

## **UK BUSHMEAT WORKING GROUP**

### **Meeting on monitoring of illegal imports from Africa to Europe**

**20<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

**10:30-12:30**

**Council Room, Zoological Society of London**

### **Meeting report**

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#### **Attendees**

Margaret Starling	UK Border Agency
Mark Baxter	Defra
Rolf Kluttig	Defra
Andy Green	Defra
Tony Fook	Veterinary Laboratories Agency
Simon Mickleburgh	Rufford Foundation
Rui Sa	Cardiff University
Lauren Coad	Oxford Centre for Tropical Forests
Chantal Elkin	Alliance of Religions and Conservation
Niall Strawson	Environmental Change Institute, Oxford University
Vicki Crook	TRAFFIC International (Europe office)
Ned Kingcott	Independent
Olly Hymas	University College London/ZSL Institute of Zoology
Helen Thirlway	International Primate Protection League (UK)
James McNamara	Imperial College London/ZSL Institute of Zoology
Dawn Starin	University College London
Marcus Rowcliffe	ZSL Institute of Zoology
Andrew Cunningham	ZSL Institute of Zoology
Kate Ciborowski	ZSL Institute of Zoology
Noëlle Kümpel	ZSL
Paul De Ornellas	ZSL
Johanna Segal	ZSL

#### **Apologies**

David MacDonald	Oxford University
Matthew Hatchwell	Wildlife Conservation Society - Europe
Andrina Murrell	Born Free Foundation
Christopher Stewart	ProForest
Heather Eves	Yale University
Chris Wright	Born Free Foundation
Ian Watson	Watson Fish Consulting
Lydia Hall	Independent
Justice Eshun	Samartex, Ghana
Rob Ogden	Wildgenes Laboratory, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
David Brown	Overseas Development Institute
Jo Elliot	African Wildlife Foundation
Ian Redmond	Ape Alliance

**The Chair, Noëlle Kümpel**, outlined the purpose of the UK Bushmeat Working Group (UKBWG) as a forum for discussion on bushmeat-related research and policy amongst government, industry, NGOs and academia, particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to the UK. ZSL took over secretariat responsibilities of the UKBWG from the Tropical Forest Forum in 2006 and is funded by Defra, which she thanked. She welcomed attendees to this focused meeting, which was intended as a follow up to a UKBWG meeting held in April 2009, on the same general topic of the conservation and health implications and potential for monitoring, of bushmeat imports from Africa to Europe, to discuss current and new work proposed by ZSL and collaborators in this area.

She drew attention to the minutes of this previous meeting as well as those of the last UKBWG meeting, held in March 2010, on the topic of sustainable forest management and the timber trade. She then asked attendees to introduce themselves before drawing attention to the agenda, and introduced **Marcus Rowcliffe (IoZ)** who gave the first presentation.

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**Marcus Rowcliffe, Research Fellow, Institute of Zoology**  
***Monitoring bushmeat imports from Africa to Europe: refining methods,  
establishing scale and evaluating threats***

**Marcus** began by explaining that the purpose of his presentation was to provide the group with an outline of his current thinking, why ZSL are proposing further work researching bushmeat imports into Europe and to act as a basis for discussion. Outlines of the proposed work were handed around to attendees.

**Marcus** outlined four main risk factors associated with bushmeat imports into Europe:

- Zoonosis – the transfer of disease between animals and humans and vice versa
- Human health – due to poor meat hygiene from transportation, poor preparation and cooking and cross-contamination
- Animal / livestock disease - e.g. foot and mouth disease, swine fever
- Conservation – with potentially negative impacts on:
  - Species listed under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)
  - Unsustainable hunting to supply the luxury market

**Marcus** then summarised the previous research that has been conducted in these areas as far as he was aware, and requested information on any further research if available. Most of this work was covered in the previous April 2009 UKBWG meeting.

- Wildlife Forensics Network (Rob Ogden et al.)<sup>1</sup>
  - Genetic identification of meat samples from a 2005 survey at London Heathrow airport
- Cardiff University (Mike Bruford et al.)
  - Genetic identification of primates
- Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA)<sup>2</sup>
  - Pathogen screening and risk analysis
- ZSL Institute of Zoology / Royal Veterinary College (Anne-Lise Chaber et al.)<sup>3 & 4</sup>
  - 2008 survey of volumes, species and pathogens at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport

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<sup>1</sup> McEwing and Ogden (2006) Imported bushmeat – species identification using DNA typing; Defra project WC05011. Wildlife DNA Services Ltd, University of Wales, Bangor

<sup>2</sup> Veterinary Laboratories Agency (2004) Risk Assessment for the Import of Contaminated Meat and Meat Products into Great Britain and the Subsequent Exposure of GB Livestock

<sup>3</sup> Chaber, A.-L. (2008) An analysis of the African bushmeat trade in France. *MSc Thesis*, Royal Veterinary College, London

<sup>4</sup> Chaber, A.-L., Allebone-Webb, S., Lignereux, Y., Cunningham, A.A., & Rowcliffe, J.M. (2010) The scale of illegal meat importation from Africa to Europe via Paris. *Conservation Letters*, 3, 317-321

**Marcus** went on to propose that it would be useful to undertake a new survey to get a larger-scale picture and this would necessitate building a network of organisations including governmental and airport representation. He stated that this is a consultative stage to get an understanding of what information is required, how and where to gather the information and how to obtain access to points of import.

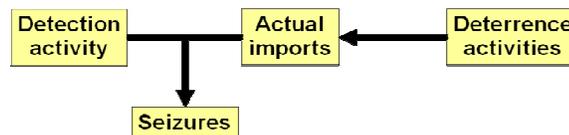
The overall goals of the proposal are twofold:

- Improved tools for detection and monitoring
- Stronger evidence base on risks and trends

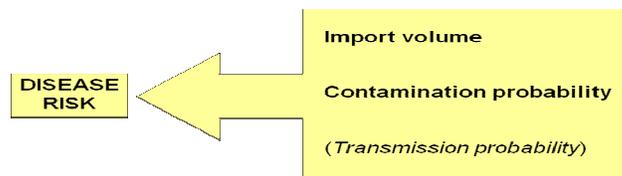
Initially the focus of the work is envisaged to be on method development with a small geographical focus in London and Accra; but ultimately it is planned to extend this to pinpoint problem areas on a continent-wide scale for Africa/Europe. ZSL is currently in discussions with the Rufford Foundation with regard to the provision of some funding to support this work, hence the possibility of developing and extending previous research has arisen.

**Marcus** proceeded to discuss the information requirements of the proposed research programme under three main categories: a) monitoring import volumes; b) disease risk analysis and c) CITES prosecutions and deterrent monitoring.

Monitoring import volumes is required to undertake disease risk assessment, to understand the geographic spread and impacts and to analyse the effectiveness of deterrent strategies. Whilst there is a small body of volume data from the previous research conducted, this focused upon seizures and not total imports. Using seizure data alone does not provide the full picture as it is subject to other factors such as the strength of deterrents and the level of detection effort as illustrated below.



This is a potential area for further research to improve sampling methodologies for realistically estimating total import volumes. By increasing the reliability of the volume data along with improving tools for calculating contamination probabilities, through testing seizures of imports, more accurate disease risk assessments can be made. This would be further enhanced by utilising transmission probability calculations, however this element is beyond the scope of the proposed work at this stage.



Finally, Marcus explained that often when an animal product is seized it is not easily identifiable from a morphological perspective, which results in gaps in knowledge about the species type and numbers being imported, or whether it is subject to CITES protection and prosecution or not, hence making it difficult to plan effective deterrent strategies. Through the development of robust methods for identifying imported bushmeat using genetics or osteology a clearer understanding of what is being of imported will emerge which will facilitate improved and targeted deterrent strategies.

**Marcus** summarised his presentation by highlighting the three areas of research upon which ZSL's proposed research programme is focused:

- Sampling methods for robust volume estimation
- Key pathogen screening (potentially with VLA)
- Species identification methods (potentially with Cardiff, Wildlife Forensics Network)

He referred to the more detailed concept note distributed to attendees and ended by inviting a discussion on how best to target this research later in the meeting.

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**Noëlle** thanked **Marcus** for his contribution, introduced the second presenter **Rui Sa (Cardiff University)** and opened the floor to questions whilst the presentation was set up.

**Tony Fook (VLA)** asked who had performed the VLA work referred to during the presentation as he had not been involved in it. **Noëlle** referred him to the reference in the previous meeting's minutes and that it was conducted following the foot and mouth outbreak in 2004. The actual authors were not known.

**Tony** then informed the group that he had seen a Food Standards Agency (FSA) 2005 discussion paper and asked if this was now in the public domain as he found it a useful background document but did not want to refer to it if not publically available. **Ned Kingcott** confirmed that he had provided input into this report and it had been sent to the FSA advisory committee. At that time there were some sensitivities and he was not aware whether or not these had been resolved or if it had been published. **Noëlle** commented that she was aware of this report's existence and would check if it was publicly available [it is available online<sup>5</sup>]. **Ned** suggested contacting Sarah Appleby (Head of Enforcement - FSA) for an update.

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### **Rui Sa, Cardiff University** *Using genetic techniques to identify species in the bushmeat trade*

**Rui** began by stating that the authenticity of meat is important to prevent fraudulent labelling of products, for the protection of endangered species and to prevent the excessive hunting of declining populations. He explained that morphologically identification can be quite difficult, especially in processed foods and often bushmeat has been smoked or is in parts. This has driven the development of research into species identification at the molecular level.

**Rui** then outlined the 3 different approaches that have been developed along with their pluses and minuses. These are:

1. DNA barcoding, which amplifies mitochondrial DNA and is compared against reference barcodes. This method is simple, rapid, has high success rates, is species-specific and there is no need to know the origin of the meat. On the down side it can't identify between closely related species such as wild and domesticated animals and does not work on processed foods.
2. Species-specific primers used in restrictive PCR conditions. This method can analyse processed foods and large volumes cost-effectively, but requires a prior knowledge of possible species type and primers are not available for all species.
3. A micro-array system which uses both nuclear and mitochondrial genes. This can rapidly and cost-effectively identify large samples of 45 of the 65 genera of primates, but is not able to identify to species level and is not suitable for small sample sizes.

**Rui** moved on to describe Guinea-Bissau where the fieldwork was conducted. It is a small West African country with 1.5 million people comprising 20 different ethnic groups. Ranked the third poorest country in the world with an average daily wage of £2, the country is

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<sup>5</sup> Food Standards Agency (2005) Review of possible microbiological hazards that may be associated with the illegal importation of bushmeat. Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food, Discussion Paper. Available at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/acm741.pdf>

politically unstable. However it does have high levels of biodiversity with 9 primate species recorded, three of which are threatened by the bushmeat trade, pet trade, cultural use in rituals and medicines and habitat loss/fragmentation.

Focusing on bushmeat, **Rui** explained that there are two forms of bushmeat consumption. Villagers eat bushmeat as source of protein, which leads to low pressure, largely sustainable hunting. However high hunting pressure exists to supply the larger cities where bushmeat, particularly primates, is considered a delicacy. This has resulted in a well-established professional network of hunters, transporters, sellers and buyers putting continuous high pressure on the primate populations. He estimated up to 10 monkeys per week are hunted during the dry season.

**Rui** then outlined the objectives of his study which were:

1. Assessment of primate species traded
2. Assessment of frequencies for each species
3. Recording of information about the trade (e.g. prices, geographical origin of individuals and transportation)
4. Molecular confirmation of morphological identification

He then described the study itself and the results. The study was conducted in the capital city, Bissau, from March to June 2010 at two markets - Rampa and Chapa. Visiting the markets on 18 separate days (approximately 1 day per week), the team recorded 110 individuals of 6 different primate species using morphological identification, with *Cercopithecus campbelli* (Campbell's mona monkey) being the most common species for sale. The average trade in Chapa was higher over the study timeframe, with both markets showing a dramatic peak in April – this was thought to be the result of a coup attempt which prevented trading and caused a backlog for a number of days prior to the peak. The trade declined noticeably in May with the onset of the rainy season (May – September) and the prohibition of hunting during the mating/birthing season, but again Chapa had higher trading levels.

Different patterns emerged for each species, with Campbell's mona monkey, western red colobus (*Piliocolobus badius*) and hamadryas baboons (*Papio hamadryas papio*) appearing to be traded on a constant basis whereas the availability of other species was more sporadic. Possible explanations proposed were consumer's preferences, species abundance, geographical distribution and/or species conspicuity.

The team gathered further information from the sellers directly who indicated the primates are transported by truck and public transport from an unspecified area to the south – an area with two protected areas. In Rampa the bushmeat appears to be hunted to order. Trading increased during the *caju* campaigns, in correlation with increases in wine consumption, availability of money and a belief by Muslims (which make up 60% of the population) that eating primates counters the effect of alcohol.

**Rui** explained that wealth is a key factor as bushmeat is sold as a luxury item and the trade is a highly lucrative industry. Individual animals cost an average of 8000CFA (£10), with male baboons trading at 15,000CFA (£16). They are then served in small quantities (maybe 4 pieces) in stews at £1.50 per portion alongside alcohol (as even though 60% of consumers are Muslim there is a belief that eating monkey mitigates the effects of alcohol).

**Rui** described that the meat is gutted and smoked prior to transportation in order to preserve it, which leads to difficulties in morphological identification. Hence 70 tissue samples were also collected for molecular identification which will enable more accurate species identification and the assessment of a morphological identification error rate.

He reminded everyone to bear in mind that these results are based upon only two markets in Bissau hence the numbers do not include bushmeat trading in villages, in transit or in other markets/cities. He suggested that it is likely that the actual numbers of primates being

hunted is much higher and is not sustainable and there does not appear to be any controls in place by the authorities.

**Rui** concluded by stating the need to understand the trade fully. He proposed this could be achieved by conducting a long-term, geographically-widened study across the whole chain from primates in the bush to the end consumer and the international market (bushmeat is imported to Guineans living in the UK, France, Spain and Brazil). This would enable:

1. Estimates of the real numbers of primates lost per year due to the bushmeat trade within Guinea-Bissau's territory
2. Investigations into how hunting pressure affects the genetic and social structure of populations
3. Research into the adaptative responses caused by hunting pressure.

**Rui** stated that this would facilitate the overall aim of delineating conservation measures towards populations at risk and to raise awareness and inform the international conservation community about the bushmeat crisis in Guinea-Bissau. Finally, Rui acknowledged all parties involved in all aspects of his work including the people of Guinea-Bissau.

**Noëlle** thanked Rui for his presentation, commenting that it put some of the proposed research programme work into context, and opened the floor to discuss any issues / thoughts on the proposal Marcus had presented.

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**Andrew Cunningham (ZSL)**, referring to Marcus's presentation, stated that during Anne-Lise Chaber's research work, whilst no endogenous bacteria were identified, there was some evidence of *Listeria monocytogenes*, *L. grayii*, *Streptococcus spp.* and *Staphylococcus spp.* as well as carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) found in the smoked meat. The bushmeat is smoked for preservation during transport and this is one of the reasons that morphological identification is difficult. Some samples were sent to a university laboratory for further analysis and a possible positive hit for Ebola was recorded but it was not possible to confirm if this was a viable sample as the methodologies employed were not robust and all samples were incinerated afterwards.

**Noëlle** commented that the disease aspect was somewhat tricky as there are numerous issues with sampling e.g. transporting of samples for testing which is time consuming and costly and requires a licence from Defra to remove seized items. Meat UK seizures are usually destroyed immediately upon discovery though this didn't appear to always be the case in the US as far as she was aware, where some testing of seizures to determine species at least used to take place [she had been told about some genetic testing of bushmeat seizures by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 2006].

**Andrew** further added that the trade is not restricted to bushmeat as during Anne-Lise's research a passenger brought in a freshly killed calf in a holdall into Paris airport. This presents a potentially high risk regarding diseases such as African swine fever. **Ned** asked if material that had been seized in Paris was from personal baggage. **Andrew** confirmed that it was but that no fines were issued so no real deterrent is in place.

**Maggie Starling (UKBA)** explained that participation with UKBA was very important if the proposal was to ahead. She outlined that recent changes within HMCE have resulted in anti-smuggling being combined with immigration in the same department. She pointed out that they have wider concerns than just products of animal origin such as drugs, firearms and counter-terrorism and that resources had to be allocated based upon perceived risk. Any proposal that required access to points of entry and seizures would have to involve UKBA and follow a process. The proposal would need to be presented to the tasking and co-ordination group who consider all the risks in the UK and then decide how to allocate resources

accordingly. She added that the proposal needs to be evidence-based and needs to consider five main areas:

1. Funding – how is the proposed work to be funded and what does it cover?
2. Logistics – how will the research be conducted in detail e.g. Guy Clarke from the Heathrow CITES team pointed out that obtaining samples for testing is difficult and removal from of the airport requires a license from Defra
3. Airport authorities – would need to be involved and buy-in to the proposal
4. Intelligence – this area is critical to UKBA and FSA and should include information flow from local authorities to Customs
5. Defra – would need their support for the proposal

**Noëlle** thanked **Maggie** and reiterated that this meeting was a consultative one to provide background to interested parties about the proposal and act as an information gathering exercise to understand who needs to be involved and the level of involvement.

**Rolf Kluttig (Defra)** added that there was a need to identify what is currently being done by UKBA/Customs as there is already a lot of work underway e.g. sniffer dogs for products of animal origin and x-ray machines. He went on to state that from Defra's perspective the risk of meat in imports from West Africa is not perceived to be that high. In particular, mostly fish comes in from Ghana [the proposed African focal country], and relatively little bushmeat. Seizures of personal imports from Africa are not in the top 10 and only 1% of all seized meat is identified as bushmeat, which in fact represents a decrease from the 3% of a few years ago. With limited resources, South-east Asia was the main focus regarding imports at the moment. A lot of work has been undertaken by Defra to educate and raise public awareness of personal allowances and this is felt to be having an impact. However, a further problem is at the point of export where corruption is something that needs to be considered. He continued that input from the local authorities is that bushmeat does not figure and is not a concern. Hence more background is needed on how serious the problem really is. **Mark Baxter (Defra)** added that unfortunately a problem is that the focus will only be made if there is sufficient evidence of risk however it is difficult to obtain evidence without the initial focus.

**Noëlle** agreed that more research is required into what is actually happening now and that is what the proposal is trying to address. She explained that the West/Central African focus is due to the fact that local people there rely upon bushmeat so sustainability is important from a conservation perspective. Accra in Ghana was proposed as ZSL is already working there and has developed relationships and local links already (and there are direct flights to London which would facilitate direct monitoring of imports). At this stage the proposed work is focused on conducting research into methodologies and tools, and how best to achieve that.

**Dawn Starin (UCL)** commented that in her experience of Africa the problem of bushmeat hunting will never be solved unless a viable alternative is offered to the local populace, and penalties and fines simply do not work. She then asked if this meeting was about stopping the bushmeat trade totally or only about bushmeat coming into the UK. **Noëlle** replied that the focus of the meeting was to consider the specific proposal that Marcus had presented.

**Dawn** interjected to state that she felt the money was being spent at the wrong end.

**Noëlle** continued by recognising that obviously there is a bigger issue in-country, but this was not the focus of today's meeting. She explained that there is a need to understand the trade first, establish if there is a problem and its extent and what the impacts are for the UK, its strategy and how that feeds into UK government policy.

**Ned** brought the focus back to the UK by stating that not much information with regard to bushmeat was being received from local authorities. Also there is a need to be careful not to overstate the risks. He went on to explain that the preparation (smoking), transportation (freezing) and cooking (boiling) methods tend to kill the pathogens so the risk is probably low but more research is needed. He suggested that Defra had carried out good awareness raising at airports, but wondered whether local authorities had done the same with West

African communities in the UK. It was pointed out that the lack of information coming through via local authorities may be largely due to the practice going underground in the UK. Bushmeat has a huge cultural significance for some ethnic groups and they will continue to buy and consume but know not to reveal this.

**Andrew** find pointed out that Anne-Lise Chaber didn't find bushmeat in France until she asked French customs to open passengers' bags. He then reiterated the tale of the freshly killed calf brought into Paris and raised the concern that it is not simply about end consumption but the threat to the livestock industry as well. He continued by praising the publicity work undertaken by Defra at airports but wanted to know what was being done to persuade UK ethnic communities to understand the laws. **Rolf** replied that these groups were in general well informed about the laws but their desire to 'have a taste of home' meant they ignored them. Defra probably also had little budget for additional work with local communities. **Marcus** agreed that the campaigns had shown a positive impact upon the number of seizures but added that focusing on seizures is not the best way of monitoring the trade.

**Tony** commented that there was certainly evidence that pathogens, including viruses, in uncooked meats were arriving into the UK. However, to date outbreaks have not been happening so his personal thought is that the risks are low.

**Olly Hymas (UCL/ZSL)** commented that in Gabon bushmeat is preserved in formaldehyde which could kill pathogens but presents an obvious concern in terms of consumption regardless of cooking methods, and more so in the range states. He continued that Africans are very adept at law avoidance and concealment citing examples of smuggling ivory in private planes and bushmeat via false suitcases and refrigerated containers. The problem is also not UK specific but all across Europe. He told a story of a passenger who carried a live monkey through customs onto a plane in Lisbon in a handbag and it was only at the outrage of a fellow passenger that the monkey was eventually seized and the passenger detained. Furthermore, given that most flights from West Central Africa are not direct to the UK, passengers arriving from Africa via Europe are not targeted by HMCE which understates the problem.

**Maggie** explained that the non-direct flights highlighted another problem. Under current legislation, if meat arrives via and is cleared by another EU state, HMCE does not have powers of seizure (although they could call in the local authorities, or the FSA or VLA if deemed to be of risk). **Dawn** expressed shock and asked if a live animal could be brought in from Paris, for example. **Maggie** replied not as the animal was live and subject to other rulings. However, in the instance of products of animal origin, in theory, it could happen. Though for a whole animal most likely it would be detained and the relevant competent authorities contacted.

**Andrew** asked whether we were not concerned about what appear to be lax controls at some continental airports. **Lauren Coad (OCTF)** added that it seemed like a small percentage of the trade was passing through the airports so should we not also be including sea ports. She also asked whether Chaber et al (2010)'s estimate of 3,000 tonnes/year meat/fish imports coming into Paris suggested that this was a relatively less important conservation issue for the UK. **Noëlle** commented that Chaber et al (2010)'s initial research suggests a lot more is coming into France than previously thought and this was probably true of the UK as well. France is not necessarily more lax – but this may be because the UK has not been researched properly, so the question is how can we better monitor and provide evidence. **Olly** added that it is not just a problem in Paris, but lots of bushmeat is going through Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Lisbon, hence there is a need to consider continental Europe as well.

**Niall Strawson (ECI)** wondered if there was any way in which resources at UKBA could be combined e.g. if the same people are committing a combination of organised crimes such as drug smuggling as well as bushmeat and live animals for the pet trade, could they not use

the same method of detection for all these illegal activities. **Maggie** replied that this area is currently being targeted but they are not seeing 'organised' levels of bushmeat trade – it is personal amounts.

**Noëlle** commented that she understood from UKBA's perspective that firearms and drugs are a higher priority but reiterated Niall's question as to whether resources may be combined such as the use of sniffer dogs. She then asked specifically about the sniffer dogs currently being used which Rolf had referred to earlier. **Rolf** explained that currently there is funding for 10 sniffer dogs trained specifically for the detection of products of animal origin in the UK which are used nationally, travelling around the country. **Noëlle** stated that it is possible to train dogs to identify CITES species for example but that it must be borne in mind that they are expensive to train and a long-term commitment. **Oilly** asked why not have trained dogs at the African airports rather than in the UK to prevent the bushmeat trade at the export stage. **Noëlle** agreed this might be simpler as a pilot study and that there is a need to consider in-country options.

**Vicki Crook (TRAFFIC International)** outlined TRAFFIC's perspective for the group. She explained that TRAFFIC has a contract with the European Commission and liaises with all of the EU member states. Regular meetings are held and contributions of member states are discussed with attendees from both Europol and Interpol. This is an ideal forum to understand other EU member states' border controls and practices and raise any concerns at a European level. Recent reports have noted a clear connection between organised crime (e.g. drugs trade) and the wildlife trade. TRAFFIC also coordinates EUTWIX<sup>6</sup> (European Union Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange), which comprises a database of information on wildlife seizures in the EU and an associated mailing list that allows quick and efficient information sharing between designated enforcement officers from all 27 EU member states, plus Croatia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and the Ukraine. She acknowledged the issue of why governments would focus on something if they didn't know it was a problem, and suggested that the EUTWIX database was a useful resource to, for example, get intelligence information from markets regarding where meat was coming and volumes of bushmeat traded, in addition to information from seizures.

**Vicki** confirmed that dogs can be trained to pick up general products of animal origin (POAO) or individual species. Species-specific sniffer dogs are in use in India and Russia which are able to identify tiger meat, and WWF Germany currently has funding for an EU-wide sniffer dog proposal for CITES regulation. The Czech Republic is also doing good work in this area. This is something that ZSL could link into which **Noëlle** agreed with. **Mark** agreed with Vicky that we should be considering developing links at European level, adding that we need to really co-ordinate with other EU member states. For example, even though the UK is already doing a lot, such as tightening regulation of re-exports of rhino horn to Asia for the traditional medicine markets, there is the problem of free circulation within the EU and the need for an understanding of legal steps elsewhere.

**Mark** stated that his enforcement team have never dealt with bushmeat under CITES legislation, explaining that it would have already been picked up earlier as an illegal import under CEMA<sup>7</sup> regulations, which carries stronger penalties. **Noëlle** asked if the penalty was therefore the same under CEMA for say gorilla and goat, which Maggie needed to check. **Vicki** suggested this was probably why very little bushmeat was recorded in the EUTWIX database. **Noëlle** suggested that it would still be useful to understand the CITES implications from a conversation perspective, even if the case was dealt with under different legislation.

**Mark** stressed the need to focus on why and for whom the proposed work was for. He stated that there was a need to ensure the research could be taken forward with practical outcomes rather than simply be an interesting piece of research that does not go anywhere.

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<sup>6</sup> EU-TWIX is a joint initiative of the Belgian Federal Police, Customs and CITES Management Authority, and TRAFFIC Europe, which co-ordinates the system

<sup>7</sup> Customs and Excise Management Act 1979

**Marcus** replied that he hoped the proposed research would provide a better understanding of which methods are required to better monitor and manage the illegal meat trade.

**Mark** also stated that, upon seizure at the airport, products are very quickly incinerated and there is a need to consider what facilities would be required for retaining samples. **Niall** asked if airports had any laboratory facilities at the moment to which the answer was no.

**Maggie** reiterated that storage and transport is a problem (they have no storage facilities at Heathrow; seizures are taken away by a contractor) but is allowed with a licence from Defra.

**Dawn** stated that it seemed that CITES and UKBA were not linked and asked if CITES was informed of any seizures made. **Maggie** explained that there were CITES specialists within the Customs team and they are made aware of all seizures of products of animal origin.

**Andrew** felt it would be useful to have a comparison of different ports of entry across Europe to answer whether detection, monitoring or deterrents were better in the UK or not, and if so, why (e.g. is education better?), and then to apply the lessons learnt.

**Dawn** pointed out that lots of ethnic groups in Britain originate from ex-British colonies and in these countries most of the animals have been 'shot out' already. This may account for the apparent lower levels of traffic in the UK, i.e. the volumes being imported into different countries may be related to country of origin. **Oilly** added that there is also a cultural impact on diets in countries that are 'shot out' such as Nigeria, where people did not grow up eating bushmeat and therefore do not associate it with consumption and 'a taste of home'. He went on to talk about undercover work being conducted in Gabon which is attempting to understand the bushmeat trading system in its entirety including cultural influences. He added that there is also a need to look at sea ports as well as airports as refrigerated containers are being used for transportation.

**Andrew** asked how much work has been done in the UK already to assess the situation.

**Noëlle** replied that a researcher in the US had looked at something like 12 markets across Europe and North America, of which the UK was one, and that the volumes were higher than first thought. This research has not been published yet however, partly due to cultural sensitivities in the US about targeting cultural traditions of particular ethnic communities.

**Marcus** reiterated that he was more interested in and capable of research than intelligence gathering with **Noëlle** adding that there is a need to ensure the proposal is realistic in what can be achieved and the desire to link in with other organisations such as TRAFFIC. **Vicki** stated that TRAFFIC Cameroon is currently developing indicators for the international bushmeat trade in COMIFAC countries and this has just got underway. **Noëlle** stated that this was an obvious contact for more information and collaboration.

**Oilly** stated that the problem of hunting is twofold, with two distinct markets. These are a) the bushmeat market which is largely animals that are not endangered and b) the traditional medicinal market which tends to involve a lot more CITES species. However, the problem of species identification still needs to be addressed.

**Kate Ciborowski (ZSL)** asked what proportion of imports is not being identified without genetic methodology. **Noëlle** replied that in-country it is easier at markets as animals tend to be fresher and whole, however once treated for export it is much more difficult as the meat is often smoked and transported in parts.

**Tony** asked whether this proposal was about import volumes/types or pathogen load as the conversation seemed to have become general to the bushmeat trade globally. If the former then he felt that 1% of imports being bushmeat should be enough to justify a small concept note. **Maggie** reiterated that this would still require UKBA's involvement.

**Noëlle** summarised that the proposal put forward focuses upon the risks, scale (which she accepted would be more of a challenge) and the development of monitoring tools. In other

words, is there a problem? How big is it? And how can it be managed? She stated that the pathogen issue is most important for government policy but that the trade also has important conservation implications. **Marcus** confirmed that the proposal is not solely focused upon pathogen risk.

**Ned** stated he understood that EU law prevents seized products from being moved. **Noëlle** replied that this can be done with permits but does push up costs. Ideally, point of seizure sampling would be possible. **Kate** asked if the licence required was the same for whole animals/parts as for a small sample of the item. **Maggie** thought that it was. **Tony** agreed that point of seizure sampling would be better and he could think of some ways to do this.

**Noëlle** brought the meeting to a conclusion and thanked everyone for coming. She asked the group to inform her of any other issues they would like to discuss at future UKBWG meetings and agreed to follow up the issues discussed at this meeting.

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**Many thanks to all who attended**