
Francois' Langur 98 Fact Sheet (10/1/98)

Francois' Langur

Description: The Francois' langur is a glossy black medium sized primate with a long tail and white sideburns extending from the corner of the mouth to the top of the ears. They possess prominent brow ridges and pointed crest of hair. Head and body length are approximately 24 inches, tail length is approximately 33 inches and weights range from 13-15lbs. Up to seven sub-species exist which are easily differentiated by the distinct coloration of the tail, head, and thighs.

Range: The Francois' langur inhabits northeast Vietnam north of Hanoi and the southern portion of China adjacent to the Vietnamese border.

Habitat: These leaf-eating monkeys prefer habitat containing moist forests that grow on well sheltered rocky areas in the limestone hills and caves (karst formations).

Diet: Their diet in the wild is thought to consist primarily of mature leaves, young leaf parts and buds, and seasonally available fruits, seeds, and flowers.

Social Organization: Although little is known about these animals, the observed social structure is a harem society with one adult male overseeing a family group of 3-12 individuals consisting of 4-6 females and their young. In zoos, animals are primarily kept as pairs, and trios although as many as 9 have been kept together with one male serving as the dominant breeding member of the group.

Conservation Status: The Francois' langur is regarded as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, Appendix II under CITES, as a protected species with first class status in China and endangered and protected in Vietnam. The IUCN/SSC Primate specialist group rates the degree of threat for the Francois' langur as (5), Endangered. This category is defined as "Population restricted to a very limited areas, or with a very fragmented distribution; less than 25,000 individuals probably remain (for all subspecies), and there are threatened by major habitat alteration and/or severe hunting; likely to move to category (6) Highly endangered by the end of the century if current destructive forces continue to operate." Fewer than 2,500 individuals are thought to exist of the T. francoisi francoisi population.

Threats to Survival: The Francois' langur population is in rapid decline throughout its range due to habitat destruction, fragmentation, and poaching although the latter is diminished due to the small numbers of animals left. Hunting has reduced some of the populations of rare subspecies of the Francois' langur to the point where fewer than 200 exist. The doubling of the population of Vietnam since 1975 to ~70 million people has put enormous pressure on forests and national parks as sources for wood for cooking and heating. Most of the flat areas of land are being cultivated for food crops with steady encroachment up hills and into forests.

Zoo Programs -SSP: Twelve AZA institutions participate in the Francois' langur SSP and manage approximately 72 individuals. Reproduction in this species has been relatively easy producing a steady population growth which is now exceeding the capacity. A recent masterplan has, for the first time, called for reduced breeding. The founder base is adequate at 18 with living descendants. Space limitations have been self imposed in order to prefer other langur species whose populations are in critical need of space.

Conservation: Most conservation related work with this species has centered on limited census work in Vietnam and ecological studies conducted by Chinese zoologists. Although adequate laws exist in Vietnam, enforcement is poor leading to continued trade and hunting of primates including langurs. National Parks do exist within the historical range of this species but much of the habitat inside and outside the park has been compromised by logging and fuelwood gathering to the point where they will not support healthy populations. An Endangered Primate Rescue Center has been established in Vietnam in Cuc Phuong National Park which houses several primate species including 4 of the subspecies of the Francois langur. No animals of the subspecies covered by the SSP are known to exist in captivity in Vietnam although over 100 are known to exist in China in zoos and breeding centers. The Frankfurt Zoological Society supports park protection measures at Cuc Phuong where the critically endangered Delacours' langur (thought by some to be a distinct species from the Francois' langur group) is known to exist.

Education: Few education initiatives exist outside of zoos housing the species in North America, Japan, and China. Some education was conducted in the village near Cuc Phuong National Park about the value of the park to wildlife. Posters have been printed as an aid to wildlife law enforcement authorities in Vietnam when considering confiscations of illegally held animals.

Reintroduction: To date, no reintroduction with this species has been undertaken. A small hill near the Endangered Primate Rescue Center in

Cuc Phuong National Park has been fenced in to serve as a semi-free area for primates and may serve as a halfway house to prepare langurs for eventual release back into the park at some future date.

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