



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Madagascar Highlights I

*21<sup>st</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2012 (15 days)*

### Trip Report



Subdesert Mesite by Markus Lilje

**Trip report compiled by tour leader: Markus Lilje**

**Top ten birds as voted for by participants:**

1. Subdesert Mesite
2. Long-tailed Ground Roller
3. Short-legged Ground Roller
4. Red-tailed Tropicbird
5. Blue Vanga
6. Red-breasted Coua
7. Collared Nightjar
8. Brown Emutail
9. Totoroka Scops Owl
10. Red-shouldered Vanga

## 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, while enjoying a very pleasant and much cooler climate at the same time.

We began our tour with an afternoon to the bird-filled Lake Alarobia, which proved to be most enjoyable and a good start and introduction to the varied birding that was to come. We viewed large numbers of waterfowl including mainly White-faced Whistling Duck and Red-billed Teal, with a few Knob-billed Ducks in the mix and Black, Great, Western Cattle and Dimorphic Egrets busy overhead and in the reedbeds. Malagasy Kingfisher showed very well, as did a number of other endemics: Madagascar Swamp Warbler, Malagasy Turtle Dove, Madagascar White-eye and Madagascar Coucal, before we headed back to enjoy a good dinner at our comfortable accommodations.

The next morning we had an early flight out of the capital, taking us over vast expanses of dry and often very eroded landscapes, into the south-west of the country, where we landed in Tulear. There we climbed into our vehicles and headed north along the coast to a small town, Ifaty, near which we stayed for 2 nights. On the way we stopped at a few small wetland sites, finding some great species that we did not see again on the tour. These included Baillon’s Crake, Little Bittern and Greater Painted Snipe

– all showing fantastically well. This area also gave us our first views of Madagascar Lark, Madagascar Cisticola, Madagascar Mannikin, Madagascar Buttonquail, Chabert’s Vanga, Subdesert Brush Warbler, Red-knobbed Coot and a number of others. The spiny forest near the settlement of Ifaty is justly



**Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec by Markus Lilje**

famous for its bizarre appearance. The burnt orange soil is punctuated with bulbous baobabs, unique octopus trees and other succulents – many of them with spikes and thorns of various descriptions, creating a unique and unforgettable landscape! Our morning’s outing was very successful, as we bagged 2 of the most important species of the whole tour – both representing endemic Malagasy families and both making it into the top 3 birds of the tour: Subdesert Mesite and the amazing Long-tailed Ground Roller. The area holds many other great birds too and we added the incredible Sickie-billed Vanga, Running, Red-capped and Crested Couas, Archbold’s Newtonia, Banded Kestrel, Stripe-throated Jery, a pair of Lafresnaye’s Vanga and Thamnornis. In a nearby area, we worked hard to finally get some great views of the rare and sought-after Madagascar



**Banded Kestrel by Markus Lilje**



Plover. On the mammalian front the area is not very strong, but we got very lucky with a great Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec, while we also had a possible Petter’s Sportive Lemur and Grey-brown Mouse Lemur; smaller creatures that caught our attention included the impressive Standing’s and Lineated Day Geckos.



Madagascar Green Pigeon by Markus Lilje

Back in the Tulear area we paid a visit to the coral rag scrub habitat near La Tabla, where we found the two big targets of the region: Verreaux’s Coua and the fairly recently discovered Red-shouldered Vanga. Because of our flight schedule we ended up with more time in this area than we needed, so we decided to head inland for a few hours of birding around Zombitse forest. This turned out to be a great plus for the tour as we added a fair number of species including the very restricted Appert’s Tetraka, Rufous Vanga and Cuckoo Roller, as well as Verreaux’s Sifaka, Hubbard’s Sportive Lemur and the huge Oustalet’s Chameleon. The following day was a little different, with us heading out on a boat towards the small island of Nosy Ve, to the south of Tulear. Our first stop was to look for endemic Humblot’s Heron at some nearby cliffs – we managed to get great views of around a dozen of these large, distinctive birds between some more widespread Grey Herons. The Nosy Ve Island itself 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 these elegant birds flying nearby as well as displaying to each other. The island also produced a large flock of overwintering Ruddy Turnstone, White-fronted Plover, Whimbrel, and Lesser Crested Tern. A short ride to the mainland, where we enjoyed a great lunch, was followed by a quick stroll providing us with Subdesert Brush Warbler and the localised Littoral Rock Thrush. With less-than-ideal weather conditions on the way back, we all got thoroughly soaked before some participants enjoyed being emerged in the local market in the late afternoon.



Red-tailed Tropicbird by Markus Lilje

Leaving the south-west, we flew east to the scenic town of Fort Dauphin, via the rather distant Antananarivo, before we drove the rough road inland to Berenty. The area we visited consists mainly of vast sisal plantations, with a few pockets of gallery forest along the Mandrare River and Spiny forest



being conserved at the Berenty Lemur Reserve. Due to less-than-ideal flight schedules, we were a little rushed for time here, but we nonetheless did very well, obtaining very good views of a great number of target species. During 2 night walks, which proved most entertaining, we had excellent sightings of White-browed Hawk-Owl, Grey-brown and Grey Mouse Lemurs, White-footed Sportive Lemur and colourful Painted Big-headed Gecko, in addition to a number Warty Chameleon, Flattid Leaf Bugs and



Verreaux's Sifaka by Markus Lilje

many spiders. Our full day at Berenty was spent walking the trails through the tall Tamarind trees along the river, finding a number of Giant Couas, White-headed and Hook-billed Vangas, Grey-headed Lovebird, Madagascar Hoopoe and lovely Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, with the raucously quarrelsome Madagascar Flying-foxes providing an enjoyable change. In the Spiny Forest and surrounding areas there were other attractions and we had Madagascar Sandgrouse, Torotoroka Scops Owl, Madagascar Nightjar, Red-capped Coua and many resting White-footed Sportive Lemurs. Arguably the top attraction for this reserve are the lemurs, with the Ring-tailed Lemur being ever-present and a few Verreaux's Sifakas providing great entertainment as they danced across the more open areas around the lodgings.

After the lemur paradise that is Berenty, we headed back to Fort Dauphin and then Antananarivo, where we spent the night. The eastern rainforests of Madagascar, our next and final biome, harbour

a rich assemblage of sought-after birds and mammals; for this reason the forested zone in the vicinity of Andasibe village formed the basis of our explorations for five days. Our time was divided between visits to the Analamazaotra reserve and the more distant Mantadia National Park, both offering good rainforest birding. A large hurricane that hit the region in February had

caused a fair bit of destruction, but we were fortunate that all the areas were open again by the time we got there, although many fallen trees and damaged bridges were still in evidence. 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 a very



Short-legged Ground Roller by Markus Lilje



Forest Fody by Markus Lilje





**Indri by Markus Lilje**

the best-looking lemurs around: the elegant Diademmed Sifaka and Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur! During the numerous night walks we did in the area, we managed to find the tiny nocturnal Goodman's Mouse Lemur as well as a number of smart chameleons and a young reddish Madagascar Tree Boa.

unexpected Short-legged Ground Roller, Madagascar Flufftail, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Blue, Red-fronted and Red-breasted Couas, Madagascar Spinetail, Madagascar Grebe, Madagascar Wood, Madagascar and White-throated Rails, great Cuckoo Roller, 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 Newtonias, Ward's Flycatcher and the delightful terrestrial Crossley's Babbler), Madagascar Mannikin, Madagascar Cuckooshrike, beautiful Collared Nightjar, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Spectacled Tetraka, Long-billed Bernieria, Green and Common Jerys, Madagascar Magpie-Robin, Souimanga and Malagasy Green Sunbird, Nelicourvi Weaver and hundreds of Forest Fody. Lemurs are certainly one of Madagascar's greatest draw cards, and we saw a lovely selection of these including the famous and highly vocal Indri, Common Brown Lemur, Eastern Avahi and 2 of

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 140 birds (including members of all endemic families) and 17 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!

## 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 140 (138 seen and 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

**Guineafowl Numididae**

**Helmeted Guineafowl (I)** *Numida meleagris*  
We managed a view of a single small flock in a sisal plantation at Berenty.

**Ducks & Geese Anatidae**

**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*  
Common at Lake Alarobia in Tana.

**Knob-billed (Comb) Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos*  
We recorded 3 birds at Lake Alarobia.

**Red-billed Teal (Duck)** *Anas erythrorhyncha*  
Seen well and in good numbers on Lake Alarobia and again near Ifaty.

**Grebes Podicipedidae**

**Little Grebe (Dabchick)** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
A few birds were seen in a wetland near Ifaty.

**Madagascar Grebe (E) (V)** *Tachybaptus pelzelinii*  
3 birds 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, where they nest.

**Hérons & Bitterns Ardeidae**

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*  
We had great views of 2 birds in the wetlands we birded on the way to Ifaty on the first full day of birding on the tour.

**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*  
We recorded 2 birds in the wetlands just south of 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 had views of a number of birds in the wetlands south of Ifaty, all in non-breeding plumage.

**[Western] Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*  
Widespread, and seen in a number of wetland / open country situations, but in fairly small numbers.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*  
Good numbers were seen on the coastal cliffs of the Onilahy River, near San Augustin, with further birds seen a sandbar at the island of Nosy Ve.



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

*Ardea humbloti*

The Onilahy Cliffs produced excellent views of this species, with around 9 birds recorded in flight, on their nests, as well as surrounding rocks and trees.

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

**Purple Heron**

*Ardea purpurea*

We had good but brief views of a single bird in flight in Berenty.

**[Western] Great Egret**

*Ardea alba*

Seen at Lake Alarobia and again in wetlands south of Ifaty.

**Black Heron**

*Egretta ardesiaca*

Very 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; both the very dark and almost white colour morphs were recorded.

*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 Zombitse Forest to Tulear and near Fort Dauphin.

**Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**

**Yellow-billed Kite**

*Milvus aegyptius*

Birds were recorded at a few scattered locations throughout.

*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.*

**Black Kite**

*Milvus migrans*

We had a strange record of an overwintering bird in Berenty, usually only here in summer.

**Frances's Sparrowhawk (NE)**

*Accipiter francesii*

A first bird was seen by some in Ifaty, before we had great views in Berenty and on the way to Andasibe.

**Henst's Goshawk**

*Accipiter henstii*

Unfortunately, only heard while at Mantadia, where it flew overhead.

**Madagascar Buzzard (E)**

*Buteo brachypterus*

First seen circling above Zombitse Forest, 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*

This is a tough and uncommon species; a pair allowed close approach and excellent views at Ifaty, now getting a feast of cockroaches in the area.

**Peregrine Falcon**

*Falco peregrinus*

One bird was seen disappearing by some participants during our boat ride to Nosy Ve.



### Mesites Mesitornithidae

#### **Subdesert Mesite (E) (V)**

*Monias benschi*

One female bird showed very well near Ifaty, when she held her typical bent-over frozen pose and allowed a very close approach – definitely one of the star birds of the tour, being the only member of this endemic family we had a chance for. 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, male birds showed very well on 3 occasions in the Analamazaotra and Mantadia areas.

### Rails & Gallinules Rallidae

#### **Madagascar Wood Rail (E)**

*Canirallus kioloides*

Great views of this skulky terrestrial species were had at Perinet, where 2 were seen feed on a open patch in the forest.

#### **Madagascar Rail (E)**

*Rallus madagascariensis*

This wetland species was finally seen well, when 2 birds showed on the edge of a dense reedbed near Mantadia NP after much time and effort, particularly from our local guide.

#### **White-throated Rail (E)**

*Dryolimnas cuvieri*

We recorded a total of three seen birds in the Analamazaotra area.

*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*

This very widespread, yet tough and skulky species was seen very well in the Ifaty wetlands.

#### **Common Moorhen**

*Gallinula chloropus*

Good views were had at Lake Alarobia in Tana.

#### **Red-knobbed Coot**

*Fulica cristata*

We had fairly distant scope views of this species in the Ifaty wetlands, this species is restricted to a few sites on the island.

### Buttonquails Turnicidae

#### **Madagascar Buttonquail (E)**

*Turnix nigricollis*

We had brief views of these skulking ground birds in Zombitse Forest, and in flight at Berenty.

### Avocets & Stilts Recurvirostridae

#### **Black-winged Stilt**

*Himantopus himantopus*

Recorded in good numbers at a wetland near Ifaty.

### Plovers Charadriidae

#### **Madagascar Plover (E) (NT)**

*Charadrius thoracicus*

A handful of birds allowed superb views near Ifaty, on our second attempt, after we were unsuccessful the previous day – a rare endemic.



**Kittlitz's Plover***Charadrius pecuarius*

Very common around Ifaty, where we had to keep scanning through many of these to eventually find the Madagascar Plover.

**Three-banded Plover***Charadrius tricollaris*

2 birds were seen to the south of Ifaty.

**White-fronted Plover***Charadrius marginatus*

Great views of this shorebird were on the island of Nosy Ve after initial views near 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*

One of these birds was seen at a wetland south of Ifaty.

**Common Sandpiper***Tringa hypoleucos*

This species was seen on the Mandrare River at Berenty.

**Ruddy Turnstone***Arenaria interpres*

Quite a few over-wintering birds were seen very well on the island of Nosy Ve.

**Curlew Sandpiper***Calidris ferruginea*

A total of around 10 birds were seen at a wetland south of Ifaty.

**Gulls & Terns Laridae****Kelp Gull***Larus dominicanus*

Two were seen in Fort Dauphin.

**Caspian Tern***Sterna caspia*

We had a single large tern flying near the island of Nosy Ve.

**Lesser Crested Tern***Sterna bengalensis*

A few of these were seen well around Nosy Ve.

**Greater Crested (Swift) Tern***Sterna bergii*

Good views of this uncommon species in Madagascar near Nosy Ve.

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

A lovely male with its characteristic wing stripes was seen in a sisal plantation at Berenty, another 2 were seen in flight in the same area.

**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 in woodland near Lake Alarobia.

**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*

We had some great views of this species as we entered the Zombitse Forest.



**Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E)** *Alectroenas madagascariensis*  
 We had over a dozen birds warming up in the morning sun in Mantadia NP.

### Parrots Psittacidae

**Grey-headed Lovebird (E)** *Agapornis canus*  
 Our best views of this delightful species were had at Berenty after first views in the Ifaty area.  
**[Greater] Vasa Parrot (NE)** *Coracopsis vasa*  
 Only heard over the forest at Mantadia.  
**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 on many of the days during the tour.  
**Crested Coua (E)** *Coua cristata*  
 Initially seen at Ifaty in the spiny forest, with a few others seen elsewhere in the south.  
**Verreaux's Coua (E) (NT)** *Coua verreauxi*  
 We had great 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*  
 After great first views in the Ifaty area, we managed another sighting in the spiny forest at Berenty.  
*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*  
 A single bird showed really well in Analamazaotra, others were heard.  
**Coquerel's Coua** *Coua coquerellii*  
 A single bird showed really well in Analamazaotra, others were heard.  
**Running Coua (E)** *Coua cursor*  
 One bird exceptionally well in Ifaty, where everyone had very close views.  
**Giant Coua (E)** *Coua gigas*  
 This species is fairly common in Berenty, where we had great views after hearing them in Zombitse.  
**Red-breasted Coua (E)** *Coua serriana*  
 Much time and effort was spent trying to get views of this shy bird of the forest understory – on the final morning we managed to get 2 birds that showed very well indeed.

### Barns Owls Tytonidae

**[Western] Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*  
 2 birds were seen fairly well on a day roost in Berenty.

### Typical Owls Strigidae

**Torotoroka Scops Owl (E)** *Otus madagascariensis*  
 We had superb views of a single bird at Zombitse forest with another at Berenty, where many were also heard during our night walks.



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

A roosting pair allowed close views at Perinet. This owl's call was heard every evening nightly at our accommodations near Andasibe and on night walks in the same area.

*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 during a night walk, where one allowed fantastic close-up views.

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

On our third attempt we got lucky, getting scope views of this great species on a day roost, before we heard and then saw one on a night walk in the Andasibe area.

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae****Madagascar Nightjar (NE)** *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

Seen and heard at scattered locales during the tour, on a day roost in Berenty.

**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 over Zombitse Forest, another at Berenty and then in good numbers in Analamazaotra and Mantadia, where we even had some drinking.

**African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus*

A number of these very slender birds were seen in flight near Fort Daupin.

**Malagasy Swift (E)** *Apus balstoni*

This large species was seen over the spiny forest north of Fort Daupin.

**Cuckoo Roller Leptosomidae****Cuckoo Roller (NE)** *Leptosomus discolor*

We had good views in flight of these constantly calling birds over Zombits Forest, where one participant also saw a perched bird. Some lovely views of this large bird were had in 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****Short-legged Ground Roller (E) (V)** *Brachypteracias leptosomus*

Wow – this bird is almost impossible to find when it is not calling – we got amazing views of a single relaxed individual in the forest at Mantadia.

**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 bird in the spiny forest at Ifaty, where it called frequently.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae****Malagasy Kingfisher (NE)** *Alcedo vintsioides*

Commonly encountered at various wetlands on the tour, great views at Alarobia.



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

This beautiful member of a very popular family was commonly recorded on the tour.

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

After a brief drive-by view for some, we got great views of 2 birds in the Berenty riverine woodland.

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 Analamazaotra, while we had females daily in the same area.

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

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

**Vangas Vangidae****Red-tailed Vanga (E)***Calicalicus madagascariensis*

First seen in Ifaty's Spiny forest, with others scattered views later, best in Mantadia NP.

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

We had excellent views of a single male bird in the coral rag scrub at La Tabla. A very localised and only fairly recently described bird!

**Hook-billed Vanga (E)***Vanga curvirostris*

After following up on a calling bird, we scope views on 2 occasions in the Berenty area.

**Lafresnaye's Vanga (E)***Xenopirostris xenopirostris*

This heavy-billed and often uncommon species was seen very well in spiny forest at Ifaty.

**Sickle-billed Vanga (E)***Falcula palliata*

This bizarre bird, often on of the biggest targets of the tour, was seen well at Ifaty.

**White-headed Vanga (E)***Artamella viridis*

After the call alerted us to their presence, we found 3 birds that showed well in Berenty.

**Chabert's Vanga (E)***Leptopterus chabert*

Widespread and seen in a number of woodland situations on the tour, firstly north of Tulear.

**Blue Vanga (NE)***Cyanolanius madagascarensis*

An absolutely stunning blue vanga, it was seen on a few occasions on the final day we had in 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.

**Rufous Vanga (E)***Schetba rufa*

Another bonus bird that we found during our excursion to Zombitse Forest to the north of Tulear.

**Tylas Vanga (E)***Tylas eduardi*

We saw a few very well 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 on a good number of occasions in mixed flocks while in Mantadia NP.

**Dark Newtonia (E)***Newtonia amphichroa*

A single bird came in to call during a walk in Mantadia.

**Common Newtonia (E)** *Newtonia brunneicauda*

This widespread species was first seen in forest at Zombitse.

**Archbold's Newtonia (E)** *Newtonia archboldi*

We had close-up views of this species in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

**Ward's Flycatcher (E)** *Pseudobias wardi*

A number were seen well in Perinet – Mantadia.

**Crossley's Babbler (E)** *Mystacornis crossleyi*

We had great views of this beautiful, aberrant terrestrial vanga near the entrance to Analamazaotra.

### Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae

**Madagascar (Ashy) Cuckooshrike (E)** *Coracina cinerea*

This species showed very well in the dry deciduous forest at Berenty.

### Drongos Dicruridae

**Crested Drongo (NE)** *Dicrurus forficatus*

This is a very common species throughout many of the different habitats on the island.

### 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)** *Mirafra hova*

Abundant in the dry areas around Tulear, a few others seen in Berenty.

### Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

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

Seen frequently during the tour.

### Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

**Mascarene Martin (BE)** *Phedina borbonica*

Best views were had of birds flying at close range over the airport in Tana.

### 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 after we had first views in dry thickets north of Tulear.



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.

### Grassbirds & allies Megaluridae

**Brown Emutail (E)** *Bradypterus brunneus*

A very shy species that we managed to entice over a small path in Mantadia where all were provided with unusually good views.

**Grey Emutail (E)** *Amphilais seebohmi*

A bird of fast-disappearing wetlands near Andasibe, where we had great close views of 2 birds – very retiring and hesitant to come into the open.

### Malagasy Warblers Bernieridae

**White-throated Oxylabes (E)** *Oxylabes madagascariensis*

A beautiful species that showed well, but fleetingly in the forests of Mantadia NP.

**Long-billed Bernieria (Greenbul) (E)** *Bernieria madagascariensis*

First seen in Zombitse Forest. Seen on a few of occasions in Perinet – Mantadia.

**Wedge-tailed Jery (E)** *Hartertula flavoviridis*

A single bird showed briefly in a small mixed flock in Mantadia NP, which also featured the Oxylabes.

**Thamnornis (Warbler) (E)** *Thamnornis chloropetoides*

We had excellent views of this greenish-tinged localised endemic in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

**Spectacled Tetraka (Greenbul) (E)** *Xanthomixis zosterops*

Our time in Perinet – Mantadia provided a number of sightings of this bird. Usually sighted in mixed feeding flocks in the under and mid story.

**Appert's Tetraka (Greenbul) (E)** *Xanthomixis apperti*

This is a very range-restricted species in the south of the country that we found on an extra excursion we did when we had more time in the Tulear area. It took a while to find it before everyone had some good views.

**Rand's Warbler (E)** *Randia pseudozosterops*

This is a very range-restricted species in the south of the country that we found on an extra excursion

### Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

**Common Jery (E)** *Neomixis tenella*

“Tom and Jerry’s” were recorded frequently in woodland situations on the tour.

**Green Jery (E)** *Neomixis viridis*

Seen well in Perinet and Mantadia NP.

**Stripe-throated Jery (E)** *Neomixis striatigula*

We had a very nice sighting of 5 birds warming each other as they perched close together during our Ifaty night walk.

**Madagascar Cisticola (NE)** *Cisticola cherinus*

Seen commonly in open habitat around Tulear.

### White-eyes Zosteropidae



**Madagascar White-eye (NE)** *Zosterops maderaspatana*  
Very common in Berenty after first views near Lake Alarobia in Tana.

### Starlings Sturnidae

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

**Madagascar Starling (E)** *Hartlaubius aurata*  
2 birds were scoped where they were warming up in Mantadia NP.

### Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

**Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E)** *Copsychus albospecularis*  
Seen on many occasions on the tour, often very relaxed and confiding.

**[Madagascar] Stonechat (E)** *Saxicola sibilla*  
This was first seen in the Tana hotel garden.

**Littoral Rock Thrush (E)** *Monticola imerinus*  
We had excellent views of a single male bird at Anakao, south of Tulear.

**Forest Rock Thrush (E)** *Monticola sharpei*  
We had excellent views of a single male bird at Anakao, south of Tulear.

### Sunbirds Nectariniidae

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

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

### Weavers Ploceidae

**Nelicourvi Weaver (E)** *Ploceus nelicourvi*  
This smart bird was seen a few occasions in Mantadia, including a nest-building individual.

**Sakalava Weaver (E)** *Ploceus sakalava*  
We had great views of this dry country bird near Ifaty and at Berenty, unfortunately only in non-breeding plumage now, during the dry season.

**(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 and in very good numbers in forest at Mantadia NP.

### Waxbills, Munias & Allies Estrildidae

**Madagascar Mannikin (Munia) (E)** *Lemuresthes nana*  
We had some wonderful views of this species at a small wetland north of Tulear as well as in Tana.

### Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

**Madagascar Wagtail (E)** *Motacilla flaviventris*  
First seen at a few sites around Tana. Seen daily in the Andasibe and Mantadia areas.



## Annotated List of Mammals recorded

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

### Total species recorded 17

#### 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.

##### Shrew-tenrec sp

*Microgale sp.*

These seldom seen tiny mammals are very tough to identify – we had one lying on the road in Mantadia, before it headed off into the undergrowth.

#### Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae

##### Grey Mouse Lemur

*Microcebus murinus*

Good views of this species were obtained in the gallery forest in Berenty.

##### Grey-Brown Mouse Lemur

*Microcebus griseorufus*

We had fantastic views of this cute creature at Berenty and Ifaty's spiny forests.

##### Goodman's Mouse Lemur

*Microcebus lehilahytsara*

We had some great views of this species in the rainforest around Andasibe during night walks.

#### Sportive Lemurs Megaladapidae

##### Petter's Sportive Lemur

*Lepilemur petteri*

We saw a single sportive lemur 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*

We had a total of around 20 individuals in the Berenty area – including sightings during both night walks and at a number of day roosts.

##### Hubbard's Sportive Lemur

*Lepilemur microdonta*

During our walk in the Zombitse Forest we recorded about 4 of these localised animals on day roosts.

#### "True" Lemurs Lemuridae

##### 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. We had a surprise first view of a group above the cliffs near San Augustin.

##### Common Brown Lemur

*Eulemur fulvus*

Seen on a few occasions in Analamazaotra.



**Red-fronted Brown Lemur***Eulemur rufus*

Introduced to Berenty where they are common and putting the other species under pressure.

**Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur***Varecia variegata variegata*

We were fortunate to get to see one of these fantastic creatures in the Mantadia NP area.

**Avahis, Sifakas and Indri Indriidae****Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur)***Avahi laniger*

After finding 3 of these nocturnal lemurs during a night walk, before we got great views of 2 animals on a day roost on the final morning – all in the Analamazaotra area.

**Diademed Sifaka***Propithecus diadema diadema*

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

**Verreaux's Sifaka***Propithecus verreaux verreauxi*

The famous “dancing” sifaka was seen fantastically well on a number of occasions at Berenty after initial brief view in Zombitse Forest.

**Indri***Indri indri*

Always one of the highlights of a tour in Madagascar – these animals were often heard in Andasibe and Mantadia NP. We had great views from our accommodations on the edge of Analamazaotra as well as inside the forest there on 2 occasions – getting great, close-up views.

**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).

**Green Tree Frog***Boophis viridis*

A beautiful little frog that was seen twice on a night walk in the Andasibe area.

*Guibemantis pulcher*

This small species was seen well in a pandanus plant in Analamazaotra.

**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*

Seen in good numbers on 4 days in the Andasibe area – mainly in the Andasibe area.

**Nose-horned Chameleon***Calumma nasuta*

This tiny chameleon, was seen on night walks in the Andasibe area.

**Band-bellied Chameleon***Calumma gastrotaenia*

A small and smart green chameleon – we had male and female animals during night walks in Andasibe.

**Oustalet's Chameleon***Furcifer oustaleti*

A huge chameleon, seen animal was seen low down in the Zombitse forest.

**Warty Chameleon** *Furcifer verrucosus*

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

**Side-striped Chameleon** *Furcifer lateralis*

Two stunning animals were during our drive from Berenty to Fort Dauphin.

### Iguanas Iguanidae

**Three-eyed Lizard** *Chalarodon madagascariensis*

Some very young individuals were seen well in the dry forest in the Ifaty area. Possesses a photo-sensitive “pineal eye” on the top of the head.

### Geckos Gekkonidae

**Painted Big-headed Gecko** *Paroedura pictus*

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

**Leaf-tailed Gecko sp** *Uroplatus sp.*

Unfortunately the only one we found was high up in a tree, we were unable to have a close look.

**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.

**Southern Bark Gecko** *Lygodactylus tuberosus*

We recorded this *Lygodactylus* species both in Zombitse forest and the Berenty Private Reserve.

**Standing's Gecko** *Phelsuma standingi*

Quite an impressive and distinctive species, seen on a number of occasions in the Ifaty area and in Zombitse forest, where they are often found on Baobab trees.

**Lineated Day Gecko** *Phelsuma lineata*

This stunning species was seen well in the garden at Ifaty.

### Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae

**Lesser Plated Lizard** *Tracheloptychus madagascariensis*

One of these was seen in the scrub in the Tulear region.

**Gravenhorst's Skink** *Trachylepsis gravenhorstii*

We recorded this species in Berenty.

### Boas Boidae

**Madagascar Tree Boa** *Sanzinia madagascariensis*

A single young snake was seen during a night walk near Andasibe.

## 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



**Flatid Leaf Bug**

*Phromnia rosea*

We saw these clustered on branches at Berenty.

**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 colourful little terrestrial animal that was seen twice very near our Collared Nightjar sighting in Mantadia NP.

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