

Project Update June 2015

1. Acoustic Survey of Preferred Habitat

The mouse lemurs were found to only inhabit certain areas within the Anabohazo forest. They were sometimes seen within close proximity to the forest edge but were mostly observed and tracked within secondary forest and riparian forest habitat. They are certainly not found within primary forest as the trees are too big. It is almost certain that the acoustic survey has been able to show this and we will soon know once the audio recordings have been analysed.



The Acoustic Recorder was left to record for the duration of the study

2. Species Vocal Repertoire

Microcebus sambiranensis was observed to have at least four or five distinct call types. Audio files of these have been collected. However, vocalisations were observed infrequently and therefore it is possible that the species possessed more call types in its vocal inventory. It also suggests that they possibly only vocalise at certain times of the night or during certain periods of the year such as the mating period etc. Call playbacks of the *M. murinus* vocals were not acknowledged or responded to at all by *M. sambiranensis*, suggesting that their vocal repertoire is significantly different to that of other members of the *Microcebus* genus.



Vocalisations being recorded with a handheld microphone

3. Sleeping Site Micro-habitat Ecology

It was evident at the field site that the mouse lemurs use vegetation such as branches and dead leaves to construct their sleeping sites rather than tree holes. This is most likely because there is already competition for tree hole sleeping sites between two other, larger species: the Sahamalaza sportive lemur (*Lepilemur sahamalazensis*) and the northern giant mouse lemur (*Mirza zaza*). Although statistical analysis has not yet been carried out, the results suggest that certain tree species, particularly those with densely compact branches, are the preference of the Sambirano mouse lemur for sleeping site construction. Larger trees and fruiting trees that were used for feeding were never used as sleeping sites. The sleeping site micro-habitats used appeared to be quite dense and tree/bole height was not significantly high, however further analysis is needed to confirm this.



Some of the used sleeping sites: densely vegetated trees with nests constructed using branches and leaves.

4. Home Ranging Behaviour

Recorded home ranges were approximately 1-1.5 ha in size, a value consistent of that with most other mouse lemur species. The nightly distance travelled for each individual whilst tracking occurred was mostly 150-300 m. Statistical analysis will be needed to determine whether home range size and the nightly distance travelled varies between certain members of the population e.g. males and females. It is evident that many *M. sambiranensis* individuals have home ranges that overlap. It appeared during tracking that each individual tends to prefer using the same routes to travel/feed at night and many individuals of the population sample were found to use a few particular trees to spend most of their time in. The travelling behaviour of the mouse lemurs was very inconsistent: they regularly spent several hours motionless in one tree before quickly moving many meters to another tree before stopping for a long period of time again.



Radio tracking in progress.