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Ecological diversity of edible insects and their potential contribution to household food security in Haut-Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

Examines food plants of edible insects, seasonal availability, indigenous knowledge and consumer acceptance

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Authors:

Bomolo, O, Niassy, S, Chocha, A, Longanza, B, Bugeme, D.M., Ekesi, S, Tanga, C.M.

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Abstract

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) is one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in Africa in terms of the wide range of edible insects. The government of DR Congo is promoting the sustainable exploitation and farming of insects, especially edible caterpillars as an alternative source of protein. Although 28% of the inhabitants of Haute-Katanga province consume caterpillars, little is known about their willingness to consume other edible insects and the role of edible caterpillars on the economy and their contribution to food security.

This article ascertains the food plants of edible insects, seasonal availability, indigenous knowledge, consumer preference, and acceptance (with regard to sex, age groups, marital status, customs and varying levels of education). Results show that the inhabitants of Haute-Katanga Province consume 11 edible insect species belonging to 4 insect families, which has implications on policies aimed at overcoming barriers to mass rearing, quality control and marketing of caterpillars and other insects for human consumption, and conservation of their food plants.

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