

# Leaping Lemurs!



*Robert Zingg*

A new Lemur has scientists jumping.

Scientists are thrilled about some tiny, furry finds. They have discovered two new species of lemurs on Madagascar, an island located off the southeast coast of Africa.

The endangered animals are found only in Madagascar and a few of the country's nearby islands. Madagascar is home to some of the world's most **exotic**, or unusual, plants and animals. Lemurs live mainly in forest trees and are **nocturnal**, or active at night.

One of the newly discovered creatures has wide eyes, is small enough to fit in a hand, and bounces from tree branch to tree branch in the dark. Its name in Malagasy means "good man." Malagasy is the official language of Madagascar. The animal was named after scientist Steve Goodman. He has been studying the tiny creatures in Madagascar for 20 years. It is truly an honor to have an animal named after me," says Goodman.

The other species is a giant mouse lemur with a bushy tail. It was named in honor of Madagascar's children. Its name in Malagasy means "child." The scientists chose that name to remind Madagascar's children to care for the many plants and animals in their country.

Finding a new lemur species is rare because many of the tiny creatures have become extinct. The recent find means that there are now 49 known species of lemurs in the wild.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. According to the passage, how many known species of lemurs exist in the wild?

- A 2
- B 49
- C 20
- D 42

2. Which of the following best describes the giant mouse lemur?

- A It has a bushy tail.
- B It has wide eyes.
- C It bounces around on tree branches at night.
- D It has big ears.

3. Based on the passage, it is likely that

- A scientists will find another species of lemur soon
- B the animals found in Madagascar also live in many other countries
- C it is difficult to find lemurs moving around during the day
- D Steve Goodman does not know a lot about lemurs

4. Read the following sentence: "Madagascar is home to some of the world's most exotic, or unusual, plants and animals."

In this sentence the word **exotic** means

- A very common
- B very tall
- C very rare
- D very tropical

5. What is the central idea of this passage?

- A Scientists are working in Madagascar.
- B Madagascar is an exotic place to visit.
- C Scientists found two new species of lemurs.
- D Lemurs are very active.

6. Where is Madagascar located?

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7. Based on the passage, why is important that scientists named the giant mouse lemur after the children of Madagascar?

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ so many of these animals have become extinct, the discovery of two new lemurs is unusual.

- A But
- B Because
- C Although
- D If

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Scientists named the lemur after scientist Steve Goodman because he has been studying the animals for 20 years in Madagascar.

Who? scientists

(did) What? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

**Vocabulary Word:** thrilled (thrilled): describes a feeling of being very happy about something.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **thrilled**.

1. Scientists were thrilled to find two new lemurs because they are very rare.
2. Steve Goodman was thrilled to have a lemur named after him because he has been studying these animals for a long time.
3. The smile on her face told everyone that she was thrilled that they had all come to her birthday party.
4. I was thrilled when my mom gave me a DVD of my favorite movie.
5. He was thrilled that the sun was shining so they could go outside to play.

10b. Circle the picture of the face that looks thrilled.



11. Would a student most likely be thrilled about a surprise birthday party or a surprise history test? Why?

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## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 870

**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

**Passage Summary:** This passage describes the discovery of two new species of lemurs in Madagascar, including descriptions of the two lemurs and how they were named.

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- B 49**
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- B Madagascar is an exotic place to visit.
- C Scientists found two new species of lemurs.**
- D Lemurs are very active.

6. Where is Madagascar located?

**Suggested answer:** Madagascar is an island located off the southeast coast of Africa. [paragraph #1]

7. Based on the passage, why is it important that scientists named the giant mouse lemur after the children of Madagascar?

**Suggested answer:** It is important that the lemur is named after the children of Madagascar because it states that the scientists wanted to remind Madagascar's children to take care of the plants and animals in their country, [paragraph #4], since it is home to some of the world's most exotic plants and animals and many of them are rare or endangered. [paragraph #2]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ so many of these animals have become extinct, the discovery of two new lemurs is unusual.

- A But
- B Because**
- C Although
- D If

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Scientists named the lemur after scientist Steve Goodman because he has been studying the animals for 20 years in Madagascar.

Who? scientists

(did) What? **named the lemur after scientist Steve Goodman**

Why? **because he has been studying the animals for 20 years**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

**Vocabulary Word:** thrilled

**Step 1:** Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (thrilled)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is thrilled. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "thrilled."]

**Step 2:** Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Thrilled describes a feeling of being very happy about something."
- b. Teacher says: "In the passage, scientists were thrilled to find two new species of lemurs in Madagascar because they are very rare and endangered, which means there are not very many of these animals."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "thrilled."]

**Step 3:** Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

- 10a.**
1. Scientists were thrilled to find two new lemurs because they are very rare.
  2. Steve Goodman was thrilled to have a lemur named after him because he has been studying these animals for a long time.
  3. The smile on her face told everyone that she was thrilled that they had all come to her birthday party.
  4. I was thrilled when my mom gave me a DVD of my favorite movie.
  5. He was thrilled that the sun was shining so they could go outside to play.

**Step 4:** Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Circle the picture of the face that looks thrilled.



- 11.** Would a student most likely be thrilled about a surprise birthday party or a surprise history test? Why?

**Suggested answer:** A student would most likely be thrilled about a surprise birthday party because that would make someone very happy. A surprise history test would probably not make someone feel thrilled.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary:* endangered, exotic, nocturnal, official, bushy, honor