

MASOALA RAINFOREST – OVERVIEW

Exhibit

Opening date:	30 June 2003
Planning & construction:	11 years
Length:	120 metres
Width:	90 metres
Height:	30 metres
Surface area:	11,000 m ²
Volume:	200,000 m ³
Costs:	CHF 52 million, entirely financed by donations

Masoala Rainforest represents a milestone in the strategic development of Zoo Zurich into a centre of nature conservation. In the functioning «miniature rainforest ecosystem», visitors can see many animal species flourishing in their natural habitat. Since 2013, it has also been possible to look over the treetops thanks to the Masoala treetop walkway. Masoala Rainforest is heated and cooled by means of an ingenious system that keeps energy consumption low. 40 geothermal probes buried at a depth of 250 metres provide most of the heat required via a heat pump. Additional, equally CO₂-neutral heating is provided by a central woodchip heating system if necessary. Two cisterns, each with a capacity of 500 cubic metres, collect rainwater that is used for watering the ground. Masoala Rainforest needs up to 140,000 litres of water per day in summer. In winter, around 40,000 litres a week are sufficient.

Animals

Over 40 vertebrate species (approx. 500 individuals) live together in the Masoala Rainforest. A few more species can be found in the adjacent information centre:

- Mammals: Red ruffed lemur, red-fronted brown lemur, Goodman's mouse lemur, Rodrigues fruit bat;
- Birds: among other herons, yellow-billed stork, waterfowl, wading birds, game-fowl, parakeets, doves, couas, bayas, pitta-like ground roller, etc.;
- Reptiles: among other chameleons, geckos, turtles, gerrhosauridae, and snakes (the latter in a terrarium in the information centre);
- Amphibians: tomato frog;
- Fish: among other Malagasy cichlid, Marakeli tilapia, Menarambo cichlid, and silverside;

- Insects and spiders: among others longhorn beetles, millipedes, etc. as well as species for biological plant protection.

International breeding programmes: Bernier's teal, Goodman's mouse lemur, hamerkop, Madagascar tree boa, Meller's duck, red-fronted brown lemur, red ruffed lemur, and Rodrigues fruit bat. (📄 zoo.ch/zuchtprogramme)

Plants

Over 500 plant varieties grow in the Masoala Rainforest. Roughly 80 percent of them can be found in Madagascar. Nearly 40 species are on the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN (iucnredlist.org). They are mostly palms. With the Masoala Rainforest, Zoo Zurich participates in the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation implemented by Botanic Gardens Conservation International (bgci.org).

Conservation

Zoo Zurich supports the Masoala region in Madagascar, in close cooperation with the Masoala National Park, the Wildlife Conservation Society WCS and Medair. Each year, it contributes at least USD 125,000 to the operating costs and sustainability fund of the Masoala National Park. It also finances socio-economic projects in the surrounding area from which 40,000 inhabitants have already benefited. In total, Zoo Zurich has invested over CHF 6,1 million in the sustainable development of the Masoala region to date.

(📄 zoo.ch/en/masoala-conservation)

Exhibition

«Masoala Rainforest»: The largest nature conservation exhibition at Zoo Zurich provides information about life and culture in Madagascar and about the tropical rainforest.

(📄 zoo.ch/ausstellung-masoala)

Activities

(📄 zoo.ch/veranstaltungen, zoo.ch/event)

Animal presentations: Animal keepers inform visitors about Masoala Rainforest, its inhabitants and the conservation projects in Madagascar.

Adventure trails: Guided tours on hidden paths through Masoala Rainforest.

Adventure vouchers: Feeding expedition in Masoala Rainforest, a look behind the scenes and information from the keepers.)

Guided tours & events: Custom private and business events and guided tours.

📄 **Exhibit overview:** zoo.ch/anlagen-masoala

📄 **Media releases, media doc:** zoo.ch/medien-masoala