

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.
MADAGASCAR
November 1-18, 2007



Madagascar Rail, Red-fronted Brown Lemur, Giant Coua by Adam Riley

Trip report compiled by Victor Emanuel & Adam Riley

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Leaders: Adam Riley and Victor Emanuel

Our November 2007 Madagascar tour was one of our most successful ever. We started at Perinet and Mantadia Reserves east of Tana where we spent five nights at the lovely Vakona Lodge. There we saw a host of species endemic to the rainforests of Madagascar. There were many memorable moments, but some that stand out are our first ground-roller—the stunning Pitta-like Ground-Roller; having a Madagascar Crested Ibis fly right over our group; many interesting chameleons; great looks at a Collared Nightjar that first afternoon; the incredible Blue Vanga—one of the most striking birds in the world; and, best of all, close encounters with both indris and diademed sifakas. The cry of the indri is one of the most amazing animal sounds in the world.

Then it was on to the southwest coast near Tulear. Driving north to Ifaty we were surprised to see a flock of both Great and Lesser frigatebirds. The spiny desert was amazing, surely one of the most interesting habitats in the world. There we saw many great birds and other critters. Most memorable were our good looks at a Subdesert Mesite that our local guides had flushed into a small tree, and great looks at the Long-tailed Ground-Roller, one of the most bizarre birds in the world. Neither Adam Riley nor I had ever seen the spiny desert so green.

Returning to Tulear, we took a boat trip to Nosy Ve to see the nesting Red-tailed Tropicbirds and other species. En route we saw a pair of Littoral Rock-Thrushes. On a small sand bar off the island, Adam spotted an adult Sooty Gull, the second record for Madagascar for this species, which is found mainly in the Red Sea area. This is the same place where Adam found the first Madagascar record two years ago. The most amazing part of this boat trip was how we boarded the boat and how we disembarked. Since there is no dock in Tulear, and since the tide was out, we climbed into zebu-drawn oxcarts that traveled about 100 yards into the bay, with water up to the bellies of the zebu, in order to reach the boat.

Our final destination was the private reserve of Berenty where we saw many ring-tailed lemurs and Verreaux's sifakas, two of the most striking lemurs. There we also saw more endemics including the wonderful Giant Coua and the lovely Madagascar Sandgrouse.

We had a most congenial group and a very successful trip to this remarkable island.

Top 10 Trip List as Voted by Participants:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Giant Coua | 6. Cuckoo-Roller |
| 2. Pitta-like Ground-Roller | 7. Madagascar Crested Ibis |
| 3. Sub-desert Mesite | 8. Scaly Ground-Roller |
| 4. Red-shouldered Vanga | 9. Crab Plover |
| 5. Sickle-billed Vanga | 10. Lesser Frigatebird |

KEY:

ENDEMISM

E: an endemic species

NE: a near-endemic species (i.e. occurring in the Malagasy region only)

BE: a breeding endemic species

I: an introduced species

e: an endemic subspecies

ne: a near-endemic subspecies

be: a breeding endemic subspecies

CONSERVATION STATUS

C: critical

En: endangered

V: vulnerable

NT: near-threatened

BIRDS

Grebes Podicipedidae

Little Grebe (Dabchick) *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Over fifty of these widespread birds were encountered at lakes on the road between Tulear and Ifaty.

Madagascar (Little Grebe) (E) (V) *Tachybaptus pelzelinii*

A lovely brightly plumaged pair were seen well on a small lake at Mantadia and 4 individuals in non-breeding plumage were at surprise on our last afternoon at Lake Alarobia

NOTE: Globally threatened and declining due to habitat loss, introduction of exotic fish, and competition (and possibly hybridisation) with Little Grebe.

Tropicbirds Phaethontidae

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*

We enjoyed intimate encounters with these most elegant birds, including sightings of at least 30 birds, some adults with young fledglings and many sub-adults, on the island of Nosy Ve.

Frigatebirds Fregatidae

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*

Seldom observed in Madagascar, we were very fortunate to find a flock of five soaring frigatebirds near Ifaty. Both sexes of both species were represented and we had great views as they sailed right over our heads

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

Seldom observed in Madagascar, we were very fortunate to find a flock of five soaring frigatebirds near Ifaty. Both sexes of both species were represented and we had great views as they sailed right over our heads

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

Gray Heron (ne) *Ardea cinerea*

Only in western wetlands, where seen on coastal mudflats and nesting on cliffs near the Onilahy River mouth.

Humblot's (Madagascar) Heron (E) (V) *Ardea humbloti*

This large heron was also seen on coastal mudflats between Ifaty and Tulear and again nesting on the cliffs near the Onilahy River mouth.

NOTE: A globally threatened species, essentially restricted to Madagascar but with vagrant records elsewhere.

Purple Heron (e) *Ardea purpurea*

Small numbers were seen near wetlands in the Perinet area.

Great (White) Egret *Ardea alba*

Small numbers at wetlands and rice paddies throughout, with a highest total of 30 nesting at Lake Alarobia in Tana.

Black Heron (Egret) *Egretta ardesiaca*

First seen at Lake Anosy in central Tana where we watched their curious umbrella-feeding technique. A single was also seen at Berenty and at Lake Alarobia we found 30 birds on the island.

Little (Dimorphic/Mascarene Reef) Egret (NE) *Egretta garzetta dimorpha*

Widespread and common throughout Madagascar. First seen at Tsimbazaza Zoo where they breed – both dark and white forms were observed. Birds seen inland were predominantly of the white morph and about 70% of coastal birds were dark morph.

NOTE: The latest Clements checklist still considers this distinctive form a subspecies of Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta dimorpha*) although it is usually split as a separate species which is endemic to Madagascar and surrounding islands.

(Common) Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Widespread and common in a variety of wetland habitats across the island, from rice paddies to tidal mudflats. Highest number was the estimated 100 roosting and breeding at Lake Alarobia, including many in magnificent nuptial plumage.

Madagascar Pond-Heron (BE) (V) *Ardeola idea*

The first sightings near Fort Dauphin and Berenty but the highest total (10+) from Lake Alarobia, where we watched a mother with young chicks on the nest.

NOTE: A regional endemic breeder that is considered vulnerable and declining due to competition with Squacco Heron.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Common throughout and recorded almost daily in open and semi-open habitats. Large numbers also seen at Lake Alarobia. One of the memorable sightings of the tour was a flock of Cattle Egrets feeding on a locust swarm at Berenty.

Striated (Green-backed) Heron (ne) *Butorides striatus*

Small numbers at most freshwater and marine wetlands, brackish marshes between Tulear and Ifaty, the tidal mudflats in Tulear Harbour and in the rice paddies on the way to Perinet. First seen at Lake Anosy in Tana.

NOTE: Represented in Madagascar by the race *B. s. rutenbergi*, which tends to be darker than its African counterpart, with a reddish neck reminiscent of the American *B. virens* (Green Heron).

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Common in wetlands around Tana and up to 50 recorded during the afternoon visit to Tsimbazaza Zoo. Numbers also seen at Lake Alarobia.

Little Bittern (e) *Ixobrychus minutus*

This species represented in Madagascar by an endemic subspecies is seldom encountered and we were fortunate to see a male at a wetland near Perinet.

Hamerkop Scopidae

Hamerkop (e) *Scopus umbretta*

Small numbers in roadside rice paddies on the drives to and from Tana and Perinet.

Storks Ciconiidae

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus*

We were fortunate to find one at Lake Alarobia. This out of range individual has been roosting at this site for several years.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Madagascar Crested (White-winged) Ibis (E) (NT) *Lophotibis cristata*

We enjoyed incredible views of one in Perinet Special Reserve as it swooped right over our heads. Thanks to Victor for spotting it and Patrice and Fidy for herding it to us!

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

Large numbers were recorded at freshwater wetlands around Tana (300 at Lake Alarobia) and smaller numbers in the west.

Comb (Knob-billed) Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

two seen at Berenty with closer views of another two at Lake Alarobia.

Red-billed Duck (Teal) *Anas erythrorhyncha*

Widespread in freshwater wetlands across the island. Peak numbers were of 20 at Lake Alarobia. Ten were also seen at Berenty.

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*

Not particularly common. One at Lake Alarobia, six near Tulear.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites Accipitridae

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk (E) *Aviceda madagascariensis*

This scarce bird was seen well flying towards the group at Perinet.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

This Palaearctic species is rare and very localized in Madagascar. We recorded 1 at Berenty which afforded superb views, right from the restaurant.

[Yellow-billed Kite] *Milvus [migrans] parasitus*

Common and conspicuous in open habitats, particularly in the west. Small numbers seen at the roadside on most road journeys with up to 30 seen at Berenty.

NOTE: This Afrotropical and Malagasy breeder is generally considered a separate species from Black Kite and recent genetic research has verified this. However the latest edition of Clements still lumps the two forms.

Madagascar Harrier-Hawk (E) *Polyboroides radiatus*

Singles seen distantly at Mantadia and Ifaty but superb scope views of a subadult were enjoyed at Berenty.

Frances' Goshawk (Sparrowhawk) (NEe) *Accipiter francesii*

Flip spotted our first at Perinet and we had another 3 sightings in the same area.

Madagascar Sparrowhawk (E) (NT) *Accipiter madagascariensis*

We were extremely fortunate to encounter this rare species at Berenty. We had crippling views of one perched at close quarters in the riverine woodland.

Madagascar Buzzard (E) *Buteo brachypterus*

Common and widespread, with small numbers recorded from almost all wooded sites. Seen almost daily at Perinet and Mantadia with our best sightings of nesting birds in the Ifaty area.

Falcons & Caracaras Falconidae

Madagascar (Newton's) Kestrel (NEe) *Falco newtoni*

Common in open and semi-open habitats throughout. Recorded almost daily, regularly at the roadside and at most birding sites with highest count of six at Berenty.

Banded Kestrel (E) *Falco zoniventris*

This scarce endemic was spotted by Bill and we enjoyed scope views of this unusual raptor.

Guineafowl Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl (I) *Numida meleagris*

We encountered a few small flocks at Berenty.

NOTE: This African species was probably introduced to Madagascar by early colonists.

Mesites Mesitornithidae

Subdesert Mesite (E) (V) *Monias benschi*

An early morning start enabled us to locate this elusive species in the Spiny Desert at Ifaty. We all enjoyed exceptional scope views of a very obliging male.

Buttonquails Turnicidae

Madagascar Buttonquail (E) *Turnix nigricollis*

We enjoyed superb sightings of these cute birds in the spiny desert at Ifaty and coral rag scrub of La Tabla.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae

Madagascar Flufftail (E) *Sarothrura insularis*

A species which always proves particularly elusive. A stunning male did show several times at Mantadia for those who were looking at the right spot at the right time! Many more were heard calling.

Madagascar Wood Rail (E) *Canirallus kioloides kioloides*

Excellent views were had at Perinet of a pair crossing the trail in front of us on several occasions. Briefer views were had at Mantadia.

Madagascar Rail (E) *Rallus madagascariensis*

We had superb views of a single adult at a wetland near Vakona Lodge.

White-throated (Cuvier's) Rail (NEe) *Dryolimnas cuvieri*

We were treated to superb views of a pair from the bridge at Perinet. This species was also heard calling on several occasions.

NOTE: Some authorities consider the nominate Madagascar race of this bird as distinctive from the near-flightless Aldabra Island race, making this another endemic rallid to Madagascar.

Common Moorhen (ne) *Gallinula chloropus*

Small numbers were seen at Perinet and Lake Alarobia.

Painted-Snipes *Rostratulidae*

Greater Painted-Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

A single male was flushed from a wetland near Tulear, affording our whole group good views. Ian made a valiant effort at another site but we were rewarded in the end.

Crab Plover *Dromadidae*

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*

This distinctive and unusual wader was first located (after a disappearing trick) between Tulear and Ifaty where we eventually noted four birds. A dozen on Nosy Ve island afforded better and closer views.

Stilts & Avocets *Recurvirostridae*

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Recorded in the Ifaty and Tulear regions, both coastal and inland. A family with chicks were noted on our return to Tulear.

Pratincoles & Coursers *Glareolidae*

Madagascar Pratincole (BE) *Glareola ocularis*

Only Flip was fortunate enough to spot this species from the bridge on the Mangoro River *en route* to Perinet.

Plovers & Lapwings *Charadriidae*

Black-bellied (Gray) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

This species was fairly common on tidal flats around Ifaty (40+ counted).

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Small numbers seen on the mudflats and salt pans around Ifaty.

Madagascar Plover (E) (NT) *Charadrius thoracicus*

3 individuals of this scarce, localised endemic were observed at close quarters at a grassy plain in Ifaty, thanks to Bob's spotting skills.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*

Largest numbers recorded at brackish lakes near Ifaty with 20 birds being seen.

Three-banded Plover (e) *Charadrius tricollaris*

Recorded in small numbers at several sites including the lakes between Tulear and Ifaty.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

Our first sighting was of a single at Ifaty but our best views were of a group of 4 on the island of Nosy Ve.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultia*

A dozen were found on the Ifaty-Tulear mudflats.

Sandpipers & Allies *Scolopacidae*

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Two birds were seen on the tidal mudflats approximately halfway between Tulear and Ifaty.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

This species was fairly common on tidal flats around Tulear and Ifaty where we saw up to 100 on a single day.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Another common wader, easily seen at the mudflats and lakes in the Ifaty area as well as at Berenty and Nosy Ve.

Terek Sandpiper *Tringa cinerea*

We had superb views on the tidal flats near Ifaty, a dozen birds were counted.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*

Small numbers in freshwater and brackish wetland habitats throughout. First noted on the Mangoro River.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Fairly common on tidal flats around Tulear and Ifaty where up to 20 were seen daily.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Our first sighting was of two on the tidal flats around Ifaty with more seen in the same area and on Nosy Ve.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A pair seen briefly at the lakes between Tulear and Ifaty.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Many seen in the Tulear/Ifaty area.

Gulls *Laridae*

Sooty Gull *Larus hemrichii*

We were once again very fortunate to find this incredible vagrant to Madagascar on Nosy Ve. The first record was two years previously at the same site. It was not present in 2006 nor during October 2007.

Terns *Sternidae*

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

More than 200 were present on the island of Nosy Ve.

Greater Crested (Swift) Tern *Sterna bergii*

Smaller numbers were seen at Ifaty and Nosy Ve.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Ten birds were seen on the sandbar near Nosy Ve together with the previous two species.

Sandgrouse *Pteroclididae*

Madagascar Sandgrouse (E) *Pterocles personatus*

After long, patient watching along the Mandrare River in Berenty, we managed to locate about 15 birds foraging in dry fields, where we enjoyed great scope views of this huge sandgrouse.

Pigeons & Doves *Columbidae*

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (I) *Columba livia*

Widespread in urban areas.

Madagascar Turtle Dove (NEe) *Columba picturata*

First seen at Tsimbazaza Zoo, with numerous subsequent sightings at almost all sites. Particularly tame and conspicuous at Berenty.

Namaqua (Long-tailed) Dove (e) *Oena capensis*

Widespread and common in drier areas, with highest totals of 20 during the day from the Ifaty area.

Madagascar Green Pigeon (NEe) *Treron australis*

We had a hard time finding this species before Mosa located a single bird in a fruiting tree and we then enjoyed stunning scope views.

Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E) *Alectroenas madagascariensis*

This beautiful bird is fairly common in eastern rainforest, and we had superb views almost daily in Perinet and Mantadia.

Macaws, Parrots & Allies *Psittacidae*

Gray-headed Lovebird (E) *Agapornis canus*

After frustrations of only seeing quick flyby's (Victor postulated that this "race" even nesting in the air") we finally enjoyed superb scope views at Ifaty with further sightings to the south and at Berenty.

(Greater) Vasa Parrot (NEe) *Coracopsis vasa*

The eastern subspecies is much less common than Lesser Vasa Parrot in the rainforest biome but we did finally enjoy scope views in Mantadia. The western subspecies was observed in small numbers at Ifaty.

Black (Lesser Vasa) Parrot (NEe) *Coracopsis nigra*

A widespread and fairly common bird and exceedingly vocal. Many seen at Perinet, Mantadia and Berenty.

Cuckoos *Cuculidae*

Madagascar (Lesser) Cuckoo (BE) *Cuculus rochii*

Very common and one of the dominant sounds in wooded and semi-wooded habitats throughout. We had great views at Perinet and Mantadia.

Giant Coua (E) *Coua gigas*

A single bird that behaved exceptionally well for us at Berenty, as it called and strolled about at close quarters, was voted bird of the tour. An impressive beast indeed!

Red-breasted Coua (E) *Coua serriana*

This species was heard calling on several occasions at Perinet and Mantadia. One pair came in close at the latter site but awarded little more than brief glimpses and shaking vegetation

Red-fronted Coua (E) *Coua reynaudii*

Usually not a tough bird to find, we heard many calling but for some reason they were unresponsive. On our final morning however, a single was observed by some of the group on the main trail at Perinet.

Red-capped [Green-capped] Coua (E) *Coua ruficeps olivaceiceps*

A single bird was observed at close quarters in the spiny desert around Ifaty.

NOTE: This southern, khaki-capped form of Red-capped Coua is considered to be a full species in Sinclair I. and Langrande O. *Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands* however many other authorities consider this form to be a subspecies of Red-capped Coua.

Running Coua (E) *Coua cursor*

Again, a single was seen at close quarters at Ifaty.

Crested Coua (E) *Coua cristata*

Commonly seen around Ifaty and Berenty.

Verreaux's Coua (E) (NT) *Coua verreauxi*

We eventually had great views of this rare and localised species in coral rag scrub on La Table. The most localised member of this endemic sub-family. Two were seen in total.

Blue Coua (E) *Coua caerulea*

Fairly common in the eastern rain forests of Perinet and Mantadia. A total of seven were seen with many heard calling.

Madagascar Coucal (NEe) *Centropus toulou*

Common, widespread and recorded in small numbers virtually daily during our tour. The first sighting was at Perinet, and recorded from deciduous forest, reedbeds, secondary growth, primary rainforest and spiny desert and all habitats in between!!

Typical Owls *Strigidae*

Malagasy (Rainforest) Scops-Owl (NEe) *Otus rutilus*

This recently split form of the Madagascar Scops Owl was located on a day roost by Patrice in Perinet, where we all enjoyed superb views.

Torotoroka Scops-Owl (E) *Otus madagascariensis*

This new species of Scops-Owl (pronounced “Toorootoorook”, an onomatopoeic name) was seen at Berenty, during the day, what a cutie!

NOTE: These Scops-Owls have recently been split, based on morphological and vocal differences and habitat preferences.

White-browed (Madagascar Hawk) Owl (E) *Ninox superciliaris*

We all enjoyed fantastic views of these spectacular owls during our stay at Berenty, and they were very vocal around the cabins.

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

We had great views of an adult at Perinet Special Reserve, just after sunset. We were very lucky to find this species that most groups missed this season.

Nightjars *Caprimulgidae*

Collared Nightjar (E) *Caprimulgus enarratus*

One of our very first rainforest ticks: we had incredible views of a bird roosting during the day in Perinet Special Reserve. This is a rare endemic restricted to the eastern rain forest belt.

Madagascar Nightjar (NEe) *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

The common nightjar on Madagascar. First seen at Perinet with many more at most other localities, a species that called frequently in the evenings. Best views were of an adult and juvenile on a day roost at Ifaty.

Swifts *Apodidae*

Madagascar Spinetail (NEe) *Zoonavena grandidieri*

Common in the rain forests where seen daily. Peak numbers of ten birds were seen in Mantadia NP.

Alpine Swift (e) *Tachymarptis melba*

We were fortunate to see two flying over the forest at Perinet Special Reserve.

Madagascar (Black) Swift (NE) *Apus balstoni*

First encountered at the Onilahy Cliffs where about 50 birds were swooping about.

NOTE: These Malagasy birds are usually considered a species distinct from the African Black Swift (*A. barbatus*), however no dedicated research has been done.

Kingfishers *Alcedinidae*

Malagasy (Madagascar Malachite/Diademed) Kingfisher (NEe) *Alcedo vintsioides*

Fairly common at freshwater and marine wetlands throughout. First recorded at Tsimbazaza Zoo with best sightings from Lake Alarobia

Madagascar Pygmy-Kingfisher (E) *Ispidina madagascariensis*

This attractive endemic was seen twice at Perinet where we had stunning views.

Bee-eaters *Meropidae*

Madagascar (Olive) Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*

Common, widespread in semi-open areas and recorded from almost all sites. Our first sightings were at Mantadia.

Rollers *Coraciidae*

Broad-billed Roller (be) *Eurystomus glaucurus*

Widespread and common breeding migrant from the African mainland. First recorded at Mantadia where we enjoyed excellent views.

Ground-Rollers *Brachypteraciidae*

Short-legged Ground-Roller (E) (V) *Brachypteracias leptosomus*

The most difficult of the Ground-Rollers to find and we were extremely fortunate to have superb views of a pair in Mantadia. This was just reward after walking up and down steep ridges, tangling with vines and negotiating the stream crossings.

Scaly Ground-Roller (E) (V) *Brachypteracias squamigera*

Another elusive and retiring species. We had fabulous scope views of what can only be described as an awesome bird, especially as it was in full song. A scarce and secretive bird, formerly considered to be restricted to the forests of the Masoala Peninsula. We found a pair in Mantadia NP.

Pitta-like Ground-Roller (E) *Atelornis pittoides*

Again, we enjoyed stunning views of one in Mantadia NP. Despite being the commonest of the ground-rollers, this magnificent creature is justifiably one of the most sought-after birds on Madagascar.

Rufous-headed Ground-Roller (E) (NT) *Atelornis crossleyi*

This ridgetop species proved too elusive for us this time. We did hear it calling in Perinet and it approached quite close to our group, but unfortunately did not reward us with a sighting.

Long-tailed Ground-Roller (E) (V) *Uratelornis chimaera*

We enjoyed superb views of one in the Spiny Desert at Ifaty.

Cuckoo-Rollers *Leptosomidae*

(Madagascar) Cuckoo-Roller (E) *Leptosomus discolour*

This is a surprisingly large bird. Spectacular in every way, a great call, magnificent flight action and a beautiful bird. Excellent scope views were had in Perinet, Mantadia and right at Vakona Lodge, where four were seen in total.

NOTE: Some authorities such as Sinclair I. and Langrande O., consider the Comores form of this bird to be a separate species from that occurring in Madagascar.

Hoopoes *Upupidae*

Madagascar Hoopoe (E) *Upupa marginalis*

Recorded at all western sites, including daily sightings at the Spiny Desert at Ifaty and Berenty. Our first was at Tsimbazaza Zoo in Tana.

NOTE: This form is usually considered distinct from the African Hoopoe, based on vocal and morphological differences.

Asities *Philepittidae*

Velvet Asity (E) *Philepitta castanea*

A male gave us only a brief flyby (right through our group!) in Mantadia, but we enjoyed prolonged and very close views of a female in Perinet.

Common Sunbird Asity (E) *Neodrepanis coruscans*

Several birds were active at a clearing in Mantadia, but as always, these tiny birds were exceptionally quick and not everyone managed to lock onto one.

Larks *Alaudidae*

Madagascar (Hova) Lark (E) *Mirafra hova*

A numerous species in the dry areas around Tulear and Ifaty.

Swallows *Hirundinidae*

Plain (Brown-throated) Martin (e) *Riparia paludicola*

A single seen at the marshes near Vakona

Mascarene Martin (NEbe) *Phedina borbonica*

This a regional breeding endemic. Easily found around Tana and elsewhere.

Wagtails & Pipits *Motacillidae*

Madagascar Wagtail (E) *Motacilla flaviventris*

Common in the east and highland plateau, where seen daily in small numbers. First sightings were at Tsimbazaza Zoo.

Cuckoo-shrikes *Campephagedae*

Ashy (Madagascar) Cuckoo-shrike (NEe) *Coracina cinerea*

This eastern forest form of the cuckoo-shrike was seen at Mantadia and Perinet Special Reserve.

Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae*

Long-billed Greenbul (E) *Phyllastrephus madagascariensis*

Widespread in eastern forests of Madagascar. This form was first encountered in small numbers at Mantadia NP but more commonly encountered in Perinet Special Reserve.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Spectacled Greenbul (E) *Phyllastrephus zosterops*

Restricted to eastern forests, where it is the commonest of the “small greenbuls”. Small numbers seen and many heard in Mantadia NP and Perinet

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Gray-crowned Greenbul (E) (NT) *Phyllastrephus cinereiceps*

Uncommon in eastern rainforest, mainly at altitudes above the range of Spectacled Greenbul.

We were very fortunate to have long observations of a pair with a young feeding in their typical nuthatch manner in Mantadia NP.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Madagascar Bulbul (NEe) *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

Common and ubiquitous, with daily sightings in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats. First seen between Tana and Perinet.

Thrushes & Allies *Turdidae*

Littoral Rock Thrush (E) *Pseudocossyphus imerinus*

A pair were found in dune scrub at Anakao and even a nest with three chicks was pointed out to us by the lodge manageress. A most peculiar habitat for a Rock Thrush.

Cisticolas & Allies *Cisticolidae*

Madagascar Cisticola (NE) *Cisticola cherinus*

Common in open habitats throughout, including rice paddies and the man-altered plateau grasslands as well as on the island of Nosy Ve.

Old World Warblers *Sylviidae*

Gray Emu-tail (E) *Dromaeocercus seebohmi*

A very primed pair were found at Ampatsimpotsy marsh near Perinet and we were very fortunate to watch the full aerial display as well as observe the strange tail feathers of this usually secretive species.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species may belong in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Madagascar Brush-Warbler (NEe) *Nesillas typica*

Very common in dense cover of any kind in the east, where it was recorded daily. First seen well in Perinet special reserve.

Sub-desert Brush Warbler (E) *Nesillas lantzii*

Replaces Madagascar Brush Warbler in the South West, where common: Many encountered in the Spiny Desert area around Ifaty.

NOTE: Formerly considered conspecific with Madagascar Brush Warbler but vocally distinct and sympatric with that species near Fort Dauphin.

Thamnornis (Warbler) (E) *Thamnornis chloropetoides*

Three seen in the Spiny Desert near Ifaty, one of which perched out allowing stunning views.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Madagascar Swamp Warbler (E) *Acrocephalus newtoni*

Fairly common in wetland habitat throughout, ranging from highland marshes in the east to reedbeds in the west. First seen at en route to Perinet.

Rand's Warbler (E) *Randia pseudozosterops*

Fairly common denizen of eastern rainforest, with small numbers seen/heard daily in the Perinet and Mantadia areas. A bird vocalising from a typical treetop perch in Perinet was the first seen.

Dark Newtonia (E) *Newtonia amphichroa*

One was seen briefly in Mantadia NP.

NOTE: Latest DNA evidence indicates that this species is actually a vanga.

Common Newtonia (E) *Newtonia brunneicauda*

Common and widespread in wooded and semi-wooded habitat throughout. The first seen was at Perinet.

NOTE: Latest DNA evidence indicates that this species is actually a vanga.

Archbold's Newtonia (E) *Newtonia archboldi*

2 were seen at close quarters in the Spiny Desert near Ifaty.

NOTE: Latest DNA evidence indicates that this species is actually a vanga.

Cryptic Warbler (E) *Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi*

This recently described species was observed singing from its treetop perch at Mantadia NP.

Unfortunately it was displaced by a Black Parrot never to return!

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*

Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E) *Copsychus albospecularis*

This particularly tame and confiding species was observed on numerous occasions in all woodland habitat from rainforest at Perinet, to spiny desert at Ifaty and gallery woodland at Berenty.

African Stonechat (e) *Saxicola axillaries*

Common in open habitats of the eastern highlands, where several seen daily.

Wattle-eyes *Platysteiridae*

Ward's Flycatcher (E) *Pseudobias wardi*

Fairly common in the Perinet and Mantadia areas, where seven were seen.

NOTE: Latest DNA evidence indicates that this species is actually a vanga.

Monarch Flycatchers *Monarchidae*

Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher (NEe) *Terpsiphone mutata*

Common and widespread in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats. First recorded at Perinet, with subsequent sightings almost daily of both rufous and white phases.

Babblers *Timaliidae*

Common Jerry (E) *Neomixis tenella*

Common and ubiquitous. "Tom and Jerry's" were first seen in Perinet and recorded daily throughout the trip.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Green Jerry (E) *Neomixis viridis*

Fairly common in eastern forests, where small numbers recorded daily. First seen at Perinet Special Reserve with further sightings at Mantadia.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Stripe-throated Jery (E) *Neomixis striatigula*

This species' scratchy call is a common background noise in the rain forests and spiny desert. It was seen in the Perinet and Mantadia forests as well as Ifaty and La Table.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Wedge-tailed Jery (E) (NT) *Hartertula flavoviridis*

An uncommon and elusive endemic of eastern forests. We were very fortunate to all enjoy good views of a responsive bird in Mantadia NP.

White-throated Oxylabes (E) *Oxylabes madagascariensis*

Fairly common endemic of the understory of eastern rainforest, although nearly always difficult to see. Brief but excellent views of a pair with a young were had at Perinet Special Reserve.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Crossley's Babbler (E) *Mystacornis crossleyi*

We enjoyed incredible views of a single bird calling at close range in Perinet.

NOTE: Latest DNA evidence indicates that this species is actually a vanga.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters *Nectariniidae*

Souimanga Sunbird (NE) *Nectarinia souimanga*

By far the more common of Madagascar's two sunbird species, occurring in a variety of wooded and semi-wooded habitats. First encountered at the Mangoro River and thereafter seen daily.

Madagascar (Long-billed Green) Sunbird (NEe) *Nectarinia notata*

A very handsome and widespread but uncommon species. Four of these birds were found in Perinet and Mantadia forests, with our first sightings also at the Mangoro River.

White-eyes *Zosteropidae*

Madagascar White-eye (NE) *Zosterops maderaspatana*

Common and widespread, though scarce in the south-west. First sightings at Perinet and seen at all localities except around Tulear/Ifaty.

Vangas *Vangidae*

Red-tailed Vanga (E) *Calicalicus madagascariensis*

A fairly common and regularly encountered denizen of wooded and semi-wooded habitats, particularly once its "wolf-whistle" call is recognised. This species was seen or heard daily in the Perinet and Mantadia areas, as well as Ifaty.

Red-shouldered Vanga (E) (V) *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*

We enjoyed superb close studies of a pair of this recently described and highly localised endemic, in "coral rag" scrub on La Table. This species can be particularly hard to find and we were very fortunate to get such good views.

Hook-billed Vanga (E) *Vanga curvirostris*

This often heard and infrequently observed species was seen well at Ifaty.

Lafresnaye's Vanga (E) *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*

This large species was seen very well in the Spiny Desert at Ifaty where we saw two birds.

Sickle-billed Vanga (E) *Falcullea palliate*

One of Madagascar's GREAT birds and wonderfully common in the dry west. Several birds were noted and one on the nest seen particularly well in the Spiny Desert at Ifaty. Others were also observed at Berenty.

White-headed Vanga (E) *Artamella viridis*

The more uncommon eastern forest subspecies of this attractive vanga was observed nesting at Perinet Special Reserve. A hardworking pair were feeding three hungry chicks. The western subspecies was briefly seen at Ifaty.

Chabert Vanga (E) *Leptopterus chabert*

The commonest vanga, occurring in habitats ranging from pristine rainforest to degraded scrub. First seen at Perinet and an active nest was located close to Vakona Lodge. The southern sub-desert race is morphologically and vocally distinct from the nominate and may represent a different species. It was observed during our excursions into the Spiny Desert at Ifaty

(Madagascar) Blue Vanga ([N]E) *Cyanolanius madagascarinus*

Our first encounter with this species was of a pair at Perinet. Several others were heard and seen in Perinet and Mantadia NP.

NOTE: Sinclair I. and Langrande O., consider the Comoros race of this species to be distinct, resulting in the Madagascar Blue Vanga being another Madagascar endemic. This stance is not widely accepted.

Tylas (Vanga) (E) *Tylas eduardi*

A total of 4 seen and many more heard in Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia NP.

Coral-billed Nuthatch (Vanga) (E) *Hypositta corallirostris*

A peculiar and localised eastern rainforest endemic that was high on everyone's want list. This bird held out until our very last outing when we enjoyed superb and prolonged views of a calling adult.

NOTE: Recent DNA evidence indicates that this species belongs in a new family: The Madagascar Warblers (*Bernieridae*)

Drongos *Dicruridae*

Crested Drongo (NEe) *Dicrurus forficatus*

Common and highly conspicuous in a variety of wooded habitats throughout. First seen on the road between Tana and Perinet.

Crows & Jays *Corvidae*

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Common and widespread in open habitats with particularly high numbers seen at Berenty.

Starlings *Sturnidae*

Madagascar Starling (E) *Hartlaubius aurata*

This species was first seen Mantadia at, with further sightings at Perinet.

Common Myna (I) *Acridotheres tristis*

Common in open habitats throughout the island.

Weavers Ploceidae

Nelicourvi Weaver (E) *Ploceus nelicourvi*

Fairly common in eastern rainforest areas, where small numbers were seen on most days. First seen well in Perinet on a nest. Others were observed at Mantadia and Vakona.

Sakalava Weaver (E) *Ploceus sakalava*

Abundant in the dry south, where recorded in large numbers in the Tulear-Ifaty area.

(Madagascar) Red Fody (E) *Foudia madagascariensis*

Common, ubiquitous and good numbers recorded almost daily.

Forest Fody (E) *Foudia omissa*

One male was seen in Mantadia, it provided great views. Later a second was only a fly-by. A bird that is decreasing in numbers due to habitat loss and interbreeding with the previous species.

Waxbills Estrildidae

Madagascar Mannikin (Munia) (E) *Lonchura nana*

Fairly common throughout. First recorded in Perinet with our best sightings near Tulear.

MAMMALS

ORDER: Lypotyphla

Family Tenrecidae (Tenrecs)

Lowland Streaked Tenrec *Hemicentetes semispinosus*

We were very fortunate that Patrice found a specimen of this aberrant creature during the day in Perinet reserve. One of the trip highlights for Ian and many others!

ORDER: Chiroptera

Family Pteropodidae (Old World Fruit Bats)

Madagascar Flying Fox *Pteropus rufus*

We enjoyed long scope studies of approximately 30 of these handsome but noisy animals at their day roost in the gallery woodland at Berenty.

ORDER: Primates

Family Cheirogaleidae (Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs)

Gray-brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus griseorufus*

Two of these tiny lemurs were seen well in the spiny desert at Berenty.

Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*

We had fantastic views of these delightful creatures feeding right outside a lodge at Perinet.

Family Megaladapidae (Sportive Lemurs)

Hubbard's Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur hubbardi*

This was presumably the species we found at a day roost in the spiny desert of Ifaty. Species limits have not been finalised in this group of lemurs.

White-footed Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur leucopus*

Superb views of one of these cute lemurs was had at a day roost in Berenty.

Family Lemuridae ("True" Lemurs)

Eastern Gray Bamboo Lemur *Haplemur griseus*

We were lucky to observe several groups of these often shy lemurs in Perinet and Mantadia NP.

Ring-tailed Lemur *Lemur catta*

The quintessential Malagasy mammal. We enjoyed prolonged encounters with numerous groups of these delightful animals, the most terrestrial of the lemurs, at Berenty. We estimated numbers of 100+ during our full day.

Common Brown Lemur *Eulemur fulvus*

Small numbers were seen daily in Perinet Special Reserve and we enjoyed wonderful encounters with these cute animals.

Red-fronted Brown Lemur *Eulemur rufus*

A very common and conspicuous lemur at Berenty (where introduced), and an estimated 50 were encountered.

Family Indriidae (*Avahis*, *Sifakas* and *Indri*)

Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur) *Avahi laniger*

Three adults and a young were found in Perinet at a day roost and we stayed with them until it was time for them to wake up and begin foraging, a wonderful experience indeed!

Diademed Sifaka *Propithecus diadema*

We had outstanding encounters with this magnificent creature in Perinet and Mantadia NP. First we found the relocated male in Perinet that afforded great views and later we located another individual hidden deep in a thicket in Mantadia. Widely considered to be Madagascar's most beautiful primate, this is also the largest of the lemurs, with a number of specimens heavier than the largest Indri on record (Mittermeier et al 1994).

Verreaux's Sifaka *Propithecus verreaux*

This magnificent primate, with its soulful expressions and comical, bipedal locomotion, is undoubtedly one of the mammalian highlights of Madagascar. Common in Berenty, where up to 30 were seen.

Indri *Indri indri*

We had fantastic experiences with this incredible lemur. Our first sighting was of a small family group consisting of 4 adults for an extended period during the middle of the day, at Perinet Special Reserve. 2 more were seen in Perinet. The territorial calls of this lemur, often considered the largest extant species (but see Diademed Sifaka, above), is one of the world's great wildlife sounds.

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

ORDER: Anura (*Amphibians*)

Family Ranidae ("True" Frogs)

Madagascar Leaf-litter Frog *Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis*

A single of this attractive frog was found in Perinet Special Reserve.

Pandanus Leaf Frog *Mantidactylus liber*

2 were found in their typical pandanus habitat in Perinet Special Reserve.

Little Tree Frog *Boophis miniatus*

A single was found by Ian at Vakona.

Goudot's Tree Frog *Boophis goudoti*

This large species was found on the restaurant window at Vakona

Painted Mantella *Mantella madagascariensis*

This beautiful frog was only heard at Mantadia.

ORDER: Squamata (Scaled Reptiles)

Family Chamaeleonidae (Chameleons)

Short-horned Chameleon *Calumma brevicornis*

Usually the commonest chameleon at Perinet, several were found in Perinet forest and at Vakona.

Elephant-eared Chameleon *Calumma malthe*

This rare chameleon was found and photographed at Perinet – the only lifer of the tour for Adam!

Band-bellied Chameleon *Calumma gastrotaenia*

A few of these very attractive chameleons were found at Perinet Special Reserve, both at night and during the day.

Parson's Chameleon *Calumma parsonii*

We found a few young of this huge chameleon in Perinet before we found a large adult that was enjoyed by our whole group

Oustalet's Chameleon *Furcifer oustaleti*

This giant dry country species was a surprise find en route to Perinet, well done Fano for spotting it on the road!

Eye-browed Stump-tailed Chameleon *Brookesia superciliaris*

This strange leaf-litter dwelling, armoured chameleon was located not once but twice in Perinet and Mantadia. Always a special find, we were very lucky!

Family Iguanidae (Iguanas)

Three-eyed Lizard *Chalarodon madagascariensis*

The commonest reptile around Ifaty, also seen in the spiny forest at Berenty. This species has a central pineal eye that can detect light, but about which little is known.

Four-spotted Iguanid (Scaly-tailed Lizard) *Oplurus quadriocelata*

This attractive species was observed on a tree stump in the spiny desert at Ifaty.

Family Gekkonidae (Geckos)

Mossy-backed Leaf-tailed Gecko *Uroplatus sikorae*

One of the star sightings at Perinet Special Reserve, Patrice had a roosting one staked out on our arrival at Perinet and we later found one hunting at night nearby. One of the world's most special reptiles.

Common House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*

This nocturnal species was present at our hotel in Tulear.

Lineated Day Gecko *Phelsuma lineate*

These luminescent green day gecko's were fairly common around Perinet.

Madagascar Day Gecko *Phelsuma madagascariensis*

This large and attractive day gecko was photographed around Vakona lodge by Ian and seen by a few people.

Four-spotted Day Gecko *Phelsuma quadriocelata*

Another attractive species seen by Bob & Sarah at Vakona.

Standing's Day Gecko *Phelsuma standingi*

This rare and lovely species was located in the spiny desert at Ifaty.

Short-headed Day Gecko *Phelsuma breviceps*

A less colourful day gecko that was also found at Ifaty.

Pale-bellied Day Gecko *Phelsuma leiogaster*

This species was found at Berenty.

Androy Big-headed Gecko *Paroedura androyensis*

This large and uncommonly observed species was located in a baobab tree at Ifaty.

Sakalava Dwarf Gecko *Homopholis sakalava*

This small gecko was also found at Ifaty.

Southern Dwarf Gecko *Lygodactylus tuberosus*

This tiny species was present on the buildings at Berenty.

Family Gerrhosauridae (Plated Lizards)

Madagascar Plated Lizard *Zonosaurus madagascariensis*

This large lizard was observed on a few occasions in Perinet and Mantadia.

Rainbow (Small) Plated Lizard *Trachyloptychus madagascariensis*

Ian found this beautiful and seldom encountered reptile at Ifaty.

Gravenhorst's Skink *Mabuya gravenhorstii*

This common skink was seen at Perinet.

Elegant Skink *Mabuya elegans*

Another widespread skink, we observed a pair foraging at Berenty.

Golden-spotted Skink *Mabuya aerupunctata*

This beautiful leaf-litter skink was also found at Berenty.

Family Boidae (Boas)

Madagascar Tree Boa *Sanzinia madagascariensis*

We had fantastic views of one curled up in a tree at Perinet Special Reserve. Another was found sunning itself near the trail in the same reserve.

Family Colubridae (Colubrids)

Bernier's Snake *Dromicodryas bernieri*

This attractive striped snake was seen on the road to Mantadia.

Striped Water Snake *Liopholidophis lateralis*

This water loving species was seen at Perinet Special Reserve.

Mahfaly Sand Snake *Mimophis mahfalensis*

This small snake was seen twice in the spiny desert at Ifaty and again at Berenty.

For participant Ian Gibson's excellent weblog of this trip, richly illustrated with his and other photos, please click on <http://www.islandnet.com/~ig/madaga/madnov03.htm>

NORTH-WEST EXTENSION (Additional Birds)

Ducks, Geese & Swans *Anatidae*

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*

This diminutive waterfowl was scoped at a lake south-west of Ankarafantsika NP.

Bernier's Teal *Anas bernieri*

We recorded two male birds on the mangrove mudflats of the Betsiboka Delta during our boat trip. These birds were seen at the “eleventh hour” on the trip – what a relief!

NOTE: This globally threatened endemic, currently known only from a few inaccessible sites on the west coast of Madagascar, has rarely been recorded until its discovery at this site by Rockjumper Birding Tours in 1999. “Only significant recent counts are 60 on Masama Lake in 1970 and 61 on Bemamba Lake in 1973” Volume 1; HBW.

Ibises & Spoonbills *Threskiornithidae*

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Approximately ten birds were seen in the Betsiboka Delta on our boat trip.

NOTE: A globally threatened species restricted to largely inaccessible wetlands in western Madagascar and Aldabra Island.

Falcons *Falconidae*

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

A pair was seen at the gorge in Ankarafantsika NP and later we observed an individual devouring a Common Pigeon at Majunga airport.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites *Accipitridae*

Madagascar Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vociferoides*

This critically endangered species was recorded near the camp at Ankarafantsika NP. We enjoyed good scope views of this bird for an extended period.

NOTE: This is one of the world's rarest raptors, with a total global population of no more than 60 pairs.

Mesites *Mesitornithidae*

White-breasted Mesite *Mesitornis variegates*

We had great views of this beautiful bird during our walks in the dry, deciduous forest of Ankarafantsika NP.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae*

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*

During our boat ride on Lake Ravelobe, we had good numbers of these migrants on the aquatic vegetation along the edge of the lake.

Jacanas *Jacanidae*

Madagascar Jacana *Actophilornis albinucha*

We recorded several of these attractive birds on Lake Ravelobe.

Sandpipers, Snipes Scolopacidae

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Seen during the boating excursion on the mangrove mudflats of the Betsiboka Delta.

Courasers, Pratincoles Glareolidae

Madagascar Pratincole *Glareola ocularis*

We made a special effort to track down this breeding migrant on the extension. Fortunately, this proved successful and we found 30+ of these birds on the rocks of the Betsiboka River, near Maevatanana.

Cuckoos Cuculidae

Red-capped Coua *Coua ruficeps*

During our walks on the trails of Ankarafantsika NP, we had good views of this beautiful coua.

Coquerel's Coua *Coua coquereli*

Another dry forest coua, it was seen very well in Ankarafantsika NP near the village of Ampijoroa.

Asities Philepittidae

Schlegel's Asity *Philepitta schlegeli*

Our initial sightings of this species were not good, but a little persistence paid off and we had amazing, close-up views of two male birds. This is an absolute beauty!!!

Vangas Vangidae

Van Dam's Vanga *Xenopirostris damii*

This impressive vanga can sometimes be difficult to locate, however, we managed to find a nest site and were treated to good views of both the male and female birds.

NORTH-WEST EXTENSION (Additional Mammals)

ORDER: Chiroptera

Family Emballonuridae (Sheath-tailed Bats)

Mauritian Tomb Bat *Taphozous mauritanus*

Half-a-dozen of these good-looking bats were found in the camp at Ankarafantsika NP.

ORDER: Lypotyphla

Family Tenrecidae (Tenrecs)

Greater Hedgehog Tenrec *Setifer setosus*

ORDER: Primates

Family Cheirogaleidae (Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs)

Golden-brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus ravelobensis*

Several of these delightful creatures were found during our night walks in Ankarafantsika NP.

Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus medius*

On our last night walk in the dry forests of the national park our local guide expertly spotted this cute lemur.

Family Megaladapidae (Sportive Lemurs)

Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur edwardsi*

These extremely vocal sportive lemurs were heard and seen during most nights in Ankarafantsika NP.

Family Lemuridae ("True" Lemurs)

Mongoose Lemur *Eulemur mongoz*

A small family, pair and their baby, was seen in the camp of the national park and then on our last walk in the park we stumbled upon a male with two females. This lemur is restricted to the dry forest of the north-west and was a good find.

Family Indriidae (Avahis, Sifakas and Indri)

Western Avahi (Woolly Lemur) *Avahi occidentalis*

Recorded in the dry deciduous forests of the north-west near Ampijoroa during a night walk.

Coquerel's Sifaka *Propithecus verreauxi coquerel*

An absolutely stunning lemur, this species entertained us at length in the camp at Ankarafantsika NP.

NORTH-WEST EXTENSION (Additional Reptiles)

ORDER: Squamata (Scaled Reptiles)

Family Chamaeleonidae (Chameleons)

Rhinoceros Chameleon *Fucifer rhinosceratus*

Seen well in the dry, deciduous forests of Ankarafantsika NP.

Family Iguanidae (Iguanas)

Cuvier's Iguanid *Oplurus cuvieri*

These spiky devils were a dime-a-dozen at Ankarafantsika NP. We enjoyed numerous, close-up encounters with these pugnacious creatures.

Family Gerrhosauridae (Plated Lizards)

Western Girdled Lizard *Zonosaurus laticaudatus*

A very large lizard, we observed good numbers of these reptiles in the dry forests of the north-west.