

Wild Meat Learning Group

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

USAID's Wild Meat Collaborative Learning Group has learned a great deal over the course of multiple years of intentional learning activities. This document organizes lessons learned and resources for each learning question in the Wild Meat Learning Agenda.

For more information and resources on the Wild Meat Collaborative Learning Group, please visit <https://biodiversitylinks.org/learning-evidence/wild-meat-collaborative-learning-group>.



LEARNING QUESTION 1A:

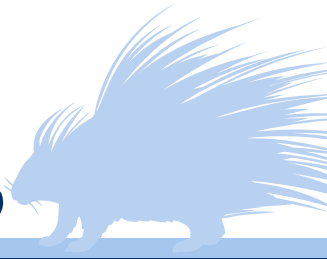
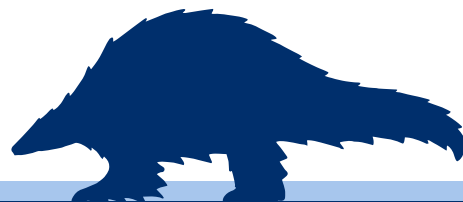
What are the barriers and incentives that motivate urban, peri-urban, and non-subsistence demand for and consumption of wild meat?

Taste is the most commonly cited reason to consume wild meat.

- ▶ Taste is the primary driver for consumption, according to research from across Nigeria, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Vietnam, and Thailand. [[Wild Meat Compilation](#)]
- ▶ Interventions that provide more satisfying alternatives to wild meat may help shift consumers away from it. An urban consumer study in Vietnam showed that while taste was frequently noted as the reason that consumers ate wild meat, nearly half of those surveyed rated their wild meat meals as only “okay.” [[Alegria, et al., 2021](#); [Webinar: Consumers in Ho Chi Minh City](#)]

Wild meat is often not a government priority, so it can be difficult for projects to engage government officials and secure their buy-in.

- ▶ Governments typically prioritize countering wildlife trafficking to protect high-value species rather than commonly-consumed species like ungulates and rodents. [[Case study: CONNECT](#)]
- ▶ Careful messaging around wild meat is critical for ensuring government engagement. In East Africa, USAID partners emphasized the alarming extraction rates of species such as zebra, giraffe, and marine species and the urgent attention needed to conserve them. In addition, the project targeted “kingpins” along the wild meat value chain rather than local-level subsistence hunters. [[Case study: CONNECT](#)]





LEARNING QUESTION 1B:

What behavior change approaches are effective in overcoming barriers or leveraging incentives for changing wild meat demand and consumption behavior?

Understanding audiences and their motivations is essential.

- ▶ People may be unaware of the legal repercussions of consuming wild meat. In Cambodia, people who were aware that wild meat consumption has a negative impact on the environment did not change their consumption habits. Additionally, they did not perceive that consumption was illegal, though they thought that poachers, sellers, and restaurant owners were breaking the law. [[Case study: Cambodia Green Future](#)]
- ▶ Selecting the right messenger can significantly expand a campaign's reach. Effective messengers (e.g., religious leaders, celebrities, government leaders) must be respected and influential among the target audience. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Messages must target decision-makers and align with their needs and values. In urban areas, men often decide where to dine, but in rural areas, women typically make decisions about meals. [[Webinar: Consumers in Ho Chi Minh City](#)]
- ▶ Individuals vary in their acceptance of the links between wild meat and human health risks, including zoonotic disease spillover, and successful messaging must be tailored to address these varying perceptions. Where consumers perceive wild meat to be healthier than domestic meat, messages about health risks are not credible. [[Wild Meat Compilation](#); [Webinar: Poultry Production in Northern Republic of the Congo](#)]

Multi-pronged social and behavior change approaches that reach many audiences are more likely to be effective. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]

- ▶ Comprehensive social and behavior change strategies require a multi-faceted approach that effectively engages diverse audiences. A single intervention, such as a radio campaign, is often insufficient to reach a broad audience. [Human-centered approaches](#) can help ensure that messages and delivery methods resonate with the target audience. [Case studies: [CONNECT](#) and [Cambodia Green Future](#)]
- ▶ Engaging journalists can enhance their understanding of wild meat issues and empower them to write future articles on the topic. The USAID CONNECT activity worked with journalists and media organizations through workshops and other capacity building activities to amplify their message. [[Case study: CONNECT](#)]



LEARNING QUESTION 2:

How effective is alternative protein substitution for subsistence-level consumption of wild meat?

Alternative protein substitution efforts should be informed by understanding audiences and essential needs.

- ▶ Alternatives should offer comparable or superior dietary and nutritional benefits, with consideration to factors such as seasonal availability, protein content, iron levels, and vitamin B12 content. [[Webinar: Why Eat Wild Meat](#), [Webinar: Importance of Wild Meat and Fish for Children's Nutritional Intake in the Congo Basin](#)]
- ▶ To encourage adoption and acceptance within communities, alternatives should align with people's food preferences, which are often influenced by sensory factors like taste, smell, and appearance. [[Wild Meat Compilation](#), [Webinar: Why Eat Wild Meat](#)]
- ▶ Alternatives must be easy to produce and affordable to purchase. To assess the long-term sustainability of alternatives, compare their financial and labor costs (i.e., production and purchasing) to those of wild meat. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Follow-up with communities is needed to better understand the long-term sustainability of alternative protein projects after funding ends. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]

Pairing alternative protein production with complementary services can enhance its effectiveness.

- ▶ Replacing wild meat with alternative proteins requires a holistic approach. In the Congo, a poultry production activity identified the need for complementary services, such as support for feed production, veterinary services, and access to banking/loans for aspiring producers. [[Case study: Soso Pona Moto Nyonso](#)]

Adopting alternative protein requires consideration of market forces.

- ▶ While small-scale operations may supply additional income for a few people, replacing wild meat in diets requires models that can scale. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Multiple actors must collaborate and coordinate for effective alternatives to gain market share, particularly to ensure they are not working at odds with each other. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]



LEARNING QUESTION 3A:

Where wild meat sales are legal, how effectively are regulations monitored and enforced?

Traceability and legality verification of wild meat are challenges for effective monitoring.

- ▶ Without clear species and origin identification, monitoring and law enforcement efforts are hampered. Determining the legal origin of wild meat can be daunting once it is no longer in the hunter's possession. After butchering, it becomes increasingly challenging to identify the species of meat in markets. [Case studies: [Wildlife TRAPS Vietnam](#) and [Tuhifadhi Maliasili](#), [Webinar: Wild Meat and One Health](#)]

Good data is essential to understand the effectiveness of regulations.

- ▶ Useful data includes information on wildlife populations, the health of protected areas, dietary and nutritional needs of communities, and health risks along the wildlife value chain. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]

Good governance of natural resources is critical to the success of regulations and effective enforcement.

- ▶ Political will for shifting demand away from unsustainable offtake may be present at some levels of government and not at others. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]



LEARNING QUESTION 3B:

How effective are regulations at reducing illegal and unsustainable sale of wildlife?

Regulations must be enforced to be meaningful. Without appropriate training, human resources, and funding to carry out enforcement, regulations alone are unlikely to be successful.

- ▶ Illegal trade can be hidden in legal markets. Legalization of wild meat has been found to increase illegal offtake in Tanzania. TRAFFIC found that at least 70 percent of respondents acknowledged that established game meat selling points could increase poaching if the game meat supply is not well-managed. [Case studies: [Tuhifadhi Maliasili](#), [Wildlife TRAPS Tanzania](#)]
- ▶ Because borders are often porous, enforcement of wildlife laws must be transboundary to be impactful. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]



LEARNING QUESTION 4:

What management systems for land and protected areas can support sustainable subsistence hunting for local communities without contributing to commercial hunting?

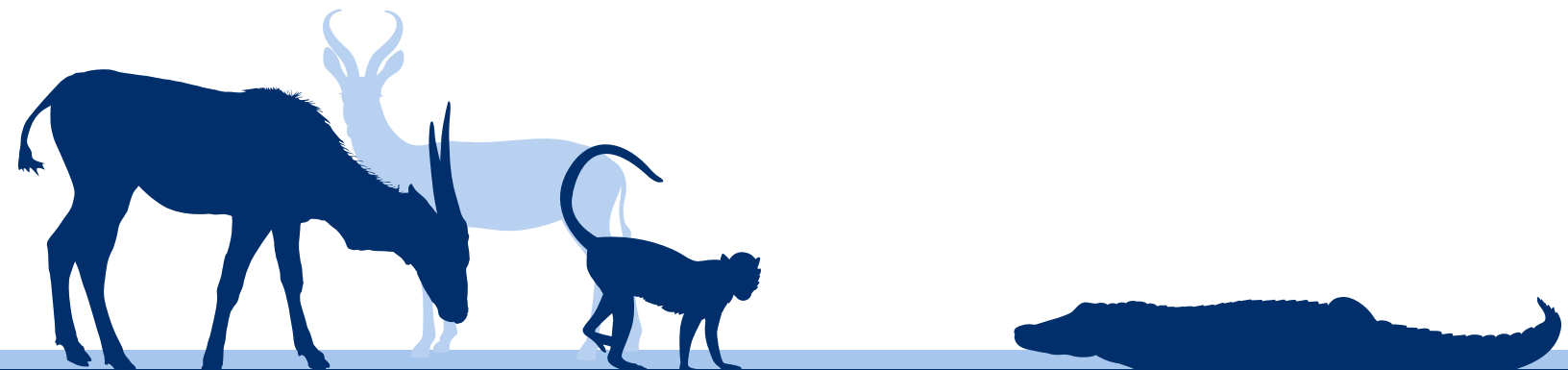
The establishment of sustainable, legal trade requires several key conditions to be met.

- ▶ Communities must have good governance and existing laws that regulate trade, as well as good data on wildlife populations and transparent hunting quota setting systems. [[Case study: Wildlife TRAPS Tanzania](#)]
- ▶ There should be well-functioning monitoring and enforcement systems along the wildlife value chain. [[Case study: Wildlife TRAPS Tanzania](#)]
- ▶ Potential profits from legal, sustainable systems must be higher than those from hunting and/or selling illegal wild meat. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]

Community or household-level projects can build local buy-in.

- ▶ Meaningful community engagement in project design and data collection aligns conservation efforts with the specific needs and aspirations of the communities involved, fostering a sense of ownership and cooperation. [[Webinar: Sustainable Wildlife Management](#); [Case study: Zambia Luangwa Livelihood and Conservation Activity](#)]
- ▶ Community hunter associations empower communities to actively participate in data collection and management. [[Webinar: Sustainable Wildlife Management](#)]
- ▶ Some communities prefer household-level projects. Research suggests that contributing factors can include community-level conflict, family trust issues, distrust of NGOs, and historically poor benefit sharing. [[Webinar: Why Eat Wild Meat](#)]

Because local subsistence use can be entangled with commercial trade, separating the two can be complex. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]





LEARNING QUESTION 5:

Where are the synergies between wild meat interventions and those focused on zoonotic disease, food security, and household income in USAID programming?

Wild meat is often a source of both food and income.

- ▶ Interventions must dually address food and income. Research with communities around the Dja Faunal Reserve in Cameroon suggested that alternative protein is more likely to reduce wild meat consumption and sales when projects focus on both food security and household income. [[Webinar: Why Eat Wild Meat?](#)]

Collaboration and coordination across institutions and sectors can be beneficial, especially in resource-constrained environments.

- ▶ Stakeholders and decision-makers should share information to bridge critical data gaps.
- ▶ Optimizing resource use helps avoid duplication, address gaps, and maximize the impact of initiatives. [Case studies: [Wildlife TRAPS Tanzania](#) and [Wildlife TRAPS Vietnam](#)]
- ▶ Understanding and addressing jurisdictional issues, such as the different government ministries responsible for wildlife and environment, food safety, public health, economic growth, and transportation, is key. [[Case study: Wildlife TRAPS Vietnam](#)]
- ▶ Collaboration across sectors requires time, effort, and good communication. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]

Interventions focused on zoonotic disease spillover require careful consideration of the entire value chain, from source to consumer.

- ▶ While recent events have brought global attention to the linkages between wild meat markets and zoonotic disease spillover, interventions that focus solely on closing markets may ignore other risks. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Messaging regarding zoonotic diseases and wild meat trade should not vilify wildlife hosts/reservoirs (e.g., bats). [[Webinar: Wild Meat and One Health](#)]
- ▶ Messages to target audiences should address audience concerns. The global risk of zoonotic diseases may not be an effective message for local behavior change. [[Webinar: Wild Meat and One Health](#) and [Case Study: Cambodia Green Future](#)]
- ▶ Health workers and conservationists can collaborate to prevent disease risks, not just respond to them. Health workers are often trusted sources of information and can also convey conservation messages.. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]

Interventions should consider climate impacts.

- ▶ By influencing wildlife migration and movements, climate change is a factor that has important health and zoonotic disease implications. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]



LEARNING QUESTION 6:

What combination of strategic approaches are effective in reducing unsustainable and illegal hunting, and under what conditions?

No single strategic approach can shift all of the factors underpinning unsustainable demand for wild meat.

- ▶ Understanding the local context is key, and activities must be customized rather than using one-size-fits-all solutions. The local context includes attention to demographics, governance, economies, ecology, incentives and barriers to change, and local beliefs and culture. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Governance of natural resources, land tenure, protected area management, and law enforcement are critical factors for enabling environments for change. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Building a constituency for conservation and biodiversity requires both government leadership and community buy-in. This includes supporting community resource rights and/or ownership, education and sensitization, support for appropriate behavior change, and meaningful inclusion of marginalized peoples and youth. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Supporting environmentally sustainable rural economies requires attention to the needs of people living in and around protected areas. This includes providing access to employment opportunities and alternative livelihoods, as well as connecting to private sector alternatives to wild meat. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]
- ▶ Collecting and sharing evidence on wildlife, rural economies, food safety and security, and public health can reinforce the above efforts and contribute to long-term support for shifts away from wild meat. [In-Person Event: Wild Meat Learning Exchange]

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