

Madagascar's Lemurs

Naturetrek Tour Report

9 – 23 October 2015



Baby Ring-tailed Lemur



Greater Bamboo Lemur



Lowland Streaked Tenrec



Long-tailed Ground Roller

Report & images compiled by Ed Drewitt



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Introduction

During this two-week holiday we enjoyed seeing 20 species of day and night-time lemurs, from the critically endangered Greater Bamboo Lemur to the ever-energetic mouse lemurs. Many unique, endemic families of birds put on a good show from the warbler-like tetrakas to the dazzling Blue Coua and its relatives, as well as the vangas such as the bizarre Sickle-billed Vanga, and mesites, including ten Subdesert Mesites all lined up together as dawn broke. Owls put on a good show with five species seen or heard. A visit to Madagascar wouldn't be complete without the chameleons - we saw ten species from the minute Broad-browed Chameleon to the large Parson's and Oustalet's Chameleons. They were supported by a range of tiny tree and leaf litter frogs, plus a variety of snakes including tree and ground boas. Not forgetting the many colourful swallowtail butterflies, the beautifully patterned orb-web spiders, a scorpion, giant millipedes and a vast array of other weird and wonderful invertebrate including Hissing Cockroaches, Rainbow Locust and gigantic stick insects. A chance encounter with Madagascar's largest carnivore, the Fosa and the incredible diversity of plant life from the unique spiny forest to the rainforest flora, made this tour a very memorable, enjoyable and exciting experience for everyone.

Day 1

Friday 9th October

London to Paris

Our first day for most of the group involved travelling to Paris for an overnight stay, to be ready for a flight to Madagascar from France the following morning. We had a quick flight from London Heathrow to Paris bathed in lovely autumn sunshine. We transferred to our hotel and met again at 7.45pm for dinner where we met with Marion who had travelled from Washington via Iceland, and John and Celia who had landed earlier from Birmingham Airport. We headed for bed at a reasonable time to be ready for our long flight to Madagascar the next morning.

Day 2

Saturday 10th October

Paris to Antananarivo, Madagascar

The next day we met together at the hotel at 7.45am and headed for Terminal 2F, a quick two-stop journey on the shuttle. It was just getting light and Common Starlings were appearing from their overnight roost. After finding some breakfast and with time to spare, we boarded our plane at 10.45am and left a little delayed at 12.15pm. We headed south-east across a very sunny France covered in extensive agricultural land and green woodland. We had spectacular views of the Swiss Alps, with mountain peaks just poking up through the cloud in some areas. Other mountains were capped with snow and the montane valleys, lakes and villages looked very pretty below. We continued along the coastline of Croatia, over Albania and the sun-scorched Greek islands, and across the Mediterranean Sea into northern Africa. Here the terrain below became very hot, sandy and rugged as we passed over Egypt and the River Nile, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya (including Mount Kenya) before crossing over Zanzibar and descending down towards Madagascar mid-evening, landing around 11.20pm.

The air was fresh as we exited the plane and the distinctive smell of wood smoke from the brick kilns permeated the air from nearby settlements. Various moths were flying both outside and inside the airport, and a few pale-bellied Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bats could be seen hunting like martins above as their fast flying bodies caught

the beam of lights overhead. We spent some time working our way through security, getting our visas, and collecting our luggage before meeting our guide Claude at arrivals. We picked up our currency, met our driver Patrick and his assistant Jean and then, with the bus packed, headed down the road to a nearby luxury hotel for some well-earned sleep at just after 2am.

Day 3

Sunday 11th October

Lemurs Park and Antsirabe

We awoke to a bright sunny morning and views across rice paddies with people already hoeing and maintaining their crops at 6am. Madagascar Fodies were loudly squeaking outside in the trees. A Jacaranda tree was in full purple bloom by the car park and dry, dead looking Crown of Thorn plants were sporting glorious red flowers.

We all met at 8.15am for breakfast, and then headed out just before 9am on a bright sunny day to Lemurs Park just outside Tana, where we had the chance to see semi-wild lemurs up close and to get our eye in on what to look for when we explored the forests later in the week. On the 80-minute drive there we passed rice paddies where goats, zebu (cows), lots of Great Egrets, a Yellow-billed Kite, Common Mynas, and plenty of domestic ducks fed. We saw do-it-yourself brick kilns, some smoking away as fires inside cooked the clay bricks, and lots of people by the riverside washing their clothes or collecting clay soil. The kilns have become an important part of the house building industry now there are so few trees left to cut down.

At the lemur sanctuary a variety of species have been saved from the pet industry and we were able to explore the area both for lemurs as well as birdlife, insects, and xerophytic plants including the Elephant Foot plant (many have been planted to show visitors the unique botanical species that live in the hot environments further south in the country). Mascarene Martins flew overhead as we arrived and 'Napoleon's Hat', a type of *Kalanchoe* with hat-like succulent leaves, was growing by the entrance. During our visit we saw various groups of eight species of lemur, many found in the north of the country where we wouldn't be visiting, so it was a good chance to see them for real. Our first lemurs were a pair of Ring-tailed Lemurs with a little baby. Our guide Marc then quickly guided us down to a stand of bamboo to see the secretive Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemurs whose wild populations are currently classed as vulnerable - two of these furry, compact lemurs were feeding alongside a Common Brown Lemur (near threatened) and a Red-fronted Brown Lemur for comparison. One of the brown lemurs came and sat on the fence right by Marjorie giving wonderful close views as it licked its long, fluffy tail. A little further along we met a family of Crowned Sifakas which included a bouncy four month old baby jumping all over the place, mum keeping tabs on her baby, and dad close by. The female was dominant over her mate and seemed to be exerting her position over him using grunts, body language and moving away from him with her baby. Further along the path four Coquerel's Sifakas, including a one year old 'teen', were feeding. They leapt from tree to tree and even over Rosemary's head before settling to feed together. We also saw some very vocal Black and White Ruffed Lemurs, and sleepy, curled up forms of Greater Dwarf and Brown Mouse Lemurs. The dwarf lemurs' hands and feet were sticking out of their sleeping hole allowing us to see how their different toes are adapted to do different things; for example their large swollen thumb for gripping branches and the claw-like nail of the second finger for helping to forage - the other fingers had flat nails like ours.

Chameleons were out in force today and we saw four different Oustalet's Chameleons; two juvenile males, one juvenile female and an adult female. From certain angles they just looked like twigs. An Ornate Girdled Lizard stood watching us in the leaf litter, and back at the main centre we had very close views of a tame Spiny-tailed

Iguanid with a black collar on its neck. Marc also showed us three endangered tortoises which are held in a pen for their safety and security: the large Radiated Tortoise, the medium-size Hinge-backed Tortoise and the palm-size Spider Tortoise.

There were plenty of birds around too from a small group of Madagascar White-eyes feeding on berries to the sound of Madagascar Cuckoo, freshly arrived from Mozambique or Kenya. At least two Common Sandpipers fed by the river along with three Madagascar Wagtails. Souimanga Sunbirds were often in the naked trees above, the males singing a short wren-like song, and a Madagascar Brush Warbler called from the bushes.

John found the rare *Euphorbia prunifolia*, a tiny plant with white or pink flowers and tube roots, growing by the path. Large water beetles congregated and dived together in the river where a bright scarlet red dragonfly and a blue-tailed damselfly rested. A large yellow swallowtail butterfly flew across the dam like a bird. Many butterflies didn't stop, but grass yellows and *Acraea zija* were common. A huge Golden Orb-web spider had spun its web across some tree branches.

After a delicious three-course lunch we headed in glorious sunshine back towards Tana and then south to Antsirabe. We passed many more paddy fields, spotting Dimorphic Egret (white phase), Great Egret and Hamerkop. We headed south up into the hills along windy roads with incredible views across the dramatic rocky landscape, now deforested and scattered with pine trees introduced from Mexico. Rice paddy fields were positioned all along the road network, most recently ploughed and mixed with cow dung, waiting for the rains before sowing another rice crop. We stopped half way on our four-hour journey at a restaurant in Ambatolampy for a comfort break and tea or coffee. We then continued on into the dusky, overcast evening. At one point we passed some roadworks where the tarmac was being replaced. A set of 20 wood fire-heated drums were cooking away the stones and old tarmac, later to be transferred to re-line this section of road. Quite different to the large mobile machines we have in the UK.

We reached the town of Antsirabe around 6.30pm and settled in to the delightful Soa Guest Hotel where we enjoyed a pumpkin soup, chicken with rice and potatoes, and fruit salad dinner. The name Antsirabe means 'the place of much salt', relating to local springs bringing concentrated minerals to the Earth's surface.

Day 4

Monday 12th October

Ialatsara Forest Camp and Ranomafana

We met on a bright morning at 6.45am and enjoyed a breakfast of mixed fruit juice, fresh bread, guava jam, tea, coffee, yogurt and bananas. We were in the north of Antsirabe and headed through the centre of town towards the south. 200,000 people live in Antsirabe which is well known for the country's gemstones which are brought for polishing. We stopped briefly to look at the architecture, local people busy moving around in their rickshaws, and general daily life.

After passing parched grassland, some of it burnt ready for the rainy season and new growth for zebu cattle, we passed many more acres of rice paddies. We saw a Hamerkop in flight and, as Claude was explaining some fascinating cultural facts about Madagascar, a kingfisher caught his eye. We stopped and a few small rice paddy fields away a Madagascar Kingfisher was perched. It gradually came closer while a Madagascar Wagtail fed nearby. The local children came to say hello and Ed showed them the kingfisher and egrets in a bird book. As we

watched the kingfisher, a farmer was ploughing his paddy with two zebus. Just as we boarded the bus another Hamerkop flew overhead.

We passed acres and acres of rice paddies, while the granite mountains, the 'backbone' of Madagascar, were ever present and impressive to our right. During our morning journey we also saw Madagascar Kestrels, often perched on the tops of pylons, Common Myna, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Dimorphic Egret, Madagascar Wagtail, and Mascarene Martin.

We passed areas of native *Tapia* trees which have thickened bark to withstand natural fires on the sun baked Madagascan countryside. The trees are used for firewood and the berries sold. Locals are encouraged to plant *Tapia* trees and to leave this native woodland. This encourages the native silk worm caterpillar, and women's groups are set up to develop local silk-weaving. Also some particular orchids in Madagascar only grow on certain *Tapia* trees.

We stopped briefly at an old bridge, toppled by supporters of the losing political party in 2002 after the then elections. At least three Madagascar Cisticolas were singing and flying overhead, and a Madagascar Bee-eater was perching and flying around before dealing with a bee which it subsequently ate.

At 11am we stopped in the town of Ambositra, which means woodcarving. We visited the toilets via a wood carving shop where some bought local souvenirs. The roads were busy with people and little market shops selling everything from meat to torches. A Yellow-billed Kite was overhead, quartering the streets looking for any titbits.

An hour or so later we stopped at a few (rare) freshwater pools and native woodland. 40 Red-billed Teals were resting and washing in an open area of water on one side of the road, whilst another four were sleeping on the other side of the road. A Purple Heron was almost hidden in the sedges but spotted by Marjorie, a Madagascar Buzzard soared overhead and a Great Egret rested in the trees.

We continued to travel through huge swathes of countryside subject to burning by man, grazing by Zebu and shaping into a stepped watery landscape for rice paddies. A Pied Crow was foraging over the road and hung in the air right next to our bus. We passed more crows later alongside a kestrel hovering near a burnt area. Glynn spotted a Madagascar Stonechat by the roadside.

We came to some semi-natural woodland. It was time to turn off the road and stop for lunch. We walked 150 metres along a path through trees to the Ialatsara Forest Camp. We had a delicious hot lunch with goat's cheese tart for starters, then zebu with rice and vegetables, all home-grown, and a physalis tart to finish. Before we left the gardeners had kindly found us some chameleons. A male and female O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon were in one place - the female was the same colour as the branch she was stood on. The larger male was bright green with beautiful yellow streaks towards his pelvis and back legs. He also had two short 'horns' on his nose. On the other side of the path we watched a young Blue-legged Chameleon which was sandy brown with a white stalk along its sides. John also discovered a small Lined Gecko with a huge grey beetle grub in its mouth, standing vertically on a tree. By the bus we watched another bright green male O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon walk across the path and gradually climb a tree half a metre from us. In a bush behind us one of the gardeners found an adult

female Blue-legged Chameleon - she had a mottled blood-red head mask and a grey-brown body with a white streak on her sides.

We left just after 3pm, stopping in a nearby village to see a large heronry containing tens of Dimorphic Egrets (both the white and black-blue colour forms) with their splendid feathery 'aigrettes', two families of Black-crowned Night Herons, and some Cattle Egrets. Spotted young night herons were flexing their still-growing wings. Many of the egrets were mating, collecting sticks from the ground below or sitting on nests. A pair of Cattle Egrets was looking splendid in their golden breeding body plumage, raised feathers and red bills. The egret colony is based in a number of trees at the town mayor's offices within a walled garden, so relatively safe. John also spotted a few small Brown Day Geckos sunning themselves on the wall.

We headed for a few more hours to our hotel at Ramanofana. Just before we arrived we stopped at some impressive waterfalls over huge boulders in the river. Nearby we admired a variety of orchids, club mosses and other flowers. Some frogs were already singing with a distinctive creaking croak. We arrived around 6pm and settled into our rooms at dusk beforehand dinner and the checklist, joined by the odd House Gecko. A little later Glyn tried out his bat detector and a large bat with a low frequency was feeding right above our heads in the darkness. John, Celia and Marjorie saw a large chameleon in a tree by the car park, and a couple of frogs came out to play including a small dark frog with bright yellow spots: *Heterixalus alboguttatus* - this species is only found in the Ranomafana area.

Day 5

Tuesday 13th October

Ranomafana

After breakfast at 6.15am, we set out at 7am having already spotted Madagascar Wagtail and African Palm Swift around the hotel. We headed 20 minutes up the road to the Talatakely part of the Ranomafana National Park and spent the morning looking for lemurs, birds, orchids and geckos with our local guide Jean Claude. On the entrance sign we admired various moths including two Emperor Moths and another that looked like a crumpled dead leaf.

There was a lot of birdsong including a Rand's Tetraka, a warbler-like bird that sounds a little like a European Greenfinch. We heard the calls or songs of Common Newtonia, Souimanga Sunbird, Common Jery, Madagascar Bulbul, Red-tailed Vanga, Brush Warbler, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Crested Drongo, Pitta-like Ground Roller, Madagascar Magpie Robin and Madagascar Cuckoo. We also had views of two Red-fronted Couas, pheasant-like relatives of the cuckoo, chasing each other noisily around a small stream. Some also spotted a Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher.

As we headed up the main path we encountered our first lemurs: two Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemurs of the Ranomafana subspecies. They were feeding and the male was busy scent-marking branches with his bottom - the female followed behind giving the scent a good sniff. We then headed up, off the main path and through the bamboo and trees. We were looking for Golden Bamboo Lemurs but they were on the edge of the hillside away from easy access, so we continued on and half an hour later encountered some of Madagascar's rarest lemurs, two Greater Bamboo Lemurs; a father and daughter. They are the only two left here in the national park and there are only 160 remaining in the wild in the whole country. They were resting in the bamboo, but 20 minutes later, just as we headed off, the female came down to feed on a bamboo stump giving remarkable views only

metres away. It was rare to her so close on the ground. After 15 minutes or so there were lots of grunting sounds and the male, her father, also came down to feed. Being less dominant, his daughter headed up into the adjacent trees in response to his presence, though not before taking her own larger split of bamboo to chew. The male then proceeded to feed on the same bamboo stump for ten minutes or so before biting off his own piece to eat a few metres up in the tree. What a treat!

As we headed back to the main entrance we admired a Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko - this small reptile was almost black with two horns on its nose and the odd white markings which looked like mould. It was mimicking a decaying dead leaf. Nearby a type of stink horn fungus was attracting lots of small flies to feed - they then fly away with spores stuck to their feet and help spread the fungus to other parts of the forest.

Further along the walk we also watched a bright green Lined Day Gecko, a *Mantella* frog that just looked like the leaves, various leaf-like large butterflies, and a blue-tailed damselfly. The additional highlight was seeing not one, but two Broad-browed Stump-tailed Chameleons. They are no more than three inches long and look like the leaf litter. They are some of our smallest chameleons and don't curl their tails like the bigger species. These two were separately spotted by Jean Claude on the paths making their way across and into the leaves. As we headed back down the main path Celia spotted one of the grey bamboo lemurs and we had lovely views of the animal feeding and investigating the tree bark and branches.

The forest was alive with native bamboo, fig trees with bizarre clumps of fig fruits at various stages of growth, orchids and other parasitic plants, tree ferns, lichens, and much more.

We arrived back at the hotel at 12.45pm and after a delicious three-course lunch, John found two Red-bellied Grass Snakes and a Kite Spider, while the gardener showed him and Celia a large Parson's Chameleon.

After a well-deserved break we headed out at 4pm with a different guide, the very experienced Jean Chris, to another part of the reserve (Vohiparara, Park Sahamalotra). As we entered into the forest Blue Coua was calling and a Rand's Tetraka was singing. Our lemur trackers had found us another delightful species of lemur, the endangered Milne-Edwards Sifaka - we saw five in total over the course of an hour. They were mainly feeding and jumping, with such precision, through the trees. We also watched the male and perhaps his mate (they live in small family groups) mutually grooming each other while giving out little squeaks. We had prolonged views and the family group often allowed us to be very close, admiring their thick dark fur and white saddle on their back. Claude and Marjorie also spotted an adult Eastern Ring-tailed Mongoose along the stream, and on the edge of the water we watched a medium-size frog with a pointed nose, the *Boophis majori*. As the light began to fall Madagascar Cuckoos and Coucals were singing away. At the road entrance a white-eye was also singing. Our two lemur trackers had also found something special for us to see - a male and female Giraffe-necked Weevil. Despite the fading light, with torches we were able to appreciate the male's crane-like head used for display and attracting a mate.

As the light faded we went down the road in the bus ready for a night walk. Even before the light had faded, at 6.10pm a Brown Mouse Lemur was coming to feed on some banana smeared onto the bark of a tree. It was small, very round and cute, with large eyes ideal for night vision. The cuckoos were still singing. We continued along the dark road with our head torches and saw a Nose-horned Chameleon (the smallest tree-dwelling chameleon), both a male and a female O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon, and one Glaw's Chameleons (only found

here on this reserve in the whole of Madagascar). As we headed back to the bus at 6.45pm we could hear the calls of many frogs including that of Madagascar's largest tree frog, *Boophis madagascariensis*.

Day 6

Wednesday 14th October

Ranomafana

After breakfast we were out at 7am to the main entrance of the Talatakely reserve to look for more lemurs. Just as we started a Blue Coua was in a distant tree. A pair of Red-tailed Vangas gave close views - their call sounds like a wolf whistle. The male looked like a well-marked chickadee with a black and white head and rusty brown plumage. African Palm Swifts and Mascarene Martins flew nearby catching some early morning insects.

After some walking and clambering through the trees we had our first of the morning's rewards. At least one Golden Bamboo Lemur was busy devouring green bamboo leaves amongst a dense bamboo stand, and it looked much lighter than the other bamboo lemur species we had seen, with a golden-coloured tail and a dark facial muzzle.

A little further through the forest we had a small family of Red-fronted Brown Lemurs feeding by the path - they then launched themselves, one at a time, across the path and over our heads; a female was carrying a small baby. They quickly climbed into the tops of the tall trees and we went off the path to spot them up high.

Further along, after more climbing up steps, we were shown a nesting Rufous Vanga - the female was sat on a mossy nest in the fork of a tree. We could see her blue-grey bill, black cap, white throat and just a hint of her rusty-brown back.

A little further down the path we stopped to see a Black and White Ruffed Lemur; a rare lemur to be seen at this reserve as they live mainly in primary forest (we were visiting secondary forest). The species in Madagascar is critically endangered. A few people spotted it before we moved on, to return later. In the meantime we looked at a Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko that looked like some curled up dead leaves, and some caught sight of a green, female Velvet Asity found by Rosemary. John also spotted a Madagascar Plated Lizard.

Venturing down lots of steps and through more trees we finally had our reward - another Black and White Ruffed Lemur was resting in a tree for us all to see. Its black and white fluffy coat was very distinctive and now and again the animal dropped its long, thick black tail down from the branch. Occasionally it woke up to lick its fur. Just as everyone had started to walk away downhill the lemur decided to quickly leap through the trees and stop right above where we had been standing! Everyone returned to get a closer glimpse before the animal disappeared into thicker foliage. What a treat!

For the rest of the walk we headed up to a viewpoint before dropping down, back to the river bridge. Along the way we saw Long-billed Tetraka, a pair of Dusky Tetrakas, two Cuckoo Rollers and a Red-fronted Coua, and we heard singing Souimanga Sunbirds and Rand's Tetraka. Our final highlight, just as we got to the bridge and the end of the walk, was a small family of Red-fronted Brown Lemurs. A male and female were feeding just metres away. The females then jumped onto a tree right by our group before leaping into the trees behind us. She was followed by a female with a small baby snuggled into her back fur, and the male.

We arrived back at the bus at 12.30pm, and just before we finished we watched a digger wasp, a large iridescent black wasp with red antennae, pacing around a large spider it had paralysed. After a few minutes it then, remarkably, carried the spider as big as itself backwards for over ten metres towards the bridge. We weren't able to see the next stage of its work - but it was going to take the spider down a burrow, lay eggs on the spider and cover the burrow with soil. The eggs would then later hatch and have the paralysed spider as a live, fresh meal to devour.

We lunched at 1.30pm and relaxed for the afternoon before meeting together again at 5pm for a later afternoon/early evening night walk. We stopped near the impressive boulder waterfalls 20 minutes up the road and quickly found some frogs with the help of our trackers. Without their help the frogs were invisible! The frogs included *Boophis madagascariensis* which had also recently spawned in the water at the base of the mossy, liverwort covered rocks. There were a whole variety of flowering plants including orchids and a climbing *Kalanchoe*. The air was cool with a light breeze from the river and there were lots of Mascarene Martins and Madagascar Black Swifts feeding on the insects close to the trees. The swifts were in small parties and screaming over the valley.

As the light faded we just managed to see a male Blue-legged Chameleon and a Nose-horned Chameleon. A bright red and black giant millipede was on a nearby road bend block. At dusk many male cuckoos were singing: one was spotted perched and another in flight; and a female made her bubbling call. A Madagascar Brush Warbler called in the bushes. We walked down to the mouse lemur site and saw probably the same Brown Mouse Lemur feeding on banana. Glyn picked up a bat feeding overhead on his bat detector. We headed back for 7pm and dinner at 7.45pm.

Day 7

Thursday 15th October

Enja and Isalo

We were up early and had breakfast at 5.45am before heading off in the bus at 6.30am. Just before we left, some had views of a bright red male Forest Fody. We stopped on our way further up the river and gorge to look at the magnificent views of the water and geology. We then headed on our journey south passing many more paddy fields and dramatic scenery, and seeing a few Dimorphic Egrets, Great Egrets, a Green-backed Heron, a Hamerkop, a kestrel and Pied Crows. We stopped briefly at a fuel station in Madagascar's second largest city, Fianarantsoa and continued on through much hotter, granitic landscape with huge boulder outcrops. At 11am we stopped to visit a papermaking factory in Ambalavao where local people hand-make paper from the local Avoha tree bark. Claude told us how the women make the paper, and afterwards we were able to buy the card, place mats and photograph albums made from their handiwork. We then had an early lunch down the road at a lovely restaurant with delicious food, and in the gardens we spotted swallowtail butterflies, Madagascar Bulbul and a female Green Sunbird. By 12.30pm we were back on the road and travelled 20 minutes to our next destination.

Our next stop was Enja, a community-run woodland managed for the lemurs. In front of us was the imposing scenery of granite mountains known as the 'inselbergs'. In fifteen years the population of the near threatened Ring-tailed Lemur has risen from 100 individuals to 1,200 and now that more tourists are visiting, the money can be invested back in the area for the lemurs and infrastructure such as a school for the local village. A short walk led us into a small part of the woodland where two male Oustalet's Chameleons were hanging out. One even

caught a locust and devoured it in a few munches. We saw another male and a female in a tree. Also in one tree Claude pointed out the larval form of Flatid Leaf Bugs - these wasp-size invertebrates have white, fluffy rear ends which from afar look just like small white flowers. The flower-like accessories are targeted by predators such as small birds and leave the main animal intact if they are attacked. A little further along we were shown the adult form - a cluster of white-pink teardrop-shape winged insects.

Meanwhile we were being followed by two Ring-tailed Lemurs and were led to a patch of trees where a whole troop of lemurs were hanging out, literally, in the very hot heat. There were ten adults and at least four young, including twins. The babies were six to eight weeks old. The youngsters were playing together or being groomed by their mums or dad who was also with them. The babies returned the favour by licking their mum's toes! One male lemur with a short tail was always scent marking his fluffy, black and white tail with scent glands on his wrists. A few moved to the ground and began feeding on the soil - they do this to help neutralise any nasty chemicals they ingest from the berries and fruits they eat.

Other wildlife included a type of plated lizard *Tracheloptychus madagascariensis*, bee-eaters, five Grey-headed Lovebirds, the call of a Hoopoe, Madagascar Kingfisher catching an insect, Pied Crows, and a few more Ring-tailed Lemurs in a tree towards the end of our walk. People-wise, some young women were also fishing for carp in the drying out pool using a sheet of plastic and a bucket, while a lady herded her six zebus by the woodland.

We drove on for another four hours and arrived at our luxury hotel, Le Jardin du Roy, near the Isalo National Park, around 7pm. On our journey we passed through breath-taking granite mountains and vast grassy plains, some on fire to encourage plant growth for the Zebu. An hour before sunset we drove across the barren Horombe Plateau seeing mainly Pied Crows, Madagascar Larks, Madagascar Kestrels and lots of termite mounds. Nearing the main village near our hotel we stopped to see a wild Helmeted Guineafowl by the side of the road. In the village, tens of Madagascar Mannikins were coming to roost in a set of Cypress trees, and just before we turned off to the entrance a Marsh Owl quartered the grassland close to the road before flying away.

After a refreshing welcome drink and towel, we met for a delightful three-course meal before heading off to bed after a long day. As we went to our rooms it became clear we were surrounded by an impressive sandstone landscape and huge eroded boulders by our lodges. The night sky was full of stars and constellations, a White-browed Owl hooted nearby, and White-throated Rails called with their whip-like sound all night.

Day 8

Friday 16th October

Isalo

After a good night's sleep we headed out at 6.30am before breakfast, the sun already shining and the air very warm. We spotted Madagascar Bulbuls, two Grey-headed Lovebirds, a Broad-billed Roller, a few Madagascar Bee-eaters, African Palm Swift, Crested Drongo, Pied Crows and Madagascar Wagtail.

We met for breakfast at 7am; a delicious mix of toast, cake, fruit and spreads. Just before heading off for the morning we watched a Madagascar Hoopoe feeding just outside the front of the hotel, and John found a Four-lined Iguanid on the rocks. Marian saw a hoopoe and a Benson's Rock Thrush, special for this region, in a tree near her room.

At 8am we headed to the Namaza Canyon in the Isalo National Park and surrounded by the impressive Isalo massif: Jurassic sandstone that has been carved by the wind and rain into spectacular gorges and gullies. On the way we picked up our guide Roland in Isalo. Before our main stop we paused to look at a few Rainbow Locusts - brown looking insects from afar but Roland revealed their bright red wings which are used to scare/surprise predators. A bright green female Oustalet's Chameleon was wandering along the ground by the car park and rested in a branch that Roland provided for it.

As we wandered into the canyon Roland pointed out many of the native xerophytic plants and trees that are adapted to the hot and dry conditions here, and are unique to Madagascar. Orange shield bugs mimicking flowers, cryptic stick insects, a snout bug, a jumping spider, a small cicada and a praying mantis were all spotted despite their incredible camouflage colours and body forms. A Crested Drongo sat on a nest in an exposed tree. During our walk we passed Madagascar Cisticolas, Yellow-billed Kites, Madagascar Kestrels, a Spiny-tailed Iguanid and a few lizards. We paused for half an hour or more around a camp watching a family of seven adult and four baby Ring-tailed Lemurs sleeping in the heat which was getting up towards 36 degrees Celsius or more. Nearby a male Oustalet's Chameleon was negotiating a branch. Claude found a White-throated Rail by the stream where a variety of dragonflies and damselflies were resting or flying. Behind the camp we watched a sleeping family of Red-fronted Brown Lemurs, also with a young baby poking out. Other Ring-tailed Lemurs were nearby and as we headed back, John and Celia watched a group of 20 walking through the woodland. A tame male and female Paradise Flycatcher also came down close. On the walk back we watched Common Jerys, a Madagascar Button Quail, a pair of Madagascar Cuckoo Shrikes, a stunning Madagascar Swallowtail butterfly, a White-headed Vanga and a few Madagascar Coucals. Our final treat was a gecko that even Claude had not seen before; *Phelsuma hielscheri* - it is found at only a few spots in Madagascar and likes the *Pandanus* Screw Pine trees.

We got back to the hotel for 12.30pm where, after a short rest, we had a delicious three-course lunch. Just as desserts were arriving a lovely male Benson's Rock Thrush, now thought to be a subspecies of the Forest Thrush, was feeding metres away from where we were eating. It had a beautiful blue-grey head and back, large eyes and an orange chest.

We met together again at 4pm and headed out behind the hotel with our guide Roland to explore the canyon. We had the chance to really see the sandstone cliffs up close and observe the many layers of compacted sand. The rock was pitted with holes where small pebbles had dislodged and weather had opened up where they had been sitting. Throughout the walk Roland pointed out many of the country's unique plants from ferns to the Elephant Foot flowering plant. On some of the trees shield bugs were packed in like ladybirds - most were bright shiny orange adults with a few larval forms, coloured like the bark of the stem. Roland found a huge spider living amongst the fronds of a *Pandanus* tree. A Madagascar Turtle Dove was feeding on the path and up in the trees large oval shaped ants nets were easy to spot. A green-yellow *Lynx* spider was camouflaged in a bush, and on the ground Madagascar's smallest Praying Mantis walked across the path. A spiky *Mimosa* tree entertained us as the leaves drew together when touched. As we neared the end of our walk a few Broad-billed Rollers were perched on the weather-carved sandstone rock. Flowering plants were in abundance including those of the Madagascan variety of Periwinkle, *Cathantus ovalis* var. *grandiflora* with bright pink flowers. The Elephant Plants were also sporting their yellow flowers. In the stream a dark brown, leaf-like frog *Mantidactylus redimitus* was hiding in the water. Other birds included Crested Drongo, Madagascar Bulbul, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Yellow-billed Kite, Madagascar Hoopoe, Madagascar Bee-eater, Cattle Egret and Madagascar Coucal.

At 7pm we had another delicious dinner, during which we headed out to the front steps where the night security men had found a snake - it was a beautiful, uncommon snake called the Madagascar Southern Night Snake and had grey-brown chequered skin. They hunt for frogs and was probably sensing the rain. During dinner a deluge of rain came down but stopped in time when we were ready to return to our rooms. Just before we did the checklist the security men had found another night treat - a roosting Benson's Rock Thrush under the eaves just outside the window of the restaurant. We finally paid our bills and headed to bed to be ready for an early start at 4.30am.

Day 9

Saturday 17th October

Zombitse National Park and Antsokay Arboretum of Toliara

We set off at first light at 5am with Venus showing brightly in the night sky and White-throated Rails calling from nearby. Twenty minutes before we reached the Zombitse National Park we stopped briefly at a river, reedbed, and paddies to see a Green-backed Heron, a Madagascar Pond Heron, a few Squacco Herons, three Black-crowned Night Herons, a flock of Red-billed Teal in flight, and Cattle Egrets coming out of roost to feed on the paddies. Black Swifts and African Palm Swifts were feeding low over the reedbeds, and four Madagascar Coucals were amongst the trees and reeds, some calling. Just before we left a flock of 20 Grey-headed Lovebirds flew into a naked tree.

We passed expanses of open land where the woodland has been removed for firewood, slash and burn for Zebu, and mining for sapphires. Villages have turned into large, poor conurbations as people have flocked to the areas to be part of the business. Standing out in the middle of nowhere were Baobab trees, once surrounded by scrub and other trees. As we came over the brow of a hill (with some low mist) the sterile land suddenly became good quality dry deciduous forest known as the Zombitse National Park (and where the Baobab trees were more naturally nestled amongst natural vegetation), and by 7am we were at the park and meeting our guide Randrie. Cuckoo-rollers were calling all around us; two Madagascar

Green Pigeons flew past and a kestrel was perched nearby. Something was on the brow of the road hill ahead - as we focused on it we realised it was in fact a Fosa, a top predator that eats lemurs and is rarely encountered due to its elusive and nocturnal behaviour. We were all incredibly excited.

We wandered in to this special woodland looking at a variety of trees, including baobabs, and a tree with thin, peeling bark known as the Tourist Tree (as its skin peels like sunburnt western tourists). There were ant-lion burrows all over the path - the soil made from very coarse quartz grains. Common Jerys and Newtonias called around us, as did a Madagascar Hoopoe, sounding like the purring of a dove.

As we explored the woodland Randrie pointed out a hole in a tree where a rare snake, the Fandrefiala Snake, was poking its head out. It was the same pattern as the tree bark - it was remarkable how he found it! A little further along we saw a Marbled Emerald Day Gecko hiding in the fork of a baobab tree - it had grown a new stumpy tail. Nearby two Madagascar Turtle Doves, a Crested Drongo, a Crested Coua and a hoopoe were perched.

Next we saw a Verreaux's Sifaka feeding by itself before swinging through the trees away from us - its family was nearby somewhere. Meanwhile we walked on to see a Hubbard's (or Zombitse) Sportive Lemur at its roost tree,

sat right out of its tree crevice. About the size of a small cat, this nocturnal lemur was sandy brown with large big eyes staring straight at us before it hunkered down into its hole.

A little further along we came across three other Verreaux's Sifakas feeding on the leaves at the top of a tree. The single sifaka we saw earlier, with a distinctive bare patch on its tail, reappeared as we headed back giving closer views in better light.

On the ground Claude pointed out some Wild Boar droppings and the scats of a Fosa containing the grey-brown fur from a sportive lemur. Various moulted coua tail feathers were found along the track. A male Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher of the white phase variety was sat on a tiny thimble-like nest; and in the crevice of a baobab tree a Hook-billed Vanga was sat on its nest. The bird's hooked upper mandible was clearly visible. As we neared the end a Long-billed Tetraka sang from the top of a tree and a Madagascar Giant Swallowtail flew past the bus. Just before we left, while having snacks in the bus, another troop of Verreaux's Sifakas climbed into a tree near the roadside. This species has a 'vulnerable' conservation status and it was good to see so many in this one area. We watched up to seven adults - a female had a young baby on her back too. They were feeding on the fresh leaf buds. Many of the sifakas have white fur and a dark red-brown cap, but some of these, through natural variation, had much dark-brown backs around their shoulder blades.

We headed further west towards the coast past cotton fields, stands of cashew nut trees and degraded grassland that used to be woodland - the odd standing baobab tree is a reminder of what was once here. We passed very poor villages with simple wattle and daub huts - in the west they have the least rainfall in the whole country.

After driving for a few hours we arrived at Antsokay Arboretum of Toliara. After lunch and close sightings of a pair of Madagascar Magpie Robins nesting nearby, Subdesert Brush Warbler and a female Suimanga Sunbird, we headed for an hour's walk around the arboretum. Our guide Jeanto showed us a whole selection of local spiny forest trees including xerophytic plants such as *Kalanchoe*, *Pachypodium* and *Euphorbias*.

It was a great opportunity to see how these xerophytic plants have adapted to the hot, dry environment by developing thick, succulent leaves and a bulb-like root system that stores water. Meanwhile, there was plenty of birdlife including chiffchaff-like Common Jerys. On the ground a Green-capped Coua, a speciality here, was dealing with a locust by removing all the legs and head before wandering off with the main body. Later we saw it again, preening. A pair of Madagascar Button Quails was scratching around in the leaves, the male very striking, but both very well camouflaged. Even closer was a sleeping adult Madagascar Nightjar looking like a log amongst the leaf litter. Earlier, just as we had started our walk, Jeanto had pointed out two well-grown baby nightjars also sleeping amongst the leaves and staying very well hidden. This was the first time most of us had seen a nightjar up so close.

There were a few reptiles around too: two grey-coloured geckos, a very obliging Spiny-tailed Iguanid, and a black Spiny-backed Chameleon with distinctive white streaks along its sides. Its armoured head and spines reminded us of the dinosaur Triceratops.

A highlight was seeing a mum and baby Reddish Grey Mouse Lemur snuggled together in a type of *Euphorbia* tree, occasionally looking up with their big eyes. They had furry bodies, distinctive, fleshy toes and fingers, and tails that curled right across their faces.

We left the gardens at 3.30pm and headed for our coastal hotel along a bumpy track which is the main road Number 9. We stopped at an open salt marsh pool finding half a dozen Kittlitz's Plovers, eight Black-winged Stilts, a Curlew Sandpiper, and unusually for such open habitat, a Greater Painted Snipe.

At 5pm we arrived at our beach hotel and quickly settled into our separate beach cabins before meeting for dinner at 7pm. It was windy outside and the sea a little choppy. After dinner, nightjars were calling and a Big-headed Gecko (juvenile) joined us for the checklist, courtesy of John who found it in the toilets.

Day 10

Sunday 18th October

Ifaty

Today we met at 5am and enjoyed a morning cup of tea or coffee from some flasks that had been left out for us. Madagascar Nightjars were still calling as the light came up. Venus, Jupiter and Mars were all on show in the night sky. Half an hour along the very bumpy and puddled road we arrived at Reniala spiny forest reserve to admire both the plant and bird life.

As we walked along the sandy track to the reserve we didn't have to go far to find some wildlife at first light. As the red sun rose adjacent to a baobab tree in the foreground a Stripe-throated Jery sang near the bus. A hoopoe was foraging amongst the plants and a pair of Turtle Doves was amongst the octopus trees. John was exploring the nooks and crannies of a tree and found a real star insect - the Madagascar Hissing Cockroach. This is an insect often used in zoos for children to handle but these were the 'real McCoy'. A female was most obvious in the tree hole but a torch shone into the cavity revealed a whole colony resting up after a night out - their trail prints were all over the sand. Madagascar Coucal began to call and a flock of 15 lovebirds flew overhead. Those of us at the back of the group also saw a Spine-tiled Swift flying low over the trees showing off its nightjar-like flight, more rounded wings and pale rump compared to the other swifts we had seen.

As we entered the reserve we were surrounded by various baobab trees including the oldest which was huge, measuring 13 metres in circumference, and 1,200 years old. There were also false baobab trees and many different xerophytic trees with leaves, stems and roots very well adapted to the hot environment. The main plants that dominated here were the spiny octopus trees. Being the dry season, most were lacking any green leaves poking out from the spines but were no less impressive, rising up like octopus tentacles with many thorns inches in length. Some were just beginning to grow their bright green leaves.

Our first star of the day was a group of roosting Subdesert Mesites - these jay-size birds were all huddled together in a line on the branch of a *Euphorbia* tree; five males and five females. The males had white breasts with black spots while the females had brown spots that merged together to form splotches. The group of mesites stayed very still in the hope we hadn't spotted them.

The next bird we saw was a Running Coua. Like other couas, it had bright blue skin around its eye, and it was walking along the ground in front of us and calling. At the same time three Sickle-billed Vangas, black and white birds with incredible down-curved bills, were pecking into baobab fruits foraging for insects.

Souimanga Sunbirds were calling and singing all over the place while Common Jerys were also in every other bush to begin with. Two house martin-like Chabert's Vangas were feeding in the trees and a Subdesert Tetraka was heard singing briefly. An overturned log revealed a small scorpion hiding underneath.

Our next bird was another of our key target species; a Long-tailed Ground Roller. This Magpie-size ground feeding bird was five or six metres away, showing off his beautiful patterns and colours - almost nightjar-like colours with a blue wing patch and black and white throat/neck markings. In the leaf litter it almost disappeared. Nearby John found a Red Clear-winged Butterfly.

A little further along a Green-capped Coua showed well in a tree, sun bathing - it was lowering its wings and exposing its fluffy back. The couas are a type of cuckoo and, with good views of the head, bill shape and their zygodactyl toes (two point forward and two point back), you can see their cuckoo characteristics. Further on Sheila found two hoopoes feeding on the ground while John found a Three-eyed Lizard - the fake eye is on the top of its head to fool would be predators.

The crème de la crème was not just one but a pair of Banded Kestrels, which are rare birds. The female was clearly larger than the male as they perched on octopus trees. As their name suggests, they have a dark grey plumage with dark bars on their back, a banded belly and yellow eyes. They stood tall and upright, and were a little hawk-like in appearance. When we first saw just the female she was incredibly camouflaged - her plumage amongst the grey lichens that grow on the branches of the baobab trees that they inhabit. The male at one point swooped down above some of our heads to land just behind us before returning to his original perch. We think they were probably starting to nest nearby. For comparison we had also seen a female Madagascar Kestrel up close in a baobab tree a little earlier.

Suddenly, in a nearby flowering tree, a Lesser Vasa Parrot was spotted - another had been seen in silhouette earlier, but this one was in the sunshine and showing well. The dark body is in fact sooty grey and the wing feathers have hints of green colour. It was feeding on the nectar of the flowers and the pollen was sticking to the feathers of its forehead turning them yellow. After a short while we realised a second parrot was feeding in the same tree nearby. At one point the first parrot flew over our heads revealing its long tail and slim build. A White-headed Vanga joined in the feeding, while a Hook-billed Vanga was hiding in a nearby bush. Three more Sickle-billed Vangas were feeding in a baobab tree; by this point cicadas were warmed up and singing. Back at the centre building a Marbled Emerald Day Gecko was resting on the underside of the top of the thatched roof.

We arrived back at the bus at 9am after an amazing morning exploring what is hidden amongst the spiny forest. A giant Madagascan Swallowtail Butterfly flew by as we boarded the bus. After a late breakfast of fresh fruit, pastries and tea or coffee we had the rest of morning to explore the beach or rest before meeting for lunch at 1.30pm. A few of us had seen Three-eyed Lizards and Peter's Dwarf Plated Lizards during the afternoon, the latter only found in this particular area of Madagascar. A lucky few also saw and touched a Dumerel's Ground Boa snake that had been resting under the dining room and came out onto the paving. It was a metre and a half long with beautiful patterning to keep it hidden in the bush.

At 4pm we met together and headed out to the nearby brackish pools and salt pans finding Kittlitz's Plover, three Three-banded Plovers, Greenshank, Whimbrel, Common Sandpiper, a few Curlew Sandpipers, Ringed Plover, two White-fronted Plovers and a Common Sandpiper. Meanwhile, on the beach at low tide two

Whimbrels, a few Turnstones, Ringed Plover, White-fronted Plover and a Grey Plover were seen. The beach was full of many different seashells and sea urchin shells. On closer inspection of the wet sand, the sensitive small tentacles of sand worms formed individual circles all across the low tide zone.

At 6.30pm we met with the security and gardeners for a walk around the hotel grounds as it got dark. We saw a Fandrefiala Snake in a tree and a Madagascar Nightjar sat on the pathway in front of us. It was a bit breezy for the mouse lemurs but in the night sky we did spot the planet Saturn. We finished off the day in the restaurant for dinner, and were entertained by a local band with dancers using homemade guitars and drums.

Day 11

Monday 19th October

Transfer to Tana and on to Andasibe

After a relatively later start we had breakfast at 8am and then headed out at 10am, back along the bumpy road towards the airport. While Claude sorted out our luggage at the airport we ate lunch at a nearby hotel. On display and to touch were two eggs of the extinct Elephant Bird – a bird that once lived in Madagascar 300 years ago. The eggs that are as big as a dinner plate have been pieced together from fragments found together.

We caught the 3.15pm flight to Tana. Along the way the flight took us over mountains, dried rivers, and open country - a chance to see just how much forest has disappeared but was present in the mountain canyons and parts of the countryside. We landed just after 5.15pm, met our new driver Fidy, bought some water and travelled the next four hours to Andasibe. On arrival at Tana airport we had a sudden temperature change from the very hot, dry south to a cool and wet Tana (though still 23 degrees Celsius). Mascarene Martins were feeding low over the airport and a wagtail had a beak full of insects.

We headed east in the dark and heavy rain, arriving at our destination where the rain had stopped around 11pm. Just before stopping Ed spotted a Barn Owl in tree. We had a quick supper before being shown to our rooms, some seeing a few Crossley's Dwarf Lemurs along the way. Frogs were beeping around us.

Day 12

Tuesday 20th October

Andasibe-Mantadia

Today we met for breakfast at 7am and left at 8am. Ward's Vanga, bulbuls, Crested Drongo and white-eyes were all feeding around the gardens. Mascarene Martins were visiting nests under the eaves of the reception building and the odd one was singing from a lodge roof. At breakfast a Madagascar Kingfisher was perched on a nearby tree over the lake.

We headed down the road to the entrance of Analamazaotra nature reserve, part of the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, and met our guide Florin and his assistant Lalaina. Around the car park we spotted a kite spider, four feeding Lesser Vasa Parrots and a Common Brown Lemur.

As we started to walk around we could hear the far travelling sound of the largest lemur, the endangered Indri - it was an incredibly eerie howling sound. There were many birds around including two Spectacled Tetrakas, a Red-fronted Coua, a few approachable Blue Couas, Madagascar Magpie Robin, coucals, bulbuls, brush warblers,

a Spine-tailed Swift and Madagascar Wood Rail. We heard the lovely song of Rand's Tetraka as well as the calls of cuckoo, Hook-billed Vanga and Red-tailed Vanga.

Near the beginning of the walk we had a real treat as we approached two Madagascar Tree Boas sunning themselves on some grassy vegetation, their skin shiny with an oily blue sheen. Along the walk we also saw a species of tree frog within the fronds of a Screw Pine tree, various fungi, a Lined Day Gecko and some orchids.

With Indri calling in the background we headed towards a known family group. They had already dropped down into an area too steep for us, so we headed to another nearer family group. We suddenly came across three black, white and grey teddy-like lemurs; the Indri. There were six in total; a few feeding up high but most resting and sleeping with their heads down. We were able to appreciate their long legs, tiny tail stump and black, fluffy ears. They were also well camouflaged, all curled up against a tree. Before we left them the group began to call incredibly loudly all around us - it was remarkable. Even the sleepest Indri lifted its head to join in before snoozing again.

A short walk away we encountered our third lemur for the day, a family of five endangered Diademed Sifakas. These beautiful, golden sifakas were busy feeding up in the trees. One female had a baby. The dominant male moved away from the group giving separate, more open views. He and a few of the others had radio collars around their necks to help understand more about where these animals roam.

After enjoying the sifakas for some time we headed on to our last lemur of the day, the Eastern Woolly Lemur or Fotsyfa in Malagasay, meaning white-thighed lemur. Four plus a baby were huddled together, fitting together like spoons, on a tree branch showing off their white thighs. We could see the odd eye and head poking out.

As we headed back for lunch, Florin took us along a path to see a special ground-dwelling bird. Camouflaged in the leaf litter were two Collared Nightjars sat side by side. It is incredible that anybody ever spotted these cryptic and little known birds.

We arrived back at the bus just before 1pm and travelled a short distance down the road to our lunch spot by a pool and forest. A kingfisher was perched on a nearby island, Indris called in the background, and Claude pointed out the impressively long, dangling cocoon of the Madagascar Comet Moth hanging from a distant tree.

After a few hours rest, half the group met again at 5.45pm and headed to our night walk back at the national park for 6.15pm. It had been raining but was easing off. We met our guide Pierre and headed into a reserve, one of very few that you can enter at night. We saw a whole variety of night life including a Crossley's Dwarf Lemur staring down at us, two Eastern Woolly Lemurs cuddling together, one young Parson's Chameleon, two baby and very small Nose-horned Chameleons, a cricket with long leg and long antennae, a leaf litter frog, a frog hiding in a pool of water within a tree hole, a white slug, a sleeping Citrus Swallowtail butterfly, and two stick insects. We could hear bats around us plus all sorts of wonderful beeping, creaking and croaking sounds of the many different types of frogs.

Day 13

Wednesday 21st October

Andasibe-Mantadia

After breakfast and spotting Madagascar Kingfisher, Purple Heron (John and Celia) and Mascarene Martins by the pool, we had a 70-minute drive along a bumpy track to Analagodri, part of the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, gradually venturing further into good quality primary forest. At the entrance where we stopped for our tickets four Red-billed Teals were circling over the wet paddy fields nearby. We spent a few hours with our guides Florin and Lalaina, first spotting some big swallowtail, and small brown and blue butterflies around the sun-exposed puddles near where we arrived. The ground was covered in bottle green Pill Millipedes - they were out in abundance and many were dying off after recently laying eggs. If picked up they rolled into a ball, their segments joining together with complete perfection.

We made our way through the forest admiring the Bird's Nest Ferns, array of fungi, mature large trees and small insects. We stopped at a Screw Pine Tree. Perched below the fronds where the older, dead brown leafy bits lay, was a very well hidden Eastern Rainforest Scops Owl. Its plumage made it completely disappear; the body was transacted by a dead tree frond making it even more difficult to see. The owl had raised its ear tufts and was looking straight down at us. Our first and new lemur for the day was the Red-bellied Lemur – a female with a baby was difficult to see as she moved through the trees. A little while later we had better views by the stream – her thick, red-brown coat was very distinctive. Nearby, a male came to join her with his distinctive white eye patches before they disappeared, the baby poking its head out of its mum's fur.

A short walk later most of the group caught a short glimpse of a Black and White Ruffed Lemur before it continued on in the canopy where they feed. On a tree low down we watched an orange Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher which feeds on small insects and frogs in the forest. Lalaina had found a leaf litter frog - a small yellow frog hidden amongst the leaves out on the open path. A little earlier he had also found a Lowland Streaked Tenrec, a small hedgehog-like insectivore with black and blond streaks. We just had enough time to admire the small mammal's prickly form before it scuttled into the cover - Lalaina was left with a hand full of tiny spines! Our final bird before we left was a jackdaw-size Short-legged Ground Roller. Unlike other ground rollers this species spends more time in the trees, and this one was indeed sat out on a perch. It was a stunning brown and white bird with the white colours marked beautifully on the edge of its feathers. Nearby a Blue Coua was hanging around too.

We headed on to a small lake ten minutes walk away. These forest lakes are very rare and the water life that inhabits them is endangered. So it was with real excitement and relief to see Meller's Ducks surviving and living here - we saw six but Florin had counted ten when he ventured further round the water. There are thought to be only between 2,000 and 5,000 left in the wild. They are dark brown ducks with no sexual dimorphism so both the males and females look like a female duck. They have light grey bills, orange legs and shiny green secondary feathers. The three pairs were chasing each other a little and then settled to preen and sleep. A few Moorhens were swimming around the lake and three Madagascar Little Grebes, two adults and one well-grown baby, were resting and swimming around.

Two Madagascar Starlings were perched in a tree near a couple of bee-eaters. As a buzzard flew overhead two Lesser Vasa Parrots flew out in angst. Madagascar Swamp Warblers showed well as they foraged and at least one male was singing by the water's edge. Another was moving around with nest material in its bill. A Spine-tailed

Swift flew between the trees and Mascarene Martins fed overhead and dipped down to the water for a drink. A pair of stonechats were nearby, the male showing particularly well - his black head and brick red-orange chest very obvious. John also found a Madagascar Girdled Lizard and a Dwarf Plated Lizard. We ate our packed lunch here and headed back, by foot or car, to our original starting point just up the road before travelling back to our hotel, arriving back around 4pm. We had a rest for a few hours, some spotting Madagascar White-eyes and a few Lesser Vasa Parrots.

We met again at 5.45pm and headed down to Antsirabe for an hour's night walk. What a fantastic walk it was. We saw our first Short-horned Chameleon curled up on a branch. Two frogs *Boophis viridis* then followed; bright green frogs with pale blue bellies, sat on leaves. A ghostly Barn Owl flew across the road, a Madagascar Long-eared Owl called in the distance, and at least two Madagascar Scops Owls hooted. Two Crossley's Dwarf Lemurs, including a male, were spotted feeding on the nectar of cream yellow tree flowers of *Strongylodon* sp. in a tree giving us the opportunity to appreciate their size, fur colour, big eyes and thick long tails. A little further along up to three Goodman's Mouse Lemurs were scurrying around in a different tree also offering nectar via much darker, redder flowers of *Cryptocarya densiflora*. They were so quick you could blink and miss them. As we continued along we enjoyed listening to the various bleeps, ticks and dripping sounds of frogs 'singing'. Before we got on the bus we heard at least three different Madagascar Crested Ibises making some odd sounds from the darkness of the forest.

Day 14

Thursday 22nd October

Andasibe-Mantadia and transfer to Tana

Around the hotel at breakfast we enjoyed close views of the Mascarene Martins perching under the eaves of the main reception building. A few photographed a pair of Madagascar Kingfishers, the male offering his mate a fish. Paradise flycatcher, drongo and wagtails were also seen, while Glyn and Rosemary watched a kestrel catch a gecko from a palm frond by the lake.

After checking out we headed down the road, stopping on the way to pick up our guides. They asked us to get out of the bus and in a matter of five minutes we saw two Madagascar Green Pigeons, half a dozen Lesser Vasa Parrots, and a troop of Common Brown Lemurs making their way through the trees. The real highlight was a very cryptic reptile. Florin got us to look very hard, and after a few minutes people began to see it. The animal was an incredibly disguised Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko lying along the trunk of a small tree.

We continued down the road to order our lunch and then stopped at the Analamazaotra nature reserve that we had visited a few days earlier. We first visited some bushes to get close views of a male and a female Short-horned Chameleon and a young Nose-horned Chameleon.

As the rain came down we headed into the forest seeing a male magpie robin, a Long-billed Tetraka and a wood rail. We could hear Indris calling and saw a family of Diademed Sifakas. We saw three to begin with, and then close by another four were feeding. We enjoyed watching these honey-coloured sifakas as they climbed on to trees while reaching out to munch on leaves. A few Broad-billed Rollers were calling above and then the sifakas suddenly split and made alarm calls - something above had spooked them. Individuals came within a few metres above us and gave us the chance to see how they use their enlarged, round, flattened opposable thumbs and big toes.

As we headed back, a few species of tree frogs were spotted in a Screw Pine tree and a Green Sunbird was heard calling. We had close views of a Madagascar Coucal, and just as we thought we were finished we encountered a group of six to ten Common Brown Lemurs feeding on low vegetation right but the path. Ed first discovered them by hearing their grunting calls, and one or two came within a metre of the group.

We arrived back at 12pm and headed for our lunch spot where Indri were calling in the background. We set off for Tana at 12.50pm, spending just over four hours on the road with stops, passing through a range of habitats and settlements along the way. We stopped in Tana at a few artisan shops to buy souvenirs from chocolate to hats, and then headed through the city centre to our hotel. We had fascinating views of the city as it wound down for the day, passing the central lake and park and admiring the jacaranda trees in full purple bloom. As dusk fell small groups of Great Egrets flew over buildings on their way to roost and as it got even darker a few Black-crowned Night Herons also made an appearance. Driving down the side roads we saw a busy, bustling Tana with lots of small street shops and restaurants selling everything from fruit to meat; grain to spare bike parts.

We spent the evening at our hotel where we also dined before heading to the airport at 11.30pm, ready for our 2.30am flight (delayed from 1.40am). On arrival, Claude pointed out a kingfisher in a car park tree with his torch as well as a flock of Madagascar Fodys including the odd male now developing its red belly. Check in and security were straightforward and relatively quick, and we boarded our plane to Paris with onward connections to different parts of Britain.

Day 15

Friday 23rd October

During our overnight flight some of us close to a window enjoyed beautiful views of the snow-capped mountains of the Italian Alps and the golden forests in the alpine valleys. At Paris we headed for our different flight connections back to the UK where another Naturetrek adventure came to an end. A huge thanks to everyone for their wonderful and diverse contributions, interests and company.

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Species Lists

Lemurs (C= Captivity/semi-wild; H = Heard; S = Signs of)

	Common name	Scientific name	October														
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
1	Brown (Rufous) Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>	C		1												
2	Goodman's Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus lehilahytsara</i>													3		
3	Grey-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>								2							
4	Greater Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogalus major</i>	C														
5	Crossley's (Furry-eared) Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogalus crossleyi</i>											2	3	3		
6	Hubbard's (Zombitse) Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur hubbardi</i>								1							
7	Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur griseus griseus</i>	C														
8	Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur (Ranomafana subspecies)	<i>Hapalemur griseus ranomafanensis</i>			2												
9	Golden Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>				1											
10	Greater Bamboo Lemur	<i>Plemur simus</i>			2												
11	Ring-tailed Lemur	<i>Lemur catta</i>	3				20	30			C						
12	Common Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>	1			4							1	15			
13	Red-fronted Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur rufus</i>	1			4		6									
14	Red-bellied Lemur	<i>Eulemur rubriventer</i>													3		
15	Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata variegata</i>	4			1									1		
16	Eastern Woolly Lemur	<i>Avahi laniger</i>												7			
17	Golden-crowned Sifaka	<i>Propithecus tattersalli</i>	3														
18	Verreaux's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>								12+							
19	Diademed Sifaka	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>											6	7			
20	Milne-Edwards' Sifaka	<i>Propithecus edwardsi</i>			5												
21	Coquerel's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus coquereli</i>	4														
22	Indri	<i>Indri indri</i>												6	H		
23	Aye-aye	<i>Daubentonia madagascariensis</i>												S			

Other Mammals

1	Fosa	<i>Cryptoprocta ferox</i>								1							
2	Ring-tailed Mongoose	<i>Galadia elegans</i>			1												
3	Lowland Streaked Tenrec	<i>Hemicentetes semispinosus</i>													1		

	Common name	Scientific name	October														
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
4	Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat	<i>Hipposideros commersons</i>	2														
5	Black Rat	<i>Rattus rattus</i>		1						1							
6	Bush Pig	<i>Potamochoerus larvatus</i>								S							

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

1	Madagascar Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus pelzelinii</i>															3		
2	Common Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	3																
3	Madagascar Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola idae</i>								1	1								
4	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		5						3								3	
5	Green-backed Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>						1		1									
6	Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	20	20				6					6					12	
7	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	6	15					6	20			6					6	
8	Black Egret	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>																1	
9	Dimorphic Heron	<i>Egretta dimorpha</i>	10	200				6										2	
10	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		1					3										
11	Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	1	2				1										1	
12	Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>		44						15								4	
13	Meller's Duck	<i>Anas melleri</i>																10	
14	Madagascar Buzzard	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>		1					H							1	1		
15	Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptus</i>	1	6	1			4	6	6	2								
16	Banded Kestrel	<i>Falco zoniventris</i>											2						
17	Madagascar Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>		4			2	4	4	6	4	3						2	
18	Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>						1											
19	Madagascar Wood Rail	<i>Canirallus kiolooides</i>														1		1	
20	Madagascar Button-quail	<i>Turnix nigricollis</i>							1	2									
21	White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>							1	H									
22	Madagascar Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>				H													
23	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>																2	
24	Greater Painted Snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>								1									
25	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>										2							
26	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>								12									

	Common name	Scientific name	October													
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
27	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>									2					
28	Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>								6	6	2				
29	White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>									3					
30	Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>									3					
31	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>									3					
32	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>									1					
33	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	2													
34	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>								1	2					
35	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>					2	1	4	2	2					
37	Madagascar Green Pigeon	<i>Treron australis</i>								2					2	
38	Madagascar Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia picturata</i>					H	1	2	6					1	
39	Grey-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis canus</i>					5	2	20	15						
40	Lesser Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>			H	H		1		3		4	2	10		
41	Madagascar Coucal	<i>Centropus toulou</i>			1	H	H	2	4	H		1		1		
42	Madagascar Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>	H	H	6 H	H		H				H	H	H		
43	Green-capped Coua	<i>Coua olivaceiceps</i>								1	1					
44	Running Coua	<i>Coua cursor</i>									1					
45	Red-fronted Coua	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>			2	1						1				
46	Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>			H	1						2	1			
47	Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>								1						
48	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>												1		
49	Madagascar Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio madagascariensis</i>												H		
50	White-browed Owl	<i>Ninox supercilialis</i>							H							
51	African Marsh Owl	<i>Asio capensis</i>					1		1							
52	Rainforest Scops Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>		H		H								1		
53	Collared Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus enarratus</i>										2				
54	Madagascar Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>							3	H	H		1			
55	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>		2			1									
56	Madagascar Black Swift	<i>Apus balstoni</i>				8	3		15							

	Common name	Scientific name	October													
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
57	Madagascar Spine-tailed Swift	<i>Zoonavena grandidieri</i>									1		1	1		
58	African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>			6	6	6	2	4							
59	Mascarene Martin	<i>Phedina borbonica</i>	6	20	4	2	6						20	20	20	
60	Madagascar Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo vintsioides</i>		1			1						2	2	3	
61	Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx madagascariensis</i>												1		
62	Madagascar Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>		3			7	2	4	2	4			2		
63	Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>				1		2					H	H	H	
64	Madagascar Cuckoo-Roller	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>			2	2			2				H	H		
65	Pitta-like Ground-Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>			H											
66	Long-tailed Ground-Roller	<i>Uratelornis chimaera</i>									1					
67	Velvet Asity	<i>Philepitta castanea</i>				1										
68	Madagascar Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>			2	2	2	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
69	Rand's Tetraka	<i>Randia pseudozosterops</i>			1	1							2	2		
70	Dusky Tetraka	<i>Xanthomixis tenebrosa</i>				2										
71	Long-billed Bernieria (Tetraka)	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>				1			1					H	1	
72	Spectacled Tetraka	<i>Bernieria zosterops</i>											2			
73	Subdesert Tetraka	<i>Thamnornis chloropetoides</i>									H					
74	Madagascar Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus albospectularis</i>			H	2	4		2	H			2	1	1	
75	Madagascar Hoopoe	<i>Upupa marginata</i>						1	1	3						
76	Benson's Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola sharpei bensoni</i>						1								
77	Madagascar Stonechat	<i>Saxicola sibilla</i>		2			2	1	1					2	2	
78	Madagascar Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>	5	6	2	1	1	2				1	2	2	2	
79	Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone mutata</i>			1	1			2	1			2	1	2	
80	Ward's Vanga	<i>Pseudobias wardi</i>											1			
81	Common Newtonia	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>			H				2H							
82	Madagascar Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cherina</i>						2	2	H	2					
83	Madagascar Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra hova</i>								2						
84	Madagascar Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus newtoni</i>												2		
85	Madagascar Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas typica</i>	H		H	1							H	H	H	
86	Subdesert Brush Warbler	<i>Nesillas lantzii</i>							2		2					
87	Common Jery	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>	1		H		3	5	2	6						
88	Stripe-throated Jery	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>								2		✓				

	Common name	Scientific name	October												
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
89	Madagascar White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>	6		H								8	✓	
90	Madagascar Green Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia notata</i>					1		1	1					2
91	Souimanga Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia sovimanga</i>	4	H		H			2	2	12	✓	✓	✓	
92	Nuthatch Vanga	<i>Hypositta corallirostris</i>			H										
93	Chabert's Vanga	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>									2				
94	White-headed Vanga	<i>Artamella viridis</i>						1							
95	Sickle-billed Vanga	<i>Falcolea palliata</i>									3				
96	Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>			H	2							H	H	
97	Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>							1	1			H		
98	Madagascar Cuckoo Shrike	<i>Coracina cinerea</i>						2	1						
99	Madagascar Starling	<i>Saroglossa aurata</i>												2	
100	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
101	Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>			1		1	6	2	3	2	2	1	1	
102	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>		6			30	8	10	✓	✓				
103	Madagascar Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	✓									✓			
104	Forest Fody	<i>Foudia eminentissima</i>					1								
105	Sakalava Weaver	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>							10	2					
106	Nelicourvi Weaver	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>				1								1	
107	Madagascar Mannikin	<i>Lonchura nana</i>					30								

Reptiles & Amphibians (C = Captivity/in pen)

1	Tree Frog	<i>Guibemantis pulcher</i>											1		3	
2	Tree Frog	<i>Guibemantis liber</i>													1	
3	Tree Frog	<i>Heterixalus alboguttatus</i>		1												
4	Tree Frog	<i>Heterixalus betsileo</i>			4											
5	Tree Frog	<i>Boophis madagascariensis</i>		1	H	3										
6	Frog	<i>Boophis majori</i>			1											
7	Frog	<i>Mantella alba</i>			1											
8	Tree Frog	<i>Aglypodactylus madagascariensis</i>											1	1		
9	Frog	<i>Anathodonthohyla librisa</i>											1			
10	Frog	<i>Mantidactylus redimitus</i>						1								
11	Broad-browed Chameleon	<i>Brookesia superciliaris</i>			2										1	

	Common name	Scientific name	October													
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
12	O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon	<i>Calumma oshaughnessyi</i>		3	2											
13	Short-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma brevicornis</i>										1		3		
14	Parson's Chameleon	<i>Calumma parsonii</i>			1	1										
15	Nose-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma nasuta</i>										2				
16	Blue-legged Chameleon	<i>Calumma crypticum</i>		2	1	1										
17	Short-nosed Chameleon	<i>Calumma gastrotaenia</i>			1	1									3	
18	Oustalet's Chameleon	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>	5				4	2								
19	Glaw's Chameleon	<i>Calumma glaw</i>			1											
20	Spiny-backed Chameleon	<i>Furcifer verrucosus</i>								1						
21	Three-eyed Lizard	<i>Chalerodon madagascariensis</i>									2					
22	Spiny-tailed Iguanid	<i>Oplurus cyclurus</i>	1					6	1							
23	Four-lined Iguanid	<i>Oplurus quadrimaculatus</i>							6							
24	Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus phantasticus</i>			1	1										
25	Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus sikorae</i>														1
26	Dwarf Plated Lizard	<i>Tracheloptychus madagascariensis</i>					1							1		
27	Peter's Dwarf Plated Lizard	<i>Tracheloptychus petersii</i>									2					
28	House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>				1							1			
29	Lined Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata bifasciata</i>		1	1	2						1	1			
30	Four-eyed Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>			2	4										
31	Marbled Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma standingi</i>							1	1						
32	Changeable Emerald Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma mutabilis</i>							2	1						
33	Gecko	<i>Phelsuma leiogaster</i>										1				
34	Gecko	<i>Phelsuma hielscheri</i>						1								
35	Big-headed Gecko	<i>Paroedura picta</i>							1							
36	Lizard/skink	<i>Trachylepis nancycoutuae</i>						1								
37	Lizard/skink	<i>Trachypelis aureopunctatus</i>							1							
38	Ornate Girdled Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus ornatus</i>	1													
39	Madagascar Girdled Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus madagascariensis</i>				1								1		
40	House Gecko	<i>Gehyra mutilata</i>		2	1						1					
41	Big-eyed Grass Snake	<i>Mimophis mahafalensis</i>										1				
42	Madagascar Tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>											1			
43	Dumerel's (Ground) Boa	<i>Acrantophis dumerlii</i>									1					

	Common name	Scientific name	October													
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
44	Red-bellied Grass Snake	<i>Liopholidophis rhadinaea</i>			2											
45	Madagascan Southern Night Snake	<i>Madagascarophis meridionalis</i>						1								
46	Fandrefiala Snake (Zebu-killing Snake)	<i>Ithycyphus miniatus</i>						1								
47	Blond Hognose Snake	<i>Leioheterodon modestus</i>						S		S						
48	Bell's Hinged Tortoise	<i>Kinixys belliana</i>	C													
49	Radiated Tortoise	<i>Geochelone radiata</i>	C					C	C	C						
50	Spider Tortoise	<i>Pyxis arachnoids</i>	C						C							

Butterflies

African Swallowtail, *Papilio dardanus*

Citrus Swallowtail, *Papilio demodocus*

Swallowtail sp., *Papilio delalandei*

Swallowtail sp., *Papilio mangoura*

Madagascar Giant Swallowtail, *Pharmacophagus antenor*

brown species of butterfly, *Junonia goudotii*

Brilliant Blue, *Junonia rhadema*

African Monarch, *Danaus chrysippus*

orange species of butterfly, *Acraea zija*

Small Yellow Grass, *Eurema brigitta*

Malagasy Grass Yellow, *Eurema floricola*

Angled Grass Yellow, *Eurema desjardinsii*

brown species of butterfly, *Strabena sp*

forest species of butterfly, *Saribia tepahi*

Red Clearwing Butterfly, *Acraea lia*

white and red-winged butterfly, *Colotis sp.*

small blue butterfly, Lycaeridae family

Moths

Suraka Silkmoth, *Antherina suraka*

Cabbage Tree Emperor Moth, *Bunaea alcinoe*

a dead Leaf Moth

Other Invertebrates

Red Darter type Dragonfly, *Trithemis selika*

Scarlet Darter, *Crocothemis erythaea*

Darter sp., *Crocothemis sp.*

Emperor Dragonfly, *Anax imperator*

Dragonfly, *Anax tumorifer*

Spreadwing, *Lestes ochraceus*

Dragonfly, *Zygonoidea sp.*

Blue damselfly, *Ischnura sp.*

Blue damselfly, *Azuragrion kanderni*

Dragonfly, *Orthetrum sp.*

Rainbow Locust, *Phymateus saxosus*

Praying Mantis (3+ species), *Mantis sp.*

a Stick Insect	Giraffe-necked Weevil, <i>Trachelophorus giraffa</i>	Flatid Leaf-bug, <i>Phromnia rosea</i>
Firefly, <i>Lampyridae</i> sp.	Pill Millipede (Green), <i>Sphaerotherium</i> sp.	Giant Black Millipede, <i>Archispirostreptus</i> sp.
Madagascar Fire Millipede, <i>Aphistogoniulus</i> sp.	Golden Orb-web Spider, <i>Nephila madagascariensis</i>	Orb-web Spider, <i>Nephila</i> sp.
Thorn Spider (Orange), <i>Gasteracanthinae</i> sp.	Lynx Spider, <i>Peucetia madagascariensis</i>	Scorpion, <i>Opisthacanthus</i> sp.
Shield Bugs	a Potter Wasp	Diving Beetles
a Cricket	a Giant Snail	a Digger Wasp
Rhinoceros Beetle, <i>Oryctes</i> sp.	Snout Bug, <i>Zanna tenebrosa</i>	a Cockroach
a Bush Cricket	a Field Cricket	Antlions
Madagascar Hissing Cockroach, <i>Gromphadorbina portentosa</i>		

Naturetrek Facebook

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Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!

Plants

RE = Reniala M = Mantadia I = Isalo
 Z = Zombitse RF = Ramanofana AG = Analagodri
 J = Jardin de Roy L = Lemur Park

Scientific name	Common name	Location
LYCOPODIOPSIDA		
CLUBMOSES & QUILLWORTS		
Lycopodiaceae		
<i>Lycopodium</i> sp.	-	✓
Selaginellaceae		
<i>Selaginella</i> sp.	-	RF
PTERIDOPHYTES		
FERNS & ALLIES		
Adiantaceae		
<i>Adiantopsis linearis</i>	Maidenhair Fern Family	RF, AG, M
Aspleniaceae		
<i>Asplenium nudis</i>	Spleenwort Family	RF, AG, M
Blechnaceae		
<i>Blechnum</i> sp.	Hard Fern Family A Hard Fern	RF, AG, M
Cyatheaceae		
<i>Cyathea</i> sp.	Tree Fern Family A Tree Fern	Three species RF, M, AG
Dennstaedtiaceae		
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken Family Bracken	RF, AG, M
Schizaeaceae		
<i>Lygodium</i> sp.	Climbing Fern Family -	RF, M
MAGNOLIIDAE (Dicotyledons)		
FLOWERING PLANTS		
Anacardiaceae		
<i>Operculicarya pachypus</i>	Sumac Family Elephants Skin	✓
<i>Protorhus abrahainia</i>	"Coffin" Tree	✓
Apocynaceae		
<i>Pachypodium rosulatum</i> ssp. <i>gracilis</i>	Periwinkle Family an Elephant's Foot	J
<i>Pachypodium rosulatum</i> ssp. <i>rosulatum</i>	an Elephant's Foot	J
<i>Petchia erythrocarpa</i>	-	J
<i>Catharanthus ovalis</i> var. <i>grandiflora</i>	-	J
Asclepiaceae		
<i>Folotsia madagascariensis</i>	Milkweed Family	RE, AG, M
<i>Pervilia veninata</i>	-	J
Asteraceae		
<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i>	Daisy Family -	RM
<i>Ageratum</i> sp.	-	T, M, AG, RM

Scientific name	Common name	Location
<i>Psiadia altissima</i>	-	RF, AG, M
<i>Psiadia angustifolia</i>	-	RF, AG, M
<i>Dicoma incarna</i>	-	I
Bombacaceae	Baobab Family	
<i>Adansonia rubrostipa</i>	Red-stipuled Baobab	RE
<i>Adansonia za</i>	-	RE
Buddlejaceae	Butterfly-bush Family	
<i>Buddleja madagascariensis</i>	-	RM, AG
Burseraceae		
<i>Commiphora simplicifolia</i>	Tourist Tree	Z
Cactaceae	Cactus Family	
<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>	Barbary Fig	RF, AG, M
<i>Rhipsalis baccifera subsp. mauritiana</i>	Mistletoe Cactus	M
Campanulaceae	Bellflower Family	
<i>Lobelia sp</i>	-	RM
Capparaceae		
<i>Maerua caffra</i>	-	A
Clusiaceae	St.John's-wort Family	
<i>Harunga madagascariensis</i>	-	RM
<i>Symphonia fasciculata</i>	-	RM, AG, M, X
Combretaceae	Comberetum Family	
<i>Terminalia matey</i>	-	X, RM
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop Family	
<i>Kalanchoe sp</i>	-	RM, AG, M
<i>Kalanchoe beharensis</i>	Napoleon's Hat	L
	Climbing <i>Kalanchoe</i> sp.	RM
Cunoniaceae	Weinmannia Family	
<i>Weinmannia sp</i>	-	RM, AG
Didiereaceae	Octopus Tree Family	
<i>Alluaudia procera</i>	-	RE
<i>Didierea madagascariensis</i>	Octopus tree	RE
<i>Didierea trollii</i>	-	
<i>Alluaudia comosa</i>	Umbrella Tree	
Droseraceae	Sundew Family	
<i>Drosera madagascariensis</i>	Sundew	RM
Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family	
<i>Alchornea greveana</i>	-	M
<i>Euphorbia stenoclada (E. famata)</i>	-	RE
<i>Uapaca bojeri</i>	Tapia	I
<i>Euphorbia sp.</i>	Balsa Tree	

Scientific name	Common name	Location
<i>Euphorbia prumifolia</i>		L
Fabaceae	Pea Family	
<i>Albizia gummifera</i>	-	J
<i>Crotalaria</i> sp. (Yellow)	-	I
<i>Dalbergia baronii</i>	Yellow Flame Tree	I
<i>Delonix decaryi</i>	-	RE
<i>Indigofera</i> sp.	-	RF
<i>Sesbania</i> sp.	-	I
<i>Strongylodon</i> sp.	-	M
Loranthaceae	Mistletoe Family	
<i>Bakerella</i> sp.	-	RM, AG, M
Lauraceae		
<i>Cassytha filiformis</i>		I
<i>Cryptocarya densiflora</i>		M
Melastomataceae	Melastoma Family	
<i>Clidemia hirta</i>		RM, AG, M
Meliaceae		
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Persian Lily	A
Mimosaceae	Acacia Family	
<i>Mimosa delicatula</i>		I
Monimiaceae	Schrameckia Family	
<i>Tambourissa</i> sp.	-	RM, AG, M
Moraceae	Fig Family	
<i>Ficus pyrifolia</i>	Strangler Fig	RF, M
<i>Ficus</i> sp.	-	RF, M, AG
<i>Ficus grevei</i>	-	I
Myrtaceae	Myrtle Family	
<i>Eugenia jambos</i>	-	RF, Z, AG
<i>Esc. Camaldulensis</i>		RF
<i>Psidium catalinum</i>	Chinese Guava	RM, AG, M
<i>Psidium guavanua</i>		RM, AG, M
Nymphaeaceae		
<i>Nymphaea</i> sp.	Water Lily	L, M
Oleaceae	Olive Family	
<i>Jasminum</i> sp.	Jasmine	RF
Passifloraceae	Passion Flower Family	
<i>Adenia olaboiensis</i>	-	RE
<i>Passiflora</i> sp.	-	AG, M
Pedaliaceae	Uncarina Family	
<i>Uncarina liandri</i>	-	Z

Scientific name	Common name	Location
Proteaceae	Protea Family	
<i>Grevilla</i> sp.	-	RM, AG, M
Rosaceae	Rose Family	
<i>Rubus moluccanus</i>	-	RM, AG, M
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family	
<i>Psycotria</i> sp.		I
Scrophulariaceae	Figwort Family	
<i>Scrophularia</i> sp.		RE, J, I
Solanaceae	Nightshade Family	
<i>Datura stamonium</i>	Thorn Apple	I
Sphaerosepalaceae	Rhopalocarpus Family	
<i>Dombeya laurifolium</i>	-	J, M, RM
<i>Dombeya</i> sp.		RM, M
Strelitziaceae	Strelitzia Family	
<i>Ravenala madagascariensis</i>	Traveller Palm	RM
Verbanaceae	Verbena Family	
<i>Verbena teneriensis</i>		M
<i>Duranta erecta</i>	Golden Dewdrops	
LILIIDAE (Monocotyledons)		
Arecaceae	Palm Family	
<i>Baccariophoenix madagascariensis</i>	Marula Palm	I
<i>Bismarkia nobilis</i>	-	I
<i>Ravenea rivularis</i>	-	J, M
Cyperaceae	Sedge Family	
<i>Cyperus papyrus</i>	Papyrus	I, X, RM
Liliaceae	Lily Family	
<i>Aloe cortinqua</i>	-	J
<i>Dracaena</i> sp.		I
Orchidaceae	Orchid Family	
<i>Oeonia rosea</i>	Moon Orchid	RM, AG, M
<i>Vanilla madagascariensis</i>	a Vanilla Orchid	
<i>Cynorchis purpurescens</i>	Dancing Ladys	RM
Pandanaceae	Pandanus Family	
<i>Pandanus pucher (Branched)</i>	Screwpine	I, M, RM, AG
<i>Pandanus</i> sp.	Spiral Screwpine	I, M, RM, AG
<i>Pandanus xerophyta</i>	Screwpine	Z
<i>Pandanus</i> sp		3 Species RM
Phormiaceae	New Zealand Flax Family	
<i>Dianella ensifolia</i>	-	AG

Scientific name	Common name	Location
Poaceae	Grass Family	
<i>Phragmites</i> sp.	a Reed	A, I, RM
<i>Cathariostachys madagascariensis</i>	Madagascar Giant bamboo	RM
<i>Pennisetum</i> sp.		RM, AG, M



Verreaux's Sifaka



O'Shaunessy's Chameleon (male)