

# LEMUR LATITUDES

critters with attitude VOL. 6 #1

## FIRST ANIMAL HUSBANDRY INTERN IS A KEEPER!

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Alexandra Porpora is the Lemur Conservation Foundation's first Penelope Bodry-Sanders and Mackarness M. Goode Animal Husbandry Intern. This six-month internship is meant to provide hands-on experience in the aspects of maintaining an animal collection and contributing to a conservation mission.

Alex has been at LCF since January, and during this time she has assisted in the daily care of the many lemurs that reside at the Myakka City Lemur Reserve. While the work is often hard and unglamorous, she enjoys it and is excited about being LCF's first intern.

Along with routine daily care, Alex has assisted with physicals, the prescribed burn that took place this spring and has traveled to pick up new lemurs. She admits that the mongoose lemurs and red ruffed lemurs are some of her favorites. A graduate of the University of Miami, Alex first came to LCF in 2007 to participate in a field methods course. She has presented her undergraduate research on obesity in captive orang-

utans at the AZA meetings in 2007 and the AAPA meetings in 2008. Alex has previously interned at the Center for Great Apes, working with chimpanzees and orangutans and volunteered at the DuMond Conservancy with owl monkeys. She plans on pursuing a master's degree in science education.

In addition to working with primates, Alex was a zoo educator at Sea World, where she taught camp for two years in addition to narrating at exhibits and giving small tours.

Her interest in interpretive and science education is an added bonus for LCF, as she has been working on developing educational materials and "lemur crafts" for the Center to use. Alex's infectious enthusiasm and serious dedication to her work has made her a welcome addition at the Reserve. She thinks her time at LCF can best be summed up in a limerick:

*Alex, Lemur Conservation Foundation's first intern  
She worked hard, even got a sunburn  
Those lemurs she adored  
And she never got bored  
Even in Myakka City, who knew there was so much to learn?*



Alex Porpora with Red Ruffs



# TOOMEY WOODS BURN: A PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

by Tyann Marsh



their enclosures for the duration of the burn. Around 10am, Mike and Forest Rangers Chris Taylor and Eugene Clark ignited the fire in the Northwest corner of the enclosure. For several hours the fire worked its way against the wind to the Southeast, burning through the underbrush of Toomey Woods. LCF staff, Myakka Fire Department firefighters and Forest Rangers kept watch on the fence-line for any flare-ups or line-jumps by the fire. By late afternoon, the fire had reached the Southeast corner of the enclosure, and brush trucks full of water were brought in to put out the fire as it approached the fence-line.

On March 18<sup>th</sup> of this year, LCF teamed up with Florida Division of Forestry and Myakka City's local fire department to conduct a prescribed burn in our 13 acre Toomey Woods enclosure. This is the second burn Toomey Woods has undergone since LCF purchased the property eleven years ago.



*Forest the day after*



Prescribed burns are important in Florida for reducing fuel buildup (i.e. leaf litter, dead pine needles, rotten wood) that enables fires from lightning strikes to burn uncontrolled, causing potentially devastating damage. Here

at LCF, we try to burn each of our forested enclosures every three years to minimize the accumulation of burnable materials.

Headed by Mike Keegan, the Division of Forestry arrived early on that Tuesday morning and readied their equipment, while LCF staff crated all 39 lemurs and removed them from

The following day, we received a good amount of rain that helped to put out still smoldering trees and stumps. Though prescribed burns are a lot of work, they are greatly beneficial, and this latest burn was a complete success.



*Regrowth one week after the burn*



# Critter Corner

by Monica Mogilewsky



Claire and Antoine  
Marc Ellis/H2O Pictures

According to Dr. Ian Tattersall, LCF scientist and curator in the Division of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History, "The last few hundred years have witnessed an extraordinary ravaging of Madagascar's forests, and the reduction of many lemur populations to critically low levels." The Lemur Conservation Foundation was formed 11 years ago to address this very problem.

as the Eulemur fulvus. LCF is working to protect as many of these "orphan species" as possible while maintaining the highest standards in animal welfare and research quality.

LCF is not alone in their efforts. The newly created Eulemur Species Survival Plan (Eulemur SSP) under the management of the AZA's Prosimian Taxon Advisory Group addresses many of the issues related to captive management of Eulemur species. LCF, the Eulemur SSP, and other institutions invested in the conservation of lemurs are cooperating to increase the population sizes of several Eulemur species currently in captivity. This includes increasing the number of institutions holding these types of lemurs, increasing the number of breeding pairs, and potentially importing additional breeding lemurs from European and Malagasy zoos.

Since its inception, LCF has focused particularly on the conservation of the brown lemur, Eulemur fulvus sp. While brown lemurs were once prolific in North American zoos, the population has decreased dramatically over the last decade. Many traditional institutions decided not to hold these species due to lack of space, management problems and, according to some, lack of visitor appeal. However, Dr. Tattersall and his colleagues believe that, among all the lemurs, it will be the brown lemurs that are most likely to survive in 200 years' time -- if given the chance. They are proven reliable breeders and are extremely adaptable to diverse habitats. Their chances of long term survival, however, are greatly reduced if the species disappears in captivity.

It is hoped that at least one or two of the Eulemur species populations currently held in captivity will be able to recover from the demographic decline experienced over the past decade resulting from breeding moratoriums and space constraints.



Azizi and Rollo munching hibiscus  
Marc Ellis/H2O Pictures

When opening the Myakka City Lemur Reserve and deciding on a colony collection plan, the LCF Scientific Advisory Council recognized the need for less traditional institutions - like the Reserve - to accept responsibility for the conservation of brown lemurs. In Dr. Tattersall's words, "...while it is vital to make every effort to protect what remains [in Madagascar], it also makes sound conservation sense to maintain stocks of these human relatives away from Madagascar, in places where their propagation can be assured."

For the Reserve, this means acquiring a couple of species that were not part of the original collection plan, specifically Eulemur collaris and Eulemur coronatus. Dwindling numbers and aging individuals are the biggest challenges to breeding collared lemurs and crown lemurs.

As the lemur reserve has developed and the colony has expanded, conservation efforts of brown lemurs have grown more complicated. Recent taxonomic changes reflect the results of new research determining that many populations previously considered subspecies are in fact species in their own right. In addition, many species within the genus Eulemur experienced the same population drop in captivity

"Antoine" is a male collared lemur, Eulemur collaris, from Duke University Lemur Center. He is 15 years old and was donated to the reserve to breed with beautiful "Claire" another new arrival. Claire was donated by the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and is 16 years old.

Newcomer "Azizi," a male crowned lemur, Eulemur coronatus, was donated from Chehaw Wild Animal Park and is 3 years old. His mate, "Rollo" was donated by the Cincinnati Zoo this spring and is 7 years old.



Houdini and Beriddled  
with a cold treat on a hot day

When the Myakka City Lemur Reserve first opened in 1999, the original lemur colony included three gentle gray bamboo lemurs, Hapalemur griseus. Due to natural attrition, the reserve was left with a singly housed male, Beriddled. Every effort was made to provide enrichment and social stimulation but it was clear that he needed a companion.

Happily, the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo agreed to donate their two female bamboo lemurs, Houdini, 7 and Belittle, 12. Houdini is Belittle's daughter. The trio are doing well and researchers at the reserve once again have the opportunity to study this interesting species.

## ABOUT US



The Lemur Conservation Foundation (LCF), Incorporated in Florida (1996), is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit publicly supported organization (EIN 59-3359549) dedicated to the preservation and conservation of the primates of Madagascar through captive breeding, non-invasive scientific research, education, and reintroduction. At LCF's 90-acre, non-public Myakka City Lemur Reserve the lemurs live naturally in a pristine forest, yet are readily available for educational and research purposes. LCF also operates the Mianatra Center for Lemur Studies and the Anne & Walter Bladstrom Library open for scientific research by appointment. LCF conducts a unique Field Training Program, which teaches students field techniques and the Teachers Institute for Conservation Biology in which high school teachers learn skills and innovative methods to communicate science to students. The LCF also built an education center and guesthouse at the Tapolo Forest Station, its partner reserve in Madagascar, to promote collaborative research projects and a researcher exchange program.



## Plant a Tree in Our Forests

We are planting native Florida trees and shrubs in our forests for future generations of lemurs to enjoy. The trees will be carefully selected to suit the terrain and to make the lemurs happy. A healthy forest canopy is vital to the lemurs survival.

If you would like to be a part of our long range forest management plan by contributing a tree, please contact us at the Reserve and we will provide you more information.

And to save trees, our current newsletter and past issues are available online with photos in full color!  
<http://www.lemurreserve.org/newsletters.html>



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CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION

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