

Big-eyed Borneo slow loris tagged for first time

July 17 2011



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The researchers in Sabah state on [Borneo island](#) fitted a radio-collar on a recently caught slow loris -- a [protected species](#) that is threatened by the illegal pet trade -- to enable them to study its behaviour.

It will give scientists a valuable insight into the animal's habits, such as where it sleeps and how it hunts for insects, lizards and other prey, they said in a statement on Sunday.

"As little is known about the Bornean slow loris, particularly in Sabah, any information collected... through tracking through the forest will be important in understanding the species," Benoit Goossens, director of the Danau Girang Field Centre that is spearheading the study, said in the statement.

"With this study, we also hope to raise the awareness in Sabah on the importance of protecting nocturnal primates as much as protecting [orangutans](#), proboscis monkeys, sun bears and elephants," Goossens added.

Laurentius Ambu, director of the Sabah Wildlife Department, said the Bornean slow loris was the second most common [primate species](#) owned as pets in Asia, after macaques. They also face threats from the medicinal and ornamental trade.

"Although slow lorises are protected by law from international and commercial trade, the greatest growing threat to slow lorises is the illegal [pet trade](#)," Ambu said in the statement.

"Lorises face extremely high [mortality rates](#) in markets and transport of them, due to starvation, dehydration and infections from dental health injuries, as their teeth are removed to increase their sales," Ambu added.

Goossens said it was hard to estimate how many Bornean slow lorises,

which are indigenous to the island shared by Malaysia and Indonesia, were left in the wild.

He said no surveys had been conducted on the population but researchers hope they will be able to trap more slow lorises high up in the jungle canopy to fit them with collars.

"We hope that this can be a long-term study," he said.

Despite conservation efforts, poaching and logging threaten the survival of animal and plant species in Borneo's vast jungle, which is home to many endangered species, such as pygmy elephants and rhinos.

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Citation: Big-eyed Borneo slow loris tagged for first time (2011, July 17) retrieved 21 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-07-big-eyed-borneo-loris-tagged.html>

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