

My wife and I visited Madagascar during 3 weeks in July 2017. Thanks to the help of Jon Hall and Dominique Brugiere we contacted and the various trip reports we can find on the Mammalwatching website about this country, we identified the main parks and species we wanted to see during this trip. We had to make some choices since we only had 3 weeks of vacation and it was obviously impossible to visit the entire island during that timeframe. We also knew that July was definitely not the best period in the year for wildlife watching in Madagascar as this is winter time with low temperatures and then, some animals are in a hibernating mode like the tenrecs of the dwarf lemurs (some migrating bird are also out of the country) but we personally cannot take vacation whenever we want during the year ☺. However, I must say we were very happy about our observations since we managed to see 38 different types of lemurs and mammals during this trip, which doesn't include any single bat. I believe this is not too bad. We actually see all the species we had targeted before the trip and even more thanks to the very good organization of the local tour operator we chose. We first contacted Fano (Fanomezantsoa Andrianirina) who Jon Hall is recommending on his website but he never answered to the several emails I sent. Therefore, I contacted several other local guides and taking into account the itinerary, options and pricing they were proposing, we finally chose Andry from Madagascar Tour guide (www.madagascar-tour-guide.com). We were not disappointed to say the least and I would highly recommend him: very professional, great organization with nice selection of hotels, very good choice of experienced local guides they booked for us in each park and the 4x4 car with driver we had was excellent (very careful driver and car in very good shape). The itinerary we defined together was the following:

- Tsarasaotra lake in Tana (only for birdwatching but excellent spot)
- Ifaty spiny forest w/ 1 "night" walk
- Zombitse
- Isalo
- Anja
- Ranomafana w/ 2 night walks
- Kirindy Forest w/ 2 night walks
- Tsingy de Bemaraha
- Andasibe & Mantadia w/ 1 night walk
- Manambato w/ 1 night walk
- Ankarafantsika w/ 1 night walk
- Katsepy

As you can see, this was quite a comprehensive selection of locations for the South, East and West of Madagascar. This implied a lot of driving but there is so much to see along the roads in Madagascar that we never felt bored.

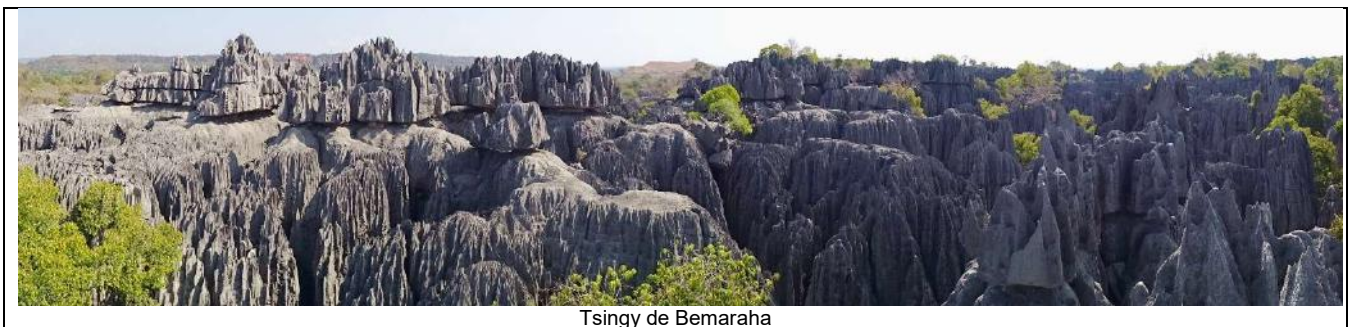
There would be a lot to say about the economic, social and political situation in this country but to focus on the nature side only, 3 things struck me. First, I found the concentration of wildlife to be very low even in the national parks. This is very different to what we can see in the large national parks on the African continent. Secondly, I found difficult to take good quality pictures of the wildlife since we do all the visits on foot during more or less strenuous hikes, often in thick and dark forests and the animals are globally very shy, which is not so surprising since Malagasy people are still hunting a lot of them. Finally, I found the ecological situation to be catastrophic in Madagascar (at least I can say for the area we visited): they are burning everything and the remaining patches of forests are disappearing in smoke year after year. I did not really see any strong commitment and enforcement from the government to improve the situation. If I also trust what the local guides told us about the national parks themselves, I'm quite concerned about the long term viability of those parks and it is clear that most of the mammals would be in danger of extinction if nothing really serious about nature conservation is done. It is quite sad and I would recommend people to visit Madagascar quickly as long as we can still see something. I might be over pessimistic but this was my feeling during this trip. Having said that, local guides and tour operators realize the economic benefits they can take from ecotourism and we saw several interesting local actions from villagers about nature/wildlife conservation.

Below is the list of mammals we saw during this trip:

Mammals with photos or well seen				
Species	Espèces	Latin Name	Where seen	Pic
Lesser Hedgehog-tenrec	Petit Tenrec-Hérisson	Echinops telfairi	1 in Ifaty spiny forest late afternoon	X
Giant Jumping Rat	Rat géant de Madagascar	Hypogeomys antimena	2 in Kirindy late at night at the Camp	X
Eastern Red Forest Rat	Rat de Madagascar	Nesomys rufus	1 in Ranomafana forest	X
Fosa	Fossa	Cryptoprocta ferox	2 in Kirindy at noon at the Camp	X
Fanaloka	Fanalouke / Civette malgache	Fossa fossana	1 in Ranomafana near Belle Vue	X
Ring-tailed Mongoose	Mangouste à queue annelée	Galidia elegans	Several in Belle Vue at Ranomafana and 1 seen in Tsingy de Bemaraha	X
Narrow-striped Mongoose	Mangouste à dix raies	Mungotictis decemlineata	6 seen in Kirindy forest	X
Madame Berthe's Mouse Lemur	Microcèbe de Berthe	Microcebus berthae	Several seen at night in Kirindy forest	X
Goodman's Mouse Lemur	Microcèbe de Goodman	Microcebus lehilahytsara	A couple seen at night in Andasibe	X
Gray Mouse Lemur	Microcèbe mignon	Microcebus murinus	Several seen at night in Kirindy and one in Ankarafantsika	X

Golden-Brown Mouse Lemur	Microcèbe doré	<i>Microcebus ravelobensis</i>	3 seen at night in Ankarafantsika	X
Rufous Mouse Lemur	Microcèbe roux	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>	2 seen at night in Ranomafana at a "feeding station" along the main road	X
Pale Fork-marked Lemur	Phaner à fourche pâle	<i>Phaner pallescens</i>	Several seen & heard at night in Kirindy	X
Milne-Edwards Sportive Lemur	Lépilémur de Milne-Edwards	<i>Lepilemur edwardsi</i>	2 sleeping on a tree in Ankarafantsika	X
Hubbard's Sportive Lemur	Lépilémur de Hubbard	<i>Lepilemur hubbardi</i>	1 sleeping on a tree in Zombitse	X
White-footed Sportive Lemur	Lépilémur à pieds blancs	<i>Lepilemur leucopus</i>	3 active in a tree in Ifaty forest	X
Randrianasolo Sportive Lemur	Lépilémur de Randrianasolo	<i>Lepilemur randrianasoli</i>	1 sleeping on a tree in the Tsingy	X
Red-tailed Sportive Lemur	Lépilémur à queue rousse	<i>Lepilemur ruficaudatus</i>	Several seen night & day in Kirindy	X
Common Brown Lemur	Maki brun	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>	Several observed in Mantadia, Andasibe and Ankarafantsika	X
Mongoose Lemur	Maki mangouste	<i>Eulemur mongoz</i>	Several observed in Ankarafantsika and Katsepy near the lighthouse	X
Red-bellied Lemur	Maki à ventre roux	<i>Eulemur rubriventer</i>	Several observed in Ranomafana and Mantadia	X
Red-fronted Brown Lemur	Maki brun à front roux	<i>Eulemur rufus</i>	Common in Isalo, Kirindy and Ranomafana	X
Golden Bamboo Lemur	Hapalémur doré	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>	Several seen in Ranomafana	X
Easter Grey Bamboo Lemur	Hapalémur gris	<i>Hapalemur griseus</i>	Several seen in Mantadia and Andasibe – a nightmare to take pictures of ☹️	X
Greater Bamboo Lemur	Grand hapalémur	<i>Prolemur simus</i>	2 seen in Ranomafana	X
Black & white Ruffed Lemur (2 ssp)	Maki varié (2 ssp)	<i>Varecia variegata variegata</i>	Several observed in Ranomafana	X
		<i>Varecia variegata editorum</i>	2 observed quickly in Mantadia	X
Ring-tailed Lemur	Maki catta	<i>Lemur catta</i>	Several seen in Isalo and Anja parks	X
Western Avahi	Avahi laineux de l'Ouest	<i>Avahi occidentalis</i>	3 seen high in a tree in Ankarafantsika	X
Eastern Avahi	Avahi laineux de l'Est	<i>Avahi laniger</i>	Several seen at night in Andasibe	X
Verreaux's Sifaka	Propithèque de Verreaux	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>	Several seen in Zombitse, Isalo, Kirindy	X
Milne-Edward's Sifaka	Propithèque de Milne-Edwards	<i>Propithecus edwardsi</i>	2 groups seen in Ranomafana	X
Diademed Sifaka	Propithèque diadème	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>	Beautiful sifakas! Several individuals seen in Mantadia	X
Decken's Sifaka	Propithèque de Decken	<i>Propithecus deckeni</i>	3 observed in forest patch in the Tsingy	X
Crowned Sifaka	Propithèque couronné	<i>Propithecus coronatus</i>	3 seen near the lighthouse in Katsepy	X
Coquerel's Sifaka	Propithèque de Coquerel	<i>Propithecus coquereli</i>	Several seen in Ankarafantsika, including near the camp. 1 had a baby.	X
Indri	Indri	<i>Indri indri</i>	Heard only in Mantadia. What a sound!! Heard and 6 seen very well in Andasibe. 1 had a cute baby.	X
Aye-aye	Aye-Aye	<i>Daubentonia madagascariensis</i>	2 seen in an island in Manambato. "semi wild" I would say since they are regularly fed with coconuts.	X
Total Species Recorded = 38				

I'm adding to this report our pictures of the most iconic species we observed during that trip (they were all new to me since it was the first time we came to Madagascar ☺️).



Tsingy de Bemaraha



Fosa



Fanaloka



Ring-tailed Mongoose



Narrow-striped Mongoose



Giant Jumping Rat



Lesser Hedgehog-tenrec



Pale Fork-marked Lemur



Hubbard's Sportive Lemur



White-footed Sportive Lemur



Randrianasolo Sportive Lemur



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Mongoose Lemur



Rufous Mouse Lemur



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Western Avahi



Eastern Avahi



Black & white Ruffed Lemur



Verreaux's Sifaka



Decken's Sifaka



Milne-Edward's Sifaka



Coquerel's Sifaka



Crowned Sifaka



Diademed Sifaka



Indri



Aye-aye