

Primate Conservation and Bushmeat Hunting in Rio Muni, Equatorial Guinea.

Janna Rist

Janna.Rist@ioz.ac.uk

Institute of Zoology & Imperial College London

Zoological Society of London

Regents Park, London

NW1 4RY

Awarded a BFF Grant (through PSGB) in August 2005

Abstract

Equatorial Guinea has one of the highest primate diversities in Africa but is currently undergoing considerable economic growth and associated improvements in trade and infrastructure. In combination with the limited availability of, and access to, alternative protein sources, this increasing urban wealth is likely to fuel the bushmeat trade. This project provides a better understanding of the impact of hunting on primates, and of the importance of primates in supplying Equatorial Guinea's bushmeat trade. This project was based in Midyobo Anvom, situated to the south-east of the Monte Alen–Monte Mitra national park. This hunting community is currently one of the major sources of bushmeat to markets in the region's capital, Bata. Data were collected on primate species density in areas undergoing different degrees of hunting pressure and the volume and composition of hunter offtake, as well on the volume and composition of bushmeat available in Bata markets.

Densities of the commonly hunted primate species, the black colobus (*Colobus satanus*), moustached monkey (*Cercopithecus cephus*), crowned monkey (*Cercopithecus pogonias*), and putty-nosed monkey (*Cercopithecus nictitans*), were high in remote and infrequently gun hunted sites, but densities were found to be substantially lower in areas with higher levels of hunting pressure. Primates were found to represent 17% by carcass numbers, and 27% by biomass, of total annual hunting offtake in Midyobo Anvom. This offtake was made of up 11 primate species, including the black colobus, Central African chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes troglodytes*), crowned

monkey, mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*), putty-nosed monkey and moustached monkey. The black colobus, classed as vulnerable by IUCN, alone makes up 6% by carcass numbers and 12% by biomass of total annual hunting offtake. Primates were found to represent 14-24% of all animal carcasses in Bata's main bushmeat markets.



Bushmeat being taken to market

This study has shown that primates currently represent an important component of Equatorial Guinea's bushmeat trade, and that in some areas primate species still exist at high densities. However, current levels of hunting have reduced primate densities in some areas. There is also evidence that hunting levels are increasing in Equatorial Guinea as a whole, and that commercial hunters are moving into areas that were previously only lightly hunted. Combined conservation and development efforts are urgently required to ensure the sustainability of hunting and future primate conservation in Equatorial Guinea. This project provided training in primate survey methods to national forest management agency staff as well as to many community members of Midyobo Anvom. Future plans include the development of participatory techniques for monitoring hunting impact and further capacity building for natural resource management in Equatorial Guinea.