

When to visit Mandrare River Camp



April

This is the month in the Mandrare Valley where everything is very green after the rains, the corn Harvest starts and it is still very warm, late summer. The birding is still surprisingly good and reptiles are very active indeed as they are well fed after the rains, this is an excellent time to visit and it offers high season experience at low season prices. We cross the Mandrare by boat in April (Zodiac) as it is still high, and we can offer trips to the sacred Gallery forest by boat, which is a lovely way to see the life along the river.

May

For those who prefer it a little cooler in the evenings, but still hot in the day May is a fantastic month to visit Mandrare, the river is still high and it is still green enough and warm enough for the animals to be active. The sun sets straight behind the baobabs in Baobab alley and the late autumn light all over Madagascar is great for photography.

June

June is the start of winter and while it is still usually in the mid-twenties in the daytime, at night it can drop into the low teens. 26th of June is the national day holiday – Independence day and for those interested in the real culture of Madagascar this is a fantastic experience. All of the villages and schools participate in a big parade and there are lots of events that take place, cycling races, football matches etc. festivities start on the 24th and if you can time your visit for these days it is quite an experience!

July & August

These are the winter months and the driest time of the year (often with no rainfall at all for the two months). Both diurnal and nocturnal Lemurs are still easily seen and birding can be rewarding as the forest greenery starts to thin out after the rains. On the cultural side this is a very active period with many celebrations in the villages and also ceremonies such as exorcisms which are carried out in the winter months. Cultural life congregates at the river which is now the only reliable source of water for the entire valley.

For those who enjoy hiking this is the ideal time to come as the cooler days allow for longer walks. The Verreauxs Sifaka start birthing in Late August and so it is a great time to see the smallest of young.

September

September is an interesting month, all sources of water have now dried, even the Mandrare becomes dry every few years, even when it is not it becomes a trickle you can step over! This means that wildlife requiring water is concentrated very close to the river and seeing Ringtails in large groups is very easy. The mating season has also started, with grey headed lovebirds and Paradise Flycatchers early nesters, The ringtails join the Sifaka in having young and so we start to see many baby lemurs.

October

This is the peak time for bird watchers as the mating season is in full flow, it starts to get hot during the day, and doesn't cool down as much overnight, however the reward is that all species are highly active and easy to see. This is our peak season (October to Mid-November), due to the spectacular wildlife on offer.

There may be the chance - usually between 8th and 25th October to see the River rise, if it has been totally dry then this is a great experience, as the Antandroy celebrate the first signs of the coming rains. The river rises due to rain in the mountains filling up the Mandrare catchment basin, rain in camp itself in October is still only about 2 or 3 days in the month and if it happens it is a brief afternoon thunderstorm, to clear the air and drop the temperature!

November

This is still peak season again with excellent birding and wildlife, rains will usually start yearly in the month, as a thunderstorm or two in the late afternoon, the mornings are glorious and the early sun rise permits activities prior to breakfast allowing long days for those who want to see lots of wildlife.

December & January

The humidity tends to generally drop off from November with just a couple of days prior to rain being humid, again afternoon thunderstorms are the usual rain if it comes (usually only a few days in the month), the river is high again and so floating down the river to the Sacred gallery forest is a great activity. The cultural side is not to be missed with lots of celebrations for Christmas and New Years.

