Owing to its distinct geographically cut-off location, Madagascar has had the ability to develop distinct ecosystems and extraordinary wildlife. Madagascar is the world’s fifth-largest island and has some of the most fascinating topography, allowing for all kinds of wildlife to thrive. It harbors lush rain forests, deserts, plateaus, dry forests and a 3,000-mile long coastline. Madagascar is home to 21 million people who come from as diverse a background as the biodiversity here. More than 20 ethnic groups live on this island. Around 80% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Over 80% of the 200,000 species that Madagascar hosts are endemic to only this island, out of which 111 are primate species. Around 90% of lemur species are at risk of extinction.

Over the years, Madagascar has been developing much like the rest of the world. I have used night light data from satellites as a development proxy for the years of 1992 and 2013. I then studied the difference between the lights in both years and calculated the change. The areas of high night light change were matched with areas where mammals listed as Critically Endangered are found. This allowed me to narrow the study down to four lemur species that are in high danger of extinction. A lot of the threats surrounding biodiversity in Madagascar are related to illegal wildlife trade and unsustainable agriculture practices, which stem from the demands of global markets and from the growing needs of the population.

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