

Editors' Preface

The first international conference dedicated to prosimian primates was held in April, 1972 at the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London and was organized by Bob Martin, Alan Walker, and Gerry Doyle. The resultant publication of the conference proceedings (*Prosimian Biology*, Duckworth, London, 1974) became the “Bible” for prosimian primatologists working in the last decades of the twentieth century.

In June 1993, a conference dedicated to the nocturnal prosimians was held at Duke University, in Durham, NC. Kay Izard, Lon Alterman, and Gerry Doyle once again issued a volume of conference proceedings, entitled *Creatures of the Dark: The Nocturnal Prosimians* (Plenum Press, New York, 1995), that became a milestone in the development of prosimian studies.

In September 1995, the Duke meeting was followed by the International Conference on the Biology and Conservation of Prosimians, held at Chester Zoo in the UK. The proceedings were edited by Caroline Harcourt, Robin Crompton, and Anna Feistner and published as a supplement to *Folia Primatologica* in 1998. This volume served as a further focal point for prosimian biologists to reflect on the growth of their field, and it became as indispensable as the previous proceedings volumes had been.

A decade elapsed before a fourth conference was convened, and work on prosimians—particularly on the Malagasy lemuriforms—had blossomed in the interim. The Prosimians 2007 International Congress took place in mid-July, 2007, in Ithala Game Reserve, South Africa. The final program was comprised of 77 spoken presentations spread over four-and-a-half days and 26 posters. One hundred participants attended the conference, representing research and conservation institutions in 12 countries. Of particular note was the strong representation by participants from developing countries, who contributed one-third of the presentations. Prosimian

primates are found in the tropical and subtropical forests and woodlands of Africa, South-east Asia, and Madagascar, and the majority of countries in which they occur qualify as developing countries. For the conference to have a meaningful impact on the conservation and general understanding of prosimians, it was clear that a substantial percentage of the participants should be drawn from these habitat countries. Funds to make this possible were generously supplied by Conservation International, the University of Fort Hare, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and the South African Department of Science and Technology. We are also indebted to Dr Mikhail Mostovski, who volunteered his skills in Web site design and management, and Patricia Birkett, who drew the logo.

This collected volume, inspired by the Ithala conference proceedings, is not simply an account of what transpired in July 2007. It presents a summary of the state and scope of prosimian research as we move into the second decade of the twenty-first century. The diverse chapters have been grouped into seven sections: systematics and evolution; general ecology; behavioral ecology; dietary ecology; physiological ecology; sensory ecology, communication and cognition; and prosimian conservation. Each chapter was thoroughly reviewed, and we acknowledge the following people who assisted with the review process:

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Leaping Ahead

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