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IUCN/SSC PRIMATE SPECIALIST GROUP TRIENNIAL REPORT 1994-1996

The Primate Specialist Group has had a very successful triennium, during which it consolidated the reorganization that began in 1992, started a new publication series, and saw a substantial increase in fundraising success. Some of the highlights of the past three years are briefly summarized here.

First of all, the group now numbers some 250 individuals from more than 30 countries. These are divided into four major geographic regions representing the principal areas in which nonhuman primates live: the Neotropical region, Africa, Asia and Madagascar. Given the large size and many activities of the group, the decision was

reached to undertake substantial decentralization during a meeting of the group at the International Primatological Society Congress in Strasbourg, August 1992. This restructuring has been underway for the past four years, and is now almost complete, with Vice-Chairs and regional newsletters in place in each region. Dr. Anthony Rylands from Brazil and Dr. Ernesto Rodríguez-Luna of Mexico are Co-Chairs of the Neotropical Section, Dr. Ardith Eudey chairs the Asian Section, Dr. Thomas Butynski of the Atlanta Zoo (and based in Nairobi) chairs the African Section, each producing newsletters for their respective regions. Dr. Jörg Ganzhorn of the German Primate Center, has taken over the editing of the newsletter for the Madagascar Section, *Lemur News*, and is considering taking over the Vice-Chair position of this section as well. Publication of *Asian Primates* has been underway since 1991, *Neotropical Primates* and *Lemur News* began in 1993, and *African Primates* was inaugurated in 1995.

In addition, after serious consideration of the role of our journal, *Primate Conservation*, which had been backlogged for several years, we decided that there was a continued role for this publication, and it was subsequently brought up to date with the production of three full issues in August, 1996. Editing of the journal has now been turned over to Dr. Anthony Rylands, and the next issue (No.17) is expected by the end of 1996.

The fourth of our PSG Action Plans was also produced during this period, this one being the updated version of the *Action Plan for African Primate Conservation: 1986-90*. The first African Action Plan, published in 1986, was the first of the SSC Action Plans in their modern form. Dr. John Oates wrote the original plan and prepared the updated 1996 version as well. A draft of a second action plan, *Mesoamerican Primates*, has been completed and should be published shortly. It has been prepared by Ernesto Rodríguez-Luna, Liliana Cortés-Ortiz, Russell Mittermeier and Anthony Rylands.

With support from Conservation International, we have also launched a new *Tropical Field Guide Series*, the first few of which will be dedicated to primates. The first volume, *Lemurs of Madagascar*, has already appeared, and other volumes are in preparation for primates of the Guianas, the Atlantic forest of eastern Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Vietnam, with an additional volume on marmosets and tamarins. The purpose of these books is to summarize available information in a ready-to-use format, with a particular eye towards ecotourism, the idea being to stimulate a tradition of life-listing and primate-watching comparable to that for birds.

The PSG also participated in the analysis of all primate species using the new Red List criteria, published in the

1996 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals (see *Neotropical Primates*, 3 (suppl.), 1995). The results of this analysis indicated that 95 out of 275 primate species fall into the critical, endangered and vulnerable categories. This is almost certainly an underestimate, given the fact that many animals were in the data deficient category, which, as information, becomes available, are likely to be added to the threatened list. Furthermore, the PSG undertook an analysis of primate status at the most basic taxon level (subspecies), since it rapidly became obvious that the species level was not adequate for fully understanding the conservation situation of the Order Primates. This analysis indicated that of the approximately 620 taxa of primates, fully 35 are in the critical category, 70 in the endangered category, and another 101 in the vulnerable category. Of particular concern are the 35 critically endangered species, which are literally on the verge of extinction. Although the Order Primates is the only large Order of mammals that has not lost a single taxon in this century, a record of which we are particularly proud, we may not be so fortunate in the next century. Indeed, it is possible that one subspecies, Miss Waldron's red colobus (*Procolobus badius waldroni*) from Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, may already have gone extinct. Clearly these critical primate taxa need very special attention from the primate conservation community.

The PSG also organized a two day symposium at the recent Congress of the International Primatological Society, held in Madison, Wisconsin in August, 1996 (see *Neotropical Primates*, 4(3), 1996, pp.89-90). This was the largest meeting of primatologists in history (1200 participants), and our symposium attracted a large audience. Its principal objectives were to provide a retrospective of what had been accomplished in primate conservation over the past two decades (particularly the activities of the PSG and Conservation Breeding Specialist Group - CBSG), and also a look at the future, focusing on the critically endangered. More than 35 scientists gave presentations in the symposium and there were more than 300 participants in this event, which also included a closing roundtable looking at possibilities for action in the 21st century. One of the conclusions was that we might consider an *Action Plan for the Critically Endangered*, to guide at least one portion of our activities over the next few years. Several areas of particular concern emerged, especially Vietnam, which has a large number of critical and endangered species, most of which are receiving little or no attention. Brazil, Madagascar, Indonesia, China and parts of West Africa emerged as major priorities once again, to no one's surprise. The issue of the bushmeat trade in Central Africa and its impact on primates was also raised and is clearly a major issue in primate conservation with which we will have to deal in the future.

At this meeting, we also announced the appointment of Anthony Rylands as Deputy Chairman of the PSG, replacing William Konstant who had served in that position for almost a decade.

Finally, we are pleased to announce the creation of two new foundations devoted specifically and exclusively to primate conservation. The first of these, the *Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation*, will provide several hundred thousand dollars per year for priority primate conservation projects. It is named after the late Margot Marsh, a great supporter and friend of conservation during her lifetime (see *Neotropical Primates* 4(2), 1996, pp.65-66). PSG Chair, Russell Mittermeier, serves as President of this new foundation. The other, entitled *Primate Conservation Inc.*, is headed by PSG member Noel Rowe, and will provide several tens of thousands of dollars for selected primate conservation projects (see *Neotropical Primates*, 3(1), p.23, and 3(3), p.91, 1995).

We look forward to continued growth during the next triennium, and to accompanying and participating in further efforts to maintain the diversity of the Order Primates.

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THE PRIMATE CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRASÍLIA

The Primate Center of the University of Brasília (CPUnB) was established over 20 years ago under the leadership of Prof. Milton Thiago de Mello and has played an important role in the development of primatology in Brazil. During this time, the CPUnB, working together with the Brazilian Primatological Society (SBPr), has promoted six specialization courses in Primatology, and hosted four SBPr congresses and the 1988 Congress of the International Primatological Society (IPS).

The CPUnB is currently in the process of being reorganized, with the construction and refurbishment of