

CONSERVATION STATUS OF THE BOKO ISLAND DRILL (*MANDRILLUS LEUCOPHAEUS POENSIS*)

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The Bioko Island drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus poensis*) is a CITES appendix I endangered species, endemic to Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea. The 13 year bushmeat market record collected by the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP), an academic partnership between the National University of Equatorial Guinea (UNGE) and Drexel University, has shown a dramatic increase in drill bushmeat trade over the past two years. Since January of 2009 over 1000 drill carcasses have been sold at the Semu bushmeat market in Malabo (the capital of Equatorial Guinea), approximately a third of the 2007 population estimate. Previous conservation efforts, in particular a complete ban on the hunting, sale, and consumption of primate bushmeat, have been ineffectual due to a lack of enforcement. Since the ban took effect in October 2007 the sale of drill carcasses has more than doubled to over five per day in December 2009. Preliminary analyses of the past ten years of BBPP annual Caldera expedition census data show no statistical decline in the density of drill groups within the Caldera. In light of the total primate density decreases found in certain localities, drills may possess a higher resistance to hunting pressure than other sympatric species due to inherent ecological and behavioral traits.

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