Madagascar Highlights II
13th to 27th October 2016 (15 days)
Trip Report

Long-tailed Ground Roller by Gareth Robbins

Trip report and photos by tour leader: Gareth Robbins
Tour Summary

Today was the first day of the Madagascar Highlights II Tour. From our hotel ground in Antananarivo, birds such as Madagascar Hoopoe, Red Fody, Malagasy Stonechat, Malagasy Bulbul, Malagasy Green Sunbird, immature Malagasy Magpie-Robin, Malagasy White-eye, Olive Bee-eater, Malagasy Wagtail and Malagasy Nightjar were seen. After lunch, we made our way through the thick traffic to Lake Alarobia. During the drive, we passed some rice paddies where we saw a few Squacco Herons and Western Cattle Egrets. We eventually arrived at the lake where we were welcomed to a little haven of abundant bird life right in front of our eyes. We systematically worked our way through the various species of birds, seeing Red-billed Teals, White-faced Whistling Ducks, Black Heron, Dimorphic Egret, Squacco Heron, Malagasy Kingfisher, Malagasy Pond Heron, Common Moorhen, Great Egret, Hottentot Teal and a Red-knobbed Coot. We then moved onto the second lake and here we saw Malagasy Kestrel and Meller’s Ducks. We moved across to the back of the first lake where we had a fantastic view of a Malagasy Coucal which flew into a tree above us. At this point, we could also hear White-throated Rails calling. We walked back around the first lake where we had brief sightings of Malagasy Brush Warbler and as we were walking back to the bus, a White-throated Rail came out of the dense reeds and allowed the entire group to observe this secretive and flightless bird as it continued to walk around and feed, totally oblivious to our presence.

After an early breakfast, we left the bustling city of Antananarivo (meaning: 1000 soldiers) and made our way to Perinet. We passed a few rice paddies in the city and here we saw Western Cattle and Dimorphic Egrets. Once we were out of the city, we winded our way through a good number of hills and as we neared a village called Anjiro, we stopped opposite a few rice paddies with some water in them and saw two Hamerkops, Malagasy Kingfisher, Malagasy Cisticola and three Striated Herons. We then continued and stopped at the Mangoro River Bridge, just before the village of Mandoro. Here we were very fortunate to see two Malagasy Pratincoles sitting on a large rock in the river. We also saw Madagascar Green Sunbird, Common...
Sandpiper, Crested Drongo and two very obliging Chabert’s Vangas. We then made our way through the large and busy village of Mandoro and finally arrived at our hotel in Perinet, where we would be staying for the next 5 nights.

After lunch, we set out for our afternoon walk in the Park National Forest with our expert local guide, Luc. In the park, we saw Madagascan Wagtail, Malagasy Bulbul and Malagasy White-eye. In the forest, we saw Striped-throated Jeries, Malagasy Brush Warbler, Madagascar Buzzard, Greater Vasa Parrots, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Malagasy Turtle Dove and fantastic views of a male Souimanaga Sunbird feeding on a flowering plant. We then went off the path into the forest where we saw a Collared Nightjar sitting under a large Pantanal. We then made our way back, managing to see Malagasy Coucal, Red Fody, Malagasy Green Sunbird and an exceptionally close view of two Rainforest Scops Owls. Immediately after this sighting, we saw some Indris and were fortunate to hear them call. We then made our way out of the park and had a great look at a Lowland Steaked Tenrec, which made its way amongst the group. Just before dinner, we went out for a night walk near the hotel, where we had distant views of Eastern Woolly Lemur and quick views of a Goodman’s Mouse Lemur. We also had a great look at a Short-horned Chameleon (Elephant Eared Chameleon).

Today we visited the Mantadia Reserve which forms part of the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. After breakfast, we spotted Rand’s Warbler and Stripe-throated Jery in the car park. We then made our way to the National Park, stopping en route for a Brown Lemur with a young one firmly attached to it. We stopped at Vakona Lodge to collect our packed lunches and here we had fantastic views of a male and female Nelicourvi Weaver, Brown-throated Martins, Souimanaga Sunbirds and a Madagascan Wagtail. We entered the National Park, spotting Madagascan Staring and Yellow-billed Kite along the way as we navigated through some very bumpy roads. We finally arrived at the point where we would be based for the day and made our way into the rainforest. Our chief focus for the day was to find a few members of the endemic Ground-Roller Family. As we pursued...
these sought-after birds, we had fantastic views of a Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher.

We eventually heard a Scaly Ground Roller call, and after some eventful river crossings, tree scratching and mud wrestling, we eventually got some first-class sightings of the bird. We then crossed the road and heard a Short-legged Ground Roller. After some strenuous mountain climbing, we finally got fantastic close views of a Short-legged Ground Roller perched on a branch, and we managed to oversee the bird as it called a few times before it finally lost interest and flew off. We then made our way back down the hill with some guests doing their own impersonation of a Ground Roller! A male Velvet Asity was also seen by some of the guests that were on the road below us. We had a relaxing lunch and embarked on our next adventure. On this route, we had good views of the tiny Madagascan Flufftail, the unique Crossley’s Vanga, two Cuckoo Rollers and we also had wonderful looks at a Pitta-like Ground Roller which was perched in a tree. After a successful day, we made our way back to Perinet and en route we saw a Madagascan Swamp Warbler.

After some light rain during the night, we woke up to a brand new sunny day in our hotel in Perinet. We made our way to the Park National and immediately started to see birds. We had excellent views of a pair of Madagascan Wagtails as they built their nest by the reception area of the park. We then walked through the rain forest where we got brief views of a Madagascan Wood Rail. We also managed to see Spectacled Tetraka, Long-billed Bernieria, Red-fronted Coua, Common Jery and Malagasy Coucal. On our walk, we found a few bird parties consisting of Common Newtonias, Madagascan Cuckooshrike and Tylas, Red-tailed and Blue Vangas. As we walked through the forest, we located and viewed some Diademed Sifakas, with one Sifaka carrying its young. Further along the trail, we heard a Red-breasted Coua and after some expert mountain climbing, we, unfortunately, could not locate the shy Coua. We then headed back to the reception area and en route we came across a Red-breasted Coua on the trail and had excellent views of the bird. We came across a few more Vanga parties and managed to see Nuthatch, Tylas and Blue Vangas. After a successful morning in the
In the park, we had lunch at our hotel before venturing into a Community Reserve nearby. Immediately after entering the reserve, we came across two Madagascar Ibises and at the same time, we heard and saw a Blue Coua. Our next sighting was of two Madagascar Wood Rails, which everybody managed to see. Towards the end of the trail, we spotted two Broad-billed Rollers and saw a Southern Flat-tailed Gecko sitting flat against a tree. This gecko is preyed on by Blue Couas and has to rely on its camouflage to avoid being eaten. We then visited a Madagascar Owl roosting site and here we saw the owl sitting in a pine tree.

Today we revisited Mantadia National Park and our first stop of the day was at Vakona Lodge where we had fantastic views of Mascarone Martins sitting in the road and roosting on the rooftops of the chalets. In the parking lot of the lodge, we saw Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Nelicourvi Weaver, Malagasy Green and Souimanaga Sunbirds and a pair of Madagascar Mannikins flying in and out of their nest. We then entered the National Park and as we made our way through the park, we stopped for a Cuckoo-Roller as it flew over the vehicles. We successfully relocated the bird, first seeing the female Cuckoo-Roller and then enjoying fantastic views of a male Cuckoo-Roller. At the same time, we heard the Madagascar Cuckoo call and after some serious searching, we managed to find the bird. Our next stop yielded a sighting of Diademed Sifakas right next to the road. We then visited a dam and en route to the dam, we managed to get views of a Green Jery, Madagascar Buzzard and Madagascar Harrier-Hawk. Once we arrived at the dam, we were welcomed by sightings of a female Madagascar Starling and a pair of Broad-billed Rollers. We were also very fortunate to see two Madagascar Grebes, Common Moorhen and a Madagascan Swamp Warbler. We then walked back to the main road, where we had excellent views of a large variety of butterflies at a pothole in the road filled with water. At the same time, we heard a Madagascan Flufftail calling, and after finding an open spot in the bushes, we waited for this secretive bird to come out and when it did, we all managed to see the bird. At our
lunch stop, we had a Lesser Vasa Parrot land in a tree nearby us and we also had good looks at the striking Striped Day Gecko. We then made our way back to Perinet where we had better views of Common Newtonia, as well as a Madagascar Girdled Lizard, Diadem Sifakas, and Brown Lemurs.

Today was our last full day at Perinet and we still needed to find a few more target species. After breakfast, we made our way to the Park National and near the gate, we successfully managed to locate a Madagascan Pygmy Kingfisher. After entering the park, we followed a few trails and one led us to a small group of Forest Fody's. Within this group, we saw a male in full breeding plumage. We then continued and revisited the roosting site of the Rainforest Scops Owls and saw a Lesser Vasa Parrot too; while also managing to see a Wedge-tailed Tetraka. We then made our way back to the lodge and at the lodge, a small group of Indris were feeding above the chalets; we were not only fortunate to see them, we also heard them sing! We visited Vakona Lodge for lunch, where we had a table reserved for us that overlooked the small dam in front of the lodge. From the comfort of our chairs, we saw Malagasy Kingfisher, Crested Drongo, Mascarene Martin, Malagasy White-eye and a nesting pair of White-headed Vangas. After lunch, we visited Lemur Island and after a short, entertaining canoe ride, we saw the rehabilitated/habituated Brown, Bamboo and Ruff-tailed Lemurs. We also saw a Gold Sifaka - which was seen feeding on another Island. These Lemurs were extremely used to people and had no problem jumping onto someone’s back! Before dinner, we set out on a night walk and saw Eastern Woolly Lemur, Goodman’s Mouse Lemur and Greater Dwarf Lemur, as well as a Praying Mantis and a Short-horned Chameleon (Elephant-eared Chameleon).

This was our final morning in the Perinet Special Reserve and we set out after an early breakfast and entered the park as soon as it opened. We made our way through the reserve where we got to see two White-throated Oxylabes and had a great view of a male Forest Fody. We then took a trail along a small stream and here we came across a pair of Malagasy 

Indri by Gareth Robbins

Red-fronted Coua by Gareth Robbins
Wood Rails that were in the process of building their nest. We watched these birds for a lengthy period as they just continued, unfussed by our presence. Shortly after this memorable sighting, we came across an Olive Bee-eater and managed to get good views of the bird through the scope. We then took to a few trails, where we managed to see Brown Lemurs, Madagascan Stonechats, and Wedge-tailed Jery and had fantastic views of two Red-fronted Couas as they fed along the road - not too bothered by us at all. We exited the reserve and made our way back to our hotel before making our way back to Antananarivo. On the drive, we saw Squacco Herons, Dimorphic and Western Cattle Egrets, Malagasy Kestrel and Yellow-billed Kites.

Our next venture took us to Ifaty. After a relaxing morning, we made our way to Antananarivo Airport and caught a flight to Tulear via Fort Dauphin. From the plane, we managed to see one Pied Crow. After landing at Tulear Airport, we met our new group of drivers and made our way to our hotel on the beach in Ifaty.

Anticipating a hot day in the spiny forests, we had an early start. We met our two expert local guides, Mosa and Freddie, and it did not take us long to see Sakalava Weavers, Sub-desert Brush Warbler, Thamnornis and Archbold’s Newtonia. We made our way through the multitude of trails, picking up sightings of Stripe-throated Jery, Red Fody, Malagasy Coucal, Malagasy Kestrel and Madagascan Harrier-Hawk. Our first special of the day was of a Running Coua on a nest, followed by sightings of the much anticipated Long-tailed Ground-Roller, Crested Coua, Lafresnaye’s Vanga, Madagascan Cuckoo Hawk, Madagascan Buttonquail and Sub-desert Mesite. After an exciting morning, we headed back to the hotel and relaxed with a late breakfast. During lunch, we were visited by a pair of Namaqua Doves and some of the guests saw a Madagascan Hoopoe. After lunch, we set out to visit the local wetlands and as soon as we arrived, we were welcomed by a pair of Curlew Sandpipers, White-fronted and Kittlitz’s Plovers and a Black-winged Stilt. We were also very fortunate to see a Malagasy Harrier fly right over us. After all the excitement, we continued to another section of the wetlands and here we saw Little Grebes, Common-ringed Plover, Common Sandpiper, Olive Bee-eater, Madagascan Cisticola, Grey-headed Lovebirds,
Squacco Heron, Madagascan Lark and a Greater Painted Snipe. This was by far one of the most enjoyable days on the tour so far!

Today we re-visited the Spiny Forest and after some fast trekking through the thick sand, we finally came across a Green-capped Coua running on the trail ahead of us. Our next find was of a Madagascan Sparrowhawk on its nest. As we were about to exit the park, we managed to see another Running Coua, Archbold’s Newtonia and a pair of Madagascan Hoopoes. Our next stop was at the local salt pans and here we saw the Madagascan Plover. We then visited an area with some small ponds and here we saw Three-banded Plover and a Peregrine Falcon. We headed back to our hotel on the beach where we checked out and drove to Tulear - where we would be staying for the next two nights. We arrived at our hotel in Tulear and after lunch, we drove to La Tabla, where within forty-five minutes we had successfully managed to locate Verreaux’s Coua and a pair of Red-shouldered Vangas.

After a good night’s rest, we woke to a beautiful day in Tulear. Today we were going to visit the small island of Nosy Ve and the village of Anakao. We arrived at the harbour after breakfast and caught our zebu cart taxis through the harbour water and hopped aboard the Anakao Express. We then motored across the bay to the St Augustine Peninsula, where we saw Grey and Humboldt’s Herons as well as a Peregrine Falcon and Dimorphic Egret. We stopped briefly at the village of Anakao to collect the scuba diving gear and then made our way to Nosy Ve. Just as we arrived at the island, we could see a few Red-tailed Tropicbirds. We decided to drive around the island slowly, which allowed us to see Greater Sand Plovers, Sanderlings, Greater and Lesser Crested Terns, Ruddy Turnstones, Saunders Terns and the large and much anticipated Crab Plover. We then exited the boat and took a short walk on the island where we managed to find a pair of Red-tailed Tropicbirds sitting inside a bush and we had good views of the tropicbirds as they flew right over our heads. We then made our way back to the
village of Anakao, where we had a delightful lunch and managed to see a pair of nesting Littoral Rock Thrushes. After lunch, we boarded the Anakao Express and cruised back to the harbour where our zebu taxi patiently waited for us.

Today was reserved as a travel day to Berenty Lemur Reserve, however, we still had a few hours to visit the local arboretum where we met their local guide, Jeanto. Not only was Jeanto a good birder, he also knew the various plant and tree life as well as the reptiles! We saw a Madagascar Nightjar with two young, Sakalava Weavers, Malagasy Turtle Dove and a pair of Malagasy Kestrels nesting behind the museum. We also saw Malagasy Bulbul, Madagascan Magpie-Robin and a Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher in its nest. We also managed to get the best view yet of an Olive Bee-eater and we finally managed to have far better views of Malagasy Buttonquails. Jeanto also showed us two Warty Chameleons, Spiny-tailed Iguana, Modest Day Gecko, Madagascar Keeled Cordylid and a Hedgehog Tenrec. By this time, it was around 30°C and we made our way back to our hotel in Tulear, had lunch and then flew to Fort Dauphin, where we would be meeting our Berenty guide, Benoit. We loaded the vehicle and prepared for a long, slow and bumpy ride to Berenty.

After a lovely evening, we woke to a hot summer’s day in Berenty Lemur Reserve. We made our way to the nearby airstrip where we saw Stripe-throated Jery, Madagascar Buttonquails, Madagascar Lark and Madagascar Cisticola. We then headed back to the lodge for breakfast and as we arrived, we saw a few Sakalava Weavers in their nests and had fabulous views of a Crested Coua. After breakfast, we walked in the gallery forest and here we saw Torotoro Scops Owl, a pair of Hook-billed Vanga building their nest and a two Giant Couas. We then came across a female France’s Sparrowhawk, Madagascan Hoopoe and Madagascar Cuckoo. We also saw the Madagascan Flying Fox and had wonderful views of the White-browed Hawk-Owl. Once the temperature reached around 40°C, we decided to get back to the lodge to enjoy a relaxing lunch while being entertained by the local Ring-tailed Lemurs. After lunch, we set out for a cool walk in the Spiny forest, where we saw Madagascar Nightjar, Carpet Chameleon, Spider Tortoise and the Giant Madagascan Velvet Gecko.
on a large Baobab. After the walk, the clouds set in and we had a few drops of rain. Near the chalets, we saw a Black Kite and a few Broad-billed Rollers. Before dinner, we went on a night walk which yielded White-footed Sportive Lemur, Grey Mouse-lemur, Carpet Chameleon and a few Verreaux’s Sifakas sleeping in the Octopus Tree. After a long, hot and successful day, we sat down to a fantastic dinner with great hosts.

Today we left Berenty and made our way back to Fort Dauphin along the extremely bumpy and potholed road, spotting Red Fodys and Namaqua Doves all the way. We finally arrived in the beautiful seaside town of Fort Dauphin and stopped for breakfast at a nearby hotel. After breakfast, we drove through the town to the airport, taking in the scenic views of the beautiful coastline. Our flight took us back to Antananarivo, where we spent our final night.

Today was the day that we would all be departing and during an early lunch, we all mentioned our favourite birds of the tour and shared some of our interesting and funny experiences. After an entertaining lunch, we bid farewell to one another and we all went our separate ways.

Annotated List of Birds recorded


Total species recorded 141

Key to abbreviations:
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
Ducks & Geese Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*
Common at Lake Alarobia in Tana.

Meller’s Duck *Anas melleri*
We had a couple of sightings of these ducks in Lake Alarobia.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*
Seen well and in good numbers in Lake Alarobia and at the wetlands near Ifaty.

Hottentot Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*
We saw these smaller teals at Lake Alarobia and at the wetlands near Ifaty.

Guineafowl Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl (I) *Numida meleagris*
We saw these large game birds in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Grebes Podicipedidae

Little Grebe (Dabchick) *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
A few birds were seen in a wetland near Ifaty.

Madagascar Grebe (E) (V) *Tachybaptus pelzelnii*
This grebe was seen very well on a small dam in Mantadia NP.
*NOTE: Globally threatened and declining due to habitat loss, introduction of exotic fish, and competition (and possibly hybridization) with Little Grebe.*

Tropicbirds Phaethontidae

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*
These beautiful, birds showed fantastically for us at Nosy Ve, where they nest.

Ibises and Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Madagascar Ibis *Lophotibis cristata*
We were very fortunate to see these very shy birds in a community reserve in Perinet.

Herons & Bitterns Ardeidae

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
We had a couple of sightings of these herons in Lake Alarobia.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*
We recorded these birds in rice fields en route to Perinet Special Reserve.
*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. s. virens (Green Heron).*

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*
We had views of several birds in Lake Alarobia, rice fields in and around Antananarivo and at the wetlands outside Ifaty.

Malagasy Pond Heron *Ardeola idea*
We saw two birds in breeding plumage in Lake Alarobia.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Widespread, and seen in a number of wetlands throughout the tour.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Only two birds were seen on the coastal cliffs of the Onilahy River, near San Augustin.

Humblot’s Heron (E) (V) *Ardea humboldti*
The Onilahy Cliffs produced excellent views of this species.
**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*
A bird was seen flying over us as we made our way to Mantadia NP.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*
Seen at Lake Alarobia and around rice fields in the Antananarivo area.

**Black Heron** *Egretta ardeciaca*
These herons were common at Lake Alarobia and were also seen around the rice fields outside Antananarivo.

**Dimorphic (Western Reef) Egret** *Egretta dimorpha*
See both in the highlands in and around Tana, as well as later on the coast near Ifaty.

*NOTE: This species is sometimes lumped by authorities as a distinct subspecies of the widespread Little Egret, Egretta garzetta. Clements treats it as a subspecies of Little Egret.***

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*
These strange looking birds were seen briefly along the road to Perinet Special Reserve.

**Hawks, Eagles and Kites** *Accipitridae*

**Madagascan Harrier-Hawk (E)** *Polyboroides radiatus*
We enjoyed views of this endemic in the Ifaty area, after brief flight views in Mantadia.

**Madagascan Cuckoo-Hawk (E)** *Aviceda madagascariensis*
We enjoyed good views of this bird in the Ifaty spiny forest.

**Frances's Sparrowhawk (NE)** *Accipiter francesii*
The Gallery Forest at Berenty gave us good views of this bird.

**Madagascan Sparrowhawk (E)** *Accipiter francesii*
We enjoyed good views of this bird in Ifaty and Berenty.

**Malagasy Harrier** *Circus macrosceles*
We were extremely fortunate to see one of these uncommon birds of prey at the Wetlands near Ifaty.

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius*
Birds were recorded at a few scattered locations throughout the south.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*
This bird was seen in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Madagascar Buzzard (E)** *Buteo brachypterus*
This bird of prey was seen in Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia NP.

**Mesites** *Mesitornithidae*

**Subdesert Mesite (E) (V)** *Monias benschi*
We saw this birds on both visits to Mosa Park Spiny Forest.

**Flufftails** *Sarothuridae*

**Madagascar Flufftail (E)** *Sarothrura insularis*
We had fantastic close encounters with this bird in Mantadia NP.

**Rails & Gallinules and Coots** *Rallidae*

**Madagascar Wood Rail (E)** *Canirallus kioloides*
We had great views of this bird in the community reserve, and we watched a pair building a nest in the Perinet Special Reserve.
White-throated Rail (E) *Dryolimnas cuvieri*
We had fantastic views of one bird in Lake Alarobia and in the community reserve in Perinet wetlands.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
These birds were seen in Lake Alarobia.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*
We saw one bird in Lake Alarobia and another bird at the small dam in Mantadia.

**Buttonquails Turnicidae**

Madagascar Buttonquail (E) *Turnix nigricollis*
We had views of these skulking ground birds in Mosa Park Spiny Forest, the Arboretum at La Tabla and in Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Crab Plover Dromadidae**

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*
Fantastic views were had at Nosy Ve.

**Avocets & Stilts Recurvirostridae**

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
 Recorded in good numbers at various wetlands and dams near Ifaty.

**Plovers Charadriidae**

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
Good views were had of these plovers at various wetlands and dams near Ifaty.

Madagascar Plover (E) (NT) *Charadrius thoracicus*
2 birds allowed superb views near Ifaty – a rare endemic.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*
Very common around Ifaty wetland areas and we also saw a couple of birds on the airfield at Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricolor*
These plovers were eventually seen at a small dam outside Ifaty.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*
Great views of this shorebird were on the island of Nosy Ve after initial views near Ifaty.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultia*
We had some good looks at these plovers at Nosy Ve.

**Painted Snipes Rostratulidae**

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*
One bird was seen hiding in the tall grass at the wetland near Ifaty.

**Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae**

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
These birds were seen on numerous occasions at Ifaty and Nosy Ve.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
One was seen at the wetland near Ifaty.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*
This species was seen en route to Perinet Special Reserve and in various wetlands near Ifaty.
**Ruddy Turnstone**  *Arenaria interpres*
These birds were seen sitting on the rocks on the Nosy Ve island.

**Sanderling**  *Calidris alba*
A couple of these small birds were seen on the island of Nosy Ve.

**Curlew Sandpiper**  *Calidris ferruginea*
These sandpipers were seen at the wetland outside Ifaty.

**Pratincoles and Coursers  Glareolidae**

**Madagascar Pratincole**  *Glareola ocularis*
We had good scope views of these birds en route to the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Gulls, Terns and Skimmers  Laridae**

**Greater Crested Terns**  *Thalasseus bergii*
One bird was seen from the boat as we neared the island of Nosy Ve.

**Lesser Crested Terns**  *Thalasseus bengalensis*
A small group of these terns were seen on the island of Nosy Ve.

**Saunders’s Tern**  *Sternula saundersi*
These small terns were seen at Nosy Ve island.

**Pigeons & Doves  Columbidae**

**Rock Dove (I)**  *Columba livia*
Widespread and common around human habitation.

**Malagasy (Madagascar) Turtle Dove (NE)**  *Streptopelia picturata*
This dove was seen in the Perinet Special Reserve, Mosa Park and Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Namaqua Dove**  *Oena capensis*
This very small and distinctive dove was common in the dry south and south-west.

**Madagascar Green Pigeon (E)**  *Treron australis*
Some guests were fortunate to see these pigeons flying past the restaurant at our hotel in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E)**  *Alectroenas madagascariensis*
We saw these pigeons on most days when we were in the Perinet and Mantadia areas.

**Cuckoos, Couas & Coucals  Cuculidae**

**Malagasy Coucal (NE)**  *Centropus toulou*
Small numbers were recorded on numerous of the days during the tour.

**Crested Coua (E)**  *Coua cristata*
These birds were seen in Ifaty and Berenty.

**Verreaux's Coua (E) (NT)**  *Coua verreauxi*
We had great views of one of these birds at La Tabla.

**Blue Coua (E)**  *Coua caerulea*
A large, stunning blue coua was seen in the Mantadia National Park and in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Red-capped (Green-capped) Coua (E)**  *Coua reynaudii olivaceiceps*
We saw this shy bird in Mosa Park Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

*NOTE: This southern, khaki-capped form of Red-capped Coua, which we saw, 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.*
Red-fronted Coua  
*Coua reynaudii*
We watched a pair forage for food right next to the foot path in the Perinet Special Reserve.

Running Coua (E)  
*Coua cursor*
This coua was seen sitting on the nest in Mosa Park Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

Giant Coua (E)  
*Coua gigas*
Large couas were seen in good numbers in the Gallery Forest, Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Red-breasted Coua (E)  
*Coua serriana*
We were very fortunate to see this bird right next to the path after many failed attempts.

Madagascar Cuckoo  
*Cuculus rochii*
We had great views of this cuckoo in Mantadia NP and in the Gallery Forest, Berenty.

**Typical Owls Strigidae**

Torotoroka Scops Owl (E)  
*Otus madagascariensis*
We had superb views of this owl in its day roost in the Gallery Forest, Berenty.

Rainforest Scops Owl (NE)  
*Otus rutilus*
A pair of these small owls were seen in the Perinet Special Reserve.

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

White-browed Hawk-Owl (E)  
*Ninox superciliaris*
This owl provided us with some fantastic views in the Gallery Forest, Berenty.

Madagascar Owl (E)  
*Asio madagascariensis*
We saw one owl on its day roost in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae**

Madagascar Nightjar (NE)  
*Caprimulgus madagascariensis*
Seen and heard at scattered locales during the tour, including on a day roost in Tana, Berenty and the Ifaty area.

Collared Nightjar (E)  
*Caprimulgus enarratus*
Wonderful views of a pair were enjoyed when we managed to see them at close range in the leaf litter in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Swifts Apodidae**

Malagasy Spinetail (NE)  
*Zoonavena grandidieri*
A few of these fluttery swifts were seen flying overhead in the Mantadia NP.

**Cuckoo Roller Leptosomidae**

Cuckoo Roller (NE)  
*Leptosomus discolor*
This vocal bird was eventually seen in the Mantadia NP.

**Rollers Coraciidae**

Broad-billed Roller  
*Eurystomus glacurus*
We heard and saw these vocal rollers in the Community Reserve in Perinet and Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae**

Short-legged Ground Roller (E) (VU)  
*Brachypteracias leptosomus*
A couple of us managed to get some great looks at this ground roller in the Mantadia NP.
Scaly Ground Roller (E)  
*Geobiastes squamiger*

After traversing through muddy terrain, we eventually caught up with this extremely shy bird in the Mantadia NP.

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

After hearing the bird call we finally tracked it down and saw the bird sitting in a tree in the Mantadia NP.

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

A highly localised and very sought-after endemic, we had excellent close-range views of this ground roller on two occasions in Mosa Park Spiny Forest, Ifaty.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

Madagascan Pygmy Kingfisher (E)  
*Corythornis madagascariensis*

On our last day in Perinet Special Reserve, we finally managed to see one bird alongside a small stream.

Malagasy Kingfisher (NE)  
*Corythornis vintsioides*

Commonly encountered at various wetlands on the tour, especially in Lake Alarobia and the Perinet and Mantadia areas.

**Bee-eaters Meropidae**

Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater  
*Merops superciliosus*

This beautiful member of a very popular family was commonly recorded on the tour, with one excellent view of a single bird in the Arboretum at La Tabla.

**Hoopoes Upupidae**

Madagascar Hoopoe (E)  
*Upupa marginalis*

This bird was seen at our hotel in Antananarivo, Ifaty and Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Falcons Falconidae**

Malagasy Kestrel (NE)  
*Falco newtoni*

We had regular sightings of this small bird of prey during the tour.

Peregrine Falcon  
*Falco peregrinus*

We had a couple of sightings of this well know falcon in the Ifaty, Tulear areas.

**Parrots Psittacidae**

Grey-headed Lovebird (E)  
*Agapornis canus*

These gorgeous little birds were seen in the Mosa Park Spiny Forest and the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Greater Vasa Parrot (NE)  
*Coracopsis vasa*

We saw these larger parrots in Perinet Special Reserve, Mantadia NP and the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Lesser Vasa Parrot (NE)  
*Coracopsis nigra*

This smaller parrot was seen in Mantadia, Mosa Park Spiny Forest and in the Gallery Forest of the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Asities Philepittidae**

Velvet Asity (E)  
*Philepitta castanea*

Some of the guests were very fortunate to see a male Velvet Asity in the Mantadia NP.
**Vangas  Vangidae**

**Red-tailed Vanga (E)**  *Calicalicus madagascariensis*
We had great looks at both male and female birds in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Red-shouldered Vanga (E) (VU)**  *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*
This confiding bird was finally seen at La Tabla near Ifaty.

**Hook-billed Vanga (E)**  *Vanga curvirostris*
A pair of birds were seen building a nest in the Gallery Forest, Berenty.

**Lafresnaye's Vanga (E)**  *Calicalicus madagascariensis*
This heavy-billed and often uncommon species was seen very well in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

**Sickle-billed Vanga (E)**  *Calicalicus madagascariensis*
This bizarre bird, and of the highlights of the tour was seen on a nest in the spiny forest, Ifaty.

**White-headed Vanga (E)**  *Artamella viridis*
During lunch, we watched a pair blinding a nest at Vakona Lodge and we also managed to see these birds again Galley Forest, Berenty.

**Chabert Vanga (E)**  *Leptopterus chabert*
This was the most frequently seen vanga on tour.

**Blue Vanga (NE)**  *Cyanolanius madagascarinus*
A stunning bird; it was seen in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Tylas Vanga (E)**  *Tylas eduardi*
We saw a few of these birds in the Perinet and Mantadia NP.

**Nuthatch Vanga (E)**  *Hypositta corallirostris*
Often a difficult bird to find, we enjoyed excellent views of these tree creeping birds in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Common Newtonia (E)**  *Newtonia brunneicauda*
This widespread species was seen in the Perinet and Mantadia areas as well as in the Spiny Forests of Ifaty.

**Archbold's Newtonia (E)**  *Newtonia archboldi*
We had close-up views of this species in the spiny forest at Ifaty.

**Crossley's Vanga (E)**  *Mystacornis crossleyi*
We were very lucky to have this bird seen right next to the path in the Mantadia NP.

**Cuckooshrikes  Campephagidae**

**Madagascar Cuckooshrike (E)**  *Coracina cinerea*
This species was seen in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Drongos  Dicuridae**

**Crested Drongo (NE)**  *Dicrurus forficatus*
This is a very common species throughout many of the different habitats on the island.

**Monarch Flycatchers  Monarchidae**

**Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher (NE)**  *Terpsiphone mutata*
A beautiful bird, seen in all three colour morphs throughout the tour.

**Crows, Jays and Magpies  Corvidae**

**Pied Crow**  *Corvus albus*
We saw this species daily in the south and south-west of the island.
Larks *Alaudidae*

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

This lark was commonly seen in the Ifaty and Tulear areas as well as in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae***

**Malagasy (Madagascar) Bulbul (NE)**  
*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

This was one of the most frequently seen bird on tour, which was found in most habitats.

Swallows & Martins *Hirundinidae*

**Mascarene Martin (BE)**  
*Phedina borbonica*

Excellent views were had of these birds as they were perched on the roof of the chalets at Vakona Lodge.

**Brown-throated Martin**  
*Riparia paludicola*

We had many of these birds flying around wetland and grassland areas.

Reed Warblers & Allies *Megaluridae*

**Malagasy Brush Warbler (NE)**  
*Nesillas typica*

This dark brown warbler was seen and heard on several occasions in the east of Madagascar.

**Subdesert Brush Warbler (E)**  
*Nesillas lantzii*

This species showed very well near Ifaty, in the La Table scrub, all in the south-west of Madagascar.

**Madagascar Swamp Warbler (E)**  
*Acrocephalus newtoni*

We had good views of this species in a marsh in the Mantadia NP.

Malagasy Warblers *Bernieridae*

**White-throated Oxylabes (E)**  
*Oxylabes madagascariensis*

After a lot of searching, we finally managed to see this bird in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Long-billed Bernieria (E)**  
*Bernieria madagascariensis*

This long-billed bird was seen in Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia NP.

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

We enjoyed fantastic views of these birds in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Thamnornis (E)**  
*Thamnornis chloropetoides*

We had excellent views of this greenish-tinged localised endemic sitting on an Octopus Plant in Mosa Park Spiny Forest.

**Spectacled Tetraka (E)**  
*Xanthomixis zosterops*

These tetrakas with bright yellow throats were seen well in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Rand’s Warbler (E)**  
*Randia pseudozosterops*

These tiny birds were heard and seen in the Perinet Special Reserve, usually sitting at the top of a tall tree.

Cisticolas & Allies *Cisticolidae*

**Common Jery (E)**  
*Neomixis tenella*

Seen often in the Perinet Special Reserve and Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Green Jery (E)**  
*Neomixis viridis*

We saw these small and vocal birds in the Mantadia NP.
Stripe-throated Jery (E)  Neomixis striatigula  
We had regular sightings of these jerys during the tour.  

Madagascar Cisticola (NE)  Cisticola cherinus  
Seen commonly in open habitat around Tulear, Ifaty and Berenty.

White-eyes  Zosteropidae  
Madagascar White-eye (NE)  Zosterops maderaspatana  
Very common in a variety of areas during the tour.

Starlings  Sturnidae  
Common Myna (I)  Acridotheres tristis  
Commonly recorded near human habitation.  
Madagascar Starling (E)  Hartlaubius aurata  
We had brief looks at these birds in the Mantadia NP.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers  Muscicapidae  
Madagascar Magpie-Robin (E)  Copsychus albospecularis  
Seen on many occasions on the tour, often very relaxed and confiding.  
Littoral Rock Thrush (E)  Monticola imerina  
We had excellent views of a pair at Anakao, south of Tulear.  
Madagascar Stonechat (E)  Saxicola sibilla  
This bird was regularly seen during the first week of the tour.

Sunbirds  Nectariniidae  
Souimanga Sunbird (NE)  Cinnyris sovimanga  
This lovely sunbird was seen almost every single day on the island.  
Malagasy Green Sunbird (NE)  Cinnyris notatus  
This larger green sunbird was seen in Antananarivo, Perinet Special Reserve and in the flowering plants at Vakona Lodge.

Weavers  Ploceidae  
Nelicourvi Weaver (E)  Ploceus nelicourvi  
This smart bird was seen well in the Perinet and Mantadia areas.  
Sakalava Weaver (E)  Ploceus sakalava  
We had great views of this dry country bird near Ifaty and at Berenty.  
Red Fody (E)  Foudia madagascariensis  
Widespread, and seen on numerous days of the tour, with many birds in the bright red plumage.  
Forest Fody  Foudia omissa  
We were very fortunate to see one male bird in breeding plumage in the Perinet Special Reserve.

Waxbills & Allies  Estrildidae  
Madagascar Mannikin (E)  Lepidopygia nana  
We had some wonderful views of this species flying in and out of a nest at Vakona Lodge.
Wagtails & Pipits  *Motacillidae*

**Madagascar Wagtail (E)**  *Motacilla flaviventris*
This wagtail was seen regularly during the first week of the tour, with one pair build a nest at the entrance to the Perinet Special Reserve.

---

Annotated List of Mammals recorded

**Total species recorded 15**

---

**Tenrecs Tenrecidae**

**Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec (E)**  *Echinops telfairi*
We were very fortunate to see one of these animals in a tree trunk at the arboretum near La Tabla.

**Lowland Streaked Tenrec (E)**  *Hemicentetes semispinosus*
These well-loved little creatures were seen in the Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia NP.

---

**Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae**

**Madagascar Flying Fox**  *Pteropus rufus*
These noisy, quarrelsome creatures were seen and scoped well at the roost at Berenty Lemur Reserve.

---

**Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae**

**Grey-Brown Mouse Lemur**  *Microcebus griseorufus*
We had fantastic views of this cute creature at Berenty’s spiny forest on a night walk.

**Goodman’s Mouse Lemur**  *Microcebus lehilahytsara*
We had some great views of this species on our night walk outside the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Grey Mouse-Lemur**  *Microcebus murinus*
Originally thought to be a house rat this tiny lemur was seen at dinner at the hotel in Ifaty.

**Greater Dwarf Lemur**  *Cheriogaleus major*
This dwarf lemur was seen on our night walk outside the Perinet Special Reserve.

---

**Indrid Lemurs and Sifakas Indriidae**

**Eastern Woolly Lemur**  *Avahi laniger*
We saw these lemurs on our night walks outside the Perinet Special Reserve with far better views on the last night walk.

**Indri**  *Indri indri*
Always one of the highlights of a tour in Madagascar – these animals were often heard and seen in the Perinet Special Reserve, with one excellent sighting near our chalets.

**Diademed Sifaka**  *Propithecus diadema diadema*
Surely one of the most handsome of all lemurs, we saw this species very well in the Mantadia NP.

**Verreaux’s Sifaka**  *Propithecus verreaux verreaux*
The famous “dancing” sifaka was seen very well on several occasions at Berenty.
Lemurs  Lemuridae

Common Brown Lemur  *Eulemur fulvus*
These lemurs were commonly seen in the Perinet Special Reserve as well as outside our chalets.

Red-Brown Lemur  *Eulemur rufus*
These lemurs were introduced to Berenty where they are commonly seen.

Ring-tailed Lemur  *Lemur catta*
Certainly, the most recognisable of all Malagasy fauna, we had numerous extended views of these endearing mammals during our time at Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Sportive Lemurs  Megaladapidae

White-footed Sportive Lemur  *Lepilemur leucopus*
We had great views of many of these nocturnal lemurs in Mosa Park Spiny Forest and in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Annotated List of Reptiles recorded

Total species recorded: 14

Boas  Boidae

Madagascar Ground Boa (E)  *Acrantophis madagascariensis*
We saw one individual being removed by a staff member in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Chameleons  Chamaeleonidae

Short-horned (Elephant-eared) Chameleon (E)  *Calumma brevicorne*
We found this chameleon on our night walks on the border of the Perinet Special Reserve.

Carpet Chameleon  *Furcifer lateralis*
We had a fantastic look at this chameleon in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Warty Chameleon  *Furcifer verrucosus*
A large chameleon was seen in Mosa Park Spiny Forest, La Tabla Arboretum and in the Berenty Lemur Reserve.

Geckos  Gekkonidae

Sakalava (Giant Velvet) Gecko  *Blaesodactylus sakalava*
This beautiful large gecko was seen in a baobab in the Berenty Special Reserve.

Striped Day Gecko (E)  *Phelsuma lineata*
During our lunch stop, we managed to see this beautiful green gecko in the Mantadia NP.

Modest Day Gecko  *Phelsuma modesta*
We saw this gecko in the La Tabla Arboretum.

Standing’s Gecko (E)  *Phelsuma standingi*
This large gecko was seen at our hotel in Ifaty.

Southern Flat-tailed Gecko  *Uroplatus sikorae*
This well-camouflaged gecko was seen in the community reserve, Perinet.
**Plated Lizards** *Gerrhosauridae*

**Madagascar Keeled Cordylid (E)** *Tracheloptychus madagascariensis*
We had a great close look at this lovely lizard in the La Tabla Arboretum.

**Madagascar Girdled Lizard** *Zonosaurus madagascariensis*
This large lizard was often seen along the roadside.

**Iguanas** *Iguanidae*

**Madagascar Iguana (Three-eyed Lizard) (E)** *Chalarodon madagascariensis*
This three-eyed lizard was seen in Mosa Park Spiny Forest and Berenty Lemur Reserve.

**Merrem’s Madagascar Swift (E)** *Oplurus cyclurus*
This large iguana was seen up close in the La Tabla Arboretum.

**Tortoises** *Testudinidae*

**Southern Spider Tortoise (E)** *Pyxis arachnoides*
We were very lucky to see this rare and tiny tortoise in Berenty Lemur Reserve.

---

**List of Notable Insects and other Invertebrates**

Names where derived from various sources including Madagascar Wildlife: A visitors guide by Hilary Bradt, Derek Schuurman and Nick Garbutt (1996)

**Class Insecta**

**Giraffe Weevil** *Trachelophorus giraffe*
We were very fortunate to see a pair mating in the Perinet Special Reserve.

**Green-Blue Swallow-tail Butterfly** *Papilo oribazus*
These butterflies were seen drinking water in a rain puddle along the dirt road in Mantadia NP.

**Class Arachnida, Family Nephilidae**

**Golden Orb-web Spider** *Nephila madagascariensis*
A colourful arachnid famous for the gold-coloured webs it spins, it was seen at several localities during our tour.

**Class Diplopoda**

**Emerald Pill Millipede** *Sphaerotherium sp.*
A colourful little terrestrial animal that was seen in Mantadia NP.

---

Rockjumper Birding Ltd
Labourdonnais Village
Mapou
Mauritius
Tel (USA & Canada) toll free: 1-888-990-5552
Email: info@rockjumperbirding.com
Alternative email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com
Website: www.rockjumperbirding.com