



WILD ANIMALS AND HUMAN HEALTH: DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSHMEAT TRADE IN THE CITY OF COARI (AM)

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RESUMO

Direct contact of humans with wild animals is an important route for the transmission of zoonotic diseases. Among the latest discoveries, in addition to SARS-CoV-2, are avian flu (H5N1), Mayaro fever, and Oropouche fever. The habit of consuming bushmeat, still prevalent in the Amazon, both in rural communities and large cities, may be one of the important contamination routes for already known diseases and yet unknown pathogens. Therefore, the aim of this study was to survey bushmeat sold in the municipality of Coari, in the middle Solimões River region, between August 2019 and December 2022. During this period, nine mammal species were found, with four of them listed as vulnerable to extinction on both the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and SISBIO (Biodiversity Authorization and Information System) lists: tapir, manatee, peccary, and short-tailed deer. Samples were collected from 206 bushmeat products being sold, with the most found species being paca, tapir, and peccary. Up to this point, 144 samples have been analyzed using DNA barcoding for species identification, with about 18% of animals identified erroneously by the seller. Most often, the meat is presented in a way that makes visual identification impossible, without the skin, head, and feet, because if easily recognized, these vendors can be arrested since the Wildlife Protection Law (Law 5.197 of 1967) prohibits the sale of both live specimens and their products. During the same period, data on the sale prices of these products were collected, along with data on prices of some popular food items such as chicken, rice, coffee, beans, sugar, and flour. Over time, the price of beans (1kg) and chicken (1kg), the most expensive products in our research, reached 13 reais, while the minimum price of bushmeat sold was 10 reais per kilo, and the maximum was 45 reais per kilo. Initially, we began collecting this data because we believed that this type of meat was sold at a lower price than other types of meat or popular food items, since the trade in Coari was rampant and completely open. However, it became evident that prices are often higher, yet the population continues to buy. Additionally, we are conducting tests to detect different pathogens in the collected material, as deforestation, hunting, and climate change lead to more frequent contact with wild animals, increasing the likelihood of pathogen spillover to humans and facilitating disease transmission. Funding source: FAPEAM/UNIVERSAL 006/2019; FAPEAM/UNIVERSAL 001/2023

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