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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Lesser Ant-eater

The **Lesser Ant-eater** (or Southern Tamandua), *Tamandua tetradactyla*, is listed as 'Least Concern' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. It occurs in South American savannahs, tropical forests and mangroves, ranging east of the Andes from Venezuela and Colombia south to northern Argentina, southern Brazil and northern Uruguay.

This solitary, mainly nocturnal species is adapted to an arboreal lifestyle and uses its long, prehensile tail as a fifth limb to grasp branches while climbing. The Lesser Ant-eater mainly feeds on ants and termites using its long cylindrical tongue (up to 40 cm in length), but also attacks bees nests to eat honey. When inactive, it rests in hollow trees, armadillo burrows or other natural cavities. Lesser Ant-eater females carry their offspring on their back for about five months.

The main threats to this species are wildfires, habitat loss and degradation, road traffic, hunting and domestic dogs. Taxonomic studies together with field research on its exact distribution, population densities and dynamics are needed to help prioritize conservation efforts for this charismatic South American species.

www.iucnredlist.org
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