

Madagascar's Lemurs

Naturetrek Tour Report

16th September – 1st October 2023



Zombitse Sportive Lemur



Ring-tailed Lemur



Indri by Sam & Bob Pickett



O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon

Tour report and images by Bob Elliot



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants. Bob Elliot (Leader) and Parson (Local guide), with five Naturetrek clients.

Day 1

Saturday 16th September

London Heathrow to Addis Ababa

Our overnight flight to Ethiopia was on time and we settled in to relax and were looking forward to the days to come.

Day 2

Sunday 17th September

Addis Ababa to Antananarivo

We arrived in Addis Abba and made our connection to our flight to Antananarivo (Tana) on time. As we descended over Madagascar, we enjoyed stunning views of the landscapes of the island below us. After organising our immigration formalities, and having collected our baggage, we met our local guide Parson who helped us with the task of changing money into the local currency, the Ariary. We boarded our vehicle and headed to the very comfortable Combava Hotel on the outskirts of the capital. Our final two clients, who had flown in from Nairobi, joined us an hour later.

After a welcome drink we all crossed the road from the hotel and scanned the nearby rice paddies for birds. Cattle Egret, Black Egret, Squacco Heron and a surprise Painted Snipe, a very special bird, and a difficult one to spot, were seen feeding in the evening light. Madagascar Red Fodies were calling in the trees in the hotel garden before settling down to roost for the night. We settled in for a lovely three course dinner, and a briefing on the trip ahead was held by Bob and Parson. All retired to bed early to catch up on some sleep.

Day 3

Monday 18th September

Antananarivo to Antsirabe

We started the day early after a comfortable night in the Hotel Combava and the bags were loaded as we all enjoyed a good breakfast. Our first stop was a lake at Tarasaotra (translated from the Malagasy as a 'good place') a protected RAMSAR wetland site. Thousands of Red-billed Teal, quite a sight to see and hear, along with hundreds of White-faced Whistling Duck, Blue-billed Teal, Malagasy Pond Herons, Fulvous Whistling Ducks, and the rare Meller's Duck. A Malagasy Kingfisher perched on branches low to the water afforded great views and with the morning warming up a few butterflies were on the wing including large species such as the Banded Blue and Blue Pansy on our walk around the lakeside.

We boarded our bus again traveling through the outskirts of Tana through areas of rice paddies surrounded by low hills and small villages with bustling roadside vendors. We then joined the RN7 the main road winding south through the backbone of the island's mountainous interior.

Madagascan Stonechats were seen perched on the roadside vegetation as we passed by, and a soaring Madagascan Kestrel was spotted. Continuing our journey, we had a stop at a river viewpoint to stretch our legs and watched

Brown Martins hawking for insects in front of us and a Three-banded Plover was seen at the water's edge along with a distantly soaring Yellow-billed Kite.

We stopped for lunch at Ambatolampy at the restaurant Relais des Pêcheurs. Large Orb Spiders seen in the low bushes in the grounds of the restaurant gardens. After a lunch of grilled fish and meats and a vegetable curry we called in to an aluminium factory to watch cooking pots being made. A fascinating and hands on process involving molten aluminium and great dexterity! Continuing our journey we passed many stands of Mexican weeping pines, an introduced species used for cooking fuel and for tapping resin. We arrived at Antsirabe and settled into our hotel, Café Couleur, which has very comfortable bungalows set in beautiful gardens. After another excellent dinner and a catch-up of the wildlife log, we retired to bed.

Day 4

Tuesday 19th September

Antsirabe to Ranomafana via Ambositra and Ankazomifady.

An early start before dawn and around the hotel we watched Madagascar Brush Warblers and Red Fodies foraging through the vegetation as the light brightened. After another filling breakfast including some Madagascar specialities, we headed on our way to continue to drive south. Ever changing scenes of village life unfolded as we navigated the busy road, watching the seemingly endless chaos of the lively markets lining the roadsides of many villages and towns. People selling everything from staple foods to engine parts, vegetables, meat, charcoal, and clothes.

A short stop by the side of the road yielded Hamerkop, Madagascar Stonechat and Great and Cattle Egrets in the rice paddies. Everything seemed to glow in the morning light. Continuing our journey, a shout of "Bee-eater" was heard from the back of the vehicle and a bird was seen by a lucky few. Almost simultaneously a Yellow-billed Kite landed on the road in front of us before flying up and away with a prey item. A short stop was undertaken to view the cocoons of comet moths. This is one of the largest silk moths and the adult moth lays 100 to 150 eggs and the resulting caterpillar has the unique ability to spin a very large greyish sac like silk cocoon. Hanging very obviously from a tree branch, the caterpillar constructs drainage holes so rainwater can escape.

Later in the morning we stopped at a potential bee-eater nesting colony location. Perhaps we were a little too early in the breeding season for them to be excavating burrows on this occasion. A very confiding Souimanga Sunbird feeding close to us was a glorious sight and two bulbuls and a Madagascar Wagtail were seen feeding by a small rice paddy pool. Later, we made another stop at a community managed patch of forest to look for Madagascar Snipe. We were lucky to see two of these impressive large heavy bodied snipe flying past as we watched from our vantage point. A Frances's Sparrowhawk landed at the side of the marsh, obviously hunting, and took off in front of us with a small prey item.

Heading off for the last stage of the journey for the day we turned off the main road and suddenly we started seeing the forest and were excited to see the tree ferns, bamboos, and classic trees of the mid-altitude montane rainforest. We wound our way down the escarpment towards the village of Ranomafana (meaning hot water). Setam Lodge, our accommodation for the next three nights is located close to the main entrance to Ranomafana National Park.

We were welcomed with Lemongrass tea before we settled into our rooms to prepare for dinner. A briefing was held from Parson and our local expert tracker Jean Chris about the next few days' walks in the rainforest. We made our way back to our rooms very much looking forward to the next two days in the forest.

Day 5

Wednesday 20th September

Ranomafana National Park

Mascarene Martins were flying over the hotel as we enjoyed an early breakfast. From the dining room window the rainforest view stretched away into the valley, cloaked in mist with the sound of Madagascar Cuckoos, with the males calling their 'pow-pow-pow...too' song all around us.

We decided to head for the Vohiparara section of the National Park, a quieter section of the park with far fewer visitors and a great introduction to the forest. At the park entrance, spotters Bako and Delor went ahead to look for lemurs while we ambled along the flat paths, enjoying sightings of a variety of bird species including, Common Newtonia, Rand's Warbler, Malagasy Bulbul, Souimanga Sunbird, Green Sunbird and Stripe-throated Jerry. A calling Madagascar Cuckoo was seen high in the tree canopy above us. A male Giraffe-necked Weevil was located on its host plant *Dichaetanthera cordifolia* and we were lucky to be able to photograph the egg packet, consisting of a carefully sewn up leaf with a single egg inside. The neat egg packet is constructed by the female weevil which is then allowed to fall into the leaf litter at the base of the host plant.

Locating lemurs is more challenging in Vohiparara because there are far fewer visitors, fewer trails, and a lower canopy, with correspondingly denser understory growth. However, it was with great excitement we were able to catch a glimpse of our first lemur, the Small-toothed Sportive sleeping in a tangle of vegetation in a tree. As we walked the trails we marvelled at the clear-running streams, lined with Screw-pines *Pandanus*, Madagascar has 26 species, and Tree Ferns *Cyathea*, of which the island has 49 endemic species! everyone was very much enjoying taking in the often-quirky rainforest flora and fauna.

We returned to our lodge for a very welcome lunch break before heading out to the main reserve gates at 3pm. After payment of the park fee, we made our way down into the river valley and crossing the bridge into the river gorge, the sounds of the rainforest all around us. The lemur watching then started in earnest, and we were soon observing two Red-bellied Lemurs feeding in front of us and a short time later along the steeper winding trails, we spotted two Red-fronted Brown Lemurs making their way at mid tree canopy level. As the afternoon drew on a group of four stunning Golden Bamboo Lemurs were watched feeding, and regularly scent marking in the trees around us.

We started to make our way back to the park entrance to start our night walk and on the way noted Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Red-tailed Vanga, Pollen's Vanga and the Long-billed Tetraka. A Madagascar Wood Rail was watched crossing the trail in front of us and we got good views of a Blue Coua foraging as it moved silently from tree to tree. As we crossed the river gorge once again our guide Parson pointed-out a Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko, perfectly camouflaged hanging in a branch close to the path

We boarded our vehicle again and travelled a short way up the main road to start our night walk. A dusk fell, we focused our efforts on observing nocturnal Rufous Mouse Lemurs, with the help of a smear of banana on a branch.

These tea-cup sized primates are among the smallest on earth but are one of Madagascar's most abundant lemurs, although they can be very difficult to observe, scurrying at speed along the branches of the understory and capable of spectacular leaps. The banana smears attract the lemurs so we can watch them with a low-powered light that won't damage their eyes. This activity takes place outside the National Park as night walks are now no longer permitted within it. Two of these small lemurs were watched bouncing on the low branches in front of us.

As we continued our search for wildlife along the roadside, the large O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon was spotted roosting on a vine and later a Blue-legged Chameleon and a lovely Jewel Chameleon were seen in the torchlight. A Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur was seen in the torchlight high up in tree, the lemur moving quickly away towards the nearby river. Back at the Lodge for dinner and we took time to go through we had seen during this fantastic first day in Ranomafana's forests.

Day 6

Thursday 21st September

Ranomafana National Park

A few of the group were up at dawn to listen to the dawn chorus as the forest birds awaken. Madagascan Cuckoos were again calling from the high emergent trees.

After another hearty breakfast we again made our way to the main entrance gate of the National Park, and we set off down the trails. A large Eastern Red Forest Rat was seen foraging along the edge of the trail. Some of the group chose to take an easier route through the forest this time, with the rest taking a hillier route. At a dip in the path, as we followed the edge of the river, a Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher showed well on a branch in front of us in the forest clearing, and later on the same trail, a Pitta-like Ground Roller was seen feeding and moving alongside us affording good views out in the open. This is a large thrush- sized species with a dazzling array of colours and a stunning blue head.

Suddenly we were back watching lemurs again as the spotters had called in with a sighting of Black and White Ruffed Lemurs. We were off at speed to try to see them. Sure enough, the pair were high in the canopy, at rest to start with, but later moving off to forage. As fruit and nectar eaters, these lemurs are important forest pollinators. A single Brown Lemur was seen at a distance then another three Brown Lemurs, a male, female, and a juvenile were watched a few metres above us in the vegetation.

The birding didn't disappoint with some good sightings of different species of the Vanga family, a group of endemic birds that evolved to fill a wide variety of previously vacant niches. It can be challenging birding in rainforests, but we had good views of Tylas Vanga, Red-tailed Vanga, Chabert's Vanga, Ward's Vanga, and the White-headed Vanga. We headed to the canopy viewpoint to meet the rest of the group who had also seen the lemurs. A rest in the covered viewpoint and a welcome drink of water and snacks fortified us for the rest of the morning as we watched Malagasy Palm Swifts high above us and two Lesser Vasa Parrots were seen climbing in the trees close to the viewpoint, whilst Madagascan Giant Swallowtail butterflies flew below us. Displaying Cuckoo-rollers were also seen well from the viewpoint, the males and pairs undertaking soaring display flights, constantly producing incredibly loud and persistent three-part wailing calls that echo down over the forest.

We then set-off to see the very rare Greater Bamboo Lemur. After a bit of scrambling a single female was seen sleeping in a bamboo thicket. This is the largest of the bamboo lemurs, recognised by its prominent pale grey or white ear tufts and they have a more rounded face compared to other members of the family. Their current population in the wild is restricted to in and around the Ranomafana National Park, in humid rainforests where giant bamboo trees are found. 98% of their diet is made up of bamboo, especially the inner pith of giant bamboo. We were able to chat to a researcher on duty who records the activity of this single isolated female to try to understand why the species is not doing so well in this area of the National Park but does occur in low numbers in other areas of Ranomafana.

Back at the park entrance we found a Canopy Chameleon which was watched hunting, admiring visitors to the park attempting to photograph its long tongue firing-out as the chameleon hunted insects.

We headed back to our lodge for a well-earned lunch with a rest and a siesta for some. During the afternoon, a group of four Red-fronted Brown Lemurs were seen foraging in the trees at the back of the hotel gardens.

Setting off from the hotel we drove past the village of Vohiparara where our guides found a Baron's Painted Mantella, a very colourful frog that occurs in this area and live on stream banks and in other wet areas. This species bears a remarkable similarity to the poison dart frogs of South America. We walked a short distance down the quiet road and suddenly a Harrier Hawk flew low over us and landed in a tree close to the roadside and proceeded to hunt along the trees to the side of us. We kept pace and watched as it walked through the branches using its long legs to probe into tangles of vegetation, looking for prey such as sleeping lemurs and geckos.

Boarding our vehicle, we again visited the quieter Vohiparara section of the National Park for the best chance of seeing Milne-Edwards Sifaka. At the park entrance, spotters Bako and Delor again went ahead to look for lemurs while we walked the trails along the stream edges. A birding highlight was a Madagascar Flycatcher seen in the open foraging at the edge of the trail. Suddenly our spotters reported back that Lemurs had been seen close by. Sure enough, we came across a group of four Milne-Edwards Sifaka, one female with a small baby. This species are joint holders of the 'Largest Lemur' title along with Indri and Diademed Sifaka. One of the adults had a baby and stayed at a distance from us. We watched them using their long hindlimbs for grip and stretching out their forelimbs to snatch clusters of leaves as they foraged. Then, exhausting the potential of one tree, they'd bound to the next, in acrobatic leaps of many metres, sometimes over our heads and landing vertically on the next trunk. This was a great encounter, made all even more special by the fact we were alone in the forest with the lemurs. The sight of the animal's orange-red eyes peering down at you is thrilling

As dusk fell, we walked along the road to view some nocturnal wildlife. Again, great views of the Rufous Mouse Lemur and the roosting chameleons didn't disappoint; they included Blue-legged, Glaw's Flap-necked, Canopy, Nose-horned, and a large and an impressive male O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon.

We returned to our lodge for a final dinner at Ranomafana and had many conversations about the great lemurs and birds we have seen during the two days in the National Park.

Day 7

Friday 22nd September

Ranomafana to Isalo

After breakfast we were on the road by 7.00am with the early morning sun lighting up the forest where the threads of mist lingered. As we continued out of the forest reserve we could see evidence of Tavy, the slash and burn practice that is fragmenting Madagascar's forests. Tavy tends to be most evident along the roadside as this is where local people want to farm and to be able to sell any surplus produce for cash to passing traffic.

At Madagascar's second highland city Fianarantsoa, the drivers took on fuel, while we used the facilities. Back on the move, we passed the taxi brousse (bush taxi) station, where throngs of overladen minibuses were preparing to depart, their roof racks piled high with anything from bicycles and sofas to hens and ducks. Leaving the city, many of the rice paddies had been turned to brickworks, and huge smoking brick ovens lined the road. We passed herds of Zebu cattle on the long march north to the capital to be sold – in some parts of Madagascar a family's wealth is measured by the size of their herd and Zebu take the place of money. A couple of roadside stops to scan the rice paddies yielded Squacco Heron, Black and Cattle Egrets and soaring Yellow-billed Kites.

Arriving at the town of Ambalavao, we were shown around the Antaimoro paper workshop, where beautiful flower-impregnated paper is made by hand from the pulp of the Avoha shrub *Trilepisium madagascariensis*, following a technique developed by Arab settlers on the coast. Another short hop was to a silk processing workshop and to watch a demonstration of the boiling, unrolling, and the dyeing of the resulting fabric.

After purchasing paper and silk items we boarded our vehicle and arrived later at the Anja reserve managed by the local community. Our guides took us to the forest edge where we were enthralled by a group of Ring-tailed Lemurs. A female had a newborn baby which was being passed around the inquisitive group before the mother, eventually tiring of this confusion and bedlam, took back the youngster with much scolding of the other members of the group.

The forest supports a healthy population of Ring-tailed Lemurs and at this time of year they are easy to find as they feed on the flowers of Indian Lilac *Melia azedarach*, whose heady scent was in the air. The reserve was set up by local villagers and the entry fee benefits the community. Continuing our walk, we watched a Malagasy Kestrel and some rather fine Oustalet's Chameleons.

Returning to the vehicle for our picnic lunch we encountered a Ring-tailed Lemur group once again, up to 15 individuals this time. The younger members of the group bouncing and wrestling each other as they played on the ground all around us.

Our picnic lunch was spread on tables under a shady canopy, but all too soon it was time to move on with still several hours drive still ahead of us. The landscape started to change again as we made our way further south, with smooth steep rocky outcrops and coarse dry grasses dominating. Zebu cattle find the mature grass to be unpalatable, so areas had been burned off to encourage new shoots – this introduced grass has largely replaced the original savanna. Along the roadside Madagascan Larks, Yellow-billed Kites and Pied Crows were plentiful.

We stopped at the foot of some impressive hills to look at some large Termite mounds. Termites have a symbiotic relationship with ants and the mounds were dotted through the sparse grassland. We continued our drive through the high plateau grasslands, a vast area stretching as far as the eye could see, and as the light started to fade, we could see lines of fire on the far distant horizon, the Zebu herders clearing the old grass from areas of the plateau. This area can be good to see Marsh Owls and we weren't to be disappointed with two individual birds seen hunting close to our vehicle in the fading light. A special sight.

A species of Cat-eyed Snake, probably Southern Cat-eyed Snake, on the side of the road in the darkness was a superb find by Parson. We arrived to our very well-appointed hotel Relais de la Reine for a late dinner and then off straight to bed.

Day 8

Saturday 23rd September

Isalo Park including the Namaza forest

After a slightly later start and lovely breakfast of fruit, eggs and pastries and after watching and photographing the Radiated Tortoises on the lawn feeding on fruit from the kitchen, we boarded our two four-wheel drive Land Rovers and headed to Isalo National Park. Two Yellow-billed Kites were seen flying around the imposing escarpments as we left.

We arrived at the town of Ranohira, which means 'watering place for Ring-tailed Lemurs', a name that sounded promising! We picked up our National Park guide Mamy and continued to the foot of Isalo's sandstone cliffs. Along the way Mamy explained how Isalo formed when a deep valley filled with sediments which were subsequently pushed up by tectonic forces, and over time eroded into the spectacular formations we were about to witness.

We set off on foot at a slow pace into the Namaza Canyon, stopping to watch a small group of Ring-tailed Lemurs in the canyon shade in the picnic area and a very confiding Rainforest Scops Owl roosting in a tangle of branches. Later, two White-browed Owls were admired as they looked down at us from the branches of a tree. The river that runs through the canyon can be a good location to see the White-throated Rail and sure enough, we were able to watch two individuals duetting together and calling territorially at the sides of the river. Two Madagascar Buttonquail were watched feeding in the forest edge, and to our surprise the quail were joined by a Madagascar Hoopoe.

Some of our group walked up into the canyon and the rest stayed around the picnic area in the forest. In the canyon we were treated to close views of the rare Benson's Rock Thrush on the exposed rocks of the river valley. After a swim we made our way back to the campsite area to rendezvous with the rest of our group who had been watching the Ring-tailed Lemurs again.

Soon our spotters called back with the news that a group of Verreaux's Sifaka had been spotted near the river's edge. Sure enough, we were able to get incredibly close views of this beautiful lemur. Four animals were feeding low down in front of us, including one female with a small baby that was starting to gain in confidence and to make exploratory forays onto the branches close to its mother. We were able to watch the lemurs for some time before, with spectacular leaps, the group moved away from us.

Returning to the hotel for a late lunch, we then had time for a rest and a swim before setting out in the late afternoon to explore the hotel grounds and the network of canyons and sandstone bluffs behind the hotel. We admired the bulbous water-storing trunks and delicate yellow flowers of Elephant's Foot *Pachypodium rosulatum* ssp *gracilis*, endemic Aloe *Aloe imalotensis*, Rosy Periwinkle *Catbaranthus roseus* and Salotse *Ichnolepsis graminifolia*, the plant that gives Isalo its name. We found many thousands of orange and black Plataspid Shield Bugs *Libyaspis coccinellaoides*. After watching a beautiful sunset from a viewpoint, we returned to the hotel for dinner. With an early rise scheduled for the morning, everyone turned in straight after dinner.

Day 9

Sunday 24th September

Isalo to Zombitse National Park & Ifaty

An early 5am start with a picnic breakfast in our rooms. As we departed for our vehicle a Scops Owl was calling from the tree outside our rooms. With dawn breaking and another beautiful sunrise, we headed west over savanna grassland. We passed the sapphire mining town of Ilakaka, which exploded from a hamlet to a city in the early years of a recent sapphire boom.

Enroute to Zombitse, we stopped by some rice paddies and a river with surrounding marshland. In a reed bed to one side of the marsh a Little Bittern was seen perched out on a reed in the open, very unusual behaviour.

Zombitse National Park is a pocket of dry deciduous forest, sharing some characteristics of spiny forest and known as a transitional forest. Not many visitors stop here as the lack of accommodation means that most people arrive during the heat of the day, but with our early start we were there by 7.00am, an ideal time. Accompanied by park guide Toussain and assistant Klo, we set off to look for birds along the network of easy, flat trails, while spotter Martin went ahead to look for lemurs.

At this time of year, the forest is not in full leaf, so birds are easier to spot, and we had good views of Crested Coua, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Greater Vasa Parrot, Grey-headed Lovebird, Red-tailed Vanga and Red-shouldered Vanga. The local endemic Appert's Tetraka showed well as it hopped from branch to branch in the understory, and we got excellent views of a Madagascan Harrier Hawk. Crested Drongos and Malagasy Flycatchers showed well along the trails and a Giant Coua crossed the path in front of us and a large Blue Pansy butterfly drifted by.

We visited a small area in the forest that has been set aside as teaching area. In one of the trees, hiding in a crack in the trunk our guides spotted a Zombitse Sportive Lemur; we could just see the side of its head and its ears. On our way back along the trail we spotted another of the same species, this animal giving us good views of this diminutive nocturnal lemur. Sportive Lemurs are regularly seen in habitual sleeping sites during the day.

With the weather really warming up we made our way back to the vehicle along the trails and on our way back we were able to see a roosting Rainforest Scops Owl and a White-browed Owl.

After a picnic lunch we were off again, driving past small villages with mud huts and increasingly dry conditions before stopping to walk through a local reserve. The thorny trails were so different to the lush rainforest walks we had undertaken earlier on our trip. We had very good views of the rare Verreaux's Coua.

As dusk was falling, we checked-into the Paradisier Hotel located right on the coast at Ifaty. What a location! Dinner was enjoyed with a local band and dancing group putting on a fine show. A very confiding Grey Mouse Lemur was seen in a tree right by the dining room. A great end to a wonderful day.

Day 10

Monday 25th September

Ifaty & Reniala Community Reserve to Tulear Arboretum Private Reserve & Tana

It was another very early start before breakfast to maximise the opportunities of the cool morning before the temperatures start to rise on the arid south-west of Madagascar. We set off at first light for pre-breakfast birding at the Reniala private reserve, a 10-minute drive north of our hotel and adjacent to the village of Ifaty. Visitors can explore a small pocket of protected spiny forest, where the guides are expert at finding Long-tailed Ground Roller and Sub-desert Mesite - two local rarities confined to this corner of the island. Abundant leaf litter forms an ideal foraging ground for these ground-dwelling birds.

Reniala has some truly spectacular Baobabs, some of them over a thousand years old, these odd shaped trees glowing pink in the early morning sunrise. Some great birding with Crested and Green-capped Couas seen on the ground running and flying between the spiny bushes and trees. A Running Coua was a special sight. Later we watched Harrier Hawks attending to their well-built nest. Special mention should be recorded of our sighting of a male Sub-desert Mesite at its roost on a branch and a Long-tailed Ground Roller, ambling among the leaf-litter, showing its splendid blue feathers and incredibly long tail.

One of the species we were keen to see was the Sickle-billed Vanga. This spectacular bird is equipped with a long down-curved bill, used to extract prey from crevices. One of its vocalisations resembles the wailing of a baby and as we followed the path around the perimeter of the reserve, we were listening attentively for the call and patience paid off as we spotted at least three Sickle-billed Vangas on our way round the footpaths. An incredibly well camouflaged Madagascar Nightjar was seen on the sandy pebbly floor.

We returned to our hotel for a very welcome breakfast overlooking the sea and then departed our hotel to head off towards the airport for our internal flight back up to Antananarivo.

We stopped at a restaurant for lunch and then had some time before our flight, so we visited the fascinating Antsokay Arboretum, established in 1980 at the initiative of the Swiss amateur botanist Petignat Hermann (1923-2000). It covers an area of 52 hectares, with more than 920 plant species. Radiated Tortoise was seen once again along with a Gravenhorst's Skink and an Elegant Skink.

We said farewell to our driver and assistant and boarded local taxis for our transfer to the nearby Toliara airport. During the flight we looked down on Madagascar's parched southern interior and the many soil-laden rivers draining to the Mozambique Channel. We landed at Tana at 10pm to much cooler weather which found us donning our fleeces once again. We boarded a new vehicle for our short transfer to the Hotel Le Combava for dinner and then bed.

Day 11

Tuesday 26th September

Tana to Andasibe

After a restful night we set off after breakfast on our journey to Andasibe navigating Tana's outskirts and joining the road that winds its way through the hills. Squacco Heron, Great Egret, Western Cattle Egret and Black Egret were all seen feeding in the terraced rice paddies as we passed by. The digging and weeding of the rice paddies and the planting of rice was well underway. Bright green rice stems being transferred from the nursery pools and spaced-out into the large paddies ready for the rainy season in a few months' time.

Despite some delays due to roadworks, we arrived at a restaurant called Hotel Feon' ny Ala, which when translated means "song of the forest Hotel." Our table had a fantastic view across a lake and to the rainforest edge. We finished our relaxing lunch and made our way to Hotel Mantadia where we were to spend the next three nights.

We didn't waste any time and soon gathered to set off into the rainforest trails. Enroute, we stopped in the nearby village square and were shown a palm tree that often contains nesting Barn Owls. Sure enough, a bird was seen perched on the edge of the palm, an interesting nest site for this species. We left our vehicle for the afternoon walk in the forest and soon we were watching lemurs again with a small group of Common Brown Lemurs moving through the trees alongside us. Also, the eerie calls of the Indri, the largest lemur, were heard ahead of us and sure enough a group was seen high up in the tree canopy. A female with a very small baby who was exploring the nearby branches close to its mother. A great first encounter with this species. A very large Parson's Chameleon was spotted by our guide, this was a male with a prominent nose horn.

We returned to our hotel and enjoyed our dinner and chatted about the day, and our trip, so far.

Day 12

Wednesday 27th September

Andasibe-Mantadia National Park (Analamazaotra Indri Reserve in the Morning Andasibe Community Reserve in the Afternoon)

We awoke to light rain and a misty start and the evocative distant calls of the Indri across the forest, and after another fine buffet breakfast we started our walk in the Mantadia National Park area of the forest with our guide Maurice choosing the best trails and introducing us to this part of the National Park. Almost immediately on starting into the forest we encountered a group of Grey Bamboo Lemurs feeding on the emergent bamboo lining the path. The animals were incredibly close, gathering the leaves and folding them before consuming the bundle. The Lemurs were very relaxed and slowly moving through the bamboo.

A nearby lakeside viewpoint further along the trail yielded a Malagasy Kingfisher sitting on the overhanging branches and in the nearby vegetation Red-tailed Vanga, Chabert's Vanga, Crested Drongo and a Malagasy Flycatcher were seen well, along with Spectacled Tetraka, Rand's Warbler, Common Jerry, Stripe-throated Jerry and a rather fine White-throated Oxylabes.

We got the message through that a small group of Diademed Sifaka had been spotted and shortly we were watching these colourful lemurs moving through the lower branches of the trees. The sifakas were brought to Andasibe when the construction of a nickel pipeline robbed them of a large part of their territory. The introduction was successful as Diademed Sifakas do not compete for food with Indri. The sifakas were in a 'playful' mood and we watched them not only feeding and socialising, but also taking huge bounding leaps from tree to tree. We heard their contact call, a bit like a cow mooing and were able to see a small baby.

Walking back to our vehicle we called in to the Ampiana project. A site where studies are being carried-out to improve and develop fish farming in the Madagascan Highlands, Ampiana is also a conservation unit for the enhancement of Madagascar endemic fish species. This location is a good one to see the Madagascar Tree Boa and we spotted a large specimen in the grassy edge of a lagoon, the snake having blue eyes demonstrating that it was soon to shed its skin.

We returned to our hotel for a fine lunch of Madagascan specialities and to plan our afternoons excursion, and the later night walk. Two Malagasy Hog-nosed Snakes were spotted mating at the edge of the hotel garden near the swimming pool.

We re-joined our vehicle later in the afternoon for a walk along the forest trails and again a group of Grey Bamboo Lemurs were seen, but this time the Lemur's were out foraging very differently and were feeding on grasses in the open in a glade close to the edge of the river and as a result they were nervous and on very high alert being in this vulnerable exposed position on the ground. When their nerves got the better of them, they would bounce off into the surrounding vegetation. Another Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko was spotted by Maurice on a tree trunk, incredible camouflage with frills along the body breaking up the outline of this large nocturnal Gecko.

We returned to the hotel before a night walk where we had great views of the tiny Goodman's Mouse Lemur.

Day 13

Thursday 28th September

Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

Overnight rain started to clear as we boarded our jeeps for our morning's trip. The track is very rutted and eroded meaning our normal vehicle would be unsuitable.

We stopped along the roadside and walked into the forest to locate more lemurs with our guide Maurice. The lemur watching started with good views of Red-bellied Lemur feeding in the canopy, closely followed by Black and White Ruffed Lemurs. The pair were high in the canopy, at rest to start with, but later moving off to forage. Fruit and nectar eaters, these lemurs are important forest pollinators. Two Brown Lemurs were seen at a distance, moving away from us.

Birding was as good as ever, if a little challenging at times. Primary rainforest can be a little more testing to see species, with the complexity of growth and a thick understory. Nevertheless, we had good views of Madagascar Buzzard, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Madagascar Blue Vanga, Wedge-tailed Jery, Spectacled Tetraka and Madagascar Manakin.

Back along the track we stopped at a small marsh area to look for the shy and endemic Madagascar Rail and were very fortunate to see two birds in a small creek area at the edge of the marsh. A Madagascar Swamp Warbler also showed well.

The afternoon was dry by now and we set off to a community-owned area of forest to visit a small, secluded lake. On the lake itself was Common Moorhen and a Madagascar Grebe with a Straited Heron in amongst the blue water lilies. The star of the show however was seeing the extremely secretive Madagascar Flufftail in a small clearing at the edge of the forest. The beautiful chestnut male bird was running in and out of view and occasional uttering its very loud trilled and double-note call. A real wow. A Cuckoo-roller was seen perched in the open, on a branch on the edge of the forest bordering the lake.

We ate our packed lunch in the eaves of a National Park building near the lake and carried-on with our walk, heading to an area where a Madagascar Owl has been seen roosting in before. This is in an incongruous looking area of pine trees, very different to the rainforest we were getting so used to. This plantation was a failed attempt at a community timber business some years ago. Unfortunately, we didn't see the bird on this occasion, despite much searching with our binoculars. A Red Forest Rat was seen briefly as we made our way back into the rainforest proper.

After a break at the Hotel and with dusk falling and nightjars flying around the carpark, we made our way to the community run Mitsinjo forest and walked the trails looking for nocturnal wildlife. By the stream frogs were calling and we had good views of Fiery Bright-eyed Frog and Spinomantis Frog sitting on mossy branches. A stunning close view of a Goodman's Mouse Lemur had everyone enthralled - what a superb end to the day. We headed back to the Lodge for our final dinner at Andasibe.

Day 14

Friday 29th September

Andasibe to Tana

Once we had breakfast and settled our bill we were out for a final walk with Maurice. Some of the group went to see the Grey Bamboo Lemurs again, and others for a walk round the forest at Mitsinjo. Nuthatch Vanga was seen close to the carpark. Suddenly we heard Indri calling again and this time they were very close indeed. Sure enough three Indri were seen extremely close to us with one animal at head height just metres away. What an animal! It is quite striking that this species has a very short tail compared to the other large Lemurs. The thump of the powerful legs, and to see the large grasping hands and feet as they moved with ease from trunk to trunk was just incredible.

Later, we returned to our roosting Madagascan Owl location and were rewarded with good views of a bird resting high in the conifer canopy.

It was time for lunch and to start our journey back to Tana. Lunch was back at the restaurant Hotel Feon' ny Ala "song of the forest Hotel" with its fantastic views across a lake and to the rainforest edge. We said a fond farewell to one of our group members who was joining another tour.

We bought some local honey and set off for Tana. The road was again slow and dusty, but it was good to see some serious upgrading work to the road taking place. An Elenora's Falcon was a surprise bird seen from the moving

vehicle. Yellow-billed Kite and Kestrel were also spotted We arrived back at Hotel Combava to check-in and enjoy our dinner and a final exchange of stories about the wonderful trip we had had together.

Day 15

Saturday 30th September

Tana and in flight to Addis Ababa

Arriving at the airport it was time to say goodbye to our drivers and our guide and friend Parson, who'd worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth-running of the tour, and generously shared so much of his knowledge of Madagascar and its flora and fauna with us. We also said farewell to two of our group who were flying separately to Nairobi.

Our flight left on time to Addis Ababa where we had a five hour stop over before boarding the overnight flight to London Heathrow.

Day 16

Sunday 1st October

Addis Ababa to London Heathrow

We arrived early morning at London Heathrow and now it was time to say goodbye to one another after a very memorable holiday.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers and exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays



www.twitter.com/naturetrektours



www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays

Species lists

Mammals

E=Endemic		September - October 2023													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Grey Mouse Lemur - E	<i>Microcebus murinus</i>								✓						
Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur - E	<i>Cheirogaleus medius</i>				✓										
Goodman's Mouse Lemur - E	<i>Microcebus lehilahytsara</i>											✓	✓		
Rufous Mouse Lemur - E	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>				✓	✓									
Zombitse Sportive Lemur - E	<i>Lepilemur hubbardorum</i>								✓						
Small-toothed Sportive Lemur - E	<i>Lepilemur microdon</i>				✓										
Brown Lemur - E	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>										✓	✓		✓	
Red-bellied Lemur - E	<i>Eulemur rubriventer</i>				✓							✓			
Red-fronted Brown Lemur - E	<i>Eulemur rufifrons</i>				✓										
Grey Bamboo Lemur - E	<i>Hapalemur griseus</i>											✓			
Golden Bamboo Lemur - E	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>				✓										
Ring-tailed Lemur - E	<i>Lemur catta</i>						✓			✓					
Greater Bamboo Lemur - E	<i>Prolemur simus</i>					✓									
Indri - E	<i>Indri indri</i>										✓			✓	
Diademed Sifaka - E	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>											✓			
Milne-Edwards's Sifaka - E	<i>Propithecus edwardsi</i>					✓									
Verreaux's Sifaka - E	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>							✓							
Red Forest Rat - E	<i>Nesomys rufus</i>					✓									
Black and White Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata</i>					✓							✓		

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		September – October 2023													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>		✓												
Blue-billed Teal	<i>Spatula hottentota</i>		✓												
Meller's Duck - E	<i>Anas melleri</i>		✓												
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>		✓				✓								
Madagascar Nightjar - N	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>									✓					
Malagasy Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus gracilis</i>					✓									
Malagasy Coucal - N	<i>Centropus toulou</i>							✓							
Crested Coua - E	<i>Coua cristata</i>								✓	✓					
Verreaux's Coua - E	<i>Verreaux's Coua</i>								✓						
Blue Coua - E	<i>Coua caerulea</i>				✓	✓									
Red-fronted Coua - E	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>					✓									
Green Capped Coua	<i>Coua ruficeps</i>									✓					
Running Coua - E	<i>Coua cursor</i>									✓					
Giant Coua - E	<i>Coua gigas</i>								✓						
Madagascar Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>				✓										
Subdesert Mesite - E	<i>Monias benschi</i>									✓					
Madagascar Sandgrouse - E	<i>Pterocles personatus</i>										✓				
Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>			✓			✓			✓					
Malagasy Turtle Dove	<i>Nesoenas picturatus</i>							✓	✓	✓					
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>								✓						
Madagascar Blue Pigeon - E	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>				✓	✓			✓						
Madagascar Forest Rail - E	<i>Mentocrex kioloides</i>				✓										
Madagascar Flufftail - E	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>												✓		
Madagascar Rail - E	<i>Rallus madagascariensis</i>												✓		
White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>														
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓										✓		

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		September – October 2023													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Madagascar Grebe - E	<i>Tachybaptus pelzelinii</i>												✓		
Madagascar Buttonquail - E	<i>Turnix nigricollis</i>							✓							
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>			✓											
Greater Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	✓													
Madagascar Snipe - E	<i>Gallinago macrodactyla</i>			✓											
Madagascar Ibis - E	<i>Lophotibis cristata</i>													✓	
Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>								✓						
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓												
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>												✓		
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓		✓		
Malagasy Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola idae</i>		✓												
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓				✓	
Humboldt'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>			✓										✓	
Madagascar Harrier-Hawk - E	<i>Polyboroides radiatus</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 superciliaris</i>							✓	✓						
Rainforest Scops Owl - E	<i>Otus rutilus</i>							✓	✓			✓			
Madagascar Owl - E	<i>Asio madagascariensis</i>													✓	
Marsh Owl	<i>Asio capensis</i>						✓								
Cuckoo-roller - N	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>					✓							✓		
Madagascar Hoopoe - E	<i>Upupa marginata</i>							✓							

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		September – October 2023													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Pitta-like Ground Roller - E	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>				✓	✓									
Long-tailed Ground Roller - E	<i>Uratelornis chimaera</i>									✓					
Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher - E	<i>Corythornis madagascariensis</i>					✓									
Malagasy Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis vintsioides</i>		✓		✓							✓			
Olive Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>			✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Malagasy Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>			✓			✓	✓		✓					
Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>													✓	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>								✓						
Greater Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>								✓						
Lesser Vasa Parrot - E	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>					✓							✓		
Grey-headed Lovebird - E	<i>Agapornis canus</i>								✓						
Red-tailed Vanga - E	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>				✓				✓		✓	✓			
Red-shouldered Vanga - E	<i>Calicalicus rufocarpalis</i>								✓						
Hook-billed Vanga - E	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>										✓				
Pollen's Vanga - E	<i>Xenopirostris polleni</i>				✓										
Sickle-billed Vanga - E	<i>Falcula palliata</i>									✓					
White-headed Vanga - E	<i>Artamella viridis</i>					✓									
Chabert Vanga - E	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>					✓				✓		✓			
Madagascar Blue Vanga - E	<i>Cyanolanius madagascarinus</i>					✓							✓		
Tylas Vanga - E	<i>Tylas eduardi</i>					✓									
Nuthatch Vanga - E	<i>Hypositta corallirostris</i>													✓	
Dark Newtonia - E	<i>Newtonia amphichroa</i>					✓									
Common Newtonia - E	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>				✓	✓			✓						
Archbold's Newtonia - E	<i>Newtonia archboldi</i>									✓					
Red-tailed Newtonia - E	<i>Newtonia fanovanae</i>					✓									
Ward's Flycatcher - E	<i>Pseudobias wardi</i>					✓									
Madagascar Cuckooshrike - E	<i>Ceblepyris cinereus</i>												✓	✓	
Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		September – October 2023													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
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>			✓	✓	✓									
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>			✓											
Malagasy Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas typica</i>			✓											
Subdesert Brush Warbler - E	<i>Nesillas lantzii</i>			✓						✓					
Madagascar Swamp Warbler - E	<i>Acrocephalus newtoni</i>			✓									✓		
Brown Emutail - E	<i>Bradypterus brunneus</i>					✓									
White-throated Oxylabes - E	<i>Oxylabes madagascariensis</i>											✓			
Long-billed Bernieria - E	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>				✓						✓				
Wedge-tailed Jery - E	<i>Hartertula flavoviridis</i>					✓							✓		
Thamnornis - E	<i>Thamnornis chloropetoides</i>									✓					
Spectacled Tetraka - E	<i>Xanthomixis zosterops</i>					✓						✓	✓		
Appert's Tetraka - E	<i>Xanthomixis apperti</i>								✓						
Rand's Warbler - E	<i>Randia pseudozosterops</i>				✓	✓						✓	✓		
Common Jery - E	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>				✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	
Green Jery - E	<i>Neomixis viridis</i>										✓				
Stripe-throated Jery - E	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>				✓					✓		✓			
Madagascar Cisticola - N	<i>Cisticola cherina</i>						✓	✓	✓					✓	
Malagasy White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>		✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		
Common Myna - I	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	
Madagascar Starling - E	<i>Hartlaubius auratus</i>				✓	✓			✓		✓				
Madagascar Magpie-Robin - E	<i>Copsychus albospectularis</i>			✓						✓					
Benson's Rock Thrush - E	<i>Monticola bensoni</i>							✓							
Madagascar Stonechat - E	<i>Saxicola sibilla</i>			✓											
Souimanga Sunbird - N	<i>Cinnyris sovimanga</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓				

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		September – October 2023												
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Malagasy Green Sunbird - N	<i>Cinnyris notatus</i>				✓			✓						
Nelicourvi Weaver - E	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>					✓								
Sakalava Weaver - E	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>								✓	✓	✓			
Red Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Madagascar Mannikin - E	<i>Lepidopygia nana</i>			✓									✓	
Madagascar Wagtail - E	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>											✓		

Reptiles & Amphibians

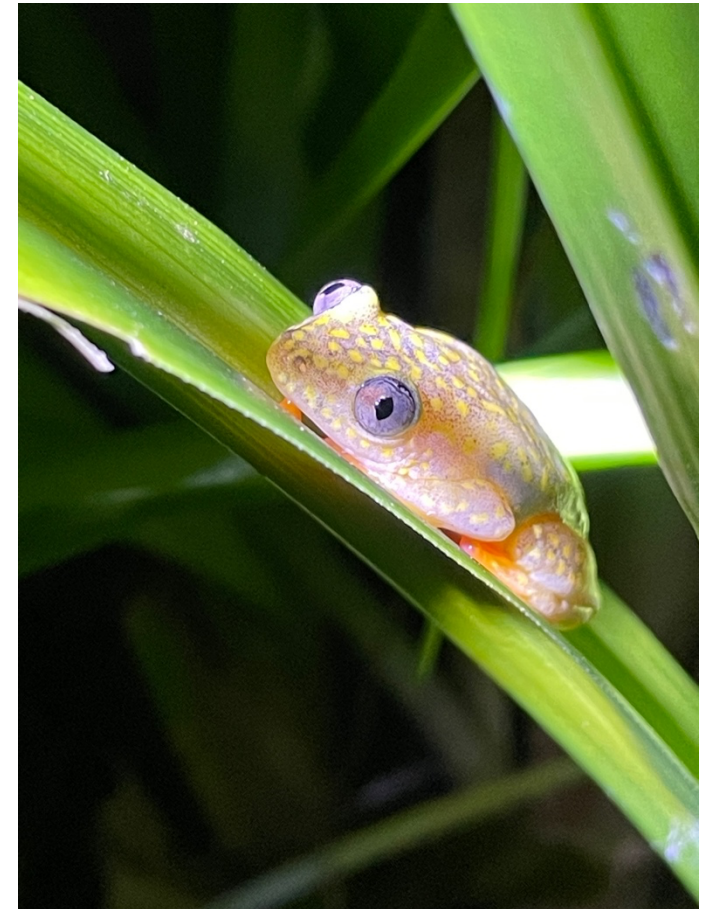
		September – October 2023												
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Tree frog	<i>Boophis schuboeae</i>				✓									
Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog	<i>Boophis madagascariensis</i>					✓								
Fiery Bright-eyed Frog	<i>Boophis pyrrhus</i>												✓	
Baron's Mantella	<i>Mantella baroni</i>					✓								
Starry-night Reed Frog	<i>Heterixalus Alboguttatus</i>			✓	✓									
Betsileo Reed Frog	<i>Heterixalus betsileo</i>						✓							
Spinomantis Frog	<i>Spinomantis agelvei</i>												✓	
Brown Leaf Chameleon	<i>Brookesia superciliaris</i>											✓		
Blue-legged Chameleon	<i>Calumma crypticum</i>				✓	✓								
Glaw's Flap-necked Chameleon	<i>Calumma glawi</i>				✓	✓								
Canopy Chameleon	<i>Furcifer willsii</i>					✓								
Nose-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma nasuta</i>					✓								
O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon	<i>Calumma oshaughnessyi</i>				✓	✓								
Parson's Chameleon	<i>Calumma parsonii</i>										✓			
Long-nosed Chameleon	<i>Calumma gallus</i>				✓									
Jewel' Chameleon	<i>Furcifer lateralis</i>				✓									
Oustalet's Chameleon	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>						✓		✓					
Warty Chameleon	<i>Furcifer verrucosus</i>									✓				

Common name	Scientific name	September – October 2023													
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus phantasticus</i>				✓								✓		
Lined Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata bifasciata</i>				✓								✓		
Lined Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata lineata</i>														
Peacock Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>				✓										
Standing's Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma standingi</i>								✓						
Thick-tail Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma mutabilis</i>								✓						
Gravenhorst's Skink	<i>Trachylepis gravenhorstii</i>				✓					✓					
Elegant Skink	<i>Trachylepis elegans</i>				✓					✓					
Ornate Girdled Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus ornatus</i>				✓										
Madagascar Girdled Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus madagascariensis</i>				✓										
Southern Cat-eyed Snake	<i>Madagascarophis meridionalis</i>						✓								
Madagascar Tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>											✓		✓	
Malagasy Hog-nosed Snake	<i>Leioheterodon madagascariensis</i>											✓			
Radiated Tortoise	<i>Geochelone radiata</i>									✓					

Others

Common name	Scientific name	September – October 2023													
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Butterflies															
Madagascar Giant Swallowtail	<i>Pharmacophagus antenor</i>					✓									
Banded Blue	<i>Papilio oribazus</i>			✓		✓								✓	
Citrus Swallowtail	<i>Papilio demodocus</i>											✓	✓		
Blue Pansy	<i>Junonia oenone</i>			✓			✓		✓						
Other Invertebrates															
Desert Locust	<i>Schistocerca gregaria</i>														
Praying Mantis	<i>Polyspilota aeruginosa</i>														
Hissing Cockroach	<i>Gromphadorhina portentosa</i>					✓				✓					
Flatid Leaf-bug	<i>Phromnia rosea</i>					✓	✓	✓							
Snout Bug	<i>Zanna tenebrosa</i>							✓							

Common name	Scientific name	September – October 2023													
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Giraffe-necked Weevil	<i>Trachelophorus giraffa</i>				✓	✓								✓	
Madagascar Fire Millipede	<i>Aphistogoniulus sp.</i>					✓									
Stick Insect	<i>Achrioptera fallax</i>				✓										
Madagascar Orb-web Spider	<i>Nephila madagascariensis</i>														



Radiated Tortoise by Bob Elliot & Starry-night Reed Frog by Sam & Bob Pickett