



These two juvenile lesulas (*Cercopithecus lomamiensis*) live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This species was first described in 2012. Photo by Teresa Hart

# Primate Conservation Inc. UPDATE

2014

## Director's Report

Primate Conservation Inc.'s mission is to provide support for projects that study and protect the least-known and most endangered primates in their natural habitats. This is our 21st year of giving small grants and matching funds to help graduate students and conservationists. In our first 20 years we received almost 1,200 funding requests and we were able to award almost 600 grants to more the 400 people.

We used SurveyMonkey to see if PCI grants have had a discernible impact over the last 20 years. We received 154 responses. Of the 128 respondents who reported they were awarded grants, 26.5% said they couldn't have started their project without PCI funding, 41% stated that it helped keep them in the field longer, and 14% reported that the grant helped a habitat country student. Seventy-eight percent published the results of their project, 73% of the publications were in peer-reviewed journals, and 69% published more than one article from the data collected. Seventy-six respondents later received a master's degree or a doctorate. Eighty-three percent (125 respondents) are currently doing field research or will be doing field research in the next year. The majority of respondents (100) had a habitat country counterpart and 89% of counterparts are reported to be still active in conservation. Sixty-seven respondents now teach, and 58 teach at universities or graduate schools. A full report will be available at [www.primate.org](http://www.primate.org).

It is a great honor to all the people who have donated to PCI over the years to receive comments from respondents like the following: *"Funds from PCI were crucial for completing my pilot study that helped me become eligible for larger grants."* *"I firmly believe that the support of PCI has been one of the key factors to my success as a researcher in the field."* *"Even with small grants, a lot can be accomplished."* *"PCI is a wonderful resource with far-reaching impacts that go well beyond the*

*funds allocated to field projects. Thank you!"* We hope you will continue to support PCI.

If you haven't supported PCI yet, you can donate by credit card or PayPal at [www.alltheworldsprimates.org](http://www.alltheworldsprimates.org). Members are rewarded with well-referenced information and will enjoy the photos, videos, and audio recordings.

This update includes field reports from two recent PCI grantees.

**Steven McPhee, Pablo Ayali, John Hart, and Kate Detwiler:** A Camera Trap Study of the Cryptic, Terrestrial Guenon *Cercopithecus lomamiensis* in Central Democratic Republic of the Congo. \$3,100, Spring 2013



Steven McPhee on his way to the Yawende district. Photo by Pablo Ayali

In September 2013, in collaboration with the Lukuru Wildlife Research Foundation, I traveled to the Congo River Basin in Central Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. The goal of the research project was to gather information on the cryptic primate species called lesula (*Cercopithecus lomamiensis*) and to assess how bushmeat hunting is affecting this species. With the aid of 12 of the Lukuru Foundation's Congolese field staff members and project team leader Mr. Pablo Ayali, we were able to perform a four-month camera-trap study, vocalization survey, and transect census in a community conservation area surrounding the proposed Lomami National Park.

Moving people and equipment 350 km from the regional capital of Kisangani into the heart of the Congo River Basin was challenging. Pablo and I traveled by boat, and then three bumpy days on a motorcycle to reach the Yawende district, a small cluster of villages on the edge of the 9,000 km<sup>2</sup>, uninhabited forest block that comprises the proposed park. We traveled another 13 km on foot into the forest to set up camp on the banks of the Okulu River.

During the survey we documented lesulas, along with 15 other mammalian species, including honey badger, armadillo, mongoose, four cat species, and four duiker species. We used game cameras with video to capture the behavior and context of how these primates live. (The videos and other news are at [www.bonoboincongo.com](http://www.bonoboincongo.com).) We gathered new information about the lesula's diet, which includes fruit from the arrowroot family (Marantaceae), the young leaves of understory plants, and insects. Group sizes up to 11 individuals were recorded, as well as information on group composition, terrestriality, and species abundance. Despite a radical decline in all species in the study area due to hunting, we were able to establish that lesula populations, though hunted, are presently stable and comparable to populations in nonhunted forests. This is likely due to the lesula's shy, cryptic behavior.



A dead lesula killed by a bushmeat hunter. Photo by Teresa Hart

The Lukuru Foundation is working hard to establish this area as Lomami National Park. Thanks to funding from PCI, our research on lesulas will help conservation efforts.

**Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh:** Conservation Research to assess the Population Status, Distribution, and Prevalent Threats to the Critically Endangered Niger Delta Red Colobus Monkey (*Procolobus pennantii epieni*). \$3,800, January 2013



Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh in the Niger Delta. Photo by Perekebena Patrick.

The Niger Delta red colobus monkey (*Procolobus pennantii epieni*) is listed as one of 25 most endangered primates in the world. It occurs in what can be considered one of the modern world's most "challenging environments for conservation." The Niger Delta region of Nigeria contains large areas of mangrove and tropical swamp

forest where oil has been extracted for over 50 years. Lax environmental laws have led to large-scale environmental degradation from oil spills and civil violence directed against the government and oil companies over poor livelihoods and environmental conditions.

Almost 20 years have passed since *P. p. epieni* was first discovered, and my project was to understand the current state of the subspecies in order to determine its conservation needs. Our team was made up of field



A male Niger Delta red colobus. Photo by Noel Rowe

researchers originating from several of the local tribes of the Niger Delta. The team will hopefully help carry out conservation efforts in the future. We were advised by Dr. John Oates, one of the first scientists to draw attention to the presence of this rare monkey. With initial funding from PCI, we were able to commence research activities across the approximately 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> area where *P. p. epieni* is known to occur. Interviews and consultations were conducted in about 30 major local communities within the range of the subspecies while traversing the remnant forest patches to confirm its presence/absence and population status.

The results of our research are alarming. They indicate that the status of *P. p. epieni* is more precarious than previously thought. Our project is moving quickly to encourage the government and other relevant stakeholders to take crucial steps to conserve the remnant populations of this subspecies. In particular, we are pressing for the formulation of new laws that will make *P. p. epieni* a fully protected subspecies and the creation of two new protected areas within its distribution region, where significant populations still persist.

#### 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, partial, or renewal funding 500 projects in 28 countries with primate habitats. Projects in Asia have received 40% of our funding; Africa, 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. To keep our overhead to a minimum, so that as much as possible of the money raised is used to support field conservation projects, 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 help fund these vital primate projects.

Sincerely,