

# New Locality for the Yellow-tailed Woolly Monkey

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**The authors found a small number of yellow-tailed woolly monkeys in a part of Peru 200 kilometres from where in 1974 the species was 'rediscovered' (having been believed extinct). As the area is also the home of a number of endemic Peruvian birds, they suggest it may have been a refugium in the late Pleistocene and should be both protected and explored for other possible undescribed species.**

In October 1979, while studying some of the birds and small mammals of the cloud forest in the eastern part of La Libertad Department in northern Peru, we came across a group of seven yellow-tailed woolly monkeys *Lagothrix flavicauda*. We saw them six times between October 4 and November 10 along the mule trail between Tayabamba and Ongón. The group consisted of a dominant male, one female carrying a small juvenile on her back, and four that were either females or sub-adult males. They moved about in the forest canopy – 16-20m (52-70ft) above ground – on a steep slope between 2400 and 2500m (7800-8100ft) and spent much of their time feeding on buds of the dominant tree species, a *Clusia* sp. (Guttiferae), which has large shiny oval leaves and yellow flowers. They also fed on the fruits of a tree of the Melastomataceae (possibly a *Miconia* sp.), and were once observed pulling apart dry, curled *Clusia* leaves. They were quite tame and on one occasion we were able to observe and tape-record them from within 30m for more than an hour. Local hunters know them as *ginebras* and kill them for food. However, few people have guns in this remote region, and the monkeys and other large mammals are still found surprisingly close to human settlements.

This record extends the known range of the monkey southward some 200km from the Departments of Amazonas and San Martín, and its known

distribution now coincides with the ranges of a number of little-known endemic Peruvian birds, such as the toucanet *Aulacorhynchus huallagae*, the ovenbird *Thripophaga berlepschi*, the antpitta *Grallaria przewalskii*, and two recently discovered and as yet undescribed species of Formicariid. This suggests that in the late Pleistocene montane forests in this part of the Peruvian Andes served as a refugium where subsequent speciation has occurred.<sup>2</sup> If so, then other undescribed vertebrates may to be found there, as well as many invertebrates and plants, and we recommend that a forest reserve be created, preferably between 1200 and 3800m. At present vast areas of forested land on the eastern slope of the Eastern Cordillera, from northern Amazonas to Huánuco, remain uninhabited. Even in long-settled valleys, such as that of Ongón-Utcubamba, there has been little forest clearing above 1800m. Protection of montane habitats in this part of the Andes is urgently needed.

A potential site for a forest reserve is in the Department of San Martín, north-east of Pataz. Here the Peruvian Government could create a park which would both save the cloud forests and adjacent habitats and protect the magnificent pre-Inca ruins of Pajatén.

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### References

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### Tigers and Leopards in Russia's Far East

David Prynns sends the following additional material on the status of the Siberian tiger in Chinese territory (see *Oryx*, December 1980, page 496): About 150 tigers survive in the mountains of north-east China. In the last decade they have become extinct in the Greater Khingan range, but in the Lesser Khingan range and the Changbai mountains reserves have been established to protect them. The information comes from *China Reconstructs*, December 1980, pages 62-63.

The photo of the Siberian tiger in the December 1980 *Oryx* was by Louis Bagge.

### Galapagos Turtle Recoveries

The first long-distance recoveries of male turtles anywhere in the world were two green turtles *Chelonia mydas* tagged in the Galapagos Islands – proof that male turtles do migrate. Altogether 21 Galapagos-tagged green turtles have been recovered outside the islands: in Costa Rica (3), Panama (4), Colombia (1), Ecuador mainland (4) and Peru (9).