

# **The threatened bamboo-eating Bale monkey (*Chlorocebus djamdjamentis*): Its ecology, behavior, genetics, and conservation in southern Ethiopia**

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## **Abstract**

The Bale monkey (*Chlorocebus djamdjamentis*) is a threatened primate species endemic to a small section of the southern Ethiopian Highlands. Until a decade ago, the Bale monkey was one of the least studied non-human primates in Africa. Since 2007, my team and I have been conducting a long-term study as part of the Bale Monkey Research and Conservation Project, focusing on the ecology, behavior, genetics, and conservation of the species. We found that the Bale monkey is a bamboo specialist folivore relying heavily on a single species of highland bamboo (*Arundinaria alpina*) in the intact forests of the Bale Mountains. However, the species also persists in small isolated forest fragments with degraded and, in some cases, nearly eradicated stands of bamboo in the human-modified landscape of the Sidamo Highlands. The major threats facing the species are deforestation, hunting (in response to their crop feeding behavior), and possibly hybridization with its sister species, vervets (*C. pygerythrus*) and grivets (*C. aethiops*). My talk aims to summarize my past, present, and future research on the Bale monkey, focusing on its current status, distribution, feeding ecology, activity budget, ranging ecology, locomotion, population genetics, microbiome, conflict with humans, and conservation. I will also briefly highlight past and ongoing studies of several other endemic Ethiopian primates. To conclude, this talk will provide an overview of the ecology, behavior, and conservation of the Bale monkey and provide the basis for potential future collaborations.

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