

# Northern Madagascar - In Search of the Aye-aye

Naturetrek Tour Report

3-19 November 2007

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Report compiled by Roy Taylor



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## Day 1

**Saturday 3rd November**

Today, all the tour participants made their way to Charles de Gaulle airport, Paris, on different flights and at different times. On arrival, a quick train ride from the airport took us to the Ibis Hotel, our accommodation for the night. Most of us managed to meet up for a meal in the evening and discussed, with anticipation, our adventures to come.

## Day 2

**Sunday 4th November**

After an early breakfast, we caught the train and then a bus (as the train broke down!) back to Charles de Gaulle airport. Though busy, check-in was a relatively smooth process and our 10.20 am flight left on time.

Nearly 11 hours later we touched down in Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo, just before 11 pm. Passing through customs was quick and efficient and after meeting our local guide Olivia and changing money (we were now ariary millionaires!), we made the short bus ride to the Tana Plaza Hotel and were all in bed by about 1 am.

## Day 3

**Monday 5th November**

Just 4 hours later we had a quick breakfast before catching the bus back to Tana airport, passing rice paddies with Squacco Herons, Cattle Egrets and Common Mynah's en route.

After a chaotic check – in, we were delighted when our 7.40 am flight to Maroantsetra left on time. 10 minutes into the flight however it was announced that there was a technical fault and we were returning to Tana! After 30 minutes in the transit lounge the fault had been fixed and we were back on board for a journey of little over an hour to the small, east coast town of Maroantsetra.

On landing, we immediately piled into 3 taxis and were whisked off to the quayside. Here we boarded 2 motor boats for a 2 hour journey across the bay of Antongil. Several shoals of large, tuna-like fish were driving smaller fish to the surface and these attracted mixed flocks of Lesser Crested, Common and Roseate Terns.

Landing on an idyllic beach, where the rainforest came right down to the sea, we discovered our home for the next 4 nights, Tampolo Lodge. The lodge comprised of a series of individual beach huts, shared showering

facilities and a restaurant overlooking a small, freshwater river. Combine this with excellent cooking and the place wasn't far from paradise!

Our appetites satisfied by one of the aforementioned meals, we set off late afternoon for our first exploration of the rainforests of the Masoala National Park. Tree Crabs, small frogs living in mini-ecosystems within tree stumps, and a *Brookei* type Chameleon were our first introductions to the wealth of wildlife hidden in these forests.

As darkness fell our spotlights revealed the prize denizens of these forests – Lemurs! Looking for eye shine within the torches beam is the way to find the nocturnal species and within a relatively short time we had found 4 of them – Rufous Mouse, Seal's Sportive, Greater Dwarf and several Eastern Woolly Lemurs, including a mother with young and one animal bounding, kangaroo style, through the branches. An excellent start to our Masoala adventure!

## Day 4

Tuesday 6th November

After an early breakfast, we departed for an area of primary forest, reached via a walk along the beach which involved wading across one, small river channel and using a small boat, complete with a rope – pulley, to cross another.

The secondary growth along the landward side of the beach held our first Panther Chameleon and birds such as Souimanga Sunbird, Nelicourvi Weaver and some showy Blue Coua's.

Leaving the beach, we started to climb a trail into the primary forest, characterised by mature trees and an abundance of tree ferns. A Red-breasted Coua was seen walking stealthily along the forest floor and some of the group glimpsed a Mongoose (the identification of which remains a puzzle).

Madagascan rainforests are generally quite silent places but the peacefulness was shattered when we heard loud grunts and shrieks coming from the canopy – Red-ruffed Lemurs! For the next 30 minute's we were able to watch 3 of these large and incredibly handsome Lemurs in the canopy and by pushing our way through the undergrowth were able to keep them in view as they moved through the tree tops. Found only on the Masoala peninsula, this Lemur was one of the targets of the trip and we were delighted to see them on our first attempt!

Our luck was certainly in as shortly after leaving the Lemurs our guide pointed to a nest in the fork of a tree, close to the path. Sticking out of the nest was the large and incredibly blue, toucan like bill of a Helmet Vanga! We settled down to watch and photograph this bird and congratulated ourselves on seeing another Masoala "speciality".

The walk back to camp was interspersed with some heavy rain showers, helping us appreciate why this is indeed called a rainforest, but still we continued to encounter new wildlife; A troop of White – fronted Brown Lemurs and a Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher which we watched at very close range.

After a 6 hour trek, we all appreciated a sit down, lunch and then a siesta spent either swimming off the beautiful beach or in the Lodge's hammocks.

Late afternoon, we headed into an area of damp, secondary forest and although sightings were quiet to start with, things soon picked up after the sun went down. We had exceptionally close views of Greater Dwarf Lemur, Eastern Woolly and Rufous Mouse Lemurs, but star of the show was an amazingly camouflaged Leaf-tailed Gecko clinging upside down on a tree trunk- a fitting end to a wonderful day.

## Day 5

## Wednesday 7th November

This morning's walk was in the secondary forest to the south of camp. Here we added a number of new birds to the list, including Madagascar Cuckoo Roller, Common Newtonia, Madagascar Buzzard, Spectacled and Long-billed Greenbuls. It was also evident that the breeding season was in full swing as we watched pairs of both France's Sparrowhawk and Crested Coua's mating, with the males offering a frog and crab respectively to their partners.

One of the real joys of Madagascar is the great diversity of "small stuff" you find when walking through the forest. Today was no exception and notable finds included an unidentified Snake, Giant Millipede, a tree stump housing a flotilla of tadpoles and 2 more Leaf-tailed Gecko's, one of which we caught and photographed.

In no time at all, 5 hours had passed, so we returned for lunch after which some of the group went snorkelling along the rockier sections of the beach.

Our quest this afternoon was the Western Lesser Bamboo Lemur, which lives in thickets along the forest edge. This is a hard species to see in Masoala, but our luck was in and we enjoyed good but brief views of a single animal. This was followed by a troop of White-fronted Brown lemurs and then an obliging pair of Stripe-throated Jery's for the birders. Emerging from the forest we found ourselves at a deserted "Robinson Crusoe" beach and settled down to watch the sunset.

With nightfall, out came the torches for our walk back to the Lodge. We found "Lemur eyes" at regular intervals and had excellent views of several Eastern Woolly and Greater Dwarf Lemurs. An excellent find was a rare species of Leaf-tailed Gecko which our guide only sees on a handful of occasions each year and we finished the day by catching a Tree Snake species on the edge of the camp.

## Day 6

## Thursday 8th November

The day started well when a small pod of Bottle-nosed Dolphins cruised through the bay, close to shore, as we were walking to breakfast.

With the "wildlife omens" looking good, we decided to return to the primary forest and what turned out to be an exceptional morning. No sooner had we entered the forest when we located a small, foraging flock, the highlights of which were Red-tailed and Blue Vanga's. While watching the birds, we realised that there were 3 Red-ruffed Lemurs in the trees directly above our heads! We then spent a prolonged period watching these engaging animals as they periodically leapt from tree to tree in moments of hectic and vocal behaviour, alternating with bouts of mutual grooming and sleep. A particularly enjoyable moment was when one animal ventured down a sloping branch and drank from a broken off tree stump which had collected water.

The rest of the walk was punctuated with stops to photograph a variety of weird and wonderful reptiles and insects, including a big Panther Chameleon. Another magical experience occurred when Olivia found a Short-legged Ground Roller, this obliging and handsome bird allowed us to approach closely, delighting the photographers in the group. As we left the forest another foraging flock added a further Vanga to the list – White-headed Vanga.

The walk back along the beach seemed particularly long after 5 hours in the forest, so yet another excellent lunch accompanied by cold drinks were particularly appreciated.

Refreshed after a siesta or swim (depending on how energetic people felt!), we returned to the damp, secondary forest. A flock of Greenbuls held a single Grey-crowned, the first of the trip and a white morph, male Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher flitted from perch to perch like a wound up clock work toy.

The walk back in the dark was unusually quiet, but after 3 consecutive super night walks we weren't complaining!

## Day 7

## Friday 9th November

Despite this being our final morning on the Masoala Peninsula, a few hardy souls were out on the trails at 5 am and were suitably rewarded with a Lowland Streaked Tenrec and a pair of Red-fronted Coua's. Sadly, after saying our goodbyes to Bruno and his team, who had looked after us so well, we boarded our boats, bound for the island of Nosy Mangabe.

En route, we moored of a small, wooded islet and watched a large colony of Madagascar Flying Foxes roosting in the tree tops and occasionally circling over the islets summit. We also saw Madagascar Buzzard and a flock of White-faced whistling Ducks.

Our home for the next 2 nights was Nosy Mangabe, a forested island covering 520 hectares where Gerald Durrell released several Aye-Aye's in the 1960's. After landing and selecting wooden platforms where our tents would be pitched, we had time for a short walk before lunch. Leaf-tailed Gecko's were very abundant (due to the absence of Coua's which predate them) and a special find was a green Mantella frog.

After a restful afternoon and swim (another superb beach) we climbed the steep trails and soon found ourselves sweating in the high humidity. It was worth the effort however as we found a troop of White-fronted Brown Lemurs, who looked far more impressive than the habituated ones which were living around the camp. The real star however was the Black-and-white ruffed Lemur. We could hear 2 or 3 troops calling from different parts of the forest and we enjoyed brief, but exciting views of 1 animal disappearing into the canopy.

Returning for an early dinner, once darkness came we set off into the forest to look for that bizarre, nocturnal Lemur, the Aye-Aye. We walked for nearly 3 hours and it was hard work in the rugged terrain and humidity, however the eye shine from Rufous Mouse Lemurs kept us alert (and we managed to photograph one obliging individual) and although we didn't find an Aye-Aye, there was ample compensation; A Greater Hedgehog Tenrec scuttling along the path, the world's smallest Chameleon (a Brooksei species) and a ferocious looking, Cockroach type insect, which Shailesh bravely (foolishly?) tried to pick up and earned a nasty cut to the tip of his finger for his trouble!

## Day 8

## Saturday 10th November

A slightly later breakfast today, allowing everyone to recover from last night's exertions, then straight onto the trails to look for the Black-and-white ruffed Lemurs again. Shortly, we heard a troop calling and located their general vicinity. For a few minutes we couldn't see any animals, and then located an individual in a tree above us. What a wonderful creature! A thick black tail, teddy bear, yellow eyes and a pie-bald, panda like pelage. After watching this animal for a prolonged period, it leapt across to another tree and disappeared from view.

On the trail back down the hill, brief views of a Madagascar Coucal were counter balanced by a female France's Sparrowhawk, which sat perched above the path.

Knowing that we were due another nocturnal foray for the Aye-Aye, we had the afternoon "off" – well, that meant we undertook various activities including swimming, snorkelling, photographing the amazing Leaf-tailed Gecko's and generally exploring the (flatter) trails in a leisurely manner.

Tonight we searched the trails at the opposite end of the island and although we again failed to find an Aye-Aye, the walk produced several good wildlife sightings. Most notable was a roosting Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher on thin branches just above the path. We also found several Madagascar Sheath-tailed Bats on the walls of a small cave, an amazing looking Flatworm and a wonderful moment when we sat down, turned off our torches and watched the Fireflies twinkling in the darkness.

## Day 9

## Sunday 11th November

After breakfast we packed our bags and before 9 am we were back on the boats for the short ride back to Maroantsetra. As we entered the small estuary, there were numerous herons and waders on the mudflats, including our first Purple Herons of the trip.

Stopping at the first jetty we wandered into town to buy some chocolate and then it was a further, very short boat ride to our hotel.

The next few hours were a bit of a luxury as steaming showers washed off the accumulated dust and grime of 6 days in a rainforest! Panther Chameleon and Madagascar Kestrel were noted in the grounds and a certain member of the group spent half an hour picking and eating Lychee's in the hotel's fruit grove!

At 4 pm we boarded a motorised canoe and set off on a wonderful journey through a series of backwaters to Farankaraina forest. Birdlife was abundant with numerous new birds of interest, including Red-billed Teal, Reed Cormorant and Madagascar Manikin's. It was also a delight to watch the local people in their pirogues and herding ducks alongside them!

On arrival at the forest, a short walk took us to a large fruiting tree on the edge of a broad track. We settled down to wait and as it went dark, 6 White-fronted Brown Lemurs arrived and began noisily eating the fruit. A little later, the Brown Lemurs fell silent and left and then we heard it, the hissing call of an Aye-Aye!

Once we were confident that the animal was settled and feeding on the fruit, we turned on the torches and spent an amazing half hour watching an Aye-Aye feeding in the top of the tree! Surprisingly large, it had a long, bushy tail, black pelage contrasting with a grey face and large, triangular ears. It was also extremely agile and at times hung upside down from the branches to collect fruit. A truly memorable experience!

Elated by our success, we walked back through the forest (seeing a tree snake and several Greater Dwarf Lemurs) and had a picnic on the beach by our boat.

In the dark, some remarkable navigation skills and boatmanship got us safely back to the hotel by 10.30 pm and we retired to bed a tired but happy group!

## Day 10

## Monday 12th November

We left the hotel at 7.30 am for the short, but bumpy ride to the airport where our plane left on time, and stopped briefly at Tamatave on the way back to the capital, Tana.

We took the opportunity to spend a few minutes buying gifts in the airport shops and then drove to Tsasoatara Lake, a small nature reserve in the heart of the city. The trees around the lake and on the island were swarming with hundreds of egrets – Dimorphic, Black, Great White, Cattle, Squacco Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron – all in the throes of breeding. We also found our first Madagascar Pond Herons, as well as several other endemics – Madagascar Little Grebe, Madagascar Swamp Warbler and Madagascar Brush Warbler. Amongst the numerous White-faced Whistling Duck we picked out a single Fulvous Whistling Duck and a pair of Knob-billed Ducks.

It was now early afternoon and we enjoyed a late picnic under the trees on the lakeshore and watched a Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher catching small fish.

Next stop was the zoo, which is made up of largely Malagasy animals and includes a nocturnal house, complete with Aye-Aye's. It also houses a large heronry, comprising all the species we had seen earlier at the lake and again the nests were full of chicks at various stages of growth.

We left the zoo as it was closing at 5pm and had a short journey through the Tana rush hour, watching the colourful street scenes as we passed by. The Tana Plaza was again our home for the night and we enjoyed an excellent meal over which we discussed the next stage of our Madagascan adventure.

## Day 11

## Tuesday 13th November

An early morning start today in order to catch the 7am flight to Diego Suarez at the far, northern tip of the island. We arrived just before 10am and met our local guide for this stage of the tour, Angellin.

With 3 land cruisers at our disposal, we made the 20 km journey to the Nature Lodge, near Joffreville, on the lower slopes of Amber Mountain. Small flocks of Madagascar Bee-eaters were seen on both the journey and over the Lodge grounds.

After settling in and enjoying (yet another) excellent lunch, our destination this afternoon was Amber Mountain, a dormant volcano, covered in rainforest and the oldest National Park in the country. The trails here are broad, enabling views of the full strata of the forest and with good viewing conditions we soon located a troop of Sanford's Brown Lemur's, the males sporting white whiskers which frame their dark faces.

Reptiles were also in evidence, many of them being endemic to this part of Madagascar, including Blue-nosed Chameleon and a Snake, which wrapped itself around our arms as we photographed it.

One trail led us to a viewpoint overlooking the spectacular Grande Cascade and it was on this trail that we enjoyed fantastic views of both Madagascar Cuckoo Roller and Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, however only Olivia saw the Madagascar Crested Ibis which slipped off into the forest undergrowth.

Once again, we finished our walk in darkness and listened to the weird calls of Amber Mountain Fork-marked Lemurs, although these animals moved too fast for us to see them. We were however rewarded with excellent views of a new Mouse Lemur for the trip – Northern Brown.

## Day 12

## Wednesday 14th November

The day started well with Grey-headed Lovebird, Madagascar Starling and African Stonechat all observed on the early morning drive back to the mountain, where we based our walks around the Station de Rousettes.

Immediately on arrival, we found a superb pair of Amber Mountain Rock Thrushes, a species found only on this mountain and enjoyed watching the female nest building. An exploration of the trails revealed an elusive Madagascar Wood Rail, Red-tailed Vanga and our first Madagascar Blue Pigeons. We then taped out a Madagascar Flufftail, which repeatedly walked out into the open just a few feet away from us!

However perhaps the highlight of the morning for many were the 2 Ring-tailed Mongoose's which we found on 3 separate occasions and which seemed oblivious to our presence, as they hunted frogs in tree roots and on one occasion climbed up the trunk of a tree.

Another highlight of the morning was a colourful, Pitta-like Ground Roller – a real stunner – hopping around on the forest floor, unconcerned by our presence. Yet this avian beauty had to compete for our attentions with a male Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher, sat on its nest, at eye level and just crying out to be photographed!

Later in the morning we walked down to the crater lake, Lac Vert, which supported several Madagascan Little Grebe's and a solitary Madagascan Pond Heron, although the view alone was worth the walk, even the steep climb back up!

So far, we had already seen 3 troops of Sanford's Brown Lemurs, and on the way back to the vehicle we found a troop of Crowned Lemur's feeding in flowering bushes close to the path. We were enthralled by these extremely attractive Lemurs, especially a female with a youngster on her back. A fantastic end to what had been a really exciting morning!



As soon as we had finished lunch we went straight back to the forest in order to make the most of this superb reserve. A troop of Crowned Lemur's crossed over a stream via the branches over our heads and it was amusing to watch a lone male, cut off from the rest, summon up the courage to cross over on his own!

For the rest of the afternoon, White-throated Rails led us a merry dance, offering glimpses in the thick undergrowth but refusing to come out despite playing tapes of their calls. Just as we were about to give up, one appeared out on the track and literally ran straight at us appearing confused by the sound of another rail coming from the knot of humans!

Tonight's nocturnal walk was rather quiet by recent standards, however a Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur showed well, allowing prolonged views of a species we had only seen briefly to date.

## Day 13

## Thursday 15th November

Today we were due to leave Amber Mountain straight after breakfast and although our cars arrived a little late, this was compensated for by watching a range of birds of prey over the adjacent forested ridge, including an Eleonora's Falcon.

By 8.30 am however we were on the road for a drive of 3 hours to Ankarana National Park. Stopping to buy water on the way, we found a colony of Sakalava Weavers in a Palm Tree and whilst checking in at the Park entrance a superb Madagascar Harrier Hawk flew over.

Fortunately, the drivers (and cook we had brought with us) were in charge of setting up camp, allowing us to take the short walk to the famous bat cave. This is an impressive cave with a huge entrance below a limestone cliff (resplendent with Lesser Vasa Parrots). Descending some 150 steps, we entered the cave to the sound of hundreds of whickering bats. In the darkest recesses of the cave roof were tight clusters of large Madagascar Straw-coloured Fruit Bats, an impressive sight indeed!

On the walk to and from the cave we passed an Ankarana Sportive Lemur sitting obligingly in its daytime, sleep hole in a tree cavity.

Lunch, given the basic cooking facilities was excellent and suitably refreshed and with lots of water (Ankarana is very hot) we set off for what proved to be one of the walks of the trip. The forest here is deciduous and more open than the eastern rainforest to which we had become accustomed. Lemurs were both easy to see and found at high densities and we encountered numerous troops of both Crowned and Sandford's Brown Lemurs throughout the afternoon.

A great find were 4 Northern Brown Mouse Lemur's roosting in a tangle of vines and equally as good were the pair of Rainforest Scop's Owls (both a grey and rufous morph) sitting side by side in another tangle of vines.

There was no doubt as to the avian highlight of the day. A rustle from the leaf litter betrayed the presence of a pair of White-breasted Mesite's, a bizarre looking bird (a cross between a rail and a partridge) and a family endemic to Madagascar.

The scenery was equally as good as the wildlife and we emerged from the woodland to a stunning panorama, as a vast area of “tsingy” stretched out into the distance. These wickedly pointed limestone pavements create an almost impassable barrier! A carefully laid path allows access to an area of “tsingy” leading to a collapsed cavern, colonised by woodland. As well as the unique geology, the rocks were studded with mini Baobabs and Elephant Foot plants. Experiencing the “tsingy” really was a uniquely Madagascan experience!

The day wasn't over however and at dusk we heard Amber Mountain Fork-marked Lemurs calling nearby and were able to enjoy views of 3 of these attractive animals feeding on the open branches of a deciduous tree.

Back at camp and very thirsty, we drove to the nearest shop to buy some much needed cold pop and beer. A sudden commotion in the trees adjacent to our dinner table was probably a Fosa hunting sleeping Lemurs and although we didn't see it, the chance that it may return added a degree of excitement to our evening meal!

## Day 14

## Friday 16th November

A pre-breakfast bird walk was very productive, turning up Hook-billed and Blue Vanga, Madagascar Green Pigeon and our first Common Jery, although our target bird, Madagascar Crested Ibis, was once again seen by our guide only! During breakfast, a pair of Ring-tailed Mongoose appeared and one animal, climbed into our rubbish bin and took away one of yesterdays chicken wings.

Sadly, this had to be our last wildlife experience in Ankarana as we reluctantly packed up and left for the 3 hour drive to the small port of Ankify. Here we boarded an open topped boat for an exhilarating but bumpy (the waves get quite big from late morning onwards) ride to the picturesque island of Nosy Komba.

We were spending the next 2 nights in a luxury hotel (well, rather luxury lodges with a central restaurant area) set on its own private beach. After a tiring trip, people were happy to have an afternoon to relax and we almost forgot about wildlife, although a very big, very black and scary looking Snake reminded us that it wasn't too far away.

The rest of the day revolved around rest and the meals, which served at a very leisurely pace, are the focal point of the resorts day.

## Day 15

## Saturday 17th November

It was back onto a boat again this morning for the short trip to the tiny island of Nosy Tangiliky. Here the group split in two, some opting to go snorkelling, others to climb the lighthouse and watch the roosting Madagascar Flying Foxes.

A real bonus here were the White-tailed Tropicbirds nesting on the more inaccessible parts of the island and even more of a surprise were a pair of prehistoric looking Greater Frigatebirds soaring overhead.

Next stop was back on Nosy Komba and the experience of watching a troop of Black Lemurs which although wild, have become habituated to tourists and are fed bananas by the guides from the village.

Beautiful animals, it is a thrill to get so close to Lemurs, although whether such intrusive eco-tourism should be encouraged is open to debate. Anyway, we watched the Lemurs until the throng of Italian tourists got too much for us and we retreated to the souvenir shops in the village to behave like tourists ourselves!

Again, the rest of the day revolved around food and relaxation, although David, showing greater stamina than the rest of us, climbed to the top of the hill behind the resort!

That evening an incredible electrical storm and pouring rain accompanied our evening meal and we needed umbrellas to get back to our rooms.

## Day 16

## Sunday 18th November

We had to leave Nosy Komba just before 5 am and it was still raining when we boarded our boat. The combination of rain and a boat ride certainly had the effect of waking us all up!

It was then a 4 hour drive back to Diego Suarez, although with time on our side we stopped at roadside stalls to eat fresh mango's and coconuts and watched a small snake slithering underneath the stand from which we purchased our fruit.

Arriving back at Tana early afternoon, we once again transferred to the Tana Plaza and all went out for afternoon ice cream on Independence Avenue. This was followed by a late evening meal where we thanked Olivia for his excellent work throughout the trip.

## Day 17

## Monday 19th November

We flew out of Tana at 1.30am and after such an action packed tour, most of us managed to get some sleep on the plane. Unfortunately, we arrived an hour late into Paris, but after a mad rush across Charles de Gaulle airport we managed to make our connecting flight to Heathrow and were even more pleasantly surprised when our bags made it as well!

All that was left now was to say our goodbyes to the great friends we had made on a wonderful trip to the unique island that is Madagascar.

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## Species Lists

### Mammals

	Common name	Scientific name	November													
			5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	Greater Hedgehog Tenrec	<i>Setifer setosus</i>					1	1								
2	Lowland Streaked Tenrec	<i>Hemicentetes semispinosus</i>					1									
3	Madagascar Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus rufus</i>					400								50	
4	Mad' Straw-coloured Fruit Bat	<i>Eidolon dupreanum</i>											500			
5	Madagascar-Sheath-tailed Bat	<i>Emballonura atrata</i>						10								
6	Rufous Mouse lemur	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>	4	1			7	3	1							
7	Northern Brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus tavaratra</i>									3	3	5			
8	Greater Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogaleus major</i>	1		5				3							
9	Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogalus medius</i>									1	1				
10	Amber Mountain Fork-marked Lemur	<i>Phaner electromontis</i>											3			
11	Seals's Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur seali</i>	1	1												
12	Ankarana Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur ankaranensis</i>											2			
13	Western Grey bamboo Lemur	<i>hapalemur occidentalis</i>			1											
14	Crowned Lemur	<i>Eulemur coronatus</i>										15	50	10		
15	Sanford's Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur sanfordi</i>									9	14	25			
16	White-fronted Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur albifrons</i>	3	8	4		10	6	6							
17	Black Lemur	<i>Eulemur macaco</i>													7	
18	Black and White Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata</i>					1	1								
19	Red Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia rubra</i>		3		4										
20	Eastern Avahi	<i>Avahi laniger</i>	6	3	6											
21	Aye-Aye	<i>Daubentonia madagascariensis</i>							1							
22	Small Indian Civet	<i>Viverricula indica</i>										1				
23	Ring-tailed Mongoose	<i>Galidia elegans</i>										2	2	1		
24	Lowland Red Forest Rat	<i>Nesomys audeberti</i>	1													
25	Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>				5										

## Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	November													
			5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	Madagascar Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus pelzelinii</i>								7		5				
2	White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>													4	
3	Greater Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>													3	
4	Reed Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>								10						
5	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>					1		1	40						
6	Common Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	1							200						
7	Madagascar Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola idae</i>								10	1		1			
8	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	300	2	30	20	1		100	500				100		500
9	Green-backed Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>			2	1			10	1				1		
10	Black Egret	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>							5	40						5
11	Dimorphic Heron	<i>Egretta dimorpha</i>	50			2			20	300			1	3	2	
12	Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	100						5	1			1		10	
13	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>							10	1						
14	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1						3							
15	Fulvous Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>								1						
16	White-faced Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>					15		20	500						
17	Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>								2						
18	Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>							20	20						
19	Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptus</i>												3		1
20	Madagascar Harrier- Hawk	<i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>											1			
21	Frances's Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter francesiae</i>			2			1				1				
22	Madagascar Buzzard	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>			2	1	1	2	1		2	4	6	2	2	1
23	Madagascar Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>							2				4	2	1	2
24	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>											1			
25	Sooty Falcon	<i>Falco concolor</i>	1							1					1	
26	White-breasted Mesite	<i>Mesitornis variegatus</i>											2			
27	Madagascar Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>										1				
28	Madagascar Wood Rail	<i>Canirallus kioloides</i>										1				
29	White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>										3				
30	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>								5						

	Common name	Scientific name	November													
			5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
31	Madagascar Pratincole	<i>Glareola ocularis</i>		1	2	2	2		1							
32	White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	1													
33	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1						10							
34	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>					1		20							
35	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1						2							
36	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i>	100		30	20	2									
37	Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	50													
38	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	100												30	
39	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	10							5				15		20
40	Malagascas Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia picturata</i>			3					5	1	1		1		
41	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>												1		
42	Madagascar Green Pigeon	<i>Treron australis</i>	1		1									2	1	
43	Madagascar Blue Pigeon	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>										6				
44	Lesser Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>	3	10	6	5	2					6	20			
45	Grey-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis canus</i>										2		2		
46	Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>											1			
47	Red-breasted Coua	<i>Coua serriana</i>		3	3	1										
48	Red-fronted Coua	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>				2	2									
49	Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>			3								3			
50	Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>	1	6	8	1										
51	Madagascar Coucal	<i>Centropus toulou</i>		2				1	4	1		1	5	5		
52	Rainforest Scops Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>											2			
53	Madagascar Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>											1			
54	Madagascar Spinetail	<i>Zoonavena grandidieri</i>	10	10	10	10					1	1				
55	African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>							10		8	4	20	20	3	5
56	Madagascar Black Swift	<i>Apus balstoni</i>	5										10			
57	Madagascar Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo vintsioides</i>		3	2		1	2	1	2						
58	Mad' Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx madagascariensis</i>						1			1					
59	Madagascar Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>									6	4	5	2		1
60	Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	1								3	15	20	10		
61	Short-legged Ground Roller	<i>Brachypteracias leptosomus</i>				1										
62	Pitta-like Ground Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>										3				

	Common name	Scientific name	November													
			5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
63	Madagascar Cuckoo-Roller	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>				1	1				1	2	2	1		
64	Madagascar Hoopoe	<i>Upupa marginata</i>								1				1		
65	Madagascar Lark	<i>Mirafraga hova</i>											1			5
66	Mascarene Martin	<i>Phedina borbonica</i>	30	10	10	50	30		40	50	50	50	50	50		100
67	Brown-throated Sand Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>							4							
68	Madagascar Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>	6	2	2	2					1	1				
69	Mad' Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina cinerea</i>		2	1								1	2		
70	Madagascar Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
71	Amber Mountain Rock Thrush	<i>monticola erythronotus</i>										3				
72	Madagascar Magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus albospectularis</i>		2	2	3	1			1	1	4	10	10		
73	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>										5	2		1	
74	Madagascar Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas typica</i>								1		10	2			
75	Madagascar Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus newtoni</i>								1						
76	Common Newtonia	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>			1	2						3		1		
77	Mad' Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone mutata</i>		4	6	4	3	5			1	1	10	7		
78	Common Jery	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>												3		
79	Stripe-throated Jery	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>			2											
80	White-throated Oxylabes	<i>Oxylabes madagascariensis</i>				2					2					
81	Crossley's Babbler	<i>Mystacornis crossleyi</i>		1	1											
82	Long-billed Greenbul	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>		1	4	4					2		2	2		
83	Spectacled Greenbul	<i>Bernieria zosterops</i>		4	4	2										
84	Grey-crowned Greenbul	<i>Bernieria cinereiceps</i>				1										
85	Souimanga Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia sovimanga</i>	2		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
86	Madagascar Green Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia notata</i>				2										
87	Madagascar White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>	4	6	6	10					2	10			5	
88	Helmet Vanga	<i>Euryceros prevostii</i>		1		1										
89	Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>				1						2		2		
90	Rufous Vanga	<i>Schetba rufa</i>	2		1											
91	Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>										1		1		
92	White-headed Vanga	<i>Artamella viridis</i>				2										
93	Chabert's Vanga	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>	4	2												
94	Madagascar Blue Vanga	<i>Cyanolanius madagascarinus</i>				1						1		3		

	Common name	Scientific name	November													
			5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
95	Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
96	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>					1		2		1		1	1	2	
97	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	C						C	C	C			C		C
98	Madagascar Starling	<i>Saroglossa aurata</i>	4								6	3	4			
99	Nelicourvi Weaver	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>		2	2	4					3	8				
100	Sakalava Weaver	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>											10			5
101	Madagascar Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	4	2					C	C						10
102	Madagascar Mannikin	<i>Lonchura nana</i>							30							

## Creepy Crawlies

One of the joys of a visit to Madagascar is the variety of weird and wonderful creatures that you find on every walk.

While Lemurs are understandably what the island is famous for, the “smaller stuff” makes any walk a real pleasure.

Notable highlights on this trip included;

- Panther, Stump-tailed, Ostelets's, Blue-Nosed Amber Mountain and several species of *Brookei* Chameleons.
- Spider, Tree and Hermit Crabs.
- 2 species of Leaf-tailed Gecko, Day Glow Gecko's and 3 species of Skink.
- Hissing Cockroach, Giant Millipede, Pill Millipede, Fireflies and Flatid Leaf Bugs.
- A species of Mantilla Frog, along with several other Frog species