

# Episode 4: Coquerel's Sifaka



**Megan:** Hi, Megan here! I'm going to be taking you into one of our Natural Habitat Enclosures to meet our Coquerel's sifakas.

Alright, so here I have some of our lemurs who live in Natural Habitat Enclosure #1, including a very curious Pompeia.

Coquerel's sifakas are an amazing species of lemur. All lemurs are pretty remarkable, but these guys are pretty unique. These guys are bipedal: they are two-footed, like us, like humans! But they move a little different than humans. You can see that they actually have their hips rotated out constantly, so as Francesca bounces around, she is bouncing around with her hips open wide. And she is kind of hopping around instead of walking one foot in front of the other. It's for this unique locomotive pattern that these guys are called the "dancing lemur." And you can see that they are very graceful as they move around.

In addition to their super unique locomotive pattern as they're doing that vertical leaping and clinging through the forest, these lemurs have some amazing adaptations in their hands and feet. All lemurs have grasping hands so they can grab and hold on to things really well, but Coquerel's sifakas have particularly long fingers. If you can see on her feet, those are really, really long toes and she also has little circular ends on her fingertips, kind of like a gecko, so that's something that helps them grab and hold on when they are moving through the trees.







Coquerel's sifakas are also incredibly unique in their digestive habits and their eating habits. They live in the northwestern deciduous forests of Madagascar, and their diet mostly consists of leaves. They also like to eat twigs, bark, and might even come down to the ground and eat dirt sometimes for some nutrients they can get from it.

As you can see, Francesca behind me is actually nibbling on some of the leaves that are in her forested habitat—and you might get photobombed because we have a very curious mongoose lemur who's near our camerawoman right now! Nacho might be coming into frame... There's his nose. Nacho and Francesca can snack on all of the food you can see around you in the forest. They know what's good for them, and they know what isn't. They have those natural instincts. But Francesca is going to prefer all the fresh new leaves in the spring: the new flowers, things like redbud or muscadine grape vine that grow around here naturally.

Francesca here is also a very special lemur. You guys may or may not have heard of the show *Zoboomafoo*. Now if you're like me, you grew up watching this show. It was one of my favorite shows as a kid. It was hosted by Chris and Martin Kratt but they also had a cohost: a live lemur in the opening shots named Zoboo on the show, but known to us as Jovian. Jovian was a very special guy who lived here for many, many years and Francesca is actually his granddaughter.

Coquerel's sifakas like Pompeia and Francesca are critically endangered in the wild. Like all of the other lemur species, these guys are threatened by habitat loss and deforestation. One of the ways you can help lemurs like them is by helping support the work we do here at the Duke Lemur Center. Pompeia is actually one of our adoptable lemurs. Now of course that doesn't mean you can bring Pompeia home. As we hope you know by now, lemurs do not make good pets! But you can symbolically adopt her and support what we do here. Learn more at [lemur.duke.edu/adopt](http://lemur.duke.edu/adopt).

