

Inventory of the *Eulemur macaco flavifrons* population in the Sahamalaza protected area, northwest Madagascar, with notes on an unusual colour variant of *E. macaco*

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Abstract

The blue-eyed black lemur (*Eulemur macaco flavifrons*; *Emf*), the taxonomic validity of which was recently confirmed [3], was rediscovered by science only in 1983 [1] and is still one of the least-studied of all lemur taxa. It is only found in the sub-humid forests of the Sahamalaza peninsula and in a small stretch of forest on the adjacent mainland [1,2,4]. In the north-eastern part of its range the subspecies seems to hybridise with the nominate subspecies, *E. m. macaco* (*Emm*) [2,4]. *Emf* is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. Its remaining habitat is already substantially fragmented. A protected area, including the Sahamalaza peninsula and thus the probably largest remaining population of blue-eyed black lemurs, is currently in the process of creation. As part of a long-term research and conservation programme we counted the total number of individual *Emf* in two fragments of the Ankarafa forest in the south-western part of the peninsula to be 37 individuals on 0.61 km². We extrapolate this count to the total forested area of the national park and compare the figures with earlier population estimates for the subspecies. We moreover provide preliminary data on a population of *Eulemur macaco* showing an unusual fur colouration different to that of both described subspecies. These animals occur around the village of Kapany, about 12 km north of Maromandia [5] and thus in the western part of the *Emf* and *Emm* border region. As they are homogeneous in colouration across groups and forest fragments it is unlikely that they represent subspecies hybrids.

References:

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Supported by AEECL, CI Primate Action Fund and Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation.