



Part 7

LEMURS



The remarkable ring-tailed lemur has existed for 60 million years. But unless steps are taken now, it will soon be extinct. 80% of the forests of Madagascar, where the lemurs live, have been destroyed. 90% of lemur species have disappeared forever.

Dr. Lisa Gould first saw ring-tailed lemurs in 1984, and she immediately fell in love. Her passion took her to a remote research centre in southern Madagascar where she

now lives, studying the lemurs' intriguing behaviour and matriarchal social structure.

Endangered animals – and the champions who have dedicated their lives to saving them – feature in this spectacular series of 13 half-hour videos! Stunningly shot around the world, from the frozen ice fields of Canada's North to the jungles of Borneo, **Champions of the Wild** combines fascinating natural history with the intrigue of personal drama.

Director: **Chris Aikenhead**

Producers: **Christian Bruyère and Ian Herring** (Omni Film),
George Johnson (NFB)

Executive Producer: **Michael Chechik** (Omni Film)

25 minutes

Order number: **C9197 105**

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Part 7



VHS

C9197 105



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AS SEEN ON
DISCOVERY
AND
ANIMAL
PLANET



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"Ringtailed lemurs are fascinating creatures! Yet subsistence agriculture has replaced much of their habitat, so that only small patches of forest are left. Conservation efforts are essential for lemurs – and for all the other unique plants and animals of Madagascar – to continue to exist," says Dr. Lisa Gould.

Ringtailed lemurs have been around for 60 million years, much longer than other primates like apes and humans. They evolved in the extraordinary forests of Madagascar, a biological time capsule where nature has experimented with a remarkable variety of plants and animals. In Madagascar's splendid isolation, over 30 species of lemurs were free to evolve and diversify.

From the moment she first saw lemurs in 1984, Dr. Lisa Gould was fascinated. Although much research has been done on other primate societies, Dr. Gould was one of the pioneers to first shed light on the intriguing world of ringtailed lemurs. Her exotic laboratory is the Beza Mahafaly Special Reserve, a lush island of protected habitat in Southern Madagascar, 200 kilometers from the nearest hospital or town. Here she conducts research expeditions to study the lemurs in their threatened habitat. The behaviour of individual lemurs is analyzed in minute detail with a stopwatch and clipboard, offering insights into feeding, grooming and huddling together for warmth. Dr. Gould also studies the lemurs' fascinating social dynamics. In lemur society, the females are in charge and enjoy first choice of feeding sites and resting places. Males are kept in place with a sharp slap on the head. Dr. Gould has made a special study of the way males relate to one another in this female-dominant system.

Sadly, Madagascar is one of the world's environmental tragedies. More than 80% of the forests have been destroyed, and 90% of lemur species have disappeared forever. As Dr. Gould's research helps us better understand the need to protect habitat for ringtailed lemurs, it also raises difficult issues for conservation. The conflict between human needs and environmental protection is especially tough in a country as poor as Madagascar. Yet the efforts of researchers like Lisa Gould are helping us understand the plight of threatened wildlife and offer the ringtailed lemur a better chance to survive.

PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Locate Madagascar on a map. How does the climate of Madagascar compare to your climate?

Unique species of animals live in both Madagascar and Australia. Can the students explain this phenomenon?

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS

Lemurs live in a matriarchal society. Define this system of social organization in terms of the use of resources, social dominance, individual protection, social order, group dynamics and parenting.

How are government policies regarding conservation and human resource development affecting the survival of the lemurs?

The lemurs' forest is disappearing because of the expansion of subsistence farming areas with a subsequent loss of biodiversity. Is this good or bad for Madagascar's ecosystem? Why?

Dr. Gould's lemur research is done with a clipboard and stopwatch. How does this finely timed observational research yield an understanding of lemur behaviour and development?



Champion:
Dr. Lisa Gould

Champions of the Wild is a spectacular 13-part series featuring endangered animals and the champions who have dedicated their lives to saving them.

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in association with
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WORLD WIDE WEB SITES:

Pictures of ringtailed lemurs

<http://www.duke.edu/web/primate/rt1.html>

Lemur sights and sounds

http://www.kingston.ac.uk/users/mu_s454/godric/lemgall.html

Lemurs in Madagascar's Berenty Reserve

<http://staff.sb.aol.com/gww/Berenty/Lemurs.html>

CHAMPIONS OF THE WILD SERIES:

Part 1: SHARKS (C9197 096): From their research station on Bimini Island in the Bahamas, Tim Calver and his mentor, Dr. Sam Gruber, are committed to changing the world's negative perception of sharks.

Part 2: GORILLAS (C9197 104): In the dangerous surroundings of Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, Dr. Pascale Sicotte risks her life to protect one of the world's last remaining populations of mountain gorillas.

Part 3: GRIZZLIES (C9197 093): Wayne McCrory has spent the last 25 years passionately campaigning to protect the grizzly and rare white spirit bears of the British Columbia rain forest.

Part 4: WOLVES (C9197 103): Dr. Paul Paquet studies the harmful effects of wolves coming into contact with civilization and has succeeded in reintroducing wolf packs into the southern Alberta Rockies.

Part 5: HUMPBACKS (C9197 099): Dr. Jim Darling, a leading authority on humpback whales, follows the migration of these magnificent creatures in order to protect them in their Pacific environment.

Part 6: PANDAS (C9197 102): A self-proclaimed "pandaholic," Dr. Sue Mainka helps the Chinese make critical breakthroughs in raising captive pandas.

Part 7: LEMURS (C9197 105): Dr. Lisa Gould's mission is to protect the ringtailed lemurs of Madagascar and to make the world aware of these obscure primates.

Part 8: ORCAS (C9197 100): Radical researcher and visionary Dr. Paul Spong, having researched killer whales for over three decades, helps us understand how humans affect orca habitat and behaviour.

Part 9: POLAR BEARS (C9197 095): Biologist and photographer Dr. Dan Guravich has a love affair with the polar bear. His thousands of photographs have profoundly influenced our understanding of the world's largest land-based carnivore.

Part 10: DOLPHINS (C9197 097): Diane Claridge and Ken Balcomb are leaders in the fight to free the planet's imprisoned dolphins and whales and return them to the wild.

Part 11: SWIFT FOXES (C9197 094): Clio Smeeton has dedicated her life to completing her parents' dream of reintroducing the once-extinct swift fox to its Canadian Prairie home.

Part 12: RIGHT WHALES (C9197 101): By policing the Bay of Fundy and educating those who use the world's waterways, Deborah Tobin and Dr. Moira Brown are dedicated to saving the northern right whales, the planet's rarest marine mammal.

Part 13: ORANGUTANS (C9197 098): Activist researcher Dr. Biruté Galdikas lives in the gruelling jungles of Borneo and Sumatra, fighting to save the increasingly threatened orangutan.