



Grey-shanked Douc *Pygathrix cinerea*

Primate Conservation Inc. UPDATE

2001

Director's Report

In 2001 PCI enters its 8th year providing grants to help study and protect the least known and most endangered primates. As Director, I would like to highlight some of the researchers, their projects, and conservation efforts. Although a majority of our grants are given to beginning graduate students, several of these students have finished their Ph.D. programs and are thus referred by the title they have earned.

Conservation is a long-term commitment. What these endangered primates most need is funding to provide extended support for ongoing projects that are their best hope for the survival. A commitment of 5 to 10 thousand dollars per year for 10 years would assure that conservation efforts would continue long enough to establish themselves. Though PCI has an important niche of getting researchers into the field to begin their work, we really feel the need to be able to help some projects over an extended period of time to provide effective conservation.

Viet Nam

Until November of this year the Tonkin snub nosed monkey, *Rhinopithecus avunculus* (first documented photographically by a Vietnamese and American survey in 1992) was thought to remain in only in two tiny forests comprising the Na Hang Nature Reserve in the far North of Viet Nam. But this year researchers who have received past support from PCI confirmed a second population in another remnant forest about 50 miles away from Na Hang. Conservation efforts are currently expanding, and this discovery gives the Tonkin monkey a little more hope of survival. However, threats continue. Hunting is still widely practiced and development schemes, including roads and a dam are planned in the area near the reserve.

One of PCI's first grants was to Lois Lippold Ph.D. for one of the first surveys for douc langurs in Viet Nam by a Western primatologist since the wars end. In the eight years since that grant was given, a new subspecies of douc langur *Pygathrix nemaus cincerus* was found, described and is the subject of an ongoing conservation

project by Dr. Lippold and Vietnamese researcher Vu Noc Thanh.

Indonesia

Sharon Gursky Ph.D. watched spectral tarsiers mob the python, joining together, lunging and retreating at a snake much larger than themselves. Mobbing was only one of the surprising behaviors Dr. Gursky, an early PCI grant recipient, observed as she followed tarsiers through the night to report their behavior. Once thought to be indifferent parents who left their infants alone for extended periods of time, Dr. Gursky found that tarsiers instead cache their infants nearby while they forage for insects and small vertebrates.

In another PCI supported project with tarsiers, Myron Shekelle began a genetic study to assist in the identification of new taxa. Results are expected in 2001. It will be exciting to learn what has been found by Myron and his colleagues about these faunivorous primates.

For the first time wild orangutans have been observed using tools. Beth Fox's grant to study orangutans in a lowland swamp in Sumatra helped to document these intelligent apes using sticks to both feed on social insects that have hidden nests in tree holes and to extract the meat from very hard shelled fruits.

PCI is proud to have helped Lisa Paculli begin and continue her long-term study and conservation project on the pig tailed langur *Simias concolor* in the Mentawai Islands off the island of Sumatra. As a result of her work with the government, illegal logging was halted in 1998 and a 600 hectare protected area was established. She was the subject of a recent article in *International Wildlife magazine* (June, 2000) which shows the destruction caused by logging this forest.

India

Prevented by local authorities from radio collaring the slender lorises in her study, dedicated PCI grantee Kimberly Nekaris followed these small, elusive and nocturnal primates with a flashlight on their nightly rounds. One of two projects in Southern India supported by PCI to study two different loris subspecies, Kimberly

found that slender lorises were not as solitary as previously presumed but are more social, often resting near one other and sleeping together during the day among dense vegetation.

Primates in India have been the subject of several other grants including an early PCI effort assisting the study of the ecology of lion tailed macaques by R. Kishnamurthi and a recent conservation project on golden langurs by Jihosus Biswas and Dilip Chetry to document how a 18 year reforestation project effects the ability of these endangered langurs to survive.

Madagascar

In 1992 it was very difficult to find the extremely rare bamboo lemurs in Ranamafana National Park but by 1998 guides could take you to whichever species you wanted to observe. This would never have happened without the work of Chia Tan and other dedicated researchers and field assistants that habituated these primates to humans. They followed these lemurs from sunup to sunset, upslope and down, often through wet forest. Chia's three-year study of the three bamboo lemurs in the Park has shown how three closely related species of different sizes share the same habitat. Though they all eat bamboo, they each concentrate on different bamboo species.



Greater bamboo lemur eating giant bamboo

The bamboo lemur study groups have become one of the main tourist attractions in the park. This helps conserve wildlife by bringing much needed cash to the park and the local community.

Only a year after PCI supported Malagasy native and Ph.D. candidate Jonah Ratsimbazafy began his research in Manombo Reserve, this rare remnant lowland rain forest on southern Madagascar's east coast was hit by one of the worst cyclones ever seen in the area. The winds were so strong that more than 80% of forest canopy was blown down. Jonah study



Jonah (second from the left) at Manombo

now includes observations to determine if lemurs, especially the black and white lemur *Varecia variegata variegata* can adapt to large scale natural habitat alteration. To date *Varecia* have only been found in pristine primary forest, because they rely on large fruit bearing trees, this study may well tell us if an endangered species living in a fairly large remnant forest can survive a single violent storm.

Humans have reduced the populations of many primates and forced them into ever smaller patches of forest where they become very susceptible to being wiped out by random natural events, introduced diseases, human hunting and other calamities. Whereas a larger population with a bigger intact forest could probably survive these problems.

PCI provided partial funding for studies of two subspecies of diadem sifaka. The all black sifaka *Propithecus diadema perrieri*, lives in the far North of Madagascar. The all white silky sifaka *P.d. candidus*, lives in the mountains of the Northeast. It is possible they are valid species not subspecies. PCI supported researcher Mireya Major will collect DNA samples of all the diadema subspecies to investigate their degree of genetic similarity.

Madagascar is the only home of lemurs. Little is known about many lemur species and subspecies. Little time is left to study these wonderful creatures in their natural habitat because of the rapid destruction of Madagascar's forests and wildlife. This is due to an increasing human population and widespread poverty.

Central and South America

Although PCI gives preference to projects in West Africa and Asia, support has been provided to research and conservation efforts in the Neotropics. In Bolivia Leila Porter studied Goeldi's marmoset *Calimico goeldi* and found that they eat a great deal of fungus during the dry season when other food is scarce. PCI funded her first project in 1997. Through her efforts her study site will become part of a new protected area, conserving this and thousands of other rain forest species.

Two recent projects in Brazil are still underway. One by Milene Martins is on the largest primate in South America the miqui *Brachyteles arachnoides* and the other by Beatrix Perez-Sweeney is a study of the diminutive and critically endangered black lion tamarin *Leontopitecus chrysopygus*.

Zanzibar

When Kristin Seix began her research in 1996 to study the Zanzibar red colobus *Procolobus pennanti kirki* she found this endangered primate was being killed by cars speeding through the park. Documenting the fatalities in her reports to the local authorities, she continued her conservation efforts until last year when an agreement was reached with the local community to place speed bumps in the road at the most common accident sites. Since these bumps were installed red colobus roadkills have decreased by 78-93%.

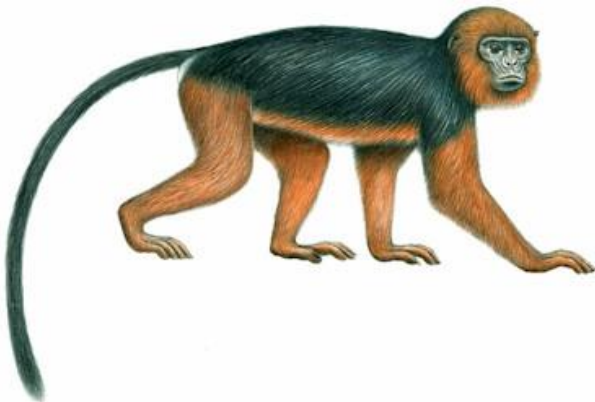
Central African Republic

PCI helped fund the first comparative study of the two genres *Cercocebus* and *Lophocebus* in the same forest. These two species were thought to be closely related and were included in one genus until 10 years ago. The gray cheeked mangabey *Lophocebus albigena* lives in the trees in small groups where as the agile mangabey *Cercocebus agilis* spends most of its time in a large troop on the ground. After almost three years of data collection Natasha Shah will soon publish her results which will help us to understand the ecological needs of these species.

Nigeria

In 1998 Rebecca Stump et. al. published a museum study of the skulls of gorillas found in Eastern Nigeria and Western Cameroon. They were found to be different enough from others to be declared a new subspecies, Gorilla gorilla dehlii. Kelly McFarland conducted the first study of this endangered population numbering approximately 200 individuals. PCI also funded Nigerian citizen Ernest Nwofoh to continue monitoring these gorillas and supported a DNA study to be conducted by Richard Beryl to determine how closely these gorillas are related to other members of their species. Without the efforts of these and other dedicated conservationist including Dr. John Oates, this population could have disappeared before we even knew it was different.

Ludwig Werre did an ecological study of a subspecies of red colobus in the Niger Delta. This taxon was only discovered and described in the 1990's. He has helped establish a community based protected area for this species.



Drawing of Miss Waldroni's Colobus by Stephen Nash

Ghana

The last hopes of finding Miss Waldron's red colobus ***Procolobus badius waldroni*** faded for Scott McGraw and Michael Abeti Lartey as they observed the litter of shotgun shells through the lowland swamp, a supposedly protected area where this loud and gregarious monkey was rumored to still survive. This, the last of four successive surveys which PCI helped fund, ended the search for Miss Waldron's red colobus, as each forest fragment within its range was found empty. Colobus are often the first to be shot out of the trees and thrown on a truck for the market in towns and cities as bushmeat. An article in the New York Times announced its end September 12th. It is the first primate to be declared extinct in the new millenium.

There is still hope for other endangered primate species and we must not let another one go extinct. With your support PCI will be able to continue to provide funds for conservationists and researchers dedicated to studying and protecting the least known and most endangered primates.

Republic of Congo

If gorillas exist in Northeastern Congo, they are 300 hundred of miles between the known range of the Western lowland gorilla *G. g. gorilla* and the Eastern lowland gorilla *G. beringei graueri*. PCI's most recent action fund grant is for a survey of this area. If they are found there, they may even be a subspecies new to science. This has happened once it could happen again with your support. There is so much more to learn about primates, and we must use this knowledge to protect them.

How to Support PCI

PCI is an all-volunteer, tax-deductible private operating 501(c)(3) foundation which has supported more than 700 projects in more than 30 countries with primate habitats throughout the world since 1993.

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,

