



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## MADAGASCAR COMPREHENSIVE III

*20<sup>th</sup> October to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2012*



Slender-billed Flufftail by Lisa Thurston

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

## Tour Summary

Our Madagascar adventure, the third of four comprehensive tours to Madagascar for Rockjumper in 2012, was quite simply phenomenal! We notched up all 127 possible endemics on the route, with the added bonus that they were seen in just 22 days. As far as I am aware, this has never been achieved before! Highlights included a cracking male Slender-billed Flufftail (see Lisa's excellent photo above), all 5 ground rollers, all 4 asities, all 3 mesites, all 10 couas and all possible vangas on our route, plus 22 species of lemurs, a fabulous confiding Fosa which showed for half an hour, numerous species of splendid chameleons including the cryptic Domergue's Leaf Chameleon, Fantastic and Henkel's Leaf-tailed Geckos, Giraffe-necked Weevil and the critically endangered Radiated Tortoise in the wild! Simply incredible!! For more highlights and a detailed report, read on....



**Brown Mouse Lemur by David Hoddinott**

Chameleons. As if it couldn't get any better, we also ventured into the superb wetland and were astounded to obtain outrageous views of a male Slender-billed Flufftail – what a coup! Other highlights here included Madagascar Rail, displaying Madagascar Snipe, Malagasy Kingfisher, Madagascar Swamp Warbler and Grey Emutail. An enthusiastic participant, Dixie Coleman, has been particularly fortunate on all Rockjumper birding tours that she has been part of and so, after such a successful start, we coined the term Dixie's luck; this was to be referred to many times during the tour!

Leaving Anjozorobe extremely delighted with our successes, we next made our way to Perinet Special Reserve. En route we picked up a lovely pair of Madagascar Pratincoles; a great relief as they have been unreliable in recent years. On arrival at Perinet, we were greeted with the sound of the incredible Indri calling right near our cabins and were absorbed with stunning scope views of this impressive prosimian! And then, shortly afterwards, we actually had to tear ourselves away from the Indri to watch one of the

We started off this amazing tour with a visit to the ridge-top forest and wetlands of Anjozorobe. Our time in the forests produced the beautiful Madagascar Blue Pigeon, noisy Lesser Vasa Parrot, Malagasy Coucal, constantly calling Madagascar Cuckoo, cute Rainforest Scops Owl, Cuckoo Roller displaying over the canopy, Red-tailed and Hook-billed Vangas, confiding female Blue Vanga, Dark Newtonia, Madagascar Cuckooshrike, elusive Brown Emutail, Madagascar Yellowbrow, Madagascar Stonechat and several stunning Forest Fody. Our night walk was particularly productive and we found numerous Brown Mouse Lemurs, Greater Dwarf Lemur, Weasel Sportive Lemur and two cryptic Domergue's Leaf



**Malagasy Kingfisher by David Hoddinott**



great blue birds of the world – the magic Blue Coua of course, which showed particularly well!

The next day saw us spending time in the extensive primary rainforest of Mantadia National Park and, after considerable effort, we were delighted to see all three of our target Ground Rollers; the elusive Short-legged, cryptic Scaly and beautiful Pitta-like. A forested lake nearby produced another two sought-after endemics – a pair of the rare Meller’s Duck and Madagascar Grebe with young. Other



Fosa by David Hoddinott

highlights of our time here included a splendid male Madagascar Partridge on the road (how lucky can you get!), tricky Red-breasted Coua, Madagascar Long-eared Owl, Collared Nightjar at a day roost, cracking Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, four Velvet Asity males on one day, Nuthatch and Crossley’s Vangas, Ward’s Flycatcher, extremely confiding Wedge-tailed Jery, and Nelicourvi Weaver building its intricate nest. On the mammal front we couldn’t have scripted it better: a magnificent Fosa was watched for a fabulous 30 minutes (see photo), whilst Diademed Sifaka kept a wary eye on the potential danger and Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur lazed in the canopy nearby.

Thereafter we made our way back to Tana and were surprised to get a flight – which for once was on time! – to Fort Dauphin. Excitement mounted as we finally arrived at Berenty, as this is the home to Verreaux’s Sifaka – often referred to as “the dancing sifaka”. We were not disappointed as they gave a fabulous show, as did the adorable Ring-tailed Lemurs. The birding was equally superb with great views of the elusive Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk. Working the network of comfortable trails we also found France’s Sparrowhawk, Madagascar Green Pigeon, a lovely flock of Grey-headed Lovebirds, Crested and impressive Giant Couas, and a foursome of night birds all at splendid day roosts: Western Barn Owl, Torotoroka Scops Owl, White-browed Hawk-Owl and Madagascar Nightjar. Returning to Fort Dauphin we picked up a cracking adult Malagasy Pond Heron in full breeding plumage and a flock of Black Herons fishing.

From the south-east we then travelled to Tulear and Ifaty in the south-west. We lucked out again with a domestic flight that was on schedule and this gave us sufficient time to search for the two key endemics at La Tabla: namely Red-shouldered Vanga and Verreaux’s Coua, which we found in record time. An added bonus here was great views of Lafresnaye’s Vanga.

At Ifaty we made early starts, making the most of the cool mornings, and ventured into the wonderful Spiny Forest where our local guides assisted us in finding a fabulous male Long-tailed Ground Roller and the



Giant Coua by David Hoddinott



elusive Subdesert Mesite. Other species found here included a pair of Madagascar Harrier-Hawks at their nest, Greater Vasa Parrot, Red-capped and Running Couas, Madagascar Nightjar at a day roost, the impressive Sickle-billed Vanga, localized Archbold's Newtonia, Thamnornis perched atop flowering Dideira, and Stripe-throated Jery. Nearby a pair of splendid Madagascar Plovers showed



**Subdesert Mesite by David Hoddinott**

exceptionally well alongside the similar Kittlitz's Plover and several Madagascar Larks. Our initial searches for the low density Banded Kestrel had proved fruitless thus far and so we made one last attempt on our final morning in the area, and were therefore delighted to find a splendid adult which gave fabulous scope views. Investigating nearby wetlands saw us teasing out the smart Baillon's Crake, which gave some of the best views I have personally ever had of this widespread but tricky species. Madagascar Swamp Warblers were also very showy and a bonus find was a vagrant Red-necked Phalarope. In addition to the great birding, whilst at Ifaty some members of the group also enjoyed good snorkeling during the heat of the day.

From Tulear we made a boat trip down to Nosy Ve Island, where we were pleased to find a good number of Humblot's Herons nesting along the cliffs en route. At the Onilahy River mouth we also found a splendid 158 Greater Flamingos and then made our way to the island. Whilst there was no sign of any Crab-plovers, we did however find the cute White-fronted Plover and a good number of the very elegant Red-tailed Tropicbird. Heading to Anakao, we were then greeted on arrival by a splendid male Littoral Rock Thrush, which posed on a restaurant aerial where we enjoyed a delicious lunch.

Travelling inland we next made our way to the sandstone massif of Isalo, stopping en route at Zombitse National Park. Exploring the network of trails during unexpected rain we found the desired Appert's Tetraka, a roosting Hubbard's Sportive Lemur and impressive Oustalet's Chameleon.

At Isalo, this time it was a Benson's Rock Thrush which eyed us during lunch as he posed atop our luxurious accommodations. A small stream nearby held memorable sightings of White-throated Rail, while a confiding pair of Madagascar Hoopoes was found by Ted nesting right outside his room! We all enjoyed fabulous views of the pair bringing food to their hungry chicks.

Departing Isalo, we then made the drive to the fabulous Ranomafana National Park. Two days of rain did not dampen our spirits and we first explored the upper forest at Voiparara. Here a Madagascar Wood Rail showed well, Red-fronted Coua, although



**Humblot's Heron by David Hoddinott**



initially elusive, was enticed into view, Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity gave lengthy views, a pair of Pollen's Vanga was seen at close range, Cryptic Warbler called from his prominent perch, Grey-crowned Tetraka showed on two occasions, and Madagascar Yellowbrow made brief appearances. Well pleased with our sightings considering the inclement weather, we decided to explore the lower



**Schlegel's Asity by David Hoddinott**

trails the following day. Our time here was particularly rewarding with great sightings of Henst's Goshawk, a pair of Brown Mesites which gave phenomenal views only a few metres away (we watched these bizarre birds for at least three minutes!), a calling Pitta-like Ground Roller which also gave exceptional views, and a family group of Golden Bamboo Lemurs that munched on bamboo nearby. Delighted with our good fortune and the improving weather, we headed back up to Voiparara and were pleased with a superb sighting of a stunning male Madagascar Flufftail. However, our nemesis, the Rufous-headed Ground Roller, had eluded us at all forest sites thus far and, desperate to see this beauty, we explored numerous suitable sites. It was therefore with great relief that a confiding individual at last popped into view and gave wonderful views for all. Other highlights here included a lovely pair of Common Sunbird-Asity, Madagascar Starling, a splendid male Forest Rock Thrush, and dazzling Malagasy Green Sunbird.

From Ranomafana we next headed back to Tana, where we observed a dozen Little Swifts (a rare species in Madagascar) before departing on a flight to Majunga in the north-west of the island. From here we transferred to the superb Ampijoroa National Park.

Traversing the network of trails through the park's deciduous forest, we were delighted to find another elusive endemic, the magnificent Madagascar Ibis, which gave great scope views, as well as the rare Madagascar Sparrowhawk, Sooty Falcon flying low overhead, splendid White-breasted Mesite, beautiful Madagascar Buttonquail on several occasions, sunning Red-capped Coua, Cuckoo Roller displaying above, Broad-billed Rollers in the campsite, simply unbeatable views of a pair of Schlegel's Asity (see photo of the male), Mongoose Lemur at a day roost, elusive Van Dam's Vanga, spectacular male Blue Vanga and cracking Rufous Vanga. As if this wasn't enough, the nearby Lake Ravelobe brought superb views of a male Little Bittern, African Darter, a pair of Madagascar Fish Eagles, splendid Allen's Gallinule, six Greater Painted Snipes and a lone Madagascar Jacana. Other highlights included the inquisitive Coquerel's Sifaka, amazing Henkel's Leaf-tailed Gecko and stunning Giant Hog-nosed Snake. In addition, our night walks produced splendid views of Golden-brown Mouse Lemur to wrap up a most memorable stay!

From Ampijoroa we then made our way back to Majunga where we visited Lake Andretsa, which produced great scope views of a pair of lovely African Pygmy Goose, flocks of Black Heron



**Blue Vanga by Lisa Thurston**



mantling, and yet more Greater Painted Snipes. From our comfortable base in Majunga we also made a boat trip into the Betsiboka Delta, picking up our main endemic targets of Bernier's Teal and Malagasy Sacred Ibis in no time at all. Thereafter we enjoyed fabulous views of African Spoonbill (a rarity in Madagascar), the impressive and highly sought-after Crab-plover (which delighted many as we'd missed it earlier in the trip), Greater Sand Plover, Terek Sandpiper and another target, Saunders's Tern.

Our explorations were nearly complete, but not without a visit to the fabulous Lac Alarobia (a protected lake with many species of waterbirds right in the middle of the capital, Antananarivo.) On arrival we quickly found an out of range Humblot's Heron, another Meller's Duck and, unbelievably, a Malagasy Harrier completing the full set of endemics possible (100%), barring vagrants on our route! This was a truly sensational trip and we set a record that will be extremely difficult – if not impossible – to beat!!!



**Madagascar Hoopoe by David Hoddinott**





Panther Chameleon by David Hoddinott



Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher by David Hoddinott



## ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS (194 species recorded)

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 male on the road in Mantadia NP, a very lucky sighting indeed! Later a pair was flushed whilst searching for Marsh Owl in Isalo NP.

## Ducks & Geese Anatidae

### White-faced Whistling Duck

*Dendrocygna viduata*

We observed this species at Lake Ravelobe where common, en route from Tulear to Ifaty and in the Betsiboka Delta.

### African Pygmy Goose

*Nettapus auritus*

This spectacular little bird was encountered at a wetland near Majunga, where we were fortunate to find a splendid pair.

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

*Anas melleri*

A small forest pond in Mantadia National Park produced a pair of this scarce species. Later we enjoyed fabulous scope views of one at Lac Alarobia.

### 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 en route from Berenty to Fort Dauphin.

**Petrels, Shearwaters Procellariidae****Wedge-tailed Shearwater***Puffinus pacificus*

We had distant views of one off Fort Dauphin.

**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 where we found a pair with chick.

*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***Phoenicopterus roseus*

One sub-adult was seen at a lake en route from Tulear to Ifaty, a further 158 were seen in the Onilahy River Delta and finally 3 at Lake Amboromalandy.

**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 5 birds. We did enjoy 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*

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*

After a final last effort we were rewarded with fabulous scope views of a magnificent adult in Ampijoroa National Park.

**African Spoonbill***Platalea alba*

We had splendid views of one in the Betsiboka Delta. This is a rare species in Madagascar!

**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*

One bird was seen flying over our hotel in Antananarivo on our first morning and a juvenile was seen sitting next to the road in Berenty. Good numbers were also seen at 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 one adult breeding plumaged bird near Fort Dauphin and thereafter 3 at Lake Ravelobe and a further 3 at Lake Andretsa near Majunga.

*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 where we found 10 and at close quarters on Lac Ravelobe. Our final sighting was 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.

**[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 Lake Amboromalandy. A large flock of 100 were 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 NP.

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

This scarce endemic was seen exceptionally well in the gallery forest at Berenty Private Reserve where superb flight views were had (see photo above).

**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.*

**Malagasy (Reunion) Harrier (E)** *Circus macrosceltes*

On our final morning we were rewarded with fabulous views of one at Lac Alarobia. How lucky can you get!!! This species has become extremely rare in the last few years and is now one of the most difficult endemics to find.

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

The spiny forest at Ifaty produced good views of this species where a pair was nesting, as did the dry woodland in Ankarafantsika NP.

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

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

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

A female was observed at close quarters through the scope in deciduous woodland of Ampijoroa NP.

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

First heard in flight over the secondary forest near Mantadia National Park, it was later recorded at Ranomafana NP where we enjoyed splendid 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 a great view of two birds flying overhead in Ampijoroa NP.

### Mesites Mesitornithidae

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

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

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

We had the most amazing experience of a pair only a few meters away on the forest floor giving unprecedented views of this highly elusive species!



**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 Ranomafana NP.

**Slender-billed Flufftail (E)***Sarothrura watersi*

After wading through knee deep water for several hundred metres we were rewarded with phenomenal views of this rare, elusive and highly sought-after species! This was rated as bird of the trip by a number of participants.

**Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae****Madagascar Wood Rail (E)***Canirallus kioloides*

We had brief sightings of two as they wandered through the undergrowth in the forest at Perinet Special Reserve. Later an obliging bird showed well in Ranomafana NP.

**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*

The forest edge at our lodgings in Perinet gave us our first but brief views of this beauty. Later we were treated to superb views of one at Isalo NP and a further pair in Ranomafana NP.

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

**Baillon's Crake***Porzana pusilla*

We managed exceptional views of this tricky species near Ifaty. Our outstanding views ensured it even made it into the top ten birds of the trip as voted by participants.

**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 Lake Ravelobe, with good numbers at Lake Andretsa near Majunga.

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

We had wonderful views of two females at Ampijoroa NP and several in the Spiny Forest at Berenty.

**Crab-plover Dromadidae****Crab-plover***Dromas ardeola*

After missing this species at Nosy Ve we were fortunate to find a splendid 10 birds in the Betsiboka Delta. This species which is in a monotypic family and has unusual nesting habits of burrowing in sandbars and nesting underground is always a delight to see. It was highly sought-after by a number of participants but due to Madagascar's incredible array of endemics, it did not even make the top ten species of the trip.



**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*

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 first in a rice paddy en route to Perinet with further sightings of 10 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*

First recorded at a roadside stop en route to Fort Dauphin, we later had excellent scope views of a female and five males at Lake Ravelobe and a further female and five males at Lake Andretsa, Majunga.

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

One of these attractive birds was seen on the floating vegetation of Lake Ravelobe. A further adult was 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 20 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*

One of these striking shorebirds was observed at an estuary en route from Tulear to Ifaty.

**Sanderling***Calidris alba*

Thirty 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.

**Red-necked Phalarope***Phalaropus lobatus*

We had great views of one at a large wetland en route from Tulear to Ifaty. This is a rarity in Madagascar.

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

We had good scope views of 2 birds on rocks in the middle of the Morogoro River.

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

We had fabulous views of one sub-adult at 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 three during our boat trip into the Betsiboka Delta.

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

We were very fortunate to have superb views of one during the boat trip into the Betsiboka Delta.

**Common Tern***Sterna hirundo*

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

**Whiskered Tern***Chlidonias hybrida*

Eight of these striking terns were found at Lake Amboromalandy.

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

Excellent views were had of a splendid male 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 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.

**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 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.

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

The spiny forest at 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 Ranomafana and Mantadia NPs.

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

A good sighting was had in the dry, deciduous forest of Zombitse and another seen briefly at 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 a pair 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.

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

We had great views of one 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 and another in Ampijoroa NP.

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

First seen briefly at Anjozorobe and later one was observed very well at Voima Park.

*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 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 Mantadia NP.

**Marsh Owl***Asio capensis*

We had great views of one near Isalo NP during our night drive.

**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 and again at Ifaty.

**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 Mantadia NP.

**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*

A couple of birds were spotted at Anjozorobe and Isalo.

**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*

We had superb views of a dozen birds in Antananarivo. Although common elsewhere, this is a very localized and scarce species in Madagascar.

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

This extremely vocal bird was first seen high over the forest at Anjozorobe. 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 splendid views of two pairs 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 splendid scope 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*

After missing this species at Anjozorobe and Perinet we finally managed to track one down in Ranomafana NP. It gave the most memorable close views and was voted bird 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 Voima Park we enjoyed stunning views of a pair and another was seen briefly in Mantadia 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*

First seen en route to Anjozorobe, 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 fabulous four males were seen in Mantadia NP.

#### **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 pair in Ranomafana NP.

#### **Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity (E) (En)**

*Neodrepanis hypoxanthus*

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

### 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 sighting of this highly localized endemic. We were treated to magnificent point blank views of a pair.

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

*Vanga curvirostris*

First seen exceptionally well at Anjozorobe with a further sighting in Ankarafantsika NP. This species behaves similarly to the African bushshrikes.

#### **Lafresnaye's Vanga (E)**

*Xenopirostris xenopirostris*

One was seen very well at La Tabla and another 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 polleni*

A pair was seen foraging low down in the forest in Ranomafana NP. This can often prove an elusive species.

#### **Sickle-billed Vanga (E)**

*Falcula palliata*

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*

Initially, this bird was found at Perinet Special Reserve, with later views at 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 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 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.

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

One showed well but briefly in Anjozorobe and another in Ranomafana NP.

**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 two pairs 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.



**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 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 two during the drive from Anjozorobe to Tana.

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

This nondescript bird was seen at 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)***Amphilius (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 in Anjozorobe.

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

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

One of these briskly moving birds was seen exceptionally well in the understory of Mantadia NP and several more in 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 in Ranomafana NP.

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

This very scarce and secretive species was seen briefly but well at Anjozorobe albeit in dim light conditions and again in Ranomafana NP.

*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*

Mantadia 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*

First seen well in Perinet Special Reserve, it was also found and seen well in 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 greeting us on arrival and a female on a nest.

#### **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 Isalo.

### 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 Anjozorobe, Mantadia and Ranomafana.

### 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 (28 species recorded)

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

### Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae

**Madagascar Flying Fox**

*Pteropus rufus*

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

**Mauritian Tomb Bat**

*Taphozous mauritanus*

We had splendid scope views of one in Ampijoroa NP.

### Old World Rats and Mice Muridae

**Eastern Red Forest Rat**

*Nesomys rufus*

This attractive forest rat was seen briefly at Anjozorobe.

**Black Rat**

*Rattus rattus*

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

### Civets & allies Viverridae

**Fosa**

*Cryptoprocta ferox*

We had superb views of one in Mantadia NP, yet another fabulous highlight of this trip! (see photo above)

### 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.

**Greater Dwarf Lemur**

*Cheirogaleus major*

We were fortunate to have great views of one in Anjozorobe.

**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

**Weasel Sportive Lemur**

*Lepilemur mustelinus*

We had fantastic views of one at Anjozorobe.

**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 yielded sightings of five of this adorable animal.

**Golden Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur aureus*

A fairly recently described species, we had a special encounter with four 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 male and a further two were seen at Mantadia.

**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 Mantadia NP we were treated to superb views of four in the canopy.

### Avahis, Sifakas and Indri Indriidae

**Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur)** *Avahi laniger*

We had great views of three during our night walk at Voima Park.

**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.

**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.

### **Hump-backed Whale**

We had wonderful views of one from Fort Dauphin.



## Annotated list of Amphibians & Reptiles (30 species recorded)

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 several occasions during our night walk at Ranomafana.
- White-lipped Tree Frog** *Boophis albilabris*  
We had awesome views of one on the hand rail near our rooms at Ranomafana.
- Giant Tree Frog** *Platepelis grandis*  
We heard several in the forest at Anjozorobe.

### Land Tortoises Testudinidae

- Radiated Tortoise** *Geochelone radiata*  
This good-looking reptile was spotted in a patch of Spiny Forest near Berenty Lemur Reserve, a fabulous find of this critically 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

- Domergue’s Leaf Chameleon** *Brookesia thieli*  
During our stay in Anjozorobe we recorded this delightful reptilian.
- 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 Perinet Special Reserve, Anjozorobe and at Ranomafana.
- Oshaughnessy’s Chameleon** *Calumma oshaughnessyi*  
We had superb views of five on our night walk at Ranomafana NP.
- Blue-legged Chameleon** *Calumma crypticum*  
This large chameleon was seen at Ranomafana NP.
- Tusked Chameleon** *Furcifer balteatus*  
We had good looks at this superb chameleon in Ranomafana 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 six in Berenty.



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

We had great views of three 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.

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

We found this species in the woodland at Zombitse.

**Henkel's Leaf-tailed Gecko***Uroplatus henkeli*

We observed this cryptic species at Ampijoroa NP.

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

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

**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.

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

One was seen in Ranomafana NP.

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

These large, attractive reptiles were spotted at Zombitse.

**Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae****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.

**Boas Boidae****Dumeril's Boa***Boa dumerilli*

We had good but brief views of one near Fort Dauphin.

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

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

**Lesser Hog-nosed Snake***Leioheterodon modestus*

We had awesome views of one at Ampijoroa NP.

**Mahafaly Sand Snake***Mimophis mahfalensis*

We had great views of one at Berenty and another at Ifaty.



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