

## **Learning by Ear – Environment**

### **03 – Bushmeat**

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#### **Intro**

Hello and welcome to Learning By Ear's special series that takes a look at the environment. On Today's programme we'll be talking about the toll human activities are having on Africa's wildlife populations. Africa's tropical forests and savannas are home to some of the most diverse forms of life. But Man's insatiable appetite for the continent's natural resources comes at the cost of dwindling wildlife populations. Coming up in today's Radionovela, we'll tell you about the devastating consequences of the illegal bushmeat trade that remains rife across the continent. And we'll hear which species are most at risk. And we'll hear why this irreversible loss of what's termed 'biodiversity' matters.

#### **Music – 0:30**

#### **Radionovela**

#### **SFX\_School\_bell**

## **SFX\_Sitting down at desks**

1. Alice: Good Afternoon class
  
2. Moses, Gladys, Monica: Good Afternoon Miss
  
3. Alice: My name is Alice Lubenga and I work for an organisation called Fighting Bushmeat. I've come to your school today to talk to you about the importance of conserving wildlife populations. Who has seen wild animals?

**[collective hands go up in the air with a 'yes miss']**

4. Alice: Yes, you.
  
5. Moses: Yes miss. My name is Moses. I like wildlife but often at night elephants come to our farm and eat our crops. Last month they destroyed our entire maize harvest. They cause havoc and we have to chase them away.
  
6. Alice: And Moses, what other animals do you like?

7. Moses: I like zebra and leopard. When I grow up I'd like to be a ranger to help conserve our wildlife...

**SFX\_hand\_clap**

8. Alice: That's great...

9. Moses: I also see many antelope, which I hunt with my brothers.

10. Alice: [exclaim] Oh!

11. Moses: Yes, we chase them with our dogs. And sometimes we set snares.

12. Monica: Why Moses?

13. Moses: Sometimes we eat the meat. Monica, you know, this weekend we caught a monkey in one of our snares. So we ate it. It was delicious.

14. Monica: [frustrated sigh] But Moses you can't say one minute you love wildlife and want to be a ranger and the next minute tell us you enjoy eating monkey.

15. Moses: Monica, nobody has ever told me it is illegal. We even sometimes see soldiers when we are carrying the carcasses. They never stop us.
16. Alice: Moses, I must tell you that what you are doing is against the law.
17. Moses: But I remember hunting with my grandfather when I was just five years old. We would creep up behind antelope and he would kill them with a bow and arrow.
18. Alice: It's true Moses. Our ancestors hunted wild animals for food. But the problem is now large gangs are poaching our antelope, monkey, even chimpanzees. These gangs are hunting on a commercial scale...
19. Gladys: You mean they are selling the meat?
20. Alice: That's right, Gladys. Come let's go into town...

### **SFX\_road traffic**

21. Alice: Two years ago our organisation did an investigation. We found that twenty percent

of the meat found in our town's butcheries was bushmeat.

22. Gladys: What is bushmeat?
23. Alice: We define bushmeat as meat that comes from wild animals living in our forests and reserves.
24. Moses: Including monkeys?
25. Alice: Including monkeys...
26. Monica: [gasp of horror] That's awful. How can they if it is illegal?
27. Alice: Because they won't sell it as bushmeat. Instead they will sell it as beef or goat. But really it is antelope or zebra or even buffalo.
28. Gladys: So people are buying bushmeat without knowing it?
29. Alice: Well no we don't think they are. From our survey it was clear that people were deliberately buying bushmeat. You know, in Africa bushmeat is considered something of a delicacy. Even Africans living abroad

still enjoy the taste of bushmeat, even though they know it is endangering wildlife populations.

30. Gladys: They do?

31. Alice: I am afraid so.

32. Monica: This afternoon we must spend the afternoon with my brother, Simon. He's a ranger at our National Park.

### **X-fade from SFX\_road\_traffic to SFX\_4x4\_Safari\_vehicle**

33. Simon: The poachers use very crude but brutally effective snares to trap their quarry.

34. Gladys: Yes, Moses can tell you all about those.

35. Simon: That's not for me to know. If it is true Moses then I want you to listen to what I have to say.

36. Moses: Yes sir.

37. Simon: Poaching in this park is rampant. Indeed it is rampant across the country. You know it is estimated that in the last 30 years we have lost nearly two thirds of our wildlife.

38. Moses:                   What, all to poaching?

39. Simon:                   Not entirely. As our population grows, our wild animals face increasing competition for land, which is affecting their numbers. But you're right, hunting for bushmeat is a major cause of population decline.

### **SFX\_Slowing\_down\_vehicle**

40. Simon:                   Look you see those vultures circling in the sky? The chances are there's an animal carcass somewhere near. Let's take a look – it could be a snared animal.

### **SFX\_open\_vehicle\_doors**

41. Monica:                   I'm not sure I want to see this...

### **SFX\_vehicle\_doors\_close. SFX\_walking\_through\_grasses**

42. Simon:                   We now have a team consigned to dealing with poachers. Every week they find hundreds of snares. Some are set for small animals like porcupines, others for bigger beasts like zebra.

43. Gladys:                   [squeal] Oh no...

44. Simon: This is what we see every day. It's a little dik-dik. One of the smallest antelope. This one is only 30cm tall but it is full-grown. In a few years there will be very few left.
45. Gladys: Simon, which species are most at risk?
46. Simon: Well that depends which country you are talking about. Here it is the antelope like this dik-dik, impala and also kudu. Let's take this dik-dik with us.

### **SFX\_walking\_through\_grasses**

47. Gladys: And elsewhere?
48. Monica: I've heard that in Africa's tropical jungles poachers are killing the great apes to the point of extinction.
49. Simon: That's right, in parts of this continent poachers are decimating the chimpanzee and gorilla populations. Their slaughter makes the headlines but the implications of the poaching here are just as dire. Soon we may have few animals to protect. And that will hurt the economy as tourists go elsewhere.

50. Moses: So how do you stop the poaching?
51. Simon: Well let me ask you Moses: why do people poach?
52. Moses: Either for food or to sell.
53. Simon: Precisely. Many people living around our national park don't benefit financially from the wildlife or tourists who come to see them. So the animals hold no value. Monica, do you think if the communities here were benefiting from tourist revenues they would destroy the wildlife they've come to see?
54. Monica: They wouldn't! But also these animals are the jewels of our continent. Look at the apes, they are now an endangered species. Once they're extinct that's it, they're gone forever.
55. Moses: Simon, is it too late to save these animals facing extinction?
56. Simon: It's not. You know that poachers nearly wiped out our elephant population two decades ago. Now they're numbers are very healthy. But we have to change

attitudes. We have to make people value our wildlife.

57. Moses: Well there's no more bushmeat for me. No Monkey, just beef and goat!

[Collective laughter].

### **Music – 0:30**

### **Did You Know? – Biodiversity**

Did you know that the biggest threat to Africa's wildlife is man. Take Kenya for example where wildlife populations have decreased by up to sixty percent in just thirty years. The same trend is true across the continent. Experts believe there are now fewer than 110,000 chimpanzees in Africa. Compare this to one hundred years ago when it believed more than two million chimps swung from the continent's forest canopies.

There are several key reasons for this alarming trend. As we've just heard the illegal bushmeat trade is a factor. According to one wildlife organisation, more than 100 million tonnes of bushmeat is taken from the Congo Basin forests EACH year. Another factor is Africa's exploding population. There is only one winner in the competition between man and animal for land...and it is man.

Every day we are destroying our wildlife's natural habitats sending their numbers into a spiralling decline. Does this matter? Well, yes it does. We are simply killing the planet's biodiversity. Biodiversity is the variation of life forms within a given ecosystem. It's often used as a measure of the earth's health.

Biodiversity is not distributed evenly on earth. Infact, nowhere is life more diverse than the tropical forests that line the equator, including in Africa. Biodiversity on earth today is the result of 4 billion years of evolution.

Until approximately 600 million years ago – a relatively short period in the earth's life - all life consisted of bacteria and single-celled organisms. But in the space of just a few decades man's activities has placed tens of thousands of animals and plants on the list of endangered species. What's more, reducing the biodiversity of an ecosystem affects the food and health of local people who rely on a large number of animal, vegetable and plant species for food and medicines. It's extremely difficult to put a figure on the loss, but it is irreversible. An extinct species will never reappear. But the sad reality is that the rate at which species become extinct is increasing rapidly.

## **Outro**

And that's all for today's Learning By Ear special environment focus on biodiversity and the illegal bushmeat trade, written by Richard Lough. So remember, our activities have a direct affect on the natural habitats of our continent's wildlife. If we don't look after

them now, it may be too late to save certain species from extinction in the years to come. Thanks for being with us. If you want to hear the programme again or tell friends about it, go to our website at [www.dw-world.de/lbe](http://www.dw-world.de/lbe). Good Bye.