and substitutes do not exist, bushmeat prices will likely increase, providing incentives for people to enter the trade and find ways to circumvent controls. Consequently, solutions to the bushmeat crisis must include ensuring that consumers have access to alternative protein sources that are both palatable and priced competitively with bushmeat. Unless people have economically viable alternatives they will continue, not surprisingly, to demand wildlife as an affordable and tasty source of meat.



New technologies such as wire snares, enable hunters to kill a wide range of animals at very low cost. Ironically, this intensified, commercial hunting is often highly wasteful (up to 80% rot on the snare and never make it to market), and is both ecologically and economically unsustainable over the long term.

What Can You Do?

Grassroots: Contact the BCTF for more information about activities and programs in your area. Contact decision-makers and let them know you are concerned about the bushmeat trade and the effects it will have on the health and well-being of rural communities and wildlife populations across West and Central Africa.

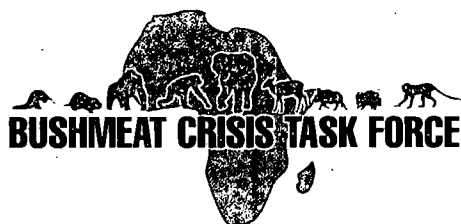
Governments and Donors: Commit technical and financial resources to ensure that communities in West and Central Africa have access to alternative and affordable sources of protein, and support policies that reflect the needs and concerns of bushmeat producers, traders, re-sellers and consumers.

Private Sector: Commit to providing alternative protein sources for your workers and their families; stop the use of company vehicles to transport bushmeat to urban markets, and design and implement wildlife management plans within your concession.

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BUSHMEAT FOCUS ISSUE: SOCIAL ECOLOGY

SPECIES INVOLVED: All bushmeat species: rodents, giant pangolins, brush-tailed porcupine, duikers (forest antelope), monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas, elephants, and humans

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED: Rural and urban communities, indigenous groups, conservation and development organizations

KEY CONCEPTS

◆ Bushmeat is an important source of protein for poor rural and urban families in West and Central Africa.

◆ Many communities will continue to hunt even where alternatives exist as bushmeat

and hunting are culturally and socially important.

◆ When people do not have stable land tenure or livelihood security, they are less likely to care for the resources in the areas where they reside.

◆ Population growth has a major effect on the demand for

bushmeat. Even if per capita consumption remains stable, increasing population can have a devastating effect on wildlife and natural resources. More land must be cleared for housing and agriculture, and more forest resources must be extracted to meet basic needs.



VERHOEF

Bushmeat is an important social, cultural, nutritional, and economic component to the lives of many rural communities in West and Central Africa.

SUMMARY: Rural and urban people are inextricably tied to the current bushmeat crisis in West and Central Africa. They form the network of hunters, traders, truck drivers, market-resellers, restaurateurs and consumers, that moves wildlife from the forest to the urban cooking pot. All participants in this trade network rely on bushmeat for some of their livelihoods. Wildlife provides protein, cultural and religious linkages, and a source of income for many families. People do not typically view bushmeat hunting as a problem. Rather wildlife is viewed more as crop pests, threats to their lives and livelihoods, an inexhaustible resource free-for-the-taking, and a new source of income. However, growing human population and changing economic conditions are driving demand for bushmeat that now exceeds the rate that hunted wildlife are replaced within the forest. Unsustainable hunting for meat will mean the loss of a valuable source of food and income for the huge number of families involved in bushmeat trade networks. Finding ways to conserve threatened and endangered wildlife species, without compromising the health and welfare of poor rural and urban families is a challenge. Shifting demand to locally produced alternatives to bushmeat and revitalizing the traditional agricultural economies of recent entrants into the bushmeat trade, are the keys to curbing the commercial trade in bushmeat without jeopardizing the health and security of West and Central Africans.

BACKGROUND: Wildlife species have held great importance for forest-dwelling peoples for millennia. Duikers (forest antelopes), monkeys, rodents and bushpigs provide people with sources of protein, cultural and social artifacts and now, as sources of cash when sold to bushmeat markets. Hunting is vital to families without access to agricultural markets, or to those too poor to purchase other sources of meat. Hunting is inextricably woven into many societies. Animal parts, such as horns, feathers or bones are a crucial part of many cultural and religious ceremonies.

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In Africa, forest is often referred to as 'the bush', thus wildlife and the meat derived from it is referred to as 'bushmeat' (in French - *viande de brousse*). This term applies to all wildlife species, a number of which are threatened or endangered species, used for meat including: elephant; gorilla; chimpanzee and other primates; forest antelope (duikers); porcupine; bush pig; cane rat; pangolin; monitor lizard; guinea fowl; etc. Though habitat loss is often cited as the primary cause of wildlife extinction, commercial hunting for the meat of wild animals has become the most immediate threat to the future of wildlife in the Congo Basin in the next 5-10 years and has already resulted in widespread local extinctions throughout West Africa.



Wildlife and bushmeat are an important component of subsistence communities in West and Central Africa.



In areas where people live at low densities and can rotate their usage of forest resources, wildlife populations do not seem to suffer much damage. However, increasing population densities and unstable land tenure risks depleting the wildlife upon which many communities depend for their way-of-life and cultural identity. Halting unsustainable hunting and helping to retain the cultural value of wildlife is a challenge when many people involved in the commercial trade in bushmeat view wildlife as abundant, inexhaustible, and free to be used.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING AND ACTIVITIES:

Livelihood insecurity, and absence of land tenure facilitate the unsustainable commercial trade of bushmeat. Poor people with few job opportunities see hunting or trading or re-selling bushmeat as a source of income to meet today's critical needs, and, not surprisingly, are less concerned that their actions risk forfeiting their livelihood in the future. Similarly, families without the legal or practical ability to restrict who hunts how much in their forest, are encouraged to hunt all the wildlife they can as quickly as possible, before others do.

Conservation and development organizations (both governmental and nongovernmental) must tread carefully when working with people on the bushmeat issue. All of us resent "outsiders" imposing restrictions on our behavior that seem artificial and unconnected to our personal situations, needs and realities. Building relationships and capacity among all key stakeholder groups enables the development of appropriate solutions that can link resource use regulations with activities that offer alternatives sources of protein and economic opportunities.

RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS:

Working with all participants in the commercial bushmeat trade to increase livelihood and resource access security will increase the success of any projects that seek to decrease the quantity of wildlife hunted for food. Targeting development activities to draw population pressure away from fragile areas, and promoting the use of family planning can help secure access to forest resources over the long term. People must have access to alternative, economically competitive, and palatable protein sources, for bushmeat consumption to decrease.

What Can You Do?

Grassroots: Educate yourself and your community about the bushmeat trade and how it affects local communities in West and Central Africa. Keep yourselves informed about livelihood security and land tenure issues, and let other people know that the welfare of African communities and wildlife is important to you.

Donors: Commit resources to increase land tenure and livelihood security in West and Central Africa, to enhance the ability of governments to enforce existing wildlife laws, and to developing new sources of protein for African communities.

Governments: Commit to supporting African governments in their agreement to manage wildlife sustainably, according to the Yaoundé declaration signed in March 1999, and to enforcing and legitimizing other wildlife laws.

Non-Government Organizations:

Collaborate with national governments and other NGOs to develop projects to curb the export of bushmeat from forest communities, especially logging concessions and to ensure local people's land tenure and access to protein sources.

Industry: Ensure that local people working for industry have access to forest products following a collaborative management scheme, and access to adequate protein sources. Allocate a percentage of capital to wildlife habitat restoration and protection. Ensure or adopt sustainable management practices in extraction of forest resources.

you are interested in this bushmeat focus issue, you may also be interested in the following BCTF Fact Sheets:

URL: www.bushmeat.org

Health • Eco-Economics • Logging



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The Bushmeat Crisis Task Force (BCTF) is a project of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization exempt from federal income tax under the Internal Revenue Code. BCTF is operated in conjunction with, and supported by, its task force members.

The primary goal of the **Bushmeat Crisis Task Force (BCTF)** is to facilitate the work of its members in identifying and implementing effective and appropriate controls over the commercial exploitation of endangered and threatened species.

BUSHMEAT FOCUS ISSUE: The Role of the Logging Industry

SPECIES INVOLVED: All Flora and Fauna — Entire Ecosystem

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED: Local communities, international timber producers, timber product traders and consumers, producer and consumer country governments, World Bank, Multilateral Development Banks, International Monetary Fund, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), African Timber Organization, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).

KEY CONCEPTS

◆ After oil and minerals, logging typically provides the next significant source of national revenue for the densely forested countries of West and Central Africa, and will continue to do so for at least the next 25-50 years.

◆ Road construction associated with selective logging dramatically increases hunter access to isolated sectors of the forest, and decreases the cost of transporting bushmeat to urban

markets, effectively increasing the supply to, and profitability of the bushmeat trade.

◆ Per capita bushmeat consumption is highest in logging concessions, because the large numbers of company workers can afford to eat more meat than poorer unemployed families, have the money to purchase guns and ammunition, and they have motorized access to the forest to hunt.

◆ Logging companies are the de facto managers of most of the

remaining relatively intact blocks of forest outside of protected areas and have a key role to play in ensuring that logging practices do not jeopardize the survival of wildlife populations within their concessions.

◆ Public advocacy has encouraged several logging companies to partner with conservation organizations. Such companies are developing and testing approaches to curb the export of bushmeat from concessions and to decrease bushmeat consumption by loggers and their families.



Logging company vehicles and road systems coupled with lack of enforcement and increased demand have facilitated the dramatic increase in commercial exploitation of wildlife in West and Central Africa.

SUMMARY: Logging is an economically important land use throughout West and Central Africa, and a major threat to wildlife. Present selective logging practices not only result in increased consumption of bushmeat within concession areas, but also facilitate the supply of bushmeat to urban markets and enhance the profitability of the trade. With assistance from governments and conservation NGOs, logging companies are beginning to alter their practices so that they do not directly or indirectly promote the unsustainable consumption of bushmeat, thereby minimizing the impact of logging on forest wildlife. Widespread adoption and enforcement of appropriate forest and wildlife management policies and practices is essential to effectively control the commercial bushmeat trade.

BACKGROUND: The tropical forests of West and Central Africa cover an area of over 2 million km² — almost four times the size of France. Although as many as 80 species of trees are logged commercially in these regions, less than 5 account for the majority of wood exports. In Cameroon, Sapelli (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*) and Ayous (*Triplochiton scleroxylon*) comprise over 1/3rd of all log exports. In Gabon, Okoumé (*Aucoumea klaineana*) accounts for over 70% of exports. Logging progresses like a wave over the landscape as timber companies enter into unlogged areas in search of the few valuable trees that are scattered in low density throughout the forest. Once these are logged the company quickly moves on to the next area. To find and harvest these individual trees, loggers must construct numerous survey trails and roads. This road-building both heavily fragments the forest, and opens it up to hunters. A hunting trip that might have taken days to complete before the arrival of logging, may be reduced to a few hours when the hunter can hitch a ride on a company vehicle.

continued...



What is the Bushmeat Crisis?

In Africa, forest is often referred to as 'the bush', thus wildlife and the meat derived from it is referred to as 'bushmeat' (in French - *viande de brousse*). This term applies to all wildlife species, a number of which are threatened or endangered species, used for meat including: elephant; gorilla; chimpanzee and other primates; forest antelope (duikers); porcupine; bush pig; cane rat; pangolin; monitor lizard; guinea fowl; etc. Though habitat loss is often cited as the primary cause of wildlife extinction, commercial hunting for the meat of wild animals has become the most immediate threat to the future of wildlife in the Congo Basin in the next 5-10 years and has already resulted in widespread local extinctions throughout West Africa.

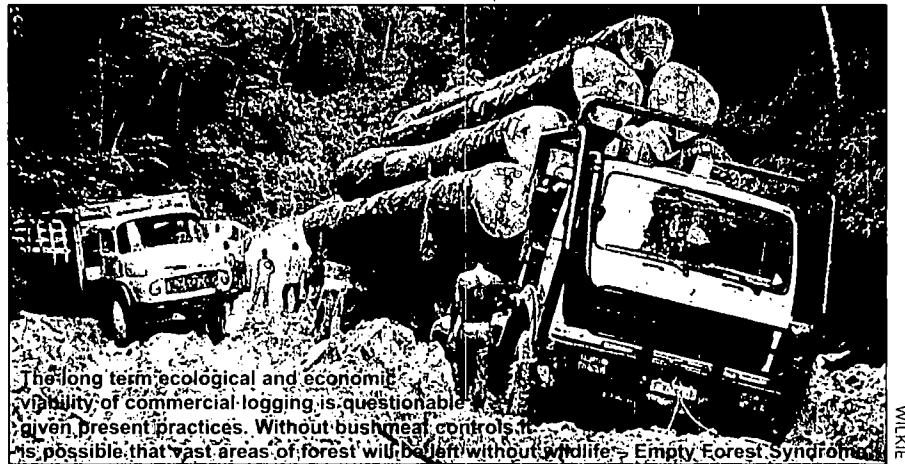


Moreover, with the help of logging company drivers and their vehicles, hunters no longer have to carry the dead animal(s) for long distances and therefore tend to kill many more animals on each trip. Logging companies not only directly increase demand for meat by hiring a large workforce, they also greatly facilitate their workers' entry into the commercial trade to supply bushmeat to urban markets. This same scenario existed in West Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, and contributed to the widespread and dramatic declines in wildlife populations evidenced in West African forests today.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING AND ACTIVITIES:

Decades of research and subsidies have convincingly demonstrated that natural forest management for timber is both economically and ecologically untenable. Yet, it may be possible to manage timber harvesting to generate a relatively constant, and economically viable stream of marketable wood, accepting that tree species composition will change within the logged forest, but ensuring that logging practices do not result in significant impacts on wildlife populations. The majority of large, relatively intact blocks of forest outside of protected areas, that comprise less than 6% of the landscape in Central Africa, are currently being logged or are earmarked for logging. It is critical that logging companies modify their practices to minimize the impact on wildlife, and that protected areas are provided with funding sufficient to ensure the long-term persistence of forest plants and animals. The role of protected areas in conserving forest biodiversity is particularly important in West Africa where less than 8% of the post-Pleistocene forest remains, and protected areas constitute the last bastions for forest dependent species. Advocacy and media attention at the international level recently has encouraged several multinational logging companies to develop partnerships with conservation NGOs to design and implement pilot activities to curb the flow of bushmeat from concessions, and to provide logging companies workers and their families with alternatives to bushmeat. Governments and donors are also working with trade associations to develop a 'code of good conduct' for all logging companies active in the region.

COMMENDED SOLUTIONS: Logging companies provide revenues and employment essential to the economies of West and Central Africa, and have a major role to play in determining the future state of forests and wildlife management in the region. Providing logging companies with incentives to minimize impacts on plant and animal communities within concessions, to establish long-term wildlife management plans, to set aside unlogged refuges for rare or threatened species, to halt the transportation of hunters and bushmeat on logging vehicles, to deny hunters road access to logged forests, and to seek ways to provide company employees with alternative sources of protein, are all important steps in mitigating the adverse impacts of logging on wildlife.



What Can You Do?

Grassroots: Use your buying power as a consumer to support the exclusive use of timber and wood products that have been certified regarding both forest and wildlife management practices.

Governments and Donors: Continue efforts with the industry to develop, implement, and monitor a logging 'code of good conduct.' Explore the use of conservation bonds as an revenue neutral incentive for logging companies to adopt good conduct practices.

Private Sector: Commit to ensuring that company employees reduce their consumption of bushmeat, and prevent the use of company vehicles to transport hunters into the forest, and bushmeat to markets. Make roads that are no longer required for logging impassable for vehicles.

Conservation Organizations: Help to transfer the experience from ongoing bushmeat management pilot projects to other logging concessions. Continue efforts to develop logging sector watch-dog capacity within government and national NGOs. Encourage the Forest Stewardship Council to make certification contingent on the control of bushmeat hunting and consumption within concessions.

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Ecological Impacts • Economics • Social Ecology



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BCTF FACT SHEET

APRIL 2000

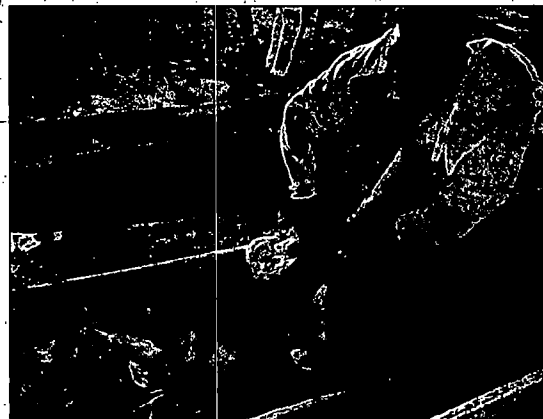
The primary goal of the **Bushmeat Crisis Task Force (BCTF)** is to facilitate the work of its members in identifying and implementing effective and appropriate controls over the commercial exploitation of endangered and threatened species.

BUSHMEAT FOCUS ISSUE: BUSHMEAT and INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

SPECIES INVOLVED: All Bushmeat Species – Rodents to Elephants

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED: Rural Communities, Heads of State, National and International Conservation Organizations, Zoological Parks, Animal Welfare Organizations, Human Welfare Organizations, Tropical Forest Conservation Agencies, Local and National Governments, Government Wildlife Agencies, and International Treaty Organizations

The commercial bushmeat trade is the most significant threat to wildlife in West and Central Africa today.



7 CONCEPTS

◆ The bushmeat crisis is the most significant immediate threat to the future of wildlife populations in West and Central Africa.

◆ People in the Congo Basin eat as much meat as do Europeans Americans, and ~80% of

animal protein is derived from wildlife.

◆ Forest wildlife productivity is very low compared to savannas and cannot sustain protein demands for growing human populations in West and Central Africa.

◆ Working with logging companies to include sound wildlife management principles, in their forest management plans, including controls on consumption of bushmeat by employees and the transportation of hunters and bushmeat on company vehicles, are essential steps to conserving forest wildlife.

SUMMARY: Approximately 30 million people live within the forested regions of Central Africa, 40-60% live in cities and towns, and most rely on the meat of wildlife as a primary source of animal protein. Forest antelope (duikers), pigs, and primates are most often eaten, and as much as 1 million metric tons of wildlife is killed for food in the region each year. In West Africa, human population densities are high (25-78 persons per square kilometer) compared to countries in the Congo Basin (5-20 persons per square kilometer). West African wildlife populations have been so depleted by years of unsustainable hunting for meat, that bushmeat is no longer the most important source of protein in families' diets. When bushmeat is eaten in West Africa, rodents have replaced the over-hunted and now scarce antelope and primates as the most commonly eaten wild animals.

BACKGROUND: Wildlife has been hunted for food ever since humans first evolved, and wildlife is still viewed as a resource 'free' for the taking in many areas. Today in West and Central Africa, bushmeat continues to be an economically important food and trade item for thousands of poor rural and urban families. Animal parts are also important for their role in ritual, and bushmeat has become a status symbol for urban elites trying to retain links to 'the village' - often commanding extremely high prices in city restaurants. Rising demand for bushmeat, lack of economic options for rural and urban communities, the absence of affordable substitutes, the opening up of 'frontier' forests by logging and mining companies, the complicity of government law makers and law enforcers, and the fact that anyone can hunt almost anywhere and trade the meat with few if any restrictions are the most important factors driving commercial hunting and working against wildlife conservation (See BCTF Fact Sheet on Logging).



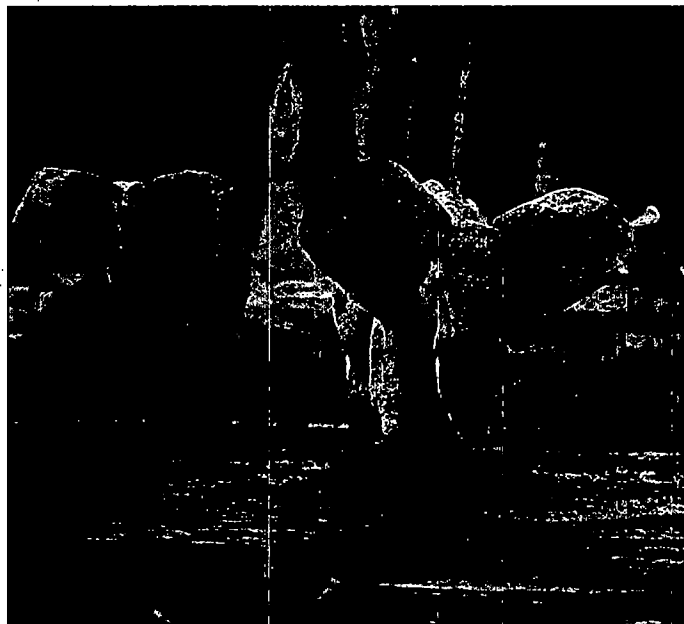
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ENT DERSTANDING A ACTIVITIES:

Hunting of wildlife to meet people's demand for protein may still be sustainable in the few remaining areas where population densities are less than 2 people/km², trade routes are poorly established, and human population growth rates are low. The scale of the commercial bushmeat trade now occurring in West and Central Africa, however, is driven by markets with large, rapidly growing populations of consumers. This commercial-scale trade threatens the survival of many species, including several unique to the dense forested regions of Africa. Though deforestation has an obvious impact on wildlife dependent on these habitats, hunting constitutes a comparable threat to the ecosystem itself, in that it often results in the Empty Forest Syndrome: a forest filled with trees, but with few if any large animals. Such forests will, over the long term, suffer dramatic changes in structure and composition as the wildlife responsible for dispersing seeds are lost through over hunting. The immediate loss of wildlife and the secondary loss of many plant species jeopardizes the function and stability of the forests' complex web of life, threatening the long-term survival of the forests themselves.



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UTIONS:

Implementation of low ecological impact logging

practices, maintenance of a network of protected areas, regulation of bushmeat hunting and trade, increasing consumer access to affordable and palatable protein substitutes, and enhancing national and local resource management capacity are all important components of a comprehensive solution to the unsustainable hunting of wildlife for meat. For these steps to be taken, it is imperative that conservation organizations, government agencies, donors, and interested individuals collaborate to increase awareness, share information, and facilitate action. **The Bushmeat Crisis Task Force** was formed with these goals in mind.

Through collaborative efforts and communication, appropriate solutions to the bushmeat crisis can be identified and implemented.

BCTF SUMMARY

The BCTF, founded in 1999, is a consortium of conservation organizations and scientists dedicated to the conservation of wildlife populations threatened by commercial hunting of wildlife for sale as meat. The BCTF operates under the direction of an elected Steering Committee and is funded by Supporting Members. Year 2000 goals are to: a) work with the general members of the BCTF to focus attention on the bushmeat crisis in West and Central Africa; b) establish an information database and mechanisms for information sharing regarding the bushmeat issue; c) facilitate engagement of African partners and stakeholders in addressing the bushmeat issue; and d) promote collaborative decision-making, fund-raising and actions among the members and associates of the BCTF.

BCTF SUPPORTING MEMBERS

American Zoo and Aquarium Association
Center for Applied Biodiversity Science - Conservation International
Chicago Zoological Society - Brookfield Zoo
Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden
Detroit Zoological Park
Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund
Humane Society of the United States
The Jane Goodall Institute
Lincoln Park Zoological Gardens
Louisville Zoological Garden
Wildlife Conservation Society
World Wildlife Fund, US
Zoo Atlanta

BCTF CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

American Society of Primatologists
Primate Conservation and Welfare Society
Rainforest Action Network

BCTF STEERING COMMITTEE

Michael Hutchins, Ph.D. / CHAIR, AZA
Christine Wolf / VICE-CHAIR, THE FUND FOR ANIMALS
Mohamed Bakarr, Ph.D. / CI-CABS
Richard Carroll, Ph.D. / WWF-US
Stewart Hudson / JGI
Russ Mittermeier, Ph.D. / CI
Andrew Plumptre, Ph.D. / WCS
Anthony L. Rose, Ph.D. / BIOSYNERGY INSTITUTE
David S. Wilkie, Ph.D. / BOSTON COLLEGE
Heather E. Eves / BCTF COORDINATOR



***For more information about becoming a BCTF Supporting or Contributing Member...**

Please contact the BCTF Coordinator
Heather E. Eves at
email: HEves@aza.org
URL: www.bushmeat.org

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Logging • Health • Social Ecology • Eco-Economics



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