History of SADABE Activities at Tsinjoarivo

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I. Research

Census 2000 – In July 2000, we censused forest fragments in the Mahatsinjo region and continuous forest in the Ankilahila region. We located seven *P. diadema* groups, and documented a previously unrecognized degree of pelage variation, including the existence of all-black individuals.

Census 2001 - During June-July 2001, we established census trails in 37 forest



fragments in the Mahatsinjo region varying from <1 to 228 hectares. We censused the lemur species in these fragments intensively during September-October, finding a total of 0-6 species per fragment. Smaller fragments consistently have fewer lemur species, highlighting the importance of fragment size and connectivity in preserving intact lemur communities. During August 2001, we established a new research site within the intact forest at Vatateza (east of Ankilahila) and censused the lemur community there. Our surveys, plus local observations, showed that this intact forest retains the full set of lemur species: Propithecus diadema, Eulemur fulvus fulvus, Eulemur rubriventer, Hapalemur griseus, Avahi laniger, Lepilemur mustelinus, Cheirogaleus major, Microcebus rufus. and Daubentonia madagascariensis.

During September and October, we also performed botanical inventories in all 37 forest fragments at Mahatsinjo, in collaboration with botanists from Ranomafana National Park.

Ecology of P. diadema (2002-2003) – In November 2002, in collaboration with Dr. Ken Glander, we captured and marked *P. diadema* individuals within four study groups, and

collected tissue samples and morphometric data. Two of these groups were found in the forest fragments at Mahatsinjo, and two were found within the continuous forest at Vatateza. These groups were habituated during all-day follows during December.

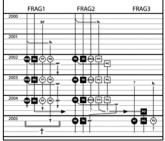
From January-December 2003, our research teams followed these four groups, accumulating more than 6,000 hours of behavioral data. We also collected phenological data at monthly intervals to provide estimates of food availability. Our data show clear differences between the



fragment groups and the continuous forest groups. First, body mass for many animals is reduced in fragments. In general, females have similar mass, males are lighter in fragments, and juveniles are roughly 0.5 kg lighter in fragments relative to continuous forest. Second, the preferred fruits consumed in the continuous forest during the rainy season (January-April) are absent from the forest fragments (partly due to exploitation). Thus, fragment groups rely

on the fruits of the parasitic plant *Bakerella clavata* (Tongoalahy), thought to be a lower-nutrition substitute food. Finally, fragment groups show reduced activity levels, probably due to a lower-quality diet.

P. diadema Monitoring (2004-present) - Since 2004, we have been monitoring the



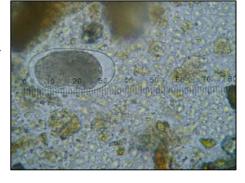
four P. diadema study groups at Tsinjoarivo. Because P. diadema is a long-lived species, it is important to compile long-term data in order to examine rates of reproduction, mortality, and transfer among groups. We now have >5 years of data, and preliminary analyses suggest important demographic differences between fragment and continuous forest groups (specifically an elevated mortality rate for juveniles in the forest fragments).

Parasitology (2004-present) - The parasites of lemurs in the wild remain

understudied, and even basic questions such as species richness and host specificity remain poorly known. Starting in 2004, in collaboration with Prof. RABETAFIKA Lydia of the University of



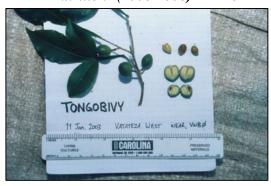
Antananarivo
we have
collected fecal
samples from
P. diadema
study groups in
order to



document the diversity of their parasites, and how infection rates change across seasons and habitats. Specifically, we will test whether nutritional stress in

forest fragments exacerbates parasite infections. Analyses are ongoing, and these data will form the basis for Raharison's doctorate.

Nutrition (2006-2008) - From August 2006 to July 2007, our research teams



collected feeding data and samples of food items for all four *P. diadema* study groups. During 2007-2008, we are now analyzing all food items for protein, fiber, sugars, fats, minerals, and ash. This analysis will quantify their nutritional intake, including differences across habitats and seasons. With these data, we will be able to assess the effects of habitat fragmentation on the nutritional status and health of sifaka populations at Tsinjoarivo.

Cheirogaleid Diversity and Ecology (2006-2007) – In November 2006 and November

2007, we trapped *Cheirogaleus* and *Microcebus* at Mahatsinjo and Vatateza, in collaboration with Marino Blanco of the University of Massachusetts. Preliminary results show that *Cheirogaleus* diversity is higher than expected: animals at Vatateza resemble *C. major*, but animals at Mahatsinjo are morphologically distinct and resemble the poorly-known species *C. sibreei*, which is of great conservation concern. Future research will examine the reproductive ecology of all three Cheirogaleid species, and the effects of microhabitat and microclimate on the timing and success of reproduction.



Future Research – In June 2008, we plan to capture *P. diadema* individuals from eight study groups across a gradient of habitat disturbance, and perform detailed biomedical health assessments. In collaboration with Dr. Randall Junge of the St. Louis Zoo, we will examine the relationships between habitat disturbance and physiological indicators of health, specifically body mass, morphometrics, baseline bloodwork (hematology, serum biomedical profile, and nutrition analysis), and ectoparasite infection.

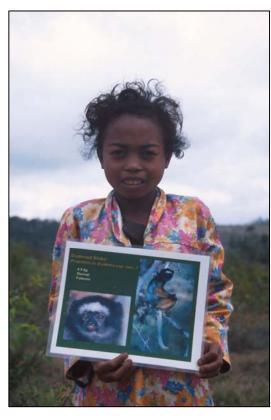
We will then monitor these groups over one year in order to examine: (1) differences in diet, behavior, and ranging patterns, (2) non-invasive measures of physiologic stress, including urine (c-peptide, a measure of energy balance) and feces (cortisol, a hormone indicating stress, and endoparasites).

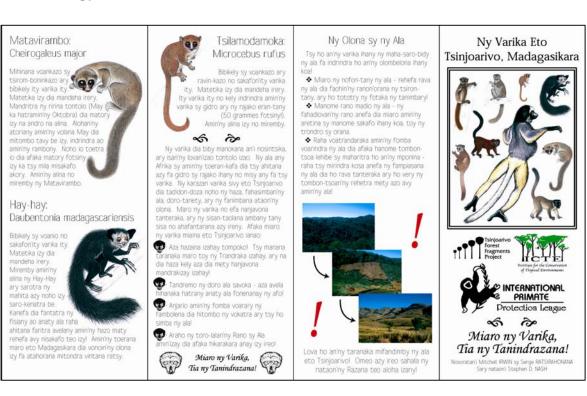
Sponsors of Research at Tsinjoarivo: Conservation International (Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation), Primate Conservation Inc., National Geographic Society, Stony Brook University, NSERC, St. Louis Zoological Park.

II. Development

Education – In 2002-2003 our research teams made monthly visits to local schools at the Mahatsinjo and Vatateza field sites. We forged relationships with the students and teachers, gave presentations highlighting the region's unique biodiversity, introduced our research project and methods, and offered instruction in English language. In November 2003, we hosted school groups from both regions for visits to our habituated P. diadema groups. Although the children live in the region, many of them (roughly half) had never seen lemurs up close. We held another school visit in 2007 at Mahatsinjo

In 2002, we printed 2000 brochures (1000 in Malagasy, 1000 in English) highlighting the lemurs of Tsinjoarivo. These were illustrated with drawings by Stephen Nash of Conservation International and encouraged awareness of lemur diversity and conservation. We distributed these brochures widely throughout Tsinjoarivo commune in 2002 through the present, left copies at the Musee du Rova at Tsinjoarivo, the Mayor's office at Tsinjoarivo, and the DEF office at Ambatolampy.

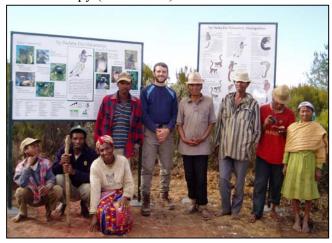


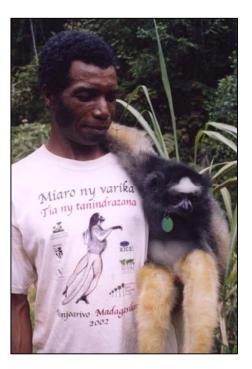




Plaque "The Lemurs of Tsinjoarivo", installed at Tsinjoarivo, Mahatsinjo and Vatateza.

Also in 2002, we printed and distributed more than 200 t-shirts with the message "Miaro ny Varika, Tia ny Tanindrazana". The front panel featured the sadabe, *Propithecus diadema*, and the back panel contained pictures of all nine lemur species found at Tsinjoarivo. These t-shirts were distributed both to local guides and residents, collaborators at Tsinjoarivo (Mayor's office), Ambatolampy (DEF office) and Antananarivo.





In 2004, we installed five permanent educational plaques: one at Tsinjoarivo town center, two at the research site at Mahatsinjo, and two and the research site at Vatateza. The first plaques, "Ny Varika Eto Tsinjoarivo", gave details about all lemur species, highlighting their ecology, behavior and uniqueness. The additional plaques "Ny Sadabe Eto Mahatsinjo" and "Ny Sadabe Eto Vatateza", gave details of local groups of sadabe (*P. diadema*), including their ecology, diet and behavior.

In 2004-2005, we collaborated with the Madagascar Ankizy Fund (www.ankizy.org) to facilitate the donation of a public school to the



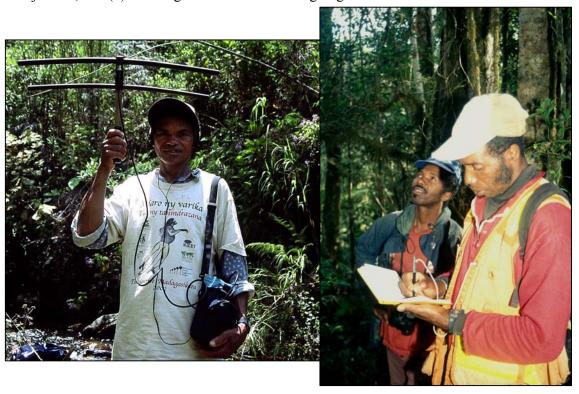
Mahatsinjo region. Previously, the only school in the region was a private catholic school which was held in the church building (usually inoperable during the cyclone season due to rain damage).

Parents were obliged to pay high monthly fees to support the teachers' salaries. The new school, Sekoly RAH King Mahatsinjo, was built during 2004 and inaugurated in 2005. It is maintained by the Madagascar Ankizy Fund, which pays the salary of four teachers.



Inscription is free, and approximately 200 students from Mahatsinjo and nearby regions benefit from this free, high-quality education. The Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research recognized the RAH King and supplied one principal teacher starting in November 2007. Eventually, this school will become an Ecole Primaire Publique (EPP) and management will gradually be transferred to CISCO.

Training and Capacity Building – Starting in 2000, we have trained 11 local people in research techniques. They have gained skills in botanical inventories, phenological monitoring, behavioral observations, and lemur census techniques. Training has also including instruction in English and French. We have also trained our three core senior guides in data recording, and these three guides can now work autonomously in data collection. In 2007 we distributed materials intended to help our research guides and other local people learn English and French. This will aid in the career development of people who wish to become tourist guides. We have already helped local people at Mahatsinjo form a legal association ("Imaintso an'Ala"), which will be responsible for co-ordinating tourist visits. The development of these local skills will be crucial in: (1) facilitating future research, (2) developing ecological monitoring programs for the protected area to be developed at Tsinjoarivo, and (3) ensuring the success of the ongoing ecotourism initiative.



Health – Medical and dental care is extremely limited in Tsinjoarivo commune. The nearest doctor is located at Tsinjoarivo (up to 15 km away from the rural villages) and the

nearest dentist is in Ambatolampy (approx. 75 km away). Many people in Tsinjoarivo commune do not receive needed medical and dental care due to this distance, as well as lack of money. During July 2007, our teams hosted a Madagascar Ankizy Fund dental mission at Mahatsinjo, held at the

Sekoly RAH King. The team included one dentist and professor (Dr. Laurence Wynn) and five dental students (four from New York, one from Madagascar), plus a small support staff. During 8 days, the team treated more than 200 patients from



used in guiding future clinics.

nearby Mahatsinjo and regions, including many with badly infected teeth and gums. The team provided extractions of teeth that were too badly decayed to be saved, restorations for teeth with minor decay, endodontic reconstructions (root canals) education in oral health. They also provided free toothbrushes, antibiotics, and painkillers. They also collected data on dental health, which will be

Future Activities – We are currently planning a second dental clinic, in collaboration with the Madagascar Ankizy Fund, and a women's health clinic (including specialist doctors from Canada) in June-July 2008.

III. Reforestation

In July 2005, we established the Mahatsinjo Reforestation Initiative, funded by Conservation International. In collaboration with the Direction des Eaux et Forêts office in

Ambatolampy and with the agreement of the local people at Mahatsinjo, we delimited 12 areas for reforestation. We engaged local people at a series of meetings in order to integrate our reforestation efforts with local needs, and gain the support of the local people. Areas chosen for reforestation included

strategic connections between isolated forest fragments, and were chosen so as to reduce the impact on local agricultural production. During 2005-2006 project staff collected more than 10,000 seedlings either grown from seed or harvested from the nearby forest. During 2006-2007 we employed local villagers to plant 7 corridor locations

and install signs demarcating the corridor areas. The total number of trees planted was more than 55,000, and the project has provided full-time employment for one resident of

Mahatsinjo and part-time employment for more than 40. In future years we will employ local villagers to maintain the growing corridors, and reforest the remaining areas.





Publications, Theses and Conference Presentations Resulting from SADABE Research at Tsinjoarivo

Publications and Theses:

- Irwin MT, Raharison JL (in prep.) Ecosystem in decay: Factors influencing primate species extinctions in forest fragments of Tsinjoarivo, Madagascar.
- Irwin MT, Glander KE, Raharison JL, Samonds KE (in prep.) Effect of habitat and sex on body mass and morphometrics of diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*).
- Blanco MB, Godfrey LR, Rakotondratsima M, Samonds KE, Raharison JL, Irwin MT (submitted) Discovery of sympatric dwarf lemur species in the high-altitude rainforest of Tsinjoarivo, eastern Madagascar: Implications for biogeography and conservation.
- Irwin MT (2008) Feeding ecology of diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) in forest fragments and continuous forest. International Journal of Primatology 29(1):95-115.
- Irwin MT (2008) Diademed sifaka (*Propithecus diadema*) ranging and habitat use in continuous and fragmented forest: Higher density but lower viability in fragments? Biotropica 40(2):231-240.
- Godfrey LR, Irwin MT (2007) The evolution of extinction risk: Past and present anthropogenic impacts on the primate communities of Madagascar. Folia Primatologica 78:405-419.
- Irwin MT (2007) Living in forest fragments reduces group cohesion in diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) in eastern Madagascar, by reducing food patch size. American Journal of Primatology 69:434-447.
- Irwin MT, Raharison JL, Rakotoarimanana H, Razanadrakoto E, Ranaivoson E, Rakotofanala J, Randrianarimanana C (2007) Diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) use olfaction to forage for the inflorescences of subterranean parasitic plants (Balanophoraceae: *Langsdorffia* sp., and Cytinaceae: *Cytinus* sp.). American Journal of Primatology 69:471-476.
- Irwin MT (2006) Ecologically enigmatic lemurs: The sifakas of the eastern forests (*Propithecus candidus*, *P. diadema*, *P. edwardsi*, *P. perrieri* and *P. tattersalli*). In: Lemurs: Ecology and Adaptation (L. Gould & M. Sauther, eds.). New York: Springer, pp. 305-326.
- Irwin MT (2006) Ecological Impacts of Forest Fragmentation on Diademed Sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) at Tsinjoarivo, Eastern Madagascar: Implications for Conservation in Fragmented Landscapes. PhD Dissertation, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY, USA.
- Irwin MT, Ravelomanantsoa HV (2004) Illegal rum production threatens health of lemur populations at Tsinjoarivo, eastern central Madagascar: Brief report and request for information. Lemur News 9:16-17.

Conference Presentations:

- Irwin MT, Raharison JL, Wright PC (2008) Spatial and temporal variability in predation by Cryptoprocta ferox on sifakas in continuous and fragmented rainforest in Madagascar: Do forest fragmentation and predation act synergistically? Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists.
- Blanco MB, Godfrey LR, Rakotondratsima M, Samonds K, Raharison JL, Irwin MT (2008) Discovery of sympatric Cheirogaleus species in the high-altitude rainforest of Tsinjoarivo, eastern central Madagascar: Implications for biogeography and conservation. Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists.

- Bradley BJ, Irwin M, Kappeler PM, Moisson P, Morelli TL, Pastorini J, Mundy NI (2008) Primate pigmentation: Understanding the genetic basis of convergent coat color phenotypes. Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists.
- Bradley BJ, Pastorini J, Moisson P, Irwin M, Morelli TL, Mundy NI (2007) The colour of monkeys: Genetics of primate pigmentation often contradict expectations based on the mouse model. 11th Congress of the European Society for Evolutionary Biology.
- Irwin MT, Glander KE, Raharison JL, Samonds KE (2007) Effect of habitat and sex on body mass and morphometrics of diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*). American Journal of Physical Anthropology 132(S44):134.
- Irwin MT (2006) Forest fragmentation alters ranging and habitat use in diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*): Implications for viability of fragmented populations. 31st Annual Meeting of SQEBC (Société Québecoise pour l'Étude Biologique de Comportement), 2006.
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- Irwin MT, Raharison JL (2006) Dietary and behavioral flexibility facilitates survival of diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) in forest fragments at least in the short term. Annual Meeting of the International Primatological Society, 2006.
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- Irwin MT (2006) Leaner diet, less energy: Diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) in forest fragments show reduced ranging and altered activity patterns. American Journal of Physical Anthropology 129(S42):108.
- Godfrey LR, Irwin MT (2005) Ecosystems in disequilibrium: Anthropogenic impacts on the primate communities of Madagascar. 2005 Winter Meeting of the Primate Society of Great Britain.
- Irwin MT (2005) Living in forest fragments reduces group cohesion in diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) in eastern Madagascar, by reducing patch size of food resources. American Journal of Primatology 66(1):132-133.
- Samonds KE, Raharison JL, Irwin MT (2005) Quantifying the positional behavior repertoire of diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*), and comparisons between continuous and fragmented habitats. American Journal of Primatology 66(1):151.
- Patel ER, Anderson JD, Irwin MT, Owren MJ (2005) Quantifying the vocal repertoire of wild adult diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) in Madagascar. American Journal of Primatology 66(1):48.
- Irwin MT (2005) The lean season lasts all year: Diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) in forest fragments show reduced dietary diversity and rely heavily on parasitic mistletoes. American Journal of Physical Anthropology 126(S40):120.
- Irwin MT (2004) The effects of forest fragmentation on the feeding ecology of the diademed sifaka (*Propithecus diadema*): The importance of parasitic mistletoes. Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Physical Anthropology.