



95% of lemur population facing extinction: conservationists

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The arboreal primates with pointed snouts and typically long tails are found only in Madagascar, where rainforest destruction, unregulated agriculture, logging and mining have been ruinous for lemurs, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said.

"This is, without a doubt, the highest percentage of threat for any large group of mammals and for any large group of vertebrates," Russ Mittermeier of IUCN's species survival commission said in a statement.

Out of a total of 111 lemur species and subspecies, 105 are under threat, IUCN said, as it released its first update on the lemur population since 2012.

Among the most concerning trends is an "increase in the level of hunting of lemurs taking place, including larger-scale commercial hunting," Christoph Schwitzer, director of conservation at the Bristol Zoological Society, said in the statement.

He described the hunting as "unlike anything we have seen before in Madagascar." IUCN said it was launching "a major action plan for lemur conservation," to help preserve the endangered primates.