



## DISCUSSION MEETING

# WILDLIFE WOOD: TIMBER AND BUSHMEAT

Tuesday 9 January 2007

The Meeting Rooms, The Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY

**Chair: Barry Gardiner MP, Parliamentary Secretary (Commons)  
(Biodiversity, Landscape and Rural Affairs)**

### **The biological and socio-economic context of wildlife management in African timber-production forests**

*Björn Schulte-Herbrüggen, Institute of Zoology, ZSL, UK*

Hunting of wild animals in African forests is an important source of food and income in rural areas and supplies an increasing urban demand for bushmeat. It is a crucial resource for many households during the agricultural lean season and acts as a safety net during times of economic hardship.

However, both hunting and habitat disturbance through logging alter wildlife abundance patterns and can lead to local extinction of species if managed unsustainably. The response of individual species to hunting and habitat disturbance varies but a wide range of species can survive in logged forests if offtake is below the production limit. Based on the species-specific response to habitat disturbance and hunting, detailed guidelines are required to inform what species can be maintained in timber concessions when hunting is restricted.

### **Forest certification: setting the standard for improved wildlife management in tropical forests**

*Tim Rayden, ProForest, Oxford, UK*

There is little doubt that industrial logging activity has exacerbated the exploitation of bushmeat in the tropics. Logging activity generates an infrastructure that opens large areas of forest for access by road and brings the logging company workforce and local people into close contact with previously remote areas.

Logging activity has been poorly regulated in the tropics in general and in Central Africa in particular, leading some to question whether sustainable forestry and wildlife management is a realistic aim in the region. To date, initiatives to improve forest governance have been slow to improve the practice of forest management, and developed-world consumer boycotts may have been counter-productive by pushing irresponsible producers to less discerning timber markets.

Market-based incentive schemes, such as third-party forest certification, have gained ground much more rapidly and appear to offer a robust method of delivering positive change on the ground. Forest certification requirements include the preservation of rare habitats and threatened species, and the development of wildlife management plans, all of which are

overseen by independent third-party auditors with expertise in forest ecology and wildlife management. They also require that forestry companies consider the livelihoods of indigenous and other local people; some of whom may rely on bushmeat as a major source of protein. However, the extent to which a market-based scheme can deliver real benefits for wildlife conservation is limited by the rigour of the certification standard itself, and the participating company's desire to participate in the scheme. This, in turn is affected by the timber consumer's willingness to select (and to pay for) a certified product.

#### **Further Reading:**

Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria for sustainable forest management available from [www.fsc.org/en/about/documents/Docs\\_cent/2,37](http://www.fsc.org/en/about/documents/Docs_cent/2,37).  
Website of the HCV Resource Network [www.hcvnetwork.org](http://www.hcvnetwork.org).

Ghazoul, J. (2001) Barriers to biodiversity conservation in forest certification. *Conservation Biology* **15**(2), 315-317.

Bennet, E. L. (2000) Timber certification: where is the voice of the biologist? *Conservation Biology* **14**(4), 921-923.

Sheil, D. *et al.* (2004) Ecological criteria and indicators for tropical forest landscapes: challenges in the search for progress. *Ecology and Society* **9**(1), 7.

### **How can markets make a significant contribution to wildlife conservation in timber-production forests?**

*Dr Mike Packer, Director, Responsible Business, Timbmet Silverman, UK*

Annual production of round wood worldwide for industrial purposes exceeds 1.6 billion m<sup>3</sup>. The majority of this is temperate production, with tropical production accounting for about 15%; production from Africa comprises a little over 1%.

The World Bank estimates that over 50% of tropical production is from illegal logging. Independent certification of legal and well-managed forestry is beginning to expand within Africa but the proportion that is independently certified to be legal, progressing to sustainable or sustainable, is currently trivial.

At the same time that certified wood supply is limited, so currently is voluntary market demand for a certified product. Even where demand is emerging, there is a reluctance to pay the true cost of the sustainable timber. There is therefore little incentive for producers to commit to certification.

Public markets for round wood represent a sizeable proportion of national spend on timber products (perhaps as much as a third in the UK) and have the potential to influence the wider market. Current policy does not, however, mandate contract requirements for the supply of independently verified legal and sustainable timber.

For timber markets to contribute to wildlife conservation there must be a tradable product from credibly certified forests where sustainable management explicitly includes ecologically robust wildlife measures. The capacity to guarantee the compliance and traceability of the product throughout the supply chain also needs to be in place. There must, of course, also be a market that knows how to purchase differentiated products and, more critically, is willing to pay the price.

Whether timber production forests offering "wildlife-friendly, sustainable timber" can deliver sufficient economic value to guarantee conservation of biodiversity is a moot point. It is possible that markets will also need to be created that pay for ecosystem services delivered by forests. But, perhaps, we best proceed one step at a time.