

Project Update: April 2019

Last week we finished part 2 of our field season. Over the past 2.5 months (January-April 2019) we have revisited three forest fragments (Bekaraoka, Binara, and Solaniampilana) and have continued following six of the habituated groups of golden-crowned sifaka. Our main goal for this field season was to collect data concerning lemur behaviour, physiology, habitat use, and forest structure during the rainy season. We were able to collect faecal samples from all individuals ($n=289$ faecal samples) and followed each lemur group for a minimum of 8 consecutive days. We also added an additional element to the study. We collected the top five consumed plant parts from the lemurs diet (pictured to the right are Tsarafanahy flowers). We dried the samples and they will be analysed for nutrient levels and secondary metabolites back in the U.S. We hope that by gaining an understanding of the nutritional intake of the lemurs throughout their range of landscape types, that we will be able to better protect and reforest their habitats.



We have also been successful with collecting infant faecal samples (infant Kate pictured to the left). We hope that this will allow us to determine if infant sifaka in contiguous and matrix habitats display similar stress hormone profiles compared to their group members.



We have also been working with the Daraina Guide Association to discuss the possibility of building a location for the guides to gather. The guides currently have no location to hold meetings or for tourists to find a guide. The guides believe that a centralised building would greatly improve tourism in the region and lead to an increase in guiding positions.

We are currently in Sambava, Madagascar finalising permits that are needed to travel with the faecal and plant samples. Our plan for the next month is to begin faecal sample evaporation, freeze drying, and hormone analysis.