



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Madagascar Comprehensive III

30th October - 20th November 2008



Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader Glen Valentine

Top ten birds as voted by participants:

- 1) Velvet Asity
- 2) Rufous-headed Ground Roller
- 3) Slender-billed Flufftail
- 4) Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity
- 5) Short-legged Ground Roller
- 6) Crossley's Babbler
- 7) Scaly Ground Roller
- 8) Cuckoo Roller
1. Collared Nightjar
- 9) White-breasted Mesite

Tour Summary

Our comprehensive tour of Madagascar, “The Eighth Continent” took us to all the key birding sites on the island in search of the majority of endemic birds and a really good spread of mammals and herps. Starting out in the capital city, Antananarivo, we spent some time at the Tsimbazaza Zoo and nearby Lake Alarobia, a small water body within the city limits where we found Malagasy Pond Heron, Malagasy Kingfisher, Malagasy Coucal, Madagascar Grebe and Dimorphic Egret along with many other more common and widespread species.

Our early arrival in Mahajanga meant that we had some time to explore the immediate area and with some good local gen we made our way to what was eventually termed “Harry’s Wetland” a great little pan with an adjacent backwater. We were thrilled to pick up Madagascar Plover, Madagascar Jacana, White-throated Rail, Madagascar Cisticola and Malagasy Pond Heron during our time here.

Our first full morning had us heading out by boat into the fabled Betsiboka Delta. This estuary is the only known easily accessible site for the rare and endangered Bernier’s Teal and Madagascar Sacred Ibis, both of which were found relatively easily and showed well for all. Waders such as Terek Sandpiper and Greater Sand Plover stood out amongst commoner species and we had a fly over of a Madagascar Harrier-Hawk and a small flock of Saunder’s Tern.

The dry deciduous woodlands of Ampijoroa beckoned and on arrival provided us with immediate entertainment. Bird activity was good even though we arrived in the mid afternoon and we



were pleased to pick up gaudy Broad-billed Roller, Lesser Vasa Parrot and various species of Vanga, many of which were on nests. In fact we located nests of five species of vanga all in or just around the campsite! Friendly Cuvier’s Iguanid scurried around our feet, Grey-headed Lovebirds squawked above us and Malagasy Turtle Dove, Madagascar Crested Drongo, Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher and Madagascar Bulbul were in constant view providing us with a wonderful opening experience to “classic Madagascar”. Wondering along the paths, we managed to pick up all of the specials of the area. White-breasted Mesite eventually provided us with

cripping views and a male Schlegel’s Asity showed well in the forest canopy. In the mid morning heat, we added Van Dam’s Vanga on a nest, an extremely localised, uncommon and often difficult-to-find endemic. Other noteworthy finds included Rufous Vanga, Coquerel’s and Red-capped Couas, Madagascar Jacana, Humblot’s Heron and unbeatable views of Madagascar Fish Eagle. On the mammal front we enjoyed repeated views of the beautiful Coquerel’s Sifaka and gregarious Common Brown Lemur. Western Avahi was found on a day roost whilst a small group of Mongoose Lemurs entertained us around the lake edge. Night walks were very productive and we enjoyed Grey Mouse Lemur, Golden-brown Mouse Lemur, Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur and Milne-Edward’s Sportive Lemur. Totoroka Scops Owl showed well and Common Tenrec was seen by a lucky few. Giant Hog-nosed, Black-and-White Striped and Mahafaly Sand Snakes were also enjoyed and a Henkel’s Leaf-tailed Gecko was a fantastic bonus!

We flew back to Tana and hastily moved on to the little known area of Anjozorobe. Extensive rainforest and pristine high altitude wetlands is a feature of this wonderful area. Birding in the

surrounding forest saw us racking up Forest Rock Thrush, Madagascar Yellowbrow, Dark Newtonia, Madagascar Wood Rail, Red-fronted Coua, Madagascar Flufftail, a stunning male Forest Fody and the sought-after Crossley's Babbler. The nearby marsh gave us Madagascar Rail, Madagascar Snipe, Grey Emutail and Meller's Duck, a bird that's numbers seem to be decreasing at an alarming rate. We were also treated to one of the most memorable experiences in all our lives! As we descended the ridge above this magnificent marsh the distinctive call of the near-mythical Slender-billed Flufftail was heard and I began to shiver uncontrollably with excitement and anticipation! We quickly discussed a team strategy which involved "The General" and "The Colonel" heading into the wetland to pinpoint the exact position of the calling bird. Once the position had been located, the two of them had no trouble in putting a male SLENDER-BILLED FLUFFTAIL to air for the whole group to see! High fives all round and a leader who was a bit besides himself to say the least! A night walk in the forest was extremely rewarding and we had Spectacled Greenbul and Pitta-like Ground-Roller on night roosts, several close-up views of Short-horned, nose-horned, Band-bellied and stump-tailed (Brookesia thieli) Chameleons. We also added Greater Dwarf Lemur to the ever-growing mammal list whilst Calumma Globifer (an extremely attractive and large chameleon) and the beautiful Side-striped Chameleon were wonderful finds.



Bidding farewell to the botanical wonderland of Anjozorobe, we made our way further east towards the legendary eastern rainforest site of Perinet. Like most rainforest sites, Perinet and Mantadia require a lot of hard work, perseverance and patience but in so doing, offer great reward at the same time. Reeling in the exquisite Collared Nightjar and Rainforest Scops Owl before dark on our first afternoon set us in high spirits for a mammoth day in Mantadia National Park. Mantadia is most famous for being the only reliable site on the island to see all four eastern rainforest ground rollers with any regularity! We were not to be disappointed with all four ground rollers and other rainforest specialties coming thick and fast! Our first ground roller seen in Mantadia was the gorgeous Pitta-like, which is always a crowd-pleaser. Soon afterwards we were oohing and aahing at an immaculate Scaly



Ground Roller completely unperturbed by our presence. Later that morning we heard the poop poop call of a Short-legged Ground Roller in the distance, we knew we had to go for it as this would probably be our only chance. We blazed through the dense tangles of vines, crossed a small stream and pursued this mega endemic up a small ridge and there it was, Madagascar's toughest ground roller and one of the most sought-after endemics, Short-legged Ground Roller! A pair sat right in the open only a few meters away for crippling views. Our last morning in this awesome reserve gave us the stunning Rufous-headed Ground Roller, which

sat within touching distance of the entire group for a prolonged period – absolutely amazing! Our time at Mantadia and Perinet also produced an array of other exciting endemic birds and mammals. We had saturation views of Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher whilst Wedge-tailed Jery, Grey-crowned Tetraka

and White-throated Oxylabes were unusually confiding. Madagascar Starling was scoped along with all the jeries and everyone's favourites: Rand's and Cryptic Warbler. We were fortunate to bump into an electric male Velvet Asity, which left everyone in awe! Mammals are an attractive feature of these forests and we had numerous sightings of some of Madagascar's most prized lemurs. Indri with its deafening howls and the rare Diademed Sifaka stole our hearts, whilst Eastern Grey Bamboo and the incomparable Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur entertained us through the days.

Perinet was as brilliant as always but all good things must end and it was time to head to the south east corner of the island. We hit the bumpy road to Berenty passing villages, farmlands (rice, kasava, mangos, litchis and sisal) and patches of spiny forest. We made a few stops in this unique and other-worldly habitat and finally obtained fantastic views of Lafresnaye's Vanga. On arrival at Berenty we took a very short and highly entertaining walk through the spiny forest and had close views of Green-capped Coua, Torotoroka Scops Owl, White-footed Sportive Lemur and Grey-brown Mouse Lemur. Comical Three-eyed Lizards and huge Golden Orb-web Spiders were also enjoyed. That afternoon we scoped the rare Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk on the nest and we were delighted to find a flock of nineteen Madagascar Sandgrouse in the fields nearby. The next morning was hot and sunny with Ring-tailed Lemurs sitting up in trees with their meditation-like stance catching the first rays of light. Verreaux's Sifakas were soon seen bounding across the open sand in their typical bipedal sideward dance. Two special birds that are seldom-seen elsewhere are relatively easily found at Berenty. These are the Giant Coua and White-browed Hawk Owl, which were seen brilliantly at close quarters. A pair of France's Sparrowhawk showed very well and we enjoyed several looks at Warty Chameleon.



After enjoying our time at Berenty we bumped back along the road to Fort Dauphin to catch our flight to Tulear. The spiny desert around Ifaty where a variety of delectable birds are on offer was our next target destination. This unique habitat of giant Baobabs, most of them being hundreds of years old along with several species of *didierea*, *pachypodium* and *Euphorbia* support the only populations of two of the world's most specialized and desirable birds: Long-tailed Ground Roller and Subdesert Mesite. We had incredibly satisfying views of both species along with a number of other range-restricted endemics during our morning exploration of the forest. These included Subdesert Brush Warbler, Archbold's Newtonia, Thamnornis with its characteristic song and Running Coua. The spiny desert becomes unbearably hot by mid-morning and the idea of going snorkelling sounded like the only sensible plan. The coral reef off Ifaty teems with the most amazingly colourful fish and swimming in these tropical waters amongst them was an amazing experience.

After finding all the target birds for the area, we made for Tulear, the largest town in the southwest from where we would drive further east to a landmark known as La Table in order to search for two more range-restricted endemics: Red-shouldered Vanga and Verreaux's Coua. Both of these attractive species were found without too much trouble and we took some time to relax before our wonderful boat voyage to the island of Nosy Ve the following day. The island lies just off the coast and is the home of breeding Red-tailed Tropicbirds. It also supports a variety of Terns and waders. We picked up a surprise Wilson's Storm Petrel en route to Anakao where we watched Littoral Rock Thrush at the nest and sat down for some liquid refreshments. An even bigger surprise came in the form of a

stunning adult White-tailed Tropicbird, which flew over us just before we went snorkelling in the sparkling waters off this tropical island.

Driving north to our final destination, Ranomafana, we enjoyed an overnight stay at our luxurious hotel near Isalo where we found the localised Benson's Rock Thrush. En route to Isalo, we stopped at Zombitse Forest, a small patch of deciduous woodland that holds the inexplicably localised Appert's Tetraka of which we had wonderful close-up views. The outrageous Phelsuma Standingi, an electric-looking day gecko was another endemic species that we could add to the list. Cuckoo Roller was abundant here and we had our final encounters of Verreaux's Sifaka in these forests.

Ranomafana National Park protects a fairly large tract of pristine mid to high-altitude rainforest that once covered the entire area. The proclamation of the park was due to the discovery of Golden Bamboo and Greater Bamboo Lemurs, which are still only known from the national park and its immediate surrounds. Many extremely elusive and sought-after endemic bird species also occur in the forests of Ranomafana and high on the priority list were, Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity, Pollen's Vanga, Brown Mesite, Brown Emutail and Madagascar Pratincole, all of which were seen amazingly well! We had brilliant views of Golden and Greater Bamboo Lemurs, Red-bellied Lemur and the soulful Milne-Edward's Sifaka. Herps abound in these diverse forests with Tusked, Oshaughnessy's and Greater Stump-tailed Chameleons, Uroplatus Ebenau (a type of bizarre leaf-tailed gecko), the newly described Calumma crypticum (split from Short-horned Chameleon), beautiful Painted Mantella and magnificent Tree Boa being just a few of the fantastic herps that we added to our huge list.

Alas, it was time to make our way back to Antananarivo for everyone to depart on their separate ways. Thank you to everyone for making this yet another highly successful and extremely enjoyable trip to Madagascar!

Annotated Checklists of Birds, Mammals and "Herps"

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Morris, P. & Hawkins, F. (1998) *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Madagascar*, with the notable exception of a few of the recent taxonomic changes; Garbutt, N. (1999) *Mammals of Madagascar* with recent changes as adopted by Mittermeier *et al* (2006) *Lemurs of Madagascar*, and, Glaw, F. & Vences, M. (1994) *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar*. Insect names were derived from various sources.

BIRDS 182 species

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*

Fairly large numbers were encountered at Berenty.

*NOTE: This African species was probably introduced to Madagascar by early colonists.***Pheasants, Fowl & Allies *Phasianidae*****Madagascar Partridge (E)** *Margaroperdix madagascarensis*

Cracking views of a male and female were had at Anjozorobe.

Ducks, Geese & Swans *Anatidae***White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*

Large numbers were recorded at freshwater wetlands around Tana, Ampijaroa and south of Ifaty.

Knob-billed (Comb) Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Several individuals were seen at Lake Alarobia.

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

Great flight views of several individuals at Anjozorobe. This species' numbers seem to continue to decline.

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

The greatest prize of our adventurous trip into the Betsiboka Delta. We wasted no time in finding this species. Within minutes of arriving in the delta we found our first birds perched up in the mangroves and later had them feeding on the nearby mudflats.

*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*

Probably the commonest duck and widespread in freshwater wetlands across the island.

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*

Several were seen at Lake Amboromalandy. We also had good views of several at wetlands south of Ifaty.

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

High numbers were found on the wetlands south of Ifaty.

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

At least 5 birds were seen on Lake Alarobia. It's good to see them back at this site!

*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*

2 birds were seen on pans near Ifaty.

Ibises & Spoonbills *Threskiornithidae***Sacred (Madagascar Sacred/Bernier's) Ibis (NE) *Threskiornis [aethiopicus] bernieri***

Another prize of our speedboat adventure up the Betsiboka Delta, several individuals were seen in flight and feeding on the mudflats.

NOTE: A globally threatened species restricted to largely inaccessible wetlands in western Madagascar and Aldabra Island.

Glossy Ibis*Plegadis falcinellus*

We found several at Lac Ravelobe and Lake Amboromalandy near Ampijoroa.

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

We enjoyed magnificent views of a pair on the nest at Ampijoroa. We did also see 2 further individuals at Mantadia National Park.

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

Large numbers recorded during the visit to Lake Alarobia, seen in smaller numbers throughout the tour thereafter.

Striated (Green-backed) Heron*Butorides striatus*

Small numbers at most freshwater and marine wetlands.

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).

(Common) Squacco Heron*Ardeola ralloides*

Widespread and common in a variety of wetland habitats across the island, from rice paddies to tidal mudflats. Highest numbers were at Lake Alarobia.

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

Small numbers seen at Lake Alarobia, including several in magnificent nuptial plumage. Two pure white individuals were also enjoyed during our boat trip on Lake Ravelobe.

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

Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Common throughout and recorded daily in open and semi-open habitats. Large numbers breeding at Ampijoroa and at Lac Alarobia.

Grey Heron*Ardea cinerea*

One seen in the Betsiboka Delta with another found on Nosy Ve.

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

Good views were had of this, the second largest heron in the world, at Lake Ravelobe. This particular individual had a surprisingly orange bill! Another bird was seen on the island of Nosy Ve.

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

Purple Heron*Ardea purpurea*

Seen at wetlands throughout the island.

Great (White) Egret*Ardea alba*

Small numbers at wetlands throughout.

Black Heron (Egret)*Egretta ardesiaca*

Commonly encountered throughout the island. Our second sighting was particularly memorable with at least 30 birds all performing their canopy feeding strategy at the same time.

Dimorphic (Mascarene Reef) Egret (NE)*Egretta [garzetta] dimorpha*

Widespread and common throughout Madagascar.

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.

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

We enjoyed intimate encounters with these most elegant birds on the island of Nosy Ve.

White-tailed Tropicbird*Phaethon lepturus*

Good views were had of a single bird on several occasions at the island of Nosy Ve. This is a rare visitor to the Madagascan coastline.

Storm Petrels Hydrobatidae**Wilson's Storm Petrel***Oceanites oceanicus*

Bumping into one of these tiny pelagic birds was a serious surprise on the way to Nosy Ve.

Hamerkop Scopidae**Hamerkop***Scopus umbretta*

Small numbers in roadside rice paddies on the drives from Tana to Anjozorobe, Anjozorobe to Perinet and from Ranomafana to Tana.

Anhingas Anhingidae**African Darter***Anhinga rufa*

Uncommon in Madagascar, only recorded on Lake Ravelobe, Ampijoroa.

Falcons Falconidae**Malagasy (Newton's) Kestrel (NEe)***Falco newtoni*

Very common in open and semi-open habitats throughout. Recorded almost daily, regularly at the roadside and at most birding sites.

Banded Kestrel*Falco zoniventris*

One of Madagascar's most often missed endemics on a trip, we were very fortunate to have had unbeatable scope views of this rare raptor at Anjozorobe.

Eleonora's Falcon*Falco eleonora*

Brief views of two birds, one light morph and one dark morph, on the drive from Ampijoroa to Mahajanga.

Sooty Falcon*Falco concolor*

A pair was seen perched at close range en route from Tuléar to Zombitse. Some folks saw an adult perched on the roof of the main airport building at Tana upon leaving for their international flights home.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk***Aviceda madagascariensis*

A very scarce forest raptor that was scoped on the nest at Berenty.

Black (Yellow-billed) Kite*Milvus migrans*

Common and conspicuous in open habitats, particularly in the west. Small numbers at the roadside on most road journeys, very common on the drive from Isalo NP to Ranomafana.

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

Fine studies of 2 of these critically endangered, endemic eagles at the edge of Lake Ravelobe, Ampijoroa.

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*

Small numbers encountered at several sites.

Frances' Sparrowhawk (NE)*Accipiter francesii*

A few individuals were seen at various sites including a lovely pair seen at close quarters at Berenty.

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

After hearing this species at Anjozorobe we had a single bird fly over us in Mantadia NP.

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

Madagascar Buzzard (E)*Buteo brachypterus*

Common and widespread, with small numbers recorded from almost all wooded sites.

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

Ampijaroa produced great sightings; we had superb views of a pair of these beautiful birds and also heard their shrill duet.

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

Killer views in the path of this rare forest species at Ranomafana NP.

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

An early morning start enabled us to locate this elusive species in the Spiny Desert at Ifaty. We all enjoyed exceptional scope views of a male.

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

A species which can often prove particularly elusive, we had views of two separate males at Anjozorobe. Thereafter heard its characteristic call at many sites.

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

WOW! What can I say: To the “General”, I and 8 other birders will be forever grateful! This was absolutely amazing! Everyone was treated to brilliant flight views of this mythical wetland, endemic mega at Anjozorobe.

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

This can be a devilishly hard bird to see! We had reasonably good views of this secretive forest rallid at Anjozorobe.

Madagascar Rail (E) *Rallus madagascariensis*

We had fantastic views of this shy rallid at Anjozorobe.

White-throated (Cuvier’s) Rail (NE) *Dryolimnas cuvieri*

We saw several birds at various sites. Our first views were of a single bird at “Harry’s Wetland” near the airport at Mahajanga.

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.

Baillon’s Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Brief views were had of several males running around like miniature bantams at a wetland near Ifaty.

Allen’s Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*

Good sightings of several birds at Lake Ravelobe.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Small numbers were encountered at several sites including Lake Alarobia and lake Ravelobe.

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

This can often be a tricky bird to find and see well. Excellent views of several attractive females at Ampijaroa and near Ifaty.

Stilts *Recurvirostridae***Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

First seen in the Betsiboka Delta with further sightings near Ifaty.

Plovers *Charadriidae*

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| Grey (Black-bellied) Plover | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> |
| Several birds were seen near Ifaty and on the island of Nosy Ve. | |
| Common Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> |
| We found several on mudflats throughout the Ifaty area. | |
| Madagascar Plover (E)(NT) | <i>Charadrius thoracicus</i> |
| This scarce, localized endemic was seen at “Harry’s Wetland” near Mahajanga, which is a tad out of range to say the least! | |
| Kittlitz’s Plover | <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i> |
| Seen near Mahajanga and in the south around Ifaty. | |
| Three-banded Plover | <i>Charadrius tricollaris</i> |
| Seen near Mahajanga at various small pans in the Ifaty area. | |
| White-fronted Plover | <i>Charadrius marginatus</i> |
| This delicately beautiful wader was seen near Mahajanga, in the Betsiboka Delta and in the south around Ifaty and on Nosy Ve Island. | |
| Greater Sand Plover | <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i> |
| Common on mudflats in the Betsiboka Delta where good numbers were present. | |

Jacanas *Jacanidae*

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|--|--------------------------------|
| Madagascar Jacana (E) | <i>Actophilornis albinucha</i> |
| This beautiful “Lillytrotter” was first seen at “Harry’s Wetland” with further sightings on Lake Ravelobe. | |

Snipes & Sandpipers *Scolopacidae*

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| Madagascar Snipe (E)(NT) | <i>Gallinago macrodactyla</i> |
| This species is becoming rare and extremely local on the island due to habitat destruction. We had flight views of several birds at Anjozorobe. | |
| Whimbrel | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> |
| This species was fairly common on tidal flats around Tulear and Ifaty and in the Betsiboka Delta. | |
| Common Greenshank | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> |
| Another common wader, this species was regularly seen at the wetlands in the Tulear and Ifaty area. Also seen in the Betsiboka Delta. | |
| Wood Sandpiper | <i>Tringa glareola</i> |
| A single bird was seen at a small pan near Ifaty. | |
| Terek Sandpiper | <i>Tringa cinerea</i> |
| We had good numbers in the Betsiboka Delta. | |
| Common Sandpiper | <i>Tringa hypoleucos</i> |
| Small numbers in freshwater and brackish wetland habitats throughout our tour. | |
| Ruddy Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> |
| Seen on the island of Nosy Ve. | |
| Sanderling | <i>Calidris alba</i> |
| Several birds on the island of Nosy Ve. | |
| Curlew Sandpiper | <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> |
| The commonest Calidrid, seen on the tidal flats in the Betsiboka Delta and in the Ifaty and Tulear areas. | |

Pratincoles *Glareolidae*

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|---|--------------------------|
| Madagascar Pratincole (BE) | <i>Glareola ocularis</i> |
| Brilliant scope views were enjoyed of a single bird on a rock in the river at Ranomafana. | |

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

A couple were seen along the shore at Fort Dauphin.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

We had good views of a huge flock on Nosy Ve.

Swift (Greater Crested) Tern *Sterna bergii*

Recorded in the Betsiboka Delta and in the Tulear area.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

An extremely widespread species. Several birds were seen near Ifaty and on Nosy Ve.

Saunders's Tern *Sterna saundersi*

We had good close flight views of three birds in the Betsiboka Delta.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Three birds in full breeding dress were seen flying around Lake Alarobia.

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

19 birds were counted in a loose flock in the fields at Berenty. We enjoyed great scope views of these huge, boldly-patterned sandgrouse.

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

Widespread in urban areas.

Malagasy Turtle Dove (NEE) *Columba picturata*

First seen at Tsimbazaza Zoo, with numerous subsequent sightings at almost all sites. Particularly tame and conspicuous at Berenty and Ampijoroa.

Namaqua (Long-tailed) Dove *Oena capensis*

Widespread and common in drier areas.

Madagascar Green Pigeon (NE) *Treron australis*

This species was seen well at Ampijoroa and Berenty.

Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E) *Alectroenas madagascariensis*

This beautiful bird is fairly common in eastern rainforest, we had superb views at Anjozorobe. Several birds were later seen at Perinet Special Reserve, Mantadia and Ranomafana.

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

This small parrot was first found in the campsite at Ampijoroa and later seen again in strong numbers near Ifaty.

Greater Vasa Parrot (NE) *Coracopsis vasa*

This is the less common of the two Vasa Parrots in Madagascar, and we had good views at Ampijoroa and flight views in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

Lesser Vasa Parrot (NE) *Coracopsis nigra*

A widespread and common bird and exceedingly vocal, this bird was regularly recorded in good numbers throughout our trip.

Cuckoos *Cuculidae***Madagascar Coucal (NEE)** *Centropus toulou*

Common, widespread and recorded in small numbers virtually daily during our tour.

Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo (BE) *Cuculus rochii*

Very common and one of the dominant sounds in wooded and semi-wooded habitats throughout. We had regular views at several different sites.

Crested Coua (E) *Coua cristata*

This species was first recorded at Ampijoroa. We continued to enjoy views throughout the drier regions of the country.

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

We enjoyed superb views of this localized species in coral rag scrub near La Table. The most localized member of this endemic sub-family.

Blue Coua (E) *Coua caerulea*

Fairly common in the eastern forests. Strangely turaco-like and one of the world's great "Blue Birds"!

Red-capped Coua (E) *Coua ruficeps*

We enjoyed great views of several confiding birds at Ampijoroa.

NOTE: See notation under Green-capped Coua

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

A pair of these beauties was seen very well at Berenty.

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*

We had superb views at Anjozorobe. One was also seen by some of the group in Mantadia and later heard at Ranomafana.

Coquerel's Coua (E) *Coua coquereli*

Commonly heard at Ampijoroa, and several individuals seen well. Also heard and seen in Zombitse NP.

Running Coua (E) *Coua cursor*

We all had good views of this dry-country coua in the spiny desert at Ifaty.

Giant Coua (E) *Coua gigas*

Common at Berenty where we had numerous sightings of these amazingly relaxed birds. Heard again at Zombitse.

Red-breasted Coua (E) *Coua serriana*

Very brief views were had in Mantadia NP. A tough bird to see outside the Masoala Peninsula.

Barn Owls *Tytonidae*

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Brilliant views of this cosmopolitan species on a day roost at Berenty.

Owls *Strigidae*

Torotoroka Scops Owl (E) *Otus madagascariensis*

This new species of Scops Owl (pronounced "Toorootoorook", an onomatopoeic name) was seen at Ampijoroa and again at Berenty.

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

Rainforest Scops Owl (NE) *Otus rutilus*

This recently split form of the Madagascar Scops Owl was seen exceptionally well on a day roost at Perinet.

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

Crippling views were had of this beauty at Berenty and at Zombitse.

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

We were exceptionally lucky to have views of this uncommon endemic on a day roost at Perinet.

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

The common nightjar on Madagascar. We were treated to their “bouncing marble” calls on most nights.

Collared Nightjar (E)*Caprimulgus enarratus*

We had fantastic views of a single bird roosting during the day in Perinet Special Reserve. A rare endemic restricted to the eastern forests. The call of this species still remains unknown!

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

Recorded over forest at Mantadia NP.

African Palm Swift*Cypsiurus parvus gracilis*

Common in suitable palm habitat throughout the island.

Madagascar Black Swift (NE)*Apus balstoni*

Our first sighting was over Lake Alarobia. We had further encounters at the Tana Airport and en route from Tulear to Ranomafana.

NOTE: These Malagasy birds are usually considered a species distinct from the African Black Swift (A. barbatus), however no dedicated research has been done. There seems to be two distinct sizes of all black swifts in Madagascar, and these may represent two or more species.

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

Widespread and common breeding migrant from the African mainland. We first recorded this brightly coloured species in large numbers at Ampijoroa.

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

Often the most difficult of the Ground-Rollers to find, we were treated to absolutely sensational views of a pair after a long slog through the rainforest at Mantadia. Well played team!

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

Another elusive and retiring species. We had cracking views of a single bird in the open for ages at Mantadia NP. This usually scarce and secretive bird was formerly considered to be restricted to the forests of the Masoala Peninsula.

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

Our first sighting of this gaudy species was at Anjozorobe. We also had great views in Mantadia NP. Despite being the commonest of the ground-rollers, this magnificent creature is justifiably one of the most sought-after birds on Madagascar.

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

Without a doubt one of the most beautiful birds in the world, we had awesome views of a single bird on our second morning in Mantadia.

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

We salivated over superb views of one cooperative individual in the Spiny Desert at Ifaty after the local guides shepherded the bird in our direction.

Cuckoo-Roller *Leptosomidae***(Madagascar) Cuckoo-Roller (E)***Leptosomus discolor*

This spectacular endemic was seen at most of the forest sites, the first being seen at Ampijoroa.

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.

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

We had several fantastic looks at this delightful little kingfisher in Mantadia NP.

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

Fairly common at freshwater and marine wetlands throughout.

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

Common, widespread in semi-open areas and recorded from almost all sites.

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

Commonly recorded at all western sites.

*NOTE: This form is usually considered distinct from the African Hoopoe, based on vocal and morphological differences.***Asities *Philepittidae*****Velvet Asity (E)** *Philepitta castanea*

We enjoyed superb views of this electric species in Mantadia and Ranomafana.

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

We found this mega endemic fairly quickly on our first morning at Ampijoroa.

Common Sunbird-Asity (E) *Neodrepanis coruscans*

Several brief views were obtained of males at Perinet and Ranomafana.

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

I'm sure that this bird will hold a special place in everyone's hearts. After making the effort, we had great views of a single male at Ranomafana.

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

A fairly common and denizen of wooded and semi-wooded habitats, particularly once its "wolf-whistle" call is recognized. Seen at most forest sites.

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

We had superb close studies of two pairs of this recently described and highly localized endemic, in "coral rag" scrub near La Table. This species can be particularly hard to find and we were very fortunate to get such good and prolonged views.

Hook-billed Vanga (E) *Vanga curvirostris*

This often heard and infrequently observed species was seen on several occasions at scattered localities throughout the tour.

Lafresnaye's Vanga (E) *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*

Saturation views were enjoyed of this localized endemic on the way to Berenty.

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

We were rewarded with superb views of a pair at the nest at Ampijoroa.

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

A scarce and local denizen of eastern forests, we had brilliant views of several birds at Ranomafana.

Sickle-billed Vanga (E) *Falcoelea palliata*

One of Madagascar's great birds and wonderfully common in the dry west. Particularly common and conspicuous at Ampijoroa, where we saw our first individuals.

White-headed Vanga (E) *Artamella viridis*

Seen at several of the forest sites with our first views right in the campsite at Ampijaroa.

Chabert's Vanga (E) *Leptopterus chabert*

The commonest vanga, occurring in habitats ranging from pristine rainforest to degraded scrub. First seen at Ampijaroa, where observed daily, this species was also regularly observed throughout the trip, especially in the dry south.

(Madagascar) Blue Vanga ([N]E) *Cyanolanius madagascarensis*

Our first encounter with this species was at Ampijaroa. We encountered small numbers at most forest sites in the east. Another one of the world's great "Blue Birds"!

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*

This handsome bird was recorded in the forest at Ampijaroa and was heard on a few occasions at Ranomafana.

Tylas Vanga (E) *Tylas eduardi*

Several birds seen at Mantadia, Perinet and Ranomafana.

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

Dark Newtonia (E) *Newtonia amphichroa*

This smart little bird was found at Anjozorobe.

Common Newtonia (E) *Newtonia brunneicauda*

Common and widespread in wooded and semi-wooded habitat throughout our tour.

Archbold's Newtonia (E) *Newtonia archboldi*

Seen at close quarters in the Spiny Desert near Ifaty, located by call.

Ward's Flycatcher (E) *Pseudobias wardi*

We had great views at Ranomafana after brief encounters at Mantadia earlier in the trip.

Crossley's Babbler (E) *Mystacornis crossleyi*

We enjoyed close views of this strikingly beautiful endemic at Anjozorobe and Ranomafana NP.

Cuckooshrikes *Campephagedae*

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

The only cuckoo-shrike on the island of Madagascar, we observed this species regularly throughout the tour.

Drongos *Dicruridae*

Crested Drongo (NE) *Dicrurus forficatus*

Common and highly conspicuous in a variety of wooded habitats throughout.

Monarchs *Monarchidae*

Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher (NE) *Terpsiphone mutata*

Common and widespread in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats with sightings almost daily of both rufous and white morphs.

Crows & Jays *Corvidae*

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Common and widespread in open habitats.

Swallows & Martins *Hirundinidae*

Mascarene Martin (NE) *Phedina borbonica*

Madagascar's commonest hirundine and a regional breeding endemic. Recorded at almost all sites, on most days.

Larks *Alaudidae*

Madagascar (Hova) Lark (E) *Mirafra hova*
Common in all dry country and open habitats.

Cisticolas & Allies *Cisticolidae*

Madagascar Cisticola (NE) *Cisticola cherinus*
Common in open habitats throughout, including rice paddies and the man-altered plateau grasslands.

Family Uncertain *Incertae sedis*

Common Jery (E) *Neomixis tenella*
Common and ubiquitous. We recorded this species almost daily throughout the trip.

Green Jery (E) *Neomixis viridis*
Seen regularly in eastern forests where we encountered small numbers.

Stripe-throated Jery (E) *Neomixis striatigula*
This specie's scratchy call is a common background noise in the rain forests.

Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae*

Malagasy Bulbul (NE) *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*
Common and ubiquitous, with daily sightings in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats.

Old World Warblers *Sylviidae*

Grey Emutail (E) *Dromaeocercus seebohmi*
We had sightings of a single bird at Anjozorobe. This is an extremely secretive species.

Brown Emutail (E) *Dromaeocercus brunneus*
The entire group managed to see this "rat-like critter" at Ranomafana – amazing!

Malagasy Brush Warbler (NE) *Nesillas typica*
Very common in dense cover of any kind in the east, where several recorded daily.

Subdesert Brush Warbler (E) *Nesillas lantzii*
Replaces Madagascar Brush Warbler in the South West, where it is very common.

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*
Fairly common in wetland habitat throughout, ranging from highland marshes in the east to mangroves in the west.

White-throated Oxylabes (E) *Oxylabes madagascariensis*
An extremely secretive endemic of the understorey of eastern rainforest and usually unbelievably difficult to see. All of the group managed to obtain good views of an extremely responsive individual in Mantadia NP.

Long-billed Berniera (Greenbul) (E) *Phyllastrephus madagascariensis*
Widespread in Madagascar, we first encountered this species in good numbers at Ampijoroa and heard and saw it regularly in forest sites thereafter.

Cryptic Warbler (E) *Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi*
This recently described species was seen and heard at Mantadia singing at the top of a tall tree.

Wedge-tailed Jery (E) (NT) *Hartertula flavoviridis*
An uncommon and elusive endemic of eastern forests. We enjoyed close views of this species at Mantadia NP.

Thamnornis (Warbler)(E) *Thamnornis chloropetoides*
Several of these unique birds were seen in the spiny desert near Ifaty.

Spectacled Tetraka (Greenbul) (E) *Phyllastrephus zosterops*
Restricted to eastern forests, where it is the commonest of the “small greenbuls”.

Appert's Tetraka (Greenbul) (E) (V) *Phyllastrephus apperti*
We enjoyed superb encounters with this attractive and confiding species in Zombitse NP. A globally threatened bird that is restricted to two forests in south west Madagascar.

Grey-crowned Tetraka (Greenbul) (E) (NT) *Phyllastrephus cinereiceps*
Uncommon in eastern rainforest. We had good views in Mantadia NP.

Madagascar Yellow-brow (E) (NT) *Crossleyia xanthophrys*
A scarce, localized and incredibly skulking and secretive rainforest endemic seen in the dense undergrowth 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*
Fairly common denizen of eastern rainforest, with small numbers seen and heard in the Perinet and Ranomafana areas. A bird vocalizing from a typical treetop perch in Mantadia was the first seen.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Madagascar White-eye (NE) *Zosterops maderaspatana*
Common and widespread, though scarce in the southwest. First sightings at Ampijoroa and at most localities thereafter.

Starlings Sturnidae

Madagascar Starling (E) *Hartlaubius aurata*
Scope views were had of this species in Mantadia NP.

Common Myna (I) *Acridotheres tristis tristis*
Unfortunately this species is common in open habitats throughout the island.

Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E) *Copsychus albospecularis*
This species was seen throughout the tour almost daily and is a rather bold and confiding bird.

(Eurasian) African Stonechat *Saxicola axillaries*
Common in open habitats of the eastern highlands, where several seen daily. This species was particularly common at Anjozorobe.

Littoral Rock Thrush (E) *Pseudocossyphus imerinus*
A pair were found breeding in dune scrub behind Anakao; a most peculiar habitat for a Rock Thrush.

Forest Rock Thrush (E) *Pseudocossyphus sharpei*
We had good views of this forest-dweller at Anjozorobe.

Benson's Rock Thrush (E) (NT) *Pseudocossyphus bensoni*
We had superb views of at least 4 birds in the Isalo area.

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.) Furthermore, the two species are morphologically and, especially, vocally quite distinct.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae

Souimanga Sunbird (NE) *Nectarinia souimanga*
By far the more common of Madagascar's sunbird species, occurring in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats. This species was seen virtually daily on tour.

Malagasy (Long-billed) Green Sunbird (NE) *Nectarinia notata*

A very handsome and widespread but uncommon species. Small numbers were encountered at scattered sites.

Weavers *Ploceidae*

Nelicourvi Weaver (E)

Ploceus nelicourvi

A bird of the eastern rainforest areas, where small numbers were seen daily.

Sakalava Weaver (E)

Ploceus sakalava

This species was common in the drier regions of Madagascar and first sighted in Ampijoroa.

(Madagascar) Red Fody (E)

Foudia madagascariensis

Common, ubiquitous and good numbers recorded almost daily.

Forest Fody (E)

Foudia omissa

Scarce and can be tough to find, we had unbeatable views of a stunning full breeding plumage male at Anjozorobe.

Waxbills & Allies *Estrildidae*

Madagascar Mannikin (*Munia*) (E)

Lonchura nana

First seen at "Harry's Wetland" near Mahajanga and seen in small numbers throughout the tour thereafter.

Wagtails *Motacillidae*

Madagascar Wagtail (E)

Motacilla flaviventris

Common in the east and highland plateau, where small numbers were seen regularly.

MAMMALS

28 Species

ORDER: Chiroptera

Family *Pteropodidae* (*Old World Fruit Bats*)

Madagascar Flying Fox

Pteropus rufus

We enjoyed good views of these handsome but noisy animals at their day roosts in gallery woodland at Berenty.

ORDER: Chiroptera

Family *Emballonuridae*

Mauritian Tomb Bat

Taphozous mauritanus

Close-up views were had at a day roost at Ampijoroa.

ORDER: Insectivora

Family *Tenrecidae* (*Tenrecs and Otter Shrews*)

Common Tenrec

Tenrec ecaudatus

Brief views were had on a night walk in Ampijoroa.

ORDER: Rodentia

Family *Muridae* (*Old World Rats and Mice*)

Eastern Red Forest Rat

Nesomys rufus

Recorded at most eastern rainforest sites.

ORDER: Carnivora

*Family Herpestidae (Mongooses)***Ring-tailed Mongoose***Viverricula elegans*

1 brief sighting was had at Ranomafana.

ORDER: Primates

*Family Cheirogaleidae (Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs)***Grey Mouse Lemur***Microcebus murinus*

Several of these tiny lemurs were seen on our night walk at Ampijoroa.

Grey-brown Mouse Lemur*Microcebus griseorufus*

This newly described species was found during the day in the spiny forest habitat of Berenty.

Golden-Brown Mouse-Lemur*Microcebus ravelobensis*

One of these extremely localised lemurs was seen on a night walk at Ampijoroa.

Greater Dwarf Lemur*Cheirogaleus major*

One was seen on the night walk at Anjozorobe.

Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur*Cheirogaleus crossleyi*

This extremely localised and unknown lemur was seen on a night walk along the road to Perinet.

Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur*Cheirogaleus medius*

We had a few on night walks at Ampijoroa. This species only becomes active in the warmer, wetter summer months as it hibernates in winter.

*Family Megaladapidae (Sportive Lemurs)***Milne-Edwards's Sportive Lemur***Lepilemur edwardsi*

Several noisy individuals were seen on night walks at Ampijoroa.

White-footed Sportive Lemur*Lepilemur leucopus*

Seen on day roosts and at night at Berenty.

*Family Lemuridae ("True" Lemurs)***Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur***Hapalemur griseus griseus*

This attractive species was found at Perinet and Mantadia.

Golden Bamboo-Lemur*Hapalemur aureus*

A small group of these extremely localized lemurs were seen exceptionally well in Ranomafana NP.

Greater Bamboo-Lemur*Hapalemur simus*

Fantastic views of this, one of the world's rarest mammals, were had in the rainforest at Ranomafana. The known world population of this lemur seems to be around 100 individuals!

Ring-tailed Lemur*Lemur catta*

The quintessential Malagasy mammal. We enjoyed prolonged encounters with numerous groups of these delightful animals, the most terrestrial of the lemurs, at Berenty.

Mongoose Lemur*Eulemur mongoz*

A rare and localized lemur restricted to the north west of the island. We had brilliant views of a group at the edge of Lake Ravelobe, Ampijoroa.

Red-bellied Lemur*Eulemur rubriventer*

A small troop of these beautiful lemurs were found at Ranomafana.

Common Brown Lemur*Eulemur fulvus fulvus*

These playful lemurs were seen at Ampijoroa.

Red-fronted Brown Lemur*Eulemur fulvus rufus*

Large numbers were seen at Berenty where they have been introduced.

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

This is without a doubt one of the top lemurs in Madagascar and we were lucky to have exceptional views in Mantadia NP.

Family *Indriidae* (*Avahis*, *Sifakas* and *Indri*)

Western Avahi (Woolly Lemur)

Avahi occidentalis

This species is far more local and uncommon than its eastern counterpart, we recorded it at Ampijoroa during the day.

Diademed Sifaka

Propithecus diadema diadema

We had outstanding encounters with this magnificent creature in Mantadia NP. Widely considered to be Madagascar's most beautiful primate, this is also the largest of the lemurs, with a number of specimens heavier than the largest Indri on record (Mittermeier et al 1994).

Milne-Edward's Sifaka

Propithecus diadema edwardsi

Another of Madagascar's most beautiful lemurs. We were extremely fortunate to spend time with a very habituated troop in Ranomafana NP.

Verreaux's Sifaka

Propithecus verreaux verreauxi

This magnificent primate, with its soulful expressions and comical, bipedal locomotion, is undoubtedly one of the mammalian highlights of Madagascar. Common in Berenty, where seen daily.

Coquerel's Sifaka

Propithecus verreauxi coquereli

Common at Ampijoroa, where recorded daily, even within the confines of the camp.

Indri

Indri indri

We had fantastic experiences with this incredible lemur. The territorial calls of this lemur is one of the world's great wildlife sounds. It is often considered the largest extant species (but see Diademed Sifaka, above),

Listing of amphibians and reptiles seen 55 Species

Amphibians

Family; Hyperolilidae (Reed Frogs)

Betsileo Reed Frog

Heterixalus betsileo

Family; Ranidae (True Frogs)

Madagascar Leaf-litter Frog

Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis

Madagascar Tree Frog

Boophis madagascariensis

Yellow-banded Tree Frog

Boophis Tephraemystrax

Boophis granulosus (guibei)

Gephyromantis (Mantidactylus) sculpturatus

Gephyromantis (Mantidactylus) luteus

Gephyromantis tschenki

Plethodontohyla bipunctata

Mantidactylus melanopleura

Betsileo Leaf Frog

Mantidactylus betsileanus

Mantidactylus majori

Mascarene Grass Frog

Ptychadena mascareniensis

Painted Mantella

Mantella madagascariensis

Reptiles

Family; Crocodylidae (Crocodiles)

Nile Crocodile

Crocodylus niloticus

Family; Chamaeleonidae (Chameleons)

Greater Stump-tailed Chameleon
 Short-horned Chameleon
 Nose-horned Chameleon
 Band-bellied Chameleon
 Tusked Chameleon
 Oustalet's Chameleon
 Warty Chameleon
 Side-striped Chameleon
 Oshaughnessy's Chameleon

Brookesia superciliaris
Calumma brevicornis
Calumma nasuta
Calumma gastrotaenia
Furcifer balteatus
Furcifer oustaleti
Furcifer verrucosus
Furcifer lateralis
Calumma oshaughnessyi
Calumma globifer
Calumma crypticum
Brookesia thieli
Brookesia Nasus

Family; Iguanidae (Iguanas)

Three-eyed Lizard
 Cuvier's Iguanid
 Double-banded Iguanid
 Four-striped Iguanid

Chalarodon madagascariensis
Oplurus cuvieri
Oplurus cyclurus
Oplurus quadrimaculatus

Family; Gekkonidae (Geckos)

Henkel's Leaf-tailed Gecko

 Mercator Tropical House Gecko
 Madagascar Day Gecko
 Lineated Day Gecko
 Four-spotted Day Gecko
 Pale-bellied Day Gecko
 Standing's Day Gecko
 Southern Bark Gecko

Uroplatus henkeli
Uroplatus Ebenau
Hemidactylus mercatorius
Phelsuma madagascariensis
Phelsuma lineata
Phelsuma quadriocellata
Phelsuma Leiogastor
Phelsuma standingi
Lygodactylis tuberosus
Lygodactylis sp.

Family; Gerrhosauridae (Plated Lizards)

Madagascar Plated Lizard

Zonosaurus madagascariensis
Zonosaurus laticaudatus

Family; Scincidae (Skinks)

Bouton's Skink
 Gravenhorst's Skink
 Elegant Skink

Cryptoblepharus boutonii
Mabuya gravenhorstii
Mabuya elegans

Family; Colubridae (Typical Snakes)

Madagascar Tree Boa
 Madagascar Ground Boa
 Giant Hog-nosed Snake
 Lesser Hog-nosed Snake
 Black-and-White Striped Snake

Sanzinia madagascariensis
Acrantophis madagascariensis
Leioheterodon madagascariensis
Leioheterodon modestus
Liopholidophis lateralis

Mahafaly Sand Snake
Lined Forest Snake

Liopholidophus thieli
Mimophis mahfalensis
Geodipsus (Compsophis) infralineata
Geodipsus (Compsophis) laphystia

Notable Insects and other Invertebrates

As if this staggering diversity of life forms was not enough, we also encountered a bewildering variety of invertebrates that ranged from the bizarre Giraffe-necked Weevil *Trachelophorus giraffa* to the immense super-homes of Golden Orb-web Spiders *Nephila madagascariensis*. Other notable “creepy-crawlies” included Pill Millipedes *Sphaerotherium sp.*, centipedes, Flatid Leaf Bugs, and, of course, numerous spectacular moths and butterflies.

Photos credits: Scaly Ground Roller by James Wakelin, Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur by David Shackelford, Madagascar Partridge, Indri, Pitta-like Ground Roller, Ring-tailed Lemur and Velvet Asity by James Wakelin

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