

Primates of Sri Lanka

Charmalie AD Nahallage and Michael A Huffman

University of Sri Jayawardenepura and Primate Research Institute, Kyoto University

Sri Lanka has five primate species, the toque macaque (*Macaca sinica*) representing three sub species, the purple-faced langur (*Tracypithecus vetulus*), with four sub species, gray langur (*Semnopithecus priam*), and two species of slender loris: *Loris tardigradus*) and *Loris lydekkerianus*. These species inhabit varying ecological habitats throughout the country. *M.s.sinica* is distributed throughout lowland dry, arid and intermediate zones of the country. They have lighter body and tail color with relatively short crown hair compared to *M.s.aurifrons* whose fur is dark brown/red with a black tail. It is confined to the lowland and midland wet zones. *M.s.opistomelas* is found in the highest mountain plateaus above 1500m and are lighter in body and tail color than then the others. They have the largest body size and longest crown hair of them all. *T.v.vetulas* and *T.v. nestor* are found in the lowland wet zone and have a white rump patch. They are smaller in body size compared to *T.v.monticola* that is found in the highland. This sub-species does not have a rump patch and has longer body fur and cheek hairs. The dry zone *T.v.philbriki* has a larger body size compared to the wet zone sub-species and has no white rump patch. *Semnopithecus priam* is distributed mainly in the northern and southern lowland dry zones and has no clear-cut morphological regional differences, other than a more whitish fur color in the southern dry zone. Of the two loris species, the Hortain Plains slender loris (*Loris tardigradus nycticeboides*) is distributed in tropical montane rainforests between 1650 – 2000m. The red slender loris (*Loris tardigradus tardigradus*) can be found in the wet zone lowland forests up to 700m. The dry zone slender loris (*Loris lydekkerianus nordicus*) has the widest distribution and can be seen in the tropical dry evergreen forests up to 350m. The highland slender loris (*Loris lydekkerianus grandis*) is distributed in the tropical hill forests up to 600-1200m. Except for the grey langur all of the primates species of Sri Lanka are endemic to the island.