

## Assessment of Progress towards Resolving the Bushmeat Crisis On Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea

\*\*\*\*\*

### Current Status of Monkey Hunting on Bioko

This is a 6 month update to the UNGE/BBPP report titled “*Monkeys in Trouble: The Rapidly Deteriorating Conservation Status of the Monkeys on Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea (2006)*,” which can be downloaded as a .pdf file from the website [www.bioko.org](http://www.bioko.org). The purpose of this update is to assess the progress, if any, toward controlling the shotgun hunting of wildlife within Bioko Island’s two protected areas.

Although many species of forest animals are being killed for the Malabo bushmeat market at an unsustainable rate, the seven species of monkeys native to Bioko Island are at greatest risk of extinction on Bioko Island. Also at risk is Ogilby’s duiker.

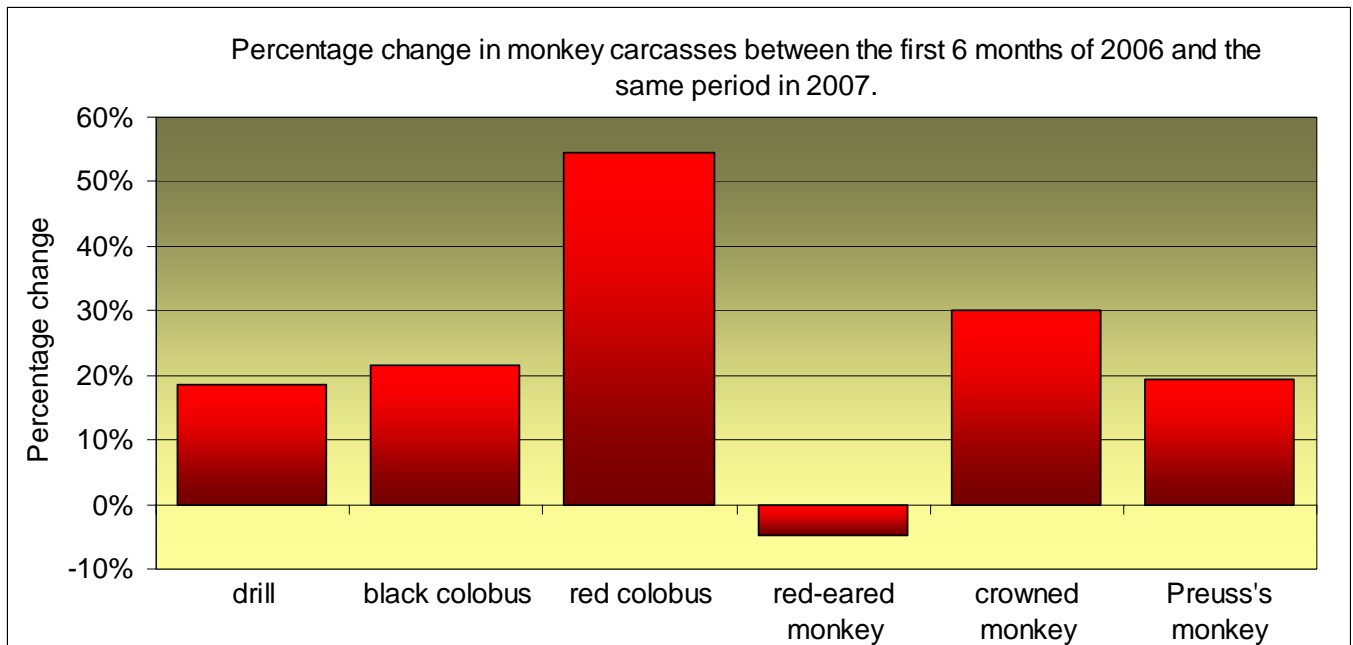
**During the last 3 months (April through June, 2007) the conservation status of all seven of Bioko’s species of monkeys, and of Ogilby’s duiker, has continued to worsen.**

**Evidence from the Malabo Bushmeat Market:** The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP), working in partnership with the National University of Equatorial Guinea (UNGE) has been recording the numbers of animals brought to the Malabo bushmeat market for more than 10 years. As of 1 August 2007, more than 110,000 carcasses have been recorded.

There has been a dramatic increase in bushmeat in the Malabo market since the ‘*Monkeys in Trouble*’ report was issued in December 2006. When the results from the first 6 months of 2007 are compared to the first 6 months of 2006, total carcasses are up 36%[[.]] and total monkey carcasses are up 12%.

The increase in the percentage of animals captured by shotgun, from 53% during January – June 2006 to 73% during January - June 2007, a trend established in the first quarter of 2007, continues and supports the observation that additional shotguns are being brought to Bioko Island.

The most alarming observation is the decrease in the monkey carcasses coming from Pico Basile National Park (discussed in detail below) with a concomitant increase in carcasses from the Gran Caldera and Southern Highlands Scientific Reserve. The species profile of carcasses indicates that almost all of the increase in numbers is due to hunting in the Gran Caldera and Southern Highlands Scientific Reserve (Figure1).



**Figure 1.** *Percentage increase on Bioko Island in market carcasses of each of six monkey species between the first 6 months of 2006 and the same time period in 2007. The species showing the greatest increase are concentrated in the southern third of the island, inside the Gran Caldera and Southern Highlands Scientific Reserve.*

**Evidence from Forest Censuses:** The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP), working in partnership with the National University of Equatorial Guinea (UNGE), has been counting animals in the forests of Bioko Island for more than 11 years. In addition, some baseline data exist back to 1986. The increase in bushmeat in the Malabo market is matched by a decline in animals in the forest. Signs of hunting include shotgun shells, new hunting camps, and encounters with hunters. In addition, greatly reduced rates of encounter with monkeys, duikers and other wildlife indicate that there is increased hunting throughout the northern half of the Gran Caldera and Southern Highlands Scientific Reserve.

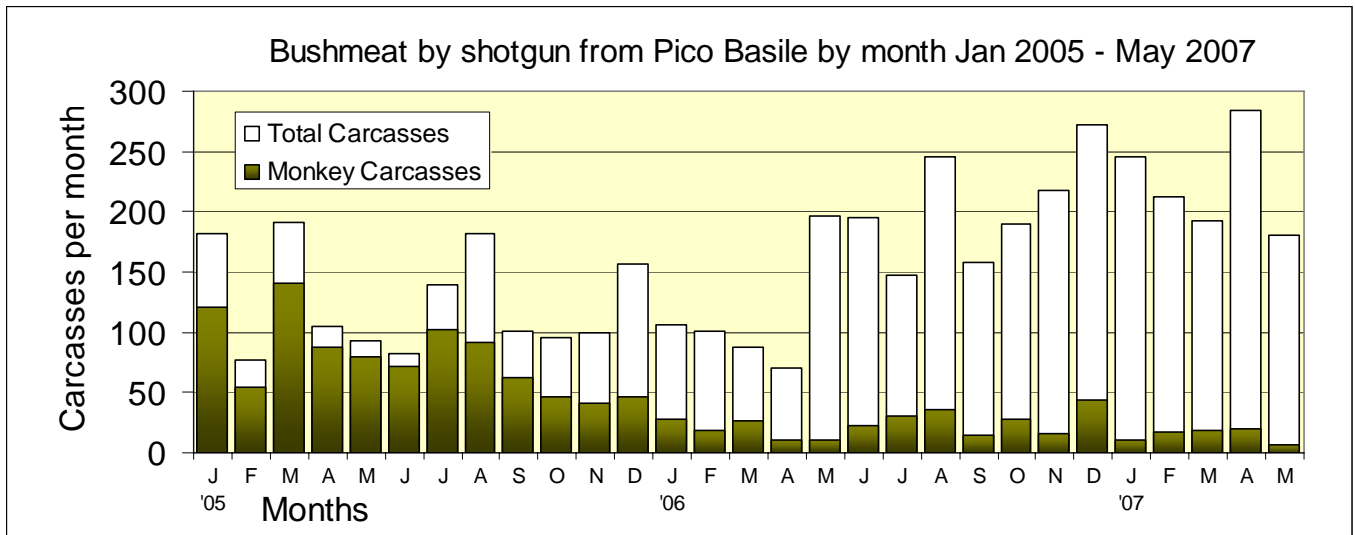
### Status of Monkeys and Ogilby's Duiker in the Pico Basile National Park

Pico Basile National Park is an example of how quickly monkeys and Ogilby's duikers can be eliminated from a protected area by illegal, and uncontrolled, shotgun hunting.

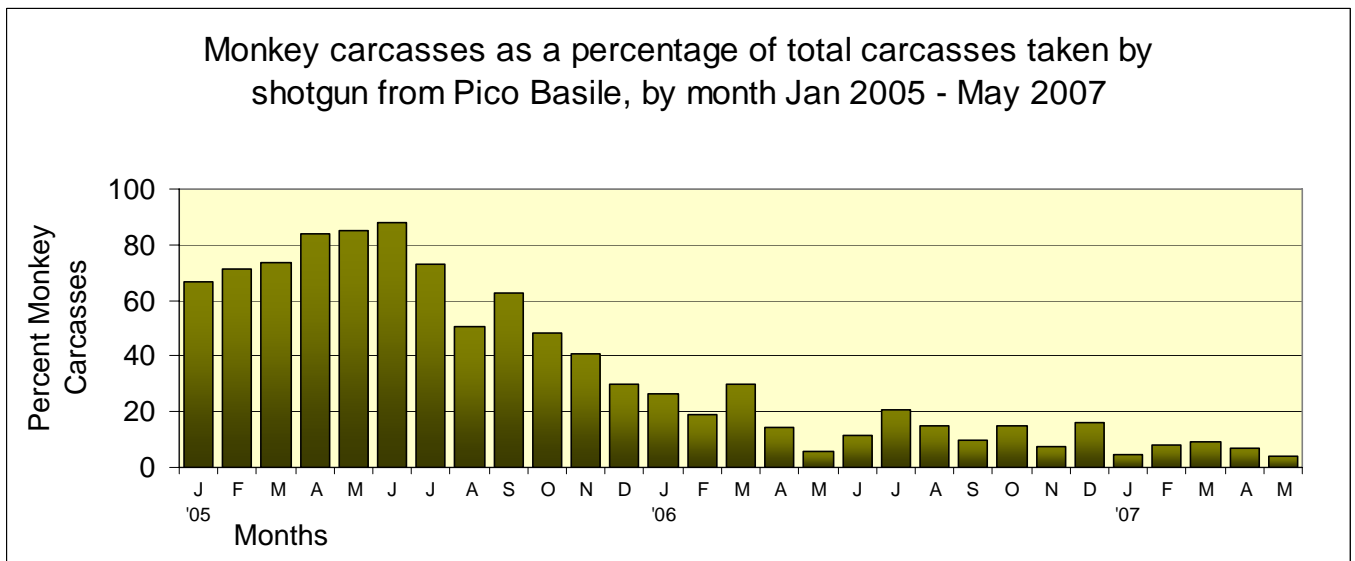
Although the number of animals shot in Pico Basile National Park steadily increased since the beginning of 2005, the number of monkeys as a percentage of that total declined (Figures 2 and 3). The pattern for Ogilby's duiker is similar (Figure 4). In contrast, the number of blue duikers shot for market has increased, both in absolute numbers and in proportion of total carcasses (Figure 5).

This pattern is typical of the final stages in extinction by unsustainable hunting. The larger, slower-breeding mammals (monkeys and Ogilby's duiker on Bioko Island) disappear before the smaller, faster-breeding mammals (blue duikers, porcupines and pouched rats).

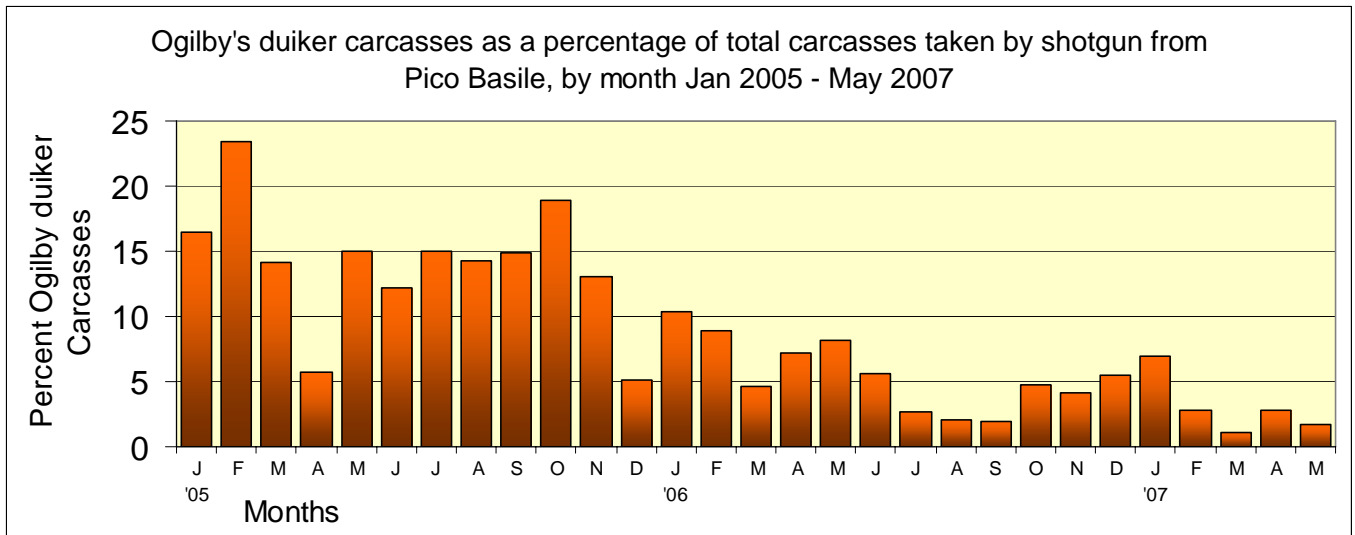
The following graphs illustrate the changing character of the animals shot in the Park across the last 2 ½ years.



**Figure 2.** The total number of monkey carcasses compared to the total number of carcasses of all species taken by shotgun from Pico Basile National Park in the last 2 ½ years. The number of monkey carcasses has declined from an average of over 100 carcasses per month in the first 3 months of 2005 to fewer than 10 carcasses in May of 2007. The number of monkey species represented has also declined--- from all seven monkey species being represented during January-March 2005, to only two species (drill and red-eared monkey) being represented in May 2007.



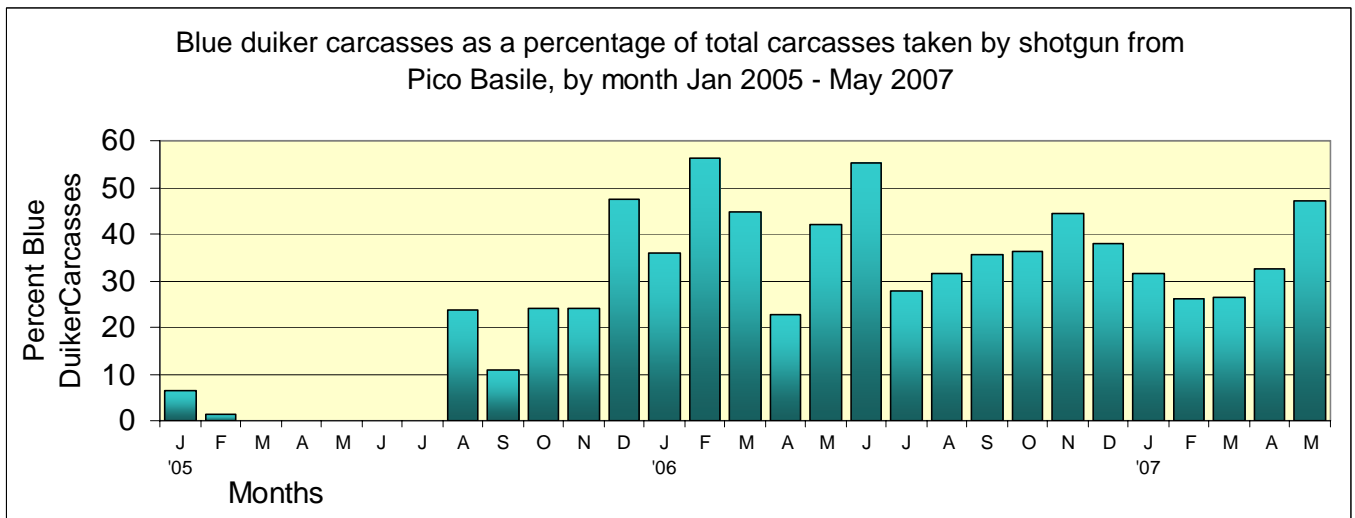
**Figure 3.** Monkey carcasses as a percentage of total carcasses (all species) taken by shotgun from Pico Basile National Park in the last 2 ½ years. Only 2 years ago, during April-June, 2005, monkeys represented more than 80% of the total carcasses being harvested from Pico Basile by shotgun. By May 2007, monkeys represented less than 5% of total carcasses.



**Figure 4.** *Ogilby's duiker carcasses as a percentage of total carcasses taken by shotgun from Pico Basile National Park in the last 2 ½ years.*

Ogilby's duiker shows a pattern of unsustainable hunting by shotgun hunters that is similar to that shown for monkeys coming from Pico Basile National Park in the past 2 ½ years. This species has declined from about 15 % of the total carcasses during 2005, to less than 2 % of the total in May 2007 (Figure 4).

Blue duikers, on the other hand, follow a pattern of shotgun hunting that is typical of other small mammal species. During the first half of 2005, shotgun hunters largely ignored blue duikers, preferring the larger species (monkeys and Ogilby's duikers). As bushmeat prices increased, and as the larger species became less common, hunters increasingly turned to blue duikers (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** *Blue duiker carcasses as a percentage of total carcasses taken by shotgun hunters from Pico Basile National Park in the last 2 ½ years.*

## Status of Wildlife Protection by the Government of Equatorial Guinea:

**Protection of Wildlife on Bioko Island:** The Government of Equatorial Guinea created two protected areas on Bioko Island in 1988. Unfortunately, no government park guards or other government personnel protect these areas, nor is there any effective management of these two areas. “No Hunting” signs were placed at protected area borders in a project funded by Conservation International in 2003, but these presently have no influence on hunters, who continue to hunt, at will, in both protected areas.

BBPP has a system of ‘Forest Patrols’ surveying populations of monkeys and duikers in the Southern Highlands and Gran Caldera Scientific Reserve (1997 to present, except 2005). Formerly, the presence of these unarmed patrols discouraged hunters in the Gran Caldera and in the forests near the southern coast. Increasingly, however, shotgun hunters disregard these patrols as they have no mandate for law enforcement.

BBPP also has a system of ‘Beach Patrols’ that survey marine turtles on the southern beaches during the 7 month nesting season (October - April). These patrols, conducted since 2000, have been effective in discouraging the hunting of green turtles on most of the beaches. The exception is the beach near Moraka Playa, one of the two boat-landing areas along the southern coast of Bioko Island. Poachers continue to arrive at this beach by boat, with official-looking permits, and harvest more than 100 nesting green turtles each year. This beach has shown a steady decline in green turtles over the last 6 years.

At this time, as far as we are aware, the Government of Equatorial Guinea is not training any protected area guards, nor has it deployed any protected area guards to Bioko Island.

Table I. Conservation Status of Bioko Island Monkeys

Common Name of species ( <i>Genus species subspecies</i> )	IUCN Category: species	IUCN Category: subspecies	US ESA species	CITES Appendix
Bioko drill ( <i>Mandrillus leucophaeus poensis</i> )	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	I
Black colobus ( <i>Colobus satanas satanas</i> )	Vulnerable	Endangered	Endangered	II
Pennant’s red colobus ( <i>Procolobus pennantii pennantii</i> )	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	II
Red-eared monkey ( <i>Cercopithecus erythrotis erythrotis</i> )	Vulnerable	Endangered	Endangered	II
Bioko crowned monkey ( <i>Cercopithecus pogonias pogonias</i> )	Least Concern	Endangered	-----	II
Stampfli’s putty-nosed monkey ( <i>Cercopithecus nictitans martini</i> )	Least Concern	Endangered	-----	II
Bioko Preuss’s monkey ( <i>Cercopithecus preussi insularis</i> )	Endangered	Endangered	-----	II

**Legislative Action:** In response to requests in January 2007 to issue a decree to stop the shotgun hunting of monkeys (as expressed in '*Monkeys in Trouble*') there was discussion by the Government of Equatorial Guinea of this problem. It was decided that the legislation in place (Ley 7/2003) was ambiguous and new legislation would be more effective in protecting wildlife. The concept of a decree was abandoned and work was begun on new legislation. The earliest that this legislation could be brought before the Parliament of Equatorial Guinea was the Fall 2007 Session because the Ministry already had another legislative proposal before the Legislature for the Spring 2007 Session.

As of July 2007, the Ministry of Environment and Fisheries has drafted new legislation to regulate hunting in Equatorial Guinea. The draft of the new legislation does not reflect familiarity with the information on Bioko's endangered species provided by BBPP or with the recent (last 10 years) scientific literature on Equatorial Guinea in general. The hunting of endangered species in the country's protected areas is not directly addressed in the draft, and therefore this proposed legislation does not provide any additional protection for Bioko's endangered wildlife.

Regardless of the status of legislation within Equatorial Guinea, the threat of extinction to monkeys of Bioko Island is well documented. No similar-sized (2,017 km<sup>2</sup>) area on Earth has so many internationally recognized threatened taxa of primates.

If the Government of Equatorial Guinea is to meet its responsibilities under the several international conservation and biodiversity agreements to which it is a signatory (see the *Monkeys in Trouble* report and Table I. above), it will need to take immediate, effective, actions to stop the obviously unsustainable hunting of primates and Ogilby's duiker on Bioko Island. That this has not happened at this late hour means that it is now time for those charged with monitoring and evaluating compliance with these conventions to (1) quickly and fully review the situation on Bioko Island, and then (2) to work closely with the Government of Equatorial Guinea to facilitate full compliance of all conservation conventions by the end of 2007.

\*\*\*\*\*