

Madagascar

27/10-14/11 2013



© Joakim Johansson, Running Coua

Travel participants

Kjell Hedmark, Orsa
Tomas Hedmark, Vaxholm
Michael Johansson, Borås
Joakim Johansson, Örebro
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Karl Fredrik Sjölund, Sollentuna
Karl Gustav Sjölund, Stockholm
Staffan Sundin, Norrfjärden



Fredrik, Kjell, Tina, Tomas, Karl Gustav, Michael, Staffan and Karl Fredrik.
In front sitting and to the right, our local guides at the Spiny Forest

Introduction

In October 2013, the Swedish tour operator Heliangelus (www.heliangelus.se) arranged a three week long birding-trip to Madagascar. This was Heliangelus third trip to Madagascar, the difference this time was that no Swedish tour leader participated on the trip, instead the group was taken good care of by a local tour operator in the form of Zina-Go. Zina-Go is a small local tour operator specialized in nature tours on Madagascar and Zina, one of the owners, acted as our driver during the whole trip. Zina ran all the logistics perfectly during the whole trip and was a very careful driver. Together with Zina we also had company during the whole trip by the very skilled birding guide Tina. Tina was very knowledgeable about the bird-species we encountered on the trip but also proved very knowledgeable about mammals, reptiles and amphibians which came in handy since many of the tour participants had a keen interest also in these animals.

Thanks to Zina, Tina and all the local guides assisting Tina during our visits to all the different sites, the trip proved to be very successful with virtually all possible endemic bird species seen or heard during the trip. Besides all the fantastic bird species seen we also saw plenty of lemurs and other mammals, many interesting reptile and amphibian species as well as many different insects and other bugs!

Travel route



Travel route illustrated by Karl Gustav Sjölund

- 27/10 Antananarivo–Ankarafantsika National Park. Full day transport from Antananarivo to Ankarafantsika National Park with occasional stops along the way to do some bird watching. Check in at Blue Vanga Lodge in the village Andranofasika just outside the park.
- 28/10-29/10 Birding in Ankarafantsika National Park and surroundings.
- 30/10 Ankarafantsika National Park–Antananarivo. Return back to Antananarivo and Hotel Medicis for an overnight stay.
- 31/10 Antananarivo–Andasibe/Mantadia National Park. Early morning birding at the small wetland reserve Parc Tsaratsotra in the outskirts of Antananarivo. Approximately 5h drive to Andasibe/Mantadia National Park and check in at Grace Lodge. Short afternoon bird watching at the Andasibe National Park followed by bird watching in the park surroundings.
- 1/11-2/11 Birding in Andasibe/Mantadia National Parks and surroundings. Spotlighting for Lemurs and other night active animals outside Andasibe during the evenings.

- 3/11 Andasibe/Mantadia National Park–Antananarivo–Antsirabe. Early morning birding outside Andasibe National Park leaving the area 8.30 arriving Antsirabe and check in at the really nice Hotel Chambres du Voyageur at 17.00. Pit-stop for lunch at Antananarivo.
- 4/11 Antsirabe–Ranomafana. Sleep in and arriving Ranomafana 14.00 with check in at Hotel Le Grenat. Afternoon birding in Ranomafana.
- 5/11-6/11 Two full days birding in Ranomafana.
- 7/11 Ranomafana–Isalo. Full day transportation with a stop at Anja Community Reserve on the way, arriving Isalo Ranch in the afternoon.
- 8/11 Isalo–Zombitse. Birding Isalo until lunch, then onwards a couple of hours to Zombitse and check in at Zombitse Eco Lodge. Afternoon birding in Zombitse.
- 9/11 Zombitse–Toliara. Morning bird watching in Zombitse then transportation to Toliara which we arrived at 14.00 with check in at Hotel Victory. Afternoon birding at La Table.
- 10/11 Toliara–Nosy Ve. Early morning birding around Toliara, then transportation by speedboat to the sandy island Nosy Ve for a couple of hours of bird watching. We then continued with the speedboat back to the main island with check in at Anakao Ocean Lodge.
- 11/11 Anakao Ocean Lodge–Toliara–Mangily. Speedboat back to Toliara and then by our car to Mangily. Check in at Hotel Vovotelo and afternoon birding in the Ifaty Spiny Forest.
- 12/11 Mangily–Toliara. Morning birding at Ifaty Spiny Forest, then back to Toliara and Hotel Victory.
- 13/11 Toliara–Antananarivo. Late flight back to Antananarivo.
- 14/11 Tour ends with flights back to Sweden.

Travel Diary by Fredrik Rudzki

25/10-26/10

Major part of the group arrived Antananarivo on time in the early afternoon 26/11 and every one except Joakim got their luggage. Zina and Tina met us by the exit and after arranging with changing money and formalities with Joakims luggage we were driven to the quite basic Hotel Medicis, located not far away from the airport. After check in, everyone was eager to start bird watching and we had the opportunity to visit some small lakes surrounded by rice fields not far from the hotel. Here we spent a couple of hours seeing some of the more common species like Squacco Heron, Great, Dimorphic, Black and Cattle Egrets, Madagascar Kingfisher, Red Fody, Madagascar Munia, Madagascar Bee-Eater, Madagascar Swamp-Warbler and Red-billed Teal. Back at the hotel we all gathered at the hotel top terrace and celebrated Karl Gustavs 50th birthday by singing “Ja må han leva”, Karl Gustav also treating us with a nice bottle of Champaign. After supper at 20.00 we all went to bed.

27/10

This day was the official start of the tour which basically would be a long transportation day to the Northwest and Ankarafantsika National Park. We all had a sleep in with a late breakfast where we now also could say hello to Tomas and Kjell, whose flight with Air Madagascar had been delayed several hours and had arrived late in the previous night. After a quite meagre continental breakfast of coffee/tea and baguettes with marmalade and extra additional orders of omelettes, we started the trip at 08.30. The landscape along the road RN 4 to the national park was quite monotonous, mostly grassy plains with not many bird species to see besides Madagascar Cisticola and Madagascar Lark, although we had an adult male Madagascar Harrier close by at one occasion, showing very well for all in the group. On the way we also made a stop by a bridge at a small river were we had very good views of Madagascar Pranticole, Madagascar Green and Souimanga Sunbird, Crested Drongo and Madagascar

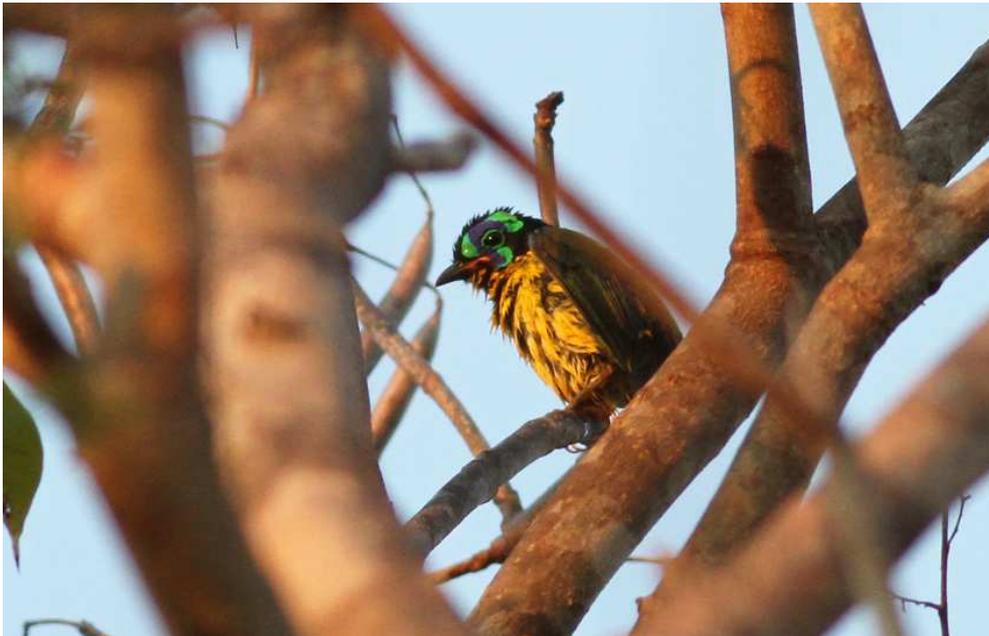


© Joakim Johansson, Madagascar Pratincole & Lark

Harrier-Hawk. We also had three Madagascar Cuckoo-Rollers at one of our stops, a species not expected out on the grassy plains. Besides the birds, we had our first species of Chameleon in the form of two Oustalet's Chameleons, one passing the road and giving everybody good photo opportunities. We arrived the small village of Andranofasika, located just a short drive from the Ankarafantsika National Park at 19.30. Before dinner some of us had the time to check in the different gecko species and look at the moths which were attracted to the outdoor lights of our cabins.

28/10

Ankarafantsika National Park has one of the larger remaining parts of dense dry deciduous forest in Madagascar, covering an area of 1350 km². The more humid parts of the park are located around the park entrance and is called Botanical Garden Trails A and B. This day we started early at 05.30 and headed directly to Botanical Garden Trail A. Our main target species here was Schlegel's Asity and it did not take long until a nice adult male was found, sitting in the foliage of a small tree.



© Joakim Johansson, Schlegel's Asity

With this species ticked we then spent a couple of hours birding following the different trails in the area. Besides the Schelgel's Asity we also saw Crested and Coquerel's Coua, Rufous, Chabert and Blue Vanga, Madagascar Green-Pigeon, Long-billed Bernieria, Madagascar Magpie-Robin, Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher, Madagascar Cuckoo-Shrike and many more species. Before getting back to the Blue Vanga Lodge for breakfast at 09.30 we made a quick stop at the park entrance where we had several Vasa and Black Parrots, Grey-headed Lovebird, Madagascar Hoopoe, Broad-billed Roller as well as several White-headed and Sickle-billed Vangas.



© Joakim Johansson, Rufous Vanga



© Karl Fredrik Sjölund, Madagascar Magpie-Robin



© Joakim Johansson, Coquerel's Coua

After having breakfast we drove back to the entrance again and spent some time there looking at our first Lemurs for the trip, Coquerel's Sifaka. The birding then continued on Botanical Garden Trail B, a much drier trail system than the one we visited in the morning. We walked the trails until early afternoon and here we had Torotoroka Scops-Owl as well as Western Wolly Lemur on day-roost, several Red-capped Coua and also a pair of White-breasted Mesite.



© Karl Fredrik Sjölund, Torotoroka Scops-Owl



© Karl Fredrik Sjölund, Coquerel's Sifaka



© Joakim Johansson , White-breasted Mesite

After lunch at the park entrance restaurant, we went down to Lake Ravelobe where we spent several hours birding and saw Humblot's Heron as well as several other species of Herons and Egrets, Madagascar Pond-Heron, Little Bittern, Glossy Ibis, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Madagascar Jacana and some species of wading birds. Here we also managed to see the very rare Madagascar Fish-Eagle as well as other raptors like Madagascar Buzzard, Madagascar Harrier-Hawk and Yellow-billed Kite. Beside the birds we also saw Common Brown and Mongoose Lemur and also several Nile Crocodiles lurking in the lake itself. In the evening we went spot-lighting on a small dirt track just outside the village. The short walk was very rewarding with good views of several nocturnal lemur species and chameleons, Grey and Golden-brown Mouse Lemur, Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur, Oustalet's and Rhinoceros Chameleons. After the walk we had late dinner in the village before returning to the lodge.

29/10

This morning we started at Botanical Garden Trail B, target species being the rare Van Dam's Vanga. We spent several hours trying to find the birds at their known localities but despite our efforts we were not successful, although we saw the new species Hook-billed Vanga very well during the walk. After we had started the walk back to the entrance a local guide came running and told us that he had heard Van Dam's Vanga further back on one of the trails. We then followed him to the place where he had heard the birds and it did not take long until we also heard them. After a short while we could also see a male and a female when they crossed the trail and flew up from the denser shrubbery up into the treetops, giving us all really nice observations. After the birds had disappeared we returned to the entrance where we had some cold drinks before we continued with the car to a lake called Lake Amboromalandy to look for African Pygmy Geese and other waterfowls.



© Joakim Johansson, Van Dam's Vanga, Male



© Joakim Johansson, Van Dam's Vanga, Female

When we reached the lake, it was in the middle of the day and well above 40° C. We walked down to the lake where the birds normally were to be seen, but since they had been scared off by people fishing, they had flown off and had gathered at a small bay maybe two kilometres away. Some in the group decided to make the walk in the heat and those who did could see several hundreds of Hottentot and Red-billed Teal, however at some distance and in very strong heat haze. After some time we also managed to find a couple of African Pygmy Geese, but from a very long distance. After this we drove back to the lodge for a well earned siesta, returning back to the park entrance later in the afternoon. Here we made an effort to find Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher but since we were unsuccessful we decided to try for Madagascar Crested Ibis in the forest next to Lake Ravelobe instead. It did not take long before Tina found two Ibises near the trail and we managed to see them quite well when they scurried away on the forest floor, then running away on the trail. Getting darker, we made a final effort to find the Pygmy-Kingfisher but still without success. On the way back to the car however, we saw a White-throated Rail coming out of the forest walking in the open on the riverbank, a really nice ending of our visit to Ankarafantsika with us being successful in seeing all the special endemics in the area.

30/10

Today we drove back to Antananarivo and Hotel Medicis. On our way back we made a short stop at the Lake Ambodromany where we saw four Greater Painted Snipes as well as better observations of ten African Pygmy Geese, some teals and also a grebe, however not possible to see which species due to the distance.

31/10

Before we started our drive to Perinet and the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, we made a stop at Parc Tsaratsaotra which is a small privately owned park in the outskirts of Antananarivo. The park contains two small lakes with good numbers of Squacco Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Great, Dimorphic, Black and Cattle Egret, White-faced Whistling Duck, Knob-billed Duck, Red-billed and Hottentot Teal and also small numbers of breeding Madagascar Pond Heron. At one of the lakes we also had good views of a single Madagascar Grebe.

The trip then continued to Perinet which we arrived in the afternoon. At Grace Lodge we were met by the very friendly hostess Henrietta who made sure that we had a really pleasant stay with good food, cold drinks and very good service all in all. We checked in and then left to the closest park, Andasibe. Andasibe-Mantadia National park is a 155 km² large area which

consist of two parks, the low elevation Andasibe and the middle elevation Mantadia. Compared to Ankarafantsika the climate was more humid and during the stay in the area we experienced some light rainfall, but nothing that continued for very long.

At the entrance to Andasibe we met our friendly and very energetic guide Flora, who would be assisting us during our stay in the area. We arrived at the park at 15.00 which meant that we just had one hour in the park since it closed at 16.00. Despite the short time Flora managed to show us Collared Nightjar and Crested Ibis, both on their nests. On the way out we also saw our first Madagascar Blue-Pigeon and also the strange-looking and very much appreciated Giraffe-necked Weevil, an insect that all of us had anticipated to see on the trip.



© Joakim Johansson, Collared Nightjar

After the park had closed we drove a couple of kilometres to a group of trees where Flora previously had spotted a Madagascar Long Eared Owl on day roost. It took some time to find the bird since it had moved from its usual resting place but finally we managed to spot it, just when we had decided to quit the search and go back to our car. On the way back to our lodge we stopped and walked along the road outside the Andasibe National Park. Getting darker and with raindrops starting to fall, the bird activity was not that high but we saw Nuthatch, White-headed, Chabert and Blue Vanga. Here we also had Goodman's Mouse Lemur, Nose-horned and Short-horned Chameleons.

1/11

We started the morning 04.30 with breakfast at the lodge, we then drove the 10 km to the Mantadia National Park. When we arrived to the park, we started with birding along the road for several hours, seeing Madagascar Starling, Nelicourvi Weaver, Rand's and Cryptic Warbler, Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher, White-throated Oxylabes, Wards Flycatcher and many more species. A short detour on a small trail gave us close and very good views of Madagascar Groundhunter as well as Tylas Vanga. It was on this trail Tina also found a small and very strange looking Fantastic Leaf-tailed Gecko, one of the coolest reptilians on the whole trip! Back on the road again Flora worked hard to locate Short-legged Ground-Roller and after some time he heard a call from inside the forest. We left the road and started to search for the bird inside the forest and after some authentic sound imitations by Flora, the bird was located, sitting still in the open on the branches in a tree. The bird was not bothered at all by our appearance and after a while another bird appeared.



© Joakim Johansson, Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher



© Joakim Johansson, Short-legged Ground-Roller

We then continued our trip and drove to a small lake where we could see Meller's Duck as well as Madagascar Grebe from a short distance. After a short break for our field lunch we continued birding, now in the actual forest and the extensive trail system within the park. We spent several hours walking on the trails where our guides managed to locate a pair of Pitta-like Ground-Rollers, however very uncooperative and not giving us more than quick glimpses before quickly moving away in the undergrowth. Other birds seen on the forest walk was Long-billed Bernieria, Spectacled Tetraka, Forest Fody and many other more common bird species we had seen before. We also had Diademed Sifaka, Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur and also a Lowland Streaked Tenrec, the latter one disappearing very fast and not seen by everyone.

Leaving the Mantadia Park at 16.00 we drove back to our lodge where some of us took the opportunity to take a swim in the pool and then taking a rest before the evening walk outside the Andasibe park entrance. We spent a couple of hours walking along the road but it was not just us being out looking for nocturnal animals, the road was full of other tourists and it became somewhat hysterical at some occasions. During the walk we saw several nocturnal lemurs and chameleons on night roost, but beside a Great Dwarf Lemur we did not see any new species for the trip.

2/11

The target species for the day was the Scaly Ground-Roller and to see this species we started early again and drove to Mantadia. Arriving to our starting point, we discovered a Pitta-like Ground-Roller just by the side of the road where we were going to park our car, giving us much better observations than the quick glimpses from yesterday. The quest for the Scaly Ground-Roller then started and the ever energetic Flora guided us for several hours and we tried many locations without seeing or hearing the species. We had almost decided to give up for the day when Flora got a tip from another local guide who had heard the species and we decide to make a last effort for the species. We arrived to the area for the bird and Flora quickly heard the call from a Scaly Ground-Roller, then also located the bird sitting openly on a fallen tree-trunk. Since we focused on finding the Scaly Ground-Roller we did not actually spend too much time looking for other birds. One exception was when we stopped and did some play-back for a Red-breasted Coua, which some of us managed to see quickly before it saw us and disappeared. During the day we also saw two Lowland Streaked Tenrec. The first one disappeared in a dense shrubbery just by the road and despite that Flora energetically tried to find it for us, it managed to dodge away. The other one was much more cooperative and easier to see well when we found it walking on the ground inside the forest in an area without to much undergrowth.

With the Scaly Ground-Roller seen, we had managed to see all three species of Ground-Rollers possible in the area, Flora doing a fantastic job in locating and showing us all the species. Returning to the Andasibe area we had a short lunch break before we made a short visit inside the Andasibe Park where we saw Madagascar Wood-Rail and also Indri. At 17.00 we drove to a marsh where we playbacked for Madagascar Rail and Madagascar Flufftail which we heard but did not manage to see, however very pleased with a good day of birding and some very nice mammals seen.

3/11

We left Grace Lodge at 06.00 and birded outside Andasibe together with Flora a couple of hours where we had nice views of Blue Coua and a Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko, a much larger species than the Fantastic Leaf-tail Gecko we had seen before. After saying good bye to Flora we started our drive to Antsirabe where we would stay for the night before continuing to Ranomafana. We drove back to Antananarivo where we had lunch at a really good Chinese restaurant before driving south to Antsirabe and Hotel Chambres du Voyageur, which we arrived at 17.00. During the drive we did not do very much birding, but at one stop we could see three Hammerkops just by the side of the road in a rice field.

4/11

We had a late morning with sleep in and then we checked the nice garden of the hotel for the local Chameleons. We then continued towards Ranomafana, a 415 km² middle elevation park with primary and secondary rainforest located on mountainous terrain in the southeast of Madagascar. We arrived in 14.00 with check in at Hotel Le Grenat and after lunch we drove to the Ranomafana for some afternoon birding. In the park we soon came across Golden Bamboo Lemur and also Red-fronted Brown Lemur. The Golden Bamboo Lemurs seemed to be agitated, constantly looking at something on the ground just beneath the tree they were sitting in. When we advanced to have a better view of the animals, a Malagasy Civet, or Fanaloka, quickly ran away into the undergrowth, apparently not a common species to see during day-light. Since it was getting late, the bird activity was not that high but we saw Pollen's Vanga and when we tried the playback for Brown Mesite, we got a response close by the trail which we were walking. After several tries and some re-allocations the bird was also finally seen, but not easily since it was sitting and looking at us in the dense undergrowth, visible from just a small place from the trail.

5/11

We had an early breakfast at 05.00 and then we drove away to pick up our local guide Jean Cry with assistant Joe. We started birding at a trail a couple of kilometres away from the main entrance called Sahamalaotra, which we walked on until lunchtime. It had been raining during the night and it was a little bit foggy and the visibility was not the best, but during this walk we saw Pitta-like Ground-Roller in the open, male Velvet Asity, Madagascar Flufftail, a skulking Brown Emutail and Common as well as Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity, of the latter one we saw two individuals close by a nest. Here we also saw a quite large and very colourful O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon, probably the most colourful of all the chameleons we saw on the whole trip.



© Joakim Johansson, Pitta-like Ground-Roller

When returnig for luch, we had a large Madagascar Boa on the side of the road. First we thought it was dead, lying curled up on a stone fence, but when we got closer it started to curl up a little bit more. After our lunch and a small siesta at the hotel until 15.00, we drove to Ranomafana main entrance and basically walked the same route as yesterday. On this walk we saw a Red-fronted Coua, but the main goal was to see Greater Bamboo-Lemur, one of the most endangered primate species in the world, estimates vary between 60-160 individuals still to remain in the wild. While we had our lunch, assisting guide Joe had been looking for the species and managed to find two individuals which we then had excellent views of when they foraged in the bamboo-stands next to one of the trails. Leaving the main area, we then drove higher up in the mountains to look for Forest Rock-Thrush. Since we had spent some time on the previous trails it was now getting darker and we did not manage to see but just hear this species when we walked along the roadside. Before we stopped birding for the day we made a short visit to look for nocturnal lemurs at a site just by the road where bananas had been used to bring out the animals into view. Just like in Andasibe-Mantadia it soon got crowded with tourist but despite the close range, just a couple of metres, the animals did not look to disturbed by the commotion around their trees.

6/11

This morning was much clearer than yesterday and we spent most of the time up until lunch on the upper trails of Ranomafana. Here we had some really nice and close views of male Velvet Asity and also Pitta-like Ground-Roller. Further up the trail we spent some time to see a pair of very shy Yellow-throated Oxylabes and here we also saw Madagascar Flufftail as well as Eastern Red Forest Rat. When we looked for the Yellow-throated Oxylabes we also heard Milne-Edwards's Sifaka close by, but unfortunately we never managed to see the animals.



© Joakim Johansson, Velvet Asity

We had our lunch down at the hotel which we left again at 14.30, this time to look for Madagascar Snipe. Our first area was a small rice-field a couple of kilometres from Ranomafana main entrance. We checked the whole area but we did not find any Madagascar Snipe at all. Two young boys however told us that they had seen a bird taking cover in a small ditch covered by shrubbery. The boys started to find the bird and suddenly a Baillon's Crake took off and flew toward us and passed by just above our heads. It landed in a small tree a couple of metres from us, however not being a normal place for a Crake to be in, it looked puzzled before it decided that it was much better to fly away again, disappearing on the ground further up among the trees. Since we did not manage to find the snipe at this location we decided to make a new try at another larger rice-field some kilometres away. At the new rice-field we took position and waited while our guides started to walk along the rice-paddies to look for the snipe. Following Tina through our binoculars, we saw that he had come upon a Marsh Owl. Since no snipe was to be seen around where we were standing, we decided to re-allocate and started to move towards Tina to have a look at the owl, sitting openly in a small tree beside the rice field. On the way to Tina we had to cross a wet area, not being part of the rice field, and when crossing this part a Madagascar Snipe flew up and landed again a short distance away. To see the bird better we then flushed the bird two times before we decided that enough was enough and let the bird be in peace. We then left the rice fields to look for another of our target species, Grey Emutail. To see this bird we walked the Amboditanimena trail 1,5 km to a small marshy area where we relatively soon saw several Grey Emutail and also another Madagascar Snipe. We then drove back to the hotel, making a short stop to look for Mantella frogs at a place close to a river, however not seeing any.

7/11

We left Hotel Grenat and Ranomafana at 07.30 and started our trip towards Isalo further south. We made a couple of stops along the road outside Ranomafana to see if we could find any Forest Rock-Thrush, but we missed out on this bird. We also made a try to see a mantella frog, and this time Tina was successful and could show us a beautiful Malagasy Painted Mantella sitting close to the water along a small river. On our way to Isalo we made a stop at Anja Community Reserve to look for Ring-tailed Lemur. We reached the reserve at 11.00 and spent a couple of hours walking along the trail inside the small reserve, the Ring-tailed Lemur easily seen along the different trails. We saw several different family groups and some of the young ones entertained us for quite some time, sometimes hanging upside down in the tree-branches while chasing each other. During the stay we also saw several reptiles, among one of them a strange looking Spiny Leaf Chameleon, a small and very well camouflaged ground living chameleon.



© Joakim Johansson, Ring-tailed Lemur

After lunch at the reserve's restaurant we continued to the lodge Isalo Ranch, the road passing through a flat and very grassy landscape with occasional stone formations, very similar to kopjes in Africa but much larger. Since the landscape was so monotonous and not many birds to be seen, we did not do any further bird watching along the road, besides an occasional stop along a small creek where we could see two White-throated Rail in the open. After a long journey we then reached the very nice Isalo Ranch, a really fine lodge offering good rooms and very good food. Michael and I decided to try out the pool before it was getting dark while the others decided to rest a little bit in their cabins before dinner or do some bird watching on the grassy fields just outside the lodge area. When Michael and I was about to jump into the pool, the bird watching group signalled to us that they were seeing something and we decided to leave the pool and have a look at what they were seeing. We started to run towards them, on our way making a shortcut over the lawn to another cabin where two tourists, having a cold beer in the sunset, looked strangely at us when we ran by in sneakers, bathing shorts and towels. The other ones had discovered a pair of Madagascar Partridge and we were fortunate to see them for some time when they calmly walked along a gravel road before they

disappeared into the grass. Back at the lodge again several of us made it to the pool and later on we all enjoyed a really nice dinner at the restaurant.

8/11

Several of us went up early and did some bird watching outside the lodge before we all had breakfast. We then drove into the town of Isalo where we picked up our local guide and arranged with the permits to Isalo National Park. It took some time to arrange with the permits but soon we were on our way to the park to look for our target bird, Benson's Rock-Thrush. We walked along a trail from the parking area up to a camping site and then onwards into a canyon. In the canyon, there was a small creek surrounded by trees and brushes and it was in this area where we encountered our first male Benson's Rock-Thrush, singing out in the open in a small tree. We continued up to a small waterfall where Joakim and Karl Gustav took a swim in the natural pool beneath the waterfall. On the way back to the camping area we saw a couple of more Benson's Rock-Thrush, otherwise the bird activity was quite low, now it was also getting hotter. Back at the camp site we saw a female Madagascar Buttonquail with two chicks, not particularly disturbed by the hustle and bustle in the area, looking for food among the bushes.



© Joakim Johansson, Benson's Rock-Thrush



© Joakim Johansson, Madagascar Buttonquail

We then returned back to Isalo Ranch for lunch before we drove further southwest a couple of hours to Zombitse Eco Lodge. The lodge was quite basic and since our rooms were not ready, we decided to leave our luggage at the lodge and do some afternoon bird watching at Zombitse Vohibasia National Park. The Zombitse Vohibasia National Park covers 363 km² and consists of dry forests, marshes and savannas and is the last small remaining part of this special type of dry deciduous forest on Madagascar. The target species for this park is the Appert's Tetraka, a species that we saw very well during our afternoon walk inside the dry forest, as well as several Coquerel's Coua and also a Hubbard's Sportive Lemur. We then did some birding along the road but did not see any more species not seen before on the trip, then returning to the lodge for check in and dinner. We did the checklist before dinner outside in the garden, the lights however attracting several thousands of small dung beetles, so we finished the list quickly and then took cover inside the restaurant for a very basic dinner.

9/11

We started early and drove to the national park to see Giant Coua, another target species for the area, which we had missed yesterday. At the park entrance we met our local guide together with his two assistants which were going to assist us in localising the birds in the dense dry forest. We spent some time walking around on the trails inside the forest but had no

contact with the Giant Coua, however we once again saw Hubbard's Sportive Lemur on day roost and also some Verreaux's Sifakas. Not being successful with the Giant Coua, we then took a break from this species and went to look at White-browed Hawk-Owl. One of the assistants knew where to see this species on day roost, so we drove back a couple of kilometres along the main road and then walked into the bushes besides the road to a hollow tree, where we saw two White-browed Hawk-Owls from a short distance. Back at the main area again we made a new effort for the Giant Coua but we still did not manage to locate the species. When we had started to give up the search, one of the assistants came and told us that he had found one bird, which had taken cover up in a tree. We all then had good views of the bird which remained in the safety of the tree until we left it in peace and returned to our car.

Before we drove back to the lodge for breakfast, we made an attempt to see Banded Kestrel which should be possible to see in the area, but without success. Our next leg on the journey took us to the city of Toliara in the south-west by the Indian Ocean. We arrived at Hotel Victory around 14.00 and most of us had a nice stone oven pizza lunch. It had come to our knowledge that Air Madagascar had changed its flight back to Antananarivo on November 13th, now leaving in the morning instead of in the evening as planned. With this change we were worried that we would not have sufficient time to bird La Table which was planned for in the morning November 13th, hence Zina and Tina had arranged that our local guides would take us there this afternoon instead. At 15.00 we picked up our local guides and drove back a couple of kilometres outside Toliara to the very dry La Table, a sandy and dusty area covered by dense and very thorny vegetation. The guides were very effective and they soon had localised the specialities of the area, Subdesert Brush-Warbler, Lafresnaye's Vanga, Verreaux's Coua and also the very much wanted Red-shouldered Vanga. With these important species secured we then returned to Hotel Victory where some of us enjoyed the pool before dinner.



© Joakim Johansson, Red-shouldered Vanga

10/11

Early in the morning at 05.15 we left Hotel Victory and drove to a large grassy field a couple of kilometres from the hotel with the hope to see Madagascar Sandgrouse. According to the local guides, this was a place where the birds used to appear between 05.30 and 06.00, so we needed to be on place in time, not to miss out on this species. The field lay between the road and a housing area and according to the guides the Madagascar Sandgrouse had become more and more difficult to see on this particular place due to increased human activity as well as grazing live-stock. Nevertheless we made a try for the birds and after a short while two Madagascar Sandgrouse came flying and landed on the field, then disappearing in the grass. We advanced and after a while we could see the two birds through our spotting scopes, sitting fairly close in the open near a small waterhole. The birds did not stay very long and after a while they both took off and flew away again. Pleased to have seen this species we returned to the hotel for breakfast, and then loaded our luggage in the car and drove to the Toliara harbour.

At 09.30 we had packed our luggage on a speedboat with two 140 hp motors, driving us to the sandy island Nosy Ve. It took about one hour to reach the island and we were then left alone for a couple of hours while the captain continued with his other passengers to the different hotels lying on the main island coast. We spent several hours on Nosy Ve where we looked at the Red-tailed Tropicbirds roosting on the ground and also came by a large aggregation of Greater and Lesser Crested Terns, Roseate Tern, a Saunders's Tern, a Kelp Gull and a large flock of Crab Plover on the sandy beach south of the island. Some of us also took the opportunity to do some snorkelling, but the sea was quite rough and not many fishes or other marine life was to be seen. After leaving the other passengers, the captain of our speedboat had returned to pick us up, waiting for us until we felt that it was time to move on. He then drove us to the very nice Anakao Ocean Lodge, a premium class hotel located just by the shore on the main island. At the shore we were welcomed by the hotel manager with all the staff and then offered welcome drinks and cold wet towels to refresh us with, very much appreciated by all of us. Our cabins here were the best on the whole trip, large, spacious and located just by the sea and the three course lunch which we had shortly after we arrived was fantastic! After lunch we walked around in the hot and dry hotel surroundings and saw Littoral Rock-Thrush, which appeared to be quite common in the area, and also an unexpected Spider Tortoise. It was quite hot and since we had been out in the sun the whole day we did not do any particular birding after this.



© Joakim Johansson , Crab Plovers

11/11

After breakfast we left the nice hotel and the speed-boat then took us back to Toliara, making short stops along the shore to pick up other tourists at the different hotels and lodges. Zina and Tina met us at the harbour and after making a short stop at the Air Madagascar office to confirm our tickets to Antananarivo, we continued towards Mangily and the Ifaty Spiny Forest. The road to this area was very bumpy and not in a very good condition, but Tina got us to the place and we arrived to Hotel Vovotelo just in time for lunch. After having pizza and resting a little bit, we drove a short distance to the actual reserve together with our local guide and his assistants. The guides were very effective and soon they had located and showed us some of the local specialities which the area is known for, Subdesert Mesite, Long-tailed Ground Roller and we also saw Banded Kestrel as well as Green-capped Coua, both on their nests.



© Joakim Johansson, Subdesert Mesite

12/11

This was going to be our last day of birding and we started the day by driving back to Ifaty Spiny Forest and tried to find some of the species we did not have time for yesterday. Relatively soon our guides located a Running Coua which we also managed to see well. Continuing our morning walk we then also came across a couple of Archbold's Newtonia and also Thamnornis Warbler, thus making a clean up of the special endemic species for the area. Before returning back to the hotel we stopped by a large field where our guides showed us a pair of Madagascar Plover, apparently nesting somewhere on this field. After breakfast we drove back to Toliara and Hotel Victory making a few birding stops along the way, seeing a variety of different more common shorebirds.



© Joakim Johansson, Archbold's Newtonia

13/11

At dinner yesterday we had gotten the message that Air Madagascar had changed the departure time for our flight yet another time, which now was to depart in the evening instead of in the morning as communicated a couple of days earlier. In the morning we had breakfast together with Zina and Tina who then started the long drive back to Antananarivo. The rest of us spent the day at the hotel, making the best of the time by playing billiards, swimming in the pool or just resting. In the evening the hotel manager drove us to the airport and our flight back to Antananarivo. At the airport we were met by Zina's brother and a friend of his who took us back to the familiar Hotel Medicis for an overnight stay.

14/11

Last day on Madagascar! Besides Kjell and Tomas, who had left earlier in the morning, the rest of the group took the flight from Antananarivo to Johannesburg and from there various departures back to Sweden.

List of Birds – by Fredrik Rudzki

PODICIPEDIDAE

Madagascar Grebe *Tachybaptus pelzelni* (VU) A single bird seen in Parc Tsaratsaotra and another two birds seen in a small forest lake at Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

PHAETHONTIDAE

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* Common on Nosy Ve.

ANHINGIDAE

Darter *Anhinga rufa vulsini* One single bird seen in Lake Ravelobe.

ARDEIDAE

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea firsas* Few birds seen in different wetlands.

Madagascar Heron (Humblot's Heron) *Ardea humbloti* (EN) A single bird seen at Lake Ravelobe and another single bird seen at Betsiboka River. Madagascar endemic.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea madagascariensis* Quite common at Lake Ravelobe, otherwise few birds seen at different wet areas along the way.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Common species at various wetlands and rivers.

Black Egret *Egretta ardesiaca* Quite many seen in the ricefields outside Antananarivo, also seen at Lake Ravelobe and other wet areas along the way.

Dimorphic Egret *Egretta (gularis) dimorpha* Common species.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Common species.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* Common species, numerous at Parc Tsaratsaotra and Lake Ravelobe.

Madagascar Pond-Heron *Ardeola idae* (EN) One seen at Lake Ravelobe, another five birds seen in Parc Tsaratsaotra. Madagascar endemic.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata rutenbergi* Small numbers seen at Lake Ravelobe and Lake Amboromalandy. Few birds seen at other locations along the way.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Seen at Parc Tsaratsaotra and Lake Ravelobe, a few birds also seen at other wet areas.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus podiceps* A single bird seen at Lake Ravelobe.

THRESKIORNITIDAE

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Seen at Lake Ravelobe.

Madagascar Crested Ibis *Lophotibis cristata* (NT) In total four birds seen on the trip, two at the Lake Ravelobe area, a single bird on its nest at Andasibe and another bird in Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

SCOPIDAE

Hammerkop *Scopus umbretta* Few birds seen at various sites during the trip.

ANATIDAE

White-faced Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* Common at Lake Ravelobe, Lake Amboromalandy and Parc Tsaratsaotra.

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Seen at Parc Tsaratsaotra.

African Pygmy-Goose *Nettapus auritus* Four birds seen from long distance at Lake Amboromalandy, another ten birds seen at Lake Ambondromamy.

Meller's Duck *Anas melleri* (EN) A single bird seen in a small forest lake at Mantadia (together with two Madagascar Grebes). Another single bird seen flying when looking for Madagascar Snipe on the rice fields outside the Ranomafana National Park. Madagascar endemic.

Red-billed Duck *Anas erythrorhyncha* Quite common at the major lakes visited.

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* Also a common species at the major lakes

ACCIPITRIDAE

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus (migrans) aegyptius* Common species .

Madagascar Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus vociferoides* (CR) One single bird seen sitting in a treetop at Lake Ravelobe. It is estimated that just 120 pairs still exists in the wild, making this species one of the rarest reports in the world. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Harrier *Circus maillardi* (VU) Two single birds seen from the road at two different occasions, one adult male from very close distance. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides radiatus* Single birds seen at different locations. Madagascar endemic.

Frances's Sparrowhawk *Accipiter francesii* One bird seen in a tree outside the restaurant at Ankarafantsika National Park, another bird seen in the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

Henst's Goshawk *Accipiter henstii* (NT) Two birds seen in Andasibe/Mantadia and another single bird seen in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Buzzard *Buteo brachypterus* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk One individual seen in the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

FALCONIDAE

Madagascar Kestrel *Falco newtoni* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

Banded Kestrel *Falco zoniventris* One bird seen at its nest in the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* Three birds seen on the way to Ranomafana National Park.

PHASIANIDAE

Madagascar Partridge *Margaroperdix madagascariensis*. Two plus one bird birds seen outside our lodge Isalo Ranch. Madagascar endemic.

NUMIDIDAE

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Six birds seen at Zombitse.

MESITORNITHIDAE

White-breasted Mesite *Mesitornis variegata* (VU) A pair seen very well at Ankarafantsika. Madagascar endemic.

Brown Mesite *Mesitornis unicolor* (VU) One bird seen at Ranomafana, several others heard during our walks along the trails. Madagascar endemic.

Subdesert Mesite *Monias benschi* (VU) One bird seen very well at the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

TURNICIDAE

Madagascar Buttonquail *Turnix nigricollis* One female with two chicks seen from close range at the camp site at Isalo National Park. Madagascar endemic.

RALLIDAE

Madagascar Flufftail *Sarothrura insularis* In total four different birds seen well in Ranomafana, also heard in Mantadia at different occasions. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Wood-Rail *Canirallus kioloides* One bird seen well in Andasibe, otherwise heard at several occasions in the park. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Rail *Rallus madagascariensis* (VU) A couple of individuals only heard at the wetlands in Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

White-throated Rail *Dryolimnas cuvieri* Seen very well in the open on a couple of occasions, also heard several times at different locations. Madagascar endemic.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* One flushed in a ricefield outside Ranomafana National Park when looking for Madagascar Snipe.

Allen's Galinule *Porphyrio alleni* One individual seen at Lake Ravelobe.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus pyrrhorhoa* Seen at different wetlands and lakes.

JACANIDAE

Madagascar Jacana *Actophilornis albinucha* A few seen at Lake Ravelobe and also at Lake Ambondromamy. Madagascar endemic.

ROSTRATULIDE

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* Four individuals seen at Lake Ambondromamy.

DROMADIDAE

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* A large flock seen on Nosy Ve.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Several seen at Lake Amboromalandy and surroundings.

GLAREOLIDAE

Madagascar Pratincole *Glareola ocularis* (VU) Several seen at at stop close to a river on our way to Ankarafantsika. Other individual birds seen at rivers along the way on the trip. Madagascar endemic.

CHARADRIIDAE

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* A few seen during our trip in the Nosy Ve–Toliara–Mangily area.

Great Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A few seen during our trip in the Nosy Ve–Toliara–Mangily area.

Madagascar Plover *Charadrius thoracicus* (VU) One seen by a few of us close to Anakao Ocean Lodge, the whole group later saw a male and a female at a site not far from our hotel Vovotelo in Mangily. Madagascar endemic.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Seen in good numbers at various locations.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris bifrontatus* A few seen at various locations during the trip.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus* A few seen during our trip in the Nosy Ve–Toliara–Mangily area.

Greater Sand-Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* A few seen during our trip in the Nosy Ve–Toliara–Mangily area.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Madagascar Snipe *Gallinago macrodactyla* (VU) One individual flushed in a large ricefield near Ranomafana National Park. Another bird seen flying at a swamp when looking for Grey Emutail at the Amboditanimena trail. Madagascar endemic

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* A few seen during our trip in the Nosy Ve–Toliara–Mangily area.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Seen around the larger lakes and aslo a few seen during our trip in the Nosy Ve–Toliara–Mangily area.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucis* Several seen at different wetlands at various sites.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Common on Nosy Ve, also seen on at locations between Toliara and Mangily.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Small flocks seen on Nosy Ve and between Toliara and Mangily.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Several seen at Lake Amboromalandy and also between Toliara and Mangily.

LARIDAE

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus melisandae* One single bird on Nosy Ve.

STERNIDAE

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* Several on Nosy Ve.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Several on Nosy Ve but in less numbers compared to above species.

Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi* One individual on Nosy Ve.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougalli* A few birds seen on Nosy Ve.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Several seen at Lake Amboromalandy.

PTEROCLIDAE

Madagascar Sandgrouse *Ptercoles personatus* Two birds seen close to Toliara. Madagascar endemic.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* Common in towns.

Madagascar Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia picturata* Seen at several occasions at different localities. Madagascar endemic.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis aliena* Common species.

Madagascar Green-Pigeon *Treron australis* A few birds seen in Ankarafantsika and Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Blue-Pigeon *Alectroenas madagascariensis* Seen at several occasions in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

PSITTACIDAE

Grey-headed Lovebird *Agapornis canus* Seen in Ankarafantsika and around Toliara/Mangily but never in any large numbers. Madagascar endemic.

Vasa Parrot *Coracopsis vasa* Seen several times at different locations. Madagascar endemic.

Black Parrot *Coracopsis nigra* Seen several times at different locations. Madagascar endemic.

CUCULIDAE

Madagascar Cuckoo *Cuculus rochii* Heard quite often and also seen at various occasions. Madagascar endemic.

Giant Coua *Coua gigas* After a long search we finally saw one individual very well in the Zombitse Vohibasia National Park. Madagascar endemic.

Coquerel's Coua *Coua coquereli* Several seen very well at Ankarafantsika as well as in the Zombitse Vohibasia National Park. Madagascar endemic.

Red-breasted Coua *Coua serriana* Heard at Mantadia and one individual also seen, however not by all in the group. Madagascar endemic.

Red-fronted Coua *Coua reynaudii* One individual seen very well in Ranomafana, also heard during our walks. Madagascar endemic.

Running Coua *Coua cursor* One individual seen very well in the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

Red-capped Coua *Coua ruficeps* Several individuals seen very well in Ankarafantsika. Madagascar endemic.

Green-capped Coua *Coua (ruficeps) olivaceiceps* One nesting bird in the Spiny Forest seen very well. It is treated as a good species by Sinclair but as a subspecies by other authorities. Madagascar endemic.

Crested Coua *Coua cristata* Several individuals seen very well in Ankarafantsika, Zombitse and the regions around Toliara. Madagascar endemic.

Verreaux's Coua *Coua verreauxi* (NT) One individual seen very well at La Table. Madagascar endemic.

Blue Coua *Coua caerulea* Heard and also seen very well at several occasions, best views in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Coucal *Centropus toulou* Common bird, more often heard than seen. Madagascar endemic.

STRIGIDAE

Rainforest Scops-Owl *Otus rutilus* Responded to our playback at Andasibe but we never managed to see the bird. Madagascar endemic.

Torotoroka Scops-Owl *Otus madagascariensis* One individual seen very well on day roost at Ankarafantiska. Madagascar endemic.

White-browed Hawk-Owl *Ninox superciliaris* Two birds seen very well on day roost in the Zombitse Vohibasia National Park. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Long-eared Owl *Asio madagascariensis* One individual seen very well on day roost at Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis hova*. One individual seen very well when looking for Madagascar Snipe on the rice fields outside the Ranomafana National Park.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Madagascar Nightjar *Caprimulgus madagascariensis* Seen and heard at several occasions at different localities. Madagascar endemic.

Collared Nightjar *Caprimulgus enerratus* One individual seen very well on its nest at Andasibe. Madagascar endemic.

APODIDAE

Madagascar Spinetail *Zoonavena grandidieri* Most birds seen in the Ranomafana area. Madagascar endemic.

African Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus parvus gracilis* Common species.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba willisi* Seen along the way from Ranomafana to Isalo.

Madagascar Swift *Apus balstoni* Seen at various locations during the trip. Madagascar endemic.

ALCEDINIDAE

Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher *Ceyx madagascariensis* Several seen very well in Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Kingfisher *Alcedo vintsioides* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

MEROPIDAE

Olive Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus* Common species.

CORACIIDAE

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus glaucurus* Seen at several locations.

BRACHYPTERACIIDAE

Short-legged Ground-Roller *Brachypteracias leptosomus* (VU) Male and female seen very well at Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Scaly Ground-Roller *Brachypteracias squamiger* (VU) After a long search we finally managed to see this species very well at Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Pitta-like Ground-Roller *Atelornis pittoides* Several individuals seen very well in Mantadia and Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Rufous-headed Ground-Roller *Atelornis crossleyi* (NT) Two individuals seen and several heard at Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Long-tailed Ground-Roller *Uratelornis chimaera* (VU) One individual seen very well in the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

LEPTOSOMATIDAE

Madagascar Cuckoo-Roller *Leptosomus discolor* Seen very well at different locations, especially in the Zombitse Vohibasia National Park. Madagascar endemic.

UPUPIDAE

Madagascar Hoopoe *Upupa marginata* Seen very well at many different locations. Madagascar endemic.

PHILEPITTIDAE

Velvet Asity *Philepitta castanea* Several adult males seen very well at Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Schlegel's Asity *Philepitta schlegeli* (NT) Two adult males and a female seen very well in Ankarafantsika. Madagascar endemic.

Common Sunbird-Asity *Neodrepanis coruscans* One adult male seen very well in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity *Neodrepanis hypoxantha* (VU) Two individuals seen close to a nest in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

VANGIDAE

Red-tailed Vanga *Calicalicus madagascariensis* Seen at several occasions, especially in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Red-shouldered Vanga *Calicalicus rufocarpalis* (VU) One adult male seen very well at La Table from just a couple of metres away. Madagascar endemic.

Hook-billed Vanga *Vanga curvirostris* Few individuals seen at Ankarafantsika and Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Lafresnaye's Vanga *Xenopirostris xenopirostris* In total four individuals seen very well at La Table. Madagascar endemic.

Van Dam's Vanga *Xenopirostris damii* (EN) One pair seen very well in Ankarafantsika. Madagascar endemic.

Pollen's Vanga *Xenopirostris polleni* (NT) A few birds seen well in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Ward's Flycatcher *Pseudobias wardi* One adult male seen in Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Sickle-billed Vanga *Falcolea palliata* Seen very well in Ankarafantsika. Madagascar endemic.

White-headed Vanga *Artamella viridis* Seen very well at different locations, especially in Ankarafantsika. Madagascar endemic.

Chabert Vanga *Leptopterus chabert* The most common Vanga seen on the trip. Madagascar endemic.

Blue Vanga *Cyanolanius madagascariensis* Seen and heard at different locations. Madagascar endemic.

Rufous Vanga *Schetba rufa* Several seen very well in Ankarafantsika. Madagascar endemic.

Tylas Vanga *Tylas eduardi* A few birds seen very well in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Nuthatch Vanga *Hypositta corallirostris* A few birds seen at Andasibe. Madagascar endemic.

Dark Newtonia *Newtonia amphichroa* A few birds seen at Andasibe/Mantadia and also in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Common Newtonia *Newtonia brunneicauda* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

Archbold's Newtonia *Newtonia archboldi* Two individuals seen very well at the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Groundhunter (Crossley's Babbler) *Mystacornis crossleyi* One individual seen very well in Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Madagascar Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina cinerea* Seen very well at different locations. Madagascar endemic.

DICRURIDAE

Crested Drongo *Dicrurus forficatus* Common species.

MONARCHIDAE

Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone mutata* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

CORVIDAE

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Common species.

ALAUDIDAE

Madagascar Lark *Mirafra hova* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Mascarene Martin *Phedina borbonica* Common species.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* A few seen along the way between Toliara and Mangily.

Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola* A few seen at various places during the trip.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Madagascar Bulbul *Hypsipetes madagascariensis* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

ACROCEPHALIDAE

Madagascan Brush-Warbler *Nesillas typica* Common species, heard more often than seen. Madagascar endemic.

Subdesert Brush-Warbler *Nesillas lantzii* Seen very well at La Table and the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Swamp-Warbler *Acrocephalus newtoni* Common species, heard more often than seen. Madagascar endemic.

MEGALURIDAE

Brown Emu-Tail *Dromaeocercus brunneus* One individual seen very well at Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascan Grassbird (Grey Emu-Tail) *Dromaeocercus seebohmi* At least three birds seen at the swamp at Amboditanimena trail in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

BERNIERIDAE

White-throated Oxylabes *Oxylabes madagascariensis* Several individuals seen very well in Andasibe/Mantadia and in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic..

Long-billed Bernieria *Bernieria madagascariensis* Several seen very well in Ankarafantsika, Andasibe/Mantadia and Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Cryptic Warbler *Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi* A few seen in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Wedge-tailed Jery *Hartertula flavoviridis* (NT) A few seen in Andasibe/Mantadia as well as in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Thamnornis Warbler *Thamnornis chloropetoides* Two individuals seen very well in the Spiny Forest. Madagascar endemic.

Spectacled Tetraka *Xanthomixis zosterops* A few birds seen very well in Andasibe/Mantadia as well as in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Appert's Tetraka *Xanthomixis apperti* (VU) In total four individuals seen very well from close distance during our walks in the Zombitse Vohibasia National Park. Madagascar endemic

Grey-crowned Tetraka *Xanthomixis cinereiceps* (NT) A few birds seen in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Yellowbrow *Crossleyia xanthophrys* (NT) A quick and skulking species which we finally managed to see very well in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Rand's Warbler *Randia pseudozosterops* A few seen in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

CISTICOLIDAE

Common Jery *Neomixis tenella* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

Green Jery *Neomixis viridis* A few seen in Andasibe/Mantadia and also in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Stripe-throated Jery *Neomixis striatigula* A few seen in Andasibe/Mantadia and also in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Cisticola *Cisticola cherina* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

TURDIDAE

Forest Rock-Thrush *Monticola sharpei* Heard only in Ranomafana. Madagascar endemic.

Benson's Rock-Thrush *Monticola (s.) bensoni* Several pairs seen well during our visit to Isalo National Park. Considered as a subspecies to Forest Rock Thrush by Clements. Madagascar endemic.

Littoral Rock-Thrush *Monticola imerinus* Several individuals seen very well around Anakao Ocean Lodge. Madagascar endemic

Madagascar Magpie-Robin *Copsychus albospectularis* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquata sibilla* Common species. Split by IOC, "Madagascar Stonechat".

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Madagascar White-Eye *Zosterops maderaspatanus* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

STURNIDAE

Madagascar Starling *Saroglossa aurata* Five individuals seen very well in Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* Common species.

NECTARINIIDAE

Souimanga Sunbird *Cinnyris sovimanga* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

Madagascar Green Sunbird *Cinnyris notatus* Not seen as often as above species but nevertheless seen regularly at various locations. Madagascar endemic.

MOTACILLIDAE

Madagascar Wagtail *Motacilla flaviventris* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

PLOCEIDAE

Nelicourvi Weaver *Ploceus nelicourvi* Seen at various locations during the trip. Madagascar endemic.

Sakalava Weaver *Ploceus sakalava* Seen at various locations during the trip. Madagascar endemic.

Red Fody *Foudia madagascariensis* Common species. Madagascar endemic.

Forest Fody *Foudia omissa* Few individuals seen in Andasibe/Mantadia. Madagascar endemic.

ESTRILDIDAE

Madagascar Munia *Lonchura nana* Common species seen at various locations during the trip. Madagascar endemic.

List of Mammals – by Joakim Johansson

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication : Mammals of Madagascar – A Complete Guide (2007) by Nick Garbutt.

Total species recorded : 33

Commerson's Leaf-Nosed Bat *Hipposideros commersoni*
28/10 1 ex. Ampijoroa.

Lowland Streaked Tenrec *Hemicentetes semispinosus*
1/11 1 ex., 2/11 2 ex. Mantadia.

Eastern Red Forest Rat *Nesomys rufus*
6/11 2 ex. Ranomafana.

Western Tuft-tailed Rat *Eliurus myoxinus*
28/10 1 ex. Ampijoroa.

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*
10/11 1 ex. Tulear.

Fanaloka *Fossa fossana*
4/11 1 ex. Ranomafana.

Grey Mouse Lemur *Microcebus murinus*
28/10 6 ex. Ampijoroa.

Grey-brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus griseorufus*
11/11 1 ex. Tulear.

Brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus rufus*
5/11 6 ex. Ranomafana.

Golden-brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus ravelobensis*
28/10 5 ex. Ampijoroa.

Goodman's Mouse Lemur *Microcebus lehilahytsara*
31/10 2 ex., 1/11 5 ex. Andasibe

Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*
1/11 3 ex. Andasibe.

Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus medius*
28/10 2 ex. Ampijoroa.

Small-toothed Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur microdon*
5/11 1 ex. Ranomafana.

Milne-Edwards's Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur edwardsi*
29/10 1 ex. Ampijoroa.

Hubbard's Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur hubbardi*
8/11 2 ex. Zombitse.

Petter's Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur petteri*
12/11 2 ex. Ifaty.

Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur griseus*
1/11 1 ex. Mantadia, 5/11 3 ex. Ranomafana.

Golden Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur aureus*
4/11 5 ex. Ranomafana.

Greater Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur simus*
5/11 2 ex. Ranomafana.

Ring-tailed Lemur *Lemur catta*
7/11 20 ex. Anja, 7/11 5 ex. Isalo Ranch.

Mongoose Lemur *Eulemur mongoz*
28/10 2 ex. Ampijoroa.

Red-bellied Lemur *Eulemur rubriventer*
2/11 2 ex. Mantadia, 5/11 3 ex. Ranomafana.

Common Brown Lemur *Eulemur fulvus*
We encountered this species on number of occasions in the Ampijoroa and Perinets area.

Red-fronted Brown Lemur *Eulemur rufus*
4/11 9 ex., 5/11 8 ex. Ranomafana.

Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur *Varecia variegata*
1/11 2 ex., 2/11 4 ex. Mantadia, 4/11 heard Ranomafana.

Eastern Avahi *Avahi laniger*
31/10 1 ex. Andasibe.

Western Avahi *Avahi occidentalis*
28/10 3 ex. Ampijoroa.

Diademed Sifaka *Propithecus diadema*
1/11 7 ex. Mantadia.

Milne-Edwards's Sifaka *Propithecus edwardsi*
6/11 heard only Ranomafana.

Verreaux's Sifaka *Propithecus verreauxi*
8/11 15 ex. Zombitse.

Coquerel's Sifaka *Propithecus coquereli*
28/10 12 ex., 29/10 7 ex. Ampijoroa.

Indri *Indri indri*
2/11 5 ex. Mantadia. The territorial calls of this lemur is one of the world's great wildlife sounds.

List of Amphibians and Reptiles – by Joakim Johansson

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

Total species recorded: 50

Malagasy Painted Mantella *Mantella madagascariensis*
6/11 1 ex. Vohiparara.

Boophis madagascariensis
6/11 2 ex Ranomafana.

Boophis liliana
5/11 2 ex Ranomafana.

Boophis rappiodes
5/11 1 ex Ranomafana.

Spotted Madagascar Reed Frog *Heterixalus punctatus*
1/11 1 ex. Andasibe.

Heterixalus betsileo
5/11 1 ex Ranomafana.

Mantidactylus pulcher
5/11 1 ex. Ranomafana.

Ivohimanita Madagascar Frog *Mantidactylus majori*
5/11 3 ex Ranomafana.

Mantidactylus (Gephyromantis) asper
1/11 1 ex Mantadia.

White Madagascar Frog *Mantidactylus (Gephyromantis) luteus*
1/11 1 ex Mantadia.

Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis
5/11 1 ex Ranomafana.

Mascarena Ridge Frog *Ptychadena mascareniensis*
27/11 10 ex. Tana-Betsiboka.

Anodonthyla moramora
5/11 1 ex. Ranomafana.

Spiny Leaf Chameleon *Brookesia decaryi*
7/11 1 ex. Anja.

O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon *Calumma oshaughnessyi*
6/11 1 ex. Ranomafana.

Short-horned Chameleon *Calumma brevicorne*
31/10 2 ex. Andasibe.

Nose-horned Chameleon *Calumma nasuta*
31/10 1 ex. Andasibe.

Jewelled Chameleon *Furcifer lateralis*
2/11 1 ex. Antsirabe.

Warty Chameleon *Furcifer verrucosus*
11/11 1 ex. La Table.

Oustalet's Chameleon *Furcifer oustaleti*
We had numerous sightings during the tour.

Rhinoceros Chameleon *Furcifer rhinocerotus*
28/10 2 ex. Ampijoroa.

Madagascar Iguana *Chalarodon madagascariensis*
8/11 5 ex. Zombitse, 11/11 4 ex Ifaty.

Cuvier's Iguanid *Oplurus cuvieri*
28/10 5 ex. Ampijoroa.

Dumeril's Madagascar Swift *Oplurus quadrimaculatus*
7/11 4 ex. Anja.

Grandidier's Madagascar Swift *Oplurus grandidieri*
7/11 6 ex. Anja.

Mocquard's Dwarf Gecko *Lygodactylus verticillatus*
8/11 1 ex. Zombitse.

Big-headed Gecko *Paroedura pictus*
8/11 1 ex. Zombitse.

Common House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*
We had numerous sightings during the tour.

Farquhar Half-toed Gecko *Hemidactylus mercatorius*
They are common around and in houses.

Brown Day Gecko *Phelsuma mutabilis*
7/11 1 ex. Anja.

Madagascar Day Gecko *Phelsuma madagascariensis*
27/10 2 ex. Blue Vanga Lodge.

Lineated Day Gecko *Phelsuma lineata*
These beautiful day gecko were found at all eastern rainforest sites during the tour.

Peacock Day Gecko *Phelsuma quadriocellata*
5/11 3 ex. Ranomafana.

Standing's Day Gecko *Phelsuma standing*
11/11 1 ex. Ifaty.

Fantastic Leaf-tailed Gecko *Uroplatus phantasicus*
1/11 1 ex. Andasibe.

Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko *Uroplatus sikorae*
1/11 1 ex. Andasibe.

Madagascar Plated Lizard *Zonosaurus madagascarensis*
Good numbers and great views in Andasibe.

Western Girdled Lizard *Zonosaurus laticaudatus*
Good numbers and great views in Ampijoroa.

Ornate Girdled Lizard *Zonosaurus ornatus*
5/11 2 ex. Ranomafana.

Boettger's Mabuya *Trachylepis (Mabuya) boettgeri*
1/11 1 ex. Mantadia.

Elegant Skink *Trachylepis (Mabuya) elegans*
27/10 1 ex. Betsiboka.

Gravenhorst's Skink *Mabuya gravenhorstii*
5/11 2 ex. Ranomafan.

Eastern Madagascar Tree Boa *Sanzinia madagascariensis*
5/11 1 ex. Ranomafana.

Malagasy Cat-eyed Snake *Madagascarophis colubrinus*
7/11 1 ex. Anja, 1 ex. Isalo Ranch.

Common Big-eyed Snake *Mimophis mahfalensis*
28/10 1 ex. Ampijoroa, 9/11 1 ex. La Table.

White-lipped Smooth Snake *Liophidium torquatum*
28/10 1 ex. Amijoroa.

Perinet Night Snake *Ithycyphus perineti*
1/11 1 ex. Andasibe.

Bernier's Striped Snake *Dromicodryas bernieri*
7/11 1 ex. Isalo NP.

Spider Tortoises *Pyxis arachnoides*
10/11 1 ex. Anakao.

Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*
28/10 5 ex. Ampijoroa.

Insects and other bugs – by Joakim Johansson

Golden Orb Spider *Nephila madagascariensis*

Spiny orb-weavers *Gasteracantha versicolor formosa*

Swallowtail Butterfly *Papilio antenor*

Swallowtail Butterfly *papilio oribazus*

Graphium cyrnus

Clouded Mother-of-Pearl *Salamis anacardii duprei*

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

African Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*

Common Leopard *Phalanta phalantha aethiopica*

Junonia goudoti

The Brilliant Blue *Junonia rhadama*

Junonia oenone epiclelia

Precis andremiaja

Precis clelia

Appias sabina confuse

Cupidopsis iobates

Zizeeria knysna

Leptomyrina Phidias

Leptotes pirithous

Belenois grandidieri

Saribia tepahi

White-barred Acraea *Acraea encedon*

Acraea ranavalona

Aterica rabena

The Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica*

Death's-head Hawk-moth *Acherontia atropos*

Balsam Striped Hawk *Hippotion balsaminae*

Cabbage Tree Emperor Moth *Bunaea alcinoe aslauga*

Cheetah *Argina amanda*

The Crimson-speckled Flunkey *Utetheisa pulchella*

Rainbow Milkweed Locust *Phymateus saxosus*

Red Locust *Nomadacris septemfasciata*

Flatid Leaf Bug *Phromnia rosea*

Leafhopper *Madranga segnita*

Leafhopper *Madumbra melancholica*

Beetle *Euryomia argentea*

Jewel beetle *Polybothris zivetta*

Tiger Beetle *Lophyra abbreviata*

Weevil Beetle *Lixus Barbiger*

Giraff-necked Weevil *Trachelophorus giraffe*

Dragonfly *Anax tumorifer*

Dragonfly *Acisoma panorpoides ascalaphoides*

Dragonfly *Trithemis selika*

Dragonfly *Trithemis annulata*

Dragonfly *Thermosthemis madagascariensis*

Dragonfly *Palpopleura vestita*

Dragonfly *Zygonoides lachesis*

Dragonfly *Brachythemis leucosticte*

Dragonfly *Urothemis edwardsii*

Dragonfly *Orthetrum lemu*

Dragonfly *Orthetrum azureum*

Dragonfly *Phaon iridipennis*

Madagascar Hissing Cockroach *Gromphadorhina portentosa*

Madagascar Hissing Cockroach *Gromphadorhina javanica*