



# Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Madagascar Comprehensive I

*4<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October 2008*

### Masoala extension

*25<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008*



### Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader Fraser Gear

Madagascar combines fantastic birding in globally unique forests with a sensational side show of bizarre mammals, colourful “herps” and a friendly and welcoming culture. This tour was very successful and we managed great views of most of the island’s most desirable endemics. After some hard work we were eventually rewarded with unbelievable views of all five Ground-Rollers, all the Mesites and Asities and a plethora of Vangas and Couas.

The bustling capital Antananarivo, or Tana, provided our first birding site, Lac Alarobia, which is home to loads of waterfowl. Most importantly it is one of the only known breeding sites for Madagascar Pond Heron. We had great views of birds in full breeding plumage, with good comparative looks at the much more numerous Squacco Heron. Along with some of the island's more common endemics we also found the regular individual African Openbill. Great excitement was had when thousands of duck took to the wing as a juvenile Madagascar Harrier quartered the wetland, a welcome surprise indeed as the harrier is most often missed on tour.

Early on our second morning we flew to Mahajunga on the west coast, from where we drove a few hours to the remarkable Ankarafantsika National Park and the Ampijoroa forest station. In typical style we were greeted at the park entrance by Sickle-billed, Chabert's and White-headed Vangas. Noisy gangs of both Greater and Lesser Vasa Parrots cavorted in the trees above us and a lazy family of Coquerel's Sifaka snoozed in a big shady mango tree. Exploring the park trails we had some really great birding. Schlegel's Asity and White-breasted Mesite were welcome "essentials" whilst Van Dam's Vanga proved a little tricky – we only had flight views. On the trails early in the morning we enjoyed some really great scope views of a pair of Madagascar Crested Ibis, whilst the hotter part of the day was spent on a boat on Lake Ravelobe from where we had super views of Madagascar Fish Eagle and a pair of White-throated Rail. The presence of numerous large Nile Crocodile in the lake added some excitement to the otherwise peaceful and idyllic cruise. Night walks around the forest station produced the highly localized *Microcebus ravelobensis*, a recently described mouse lemur, and delightful Western Avahi. True to form, Hery, our host, produced fantastic tasty meals and great service to make this rather remote and simple camp most comfortable.

After a great time at the forest station we made our way back to Mahajunga for a night in a beachside hotel. Before flying back to Tana the next morning we had a boat ride into the Betsi Boka delta where Bernier's Teal feed on the mudflats in the mangroves. We were lucky to find good numbers of these beautiful duck as well as some really good looks at Crab Plover, Humblot's Heron, Lesser Flamingo and numerous shore birds. After short flight back to Tana we were ready to head east for our first taste of Malagasy rainforest birding.

Analamazaotra, Andasibe, Perinet, Mantadia, Special Reserve, National Park...No birding site anywhere has as many names in common usage! With classic military style our local guide, Patrice, led us relentlessly in search of the regions specials. After our first morning which was very quiet, we entered the fantastic forest at Mantadia with lots to see. We had with perfect views of Pitta-like and Scaly Ground Rollers, while a Crossley's Babbler came so close I thought it may sit on my foot. A stunning male Velvet Asity posed for us and finally, after an epic scramble off trail, a Short-legged Ground Roller was just above our heads. Here the incredible skill and local knowledge of Patrice was invaluable. We had absolutely perfect views of the drop-dead-gorgeous Collared Nightjar. We also had some great luck with mammals enjoying intimate encounters with Diademed Sifaka, Indri, Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur, Red-bellied Lemur and Common Brown Lemur.



Our next destination, Anjozorobe, has some similar forest but also offers some of the best wetland birding in Madagascar. An early morning walk to the marsh produced great views of Madagascar Rail, Madagascar Snipe, Meller's Duck and some distant Grey Emutail. It is also quite a moving experience seeing pristine marshes surrounded by

forest, a very rare sight in Madagascar. Our exploration of the forest was mainly taken up by searching for the unbelievably sneaky Rufous-headed Ground Roller – some exciting off trail walking had us very close, but we just could not get a look at the bird! After the frustration of the Ground Roller we really enjoyed the much more obliging Sikorae Leaf-tailed Gecko and a delightful Stump-tailed Chameleon.

Next up was a look at a completely different world – the dry spiny forests of the south. Berenty provided a full day of intimate experiences with relaxed wildlife. The main attraction was of course the unbelievable numbers of Ring-tailed Lemur and Verreaux's Sifaka and we enjoyed spending time with these endearing creatures. We were also very lucky with owls, seeing Barn Owl, White-browed Hawk-Owl and Torotoroka Scops Owl. In the dry fields away from the forest we found a group of Madagascar Sandgrouse and on our last morning we were thrilled to get views of a pair of the seldom seen Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk, which arrived on the scene as we were finishing breakfast – perfect!

The main birding attractions of the dry land habitats are in the south west and this is where we headed next. After landing at Tulear we drove the rough, sandy track north to Ifaty. On our way in we quickly picked up Madagascar Plover – endemics are always great on travel days! Next morning saw us up before dawn so as to be walking in the botanical wonderland of Ifaty's dry forests at first light. Whilst wandering amongst the fantastic baobabs and *Dideraceae*, the "Musa Family Guides" tracked down all the specials of this remarkable region. Long-tailed Ground Roller, Subdesert Mesite, Lafresnaye's Vanga, Running Coua and Thamnornis were seen exceptionally well. We had to return after the heat of the day to bag the last outstanding target – Archibald's Newtonia. On our way out of the forest we were treated to some fine looks at Banded Kestrel. The combination of fine birding and the unique way in which the birds are located – tracked in the soft sands, whilst walking in a beautiful, bizarre and unique forest make this one of the quintessential Madagascar experiences. Some of us took to the warm ocean water during the heat of the day to snorkel on a small but surprisingly diverse and productive "Rose garden" coral formation.



On our way back south from Ifaty we stopped in at some wetlands where we managed to get super views of Baillon's Crane – for some reason this normally extremely furtive species is easier to see on Madagascar. Tulear was our base from where we took a boat out to the island of Nosy Ve and the adjacent mainland at Anakao. Nosy Ve is home to a breeding colony of Red-tailed Tropic bird and we also had good luck with a tern roost that produced a variety of terns and good numbers of Crab Plover. Snorkelling the reefs was also very productive and numerous reef fish and even Occellated Snake-Eel were seen. The short run across to the mainland at Anakao provided a hearty lunch and the extremely range restricted Littoral Rock-Thrush. That evening some of the group chose to relax whilst a few of us braved the winds and enjoyed some wader watching at the harbour where we got some good views of Bar-tailed Godwit. A short trip to the Le Table area bagged both Verreaux's Coua and Red-shouldered Vanga without too much effort required.

From Tulear we followed National Route 7 inland. The fascinating Zombitse forest was our first birding stop along this long and varied route back to Tana. Appert's Tetraka is the key endemic at Zombitse and we were treated to really outstanding views as the birds foraged in the leaf litter at our feet. Next stop was the scenic wonderland of Isalo National Park, where Benson's Rock Thrush is

resident in the hotel grounds and we had no problems getting great views. It was also a good place to slow the pace a little and enjoy the comfortable hotel and beautiful surrounds. From Isalo, a long drive took us to the steep forested slopes of Ranomafana. Here we set about finding the still problematic Rufous-headed Ground Roller. Wading through streams, pushing into the deepest darkest corners of the forest and using all our energy and determination, we were finally treated to superb views of this stunning bird. At one stage we were literally sitting in the densest of thickets when the Ground Roller and the normally extremely shy Brown Emutail both appeared simultaneously, causing all sorts of interesting results as we gave directions and descriptions of these two very different birds at once. Other birding highs included great looks at Pollen's Vanga, the delightful Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity and dazzling views of a male Common Sunbird Asity. Ranomafana is also justly famous for its mammals and highlights included Ring-tailed Mongoose walking right passed us down the trail and great views of the striking Milne-Edward's Sifaka. From Ranomafana we had the long winding road back to Tana and the end of a successful and enjoyable main tour. Sadly we had to say farewell to some of our group not joining us on the Masoala extension, but we did pick up more participants that just arrived in Madagascar. Whilst the veterans rested and enjoyed a well earned slow start the following morning, the new arrivals to Madagascar birded excitedly around the hotel grounds and managed some good species for their efforts.

The Masoala National Park offers some of Madagascar's finest forest, wildest land and a stunning coastline. On arrival in Maroantsetra all the participants opted for the optional excursion to Nosy Mangabe – a beautiful island just offshore. This part of Madagascar gets more rain than anywhere else and the afternoon became incredibly wet for the intrepid group. Luckily the weather was fine for the rest of our stay and we enjoyed an easy and smooth boat transfer out to Masoala Forest lodge the next morning. Our efforts were well rewarded as we had incredible Scaly and Short-legged Ground-rollers, the sensational Helmet Vanga and, in my opinion the islands best looking mammal – Red-ruffed Lemur. Our number one target, Helmet Vanga, proved rather easy this year and we enjoyed fantastic views of birds on the nest and another pair moving with a mixed flock. An afternoon walk in the littoral forest produced a Brown Mesite – much to our delight given our earlier experiences at Ranomafana. Other attractions at Masoala included some fine snorkelling. Paddling around the stunning coastline in kayaks and walking in some of the most attractive forest imaginable provided us with a suitable end to a fantastic and diverse tour of this unique island.



**Photo credits:** Velvet Asity, D Shackelford; White-browed Hawk-Owl, K Valentine; Long-tailed Ground Roller, D Chantler; Helmet Vanga, K Valentine.

## Annotated Checklists of Birds, Mammals and “Herps”

*Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Frank Gill & Minturn Wright Birds of the World: Recommended English Names (2006) Princeton University Press, with updates to October 2007. With notes where Clements differs or Clements names in parenthesis.*

## BIRDS

**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

### Grebes Podicipedidae

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

High numbers were found on the wetlands south of Ifaty.

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

A beautiful breeding bird was seen well on a forest lake in Mantadia.

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

### Tropicbirds Phaethontidae

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

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

### Cormorants & Shags Phalacrocoracidae

**Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus*

Uncommon in Madagascar, with a few records from Masoala.

### Darters Anhingidae

**Darter** *Anhinga rufa*

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

### Hérons Ardeidae

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

Seen when flushed from some reeds near Ifaty in the west.

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

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

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

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

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

Lake Alarobia. Including birds in magnificent nuptial plumage.

*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.

**Striated 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).*

**Black Heron***Egretta ardesiaca*

First seen at Lake Alarobia where we found good numbers on the island.

**Dimorphic Egret (NE)***Egretta [gularis] dimorpha*

Widespread and common throughout Madagascar.

NOTE: This species is sometimes lumped by authorities as a distinct subspecies of Western Reef Heron, *Egretta garzetta*, a view also followed by Clements.

**Great Egret***Ardea alba*

Small numbers at wetlands throughout.

**Purple Heron***Ardea purpurea*

First recorded at wetlands around Ampijoroa.

**Grey Heron***Ardea cinerea*

Recorded around Andasibe.

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

We were very fortunate in obtaining sightings of this sometimes difficult species. First sighted at the lake in Ampijoroa.

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

**Hamerkop Scopidae****Hamerkop***Scopus umbretta*

Small numbers in various sites around the island.

**Storks Ciconiidae****African Openbill***Anastomus lamelligerus*

We were fortunate to find one at Lac Alarobia, a rare species in Madagascar.

**Flamingos Phoenicopteridae****Lesser Flamingo***Phoeniconaias minor*

We found this species in the Betsi Boka delta.

**Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae****Sacred Ibis***Threskiornis aethiopicus*

This species was found feeding on the mudflats in the Betsi Boka delta.

**Glossy Ibis***Plegadis falcinellus*

Common at Lac Ravelobe in Ampijoroa.

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

We enjoyed magnificent views of a pair on the trail at Ankarafantsika; we even managed some great scope views.

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

Large numbers were recorded at Lake Alarobia, and in the west, at wetlands around Ampijoroa.

**Knob-billed (Comb) Duck***Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Recorded at wetlands close to Ampijoroa and at Lake Alarobia.

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

We were very lucky to enjoy several great flight views of a pair at Anjozorobe. This species numbers seem to continue to decline.

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

The greatest prize of our adventurous trip into the Betsi Boka Delta. We had great views of close to forty birds.

*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*

Good numbers on our first day at Lake Alarobia.

**Hottentot Teal***Anas hottentota*

This attractive duck was found at wetlands near Ifaty in the west.

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

Excellent luck was had when this seldom seen raptor appeared whilst we were eating breakfast at Berenty.

**Black 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 this critically endangered, endemic eagle 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 including Ankarafantsika.

**Malagasy Marsh (Reunion) Harrier (NE) (V)***Circus macrosceles*

We were very fortunate to find this seldom seen species. We were first alerted to its presence when all the ducks at Lake Alarobia took to the air in panic.

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

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

We had good views of a bird in flight over Mantadia.

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

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

Our first sightings were at Ampijoroa and we had several sightings thereafter.

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

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

**Falcons Falconidae****Malagasy 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 (E)***Falco zoniventris*

Good views of this fine raptor at Ifaty.

**Partridges, Quails & Pheasants Phasianidae****Madagascar Partridge (E)***Margaroperdix madagascarensis*

Excellent views of both males and females at Anjozorobe.

**Guineafowl Numididae**

**Helmeted Guineafowl (I)***Numida meleagris*

We encountered this species at Berenty.

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

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

Brief but good views were had of this sneaky species at Ampijoroa.

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

We struggled at Ranamofana NP, only hearing the call. Those of us that did the extension to Masoala were rewarded with fine views.

**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 one.

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

Fairly common and widespread, we had great views at Ampijoroa.

**Rails & Gallinules Rallidae****Madagascar Flufftail (E)***Sarothrura insularis*

Absolutely sensational views of a responsive bird at Anjozorobe.

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

This can be a devilishly hard bird to see! We were lucky to get good views at Anjozorobe.

**Madagascar Rail (E)***Rallus madagascariensis*

Great views at the Anjozorobe wetlands.

**White-throated Rail ([N]E)***Dryolimnas cuvieri*

We were treated to superb views of a pair at Ampijoroa. This species was also heard calling on several occasions.

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*

We were very fortunate to have cracking views at a wetland near Ifaty.

**Common Moorhen***Gallinula chloropus*

Small numbers were encountered at Lake Alarobia.

**Red-knobbed Coot***Fulica cristata*

Found at the wetlands near Ifaty.

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

Only in wetlands of the northwest, where birds were seen at Lac Ravelobe.

**Crab Plover Dromadidae****Crab Plover***Dromas ardeola*

We enjoyed great views of these strange waders, so unusual in fact that they are placed in their own family *Dromadidae*.

**Avocets & Stilts Recurvirostridae**

**Black-winged Stilt***Himantopus himantopus*

Recorded at several sites, both coastal and inland, with peak numbers found in wetlands between Tulear and Ifaty.

**Courser & Pratincoles Glareolidae****Madagascar Pratincole (BE)***Glareola ocularis*

Excellent views over the river at Ranomafana.

**Plovers Charadriidae****Common Ringed Plover***Charadrius hiaticula*

We found good numbers of this species on mudflats throughout the Ifaty area.

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

Largest numbers recorded at brackish lakes near Ifaty.

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

This scarce, localized endemic was observed at close quarters at a small salt pan in Ifaty.

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

Recorded at a roadside wetland near Ifaty.

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

We enjoyed sightings of this coastal species on the island of Nosy Ve.

**Greater Sand Plover***Charadrius leschenaultii*

Common on mudflats in Tulear, also recorded in the Betsi Boka delta.

**Grey (Black-bellied) Plover***Pluvialis squatarola*

First recorded in the Betsi Boka delta.

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

We had superb flight views at Anjozorobe Marsh.

**Bar-tailed Godwit***Limosa lapponica*

Seen on the tidal mudflats at Tulear.

**Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus*

This species was fairly common on tidal flats around Tulear and Ifaty.

**Eurasian Curlew***Numenius arquata*

A single bird was recorded at Ifaty.

**Common Greenshank***Tringa nebularia*

Another common wader, this species was regularly seen in the wetlands in the Tulear and Ifaty.

**Terek Sandpiper***Tringa cinerea*

We had views of good numbers in the Betsi Boka Delta.

**Common Sandpiper***Tringa hypoleucos*

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

**Ruddy Turnstone***Arenaria interpres*

Fairly common on tidal flats around Tulear and Ifaty.

**Sanderling***Calidris alba*

Several of these cosmopolitan birds were seen on tidal flats around Ifaty.

**Curlew Sandpiper***Calidris ferruginea*

The commonest Calidrid, seen on the tidal flats in the Ifaty and Tulear areas.

**Terns Sternidae**

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<b>Greater Crested (Swift) Tern</b>	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Recorded at the island of Nosy Ve.	
<b>Lesser Crested Tern</b>	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i>
We had good views of several at Nosy Ve, the Betsi Boka delta and at Masoala.	
<b>Saunders's Tern</b>	<i>Sterna saundersi</i>
This diminutive tern was found in the Betsi Boka delta.	
<b>Common Tern</b>	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Seen on Nosy Ve.	

### Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

<b>Madagascar Sandgrouse (E)</b>	<i>Pterocles personatus</i>
Good views of a flock at Berenty.	

### Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

<b>Common (Rock) Pigeon (I)</b>	<i>Columba livia</i>
Widespread in urban areas.	
<b>Malagasy Turtle Dove (NEe)</b>	<i>Columba picturata</i>
First seen at Ampijoroa, with numerous subsequent sightings at almost all sites. Particularly tame and conspicuous at Berenty and Ampijoroa.	
<b>Namaqua Dove</b>	<i>Oena capensis</i>
Widespread and common in drier areas.	
<b>Madagascar Green Pigeon (NE)</b>	<i>Treron australis</i>
This species were seen well at Ampijoroa.	
<b>Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E)</b>	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>
This beautiful bird is fairly common in eastern rainforest, we had superb scope views of several at Perinet Special Reserve.	

### Parrots Psittacidae

<b>(Greater) Vasa Parrot (NE)</b>	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>
This is the less common of the two Vasa Parrots in Madagascar, and we enjoyed good views at Ampijoroa.	
<b>Lesser Vasa (Black) Parrot (NE)</b>	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>
A widespread and fairly common bird and exceedingly vocal, this bird was regularly recorded in good numbers throughout our trip.	
<b>Grey-headed Lovebird (E)</b>	<i>Agapornis canus</i>
This small parrot was first found in the campsite at Ampijoroa.	

### Cuckoos, Couas & Coucals Cuculidae

<b>Madagascar Cuckoo (BE)</b>	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>
Seen at Mantadia and Ranomafana.	
<b>Giant Coua (E)</b>	<i>Coua gigas</i>
Common at Berenty where we had numerous sightings of fantastically relaxed birds.	
<b>Coquerel's Coua (E)</b>	<i>Coua coquereli</i>
Commonly heard at Ampijoroa, and several individuals seen well.	
<b>Running Coua (E)</b>	<i>Coua cursor</i>
Found in the forests near Ifaty.	
<b>Red-breasted Coua (E)</b>	<i>Coua serriana</i>
Excellent views were had during the Masoala extension.	

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

We had views several birds in Eastern rainforest.

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

We enjoyed great views of numerous birds at Ampijoroa.

**(Green-capped Coua) (E)***(Coua olivaceiceps)*

A single bird 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.*

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

This species was first recorded at Ampijoroa with many individuals being seen during our stay there.

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 rare and localized species in coral rag scrub on 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"!

**Malagasy Coucal (NEe)***Centropus toulou*

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

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

A single bird was seen at its day roost in riverine forest at Berenty.

**Typical Owls Strigidae****Rainforest (Malagasy) Scops Owl (NE)***Otus rutilus*

This recently split form of the Madagascar Scops Owl was seen well at Perinet.

**Torotoroka Scops Owl (E)***Otus madagascariensis*

This new species of Scops Owl (pronounced "Toorotoorook", 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.*

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

Our first sighting was fantastic views of one of these spectacular owls during our first day in Berenty.

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

We enjoyed excellent views of this impressive owl at Perinet.

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae****Collared Nightjar (E)***Caprimulgus enarratus*

We had fantastic views of a bird roosting during the day in Mantadia. A rare endemic restricted to the eastern forests.

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

The common nightjar on Madagascar. Our first sighting was of one at Ampijoroa.

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

Recorded over forest at Perinet and Masoala.

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

Common in suitable palm habitat.

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*

Recorded in a mixed flock over Tana and Ranomafana.

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

Recorded at Ifaty.

*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.*

### Kingfishers Alcedinidae

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

Fairly common at freshwater and marine wetlands throughout.

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

A good view was had at Ampijoroa.

### Bee-eaters Meropidae

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

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

### Rollers Coraciidae

**Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus*

Widespread and common breeding migrant from the African mainland.

### Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae

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

The most difficult of the Ground-Rollers to find, we were treated to absolutely sensational views!

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

Another elusive and retiring species. We had outstanding views. A scarce and secretive bird, formerly considered to be restricted to the forests of the Masoala peninsula.

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

Our first sighting was on the same morning as the above two ground-rollers! 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*

After extensive searching and enormous effort we were finally rewarded with great views at Ranomafana.

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

We enjoyed 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 ([N]E)** *Leptosomus discolor*

This spectacular endemic was seen at all forest sites.

*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.*

### 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.

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

A stunning pair was seen in the deciduous forests of Ampijoroa.

**Common Sunbird Asity (E)** *Neodrepanis coruscans*

We had a great sighting of this delightful bird at Ranomafana.

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

After a long morning of searching in the ridge-top forest at Vohiparara we had good views of a female.

Larks Alaudidae

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

Common in all dry country and open habitats.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

**Mascarene Martin (BE)** *Phedina borbonica*

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

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

This high plateau wetland hirundine was observed mostly *en route* including on the way to Perinet and from Anjozorobe to Tana.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

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

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

Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae

**Madagascar (Ashy) Cuckoo-shrike (NE)** *Coracina cinerea*

The only cuckoo-shrike of the island of Madagascar, we first recorded this species in the forests of Ampijoroa associating with a mixed flock. Observed regularly throughout the tour thereafter.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

**Malagasy Bulbul (NE)** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

Common and ubiquitous, with daily sightings in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats. First seen at Ampijoroa.

Vangas Vangidae

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

A fairly common and regularly encountered denizen of wooded and semi-wooded habitats, particularly once its "wolf-whistle" call is recognized.

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

We enjoyed superb close studies of a male and female of this recently described and highly localized endemic, in "coral rag" scrub on La Table. This species can be particularly hard to find and we were very fortunate to get such good views.

**Rufous Vanga (E)** *Schetba rufa*

This handsome bird was recorded in the forest of Ampijoroa.

- Hook-billed Vanga (E)** *Vanga curvirostris*  
This often heard and infrequently observed species was seen at Ampijoroa.
- Lafresnaye's Vanga (E)** *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*  
This species was seen very well in the Spiny Desert at Ifaty.
- Pollen's Vanga (E) (NT)** *Xenopirostris polleni*  
A scarce and local denizen of eastern forests, we had great views at Ranomafana.
- Van Dam's Vanga (E) (En)** *Xenopirostris damii*  
We struggled to get views although we heard it calling more than once we only managed flight views. The most localized of the vangas after the recently discovered Red-shouldered.
- Sickle-billed Vanga (E)** *Falcula 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.
- White-headed Vanga (E)** *Artamella viridis*  
Seen very well daily in small numbers at Ampijoroa.
- Chabert's Vanga (E)** *Leptopterus chabert*  
The commonest vanga, occurring in habitats ranging from pristine rainforest to degraded scrub. First seen at Ampijoroa, 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 several at Ampijoroa. 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.*
- Nuthatch Vanga (Coral-billed Nuthatch) (E)** *Hypositta corallirostris*  
Seen well at Mantadia.
- Tylas Vanga (E)** *Tylas eduardi*  
Several seen and many more heard in Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia NP, with further sightings at Masoala.  
*NOTE: Recent DNA evidence suggests that this "vanga" is more closely related to the cuckoo-shrikes.*
- Helmet Vanga (E)** *Euryceros prevostii*  
A MEGA indeed, we had great views of a few birds at Masoala.
- Crossley's Babbler (E)** *Mystacornis crossleyi*  
We enjoyed close views of this strikingly beautiful endemic at Mantadia.
- Dark Newtonia (E)** *Newtonia amphichroa*  
This smart little bird was found at Mantadia.
- 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*  
Fairly common in the Perinet and Mantadia reserves where it was recorded daily.

### Chats, Old world Flycatchers Musicapidae

- Littoral Rock Thrush (E)** *Pseudocossyphus imerinus*  
A single bird was found in dune scrub behind Anakao; a most peculiar habitat for a Rock Thrush.
- Forest Rock Thrush (E)** *Pseudocossyphus sharpei*  
Seen at Ranomafana.
- Benson's Rock Thrush (E) (NT)** *Pseudocossyphus bensoni*  
We had superb views of a pair in Isalo NP.

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.

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

This species was seen throughout the tour almost daily and is a rather bold and confiding species. Both white-bellied and dark-bellied races were noted during the course of the tour.

**Eurasian Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*

Common in open habitats of the eastern highlands, where several seen daily. This species was particularly common at Anjozorobe.

### Old World Warblers Sylviidae

**Brown Emu-tail (E)** *Dromaeocercus brunneus*

We were treated to outstanding views of one in Ranomafana NP.

**Gray Emu-tail (E)** *Amphilais (Dromaeocercus) seebohmi*

A single bird was seen in the wetlands at Ampijoroa.

**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 was 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.

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

One seen in at exceptionally close distance the Spiny Desert near Ifaty.

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

Fairly common denizen of eastern rainforest.

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

This recently described species was first seen on the way to Mantadia singing at the top of a tall tree.

We later saw one singing from its treetop perch in the ridge-top forest at Vohiparara.

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

An uncommon and elusive endemic of eastern forests. We enjoyed excellent views of this species at Mantadia NP.

**White-throated Oxylabes (E)** *Oxylabes madagascariensis*

A secretive endemic of the understorey of eastern rainforest and difficult to see. Our best sightings came from Mantadia.

**Long-billed Berniera (Greenbul) (E)** *Berniera (Phyllastrephus) madagascariensis*

Widespread in Madagascar, we first encountered this species in good numbers at Ampijoroa and heard and saw regularly it in forest sites thereafter.

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

Restricted to eastern forests, where it is common.

**Appert's Tetraka (Greenbul) (E) (V)** *Xanthomixis (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 southwest Madagascar.

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

Uncommon in eastern rainforest, mainly at altitudes above the range of Spectacled Greenbul. Seen at Vohiparara.

**Uncertain Incertae sedis****Common Jery (E)***Neomixis tenella*

Common and ubiquitous. First seen at Ampijoroa and recorded almost daily throughout the trip.

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

Seen regularly in eastern forests where we encountered small numbers daily.

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

This species scratchy call is a common background noise in the rain forests.

**Cisticolas Cisticolidae****Madagascar Cisticola (NE)***Cisticola cherinus*

Common in open habitats throughout, including rice paddies and the man-altered plateau grasslands.

**Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae****Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher (NE)***Terpsiphone mutata*

Common and widespread in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats. First recorded at Ampijoroa, with subsequent sightings almost daily of both rufous and white phases.

**Sunbirds Nectariniidae****Souimanga Sunbird ([N]E)***Nectarinia souimanga*

By far the more common of Madagascar's sunbird species, occurring in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats. First seen at Ampijoroa and virtually daily thereafter.

*NOTE: This is split from Abbott's Sunbird, which occurs on Aldabara Island. Clements does not follow this view.*

**Malagasy Green (Madagascar) Sunbird (NE)***Nectarinia notata*

A very handsome and widespread but uncommon species. This species was seen in small numbers at sites throughout.

**White-eyes Zosteropidae****Madagascar White-eye (NE)***Zosterops maderaspatana*

Common and widespread, though scarce in the southwest.

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

First recorded in Ampijoroa and seen in small numbers throughout the tour thereafter.

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

Regular only in eastern rainforest areas, where small numbers were seen.

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

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

**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, after some sightings of females we finally saw breeding males briefly at Ranomafana.

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

Common in open habitats throughout the island.

**Madagascar Starling (E)**

*Saroglossa aurata*

This species was first seen at Perinet and Mantadia.

**Drongos Dicruridae**

**Crested Drongo (NE)**

*Dicrurus forficatus*

Common and highly conspicuous in a variety of wooded habitats throughout. First seen at Ampijoroa, and almost daily in small numbers thereafter.

**Crows & Jays Corvidae**

**Pied Crow**

*Corvus albus*

Common and widespread in open habitats.

**MAMMALS**

*Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Garbutt, N. (1999) Mammals of Madagascar with recent changes as adopted by Mittermeier et al (2006) Lemurs of Madagascar.*

**Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae**

**Madagascar Flying Fox**

*Pteropus rufus*

We enjoyed good views of these handsome but noisy animals at their day roosts in gallery woodland at Berenty and on an island off Masoala.

**Old World Rats and Mice Muridae**

**Eastern Red Forest Rat**

*Nesomys rufus*

Recorded from Mantadia and Ranomafana NP.

**Civets and allies Viverridae**

**Fanaloka (Madagascar Striped Civet)**

*Fossa fossana*

Seen at very close quarters at Belle Vue in Ranomafana NP.

**Ring-tailed Mongoose**

*Viverricula elegans*

Seen well at Ranomafana NP.

**Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae**

**Grey Mouse Lemur**

*Microcebus murinus*

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

**Golden-brown Mouse Lemur**

*Microcebus ravelobensis*

Recently discovered at Ampijoroa and named after Lake Ravelobe, we enjoyed nightly sightings at Ampijoroa.

**Brown Mouse Lemur**

*Microcebus rufus*

This delightful species was found at Anjozorobe.

**Reddish-Gray Mouse Lemur**

*Microcebus griseorufus*

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

**Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur**

*Cheirogaleus medius*

This species had become active for the wet season and we were treated to a great sighting.

**Sportive Lemurs Megaladapidae**

**Milne-Edwards's Sportive Lemur**

*Lepilemur edwardsi*

Several individuals were seen at Ampijoroa.

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

Commonly seen at Berenty.

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

This species was found at Zombitse.

**Red-tailed Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur ruficaudatus*

This species was found at Ifaty.

### "True" Lemurs Lemuridae

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

This attractive species was found at Perinet and Ranomafana.

**Golden Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur aureus*

We were particularly fortunate to find these rare prosimians in tall stands of Bamboo in Ranomafana. This species although quite large, was only discovered in 1987.

**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*

We were very fortunate to have excellent views of this species at Ampijoroa. This is one of the most difficult lemurs to find in Madagascar.

**Red-bellied Lemur** *Eulemur rubriventer*

First seen at Mantadia and later found at Ranomafana.

**Common Brown Lemur** *Eulemur fulvus*

These playful lemurs were seen at Ampijoroa. Small numbers were seen in Perinet Special Reserve.

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

Observed in Ranomafana NP during our stay.

**White-fronted Brown Lemur** *Eulemur albifrons*

Excellent views of large groups of these lemurs were had at Masoala.

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

This species was seen on the island of Nosy Mangabe.

**Red Ruffed Lemur** *Varecia rubra*

One of the world's MEGA mammals, very vocal and remarkable to look at. We enjoyed great sightings of these fine beasts at Masoala.

### Avahis, Sifakas and Indri Indriidae

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

We were fortunate to find this species at Masoala.

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

This species is far more local and uncommon than its eastern counterpart; we recorded it at Ampijoroa during a night walk.

**Diademed Sifaka** *Propithecus 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).

**Verreaux's Sifaka** *Propithecus 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 coquereli*

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

**Milne Edwards Sifaka***Propithecus edwardsi*

Spectacular views at Ranomafana.

**Indri***Indri indri*

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

**Family Delphinidae****Bottle-nosed Dolphin***Tursiops truncatus*

We had an active pod leaping from the water surface in front of our lodge at Masoala.

**Listing of amphibians and reptiles seen**

*Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Glaw, F. & Vences, M. (1994) A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar.*

**Amphibians****True Frogs Ranidae****Madagascar Leaf-litter Frog***Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis***Madagascar Tree Frog***Boophis madagascariensis***Noisy Tree Frog***Boophis rappoides***Painted Mantella***Mantella madagascariensis***Mascarene Grass Frog***Ptychadena mascariensis**Scaphiophryne marmorata***Reptiles****Land Tortoises Testudinidae****Spider Tortoise***Pyxis arachnoids***Crocodiles Crocodylidae****Nile Crocodile***Crocodylus niloticus***Chameleons Chamaeleonidae****Short-horned Chameleon***Calumma brevicornis***Nose-horned Chameleon***Calumma nasuta***Band-bellied Chameleon***Calumma gastrotaenia***Parson's Chameleon***Calumma parsonii***Rhinoceros Chameleon***Calumma rhinoceratus***Oustalet's Chameleon***Furcifer oustaleti**Furcifer pardarlis***Stump-tailed Chameleon***Brookesia thieli***Iguanas Iguanidae****Three-eyed Lizard***Chalarodon madagascariensis***Cuvier's Iguanid***Oplurus cuvieri***Four-striped Iguanid***Oplurus quadrimaculatus*

**Geckos Gekkonidae**

Sikora Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus sikorae</i>
Mercator Tropical House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mercatorius</i>
Southern Bark Gecko	<i>Lygodactylus tuberosus</i>
Giant Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma standingi</i>
Madagascar Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma madagascarensis</i>
Lineated Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata</i>
Four-spotted Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>

**Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae**

Madagascar Plated Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus madagascarensis</i>
	<i>Zonosaurus laticaudatus</i>
	<i>Zonosaurus elegans</i>

**Skinks Scincidae**

Gravenhorst's Skink	<i>Mabuya gravenhorstii</i>
Elegant Skink	<i>Mabuya elegans</i>

**Typical Snakes Colubridae**

Mahafaly Sand Snake	<i>Mimophus mahfalensis</i>
Black-browed Snake	<i>Liophidium torquatam</i>

**Boas Boaidae**

Madagascar Tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>
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**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 delicate congregations of "Waxtail" nymphs of the Flatid Leaf Bug *Phromnia rosea*, and to the immense super-homes of Golden Orb-web Spiders *Nephila madagascariensis*. Other notable "creepy-crawlies" included Pill Millipedes *Sphaerotherium sp.*, an array of leaf- and stick-mimic mantids, and, of course, numerous spectacular moths and butterflies, most notably Madagascar's largest butterfly, the beautiful swallowtail *Atrophaneura anterior*.

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