

P R O G R E S S R E P O R T

Summer 2001



LEMUR CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION

Dear Friends of the Lemur Project,

We are delighted to send you this 2001 Progress Report to appraise you of recent developments on the Foundation and the Lemur Reserve. Much has happened at the Myakka City Lemur Reserve since you received the Bi-Annual Report last year, not the least of which is that we have changed the name of the Foundation! We are pleased to report that we are now simply the "Lemur Conservation Foundation". When we were founded in 1996, few people actually knew what lemurs were but that has changed through a growing awareness caused by exposure to Madagascar and lemurs on television, in movies, in popular literature, and through published reports about our own efforts. We are happy with our new streamlined, direct name and hope you are as well.

The second bit of major news is that we have received two outstanding gifts of support. We have been able to purchase outright the 50 acres of adjoining land on the Myakka City Lemur Reserve thanks to the continued and spectacular support of John and Emily Alexander who underwrote the balance of the cost, \$85,000. And secondly, we received a yearly commitment of \$15,000 from Mark Braunstein and Katharine McKenna to help cover operating expenses. These yearly commitments are crucial to our continued success as they insure the future of the lemur project, and we are very grateful for them.

As you may remember from our Christmas letter in 2000, two new lemurs came to Myakka last fall - Christina and Gustavo, both Mongoose lemurs (*Eulemur mongoz*). Christina came from the Philadelphia Zoo and Gustavo arrived from Duke University Primate Center. The two of them bonded immediately and have been getting along very well with the other lemurs as well. We are hoping for offspring during the next cycle and will keep you posted about any anticipated pregnancies.

The other new critters on the reserve are pygmy goats, three of them! We are very concerned about the wildfires for which Florida is famous and have been researching ways to prevent or at least mitigate them on the reserve. Because the biggest factor is density of ground cover, it was suggested that we free a few goats in the forest and set them to work on the under story. They are indeed little eating machines! And, as an interesting wrinkle, we have learned a lot about lemur behavior as well. The lemurs considered the first goat we introduced ("Anastasia"), a "predator below" and sent up an outrageous racket any time they spotted her over the first few days. It was very interesting and amusing to witness the lemurs' reactions, especially the Ring-tailed lemurs as they walked bipedally along the paths peeking around the palmettos to find where the goat was browsing. We have now added two more. Brian Grossi, our Manager, brings us up to date on the Mongoose lemurs and the goats in his "Report From the Field" (page 8).

The next bit of news is that we are expecting 15 more lemurs this year - additional groups of Ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*) and Red-fronted Brown lemurs (*Eulemur fulvus rufus*) - all in breeding condition - and breeding pairs of Crowned lemurs (*Eulemur coronatus*) and Red Ruffed lemurs (*Varecia variegata rubra*). All of these animals will be accommodated in the forest enclosure inhabited by our original 13 animals. We are currently doubling the size of the lemur shelter to house the new animals in times of environmental stress. True to our promise concerning future capital building, we were fully capitalized for the extension before we broke ground and we graciously acknowledge the financial support of Mark Braunstein and Katharine McKenna, John and Emily Alexander and Marilyn North for assuring the timely construction. We expect the first group to arrive in Myakka City in early June.

In January, we had a very important Board and Scientific Advisory Council Meeting on the Reserve. We held the meeting in our fabulous new Researcher's House, underwritten in full by Emily H. Fisher (now Emily Alexander), and it could not have been more exciting and effective. Besides the new name and decisions as to which additional species to integrate into the colony, we designed a five-year plan that will eventually utilize our untouched, contiguous 50 acres. The plan calls for a 25-acre enclosure that will house at least two new species of lemur, in addition to new groups of lemurs already present on the reserve. We will need to build two shelters in the forest, and of course, install a new fence. These are long-range plans and we are not proceeding with them at this time but we will certainly keep you abreast on more concrete plans. The other idea proposed by the scientists is the establishment of "The Institute of Malagasy Primate Studies". Please read more about this on page 5.

The Myakka City Lemur Reserve has been going quite well and has caught the attention of many scientists and conservationists around the country. In fact, Brian was asked to deliver a paper about the work of the Foundation at the Florida Primate Conference at St. Leo's earlier this year. But as we are positioned more acutely in the conservation arena, it becomes crucial to refine our goals and to step faithfully and sure-footedly into the future. Your belief in us and your overwhelming support have brought us to where we are and we are very, very grateful. Our goals for the future grow intrinsically from our mission and we hope you share our excitement about these new initiatives. Your continued support and guidance are essential if we are to deepen our commitment to effect change in the world of conservation. Thank you so very much! Enjoy the report and photos and please come visit us in Florida and see what you have helped to build.

Warmest regards,



Penelope Bodry-Sanders



New Board and Staff Members

DIRECTOR

James K. Toomey is a director of Coast Bank of Florida, a newly organized community bank in Bradenton opened last April. Previously, Mr. Toomey served in various positions for Knight-Ridder/Bradenton Herald from June 1990 to September 1997. Since September 1997, Mr. Toomey's business interests have been focused towards commercial shopping development and investments. He is a life-long Florida native and is the co-owner of three real estate development companies in Manatee County. Mr. Toomey earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics from Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida in 1988 and a MBA degree from Crummer Graduate School, Rollins College in 1990. Mr. Toomey is a director of the Florida Paleontological Society and is currently in the process of founding the Toomey Foundation for the Natural Sciences. ∞

ASSISTANT LEMUR CARETAKER

Yolanda Sewell, formerly LCF "back-up" Lemur Caretaker, has been promoted to the permanent position as Assistant Lemur Caretaker. She is an honors graduate of Eckert College with a major in biology and minors in anthropology and psychology. She is currently attending the Masters in Science program at the

University of South Florida. Yolanda has extensive experience in working with and studying monkeys and apes through participation in behavioral research projects (one involving gorillas at Busch Gardens) and volunteering in private primate facilities. ∞



Malcolm McKenna, LCF board member, with Christina on the day of her release. Initially anxious about leaving the shelter, she finally took off into the forest and has been loving it ever since.





Visitors on the Reserve

Kipling Sanders, friend of the foundation, and Redlake, at 18 years of age, the oldest lemur on the reserve.



Donor Mark Braunstein enjoying his new friends – Alexandra and Valgius.



Donor Raj Singh and the mischievous Christina, who seems to be everywhere!



Lemur Conservation Foundation Board and Scientific Advisory Council members exploring the new forest.



The Institute of Malagasy Primate Studies

The Board of the Lemur Conservation Foundation has been encouraged by its Scientific Advisory Council to explore the establishment of the Institute of Malagasy Primate Studies, a text-based combination hard copy and virtual library of all historical, current, and future scholarly and popular written material concerning the primates of Madagascar. There is no single place where all of this information is housed and immediately accessible. It is totally appropriate that this library be founded at the Myakka City Lemur Reserve, as the reserve is already a center of scientific research, and visiting researchers can be accommodated in the Researcher's House during their time of study.



Much has been written about the advan-

tages of a paperless society, and while the library will be equipped with the latest technology and electronic journals, we believe that it is still important to have traditional library materials at the disposal of scientists and researchers. To that end, the library will hold and maintain, in addition to published materials, unpublished theses, dissertations, manuscripts, field notes, drawings and letters, etc., dealing with lemurs and their ecology.

We are currently seeking financial resources to design a technical development plan for the library so we can begin applying for grants. Already we have started to receive boxes of reprints, journals and books, and promises of much more to come. A room in the Researcher's House has been designated as a housing area for these materials, but



we need to build bookcases and purchase a dedicated computer/printer and photocopy machine, before we can begin to efficiently catalog these materials. Scientists on the LCF Scientific Advisory Council have already begun to assign graduate students significant amounts of photocopying for the library as the students are conducting their own research. These materials must be bound (or otherwise housed) and cataloged. But even more important than processing these initial materials, we have to set in place a solid plan that can be implemented as the Foundation locates funding sources. Our hope is that we will secure funds for the physical library (2000 square feet), equipment, books, etc. over these next few years and hope to move to construction in 2004, at which point a part-time librarian will be added to the staff. We feel sure that this exciting initiative, proposed by LCF Scientific Advisory Council Member, Dr. Robert W. Sussman, fills an important niche in Malagasy primate studies.

We'll keep you posted as this initiative progresses. ☺



A little splash of southern comfort – Redlake and Atako relaxing in the canopy.



Reflections on Madagascar and Myakka City

Photo by Janet Fessler



Penelope having a lemur moment at Berenty Reserve in southern Madagascar.

The Lemur Conservation Foundation was conceived as a project single-mindedly dedicated to the preservation and conservation of Malagasy primates through captive breeding, scientific research, education, and reintroduction. Our mission today remains the same but one of our ultimate goals — the reintroduction of lemurs to their native homeland — grows more dubious as the devastation of the forests in Madagascar worsens every year. With at least part of the lemur project's success somewhat dependent upon the situation in Madagascar, we are increasingly concerned with conservation efforts over there. As with all countries facing desperate poverty and over-population, conservation is often at odds with the immediate needs of the people, and a balance between the competing requirements is very difficult to negotiate. Having seen the problems faced by Madagascar first-hand, I find that my views on conservation have evolved over the years, and I would like to discuss with you the place I believe the LFC holds in the grand scheme of things.

Twenty years ago this month I read an article that ended up changing my life. It was a review of Alison Jolly's book, *Madagascar, A World Like Our Own*, in *Natural History* magazine (March '81) by a scientist named Ian Tattersall, who was unknown to me at the time. Ian's review made a powerful impression on me and, I think, jump-started my own notions about conservation. Not particularly given to emotional writing, Ian felt so strongly about his point of view on this subject that he veritably jumped off the page. Though I didn't know him, I embraced fully what Ian had to say about conservation and parroted his ideas for years. Twenty years later after returning from my second trip to Madagascar, I find I'm not so sure anymore.

Dr. Jolly had been sent to Madagascar by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to survey the astounding biodiversity of the

island and to make recommendations concerning its conservation, which was already in dire straits. What she came away with was a sympathy for the Malagasy people so profound that her mission for conservation became blurred. For Ian, this ambivalence was indefensible as he stated, "there is nothing in the book of the sense of helpless outrage that so often engulfs one in Madagascar, and something akin to that has to lie at the heart of conservationists everywhere. Of course, such emotion has to be balanced by pragmatism, by a sense of reality; but if it is overbalanced, we are paralyzed." He writes of standing on a hill and watching Madagascar burn, "signaling the imminence of the end of what still remains. And one doesn't want to understand [about the people's plight].



One doesn't sympathize. For if one did, if one really understood the human needs that underlie such devastation, could one really seek to stop it?" And lastly, "Successful conservation under these conditions requires a certain degree of monomania, a refusal to acknowledge the full, daunting dimensions of the problem."

In the intervening 20 years the destruction has become much more pronounced and conservation priorities much more acute. During my recent return to Madagascar I was again truly outraged and overwhelmed when I saw mile after mile of open plains that used to be covered in lush vegetation. Yet this

by Penelope Bodry-Sanders

trip also made clear to me that the Malagasy don't WANT to burn down their forests and eat lemurs, but staggering poverty and over-population often necessitate these actions.

Monomania can easily make one fail to see such simple facts. Until we can solve these human problems, conservation problems will persist and worsen.

I still believe that we at LCF must follow our mission with Ian's dictate of a "certain degree of monomania" in our attempts to help preserve the lemurs of Madagascar. After all, we are not in Madagascar

and the future of our own animals is paramount. However, conservation cannot exist in a vacuum, and people are and will continue to be part of the conserva-

tion mix. We have our own clear mission "dedicated to the preservation and conservation of Malagasy primates through captive breeding, scientific

research, education, and reintroduction," yet this last aspect stills dogs us. How can we some day send lemurs back to their homeland, if there is no homeland? Will there be any forests left for the lemurs, or will our reserve hold some of the

last representatives of their kind on earth? In a cheerless mood, I brought home bags of sterilized Madagascar earth and mixed it into the soil of Myakka City Lemur Reserve — a little

touch of home, just in case they are never again able to live in the land of their ancestors.

With these thoughts in mind I find myself frantically trying to come up with schemes to help "solve" the situation in Madagascar and ensure that the forests will survive: we could buy big chunks of land and bury someone in the forest, thus creating a sacred forest that CAN'T be destroyed; or set up a micro-lending bank to empower the women and raise the standard of living through other means than destroying the land; or subsidize community/education centers, etc. It is truly agonizing to sort through the emotions and complexities that haunt these issues. Conservation schemes of this magnitude can only hope to succeed if driven by huge international NGOs and foundations. And fortunately there are both Malagasy and international conservationists working in the field who



have accomplished a great deal, but they are racing against the clock because time is running out for this remarkable island.

I think LCF can do something to help mitigate the Malagasy crisis, even if it is very small. For instance, constructing a \$4,000 education center at Beza Mahafaly, our "potential sister" reserve in southern Madagascar, might go a long way. We still have hope that we can create an exchange system with Beza and send them some of our animals to improve their breeding stock down the line. We can determine the best course of action through the efforts of the reserve's co-founder, Dr. Bob Sussman, LCF scientist. At the last board meeting Bob said, "If we can't save Madagascar, we can't save the planet" — strong words but a sentiment echoed by Ian in his review when he wrote "... as the title reminds us, the problems are not Madagascar's alone." Ian and his esteemed colleague Alison Jolly both feel passionately about Madagascar's devastation and the awful impact it has on the unique biodiversity of the island — and they each have valid points of view about how to alter the consequences. Hopefully with wisdom and support, we can unite their visions of compassion and action and affect change commensurate with our size. ☺





The Field Report by Brian Grossi

Thus far, the new millennium has been very exciting at the Myakka City Lemur Reserve. For the first time ever, all 13 of our lemurs are free-ranging in relative harmony in the forest! And in addition to housing lemurs, we now have three miniature goats in the enclosure to pick up some of the grounds-keeping responsibilities. These newcomers have also brought a peculiar tale of altruism and inter-species lust.

Christina and Gustavo, our breeding pair of mongoose lemurs and newest lemur additions to the reserve, have been adapting admirably to their new home. They were seen mating in January, February, and March. We don't think Christina is pregnant, but we are encouraged that the notoriously difficult to breed mongoose lemurs really like each other. And while neither one of the dynamic duo has had any previous free-ranging experience, they both went toward the trees shortly after their release into the forest in February. Board member/scientific advisor Malcolm McKenna, his wife, Priscilla, and donor Mark Braunstein were all on hand to witness the special day. Gustavo and Christina liked the forest so much that we were unable to convince them to return to the shelter for several days. Now, after a few weeks of daily training sessions, they have the hang of our daily feeding routine and return to the shelter regularly.



Concurrently with the mongoose lemurs' release into the forest, we added the first of our small pygmy goat herd into the enclosure. Our hope is for the goats to eat much of the underbrush in the woods and thereby decrease the chance of a destructive wildfire. Unfortunately, Anastasia (goat #1) was bottle raised and is imprinted on humans. She followed us everywhere we went and would cry when we left the enclosure, sitting on the front step of the shelter awaiting our return. Much to the brown and ring-tailed lemurs' relief (and to our distress), she wasn't remotely interested in grazing in the lush forest. The lemurs, as it turned out, were terrified of her! They spent much of her first three days in the enclosure barking anti-predator calls at her. We decided after three days (and a moderate headache) to lock all the lemurs in the shelter for a week so they could acclimate to Anastasia's presence. The plan worked, and now all the animals coexist without fear.

Anastasia's loafing around the shelter does have a peculiar footnote, but please forgive the anthropomorphizing. Bewhiskered, one of our three bamboo lemurs, took a real liking to Anastasia and became very possessive of her. He followed her around, played with her, and threatened any human who got too close to her. This was cute while the bamboo lemurs were locked in their



cage, but after their release to free-range in mid-March, we had to be mindful of his whereabouts, as the jealous Bewhiskered would not abide our proximity to the goat and would threaten us.

The upshot of this odd report dates to the week after Easter when we added two more goats to the enclosure. These animals were much more enthusiastic about fulfilling their job as eating machines in the forest. As fellow goats, Anastasia apparently decided that they would be better company than lemurs, so she took off into the woods after them. Bewhiskered decided to follow all of them! (see photos below) When they stopped to graze, he sat down next to them and joined in. What a spectacle it was. I couldn't believe my eyes. At dusk, as I left them, I realized that Bewhiskered was following me, Anastasia followed him, and the new goats followed her. What a sight!

There is never a dull moment on the reserve because the lemurs are always interesting and enjoyable to watch and always have something to teach us about their behavior. Since the day Bewhiskered and the goats shared a meal, they have not had any contact with each other. Bewhiskered stays with the other bamboo lemurs and has not been seen following Anastasia since she abandoned him for her own kind. 🐾





Views of the Reserve



Our beautiful four-bedroom, two-bath Researcher's House shown with the pond (now stocked with five species of fish) and inside views of the living room and dining area.



The curious lemurs used the construction site as a great playground.



Construction on the Reed and Barbara Toomey Lemur Pavilion — now doubled to eight rooms to accommodate our new lemurs.



Myakka City Lemur Reserve

14-MINUTE VIDEOTAPE

Last summer, documentary filmmaker Phil Sirois visited the reserve and made a short video about the lemurs and the foundation's mission. It features Blair Brown, LCF board member and actress (winner of the Tony Award for her performance last year in Copenhagen). The lemurs are the real stars, however, and the reserve itself.

If you would like a copy, we ask that you send us a check for \$5.00 to cover shipping:
Lemur Conservation Foundation,
31 Greene Street, New York, NY 10013.



Wish List

- Bush Hog Tractor/Mower (to maintain fence line and fire breaks)
- Telonics Radio Collars and Receiver (to track the lemurs in the forest)
- GPS receiver (for mapping the forest and tracking the lemurs)
- Night vision goggles (to passively monitor the lemurs during nighttime activity)
- Gift certificates to Lowes or Home Depot
- Stainless steel veterinary exam table
- Electronic weather station capable of downloading data to a computer





Acknowledgements

Gifts Received since June 1, 2000

\$150,000 +

John and Emily Fisher Alexander

\$50,000 +

Brenda Wood

\$15,000+

Mark Braunstein and
Katharine McKenna
Judy Rasmuson and Ronald Wallace

\$10,000+

Marilyn North
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\$5,000+

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\$2000 +

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Penelope Bodry-Sanders and
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Julie Kohn and Dan Swift

Gifts in Kind

AMNH Division of Anthropology _____ box of reprints (lemur)
Dorothy Bodry _____ furnishings for the Researcher's House
Peter and Judy Carlin _____ hosted LCF Board dinner, sod for Researcher's House
Elizabeth Clement _____ publications producer
Gregory Clement _____ preliminary architecture designs for "Institute"
DesignWorks NY, LLC _____ Progress Report design
William and Patricia Grossi _____ linens for Researcher's House
David Haring _____ use of photographs
Monica Hoffine _____ volunteer on reserve
Phil Klus _____ volunteer on reserve
Marci Lew _____ volunteer on reserve
Lee Ann Rottman _____ volunteer on reserve
Camille Ryan _____ LCF artist
Barbara Sandler _____ gift of gorilla painting
Diana Shih _____ assistance with library project
Phil Sirois _____ filmmaker, LCF video
Jim Toomey _____ construction of quarantine shelter and green house and plants
Stephen Teitelbaum _____ accounting services
TCS Expeditions _____ airline tickets for LCF business
U of Miami Anthropology Club _____ used fax/printer
Suzi Zetkus _____ volunteer on reserve



LEMUR
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LCF is a tax-exempt publicly
supported organization
(ID 59-3359549) founded in 1996

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LCF Progress Report

Produced by Elizabeth Clement
Designed by DesignWorks NY, LLC
Cover art by Joyce Powzyk
Illustrations by Camille Ryan



Printed on 100% recycled paper