



# AND AWAY THEY GO!

## COQUEREL'S SIFAKA CONSERVATION BREEDING PROGRAM EXPANDS INTERNATIONALLY

By SARA CLARK and DAVID HARING

Photo by Steve Coombs.



In the late 1980s, the DLC established its conservation breeding program for the highly endangered Coquerel's sifaka. The program has since grown into the most successful breeding program in the world of any species of sifaka, and for years the Lemur Center has been working with partner zoos in the U.K. and Germany to expand this breeding program into Europe.

This summer, a half-decade of planning finally came to fruition: Three separate shipments of sifakas, departing from Atlanta's Hartsfield Jackson airport over a period of four months, delivered four pairs of DLC sifakas to three European zoos.

Beatrice and Elliot, the first pair of Europe-bound sifakas, were driven by DLC staff to Atlanta on May 19, where they boarded a direct flight to Heathrow airport in London with a final destination of the Chester Zoo in Cheshire, England. After 4,000 miles of travel, they became the first members of their species ever to set foot on European soil.

The pair was followed two weeks later by Sigismund and Justa, traveling from the DLC to Cologne Zoo; and by Euphemia and Hostilian, leaving Durham for Tierpark in Berlin.

Finally on September 24, the DLC-to-Atlanta-airport sifaka shuttle service made its final trip down I-85, and DLC staff delivered Isabella and Wenceslaus to the airport's animal shipment staff, who were by now very familiar with sifakas (and DLC staff!). Later that day the pair departed for Berlin, and soon after their arrival, on to the Tierpark Zoo.

The goal? To use carefully planned conservation breeding programs to expand the genetic safety net for this increasingly threatened species.

"Coquerel's sifakas are critically endangered," says Mike Jordan, Animal and Plant Director at Chester Zoo. "What we aim to do now is to establish a 'safety net' population in Europe's top zoos, and to help prevent their extinction and preserve options for future conservation." 🙏



- 1 **Isabella** - Berlin, Germany
- 2 **Elliot** - Cheshire, England
- 3 **Wenceslaus** - Berlin, Germany
- 4 **Euphemia** - Berlin, Germany
- 5 **Beatrice** - Cheshire, England
- 6 **Justa** - Cologne, Germany
- 7 **Sigismund** - Cologne, Germany
- 8 **Hostilian** - Berlin, Germany

Photos by David Haring and Sara Clark.

