



**Field course:** Lemur Biology, Plant Ecology and Conservation in Madagascar

**Location:** Association Mitsinjo locality in Analamazaotra, Andasibe:

<https://associationmitsinjo.wordpress.com/analamazaotra-forest-station/>

**Dates:** July 25 – July 27, 2019

**Travel dates:** Leave Antananarivo on July 24 and return on July 28.

**Organizers:**

- Dr. Onja H. Razafindratsima
- Dr. Paul V.A. Fine
- Dr. Lúcia G. Lohmann

**Description:** Tropical ecosystems are diverse, have many unique features and provide important ecosystem services, but unfortunately, are among the most endangered systems across the globe. Madagascar hosts about 20% of the world's primates, which are found nowhere else in natural habitats. Unfortunately, however, more than 90% of these unique taxa are currently threatened to extinction. This field course is designed to equip students with various field techniques used in studying primate ecology in their natural environment. By targeting and training Malagasy students who are concerned about and conscious of the threats facing the nation's flagship species, this course aims to contribute to the long-term conservation of lemurs and their habitats. This field course in the rainforest of Andasibe in eastern Madagascar is designed to provide students with tools to conduct research in lemur and plant ecology, as well as to equip students with tools to help biodiversity conservation in the country. The field component will be conducted at Analamazaotra Forest Station. The main goal of this field course is to increase the capacities of Madagascar's future conservation leaders. It is also expected to foster long-lasting collaborations by networking with international scientists. With their acquired knowledge and skillset, the participants will be able to design research that will benefit lemur conservation in Madagascar. Instructions will be provided through short lectures and field studies, intended to introduce fundamental concepts, commonly used field techniques, and conservation applications.

**Target:** While Malagasy students are a priority, we will consider all registered students but give preference to students from developing countries. The course is limited to 10 students and the selection process will be made after the analysis of an online survey.

**How to apply:**

Fill out the following form by June 26, 2019: <https://forms.gle/VvpjZmsT2GTVs67d6>





**Topics covered:**

- Primate ecology (behavioral observations of lemurs using various techniques, tracking lemur movement, survey of lemur populations along transects, sampling of nocturnal mouse lemurs using Sherman traps)
- Sampling of plant diversity (transects, plots) to determine food availability for lemurs as well as the structure of their habitats
- Plant functional ecology (measuring plant functional traits)
- Plant-insect interactions (field measurements of herbivory)

**Tentative schedule:**

Date	Activity
Wed July 24	<p><b>- Afternoon:</b> Leave at 1PM from Antananarivo to Andasibe (~ 3-hour drive)</p> <p><b>- Evening:</b> Course introduction, field procedures, safety, and getting to know each other</p>
Thu July 25	<p><b>Morning:</b> Short lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analamazaotra Forest</li> <li>- Research design</li> <li>- Various topics associated with subsequent field-studies</li> </ul> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Forest visit, field practice *</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Trapping of nocturnal mouse-lemurs</p>
Fri July 26	<p><b>Morning to mid-afternoon:</b> Field projects *</p> <p><b>Late afternoon:</b> Short lectures</p>
Sat July 27	<p><b>Morning to mid-afternoon:</b> Field projects *</p> <p><b>Late afternoon:</b> Wrap-up</p>
Sun July 28	<p><b>Morning:</b> Return to Antananarivo, departure at 7AM</p>

\* for each field project, participants will be divided into three small groups, each led by an instructor and a local guide. Each group will switch instructors on the following day.

**Course materials**

Participants should bring their own laptop computers (optional), binoculars, sturdy notebooks and pens. Other needed equipment for the field projects will be available.

