

Madagascar for Real



Madagascar is one of the world's great conservation priorities with an unparalleled combination of diversity and uniqueness of its plants and animals. Key factors making the island a biological treasure house are its relatively large size, its tropical location, its 88 million years of isolation and the late arrival of humans.

This large (6-inch), millipede advertises danger. Its chemical defenses may include distasteful quinones and hydrogen cyanide. Some lemurs overcome this defense: Rolling a captured millipede in its hands, the lemur gets the millipede to release its toxic load. Wiping off the distasteful material with its own tail, the lemur eats the millipede.