

ANTI-POACHING, THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IN SAVING CHINA'S WILDLIFE: LESSONS LEARNT FROM YUNNAN SNUB-NOSED MONKEY CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

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The Yunnan snub-nosed monkey is one of the most endangered primate species endemic to China. Conserving the monkey will not only just save this beautiful creature but also protect thousands of square kilometers of primary forest that has an evolution history for millions of years. TNC has initiated the Yunnan Snub-nosed Monkey Range-wide Conservation Effort with local partners since 2004. In our initial survey during 2004-2005, the monkey population was 1,700 spread into 15 sub-population. Then, we helped local authorities to establish anti-poaching patrolling systems since 2006. Due to limited financial and human resources, the patrol intensity for the sub-populations varied; that is, only two followed for at least 20 days per month, six monitored at least four times a month, five occasionally observed during the quarterly line-transect walking, and two seldom patrolled. Due to the patrolling intensities, large differences on their population dynamics were found in these four years. One sub-population with 30-50 individuals could hardly be seen except some feces in 2009. In contrast, the sub-population with day-to-day follow increased rapidly (560 in 2004 to more than 800 in 2009). This striking contrast indicates: 1) poaching is the key threat for the monkey's survival; 2) anti-poaching is much more important than habitat protection in terms of wildlife conservation and such effort was long neglected in China.

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