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POSITIONAL BEHAVIOR OF DELACOUR'S LANGURS (TRACHYPITHECUS DELACOURI) IN NORTHERN VIETNAM

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Colobines spend a small portion of their activity budget locomoting, yet locomotion is important because animals must efficiently find and locate food, avoid predators and exploit their habitat. The six limestone langur taxa of Southeast Asia forage in environments with many exposed rocky substrates, environments unlike that of other African and Asian colobines on which locomotor studies have been conducted. From June 2007-July 2008, I collected data on the substrates and positional behaviors (postures and locomotions) used by Delacour's langurs (Trachypithecus delacouri) in Van Long Nature Reserve, Vietnam. Langurs exhibited 23 total locomotions and 16 postures during the study period. They spent nearly 70% of their locomotor time quadrupedally, more than double that of climbing. Sitting (95%) dominated postural behaviors with only 3% and 2% of postural bouts spent standing and reclining, respectively. Of greatest interest in this study were the two anomalous results which set Delacour's langurs apart from other colobines on which positional behavior data have been collected. First, Delacour's langurs were not highly arboreal in this habitat: nearly 80% of locomotor and postural behaviors were performed on rocks. Second, Delacour's langurs were not frequent leapers: only 6% of their overall locomotion was leaping. Substrate availability, rather than diet or body size, seems to best explain the lack of arboreality, high degrees of quadrupedalism and climbing, and low percentage of leaping expressed by this species. The locomotor profile of these critically endangered animals would likely look different if the species were not limited to remaining limestone karst blocks.

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