

BUSHMEAT



The bushmeat trade is the illegal, over-hunting of wildlife for meat and income.

Already in West and Central Africa this trade has resulted in declines and local extinctions of many wildlife species and the economic, cultural and ecosystem services they provide. In addition, a number of human health threats have emerged from the trade in bushmeat including linkages with HIV/AIDS, ebola and the threat of anthrax. Bushmeat trade is not regulated or managed by any authority. Economic benefits from the trade go mainly to hunters and traders. If current trends continue, future generations of citizens in Africa will not have the opportunity to access benefits from wildlife. Using wildlife to meet protein and income demands cannot be supported in the long term. The immediate threat of loss of economic opportunity, cultural and ecological services, and other values to a wider community must be addressed today.

BUSHMEAT IN EAST AFRICA

The actions of many people across eastern Africa are having an enormous impact on wildlife populations and the services they provide. Although leading wildlife authorities work hard in their efforts to address illegal hunting, the capacity to address this problem is limited. Many citizens are not aware that there is a bushmeat problem or what the problem is. Recent studies have determined that across Southern Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya there is a widespread, growing, illegal trade in wildlife for meat and money. This over-hunting is causing a reduction in numbers and diversity of wildlife.

In Kenya bushmeat hunting is widespread in and around protected areas as well as on private land. Snare hunting is widespread with thousands of snares being recovered each year from key protected areas. Wildlife policy is under review and going by the current debate, there is no sign that bushmeat management will be given the attention it deserves. **In Southern Sudan** bushmeat hunting with rifles is widespread in and around protected areas where many citizens rely on bushmeat as a source of protein and income. Lack of capacity to manage over-hunting has resulted in decline of many wildlife species including elephant, buffalo, zebra and giraffe.

In Tanzania trophy and subsistence hunting is legally allowed in wildlife areas outside the National Parks and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. This type of consumptive wildlife utilization is controlled through quota and permit system, however, with limited capacity to manage illegal hunting.

In Uganda studies have shown declines in wildlife populations including hippopotamus, buffalo and elephant in protected areas due to hunting. Reviews of wildlife professionals in Uganda and Tanzania have found that there is need for improvement in understanding of wildlife laws and governance systems. Laws do not adequately take into account the economic and other values of wildlife and require revision.

SOLUTIONS

Alternatives for both protein and income are essential to change current trends in illegal, over-hunting of wildlife. Improved policy, legislation and regulation of legal wildlife use is necessary if future generations of citizens in Africa will be able to have wildlife as part of their heritage to pass on to future generations. Individuals and institutions must become aware of the importance of this illegal, unsustainable trade and how it will impact future economics and ecology of their livelihoods. Partnerships that bring together government authority, private industry, non-profit organization and local community ingenuity and effort can assure the future of wildlife populations in Africa and the many services they provide. A change in both awareness and responsibility must be developed among all sectors of society to address this important conservation and cultural challenge.



Photo: Ephraim Mwangomo



Photo: RG Ruggiero

MENTOR Fellowship

The USFWS MENTOR (*Mentoring for Environmental Training in Outreach and Resource conservation*) Fellowship program is an initiative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the College of African Wildlife Management-Mweka, Tanzania, and the Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) a consortium¹ of U.S. based international conservation non-governmental organizations. The 2008/2009 program addresses the need for action to curtail illegal bushmeat trade in eastern Africa. The program invests in capacity building, training and career development of emerging conservation leaders. The resulting team is working to build a network of eastern African wildlife professionals who can lead efforts to reduce illegal and unsustainable bushmeat exploitation at local and regional level.



The eight Fellows from Kenya, Southern Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, were selected in February 2008 to participate in an 18 month post-graduate diploma program. The Fellows spend approximately 6 months at the College of African Wildlife Management taking specially designed coursework on bushmeat solutions and challenges. The Fellows spend approximately 12 months in the field working under the guidance of experienced conservation Mentors to conduct bushmeat field assessments and to implement pilot projects on bushmeat solutions. (For more information see: www.mentorfellowshipprogram.org.)

¹ ABCG is composed of members including: African Wildlife Foundation - AWF, Conservation International - CI, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, the Jane Goodall Institute -JGI, The Nature Conservancy - TNC, Wildlife Conservation Society - WCS, World Resources Institute - WRI, and World Wildlife Fund - WWF

Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network (BEAN)

The Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network (BEAN) is an interdisciplinary and multi-institutional network consisting of stakeholders (wildlife professionals, human development experts, government representatives, private industry personnel, academic experts, local community leadership and citizens etc.) who work collaboratively to raise awareness, focus attention, share information, analyze, evaluate and report on trends, and leverage resources to build local partnerships and capacity to implement grassroots solutions that directly address bushmeat exploitation problems affecting protected and surrounding areas in eastern Africa.

VISION

A bushmeat-free eastern Africa through increased protection, alternatives, awareness and sustainable utilization of wild fauna to conserve the region's rich biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations.

GOAL

To reduce bushmeat offtake in and around key protected areas in eastern Africa through a network of organizations and individuals working collaboratively to mobilize resources, share information, set priorities, and apply solutions.



For more information on BEAN visit: <http://www.bushmeatnetwork.org/>



Envisioning a future marked by partnerships that enable diverse, sustainable wildlife populations, viable protein and income alternatives, freedom from wildlife diseases and conflict, and supporting eastern Africa's cultural, economic and ecological heritage for generations to come.