



CROWNED LEMUR

PRIMATES
Family: Lemnridae
Genus: *Eulemur*
Species: *coronatus*



Range: extreme northern tip of Madagascar

Habitat: semi-deciduous dry lowland and mid-altitude forest; found more frequently in the canopy forest as opposed to the edges or degraded forest areas.

Niche: primarily arboreal, herbivorous, and cathemal

Wild diet: predominantly fruit when available but some flowers & leaves

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild) 20 years
(Captivity) 36 years

Sexual dimorphism: dichromatic; marked color differences (see photo top right – M on left)

Location in SF Zoo: Lemur Forest

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The Crowned Lemur is the smallest of the genus *Eulemur*. It has a distinctive crown shaped orangey hair coloration on the top of their heads; females are predominantly lighter in color with gray bodies, whitish bellies and an orange crown; males are a darker reddish brown with a black and orange crown. Crowned lemurs often forage in scrubby bushes and short trees, and routinely come to the ground.

These lemurs have long tails that darken distally and are used for balance when leaping around the canopy. Crowned lemurs have pseudo-opposable thumbs, and binocular vision.

Weight:	4.4 lbs
HRL:	12 - 15 in
TL:	17 - 20 in

Dental formula: I2/2-C1/1-P3/3-M3/3 x 2 =36. The lower six incisors and canines form “dental comb” for self grooming.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List and on Appendix I of CITES. Total population estimates range from 1,000 to 10,000 animals. Habitat destruction due to slash-and-burn agriculture, charcoal production, mining for sapphires and gold, and illegal logging is the major threat facing Crowned Lemurs. The area of suitable habitat remaining in Madagascar for crowned lemurs is shrinking rapidly. This species is hunted for food and captured for the local pet trade.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

These small lemurs live in close-knit social groups of 5 - 15 individuals. Foraging often takes place within subgroups of 2 - 4. Vocalizations are used to maintain contact between different subgroups; these include “piercing yaps” and guttural grunts. Females in the group are dominant over males, giving them advantages in food selection and choice of mates. Grooming other group members is important in the development and maintenance of social bonds.

In the wild, crowned lemurs travel in all levels of the forest, but seem to prefer the canopy level. They readily descend to the ground to eat fallen fruit, lick or eat dirt, or travel. They play an important role in seed dispersal and in plant pollination. Although the animals are more active during daylight than night, researchers have found that there is usually a nighttime activity period lasting up to two hours.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Matings occur in late May and June with resulting in births between mid September and October, which coincides with the start of the rainy season and food is more plentiful. Females are capable of breeding annually.

Females have a 34 day reproductive cycle, with the vulva being closed when not in estrus. Infants are initially carried on the mother’s belly, but switch to her back when they are a couple of months old. Single infants and twins appear to be equally common. The role of males in parental care has not been documented.

Estrous: seasonally polyestrous; 34 day cycle	
Gestation: 125 days	Sexual Maturity: 20 mos
# of Mammae: 2 pair	Weaning Age: 5 – 6 mos
# of Young: 1 -2 (twins are common)	Weight at birth: 2.1 oz

MISCELLANEOUS

Crowned lemurs are sympatric throughout most of their range with Sanford’s lemur (*Eulemur fulvus sanfordi*). Crowned lemurs generally feed lower in the forest than Sanford’s lemurs, which may help avoid aggressive interactions between these two species.

The Crowned Lemurs of Ankarana Reserve are the only lemurs in this region known to traverse the razor-sharp *tsingy* (the eroded limestone rock that is characteristic of this national park) as they head into the forest early in the morning and as they leave the forest just before sunset to settle in the safer canyon forest in the center of these rock fields for the night.

Sources:

Walker’s Mammals of the World 6th edition © 1999, R. Nowak p. 517 -521

Mammals of Madagascar © 2007, Nick Garbutt p. 151-153

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Eulemur_coronatus/

<http://lemur.duke.edu/discover/meet-the-lemurs/crowned-lemur/>

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/8199/0>

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