



VOL. 01 · A FOREST IN NORTHWEST MADAGASCAR

# There is a hill in northwest Madagascar.

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*A field document on the Andilambologno forest — Sofia region, northwest Madagascar.*

MARCH 2025

Photographs from the March 2025 expedition. With thanks to the Mikajy Natiora field team.

# Two days from the capital.

Drive north from Antananarivo. The first half-day is spent comfortably on a paved road. The next day-and-a-half are spent bouncing along the only dirt track that runs the northwest coast. Past the receding primary forest, past the village of Mahitsihazo, lies a forest no government protects — and a community that does.



*The single road up the northwest coast. From the air, primary forest is already receding into grass.*

REGION

**Sofia**

NEAREST VILLAGE

**Mahitsihazo**

COORDINATES

**14°17.045' S  
48°03.899' E**

LEGAL STATUS

**Unprotected**

From the field notes of the March 2025 expedition. The road is the only land approach.

# Andilambologno.

*An unprotected forest in the last refuge of one of the rarest primates on Earth.*



*The Andilambologno hill, looking west toward the Mozambique Channel.*

## 01 Madagascar.

One of the world's biodiversity hotspots. Among the top six megadiversity countries on Earth, second on the global list of primate diversity. About fifteen thousand plant species exist here; eighty-three percent are endemic. Ninety-two percent of reptiles. Ninety-nine percent of amphibians. One hundred percent of lemurs — they exist nowhere else.

## 02 Andilambologno.

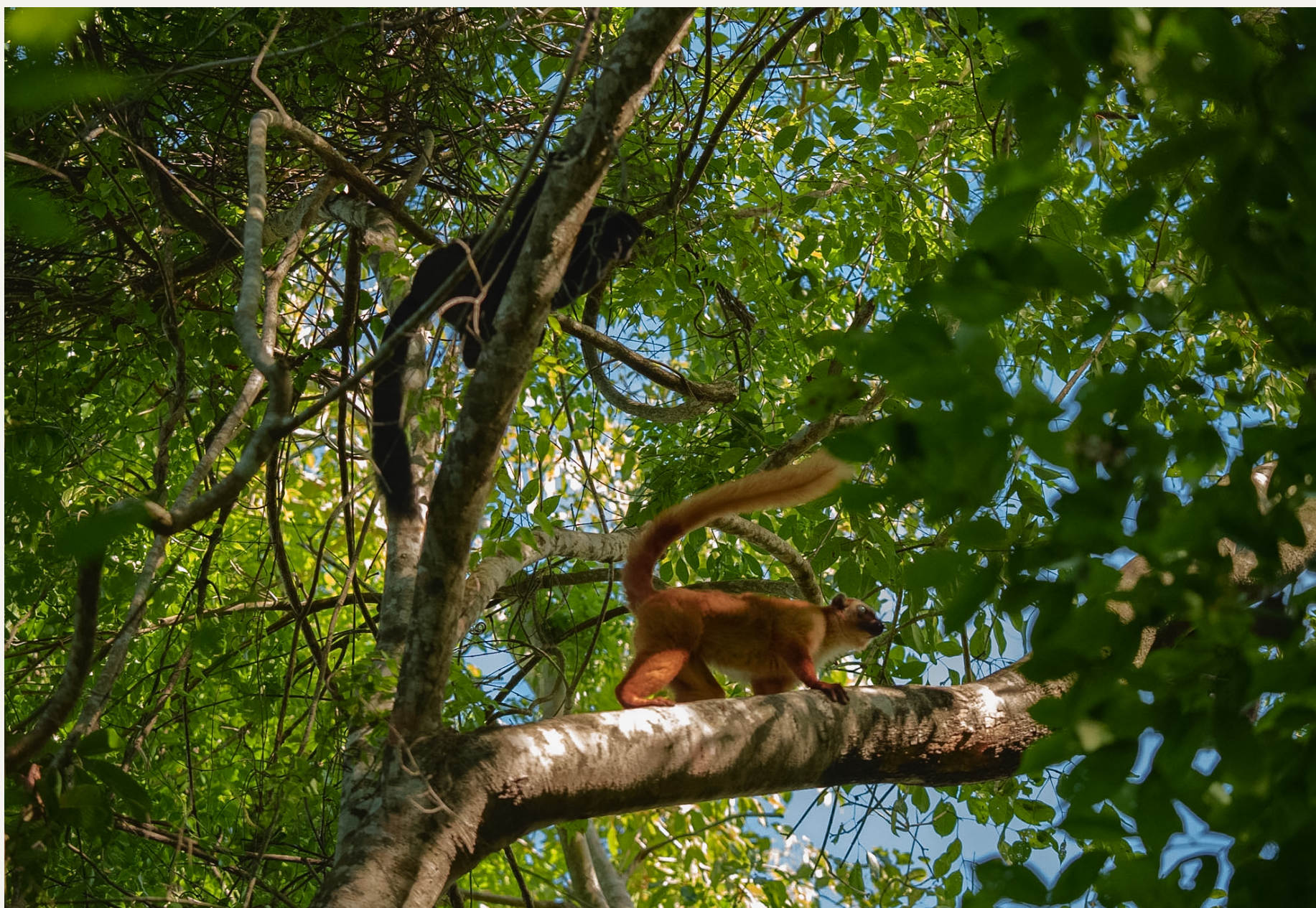
Sits adjacent to Sahamalaza-Iles Radama National Park, the only legally protected habitat of the blue-eyed black lemur. The forest itself is unprotected. No park designation. No legal status. No conservation actions had been undertaken here before Mikajy Natiora began.

## 03 The pressure.

Slash-and-burn agriculture. Selective logging. Uncontrolled fire. Illegal mining. Hunting. About ninety-five percent of all lemur species are now classified Critically Endangered or Endangered.

# The blue-eyed black lemur.

*One of two primates on Earth with blue eyes. The other is us.*



*A pair of Eulemur flavifrons — male (left) and female (right) — Andilambologno, March 2025.*

Listed Critically Endangered. Population dropped by more than eighty percent between 1990 and 2014 — among the steepest declines for any lemur on record. Range among the smallest of any lemur, anywhere. Only one place on Earth grants it legal protection: Sahamalaza-Iles Radama National Park. Andilambologno is part of its habitat. It is not in the park.

They live in family groups of seven to ten, and are cathemeral — active across day and night. Their diet is fruits, flowers, nectar, and young leaves. They are critical seed dispersers; what they eat, the forest depends on. *Eulemur flavifrons* was elevated to its own species, distinct from *Eulemur macaco*, only in 2008 — and is the only non-human primate to have evolved blue eyes.

**Females are rust orange with blue eyes. Males are black with blue eyes. They mate for life.**

# Four focal species. One forest.

These are the species monitored on the Andilambologno hill by Guy and the Mikajy Natiora team. Three of the four are pictured here. Most of what else lives in the forest has not been counted.



*Eulemur flavifrons* · Female



*Eulemur flavifrons* · Male



*Haplemur occidentalis* · Northern bamboo lemur



*Mirza zaza* · Northern giant mouse lemur

## FOCAL SPECIES — ANDILAMBOLOGNO FOREST

<i>Eulemur flavifrons</i>	Blue-eyed black lemur	<b>Critically Endangered</b>
<i>Haplemur occidentalis</i>	Northern bamboo lemur	<b>Vulnerable</b>
<i>Mirza zaza</i>	Northern giant mouse lemur	<b>Vulnerable</b>
<i>Cheirogaleus medius</i>	Fat-tailed dwarf lemur	<b>Vulnerable</b>

# Twelve years on this hill.

Mikajy Natoria is a Madagascar-based conservation NGO founded in 2013 by Malagasy biologists. The same team has worked Andilambologno since the beginning. Only locals work here. Guy is the only outsider from the capital city of Antananarivo.



*Teoda — Mikajy Natoria field team — facing the village at the March 2025 community gathering.*

#### FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

### **Dr. Sylviane Volampeno**

Primatologist. PhD Zoology, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Lecturer at the University of Antananarivo. Founded Mikajy Natoria in 2013.

#### PROJECT COORDINATOR

### **Guy Randriatahina**

One of the world's leading experts on *Eulemur flavifrons*. Long-tenured field director, formerly with AEECL.

#### FIELD COORDINATOR

### **Tsiory Rakotomalala**

Manages forest patrols, ranger schedule, and the four-times-a-year mobile clinic. Pictured filling prescriptions on Page 09.

#### LOCAL RANGERS & FIELD

### **Teoda + 3 field team**

All from the surrounding villages. Daily presence on the hill. Six field staff total.

# Reciprocity, not enforcement.



*Guy Randriatahina walking a girl to her prize at the community talent show. Andilambologno, March 2025.*

This is Guy. He is one of the world's leading experts on the blue-eyed black lemur. He is also a man you trust your daughter with. The model that has held this forest for twelve years is reciprocity. Seeds. Medicine. School materials. Cooperative incentives in exchange for keeping the forest standing. Households without income are prioritized first.

## WHAT THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS RECEIVE

### SEEDS

Maize, fast-growing crops, 200 chickens distributed annually

### MEDICINE

Doctor + midwife visits 4× a year. Free consultations + prescriptions

### OUTREACH

School programs, t-shirts, calendars, talent shows, lemur films

### WORK

Local employment as rangers, field staff, cooks, drivers

# The work is the relationship.

A talent show in the village. Girls dancing. The kids broke loose into a mosh pit. Above it all, a drone — which the kids promptly chased.



*Aerial of the same gathering. The kids saw the drone and chased it.*



*Girls dancing in the talent show.*



*And later, a mosh pit.*

**“We are committed to remain at this site for as long as is necessary to ensure the protection of the forest.”**

GUY RANDRIATAHINA · PROJECT COORDINATOR, MIKAJY NATIORA

# There is no other clinic.

*How healthcare reaches Andilambologno.*

Mikajy Natorra drives a doctor and a midwife two days from Antananarivo. They make the trip four times a year. They bring bags of medicine, examination instruments, and a list of who needs to be seen.

They diagnose what the village faces — malaria, infections, complications of pregnancy, the cuts and burns and chronic conditions of a place a day's drive from any hospital. They write prescriptions. They examine pregnant women. They leave medicine.

Then they drive back. The next visit is three months later.

**There is no other clinic for tens of kilometers.**

## FROM GUY RANDRIATAHINA'S 2026 PROJECT BUDGET

- Ten doctor per diems for four days every quarter.
- One car hire and fuel for four trips of ten days each from Antananarivo.
- Medicines distributed to patients during clinics.
- The team is a doctor and a midwife.



*Tsiory filling prescriptions during a quarterly clinic.*

# Twelve years, from above.

From the ground, you can see the whole project at once. A school at one end. A field research station at the other. Soccer in between. Here it is from above.



*Drone view: existing village school (lower frame) and field research station (middle frame). Kids playing soccer between them. March 2025.*

## FIVE PROGRAMS

- |           |                                 |  |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>01</b> | <b>Lemur surveys</b>            | Four line-transect routes. GPS waypoints, group size, activity, tree height. Standard primate density methodology. |
| <b>02</b> | <b>Forest patrols</b>           | Currently 4 local rangers, randomized routes so loggers can't predict patrols. GPS + camera. Monthly reporting.    |
| <b>03</b> | <b>Sustainable livelihoods</b>  | Maize seeds, fast-growing crops, 200 chickens distributed annually. Single-parent households prioritized.          |
| <b>04</b> | <b>Healthcare</b>               | Doctor + midwife, four trips a year from Antananarivo. Free consultations, prescriptions, pregnancy screenings.    |
| <b>05</b> | <b>Education &amp; outreach</b> | School programs, films, T-shirts, talent shows, beach cleanups. Lemur Day, Earth Day, World Environment Day.       |



# Twenty-three thousand dollars a year.

The annual budget for the Andilambologno project — from Guy Randriatahina's 2026 grant proposal. Against the loss of one of the rarest primates on Earth.

## \$23,009

PER YEAR · CURRENT OPERATING BUDGET

## \$69,027

REQUESTED · 3 YEARS, 2026–2029

### ANNUAL BUDGET BREAKDOWN · FROM GUY RANDRIATAHINA'S 2026 GRANT PROPOSAL

PROGRAM	DETAIL	ANNUAL
<b>Human resources</b>	Project coordinator, field coordinator, 4 rangers, cook, doctor per diems (4 trips × 10 days)	<b>\$10,500</b>
<b>Travel &amp; subsistence</b>	Car hire + fuel + food, 4 trips of 10 days each from Antananarivo	<b>\$5,273</b>
<b>Education &amp; outreach</b>	300 T-shirts, 300 calendars, 300 tote bags, films, talent shows	<b>\$4,909</b>
<b>Medical consultation</b>	Medicines distributed to patients during quarterly clinics	<b>\$1,045</b>
<b>Sustainable livelihoods</b>	Maize seed, 200 chickens for distribution to vulnerable households	<b>\$1,367</b>
<b>Overhead</b>	Internet	<b>\$545</b>

### TOTAL — ANNUAL OPERATING

## \$23,009

#### ON LONG-TERM FUNDING · FROM GUY'S 2026 PROPOSAL

*“Lemurs are long-lived primates with slow reproductive rates. Conservation outcomes — population trends, threat reduction, forest regeneration — require years of consistent effort to become measurable. Behavioral change cannot be achieved through one-off awareness campaigns.”*

# The other side of the hill.



*The Andilambologno ridge. The forest extends across both faces. The far side has never been documented.*

The forest does not stop at the ridge. Half of it — the other half — is, in Guy's words, a forest no scientist has ever walked. No transects. No camera traps. Unknown to science.

And the villages on the other side: Increasing deforestation. No rangers. No clinic. No school. No reciprocity. No relationship.

**Today, that forest still stands. Tomorrow is not a guarantee.**

## THIS SIDE

4 rangers, quarterly clinic, 12 years of trust, talent shows, declining deforestation

## THE RIDGE

Virgin forest. No documentation. Unmapped for science. In need of protection.

## OTHER SIDE

No rangers. No clinic. No school. In need of support.

# Mikajy Natiora.

*Protect Nature. — from the Malagasy.*



A Madagascar-based, Madagascar-led conservation NGO. Founded in 2013 by a team of Malagasy biologists. Headquartered in Antananarivo. Field-based across northwest Madagascar — Antsohihy, Maromandia, Analalava, Mahitsihazo, and the unprotected forests adjacent to Sahamalaza-Iles Radama National Park.

## FOUR PROGRAMS

### Research

Population surveys, vocalization studies, distribution mapping. Discovery of new lemur populations.

### Livelihoods

Seeds, poultry, beekeeping. Income alternatives that reduce forest pressure.

### Education

School outreach, films, talent shows, calendars. Tied to Earth Day, Lemur Day, Mangrove Day, and other environmental events.

### Healthcare

Quarterly mobile clinics. Doctor + midwife from Antananarivo. Free consultations and medicine.

## THE TEAM

### Dr. Sylviane Volampeno

*Founder & Principal Investigator*

### Guy Randriatahina

*Project Coordinator*

### Tsiory Rakotomalala

*Field Coordinator*

### Teoda + 3 field rangers

*Local field staff*

*Mikajy's broader portfolio extends to coastal mangroves and the threatened Madagascar sacred ibis (*Threskiornis bernieri*).*

**“Madagascar has a rich biodiversity that is not found anywhere else in the world, and we are determined to do what we can to protect it.”**