



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Madagascar Highlights

Knox: Private

28th October to 11th November 2016 (15 days)

Trip Report



Short-legged Ground Roller by Gareth Robbins

Trip report and photos by tour leader: Gareth Robbins

Tour Summary

Mike and Linn arrived on a prompt flight in from South Africa and once they made it through customs, they were greeted by Guillaume - who is the MEA (Madagascar Expedition Agency a Representative and Guide) and myself. We made



Madagascar Wagtail by Gareth Robbins

a few stops along the way to the hotel and had a brief glimpse of Malagasy Kestrel as it shot over the road. We finally arrived at our beautiful, cool hotel called Au Bois Vert, which lay at the foot of a cluster of pine trees. There were a couple of birds spotted on the property after check-in, such as Malagasy Bulbul, Red Fody, Malagasy Brush Warbler, Madagascar Wagtail and Malagasy White-eye. After a lovely dinner, we made our way back to our rooms and were serenaded by the Madagascar Nightjar throughout the night.

We said goodbye to our peaceful and serene hotel and made our way through the hustle and bustle of the city of 1000 soldiers - Antananarivo. After leaving the city, we drove through a few smaller villages, managing to spot Dimorphic and Western Cattle Egrets, and Squacco and Striated Herons, as well as a pair of Malagasy Kingfishers in some of the rice paddies we passed. We finally arrived at our hotel along the river in Perinet and as we walked to reception, we spotted a Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher in the trees in front of the restaurant. After a delightful lunch, we set out to the Perinet Special Reserve and here we met our expert local guide, Luc. At the beginning of our walk, we had good views of Nelicourvi Weavers and not so good views of White-throated Oxylobes; we did, however, manage to see a very full and lazy Madagascar Tree Boa basking in the sun on the forest floor. As we continued with the walk, we saw Red Fody, Souimanga Sunbird, Madagascar Cuckoo and we were also very lucky to sneak up on two Madagascar Ibises. Further along the trail, we had excellent views of a Collared Nightjar sitting in a fern tree. It did not take us long to come across our first group of Indri, which we spent a bit of time with, watching them feed and leap from tree to tree. As we made our way out the park, we came across a pair of Rainforest Scops Owls and at the reception area, we saw a female Malagasy Green Sunbird and a pair of Madagascar Wagtails in their nest. After a great start, we headed back to the hotel before setting out again on a night walk.



Collared Nightjar by Gareth Robbins



On the walk, we managed to see a Green Bright-eyed Frog and were very lucky to have a rare sighting of a female Canopy Chameleon.



Nelicourvi Weaver
by Gareth Robbins

After an early breakfast, we met Luc and made our way to the Mantadia National Park. Along the way, we stopped at a hotel to get some good views of Mascarene Martin sitting on the roof of one of the chalets. We entered Mantadia National Park and made our way along the bumpy dirt track to where our birding would start. This drive came to a sudden halt when a Pitta-like Ground Roller flew past the car. We all got out and perused the bird, managing to get excellent views of these popular birds. At the same time, a Scaly Ground Roller appeared on the scene and we all managed to get superb views of this generally difficult bird. We finally arrived at the start of the trails and it did not take us long to see White-throated Oxylabes, Wedge-tailed Jery, Spectacled Tetraka and Malagasy Brush Warbler. Our next couple of stops consisted of vanga parties, where we saw Tylas, Blue, Chabert, White-headed, Red-tailed and Nuthatch Vangas, as well as Common

Newtonia, Malagasy White-eye, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Long-billed Bernieria, Souimanga Sunbird, Madagascar Magpie-Robin and a Ward's Flycatcher. One of our interesting amphibian sightings of the day was of a brightly coloured Madagascar Poison Frog. On our way to the lunch spot, we came across a troop of Diademed Sifakas next to the road and we watched these amazing creatures swing and jump from tree to tree. We stopped for a quick lunch before shooting off over some muddy terrain, across a few streams and climbing up the hillside dodging leeches, holes and spiky trees to get a well-deserved view of three Short-legged Ground-Rollers. After our exhausting climb, we took a relaxing walk to a small dam and here we were very fortunate to see Madagascar Grebe, a pair of Meller's Ducks, Madagascar Swamp Warbler, Common Moorhen, Madagascar Starlings, Broad-billed Rollers and a very unexpected view of a Malagasy Pond Heron. After some fantastic sightings, we called it a day and made our way back to the hotel, spotting a female Frances's Sparrowhawk perched in a tree along the side of the road.

Today we re-visited the Perinet Special Reserve and after arriving in the park, it did not take us long to start finding some new species of birds, such as a pair of Madagascar Wood Rails, a Malagasy Coucal and a very vocal Rand's Warbler sitting right at the top of a Conifer Tree. We then took a steep, off-the-beaten-track forest trail, where we managed to get fantastic views of White-throated Rail. After having no luck with any of the Couas, or the Rufous-breasted Ground Roller, we made our way back to



Pitta-like Ground Roller
by Gareth Robbins





Malagasy Coucal
by Gareth Robbins

our hotel to have lunch. Getting great views of a Madagascan Pygmy Kingfisher along the way. After lunch, we visited a community guide's reserve and this is where we had some fantastic views of Malagasy Bulbul, Crested Drongo and Blue Vanga. Further along the trail, we came across a Madagascan Owl with a chick, as well as huge male and female Parson's Chameleons in a bush right next to the path. We also had a small troop of Brown Lemurs in the trees above us. We then backtracked to another area, where an interesting challenge was presented to us. This challenge was to spot the Southern Flat-tailed Gecko in a nearby tree. Fortunately, we all eventually managed to see the superbly camouflaged Gecko. These geckos rely on their camouflage to avoid being eaten by the Blue Coua. Towards the end of the trail, we got a brief view of one Blue Coua. After another successful day, we retired to our hotel on the Sahatandra River.

At first light, we woke up to a thick misty morning and this was our warning that a very hot day was to be expected. After lunch, we met Patrick - our driver, and Luc and made our way to a large wetland that is well-known for a different group of specialities. As the mist lifted and we neared the wetland, we were very fortunate to see a couple of Madagascan Mannikins along the side of the road. We finally arrived at the wetland and met Ravao, who was the local bird expert, and followed her into the wetland. As we walked through the muddy flats, we heard a Madagascan Flufftail call and after some clever positioning, we all managed to get some great views of this secretive yet vocal bird. Mike even managed to get a decent photo of the bird as it darted across the path. Next was a very close sighting of a Madagascan Cisticola as it sat in a bush right next to the track. We crossed several small streams using some very thick planks, making this process rather interesting, as some people were very worried that the planks would collapse beneath them. As we neared the wetland we had two brief views of Madagascan Partridges as they were flushed out from the grass, as well as some excellent views of a Madagascan Snipe as it flew straight past us. Some of the other birds we saw were Broad-billed Roller, Malagasy Turtle Dove and a couple of Purple Herons. We then came across an area where there were some reeds and some thicker scrub and this is where we heard the Grey Emutail calling. After some searching, we finally managed to get some great views of these special birds. We tried our luck with the Madagascan Rail but only managed to hear the bird and get some brief glimpses of a bird moving in the tall grass.



Parson's Chameleon by Gareth Robbins





Grev Emutail by Gareth Robbins

We also managed to get some great views of a male Forest Fody and an immature Madagascan Harrier-Hawk being mobbed by a Crested Drongo. By this time of the day, it was already very hot and we decided to make our way back to the car. Once we arrived at the car we tried one more time for a better view of the partridge but, instead, managed to flush a Western Barn Owl out of its day roost. After yet another successful day, we decided to make our way back to the hotel and enjoy the shade.

If the previous day was misty, today was even mistier and as we made our way down to the restaurant for breakfast, we could hear the calls of the Indri and Red-fronted Coua. After breakfast, we drove to the Perinet Special Reserve, where met Luc. We narrowed the target list to a few bird species, mainly focussing on the Coua family and then we were on our way. As

it was still a bit cool, we walked for a long period before we came across our first Coua! This was the very vocal Blue Coua and it eventually landed almost at eye-level and we all had amazing views of the bird. Our next Coua sighting was of a very obliging Red-fronted Coua, which happened to run across the path a couple of times, enabling us to get some great looks at the bird. As the morning heated up, we saw a few more birds, such as Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Long-billed Bernieria and Malagasy Turtle Doves. We then heard a Red-breasted Coua calling in the distance and after clambering down a few root infested paths, we finally made it onto the main track where Luc found a Red-breasted Coua in a nest in a Pandanus Tree. After a successful Coua day, we made our way out of the park and visited a nearby hotel, where we saw a few Blue Pigeons feeding on the fruits of a tree at a nearby restaurant. We then returned to our hotel for a short break before heading to lunch at the pristine Vakona Lodge. Our table overlooked a small dam and during lunch, we saw a Malagasy Kingfisher catching a small fish, Mascarene Martins flying over the water and pair of White-headed Vangas feeding their chicks. After a delicious lunch, we headed to the Lemur Island where we had some fun, interacting with some of the Brown, Bamboo and Black-and-White Ruffed Lemurs. After another successful day, we headed back to the hotel and enjoyed a delicious meal, accompanied by local Malagasy musicians playing some of their traditional hits.

Today we set out for our last morning of birding in the Perinet Special Reserve. Not long after entering the forests, we could hear the Indri calling and at the same time, a Crossley's Vanga called too! It only took us a few minutes to get great looks of this secretive vanga! We then continued with our mission to look for the



Red-fronted Coua by Gareth Robbins





Malagasy Kingfisher
by Gareth Robbins

Velvet Asity. We took a few trails and started to make our way up a steep hill which levelled out at the top. After nearly an hour, we walked into a Vanga party consisting of Blue, Nuthatch and Tylas Vangas and suddenly a female Velvet Asity appeared and we all got fantastic views of this plump little bird. A little further down from us, we could hear the Indri calling, so we followed the call and got to look at these amazing animals for one last time. After a very successful morning, we said goodbye to Luc and thanked him for his great guiding and we headed back to the hotel, where we packed and made our way back to Antananarivo. On our way back, we managed to get a chance sighting of two Madagascan Pratincoles sitting on some rocks in the Mandoro River. At the same time, an Olive Bee-eater flew overhead. We also managed to see Great, Dimorphic and Western Cattle Egrets

in the rice paddies on the way to Tana. After some severe traffic jams, we finally made it back to our hotel in the pine forest, where we managed to relax before our next venture.

We were half way into the tour, and we found ourselves flying south-west of Antananarivo, to the coastal town of Tulear. We then made our way to La Tabla, which is just a little bit south of the town, in search for two special birds, namely the Verreaux's Coua and the Red-shouldered Vanga. We finally arrived at Tulear Airport in our propeller aeroplane and met Freddie - who would be our guide for the next two days, and made our way to La Tabla, stopping off at a nearby hotel for lunch. Once we arrived at La Tabla, we walked along a well-used dirt road full of bicycles, Zebu carts and people passing by. Freddie disappeared in search for the Red-shouldered Vanga and we waited around, spotting Sakalava Weavers, Madagascan Larks and a Lafresnaye's Vanga. Finally, when we heard Freddie shout, we followed him through some thick and spiny bushes into an area where he had found the bird. We eventually managed to get fantastic clear views of a pair of Red-shouldered Vangas without too many obstructions from the spiny plants. We then walked back towards the vehicle and we heard the Verreaux's Coua call. A Stripe-throated Jery caught our attention, and as we looked at the Jery, a Verreaux's Coua flew out a euphorbia tree a little further back down the road. We followed the bird and managed to get some great scope views of the Coua. After a successful travel day, we made our way to Ifaty, where we would be staying at a hotel on the beach.



Madagascan Cuckoo
by Gareth Robbins





Verreaux's Coua by Gareth Robbins

After a good night's rest, with the sounds of the Madagascan Nightjar calling all night, we met for coffee at first light and then proceeded to Mosa Park. Mosa Park is a privately-owned reserve managed by the owner, Mosa, and his son, Freddy. This 50ha reserve consists of Baobabs and Octopus Plants, which make up the habitat called Spiny Forest. As we got out of the car, we were welcomed by a Madagascan Hoopoe and a couple of Sakalava Weavers flying in and out of their messy nests. We then followed Freddie into the Spiny Forest and before we knew it, we were seeing *Thamnornis*, Archbold's *Newtonia*, Crested Coua, and our first big sighting of the day, which was of a Pair of Long-tailed Ground-Rollers. We spent a good few minutes enjoying these birds, especially the male, as he would jump into the tree for a couple of seconds the jump back down, doing this interesting display around ten times. We then continued along the trail, managing to see Sub-desert Brush Warbler, Madagascan Sparrowhawk in its nest and a Sub-desert Mesite perched in a tree, which did not move at all. We took a few more trails through the Spiny Forest, passing some beautiful Baobabs and Octopus Plants and along the way, we also managed to see Sickie-billed Vanga in a nest and a Running Coua. As the morning started to heat up, we made our way back to the car, getting some great views of another Sickie-billed Vanga being mobbed by some Chabert's Vangas. We then drove to some local salt pans in search of the Madagascan Plover, and here we saw White-fronted and Kittlitz's Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Dimorphic Egrets, Common and Curlew Sandpipers and eventually, after almost giving up, we managed to find these birds near the back of the salt pans. We then headed to the hotel, where we relaxed in the shade and had a light lunch before heading to the Tsarako Wetlands. Upon arriving at the wetlands, we managed to get some good views of Black-winged Stilts, Kittlitz's Plovers, Curlew Sandpipers, Little Grebes and we had some great views of a male Greater Painted Snipe. We then drove to the opposite side of the wetland, and here we managed to get good views of Hottentot and Red-billed Teals. We saw many Whimbrels flying overhead and landing in another wetland, so we decided to follow these birds and along the way we stopped and had fantastic looks at a Baillon's Crake in a thick marshy area. We finally arrived at a wetland and here we could see large numbers of White-faced Whistling Ducks, Squacco Herons, Common Moorhens and a couple of Great Egrets. We then decided to make our way back to the hotel, managing to get some good looks at some Madagascan Buttonquails along the way.



Long-tailed Ground Roller by Gareth Robbins



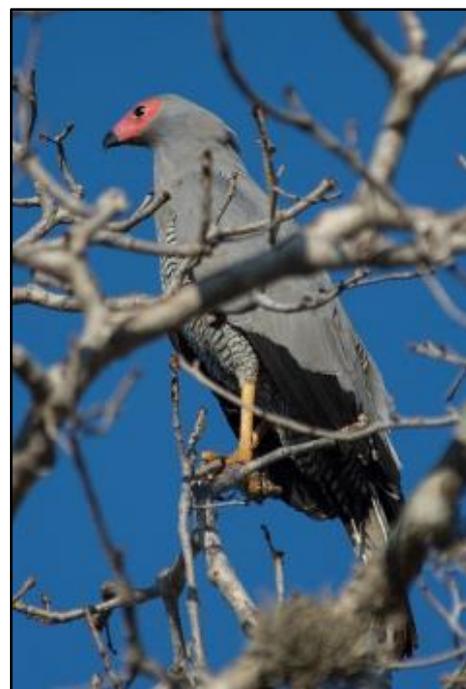


Red-tailed Tropicbird by Gareth Robbins

We revisited the Spiny forest in the morning and as we got out the car, we had some excellent views of a few Grey-headed Lovebirds. We then walked along a few trails in pursuit of the Green-capped Coua, which we could never locate. However, we did manage to see a pair of Madagascan Cuckoo-Hawks. We then went back to the hotel and had breakfast before checking out and heading back to Tulear. Once we arrived at Tulear, we drove to the harbour and here we hopped onto some Zebu carts and made our way towards our speed boat. Once we were on the

boat, we made our way through the harbour, luckily seeing a Humblot's Heron fly overhead. We eventually arrived at the St Augustine cliff, which was very quiet, and here we managed to see another Humblot's Heron. We then headed straight to the island of Nosy Ve, and once we neared the island we could see Red-tailed Tropicbirds flying in the distance. On the northern Section of the island, there was an exposed sandbank where we could see Greater-crested Terns, Saunders Terns and Lesser-crested Terns, as well as Sanderlings and Grey Plovers. We continued around the island, spotting some more Ruddy Turnstones and a Grey Heron. We finally managed to exit the boat and we walked on the island, managing to see some Red-tailed Tropicbirds sitting in the shade. At the same time, we had some fantastic views of the Tropicbirds as they flew overhead. We then left the island and got out at the seaside village of Anakao, where we had lunch and looked for the Littoral Rock Thrush. After some quick searching, we managed to find a male Littoral Rock Thrush as well as a few Red Fodys and some Sakalava Weavers. After Lunch, we headed back to Tulear and checked into our hotel with lovely air-conditioned rooms.

Today we said goodbye to Tulear and boarded a plane and flew to the seaside town of Fort Dauphin. Once we arrived, we collected our luggage and met our pothole avoiding expert, Antwan. We then made our way to Berenty, on one of the bumpiest roads in Madagascar, and with some expert driving skills from Antwan, we managed to cover the required 90km in only 2 hours and 45 minutes. We arrived at Berenty Lemur Reserve and were welcomed by the extreme heat. We had lunch and were entertained by the Local Ring-tailed Lemurs before meeting our guide, Danny, who took us to a patch of Spiny Forest, primarily in search of the Green-capped Coua that was missed in Ifaty. Along some of the trails, we passed some large Baobabs, as well as a few species of Didierea Tree (Octopus Plants) and a scorpion. After some serious searching, we eventually came across one Green-capped Coua. Before dinner, we revisited the Spiny Forest for a short night walk,



**Madagascan Harrier-Hawk
by Gareth Robbins**



where we saw White-footed Sportive Lemurs and a Grey-Brown Mouse Lemur. After a successful walk, we headed back to the hotels for dinner.



**Female White-browed Hawk-Owl
by Gareth Robbins**

We left the hotel at 4:30 am and made our way to some open section of the reserve in search of the Madagascar Sandgrouse. Our first search area yielded nothing so we drove to a small sisal plantation and here Mike and Linn managed to flush the Sandgrouse and got some reasonable views of the birds. We then drove to the Gallery Forest and here we managed to get excellent looks at Giant Coua, Hook-billed Vangas and had some close encounters with some habituated Verreaux's Sifakas. After lunch and a siesta, we headed back out to look for some Owls. Our first stop was a brief walk back into the Gallery Forest, where we had some fantastically close views of a pair of White-Browed Hawk-Owls. On our way out, we had some excellent looks at Broad-billed Rollers, Madagascar Turtle-Doves and Madagascar Hoopoe. We then drove to the Spiny Forest and on the edge of the forest we were very fortunate to see the Torotoroka Scops Owl roosting in a tree. We then continued with a short walk through the Spiny Forest and here we had two great views of Running Couas, as well

as Madagascar Magpie-Robin and Crested Couas. After a successful day, we made our way back to the hotel for an early dinner and celebrated 100 new birds for Mike and Linn.

Today we had our final walk in the Gallery Forest. It was already very warm, even though the sun had just risen. As soon as we started the walk, we were welcomed by a sighting of a Giant Coua standing in the road, followed by sightings of Hook-billed Vanga, Madagascar Hoopoe, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Madagascar Magpie-Robin and a female Frances's Sparrowhawk. As we walked through some open areas, we started to see many Yellow-billed and Black Kites, Malagasy Kestrels and Broad-billed Rollers. After seeing some great birds and making our way back to the hotel, we had some luck, managing to spot a few Madagascar Green Pigeons. We also managed to get some great views of the resident Madagascar Flying Foxes as they slept in the trees. After arriving back at the hotel, we were welcomed by a troop of dancing Verreaux's Sifakas as they skipped past us and we also had some fun watching the resident Ring-tailed Lemurs moving in between the tables



Sakalava Weaver by Gareth Robbins



of the restaurant. After breakfast, we checked out and made our way back along the bumpy route 13 to the town of Fort Dauphin. After a three hour drive, we finally arrived in Fort Dauphin. We took a short drive around the town, scanning for any possibility of seabird life. Unfortunately, we had no luck, so we checked into the lovely cool hotel and had a relaxing afternoon.



Verreaux's Sifaka by Gareth Robbins

Today we had a late breakfast and at midday, we made our way to the airport, where we would fly back to Antananarivo. After arriving in Antananarivo

Airport, we made our way out on the airstrip, managing to see a Malagasy Kestrel sitting on a lamp post. We then collected our luggage and as we were loading the car, Guillaume said that we should look at that grey figure sitting on the control tower. After scurrying along the car park, we managed to get some decent views of a Sooty Falcon.



Broad-billed Roller by Gareth Robbins

Today was the last day of the tour and we would be catching a flight out of Antananarivo to South Africa. After lunch, we made our way back to the Airport, where we were notified that the flight was delayed. After 7 hours of sitting at the boarding gates, we finally got the go ahead to board. As we came out of the terminal gate, we looked up and watched a Sooty Falcon flying right overhead, catching the bugs that were attracted to the flood lights. We eventually arrived at OR Tambo International Airport, where we went our separate ways.

Annotated List of Birds recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC List of Please cite: Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2006. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Total species recorded 143 (141 seen & 2 heard only)

Key to abbreviations:

E: an endemic species

NE: a near-endemic species (i.e. occurring in the Malagasy region only)

BE: a breeding endemic species

I: an introduced species

e: an endemic subspecies

ne: a near-endemic subspecies

be: a breeding endemic subspecies



CONSERVATION STATUS

C: critical En: endangered V: vulnerable NT: near-threatened

NP: National Park

SR: Special Reserve

LR: Lemur Reserve

Ducks & Geese Anatidae**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*

We saw these pretty ducks at the wetlands near Ifaty.

Meller's Duck *Anas melleri*

We saw these shy ducks at a dam in Mantadia NP.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

Seen well and in good numbers at the wetlands near Ifaty.

Hottentot Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

We saw these smaller teals at the wetlands near Ifaty.

Guineafowl Numididae**Helmeted Guineafowl (I)** *Numida meleagris*

We saw a single bird in the Mantadia NP and had a few more sightings in Berenty.

Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies Phasianidae**Madagascar Partridge (E)** *Magaroperdix madagarensis*

These shy birds were seen at the Wetland between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.

Grebes Podicipedidae**Little Grebe (Dabchick)** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A few birds were seen in a wetland near Ifaty.

Madagascar Grebe (E) (VU) *Tachybaptus pelzelni*

This grebe was seen very well on a small dam in Mantadia NP.

*NOTE: Globally threatened and declining due to habitat loss, the introduction of exotic fish, and competition (and possibly hybridization) with Little Grebe.***Tropicbirds Phaethontidae****Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda*

These beautiful, birds showed fantastically for us at Nosy Ve, where they nest.

Ibises and Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**Madagascar Ibis** *Lophotibis cristata*

We were very fortunate to see these two birds in the forests of Perinet SR.

Hérons & Bitterns Ardeidae**Striated Heron** *Butorides striatus*

We recorded these birds in rice fields en route to Perinet SR and at a dam at Mantadia NP and at the wetlands near Ifaty.

*NOTE: Represented in Madagascar by the race B. s. rutenbergi, which tends to be darker than its African counterpart, with a reddish neck reminiscent of the American B. s. virens (Green Heron).***Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

We saw these herons in the rice field in Antananarivo and at the wetlands outside Ifaty.



Malagasy Pond Heron*Ardeola idea*

We were very lucky to see this rare bird at the dam in the Mantadia NP.

Western Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Widespread, and seen in several wetlands throughout the tour.

Grey Heron*Ardea cinerea*

This heron was seen on the coastal cliffs of the Onilahy River, near San Augustin.

Humblot's Heron (E) (V)*Ardea humbloti*

The Onilahy Cliffs produced good views of this heron. We also had one bird fly over us as we left Tulear Harbour.

Purple Heron*Ardea purpurea*

This heron was seen at a large wetland between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.

Great Egret*Ardea alba*

This heron was seen en route to Antananarivo from Perinet SR and in the wetlands near Ifaty and Tulear.

Dimorphic (Western Reef) Egret*Egretta dimorpha*

This egret was seen in and around the rice fields at Antananarivo and at the wetlands near Ifaty.

NOTE: This species is sometimes lumped by authorities as a distinct subspecies of the widespread Little Egret, Egretta garzetta. Clements treats it as a subspecies of Little Egret.

Hamerkop Scopidae**Hamerkop***Scopus umbretta*

These strange looking birds were seen along the roadside en route to Perinet SR.

Hawks, Eagles and Kites Accipitridae**Madagascan Harrier-Hawk (E)***Polyboroides radiatus*

We enjoyed views of this endemic in the wetlands between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP as well as on a nest in the Spiny Forest at Ifaty.

Madagascan Cuckoo-Hawk (E)*Aviceda madagascariensis*

We enjoyed good views of this bird in the Ifaty spiny forest.

Frances's Sparrowhawk (NE)*Accipiter francesii*

The Gallery Forest at Berenty gave us good views of this bird.

Madagascan Sparrowhawk (E)*Accipiter francesii*

We only managed to see parts of this bird as it sat in a nest in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Yellow-billed Kite*Milvus aegyptius*

Birds were recorded at a few scattered locations throughout the south.

Black Kite*Milvus migrans*

This bird was seen in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Madagascar Buzzard (E)*Buteo brachypterus*

This bird of prey was seen en route to Perinet SR and seen in Ifaty.

Mesites Mesitornithidae**Subdesert Mesite (E) (V)***Monias benschi*

We saw this motionless perched in a tree in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Flufftails Sarothruridae**Madagascar Flufftail (E)***Sarothrura insularis*

We had fantastic close encounters with this bird at the large wetland between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.



Rails & Gallinules and Coots Rallidae

- Madagascar Wood Rail (E)** *Canirallus kioloides*
We had two good views of this bird in the Perinet SR.
- Madagascar Rail (E) (VU)** *Rallus madagascariensis*
We only managed to hear this bird in the wetland between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.
- White-throated Rail (E)** *Dryolimnas cuvieri*
We had fantastic views of this secretive bird in the Perinet SR.
- Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*
These birds were seen at the dam in Mantadia NP and in the wetlands near Ifaty.
- Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata*
We saw plenty of these birds in the wetland near Ifaty.

Buttonquails Turnicidae

- Madagascar Buttonquail (E)** *Turnix nigricollis*
We had views of these tiny fast moving birds in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Avocets & Stilts Recurvirostridae

- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
Recorded in good numbers at various wetlands and dams near Ifaty.

Plovers Charadriidae

- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
These plovers were seen on the Island of Nosy Ve.
- Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*
Good views were had of these plovers at various wetlands and dams near Ifaty.
- Madagascar Plover (E) (NU)** *Charadrius thoracicus*
After a lot of searching, we finally managed to see this rare endemic at the salt works in Ifaty.
- Kittlitz's Plover** *Charadrius pecuarius*
We saw this Plover in the wetlands/Dams near Ifaty.
- White-fronted Plover** *Charadrius marginatus*
We had good views of this plover in the Ifaty area and Nosy Ve.

Painted Snipes Rostratulidae

- Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*
One bird was seen flying the wetlands between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP. We had better views of another bird at the wetland near Ifaty.

Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae

- Madagascan Snipe (E) (VU)** *Gallinago macrodactyla*
We were very lucky to see these snipes at the large wetland between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.
- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
These birds were seen on numerous occasions at Ifaty and Nosy Ve.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
One was seen at the wetland near Ifaty.
- Common Sandpiper** *Tringa hypoleucos*
This species was seen en route to Antananarivo from Perinet SR, and was seen at the wetlands near Ifaty.



Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

These birds were seen at Ifaty and on Nosy Ve.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A couple of these small birds were seen on the island of Nosy Ve.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

These sandpipers were seen at the wetland outside Ifaty.

Pratincoles and Coursers Glareolidae**Madagascar Pratincole (VU)** *Glareola ocularis*

We were very lucky to see these birds along the Mandoro River as we made our way back to Antananarivo from Perinet SR.

Gulls, Terns and Skimmers Laridae**Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii*

One bird was seen from the boat as we neared the island of Nosy Ve.

Lesser Crested Terns *Thalasseus bengalensis*

A small group of these terns were seen on the island of Nosy Ve.

Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi*

These small terns were seen at Nosy Ve island.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae**Madagascar Sandgrouse (E)** *Pterocles personatus*

These birds were seen briefly in the sisal plantations at Berenty.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae**Rock Dove (I)** *Columba livia*

Widespread and common around human habitation.

Malagasy (Madagascar) Turtle Dove (NE) *Streptopelia picturata*

This dove was seen often during the tour.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

This very small and distinctive dove was common in the dry south and south-west.

Madagascar Green Pigeon (E) *Treron australis*

After a lot of searching, we finally managed to see a couple of these birds in Berenty.

Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E) *Alectroenas madagascariensis*

These beautiful pigeons were seen on the hotel grounds bordering the Perinet SR.

Cuckoos, Couas & Coucals Cuculidae**Malagasy Coucal (NE)** *Centropus toulou*

Small numbers were recorded on numerous of the days during the tour.

Crested Coua (E) *Coua cristata*

These birds were seen in Ifaty and Berenty LR.

Verreaux's Coua (E) (NT) *Coua verreauxi*

We had great views of one of these birds at La Tabla near Tulear.

Blue Coua (E) *Coua caerulea*

We had some fantastic looks at this coua in the Mantadia NP and in the Perinet SR.

Red-capped (Green-capped) Coua (E) *Coua reynaudii olivaceiceps*

After many misses, we finally located this bird in the Spiny Forests of Berenty LR.



NOTE: This southern, khaki-capped form of Red-capped Coua, which we saw, is considered to be a full species in Sinclair I. and Langrande O. *Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands*; however many other authorities consider this form to be a subspecies of Red-capped Coua.

Red-fronted Coua *Coua reynaudii*

We managed to finally see this coua in the Perinet SR.

Running Coua (E) *Coua cursor*

This coua was seen in the Spiny Forests of Ifaty and Berenty LR.

Giant Coua (E) *Coua gigas*

Large couas were seen in good numbers in the Gallery Forest, Berenty LR.

Red-breasted Coua (E) *Coua serriana*

We were very fortunate to see this bird on a nest right next to the path after many failed attempts.

Madagascar Cuckoo *Cuculus rochii*

We had great views of this cuckoo eating caterpillars from our hotel in Perinet, and also in the Perinet SR.

Barn-Owls Tytonidae

Western Barn Owl *Tyta alba*

We saw one bird get flushed out of the tall grass in the large wetland between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.

Typical Owls Strigidae

Torotoroka Scops Owl (E) *Otus madagascariensis*

We had superb views of this owl in the Spiny Forest, Berenty LR.

Rainforest Scops Owl (E) *Otus rutilus*

A pair of these small owls were seen in the Perinet SR.

NOTE: These Scops Owls have recently been split, based on morphological and vocal differences and habitat preferences.

White-browed Hawk-Owl (E) *Ninox superciliaris*

This owl provided us with some fantastic views in the Gallery Forest, Berenty LR.

Madagascar Owl (E) *Asio madagascariensis*

We saw and juvenile bird and one adult bird in the community guides reserve, Perinet.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae

Collared Nightjar (E) *Caprimulgus enarratus*

We had excellent close views of this nightjar, roosting on a Birdnest Fern in Perinet SR.

Madagascar Nightjar (NE) *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

This nightjar was seen and heard at scattered localities during the tour, and we had great views of this nightjar in the Spiny Forest, Berenty LR.

Swifts Apodidae

Malagasy Spinetail (NE) *Zoonavena grandidieri*

A few of these fluttery swifts were seen flying overhead in the Mantadia NP.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

We saw this swift in Perinet and in Fort Dauphin.

Cuckoo Roller Leptosomidae

Cuckoo Roller (NE) *Leptosomus discolor*

This vocal bird was seen in Perinet SR.



Rollers Coraciidae**Broad-billed Roller***Eurystomus glaucurus*

We heard and saw these rollers in the Perinet SR, Mantadia NP and Berenty LR.

Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae**Short-legged Ground Roller (E) (VU)***Brachypteracias leptosomus*

After some serious mountain climbing, we managed to locate this ground roller in the Mantadia NP.

Scaly Ground Roller (E)*Geobiastes squamiger*

We were very fortunate to get fantastic views of this ground roller, before being chased by Pitta-like Ground Rollers in Mantadia NP.

Pitta-like Ground Roller (E)*Atelornis pittoides*

This bird was seen flying across the road in Mantadia NP and then relocated with excellent viewings of the bird.

Long-tailed Ground Roller (E) (VU)*Uratelornis chimaera*

This stunning ground roller entertained us for a lengthy period in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher (E)***Corythornis madagascariensis*

This beautiful kingfisher perched directly above us in the Perinet SR.

Malagasy Kingfisher (NE)*Corythornis vintsioides*

This kingfisher was seen in the Perinet area on a couple of occasions. We also saw this bird while driving to and from Antananarivo to Perinet SR.

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater***Merops superciliosus*

This beautiful member of a very popular family was seen in Perinet NP, Ifaty and Berenty LR.

Hoopoes Upupidae**Madagascar Hoopoe (E)***Upupa marginalis*

This bird was seen in well in Ifaty and Berenty LR.

Falcons Falconidae**Malagasy Kestrel (NE)***Falco newtoni*

We had regular sightings of this small bird of prey during the tour.

Sooty Falcon*Falco concolor*

This falcon was seen on two occasions at the Antananarivo Airport.

Parrots Psittacidae**Grey-headed Lovebird (E)***Agapornis canus*

These gorgeous little birds were seen in the Spiny Forests of Ifaty and Berenty LR.

Lesser Vasa Parrot (NE)*Coracopsis nigra*

This parrot was seen in Perinet SR, Spiny Forests of Ifaty and in Berenty LR.

Asities Philepittidae**Velvet Asity (E)***Philepitta castanea*

After much searching, we finally found a female bird in a mixed party of Vangas.

Common Sunbird-Asity (E)*Neodrepanis coruscans*

We only managed to hear this bird briefly in the Perinet SR.



Vangas Vangidae

- Red-tailed Vanga (E)** *Calicalicus madagascariensis*
We had great looks at both male and female birds in Mantadia NP.
- Red-shouldered Vanga (E) (VU)** *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*
This confiding bird showed very well at La Tabla near Tulear.
- Hook-billed Vanga (E)** *Vanga curvirostris*
We eventually managed to get some great views of this vocal vanga in Berenty LR.
- Lafresnaye's Vanga (E)** *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*
This heavy-billed and often uncommon species was seen at La Tabla near Tulear.
- Sickle-billed Vanga (E)** *Falcoelea palliata*
This bizarre bird, and of the highlights of the tour was seen on a nest in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.
- White-headed Vanga (E)** *Artamella viridis*
During lunch, we watched a pair feeding their young at Vakona Lodge in Perinet.
- Chabert Vanga (E)** *Leptopterus chabert*
we had regular sightings of this vanga on tour.
- Blue Vanga (NE)** *Cyanolanius madagascarinus*
A stunning bird; it was seen in the Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.
- Tylas Vanga (E)** *Tylas eduardi*
We saw a few of these birds in the Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.
- Nuthatch Vanga (E)** *Hypositta corallirostris*
Often a difficult bird to find, we enjoyed excellent views of these tree creeping birds in Mantadia NP and Perinet SR.
- Common Newtonia (E)** *Newtonia brunneicauda*
This widespread species was seen in the Perinet and Mantadia areas as well as in the Spiny Forests of Ifaty.
- Archbold's Newtonia (E)** *Newtonia archboldi*
We had close-up views of this species in the spiny forest at Ifaty.
- Ward's Flycatcher** *Pseudobias wardii*
We saw this flycatcher in the Mantadia NP.
- Crossley's Vanga (E)** *Mystacornis crossleyi*
We were very lucky to see this secretive bird in the Perinet SR on our last morning.

Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae

- Madagascar Cuckooshrike (E)** *Coracina cinerea*
This species was seen in the Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.

Drongos Dicruridae

- Crested Drongo (NE)** *Dicrurus forficatus*
This is a very common species throughout many of the different habitats on the island.

Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae

- Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher (NE)** *Terpsiphone mutata*
A beautiful bird, was in all three colour morphs throughout the tour.

Crows, Jays and Magpies Corvidae

- Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*
We saw this species daily in the south and south-west of the island.



Larks Alaudidae**Madagascar Lark (E)** *Mirafra hova*

This lark was commonly seen in the Ifaty and Tulear areas as well as in the Berenty LR.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**Malagasy (Madagascar) Bulbul (NE)** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

This was one of the most frequently seen bird on tour, which was found in most habitats.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae**Mascarene Martin (BE)** *Phedina borbonica*

Excellent views were had of these birds as they were perched on the roof of the chalets at Vakona Lodge.

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*

We had many of these birds flying around wetland and grassland areas.

Reed Warblers & Allies Megaluridae**Malagasy Brush Warbler (NE)** *Nesillas typica*

This dark brown warbler was seen and heard on several occasions in the east of Madagascar.

Subdesert Brush Warbler (E) *Nesillas lantzii*

This species showed very well near in the scrub vegetation at La Tabla.

Madagascar Swamp Warbler (E) *Acrocephalus newtoni*

We had good views of this species in a marsh in the Mantadia NP and in the wetlands near Ifaty.

Grassbirds and Allies Locustellidae**Grey Emutail** *Amphilais seebohmi*

We had excellent views of a few of these birds in the wetlands between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.

Malagasy Warblers Bernieridae**White-throated Oxylabes (E)** *Oxylabes madagascariensis*

After a lot of searching, we finally managed to see this bird in the Perinet SR

Long-billed Bernieria (E) *Bernieria madagascariensis*

This long-billed bird was seen in Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.

Wedge-tailed Jery (E) *Hartertula flavoviridis*

We enjoyed fantastic views of these birds in the Mantadia NP.

Thamnornis (E) *Thamnornis chloropetoides*

We had excellent views of this localised endemic sitting on an Octopus Plant in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Spectacled Tetraka (E) *Xanthomixis zosterops*

These tetrakas with bright yellow throats were seen well in the Mantadia NP.

Rand's Warbler (E) *Randia pseudozosterops*

These tiny birds were heard and seen in the Perinet SR, usually sitting at the top of a tall tree.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae**Common Jery (E)** *Neomixis tenella*

We saw a few of these jerys in the Mantadia NP and the wetland between Perinet and Mantadia NP.

Stripe-throated Jery (E) *Neomixis striatigula*

We had regular sightings of these jerys during the tour.



Madagascar Cisticola (NE) *Cisticola cherinus*

We saw this cisticola in the wetland between Perinet and Mantadia NP.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Madagascar White-eye (NE) *Zosterops maderaspatana*

Very common in a variety of areas during the tour.

Starlings Sturnidae

Common Myna (I) *Acridotheres tristis tristis*

Commonly recorded near human habitation.

Madagascar Starling (E) *Hartlaubius aurata*

We had lengthy looks at these starlings at the dam in Mantadia NP.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E) *Copsychus albospectularis*

Seen on many occasions on the tour, often very relaxed and confiding.

Littoral Rock Thrush (E) *Monticola imerina*

We had excellent views of a pair at Anakao, south of Tulear.

Madagascar Stonechat (E) *Saxicola sibilla*

This bird was regularly seen during the first week of the tour.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae

Souimanga Sunbird (NE) *Cinnyris sovimanga*

This lovely sunbird was seen almost every single day on the island.

Malagasy Green Sunbird (NE) *Cinnyris notatus*

This larger green sunbird was seen in Perinet SR and in Berenty LR.

Weavers Ploceidae

Nelicourvi Weaver (E) *Ploceus nelicourvi*

This smart bird was seen well in the Perinet and Mantadia areas.

Sakalava Weaver (E) *Ploceus sakalava*

We had great views of this dry country bird near Ifaty and at Berenty.

Red Fody (E) *Foudia madagascariensis*

Widespread, and seen on numerous days of the tour, with many birds in the bright red plumage.

Forest Fody *Foudia omissa*

We were very fortunate to see a couple of males in full breeding plumage in the Wetland near Mantadia NP and in Perinet SR.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

Madagascar Mannikin (E) *Lepidopygia nana*

We had some wonderful views of these birds in the large wetland between Perinet and Mantadia NP, as well as in Perinet SR.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

Madagascar Wagtail (E) *Motacilla flaviventris*

This wagtail was seen regularly during the first week of the tour, and was frequently seen at our hotel in Perinet.



Annotated List of Mammals recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication: Mammals of Madagascar - A Complete Guide (2007) by Nick Garbutt.

Total species recorded 11

Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae

Madagascar Flying Fox *Pteropus rufus*

These noisy, quarrelsome creatures were seen and scoped well at the roost at Berenty LR.

Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae

Grey-Brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus griseorufus*

We had fantastic views of this cute creature in the Spiny Forest in Berenty LR.

Grey Mouse-Lemur *Microcebus murinus*

This tiny lemur was seen at our hotel in Ifaty, and on our first day, one was on the roof at the reception.

Indrid Lemurs and Sifakas Indriidae

Eastern Woolly Lemur *Avahi laniger*

We saw these lemurs on our night walks outside the Perinet SR.

Indri *Indri indri*

Always one of the highlights of a tour in Madagascar – these animals were often heard and seen in the Perinet SR, with an excellent sighting on our last day.

Diademed Sifaka *Propithecus diadema diadema*

Surely one of the most handsome of all lemurs, we saw this species very well in the Mantadia NP.

Verreaux's Sifaka *Propithecus verreaux verreauxi*

The famous “dancing” sifaka was seen on several occasions at Berenty LR.

Lemurs Lemuridae

Common Brown Lemur *Eulemur fulvus*

These lemurs were commonly seen in the Perinet SR.

Red-Brown Lemur *Eulemur rufus*

These lemurs were introduced to Berenty where they are commonly seen.

Ring-tailed Lemur *Lemur catta*

Certainly, the most recognisable of all Malagasy fauna, we had numerous extended views of these endearing mammals during our time at Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Sportive Lemurs Megaladapidae

White-footed Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur leucopus*

We had great views of these nocturnal animals in the Spiny Forests of Ifaty and Berenty LR.



Annotated List of Reptiles recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication: *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar* by Frank Glaw and Miguel Vences – Third edition (2007).

Total species recorded: 10

Boas Boidae

Madagascar Tree Boa (E) *Sanzinia madagascariensis*
We were very fortunate to come across this boa twice in the Perinet SR.

Chameleons Chamaeleonidae

Parson's Chameleon (E) *Calumma parsonii*
We came across a pair of these large chameleons in the community guides reserve.

Warty Chameleon *Furcifer verrucosus*
We saw this chameleon in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Canopy (Will's) Chameleon *Furcifer Willsii*
We saw this pretty chameleon on our night walk in Perinet SR.

Antimena Chameleon *Furcifer antimena*
This smaller chameleon was seen in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Geckos Gekkonidae

Striped Day Gecko (E) *Phelsuma lineata*
We managed to see this beautiful green gecko in the Perinet SR.

Southern Flat-tailed Gecko *Uroplatus sikorae*
This well-camouflaged gecko was seen in the community reserve, Perinet.

Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae

Madagascar Girdled Lizard *Zonosaurus madagascariensis*
This large lizard was seen along the path in Mantadia NP and in the wetland between Perinet SR and Mantadia NP.

Iguanas Iguanidae

Madagascar Iguana (Three-eyed Lizard) (E) *Chalarodon madagascariensis*
This three-eyed lizard was seen in the Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Lamprophiidae Lamprophiidae

Mahafaly Sand Snake *Mimophis mahafalensis*
We saw these small snakes in Ifaty and Berenty LR.



Annotated List of Amphibians recorded

Total species recorded: 2

Madagascar Frogs Mantellidae

Madagascar Poison Frog *Mantella baroni*

We had a fantastic look at this colourful frog in the Mantadia NP.

Green Bright-eyed Frog *Boophis viridus*

This frog was seen on our night walk just outside the Perinet SR.

List of Notable Insects and other Invertebrates

Names where derived from various sources including Madagascar Wildlife: A visitors guide by Hilary Bradt, Derek Schuurman and Nick Garbutt (1996)

Class Insecta

Giraffe Weevil *Trachelophorus giraffe*

We were very fortunate to see a pair mating in the Perinet Special Reserve.

Class Arachnida, Family Nephilidae

Golden Orb-web Spider *Nephila madagascariensis*

A colourful arachnid famous for the gold-coloured webs it spins, it was seen at several localities during our tour.

Class Diplopoda

Emerald Pill Millipede *Sphaerotherium sp.*

A colourful little terrestrial animal that was seen in Perinet SR.

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