



Greater Bamboo Lemur (*Prolemur simus*)
on its main food source giant bamboo
Photo by Peter Schlichting

Primate Conservation Inc. UPDATE

2008

Director's Report

The mission of Primate Conservation Inc. is to help get the next generation of primatologists and conservationists into the field to study and protect the least known and most endangered primates. Jane Goodall is one of the conservation leaders to whom we look for inspiration. PCI, with your support, has helped some of the current generation follow in Jane's foot steps.

Jill Pruetz was given a PCI grant in the fall of 1999 to make her first trip to Senegal to see if she could find chimps that lived in a dry savannah environment to study. You may have read about her in National Geographic magazine (February, 2008) or seen the chimps on Nova, public television's show called Ape Genius (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/apegenius/program.html> to download it free), She was successful and was given another small grant for the summer of 2004 to continue her research. In 2007, she published her observations that these chimpanzees fashion sticks into sharp pointed tools which they use to jab in the holes of trees to spear bushbabies to eat when food is scarce. Bushbabies are in the genus Galago and are kitten sized nocturnal primates that sleep during the day in these hideaways.

Jill's other amazing finding was that the chimps in the community she studies like to soak and play in pools of water that form in the rainy season when the temperatures reach 120 degrees. Chimps in all of the other communities studied, avoid water except to drink it and have never been seen to bath in it. The body mass of chimpanzees is different from humans in that they do not float and often drown if they get in water over their heads.

These fascinating findings about this culturally different community of chimpanzees might never have been known without your support of PCI which enabled us to support the start of Jill's project. **Please help us to help other dedicated researchers get to field for the first time** or continue their valiant efforts to study and protect primates.



Rachel and Peter with their expedition team in Madagascar.

News from the Field

Rachel Jacobs and Peter Schlichting "Assessment of the densities of *Prolemur simus* and giant bamboo at five sites in southeastern Madagascar" Granted \$3,800.00 in May, 2007.

The greater bamboo lemur, *Prolemur simus*, is one of Madagascar's most critically endangered species. Primate surveys have been conducted along the southeastern rainforests of Madagascar since 1986. During that time, only a handful of sites were found with populations of *P. simus*. The total population for this species was estimated to be as low as 60 individuals.

In the summer of 2007, with the support of Primate Conservation Inc., Primate Action Fund, Saint Louis Zoo's WildCare Institute, and in conjunction with the Centre ValBio at Ranomafana National Park, we conducted surveys at three sites known to have populations of this lemur 10 years ago. The greater bamboo lemur was only found at one of the three sites, Kianjavato, which is a highly disturbed coffee plantation, with a significant threat of hunting, which was confirmed when a juvenile lemur was found and released from a live trap. No sightings of lemurs or definitive signs of hunting were found at the latter two sites. Karianga, which at one time contained 26 individuals, had been entirely converted to a coffee plantation. Miaranony, the only site with undisturbed rainforest, had clear signs of hunting.

Fortunately, two new sites were found with this lemur. Three individuals were sighted at Morafeno, and a group of at least 17 individuals were observed at Mahasoa. Both of these populations inhabit coffee plantations that still have some natural bamboo forest. There was no sign of hunting at either site but both sites are highly disturbed and at risk of further land conversion for agricultural practices.

The situation of the largest of the three bamboo lemurs is desperate. Confirmed populations of the greater bamboo lemur in southeastern Madagascar are confined to isolated and disturbed bamboo patches. With additional threats of hunting and habitat loss, this lemur is at real risk of extinction in the next few years. Immediate conservation action is needed to prevent the loss of this little known and critically endangered species.



Francois's langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*) female and infant and a group in a tree. Photo by Gang Hu

Gang HU "Ecology and Conservation of Francois Langur in Mayanghe Nature Reserve, Northeast Guizhou, China" Granted \$3,500.00 in December, 2004.

From Jan. 05 to Jan. 06, this study, conducted at Mayanghe Nature Reserve focused on the behavioral response of Francois' langurs *Trachypithecus francoisi* in different habitats and how human disturbance has impacted their conservation. Three groups were studied in different habitats with daily follows and behavioral data gathered. Information about the local community was collected from on-site interviews and official records.

The main results of this study were: (1).Langurs at MNR have a broad diet, of 164 food species. This is the highest number of food plants of all studies of this genus. Leaves contributed 63.9% of feeding record, fruits and seeds contributed about 32.2%, while buds, flowers and others contributed only about 3.9%; (2). Langurs at MNR relied more on shrub, liana and herb species than on tree species for food. (3). There was a significant habitat effect, langurs in an undisturbed habitat consumed more species and had more staple species in their diet than those in a disturbed habitat, langurs at undisturbed habitat fed more young leaves, buds and flower, while langurs at disturbed habitat ate more mature leaves, fruits, seeds and herb roots; (4). Crop-raiding although usually very rare in Colobine species, was quite common and serious by Francois' langur and is likely due to the shortage of available food as a result of habitat degradation and food competition with

herds of goats. (5). Langurs at MNR had largest range size (77.75ha) and longer daily travel distance (887m) than in other sites.. Langurs living in the disturbed habitat had a much larger range size (110.75 ha) than langurs at undisturbed habitat (61.25ha).



Gang Hu giving his presentation at the local school

Conservation Problems: The mainly threats to the long term survival of the langurs at MNR are: (1) The habitat is being degraded by large-scale cultivation of tobacco. Currently over 20% of the buffer area of the Nature reserve is farmed (10,568 acres). Firewood collected from the reserve is the only source for cooking and heating for 90% of local families. Goats which will eat almost anything are loose in the reserve. Although tree cutting is totally forbidden at MNR, there is no enforcement against the cutting of small trees and shrubs. (2) Conflict with the local people due to raiding crops by langurs was quite common and serious but compensation has been paid out since 2005 on a limited scale. (3) Local people have little knowledge about the langurs and other wildlife and don't realize that their traditional activities have great impacts. I presented conservation lectures about the langurs with photos and video at one school. But more education about langurs and conservation is greatly needed for the next generation, as well as special training for the staff of Mayanghe Nature Reserve.

How to Support 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 or partial or renewal funding 340 projects in 28 countries with primate habitats. Projects in Asia have received 40% of our funding, African projects 32%, Madagascar 22%, and South America 6%.

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. 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.** Please do not forget about this as you will not receive other mail from us nor will we share your name with others. We appreciate your support and hope you will give generously to support one of these primate projects.

Sincerely,

Noel Rowe