

NEGLECTED SPECIES: CONSERVATION AND ETHICAL RAMIFICATIONS

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Macaca fascicularis, the crab-eating or long-tail macaque, became the first primate species to be formally recognized as “widespread and rapidly declining” during the biennial review of the “World’s 25 Most Endangered Primates” at the 2008 Congress of the International Primatological Society (IPS) in Edinburgh, UK, a joint activity of the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group, Conservation International, and IPS. Two factors underlie the species’ decline. Encroachment of the burgeoning and increasingly affluent human population on the monkey’s Southeast Asian forest habitat through exploitative activities such as subsistence farming, legal and illegal logging, and monoculture agriculture has resulted in human/macaque conflict and intolerance of pest behavior in both rural and urban areas. At the same time, throughout much of its range the species is being trapped, and frequently laundered as captive-bred, to satisfy the demand of Big Pharma for its use in toxicology and pre-clinical studies. It is, therefore, inexplicable that *M. fascicularis* was downgraded on the 2008 *IUCN Red List* from “lower risk: near threatened” to “least concern”. Such low priority has resulted in a continued lack of funding and commitment to document the species’ actual distribution and monitor population trends. Responses to inhumane trapping and captive conditions documented by animal welfare groups have been transitory and muted in comparison to those for “threatened species”: such groups have been left to visibly raise conservation issues and advocate preventive action to slow further decline, such as upgrading *M. fascicularis* to CITES Appendix I.

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