

TOURS

a destination for all seasons

By Niki Barnett, Interim Education Manager



only

a short time ago we remember the Center being blanketed by thick plastic tarps during the fall and winter seasons. This did not make for the most ideal experience for our supporters who visited during those months.

Fast forward. Now, the DLC is an ideal place to visit year round. We have a variety of tour experiences that are designed for all seasons, ages, and lemur enthusiasts. Our new buildings enable us to view the lemurs both indoors and out and to offer more in depth experiences to our guests. If you have not visited the Center since the new buildings have become a reality, I encourage you to do so. If you have, I would invite you to take a more in depth tour of the Center.

As always tours are available Monday-Saturday by appointment. We now offer gift certificates as well for our premium tours. Stop by the Lemur Landing gift shop Monday through Friday 10-4 to get a great gift for that lemur enthusiast in your life! Call 919-401-7240 or visit lemur.duke.edu to find out more!

Lemurs Live:

All ages; Year round; \$10/adults, \$7/seniors and children (maximum 30 participants)

Behind the Scenes:

Ages 10 and older; October-April; \$65/person (maximum 8 participants)

Walking with Lemurs:

Ages 10 and older; May-September; \$95/person (maximum 8 participants)

Learning with Lemurs:

Ages 12 and older; Year round; \$150/person (maximum 2 participants)

Keeper for a day:

Ages 13 and older; Year round; \$350/person (maximum 2 participants)

GIVING

an unusual birthday present

By Gaiatri - age 8

On my 8th birthday instead of getting presents, I sent in money to help the aye-eyes. The idea to help the aye-eyes came from a book about endangered species. I had a hard time deciding between long furred chinchillas and aye-eyes. I had to flip a coin to choose which one to help. Heads = aye-eyes. Tails = chinchillas. The winner was... aye-eyes!

I told my mom I wanted to help the aye-aye, and then on my birthday I collected money and sent it to the Duke Lemur Center. Later, I got a free pass to the Duke Lemur Center. I begged my mom to take me there. Finally, over spring break I went there.

When we went there we began with a regular tour. I saw blue-eyed lemurs and ruffed lemurs and ring-tailed lemurs. One had an adorable baby.

Then we went on a litter patrol and found bottles, baskets with eggs inside and an old wallet. We did not think we would find much in the beginning but then we left the path because we saw some bottles. We recycled them. It felt so good to help the earth.



Later we got to get up close to an aye-aye without glass between us! I was so happy when it came within 2 feet of us. In the beginning the aye-aye was afraid of us because the lights were on. We turned them out, and it came up to a bowl placed five feet away from us. In the bowl there were : nuts, honey and...mealworms!

The aye-aye's trainer shook a blue bag hung on a stick in the enclosure and out came a grumpy looking slow loris! He ran in circles and still looking grumpy, sat on a box. Meanwhile, the aye-aye was eating a nut and I heard it tap with its middle finger against the nut! After finishing the nut, it ran around a branch and came to investigate us! It tried to leave its enclosure but the trainer gently pushed it back in.

That day was the best day of my life!

research · conservation · education
winter 2011



teacher
training

all season
destination

presence in
madagascar

in this issue

lemur.duke.edu

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Duke University
Duke Lemur Center
3705 Erwin Road
Durham, NC 27705



Two words that belong in the Department of Redundancy Department, do they not? Why would you strategize without planning, and why would you plan, if not strategically? And so it is that I have tended to scoff at this phrase. But here I sit, at exactly 7:47 p.m. on Friday night, November 18, 2011, having just completed the final FINAL version of the DLC Strategic Plan. It has been an arduous process, beginning on October 24, 2010, with an email to Peter Lange that said the following "This spring semester, I wish to begin a strategic planning process for the DLC. The ESAC (External Scientific Advisory Committee) has been pushing for this for some time, and I believe that the time is ripe. I have never led or participated in such a process, and I want to do it right. I have human resources within both the ESAC and my Director's Board, but I also wish your input. Are there campus resources available to me? Do you have any particular advice?"

Little did I know what would be involved! The process began in earnest in December 2010 when I contracted Ross Simons, of Simons and Associates, to assist me as a consultant. Soon afterwards, we together launched a public survey in which many of you would have participated. And so it is, nearly a year later that I sit at my desk, having just emailed the final version to the Provost's Office in preparation for my presentation to the Provost's Academic Affairs Committee on November 30th, and to the Academic Affairs Committee of Duke's Board of Trustees on December 2nd.

So what is in the plan, you are (hopefully) asking yourselves? It is an 18-page document, so a bit challenging to summarize in this short space, but here are the essentials: The plan is entitled "Revolutionary Opportunities" and reflects the fact that the DLC is on the cusp of a new phase in its distinguished history. Though research has always been one of our major foci, we have been, and remain, completely committed to non-invasive research. But now, with the recent scientific revolutions in genomics, informatics, and nanotechnology, we can explore biological phenomena non-invasively that couldn't even be imagined, only a few years ago.



The plan is built on four fundamental themes: scientific inquiry, scholarship, information, and global engagement. It takes advantage of many existing assets at the DLC, but equally importantly, of its unique place within the broader Duke community. It will enrich the lives of students and researchers, while opening new opportunities for our conservation mission in Madagascar. The plan extends into the year 2017, which, as luck would have it, will mark our 50th anniversary! We are excited about the future, and the insights and impacts that lie ahead are truly beyond imagining.

On this note, I bid you adieu until Fall of 2012. I will be undertaking a period of scientific refreshment for the spring term (aka, sabbatical). Beginning in January, I will be working in the UK with my colleague, Ziheng Yang, at the University College London. I have a list of projects that is way too long to be realistic, but oh the joy of data analysis! I can hardly wait. While I am gone, the Center will be in the superbly capable hands of the DLC staff and management team, and under the watchful eye of interim Director, Dr. Jim Siedow, Vice Provost for Research.

Happy Holidays to all, and very best wishes for the New Year -- 2012: Year One of the DLC Strategic Plan!

Anne D. Yoder, Ph.D.
Director

teacher training begins!

By Charlie Welch, Conservation Coordinator

Our new conservation initiative in the SAVA region of northeastern Madagascar has taken its inaugural step in the form of teacher training in environmental education! After extensive planning, in August we sent three Malagasy teacher-trainers to the town of Sambava. The three have had years of experience with Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) teacher training workshops, and were led by our long time colleague and environmental education specialist André Ratsimbazafy. The first phase of the training program was not actually conducted with the teachers, but rather focused on training of the future trainers- 33 education professionals from the CISCOS (school districts) of Sambava and Andapa.

The keystone of the week-long training is the teacher's manual to environmental education, which was developed by the Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) education team, and approved for use in public schools by the Madagascar Ministry of Education. The manual was designed to dovetail with the existing primary school curriculum, and gives the teachers a source from which to teach their students about Madagascar's environment and ecosystem relationships, topics which are overlooked in Malagasy primary school education. Eventually, each of the 2,431 teachers in the two districts will receive a copy of the manual, and training in how to use it in their classes.

In the next phase of the program, the newly trained trainers will lead workshops for the school directors. In the third and final phase, these directors will train the teachers in their schools. The experienced MFG trainers will periodically oversee training sessions to assure quality and consistency. This method of teacher training, using the teacher's manual, has been successfully implemented by the MFG in the Tamatave area for a decade, and we are all excited to now be transferring that knowledge and experience to a different region of the country!

Experience has taught us that teacher training goes far beyond the transfer of information to students only. Teachers are often the most respected members of rural communities, so if they receive environmental education and become convinced of the value of conservation themselves, the message is conveyed not only to students, but also to adults in the communities. The training workshops and follow-ups help incite enthusiasm for conservation issues, and are an effective early step in building long-term trusting relationships with local peoples – a crucial element in any viable conservation project.

Sincere thanks go to the Margot Marsh Fund for making possible this first phase of the training program. Without their support, we would have been unable to move forward on the trainings in such a timely manner. We have no time to lose!



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duke lemur center arrives in the sava!

By Charlie Welch, Conservation Coordinator



I would like take this opportunity to introduce the Duke Lemur Center's (DLC's) new, and for the moment only, permanent presence in Madagascar, Lanto Andrianandrasana. Since August, Lanto has worked on behalf of DLC in the SAVA region in northeastern Madagascar, coordinating various activities, from teacher trainings, to lemur research missions, to meeting with potential reforestation collaborators.

Lanto has extensive experience with research and conservation. After receiving his masters degree from the University of Antananarivo, in 2006, Lanto first worked as a field research assistant, on a variety of lemur species at Ranomafana National Park. He then went on to do similar work with silky sifakas in various protected areas in the SAVA region. Lanto has been a long time assistant and colleague to our future post-doc/project manager Erik Patel. He and Erik will continue to work together, now on behalf of DLC.

On the personal side, Lanto was born in Antsirabe, in Madagascar's high plateau, and grew up in Antananarivo. He is married to Mireille Razafimandranto who also has a biology background, and has done work for Erik. They have a 3 year old son, Lanto Fanomezantsoa, and all live in Sambava where Lanto is based.

A welcome aboard to Lanto! We are happy to have you working with us in the exciting beginning stages of our new conservation initiative.

NAMING OPPORTUNITY

*a lemur-sized "naming opportunity"*

You may have bought a brick or even put your name on a building, but here is a "Uniquely Duke" naming opportunity. For \$350 you can have your name on a lemur - or at least on a tag on a brand new radio collar worn by a lemur.

The radio collars are an insurance policy that helps our dedicated staff insure that all our lemurs are safe all the time. Our free-ranging lemurs all have to prove that they are 100% reliable in coming in response to the appropriate cue. On the rare occasion when that doesn't happen, our Primate Technicians have a well-practiced protocol to follow to assure the errant animal is found and safe. The radio collar is that back up for the one-in-a-million chance that an animal is ill or injured or so driven by desire that

all their careful training is forgotten. Then our technicians will bring out the telemetry tracking device and add electronics to the boots on the ground and eyes scanning the forest until the missing lemur is found and escorted safely home.

Again, for \$350 you can assure a lemur's safety while attaching your name (or the name of someone you love) to the lemur's new collar. By the way, this idea was brought to us by Duke parents, Alan and Leslie Weiskopf. We thank them for a "Weis" idea!

For a gift of \$10,000 the Duke Lemur Center staff will give you a one-hour lesson in telemetry in the forest tracking real lemurs. Limit no more than two people at a time. Must be 13 year old or older. Talk about Uniquely Duke!

*Radio collar!
I want one!**division of fossil primates*

By Gregg F. Gunnell, PhD

Big changes are afoot at the Lemur Center's Division of Fossil Primates (DFP). Long time director, Elwyn L. Simons, has retired and moved to a new life in Arizona. Equally long-serving Curator, Prithijit Chatrath, will retire early in the New Year. Elwyn and Prithijit spent their careers building a truly amazing and unique collection of fossil vertebrates, now numbering some 24,000 individual specimens. Duke University and the Duke Lemur Center owe a huge debt of gratitude to both of them for their many years of service and their lasting contributions, not only to the DFP, but to the understanding of the evolutionary history of primates.

Incoming DFP director Gregg F. Gunnell has a tall task following in the footsteps of Elwyn and Prithijit. Gregg plans to maintain the traditions of field and specimen based research while bringing some aspects of the DFP collections into the new information age. In this time of budget constraint, new models of field research will have to be developed. In order to engage Duke students directly in the process and to provide field opportunities for as many students as possible, a renewed focus on North American field work will be emphasized. Working in the western United States will not only build important research collections for the DFP, it will provide more readily available (and affordable) field opportunities for Duke graduate and undergraduate students.

The DFP will continue to carry on the traditions of field work in Egypt and Madagascar that were initiated by Dr. Simons. However, the realities of fiscal restraint will require a re-think of how best to carry out this field work. This may entail smaller crews for shorter periods of time and developing other collaborations with different partners. In order to provide Duke students with as many opportunities as possible for global engagement, Gregg will continue to develop his contacts and field work options in SE Asia and in other parts of Africa, as well as pursuing all possible avenues to continue the work in Egypt and Madagascar.

The collection facilities at the DFP are undergoing renovation as we develop a climate controlled room for some sensitive material. We anticipate adding new cabinets for specimen storage in order to continue collection expansion. An exciting new initiative places the Lemur Center and the DFP on the cutting edge of new technology as we have formed a partnership with several other institutions and museums to develop a 3D digital repository for storing and accessing virtual specimens. As this repository expands and develops, most DFP fossil specimens will become available for virtual study online.



This will have many advantages including: cutting down on the need for colleagues to undertake expensive and time consuming travel to examine specimens first-hand; and eliminating most of the inherent dangers of physically manipulating specimens in the lab or eliminating costly and potentially dangerous shipping of specimens to other locations.

The challenges for the DFP are many but each also provides an opportunity to achieve great things – we will move forward, excited by the opportunity to expand on the legacy left by those who went before.

The *Division of Fossil Primates* will move forward, excited by the opportunity to expand on the legacy left by those who went before.



continuation of the crowns

By David Haring, DLC Registrar, Photographer, and Historian



This past month we bid a fond farewell to Meritaten, a sweet and gentle, 27 year old crowned lemur, who had been blissfully living out her declining years in Natural Habitat Enclosure (NHE) 1 with her son, Geb, and sister, Nefartari. As her energy and appetite started to decline earlier in the summer, Meritaten enjoyed a daily parade of delectable and nutritious treats hand delivered to her at 10, 2 and 4 by her dedicated technician, Bevan Clark. Meritaten died in her sleep 24 October.

Crowned lemurs are a species which generally have proven to be difficult to maintain and breed in captivity. But Meritaten proved to be one of the rare exceptions, as she was the second most productive crowned lemur female in Duke Lemur Center (DLC) history (second only to her mother, Nefertiti), giving birth to 14 infants, 7 of which survived over a year (an excellent percentage for this delicate species).

Meritaten was the youngest member of the first group of crowned lemurs introduced to a free range enclosure in the summer of 1985. However, the crowns did NOT receive a warm welcome from the group of brown lemurs already living in NHE1, so they had to be relocated to NHE2, where they were released in fall, 1985. Things didn't work out for them in NHE2 either, so like a group of persecuted pilgrim lemurs searching for their holy forest, the crowned lemurs returned to NHE 1 the following year.

In 2000, Meritaten was moved from the forest to form a new breeding group with a young male, Bes, destined to become the love of her lemur life. The pair, happily settling down in a DLC traditional suburban

lemur cage, produced five infants (including two sets of twins), all of which lived for at least five years. Both sets of twins were male/female pairs, and as anyone who has ever watched the development of twin infants of both sexes, born of a sexually dichromatic lemur species, can tell you, the beautiful family was a feast for the eyes.

In May 2000, with Meritaten on birth control, her family was introduced into NHE6 to provide a second free ranging crowned lemur group for researchers to observe (the NHE1 crowned lemur group still existed). Unfortunately, while Bes was a fabulous father, and perfect mate to Meritaten, he was not too fond of humans (a condition not that unusual in crowned lemur males), and his hostility towards the two legged creatures resulted in a number of amusing (at least in retrospect) instances in which the frail little 3 pound lemur chased his keepers down the trail through the forest and into the safety of the adjoining parking lot!

Bes never actually harmed anyone, merely threatening to do so, but his potentially aggressive behavior, meant that he had to be in a cage in the forest, when Duke Anthro students came out to observe crowned lemur behavior. This proved to be rather impractical from a management standpoint, not to mention that it made the whole exercise of the observation of a free ranging crowned lemur group somewhat pointless, since the group's adult male always had to be separated from his family and locked up! So the group was brought back to traditional caging in fall, 2000.

Bes died in winter, 2001, and the following Spring, Meritaten and her offspring were moved out to NHE 1 once again, where she spent her declining years free ranging in glorious freedom, basking in the sun, and waiting for Bevan to bring her treats! As tends to happen at the Lemur Center, the sad news of Meritaten's passing was tempered somewhat by the arrival of a beautiful 1.5 year old crowned lemur male, Mosi, from the Indianapolis Zoo, not two weeks later. Mosi is now in quarantine, and when he gets out he will be paired with the lovely Sheshat, born at the Center July, 2010, in the first crowned lemur birth here since Meritaten gave birth to her last set of twins in 1996. They might be hanging on by a thread in captivity, but crowned lemurs are indeed hanging on!

*making the dlc even more accessible*

By Erin Ehmke, PhD, DLC Research Coordinator

After surviving years in the remote jungles of South America (not to mention the even more treacherous life of a graduate student), and years teaching Primate Biology and Behavior college courses, it is with great excitement that I transition into my new role as Research Coordinator at the Duke Lemur Center (DLC). From my first experience working with primates - at a Florida sanctuary that rescues abused, or simply unwanted, monkeys from the pet and entertainment industries - to my eventual fieldwork studying their wild counterparts, my path has always revolved around our closest, slightly more hairy, relatives. For the past five years, I spent my summers at the DLC as the Primate Biology instructor for Duke TIP - an academic program for gifted high school students. And with each passing year, I was more eager to return.

A primatologist whose previous work focused on monkeys (the flatter-faced cousins to lemurs), I became fascinated with how similar, yet so different, the prosimians at the DLC were from the rest of the Primate order. I was especially thrilled to learn about how positive the research program is for the lemurs themselves! Captive primates can easily become bored, and so, in addition to their regular enrichment, the opportunity to play on a computer (yes, lemurs do that!), or bounce around a new room while being filmed, or simply free-range in the natural habitat enclosures...serves not only the lemurs' physical and psychological well-being but also helps us to learn a lot more about them, and often about ourselves.

As Research Coordinator, my vision is to help make the DLC even more accessible to the larger research community, particularly undergraduates. Presently, when a new student expresses an interest in conducting research at the DLC, they must first find a faculty sponsor. That can be limiting in that faculty investigators are often constrained in the number of project that they can oversee. And so, with

the assistance of other DLC staff, I am currently in the process of designing a program whereby students can undertake observational projects independently. The program (still in the earliest planning stages!) will involve instructing students in the fundamentals of prosimian behavior and data collection (i.e., mini field-schools), and then providing them with the ability to participate in an ongoing study of their choice. Keep your eyes open for the announcement of this latest DLC endeavor, and help us spread the word!

I am proud to now be part of the DLC family and to be able to bring my past experiences full circle to facilitate ever-growing research focused on conservation, education, and captive animal welfare. Please stop by the Research Department and say hello - I will be more than happy to brag about our various projects and tell (often comical, always true) tales of our eager research volunteers with tails!

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THE CARE*share the care for the holidays...or any day!*

Are you always searching for that unique gift for your loved ones? Well we have your answer! Adopt a lemur and support a great cause at the same time! We have six of your favorite species to choose from: Ring-tailed lemur, Coquerel's sifaka, Red ruffed lemur, Mouse lemur, Aye-aye, and the Pygmy slow loris.

Share the Care packages start at \$50.00. We will ship the packages directly to your loved ones at no cost to you! Please have all holiday orders in by December 19th to ensure Christmas delivery! Orders can be placed directly from our website (www.lemur.duke.edu), by mail, or phone 919-401-7257. Happy holidays from our family to yours!