

*„The bushmeat crisis in Africa, the illegal hunting of animals in the wild for commercial gains, threatens the extinction of great apes and other endangered animal species in Central and West Africa within the next 10 to 20 years.“*

*(Dr. Jane Goodall, Washington Post, 8th April, 2000)*

### What is Bushmeat?

Bushmeat is **meat of wild animals consumed**. It has long been the main diet of local communities in developing countries.



*Bushmeat, here Pangolin pieces, are sold fresh and smoked.*

### What is the Bushmeat Trade?

Bushmeat has traditionally been used by **forest dwellers** for their own use. Recently, the **population explosion** of developing countries with concurrent growth of cities has dramatically increased this trade. This most noticeable in **cities**, now using **commercial hunters and dealers**, often through illegal means.

The trade has been made easier through wider infrastructure and technical possibilities, which in particular give access to pristine forests. Especially **commercial logging** companies from industrial nations are big players in opening up and exploitation of tropical forests.

**These companies have laid roads and provided transport into the pristine forests, allowing hunters a "bushmeat pipeline" to the cities.**

The threat through the commercial bushmeat trade to many animal species in some areas **dramatically exceeds the danger through loss of natural habitats, mainly in West and Central Africa.**



*New roads cut through pristine forests.*

The greatest use of bushmeat is estimated in the Congo Basin, **at 4 million tonnes per year.**

Regionally this has already led to extinction of different species.

**Many of the endangered species are subject to protection through international and national laws, but enforcement has failed to protect them.**

There is even international trade in bushmeat, as monkeys, bats and even gorilla meat, partly cooked, have been found on menus in European restaurants, such as Brussels and London.

### Which species are threatened?

National, local and cultural-religious eating habits are relics of an earlier era. **Traditional taboos have changed or are no longer respected.** The hunters have become opportunists, killing everything from elephants to bats.

**The commercial trade of bushmeat is the biggest current threat to the endangered great apes (chimpanzees, bonobos and gorillas)!**



*Orphans are "by-products" of the bushmeat trade.*