

Preliminary information on the Current Status of the Yellow-Tailed Woolly Monkey (*Oreonax flavicauda*) at Yambrasbamba, Peru

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Abstract

The yellow-tailed woolly monkey (*Oreonax flavicauda*) is classified as critically endangered (IUCN 2006) and is listed by the IUCN Primate Specialist Group as one of the top 25 most endangered primate species in the world (PSG 2006). Its distribution is restricted to the Tropical Andes Biodiversity Hotspot. Between March and June 2007 we conducted a preliminary survey of *O. flavicauda* in Amazonas and San Martin states, Peru. Forest fragments which are part of the distribution range of *O. flavicauda* were surveyed and secondary data on current habitat threats was collected using semi-structured interviews.

Since the last field survey of this species (Leo-Luna 1980) the area has undergone high levels of deforestation and many populations of the species now exist in isolated forest patches. The preliminary results of this pilot study suggest that the area of Yambrasbamba is one of the last remaining forest refuges for *O. flavicauda* and, considering the species habitat requirements, represents a critical area for its survival.

On Yambrasbamba's lands we encountered a large area of intact habitat where *O. flavicauda* still persist. The area lies between the Alto Mayo Protected Forest and the proposed Cordillera de Colan Reserved Zone, forming a natural corridor.

The main threats facing *O. flavicauda* are the continued immigration of people from the highlands and associated habitat destruction. The main income sources for the local inhabitants are timber extraction, followed by clear cutting for cattle ranching and commercial coffee cultivation. Soils are poor and susceptible to erosion requiring further encroachment into forested areas. Other threats include mining and road construction and subsistence hunting by neighbouring indigenous groups. Owing to the paucity of protection and updated information on the conservation status *O. flavicauda*, we recommend immediate protection of this area alongside the implementation of alternative income strategies and a sustained public awareness campaign.