

# Rare monkey adapts to fragmented habitat by dieting and reducing activity

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Olalla's titi monkey switches to “alternative foods” and hunkers down in lean times. Credit: Jesus Martinez/WCS Bolivia

A team of scientists with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Oxford Brookes University found that a rare species of monkey in

Bolivia has adapted to living in a fragmented forest by dieting and moving less during lean times.

Publishing their results in the *International Journal of Primatology*, the [team](#) say that Olalla's titi monkey (*Plecturocebus olallae*), follows an energy–area minimizing strategy that may enable it to inhabit a forest-savanna landscape in the southwestern portion of the Llanos de Moxos—the largest wetland in the Amazon.

The team observed a shift in diet away from fruits during the dry season toward alternative foods such as seeds, lichens, and fungi. In addition, the monkeys reduced movement instead of expanding ranging behavior to look for fruits and other higher quality foods.

Nevertheless, the authors say that deforestation and further fragmentation in the range of these endemic and Critically Endangered primates must be addressed, as they represent significant threats to the severely range-restricted populations.

Rob Wallace, Director of WCS's Greater Madidi-Tambopata Landscape Program, and a co-author of the study says that "the study illustrates the relevance of understanding primate ecological flexibility in response to food reductions to the development of conservation actions, especially in the light of increasing forest degradation and loss in the study region."

In December 2021, WCS Bolivia won the National Biodiversity Science Prize for its work over the last two decades studying and developing conservation actions for the endemic titi monkeys in the Greater Madidi-Tambopata Landscape. In 2020, WCS began a second landscape-scale program in the Llanos de Moxos of Beni.

**More information:** Jesus Martinez et al, Seasonal Ecological Flexibility of a Threatened Bolivian Endemic: Olalla's Titi Monkey

(*Plecturocebus olallae*), *International Journal of Primatology* (2022).  
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