

Golden Monkey: Fact Sheet

Kinyarwanda name:	Inkima
Scientific name:	<i>Cercopithecus mitis kandti</i>
Size:	Approximately 48 to 67 centimeters (males), 46 to 53 centimeters (females)
Weight:	Approximately 4.5 to 7 kilograms up to 12 kilograms (males), 3.5 to 4.5 kilograms (females)
Lifespan:	Up to approximately 19 years
Habitat:	Afromontane and bamboo forests: Virunga Volcanoes (DRC, Rwanda and Uganda) and the afromontane forests of Gishwati Forest Reserve and Nyungwe National Park Rwanda.
Diet:	Omnivorous
Gestation:	5 months (140 days)
Predators:	Mainly humans, dogs, crowned eagles
Status:	Endangered



The Golden Monkey is a subspecies of the Blue monkey (or Sykes monkey). As a result of continuous divisions of forests, *Cercopithecus* species were isolated in different regions and therefore forced to adapt to these regions. The golden monkey is said to have diverged from *Cercopithecus mitis* during these isolation events (it is one of 8 subspecies of *Cercopithecus mitis*), and is now endangered. Because it has been seldom studied, little is known about the golden monkey, its behavior and ecology.

Physical Characteristics

Golden monkey males have a reddish color on their back and on the dorsal part of their sides as well as some grizzled darker patches. Females are lighter in color and have less grizzled brown patches.

Behavior

Golden monkeys live in groups of between 30-80 individuals, usually led by one adult male. The female defends her territory, while males stay for a certain period of time after which they leave the group. These males are in the position to copulate with every female in the group; however it is the females that solicit the males. These monkeys use a series of different calls to express themselves. Males use calls to communicate territoriality and fighting, females to display group cohesion, and alertness, and subadults to display submissiveness, and to stimulate mobbing behavior. They also communicate using visual expressions.

Diet

Golden monkeys eat about 20 to 30 plant species. They mostly rely on leaves, fruits, and invertebrates, but their main preference is bamboo.

Caring for the Young

Golden Monkeys breed seasonally and have a gestation period of 5 months. They give birth to a single offspring that is born with all its fur and with its eyes open. The female eats the placenta, and then cleans the baby by licking it. After the first few months, the female nurses the offspring less, and stops once a new offspring is born usually 2 years later. Male offspring become independent of the group when they reach sexual maturity.

Predators

Humans are the main predators, as they encroach onto the golden monkeys' habitat, set snares, and illegally cut down bamboo. Conservation efforts are being made to protect the golden monkey and their forest habitat; however, they are still threatened.

