

From Bush to Butchery: THE GAME MEAT VALUE CHAIN IN NORTHERN TANZANIA



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Tanzania is home to wild herds of buffalo, wildebeest, hartebeest, and impala that have been hunted for meat by generations of indigenous communities.

In 2019, Tanzania’s late President called on the country’s authorities to establish a mechanism that will allow Tanzania’s to access wild meat, counter rampant poaching and illegal bushmeat trade through a pioneering set of national laws.

By early 2020, the Game Meat Selling Regulations (GMSR) – new legislation for the legal sourcing, selling, and consumption of wild meat – had come into force.

In the short time since, the legislative landscape of domestic wild meat trade has radically changed, even if effective implementation and public awareness are yet to catch up.

TRAFFIC’s report *From Bush to Butchery* analyses the impact, gaps and opportunities of Tanzania’s new regulations from conservation, traceability, community, and economic perspectives.

TRAFFIC used a multi-sectoral One Health approach to engage wildlife, livestock, and public health officials from district level up to national agencies as the project's foundation for developing practical recommendations.

Given its potential for application in other African countries facing similar issues, TRAFFIC’s report adds to ongoing collaboration with local authorities with a set of evidence-based insights to help guide future improvements in Tanzania and beyond.

While the GMSR are ambitious in scope, they hold the potential to trailblaze similar approaches that could be adopted elsewhere - law enforcement, monitoring of hunting and trade, safety inspections, and public awareness need to be stepped up.

If successfully applied, the GMSR hold the potential to holistically address threats to both people and wildlife, connecting issues such as poaching, zoonotic and other food borne diseases transmission, climate change, poverty, sustainable development, and alternative livelihoods.”

Qudra Kagembe, TRAFFIC East Africa’s Project Officer and lead author of the report



A resident hunter collects legally hunted catch from a hunting block in Southern Tanzania.

Photo: S. Obae / TRAFFIC

Sustainable, safe, and legal supply of wild meat involves actors across the domestic supply chain, starting with regulated sourcing from resident and tourist hunting.

For the process to succeed, sourcing should only take place once the relevant wildlife authorities have issued hunting permits that comply with precise wildlife management stipulations.

Poaching for bushmeat (illegally sourced and traded meat) remains a legacy problem for Tanzania as it grapples with balancing local subsistence needs with wildlife conservation and sustainable development.

Because of the costs associated with legal wild meat supply chains, economic barriers remain a challenging factor in reducing bushmeat consumption among poor communities.

Regulations also require game meat supply chain actors to maintain strict sanitation and hygiene standards, specifying refrigeration and transportation obligations for both hunting expeditions and selling facilities.

TRAFFIC has independently conducted pathogen screening of wild meat samples to assess the risks of zoonotic disease transmission from consuming contaminated meat.

To support the regular inspection and traceability monitoring of wild meat supply, TRAFFIC and government partners have brought about regulatory changes that bring wild meat inspection under the purview of existing Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries regulations.

TRAFFIC's implementation of a One Health Approach enabled the Wildlife TRAPS Project to cut across multiple related sectors to bring together experts from community associations, veterinary services, wildlife authorities, and environmental organisations to ensure the regulations protect biodiversity while benefitting local communities and businesses.

TRAFFIC's engagement with government went from the district level all the way up to the Prime Minister's department managing the national One Health desk.

Tanzania's model for legal wild meat supply shows how health, economic, and environmental challenges can be tackled hand-in-hand for their mutual benefit. Insights from this research point the way forward for the game meat industry to develop in a sustainable, safe, and legal direction."

Dilys Roe, senior researcher at the International Institute for Environment and Development



A restaurant owner displays a dish made with legally-sourced wild meat. Photo: S. Obae / TRAFFIC

Coherent policy that links regulations on hunting processes, domestic trade laws, veterinary inspections, and sustainable livelihoods are needed to ensure that ordinary people can reap the rewards from the trade.

Integrating game meat industry legislation and national One Health approaches would harness insights from each and bolster their effective implementation on the ground.

TRAFFIC continues to work with representatives across government, enforcement, civil society, and community agencies to maximise the impact Tanzania's GMSR can have for people and wildlife in-country.

We have shared these results with the wider East Africa Community (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda) as a model for adaptation across the region.