



Francois' langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*) in their limestone (karst) habitat Photo by Tilo Nadler

Primate Conservation Inc. UPDATE

2023

Director's Report

With COVID travel restrictions lifted, PCI grantees are able to travel to their study sites and run their conservation programs. This is good news for primates, which in many places in the world had little or no protection during the pandemic, when protected areas were closed and laws were not enforced.



This photo shows the still forested karst hill which is the habitat of the Francois' langur. The researchers had to navigate this steep and difficult terrain to search for this elusive endangered species.

Trần Văn Dũng and Ta Tuyet Nga: Population Status Of Francois' Langur (*Trachypithecus Francoisi*) In Than Sa – Phuong Hoang, And Huu Lien Nature Reserve, Vietnam National University of Forestry. \$4100.00 Fall 2021 Northern Vietnam.

In his report to PCI Tran Van Dung stated " o. In 2022, our project conducted field surveys on the endangered langurs in Than Sa - Phuong Hoang Nature Reserve (NR) and Huu Lien NR. According to information gathered from local communities, the Francois' langur still exists in both protected areas, but their population size may be very low. We identified two groups of langurs likely inhabiting Kim Son and Trung Thanh forests inside while Huu Lien NR is likely home to only one group. However, during our surveys (24 days in Than Sa - Phuong Hoang NR and 16 days in Huu Lien NR), we did not observe any direct signs of langurs or their sleeping

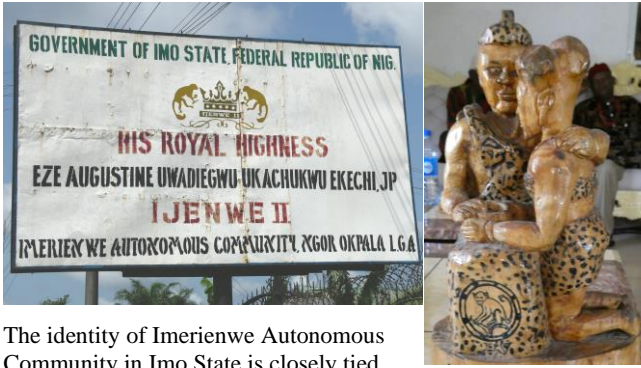
sites. The low density of langurs and the complicated topography in these areas may have contributed to our inability to observe them during the short surveys. We also identified illegal logging and hunting as the main threats to the langurs in both..."

These PCI grantees recommend: " To improve the effectiveness of langur conservation in Than Sa, it is necessary to increase both the quantity and quality of forest rangers. Law enforcement officials should receive training on the laws and regulations related to langur conservation. This training should include an understanding of the biology and behavior of langurs, as well as the methods used to identify and prevent illegal hunting and trade."

They further recommend: "The illegal logging and hunting need to be stopped immediately. Strong penalties and effective enforcement are necessary to deter illegal activities and ensure compliance with conservation laws... Effective cooperation between protected area management and local communities is crucial in encouraging the conservation of langurs and their habitat."



Illegal logging for construction materials is the major threat to the forest. Hunting of these diurnal monkeys is the primary threat to their survival in these protect areas. Photo by Trần Văn Dũng



The identity of Imerienwe Autonomous Community in Imo State is closely tied to monkeys, which are part of the origin folklore of the community and which feature in the logo of the traditional ruler. Imerienwe means those who “do not eat monkey.” All monkeys are said to be protected here, but monkeys are rarely observed, likely due to habitat destruction. (Photos: L.R. Baker)

Lynne Baker Status of Sacred Monkey Populations in Nigeria. Institute for Development, Ecology, Conservation, and Cooperation \$4600.00 Spring 2021

This project built on prior research on sacred monkeys in Nigeria’s southeastern region. We aimed to visit 25 sites, some of which were surveyed more than 15 years ago, to determine (or re-confirm) species present, status of primates, and the basis and status of local protection. We were able to visit 18 sites, excluding others mainly due to insecurity. Across the locations we surveyed, we recorded four primate species: Sclater’s monkey (*Cercopithecus sclateri*), mona monkey (*C. mona*), tantalus monkey (*Chlorocebus tantalus*), and patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*).

Local protection of monkeys varied across sites. For example, protection may be restricted to one species, a few villages in a community, or one kindred in a village. One key outcome of this study was the confirmation of two previously undocumented sacred populations of the Endangered Sclater’s monkey at Obeagu and Awgunta Autonomous Communities in Enugu State. At Obeagu, protection for *C. sclateri* reportedly occurs in two villages, and protection for *E. patas* is restricted to just one kindred. In Awgunta, we observed only *C. sclateri*, said to be strictly protected in one village.



Forest loss and degradation due to intentionally set fire and encroachment were evident at the Awkunanaw market sacred forest in Ihe Town, Awgu, Enugu State, shown in 2004 (left) and 2021 (right). We observed mona monkeys here in 2004 (≥ 11) and 2021 (< 5). Monkeys were said to be rare now. (Photos: L.R. Baker)

We were forced to avoid all three sites in Oru East Local Government Area given that kidnappings and

crime were reported. Other challenges included higher-than-expected costs, particularly for transportation and fuel and COVID testing requirements for travel.

Although most primates continued to receive local protection at the surveyed sites, in some cases local beliefs about primates were now weak, and the general natural environment was severely degraded at most sites. Sacred forest groves that persisted were usually small and surrounded by farms or buildings. Culturally protected monkeys in this region are thus forced to adapt to increasingly urbanized environments.

Given our findings, we are investigating a potential regional program aimed at the conservation of sacred species (not only primates) and forests across southeastern Nigeria. We have sought collaboration with others working in this region, such as the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, which has a program on



Camera-trap photo of a Sclater’s monkey crossing an artificial canopy bridge over a road in Akpugoeze, Nigeria. (Photos: L.R. Baker)

critically endangered vultures. We have developed the “Biocultural conservation in Southeastern Nigeria Working Group,” which first met in March 2022.

The largest sacred population of Sclater’s monkey occurs at Akpugoeze, Oji River LGA, Enugu State. Here, five artificial canopy bridges (ACBs) were constructed at key crossing points. ACBs help monkeys avoid dangerous electrical wires and vehicular traffic at this urbanizing site. Given a lack of suitable trees to use as support structures for the bridges, non-natural materials, including steel poles, cement bases, and marine-grade rope, were used. Because the ACBs were built around homes and other buildings, they were designed to be moveable in case of future changes in land ownership or use.

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Sincerely,