



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Madagascar Comprehensive II

17th October - 7th November 2008 (22 days)



Tour Summary

Madagascar is, quite simply, one of the most fascinating birding destinations in the African region. The island boasts some of the highest levels of endemism in the world and a diversity of striking and good looking bird species and this, coupled with an interesting blend of cultural highlights and varied landscapes make it a must visit destination! Our 22 day tour covered a large area of the island, exploring areas ranging from humid rainforests to endless grasslands, bizarre spiny forest to tropical seas, and thus exposed our eager group to an excellent selection of birds, mammals and herps.

Our adventure began in the bustling capital, Antananarivo, set in the highlands in the centre of the island. The busy streets and large rice paddies are not particularly bird rich however a stop at the

famous Lake Alarobia was a welcome relief from the hustle and bustle and provided a number of interesting species! The noisy heronry is home to large numbers of birds, many pre-occupied with breeding and thus even the common Cattle Egrets looked particularly smart in breeding dress. Black Heron, Madagascar Grebe, Dimorphic Egret, the ubiquitous Squacco Heron and White-faced Whistling Ducks were highlights on the waters edge while we managed to entice a Madagascar Swamp Warbler into the open while the skulky Malagasy Brush Warbler crept through thick brush on the lake edge. Certainly the star bird of the day was a splendid Malagasy Pond Heron, pure white in its breeding colours. We spent our afternoon on a leisurely stroll through the grounds of the Tsimbazaza Zoo, admiring the mammal, herp and bird exhibits. The zoo grounds produced Madagascar Turtle Dove and Common Jery. Thereafter it was back to the hotel where we found our first nocturnal bird of the tour, a noisy Madagascar Nightjar.



The northwest of the country was our first destination and after a short flight to Mahajanga and a bumpy bus ride we arrived at our camp at Ampijoroa on the edge of the very birdy Ankaranfantsika NP - this was quite evident within minutes of arriving, with assorted camp birds (and especially vangas!) making it really difficult to eat lunch! The area is dominated by dry deciduous woodland and the exotic Lake Ravelobe with the woodlands providing excellent views of specials such as the sought after Schlegel's Asity, White-breasted Mesite, Van Dam's and gorgeous Blue Vanga, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, Coquerel's and Red-capped Coua and Madagascar (Crested) Ibis. A boat cruise on Lake Ravelobe was a highlight, with great views of a pair of the endangered Madagascar Fish Eagle (roughly only 200 birds survive in the wild!) serving as our trump bird. The lake is also home to large numbers of waterbirds and we enjoyed lovely views of the huge Humblot's Heron, the smaller Purple Heron and more Malagasy Pond and Black Heron. While on the boat, we also spotted a lone African Openbill as well as our first Banded Kestrel, the latter especially a welcome find indeed at this early stage of the tour. Some additional exploring was needed to find Madagascar Jacana and after some dedicated searching, a single bird was found and scoped, shew! As for the great birds Ampijoroa is definitely one of the better mammal and herp destinations in Madagascar, with sightings in camp including the difficult Mongoose Lemur and handsome Coquerel's Sifaka, *Boophis* frogs, Cuvier's Iguanids and Plated Lizards in camp and *Dromicodryus* snakes searching for prey in sandy burrows. Wonderful night walks in this area added other mammal sightings, including Grey and the special Golden-brown Mouse Lemur, Western Avahi, Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur and noisy Milne-Edwards Sportive Lemur.



Leaving Ampijoroa we made a short stop at Lake Amboromalandy which added Grey Heron and Kittlitz's Plover on a nest (we all marvelled here at what a superb job this bird does of camouflaging the nest!) and an additional sighting of Madagascar Jacana. Thereafter we made for the seaside port of Mahajanga overlooking the turquoise waters of the Mozambique Channel.

The next morning we boarded a boat and headed out into the muddy Betsiboka Delta in search of two very special birds, namely Bernier's Teal and the pale eyed Malagasy subspecies of Sacred Ibis.



After a 45 minute drive into the sediment rich delta, while we reached the mangrove dotted mudflats, and soon after our first views of the teal! They were dotted about the mudflats, and eventually a total of at least 12 were seen. Decent numbers of waders were present, with good views of Terek Sandpiper being particularly enjoyable. Certainly a highlight was the pair of Sacred Ibis perched not 25 metres from the boat in a mangrove tree, allowing close up views of this rare subspecies.

After the heat of the northwest, we journeyed back to the capital, before embarking on the four hour ride to the eastern rainforest area of Andasibe-Mantadia. This area is the most famous and visited eastern rainforest area in Madagascar, and justifiably so as it houses almost all the rainforest bird species, as well as charismatic mammals like the famed Indri.



Despite the fair amount of rain, we managed great views of amazing Scaly and Pitta-like Ground Roller, inconspicuous Cryptic Warbler, Velvet Asity, Rainforest Scops Owl, brilliant Nuthatch Vanga, skulky White-throated Oxylabes, Forest Fody, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Red-fronted Coua, lovely Collared Nightjar and Rand's Warbler. Diurnal mammals included the huge Indri, beautiful Diademed Sifaka as well as Common Brown, Red-bellied and Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur. Our night time excursions added further "furries" in the form of Goodman's Mouse and Furry-eared

Dwarf Lemur and Eastern Avahi, numerous incredible chameleons and a superb Madagascar (Long-eared) Owl perched in a pine tree above us, providing close and prolonged views!

Our next destination was the wonderful Mananara Lodge at Anjozorobe. Here the tranquil natural setting and great accommodations provide for a really relaxing stay and the surrounding habitat just brims with many of Madagascar's finest birds! The wetland birding was great, and we got superb views of Madagascar Snipe, Madagascar Rail, our big target - Meller's Duck and a skulky Grey Emutail. In fringe habitat we were treated to lovely views of the cute Madagascar Flufftail and Madagascar Partridge. The rich forest here did not disappoint either and spoiled us with views of Madagascar Wood Rail, Crossley's Babbler, the tricky Madagascar Yellowbrow and beautiful Diademed Sifaka, what a place! Nightwalk highlights included the tiny and superbly camouflaged chameleon *Brookesia thieli*, agile Brown Mouse Lemur and roosting Pitta-like Ground Roller.

Leaving the east of the country, we then flew to the south east, our destination being the world famous lemur reserve - Berenty. The broad trails, shaded by the canopy of the tamarind dominated gallery forest, allowed us some respite from the heat and served us well in our quest to catch up with more famous residents of the area. Giant Couas were seen with ease, Ring-tailed Lemurs with young cavorted about, Verreaux's Sifakas "danced" across open areas and at night White-browed Hawk-Owls and White-footed Sportive Lemurs added to the din of nocturnal sounds. Additional faunal delights at Berenty included Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec (what a beast!), Madagascar Buttonquail, Frances's and Madagascar Sparrowhawk, the Green-capped form of Red-capped Coua, Barn and Torotoroka Scops Owl and the delightful Grey-brown Mouse Lemur on a day roost.



From Berenty, we retraced our way back to Fort Dauphin, where we spent the night (and picked up Kelp Gull the following morning) before catching the short flight to Tulear, our springboard to the south west of the island. Ifaty, a short but dusty drive north of Tulear, is home to a splendid variety of woodland and waterbird species. Wetland and mudflat habitat was especially productive, and here we saw the rare Madagascar Plover, Baillon's Crake, Hottentot Teal, Greater Flamingo, Sanderling and Eurasian Curlew. The spiny forest is one of the main reasons for visiting this area, and it was here that we caught up with Long-tailed Ground Roller (for many the most favoured Malagasy bird), the strange Subdesert Mesite, subtly coloured Thamnornis and noisy Archbold's Newtonia. A morning birding here is always a special experience as the scenery and atmosphere (bizarre Baobab and *Didierea* studded woodland set on red sand, and overrun with the sound of bird song) is quite unlike anything else one is likely to experience anywhere! After our early outing, some chose to visit a local reef and swim amongst the tropical fish in the Mozambique Channel affording a refreshing contrast to the hot spiny forest a few kilometres away!

We then returned to Tulear and enjoyed a short visit to the islet of Nosy Ve. A Red-tailed Tropicbird colony is present here and we enjoyed close-up encounters as the birds cackled noisily on their nests. Our ride to the island was not without its surprises, and we were treated to a mother Humpback Whale and calf playing in the warm clear waters – what a special treat! To boot we enjoyed a Bridled Tern on a buoy. While skirting the island, another surprise materialised in the form of a White-tailed Tropicbird, an unusual species in these waters, and generally only seen off the north of the Madagascar where it breeds in small colonies. After connecting with the resident Littoral Rock Thrush at Anakao, we then headed back to Tulear. In the afternoon, a visit to the impenetrable coral rag scrub near La Tabla produced the sought-after Red-shouldered Vanga and Verreaux's Coua.

The good road inland from Tulear towards Tana bisects a number of interesting sites, one of



them being the dry Zombitse forest. Here the specific target for us was the highly range restricted Appert's Tetraka. After a little searching in the growing heat, we encountered this species as it went about hopping on or near the ground in typical fashion. This is definitely the best looking of the island's "greenbuls", and after seeing it, along with Hubbard's Sportive Lemur on a day roost, and the interestingly coloured local Verreaux's Sifakas, we continued onward to Isalo National Park. Our accommodations, set in amongst the spectacular sandstone formations of the area, were quite amazing, and it didn't take long to find the Benson's Rock Thrushes

who were making good use of the large stone buildings!

After a good night's rest, we continued on to the spectacular eastern rainforest site of Ranomafana. The road to the park passes through vast swaths of grassland, these providing a home for the uncommon Malagasy Marsh Harrier, and after a period of picking through the numerous Black (Yellow-billed) Kites and Pied Crows, we found a single bird.

Ranomafana NP was originally set aside to protect some of the unique inhabitants of the area, notably the Golden Bamboo Lemur, which was discovered here in 1985. The thundering Namorona River roars through a steep sided valley covered in thick rainforest, and it is this forest that provides a home for the incredible wildlife of the area. While here, we were treated to amazing views of Brown



Mesite walking around near our feet, the tough Pollen's Vanga mere metres away, Common Sunbird Asity flitting through the trees and Rufous-headed Ground Ground-Roller. One of the highlight birds of the tour, Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity, was found on this leg of the tour where we enjoyed incredibly close and confiding birds seemingly oblivious to our presence! A further highlight here was finding a Short-legged Ground Roller that sat close to the path, no doubt watching for a large insect or chameleon to come within reach. On the mammalian front, we watched the beautiful Golden Bamboo Lemur as well as the more common Red-fronted Brown Lemur and Fanaloka, a civet like predator of the Malagasy rainforest. Night walks were particularly productive for chameleons, with five species seen on one walk! All in all, this rainforest paradise was a great way of rounding of a wonderful and memorable tour to magical Madagascar.

Annotated List of Birds recorded

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

Total species recorded (including heard): 187

Guineafowl Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Recorded at Berenty and en route from Ranomafana to Tana. Presumed to have been introduced from Africa.

Pheasants and allies Phasianidae

Madagascar Partridge

Margaroperdix madagascariensis

A beautiful bird that was well seen at Anjozorobe.

Ducks and Geese Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna viduata

One of the more common ducks seen on the tour, first recorded in Tana.

Knob-billed Duck

Sarkidiornis melanotos

Seen at Lake Alarobia in Tana and at Lake Ravelobe at Ampijoroa.

Meller's Duck

Anas melleri

Generally quite scarce in Madagascar, we saw recorded at least two while at Anjozorobe.

Bernier's Teal

Anas bernieri

Our boat trip to the Betsiboka Delta was particularly successful with regards this species, and we saw around 12 individuals, including some really decent views of this generally rare species.

Red-billed Teal

Anas erythrorhyncha

Large numbers were seen at Lake Alarobia, with smaller numbers later in Isalo NP.

Hottentot Teal

Anas hottentota

A dainty bird, first seen at Lake Alarobia, and later recorded in good numbers near Ifaty.

Grebes Podicipedidae

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Large numbers were seen near Ifaty.

Madagascar Grebe

Tachybaptus pelzelni

We saw this smart bird at Tsimbazaza Zoo, Lake Alarobia and in Mantadia NP.



Flamingos Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo

Phoenicopterus roseus

Three birds were seen on a saline lake near Ifaty.

Storks Ciconiidae

African Openbill

Anastomus lamelligerus

An uncommon bird in Madagascar, we recorded a single individual at Lake Ravelobe.

Ibises Threskiornithidae

Sacred Ibis

Threskiornis aethiopicus bernieri

We were treated to superb views of a pair perched in mangrove tree. A rare bird and previously regarded as a separate species *T. bernieri*, but has been recently lumped with Sacred Ibis (Malagasy birds have pale wing tips and iris, as apposed to dark wing tips and iris of African birds, and are estuarine inhabitants quite unlike African birds which have a fairly broad habitat tolerance).

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Large numbers of this species were recorded at Lake Ravelobe.

Madagascar (Crested) Ibis

Lophotibis cristata

What a bird! We watched a pair foraging in the late afternoon light at Ampijoroa, a lovely sighting indeed.

Bitterns and Herons Ardeidae

Little Bittern

Ixobrychus minutus

Around four birds were seen at a wetland near Ifaty.

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

We first recorded this one, and in fair numbers, at Lake Alarobia.

Striated Heron

Butorides striata

This species was seen quite frequently, especially on wetland edges and rice paddies.

(Common) Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

Common at Lake Alarobia and Lake Ravelobe.

Malagasy Pond Heron

Ardeola idea

We had great views of this stunning breeding endemic at Lake Alarobia, and later at Lake Ravelobe.

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

A common trip bird, seen quite frequently.

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common/Western Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret E. coromanda. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Seen at Lake Amboromalandy, Betsiboka Delta and Nosy Ve.

Humblot's Heron

Ardea humbloti

We had superb views of this, the worlds second largest heron, at Lake Ravelobe.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

This good looking species was first recorded at Lake Ravelobe, and then at a few scattered localities thereafter.

Great (White) Egret

Ardea alba

A common bird, often seen on rice paddies.

Black Heron

Egretta ardesiaca



After lovely views of perched birds at Lake Alarobia, we were treated to numerous individuals mantling near Lake Amboromalandy.

Dimorphic Egret *Egretta dimorpha*

A fairly common egret on Madagascar, we recorded dark and pale phase birds (as well as intermediate forms) on a numbers of days and ranging in habitat from rice paddies to coastal shorelines.

NOTE: Clements lumps Little E. garzetta and Dimorphic Egret into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted.

Tropicbirds Phaethontidae

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*

Certainly a highlight of the tour, we had superb opportunities to admire these beauties in the air and on the nest while at Nosy Ve.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

This certainly was an unexpected find, we were very fortunate to record a single bird flying over the Red-tailed Tropicbird colony on Nosy Ve. Is normally only seen on the north and north western coast of Madagascar where it breeds.

Hamerkop Scopidae

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

We saw maximum numbers of this interesting species en route from Tana to Andasibe. Not uncommon on rice paddies in the highland areas of Madagascar.

Anhingas Anhingidae

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

This species was recorded at Lake Ravelobe.

Falcons Falconidae

Malagasy Kestrel *Falco newtoni*

One of the more common raptors on the island, seen almost daily.

Banded Kestrel *Falco zoniventris*

We were treated to a number of superb views of uncommon species while at Ampijoroa, Anjozorobe and later at Ifaty.

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

Although seen in poor light, a bird presumed to be this species was seen at the airport in Mahajanga.

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*

A non-breeding visitor, we had brief views of this species at Ampijoroa.

Kites, Hawks and Eagles Accipitridae

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk *Aviceda madagascariensis*

A single bird was seen briefly by some at Ranomafana.

Black (Yellow-billed) Kite *Milvus migrans*

The most commonly recorded raptor on the tour, seen in a range of habitats.

NOTE: Many authorities treat the resident African and Malagasy subspecies of this raptor as a separate species, Yellow-billed Kite *M. parasitus*, bizarrely however IOC does not accept this split.

Madagascar Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vociferoides*



Our boat cruise provided lovely views of the pair at Lake Ravelobe. Only around 200 birds are thought to survive!

Malagasy Marsh Harrier *Circus maillardi*

A single bird was seen cruising over the grasslands en route from Isalo to Ranomafana.

Madagascar Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides radiatus*

This species was recorded at a few scattered localities during the tour, with our first sighting at Ampijoroa.

Frances's Sparrowhawk *Accipiter francesiae*

We had our best views of this species at Berenty in the gallery forest.

Madagascar Sparrowhawk *Accipiter madagascariensis*

An uncommon species in Madagascar, we recorded it in the gallery forest at Berenty.

Henst's Goshawk *Accipiter henstii*

An enormous accipiter, it was seen at Ranomafana. Its loud and aggressive call was often a give-away as to its presence.

Madagascar Buzzard *Buteo brachypterus*

A fairly common and vocal bird in Madagascar, we first encountered it at Ampijoroa.

Mesites Mesitornithidae

White-breasted Mesite *Mesitornis variegates*

A pair of this handsome species were seen very well while at Ampijoroa.

Brown Mesite *Mesitornis unicolor*

Definitely the most difficult of the mesites to see, we had outrageous views of this species as walked around near our feet while at Ranomafana!

Subdesert Mesite *Monias benschi*

We had excellent views of a pair in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

Flufftails Sarothruridae

Madagascar Flufftail *Sarothrura insularis*

Flufftails are fascinating birds, and the group was treated to superb views of a male at Anjozorobe.

Rails, Crakes and Coots Rallidae

Madagascar Wood Rail *Canirallus kiolooides*

A very skulky bird, we had our best sighting of this species at Anjozorobe. Also seen at Andasibe and Ranomafana.

Madagascar Rail *Rallus madagascariensis*

Excellent views of this species were had at Anjozorobe.

White-throated Rail *Dryolimnas cuvieri*

This handsome species was first seen (with superb views at that!) at Andasibe.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Great afternoon light and an unphased bird resulted in a brilliant sighting of this usually skulky rallid near Ifaty.

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*

This bird was seen by some as it flushed out of lakeside vegetation at Lake Ravelobe.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Seen well at Lake Alarobia, with a few individuals also seen later at Lake Amboromalandy.



Buttonquail Turnicidae**Madagascar Buttonquail***Turnix nigricollis*

Seen by some at Ampijoroa, and later seen by all at Berenty. The bright coloured female is particularly good looking!

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

First seen near Lake Amboromalandy, and later seen in good numbers near Ifaty.

Plovers Charadriidae**Grey Plover***Pluvialis squatarola*

Decent numbers were seen in and around Ifaty.

Common Ringed Plover*Charadrius hiaticula*

A fairly good looking bird, seen near Ifaty.

Madagascar Plover*Charadrius thoracicus*

This Globally Threatened species was very well seen Ifaty. The black breast band is distinctive.

Kittlitz's Plover*Charadrius pecuarius*

First seen at Lake Amboromalandy, with subsequent sightings near Tulear and Ifaty.

Three-banded Plover*Charadrius tricollaris*

Seen at a few scattered wetland sites, with our first sighting coming in near Lake Amboromalandy.

White-fronted Plover*Charadrius marginatus*

A few birds were seen on mudflats near Ifaty.

Greater Sand Plover*Charadrius leschenaultia*

Good numbers were recorded in Mudflats near Ifaty.

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

A shy wader, a pair were seen en route from Tana to Andasibe, with a further three birds seen near Tulear.

Jacanas Jacanidae**Madagascar Jacana***Actopjilornis albinucha*

After some hard searching, we obtained great views of a single bird at Lake Ravelobe. Another four birds were later seen at Lake Amboromalandy.

Snipes and Sandpipers Scolopacidae**Madagascar Snipe***Gallinago macrodactyla*

We had great views of this species at Anjozorobe, with some evening witnessing some birds drumming at dusk.

Bar-tailed Godwit*Limosa lapponica*

Decent numbers were recorded near Ifaty.

Whimbrel*Numenius phaeopus*

Seen on the Betsiboka Delta and in good numbers near Ifaty.

Eurasian Curlew*Numenius arquata*

We were fortunate to recorded a single bird on mudflats near Ifaty.

Common Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

Good numbers (40 plus) were recorded on the Mandrare River at Berenty.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

The Betsiboka Delta was once again a great place to view this species, and we recorded good numbers in the mangrove studded mudflats.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Scattered individuals were seen at wetland habitats throughout the tour.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Seen on mudflats near Ifaty.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

This pale shorebird with a dark shoulder patch and eye was seen on mudflats near Ifaty.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidrus ferruginea*

We saw this species in the Betsiboka Delta, and later in and around Ifaty.

Pratincoles Glareolidae

Madagascar Pratincole *Glareola ocularis*

This species was seen on the Namorona River at Ranomafana.

Gulls and Terns Laridae

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*

Three birds were seen in the windy town of Fort Dauphin.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

This species was seen in the Betsiboka and around Tulear and Ifaty.

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*

A handsome bird, and a nice surprise on our Nosy Ve boat cruise! A single bird was well seen in amongst a flock of diving Lesser Crested Tern on the way to the island.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

Madagascar Sandgrouse *Pterocles personatus*

This large sandgrouse was well seen at Berenty. After our sighting of two birds having a brief drink on the Mandrare River, a lovely sighting of seven birds on a stubbly field was most welcome!

Pigeons and Doves Columbidae

Common Pigeon *Columba livia*

A common species, these “rats with wings” were seen almost daily.

Malagasy Turtle Dove *Streptopelia picturata*

A fairly common bird in woodland environs, we had our best sightings of this species at Ampijoroa.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Many were seen in the drier western areas of the island.

Madagascar Green Pigeon *Treron australis*

This species was seen at a number of scattered locales, starting with Ampijoroa.

Madagascar Blue Pigeon *Alectroenas madagascariensis*

We obtained excellent views of this species at Andasibe-Mantadia.

Parrots Psittacidae

Grey-headed Lovebird *Agapornis canus*

This delicate species was well seen at Ampijoroa in the north west, with later sightings coming in the south east at Berenty and south west near Ifaty.



Greater Vasa Parrot*Coracopsis vasa*

The larger of the two Vasa Parrots, it is usually at a lower density than the similar Lesser Vasa Parrot. We recorded this species at Ampijoroa.

Lesser Vasa Parrot*Coracopsis nigra*

Seen fairly frequently during the tour, the musical whistles of this species were usually the first indicator of its presence.

Cuckoos and allies Cuculidae**Malagasy Coucal***Centropus toulou*

One of the commoner birds on the island, seen almost daily and showing virtually no habitat preference.

Crested Coua*Coua cristata*

We had many good looks at this species in the dry woodland of the west.

Verreaux's Coua*Coua verreauxi*

We had good views of two birds while in the coral rag scrub at La Tabla.

Blue Coua*Coua caerulea*

In behaviour very similar to the turacos of Africa, we saw this species really well at a number of eastern rainforest sites.

Red-capped Coua*Coua ruficeps*

We had great views of this species while at Ampijoroa, allowing nice comparisons between this species and the co-occurring Coquerel's Coua.

(Green-capped Coua)*Coua ruficeps olivaceiceps*

Although not treated as a full species by IOC, I have chosen to include it as some works have split this species from Red-capped Coua. We saw the Green-capped form at Berenty.

Red-fronted Coua*Coua reynaudii*

A rainforest species, it was seen at Andasibe.

Coquerel's Coua*Coua coquereli*

We had excellent views of this species at Ampijoroa, with further sightings later at Zombitse Forest.

Running Coua*Coua cursor*

This species was well scoped at Ifaty, with a total of two birds seen on our morning in the forest.

Giant Coua*Coua gigas*

A huge coua (aptly named!), it was excellently seen at Berenty, with a later sighting at Zombitse Forest.

Red-breasted Coua*Coua serriana*

This elusive species was only heard while at Mantadia.

Madagascar Cuckoo*Cuculus rochii*

Heard almost daily, with great views of this breeding endemic at Ampijoroa.

Barn Owls Tytonidae**Barn Owl***Tyto alba*

We obtained great views of a roosting bird at Berenty.

Owls Strigidae**Torotoroka Scops Owl***Otus madagascariensis*

Lovely views were had of roosting birds at Ampijoroa and Berenty.

Rainforest Scops Owl *Otus rutilus*

Two roosting birds were seen at Andasibe, providing very good views.

White-browed Hawk-Owl *Ninox superciliaris*

A good looking bird, we were treated to close-ups of the birds during the day at Berenty and Zombitse.

Madagascar (Long-eared) Owl *Asio madagascariensis*

We were really fortunate to get outstanding views of this sough-after bird at Andasibe.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae

Madagascar Nightjar *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

A common species in Madagascar, we recorded flying birds where the white in the wing (a distinctive feature) was easily visible, as well as roosting birds which allowed detailed studies.

Collared Nightjar *Caprimulgus enarratus*

A single roosting bird at Mantadia provided fantastic views. Definitely one of the most beautiful of the nightjars!

Swifts Apodidae

Madagascar Spinetail *Zoonavena grandidieri*

Good views were obtained at Mantadia and Berenty.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

Frequently recorded during the trip, and usually found in association with palm trees.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

Seen over the gallery forest at Berenty, and later near Isalo NP.

Malagasy Black Swift *Apus balstoni*

We had good looks at this bird at a number of scattered localities throughout the island.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

A tough bird in Madagascar, we recorded it over rice paddies on the edge of a suburban area in Tana.

Rollers Coraciidae

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

This noisy, colourful species was seen at a number of sites, starting with Ampijoroa.

Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae

Short-legged Ground Roller *Brachypteracias leptosomus*

An amazing bird, it was brilliantly seen by some at Vohiparara. Despite some intensive searching at Mantadia, the constant rainfall courtesy of a cyclone north of Madagascar just wasn't conducive to finding this creature, with one particular bird only calling half heartedly.

Scaly Ground Roller *Geobiastes squamiger*

We enjoyed superb views of this species on a path while at Mantadia. The subtle colouration on this terrestrial bird is quite beautiful when seen in the light, and also provides great camouflage, allowing them to often slip away unnoticed!

Pitta-like Ground Roller *Atelornis pittoides*

The commonest of the ground rollers, we recorded it at Mantadia, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana. The blue on the birds face is quite exquisite!

Rufous-headed Ground Roller *Atelornis crossleyi*



The smallest of the ground rollers, we were able to admire a calling bird as it sat on a log mere metres away! What an experience.

Long-tailed Ground Roller *Uratelornis chimaera*

A ground roller “outcast”, inhabiting the bizarre spiny forest in the south west, while the other members ply their trade in the luscious eastern rainforests. We had very good views of this species while on our early morning walk at Ifaty.

Cuckoo Roller Leptosomatidae

(Madagascar) Cuckoo Roller *Leptosomus discolor*

A deceptively big bird, we first recorded it at Ampijoroa. Often seen as it cruises hawk like over the canopy, belting out it loud, wailing call.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae

Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina madagascariensis*

A single was seen as it perched alongside the path on our night walk at Ampijoroa, allowing for marvellous views!

Malagasy Kingfisher *Alcedo vintsioides*

Frequently recorded on various waterbodies throughout the tour.

Bee-eaters Meropidae

Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*

This common species, seen almost daily.

Hoopoes Upupidae

Madagascar Hoopoe *Upupa marginata*

Seen very well in the dry areas of Ampijoroa, Berenty and Ifaty. This species strange growling call is quite unlike its African and Eurasian counterparts.

Asities Philepittidae

Velvet Asity *Philepitta castanea*

We had brilliant views of a fluffy, black male in full breeding plumage (the fleshy green caruncle very evident!) at Mantadia.

Schlegel’s Asity *Philepitta schlegeli*

A morning walk at Ampijoroa provided lovely views of this sought after species.

Common Sunbird-Asity *Neodrepanis coruscans*

We got decent views of this species at Vohiparara. The larger size and marked breast was very evident.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity *Neodrepanis hypoxantha*

We were treated to truly phenomenal views of this stunning avian on Vohiparara Ridge. One of the most beautiful birds on the island!

Vangas Vangidae

Red-tailed Vanga *Calicalicus madagascariensis*

The “wolf whistle” of this vanga was a common background sound in the eastern rainforest areas, and we recorded this one at Andasibe-Mantadia, Anjozorobe and Zombitse Forest.

Red-shouldered Vanga *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*

Only described in 1997, this bird inhabits the unforgiving coral rag scrub near Tulear. We had excellent views of a pair at La Tabla.

Hook-billed Vanga *Vanga curvirostris*



An appropriately named bird, we first saw it within minutes of arriving at Ampijoroa!

Lafresnaye's Vanga *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*

The most common of the *Xenopirostris* vangas, we had our first view of this bird near Berenty.

Van Dam's Vanga *Xenopirostris damii*

This is a very localised species, and we were fortunate to obtain good scope views of a pair at the nest while at Ampijoroa.

Pollen's Vanga *Xenopirostris polleni*

One of the toughest of the vangas, we had outstanding views of a bird perched alongside a Tylas Vanga, allowing for a brilliant comparison.

Sickle-billed Vanga *Falcula palliata*

A bizarre bird, seen extremely well at Ampijoroa.

White-headed Vanga *Artamella viridis*

Well seen at Ampijoroa and Andasibe-Mantadia.

Chabert's Vanga *Leptopterus chabert*

Probably the most common of the vangas, we enjoyed a number of good views of this species starting with Ampijoroa.

Blue Vanga *Cyanolanius madagascarinus*

Seen by some at Ampijoroa, another three were seen at Ranomafana. A really beautiful bird.

Rufous Vanga *Schetba rufa*

We obtained great views of this handsome but thuggish creature at Ampijoroa.

Tylas Vanga *Tylas eduardi*

A common bird at Andasibe-Mantadia and Ranomafana, and seen well at these sites.

Nuthatch Vanga *Hypositta corallirostris*

A remarkable bird, we got lovely views of a pair as they crept up the trunk of *Eucalyptus* trees at Andasibe. Sometimes a difficult bird to see!

Dark Newtonia *Newtonia amphichroa*

A pair were well seen at Andasibe.

Common Newtonia *Newtonia brunneicauda*

Common as the name suggests, and on numerous occasion during the trip.

Archbold's Newtonia *Newtonia archboldi*

We obtained very good views of an individual at Ifaty.

Ward's Flycatcher *Pseudobias wardi*

A seemingly strange addition to the Vangidae, we saw many birds at Andasibe-Mantadia, and later at Ranomafana.

Crossley's Babbler *Mystacornis crossleyi*

Brilliantly seen at Anjozorobe! First a pair good on a good show for us during an afternoon walk, and then the nightwalk produced a point-blank roosting bird, what a sight!

Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae

Madagascar (Ashy) Cuckooshrike *Coracina cinerea*

A common bird in suitable forest or woodland, it was first recorded at Ampijoroa.

Drongos Dicruridae

Crested Drongo *Dicrurus forficatus*

This noisy species (and the Malagasy "King of the birds") was seen almost daily.

Monarchs Monarchidae



Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher *Tersiphone mutata*

A splendid bird, we encountered numerous individuals of different colour forms. A few nesting birds were also found.

Crows Corvidae**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*

A widespread and common bird in dry and/or degraded areas and towns.

Martins and Swallows Hirundinidae**Mascarene Martin** *Phedina borbonica*

A breeding endemic to Madagascar, we saw them almost daily.

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*

This wetland associated species was recorded over marshes in the vicinity of Andasibe and Anjozorobe.

Larks Alaudidae**Madagascar Lark** *Mirafra hova*

Common in the dry western areas of the country, and regularly recorded while in these areas.

Cisticolas Cisticolidae**Madagascar Cisticola** *Cisticola cherina*

Frequently heard (and seen) in grassy areas throughout the tour. It's call sounds superficially like that of Zitting Cisticola.

Family Uncertain**Common Jery** *Neomixis tenella*

This species was frequently seen (and heard) during the tour.

Green Jery *Neomixis viridis*

A rainforest species, we recorded it at Andasibe-Mantadia and Ranomafana.

Stripe-throated Jery *Neomixis striatigula*

We obtained scope views of this species at Mantadia. Also seen in the south west, and later at Ifaty.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**Malagasy Bulbul** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

Seen every day of the trip!

Old World Warblers Sylviidae**Grey Emutail** *Amphilais seebohmi*

A single bird was seen very well at Anjozorobe. A wetland species.

Brown Emutail *Dromaeocercus brunneus*

This notorious skulker was seen at Anjozorobe.

Malagasy Brush Warbler *Nesillas typica*

First seen at Lake Alarobia, and then recorded at a number of sites thereafter.

Subdesert Brush Warbler *Nesillas lantzii*

We got good views of this species at Berenty and Ifaty. A pale version of the previous species.



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- Madagascar Swamp Warbler** *Acrocephalus newtoni*
Excellent views were obtained in Tana, with birds later recorded in the Betsiboka Delta, Anjozorobe and near Ifaty.
- White-throated Oxylabes** *Oxylabes madagascariensis*
A skulky species, we got great views of this one at Andasibe.
- Long-billed Bernieria** *Bernieria madagascariensis*
Seen in a variety of woodland and forest habitats, we first bumped into this species with its strange long bill at Ampijoroa.
- Cryptic Warbler** *Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi*
Discovered in 1995, we scoped this species at Mantadia NP.
- Wedge-tailed Jery** *Hartertula flavoviridis*
Seen by some at Ranomafana. A bird of uncertain affinity.
- Thamnornis** *Thamnornis chloropetoides*
Two birds were seen very well in the spiny forest at Ifaty. Its ratchety call is quite diagnostic!
- Spectacled Tetraka** *Xanthomixis zosterops*
A common eastern rainforest “greenbul”, seen at Andasibe-Mantadia, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.
- Appert’s Tetraka** *Xanthomixis apperti*
Probably the most handsome tetraka on the island, we had lovely views of three bird in Zombitse Forest.
- Grey-crowned Tetraka** *Xanthomixis tenebrosa*
This bird was well seen by some at Ranomafana.
- Madagascar Yellowbrow** *Crossleyia xanthophrys*
One of the skulkiest birds in Madagascar, we all got very good views of this species hopping along the floor while at Anjozorobe.
- Rand’s Warbler** *Randia pseudozosterops*
We scoped this one at Mantadia. Possesses a call superficially similar to that of Stripe-throated Jery.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

- Madagascar White-eye** *Zosterops maderaspatanus*
A fairly common species, seen from the first day in suitable woodland and forest.

Starlings Sturnidae

- Madagascar Starling** *Saroglossa aurata*
Our sighting of this species at Anjozorobe was particularly good, with some also recording this species at Ranomafana.
- Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*
A real “trash” bird, seen almost daily.

Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

- Madagascar Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus albospecularis*
Another very common trip bird, its delightful singing was commonplace at many sites throughout the trip.
- Eurasian Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*
This species was common in highland areas, with our first sightings being in Tana.
- Littoral Rock Thrush** *Pseudocossyphus imerina*
Three birds were well seen at Anakao. Although not as dark as the rock thrushes on Madagascar, this bird is certainly a little more vividly coloured than the field guide illustrations!



Forest Rock Thrush *Pseudocossyphus sharpei*

We saw at least four birds at Ranomafana. The excellent views allowed us to see just how pretty this bird is.

Benson's Rock Thrush *Pseudocossyphus bensoni*

This bird (regarded as a subspecies of Forest Rock Thrush by some) was particularly showy on top of the buildings at our hotel in Isalo NP.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae**Souimanga Sunbird** *Cinnyris souimanga*

Quite good looking, and recorded almost daily.

Malagasy (Long-billed) Green Sunbird *Cinnyris notatus*

Much less common than the previous species, we first recorded it in Tana on the first day of the tour.

Weavers Ploceidae**Nelicourvi Weaver** *Ploceus nelicourvi*

This handsome forest species provided excellent views at Andasibe-Mantadia.

Sakalava Weaver *Ploceus sakalava*

A dry country bird, it was first seen en route to Ampijoroa.

Red Fody *Foudia madagascariensis*

Seen almost daily, we also saw a number of stunning bright red males.

Forest Fody *Foudia omissa*

An inhabitant of the eastern rainforests, we obtained great views of this species at Mantadia.

Waxbills and Allies Estrildidae**Madagascar Mannikin** *Lemuresthes nana*

We got good views of this smart estrildid at a number of localities.

Wagtails Motacillidae**Madagascar Wagtail** *Motacilla flaviventris*

A common species recorded on a number of different days on the tour.

Annotated List of Mammals recorded

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

Total species recorded (including heard): 31

Rorqual Whales Balaenopteridae**Humpback Whale** *Megaptera novaeangliae*

We were very fortunate to find and watch a mother and calf at fairly close range near to Nosy Ve, definitely an unexpected bonus!

Tenrecs Tenrecidae**Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec** *Tenrec ecaudatus*

A total of three animals were seen foraging at night while at Berenty. Is remarkably similar to a hedgehog!

Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae

Madagascar Flying Fox *Pteropus rufus*

While at Berenty, we had very good views of this species on a roost. They remain noisy and restless even in the heat of the day!

Old World Leaf-nosed Bats Hipposideridae

Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros commersoni*

A single was seen while on a nightwalk at Ampijoroa.

Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae

Grey Mouse Lemur *Microcebus murinus*

A single of this, the largest of the mouse lemurs, was seen at Ampijoroa.

Brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus rufus*

Seen at Anjozorobe and Belle Vue at Ranomafana.

Golden-brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus ravelobensis*

We had a very good look at this recently described species while on a nightwalk at Ampijoroa. The long tail and golden-brown colour on the head and upperparts were quite noticeable.

Grey-brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus griseorufus*

We had a close-up of this species on a day roost in the spiny forest at Berenty.

Goodman's Mouse Lemur *Microcebus lehilahytsara*

A total of four were seen while on our nightwalks at Andasibe.

Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*

Four specimens were recorded while on nightwalks at Andasibe.

Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus medius*

We saw a number of individuals (six) while on nightwalks at Ampijoroa. Possesses the ability to store fat in its tail.

Sportive Lemurs Lepilemuridae

Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur edwardsi*

We saw four specimens while at Ifaty. Although quite noisy, the sportive lemurs don't appear to be sporty at all!

Hubbard's Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur hubbardi*

Two were seen in Zombitse Forest. This lemur is restricted to the south west of the island.

White-footed Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur leucopus*

This species is quite common at Berenty, and we got a number of great looks of this species (both on day roosts and at night).

True Lemurs Lemuridae

Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur griseus*

A delightful species, it was seen very well (in association with bamboo!) while at Mantadia.

Golden Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur aureus*

Definitely one of the mammalian highlights of the tour, we watched a pair while at Ranomafana. A really good looking beast!

Ring-tailed Lemur *Lemur catta*



One of the most recognisable of all Madagascar's animals, we were witness to their antics at Berenty. A lot of the ring-tails looked fairly scruffy, with patchy fur coverage on their bodies, and often relatively sparsely furred, stalk-like tails. This is as a result of eating pods from the *Leucena* tree.

Mongoose Lemur *Eulemur mongoz*

Often one of the more difficult of the lemurs to see, we enjoyed great views of a few feeding in a mango tree at Ampijoroa.

Red-bellied Lemur *Eulemur rubriventer*

A smart forest lemur, which we recorded at Mantadia.

Common Brown Lemur *Eulemur fulvus*

We recorded this species at Ampijoroa and at Andasibe-Mantadia. Quite common as the name suggests.

Red-fronted Brown Lemur *Eulemur rufus*

This species was seen at Ranomafana. The Berenty animals we saw are introduced, and are supposedly hybrids with common brown lemurs.

Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur *Varecia variegata*

Unfortunately, this noisy lemur was only heard while at Mantadia.

Avahis, Sifakas and the Indri Indridae

Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur) *Avahi laniger*

A single was seen at Andasibe on a night walk.

Western Avahi (Woolly Lemur) *Avahi occidentalis*

We saw four on our nocturnal excursions at Ampijoroa.

Diademed Sifaka *Propithecus diadema*

Certainly one of the most beautiful of the lemurs, we saw three at Andasibe, and later enjoyed superb views of four at Anjozorobe. Although the Indri is the world's largest extant species of lemur, the largest specimen of any modern lemur belongs to that of a Diademed Sifaka.

Verreaux's Sifaka *Propithecus verreauxi*

Seen very well at Berenty and Zombitse Forest. These are the famous "dancing sifakas", and they certainly didn't disappoint us, with close-ups of feeding individuals, and many "dancing" across the paths before us.

Coquerel's Sifaka *Propithecus coquereli*

We recorded a number of these good looking creatures at Ampijoroa. The northern counterpart of the previous species, and previously classed as a sub-species of it.

Indri *Indri indri*

This unmistakable mammal was seen at Andasibe. The largest extant species of lemur, its call epitomises wild rainforest in many eastern areas of Madagascar, and is both loud and quite unforgettable!

Malagasy Carnivores Eupleridae

Fanaloka *Fossa fossana*

A good looking beast, we saw one at Belle Vue while on a night walk there.

Old World Rats and Mice Muridae

Eastern Red Forest Rat *Nesomys rufus*

Not uncommon in some eastern rainforests, we recorded it at Mantadia and Ranomafana.



Brown Rat*Rattus norvegicus*

One was seen in Tulear.

Annotated List of Amphibians recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication: A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar by Frank Glaw and Miguel Vences – Third edition (2007).

Total species recorded: 10**Dicroglossidae****Mascarene Grass Frog***Ptychadena mascareniensis*

Good views were had of this species in Isalo NP.

Hyperoliidae*Heterixalus luteostriatus*

A single was found at near Lake Amboramalandy in the north west. Identified by the dorso-lateral stripes on the hind limbs, which were faint but still visible.

Microhylidae*Platypelis grandis*

This species was seen in a water-filled tree hole at Andasibe. Sticking an object (finger or stick) into the hole elicited an aggressive response from this frog!

Anodonthyla boulengeri

A small pinkish frog that was seen on a mossy stem while on a nightwalk at Ranomafana.

Mantellidae*Boophis doulioti*

A common species in accommodations and Ampijoroa.

Boophis madagascariensis

Seen on a night walk at Ranomafana. We inspected a male frog (distinguished by the femoral glands between the hind legs).

Boophis viridis

Three of this tree frog were seen on a nightwalk at Andasibe. It is often found on the leaves of wild ginger.

Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis

This handsome frog was seen while on an afternoon walk at the Orchid Garden at Andasibe.

Mantidactylus femoralis

We observed a single specimen perched on a rock in the river at Ranomafana.

Mantidactylus lugubris

This species was perched near the previous species in a clear stream at Ranomafana.

Annotated List of Reptiles recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication: A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar by Frank Glaw and Miguel Vences – Third edition (2007).



Total species recorded: 36**Crocodiles Crocodylidae****Nile Crocodile***Crocodylus niloticus*

Several of these prehistoric beasts were seen at Lake Ravelobe during our stay at Berenty.

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

Not uncommon in the eastern rainforests, we recorded a single individual on a nightwalk at Ranomafana.

Brookesia thieli

We saw two while on a nightwalk at Anjozorobe. Smaller than the previous species.

Short-horned Chameleon*Calumma brevicorne*

This specimens was seen at Andasibe. Possesses large occipital lobes.

Calluma crypticum

We recorded a total of three while at Ranomafana. This species was only recognised as separate from *C. brevicorne* in 2006.

O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon*Calluma oshaughnessyi*

Two of this good looking species were recorded at Ranomafana on a nightwalk. The male is a particularly good looking chameleon!

Nose-horned Chameleon*Calluma nasutum*

Regarded as the smallest "typical" chameleon, we saw this tiny creature at Andasibe, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

Band-bellied Chameleon*Calluma gastrotaenia*

A bright green chameleon with a white belly, we recorded it at Andasibe, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

Side-striped Chameleon*Furcifer lateralis*

A bright chameleon, we recorded one at Zombitse Forest.

Oustalet's Chameleon*Furcifer oustaleti*

A huge chameleon! We saw an absolute monster at Zombitse Forest. This species is tied with *Calumma parsonii* (Parson's Chameleon) for the title of the world's biggest chameleon.

Warty Chameleon*Furcifer verrucosus*

First recorded at Berenty, and later seen at Anakao, this fairly large chameleon generally inhabits the dry west and south.

Rhinoceros Chameleon*Furcifer rhinoceratus*

We found a single specimen while at Ampijoroa.

Iguanids Iguanidae**Cuvier's Iguanid***Oplurus cuvieri*

Probably the most common camp herp at Ampijoroa, where we saw many.

Four-striped Iguanid*Oplurus quadrimaculatus*

This large lizard was seen on the rocks around our accommodations in Isalo NP.

Three-eyed Lizard*Chalarodon quadrimaculatus*

Commonly seen in dry areas such as Berenty and Ifaty. Possesses a pineal gland on top of its head (this gland is supposedly light sensitive).



Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae

Zonosaurus laticaudatus

We recorded this species at Ampijoroa, where it is fairly common.

Zonosaurus ornatus

A colourful plated lizard, we saw a single specimen at Ranomafana.

Madagascar Plated Lizard

Zonosaurus madagascariensis

This species was seen at Andasibe.

Skinks Scincidae

Elegant Skink

Trachylepis elegans

A few were seen during the course of the tour.

Gravenhorst's Skink

Trachylepis gravenhorstii

We observed this skink in a number of areas, especially in fringe habitat (most of the skink photos obtained during the tour were of this species).

Trachylepis nancykoutuae

Seen at Isalo (guide only).

Madascincus igneocaudatus

Seen by some at Isalo.

Geckos Gekkonidae

Blaesodactylus sakalava

A few were seen on tree trunks while in Zombitse Forest. A medium sized gecko.

Mercator Tropical House Gecko

Hemidactylus mercatorius

This species was seen and heard quite regularly around our accommodations.

Painted Big-headed Gecko

Paroedura picta

This stunning gecko was seen in the leaf litter at Berenty. A particularly beautiful gecko!

Southern Bark Gecko

Lygodactylus tuberosus

Seen on some houses and trunks at Berenty.

Lygodactylus tolampyae

Another brown, diurnal gecko, it was seen at Zombitse Forest and Ampijoroa.

Standing's Gecko

Phelsuma standingi

A large gecko, it was seen on a baobab tree at Ifaty, and later on a hut at Zombitse Forest. Restricted to the south west of Madagascar.

Madagascar Day Gecko

Phelsuma madagascariensis

This large, green diurnal gecko was seen in the forests and on buildings at Ampijoroa, and later at our hotel in Mahajanga.

Phelsuma modesta

We saw this gecko on the walls of the Le Dauphin hotel in Fort Dauphin. The males were a little brighter than the drab, washed out green of the females.

Brown Day Gecko

Phelsuma mutabilis

Another gecko that was seen on trees in Zombitse Forest.

Lineated Day Gecko

Phelsuma lineata

We encountered this one at eastern rainforest sites (e.g. Andasibe, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana) on our accommodations. The bright greens, blues, reds combined with the black lateral line make this a particularly handsome gecko!

Four-spotted Day Gecko

Phelsuma quadriocellata



Also a handsome species, the black dot behind the forelimbs and bright green colour facilitated identification. We saw it at Ranomafana.

Boas Boidae

Madagascar Tree Boa

Sanzinia madagascariensis

A single specimen was found near Mantadia. Quite a showy snake but well behaved snake! Although traditionally classed with the South American boas, new research suggests they are closest relatives of the African Burrowing Python (*Calabaria* sp.).

“Typical” Snakes Colubridae

Stenophis arctifasciatus

An amazing snake, we had an incredible encounter with an individual at Andasibe. Watching the rainwater run down its body and off the tip of its nose as it posed motionless was quite an experience!

Dromicodryus bernieri

We watched a pair in camp at Ampijoroa. They inspected small tunnels in the ground, and seemed unperturbed despite our close presence.

Photo Credits: Crossley’s Babbler, *Stenophis arctifasciatus*, Banded Kestrel, Shield Bugs, Subdesert Mesite, and O’Shaughnessy’s Chameleon. All Photos by Rainer Summers.

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