

# Madagascar

Naturetrek Tour Report

25 - 17 November October 2005

---

Report compiled by Cliff Waller



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Tour leaders: Cliff Waller (Naturetrek)  
Rarivosoa Rivomahefa (local guide)

Tour Participants Ian Barclay  
Sue Barclay  
Joan Cunningham  
Peter Cunningham  
Enid Murphy  
Tony Murphy  
David Potton  
Julie Potton  
Graeme Robertson  
Ivan Turner  
Gill Walker  
Ron Walker

## Day 1

Tuesday 25th October

### London Heathrow to Paris

With the group leaving at different times from several UK destinations, most of us did not meet up until late evening in the Ibis Hotel, although most people had had less of a problem this year in finding the right Ibis Hotel.

## Day 2

Wednesday 26th October

### Paris to Antananarivo

After breakfasting in the hotel we departed together for the airport at a reasonable civilized time. The check in, immigration and customs formalities went reasonably smoothly giving us plenty of time for coffee and a look around.

On arriving in the intriguing world that is Madagascar, we spent surprisingly little time getting through the peculiar customs and immigration routines and some of the group even had time to change currency. We then headed for Antananarivo which with the light late night traffic only took about 35 minutes, but it was still after 1pm before most of us got to our beds in Tana Plaza.

## Day 3

Thursday 27th October

### Antananarivo

After a bit of a lay in and a leisurely breakfast following our very late arrival last night, we set off for Tarasoatra Lake where we spent one and a half hours watching a good variety of species which centred mainly around the heronry with it's hundreds of cattle Egret, along with Dimorphic Egret, Night Heron, Black Heron, Squacco Heron and Madagascar Pond Heron, while other species included Comb Duck, Red-billed Teal and both White-faced and Fulvous Tree-ducks and Moorhen, whilst more terrestrial species included Madagascar Kestrel,

Yellow-billed Kite, Madagascar Coucal, Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo, Madagascar White-eye, Madagascar Swamp Warbler, Sakalava Weaver and Madagascar Red Fody.

Unfortunately while at Tarasoatra we heard that our flight to Fort Dauphin had been cancelled, but we still needed to go to the airport to check possible later schedules and to arrange some suitable alternate accommodation, which took some time, although we did see our first Madagascar Wagtail here. A quick drive to look at the accommodation allocated by the airline proved it to be unacceptable, so we had to go back and renegotiated with a somewhat resolute lady, but eventually got to see the airline manager, which got us upgraded to the Hilton Hotel.

After settling in at the Hilton, we set off to visit the zoo and museum, which proved very worthwhile and provided us with an opportunity to see some of the birds and mammals that we hoped to see in the wild during the coming days.

After a very pleasant if somewhat slow dinner we headed off to catch up on some sleep ready for an early start next day.

## Day 4

Friday 28th October

### Antananarivo via Fort Dauphin to Berenty

A 4am wake up was required for our early morning flight to Fort Dauphin, where on arrival the luggage was slow appearing even for here, once away however we soon stopped again near the small bridge on the airport entrance road to look at some Painted Snipe, two males and a colourful female, we also saw Madagascar Pond Heron, Madagascar Kingfisher and Madagascar Cisticola here.

We made only one stop, on our journey to Berenty, which was more for a leg stretch than anything, but we did see Madagascar Buzzard Crested Drongo and Striped-throated Jery here.

After settling in and lunch we headed off at about 3.30pm for a walk in the gallery forest, which proved to be very good as we had excellent views of both White-browed and T Scops Owl, we also saw Giant Coua, Crested Coua, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Broad-billed Roller and Francese's Sparrowhawk.

All three diurnal lemurs were also seen, Ring-tailed, Red-fronted Brown, with particularly good numbers of Verreaux's Sifaka and at one stage we were able to watch some territorial interaction by two large groups of this species. We also visited the Madagascar Flying Fox colony.

Later before supper we headed off to the spiny forest area for a night walk, which proved excellent as we saw three of the recently split Grey-Brown Mouse Lemur and two White-footed Sportive Lemur, while we also found two species of chameleon

On the way back from supper a few of us did a short night walk back through the gallery forest, seeing Grey Mouse Lemur and another White-footed Sportive as well as three White-browed Owls.

## Day 5

## Saturday 29th October

### Berenty to Fort Dauphin

With now having only one day here we made a 5.15am start for the spiny forest area, where we were shown roosting Grey Brown Mouse Lemur and Torotoroka Scops Owl, but best of all here we found Lafresnaye's Vanga, which are uncommon at this site, while Sub-desert Warbler was also new and we also got good views of numerous Grey-headed Lovebirds.

After returning to the lodge we then set off into the gallery forest at just after 7am, but it was already starting to get more difficult to find the early morning birds, although we did see six more Giant Coua as well as our first Common Newtonia, while Ashy Cuckoo-shrike was also new for most of the group.

We headed out to the river but even here it was quiet, although we did see Green Sandpiper, which is rare in Madagascar, along with Common Sandpiper, Madagascar Kingfisher, Comb Duck and more Grey-headed Lovebirds, while all three of the now familiar diurnal lemurs were also seen in good numbers.

Leaving Berenty around 10am we made several stops on our way back to Fort Dauphin for Madagascar Bush Lark, Sakalava Weaver, Madagascar Pitcher Plant, wood carvings and several photo calls.

After lunch and a short settling in rest period we all headed off to the headland near the Miramar hotel, here we found between 8 and 20 Humpback Whales, many of them distant, but several of them came closer in shore before we had to leave, although they were not breaching and displaying like they often do here. With so little wind, seabird passage was very poor but we did see first Kelp Gull and four species of tern, Lesser and Greater Crested, Roseate and Saunter's Little Tern.

## Day 6

## Sunday 30th October

### Fort Dauphin to Antsirabe

This was mainly a travelling day and we had our bags out ready to be taken to the airport by 7.15, this enabled us to have a more leisurely breakfast before we also had to depart.

Our flight back to Tana was via Tulear where on our arrival back in the capital we met by our almost new bus and were soon skirting the city, before eventually heading off south towards Antsirabe. We made only one brief stop along the way, which was more for a leg stretch and toilet break than anything.

We did see a few species as we travelled though, including our first Purple Heron and Brown-throated Martin, while other species included Hammerkop and Little Swift.

We reached Antsirabe earlier than usual, arriving before dark, which allowed us plenty of time to settle and even have a quick look around the town.

## Day 7

Monday 31st October

### Antsirabe to Ranomafana

This was again mainly a travelling day, with us leaving Antsirabe around 7am to continue our journey south.

Our first stop was at Ambositra for toilets, drinks and a look around some of the shops, as the town is famous for its wood carving and marketry work, while the toilet signs at the local Grand Hotel are also a notable feature.

The next stop was at a remnant of upland rain forest which is a rare habitat these days, here we heard our first Cuckoo-Roller, while in the adjacent wet area we had brief views of a Madagascar Snipe as it flew down the valley, while other species here included Great White Heron, Purple Heron Madagascar Cisticola and Madagascar Swamp Warbler.

As we travelled on we made a few more stops, including one for an unusually good packed lunch, while those for birds included sightings of our first Black Swift and another for a Sooty Falcon, where we also saw Alpine Swift. As we neared Ranomafana and left the main road we made a few stops along the long rough road which eventually leads to the village, here we found amongst other species our first White-throated Rail, Madagascar Pratincole and Blue Coua. We finally reached our hotel the Centrest just after 6pm, allowing plenty of time for us to settle in before supper.

## Day 8

Tuesday 1st November

### Ranomafana

A 5am breakfast was quickly followed by a trip into the rain forest and at the main park entrance where we left the bus we saw several new birds including Blue Pigeon, Green Jery and Madagascar Starling, while Striped Jery was also new for many of the group.

We then followed the trail across the river and up towards the view point. It was a strenuous but extremely rewarding morning, we managed to see a number of species of lemur, which included Greater Bamboo, Red-bellied, Red-fronted Brown and Milne-Edward's Sifaka, while birds also included some excellent species, with Henst's Goshawk, Brown Mesite, Pitta-like Ground Roller, White-headed Vanga and Cuckoo Roller. Eventually we reached the view point where we rested for a while, but we saw nothing new here apart from an attractive small day Gecko *Phelsuma quadricellata*.

In the late afternoon we retraced our steps to the view point, seeing Red Forest Rat on the way up and Tony and Enid who only came partway found our first Forest Rock Thrush on their way down.

On our arrival at the viewpoint feeding station we soon got stunning views of the habituated Brown Mouse Lemur, as they came to feed on the banana which is smeared on suitable branches, but the highlight here are the rare Fanaloka which also came for tidbits, while Ringed-tailed Mongoose and Red-bellied Lemur also put in an appearance, we also found a few birds as we waited including our first White-throated Oxylabes as well as both Spectacled and Long-billed Greenbul. Our journey back down in the dark was a disappointment as we found nothing new.

## Day 9

Wednesday 2nd November

### Ranomafana

Only about half of the group ventured out for an early morning excursion to Vohiparara, where we had an excellent time getting stunning close views of Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity as they came to a nest, while other rare and difficult species included Cryptic Warbler, Crossley's Babbler and Grey-headed Greenbul, but Rufous-headed Ground Roller and Yellow-browed Oxylebes proved difficult, and although seen by me were only glimpsed by the group, while Brown Emutail remained invisible to all of us, although we heard several calling. Other more regular species seen here, included Blue Vanga, Tylas Vanga, Blue Coua, Souimanga Sunbird and Madagascar Brush Warbler.

In the afternoon Graham who particularly wanted to see Golden Bamboo Lemur went off with Jean Chry our best lemur finder to the area near Bell Vue to have another try for them, successfully locating two of them along with five more Greater Bamboo Lemur and a Red-bellied Lemur, while birds seen included Spectacled Greenbul and Forest Rock Thrush.

The rest of us apart from Julie and David who walked back down the road from Dom Nature, went back up to Vohiparara where we visited an area of marshland to successfully find Grey Emutail, then instead of climbing the ridge as we had done in the morning, this time we walked back down the road towards the park entrance finding our first Madagascar Fluff-tail along the way, while lemurs included Red-fronted Brown and Red-bellied. We also heard Forest Rock Thrush and saw several other common species.

## Day 10

Thursday 3rd November

### Ranomafana to Isalo

Only a few of us went on the early morning visit back to Vohiparara, while the rest had a lay in. We concentrated on the three main species we had failed to see yesterday, but with limited time still only managed good views of Rufous-headed Ground Roller, but we also saw our first Dark Newtonia, while mammals included our first Eastern Bamboo Lemur and two Milne Edward's Sifaka.

Later we were picked up by the rest of the group who had not left the hotel until 8.30am, but they had made a few stops on the way up seeing Madagascar Fluff-tail, which two of the group had not seen yesterday as well as both Red-bellied and Red-fronted Brown lemurs.

It then took over two hours along the bad road before we reached the main highway, and we were all glad of a coffee break by the time we reached the nice patisserie at Fianarantsoa, the regional capital, where we also had time for a little shopping.

After passing through some of Madagascar's most beautiful highland scenery, our next main stop was at Ambalavao where we visited the paper making factory to see the Antaimoro traditional paper making techniques, a type of paper mache decorated with flowers. We also found and photographed Carpet Chameleon *Furcifer lateralis* and Oustalet's Chameleon *Furcifer oustaleti* in the garden.

On reaching Ihosy we had to stop for fuel which allowed us time for drinks and ice cream, before we set off up into the hills to reach the Horombe Plateau, where the newly completed tarmac road allowed us to speed quickly across the vast open plain, where after some diligent searching we eventually found a superb male Reunion Harrier, and just before dark a Marsh Owl flew across the road in front of us.

## Day 11

Friday 4th November

### Isalo

Very few ventured out before breakfast, but those who did managed to see Grey-headed Lovebird, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Broad-billed Roller along with our first Benson's Rock Thrush and lots of iguana *Oplurus quadrimaculatus*.

After a more leisurely breakfast we set off to the small town of Ranohira to collect our permits and find a local guide. It was then a slow drive through the Isalo National Park to reach the parking area near the river and it was already quite warm as we walked up towards the oasis in Canyon de Singes, where we stopped to photograph a herd of zebu cattle being driven round and round in a small rice paddy to puddle the mud ready for planting.

Once in the canyon we headed straight off to see a group of obliging Verreaux's Sifaka, while Ringed-tailed Lemur were heard calling, but birds were few although we did get stunning views of Madagascar Bee-eater along with sightings of Common Jery, Ashy Cuckoo-shrike, Grey-headed Lovebird and Benson's Rock Thrush. We also saw the Dwarf Baobab *Pachypodium rosulatum*, with its beautiful yellow flowers, this plant is also known as the Elephant's Foot Plant, other species here included a number Bismarkia palms.

After returning for lunch at hotel Relais de la Reine, everyone did their own thing, which varied from swimming and sunbathing to just catching up on various chores.

In the late afternoon we drove back to the main road to look for Madagascar Francolin, but failed to find them, but we saw a few other species including a number of very attractive terrestrial orchids and also experienced a superb sunset, with the changing light casting different coloured hues on the spectacular rock formations.

## Day 12

Saturday 5th November

### Isalo to Tulear

After a 4.15 breakfast we made a very early start on our journey south to Zombise and with the road having been recently resurfaced we were soon passing through the boom town of Iiakaka, where the population exploded from a couple of hundred to thousands after the discovery of sapphires.

A further 40kms or so down the road we reached an area of deciduous forest, which forms part of the Zombitse and Vohibasias National Park, where after

spending some time procuring a local guide we were quickly off into the forest, which proved to be a very interesting walk as we soon found a Sportive Lemur sitting outside its roost hole and with some work we also eventually found and got excellent views of the rare Appert's Greenbul, the endemic specialty of this forest.

Other species seen here included Madagascar Hoopoe, Common Newtonia and Long-billed Greenbul. We also heard Coquerel's Coua and during the entire walk were also accompanied by the resounding calls of Cuckoo Rollers, some of which we saw

Apart for one stop for drinks we made good progress and arrived at our lunch stop, the arboreteum, near Tulear, early, here we had an excellent guided walk around the gardens, enabling us to see many of the spiny forest plant specialities as well as several birds, including our first Green-capped Coua, we were also able to watch a delightful pair of Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher, one of which was sitting on its extremely delicate nest, while a Souamanga Sunbird was also seen nest building and amongst other species seen were Madagascar Buttonquail and Sub-desert Warbler.

As we lunched out on the veranda we were able to watch very close Sakalava Weaver and several other common species coming to a dripping tap to drink.

After heading for Tulear we booked into the Hotel Capricorne and had a short rest before most of us set off in the heat of the afternoon to visit an area of dry forest above Sainte Augustine Bay to look for the recently discovered Red-shouldered Vanga, but although we heard a couple calling, it was not really surprising that at this time of day, we failed to find them in the dense spiny scrub, although we did get excellent views of Chabert's Vanga and also managed to see the other two rare specialities found here, Verreaux's Coua and Lafresnaye's Vanga. More common species seen included Grey-headed Lovebird and Sub-desert Warbler and on our way back several Madagascar Nightjar were seen.

## Day 13

## Sunday 6th November

### Tulear to Anakao

Due to the difficulty with spring tides we had to make an earlier than expected start for Anakao, but this did provide us with a much calmer sea and much pleasanter crossing, although we saw little of interest apart from one Greater Crested Tern and a few flying fish.

On reaching our destination we settled into the much improved accommodation at Safari Vezo Hotel which now includes indoor toilets, before we headed off to the uninhabited island of Nosy Ve, here again the spring tide was a problem and we had to land at the southern end of the island, but this meant we were able to scope the tern flock on a nearby islet, these were mainly Sandwich Tern, with a good scattering of Lesser Crested Tern and a few Greater Crested Tern, but the highlight was a Sooty Gull, which flew in to land amongst them, this being a new bird species for Madagascar.

We then had walk all the way down the island to the Red-tailed Tropicbird colony, but we did see a few waders along the way including White-fronted Plover, Grey Plover, Whimbrel and Turnstone, as well as Grey Heron and several Dimorphic Egret.

A few of the group went snorkelling for a while before walking to the tropicbirds colony, where everyone had good views and some excellent photographic opportunities, while Ian also managed to see a Caspian Tern.



As only Graeme had managed to see Littoral Rock Thrush around the hotel we set off at about five pm for a short walk, soon finding the Rock Thrush, as well as several Subdesert Warbler and Madagascar Bush Lark, we also had a number of pairs of Kittlitz's Plover, some of which had small chicks.

## Day 14

Monday 7th November

### Anakao to Ifaty

Again due to the tide we had to make an early start back, which, again provided a smooth crossing, but again we saw little of interest along the way, although as we arrived at Tulear some of the group saw a Humblot's Heron fly by.

Heading off for Ifaty we made several stops along the way, finding a number of new wading birds such as Ringed Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Crab Plover Black-winged Stilt, Sanderling and Little Stint as well as the distinct Madagascar race of Three-banded Plover. We also saw our first Madagascar Harrier Hawk which eventually drifted right over us.

After lunching and settling in to our more luxurious beach side accommodation, we were able to swim snorkel or just rest through the heat of the afternoon, even a little birdwatching took place with a variety of waders along the shore and several more interesting species such as Green-capped Coua and Crested Coua being seen in the hotel's vast grounds.

Later we set out for a short visit to the local salt pans come sewage works. Here we found conditions extremely dry and there was none of the usual wader abundance, but we still saw a few species of wader including the endemic Madagascar Plover, while other species around the included Hoopoe, Chabert's Vanga and Madagascar Mannikin.

## Day 15

Tuesday 8th November

### Ifaty

We made an early start for the Rena la Botanical Park, which is situated in one of the remnants of spiny forest, here Claude one of the local guides with his helpers managed to find us both Long-tailed Ground Roller and Subdesert Mesite, two of the very special endemic birds of this habitat. We also saw other specialities of the area such as Archbold's Newtonia and Thamnornis Warbler along with Greater Vasa Parrot and Sickle-billed Vanga, which were new for some of the group, while other species seen included Madagascar Buttonquail, Madagascar Harrier Hawk and White-headed Vanga.

During our afternoon rest period a few waders were seen along the shore, including our first Bar-tailed Godwit and Curlew as well as Greater Sandplover and two more Madagascar Plover.

Later in the afternoon several of us returned to the spiny forest to look for Running Coua, which we had missed in the morning. The guides this time were Mosa's family, but the area of forest here is being rapidly cut down and some of the group found the terrain difficult to walk over with the occasional irregular cut stumps. We failed

to find the Running Coua in spite of visiting an occupied nest, but we did see three more Sub-desert Mesite and everyone got excellent close views of Archbold's Newtonia.

## Day 16

Wednesday 9th November

### Ifaty to Mahajanga

This was mainly a travelling day, but three of us successfully searched the grounds early morning to find our elusive Running Coua, while Tony and Enid went later to catch up on it.

On our drive to Tulear we stopped to view some waders in a bay and found our first Terek Sandpiper, while Curlew was new for some of the group and other species seen included White-faced Whistling Duck and Crab Plover.

Several other species were seen as we travelled including Madagascar Hoopoe and lots of Madagascar Bee-eater, many of which were nesting in tiny foot high banks alongside the road.

Our flight back to Tana was uneventful and with time to spare before our onward flight we headed off to the crocodile farm for lunch. There is also a small zoo here and after our meal were able to photograph various herpetiles as well as a few mammals, while the excellent shop here was also well frequented.

The rest of the day was taken up by our flight to Mahajanga and it was early evening by the time we reached the Piscine hotel, which is situated overlooking the sea and has an extraordinarily large swimming pool.

## Day 17

Thursday 10th November

### Mahajanga to Ampijoroa

We made an early start for but we soon stopped for fuel, which gave us the chance to catch up on a few personal supplies for our stay at Ampijoroa.

Our major stop on the journey was at Amboromalandy reservoir, but due to it being the local market day we were unable to visit our usual view point, so crossed the dam and followed the trail up the other side, this entailed a walk in the increasing heat, but we did find several new species, which included African Pigmy Goose, Hottentot Teal and Madagascar Jacana, while other species included Squacco Heron, Purple Heron, Comb Duck and Black-winged Stilt.

On reaching Ampijoroa Forestry Station part of the much larger Ankarafantsika Nature Reserve, we settled into to the basic but much improved accommodation, before heading for lunch at the new restaurant, after which due to the heat of the day we had a rest period.

Late afternoon we went for a walk in the dry forest area behind the station, here in the more open forest both birds and mammals area somewhat easier to see and we found several new species, such as Barn Owl, Rufous Vanga, Coquerel's Coua and Red-capped Coua while mammals included Coquerel's Sifaka and other bird species

seen included Lesser Vasa Parrot, Grey-headed Lovebird, Crested Coua, Sickle-billed Vanga and White-headed Vanga.

After dark we went for a night walk in the dry forest behind the research station, here we found our first Western Woolly Lemur and Golden Brown Mouse Lemur, while later near the restaurant we had good views of an Mongoose Lemur.

## Day 18

Friday 11th November

### Ampijoroa

Our early morning walk was into the gallery forest area behind lake, with our main target being the rare Schlegel's Asity, one of Madagascars most beautiful endemic birds, and we were fortunate that almost everyone got excellent views, first of a pair and later another single male, while those who missed yesterdays Red-capped Coua also caught up on this species.

After breakfast we all went for a boat trip around the lake, with one group going at 9am and the other at 10am, amongst the many species seen were a pair of the rare and threatened Madagascar Fish Eagle plus a juvenile, while other species seen amongst many other, where Glossy Ibis, Madagascar Jacana, Allen's Gallinule, Purple Heron, Madagascar Pond Heron and African Darter.

Later in the afternoon we went for a walk in the dry forest area again to look for White-breasted Mesite and Rufous Vanga, obtaining excellent views of both, while we also saw the remaining one of the eight species of lemur to be found we had not seen Milne Edwards Sportive Lemur.

A night walk before supper in the forest area behind the lake produced both Golden-brown Mouse Lemur and Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur.

## Day 19

Saturday 12th November

### Ampijoroa to Antananarivo

On our final morning here most of the group went for a walk in the dry forest area behind the research station, where we had an excellent time, the highlight being a Banded Kestrel, while other good species included Frances's Sparrowhawk, White-throated Rail, Coquerels Coua, Red-capped Coua, Cuckoo Roller, Madagascar Hoopoe, Long-billed Greenbul, Rufous Vanga, Van Dam's Vanga and Blue Vanga, while mammals included Coquerl's Sifaka and Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemur.

Those who had accommodation overlooking the lake also saw Madagascar Fish Eagle, Glossy Ibis and Allen's Gallinule before we left.

Once away on our journey back to Mahajanga we made a few stops to break up our journey including one near Amboromalandy reservoir, but we saw little new although some interesting species were seen including Madagascar Jacana and Humblot's Heron.

After a nice lunch at a good hotel, our return flight back to Tana was somewhat late leaving Mahajanga, but we still arrived back at the hotel Tana Plaza in good time to go for our very slowly served meal.

## Day 20

Sunday 13th November

### Antananarivo to Andasibe

After a Sunday morning lay in we left Tana around 8.30 am and stopped only to look for Madagascar Pratincole at the Mangoro river bridge, but we failed to find any due to disturbance created by the excessive Sunday activity on the river. We then stopped again in the nearby town for fuel, which enabled us to stock up on bottled water and other items for the remainder of our stay.

After setting into the comfortable Vakona Lodge we headed back to Perinet to collect permits and meet up with our local guide Maurice for a walk in the forest, where we found our first Ward's Flycatcher and Red-fronted Coua, while herpetiles included our first Short-nosed Chameleon *Calumma brevicornis* and a green tree frog *Boophis virida*. We were also taken to visit a nest of Collared Nightjar, where the pair were found to be sitting side by side.

After drinks at the Feon ny Ala lodge where we were able to photograph the habituated Greater Dwarf Lemurs, we set off for a night walk along the road, finding our first Eastern Woolly Lemur and Hog-nosed Chameleon *Calumma nastuta*. Finally we ventured into the forest to successfully find a Lowland Streaked Tenrec.

## Day 21

Monday 14th November

### Mantadia

We made an early start for Mantadia, where we had an excellent time finding both Short-legged and Scaly Ground Rollers, both of which were surprisingly close to the road, while other new species included Madagascar Pigmy Kingfisher, Madagascar Spinetail, Nuthatch Vanga, Wedge-tailed Jery and Rand's Warbler, while amongst other species were Tylas Vanga, Madagascar Starling and Grey-crowned Greenbul. Mammals were less obliging but we found a couple of groups of Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur, which were new for several of our group, while we also heard the evocative calls of both Indri and Black and White Ruffed Lemur.

Only eight of the group returned to Mantadia in the afternoon, where our first stop was for Madagascar Rail, which everyone saw well. We then drove right up to the quarry area in the hope of finding Black and White Ruffed Lemur but failed even to hear any, but birds included a nesting pair of Madagascar Little Grebe, Blue Pigeon, Blue Vanga, Long-billed Greenbul and White-headed Vanga.

Later we had a night walk back along the road, finding our first White-toothed Sportive Lemur as well as finding Greater Dwarf and Eastern Bamboo Lemurs again.

## Day 22

Tuesday 15th November

### Perinet

Our early morning excursion was to look for Indri again, eventually finding them much lower down the hills than usual, which enabled us to spend a considerable time with them, we also found another Nose-horned Chameleon *Calumma nastuta* here, but we failed to find any Long-eared Owl at a known site we visited.

After the Indri we split into two groups, one going further while the other headed slowly back, but both managed to find Crested Ibis, while our group also found Red-tailed Vanga and another Lowland Streaked Tenrec, while other species seen included White-throated Rail, Blue Pigeon and Greater Vasa Parrot.

During the afternoon almost all of the group visited the lemur island, which belongs to Vakona Lodge and where they were able to get close photos of the tame Black and White Ruffed, Ring-tailed and Common Brown Lemur.

Those of us who went back to Perinet again in the late afternoon saw both Indri and Brown Lemur again, but birds were few although we did see Red-fronted Coua, Blue Coua, Blue Vanga, Madagascar Cuckoo Roller and Long-billed Greenbul. We also saw our first Rain Forest Scops Owl, but in spite of much effort we failed to find the Long-eared Owl.

## Day 23

Wednesday 16th November

### Andasibe to Antananarivo

For the keener few, we made a very early start to Mantadia for a final attempt for Diademed Sifaka and to try to catch up on a few missed birds. We had to climb to the top of the ridge and down a steep slope to locate the Sifaka, a group of five, which we watched for a while. Birds were scarce though and with only limited time we saw little but one good feeding flock as we neared the road produced Wedge-tailed Jery, which was new for some of the group, while other species included Grey-headed Greenbul, Spectacled Greenbul and Common Jery.

After a late breakfast and packing we set off on our journey back to Antananarivo, on which we only made a few brief stops for fuel and at the Mangoro river bridge again for the Madagascar Pratincole.

We again had rooms at the hotel Tana Plaza and in the afternoon most of the group went off for last minute shopping to the crafts market, which has a good selection of local merchandise.

Later we headed off towards the airport to have dinner at the hotel Tonga Soa where we had a reasonable meal before going early to the near by airport to slowly proceed through the usual formalities, before our slightly delayed flight headed off for Paris.

## Day 24

## Thursday 17th November

### Antananarivo to London

We had a reasonable return flight to Paris, where we said our goodbyes to those of the group heading to different UK destinations, before the remainder of us caught our onward connection back to Heathrow, where the usual farewells ended another interesting tour.



Common name	Scientific name	October					November																	
		27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Green-backed Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	1	1	1							1		3	6	3	1								
Black Egret	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	14													4	4	8							
Dimorphic Heron	<i>Egretta dimorpha</i>	30+	2	3	1	15			3	2		10	6	4	2	1		3	3					
Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	20+	8	5	20c	8			5	1	2					10	2	15	8					
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>				1	1			1							1	4	1		2				
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>											1	4			1	2	1						
Humblot's Heron	<i>Ardea humbloti</i>																							
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>		2	1	3	3			3	1					2			1	3					
Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>				3																			
African Openbill	<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>	1																						
Madagascar White Ibis	<i>Threskiornis berniere</i>																							
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>															20+	20+							
Madagascar Crested Ibis	<i>Lophotibis cristata</i>																							
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>																					2		
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>																							
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>																							
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	11																						
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	60+														6	30c	20+						
White-backed Duck	<i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>																							
Comb Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	40c		30c												4								
African Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>															3								
Meller's Duck	<i>Anas melleri</i>																							
Madagascar Teal	<i>Anas bernieri</i>																							
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	80+			60	20c										2								
Hottentot Teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>															30c								





Common name	Scientific name	October					November																
		27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Madagascar Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura insularis</i>							2	1										h	h	h		
Slender-billed Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura watersi</i>																						
Madagascar Wood Rail	<i>Canirallus kioloides</i>																						
Madagascar Rail	<i>Rallus madagascariensis</i>																			1	h		
White-throated Rail	<i>Dryolimnas cuvieri</i>		h		1								1		h	2	1				1		
Sakalava Rail	<i>Amauornis olivieri</i>																						
Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>																						
Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>																						
Allen's Gallinule	<i>Porphyryla alleni</i>																2	1					
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	5	1													2	2	1	2	1	1		
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>																						
Madagascar Jacana	<i>Actophilornis albinucha</i>															2	5	2					
Greater Painted Snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>		3																				
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>												5		6								
Crab Plover	<i>Dromas ardeola</i>												9		7								
Madagascar Pratincole	<i>Glareola ocularis</i>					3																	
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>												5	7	2								
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>												30c	12	6	2	2	1					
Madagascar Plover	<i>Charadrius thoracicus</i>													4	2								
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>													2	2								
White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>												7	3	5	2							
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>															1							
Lesser Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>											4	4	5	2	30+							
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>																						
Madagascar Snipe	<i>Gallinago macrodactyla</i>																						

Common name	Scientific name	October					November																	
		27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>													1										
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>										5	3	8	5	20c									
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>													1	1									
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>																							
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	1	6											5	4									
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			1																				
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>															2								
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>																							
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1	2											2	1	2	2	1		2				
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>													50c	12	20+								
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>													50+	100c									
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>													1										
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>													40+	10	20+								
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>																							
Sooty Gull	<i>Larus hemprichii</i>													1										
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>			6																				
Grey-headed Gull	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>		1	1																				
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>																							
Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>																							
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>			8										4	2									
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i>			4										20c	5									
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>													200+										
Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>																							
Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>			1																				
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>																							

Common name	Scientific name	October					November																		
		27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
Bridled Tern	<i>Sterna anaethetus</i>																								
Sooty Tern	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>																								
Saunders's Tern	<i>Sterna saundersi</i>			2																					
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>																								
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>																								
Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>																								
Madagascar Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles personatus</i>			10																					
Malagascar Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia picturata</i>	2	4	10		2		3	2				3	15	2	8	20c	8	2	4	8				
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>		20c	20+				6	12				1	5	6		9	5	15						
Madagascar Green Pigeon	<i>Treron australis</i>			2					1									3	3						
Madagascar Blue Pigeon	<i>Alectroenas madagascariensis</i>					8	2														6	3			
Greater Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>							3							2				4		2	1			
Lesser Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>		2	4		2			3								4	6	1		6	5			
Grey-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis canus</i>			30+								30+			4		11	6	2	h					
Thick-billed Cuckoo	<i>Pachycoccyx audeberti</i>																								
Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>	1	2h	h	h			6	3	h	5				2		h	h	1		h	h			
Giant Coua	<i>Coua gigas</i>		1	6																					
Coquerel's Coua	<i>Coua coquereli</i>										h						2	2	2						
Red-breasted Coua	<i>Coua serriana</i>																						2		
Red-fronted Coua	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>																				1	h	2		
Running Coua	<i>Coua cursor</i>															1+h									
Red-capped Coua	<i>Coua ruficeps</i>																1	4	2						
Green-capped Coua	<i>Coua olivaceiceps</i>											3													
Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>																								
Verreaux's Coua	<i>Coua verreauxi</i>																								

Common name	Scientific name	October					November																
		27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>					3		3	1											3	6		
Madagascar Coucal	<i>Centropus toulou</i>	1	5	4				5	4			h	2	2	5	1	5	4	4	3	4	7	
Madagascar Red Owl	<i>Tyto soumagnei</i>																						
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>															1							
Torotoroka Owl	<i>Otus madagascariensis</i>		1	1										h	h			1					
Rainforest Scops Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>																					1	
White-browed Owl	<i>Ninox superciliaris</i>		3	3																			
Madagascar Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio madagascariensis</i>																						
Marsh Owl	<i>Asio capensis</i>								1														
Collared Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus enarratus</i>											2	2										
Madagascar Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>	h									2	7		4	2		3	4	h				
Madagascar Spinetail	<i>Zoonavena grandidieri</i>																					8	
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>			4		2				8	20+				4	6	4	20+	6				
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>		2		2				3		1												
African Black Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>	6		20+						5								2					
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	10		1	8																		
Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo vintsioides</i>	1	2	2					1					2		4	2	4	3	2	1		
Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx madagascariensis</i>			2																2	2		
Madagascar Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>	1	5	8		h			12	10	40+	4	30+	20c	30c	30+	12	50c	10	8	4		
Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>		5	3						3							20+	15	12		6	1	
Short-legged Ground Roller	<i>Brachypteracias leptosomus</i>																				1		
Scaly Ground Roller	<i>Brachypteracias squamigera</i>																				1		
Pitta-like Ground Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>							1													2		
Rufous-headed Ground Roller	<i>Atelornis crossleyi</i>								4	2													
Long-tailed Ground Roller	<i>Uratelornis chimaera</i>													1									



Common name	Scientific name	October					November																	
		27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Dark Newtonia	<i>Newtonia amphichroa</i>								2															
Archbold's Newtonia	<i>Newtonia archboldi</i>													3										
Red-tailed Newtonia	<i>Newtonia fanovanae</i>																							
Madagascar Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cherina</i>		2	2	1	4			1	8	6	9	5	1	3	2	1				1	1		
Ward's Flycatcher	<i>Pseudobias wardi</i>																		1	3	2			
Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone mutata</i>		4	2			3	2		2	3	2	1	8		4	6	2			5	10		
Common Jery	<i>Neomixis tenella</i>	1	8	5	8	3	5	h	h	5	6		8	20+	2	12	10	6	4	8	5			
Green Jery	<i>Neomixis viridis</i>						1															1		
Stripe-throated Jery	<i>Neomixis striatigula</i>		h	6			1		h											h	h	h		
Cryptic Warbler	<i>Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi</i>							2	h															
Wedge-tailed Jery	<i>Neomixis flavoviridis</i>																					1		
White-throated Oxylabes	<i>Oxylabes madagascariensis</i>						1		1															
Madagascar Yellowbrow	<i>Crossleyia xanthophrys</i>							1	h															
Crossley's Babbler	<i>Mystacornis crossleyi</i>						h	1			h											1		
Long-billed Greenbul	<i>Bernieria madagascariensis</i>						1	4	1		1						5	8			3	7		
Spectacled Greenbul	<i>Bernieria zosterops</i>						1	1														1		
Appert's Greenbul	<i>Bernieria apperti</i>										3													
Dusky Greenbul	<i>Bernieria tenebrosa</i>																							
Grey-crowned Greenbul	<i>Bernieria cinereiceps</i>								1													2		
Souimanga Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia sovimanga</i>		8	2		5	5	12	10	3	20+	4	4	20c	3	6	6	7	12	7	8			
Long-billed Green Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia notata</i>						3	1	4		2					2	4	2			2	3		
Madagascar White-eye	<i>Zosterops maderaspatanus</i>	50c	20+	10	2	6	5	5	4		3										2	6	6	
Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>																						1	
Red-Shouldered Vanga	<i>Calicalicus rufocarpalis</i>										2h													
Rufous Vanga	<i>Schetba rufa</i>																	4	5					

Common name	Scientific name	October					November																	
		27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>							1	h	1														
Lafresnaye's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris xenopirostris</i>			1							1			1										
Van Dam's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris damii</i>																1	2						
Pollen's Vanga	<i>Xenopirostris polleni</i>															1								
Sickle-billed Vanga	<i>Falcoea palliata</i>													3		4	12	3						
White-headed Vanga	<i>Artamella viridis</i>						1	h						1		2	2	2		4	2			
Chabert's Vanga	<i>Leptopterus chabert</i>						2	3					4	10		3	5	8						
Blue Vanga	<i>Cyanolanius madagascarinus</i>							2										2		3	7			
Bernier's Vanga	<i>Oriolia bernieri</i>																							
Helmet Vanga	<i>Euryceros prevostii</i>																							
Nuthatch Vanga	<i>Hypositta corallirostris</i>																				2			
Tylas Vanga	<i>Tylas eduardi</i>						h	2													1	1		
Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>		12	12	1	4	6	4	2	3	20c	1	10	20+	8	10	8	9	6	10	6			
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	7	50c	50+	20+	30+			20c	20c	30+	11	10	8	3	12	20c	5	20c		15			
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	50+	30+	30+	100+	50c	3		30+	15	50c	20+	50c	20	20c	40+	12	50+	100+	10	5			
Madagascar Starling	<i>Saroglossa aurata</i>						5														7			
Nelicourvi Weaver	<i>Ploceus nelicourvi</i>																				8	7		
Sakalava Weaver	<i>Ploceus sakalava</i>	2	6	4	6				2		30+		15	30+	12	50+	20+	12	12		2			
Madagascar Red Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	20+		20c	8	5		6	3	3	20c	20c	4	12	2		10	40+	6	6	1			
Forest Fody	<i>Foudia eminentissima</i>							5					1	1							3	2		
Madagascar Mannikin	<i>Lonchura nana</i>	7				50+		30c		30c			4		5	5				1				



## Mammals

		October					November																
		27th	28th	29th	30th	31st	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	
Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>				1																		
Greater Mastiff Bat	<i>Tadarida leucistigma</i>																						
Madagascar Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus fufus</i>		200+																				
Lowland Streaked Tenrec	<i>Hemicentetes semiispinosus</i>																	1			1		
Greater Hedgehog Tenrec	<i>Setifer setosus</i>																1			1			
Eastern Red Forest Rat	<i>Nesomys rufus</i>						2		1											1			
Western Tuft-tailed Rat	<i>Eliurus myoxinus</i>																						
Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>																				1		
Fanaloka	<i>Fossa fossana</i>						2																
Ringed-tailed Mongoose	<i>Galidia elegans</i>						1																
Grey Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus murinus</i>		1													5							
Brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus rufus</i>						3					1		1									
Grey-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus griseorufus</i>		2	3																			
Golden-brown Mouse Lemur	<i>Microcebus ravelobensis</i>																			4			
Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cherogalus major</i>																			1	1		
Greater Dwarf Lemur	<i>Cherogalus medius</i>																				2	3	
Milne-Edwards Sportive	<i>Lepilemur edwardsi</i>																			1	1		
White-footed Sportive	<i>Lepilemur leucopus</i>		4								1												
Small-tooth Sportive	<i>Lepilemur microdon</i>																					2	
Red-tailed Sportive Lemur	<i>Lepilemur ruficaudalus</i>																						
Ringed-tailed Lemur	<i>Lemur catta</i>		40c	30c								h										2	
Mongoose Lemur	<i>Lemur mongoz</i>																				1		
Red-bellied Lemur	<i>Lemur rubiventer</i>						5	6	2														
Brown Lemur	<i>Lemur fulvus fulvus</i>																						1

		October					November																
		27th	28th	29th	30th	31st	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	
Red-fronted Lemur	<i>Lemur fulvus rufus</i>		20+	5			8	2	2														
Grey Gentle Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur grieus griseus</i>																			8			
Greater Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur simus</i>						3	5															
Golden Bamboo Lemur	<i>Hapalemur aureus</i>							2															
Black & White Ruffed Lemur	<i>Varecia variegata variegata</i>																				h		
Eastern Woolly Lemur	<i>Avahi langiger laniger</i>								1										2				
Western Woolly Lemur	<i>Avahi langiger occidentalis</i>															2							
Indri	<i>Indri indri</i>																				h	4	
Diademed Sifaka	<i>Proithecus diadema diadema</i>											8											
Milne-Edward's Diademed Sifaka	<i>Proithecus d. edwardsi</i>						3		2														
Coquerl's Sifaka	<i>Proithecus verreauxi coquerli</i>															11	12	8					
Verreaux's Sifaka	<i>Proithecus v. verreauxi</i>		40+	12						5													
Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>																						
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>			10+	2																		



