

MAROMIZAHA Newsletter: Updates from the Field

JUNE 2023



**UNIVERSITÀ
DI TORINO**



ONGOING ACTIVITIES AND NEWS FROM THE RESEARCHERS AT THE MAROMIZAHA MULTIPURPOSE CENTER (CRPM)



**PARCO
NATURA
VIVA**
Nature, all ways.



MISSION OF THE EQUIPE PNV @Maromizaha

In June 2023, the team from Parco Natura Viva and Fondazione A.R.C.A. visited the village of Anevoka and the Maromizaha Multipurpose and Research Center.



This visit gave the opportunity to the team to know the on-site managers of GERP, Randria and Volana, and to organize activities together with the schoolchildren in Anevoka. The team of the University of Turin was introducing the guests to the field site and to all the activities developed in the last years, thanks to the collaboration with GERP, Parco Natura Viva and Fondazione A.R.C.A.

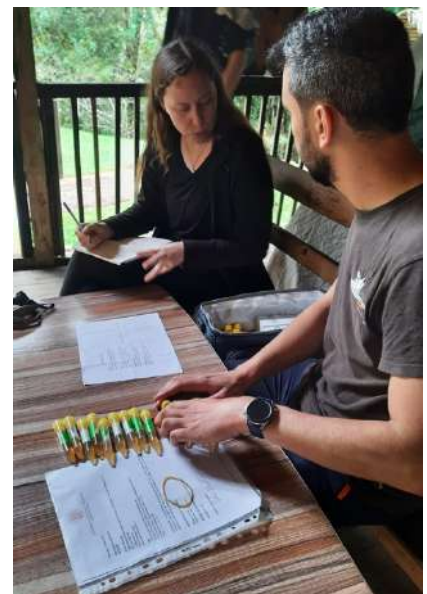


On 9th June, 140 children spent the morning with the Natura Viva Park team at the village of Anevoka, who donated school gadgets and offered them a snack, while 100 children took part in a green class in the forest, where they were welcomed by the UNITO team. Together, they sang and danced and ate sweets!



The children during the green class at the Maromizaha research center

It was also an opportunity to organize and implement the collection of samples of indri feces, soil consumed by indri (geophagic behavior) and leaves that are part of the species' diet. These samples will be analyzed to investigate the origin of the lactobacilli that form part of the species' intestinal microbiome, as from a very productive scientific collaboration between the Parco Natura Viva, the University of Bolzano, the University of Bologna and several other actors.



Preparing the tubes for the collection of indris faeces, soil and leaves

FIELD ACTIVITIES

Lemurs monitoring and data collection

The monitoring of the four lemur species studied in Maromizaha continues. Nine research guides are monitoring every day groups of *P. diadema*, *H. griseus*, *E. rubriventer* and *I. indri*. Currently, Leonardo, a student from the University of Torino is collecting data on the 12 groups of indris for his Master thesis, and will be joined soon by more students coming, studying in Torino and Parma. Leonardo is interested in understanding latrine behavior, the repeated use of specific sites for defecation/urination.

This behavior represents a multimodal communicatory signal which is common in mammals but rare among primates. In indris, all the group members move from their feeding or sleeping trees to other trees from which they defecate and urinate, but this specific behavior has never been investigated.



Leonardo collecting data with the assistance of the expert guide Gilbert.

New births among the indris!

Three babies were born during the first two weeks of June: Levy from mama Bevolo in group 1, Lala from mama Bemasoandro in group 8 and Lulu from mama Befotsy in group 6. As soon as they are born, they are often difficult to see, as they stay all the time curled up on their mother's belly, which sometimes remains more isolated than the group to protect the baby. The mothers are also very susceptible: every passing bird could be a possible predator, and they often send out alarm calls.



Bemasoandro with baby Lala

PROJECT CARNIVORES: a first step towards the study of carnivore's population in Maromizaha

This June, an important step in the study of Maromizaha carnivores took place. Prof. Francesca Marucco, who teaches several courses at UNITO and is one of the world experts in big carnivores' ecology and behavior, started a pilot study to investigate the presence of the fosa (*Cryptoprocta ferox*, the largest predator of Madagascar) and other carnivores as the fanaloka (*Fossa fossana*) and galidia (*Galidia elegans*). With the help of the research guides Zafy and Setra, they selected eight spots in the dense vegetation where they thought the fosa could be spotted and put a camera trap in each spot. Moreover, they also collected and note down information on faces from fosa, to better understand the spatial distribution of the species.



Prof. Marucco and the research guides set up one of the camera traps. On the right side, they took note on the GPS position of fresh faeces of fosa.

After a week, the camera traps have been checked to understand if the spot selected were actually where fosa and other carnivores would pass. While some camera traps will likely be moved to another spot as they did not record any carnivore passing, other captured the passage of fosa and many fanalokas! Stay tuned for more results from this project

A fosa captured by one of the camera traps





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