



L'Hoesti's Monkey in Uganda  
(*Cercopithecus lhoesti*)  
Photo by Tharcisse Ukizintambara

# Primate Conservation Inc. UPDATE

2007

## Director's Report

Primate Conservation Inc. (PCI) has been giving grants for 14 years to projects that study and protect the least known and most endangered primates in their natural habitat. With your support, PCI has been able to help more people get involved in the conservation of endangered primates. It is heartening for me to see this happening. Our current granting period started on February 1 and we received half again more proposals than any other granting period. Alas unless we get half again more donations than every before, PCI will have to turn many of these earnest field workers away, simply because there isn't enough money to fund their worthwhile projects. Your donations will help PCI fund projects that will lead to solutions to some of the problems threatened primates face as they try to adapt to living close to people. As the following field reports illustrate, primate field workers are very adaptable, courageous, and dedicated. Please help PCI help them!

### News from the field

Tharcisse Ukizintambara is currently doing field work for his Ph. D thesis from Antioch University of New England in Keene, New Hampshire. He received a grant from PCI for \$3,100.00 in the Spring of 2005 for his pilot project the "Status of L'Hoesti's Monkey in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda: Habitat characteristics, edge effects and intra-specific behavioral ecology and conservation."

As a native from a primate country, I was exposed to primates at early age and I am determined to follow the footsteps of leading primatologists and conservationists in improving our knowledge and the conservation of primates and their habitat back home in Africa. At the age of 4, I saw a chimpanzee near my home, about 20km north of Kigali, Rwanda. I noticed how very clever, adorable, and unique that creature was. For a long time, I observed him his playfulness through

the wire and the bougainvilleas that fenced where he was kept as a pet and a prisoner. I realized that we both had a lot in common. Later, I met and worked for Beth Kaplin who was doing research on how l'hoest's (pronounced lusty's) and blue monkeys disperse seeds in Nyungwe national park in the south of Rwanda.

My current research is on the forest boundaries of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) in Uganda. Before it became a national park in 1991, BINP was intensively logged from the edge towards the forest interior. At the moment, no one knows for sure how much such activity has affected the park and its species. In addition, I am interested in how l'hoest's monkeys, an edge dwelling species, are impacted by the people that live around the park. I am looking at the ranging and foraging ecology of this threatened monkey.

The habituation of 2 groups took 8 months but I am now able to give some preliminary results. The average size of both groups home ranges is about 150 acres. Due to a more open under story habitat, the edge group is more susceptible to eagle attacks and disturbances from feral dogs, jackal and humans. I once witnessed the attack and killing of one new infant from the edge group by a crowned eagle. Thus, the edge group spends more time being vigilant while the interior group engages in more social activities such as grooming and playing. Even though l'hoest's monkeys are very silent, they interact vocally with other animals such as gorillas, red duikers, and some birds, especially exchanging warning information with grey-throated barbet on the approach of eagles. The interior group is relatively more vocal probably due to more aggressive encounters with overlapping groups of l'hoest's monkeys. The interior group is more terrestrial than the edge group, which maybe due to more open gaps dominated by ferns. The edge group includes in their diet crop species such as papaya fruits, black wattle seeds, potatoes, beans, etc., which aren't found in the forest.

The study is still in the infant stage and many questions remain to be answered. I expect to compile more behavioral, vegetation and local weather data for a full 12-month cycle so I can recommend strategies for the conservation of l'hoest's monkeys in BINP.



Dana and Aidan and a thirsty juvenile ringtailed lemur  
(photo: Jason Whitelaw)

**Dana Whitelaw** was given a grant of \$3,200.00 for her project “Behavioral Ecology of Ring-tailed lemurs in a Fragmented habitat of Southwestern Madagascar.

My dissertation research at the University of Colorado in Boulder is to compare how ring-tailed lemurs that live in a protected and undisturbed forest reserve with groups that live in the heavily deforested, fragmented habitat surrounding the protected reserve. My goal is to help local Malagasy effect conservation plans that allow lemurs and humans to coexist. At Beza Mahafaly, this requires developing plans that allow humans to farm, graze and cut wood while preserving the key resources for lemurs.

In the summer of 2005, I moved my family to Madagascar to live for a year while I studied lemurs. This was a dream come true for me. The details were a bit more complicated than my fantasy. Take the road to our remote field site in southwestern Madagascar – Beza Mahafaly Reserve, our Malagasy friend exclaimed, “This is not a road, this is a cattle path!” After the three-day drive from the capital, my 2 1/2-year-old son’s reaction and my husband’s were distinctly opposite. My son, Aidan, was ecstatic to be out of his car seat and bouncing along through small ponds and down what resembled rocky cliffs rather than a road. My husband Jason, mouth agape, was giving me a look of, “*What* were you thinking?”

A bout of giardia and several car repairs later, we arrived and settled into a routine with me going out into the forest to find the lemurs (far more challenging than I was lead to believe) and my husband staying in the research camp with our son. I soon realized that I needed

more eyes and ears to help locate the small beasts. Aidan proved to be invaluable at locating the lemurs and could start identifying some of the more distinct individuals (“Mom, there’s Popeye, he only has one eye!”).

Luckily, after figuring out how to find the uncooperative ringtails each morning, my research went quite smoothly. We were blessed with good health, and the good company of the very supportive local Malagasy friends who helped us with the day-to-day issues of living in rural Madagascar. Once Aidan was stung by a beetle with ominous red and black markings, all our Malagasy friends ran to help when they heard his piercing screaming. They were able to reassure us it was just a painful wasplike sting. Clara, our amazing cook, found a foot long boa that had set up residence under his bed and helped evacuate it to a more proper habitat. These events aside, we felt incredibly lucky to have had this simple living experience with a small child. We had an amazing year of learning the ins and outs of ring-tailed lemurs, and thrived living in a tent without refrigeration, running water or electricity. Some of the most rewarding times during the year were watching my son identify lemurs and find them when I had given up.

## How to Support PCI

PCI is an all-volunteer, tax-deductible private operating 501 (c) (3) foundation. Since our first grant in 1993 we have supported with full or partial or renewal funding 320 projects in 28 countries with primate habitats. Projects in Asia have received 40% of our funding, African projects 32%, Madagascar 22%, and South America 6%.

If you would like to contribute cash, stock or real estate to PCI or would like more information on a specific project please contact me at the address below.

To keep our overhead to a minimum, so that as much of the money raised is used to support field conservation projects, we only send one newsletter per year. **This is our annual appeal for your donations.** You will not receive other mail from us nor will we share your name with others. We appreciate your support and hope you will give generously .to support one of these primate projects.

Sincerely,

Noel Rowe