

Madagascar's Lemurs

Naturetrek Tour Report

27 September - 12 October 2008



Ring-tailed Lemur



Ring-tailed Lemur



White-browed Owl



Verreaux's Sifaka



Ring-tailed Lemur

Report and images compiled by Cathy Harlow



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Day 1

Saturday 27th September

Departure from the UK

The group and tour leader met up in Paris after arriving on different regional flights from the UK. We checked into the Ibis Hotel and had dinner.

Day 2

Sunday 28th September

Arrival at Antananarivo

After a long but pleasant enough flight with Air France, we arrived at Antananarivo, a little later than scheduled. Once we had tracked down enough landing cards, the immigration and customs formalities went smoothly and we were met by our local guide Desi. After changing money, we were swiftly transferred to the IC Hotel, close to the airport for the night. Desi had thoughtfully bought bottled water for the group.

Day 3

Monday 29th September

Antananarivo to Fort Dauphin

Weather: cloudy then clearing in Antananarivo; hot, windy and humid in Fort Dauphin

After a restless night for some but a good night for others, we awoke to a cloudy morning. A suitably planted Oustalet's chameleon was perched on a branch over the IC Hotel's entrance and together with a Madagascar fody kept us busy while we assembled for a 9.00 departure for the 'Lemur Park'. The route bypassed the centre of Antananarivo, a city of 1.8 million clinging to a cluster of hills rising from a sea of rice paddies. These provided the first birding of the day with a dimorphic egret, great egret, greenshank and squacco heron, while overhead yellow-billed kite and pied crow were quickly identified. Crossing a muddy waterway, where women busied themselves with the laundry, we passed brickworks, where hand-made bricks lay stacked up to dry before firing. The sticky clay is scooped out from exhausted rice paddies.

Leaving the city, the road twisted from hamlet to hamlet to arrive at the 'Lemur Park' where a Madagascar wagtail was flitting around in the dust by the entrance, while a bulbul was spotted in a eucalyptus overhead. Madagascar white-eye, souimanga sunbird, mascarene martin, madagascar bee eater, a wasp and a spectacular array of butterflies and dragonflies were soon noted as we were escorted to meet the first of the lemurs. Coquerel's sifaka (3 family groups including one with a 4 month old baby) were leaping from tree to tree, as well as jumping sideways across the open ground. Next we met half a dozen lively common brown lemurs and very obliging eastern grey bamboo lemurs. A single mongoose lemur, a ring-tailed lemur, crowned sifaka and two black and white ruffed lemurs completed the line-up of diurnal species, while inside the nocturnal house, we were introduced to greater dwarf lemur and a grey mouse lemur. Several tortoises including the endemic spider tortoise and radiated tortoise were also on view, along with a collared iguanid (*Oplurus cuvieri*).

Back at the hotel, we had lunch and then transferred to the airport to check in for the flight to Fort Dauphin. Madagascar wagtail and Madagascar kestrel kept us engaged, while we waited to be called for the flight. Those with window seats got spectacular views of the coast as we landed. Soon we were transferred to the Dauphin Hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 4

Tuesday 30th September

Fort Dauphin to Berenty

Weather: hot and humid, then hot and dry

Before breakfast we took a short walk from the Dauphin Hotel down to the sea where our first madagascar coucal was spotted in a palm and a male madagascar fody, its head already turning red, flitted from tree to tree. Common myna and feral pigeon were also present while two greater crested terns winged past at speed, giving little opportunity for observation. A kelp gull winged past as we scanned the white-capped sea for signs of humpbacks, without luck. Golden orb spiders *Nephila madagascariensis* were noted, the delicate threads of their webs spanning the branches of two trees, with the tiny male dwarfed by the very much larger female.

Leaving Fort Dauphin, we drove past the town's bustling market and Olivier, our Berenty guide, ably locating two warty (spiny-backed) chameleons *Furcifer verrucosus*. Continuing the journey six yellow-billed kites were spotted rising on a thermal above the rice paddies, where great egrets stalked their prey. Many butterflies were in evidence, including Madagascar's largest *Atrophaneura anterior*. We paused by a dead tree in a rice paddy festooned with cattle egrets. A madagascar malachite kingfisher flashed by and a flock of common jerys were seen. A stop for the botanists gave us the beautiful *Combretum coccineum*, a red-flowered vine and the sensitive plant *Mimosa pudica*.

At Andohahela National Park, we stopped to look at the triangular palm *Dyopsis decaryi*, which is only found in this transitional forest. Common jery, hoopoe and souimanga sunbird put in an appearance and a stripe-throated jery flitted around in the boughs of a tree with a common newtonia, soon recognised by its persistent and repetitive call. A *Liopholidophis* lined snake was spotted by the side of the road along with a dead grey mouse lemur, presumably dropped by an aerial predator. A puncture provided an unexpected stop by a baobab (*Adansonia za*) festooned with sakalava weavers' nests and a half a dozen of these busy birds were busy nest building, arriving with stalks in their beaks. A crested drongo sat on a branch of the baobab.

Nearby, a white-flowered *Pachypodium lameryi* was admired by some, while others took time to buy some wood sculptures made by the local villagers as the wheel was changed. Soon we were on our way again and as the vegetation changed to spiny forest, we saw our first crested coua, hopping from branch to branch in the low-growing thorny scrub, which also yielded magpie robin. Half a dozen namaqua doves were noted before arriving at Berenty, where we had lunch and checked in to our bungalows.

The searing heat meant that we waited until 3.30 before setting out to explore. We headed for the Ankoba area of the park and into the shade of the gallery forest, where crested drongo, madagascar kestrel, a flock of noisy grey-headed love birds, common jery, madagascar paradise flycatcher, common newtonia, madagascar white-eye, magpie robin and oustalet's chameleon heralded a productive afternoon of wildlife viewing. Some of the group got a fleeting glimpse of a cuckoo roller, but for most it was the strident whistle that was remembered. A beautiful butterfly with yellow underside to the wings and a white curved band could not be identified but soon we moved on to admire an endemic crested coua and two ground dwelling giant couas ambling along the path.

Next Olivier and Desi spotted two white-footed sportive lemurs, a nocturnal species resting under cover of densely packed foliage about 20 ft off the ground in separate trees. A group of obliging ring-tailed lemurs, including two females with very young babies, paused to allow us to photograph them. During this productive afternoon we also saw no fewer than three groups of red-fronted brown lemurs moving confidently along the trail, tails cocked high in the air as a communication device. A verreaux's sifaka descended from its perch on a tree trunk and obligingly danced across the path in front of us, a treat for those with cameras to hand. Also noted was a large black and red wasp digging its hole in the sand, three pairs of madagascar turtle doves, a barn owl, and two scops owls roosting under a dense matting of twigs.

As the light faded, we made our way with torches to the spiny forest for the first of our night walks, where Olivier immediately found a warty chameleon on a branch. A highlight of the evening were a pair of scops owls, perched on the thorny branches of a *didierucae*. With great care, the male brought in a hissing cockroach for his mate, which she readily accepted. A madagascar bulbul and pair of magpie robins were found roosting. Soon our attention was drawn to the eye shine of the first of five reddish-grey mouse lemurs hopping from branch to branch in search of insects. A single grey mouse lemur was also photographed, and following that a white-footed sportive lemur was located providing further photo opportunities for what was an exceptional first day in Madagascar's best known private reserve, Berenty. After dinner, the group quickly retired for an early night, in anticipation of the next day's full programme.

Day 5

Wednesday 1st October

Berenty

Weather hot and sunny

As we assembled in the car park at 6 am, a pair of Madagascar coucals treated us to their evocative call. Crested drongo and crested coua were spotted in the branches above the bungalows. We headed straight for the Mandrare River, a spectacular place at sunrise. Several greenshanks were noted and we heard the call of the white-throated rail. Kittlitz plover could just be made out in the distance, along with dimorphic egret. A flock of grey-headed love birds noisily descended to a sandbank, while madagascar malachite kingfisher flitted between two tree stumps.

Common jery, common newtonia and madagascar white-eye were soon added to the list while Olivier heard the white-headed vanga and soon located it perched on a branch.

After breakfast, we headed back into the gallery forest to find a white-browed owl roosting. A tantalising glimpse of two lesser vasa parrots was accompanied by their liquid whistle. A madagascar paradise flycatcher on the nest sited was spotted just a couple of feet above the ground on a tree trunk, giving rewarding photos to those who had their cameras at the ready. In a forest clearing we could see pied crows and yellow-billed kites rising on the thermals and in among them a madagascar cuckoo hawk. Olivier peeled back the bark of a tree to reveal three hissing cockroaches, which were admired, then replaced carefully.

Whilst ring-tailed lemurs and red-fronted brown lemurs were curiously absent, the birds continued to delight us: a madagascar kestrel perched on a dead branch, giant couas rustling on the forest floor and a france's sparrowhawk darting across the trail. After a good view of the diminutive souimanga sunbird, Olivier excitedly announced a sickle-billed vanga pair, one of the larger birds in this endemic family. Some of the group saw a pair of kites feeding a chick on the nest. Before returning to the bungalows, we visited the madagascar flying fox colony, whose cacophony of calls was accompanied by a lot of restless coming and going.

After lunch and a siesta, we drove through the sisal plantations in search of buttonquail and sandgrouse, both of which were found with ease. Six of the elusive madagascar sandgrouse were pecking the dry earth but as a herd of zebu approached from behind, they abruptly took off. Olivier then took us to the spiny forest where we'd done the night walk the evening before. The temperature was dropping and a breeze made for more pleasant walking conditions. We were greeted by the intriguing sight of a *Mimophis mahfalensis* snake catching a three-eyed lizard *Charaladon madagascariensis* and devouring it in a matter of minutes. We then spent time looking at plants including a yellow-flowered shrub whose leaves are mashed to make a natural shampoo and *Euphorbia stenoclada*, whose latex is used to make candles and also chewed as a remedy for toothache. We heard vasa parrots flying overhead and were rewarded with sightings of both lesser and greater vasa parrots. The highlight for some of the group was finally locating a hook-billed vanga, whose massive bill is used for catching its insect and reptilian prey but for others the verreaux's sifaka feeding on euphorbia flowers took some beating. A small group of ring-tailed lemurs clinging to the impossibly thorny alluaudia branches rounded off a most rewarding afternoon.

For the night walk Olivier took us into the gallery forest, where we saw plenty of sifaka and red-fronted brown lemurs huddled on the branches high up in the canopy, but mouse lemurs and sportive lemurs were more challenging to find. The highlight of tonight's foray was without doubt when Olivier spotted a small indian civet. These animals are normally very shy, but Olivier succeeded in arousing its curiosity and as we stood motionless in the path, the animal approached to within two yards of us!

Day 6

Thursday 2nd October

Berenty to Fort Dauphin and on to Tulear and Isalo

Weather: hot and sunny, humid on the coast, then drier

Some of the group were up at 5 am for an early morning walk through the gallery forest. Red-fronted brown lemurs were today's early risers and we enjoyed sightings of four different groups, along with some still sleepy and huddled up sifaka, perched on a branch.

An unexpected sight were 21 guineafowl roosting in the top of a tamarind, which was closely followed by a wonderful view of a white-browed owl perched on a branch close to the path. A pair of buttonquail allowed us to approach very close and provided further photo opportunities.

After breakfast, the bus was loaded up and we headed back to Fort Dauphin for the flight to Tulear. Arriving at Tulear we made for the mud flats just beyond the airport where 3 black-winged stilts and a dozen kittlitz plovers were spotted. The heat was intense as we crossed a barren limestone plateau, peppered with tombs of the Mahafaly people, baobabs and villages of tiny thatched mud huts.

Just before sunset we arrived at Zombitse forest, unfortunately too late to go into the National Park but a walk along the road proved just as rewarding. Greater and lesser vasa parrots, grey-headed love bird, white-eye and a good view of two red-tailed vangas were followed by spinetail swift, drongo, common jery, madagascar buzzard, madagascar bulbul and crested coua. Desi pointed out a france's sparrowhawk male, on a branch just yards from the road, which was duly photographed but appert's tetraka, the local endemic, eluded us. A dead hoopoe and skin of a hog-nosed snake (*Leiobetaredon madagascariensis*) outside its burrow were also noted along the roadside.

The final leg of today's long and hot journey took us through the 'wild west' sapphire mining town of Ilakaka, which grew from a hamlet to a town of 20,000 in just a few years. As darkness fell, we approached the Isalo Massif and turned off to the luxurious Jardin du Roi hotel, in a spectacular setting.

Day 7

Friday 3rd October

Isalo National Park

Weather: very hot and sunny

Some of the group were up and about early for a spot of bird watching, but most enjoyed a relative 'lie in'. The morning was fresh and the grassy lawns of the Jardin du Roi dew-soaked. Perched on one of the rocky outcrops, the bright orange breast of a male benson's rock thrush was easily spotted. A hoopoe flew up in front of us into a jacaranda tree in full bloom while grey-headed love birds, greater vasa parrots' liquid whistle and bee-eaters added to the symphony of sound and colour. A large raptor on a dead tree stump had us puzzled for a while, but turned out to be a yellow-billed kite, one of dozens flying over the hotel.

The cool of the morning seemed barely to last five minutes and by the time we were on the coach and heading for the town of Ranohira, the searing heat was already beginning to gather strength. We picked up Parson, our local guide, and a supply of water, while some of the group raided the Maki (Malagasy for ring-tailed lemur) T-shirt shop. It was a short but bumpy ride to the park entrance, from where we began the walk with a steady climb to a gap in the otherwise impenetrable face of Isalo's sandstone massif. Resting in the shade of a fire-resistant tapia tree, our guide explained that an endemic silk worm *Antherina swaka* feeds on the leaves. Here we also found two lined snakes *Liopholidophis* poking their heads out of a burrow. On a shaded rock face, carnivorous *Drosera* were observed. As the path levelled out, the full heat of the sun could be felt. Here we found the endemic *Aloe contigua* and abundant elephant's foot *Pachypodium rosulatum*, in full bloom, their bulbous shiny grey trunks sprouting a cluster of leaves and bright yellow blooms and *Catharanthus roseus*, the Madagascar rosy periwinkle, whose alkaloids have produced treatment for leukaemia.

Because of the heat, bird life was scarce, but kestrels could be heard on the cliffs above, where the sandstone was splashed with bright yellow and orange lichen. Nigel and Tom found a scorpion under a stone – these are the only harmful wildlife on the island.

We paused on a rocky outcrop with a splendid view into Isalo's labyrinthine canyons but by now the heat was almost unbearable. Our guide pointed out the tombs of the Bara people, who lay their dead for a year in cavities in the easily eroded sandstone. At the piscine naturelle, a bathing pool at the foot of a small waterfall, about half the group took a refreshing dip, while the others enjoyed the shade of the pandanus and palm groves.

Following a picnic lunch, half the group decided to return with Desi to the hotel, while the rest continued with Parson and Cathy on a longer walk to Namaza. The heat meant that progress was slow, but the walk gave great views into the rugged depths of the Namaza Canyon, where a fresh-running stream was flanked by a surprisingly luxuriant pocket of gallery forest. Ring-tailed lemurs were heard but not seen but as things cooled down, so the birds began to reappear and we had good sightings of madagascar paradise flycatcher, souimanga sunbird and kestrel. Back at the hotel, Tom had enjoyed a massage, while Kat and Ger had made good use of the swimming pool. A few of the group climbed onto the rocks beyond the hotel gardens at sunset.

Day 8

Saturday 4th October

Isalo to Ranomafana

Weather: hot and sunny

A final sunrise bird watch gave further observations of three hoopoes, common jery, long-billed green sunbird and several bee-eaters atop a dead tree. By the small stream, Alison glimpsed the furtive white-throated rail that we had missed seeing at the piscine naturelle yesterday. We were on the road by 8.00 but paused at the small lake adjacent to the hotel, where flocks of white-faced whistling duck and red-billed teal were seen and two cisticolas announced their presence with their characteristic 'chatter'.

We met our guide Parson briefly to hand over a pair of second hand binoculars – many of the guides don't have any and Cathy brought some old ones to donate. Leaving the Isalo Massif behind, the flat Horombe Plateau stretched into the distance, merging with the smoke haze created by the spring burn-off of old coarse grass to encourage the new tender shoots preferred by zebu to grow. Bush larks and pied crows were the only birds in this parched and hostile landscape, where it was hard to believe people would choose to live. Yet every so often, tiny oases of green announced the presence of water and little thatched roof huts sprung up around them. The hoped for sighting of reunion harrier did not happen. The road abruptly dropped down in a series of hairpin bends to the Bara town of Ihosy (pronounced Eeoosh), where a local festival was in progress and everyone was dressed in their best clothes. Chabert's vanga was spotted in a tree.

Now heading north, the scenery became dramatic, with huge inselbergs of granite, including the distinctive 'Bishop's Hat', which we paused to photograph. Next stop was the small community reserve of Anja, sited at the foot of a rounded granite summit. A pocket of luxuriant gallery forest supports a population of several hundred ring-tailed lemurs, which differ from those of Berenty, in that their pelage is darker and they looked altogether healthier. Avoiding the midday heat, they were grouped under the canopy and were easy to photograph and observe.

Here, the bird watchers were rewarded with a magnificent view of a madagascar lesser cuckoo, a species that is regularly heard, but seldom seen. Two species of chameleon, *Furcifer oustaleti* and *Furcifer lateralis*, added to the interest of this wildlife interlude, though we suspected that the locals had 'planted' them by the side of the path for our benefit! Red-billed teal were seen for the second time today, on the small lake where locals were fishing. A few miles down the road we arrived at the town of Ambalavao, where an important zebu market takes place each week. Here we paused for lunch at the paper factory, where handmade paper is crafted from the pulp of the Avoha tree and cleverly impregnated with petals and leaves, following a tradition introduced by Arab settlers.

After lunch we still had a long way to go but the ever-changing scenery meant the journey was never dull. We passed vineyards, where Madagascar's limited wine production is centred, and many herds of zebu, on a seven-week route march from the south to the capital – cheaper apparently than sending them by truck. Arriving in Fianarantsoa (the place of good learning), we filled up with fuel and a few of the group escaped to the rather good souvenir shop over the road at the Hotel Soafia. Just north of the city, Madagascar's second largest, we turned off for Ranomafana on the new fast road to the coast, the last rays of sun on yet another cloudless day striking the mud village houses and turning them gold. It was almost seven when we arrived at Domaine Nature, a Malagasy-run forest lodge, where we were to stay for three nights in individual bungalows stacked up the hillside.

Day 9

Sunday 5th October

Ranomafana National Park

Weather: fairly hot and humid

At breakfast, Kay and Peter were admiring a beautiful moth with brown and pinkish markings which had got trapped inside the dining room – this was later identified as *Pictogramma cyligramma*. Boarding our coach for the short ride up the National Park entrance, an emerald gecko *Phelsuma quadriocellata*, appeared by the hotel entrance. This species is easily recognised by the four spots on its flank.

As Desi was sorting out tickets for the reserve, Fidy, one of Ranomafana's most experienced guides, was already hard at work on our behalf, pointing out ten different bird species in a matter of minutes – souimanga sunbird, rand's warbler perched on a dead branch, stripe-throated jery, lesser vasa parrot, mascarene martin, madagascar buzzard, chabert's vanga, madagascar coucal, black swift and red-tailed vanga, with its 'wolf whistle' call. At the same time we were drawn to a group of red-fronted brown lemurs, feeding by the side of the road.

We then plunged into the rainforest descending rapidly to the Namarona River, which is crossed by a footbridge. Soon after, we were enclosed in thickets of bamboo, the preferred habitat for the golden bamboo lemur, a species only discovered in 1986. Madagascar's seven species of bamboo can contain up to 16% cyanide, yet are readily consumed by three lemur species – it is believed that they ingest earth to help deal with the toxins. We shortly found a group of two golden bamboo lemurs feeding high in the canopy and quietly observed them until they moved out of view. Continuing deeper into the forest, Fidy's son had located a group of three greater bamboo lemurs at rest but with rather a crowd of onlookers. Shortly, red-bellied lemurs were spotted nearby but only a few of our group caught a glimpse as tails swung off into the foliage and were obscured from view. Not wishing to pursue them, we opted instead to enjoy the company of a small-toothed sportive lemur eyeing us sleepily from its roost high in a tree.

Next we were drawn to the first of six small leaf-tailed geckos *Uroplatus ebenani*, convincingly mimicking dead leaves which was a highlight for some of the group. Returning later to the greater bamboo lemurs, we were able to observe them quietly on our own, which most agreed was much more rewarding. By now they had settled down to grooming and resting high in the canopy and well out of sight of aerial predators, such as henst's goshawk and madagascar harrier hawk. Returning to the park entrance, the excitement continued - a plated lizard *Zonosaurus ornata* poked its head out of a burrow, a huntsman spider *Monocentropus lambertoni* perilously crossed the car park and a male short-nosed chameleon *Calumna gastrotaenia* was admired in the undergrowth.

After lunch and a short rest it was time to return to the park, where the endemic white-throated oxylabes and crossley's vanga were located by Fidy. A dark brown tree snake *Ithycythus* sp was identified by Desi en route to Belle Vue, where we enjoyed a rainforest panorama and several more emerald day geckos running up and down the frame of the shelter. Arriving early meant we were first to see the fanaloka or striped civet, which gingerly surveyed us from the safety of a bush. Feeding is no longer permitted here but a pair of civets and several ring-tailed mongooses regularly show up here at dusk in the expectation of a morsel or two. The ring-tailed mongoose was a delight to observe, its gorgeous russet and black striped bushy tail catching the last of the light. Just before nightfall, the first of six brown mouse lemurs appeared, jumping between bushes and darting along the branches. For some of the group there was all too little light left for photography and as flash is no longer permitted because of the numbers of visitors, the results were predictably mixed.

Dinner gave us the chance to sample some genuine Malagasy home cooking. The fish stew went down well but the large plate of mashed yam leaves resembling a cow pat raised more laughter than culinary acclaim though was bravely tackled by the three who had ordered it!

Day 10

Monday 6th October

Ranomafana National Park

Weather: hot and sunny in the morning, some cloud in the afternoon

After an early breakfast we headed for Vohiparara, a tract of high altitude rainforest reserve promising good birding and the place to find rarities such as yellow-bellied sunbird-esity. We were greeted by a cryptic warbler high in the canopy and soon after Fidy and his assistant excitedly rushed us off to view a common sunbird-esity, a diminutive nectar-feeder easily recognised by its long curved beak and sky-blue wattle. Nearby, the yellow-bellied sunbird-esity could be heard but despite Fidy's efforts with the tape, we failed to locate it. Right by the path, an unoccupied spectacled greenbul's cup-shaped nest was wedged in the fork of a low branch. Later we came across this lower-storey bird darting out from its perch to grab insects from the leaves. A highlight for some of the group was when four noisy blue couas engaged in mating just yards from the path. Others were busy admiring a beautiful tree frog *Mantidactylus pulcher*, whose entire life-cycle takes place in the screw pine pandanus, which trap water at the base of their saw-toothed leaves. These endemic trees are endangered because of their multiple uses for roofing and basket and hat weaving.

While continuing to search for pitta-like and rufous-headed ground rollers, both of which had been heard though stubbornly refused the lure of Fidy's tape, we hit on a feeding flock of drongo, white-eye, nelicourvi weaver, rand's warbler and ashy cuckoo-shrike.

A fleeting glimpse of a red forest rat was the closest we came to mammals this morning but by contrast the reptiles and amphibians did not disappoint – the tiny stump-tailed chameleon, the brightly coloured painted mantella *Mantella baroni*, mascarene rocket frog *Ptychoadena mascarensis* and splendid *Boophis madagascariensis* tree frogs. These we discovered clinging to a damp cliff face opposite the Namarona River and its waterfall, along with an unidentified snake. Here too, beautiful dancing lady *Cynorchis purpurescens* orchids and purple *Streptocarpus* hung in profusion.

Back at the Domaine Nature for lunch, a tree boa was spotted in a rocky hollow in the wall opposite the hotel along with a splendid female *Furcifer balteatus* chameleon, perched on a branch overlooking the road. After lunch at the hotel and a siesta, we proposed to focus our afternoon's activity on the main part of the National Park and looking for further species of lemur. Disappointingly, we discovered from Fidy that the group of four habituated Milne-Edwards diademed sifakas, for years easily observed at Ranomafana, were now reduced to just one individual, following an isolated incident of poaching. It is planned to habituate another group, but this will take time.

The sky had partly clouded over and temperatures dropped a little, which made hiking on Ranomafana's roller-coaster paths a little less taxing. Every so often, a break in the canopy revealed the luxuriant rainforest dropping away into steep-sided valleys. As yesterday, our first sighting was of the red-fronted brown lemurs, which astonished us with their agility, walking tightrope along a wire.

Moving on from here, Fidy and Desi were patiently listening for a tell-tale rustle of leaves that might mean bamboo lemurs, while their sharp eyes kept us busy with other wildlife on the forest floor, including a crayfish in a small stream. Soon, two golden bamboo lemurs were heard and then sighted. It was a rare privilege to get an uninterrupted view of them breaking off segments of bamboo, then stripping the outer sheath away with great dexterity to get to the inner pith. After a while feeding gave way to grooming activity – many lemur species have specially adapted lower teeth to make this easier!

Moving on from the golden bamboo lemurs, we found a group of four eastern grey (lesser) bamboo lemurs, the smallest of the family. These had numbered collars on, indicating that they are under study – researchers from Stonybrook University have a new research station near the entrance to the park. By now the light was beginning to dwindle, so we made for the guava thickets by the old research cabin, a favourite spot for mouse lemurs. As night fell, we were again lucky to find one of these diminutive primates, its eye-shine caught in the beam of our torch lights.

Three of the group, Dave, Kirsty and Cathy were lodged in the upper bungalows. Kirsty was amused to be allocated bungalow K2 but to all of us at the end of another rewarding but tiring day in Ranomafana, the extra hike up the steps did take on Himalayan proportions!

Dave's ever-sharp eyes picked out a stunning moth with a 5 inch wing span on a lamp post at the bottom of the steps leading to the upper bungalows. Kay, our moth 'enthusiast' believed it to be a female spreading her pheromones to the wind, but we couldn't put a name to it...

Day 11

Tuesday 7th October

Ranomafana to Antsirabe

Weather: hot and sunny

Most of the group were up and about for a five o'clock start and our last chance to enjoy Ranomafana's varied fauna. The entrance to the park again proved to be fruitful for birds with madagascar green sunbird, stripe-throated jery, ward's vanga, and two new species for the group: madagascar starling characteristically perched on top of a tree, and four forest fodies including a resplendent red male in full breeding colours. Descending for the final time to the river the elusive pitta-like ground-roller was heard but not seen. While Fidy's assistant went off to search for lemurs, we enjoyed an excellent view of a male velvet asity, its stunning lime-green caruncle above the eye clearly visible. Some of the group got good views of the red forest rat, while Dave spotted a tiny *Platypelis* frog on a tree trunk.

Brush warbler, lesser cuckoo, and turtle dove and tylos were heard but not seen as we continued to search for lemurs in a part of the reserve transected by steep ridges and valleys. This made for challenging walking. While waiting for Fidy's assistant to return, two perfectly camouflaged satanic leaf-tailed geckos were spotted, admired and photographed, providing a much needed rest for the group. Soon we were off again to observe a group of three greater bamboo lemurs, resting. It was a privilege to see at closer quarters the species that we had previously only glimpsed in the canopy. Descending to the park entrance Fidy was keen to locate another local rarity, the Madagascar wood rail but without success. Needless to say, after three and a half hours of tramping up and down Ranomafana's rugged trails, the group were more than ready for a late breakfast.

Waiting for the bus to load up, stunning blue and brown *Papilio epiphorbas* continued to tease the photographers. Leaving the hotel, we stopped by the lamp post so that the rest of the group could admire Dave's moth and praying mantis. A little further up, Desi stopped for a blue pigeon perched in a tree. We couldn't resist the temptation to pause again by the waterfall for a second view of the wonderful 'dancing ladies' orchids growing on the rock face. A couple of the well-camouflaged tree frogs were spotted as well. Along the road side, children were selling crayfish, artfully wrapped in banana leaves.

Reaching the main road, we turned north for the long but fascinating journey through Betsileo country. These people, of Indonesian descent, grow rice in terraced paddies, ploughed by hand, though zebu cattle are sometimes used to break up the hard clay. Their villages of brick houses with intricate wooden balconies were stacked up on the hillside. At Ambohimahasoa it was market day and people were strung out along the approach roads coming from miles away, dressed in their best clothes for this weekly event. Often leaving home at 4 in the morning, this is the only way they can sell any surplus produce to get cash. Here we came across a tree festooned with dozens of white and dark morph dimorphic egrets.

We stopped for a picnic lunch by a bridge, where a herd of zebu were driven down for a bath. School children lined up along the road, staring at the strange 'vazaha'. After lunch we still had a long way to go but the journey was punctuated by stone chats perched on bushes and a succession of black kites and pied crows. Passing a small and degraded enclave of forest, local people lined the roadside selling forest-harvested honey in water bottles and wooden plates made from pine and eucalyptus. Sacks of charcoal for sale were stacked up on the roadside – this is still the main source of fuel for cooking in Madagascar.

Mid afternoon we broke the journey once again at the town of Ambositra, a colourful place known for its wood carvings and inlaid boxes. Some of the group couldn't resist the chance to shop, while others enjoyed the opportunity to observe and photograph local life.

After Ambositra, the road finally began to straighten out and views of the villages set among rice paddies became ever more spectacular in the late afternoon light. Arriving at Antsirabe, a few of the group went off to explore, indulging in a visit to the chocolaterie next door to our hotel. In the fading light, we also noted the statue commemorating independence, with its emblems of the 18 ethnic groups, crowned by zebu horns. The service at the hotel's restaurant seemed very slow as we were all ready for an early night. There was great mirth when Gloria brought out her tape measure and made good use of the wait by negotiating with the local table cloth sellers for an embroidered shirt. Some of the group didn't manage to stay for dessert, which was a pity as it was the best part of the meal - fruit and sorbet served in a caramel net basket.

Day 12

Wednesday 8th October

Antsirabe to Andasibe via Antananarivo

Weather: hot and sunny

Dave was up early to recce the hotel grounds, where fody, wagtail, common mynah and common jery were spotted, along with improbably, a brush warbler. We set off to continue the journey through the Hauts Plateaux on a somewhat straighter road than yesterday. Along the way, local villagers were selling wooden toys and hats and baskets made of sisal and raffia. Here we stopped by a river, cascading over smooth slabs of granite, where four common sandpipers, mascarene martin, white-eye, bulbul, spintail swift and wagtail kept some amused, while others shopped. A 'comfort' stop by the road side gave the photographers a chance to get shots of the bush lark.

Just before Antananarivo, we stopped again by a lake for dimorphic egret, stonechat, long-billed green sunbird and green-backed heron. After four hours, the hills on which the capital's 1.8 million inhabitants' homes are stacked up, came into view. Our lunch stop was at an Indonesian restaurant by the Tsimbazaza Zoo so once food had been ordered, we had time for a quick visit. This gave the group the chance to see two mammal species seldom observed in the wild: aye aye and fosa. In the noctarium, reverse lighting meant that the aye aye were awake, though it was too dim to get a proper view of the animals that inspired Gerald Durrell to visit Madagascar. Weighing in at up to 3 kg, they are surprisingly large and have a long bushy tail. In an outside enclosure the fosa was curled up in a ball asleep, but its huge paws and long legs gave a clue to its success as the island's top carnivore. A WWF funded project, the zoo is instrumental in raising awareness of the island's fauna among local people. The trees and small lakes attract abundant birdlife and we observed a flock of white-faced whistling duck, black-crowned, green-back and squacco herons and plenty of dimorphic and cattle egrets nesting in the crowns of the trees.

Continuing the journey, we dropped down off the plateau through a pocket of degraded forest at Mandraka, the road endlessly winding and choked with heavy traffic connecting the port of Toamasina and the capital. A brief stop by the bridge over the Mangoro River at sundown gave us a probable common sandpiper. Desi explained how nearby Moramanga had been the scene of an uprising in 1947 against the French colonists, when they tried to press-gang the Malagasy to fight in Algeria.

It was dark by the time we arrived in Andasibe and everyone was ready to enjoy dinner and a comfortable night in the very well-appointed bungalows of Hotel Vakona, set around a small lake.

Day 13

Thursday 9th October

Andasibe (Perinet)

Weather: clear, then cloudy, cooler

We awoke to a clear and bright morning with some of the group up and about early watching the resident Madagascar malachite kingfisher, nelicourvi weavers, mascarene martins, white-eyes and wagtail. After a quick breakfast most were keen to get straight into the reserve but boarding the bus, Desi pointed out more local 'attractions' in the form of ward's vanga, long-billed greenbul and madagascar cuckoo-roller – our first proper sighting of this spectacular and enigmatic bird, with its unmistakable call and flight.

At the park entrance we were introduced to Maurice, one of Perinet's most experienced and respected guides, and his trainee assistant Lala, who would accompany us over the next three days. While Desi sorted out park permits Maurice got us started with a spectacular emerald day gecko and tree frog, adorning a pandanus.

The last rain had fallen at Perinet over a week ago, so the forest floor was predictably very dry, though made for easy walking. Perinet's terrain is generally less demanding than that of Ranomafana and the trails are well graded. The morning yielded several new birds for us: forest fody, rainforest scops owl and a delightful madagascar flufftail with chicks. However, most of the group agreed that the lemurs stole the show and today we hit the lemur 'jackpot', with one outstanding sighting after another. Common brown lemurs were spotted soon after entering the park, announcing by their grunts that they were aware of our presence and bounding off through the trees in several athletic leaps.

Soon Lala appeared having located a group of Indri feeding nearby in a rather inaccessible spot down a steep slope, overlooking the Lac Vert. With care we edged our way down the slope, saplings providing useful handholds for the less agile members of the group. A group of four animals - two adult indri, a juvenile and a young baby, which Maurice informed us born on 5th May, were feeding on tender young leaves just above us, though spread out over several trees. Weighing in at 6-7 kg, these vertically-clinging lemurs are capable of spectacular leaps of 10 metres or more from trunk to trunk. Needless to say, each leap brought a chorus of gasps from the onlookers and a tirade of camera shutters. With their striking black and white pelage, green eyes and inquiring expression, it's not hard to see why these lemurs are so engaging but in due course, Desi lured us away to view a leaf-tailed gecko *Uroplatus sikorae*, perfectly camouflaged against a lichen-covered tree trunk, and a very colourful parson's chameleon.

Lala then returned with news of diademed sifakas in the same area of the forest. Arguably the most beautiful of the lemurs, they are also one of the largest and until recently, most difficult to see. This group of three had been relocated to Perinet, following destruction of their habitat by the nickel pipeline and were now habituated and easier to observe. When we arrived, they were resting but soon two of them joined up for some social interaction and grooming, which progressed to an outstanding display of lemur acrobatics, made all the more rewarding for us because it was at eye level.

As if this weren't enough for one day, Maurice topped things off by finding a huddle of three eastern woolly lemurs roosting on a branch. After quietly observing them for a while, we realised that there were in fact five faces peering down at us as two of the females had babies. On our way out of the reserve, we were treated to our closed yet concert of indri calls. It's hard to describe the sound – a cadence of howls alternately rising and falling that are used to establish each group's territory, which can be between eight and 20 hectares.

After a late lunch at Feo ny Ala, a quick scan of the restaurant's surrounds yielded six blue pigeons in a nearby tree, a huge moth cocoon hanging from a branch overlooking the lake and our first broad-billed roller. After a visit to the orchid garden, Gloria and then Kirsty returned to the lodge, while the rest of the group set off down the road to look for birds and reptiles. An obliging blue vanga posed on a branch with madagascar starling, madagascar buzzard, chabert's vanga, and souimanga sunbird adding interest to the afternoon. On the reptile front we did rather well too, with time spent photographing nose-horned chameleon and short-horned chameleon.

Our night walk was less fruitful as we failed to find the expected mouse and dwarf lemurs but after such an unforgettable morning we could hardly complain! Over dinner, the indri was voted in as top lemur, with the woolly lemur a close runner up.

Day 14

Friday 10th October

Mantadia National Park

Weather: overcast and cool, brighter later

A six o'clock breakfast saw us ready to depart by 6.30 for the journey into Mantadia National Park. Along the way, Maurice explained how the locals are creating a vital forest corridor to link it with Perinet Reserve and pointed out newly-planted saplings. Bird watching from the bus was rewarding, with bulbul, madagascar fody, malachite kingfisher, kestrel, paradise flycatcher, white-eye, turtle dove, magpie robin and blue coua all spotted, together with two eastern grey bamboo lemurs. The road into the park was built for the graphite mine but also provides access to visitors to a tract of primary rainforest. The difference was immediately apparent with many more large-trunked trees with buttressed roots and abundant epiphytes, pandanus and tree ferns.

Setting off on a trail following a small stream, Maurice endeavoured to lure the pitta-like ground roller out of hiding. We could clearly hear it, but once again failed to see it. Instead, we were rewarded with a wonderful view of a collared nightjar, its cryptic colouring making it almost indistinguishable from the tree trunk on the forest floor, on which it was roosting. Another highlight of the morning was a group of five red-bellied lemurs moving through the canopy. Though relatively shy, we were still able to get good views of this striking species we had failed to see properly at Ranomafana.

Emerging from the forest, we paused at a small lake, where two madagascar little grebes were observed, a species once commonly seen at Lac Vert in Perinet but now absent probably due to disturbance. A broad-billed roller perched on a dead tree was easily identified by its distinctive rattle-like call, as well as its unmistakable chestnut plumage. Soon Maurice had us staring at a distant raptor circling at height, which he reliably informed us was a henst's goshawk, a species that is difficult to see.

At this point we were interrupted by a weird and quite disturbing call that issued from the canopy up a steep slope above us. As if on cue - black and white ruffed lemur, the one species we still hoped to find. Confidently, Maurice, Desi and Lala led us on an imperceptible trail up the slope, fighting lianas and tree roots along the way and in no time had located a single animal resting on a horizontal bough. Half the group followed our guides down a steep slope to try and get a better view of this often difficult to find lemur. In the event, it was those who had stayed at the top who got the best sighting as the lemur moved along the branch and into full view, albeit fleetingly.

On our journey back to the hotel, nuthatch vanga was heard and a beautiful male velvet asity spotted at the side of the road. An obliging madagascar tree boa was picked up and examined by Nigel – a vet and experienced snake handler, it should be added!

We relaxed over a late lunch at Vakona Lodge and with the sun out, a few of the group had a dip in the pool. Later, Kirsty, Alison, Kat, Ger, Dave, Jo, Kay, Peter and Cathy walked down to the lodge's 'Lemur Island' reserve, where pet and rescue lemurs of several species enjoy sanctuary in relatively natural surroundings. This offered an 'in your face' lemur experience that most found enjoyable, together with a chance to feel banana tit-bits to the relatively well-behaved black and white ruffed lemurs and the not-so-well-behaved brown lemurs.

Day 15

Saturday 11th October

Andasibe (Perinet)

Weather: bright in the morning, cool and heavy rain afternoon and evening

After spotting a couple of feeding eastern grey bamboo lemurs near the entrance to the reserve, we were keen to see the indri again and so the first part of the morning was spent with the same group who had so enthralled us two days earlier. This time they were again feeding, but lower in the canopy affording the photographers excellent views. The juveniles are often curious and the youngster in this group, who was probably two or three years old, rested on a branch, just yards from us, eyeing us up but clearly unperturbed by our presence. Higher up, the baby detached itself from its mother's back and daringly leaped to an adjacent branch before rushing back to mum. It is at this stage that they are most vulnerable to predation from madagascar harrier hawk and henst's goshawk, Desi explained. Woolly lemurs were again found roosting today.

The morning's birding was equally rewarding with excellent views of blue coua, chief predator of chameleons. A feeding flock characteristically headed by a drongo, also yielded white-headed vanga, starling, rand's warbler, souimanga sunbird, common newtonia, chabert's vanga, white-eye and paradise flycatcher. A brush warbler's loud rattle alerted us to its presence in a bush, while overhead there were good views of the cuckoo-roller and two circling buzzards. After a light rain shower the damp had brought out an impressive red giant millipede, which was much admired. As we made our way back to the park entrance, we were detained by the intriguing spectacle of dozens of caterpillars joined in procession along the path.

After lunch at Vakona Lodge, the rain that had been threatening all morning, finally took hold, just as Tom, Alison, Kat and Ger went down to see the lemurs again. For the rest of the group this was a chance to catch up on sleep, postcard writing and/or reading.

By five o'clock, it was still pouring down so there were fewer takers for the night walk than originally planned. The coach took us down to the entrance to the private reserve of Mitsinjo, where we met with Pierre, our guide for the walk. First we visited the tree nursery, which supplies young native species for the forest corridor project. The rain showed no signs of abating but despite this the night walk was rewarding, especially on the frog front!

Mantidactylus liber was easily identified but several others including another *Mantidactylus* and a *Bophis* were photographed but not named. *Calumna gastrotaenia* and *Brookesia superciliaris* chameleons posed for the cameras brave enough to risk the rain. Finally just when we thought that even goretex might give up on us, the tell-tale eye-shine announced the presence of a Goodman's mouse lemur, which most of the group managed to see reasonably well. This was followed by two furry-eared dwarf lemurs, the second of the nocturnal specialities of Perinet. These were feeding higher up in the forest at a distance, so less easy to observe. Back at the hotel, we regrouped for a last dinner at Vakona's excellent restaurant.

Day 16

Sunday 12th October

Perinet to Antananarivo

Weather: cool and wet in the morning, becoming dry and sunny with heavy downpour late afternoon

We woke to a soggy morning but even so there was no let up in the enthusiasm of the group for a final early start to allow us one last visit to the reserve. For this we divided into two groups, with Maurice and Cathy taking the birders and Desi and Lala's group heading off for a final look at the lemurs. Indri and common brown lemurs were again relatively easy to locate, while the birding group enjoyed several treats, the first a close look at a pair of blue vangas, the male's brighter plumage clearly distinguishing it from the slightly less flamboyant female. Red-fronted coua was fleetingly glimpsed but failed to be drawn out, though all the group members got a good look at last at the white-throated rail, on the shore of Lac Vert.

The highlight of the morning was arguably the madagascar sparrowhawk, picked up by Maurice as it sped through the lower storey of the forest, then perched on a branch. This bird is a rarity, so we felt extra-privileged to have had a good look at it. After all that rain, the frogs were very vocal – in particular *Heterixalus betsileo*, whose call was aptly described by Tom as a 'frog horn'. All too soon it was time to say goodbye to Maurice and Lala, who had done such an excellent job in helping us find and enjoy Perinet and Mantadia's wildlife showcase.

On the drive back to Tana, we stopped at Moramanga so Tom could buy a charcoal stove to take home! Desi then found us a decent picnic spot in Mandraka forest, by the side of a stream and fortunately it had completely stopped raining at last. Stopping at the craft market on the outskirts of Tana, there was time for some last-minute souvenir shopping and the group came back laden with an assortment of musical instruments, fridge magnets, semi-precious stones, wood carvings, metal lamp shades, basket work and of course, vanilla pods, an important cash crop for Madagascar. Gloria made a last attempt to find a gold charm to add to her bracelet, but without success.

Late afternoon we arrived at the IC Hotel, near the airport, where there was time for a rest before dinner and the short transfer to the airport. Here the group said thanks and goodbye to tour leader Cathy, who was staying on for a second tour.

Thank you to Desi, our very capable and knowledgeable local guide, our driver Michel, who was competent, confident and unflappable to the last, and his able helper Patrick, who kept the bus spotlessly clean and was ever smiling and helpful, and lastly to the group members.

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Species Lists (Key: C = captive specimen; H = heard only)

Lemurs

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October													
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Indri	<i>Indri indri</i>											5	H	5	3
2	Diademmed Sifaka	<i>Propithecus diadema diadema</i>											3			
3	Verreaux's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus verreauxi verreauxi</i>		20 +	30 +	15										
4	Coquerel's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus verreauxi coquereli</i>	C													
5	Crowned Sifaka	<i>Propithecus verreauxi coronatus</i>	C													
6	Woolly Lemur (Avahi)	<i>Avahi laniger</i>									H		5		3	
7	Ring-tailed Lemur	<i>Lemur catta</i>	C	15 +	20 +	2	H	12								
8	Black and White Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata variegata</i>	C											1		
9	Mongoose Lemur	<i>Eulemur mongoz</i>	C													
10	Red-bellied Lemur	<i>Eulemur rubiventer</i>							1					5		
11	Common Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur fulvus fulvus</i>	C										4		3	4
12	Red-fronted Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur fulvus rufus</i>		30 +	15	35 +			7	2						
13	Collared Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur fulvus collaris</i>														
14	Greater Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur simus</i>							3		3					
15	Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur griseus griseus</i>	C							4				2	2	
16	Golden Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>							2	2						
17	Grey Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus murinus</i>	C	1												
18	Reddish-grey Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>		5	1											
19	Goodman's Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus lehilahytsara</i>											2		1	
20	Brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>							6	1						
21	Greater Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogalus major</i>	C													
22	Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogalus crossleyi</i>													1	
23	White-footed Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur leucopus</i>		3	4	1										
24	Small-tooth Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur microdon</i>							1							

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October													
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
25	Aye Aye	<i>Daubentonia madagascariensis</i>											C			

Other Mammals

1	Small Indian Civet	<i>Viverricula indica</i>			3											
2	Striped Civet (Fanaloka)	<i>Fossa fossana</i>							2							
3	Ring-tailed Mongoose	<i>Galidia elegans</i>							3							
4	Fosa	<i>Cryptoprocta ferox</i>										C				
5	Eastern Red Forest Rat	<i>Nesomys rufus</i>							1	1	1					
6	Black Rat	<i>Rattus rattus</i>			1											
7	Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>		1												
8	Madagascar Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus rufus</i>			250 +											
9	Unidentified bat								1							

Reptiles

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October													
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Stump-tailed Chameleon	<i>Brookesia superciliaris</i>									1					1
2	Short-nosed Chameleon	<i>Calumma gastrotaenia</i>														2
3	Short-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma brevicornis</i>											1		1	
4	Parson's Chameleon	<i>Calumma parsonii</i>											1		1	1
5	Nose-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma nasuta</i>											1			
6	Chameleon	<i>Furcifer balteatus</i>									1					
7	Will's Chameleon	<i>Furcifer willsi</i>							1							
8	Oustalet's Chameleon	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>		1	1		3									
9	Spiny-backed Chameleon	<i>Furcifer verrucosus</i>		4	1											
10	Jewel (Carpet) Chameleon	<i>Furcifer lateralis</i>						1								
11	Lined Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata bifasciata</i>							1	2			1	2	2	

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October													
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12	Four-Spotted Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>						1	4						2	
13	Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus sikorae</i>														
14	Spear-point Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus ebenau</i>							12	1						
15	Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus phantasticus</i>								2						
16	Collared Iguanid	<i>Oplurus cuvieri</i>	1													
17	Spiny-tailed Iguanid	<i>Oplurus cyclurus</i>					3									
18	Three-eyed Lizard	<i>Chalaradon madagascariensis</i>			15 +											
19	Lined Plated Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus laticaudata</i>												1	1	
20	Ornate Plated Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus ornatus</i>							1	1						
21	Boettger's skink	<i>Mabuya boettgeri</i>								1						
22	Elegant skink	<i>Mabuya elegans</i>			2											
23	Madagascar tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>								1				1		
24	Fandrefiala Snake	<i>Ithcythus sp.</i>							2							
25	Malagasy Hog-nosed Snake	<i>Leioheterodon madagascariensis</i>				skin										
26	Lined Snake	<i>Liopholidophis lateralis</i>		1			2		1							
27	Snake	<i>Mimophis sp.</i>			1											
28	Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus nilicolis</i>			C											
29	Spider Tortoise	<i>Pyxis arachnoids</i>	C		C											
30	Radiated Tortoise	<i>Geochelone radiata</i>	C		C											

Birds

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October														
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	Madagascar Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus pelzelinii</i>													2		
2	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>											20				
3	Common Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	1										6				
4	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	6	11	3				20 +			2	20				20 +

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October													
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
5	Green-backed Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>										2				
6	Dimorphic Egret	<i>Egretta dimorpha</i>	4		1			10				50 +	30 +			20 +
7	Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	2	4	1							2	2			6
8	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>													1	
9	Humboldt's Heron	<i>Ardea humbloti</i>				1										
10	Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>										3	1			
11	White-faced Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>						80 +					20			
12	Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>						40								10
13	Hottentot Teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>														
14	Madagascar Cuckoo Hawk	<i>Aviceda madagascariensis</i>			1											
15	Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptus</i>	10	12	40	40	40	20 +				20				
16	Henst's Goshawk	<i>Accipiter henstii</i>													1	
17	Madagascar Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter madagascariensis</i>														1
18	Frances's Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter francesiae</i>			1	1										
19	Madagascar Buzzard	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>				1		2	2	1		1	3	2	2	1
20	Madagascar Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>	4	7	6	10	8	20	1	1	10	10		1		1
21	Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>				21										
22	Madagascar Buttonquail	<i>Turnix nigricollis</i>			3	2										
23	Madagascar Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>														
24	White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>			H		H	1						1	1	1
25	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>				3										
26	Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>			3	10										
27	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	1		10											
28	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>										5				
29	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>		1	1											
30	Greater Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>		2												
31	Madagascar Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles personatus</i>		6												

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October													
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
32	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columbalivia</i>	2					2				6				
33	Malagascar Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia picturata</i>		8	6											
34	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>		8	6											
35	Madagascar Blue Pigeon	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>									1		6	2		
36	Greater Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>			2	2	2	2			H			2		2
37	Lesser Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>			4	8			2				3	6	6	2
38	Grey-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis canus</i>		H	15	1	H	2								
39	Thick-billed Cuckoo	<i>Pachycoccyx audeberti</i>									H					
40	Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>						1	H	H			H	H	H	H
41	Giant Coua	<i>Coua gigas</i>		2	6	2										
42	Red-fronted Coua	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>														1
43	Running Coua	<i>Coua cursor</i>					H									
44	Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>		6	12	1										
45	Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>							1	4			1	1	1	
46	Madagascar Coucal	<i>Centropus toulou</i>		4	6	1	2	1	2				H		H	
47	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>		1												
48	Torotoroka Owl	<i>Otus madagascariensis</i>		4	H		H	H								
49	Rainforest Scops Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>											2			
50	White-browed Owl	<i>Ninox supercilialis</i>		1	2	1										
51	Collared Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus enarratus</i>												1		
52	Madagascar Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>			H						H		2			
53	Madagascar Spinetail	<i>Zoonavena grandidieri</i>				6	2	2						2		2
54	African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>				2		12				2				
55	African Black Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>				1	1		2							
56	Madagascar Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo vintsioides</i>		1	1	1		1				1	2	2	3	1
57	Madagascar Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>	1			3	10	6				2		4		1
58	Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>					H						1	2		

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October														
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
59	Pitta-like Ground Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>									H	H			H		
60	Rufous-headed Ground Roller	<i>Atelornis crossleyi</i>									H						
61	Madagascar Cuckoo-Roller	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>		H	H	H				H	H			2	2		H
62	Madagascar Hoopoe	<i>Upupa marginata</i>		2	3			2	3								
63	Velvet Asity	<i>Philepitta castanea</i>										1				1	
64	Common Sunbird-Asity	<i>Neodrepanis coruscans</i>									1						
65	Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity	<i>Neodrepanis hypoxantha</i>									H						
66	Madagascar Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra hova</i>				1	4						6				
67	Mascarene Martin	<i>Phedina borbonica</i>	2	2						6	2		12 +	12 +	12 +	12 +	20 +
68	Brown-throated Sand Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>										4					
69	Madagascar Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>	1					1	1	3	4		4	2	4		1
70	Ashy Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina cinerea</i>									1						1
71	Madagascar Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>	4	6	12	10	14	14	14	3	10	10	10	10	14	8	
72	Madagascar Magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus albospectularis</i>		4	8	H			1	2	1	1		2	2	3	
73	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>										3	2	2		1	
74	Madagascar Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas typica</i>								1		H	1	1	3	1	1
75	Rand's Warbler	<i>Randia pseudozosterops</i>								2	H						2
76	Common Newtonia	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>		5	10	6				1				1	2	1	
77	Madagascar Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cherina</i>				2	2	2					1				
78	Ward's Flycatcher	<i>Pseudobias wardi</i>										1		2	6	1	
79	Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone mutata</i>		5	12	3	2		1		2			2	8	6	6
80	Common Jery	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>		5	10	10	1	1					1				
81	Green Jery	<i>Neomixis viridis</i>					3										
82	Stripe-throated Jery	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>		2				1	1	1		1				1	
83	Cryptic Warbler	<i>Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi</i>									1						
84	White-throated Oxylabes	<i>Oxylabes madagascariensis</i>								1							
85	Crossley's Babbler	<i>Mystacornis crossleyi</i>								1							

	Species	Scientific Name	September/October													
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
86	Long-billed Greenbul	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>									H					2
87	Spectacled Greenbul	<i>Bernieria zosterops</i>								H	1			2	1	
88	Souimanga Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia sovimanga</i>	2	2	4	5	3			1	2		6	6	10	4
89	Madagascar Green Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia notata</i>						1	1		2	1	2	4		
90	Madagascar White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>	4	2	3	12				1	6		3	4		8 6+
91	Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>				4				2	H			H	2	2
92	Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>			H	2										
93	Sickle-billed Vanga	<i>Falcula palliata</i>				2										
94	White-headed Vanga	<i>Artamella viridis</i>				1	1									1
95	Chabert's Vanga	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>							1	1			2	1	1	
96	Madagascar Blue Vanga	<i>Cyanolanius madagascariensis</i>											2	1	1	2
97	Nuthatch Vanga	<i>Hypositta corallirostris</i>												H		
98	Tylas	<i>Tylas eduardi</i>								1	H			H		
99	Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>		2	12	10	10	2	1	1			3	6	8	4
100	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	8	20	30 +	30 +	30 +	30 +				20 +	4			
101	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>		20	20	30 +	20 +	20 +				20 +	20 +			4
102	Madagascar Starling	<i>Saroglossa aurata</i>										1		1		1
103	Nelicourvi Weaver	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>									4		2		4	2
104	Sakalava Weaver	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>		6		1										
105	Madagascar Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	1	1			1	2				4	2		6	2 2
106	Forest Fody	<i>Foudia eminentissima</i>										4		1		
107	Madagascar Mannikin	<i>Lonchura nana</i>									2					5
108	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>						H								