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Source: Neotropical Primates, 21(2) : 206-208

Published By: Conservation International

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1896/044.021.0211>

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YELLOW-TAILED WOOLLY MONKEY (*OREONAX FLAVICAUDA*: HUMBOLDT 1812) ALTITUDINAL RANGE EXTENSION, UCHIZA, PERÚ

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The yellow-tailed woolly monkey (*Oreonax flavicauda*) is endemic to a small area of montane cloud forest dominated by *Ficus* spp. in the Peruvian departments of Amazonas and San Martín (Leo Luna 1980) and neighboring areas of the departments of Huánuco and La Libertad (Graves & O'Neil, 1980; Parker & Barkley, 1981; Shanee, 2011). This species is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (2008, A4c) and Endangered on Appendix 1 of CITES (2005). The main threats to *O. flavicauda* are massive deforestation for agriculture, subsistence hunting, logging and mining (deLuycker, 2007; Leo Luna, 1980; Shanee, 2011). In many areas habitat loss has forced this species into small forest fragments (Shanee et al., 2007; Shanee, 2011).

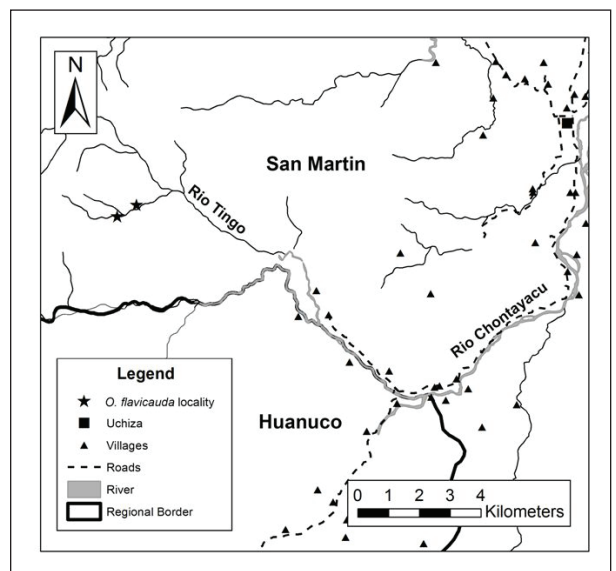


Figure 1. Map of observation locality.

Table 1. Minimum altitudes where *O. flavicauda* has been observed in previous studies.

Altitude (m a.s.l.)	Study sites	Source
1,084	Tingo de Uchiza, San Martín	This study
1,560	Shunte, San Martín	Shanee (2011)
> 1,600	Pucatambo, Amazonas	Leo Luna (1980)
1,505	Bosque de Protección Alto Mayo	DeLuyker (2007)
2,400	Ongón, La Libertad	Parker & Barkley (1981)
1,670	Abra Patricia, Amazonas	Graves and O'Neil (1980)
1,550	Pucatambo, Amazonas	Thomas (1927)
2,220	Cordillera de Colán, Amazonas	Butchart et al (1995)

On the 25th and 26th of January 2013, while carrying out distribution surveys of the Andean night monkey (*Aotus miconax*), we encountered a group of *O. flavicauda* 14.5 km west of the city of Uchiza in San Martín department in an area known locally as Tingo de Uchiza (S 8°28'47.04", W 76°35'24.90"), just north of the border with Huánuco (Fig 1.). The group was found along an existing 1.1 km trail at altitudes between 1,084 and 1,373 m. a.s.l., just under 500 m lower than previous observations (Table 1). We observed the group feeding on fruiting figs (*Ficus* spp.) for 25 minutes before they crossed a small stream which feeds the Rio Trisneja where we were unable to follow. The group consisted of 12 individuals, including two females with infants.

The habitat was similar to that described by previous researchers (Shanee, 2011; Shanee & Shanee, 2011) with high humidity (up to 99% relative humidity at 14.7°C). Forests in this area are dominated by Moraceae (*Ficus* spp.) and Cecropiaceae (*Cecropia* spp.) as well as Fabaceae (*Inga* spp. and *Erythrina* spp.), Icacinaceae (*Citronella* spp. and *Styloceras* spp.) with a high density of epiphytes. Our observations were made in a long thin canyon with steep sides that culminated in the 400 m high *Velo de Plata* waterfall. It is possible that the extremely humid and cool microclimate created by the local topography and the effect of the waterfall have allowed the higher altitude forest type, which is home to *O. flavicauda*, to establish itself at these lower altitudes.

Local villagers stated that *O. flavicauda* is common in the area, which they had mistakenly identified as howler monkeys (*Alouatta* sp.). When informed about the species endemism and Critically Endangered status they showed a lot of interest in conserving the species. The Municipality of Uchiza is currently working with the San Martín Regional Government to create a new Regional Conservation Area (*Area de Conservación Regional*) which covers the area where our observations were made. More time will need to be spent in this area to see how much lower the species distribution reaches in this and other similar areas. With the current high rates of habitat loss throughout this species

distribution area, any additional areas of habitat suitable for them are of importance for its conservation.

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