

# Madagascar's Mammals

Naturetrek Tour Report

29th October – 13th November 2022

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Bokiboky (Narrow-striped Mongoose at Kirindy



White-footed Sportive Lemur at Berenty



Black and White Ruffed Lemur



Baobab Avenue

Tour report and images by Cathy Harlow

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Tour participants: Cathy Harlow & Claude Rambelison (leaders) with 11 Naturetrek cleints

## Tour Summary

Everyone enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere of the Palmarium Reserve, the relaxing boat travel and the wonderful encounters with Indri and Black and White Ruffed Lemurs. The Aye-aye were mesmerising, and we had great sightings on both night visits to their island home. On our walks around the reserve, we marvelled at a rare and quirky Madagascar Leaf-nosed Snake, a Giant Hog-nosed Snake and a Cat-eyed Snake. In Kirindy's dry deciduous forest we observed nocturnal Grey Mouse Lemur and Pale Fork-marked Lemur, while in the day we found a roosting Scops Owl, Giant Coua, Crested Coua, Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher and Madagascar Ibis and enjoyed great views of acrobatic Red-fronted Brown Lemurs and Bokiboky or Narrow-striped Mongoose foraging among the leaf litter. Fossas were definitely in the area but this year, in contrast to previous years, have not been regularly seen around the camp. We heard the grunt of a Giant Jumping Rat emerging from its burrow but only a glimpse of it as it scampered away into the night. At Berenty we explored the Gallery Forest and Spiny Forest, finding White-footed Sportive Lemur, White-browed Owl, 'dancing' Verreaux's Sifakas and abundant Ring-tailed Lemurs with their babies. At Andasibe, we heard the Indri calling and spent time with a family group whose playful youngster was learning to explore the canopy world, leaping from bough to bough. With the help of expert guides, we got great views of the colourful Diademed Sifaka, Grey Bamboo Lemur, Goodman's Mouse Lemur, Peyrieras Woolly Lemur, Blue Coua, White-throated Rail and chicks, Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko, Giraffe-necked Weevil and Madagascar Tree Boa.

### Day 1

**Saturday 29th October**

#### Flight London Heathrow to Addis Ababa

Cathy met most of the group at check in at London Heathrow Airport before boarding Ethiopian Airlines overnight flight to Addis Ababa.

### Day 2

**Sunday 30th October**

#### Addis Ababa to Antananarivo and on to Toamasina

Those with window seats enjoyed dawn views over Ethiopia as we descended, landing on time at the capital city's busy airport hub. There were long queues at security but once through we reassembled at the departure gate for our onward flight to Madagascar. We spotted vultures soaring in the distance and a Yellow-billed Kite flew overhead as we boarded the flight, which left on time at 08.50.

Crossing the deep-blue Indian Ocean, at last Madagascar appeared below us, its sediment-laden arterial rivers bleeding into the Mozambique Channel. The world's fourth largest island's west coast is fringed by sandy beaches and coral reefs, giving way to dry forests on beds of sandstone and limestone. As we began the descent to the island's capital Antananarivo, we noticed tiny villages dotted over the hills and valleys of the highlands.

We disembarked into warm afternoon sunshine. Inside the new terminal, immigration formalities were somewhat less onerous than in previous years and soon we were all assembled and thankfully with all our luggage! We met

Nicole from our ground agents Ecotour and checked in for the short flight to the east coast port city of Toamasina. Greeting us on arrival was Claude, our very knowledgeable and enthusiastic local guide who would be with us for the whole tour. It was a short transfer to the Calypso Hotel, where we checked in to comfortable rooms and enjoyed dinner and a much-needed sleep.

## Day 3

Monday 31st October

### Toamasina by boat to the Palmarium

Weather: hot and sunny, with a light breeze

After a copious breakfast, we loaded up the luggage and prepared to leave the hotel. Flitting among the trees in the car park, we observed Madagascar Fody, House Sparrow and Common Myna and a Malagasy Kestrel in flight. It was a 30-minute drive to the port, where we boarded the boat and set off on the scenic journey along the Pangalanes Canal. This series of natural rivers, waterways and man-made lakes extends for over 645 kilometres down Madagascar's east coast linking scores of towns and villages. This watery highway is a focal point for the locals, who we observed bathing and doing laundry as we sped past. Bamboo and bananas are grown and harvested along the banks and then floated on rafts or dug-out canoes to be sold at market. We passed row upon row of fish traps and Claude explained that overfishing has left stocks depleted and locals hungry for protein.

The relaxing and scenic three-hour journey was a chance for us to familiarise ourselves with some of Madagascar's birds: Olive Bee-eaters in flight, Madagascar Kingfishers perched and in flight, Chabert Vanga, Madagascar Bulbul, Madagascar Coucal, a pair of White-faced Whistling Duck in flight, Cattle Egret, Yellow-billed Kite, a flock of 12 Red-billed Teal and Purple Heron.

The last stage of the boat ride took us across a broad lake, on whose sandy shore the Palmarium Hotel is located, in an idyllic setting. The hotel is backed by lowland secondary regrowth rainforest and its reserve is home to several species of lemur, many of whom are rescued pet lemurs who are undergoing rehabilitation into the wild. We were greeted by a family of Indri with a youngster spread-eagled over a branch, looking down at us wide-eyed, while on the ground a Madagascar Hog-nosed Snake was hunting in the undergrowth. We checked into bungalows sited above the shore in luxuriant rainforest gardens. Over a relaxing lunch, Blue-spotted Swallowtail butterflies flitted back and forth, settling briefly on a red-flowering Crown of Thorns (*Euphorbia millii*), while a Black and White Ruffed Lemur watched over us, hopeful of snatching some fruit from the table.

After lunch we met reserve guide Rico for a stroll through the rainforest reserve. Rico showed us a Hook-billed Vanga on its nest in the fork of a tree right by the hotel dining room. A pair of Madagascar Green Pigeon were feeding in the crown of a fig tree. Chattering Madagascar Bulbuls flew by and a Malagasy Coucal called from a distance. We admired a Giant Day Gecko on a tree trunk and four Damselflies resting on a liana. Butterflies were abundant and we noted Madagascar Forest Nymph, African Wood White and Grandidier's Caper White. We spent much of the afternoon enjoying close views of acrobatic Black and White Ruffed Lemurs and Indri, as they munched on leaves and groomed one another and then slumbered between bouts of activity.

At sunset, we boarded the boat for a 20-minute ride to an island in the lagoon, where Aye-aye have been introduced and are readily observed on their own terms. Five feeding stations have been set up on the island, to supplement

their natural food supply but the Aye-aye choose whether or not to take advantage of the coconuts and hens eggs provided by the rangers. There are currently nine Aye-aye on the island and they are breeding successfully so there are plans to relocate some of the animals to another island in due course. Arriving on the island Rico took us to one of the feeding stations where we waited until nightfall, while he and Claude constantly checked for signs of Aye-aye. We didn't have to wait long and soon one of these extraordinary nocturnal lemurs appeared and began to vigorously attack the coconut shell with its fingernails to extract the flesh. Their rodent like teeth and long fingers are adapted for extracting insects from bark but one of the fingers is unusually thin and perfect for that purpose. It was a mesmerising sight and a true privilege to witness the largest of Madagascar's nocturnal lemurs, which because they are normally canopy feeders are difficult to see in the wild. Aye-aye are endangered due to habitat loss and local superstitions, which in some areas of Madagascar encourage local people to kill them.

Back at the hotel, we dined on Romazava, a local Malagasy zebu stew, and fresh fish, as well as a vegetarian option. After dinner, Rico suggested a night walk and though most of us were tired after our long journey, it was hard to resist. We were soon greeted by Rufous Mouse Lemurs scampering from branch to branch. Amongst the world's smallest primates, these diminutive nocturnal lemurs would fit in a tea-cup. In spite of their size, they are capable of acrobatic leaps from branch to branch in search of a variety of foods including nectar and insects. Perched on a high branch we observed a nocturnal Eastern Woolly Lemur, second in size to Aye-aye and easily identified by the white stripes on its thighs. Rico pointed out a male Souimanga Sunbird, roosting on a branch, a Panther Chameleon and a Madagascar Cat-eyed Snake, a nocturnal species of snake. On our way back to our bungalows we heard Madagascar Nightjar and Scops Owl calling and some of the group saw a Greater Dwarf Lemur, identified by Claude.

We were now ready to turn in after a marvellous first day of wildlife viewing.

## Day 4

Tuesday 1st November

### Palmarium

Weather: hot and sunny with a moderate breeze

We awoke to the haunting sound of Indri calling to establish their territorial boundary. After breakfast we set off on a forest walk with Rico and spent the morning observing Indri and Black and White Ruffed Lemurs feeding upside down, toes wrapped around a bough and forelimbs stretched out to grab handfuls of leaves. Rico explained that they can share a territory with Indri as they do not compete for the same food plants. Common Brown Lemur were resting in the same area and we noted a hybrid individual, a mix of Common Brown and Black Lemurs.

We were very lucky to find a Leaf-nosed Snake, an endemic arboreal sit-and-wait predator that by the noticeable midriff bulge had recently had a meal. These snakes are so cryptically coloured you could walk straight past them. We also observed a Stick Insect, another master of camouflage. A pair of Green Pigeons were feeding in the canopy and African Wood White butterflies flitted along the forest floor. We then set off by boat along the coast where we found a pale blue-green Madagascar Reed Frog perched in a shrub. Behind the beach, we found two species of Pitcher Plant, *Nepenthes madagascariensis* and *Nepenthes masoalensis* growing among Pandanus and Tree Heather. These carnivorous plants' sugary nectar attracts insects which topple into the pitchers containing digestive fluid. The plants gain nitrogen and phosphorus to supplement the scant nutrients they gain from the poor soil of their habitat.

We observed Olive Bee Eater and White-faced Duck in flight. Returning to the hotel for lunch we watched Lined Emerald Day Geckos dart to-and- fro on the veranda.

In the afternoon, we set out again on foot to look for Red-bellied Lemur. We found a family group, including a very curious and playful juvenile. The males of the species have white tear-drop shaped patches below the eyes, while the females are white on their front. We also got good views of a Forest Nymph butterfly, wings open on the forest floor. At dusk we set out again by boat to the Aye-aye island, where we gathered at a feeding station hoping for another encounter. First a male appeared from the darkness and began to feed. Then a female arrived to join in but was chased off by the male who was in no mood for sharing the coconut. Again, we witnessed the matchstick-thin middle finger scraping through the outer fibre to feast on the tender and tasty flesh. Once he'd had his fill, he slipped away into the night and the female returned to finish the remains. What a thrill to have observed the interaction between the pair. On our way back to the boat we found a Net-throwing Spider, a fascinating predator with an unusual hunting strategy. It holds a woven silk net between its legs and pounces on prey as it comes into range. We also found a Grandidier's Dwarf Gecko and a rustle in the leaf litter proved to be a Common Tenrec, scuttling away into the darkness.

## Day 5

Wednesday 2nd November

### Palmarium to Antananarivo

Weather: hot and sunny with cloudy skies in the afternoon

After a 6.15 breakfast we were ready to leave at 7.00 and boarded the boat. The mellow morning sunshine bathed the forest in a warm glow as we cruised among the channels and lakes of the waterway and gave us excellent views of Greater Crested Tern, Olive Bee-eater and a small flock of White-faced Duck in flight. A highlight of the morning was a pair of Madagascar Pratincole nesting on a rocky islet. As we continued this most relaxing of journeys a Malagasy Kingfisher flashed by, a Great White Egret flew overhead and we noted a Greater Sand Plover on a sand spit.

All too soon we had reached Manambato, where we went ashore. While the luggage was being unloaded, we watched a Madagascar Heron (Humboldt's Heron) in flight. We transferred to 4 X 4 vehicles for the long road journey to Antananarivo. The first hour was on a rough dirt track and quite an adventure but our drivers negotiated the potholes skilfully. We passed tiny settlements, where children smiled and waved from their roadside homes. We saw bright flashes of colour of male Souimanga Sunbirds singing from their perches and Madagascar Spinetail flashed by overhead. We passed numerous endemic Travellers Palms (*Ravenala madagascariensis*), so named because a knife plunged into the leaf axil produces a stream of water for thirsty travellers. The roadside was lined with *Lantana camara*, an introduced invasive rambling shrub with attractive pink and orange flowers. We joined the main RN2 road at Brickaville, where we stopped for fuel and observed a dozen or so Madagascar Pratincoles perched on roofs and in flight. Continuing the journey, Madagascar Fody males were sporting their scarlet breeding plumage and we observed Madagascar Magpie Robin, Striated Heron, Crested Drongo, Malagasy Kestrel and Yellow-billed Kite along the roadside.

We took a most welcome lunch break at Andasibe. From the terrace of Feo n'y Ala restaurant a Cuckoo Roller flew overhead and we watched a pair of Malagasy Bulbuls feeding on Woolly Nightshade (*Solanum mauritianum*),



and Chabert Vanga darting in and out of a tree. All too soon it was time to continue the journey, climbing the steep rainforested escarpment to the densely populated Hauts Plateaux region of central Madagascar. Towns and villages are strung along the roadside as people move here from more isolated areas to be able to sell their produce to passing traffic. The RN2 is the only road linking the island's main port of Toamasina with the capital city Antananarivo and it is blighted by the constant stream of heavy lorries. A lack of essential maintenance has left the road in a pitiful state, making for a slow and bumpy journey. There was always something of interest along the way: the bustling towns and markets selling fruit and vegetables, hens, pigs, herbal remedies, clothes, hats, recycled car parts and everything else imaginable; the highland Merina people of Indonesian origin and their attractive two storey brick homes with balconies; rice paddies, where knee-deep in water, women and girls were neatly planting out rice seedlings while men and teams of zebu cattle were tasked with the back-breaking job of breaking up the hard clay prior to planting. Along the way we noted Hamerkop, Madagascar Wagtails, abundant introduced Common Mynas, Malagasy Bulbuls, African Palm Swifts, Cattle Egret, Dimorphic Egret and Great Egret. At nightfall, we finally reached our destination, the very comfortable Combava Hotel in the outskirts of the capital where drinks, dinner and a restful night helped to offset the weariness of a long day of travel.

## Day 6

Thursday 3rd November

### Flight Antananarivo to Morondava and on to Kirindy

Weather: hot and sunny

After an early rise it was a short drive to the airport for our morning flight to Morondava, on the west coast of Madagascar. At the airport, a Sooty Falcon flew over and we met a new crew of 4 X 4 drivers and our guide for the next days, Eristor. Kirindy Reserve lies 50km north of Morondava, a pleasant drive of an hour and a half with a stop at the justly famous Baobab Alley. Here the dirt road is flanked by rows of statuesque *Adansonia grandidieri* baobabs rising to heights of 30m. These giants are known as 'Reniala' in Malagasy, meaning 'Mother of the Forest' and some are thought to be over 2000 years old. Baobabs are very useful: their fruits are edible and their trunks store water to draw on in times of drought; if the bark is cut, it regenerates, and the inner pulp can be fed to cattle. Walking among these stately trees we saw Sakalava Weaver nests and their occupants flying in and out, Greater Vasa Parrot, Namaqua Dove and Crested Drongo. We also noted Citrus Swallowtail and African Monarch butterflies.

Arriving at Relais de Kirindy, our hotel for the next days we checked into bungalow rooms and had a little time to relax after lunch. Late afternoon we drove the short distance to Kirindy Reserve, a tract of dry deciduous forest, once selectively logged but today an important conservation project for an endangered habitat. During the drive we spotted many Crested Drongo along the road and some of our group got a first view of a Verreaux's Sifaka as it bounded across the track ahead of the first jeep. Kirindy Reserve had recently reopened to visitors after a two-year pause. Over the years it has become the most reliable place in Madagascar to observe Fossa, the island's largest carnivore, who wander in and out of the reception area of the reserve, known as the 'Camp' as well as often being spotted inside the forest. While Eristor, our reserve guide, went to check for signs of Fossa, we watched Lesser Vasa Parrot, Common Jery, Madagascar Magpie Robin and Malagasy Turtle Dove. Setting off on foot along Kirindy's forest trails we heard Scops Owl call – the western variety is known as Totoroka Scops Owl. We watched a pair of Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher flitting among the branches, the male easily distinguished by its long tail feathers. We heard the raucous bedtime call of Crested Coua. Kirindy is known for its reptiles and our

guide pointed out two iguanids: Merrem's Madagascar Swift perfectly camouflaged against a tree bark and a Madagascar Iguana (Three-eyed Lizard), whose light sensitive third eye is located on the top of the head. We also observed an Elegant Skink scuttling among the leaf litter. We were excited to find a large Oustalet's Chameleon on the low branch of a tree, well-blending into its surrounds and almost invisible.

## Day 7

Friday 4th November

### Exploring Kirindy Forest

Weather: hot and sunny

We were up at dawn for a quick hot drink before setting off for the reserve. Crested Drongos were swooping over the swimming pool, collecting insects. A Madagascar Hoopoe was foraging in the hotel gardens. Along the road we saw the orange flowers of Firebush *Fernandoa madagascariensis*, a prominent shrub in the Western forests. Setting out with Eristor along the level and easy forest paths, we found a group of ten Red-fronted Brown Lemurs in the canopy above us, moving from tree to tree following the lead female. After a while they paused and began to forage on newly sprouted leaves before taking a rest, giving us the chance to observe them quietly. Later we spotted and photographed Verreaux's Sifaka snacking on what seemed to us rather unappetising thorny leaves. The morning's walk yielded good sightings of a variety of birds: Coquerel's Coua, a ground dwelling member of this colourful endemic family, all of which sport a patch of bright blue bare skin around the eye. Following this we got good views of a Crested Coua, an arboreal member of the family, hopping secretively from branch to branch combing for insects and grubs. A flash of brilliant blue and white alerted us to a Blue Vanga suspended from a cluster of leaves looking for its insect prey. We also got fantastic views of a Rufous Vanga, another member of this endemic shrike-like family. We got excellent views of a very curious pale phase male Paradise Flycatcher and observed Long-billed Tetraka, Common Jery, Common Newtonia, Lesser Vasa Parrot and Magpie Robin. Eristor pointed out a different type of baobab *Adansonia rubrostipa* with a reddish bark and also known as Fony baobab.

Returning to the hotel for breakfast we saw several Namaqua Doves and a Hoopoe along the way. After a late breakfast there was time to catch up on sleep or enjoy a swim in the hotel pool before lunch. Late afternoon we returned to the reserve and while Eristor went to look for signs of Fossa, we enjoyed watching wildlife around the camp area with Claude. A group of a dozen Red-fronted Brown Lemurs were resting in the trees above the car park. Paradise Flycatcher, Common Newtonia, Common Jery, Hoopoe and Souimanga Sunbird were easy spots and we enjoyed the antics of a pair of Crested Couas and Verreaux's Sifaka feeding high in the canopy. At this time of year the forest is not in full leaf, making it easier to observe wildlife. We also found a Thick-tailed Day Gecko – most of the *Phelsuma* day geckoes are emerald green but in the dry deciduous forests their colouring is more muted to blend in with the grey of trunks and branches. We were disappointed not to see Fossa – one had been spotted in the camp area earlier in the week but Eristor explained that some of the 'regulars' had stopped calling at the camp during the pandemic as there were no restaurant scraps to scavenge and instead had made their way to a nearby village where they preyed on hens and had been killed. We were devastated to hear this and that some of the reserve lemurs had been poached for food, which might explain why we only found one Sifaka. Eristor was hopeful that Fossas would return to the camp and that Verreaux's Sifakas would repopulate the forest.

After dinner, we set off once more for the reserve where we staked out a spot for watching nocturnal Giant Jumping Rats emerge from their burrows. These huge rodents are confined to a tiny area of forest in the West of

Madagascar and are critically endangered. It is a wonderful, if somewhat eerie experience to sit in total darkness and silence, awaiting the rustling of leaves that might signal its appearance. Soon our ears were attuned to other night sounds: Madagascar Nightjar, Scops Owl and White-browed Owl. At exactly 11.05 we heard a grunt and in the beam of Eristor's torch, one of our group got a brief view as it emerged from its burrow and scuttled into the night. We set off looking for it, without luck. On the way back to the hotel, we saw Madagascar Nightjar on the road.

## Day 8

Saturday 5th November

### Kirindy Forest

Weather: hot and sunny with cloud building up in the late afternoon and overnight storm and heavy rainfall

After another early rise, a cup of tea and coffee we drove to the reserve. Along the road we saw Oustalet's Chameleon, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Madagascar Hoopoe and a Narrow-striped Mongoose (*Bokiboky*), which crossed the road in front of the first jeep. In the camp area six Chabert Vanga were flying in and out of a tree, a pair of Crested Coua were warming up in the first rays of sunshine, exposing a dark area of feathers to the sun. Blue Vanga and Paradise Flycatcher were also spotted and Sakalava Weavers were foraging on the ground. A Lesser Vasa Parrot was feeding on the blossom of a *Hildegardia sp.* Its liquid musical call is one of the familiar sounds of Madagascar. Inside the forest we got good views of a Coquerel's Coua foraging on the forest floor and a Malagasy Kestrel mobbing a perching Madagascar Buzzard. We were excited to find a Giant Coua, the largest of the family, ambling among the leaf litter and enjoyed a brief view for some of our group of a White-breasted Mesite, one of Madagascar's signature endemics. We waited around to see if it would reappear, but it had other ideas. Once the sun was up, we saw a Madagascar Dotted Border butterfly, a Western Girdled Lizard and a Merrem's Madagascar Swift. On the drive back to the hotel we spotted an iridescent Malagasy Green Sunbird perched by the roadside.

Over a late breakfast we heard Madagascar Cuckoo and Cuckoo-roller. After breakfast some of us took a rest and a nap, while others wandered around the hotel gardens and had a swim in the pool. After lunch we set off again for the reserve. A Giant Coua crossed the road in front of us and we counted numerous Crested Drongos perched along the way. Around the camp Sakalava Weavers were flying to and from their colonial nests and ever ebullient Madagascar Bulbuls were darting from tree to tree. We photographed a Giant Hognose Snake emerging from under a shed. Eristor decided we should check out a different part of the forest and this was a good decision as we found two Narrow-striped Mongooses foraging in the leaf litter and seemingly oblivious to our presence. We watched spellbound as these nimble carnivores searched randomly for invertebrates, their long noses sniffing out possible prey. At one point they crossed the path ahead of us allowing at last an uninterrupted view. It is suggested that males and females form separate groups with the males' larger territory overlapping that of several female groups. Shortly after, we found a third individual. Known locally as *Bokiboky*, these diurnal carnivores are endangered due to a limited distribution in the ever-shrinking Western deciduous forests.

In the same patch of forest we found a yellow-flowering *Uncarina peltata*, a shrub used by locals as shampoo. Our guide pointed out a roosting Scops Owl in a tree hole and we heard the raucous call of Sickle-billed Vanga, disappearing in rapid flight away from us. We got an excellent sighting of a pair of Madagascar Ibis silhouetted against the sky as they perched on a branch. We spotted a Sakalava Velvet Gecko on a tree trunk and as we returned to the camp area at dusk we found an energetic Grey Mouse Lemur emerging from its daytime roost.



Our guides offered us the chance to go out after dinner to look for Giant Jumping Rat but with the prospect of another early rise and an approaching storm, there were no takers. A wind storm hit during the night accompanied by a deluge of heavy rain.

## Day 9

Sunday 6th November

### Kirindy to Antananarivo

Weather: pleasantly cool in the morning and at Antananarivo

After a 6.30 breakfast we set off for the 1.5 hour drive back to Morondava Airport again marvelling at the avenue of baobabs lit up in the mellow morning sunshine. We said goodbye to our guide and drivers. Along the way we saw Namaqua Dove, Grey-headed Lovebird, Giant Coua and Malagasy Coucal. At the airport a pair of Malagasy Kestrels were flying overhead. Our flight left on time and arriving at Antananarivo Airport we transferred to Hotel Combava spotting Squacco Heron, Great Egret and Dimorphic Egret in the rice paddies along the way. Later afternoon some of the group visited the Malagasy craft market near the hotel to shop for souvenirs and vanilla. Returning at dusk we saw a Black-crowned Night Heron in a tree in the hotel gardens.

## Day 10

Monday 7th November

### Antananarivo to Berenty Reserve

Weather: hot and humid at Taolagnaro and an electric storm at Berenty

After a copious breakfast we gathered as the coach was being loaded with our luggage and spotted several roosting Black-crowned Night Herons. Red Fodies were flying from tree to tree, along with Malagasy Bulbuls and Madagascar Wagtail. On the way to the airport, we observed Squacco Heron and four Black Egrets, wings outstretched umbrella fashion as they foraged in the rice paddies. The flight to Taolagnaro in the south-east corner of Madagascar left on time and as we came into land, we got splendid views of the turquoise sea and sandy coastline.

When in Madagascar expect surprises and never more so than with the Air Madagascar. Some of our group's luggage had not arrived and it took a while to establish what had happened. There were promises it would be delivered next day – we shall see!

Together with our guide Olivier, we boarded one of Berenty's coaches, while the luggage went in a separate vehicle. We set off on the road to Berenty, which is slowly being upgraded but in Madagascar, that can take years. The rickety iron bridges, built during the French occupation of the island which ended in 1960, have mostly been replaced and the remnants of potholed tarmac crushed and levelled with the intention of resurfacing.

As we drove past lush green paddies, Dimorphic Egrets and a Hamerkop were noted and circling overhead were a succession of Pied Cows. We passed groves of lychee trees laden with fruit and orange-flowering *Grevillea robusta*. We passed roadside ponds filled with lotus flowers.

Soon the lush vegetation gave way to a transitional forest dominated by the curious triangular palms *Dyopsis decaryi*, which are endemic to the area and found nowhere else. This tiny pocket of forest forms part of the larger protected area of Andohahela National Park, which also includes some rainforest and spiny forest. Another prominent species is thorny *Mimosa delicatula*, known locally as 'Roy' from which the local people the Antandroy (People of the Thorns) get their name.

Soon we emerged into a 'sea' of spiny forest, the dominant natural vegetation of Southern Madagascar. Huge stands of *Didieracae* swayed in the breeze, their thorny boughs sporting the new season's growth of leaves. Superficially cactus-like, these are deciduous trees. One species, *Allaudia procera*, recognised by its flowers emerging from the top of the branches, is a valuable timber species planked for local housing needs. Much of the spiny forest has been cleared for the sisal plantations that surround the town of Amboasary. Crossing the Mandrare River by a long bridge, locals thronged the riverside, bathing, washing clothes and frolicking in the water that filled the river bed following heavy rainfall. It looked as though more rain would fall shortly as sheet lightning began to flash around us and a deluge of rain followed. The rainfall is greatly welcomed as this area has been plagued by drought for several years.

We now turned off the main road down a trail leading through sisal plantations to the entrance to Berenty. We checked into our bungalows and met up at the restaurant for dinner. The rain showed no sign of letting up. After dinner everyone was pretty much ready for bed anticipating an early rise in the morning.

## Day 11

Tuesday 8th November

### Berenty Reserve

Weather: cool in the morning with cloudy skies, hot in the afternoon

What is special about Berenty is that the bungalows are located in the reserve so you wake up to wildlife at your doorstep. Setting off at dawn with Olivier, to explore the Malaza gallery forest there was a welcome coolness in the air. A Crested Coua was sitting on a branch with wings outstretched waiting for the sun to appear. A Lesser Vasa Parrot was singing from a perch, a Hook-billed Vanga obliged the photographers with a good view before flying off and several Malagasy Kestrels perched on bare tree-tops. Madagascar Bulbul, Crested Drongo, Common Jery, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher and Magpie Robin were all up and about and a Broad-billed Roller cackled from its perch on a dead tree stump. A White-footed Sportive Lemur sat by his tree-hole roost, peering down at us.

After breakfast, we assembled in the reception area, where a group of Verreaux's Sifaka 'danced' across the car park in front of us. Because their forelegs are short they cannot move on all fours and when crossing an open space between patches of forest they adopt this curious side-stepping dance-like gait, one of the signature sights in Berenty. The reserve is also famous for its Ring-tailed Lemurs and we watched a group warming up – seated cat-like on their haunches exposing their chests to the rays of the sun. Many were carrying the new season's babies: the older ones riding pillion but the new-born clinging to their mother's chest. One of the babies had startling blue eyes, we noted. We progressed through the gallery forest, its tall shady trees fringing the river banks, and encountered another group of Sifakas resting in the trees. Berenty's lemurs are habituated to visitors and not shy of photographers. The overnight rainfall had brought out many Pill Millipedes along the path, together with a Hammerhead Worm and Dung Beetles. We found a Thicketail Day Gecko on a tree trunk and a sleek Gravenhorst's

Skink rustling in the leaf litter. Souimanga Sunbird and a Madagascar Cuckoo showed well and Olivier located the roost of a White-browed Owl in a tangle of foliage. We also found an orange Damsselfly and a Crab Spider and observed Madagascar Flying Foxes at their roost site. By 11.00 it was starting to get hot and we returned to our bungalows.

Late afternoon we took the coach for a short drive to Ramily, a pocket of spiny forest that was left intact when the De Heulme family cleared the land to plant sisal in the 1930s. We found Green Pigeon, Chabert Vanga, Crested Drongo, and Sub-desert Brush Warbler and flocks of noisy Grey-headed Lovebirds and Madagascar Bulbuls in flight. A Madagascar Nightjar was roosting on the ground, perfectly camouflaged among the leaf litter. A Sakalava Velvet Gecko was hiding in the split trunk of an *Adansonia za* baobab. We also noted a Thickettail Day Gecko. Fluffy white Flatid Leaf Bugs were lined up on the low branch of a shrub. They excrete the sugary fluff as a protection against predators, who take a mouthful of white fluff but miss the larvae under it. The forest guard who accompanied our walk showed us a Scorpion under a stone and found a cluster of four Grey-brown Mouse Lemurs roosting in a tangle of Didieraceae branches. Aware of our presence they peered down at us wide-eyed and dazzled by the daylight.

At nightfall we took torches and searched for nocturnal lemurs. The branches of Didieraceae are armed with inch-long spines, each protecting a delicate rosette of deciduous leaves. It would be hard to imagine a less likely habitat for lemurs yet this is where nocturnal White-footed Sportive Lemurs thrive, feeding on the tender leaves and flowers, dodging the spines as they leap from bough to bough. Olivier and Claude were adept at finding their eye shine and that of Mouse Lemurs, who share the spiny forest. Berenty is one of the few reserves in Madagascar, where it is still possible to walk into the forest at night, and that makes a visit all the more rewarding. Arriving back at the reception, those who'd been unwillingly parted from their luggage were joyfully reunited with it.

After this long day of wildlife encounters, we were ready for dinner and sleep, lulled by the calls of White-browed Owl and Scops Owl.

## Day 12

Wednesday 9th November

### Berenty Reserve then by road to Taolognaro

Weather: clear skies, sunny and hot

We had a 5 o'clock start for the drive to Anjapolo, a tract of spiny forest 40 minutes along a dirt road from Berenty. Along the way we passed the village of Berenty, where many of those employed on the sisal plantations live. We saw Madagascar Buttonquail, Madagascar Hoopoe and a perching male France's Sparrowhawk along the way. Setting out on foot, we got good views of Madagascar Cuckoo, Crested Coua warming up in the sun and Souimanga Sunbird. Large numbers of Red Mites were emerging from the sand along the path. We came across a group of Verreaux's Sifaka and observed how adeptly they leapt from one spiny bough to another, taking care as they fed on the clusters of new-growth leaves. Ring-tailed Lemurs with their babies were also stirring from their night roost and moving off to feed, accompanied by a chorus of plaintive cat-like mewing. African Palm Swifts were flying overhead and a Stripe-throated Jery was singing its heart out from a perch on top of a spiny branch. We also found Madagascar Magpie Robin, Madagascar Lark and Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher. But the forest had even more to

surprise us with: a Mahafaly Sand Snake wriggling in and out of a bush, a Dumeril's Boa with a bulge showing its last meal and a Peter's Dwarf Plated Lizard.

After a late breakfast we had time to head back into the gallery forest where we found a Western Barn Owl hidden in a tangle of vines by the river. A local man was leading his cattle to drink at the river, which was still in full spate after the heavy rainfall. We saw many Zebra Blue and African Migrant butterflies on the mud by the river. During the morning we also found a group of introduced Red-fronted Brown Lemur, White-browed Owl, Green Pigeon, Blue Coua, Madagascar Ibis and Broad-billed Roller. Yellow-billed Kites were noted in flight.

We checked out of our bungalows and after lunch set off in the heat of the afternoon for Taolagnaro. Along the way we observed Namaqua Dove, Crested Drongo, Madagascar Lark and Pied Crow, while the lagoon just outside Taolagnaro town yielded a surprise sighting of a flock of Greater and Lesser Flamingos. Driving through the town's bustling market quarter, we stopped at a viewpoint over the ocean, where large breakers pounded a sandy beach.

We checked into our rooms at the Dauphin Hotel, some of which had definitely seen better days. Unfortunately, we have no say over where we stay as the hotel and rooms are allocated as part of the Berenty package. Frustrating nevertheless but all part of the Madagascar experience!

## Day 13

Thursday 10th November

### Flight Taolagnaro to Tana and by road to Andasibe

Weather: warm with light cloud cover

Today was essentially a travel day, and a long one at that, our journey constrained by flight schedules. After a 6.00 breakfast, we transferred to the airport for the flight back to the capital. At Antananarivo. We were met by a new crew of drivers and set off for Andasibe. We knew already that this would be a long road journey but the ever-changing scenes from daily village life in Madagascar added interest. Along the roadside emerald-green rice paddies glowed in the morning sunlight and we noted foraging Black Egret, Great Egret and Cattle Egret. In the hills beyond the capital, small vegetable plots showed the different crops that can be grown in the highlands: carrots, potatoes, beans, peas, maize and various brassicas. All around we could see huge granite boulders being split by hand in response to demand from the recent building boom in Antananarivo. Granite chips are made by hand too, and we noticed women with young families sitting by the side of the road chipping by hand. Arriving late afternoon, we checked into our hotel at Andasibe and met reserve guides Maurice and Chris for a night walk along the road. We got good views of Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur, a family group of two adult Peyrieras Woolly Lemurs and a youngster, and a tiny Goodman's Mouse Lemur.

Back at the hotel, we had dinner and then retired to our bungalow rooms.

## Day 14

Friday 11th November

### Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

Weather: warm and partly cloudy

Some of our group spotted a White-headed Vanga in the hotel gardens.

After an early breakfast we entered the Analamazaotra part of the national park, which was created to preserve Indri habitat, adjoining the village of Andasibe. Containing some original forest cover, much of it is regrowth yet there is an impressive variety of wildlife on offer here. We could already hear Indri calling in the distance as we entered, and expectations were high. Our first lemur sighting was of Common Brown Lemurs moving through the canopy one after another. After a while they paused, and we observed at close quarters a mother and baby feeding. Continuing further into the reserve, our guides found a family group of Indri with a youngster. Born in July, this one was already testing its independence, leaping from parent to parent oblivious to possible danger from aerial predators. Indri cannot survive in captivity and will only feed in the wild. Habitat loss and illegal hunting have put them at risk and they are now critically endangered. One of the largest lemurs, they have an upright posture and take vertical leaps from trunk to trunk. Their watchful green eyes, teddy bear ears and cute faces may be endearing but they vigorously defend their territory from other Indri families by launching vocalisations that can be heard over several kilometres.

After quietly observing and photographing the Indri, we moved on to where our guides had located a group of Diademed Sifaka, a rainforest species. This sighting was a little more challenging as the animals were feeding on a steep slope. Half of our group hauled up the slope for views, while the rest waited below, which proved a good move as the sifakas came down to eye level, pausing right by the path. Who is observing who, we mused? Diademed Sifakas are similar in size to Indri but unlike Indri have long tails and a stunning gold, grey and white pelage. One of the group had a tiny baby, we noted.

The morning brought an excellent sighting of a pair of White-throated Rail and chicks meandering along the banks of a stream, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Striated Heron and Red-tailed Vanga. On the reptile front we found a Lateral Water Snake, a stunning Madagascar Tree Boa curled around a branch and a Lined Day Gecko. Several species of butterfly added interest to the morning's sightings with Citrus Swallowtail, Madagascar Commodore, Banded Blue Swallowtail and Brown Pansy.

Over lunch at Feo n'y Ala restaurant we saw a Nelicourvi Weaver building its nest. Returning to the reserve we found a Giraffe-neck Weevil on its host plant *Dichaetanthera cordifolia*. Maurice showed us the egg packets intricately rolled, sealed and snipped off by the adults, falling to the base of the host plant. Back in the reserve, we found two Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemurs feeding in a clump of bamboo by the bridge over the river. We observed how adeptly they feed on bamboo shoots and young leaves. This feeding strategy is interesting as bamboo contains high levels of cyanide which the species ingests at a concentration that would be fatal to humans. Bamboo lemurs are able to neutralize the toxins and so benefit from food that they do not compete with other lemurs for. We spotted Madagascar Stonechat by the fish farm and got a brief view of Brush Warbler. We heard the call of a Madagascar Flufftail at close range, but the bird failed to show.

For our final night walk we visited the Andasibe Community Reserve, bordering the National Park, and found a splendid Parson's Chameleon, a diminutive Big Nose Chameleon, a Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko, a Madagascar Tree Boa, Stick Insect and a very sleepy Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher. It was now time to say goodbye to Maurice and his team and make our way back to the hotel to pack and have dinner.

## Day 15

**Saturday 12th November**

### Andasibe to Antananarivo and return flight to Addis Ababa

Weather: hot and sunny with cloudy spells

After an early breakfast we were on the road for the return journey to Antananarivo Airport. Along the way, we noted Hamerkop, Squacco Heron, Great Egret, Dimorphic Egret, Cattle Egret and Common Myna. Thankfully the traffic load was light and we arrived in good time at the airport.

We had a packed lunch before checking in for our flight to Addis Ababa. Check in was smooth but we had a lengthy wait at the bag drop queue. The new international terminal of the airport had opened two months ago but none of the shops and restaurants were open in the departures area. Arriving into Addis Ababa we had several hours to wait once we had gone through security. There were interesting (but expensive) shops to browse and places to grab food and drink while waiting.

## Day 16

**Sunday 13th November**

### Arrive London Heathrow

We had one final security check before boarding the overnight flight, which left on time, bringing us into London Heathrow. At baggage reclaim it was time to say our goodbyes as we embarked on our final journeys home. There will be many good memories of this epic journey around Madagascar and the adventures and misadventures we shared.





Red and Grey Mouse Lemur

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## Species lists

## Mammals

E=Endemic		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Tenrecs</b>		<b>Tenrecidae</b>													
Tailess (Common) Tenrec - E	<i>Tenrec ecaudatus</i>			✓											
<b>Dwarf and Mouse Lemurs</b>		<b>Cheirogaleidae</b>													
Crossley's Dwarf Lemur - E	<i>Cheirogaleus crossleyi</i>												✓		
Greater Dwarf Lemur - E	<i>Cheirogaleus major</i>		✓												
Red-and-grey Mouse Lemur - E	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>										✓				
Goodman's Mouse Lemur - E	<i>Microcebus lehilahytsara</i>												✓		
Grey Mouse-lemur - E	<i>Microcebus murinus</i>					✓		✓							
Rufous Mouse Lemur - E	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>		✓												
Pale Fork-marked Lemur - E	<i>Phaner pallescens</i>					✓									
<b>Aye-eyes</b>															
Aye-aye - E	<i>Daubentonia madagascariensis</i>		✓	✓											
<b>Woolly Lemurs, Sifakas &amp; Indri</b>		<b>Indriidae</b>													
Eastern Woolly Lemur - E	<i>Avahi laniger</i>		✓												
Peyrieras Woolly Lemur - E	<i>Avahi peyrierasi</i>												✓	✓	
Indri - E	<i>Indri indri</i>		✓	✓	✓									✓	
Diademed Sifaka - E	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>													✓	
Verreaux's Sifaka - E	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>						✓	✓			✓	✓			
<b>Large Lemurs</b>		<b>Lemuridae</b>													
Crowned Lemur - E	<i>Eulemur coronatus</i>			✓											
Brown Lemur - N	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>		✓	✓										✓	
Black Lemur - E	<i>Eulemur macaco</i>			✓											
Red-bellied Lemur - E	<i>Eulemur rubriventer</i>			✓											

E=Endemic		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red-fronted Lemur - E	<i>Eulemur rufus</i>						✓	✓			✓				
Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemur - E	<i>Hapalemur griseus</i>													✓	
Ring-tailed Lemur - E	<i>Lemur catta</i>									✓	✓	✓			
Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur - E	<i>Varecia variegata</i>		✓	✓	✓										
<b>Sportive Lemurs</b>		<b>Lepilemuridae</b>													
White-footed Sportive Lemur - E	<i>Lepilemur leucopus</i>										✓	✓			
Red-tailed Sportive Lemur - E	<i>Lepilemur ruficaudatus</i>					✓									
<b>African Rats</b>		<b>Nesomyidae</b>													
Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat	<i>Hypogeomys antimena</i>						✓								
<b>Flying Foxes</b>		<b>Pteropodidae</b>													
Madagascan Flying Fox - E	<i>Pteropus rufus</i>										✓				
<b>Malagasy Mongooses</b>		<b>Eupleridae</b>													
Narrow-striped Mongoose - E	<i>Mungotictis decemlineata</i>							✓							

## Birds (H = Heard only)

E – Endemic, N – Near Endemic, I – Introduced		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>		✓	✓	✓										
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>		✓									✓			
Helmeted Guineafowl - I	<i>Numida meleagris</i>										✓	✓			
Madagascar Nightjar - N	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>		H				✓	✓			✓			H	
Madagascar Spinetail - N	<i>Zoonavena grandidieri</i>				✓										
Malagasy Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus gracilis</i>				✓							✓			
Malagasy Coucal - N	<i>Centropus toulou</i>		✓				H	✓	✓		✓	✓			

E – Endemic, N – Near Endemic, I – Introduced		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Crested Coua - E	<i>Coua cristata</i>					H	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Blue Coua - E	<i>Coua caerulea</i>													✓	
Coquerel's Coua - E	<i>Coua coquereli</i>						✓	✓							
Giant Coua - E	<i>Coua gigas</i>					✓	✓	✓							
Madagascar Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>					H					✓	✓			
White-breasted Mesite - E	<i>Mesitornis variegatus</i>							H							
Madagascar Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>													H	
Feral Rock Dove - I	<i>Pterocles personatus</i>					✓	✓						✓		✓
Malagasy Turtle Dove	<i>Nesoenas picturatus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Madagascar Green Pigeon - E	<i>Treron australis</i>		✓	✓											
White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>													✓	
Madagascar Buttonquail - E	<i>Turnix nigricollis</i>											✓			
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>				✓										
Madagascar Pratincole	<i>Glareola ocularis</i>				✓										
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>				✓										
Madagascar Ibis - E	<i>Lophotibis cristata</i>							✓						✓	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>								✓	✓	✓				
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>				✓								✓		
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>								✓	✓			✓		✓
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubuculus ibis</i>		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>							✓							
Humblot's Heron - E	<i>Ardea humbloti</i>				✓										
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		✓												
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				✓				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>									✓			✓		
Dimorphic Egret	<i>Egretta dimorpha</i>				✓				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>				✓					✓					✓
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>											✓			
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>											✓			
A Vulture sp.		✓													

E – Endemic, N – Near Endemic, I – Introduced		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk - E	<i>Aviceda madagascariensis</i>											✓			
Frances's Sparrowhawk - N	<i>Accipiter francesiae</i>											✓			
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			
Madagascar Buzzard - E	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>							✓							
Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>											✓			
White-browed Owl - E	<i>Athene supercilialis</i>										✓	✓			
Rainforest Scops Owl - E	<i>Otus rutilus</i>		H			✓	✓	✓			✓				
Cuckoo-roller - N	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>				✓		H	H							
Madagascar Hoopoe - E	<i>Upupa marginata</i>						✓	✓				✓			
Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>							H			✓	✓			
Malagasy Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis vintsioides</i>		✓		✓										
Olive Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓							
Malagasy Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Sooty Falcon	<i>Falco concolor</i>					✓			✓						
Greater Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>					✓									
Lesser Vasa Parrot - E	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		H	
Grey-headed Lovebird - E	<i>Agapornis canus</i>								✓		✓	✓			
Red-tailed Vanga - E	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>													✓	
Blue Vanga - E	<i>Cyanolanius madagascariensis</i>						✓	✓							
Hook-billed Vanga - E	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>		✓								✓	H			
Sickle-billed Vanga - E	<i>Falcula palliata</i>							✓		✓					
Rufous Vanga	<i>Schetba rufa</i>						✓								
White-headed Vanga - E	<i>Artamella viridis</i>													✓	
Chabert Vanga - E	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>		✓		✓			✓			✓				
Common Newtonia - E	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>						✓	✓			H	✓		✓	
Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone mutata</i>					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Madagascar Lark - E	<i>Eremopterix hova</i>											✓			
Malagasy Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Mascarene Martin	<i>Phedina borbonica</i>	✓			✓				✓						

E – Endemic, N – Near Endemic, I – Introduced		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Malagasy Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas typica</i>													✓	
Subdesert Brush Warbler - E	<i>Nesillas lantzii</i>										✓				
Long-billed Bernieria - E	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>						✓								
Common Jery - E	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Stripe-throated Jery - E	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>											✓		✓	
Common Myna - I	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Madagascar Magpie-Robin - E	<i>Copsychus albospecularis</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Madagascar Stonechat - E	<i>Saxicola sibilla</i>													✓	
Souimanga Sunbird - N	<i>Cinnyris sovimanga</i>		✓	H	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	
Malagasy Green Sunbird - N	<i>Cinnyris notatus</i>								✓						
Nelicourvi Weaver - E	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>													✓	
Sakalava Weaver - E	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>					✓	✓	✓							
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓												
Red Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>		✓		✓				✓	✓		✓			
Madagascar Wagtail - E	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>				✓				✓	✓				✓	

## Reptiles and Amphibians

		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Reed Frogs</b>	<b>Hyperoliidae</b>														
Madagascar Reed Frog - E	<i>Heterixalus madagascariensis</i>			✓											
<b>Common Geckos</b>	<b>Gekkonidae</b>														
Southern Flat-tail Gecko - E	<i>Uroplatus sikorae</i>													✓	
Striped Day Gecko - E	<i>Phelsuma lineata</i>			✓										✓	
Thicktail Day Gecko - E	<i>Phelsuma mutabilis</i>						✓				✓				
Giant Day Gecko - E	<i>Phelsuma grandis</i>		✓												
Grandidier's Dwarf Geckos	<i>Lygodactylus tolampyae</i>			✓											
House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus spp.</i>					✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	



		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sakalava Velvet Gecko	<i>Blaesodactylus sakalava</i>								✓		✓				
<b>Skinks</b>	<b>Scincidae</b>														
Elegant Skink - E	<i>Trachylepis elegans</i>					✓									
Gravenhorst's Skink - E	<i>Trachylepis gravenhorstii</i>										✓				
<b>Plated Lizards</b>	<b>Gerrhosauridae</b>														
Western Girdled Lizard - E	<i>Zonosaurus laticaudatus</i>						✓	✓							
Peter's Dwarf Plated Lizard	<i>Tracheloptychus petersi</i>											✓			
<b>Chameleons</b>	<b>Chamaeleonidae</b>														
Nose-horned Chameleon - E	<i>Calumma nasutum</i>													✓	
Parson's Chameleon - E	<i>Calumma parsonii</i>													✓	
Panther Chameleon - E	<i>Furcifer pardalis</i>		✓												
Oustalet's Chameleon - E	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>					✓		✓			✓				
<b>Madagascan Iguanids</b>	<b>Opluridae</b>														
Madagascar Iguana - E	<i>Chalarodon madagascariensis</i>					✓	✓								
Merrem's Madagascar Swift - E	<i>Oplurus cyclurus</i>					✓	✓	✓							
Cuvier's Madagascar Swift	<i>Oplurus cuvieri</i>		✓	✓											
<b>African Sand Snakes</b>	<b>Psammophiidae</b>														
Mahafaly Sand Snake - E	<i>Mimophis mahfalensis</i>											✓			
<b>Madagascar Snakes</b>	<b>Pseudoxyrhopiidae</b>														
Madagascar Leaf-nosed Snake - E	<i>Langaha madagascariensis</i>			✓											
Giant Hog-nosed Snake - E	<i>Leioheterodon madagascariensis</i>		✓	✓											
Lateral Water Snake - E	<i>Thamnosophis lateralis</i>													✓	
Madagascar Cat-eyed Snakes	<i>Madagascarophis spp.</i>		✓												
<b>Boas</b>	<b>Boidae</b>														

		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Dumeril's Boa - E	<i>Acrantophis dumerili</i>											✓			
Madagascar Tree Boa - E	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>													✓	
<b>Crocodiles</b>	<b>Crocodylidae</b>														
Nile Crocodile (captive)	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>										✓				
<b>Tortoises</b>	<b>Testudinidae</b>														
Radiated Tortoise - E (captive)	<i>Astrochelys radiata</i>		✓	✓											
Southern Spider Tortoise - E	<i>Pyxis arachnoides</i>										✓	✓			

## Others

		October – November 2022													
Common name	Scientific name	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Citrus Swallowtail	<i>Papilio demodocus</i>					✓	✓		✓					✓	
Spotted Blue Swallowtail	<i>Papilio epiphorbas</i>		✓	✓											
Banded Blue Swallowtail	<i>Papilio oribazus</i>													✓	
Madagascar Orange Tip	<i>Colotis evanthe</i>								✓		✓				
Grass Yellow	<i>Eurema sp.</i>		✓												
Migrant	<i>Catopsilia sp.</i>								✓						
African Monarch	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Acraeas	<i>Acraea spp.</i>							✓			✓				
Brilliant Blue	<i>Junonia rhadama</i>											✓			
Madagascar Brown Pansy	<i>Junonia goudoti</i>													✓	
Madagascar Commodore	<i>Precis andremiaja</i>													✓	
Common Diadem	<i>Hypolimnias misippus</i>						✓								
African Wood white	<i>Leptosia alcesta sylvicola</i>		✓	✓											
Grandidier's Caper White	<i>Belenois grandidieri</i>		✓	✓											
Madagascar Forest Nymph	<i>Aterica rabena</i>		✓	✓											
Common Zebra Blue	<i>Leptotes pirithous</i>							✓				✓			
A Hawkmoth			✓												

Common name	Scientific name	October – November 2022													
		30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Hissing Cockroach	<i>Gromphadorhina portentosa</i>											✓			
Damselfly			✓												
Stick Insect				✓										✓	
Flatid Leaf-bug	<i>Phromnia rosea</i>											✓			
Pill Millipede	<i>Sphaerotherium sp.</i>											✓			
Madagascar Golden Orb-web Spider	<i>Nephila madagascariensis</i>		✓									✓			
Net-throwing spider	<i>Deinopsis sp.</i>			✓											
Thorn Spider (Orange)	<i>Gasteracanthinae sp</i>											✓		✓	
Scorpion	<i>Opisthacanthus madagascariensis</i>											✓	✓		
Giraffe-necked weevil	<i>Trachelophorus giraffa</i>													✓	
Giant African Land snail	<i>Achatina fulica</i>		✓	✓											