

Behavioral ecology and population genetics of diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) and black-and-white ruffed lemurs (*Varecia variegata*)

Position Description:

We are searching for four highly motivated and self-reliant PhD students to work on a research study of diademed sifakas (*Propithecus diadema*) and/or black-and-white ruffed lemurs (*Varecia variegata*) in Madagascar. The four candidates will assist the Principal Investigators (PIs) Dr. Krista Milich and Dr. Emily Wroblewski, fieldwork supervisor Dr. Giovanna Bonadonna (Washington University in St. Louis, USA), and Dr. Brigitte Marie Raharivololona (the PhD students' academic advisor at the University of Antananarivo). Two students will be based at Betampona Natural Reserve to work in collaboration with Madagascar Fauna and Flora Group (Dr. Karen Freeman, Ingrid Porton, and Dr. Fidisoa Rasambainarivo), and two students will be based in the Vohibe Forest near Ambalabe village to work in collaboration with the Missouri Botanical Garden (Dr. Armand Randrianasolo). The aim of this study is to compare the behavioral ecology and population genetics of these species at these two sites – Betampona being an isolated and highly fragmented forest, while Vohibe is better connected as part of Corridor Ankeniheny-Zahamena (CAZ). Successful applicants will be trained in all relevant data collection and archiving methods, including behavioral and ecological sampling, radio-telemetry, database manipulation, non-invasive sample collection, etc.

Applicants will need to be available to conduct field work for two years starting approximately in September 2021. The work will involve daily focal follows of the lemurs, including hiking through difficult terrain in the forest and staying at remote field sites. This work will be rigorous and demanding. Assistants will be expected to work about 12 hours in the field each day, beginning early in the morning, for about 20-25 days out of each month. The terrain is quite hilly and can be very steep in places, seasonal rains can be extreme and lead to very muddy conditions, and the climate can alternate between hot and humid to cold and rainy.

Applicants will need to be able to work cooperatively with a local assistant and with the other project team at their field site. Students will be remotely supervised by the fieldwork supervisor and a local fieldwork coordinator but will need to be highly self-sufficient and dependable. The position requires a substantial amount of data management. Applicants will maintain direct regular communication in English with the field supervisor and the PIs. Prior to the start of data collection, PhD students and the PIs will discuss the use of data, such that students will have a usable set of data from the project for their graduate work and the remaining data will be used by the project. Students need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to the start of the field work. If the vaccination against COVID-19 is not available, alternative plans will be discussed.

Qualifications/Experience:

Ideal candidates must possess the following qualifications and experiences:

- The equivalent of a MS in Primatology, Animal Behavior, Biological Anthropology, Biology, Ecology, or a related field.
- Be comfortable using Excel and either be familiar with or interested in learning to use databases.
- Good English proficiency.
- A strong interest in primate behavior and ecology.
- Prior experience with living or working at a remote field site.

- Be in good physical and mental condition; be able to follow instructions; feel comfortable being far away from family and friends; be emotionally mature, energetic, and VERY patient; have an excellent eye for detail.
- Have very good social and communication skills, especially in small groups; and be able to maintain a positive attitude towards challenging and tiring work.
- Persistence, maturity, dedication, flexibility, good attitude, and an excellent work ethic are extremely important.
- Not be afraid of bugs, snakes, or being alone in the forest.

Preferred experience:

- Preference will be given to applicants with previous outdoor experience in demanding environments and especially those who have previously studied lemurs.
- Previous experience with primates is preferred, but applicants with previous experience with animals or working outdoors will also be considered.
- Experience with collecting systematic data in a scientific context is preferred.

Salary/funding:

Applicants will be supported following university recommendations for students' Per Diem in Madagascar. Additionally, living expenses at the field sites will be covered, travel costs to get to and from the field site at the start and end of the study period will be provided. The technical material for data collection and management will be provided as well as some basic field gear and equipment. Students are responsible for providing their own personal items necessary during the study period.

Term of Appointment:

Two years starting in September 2021 (subject to change due to logistic issues and restrictions for COVID-19)

Application Deadline:

Applications will be considered until the positions are filled. Review of applications will begin immediately.

Application Instructions:

Please direct all initial inquiries regarding the application process or project to Dr. Krista Milich (krista.milich@wustl.edu) and Dr. Brigitte Marie Raharivololona (raharivololonabrigitte@yahoo.fr)

Please submit the following documentation in ENGLISH and in ONE single PDF file saved with your last and first name in the file name (e.g. "SmithJohn.pdf").

[1] A letter of interest describing your motivation for applying for this position. Include dates you are available.

[2] A recent CV including relevant coursework, previous field/outdoor experience, and where/how you can be contacted.

[3] Contact information for two people (preferably professors or research supervisors with whom you've worked closely) who can provide information about your experiences, skills, and training.