

TRAFFIC DISPATCHES

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Bush meat utilisation depletes wildlife in East and Southern Africa

Many wildlife populations in east and southern Africa are facing a lean future. The illegal killing of wild animals for meat, the so-called use and trade of 'bush meat', is believed to be one of the greatest direct causes of the decline of wildlife numbers outside of protected areas.

While many rural Africans struggle for survival amidst endemic poverty and frequent famine, wild animals continue to be an economic resource of major importance, particularly as food. Wildlife is critically important as a source of cheap protein for malnourished people and, when traded, as earnings in cash where few alternative sources of income exist. But such use and trade is widely prohibited

by law in the countries of East and Southern Africa.

To date, most research on bush meat has been focussed on west and central African countries. To gather more substantial information on the situation in other parts of Africa, TRAFFIC conducted a two-year review on trade and utilisation of wild meat in seven east and southern African countries (Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The study "*Food For Thought: The Utilisation and Trade of Wild Meat in Eastern and Southern Africa*" by Rob Barnett, TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa, will be released on 18 July 2000.

This study documents the utilisation of wild meat in the region, its economic value to rural communities, and the impact of harvest on protected areas and individual species valued in the trade.

A total of 23 surveys were conducted from 1997 to 1998, of which 16 were focused on illegal use of wildlife. A diversity of rural and urban areas was targeted and approximately 6,000 respondents contributed to the collection of baseline data.

Versatile source of food and protein

A wide variety of species - from insects, rodents and birds, to duikers, elephants, and impalas - are utilised regularly throughout the areas studied. Bush meat also affects a wide range of communities, from traditional hunter/gatherer societies, to agro-pastoral and pastoral communities as well as urban centres in the region. Among the majority of the people, bush meat is recognised as a valued resource and consumed regularly on daily, weekly or



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Decomposing carcass. Hundreds of animals are caught but only few are taken and majority left behind.

monthly basis.

For example, the study found that in Kitui District, Kenya, about 14.1 kg of bush meat per household is consumed by 80% of the households each month and in the Kweneng rural area of Botswana, 46% of households consume at least 18.2 kg of bush meat every month. In many areas bush meat also represents the only viable source of meat protein, with domestic meat being prohibitively expensive and largely unavailable.

With increasing urbanisation, a key trend within all countries of the study is a continuing reliance on affordable sources of bush meat protein. For example, in the urban survey area of Maputo Province, Mozambique, a substantial trade of more than 50 metric tonnes (mt) per month of bush meat exists, with the supply emanating from numerous, often distant, source areas. Such commercialised urban trade is also extensive elsewhere, for example in Lusaka, Zambia.

In six of the seven countries surveyed, bush meat was found to be

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much cheaper than domestic meat. For example, in Zimbabwe bush meat is 75% cheaper than domestic meat and in Botswana it is 30% cheaper. The study also found that the poorer the household, the greater its reliance on bush meat seems to be.

During times of economic hardship, droughts and famine, bush meat is relied upon to an even greater extent. Peak hunting periods coincide with dry season drought months, as vegetation is less dense and wildlife searching for watering holes are easier to locate and hunt. Hence, supply peaks during times of hardship, and constitutes an important drought and famine coping strategy for the majority in the rural areas surveyed.

Legal game meat production

All the countries surveyed legally produce game meat through ranching, farming, cropping/culling, licensed hunting or problem animal control initiatives. Such schemes collectively yield about 8,500 metric tonnes (mt) of meat annually, with an estimated local

value of nearly \$US 7.7 million.

Game meat production in Zimbabwe (2,925 mt per year) represents a substantial and growing industry. It is economically more favourable compared with other land uses such as farming and livestock ranching in semi-arid areas. This is due, in part, to the ability of wildlife to adapt to harsh conditions, and the versatile options wildlife offer in terms of photographic tourism, trophy hunting, and hide and meat production.

However, the study found that the other countries surveyed have a negligible game ranching, farming and cropping sector due to unfavourable wildlife ownership and land tenure laws. In these countries, wildlife is government-owned with only limited and, in many cases, short-term user rights given to landholders. When a continuing uncertainty about the retention of wildlife user rights persists, landholders remain reluctant to invest in costly start-up infrastructure.

Game meat also results as a by-product from licensed hunting. All the countries surveyed have legislation allowing low-cost licensed hunting by

citizens. However, due to the subsidised cost of licenses, licensed citizen hunting can be open to misuse.

For example, in Tanzania the cost of a citizen license to hunt a Cape Buffalo is USD 10. By comparison, the animal's meat is valued at USD 211 and its value as a safari hunting trophy is USD 800. Hence, the high-value of bush meat can result in many citizen hunters, literally, over-shooting their license quotas for commercial gain.

Bush meat trade

In many rural survey areas, hunters whose primary objective is still to provide meat to their families, conduct



Wildlife trader with dik dik *Ryncho-tragus kirki* meat in Maputo, Mozambique.

IUCN Mozambique

A landmark tuna agreement underway

Since June 1997 the coastal states, territories and states fishing in the area of the western and central Pacific Ocean have been negotiating a new fisheries arrangement under the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement¹. Called the 'Multilateral High Level Conference (MHLC) process', the resulting arrangement will be the first to be concluded under the UN Agreement.

The fishery for highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific is based on four tuna stocks; skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and South Pacific albacore. The largest tuna fishery in the world, it is worth around US\$1.7 billion per annum. The geo-political nature of the western and central Pacific distinguishes it from other major tuna fisheries, with around 70% of the total catch taken in the exclusive economic zones of Pacific island countries and territories. This, combined with the high economic reliance by many Pacific island countries on the fishery, makes these negotiations very sensitive.

Not unexpectedly, the issues that have polarised participants mirror those that have plagued other international

fisheries organisations; among others decision-making processes and basis for future fishing entitlements.

TRAFFIC Oceania continues to work with other environmental NGOs, as well as in co-operation with the Australian government, to ensure that any decisions made do not undermine the effectiveness of the arrangement in support of effective conservation and management.

At present, only two countries have had environmental NGO delegates – Australia and the US. TRAFFIC Oceania is the only NGO on the Australian delegation and has been liaising closely with the NGOs represented on the US delegation, including through the tabling of a joint statement on transparency provisions for observers at the last session of the MHLC.

Negotiations are pursued to be concluded by the end of summer 2000.

- Anna Willock, Senior Fisheries Adviser
TRAFFIC Oceania

¹ The UN Fish Stocks Agreement was adopted in 1995 and requires 30 ratifications to bring it into force. There are currently 26 ratifications and it is expected to come into force later this year.

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The study also showed that enforcement and market surveys that are carried out sporadically by both, the enforcement authorities and the insect fair hosts, are far from satisfactory. The conservation status of certain non-migrant, resident insect species with low population densities and restricted range (eg., *Atrophaneura jophon*, a Sri Lankan Papilionid butterfly and *Colophon primosi*, a South African Lucanid beetle) seems to remain under threat by commercial collecting and trade.

The report urges that all the specific butterfly and beetle species threatened by trade should be considered for trade restrictions under the EU-Wildlife Trade Regulation and possibly also under CITES. The report also calls upon entomological associations to explore the possibilities of self-regulation and co-operation in trade-related activities.

For full recommendations and report (in German) contact TRAFFIC Europe-Germany. For contact details see page 16.

the majority of trade. In Kitui District and the Loikas area of Kenya, and the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, many hunters, who are primarily subsistence farmers, sell only excess bush meat after their families have been satisfied.

Full-time commercial traders also exist in most of the survey areas. Such traders sell larger quantities of meat and, in many cases, identify more lucrative markets outside the local supply area.

In Kitui District, Kenya, a range of more commercially orientated trade outlets such as open air markets, illegal brew bars, and butchery kiosks are used to trade bush meat.

In the western Serengeti of

Tanzania, 34% of traders rely on bush meat as their sole source of income, and have identified markets as far as 200 km away on the more densely populated Kenyan border.

However, most trade in rural areas still occurs locally. Trading mechanisms vary, with house to house sales and contracts between hunters and consumers or traders being successful due to their relative secrecy.

Rights for landholders

This study recommends that wildlife ownership be more widely transferred to landholders and secure land tenure needs to be formalised in

legislation. This would prompt an interest among landowners and holders to invest in the sustainable management of the wildlife resource for meat production.

Once benefits increase to landholders, wildlife can play an important sustainable role in community development and, by doing so, ensure its continued survival. Without it, wildlife will continue to be seen as a freely exploitable, uncared-for resource, that benefits only those who use it first.

Without a dynamic and proactive response to the bush meat issue in the region, it is likely that the countries of this study will lose not only a valued natural resource, but also a vital community development option.

The study urges for a more equitable distribution of donor funding to this critical conservation and social issue, with greater collaboration between the conservation and community development government departments, NGOs and professionals.

This study was funded by the European Union.

For more information and full report contact TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa - Kenya office, Senior Programme Officer Rob Barnett. For contact details see page 16.

Longline snares, used for capturing antilopes and buffalo, seized from poachers by Wildlife Division, Tanzania.



Freidkin Conservation Trust

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