



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Singapore's banded leaf monkey is "Close to Man. Closer to Extinction."

The banded leaf monkey subspecies that is native to Singapore may just be the country's best kept secret — so well kept that most are unaware that fewer than 40 of these monkeys are left.

Rapid development in Singapore over the past 40 years has led to the loss of their habitat. Up to the 1920s, sightings of these black monkeys were common from Changi to Tuas. Today, the endangered monkey population is confined to the Central Catchment Nature Reserve.

To raise awareness of the plight of the banded leaf monkeys, seven students from Roots & Shoots Youth United at the National University of Singapore (NUS) organised Singapore's first primate conservation campaign, "Close to Man. Closer to Extinction." The title represents the endangered wildlife once frequently sighted in the region, especially the banded leaf monkey.

NUS undergraduate, Nadya Huang, 22, who leads the campaign team, is alarmed by how dire the situation is.

"The fact that there are fewer than 40 banded leaf monkeys left is a symbol of how quickly we are losing Singapore's rich biodiversity," Huang said.

Dr. Jane Goodall, world-renowned primatologist and founder of the Jane Goodall Institute, believes that the degradation of biodiversity leaves negative impacts on health, wealth and most importantly the ecosystems which sustain lives.

"Biodiversity must be preserved if we are to ensure the health and long-term survival of the forest itself, because the countless life forms found there are interdependent in ways we do not yet fully understand," Goodall said at the 2010 Cancun climate change summit.

The campaign will benefit the non-profit Jane Goodall Institute Singapore. JGIS is the first Southeast Asian branch of the institute, an international leader in primate conservation and research. JGIS supports researchers such as Andie Ang of NUS, who studies the banded leaf monkeys.

The banded leaf monkey is one of only three species of non-human primates native to Singapore. The other two primates, which are also critically endangered, are the *Sunda slow loris* and the long-tailed macaques. People can help save these monkeys through research and donations.

"We can't go into the forest ourselves to help them repopulate, but with the combined efforts of our support to facilitate JGIS in this, we can achieve a lot," Huang said.

As part of the campaign, a special event on March 15, with an educational exhibition on the banded leaf monkeys, will introduce the legacy of Dr. Jane Goodall and her commitment to sustainable living. The event, which will also showcase environmental and community projects by another Roots & Shoots chapter in Singapore, will be held at the NUS Science Foyer.

The campaign is supported by Wildlife Reserves Singapore, Tom's Palette, Pink Elephant Labs, Cathay Cineplex and the National Youth Council.

MORE



Roots & Shoots Youth United is the NUS chapter of the international Roots & Shoots organization, also founded by Goodall to encourage youth action in projects to help animals, the environment and people.

For information about the campaign, contact Huang at _____.

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