

CONSERVATION STATUS OF MONKEYS ON BIOKO ISLAND, EQUATORIAL GUINEA (1990 – 2009)

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Commercial bushmeat hunting is rapidly depleting remaining populations of all seven monkey species found on Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea (West/Central Africa). Five of these populations are subspecies endemic to Bioko, four of which are currently categorized as IUCN “endangered” (drill, *Mandrillus leucophaeus poensis*; black colobus, *Colobus satanas satanas*; Pennant’s red colobus, *Procolobus pennantii pennantii*; and, Preuss’ monkey, *Allochrocebus preussi insularis*). The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program, an academic partnership between Drexel University and the National University of Equatorial Guinea, has recorded bushmeat market carcasses (6 days/week) in the capital city of Malabo since 1997, as well as monkey group encounter rates in Bioko Island’s two protected areas since 1990. Although a 2007 ban on monkey-hunting was initially effective, a lack of enforcement has now allowed hunting to escalate well above all previous levels, with more than 7000 monkey carcasses recorded in the market during 2009 alone. Monkey group encounter rates recorded during forest census decreased in both of the Island’s legally protected areas, including the naturally remote Gran Caldera de Luba. With intense shotgun hunting throughout the 2027 km² island, and with no protection in the 840 km² protected areas, immediate enforcement of existing laws by the government of Equatorial Guinea is essential to prevent the imminent extinction of these primate populations.

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