
Where did the mammals in Madagascar?

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Millions of years ago, mammals arrived from Africa to Madagascar on natural rafts - the researchers write in the columns of the weekly journal Nature. Madagascar is characterized by rich fauna. Often these are unusual animals elsewhere on Earth, for example, 70 types of lemurs.

Only in Australia there are more endemic species, but it is 13 times greater than Madagascar. Lemurs, flying foxes and mongooses inhabit the island for many millions of years researchers, however, how it got on. This had to be more than 65 million years ago. The problem is that Madagascar separated from Africa some 120 million years ago. Matthew Huber of Purdue University in the United States, and Jason Ali of University Hong Kong believe that mammals come into the parts of Madagascar to the trees, carried by sea currents from Africa. Scientists have shown that millions of years has created the system of currents that such a trip was not only possible but also quite fast. The results are based on three years of the ongoing computer simulation of ocean currents. The idea that the animals got to Madagascar on natural rafts, is not new. Already appeared in 1915 and together with the competitive hypothesis of the land bridge between Africa and Madagascar, tries to explain the riddle of the island's inhabitants. Hypothesis of the land bridge, however, is difficult to accept. There is no geological certificates for the existence of such a bridge. Besides, if it existed on Madagascar also higher mammals - monkeys, giraffes, lions and elephants. By contrast, a weak point of the theory of natural rafts were the conclusions from the observation of ocean currents between Africa and Madagascar. From these currents, but should that detract from these rafts to the south, and not in the direction of Madagascar. However, it appears that millions of years ago currents are arranged differently. Computer simulations have shown that between 20 million and 60 million years ago, they are guided by the side of Africa to the island. Changed later, as a result of shifts in the two land masses about 1,600 km to the north.