

Executive Summary - African Primates: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan, Revised Edition

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This is a fully revised edition of the Action Plan for Primate Conservation, first published by the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group in 1986. The plan deals with the primates of continental Africa, excluding Madagascar.

Sixty-four species (15 prosimians, 46 monkeys and 3 apes) are recognized in the plan, which takes account of new taxonomic research.

A revised system is used to rate species for conservation action. Species are rated on a scale of 1-5 for the degree of threat they face, and either 1 or 2 points are added based on their taxonomic distinctiveness. The threat ratings are compatible with, but not identical to, new IUCN categories. Under this rating system, the drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*) is the highest-ranked species for action.

This plan gives more attention to threatened subspecies. Forty-three subspecies and distinct local populations are identified as deserving of special conservation attention and are prioritized for action. Of 12 subspecies with the highest rating, six are red colobus monkeys.

As in the previous plan, important sites for conservation action are identified based on the recognition of distinct regional communities. Eleven such communities are listed. Most of these are tropical forest communities with high levels of species richness and endemism.

The original plan listed 42 projects across 11 regional communities. These projects included both basic surveys and reserve management schemes. The new plan reviews what action has been taken on these projects in the last 10 years: some action has been taken on 38 projects, but in 10 cases this action has been interrupted by civil war or other political instability, a growing impediment to effective conservation in Africa.

Based on this project review, specific recommendations for further action are made. Twenty-four projects are identified as of very high priority, but in six of these cases political factors mitigate against immediate research or conservation efforts.

In addition to further action in previously identified areas, three new areas with endemic primates are recognized as requiring attention. These are southern Somalia, Benin, and the Niger Delta.

Given the large number of highly localized and threatened populations of red colobus monkeys, it is recommended that a Red Colobus Conservation Action Plan be prepared and implemented.