

At least 1 million tonnes of bushmeat are sold per year in West and Central Africa. Market analysis do not distinguish killing for subsistence or for commercial trade. Informations from hunters and traders is often unreliable, as they know that a portion of their business is illegal. Realistic estimates are up to 4 million tonnes of bushmeat per year.

Surveys in West Africa show that **on average 50% of the catch is meant for commercial trade**, while in 1988 in the East of DR Congo it was as much as 90%. The financial gain from hunting from a 1km² forest area is the equivalent of the monthly wage of a peasant. The price differential from hunter to consumer can be 3- to 5-fold. Therefore more and more people try to participate in this business.



The commercialisation of the bushmeat trade has directed dealers into **specific marketing channels**. Hunters sell the meat directly to the closest market, to consumers and restaurants, or to traders who come to the hunters' village or to the hunting camps.

While men hunt, it is mainly women who sell on the market stalls. Even small town economies are set up to deal with bushmeat. Some traders give credits to hunters to buy weapons, or pay school fees for their children, thereby purposefully putting them into debt.

Regional animal existence and food preferences affect supply and demand. Price differences between domestic and bushmeat vary; in larger towns domestic is mostly cheaper than bushmeat, and in forest villages it is more expensive.



Every Friday, 15-20 boats dock at small ports in the Ivory Coast with bushmeat from Liberia. Liberia is a war zone and this weekly market is frequently the only source of income for these people.

Range of yearly bushmeat consumption

(Amounts taken from different market surveys)

Ghana	(total)	305 000 t
Ghana	(small town)	165 t
Cameroon	(capital)	356 t (only smoked meat)
PR Congo	(town in the North)	296 t
Ivory Coast	(small town)	70 t



Market women offer duiker for sale.

During the last few years the supply of bushmeat in urban centers has doubled due to the growing demand. Most bushmeat on offer is forest antelope and rodents. Small animals are sold whole, larger ones in pieces, some even alive like the pangolin. On some markets the bushmeat is freshly prepared as a meal.

Price range (in US\$) for bushmeat in markets

Species	price per animal	price per kg
elephant		1
duiker (diff. species and sizes)	2.5-15	1-2.5
other antelope	14.5-22	0.5
bush-pig	27.5	0.5
pangolin	1.5-10.5	
porcupine	3 - 5	1-1.5
pouched rat	0.5-1	
civet	6	1
patas monkey	2.5-4.5	1-1.5
smoked chimpanzee	20-25	
gorilla	150	

Bushmeat trade crosses international borders. 13% of the bushmeat in the PR Congo comes from Cameroon, and chimpanzee skulls from Cameroon were sold in Nigeria. Border rivers and roads facilitate this trade. Even on other continents bushmeat is desired: In exotic European restaurants bushmeat can be found on the menus and carcasses have been discovered in the luggage of travellers in international airports such as London.