# **Madagascar's Lemurs**

# Naturetrek Tour Report

4 - 20 October 2008







Diadem Sifaka

Mossy leaf-tailed Gecko Uroplatus sikorae

White-browed Owl



Report & images compiled by Paul Harmes



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Tour Report Madagascar's Lemurs

Tour Leaders: Paul Harmes (Naturetrek Leader)

Claude Rambeloson (Local Guide)

**Driver:** Andre **Assistant Driver:** Tsuvu

Guides: Rija Reserve (Privee de Lemuriens)

Olivier (Berenty) Roland (salo) Victor (Anja)

Fidi (Ranamafana Jean-chry) Maurice & Lala (Andasibe/Perinet)

Participants: Hazel Belsey

Sue Chant Jon Chant

Frances Clinkard Steve Clinkard Mike Coe Angela Moore Lauren Griffiths David Griffiths Jenni Holliday John Holliday Jennifer Smith

#### Day 1

# Saturday 4th October

Weather: London: cloudy and bright. Paris: cloudy

Eight group members met with Paul, at the departure gate at London Heathrow Airport, Terminal 2, for the Air France flight AF1481 to Paris Charles de Gaulle, departing at 16-15hrs. Meanwhile, Hazel, Jennifer, Sue and John had arrived from Manchester on flight AF2269. Upon our separate arrivals, in Paris, we soon found our way to the new rapid transit system, the CDG Val, and made the short journey to the Ibis Hotel, where we were to spend the night. Paul soon checked us in, and, after time to freshen up, we all met in the bar for a short briefing on the trip, before going to the restaurant..

Day 2

**Sunday 5th October** 

Weather: Paris: Dull, overcast and Wet. Antananarivo (Tana): Hot

After an early breakfast, the whole group met in the Hotel lobby at 07-00hrs, before making our way, via the CDG Val rapid transit system, to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, Terminal 2C, and our Air France flight AF0908 to Tana, departing at 10-15hrs, arriving at 21-55hrs after an eleven hour flight.

Having completed immigration formalities and the collection of our luggage, we met with Claude, our local guide, and a driver, who assisted with the changing of currency and the moving of our baggage to our waiting bus. From the airport, we transferred to the Hotel Plaza for the night.

#### Day 3

## **Monday 6th October**

Weather: Tana: Bright and warm. Fort Dauphin: Cloudy with a stiff breeze, with rain later

This morning we had a leisurely start to the day, with breakfast at 07-30hrs. As there had been a late itinerary change, due to amended Air Madagascar flight schedules, we would not be flying to Fort Dauphin until the afternoon. So Paul and Claude arranged for us to visit a small private reserve, just west of Tana. Here, a number of Lemur species that have been rescued from illegal captivity or ownership are allowed to roam free. It is important to note that these animals are not, and will never be truly wild. For this reason they are very obliging with regard to being photographed, and the reserve provided us with a splendid early introduction to this unique animal group.

Leaving the Plaza hotel at 09-00hrs, we made a brief stop at Tana's Lake Anosy, with its memorial to the Malagasi people who died in the Second World War. Here we saw White-faced Duck, Red-billed Teal, Great Egret, Black Egret and Green-backed Heron. Nearby, on the verge, we found a splendid *Spathodea campanulata* (Flame of the Forest) and a small flowered *Bauhinia sp.* (Orchid Tree).

It was not long before we arrived at the 'Reserve Privee de Lemuriens', where we were met by Rija, our local guide for the morning. We began our tour with a walk through a relatively young botanical garden, seeing Uncarinas, Pachypodiums, Alluaudias and Palm species. Madagascar Brush Warbler and Madagascar White-eye were both common, and Madagascar Kingfisher was seen several times on the river as well as Common Sandpiper. It was not long before we made contact with the Lemurs. Common Brown Lemur, Coquerel's Sifaka and Ringtailed Lemurs were the first we saw. We added Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur and Mongoose Lemur as we progressed. Madagascar Bulbul was seen singing in a nearby tree and a couple of Cattle Egrets flew over. The reserve also runs a breeding programme for Tortoises. We were shown the highly endangered Radiated Tortoise, Spider Tortoise and Hinged Tortoise. We completed our tour with a visit to the nocturnal house. Grey and Brown Mouse Lemur and Greater Dwarf Lemur were seen here.

After a splendid lunch in the small restaurant, it was time to make our way to Tana Airport, for the Air Madagascar flight to Fort Dauphin, which departed at 16-15hrs. Red Fody, and Madagascar Bee Eater were seen and Mascarene Martin soared overhead. Upon our arrival in Fort Dauphin, we boarded our bus for the short journey to the Fort Dauphin Hotel, where we booked into our rooms before gathering for dinner.

## Day 4

# **Tuesday 7th October**

Weather: Rain at first, becoming fine, hot and sunny

After breakfast, we boarded our bus in Fort Dauphin, for the journey to Berenty, leaving at 08-00hrs. Shortly after leaving the town, we stopped to buy water. And a further stop was made at Manambaro to take a look at a weekly market. Here, we also bought fruit for the journey.

Rejoining our bus, we were to make two further stops on our journey, the most significant of which was in an area of Transitional Forest, where the eastern wet forests meets the western dry spiny forest. Here we found *Alluaudia procera* (an Octopus Tree) and the rare *Dypsis decaryi* (Three-cornered or Triangle Palm). In the river there were some fine stands of *Typhonodorum lindleyanum*. Overhead, we saw a Madagascar Buzzard, a good flock of African Black Swift and we also had good views of Strip-throated Jery.

Our second stop was to get first hand experience of Western spiny forest habitat. Here we spotted Yellow-billed Kite and had fantastic views of Madagascar Hoopoe.

We arrived in Berenty in time for lunch. After our meal and checking into our rooms, we met with our local guide, Olivier, who took us for a walk in the Tamarind Gallery Forest. Our first encounter of the afternoon was w2ith a pair of Crested Drongo. In some nearby trees, we got some close views of Red-fronted Brown Lemurs. Several of the females had young, and were beginning to feed. A troop of Verreaux's Sifaka was also spotted. Some of the birds we encountered included Crested Coua, Madagascar Kestrel and Pied Crow. Olivier's sharp eyes also located an early rising White-footed Sportive Lemur, which we all managed to get good views of.

We now made our way back to the lodges to prepare for an evening walk in the spiny forest. We took the bus a short way back towards the entrance of the reserve. Here set off on foot in search of nocturnal wildlife. Reddish Grey Mouse Lemurs were the highlight and we also saw White-footed Sportive Lemur. In the distance were could clearly hear the unmistakable chirring of Madagascar Nightjars. It was now time to return for dinner.

## Day 5

## Wednesday 8th October

Weather: Fine, hot and sunny

We had a very early start for some of the group today, as Olivier was taking us Lemur and bird-watching. At day-break the forest is alive with activity as all the animals and birds feed before it gets too hot. The route Olivier chose began with us boarding the bus and returning to the spiny forest we had visited the previous night. Early sightings included Yellow-billed Kite, Madagascar Fody and Common Jery. Before long we found a small group of Verreaux's Sifaka taking the early sun in the spiny forest. Hook-billed Vanga was seen quite clearly and fleeting views of White-headed Vanga and Sickle-billed Vanga were also had.

As we moved on we made the transition onto a path that took us through Tamarind Gallery Forest. Madagascar Turtle Dove, Pied Crow and Crested Drongo were all present together with a few more Verreaux's Sifakas and a group of Ring-tailed Lemurs, who were busy feeding. Grey-headed Lovebirds and a circling Madagascar Cuckoo Roller were added before we reached the river Fleuve de Mandrare, where we stopped to scan the shoreline. Common Greenshank, Purple Heron, Dimorphic Egret and Kelp Gull were recorded. Further on, Giant Coua were also spotted working their way through the leaf litter, and a small group of Madagascar Button Quail were doing a similar job quietly searching for insects. A group of Red-fronted Brown Lemurs greeted us on our way back to breakfast.

After eating, we set off to explore another section of Tamarind Gallery Forest. We began by watching Redfronted Brown Lemurs feeding in trees. Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher and Madagascar Magpie Robin were also recorded.

As, once again, we approached the river, Olivier found a roosting Torotoroka Scops Owl. Not satisfied with this, he added Barn Owl and White-browed Owl within thirty minutes. Verreaux's Sifaka and Ring-tailed Lemurs were seen regularly, before we stopped at a roost of Madagascar Flying Foxes, some of which gave an impressive aerial display. As we returned towards the restaurant for lunch, we had great views of Madagascar Hoopoes and a Madagascar Cuckoo Hawk begin mobbed by a pair of Crested Drongo.

After lunch, we all retired for a siesta as it was now the hottest part of the day. We reconvened at 16-00hrs in order to visit another area of spiny forest at Rampoli. On the way we attempted to locate the elusive Madagascar Sandgrouse. This proved very rewarding with good views of nine birds feeding and in flight. Shortly after this we arrived in Rampoli. We first visited the breeding population of Radiated Tortoise. In this enclosure we saw *Chaladoran madgascariensis* (Three-eyed Lizard).

As we moved on, Olivier found us a roosting Madagascar Nightjar. It was sitting on the ground and proved quite difficult for some of the group to see. However, eventually the whole group got to see it. As we were leaving the forest we added another lizard, *Tracheloptychus petersii* and *Blaesodactylus homopholis* (a Bark Gecko). We now returned to the lodges for dinner.

#### Day 6

## **Thursday 9th October**

Weather: Fine, hot and sunny

We took breakfast at 05-00hrs, as we had to be back in Fort Dauphin for our flight to Tulear. With the luggage loaded into our bus, we said goodbye to Olivier and set off. We made one short stop to admire and photograph a splendid *Adansonia za* (Baobab Tree) and to purchase some small carved figures. Here we saw Crested Coua and Sakalava Weavers. Just outside Fort Dauphin, we stopped to admire a large patch of *Nepenthes madagascariensis* (Pitcher Plant) where we also found *Peucetia madagascariensis* (Lynx Spider). We arrived in good time at the airport for our 12-15hrs flight to Tulear, arriving at 13-15hrs. We still had some way to go by road, and Paul and Claude introduced us to our driver, Andre and his assistant Tsuvu, who would be with us for the rest of the trip.

We made a fuel stop in the town before setting off towards Isalo. Namaqua Dove and Madagascar Kestrel were our first bird sightings. We travelled northeast, passing small villages and encampments and several Mahafaly tribal tombs. Just before we reached the village of Andranovory, we passed a magnificent *Adansonia za* (Baobab), thought to be some 2000 years old. We stopped to take pictures, and some local boys appeared with some *Calumma oustletii* (Oustlet's Chameleon) for us to photograph.

As we drove on, Yellow-billed Kite was seen regularly. Very soon the remnant spiny forest was left behind and we moved into Savannah grasslands. Passing through Mahabobka and Sakaracha villages, we stopped on the roadside as we passed through Zombitse National Park, an area of dry deciduous forest. Here we had fine views of Madagascar Hoopoe, Palm Swifts and Madagascar Spinetails. At this point we also found some Red-fronted Brown Lemurs and Verreaux's Sifaka.

Moving on, we eventually we passed through the Sapphire boom town of Llakaka, before arriving at the hotel La Relais de la Reine, our base for the next two nights.

#### Day 7

## Friday 10th October

Weather: Fine, hot and sunny later

Today we arose at 06-00hrs for an early morning bird walk in the extensive grounds of the hotel. As it is set among rocks and remnant forest, this is often quite fruitful. We saw Madagascar Bee-eaters, Yellow-billed Kites, Madagascar Buzzard, Broad-billed Roller and the endemic Benson's Rock-thrush.

We had one main objective today, and this was to take a walk in the Isalo National Park. After breakfast, we boarded our bus to drive the 12kM to the small town of Ranohira, where Claude went to secure our permit for the park and to collect our local guide, Lala Roland. It was a short distance to the track that would take us the 3kM to the car park at the base of the escarpment. Here, Lala gave a short explanation about the Isalo National Park, and outlined our route up to the escarpment, through an area of Tapia forest, through some rocky outcrops and down to the Natural Swimming Pool.

Our route began with a steady climb of some 80m, passing *Buddleja madgascariensis*. At the top of the incline we stopped for Lala to explain the two different types of graves that the Bara people utilise, these being the temporary and the permanent. The path led us on through a fine stand of *Upaca bojeri* (Tapia). Further on, among some wonderful rocky outcrops we found *Pachypodium rosulatum subsp. rosulatum* (Elephant's Foot). At this point, Lala had brought us to a magnificent viewpoint, affording panoramic views of the valley below. We now began to descend towards the river, and a small body of water below a waterfall, known as the 'Piscine Naturelle'. Several members of the group chose to indulge in a swim. The return journey was along the same track, back to where the bus was waiting for us. We now returned to the hotel for lunch followed by a rest.

We reconvened at 16-00hrs for another short local bird walk. At the rear of the hotel, Paul pointed out the rare Ravenea rivularis (a Palm), as we made our way through a small section of forest, and across a stream. Crested Drongo watched us from their tree top vantage points. Retracing our steps and making our way through the grounds, we added Madagascar Bulbul, Madagascar Hoopoe and Benson's Rock-thrush. On the far side of the hotel there is a small lake. Here we saw a good number of White-faced Duck. It was now time to return to our rooms and prepare for dinner.

## Day 8

## Saturday 11th October

Weather: Fine, hot and sunny, becoming cloudy later

After breakfast, we left the Hotel at 07-45hrs, driving on north eastward, stopping in the town of Ihosy for fuel and a comfort stop. The, by now, standard Madagascar Kestrel and Yellow-billed Kite were much in evidence as we travelled. Claude spotted a rather distant raptor which, on closer examination, proved to be a male Reunion Harrier, a difficult bird to find in any habitat. We stopped to try a get better views of it, but it glided away down an obscured valley. As we had a long way to travel today, we continued on up to Ambalavao. We did, however, have a scheduled stop planned at the Anja local community project reserve. Here we took a short walk through the *Melia azedarach* (Persian Lilac) dominated forest and rocks to observe a splendid and obliging troop of Ringtailed Lemurs. One of the females had a rather adventurous youngster. We also saw Hamarkop, Common Jery and Madagascar bulbul. Among the rocks we found *Oplurus garndidieri* (Grandidier's Iguanid), and on a small lake there was a large flock of Red-billed Teal.

Moving on, we took twenty minutes to complete the first part of our journey to Ambalavoa, where we took lunch at the Restaurant Bougenvilhias. After placing our orders, Claude took us into a small local paper factory, where a dozen or so workers produce items, many of which incorporate locally grown flowers, for sale to the large numbers of visitors that pass through the town. After lunch, we continued our journey north.

Our next scheduled stop was in Fianarantsoa, Madagascar's second largest town. Here we stopped for fuel and refreshments. Moving on we drove the last 50km up to our destination at Ramanafana. Along the way we saw a pair of Diamorphic Egrets, one a white phase and one a dark. Good views were also had of Hamerkop hunting in the paddy fields. We arrived at the Hotel Domaine Naturelle in time for dinner.

#### Day 9

## **Sunday 12th October**

Weather: Misty rain early on, clearing to become Fine, warm and sunny. Clouding up later

This morning we took an early breakfast at 05-30hrs. Before boarding the bus, we were introduced to our local guides, Fidi and his brother Jean-chry, before making our way down to the main entrance to the national park. Ranamafana is a substantial area of rain forest and home to some very interesting and rare wildlife. In the car park Fidi showed us Forest Fody, Madagascar White-eye, Green Jery and Wards Flycatcher or Vanga. At this point we were treated to magnificent close views of a pair of Cuckoo Rollers, which perched obligingly for all of us to see.

As we set off into the forest, Fidi pointed out Rand's Warbler singing from an adjacent tree. We made our way down the path, over the river bridge and into the forest. Our first Lemur encounter was with a small group of Red-fronted Brown Lemurs, feeding. We took a short time watching them whilst our guides scouted for more wildlife opportunities. We did not have to wait long. We were shown Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo, enabling us to put a shape to the very repetitive and familiar call, Red-tailed Vanga and Lesser Vasser Parrot. Fidi managed to find the strange and intriguing *Uroplatus phantasticus* (Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko). The next Lemur species we saw was the endangered Greater Bamboo Lemur. Thought to be extinct until it was re-found in 1996, this Lemur is thought to have as little as 60 or 70 individuals left in the park, and is found nowhere else. The next reptile was the fascinating *Brookesia superciliaris* (Broad-browed Chameleon), which was found on a small bush. This species normally lives in the leaf litter on the ground. With photos taken, we set off to find Red-bellied Lemurs. Jeanchry had located a small group of about six. These were quite difficult to see, but many of the group had reasonable views.

We now made our way along the undulating paths back to the car park, where we boarded the bus for the return journey to the hotel for lunch. As we arrived *Sanzina madagascariensis* (Tree Boa) was seen basking on the rocks outside the hotel.

After a relaxing afternoon, we met at 16-30hrs to return to the forest. Some of the group chose to return to the National Park, where we had been this morning, with Fidi and Claude, whilst Paul and Jean-chry took the rest of the party to another area of forest called Vohiparara.

The first group had some very good views of Brown Mouse Lemur and the secretive Fossa fossana (Madagascar Striped Civet), as well as several species of Tree Frog in the genus Boophis.

These included *Boophis madagascariensis, Boophis rappoides and Boophis idae*. Meanwhile, the second group with Paul and Jean-chry found Pitta-like Ground-roller, Yellow-browed Oxylabes and Long-billed Greenbul. It was now time to return to the hotel for dinner.

## **Day 10**

## **Monday 13th October**

Weather: Misty and cloudy at first, becoming dry, hot and sunny

Today we had a very early breakfast at 06-00hrs, before making our way down to the National Park entrance Claude and Fidi, once again led a group in the main area of the National Forest, in search of the remaining species of Lemur, while Paul and Jean-chry were returning to Vohiparara. Claude's group had some good views of Golden Bamboo Lemur and Red-bellied Lemur. Also seen were two Chameleons, *Furcifer balteatus* and the recently described, *Calumma cryptica* (Blue Short-horned Chameleon). At this point they left the forest and made their way, on foot, back towards the hotel. Along the way they saw a splendid pair of Hook-billed Vanga as well as Chabert's Vanger and Forest Fody. On a verge bank Fidi found a nice clump of the Orchid, *Cynorkis purpurescens* (Dancing Ladies).

The group with Paul got off to a very good start with reasonable views of Crossley's Babbler and Long-billed Greenbul. This was soon followed by stunning views of Madagascar Pigmy Kingfisher, and Cryptic Warbler and Dark Newtonia were added before we had one of the highlights of the morning, superb views of Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity and Forest Rock-thrush. A tiny green and black tree frog, *Mantydactylus pulchre*, was found on a large *Pandanus*. As we were leaving the forest we had a 'Vanga moment', four species in one location. These were Pollen's Vanga, Tylas Vanga, White-headed Vanga and Red-tailed Vanga. During lunch, back at the hotel, a pair of Madagascar Starlings perched in a nearby tree.

At 15-30hrs, we rejoined the bus to drive to a spot on the river where we may add some of the missing birds we would still like to see. On the way we made a short stop to see *Mantilla madagascariensis* (Painted Marsh Frog) and, in an adjacent marsh, a Madagascar Buzzard was enjoying a late lunch. We re-parked the bus and walked up through thinned out *Eucalyptus*, to a vantage point where we could look down on a quiet section of the river. Here we saw 4 Mellor's Ducks, Black-crowned Night Heron and Red-billed Teal, before returning to the hotel for our evening meal.

#### **Day 11**

# **Tuesday 14th October**

Weather: Misty at first, becoming fine, warm and sunny

After a leisurely breakfast, we boarded our bus and set off towards our stop-over destination of Antsirabe. We made two short stops, one at the main Park office, to buy some souvenirs, and a second by the splendid waterfall, just past the park entrance. Here we found a number of amphibians and a fine display of *Drosera Madagascariensis* (Sundew) and *Cynorkis purpurescens* (Dancing Ladies), on a wet cliff face. Most of the group were keen to take pictures.

Continuing on, we made a mid-morning stop in Ambofumahasoa to admire a splendid Heronry with Cattle Egrets, both colour forms of Dimorphic Egret and several Black-crowned Night Herons. As we progressed we began to pass a number of paddy fields. Madagascar Kingfisher was spotted sitting on the bank of a paddy.

Today we took our lunch, on the outskirts of Ambositra, in one of the local 'Hotelys', called 'Mendrinka', where they permitted us to eat our packed lunch in return for purchasing drinks.

Resuming our journey, we made a stop by a river, south of Soavina. This produced a pair of Madagascar Wagtails and a single Madagascar Little Grebe, which everyone had good views of. We arrived at the Arotel hotel in Ansirabe, in time for people to visit the swimming pool or the local town, before dinner.

#### **Day 12**

## Wednesday 15th October

Weather: Fine, warm and sunny

We left Ansirabe at 07-45hrs, after breakfast, and drove north towards Antananarivo (Tana), via Antanifotsy and Ambatolampy, passing vast area of paddy fields and small plantations of Sugarcane, Papya and other cultivation. Past roadside stalls selling everything from splendid produce, wooden cars and lorries, and religious figures. We also spotted Great Egret, Mascarene Martins, Brown-throated Martins and Hamerkop. We made our way into Tana and to the Tsimbazaza Zoological and Botanic gardens. Before going in, we made our lunch order in the Ngarki Indonesian Restaurant. In the zoo we took the opportunity to visit the night house, where the Aye-ayes were active. We also saw Ring-tailed Lemurs and Mongoose Lemurs. The central lake produced a good selection of Herons, including Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Egret, Common Squacco Heron, Madagascar Pond Heron and Green-backed Heron. There we also large numbers of nesting Cattle Egrets.

We left Tana at 14-30hrs travelling eastwards towards Manjakandrina and Moramanga, where we stopped for petrol, and on to our destination of Andasibe. Once again the paddy fields produced Green-backed Heron, Great Egret and Black Heron. We made a short stop to stretch our legs and search, unsuccessfully for Madagascar Pratincole, at the Mangoro River Bridge. Continuing our journey, we arrived at Perinet and Andasibe at 18-00hrs, and, after a brief meeting with our local guide, Maurice, drove on up to Vakona Lodge, our base for the next four nights.

#### **Day 13**

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## **Thursday 16th October**

Weather: Fine, Hot and sunny

We had an early breakfast at 06-30hrs, this morning, before boarding the bus and driving down to the rainforest centre at Perinet, where we met with Maurice, our local guide and Lala, his student guide. He first directed us to see *Uroplatus sikorae* (Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko) and *Calumma brevicornis* (Short-horned Chameleon). After a very brief look at the interactive displays in the Perinet centre, we set off into the Special Reserve. In the distance we could here the plaintive call of the Indri. As we left the centre, Maurice found one of the curious *Gasteracanthinae sp* (Thorn Spiders). As we crossed a stream bridge, a couple of Eastern Gray Bamboo Lemurs were seen. Maurice soon found their feeding spot and we had good views of these delightful animals. It took us some thirty minutes to get into the forest, passing a number of introduced plant and tree species. By now, we had made good progress, and it was not long before we found a family group of Common Brown Lemurs moving through the forest, feeding as they went. At this point we had good views of Madagascar Blue Pigeon and a splendid *Calumma parsonii* (Parson's Chameleon). It was not long before we found a small family group of Indri. One of the females had a young baby, which had been born in May of this year. We spent twenty minutes with them.

We also saw Red-fronted Coua and a male Nelikorvi Weaver constructing a nest. As we left the forest, we added Purple Heron, *Zonosaurous madagascariensis* (Madagascar Plated Lizard) and *Liophodosis theli* (Thel's Lined Snake). Everyone agreed it was a full and rewarding morning. We now rejoined the bus for the return to Vakona Lodge for lunch.

Following a leisurely afternoon, we took the bus to 'Lemur Island'. As the name suggests, this small island is home to Common Brown Lemurs, Black and White Ruffed Lemurs, Diadem Sifaka and Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemurs, all of which are free to roam, but are very humanised. Nevertheless, they did provide some splendid photo opportunities. We completed our day with a visit to what I can only describe as a small zoo. This comprised a small lake, with a good number of Crocodiles and several cages with captive *Cryptoprocta ferox* (Fossa). It was now time to return to the Lodge for dinner.

#### **Day 14**

## Friday 17th October

Weather: Fine, warm and sunny

Today we were going to Mantadia Special Reserve to explore a section or primary rainforest. We again met with Maurice and Lala, who were already on the bus, and set off on the forty-five minute drive along a track towards the reserve. Our attention was soon alerted to a pair of Madagascar Pigmy Kingfishers, perched beside the track, giving great views. As we entered the forest we could here the distant calls of Indri, but we did not see them. It took quite a lot of time to track down the wildlife, but eventually, Maurice succeeded in getting us some close views of Diadem Sifaka, a small family group, including a mother with baby. We spent a good twenty minutes watching their antics. These particular Lemurs can be very secretive and difficult to observe, so we were very fortunate.

Before long we spotted a Nuthatch Vanga working its way up a nearby tree. As we continued on through the forest, some of the group had a fleeting glimpse of Pitta-like Ground-roller and, after some effort we also saw Scaly Ground-roller. After about three hours, we emerged onto a track, where we carried on up the path to a small lake, where a pair of Madagascar Little Grebe was seen well. Madagascar Mannikin and a solitary Henst's Goshawk were also recorded.

We now rejoined the bus in order to return to Vakona Lodge for lunch. However, we had not gone one hundred yards when Maurice found us a pair of Black and White Ruffed Lemurs high in the trees, above the road, so we stopped to observe them for a while. We also had fleeting glimpse of Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemurs and excellent sighting of Madagascar Blue Pigeon feeding.

After a short siesta, we made our way down to Fy an Yala, where, while waiting for darkness to fall, we watched Madagascar Nightjars flying around hunting insects. When it was fully dark, we set off along the road seeking out nocturnal wildlife. Tiny Fireflies produced pinpoints of light as we walked. We found two Chameleons, *Calumma brevicornis* (Short-horned Chameleon) and *Calumma nasuta* (Nose-horned Chameleon).

However, the highlight was a spectacular high wire display by a Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur. We now returned to the Lodge for Dinner.

## **Day 15**

## Saturday 18th October

Weather: Fine, Hot and sunny

A rare and unhurried breakfast today, we caught the bus at 07-00hrs to return to the Perinet Special reserve, in order to have a final Indri experience. After leaving the car park and following the track, we saw a Rand's Warbler singing from the top of a dead tree. A Cuckoo Roller was calling in the distance. Making our way further into the forest, it did take us quite some time to contact the Indri. However, as we went we saw Blue Coua and a solitary Common Brown Lemur, with her baby. Lala found a small group of Indri enjoying breakfast, whilst their relatives were calling in the distance. We moved to a second group of these enigmatic animals, where we had superb views.

A short rest at a bridge added a fleeting glimpse of White-throated Oxylabes and excellent views of Madagascar Brush Warbler. As we made our way back to the car park, we found Blue Vanga, Red-tailed Vanga and Tylas Vanga and another splendid Red-fronted Coua. Just before reaching the car park, Paul managed to catch a frog hunting *Liophodosis theli* (Thel's Lined Snake).

A little souvenir shopping was undertaken before we returned to the Lodge for lunch. As tomorrow was going to be a particularly long day, we decided on a leisurely afternoon with a visit to the Perinet 'Orchid Garden' and not undertake another night walk. We drove down to the visitor centre, where we met Maurice and Lala. The Orchid Garden has only Orchids that are native in the Andasibe area, and displays them in, as near as possible, their natural situations in the rainforest. Claude gave us an explanation of the flower structures, before setting off on a circular walk. As we went we startled a Blue Coua, and it came and perched very close to us, and many of the group got good pictures. The Orchid species we saw included Angreacum compactum, Angreacum Vigueri, Aerangis articulata, Gastrorchis schlechteri and Gastrorchis tuberose. Blue Vanga and Chabert's Vanga were also seen, together with Lygodactylus tolampyae (a Day Gecko).

Most of the group now returned to Vakona Lodge, but a small group, including Paul and Claude, joined Maurice to search for Madagascar Rail in the Vakona swamp. Our first sighting was of a number of Madagascar Swamp Warblers, followed by Madagascar Green Pigeon. We made three separate attempts to tape call the Rail, but all we got were a few audible responses, but no sightings.

#### Day 16

## **Sunday 19th October**

Weather: Fine warm and sunny

A late breakfast was had before we left Andasibe for the journey back to Tana. We took our lunch in the Hotel Plaza in the city, before spending the afternoon visiting a T-shirt shop and an Artisan's market. Returning to the Plaza Hotel, we completed our packing and met for dinner, before leaving for the Airport for the Air France flight AF0905 to Paris Charles de Gaulle, and our onward flights to Manchester and London.

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Tour Report Madagascar's Lemurs

# **Species Lists**

Key: LO = Leader Only; C = Captive; H = Heard only

										Octobe	r						
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Ler	nurs																
1	Indri	Indri indri											✓	Н	✓		
2	Diademed Sifaka	Propithecus diadema diadema											✓	✓			
3	Coquerel's Sifaka	Propithecus coquereli	С														
4	Verreaux's Sifaka	Propithecus verreauxi verreauxi		✓	✓	✓											
5	Woolly Lemur (Avahi)	Avahi laniger											✓				
6	Ring-tailed Lemur	Lemur catta	С	✓	✓			✓							С		
7	Black and White Ruffed Lemur	Varecia variegata variegata	С										С	✓			
8	Mongoose Lemur	Eulemur mongoz	С														
9	Red-bellied Lemur	Eulemur rubiventer							✓	✓							
10	Common Brown Lemur	Eulemur fulvus fulvus	С										✓		✓		
11	Red-fronted Brown Lemur	Eulemur fulvus rufus		✓	✓	✓			✓								
12	Greater Bamboo Lemur	Hapalemur simus							✓								
13	Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur	Hapalemur griseus griseus	С										✓	✓			
14	Golden Bamboo Lemur	Prolemur simus							✓	✓							
15	Grey Mouse Lemur	Microcebus murinus	С														
16	Brown Mouse Lemur	Microcebus rufus	С						✓								
17	Reddish-grey Mouse Lemur	Microcebus griseorufus	С	✓													
18	Greater Dwarf Lemur	Cheirogalus major	С														
19	Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur	Cheirogalus crossleyi	С											✓			
20	White-footed Sportive Lemur	Lepilemur leucopus		✓	✓												

## Other Mammals

Small-tooth Sportive Lemur

Lepilemur microdon

1	Fanaloka (Striped Civet)	Fossa fossana				✓					
2	Eastern Red Forest Rat	Nesomys rufus					✓				
3	Madagascar Flying Fox	Pteropus rufus		✓							

									(	Octobe	r						
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Bird	ds																
1	Madagascar Little Grebe	Tachybaptus pelzelnii									1			2			
2	Madagascar Pond Heron	Ardeola idae										2					
3	Common Squacco Heron	Ardeola ralloides										6				1	
4	Black-crowned Night Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax								2	4	✓					
5	Green-backed Heron	Butorides striata	✓									2		1	1	1	
6	Great White Egret	Ardea alba	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓				✓	
7	Cattle Egret	Bubulcus ibis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
8	Black Egret	Egretta ardesiaca	2									2				3	
9	Dimorphic Egret	Egretta dimorpha	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	
10	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea			✓	✓				2			✓		1		
11	Hamerkop	Scopus umbretta	✓			✓		✓				✓				1	
12	Red-billed Teal	Anas erythrorhyncha	✓					✓		✓		✓					
13	Meller's Duck	Anas melleri								4							
14	White-faced Whistling-duck	Dendrocygna viduata	✓				300					✓					
15	Henst's Goshawk	Accipiter henstii			2									2			
16	Madagascar Buzzard	Buteo brachypterus		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓		
17	Madagascar Cuckoo Hawk	Aviceda madagascariensis			1												
18	Reunion Harrier	Circus maillardi						1									
19	Yellow-billed Kite	Milvus aegyptius		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	
20	Frances's Sparrowhawk	Accipiter francesiae				1					1						
21	Madagascar Kestrel	Falco newtoni	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
22	Helmeted Guineafowl	Numida meleagris			✓												
23	Madagascar Wood-rail	Canirallus kioloides								1							
24	Madagascar Buttonquail	Turnix nigricollis			✓		1	✓									
25	White-throated Rail	Dryolimnas cuvieri											Н	1			
26	Madagascar Rail	Rallus madagascariensis													Н		
27	Madagascar Flufftail	Sarothrura insularis								Н					Н		
28	Common Greenshank	Tringa nebularia			✓												
29	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos	✓		✓							✓					
30	Kelp Gull	Larus dominicanus			1												

									(	Octobe	er						
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
31	Madagascar Sandgrouse	Pterocles personatus			9												
32	Rock Dove or Feral Pigeon	Columba livia	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
33	Namaqua Dove	Oena capensis		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									
34	Madagascar Blue-pigeon	Alectroenas madagascariensis								1			2	6			
35	Madagascar Green-pigeon	Treron australis							1						1		
36	Madagascar Turtle-dove	Streptopelia picturata		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		
37	Grey-headed Lovebird	Agapornis canus		✓	✓	✓	7			✓							
38	Greater Vasa Parrot	Coracopsis vasa					2	1					1		2		
39	Black or Lesser Vasa Parrot	Coracopsis nigra		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
40	Madagascar Coucal	Centropus toulou	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
41	Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo	Cuculus rochii	Н		Н			Н	✓	✓		Н	Н	Н	Н	Н	
42	Green-capped Coua	Coua olivaceps			1												
43	Running Coua	Coua cursor		1													
44	Giant Coua	Coua gigas			✓												
45	Red-fronted Coua	Coua reynaudii											1		2		
46	Blue Coua	Coua caerulea								1			Н	✓	✓		
47	Crested Coua	Coua cristata		✓	✓	✓								1			
48	Madagascar Long-eared Owl	Asio madagascariensis													LO		
49	Barn Owl	Tyto alba			2												
50	White-browed Owl	Ninox superciliaris		Н	4	Н		1									
51	Rainforest Scops-owl	Otus rutilus											1	Н	Н		
52	Torotoroka Scops-owl	Otus madagascariensis			2												
53	Collared Nightjar	Caprimulgus enarratus												1			
54	Madagascar Nightjar	Caprimulgus madagascariensis		Н	✓								✓	✓			
55	Alpine Swift	Apus melba		2			1	2									
56	Madagascar Black Swift	Apus balstoni		✓			2	✓				1	✓			✓	
57	Malagasy Spine-tailed Swift	Zoonavena grandidieri				✓	10										
58	African Palm-swift	Cypsiurus parvus	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
59	Brown-throated Sand Martin	Riparia paludicola										3					
60	Mascarene Martin	Phedina borbonica	✓	<b>✓</b>		<b>✓</b>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
61	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica															
62	Madagascar Kingfisher	Alcedo vintsioides	✓	✓							✓	✓		✓	✓		

									Octobe	r						
Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
63 Madagascar Pygmy-kingfisher	Ispidina madagascariensis								1				2			
64 Madagascar Bee-eater	Merops superciliosus	✓				✓	✓			Н			6			
65 Broad-billed Roller	Eurystomus glaucurus	1				2										
66 Madagascar Cuckoo-roller	Leptosomus discolor			✓	Н			2	Н			✓	✓	✓	✓	
67 Scaly Ground-roller	Brachypteracias squamigera												1			
68 Pitta-like Ground-roller	Atelornis pittoides							3	1				1			
69 Velvet Asity	Philepitta castanea							1	1							
70 Common Sunbird Asity	Neodrepanis coruscans													✓		
71 Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity	Neodrepanis hypoxanthus								1							
72 Madagascar Bulbul	Hypsipetes madagascariensis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
73 Grey-crowned Greenbul	Phyllastrephus cinereiceps								2							
74 Long-billed Greenbul	Phyllastrephus madagascariensis							✓	✓							
75 Yellow-browed Oxylabes	Crossleyia xanthophrys							1								
76 Spectacled Greenbul	Phyllastrephus zosterops								✓			✓	✓	✓		
77 White-throated Oxylabes	Oxylabes madagascariensis								Н					1		
78 Crossley's Babbler	Mystacornis crossleyi								1							
79 Madagascar Magpie-robin	Copsychus albospecularis	<b>✓</b>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
80 Madagascar Hoopoe	Upupa marginata		3	✓	✓	1	✓									
81 Forest Rock-thrush	Monticola sharpei								1							
82 Benson's Rock-thrush	Pseudocossyphus bensoni					✓	✓									
83 African Stonechat	Saxicola torquata	✓					✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
84 Madagascar Wagtail	Motacilla flaviventris	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
85 Madagascar Paradise-flycatche	Terpsiphone mutata		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
86 Ward's Vanga (Flycatcher)	Pseudobias wardi							2				2	2	3	2	
87 Common Newtonia	Newtonia brunneicauda		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
88 Dark Newtonia	Newtonia amphichroa								2							
89 Madagascar Cisticola	Cisticola cherinus		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	
90 Madagascar Lark	Mirafra hova				✓	✓	✓				✓					
91 Madagascar Swamp-warbler	Acrocephalus newtoni								LO	Н		1		7		
92 Madagascar Brush-warbler	Nesillas typica	✓						✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
93 Grey Emutail	Amphilais seebohmi								3							
94 Common Jery	Neomixis tenella		<b>✓</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>✓</b>	✓	<b>✓</b>	✓		<b>✓</b>		<b>✓</b>		

										Octobe	r						
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
95	Stripe-throated Jery	Neomixis striatigula		✓	✓				✓	✓					✓		
96	Green Jery	Neomixis viridis							✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
97	Wedge-tailed Jery	Haetertula flavoviridis								3							
98	Rand's Warbler	Randia pseudozosterops							✓		✓		✓		✓		
99	Cryptic Warbler	Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi								✓							
100	Madagascar White-eye	Zosterops maderaspatanus	✓						✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
101	Madagascar Green Sunbird	Cinnyris notatus		✓			✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
102	Souimanga Sunbird	Cinnyris souimanga	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
103	Nuthatch Vanga	Hypositta corallirostris											✓	✓	✓		
104	White-headed Vanga	Artamella viridis			✓					✓				2			
105	Chabert's Vanga	Leptopterus chabert		LO						✓	2		✓		3		
106	Madagascar Blue Vanga	Cyanolanius madagascarinus							✓	✓					✓		
107	Sickle-billed Vanga	Falculea palliata			✓												
108	Red-tailed Vanga	Calicalicus madagascariensis							2	✓			Н		✓		
109	Lafresnaye's Vanga	Xenopirostris xenopirostris		Н													
110	Hook-billed Vanga	Vanga curvirostris		✓	✓					2							
111	Pollen's Vanga	Xenopirostris polleni								✓							
112	Tylas Vanga	Tylas eduardi							✓	✓				Н	✓		
113	Madagascar Cuckoo Shrike	Coracina cinerea							✓	✓			2				
114	Madagascar Starling	Saroglossa aurata								✓	5						
115	Common Mynah	Acridotheres tristis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
116	Crested Drongo	Dicrurus forficatus		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
117	Pied Crow	Corvus albus		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	
118	Madagascar or Red Fody	Foudia madagascariensis	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
119	Forest Fody	Foudia omissa							✓	✓			✓		✓		
120	Sakalava Weaver	Ploceus sakalava		✓	✓	✓											
121	Nelicourvi Weaver	Ploceus nelicourvi							✓	2			✓	✓	✓		
122	Madagascar Mannikin	Lonchura nana	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	

									Octobe	er						
Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Reptiles & Amphibians	'	'														
1 a Tree Frog	Boophis idae							✓								
2 a Tree Frog	Boophis madagascariensis							✓								
3 a Tree Frog	Boophis rappiodes							✓								
4 a Tree Frog	Boophis sp.									✓						
5 a Tree Frog	Boophis sp.									✓						
6 a Tree Frog	Boophis sp.									✓						
7 Painted or Golden Frog	Mantella madagascariensis							✓								
8 a Frog	Mantidactylus pulcher								✓							
9 Brook Frog	Mantydactylus grandidieri							✓								
10 a Frog	Platypelis grandis												✓			
11 a Frog	Platypelis barbouri							✓								
12 Broad-browed Chameleo	n Brookesia supercilaris							✓								
13 O'Shaughnessy's Chame	eleon Calumma oshaughnessyi															
14 Short-horned Chameleon	Calumma brevicornis							✓				✓	✓			
15 Parson's Chameleon	Calumma parsonii											✓		✓		
16 Nose-horned Chameleon	Calumma nasuta							✓					✓			
17 Rhinoceros Chameleon	Fucifer rhinoceratus															
18 Spiny-backed Chameleon	n Furcifer verrucosus		✓		✓											
19 Oustalet's Chameleon	Furcifer oustaletii	✓			✓	✓	✓									
20 Jewel Chameleon	Furcifer lateralis					✓										
21 Three-eyed Lizard	Chalerodon madagascariensis			✓	✓											
22 Collared Iguanid	Oplurus cuvieri	✓														
23 Four-lined Iguanid	Oplurus quadrimaculatus		✓		✓	✓	✓									
24 Grandidier's Iguanid	Oplurus grandidieri						✓									
25 a Day Gecko	Lygodactylus tolampyae													✓		
26 Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko	Uroplatus phantasticus							3								
27 Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko	Uroplatus sikorae											✓				
28 Bark Gecko	Blaesodactylus homopholis			✓												
29 a Skink	Trachelpptychus madgascariensis			✓												
30 Lined Day Gecko	Phelsuma lineata bifasciata						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
31 Four-eyed Emerald Day	Gecko Phelsuma quadriocellata							✓								

									(	Octobe	r						
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
32	Pale-belled Emerald Day Gecko	Phelsuma leiogusta	✓	✓													
33	a Day Gecko	Gehyra mutilata	✓	✓													
34	a Skink	Mabuya aureopunctata			✓												
35	Three-lined Plated Lizard	Zonosaurus triliniatus			✓												
36	Madagascar Girdled Lizard	Zonosaurus madagascariensis											✓	✓		✓	
37	a Snake	Ithycyphus perineti												✓			
38	a Grass Snake	Mimophis mahafalensis		✓	✓												
39	Thiel's Lined Snake	Liopholidophis thieli							✓		✓		✓				
40	Madagascar Tree Boa	Sanzinia madagascariensis							✓	✓					✓		
41	Bell's Hinged Tortoise	Kinixys belliana	С														
42	Radiated Tortoise	Geochelone radiata	С		С												
43	Spider Tortoise	Pyxis arachnoides	С		С												
44	Nile Crocodile	Crocodylus nilicolis		С													

#### Other taxa

1	Emperor Dragonfly	Anax imperator									✓					
2	Dragonfly (Red)	Trithemis selika	✓													
3	Dragonfly (Blur - dark wing marks)	Thermothemis madagascariensis											✓		<b>✓</b>	
4	Desert Locust	Schistocerca gregaria		✓												
5	Praying Mantis (Nymph)	Mantis sp		✓												
6	Cockroach (Black)	-		✓												
7	Stick Insect	-					✓							✓		
8	African Monarch	Danaus chrysippus		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
9	Kite Swallowtail	Graphium eyambar		✓		✓		✓								
10	Citrus Swallowtail	Papilio demodocus		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
11	Blue Pansy	Junonia orythia										✓				
12	Comet Moth	Argema mittrei							✓							
13	Giraffe-necked Weevil	Trachelophorus giraffa								✓			✓	✓		
14	Rhinoceros Beetle	Oryctes sp.												✓		
15	Flatid Leaf-bug (Nymphs)	Phromnia rosea		✓												
16	Firefly	Lampyridae sp												✓		

									(	Octobe	r						
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
17	Giant Black Millipede	-							✓								
18	Giant Red Millipede	-												✓			
19	Orb Spider	Nephilia sp											✓				
20	Thorn Spider (Orange)	Gasteracanthinae sp										✓	✓				
21	Thorn Spider (Yellow / Black)	Gasteracanthinae sp						✓									
22	Lynx Spider	Peucetia madagascariensis					✓										
23	Scorpion	Opisthacanthus madagascariensis			✓												
24	Madagascar Leech	-							✓								
25	Slug	-		✓	✓												

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