

**WILDAID**

**ATTITUDES**  
**TOWARDS PANGOLINS**  
**AND WILDLIFE AMONG**  
**THE GENERAL PUBLIC**  
**IN URBAN CAMEROON**



# ATTITUDES TOWARDS PANGOLINS AND WILDLIFE AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN URBAN CAMEROON

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Author: Simon Denyer, WildAid

# ATTITUDES TOWARDS PANGOLINS AND WILDLIFE AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN URBAN CAMEROON

## I. Summary

Unsustainable bushmeat hunting has emerged as a major threat to wildlife populations in Africa, with demand for bushmeat from the continent's fast-growing cities putting serious strains on many species, especially in West and Central Africa. The bushmeat trade is also associated with an increased risk of propagating zoonotic diseases.

Pangolins in particular are facing growing threats of extinction in both Africa and Asia. In Africa, they are hunted for local consumption of their meat, while their scales are increasingly exported to Asia for use in traditional Chinese medicine.

The global threats to pangolins were recognized by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 2017, which placed all eight pangolin species on its Appendix I of most endangered species, banning all international trade. The government of Cameroon followed suit by banning the hunting, capture, killing and trade of all three indigenous pangolin species.

This survey is intended as a companion to WildAid's report "*Understanding urban consumption of pangolin meat in Cameroon*," which took a detailed look at attitudes among consumers of bushmeat in the cities of Douala and Mbalmayo, surveyed at bushmeat restaurants.

By contrast, this survey looks at attitudes among the general public, in five cities: Douala, Yaoundé, Bertoua, Ebolowa and Mbalmayo. Rather than concentrating on people eating in bushmeat restaurants, it is intended to provide insight into the bigger picture among Cameroon's city dwellers.

It is also intended to provide a baseline for WildAid's campaign to protect pangolins in Cameroon, to allow us to evaluate what impact that campaign has on awareness, attitudes and consumption of pangolin meat.

The results allowed some clear conclusions to be drawn. In the first place, consumption of bushmeat is widespread, with only 8% of respondents say they never eat it. While 58% say they only eat bushmeat once a year or very rarely, a total of 34% say they eat it roughly once a month or more frequently.

Pangolin meat is also eaten in significant amounts, with 63% eating it once a year or very rarely, but 17% saying they eat it roughly once a month or more frequently.

Given the size of Cameroon's cities and the slow reproduction of pangolins, these levels of consumption are bound to put pressure on the populations of native pangolin species.

Awareness of the 2017 law banning the hunting, killing, capture, trade and consumption of pangolins was very low. Only 29% of respondents correctly said it was illegal to hunt, kill and trade all species of pangolin.

When told about the 2017 law banning the killing and trade of all pangolin species, slightly over half said it had no impact on their consumption. But significant

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numbers of people said they had either given up eating pangolin as a result or were eating less.

These findings give considerable room to raise awareness of the law and raises the prospect that higher awareness will reduce consumption of pangolin meat.

Asked about their attitudes towards pangolins, a very strong majority (93%) said they were proud that pangolins exist in Cameroon. More than half (55%) were aware that pangolins help to maintain a healthy environment, but many were not aware of the role pangolins play in the ecosystem by eating ants and termites.

While opinion was divided about whether hunting pangolins should be allowed or forbidden, awareness of the threats facing pangolin populations was incomplete.

These findings suggest that a campaign that raises awareness of the law, the threats faced by pangolin populations, stresses their value to the environment and their important place in Cameroon's natural heritage could have impact in reducing consumption.

Attitudes towards wildlife in Cameroon were overwhelmingly positive and should provide encouragement for conservationists.

Very strong majorities said wildlife is important for Cameroon's natural heritage (92%), said they were proud of Cameroon's wildlife (87%), and said wildlife provides valuable income through tourism (89%).

Another overwhelming majority (83%) said they would pay money to visit a national park in Cameroon, a finding that will support the government's efforts to expand domestic tourism.

Opinion was more split on whether hunting of wild animals should be allowed, but by far the strongest agreement came to the statement that Cameroon should allow the hunting of common wildlife species but not endangered ones. This suggests support for the ban on pangolin hunting would rise if people were made more aware of the threats facing them.

There was a very strong expression of concern about deforestation as a major problem in Cameroon, while most people also agreed that Cameroon can gain useful income from its forests.

## II. Methodology

The survey was carried out in five cities across Cameroon, through face-to-face interviews.

The sample was weighted towards the two biggest cities, Yaoundé and Douala, while smaller samples were drawn from Bertoua, Ebolowa and Mbalmayo. This allows for general conclusions to be drawn about attitudes in Cameroon's urban centres, but also enables us to look in more depth at differences between different cities and regions if required.

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The sample was also balanced between different genders, age groups, and educational attainment levels. The intention is carry out an endline survey after the campaign with a similar breakdown.

### Demographic profile of study population

<u>City</u>	<u>Sample</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Sample</u>
Bertoua	130	Female	500
Douala	300	Male	501
Ebolowa	120	Total	1,001
Mbalmayo	102		
Yaoundé	349		
Total	1,001		

<u>Age</u>	<u>Sample</u>
18-24	234
25-34	426
35+	341
Total	1,001

## III. Results and discussion

For the purposes of this brief report, we will concentrate on the overall results, without examining differences between age, gender and city. These breakdowns will be examined in more detail once the endline survey is carried out.

### III.1 Consumption of bushmeat and pangolin meat

Respondents were asked about their consumption of bushmeat. Most said they consumed it once a year or very rarely (58%), but significant numbers said they consumed it around once a month (23%) or once a week/more often (11%). Only 8% of respondents said they never consume bushmeat.

**Table 1. Consumption of bushmeat**

*Q. How often do you consume bushmeat?*

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Once a week or more often	110	11
Roughly once a month	234	23
One a year/very rarely	579	58
Never	78	8
Total	1001	100

Respondents were then shown a photograph of a pangolin and asked if they could identify what animal it was. Around 86 percent were able to correctly identify it as a pangolin.

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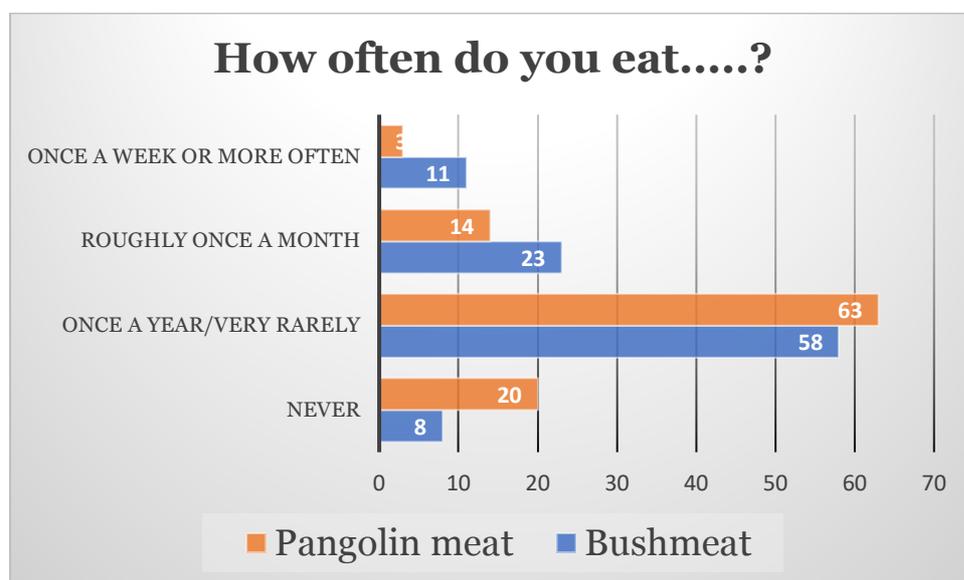
Asked how often they consume pangolin meat, 63% said once a year or very rarely. But 17% said they consume it once a month or more often. Given the size of Cameroon's cities, that level of consumption is bound to put pressure on the populations of native pangolin species.

**Table 2. Consumption of pangolin meat**

*Q. How often do you consume pangolin meat?*

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Once a week or more often	33	3
Roughly once a month	137	14
One a year/very rarely	626	63
Never	205	20
Total	1001	100

**Figure 1. Consumption of bushmeat and pangolin meat**



### III.2 Awareness and impact of Cameroon's law on pangolins

Awareness of the 2017 law banning the hunting, killing, capture, trade and consumption of pangolins was low. Only 29% of respondents correctly said it was illegal to hunt, kill and trade all species of pangolin.

A much larger proportion (47%) believed it was legal to kill some species. This was the law between 2006, when ground pangolins were protected, until 2017, when white-bellied and black-bellied pangolins were also placed under official protection. A further 20% believed it was legal to hunt, kill and eat all species of pangolin. This finding gives significant room to raise awareness.

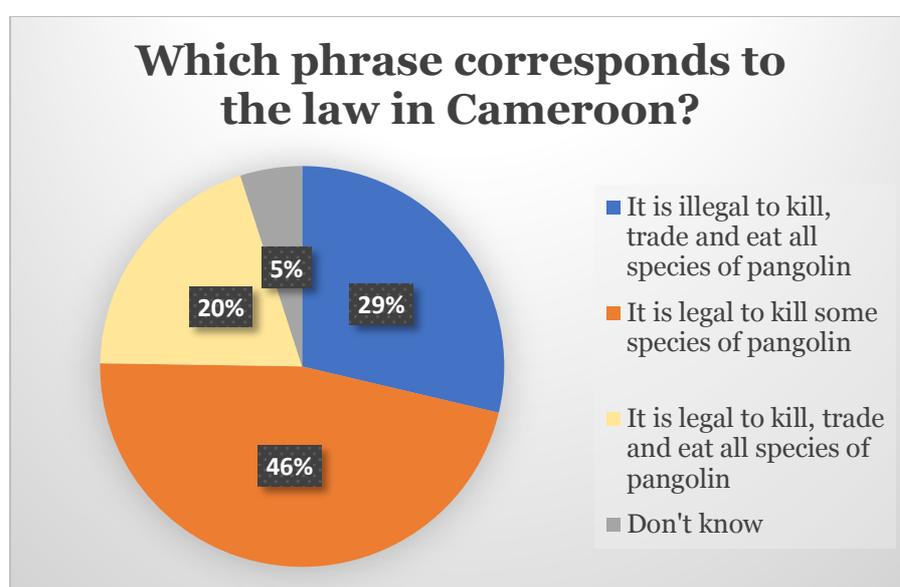
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**Table 3. Awareness of the law on pangolins**

*Q. Which phrase below corresponds to the law on pangolins?*

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
It is illegal to kill, trade and eat all species of pangolin	289	29
It is legal to kill some species of pangolin	469	47
It is legal to kill, trade and eat all species of pangolin	196	20
Don't know	47	5
Total	1001	100

**Figure 2. Awareness of the law on pangolins**



When told about the change in the law enacted in 2017, more than half of respondents (53%) said the change had no impact or would have no impact on their consumption of pangolin meat.

However, 19% said they had stopped eating pangolin meat or would stop eating it as a result of the change in the law, while 11% said they were eating less.

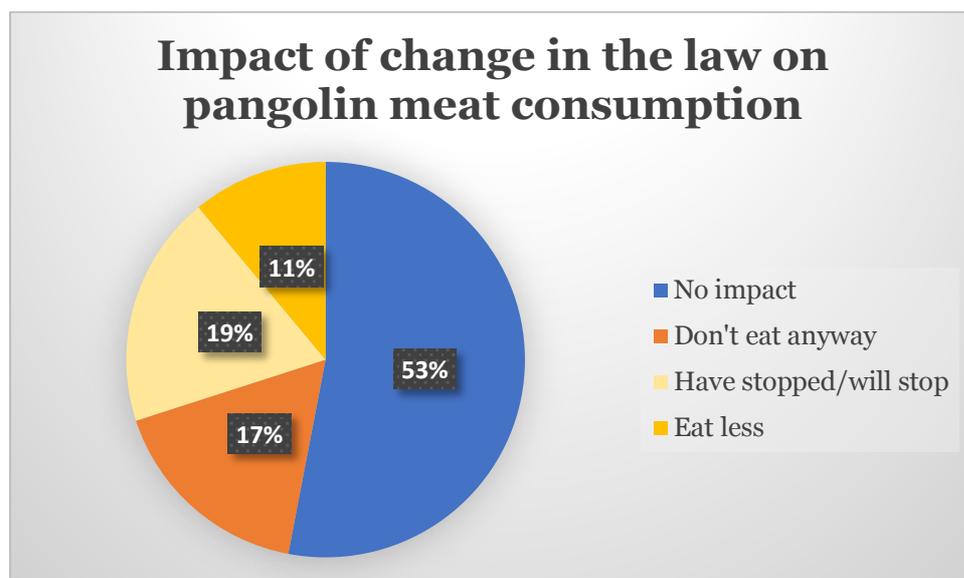
**Table 4. Impact of the change in law**

*Q: In 2017, the government changed the law to make it illegal to kill and trade pangolins. Did that change your consumption of pangolin meat?*

<u>Response</u>	<u>%</u>
It had no impact	53
I don't eat pangolin meat anyway	17
I have stopped eating it/I will stop	19
I eat less pangolin meat	11

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**Figure 3. Impact of the change in law**



### III.3 Attitudes towards pangolins

Asked about their attitudes towards pangolins, a very strong majority (93%) said they were proud that pangolins exist in Cameroon. More than half (55%) were aware that pangolins help to maintain a healthy environment.

More than two-thirds (68%) see pangolins as an important source of food in Cameroon, not surprising considering rural and urban consumption of pangolin meat.

Asked about the threat of extinction, results were slightly contradictory, with 70% agreeing that pangolins are endangered, but 40% saying there are still many pangolins here.

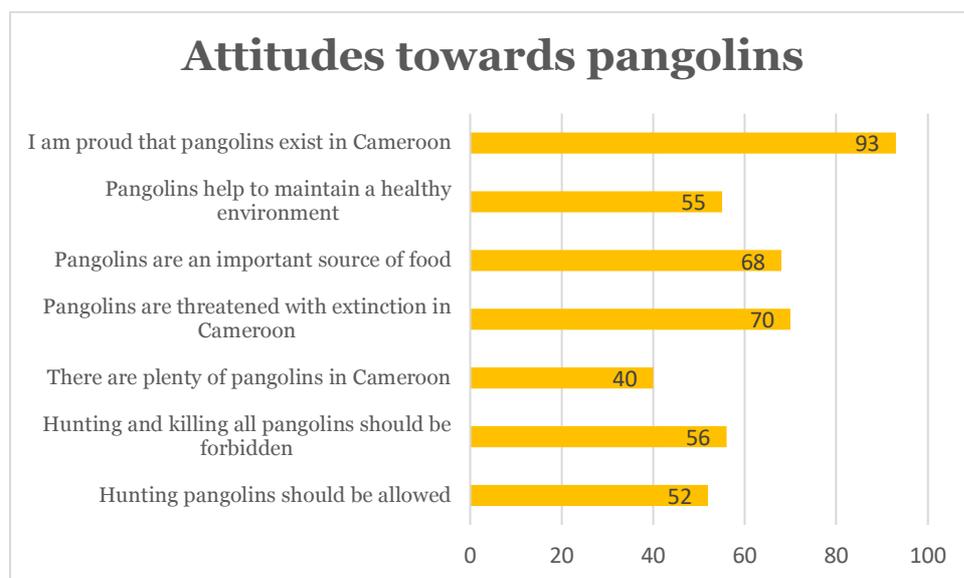
Opinion was divided about whether hunting pangolins should be allowed or forbidden.

**Table 5. Attitudes towards pangolins**

<u>Question</u>	<u>Agree (%)</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
I am proud that pangolins exist in Cameroon	93	4	3
Pangolins help to maintain a healthy environment	55	25	20
Pangolins are an important source of food	68	27	5
Pangolins are threatened with extinction in Cameroon	70	20	10
There are many pangolins in Cameroon	40	48	11
Hunting and killing all pangolins should be forbidden	56	40	3
Hunting pangolins should be allowed	52	44	35

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**Figure 4. Attitudes towards pangolins**



### III.4 Attitudes towards wildlife and forests

Attitudes towards wildlife in Cameroon were overwhelmingly positive and should provide encouragement for conservationists.

Very strong majorities said wildlife is important for Cameroon's natural heritage (92%), said they were proud of Cameroon's wildlife (87%), and said wildlife provides valuable income through tourism (89%).

Another overwhelming majority (83%) said they would pay money to visit a national park in Cameroon, a finding that will support the government's efforts to expand domestic tourism.

Opinion was more split on whether hunting of wild animals should be allowed, but by far the strongest agreement came to the statement that Cameroon should allow the hunting of common wildlife species but not endangered ones. This suggests support for the ban on pangolin hunting would rise if people were made more aware of the threats facing them.

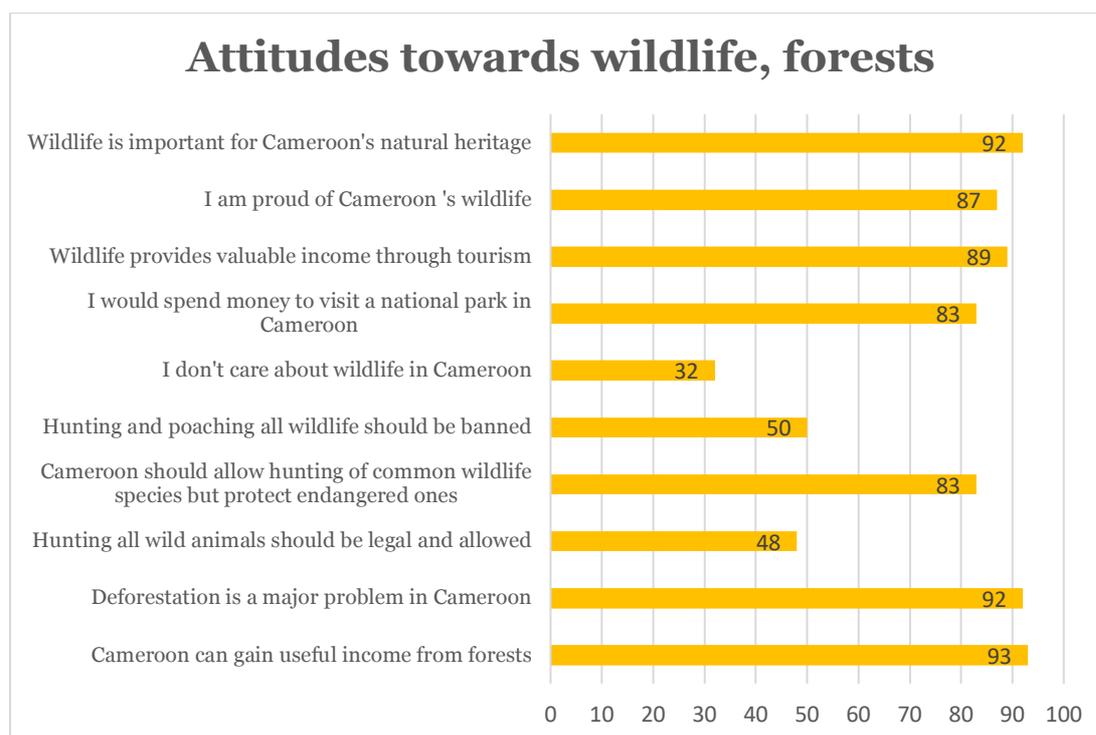
There was a very strong expression of concern about deforestation as a major problem in Cameroon, while most people also agreed that Cameroon can gain useful income from its forests.

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**Table 6. Attitudes towards wildlife, forests**

	<u>Agree</u> (%)	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Wildlife is important for Cameroon's natural heritage	92	6	2
I am proud of Cameroon's wildlife	87	11	2
Wildlife provides valuable income through tourism	89	8	3
I would spend money to visit a national park in Cameroon	83	14	3
I don't care about wildlife in Cameroon	32	65	2
Hunting and poaching all wildlife should be banned	50	47	3
Cameroon should allow hunting of common wildlife species but protect endangered ones	83	14	3
Hunting all wild animals should be legal and allowed	48	48	4
Deforestation is a major problem in Cameroon	92	6	2
Cameroon can gain useful income from forests	93	5	2

**Figure 5. Attitudes towards wildlife, forests**



### Acknowledgments and thanks

We thank the populations of Bertoua, Douala, Ebolowa, Mbalmayo and Yaoundé who kindly agreed to participate in this study.

WildAid thanks Cible Etudes & Conseil in Cameroon for carrying out this survey.