

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE YELLOW TAILED WOOLLY MONKEY *OREONAX FLAVICAUDA* IN NORTHEASTERN PERU

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The critically endangered *Oreonax flavicauda* “Yellow Tailed Woolly Monkey” is endemic of Peru’s northeastern cloud forests, an area extremely disturbed and fragmented by human activities. Potential distribution models estimate its current extent of occurrence in around 7,000 km<sup>2</sup>, a very low number for a large atelid. Even though some areas/fragments may appear to have suitable habitat for the species, because of activities such as hunting –usually associated with timber extraction- populations of woolly monkeys might have disappeared. An exhaustive field study to confirm the presence/absence of the species is needed. During 2009 and part of 2010, we surveyed mainly previously unstudied areas in order to verify the species occurrence and assess the characteristics of the forests that still harbor this species. In total, we visited 24 sites, where censuses and habitat characterizations were realized. We confirmed by sightings the presence of the species in 17 sites, finding an unexpected flexibility of the species, being able to occur in small fragments and strongly disturbed areas, even in forests where more than 70% of trees had heights between 3.3-9.9m and DBHs of less than 20cm. But we also found its presence eradicated from several fragments of forest where local people acknowledge the species presence decades ago. Group sizes were small, ranging from two to 12 individuals, not finding a correlation of group size with proximity to towns or forest characteristics. We believe the species still exists because of its flexibility to survive in disturbed areas.

*Keywords: Oreonax, Lagothrix, Primate, Tropical Andes, Critically Endangered, Peru*