

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release May 17, 1978

Levitt 202/343-5634

STATUS OF RHESUS MONKEY POPULATION IN BANGLADESH TO BE REVIEWED

The status of the rhesus macaque monkey population in Bangladesh is being reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine if it qualifies for listing as an endangered or threatened species, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director, announced today.

The Service is acting on information presented in a petition by Dr. Ken Green of the National Zoological Park, Washington, D.C. The Endangered Species Act of 1973 enables citizens to petition the Government to propose species for addition to or deletion from the endangered or threatened species lists. It also enables certain populations of animals to be listed as "species."

The rhesus macaque is one of the most widely used animals in biomedical and other research. It is also one of the most common monkeys in Southeast Asia and does not appear to be in trouble in any country other than Bangladesh.

India has always been the major supplier of the monkeys for researchers, but recently imposed a ban on their export. This means that researchers will have to obtain rhesus macaques elsewhere, and Bangladesh, a relatively minor supplier in the past, may now become the primary source. Dr. Green presented data to indicate that forest destruction and alteration of habitat by land clearing are the most serious problems for the species in Bangladesh, and that there is little indication that Bangladesh will take any action to reverse this trend due to its high rate of human population growth. In addition, despite a prohibition on the export of endemic primates from that country, Dr. Green's report indicates that significant numbers of the species have been imported from Bangladesh into the United States between 1972 and 1975.

The Service is seeking data, information, and comments from all interested and knowledgeable parties on the status of the Bangladesh population of the rhesus macaque. The Government of Bangladesh has also been contacted to obtain what information is available there. This information will be analyzed to determine if the Bangladesh population of the rhesus macaque should be proposed for listing as an endangered or threatened species.

Comments on this review should be addressed to the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (OES), Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. All material should be received by June 13, 1978.

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INT: 3691-78