Langur conservation status in Lao PDR

Between 1992 and 1998, a systematic survey programme of protected areas in Laos documented internationally-endangered douc langurs (Pygathrix nemaeus) widely between 14° 25'N and 18°38'N. The species is unlikely to occur in Laos north of 0/20°. The survey, carried out by the World Conservation Society (WCS), obtained most sightings from evergreen or semi-evergreen forest and from a wide altitudinal range (200—1600 m). The largest population occurs over 3,000 km² of the Nam Theun basin and surroundings, encompassing the protected areas of Nakai-Nam Theun, Hin Namno and the proposed Nam Theun Extension. This is the most important population of red-shanked langurs in the world. Laos supports the vast majority of their conservable population. The WCS researchers said that douc langurs are threatened in Laos by habitat fragmentation increasing their vulnerability to the existing high hunting levels. The researchers recommended that protective measures should centre around implementing habitat conservation and anti-hunting measures in National Biodiversity Conservation Areas. A government initiative to reduce gun use in rural areas is likely to have a strong positive effect on the population. The best protection for some time will remain the inaccessibility of their habitat. Accordingly, the WCS team recommends, road-building into remote forest and piecemeal clearance at its edges should thus be minimised. Cross-border attention should be given to wildlife trading, including measures to reduce market demand.


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