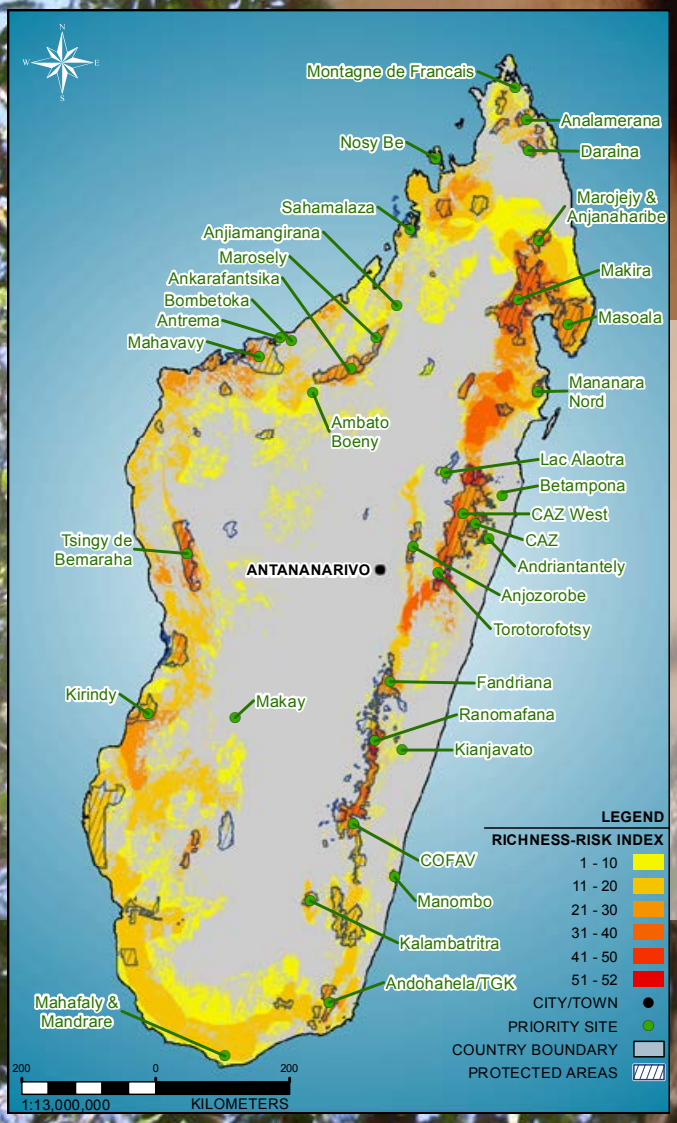
Averting Lemur Extinctions amid Madagascar's Political Crisis

The most threatened mammal group on Earth, Madagascar's five endemic lemur families (lemurs are found nowhere else), represent more than 20% of the world's primate species and 30% of family-level diversity.

This combination of diversity and uniqueness is unmatched by any other country - remarkable considering that Madagascar is only 1.3 to 2.9% the size of the Neotropics, Africa, or Asia, the other three landmasses where nonhuman primates occur. But lemurs face extinction risks driven by human disturbance of forest habitats. We discuss these challenges and reasons for hope in light of site-specific, local actions proposed in an emergency conservation action plan.



Lemur species richness-extinction risk index and priority conservation areas *- Each species range was given a weighting according to its estimated extinction risk (the likelihood of a species becoming extinct in the near future, given current knowledge about population trends, range, and recent, current or projected threats, expressed by its 2012 IUCN Red List status (1, Least Concern; 2, Near Threatened; 3, Vulnerable or Data Deficient; 4, Endangered; 5, Critically Endangered).*

All lemur species' range weightings were summed to provide the richness-risk index, a composite measure of richness and estimated extinction risk. For example, where two Near Threatened species co-occur, there is a value of 4, and where two Critically Endangered species co-occur, the value is 10. The colour spectrum represents the continuum from areas with low species richness and lower extinction risk to areas with high species richness and high extinction risk. Hatched areas indicate terrestrial protected areas. Green dots show locations of priority areas for lemur conservation digitized from the 2013 to 2016 conservation action plan (2).CAZ, Corridor Ankeniheny-Zahamena; COFAV, Corridor Fandriana-Vondrozo; TGK, Tsitongambarika.

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