

Red List Assessments for World's Primates publicity during IPS Congress

Editors' Note : ZOOS' PRINT contributes up to date information about the IUCN Red List, Criteria and Categories, and various workshops whenever possible. In this issue, which is devoted primarily to non-human Primates and recent activities on their behalf, we would like to highlight some of the press news preceeding the release of primate assessments of the IUCN Global Mammal Assessment GMA. The press campaign did a magnificent job of promoting the needs of the world's primates for better protection and other action steps.

In the story below the efforts of Conservation International staff to spread the news of the primate Red List assessments are documented. Following this are some snatches of press reports in news media that appeared all over the world. Enjoy. **Eds.**

Recent CI / PSG Press Campaign Results

Lisa Bowen

CI made significant news worldwide last week with the announcement of the results of the primate assessment, which is part of the IUCN Global Mammal Assessment. In partnership with IUCN, the SSC Primate Specialist Group and the International Primatological Society, CI's SMGC team led the news media outreach efforts for last week's announcement, which took place at the IPS meeting in Edinburgh.

The attachment of clips shows a sampling of some of the coverage worldwide — reaching more than 24 million people, with earned news media placements worth an equivalent \$8.5 million dollars in paid advertising. The coverage was particularly strong in the UK. On the day of the release, visits to CI's website showed a 35 percent increase in site visits and 41 percent increase in page views.

These types of media outreach campaigns require long-term planning and teamwork to be a success. I would like to acknowledge and thank those involved:

* Working closely with Mike Hoffman, Anthony Rylands and our partners, Tom Cohen coordinated the overall campaign, wrote the press materials and along with myself and Marshall Maher, contacted key journalists for placements. I worked closely with Russ to prepare and place his op ed piece as the lead commentary with the BBC's online Green Room. Marshall Maher ensured several online news sites ran the story.

* Carolina Hoyos and Patricia Yakabe Malentaqui worked with the communications coordinators in Latin America to achieve placements in some of the largest and most prestigious news outlets, and to ensure that the press materials were translated into Spanish, French and Portuguese and distributed to all CI communications coordinators in Japan achieved very strong placements with top Japanese outlets.

* Juliane Min and Sterling Zumbrunn ensured that all the photos were gathered and ready to go, for both the news media as well as for conservation.org

* Gina Buchanan and John Martin ensured that we had the video footage of primates prepared.

* The CI web team — Jen Shatwell, Jen Maceyko, Erika Norris, made sure the story got prominent coverage on conservation.org, and Tom, Marshall, staff writer Alex McClennon and I wrote the articles for the CI web content. Many thanks to everyone for their hard work and congratulations on excellent results!

***Lisa Bowen is Senior Director, Strategic Marketing & Global Communications, Conservation International, 2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22202 lbowen@conservation.org**



Summaries : a few of the hundreds of press items covering the primate assessments world over

Viewpoint, BBC News. Driving primates to the edge. Russ Mittermeier, President, C.I.; Chm. IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group

The IUCN Red List of primates makes grim reading, says Conservation International president Russell Mittermeier. In this week's Green Room, he says the sooner we listen to the message that our closest living relatives are telling us, the longer we have to save ourselves.

Monkeys and apes are trying to tell us something. After all, some of the non-human primates that share 98.5% of our genetic code can and do talk to us. Take Kanzi, for instance; this bonobo chimp understands thousands of words, uses sentences, expresses emotions and concern for others; even talks on the phone.

Whether certain primates, such as chimps and other apes, use language the same way people do remains a matter of scientific debate. But one thing about primates that scientists agree upon today is that they are among the most threatened animal species on Earth.

Results of the most recent global primate assessment have been discussed this week at the annual International Primatological Society meeting, held in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The survey was done as part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's 2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, and it is grim reading. Nearly 50% of the world's 634 primate species and subspecies are in danger of going extinct. The

situation is most dire in Asia, where more than 70% could disappear forever in the near future. News reports of a global species extinction crisis appear every now and then. Somehow, the fact that hundreds and perhaps even thousands of species are lost daily - gone forever, irreplaceable - has not roused much alarm among the general public.

Why it matters

Will it matter when the chimps, lemurs, gorillas and cotton-topped tamarins are all gone? After all, what has a monkey done for you lately?

The yellow cheeked crested gibbon is listed as Endangered. Right now, the message monkeys are sending could help us all have a healthier, more secure and prosperous planet. If these highly intelligent species are dying out, what does that mean for us, their human cousins?

It means we have so seriously and destructively altered the Earth's landscape that these creatures can no longer survive in their natural habitats. We've laid waste to forests from Latin America to Asia and Africa where these primates have lived and evolved, and where they are now perishing.

The larger, global impact of this kind of massive forest destruction equals one of the greatest causes of global climate change - which finally has captured the public's attention and is causing alarm. Twenty percent of greenhouse gas emissions that are accelerating global warming come from tropical forest destruction.

In fact, deforestation makes Indonesia (one of the world's three richest countries for primates) the third leading emitter of greenhouse gases.

Shrinking world

Habitat loss is the most serious threat to primates, closely followed by relentless hunting of some species to supply a luxury exotic meat market and for use in traditional medicines. If primates are telling us to rescue them, they are also sending us a message that will help us rescue ourselves.

In fact, in some places primates are literally being eaten to extinction. It is horrific to see these animals in the open air bush meat markets, being grilled on fire pits and sometimes even being blowtorched to remove their hair, their faces frozen in final screams of anguish.

Forests where primates have historically occurred rely on these keystone species to remain healthy, productive ecosystems. Many monkeys and apes eat the forest fruit and are the primary seed dispersers. A forest that loses its primates becomes a forest without seedlings, unable to regenerate and thrive. That in turn has a direct impact on people who live in or near these forests and rely on the forest resources for many essential needs.

There is plenty at stake for the entire planet if primates become extinct. And that's not to mention our undeniable affection for these intelligent, fascinating creatures. We can see, and hear, ourselves in them.

BBC News. Primates 'face extinction crisis' Mark Kinver, Science and nature reporter,

A global review of the world's primates says 48% of species face extinction, an outlook described as "depressing" by conservationists. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species says the main threat is habitat loss, primarily through the burning and clearing of tropical forests. More than 70% of primates in Asia are now listed as Endangered, it adds. The findings form part of the most detailed survey of the Earth's mammals, which will be published in October.

Primates in Peril

Nations with the highest percentage of threatened species:

Cambodia	90%
Vietnam	86%
Indonesia	84%
Laos	83%
China	79% (Source: IUCN Red List)



The survey, involving hundreds of experts, showed that out of 634 recognised species and subspecies, 11% were Critically Endangered, 22% were Endangered, while a further 15% were listed as Vulnerable.

Asia had the greatest proportion of threatened primates, with 71% considered at risk of extinction. The five nations with the highest percentage of endangered species were all within Asia. "It is quite spectacular; we are just wiping out primates," said Jean-Christophe Vie, deputy head of the IUCN Species Programme.

Science Daily (Aug. 5, 2008) Extinction Threat To Monkeys And Other Primates Due To Habitat Loss, Hunting

The review funded by CI, the Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation, Disney's Animal Kingdom and the IUCN is part of an unprecedented examination of the state of the world's mammals to be released at the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October.

With the input of hundreds of experts worldwide, the primate review provides scientific data to show the severe threats facing animals that share virtually all DNA with humans. In both Vietnam and Cambodia, approximately 90 percent of primate species are considered at risk of extinction. Populations of gibbons, leaf monkeys, langurs and other species have dwindled due to rampant habitat loss exacerbated by hunting for food and to supply the wildlife trade in traditional Chinese medicine and pets.

"What is happening in Southeast Asia is terrifying," said Jean-Christophe Vié, Deputy Head of the IUCN Species Program. "To have a group of animals under such a high level of threat is, quite frankly, unlike anything we have recorded among any other group of species to date."

"Among the African species, the great apes such as gorillas and bonobos have always tended to grab the limelight, and even though they are deeply threatened, it is smaller primates such as the red colobus that could die out first," said IPS President Richard Wrangham.

Meanwhile, scientists continue to learn more about primates and their role in the world. Since 2000, 53 species of primates previously unknown to science have been described – 40 from Madagascar, two from Africa, three from Asia and eight from Central and South America. In 2007, researchers found a long-rumored population of Critically Endangered greater bamboo lemurs (*Prolemur simus*) in a wetland 400 kilometers (240 miles) from the only other known home of the species. In total, the species numbers about 140 individuals in the wild.

The IUCN Red List sets a series of criteria for a species to be categorized as threatened. In cases lacking the necessary information, the species can be listed as Data Deficient, which applied to nearly 15 percent of the primates in the new review. Many of those species, particularly newly discovered ones, are expected to eventually be classified as threatened.

Despite the gloomy assessment, conservationists point to a notable success in helping targeted species recover. In Brazil, the black lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus chrysopygus*) was downlisted to Endangered from Critically Endangered, as was the golden lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia*) in 2003, as a result of three decades of conservation efforts involving numerous institutions. Populations of both animals are now well-protected but remain very small, causing an urgent need for reforestation to provide new habitat for their long-term survival.

"If you have forests, you can save primates," said CI scientist Anthony Rylands, the deputy chair of the IUCN Primate Specialist Group. "The work with lion tamarins shows that conserving forest fragments and reforesting to create corridors that connect them is not only vital for primates, but offers the multiple benefits of maintaining healthy ecosystems and water supplies while reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change."

Not all bad news

There is some good news also...newly discovered increases in mountain gorillas in Rwanda, Uganda, DRC, and also two species of gibbons (black-shanked douc langurs and yellow-cheeked crested gibbons, in Cambodia. For quick access to the complete articles of these items check <http://www.silobreaker.com/> and search for gorillas and gibbons.

Quotes from different sources on gorillas and gibbons

More than 100,000 rare gorillas found in Congo - CNN [08/05/2008] ...the researchers trekked on foot through mud for three days to the outskirts of Lac Tele, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) from the nearest road. "When we went there, we found an astonishing amount of gorillas" said Rainey, speaking from the IPS Congress in Edinburgh

Census finds twice as many gorillas living in central Africa - USA Today [08/05/2008]

...although the report was well received, scientists gathered at the 22nd IPS Congress in Edinburgh warned against celebrating too soon. "If verified, the discovery of these new populations of gorilla are hugely significant for our work as conservationists, but we must not be distracted from the very real and present danger these gorillas are in from man and Ebola" said John Oates, emeritus professor of primatology at Hunter College in New York.

Gorillas that we missed (+photos) - New Zealand Herald [08/05/2008]

"...this was the mother lode of gorillas," Steven Sanderson, president and chief executive officer of the Wildlife Conservation Society, said in a statement. "It also shows that conservation in the Republic of Congo is working. This discovery should be a rallying cry for the world that we protect other vulnerable and endangered species, whether they be gorillas in Africa, tigers in India, or lemurs in Madagascar." The group released its findings at a meeting of the International Primatological Society Congress in Edinburgh

Large population of endangered monkeys discovered in Cambodia

[http://topnews.in/files/Wildlife Conservation Society Aug 29, 2008](http://topnews.in/files/Wildlife%20Conservation%20Society%20Aug%2029,%202008). Researchers from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) have discovered an unexpectedly large population of two endangered species of monkeys in Cambodia. According to a report released by WCS, there are 42,000 black-shanked douc langurs along with 2,500 yellow-cheeked crested gibbons in Cambodia.

