

„With the advent of modern firearms, improved communications and transport, subsistence hunting has given way to anarchic exploitation of wildlife to supply the rapidly growing cities with game.“

(Juste et al., 1995)

The bushmeat trade exploded in a rush for individual profit, similar to the gold rush. Bushmeat is like money lying on the street.

Traditional:

- hunting by forest dwellers for own use and for barter
- hunting equipment made from natural materials
- bows and arrows, spears, nets
- hunting taboos for certain species, seasons, etc.
- strengthening of social bonds through barter

Non-traditional:

- wire snares, firearms and ammunition, (dogs)
- non-local hunters
- selling the catch for cash
- selling the majority of the catch in distant markets (with the aid of motorised transports)
- commissioned hunting (to supply logging camps)
- organised commercial hunts brought about by broadening of the market for meat and trophies
- opportunistic hunting of bushmeat at any time and anywhere, particularly of large animals

Commercial hunters kill 10 times as many animals as subsistence hunters!



Hunting dogs are very valuable. Unlike our dogs, they do not bark. They carry a bell tied to the collar so that the hunters can tell if they have caught prey. The dogs then will be given the victim's official as reward.

I. Weiche

There are 2 types of commercial hunters:

- 1) **Locals** - fall of world market prices in the '80s led to the selling of bushmeat
- 2) **Non-locals** - sometimes in organised bands; access is made possible via roads made by logging and mining companies

Hunters today have long journeys to find enough prey. There is no longer any wildlife along the rivers or roads or near to settlements. Along the logging roads and because of the vehicles, transport is no longer a problem for hunters. **What formerly used to take days and weeks is now possible within a few hours.**



L. Corbière/REUTERS

Hunters in Cameroon burning off the fur of an adult male drill before smoking the flesh.

To preserve bushmeat for the long journey, it is **smoked**. To avoid confiscation, or doubts with regard to food taboos, the meat is sometimes cut into **unrecognisable pieces** and sold as legal meat.

Firearms and cartridge cases litter many areas, as ammunition is readily available, particularly in war zones. But also the logging companies provide their workers with hunting materials. Professional hunters are hired to provide the loggers and their families with bushmeat. The weapons are often poor quality and unreliable, resulting in many animals being wounded and suffering.

Ammunition is expensive, therefore large animals are preferred, as the profit is greater than. **The hunter shoots everything that moves**, because if he does not, the next hunter will. If one animal species is so much reduced that hunters can no longer find it, they move to the next species.



U. Kallweit

Spears and snares.

Snares are used traditionally. Originally made from plant material they are nowadays made of wire. They are laid in trap-lines. **This method is preferred as it is cheap and can be utilised for different animal species.**

Plant snares can be bitten or torn apart by larger animals, but this is impossible with **wire snares**. **They cut into the flesh and trap every animal which is caught in them.**

Great apes and other large mammals then suffer from severe **mutilations** and long-lasting wound infections.

Up to 80% of the animals caught rot in wire snares as the hunters do not monitor their trap lines regularly or simply cannot find them again.



U. Kallweit

Poacher with antelope tied up to transport it more easily.

The short-term profit from commercial hunting results inevitably in an over-exploitation of animal populations. As general ban on hunting is rarely achieved, much discussion has centred on "sustainable" hunting.

Sustainable Use

The use of components of biodiversity in a way and at a rate, that does not lead to its reduction in the long term and at the same time preserves its capacity in supply the needs of today's and future generations.

(Convention on Biodiversity, 1992)

Simply put, any resource, whether wildlife or timber, cannot be exploited beyond the level at which it can reproduce itself. In animals this depends on the natural reproduction and mortality rates. But these rates can be flexible and react to the slightest change of the natural environmental conditions.

Any exploitation is over-exploitation, when a population can not recover from the losses.