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Pilot survey of ethnozoological utilization of vertebrates in southwestern Nigeria

G A Dedeke, D A Soewu, O A Lawal, M Ola

Abstract

A survey of some vertebrates used in traditional medical practices was carried out Among the Ijebu and Ibadan people of southwestern Nigeria. Open-ended structured Questionnaires were administered on 50 traders at five markets namely Oja-Oba, Bode and Oje in Ibadan; Ita-Osu in Ijebu-Ode and Obada in Ijebu-Igbo. Eighty percent (80%) of the traders were females, sixty-four percent (64%) were Muslims, sixty-two percent (62%) were primary school leavers while forty percent (40%) were between the ages of 36-45 years

The zootherapeutic uses of the wild vertebrates claimed by these traders ranged from The cure of skin dryness, rheumatism, epilepsy, leprosy, impotency, infertility, healing Of wounds and preparation of aphrodisiacs. Other uses include the preparation of charms Or amulets for protection, good fortune, reverence from peers and elders and money Ritual Sixteen of the forty species surveyed were listed as threatened in the Nigeria's Endangered Species (Control of International Trade and Traffic) Decree No 11 of 1985. It is therefore a necessity to conduct further research in order to authenticate the abovementioned therapeutic claims. It is also imperative to educate these traders on the effect of their trade on the threatened species and the likely resultant impact on biodiversity and by extension the Nation as a whole.

Keywords: zotherapy, ethnozoology, impact, species.