Project Update: March 2021

We started the fieldwork on January 20th, 2021.

To determine how much lemur eats galls, we have identified three groups of *Varecia variegata* (lemur frugivore) to follow during this next round of project. One group is located in Ambatabe (S18°45.109'; E048°25.003'), one in Bekalakody (S18°45.470'; E048°25.398') and one in Bevoloto (S18°45.967'; E048°25.557'). We could not find and follow all the groups of lemurs that we followed during the last phase, except the group located in Bekalakody. We recorded all the same parameters as previously, such as the feeding and defecation events with their respective associate parameters. Up to now, we have done 15 days of survey of each lemur group.

Me with my field team. © Lovasoaniaina, Elicien

To determine if galls constitute an additional food source for frugivorous lemurs, we dried plant items for later nutritional analysis. To do this, we collected and dried 100-200g of plant items the same as the lemurs fed on. So far, we have dried 20 plant items that each lemur groups consumed. These items are fruits, seeds, leaves and galls. We stock the dried samples into a metal dark box, and we use desiccants to preserve samples before the nutritional analyses.

To quantify the abundance of galls, we aim to set up 30 botanical plots of 2 x 50 m along three transects of 500 m long, one in each lemur group territory. For each plot, we assess the presence or absence of galls in each canopy tree above 15 cm of DBH (Diameter at the Breast High). So far, we have set up nine botanical plots, three per

territory, and we have recorded the presence of galls for some tree species and the absence for the others. So, we had 21 plots left to do next.

Varecia variegata feeds fruits. © Nantenaina, Rindra H.