
Colobus Monkey Fact Sheet (5/1/94)

Colobus Monkey (*Colobus guereza* and *Colobus angolensis*)

Description: The Guereza (*Colobus guereza*) can be identified by a heavy, black body with a naked, slate-gray face surrounded by a white brow and full beard, a white mantle, long tail, broad white ring around the callosities, and an indistinct white thigh spot. The tail tuft varies in length and degree of business, from a simple terminal tuft to a long flowing brush 3/4 the length of the tail. Subspecies can be distinguished by the amount of white on tail and length of the mantle.

The Angolan Colobus (*Colobus angolensis*) is a heavily built, mostly black monkey with long, white hairs on the shoulders and well-developed white whiskers. The white shoulder hairs vary in length between subspecies and give this monkey its alternative name -- the White-Epauletted Black Colobus. The Angolan Colobus does not possess a mantle. The white tail tuft is variable among the subspecies.

Range: The current distribution of the Black-and-White Colobus Monkey is across equatorial Africa. The six subspecies of *Colobus guereza* range from Mt. Kilimanjaro in the East (*C. g. caudatus*) across central Africa to Nigeria (*C. g. occidentalis*). This species can be found from sea level to a recorded altitude of 9300 feet (*C. g. matschiei*). *Colobus angolensis* follows a similar distribution to *Colobus guereza* although exhibiting a more southerly range. The six subspecies of *C. angolensis* range south of the Sahara from Zaire (*C. a. angolensis*) to Tanzania (*C. a. palliatus*). These two species of Colobus (*C. guereza* and *C. angolensis*) live sympatrically in parts of their range.

Habitat: The Black-and-White Colobus Monkey is successful in a variety of habitats. These two species (*C. guereza* and *C. angolensis*) are forest dwellers, frequently found in young secondary forest. Although Colobus do come down to the ground, they are dependent on trees.

Diet: A system very similar to the ruminant digestive system of the cow has evolved in the leaf-eating monkeys of the subfamily Colobinae. The colobines are different from all other primates in the large size and complexity of their stomach. Their stomach is comprised of three or four subcompartments and parallels that of the ruminants, kangaroos, and sloths.

The dominant food choice of *Colobus guereza* are leaves from *Celtis durandii*. Young leaves of *C. durandii* are primarily selected, but also selected are the mature leaves of this particular hackberry tree. Three species of tree comprise 69% of the total diet. The trees most eaten are deciduous and at the forest edge. Analyses of chemicals in the plants eaten found that the key factor in the determination of leaves eaten is the tannin content.

In captivity, the diet of the Colobus Monkey should reflect their preference for a leafy diet. Zoos supplement the Colobus daily diet with browse.

Social Organization: A Colobus troop is a cohesive group typically composed of a single adult male, three to four adult females, sub-adults, a juvenile, and an infant. The size of the troop ranges from 3 to 15. Multi-male troops have been observed as well as bachelor groups of males, but both of these groupings are believed to be temporary. These troops are highly social, mutual handling of infants by members other than the mother is believed to maintain the cohesiveness of the group. Females spend a great deal of time in allogrooming. Long range communications is accomplished visually and vocally, primarily by the males jumping up and down in trees which is accomplished by a contagious roaring.

Conservation Status: The IUCN Red Data Book does not consider these two species of Colobus to be endangered, however this is not true of all populations within each species.

Threat to Survival: As with all wild primate populations, the major threats to their survival are habitat destruction, hunting and live capture for sale or trade. The hunting pressure on the Colobus monkey has been immense. Skins are used for trimming coats and dresses, but most are commonly made into circular rugs or wall hangings. Many African peoples wear Colobus skins for ornamentation, although the greatest demand has been from overseas.

Zoo Programs -- SSP: The Colobus Monkeys are included under the auspices of the Old World Monkey Taxon Advisory Group of the AZA. In April 1995, the Colobus SSP was approved by the WCMC. Over 1200 animals have been included in the *Colobus guereza* studbook. The *Colobus angolensis* studbook lists a total of 60 animals. Birth and death rates show stable population growth over the past 5 years. Effective management of this population is necessary in order to ensure its long term viability, and to most effectively use the limited space available for this primate and others kept in captivity. Plans are being made to develop a masterplan for these species in late spring or early summer of 1996.

Conservation: The Guereza can be found in national parks and forest reserves in several countries within their range, including Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. Only one viable population of *Colobus angolensis* is contained within a national park.

Education: The Colobus SSP will assist in the development of programs for Colobus to serve as "conservation ambassadors" for Old World Monkeys, particularly those African Colobines not currently held in captivity, but critically endangered in the wild, such as the Red Colobus.

Reintroduction: Currently there does not exist the need or opportunity to reintroduce the Black-and-White Colobus Monkey.