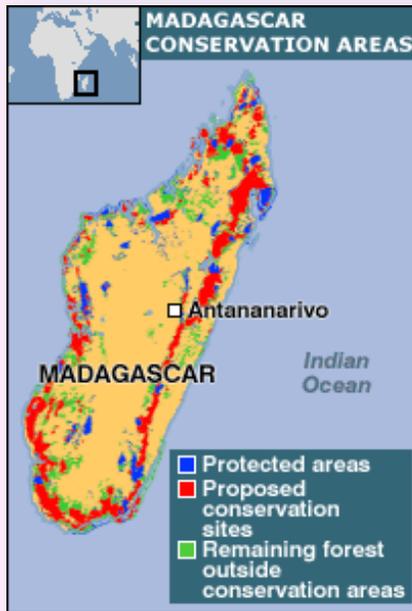


Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Presents



Madagascar Conservation Through Community With James Herrera

June 11, 2014

7pm

Madagascar is a biodiversity hotspot characterized by 80 – 100% endemic species and rapid habitat loss. Approximately 10% of the island still has natural forest, and of that, only 3% has formal protected status. The endemic primates of Madagascar, lemurs, are unique and diverse; there are 100 species, making up 25% of the world's primates. Tragically, more than 90% of lemurs are threatened with extinction, largely due to habitat loss. Many protected areas, especially national parks, have been safe havens for endangered lemurs. The corridors connecting parks, however, are frequently fragmented and unprotected.

Tonight's discussion will focus on the corridor in the southeast that connects three national parks, which is a priority site for protecting endangered lemurs. We will learn about a community-management focused conservation research and development project, partnering with people from the communities bordering the forest and landowners. We will learn how the project is using biodiversity education, training in sustainable agriculture and agroforestry, reforestation, and public health projects to improve the standard of living of local impoverished populations that rely on the forest for their livelihoods. Through community empowerment and capacity building, the goal is to encourage a new sense of stewardship at the local-level so that the people that truly interact with the forest manage it and benefit from it.

James Herrera is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at Stony Brook University, NY. He earned his Bachelor's degree from University of Miami (2009) and Masters at Stony Brook. He has been conducting research and training in Madagascar since 2007, and most recently has been studying endangered primates outside of protected areas to determine how biodiversity might be affected when the habitats in which they live are actively exploited. His Ph.D. research focuses on primates, but he has also conducted botanical surveys to determine the effects of habitat disturbance on forest composition and structure and the interrelationships between habitat disturbance, forest quality and primate abundance. He has also collaborated with experts in birds, amphibians and reptiles, rodents and insects. Thus with data across taxonomic levels he can compare if the results he finds for primates generalize to other vulnerable groups of organisms. James hopes to use this information to encourage sustainable use of forests outside protected areas, reforestation of degraded lands, and recreating connections in the fragmented landscape.

All meetings are free and open to the public!
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