



## Wildlife Research and Conservation 2019 (WRC2019)

### Panel Discussion

#### *Defaunation – from conservation science to conservation action*

**Date & time:** 01 October 2019, 14.00h – 15.30h

**Location:** Main lecture hall, Botanical Museum Berlin, Königin-Luise-Str. 6-8, 14195 Berlin

~\*~

In the 1990s, the term of “empty forest” was first mentioned to describe the extirpation of forest mammalian diversity. There is no doubt that hunting poses a major threat to the persistence of wildlife throughout the tropics. Hunting pressure is obviously triggered by environmental variables and anthropogenic pressure, and it seems that many protected areas are located in high-risk areas. In 2000, John Robinson & Liz Bennett, in their seminal book “Hunting for Sustainability”, invoked an image of the slippery concept of sustainability by comparing it to Lewis Carroll’s “snark”, an imagery animal difficult to track down. Almost two decades later, we are probably just as far away from tracking down the fabled animal. In other words, our understanding of the sustainability of hunting in the tropics is still incomplete. But, although we do know much about who hunts and why, as witnessed by the large number of studies that have been published on hunting in the tropics, our understanding of how much is extracted is still sketchy. Knowing where extraction of wild meat occurs is a prime importance in understanding how to tackle the problem of overexploitation of wildlife. After all, bushmeat extraction, which has no doubt increased substantially during recent decades, is perhaps the most pervasive threat to biodiversity in tropical forests worldwide. In recent years, the magnitude of the global illegal wildlife trade has increased significantly, and several new studies indicate that unsustainable hunting may be a greater threat to tropical biodiversity than deforestation. Defaunation has myriad ecological and socio-economic consequences. The disappearance of large vertebrate species, for example, can degrade ecosystem services, change evolutionary trajectories, and even impact human health. This panel discussion will provide a platform for scientists, conservation practitioners, and the donor community to take a critical look at how current conservation strategies can be strengthened to deal with this global challenge. The discussion will focus on ways to integrate findings from recent scientific studies into conservation actions that can effectively address the defaunation crisis.



#### **The Panel:**

**Prof. John Fa** (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK and Center for International Forestry Research, Indonesia): One of the leading scientists surrounding the exploitation of bushmeat in South America and Central Africa; did a number of field studies on consumptive use of wild animals in Central Africa, published numerous scientific papers on bushmeat consumption, sustainable use of bushmeat, role of bushmeat in terms of malnutrition of children, bushmeat as source of zoonotic diseases (e.g., ebola).

**Andrew Tilker** (Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research, Germany): Tropical ecologist with a focus on ecology and conservation of endangered mammal species, extensive fieldwork experience in Vietnam and Laos, interest in using robust survey methods to inform conservation strategies, especially in areas subjected to increasing levels of hunting-driven defaunation.

**Frank Barsch** (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety [BMU], Germany): Biologist by training, spent several years as development worker in Botswana, worked on sustainable trade of medicinal and aromatic plants for World Wildlife Fund for Nature, joined BMU and was part of the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) team where he gained profound knowledge of sustainable use issues, is now responsible for CBD within BMU.

**Martin Bostroem** (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau [KfW] Development Bank, Germany): Agricultural Engineer/Economist, started his career at Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), spent 4 years as expert for rural development for German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) in Tunisia. Since 2000 project manager in KfW / Frankfurt. Since 2006 mainly responsible for projects in the field of sustainable resource management with a focus on protected areas in the Congo Basin and (since 2014) in Madagascar.

#### **Facilitator:**

**Marion Junkersdorf** (World Wide Fund for Nature, Germany): Marion Junkersdorf has been with WWF since 2003, her field is the organization of WWF's political communication. She holds a Diploma in Translation and is in charge of event management with growing numbers of events and guests out of the realms of politics, media, industry and civil society. She ensures that all political communication is clear and professional, and she makes sure that all political WWF events go by the same high standard and quality.