

FEEDING ECOLOGY AND RANK IN RING-TAILED LEMURS (*LEMUR CATT*A) IN THE BERENTY RESERVE, SOUTHEASTERN MADAGASCAR

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The Ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*) is a living in multi-male, multi-female troops. Rank in a troop of this species can change frequently, especially among females. The aim of this study was to investigate differences in individual feeding ecology in relation to rank among females, with the question being, does social rank affect feeding ecology of ring-tailed lemurs? To determine this, I conducted an 11-month feeding study in the gallery forest in southeastern Madagascar.

Four females of two troops (Big troop: N=22 , Small troop: N=11) were observed using a focal animal sampling method, with whole day follows each individual for two days per month from October, 2004 to September, 2005. The rank with the big troop was stable during this study period, whereas that of individuals in the small troop changed. Quantitative feeding data indicate that there is a difference in nutritional gain among individuals. High-ranking female may have a feeding advantage, but subordinate individuals seemed to adapt their own strategy as avoiding higher ranking females to cope with severe feeding situations.

Keyword: *Lemur catta*, Feeding ecology, Ranking