

18th Meeting of the CBFP Parties – Scientific day (27 – 28 November 2018 in Brussels, Belgium)

- Proposal for an oral presentation
- Topic: *“The crisis of poaching and bushmeat: what impacts on forests and people in the Congo Basin?”*

Assessment of mammal diversity and bushmeat offtake in the tropical forests of southeastern Cameroon

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ABSTRACT:

Tropical forests of central Africa host an important part of the world’s terrestrial biodiversity and provide numerous provisioning, regulating, and cultural ecosystem services to human populations. Major threats hang over those diverse ecosystems, namely land use changes and consumption of bushmeat. Our study aimed to assess mammal diversity and bushmeat consumption in three contrasted and largely represented forest land allocation types in southeastern Cameroon: (i) a protected area, (ii) a FSC-certified logging concession, and (iii) three community forests. Mammal inventories were conducted with 44 camera traps installed for 3 months. Bushmeat consumption was quantified using both tracking of volunteer hunters over 651 kilometers and the daily monitoring of the food bowl of 55 households for 3 months. Though a great part of the mammal diversity is retained inside the logging concession, the protected area holds the richest and most abundant mammal communities, whereas community forests were found to be defaunated and structurally disturbed. The size of the hunting territories is influenced by many factors such as human population density or the presence of alternative protein sources. Although poaching controls in the protected area and, to a lesser extent, in the certified logging concession appear to play a deterrent role, evidence of hunting activities were found in all land allocation types. Bushmeat represents on average 56% of the animal protein consumed by households, the remaining part being mainly fish. Our results demonstrated the ability of the certified logging concession and the protected area in the conservation of wildlife species and the provision of bushmeat for local populations. It remains essential to maintain and develop anti-poaching patrols in those areas, strategically based on geographic data of hunting pressure. Current levels of hunting activities also confirm the need for the development of alternatives to bushmeat.