

New primate species discovered on Madagascar

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A Malagasy-German research team has discovered a new primate species in eastern Madagascar. Photo: B. Randrianambinina

A Malagasy-German research team has discovered a new primate species in the Sahafina Forest in eastern Madagascar, a forest that has not been studied before.

The name of the new species is Gerp's mouse lemur (*Microcebus gerpi*), chosen to honour the Malagasy research group GERP (Groupe d'Étude et de Recherche sur les Primates de [Madagascar](#)). Several researchers of GERP have visited the Sahafina [Forest](#) in 2008 and 2009 to create an

inventory the local [lemurs](#). They captured several mouse lemurs, measured them, took photos and small biopsies for genetic studies, and released them again.

Prof. Ute Radespiel, Institute of Zoology of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, analysed the samples and the morphological dataset, and confirmed that the animals from the Sahafina Forest belong to an undescribed species of the small nocturnal mouse lemurs.

"We were quite surprised by these findings. The Sahafina Forest is only 50km away from the Mantadia National Park in eastern Madagascar, which contains a different and much smaller [species](#), the Goodman's mouse lemur", commented Prof. Radespiel. In contrast, the Gerp's mouse lemur belongs to the group of larger mouse lemurs, i.e. has a body mass of about 68g, and is therefore almost "a giant" compared to the Goodman's mouse lemur (ca. 44g body mass).

The distribution of the Gerp's mouse lemur is probably restricted to the remaining fragments of lowland evergreen rain forest of this region in eastern Madagascar. Continuing deforestation poses a serious threat for these animals.

The researchers from Hanover/Germany, and Madagascar published their discovery together in the journal *Primates*.

More information: First indications of a highland specialist among mouse lemurs (*Microcebus* spp.) and evidence for a new mouse lemur species from eastern Madagascar, [DOI: 10.1007/s10329-011-0290-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10329-011-0290-2)

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