

Wide-eyed primate caught on camera for the first time

鏡頭首次捕捉到大眼靈長類



A “cute” primate so rare it was thought to be extinct has been caught on camera in the forests of Sri Lanka for the first time, scientists said Monday.

The Horton Plains slender loris is a small, **nocturnal** animal which can grow up to 17cm long with big, bulging eyes.

Endemic to Sri Lanka, it was first discovered in 1937 but had only been seen four times since then.

Scientists last caught a glimpse of the primate in 2002, and believed the **elusive** animal had since died out.

But field researchers, working with the Zoological Society of London, managed to track down the mysterious creature in the forests of central Sri Lanka.

In a world first, they were able to take pictures of an adult male slender loris sitting on a tree branch.

The field team was able to capture one of the creatures and give it a physical examination, the first time that has ever been done, before releasing it back into the wild.

But experts warned that **deforestation** in Sri Lanka — largely blamed on the drive to create tea **plantations** in the region — was now the biggest threat to the loris.

Craig Turner, a conservation biologist at the ZSL, said their natural forest habitat had been divided up for farming and logging use, cutting off the “very cute” animals from their partners.

“The forest has now been fragmented into a series of small islands,” Turner told BBC radio.

“They can’t move to one another, they can’t mate, breed, so it has real implications for the future persistence of the species.” (AFP)

科學家星期一表示，一隻原本稀有到大家以為絕種的「可愛」靈長類，最近在斯里蘭卡的森林裡第一次被鏡頭拍到。

霍頓平原懶猴是種體型嬌小的夜行性動物，有著又大又凸的雙眼，身長最長可達十七公分。

這種動物是斯里蘭卡特有種，於一九三七年首次被發現，自那之後只被看見四次。

科學家最近一次看到霍頓平原懶猴是在二〇〇二年，他們相信從那時起，這種難以捉摸的動物已經絕種。

不過倫敦動物學會的野外研究員卻在斯里蘭卡中部的森林裡，成功追蹤到這神秘動物的蹤跡。

他們是世界第一個拍到坐在樹枝上的成年公懶猴的研究團隊。

他們還史無前例地抓到一隻懶猴，幫牠做完全身檢查後再放回大自然。

但是專家們警告，斯里蘭卡砍伐森林——多半是為了在該區種植茶葉——如今已成為懶猴的最大威脅。

倫敦動物學會的保育生物學家克來格·透納表示，牠們的自然居住環境被農作區與伐木區分割開來，這些「很可愛」的動物因此被迫與同伴分離。

透納向英國廣播電臺表示：「森林現在已被切割成許多一小塊一小塊的小島。」

「牠們無法移到他處，也無法交配、生育，因此這對此物種未來的存續有絕對性的影響。」

(法新社/翻譯：吳岱璟)

An undated handout image provided by the Zoological Society of London on July 16, 2010 showing the rare Horton Plains slender loris (*Loris tardigradus nycticeboides*), in an image taken in the montane forests of central Sri Lanka.

PHOTO: EPA/ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

倫敦動物學會七月十六日提供的這張未註明拍攝日期的照片中，是在斯里蘭卡中部山林裡拍到的稀有霍頓平原懶猴。

照片：歐新社 / 倫敦動物學院

TODAY'S WORDS

今日單字

1. nocturnal /nɒk'tɜːnl/ adj.

夜間活動的 (ye4 jian1 huo2 dong4 de5)

例：This is great place to spot nocturnal wildlife.

(這是個觀看夜行性野生動物的絕佳位置。)

2. elusive /ɪ'lusɪv/ adj.

難以解釋的 (nan2 yi2 jie3 shi4 de5)

例：A solution to high unemployment has been elusive.

(還找不到解決高失業率的對策。)

3. deforestation /,dɪfɔːrɪ'steɪʃən/ n.

砍伐森林 (kan3 fa2 sen1 lin2)

例：The government plans to reduce deforestation by 50% within 10 years.

(政府打算在十年之內減少百分之五十的伐木。)

4. plantation /plæn'teɪʃən/ n.

耕地 (geng1 di4)

例：The investors were given a tour of a banana plantation.

(投資者被帶著逛了香蕉園一圈。)