

# Lemurs the world's most threatened mammal: study

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Two red Madagascar lemurs, an endangered species, frolic in a daisy bed at Doué-la-Fontaine zoo in western France. Lemurs are the most endangered mammals on Earth, an International Union for Conservation of Nature conference found.

Lemurs, the furry apes brought to fame by the Disney animation film "Madagascar", are the most endangered mammals on Earth, an International Union for Conservation of Nature conference found.

An IUCN workshop met in Madagascar this week to discuss the world's 103 lemur species as conservation deteriorates amid political turmoil that has lasted three years.

"Madagascar has, by far, the highest proportion of threatened species of any primate habitat region or any one country in the world. As a result,

we now believe that lemurs are probably the most endangered of any group of vertebrates," said [primatologist](#) Christoph Schwitzer, one of the conference organisers.

Over 90 percent of the world's lemur species -- found only on the Indian Ocean island -- were upgraded to critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable on the IUCN's Threatened Species list.

The destruction of the primates' tropical [forest habitat](#) and an upsurge in bushmeat hunting have depleted lemur numbers since conservation efforts broke down after a coup in 2009, the body said in a statement late on Friday.

"Following this coup, there has been a serious breakdown of protective measures, with two key protected areas in northern Madagascar, Masoala National Park and Marojejy National Park, both of them part of a UNESCO complex of [World Heritage Sites](#)."

"Political uncertainty has increased poverty and accelerated illegal logging. Hunting of these animals has also emerged as a more serious threat than previously imagined," it found.

The bush meat trade also affected tortoises and other species.

Madagascar's lemurs represent 20 percent of all primates, concentrated in an area less than one percent of global land area where apes roam.

These include the world's smallest primate at 30 grams, Madame Berthe's [mouse lemur](#), and the blue-eyed black lemur, the only [ape species](#) with blue eyes besides humans -- both endangered.

Since 2000, 40 new lemur species have been discovered.

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