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CHAPTER 6

Observations on the Bushmeat Trade



Red-eared guenons *(Cercopithecus erythrotis*) (red tails) and Preuss's guenons (*Cercopithecus preussi*) (gray tails) displayed for sale in the bushmeat section of Malabo market, Bioko Island.

During field work we carried out in the course of this study, and during our previous visits to the Gulf of Guinea forests, it was apparent that larger animals, especially large rodents, ungulates, and anthropoid primates, are hunted almost everywhere, both with guns (typically 12-gauge shotguns) and wire-snare traps. Gun hunting occurs both during the day and at night, with the aid of acetylene or battery-powered headlamps. Although we did not collect quantitative data during this study, the amount of evidence we observed of hunting activity (e.g., spent shotgun cartridges, active snares) appeared to correlate roughly with the number of animals we observed in the forest. We ultimately concluded that hunting was mostly to blame for the low number of animals we encountered in most forests. A striking example of the impact of hunting is that we observed primates and ungulates most frequently in the Gran Caldera de Luba on Bioko, which has the lowest number of hunters. Animals in this area are also less afraid of people than elsewhere in the Gulf of Guinea forests.

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At most sites it is unclear how much hunting is devoted to providing meat for local consumption, and how much is driven by trade. Trade is probably the main driver of hunting in southern Bioko, since human population density is very low there. Because most Bioko inhabitants live on the northern part of the island, and especially in and around the capital of Malabo, much of the game hunted on the island ends up in the Malabo market. Similarly, the area immediately surrounding Korup National Park has a relatively sparse human population, whereas eastern Nigeria to the west of the Cross River is very densely populated. Most of the hunting taking place in and around Korup is therefore probably done for trade. Indeed, we found evidence of a major one-way trade route for bushmeat running through Cross River National Park. The route appears to originate at the Korup enclave of Erat in Cameroon and runs to Ekonganaku on the edge of the Oban Division of Cross River National Park in Nigeria. For instance, over a three-day period in January 2001 Bergl observed the following mammal carcasses being carried on forest trails towards Ekonganaku: 10 *Cephalophus* spp., 6 *Mandrillus leucophaeus*, 4 *Atherurus africanus*, 3 *Hyemoschus aquaticus*, 1 *Cercocebus torquatus*, 1 *Cercopithecus erythrotis*, and 1 *Manis* sp. Much of this meat is apparently sold in a weekly market at Anigeje, on the Oban road about 30 km north of Calabar. From there it is probably widely distributed in the east of the country. More than 100 monkey carcasses, many of them drills, are reported to be sold at this market each week (Eniang, E. & Louk, D., pers. comm.).

Oates visited the Malabo bushmeat market several times in January 2001 and January 2002 and found it to be highly dynamic. Fresh carcasses arrived frequently, at least during the early part of the day, and purchases were also frequent. As a result, a spot check of the carcasses available at a particular moment could provide a significantly different view of the market than a full sampling of the carcasses available throughout an entire day.

In 2001 and 2003, Oates conducted a total of six spot-check samples of the Malabo market. Eric Lombardini of the University of Pennsylvania and his student associates also conducted 10 spot samples of the Malabo market on different days in 2001. The total carcasses observed during these 16 spot samples are as follows: 143 *Cephalophus monticola*, 104 *Cricetomys emini*, 38 *Cercopithecus erythrotis*, 25 *Atherurus africanus*, 10 *Cephalophus ogilbyi*, 7 *Colobus satanas*, 6 *Manis tricuspis*, 6 *Varanus niloticus*, 4 *Cercopithecus preussi*, 4 *C. pogonias*, 3 *Mandrillus leucophaeus*, 2 *Python sebae*, 2 squirrels, 1 *Procolobus pennantii*, 1 *Dendrohyrax dorsalis*, and 1 *Galago alleni*. The number of carcasses observed per day of *C. monticola*, *C. ogilbyi, P. pennantii*, and *M. leucophaeus* is smaller than Fa *et al.* (2000) reported in 1991 and 1996. On the other hand, despite the small size of our sample, we recorded more *C. erythrotis* than did Fa *et al.* in 1996. At first glance, these numbers seem to confirm Fa *et al.*'s speculation that larger primates and Ogilby's duiker are becoming scarcer in the market and thus perhaps are disappearing from Bioko's forests as well.

However, our figures are probably not directly comparable to those reported by Fa *et al.* (2000), who sampled the market between 06:30 and 12:00 hours, six days each week, for eight months in 1991 and 1996, and who claim to have recorded all meat reaching the market on each day of their sample. Our observations strongly suggest that spot samples such as ours represent only part of a day's total number of marketed carcasses. One would thus expect the results of our samples to include significantly fewer carcasses than Fa recorded in his surveys. Yet, for some species, our results are similar to the figures reported by Fa for 1991, and for several species (e.g., *Cercopithecus erythrotis* and *Cephalophus monticola*) our results considerably exceed the results of spot checks by Butynski in 1986 and Fa in 1988 (Butynski & Koster 1990) (see Table 9).

As part of a new bushmeat study, John Fa of the Durrell Wildlife Trust recently finished surveying markets and human nutritional status on both sides of the Nigeria-Cameroon border that extends into our study region. The data from that study were being prepared for publication as this volume was finalized.

Table 9. Number of carcasses seen per visit during spot checks of the Malabo bushmeat market in 1986, 1988, and 2001–2.

Species	Butynski & Koster 1986*	Fa 1988**	Oates & Lombardini 2001–2***
Mandrillus leucophaeus	0.22	0.13	0.19
Cercopithecus erythrotis	0.44	1.33	2.38
C. nictitans	0.22	0.13	0
C. pogonias	0	0	0.25
C. preussi	0	0	0.25
Colobus satanas	0.22	0.20	0.44
Procolobus pennantii	0	0	0.06
Cephalophus monticola	2.56	5.40	8.94
C. ogilbyi	0.22	0.27	0.63
Cricetomys eminii	3.11	3.67	6.50
Atherurus africanus	1.44	0	1.56
Manis tricuspis	0.22	0	0.38

*9 market visits (reported in Butynski & Koster 1990)

**15 market visits (report to IUCN, from Butynski & Koster 1990)

***16 market visits (this volume)

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