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BROAD DIETARY REPERTOIRE OF FRANÇOIS' LANGUR AT MAYANGHE NATURE RESERVE, CHINA, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD CHOICE AND CONSERVATION

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Accumulating data suggests that seasonal dietary variation of colobines is remarkable and that food choice is a complex process. I quantified potential food availability (based on basal area) and the food species eaten by five groups of François' langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*) in Mayanghe Nature Reserve (MNR), China from January to December 2005, aiming to test whether foods were consumed in proportion to their abundance. Over the year, the langurs fed on 164 species and the top 10 species accounted for 51% of all feeding records. Langurs consumed more species (91) in spring than they did in other seasons (73 summer, 75 autumn and 67 winter), and only 38 species were consumed throughout the year. Non-tree food species, such as bushes and lianas were important for langurs and accounted for nearly half (47%) the total feeding records and for the majority (68%) of the feeding records in winter. Results indicate that the langur could survive well in highly seasonal and moderately disturbed habitats by broadening diet and using non-tree species. Findings from this study suggest that restoration of cultivated land could offer a great opportunity for the conservation of this species. There was no correlation between the proportion of feeding records and food availability in the most frequently consumed species, indicating disproportional consumption. But there were correlations between consumption and availability over a broader dietary range. It appears that it is food availability, rather than animal's selectivity, that plays the key role in the foraging pattern of the langur at MNR.

Key words: food availability; food choice; seasonal and disturbed habitat; Trachypithecus francoisi