

Announcing the ASP Conservation Action Network (CAN)

**Scientific Activism to Protect the World's Primates and their
Environments from Extinction**

The Time to Act is Now!



Endangered Francois or black langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*) from Guizhou Province, China. The remaining world's population is estimated at <2000 individuals. Photo courtesy of Paul A. Garber

Why we created ASP-CAN

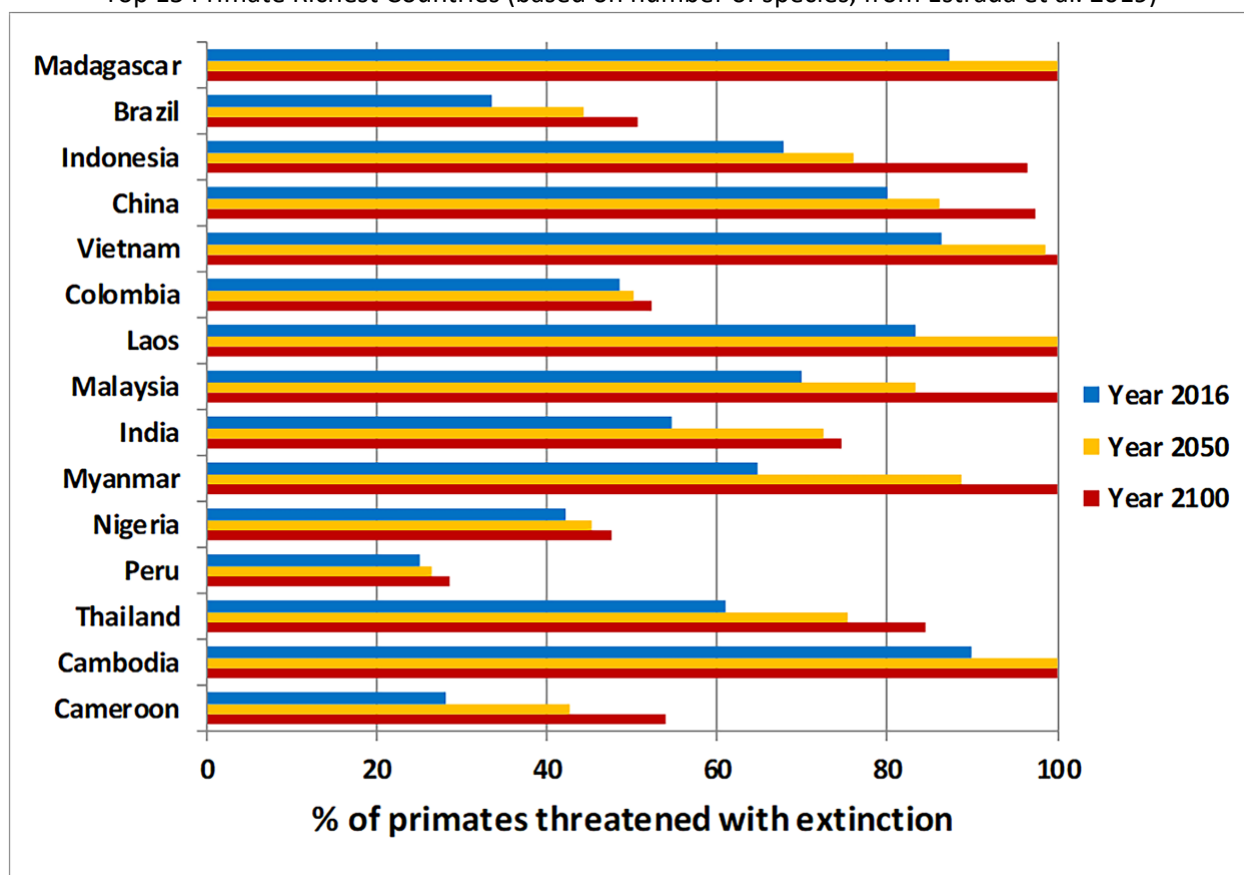
Paul A. Garber and Francine L. Dolins

Nonhuman primates and their habitats are facing an unprecedented and impending extinction crisis. A recent review (Estrada et al. 2017) found that 60% of primate species are listed as Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered and some 75% of primate populations are declining. Most of the destruction to primates and their habitats has occurred over the past 50

years. Projections concerning the primate extinction crisis indicate that unless immediate action is taken:

- By the end of the century almost 70% of the area currently occupied by primates will be converted for industrial agriculture (Estrada et al. 2017).
- Unsustainable consumer demands by a small number of affluent nations (US, China, India, Japan, and EU countries) for forest-risk commodities such as soy, palm oil, natural rubber, beef, fossil fuels, metals, minerals, and gemstones is expected to result in **80-100% of primate species in 9 of the 15 primate richest countries in the world** (based on number of species) **threatened with extinction or effectively extinct by the year 2100** (Estrada et al. 2019).

Top 15 Primate Richest Countries (based on number of species, from Estrada et al. 2019)



- 180 Mha of tropical forest, an area roughly equivalent to the combined size of Spain, France, Germany, and the UK, has been lost between 2001 and 2017

- Alarming, the four primate-richest countries: Brazil, Madagascar, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which combined account for some 65% of all primate species, experienced the greatest loss of tree cover in 2017 (Global Forest Watch.Org).

Top 10 Tropical Countries for
Tree Cover Loss in 2017



WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

- Global trade in agriculture and nonagricultural forest risk commodities produced in primate range countries has increased to US \$1.1 trillion in 2016, **nevertheless, the citizens of primate habitat countries lag far behind** importer nations in food security, access to clean water and health care, and economic well-being.
- Global trade and commodity-driven land-use have done little to generate wealth and well-being for the majority of citizens in primate habitat countries

Clearly, the time to act is now.

A shared goal among primatologists who work with captive and/or wild primates is to protect the world's primate species and populations. **We are the experts** and, as one of the world's leading primatological societies, **there are many positive steps** that we, the membership of the American Society of Primatologists, can take individually and collectively to promote primate conservation and environmental justice.

To this end the American Society of Primatologists approved the creation of the [Conservation Action Network \(CAN\)](#), a new subcommittee of the Conservation Committee whose primary goals include:

- to educate the ASP membership in ways of advocating for primate conservation in their classroom, university, research institution, local community, on social media, and with the local and national press, and political leaders;
- to provide the most up-to-date scientific information and conservation action plans to ASP members, global citizens, business leaders, and politicians;
- to help ASP members organize and work collectively and effectively to promote scientific activism;
- to solicit crowd funds and raise awareness for ASP sponsored conservation projects;
- to make recommendations to the ASP Board of Directors to advocate through official letters or statements (press releases) to the media, international corporations, government agencies, conservation organizations, scientific societies, the United Nations, and other relevant institutions in the name of ASP, in support of measures/policies to protect primates and their habitats; and,
- to organize local events during the ASP meetings to promote/educate the public regarding issues of primate conservation.

The ASP Conservation Action Network (ASP-CAN) subcommittee is co-chaired by Francine L. Dolins and Paul A. Garber. Other subcommittee members include Michelle Bezanson, Sylvia Atsalis, Stacey Tecot, Erik Patel, Anne Russon, Anne Savage, and Marilyn Norconk.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

[Follow the links on these three important conservation issues:](#)

1. **Tapanuli orangutan** (*Pongo tapanuliensis*); The world's remaining population of fewer than 800 Tapanuli orangutans are threatened by the proposed construction of a hydrodam



<http://alert-conservation.org/issues-research-highlights/2019/12/10/imperiled-ape-dam-companys-use-of-local-wisdom-reeks-of-greenwashing>
<https://www.iucn.org/news/secretariat/201904/iucn-calls-a-moratorium-projects-impacting-critically-endangered-tapanuli-orangutan>
<http://alert-conservation.org/issues-research-highlights/2019/9/3/dirty-tricks-behind-conservation-u-turn-for-worlds-rarest-ape>)

TAKE ACTION: ASP can join with the IUCN and the Union of Concerned Scientists and call for a moratorium of infrastructure projects that threaten the habitat and survivorship of Tapanuli orangutan and provide expertise for the development of a Conservation Action Plan to save this Critically Endangered species.

2. **Cotton-top tamarins** (*Saguinus oedipus*). Cotton-top tamarins are endemic to Colombia and are listed as Critically Endangered. Major threats include deforestation and capture for the pet trade. For over 30 years, Proyecto Titi, a multidisciplinary nonprofit conservation organization that has worked successfully to integrate behavioral observation, conservation management, education, and local community programs to inspire a new generation of conservation leaders and protect these primates.



TAKE ACTION: Visit the Proyecto Titi website to learn more about the what you can do to support cotton-top tamarin conservation.

<https://www.proyectotiti.com/en-us/>

3. **Carbon Footprint:** Since 1988 the contribution of fossil fuels to carbon emissions has doubled. Fossil fuels are the largest source of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, with 25 corporate and state producing entities account for 51% of global industrial GHG emissions. A list of these companies can be found on Page 8, Figure 4 of the CDP Carbon Majors Report 2017 written by P. Griffith (listed in the references below). These companies include ExxonMobil, Shell, BP and Chevron.

<https://insideclimatenews.org/content/Exxon-The-Road-Not-Taken>

<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jul/10/100-fossil-fuel-companies-investors-responsible-71-global-emissions-cdp-study-climate-change>

TAKE ACTION: Contact your local, city, and state political leaders and demand that they use their power to require these companies to reduce carbon emissions by installing effective carbon, capture, utilization and storage technologies (CCUS). Write directly to these companies expressing your concern over their emissions production. Many of these companies are public companies and you can divest if you have invested assets in these companies.

ANNOUNCING: ASP Conservation Action Network Workshop at ASP May 2020

To introduce the ASP membership to the Conservation Action Network and create a forum for exchanging ideas, concerns, and actions, Paul Garber¹, Francine Dolins, Sylvia Atsalis, Marilyn Norconk, and Michelle Bezanson have organized a workshop at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists in Denver (May 28-31, 2020) on *Scientific Activism: Exploring the goals and responsibilities of the New ASP subcommittee on Conservation Action*. We invite everyone to attend and will provide additional details in future communications.

Join and Support ASP-CAN

We encourage interested ASP members to join the ASP Conservation Action Network (ASP-CAN) subcommittee and/or provide subcommittee members with information to share with the ASP membership by emailing Paul Garber (p-garber@illinois.edu)

Select publications highlighting the primate extinction crisis and scientific activism:

Bezanson, M. F., & McNamara, A. (2019). The what and where of primate field research may be failing primate conservation. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 28:166-178. <https://doi.org/10.1002/evan.21790>

Estrada, A., Garber, P. A., & Chaudhary, A. (2019). Expanding global commodities trade and consumption place the world's primates at risk of extinction. *PeerJ*, 7, 1–45. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.7068>. e7068.

Estrada, A., Garber, P. A., Mittermeier, R. A., Wich, S., Gouveia, S., Dobrovolski, R., ... Setiawan, A. (2018). Primates in peril: The significance of Brazil, Madagascar, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for global primate conservation. *PeerJ*, 6, 1–57. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.4869>

Estrada, A., Garber, P. A., Rylands, A. B., Roos, C., Fernandez-Duque, E., Di Fiore, A., ...Li, B. (2017). Impending extinction crisis of the world's primates: Why primates matter. *Science Advances*, 3, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1600946>. e1600946.

Garber, P.A. (2019). Distinguished primatologist address—moving from advocacy to activism: Changing views of primate field research and conservation over the past 40 years. *American Journal of Primatology* DOI: 10.1002/ajp.23052

Gardner, C. J. and Wordley, C. F. R. (2019) Scientists must act on our own warnings to humanity. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 3 (9). pp. 1271-1272. ISSN 2397-334X.

Gardner, C.J, Struebig, MJ, Davies, Z.G. (2020). Conservation must capitalize on climate's moment. *Nature Communications*. (2020) 11:109 | <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-13964-y>

Griffin, P. 2017. [CDP Carbon Majors Report 2017](#). CDP Worldwide. London, United Kingdom.

Horwich, R. H., Das, R., & Bose, A. (2013). Conservation and the Current Status of the Golden Langur in Assam, India, with Reference to Bhutan. *Primate Conservation*, 27, 77–83. <https://doi.org/10.1896/052>. 027.0104

Li, B.-G., Li, M., Li, J., Fan, P., Ni, Q., Lu, J., & Garber, P. A. (2018). The primate extinction crisis in China: Immediate challenges and a way forward. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 27, 3301–3327. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-018-1614-y>

Nunn, C. L., & Gillespie, T. R. (2016). Infectious disease and primate conservation. In S. A. Wich, & A. J. Marshall (Eds.), *An introduction to primate conservation* (pp. 157–173). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Zhang, L., Ameca, E. I., Cowlshaw, G., Pettoelli, N., Foden, W., & Mace, G. M. (2019). Global assessment of primate vulnerability to extreme climatic events. *Nature climate. Nature Climate Change*, 554–561. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-019-0508-7>