



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## MADAGASCAR COMPREHENSIVE II

*11<sup>th</sup> November to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2012*



Helmet Vanga near Perinet by David Hoddinott

**Trip report compiled by tour leader David Hoddinott**

## Tour Summary

Our second of four comprehensive Rockjumper tours to Madagascar for 2012 was, yet again, simply phenomenal! We notched up all but four of the 127 possible endemics on the route with the added bonus of a splendid male Helmet Vanga! As far as I am aware, this is the first time that this particular vanga has been seen by a tour group in the Perinet area. Other highlights included all 5 species of ground rollers, all 4 asities, all 3 mesites, all 10 couas and all possible vangas on our route, plus 25 species of lemurs, a fabulous Ring-tailed Mongoose, numerous species of splendid chameleons including the cryptic Domergue's Leaf Chameleon, Fantastic, Sikora and Ebenau's Leaf-tailed Geckos, Giraffe-necked Weevil and the endangered Spider Tortoise! For more highlights and a detailed report, read on .....



**Hook-billed Vanga by David  
Hoddinott**

We started off this amazing tour with a visit to the Tana Zoo where we enjoyed great sightings of Malagasy Coucal, Malagasy Kingfisher (the first of many), Malagasy Brush Warbler and a large heronry giving outstanding views of Dimorphic Egrets and Black-crowned Night Herons.

Leaving the capital we made our way to the south east of the island, to Berenty. A comfortable flight saw us arriving at Fort Dauphin in good time, though during the ensuing drive to Berenty we were hindered by a closed road due to a bridge being repaired. This added to the adventure as we had to take a ferry crossing; and, whilst waiting for the ferry, we enjoyed views of a Madagascar Harrier-Hawk, soaring on the thermals. We finally arrived at Berenty excited at the thoughts of the wonderful birds and lemurs that we could look forward to over the next two days. A night walk that evening produced great views of Torotoroka Scops Owl and White-browed

Owl. Some of our highlights during our time exploring the gallery forest and surrounding area included superb breeding plumaged Malagasy Pond Heron, several Frances's Sparrowhawks, our first Madagascar Buttonquail, a pair of Madagascar Sandgrouse, sunning Madagascar Green Pigeon, delightful Grey-headed Lovebirds, raucous Crested Coua, the impressive Giant Coua, Western Barn Owl, a superb Madagascar Nightjar on its day roost, lovely Hook-billed Vanga at its nest, and Sakalava Weavers. An added bonus was several chameleon species, Spider Tortoise, and numerous sightings of Ring-tailed Lemurs and the fabulous Verreaux's Sifaka, which we observed doing their comical dancing-like behavior as they crossed open ground – what a sight to behold!



**Crested Coua by David Hoddinott**



Next we made our way to the southwest and the Spiny Forest of Ifaty. What a magical place this is, with all manner of spiny plants and studded with the impressive baobabs. Exploring this area we were rewarded with superb sightings of the rare Banded Kestrel, a Subdesert Mesite in its typical frozen posture on an exposed *Dideira* branch, Baillon's Crake skulking in the reeds, an African Swamphen which, although common in Africa, is very difficult on this unique island, a confiding pair of Madagascar Plover, Running Coua showing particularly well, the fabulous Long-tailed Ground Roller, Olive Bee-eater posing for photos, Lafresnaye's Vanga at its nest, and Archbold's *Newtonia* and *Thamnornis* calling from exposed perches. A visit to the coral rag scrub of the La Tabla area saw us finding the localized Verreaux's Coua and a superb three Red-shouldered Vangas,



**Madagascar Buttonquail by David Hoddinott**

plus our first Sickle-billed Vanga. Some participants also enjoyed a memorable pirogue ride and snorkeling during the heat of the day.

From our base of Tulear we ventured out on a fabulous boat trip to Anakou and the sandy island of Nosy Ve. En route to the island we stopped off at some cliffs and enjoyed sightings of a migrant Peregrine Falcon and large Humblot's Heron. Red-tailed Tropicbirds displayed elegantly above the island giving outstanding views and a few juveniles were observed at the nest. Our lunch break at Anakou was welcome relief from the sun and the Littoral Rock Thrushes showed particularly well, as did a female Madagascar Buttonquail that walked nonchalantly right past us as we sipped cold drinks at the restaurant.

Making our way to the sandstone massif of Isalo National Park we took a nice break from the journey at Zombitse Forest, where a female Rufous Vanga eyed us warily from her nest, Hubbard's Sportive Lemur lurked in the shadows and our main target, Appert's Greenbul, gave excellent views. At Isalo a confiding White-throated Rail showed well right in the lodge grounds and Benson's Rock Thrush sheltered under a rocky ledge during a torrential thunderstorm. Our night drive produced a splendid Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec.

Thereafter we made our way to the rainforest of Ranomafana National Park. Our first morning provided us with opportunities to see the elusive Rufous-headed Ground Roller. After a frustrating time only hearing the bird and much patience and persistence by a dedicated group, we were finally rewarded with fantastic views of this beauty! Other



**Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec by David Hoddinott**



highlights during our time exploring the forest trails were the exquisite male Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity, elusive Brown Mesite, Pollen's Vanga, huge Henst's Goshawk, Madagascar Wood Rail, beautiful Pitta-like Ground Roller, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher (which had stunned itself on a window of our lodge and recovered slowly giving us unprecedented views), male Velvet Asity, brief



Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher by David Hoddinott

Brown Emutail, fabulous group of five Wedge-tailed Jery, and vocal Cryptic Warbler. On leaving the park we stopped to take a photograph of a splendid waterfall where first a Forest Rock Thrush made a sudden appearance and then the beautiful Milne-Edwards Sifaka was spotted, which gave lengthy scope views.

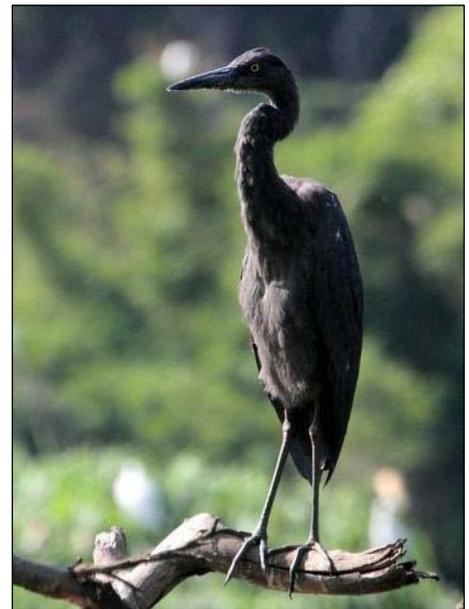
Returning to Tana we made a visit to the fabulous Lac Alarobia. Here a surprise sighting was of Humblot's Heron, which is usually confined to the west coast. In addition, a confiding pair of White-throated Rails with juvenile gave amazing views and we enjoyed superb views of numerous egrets and waterfowl, including our only Knob-billed Ducks of the trip.

The deciduous forest of Ankarafantsika National Park in the North West was our next stop. Arriving at Tana airport in order to catch our flight to Majunga, we were thrilled to find a fabulous Sooty Falcon allowing great scope views as it perched up on a satellite dish. Ampijoroa was great as always and exploring the network of wonderful trails through the dry forest we found the stunning Madagascar Crested Ibis, pair of confiding White-breasted Mesite, Red-capped Coua nonchalantly walking along the forest trails, a more reclusive Coquerel's Coua, magnificent Schlegel's Asity, elusive Van Dam's Vanga and the impressive Sickie-billed Vanga.

At the nearby Lac Ravelobe we enjoyed scope views of a male Little Bittern, pair of Madagascar Fish Eagle acting like goalies as they perched atop the soccer field goal post, a number of Allen's Gallinules, plus a couple of lily-trotting Madagascar Jacana to round off a wonderful stay here.

Heading back to Majunga we stopped at a small wetland where we enjoyed great views of 120 Black Herons, many of which were performing their mantling behavior whilst fishing, and a whopping nine Greater Painted Snipe!

From Majunga we then took a boat trip into the Betsiboka Delta where we managed to find our primary target in the form of the endemic Bernier's Teal (just two pairs). A lone Malagasy Sacred Ibis was located after an extensive search, while after some careful scanning a number of Terek Sandpipers were seen feeding on the mudflats and the tiny Saunders's Tern was spotted



Humblot's Heron by David Hoddinott



nearby.

Leaving Majunga we flew back to Tana and then drove down to Perinet. *En route* we enjoyed a fabulous sighting of a Madagascar Pratincole with young chick. Over the next couple of days we explored the impressive lowland rainforest of Mantadia, ridge-top forest of Perinet and secondary forest of Voimma Community Reserve. Our time here was particularly productive and we enjoyed many great sightings including the endangered Meller's Duck, Madagascar Grebe, pretty Crossley's Vanga, Short-legged and Scaly Ground Rollers to wrap up all the ground rollers, smart Nuthatch Vanga, Ward's Flycatcher, handsome Red-breasted Coua, Rainforest Scops Owl, Madagascar Long-eared Owl (an adult allowing great scope views) and roosting Collared Nightjar. On one occasion we had a particularly memorable experience as a very territorial male Madagascar Flufftail gave superb views as he moved slowly through the undergrowth just a few feet in front of us.



**Madagascar Pratincole by David Hoddinott**

Having seen virtually all the key forest species with a day to spare, we decided to visit another community reserve nearby to try our luck at finding the beautiful and enigmatic Helmet Vanga. The start of our walk was through open scrub and, for the first two hours, we didn't see much except for a confiding Madagascar Cuckoo, which sat out on an exposed branch and called for ages. The further we walked into the forest the better it became, with some lovely large forest trees festooned with mosses and orchids. Our local guides had set about doing transects to search for the Helmet Vanga and after a further two hours without success we decided to head back for lunch. After just twenty minutes of walking we heard the shouts of our local guide who had amazingly located one at a nest. However, to get to the nest would take us at least another two hours walk, and so some of the group decided to instead head back. (They were duly compensated with fabulous sightings of the iconic Indri and Madagascar Wood Rail at Perinet in the afternoon.) The rest of us who were determined to find the vanga took snacks, water and flashlights and continued on. As it turned out, with all our local guides' enthusiasm he had lost the trail and we therefore scrambled around for the next twenty minutes or so before we finally relocated the trail, following which we immediately set about making our way to the spot. After a further hour's walk we reached some ridge-top forest, which proved rather taxing to say the least since we had already been walking since 6am and it was



**White-footed Sportive Lemur by David Hoddinott**



now 2pm! Nevertheless, along the way we encountered some great birds including a confident juvenile Red-fronted Coua, several male Velvet Asities, and Dark Newtonia.

Having gone through all this effort, we were then told that we wouldn't have time to get to the nest before dark, which meant that our hopes were all but dashed! The guide was still confident however that we could find the male and so we pushed on – and at 3pm we finally reached the site where the male had last been seen, about one and a half hours earlier. Again our local guides spread out and amazingly, after just five minutes, we heard shouts of “I've got it”! Although still out of breath we pressed on, dripping sweat from all corners of our bodies, and, finally, there it was – the amazing Helmet Vanga!!! What a bird – after all that, we all enjoyed outstanding views of the male for a good fifteen minutes, before we had to depart to make the four-hour return walk back. Exhilarated with our good fortune we returned and, although the walk was long, it was now much easier having seen this great and beautiful bird, voted by most birders in the top 50 birds of the World! What a great way to end our stay at Perinet!!



Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher by David Hodinott

From Perinet we then travelled to Anjozorobe, our final destination of the tour. Exploring the local wetland we found splendid Madagascar Rail, several Madagascar Snipes and an obliging Grey Emutail. Time spent in the ridge-top forest yielded Brown Emutail for some and Grey-crowned Tetraka, but the highlight was without doubt watching the fabulous Indri (this subspecies often called Black Indri) and the cryptic Domergue's Leaf Chameleon.

So ended our wonderful adventure through the “Island Continent” of Madagascar, and we made our way back to Antananarivo to connect with our return flights home.

## 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.

**Pheasants, Fowl & Allies Phasianidae**

**Madagascar Partridge (E)** *Margaroperdix madagarensis*

We had splendid views of a pair walking in an open area of grassland in Isalo NP, a very lucky sighting indeed!

**Ducks & Geese Anatidae**

**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*

We observed this species at Lake Ravelobe where common, in Isalo NP and at Lac Alarobia.

**Meller's Duck (E) (En)** *Anas melleri*

A small forest pond in Mantadia National Park produced great views of this scarce species.

**Bernier's Teal (E) (En)** *Anas bernieri*

Our boat excursion into the Betsiboka Delta from Majunga yielded views of this highly sought-after bird. Only 2 pairs were seen.

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*

A splendid 7 birds were seen well at Lac Alarobia.

**Grebes Podicipedidae**

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

Good numbers were seen at a wetland between Tulear and Ifaty.

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

This delicate species was seen extremely well at a small forest pond in Mantadia National Park where we found a pair with juvenile.

NOTE: Globally threatened and declining due to habitat loss, introduction of exotic fish, and competition (and possibly hybridization) with Little Grebe.

**Flamingos Phoenicopteridae**

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopus roseus*

One sub-adult was seen at a lake en route from Tulear to Ifaty.

**Tropicbirds Phaethontidae**

**Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda*



On Nosy Vé 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 just one bird. After a concerted effort we enjoyed good views of this 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*

We found these birds around Lakes Amboromalandy and Ravelobe, including over 100 birds observed on a day in Ampijoroa NP.

#### **Madagascar (Crested) Ibis**

*Lophotibis cristata*

We were rewarded with fabulous scope views of a magnificent adult in Ampijoroa National Park.

### Hérons Ardeidae

#### **Little Bittern**

*Ixobrychus minutus*

Good scope views were had of a smart adult male at Lake Ravelobe, Ampijoroa.

#### **Black-crowned Night-Heron**

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Good numbers of this widespread species were seen at the Zoo and Lac Alarobia.

#### **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*

We enjoyed great sightings of large numbers at Lake Ravelobe. At least 80 were seen on one day.

#### **Malagasy Pond Heron (BE) (V)**

*Ardeola idea*

We observed three adults in breeding plumage at Berenty.

*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*

Small numbers were recorded on the exposed tidal flats between Tulear and Ifaty.

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

*Ardea humbloti*

This endemic heron was spotted at the cliffs near San Augustine where we found a pair at close quarters. An unusual inland sighting was of a single adult at Lac Alarobia.

*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. One was also seen flying over Voiparara.

#### **[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 Lac Alarobia. A large flock of fifty was seen at Lake Andretsa near Majunga.

**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.

### Anhingas Anhingidae

**[African] Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster*

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

### Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius*

We enjoyed sightings on an almost daily basis.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

A few birds were seen at Berenty.

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

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

On our first morning at Ankarafantsika National Park we had great scope views of this highly endangered bird. On the morning of our departure we had splendid views of an adult eating a fish.

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

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

One was seen flying over the gallery forest at Berenty.

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

We had excellent views of four at Berenty and a couple more at Ampijoroa NP.

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

We recorded a stunning female at Ranomafana NP where we enjoyed splendid scope views.

*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 perched for scope views in Mantadia NP.

### 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 of one on the nest in the spiny forest near Ifaty.

**Sooty Falcon** *Falco concolor*



We enjoyed fantastic scope views of one at the Tana airport.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

We had superb views of a large female en route to Nosy Ve.

### Mesites Mesitornithidae

**White-breasted Mesite (E) (V)** *Mesitornis variegatus*

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

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

We had good views of a pair of this highly elusive species in Ranomafana NP!

**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.

### Flufftails Sarothruridae

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

Initially this species was only heard on many occasions but later we had great views of a male in Perinet Special Reserve.

### Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae

**Madagascar Wood Rail (E)** *Canirallus kiolooides*

A splendid pair showed well in Ranomafana NP. Some participants also had good sightings of two as they wandered through the undergrowth 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.

**White-throated Rail (E)** *Dryolimnas cuvieri*

We were treated to superb views of one at Isalo NP and a further pair with juvenile at Lac Alarobia.

*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*

We managed good but brief views of this tricky species near Ifaty.

**African Swamphen** *Porphyrio madagascariensis*

We had good scope views of one at a wetland en route from Ifaty to Tulear.

**Allen's (Lesser) Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni*

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

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

A couple of birds were found at Lake Ravelobe and two at Lake Andretsa near Majunga.

### Buttonquail Turnicidae

**Madagascar Buttonquail (E)** *Turnix nigricollis*

We had wonderful views of a male with two chicks at Ampijoroa NP and splendid views of a female at Anakou.



### Stilts, Avocets 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*

We enjoyed fantastic scope views of a pair of this smart wader near Ifaty. 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*

A couple was seen at Lake Ravelobe.

#### **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*

We had excellent scope views of a female and two males at Lake Ravelobe and a further dozen at Lake Andretsa, Majunga.

### Jacanas Jacanidae

#### **Madagascar Jacana (E)**

*Actophilornis albinucha*

Two of these attractive birds were seen on the floating vegetation of Lake Ravelobe. A further two were seen at Lake Andretsa near Majunga.

### Sandpipers, Snipes 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*

We had wonderful views of 8 birds in the Betsiboka Delta.



**Common Sandpiper***Tringa hypoleucos*

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

**Ruddy Turnstone***Arenaria interpres*

Several of these striking shorebirds were observed at wetlands en route from Tulear to Ifaty.

**Sanderling***Calidris alba*

A few were recorded on the exposed tidal flats between Ifaty and Tulear.

**Little Stint***Calidris minuta*

We observed one individual of this species 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 good scope views of 2 birds and a chick on some rocks in the middle of the Morogoro River.

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

We had superb views of one during the boat trip to Nosy Ve.

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

One was seen in the Betsiboka Delta.

**Lesser Crested Tern***Sterna bengalensis*

We had good views of a dozen during our boat trip into the Betsiboka Delta.

**Saunders's Tern***Sternula saundersi*

We were very fortunate to have superb views of one at Nosy Ve and several more during the boat trip into the Betsiboka Delta.

**Common Tern***Sterna hirundo*

One was observed during the boat trip to Nosy Ve.

**Whiskered Tern***Chlidonias hybrida*

Three of these striking terns were found at Lake Amboromalandy.

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

Excellent views were had of a pair of this massive Sandgrouse in the Periwinkle fields at Berenty. Later 32 were seen during the drive from Tulear to Isalo NP.

**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 Berenty and then at the edge of the spiny forest at Mangily.

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

Anjozorobe yielded good sightings of this stunning pigeon where an amazing count of up to eighty on one day.

**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*

The Spiny Forest at Mangily produced good 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 at Anjozorobe.

**Cuckoos 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.*

**Red-fronted Coua (E)***Coua reynaudii*

Good views were had of this smart bird in the forests at Ranomafana and Perinet Special Reserve.

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

A good sighting was had in the dry, deciduous forest of Ankarafantsika NP.

**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, on numerous occasions in the gallery forest at Berenty.

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

Late one afternoon in Voima park we observed one on a forest trail. 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.



**Barn Owls Tytonidae****[Western] Barn Owl***Tyto alba*

We had great views of two at a day roost in Berenty.

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

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

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

One was observed exceptionally well at a day roost in Perinet Special Reserve.

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

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

This attractive owl was recorded at Berenty Private Reserve at a day roost.

**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 Perinet Special Reserve.

**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 one of these birds at a day roost in the forest interior at Perinet Special Reserve.

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

Recorded at several sites including Perinet, Berenty and Ifaty.

**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*

One was seen en route from Fort Dauphin to Berenty.

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

Recorded at scattered localities throughout the tour with our best sightings at the cliffs en route to Anakao and at Isalo.

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

**Little Swift***Apus affinis*

Three birds were seen in Antananarivo. Although common elsewhere, this is a very localized and scarce species in Madagascar.

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

We enjoyed fantastic scope views of a male at Zombitse Forest and several more at Anjozorobe.

*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 splendid scope views of one at Mantadia NP.

#### **Scaly Ground Roller (E) (V)**

*Geobiastes squamigera*

Another secretive ground roller, it was found in the forest undergrowth of Mantadia NP, where we enjoyed fantastic views.

#### **Pitta-like Ground Roller (E)**

*Atelornis pittoides*

This colourful bird was recorded in Mantadia NP and again in primary forest in Ranomafana NP.

#### **Rufous-headed Ground Roller (E) (NT)**

*Atelornis crossleyi*

We finally managed to track one down in Ranomafana NP. It gave the most memorable close views and was voted as one of the birds of the trip!

#### **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*

At Ranomafana NP we enjoyed stunning views of one which had stunned itself on a window of our lodge and another was seen exceptionally well in Ankarafantsika NP.

#### **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*

It was recorded at many 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 fabulous male was seen in Mantadia NP and a further 3 males at Iaroka Community Reserve.

#### **Schlegel's Asity (E) (NT)**

*Philepitta schlegeli*

This mini Bird-of-paradise look-a-like was seen exceptionally well (see photo above) in the deciduous forests of Ankarafantsika NP, where we were entertained by a pair at close quarters at eye-level for several minutes.



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

We had superb sightings of a male in Ranomafana NP and another at Iaroka Community Reserve.

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

A new site at the Vohiparara ridge produced wonderful views of a stunning pair.

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

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

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

The coral rag scrub near La Tabla yielded our sightings of this highly localized endemic. We were treated to magnificent point blank views of three birds.

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

Seen exceptionally well at Berenty where seen nesting. This species behaves similarly to the African bushshrikes.

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

A pair was seen very well in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

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

We encountered a male in the dry, deciduous woodland of Ankarafantsika NP.

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

After much effort one was seen in the forest in Ranomafana NP. This can often prove an elusive species.

**Sickle-billed Vanga (E)***Falco palleri*

These incredible birds were seen at several sites during the tour, namely Ifaty and Ankarafantsika. They were definitely another highlight of the trip!

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

Seen at Perinet Special Reserve, 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 observed this gorgeous bird in Anjozorobe but our most memorable sighting was in the deciduous woodland of Ankarafantsika NP. Here we watched a male, at extremely close quarters.

*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*

A female was seen on the nest at Zombitse NP and another female showed well in Ankarafantsika NP.

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

Rather plain looking by vanga standards, we found this bird at 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 one foraging in the forest of Mantadia NP. A further pair was seen at Iaroka Community Reserve.

**Helmet Vanga (E)**

After a lengthy hike and superb perseverance by a determined group of participants we secured fantastic views of a splendid male at Iaroka Community Reserve. We were extremely fortunate as this is the first birding tour to see this species in the Perinet area. What a fantastic bird!!!

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

A pair showed well but briefly at Ranomafana with further sightings at Iaroka Community Reserve and at Anjozorobe.

**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 pair at close range in the Spiny Forest near Ifaty.

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

Small numbers of this striking bird were encountered in Mantadia NP.

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

After hearing this species on a number of occasions we were finally rewarded with superb views of one casually strolling in the leaf litter not ten feet away, in Perinet Special Reserve...what a stunning species!

### Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae

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

This species was seen regularly at various forested sites during the tour, with exceptional views at Anjozorobe.

### 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. We enjoyed magnificent views of a white morph male on its nest at Ankarafantsika NP.

### Crows & Jays Corvidae

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*

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

### Larks Alaudidae

**Madagascar Lark (E)** *Mirafrha 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 virtually 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 of this species. We had good views of several at Anjozorobe.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
We had great views of three flying over the spiny forest at Ifaty. This species is only recorded occasionally on the island.

### Reed Warblers & Allies Acrocephalidae

**Malagasy Brush Warbler (NE)** *Nesillas typical*  
This nondescript bird was seen at Zoo in Tana, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana NP.

**[Subdesert Brush Warbler] (E)** *Nesillas lantzii*  
A much paler form of the aforementioned species, it was seen in the spiny forest near Ifaty.  
*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 near Ifaty.

### Grassbirds & Allies Locustellidae

**Grey Emutail (E)** *Amphispiza (Dromaeocercus) seebohmi*  
The pristine marsh at Anjozorobe yielded superb 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*  
One of these secretive birds was seen briefly at Ranomafana NP and another at Anjozorobe.

### Malagasy Warblers Bernieridae

**White-throated Oxylabes (E)** *Oxylabes madagascariensis*  
We enjoyed good views of this secretive endemic of the understorey in the forest at Ranomafana NP.

**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 rather difficult to locate against the bright, grey sky during our time in Ranomafana NP. However, after perseverance we did have good scope views of a bird.

**Wedge-tailed Jery (E) (NT)** *Hartertula flavoviridis*  
Five of these briskly moving birds was seen exceptionally well in the understory of Ranomafana NP. This can be a tricky species to see well.

**Thamnornis (Warbler) (E)** *Thamnornis chloropetoides*  
The Spiny Forest at Mangily produced outstanding views of this vociferous warbler on two occasions.



**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 on two occasions at Anjozorobe.

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

This very scarce and secretive species was heard by the group but unfortunately seen only by the leader at Anjozorobe

*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 Mantadia NP and again in Ranomafana NP.

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

Widespread and common throughout the tour at most sites.

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

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 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*

Seen well in small numbers in Mantadia 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 at our comfortable hotel in Antananarivo and found commonly at Anjozorobe.

**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 on an aerial and a female on a nest with two chicks.



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

This ridge top forest specialist was seen well 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 Ranomafana NP.

**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 of a male near its nest in Mantadia NP.

**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*

Good views were had of this species at Mantadia and Ranomafana NPs.

**Waxbills, Munias & Allies Estrildidae****Madagascar Mannikin (Munia) (E)** *Lemuresthes (Lonchura) nana*

This diminutive bird was recorded in small numbers at many sites throughout the trip.

**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 six of these bizarre creatures at their day roost in the riparian forest of Berenty Lemur Reserve.



**Tenrecs & Otter Shrews Tenrecidae****Greater Hedgehog Tenrec***Setifer setosus*

This primitive mammal was seen exceptionally well on a night walk at Ampijoroa NP.

**Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec***Echinops telfairi*

Our local guide found one in a rotting log at Ifaty and we observed another on our night drive at Isalo NP.

**Old World Rats and Mice Muridae****Eastern Red Forest Rat***Nesomys rufus*

This attractive forest rat was seen on several occasions at Anjozorobe.

**Black Rat***Rattus rattus*

Two were seen at Tulear.

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

We had superb views of one in Ranomafana NP, yet another fabulous highlight of this trip! (see photo above). Another was seen by some participants at Iaroka Community Reserve.

**Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae****Grey Mouse Lemur***Microcebus murinus*

We enjoyed amazing views of one of these delightful mouse lemurs at Berenty.

**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.

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

During a night walk in Voimma Community Reserve, we were fortunate to have extended views of this lemur.

**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 Perinet yielded sightings of three of this adorable animal.

**Golden Bamboo Lemur**

*Hapalemur aureus*

A fairly recently described species, we had a special encounter with three 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.

**Greater Bamboo Lemur**

*Hapalemur simus*

A fairly recently described species, we had a special encounter with one in the forest at Ranomafana. A lucky find as this is a rare species.

**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 in Ranomafana NP we had excellent views of five of these beauties.

**Common Brown Lemur**

*Eulemur fulvus fulvus*

Ampijoroa NP 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 Ranomafana NP we were treated to superb views of two in the canopy.

### Avahis, Sifakas and Indri Indriidae

**Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur)**

*Avahi laniger*

We heard one during our night walk at Voimma Park and saw one at Anjozorobe.

**Western Avahi**

*Avahi occidentalis*

We had splendid views of three in Ampijoroa NP.

**Diademed Sifaka**

*Propithecus diadema diadema*

A family group was observed in the forests of Mantadia NP. Later we had great views of eight at Anjozorobe.

**Milne-Edward's Sifaka**

*Propithecus edwardsi*

A family group was observed in the forests of Ranomafana NP.

**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 and a further three in Zombitse NP.

**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. One of the great mammals of the world!

## 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 Tree Frog** *Boophis madagascariensis*  
This fairly common species was seen on one occasion during our night walk at Ranomafana.
- Painted Mantella** *Mantella madagascariensis*  
This beautiful species was seen on several occasions in Mantadia NP.

### Land Tortoises Testudinidae

- Spider Tortoise** *Pyxis arachnoides*  
This good-looking reptile was spotted in a patch of Spiny Forest near Berenty Lemur Reserve, and again at Ifaty, fabulous finds of this endangered species.

### 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*  
We had splendid views of one in Voimma Community Reserve.
- Domergue’s Leaf Chameleon** *Brookesia thieli*  
During our stay in Anjozorobe we recorded two of these delightful reptilians.
- Short-horned Chameleon** *Calumma brevicornis*  
This common species was sighted at Anjozorobe.
- Nose-horned Chameleon** *Calumma nasuta*  
A small species that was seen in the rainforests of Anjozorobe and Ranomafana NP.
- Band-bellied Chameleon** *Calumma gastrotaenia*  
We recorded good numbers of this species at Anjozorobe.
- Parson’s Chameleon** *Calumma parsonii*  
We had fantastic views of one in Perinet Special Reserve.
- Oshaughnessy’s Chameleon** *Calumma oshaughnessyi*  
We had superb views of two on our night walk at Ranomafana NP.
- Rhinoceros Chameleon** *Furcifer rhinocerotus*  
A superb male was seen in Ampijoroa NP.



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

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

**Warty Chameleon***Furcifer verrucosus*

We had stunning views of one in Berenty.

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

We had great views of two at Anjozorobe.

*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.

**Double-banded Iguanid***Oplurus cyclurus*

We observed one of these striking iguanids at Ifaty.

**Four-striped Iguanid***Oplurus quadrimaculatus*

We observed several of these striking iguanids at Isalo NP.

**Geckos Gekkonidae****Plain Big-headed Gecko***Paroedura bastardi*

We found this species in the woodland at Berenty.

**Sikora Leaf-tailed Gecko***Uroplatus sikorae*

We observed this cryptic species at Ranomafana NP, Voimma Community Reserve and Anjozorobe.

**Fantastic Leaf-tailed Gecko***Uroplatus phantasticus*

We had incredible sightings of one of these little beauties at Ranomafana!

**Ebenaui Leaf-tailed Gecko***Uroplatus ebenaui*

We had incredible views of one of these rare beauties at Anjozorobe.

**Madagascar Day Gecko***Phelsuma madagascariensis*

We had good views of one at Ampijoroa NP.

**Brown Day Gecko***Phelsuma mutabilis*

We had great views of one in Berenty.

**Lineated Day Gecko***Phelsuma lineata*

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

**Four-spotted Day Gecko***Phelsuma quadriocellata*

Several were seen in Ranomafana NP.

**Pale-bellied Day Gecko***Phelsuma leiogaster*

Two were seen in Mahajunga.

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

These large, attractive reptiles were spotted at Zombitse.

**Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae****Lesser Plated Lizard***Tracheloptychus madagascariensis*

We had good views of one at Berenty.



**Madagascar Plated Lizard***Zonosaurus madagascarensis*

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

**Gravenhorsts' Skink***Mabuya gravenhorstii*

We had cracking views of one at Berenty.

**Elegant Skink***Mabuya elegans*

One was seen at Berenty.

**Boas Boidae****Madagascar Tree Boa***Sanzinia madagascariensis*

One was seen in Ranomafana NP.

**Dumeril's Boa***Boa dumerilli*

We had good views of one at Berenty.

**Typical Snakes Colubridae****Giant Hog-nosed Snake***Leioheterodon madagascariensis*

We enjoyed magnificent views of this large snake in Ankarafantsika NP.

*Dromicodryas bernieri*

We had good views of one at Berenty.

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