

Study Questions and Guide
Hunter & Gibbs Ch. 9 – Overexploitation
Conservation Biology
Spring 2009

1. Humans have a long history of pushing other species into extinction. Note the many examples. Although there is some controversy, most scientists presently believe that the megafaunal (large mammals and birds) extinction that occurred with the spread of advanced Paleolithic humans near the end of the ice age was the first great anthropogenic human extinction. Note that megafaunas, not microfaunas, were lost – why megafaunas? – invoke arguments from earlier in the course and human needs/abilities.
2. Notice that the concept of bushmeat is an ancient one although one hears it most frequently these days in regard to tropical areas.
3. What is the link between bushmeat and diseases such as AIDS and Ebola? You may need to do a bit of additional research to answer this.
4. Please understand the reasons that commercial overexploitation continues – be able to write a good essay on this topic.
5. Note that although subsistence and recreational exploitation are often considered relatively benign, they need not be so. Moreover, exploitation does not necessarily involve harvesting (see the section on non-consumptive exploitation).
6. What is bycatch?
7. What is indirect exploitation?
8. The consequences of overexploitation are numerous. Be familiar with the ones mentioned in your text. Notice that they touch on every factor that affects diversity and species extinction that we have discussed previously.
9. How can overexploitation of species affect ecosystems? Are all species necessarily equally important in this regard? Explain.
10. Note the many sources of over-exploitation – its not all greedy corporations – many of us are responsible and many of us fool ourselves that our reasons for taking organisms is justified or won't hurt – sometimes it is and won't but often that is not the case.
11. The Gulf of Maine case study is very important. Not only is it a local example, but also essentially the problem got out of hand and has spiraled down in the last hundred and especially last 20 years.

Terms; overexploitation, megafauna, bushmeat, bycatch, indirect exploitation.