Pilot study on the conservation status of the hairy-eared dwarf lemur (*Allocebus trichotis*) in Eastern Madagascar.

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During this 4 month pilot study, we conducted nocturnal surveys and located the hairy-eared dwarf lemur on 12 occasions. This confirms the animal's presence in the Analamazaotra Special Reserve and Forest Station. We located 2 sites that are probably important areas for the species as animals were observed at least 3 times in these locations. The Special Reserve could hold 3 or 4 groups and the Forest Station at least 1 group of the species. With a group size of 2-4 individuals, this means 8 to 20 animals in the areas surveyed and a density of 1 to 3 individuals per hectare.

The hairy-eared dwarf lemur is a highly insectivorous, solitary forager; probably active from sunset until dawn. During the night, we heard very high pitched contact calls between members of a sleeping group, coordinating their activity and movements. The species is not exclusive to virgin primary rainforest and could be tolerant of some habitat disturbance. However, the destruction and fragmentation of the hairy-eared dwarf lemur's natural habitat is a serious concern. A long term reforestation project is currently ongoing; aiming to restore forest corridors between the reserves and Mantadia National Park, but it will take a long time for the trees to grow and it is not clear what state the current population is in. Human disturbance in the area is currently mainly due to tourism and illegal tree cutting. During our nocturnal surveys, we encountered many other species of nocturnal lemurs as well as birds, reptiles, frogs, insects and other mammals. We believe there are at least 3 or 4 *Microcebus* species (possibly at least one new to science) and at least 2 *Cheirogaleus* species. This shows the biodiversity and conservation importance of the area.

We are currently planning a long term research project involving radio-tracking of *A. trichotis* to improve further our understanding of the ecology and behaviour of the species. The study will include all night animal follows and records of diet, vocalization, social interactions, home range and activity. We will continue helping to train guides and set up an educational project introducing school children and villagers to the variety of nocturnal life in the forests. Our research will also involve Malagasy students.

Hairy-eared dwarf lemur *Allocebus trichotis* observed in Analamazaotra Special Reserve