



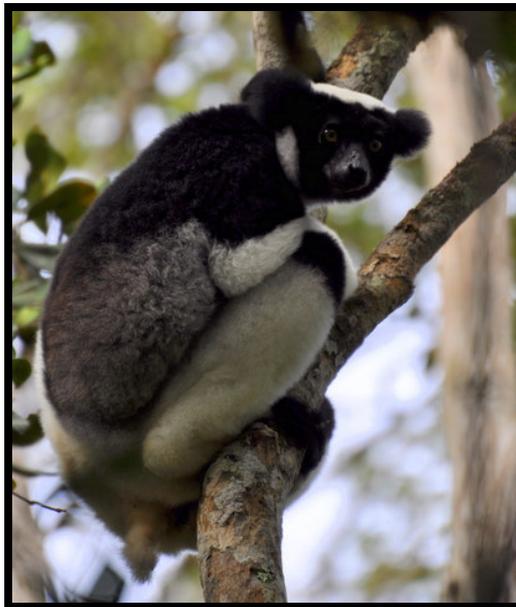
ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Madagascar Highlights I

11th to 25th July 2011 (15 days)

Trip Report



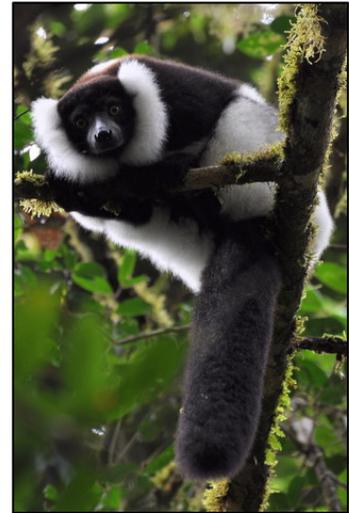
Trip report compiled by tour leader: Rainer Summers

Tour Summary

Sometimes referred to as the “laboratory of evolution”, Madagascar, the huge Indian Ocean island situated 500km off the coast of east Africa, has long attracted the attention of naturalists and travelling birders alike. Our winter tour, although a departure from the standard summer tours to the “Red Isle”, was very successful, and we managed to see a fantastic proportion of the amazing creatures that call Madagascar home.

We began our first day with a visit to the Tsimbazaza Zoo, where despite the overcast weather we managed to find Eleonora's Falcon, Mascarene Martin and the first of many Madagascar Buzzards, while our afternoon at Lake Alarobia proved to be most enjoyable, with large numbers of waterfowl including Knob-billed Duck and Red-billed Teal, Black and Dimorphic Egret, Malagasy Kingfisher and Madagascar Swamp Warbler, before enjoying a sumptuous dinner at our comfortable accommodations.

The eastern rainforests of Madagascar harbour a rich assemblage of sought-after mammals and birds, and for this reason the forested zone in the vicinity of Perinet village formed the basis of our explorations for four days. Our time was divided between visits to the reserve at Perinet and the more distant Mantadia National Park, both offering good rainforest birding. Despite the less than optimal weather during our time in Perinet-Mantadia, our hard work and time in the field paid off, and we were rewarded with a mouth-watering selection of eastern rainforest endemics. The pick of the species seen during this time included Frances's Sparrowhawk, Madagascar Flufftail, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Blue, Red-fronted and Red-breasted Coua, Madagascar Spinetail, Madagascar Grebe, Madagascar Wood and White-throated Rail, Cuckoo Roller, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, Common Sunbird-Asity, a plethora of vangas including Red-tailed, Chabert's, Blue, Tylas and Nuthatch (as well as the new additions to the vanga family in the form of Dark and Common Newtonia, Ward's Flycatcher and the delightful Crossley's Babbler), Madagascar



Mannikin, Madagascar Cuckooshrike, beautiful Collared Nightjar, quite unexpected Madagascar Partridge, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Spectacled Tetraka, Long-billed Bernieria, Green, Stripe-throated and Common Jeries, Madagascar Magpie-Robin, Souimanga and Malagasy Green Sunbird, Nelicourvi Weaver and Forest Fody. Lemurs are certainly one of Madagascar's greatest drawcards, and we saw a lovely selection of these including the famous and highly vocal Indri, Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur, Common Brown Lemur, Eastern Avahi,

elegant Diademed Sifaka and one of the best of them all, the ridiculously cuddly Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur! Aside from a few smart chameleons, the top reptile recorded was an amazing Fimbriated Leaf-tailed Gecko blending in perfectly on a pale tree trunk!

After our time in the overcast eastern rainforests, we made for the warm and dry south-west of the island at Tulear. Post our early flight we enjoyed a relaxed breakfast before striking out for the coral rag scrub near La Tabla, where we found Greater Vasa Parrot, Verreaux's, Red-capped and Running Coua, plus a bird that is quite common in the dry west, Madagascar Lark. Thereafter it was north to Ifaty, a



few stops en route yielding Little Grebe, Hottentot Teal, Baillon's Crake and the sought-after Madagascar Plover. The spiny forest near the settlement of Ifaty is justly famous because of its bizarre appearance, the burnt orange soil punctuated with bulbous baobabs and unique octopus trees and creating a unique and unforgettable landscape! Our mornings outing was most successful, and we saw Madagascar Harrier-Hawk, Banded Kestrel, Subdesert Mesite, Crested Coua, the amazing Long-tailed Ground Roller, Madagascar Hoopoe, Sickle-billed Vanga, Archbold's Newtonia and Thamnomis. On the mammalian front we found Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec, while smaller creatures that caught our attention included an impressive Standing's Day Gecko and a noisy Madagascar Hissing Cockroach! A spot of snorkelling added some variety to our otherwise land-based pursuits, where after the remainder of our day was spent relaxing and enjoying the beautiful balmy coastal weather!



The following day began with an early start as we departed Ifaty and drove south back to Tulear, thereafter boarding a boat headed for Nosy Ve – a scenic islet a few kilometres off the coast of the sleepy seaside resort of Anakao. En route to the island, we inspected the precipitous cliffs that guard the northern side of the Onilahy River, in the process finding a few Grey and the scarce Humblot's Herons, before speeding onward to Nosy Ve. The island hosts a nesting colony of Red-tailed Tropicbird, which breed undisturbed at the site as a result of a local “fady” or superstition that

protects them. We enjoyed some amazing views of flying and nesting birds, and in to the bargain saw Grey and White-fronted Plover, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone and Lesser Crested Tern. A short ride to the mainland followed by a quick stroll provided us with Subdesert Brush Warbler and the localised Littoral Rock Thrush, before enjoying a delicious lunch! A dream of a boat ride back to Tulear precluded a second round visit to La Tabla, where we netted our last remaining target for the area, the recently described Red-shouldered Vanga.

Leaving the south-west, we flew east to the scenic town of Fort Dauphin, and thereafter drove the rough road to Berenty. En route Madagascar Buttonquail and the smart Lafresnaye's Vanga provided a much needed break from the confines of the vehicle, before rolling in to the well-known Berenty Lemur Reserve. A night walk proved most entertaining, with excellent sightings of Torotoroka Scops Owl, White-browed Hawk-Owl, Grey-brown Mouse Lemur, White-footed Sportive Lemur and two colourful Plain Big-headed Geckos! Our full day at



Berenty was spent walking the trails through the tall Tamarind trees that line the Mandrare River in a dense cloak, and diurnal and nocturnal visits to segments of Berenty's fragmented Spiny Forest. Top creatures recorded included Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk, good numbers of Malagasy Kestrel, Madagascar Sandgrouse, Giant Coua, a huge roost of quarrelsome Madagascar Flying Fox, and two of Berenty's most well-known residents, the delightful Ring-tailed Lemur and Verreaux's Sifaka (Berenty's famous “dancing” lemur).





After the lemur paradise that is Berenty, we drove back to Fort Dauphin where we overnighted. The following day we managed a short morning walk in Fort Dauphin where we found Kelp Gull, a school of Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphin and a few Humpback Whales, before flying back to the bustling capital in the central highlands of Madagascar.

Despite our tour running in the “low” season, we enjoyed a very successful trip and managed to see a superb selection of the island’s inhabitants. It must be said that the weather was most pleasant on the whole, without the blistering heat that characterises large portions of the island from October onwards. And with 137 birds and 16 mammals recorded, this tour offered almost all of the potential birds and mammals along with very balmy weather, a major plus for those who don’t enjoy high temperatures!

Photo Credits: Indri, Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur, Collared Nightjar, Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec, Red-tailed Tropicbird, Plain Big-headed Gecko, Ring-tailed Lemur all by Rainer Summers.

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 137 (133 seen and 4 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

Guineafowl Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl (I)

Numida meleagris

A few coveys of this noisy gamebird were seen at Berenty.

Pheasants, Fowl & Allies Phasianidae

Madagascar Partridge (E)

Margaroperdix madagascariensis

We were exceptionally lucky to see a covey of this uncommon species en route to Mantadia NP.

Ducks & Geese Anatidae



White-faced Whistling Duck*Dendrocygna viduata*

Common at Lake Alarobia in Tana.

Knob-billed (Comb) Duck*Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Small numbers were recorded at Lake Alarobia.

Red-billed Teal (Duck)*Anas erythrorhyncha*

Seen on a number of occasions in the former half of the trip.

Hottentot Teal*Anas hottentota*

This dainty waterbird was seen at a wetland south of Ifaty.

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

Good numbers were seen in a wetland near Ifaty.

Madagascar Grebe (E) (V)*Tachybaptus pelzelinii*

A pair showed well in a small dam in Mantadia NP.

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

These beautiful, confiding birds showed fantastically for us at Nosy Ve.

White-tailed Tropicbird*Phaethon aethereus*

One bird was seen by some at Nosy Ve. This bird is seen from time to time, after initially being found here in 2008.

Hérons & Bitterns Ardeidae**Black-crowned Night Heron***Nycticorax nycticorax*

Good numbers were seen at Lake Alarobia, and later at the gallery forest in Berenty.

Striated Heron*Butorides striatus*

Recorded on two occasions, initially at Tsibazaza Zoo, and later at Perinet.

*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*

Recorded in Tana and later near Tulear.

[Western] Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Widespread, and seen in a number of wetland / open country situations.

Grey Heron*Ardea cinerea*

Good numbers were seen on the coastal cliffs of the Onilahy River, with further birds seen on Nosy Ve.

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

The Onilahy Cliffs produced excellent views of this species, with a few birds recorded thereafter on Nosy Ve.

*NOTE: A globally threatened species, essentially restricted to Madagascar but with vagrant records elsewhere.***Purple Heron***Ardea purpurea*

Recorded in the vicinity of Perinet.

[Western] Great Egret*Ardea alba*

A large, elegant bird, it was seen at scattered wetland locales during the tour.

Black Heron*Egretta ardesiaca*

Common at Lake Alarobia.

Dimorphic (Western Reef) Egret

Egretta dimorpha

Seen both in the highlands in and around Tana, as well as later on the coast.

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

Recorded en route from Tana to Perinet, as well as later near Fort Dauphin.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk (E)

Aviceda madagascariensis

A pair was observed at Berenty. This elusive, low-density raptor was also observed mating in the tall gallery forest.

Yellow-billed Kite

Milvus aegyptius

First observed near Perinet, we later saw them in good numbers at Berenty.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split into two, Yellow-billed and Black Kite. We observed the Yellow-billed form throughout Madagascar. This split is currently not recognized by Clements or the IOC.

Madagascar Harrier-Hawk (E)

Polyboroides radiatus

First seen at Perinet, with a bird seen later at Ifaty.

Frances's Sparrowhawk (NE)

Accipiter francesii

A total of three females were seen in the Perinet – Mantadia area, with a single male at Berenty.

Henst's Goshawk

Accipiter henstii

Unfortunately, only heard while at Mantadia.

Madagascar Buzzard (E)

Buteo brachypterus

The most frequently recorded raptor of the tour.

Falcons Falconidae

Malagasy (Madagascar) Kestrel (NE)

Falco newtoni

Seen on a number of occasions on the tour.

Banded Kestrel (E)

Falco zoniventris

A pair allowed close approach and excellent views at Ifaty.

Eleonora's Falcon

Falco eleonorae

We were very fortunate to see this species hunting over Tsimbazaza Zoo in Antananarivo. This species is a non-breeding migrant to Madagascar, with the birds escaping the austral winter and heading for their breeding grounds in the Mediterranean region, and it was thus unusual for us to record this species!

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

One bird was seen soaring over the road on the outskirts of Tulear in Madagascar's south-west.

Mesites Mesitornithidae

Subdesert Mesite (E) (V)

Monias benschi

One female bird showed very well near Ifaty. Fresh tracks were also seen on a few occasions on our walk in the spiny forest.



Flufftails Sarothruridae

Madagascar Flufftail (E) *Sarothrura insularis*
 Heard on a number of occasions in Perinet - Mantadia, one delightful male eventually showed very well at Mantadia.

Rails & Gallinules Rallidae

Madagascar Wood Rail (E) *Canirallus kioloides*
 Great views of this skulky terrestrial species were had at Perinet.

Madagascar Rail (E) *Rallus madagascariensis*
 This wetland species was seen in a wetland near Mantadia NP.

White-throated Rail (E) *Dryolimnas cuvieri*
 A single showed superbly in Mantadia NP.

NOTE: Some authorities consider the nominate Madagascar race of this bird as distinctive from the near-flightless Aldabra Island race, making this another endemic rallid to Madagascar. This is accepted by the IOC.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*
 Seen well near Ifaty.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
 Good views were had at Lake Alarobia in Tana.

Buttonquails Turnicidae

Madagascar Buttonquail (E) *Turnix nigricollis*
 Superb views were had at Berenty, where this species appears not to be too scarce in the gallery forest!

Avocets & Stilts Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
 Recorded at a wetland near Ifaty.

Plovers Charadriidae

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
 A few in non-breeding plumage were seen on Nosy Ve.

Madagascar Plover (E) (NT) *Charadrius thoracicus*
 A handful of birds allowed superb views near Ifaty.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*
 Common around Ifaty, with another bird seen on the Mandrare River at Berenty.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*
 One was seen at a wetland en route to Perinet, with a further bird seen near Ifaty.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*
 Good views of this shorebird were had on Ifaty.

Sandpipers & Snipes Scolopacidae

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
 A few were seen on a mudflat south of Ifaty, with a small group on Nosy Ve.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
 Only heard while at a wetland near Ifaty.



Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*

This species was seen on the Mandrare River at Berenty.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

We saw a few on Nosy Ve.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

One was seen at wetland south of Ifaty.

Gulls & Terns Laridae

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*

Two were seen in Fort Dauphin.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

A few were seen around Tulear, Ifaty and Nosy Ve.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

Small numbers were seen en route to Nosy Ve.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

Madagascar Sandgrouse (E) *Pterocles personatus*

A lovely male with its characteristic 'Adidas' stripes was seen at Berenty.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

Common (Rock) Pigeon (I) *Columba livia*

Widespread and common around human habitation.

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

Seen at a number of sites after our initial views at Tsimbazaza Zoo.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Common in the dry south and south-west.

Madagascar Green Pigeon (E) *Treron australis*

We had some great views of this species at Berenty.

Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E) *Alectroenas madagascariensis*

A number of sightings of this beautiful bird were had in Perinet-Mantadia.

Parrots Psittacidae

Grey-headed Lovebird (E) *Agapornis canus*

Our best views of this delightful species were had at Berenty.

[Greater] Vasa Parrot (NE) *Coracopsis vasa*

After initially hearing this scarce avian at Mantadia, we enjoyed excellent views at Ifaty after flight views at La Tabla.

Lesser Vasa (Black) Parrot (NE) *Coracopsis nigra*

Smaller than the previous species, we saw them on a number of occasions on the island.

Cuckoos, Couas & Coucals Cuculidae

Malagasy (Madagascar) Coucal (NE) *Centropus toulou*

Small numbers were recorded almost daily on the tour.

Crested Coua (E) *Coua cristata*

Initially seen at Ifaty in the spiny forest, we had our best views at Berenty, where they were common.



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

We had good views of this species in the coral rag scrub at La Tabla.

Blue Coua (E) *Coua caerulea*

A large, stunning blue coua, we saw a few smart individuals at Perinet – Mantadia.

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

Good views were had at La Tabla, and then the following day in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

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*

Two birds were seen in Perinet.

Running Coua (E) *Coua cursor*

One bird showed very nicely at La Tabla.

Giant Coua (E) *Coua gigas*

A pair strolling through the gallery forest at Berenty were seen well.

Red-breasted Coua (E) *Coua serriana*

One bird was seen by some at Berenty.

Barns Owls Tytonidae

[Western] Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Initially seen at night at our accommodations at Perinet, with a further bird that we unwittingly flushed during daylight hours at Berenty.

Typical Owls Strigidae

Torotoroka Scops Owl (E) *Otus madagascariensis*

We had superb views of a single at Berenty. The dry country equivalent of the following species.

Rainforest (Malagasy) Scops Owl (NE) *Otus rutilus*

A roosting pair allowed close views at Perinet. This owls call was heard nightly at our accommodations at Perinet.

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

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

Our time in Berenty produced some excellent views of this species.

Madagascar (Long-eared) Owl (E) *Asio madagascariensis*

Heard only on three days, however no views were forthcoming.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae

Madagascar Nightjar (NE) *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

Seen and heard at scattered locales during the tour.

Collared Nightjar (E) *Caprimulgus enarratus*

After a number of fruitless searches we were treated to a stunning pair in Mantadia NP.

Swifts Apodidae

Madagascar (Malagasy) Spinetail (NE) *Zoonavena grandidieri*

A few of these fluttery swifts were seen at Perinet – Mantadia.

African Palm Swift (e) *Cypsiurus parvus gracilis*



Small numbers were seen at Fort Daupin.

Cuckoo-Roller Leptosomidae

Cuckoo Roller (NE) *Leptosomus discolor*

Some lovely views of this large bird were had in Perinet – Mantadia.

NOTE: some authorities such as Sinclair I. and Langrande O. consider the Comoros form of this bird to be a separate species from that occurring in Madagascar.

Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae

Scaly Ground Roller (E) (V) *Brachypteracias squamigera*

Despite a huge amount of effort searching for this species, we only heard a bird alarming.

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

A highly localised and very sought-after endemic, we had excellent close-range views of a single in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae

Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher (E) *Ispidina madagascariensis*

One bird allowed for excellent views at Mantadia.

Malagasy Kingfisher (NE) *Alcedo vintsioides*

Commonly encountered at various wetlands on the tour.

Bee-eaters Meropidae

Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*

Commonly recorded on the tour.

Hoopoes Upupidae

Madagascar Hoopoe (E) *Upupa marginalis*

Seen at Ifaty and at Berenty, where the birds showed beautifully in the morning sun.

NOTE: This form is usually considered distinct from the African Hoopoe, based on vocal and morphological differences.

Asities Philepittidae

Velvet Asity (E) *Philepitta castanea*

A male in non-breeding plumage allowed us excellent views at Mantadia.

[Common] Sunbird-Asity (E) *Neodrepanis coruscans*

We enjoyed a good number of sightings of this species at Perinet – Mantadia.

Vangas Vangidae

Red-tailed Vanga (E) *Calicalicus madagascariensis*

A common flock attendant at Perinet-Mantadia.

Red-shouldered Vanga (E) (V) *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*

We had excellent views of a pair in the coral rag scrub at La Tabla. A very localised bird indeed!

Hook-billed Vanga (E) *Vanga curvirostris*

Initially heard at Perinet, we had good scope views of this species at Berenty.

Lafresnaye's Vanga (E) *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*

This heavy-billed species was heard at Ifaty, and later seen in spiny forest en route to Berenty.



Sickle-billed Vanga (E)

Falcoelea palliata

This bizarre bird was seen at Ifaty.

White-headed Vanga (E)

Artamella viridis

Heard at Perinet, it was later seen in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

Chabert's Vanga (E)

Leptopterus chabert

Widespread and seen in a number of woodland situations on the tour.

Blue Vanga (NE)

Cyanolanius madagascarensis

An absolutely stunning blue vanga, it was seen on a few occasions in Perinet – Mantadia.

NOTE: Sinclair I. and Langrande O., consider the Comoros race of this species to be distinct, resulting in the Madagascar Blue Vanga being another Madagascar endemic. This stance is not widely accepted.

Tylas Vanga (E)

Tylas eduardi

We saw a few as mixed flock attendants while in Perinet – Mantadia.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence suggests that this “vanga” is more closely related to the cuckoo-shrikes.

Nuthatch Vanga (E)

Hypositta corallirostris

Often a difficult bird to find, we enjoyed excellent views while in Mantadia NP.

Dark Newtonia (E)

Newtonia amphichroa

A total of two birds were seen in Perinet.

Common Newtonia (E)

Newtonia brunneicauda

This widespread species was seen on a number of occasions.

Archbold's Newtonia (E)

Newtonia archboldi

We had closeups of this avian in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

Ward's Flycatcher (E)

Pseudobias wardi

A number were seen in Perinet – Mantadia.

Crossley's Babbler (E)

Mystacornis crossleyi

A few birds showed superbly on one day in Mantadia NP.

Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae

Madagascar (Ashy) Cuckooshrike (E)

Coracina cinerea

We saw a few birds in Perinet-Mantadia, with a single bird seen later at Berenty.

Drongos Dicruridae

Crested Drongo (NE)

Dicrurus forficatus

The Malagasy ‘King of the birds’ was seen virtually daily.

Monarchs Monarchidae

Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher (NE)

Terpsiphone mutata

A beautiful bird, it was seen in the eastern rainforest as well as at Berenty.

Crows & Jays Corvidae

Pied Crow

Corvus albus

We saw this species daily in the south and south west of the island.

Larks Alaudidae

Madagascar Lark (E)

Mirafrona hova

Commonly recorded in the dry southern areas of Madagascar.



Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

Malagasy (Madagascar) Bulbul (NE) *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*
Seen daily.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

Mascarene Martin (BE) *Phedina borbonica*
Seen in Tana, near Ifaty and later around Fort Dauphin.

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*
Small numbers were seen over wetlands in the highlands and eastern rainforest areas.

Reed Warblers & Allies Megaluridae

Malagasy Brush Warbler (NE) *Nesillas typica*
Seen and heard on a number of occasions in the east of Madagascar.

Subdesert Brush Warbler (E) *Nesillas lantzii*
This species showed very well at Anakao in the south-west of Madagascar.

NOTE: Formerly considered conspecific with Madagascar Brush Warbler but vocally distinct and sympatric with that species near Fort Dauphin.

Madagascar Swamp Warbler (E) *Acrocephalus newtoni*
We had good views of this species at a few wetland sites during the tour.

Malagasy Warblers Bernieridae

White-throated Oxylabes (E) *Oxylabes madagascariensis*
Two birds showed briefly in a mixed flock while in Mantadia NP.

Long-billed Bernieria (Greenbul) (E) *Bernieria madagascariensis*
Seen on a number of occasions in Perinet – Mantadia.

Wedge-tailed Jery (E) *Hartertula flavoviridis*
At least two birds showed well as part of a mixed flock in Mantadia NP.

Thamnornis (Warbler) (E) *Thamnornis chloropetoides*
We had excellent views of this localised endemic in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

Spectacled Tetraka (Greenbul) (E) *Xanthomixis zosterops*
Our time in Perinet – Mantadia provided a number of great sightings of this bird. Usually sighted in mixed feeding flocks in the under and mid story.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Common Jery (E) *Neomixis tenella*
“Tom and Jery’s” were recorded frequently in woodland situations on the tour.

Green Jery (E) *Neomixis viridis*
Seen well in Perinet.

Stripe-throated Jery (E) *Neomixis striatigula*
After our initial sighting in Perinet, they were seen in the spiny forest and later en route to Berenty.

Madagascar Cisticola (NE) *Cisticola cherinus*
Seen on a few occasions in open habitat i.e. the grassy abandoned fish pond at Perinet.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Madagascar White-eye (NE) *Zosterops maderaspatana*
 First encountered at Lake Alarobia, with further sightings in the eastern rainforest.

Starlings Sturnidae

Common Myna (I) *Acridotheres tristis tristis*
 Commonly recorded in the vicinity of human habitation.

Madagascar Starling (E) *Hartlaubius aurata*
 Four birds were scoped outside of Mantadia NP.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E) *Copsychus albospectularis*
 Seen on a number of occasions on the tour.

[Madagascar] Stonechat (E) *Saxicola sibilla*
 Seen daily in the former half of the tour.

Littoral Rock Thrush (E) *Pseudocossyphus imerinus*
 We had excellent views of at least two pairs at Anakao.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae

Souimanga Sunbird (NE) *Cinnyris sovimanga*
 Seen virtually daily.

Malagasy (Madagascar) Green Sunbird (NE) *Cinnyris notatus*
 A few good views were enjoyed in the eastern rainforest area.

Weavers Ploceidae

Nelicourvi Weaver (E) *Ploceus nelicourvi*
 This smart bird was seen a few occasions in Perinet-Mantadia.

Sakalava Weaver (E) *Ploceus sakalava*
 We had great views of this dry country bird at Berenty.

(Madagascar) Red Fody (E) *Foudia madagascariensis*
 Widespread, and seen on numerous days of the tour.

Forest Fody (E) *Foudia omissa*
 We saw this species well in forest at Mantadia NP.

Waxbills, Munias & Allies Estrildidae

Madagascar Mannikin (Munia) (E) *Lemuresthes nana*
 A few scattered flocks were recorded, with our best views at Mantadia NP.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

Madagascar Wagtail (E) *Motacilla flaviventris*
 Seen daily in the former half of the tour.

Annotated List of Mammals recorded



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

Total species recorded 16 (15 seen and 1 heard only)

Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae

Madagascar Flying Fox

Pteropus rufus

These noisy, quarrelsome creatures put on a great show for us at the roost at Berenty.

Tenrecs & Otter Shrews Tenrecidae

Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec

Echinops telfairi

We were very fortunate to obtain excellent views of one in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae

Grey-Brown Mouse Lemur

Microcebus griseorufus

We had fantastic views of this cute creature at Berenty.

Goodman's Mouse Lemur

Microcebus lehilahytsara

Heard on a few occasions at Perinet, with one individual zipping through the foliage and not allowing for acceptable views.

Sportive Lemurs Megaladapidae

Petter's Sportive Lemur

Lepilemur petteri

We saw two sportive lemurs on a day roost in the spiny forest at Ifaty. However, distribution maps do not show any sportive lemur to occur here, with the closest being Petter's Sportive. Evidently there is still a huge amount of work to be done on this fascinating Malagasy family.

White-footed Sportive Lemur

Lepilemur leucopus

A few individuals were seen, both on nightwalks and on day roosts while at Berenty.

"True" Lemurs Lemuridae

Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur

Haplemur griseus griseus

One of the smallest diurnal lemurs, we had some excellent views of this species at Perinet – Mantadia.

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.

Common Brown Lemur

Eulemur fulvus fulvus

Seen on a few occasions in both Perinet – Mantadia.

Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur

Varecia variegata variegata

A most handsome creature with an incredibly thick, fluffy and very 'cuddly' coat, we had superb views of a few in Mantadia NP. Certainly one of the most beautiful mammals of the trip!

Avahis, Sifakas and Indri Indriidae

Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur)

Avahi laniger



A total of four sitting under a birds nest fern allowed for excellent views. Supposedly these Mantadia woolly lemurs may represent a split from “Eastern” Woolly Lemur, which is quite widespread through the eastern rainforests.

Diademed Sifaka*Propithecus diadema diadema*

Surely one of the most handsome of all lemurs, we saw this species in both Mantadia and Perinet.

Verreaux's Sifaka*Propithecus verreaux verreauxi*

The famous “dancing” sifaka was seen on a number of occasions at Berenty.

Indri*Indri indri*

Although heard on a number of occasions in both Perinet and Mantadia, or best views were on the ridge at Perinet, where we were treated to views of both adults and babies. Their ear-splitting calls resonate through the eastern rainforests, and are a characteristic background call.

Dolphins Delphinidae**Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin***Tursiops aduncus*

We located a school of these dolphins just outside the Fort Dauphin harbour.

Pleated Whales Balaenopteridae**Humpback Whale***Megaptera novaeangliae*

A few of these oceanic giants were from land during our morning walk at Fort Dauphin. Interestingly, a whale photographed off Brazil was later photographed off the coast of Madagascar, setting the record for the longest mammalian migration! (see <http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/humpback-migration626.html#cr> etc for more detailed report).

Annotated List of Amphibians 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: 2**Microhylidae***Stumpffia* sp.

A miniscule frog was found in the leaf litter in the gallery forest at Berenty appeared to belong to this genus. Unfortunately, according to the field guide, no *Stumpffia* frogs have been recorded for Berenty, which does not aid identification, but certainly shows how much remains to be discovered with regards “herps” in Madagascar.

Mantellidae*Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis*

A handsome frog, one was seen while on night walk at the small forest patch near Perinet village. The black and red colouration on the lateroventral portion of the shank is characteristic for many frogs from the *Aglyptodactylus* genus.



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: 17

Chameleons Chamaeleonidae

Short-horned Chameleon

Calumma brevicornis

Two were seen on a late afternoon / early evening stroll along the main road in Perinet. A medium sized chameleon.

Nose-horned Chameleon

Calumma nasuta

This tiny chameleon, the smallest of the “typical chameleons, was seen on a night walk in the Perinet area.

Band-bellied Chameleon

Calumma gastrotaenia

A smart green chameleon with a well defined, white belly was seen on two separate night walks.

Warty Chameleon

Furcifer verrucosus

A large chameleon, we saw a few during our time in Berenty.

Side-striped Chameleon

Furcifer lateralis

One individual was seen at Berenty while on a night walk.

Iguanas Iguanidae

Three-eyed Lizard

Chalarodon madagascariensis

Seen by some at Le Tabla. Possesses a photo-sensitive “pineal eye” on the top of the head.

Geckos Gekkonidae

Plain Big-headed Gecko

Paroedura bastardi

A beautiful gecko, we were lucky enough to find two during a Berenty night walk.

Fimbriated Leaf-tailed Gecko

Uroplatus fimbriatus

This splendid gecko, which is a master of camouflage, was seen along the main road at Perinet.

Mercator Tropical House Gecko

Hemidactylus mercatorius

Seen at a few lodgings around the country.

Lygodactylus tuberosus

This small gecko was seen on a few occasions in the vicinity of Berenty.

Lygodactylus sp.

We recorded a *Lygodactylus* gecko at Lake Alarobia that we could not identify in the reptile guide (the closest is *Lygodactylus pictus*, found to the south of Tana). This genus is currently being “overhauled” by scientists, and it is thought that there is going to a huge amount of splitting taking place.

Standing’s Gecko

Phelsuma standingi

Quite an impressive species, one was seen on a baobab at Ifaty.

Phelsuma modesta

A few were seen around our hotel in Fort Dauphin. Not as bright as the following species.

Lineated Day Gecko

Phelsuma lineata



This stunning species was seen in and around Perinet.

Skinks Scincidae

Elegant Skink

Trachylepsis elegans

Seen in Fort Dauphin during the course of our morning walk.

Gravenhorst's Skink

Trachylepsis gravenhorstii

We recorded this species on a number of occasions in the Perinet-Mantadia area.

Boas Boidae

Madagascar Tree Boa

Sanzinia madagascariensis

One very cold individual was found along the road while in the vicinity of Perinet.

List of Notable Insects and other Invertebrates

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

Class Insecta

Cyligramma disturbans

This beautiful brown, chestnut and golden moth was seen on a night walk near Perinet. They are believed by the Malagasy to be the embodiment of their ancestors, and it is therefore taboo ("fady") to kill them.

Flatid Leaf Bug

Phromnia rosea

We saw these clustered on branches at Berenty.

Madagascar Hissing Cockroach

Gromphadorhina portentosa

This large, dark hissing cockroach was found in the Berenty spiny forest.

Elliptorhina javanica

An amazing insect, we found these at Berenty. Only the males hiss, and this is achieved by forcing air through spiracles on the abdomen (supposedly the only insect capable of making a noise through this process).

Class Arachnida, Family Sparassidae

Huntsman Spider sp.

We saw a single individual protecting an egg sac while at Ifaty. A most impressive spider indeed!

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 a number of localities during our tour.

Class Diplopoda

Emerald Pill Millipede

Sphaerotherium sp.

A few of these green millipedes were seen at Mantadia NP.



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