

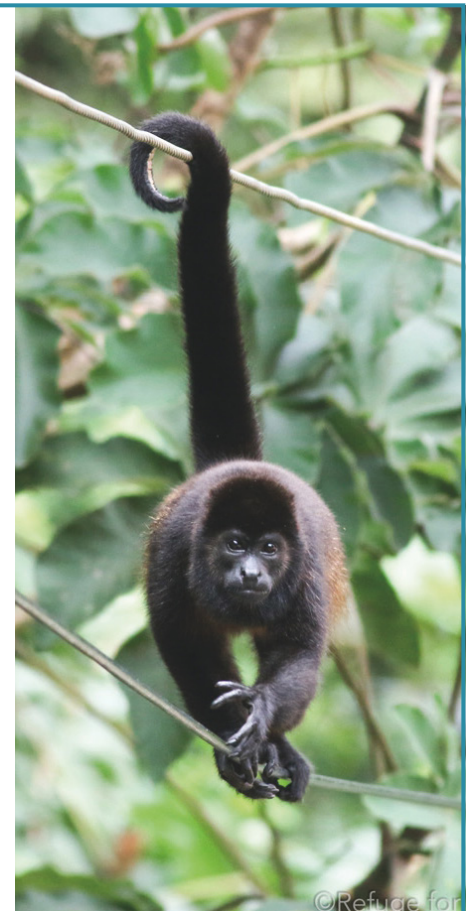
# HOWLER MONKEYS

## ABOUT HOWLER MONKEYS.

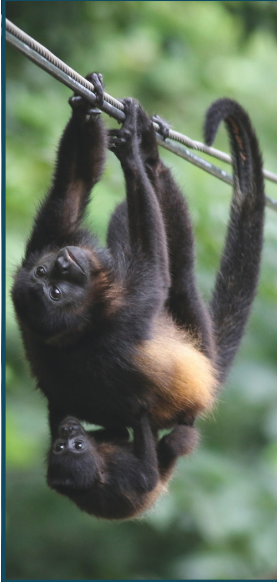
Howler Monkeys are known for their call which can be heard up to 3 miles away. They live in groups called troops. The calls are most commonly heard at dawn and dusk. The male monkeys have special vocal chambers which allow them to make this noise and it is used to tell other monkeys that the territory is occupied. Howler Monkeys are entirely vegetarian and spend all their time in the canopy, rarely coming to the ground as they find their food high up in the trees. Howler monkeys are quite big monkeys and are excellent climbers. They have a prehensile tail which means they can use it to grab onto branches as they swing through the canopy. There are 15 species of Howler Monkey and of these the Yucatan Black Howler and Northern Brown Howler are both endangered. In Costa Rica you find the Mantled Howler Monkey which is not endangered but whose numbers have sadly declined by 50%.

## DEVELOPMENT IN COSTA RICA AND HABITAT LOSS

Man's rapid development causes problems for wildlife with habitat destruction and fragmentation. The need for electricity to support this development means that powerlines are going up all over the world. Costa Rica is marketed as one of the most ecofriendly countries to visit with 25% of its land set aside to parks, reserves, and protected land. It gets 75% of its electricity through renewable energy and is working to achieve carbon-neutrality by 2021. It has a diverse wildlife with 5% of the world's biodiversity in Costa Rica and it is applauded for its eco-tourism. Even though there are these policies in place, as the country develops, large areas of forest have been cleared for construction. This has put pressure on the wildlife as their natural habitats have been reduced. For the Howler Monkeys as their habitat has been reduced the routes that they took through the canopy have disappeared. Many electrical power lines are also being installed criss-crossing the forests. These power lines are constructed as cheaply as possible and so are often uninsulated and are connected to high voltage transformers. The Howler Monkeys and other animals that live in the canopy will use the wires as aerial runways in parts of the forest where trees have been cleared. If the power lines are not insulated these leads to electrocution.



## ELECTROCUTION OF HOWLER MONKEYS



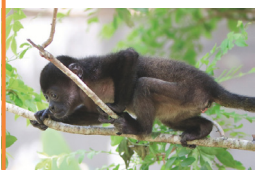
Electrocution of wildlife is not just a problem in Costa Rica. Powerlines are going up all over the world as development takes place and electrocution of wildlife has become a global issue. There have been cases of electrocutions of elephants in India, gibbons in Myanmar and birds like falcons in Mongolia. In Costa Rica these powerlines are a hidden danger to the Howler Monkeys along with other arboreal (tree-living) animals such as sloths and possums. The charity Refuge for Wildlife based at Nosara on the north west coast of Costa Rica responds to over 100 electrocutions a year. The monkeys cannot sense the danger of these powerlines and often receive fatal shocks or very bad burns and internal injuries which means the survival rate of those that are rescued is also poor. Most of the monkeys that survive the shocks are babies who were clinging to their mothers when they were electrocuted. The babies often suffer burns on their hands, tail and feet. Many must have fingers or even legs amputated but some escape with only minor burns.



## HOW ARE ORPHANED MONKEYS HELPED?

Refuge for Wildlife is a charity supported by WVS which specialises in the rescue of Howler Monkeys, although it rescues many other animals as well. It has a 24-hour hotline and a rescue team who will go out to rescue animals trapped on the cables, animals who would otherwise die.

The goal is to take in the animals, treat them, and return them to the wild as quickly as possible. The refuge has a team of vets and volunteers who treat the immediate needs of the animals and provide long-term care where necessary. Because many of the surviving Howler Monkeys are babies, the refuge has several special nurseries for different-age monkeys. There is an infant, juvenile and young-adult nursery. In these nurseries the monkeys learn to socialise and climb and, once they are ready, they are released back into the wild. One of the ways that WVS works is to support charities all over the world by providing medical supplies, equipment and by sending out volunteers.



Refuge for Wildlife in Nosara in Costa Rica is one of the charities we support. We send out supplies such as bandages and burn creams to treat injured monkeys and equipment, such as incubators, for the baby monkeys that are rescued. WVS also sends out volunteers to support the work the charity is doing.

## STOP THE SHOCKS

Whilst the surviving monkeys can be helped and, hopefully, be returned to the wild, the better solution would be to prevent the electrocutions in the first place. There are laws in the country which are supposed to protect the environment and wildlife from development but sadly these are not properly enforced. To help the situation Refuge for Wildlife run their own local community-based campaign called "Stop the Shocks" to try and prevent electrocutions. They raise money and then work in three ways:

1. They trim trees to prevent wildlife accessing the power lines.
2. They build rope bridges to provide safe aerial pathways, so the animals don't have to travel along the powerlines
3. They insulate the power lines and transformers to prevent electrocution.

