



Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development Volunteer Program 2020/21 IMPACT MADAGASCAR

At a glance...

- Volunteer positions are available between May and December for fieldwork and/or all year-round for mixed activities (office and fieldwork) for a period of more than two months.
- Volunteer with projects ranging from ecological research and conservation to educational workshops to community development and construction
- Various projects are available based at two different sites in Madagascar
- Affordable programs costing only €325/\$365 per week
- Hands-on experience living and working alongside local communities
- The opportunity to conduct your own research in the field and design your own projects
- Stunning scenery, unique wildlife, and an unforgettable adventure!



The critically endangered Propithecus coronatus at one of our field sites



A few of the younger members of the community at one of our project sites

Why choose IMPACT Madagascar?

- **AFFORDABLE FEES** Most other volunteering programs charge high prices for short stays. At IMPACT Madagascar, we offer hands-on, authentic conservation, education, and community development volunteer programs at a modest price.
 - For example, most conservation volunteer programs in Madagascar begin at €850/\$985 and are, more often than not, over €1000 for a two-week period.
 - Our price is about 35% cheaper (or more) than most other programs at €650/\$730 for two weeks. We are able to offer a low cost without sacrifices to quality.
- **SMALL TEAMS** At IMPACT Madagascar, you will work alongside a small team of researchers and other volunteers rather than being lumped together with dozens of other volunteers working on the same project. This allows for our volunteers to have a more meaningful and personal experience.
- **CREATIVE PROJECTS** Volunteers are encouraged to voice their opinions and ideas for existing projects, and also to propose new projects should they see the opportunity for one. Instead of being confined to large ongoing projects in which volunteers may not see the direct impact of their work, our volunteers have the opportunity to watch their projects grow and impact the lives of the local community members.
- **RESPONSIBLE PROJECTS** All of our projects are created and implemented with the best interest of the environment and Madagascar's local communities in mind. Volunteers will end their time here feeling humbled and fulfilled knowing that they have had a true, positive impact on responsibly conserving the resources of this unique island.
- **IMPORTANT PROJECTS** IMPACT Madagascar's scientific research focuses on the ecosystems, species, and communities most in need of help. Many of our projects involve critically endangered lemur species close to the brink of extinction, and severely deforested habitats that require immediate attention. Volunteers will be able to see the direct impact of their work in the positive influence they have on these fragile species and ecosystems.
- **UNIQUE PROJECTS** In addition to being enormously important, these projects are also unique. We focus on ecosystems where not many other conservation organizations are working with the majority of our projects taking place in the dry and gallery forests of western Madagascar. Despite the fact that dry forests have historically been more severely impacted by deforestation, much of the research conducted on the island has focused on rainforests. Dry forests are not only often overlooked by conservation organizations, but they are also less protected than humid forests. Therefore, they are more vulnerable and the projects you will be participating in to protect these at-risk habitats and communities are extremely important.
- **SCIENTIFIC TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE** Whether you are thinking of volunteering as a way to postpone the real world, or to give you an extra push on graduate school or job applications, or just gain experience in the field, our program will provide you with the necessary training and orientation for all aspects of data collection and project implementation, giving you that extra edge in your applications!

- **LEARN A NEW LIFESTYLE** IMPACT Madagascar can guarantee you will be immersed in the local way of life here. You will mingle with local people, experience local culture, and will see the “real Madagascar”. You will leave here feeling more like a local than a tourist!



Birds near the lake at our Madiromirafy field site

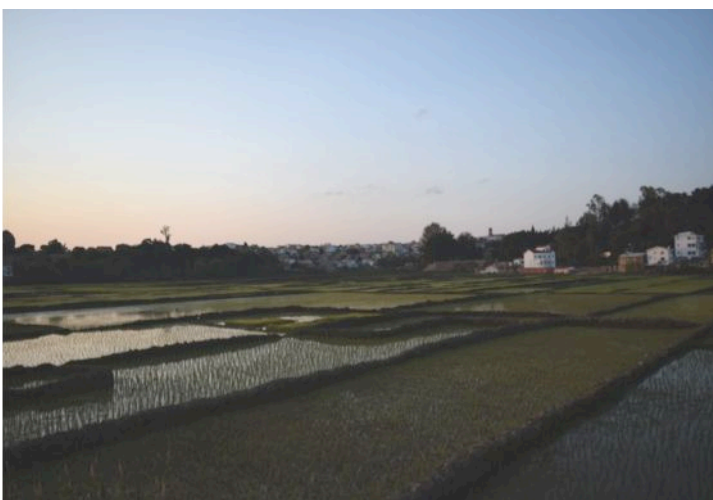


We work with local people to introduce sustainable income generating activities. Here, community members build energy efficient stoves.

Location and Duration of Program

IMPACT Madagascar’s office is found on the outskirts of Madagascar’s busy capital, Antananarivo, in a quiet and friendly neighborhood called Nanisana. Our office is just short walk from local restaurants, markets, and anything else you might need for a comfortable stay. While in the field, volunteers will have the option of staying at one of two sites: Ankirihitra or Madiromirafy, both in the northwest region of Madagascar.

We ask that volunteers commit to a **minimum of 2 weeks**, but applicants are welcome to stay for up to 12 weeks if desired. The first 1-2 days of volunteering will be spent in Nanisana to meet the team and attend a short orientation session. The remainder of training and orientation will take place in the field itself. All volunteer stays will end with 1-2 days back in Nanisana for a short debriefing and discussion of your results and experience.



Beautiful rice paddies just a short walk from our office in Nanisana



Our team outside the office in Nanisana

Our Projects

Our goal is to protect and conserve Madagascar's unique biodiversity while improving the lives of its people, and to implement permanent positive change through close collaboration with local communities. Our integrated approach to biodiversity conservation and development is reflected in our range of projects from ecological conservation to training and education, from recycling to construction.

Our volunteering programs fall into four categories:

Lemur Ecology and Conservation

Community Development

Environmental Education

School Construction

(Eligibility based on previous construction experience)

Freshwater Biodiversity Monitoring

(including fish, water birds, and reptiles. Based on specific request from volunteers)

Lemur Ecology and Conservation

Volunteers have the opportunity to assist in lemur ecology and conservation projects at two different sites for the 2020/21 season. Ecology and conservation projects are currently being conducted at our site in the Ankirihitra forests of the northwest and in the gallery forests of our Madiromirafy site, also located in the northwest.

Projects at both sites involve intensive surveying of lemur populations as well as an assessment of various threats to the area. This research is conducted with long-term conservation in mind and will be used to improve existing conservation plans and to create new conservation plans based on our assessments.

In Ankirihitra, volunteers will be conducting population surveys of two diurnal lemur species: the critically endangered crowned sifaka (*Propithecus coronatus*) and the critically endangered mongoose lemur (*Eulemur mongoz*), and one cathemeral species: the vulnerable red brown lemur (*Eulemur rufus*). Surveys will be particularly focused on the mongoose lemur as there is little known information on the abundance of this species in the area. Surveys of their population size and distribution, as well as assessments of the habitat health, are urgently needed to improve conservation efforts. This project is being used to reinforce conservation action plans for this priority species and also to establish a new protected area in the region specifically to address the needs of the mongoose lemur. Additionally, if there is particular interest, volunteers could also pursue projects on the behavioral ecology of the mongoose lemur and/or the crowned sifaka.

Our camp at this site is extremely remote and volunteers will stay in tents without electricity or running water. Instead, we can offer incredible wildlife encounters. In addition to the three lemur

species previously mentioned, the forests of Ankirihitra are home to the Madagascar flying fox (*Pteropus rufus*), and a stunning array of bird species and chameleons inhabit the surrounding wetlands.

At the Madiromirafy site, volunteers will help conduct surveys of the critically endangered crowned sifakas (*Propithecus coronatus*) and the red brown lemurs (*Eulemur rufus*) in the Mandrava gallery forest. These are currently the main species that we monitor at this site, but the fauna of this region is very diverse so there will be plenty of opportunity to observe a variety of other native and endemic species.

Another important part of the lemur ecology and conservation program is the carrying out of projects related to ecological restoration and reforestation. Working to maintain or improve the condition of the forest (the lemurs' habitat) is essential. At both sites we conduct many reforestation and ecological restoration activities that are done year-round. There is always work to be done in relation to restoring the forests, however, the specific reforestation activities that take place will depend on the time of year.

The actual planting of seedlings and the community reforestation events take place between December and March. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in these events, if they are volunteering during those months. Additionally, there is important monitoring that needs to be done in recently restored zones to monitor the saplings' survival rate and to ensure that the young trees are surviving and flourishing. The seedlings will be assessed to figure out what needs to be done to improve their growing conditions, if necessary. For example, dead saplings may need to be replaced or there may need to be clearing of underbrush or invasive plants. Other than the surveying of already planted seedlings, the seedlings at the nursery will also need to be cared for. There is plenty to do in the nurseries to make sure that the new tree seedlings are healthy and growing.

Typical Daily Schedule for Volunteers at Ecology and Conservation Project Sites

The following schedule gives you an idea of what to expect from a typical day in the field, focused on lemur monitoring. Please bear in mind that the activities that you will be conducting may change depending on the needs of the project at the time of your stay.

5:00am-12:00pm

In the field, your morning will usually start very early, between 5-6am. Typically, volunteers will wake up, pack their surveying equipment, eat breakfast, and head out to survey the forests. Most of the lemur species that we study are most active from sunrise to around 10-11:00am, and it's important that our team is active when they are active! Volunteers will spend the first several hours of the morning walking transects, collecting behavioral data, tracking lemur groups, and conducting surveys of threats in the area. Volunteers will often go to areas where our local guides have encountered lemurs the previous day or earlier that morning, but keep in mind that lemurs are fast and the forests can be very dense so it may take some time to locate a group.

12:00pm-3:00pm

Once the day heats up and the lemurs descend in the canopy to sleep for the day, it is very difficult to locate them. During this time, volunteers will return to camp and have a short period where they discuss any interesting observations, and share/record all of their data from the morning. Volunteers will be given a late lunch around 1:00/2:00pm prepared by a local cook and will have time to rest and explore the area.

3:30-6:00pm

On some days, depending on the weather, volunteers will be able to go back out on an afternoon survey of the area. Many of the lemur species become active again in the early evenings and it is beneficial for our teams to conduct another assessment during this time. These late afternoons will be similar to the morning and after a few hours of lemur tracking volunteers will return back to camp for dinner. If it is not possible to return to the forests during this time, volunteers will have the opportunity to interact with local villagers or participate in reforestation or environmental education activities.

6:30-9:00pm

After returning to camp for the night, volunteers have the rest of the evening to share stories, assist with food preparation, and interact with local villagers. The evenings at our field sites are usually very beautiful and the scenery is stunning; volunteers are encouraged to take photos and document what they see and record their experience. The next morning begins again at sunrise, so it is recommended that volunteers get a good night's sleep!

Community Development

Aside from participating in lemur ecology and conservation projects, volunteers can also choose to be a part of our many projects aimed at sustainable community development and improving the livelihoods of local people. Currently, we are conducting projects with this focus at both of our available field sites, as this area is one of the most important to focus on in order to ensure effective conservation.

In Madagascar, most people make a living off of the land, farming and working from sunrise to sunset. In order for us to properly protect the environment, it is essential for us to consider the needs of the local people who use the forests on a daily basis. For this reason, all of our field sites are in need of volunteers to help with sustainable community development. As a part of these projects, volunteers will assist in improving the livelihoods of local community members by promoting and teaching improved farming and agricultural techniques and helping to encourage alternative sources of income for community members.

Sustainable community development projects tend to be highly variable and can range from implementing more sustainable farming techniques to building fuel-efficient stoves to developing ways to provide communities with clean water, and anything in between. All of our field sites are located in very remote areas without access to electricity or running water. Access to clean water is very limited among the community around our field sites, and at many of our sites the availability of sustainable farming land is quickly dwindling. Our aim in these areas is to decrease the negative impact of farming and agriculture on the surrounding forests and biodiversity, while also improving the lives of the community members.

Volunteers working in this area are highly encouraged to brainstorm and develop new and innovative ideas of their own in the area of community improvement. In the past, some of our projects have included providing communities with fuel-efficient stoves to decrease the use of lumber, teaching more sustainable farming practices to increase crop yield and decrease negative impacts of the soil and clear cutting of forests, and helping community members create handmade products to be sold as an alternative and sustainable source of income.

Because these projects are based on the needs of the community, daily volunteer schedules for these programs will be dependent on the specific activities being undertaken.

Environmental Education and Construction

In addition to our community development and research projects, volunteers are also able to choose to participate in one of two types of conservation education projects, environmental education programs at either our Ankirihitra or Madiromirafy site, or to help with constructing a new school at our Ankirihitra field site (depending on the volunteer's level of experience).

As a part of our education projects, volunteers will assist with teaching at local schools and helping with local awareness-raising events and campaigns. The aim for these projects is to promote knowledge about the biodiversity of the local forests and increase community awareness of the importance of conservation. The majority of education-based projects will be focused on the younger community members, as our goal is to give the next generation the tools needed to conserve the environment. These activities will most likely focus on practical environmental education. Some of these activities include building vegetable gardens, planting tree saplings with students, building hand washing stations, and more!

We are also currently in the process of developing a project to help construct a new school at our Ankirihitra site. This project is very hands-on, requiring volunteers to help develop, design, and build a new school for the community. Thus, we are looking for volunteers that have any experience in construction or similar experiences to apply. Because we are looking for someone to take initiative with the development of this new project we are requiring that only volunteers with experience apply for this position. The local communities and IMPACT staff will also help with construction activities.



The community members of one of our many project sites

Orientation & Training

All volunteers will participate in a mandatory one-day orientation period at our office in Nanisana. This orientation will be used to familiarize volunteers with the project and allow volunteers to meet the rest of the team and assimilate a little bit to the different culture. Volunteers will receive any additional training upon arrival at their various field sites. While no prior training is required for volunteers, experience in scientific data collection or community outreach is a plus.

Volunteer Requirements

Our only requirement for volunteers is that they must be at least **18 years old**. Beyond this, it helps for volunteers to have a high level of interest in conservation, scientific research, community development, education, or a combination of those areas. Volunteers will also find it helpful to be at a relatively high level of fitness (especially those conducting field surveys), and to be open-minded, self-disciplined, and adventurous. All volunteers are also required to have adequate volunteer travel insurance and provide a criminal background check to IMPACT Madagascar prior to beginning.

Though being able to speak French or Malagasy is not a prerequisite for the IMPACT Madagascar volunteer program, we recommend that volunteers learn some basic French and Malagasy prior to departure, as this will help immensely with day-to-day volunteer work (specifically with community development and education projects) and communicating with local people. Before departure for Madagascar, our team will provide volunteers with a country information packet including a list of common Malagasy and French words and phrases, to help volunteers upon arrival. Volunteers will also have plenty of opportunities to practice both languages with locals throughout their time here.

You should also be comfortable living in very basic conditions. At these field sites there is no running water, minimal electricity, no Wi-Fi access, and basic shower and toilet facilities. You might also choose to sleep in a tent. Experience with fieldwork or camping, and time spent outdoors will be beneficial, but is of course not required. What is the most important is that you want to try these things and embrace the differences (from your home country) and the challenges and successes that come along with this experience! *See the Field Site Descriptions section for a more detailed description of what living at the field sites will entail.*

What Volunteers Can Expect

As you may have noticed, many of our projects have important links with one another, which means if you are volunteering in one of our project areas, you are likely to assist with some aspects of another! Volunteers in all areas will gain the unique experience of being able to perform hands-on research regarding endangered flora and fauna that are found nowhere else on Earth! Volunteers will also have an opportunity to learn local customs and work closely with members of communities with characteristics somewhere in between those of mainland Africa and Asia. You will gain invaluable experience in community development and education and will play a vital role in the conservation of critically endangered species. Along with getting to work on projects that are sure to bring you a sense of personal fulfillment and forever impact the lives of the local people you work with, volunteers will have an opportunity to see the unique landscape of the “Island Nation” and will be immersed in a beautiful wilderness during any stays in the field. Once you are in Madagascar, you will have the chance to visit the stunning national parks here and we can help you organize your trip. However, our volunteers must be independent and resilient. Madagascar is like nowhere else in the world, in terms of biodiversity, but also in the way of life of its local people.

General Schedule

This is the projected itinerary for a typical volunteer staying for three weeks. Keep in mind that the actual schedule of activities might vary during your stay.

Day 1-2

Volunteers will be picked up from the airport and taken to the accommodation that has been arranged for them near our office. During this time, volunteers will have an opportunity to rest from their travels and attend orientation sessions at our office. This will allow volunteers to be able to meet other team members and get to know a little about the area and the projects before going to the field.

Day 3-18 (or Day 3-11 for 2-week stay)

After the orientation period, volunteers will leave for the field sites to work on the projects that they have learned about and prepared for during the orientation. Depending on the distance of the site, road conditions and size of the team traveling with you, volunteers may travel either by bus or 4x4, and the trip can take anywhere from a half-day to two days. Along the way, IMPACT Madagascar will cover all accommodation for the volunteer. During this trip, volunteers may also have the opportunity to attend meetings with local governments to experience the process of collaborating with the local community. Depending on the field site and the projects the volunteer is helping in, these weeks may consist of anything from treks into the forest to track lemurs to playing with local children and teaching them about conservation. While in the field, volunteers will have an opportunity to get a firsthand taste of the rural Madagascar lifestyle, practice their Malagasy, and have an important impact on local communities and endangered species.

Day 19-21 (Day 12-14 for 2-week stay)

On the last few days of their stay, volunteers will travel back to our office in Nanisana and will have a short debriefing period where they will have the opportunity to discuss their projects with other volunteers and upload/compile all of their data and observations. Volunteers will also typically be asked to write a short report detailing their time and observations in the field.

Accommodation

During their time in Nanisana, volunteers will stay at either a local homestay set up with a family or at a local bed and breakfast/hotel. Both types of accommodation are safe and offer volunteers a unique way to experience the local people before heading to the field. During their time in Nanisana, volunteers will be responsible for their own food, however eating in Nanisana is very cheap, and you can easily get by on €4.50/\$5 a day for food. While in the field, volunteer accommodation will be in tents at our field camps. All of our field sites are remote and the camps themselves are very basic. Volunteers will get firsthand experience of the rural way of life in Madagascar and will live alongside local community members and the local flora and fauna of the region. While in the field, IMPACT Madagascar will provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner prepared by a local chef, and volunteers will often have plenty of fresh fruit to choose from. It is highly recommended that volunteers bring their own camping gear with them.

Food

Malagasy food is simple, but delicious, especially if you like rice! Rice is a staple here and is usually eaten with breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Meals are generally combined with a portion of meat and vegetables and served with rice tea (which consists of essentially burning rice in a pot and then re-boiling water in it, which is actually quite tasty after you get used to it). In town, there is a variety of food to choose from and volunteers will have no problem finding new things to try.

In the field, breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be prepared by local cooks and will generally consist of fresh vegetables and some kind of meat (usually chicken, beef, or fish) and will usually be accompanied by rice. This food is all prepared fresh and processed on site, so volunteers will likely have an opportunity to help with preparation of the rice (which there is more to than you would think) and other aspects of the meals. Vegetarians will have no problem here either, as there are plenty of fresh vegetables, beans, and delicious tropical fruits available year-round.

Program Fees

Our program is designed to be more affordable than most volunteer programs while providing you with the same level of experience. **Our volunteer programs cost €325/\$365 per week; for a 2-week program, that comes out to €650/\$730!** *For volunteers that wish to stay longer than three weeks, long-term stay packages and payment plans may be available.*

The program fee covers transfer to and from the airport, assistance with visa and travel plans, 24/7 in country support, accommodation in Nanisana, transport and accommodation to and from field sites, accommodation and food in the field, and orientation/training. Volunteers are required to cover **international flights, visa costs, travel insurance, criminal background check (required for longer stays), vaccinations (required before arrival in Madagascar), and personal spending money.** During personal time in Madagascar, most people find it easy to get by on about €13/\$15 a day or even much less depending on what you eat and do.

Fees paid by volunteers help us to run our projects efficiently and successfully. This money goes towards buying materials for projects (such as school supplies or field equipment) and a large portion of volunteer fees are used to help pay local guides, cooks, and governing bodies that give us essential support for our projects. Program fees also help us to ensure that we can provide volunteers with the necessary training and support needed to make the experience the best it can be.

Madagascar at a Glance...



Population: 26.26 million

Capital: Antananarivo

Official languages: Malagasy and French

Currency: Malagasy Ariary (MGA)

Exchange rate as of September 2020: USD\$1 = 3,832 MGA;
€1 = 4,524 MGA; £1 = 4,960 MGA

Time zone: UTC+03:00



- Madagascar is currently ranked as one of the poorest nations on Earth
- 90% of the people in Madagascar live off of less than \$2 a day
- Madagascar is known for its vanilla, pepper, and of course its lemurs!
- Madagascar is the 4th largest island in the world and is sometimes called the 8th continent

- With one of the highest per capita consumptions worldwide, rice is the staple food of Madagascar and is eaten in large quantities with most meals
- The official language of Madagascar is Malagasy, followed by French
- There are no venomous snakes in the forests of Madagascar, and no large carnivores like on mainland Africa
- Madagascar is a biodiversity hotspot, it contains 5% of the world's species in only 0.4% of the world's landmass
- 90% of Madagascar's natural forests have already been lost, making conservation more essential now than ever before
- Besides the lemur, the chameleon is another iconic animal native to Madagascar. The island holds two thirds of the world's chameleon species
- Madagascar is home to the 4th largest coral reef system in the world, making its marine life just as diverse as the life on land!
- Madagascar is a beautiful nation full of colorful culture, friendly faces, beautiful landscape, and delicious fruits and vegetable

Weather and Climate

The climate of Madagascar varies due to the topographic differences and trade winds from the Indian Ocean. Typically the climate is tropical along the coast, temperate inland, and arid in the south. There is a wet, warm season from November to April with most rainfall covering the eastern coast. There is a cooler, dry season from May to October. Temperatures fall between an average of 18°C (64°F) to 30°C (86°F) throughout the year, with the lowest temperature dropping to 12°C (54°F) and highest reaching 36°C (96°F).

Field Site Descriptions

Ankirihitra Field Site

The Camp

Our Ankirihitra field camp is located in the Northwestern region of Madagascar, within one of the last remaining dry deciduous forests in the country. The village of Ankirihitra is extremely remote and is accessible only by a 3-4 hour drive down rough dirt roads after a ferry crossing of the Betsiboka River, which winds around the larger city of Ambato-Boeny.

The village itself is basic with no running water and only a few places with electricity. In Ankirihitra, researchers are hosted by a local family of the village and stay in a vacant house within the village or a tent camping area located just outside the limits of the village.



A few of the children on their way home from the local schoolhouse



Ankirihitra Village

Amenities in the village are very limited, latrines are scarce, and there are no shower facilities. However, the village is a short walk from three springs where water can be gathered for drinking and visitors are able to bathe and wash clothes. The area is dense with *Madiro* (Tamarin) trees, offering relief from the sun and heat that is characteristic of this region. Our camp here is integrated directly with the village and researchers and volunteers live closely with local community members while on site.

The Surrounding Area

Ankirihitra is uniquely situated between two different types of forest, dry deciduous and gallery, making the area an extremely important site for conservation as it encompasses several different habitat types and is home to a wide array of species. The dry forests to the north of the village are some of the last sections of this type of forest in the entire country. These forests are therefore home to many important bird and reptile species including several species of chameleon and snakes.



Our team taking an inventory of the dry, deciduous forest of Ankirihitra

Here, small, thorny shrubs growing in sandy soil give way to massive tamarind trees and various other large tree species. The forest here is dense, but is scattered with areas of clear cutting and slash and burn agriculture. Farming is the major source of income for local community members and evidence of livestock and crop cultivation is extremely common along the secondary roads running throughout the forests.



Gallery forest surrounding Ankirihitra village

Downhill from Ankirihitra village, the labohazo River runs through a thick gallery forest, home to the critically endangered crowned sifaka (*Propithecus coronatus*), the critically endangered mongoose lemur (*Eulemur mongoz*) and a wide array of other species. The forests running along the banks of this river represent critical habitat for many of the species that can be found there. Much of this forest is part of a conservation zone and is off limits to local farmers and

livestock owners. However, the banks of the river, outside of the main limits of the

forest, are lined with rice paddies and other plots of crops that make use of the easy access to water.



A Paradise Fly Catcher, one of the many bird species of the area



Local children of Ankirihitra



Our team walking the boundaries of a new protected area in the dry, deciduous forest



A typical scene within Ankirihitra Village



Our team getting ready to cross over the labohazo River into the gallery forest



A pair of crowned sifaka high in the canopy of the gallery forest

Madiromirafy Field Site

The Camp

Madiromirafy is a commune in the Betsiboka region that is found 335 km (~208 miles) northwest of Antananarivo. The commune is composed of three main villages (known as a *fokontany* in Malagasy): Madiromirafy village (the main town of the commune) where the field camp is located, Anjiakely village, and Mahalavaolona village. The field site at Madiromirafy is only accessible by boat. It is about a six-hour drive from the capital to a point on the Ikopa River, the second longest waterway in the country. At this point it is necessary to hop on our new motorboat to make our way the field site. The trip is about two hours on the boat, riding down the wide river with plenty of biodiversity to see on and around the riverbanks. We may also have access to a hovercraft on site in which case the trip to camp would take about 45 minutes.

The village itself is very basic; it has no electricity and does not have running water. Water can be collected from the river (or other freshwater source) and is treated with chlorine or purifying tablets



Volunteers on the way to the forests

at the camp. Most of the local community members live in small houses made of packed red soil and/or thatched roof huts. The camp amenities are also basic, but functional. There is a covered shower room for volunteers, researchers, and IMPACT staff with the necessary supplies for taking a bucket shower. There are long-drop latrine toilets. For sleeping, there is a dormitory where guests can sleep. There are also covered camping areas where tents can be set up. There is an indoor dining

room with tables and chairs, and a

kitchen for all food preparation. Additionally, there is a basic health center (CSBII) in the village that is staffed by a state-qualified doctor, only 10 minutes from camp.

The Surrounding Area

The Madiromirafy site is rich in renewable natural resources and has exceptional biological and ecological value. The greater Madiromirafy area is made up of two distinct ecosystems, the Mandrava gallery forest, and the Madiromirafy wetlands and lakes. Both areas are important habitats for a variety of species. The gallery forest, with an area of about 300 hectares, is home to numerous flora and fauna species endemic to Madagascar. According to the latest inventory, there are more than 36 species of birds (including the critically endangered the Madagascan fish eagle,

Haliaeetus vociferoides), more than 15 species of reptiles (including the only crocodile species found on the island: the Nile crocodile, *Crocodylus niloticus*), at least 20 species of fish (including the critically endangered damba, *Paretroplus maculatus*) and six mammal species (including the fossa, *Cryptoprocta ferox*, and three lemur species). The lemurs of this area include one diurnal species: the crowned sifaka (*Propithecus coronatus*), one cathemeral species: the red brown lemur (*Eulemur rufus*) and two nocturnal species: a species of mouse lemur (*Microcebus* sp.) and a species of dwarf lemur (*Cheirogaleus* sp.). Other species of lemurs used to be found in the forest, including the mongoose lemur (*Eulemur mongoz*), but due to the effect of hunting, this species and others disappeared from the area. Other than the forest and wetland areas, large parts of the land are used for agriculture, which is the main source of livelihood for the community. The main crops are rice and peanuts; corn and tobacco are also cultivated.



A baobab tree in the gallery forest



Tree nursery beside the camp



A volunteer who worked with us for two years



Working with children and women in the village



Meeting with women at the camp during a project on women's empowerment



A short walk from the camp



The village