

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-RELEASE MONITORING IN SLOW LORIS REINTRODUCTION PROGRAMMES: A CASE STUDY FROM JAVA (*NYCTICEBUS JAVANICUS*)

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Trade now appears to be the greatest threat to most *Nycticebus spp.*, irrespective of their placement on Appendix 1 by CITES in 2007. In Indonesia, high demand for lorises as pets, combined with loris' inability to escape hunters due to slow evasion strategies, has led to their constant supply in trade with a subsequent influx of confiscated individuals in rescue centres. At many sites, confiscated lorises are hard-released with no monitoring. To ensure welfare of released individuals and wild populations, improved strategies are needed for reintroduction/ restocking projects. Monitoring of nine newly-seized *N. javanicus*, for the purposes of potential release was conducted over three months in 2009, comprising 270 observation hours yielding >6000 instantaneous point samples. Quantitative data were collected on behaviour and posture in relation to substrate size, type and geometry in large (mean=32m³, n=3) outdoor enclosures mimicking natural conditions. Behaviours pertaining to survival skills were recorded *ad libitum*. Lorises (n=9) exhibited mainly active behaviours, exploration being the preferred (30%). Locomotory modes (52%) included both suspensory (28%) and quadrupedal (24%). Five individuals exhibited stereotypies, including pacing and head-rolling, ranging from 9-65% of activity. All individuals successfully caught live prey. Indeed, all lorises showed improved body condition and an increase in 'natural' behaviours, suggesting the importance of the pre-release period. The next stage in our study is to release and monitor suitable individuals via long-term radio tracking. Our data suggest that hard release of lorises, especially young or weakened individuals, is a far from an optimal strategy for their conservation.

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