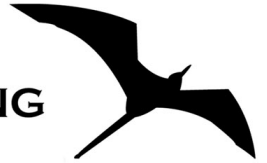




**TROPICAL
BIRDING**



MADAGASCAR:

**THE ENDEMIC OF THE
'8TH CONTINENT'**

A Tropical Birding Custom Tour

October 10—November 2, 2012

Guide: Ken Behrens

**Participants: Musse Björklund, Rob
Hutchinson, Markus Lagerqvist, &
Jonathan Newman**

**All photos taken during this trip.
All photos by Ken Behrens unless
noted otherwise**

TOUR SUMMARY

When Rob Hutchinson and friends began discussing this trip with Tropical Birding, the original idea was to try to find ALL of Madagascar's endemics on one trip. Unfortunately, most of the participants simply didn't have enough vacation time to visit all the requisite sites to achieve such a goal. Eventually, we settled on a shorter itinerary that still gave a chance at nearly all of Madagascar's endemic birds. The final itinerary was a fairly frantic one that was just over 3 weeks long. We knew that bad luck in the field, or more likely, with the national airline, Air Madagascar, could result in missed birds. But since 3 of the guys were also trying to fit in a visit to the Comoros, we had maxed out the available time for this trip. This itinerary added several sites to the normal Tulear to Tana route visited on Tropical Birding tours, namely the Bemenevika Lakes (the 'pochard site'), Lac Kinkony (for Sakalava Rail), and Anjozorobe (for Slender-billed Flufftail). We also spent several days on the Masoala Peninsula, a place where Tropical Birding offers an extension to its normal set departure. Perinet was not officially part of the itinerary, but was visited by all the participants for varying amounts of time either before or after the tour proper.

In the end, this trip was completely successful despite its hectic pace. We saw 194 species including all of the endemics that were likely on this itinerary. The only endemics that we didn't see were Madagascar Serpent-Eagle, recently described Tsingy Wood-Rail, Red-tailed Newtonia, and Dusky Tetraka. We hoped for the serpent-eagle at the 'pochard site', but the Peregrine Fund staff there hadn't yet managed to find a nest this year, and radio-tagged birds had disappeared. The second two, the wood-rail and newtonia, were missed because we didn't visit the sites where they reliably occur. The last, Dusky Tetraka, is an enigmatic species that is far from reliable at any site. Pursuing this handful of extra species would have taken at least another week, so in the end, our itinerary made sense in terms of cost and time.

Even though this was a focused birding itinerary, we managed to take in a lot of Madagascar's non-avian wonders. We recorded an amazing 34 species of lemurs (including a few that were only seen during visits to Perinet before or after the main tour), from the tiny mouse-lemurs up to Indri, the largest living species. Between were an incredible range of dwarf-lemurs, several spunky sportive-lemurs, a couple of tree-clinging woolly-lemurs, a variety of brown-lemurs, both of the big and beautiful ruffed-lemurs, and an amazing 6 of the island's 9 species of sifakas. There were some



Bernier's Vanga on Masoala was one of the trip highlights. Look at this bird's eye! Photo by Markus Lagerqvist.

other great mammals too, such as the bizarre lowland streaked tenrec and beautiful ring-tailed mongoose. We also racked up 46 species of reptiles, ranging from blazing green day-geckos to oceanic Green Sea Turtle to the fleet-footed Three-eyed Lizards of the spiny forest. The chameleons alone showed incredible diversity; we saw the world's largest chameleon, and one of its smallest! We identified 14 species of frogs, with many more seen but not identified. The highlight here was the spectacular Starry Night Reed Frog (photo below), which lives up to its poetic name.



The awesome Starry Night Reed Frog that we 'twitched' in Ranomafana.

Our trip started with an evening arrival at Ankarafantsika National Park, where we almost immediately scored a White-browed Owl, a recent addition to the avifauna of the headquarters area. The next day was destined to be a busy one, as we had a lot of tough endemic birds to find in a short time. The morning started incredibly well; by 9 am, before breakfast, we had already

seen the 3 most difficult birds: Van Dam's Vanga, Schlegel's Asity, and White-breasted Mesite. These were seen along with a strong supporting cast of fine birds like Banded Kestrel, Cuckoo Roller, Red-capped and Coquerel's Couas, Blue, Rufous, White-headed and Sickle-billed Vangas, and many more. The lemurs were good too, with Coquerel's sifaka showing well. After breakfast, we headed to the lake edge where we added some water-associated species like Madagascar Jacana, Humblot's Heron, and best of all, a pair of the endangered Madagascar Fish-Eagles.

The morning had been so astoundingly good that we decided to leave early for our next destination: the Bemenevika lakes, or the 'pochard site', as it's often called. A speedy drive on fairly good roads brought us to the scrubby town of Antsohihy. Although our hotel here was basic and sweaty, we enjoy the best meal of the trip in Antsohihy: delicious grilled prawns washed down with cold beer. We asked for desert, and on being informed that there was none available, opted to order more prawns instead!



White-breasted Mesite was the top bird at Ankarafantsika. Photo by Markus Lagerqvist.

The next day was mainly dedicated to travelling the rest of the distance to Bemenevika. The roads on this journey start bad and deteriorate to being quite awful. Despite this, we arrived more quickly than anticipated, just after lunchtime, and were able to quickly head into the forest. The first bird we saw, soon after stopping our vehicles at the trailhead, was Madagascar Pochard, in the distance on the main lake at the site. Though down to a handful of individuals, this species is very easy to see here, at the last place where it exists in the wild. Our next quarry was more difficult, but only slightly so: Red Owl. What makes this bird easy to find is the fact that the Peregrine Fund is radio tagging these owls. Instead of spending a day peering into Pandanus palm trees, we simply followed the 'beeps' of a bird's radio signal and eventually were rewarded



Wetland species like Madagascar Little Grebe that have become rare in most places in Madagascar are common around the 'pochard site'.

with some closeup sightings of this extremely rare and enigmatic bird. Although it was enjoyable to see, the tracking experience, not to mention colored leg bands, radio transmitter hanging down the back, and piece of colored string around the bird's neck, all detracted from the joy of the experience.

Though without these

things, we probably never would have seen Red Owl. The forest held a couple of other prizes too, in the form of a gorgeous Pitta-like Ground-Roller and a glittering male Common Sunbird-Asity. We ended the day at a huge marsh adjacent the forest. Here we called up a pair of Gray Emu-tails, flushed a couple of Madagascar Snipe, and were buzzed by a Reunion Harrier. Rainforest Scops-Owls called in the distance as the sun set over this beautiful piece of Madagascar, a piece of paradise whose continued existence has enabled the survival of the Madagascar Pochard. The

only thing disappointing about our visit was that the Madagascar Serpent-Eagles, which have been radio-tagged, and whose nests have been staked out in previous years, had seemingly disappeared from the area.



We first saw Red-fronted Coua at the pochard lakes. The couas form a sub-family of cuckoos that is endemic to Madagascar.

An early start the next morning brought us back into the forest to try for some bonus species. Our first sighting was a male Madagascar Partridge that flushed from the track in front of us. We had expressed interest in seeing Madagascar Long-eared Owl, so the Peregrine Fund staff had generously woken up ridiculously early in the morning, and found what appeared to be a nest. We visited the site first thing, and after a lot of maneuvering through the jungle, we found the right vantage points to see two adult and two fluffy white juvenile owls on their nest. At the lake edge, we called up a handsome Madagascar Rail, lucked into a Baillon's Crake, then ventured onto the lake by boat for closeup views and photos of the pochards and other waterbirds. A flyby

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk just after we all had returned to the shore was an unexpected bonus. Visiting a stakeout for Forest Rock-Thrush paid off with nice views of a male. We returned to the camp to enjoy another good meal prepared by Liva, our tireless driver, then we packed up and decided to leave, to get a head-start on a very long journey back to Majunga. The fact that delicious prawns waited for us in Antsohihy may have also played into our decision! After a long and bumpy ride, we were rewarded with prawns that were almost as good, beer that was just as cold as the first time, and ultimately a peaceful night's sleep.



Madagascar Swamp-Warbler, common at the Pochard Lakes and Lac Kiknony.

It was back to the road the next morning, and an early start meant that we arrived at Ankarafantsika in time for lunch and with plenty of daylight for some extra birding in this special park. Although we had nearly cleaned up before, we managed to see several new species, namely Milne-Edward's Sportive-Lemur and Torotoroko Scops-Owl. We also managed some decent photos of species like

Van Dam's Vanga and Red-capped Coua. This national park is one of the best places on the island for taking pictures of birds, as the habitat is open, and the birds are quite confiding.

The next leg of our adventure started the next morning when we headed down to the harbor to board a vehicle ferry; the first step of our complicated journey to Lac Kinkony and the land of the Sakalava Rails. Things got off to a very bad start when a vehicle ironically belonging to the

Malagasy minister of tourism shoved us out of our supposedly reserved spot, leaving us to wait with fingers crossed for the boat to return and pick us up. After a couple boring hours at the harbor, the boat returned, and we managed to cross. The journey to Lac Kinkony held a lot more birds than is normal in Madagascar, as this is a fairly remote area that has not been as heavily used by people as most parts of the country. A Madagascar Sandgrouse was a great find during our picnic lunch. Madagascar Pratincoles and a Madagascar Fish-Eagle were the stars of a river stop later in the journey. After a second, though much shorter (actually hand-operated!) ferry crossing, we were close to our destination, though thanks to the tourism minister, we still arrived on the shores of Kinkony well after dark.



Glossy Ibis was one of a suite of wetland birds that were common around Kinkony, a welcome sight in Madagascar, where many wetland birds are scarce due to habitat destruction.

After a quick breakfast, we eagerly climbed aboard a boat to head into the marshes and search for the extremely rare Sakalava Rail. Six pairs of eyes stared intently into the marsh, waiting for some sign of movement. For the first couple of hours, there were lots of birds like Madagascar Jacana, Purple Swamphen, African Spoonbill, Comb Duck, Little Bittern, Long-tailed Cormorant, 'Madagascar' Sacred Ibis, and many others, but no rails. Finally, we heard and then saw a solo adult bird, then a pair with a long-legged but still fluffy juvenile; a most satisfying end to

a long trek with this bird as its main object. The wetlands of Kinkony are wonderful even aside from the rail, perhaps unexceptional in a mainland African context, but pristine and wild in a Malagasy context, where most wetland birds are quite scarce. The numbers of birds like Glossy Ibis and Comb Duck around Kinkony are truly amazing after seeing how scarce these species are in most of the country.

Instead of spending a second night at Kinkony, we opted for an exploratory side-trip to the Tsiombikibo Forest. Though the drive was long and dusty, and we had some trouble finding the supposed headquarters of the forest, we were rewarded with a great sighting of a troop of Decken's Sifakas dancing across the sandy road in front of us... magical. After dark, we made a long night walk searching for the forest's namesake lemur, the Tsiombikibo Sportive-Lemur. We were rewarded with good sightings of Gray Mouse-Lemur, Mongoose Lemur, Torotoroko Scops-Owl, and even a sleeping Decken's Sifaka, but no sportive.

The next day, it was back down the dusty roads to Majunga, and back across the dubious ferry. Thankfully, the trip was broken up by a stop at the Katsepy Lighthouse, where we sighted the rare Crowned Sifaka, and the more common, though unexpected at this location Rufous Brown-Lemur. The ferry arrived when it was supposed to, and though we had to wait for 100s of cases of beer to be painstakingly unloaded, we were happy to soon find ourselves back in Majunga, where a comfortable hotel, the mixed blessing of an internet connection, and a delicious 3-course French dinner awaited.



Bernier's Teal, our final mission in the northwest.

Our final mission in northwest Madagascar was to find the rare endemic Bernier's Teal, a weird, long-tailed, mainly saltwater-inhabiting dabbling duck. We boarded a powerful motorboat to

search for this bird in the mudflats and mangroves of the Betsiboka Delta. Before the teal, we found a lot of other birds including Terek Sandpiper, hordes of Dimorphic Egrets of white, dark and intermediate ‘morphs’, and a couple of Madagascar Sacred Ibis. Finally, a distant pair of mud-dabbling birds turned out on closer approach to be the desired teal. A little later, we found a second pair, and hazarded the mudflats to take some pictures. Although we sank up to our knees in mud in certain spots, we managed some decent pictures, and all managed to make it back to the boat! The northwest had been very good to us; despite limited time and visiting some rugged and rarely visited locations, we had managed to find virtually everything we were searching for. Our flight to Tana was delayed, but we really couldn’t complain about our luck so far.

The delayed flight meant a very late arrival in Tana, a couple of hours



Slender-billed Flufftail at Anjozorobe, one of the top birds of the trip.

in a hotel on the outskirts of the city, and an extremely early wakeup call to drive to Anjozorobe, the best site in Madagascar for the rare Slender-billed Flufftail. Once again, time was short, since we were leaving for Masoala on an early flight the next morning, so had to return to Tana before the end of the day. We arrived at the marsh with equal parts trepidation and anticipation. Though it would be great to see this mega-rare bird, most of the people who have searched for this bird in the past have either missed it or only glimpsed it. For four hours, we slogged through the marsh.

Though we heard the flufftail a couple of times, they were always far away. There were some nice birds about, including Madagascar Snipe, Meller's Duck, Madagascar Rail, and Gray Emutail. As mid-day approached and bog-trotting was starting to be quite tiring, we finally heard a flufftail at close range. Everyone got into position, and as if by magic, the bird walked into view only a few meters in front of us. We even coaxed it back across the open area and got some photos, which are among only a handful ever taken of this species. It was with complete satisfaction that we headed to a nearby lodge for lunch. Before returning to Tana, we spent a few hours in the forest, but there was very little bird activity apart from a Dark Newtonia, lots of Forest Fodys, and a



Helmet Vanga is most birders' top reason for visiting Masoala.

Rufous-headed Ground-Roller that called, but refused to come into view.

Back in Tana, we enjoyed yet another sumptuous French dinner, and bade farewell to Jonathan, who had to head home. We were sorry to part ways with him, but happy to know that he wouldn't be stuck in the office for long, as he was heading to Peru only a few days after returning home!

Amazingly, our flight to

Maroantsetra was on time, and we found ourselves

on the Masoala Peninsula at lunchtime. This is the best place on earth to search for Helmet and Bernier's Vanga, along with a full range of other rainforest birds, lemurs, and other creatures. The peninsula supports one of the largest tracts of pristine rainforest left in Madagascar. It's a paradisiacal place, with beautiful coral reefs and a white sand beach on the one side, and virgin

rainforest with monstrous buttressed trees on the other. Although the lodge is far from luxurious, it is perfectly situated to experience this pristine environment. This was the one place on this trip where we had a little more time than was probably necessary: an astounding four nights! This was mainly because Air Madagascar only flies to Maroantsetra a few times a week, and we had to choose between too little and too much time here.

As is typical of pristine rainforest environments, birding in Masoala is never easy. Nonetheless, we slowly teased new birds out of the forest. On the first afternoon, we saw the incredible Helmet Vanga, which flew by, responded to tape briefly, then disappeared. Thankfully, we enjoyed several more views later on. Everyone commented that this bird is even better than expected, which is high praise for one of the world's most sought-after birds. Madagascar Crested-Ibis is widespread, but probably easier to see on Masoala than anywhere else. We had brief view on the first afternoon, then more later. Rob even managed to get full-frame photos of this archaic-looking ibis when he wandered the trails alone! Bernier's Vanga is one of the most difficult birds on Masoala, but we staked out the site of recent sightings, and patience eventually paid off, when saw a total of four of these odd cacique-like vangas. Masoala is one of the best places to see Scaly and Short-legged Ground-Rollers, two of the best birds in Madagascar, and by extension, in the world. We spent



The elusive Madagascar Sparrowhawk, which we enjoyed seeing on Masoala.

almost an hour with both species, and managed some great photos and even video! There were lots of other good sightings from Masoala: a Madagascar Sparrowhawk with a freshly-killed snake, Madagascar Wood-Rail, Madagascar Pratincoles on the rocks along the beach, a pair of fascinating Brown Mesites, lots of Red-capped, Red-breasted and Blue Couas, Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher, Velvet Asity, Markus's much-wanted Nuthatch Vanga (as he had missed it in Perinet), a pair of Crossley's Babblers, and many more.



A pair of Brown Mesites on Masoala. Photo by Markus Lagerqvist

The mammals were also excellent, with Masoala Avahi, Masoala Sportive-Lemur, and the teddy bear-like Red Ruffed Lemur as the highlights. The owls were excellent, with very vocal

White-browed Owls and an

amazingly tame Malagasy (Rainforest) Scops-Owl around the lodge. There is still a lot to learn about the herps of Masoala; we saw several unidentified frogs, including what appeared to be an undescribed member of the enigmatic genus *Stumffia*, whose members are some of the smallest frogs in the world.

We stopped at the island preserve of Nosy Mangabe on our way back to Maroantsetra. Although there aren't many birds on the island, there are some excellent herps. The Giant Leaf-tailed Gecko alone made the trip worthwhile, especially when it mistook Rob for a tree and jumped onto a sensitive and centrally located part of his anatomy! Also much enjoyed were Peyrieras's Leaf Chameleon, which is one of the smallest chameleons in the world, and the beautiful poison

dart frog-like Climbing (also called 'Green-backed') Mantella. A Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur sprawled on a limb of a rainforest tree high in the canopy appeared to be perfectly at peace on its island paradise.

We spent a night and a morning in the pleasantly sleepy town of Maroantsetra while waiting for our flight to Tana. The undoubted highlight here was when the owner of our hotel restaurant offered us a free and unlimited opportunity to sample the bar's selection of 20-some different varieties of rum arrangé. This rum, aged with a variety of ingredients ranging from vanilla to jackfruit, is a delicious specialty of the Indian Ocean islands. In the morning, we made a boat trip on the adjacent river, where we saw a handful of birds and several interesting frogs.

There was lots of drama surrounding our flight back to Tana. A rumor started to circulate that there wasn't enough room on the flight, which was confirmed when certain bags were retrieved from the luggage trollies and returned to the terminal. We watched with trepidation as our baggage was lifted from the pile, then cheered in triumph when it was lifted into the luggage hold instead of being recalled to the terminal. Air travel is always an adventure with Air Madagascar!



Long-tailed Ground-Roller is probably the top bird in the spiny forest of Ifaty.



Red-shouldered Vanga is a Tulear area specialty.

Yet another Air Mad schedule chance left us with nearly a full day in Tana, so a couple of us decided to make a cultural excursion to Ambohimanga, the ancient seat of power of the Merina kings, and one of Madagascar's most important historical sites. We enjoyed our tour of this site, which even held a few birds like Chabert's Vanga and Madagascar Green Sunbird. On the way back through Tana we made a quick stop for Red-billed Duck (Teal), which was a new bird for one of the guys. Our delay in Tana was frustrating but not without some

rewards. Finally, our flight for Tulear lifted off, kicking off the final leg of our grand Madagascar tour.

We woke up in Ifaty, just a couple of kilometers from the fabled spiny forest (sometimes also called 'desert'), which is Madagascar's most distinctive environment, and holds a few of its coolest birds. Birding here is generally easier than in the rainforest, but our time was very short due to the late arrival of our flight. Would we have enough time to find all the birds? One of the most difficult species is Subdesert Mesite, but very quickly after entering the forest, we stumbled into a group of 3 dashing across the sandy path in front of us. A good start! Another tough bird is Lafresnaye's Vanga, but the crew of local guides had found a nest, making this one simple. Running Coua was very vocal, and was easily seen, as were Thamnornis (Warbler), Subdesert Brush-Warbler, and Archbold's Newtonia. Long-tailed Ground-Roller is perhaps the best bird of all in the spiny forest, and once again, the local experts had found a nest. With a little expert herding, we quickly enjoyed fantastic views of this almost roadrunner-like beauty, then left it in peace.

There was only one bird left to find, though this one is not considered a full species by most authorities: 'Green-capped' Coua. Regardless of its taxonomic status, we wanted to see this southwestern specialty. For about 30 minutes, it seemed like our luck had run out, as we trudged along with no sign of the coua. Suddenly, though, I heard the coua's call, and we quickly found the bird calling from a towering octopus tree. With that, we had seen all the spiny forest specialty species, and it was only 8:30 in the morning! We had enough time to return to our hotel for a big breakfast (to augment the coffee and croissant we ingested at 4:15 in the morning!) before searching for and quickly finding Madagascar Plover on some barren salt flats. On the way back to Tulear, we briefly birded the Bealalanda flats, where we saw Humblot's Heron, Sanderling, Greater Sand-Plover, and a handful of other waders.

The Tulear area holds a couple of specialty birds that are not found around Ifaty. In the afternoon, we ventured out to search for these species. Although their coral rag scrub habitat was dry and barren-looking, and the sun was still burning hot in the sky, we quickly managed to find a male Red-shouldered Vanga. Not long afterwards, we sprinted towards a calling Verreaux's Coua, and enjoyed good views of it before it submerged back into the dense scrub. An evening vigil for watering Madagascar Sandgrouse failed, though we enjoyed photographing common birds like Madagascar Cisticola and Black (Yellow-billed) Kite in the beautiful evening light.

Although we had already seen sandgrouse, it is a great bird, and we wanted to see it again, so the next morning, we again staked out the traditional spot. Just as we were about to give up, a lone male circled around, then flew off. It was a satisfying sighting, but I am concerned about the future of these birds in this heavily disturbed (and likely hunted) area. Our main mission for the day was a boat trip to Nosy Ve and Anakao. An hour at sea in a fancy new motorboat brought us to the tiny white sand island of Nosy Ve, where we enjoyed a walk around the island



Giant Coua at Zombitse Forest, on the way from Tulear to Isalo.

and a photography session with the Red-tailed Tropicbirds that breed here. A short 'hop' in the boat brought us to Anakao, on the mainland. Here we easily found a pair of Littoral Rock-Thrushes that were nesting in the garden of the hotel where we enjoyed a seafood lunch. Having cleaned up on the southwestern specialties, we had extra time in the afternoon to visit the Tulear Arboretum, which is a world-class site that is also excellent for bird photography. Highlights here were a very tame 'Green-capped' Coua, a roosting Gray-brown Mouse-Lemur, and a spiny-backed Warty Chameleon high in a tree. This is a very good place to start understanding the strange plant life of the spiny forest: its *Pachypodium*, octopus-tree, baobabs, euphorbias, and the other groups that combine to create this utterly bizarre and unique landscape.



Appert's Tetraka is only found in the Zombitze-Vohibasia National Park in southwest Madagascar.

Leaving Tulear early in the morning, we arrived in good time at Zombitse National Park, right along the main highway. Here we quickly located two endemics the well-named Giant Coua, and the pretty little Appert's Tetraka, which is only found in this park. A troop of Verreaux's sifakas showed well; our 5th sifaka species of the trip!

While walking along an open track, we spotted three raptors in the sky. To my surprise, they all appeared to be cuckoo-hawks. Careful study of our photos later revealed that my identification was correct. This is an extremely rare bird, so seeing 3 together was something quite special and unexpected. Our local guide took us to search for a White-browed Owl that had been consistently roosting in one area in the past weeks. Although it took a little searching, he eventually relocated

the owl. We had already seen this wonderful owl a couple of times, but that did nothing to detract from these views in broad daylight at just above eye level – amazing!

By lunchtime, we had already arrived at our sumptuous lodge in the Isalo area, where we had the by now almost expected fancy 3-course French lunch. After a siesta to avoid walking in the heat of the day, we headed out to search for ‘Benson’s’ Rock Thrush, which has recently been ‘lumped’ back into Forest Rock-Thrush. Amid a landscape of lush pandanus riparian forest and beautiful sandstone outcrops, we eventually found a nice male rock-thrush, which we carefully photographed only when it sat on rocks, and not when it perched in trees, as a sort of support for our hope that it will be restored to full species status in the future! The huge lizards known as Dumeril’s Madagascar Swifts, related to the iguanas of Central and South America, looked on, and were photographed themselves in turn.



‘Benson’s’ Rock-Thrush at Isalo. Although recently lumped back into Forest Rock-Thrush, it is distinctly different in some ways. Note how it’s perching on a rock and not a tree!

We left Isalo to head to the rainforest of Ranomafana, the last time we would switch from Madagascar’s dry west to its moist east, as we had done several times during this tour. Along the way, we stopped at the Anja Community Park, and thoroughly enjoyed and photographed a troop of Ring-tailed Lemurs. This is Madagascar’s ‘flagship lemur’, and for good reason; it has a

beautiful pattern, expressive face, and complicated and even humorous social relations that include 'stink fights' between males!

At Ranomafana, we had only a handful of species left to find, though they were among the most difficult of Madagascar's endemics to locate. Our first afternoon in the rainforest confirmed that we were in for a tough search... we only found one of our target species, the beautiful Rufous-headed Ground-Roller, after hours and kilometers of searching. Milne-Edwards Sifaka was also a prize sighting that made our afternoon efforts worthwhile.



**Madagascar Yellowbrow at Ranomafana:
a very hard-to-photograph bird!**

The next morning, we headed back to the same mid-elevation ridge to continue the search. This morning, our luck was much better, as is often the case in Malagasy forest, where afternoons are notoriously quiet in terms of birds. Our first new species was Cypic Warbler, which has recently been revealed to be a member of the Malagasy greenbul family rather than any warbler

family. Gray-crowned Tetraka was next, attending a nest right next to the trail. Hiking up to higher elevations, we scoured the dense undergrowth for Brown Emutail and Madagascar Yellowbrow, two extremely skulky species. Locking into some quiet vocalizations, we eventually caught sight of the yellowbrow. This species is one of my favorites in Madagascar. Though it looks somewhat like the tetrakas, its behavior is very different: it walks along the forest floor almost like a pipit. The yellow brow is indeed prominent; it almost glows when you glimpse it amidst the forest dimness. Soon after the yellowbrow, a Brown Emutail responded to tape, and in typical emutail fashion,

crept past, only a meter or two away... more like a mammal than a bird. High atop the ridge, where the forest becomes thin and scrubby, lies the habitat of one of Madagascar's most elusive endemics, the Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity. Staking out an area with copious flowering trees eventually paid off with good views of a female. Although I had glimpsed a male soon after we arrived, two of the guys missed it, so we decided to wait around to see if a male would come in. Eventually, we heard a wing whir behind us, and I looked over my shoulder to see a male sunbird-acity no more than 2 meters away, right at eye level. Despite the density of the undergrowth, all of us somehow had a perfect view of this bird. Initially stunned by this mind-scrambling sighting, Rob eventually reacted and lifted his camera to take what would have been an incredible photo, but at just that moment, the asity flew off. Nonetheless, we could not complain - it would have been impossible to see this gorgeous bird better, and its image will remain burned into our memories. While staking out the sunbird-acity, we had whistled in a male Pollen's Vanga, yet another potentially tough bird that had come very easily. On the way back down, we encountered a big 'greenbul' flock that included a couple of Wedge-tailed Jery, a dapper little species that had so far eluded us.

We had only one more potential new species in Ranomafana: the big and powerful Hensts's Goshawk. Although the local guides reported that the traditional nest was not yet in use, I decided to visit the area and hope to bump into the hawks. Amazingly, it seemed



Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog on our Ranomafana night walk.

that a pair had started incubating just that day or the previous day, and we saw the goshawk almost as soon as we arrived at the nest site. On the way to the goshawk nest, we had seen the beautiful and endangered Golden Bamboo-Lemur, and on the way back, with some help from our local guide's assistant, we saw the critically endangered Greater Bamboo-Lemur, the perfect end to what had been an amazing day of birding.

Our final day in Ranomafana was also our last day of birding in Madagascar, and we were in the unexpected position of having no further endemic birds to search for. We enjoyed a leisurely walk in the forest, trying to get photos of tough species like Madagascar Yellowbrow and Rufous-headed Ground-Roller. We spotted two great-looking mammals: Ring-tailed Mongoose and Lowland Streaked Tenrec. We also had time for some extra 'herping', and managed to see the beautiful Madagascar Mantella frog. In the evening, we made a long night walk which was amazingly productive. We racked up 6 species of chameleons, a couple of frogs including the spectacular Starry Night Reed Frog, and the tiny Brown Mouse-Lemur.

An uneventful day's drive brought us from Ranomafana back to Tana. Here we swapped the posh airport hotel we had been using for a quaint but equally luxurious hotel in a restored 100-plus year old house near the city center. We enjoyed a celebratory feast at what is probably Madagascar's best restaurant, savoring *foie gras*, excellent grilled prawns, and a whole lot of chocolate for desert.



Ring-tailed Lemur is known in Malagasy as 'Maki'.

ITINERARY

October 10	Arrival in Majunga. Drive to Ankarafantsika National Park.
October 11	Ankarafantsika NP to Antsohihy.
October 12	Antsohihy to Pochard Lakes.
October 13	Pochard Lakes to Antsohihy.
October 14	Antsohihy to Ankarafantsika to Majunga.
October 15	Majunga to Lac Kinkony.
October 16	Lac Kinkony to Tsiombikibo Forest.
October 17	Tsiombikibo Forest to Katsepy to Majunga.
October 18	Betsiboka Delta boat trip. Flight to Antananarivo.
October 19	Antananarivo to Anjozorobe to Antananarivo.
October 20	Antananarivo to Masoala National Park.
October 21	Masoala National Park.
October 22	Masoala National Park.
October 23	Masoala National Park.
October 24	Masoala to Maroantsetra.
October 25	Maroantsetra to Antananarivo.
October 26	Antananarivo to Tulear to Ifaty.
October 27	Ifaty to Tulear.
October 28	Boat trip to Nosy Ve and Anakao.
October 29	Tulear to Zombitse NP to Isalo.
October 30	Isalo to Anja Park to Ranomafana National Park.
October 31	Ranomafana National Park.
November 1	Ranomafana National Park.
November 2	Ranomafana to Antananarivo.



Almost 2/3 of the world's chameleons are endemic to Madagascar. This is one of the smaller ones, a Brown Leaf-Chameleon that we saw in Ranomafana National Park.

PHOTO GALLERY

Follows tour's chronology



Red-capped Coua at Ankarafantsika National Park, where we kicked off our birding.



The Blonde Hog-nosed Snake is one of Madagascar's largest snakes.



A beautiful female Madagascar Buttonquail, a species in which the males actually hold the duller plumage.



Coquerel's Sifaka (left) was one of an amazing 6 species of sifakas that we saw on this trip. The Torotoroko Scops-Owl (right) was one of 6 owl species, including all 5 endemics. Both were seen at Ankarafantsika.



Western Woolly-Lemur (left) at Ankarafantsika, and a Red Owl (right) on a day roost at the 'pochard site'.



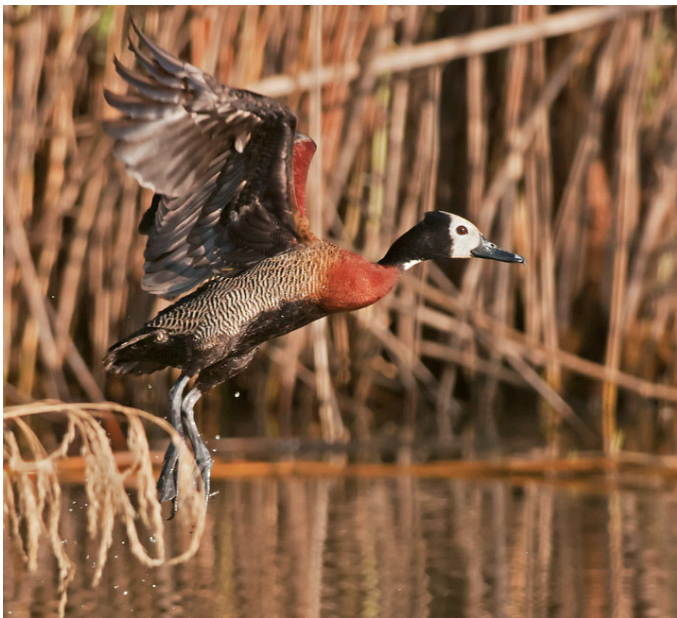
Only a couple dozen Madagascar Pochards still exist in the wild.



Here is about 15% of the world's wild breeding population!



A juvenile Sakalava Rail, at the end of a long trek to see this extremely rare and local species.



Lac Kinkony is a paradise for wetland birds, which are generally rare in Madagascar. The species present include large numbers of White-faced Whistling-Ducks (left) and a few Madagascar Jacanas (right).



Little Bittern (left) is quite common on Lac Kinkony, but scarce elsewhere on the island. Madagascar Harrier-Hawk (right) occurs throughout the country, and is fairly common.



Decken's Sifakas livened up a hot and dusty afternoon drive in the Lac Kinkony region.



Gray Mouse-Lemur (left) at Tsiombikibo Forest and Crowned Sifaka (right) at the Katsepy lighthouse.



The Sacred Ibis on Madagascar has a blue eye, and may be a different species from the African Sacred.



The marshes of Anjozorobe hold almost all of Madagascar's marsh species, including Gray Emu-tail.



Slender-billed Flufftail was the reason why we visited Anjozorobe.



Masoala is all about vangas, but there is a strong supporting cast including Short-legged Ground-Roller (left) and Red-breasted Coua (right).



Madagascar Pratincole is scarce most places in the country, but quite common on Masoala.



Malagasy (Rainforest) Scops-Owl is amazingly tame on Masoala.



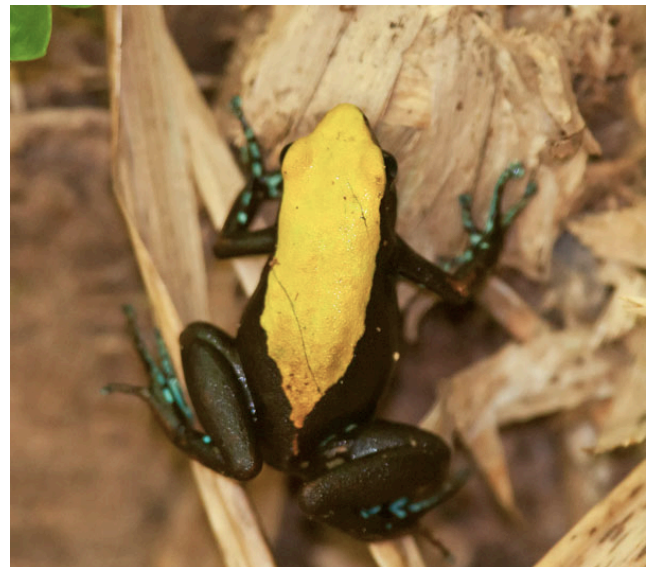
We had ridiculously close views of Scaly Ground-Roller, the best of the ground-rollers in my opinion.



Madagascar Crested Ibis (left) and Bernier's Vanga (right) were prize sightings on Masoala.



Nosy Mangabe's best reptile is the Giant Leaf-tailed Gecko, which looks like bark made animate!



But there is a lot more on offer on this small island: Brown Leaf Chameleon (left) is one of the world's smallest chameleons. Climbing Mantella (right) is a beauty. Look at those blue-green marks on the feet!



The "Green-capped" subspecies of Red-capped Coua is only found in the southwest.



Thamnornis (formerly known as 'Thamnornis Warbler') in the spiny forest near Ifaty.



Crab Plover forms a very cool monotypic family. We saw this pair on Nosy Ve.



Yellow-billed Kite (left) occurs across Africa, while Madagascar Kestrel (right) is a near-endemic.



A Littoral Rock-Thrush nest at Anakao made this easy-to-see bird even easier than normal.



Crested Drongo (left) and Sakalava Weaver (right) are both common and widespread.



**A couple of nocturnal species seen during the day at Zombitse:
White-browed Owl (left) and Zombitse Sportive Lemur (right).**



Madagascar Partridge can be tough, but this male posed beautifully.



Oplurus quadrimaculatus or Dumeril's Madagascar Swift is a large and almost dinosaur-like lizard that is common around Isalo.



Isalo has beautiful scenery, excellent lodges, and a few birds to boot.



Ring-tailed is the best known of Madagascar's lemurs.



Ring-tailed Lemur madness!



Rufous-headed Ground-Roller is often the hardest-to-see of the 5 ground-rollers.



Rand's Warblers (left) are persistent singers. Golden Bamboo Lemur (right) is an endangered species that is only found in a small area of southeastern Madagascar, including Ranomafana NP.



Madagascar Mantella is a gem of the rainforest leaf litter.



The Stripe-throated Jery is a member of the cisticola family...



...while the Wedge-tailed 'Jery' is actually a member of Bernieridae, the Malagasy warblers.



Nose-horned Chameleon (left), Rufous Mouse-Lemur (right), and the chameleon below were just a few of the sightings from one fantastic night walk at Ranomafana.



The Blue-legged Chameleon looks like it's wearing camo!

BIRD LIST

Taxonomy and nomenclature follow *The Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World 6.7* (including updates through October, 2012).

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

White-faced (Duck) Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	
Comb (Knob-billed) Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	
African Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>	
Meller's Duck	<i>Anas melleri</i>	
Bernier's Teal	<i>Anas bernieri</i>	
Red-billed Duck (Teal)	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	
Madagascar Pochard	<i>Aythya innotata</i>	

Numididae (Guineafowl)

Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	
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Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

Madagascar Partridge	<i>Margaroperdix madagascarensis</i>	
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Podicipedidae (Grebes)

Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	
Madagascar (Little) Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus pelzelinii</i>	

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

Red-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>	
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Ciconiidae (Storks)

Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	
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Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

Long-tailed (Reed) Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	
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Anhingidae (Anhingas)

African Darter	<i>Anhinga (melanogaster) rufa</i>	
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Scopidae (Hamerkop)

Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	
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Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	
Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	
Humblot's Heron	<i>Ardea humbloti</i>	
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	
Great (White) Egret	<i>Ardea (Casmerodeus) alba (albus)</i>	
Little (Dimorphic) Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta (dimorpha)</i>	
Black Heron (Egret)	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	

(Common) Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	
Madagascar (Squacco) Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola idae</i>	
Green-backed (Striated) Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	
Madagascar Crested Ibis	<i>Lophotibis cristata</i>	
(Madagascar) Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus (bernieri)</i>	
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk	<i>Aviceda madagascariensis</i>	
Black (Yellow-billed) Kite	<i>Milvus migrans (aegyptius/parasitus)</i>	
Madagascar Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vociferoides</i>	
Reunion (Madagascar) Harrier	<i>Circus macroscelus</i>	
Madagascar Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>	
Frances's Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter francesii (francesiae)</i>	
Madagascar Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter madagascariensis</i>	
Henst's Goshawk	<i>Accipiter henstii</i>	
Madagascar Buzzard	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>	

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

Madagascar Kestrel	<i>Falco newtoni</i>	
Banded Kestrel	<i>Falco zoniventris</i>	

Mesitornithidae (Mesites)

White-breasted Mesite	<i>Mesitornis variegata</i>	
Brown Mesite	<i>Mesitornis unicolor</i>	
Subdesert Mesite	<i>Monias benschi</i>	

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

Madagascar Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>	
Slender-billed Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura watersi</i>	
Madagascar Wood-Rail	<i>Canirallus kioloides</i>	
Madagascar Rail	<i>Rallus madagascariensis</i>	
White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>	
Sakalava Rail	<i>Amauornis olivieri</i>	
Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	
Purple Swamphen (Gallinule)	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	
Allen's (Lesser) Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio alleni</i>	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

Black-bellied (Grey) Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	
Greater Sandplover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	
Madagascar Plover	<i>Charadrius thoracicus</i>	
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	

White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	
<i>Dromadidae (Crab Plover)</i>		
Crab Plover	<i>Dromas ardeola</i>	
<i>Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)</i>		
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	
<i>Jacanidae (Jacanas)</i>		
Madagascar Jacana	<i>Actophilornis albinucha</i>	
<i>Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)</i>		
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	
Madagascar Snipe	<i>Gallinago macrodactyla</i>	
<i>Turnicidae (Buttonquail)</i>		
Madagascar Buttonquail	<i>Turnix nigricollis</i>	
<i>Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)</i>		
Madagascar Pratincole	<i>Glareola ocularis</i>	
<i>Rostratulidae (Painted-Snipes)</i>		
Greater Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	
<i>Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)</i>		
Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	
Great Crested (Swift) Tern	<i>Thalasseus (Sterna) bergii</i>	
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus (Sterna) bengalensis</i>	
<i>Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)</i>		
Madagascar Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles personatus</i>	
<i>Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)</i>		
Rock Pigeon (Dove)	<i>Columba livia</i>	
Madagascar Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia picturata</i>	
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	
Madagascar Green-Pigeon	<i>Treron australis</i>	
Madagascar Blue-Pigeon	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>	
<i>Psittacidae (Parrots)</i>		
Grey-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis canus</i>	
Greater Vasa-Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>	
Lesser Vasa-Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>	

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

Madagascar (Lesser) Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>	
Giant Coua	<i>Coua gigas</i>	
Coquerel's Coua	<i>Coua coquereli</i>	
Red-breasted Coua	<i>Coua serriana</i>	
Red-fronted Coua	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>	
Red-capped Coua	<i>Coua ruficeps</i>	
[Green-capped Coua]	<i>[Coua ruficeps olivaceiceps]</i>	
Running Coua	<i>Coua cursor</i>	
Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>	
Verreaux's Coua	<i>Coua verreauxi</i>	
Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>	
Madagascar Coucal	<i>Centropus toulou</i>	

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	
Madagascan Red Owl	<i>Tyto soumagnei</i>	

Strigidae (Owls)

Malagasy (Rainforest) Scops-Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>	
Torotoroka Scops-Owl	<i>Otus madagascariensis</i>	
White-browed Owl	<i>Ninox superciliaris</i>	
Madagascar Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio madagascariensis</i>	

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and allies)

Madagascar Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>	
Collared Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus enarratus</i>	P

Apodidae (Swifts)

Malagasy Spinetail (Madagascar Spine-tailed Swift)	<i>Zoonavena grandidieri</i>	
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	
Madagascar (Black) Swift	<i>Apus balstoni</i>	
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	
African Palm-Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

Malagasy (Madagascar) Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis vintsioides</i>	
Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis (Ispidina) madagascariensis</i>	

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

Madagascar Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>	
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Coraciidae (Rollers)

Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	
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Brachypteraciidae (Ground-Rollers)

Short-legged Ground-Roller	<i>Brachypteracias leptosomus</i>	
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Scaly Ground-Roller	<i>Brachypteracias squamiger</i>	
Pitta-like Ground-Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>	
Rufous-headed Ground-Roller	<i>Atelornis crossleyi</i>	
Long-tailed Ground-Roller	<i>Uratelornis chimaera</i>	

Leptosomidae (Cuckoo-Roller)

(Madagascar) Cuckoo-Roller	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>	
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Upupidae (Hoopoes)

Madagascar Hoopoe	<i>Upupa marginata</i>	
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Philepittidae (Asities)

Velvet Asity	<i>Philepitta castanea</i>	
Schlegel's Asity	<i>Philepitta schlegeli</i>	
Common Sunbird-Asity	<i>Neodrepanis coruscans</i>	
Yellow-bellied (Sunbird-)Asity	<i>Neodrepanis hypoxantha</i>	

Vangidae (Vangas)

Tylas Vanga	<i>Tylas eduardi</i>	
Dark Newtonia	<i>Newtonia amphichroa</i>	
Common Newtonia	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>	
Archbold's Newtonia	<i>Newtonia archboldi</i>	
Chabert's Vanga	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>	
(Madagascar) Blue Vanga	<i>Cyanolanius madagascarinus</i>	
Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>	
Red-shouldered Vanga	<i>Calicalicus rufocarpalis</i>	
Nuthatch Vanga	<i>Hypositta corallirostris</i>	
Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>	
Helmet Vanga	<i>Euryceros prevostii</i>	
Rufous Vanga	<i>Schetba rufa</i>	
Sickle-billed Vanga	<i>Falculea palliata</i>	
Bernier's Vanga	<i>Oriola bernieri</i>	
White-headed Vanga	<i>Artamella (Leptopterus) viridis</i>	
Lafresnaye's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris xenopirostris</i>	
Van Dam's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris damii</i>	
Pollen's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris polleni</i>	
Ward's Flycatcher	<i>Pseudobias wardi</i>	
Crossley's Babbler	<i>Mystacornis crossleyi</i>	

Campephagidae (Cuckoo-shrikes)

Ashy (Madagascar) Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina cinerea</i>	
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Dicruridae (Drongos)

Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>	
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Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone mutata</i>	
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Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	
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Alaudidae (Larks)

Madagascar Lark	<i>Mirafra hova</i>	
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Hirundinidae (Swallows)

Plain (Brown-throated) Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	
Mascarene Martin	<i>Phedina borbonica</i>	

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

Madagascar Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>	
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Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

Madagascar Brush-Warbler	<i>Nesillas typica</i>	
Subdesert Brush-Warbler	<i>Nesillas lantzi</i>	
Madagascar Swamp-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus newtoni</i>	

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

Brown Emu-tail	<i>Dromaeocercus brunneus</i>	
Gray Emu-tail	<i>Dromaeocercus seebohmi</i>	

Bernieridae (Malagasy Warblers)

White-throated Oxylabes	<i>Oxylabes madagascariensis</i>	
Long-billed Bernieria (Greenbul)	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>	
Cryptic Warbler	<i>Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi</i>	
Wedge-tailed Jery	<i>Hartertula flavoviridis</i>	
Thamnornis (Warbler)	<i>Thamnornis chloropetoides</i>	
Yellow-browed Oxylabes (Madagascar Yellowbrow)	<i>Crossleyia xanthophrys</i>	
Spectacled Tetraka (Greenbul)	<i>Xanthornix (Bernieria) zosterops</i>	
Appert's Tetraka (Greenbul)	<i>Xanthornix (Bernieria) apperti</i>	
Grey-crowned Tetraka	<i>Xanthornix (Bernieria) cinereiceps</i>	
Rand's Warbler	<i>Randia pseudozosterops</i>	

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

Common Jery	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>	
Green Jery	<i>Neomixis viridis</i>	
Stripe-throated Jery	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>	
Madagascar Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cherina</i>	

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

Madagascar Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus albospecularis</i>	
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus sibilla</i>	

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

Forest Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola sharpei</i>	
[Benson's Rock-Thrush]	<i>[Monticola sharpei bensoni]</i>	
Littoral Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola imerina</i>	

Zosteropidae (White-eyes)

Madagascar White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>	
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Sturnidae (Starlings)

Madagascar Starling	<i>Saroglossa aurata</i>	
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

Souimanga Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris (Nectarinia) souimanga</i>	
Madagascar (Green) Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris (Nectarinia) notatus</i>	

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

Madagascar Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flaviventris</i>	
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Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	
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Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)

Nelicourvi Weaver	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>	
Sakalava Weaver	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>	
Red (Magagascar) Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	
Forest Fody	<i>Foudia omissa</i>	

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

Madagascar Mannikin	<i>Lonchura nana</i>	
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Bold = Madagascar endemic species or family. Note that even many of these non-endemic species are only shared with the Comoros, Mascarenes, and/or Seychelles (other Indian Ocean Islands).

P = seen at Perinet before or after the trip by some participants

[brackets] = a species not split in the Clements list



Gray-crowned Tetraka (left) can be difficult to find, as it is small and inconspicuous. A near-endemic Crested Drongo chases a widespread Pied Crow (right).

MAMMAL LIST

Taxonomy and nomenclature for lemurs follow Conservation International's *Lemurs of Madagascar* (2010) by Russell Mittermeier et al. For other mammals, taxonomy and nomenclature follow *Mammals of Madagascar* (2007) by Nick Garbutt.

Cheirogaleidae (Mouse & Dwarf Lemurs)

Grey-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>	
Golden-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus ravelobensis</i>	
Rufous (Brown) Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>	
"Masoala" Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus sp. (mittermeieri?)</i>	
Goodman's Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus lehilahytsara</i>	P
Greater Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogaleus major</i>	
Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogaleus crossleyi</i>	P
Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cheirogaleus medius</i>	

Lepilemuridae (Sportive Lemurs)

Weasel Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur mustelinus</i>	P
Masoala Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur scottorum</i>	
Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur edwardsi</i>	
Zombitse Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur hubbardorum</i>	

Lemuridae (True Lemurs)

Eastern Lesser (Gray) Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur griseus</i>	P
Golden Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>	
Greater Bamboo Lemur	<i>Prolemur simus</i>	
Ring-tailed Lemur	<i>Lemur catta</i>	
Common Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>	
Red-fronted Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemus rufifrons</i>	H
Rufous Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur rufus</i>	
White-fronted Brown Lemur	<i>Eulemur albifrons</i>	
Red-bellied Lemur	<i>Eulemur rubriventer</i>	
Mongoose Lemur	<i>Eulemur mongoz</i>	
Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata</i>	
Red Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia rubra</i>	

Indridae (Woolly Lemurs, Sifakas & Indri)

Eastern Woolly Lemur (Avahi)	<i>Avahi laniger</i>	P
Masoala Woolly Lemur (Avahi)	<i>Avahi mooreorum</i>	
Western Woolly Lemur (Avahi)	<i>Avahi occidentalis</i>	
Verreaux's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>	
Decken's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus deckenii</i>	
Crowned Sifaka	<i>Propithecus coronatus</i>	
Coquerel's Sifaka	<i>Propithecus coquereli</i>	
Diademed Sifaka	<i>Propithecus edwardsi</i>	P
Milne-Edwards Sifaka	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>	
Indri	<i>Indri Indri</i>	

Eupleridae (Malagasy Carnivores)

Ring-tailed Mongoose	<i>Galidia elegans</i>	
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Viverridae

Small Indian Civet	<i>Viverricula indica</i>	
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Megachiroptera (Fruit Bats)

Madagascar Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus rufus</i>	
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Microchiroptera (Micro bats)

Mauritian Tomb Bat	<i>Taphozous mauritanus</i>	T
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Tenrecidae (Tenrecs)

Lowland Streaked Tenrec	<i>Hemicentetes semispinosus</i>	
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Muridae (Old World Rats and Mice)

Western Tuft-tailed Rat	<i>Eliurus myoxinus</i>	
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Eastern Red Forest Rat	<i>Nesomys rufus</i>	
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Black Rat	<i>Rattus rattus</i>	
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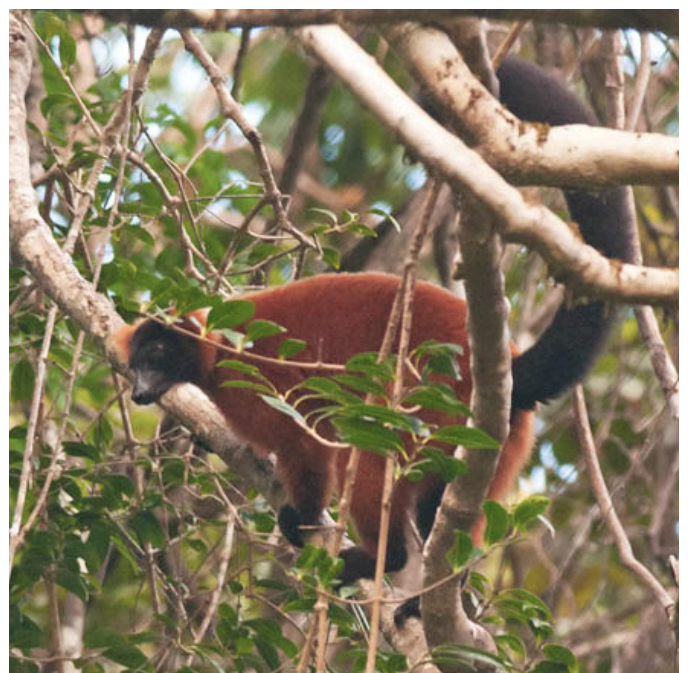
Cetaceans

Dolphin sp.	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	
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H = heard-only

P = seen at Perinet before or after the trip by some participants

T = seen in Tana before the trip by some participants



Two of the 34 lemur species recorded, on the two ends of the size spectrum:
Gray Mouse-Lemur (left) and Red Ruffed-Lemur (right).

REPTILE LIST

Taxonomy and nomenclature for follow *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar: Third Edition* (2007) by Frank Glaw and Miguel Vences.

Cheloniidae

Green Sea Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
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Pelomedusidae

Marsh Terrapin	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>
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Crocodylidae

Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>
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Chamaeleonidae

Brown Leaf Chameleon	<i>Brookesia superciliaris</i>
Peyrieras's Leaf Chameleon	<i>Brookesia peyrierasi</i>
Nose-horned Chameleon	<i>Calumma nasuta</i>
Band-bellied Chameleon	<i>Calumma gastrotaenia</i>
O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon	<i>Calumma oshaughnessyi</i>
Glaw's Chameleon	<i>Calumma glawi</i>
Blue-legged Chameleon	<i>Calumma crypticum</i>
Rhinosaurus Chameleon	<i>Furcifer rhinoceratus</i>
Oustalet's Chameleon	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>
Warty Chameleon	<i>Furcifer verrucosus</i>
Jeweled Chameleon	<i>Furcifer lateralis</i>
Panther Chameleon	<i>Furcifer pardalis</i>

Iguanidae

Three-eyed Lizard	<i>Chalarodon madagascariensis</i>
Collared Iguanid	<i>Oplurus cuvieri</i>
Dumeril's Madagascar Swift	<i>Oplurus quadrimaculatus</i>

Gekkonidae

Sakalava Gecko	<i>Blaesodactylus sakalava</i>
Grandidier's Dwarf Gecko	<i>Lygodactylus tolampyae</i>
Giant Leaf-tailed Gecko	<i>Uroplatus fimbriatus</i>
Common House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
Gray's Leaf-toed Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mercatorius</i>
Speckled Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma guttata</i>
Madagascar Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma madagascariensis</i>
Standing's Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma standingi</i>
Peacock Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>
Lined Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma lineata</i>
	<i>Phelsuma pusilla</i>
Modest Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma modesta</i>

Gerrhosauridae

Malagasy Keeled Plated Lizard	<i>Tracheloptychus madagascariensis</i>
Common Lizzard	<i>Zonosaurus madagascariensis</i>

Ornate Girdled-Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus ornatus</i>
Broad-tailed Girdled-Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus laticaudatus</i>
	<i>Zonosaurus brygooi</i>
Bronze Girdled Lizard	<i>Zonosaurus aeneus</i>

Scincidae

Elegant Skink	<i>Mabuya elegans</i>
Gravenhorst's Skink	<i>Mabuya gravenhorstii</i>
Common Madagascar Skink	<i>Madascincus melanopleura</i>

Boidae

Madagascar Tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>
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Colubridae

Madagascar Cat-eyed Snake	<i>Madagascarophis colubrinus</i>
Blonde Hog-nosed Snake	<i>Leioheterodon modestus</i>
Six-lined Water Snake	<i>Liopholidophis sexlineatus</i>
Madagascar Whipsnake	<i>Biblava lateralis</i>
Bernier's Striped Snake	<i>Dromicodryas bernieri</i>



Lined Day-Gecko is part of a genus of beautiful geckos that is endemic to the Indian Ocean islands.

AMPHIBIAN LIST

Taxonomy and nomenclature for follow *A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar: Third Edition* (2007) by Frank Glaw and Miguel Vences.

Mascarene Ridged Frog	<i>Ptychadena mascareniensis</i>
Starry Night Reed Frog	<i>Heterixalus alboguttatus</i>
	<i>Heterixalus madagascariensis</i>
Tomato Frog	<i>Dyscophus antongilii</i>
	<i>Stumpffia sp.</i>
Climbing Mantella	<i>Mantella laevigata</i>
Madagascan Mantella	<i>Mantella madagascariensis</i>
	<i>Boophis doulioti</i>
Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog	<i>Boophis madagascariensis</i>
Dumeril's Bright-eyed Frog	<i>Boophis tephraeomystax</i>
Madagascar Jumping Frog	<i>Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis</i>
Pandanus Frog	<i>Guibemantis pulcher</i>
undescribed <i>Mantidactylus</i>	<i>Mantidactylus spp. aff. Femoralis</i>
	<i>Mantidactylus grandidieri</i>



Heterixalus madagascariensis was one of 14 species of frogs that we identified, at least to genus. Many more were seen but not identified.