



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## MADAGASCAR COMPREHENSIVE II

*4<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011*



Short-legged Ground Roller by Markus Lilje

**Trip report compiled by tour leader Cuan Rush**

## Tour Summary

Despite the unrelenting pressure on Madagascar's natural resources, the island still yields superb birding and wildlife experiences, season after season. 2011 saw the resurgence in Rockjumper tours to this destination and our second Madagascar Comprehensive trip for the year was nothing short of sensational! We enjoyed unrivalled sightings of all five Ground Rollers, all four Asities (including all males in full breeding regalia), all the Vangas and Couas possible on our route and two of the three Mesites, not to mention a host of other endemic/near endemic species. Further to this, the unique creatures of the island also presented themselves beautifully to the group.



**Collared Nightjars by Markus Lilje**

pair of gorgeous Collared Nightjar, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, the striking Scaly and Pitta-like Ground Rollers, Dark Newtonia, Ward's Flycatcher, the enigmatic Crossley's Babbler, Wedge-tailed Jery, Red-tailed, White-headed, Blue, Tylas and Nuthatch Vangas, Rand's Warbler, Madagascar Starling, brilliantly plumaged Forest Fody and Nelicourvi Weaver. Over and above this impressive haul, we found a pair of delicate Madagascar Grebe and the scarce Meller's Duck on a forest pond. We also did extremely well on rallids during our stay here, namely Madagascar Wood, Madagascar and White-throated Rails. The island's other significant inhabitants, the lemurs, were well represented too. We notched up great sightings of the beautiful Diademed Sifaka, Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur, the striking Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur, Common Brown Lemur and the largest of the lemurs, Indri. Our nocturnal excursions produced Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur and Goodman's Mouse Lemur along with Madagascar Tree Frog, Greater Stump-tailed and Domergue's Leaf Chameleons and both Sikora and the incredible Satanic Leaf-tailed Geckos!

Setting off on our Malagasy adventure, we departed the chaotic capital Antananarivo and headed for the eastern rainforest sites of Analamazaotra Special Reserve (Perinet) and Mantadia National Park. Most of our time in this region of the island was spent scouring the forest in search of the spectacular birds that make their homes here. Our efforts were certainly rewarded, particularly when it came to Short-legged Ground Roller, and after navigating some difficult terrain we managed superb views of this highly sought-after species. During our expedition for the aforementioned species, we encountered many other specials such as Frances's Sparrowhawk, good numbers of Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Blue and Red-breasted Couas, Rainforest Scops Owl, a



**Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity by James Wakelin**



The secondary forests and unspoiled swamps of Anjozorobe awaited us and we travelled to the north-east of Tana to visit this exciting area. Unfortunately, our time here was marred somewhat by an unusually cold and windy spell which left us short on some forest species. However, our perseverance definitely paid off and we located several targets that included a male Madagascar Flufftail, Greater Vasa Parrot, Forest Rock Thrush, a pair of Common Sunbird-Asity, Madagascar Lark, the gorgeous White-throated Oxylabes and the elusive Madagascar Yellowbrow. Time spent in the swamps here yielded some terrific birds and we were delighted to add displaying Madagascar Snipe and Grey Emutail. One of the highlights from our evening walks was a close-up sighting of a pair of Brown Mouse Lemur.



**Long-tailed Ground Roller by Markus Lilje**

The arid south now beckoned and we heeded the call, boarding a flight to the south-east corner of the island. First site visited was the famous Berenty Lemur Reserve privately owned by one of the well-known French families, the De Haume's. This reserve offered us many spectacular sightings and we notched up all the specials during our time here. These included great views of Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk, the elusive Madagascar Sparrowhawk, Madagascar Buttonquail, the impressive Madagascar Sandgrouse, the elaborate Giant Coua, Totoroka Scops Owl and White-browed Owl. The mammals were no less spectacular and we left completely satisfied with great encounters of Ring-tailed Lemur families, dancing Verreaux's Sifakas, delightful Grey-brown Mouse Lemur and White-footed Sportive Lemurs under our belt.

Heading west now we ventured to the humid coastal areas of Tulear & Ifaty. These towns are the gateway to Nosy Vé and the Spiny Forest and despite the almost overpowering heat we triumphed with our explorations. The botanical wonderland of the Spiny Forest around Ifaty produced numerous highlights with sightings of the scarce Banded Kestrel, Madagascar Harrier-Hawk, Subdesert Mesite, Madagascar Green Pigeon, Running Coua, the iconic Long-tailed Ground Roller, the handsome Archbold's Newtonia and Thamnornis being the most memorable. Our excursions to the various tidal mudflats, seashores and wetlands here were also fruitful and we observed a magnificent male Malagasy Harrier, the striking Madagascar Plover, the secretive Baillon's Crake, and good numbers of shorebirds of which Terek Sandpiper was the most impressive. The tropical island of Nosy



**Running Coua by Glen Valentine**



Vé performed as usual and we observed the elegant Red-tailed Tropicbirds at close quarters along with shorebirds such as White-fronted Plover. Our brief lunch stop on the mainland near Anakoa yielded Littoral Rock Thrush before our boat trip back to the port in Tulear. La Tabla was the last site visited in the extreme south and it is difficult to believe that the habitat here, Coral rag Scrub, is able to support any life at all let alone the 2 target endemic birds we were after. It didn't take long to locate the striking Red-shouldered Vanga but it did require a second excursion to the site to spot the rather drab Verreaux's Coau. With these two birds firmly on the list we began our migration northwards.



**Rufous Vanga by David Shackelford**

hugely impressive and the natural beauty of the area was admired by all. During our brief stay, we spent several hours scouring the grasslands and edge habitats in search of Madagascar Partridge. This handsome species had eluded us at Anjozorobe and we were determined to locate it. Despite our courageous efforts the bird remained unseen leaving the group somewhat disappointed. However, we did manage excellent views of Benson's Rock Thrush and were treated to a splendid sighting of a White-throated Rail pair.

Leaving our luxurious lodgings behind, we continued north to the final rainforest site for our tour, Ranomafana National Park. The rainforests in this area are located on steep hillsides and valleys and we were prepared for some challenging walks in order to find the specials. As we slowly worked through our target list here, we notched up fantastic views of Rufous-headed Ground Roller and a pair of the usually elusive Pollen's Vanga, Grey-crowned Tetraka, Forest Rock Thrush, awesome Velvet Asity, incredible male and female Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity (after a lengthy wait at their feeding trees) and skulking Brown Emutail. Eastern Red Forest Rat, stunning Ring-tailed Mongoose, a family of Red-bellied Lemur and to top it all off, a fabulous encounter with a female

En route to Isalo, where we were to spend one night, we stopped off at Zombitse Forest. This isolated tract of dry, deciduous woodland (along with the nearby Vohibasia Forest) is home to and protects an extremely endangered species Appert's Tetraka. We were treated to sensational views of a pair of these birds that appeared completely unperturbed by our presence. In addition to this we notched the striking Rufous Vanga and secretive Coquerel's Coua. Other sightings worth a mention here were Hubbard's Sportive Lemur and a giant Oustalet's Chameleon! After lunch we continued our journey inland through the gemstone towns until we reached the very scenic Isalo area. The sandstone mountains and Palm savanna here are



**Golden Bamboo Lemur by Markus Lilje**



Golden Bamboo Lemur and its youngster. Ranomafana is also a herpetologist heaven and we did allocate time to look for the gems of the forest. Some of the creatures we found were the gorgeous Baron's Painted Mantella, Betsileo Leaf Frog, Nose-horned, Tusked and the impressive Oshaughnessy's Chameleons, and *Uroplatus samieti*.

Our journey now headed to the north-west of the island where we explored the dry, deciduous forests of Ankarafantsika National Park near the village of Ampijoroa. This site ranks as one of the most



**Oustalet's Chameleon by Keith Valentine**

productive birding areas on the whole island and our group was treated to a plethora of species! Our birding forays over the next couple of days yielded all the specials including the sensational Schlegel's Asity, a pair of White-breasted Mesite, Red-capped Coua, and both Rufous and the range-restricted Van Dam's Vangas. Further to this, Lac Ravelobe was teeming with waterfowl and associated aquatic species. We recorded thousands of breeding Cattle Egrets and large numbers of Squacco Heron, Little Bittern, Striated Heron, African Darter (an uncommon resident) and White-faced Whistling Duck. Specials in attendance were Humblot's Heron, Allen's Gallinule, Madagascar Jacana and the rare Madagascar Fish Eagle. Some of the mammalian highlights at Ankarafantsika

were Western Tufted Rat, Golden Brown Mouse Lemur, Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur, the scarce Mongoose Lemur, Milne Edward's Sportive Lemur, Western Avahi and the comical Coquerel's Sifaka. Nile Crocodile, Oustalet's Chameleons, Fish-scaled Gecko, Cuvier's Iguanid and Giant Hog-nosed Snake headed up the list of "herps" recorded.

We journeyed back to Mahajunga very early for a boating excursion into the Betsiboka Delta. The delta's waters run brick-red and are a symptom of the ecological disaster taking place in Madagascar. Despite this, several highly sought-after species still make this place their home. Searching the mudflats produced fairly distant (but good) views of Bernier's Teal and extended sighting of Malagasy Sacred Ibis at close range, together with a host of other shorebirds, egrets and a tern species. During our time in and around the coastal town of Mahajunga we explored a nearby wetland and were rewarded with some excellent birding. Good numbers of White-faced Whistling Duck, Red-billed Teal, 15+ Common Moorhen (scarce in Madagascar), a pair of the gorgeous Greater Painted Snipe, 12+ delicate African Pygmy Geese and an unbelievably confiding Sooty Falcon were recorded!

A delayed flight back to the capital, allowed us time to reflect on what an amazing time we had shared together on this remarkable island! We observed an outstanding 95% of the target endemic or near-endemic bird species possible on our route, plus an impressive 23 lemur species and an astonishing variety of other bizarre creatures!



## Annotated List of Birds

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

### 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*

This widespread and common African bird was recorded at Berenty.

*NOTE: This African species was probably introduced to Madagascar by early colonists.*

### Ducks & Geese Anatidae

#### White-faced Whistling Duck

*Dendrocygna viduata*

We observed this species at Isalo, Lake Ravelobe, near Kajunga and at Lake Alarobia.

#### Knob-billed (Comb) Duck

*Sarkidiornis melanotos*

One female bird was spotted at Lake Alarobia on our last morning of the tour.

#### African Pygmy Goose

*Nettapus auritus*

This spectacular little bird was encountered at a wetland near Majunga. We were fortunate to see at least 8 birds in total.

#### Meller's Duck (E) (En)

*Anas melleri*

A small forest pond in Mantadia National Park produced our first sighting of this scarce species. Thereafter, we had daily fly pasts at Anjozorobe.

#### Bernier's Teal (E) (En)

*Anas bernieri*

Our boat excursion into the Betsiboka Delta from Majunga yielded views of this highly sought-after bird.

*NOTE: This globally threatened endemic, currently known only from a few inaccessible sites on the west coast of Madagascar, has rarely been recorded until its discovery at this site by Rockjumper Birding Tours in 1999. "Only significant recent counts are 60 on Masama Lake in 1970 and 61 on Bemamba Lake in 1973" Volume 1; HBW.*

#### Red-billed Teal (Duck)

*Anas erythrorhyncha*

A common and widespread bird in Madagascar, we recorded this duck at most freshwater wetlands on the island.

#### Hottentot Teal

*Anas hottentota*

Whilst birding a wetland near Ifaty we encountered several of these attractive ducks.



### Grebes Podicipedidae

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

Good numbers were seen at the wetlands between Tulear and Ifaty.

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

This delicate species was seen extremely well at a small forest pond in Mantadia National Park.

*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*

On Nosy V  we observed this elegant bird flying overhead at close quarters. Fortunately, it is a local fady (taboo) to disturb this species and as such they are protected on the island.

### Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

**[Malagasy] Sacred Ibis (NE)** *Threskiornis [aethiopicus] bernieri*

The mangroves and mudflats of the Betsiboka Delta produced 1 bird. We did however have fabulous views of the species.

*NOTE: A globally threatened species restricted to largely inaccessible wetlands in western Madagascar and Aldabra Island. This species is often considered merely a race of the widespread Sacred Ibis of the African mainland and is treated as such by Clements and the IOC.*

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

The only site we found these birds was at Lake Ravelobe in the Ankarafantsika National Park.

**Madagascar (Crested) Ibis** *Lophotibis cristata*

Unfortunately, this striking species was only seen by a few members of the group at Perinet Special Reserve.

### Hérons Ardeidae

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

We spotted this species at a wetland near Ifaty and at Lake Ravelobe.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Good numbers of these widespread birds were seen during the tour. Our best sightings were at Lake Alarobia on the final morning of the tour.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striatus*

This species was seen at most wetland sites on the tour with our best views at Lake Ravelobe.

*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*

The best sighting of this bird was at Lake Alarobia in Tana where good numbers of breeding birds were seen.

**Malagasy Pond Heron (BE) (V)** *Ardeola idea*

We observed this bird daily at Berenty, near Majunga and at Lake Alarobia.

*NOTE: A regional endemic breeder that is considered vulnerable and declining due to habitat loss and competition with Squacco Heron.*

**[Western] Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Common throughout the tour and recorded on most days.



**Grey Heron***Ardea cinerea*

First recorded on the exposed tidal flats between Tulear and Ifaty, we found this species again breeding on cliffs near Tulear and at a wetland near Majunga.

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

This endemic heron was spotted at the cliffs near San Augustine and at close quarters on Lac Ravelobe.

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

**Purple Heron***Ardea purpurea*

Lake Ravelobe at Ankarafantsika NP produced many sightings of this attractive heron.

**[Western] Great Egret***Ardea alba*

Commonly encountered in rice paddies/wetlands throughout the island.

**Black Heron***Egretta ardesiaca*

We watched this species exhibit its unusual "mantling" feeding behavior at a wetland near Ifaty

**Dimorphic (Western Reef) Egret***Egretta dimorpha*

This elegant egret was seen on most days at a variety of water associated habitats from rice paddies to coastal mudflats.

*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*

Individuals and pairs were encountered mostly on travel days in the rice paddies at the roadside.

**Aningas Anhingidae****[African] Darter***Anhinga melanogaster*

We recorded this uncommon species (in Madagascar) at Lac Ravelobe, Ankarafantsika National Park.

**Tropicbirds Phaethontidae****Red-tailed Tropicbird***Phaethon rubricauda*

After walking the shoreline on Nosy Vé we eventually located the breeding site of this truly special bird. We then spent a memorable time mesmerized by the elegant birds flying overhead and at eye-level.

**Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae****Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk (E)***Aviceda madagascariensis*

This scarce endemic was seen very well in the gallery forest at Berenty Private Reserve where superb scope views were had of a bird at an active nest site.

**Black Kite***Milvus migrans*

A fairly commonly seen bird during the tour especially in the arid southern part of the island.

*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 Fish-Eagle (E) (C)***Haliaeetus vociferoides*

On our first afternoon at Ankarafantsika National Park we had distant views of this highly endangered bird. The following day we had simply superb, close range sightings of a pair of these magnificent eagles during a boat cruise on Lake Ravelobe.

*NOTE: This is one of the world's rarest raptors, with a total global population of no more than 60 pairs.*



**Malagasy (Reunion) Harrier (E) (V)** *Circus macroscelus*

Whilst birding a wetland near Ifaty we were fortunate to find a stunning male bird. We observed this male quartering the wetland at length before it came in close for a low overhead fly-by!

*NOTE: This species, which occurs in Madagascar and the Comoros, differs from the Reunion Harrier (Circus maillardi) in its smaller size and darker plumage, and is now considered a separate species by the IOC.*

**Madagascar Harrier-Hawk (E)** *Polyboroides radiatus*

The spiny forest at Mangily produced good views of this species as did the dry woodland in Ankarafantsika NP.

**Frances's Sparrowhawk (Goshawk) (NE)** *Accipiter francesii*

We had excellent views of a male bird en route to Mantadia National Park.

**Madagascar Sparrowhawk (E) (NT)** *Accipiter madagascariensis*

A single bird was observed at close quarters through the scope in the riparian woodland of Berenty Private Reserve. After studying this species for several minutes we managed to take note of the key characteristics that denote this species.

**Henst's Goshawk (E) (NT)** *Accipiter henstii*

First seen in flight over the secondary forest near Mantadia National Park, it was later recorded at Anjozorobe.

*NOTE: A scarce endemic that occurs at low densities; usually detected by its far-carrying and distinctive calls.*

**Madagascar Buzzard (E)** *Buteo brachypterus*

We found this bird at numerous sites during the trip with the highlight being several birds in display flight over the forests of Ranomafana National Park.

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

Numerous sightings were had throughout the island with our best at the town of Andasibe.

**Banded Kestrel (E)** *Falco zoniventris*

Our only record for this species was at the edge of the spiny forest at Mangily. Here we were treated to surreal views of a bird swooping down to catch Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches and then proceeding to feast on the creatures undeterred by our close presence.

**Sooty Falcon** *Falco concolor*

First seen in the surrounds of Ivato International Airport, we later had crippling views on several occasion at a wetland near Majunga.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

We enjoyed great scope views of a bird perched atop a radio tower in the town of Tulear and flight views of another bird over the forest at Ranomafana NP.

**Mesites Mesitornithidae****White-breasted Mesite (E) (V)** *Mesitornis variegata*

We recorded this attractive Mesite in the deciduous woodland of Ankarafantsika NP.

**Brown Mesite (E) (V)** *Mesitornis unicolor*

Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts to entice this bird out from the dense forest undergrowth we only managed glimpses of part of the bird. Therefore, it must only be counted a heard bird.

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

Whilst birding the Spiny Forest at Mangily our local guides expertly tracked down a male perched. The individual exhibited its bizarre behavior of remaining perched at an obscure angle and motionless as we



observed it at length. Sadly, we also found remains of another bird that had been poached at a known nest site.

### Flufftails Sarothruridae

#### **Madagascar Flufftail (E)**

*Sarothrura insularis*

Initially this species was seen briefly in Mantadia NP but later we had great views in the heath-like scrub at Anjozorobe.

### Rails & Gallinules Rallidae

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

*Canirallus kiolooides*

We had a good sighting of a pair as they wandered down a drainage ditch in the forest at Perinet Special Reserve.

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

*Rallus madagascariensis*

True to form, this intrepid rallid showed beautifully and for an extended period at the edge of the large wetland at Anjozorobe. We also recorded this species at a wetland site near Mantadia NP.

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

*Dryolimnas cuvieri*

The forest edge at our lodgings in Perinet and Isaol both yielded superb sightings of this striking species.

*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*

After many attempts at locating this bird we finally managed to encourage it out from the dense reedbed not far from Ifaty and were treated to excellent views.

#### **Allen's (Lesser) Gallinule**

*Porphyrio alleni*

This usually scarce and somewhat shy species (in Africa) was seen very well at Lake Ravelobe.

#### **Common Moorhen**

*Gallinula chloropus*

A couple of birds were found at a wetland near Ifaty and Lake Ravelobe, with good numbers at the wetland outside the coastal town of Majunga.

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

*Fulica cristata*

This uncommon bird in Madagascar was seen at a wetland site near Ifaty.

### Buttonquails Turnicidae

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

*Turnix nigricollis*

We had wonderful views of a male in the Spiny Forest at Berenty followed by good looks of a female in scrubby edge habitat near Majunga.

### Avocets & Stilts Recurvirostridae

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

*Himantopus himantopus*

This widespread species was spotted at various wetlands on the island.

### Plovers Charadriidae

#### **Grey (Black-bellied) Plover**

*Pluvialis squatarola*

The shoreline and coastal mudflats between Tulear and Ifaty produced many sightings of this species.

#### **Common Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius hiaticula*

We recorded this shorebird on the coastal mudflats between Tulear & Ifaty and in the Betsiboka Delta.



**Madagascar Plover (E) (NT)***Charadrius thoracicus*

Our sightings, one in particular, of this bird were incredible. It allowed close approach and we enjoyed its striking appearance.

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

It was observed at several wetland and coastal sites during the trip.

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

Nowhere near as prolific as in Africa, this species was seen only once at a wetland near Majunga.

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

This shorebird was found on the white sand beach of Nosy Vé and the mudflats of the Betsiboka Delta.

**Greater Sand Plover***Charadrius leschenaultii*

Sightings were had on the mudflats of the Betsiboka Delta and along the coastline between Tulear and Ifaty.

**Painted Snipes Rostratulidae****Greater Painted Snipe***Rostratula benghalensis*

First recorded at a roadside stop en route to Perinet, we later had good scope views of a pair at a wetland near Majunga.

**Jacanas Jacanidae****Madagascar Jacana (E)***Actophilornis albinucha*

Several of these attractive birds were seen on the floating vegetation of Lake Ravelobe.

**Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae****Madagascar Snipe (E) (NT)***Gallinago macrodactyla*

The pristine wetland at Anjozorobe yielded excellent flight views of this large snipe including a couple of birds fanning their tail feathers (a form of displaying).

**Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus*

This large shorebird was seen in good numbers on the coastal mudflats between Tulear and Ifaty and in the Betsiboka Delta.

**Common Greenshank***Tringa nebularia*

Recorded along the Mandrare River at Berenty, on the coastal mudflats between Tulear and Ifaty and in the Betsiboka Delta.

**Terek Sandpiper***Xenus cinereus*

Our best sightings of this species were on the exposed tidal flats between Ifaty and Tulear.

**Common Sandpiper***Tringa hypoleucos*

Small numbers recorded in freshwater and brackish wetland habitats throughout our tour.

**Ruddy Turnstone***Arenaria interpres*

Peak numbers of this striking shorebird were observed along the shoreline of Nosy Vé.

**Sanderling***Calidris alba*

Recorded on the exposed tidal flats between Ifaty and Tulear and in the Betsiboka Delta.

**Little Stint***Calidris minuta*

We observed this species only once during the trip at a large wetland between Ifaty and Tulear.

**Curlew Sandpiper***Calidris ferruginea*

As for most of the shorebirds this bird was encountered in good numbers on the mudflats of the Betsiboka Delta and along the coastline between Tulear and Ifaty.



**Pratincoles Glareolidae****Madagascar Pratincole***Glareola ocularis*

We had distant scope views of 1 bird on rocks in the middle of the Morogoro River.

**Gulls & Terns Laridae****Caspian Tern***Hydroprogne caspia*

A few adult birds were spotted off the coast at Ifaty.

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

Small numbers recorded along the coast at Tulear, Ifaty and Nosy Vé.

**Lesser Crested Tern***Sterna bengalensis*

We had good numbers of this species along the coastline between Tulear & Ifaty, around Nosy Vé and also on our boat trip up into the Betsiboka Delta.

**Common Tern***Sterna hirundo*

Good numbers were observed along the coastline between Ifaty and Anakao.

**Whiskered Tern***Chlidonias hybrida*

This striking looking tern was found at a wetland outside the town of Majunga.

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

Excellent views were had of this massive Sandgrouse in the Periwinkle fields at Berenty.

**Pigeons & Doves Columbidae****Common Pigeon (I)***Columba livia*

Widespread and fairly common in urban/settlement areas throughout the island.

**Malagasy (Madagascar) Turtle Dove (NEe)***Columba picturata*

These birds were seen on most days throughout the island in both dry deciduous forest and rainforest habitats.

**Namaqua Dove***Oena capensis*

Good numbers of these attractive doves were seen in the north-west and in the dry south of the country.

**Madagascar Green Pigeon (NE)***Treron australis*

First spotted at the edge of the spiny forest at Mangily, we then had great sightings in the deciduous woodland of Ankarafantsika NP.

**Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E)***Alectroenas madagascariensis*

Perinet Special Reserve, Mantadia National Park, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana NP all yielded sightings of this stunning pigeon.

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

Another delightful little bird it was seen daily at Berenty, again at Ifaty and later in good numbers at Ankarafantsika NP.

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

Anjozorobe, the Spiny Forest at Mangily, Zombitse and Ranomafana produced views of this large, dull parrot.



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

This highly vociferous species was seen regularly throughout our trip with peak numbers in the camp at Ampijoroa Forest Station.

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

Common and widespread, this bird was recorded in small numbers on most days of the tour.

**Crested Coua (E)***Coua cristata*

Our best sightings of this pretty species were in the gallery and spiny forest at Berenty.

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

This localized species took a lot of work to find, but we managed to get good views in the coral rag scrub near La Tabla.

**Blue Coua (E)***Coua caerulea*

We had great sightings at our lodgings in Perinet and in Mantadia NP.

**Red-capped Coua (E)***Coua ruficeps*

Ankarafantsika NP held wonderful views of this beautiful coua.

*NOTE: See notation under Green-capped Coua.*

**Green-capped Coua (E)***Coua [ruficeps] olivaceiceps*

The spiny forests at Berenty and Ifaty produced good sightings of this species.

*NOTE: This southern, khaki-capped form of Red-capped Coua 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 (E)***Coua reynaudii*

Adequate views were had of this bird in the forests at Mantadia NP.

**Coquerel's Coua (E)***Coua coquereli*

Good sightings were had in the dry, deciduous forests of Ankarafantsika NP and Zombitse.

**Running Coua (E)***Coua cursor*

This magnificent species was elusive but we were rewarded for our perseverance in the spiny forests at Mangily after much searching.

**Giant Coua (E)***Coua gigas*

We recorded this, the largest of the Couas, at Zombitse Forest and then on numerous occasions in the gallery forest at Berenty.

**Red-breasted Coua (E)***Coua serriana*

Late one afternoon in Perinet Special Reserve we observed this species crossing a forest clearing. In my opinion, this is the most difficult coua species to locate and we did extremely well to obtain the views we did.

**Madagascar Cuckoo (BE)***Cuculus rochii*

More often heard than seen, this vocal bird was encountered at Anjozorobe, Ifaty, Ranomafana and Ankarafantsika NP.

**Typical Owls Strigidae****Torotoroka Scops Owl (E)***Otus madagascariensis*

We enjoyed excellent close up views of this darling little bird at a day roost in Berenty.

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

Observed on several occasions at Voima near Perinet and at a nest site in Anjozorobe.

*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 attractive owl was recorded at Berenty Private Reserve on night walks and at day roosts.

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

A highly sought-after species in Madagascar, we were treated to magnificent scope views at a day roost near Mantadia NP.

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

Common and widespread on Madagascar, we had numerous sightings during the tour at most sites. Our best views were at a day roost near Berenty.

**Collared Nightjar***Caprimulgus enarratus*

Thanks to our local guide in the Eastern Rainforests, we had superb views of a pair of these birds at a day roost in the forest interior at Mantadia NP.

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

Recorded at several sites including Perinet, Berenty and Zombitse Forest.

**African Palm Swift***Cypsiurus parvus gracilis*

This elegant swift with was recorded at various sites with suitable habitat on the island.

**Alpine Swift***Tachymarptis melba*

A couple of birds were spotted at Anjozorobe and en route to Ranomafana from Isalo.

**Malagasy [Black] Swift (NE)***Apus balstoni*

Recorded at scattered localities throughout the tour with our best sightings at a wetland between Ifaty and Tulear.

*NOTE: These Malagasy birds are usually considered a species distinct from the African Black Swift (A. barbatus), however no dedicated research has been done.*

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

This extremely vocal bird was first seen high over the forest at Mantadia NP. We later enjoyed two displaying males at Zombitse Forest and perched birds at Ankarafantsika NP.

*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.*

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

This stunning bird was recorded at many sites with superb views at Mantadia NP and Ampijoroa Forest Station.

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

Our epic search for this elusive bird culminated with a strenuous hike through forest undergrowth and up and down slopes until finally we spotted a bird perched at close quarters. Fortunately, the bird remained and called allowing great views for all.



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

Another secretive ground roller, it was found in the forest undergrowth of Mantadia NP.

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

This colourful bird was recorded in Mantadia NP and at the edge of the secondary forest at Anjozorobe.

**Rufous-headed Ground Roller (E) (NT)***Atelornis crossleyi*

Another saga unfolded with this gorgeous species...we had several sightings of the bird in Perinet Special Reserve and Anjozorobe but not to everyone's satisfaction. Then on our final afternoon in Ranomafana (our last chance to observe this bird) we were trying for another skulker, Brown Emutail, when totally unexpected the Ground Roller flew in and landed just above where the emutail had been, perched and proceeded to sit out in the open on a fallen log! Quite incredible how unpredictable birding can be.

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

We enjoyed multiple views of this magnificent bird in the Spiny Forest at Mangily.

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

Mantadia NP produced several great sightings of this delightful species at the forest edge.

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

This little gem was recorded at most freshwater and marine wetlands throughout the tour.

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

First seen at Mantadia NP, it was later recorded at many other sites with spectacular close-up views near Ifaty.

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

The dry woodlands of Berenty and Ankarafantsika NP yielded outstanding sightings of this charismatic bird.

*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 pair was seen in Perinet and Mantadia NP with the highlight being close quarter views of a male bird in Ranomafana NP.

**Schlegel's Asity (E) (NT)***Philepitta schlegeli*

This mini Bird-of-paradise look-a-like was seen well in the deciduous forests of Ankarafantsika NP.

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

We had separate sightings of male and female birds in the secondary forests at Anjozorobe. Later in the trip Ranomafana NP produced views of more male birds.

**Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity (E) (En)***Neodrepanis hypoxanthus*

A new site at the Vohiparara ridge produced good views of the female bird and several hours later we were awed by a displaying male.



## Vangas Vangidae

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

One of the smaller vangas but no less attractive, we found it in Perinet/Mantadia, Zombitse Forest and Ranomafana NP.

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

The coral rag scrub near La Tabla yielded our sighting of this recently described and highly localized endemic. We were treated to magnificent point blank views of a male bird calling away!

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

First seen in the Spiny Forest at Berenty, it was later seen extremely well in Ankarafantsika NP. This species behaves similarly to the African bushshrikes.

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

En route to Fort Dauphin we spotted a pair of these birds, however the views were not good for some of our group. Later in the trip we managed to track down a pair of these impressive vangas in the Spiny Forest at Mangily where much better sightings were had albeit brief.

**Van Dam's Vanga (E) (En)***Xenopirostris damii*

We encountered a male in the dry, deciduous woodland of Ankarafantsika NP and enjoyed exceptional views of the bird.

**Pollen's Vanga (E) (NT)***Xenopirostris pollenii*

On our first afternoon at Ranomafana NP, we had a pair foraging low down at the forest edge. It was by far the best sighting I have ever had of this sometimes elusive bird.

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

These incredible birds were seen at several sites during the tour, namely Berenty, Ifaty and Ankarafantsika. They were definitely one of the top ten birds of the trip!

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

Initially, this bird was found at Perinet Special Reserve, with later views at Berenty, Ifaty and Ankarafantsika.

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

Widespread and fairly common throughout Madagascar, this plain yet attractive species was seen at many sites.

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

We first observed this gorgeous bird in Perinet & Mantadia but our most memorable sighting was in the deciduous woodland of Ankarafantsika NP. Here we watched a bird, at extremely close quarters, gathering strands of spider web for nest building.

*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*

Both Zombitse Forest and Ankarafantsika NP held good views of this smart-looking species. We were fortunate to observe pairs at these sites.

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

Rather plain looking by vanga standards, we found this bird at Perinet, Mantadia and Ranomafana.

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

**Nuthatch Vanga (E)***Hypositta corallirostris*

After hours of searching for this furtive species, we enjoyed a rather extended sighting of a pair foraging at the forest edge in Perinet Special Reserve.

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

Anjozorobe and Ranomafana NP produced views of this nondescript bird.



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

One of the most commonly recorded species, which was usually seen in small numbers in mixed feeding flocks.

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

This is one of the specials for the arid southern region of the island. We observed a couple of birds at close range in the Spiny Forest near Ifaty.

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

Small numbers of this striking bird were encountered at the forest edge in Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia NP.

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

Our best sighting was on the forest floor during our walks in Mantadia NP. Here we watched a bird casually strolling in the leaf litter not ten feet away...what a stunning species!

**Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae****Madagascar (Ashy) Cuckooshrike (NE)***Coracina cinerea*

This species was seen regularly at various forested sites during the tour.

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

We recorded this charismatic bird on all but two days of the trip in a wide variety of habitats.

**Monarchs Monarchidae****Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher (NE)***Terpsiphone mutata*

A very attractive species, it was seen in all colour morphs in at woodland and forested sites on the island.

**Crows & Jays Corvidae****Pied Crow***Corvus albus*

Common and widespread in Madagascar except in areas with pristine forest.

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

Despite being rather drab in plumage, it was pleasant to observe this bird in the drier regions of the island and in disturbed, open habitat.

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

Recorded almost daily on tour in most habitat types.

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

Madagascar's most common hirundine and a regional breeding endemic, it was recorded at most sites associated with waterbodies/rice paddies.

**Brown-throated (Plain) Martin***Riparia paludicola*

Smaller than Mascarene Martin and lacking the streaking on the breast this species was fairly regularly seen in Madagascar.

**Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica*

We were fortunate to find this uncommon summer visitor to Madagascar at a wetland near Ifaty and on Nosy Vé.

**Reed Warblers & Allies Acrocephalidae****Malagasy Brush Warbler (NE)***Nesillas typical*

This nondescript bird was seen at Mantadia NP, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana NP.

**[Subdesert Brush Warbler] (E)***Nesillas lantzii*

A much paler form of the aforementioned species, it was seen daily in arid habitats at Berenty, Ifaty area and in the coral rag scrub at La Tabla.

*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*

Our best sightings of this species were in wetlands at Anjozorobe and Lake Alarobia (Tana).

**Grassbirds & Allies Locustellidae****Grey Emutail (E)***Amphilius (Dromaeocercus) seebohmi*

The pristine marsh at Anjozorobe yielded superb scope views of this skulker. We were also privy to the birds displaying low over the marsh and observed the scraggly tail clearly.

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

On our final afternoon in Ranomafana NP we had good views of this very elusive undergrowth dweller; some of the best views I've had of this species.

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

We enjoyed good views of this secretive endemic of the understory in the secondary forests of Anjozorobe.

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

Seen at several forested sites with best views in the deciduous woodland of Ankarafantsika NP.

**Cryptic Warbler (E)***Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi*

This recently described species, with its incessant calling, proved very difficult to locate against the bright, grey sky during our time in Mantadia NP. However, we did have adequate scope views of a bird from below.

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

A few of these briskly moving birds were seen in the understory of Mantadia NP and Perinet Special Reserve.

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

The Spiny Forest at Mangily produced outstanding views of this vociferous warbler.

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

This rainforest specialist was seen at rainforest sites of Perinet, Mantadia & Anjozorobe.

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

Unfortunately, due to habitat destruction, this species is extremely range restricted and is confined to



the small Zombitse/Vohibasia forest bloc. We did, however, have magnificent, point blank views of this attractive tetraka in Zombitse Forest.

**Grey-crowned Tetraka (Greenbul) (E)** *Xanthomixis cinereiceps*

An elusive forest understory bird, it was seen in Mantadia NP by one some of the group.

**[Madagascar] Yellowbrow (Oxylabes) (E) (NT)** *Crossleyia xanthophrys*

This very scarce and secretive species was seen well at Anjozorobe albeit in dim light conditions.

*NOTE: Apart from its ground-loving habits, this species has little in common with the White-throated Oxylabes and is better retained in its own genus, with its own English name.*

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

We observed this highly vocal species calling from its song perches along the forest edge in Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia NP.

### Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

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

Widespread and common throughout the tour at most sites.

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

Perinet Special Reserve and Ranomafana NP held sightings of this drab species.

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

Most probably, our best views were had in the arid habitats near Berenty and Ifaty.

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

Regularly encountered in a variety of habitats throughout the tour.

### White-eyes Zosteropidae

**Madagascar White-eye (NE)** *Zosterops maderaspatanus*

It was seen in almost all areas apart from the arid region of south-western Madagascar.

### Starlings Sturnidae

**Common Myna (I)** *Acridotheres tristis tristis*

This introduced species was common and widespread in disturbed, open habitats throughout the island.

**Madagascar Starling (E)** *Hartlaubius aurata*

First seen well at our lodgings in Perinet, it was also found at Anjozorobe and Ranomafana NP.

### Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

**Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E)** *Copsychus albospecularis*

This bold and confiding species was seen throughout the tour on most days in most habitat types.

**[Madagascar] Stonechat (E)** *Saxicola sibilla*

Commonly recorded during the first week of the tour.

**Littoral Rock Thrush (E)** *Monticola (Pseudocossyphus) imerina*

At our lunch venue near Anakao, south of Tulear, we had great views of a male bird perched atop a sisal plant.

**Forest Rock Thrush (E)** *Monticola (Pseudocossyphus) sharpei*

This ridge top forest specialist was seen well in the secondary forests at Anjozorobe and again at the forest edge in Ranomafana NP.

**(Benson's Rock Thrush) (E) (NT)** *Monticola (Pseudocossyphus) bensoni*

Our accommodations outside Isalo NP yielded magnificent sightings of this attractive rock thrush.



NOTE: A recent paper dealing with the systematics of the Madagascar rock thrushes suggested that Benson's Rock Thrush is merely a race of Forest Rock Thrush, based on DNA studies of specimens taken at the eastern and western limits of the species' range. However, these conclusions have recently been disputed, since no specimens of Benson's Rock Thrush were ever tested! (Dowsett and Dowsett-Lemaire pers. comm.)

### Sunbirds Nectariniidae

**Souimanga Sunbird (NE)** *Cinnyris (Nectarinia) sovimanga*

A rather pretty species, it was seen almost daily during the tour.

**Malagasy Green (Madagascar) Sunbird (NE)** *Cinnyris (Nectarinia) notatus*

We recorded this species sporadically on the trip with notable sightings at Anjozorobe.

### Weavers Ploceidae

**Nelicourvi Weaver (E)** *Ploceus nelicourvi*

This attractive weaver was found in Perinet Special Reserve, Mantadia NP and Ranomafana NP. Best views were had at our lodgings near Perinet.

**Sakalava Weaver (E)** *Ploceus sakalava*

Common in the arid areas of Madagascar; first sighted near Berenty and later in the south at Ifaty and again at Ankarafantsika NP.

**(Madagascar) Red Fody (E)** *Foudia madagascariensis*

Common and widespread on the island, we had numerous observations of this brilliantly plumaged species.

**Forest Fody (E)** *Foudia omissa*

Mantadia NP produced initial views of the bird, which is far more elusive than the aforementioned bird. Later on, we spotted it in Ranomafana NP.

### Waxbills, Munias & Allies Estrildidae

**Madagascar Mannikin (Munia) (E)** *Lemuresthes (Lonchura) nana*

This diminutive bird was recorded at Anjozorobe, Berenty and a few sites in the north-west.

### Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

**Madagascar Wagtail (E)** *Motacilla flaviventris*

Seen at forest edge and lodgings in the higher altitude sites on tour.

## Annotated list of Mammals

Garbutt, N. (2007) *Mammals of Madagascar, A Complete Guide*.

### Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae

**Madagascar Flying Fox** *Pteropus rufus*

We had splendid views of these bizarre creatures at their day roost in the riparian forest of Berenty Lemur Reserve.

### Tenrecs & Otter Shrews Tenrecidae

**Lowland Streaked Tenrec** *Hemicentetes semispinosus*



During an early morning forest walk at Mantadia NP, our local guide found this gorgeous little beast.

### Old World Rats and Mice *Muridae*

**Eastern Red Forest Rat** *Nesomys rufus*

This attractive forest rat was seen briefly on numerous occasions in the Eastern Rainforests.

**Western Tufted Rat** *Eliurus myoxinus*

We found at least one of these arboreal rats on a night walk along the roadside in Ankarafantsika NP.

### Mongoose *Herpestidae*

**Ring-tailed Mongoose** *Viverricula elegans*

This beautiful animal was seen by some participants at a viewpoint in Ranomafana NP.

### Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs *Cheirogaleidae*

**Brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus rufus*

We enjoyed amazing views of these delightful mouse lemurs at Anjozorobe and at the forest edge in Ranomafana NP.

**Golden-brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus ravelobensis*

Several of these localized animals were observed at close quarters in Ankarafantsika NP.

**Grey-Brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus griseorufus*

This newly described species, taxonomic, was found in the spiny forest habitat of Berenty.

**Goodman's Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus lehilahytsara*

We found a couple of these tiny lemurs on night walks in the Perinet area. It is a highly localized species which is confined to the forests of Analamazaotra.

**Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur** *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*

Again, this recently split species, was seen during night walks in the Perinet area.

**Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur** *Cheirogaleus medius*

During a night walk in Ankarafantsika, we were fortunate to have extended views of this very cute lemur.

### Sportive Lemurs *Megaladapidae*

**Milne-Edwards's Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur edwardsi*

More often heard than seen, these noisy animals were observed in Ankarafantsika NP.

**Hubbard's Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur hubbardi*

On our brief visit to Zombitse Forest we managed to locate this attractive creature at a day roost.

**White-footed Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur leucopus*

This lemur was encountered daily in Berenty Lemur Reserve.

### "True" Lemurs *Lemuridae*

**Eastern Gray Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur griseus griseus*

The Eastern Rainforest sites of Mantadia and Anjozorobe yielded sightings of this adorable animal.

**Golden Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur aureus*

A fairly recently described species, we had a special encounter with a mother and infant in the forest at Ranomafana. This species has developed a feeding strategy that allows it to digest young bamboo leaves that are high in toxins, including cyanide. No other lemur is able to do so.

**Ring-tailed Lemur** *Lemur catta*



Mischievous but endearing, these comical lemurs were seen daily at Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Mongoose Lemur** *Eulemur mongoz*

We were fortunate to enjoy several close-up sightings of this uncommon species at Ankarafantsika NP.

**Red-bellied Lemur** *Eulemur rubiventer*

On our walk up to the Vohiparara ridge in Ranomafana NP we had excellent views of a family group.

**Common Brown Lemur** *Eulemur fulvus fulvus*

Mantadia and Ranomafana NP's held views of this species.

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

Good numbers were seen in the gallery forest at Berenty where this species has been introduced.

However, we also had sightings of this animal in the rainforests of Ranomafana NP. This population represents a recently split subspecies, Rufous-fronted Brown Lemur (*Eulemur fulvus rufifrons*).

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

While birding in Mantadia NP we were treated to a pair drinking at a forest stream. Both animals came down to drink, albeit very cautiously, and showed off their striking pied colouration at close range.

### Avahis, Sifakas and Indri Indriidae

**Western Avahi (Woolly Lemur)** *Avahi occidentalis*

Ankarafantsika produced a good sighting of this species at a day roost.

**Diademed Sifaka** *Propithecus diadema diadema*

A family group was observed at point blank range in the forests of Mantadia NP. We had a lovely time watching the group interact and were royally entertained by a couple of really young animals.

**Milne-Edward's Sifaka** *Propithecus diadema edwardsi*

Another beautiful creature despite a somewhat more dull appearance, it was recorded in Ranomafana NP where a family group was seen with a youngster in attendance.

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

Certainly one of the highlights of the trip, these amusing creatures delighted us with their comical, bipedal locomotion as they moved between patches of forest. They were recorded daily at Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Coquerel's Sifaka** *Propithecus verreauxi coquereli*

We enjoyed good sightings of this species in Ankarafantsika NP and in the camp ground at Ampijoroa.

**Indri** *Indri indri*

We first heard this species at our lodgings in Perinet Special Reserve, which bordered on the forest edge. Thereafter, we had superb close-up views of these, the largest of the lemurs, in this reserve. Hearing the family group vocalize above you is certainly a memory that will be fondly cherished.

## Annotated list of Amphibians and Reptiles

Glaw, F. & Vences, M. *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar*; Third Edition (2007). Insect names were derived from various sources.

### “True Frogs” Ranidae

**Madagascar Leaf-litter Frog** *Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis*

We observed this species in Perinet Special Reserve.



**Vohiparara Leaf-litter Frog** *Aglyptodactylus vohiparara*

During our time at Ranomafana National Park we found this species.

**Green Tree Frog** *Boophis viridis*

This elegant amphibian was recorded on a night walk in Perinet Special Reserve.

**Madagascar Tree Frog** *Boophis madagascariensis*

This fairly common species was seen in Perinet Special Reserve.

**Betsileo Leaf Frog** *Mantidactylus betsileanus*

Vohiparara Ridge in Ranomafana National Park yielded sightings of this frog.

**Baron's Mantella** *Mantella baroni*

This multi-colored frog was found in the undergrowth of Ranomafana NP.

*Spinomantis aglavei*

This incredibly attractive frog was seen in Perinet Special Reserve.

**Land Tortoises Testudinidae****Spider Tortoise** *Pyxis arachnoides*

This good-looking reptile was spotted in a patch of Spiny Forest near Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Crocodiles Crocodylidae****Nile Crocodile** *Crocodylus niloticus*

This ancient reptile was seen in Lake Ravelobe during our stay in Ankarafantsika NP. The local people of the region believe that their ancestors were drowned in a massive flood and transformed into crocodiles. Thus, the crocodiles of this lake are protected.

**Chameleons Chamaeleonidae****Greater Stump-tailed Chameleon** *Brookesia superciliaris*

On our night walk in Analamazoatra Special Reserve we found several of these 'large' stump-tailed Chameleons.

**Domergue's Leaf Chameleon** *Brookesia thieli*

During our stay in Analamazoatra Special Reserve we recorded this delightful reptilian.

**Elongate Leaf Chameleon** *Brookesia nasus*

We found these tiny creatures on a night walk in Ranomafana NP.

**Short-horned Chameleon** *Calumma brevicornis*

This common species was sighted in the entrance to Analamazoatra SR.

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

A small species that was seen in the rainforests of Analamazoatra and Ranomafana NP.

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

We recorded good numbers of this species at Perinet Special Reserve, Anjozorobe and at Ranomafana.

**Parson's Chameleon** *Calumma crypticum*

This large chameleon was seen at Perinet Special Reserve.

**Tusked Chameleon** *Furcifer balteatus*

We had good looks at this superb chameleon in Ranomafana NP.

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

The most commonly recorded chameleon during the tour, it was observed at Berenty, in Zombitse Forest and daily in Ankarafantsika NP.

**O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon** *Calumma oshaughnessyi*

We enjoyed views of this large species in Ranomafana NP.

*Calumma globifer*

The forest at Anjozorobe and grounds of our lodge here produced sightings of this chameleon.

### Iguanas Iguanidae

#### **Three-eyed Lizard**

*Chalarodon madagascariensis*

This attractive reptile was seen almost daily in Berenty, the spiny forest at Ifaty and Zombitse.

#### **Cuvier's Iguanid**

*Oplurus cuvieri*

We observed many of these striking iguanids in Ankarafantsika NP, especially in the camp grounds.

### Geckos Gekkonidae

#### **Painted Big-headed Gecko**

*Paroedura pictus*

We found this species in the Gallery Forest at Berenty Lemur Reserve.

#### **Fish-scaled Gecko**

*Geckolepis maculate*

The forests of Ankarafantsika NP held views of this strange species.

#### **Sikora Leaf-tailed Gecko**

*Uroplatus sikorae*

We observed this cryptic species in Mantadia NP and Perinet Special Reserve.

#### **Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko**

*Uroplatus phantasticus*

During a night walk in Perinet Special Reserve we had an incredible sighting of this little beauty!

#### **Leaf-tailed Gecko sp.**

*Uroplatus samieti*

Another of these camouflage masters, it was found along the forest edge of Ranomafana NP.

#### **Mercator Tropical House Gecko**

*Hemidactylus mercatorius*

Sighted at a few of our lodgings throughout the island.

#### **Lineated Day Gecko**

*Phelsuma lineata*

These beautiful day geckos were found at all eastern rainforest sites during the tour.

#### **Standing's Day Gecko**

*Phelsuma standingi*

These large, attractive reptiles were spotted in the Ifaty spiny forest.

### Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae

#### **Four-lined Plated Lizard**

*Zonosaurus quadrilineatus*

We found this species in the dry spiny forest near Berenty.

#### **Madagascar Plated Lizard**

*Zonosaurus madagascarensis*

Good numbers of these large reptilians were seen along the forest edge in Mantadia NP.

#### **Western Girdled Lizard**

*Zonosaurus laticaudatus*

Observed in the dry, deciduous forest of Ankarafantsika NP.

#### **Elegant Skink**

*Mabuya elegans*

This delicate skink was found in Perinet Special Reserve.

### Boas Boidae

#### **Madagascar Tree Boa**

*Sanzinia madagascarensis*

Perinet Special Reserve produced a sighting of this species.

### Typical Snakes Colubridae

#### **Giant Hog-nosed Snake**

*Leioheterodon madagascariensis*

We enjoyed good views of this snake during an afternoon walk in Ankarafantsika NP.



**Red-bellied Snake**

*Liophidium rhodogaster*

This beautiful species was seen in Analamazoatra Special Reserve.

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**Rockjumper Birding Tours CC**  
**Worldwide Birding Adventures**  
**PO Box 13972, Cascades, 3202, South Africa**  
Registration number 2001/059480/23  
**Tel: +27 33 394 0225**  
**Fax: +27 88 033 394 0225**  
**Tel (USA & Canada) toll free: 1-888-990-5552**  
**Email: [info@rockjumperbirding.com](mailto:info@rockjumperbirding.com)**  
**Alternative email: [rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com](mailto:rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com)**  
**Website: [www.rockjumperbirding.com](http://www.rockjumperbirding.com)**

