

Project Update: December 2017



Our team just wrapped up data collection for our 2017 pilot season studying golden-crowned sifakas (*P. tattersalli*) in Daraina, Madagascar. Over the past 6 weeks we have visited the last three large forest fragments of the pilot season - Bekaraoka atsimba, Ampondrabe, and Benanofy. Group size of golden-crowned sifakas in Bekaraoka atsimba was substantially larger than groups in other forest fragments. Bekaraoka had the greatest presence of both permanent and transient gold miners in the Daraina region and sifaka groups in the interior forest ranged from ~8-12 sifakas compared to ~4-6 in other fragments. We have had great success in these fragments in regards to distinguishing between individual lemurs and being able to collect numerous fecal samples from each lemur.

We also had the opportunity to confirm the presence of and study golden-crowned sifakas in a littoral forest near Ampitsikinana, a town on the northeast coast of Madagascar. Fanamby, the local NGO we are collaborating with, received information from a local village that several lemur groups were seen in the forests. We successfully inventoried the small ~120 ha littoral forest and found six groups of golden-crowned sifakas. This is the first confirmation of *P. tattersalli* in a littoral forest and we were able to collect behavioural data, fecal samples, and complete habitat surveys. My team hopes to revisit this forest fragment again in our next field season and continue collaborating with locals in the village to access the social cohesion and health of the nearly identified golden-crowned sifaka groups.

Overall, during our pilot season, we followed and collected data on 15 lemur groups across nine forest fragments in Daraina. We have been able to continue outreach programmes and are further improving the Eco-schools Programme which will be starting in Daraina's secondary school. We collected 283 lemur fecal samples and will be completing a hormonal validation and analysing fecal cortisol levels in the lab. The results will be part of a presentation at the International Primatological Society meeting in August 2018 (Nairobi, Kenya).



