Socioeconomic Drivers of Local Community Participation in Bushmeat Activities in Tarangire/Manyara Ecosystem

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Bushmeat is the term given to define meat of terrestrial wildlife that is hunted for subsistence or commercial use. Bushmeat is a severe threat to wildlife populations in Africa's national parks. While much is known about how the hunting of species affects populations for bushmeat, few studies examine the socioeconomic drivers of the bushmeat industry. Four hundred and seventy five individuals were interviewed in the community area surrounding Lake Manyara National Park, Tanzania, to determine their participation in bushmeat activities. Chi-square tests were then used to determine if a relationship existed between bushmeat participation and various socioeconomic variables. Knowledge of bushmeat hunting activities was more prevalent among agricultural areas, individuals under the age of 30, and males. Consumption of bushmeat was more prevalent among agricultural areas, individuals over the age of 30, and males. Among individuals interviewed who participated in bushmeat activities, all stated that they relied on hunting of bushmeat as a form of income, they also stated given the option that they would end their participation in bushmeat hunting for another form of employment, such as a community guide for tourists was available. In order to curb bushmeat activities in the Tarangire/ Manyara ecosystem, employment initiatives focused on young unemployed males in agricultural areas should be created.