

Helmet Vanga (Craig Robson)

CLASSIC MADAGASCAR

13 - 30 OCTOBER / 3 NOVEMBER 2022

LEADER: CRAIG ROBSON

This year brought a welcome resumption of our tours to this amazing endemic-rich Indian Ocean island and delivered an impressive array of Malagasy specialities. Iconic species like the ground rollers, mesites and vangas (21 species including Helmet) were all seen well, and other highlights included Meller's Duck, Bernier's Teal, Madagascar Partridge, all the couas, Collared Nightjar, Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk, Madagascar Sparrowhawk and Madagascar Fish Eagle all at their nests, Madagascar Owl, Madagascar Plover, Madagascar Snipe, Madagascar Sandgrouse, Madagascar Grebe, Madagascar and Malagasy Sacred Ibises, several Humblot's Herons, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, 3 species of Asity, Red-tailed Newtonia, both Brown and Grey Emutails, Appert's Tetraka, and Madagascan Yellowbrow. We also saw 27 species of mammal, with many wonderful lemurs, as well as numerous endemic amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, and dragonflies - a rich assemblage indeed.

As usual, the tour began with a long drive from the capital, Antananarivo, to Ranomafana National Park. There was little for us to see on the way, though we did gain a strong impression of what much of interior Madagascar looks like. We did have time for a birding stop at D'Ankazomivada Community Reserve in the mid-afternoon. The main draw here was Madagascar Snipe, and thanks to our local guide Mamy, we soon set eyes on one, and succeeded in getting several good flight views. Also of interest was our first Madagascar Cuckoo, a couple of typically showy White-throated Rails, Madagascar Cisticola, Mascarene Martin, Malagasy Bulbul, Madagascar Stonechat, and Souimanga Sunbird. We were happy to finally reach our accommodation just outside the national park boundary.

With the help of very experienced local guides Stefan and son, we had the following two days and an early morning to search for all of the specialities in and around this superb rainforest reserve. The results of our endeavours speak for themselves, with sightings of Malagasy Palm Swift, Malagasy Coucal, Blue and Redfronted Couas, a tame pair of Brown Mesites, Malagasy Sparrowhawk, Madagascar Buzzard, Cuckoo-roller, Scaly, Pitta-like and Rufous-headed Ground Rollers (the latter for but a few of us), Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, Malagasy Kestrel, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Velvet and Common Sunbird Asities, Red-tailed, Pollen's, White-headed, Chabert, Blue, Tylas and Crossley's Vangas, Dark and Common Newtonias, Ward's Flycatcher, Madagascar Cuckooshrike, Crested Drongo, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Malagasy Brush Warbler, the sneaky Brown Emutail, White-throated Oxylabes, Long-billed Bernieria, Cryptic Warbler, a good number of Wedge-tailed Jeries, Spectacled and Grey-crowned Tetrakas, a skulking pair of Madagascar Yellowbrows, Rand's Warbler, Common, Green and Stripe-throated Jeries, Malagasy White-eye, Madagascar Starling, Madagascar Magpie-Robin, a female Forest Rock Thrush, Malagasy Green Sunbird, the forest-loving Nelicourvi Weaver, a welcome male Forest Fody, Madagascar Mannikin, and Madagascar Wagtail. Beyond Vohiparara, we visited the very interesting areas of heathland and bog, where we connected with the tricky Madagascar Flufftail and Grey Emutail, as well as Madagascar Swamp Warbler. We also scoped two unexpected Malagasy Pond Herons.



Brown Mesite (Craig Robson)

After dark we were treated to the amazing sight of little Red Mouse-lemurs that were attracted to gooey banana, as well as some fascinating endemic chameleons. Other mammal highlights at Ranomafana were Red-bellied, Red-fronted and Golden Bamboo Lemurs and Milne-Edwards's Sifaka.

We left the rainforest behind and drove to a beautiful hotel in the central highlands at Isalo, amidst some stunning scenery. Along the way, we spent some time at the tiny Anja Community Reserve, which protects a small population of Ring-tailed Lemurs, as well as providing valuable tourist-income to the local population. We had nice close-up views of around 15 lemurs, and there were a few birds too, with Madagascar Hoopoe, Olive Bee-eater, Grey-headed Lovebird, and Red Fody. Several Oustalet's Chameleons, arguably the largest species in the world, were also on show. There were few highlights during the remainder of the journey, although a couple of folks saw a pair of Madagascar Partridges cross the road. Before checking-in to our hotel, we spent an hour or so at Isalo Museum, where we were eventually rewarded with a male Benson's Rock Thrush (currently lumped in Forest). Madagascar Nightjar was seen for the first time by most of us in the hotel garden.

Before breakfast the next morning we searched all of the sites that we knew for Madagascar Partridge, without success, even though footprints were seen in several places. So, this one was going to require a Plan-B. Plenty of Madagascar Buttonquails and Madagascar Larks were flushed and there was another male rock thrush.



Appert's Tetraka (Craig Robson)

After enjoying a luxury breakfast, we moved on, travelling the relatively short distance to Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park. We checked-in and met our guides, and then we were off on a circuit through the forest. First up was a roosting White-browed Owl, followed by a pair of Appert's Tetrakas, feeding in the leaf-litter and lower storey, pretty unconcerned by our presence. We also bagged Chestnut-vented (regional form of Crested), Coquerel's and Giant Couas, and a partly obscured Torotoroka Scops Owl at its day-roost. Mammals included our first Verreaux's Sifakas.

From Zombitse, we headed towards the coast, stopping en route at a new location for Madagascar Sandgrouse. Local helpers were already with the birds and led us straight to them, enabling us to get nice looks without too much effort, in the hot afternoon sun.

Our final birding destination of the day was the sub-coastal coral-rag plateau of La Table, where our local guide Mosa led us off down some narrow trails, whistling the song of Red-shouldered Vanga as he went. Before too long there was a distant response, then closer, and closer still, until we were enjoying nice close-ups of a smart male. Although collected in 1947, it was not described as a distinct species until 1997. There were several other good birds at La Table. Both Verreaux's and Running Couas showed well, a male Lafresnaye's Vanga eventually posed for good views, and we saw our first Subdesert Brush Warbler. A short drive took us to our hotel in Toliara (Tulear).

The following morning, we headed down to the harbour and boarded a speedboat for a trip across the clear blue waters to the small island of Nosy Ve. Getting off at the northern end of the island, we walked to the famous breeding colony of Red-tailed Tropicbirds. These stunning birds showed well as usual, both in flight, and under the bushes where they were nesting. Also of great interest was a huddle of five Crab-plovers on the beach, as well as a selection of commoner shorebirds, including White-fronted Plover. A short boat ride then took us to the coastal village of Anakao where our target bird, Littoral Rock Thrush, was quickly found and was very tame and confiding. After drinks at the proprietors resort, we boarded the boat and returned to Toliara, where we enjoyed a good lunch at our hotel.

Moving on north to Ifaty, our next stop was the habitat of the rare Madagascar Plover by some coastal lagoons. A single plover was soon located by Mosa and we had prolonged views. We also enjoyed the local form of Three-banded Plover - now sometimes split-off as Madagascar Three-banded. Afterwards, we drove to the Mosa Family Reserve a short distance from our hotel, to begin our exploration of the area.

With a day-and-a-bit in the spiny forest near Ifaty, there were plenty of targets. Our team of guides did a great job tracking them all down in the Mosa family section of Forêt de baobabs, showing us: the tricky Brown-capped Coua (a potential split from Red-capped), the superb Subdesert Mesite, Malagasy Turtle Dove, Madagascar Buttonquail on the deck, both Madagascar Harrier-Hawk and Madagascar Sparrowhawk at the nest, the iconic Long-tailed Ground Roller, the amazing Sickle-billed Vanga, Archbold's Newtonia, Thamnornis, and Sakalava Weaver. On the mammal front, the highlight was the recently described Petter's Sportive Lemur.

On the way back to the airport at Tulear, we checked a few wetlands, where we found our first Humblot's Heron, a wide range of migratory shorebirds, and Kittlitz's Plover. From Tulear, we flew back to Antananarivo, and then drove east to our hotel at Andasibe (Perinet), arriving after dark.

Andasibe is the focal-point for several protected areas, most of which we visited during our four-day stay. Closest to the village was the VOI MMA Community Reserve, where we spent a good deal of our time. The tricky Red-breasted Coua gave itself up without much of a fuss this year, while a pair of Madagascar Wood Rails needed more than the usual effort. We saw our first group of Madagascar Green Pigeons, a foraging pair of Madagascar Ibises, France's Sparrowhawk, a pair of day-roosting Rainforest Scops Owl at point-blank range, Malagasy Kingfisher, and the remarkable Nuthatch Vanga. Mammal highlights were the incredible Indri, with its far-carrying gibbon-like calls, and Brown and Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemurs. Across the road, Patrice found us a brilliant roosting Madagascan Owl, while a short walk to a nearby location was required in order to see a superb Collared Nightjar on its nest. Night-walks produced the local form of Barn Owl, Goodman's Mouse and Crossley's Dwarf Lemurs, as well as Madagascar Tree Boa and a few neat chameleons. Some of our most memorable sightings, however, were at Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, where we spent the best part of a day. On arrival, we set about seeing the tricky Short-legged Ground Roller, and eventually pinned one down on a surprisingly high branch. Nearby, we were lucky enough to get close views of a circling Henst's Goshawk, and then brilliant looks at a ground-dwelling Crossley's Vanga. A small secluded lake was home to a single Madagascar Grebe. Mammals were brilliant too, as the reserve protects the wonderful Black-andwhite Ruffed Lemur. En route to Mantadia, we had a nice encounter with the rare Madagascar Rail.





Long-tailed Ground Roller and Subdesert Mesite at Ifaty (Craig Robson)

On two days, we had the option to explore parts of the extensive Andasibe-Antavalobe Community Reserve, which is well off the beaten track, being accessed by a poor dirt road and then on foot along primitive trails. Visiting this site required a lot of physical effort, but it did pay off, with a male Bernier's Vanga for some of us during the first visit, and then a pair of Helmet Vangas that Patrice miraculously found us during the second visit. Other good birds at this reserve included Madagascar Blue Pigeon, a more obliging Rufous-headed Ground Roller, plenty of Greater Vasa Parrots, Hook-billed Vanga, and White-throated Oxylabes.

After our last morning session around Andasibe, when we finally tracked down some Madagascar Partridges, we drove back to Antananarivo, with lunch en route. Before arriving at our hotel, we paid a visit to the amazing little reserve at Lac Alarobia, situated right in the city. Amongst the numerous Red-billed Teals and White-faced Whistling Ducks we found a single Fulvous Whistling Duck, at least seven Meller's Ducks, and 30 Blue-billed Teal. Dotted amidst the thronging masses of Western Cattle and Dimorphic Egrets, Black, Black-crowned Night and Squacco Herons, we spotted several attractive Malagasy Pond Herons in full breeding plumage. We also had superb close-ups of Malagasy Kingfisher.

After a good night's sleep, we embarked on the long drive up to Ankarafantsika National Park in the north-west. During one of our roadside stops, we were lucky enough to spot a single male Malagasy Harrier floating over some of the remaining grassland. The journey was uneventful otherwise.

Based at a nearby lodge, we had a single full day to explore the national park itself, which safeguards a large expanse of dry tropical forest. Jackie and his colleague were our guides here, and thanks to their wealth of local knowledge we were able to find our target-birds without too much difficulty. We started with two cracking male Schlegel's Asities, and then followed the numerous trails, where we easily saw the local forms of Crested and Red-capped Couas, good numbers of tame White-breasted Mesites, and both the localised Van Dam's and more widespread (but more attractive) Rufous Vanga. As well as exploring the forest, we took a boat ride around Lac Ravelobe, where we had great views of the breeding pair of Madagascan Fish Eagles and their single well-grown offspring. During a night-walk along a track at the edge of the reserve, we were shown a fantastic Greater Hedgehog Tenrec, Golden-brown Mouse and Western Woolly Lemurs, and a handful of confiding Coquerel's Sifakas.

On our other day in the north-west, we left the lodge early and drove north to Mahajanga. At a small coastal resort, we boarded a speedboat and were whisked-off into the mouth of the Betsiboka Estuary. An hour later, as the tide dropped to reveal extensive mangrove fringing mudflats, our highly experienced skipper manoeuvred red us to a spot where we could get the best possible views of the Endangered endemic Bernier's Teal, a pair of which had been spotted distantly. Our other main target was the recently split Malagasy Sacred lbis and, after a bit of work, we managed to find four of these as well. The tide was starting to drop more quickly and it required a lot of skill from the captain to steer us to safety, before we sped off back to Mahajanga, where we were ready for a good lunch at the resort.

Our return journey to Antananarivo began at some small wetlands not far from Ankarafantsika, where Jacky helped us spot our only Madagascar Jacana of the trip. Then, a brief stop at the Betsiboka River bridge produced more Madagascar Pratincoles. The only other highlights during the long drive were sightings of two more male Malagasy Harriers.

All of the participants from the main tour joined us for the extension, as we flew south to Fort Dauphin. An afternoon walks around the cape eventually brought a few Madagascar Gulls (a likely split from Kelp Gull), but sadly there were no Humpback Whales, apart from one glimpsed briefly far out to sea.

Very early the next morning we headed inland to remote Andohahela National Park, in search of the rare Redtailed Newtonia. Our last tour to the area was a bit of a disaster, with the road in such bad condition that we had to turn back. Fortunately, this year was a lot different, as major works had been done to the road, enabling us to reach the site in record time. Recent tree-felling at the edge of the cultivated areas made the old trail difficult to relocate, but we eventually found it and headed into the forest. Almost immediately there was a Redtailed Newtonia singing and we were soon enjoying excellent views of a pair. There were not many other new





Collared Nightjar and Madagascar Rail at Andasibe (Craig Robson)

Birds for us here so, after enjoying the rich butterfly and dragonfly fauna, we headed off to Berenty Reserve along deteriorating roads. Fortunately, the road building will later extend to this area too, making things much better in the near future.

Berenty is probably most famous for its Ring-tailed Lemurs and Verreaux's Sifakas, but it is also home to some really good birds. We had the late afternoon and also the following morning to pin-down our few targets. The most important bird here has to be Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk (actually a baza), at one of its few reliable locations. With the help of one of the park guides we managed to find a nest and, after waiting for maybe an hour, a pair of cuckoo-hawks came in. It was a very satisfying result. We also enjoyed a nice selection of dry forest species and, after dark, we were shown good numbers of Grey-brown Mouse and White-footed Sportive Lemurs.

After another night in Fort Dauphin, we flew back to Tana, and connected with our onward international flights. It had been a great adventure, covering a significant part of the island in just three weeks, but for anyone who wants to see as much of Madagascar's amazing birds and wildlife as possible, it was certainly worth the effort!



Inquisitive local ladies near Ifaty (Craig Robson)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

BIRDS

White-faced Whistling Duck Dendrocygna viduata

Fulvous Whistling Duck Dendrocygna bicolor A single bird at Lac Alarobia.

Knob-billed Duck Sarkidiornis melanotos

African Pygmy Goose Nettapus auritus Four at wetlands near Ankarafantsika.

Blue-billed Teal Anas hottentota

Meller's Duck ◊ Anas melleri Endemic. Seven seen well at Lac Alarobia.

Red-billed Teal Anas erythrorhyncha

Bernier's Teal (Madagascar T) Anas bernieri Endemic. Close views of a pair at the Betsiboka Estuary.

Helmeted Guineafowl (introduced) Numida meleagris

Madagascar Partridge \(\rightarrow Margaroperdix madagarensis \) Endemic. Two, for some, en route to Isalo; then 3 at Perinet.

Collared Nightjar \(\text{ Caprimulgus enarratus} \) Endemic. One on a nest at Perinet. Beautiful.

Madagascar Nightjar \Diamond *Caprimulgus madagascariensis* Endemic. Widespread sightings.

Madagascar Spinetail ◊ Zoonavena grandidieri Endemic. Also found at multiple sites.

Malagasy Palm Swift & Cypsiurus gracilis Near-endemic. Widespread in mostly small numbers.

Alpine Swift Tachymarptis melba A couple of sightings.

Malagasy Black Swift & Apus balstoni Near-endemic. Best seen from the hotel garden in Tana.

Malagasy Coucal ◊ Centropus toulou Near-endemic. Fairly common and widespread.

Crested Coua O Coua [cristata] cristata Endemic. Several seen well at Ankarafantsika NP.

Crested Coua (Chestnut-vented C) C. [c.] pyropyga Endemic. In dry forests around lfaty & Berenty (1 on nest).

Verreaux's Coua O Coua verreauxi Endemic. Good views of one at La Table.

Blue Coua \Diamond *Coua caerulea* Endemic. Several good encounters in the rainforest.

Red-capped Coua O Coua [ruficeps] ruficeps Endemic. Three seen well at Ankarafantsika NP.

Red-capped Coua ◊ [Brown-c C] Coua [ruficeps] olivaceiceps Endemic. Tricky - one at Ifaty.

Red-fronted Coua & Coua reynaudii Endemic. Singles seen well at Ranomafana NP and Andasibe.

Coquerel's Coua O Coua coquereli Endemic. Two at Zombitse-Vohibasia.

Running Coua & Coua cursor Endemic. Two seen well in the south-western dry forests.

Giant Coua O Coua gigas Endemic. Excellent views of three at Zombitse; heard at Berenty.

Red-breasted Coua ◊ Coua serriana Endemic. One showed well at Andasibe - VOI MMA.

Madagascar Cuckoo ◊ Cuculus rochii Endemic. Often heard, occasionally seen.

White-breasted Mesite \(\phi \) Mesitornis variegatus Endemic. Great views of seven at Ankarafantsika NP.

Brown Mesite \(\text{ Mesitornis unicolor} \) Endemic. Extremely close views of a pair at Ranomafana NP.

Subdesert Mesite \(\text{ Monias benschi} \) Endemic. One seen very well at Forêt de baobabs.

Madagascar Sandgrouse ◊ Pterocles personatus Endemic. We were guided to four birds, en route to Tulear.

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) (introduced) Columba livia

Malagasy Turtle Dove \Diamond **Nesoenas picturatus** Near-endemic. Regularly seen in various forested areas.

Namaqua Dove Oena capensis

Madagascar Green Pigeon ◊ Treron australis Endemic. Five around Andasibe, and two at Ankarafantsika.

Madagascar Blue Pigeon ◊ *Alectroenas madagascariensis* Endemic. Seen at Ranomafana and Andasibe.

Madagascar Wood Rail ◊ Mentocrex kioloides Endemic. A pair at Perinet - VOI MMA.

Madagascar Flufftail ◊ Sarothrura insularis Endemic. Two sightings at Ranomafana; others heard.

Madagascar Rail ◊ Rallus madagascariensis Endemic. Mega views of one near Andasibe (Perinet).

White-throated Rail O Dryolimnas cuvieri Endemic. Several sightings, the best by all of us, at Ankazomivada NR.

Common Moorhen Gallinula chloropus

Madagascar Grebe \(\phi\) Tachybaptus pelzelnii Endemic. One on a quiet pool at Andasibe-Mantadia NP.

Lesser Flamingo Phoeniconaias minor

Madagascar Buttonquail ◊ Turnix nigricollis Endemic. Many this year, with no fewer than 19 logged.

Black-winged Stilt Himantopus himantopus

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) Pluvialis squatarola

Common Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula

Madagascar Plover ◊ *Charadrius thoracicus* Endemic. One seen very well near lfaty.

Kittlitz's Plover Charadrius pecuarius





Red-capped Coua and Humblot's Heron in the north-west (Craig Robson)

Three-banded Plover (Madagascar T-b P) C. [tricollaris] bifrontatus Endemic. Singles near Ifaty & Perinet.

White-fronted Plover Charadrius marginatus

Greater Sand Plover Charadrius leschenaultii

Madagascar Jacana ◊ Actophilornis albinucha Endemic. Just one near Ankarafantsika.

Eurasian Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus

Ruddy Turnstone Arenaria interpres

Curlew Sandpiper Calidris ferruginea

Sanderling Calidris alba

Madagascar Snipe ◊ Gallinago macrodactyla Endemic. One at D'Ankazomivada CR.

Terek Sandpiper Xenus cinereus

Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos

Common Greenshank Tringa nebularia

Crab-plover Dromas ardeola A roosting group of five was enjoyed at Nosy Ve.

Madagascar Pratincole & Glareola ocularis Near-endemic. Four Mangoro River; six Betsiboka R. bridge. Scoped.

Kelp Gull \(\) [Madagascar G] Larus [dominicanus] melisandae Endemic. Up to 9 noted at Fort Dauphin.

Greater Crested Tern Thalasseus bergii

Lesser Crested Tern Thalasseus bengalensis

Little Tern Sternula albifrons Six at Betsiboka Estuary. Saunders's is no longer considered to occur in Madagascar.

White-winged Tern Chlidonias leucopterus One was photographed at the Betsiboka Estuary.

Brown Skua Stercorarius antarcticus Three on the sea at Fort Dauphin were a surprise.

Red-tailed Tropicbird Phaethon rubricauda Lovely views on Nosy Ve, where about six were seen.

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) Microcarbo africanus

Malagasy Sacred Ibis ◊ Threskiornis bernieri Near-endemic. Four at the Betsiboka Estuary.

Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus

Madagascar Ibis ◊ (M Crested I) Lophotibis cristata Endemic. Pair foraging at VOI MMA.

Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax 150+ at Lac Alarobia, a few elsewhere.

Striated Heron Butorides striata

Squacco Heron Ardeola ralloides

Malagasy Pond Heron (Madagascar P H) Ardeola idae Near-endemic. 2 near Ranomafana; 3 at Lac Alarobia.

Western Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* A few sightings; endemic *firasa*.

Humblot's Heron ◊ Ardea humbloti Near-endemic. 1 south of Ifaty; 1 Betsiboka Estuary, 1-2 Ankarafantsika area.

Purple Heron Ardea purpurea

Great Egret Ardea alba

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* Present at several wetlands. Breeding at Lac Alarobia.

Dimorphic Egret Egretta dimorpha

Hamerkop Scopus umbretta

Madagascar Harrier-Hawk ◊ Polyboroides radiatus Endemic. Pair at nest Ifaty; another in Ankarafantsika area.

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk ◊ Aviceda madagascariensis Endemic. Nest located Berenty, and pair seen.

Frances's Sparrowhawk & Accipiter francesiae Near-endemic. Scattered sightings.

Madagascar Sparrowhawk ◊ *A. madagascariensis* Endemic. One Ranomafana; another at nest Forêt de baobabs.

Henst's Goshawk Accipiter henstii Endemic. We all had good views of a circling bird at Andasibe-Mantadia NP.

Malagasy Harrier ◊ Circus macrosceles Near-endemic. On the way to, and from Ankarafantsika (3 males).

Yellow-billed Kite Milvus aegyptius

Madagascar Fish Eagle \(\phi \) Haliaeetus vociferoides \(\text{Endemic. Two adults and a juvenile at the nest at Lac Ravelobe. \)

Madagascar Buzzard \(\phi \) Buteo brachypterus Endemic. Many sightings, including one at a nest at VOI-MMA.

Western Barn Owl Tyto alba Singles at Perinet and Berenty (poensis).

White-browed Owl Athene superciliaris Endemic. One roosting at Zombitse; many heard at Berenty.

Torotoroka Scops Owl ◊ Otus madagascariensis Endemic. Roosting birds at Zombitse and Ankarafantsika.

Rainforest Scops Owl ◊ Otus rutilus Endemic. Three seen in the Andasibe (Perinet) area, with two at a day-roost.

Madagascar Owl ◊ (M Long-eared O) Asio madagascariensis Endemic. 1 at roost and another at night Andasibe.

Cuckoo Roller \(\text{Leptosomus discolor} \) Near-endemic. Often heard and seen very well on several occasions.

Madagascar Hoopoe ◊ *Upupa marginata* Endemic. Occasionally seen throughout.

Broad-billed Roller Eurystomus glaucurus





Torotoroka and Rainforest Scops Owls (Craig Robson)





White-browed Owl and White-breasted Mesite (Craig Robson)

Short-legged Ground Roller & Brachypteracias leptosomus Endemic. Great views of two at Mantadia.

Scaly Ground Roller ◊ Geobiastes squamiger Endemic. Two seen very well at Ranomafana.

Pitta-like Ground Roller ◊ Atelornis pittoides Endemic. Five seen at Ranomafana NP, some great views.

Rufous-headed Ground Roller \(\text{\chi} \) A. crossleyi \(\text{Endemic. 1 seen Ranomafana-Vohiparara & 2 in the Andasibe area. \)

Long-tailed Ground Roller \(\phi \) Uratelornis chimaera Endemic. Superb views of one at Forêt de baobabs.

Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher ◊ Corythornis madagascariensis Endemic. 2 at Ranomafana & 1 Ankarafantsika.

Malagasy Kingfisher & Corythornis vintsioides Near-endemic. Widespread sightings.

Olive Bee-eater (Madagascar B) Merops superciliosus Widespread and often common.

Malagasy Kestrel & Falco newtoni Near-endemic. Common and widespread.

Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus One en route from Ankarafantsika to Tana (endemic radama).

Greater Vasa Parrot ◊ Coracopsis vasa Near-endemic. Best seen in the Andasibe forests.

Lesser Vasa Parrot ◊ Coracopsis nigra Near-endemic. Widespread and quite common.

Grey-headed Lovebird Agapornis canus Endemic. Fairly common in the western dry forest.

Velvet Asity ◊ Philepitta castanea Endemic. Six at Ranomafana, with some lovely males.

Schlegel's Asity \(\rightarrow \) Philepitta schlegeli Endemic. Two superb males at Ankarafantsika NP.

Common Sunbird-Asity \(\triangle \) Neodrepanis coruscans Endemic. Small numbers Ranomafana NP and Andasibe area.

Red-tailed Vanga & Calicalicus madagascariensis Endemic. Seen many times, including some nice males.

Red-shouldered Vanga ◊ Calicalicus rufocarpalis Endemic. Great views of a singing male at La Table.

Hook-billed Vanga Vanga curvirostris Endemic. A couple around Perinet, and one on a nest at Ankarafantsika.

Bernier's Vanga ◊ Oriolia bernieri Endemic. A male, all too briefly, at Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Lafresnaye's Vanga ◊ Xenopirostris xenopirostris Endemic. A male was scoped at La Table.

Van Dam's Vanga \(\rightarrow \textit{Xenopirostris damii} \) Endemic. Just one at Ankarafantsika NP.

Pollen's Vanga & Xenopirostris polleni Endemic. A few sightings at Ranomafana and Andasibe.

Sickle-billed Vanga ◊ Falculea palliata Endemic. Four at Forêt de baobabs and six at Ankarafantsika.

White-headed Vanga & Artamella viridis Endemic. Small numbers at scattered locations.

Chabert Vanga \(\rightarrow \) Leptopterus chabert \(\text{Endemic. Widespread. The commonest vanga.} \)

Blue Vanga ◊ Cyanolanius madagascarinus Endemic. Quite a number of sightings of this stunner this year.

Rufous Vanga & Schetba rufa Endemic. This very smart vanga was only seen at Ankarafantsika NP (3 birds).

Helmet Vanga \(\phi\) Euryceros prevostii Endemic. Thanks to Patrice, we saw a superb pair at Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Tylas Vanga ◊ Tylas eduardi Endemic. Small numbers at the rainforest sites; best seen at Ranomafana.

Nuthatch Vanga \(\text{Hypositta corallirostris} \) Endemic. Good views of small numbers around Andasibe (Perinet).

Dark Newtonia & Newtonia amphichroa Endemic. Seen well at Vohiparara, but just a couple.

Common Newtonia \(\rightarrow Newtonia \) brunneicauda \(\text{Endemic. Common in wooded areas.} \)

Archbold's Newtonia ◊ Newtonia archboldi Endemic. Good views of a pair at Forêt de baobabs.

Red-tailed Newtonia \Diamond Newtonia fanovanae Endemic. A pair, with singing male, seen well at Andohahela.

Ward's Flycatcher \(\rightarrow \) Pseudobias wardi \(\text{Endemic. A few of these neat vangas at the rainforest sites.} \)

Crossley's Vanga \(\partial \textit{Mystacornis crossleyi} \) Endemic. One at Ranomafana NP, and two at Andasibe - seen well.

Madagascar Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina cinerea* Endemic. Several sightings; widespread.

Crested Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus forficatus* Endemic. Often common and very widespread.

Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher ◊ Terpsiphone mutata Near-endemic. Common in wooded areas.

Pied Crow Corvus albus

Madagascar Lark ◊ *Eremopterix hova* Endemic. Common in arid country.

Malagasy Bulbul \(\rightarrow \) Hypsipetes madagascariensis \(\rightarrow \) Near-endemic. Fairly common and very widespread.

Mascarene Martin O Phedina borbonica Near-endemic. Widespread.

Malagasy Brush Warbler ◊ Nesillas typica Near-endemic. Regularly seen except in the arid south-west.

Subdesert Brush Warbler \quad Nesillas lantzii Near-endemic. Often heard with a few seen well in the arid south-west.

Madagascar Swamp Warbler ◊ Acrocephalus newtoni Endemic. Noted a few times in well-vegetated wetlands.

Grey Emutail Amphilais seebohmi Endemic. Performed really well along the Ranomafana-Amboditanimena Trail.

Brown Emutail ◊ Bradypterus brunneus Endemic. Quite good views of this notorious skulker at Ranomafana (two).

White-throated Oxylabes \Diamond Oxylabes madagascariensis Endemic. One at Ranomafana, and two at Andasibe.

Long-billed Bernieria ♦ **(L-b Greenbul, Common Tetraka)** *Bernieria madagascariensis* Endemic. Seen quite often.

Cryptic Warbler ◊ *Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi* Endemic. Singing birds at Vohiparara, and around Andasibe.

Wedge-tailed Jery \(\rightarrow \) Hartertula flavoviridis Endemic. Small numbers at rainforest sites; some nice views this year.

Thamnornis ◊ (T Warbler) Thamnornis chloropetoides One seen and another heard at Forêt de baobabs.

Spectacled Tetraka \(\rightarrow \) Xanthomixis zosterops Endemic. A few at rainforest sites, with two on nests.

Appert's Tetraka ◊ (A Greenbul) X. apperti Endemic. Super-close views at Zombitse; a pair.

Grey-crowned Tetraka (G-c Greenbul) Xanthomixis cinereiceps Endemic. Seen nicely at rainforest locations.

Madagascar Yellowbrow & Crossleyia xanthophrys Endemic. Skulking pair seen well at Ranomafana-Vohiparara.

Rand's Warbler \(\rightarrow Randia pseudozosterops \) Endemic. Small numbers singing from tree-tops at the rainforest sites.

Common Jery N. tenella Endemic. Ranomafana (orientalis); SW (decarleyi); SE (debilis); Perinet & NW (nominate).

Green Jery O Neomixis viridis Endemic. Several encounters in the rainforest.

Stripe-throated Jery & Neomixis striatigula Endemic. One of the commonest rainforest birds, at least by voice.

Madagascar Cisticola ◊ Cisticola cherina Endemic. Fairly common in arid brush country.

Malagasy White-eye ◊ Zosterops maderaspatanus Near-endemic. Widespread.

Common Myna (introduced) Acridotheres tristis

Madagascar Starling \(\phi\) Hartlaubius auratus Endemic. Best seen around Andasibe; one at Ranomafana.

Madagascar Magpie-Robin ◊ Copsychus albospecularis Common and widespread.

Littoral Rock Thrush \(\phi \) Monticola imerina Endemic. Three tame birds at Anakao.

Forest Rock Thrush \(\phi\) Monticola sharpei Endemic. Females at Ranomafana-Vohiparara and Andasibe.

Forest Rock Thrush \(\) [Benson's RT] Monticola [sharpei] bensoni Endemic. Two cooperative males at Isalo.

Madagascar Stonechat ◊ Saxicola sibilla Endemic. Well-scattered in the highlands.

Souimanga Sunbird ◊ Cinnyris sovimanga Endemic. Common and widespread.

Malagasy Green Sunbird (Long-billed G S) Cinnyris notatus Near-endemic. A handful at various sites.

House Sparrow Passer domesticus

Nelicourvi Weaver ◊ Ploceus nelicourvi Endemic. Just a few at the rainforest sites.

Sakalava Weaver ◊ Ploceus sakalava Endemic. Common in the dry forests etc.

Red Fody ◊ Foudia madagascariensis Endemic. Fairly widespread, sometimes common, mostly female-like birds.

Forest Fody & Foudia omissa Endemic. Good views of a male at Ranomafana, a scarce species.

Madagascar Mannikin (M Bibfinch) Lemuresthes nana Endemic. Noted at several sites, and in good numbers.

Madagascar Wagtail ◊ Motacilla flaviventris Endemic. Occasional in the east.



A dozy Coquerel's Sifaka (Craig Robson)

MAMMALS

Lowland Streaked Tenrec Hemicentetes semispinosus One briefly at Andasibe-Mantadia NP.

Greater Hedgehog Tenrec Echinops telfairi One during a night-walk at Ankarafantsika.

Malagasy Ring-tailed Mongoose Galidia elegans Non-leader. Ranomafana.

Humpback Whale Megaptera novaengliae Gone already. 1 briefly on way to Nosy Ve, 1 distantly off Fort Dauphin.

Madagascan Flying Fox Setifer setous

Crossley's Dwarf Lemur Cheirogaleus crossleyi Two at Andasibe (Perinet).

Red-and-grey Mouse Lemur Microcebus griseorufus Four at Berenty.

Goodman's Mouse Lemur Microcebus lehilahytsara Three during night-walks at Andasibe (Perinet).

Golden-brown Mouse Lemur (Golden M L) Microcebus ravelobensis Five at Ankarafantsika NP.

Red Mouse Lemur Microcebus rufus Three coming to Banana-goo at Ranomafana.

White-footed Sportive Lemur Lepilemur leucopus Five at Berenty, and easily seen.

Petter's Sportive Lemur (Black-shouldered S L) Lepilemur petteri One roosting at Forêt de baobabs.

Brown Lemur Eulemur fulvus A few at Andasibe (Perinet), and Ankarafantsika NP.

Red-bellied Lemur Eulemur rubriverter Seven at Ranomafana NP.

Red-fronted Brown Lemur Fulemur rufus Quite common at Ranomafana and Berenty. Introduced at the latter.

Golden Bamboo Lemur Hapalemur aureus Six at Ranomafana NP.

Eastern Lesser Bamboo Lemur (Grey B L) Hapalemur griseus Three at Andasibe - VOI MMA.

Ring-tailed Lemur Lemur catta 15 at Anja Community Reserve; common at Berenty.

Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur Varecia variagata Three beauties at Andasibe-Mantadia NP.

Western Woolly Lemur (Western Avahi) Avahi occidentalis Five seen nicely at Ankarafantsika.

Indri Indri Indri Indri This iconic lemur was seen several times around Andasibe (Perinet), and often heard.

Coquerel's Sifaka Propithecus coquereli Great views of six at Ankarafantsika NP.

Milne-edwards's Sifaka Propithecus edwardsi A total of nine seen at Ranomafana NP.

Verreaux's Sifaka Propithecus verreauxi Close encounters at Zombitse-Vohibasia NP, and Berenty.

Western Tuft-tailed Rat Eliurus myoxinus One at Zombitse-Vohibasia NP.

Eastern Red Forest Rat Nesomys rufus A few seen at Ranomafana.

Brown Rat (introduced) Rattus norvegicus Non-leader.



Indri (Craig Robson)





Goodman's Mouse and Crossley's Dwarf Lemurs at Andasibe (Craig Robson)

APPENDIX - Other fauna & flora recorded

AMPHIBIANS
Pandanus Frog *Guibemantis pulcher* Ranomafana.





Pandanus Frog and Madagascar Tree Boa (Craig Robson)

REPTILES

Nile Crocodile Crocodylus niloticus Lac Ravelobe.

Short-horned Chameleon (Elephant-eared C) Calumma brevicorne Perinet-Andasibe.

Cryptic Chameleon (Blue-legged C) Calumma crypticum One at Ranomafana NP.

Deceptive Chameleon Calumma fallax Two at Ranomafana.

Nose-horned Chameleon (Bignose C) Calumma nasutum One during our Perinet-Andasibe night walk.

Oustalet's Chameleon Furcifer oustaleti Multiple locations.

Warty Chameleon Furcifer verrucosus Berenty Reserve.

Madagascar Spiny-tailed Iguana Oplurus cuvieri Common in the north.

Merrem's Madagascar Swift Oplurus cyclurus Non-leader. Ifaty.

Dumeril's Madagascar Swift Oplurus quadrimaculatus Isalo.

Three-eyed Lizard (Madagascar Iguana) Chalarodon madagascariensis Widespread in dry areas.

Madagascar Cordylid Tracheloptychus madagascariensis Non-leader. Anakao.

Peters's Keeled Cordylid *Tracheloptychus petersi* Non-leader. Ifaty.

Broad-tailed Girdled Lizard Zonosaurus laticaudatus Ankarafantsika.

Madagascar Girdled Lizard Zonosaurus madagascariensis Non-leader. Andasibe.

Spotted Skink Brachyseps punctatus Non-leader. Andasibe.

Gold-spotted Mabuya Trachylepis aureopunctata Ifaty.

Gravenhorst's Skink Trachylepis gravenhorstii Non-leader. Zombitse.

Elegant Skink Trachylepis elegans Non-leader. Zombitse.

Asian House Gecko Hemidactylus frenatus

Mercator Tropical House Gecko Hemidactylus mercatorius Non-leaded. Hotel in Tana.

Mocquard's Dwarf Gecko Lygodactylus verticillatus Non-leaded. Ifaty.

Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko Uroplatus phantasticus Ranomafana.

Lined Day Gecko Phelsuma lineata Eastern rainforest locations.

Modest Day Gecko Phelsuma modesta Non-leaded. Ifaty.

Peacock Day Gecko Phelsuma quadriocellata Ranomafana NP.

Standing's Day Gecko (Banded D G) Phelsuma standingi Zombitse-Vohibasia.

Dumeril's Boa Acrantophis dumerili A beauty at Forêt de baobabs.

Madagascan Tree Boa Sanzinia madagascariensis madagascariensis Andasibe-Antavalobe & Perinet night walk. **Six-lined Water Snake Liopholidophis sexlineatus** One at Andasibe.



Dumeril's Boa at Ifaty (Craig Robson)

BUTTERFLIES

Cream-lined Swallowtail Papilio delalandei Eastern rainforests.

Citrus Swallowtail *Papilio demodocus* Widespread in non-forest situations.

Swallowtail Papilio erithonioides Ankarafantsika NP.

Banded Blue Swallowtail Papilio oribazus Eastern rainforests.

Spotted Blue Swallowtail Papilio epiphorbas Zombitse Forest at least.

Madagascar Swordtail Graphium evombar Many at Andohahela NP.

Madagascan Graphium (Green Lady) Graphium cyrnus Not uncommon Andasibe to Mantadia.

Small Grass Yellow Eurema brigitta Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Malagasy Grass Yellow Eurema floricola Non-leader. Ankarafantsika.

Marsh Grass Yellow Eurema hapale Andasibe-Antavalobe.

African Emigrant Catopsilia florella Zombitse Forest.

Small Salmon Arab Colotis calais crowleyi Particularly numerous at Berenty. Also Nosy Ve.

Madagascar Orange tip Colitis evanthe A few sightings in the south-west.

Colotis guenei Non-leader. Ifaty.

Colotis mananhari Non-leader. Andasibe.

Violet Tip Colitis zoe Also in the south-west, but less common than the last species.

African Wood White Leptosia alcestra Widespread.

Immaculate Wood White Leptosia nupta Photographed at Ranomafana.

Sabine Albatross *Appias sabina* Particularly common at Andohahela NP.

Madagascar Dotted Border Mylothris phileris At least one at Andasibe-Mantadia.

Pioneer White Belenois aurota Photographed at Ifaty and in the spiny forest.

Grandidier's Caper White Belenois grandidieri Non-leader. Ifaty.

Yellow-painted Caper White Belenois helcida Andasibe-Mantadia and Andohahela NP.

Common Hairstreak Hypolaecina philippus South-west and north-west at least.

Common Meadow Blue Cupidopsis cissus Perinet-Andasibe.

Common Smoky Blue *Euchrysops malathana* Non-leader. At the hotel in Tana.

Iolaus mermeros Non-leader. Ifaty.

Pea Blue (Long-tailed B) Lampides boeticus Mangoro River crossing.

'Malagasy' Bush Blue Cacyreus darius One the way from Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Madagascar Short-tailed Blue Leptotes durrelli Non-leader. Ankarafantsika.

Lang's Short-tailed Blue Leptotes pirithous Notably common at Andohahela NP.

Dark Grass Blue Zizeeria karsandra Non-leader. At the hotel in Tana.

African Grass Blue Zizeeria knysna Non-leader. At the hotel in Tana.

Tiny Grass Blue Zizula hylax Common and widespread.

Judy Saribia perroti One at Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Judy Saribia tepahi Small numbers of this little beauty at Ranomafana.

Plain Tiger (African Queen) Danaus chrisippus Widespread and common.

Low-eye Heteropsis ankaratra Berenty Reserve.

'Angle-striped' Low-eye Heteropsis angulifascia Ranomafana NP.

Low-eye *Heteropsis fraterna* Non-leader. Ranomafana.

Low-eye Heteropsis harveyi Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Low-eye *Heteropsis iboina* Non-leader. Ranomafana.

Low-eye Heteropsis subsimilis Ranomafana NP.

Low-eye Heteropsis turbans Non-leader. Ranomafana.

Low-eye *Heteropsis turbata* Non-leader. Ranomafana.

High-eye Strabena mandraka Andasibe-Antavalobe.

High-eye Strabena tamatavae Non-leader. Ranomafana.

High-eye Strabena triophthalma Non-leader. Ranomafana.

'Vinson's' High-eye Strabena vinsoni Ranomafana NP.

'Madagascar' Club-tailed Charaxes Charaxes betsimisaraka Ankarafantsika NP.

Common Diadem Hypolimnas misippus Non-leader. Berenty.

Madagascar Chocolate Pansy Junonia goudotii Andahohela NP.

Dark Blue Pansy Junonia oenone One at Anja Community Reserve.

Yellow Pansy Junonia hierta Non-leader. Mangoro River.

Royal Blue Pansy Junonia rhadama This beauty was quite widespread, mainly at drier locations.

Madagascan Mother-of-Pearl Protogoniomorpha duprei Many around the Perinet/Andasibe reserves.

Madagasacar Commodore Precis eurodoce One at Ranomafana.

Common Joker Byblia anvatara One at Ankarafantsika NP.

'Madagascar' Glade Nymph Aterica rabena Ankarafantsika NP at least.

Acraea Acraea damii Berenty Reserve.

Acraea Acraea mahela Berenty Reserve.

Acraea Acraea ranavalona Anja CR and Berenty Reserve.

Acraea Acraea turna A small number in the Forêt de baobabs.

Acraea Acraea zitja One at Andasibe, near our lodge.

Spotted Sailer Neptis saclava Non-leader. Ranomafana.

Common Leopard *Phalanta phalantha* Zombitse Forest at least.

Fervid Policeman Coeliades fervida Lac Alarobia.

Island Policeman Coeliades pansa Non-leader. Lac Ravelobe.

Mascarene Policeman Coeliades ramanatek Lots at Andohahela NP.

Orange Flat Eagris sabadius Ankarafantsika NP.

Common Fulda Fulda coroller Ranomafana NP.

Rhadama's Fulda Fulda rhadama Andasibe-Mantadia NP.

Angled Sylph Arnetta hyposticta Ranomafana NP.

Common Malagasy Sylph Hovala saclavus One photographed at Ranomafana.



Saribia perroti (Craig Robson)



Silver Widow (Craig Robson)

DRAGONFLIES

Madagascar Emperor Anax tumerifer Andasibe-Mantadia NP etc.

Nesolestes ranavalona Non-leader.

Nesolestes robustus Non-leader.

Madagascar Demoiselle *Phaon rasoherinae* River at Perinet-Andasibe etc.

Gracious Wisp *Agriocnemis gratiosa* Tsimbazaza Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

Malagasy Bluet Azuragrion kauderni Widespread.

Lime Citril Ceriagrion auritum Non-leader.

Common Citril Ceriagrion glabrum Non-leader.

Common Bluetail *Ischnura senegalensis* Tsimbazaza Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

Elk-horn Sprite *Pseudagrion alcicorne* River at Perinet-Andasibe.

Pseudagrion apicale River rocks at Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Hook-tailed Sprite Pseudagrion hamulus Ranomafana NP.

Ruddy-legged Sprite *Pseudagrion malgassicum* Perinet, Ankarafantsika-Tana etc.

Madagascar Hooktail Paragomphus madegassus Tana-Ankarafantsika & Berenty Reserve.

Red-tipped Glyphtail Isomma hieroglyphicum Road to Andohahela NP.

Tatocnemis malgassica Non-leader.

Ochre Spreadwing Lestes ochraceous Lac Alarobia etc.

Lestes simulatrix Non-leader.

Southern Banded Groundling Brachythemis leucosticta Tsimbazaza Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

Rock Scarlet Crocothemis divisa Non-leader.

Broad Scarlet (Scarlet Darter) Crocothemis erythraea Riverside Ankarafantsika-Tana etc.

Madagascar Pied-spot Hemistigma affine Trail at Andohahela NP.

Striped Junglewatcher Neodythemis hildebrandti Non-leader.

Broad Skimmer Orthetrum azureum Widespread.

Lemur Skimmer Orthetrum lemur Non-leader.

Bold Skimmer Orthetrum stemmale Ankarafantsika NP.

Long Skimmer Orthetrum trinacria Non-leader.

Silver Widow Palpopleura vestita Riverside Ankarafantsika-Tana, road to Andahohela NP etc.

Wandering Glider Pantala flavescens

Phantom Flutterer Rhyothemis semihyalina Non-leader.

Twister Tholymis tillarga

Violet Dropwing Trithemis annulata Non-leader.

Orange-winged Dropwing Trithemis kirbyi Lunch stop Tana-Ankarafantsika.

Magenta Dropwing *Trithemis persephone* Riverside Ankarafantsika-Tana etc.

Crimson Dropwing Trithemis selika Non-leader.

Blue Basker Urothemis edwardsii Ankarafantsika NP etc.

Madagascar Riverking Zygonoides lachesis Riverside Ankarafantsika-Tana.

Zygonyx elisabethae Non-leader.

Madagascar Rivercruiser Phyllomacromia trifasciata Non-leader.

Booted Featherleg *Proplatycnemis alatipes* Andasibe-Mantadia etc.

Pied Featherleg Proplatycnemis hova Non-leader.

Malagasy Featherleg Proplatycnemis malgassica Ankarafantsika NP.

Blue-faced Featherleg Proplatycnemis pseudalatipes Andasibe-Antavalobe.

Nesocordulia malagassica Non-leader.

BEETLES

Giraffe-necked Weevil Trachelophorus giraffa A few in the eastern rainforests.

PLANTS

Euphorbia enterophora Zombitse.

Silver Thicket Euphorbia stenoclada Anakao.

Pink Oeonia Oeonia rosea Ranomafana.