

Rare primate re-discovered in Borneo

An international team of scientists has found one of the rarest and least-known primates in Borneo, Miller's grizzled langur, a species believed to be extinct or on the verge of extinction.



Credit: Eric Fell

The team's findings, published in the [American Journal of Primatology](#), reveal the continued existence of this endangered monkey and shows that it also lives in an area where it was not previously known to exist.

Miller's grizzled langur (*Presbytis hosei canicrus*) is part of the small primate genus *Presbytis*, found across Borneo, Sumatra, Java and the Thai-Malay Peninsula.

In Borneo, the species is found only in the island's north-east corner where its habitat has suffered from human impacts such as fire and conversion of land for agriculture and mining.

The team travelled to Wehea Forest in East Kalimantan, a 38 000 ha area of mostly undisturbed rainforest, which contains at least nine known species of primate, including orangutan and gibbon.

'Discovery of *P.h canicrus* was a surprise since Wehea Forest lies outside of this monkey's known range,' says team member Brent Loken of Simon Fraser University, Canada.

Concern that the species may have gone extinct was first raised in 2004, and a search for the monkey during another expedition in 2008 supported the assertion that the situation was dire'.

The expedition team conducted observations at mineral licks where animals congregate and set up camera traps in various locations. The resulting photos provide the first solid evidence demonstrating that the geographic range of Miller's grizzled langur extends further than previously thought.

'The only description of Miller's grizzled langur came from museum specimens. Our photographs from Wehea are some of the only pictures we have of this monkey,' says Loken.

He points out that the remoteness of East Kalimantan's remaining forested areas explains why so little is known about this primate.

'I believe it is a race against time to protect many species in Borneo. It is difficult to adopt conservation strategies to protect species when we don't even know the extent of where they live.

'We need more scientists in the field working on understudied species such as Miller's grizzled langur, clouded leopards and sun bears.'

Source: American Journal of Primatology/Life Science News

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