

## **Project Update: March 2001**

Fieldwork has been undertaken over the 18 months since July 1999. The most significant development during the project period is the elevation of the Tana River red colobus to a full species status making it the only critically endangered primate species in Africa. Preliminary findings of this study show that average group size of the red colobus has declined from 13 animals in the 1980's to just 9 animals - but as there is no concomitant increase in the number of groups, this would indicate that there is a 30% decline in the population.

This study has also found a tremendous increase in the rate of forest loss and unregulated human use. Consequently the preliminary recommendations emerging from this study are:

- (a) the establishment of a community based conservation project focusing on forests outside the reserve area,
- (b) a detailed and current assessment of the extent of the forest habitat left in the range of the endangered primates.