



Customs officials in Houston last summer seized these pangolin carcasses from a passenger arriving from Nigeria.

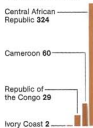
Trafficking in Bush Meat Duikers, pangolins, and brush-tailed porcupines aren't well-known animals in Europe or the U.S. But a new study estimates that each week, thousands of pounds of their meat moves illegally from Africa into European markets for human consumption, often via luggage.

At Paris's Charles de Gaulle Airport, an 18-day customs survey led to the seizure of more than 400 pounds of meat from wild animals, including cane rats and imperiled monkeys. One passenger was found carrying fresh crocodile wrapped in plastic. Anne-Lise Chaber, who led the study by European scientists, notes that bush meat is an essential part of diets in some regions of Africa. But the poorly policed illicit trade contributes to declining animal populations and poses public health hazards. A luxury item in foreign markets, bush meat tends to command a premium price there.

In the U.S., the New York–New Jersey area and metropolitan Washington, D.C., are hot spots for import and trade, according to Heather Eves of the Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network. "Only 10 percent of the planet isn't accessible to large urban areas within two days' time," she says. "A lot of smoked, dried, and even fresh bush meat can be transferred from the bush in that time." —Luna Shyr



Bush meat seized at France's Charles de Gaulle Airport in pounds, from country of origin, over 18 days



Anti-eating pangolins are popular as bush meat

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