

Madagascar lemurs top endangered primates list

October 15 2012



Photo illustration of lemurs. In the hit cartoon film "Madagascar", the island's lemurs are a lovable bunch of extroverts, but they are also among the world's most threatened primates, conservationists warned on Monday.

In the hit cartoon film "Madagascar", the island's lemurs are a lovable bunch of extroverts, but they are also among the world's most threatened primates, conservationists warned on Monday.

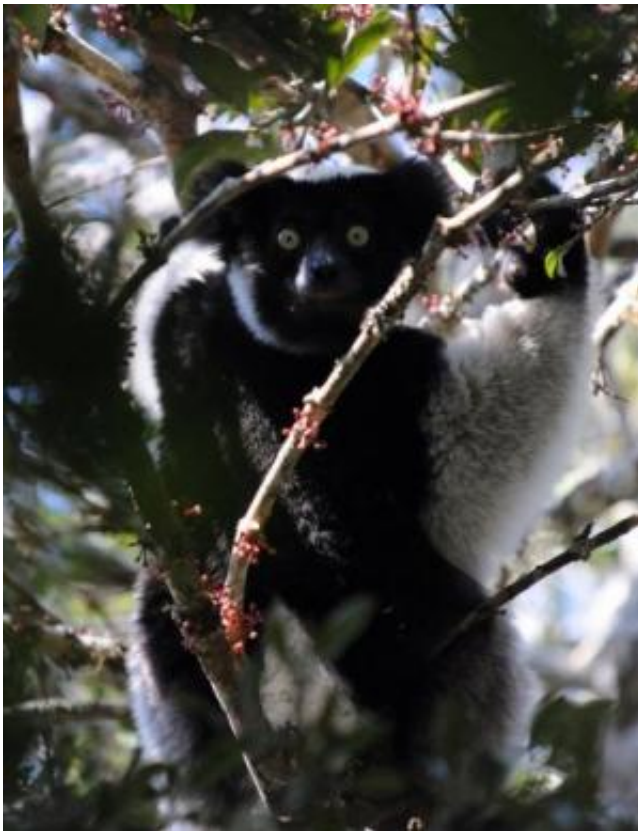
A report released at the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity

meeting in the Indian city of Hyderabad said lemurs in Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa, are severely endangered due to habitat destruction and illegal hunting.

"Primates in Peril" named the world's 25 most threatened primates, saying six of them were from Madagascar, five from Vietnam, three from Indonesia and two from Brazil.

"This report shows that the world's primates are under increasing threat from human activities," said Christoph Schwitzer, head of research at the Bristol Conservation and Science Foundation (BCSF).

"Whilst we haven't lost any primate species yet during this century, some of them are in very dire straits.



File photo of an Indri Indri Lemur in Madagascar. A report released at the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity meeting in the Indian city of Hyderabad said lemurs in Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa, are severely endangered due to habitat destruction and illegal hunting.

"The lemurs are now one of the world's most endangered groups of mammals, after more than three years of political crisis and a lack of effective enforcement in their home country, Madagascar."

The report, drawn up by the BCSF, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other experts, said primates were under pressure from destruction of forests, illegal wildlife trade and bushmeat hunting.

Madagascar's rarest lemur, the northern sportive lemur (*Lepilemur septentrionalis*), is now down to just 19 animals in the wild.

The country's government was overthrown in a coup in 2009, and the United States has denounced its failure to protect the furry lemurs, which gained fans worldwide through DreamWorks Animation's "Madagascar" movie series.

The IUCN, which compiles lists of endangered animals, said about 90 of the 103 lemur species and subspecies were threatened with extinction.

The report also highlighted the plight of the pygmy tarsier (*Tarsius pumilus*) of Indonesia, which was only known from museum specimens until 2008 when three were captured and one more was observed in the wild.

"Primates are our closest living relatives and... we continue to discover

new species every year since 2000," said Russell Mittermeier, chairman of the IUCN.

"Primate-watching is growing in interest and serving as a key source of livelihood in many local communities living around protected areas in which these species occur."

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: Madagascar lemurs top endangered primates list (2012, October 15) retrieved 11 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-primate-species-brink-extinction.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.