



# Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Madagascar Comprehensive IV

*12<sup>th</sup> November - 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 (22 days)*



### **Top Five Birds as voted by participants:**

- 1) White-breasted Mesite
- 2) Madagascar Flufftail
- 3) Short-legged Ground Roller
- 4) (tie) Scaly and Long-tailed Ground Roller
- 6) Madagascar Serpent Eagle

Madagascar is a unique island (often, with good reason, referred to as the “eighth continent”) that showcases some of earths most bizarre and threatened fauna and flora. Overall, endemism and often species richness, across the island’s inhabitants are quite astounding, and this is what draws us to this unique place. The birds and mammals that we managed to locate were as varied as they were plentiful and did not disappoint! All five ground rollers were seen, we enjoyed stunning views of the mesites, had mouth-watering looks at the highly sought-after Madagascar Serpent Eagle, multiple vanga species and well 21 endearing lemurs all made for a fabulous and simply unforgettable tour.

On arrival we journeyed though the busy maze of Tana’s streets to the Tsimbazaza Zoo and Lake Alarobia. The zoo is an interesting venue, with the highlight being the nocturnal lemur exhibit, and particularly the Aye-Aye cage. We wondered around the well manicured gardens containing a sample of the islands wildlife, and got good views of Madagascar Little Grebe and Malagasy Kingfisher, before heading for the famous waterbird venue of Lake Alarobia. The sheer number of birds here is staggering, and we enjoyed large numbers of Dimorphic and Cattle Egret, Black Heron, with the pride of place being the stunning Malagasy Pond Heron in full breeding plumage. We also connected with some other interesting birds here including Malagasy Swamp Warbler, a great view of a male Frances’s Sparrowhawk, and the first of many Common Jery’s!



The north-west was our next port of call, and in particular Ankarafantsika National Park and the forest station of Ampijoroa. The dry, deciduous woodlands and wetland habitat surrounding Lake Ravelobe provide superb habitat for some of the islands most endangered birds. In the woodlands, a superb sighting of White-breasted Mesite, with other avian stars such as Schlegel’s Asity, Van Dam’s and gorgeous Blue Vanga, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, Coquerel’s and Red-capped Coua and Madagascar (Crested) Ibis all seen very well. Lake Ravelobe is home to a pair of the endangered Madagascar Fish Eagle, a raptor thought to number only 200 birds in the wild, and we stumbled upon a pair in the tall woodland alongside the lake. The views were excellent allowing us to enjoy the subtle plumage and size difference between the male and female. Aside from the large numbers of egrets breeding around the lake, Ravelobe must qualify as one of the best places in the world to see Allen’s Gallinule, with multiple birds spotted in lakeside vegetation. An afternoon cruise also provided views of a resident pair of Madagascar Jacana working over a shallow, flooded area on the lakeshore. Ampijoroa is also an excellent mammal and herp venue, and aside from the Cuvier’s Iguanids and Plated Lizards scuttling around camp, we saw the difficult Mongoose Lemur, handsome Coquerel’s Sifaka, Grey Mouse Lemur, Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur and noisy Milne-Edwards Sportive Lemur.

On leaving Ampijoroa we visited Lake Amboromalandy where we enjoyed great views of Sooty Falcon, Whiskered Tern and Hottentot Teal before continuing back to Mahajanga. The following day we boarded a speed boat for an exploration of the Betsiboka Delta where the waters were a rich brown colour indicative of serious soil erosion inland. Decent numbers of waders were present, with good views of Terek Sandpiper being quite enjoyable. After some scanning, we eventually found our quarry - Bernier’s Teal and the pale eyed Malagasy subspecies of Sacred Ibis foraging on the mudflats.



From the hot northwest it was back to Tana before embarking on the short drive to Andasibe, the most famous eastern rainforest site. The forests here and at the nearby Mantadia National Park are home to some of the most sought after and famous faunal residents of the island, and it was these charismatic creatures that we were after! The birding was excellent, and watching a ground roller while listening to the ever present Indri and Cuckoo Roller in the background is certainly a special experience! We were treated to superb views of Scaly, Pitta-like and Short-legged Ground Roller, Cryptic Warbler, Brown Emutail, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Red-breasted Coua and Red-fronted Coua, Collared Nightjar, Rand's Warbler, Madagascar Starling, Madagascar Flufftail and Madagascar Owl, with views for some of Nuthatch Vanga and a brief encounter with Henst's Goshawk. Certainly the surprise of the trip must be the outrageous views we enjoyed of one of the island most enigmatic and sought after birds, the rare Madagascar Serpent Eagle. We had super, close-up views and this afforded us opportunity to marvel at this strange looking raptor, certainly a once in a lifetime experience! Not to outdone by their feathered compatriots, we were treated to point blank views of the handsome Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur, while the famous Indri, Diademed Sifaka, Eastern Grey Bamboo and Red-bellied Lemur put on a show in the lush forests.

After birding the steamy forests of Andasibe-Mantadia, we continued onward to Anjozorobe where the lovely accommodations and friendly service were appreciated by all. The highlight of this area for many was birding the nearby wetland where we got superb views of Madagascar Rail, Madagascar Snipe, the sought after Meller's Duck and the skulky Grey Emutail. The nearby fringe and forest habitat added the beautiful Madagascar Partridge, a shy Rufous-headed Ground Roller and excellent views of Madagascar Owl. Nocturnal excursions served us with a diversity of interesting chameleons, the very cute Brown Mouse Lemur and a two roosting Pitta-like Ground Roller!



We then continued to the southeast of the country (after some frustrating delays by Air Mad!) and to probably the most visited reserve in Madagascar, Berenty. Although it was hot, the oppressive heat did not deter us from finding the specials like: Giant Coua, a nesting Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk, confiding White-browed Hawk-Owl, Barn and Totoroka Scops Owls, Madagascar Buttonquail and great views of 19 Madagascar Sandgrouse. Searching the Spiny forest in the area added the Green-capped form of Red-capped Coua, a responsive Archbold's Newtonia, and close-up Lafresnaye's Vanga and Running Coua. The reserve is most famous for its mammalian residents, and the dancing sifakas (Verreaux's Sifaka) and Ring-tailed Lemurs put on a fabulous show! The Red-fronted Brown Lemurs were noisy as ever, the cutest of the lemurs on offer here, the miniscule Grey-brown Mouse Lemur stole hearts while the White-footed Sportive Lemurs were as sportive as ever!

From Berenty, we drove along the bumpy road to Fort Dauphin before catching a flight to Tulear, our spring board to the southwestern coastal region of Madagascar. The amazing spiny forest at Ifaty is something to behold and our mornings birding here was all the more enjoyable because of the cool conditions we had on this day, an unexpected bonus indeed! Birds were out in number, and the dawn chorus was spectacular! We kicked off with a perched Thamnornis, followed by a calling Long-tailed Ground Roller in a tree (which later stood unperturbed in the path in front of us) and enjoyed an



excellent Subdesert Mesite and Banded Kestrel before watching a tame pair of Madagascar Plover at the roadside. Nearby mudflats and wetlands provided very good birding, and we were treated to Baillon's Crake, Greater Flamingo, Greater Painted Snipe, Marsh Sandpiper, Barn Swallow, Sanderling and enormous numbers of Common Terns.

Leaving Ifaty, the road south brought us back to Tulear, conveniently positioned close to some other important birding sites. The harbour afforded us views of Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit and large numbers of Greater Sand Plover and Whimbrel, before we headed a little inland to the coral rag scrub near La Tabla. The undoubted specials here are Red-shouldered Vanga and Verreaux's Coua, both of which we saw well (and were lucky enough to have a male Red-shouldered Vanga on the nest). The next adventure was the island of Nosy Ve, the famous Red-tailed Tropicbird site. A stop en route produced superb views of Humblot's Heron and a Peregrine Falcon perched motionless on a cliff face, before heading onward to the tropical isle of Nosy Ve. Watching the dazzling white tropicbirds wheeling over ones head is a special experience, well complimented by the close-up views of nesting birds. The tern roost on the island did not disappoint, and we enjoyed excellent views of the tiny Saunder's and Lesser Crested Tern and Sooty Gull, before heading for lunch and the resident Littoral Rock Thrush at Anakao.



After the balmy coastal climate, it was time to begin our long journey inland back to the capital. A number of conveniently located birding sites en route make for an interesting journey, with the first such site being Zombitse Forest. This forest patch is home to the Globally Threatened Appert's Tetraka and we found this species with ease, treating us to an excellent show foraging in the leaf litter a few metres from the path. We also saw large Oustalet's Chameleons here, Verreaux's Sifakas and for some, an agile Giant Hog-nosed Snake. A short drive from Zombitse is the scenic Isalo National Park, an area dominated by interesting sandstone formations and large grassy plains. The park is home to Benson's Rock Thrush, which put on quite a display on top the buildings at our lodge (and in the reception area!), while nearby numerous Black (Yellow-billed) Kite, Pied Crow and co-operative African Marsh Owl did what they could to steal the show.



The journey from Isalo to the famous Ranomafana National Park is long, but arriving in the steep, forested and very scenic Ranomafana valley makes the journey worthwhile. These forests are home to a number of key Malagasy species and the steep trails here always ensure we work hard to find them! The hard work certainly paid off, and we were witness to Brown Mesite around our feet, the elusive Pollen's Vanga in a vanga flock, Madagascar Yellowbrow hopping through low shrubs and along the forest floor, an unperturbed Short-legged Ground Roller sitting motionless mere metres away while a pair of Common Sunbird Asity flitted about nearby, perched Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity allowing us



to admire what a rainforest gem this really is, Rufous-headed Ground Roller throwing out its strange call, and Brown Emutail singing its heart out on an exposed twig! Ranomafana really is a special place, and aside from the birds, the aggressive Namorona River which cuts a path through the dense rainforest, the numerous frogs (including unbelievable Mantella frogs, very much akin to the Poison Arrow Frogs of South America) and lemurs, the general atmosphere makes it a little slice of paradise!

Once back in Tana, those present on the final morning embarked on a drive to a grassland area which provided superb views of a Malagasy Marsh Harrier and Madagascar Buttonquail, a huge relief for those present and a truly a fitting finale to an incredible trip!

**Photo Credits:** Banded Kestrel, Malagasy Pond Heron, Short-legged Ground Roller, Madagascar Plover and *Boophis albilabris*. All Photo's by Rainer Summer.

## **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): 191**

#### **Guineafowl Numididae**

##### **Helmeted Guineafowl**

*Numida meleagris*

Seen at Berenty, this noisy species is presumed to have been introduced from Africa.

#### **Pheasants and allies Phasianidae**

##### **Madagascar Partridge**

*Margaroperdix madagascariensis*

A stunning avian, we had excellent views of a pair at Anjozorobe.

#### **Ducks and Geese Anatidae**

##### **White-faced Whistling Duck**

*Dendrocygna viduata*

Large numbers were seen in and around Tana, with a particularly large flock of 94 birds seen near Ifaty.

##### **Knob-billed Duck**

*Sarkidiornis melanotos*

A handful of these peculiar ducks were seen in Tana and Lake Ravelobe, and later near Isalo NP.

##### **Meller's Duck**

*Anas melleri*

A vary scarce bird in Madagascar, we were treated to a number of excellent fly-bys of pairs and small groups at Anjozorobe.

##### **Bernier's Teal**

*Anas bernieri*

We were very fortunate to find a total of three birds while on our boat cruise on the Betsiboka Delta. This is also a very scarce bird in Madagascar.

##### **Red-billed Teal**

*Anas erythrorhyncha*

One of the most common ducks on the tour, with largest numbers being seen at Lake Alarobia and later at Anja Community Reserve.

##### **Hottentot Teal**

*Anas hottentota*

We first recorded this dainty creature at Lake Amboromalandy near Mahajunga. Was recorded less frequently and in way smaller numbers that the previous species.



**Grebes Podicipedidae**

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
Large numbers (50+) were seen in a saline pond near Ifaty.

**Madagascar Grebe** *Tachybaptus pelzelni*

This scarce endemic was seen in Tsimbazaza Zoo, Lake Alarobia and at Lake Amboromalandy. The largest number seen was four birds at Alarobia.

**Flamingos Phoenicopteridae**

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus*  
Four birds were seen on a saline lake near Ifaty.

**Ibises Threskiornithidae**

**Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus bernieri*

Two birds were seen on mudflats in the Betsiboka Delta. 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*

Huge numbers of this appropriately named bird were seen at Lake Ravelobe at Ampijoroa.

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

After scoping an adult and chick on the nest at Ampijoroa, we were treated to superb views of birds walking down forest paths at Andasibe. An amazing avian, and strangely enough often underrated!

**Bitterns and Herons Ardeidae**

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

A single individual flushed out of the reeds and was briefly seen while at a wetland near Ifaty.

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

We had our best views of this species at Lake Alarobia in Tana.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*

Seen quite frequently throughout the trip, often on the fringes rice paddies.

**(Common) Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

Another frequently recorded heron, and sadly in far larger numbers than the endemic Malagasy Pond Heron.

**Malagasy Pond Heron** *Ardeola idea*

Our best view of this species was of a stunning full breeding plumaged adult at Lake Alarobia.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Frequently recorded throughout the trip.

*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*

First seen at Lake Amboromalandy, and at a few scattered freshwater and coastal sites thereafter.

**Humblot's Heron** *Ardea humbloti*

The world's second largest heron, with great views at a nesting colony near the Onilahy River mouth.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

A handsome bird first recorded at Lake Ravelobe and later seen at scattered localities throughout.

**Great (White) Egret** *Ardea alba*



Seen almost daily in aquatic environs (especially rice paddies) throughout the island.

**Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca*

We had superb views of this species. First seen at the heronry at Lake Alarobia.

**Dimorphic Egret** *Egretta dimorpha*

We recorded plain white birds commoner inland, as well as the more coastal dark phase birds (and intermediate forms!) during the course of the tour. A common bird.

*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*

A highlight of the tour was seeing these stunning creatures on nests and in flight over the tropical isle known as Nosy Ve. Close-ups, (which we got) are needed to see the subtle pink wash over this species white body.

### Hamerkop Scopidae

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*

An unusual bird, which is not uncommon in and around rice paddies in the more high lying areas of Madagascar, such as near Tana where we recorded it.

### Anhingas Anhingidae

**Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster*

This species was recorded at Lake Ravelobe.

### Falcons Falconidae

**Malagasy Kestrel** *Falco newtoni*

We had multiple views of this species. Often seen around human habitation.

**Banded Kestrel** *Falco zoniventris*

Generally quite uncommon in Madagascar, we had superb scope views of a bird in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

**Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonora*

This non-breeding visitor was seen en route to Andasibe, a great find indeed.

**Sooty Falcon** *Falco concolor*

Also a non-breeding visitor, we had some superb views (particularly at Ivato International in Tana and Lake Amboromalandy) of perched and flying individuals. A very sleek and athletic avian!

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

We had great views of a bird perched on a cliff near the mouth of the Onilahy River mouth. A scarce bird in Madagascar.

### Kites, Hawks and Eagles Accipitridae

**Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk** *Aviceda madagascariensis*

A single bird was scoped on the nest while at Berenty. This allowed us a look at the unusual head shape and large, bulging eye.

**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*



We had excellent views of the pair present on Lake Ravelobe. This endemic species is in serious danger of extinction, with only around 100 pairs surviving!

**Madagascar Serpent Eagle** *Eutriorchis astur*

We were treated to outrageous views of this MEGA while at Mantadia! The large eye, prominent rectal bristles and huge floppy tail were especially noticeable. This critically endangered species is rarely seen by resident local guides, let alone tour groups!

**Malagasy Marsh Harrier** *Circus maillardi*

After the initial disappointment of not seeing the bird near Isalo, those that were still around on the last morning of the tour obtained superb views of a sub-adult male bird. A great bird indeed!

**Madagascar Harrier-Hawk** *Polyboroides radiatus*

A few birds were seen including great views of birds on a nest while in the Ifaty Spiny Forest.

**Frances's Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter francesiae*

We had a number of excellent views of this species, including at Lake Alarobia, Ampijoroa and Berenty.

**Madagascar Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter madagascariensis*

An uncommon species in Madagascar, a single was seen while at Andasibe.

**Henst's Goshawk** *Accipiter henstii*

This enormous accipiter was encountered at Mantadia, Anjozorobe and on a nest containing two chicks at Ranomafana NP. Its loud and aggressive call was often a give-away as to its presence.

**Madagascar Buzzard** *Buteo brachypterus*

We saw a number of individuals, and were able to get close-ups of the finely barred tail and large head. Also a very vocal raptor, and more often heard than seen.

### Mesites Mesitornithidae

**White-breasted Mesite** *Mesitornis variegates*

We were treated to outrageous views of a pair calling in the path while at Ampijoroa. The closeness of the pair, coupled with good light and the interesting duetting call resulted in it being voted bird of the trip.

**Brown Mesite** *Mesitornis unicolor*

This subtly plumaged understory skulker was excellently seen by all while at Ranomafana. Certainly the most difficult of the mesites to see!

**Subdesert Mesite** *Monias benschi*

A strange inhabitant of the stark spiny forest of the south west of Madagascar. We had superb scope views of a male while on our early morning walk.

### Flufftails Sarothruridae

**Madagascar Flufftail** *Sarothrura insularis*

We group got point blank views of a highly responsive male near Mantadia. The delightfulness of this shy bird along with the superb sighting resulted in being voted second best bird of the trip.

### Rails, Crakes and Coots Rallidae

**Madagascar Wood Rail** *Canirallus kiolooides*

We obtained brief sightings of this forest ghost at Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

**Madagascar Rail** *Rallus madagascariensis*

After an initial brief sighting of an individual near Mantadia, we had superb views of birds in the wetland at Anjozorobe.

**White-throated Rail** *Dryolimnas cuvieri*



A very good looking bird, we first recorded it at Lake Alarobia, and later saw and heard it at wetland habitats throughout.

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

Although often a difficult bird to see elsewhere, we had superb views this tiny rail in the wetlands near Ifaty, where a total of three were seen.

**Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni*

We had multiple sightings while at Lake Ravelobe, and this waterbody must represent one of the best places to find this species anywhere!

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

This bird was well seen at Lake Alarobia.

### **Buttonquail Turnicidae**

**Madagascar Buttonquail** *Turnix nigricollis*

This sneaky bird was seen at Berenty, Ifaty, Isalo and later north west of Tana on the road to Mahajanga.

### **Stilts Recurvirostridae**

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

Peak numbers (including adults with chicks) were seen at wetlands near Ifaty.

### **Plovers Charadriidae**

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

One of the more common shorebirds recorded in the estuarine habitat near Ifaty. A non-breeding visitor, and easily distinguished in flight by the presence of black armpits.

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

We first recorded this dainty bird while in the Betsiboka Delta, with good sightings thereafter at the wetland areas near Ifaty.

**Madagascar Plover** *Charadrius thoracicus*

Quite a good looking bird, we had superb close-up views of this species near Ifaty. A scarce, Globally threatened species.

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

A look-alike lacking the black breast band of the previous species, Kittlitz's were seen in the vicinity of "Mad" Plover's, allowing good comparisons of the two similar birds.

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

A few birds were seen in the wetland areas in the vicinity of Ifaty.

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

We recorded maximum numbers of this coastal inhabitant near Ifaty.

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultia*

Seen in the Betsiboka Delta and later near Ifaty.

### **Painted Snipes Rostratulidae**

**Greater Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*

We had superb views of a single bird alongside a small piece of water near Ifaty.



**Jacanas Jacanidae****Madagascar Jacana***Actopijlornis albinucha*

A pair were seen at Lake Ravelobe, with some later seeing a bird at Lake Amboromalandy.

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

This huge snipe was seen in good numbers were seen at a wetland at Anjzorobe, with a further individual seen near Vohiparara on a small wetland.

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

A fairly large shorebird that was seen in decent numbers near to Ifaty.

**Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus*

Large numbers were seen in the vicinity of Tulear and Ifaty.

**Eurasian Curlew***Numenius arquata*

This species was seen at the Tulear Harbour mud flats. An uncommon visitor to Madagascar.

**Marsh Sandpiper***Tringa stagnatilis*

Around three birds were seen on mudflats near to Ifaty. Another uncommon non-breeding visitor to Madagascar.

**Common Greenshank***Tringa nebularia*

Peak numbers were recorded at mudflats at Tulear and near Ifaty.

**Terek Sandpiper***Xenus cinereus*

Good numbers were seen in the Betsiboka Delta, with a further four seen at mudflats near Ifaty.

**Common Sandpiper***Actitis hypoleucos*

We saw a few individuals in scattered aquatic localities throughout the tour.

**Ruddy Turnstone***Arenaria interpres*

A number of individuals were seen in and around Tulear and Ifaty.

**Sanderling***Calidris alba*

This drab wader with a dark shoulder patch and eye was seen near Tulear and Ifaty.

**Curlew Sandpiper***Calidrus ferruginea*

Seen in the Betsiboka and later in and around Ifaty.

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

We scoped a single individual perched on a rock in the Mangoro River en route to Andasibe.

**Gulls and Terns Laridae****Sooty Gull***Larus hemprichii*

A handsome bird, it was only recently recorded for the first time in Madagascar by Rockjumper, and since then seems to return to the same roost yearly. A lovely sighting indeed!

**Lesser Crested Tern***Sterna bengalensis*

We recorded good numbers (in some cases over 100 birds) around Ifaty and Tulear.

**Swift (Great Crested) Tern***Sterna bergii*

Small numbers were seen in the Betsiboka, near Ifaty and on Nosy Ve. Bill is large and yellow olive as opposed to the smaller orange yellow of the previous species.

**Common Tern***Sterna hirundo*

We recorded an enormous flock (certainly over 1000 and probably nearer 2000) near Ifaty.

**Saunders's Tern***Sterna saundersi*

After a few distant small terns, we had great views of an individual on the tern roost at Nosy Ve.



**Whiskered Tern***Chlidonias hybrida*

Around five birds in breeding plumage were seen at Lake Amboromalandy, with a further single at a wetland near Ifaty.

**Sandgrouse Pteroclididae****Madagascar Sandgrouse***Pterocles personatus*

We were treated to a large flock of 19 birds which offered great scope views. This particular flock was, according to local guide Dodias, the largest he had ever seen!

**Pigeons and Doves Columbidae****Common Pigeon***Columba livia*

These “rats with wings” were seen almost daily.

**Malagasy Turtle Dove***Streptopelia picturata*

First encountered at the zoo, and later seen in both the dry, deciduous western woodlands and the eastern rainforests.

**Namaqua Dove***Oena capensis*

Frequently seen in drier areas we visited in the tour.

**Madagascar Green Pigeon***Treron australis*

This species was encountered at Ampijoroa, near Mantadia and later on our morning walk at La Tabla. Quite un-pigeon like, and seeming behaves much more like a parrot.

**Madagascar Blue Pigeon***Alectroenas madagascariensis*

A very handsome rainforest inhabitant that was nicely scoped at Andasibe.

**Parrots Psittacidae****Grey-headed Lovebird***Agapornis canus*

A delightful inhabitant of the dry west, with us getting excellent views at Ampijoroa, Berenty and Ifaty.

**Greater Vasa Parrot***Coracopsis vasa*

Usually at a lower density than the similar Lesser Vasa Parrot, we saw this species well at Ampijoroa, where we were able to clearly see the large bill and straight edge of the cere where it joins the beak. Its call is also more raucous and lesser musical than the following species.

**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*

We had many superb views of this bird. Seems to show little habitat preference, and seen almost daily as a result.

**Crested Coua***Coua cristata*

Easily seen in western deciduous woodland areas.

**Verreaux's Coua***Coua verreauxi*

We walked a fair way to find this species while birding the coral rag scrub near La Tabla, with a single bird both in the afternoon and evening.

**Blue Coua***Coua caerulea*

Multiple superb views were had of this smart rainforest inhabitant.

**Red-capped Coua***Coua ruficeps*

This species was well seen at Ampijoroa while strolling through the dry woodland.



**(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*

While birding the roadside at Andasibe we were treated to superb views of a bird perched out and calling in the open.

**Coquerel's Coua***Coua coquereli*

Good numbers were seen at Ampijoroa alongside the similarly sized Red-capped Coua. Also later heard at Zombitse Forest.

**Running Coua***Coua cursor*

This species was seen exceptionally well by everyone near Berenty.

**Giant Coua***Coua gigas*

An appropriately named bird, these beauties were common in the Tamarind forest alongside the Mandrare River at Berenty. A single bird was also later seen at Zombitse Forest.

**Red-breasted Coua***Coua serriana*

Usually one of the most elusive of the couas on the main tour, we managed to obtain superb views of an individual at Mantadia NP.

**Madagascar Cuckoo***Cuculus rochii*

One of the most recognisable and frequently heard sounds on Madagascar, we enjoyed great views of this bird at Ampijoroa, Mantadia NP and at La Tabla.

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

We obtained scope views of roosting bird at Berenty.

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

We witnessed an interesting interaction between a pair at dusk while at Ampijoroa, and later saw a single while at Berenty. A common inhabitant of the western woodlands.

**Rainforest Scops Owl***Otus rutilus*

This species was frequently heard at a number of rainforest sites, but no sighting was forthcoming.

**White-browed Hawk-Owl***Ninox superciliaris*

A smart bird, we had superb views at Berenty and later at Zombitse Forest.

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

Often one of the tougher tour birds, we were very fortunate to scope a roosting bird at Berenty, and then some were treated to outstanding close-up views of a hunting individual after dark at Anjozorobe.

**Marsh Owl***Asio capensis*

This owl was seen at Isalo NP. Not recorded very often in the country, some were witness to a pair hunting at dusk. An unexpected find!

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae****Madagascar Nightjar***Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

This common Malagasy nightbird was recorded in Tana, Anjozorobe, Berenty and Ifaty. The white in the wing (a distinctive feature) was easily visible.

**Collared Nightjar***Caprimulgus enarratus*

Certainly one of the most beautiful of the nightjars, this stunning creature was well seen on a day roost at Mantadia. An adult and two chicks were present.



**Swifts Apopidae****Madagascar Spinetail***Zoonavena grandidieri*

Usually seen flying swiftly over forests (and often on a regular route), we recorded this species at Mantadia and later at Zombitse Forest.

**African Palm Swift***Cypsiurus parvus*

A common trip bird, almost always seen in association with palm trees of some sort.

**Malagasy Black Swift***Apus balstoni*

A fast flying and large swift, it was well seen at Tana, Onilahy River mouth, over Zombitse Forest and near Isalo.

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

A colourful and commonly encountered bird in areas with any substantial woodland or forest.

**Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae****Short-legged Ground Roller***Brachypteracias leptosomus*

After our initial good views at Mantadia, we were treated to point blank views of a bird unphased by our presence on Vohiparara Ridge, Ranomafana. In short, this superb view resulted in it voted as the third best bird of the trip. This bird is mostly found perched up in the canopy, quite unlike the other members of its family.

**Scaly Ground Roller***Geobiastes squamiger*

Our encounter with this amazing bird at Mantadia involved an adult delivering a large worm to the nest, affording us excellent views of the adult and the underground nest tunnel. Voted into tie fourth spot for bird of the trip.

**Pitta-like Ground Roller***Atelornis pittoides*

Despite being the most common member of the ground rollers, this species is an absolute knock-out, an is certainly one of the best looking Malagasy birds. We enjoyed incredible views of this species at Mantadia, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

**Rufous-headed Ground Roller***Atelornis crossleyi*

Another ground-dwelling forest gem, this species was seen at Anjozorobe and Ranomafana. The smallest in its family, and often very difficult to seen on the gloomy forest floor. Our best views were enjoyed at Ranomafana.

**Long-tailed Ground Roller***Uratelornis chimaera*

Often top of peoples want lists in Madagascar, we had outstanding views of the bird perched and calling in a tree, and later standing in the open on a path. A ground roller "outcast", inhabiting the bizarre spiny forest at Ifaty in the west, while the other members ply their trade in the luscious eastern rainforests. Possesses a spectacular tail, and was voted into tie fourth spot alongside Scaly Ground Roller.

**Cuckoo Roller Leptosomatidae****(Madagascar) Cuckoo Roller***Leptosomus discolor*

Our best views of this enormous bird were at Andasibe. Often seen cruising hawk like over the canopy, belting out its strange wailing call.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae****Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher***Ispidina madagascariensis*

A single bird was seen perched a few feet above our heads on an Ampijoroa nightwalk. Great views indeed!



**Malagasy Kingfisher** *Alcedo vintsioides*  
Commonly seen on waterbodies throughout the tour.

### Bee-eaters Meropidae

**Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater** *Merops superciliosus*  
Seen almost daily. A common resident and migrant to Africa.

### 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 very good views of males and a female on the large mossy ball of nest. Males were seen at Mantadia and Ranomafana, with the nesting individual at Ranomafana.

**Schlegel's Asity** *Philepitta schlegeli*  
Found in forest and woodland on the west of the island, we obtained very good views of a pair in the morning sunshine while on a morning walk at Ampijoroa.

**Common Sunbird-Asity** *Neodrepanis coruscans*  
This fast moving canopy dweller was seen very well at Ranomafana. A male and female perched a few metres apart allowed for a good comparison, before a Short-legged Ground Roller perched behind them caused even more pandemonium!

**Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity** *Neodrepanis hypoxantha*  
One of the most beautiful birds of the tour, the long walk up Vohiparara Ridge was well worth the effort once we laid our eyes upon the jewel-like male and drabber female. The presence of a nest made the job of tracking this species down a little easier!

### 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 Mantadia, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

**Red-shouldered Vanga** *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*  
Only described in 1997, this bird inhabits the unforgiving coral rag scrub near Tulear. We were extremely fortunate to observe a male on a nest, and were able to see the pale iris and large rufous shoulder on the brooding bird.

**Hook-billed Vanga** *Vanga curvirostris*  
Seen at a number of scattered sites. The name of this bird is very appropriate!

**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*  
A highly localised species, we had very good views of a female after some hard work!

**Pollen's Vanga** *Xenopirostris polleni*  
All-round one of the toughest vangas to see, we achieved lovely views of a bird at Ranomafana.

**Sickle-billed Vanga** *Falculea palliata*  
Recorded at Ampijoroa, Ifaty and La Tabla where it was well seen. Certainly one of the strangest birds on the island!



**White-headed Vanga***Artamella viridis*

We saw this one at Ampijoroa, Ifaty and La Tabla.

**Chabert's Vanga***Leptopterus chabert*

One of the commonest vangas, the generally the only vanga seen in the heavily degraded countryside to prominent in Madagascar.

**Blue Vanga***Cyanolanius madagascarinus*

A stunning avian first recorded at Ampijoroa.

**Rufous Vanga***Schetba rufa*

A smart bird, and well seen at Ampijoroa.

**Tylas Vanga***Tylas eduardi*

Like a slimmer, finer and darker billed version of Pollen's Vanga, we recorded this species at Mantadia and later at Ranomafana.

**Nuthatch Vanga***Hypositta corallirostris*

After some fruitless searching, a single female was seen by some at Andasibe.

**Dark Newtonia***Newtonia amphichroa*

This understory skulker afforded great views at Mantadia, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

**Common Newtonia***Newtonia brunneicauda*

The call of this species was a frequent background sound in wooded areas, with our first sighting coming at Ampijoroa.

**Archbold's Newtonia***Newtonia archboldi*

A spiny forest inhabitant, we had excellent views of this species at Berenty.

**Ward's Flycatcher***Pseudobias wardi*

After our initial sighting at Andasibe, we had close up views of a pair at Vohiparara Ridge.

**Crossley's Babbler***Mystacornis crossleyi*

A fascinating terrestrial "vanga", seen at Mantadia, with our later view at Anjozorobe being world's better! A smashing bird.

**Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae****Madagascar (Ashy) Cuckooshrike***Coracina cinerea*

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

**Drongos Dicruridae****Crested Drongo***Dicrurus forficatus*

This spunky species was seen virtually daily.

**Monarchs Monarchidae****Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher***Tersiphone mutata*

We had numerous sightings of this beauty (including nesting birds) during the trip. The various colour forms also add to the splendour of this bird.

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

A widespread bird especially in degraded and drier areas.

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

These birds are breeding endemics to the island, and were a fairly common sight almost everywhere.



**Brown-throated Martin***Riparia paludicola*

A wetland associated species, seen over marshes in the vicinity of Andasibe and Anjozorobe.

**Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica*

A rare summer visitor, we had good views of two birds at a wetland near Ifaty.

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

One of the commoner species in drier, grassy areas, with our best sightings being near Ifaty.

**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*

As its name suggests, a common bird, seen or heard virtually daily.

**Green Jery***Neomixis viridis*

A forest dweller, initially scoped at Andasibe, with a superior sighting coming alongside the road at Vohiparara.

**Stripe-throated Jery***Neomixis striatigula*

A particularly noisy species, that was seen on a number of occasions starting at Mantadia. Found in rainforest and woodland.

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

The only bird to be seen every day of the trip!

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

This wetland inhabitant was well seen at a wetland at Anjozorobe.

**Brown Emutail***Dromaeocercus brunneus*

A notorious skulker, it was seen very well at Mantadia, with a later sighting at Vohiparara being particularly noteworthy!

**Malagasy Brush Warbler***Nesillas typica*

A widespread species of forest edge and brush that was seen from the first day.

**Subdesert Brush Warbler***Nesillas lantzii*

Seen near Berenty and Ifaty, a pale, spiny forest version of the previous species.

**Madagascar Swamp Warbler***Acrocephalus newtoni*

We recorded this at a number of wetland venues, with the first sighting (and a good one), coming at Lake Alarobia. The most interesting sighting was definitely that of two almost white birds that seemed to be leucistic.

**White-throated Oxylabes***Oxylabes madagascariensis*

This skulky forest species was well seen at Mantadia.

**Long-billed Bernieria***Bernieria madagascariensis*

A common woodland and forest inhabitant that was first recorded at Ampijoroa.



**Cryptic Warbler***Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi*

We obtained very good views of this bird (only discovered in 1995) at Mantadia and Ranomafana.

**Wedge-tailed Jery***Hartertula flavoviridis*

Of uncertain affinity, this species was well seen at Ranomafana.

**Thamnornis***Thamnornis chloropetoides*

The ratchety call of this species alerted us to its presence, and we obtained superb looks at this avian in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

**Spectacled Tetraka***Xanthomixis zosterops*

One of the more commonly recorded and heard forest understory inhabitants, seen at Andasibe - Mantadia, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

**Appert's Tetraka***Xanthomixis apperti*

The group enjoyed excellent close-ups of what must be the best looking of Madagascar's "greenbuls" at Zombitse. Globally threatened.

**Grey-crowned Tetraka***Xanthomixis tenebrosa*

Well seen at Ranomafana. Often is associated with mixed understory flocks.

**Madagascar Yellowbrow***Crossleyia xanthophrys*

Almost everyone managed very good views of this, one of Madagascar's skulkiest birds while at Vohiparara. A total of six were recorded, with the flock containing adults and juveniles.

**Rand's Warbler***Randia pseudozosterops*

The call of this species is superficially similar to that of Stripe-throated Jery, however we managed to scope a specimen calling on a snag alongside the latter at Mantadia so as to make a comparison. Also seen at Andasibe while foraging in the canopy.

**White-eyes Zosteropidae****Madagascar White-eye***Zosterops maderaspatanus*

A common species seen in wooded areas from the first day of the tour in Tana.

**Starlings Sturnidae****Madagascar Starling***Saroglossa aurata*

Our best sighting of this species was of a bird presumably nesting in the huge crevices of a *Eucalyptus* trunk at Andasibe.

**Common Myna***Acridotheres tristis*

This introduced species was seen almost daily.

**Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae****Madagascar Magpie-Robin***Copsychus albospecularis*

Seen and heard almost daily, one of the commonest trip birds.

**Eurasian Stonechat***Saxicola torquatus*

Commonly seen in highland areas. A good looking creature.

**Littoral Rock Thrush***Pseudocossyphus imerina*

A male perched beautifully for us allowing lovely views while at Anakao.

**Forest Rock Thrush***Pseudocossyphus sharpei*

The best looking of the rock thrushes we encounter, a male was well seen at Ranomafana.

**Benson's Rock Thrush***Pseudocossyphus bensoni*

Well seen by everyone on the fancy buildings at Jardin du Roy, Isalo NP.



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

Very common, seen almost daily.

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

This species is far less common than the previous bird. We first recorded it at Ampijoroa.

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

A great looking bird that is found in the eastern rainforests. We first saw it at Andasibe.

**Sakalava Weaver***Ploceus sakalava*

This dry country bird was seen fairly regularly in the west. We first recorded it en route to Ampijoroa.

**Red Fody***Foudia madagascariensis*

Another species (along with Souimanga Sunbird, Madagascar Starling and Madagascar Coucal) that was seen almost daily. Most of the males we saw were in full breeding plumage, with a number in transitional plumage too.

**Forest Fody***Foudia omissa*

Also a smart bird, the Forest Fody is an inhabitant of the eastern rainforests, and was well seen at Andasibe-Mantadia.

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

A smart estrildid that was seen at a few scattered localities, beginning with our accommodation in Tana.

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

Very common, especially near human settlements, this spunky bird was seen regularly at scattered localities throughout 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): 29****Tenrecs Tenrecidae****Common Tenrec***Tenrec ecaudatus*

We had excellent views of this mammal at Ampijoroa, and for some on the nightwalk at Andasibe. Is capable of producing a phenomenally large litter of up to 32 young!

**Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae****Madagascar Flying Fox***Pteropus rufus*

A noisy species, these huge bats (one of the largest in the world) put on a great display of squabbling and flapping for us at the Berenty colony.



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### Sheath-tailed Bats Emballonuridae

**Mauritian Tomb Bat** *Taphozous mauritanus*  
Quite a smart bat, we had five on a roost at Ampijoroa.

### Old World Leaf-nosed Bats Hipposideridae

**Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat** *Hipposideros commersoni*  
This bat flew up and down the trail at Ampijoroa, before clinging to a twig and allowing great views.

### Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae

**Grey Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus murinus*  
A total of two were seen on our nightwalks at Ampijoroa. The largest of the mouse lemurs.

**Brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus rufus*  
Some had excellent views of this tiny creature at Anjozorobe.

**Grey-brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus griseorufus*  
We had a close-up of this species on a day roost in the spiny forest at Berenty.

**Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur** *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*  
A total of three were seen on our evening walks on the road at Andasibe.

**Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur** *Cheirogaleus medius*  
Possessing the ability to store fat in its tail, this lemur, an inhabitant of the deciduous forest in the west was excellently seen at Ampijoroa.

### Sportive Lemurs Lepilemuridae

**Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur edwardsi*  
A total of five were seen while at Ampijoroa. The "sportive" lemurs certainly don't behave like they are sporty!

**Hubbard's Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur hubbardi*  
Restricted to the south west of the island, we had good views of a single on a roost during our visit to Zombitse Forest.

**White-footed Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur leucopus*  
Has a relatively small range in southern Madagascar, we saw a few individuals at Berenty.

### True Lemurs Lemuridae

**Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur griseus*  
A common lemur around bamboo stands in the eastern rainforest, we had very good views while at Mantadia.

**Ring-tailed Lemur** *Lemur catta*  
One of the most recognisable of all mammals, we were witness to their constant antics while at Berenty. The best looking individuals we saw however, were at Anja Community Reserve, where the animals looked sleek and well furred (with good looking tails!), unlike their brethren at Berenty who mostly looked scruffy, with huge patches of fur missing. This is as a result of eating pods from the *Leucena* tree.

**Mongoose Lemur** *Eulemur mongoz*  
One of the more difficult species of lemur to see, we enjoyed lovely views in the camp at Ampijoroa of a few specimens.

**Red-bellied Lemur** *Eulemur rubriventer*  
This smart forest lemur was seen at Mantadia and Ranomafana.



**Common Brown Lemur** *Eulemur fulvus*

We had our best views of this species at Anjozorobe. A fairly widespread lemur.

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

“Wild” animals were well seen Ranomafana. The Red-fronted Brown Lemurs at Berenty are supposed to hybrid animals.

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

One of the most beautiful lemurs. While in Mantadia National Park, we were treated to an amazing show by three individuals who played in the trees above our heads.

**Avahis, Sifakas and the Indri Indridae****Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur)** *Avahi laniger*

A single was seen at Anjozorobe.

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

We saw four on our nocturnal excursions at Ampijoroa.

**Diademed Sifaka** *Propithecus diadema*

A front runner for the title of the world’s most beautiful lemur, we recorded a total of three at Mantadia. 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*

The famous “dancing sifakas”, these lemurs are always a hit at Berenty. We recorded numerous individuals during our stay there.

**Coquerel’s Sifaka** *Propithecus coquereli*

A handsome mammal, it is common in an around the accommodations at Ampijoroa. The northern counterpart of the previous species, and previously classed as a sub-species of it.

**Indri** *Indri indri*

Probably Madagascar’s most famous mammal, the unmistakeable calls of this animal drifting through the rainforest is an unforgettable experience. We watched the Indri at Mantadia and at Andasibe.

**Malagasy Carnivores Eupleridae****Ring-tailed Mongoose** *Galidia elegans*

A pair were seen on the ridge top at Vohiparara, and also tried to explore a grounded backpack for morsels before making a hasty retreat. The rich chestnut colour of the mongooses pelage was quite beautiful!

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

Not uncommon in the eastern rainforests, this species was seen at Anjozorobe, and at Ranomafana (guide only).

**Western Tuft-tailed Rat** *Eliurus myoxinus*

One was seen on our nightwalk at Ampijoroa. An arboreal species.

**Brown Rat** *Rattus norvegicus*

A furtive individual was seen by some as it slunk through a rock pier. This happened as we were boarding our zebu carts prior to the Nosy Ve adventure!

**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*

An athletic frog, it was recorded in grassy areas at Vohiparara.

#### Mantellidae

##### *Boophis doulioti*

A common species in accommodations and Ampijoroa.

##### *Boophis albilabris*

We had superb views of this phenomenal creature at our accommodations at Ranomafana.

##### *Boophis viridis*

This tree frog was seen on a nightwalk at Andasibe.

##### *Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis*

A handsome frog found in the leaf litter at Ranomafana.

##### *Aglyptodactylus* sp. aff. *madagascariensis* “Ranomafana”

Smaller than the previous species, we also recorded this species on the forest floor while at Ranomafana.

##### *Mantella baroni*

This gorgeous frog was seen at Mantadia and Vohiparara.

##### *Gephyromantis asper*

This small frog was seen at Ranomafana.

##### *Gephyromantis sculpturatus*

A medium sized frog that was seen in leaf litter at Ranomafana.

##### *Mantidactylus opiparis*

Seen by some on the last afternoon at Vohiparara.

## 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: 32

#### Land Tortoises Testudinidae

##### Spider Tortoise

*Pyxis arachnoides*

Our stroll through the spiny forest at Berenty yielded two sightings of this small tortoise.

#### 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*

Relatively common in the eastern rainforests, two were seen on a night walk at Andasibe.

*Brookesia thieli*

A smaller species than the previous, two were seen on our nightwalk at Anjozorobe.

**Short-horned Chameleon***Calumma brevicorne*

Seen on nightwalks at Andasibe and Anjozorobe.

*Calluma crypticum*

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

*Calluma globifer*

Two were seen on a nightwalk at Anjozorobe.

**O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon***Calluma oshaughnessyi*

This good looking chameleon was seen at Ranomafana on our nightwalk.

**Parson's Chameleon***Calluma parsonii*

Tied with Oustalet's Chameleon as the world's largest chameleon, we recorded it at Andasibe at night.

**Nose-horned Chameleon***Calluma nasutum*

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

**Band-bellied Chameleon***Calluma gastrotaenia*

A common, bright green reptile with a cream belly, it was seen at Andasibe, Anjozorobe and Ranomafana.

**Oustalet's Chameleon***Calluma oustaleti*

A monster, and tied with Parson's for title of world's biggest chameleon, we saw some fair sized specimens while at Ampijoroa, Zombitse and Anja.

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

A common camp herp at Ampijoroa.

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

A large lizard that was seen at Isalo and Anja on large rocks.

**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*

This large lizard was commonly seen as it scuttled around camp at Ampijoroa.

**Madagascar Plated Lizard***Zonosaurus madagascariensis*

A few were seen at Andasibe-Mantadia.

**Skinks Scincidae****Gravenhorst's Skink***Trachylepis gravenhorstii*

We observed this skink in a number of areas (especially in fringe habitat).

**Geckos Gekkonidae****Mercator Tropical House Gecko***Hemidactylus mercatorius*

A widespread species on the island, that was commonly seen (and heard!) around our accommodations.

**Southern Bark Gecko***Lygodactylus tuberosus*

Seen on our accommodations at Berenty. A small, brownish and diurnal gecko.



*Lygodactylus tolampyae*

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

**Madagascar Day Gecko***Phelsuma madagascariensis*

A large, green diurnal species that we encountered at Ampijoroa and 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*

Seen on trees in Zombitse Forest.

**Lineated Day Gecko***Phelsuma lineata*

First recorded in Tana at Tsimbazaza Zoo, it was commonly seen in eastern rainforest sites (e.g. Andasibe 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*

Another good looking gecko, this one was recorded at Ranomafana on our accommodations. Possesses a black dot behind the forelimbs.

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

We enjoyed an excellent interaction with this species at Mantadia, with a further individual seen at Ranomafana. 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****Madagascar Spotted Snake***Madagascarophis colubrinus*

Seen on our night walk at Ampijoroa. A relatively common snake on the island.

**Giant Hog-nosed Snake***Leioheterodon madagascariensis*

This interesting snake was seen by some at Ampijoroa and later at Zombitse Forest. The tip of the nose really does remind one of a hogs nose!

*Liopholidophis sexlineatus*

This snake was seen near a marsh at Vohiparara.

*Bibilava lateralis*

We recorded this species at Mantadia.

**Mahafaly Sand Snake***Mimophis mahfalensis*

A single was seen in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

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