

Episode 5: Collared Lemur



Anna: Hi! I'd love to introduce you to some collared lemur ladies. Here we have Bijou, the mama lemur, over on the stump; and right up close hanging out with us is Celine, her daughter.

Collared lemurs are **sexually dichromatic**, which means the males and the females have different colors. Both of the females in the silo here are brown with short orange fur around their faces. Males are darker brown, almost black, and the fur around their faces is a little bit longer. This makes them look like they're wearing an orange collar, which is where they get their name: the collared lemur.

In a family group like this one where the two individuals look the same, we have to work a little harder to tell them apart. The animal care staff who work with these animals every day can recognize subtle differences in face shape or personality, but to make it easier for the rest of us, there are a few techniques we use.

Lemurs are often given tail shaves, voluntary haircuts that make it really easy for visitors and staff to tell two lemurs apart from one another. Another easy way we can tell lemurs apart is with different colored collars, like the ones free-ranging animals wear in our Natural Habitat Enclosures.

In Madagascar, collared lemurs live in the southeastern coastal forests. There they can eat leaves, fruits, flowers, and occasionally insects. They're really important **seed dispersers** in these coastal forests, which are a really unique ecosystem found in Madagascar.





In the wild, collared lemurs will live in groups of mom, dad, and any offspring that may still be dependent on their parents. At the Duke Lemur Center, we can be a little bit more flexible. We make sure that each lemur has a social companion to live with, but that pair may look like mom and offspring, it may be a pair of siblings, or it may be unrelated companions that are just hanging out together as friends. Lemurs will live together as long as they're willing to tolerate one another, and with all of our observations going on here for non-invasive research, we can keep a really close eye on social groups.

Collared lemurs are considered vulnerable in Madagascar. While they aren't as rare as some of our other lemurs, habitat loss is also affecting this species. At one point, collared lemurs were found along the entire eastern coast of the island. Today, they are found only in the southeastern corner of Madagascar.

While collared lemurs aren't as well-known as other lemur species like ring-tailed lemurs, all species of lemur—as well as all of the other amazing plants and animals of Madagascar—are important for us to learn about and protect.

Teaching people about all of these amazing species is a really important part of our work here at the Duke Lemur Center. Thanks for learning about these collared lemurs with me!

