

## NOTES

### Remains of an aye-aye (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) at the edge of the Parc National d'Ankarana, Région Diana

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#### Résumé

Dans différentes régions de Madagascar, en particulier dans l'Ouest et au Nord-ouest, chez les peuples Sakalava, ils croient que quand un aye-aye (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) est observé à proximité d'une habitation humaine, il présage un mauvais augure, ils sont obligés de tuer l'animal afin que la catastrophe ne tombe pas sur les membres du village. Un autre cas est signalé dans les environs de la limite du Parc National d'Ankarana et rapporté ici. Le cadavre d'un aye-aye suspendu à une tige de bambou a été trouvé le 21 Décembre 2014 près du village d'Ambondromifehy. L'animal a été tué à la lisière du village voisin d'Andranomamy, se trouvant à proximité d'Ankarana. La découverte de ce cadavre semble être la seule observation vérifiée pour le parc depuis près de 25 ans.

#### Abstract

In different areas of Madagascar, particularly in the west and northwest amongst people part of the Sakalava cultural group, there is the belief that when an aye-aye (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) ventures close to human habitation, it is important to kill the animal so ill-fortune does not fall upon the local village members (Simons & Meyers, 2001; Sterling, 2003). This belief still remains strong in certain areas, which has resulted in the past few decades of aye-aye carcasses being found near villages close to natural forest (Simons & Meyers, 2001; Koenig, 2005; Glaw *et al.*, 2008; Koenig & Zavasoa, 2008). Herein, a case is reported of a dead aye-aye being found in close-proximity to the Parc National d'Ankarana in the far north, Région Diana.

On 21 December 2014, while driving along Route Nationale no. 6 linking Ambilobe to Antsiranana, a dead aye-aye was found hanging upside down from a large bamboo pole planted in the ground (Figure 1). The animal was attached to the pole by a bark cord joined to its hindfeet and the head of the animal facing away from the village and towards the road. The site was 1.7 km NE Ambondromifehy, 12°52'55.38"S, 49°12'51.408"E, and in close proximity to the limit of the Parc National d'Ankarana. On the basis of



**Figure 1.** Remains of an aye-aye (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) found on 21 December 2015 in close proximity to Ambondromifehy, northern Madagascar. The animal is reputed to have been killed in the forest near the village of Andranomamy and at the limit of the Parc National d'Ankarana (photograph by Asmina Gandie).

discussions with a park official, the scenario was as follows: the animal was observed during the night sometime in the first week of December 2014 in the forest near the village of Andranomamy, where it was dispatched by local inhabitants, attached to the bamboo, and carried to the place where the carcass was found. The village of Andranomamy is about 1 km from the road and borders a forested section of the Parc National d'Ankarana. On the basis of external examination of the carcass, it was an adult and with considerable white fur on the dorsum.

There are previous reports of aye-ayes from Ankarana, including feeding signs and some direct observations (Wilson *et al.*, 1988; Hawkins *et al.*, 1990). As far as can be determined, the record presented herein is the first published physical evidence of this primate in Ankarana for nearly 25 years. This species is known from several other dry deciduous forests in northern and northwestern Madagascar (Mittermeier *et al.*, 2014). Recent work on aye-aye phylogeography has shown that northern populations (specifically Analamerana, Andrafiarena and Daraina) are distinct from those in the east and west (Perry *et al.*, 2013).

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