



## The Parsonii Project: A Study to Turn Around a Species in Trouble!

In 2022, the Caméléon Center Conservation was founded. With over a third of chameleon species facing extinction, this association works to enhance scientific knowledge and conserve these peculiar reptiles worldwide. Their latest mission? The "Parsonii Project," aiming to preserve an emblematic species from Madagascar.

Hidden at the top of the canopy, I exclusively inhabit a narrow strip of humid primary forest along the East coast of **Madagascar**. Although my family is renowned for changing color rapidly, I prefer to remain discreet... So discreet that I was initially called "Cameleonis rarissima," the rare chameleon. Yet, I don't go unnoticed: at **70 cm** long, I am the world's largest chameleon: the *Calumma parsonii*! As a gentle giant, I leisurely roam the branches and observe the world from above. In September 2023, it was precisely from the treetops of the **Vohimana** reserve that I saw a group of humans with peculiar behaviors approaching... Three young volunteers, accompanied by local guides, were busy attaching small devices to the trees I frequent. After inquiring, I learned that it was actually the first step of a conservation project concerning me: the **Parsonii Project**.



It was initiated by a Swiss association: the **Caméléon Center Conservation**, which works to safeguard my family, a chance! Let's get back to these small devices. I examined them closely; they are sensors that will spy on my every move for at least a year... What voyeurism! Their goal? To collect all sorts of data about my environment and habits to facilitate my conservation. Alright, I admit I may be too discreet... and a better understanding of my lifestyle will surely help protect my species more effectively.

But why so much effort? Well, it turns out I am almost threatened... It's not me saying it, it's the **IUCN**: the International Union for Conservation of Nature. According to them, if my populations continue to decline as rapidly, I will soon be reclassified as endangered... We chameleons are more threatened than other reptiles. Unfortunately for us, **38%** of my family's species are at risk of extinction, while "only" **18%** of our reptilian cousins are affected. Our worst enemy: habitat loss. Slash-and-burn agriculture, logging, climate change... My forest is disappearing, and we are slow, powerless animals... Fortunately for me, as a gentle giant, I am more charismatic to your eyes. By making me a symbol of Madagascar's fragile biodiversity, you encourage the preservation of my entire family, thank you!

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