

## Conservation of the only poisonous primates, the Javan slow loris (*Nycticebus javanicus*), on West Java, Indonesia



*Little Fireface  
Project*

E. Johanna Rode  
eva.rode-2011@brookes.ac.uk

OXFORD  
**BROOKES**  
UNIVERSITY

Nocturnal Primate Research Group  
Department of Anthropology and Geography  
School of Social Sciences and Law  
Oxford Brookes University  
Headington Campus, Gypsy Lane  
Oxford OX3 0BP, United Kingdom

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Wild Javan slow loris in Cipaganti (Photo:  
Andrew Walmsley)

Slow lorises inhabit South and Southeast Asia and are globally threatened, with the Javan slow loris (*Nycticebus javanicus*) soon being up-listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and considered one of the Top 25 Most Endangered Primates in the World. Apart from habitat loss, trade for pets and traditional medicine is the main threat for slow lorises. In Indonesia, lorises are highly valued as pets, and wild populations are decimated for trade.

With our newly established conservation project “Little Fireface Project” (LFP) we follow an interdisciplinary approach of combining behaviour and ecology research, forest and market surveys, education and awareness on local and international levels, capacity building and communication to authorities and conservation organisations. Specific aims of the project supported by PSGB were (1) to investigate the effect of habitat accessibility on slow loris presence, (2) to do forest and habitat surveys to assess distribution and habitat requirements and (3) to do market surveys to assess the extent and characteristics of trade in slow lorises and other wildlife species. Along with these aims we put a lot of emphasis on capacity building by employing and training local rangers and training local and international students.

The field station of LFP is situated in the village Cipaganti, near Garut in West Java. We conducted interviews with local farmers and an ex-hunter of lorises to tackle the first aim, while we analysed the market surveys qualitatively. For the third aim we visited 14 protected and unprotected sites throughout Java, recorded slow loris absence/presence and collected environmental variables. We modelled the habitat suitability based on species presence and showed the potential distribution of the Javan Slow Loris using maximum entropy (MAXENT 3.3.3. k). We investigated the habitat



Habitat assessment by our local tracker  
(Photo: Wawan Tarniwan)

preferences and levels of disturbance using General Linear Mixed Models (GLMM) in R (Version 2.14.1).

First results showed that lorises occur in unprotected agriculture areas and are easily caught by local farmers. We revealed that the trade in slow lorises as pets is huge and reached 108 slow lorises during only 5 market visits in Jakarta. We encountered slow lorises from the westernmost tip to the easternmost tip of Java. Most significantly, we found them occurring in Meru Betiri National Park, officially extending the entire geographic range of the Javan slow loris for the first time to the very dry forests of East Java. While density is low in protected areas, it is surprisingly high in unprotected farmland, especially in several regions in West Java. We show that the threat the pet trade poses on lorises is still very serious and animals are easily caught in agriculture areas in West Java. This result also suggests that the protected area network in Java does not seem to be effective for Javan slow lorises. Conservation projects thus have to focus on community conservation activities as the local people and farmers are the ones who are eventually the people who can save the Javan slow loris. Finally, the amount of bamboo on transects in survey areas had a significant effect on slow loris presence.



*Nycticebus coucang* in a wildlife market in Jakarta (Photo: Johanna Rode)



Our local education officer giving a school presentation (Photo: Johanna Rode)

Along with the research, we have on-going education and awareness activities for local people and the international audience by giving presentations, distributing awareness material, visiting schools and using social networking like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. We constantly communicate results to different authorities and conservation organisations. Finally, we have trained local guides and numerous local and international students who volunteer, do internships or conduct their final university projects with LFP.



The infant of one of our radio-collared female Javan slow lorises (Photo: Wawan Tarniwan)