



MONTHLY From MADAGASCAR

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Cyclone Ivan by **Tim Tetzlaff**

As many of you have read, tropical cyclone Ivan slammed into our program area around Tamatave on Sunday, 18 February as a category 4 cyclone with winds up to 210 km per hour. As with most disasters of this sort, there is a rapid need for funding to help staff with skyrocketing food costs, destroyed homes, and of course clear debris and restore order from the chaos of a major storm. Following the initial report from Dr. Freeman summarized below, the MFG and its friends

came through. Within 24 hours of notification over \$2,000 was raised from individuals for those immediate needs. Over the last few weeks, Isle of Wight Zoo raised an additional \$750 dollars and the Bay Area AAZK Chapter's donation of nearly \$2,500 will go a long way in aiding efforts. Of course, much work remains to do. Please consider making an additional donation by clicking "Help Us" at our official website at www.savethelemur.org. Thanks to everyone in helping.



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Ivan Impact by **Dr. Karen Freeman**

Summary of Early Damage the Week of Cyclone Ivan:

We took a fairly heavy hammering from Cyclone Ivan and so has the rest of Tamatave. I haven't heard all the news yet. The Parc Ivoloina zoo itself is a mess, but we are incredibly lucky. A bunch of trees came down but miraculously seem to have missed or only glanced off all the cages and buildings. It really is amazing.

Sadly, a bunch of the staff have lost their homes. Noel, Rufin, Sosten and Jacquis lost their houses entirely while Laurent, Kamisy and Beny lost their roofs. Almost everyone has lost crops and the prices of all food in town have doubled.

The Model Station is nearly totaled unfortunately. It's going to take some work to get that together. The

trails are mostly all going to have to be closed for a while but the dam is holding so far. Actually there wasn't much rain so the Ivoloina River came up but not disastrously - thank goodness.

Celestin came down today from Betampona to let us know that they are all okay. He said it's a complete mess and trees are down

everywhere. It will be several days at least until the road is open even as far as Anosibe as so many trees are down. Celestin came by bike and said it was pretty difficult getting over some of the trees! The nursery at the village of Rendrirendry didn't fare too badly either. We've lost some plants for the reforestation project but not too many.



Creative MFG Supporters by Tim Tetzlaff

Even before Ivan, a wide variety of individuals have supported MFG programs through some very creative ways and some have been highlighted in this publication - from a bicycling UK youth to skydiving vacationers and even a software company called Delicious Monster! Here are some recent supporters continuing that creativity. Keep being creative and we know we'll have many more stories to come.

Zoo Volunteers

Bernd and Anja Hettmer work as two private volunteers in a small zoo in the north of Germany. They were starting a positive response training with a troop of 7 ringtail lemurs. After discovering that a lot of people were interested in watching the training, they began public trainings. After each training they told visitors about the situation of these animals in Madagascar and about MFG programs. To raise funds, they purchased an inexpensive children's book and resold them to zoo guests. Their efforts have netted \$750 for lemur conservation! They also created a website in German about their program and a simplified English version as well at:



Thanks Bernd and Anja!

A Toy Lemur and a Programmer Blog Their Way to over \$12,000 in Five Days

On the morning of December 27th, Mike Lee launched Club Thievey with the crazy idea of the Mac and development communities coming together to transform a little stuffed lemur into an icon for our power to make a difference in this world. . . Let's try and save the lemurs!

- bernard-web.com/pierre/

Mike Lee over at Delicious Monster has come up with an idea that I heartily approve of. A campaign to raise donations for the Madagascar Fauna Group. Viral internet conservation combined with interesting ways for independent software developers to make a difference. It's a great way to help improve the world we live in. Join Club Thievey. I did. - kamit.com

Mike Lee has opened up Club Thievey, named after an incorrigible stuffed lemur owned by his wife. The idea is simple: donate \$100 to the Madagascar Fauna Group and Mike will send you your very own stuffed lemur for free. Then, take a shot of you and your lemur and it'll get posted on the site. A number of indie Mac programmers like Brent Simmons, Gus Mueller, and Daniel Jalkut have already pledged their support. . . - macuser.com

In the waning days of 2007, longtime MFG supporter Mike Lee decided to take his support global through the blogosphere.

The plan was straightforward. A trusted voice in the Mac computer programming world throws his reputation and straight talk behind a good cause - the MFG - and offers a stuffed toy lemur for all who donate a \$100 or more.

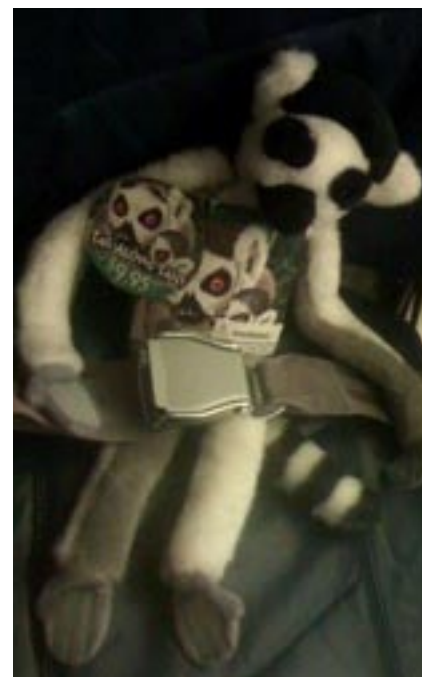
The result was unprecedented in MFG history. From Mike's personal

blog and the website he set up at www.thievey.org word started to spread. Blog after blog after blog began talking about Mike and his plan for lemurs. And many did more than talk - they donated.

As I was sitting at my computer, e-mail after e-mail began popping in with donations from \$10 a month to one time gifts of \$500. Over \$12,000 came in before year's end. And Club Thievey is continuing. In fact, donations as high as \$1,000 have come in since then. Mike also has more plans yet to come! We'll keep you posted.

Check out www.thievey.org. You can also find out about Mike and see pictures of Club Thievey members from all over the world. And for fun, google "Mike Lee Thievey" to see just how many blogs picked this up!

Our sincerest thanks to Mike and all his (and our) new friends.



Thievey buckled up on a plane for another adventure with Mike Lee

Greetings from Karen & Gareth

With apologies from Tim Tetzlaff in its delay. The following report was submitted by Karen and Gareth prior to Ivan.

Happy New Year! The litchi season and the festive season have come and gone and we're into the hottest part of the year. The MFG New Year party at Parc Ivoloïna was a roaring success attended by the Parc Ivoloïna team, the

Betampona team, and about 70 family members as well three students and two volunteers and Dr. Steve Goodman, joint editor of "The Natural History of Madagascar". Dr Goodman is supervising a study of Parc Ivoloïna's bats, being carried out by Beza Ramasindrazana (See June 2007 update).

Karen and I were on the road again in November driving down to the Ranomafana National Park for the ValbioResearchCentreconsortium meeting. MFG is on the advisory board. After the meeting, Karen worked with Dr. Anna Feistner of Valbio to establish a protocol of collaboration between MFG and Valbio.

Betampona Reserve

Diademed sifaka (*Propithecus diadema*) at Betampona have been notoriously difficult to study due to the fact that they are not vocal making them hard to locate. They also have a large home range and have a habit of disappearing quickly through the canopy when they are found. So the task facing St. Louis post-graduate student Lana Kerker and her Malagasy counterpart Lucien Lalaina Hery Randrianarimanana, who are researching the ranging and feeding behaviour of the Betampona diademed sifakas and indri (*Indri indri*), was no small one. But with the arrival of St. Louis vet Randy Junge it was about to get easier.

It is incredible to think that since I last managed to complete an update Randy has been back to St. Louis and returned to Madagascar again.



Randy lines up a dart

This time Karen, Lana and I were fortunate enough to be able accompany Randy and University of Antananarivo veterinary student Fidi Rasambainarivo. Fidi often works with Randy and will soon be employed by MFG. They darted, examined, took medical samples from, and collared four diademed sifaka and six indri. During this time, Randy also continued the training of the Betampona agents, molding them into an effective dart and capture team.

Radio-collars were put on five indri and three sifaka while the remaining animals were fitted with colour coded collars. Randy and Fidi's relaxed professionalism and the skill of the Betampona agents in positioning the net and catching the lemurs as they came out of the trees was a joy to witness. All the lemurs were handled safely during capture and the medical examinations showed that they were all healthy and did not seem to have suffered any serious injuries in the past. This is the first time that sifaka and indri have ever been radio-collared in Betampona.



Lana takes notes



Fidy and Karen examining a sifaka

Frog Finds! Portuguese post-graduate student Gonçalo Rosa has just completed a two-month long amphibian survey at Betampona working with MFG's own amphibian specialist agent Jean-Noel.

Gonçalo and Jean-Noel worked together earlier in the year on the first part of the study (see Jan./Feb. 2007 update). They hope that with the completion of the study and subsequent analysis of genetic material and call vocalisations, they will have found some new species for Betampona and hopefully also for science. They will also have improved our knowledge of the

Parc Ivoloïna

Circus Ivoloïna

There were fun and games with an environmental flavour mid-way through November at Parc Ivoloïna as the circus FONIALA came to visit. Using the Parc Ivoloïna dormitories as a base FONIALA worked with local children for a few days, encouraging them to take part in rural crafts and to try simple tricks, before their final spectacular show at the weekend.

The picnic/play area at the entrance of the park (La Collection) provided the perfect setting for the performance, which featured acrobats performing stunts on the ground as well as acrobatics in the trees – all without safety equipment! It was a breathtaking performance, the likes of which the crowd of local people that gathered to watch had never seen before.

Our thanks go to FONIALA and also to MFG office/education assistant Rostand who put in a lot of time assisting them in the organisation of the event.

reserve's amphibian ecology!

As things stand Gonçalo and Jean-Noel believe that Betampona could soon have as many as 110 identified species of amphibian.

Sticking with the frog theme Franco Andreone, the IUCN amphibian representative for Madagascar and a representative of the Parc Tsimbazaza Zoo in Tana, joined Gonçalo and Jean-Noel at Betampona in November. Franco, who is also Gonçalo's supervisor, has an incredible knowledge of Malagasy frogs and plays an integral role in MFG's amphibian conservation programme.



Frogman Gonçalo.

Boundaries Marked

After two years of work, initially with the Department of Topography, then resolving borderland disputes, and finally locating the positions of missing *bornes* (boundary markers), the Parc Ivoloïna *bornage* (boundary) has been finalised and marked by the clearance of a five metre strip of vegetation. The vegetation clearance will be done twice a year.

In addition, agro-forestry model-station manager Jacques has organised the planting of around 1,000 distinctive fast and tall-growing *Gluta tourtour* trees at approximately 50m intervals to ensure that if for any reason in the future the clearance of the *bornage* lapses, the forest station limit will remain well marked. This should help protect the Parc's forest and habitats.

Baby Boom

It's the time of year when Parc Ivoloïna's appeal is further enhanced by the arrival of the season's baby lemurs. The first, an early arrival, was born to Dawn one of the older black

and white ruffed lemurs (*Varecia variegata variegata*) almost three months ago. The youngster is doing very well.

More recently, Ivoloïna's free-ranging pair of black and white ruffed lemurs added to their twins of last year with a healthy baby, and three free-ranging white-fronted brown lemur (*Eulemur albifrons*) females have given birth to healthy young.

Due to high birth rates over the past few years we have put the red-bellied lemurs (*Eulemur rubriventer*) on birth control.

Not surprisingly the babies are proving to be a big draw for visitors to the park.



Dawn and baby

Welcome, Voluntary Rangers & Artists!

Parc Ivoloïna's voluntary ranger programme has kicked off again with the arrival of Daisy Shepperd and Jim Smith-Wright from England.

Jim and Daisy will be assisting with the management of the Parc Ivoloïna forest station, in particular the trail infrastructure and general fauna survey work, but the main focus of their work will be to survey the behaviour of Parc Ivoloïna's free-ranging eastern lesser bamboo lemurs (*Haplemur griseus*).

The information gained from Jim and Daisy's work will be used in forest management to improve the habitat of the forest for the lesser bamboo lemurs.

Daisy is taking time out from her job as a zookeeper at Battersea Park Children's Zoo, London, England, while Jim is having a break from his work as a warden for the National Trust at Sunnymede and Ankerwyke, Surrey, England.

Both are artists and Daisy has previously designed T-shirts for the MFG website.

Jim and Daisy repairing a bridge.



Daisy's Designs at MFG Online Store

The MFG online store offers a variety of gift items from t-shirts and mugs to tote bags and mousepads with Daisy's beautiful lemurs. Click www.savethelémur.org and click on the link for the online store on the right side of the page which shows one of her shirts!

As Daisy fully donated use of the images, all proceeds from the sale benefit MFG programs!



Training Centre Hosts Chef ZAPs

The latest teacher training session for local head teachers (Chef ZAPs) was held in November at the Ivoloïna Conservation Training Centre.

Once again the week long training session went well and was very well received by the Chef ZAPs. This latest success is a credit to the organisation skills of Lala, Ivoloïna's Education and Training Officer.

Staff Members of the Month

Zefania Rufin Randrianirina and Jacques Ely Ramaromisa Narison *Ivoloina Conservation Training Centre Night Guardians*

The MFG's two most recent appointments Rufin and Jacques Ely were employed in response to security concerns concerning the Training Centre.

Since their employment there have been no further problems. In addition Rufin

has also turned out to be a talented handyman, giving us a much-needed boost to the infrastructure maintenance capacity of the Parc Ivoloina team.

Rufin, 31, was born and educated in Tulear. He was married recently and

lives with his wife and two children in Tamatave.

Jacques Ely, 27, was born in and recieved his education in Tamatave. Jacques Ely lives with his wife and baby daughter in Tamatave.



Ivoloina's newest employees, Rufin and Jacques Ely



Free E-Newsletter

Wondering what's happening on your favorite island beyond the specific updates from Ivoloina and Betampona? Sign up for the free e-newsletter for info from around Madagascar at www.savethelemur.org.

Questions or comments on these updates or the e-newsletter?

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