

Primates in Peril – the World’s Top 25 Most Endangered Species

Mountain galago (*Paragalago orinus*) – Tanzania (numbers unknown)

Found in Tanzania, this is one of the smallest of all galago species. Their habitat has been affected by agricultural expansion and illegal logging. Their population is very fragmented in forests across seven isolated mountain blocks. Their conservation status has been at Near Threatened since 2008.

Roloway monkey (*Cercopithecus roloway*) – Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana (very few remain, possibly fewer than 100)

The roloway monkey is one of the most endangered monkeys in Africa. Illegal logging has destroyed large areas of the forests in Ghana where they live. Trees have also been cleared for charcoal production. They are also hunted. Without effective conservation they could become extinct. The captive population is so small that extinction in captivity is also a strong possibility.

White-thighed Colobus (*Colobus vellerosus*) – Nigeria (numbers unknown)

One of four species of black-and-white colobus monkeys in Africa. Unregulated hunting is the main reason for the demise of this species across a very large part of its range, although habitat loss and degradation have also contributed significantly to population decline. The fall in their numbers has been relatively neglected in comparison with other threatened West African primates.

Niger Delta red colobus monkey (*Piliocolobus epieni*) – Nigeria (numbers as few as 1,000)

The red colobus monkeys are probably more threatened than any other group of primates in Africa. As a result of habitat destruction and hunting, the population has declined significantly since the 1990s and may now be 90 per cent lower than the previous estimate of 10,000.

Grauer’s gorilla (*Gorilla beringei graueri*) – The Democratic Republic of the Congo (approximate population 3,800)

Grauer’s gorillas have suffered a catastrophic decline since the 1990s due almost entirely to illegal hunting by miners. An estimated 3,800 now remain across their 19,700 km sq range, representing a 77 per cent decline in a single generation. Targeted conservation is vital to slow the further demise of this subspecies.

GERP’s mouse lemur (*Microcebus gerpi*) – Madagascar (number unknown)

One of the larger mouse lemur species assessed as Critically Endangered in May 2012. In addition to the immediate threat of forest loss for the survival of this mouse lemur, they are also hunted. This alarming situation calls for immediate conservation action. Only recently described, the species was named to honour the Malagasy conservation NGO Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche sur les Primates de Madagascar (GERP).

Lac Alaotra gentle lemur (*Haplemur alaotrensis*) – Madagascar (numbers fewer than 2,500 possibly fewer than 1,000)

Found in Madagascar the Lac Alaotra gentle lemur is the only primate living constantly in a wetland. In 2005 the population stood at around 2,500 individuals but because of poaching and annual marshland burning destroying its habitat, total numbers are now assumed to be much lower. Reconnecting isolated subpopulations is a priority conservation action.

Ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*) – Madagascar (numbers fewer than 2,000)

The ring-tailed lemur is an iconic primate and a flagship species for the island of Madagascar. Its dry forests, where ring-tailed lemurs naturally occur, have been reduced by 45 per cent over the past 40 years. Lemurs are frequently captured and kept as illegal pets. Ring-tailed lemur habitats and populations are declining at unsustainable rates. If we don't act to protect this species swiftly, they are certain to become extinct in all but a few locations in the wild.

James' sportive lemur (*Lepilemur jamesorum*) – Madagascar (very few remaining)

This lemur is found only in Manombo Special Reserve and Vevembe Classified Forest in the south-eastern coastal region of the island, and is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Deforestation is a significant problem in this region as people use the forest as their only resource for timber, firewood and charcoal production. These problems directly affect food availability for James' sportive lemurs and also lead to a fragmented habitat.

Perrier's sifaka (*Propithecus perrieri*) – Madagascar (numbers 2,100)

The population of Perrier's sifaka is estimated at just 2,100 individuals. Given this small number, the persistence of local threats and the paucity of wildlife patrols, an effective control of habitat loss is urgently needed.

Aye-aye (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) – Madagascar (numbers unknown but Aye-Ayes are rare)

The aye-aye is the only surviving representative of the Daubentoniidae, the oldest family of the living lemurs. The greatest threats to aye-ayes are forest degradation and fragmentation, slash-and-burn agriculture and local communities that believe the aye-aye is a harbinger of death, and kill them whenever they are seen near their villages

Javan slow loris (*Nycticebus javanicus*) – Java, Indonesia (number unknown)

Devastating habitat loss throughout southeast Asia threatens all nine species of slow loris with extinction. Many researchers and conservationists have only ever seen a slow loris in the illegal wildlife trade, dried on bamboo sticks in preparation for traditional medicine, paraded as a photo prop on a tourist beach, or sold as a pet. They are now listed as Critically Endangered.

Pig-tailed snub-nosed langur (*Simias concolor*) – Mentawai Islands, Indonesia (approximate population 3,300)

Classified as Critically Endangered on The IUCN Red List, this remarkable and little-known species is confined to a few small islands in the Mentawai archipelago off the west coast of Sumatra. It is threatened by hunting, commercial logging, and human encroachment. Pig-tailed snub-nosed langur meat is regarded as a delicacy and entire groups can be eliminated in a single hunt.

Gee's golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) – India and Bhutan (numbers fewer than 12,000)
Discovered in 1953 and found to be restricted to India and Bhutan. The main threat is loss of habitat. Hunting and smuggling, dependency on forests, social unrest, inbreeding and diseases are additional threats. The global population of the species was estimated at about 12,000 in 2009. The conservation scenario for this golden langur is alarming and critical. Each of the threats to golden langurs is increasing and likely to worsen considerably over the coming years, despite a number of conservation initiatives.

Golden-headed or Cat Ba langur (*Trachypithecus poliocephalus*) – Vietnam (numbers 50-60)
This species occurs only on Cat Ba Island off northern Vietnam. The population fell from around 2,400–2,700 in the 1960s to approximately 50 by 2000. The langurs were poached for traditional medicines and sport. Since 2000, strict measures have seen their population increase. This has raised concern that poaching by people from adjacent regions may start again. Strict enforcement of the established protections is necessary for the survival of all species on Cat Ba Island targeted by the Asian wildlife trade.

Tonkin snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus avunculus*) – Vietnam (fewer than 250)
The Tonkin snub-nosed monkey is threatened by hunting and habitat loss due to timber exploitation, shifting cultivation and the collection of non-timber forest products for commercial purposes. Their numbers are believed to be less than 200 in a few small and isolated subpopulations. Immediate conservation measures required include establishing and training patrol groups, raising awareness and assessing the range of the population and the impact of cardamom production to the habitat.

Crested macaque (*Macaca nigra*) – Sulawesi, Indonesia (numbers 4,000 to 6,000)
The size of the current population is not known and a proper assessment is urgently needed. Crested macaques spend at least 60 per cent of their day on the ground and as human populations continue to grow so will the interactions between humans and macaques. How they will continue to survive in the face of this change remains to be seen.

Western purple-faced langur (*Semnopithecus vetulus*) – Sri Lanka (numbers unknown)
Deforestation has led to habitat fragmentation forcing them to travel on the ground and along power lines, that result in deaths through attacks by dogs, speeding vehicles and electrocution. Sri Lanka's monkeys face a perilous future, all 12 are threatened, but there is hope that they can be conserved. One reason is that most Sri Lankans follow the Buddhist doctrine of compassion towards all living things. Another is a government decision, ten years ago, to increase Sri Lanka's forest cover to 36% using native plants.

Hainan gibbon (*Nomascus hainanus*) – Hainan Island, China (numbers fewer than 30)
The Hainan gibbon is the most endangered of the gibbons and restricted to the island of Hainan. In the 1950s it was estimated there were more than 2,000 Hainan gibbons on the island but by October 2003 there were just 13. With considerable conservation efforts underway, today it is estimated there are about 30. With the slow but steady increase in the gibbon

population, there is an urgent need to secure and expand suitable lowland forest for the survival of the remaining gibbons and their habitats.

Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) – Island of Borneo, Malaysia and Indonesia (numbers between 47,000 and 73,000)

The Bornean orangutan appears in this list for the first time because of large population declines over the past 50 years. While the most recent estimate of 46,952–72,941 Bornean orangutans appears substantial, this masks very serious threats. There has been a dramatic decline in numbers over the past few decades and the forests where it lives are now highly fragmented with very few areas able to hold 1,000 individuals or more.

Caquetá titi monkey (*Plecturocebus caquetensis*) – Colombia (numbers possibly fewer than 250)

First discovered in the 1960s the presence of armed insurgents meant its formal description could not be made until nearly 50 years later. They are listed as Critically Endangered because of the high rates of habitat loss. The signing of a peace deal between the Colombian government and armed groups could lead to more infrastructure to exploit oil and mineral resources but the deal also provides an opportunity for conservation and research on this species for the first time since its discovery.

Brown-headed spider monkey (*Ateles fusciceps*) – Ecuador, Colombia, Panamá (numbers unknown)

It is estimated that there are fewer than 280 brown-headed spider monkeys surviving in the forests of Ecuador, and no subpopulation bigger than 50 individuals has been found. Extensive and ongoing deforestation and hunting are the main threats to the species.

Ka'apor capuchin (*Cebus kaapori*) – Brazil (numbers unknown)

The Ka'apor capuchin, first described just 25 years ago, is found in the eastern edge of the Brazilian Amazon. More than 70 per cent of the forest has been destroyed to create farmland and pasture. The population has fallen more than 80 per cent during the past 48 years.

Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) – Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama (numbers unknown)

The various subspecies of this spider monkey are considered to be Endangered because of habitat loss and fragmentation. They are also heavily hunted for food and for the pet trade. Some are threatened by road construction and farming activities such as oil palm. Conservation measures include environmental education and building canopy bridges to reduce the number of animals killed on the roads.

Northern brown howler monkey (*Alouatta guariba guariba*) – Brazil (possibly fewer than 100)

The main threats to the wild populations are hunting, habitat fragmentation and the very small sizes of the scattered populations. Yellow fever, which is currently affecting howler populations throughout the southeast of the Atlantic forest presents an additional and extremely serious threat. Only 27 groups and 55 individuals in 14 different locations are known to survive.