



Gray shanked douc langur

# Primate Conservation Inc. UPDATE

2002

## Director's Report

As we look back to 2001 and the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, we realize the tremendous generosity of the American people to help the survivors. In 2002 as Americans refocus on some of the other problems facing the world, we hope they will be as generous to the cause of conservation. Endangered apes and monkeys are survivors of the bushmeat trade, illegal logging, and attacks on their protected areas..

Think how the survivors in a troop of chimpanzees feel as they watch one of their females carrying an infant is shot from a tree by a hunter. The hunter takes the dead chimp, throws her on a logging truck and transports her to the nearest city to be sold for a rich persons fête. If it survives, the infant will be sold as a pet or fattened and slaughtered.

Think of the orangutan who hears chain saws every day as loggers cut the fruit trees he needs to survive in his territory. This same territory was declared a National Park ten years ago but the staff has been forced to leave at gunpoint and with out the rule of law the forest falls to be shipped to the developed world for plywood.

Think of the forest guard walking his patrols in tattered uniform and bare feet. He has survived a civil war that killed hundreds of thousands. He is still trying to do his job protecting the forest and its ape inhabitants against poachers armed with AK 47s.

Think of the field researcher forced to leave her study site, study animals, and field assistants as warring sides converge. She returns 3 years later

with medicines and other aid for the assistants and their families that have survived in the village. Even though she has permissions in hand from all sides, the occupying force interrogates her and sends her back unable to deliver help to her sick and malnourished friends. All this has happened in the last year.

As I look to the future I hope that Americans will be generous to the surviving endangered species of the world so they are not further terrorized by hunting and habitat loss.

Russell Mittermeier, a member of PCI's scientific advisory board and the head of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Primate Specialist Group, stated at the International Primatological Society conference that if half a billion dollars were available for conservation, then 25 centers could be established to protect the biodiversity the world's most threatened areas of biodiversity. As we have recently seen this is not a lot of money for Americans to provide if there is the desire to help. I am talking about helping to protect the over 50% of the species on earth in the 5% of the Earth's surface that we humans have left for them. It is a small price to pay for their freedom to live. We will be safeguarding our children's and grandchildren's right to learn about and appreciate our closest biological relatives. We must be proactive to provide real security for the biodiversity of the natural world upon which we depend for our own survival.

## Field Report from Sri Lanka

The following is an edited version of an informal report that PCI received direct from the field via email. Anna Nekaris Ph.D. received a PCI grant to do a survey of the 4 subspecies of slender loris in the country of Sri Lanka, which has been fighting a civil war for years. Lorises are nocturnal prosimians and they have not been studied in their natural habitat. They were thought to be solitary.



Slender Loris Photo by Anna Nekaris

Though this report is more dramatic than most, I hope it will give you a sense of what life is like while doing primate research, both the excitement of discovery and the outright dangers involved. I'm sure you will marvel at the endurance and dedication of primate field workers and hope you will help PCI support their projects. For more information on lorises please see Anna's article in January 2002 Natural History Magazine.

**June 8, 2001** I saw my first lorises in the central province – highland form, presumably *Loris tardigradus grandis*.

Within five minutes of entering the forest, we saw one loris, confirmed by spotting its distinctive rump - within minutes, a second was spotted some twenty meters away. I also heard two whistles, one of which is totally different from *lydekkerianus* or the recordings I have heard of nordicus.

**June 22** at Pollonaruwa The viewing is MUCH more difficult than it was in India, so I must tell you what patience it took to see these animals.

We hardly ever saw just one alone usually 2 or more- I saw a male grooming mother with singleton, and another of the second male play wrestling with mama with twins - then they fell out of the tree - all four in a ball!

We found two sleeping sites, and observed communal sleeping. Once I saw mama with twins

eating flowers, so I thought, but in the morning we saw all of these little spider eggs laid just underneath the flowers and the local researchers said the macaques relish these.

The lack of vocalizations really amazed me, but many predators are present that were absent elsewhere (toddy cat, fishing cat, fishing owl and civet).

**June 30** We surveyed each vegetation type in the Southeast dry zone, though lorises are reported to be in this area, we heard not even a peep or a whistle. The odd thing was, however, that there was no wild life at all to be seen.

On Monday, we head for one week in the Horton Plains, and another week in Yala National Park. I am a bit worried about the latter because military activity is high there and a few people have been killed recently, and going out in the night is frankly not very wise. We shall see what happens.

Otherwise, we will move to Udawalewe, which has just reopened (it was closed due to deaths by elephant trampling!).

**Jul 3** About the killings in Jaffna, I am quite far from there, though there are many problems in Yala, where I am going in a week or so. The worst place I will be in - Anaruradhapura, but things should be okay. We are being careful. I just found out, however, that there are trap guns spread throughout the forest at night used to kill elephants. This is especially prevalent around Yala. There is no way to know that they are there - there are land mines around Yala as well. But do not worry - I will do my best not to be blown up!

The Peak Wilderness Sanctuary/ Adam's Peak/ Horton Plains. Monsoon flooding had blocked the paths into the forest, so we ended up wading through a river to conduct surveys, and getting coated with leeches.

We walked approx. 12 km on foot here. No sign of lorises, and no sounds, but the rain was so torrential it was difficult to hear.

**July 17** Mammals not seen: SLENDER LORIS!!! or evidence of any other small insectivore (few bats, no shrews)

I asked some of the rangers if pesticides are used in the area, as in each place, I checked the trees and the ground and found very few insects. No insects even flew into our torchlight. I will look more into this possible connection.

**July 20** We have returned to the Western Province, We walked for 5 hours covering 3.5 km in the forest. This was by far the most difficult fieldwork we have done here. Walking was difficult, finding

paths was difficult, but worst of all, this area contains four out five venomous snakes in Sri Lanka in high abundance, and the man with whom we were working, locked the snake boots in a room and someone took off with the key! The undergrowth was snake heaven, but luckily no one was bitten. In addition, gun traps, which are set to kill wildlife especially elephants, are common here. These are very dangerous - it truly was frightening.

BUT we did see lorises! Only one - a mother with twins clinging to her side and one to her belly. I thought she was almost too small to be a loris,

By the way, rioting in Colombo broke out yesterday. We saw the mobs moving to the city from the train from Gampaha. We made it to our hotel just in time before the roads were closed and shooting began. But we are safe.

**29 July** This was such a wonderful and successful week. I worked closely with a lecturer from Ruhuna University (Anton Perera). Because of the current political unrest, we could only work each night from 7:00 (sundown) to 11:00. Each night, we saw several lorises, and heard and tape-recorded several calls. The calls were very different - higher pitched and almost always consisted of two short whistles in a row whereas the calls at Pollonaruwa were low pitched, long, and consisted of only one whistle.

They are so tiny! They must be half the size of the *nordicus* and have such a long funny snout and are pretty shades of rust/red. The other interesting thing about these animals is that they are incredibly fast, covering 15-20 meters in less than one minute (yes this is fast for a loris!).

Some crazy hazards at this site include abundant charging wild pigs (They avoid you if you put every single possible torch at them.), leeches which have a fondness for wiggling their way into shirts and are found all over everyone's stomachs!! The evil scary trap guns (which we heard go off too many times in the night. A new bizarre danger -- in areas surrounding rice paddies, the local people stretch a live wire from a tower kilometers away, so that any wet area from the power tower to the paddy is a dangerous field of live electricity.

Oh and the bombings in Colombo will only affect us if they decide not to reopen the airport!

**August 15, 2001** I spent one week in Giritele, observing lorises and ultimately, led a two day training course on management and conservation of the slender loris in Sri Lanka. About 50 officers attended, 27 of which were students from the Wildlife Training Center at Giritele.

A seed of interest was sewn not only in these officers, but also in all the parks where we managed to work. This should really bode well for lorises.



## Conservation in Zanzibar

By Kirstin S. Siex and Thomas T. Struhsaker

The Zanzibar red colobus is one of Africa's most endangered primates with probably less than 2,000 individuals remaining. They are naturally occurring only on the island of Unguja, Zanzibar. The Zanzibar red colobus are also a major economic resource in Zanzibar attracting approximately 25,000 paying tourists/year. The revenues, earned from tourism to view the red colobus, are now being shared with local communities to encourage community conservation activities.

### Major Threats and Solutions

The main threat facing this endangered species is habitat loss and degradation. Although many red colobus are found in Jozani Forest Reserve (with luck, soon to be Zanzibar first National Park), as many as half of the remaining red colobus live outside of protected areas. These areas are being destroyed at an alarming rate as Zanzibar's population grows at over 3% per year. At present, we are lobbying and trying to raise funds for the purchase of land adjacent to Jozani Forest Reserve. Addition of a very small amount of land (approximately 30 ha) to Jozani would place the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population of red colobus (the ones visited by tourists and hence the most important population economically) within the protected area.

Another major threat to the red colobus, until last year, was roadkills. Since the paving of the major road to the southern part of the island in 1996, we estimated that between 9-13 % of one of the two largest populations of red colobus was killed each year by careless drivers. We are

extremely happy to report that in April 1999 the Sub-Commission for Forestry (SCF) installed four speed breaks near the protected area entrance. These speed breaks are extremely successful. Since their installation, red colobus roadkills have decreased by 78-93%.

### **Research**

Since 1991 we have been studying the population and behavioral ecology of this species. Our overall goal is to collect data that can be used to assess the conservation status of and make management recommendation for the Zanzibar red colobus and the habitats in which they live. Specifically are goals are: monitoring the two largest populations of red colobus; collecting detailed data on red colobus habitat, demography and behavior; training the SCF staff in wildlife conservation management; and encouraging dialogue and action on conservation issues by the SCF.

### **Conservation**

Although revenue sharing is occurring, people around Jozani Forest Reserve do not seem to understand that the revenue is earned because of the presence of the red colobus. It is critical to the conservation of the red colobus that the local people understand this concept.

Furthermore, there are serious and damaging misconceptions concerning the density and movement of red colobus. It is the general opinion amongst villagers that the density of the Zanzibar red colobus is increasing and that this increase is due to red colobus leaving the forest. There definitely appears to have been an increase in colobus densities in the agricultural areas adjacent to the forest over the last few years. However, population structure indicates that this increase is not due to intrinsic growth but to habitat compression. As their habitat is being destroyed in other areas, the remaining red colobus are being compressed into smaller and smaller areas of suitable habitat. Groups are not leaving the forest. On the contrary, some agricultural groups are now spending approximately 50% of their time in the forest and along its regenerating edge. This regenerating edge appears to be extremely important for the red colobus and other wildlife such as duikers. These are the areas that should be added to the protected area and rehabilitated (see below).

If not counteracted these and other misconceptions could greatly impede the progress and success of conservation activities in Zanzibar.

Conservation education at the village level (of all age individuals) is the only solution. People from the villages that surround Jozani Forest Reserve and who receive revenue from tourism should be brought to see the red colobus. My four research assistants, as members of these communities, could be very useful as they are ideal ambassadors for the red colobus. They have many stories and observations to share with villagers about red colobus behavior, social life and the hardships that they face. My research assistants working with the SCF Education Officer may be able to improve villagers' appreciation of and empathy for the red colobus

### **Funding**

At present, funds are needed for the following: land acquisition, conservation education to develop empathy and to change attitudes in adults and school children, training for SCF staff in research and park management, and conservation research. Conservation research would include monitoring, surveys, and demographic and ecological studies of the red colobus, and monitoring of habitat quality, regeneration, and island wide loss of colobus habitat.

### **About PCI**

PCI is an all-volunteer, tax deductible private operating 501 (c) (3) foundation. Since our first grant in 1993 we have supported with full, partial, or renewal funding 159 projects in 25 countries with primate habitats. Projects in Asia have received 40% of our funding, African projects 31%, Madagascar 21%, and South America 8%. Grants have gone to study leaf monkeys (25%), apes (22%), lemurs (21%), cheek pouch monkeys (14%), prosimians (6%), new world monkeys (8%) and tarsiers (3%). For a complete list of grants please look at our web site.

In order to keep our overhead to a minimum, so that as much of the money raised is used to support field conservation projects, we only send one newsletter per year. This is our annual appeal for your donations. You will not receive other mail from us nor will we share your name with others. We appreciate your support.

If you would like to contribute cash, stock or real estate to PCI or would like more information on a specific project please contact me at the address below.

Sincerely,

Noel Rowe      Director—