

003 Pre-congress Symposium and Workshop in Inuyama

CONSERVATION OF PRIMATES IN VIETNAM

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The knowledge about the status of species and populations is an important conservation tool. Depending on the changes of limited funds for conservation activities, manpower, and education, efforts can be concentrated on projects to stabilize critical populations and to secure their survival. Data that is based on monitoring new discoveries or dramatic population changes should be updated. A continual lack of actual data for a specific taxon shows the need for further work. Several cases are known in which a late assessment of a believed common species has revealed a dire situation and then required a high effort in conservation activities.

Like all wildlife in Vietnam the 25 Vietnamese primate taxa are also under extremely high pressure mostly through poaching for the use in traditional medicine, luxury and expensive dishes, ornaments, for the pet trade, and use for farming to supply laboratories. A high number of animals are illegally exported to China

The decrease of populations shows a dramatic loss of many, especially small and isolated populations. The numbers of individuals in larger populations show a steady decrease. The total loss of some primate species for Vietnam in the long run can not be excluded. More than 90% of the taxa are threatened with extinction. Seven taxa listed as "Critically Endangered", nine taxa as "Endangered" and seven taxa as "Vulnerable". In recognition of the high endemism and threat level, five Vietnamese species have been consistently listed on "The World's Most Endangered Primates" since its inception in 2000, more than any other hotspot.

Despite the decrease in numbers of several primate species already announced since the last twenty years no sufficient measures are implemented to stop further loss. There are unfortunately only few exceptions in the effort to reduce further loss of endemic species. The Delacour's langur (*Trachypithecus delacouri*) and the enigmatic Tonkin snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus avunculus*) now have one stable or increasing population at least in one protected area each, but several subpopulations disappeared already. The Cat Ba langur's (*T. poliocephalus poliocephalus*) precipitous declines have been halted. The grey-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix cinerea*) has received considerable survey effort, revealing additional significant populations, but poaching is still a serious threat. The conservation of the eastern black gibbon (*Nomascus nasutus*), occurs in a small population in Vietnam and in an adjacent area in China, and hopefully transboundary conservation activities can support to stabilize this small population. Strong decisions and actions are necessary to avoid further extirpations. National and international conservation funds and capacity should be concentrated on active protection work and reduced in field studies in which the contents occasionally only record the dwindling of populations.