

TROPICAL BIRDING

Madagascar Eighth Continent

Western endemics extension 3rd – 7th November, 2013
Set departure tour 8th – 23rd November, 2013

Tour leader: Charley Hesse
Report & photos (all taken on this tour) by Charley Hesse



Short-toed & Pitta-like Ground-Rollers. We saw all 5 species of ground-rollers on this tour (Charley Hesse)

It was another very successful and immensely enjoyable set departure tour in Madagascar this year. Instead of 1 large group (like some other tour companies), we ran 2 simultaneous trips with 6 clients in each which meant that it wasn't crowded on the trails and both groups still benefitted greatly by sharing information. Logistics all went very smoothly thanks to the hard work of the Tropical Birding Madagascar office and all the clients were pleasantly surprised by the high quality of the accommodations and food. We not only saw all members of the endemic mesite, ground-roller and asity families. But we saw them very well. My group didn't join the northeast extension, but in the northwest and main tour, our final trip list was 186 bird species including almost 100 full endemics with many more regional endemics and endemic subspecies. A trip to Madagascar wouldn't be the same without lemurs and we saw an impressive 25 species as well as 2 Malagasy carnivores and a tenrec. Tropical Birding continues to lead the field with reptiles and my group had almost 40 species with a good range of chameleons and snakes. We saw vastly different landscapes, starting with the dry deciduous forest of the northwest with its suite of rare endemics including Madagascar Fish-Eagle, White-breasted Mesite & Schlegel's Asity. We began the main tour in the spiny forest of the southwest and its incredible plant life, not to mention the unique Long-tailed Ground-Roller and Subdesert Mesite. From here we made our way to the eastern slope, stopping at Anja to spend time with the Ring-tailed Lemurs. Highlights from the eastern rainforests at Ranomafana were many and included Brown Mesite, 3 ground-rollers, 3 asities and the seriously rare Golden & Greater Bamboo Lemurs. At Perinet & Mantadia we caught up with Madagascar Crested Ibis on a nest, Madagascar Flufftail and the unmistakable Indri. A trip to Madagascar really is the trip of a lifetime.

WESTERN ENDEMIC EXTENSION

3rd November – Tana to Ankarafantsika`

One of the many challenges with Madagascar Tours is the national airline, Air Madagascar. They are prone to changing flight times at the drop of a hat. Our early flight to Mahajanga to start the North West extension had been changed from morning to mid-afternoon, which unfortunately meant we lost half a day's birding. The flight left on time so we were at least grateful for small blessings. We had our first birds in the form of **Mascarene Martin** at Tana airport. It was about a 2 and a half hour drive to the Ankarafantsika (meaning 'Spiny Mountain') National Park. On the way we saw many common species like **Cattle Egret, Yellow-billed Kite, African Palm-Swift, Pied Crow** and even a few glimpses of the endemic **Madagascar Lark**. The highlight of the drive though were brief views of an **Eleonora's Falcon**, a species which are rarely seen this early. We called in at the restaurant next to the national park for dinner. It was right on the edge of the forest and after ordering, we took a short walk around nearby to find an amazing 5 species of lemurs. Namely, **Common Brown Lemur** and **Coquerel's Sifaka** which are both diurnal; **Mongoose Lemur** which can be either nocturnal or diurnal depending on the season; and **Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemur** and **Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur** which are both nocturnal. We also saw our first **Collared Iguanid** through a crack in a rotten tree plus **Madagascar Day Gecko** in the restaurant. We went on from here to our nearby lodge.



Fat-tailed Dwarf-Lemurs are so called as they store fat in their tails for hibernation (Charley Hesse)

4th November – Ankarafantsika NP`

Today was our only full day in the park and we planned to make full use of it. We had a nice view over a hillside during breakfast and we saw **Crested Coua, Broad-billed Roller, White-headed Vanga** and **Crested Drongo** through the scope. We drove into the park and while Ken sorted out our entry tickets at the office, I guided both groups. The number of species in the parking lot was impressive and up in the trees we saw **Sickle-billed & Chabert Vangas, Madagascar Bulbul, Madagascar Bee-eater, Grey-headed Lovebird, Lesser Vasa-Parrot** and both **Souimanga & Madagascar Sunbirds**; whilst walking around on the ground nearby, we saw **Madagascar Turtle-Dove** and **Madagascar Hoopoe**. The best bird though was a **Frances's Goshawk** which was being mobbed by smaller birds and then perched to give us good views in the scope. Our tickets procured, we drove to the start of a network of trails where our target was the amazing **Schlegel's Asity**. We set off along the edge of the lake where we saw our first **Namaqua Dove** and **Madagascar Green-Pigeon** before reaching the trailhead. The trail was fairly productive and we picked up new birds at a steady rate, with good views of **Coquerel's Coua** stalking by the side of the trail, a male **Cuckoo-Roller** calling loudly from the top of a tree, a beautiful, white-morph male **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher, Common Newtonia, Long-billed Bernieria, Common Jery** and several **Madagascar Magpie-Robins**. Our first major target was **White-breasted Mesite**. We heard them calling nearby on the trail and we called them in. They were fairly cooperative and stood by the edge of the trail before crossing over giving everyone good views. We reached a good spot for the **Schlegel's Asity** and they responded nicely to the tape. There was plenty of oohing and ahing as we ogled the male's bright blue and green caruncles in the scope. It was great to get this very special bird in the bag especially with our limited time. We started heading back, getting great views of **Blue & Rufous Vangas** on the way.

We went straight up to the upper trails in search of the endangered **Van Dam's Vanga**, another bird only found here. On the way up we saw some nice reptiles, with **Collared Iguanids**, **Broad-tailed Girdled-Lizard** and **Blonde Hognose Snake**. Next we were shown an active **Madagascar Buzzard** nest with an adult seemingly tearing something apart for a chick, and along the trail we had our first **Red-capped Coua**. Another great sighting on the way up were some nocturnal **Western Woolly Lemurs** on a day roost. Two or 3 of them were hugging each other in a big furry ball with a couple of little hands and faces poking out. We also found a close **Ashy Cuckoo-shrike** which showed very well. We finally heard the distinctive descending whistle of the **Van Dam's Vanga** and we rushed towards it. We got closer and closer and there was a nice male perched up in a tree. It even stayed put until everybody had seen it in the scope. It isn't usually that straight forward. One extra treat was a **Torotoroka Scops-Owl** sat in the entrance hole of a dead tree. It was very hot by now and it was time to start making our way back down for lunch. On the way down we managed to find out first chameleon, the **Oustalet's Chameleon**. We weren't accustomed to the heat yet and we were all pretty wiped out by the time we got down to the restaurant but a round of cold drinks soon had us feeling human again. As we walked back to our vehicle we found a group of **Coquerel's Sifakas** lazing in a tree before we went back to the lodge to rest.



Torotoroko Scops-Owl was split from the eastern form of **Malagasy Scops-Owl** (Charley Hesse)

In the afternoon we headed to the lake, and saw **White-faced Whistling-Duck**, **Gray**, **Purple** & the endangered endemic **Humblot's Heron**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Kittlitz's** & **Three-banded Plovers** and a **Madagascar Coucal**. We started walking around the lake and continued to pick up new species, with **Striated Heron**, **Madagascar Harrier-Hawk**, **Hook-billed Vanga**, **Madagascar Brush-Warbler** and even a **Nile Crocodile** sunning itself on the edge of the lake. The target for the afternoon though was the critically endangered endemic **Madagascar Fish-Eagle**. We made our way to the furthest corner of the lake where the local guides knew them to hang out in the afternoons. We finally spotted them by the edge of the water, but they spotted us and flew around the bend. We followed them and one of the guides managed to pick them out, hidden away behind the foliage of a low tree. We radioed the other Tropical Birding group and they were soon there to see these magnificent birds as well. We turned back, and on the way found several other good water birds like **African Darter**, **Squacco Heron**, **Madagascar Pond-Heron**, **Madagascar Jacana**, **Allen's Gallinule**, **Eurasian Moorhen** and **Little Bittern**. The use of walkie talkies between the 2 groups worked out very well and several times we called the other group back when we found a new bird. It was starting to get dark now though and just before we got back to the vehicles, we found a **Madagascar Nightjar** perched on the ground. We retired to the restaurant for dinner and also had better views of **Milne-Edward's Sportive**, **Common Brown** & **Mongoose Lemurs**. After dinner, we had a short night walk and picked up **Grey** & **Golden-brown Mouse Lemurs** and many **Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemurs** before it started raining heavily. What a day it had been.

5th November – Ankarafantsika NP to Mahajanga

First thing, we drove through the local town to a small lake which our guide knew to hold **African Pygmy-goose**. We found several birds very quickly, along with a surprise **Madagascar Grebe** and some **White-faced Whistling-Ducks**. Walking back, we saw a **Madagascar Kestrel** perched up on a tall snag, several **Greater Vasa-Parrots** flying by and also some **Madagascar Cisticolas** very close by. Next we went to the lake in the park. We passed a famous Baobab tree and saw a pair of **Schlegel's Asities**, **Chabert Vanga**, **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher** and **Malagasy Kingfisher** nearby. We continued on the back side of the lake where we were searching for **Greater Painted-snipe**. We scanned the water's edge, finding **Humblot's & Squacco Herons**, a flyby of the endangered breeding endemic **Madagascar Pond-Heron**, many **Glossy Ibis**, **Madagascar Jacana** and several **Three-banded Plovers**. One trip participant also spotted a **Madagascar Fish-Eagle** perched in a distant tree. We explored some thick marsh vegetation and our local guide consented to take his shoes off and wade in. We saw a pair of **Madagascar Coucals**, and he flushed an **Allen's Gallinule** and finally 2 **Greater Painted-snipes** which we had good flight views of. After we had found our target bird, we called in a **Madagascar Swamp-Warbler**, another new bird for the trip. Walking back, we came across a small flock of **Madagascar White-eyes** on the forest edge. We drove back to the park headquarters where we had our final views of **Coquerel's Sifaka**, **Collared Iguanid** and **Broad-billed Rollers** and one of our guides managed to find us a single **Mauritian Tomb Bat**.



Broad-billed Roller is a conspicuous breeding visitor at Ankarafantsika NP (Charley Hesse)

We said goodbye to the guides and drove to Mahajanga where we checked in and had lunch. After resting in the heat of the day, we ventured out to explore a pond near the airport. We located it, only to find it was almost entirely dry. There were a few open country species like **Namaqua Dove**, **Madagascar Bee-eater** and **Madagascar Lark** and a lot of water birds on the far end where a little water remained. On inspection through the scopes, we found **Great & Dimorphic Egrets**, **Gray, Black & Striated Herons** and a surprise pair of **African Openbills**, a rare species in Madagascar and a very distinct subspecies. We walked closer to see **Kittlitz's Plover** with a very cute, fluffy chick, and after being invited to enter the private land by the security guard, had good views of other birds on the pond, with **Yellow-billed Stork**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Greater Painted-snipe** and a flyby of **Black-crowned Night-Heron**. On the walk back to the car we passed some small bushes where we saw **Common Jery** and our first **Madagascar Mannikins** but only in flight. It had been a worthwhile excursion and we made our way back to the hotel for dinner and bed.

6th November – Betsiboka Delta

Today was the day for our boat trip to explore the nearby Betsiboka Delta in search of 2 of Madagascar's most threatened birds, the endangered **Bernier's Teal** and **Malagasy Sacred Ibis**. My group's was a slow boat that went chugging upstream towards the mangrove islands. The first birds we saw were numerous **Saunders's Terns** which were hovering and diving into the water to catch small fish. Next, we saw large numbers of **Lesser Flamingos** in the water, then taking off and flying ahead of the boat in a long stream of pink. We had timed the trip perfectly and the mud around the base of the mangroves was just beginning to be exposed. On a long sand spit we saw a distant **Lesser Crested Tern**, many **Dimorphic Egrets**, our first **Malagasy Sacred Ibis** and **Bernier's Teal**, although the latter were distant and back lit. Our boat man decided to take us further upstream to try and find others that we could get closer to before the water level became too low. As we continued along the mangroves we had fine views of a **Madagascar Harrier-Hawk** overhead and an **Ashy Cuckoo-shrike** perched in the mangroves. We came to a great spot further on where we did indeed get much closer views of **Malagasy Sacred Ibis** and more **Bernier's Teal**. It was also a great place for shore birds and we saw many **Greater Sandpipers** but just a couple of **Lesser Sandpipers**, several **Terek Sandpipers**, **Whimbrel**, **Bar-tailed Godwit** and **Curlew Sandpiper**. Having found our targets, we started back along the edge of the mangrove, adding **Common Sandpiper** and **White-fronted Plover**. The journey back took some time as we had to go quite slow in the shallow water of the estuary, but the faster boat came to pick us up partway to speed us back for lunch. In the afternoon, we had some down time and an excursion to a local craft market to buy souvenirs.



The endangered endemic Bernier's Teal has a very characteristic feeding behaviour (Charley Hesse)

7th November – Mahajanga to Tana

Our flight back to Tana had been changed to a late evening flight meaning that we would get in after 10pm, so we decided to undertake the long drive, have a few birding stops along the way and get back much earlier. We left Mahajanga after an early breakfast and drove back along the road to Ankarafantsika, with many of the same common birds like **Namaqua Dove**, **Sakalava Weaver** and **Madagascar Bee-eater**. In some flooded rice fields, there were more **Dimorphic Egrets** and **Black Herons**. Our first birding stop was after about 3 hours at Lake Ambondromamy. Although we had already seen **African Pygmy-goose**, taking another look was a nice excuse to stretch our legs. We also had several **White-faced Whistling-Ducks**, some distant **Hottentot Teal**, **Gray & Humblot's Heron** and **Black-winged Stilt**. We were on the road again and a short while later, Michael spotted a **White-throated Rail** from a bridge over a small stream. We reversed and all had good views before it ran into some long grass. We reached a large steel bridge over the Betsiboka River which is a well-known site for the **Madagascar Pratincole**. We got out and walked part way across and soon had 2 pairs flying around and showing some interesting territorial behaviour. From here it was a short distance to Maevetanana where we bought some cold drinks and mangos to go with our sandwiches. This was approximately the half way mark on our long drive and from here we started to climb up towards the highlands. The topography was impressive but all the forest was gone. Burnt to leave sterile grasslands with just the odd **Madagascar Kestrel**, **Madagascar Lark**, **Mascarene Martin** and **Stonechat**. We were making good time and got out to stretch our legs at a bridge over a small river where we saw another **Madagascar Pratincole**, **Common Sandpiper** and a **Madagascar Bulbul**. We arrived at our comfortable hotel and met up with 2 new group members.

8th November – Tana to Ifaty

On the way to the airport we saw **Black Heron** doing its 'mantling behaviour'. We left for Tulear on an early flight from Tana and on the lawn just outside the airport had our first **Madagascar Wagtail**. The flight was on time and we were met in Tulear by a convoy of 4x4s. The distance to Ifaty from Tulear isn't great but the sand road is pretty bad and there is plenty of birding on the way. Our first birding stop was at the Belalanda flats where there is a series of pools. We all got out here and started working our way through the shorebirds, with **Kittlitz's & Common Ringed Plover**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Common Greenshank**, many **Curlew Sandpipers** and a single **Little Stint** which is surprisingly uncommon in Madagascar. We also had distant **Little Grebe** and **Red-knobbed Coot**, both new for the list. Other birds in this area were **Madagascar Bee-eater**, **Madagascar Lark**, **Madagascar Cisticola**, **Namaqua Dove** and we managed to call out a **Madagascar Swamp-Warbler** from the reeds. We drove on to where the road ran along the edge of the marsh and got out to take a look at a **Hamerkop**. I tried the call of the **Baillon's Crake** too and got a response straight away. There was a bit of a gap in the reeds and we managed to call the crake across it to give everybody good views. Somebody also confessed later to have seen a **Barn Swallow** here, which is a curiously uncommon bird in Madagascar. We drove on to the edge of some mangroves where we managed to see **Black-bellied Plover**, **Greater Sandplover**, **Whimbrel** and **Ruddy Turnstone**. We also saw a **Gray Heron** sheltering in the shade of a tree. Across a river mouth we saw a small tern roost with **Common**, **Great Crested & Lesser Crested Terns** along with **Sanderling** and **White-fronted Plover**. I also called in a **Subdesert Brush-Warbler**, our first endemic bird to the south west. Further along we saw **Striated Heron** and **Terek Sandpiper** and we were also surrounded by dozens of begging kids.



The completely unique Long-tailed Ground-Roller. (Charley Hesse)

We drove through the centre of Ifaty and met with our local guide to arrange a meeting time in the afternoon. After that we drove further north to our comfortable hotel where we had lunch and some down time to rest out the hottest hours of the day. In the late afternoon we returned to Ifaty and Parc Mosa where we began our explorations of the famous spiny forest. A short distance along the trail we found a **Running Coua** which crossed the trail quickly and our local guides charged into the bush to herd back out for us (a common guiding technique here). We got great views and also a group of 3 **Madagascar Buttonquail** which showed very nicely. Further on we had a **Crested Coua** and other common birds such as **Common & Stripe-throated Jerys**, **Madagascar Magpie-Robin**, **Souimanga Sunbird**, **Common Newtonia** and **Sakalava Weaver**. We were led on to a spot with an area of dead leaves by the side of the trail where there was a **Madagascar Nightjar** nest. The camouflage was incredible and we wouldn't have seen it if it wasn't pointed out to us. One of the top birds of the spiny forest is the **Long-tailed Ground-Roller** and this too was wonderfully staked out. The 2 guides coaxed the birds into an opening under some small trees where they were visible to us and we watched them at our leisure. It was a mesmerizing bird and it took another local endemic, the unusual **Thamnornis**, to show up a while later before we could tear ourselves away from them. The afternoon was not all birds and we also saw a few nice reptiles in the shape of **Three-eyed Lizard**, **Sakalava's Velvet Gecko** and **Standing's Day Gecko**. It had been a fabulous introduction to the spiny forest but there was plenty left to see tomorrow. We drove back to our hotel and some of us took a short walk after dinner to see **Grey Mouse Lemur**, a few more geckos and a funny hermit crab.

9th November – Ifaty Spiny Forest

We had a very early start and just at dawn drove towards the spiny forest reserve in Ifaty. On the way there were a number of **Madagascar Nightjars** hawking insects over the roadside trees. We were met by our guides and entered the forest once more. We had an amazing morning working our way along the trails and picking up many of the common birds, like **Common & Stripe-throated Jeries, Sakalava Weaver, Crested Coua, Madagascar Kestrel** and **Grey-headed Lovebird**. We had a good morning for vangas and saw **Chabert, Sickle-billed, White-headed & Lafresnaye's Vangas**. The latter new for the trip and a SW endemic. **Common & Archbold's Newtonias** are both now also considered vangas and we saw both of these rather similar birds well. We saw another **Long-tailed Ground-Roller** in the same place as yesterday and then went on to see a **Madagascar Sparrowhawk** nest on top of a *Pachypodium* tree. It flew out of the nest and perched in a nearby tree to give great scope views. There had been some debate amongst the guides about whether the bird actually was a **Madagascar Sparrowhawk** and not a Frances' but now we could see the size and all the salient features. We passed a clearing where we scoped a distant **Broad-billed Roller** and had a **Lesser Vasa-Parrot** and **Madagascar Bee-eaters** flying by. Our main target of the morning was the **Subdesert Mesite** and after we heard some distant shouting, we rushed along the trail but it was further than we thought and took a while of following our guide through the thorny scrub, getting the odd scratch. We arrived at the spot and got the scopes onto a dark shape up in an Octopus Tree to see a female **Subdesert Mesite** doing its anti-predator defensive behaviour of flying up into a tree and freezing. It was great to have found the bird and it was no disappointment. Afterwards, we went back to the parking lot where we found a **Mahafaly Sand Snake**. Amazing as we hadn't really seen any reptiles in the forest.



Subdesert Mesite doing its fascinating predator evasion technique (Charley Hesse)

From here we drove to a spot the local guides knew for the rare **Madagascar Plover**. It was in an open area with short grass similar to where we had searched for them yesterday. At first we checked a nearby salt pan which had **Kittlitz's, Common Ringed & White-fronted Plovers, Ruddy Turnstone** and **Curlew Sandpiper**. Then the guides found us a pair of **Madagascar Plovers** which flew from next to the salt pan to the short grass nearby. There were a lot of local people around and the birds didn't seem to be too bothered by them. We headed back to the lodge for lunch, after which some people chose to take a short boat trip out to the reef to do some snorkelling. In the afternoon we returned to the reserve to pick up the few birds we were still missing from our list, one of which was the **Green-capped Coua**. One of our local guides found one quite quickly, perched up in a tree, but it flew before everybody could get on it. We also had a **Madagascar Coucal** and several more reptiles, with **Three-eyed Lizard, Standing's Day Gecko** and our first **Warty Chameleon**. We made it out to an area frequented by **Banded Kestrel** and sure enough, there was another young guy standing nearby to point it out to us (for a price). These birds sure had a premium now. We took photos of this female bird before heading back towards the entrance. On the way, we heard a **Madagascar Cuckoo** nearby and managed to call it in. It perched on a partially obscured branch in the failing light so it wasn't the best view. We waited for dark, then took a night walk on which we found the very cute **Grey-brown Mouse Lemur** and also a species of sportive lemur that is most likely **Petter's**. Just before finishing we also saw our first Big-headed Gecko. What an incredible day it had been.

10th November – Ifaty to Tulear

It was our last morning in the Ifaty area and on the way had great views of a **Broad-billed Roller** perched by the side of the road. We had our last walk in the forest, but because we had seen almost everything, there was no need to start so early. We had plenty of common species like **Grey-headed Lovebird**, **Lesser Vasa-Parrot**, **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher**, **Stripe-throated Jery**, **Subdesert Brush-Warbler**, **Sakalava Weaver** and even the **Madagascar Sparrowhawk's** tail sticking out of the back of the nest. The highlight of the morning was getting great views of **Hook-billed Vanga**, which was new for some of our group. On the way back, we had our best views of **Madagascar Cuckoo** and a new reptile for the list, **Elegant Skink**. The local guides also found us a **Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec** which they put on the trail for us to take photos of. We came back to the vehicles and we loaded up and started our drive back to Tulear. Unfortunately, one of our vehicles broke down on the way but we had enough space in the others for everybody to fit in. As we were redistributing the vehicles, a **Madagascar Green-Pigeon** flew by (a new bird for those that didn't join the pre-tour extension). We stopped to look for **White-throated Rail** on the way back but only saw **Hamerkop** and fly overs of **Striated Heron** and **Barn Swallow**. We walked along the edge of another marsh still trying for the rail and they responded but wouldn't come in. We did however see **Squacco Heron**, **Common Greenshank**, **Madagascar Swamp-Warbler**, **Madagascar Cisticola** and numerous **Three-eyed Lizards**.



Madagascar Plover is a very rare and localised endemic (Charley Hesse)

We reached our comfortable hotel in Tulear where there was a beautifully-plumaged **Red Fody** out front to welcome us. After throwing our bags in our rooms, we went straight to lunch and afterwards had plenty of time to relax. Michael did some birding from his room window which had superb views over the mudflats, where he saw **Black-winged Stilt**, **Black-bellied & Common Ringed Plovers**, **Greater Sandplover**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Curlew Sandpiper** and even **Lesser Crested Tern**. Later in the afternoon we explored some open areas near the airport where we located more **Madagascar Plovers** and a couple of **Whimbrel** but no hoped-for Madagascar Manakin. Next we went to the famous Arboretum d'Antsokay where our main target was the **Green-capped Coua** which we had only glimpsed in the spiny forest. As soon as we entered the gardens, we flushed a **Madagascar Nightjar** which came down again and gave great views. We had our best views of **Mascarene Martin** which was flying around overhead and several other common birds, like **Madagascar Coucal**, **Madagascar Bulbul** and **Common Jery**. We finally found the coua and it strutted backwards and forwards over the trail, dashing around and giving a great show. After a quick look in the gift shop, we head back to the hotel and then out to a wonderfully eccentric Italian restaurant in town.

11th November – Tulear & La Table

On the outskirts of Tulear was a stakeout for **Madagascar Sangrouse**, where every morning they fly in to the same spot to drink. We thought we had arrived with plenty of time, only to find another group of birders already looking at them over on the far side of a large expanse of short grass. We started walking towards them, when something caused the sandgrouse to flush up. We were worried that we had been too late but they soon came down again at some other ponds nearby. We raced across the grass and once we were close put them in the scope for fine views. There were 3 pairs of these large birds and we got even closer for better views and a chance to take some photos. Our target under our belt, we were off to La Table, a plateau area of dry Coral Rag Scrub outside of town. This was the site for the **Red-shouldered Vanga**, which was discovered as recently as 1997. There were 2 other birding groups there at the same time as us but we managed to avoid getting under each other's feet. We started along a trail through the scrub and soon enough came upon a **Verreaux's Coua** which we all got good views of even though they were flighty and didn't stick around. We were taken to a nest site for the **Red-shouldered Vanga** by our local guide and had fine views of a male on the nest. It had certainly been a lot easier to find than on previous tours. On the way back to the vehicle, we saw a **Madagascar Hoopoe** calling from a tree and some of the few other species that are found in this harsh habitat, like **Souimanga Sunbird**, **Namaqua Dove** and **Subdesert Brush-Warbler**. There were also some rather attractive reptiles called **Malagasy Keeled Plated Lizards**.



A male Red-shouldered Vanga nest sitting on the nest (Charley Hesse)

On the way back to the hotel, we went in search of Madagascar Mannakins by a small pond. While the clients scanned a pond to see a **Great Egret** and many **Kittlitz's Plovers**, I walked the edge of the bushes where they are often found. We drove further on to explore another spot for mannikins to no avail, but here we found many other species, including **Malagasy Kingfisher**, **Crested Drongo**, **Common Jery**, **Madagascar Cisticola**, **Madagascar Swamp-Warbler** and a flyby of **Striated Heron**. We had lunch back at the hotel, then a rest after which we went to look for crab plover and other shorebirds along the waterfront where the mudflats were exposed at low tide. The wind was howling though and blowing sand in our faces and after a short time we decided enough was enough. We did find **Greater Sandplover**, **Common Ringed Plover**, **Common Greenshank**, **Whimbrel**, **Bar-tailed Godwit** and **Curlew Sandpiper** but we were pretty sure that there were no Crab Plovers to be seen. They would have to wait until tomorrow,

12th November – Nosy Ve & Anakao

The other Tropical Birding group had been to the island of Nosy Ve yesterday and today it was our turn. One of our major targets was the very unique **Crab Plover**, but scanning the mud flats from the back of our hotel before breakfast we managed to locate 4 individuals before we left. There was also a good selection of other shorebirds, with **Greater Sandplover**, **Black-bellied & Common Ringed Plovers**, **Common Greenshank**, **Whimbrel**, **Curlew Sandpiper** and even a **Striated Heron**. After breakfast we boarded our boat in the harbour. Which was an experience in itself. As it was low tide, we had to ride Zebu-carts across the mud and out through the shallow water before getting on the boat. On the ride itself we saw several **Saunders's & Lesser Crested Terns**. Two smaller islands, not much more than sandbars, were exposed off the northern tip of Nosy Ve. On the edge of one of these we saw a single **Crab Plover** which we got fairly close to in the boat. We then landed on the main island and used our scopes to look at a large group of another 40 **Crab Plovers** just across the water giving great views.



Red-tailed Tropicbird is the highlight of a trip to the beautiful island of Nosy Ve (Charley Hesse)

The island was very beautiful with emerald green water and white sand. We made our way towards the southern end of the island, spotting a few shorebirds like **White-fronted Plover**, **Ruddy Turnstone** and **Sanderling** on the way. There was a small rookery of **Dimorphic Egrets** and a **Gray Heron** in a small group of trees. **Madagascar Cisticolas** were common on the island and there was also a pair of the introduced **Common Mynas** which were not so good to see. The main reason for us coming to Nosy Ve though was to see the **Red-tailed Tropicbird** colony. We saw plenty of them flying around and eventually found several nests, some with chicks. After this we got back on the boat for the short trip over to Anakao where the arid scrub behind the beach is home to the endemic **Littoral Rock-Thrush**. It was pretty hot by now but luckily, the birds had an active nest right next to the bar in a comfortable resort so we could watch them coming and going while we enjoyed cold drinks. There were a few other birds nearby, like **Souimanga Sunbird**, **Red Fody** and **Subdesert Brush-Warblers** calling in the brush nearby but we had pretty much exhausted our birding and took our speedboat back to Tulear. After a nice lunch we did a bit of souvenir shopping before heading back to the hotel for some well deserved time off.

13th November – Zombitse to Isalo

It was time to leave Tulear and start our long journey back towards Tana. Our first stop along the way was the magnificent Zombitse National Park which was a good 2 and a half hours drive. We left extra early and arrived just after the park headquarters was supposed to open, but we found nobody there and started to look at a few things around the parking lot. We saw a rather distinctive form of **Three-eyed Lizard**, several **Madagascar Green-Pigeons** flew by and we had many **Cuckoo-Rollers** perched and in flight showing off their acrobatics. Still no guides so we stepped inside the forest to find a **Madagascar Buzzard** perched and a glimpse of some **Verreaux's Sifakas** bouncing off through the trees. Our guide appeared and we went back to the bus and drove 3km along the highway to a stakeout he had for the rare **White-browed Owl**. We had it in a tree right over our heads offering fantastic views. We went back to the entrance and set off along the main loop trail. We soon had **Coquerel's Coua** calling from both sides but they were a little elusive and just a few of us got views. Our guide found us a pair **Rufous Vangas** which showed very well, then we heard the distinctive call of the **Red-tailed Vanga**, which we tracked down for great views.



The endemic White-browed Owl is more closely related to Asian owls than African (Charley Hesse)

Some other birds along the trail included **Crested Coua**, **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher** and **Long-billed Bernieria**, but our main target was the **Appert's Tetraka**. The other group had already been by and missed it, but we heard its distinctive call, and spotted a small bird fly off a low nest. We relocated it and had great views of this very localised endemic. Nearby, the guide showed us a **Hubbard's Sportive Lemur** which stared down at us from its roost hole. Our other main bird target was the **Giant Coua**, and before long, the guide's assistant had located one up in a tree. We met up with the other Tropical Birding group again and shared information. We gave them our Appert's site and they told us about a group of **Verreaux's Sifakas** back along the trail. It was a family group with a young one doing little practice jumps on to mum's back. Another sifaka came very close and appeared to be checking us out. It was a very special moment. We saw some nice reptiles during the morning, including **Sakalava's Velvet Gecko**, **Grandidier's Dwarf Gecko** and **Standing's Day Gecko**. It was getting late and we needed to be leaving, but one last bird that we wanted to search for was a day roosting **Torotoroka Scops-Owl** that the other group had seen and GPS'd. We located the tree which our guide hadn't known about and he was amazed over this wonder of modern technology.

We paid and said goodbye to our guides and drove on to our luxury lodge, next to the Isalo National Park. During lunch, somebody spotted a **Dumeril's Madagascar Swift**, a rather attractive species of iguanid. Later in the afternoon when it had cooled down some, we headed to another luxurious lodge nearby where we had seen a couple of species of interest on previous trips. As we drove down the entrance road and approached our stakeout for Madagascar Partridge, we saw that the whole grassland had been burnt. This was a bit of a blow as it was the most reliable site we had for the species. We walked around the lake anyway and saw a few water birds, like **Purple Heron**, **Madagascar Pond-Heron** and **Malagasy Kingfisher** as well as a large flock of endemic Madagascar Mannikins, our best views so far of this species. Michael also found a **Madagascar Whipsnake** although it disappeared quickly down a hole. We walked up to the lodge spotting **Madagascar Bee-eater**, **Madagascar Cisticola** and **Madagascar Wagtail** in the grasslands on the way. We entered the plush grounds where we searched for the **Benson's Rock-Thrush** which is now just considered a subspecies of the endemic Forest Rock-Thrush. There was no sign of it in its usual haunts but we saw a nice **Broad-billed Roller**, had a flyby of a **Madagascar Turtle-Dove** and heard a **White-throated Rail** in the thick vegetation by the stream. We had all but given up on the rock-thrushes when somebody in the other group spotted one. It quickly disappeared but we located it on top of a roof and had great scope views. We had just enough time to tramp through some grass near hotel still looking for the partridges but instead we flushed up a pair of **Marsh Owls** and a **Common Quail**. We went back for dinner and had the screech of a **Barn Owl** flying over just after dark.



The community Reserve at Anja is a model of effective conservation in Madagascar (Charley Hesse)

14th November – Isalo to Ranomafana

We were to have one more attempt at Madagascar Partridge before we left Isalo and we went tromping through the grass below our cabins. We walked our way through clapping our hands hoping to flush some up. We saw a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** flying back from its night of foraging, a small flock of **Grey-headed Lovebirds** zipped by, **Madagascar Cisticolas** did their little fluttery flights while chipping away and a big hulking **Madagascar Coucal** flew out of a small tree. We flushed up another **Marsh Owl** and had a couple of **Madagascar Kestrels** but no partridges were to be seen. We walked back up to the lodge and after breakfast, checked out and began our long drive towards Ranomafana. The first stretch we scanned for Reunion Harrier to no avail and at a spot with incredible scenery, got out to take some photos and check for lizards and found our first **Boettger's Skink**. We made it to the village of Anja and made our way into this small community reserve to look for **Ring-tailed Lemur**. We stopped at a small lake where we saw a pair of **Red-billed Ducks**, **Great & Dimorphic Egrets**. We located a group of **Ring-tailed Lemurs** not far away and spent some time around these wonderfully confiding creatures. There were some 2-month old youngsters which were playing around while the adults rested on rocks or up in the trees. It was a wonderful encounter and we were sad to drag ourselves away for lunch. We had a nice lunch in the small restaurant during which time we manage to pick out **Alpine Swift** on the huge rock faces of the mountain across from us. We left Anja and continued on to Ranomafana where we arrived in time for dinner and bed.

15th November – Ranomafana NP

We began our birding at Ranomafana with a day at the upper sector of the park known as Vohiparara. We started by trying for the recently discovered Cryptic Warbler by the road but had no response. We just saw a **Madagascar Brush-Warbler** and a flyby of **Lesser Vasa-Parrot**. We walked back down the road and entered the forest. There was a **Madagascar Turtle-Dove** walking along the trail and when we got to a clearing we found a **Rand's Warbler** singing away at the top of a tree. Some of our main targets here were ground-rollers, and we started off with partial views of **Pitta-like Ground-Roller** and then we heard the unmistakable call of the **Rufous-headed Ground-Roller**. We followed the call and found a spot where we might get a view before playing the tape. It came in nicely and our guide spotted it in the undergrowth although a couple of people missed it. We spent the first part of the morning following other calling birds until everybody had reasonable views. We passed some large-leaved *Pandanus* plants where we saw a tiny **Malagasy Glass Frog** and both **Lined & Peacock Day Geckos**. We started climbing up the ridge to the higher levels and on the way had fantastic views of 2 male **Velvet Asities** and 2 **Madagascar Blue-Pigeons**. We climbed higher, stopping briefly to try for a **Madagascar Flufftail** which was calling in the dense undergrowth. We positioned ourselves and I got the bird to walk across, although only a couple of people got on it. Our main target at the top was a sunbird-acity and at one point we thought we had it but it just turned out to be a female **Souimanga Sunbird**. Our guide took us to a nest he had found just a couple of days before and we waited patiently. Finally a female **Yellow-bellied Asity** (as it is now called) came in with some nesting material and we had fantastic views.



Unrelated to sunbirds, Yellow-bellied Asity's bill shape is an example of convergent evolution (Charley Hesse)

Birding was a little slow but we picked up birds at a steady rate, with brief views of **Blue Coua**, a soaring **Cuckoo-Roller**, **Dark Newtonia**, **Ward's Flycatcher** up in the canopy, **Ashy Cuckoo-shrike**, **Grey-crowned Tetraka** and **Long-billed Bernieria**. We had our sandwiches which we had packed and continued birding. Another main target for the day was **Brown Mesite** which our guide told us had not been showing well recently. We heard one though and they seemed to be responding to the tape. We had to go off trail to get closer to them and we spent a long time following and calling them. One participant, Jim, stayed on the trail during this, and as 'his' luck would have it, he had one crossing the trail in front of him and was the only one to see it. We started back down and saw **Spectacled Tetraka**, **Crossley's Vanga** and finally a **Ring-tailed Mongoose**, which everybody had good views of. It had been a tiring day, so we went back for a rest and those that still had the energy joined a night walk. On the way up, we stopped for **Forest Rock-Thrush** which was calling, but the best we could manage was a fly over of a female. Walking back up we had our best views of **Madagascar White-eye**. We reached the spot where **Rufous Mouse Lemurs** are seen daily. They put a little bit of banana out for them and these delightful little creatures come in very close. There was also a **Madagascar Tree Boa** which seemed to be hoping to catch one unawares. From here we walked along the road finding many chameleons, including **Elongate Leaf**, **Nose-horned**, **Band-bellied**, **O'Shaughnessy's** and **Blue-legged Chameleons**, but also other frogs and snakes.

16th November – Ranomafana NP

This morning we were birding the lower section of the park with many different targets. Things started well with a lucky pair of the uncommon **Madagascar Starling** by the park HQ. We set off on the trails and very soon were having our best views of **Pitta-like Ground-Roller**. The guides here use 'animal spotters' and ours quickly found us both **Golden & Greater Bamboo Lemurs**, both endangered, the latter critically so. We were counting our lucky stars to have found these rare lemurs when we heard **Brown Mesite** calling quite close to the trail. The guides shot into the bushes and ended up pushing these secretive birds towards the trail, and soon one crossed over offering brief views. We move further along and the guides worked as a team to herd the mesites very close to us for 'too-close-for-binocular' views. We were very happy to see these great birds, especially after all the work we had put in yesterday. Just then, one of the spotters spotted a **Fanaloka** next to the trail and a few of us caught a glimpse, but we kept after it and eventually had it in a light gap, just sat there grooming itself. It is not every visitor that gets to see one of these. I put on the tape of **Madagascar Wood-Rail** as this sometimes attracts carnivores but instead we had 2 actual wood-rails come very close. The day couldn't have gone much better. We continued our walk and past by an area where the other TB group saw a **Scaly Ground-Roller** yesterday. This is not a regular bird at Ranomafana and we were hoping to see it, but there was no response to the tape. We continued on and after a while I heard a faint call at some distance. We went off trail and finally located it in another gully. We walked closer still to a spot where we had a good view of the forest floor and then played the tape. The bird responded straight away and we all got great views of it passing along the forest floor.



Scaly Ground-Roller was an unexpected bonus at Ranomafana NP (Charley Hesse)

We continued on our long hike along the ridge where we were going to look at a Henst's Goshawk nest. On the way we saw some other nice birds, like **Madagascar Blue-Pigeon**, **Cuckoo-Roller**, another male **Velvet Asity**, **Tylas Vanga** and **Green Jery**. The spotters continued to excel by finding us both **Red-fronted Brown & Red-bellied Lemurs**. Our guide also found us a Boulenger's Giant Treefrog. A rather aggressive little fellow that lives in a hole in a tree and snaps at you when you poke a finger inside. Next we had great views of **Red-tailed Vanga** and **Red-fronted Coua**, plus the amazing **Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko**, which looks just like a dead leaf with devil horns. As if they hadn't done enough, the spotters found us another 2 rare and seldom seen lemurs, the **Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur** and **Milne-Edwards Sifaka**. These required some bush-whacking down steep slopes but everybody agreed it was worth it. As we neared the **Henst's Goshawk** nest we heard an adult calling loudly, but by the time we had got there it had already left again. We settled down to wait for it to return and in the meantime scanned a tall flowering tree to find both **Souimanga & Madagascar Green Sunbirds**, a brief **Common Sunbird-Asity** and nearby a group of **Forest Fodies**. We waited a long time and we agreed that we would wait until midday before giving up, and at exactly 11:59 the adult showed and gave great scope views. We started back for a late lunch and on the way were further held up by **Wedge-tailed Jery**, **Spectacled Tetraka** and **Nelicourvi Weaver**. We were all pretty exhausted but what a morning!

After a very short rest, it was out again, this time to the Amboditanamena sector of the park. On the way up we had a soaring **Madagascar Buzzard** seen from the window of the bus. Here we started a walk along a wide trail on tired legs. We reached a very picturesque bend in the river where there were many **Red-billed Ducks**. We walked further down when Michael shouted that he had spotted the rare **Meller's Duck** that we had been looking for. Not the most beautiful duck in the world, but still endangered endemic nonetheless. We made our way to a swampy area surrounded by forest. As we approached I heard the call of the **Madagascar Snipe** and saw a bird land round the corner in the marsh. We got to the edge and I took off my shoes and started wading through, trying to flush them up. We actually saw the target **Gray Emu-tail** first but eventually managed to flush the snipe for decent flight views. Also in the area we saw several **Stonechats**, **Mascarene Martins** and even a **Madagascar Cuckoo** which flew by. We set off back, finding a beautiful male **Red Fody** and a **Malagasy Skink**. On the way back we had just enough time to search for a beautiful frog, called **Baron's Mantella** and also caught up with the overdue **Madagascar Swift**. What a day it had been.



The endemic Cryptic Warbler was only discovered in 1995 (Charley Hesse)

17th November – Ranomafana NP to Antsirabe

We had an early breakfast again, packed our luggage onto the bus and left the hotel for the last time. **Madagascar Wagtails** were strutting around the parking lot as usual and there was even a **Madagascar Mannikin** perched on the palm tree. We were to bird one more time at Vohiparara, to search for some tricky targets that had eluded us thus far. The first one we tried for was the **Cryptic Warbler** along the road, but again there was no response. We entered the forest again and very quickly found a **Pitta-like Ground-Roller** but not great views. Another of our targets was **White-throated Oxylabes** and one soon responded to the tape. We positioned ourselves with a view into the thick forest and the birds came closer and closer. **Grey-crowned Tetrakas** were present as well just to complicate matters. They were very elusive and not all of us got on them before they realized there was no intruder and went away. We continued along the trail and just as soon as we started climbing up the ridge we heard the **Cryptic Warbler** and had to walk back down. We followed the call up another hillside and finally brought it in, just over our heads for great views of this recently discovered species. We walked back up the trail picking up birds on the way, with **Madagascar Cuckoo**, **Common Newtonia**, **Crested Drongo** and **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher**.

Our guide was constantly on the look out for Pollen's Vanga which we had only heard so far. At one point, we heard a distant call and walked closer, but it actually turned out to be a **Tylas Vanga** which sounds very similar. Still, it was a new bird for most of us. One other great bird we saw was the **Blue Coua**. I heard one vocalize and called it in, and everybody commented on how similar it seemed to a turaco. Our target at the top was the mega-skulking **Brown Emu-tail** which we had missed 2 days before. This time we had one calling and it came closer and closer. Again we positioned ourselves for a view of the low, dense bamboo and sat very still. We saw a twitch of the leaves and a head popped out. Then it hopped out for a couple of seconds on a low branch and then back in, not to reappear. On the way back down we saw **Madagascar Sunbird, Nelicourvi Weaver** and **Forest Fody** and tried again unsuccessfully for Yellow-browed Oxylabes which we had only heard before. Just before leaving the trail we were lucky enough to stumble upon another group of **Milne-Edwards Sifakas** and also had a few reptiles, with **Lined & Peacock Day Geckos** and **Madagascar Girdled-Lizard** before we started our long drive to our next location. On the drive we saw **Stonechat, Dimorphic Egret** and stopped the bus for views of **Hamerkop**. It was too far to reach Andasibe in a day so we had a 1-night stop *en route* at a very fancy hotel in the pleasant town of Antsirabe.



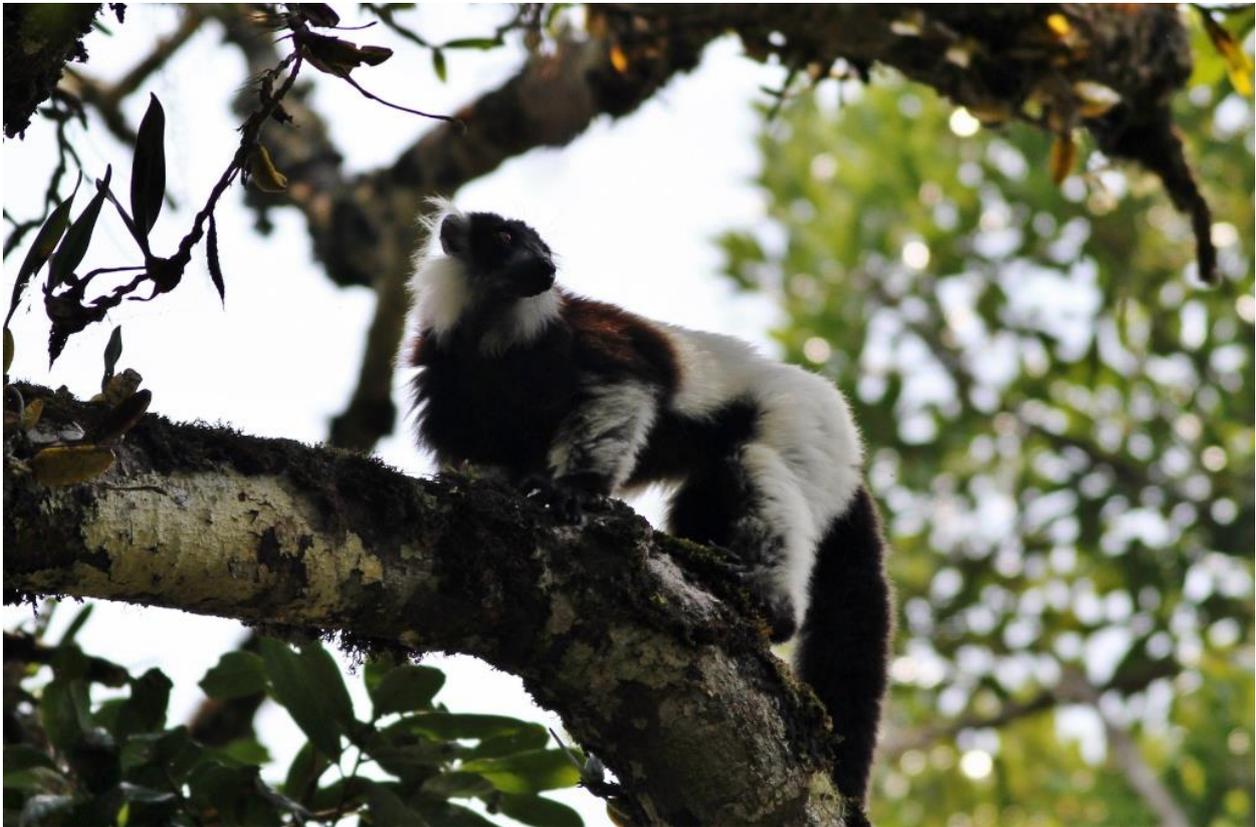
Malagasy Scops-Owl was split from the western form which has a very different call (Charley Hesse)

18th November – Antsirabe to Andasibe

Today was mainly a travel day so there was no real need to set off at the crack of dawn. We had a leisurely breakfast in the pretty little garden where we watched **Souimanga Sunbirds** and **Red Fodies** in the bushes and even added to our reptile lists with **Robust Dwarf Gecko**. The drive to Andasibe was a long one and we broke it up with a lunch stop. Another 3 hours passing through a culturally interesting but ecologically barren landscape with little more than a few egrets in the endless paddy fields. We made it to Andasibe just before the ticket office closed and bought our tickets for tomorrow so we could get off to Mantadia early the next morning. The clients had been waiting in the gardens around the main entrance and seen a few interesting things, including a pair of **Nelicourvi Weavers** mating and an attractive **Madagascan Whipsnake** which we caught and took pictures of. The backdrop of **Indris** calling really wet our appetite for things to come. We checked in to our surprisingly luxurious hotel and had an early dinner before heading out on a night walk on which we had great views of **Malagasy Scops-Owl**. **Goodman's Mouse Lemur** was less obliging only offering fleeting views although we saw well the slightly larger (but still small) **Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur**. We also saw **Nose-horned & Short-horned Chameleons**. One of the highlights of the day though was a baby **Madagascar Tree Boa** with the most beautiful patterning on it.

19th November – Mantadia National Park

We left very early today as it was a long and bumpy road. Our first bird of the day was a **Madagascar Nightjar** in the half-light outside the hotel. On the drive in, we saw a **Striated Heron** and a **Madagascar Coucal** perched up on branches next to the road. Close to Mantadia, we stopped to look at a **Madagascar Blue-Pigeon**. The other TB group pulled ahead of us and further down, they spotted a **Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher** which they shared with us. We finally made it to the start of our hike and had good views of **Madagascar Green-Pigeon** and **Madagascar Starling**. We entered the forest and started picking up some forest birds like **Dark Newtonia**, **Ashy Cuckoo-shrike**, **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher** and **Madagascar Sunbird**. We also added an amphibian in the shape of a **Madagascar Jumping Frog**. One of our main targets of the morning was the **Short-legged Ground-Roller**, and our guide took us round a few territories. He would imitate the call and listen carefully for any answer. We finally heard a faint response and walked around scanning the branches. Michael finally spotted a bird a lot higher than usual and we all had great views in the scope. For mammals, we saw **Common Brown Lemur** and the fantastic **Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur** which put on a wonderful show of aggressive howling for us. The trail came out onto the road and we birded along here for a while, getting our best views of **White-throated Oxylobes**, **Forest Fody**, **Ward's Flycatcher** (now considered a vanga) plus **Tylas & Blue Vangas**. We also had a soaring **Madagascar Buzzard** and many **Madagascar Girdled-Lizards** scurrying from the edge of the track. We walked up to a pond where we found the rare endemic **Meller's Duck** and **Madagascar Little Grebe**. The latter with a brood of 3 very cute and stripy chicks. We saw our first **Malagasy Spinetails** of the trip, plus pairs of **Madagascar Swamp-Warblers** and **Nelicourvi Weavers**.



Black-and-white Ruffed Lemurs give terrifying growling sounds that have to be heard to be believed (Charley Hesse)

We walked back to the bus and had lunch in a shady spot by the stream, during which Michael had a **Malagasy Kingfisher** zipping by. We decided to put in some more time on the trails in the afternoon and we were rewarded with some fantastic sightings. We first flushed a **Madagascar Harrier-Hawk** and then a **Madagascar Crested Ibis** which most people had decent flight views of. Next we heard a **Red-breasted Coua** calling and got closer before calling it in and getting great views of this very tricky bird. Next we had a group of **Diademed Sifakas**. It seems we had already passed them on the trail before we heard their distinctive cow-like 'moo' and turned back to see that we must have walked right underneath them. Next we had killer views of a pair of **Crossley's Vangas** doing little courtship dances and mating, followed by great views of the stunning **Pitta-like Ground-Roller**. We started driving back and stopped at a couple of spots for the endemic Madagascar Rail. Strangely we didn't hear a peep out of them and had to make do with views of **Madagascar Mannikin**. The last call of the day was dropping in on the local community reserve where there was a stake out for **Madagascar Long-eared Owl**. It took a while to reach the spot but we finally had fine views of an adult and a chick. What an amazing day it had been!

20th November – Perinet Special Reserve

We started our morning by searching for Nuthatch Vanga along the road. They are often found in mixed species flocks with other vangas and we found **Red-tailed, Blue** and **Hook-billed Vangas** along with other flocking species like **Crested Drongo**, but no Nuthatch. We saw other forest birds like **Nelicourvi Weaver** and **Spectacled Tetraka** plus plenty on little green jobs in the tree tops, like **Green Jery** and **Rand's Warbler**. We also had nice scope views of **Madagascar Blue-Pigeon** and even a **Madagascar Buzzard** nest with a cute fluffy chick. We entered the park trails and soon came across a fairly big **Madagascar Tree Boa** followed by a group of **Eastern Gray Bamboo Lemurs**, Madagascar's smallest diurnal lemur. Normally one of the toughest birds at Perinet is **Madagascar Crested Ibis**, but this year, as luck would have it, there was a nest staked out with a chick in it. Our guide took us along a narrow trail through the thick forest to where there the other TB group were excitedly looking up through the dense canopy. We found some windows up on an adult bird and a near full-size chick. What a relief it was to get such a difficult bird straight away. From here we made our way up to the upper section where we had good general birding and found **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher, Long-billed Bernieria, Dark Newtonia** and finally **Nuthatch Vanga**. We got good views of these fascinating birds up in the tree tops.



Indris are the largest living lemurs and their haunting calls resonate through the forest (Charley Hesse)

The guide had been pretty laid back about Indri but I was a little nervous until we found a group of these amazing creatures which put on an amazing performance of howling for us. As promised, we were also shown a **Collared Nightjar** nest in a bird's nest fern. The bird itself was so well camouflaged that it looked just like a pile of dead leaves. On the way down, we also found a pair of **Diademmed Sifakas**, which was a good pick up for Fred who had missed them the previous day. In the afternoon, we met up in the Parking lot where we saw **Madagascar Wagtail**. We drove to the local marsh in search of Madagascar Rail and found a single **Red-billed Duck** on a moat around a Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur belonging to a local hotel. We also saw captive Ring-tailed Lemurs while we were trying for the Madagascar Rail. It was a shame to see them like this, while they can be easily seen in the wild nearby. Whilst trying for the rails, we saw several other marsh and open country birds, including **Striated Heron, Mascarene Martin, Madagascar Brush-Warbler, Madagascar Swamp-Warbler, Stonechat, Red Fody** and **Madagascar Mannikin**. There was no response from the rails despite trying several locations so we decided to try again in the morning.

21st November – Perinet Special Reserve

First thing, we were back at the swamp searching for the **Madagascar Rail**. We saw **Madagascar Swamp-Warbler**, **Madagascar Mannikin**, **Mascarene Martin** and **African Stonechat** before we heard the rails calling from the reed beds below. We followed a steep trail down and walked through some soft but not too boggy ground to a spot with a view. We started calling the birds, and after a while they responded nearby. Using a combination of alarm calls and contact calls played very quietly, they appeared right before us and everybody got great views of these difficult birds. From here it was back to the trails where we tried for the **White-throated Rail**. Luck was on our side again and they appeared in a ditch below the trail with more great views. As we walked along the trail, a **Gray Heron** flew over and we spotted a **Malagasy Kingfisher** from a small wooden bridge over a stream. Our last main target was the **Madagascar Flufftail**. The other TB group had already seen this bird but since then, the groups had been reshuffled and a couple of people in my group were still missing it. We played the tape and received a response. The first time, the bird came close then disappeared, but the second time we tried at a place with a decent view inside the bushes and we had better luck. A flufftail appeared about 3 feet away and the people that needed it got eyeball to eyeball views. A little further on, our guide pointed out a dark shape sat inside a bush which on closer inspection was a day-roosting **Malagasy Scops-Owl**.



Madagascar Starling is an uncommon endemic that has a habit of just 'turning up' (Charley Hesse)

We continued walking the trails and picking up a lot of nice forest birds, with **Madagascar Turtle-Dove**, **Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher**, **Madagascar Brush-Warbler**, **Long-billed Bernieria**, **Spectacled Tetraka** and **Nelicourvi Weaver**. We heard **Madagascar Wood-Rail** next to the trail but had a frustrating time as they stayed well hidden inside. A little further along, we found one on the trail and had better views. Next we had a pair of **Madagascar Coucals** which were chasing each other around and then we found our main mammal target of the day, **Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemur**, which was new for the new members of my group. Just on the way out I managed to catch a **Six-lined Water Snake** which we handled and took pictures of before exiting and heading back for lunch. We took an afternoon walk along the road looking for leaf-tailed geckos. We found none of these, but birding was quite good and we had another mixed flock with **Ashy Cuckoo-shrike**, **Crested Drongo**, **Nuthatch**, **Blue**, **White-headed & Red-tailed Vangas**. We had another look at the **Madagascar Buzzard** nest with its chick, spotted another **Madagascar Blue-Pigeon** perched up and had a few other birds, like **Stripe-throated Jery**, **Madagascar Starling** and **Blue Coua**. The highlight of the walk though was a group of **Common Brown Lemurs** hopping and prancing across the road.

22nd November – Perinet Special Reserve to Tana

It was our last morning and we were on clean-up duty. As a group we had seen pretty much everything available, just remaining were a few birds some members had missed through sickness or bad luck. We entered the park, and as soon as we started down the trail we saw **White-throated Rail** again, but this time with chicks in tow. Next we had another pair of **Madagascar Blue-Pigeons** perched up on exposed branches. We walked up a steep and slightly overgrown trail looking for Rufous-headed Ground-Roller which one person had missed. Unfortunately it didn't show, but we did all get a pair of **Common Sunbird-Asities** which flitted about so quickly, it was difficult to get on them. We walked back down and then up a steeper trail which led to the upper parts of the park where we searched for the Eastern Woolly Lemur, but no luck with this either. We dropped back down and spent the rest of the morning on a mercifully flat trail where we searched for and finally found **Dark Newtonia** in amongst **Common Newtonia** and other flocking birds. We picked up other forest birds which we tried to photograph, with varying success, including **Madagascar Brush-Warbler**, **White-throated Oxylobes**, **Long-billed Bernieria** and **Nelicourvi Weaver**. We lucked upon another small group of **Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemur** and a single Indri before turning back towards the exit. On the way back we watched the macabre spectacle of a snake eating a **Madagascar Jumping Frog**.



Madagascar Pratincole was a last minute addition on the main tour (Charley Hesse)

We made it back a little later than planned, packed, had an early lunch and checked out. Passing the park, we had another group of Common Brown Lemurs crossing the road in the same spot as last night. On the drive back to Tana we stopped briefly by a river where I showed a **Madagascar Pratincole** to those that hadn't joined the pre-tour extension. Walking back to the bus afterwards we had great views of **Chabert Vanga** too. We also stopped at a reptile park where we enjoyed looking at and photographing a large number of chameleons, snakes and leaf-tailed geckos, plus some absolutely adorable **Common Tenrecs** feasting on termites. Above the enclosures **Broad-billed Roller** and **Madagascar Kestrel** were calling noisily. We finally made it back to Tana, where we had our last meal together, reminiscing about some of our personal favourites. A surprise bird of the trip was Crossley's Babbler as we had seen it so well and observed such fascinating behaviour.

BIRD LIST

Taxonomy follows *Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World 6.8* (updated August, 2013).

Anatidae (Ducks & Geese)

1	White-faced Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika & Ambondromamy.
2	African Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>	Seen at faAnkarafantsika & Ambondromamy.
3	Meller's Duck	<i>Anas melleri</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia.
4	Red-billed Duck	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	Seen at Anja, Ranomafana & Perinet.
5	Hottentot Teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>	Seen at Ambondromamy
6	Bernier's Teal	<i>Anas bernieri</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Betsuboka.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

7	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Seen at Isalo.
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Podicipedidae (Grebes)

8	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Seen at Belalanda.
9	Madagascar Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus pelzelinii</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Mantadia.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

10	Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	Near-threatened. Seen at Betsiboka.
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Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

11	Red-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>	Seen at Nosy Ve.
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Ciconiidae (Storks)

12	African Openbill	<i>Anastomus lamelligerus mad.</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Mahajanga.
13	Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Seen at Mahajanga.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

14	African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa vulsini</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
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Scopidae (Hamerkop)

15	Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	Seen at Belalanda, Anja & near Antsirabe.
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Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

16	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus podiceps</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
17	Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea firsasa</i>	Endemic subspecies. Common near water.
18	Humblot's Heron	<i>Ardea humbloti</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Ambondromamy.
19	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea madagascariensis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Isalo.
20	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Commonly seen near water.
21	Little (Dimorphic) Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta dimorpha</i>	Regional endemic. Commonly seen near water.
22	Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	Seen at Mahajanga, Ambondromamy & Belalanda.
23	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Commonly seen in open areas.
24	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika, Tana & Belalanda.
25	Madagascar Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola idae</i>	Endangered regional breeding endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Isalo.
26	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata rutenbergi</i>	Endemic subspecies. Commonly seen near water.
27	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Seen at Mahajanga & Isalo.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

28	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika.
29	Madagascan (Crested) Ibis	<i>Lophotibis cristata</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Mantadia & Perinet.
30	(Malagasy) Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus bernieri</i>	Endangered endemic subspecies. Seen at Betsiboka.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

31	Madagascar Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Betsiboka & Mantadia.
32	Frances's Goshawk	<i>Accipiter f. francesii</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika & heard at Mantadia.

33	Madagascar Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter madagascariensis</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
34	Henst's Goshawk	<i>Accipiter henstii</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
35	Black (Yellow-billed) Kite	<i>Milvus migrans (parasitus)</i>	Commonly seen throughout.
36	Madagascar Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vociferoides</i>	Critically endangered endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
37	Madagascar Buzzard	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>	Endemic. Seen at all forest sites.

Mesitornithidae (Mesites) – endemic family

38	White-breasted Mesite	<i>Mesitornis variegata</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
39	Brown Mesite	<i>Mesitornis unicolor</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
40	Subdesert Mesite	<i>Monias benschi</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ifaty.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

41	Madagascar Wood-Rail	<i>Canirallus kioloides</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.
42	Madagascar Rail	<i>Rallus madagascariensis</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Perinet.
43	White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas c. cuvieri</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen near Ambondromamy & at Perinet. Heard at Ankarafantsika, Belalanda & Isalo.
44	Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	Seen at Belalanda.
45	Allen's Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio alleni</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika.
46	Eurasian Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus pyrrhorhoa</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika.
47	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	Seen at Belalanda.

Sarothruridae (Flufftails)

48	Madagascar Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Perinet & heard at Ranomafana.
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Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

49	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mahajanga, Ambondromamy, Belalanda & Tulear.
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Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

50	Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Seen at Belalanda & Tulear.
51	Lesser Sandplover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	Seen at Betsiboka.
52	Greater Sandplover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Seen at Betsiboka, Belalanda & Tulear.
53	Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mahajanga, Belalanda, Ifaty & Tulear.
54	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Seen at Belalanda, Ifaty & Tulear.
55	Madagascar Plover	<i>Charadrius thoracicus</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ifaty & Tulear.
56	Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris bifrontatus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Mahajanga.
57	White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus tenellus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Betsiboka, Belalanda, Ifaty & Nosy Ve.

Rostratulidae (Painted-Snipes)

58	Greater Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika & Mahajanga.
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Jacanidae (Jacanas)

59	Madagascar Jacana	<i>Actophilornis albinucha</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
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Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

60	Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	Seen at Betsiboka & Belalanda.
61	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mahajanga, Betsiboka, Ambondromamy & Belalanda.
62	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Seen at Belalanda & Tulear.
63	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Seen at Betsiboka, Belalanda & Tulear.
64	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Seen at Betsiboka & Tulear.
65	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Seen at Belalanda, Ifaty, Tulear & Nosy Ve.
66	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Seen at Betsiboka, Belalanda, Ifaty & Tulear.
67	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Seen at Belalanda & Nosy Ve.
68	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Seen at Belalanda.
69	Madagascan Snipe	<i>Gallinago macrodactyla</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

Turnicidae (Buttonquail)

70	Madagascar Buttonquail	<i>Turnix nigricollis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
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Dromadidae (Crab Plover)

71	Crab Plover	<i>Dromas ardeola</i>	Seen at Tulear & Nosy Ve.
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Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

72	Madagascar Pratincole	<i>Glareola ocularis</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen between Mahajanga to Tana and again between Perinet to Tana.
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Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

73	Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>	Seen at Betsiboka & Nosy Ve.
74	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Seen at near Ifaty.
75	Great Crested (Swift) Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	Seen at near Ifaty.
76	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	Seen at Betsiboka, Ifaty, Tulear & Nosy Ve.

Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)

77	Madagascar Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles personatus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Tulear.
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Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

78	Rock Pigeon (Dove)	<i>Columba livia</i>	Introduced. Commonly seen in towns.
79	Madagascar Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia p. picturata</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at most forest sites.
80	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis aliena</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mahajanga, Ifaty & Tulear.
81	Madagascar Green-Pigeon	<i>Treron australis xenius/australis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Belalanda, Zombitse & Mantadia.
82	Madagascar Blue-Pigeon	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

83	Madagascar Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>	Seen or heard at most sites
84	Giant Coua	<i>Coua gigas</i>	Endemic. Seen at Zombitse.
85	Coquerel's Coua	<i>Coua coquereli</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Zombitse.
86	Red-breasted Coua	<i>Coua serriana</i>	Endemic. Seen at Mantadia & heard at Perinet.
87	Red-fronted Coua	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
88a	Red-capped Coua	<i>Coua r. ruficeps</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
88b	Green-capped Coua	<i>Coua ruficeps olivaceiceps</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty & Tulear.
89	Running Coua	<i>Coua cursor</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
90	Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty & Zombitse.
91	Verreaux's Coua	<i>Coua verreauxi</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at La Table.
92	Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet. Heard at Mantadia.
93	Madagascar Coucal	<i>Centropus t. toulou</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen or heard at most sites.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

94	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba affinis</i>	Heard at Ankarafantsika & Isalo.
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Strigidae (Owls)

95	Malagasy Scops-Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Perinet.
96	Torotoroka Scops-Owl	<i>Otus madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Zombitse. Heard at Ifaty.
97	Madagascar Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Perinet.
98	Marsh Owl	<i>Asio capensis hova</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Isalo.
99	White-browed Owl	<i>Ninox superciliosus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Zombitse.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and allies)

100	Collared Nightjar	<i>Gactornis enarratus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Perinet.
101	Madagascar Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus m. madagascariensis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty, Tulear & Perinet. Heard at Isalo.

Apodidae (Swifts)

102	Malagasy Spinetail	<i>Zoonavena g. grandidieri</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Mantadia.
103	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba willsi</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Anja.
104	Madagascar (Black) Swift	<i>Apus b. balstoni</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at near Tana & Ranomafana.
105	African Palm-Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus gracilis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at most sites.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

106	Malagasy Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis v. vintsioides</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Tulear, Isalo, Mantadia & Perinet.
107	Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Mantadia.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

108	Madagascar Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>	Seen at most sites.
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Coraciidae (Rollers)

109	Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus g. glaucurus</i>	Breeding endemic subspecies. Seen at many sites.
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Brachypteraciidae (Ground-Rollers) – endemic family

110	Short-legged Ground-Roller	<i>Brachypteracias leptosomus</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Mantadia.
111	Scaly Ground-Roller	<i>Brachypteracias squamiger</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
112	Pitta-like Ground-Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia.
113	Rufous-headed Ground-Roller	<i>Atelornis crossleyi</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
114	Long-tailed Ground-Roller	<i>Uratelornis chimaera</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ifaty.

Leptosomidae (Cuckoo-Roller)

115	Cuckoo-Roller	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>	Regional endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Zombitse, Ranomafana & Perinet. Heard at Mantadia.
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Upupidae (Hoopoes)

116	Madagascar Hoopoe	<i>Upupa marginata</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Belalanda & La Table. Heard at Ifaty & Zombitse.
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Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

117	Madagascar Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>	Regional endemic. Seen at many sites.
118	Banded Kestrel	<i>Falco zoniventris</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
119	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>	Seen between Mahajanga & Ankarafantsika..

Psittacidae (Parrots)

120	Grey-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis canus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Belalanda, Ifaty & Isalo.
121	Greater Vasa-Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa v./drouhardi</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Belalanda & Ifaty.
122	Lesser Vasa-Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra n./libs</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at most forest sites.

Philepittidae (Asities) – endemic family

123	Velvet Asity	<i>Philepitta castanea</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
124	Schlegel's Asity	<i>Philepitta schlegeli</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
125	Common Sunbird-Asity	<i>Neodrepanis coruscans</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.
126	Yellow-bellied Asity	<i>Neodrepanis hypoxantha</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

Vangidae (Vangas)

127	Archbold's Newtonia	<i>Newtonia archboldi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
128	Common Newtonia	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty, Ranomafana & Perinet. Heard at Isalo.
129	Dark Newtonia	<i>Newtonia amphichroa</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
130	Tylas Vanga	<i>Tylas eduardi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia. Heard at Perinet.
131	Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Zombitse, Ranomafana & Perinet. Heard at Mantadia.
132	Red-shouldered Vanga	<i>Calicalicus rufocarpalis</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at La Table.
133	Nuthatch Vanga	<i>Hypositta corallirostris</i>	Endemic. Seen at Perinet.
134	Chabert Vanga	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty & on the way back from Perinet.,
135	Crossley's Vanga (Babbler)	<i>Mystacornis crossleyi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia.
136	Blue Vanga	<i>Cyanolanius m. madagascarinus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mantadia & Perinet. Heard at Ranomafana..
137	Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty & Perinet.
138	Ward's Flycatcher	<i>Pseudobias wardi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia.
139	Rufous Vanga	<i>Schetba rufa</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Zombitse. Heard at Ranomafana & Mantadia.

140	Sickle-billed Vanga	<i>Falculea palliata</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Ifaty.
141	White-headed Vanga	<i>Artamella (Leptopterus) viridis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty, Mantadia & Perinet.
142	Pollen's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris polleni</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Heard at Ranomafana.
143	Lafresnaye's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris xenopirostris</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
144	Van Dam's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris damii</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.

Campephagidae (Cuckoo-shrikes)

145	Ashy Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina c. cinerea</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Betsiboka, Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
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Dicruridae (Drongos)

146	Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus f. forficatus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at all forest sites.
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Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

147	Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone m. mutata</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at all forest sites.
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Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

148	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	Seen at many sites
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Alaudidae (Larks)

149	Madagascar Lark	<i>Mirafra hova</i>	Endemic. Seen at most sites in the west.
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Hirundinidae (Swallows)

150	Mascarene Martin	<i>Phedina borbonica</i>	Regional endemic. Seen at many sites.
151	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Seen at Belalanda.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

152	Madagascar Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes m. madagascariensis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at most sites.
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Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

153	Madagascar Brush-Warbler	<i>Nesillas t. typica</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ranomafana & Perinet. Heard at Mantadia.
154	Subdesert Brush-Warbler	<i>Nesillas lantzi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Belalanda & Ifaty. Heard at Tulear & Anakao.
155	Madagascar Swamp-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus newtoni</i>	Endemic. Commonly seen at sites near water.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

156	Brown Emu-tail	<i>Bradypterus brunneus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
157	Gray Emu-tail	<i>Amphilais seebohmi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

Bernieridae (Malagasy Warblers) – endemic family

158	White-throated Oxylabes	<i>Oxylabes madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
159	Long-billed Bernieria	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Zombitse, Ranomafana & Perinet.
160	Cryptic Warbler	<i>Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
161	Wedge-tailed Jery	<i>Hartertula flavoviridis</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ranomafana
162	Thamnornis	<i>Thamnornis chloropetoides</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
163	Yellow-browed Oxylabes	<i>Crossleyia xanthophrys</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Heard at Ranomafana.
164	Spectacled Tetraka	<i>Xanthornix zosterops</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
165	Appert's Tetraka	<i>Xanthornix apperti</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Zombitse.
166	Grey-crowned Tetraka	<i>Xanthornix cinereiceps</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
167	Rand's Warbler	<i>Randia pseudozosterops</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

168	Common Jery	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>	Endemic. Seen at most forest sites.
169	Green Jery	<i>Neomixis viridis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
170	Stripe-throated Jery	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty, Zombitse, Ranomafana & Perinet. Heard at Mantadia.
171	Madagascar Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cherina</i>	Regional endemic. Seen in most open areas.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes)

172	Madagascar White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>	Regional endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
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Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

173	Madagascar Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus albospectularis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty, Zombitse, Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
174a	Forest Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola s. sharpei</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
174b	Benson's Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola sharpei bensoni</i>	Endemic. Seen at Isalo.
175	Littoral Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola imerina</i>	Endemic. Seen at Anakao.
176	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus sibilla</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at near Tana, Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

177	Madagascar Starling	<i>Saroglossa aurata</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
178	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Introduced. Seen at most sites.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

179	Souimanga Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris souimanga s./apolis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at most sites.
180	Madagascar Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris n. notatus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

181	Madagascar Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>	Endemic. Seen at Tana, Isalo, Ranomafana & Perinet.
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Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)

182	Nelicourvi Weaver	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet.
183	Sakalava Weaver	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mahajanga & Ifaty.
184	Red Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	Regional endemic. Seen at most sites
185	Forest Fody	<i>Foudia omissa</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia.

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

186	Madagascar Mannikin	<i>Lonchura nana</i>	Endemic. Seen at Mahajanga, Isalo, Ranomafana, Mantadia & Perinet
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MAMMAL LIST

Mammal Taxonomy follows *Mammals of Madagascar* (2007) by Nick Garbutt.

Cheirogaleidae (Mouse & Dwarf Lemurs)

1	Grey-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
2	Grey Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus murinus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika & Ifaty.
3	Golden-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus ravelobensis</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
4	Rufous (Brown) Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
5	Goodman's Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus lehilahytsara</i>	Data deficient endemic. Seen at Perinet.
6	Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogaleus crossleyi</i>	Data deficient endemic. Seen at Perinet
7	Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogaleus medius</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.

Lepilemuridae (Sportive Lemurs)

8	Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur edwardsi</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
9	Hubbard's Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur hubbardi</i>	Data deficient endemic. Seen at Zombitse.
10	Petter's Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur petteri</i>	Data deficient endemic. Seen at Ifaty.

Lemuridae (True Lemurs)

11	Eastern Lesser (Gray) Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur griseus</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Perinet.
12	Golden Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
13	Greater Bamboo Lemur	<i>Prolemur simus</i>	Critically endangered endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
14	Ring-tailed Lemur	<i>Lemur catta</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Anja.
15	Common Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mantadia & Perinet.
16	Red-fronted Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur rufus</i>	Data deficient endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
17	Red-bellied Lemur	<i>Eulemur rubriventer</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

18	Mongoose Lemur	<i>Eulemur mongoz</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
19	Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata</i>	Critically endangered endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia.

Indridae (Woolly Lemurs, Sifakas & Indri)

20	Western Woolly Lemur (Avahi)	<i>Avahi occidentalis</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
21	Verreaux's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Zombitse.
22	Coquerel's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus coquereli</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
23	Diademmed Sifaka	<i>Propithecus edwardsi</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Mantadia & Perinet.
24	Milne-Edwards Sifaka	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
25	Indri	<i>Indri Indri</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Perinet & heard at Mantadia.

Eupleridae (Malagasy Carnivores)

26	Fanaloka (Fossa)	<i>Fossa fossana</i>	Near-threatened endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
27	Ring-tailed Mongoose	<i>Galidia elegans</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

Microchiroptera (Micro bats)

28	Mauritian Tomb Bat	<i>Taphozous mauritanus</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika.
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Tenrecidae (Tenrecs)

29	Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec	<i>Echinops telfairi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
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REPTILE LIST

Taxonomy follows *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar: 3rd Edition* (2007) by F. Glaw and M. Vences.

Crocodylidae

1	Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika.
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Chamaeleonidae

2	Elongate Leaf Chameleon	<i>Brookesia nasus</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
3	Short-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma brevicornis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Perinet.
4	Nose-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma nasuta</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.
5	Band-bellied Chameleon	<i>Calumma gastrotaenia</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
6	O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon	<i>Calumma oshaughnessyi</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
7	Blue-legged Chameleon	<i>Calumma crypticum</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
8	Oustalet's Chameleon	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika, Anja & Perinet.
9	Warty Chameleon	<i>Furcifer verrucosus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
10	Rainforest Chameleon	<i>Furcifer balteatus</i>	Endangered endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

Iguanidae

11	Three-eyed Lizard	<i>Chalarodon madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Belalanda, Ifaty & Zombitse.
12	Collared Iguanid	<i>Oplurus cuvieri</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
13	Dumeril's Madagascar Swift	<i>Oplurus quadrimaculatus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Isalo.

Gekkonidae

14	Big-headed Gecko	<i>Paroedura pictus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
15	Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus phantasticus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
16	Sakalava's Velvet Gecko	<i>Blaesodactylus sakalava</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty & Zombitse.
17	Common House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>	Seen at Ankarafantsika, Ifaty & Isalo.
18	Gray's Leaf-toed Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mercatorius</i>	Seen at Ranomafana.
19	Grandidier's Dwarf Gecko	<i>Lygodactylus tolampyae</i>	Endemic. Seen at Zombitse.
20	Robust Dwarf Gecko	<i>Lygodactylus pictus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Antsirabe.
21	Madagascar Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
22	Standing's Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma standingi</i>	Vulnerable endemic. Seen at Ifaty & Zombitse.
23	Lined Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.
24	Peacock Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

Gerrhosauridae

25	Malagasy Keeled Plated Lizard	<i>Tracheloptychus madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at La Table.
26	Madagascar Girdled-Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Mantadia.
27	Broad-tailed Girdled-Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus laticaudatus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.

Scincidae

28	Elegant Skink	<i>Trachylepis elegans</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.
29	Malagasy Skink	<i>Trachylepis madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
30	Boettger's Skink	<i>Trachylepis boettgeri</i>	Endemic. Seen at Isalo.
31		<i>Amphiglossus astrolabi</i>	Endemic. Seen at Perinet.

Boidae

32	Madagascar Tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.
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Colubridae

33	Blonde Hognose Snake	<i>Leioheterodon madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ankarafantsika.
34		<i>Compsophis laphystius</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
35	Gold-collared Snake	<i>Liophidium rhodogaster</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
36	Six-lined Water Snake	<i>Liopholidophis sexlineatus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.
37		<i>Liopholidophis rhadinaea</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
38	Madagascan Whipsnake	<i>Biblava lateralis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Isalo & Perinet.
39	Mahafaly Sand Snake	<i>Mimophis mahfalensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ifaty.

AMPHIBIAN LIST

Taxonomy follows *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar: 3rd Edition* (2007) by F. Glaw and M. Vences.

Mantellidae

1	Madagascar Jumping Frog	<i>Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Mantadia & Perinet.
2	Malagasy Glass Frog	<i>Guibermantis pulcher</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana & Perinet.
3	Betsileo Madagascar Frog	<i>Mantidactylus betsileanus</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
4	Ivohimanita Madagascar Frog	<i>Mantidactylus majori</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
5	Baron's Mantella	<i>Mantella baroni</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.

Microhylidae

6	Boulenger's Giant Treefrog	<i>Platypelis grandis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana.
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