

Annual Report 2019



Mangrove landscape at low tide shot by a drone (near Andrahangy, western Madagascar)

**Dear friends and members of
Chances for Nature,**

2019 is coming to an end, and we would like to give you an overview of our activities. The focus of this year's work has been on environmental education for children and juveniles in Madagascar.

In total, approximately 50.000 € were spent in 2019 for the projects (editorial note: annual statement of account not available at time of print).

You will find these and more topics in this annual report.

We wish all friends and supporters a successful and happy 2020, and we would like to thank you for your commitment to nature conservation!

Your Chances for Nature team

**Night at the zoo: Chances for Nature at the
conservation day at the zoo in Hannover**

Chances for Nature presented its work in the event „Late-Zoo“ at the zoo in Hannover. Late-Zoo enables visitors to enjoy the evening atmosphere at the zoo while being entertained by changing special events until ten o'clock in the evening. At the species conservation day on the 20th of June, a total of 15 conservation organisations informed the visitors about their work. Chances for Nature used the opportunity to present itself to the public. Especially for the many kids, our information booth seemed very attracting. Still, we could also interest adults in our work who knew the environmental situation in our project countries from their own experience.

Tourist attraction: environmental exhibition draws visitors from near and far

In December 2018, an exhibition about biodiversity, ecology, and sustainability, developed with the support of Chances for Nature, opened in the environmental education centre in the newly-created UNESCO biosphere reserve Indawgyi Lake in Myanmar. Since the opening till October of this year, 10.696 visitors saw the exhibition, of which 345 came from abroad. The majority of the domestic visitors came from lake-side villages. A significant number of guests also arrived from more distant communities to inform themselves about the lake ecosystem, human threats, and approaches like sustainable fishery and ecological rice culture. The environmental education programme of our local partner **Inn Chit Thu**, who manages the centre, possesses great appeal far beyond the lake's catchment. The amount of money earned by the operation of the environmental education centre adds up to over 5.400 €, which can be reinvested into environmental education activities. The regional and national appeal of this project is unique to Myanmar. The centre will, therefore, supports the sustainable development of tourism at Indawgyi lake and facilitates environmental friendly alternative sources of income for the local population. Despite its short period of operating, the Indawgyi Wetland Education Centre already comes up with some impressive number of visitors and beneficiaries and is already a success story. The construction of the environmental education centre was financed by the **Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)**. The exhibition was realised with the financial support of the **Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung** and the **Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung**.

Because it will make the difference: “Little Rangers” project to become a permanent institution

Last year project leader Hanitra Markolf Rakotonirina organised a multi-day environmental education camp for children in the Kirindy forest in the Menabe region of western Madagascar. This year's task was to establish the “Little Rangers” environmental education camp as a permanent offer for education in Menabe. Hence, two events were implemented in April and September 2019, with 200 children, respectively, from

six villages. To raise awareness for the unique natural environment of Menabe, children participated in different educational activities. Near the home villages of the children, many animals have already disappeared or are very rare due to hunting. The animals of the Kirindy Forest are used to human presence due to the long term presence of researchers and tourists. And so the possibility to observe birds and lemurs at close range for several minutes during several visits to the forest left the children with a lasting impression. After sunset, the “Little Rangers” observed the nocturnal animals of the dry forest; this was made possible by the **Little Sun Foundation**, which sponsored a solar lamp for each kid. Before sleeping, many children used the solar lights to study the textbook about the Kirindy forest that Chances for Nature had explicitly designed for the camp.



Little Rangers observing nocturnal lemures with the aid of their solar lamps

The "Little Rangers" can also develop an understanding of human-induced threats to nature as well as an understanding of the importance of conserving the forest for future generations. An erosion experiment demonstrates the negative consequences of deforestation on soil stability. The learning content was designed as playful as possible; a specially designed card game motivates the kids to increase their knowledge about the animals of Madagascar independently during play.



The kids are busy taking notes of what they have learned into the specially designed textbooks.

To offer this kind of education in the future as well, we discussed possibilities of future implementation with participating schools and local partners. First donations at the site were made in line with an exhibition of graphics of Madagascan animals (see below) created by artist Moira Risen. Thank you very much, Moira. The graphics can be seen and ordered at www.12images.net.

Find out more about the first "Little Rangers" project on our Youtube channel:

<https://youtu.be/PoR8efUGiOI>

We are grateful to **UNESCO**, **Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung**, **Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung**, and **Vogelpark Marlow**, for financial support. We thank **Longon'i Kirindy**, the staff of the **Deutsche Primatenzentrum** and **CNFEREF** in Madagascar, and two volunteers for their on-site support.

Sounds of the dark: Acoustic monitoring of the pale fork-marked lemur

How do you monitor the population of a nocturnal, arboreal primate species that can be hardly observed due to its way of life? By eavesdropping on them! That is precisely what students of the University of Göttingen under the supervision of Matthias Markolf did. Listening and recording the conversations of the



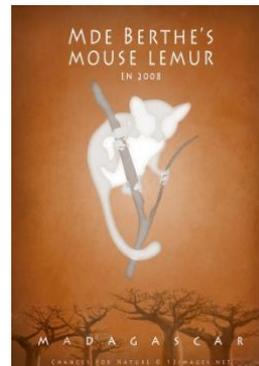
pale fork-marked lemur *Phaner pallescens* in the dry forests of western Madagascar. The animals frequently call while searching for tree sap in the forest canopy. The calls are recorded using automatic recorders. The study tests the suitability of automated acoustic recorders for monitoring populations of terrestrial animals. The analysis of the data suggests the usefulness

of this technique for monitoring vocally active species such as the pale fork-marked lemur in conservation projects.

The analyses are made in cooperation with students of the University of Antananarivo and the University of Göttingen. The acoustic recorders were funded by Chances for Nature.

Matthias presented first results of his study in August during a talk at the conference of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) in the Madagascan capital Antananarivo. At the same conference Chances for Nature also presented the "Little Rangers" project with a poster.

Poster boys: exhibition with graphics of Madagascan animals

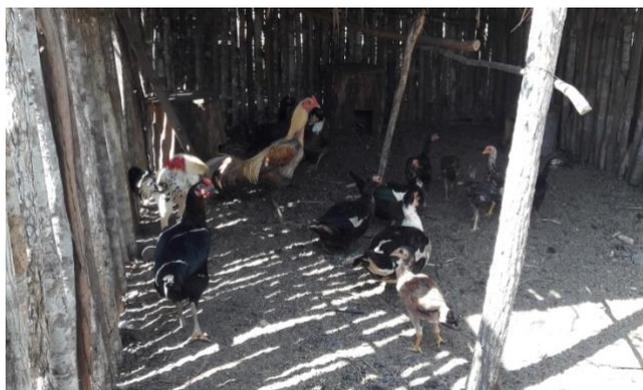


In cooperation with the Hungarian graphic designer, Moira Risen Chances for Nature presents a poster exhibition about Madagascan animals. The exhibition is located in the restaurant of the **Centre National de Formation et Recherche en Environnement et Forestier (CNFEREF)** in the Menabe-

Antimena Protected Area in western Madagascar. Moira Risen created twelve graphic representations of animals that occur exclusively on the island (www.12images.net). The pictures illustrate the uniqueness of those threatened and extraordinary representatives of the world's fauna. Furthermore, the exhibition should financially support the permanent implementation of the "Little Rangers" project.

Wildlife conservation through improved poultry farming

For several years, Chances for Nature is working on reducing the conflict between the largest predator of Madagascar, the fossa (*Cryptoprocta ferox*), and humans. The fossa regularly attacks the few chickens that villagers raise. During the daytime, the chickens roam freely through the villages, and at night they are housed in stables that do not really protect them against the fossa. Funded by Chances for Nature, further households in the communities of Ampataka and Beroboka have now acquired fossa-proof henhouses and support for improved poultry-farming. With good results: in March the chicken flock started with 50 members; in May it consisted of 104 animals already, and in September, they were 240.



Healthy chickens in Ampataka village

Chicken raising can serve as well as an alternative income for local people and further reduces hunting on endangered wildlife.

Wet feet: Monitoring the condition of mangroves in western Madagascar

Together with the ornithologist and mangrove expert Christoph Zöckler Matthias Markolf and Ndrina Razanamahenina have conducted a survey of the mangroves in the Menabe Antimena Protected Area at the end of September. Until today, there relatively little research about the mangroves of the region of Menabe. Only very little is known about the status of this type of forest whose roots are covered by seawater at each high tide. The goal of the survey was also to look for endangered waterbirds, such as the Malagasy sacred ibis *Threskiornis bernieri* and other threatened water birds. The population of this endangered shorebird in Madagascar is restricted to the west coast of the island. It is estimated to be not more than 2,000 animals. „Unfortunately, we didn't came close to a sacred ibis, but we could confirm the presence of the species by interviewing the local people", says Matthias Markolf. The total number of 38 waterbird species could be verified directly. Amongst them, such peculiar species like the Humblot's heron (*Ardea humbloti*) or the Madagascar plover (*Charadrius thoracicus*) whose occurrence at two visited sites has not been recorded before. The distribution of both species is restricted to western Madagascar. Compared to the dry forest the mangroves of this region are in good condition.



At high tide the mangroves at Tsangajoly are getting their feet wet

We thank the **Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung** and the **Stiftung Artenschutz** for their financial support.

Imprint: Chances for Nature e.V., Brauweg 9a, 37073 Göttingen

Text and editing: Markus Adamek

Picture credits: Hanitra Markolf Rakotonirina, Matthias Markolf

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