

Topic Area: Humans and Other Species

Title/RQ: How and why does the consumption of wildlife affect human society?

Name: [REDACTED]

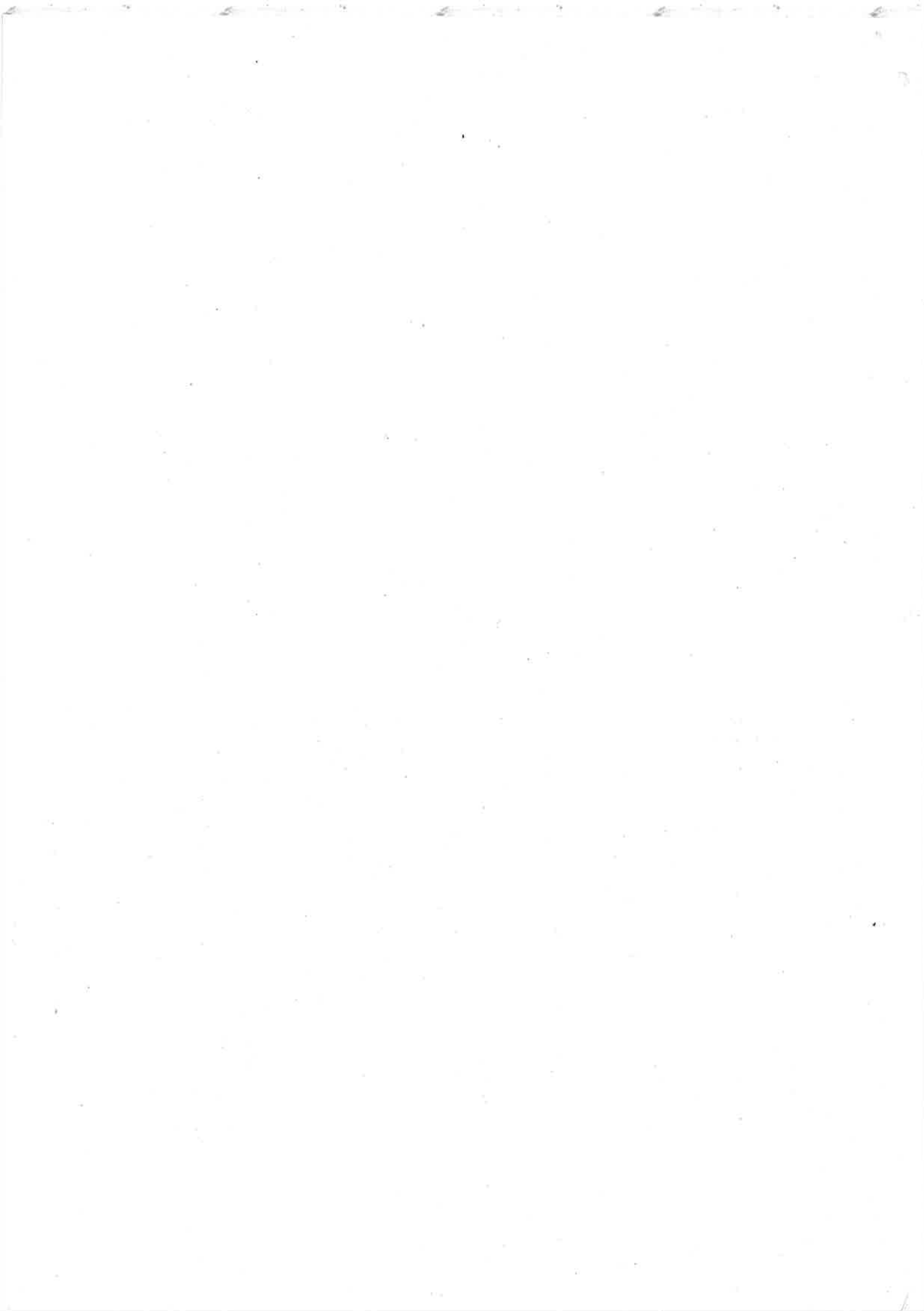
School: Island School Hong Kong

Student number: [REDACTED]

Candidate number: 1242

Centre Number: HK010

Word count: 1982



## Contents

Heading	Page
Cover Page	1
Introduction	2
Causes and Consequences	3,4,5
Courses of Action (Solutions)	6,7
Source Evaluation, Conclusion	8
Bibliography	9

## **Introduction**

This research report will be investigating how and why the consumption of wildlife affects human society. It is essential to explore this issue in more depth because the consumption of wildlife is becoming a threat to wildlife, moreover affecting humans personally and environmentally. Numerous news reports on the ongoing pandemic have highlighted the importance of potential issues in today's society, rumours said that the consumption of bat soup was how the coronavirus first spreaded. In order to fully understand the extent of these issues, we will be exploring case studies globally, nationally, and locally. These include the practice of entomophagy in Africa, how the consumption of bushmeat is related to the Coronavirus, and the wet market which sells living wildlife in Wuhan, China. We will also be examining the issue from a variety of viewpoints of consumers and buyers of wildlife, doctors, professors, the government, World WildLife Hong Kong, World Health Organisation, and the general public.

### **Causes and Consequences**

Bushmeat and insects represent a primary source of animal protein and rich nutrients for people who live in rural communities, mostly in Asia, Africa, and South America.

(Entomophagy, 2020) People from less developed countries are suffering from poverty, hence why they have a habit of eating, hunting, and selling wild animals. According to a survey conducted about the bushmeat crisis in West Africa, domestic meat is rather expensive compared to bushmeat in various countries, such as Ghana, Niger, and Togo, which is why people tend to eat bushmeat and insects because they couldn't afford domestic meat.

(Entomophagy, 2020) Moreover, wildlife meats provide a valuable source of protein for people where it is to domesticate animals in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

### **Causes and Consequences**

The consumption of wildlife animals is prompting a loss of species and causing extinction. The commercial harvesting and trading of bushmeat have been considered a threat to biodiversity since 2005. (Bushmeat,2020) 300 mammal species are threatened by bushmeat hunting, including all pangolin species. (Bushmeat,2020) This is to say that the present situation of overhunting is rather serious and needs to be stopped. Many abundant mammal species are facing extinction in West Africa. About 144000 animals are killed every year in the Cross Sanaga Bioko coastal forests, including monkeys, rats, and elephants. (Bushmeat, 2020) Most West-African countries acknowledge the endangered status of some species and do know that laws are implemented for the protection of these animals. ("What Are The Most Important Pros And Cons Of Eating Insects?, 2020") Unfortunately, the public is ignorant of these laws and the obligation to do so. Above all, the significant loss of species and extinction is primarily caused by overhunting to satisfy our needs for the consumption of wildlife animals.

### Causes and Consequences

Additionally, the reason for the consumption of wildlife animals is also part of one's culture and history. Humans have been eating bushmeat for 6 million years. Bushmeat is considered a major nutritional resource in many developing countries, which is why it has been a traditional food in many countries. (Bushmeat, 2020) To give an illustration of this, let's look at the case of the eating of bushmeat in Guangzhou, China. Cordelia, a lady who lives in Guangzhou, said that the practice of consuming bushmeat isn't exactly accepted nor common in her community. Her friends and family don't really like eating wild animals, and they think it's disgusting. She described it as "disrespectful and a strong violation of mother nature." ("Chinese citizens push to abolish wildlife trade as coronavirus persists, 2020") Cordelia believes that the ongoing epidemic will change the way others' viewpoints on this. She thought the citizens will realize that the belief that eating wild animals is beneficial is not reliable after the spread of the coronavirus." ("Chinese citizens push to abolish wildlife trade as coronavirus persists, 2020") In other words, some may agree and disagree with the consumption of wildlife due to different cultures and one's history.

### Causes and Consequences

Few people can disagree that the Coronavirus outbreak is indeed the most devastating thing that has happened in the 21st century, and it was said to start with the consumption of bushmeat in various countries in China. The COVID-19 first started in December 2019, originated at a wholesale food market in Wuhan, China. The most significant cause of why and how the consumption of wildlife affects human society may be the unhygienic environment and the crossed contaminations between various animals in the wet market in Wuhan. Exotic animals including snakes and civet cats were sold in the market, not to mention that the menu of one of the stalls had caught a lot of people's attention on the internet. (Limited, 2020) The menu of the stall was posted by the stallholder on Dazhong Dianping, that about 100 varieties of bushmeat and live animals were for sale, for example, bats, foxes, and wolf cubs. (Limited, 2020) A woman who lived near the market had named a

few live animals that were available there, such as turtles, snakes, and hedgehogs. The World Health Organisation had thought that the civets had been the intermediate host which carries a zoonotic virus from bats that could infect humans, leading to the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in 2002 to 2003 near Hong Kong, killing 774 people and infecting around 8000 people. (Xie, Cai and Rui, 2020) Hiv, Ebola, and SARS, these caused international outbreaks which were all due to the unhygienic consumption of wildlife which infected humans. ("Chinese citizens push to abolish wildlife trade as coronavirus persists, 2020") There have been 21,469,174 confirmed Covid-19 cases and 771,371 total deaths around the world so far. Dr. Jane Goodall was interviewed in a youtube video on how she viewed the world blaming the bat species for the deadly virus. ("Chinese citizens push to abolish wildlife trade as coronavirus persists, 2020") 'The bats are perfectly fine where they belong but the trouble is we've invaded their habitat, we are destroying the forests where they live.' She suggested that it was our fault that the virus was caused. ( A youtube video: "Don't blame the bats for the Coronavirus | Dr. Jane Goodall (2020)") All things considered, the selling of wildlife animals in unhygienic environments like wet markets, has caused the spread of zoonotic viruses and diseases.

### **Courses of Action (Solutions)**

One of the courses of solution I'm presenting is to enforce international laws to prevent the consumption of wildlife, protecting certain species which are about to extinct. There should be an analysis which assesses consumption patterns and related risks. Based on the results, governments can develop a more balanced banning strategy on the eating of wildlife in some countries that would limit the number of consumers, therefore decreasing the risk of endangered animals. China had announced a ban on 26 January this year on wild animal trade until the pandemic is over. This temporary ban applies to all wet markets and grocery stores was rather successful, which is why this is one of the solutions for the issue. ("Chinese citizens push to abolish wildlife trade as coronavirus persists, 2020") However, the government may encounter some difficulties when implementing these laws: some consumers may refuse to obey the law. Moreover, it would be difficult for farmers who only rely on working in the bushmeat markets to find a different job. Lastly, if a permanent ban is adopted, the government would need to recompense the farmers. But in general, the public had hoped that the ban on consumption of wildlife could be permanently enforced.

### **Courses of Action (Solutions)**

Another potential solution is to instigate national campaigns, educate people, and change their mindsets on this issue. By doing this, the number of consumers would also decrease, hence reducing the risk of extinction and the threat of losing species. A survey on the consumption of wildlife and conservation awareness was conducted in China recently. (Zhang and Yin, 2020) Compared with the results from a related survey which was conducted 8 years ago, the percentage of respondents who had consumed wildlife decreased from 31.3% to 29.6%. (Zhang and Yin, 2020) Consumers who had higher incomes and higher educational backgrounds had a higher wildlife consumption rate. (Zhang and Yin, 2020) One of the campaigners who worked on the survey had said it is essential to change people's behavior on this, "Step one is to be very clear about which behavior you want to change." It is



suggested that to promote public awareness was the key to reducing wildlife consumption. (Zhang and Yin, 2020)

### **Courses of Action (Solutions)**

The most effective way to prevent the consumption of wildlife is to replace it with bugs and insects. Ancient entomophagy practices have developed to the modern traditional entomophagy we have today. Besides, insects are eaten in 80% of the world. Ethnic groups in Asia, Africa, Mexico, and South America have used edible insects for their sustainable sources of nutrients and protein. (Entomophagy, 2020) There is a protein content of 20-76% in an insect, which transposes to 25-60% of humans' recommended daily allowance. (Entomophagy, 2020) Insects are rich in nutrients such as amino acids, as well as 71% of the recommended daily allowance of iron. Consuming insects could increase the immune system, combating inflammation, and even cancer. (Entomophagy, 2020) Not only does it require less strain on land and water resources, it also decreases greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to climate change. Compared to the raising of domestic animals which creates methane gas which contribute to climate change, bug farming produces almost no greenhouse gas emission. ("What Are The Most Important Pros And Cons Of Eating Insects?", 2020") Hence, why the consumption of bushmeat should be replaced by the practice of entomophagy.

### **Source Evaluation**

I have used a lot of information online during my research process. Firstly, I have extracted information from the news. For example, Apple Daily Hong Kong, the South China Morning Post, and BBC News. I find the sources on the news reliable because I know that the information published has been fact-checked and they are backed up with evidence. I have also looked up information on Youtube, it is a reliable source because Dr. Jane Goodall, who was being interviewed is the Founder of a professional Institute and the UN Messenger of Peace. Moreover, the video was informative because it gave me her perspective on the Coronavirus, explaining why she thought the bats aren't to blame for the coronavirus.

### **Conclusion**

After studying this topic, I have developed a more profound understanding of the situation and appreciated different perspectives on how and why on the consumption of wildlife across the globe. Knowing that the consumption of bushmeat was one of the causes of the coronavirus, I wanted to know more about this topic and this research process has allowed me to penetrate the issue. I certainly have a role to play within this problem because I do know people around me who consume wildlife animals and maybe what I could do is to tell them about the consequences and hopefully they'll stop. My research has influenced my perspective and I have learned a lot. I wouldn't have understood the practice of entomophagy and the eating of bushmeat before studying the issue. This research has made me realize the reasons behind are often because of one's culture and history. To conclude, the four causes and consequences of the consumption of wildlife are: Providing nutrients to people who are experiencing poverty in less developed countries, the unhygienic environment in bushmeat markets causing various zoonotic diseases and viruses, the overhunting of wildlife to satisfy

our needs of food causing the loss of species and extinction, and the cultural traditions and history which has caused moral and ethical indignation. Summing up, we have to put an end to the consumption of wildlife, it's for our own good.

### Bibliography

En.wikipedia.org. 2020. *Entomophagy*. [online] Available at:  
<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entomophagy>> [Accessed 17 August 2020]

En.wikipedia.org. 2020. *Bushmeat*. [online] Available at:  
<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bushmeat>> [Accessed 17 August 2020]

Crickster. 2020. *What Are The Most Important Pros And Cons Of Eating Insects?*. [online]  
Available at: <<https://www.eatcrickster.com/blog/pros-and-cons-of-eating-insects>>  
[Accessed 28 September 2020]

Limited, B., 2020. *Why Wild Animals Are A Key Ingredient In China's Coronavirus Outbreak*. [online] <https://www.bangkokpost.com>. Available at:  
<<https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/1842104/why-wild-animals-are-a-key-ingredient-in-chinas-coronavirus-outbreak>> [Accessed 28 September 2020]

Nationalgeographic.com. 2020. *Chinese Citizens Push To Abolish Wildlife Trade As Coronavirus Persists*. [online] Available at:  
<<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2020/01/china-bans-wildlife-trade-after-coronavirus-outbreak/>> [Accessed 30 January 2020]

Williamson, D., 2020. *The Bushmeat Crisis In West-Africa An Indicative Overview Of The Situation And Perception*. [online] Fao.org. Available at:  
<<http://www.fao.org/forestry/13227-0dc169eedbbab4a04cae75af869fdccf.pdf>> [Accessed 28 September 2020]

Student Name: [REDACTED]

10

Candidate Number: [REDACTED]

Xie, E., Cai, J. and Rui, G., 2020. *Why Wild Animals Are A Key Ingredient In China'S Coronavirus Outbreak*. [online] South China Morning Post. Available at: <<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3047238/why-wild-animals-are-key-ingredient-chinas-coronavirus-outbreak>> [Accessed 22 January 2020]

Zhang, L. and Yin, F., 2020. *Wildlife Consumption And Conservation Awareness In China: A Long Way To Go*. [online]

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-014-0708-4?shared-article-renderer>.

Available at:

<[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271630252\\_Wildlife\\_consumption\\_and\\_conservation\\_awareness\\_in\\_China\\_A\\_long\\_way\\_to\\_go](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271630252_Wildlife_consumption_and_conservation_awareness_in_China_A_long_way_to_go)> [Accessed 6 May 2014]

2020. – *Don't Blame The Bats For The Coronavirus | Dr. Jane Goodall | SVT/TV 2/Skavlan*.

[image] Available at: <<http://www.svt.se/program/dokumentar/dont-blame-the-bats-for-the-coronavirus>> [Accessed 17 August 2020].