

Madagascar's Lemurs

Naturetrek Tour Report

23 September - 7 October 2017



Verreaux's Sifakas group



Malagasy Painted Frog



Group at Isalo



Zombitse Sportive Lemur

Report & images compiled by Cathy Harlow



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Day 1

Friday 22nd September

London - Paris

Most of our group flew from London Heathrow to Paris Roissy Airport, where we transferred to the Ibis Hotel, a short ride on the free train shuttle. Over dinner we met up with Pete and Elizabeth who had flown from Edinburgh. Some of our group were seasoned Naturetrek travellers, while Stephen was embarking on his fourth trip to Madagascar. After sharing past experiences, we turned to the weeks ahead, looking forward to the experiences our journey through Madagascar would bring.

Day 2

Saturday 23rd September

Paris - Antananarivo

After a copious breakfast at the hotel, we took the shuttle back to the airport. There were long delays through passport control, but we boarded the flight on time, meeting the final two members of the group, Sally and Malcolm, who had flown in from Manchester. Once airborne, we enjoyed a good lunch and the selection of in-flight entertainment. We were served a light snack just before landing and got handed immigration cards to fill out on the plane. As we were seated in different areas of the plane, some were quicker off the flight than others. Getting through the immigration and visa queue is always a slow affair but eventually we had all got our visas and passport stamps and picked up our luggage.

In the arrivals hall, our Malagasy guide Claude was waiting for us. At the money-exchange bureau, we swapped sterling, euros and dollars for thick wads of local *Ariary*. After a short bus ride, we arrived at Le Bois Vert Hotel, a ten-minute drive from the airport. A Madagascan Nightjar was calling as we made our way to our rooms, in comfortable bungalows set among pine trees.

Day 3

Sunday 24th September

Antananarivo - Antsirabe

After a good rest, we woke to a warm and sunny day, tucked into an 8am breakfast at the hotel and had a short briefing on the holiday. In the hotel gardens we noted Common Myna, Madagascan Wagtail, Malagasy Bulbul, Souimanga Sunbird and a Red Fody collecting nesting material. Once the luggage was loaded on the roof, we were heading west through the suburbs of Antananarivo. Madagascar's colourful and chaotic capital is sprawled over a cluster of hills, dotted like islands on a sea of emerald rice paddies. Here we observed Squacco Heron, Great Egret, Dimorphic Egret and foraging Black Heron, wings extended in umbrella formation. We shuffled our way along traffic-clogged roads, past roadside brick ovens, market stalls and the city's canals, decked with laundry spread out to dry.

Before heading south, we'd arranged a visit to the Lemur Park. Established in 2001, this small private zoo on the outskirts of the city aims to introduce local children to their country's wildlife. Among the park's lemur species, mostly rescued from the pet trade, were Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur, Ring-tailed Lemur, Red-fronted Brown Lemur and Grey Bamboo Lemur - all species we would hopefully encounter in the wild. The visit also

introduced us to lemurs we would not be seeing on our trip: Crowned Sifaka, Coquerel's Sifaka, Mongoose Lemur and Alaotra Bamboo Lemur.

Accompanied by Lemur Park guide Princia, we explored the network of paths zig-zagging along the banks of the river bounding the reserve. In between lemur sightings we got views of Madagascar Wagtail, Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater, Malagasy Green Sunbird, Souimanga Sunbird, Common Jery, Madagascar Magpie-Robin, African Palm Swift and Malagasy White-eye. We peered up at a huge Hamerkop's nest in a *Eucalyptus* tree and some of the group got a glimpse of the bird in flight. Several lethargic Oustalet's Chameleons were spotted on the bare branches of low-growing shrubs adjacent to the path and in a flurry of excitement a semi-aquatic Madagascar Lined Snake crossed the path ahead of us.

Down by the river, Bee-eaters were sallying from their perches to grab insects on the wing. Here we encountered Coquerel's Sifaka resting in the boughs of a tree and Crowned Sifaka, both from the west of Madagascar. A group of Black-and-white Ruffed Lemurs announced their presence with a snarling communication call, while a couple of Ring-tailed Lemur mothers were fussing over their new babies on the ground. We noticed a dense layer of aquatic fern *Azolla pinnata africana* where the river had been dammed.

We sat on a shady terrace overlooking the park for lunch, where we admired the yellow trumpet-shaped flowers of *Solandra maxima*, introduced from Central America. On the opposite bank of the river, we saw Popcorn Senna *Cassia didymobotrya*, a shrub with yellow candelabra flower heads, plus *Terminalia mantaly*, whose tiered branches give it the name Wedding Cake Tree. We also admired a young baobab *Adansonia grandidieri*, Crown of Thorns *Euphorbia millii* and an Elephant's Foot *Pachypodium densiflorum*.

After lunch we set off for the drive south, stopping at a roadside stall to buy raffia souvenirs. Harvesting raffia doesn't harm the tree as only the fallen palm leaves are used. We passed the bustling villages of the Merina people, their brick houses lit up by the afternoon sun. The hills were dotted with tombs made of granite blocks hewn from the surrounding mountains. Claude explained how houses are only built to last for a lifetime but tombs are for eternity, so must be built more solidly using the best material. He went on to explain about *Famadibana*, the tradition of exhuming the dead for reburial every seven or so years, and the close relationship that people maintain with their dead ancestors and their influence over family affairs.

We ended this day of travel arriving just after dark at Antsirabe, where we checked into our rooms at Café Couleur, a small but very comfortable boutique hotel. Antsirabe, means 'place of big salt', in reference to the frosts that sometimes occur here in winter. After a good dinner and with the prospect of an early start in the morning we were ready to turn in.

Day 4

Monday 25th September

Antsirabe - Ranomafana

Some of the group enjoyed a spot of bird watching before breakfast with Madagascar Wagtail, Red Fody and Souimanga Sunbird in action around the hotel gardens, where we also admired an Indian Clock Vine *Thunbergia mysorensis*, with striking yellow-brown flowers. The early start got us on the road at 8am in warm sunshine, to continue the drive south through the mountainous backbone of the island. Monumental granite outcrops, emerald-green rice paddies and changing scenes from village life punctuated the journey.

Villagers were preparing the paddies for planting and zebu cattle play a pivotal role in softening the hard-baked clay. Rice cultivation in Madagascar is a big social event, with different families working together for mutual benefit. Rice takes an average of four months from sowing to harvest. The Indonesian origin of Madagascar's highland people is evident in the way the rice paddies are stacked up the hillsides in terraces. Pete pointed out a Hamerkop in flight over the paddies, where Cattle Egrets were foraging. We also noted a Malagasy Kestrel, a Striated Heron and two Yellow-billed Kites. It was market day in one of the villages and we saw stalls laid out with an intriguing range of medicinal herbs. Claude explained how many Malagasy don't have access to health care and rely on local healers. We stopped to photograph some village houses and soon found ourselves the centre of attention as children came to look at the strange 'Vazaha'.

A little further on we passed through a forest of native *Tapia* trees *Uapaca bojeri*. Madagascar's native Silk Worm feeds on the leaves of this fire-resistant tree, which resembles a cork oak. The hard fruits become edible once they fall to the ground and local children collect them to sell. Claude bought some for us to taste. This was a good place to break the journey and take a short walk and we spotted a Madagascan Cisticola. Stephen heard a Madagascan Cuckoo calling in the distance, Sylvia found a female Azure Skimmer dragonfly and Jane a grasshopper.

Continuing south, we passed the bridge that had been bombed during the 2001 political crisis in an attempt to cut off access routes to the capital. The RN7 is the only road that links the southern half of Madagascar with the capital. Heavy traffic has left sections of it badly potholed and children fill the holes with sand and then stop traffic to ask for money for their efforts, which are "about as useful as a chocolate tea-pot" Claude was heard to remark!

We stopped by a sandy cliff near the River Fatihita and watched Olive Bee-eaters flying in and out of their nesting sites. We spotted two delightful pairs of Grey-headed Lovebirds perched on a branch above the road, the males displaying. This proved to be a rewarding stop for butterflies with Madagascar Sailer, Brown Pansy, Blue Pansy, Madagascar Commodore and Citrus Swallowtail easily identified. Thanks to detective work by butterfly enthusiast Sylvia, we can add several more species: Indian Ocean Satyr *Hetroposis* sp, Brown Playboy *Dendorix antalus*, Gaika Blue *Zizula hylax* and a Metalmark probably *Saribi perroti*. This was also a good spot for dragonflies with Sylvia identifying Azure Skimmer *Orthetrum azureum* and Scarlet Darter *Crocothemis erythraea*. We noted a striking dark purple pea *Macroptilium atropurpureum*, an introduced species from South America.

Arriving at the attractive historic town of Ambositra, known for its skilled wood carvers, several of the group bought souvenirs.

Still journeying south, we stopped for a break by a fragment of rainforest, where we had our picnic lunch by a small pond and marshland area, now protected by the locals as Ankozomivady Community Nature Reserve. A red-flowered *Symphonia verrucosa* was in bloom – these striking trees are an important food for lemurs. We observed a Purple Heron perched on a tree top, a Malagasy Kestrel mobbing a Madagascan Buzzard, Yellow-billed Kite, a Cuckoo Roller in flight, Malagasy Brush Warbler. Elizabeth found our first Malagasy Kingfisher as it darted around the pond testing out different perches. A pair of Red-billed Teal was just in view at the back of the lake. An iguanid *Oplurus quadrimaculatus* was basking on a granite boulder, and we also found a skink *Trachylepis vato* and a Jewel Chameleon. An Emperor-type Dragonfly patrolled the shore of the pond, where Claude pointed out the purple Water-lily *Nymphaea nouchali* in bloom.

Back on the bus after lunch, sacks of charcoal lined the roadside as we passed villages whose livelihood centred on charcoal. We passed stands of introduced *Eucalyptus robusta*, one of several species harvested for charcoal production. Local people were also using the timber to make wooden platters for sale along the road. We stopped for a view where locals were selling peanuts and found a Painted Lady and a Malagasy Kestrel, beautifully lit up by the afternoon sun. At the bustling town of Ambohimahasoa we paused to photograph Cattle Egrets, Dimorphic Egrets and Black-crowned Night Herons nesting in the grounds of a large house. Shortly after, we turned off the main road towards Ranomafana National Park.

We arrived at Centrest Hotel in the village of Ranomafana just before nightfall. After dinner, some of us went looking for 'nightlife' in the hotel gardens and found Stick Insects attacking a Hibiscus, a Praying Mantis, Golden-Orb Spider, Lined Emerald Day Gecko, Starry-night Reed Frog and several Mascarene Ridged Frogs around the hotel swimming pool.

Day 5

Tuesday 26th September

Ranomafana

After a 6am breakfast, we hopped on the coach for the short drive to the National Park entrance, where we gathered with park guide Jean-Chrys and his team. Once the park permits were sorted, we split into two groups: Claude taking part of the group while the rest went with Cathy and Jean-Chrys. We made our way down steps into the rainforest area known as Talatakely. Ranomafana National Park protects important tracts of both primary and regrowth forest. It was created following the discovery of Golden Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur aureus*, identified as a new species in 1985.

Both groups had a marvellous morning exploring the rainforest and, thanks to the skills of the National Park guides, experiencing the specialities of Ranomafana, a lemur hot spot where six to eight species can be readily observed. The park is best known for the three species of bamboo lemur found here. All are fairly easy to find as the guides know the boundaries of their territories, yet they are not always easy to observe, especially when feeding in a tangle of bamboo in the canopy.

Crossing the River Namorona, Cathy and Jean Chrys's group plunged into thicker forest and the lemur spotters went ahead while we climbed at a steady pace focusing on the birds around us. We paused to observe a female Velvet Asity and a male Giraffe-necked Weevil on its host plant *Dichaetanthera cordifolia*. We examined one of the egg packets carefully rolled up in a leaf and allowed to drop to the forest floor. Above the path a Common Sunbird-Asity was feeding on nectar, and in the distance, we heard the wolf-whistle call of a Red-tailed Vanga. We observed a Madagascan Blue Pigeon feeding in the canopy and got excellent views of Tylas Vanga.

With news of lemur sightings, we headed first for a group of three Red-fronted Brown Lemur, but they were soon on the move, so we continued to where two Ranomafana Grey Bamboo Lemurs were feeding above us but somewhat obscured from view due to the dense foliage. These are the smallest of the three species found at Ranomafana and the most widespread and, unlike the other bamboo lemurs, they are also found in the dry forests of the west of Madagascar. Continuing deeper into the forest we arrived at where our spotters had located Greater Bamboo Lemur, now critically endangered due to habitat loss. A clue to their whereabouts is the tangle of shredded bamboo stems left behind after they have gouged out their favourite bit, the pith. This pair is not a breeding couple but father and daughter and, sadly, attempts to introduce a new female to the group have

been unsuccessful. After observing them feeding and resting, Jean-Chrys brought news of Golden Bamboo Lemur so we were off again. The group of six must have been spread out as we saw just one tail swinging to and fro in the canopy.

Our last and most rewarding lemur sighting of the morning was still to come as we made our way to a pair of Black-and-white Ruffed Lemurs. Unlike most other lemur species, twins are common and the female builds a 'nest' for her young and parks them there while she forages. Other lemurs cling first to their mother's belly but ride pillion as they get older. These two were feeding on fruit in the canopy and gave us great views as they moved from branch to branch, occasionally pausing to stare down at us. Abruptly the silence was shattered by what sounded like a pack of fighting dogs as the Black-and-white Ruffed Lemurs launched a contact call.

As we made our way out of the park, we found several more bird species: a Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher male, showing off his long tail, a Pitta-like Ground Roller, exquisitely coloured but totally camouflaged in the foliage of the understorey, a Malagasy Brush Warbler and Madagascar Magpie-Robin. During the morning we also saw Boulenger's Grass Snake, a yellow-and-black-striped millipede and several butterflies: Madagascar Dotted Border, Citrus Swallowtail and an Indian Ocean Satyr.

Claude's group did very well with sightings of Ranomafana Grey Bamboo Lemur, Red-fronted Brown Lemur feeding on berries of a *Cryptocaria* sp., Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur, a Ring-tailed Mongoose ambling along the path and a Lowland Red Forest Rat. They also saw a good selection of birds: Malagasy Brush Warbler, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Malagasy White-eye, Souimanga Sunbird, Rand's Warbler, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Madagascar Magpie-Robin, Pitta-like Ground Roller, Madagascar Cuckooshrike, and a Nelicourvi Weaver building a nest. On the reptile front they observed a diminutive Nose-horned Chameleon, Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko, Peacock Day Gecko and Boulenger's Grass Snake.

On the botanical side we observed the following: endemic Madagascar Cycad *Cycas thouarsii*, Bird's Nest Fern *Asplenium nidus*, introduced Chinese Guava *Psidium cattleianum*, endemic Madagascar Giant Bamboo *Cathariostachys madagascariensis*, introduced Jambolan *Syzygium (Eugenia) jambos*, a Flax Lily with bright blue berries *Dianella ensifolia*, an orange daisy *Emilia humifuga*, the Traveller's Palm *Ravenala madagascariensis* and an orchid *Oeonia rosea*.

Over lunch at the hotel, Sylvia pointed out a Clearwing butterfly *Acraea ranavalona* and we also saw a Madagascar Sailer. After lunch there was time for a rest before we set out again. After the steep paths of Talatakely, we were looking forward to an easier afternoon and we started by driving to the Namorona waterfall, where the river leaps off the eastern escarpment in a series of dramatic falls.

On the shrubs facing the river we found a Hairy Weevil *Lixus barbiger*, a black Jewel Beetle with four white spots *Polybothris* sp. and a Giant Black Millipede. Claude was very excited to find a Deceptive Chameleon *Calumma fallax*, an uncommon species. We also got good views of the locally common O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon. On the opposite side of the road, the damp cliff face was festooned with Dancing Ladies *Cynorkis purpurescens*, and *Cynorkis ridleyi* terrestrial orchids. Here too we found a purple *Streptocarpus* sp., a Sundew *Drosera madagascariensis* and a *Kalanchoe peltata*. We could hear the croaky calls of Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog, but locating these well-camouflaged large brown frogs was a little more challenging. They are identified by spines on the back of the hind legs.

Moving to a site further along the road Jean-Chrys found a stunning Malagasy Painted Frog, a small but very colourful mantella frog. Claude pointed out *Tambourissa peltata*, a tree with spectacular doughnut-shaped fruits and bright orange seeds. We got good views of Malagasy Green Sunbird and Common Jery and enjoyed the excitement of seeing two Red-bellied Lemurs dart across the road ahead of us.

As the light was now fading, we made our way down the road with a sighting of Pygmy Kingfisher by the roadside. Finding a suitable spot, we waited for nightfall and the chance of spotting some nocturnal lemurs. Tea-cup-sized Rufous Mouse Lemurs are among the most abundant lemur species in Madagascar, yet they are often hard to observe. They take a wide range of foods, including insects, nectar, flowers and gum but the firm favourite is fruit. The local guides have discovered that a banana smear on a branch guarantees a decent view of them but, in this case, it also attracted a Webb's Tuft-tailed Rat. We were keen to find 'our own' mouse lemurs using torches to catch the eye-shine. By the end of our amble along the roadside, we'd found a further four individuals, plus what our guides identified as a Greater Dwarf Lemur. Squirrel-sized and moving horizontally, nocturnal dwarf lemurs go into a hibernation-like state from July to September, when they live off the fat reserves stored in their tails. Chameleons are also easy to spot at night, as they sleep on spindly branches, overhanging the roadside. Effortlessly, our guides found three species: O'Shaughnessy's, Blue-legged and Glaw's Flap-necked Chameleons.

After dinner, most of the group turned in for an early night. Stephen and Cathy went to photograph Starry-night Reed Frog and Stephen spotted a magnificent Praying Mantis on the hotel wall. This was much larger than all others we'd noted and Stephen later identified it as a rare *Tisma freyi*.

Day 6

Wednesday 27th September

Ranomafana

After an early breakfast we set off for Vohiparara forest where the terrain is more level, a prospect that pleased most of our group after yesterday's exertions. During the 20-minute drive, we paused for a Malagasy Kestrel and a Blue Coua. While lemur spotters Sylvia and Bako went ahead, we examined and photographed some of the interesting rainforest plants: a purple-flowering shrub *Vernonia appendiculata*, an orange daisy *Emilia bumifuga*, a flax lily *Dianella ensifolia*, and a pink orchid *Aerangis* sp. We appreciated having keen botanist Sally with us, and her enthusiasm soon spread through the group.

Soon we were off at a pace through the rainforest to where the lemur spotters had found a group of Milne-Edwards' Sifakas. With ruby eyes, dark luxuriant fur and prominent pale thigh and rump patches, these striking sifakas are among the largest of the lemurs. Powerful hind-legs allow them to make astonishing jumps from tree to tree and like other sifakas they adopt a vertical clinging and leaping posture. In contrast to the busy trails we'd encountered yesterday, today we were privileged to have the forest and lemurs almost to ourselves. Quietly observing them feed and groom, we discovered that the family group of six had two babies, just a couple of months old, their miniature faces peeping out from the safety of mother's belly. The photographers in our group had plenty to smile about after this sighting!

Moving on, Jean-Chrys heard the shrill call of a Pollen's Vanga perched on a branch above us and soon we had a pair of them in view. We also observed a Long-billed Tetraka, creeping woodpecker-like along a branch probing

for insects, and a Blue Coua gliding from bough to bough furtively seeking prey. Perched on a bamboo cane in the bed of a clear stream, we found a pair of Ivohimanitra Madagascar Frogs.

Our second lemur sighting of the morning was a group of Red-bellied Lemurs and their two youngsters. We watched as they foraged among the branches and then an adult pair settled down on a nearby branch, their baby eyeing us from the safety of a parental embrace.

Continuing through the forest, we stopped to admire a Dragon Tree *Dracaena reflexa bakeri* and a pink terrestrial orchid *Cynorkis ridleyi*. Sylvia and Cathy patiently waited for a Metalmark butterfly *Saribia perroti* to settle for a photograph, while others were hoping for a sighting of Red-fronted Coua, which had called from the undergrowth but refused to show. Emerging from the forest into a sunny spot we found Green Jery, Stripe-throated Jery and Common Jery flitting from tree to tree and a Madagascar Buzzard patrolling overhead. This was also a good spot for butterflies and we noted Green Lady, Citrus Swallowtail, Grass Yellow, Madagascar Satyr and Clouded Mother of Pearl. Several Giraffe-necked Weevils were spotted on their host shrub *Dichaetanthera cordifolia*.

After a break for lunch at the hotel, some of the group opted for a quiet afternoon but the rest of us were keen to get a second look at Golden Bamboo Lemur and for this we needed to return to Talataky. The forest was surprisingly empty of visitors and, thanks to the lemur spotters' good work, we were soon quietly watching a group of three Golden Bamboo Lemurs browsing on an endemic Ranomafana Giant Bamboo *Cathariostachys madagascariensis*, helpfully identified by Claude. One of the three began to descend and soon we were eye to eye, watching it munch on the young shoots and leaves. We then observed how the lemur bounded down to the forest floor to lick soil to neutralise the toxins in its cyanide-laden diet.

Half our group were keen to do another night walk so, armed with torches, we combed the roadside shrubs and trees. Pete found an impressive Blue-legged Chameleon, while Jean-Chrys pointed out a tiny Nose-horned Chameleon and an O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon. At rest on overhanging branches their colours were muted, even ghostly white, which makes them easier to spot. Perched on a twig we found a large green White-lipped Bright-eyed (Tree) Frog, which Claude informed us is quite a rare find. A Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog was singing from a perch, its vocal sac fully inflated, and we also admired a Fire Millipede coiled on a tree trunk. It was now time to say goodbye to Jean-Chrys and his team, who had shown us such a marvellous showcase of plants and animals.

Day 7

Thursday 28th September

Ranomafana - Isalo

After another early rise we were on the road by 7am on a hot and sunny day. Madagascar Wagtails were feeding along the road and a Malagasy Kestrel was warming up on a tree-stump. A Magpie-Robin flew across the road and we passed a Great Egret feeding in a rice paddy. Leaving Ranomafana we reflected on how fragmented the rainforest has become due to continuing slash and burn. We would not be back in rainforest until the end of our trip as we were now heading for the hot, dry southern savannah.

At Madagascar's second highland city Fianarantsoa, the drivers took on fuel, while we bought postcards and some had coffee at the Soafia Hotel. Back on the move, we passed the taxi brousse (bush taxi) station, where

throng of overlaid minibuses were preparing to depart, roofs piled high with anything from bicycles and sofas to hens and ducks. Leaving the city, many of the rice paddies had been turned to brickworks, and huge smoking brick ovens lined the road. We stopped to take a look and soon found ourselves the centre of attention as a procession of locals passed us en route to market, dressed in their best attire.

We drove by fields of Sweet Wormwood *Artemisia annua*, a plant used to treat fever and malaria, but also grown as bio-fuel. A succession of Pied Crows, Yellow-billed Kites, Dimorphic Egrets and a Striated Heron helped to pass the time on this leg of the journey. Claude explained to us the richness of the Malagasy language and use of imagery – the word *masoandro* translates as ‘eye of the day’ but means ‘sun’.

After a sharp descent to Madagascar's main wine-producing area we stopped at the attractive town of Ambalavao. We visited the Antaimoro paper workshop, where beautiful flower-impregnated paper is made by hand from the pulp of the Avoha shrub *Trilepisium madagascariensis*, following a technique developed by Arab settlers on the coast. In the gardens we admired Bougainvillea and a South American Flame Vine *Pyrostegia venusta* in flower.

We collected our picnic lunch and drove the short distance to the community reserve at Anja, where a forest pocket sits among monumental granite domes. Some 15 years ago, with the help of local conservationist Adrien, the villagers established the reserve and began to show visitors their healthy population of around 400 Ring-tailed Lemurs, with the profits going back into the community to build a school and other facilities.

After a short walk in the open, we enjoyed quietly watching the lemurs feeding on the flowers of introduced Indian Lilac *Melia azedarach*. Ring-tails are highly social lemurs and we observed them grooming one another and scent-marking to define their territory and leave messages to one another. The group was made up of adults and juveniles headed by the dominant female and there were new-born babies to be seen, still clinging to mother's belly. In spite of the heat, the older youngsters were incredibly active and beginning to learn new skills in a succession of risky but entertaining acrobatic manoeuvres. We moved a little further into the forest to a second group of Ring-tails, hanging out in a shady spot.

It was getting noticeably hotter so the bird life was subdued, but we observed a Common Jery and, after some discussion, agreed that the heron on the small lake was indeed a Malagasy Pond Heron. The reserve guides pointed out an Oustalet's Chameleon, one of Madagascar's largest. We watched Madagascar Orange Tip and Grandidier's Caper White butterflies by the lake and found a Mascarene Ridged Frog. We enjoyed our picnic lunch under a shady straw canopy, but all too soon, it was time to move on, with several hours' drive still ahead of us.

Back on the road, we passed granite outcrops peppered with tombs and some interesting plants that are typical of the area's inselbergs. Near the village of Voatavo we stopped to look at some of them: an Elephant's Foot *Pachypodium densiflorum*, an *Adenia fringalavensis*, a member of the passion flower family with a bulbous water-storing trunk, and *Aloe deltoideodonta intermedia*. Once again, we benefitted from our guide Claude's extensive knowledge to identify some of them. On this bare rocky spot we also found a Grandidier's Madagascar Swift (a rock lizard) and many brightly coloured Rainbow Milkweed Locusts.

We had a short refreshment stop at Ihosy, the centre for the Bara people, and watched as the tuk-tuks passed by, laden with children returning from school. Leaving Ihosy, we tackled the long climb to the Horombe Plateau. In the dry season it's a desolate place, punctuated with clusters of mud huts and the ghostly remains of a failed experimental maize farm. We saw dozens of Madagascan Larks and Pied Crows along the way, but little else. Soon Isalo's sandstone massif appeared ahead of us, glowing in the afternoon sun. Reaching Jardin du Roy Hotel at 6.30pm, we checked into our beautiful rooms set among sandstone cliffs and fragrant gardens, before dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Day 8

Friday 29th September

Isalo National Park

Perhaps because of the long drive yesterday, we didn't have many takers for a cloudy dawn walk to look for birds around the hotel. We got great views of Madagascan Hoopoes foraging on the lawns and then flying up to a perch. A pair of Malagasy Coucals showed well as they called from a tree. A Crested Drongo perched in the open for us while a small flock of noisy Malagasy Bulbuls flew from tree to tree. Souimanga Sunbirds, African Palm Swifts and a Malagasy Kestrel were also up and about.

After an early breakfast we had a 20-minute drive to the town of Ranohira where we met our National Park guide, Parson. Ranohira means 'watering place for ring-tailed lemurs' – it sounded promising! Twenty years ago, a hamlet of a few hundred people, Ranohira now has a population of 7,000, thanks to the rising popularity of Isalo National Park, known for its amazing sandstone cliffs and canyons, unusual flora and fauna and gin-clear freshwater streams.

Parson suggested our best chances of finding lemurs would be at the Canyon de Namaza, a short drive from the town on a bumpy dirt road. The name translates as 'my friend' but the place once had a reputation for harbouring zebu rustlers. About 80% of the National Park is dotted with Tapia trees but other species are also common and Parson pointed out a pink-flowering shrub *Pemphis madagascariensis* and the fire-resistant *Bismarckia nobilis* palm. The sandstone cliffs are pitted with small caves, providing a safe roost for Ring-tailed Lemurs, and a place of burial for the Bara people. Along the river courses, we noted the endemic screwpines *Pandanus variabilis* and *Pandanus namakiensis* (*pulcher*) and stands of yellow-flowered *Crotalaria uncinella*.

Leaving the bus in a shady car park, we set off on foot at a slow pace. We spotted a juvenile Oustalet's Chameleon by the path and a small frog *Heterixalus luteostriatus* by a clump of Clubmoss. By a damp crevice we found a Mascarene Ridged Frog *Ptychadena mascareniensis*, and admired a Souimanga Sunbird feeding on the orange blooms of a Flame Bush *Chadsia flammea*. An Olive Bee-eater was flitting from perch to perch and sallying out to take insects on the wing. We also saw a flock of Red Fody, a Malagasy White-eye, Madagascan Cisticola and a pair of Malagasy Coucals. Sylvia and Steve lingered to photograph a Violet Dropwing dragonfly *Trithemis annulata*. Parson showed us another striking tree with clusters of pink blooms *Dalbergia pervillei*.

A Brilliant Blue butterfly paused briefly on the path ahead of us and several Madagascar Sailors flitted past us. We paused to photograph a Spiny-tailed Iguanid and a Madagascar Southern Black Scorpion, found by Parson under a stone. We spotted an impressive Wasp Spider *Argiope coquereli* and a Snout Bug on a *Crotalaria grevei* bush. Parson pointed out a rufous male Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher on its tiny cup-shaped nest, always sited about a metre off the ground.

Once inside the forest at the foot of Isalo's sandstone cliffs we paused in a shady spot, where a group of lethargic Ring-tailed Lemurs were taking a siesta. We got a good photo opportunity when a male Forest Rock Thrush perched within a few yards of us. A Madagascar Lined Snake *Bibilava lateralis* crossed the path as we made our way to view a roosting White-browed Hawk-Owl. Close by, Parson had also found a Rainforest Scops Owl roosting in a tangle of undergrowth. A Madagascan Buttonquail was spotted foraging in the leaf-litter.

Half of the group elected to stay and watch the lemurs with Claude, while Parson, Cathy, Michael, Sally, Malcolm, Pete and Elizabeth set off to explore further up the canyon, spotting Emperor-type dragonflies in flight over the clear-flowing stream. Clambering over large sandstone boulders with helpful steps cut into them, we arrived at the shady Cascade des Nymphes. Some of us enjoyed a paddle and other had a swim in the refreshing clear pool at the foot of the waterfall. We got a good view of a pair of Forest Rock Thrush perched in the shade by the pool. On the way back to join the rest of the group, we found a Gravenhorst's Mabuya (Skink) and a pair of mating Madagascar Swallowtails. The rest of our group meanwhile were enjoying the antics of a badly behaved group of Red-fronted Brown Lemurs, who were showing an unhealthy interest in another group's picnic lunch! On the way back to the coach we saw several more butterflies: Grass Yellow, Brilliant Blue, Yellow Pansy and a Leopard.

After a late lunch, we had time to relax in the beautiful surrounds of the hotel and take advantage of the swimming pool. Later in the afternoon Jane went horse riding and, as things began to cool down, the rest of us gathered on the hotel lawn with good views of Madagascan Hoopoes. We took a stroll to the lush forested canyon behind the hotel, where we saw Lesser Vasa Parrot, Malagasy Kestrel, Crested Drongo. We heard White-throated Rail calling from the banks of the stream. We also took time to examine the unusual endemic plants of the area: the palm *Dyopsis onilabensis*, *Aloe contigua*, *Kalanchoe sinsepala* and the yellow-flowered Elephant's Foot *Pachypodium rosulatum gracilis*.

After dinner, we were ready for an early night with the prospect of a pre-dawn rise in the morning.

Day 9

Saturday 30th September

Isalo – Zombitse - Ifaty

At 5am we were loaded up and on the road as dawn broke and the Isalo sandstone began to glow pink. Yellow-billed Kites, Pied Crows and Madagascar Larks kept us company along the straight road to Zombitse National Park, our next stop. We paused to observe a Malagasy Coucal foraging in a tree, a pair of Malagasy Kestrels feeding from a perch, a Malagasy Kingfisher and a flock of Madagascan Mannikins. We drove through the sapphire mining town of Ilakaka, which exploded from a hamlet to a city during a recent sapphire boom. Now mining activities are shifting other areas and we saw several new sapphire hotpots had sprung up along the roadside.

Zombitse National Park is a pocket of dry deciduous forest, sharing some characteristics of rainforest and known as a transitional forest. Because of its isolation and lack of accommodation, most visitors arrive during the heat of the day but with an early start, we were there by 7am. Reserve guide Lucien and his team took us on a gentle forest walk on easy trails to look for some of the specialities of the area. We paused to admire a Strangler Fig *Ficus rubra*, and two beautiful white orchids *Angraecum praestans* and *Aerangis articulata*. We also got excellent views of a large Oustalet's Chameleon before moving on to a Zombitse Sportive Lemur, gazing down at us from

its tree-hole roost. This is a nocturnal species that spends the day in a cavity or wedged in the fork of a tree, not looking very sportive, it must be said.

We were also lucky to encounter a group of six Verreaux's Sifaka. Vertically-clinging and leaping, these gorgeous creamy-white lemurs with dark faces are known as 'dancing sifakas'. Short forelimbs and long hindlimbs make it impractical for them to walk on all fours so when they need to cross open ground they hop sideways in a quasi-comical 'dancing' motion. This group, however, were spread-eagled over the bare boughs of a tree, warming up in the morning sun. As we watched we saw the fingers and feet of a tiny baby, still clinging to its mother's belly. One paused close by us to feed - what a privilege to see its fingers dextrously grasp a handful of leaves. These sifakas never drink, instead getting all the moisture they need from leaves. Moving on, we encountered a second group of sifakas, with four adults and a youngster, including a couple of very much darker individuals, a colour form that appears to be prevalent in this forest. Our guides also showed us the local endemic Standing's Day Gecko, peeking out from behind a slab of tree bark.

With the help of our guides we got excellent views of a pair of Hook-billed Vanga collecting nesting material, two roosting White-browed Owls, Malagasy White-eye, Common Jery, Crested Drongo and Souimanga Sunbird, but the endemic Appert's Tetraka eluded us this morning. Our guides now showed us the so-called 'Vazaha' tree, *Commiphora madagascariensis*, delighting in explaining how its bark peels like a sunburned foreigner! We also examined the local endemic *Euphorbia sakarabaensis* and a type of Rosewood *Dalbergia bracteolata*.

Continuing the journey, we traversed undulating terrain, punctuated by Fony Baobabs and the highly decorative roadside tombs of the Mahafaly people, which depict the ambitions of the deceased or how they died. On the approach to Toliara, we crossed an ancient coral-rag plateau, whose scrub vegetation was dominated by *Alluaudia comosa*, a species only found in this area. Dropping down to sea level, the heat and humidity were intense.

We took lunch at the Antsokay Arboretum. Founded in 1980 by Swiss botanist Hermann Petignat, this small tract of protected spiny forest showcases the unique flora of south-west Madagascar of which 90% is endemic. Local guide Fara pointed out many plants used by the local people, some downright bizarre, others possessing unique ways of coping with their harsh environment: *Operculicarya pachypus* a bonsai tree with tiny yellow flowers; *Delonix floribunda* used for making musical instruments; *Aloe vahombe* whose sap heals wounds and sunburn and *Aloe suzannae*, an endangered species because no one has discovered how to germinate its seeds; the Octopus Tree *Alluaudia procera*; false baobabs *Moringa hildebrandtii* and *Moringa drouhardii* whose pulp is used to purify water; *Commiphora aprevalii* used for the outrigger of a boat; the giant Elephant's Foot *Pachypodium geayi*; *Uncarina stelluifera* whose seeds are used as a mousetrap and whose leaves provide a natural shampoo; *Kalanchoe beharensis* which is known as Napoleon's Hat and has soft velvety leaves; *Vanilla madagascariensis* a native vanilla; and *Euphorbia stenoclada* whose latex is used to seal boats. There are over 100 species of Euphorbia and it is as well to know them as the sap of one species *Euphorbia cedrorum* causes blindness. Another poisonous plant is *Strophanthus boivini*. One of the most unusual plants at Antsokay is the vine *Cyphostemma montagnaci*, which forms a bulbous trunk base to store water. The bark and leaves of Katafray *Cedrelopsis greveii* produce an essential oil used to treat fever and pain.

As we made our way around the forest we recorded Madagascan Green-capped Coua (a subspecies of Red-capped Coua), Magpie-Robin, Sakalava Weaver, Souimanga Sunbird and Crested Drongo. We got good views of a Bernier's Striped Snake and Spiny-tailed Iguanid. Over lunch by the swimming pool we saw Olive Bee-eaters

swoop down to drink from the pool. Magpie-Robin, Sakalava Weaver, Malagasy Kestrel, African Palm Swift and Yellow-billed Kite were also observed.

After lunch we paused by some ponds on the outskirts of Toliara, where we found Black-winged Stilt, Great Egret and a Madagascar Swallowtail. Heading north along the coast on the newly surfaced and greatly improved road, we passed the fishing villages of the Vezo people, whose houses are made of reeds harvested from the surrounding wetlands.

Arriving at the beachfront Hotel Paradisier, we checked in and some of the group enjoyed relaxation time, while others went with Cathy and Claude to look at the ponds and spiny forest behind the hotel. Here we found Malagasy Coucal, Namaqua Dove, Madagascar Buzzard, Three-banded Plover, Kittlitz's Plover and Common Greenshank. At dusk we reconvened to watch a Grey-brown Mouse Lemur emerge from its sleeping hole in the eaves of an outbuilding.

Over dinner at the hotel, we heard Madagascar Nightjar and watched as they flew over the swimming pool.

Day 10

Sunday 1st October

Ifaty and Reniala Reserve

We were up before dawn for a visit to Reniala Reserve, a 20-minute drive to the north. Adjacent to the village of Ifaty is an area of protected spiny forest and the guides are expert at finding Long-tailed Ground Roller and Subdesert Mesite, two local rarities confined to this corner of the island and both under threat. Also typical of this forest are *Didieraceae* and *Alluandia* which superficially resemble cacti but are deciduous trees, the red-barked *Adansonia rubrostipa* baobabs, red-flowered *Combretum grandidieri*, a tree Elephant's Foot *Pachypodium geayi* and *Givotia madagascariensis*, whose lightweight timber is used to make canoes.

Reniala Reserve is a top bird watching spot as it offers the chance to see dozens of species in a compact area. To help us find them, we set off with reserve guide Dabe and his team of spotters. For some of us the highlight of the morning was the sight of six sleepy Sub-desert Mesites lined up on a branch, slowly warming up in the morning sun before dispersing to feed. For others it was crouching on the forest floor watching a Long-tailed Ground Roller, arguably one of the island's most impressive birds. We got great views of Madagascar Hoopoes perched on an Octopus tree and two other local specialities, Archbold's Newtonia and Thamnornis showed well, as did Common Newtonia. We also got great views of several more of Madagascar's endemics: Red-tailed Vanga, Chabert's Vanga and White-headed Vanga, along with Running Coua, several Crested Couas and Green-capped Coua. One of the Crested Couas was warming up in the sun, wing feathers outstretched. Some of us got a glimpse of Madagascar Harrier-Hawk in flight through the forest and we also enjoyed great views of a rare Banded Kestrel. Dabe showed us a Little Swift's nest in a hole in a baobab and took us to marvel the largest specimen in the reserve, a 1200-year-old baobab with a 12-metre circumference.

After almost three hours in this marvellous forest we were more than ready for a late breakfast. We then had time to relax and enjoy the surrounds of the hotel while some of the group took a stroll along the beach and others opted for a cruise on the reef lagoon on one of the traditional sailing boats and a chance to snorkel with the many reef inhabitants, among them Madagascar Clownfish, Blue-stripe Snapper, Black-spotted Rubberlip,

Arc-eye Hawkfish, Longfin Bannerfish, a Butterflyfish, Blue-barred Parrotfish, Powder-blue Surgeonfish, Blue Sea Star, Small Giant Clam and Mushroom Coral.

Over lunch, Madagascar Swallowtails were flitting among the Bougainvillea and we observed a Modest Day Gecko and got good views of a Malagasy Coucal. In the afternoon took a walk through the gardens and spiny forest behind the hotel, where we found Crested Drongo, Souimanga Sunbird, Malagasy Turtle Dove, Malagasy Coucal and Namaqua Dove. Beyond the perimeter of the hotel, we examined the surrounds of a brackish pond, where three Three-banded Plovers were foraging.

Returning to the hotel at dusk we took seats by one of the hotel outbuildings in the hope of spotting a Grey-brown Mouse Lemur leaving its daytime roost. We were in luck, and watched two of these tiny acrobatic lemurs emerge from under the eaves and leap away into the night.

Before dinner, a group of local musicians and dancers arrived to entertain us, as did a Dumeril's Boa, which had taken up residence among the bottles lined up behind the hotel's bar.

Day 11

Monday 2nd October

Ifaty - Toliara - Antananarivo - Andasibe

After an early breakfast we were ready to set off at 6.30am. En route to Toliara, we encountered a large flock of Whimbrel on a sand spit. At the Belalanda ponds we stopped to observe a group of eight Greater Flamingo, an increasingly rare sight along this stretch of coast. A pair of Black-winged Stilt were patrolling the shore of the pond, joined by a Kittlitz's Plover, while a Madagascan Cisticola were perched on a spiny bush nearby.

Arriving at the Airport, we found that our flight to Tana was to be diverted via Toalagnaro (Fort Dauphin), adding an extra leg to the journey, but offering a chance to see more of Madagascar from the air. Arriving at Tana, some of the group changed money and then we set off by coach, heading away from the city on the main road to the east coast.

Winding through hilly terrain, we passed many villages strung out along the roadside. The local people were tilling their patches of vegetables and preparing the fields for planting out rice seedlings. Claude pointed out a Striated Heron on a paddy wall and we observed Squacco Heron, Great Egret and Dimorphic Egret foraging while Mascarene Martins and Brown-throated Martins flew over the newly flooded paddies along with Madagascan Wagtail and Common Myna by the roadside.

We saw extensive forests of coppiced Eucalyptus being cut for charcoal production. Many Malagasy are dependent of charcoal for cooking and we saw sacks piled up by the roadside awaiting transport to the capital. Our progress on the winding road was slow and hampered by convoys of lorries driving to and from the island's main port Toamasina. Once past the watershed, we entered a patch of native forest and the road plunged in a series of hairpin bends to a plain below. Soon we arrived at the Mangoro River and town of Moramanga and, as the light was fading, we reached Andasibe, a bustling community adjacent to Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. The Lemurs' Lodge, our hotel for the next nights, was just beyond the village on the edge of the forest. As the hotel was brand new, we were the first group of foreign visitors to stay here so some teething problems were not totally unexpected. However, the staff were friendly, the rooms spacious and clean and the beds comfortable.

Day 12

Tuesday 3rd October

The Indri Reserve

We awoke to a misty start to the day and the distant wailing of Indri from the forest. After a filling breakfast and a short drive to the entrance to the Indri Reserve, we met veteran guide Maurice, who has worked with Naturetrek groups for many years. While Claude was sorting out entry permits, Maurice showed us a Tree Boa, coiled in a clump of thick grass. These nocturnal hunters go for small mammals, birds and frogs and during the day hide in trees or grass. We observed a tiny Nose-horned Chameleon in a tree in the car park and then set off on a broad flat trail through a clump of introduced *Eucalyptus robusta*.

We stopped by the open surrounds of the fish farm, where a Rand's Warbler (formerly Rand's Tetraka) was perched on a tree top and a Madagascar Cuckoo sat on a branch, giving us the first proper view of a bird we'd heard but not yet seen. Madagascar Stonechat, Brush Warbler and Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher were in evidence too. Maurice showed us a Thorn Spider suspended on threads spanning the path, and two orchids *Oenia rosea* and *Cynorchis ridleyi*. We paused to photograph processionary caterpillars on a tree trunk just as news came in of lemurs up ahead. A group of eight Diademmed Sifakas were moving through the forest but spread out over a wide area. One of them paused to rest and groom, giving us a good opportunity for photographs. This group was successfully introduced into the Indri reserve after their original territory was destroyed by the construction of a nickel pipeline.

Our next encounter was with a group of Common Brown Lemurs feeding on the pink fruits of a *Symphonia* sp. Reacting to the call of a Blue Coua, they launched loud alarm calls and dropped down to the forest floor, where we could observe and photograph them easily. Maurice thought they might have mistaken the Blue Coua for a bird of prey. Continuing through the forest, we observed a pair of Tylas Vanga collecting nesting material, while Maurice found a Woolly Lemur. These nocturnal lemurs should be sleeping in a safe spot during the day but perhaps this one had been disturbed by the alarm calls of the Common Brown Lemurs.

Topping the morning's lemur viewing was a marvellous encounter with a group of six Indris, one with a young baby. The largest of the lemurs, Indris are vertically clinging and leaping and capable of huge bounding jumps between trunks. As we watched, two of these stunning green-eyed lemur 'teddy bears' landed just feet from us on the forest floor and began to ingest soil. It is believed that this may help to neutralise toxins from their leaf-based diet. Indris are such specialised feeders that they cannot survive in captivity, and locals refer to them as 'Babakoto', the ancestor of man. As we sat spellbound, another scene unfolded nearby when a mother Indri and her baby began a playful interchange.

Time was moving on and Maurice had found more treats for us – Thiel's Lined Snake, Madagascar Green Lynx Spider, Giraffe-necked Weevil and a Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko, perfectly camouflaged against a tree trunk. Head facing downwards, this master of deception has a fringe around its body that prevents any shadows forming that might give it away during the day. As we made our way out of the reserve, many colourful butterflies were dancing in pools of sunlight: Green Lady, Cream-lined Swallowtail, Brown Pansy, Madagascar Sailer and Madagascar Forest Nymph.

Over lunch at Feony Ala Restaurant, we enjoyed watching a Malagasy Kingfisher darting out from a perch overlooking a small lake. Several Spotted Blue Swallowtails were drinking on the sandy shore of the lake.

After lunch some of the group opted to return to the lodge but Stephen, Sally, Elizabeth and Cathy went with Maurice back into the forest. We watched a pair of Blue Couas catching a Hawk-moth and found Crested Drongo, Chabert's Vanga, Rand's Warbler and Madagascan Wagtail. Next we headed to a patch of pine forest adjacent to the Orchid Garden, where Maurice was keen to look for Madagascan Owl. After a lot of neck-craning and guided by the alarm calls of a distressed Drongo we spotted tail feathers in the canopy. We also got good views of Tylas Vanga, White-headed Vanga and Malagasy Bulbul.

Most of the group still had energy for a night walk with Claude and Maurice, with sightings of Crossley's Dwarf Lemur, Madagascan Nightjar, Pygmy Kingfisher, Green Bright-eyed Frog, Brown Leaf Chameleon, Short-nosed Chameleon, Parson's Chameleon, Praying Mantis and Stick Insect.

Day 13

Wednesday 4th October

Mantadia National Park

After collecting packed lunches from Vakona Lodge, we set off for Mantadia National Park in 4x4 vehicles as the road to the reserve has deteriorated to a muddy, bumpy track, no longer suitable for buses. The drive through the rainforest is beautiful but it is sad to witness the continuing slash-and-burn activity outside the protected area.

Along the way we got a decent view of Madagascan Cuckoo and a very colourful male Madagascan Flufftail, skulking in the undergrowth by the track. As we entered the forest, a mixed flock passed overhead with Madagascan Cuckooshrike and Red-tailed Vanga pausing for the camera. Elizabeth got a glimpse of White-throated Rail, calling from the undergrowth bordering a clear stream.

We took in the magnificent primary rainforest that Mantadia protects. The name actually means 'Hard Walking' and it fits! As well as some steep slopes there are great buttressed trunks with splendid creeping roots, razor-sharp saw-edged *Pandanus*, tangles of lianas and orchids, fallen trunks festooned with bracket fungi and meandering clear-running streams.

Mantadia's lemurs are less habituated than those of Analamazaotra, but Maurice has huge experience in tracking them and soon we were gazing at a group of three Diademed Sifakas, including a female with a young baby. When two of the three moved off, we continued along the trail to a group of five Red-bellied Lemurs feeding on a flowering tree in the canopy, moving with precision from branch to branch. Close by, we spotted a lone Indri feeding and another Red-bellied Lemur. To round off this successful morning of lemur watching, we found a pair of rather sleepy Black-and-white Ruffed Lemurs. What made these encounters even more rewarding was the fact that we had the forest almost to ourselves.

Just before leaving the forest we spotted a Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko, a female Velvet Asity, perched on a low branch, and a Madagascan Harrier-Hawk in flight over the canopy to a chorus of alarm calls. Maurice showed us a distant view of a Madagascan Ibis nest, where we could just make out the bird sitting on it.

We made our way up a track to a small lake, where Madagascan Spinetails were flying overhead, a Madagascan Wagtail hopped among the water lilies and a Madagascan Swamp Warbler perched on a branch over the water. We enjoyed our picnic lunch in this tranquil setting, watching Blue Coua, Malagasy Black Swift, Forest Fody,

Madagascan Grebe, Common Moorhen, Madagascan Kingfisher and a pair of Meller's Duck. We got a second view of a Madagascan Harrier-Hawk in flight.

Sylvia spent time photographing some of the butterflies: Green Lady, Banded Blue, Cream-lined Swallowtail, African Monarch, Madagascan Satyr and Grass Yellow, while an Emperor-type Dragonfly patrolled the shore of the lake shore over lunch.

As we made our way back to the vehicle, Maurice dived into the undergrowth after a Lowland Streaked Tenrec. Mostly nocturnal and unusual to see outside the summer season, this was a lucky encounter. This species has an unusual defence, vibrating the quills behind the neck to produce a rattling sound.

On our way back to the hotel a small group of Grey Bamboo Lemurs was spotted from the vehicles, but they soon leapt away into the forest. We also stopped for a visit to the Lemur Island reserve, a home for lemurs rescued from the pet trade. As it was the end of the day and the lemurs had received rather a lot of visitors and food treats, they were not very interested in us but we did get a close look at some very cute Grey Bamboo Lemurs.

Day 14

Thursday 5th October

The Indri Reserve

It was our last morning in the rainforest and everyone was keen to make the most of it, so we were again up at crack of dawn and ready for an early departure. Peter and Diana found a stunning Marbled Rain Frog and a Mascarene Ridge Frog in the grounds of the hotel.

It was now time to say goodbye to Stephen and Claude who were heading off to Lac Alaotra and beyond. Stephen's unfailing enthusiasm for Madagascar's wildlife had been a fantastic motivator for our group, while Claude's eclectic knowledge of the wildlife and plants, coupled with amazing spotting and organisational ability were a huge asset throughout the tour. Perhaps though, Claude will be as much remembered for his engaging personality and extraordinary stock of English idioms, that brought many a smile to our faces. Thank you Claude, for everything you did to make our trip a success.

We were now in Maurice's good hands as we made our way to the Indri Reserve for our last morning of wildlife viewing. We started at Lac Vert, where a Madagascan Buzzard and Madagascan Harrier-Hawk, perched on a dead tree, caught our attention. Malagasy Black Swift, Malagasy White-eye, Crested Drongo, Common Jery, Tylas Vanga, Blue Coua, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher and Nuthatch Vanga added to the morning's bird list. No one would dispute that bird of the day had to be the pair of Collared Nightjar roosting on the forest floor, so cryptically coloured they were almost impossible to find without guidance.

We were to end the park visit with a marvellous sighting of a group of four Indris, including a mother and tiny baby, and the chance to hear them call. Indris' wailing songs are one of the most evocative sounds in the natural world. Many lemur species use scent to mark their territory but it is assumed that Indri's loud calls may play a part in defending a territory.

Now it was time to say goodbye and thank Maurice for showing us so much of the interesting wildlife and sharing his vast knowledge. Over lunch we met up with Sally, who had been catching up with plant identification and had spotted Purple Heron, Malagasy Coucal, Malagasy Kingfisher and Malagasy White-eye from the terrace at Feony Ala restaurant.

After lunch, we set off back to Tana with a few heads nodding in the bus. We made a short stop for souvenirs at the handicraft market before heading for Hotel Combava and a chance to rest and repack before dinner.

It was then a short transfer to the airport and after thanking our drivers, we checked in for the overnight flight to Paris.

Day 15

Friday 6th October

Antananarivo - Paris and onward flights to the UK

The flight arrived into Paris and we dispersed onto our respective flights back to the UK and it was time to say 'Veloma' to one another.

Day 16

Saturday 7th October

The end of another Naturetrek Tour to Madagascar with the arrival back into the UK

With thanks to everyone in the group for your great company, for sharing many stories and for making our Madagascar Lemurs trip enjoyable and productive. Everyone contributed in many ways but I'd like to give special mention to Sally Reader for sharing her knowledge of plants; to Sylvia Morton for her knowledge of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies and help with identifying them and to Stephen Woodham for sharing his knowledge of invertebrates in particular, and for his enthusiasm for all things Malagasy.

Thanks are due to our careful and friendly drivers and all our guides in the reserves we visited, whose knowledge and enthusiasm made all the difference to our visits. Special thanks to Claude for being a superb local guide: always helpful, kind and quietly efficient, but great company and with a wonderful sense of humour as well as hugely generous with his knowledge.

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Species Lists

Lemurs

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
		Cheirogaleidae												
1	Grey-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>								1	10			
2	Rufous Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>			6	6								
3	Greater Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogalus major</i>			1							1		
4	Crossley's (Furry-eared) Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogalus crossleyi</i>												
		Lepilemuridae												
5	Zombitse Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur hubbardorum</i>								2				
6		Lemuridae												
7	Grey Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur griseus griseus</i>											2	
8	Ranomafana Grey Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur griseus ranomafanensis</i>			2									
9	Golden Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>			1	3								
10	Greater Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur simus</i>			2									
11	Ring-tailed Lemur	<i>Lemur catta</i>					25	25						
12	Common Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>										15		
13	Red-fronted Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur rufifrons</i>			2			8						
14	Red-bellied Lemur	<i>Eulemur rubriventer</i>			2	3+2							5	
15	Variiegated Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata variegata</i>			2								2	
		Indridae												
16	Eastern Woolly Lemur (Avahi)	<i>Avahi laniger</i>										3		1
17	Verreaux's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>								10+2				
18	Diademed Sifaka	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>										8	3+1	
11	Milne-Edwards' Sifaka	<i>Propithecus edwardsi</i>				6+2								
20	Indri	<i>Indri indri</i>										6+1	1	3+1

Other Mammals:

45	Ring-tailed Mongoose	<i>Galidia elegans</i>			1									
49	Lowland Streaked Tenrec	<i>Hemicentetes semispinosus</i>											1	
52	Webb's Tuft-tailed Rat	<i>Eliurus webbi</i>			1									

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
53	Lowland Red Forest Rat	<i>Nesomys audeberti</i>			1	3								

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

1	Meller's Duck	<i>Anas melleri</i>											2	
2	Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>		2										
3	Madagascan Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus pelzelni</i>											1	
4	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>									8			
5	Madagascan Ibis	<i>Lophotibis cristata</i>											1	
6	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		15										
7	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>		1							1			
8	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	1	2			1				5			1
9	Malagasy Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola idae</i>					2							
10	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
11	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		1								1		1
12	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓	✓			1		1		✓			1
13	Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	6				1		1					
14	Dimorphic Egret	<i>Egretta dimorpha</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			2
15	Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	1	2			1							
16	Madagascan Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>									1		2	1
17	Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>		10			15	9	8	15	4			
18	Madagascan Buzzard	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>		3		1		H	1					1
19	Subdesert Mesite	<i>Monias benschi</i>									6			
20	Madagascan Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>											1	
21	White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>											1	
22	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>											1	
23	Madagascan Buttonquail	<i>Turnix nigricollis</i>						1						
24	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>							2	1	2			
25	Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>							4	2	1			
26	Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>							1	3				
27	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>								2	50			
28	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>							4					
29	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October												
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	
30	Malagasy Turtle Dove	<i>Nesoenas picturatus</i>			1				1		2	1	1		
31	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>								1	6	1			
32	Madagascan Blue Pigeon	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>			2										
33	Malagasy Coucal	<i>Centropus toulou</i>				H			2	1	1				1
34	Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>									3				
35	Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>			H	2							3	1	1
36	Red-capped Coua ('Green-capped')	<i>Coua ruficeps olivaceiceps</i>								1	2				
37	Running Coua	<i>Coua cursor</i>									2				
38	Madagascan Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>		H	H	H							1	1	
39	Rainforest Scops Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>							1		1				
40	White-browed Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox superciliaris</i>							1	2					
41	Madagascan Owl	<i>Asio madagascariensis</i>											1		
42	Collared Nightjar	<i>Gactornis enarratus</i>													2
43	Madagascan Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>	H							4	4		4		
44	Madagascan Spinetail	<i>Zonavena grandidieri</i>												4	
45	African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
46	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis theresae</i>									1				
47	Malagasy Black Swift	<i>Apus balstoni</i>												2	
48	Cuckoo Roller	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>		1	1										
49	Pitta-like Ground Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>			2										
50	Long-tailed Ground Roller	<i>Uratelornis chimaera</i>									1				
51	Madagascan Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis madagascariensis</i>			1								1		
52	Malagasy Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis vintsioides</i>		1						1			1	1	1
53	Olive Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>	2	30					3	3	2			1	
54	Madagascan Hoopoe	<i>Upupa marginata</i>		1					4		3				
55	Malagasy Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>	1	5	1		1	5	5						1
56	Banded Kestrel	<i>Falco zoniventris</i>									1				
57	Lesser Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>				1		4			1			1	
58	Grey-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis canus</i>	4					2							
59	Velvet Asity	<i>Philepitta castanea</i>			1									1	
60	Common Sunbird-Asity	<i>Neodrepanis coruscans</i>			1										
61	Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>			H						2			1	

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
62	Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>								2				
63	Pollen's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris polleni</i>				2								
64	White-headed Vanga	<i>Artamella viridis</i>								1		2		
65	Chabert Vanga	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>								2		1		
66	Blue Vanga	<i>Cyanolanius madagascarinus</i>											H	
67	Tylas Vanga	<i>Tylas eduardi</i>			1	H						4		
68	Nuthatch Vanga	<i>Hypositta corallirostris</i>										H		1
69	Common Newtonia	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>			H	H				10				
70	Archbold's Newtonia	<i>Newtonia archboldi</i>								3			1	
71	Crossley's Vanga	<i>Mystacornis crossleyi</i>				H								
72	Madagascan Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina cinerea</i>				H							1	
73	Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>			H			4	4	4		4	1	1
74	Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone mutata</i>			2			2		1		1	2	1
75	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>		6			✓	✓	✓	✓				
76	Madagascan Lark	<i>Eremopterix hova</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓				
77	Malagasy Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>	4		6	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
78	Mascarene Martin	<i>Phedina borbonica</i>		✓								✓		✓
79	Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>										4		
80	Malagasy Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas typica</i>		H	2	H		H				1		
81	Subdesert Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas lantzii</i>								2				
82	Madagascan Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus newtoni</i>											2	
83	Long-billed Bernieria	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>				1								
84	Thamnornis	<i>Thamnornis chloropetoides</i>								1				
85	Rand's Warbler	<i>Randia pseudozosterops</i>			1							2		
86	Common Jery	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>	10		2	2		10	4	10		2		8
87	Green Jery	<i>Neomixis viridis</i>				1	1							
88	Stripe-throated Jery	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>				1				1				
89	Madagascan Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cherina</i>		1			1	1		1	1			
90	Malagasy White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>	10	4	15			2	1			15	2	1
91	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
92	Madagascan Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus albospectularis</i>	1		2		3		2	4		4	1	
93	Forest Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola sharpei</i>						4						

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
94	Madagascan Stonechat	<i>Saxicola sibilla</i>	1	3					1				1	
95	Souimanga Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris sovimanga</i>	1	2	2				6	6	10	1	2	2
96	Malagasy Green Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris notatus</i>	1		1				1					
97	Nelicourvi Weaver	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>			2									
98	Sakalava Weaver	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>								2	4			
99	Red Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	2	2					✓	✓	✓			
100	Forest Fody	<i>Foudia omissa</i>											1	
101	Madagascan Mannikin	<i>Lepidopygia nana</i>								10				
102	Madagascan Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>	1	1	1				2			1	1	1

Frogs

1	Green Bright-eyed Frog	<i>Boophis viridis</i>											1	
2	White-lipped Bright-eyed Frog	<i>Boophis albilabris</i>				1								
3	Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog	<i>Boophis madagascariensis</i>		4	4	3								
4	Malagasy Painted Frog	<i>Mantella madagascariensis</i>			1									
5	Ivohimanitra Madagascar Frog	<i>Mantidactylus majori</i>				2								
6	Starry-night Reed Frog	<i>Heterixalus alboguttatus</i>		2										
7	A frog	<i>Heterixalus luteostriatus</i>						2						
8	Marbled Rain Frog	<i>Scaphiophryne marmorata</i>												1
9	Mascarene Ridged Frog	<i>Ptychadena mascareniensis</i>		4					1					1

Chameleons

1	Brown Leaf Chameleon	<i>Brookesia superciliaris</i>											2	
2	Blue-legged Chameleon	<i>Calumma crypticum</i>				4								
3	Short-nosed Chameleon	<i>Calumma gastrotaenia</i>											1	
4	Glaw's Flap-necked Chameleon	<i>Calumma glawi</i>			1	1								
5	Nose-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma nasuta</i>			1	1							2	
6	O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon	<i>Calumma oshaughnessyi</i>			2	4								
7	Parson's Chameleon	<i>Calumma parsonii</i>											1	
8	Deceptive Chameleon	<i>Calumma fallax</i>			1									
9	Jewel' Chameleon	<i>Furcifer lateralis</i>		1										
10	Oustalet's Chameleon	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>	5					1	2	1				

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
11	Spiny-backed Chameleon	<i>Furcifer verrucosus</i>									1			

Lizards, Geckos & Skinks

1	Three-eyed Lizard	<i>Chalarodon madagascariensis</i>								1	10			
2	Spiny-tailed Iguanid	<i>Oplurus cyclurus</i>							2	2				
3	Four-lined Iguanid	<i>Oplurus quadrimaculatus</i>		2					1					
4	Grandidier's Madagascar Swift (Iguanid)	<i>Oplurus grandidieri</i>					1							
5	Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus phantasticus</i>			1									
6	Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus sikorae</i>			1							1	1	
7	Lined Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata bifasciata</i>										1		
8	Lined Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata lineata</i>			4	6								
9	Peacock Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>			4	4								
10	Pale-bellied Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma leiogaster</i>									2			
11	Standing's Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma standingi</i>								2				
12	Modest Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma modesta</i>									1			
13	Thick-tail Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma mutabilis</i>						1						
14	A House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mercatorius</i>			1	1								
15	Gravenhorst's Mabuya	<i>Trachylepis gravenhorstii</i>						1						
16	Boulder Mabuya	<i>Trachylepis vato</i>		1										

Snakes

1	Mahafaly Sand Snake	<i>Mimophis mahafalensis</i>						2						
2	Madagascar Lined Snake	<i>Bibilava (Liopholidophis) lateralis</i>	1					1						
3	Thiel's Lined Snake	<i>Thamnosophis infrasignatus (L. thieli)</i>										1		
4	Bernier's Grass Snake	<i>Dromicodryas bernieri</i>							1					
5	Red-bellied Snake	<i>Liophidium rhodogaster</i>			1									
6	Boulenger's Grass Snake	<i>Compsophis boulengeri</i>			1									
7	Madagascar Tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>										1		1
8	Dumeril's Boa	<i>Acrantophis dumerili</i>								1	1			

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5

Butterflies

1	Madagascar Giant Swallowtail	<i>Pharmacophagus antenor</i>						6	1	10	8			
2	Green Lady	<i>Graphium cyrnus</i>				1		3				3	1	
3	Cream-lined Swallowtail	<i>Papilio delalandei</i>										1	2	1
4	Spotted Blue Swallowtail	<i>Papilio epiphorbas</i>										4		1
5	Banded Blue Swallowtail	<i>Papilio oribazus</i>											1	1
6	Citrus Swallowtail	<i>Papilio demodocus</i>		1	4	1								
7	African Monarch	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>						2	2	2			1	
8	Madagascar Leopard	<i>Phalanta madagascariensis</i>						2						
9	Common Joker	<i>Byblia anvata</i>			1									
10	Red Clearwing	<i>Acraea lia</i>			1	1								
11	A Clearwing	<i>Acraea ranaivalona</i>			1									
12	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		1										
13	Brilliant Blue	<i>Junonia rhadama</i>						4	1					
14	Madagascan Brown Pansy	<i>Junonia goudotii</i>		1		1		1				1		
15	Yellow Pansy	<i>Junonia hierta paris</i>						1						
16	Blue Pansy	<i>Junonia oenone</i>		2		1								
17	Madagascar Commodore	<i>Precis andremiaja</i>		1										
18	Clouded Mother-of-Pearl	<i>Protogoniomorpha anacardii</i>				1		1	1	1				
19	Madagascan Forest Nymph	<i>Aterica rabena</i>										1		
20	Spotted Sailer	<i>Neptis saclava</i>				1				1				
21	Madagascar Sailer	<i>Neptis kikiideli</i>		1	1			4					1	
22	A Madagascar Satyr	<i>Strabena sp.</i>		1		1							1	
23	African Vagrant	<i>Catopsilia florella</i>								1				
24	Grandidier's Caper White	<i>Belenois grandidieri</i>						1		2				
25	Madagascar Dotted Border	<i>Mylothris phileris</i>			1									
26	Madagascan Orange Tip	<i>Colotis evanthe</i>						1						
27		<i>Colotis zoe</i>						1						
28	A Grass Yellow	<i>Eurema sp</i>	1			1		4					1	
29	Gaika Blue	<i>Zizula hylax</i>								1				
30	A Hairstreak	<i>Hemiolaus cobaltina</i>						1						

	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
31	A Madagascar Metalmark	<i>Saribia perroti</i> (poss.)				8								
32	Brown Playboy	<i>Deudrix antalus</i>		1		1								
33	A Skipper	<i>Parnara naso</i>				1								

Moths

1	Madagascan Owl Moth	<i>Cylogramma duplex</i>			2									
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Odonata

1	Violet Dropwing	<i>Trithemis annulata</i>					1							
2	Azure Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum azureum</i>		1										
3	Scarlet Darter	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>		1			1							
4	Emperor type Dragonfly	<i>c.f. Anax imperator</i>		1			1						1	

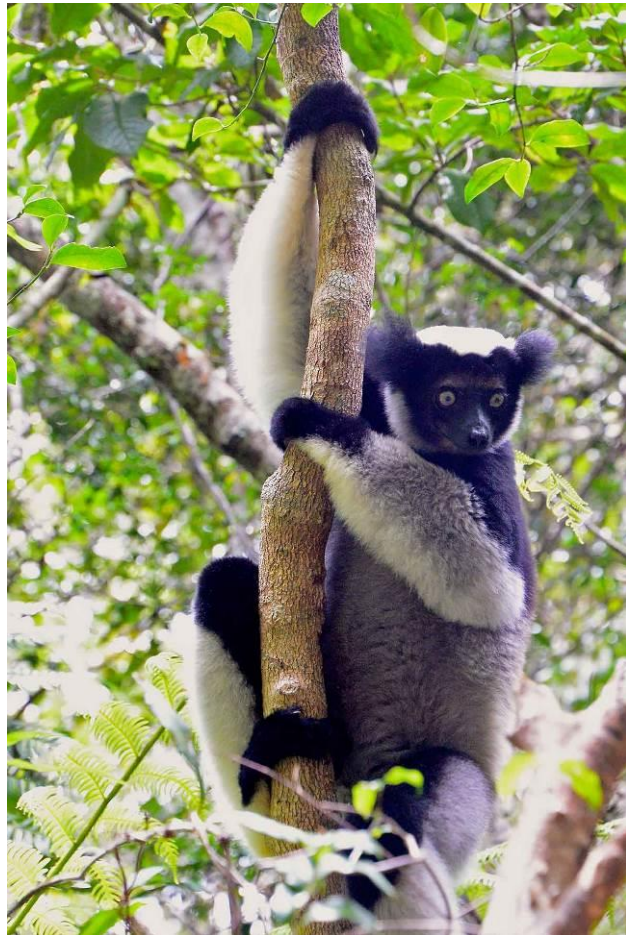
Other Invertebrates

1	Rainbow Milkweed Locust	<i>Phymateus saxosus</i>		2			6	1						
2	A Praying Mantis	<i>Tisma freyi</i>				1								
3	Madagascan Marbled Mantis	<i>Polyspilota aeruginosa</i>		2	1							2		
4	Stick Insect			✓								1		
5	Flatid Leaf-bug	<i>Phromnia rosea</i>						✓	✓					
6	Plataspid Shield Bugs	<i>Libyaspis coccinelloides</i>						✓						
7	Snout Bug or Flat-backed Weevil	<i>Zana tenebrosa</i>						2						
8	Giraffe-necked Weevil	<i>Trachelophorus giraffa</i>			6	6						1		
9	Hairy Weevil	<i>Lixus barbiger</i>			1									
10	White-spotted Beetle	<i>Polybothris</i> sp.			1	1								
11	Large Black Millipede	-			2									
12	Madagascar Fire Millipede	<i>Aphistogoniulus</i> sp.				1							1	

Spiders etc

1	Madagascar Golden Orb-web Spider	<i>Nephila madagascariensis</i>		1				1						
2	Thorn Spider (Orange)	<i>Gasteracanthinae</i> sp										1		
3	Madagascar Green Lynx Spider	<i>Peucetia madagascariensis</i>										1		

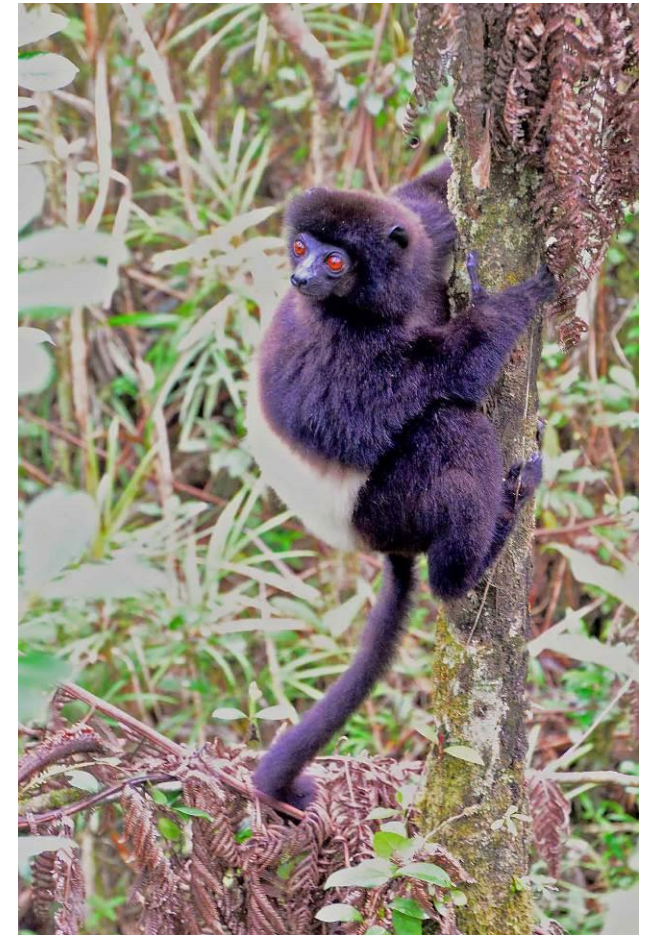
	Common name	Scientific name	September / October											
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
4	Wasp Spider	<i>Argiope coquereli</i>							1					
5	A Funnel Web Spider											1		
6	Madagascar Southern Black Scorpion	<i>Opisthacanthus madagascariensis</i>							1					



Indri



Rainforest Scops Owl



Milne-Edwards Sifaka

Plants ([] = Planted; * = Endemic)

Scientific name	Common name	Location
PTERIDOPHYTES		
Lycophytes		
Clubmosses & Quillworts		
Clubmoss Family		
Lycopodiaceae <i>Lycopodium</i> sp.	-	Ankozomivady, Isalo
Leptosporangiate Ferns		
True Ferns		
Spleenwort Family		
Aspleniaceae <i>Asplenium nidus</i>	Basket Fern	Ranomafana
Tree Fern Family		
Cyatheaceae <i>Cyathea madagascariensis</i> *	a Tree Fern	Ranomafana
Cycadaceae		
<i>Cycas thouarsii</i> <i>Cycas circinalis</i>		Ranomafana in gardens
Marsileaceae		
<i>Marsilea quadrifolia</i>	Clover Fern	Ranomafana
Polypodiaceae		
<i>Drynaria quercifolia</i>	Oak Leaf Fern	Ranomafana
Salviniaceae		
<i>Azolla pinnata</i> subsp. <i>africana</i>	a Water Fern	Lemurs Park
GYMNOSPERMS		
Conifers		
Pine Family		
Pinaceae <i>Pinus kesiya</i> <i>Pinus patula</i>	Khasi Pine Mexican Weeping Pine	Widespread Widespread
New Zealand Pine Family		
Podocarpaceae <i>Podocarpus madagascariensis</i> *	-	Widespread
PRE-DICOTS		
Primitive Angiosperms		
Water-lily Family		
Nymphaeaceae <i>Nymphaea nouchali</i> (<i>N. stellata</i>)	African Water-lily	Ankozomivady
Laurel Family		
Lauraceae <i>Cryptocarya</i> sp		Ranomafana
EU-DICOTS		
True Dicotyledons		
Bear's-breech Family		
Acanthaceae [<i>Pachystachys lutea</i>] <i>Thunbergia alata</i> <i>Thunbergia mysorensis</i>	Lollipop or Golden Shrimp Plant Black-eyed Susan Indian Clock Vine	Widespread in gardens Widespread In gardens at Café Couleur, Antsirabe

Scientific name	Common name	Location
Anacardiaceae	Sumach Family	
<i>[Mangifera indica]</i>	Common Mango	Widespread
<i>Operculicarya decaryi*</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Operculicarya pachypus*</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Abrahamia deflexa*</i> (<i>Protorhus</i> sp.)	Coffin Tree'	Zombitse
Aphloiaceae	Tea Bush Family	
<i>Aphloia theiformis</i>	Tea Bush	Ranomafana
Apocynaceae	Periwinkle Family	
<i>Adenium obesum</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Allamanda cathartica</i>	-	Widespread in gardens
<i>Catharanthus coriaceus*</i>	a Periwinkle	Isalo
<i>Catharanthus roseus*</i>	Madagascan Periwinkle	Widespread
<i>Cynanchum decaryi*</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Cynanchum floriferum*</i> (<i>Folotsia floribunda</i>)	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Cynanchum grandidieri*</i> (<i>Folotsia grandiflora</i>)	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Ischnolepis graminifolia</i>	Salotse	Isalo
<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander	Widespread in gardens Lemurs Park and Voatavo (between Ambalavao and Ihosy)
<i>Pachypodium densiflorum*</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara, Ifaty
<i>Pachypodium geayi*</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara, Ifaty
<i>Pachypodium rosulatum</i> subsp. <i>gracilis*</i>	Elephant's Foot	Isalo
<i>[Plumeria rubra]</i>	Frangipani	In gardens at Isalo
<i>[Plumeria rubra</i> var. <i>alba]</i>	White' Frangipani	In gardens at Isalo
<i>Secamone</i> sp.	a Liana	Ranomafana
<i>Stephanotis floribunda</i>	Madagascar Jasmine	In gardens
<i>Strophanthus</i> (<i>Roupellina</i>) <i>boivini*</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
Asclepediaceae	Milkweed Family	
<i>Gomphocarpus fruticosus</i>	Milkweed	Widespread on Hauts Plateaux
Asteraceae (Compositae)	Daisy Family	
<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i>	Goat Weed	Widespread along road margins
<i>Artemisia annua</i>	Wormwood	Fianarantsoa
<i>Conyza bonariensis</i>	Argentine Fleabane	Widespread on Hauts Plateaux
<i>Emilia humiguga</i>		Ranomafana & Andasibe
<i>Helichrysum heterotrichum*</i>	an Everlasting	Widespread
<i>Psiadia altissima</i>		Widespread
<i>Tridax procumbens</i>	-	Widespread along road margins
<i>Veronia apendiculata</i>	-	Ranomafana
Balsaminaceae	Balsam Family	
<i>Impatiens inaperta*</i>	Madagascar Busy Lizzie	Ranomafana
Bignoniaceae		
<i>[Jacaranda</i> c.f. <i>cuspidifolia]</i>	Jacaranda	Widespread in towns and villages
<i>Pyrostegia venusta</i>	Flame Vine	Widespread in gardens
<i>[Spathodea campanulata]</i>	African Tulip Tree	Widespread in towns and villages
Burseraceae	Torchwood or Myrrh Family	
<i>Commiphora madagascariensis</i>	-	Zombitse

Scientific name	Common name	Location
<i>Commiphora aprevalii</i>		Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
Cactaceae	Cactus Family	
<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>	Barbary Fig	Widespread
<i>Rhipsalis baccifera</i> subsp. <i>horrida</i> *	Mistletoe Cactus	Ranomafana
Campanulaceae	Bellflower Family	
<i>Lobelia madagascariensis</i>	Lobelia	Ranomafana
Caricaceae	Papaya Family	
[<i>Carica papaya</i>]	Papaya	Widespread in towns and gardens
Casuarinaceae	Sheoak Family	
<i>Casuarina</i> sp.	Sheoak	Ifaty
Clusiaceae	Garcinia Family	
<i>Symphonia verrucosa</i> *	-	Ranomafana, Mantadia
Combretaceae	Bush-willow Family	
<i>Combretum grandidieri</i>		Ifaty
<i>Terminalia mantaly</i> *	-	Lemurs Park & widespread along roads
Convolvulaceae	Bindweed Family	
<i>Bonamia spectabilis</i>	-	Isalo in canyons behind hotel
<i>Cuscuta planiflora</i> var. <i>madagascariensis</i>	Dodder	Isalo Namaza Canyon
[<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>]	Sweet Potato	In cultivation
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop Family	
<i>Kalanchoe beharensis</i> *	Napoleon's Hat	Lenurs Park, Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Kalanchoe peltata</i>	-	Ranomafana
<i>Kalanchoe synsepala</i> *	-	Isalo
<i>Kalanchoe uniflora</i>		Mantadia
Didiereaceae *	Octopus Tree Family	
<i>Alluaudia comosa</i> *	-	near Toliara
<i>Alluaudia dumosa</i> *	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Alluaudia procera</i> *	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Didierea madagascariensis</i> *	Octopus tree	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
	-	
Droseraceae	Sundew Family	
<i>Drosera madagascariensis</i>	Madagascan Sundew	Ranomafana, Isalo
Ebenaceae	Persimmon Family	
<i>Diospyros kaki</i>	Persimmon or Sharon Fruit	In towns and gardens
Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family	
<i>Croton</i> sp	-	Widespread in gardens
<i>Euphorbia cedrorum</i>		Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Euphorbia mili</i> *	Crown of Thorns	Along roadside and in gardens
<i>Euphorbia sakarahaensis</i>		Zombitse
<i>Euphorbia stenoclada</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara, Ifaty
<i>Euphorbia tirucalli</i> (<i>E. laro</i>)		Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara, Ifaty

Scientific name	Common name	Location
<i>Givotia madagascariensis</i> *	Givotia	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Jatropha mahafalensis</i> *	-	Antsokay Botanic Gardens
<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	Cassava	Widespread in cultivated areas
<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Castor Oil Plant	Widespread
Fabaceae (Leguminosae)	Pea Family	
<i>Abrus precatorius</i>	Rosary Pea	In gardens
<i>Albizia gummifera</i>	Peacock Flower	Hauts Plateaux
[<i>Bauhinia blakeana</i>]	-	Isalo hotel gardens
<i>Chadsia flammaea</i> *	Flame Bush	Isalo
<i>Chadsia grevei</i> *	a Flame Bush	Isalo
<i>Clitoria heterophylla</i>	Clitoria	Isalo
<i>Crotalaria grevei</i>	-	Isalo
<i>Crotalaria uncinella</i>		Isalo
<i>Dalbergia bracteolata</i>	A Rosewood	Zombitse
<i>Dalbergia pervillei</i>	A Rosewood	Isalo
<i>Delonix floribunda</i> *	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Delonix regia</i> *	Flamboyant Tree	Widespread By roadside between Antsirabe and Ranomafana
<i>Macroptilium atropurpureum</i>		Ranomafana
<i>Senna (Cassia) didymobotrya</i>	Popcorn Senna	Widespread
Gentianaceae	Gentian Family	
<i>Anthoclesta amplexicaulis</i>		Ranomafana
Gesneriaceae	Pyrenean-violet Family	
<i>Streptocarpus sp</i>	Streptocarpus	Ranomafana
Hernandiaceae		
<i>Gyrocarpus americanus</i>	Propellar Tree	In towns and villages
Lamiaceae	Mint Family	
<i>Leonotis nepetifolia</i>	Lion's Ear	roadside
<i>Salvia coccininea</i>		In gardens
Loranthaceae	Mistletoe Family	
<i>Bakerella sp.</i>	-	Ranomafana
Lythraceae	Loosestrife Family	
<i>Pemphis madagascariensis</i>	-	Isalo
Malvaceae	Mallow Family	
<i>Adansonia grandidieri</i> *	Grandidier's Baobab	Lemurs Park
<i>Adansonia rubristipa</i> *	Fony Baobab	Ifaty
<i>Adansonia za</i> *	Baobab	Between Isalo and Toliara, Zombitse
[<i>Ceiba pendrandra</i>]	Kapok	Sakaraha
<i>Dombeya lucida</i> *	White Ball Tree	Ranomafana
<i>Dombeya wallichii</i>	Pink Ball Tree	Ranomafana
Melastomataceae	Tibouchina Family	
<i>Dichaetanthera arborea</i> *	-	Ranomafana
<i>Dichaetanthera c.f. horrida</i>	-	Ranomafana

Scientific name	Common name	Location
Meliaceae <i>Melia azedarach</i>	Mahogany Family Indian Lilac or Bead Tree	Anja
Mimosaceae <i>Mimosa pudica</i>	Acacia Family Sensitive Mimosa	aloong roadside
Monimiaceae <i>Tambourissa peltata</i>	Boldo Family Donut tree'	Ranomafana
Moraceae <i>Ficus rubra</i> (<i>F. pyrifolia</i>) <i>Trilepisium madagascariensis</i>	Fig Family Strangler Fig Avoha	Zombitse Ambalavao
Moringaceae <i>Moringa drouhardii</i> * <i>Moringa hildebrandtii</i> *	False Baobab -	Antsokay Botanic Garden, Toliara Antsokay Botanic Garden, Toliara
Musaceae [<i>Musa</i> sp.]	Banana Family Banana	In gardens and plantations
Myrtaceae <i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i> <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> [<i>Eucalyptus robusta</i>] <i>Melaleuca viridiflora</i> <i>Psidium cattleianum</i> <i>Syzygium</i> (<i>Eugenia</i>) <i>jambos</i>	Myrtle Family Lemon-scented Gum Tasmanian Blue Gum Iron-bark Paper Bark Cattley or Peruvian Guava Jambolan	widespread widespread widespread widespread Ranomafama, Andasibe Ranomafana, Andasibe
Passifloraceae <i>Adenia isaloensis</i> * <i>Adenia firingalavensis</i>	Passionflower Family	Isalo Voatavo between Ambalavao and Ihosy
Pedaliaceae <i>Uncarina leandrii</i> * <i>Uncarina stellulifera</i> *	Sesame Family - -	Zombitse Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
Phyllanthaceae <i>Uapaca bojeri</i> *	Leafflower Family Tapia	Isalo, near Antsirabe
Proteaceae <i>Grevillia robusta</i>	Protea Family Southern Silky Oak	widespread
Roseaceae [<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>]	Rose Family Loquat	in gardens
Rubiaceae <i>Psychotria madagascariensis</i> *	Bedstraw Family -	Ranomafana
Scrophulariaceae <i>Buddleja madagascariensis</i> *	Figwort Family Madagascar Buddleja	Along roadside
Simaroubaceae <i>Quassia indica</i>	-	

Scientific name	Common name	Location
Solanaceae	Nightshade Family	
<i>[Brugmansia versicolor]</i>	Angel's Trumpets	Ranomafana gardens
<i>Brunfelsia pauciflora</i>	Yesterday-Today-and-Tomorrow	widespread in gardens
<i>Datura stamonium</i>	Thorn Apple	Ranomafana gardens
<i>Solanum hippophaeoides</i>	-	Ranomafana along roadside
<i>Solanum mauritanicum</i>	Mauritius Nightshade	Along roadside
Strelitziaceae	Strelitzia Family	
<i>Ravenala madagascariensis*</i>	Traveller Palm	Widespread
Theaceae	Camellia Family	
<i>[Camellia sinensis] (Thea sinensis)</i>	Tea	in gardens
Velloziaceae	Vellozia Family	
<i>Xerophyta dasyliroides*</i>	-	Voatavo between Ambalavao and Ihosy
Verbenaceae	Verbena Family	
<i>Lantana camara</i>	Lantana	widespread
Vitaceae	Grape-vine Family	
<i>Cyphostemma montagnacii*</i>	-	Antsokay
Zingiberaceae	Ginger Family	
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Ginger	Ranomafana
<i>Hedychium gardneranus</i>	Ginger Lily	Widespread at Ranomafana and Andasibe
MONOCOTS	Monocotyledons	
Amaryllidaceae	Daffodil Family	
<i>Crinum asiaticum</i>	Asiatic Poison Lily	in gardens
Araceae	Arum Family	
<i>Anthurium andraenum</i>		in gardens
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Taro or Elephant's Ear	Widespread
<i>Typhonodorum lindleyanum</i>	Water Banana	Andasibe
Arecaceae	Palm Family	
<i>Bismarckia nobilis*</i>	Bismarck Palm	Isalo
<i>Dyopsis isaloensis (Chrysalidocarpus i)</i>	-	Isalo
<i>Dyopsis onilahensis</i>	-	Isalo
<i>Raphia farinifera (R. ruffia)</i>	Raffia Palm	Hauts Plateaux
<i>Caryota mitis</i>	Fishtail Palm	in gardens
<i>Hyophorbe lagenicaulis</i>	Bottle Palm	in gardens
Asparagaceae	Asparagus Family	
<i>[Agave sesalana]</i>	Sisal	widespread
<i>Dracaena reflexa var. bakeri</i>	a Dragon Tree	Ranomafana
Cyperaceae	Sedge Family	
<i>Cyperus papyrus</i>	Papyrus	Ranomafana

Scientific name	Common name	Location
Dioscoreaceae		
<i>Dioscorea soso</i> *	Yam Family Wild Yam	Ranomafana
Orchidaceae		
<i>Aerangis articulata</i>	-	Zombitse
<i>Aerangis</i> sp.	-	Ranomafana Vohiparara
<i>Angraecum praestans</i> *	-	Aombitse
<i>Cynorkis purpurescens</i>	Dancing Ladies	Ranomafana
<i>Cynorkis ridleyi</i>	-	Ranomafana, Andasibe
<i>Oeonia rosea</i>	-	Ranomafana
<i>Vanilla madagascariensis</i> *	Vanilla Orchid	Antsokay Bonatic Garden Toliara
Pandanaceae		
<i>Pandanus namakiensis</i> * (<i>P. pulcher</i>)	a Screwpine	Isalo
<i>Pandanus variabilis</i>	a Screwpine	Isalo
<i>Pandanus</i> sp.	Vakoana Screwpine	Mantadia
Poaceae		
<i>Cathariostachys madagascariensis</i> *	Madagascar Giant Bamboo	Ranomafana
<i>Bambusa vulgaris</i>	Common bamboo	Lenurs Park
[<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>]	Sugarcane	Toliara
Velloziaceae		
<i>Xerophyta dasyliroides</i>		Voatavo between Ambalavao and Ihosy
Xanthorrhoeaceae		
<i>Aloe imalotensis</i> (<i>A. Contigua</i>)	-	Isalo
<i>Aloe deltoideadonta</i> * (<i>A. Intermedia</i>)	-	Voatavo between Ambalavao and Ihosy
<i>Aloe isaloensis</i> *	-	
<i>Aloe divaricata</i>	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Aloe susannae</i> *	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Aloe vahombe</i> *	-	Antsokay Botanic Garden Toliara
<i>Aloe ferox</i>		in gardens
<i>Dianella ensifolia</i>	a Chocolate Lily	Ranomafana



Group Photo