

Madagascar: Enigmatic Wildlife Tour

November 13- December 5 2024

Berenty Custom Extension: Dec 1- Dec 5

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Photos and Trip Report by Zac Babbit. All photos taken on this tour.



Madagascar has always represented a frontier of the unknown and the strange for biologists and naturalists. As the fourth largest island in the world, there are many reasons any naturalist would hope to visit it someday. For 90 million years Madagascar has remained in isolation, and in its solitude it has allowed an incredible amount of diversity and endemism to evolve. Of the estimated 200,000 species of living organisms around 150,000 are endemic to the island, an incredible 75%!

While our birding tour focuses on taking people to more heavily visited national parks since this is oftentimes the best option for seeing as many endemic birds as possible. For those that want to experience the iconic landscapes, rarer animals and less tourists, this tour is for you. The entire premise of the “Enigmatic Wildlife Tour” is to visit locations most other tours will not, and to search for animals that most tours have little or no chance of seeing. We traveled to the central western coast in search of Madagascar's elusive carnivores (**Fosa and Bokiboky**) and one of the island's strangest mammals, the **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat**. We then flew to the north where we visited several parks and preserves. Along our northern journey we found several critically endangered lemurs, dozens of highly localized chameleons and other reptiles, and seldom seen small mammals.

By the end of the tour we had seen **118 species of birds**, including at least one species from each of the endemic families. Our mammal list reached a total of **48 species**; where we saw a member from **7 of the 8 endemic mammal families**. We saw **30 lemur species, 3 euplerid species, 2 tenrec species, 7 bats species, and 6 rodent species**. Plant enthusiasts will be happy to know we located **all 6 species of endemic Baobabs**. The reptile diversity was also well represented with a total of **57 species, 13 of which were endemic chameleons!** The unseasonably dry conditions made the frog watching difficult, but we still managed to see **13 species**, including the highly sought after **Baron's Mantella**. Overall it was an epic trip with many memorable encounters, so be sure to read on for all the wonderful details of this epic adventure.

November 14: Antananarivo to Kirindy

Our flight from Antananarivo to Morondava was scheduled for 5:30 am so we arrived 2 hours early. Unfortunately the flight was delayed by a few hours, but we managed to have an otherwise easy flight to the city of Morondava. Located on the central west coast of the island, Morondava offers gorgeous views of the Mozambique Channel. Upon arrival we found our first day gecko, the highly endemic **Morondava Day Gecko** right in the airport. We picked up our bags and loaded them into our local driver's cars. It was an easy 30 minute drive to one of Madagascar's most famous locations, **Baobab Alley**. Baobab Alley is one of Madagascar's most photographed and easily recognized locations, and for a good reason too. While the surrounding habitat is gone, the local grooves of baobabs support three of the six Malagasy baobab (*Adansonia* sp.) species. The most famous of the three is **Grandidier's Baobab** (*Adansonia grandideri*), which is the predominant species in the main grove. After stopping to see the main **Grandidier's Baobab** grove we continued down the road and picked up the other two local baobab species, **Za Baobab** (*Adansonia za*) and **Fony Baobab** (*Adansonia rubrostipa*). Within 20 minutes we had seen three of the six endemic baobab species. As we marveled at the baobab's beauty we picked up several birds! Some of the highlights were the endemic **Malagasy Kestrel, Stripe-throated Jery and Crested Drongo**. However, the best bird we saw at Baobab Avenue was the **Sickle-billed Vanga**, which is a large black and white vanga with a long sickle shaped bill used for picking out well concealed insects, reptiles and amphibians. After we took more pictures of the baobabs and watched our first birds of the trip we headed 2 hours onwards to our lodge, Akiba Lodge.

The drive was bumpy but certainly enjoyable due to its unique roughness. We checked in and had lunch, which was briefly interrupted by the entry of the **Giant Coua**. This behemoth is the largest of the couas, an endemic subfamily to the cuckoos. We finished our lunch and headed out for our visit to Kirindy Reserve. The reserve is world famous for being the best place in the world to see wild **Fosa**, the apex predator of

Madagascar. We met with our local guide and as we were discussing ideas for our time there, a different local guide came running in. There was a **Fosa** being seen right at that moment in the parking lot. We dashed over and immediately found an adult female. We had found our **Fosa** within the first 10 minutes of arriving, it must have been some sort of world record!

We watched the **Fosa** as she drank water from a reservoir and then disappeared into the nearby forest. Thrilled by our encounter, we continued our afternoon hike and searched for more wildlife. It didn't take long for our incredible luck to continue. We had phenomenal photo opportunities for **Madagascar Buttonquail**, **Crested Coua**,



Long-billed Bernieria and **Hook-billed Vanga**. The temperature was lovely in the late afternoon and we walked for two hours before heading back to the cars. Upon returning to

the parking lot we were greeted by our first lemurs of the tour, **Red-fronted Brown Lemurs!** It was a lot of fun to watch these lemurs drink from the water reservoir, and one of the females even had a baby.

On our way back to the hotel we stopped abruptly to see a **Madagascar Cuckoo**, which was perched in the open. While these birds are common, it can be difficult to see them well. We marveled at the sight aside from the cuckoo. The sun was setting on Baobab Avenue, and the full moon was out in all of its glory. We took in the views along with the cuckoo before continuing back to Akiba Lodge for our night walk. We returned and began our night walk, which took us around the hotel property. The first lemur we found was the **Red-tailed Sportive Lemur**, a beautifully colored species of lemur. We moved on and found several **Gray Mouse Lemurs**, which are awesome fun to see. The reptiles activity was low but some of the highlights were **Oustalet's Chameleon** and **Madagascar Ground Gecko (*Paroedura picta*)**. The number one find of the night was undoubtedly the **Pale Fork-marked Lemur**, which is one of the larger nocturnal lemurs. We turned in and rested for our first full day in Kirindy.

November 15: Kirindy Forest Reserve

With such epic looks at the Fosa the previous day it was easy to decide which of our remaining targets needed the most attention Today our top goals would be locking down a good view of **Bokiboky** and **White-breasted Mesite**, both of which can be difficult to see at all. We arrived at Kirindy by 6:30am and were greeted by an active water hole, with epic looks of **Sakalava Weavers**, **Gray-headed Lovebirds**, and **Malagasy Turtle Dove**. As we were enjoying the birds a troupe of **Verreaux's Sifaka** came bouncing in through the trees before settling down. This was our first of the sifakas and a really memorable encounter, with several individuals coming in very close to us to investigate. It hadn't even been 15 minutes since we had arrived! We continued down the trail and had several fantastic looks at the **Coquerel's Coua** as it foraged peacefully in the brush. The same

covey of **Madagascar Buttonquail** from the previous day appeared for another great encounter. We watched both **Lesser and Greater Vasa Parrots** forage in trees, and had several **Common Jeries**.

We continued deeper into the dry forests of Kirindy, hoping to see the **White-breasted Mesite**. As we walked I would occasionally play the call, which was only met with silence. Eventually, after trying a new area that appeared to have good mesquite habitat, we heard the hysteric calls in **White-breasted Mesite!** We ran to investigate and were fortunate enough to find a pair hiding deep in the brush. Suddenly the pair leaped off the log and proceeded to forage in front of us, seemingly unbothered. We watched the **White-breasted Mesite** pair for almost 15 minutes as they didn't mind our presence



in the slightest. There were several instances where the birds walked in the open less than a meter from our feet! This was incomparably the best mesquite encounter I've had in the

3 trips to Madagascar I've made. Astonished by our luck we continued searching for **Bokiboky**, a small endemic carnivore. It didn't take long before we found more wildlife. A pair of **Rufous Vangas** were an epic find, and we even watched them construct a nest. The nearby sound of rustling leaves incited a close inspection. Luckily we were awarded for our "detective work". The rustling led us to not one, but two **Bokiboky**! The pair was a mother and baby, and we watched the pair forage as the young one learnt from its parents how to hunt. It was a beautiful encounter and one we considered ourselves lucky to see.

It was only 9:00 am and we had already seen all our major targets! Luckily there was still plenty to see. We continued bird watching and found a small mixed flock; which had **White-headed Vanga**, **Madagascar Blue Vanga**, and **Common Newtonia** in it. The heart began to come in and the group was satisfied with our time in the park, so we headed back to the hotel for a break and early lunch. Upon returning to the hotel I inquired with the local guide regarding any roosting owls. Luckily there were two species that were easy to see. Within 15 minutes we had great looks at both **White-browed Owl** and "**Torotoroka**" **Madagascar Scops-Owl**! We took lunch and relaxed until our afternoon outing.

We met back up for an afternoon walk which provided us with more views of **Red-fronted Brown Lemurs**, **Veereaux's Sifaka** and **Bokiboky**! We also got our first looks at **Malagasy Bulbul**, which was surprising since it is a common bird. We might be the first tour group to see a **Fosa** and **Bokiboky** before a **Malagasy Bulbul**! We wrapped our afternoon walk and prepared for a focused night walk for one of Madagascar's most unique mammals, the **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat**. This odd looking animal is the largest rodent in Madagascar, and resembles a rabbit mixed with a wallaby more than a rat. Unfortunately the **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat** had only been seen one time this year before our arrival, but we figured we'd give it our best shot anyways. We were led by

our local guide to the burrows of these large rodents and sat in the dark for one and a half hours.

Our local guide placed a few mango peels to lure the rodents out of the hole, increasing our chances significantly. As we sat in the dark the calls of **Madagascar Nightjar and Madagascar Shops-Owl** filled the air. The soundscape mixed with the full moon created a beautifully meditative environment as we tested our patience. As we waited we saw several **Western Big-footed Mice** and a **Gray Mouse Lemur** come to investigate the aroma from the mangos. Our cut off time was 8:00pm, when it came we gave a final scan and saw no **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rats**. Luckily the clients agreed to an extra 10 minutes. We sat patiently and at the last minute I turned the lights on one more time, and there standing in the open was the **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat!**

In recent years their numbers have dropped due to locals hunting them for food, but we were blessed with the presence of this rare mammal. We watched the rat until it wandered off. Suddenly a different group came running in and scared the **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat off**. We tried to refund the beast but were unsuccessful. Disappointed by the limited time we had seen the **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat** we returned to collect our bags from around the den. When we returned we were thrilled to see two more **Malagasy Giant Jumping Rats** feeding in the open! We watched the two feed until they ran off, but we were lucky enough to get epic views of them for a prolonged amount of time with our binoculars. The atmosphere was electric and everyone understood how lucky we were to see these endangered rodents. On the drive back we got a brief look at the **Dormouse Tufted-tailed Rat** as it ran across the road, another epic addition to the trip list!

November 16: Kirindy Forest Reserve to Morondava

Since we had such good luck the previous days we opted to do some birding around the lodge instead. We got to enjoy birds like the **Giant Coua, Malagasy Coucal and Chabert Vanga**. Another bonus was more views of the **Verreaux's Sifaka**, when they

came leaping towards the Restaurant during our breakfast. We finished breakfast and headed to Morondava for an early check in. Along the way we stopped at Baobab Avenue again for Baobab flavored ice cream, an excellent local treat. We arrived at our hotel in time for lunch, which was a beautiful accommodation. The nearby ocean and lovely rooms were inviting for everyone to take a much needed rest day. We took the remainder of the day off and prepared for an upcoming travel day.



November 17: Morondava to Antananarivo

Today was mostly a travel day, but we did manage to do some birding in the morning. After breakfast we loaded into a small canoe and were taken on a peaceful

paddle through the local mangrove forests. Along the way we saw many cool crabs like the **Brown Land Crab** (*Cardisoma carnifex*), **Inverted Fiddler Crab** (*Cranuca inversa*), **Horned Ghost Crab** (*Ocypode ceratophthalmus*), and East African Fiddler Crab (*Austruca occidentalis*). Undoubtedly the non-avian highlight was the **Barred Mudskipper** (*Periophthalmus argentilineatus*) which we saw over a hundred of. These strange fish are better suited to be on the muddy shorelines than in the water, and we loved watching them skip on land and on the surface of the water. We saw some shorebirds as well like **Curlew Sandpipers**, **Whimbrels**, **Common Greenshank**, and **Common Sandpiper**. A **Stripe-throated Jery** was seen singing from the canopy of the mangroves and a skulking **Malagasy Kingfisher** was seen on two occasions. We landed in a nearby fisherman village and were taken on a lovely walk through town to elevate our cultural understanding of the area. We reloaded the boat and returned to our hotel to pack and leave for the airport.

Once we returned to Antananarivo via airplane we settled back in Bois Vert, our local accommodation. We had some time in the afternoon and decided it was best spent at Parc de Tsarasaotra. The lake here acts as a haven for wildlife that hopes to escape the chaos of the surrounding city. We entered and immediately found the endemic and endangered **Meller's Duck**, a reliable resident here. We continued to walk the shorelines and saw **White-throated Rail**, **Black Heron**, **Red-billed Duck**, **Blue-billed Teal**, **Malagasy White-eye**, **Madagascar Hoopoe**, and **White-faced Whistling Duck**. Another major highlight of our time here was the endemic **Malagasy Pond-Heron**, which is also reliably seen here at the lake. After a few hours at the lake we returned back to our hotel and rested for another flight in the morning.

November 18: Antananarivo to Diego-Suerez

Our flight wasn't until 12:30pm so we had some time to bird the hotel grounds before and after breakfast. One of the main reasons we stay at Bois Vert is because the

gardens on the property can offer some of the best bird watching in the Antananarivo area. We walked through the gardens and found a large group of **Little Swifts** flying overhead. We continued down the trails and saw **Malagasy White-eye, Red Fody, Malagasy Bulbul and Madagascar Brush-Warbler**. One of the highlights was a **Madagascar Nightjar**, that was perched out in the open for us to enjoy. We left for our flight and arrived in Diego-Suarez by 2:40pm.

Upon arrival we met our local drivers and headed out to Montagne de Francias for some baobab and bird watching. This park is especially special since it is home to a healthy population of the endemic and critically endangered **Diego-Suarez Baobab** (*Adansonia suarezensis*). We hiked to a grove and saw **Chabert Vanga, Crested Drongo, and Olive Bee-eaters** along the way. We hiked for 30 minutes and arrived at a grove where both **Diego-Suarez Baobab** and **Gray Baobab** (*Adansonia madagascariensis*) were growing, boosting our list to five of the six endemic Malagasy baobabs. One of the **Gray Baobabs** was concealing a **Madagascar Velvet Gecko** (*Blaesodactylus boivini*), a massive nocturnal gecko that is endemic to Northern Madagascar. We reloaded in the cars and completed our drive to Nature Lodge, our accommodation as we explored Amber Mountain National Park for the next two days.

We met with our local guide for the next week, as we would be joining us for the tour until Nosy Be. We went on our first night walk to search for as many endemics as possible. The night walk was incredibly productive and we saw many species unique to Amber Mountain. Amber Mountain is a very special locality for naturalists due to its lush montane rainforest. The mountain is surrounded by dry deciduous forest, a contrast that has led to many species being restricted to the mountain and its slopes. We found the **Amber Mountain Leaf-tailed Gecko, Amber Mountain Globe-horned Chameleon, Blue-nosed Chameleon, Amber Mountain Pill Millipede, Amber Mountain Madagascar Frog and *Mantidactylus bellyi***, all of which are unique to mountain. As we enjoyed the plethora of unique reptiles and amphibians we came across the endemic

Arnold's Mouse Lemur, an endemic primate! After an hour and half of exploring the park area we returned to have a delicious dinner at our lodge and rest for the next day.

November 19: Amber Mountain National Park

After our night walk the previous night we were ecstatic about returning for a full day in the park. We entered the park as soon as it opened, and eventually got out to walk along the road. As we walked down the road we searched for the **Amber Mountain Rock-Thrush**, which is a newly split species found only on the mountain. We played



some tape at a few territories but continued empty handed down the trail. Luckily there were many other good birds we saw in the meantime like a **Forest Fody**! This beautiful

passerine is a brilliant red, accompanied by a creamy white belly. The Forest Fody offered us many epic views and was joined by a few **Red-tailed Vangas** that were passing through. We continued down the trail and eventually came across Amber Mountain's most cryptic endemics. The **Amber Mountain Leaf Chameleon** is the third smallest chameleon in the world, with adults maxing out at an inch in length! This minuscule reptile can be tough to find but luckily the careful eyes of our local guide made it possible to see a total of four individuals. As we enjoyed these tiny gems our local guide pointed out another tiny resident. *Stumpffia huwei* is one of the smallest frogs in Madagascar, and it was a great experience to see one of the smallest reptiles and amphibians side by side. We reached a smaller trailhead and entered the forest interior to continue our search for **Amber Mountain Rock-Thrush and Sanford's Brown Lemur**. As we walked through the forest we found several **Giant Day Geckos** (*Phelsuma grandis*), which are the largest of the day geckos and the animal the Gecko mascot is based off of. Suddenly the song of a **Dark Newtonia** caught my attention. We played a bit of playback and the tiny vangas came in energetically hopping from branch to branch. Despite their frantic movements we managed great looks and a few photos.

The understory of Amber Mountain held a few more endemics in its shadow for us. Despite the dry state of the forest we found a blooming *Euphoria ambrensis*, a marvelous endemic orchid that any botany nerd would drool over. As we continued down the trail one of our group members snuck off to use the bush bathroom. As we waited for her return we suddenly heard her yell, "THRUSH!". After getting the "all-clear" we rushed over and were overjoyed to find our top target of the day, a male **Amber Mountain Rock-Thrush**. Our gorgeous male perched in the open and posed for photos for about 15 minutes, well worth the effort and wait. We focused on our last major target, **Sanford's Brown Lemur**.

The darkness of the forest grew as we walked further in, when suddenly the distinctive song of a **Pitta-like Ground Roller** interrupted our pace. We stopped and

played a tape to see if we could coax this denizen of the deep forest out into the light. The responses of the ground roller came closer and we managed to spot our shy target in the tangles of the forest. Despite the thickness of the surrounding forest we all got looks and photographs of this colorful hermit. As we watched the **Pitta-like Ground Roller** sing a second one appeared! This was our first ground roller of the trip, and an awesome edition to the list. We then walked towards an overlook of one of the many waterfalls in the park, a stunning feature that the park has many of. As we enjoyed the waterfalls the



a piercing call of an endemic **Cuckoo-Roller** came from nearby. I played the call back and the large silhouette of the **Cuckoo-Roller** came soaring overhead. We struggled to relocate the bird for several minutes, but after some focused effort we had great views of a singing male. This bird can be extremely hard to find, despite its song being a common component of the local soundscape. Now we had seen a member of four of the five endemic families! Time was passing and lunch was rapidly approaching, so we continued towards the cars. As we closed in on the cars we spotted the **Amber Mountain Elephant-eared Chameleon** (*Calumma amber*), which was our last endemic chameleon we needed to find. We returned to the lodge for lunch and took an afternoon break until it was time for our night walk.

We reunited at 6:10pm for our night walk, and we headed to the roads leading to Amber Mountain National Park to find our last likely nocturnal lemur target, the **Amber Mountain Dwarf Lemur**. The night walk started with a male **Petter's Chameleon**, which boasts an impressive feature of two nose appendages. We searched for the **Giant Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko**, but instead found a **Major's Tufted-tailed Rat** (*Eliurus majori*) and **Madagascar Banana Slug** (*Elisolimax madagascariensis*). We tried several new spots for the **Amber Mountain Dwarf Lemur**. As we searched for the **Amber Mountain Dwarf Lemur** we found over a dozen more **Arnold's Mouse Lemur**. Dinner was approaching and I decided to try a small side trail, which was parallel to a home with some fruiting trees. I caught a pair of eyes staring at me from the fruit trees and investigated, luckily this was our missing **Amber Mountain Dwarf Lemur**! Our local guide asked the homeowner if we could enter the property for a better look and we were given permission. We watched the dwarf lemur eat berries for about 15 minutes before deciding it was dinner time.

November 20: Amber Mountain to Andrafiarana-Andavakoera Protected Area

Since we still hadn't found the **Sanford's Brown Lemurs** we devoted the morning to finding these endangered primates. As we drove down the park road we suddenly caught the glimpse of a kingfisher sitting on a perch. We stopped the cars and went over to find a **Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher** perched calmly in the open! This small kingfisher had no problem posing for several minutes as well as getting our fill of views and photos. We continued down the trail and saw many butterflies like **Malagasy Orange-tip, False Diadem, and Madagascar Mother-of-Pearl**. The trails were lined with the massive **Madagascar Birds-Nest Fern and Fern-Trees**, and we came across several birds like **Madagascar Blue Vanga, Red-tailed Vanga and Common Newtonia**.

Eventually we heard the sound of a large animal moving through the trees and ran over to see if we could find the source. We were overjoyed to finally intersect our elusive **Sanford's Brown Lemurs**. We watched the troupe for 20 minutes as males jumped overhead, and females with young leaped down at eye level to investigate us. We apprehensively left the group to head to a waterfall, when we came across a second group that was even larger. Upon arriving at the waterfall we checked the shorelines for **Malagasy Kingfisher**. Instead we found nesting **Mascarene Martins**, a juvenile bright-eyed tree frog (*Boophis septentrionalis*), and a stunning **Magenta Dropwing**; a bright pink dragonfly!

We returned to the lodge for lunch and then headed out for our 4 hour drive to Andrafiarana-Andavakoera Protected Area. The reserve is home to one of the Top 25 most endangered primates in the world, the **Perrier's Sifaka**. We arrived later in the afternoon and instead of heading out into the field we took an hour break before the night walk. We met up at 6:15pm for our night walk and went searching for the endemic **Tavaratra Mouse Lemur**. As we began walking down the trail a massive bat came swooping in and landed on an overhanging branch in front of us. We put lights on the bat and immediately identified it as the "Near Threatened" **Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat!**

This bat was one of my most wanted Malagasy mammals, so it was just as exciting for me as it was for the group. We got epic photographs of the bat before it took off.

As we were talking about our luck the guide alerted us that there was a **Tavaratra Mouse Lemur** in the bushes next to us. We turned and immediately saw the tiny primate foraging and leaping through the brush. With two epic mammals down in the first 15 minutes of the night walk we were thrilled to see what else the night had in store for us. Aside from a few more **Tavaratra Mouse Lemurs** the activity began to drop as we approached dinner. As we began returning to dinner we came across the **White-lipped Smooth Snake (*Liophidium torquatum*)**, which was crossing the road. We returned for dinner and rested up for the next day, where we were eager to find the **Perrier's Sifaka**.



November 21: Andrafiamena-Andavakoera Protected Area

The morning began with some breakfast and a new day gecko, **Abbott's Day Gecko** (*Phelsuma abbotti*) which was seen running on the vertical walls of the lodge. We finished our meal and headed out on the trails to find our rare lemurs. Our morning was a little slow in terms of activity but began to pick up with our first **Madagascar Green Pigeons and Hook-billed Vanga**. A **Madagascar Buzzard** flew overhead and a Crested Coua perched out in the open for the group to enjoy. Another highlight was an endemic **Malgasy Hairstreak** (*Hemiolaus cobaltina*). After a few hours of walking one of our wildlife spotters came running in and informed us he had found the **Perrier's Sifaka**. We eagerly followed him up the winding trails and suddenly found ourselves in the presence of our main target. The **Perrier's Sifaka** is a gorgeous all black lemur, and we watched several individuals foraging and playing for almost 20 minutes. We had to



pull ourselves away and continue our search for the endemic **Daraina Sportive Lemur**. Thirty minutes of walking later we came across a **Daraina Sportive Lemur** sitting in the open near his/her tree cavity. We then decided that it would be fun to explore a nearby cave for some endemic bat species.

We returned to the lodge and let some people rest while the others continued on to the cave. The trail to the cave produced **Gray-headed Lovebird**, **Olive Bee-eater**, and **Madagascar Green Pigeon**. As we approached the entrance of the cave we found an endemic **Tsingy Plated Lizard (*Zonosaurus tsingy*)**, as it maneuvered around the limestone pinnacles. We descended into the cave which had many tight passageways and narrow turns. It was a true adventure in the rawest forms and we were rewarded with a roosting group of **Glen's Long-fingered Bats (*Miniopterus gleni*)**! There were dozens of individuals that flew closely overhead. As we neared the exit of the cave we found more of Glen's **Long-fingered Bats** and one **Malagasy Mouse-eared Myotis (*Myotis goudotii*)**, another awesome endemic bat. As we left the cave we found a very interesting gecko, the **Northern Madagascar Ground Gecko (*Paroedura homalorhina*)**, which compared to other ***Paroedura*** geckos was strange and certainly adapted for life in caves.

We returned for lunch and relaxed until it was time for an afternoon outing for the **Crowned Lemur**. In the midst of our break our local guide came running into the lodge with a big smile. They had found an endemic **Madagascan Giant Hognose Snake**! While this species is not rare, it had been a nemesis of mine for years. So I was perhaps the most excited about this four and a half foot snake. We then returned to the trails for the **Crowned Lemur**. We searched for a few hours but never managed to find them. Luckily we did come across another new endemic lemur, the **Ankarana Sportive Lemur**. Our night walk was focused on finding the **Ankarana Dwarf Lemur**, which we did not find. However we did see some endemic reptiles like the **Nosy Komba Tree Boa, *Uroplatus garamaso*** (the local leaf-tailed gecko), and **Panther Chameleon**.

November 22: Andrafiamena-Andavakoera Protected Area to Camp Tattersall to Ankarana NP

With most of our targets down we decided to make a change to itinerary. I had heard the road to Camp Tattersall had just reopened this year and access was possible. The main attraction here is the critically endangered **Golden-crowned Sifaka**, otherwise known as **Tattersall's Sifaka**. The only issue was that this detour would add 4 hours of driving. The group agreed and we set off from Andrafiamena-Andavakoera Protected Area after an early 6am breakfast. The road from Andrafiamena-Andavakoera Protected Area to Camp Tattersall was surprisingly the best road I've been on in Madagascar, having been recently repaved this year. The drive was smooth and we arrived at Camp Tattersall by 11:00am. It took less than 5 minutes of searching before we found our first group of **Golden-crowned Sifakas**. The "conspiracy" of 7 was not bothered by our



presence at all and we enjoyed them for 10 minutes. Our guide then informed us that there was another group even closer. We left our first group and found ourselves just two feet from a group of 10. The lemurs came closer and investigated us, with one of the highlights being an adorable and curious baby. As we were enjoying the sifakas our guide found a group of **Crowned Lemurs**, the last diurnal species we needed to find in the area. We enjoyed both the **Crowned Lemurs and Golden-crowned Sifaka** for about 30 minutes before leaving for lunch.

We arrived at Ankarana Nature Lodge by 3:00pm and settled in since the park was closing at 4pm. We did go out for a night walk, and walked the road to the park for an hour. The night walk was incredibly productive and we found our final endemic lemur target, the **Ankarana Dwarf Lemur!** We enjoyed this small nocturnal lemur before continuing down the trail. We found a sleeping **Malagasy Kingfisher**, the rare and endemic **Plated Leaf Chameleon (*Brookesia stumpffi*)**, and another endemic ground gecko (*Paroedura stumpffi*). We were thrilled by the success of our night walk and returned to the lodge for dinner.

November 23: Ankarana NP (Eastern side)

The landscape of Ankarana is one of the most iconic parts of Madagascar. The forests of Ankarana are full of diverse species, but the most unique part are the large limestone pinnacles known as tsingy. Worn by erosion for millions of years, the vast landscape loosely resembles stalagmites of a cave. We hiked through the forest and searched for birds along the way. We found some species like **Sickle-billed Vanga**, **Madagascar Cuckooshrike**, and “**Malagasy**” **Peregrine Falcon**. The trail to the tsingy had some very interesting non-avian critters for us as well like the bright yellow and red **Malagasy Freshwater Crab (*Madagapotamon humberti*)** and **Green Madagascar Plated Lizard (*Zonosaurus haraldmeieri*)**. Eventually we reached the viewpoint of the tsingy and marveled at the alien-like landscape. As we enjoyed the view we had a close up view of the **Madagascar Green Pigeon**, an awesome bonus bird.

We walked back the trail and returned to the vehicles, where some continued on to a massive cave network. Here we walked a long staircase down to the entrance of a massive cave. The entrance was an active **Madagascar Spinetail** nesting site, and we enjoyed dozens of these endemic swifts as they called and flew overhead. We entered the cave and immediately found another major mammal target. The ceiling was lined with an active **Madagascar Fruit Bat** and **Madagascar Rousette** colony, which were calling and flying overhead. These behemoth bats were certainly a major highlight for the day. We returned for lunch and took the afternoon off to rest after a long and intense hike.

During the break **Malagasy Sunbirds** and **Madagascar Green Pigeons** were seen foraging at eye level. Our night walk was unfortunately called off due to an intense rain storm that came through. So we opted for an early dinner and rest. As I was sitting by the pool that evening to do some work a local worker came over and informed me he had



found a tenrec. The tenrec was the rarely seen **Greater Hedgehog Tenrec**, a close relative of the much more common **Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec**. I rushed to assemble the awake participants and we watched the **Greater Hedgehog Tenrec** before it sprinted up a vertical trunk with a surprising amount of speed and coordination. Our first tenrec of the trip!

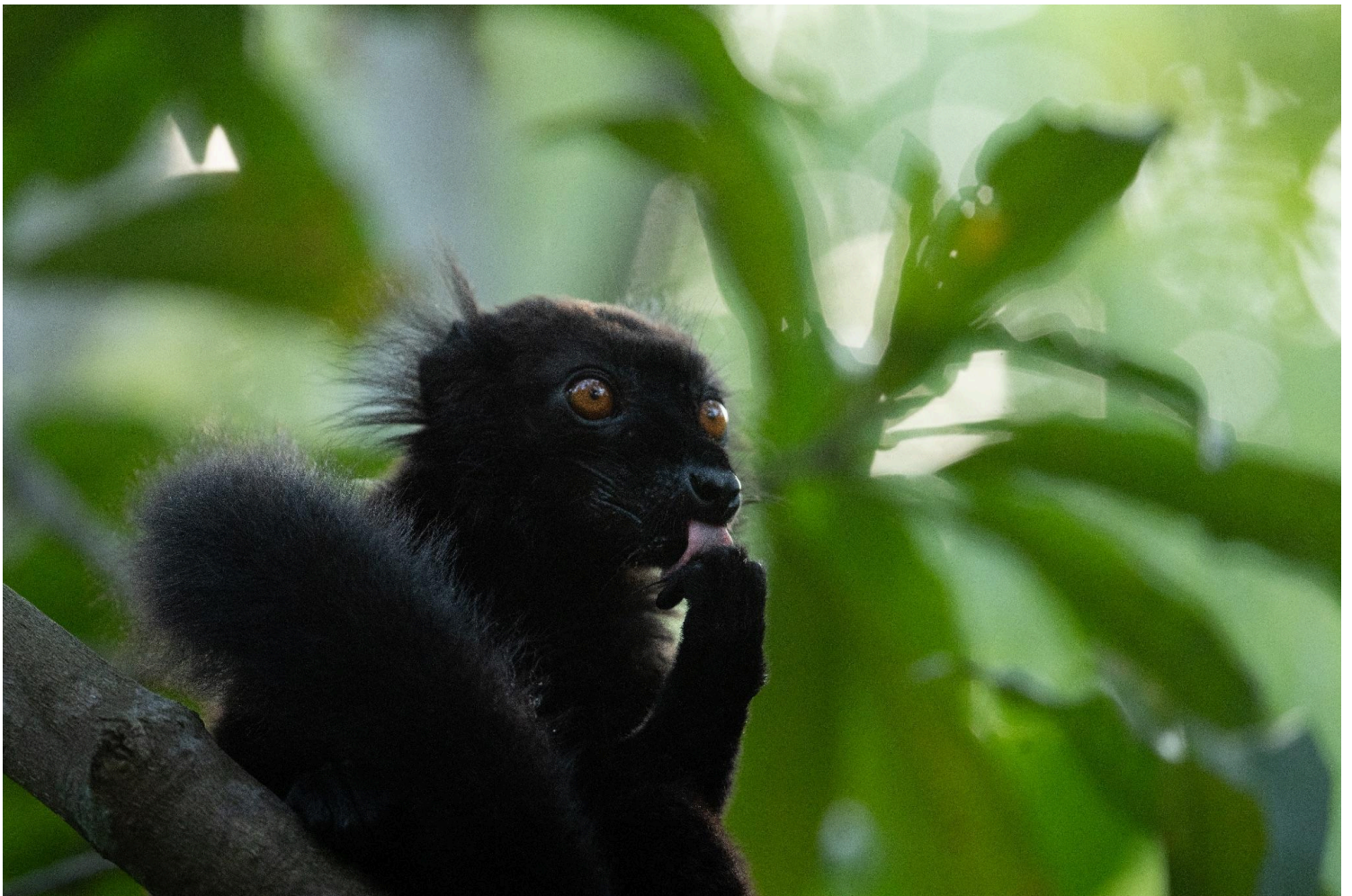
November 24: Ankarana NP to Nosy Be

We had a very successful past few days in the Ankarana area and were excited to get to our next destination, the tropical island of Nosy Be. We had reserved a small motor boat to take off from the port town of Ankify to Nosy Be, and had to be there by 11:00am. The port town was three and half hours from the hotel in Ankarana, so we opted for an early breakfast. We did a little birding around the lodge grounds and saw **Madagascar Green Pigeon, Malagasy Bulbul, Malagasy Sunbird and Madagascar Magpie-Robin**. Breakfast was delicious, as expected, and we then left for the coast. Along the drive we made a pit stop at a local plantation to see how locals grow and harvest several crops like vanilla, cocoa, pineapple, and mangos. We were shown how locals pollinate the vanilla by hand and the parts they harvest from the orchid. As we were walking through the plantation we spotted a **Madagascar Blonde Hognose**, a very hard to see endemic snake species! We finished our time at the plantation and finished the drive to Ankify. We hopped onto our boat and took a 30 minute boat ride to Nosy Be, which showcased the beautiful aquamarine waters and lush forests of Lokobe Nature Reserve.

We arrived on Nosy Be and met our driver, who took us up to our lovely new accommodation that overlooks the bay. We ate lunch and headed back out to get to Lokobe Nature Reserve for a chance at finding the **Black Lemur**. We loaded into two small paddle boats and paddled off a nearby beach that would act as our access to the park, since there were no roads available. As we paddled we saw groups of **Lesser Crested Terns** perched on nearby rocks. Eventually we arrived at our beach and exited

the boats to begin our hike. We headed up the slopes of the forests and it wasn't too long before we found our first endemic lemur, the **Nosy Be Sportive Lemur**. We watched this lemur sit still in a tree as people took photographs and got great views.

We continued our quest for the Black Lemur, moving further into the forest. Along the way we found the **Madagascar Brown Mantella** (*Mantella ebanau*), a small member of the Malagasy Dart Frog genus with a collection of stunning ocean blue spots on their belly. We continued onwards and eventually one of our wildlife spotters came back with the good news that he had found a group of **Black Lemurs**! We rushed down the trail, and eventually came to an opening in the forest where the lemurs were. The female **Black Lemur** is actually brown and white, while the males' coat is where the



name “**Black Lemur**” comes from. The group was originally only females with one baby male, but several adult males soon joined and we got great looks at both sexes for comparison. We got a very close view of both males and females as they sat perched in a nearby mango tree and ate for 20 minutes. Eventually we had to leave them, and so we returned to the forest to search for other animals.

It wasn't long until we found the **Minute Leaf Chameleon** (*Brookesia minima*), a species that was once considered the smallest chameleon in the world until 2012 when an even smaller one was discovered. As we enjoyed this tiny wonder our local guides found us a **Plated Leaf Chameleon** (*Brookesia stumpffi*) and a **Madagascar Ground Boa** (*Acrantophis madagascariensis*). As the light disappeared and the night began we readied ourselves for our night walk. Not long after we found a new species of leaf-tailed gecko for the tour, **Henkel's Leaf-tailed Gecko** (*Uroplatus henkeli*). We admired this large gecko before continuing on with the night walk, but unfortunately this was our last notable find of the night.



November 25: Nosy Be to Antananarivo

Since it was a custom tour the group decided to relax and rest after a busy week. On most tours this day can be spent returning to Lokobe Nature Reserve. We relaxed at the hotel until our flight back to Antananarivo.

November 26: Antananarivo to Andasibe-Mantadia NP

The drive from Antananarivo to Andasibe-Mantadia NP took around 5 hours, and we arrived at our accommodation around 1:00pm. We had lunch and left to explore the trails of Park VOIMMA. Unlike the surrounding national park, this small reserve is run by the local community and helps support the local people. It wasn't long after beginning our hike until we found our first lemurs, the **Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemur**. These small lemurs were both adorable and fun to watch as they leaped within 5 feet of us to get a closer look. They stayed close to us for several minutes and ate bamboo leaves completely unbothered by our presence. We eventually left their presence and continued to search for new birds and lemurs. A few moments later we found a **Madagascar Blue Pigeon**, one of the island's most beautiful birds. This large blue and red pigeon sat and fed in a nearby tree as we all watched. As we carried on down the trail we found our first **Spectacled Tetraka**, which hopped through the vines at eye level as people got great looks and photos. Our local wildlife spotter was thrilled to share a rare find with us, a nesting **Madagascar Forest-Rail**! The nest was a collection of leaves and sticks in an unorganized pile in the crux of a tree fern. The bird was difficult to see since it was well concealed within her nest, but we could see her head poking out of the opening. Luckily, as we continued down the trail we intercepted a few more, which helped people appreciate the bird even more.

The distant calls of the **Indri** filled the air, and so when we heard a nearby group we rushed off to locate them. As we closed in on the place our guide determined the Indris were we heard the song of one of Madagascar's oddest birds, the **Nuthatch-Vanga**. This strange vanga is one of the best examples of parallel evolution out there, with an uncanny similarity to nuthatches. It was a struggle to get everyone on this bird as it quickly flew from tree to tree, climbing and descending the vertical trunks. However, we all managed to see the bird after some extended effort. With this tough manga down we refocused on the **Indri**. We were overjoyed to walk less than a minute before our first **Indri** came into view. Two adults sat high in the canopy, but with some readjusting we managed to get great looks from them. **Indri** are the largest living lemur, and they were noticeably larger than any lemur we'd seen. They sat peacefully in the canopy, unbothered by our presence as we photographed them. Not long after we found one of the most unique coups, the **Red-fronted Coua**. We watched this shy bird in the open as it ate a chameleon in the open!

We continued our hike into the night and started searching for some of our resident nocturnal species. The first find was a female **Short-horned Chameleon** (*Calumma brevicorne*), which was sitting in a bush near the trail's entrance. We began approaching the river, and as we did the sounds of calling frogs grew louder. Almost immediately we found the **Blue-eyed Bright-eyed Frog** (*Boophis viridis*), whose beautiful namesake eyes are truly a marvel of the natural world. As we were photographing the **Blue-eyed Bright-eyed Frog** a new species leaped on my shoulder. The green color mixed with some gentle red striping on the dorsal side revealed it was **Bott's Bright-eyed Frog** (*Boophis bottae*). Not long after we found our third frog species of the night, the large **Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog** (*Boophis madagascariensis*).

The activity was low for mammals but eventually we got a quick glimpse of the highly localized **Goodman's Mouse Lemur** (*Microcebus lehilahytsara*), found only in the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park area. We continued searching for other nocturnal

animals and eventually found **Crossley's Dwarf Lemur**. They did not make viewing easy but after some extended effort we all saw an individual sit out in the open for a minute. As we were enjoying our well earned views of this elusive lemur, I spotted a second **Goodman's Mouse Lemur**. While this tiny lemur decided it would rather bounce around sporadically in the canopy than sit for even a moment, we all managed to get our binoculars on it briefly. We then left our night walk and returned back to our lodge for dinner.



November 27: Andasibe-Mantadia NP to Palmarium

Today we started our day in Analamazoatra Forest Station, a part of Andasibe National Park. The forest station trail is a great place for bird watching, but it is also the best place to look for **Indri** and **Diademed Sifaka**. As we waited for our guide we found **Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Red Fody, and Madagascar Wagtail** in the parking lot. Then we headed into the park to see what was waiting for us in the forest. We found a nearby group of **Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemurs**, and watched them feed for a few minutes. Shortly after we heard the distinct song of the **Madagascar Flufftail**. Flufftails are never easy to see, but after some effort we all got brief looks at a female! As we continued towards the best place to see **Indri** we found a mixed flock that had **Nuthatch-Vanga, Red-tailed Vanga** and **Chabert Vanga** in it. The alarm calls of some **Souimanga Sunbirds** revealed the presence of a **Frances's Sparrowhawk**, which sat in the open for everyone. We continued up the trails and were brought to an area our guide had recently seen a **Collared Nightjar**. It didn't long for our local guide to spot the beautifully camouflaged bird sitting in a pandanus.

Suddenly the calls of some nearby **Indri** erupted through the air and we set off to find them. We found a small family of **Indris** consisting of two adults and a baby. Andasibe is the country's most popular park and usually Indri encounters are accompanied by dozens of other people. Luckily we were the first there and had the indri all to ourselves for almost 20 minutes. The lemurs fed close by and remained unbothered before leaping off into the forest. We then focused our efforts on finding the **Diademed Sifaka**, which is a large lemur with a combination of white and orange colors. As we walked to find the group of **Diademed Sifaka** we heard the calls of a nearby **Ward's Flycatcher**. This "flycatcher" isn't actually a flycatcher at all, but instead a vanga that has incredibly evolved to appear almost identical to a monarch flycatcher. Perhaps the name "**Flycatcher-Vanga**" would be more appropriate. We all saw the bird as it stayed high in the canopy, calling from high up. A few minutes after we left the vanga we found the sifakas. A group of six adults and one baby were sitting and feeding very close by and we

all enjoyed their antics. Many photos were taken, and we all left beyond satisfied with our lemur encounters for the day. We left the park and had lunch back at the lodge.

After lunch we packed the car with our bags and headed to the coast. We had a four and a half hour drive to get to the town of Manambolo where we hoped on a boat provided by Palmarium, our accommodation for the night. The boat ride was 40 minutes to get to the famous Aye Aye Island, the best place in the world to see the elusive lemur. Along the way we passed coastal forest and pandanus groves. We saw several **Striated Herons, a Malagasy Kingfisher, and White-faced Whistling Ducks**. The most surprising find of the boat ride was an endangered **Malagasy Pond-Heron**, which was foraging along the banks of the bay. We arrived at Aye Aye Island by 6pm and were introduced to a local guide employed by the hotel. He explained if there was a coconut feeder used to attract the **Aye-Ayes**, and discussed the rules for viewing them. Then we took a short walk to the feeder area where we would wait.

As we walked I found an **Aye Aye** high up in a tree foraging away from the feeder. It was nice for all of us to get our first views of this massive lemur away from a feeder, even if it was habituated. Then we waited by the feeder in the dark. A few minutes later a large adult **Aye Aye** appeared and the local guide put a light on so we could enjoy it. The adult fed for almost 10 minutes before a second individual, this one being a juvenile, joined. We watched the juvenile feed for 30 minutes as the other groups trickled out and left. Before too long it was only us and two **Aye-Ayes** as they came in closer and investigated us. We were beyond excited with our encounter, and on the way back to the boat some people spotted another new mammal for the trip. An adult **Tailless Tenrec** was seen feeding on one of the coconuts, though it then hopped back on the ground and quickly disappeared. We reloaded the boat and took a 30 minute ride to the hotel. The lack of lights along the way helped showcase some of the most incredible stars any of us had seen. It was a wonderful way to end an amazing day.

November 28: Palmarium to Andasibe-Mantadia NP

The grounds of Palmarium are essentially an open range zoo, with several species of introduced lemurs that have been habituated for the average tourist. However, we aren't interested in zoos. So after breakfast we reloaded into the boat and returned to the mainland. We reloaded into our cars and began the four and a half drive back to Andasibe-Mantadia NP. However, we decided to make a stop along the way where we would spend our afternoon birding. Around 1:00pm we arrived at Maromizaha Reserve. The reserve is situated only 30 minutes from Andasibe-Mantadia NP, but the difference in elevation means there were potentially new species for the trip here. We met our local



guide and drove to the trailhead, which was up a long steep eroded road. Luckily the cars managed to ascend the “road” just fine. We arrived at an opening which served as the parking lot. Not long after departing the vehicles we came across our first new bird of the day, the endemic **Madagascar Starling!** There was a pair sitting in some brushes near the trail, showcasing their beautiful buffy-red coloration. We continued into the forest and were soon in the midst of a beautiful secondary forest. The calls of a **Blue Coua** suddenly caught our attention and with a little playback the bird came in, giving us great views of this large dark blue cuckoo.

The trails at Maromizaha Reserve were some of the most enjoyable and beautiful hiking we had done on this tour, with many gorgeous vistas along the way. As we enjoyed some of the viewpoints we saw **Madagascar Blue Pigeons** and **Broad-billed Roller** flying nearby, and our vantage point allowed us to see their colors better than before. As we continued hiking our guide pointed out the nearby nest of a **Tylas Vanga**, a lifer for all of the tour participants. The female sat on the nest as we watched and photographed her. We continued down the trail and stopped when our guide spotted a young mystery fledgling sitting quietly beside the trail. As we theorized what species it could be, the parents' distress calls suddenly came in and revealed it was a baby **Madagascar Cuckooshrike**. We enjoyed some good views of the adults but moved on quickly to minimize disturbing these hard working parents.

As we continued into the forest we were informed by our guide that we were closing in on a **Rufous-headed Ground Roller** territory. This was a main target for the day so we focused on finding this bird. Suddenly a smaller passerine flushed, we got our binoculars on the branch it landed and realized it was a female **Velvet Asity!** This was our first asity, and the final endemic bird family we needed to see in Madagascar for the trip. We enjoyed watching this plump bird for several minutes as it quietly sat still, something they are known to do. After enjoying the **Velvet Asity** we continued towards the **Rufous-headed Ground Roller** territory. Once we arrived we tried tape and waited for a

while. Our local guide asked us to wait while we continued looking for the bird. As we waited we were entertained by the massive and obscure **Madagascan Green-emerald Giant Pill Millipede**, whose name leaves little to the imagination. Suddenly a pair of **Cuckoo-Rollers** came barreling into view, giving us some of the best views of **Cuckoo-Rollers** I've ever had. The birds perched, flew and re-perched several times at eye level, showcasing their stunning iridescent shoulder feathers.

Our local guide returned and suggested we follow him since he heard the **Rufous-headed Ground Roller** further down the trail. We followed him, but after 30 minutes of focused effort we still hadn't seen the bird. A single note from the **Rufous-headed Ground Roller's** song was heard, but aside from that the bird remained undetected. It was getting late so we had to return to the vehicles and drive back. Everyone was tired from the long hike, so we opted to rest up since we had a full day in Mantadia ahead of us.

November 29: Andasibe-Mantadia NP Full Day

Today was our only full day in Andasibe-Mantadia NP, so we decided it would best be spent traveling to the Mantadia National Park. The roads into Mantadia NP are very rough, so despite being only 19 km away the drive takes about 2 hours. Luckily we break the drive up with several birding stops. The first stop was to try for the Madagascar Rail. We walked into some surrounding marsh habitat and played the calls of the rail. We heard several responses, but never saw the elusive bird. Surprisingly we did see a different elusive endemic, a male **Madagascar Flufftail** who emerged from the thick vegetation for a few moments.

Our next major target was the **Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur**, which is one of the island's most entertaining lemurs. We parked at a trailhead and hiked in, hoping to find these large charismatic lemurs. The trail brought us along a small creek, where we could hear several **Baron's Mantellas** (*Mantella baroni*). Mantellas are the Malagasy equivalent of the Poison Dart Frogs in the American neotropics. Their exception colors act

as a warning to potential predators, a tactic known as aposematism. We searched for several minutes and eventually found one of these tiny gems. The **Baron's Mantella** is a stunning combination of green, orange and black. As we were photographing this small frog the loud cackling calls of the **Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur** cut through the quiet of the jungle. They were very close, so we said farewell to our mantella and hiked up a slope to the lemurs. As we hiked towards them a male **Nuthatch-Vanga** landed only feet away giving us more great looks at this odd endemic. Our guide alerted us that he could see the lemurs. We walked to his position and saw three **Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur** adults and a baby! We watched them as they leaped chaotically through the canopy, and two even came down to give us better looks. It was an epic encounter and definitely the highlight of the day. Satisfied with our lemur encounter, we returned to the cars and drove to a new spot to try for **Scaly Ground Roller**.

There are five species of Ground Rollers in Madagascar, each one more incredible than the last. However, the Scaly is a top contender for the best Ground Roller. We searched in the thick rainforest understory where these elusive birds thrive. We tried for 30 minutes in an area our local guide had recently seen. We were delighted when out of nowhere a **Scaly Ground Roller** flew in and perched! While the bird remained concealed by the thick understory, everyone got brief looks. We returned to the vehicles and drove to try again for the **Short-legged Ground Roller**. Eventually we reached a spot our guide was confident could be productive. The forest was very quiet today, undoubtedly due to the wet season being three weeks late. Eventually we heard the distant hoot of the **Short-legged Ground Roller**, we quickly followed our local guide off trail and through the understory to locate the source of the call. After 10-15 minutes of bushwalking we finally found an adult **Short-legged Ground Roller** sitting high up in a tree and singing. Unlike all of the other ground rollers, the **Short-legged Ground Roller** spends most of its time in trees rather than on the ground. We returned to the cars and drove to another trailhead where we had lunch. After lunch we continued hiking for more birds, but the

activity was at an all time low. The park's closing time was approaching so we returned to the cars and drove back to the lodge.

We had an hour to rest, but then met back up to go on one last night walk. Within the first 15 minutes of the night walk we found our first lemur, the highly localized **Goodman's Mouse Lemur**. We had seen this on the previous night walk in the area, but the views we had this time were superior. This tiny primate sat in the open at eye level for over a minute. We then continued down the trail to see what other lemurs we could detect. Not long afterwards we found a **Crossley's Dwarf Lemur**, which was much less accommodating as it sat high in the canopy. Luckily we had seen that one very well a few nights ago. The next lemur we found was a new one for the trip, the **Hairy-eared Dwarf Lemur**! This adorable dwarf lemur was much easier to view, despite being high



in the canopy. We watched it for several minutes before moving on. However, the highlight of the night was our next new lemur. As we continued down the trail we caught the reflection of some eye shine. Upon further inspection we realized our mystery lemur was an **Eastern Woolly Lemur**! This lemur is a member of the genus Avahi, and our first representative of that genus for this trip. Woolly Lemurs are members of the Indri family, along with sifakas. However, unlike other members of that family, they are strictly nocturnal. It was an awesome find and a fantastic way to end our time in Andasibe-Mantadia National Park.

November 30: Andasibe-Mantadia NP to Antananarivo

Our last day of the main tour had arrived, but before returning to the capital city we decided to return to the VOIMMA reserve to see if we could find any new birds. The morning started on a high note, when within 10 minutes we heard a **Rand's Warbler**. This small bird is actually a tetraka, one of the endemic families in Madagascar. However like warblers this pesky bird is known to stay high in the canopy, resulting in some serious "warbler neck". With a little playback we soon were able to detect where the bird was singing from. While he remained high up in a tree, he did sit still and in the open for a few minutes which allowed everyone to see him well.

As we were enjoying the **Rand's Warbler**, our local guide informed us that the "Ibis is waiting for us.". While we were looking for the tetraka, a local wildlife spotter had found a **Madagascar Ibis** and called our guide with the news. We needed no convincing to ditch **Rand's Warbler** for this elusive and iconic Malagasy bird. We followed our guide through forest trails that paralleled a nearby creek. Then we took a turn into some open grassy floodplains surrounded tightly by lush rainforest. It was there, in the open, that we finally found our most wanted bird. The **Madagascar Ibis** fed and foraged in front of us for almost 10 minutes, seemingly unbothered by our presence. The beautiful yellow head plumes complemented its hummingbird-like iridescent neck feathers. This bird truly

is something to marvel at, and then it receded back into the tall grasses before disappearing for good.

We were overjoyed with our luck and decided to push it even further by searching for more new birds. Luckily, it paid off. We came across two female **Velvet Asity**, which sat still for several minutes close to a nearby nest. As we enjoyed them our local guide went to check a roost for a **Madagascar Owl**. He came back with good news, and we set afoot to find this large endemic raptor. We crossed the road and found ourselves surrounded by invasive pines. It was surprising at first, but the openness of the pine grove makes hunting the local rodents much easier for the **Madagascar Owl**. We hiked up the trail for about 10 minutes until we came to the place where it was perched. The bird was high up in the canopy, and the light was not in our favor. All that aside, the owl was out in the open and unobstructed. It was a great way to see the bird as it sat there peacefully sleeping. It was getting late so we decided to start heading back, but we made one last detour on the way.

A group of **Indri** had been seen nearby, so we decided to try and have one last encounter with these incredible beasts. We walked up and down the trails until their atmospheric screams came in from close. We hurried down the trail and were met with one of these behemoth lemurs at eye level, less than 30 feet away. As the Indri watched us, and we watched him, a second and then third **Indri** leaped in. It was an incredible spectacle, and one that you could never get bored of. After several minutes of enjoying their presence for the last time they bounced off the tree trunks and disappeared into the forest. A humbling end to our time in Andasibe-Mantadia NP. We returned to the lodge for lunch, and after eating left for Antananarivo. The drive was several hours long, but completely uneventful. We returned to Bois Vert and had one last dinner as a full group. Some of us would be leaving after today, while others would continue on to Berenty Reserve in the southeast. Unfortunately our flight from Antananarivo to Fort Dauphin was

at 1:50am the next morning. So we ate early, snuck in a few hours of sleep and then met up at 11:00pm to leave for the airport.

December 1: Antananarivo to Berenty

Since our flight brought us to Fort Dauphin by 2:00am, all we had left to do was drive several hours to Berenty itself. We arrived at around 6:30 am and were greeted by dozens of **Ring-tailed Lemurs**! These critically endangered primates are by far the most famous species on Madagascar. They are iconic with their pale gray coat and alternating black and white striped tail pattern. We enjoyed the **Ring-tailed Lemurs** before heading over to have breakfast. Since nobody had slept, and today was set aside as a travel day, we all took the day off to rest. We met back up for lunch, and shortly afterwards met up for an afternoon walk. Our afternoon walk began around 3:30pm and we took the afternoon to explore the nearby forest. However, before getting to the forest trail we made a pit stop at an old museum on the property. The reason for this was not to explore



the exhibits in the museum, but instead to watch the bat colony that now resides on the top floor. Our guide had the key to the locked building, and as soon we entered we could hear the calls of the bats upstairs. We used our flashlights to get a proper look at these little bats and identified them as endemic **White-bellied Free-tailed Bats**. The group consisted of well over 20 individuals, and we managed to get some great photos of the small mammals as they chirped away to each other. We then exited the museum and headed towards the trails.

It wasn't long after leaving the museum until we found our next new lemur, the **White-footed Sportive Lemur**. This adorable lemur is strictly nocturnal but they will often roost in tree cavities, allowing people to see them even in the daytime. This species of sportive lemur was notably smaller than some species we had seen earlier in the tour. We continued down the trail and had several amusing encounters with **Ring-tailed Lemurs and Verreaux's Sifaka**. The sifaka in the area will often get on the ground and cross the road. Since they are best adapted for leaping from tree to tree, however they are not well adapted for traveling on the ground. The result is an awkward bouncing walk, which is where the famous "dancing lemurs" get their name from. We enjoyed seeing these "dancing lemurs" several times.

As we continued hiking we saw many birds such as **Giant Coua, Broad-billed Roller**, and "**Yellow-billed**" **Black Kites**. However the highlight of the afternoon was undoubtedly the **Madagascar Flying Fox**. These are the largest bats on the island, appearing like small dogs with wings. Their colors are stunning as well, with a golden head and nape. Unfortunately the bats have been hunted for many years, so we had to be very quiet as we approached their roosting tree. We quietly moved in to get a view of them, and were delighted to see dozens of them perched at close range! The wind direction changed which allowed the bats to pick up on our scent, so some began to take off but we left to minimize disturbing them. We continued back to lodge and came across a few more troupes of **Red-fronted Brown Lemurs** and **Ring-tailed Lemurs** along the way. We continued on

into our night walk and looked for more new trip species. We started the hike and found several new species of herps throughout the night. The first highlight was *Paroedura bastardi*, an endemic species of ground gecko. We also found a few new species of chameleons like **Southern Carpet Chameleon** and **Warty Chameleon**. We wrapped up the night walk and returned to our hotel to rest for an early morning hike.



December 2: Berenty Reserve

Today we had a few major bird targets that we wanted to see, but one trumped over the rest in terms of importance. The rocky sand flats of the Berenty area are the best place in the world to view the endemic **Madagascar Sandgrouse**. This large game bird has sadly experienced generations of hunting, a practice that continues today. So it would be fair to say these birds are a little “traumatized”, which makes approaching them very difficult. We left the hotel at 5:00am to search for them in some nearby agave plantations, a locality the local guide was confident they would visit in the early hours of the day. As we drove into the first section of the plantation we immediately saw a pair of **Madagascar Sandgrouse** fly and land again. Well that was easy. Now we wanted to see them clearly since the agaves concealed them when they were on the ground. We exited the vehicle and almost immediately the pair flew off over the road before landing again. Then suddenly an additional 20 flew out of the agaves and followed the first pair. It was an incredible spectacle, and we clearly saw their beautiful sand-colored bodies complimented by their obsidian black wings.

We crossed the road and tried to get views of them in the open. We experience a similar dilemma, as they were once again hidden in the agaves. We began approaching and briefly saw a head poke out of the agaves, then the group took off once again! This time the flock flew out of our reach and disappeared. Luckily we came across a few more new birds. Surprisingly, we still hadn't seen any **Madagascar Larks** at this point in the trip. So we were relieved to find several of them foraging on the road. As we enjoyed these endemic larks, the unique call of the **Madagascar Cisticola** broke the silence. The tiny cisticola zipped into the agaves and disappeared. Luckily I played some playback and the bird re-emerged and perched right next to us in the open.

Thrilled with how our first stop had gone, we reloaded into the van and headed to the spiny forest reserve. The unique plant life of the spiny forest alone is a major reason any naturalist should visit this ecosystem. The large **Gray Baobabs** tower over a

landscape full of **Madagascar Octopus Trees** and **Silver Euphorbia**. It's a strange and enticing habitat, full of many equally interesting animals. As we walked through the trail we saw **Lesser Vasa Parrots** and **Malagasy Kestrels**. Suddenly we came across one of the coolest reptiles of the trip, the critically endangered **Spider Tortoise**! These tiny tortoises are sadly on the brink of extinction due to poaching for the pet trade. We watched this tiny gem feed and eventually wobble off into the bushes. We continued down the trail and came across our first **Southern Pencil Snake** (*Mimophis mahafalensis*). We marveled at its incredible camouflage and wondered how our guide even spotted it.

As we continued walking we saw several more **Spider Tortoises**, **Warty Chameleons** and a few more **Southern Pencil Snakes**. Suddenly we heard the call of a **Running Coua**, a new endemic for the trip. We set off in its direction. Despite spending



a considerable amount of time trying to find the bird, it eluded us this time. It was getting hot in the spiny forest and people were ready for breakfast. We started our walk back to the car when suddenly a coua emerged out into the open. It wasn't our desired **Running Coua**, but instead the newly described **Olive-capped Coua**. It was a very welcomed surprise since this was also a new bird for us. We returned back to the lodge and had breakfast. There were dozens of **Verreaux's Sifakas** and **Ring-tailed Lemurs** hanging around the restaurant, which provided a lot of entertainment. We watched babies exploring the branching and napping on their mothers back, and adults leaping up trees with incredible agility. After breakfast we took a break to avoid the intense heat and met back up after lunch for some afternoon birding.

Within the first 15 minutes of our afternoon hike we found our last nemesis. A small coua was seen skulking in the brushes off the trails. We all gathered and eventually the coua came out into the open, the **Running Coua** at last! We all got fantastic looks of this endemic, and focused on its pink eye patch and warm rufous breast patch. After several minutes of getting different looks at this shy bird it decided to fly off. Luckily, we all saw it well and were very content. We continued on into the night walk. As it got dark we came across several **White-footed Sportive Lemurs**, which were bounding between octopus trees. Another major highlight was another new lemur, the **Grey-brown Mouse Lemur**. This adorable little primate was foraging in the trees when we found him, and he allowed us to get many clear views as he ate. The reptile activity was surprisingly non-existent tonight, but we enjoyed a night full of lemur encounters.

December 3: Berenty to Fort Dauphin

After having found the **Running Coua** and the **Olive-capped Coua** yesterday, we decided to spend the morning trying to get better views of the **Madagascar Sandgrouse**. We left the hotel at 5:00 am and returned to the agave fields. We searched for 40 minutes but did not see any sandgrouse. So we decided to try another spot. As we walked down the

trail we saw a group of 20 flying far in the distance. They continued flying and vanished over a distant treeline. We continued searching, but once again failed to find any more. The heat was growing more intense so we decided to go to the hotel. Just as we reached the car, the flock of **Madagascar Sandgrouse** flew back in and landed in a nearby field! We rushed over and located them, this time they were sitting in an open field. We quietly approached, and with the help of my scope, we all got great looks from the group. It was a well earned encounter, and it was a very rewarding experience.

We returned back to the hotel and had a delicious breakfast. With the heat in full swing we decided to take a bit of time to pack and relax before departing for Fort Dauphin. After all, we had seen all our targets! We met up at 10:00 am and drove the two hours back to Fort Dauphin, where we had lunch and spent the day relaxing after a long twenty day tour. We had an early flight back to Antananarivo, so it was important to rest up.



December 4: Fort Dauphin to Antananarivo

Today was a travel day from Fort Dauphin to Antananarivo. Our flight was very early in the morning, and we arrived in time for breakfast. The “custom tour” group opted to take it easy today and do souvenir shopping.

December 5: Antananarivo

Due to the odd timing of the exit flights, we had another free day in Antananarivo with little wildlife watching to do. We opted to take the day and learn about some of the historical locations. We visited the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ambohimanga. The Royal Hill of Ambohimanga was made the capital of the highlands in the 17th century and acted as home of the King Andrianampoinimerina. The site was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2001. It was a fascinating activity and one I would recommend to anyone arriving early for a future tour. While we walked the palace and fort we saw **Souimanga Sunbirds, Island Brown Pansy, and Malagasy Brush Warbler**. We finished up at Ambohimanga and enjoyed a fantastic meal at a small locally run restaurant, giving us a taste of the local dishes. It was a lovely way to end the tour, deepening our understanding of this truly unique country.

Bird List

Taxonomy follows eBird/Clements online checklist v.2024

Anatidae (Ducks & Geese)**White-faced Whistling-Duck**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Dendrocygna viduata

Blue-billed Teal

- Seen at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Anas hottentota

Red-billed Duck

- Seen at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Anas erythrorhyncha

Meller's Duck (E)

- Endangered. Seen at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Anas melleri

Numididae (Guineafowl)**Helmeted Guineafowl (I)**

- Seen first in Berenty Reserve

Numida meleagris

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse & Allies)**Madagascar Partridge (E)**

- Seen briefly near Andrafiarana-Andavakoera

Margaroperdix madagarensis

Columbidae (Pigeons & Doves)**Rock Pigeon (I)**

- Seen in most urbanized areas

Columba livia

Malagasy Turtle-Dove

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Nesoenas picturatus picturatus

Namaqua Dove

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Oena capensis aliena

Madagascar Green-Pigeon (E)

- Seen first at Ankarana

Treron australis

Madagascar Blue-Pigeon (E)

- Seen first at Nosy Ve

Alectroenas madagascariensis

Mesitornithidae (Mesites)**White-breasted Mesite (E)**

- Vulnerable. Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Mesitornis variegatus

Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)**Madagascar Sandgrouse (E)**

- Seen in Berenty Reserve

Pterocles personatus

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)**Crested Coua (E)**

Coua cristata

- **Vulnerable.** Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Blue Coua (E)

- Seen at Maromizaha

Olive-capped Coua (E)

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Red-fronted Coua (E)

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Coquerel's Coua (E)

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Running Coua (E)

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Giant Coua (E)

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Malagasy Coucal

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Madagascar Cuckoo

- Seen first near Kirindy Reserve

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars & Allies)**Collared Nightjar (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Madagascar Nightjar

- Seen first at Bois Vert hotel

Apodidae (Swifts)**Madagascar Spinetail (E)**

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia NP

Little Swift

- Seen at Bois Vert hotel

Malagasy Palm-Swift

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Sarothruridae (Flufftails)**Madagascar Forest-Rail (E)**

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia NP

Madagascar Flufftail (E)

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia NP

Rallidae (Rails & Allies)**Madagascar Rail (E)**

- **Vulnerable.** Heard only at Andasibe-Mantadia NP

White-throated Rail

- Seen first near Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Coua caerulea**Coua olivaceiceps**Coua reynaudii**Coua coquereli**Coua cursor**Coua gigas**Centropus toulou toulou**Cuculus rochii**Gactornis enarratus**Caprimulgus m. madagascariensis**Zoonavena g. grandidieri**Apus affinis**Cypsiurus gracilis**Mentocrex kioloides**Sarothrura insularis**Zoonavena g. grandidieri**Dryolimnas c. cuvieri*

Eurasian Moorhen

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Gallinula chloropus pyrrhorhoa***Recurvirostridae (Stilts)****Black-winged Stilt**

- Seen first on route to Palmarium

*Himantopus himantopus***Scolopacidae (Sandpipers & Allies)****Whimbrel**

- Seen at Morondava

*Numenius phaeopus***Curlew Sandpiper**

- Seen at Morondava

*Calidris ferruginea***Common Sandpiper**

- Seen at Morondava

*Actitis hypoleucos***Common Greenshank**

- Seen at Morondava

*Tringa nebularia***Turnicidae (Buttonquail)****Madagascar Buttonquail (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Turnix nigricollis***Glareolidae (Pratincoles)****Madagascar Pratincole**

- Seen first at Nosy Ve

*Glareola ocularis***Laridae (Gulls & Terns)****Common Tern**

- Seen at Morondava

*Sterna hirundo***Lesser Crested Tern**

- Seen at Nosy Ve

*Thalasseus bengalensis***Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets & Bitterns)****Purple Heron**

- Seen on route to Palmarium.

*Ardea purpurea madagascariensis***Great Egret**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Ardea alba***Little (Dimorphic) Egret**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Egretta garzetta dimorpha***Black Heron**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Egretta ardesiaca***Cattle Egret**

- Seen first on route Ankarafantsika

*Bubulcus ibis***Squacco Heron***Ardeola ralloides*

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Malagasy Pond-Heron*Ardeola idae*

- **Endangered.** Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Striated Heron*Butorides striata*

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Black-crowned Night-Heron*Nycticorax nycticorax*

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Threskiornithidae (Ibises & Spoonbills)**Madagascar Ibis (E)***Lophotibis cristata*

- **Near Threatened.** Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles & Kites)**Madagascar Harrier-Hawk (E)***Polyboroides radiatus*

- Seen first at Andrafiarana-Andavakoera

Frances's Sparrowhawk*Accipiter f. francesiae*

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Black "Yellow-billed" Kite*Milvus migrans*

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Madagascar Buzzard (E)*Buteo brachypterus*

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

Tytonidae (Barn Owls)**Western Barn Owl (E)***Tyto alba*

- Seen first at Bois Vert. **TL Only**

Strigidae (Owls)**"Rainforest" Scops-Owl (E)***Otus rutilus rutilus*

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia

"Torotoroka" Scops-Owl (E)*Otus rutilus madagascariensis*

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

White-browed Owl (E)*Athene supercilialis*

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Madagascar Owl (E)*Asio madagascariensis*

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia

Leptosomidae (Cuckoo-Roller)**Cuckoo-Roller***Leptosomus discolor discolor*

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

Upupidae (Hoopoes)**Madagascar Hoopoe (E)***Upupa marginata*

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)**Malagasy Kingfisher**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher (E)

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

*Corythornis v. vintsioides**Corythornis madagascariensis***Meropidae (Bee-Eaters)****Olive Bee-Eater**

- Seen first at Andrafiamena-Andavakoera

*Merops superciliosus***Coraciidae (Rollers)****Broad-billed Roller**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Eurystomus g. glaucurus***Brachypteraciidae (Ground Rollers)****Scaly Ground-Roller (E)**

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia

Short-legged Ground-Roller (E)

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia

Pitta-like Ground-Roller (E)

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

Rufous-headed Ground-Roller (E)

- Heard Only. Maromizaha

*Geobiastes squamiger**Brachypteracias leptosomus**Atelornis pittoides**Atelornis crossleyi***Falconidae (Falcons)****Malagasy Kestrel**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Peregrine Falcon

- Seen at Ankarana

*Falco newtoni**Falco peregrinus radama***Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)****Greater Vasa Parrot**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Lesser Vasa Parrot

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Gray-headed Lovebird (E)

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Coracopsis v. vasa**Coracopsis n. nigra**Agapornis canus***Philepittidae (Asities)****Velvet Asity (E)**

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia

Philepitta castanea

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)**Madagascar Cuckooshrike (E)**

- Seen first at Maromizaha

*Coracina cinerea***Vangidae (Vangas & Allies)****Common Newtonia (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Newtonia brunneicauda***Dark Newtonia (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Newtonia amphichroa***Tylas Vanga (E)**

- Seen first at Maromizaha

*Tylas eduardi***Red-tailed Vanga (E)**

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

*Calicalicus madagascariensis***Nuthatch-Vanga (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Hypositta corallirostris***Chabert Vanga (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Leptopterus chabert***Crossley's Vanga (E)**

- **Heard Only.** Andasibe-Mantadia

*Mystacornis crossleyi***Madagascar Blue Vanga (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Cyanolanius madagascarinus***Hook-billed Vanga (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Vanga curvirostris***Ward's Flycatcher-Vanga (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Pseudobias wardi***Rufous Vanga (E)**

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

*Schetba rufa***Sickle-billed Vanga (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Falcolea palliata***White-headed Vanga (E)**

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

*Artamella viridis***Dicruridae (Drongos)****Crested Drongo**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Dicrurus forficatus***Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)****Malagady Paradise-Flycatcher**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Terpsiphone mutata***Corvidae (Crows, Jays & Magpies)****Pied Crow**

- Seen first on route to Kirindy Reserve

Corvus albus

Alaudidae (Larks)**Madagascar Lark (E)**

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

*Eremopterix hova***Cisticolidae (Cisticolas & Allies)****Common Jery (E)**

- Seen first at Ankarafantsika

*Neomixis tenella***Green Jery (E)**

- **Heard Only.** Andasibe-Mantadia

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

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Neomixis striatigula***Madagascar Cisticola**

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

*Cisticola cherina***Acrocephalidae (Reed Warblers)****Malagasy Brush-Warbler**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Nesillas t. typica***Subdesert Brush-Warbler (E)**

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

*Nesillas lantzii***Bernieridae (Malagasy Warblers)****Long-billed Bernieria (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Bernieria madagascariensis***Spectacled Tetraka (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Xanthomixis zosterops***Rand's Warbler (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Randia pseudozosterops***Hirundinidae (Swallows)****Madagascar Martin (E)**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Riparia cowani***Mascarene Martin (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Phedina borbonica***Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)****Madagascar Bulbul**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Hypsipetes m. madagascariensis***Zosteropidae (White-eyes & Allies)****Malagasy White-eye**

- Seen first at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Zosterops maderaspatanus

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

- Seen first in Antananarivo

Madagascar Starling (E)

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)**Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E)**

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Amber Mountain Rock-Thrush (E)

- **Endangered.** Seen at Amber Mountain

African Stonechat

- Seen first at Andasibe-Mantadia

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds)**“Yellow-bellied” Souimanga Sunbird**

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

“White-bellied” Souimanga Sunbird

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Malagasy Sunbird

- Seen first at Ankarana

Ploceidae (Weavers & Allies)**Nelicourvi Weaver (E)**

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

Sakkalava Weaver (E)

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

Red Fody

- Seen first at Antananarivo

Forest Fody (E)

- Seen first at Amber Mountain

Estrildidae (Waxbills & Allies)**Madagascar Munia (E)**

- Seen first at Nosy Ve

Motacillidae (Wagtails & Allies)**Madagascar Wagtail (E)**

- Seen first at Antananarivo

Acridotheres tristis

Hartlaubius auratus

Copsychus albospecularis

Monticola erythronotus

Saxicola torquatus sibilla

Cinnyris s. souimanga

Cinnyris s. apolis

Cinnyris n. notatus

Ploceus nelicourvi

Ploceus sakalava

Foudia madagascariensis

Foudia omissa

Lepidopygia nana

Motacilla flaviventris

MAMMAL LIST

Cheirogaleidae (Mouse & Dwarf Lemurs)

Gray Mouse Lemur (E) - Seen at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Microcebus murinus</i>
Goodman's Mouse Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Microcebus lehilahytsara</i>
Tavaratra Mouse Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Andrafiamena	<i>Microcebus tavaratra</i>
Reddish-gray Mouse Lemur (E) - Seen at Berenty Reserve	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>
Arnold's Mouse Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Microcebus arnoldi</i>
Ankarana Dwarf Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen at Ankarana	<i>Cheirogaleus shethi</i>
Crossley's Dwarf Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Cheirogaleus crossleyi</i>
Amber Mountain Dwarf Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Cheirogaleus andysabini</i>
Pale Fork-marked Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Phaner pallescens</i>

Lepilemuridae (Sportive Lemurs)

White-footed Sportive Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen first at Berenty Reserve	<i>Lepilemur leucopus</i>
Red-tailed Sportive Lemur (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen first at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Lepilemur ruficaudatus</i>
Nosy Be Sportive Lemur (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen first at Nosy Be	<i>Lepilemur tymerlachsoni</i>
Dariana Sportive Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen first at Andrafiamena	<i>Lepilemur milanoii</i>
Ankarana Sportive Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen first at Andrafiamena	<i>Lepilemur ankaranensis</i>

Lemuridae (True Lemurs)

Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Hapalemur griseus</i>
Ring-tailed Lemur (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen at Berenty Reserve	<i>Lemur catta</i>
Sanford's Brown Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Eulemur sanfordi</i>
Common Brown Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia NP	<i>Eulemur fulvus</i>

Red-fronted Brown Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Eulemur rufus</i>
Crowned Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen at Camp Tattersall	<i>Eulemur coronatus</i>
Black Lemur (E) - Endangered. Seen at Ranomafana	<i>Eulemur macaco</i>
Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Varecia variegata</i>
 <u>Indridae (Woolly Lemurs & Sifakas)</u>	
Eastern Woolly Lemur (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Avahi laniger</i>
Verreaux's Sifaka (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>
Perrier's Sifaka (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen at Andarfiarena	<i>Propithecus perrieri</i>
Diademed Sifaka (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>
Golden-crowned Sifaka (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen at Tattersall Camp	<i>Propithecus tattersalli</i>
Indri (E) - Critically Endangered. Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Indri indri</i>
 <u>Daubentoniidae (Aye-Aye)</u>	
Aye-Aye (E) - Endangered. Seen at Aye Aye Island	<i>Daubentonia madagascariensis</i>
 <u>Eupleridae (Malagasy Carnivores)</u>	
Ring-tailed Vontsira (E) - Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Galidia elegans</i>
Fosa (E) - Vulnerable. Seen at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Cryptoprocta ferox</i>
Bokiboky (E) - Endangered. Seen at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Mungotictis de</i>
 <u>Hipposideridae (Old World Leaf-nosed Bats)</u>	
Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat (E) - Near Threatened. Seen at Andrafiarena	<i>Macronycteris commersoni</i>
 <u>Pteropodidae (Fruit Bats)</u>	
Madagascar Flying Fox (E)	<i>Pteropus rufus</i>

- **Vulnerable.** Seen at Berenty Reserve

Madagascar Fruit Bat (E)*Eidolon dupreanum*

- **Vulnerable.** Seen at Ankarana

Madagascar Rousette (E)*Rousettus madagascariensis*

- **Vulnerable.** Seen at Ankarana

Miniopteridae (Bent-winged Bats)**Glen's Long-fingered Bat (E)***Miniopterus gleni*

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Molossidae (Free-tailed Bats)**Malagasy White-bellied Free-tailed Bat (E)***Mops leucostigma*

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Vespertilionidae (Bent-winged Bats)**Malagasy Mouse-eared Myotis (E)***Myotis goudotii*

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Tenrecidae (Tenrecs)**Greater Hedgehog Tenrec (E)***Setifer setosus*

- Seen at Ankarana

Tailless Tenrec (E)*Tenrec ecaudatus*

- Seen at Aye Aye Island

Nesomyidae (African Rodents)**Eastern Red Forest Rat (E)***Nesomy rufus*

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Dormouse Tufted-tailed Rat (E)*Eliurus myoxinus*

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Major's Tufted-tailed Rat (E)*Eliurus majori*

- Seen at Amber Mountain. TL Only

Malagasy Giant Jumping Rat (E)*Hypogeomys antimena*

- **Critically Endangered.** Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Western Big-footed Mouse (E)*Macrotarsomys bastardi*

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS LIST**Testudinidae (Tortoises)****Spider Tortoise (E)***Pyxis arachnoides*

- **Critically Endangered.** Seen at Berenty Reserve

Chamaeleonidae (Chameleons)**Minute Leaf Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Nosy Be

*Brookesia minima***Amber Mountain Leaf Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Brookesia tuberculata***Plated Leaf Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Ankarana

*Brookesia stumpffi***Short-horned Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Calumma brevicorne***Parson's Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Calumma parsonii***Amber Mountain Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Calumma amber***Amber Mountain Blue-nosed Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Calumma linotum***Amber Mountain Globe-horned Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Calumma ambreense***Oustalet's Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Ifaty

*Furcifer oustaleti***Southern Carpet Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

*Furcifer major***Panther Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Furcifer pardalis***Petter's Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Furcifer petteri***Warty Chameleon (E)**

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

*Furcifer verrucosus***Opluridae (Malagasy Iguanas)****Three-eyed Lizard (E)**

- Seen at Ifaty

*Chalarodon madagascariensis***Merrem's Madagascar Swift (E)**

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

*Oplurus cyclurus***Cuvier's Madagascar Swift (E)**

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

*Oplurus cuvieri***Gekkonidae (Geckos)****Madagascar Velvet Gecko (E)**

- Seen at Montagne de Français

Blaesodactylus boivini

Tulear Madagascar Gecko (E) - Seen at Berenty Reserve	<i>Blaesodactylus sakalava</i>
Madagascar Clawless Gecko (E) - Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Ebenavia safari</i>
Spotted Fish-scale Gecko (E) - Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Geckolepis maculata</i>
Common House Gecko (I) - Seen at Ankarafantsika (NW Extension)	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
Farquhar Half-toed Gecko (E) - Seen at Berenty Reserve	<i>Hemidactylus mercatorius</i>
Tsimanampetsotsa Dwarf Gecko (E) - Seen at Berenty Reserve	<i>Lygodactylus tuberosus</i>
Madagascar Ground Gecko (E) - Seen at Kirindy Reserve	<i>Paroedura picta</i>
Northern Madagascar Leaf-toed Gecko (E) - Seen at Ankarana	<i>Paroedura stumpffi</i>
Mocquard's Madagascar Ground Gecko (E) - Seen at Berenty Reserve	<i>Paroedura bastardi</i>
Northern Madagascar Ground Gecko (E) - Seen at Andrafiarana	<i>Paroedura homalorhina</i>
Morondava Day Gecko (E) - Seen at Morondava	<i>Phelsuma kochi</i>
Giant Day Gecko (E) - Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Phelsuma grandis</i>
Abbott's Day Gecko (E) - Seen at Andrafiarana	<i>Phelsuma abbotti</i>
Thicktail Day Gecko (E) - Seen at Berenty	<i>Phelsuma mutabilis</i>
Modest Day Gecko (E) - Seen at hotel in Fort Dauphin	<i>Phelsuma modesta</i>
Lined Day Gecko (E) - Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia	<i>Phelsuma lineata</i>
Amber Mountain Leaf-tailed Gecko (E) - Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Uroplatus finnavana</i>
Henkel's Leaf-tailed Gecko (E) - Seen at Nosy Be	<i>Uroplatus henkeli</i>
Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko (E) - Seen at Amber Mountain	<i>Uroplatus sikorae</i>
"No Common Name" Leaf-tailed Gecko (E) - Seen at Andrafiarana	<i>Uroplatus gamaraso</i>

Gerrhosauridae (Plated Lizards)**Malagasy Keeled Lizard (E)**

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Meier's Plated Lizard (E)

- Seen at Ankarana

Bronze Plated Lizard (E)

- Seen at Maromizaha

Tsingy Plated Lizard (E)

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Madagascar Plated Lizard (E)

- Seen first at Kirindy Reserve

*Tracheloptychus madagascariensis**Zonosaurus haraldmeieri**Zonosaurus aeneus**Zonosaurus tsingy**Zonosaurus madagascariensis***Scincidae (Skinks)****Gravenhurst's Skink (E)**

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Elegant Mabuya (E)

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Gold-spotted Mabuya (E)

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Spotted Skink (E)

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

*Trachylepis gravenhorstii**Trachylepis elegans**Trachylepis aureopunctata**Flexisiceps melanurus***Boidae (Boas)****Western Madagascar Tree Boa (E)**

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Madagascar Ground Boa (E)

- Seen at Ankarana

*Sanzinia volotany**Acrantophis madagascariensis***Colubridae (Colubrid Snakes)****Tiny Night Snake (E)**

- Seen at Andrafiarana

White-lipped Smooth Snake (E)

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Madagascar Cat-eyed Snake (E)

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Southern Pencil Snake (E)

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Northern Pencil Snake (E)

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Madagascan Giant Hognose Snake (E)

- Seen at Andrafiarana

*Ithycyphus miniatus**Liophidium torquatum**Madagascarophis colubrinus**Mimophis mahfalensis**Mimophis oculatus**Leioheterodon madagascariensis*

Blonde Hognose Snake (E)

- On route to Ankify

*Leioheterodon modestus***Hyperollidae (Reed Frogs)****Andranolava Reed Frog (E)**

- Seen at Nosy Be

*Heterixalus luteostriatus***Microhylidae (Microhylid Frogs)****Huwe's Microhylid Frog (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Stumpffia huwei***Mantellidae (Mantellid Frogs)****Madagascar Jumping Frog (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis***Witt's Madagascar Frog (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Blommersia wittei***Bott's Bright-eyed Frog (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Boophis bottae***Madagascar Bright-eyed Frog (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Boophis madagascariensis***Green Bright-eyed Frog (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Boophis viridis***Western Bright-eyed Frog (E)**

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

*Boophis doulioti***Baron's Mantella (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Mantella baroni***Madagascar Brown Mantella (E)**

- Seen at Nosy Ve

*Mantella ebenaui***Bell's Madagascar Frog (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Mantidactylus bellyi***Tsarafidy Pandanus Frog (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Guibemantis pulcher***Amber Mountain Madagascar Frog (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain.

*Gephyromantis ambohitra***INVERTEBRATES LIST****Arachnida (Spider & Scorpions)****Darwin's Bark Spider**

- Seen at Parc de Tsarasaotra

*Caerostris darwini***Madagascar Rainforest Bark Spider (E)***Caerostris extrusa*

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Madagascar Huntsman Spider

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Madagascar Arrowhead Spider

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Medium Wing Kite Spider

- Seen at Ranomafana

Madagascar Hermit Spider (E)

- Seen at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Red-legged Silk Spider

- Seen at Parc de Tsarasaotra

Madagascar Ogre-faced Spider (E)

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Ornamental Wandering Spider (E)

- Seen at Ifaty

Damastes sp.

Acrosomoides acrosomoides

Gasteracantha versicolor

Teruelius olgae

Trichonephila inaurata

Asianopsis madagascariensis

Viridasius fasciatus

Crustacea (Crustaceans)**Brown Land Crab**

- Seen at Morondava

Inversed Fiddler Crab

- Seen at Morondava

Horned Ghost Crab

- Seen at Morondava

Western Calling Fiddler Crab

- Seen at Morondava

East African Fiddler Crab

- Seen at Morondava

Malagasy Freshwater Crab (E)

- Seen at Akarana

Cardisoma carnifex

Cranuca inversa

Ocypode ceratophthalmus

Gelasimus hesperiae

Austruca occidentalis

Madagapotamon humberti

Lepidoptera (Butterflies & Moths)**Citrus Swallowtail**

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Blue-spotted Swallowtail

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Madagascar Striped Sword-tail (E)

- Seen at Ankarana

Malagasy Grass Yellow

- Seen at Maromizaha

Madagascar Orange-tip

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Papilio demodocus

Papilio epiphorbas

Graphium evombar

Eurema f. floricola

Colotis evanthe

Madagascar Purple-tip (E)

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

African Wood White

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

African Monarch

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Dark Blue Pansy

- Seen at Nosy Be

Yellow Pansy

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Island Brown Pansy

- Seen at Antananarivo

Madagascar Mother-of-Pearl (E)

- Seen at Amber Mountain

Purple-tipped Mother-of-Pearl (E)

- Seen at Amber Mountain

False Diadem

- Seen at Amber Mountain

Madagascar Forest Glade Nymph (E)

- Seen at Amber Mountain

Malagasy Hairstreak (E)

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Lang's Short-tailed Blue

- Seen at Ankarana

Madagascar Leopard (E)

- Seen at Ankarana

Madagascar Sunset Moth (E)

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Queen Ranavalona's Acraea (E)

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Damm's Acraea (E)

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Miscellaneous Invertebrates**Flatid Rose Leaf Bug**

- Seen at Maromizaha

Coquerel's Hissing Cockroach

- Seen at Ankarana

Halloween Hissing Cockroach

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Madagascar Hissing Cockroach

Colotis zoe

Leptosia alcesta sylvicola

Danaus chrysippus aegyptius

Junonia oenone

Junonia hierta

Junonia goudotii

Protogoniomorpha duprei

Salamis anteva

Pseudacraea lucretia apaturoides

Aterica rabena

Hemiolaus cobaltina

Leptotes pirithous

Phalanta madagascariensis

Chrysidia rhipheus

Acraea ranavalona

Acraea dammii

Flatida rosea

Elliptorhina coquereliana

Elliptorhina javanica

Gromphadorhina portentosa

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Magenta Dropwing

- Seen at Amber Mountain

Striped Junglewatcher

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

Twister

- Seen at Andrafiarana

Broad Scarlet

- Seen at Antananarivo

Madagascar Click Beetle (E)

- Seen at Kirindy Reserve

Giraffe-necked Weevil (E)

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

“No Common Name” Scarab (E)

- Seen at Ankarana

Boas Rhinoceros Beetle (E)

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

“No Common Name” Tiger Beetle (E)

- Seen at Ankarana

“No Common Name” Tiger Beetle (E)

- Seen at Antananarivo

Amber Mountain Pill Millipede

- Seen at Amber Mountain

Charming Pill Millipede

- Seen at Berenty Reserve

Madagascar Green-Emerald Pill-Millipede

- Seen at Maromizaha

Madagascar Giant Millipede

- Seen at Ankarana

Madagascar Banana Slug

- Seen at Amber Mountain

Glowing Carpenter Bee

- Seen at Andrafiarana

“No Common Name” Owlfly

- Seen at Andrafiarana

“No Common Name” Cicada

- Seen at Ankarana

Cuvier Tropid Snail

- Seen at Ankarana

Bigfin Reef Squid

- Seen at Nosy Be

Trithemis persephone

Neodythemis hildebrandti

Tholymis tillarga

Crocothemis erythraea

Neolycoreus corpulentus

Trachelophorus giraffa

Heterosoma suturale

Oryctes boas

Hipparidium alluaudi

Cicindela equestris

Zoosphaerium ambrense

Zoosphaerium blandum

Zoosphaerium neptunus

Sechelleptus sp.

Elisolimax madagascariensis

Xylocopa calens

Palpares insularis

Yanga heathi

Tropidophora cuvieriana

Sepioteuthis lessoniana

STANDOUT PLANTS LIST**Adansonia (Baobabs)****Grandidier's Baobab (E)**

- **Endangered.** Seen at Baobab Avenue

*Adansonia grandidieri***Za Baobab (E)**

- Seen at Baobab Avenue

*Adansonia za***Fony Baobab (E)**

- Seen at Baobab Avenue

*Adansonia rubrostipa***Gray Baobab (E)**

- Seen at Montagne de Français

*Adansonia madagascariensis***Diego-Suarez Baobab (E)**

- **Endangered.** Seen at Montagne de Français

*Adansonia suarezensis***Perrier's Baobab (E)**

- **Critically Endangered.** Seen at Amber Mountain

*Adansonia perrieri***Orchidaceae (Orchids)****Amber Mountain Eulophia (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

*Eulophia ambrensis***“No Common Name” Angraecum (E)**

- **Critically Endangered.** Seen at Andrafiarena

*Angraecum potamophilum***“No Common Name” Angraecum (E)**

- Seen at Andasibe-Mantadia

*Angraecum rhynchoglossum***“No Common Name” Aearangis (E)**

- Seen at Amber Mountain

Aearangis spiculata

