

Can we save critically endangered lemurs by learning about their social system?

16 June 2014, by Isabella Mandl

University of Bristol PhD student Isabella Mandl is raising money to conduct the first ever long-term study of the Sahamalaza sportive lemur—one of the rarest primates in the world.

With only 3,000 individuals left in the wild, the Sahamalaza sportive lemur is vanishing quickly. Yet hardly anything is known about this species except for one intriguing fact: they are relatively unsocial. Mandl's project aims to investigate the lemurs' social system, important information that could lead to future conservation efforts.

To fund her research, Mandl is campaigning to raise \$6,000 through crowdfunding platform Experiment.

"This project will forward the [scientific research](#)," Mandl said. "And with the help of this campaign, [the project will] hopefully evoke popular interest in a cryptic species that might otherwise be overlooked."

Fieldwork is notoriously difficult to cover with research grants, and Mandl's is no exception. Because her study subjects are nocturnal and live in the dense forests of Madagascar, she needs to be able to tag individual lemurs with radio-collars so that she can follow them at night. These collars require elaborate technology which is expensive.

If Mandl's crowdfunding campaign is successful, she will conduct the first long-term study on the Sahamalaza sportive [lemur](#), gathering valuable social information on mating habits, formation of social bonds, and territorial behavior. The research will not only provide the means to monitor the remaining populations, but it will also yield information that is needed for breeding and re-introduction programs in the future.

Through Experiment's platform, Mandl is sharing progress reports in real-time. When backers give

money to the project, they receive behind-the-scenes access to research updates, and recognition in the published results.

The project has 27 days remaining to meet a funding target of \$6,000. So far, she has raised \$912 with the help of 15 backers.

Experiment recently surpassed \$800,000 in total research funding raised. The site has been featured in The Economist, Forbes, Nature, and The New York Times.

More information: Project Link: experiment.com/projects/nightl...ered-sportive-lemurs

Provided by University of Bristol

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