



Centre ValBio Newsletter

January/February 2025

CVB News

Fossils Discovered in Ranomafana National Park

In November 2024, a team of researchers discovered a cranium, mandible, teeth, and leg bones of the dwarf hippo in a cave inside the rainforest of Ranomafana National Park. Fossils rarely are found in rainforests, and this hippo, although not dated yet, is not fully fossilized.



In February's Provost's Lecture Series at Stony Brook University, Dr. Patricia Wright will put these recent discoveries into perspective to better understand the history of Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, and propose a way to save its rapidly disappearing fauna and flora.

The lecture, "Recent Discoveries Enlighten the Mysteries of Madagascar: Earlier Human Arrival, the Lost Rainforest and Ranomafana Hippos," will take place at the Charles B. Wang Center Theater at Stony Brook University on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. The lecture will be recorded and released at a later date.

Dr. Lawrence Martin, co-founder and director emeritus of the Turkana Basin Institute in Kenya, will also be speaking. The lecture series is hosted by university Provost Carl Lejuez, and it showcases Stony Brook faculty who have earned the rank of SUNY Distinguished faculty. The

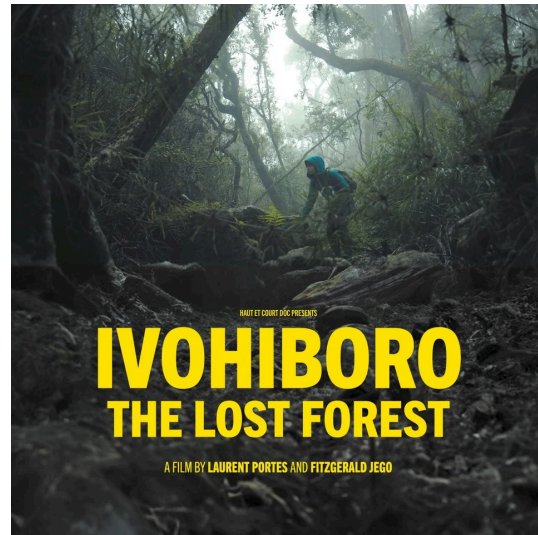
distinguished rank is the highest honor available to faculty in the State University of New York 64-campus system.

Read the Stony Brook News story here.

Photo credit: Dr. Patricia C. Wright

Upcoming Film Screenings | Q&A with Dr. Patricia Wright

A 52-minute English version of the documentary, *Ivohiboro: The Lost Forest*, will be screened in the U.S. in the coming months. The film, originally released in French in 2024, follows Dr. Patricia Wright and an international team of researchers as they embark on a 30-day scientific exploration of biodiversity in a newly studied rainforest, which is now part of the Ivohiboro Protected Area, in the High Plateau.



Screenings are to be held in partnership with **Johns Hopkins University** (Friday, March 14), **SOFO** in partnership with the **Sag Harbor Cinema** (Saturday, April 26), and **The Explorers Club** (Monday, May 5). More information on each to follow. For inquiries or to receive advance notice about any of these screenings, please email patricia.paladines@stonybrook.edu.

Florence Aghomo Wins Conservation Award

Stony Brook University doctoral student Florence Aghomo won the Young Women in Conservation Biology (YWCB) Award from the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) Africa Region.



This annual award presented to a woman aims to recognize and applaud contributions to conservation.

Florence has been the coordinator of the Red Colobus Conservation Network project since 2019. Before this role, her research and work involved studying the behavior and ecology of the endangered Red colobus monkey and establishing practices to ensure their protection and safety in the Korup National Park in Cameroon.

“Florence is a conservation hero, who has already made an incredible difference in saving wildlife in Africa,” said Dr. Patricia Wright. “I am pleased to see her apply her skills to Madagascar and to graduate school here at Stony Brook. We are looking forward to sharing in her future accomplishments. She is a winner!”

[Read the Stony Brook News story here.](#)

Photo Credit: Florence Aghomo

Fire Inside Ranomafana National Park

A devastating fire this past December and January resulted in 122 hectares of forest being destroyed on the west side of Ranomafana National Park. This is the first time we have had a fire inside the park’s boundaries. Our dry season, which normally ends in November, extended into



January. We are working on restoring ecologically important rainforest habitat, constructing firebreaks, and assessing precautions to be put in place for warding off future threats.

We are incredibly grateful for all of the support throughout this ordeal. Funds were crucial for procuring the necessary tools and, most importantly, for keeping the firefighters well-nourished while they endured long days at the blaze’s frontlines. Remaining funds will be applied toward working with the most affected communities in the restoration of their rainforest.

We would like to thank the Plant and Sofianou Family Environmental Foundation, Seneca Park Zoo, and other committed supporters for contributing to these efforts..

Read the Stony Brook News story here.

Read the Mongabay story here.

Photo credit: Dr. Patricia C. Wright

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