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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dja reserve (5,260 km²), a lowland rainforest in Southern Cameroon, situated between 2°50' and 3°40' N and 12°25' and 13°54' E, is the fifth largest protected area within the guinea-congolian rainforest (GARTLAN and LEAKEY, 1988). The Dja reserve (DR) was gazetted as a faunal reserve in 1950, raised to the status of a Biosphere reserve in 1981 and declared a World Heritage Site in 1987. A growing human population afflicted by an economic crisis and a predilection for game meat have augmented pressures on the faunal resources in this reserve particularly in the Western part which is experiencing the highest utilisation pressures. A well-developed infrastructure and presence of tarmac roads has resulted in a high human population density in the settled areas within this sector of the reserve when compared to the rest of the protected area.

A two years (January 1994 to December 1995) study was conducted to describe and quantify the village hunting dynamics in the Western DR. The objectives of the study were to :

- Evaluate the off-take of village hunters on the mammalian fauna ;
- Estimate the densities of wildlife populations in the four zones (MUCHAAL and NGANDJUI, 1994) designated as heavily hunted (zone 1), moderately disturbed (zones 2 and 3) and virtually undisturbed (zone 4) ;
- Assess the impact of village hunting on medium and large mammalian game species in order to propose management measures for a sustainable utilisation of this resource in the western sector of the Dja reserve.

METHODOLOGY

Three areas of hunting were determined by following the hunters and employing a Global Positioning System (GPS) to establish coordinates of snare lines, hunting camps and paths of access (MUCHAAL and NGANDJUI, 1994). In each zone, snare densities were determined and 5 km transects were cut to conduct animal observations using standard line transect methodology (BUCKLAND *et al.*, 1993) and a fourth transect cut within the Boamir research site represented the non-hunted zone (MUCHAAL and NGANDJUI, 1995). Throughout the two years study,