

# ASP Conservation Action Network (CAN)

## Endangered Red Colobus Monkeys



Endangered *Piliocolobus temminckii* from The Gambia

Fellow Primatologists:

In light of the extinction crisis facing the world's primates, the American Society of Primatology has formed the **ASP Conservation Action Network (ASP-CAN)**. This action letter was authored by Christy Wolovich ([cwolovich@flsouthern.edu](mailto:cwolovich@flsouthern.edu)) and Jennifer Cramer ([jdanzycramer@gmail.com](mailto:jdanzycramer@gmail.com)).

### Researchers Join Forces to Conserve Red Colobus

There are 18 taxa of red colobus monkeys (*Piliocolobus* spp.) in Africa, all of which are threatened with extinction, with more than half listed as Endangered or Critically Endangered.. Hunting, habitat loss and habitat degradation are the primary threats to their survival. To address this species and population collapse, a **Red Colobus Conservation Action Plan (ReCAP)** was initially proposed by the IUCN Primate Specialist Group in collaboration with the African Primatological Society and successfully adopted in 2018 by a consortium of research scientists at the International Primatological Society (IPS) Congress in Nairobi, Kenya.

The **Red Colobus Conservation Action Plan** aims to achieve the following objectives: 1) Improve site-based conservation of all 18 taxa of red colobus monkeys; 2) Take actions to elevate red colobus to flagship species across their range; 3) Establish continent-wide initiatives to facilitate collaboration (e.g. standardized protocols; a range-wide genomic database, create proper management to oversee administration, implementation and evaluation of funds and

activities); and 4) Build capacity through training and mentoring programs, especially for African professionals committed to red colobus conservation.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2019/12/action-plan-for-red-colobus/>

**The Red Colobus Conservation Network** was created to facilitate the implementation of the ReCAP. The network is a web-based community of volunteers and researchers, as well as local, national, and international organizations and government institutions dedicated to conserving the Red Colobus across their range and to drawing attention to their plight.

Go to: [Redcolobusnetwork.org](http://Redcolobusnetwork.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/RedColobusCN/>

Twitter: @RedColobusCN

The website provides a series of discussion forums related to current research, grants and funding, monitoring and evaluation, a blog supported by member achievement, and general information and the action plan itself. The working group members (Russell Mittermeier, Inza Kone, Aghomo Florence, Bill Konstant, Rachel Ikemeh, Deo Kujirakwinja, Stanislaus Kivai, Tim Devenport, Barney Long, Joshua Linder, Drew Cronin, Scott McGraw and Nelson Ting) are featured along with a clear framework for the network's organization in relation to the **Red Colobus Conservation Action Plan**. The *News & Stories* section provides links to relevant Facebook and Twitter feeds, and an Archive section allows for file-sharing among members.

The successful implementation of the **Red Colobus Conservation Action Plan** and the *Red Colobus Conservation Network* is a result of extensive cooperation of red colobus and conservation experts from various countries around the world working together. Currently, there are over 152 members.

## Implementing the Red Colobus Action Plan in The Gambia, West Africa

### *Initiating a Collaborative Conservation Effort*

In 2019, Jennifer Cramer partnered with the Gambian Department of Parks and Wildlife Management to organize and host a Temminck's red colobus (**TRC**) conference. Using virtual conferencing tools, they were able to bring together a set of distinguished international speakers, including Mic Mayhew, Christy Wolovich, and Josh Linder and held a live discussion focusing on **TRC** conservation sites and priorities with local stakeholders. In addition, research findings from these collaborators form the basis of an paper (in press) on the **Communities for Red Colobus (C4RC) project** (see below). Knowing the conservation challenges that Temminck's red colobus face, a collaborative approach that grows and supports locally-led conservation efforts is key.

[Jennifer Cramer and participants at the TRC conference in the Gambia.](#)



***Communities for Red Colobus (C4RC), The Gambia***

A collaborative effort was successfully established among local wildlife rangers, a project manager and Gambian and International partners that aims to implement the **ReCAP** for the benefit of local Gambian communities. The initial 3-year project includes funding to monitor and conduct research on red colobus populations in the Sambel Kunda area and the Pirang Community forest, as well as to develop woodlots and tree nurseries, promote community education and engagement, and to champion Temminck’s red colobus as a flagship species.  
<https://www.facebook.com/C4RCproject/> @CR4Cproject

***Engaging Gambian Youth to Promote Conservation of Red Colobus***

In December 2018, students from Florida Southern College travelled to The Gambia to learn about West African biodiversity, and to share their knowledge of conservation biology with Gambian youth. Under the direction of Christy Wolovich, the undergraduate students used interactive games to demonstrate how primates are impacted by deforestation and to suggest ways to mitigate human-wildlife conflict (e.g. crop raiding). During a visit to Dumbuto, over 75 children, their teachers and parents participated in these activities. Afterward, the college students donated shoes, school supplies and small toys to the village.



FSC students use art to explain the use of beehives and live fences as alternative ways to prevent crop raiding.



FSC students engage Gambian children in a fun game to help explain the negative consequences of deforestation and the benefits of replanting trees.

Follow-up discussions with the local wildlife officials indicated the need for additional conservation education materials. A GoFundMe® site has been set up to accept donations for publishing a children’s book about red colobus conservation (see ***Take Action*** section below).

**Camera traps reveal red colobus in South Sudan**

Researchers are currently trying to determine if images captured on camera-traps in a remote forest in South Sudan represent a population of Oustalet's (*Piliocolobus oustaleti*) or Semliki red colobus monkeys (*Piliocolobus semlikiensis*). In either case, the finding is exciting as it either means that Oustalet’s red colobus is not yet extinct from its extreme northeast range or that Semliki red colobus extends well beyond its formerly accepted geographical range.

<https://phys.org/news/2020-02-mystery-monkey-rare-red-colobus.html>

## TAKE ACTION

- Join the Red Colobus Network to stay informed about red colobus conservation and to review the upcoming IUCN red colobus action plan.  
<https://www.redcolobusnetwork.org/>
- Check out the upcoming publication regarding Temminck's red colobus monkeys in The Gambia. [http://www.primate-sg.org/primate\\_conservation/](http://www.primate-sg.org/primate_conservation/)
- Support the following collaborative efforts that aim to inform people about the plight of red colobus monkeys and ways to help conserve them.

*Partners 4 Red Colobus*

<https://www.facebook.com/Partners4redcolobus/videos/1279736532182413/@Partners4redcolobus>

Communities for Red Colobus

<https://www.facebook.com/C4RCproject/@CR4Cproject>

- Make a contribution to help publish children's books to be donated to schools and libraries in The Gambia. Each book includes:
  - Beautiful photos of the Temminck's red colobus
  - Information about their biology, ecology and behavior
  - Suggestions for sustainable, forms of local income
  - Conservation-related questions to guide teachers and students in meaningful discussion
  - Fun activities that encourage excitement about red colobus monkeys

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/conservation-book-for-gambian-children?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=copy link-tip&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cp+share-sheet](https://www.gofundme.com/f/conservation-book-for-gambian-children?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link-tip&utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet)