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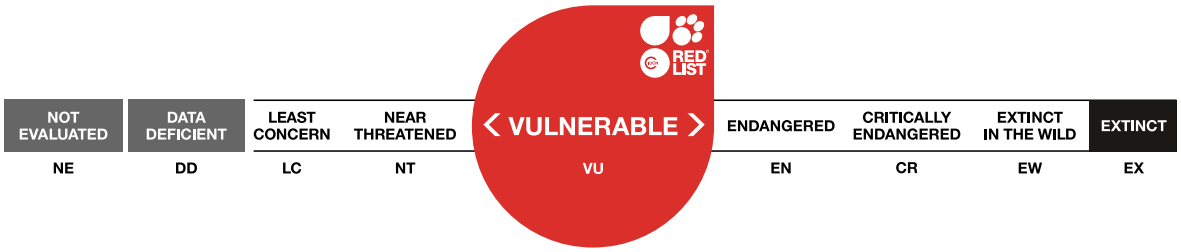
Semnopithecus priam ssp. thersites, Sri Lankan Grey Langur

Assessment by: Dittus, W.



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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Primates	Cercopithecidae

Scientific Name: *Semnopithecus priam ssp. thersites* (Blyth, 1847)

Synonym(s):

- *Pithecus entellus* ssp. *thersites* (Phillips, 1935)
- *Presbytis entellus* ssp. *thersites* (Blyth, 1847)
- *Presbytis thersites* (Kelaart, 1852)
- *Presytis priamus* (Keelart, 1812)
- *Presytis thersites* (Pocock, 1939)

Parent Species: See *Semnopithecus priam*

Common Name(s):

- English: Sri Lankan Grey Langur, Grey Langur (southern), Hanuman Langur of Sri Lanka
- French: Houleman Langur, Langur gris
- German: Hanuman Langur, Hulman Langur
- Sinhala; Sinhalese: Alu Vandura, Konda Vandera
- Tamil: Mandhi Kurangu, Saambal Kurangur

Taxonomic Notes:

The generic designation, *Semnopithecus,* was taken from Brandon-Jones 2004, and is supported by recent genetic studies (Karanth 2010, Osterholz *et al.* 2008). The Sri Lankan S*. p. thersites* is isolated from its conspecifics on the Indian subcontinent by the Indian Ocean (Palk Straight), thus justifying its subspecies status (Dittus 2013). Depending on taxonomic interpretation and future studies the Sri Lankan subspecies might be considered as an independent species. The population estimated here is only for Sri Lanka.

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Vulnerable A2cd+3cd ver 3.1

Year Published: 2020

Date Assessed: November 23, 2015

Justification:

Loss of habitat has exceed 50% over the last 2 generations, and new development projects continue to threaten the habitat. Therefore, the population is inferred to continue to decline into the future. This is especially acute since the end of the war and subsequent opening of the north to habitat conversion for economic reasons; post-war, the northern dry zone forest habitat has been reduced by at least 15% (Mattsson *et al.* 2012) and is expected to decline further. An additional threat to population size concerns poisoning, due to this animal's status as an agricultural pest, in addition to hunting for commercial purposes near southern protected areas (e.g., Yala Ruhunu National Park); hunting for subsistence has occurred historically throughout its range. *S. p. thersites* occupies approximately the

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same geographical area and has similar EOO and AOO as the mostly sympatric *Macaca sinica sinica*, and therefore faces similar threats. Compared to *M. s. sinica*, however, *S. p. thersites* can survive in drier habitats (Ripley and Schikel, 1970) and occurs at 2-10 times greater population densities. Therefore, whereas *M. s. sinica* is assessed as Endangered, *S. p. thersites* is assessed as Vulnerable due to past and predicted declines of over 30% in the past 36 years (3 generations). This rate of decline is expected to continue over the next 36 years.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Endangered (EN)
https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T39841A10275793.en

2000 – Vulnerable (VU)

Geographic Range

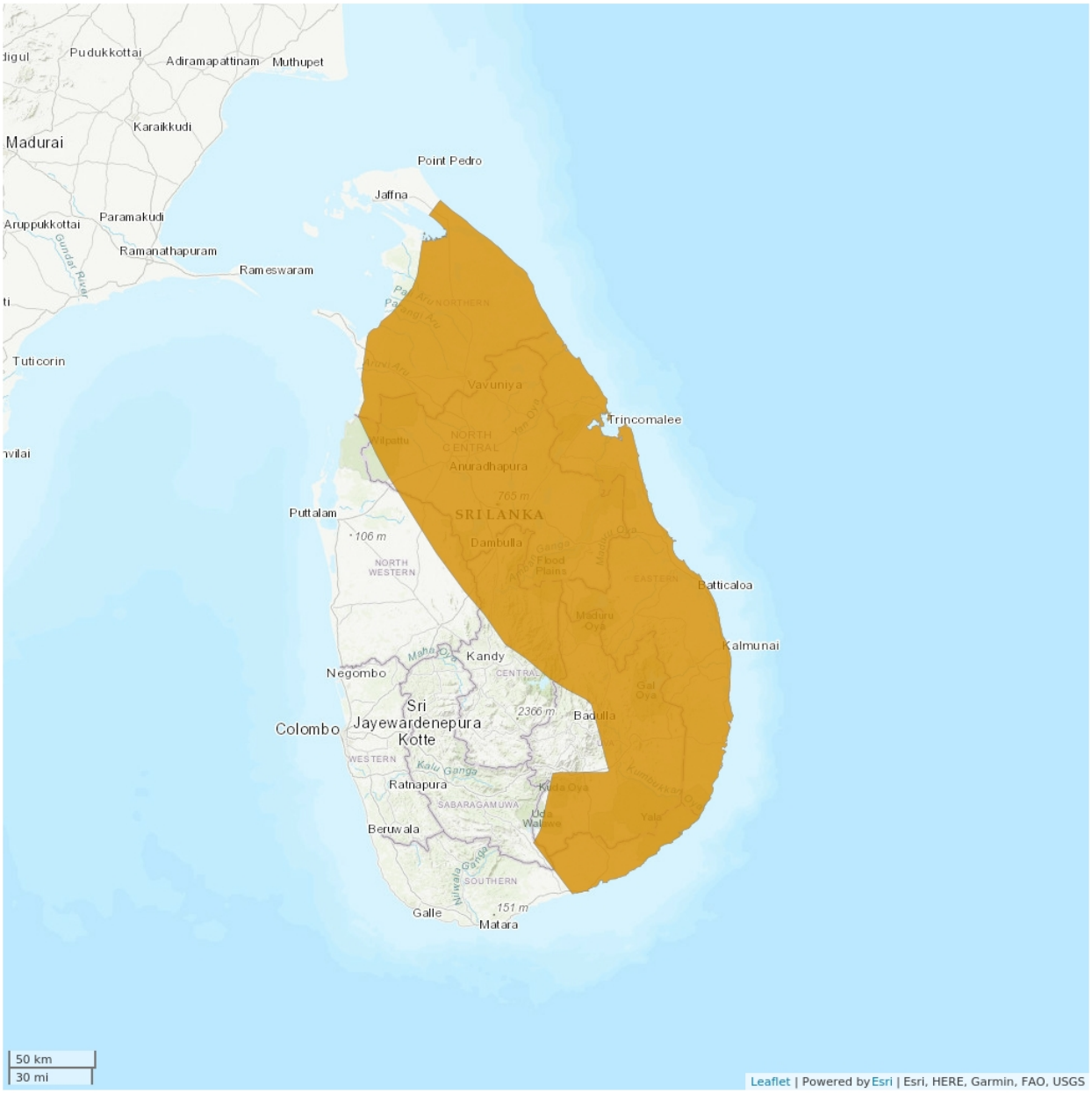
Range Description:

S. p. thersites is restricted to Sri Lanka, in the northern dry zone.

Country Occurrence:

Native, Extant (resident): Sri Lanka

Distribution Map



Legend

EXTANT (RESIDENT)

Compiled by:

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) 2020

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.

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Population

The population size is unknown. There has been a drastic decline in habitat (>50% in the last 30 years; Molur *et al*. 2003, A. Nekaris pers. comm.). The population is suspected to have declined by more than 30% in 36 years and, due to continuing threats such as habitat loss, persecution and hunting due to negative interactions with humans, the decline is suspected to continue at the same rate into the next 3 generations. It lives in social uni-male and multi-male social groups of usually 10 to 25 animals, but may number up to 60 (Ripley 1970, W. Dittus pers. comm.).

Current Population Trend: Decreasing

Habitat and Ecology **(see Appendix for additional information)**

The Sri Lankan Grey Langur inhabits the northern, eastern and southern dry zone evergreen forests of Sri Lanka, from Jaffna in the north to Matara in the southern tip of the island, at up to 350 m elevation. It is found also in the drier eastern regions of the intermediate zone but is absent from the wet zone. It prefers open forest near permanent sources of water. It is arboreal, as well as terrestrial, and uses a bounding gait for terrestrial locomotion (Ripley 1967, Grand 1976). Its diet is folivorous, favouring young leaves and green fruit (Ripley 1970, Hladik and Hladik 1972, Vandercone *et al*., 2012). It lives in social uni-male and multi-male social groups of usually 10 to 25 animals, but may number up to 60 (Ripley 1970, W. Dittus pers. comm.). It can adapt its diet to some human crops and, therefore, is persecuted as a pest.

Systems: Terrestrial

Use and Trade

The species is hunted for food.

Threats **(see Appendix for additional information)**

Semnopithecus priam thersites in Sri Lanka is considered an agricultural pest and people intentionally poison crop raiding langurs; vehicle traffic also kills them (Nahallange *et al.* 2008; Unanthanna and Wickramasinghe 2010). These threats are unchanged since the last CAMP assessments in 2003 (Molur *et al.* 2003). Hunting is an ancient tradition for subsistence in Sri Lanka, however, it is has now intensified, and is being practised commercially near Protected Areas (e.g. Yala - Ruhuna NP) and elsewhere. Demand for bush meat comes from local and foreign tourists and their agents. The species is not protected by Sri Lankan wildlife ordinances and people are therefore at liberty to kill them. Fortunately, cultural traditions dampen this impulse for most Sri Lankans.

Conservation Actions **(see Appendix for additional information)**

Crop raiding by primates, including the Sri Lankan Grey Langur, can be minimized by engaging professionally trained crop guardians. Commercial hunting might be curbed through awareness education, including of tourists and their agents. The feeding of langurs by pilgrims and tourists corrupts langur behaviour into raiding pests, and this practice should be banned. The encroachment by humans into protected areas, the felling of trees for timber and firewood needs to be prevented. It would also be

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beneficial for this species to be protected by Sri Lankan wildlife ordinances.

This species is listed on CITES Appendix I, but it is excluded from protection by Sri Lankan law (Flora and Fauna Protection [Amendment] Act, no. 22 of 2009). Recent Red List reviews by the Sri Lankan government (independent of the IUCN) assessed the species as “Least Concern” (MOE 2012).

Semnopithecus priam thersites occurs in the following protected areas: Menikdene Archaeological Reserve, Ritigala Strict Natural Reserve, Ampara Sanctuary, Sigiriya Sanctuary, NIFS Popham Arboretum, VRR Sanctuary, Wasgamuwa NP, Angammedilla NP, Hurulu FR , Kaudulla NP, Minneriya NP, Somawathiya NP, Flood Plains NP, Maduru Oya NP, Gal Oya NP, Wilpattu NP, Yala (Ruhunu) NP, Kumana (Yala East) NP, Bundala NP, Lunugamvehera NP, Lahugala Kitulaga NP, Udawalawe NP, Polonnaruwa Nature Sanctuary, Kanthale Naval Sanctuary, Remmalakanda FR, Randenigala Sanctuary, Mihintale Sanctuary, Kantalai FR, Elahera FR, Baddaragala Sanctuary, and Kaludiyapokuna FR.

Credits

Assessor(s): Dittus, W.

Reviewer(s): Molur, S. & Mittermeier, R.A.

Contributor(s): Nag, C.

Authority/Authorities: IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group

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External Resources

For Supplementary Material, and for Images and External Links to Additional Information, please see the Red List website.

Appendix

Habitats
(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
1. Forest -> 1.5. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	-

Use and Trade
(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

End Use	Local	National	International
Food - human	No	Yes	Yes

Threats
(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
1. Residential & commercial development -> 1.1. Housing & urban areas	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, significant declines	Medium impact: 6
1. Residential & commercial development -> 1.3. Tourism & recreation areas	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Slow, significant declines	Low impact: 5
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.1. Annual & perennial non-timber crops -> 2.1.2. Small-holder farming	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, significant declines	Medium impact: 6
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.2. Wood & pulp plantations -> 2.2.1. Small-holder plantations	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, significant declines	Medium impact: 6
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.2. Wood & pulp plantations -> 2.2.2. Agro-industry plantations	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, significant declines	Medium impact: 6
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.1. Intentional use (species is the target)	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, significant declines	Medium impact: 6
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.3. Persecution/control	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, significant declines	Medium impact: 6

Conservation Actions in Place
(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Action in Place
In-place research and monitoring

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Conservation Action in Place
Action Recovery Plan: No
Systematic monitoring scheme: No
In-place land/water protection
Conservation sites identified: No
Area based regional management plan: No
Occurs in at least one protected area: Yes
Invasive species control or prevention: Not Applicable
In-place species management
Harvest management plan: No
Successfully reintroduced or introduced benignly: No
Subject to ex-situ conservation: No
In-place education
Subject to recent education and awareness programmes: No
Included in international legislation: Yes
Subject to any international management / trade controls: Yes

Conservation Actions Needed

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Action Needed
3. Species management -> 3.1. Species management -> 3.1.1. Harvest management
3. Species management -> 3.2. Species recovery
3. Species management -> 3.4. Ex-situ conservation -> 3.4.1. Captive breeding/artificial propagation
4. Education & awareness -> 4.3. Awareness & communications

Research Needed

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Research Needed
1. Research -> 1.4. Harvest, use & livelihoods
1. Research -> 1.5. Threats
2. Conservation Planning -> 2.1. Species Action/Recovery Plan
3. Monitoring -> 3.1. Population trends

Research Needed
3. Monitoring -> 3.4. Habitat trends

Additional Data Fields

Distribution
Estimated area of occupancy (AOO) (km²): 9700
Estimated extent of occurrence (EOO) (km²): 43600
Lower elevation limit (m): 0
Upper elevation limit (m): 500
Population
Population severely fragmented: Yes
Habitats and Ecology
Continuing decline in area, extent and/or quality of habitat: Yes
Generation Length (years): 12

The IUCN Red List Partnership

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is produced and managed by the IUCN Global Species Programme, the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and The IUCN Red List Partnership.

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