



2018 Newsletter

Water Beetling with the Balfour-Browne Club

Each year the Balfour-Browne Club organises a field meeting, usually in a European country (see www.latissimus.org for details). This year two meetings took place in the Rif Mountains of Morocco and in Kilorglin, County Kerry, Ireland.

Highlight of the Morocco trip was a new (to me) species of Medicinal leech – the North African *Hirudo troctina*, a beautifully marked animal.



As far as water beetles went I was pleased to get my first *Melodema* (a good-sized diving beetle) in a river in Talassemtane National Park. The park was home to a number of endemic conifers, but unfortunately is being damaged by cannabis growing.

Madagascar research project



I was invited to join a research project to Marojejy National Park in the northeast of Madagascar to investigate water beetles as we ascended the mountain. Unfortunately a general election prevented the permits being obtained but we went to visit anyway. Apart from casual records of a number of Gyrinidae (*Dineutis* and *Orectogyrus*), the Park was full of *Mantella* and *Aglyptodactylis* frogs, *Brookesia* and *Furcifer* chameleons and *Uroplatus* geckos. It is most famous for the Silky Sifakas (above). We are hoping that the project will take place this year.



Highlight of the Irish trip was a visit to see the freshwater pearl mussels in a glorious river as well as a trek up to loughs in the McGillyCully Reeks where rare stoneflies (*Capnia atra*) had been recorded but unfortunately not found by me on this occasion.



Conservation projects at home continue with Medicinal leech and *Bidessus unistriatus* surveys in the New Forest and a visit to the Isle of Wight with Garth Foster to find *Paracymus aeneus* in the sort of habitat that I might easily have passed over (shallow water over deeper mud at the edge of a reed bed) had I not been in the hands of an expert.