

本集内容

New ape species discovered 科学家发现类人猿新物种

学习要点

有关 “Animal discovery 动物的发现” 的词汇

边看边答

How many species of orangutan are there following this new discovery?

文字稿

The remote mountain forests of Sumatra are home to some of our closest ape relatives. And a small population here, first discovered just 20 years ago, has been hiding a scientific secret.

This is the Tapanuli orangutan - a **species** new to science. Until now, it was thought that there were just two distinct **species** of orangutan – Sumatran and Bornean, like this big male here. But this new study shows that there are actually three – a tiny population has been hidden away and isolated by hundreds of thousands of years of evolution.

Early **DNA** analysis suggested these animals were peculiar compared to the other Sumatran apes. So scientists embarked on a detailed study examining what they ate and their unique calls.

Years of painstaking **genetic comparisons**, enabled scientists to reconstruct the animal's **evolutionary history**. The final piece of the puzzle though, was tiny but consistent differences between the Sumatran, and this, the Tapanuli orangutan skull.

Professor Serge Wich, Liverpool John Moores University:

“It’s an amazing **breakthrough**, I think. There's only seven, if we exclude ourselves, of great apes species. So adding one to that very small list is spectacular.”

With just eight hundred individuals, this species will go straight onto the critically endangered list. Logging, mining, and plans for a hydro-electric dam already pose a threat to its habitat. The hope is that adding this ape to the biology textbooks will help to ensure its survival.

印尼苏门答腊岛的偏远山林间生活着一群和我们人类最为相近的动物——类人猿。然而在这里，有为数不多的类人猿自 20 年前首次被人发现以来一直隐藏着一个科学秘密。

这是打巴奴里猩猩，一个刚刚被科学家定义的新物种。到目前为止，人们一直以为世上只有两类不同的红毛猩猩物种——苏门答腊猩猩和婆罗洲猩猩，就像这只大型雄猩猩一样。但这项新研究显示，其实世界上共有三种猩猩，而这第三种的总数很少，在数十万年的进化演变中，它们鲜为人知、与世隔绝。

早期的 DNA 分析表明，这类动物与苏门答腊猩猩相比非常独特。所以科学家们开始了一项详细的研究，分析了这些猩猩的食性及其独特的叫声。

经过多年精心的遗传对比研究，科学家们得以重新构建出这类物种的进化史。不过解决谜题的最后一步是该物种与苏门答腊猩猩之间微小却持续不变的差异以及这块打巴奴里猩猩的头骨。

塞吉尔·维奇教授 利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学：

“我认为这是一项惊人的突破。除了人类自己，世上只有七种大型类人猿。所以就算在这张短小的名单上加上一个品种，也算是一个巨大的发现。”

这类新猩猩的数量仅有八百只，所以该物种将直接被列入极度濒危物种名单中。滥砍滥伐、过度采矿，以及建设水电大坝的计划已经给它们的栖息地造成了威胁。人们希望将打巴奴里猩猩加入生物课教科书中的做法能够确保该物种生存下去。

词汇

species

（动植物）物种

DNA

脱氧核糖核酸

genetic comparisons

（为寻找基因差异而进行的）遗传对比

evolutionary history

进化史

breakthrough

突破

视频链接：<http://bbc.in/2jbtY7t>

你知道吗？

An orangutan is a type of primate. The name 'orangutan' means 'people of the forest'.

红毛猩猩是一种灵长类动物。其英文名称“orangutan”的意思是“丛林居住者”。

问题答案

Following this new discovery, there are now three species of orangutan.