



MADAGASCAR WITH A DIFFERENCE TOUR REPORT 2022

3 - 21 November 2022

BY MARK VAN BEIRS

Extraordinary birds, exquisite lemurs, cute chameleons and incredibly bad roads characterized our recent Madagascar with a difference tour. We managed to observe several very rarely encountered species like Madagascar Serpent Eagle, Sakalava Rail, Madagascar Pochard, Red Owl, Slender-billed Flufftail and Helmet and Bernier's Vangas and also found a great supporting cast consisting of goodies like White-breasted and Brown Mesites, Madagascar Wood Rail, Madagascar Buttonquail, Madagascar Jacana, Madagascar Ibis, Madagascar Fish Eagle, Short-legged and Scaly Ground Rollers, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, Sooty Falcon, Schlegel's Asity, Van Dam's, Sickle-billed, Nuthatch, Rufous and Crossley's Vangas and White-throated Oxylabes. Great mammals included an impressive Fossa and a good selection of lemurs including Hairy-eared Dwarf, Moore's Woolly, Scott's Sportive, Red Ruffed and White-fronted Brown Lemurs. A variety of interesting chameleons, geckos and an unusual frog completed the animal tally. Sadly, no maintenance has happened on the Madagascar roads for a very long time, resulting in markedly longer travel times since our last tour here. This tour is definitely a trip for the more adventurous naturalists!

The first day of this "different" tour started with a long drive from the capital Antananarivo (Tana) to the Ankarafantsika National Park, courtesy of the cancelling of our flight to Mahajanga by the local airline. Our three 4x4 vehicles crossed the grassy, often burnt and usually birdless central plateau without too much trouble. A couple of brief roadside stops gave us endemics like Madagascar Pratincole, Madagascar Stonechat and Madagascar Lark. A nice patch of wetland held a rare Madagascar Jacana and a pair of smart African Pygmy Geese. In late afternoon we arrived at the HQ of the Ankarafantsika National Park and a brief outing to the edge of the nearby lake produced scope views of the scarce Madagascar Fish Eagle (an adult and a young). A party of amazing Sickle-billed Vangas and several endearing Coquerel's Sifakas were noted just before sunset.

Early next morning found us in a beautiful stretch of deciduous forest where we soon connected with a trio of White-breasted Mesites (almost at our feet - marvellous) and a nest-building pair of exquisite Schlegel's Asities. We scoped a pair of Frances's Sparrowhawks and also observed Hook-billed Vanga and more regular fare like Madagascar Drongo, Common Newtonia, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Common Jery, Malagasy Bulbul and Souimanga Sunbird. After a quick look at the lake, where Humblot's and Purple Herons and Mascarene Martins showed, we moved to the famous grid. Here we admired a cracking male Rufous Vanga and after getting drenched, we finally found a nice male Van Dam's Vanga, which allowed great scope views. We also obtained excellent looks at Crested, Red-capped and Coquerel's Couas

and a wet Torotoroka Scops Owl. After lunch a party of at least seven Sooty Falcons were found hunting insects over the forest. Madagascar Green Pigeons and Malagasy Green Sunbird were also noted. In mid-afternoon we said goodbye to this beautiful park and drove to the rather seedy town of Mahajanga where we stayed at a nice hotel near the sea.

We enjoyed a leisurely breakfast at our hotel as the ferry to the south shore of the Betsiboka river was planned to leave in mid-morning. Nothing of note was seen on the crossing and the drive through the beautiful *Borassus* palm forest was quite exciting as it had rained recently making for some interesting mud-skidding. We drove for most of the afternoon, getting stuck several times in treacherous patches and we lost quite a bit of time at the river crossing near our destination, as the very simple ferry (three old metal boats tied together that were towed across a river) also had to handle a good number of ox carts. Eventually we reached our comfortable camp in the early evening. The spacious brand-new tents had been erected already and although the beer was a tad warm, we enjoyed our first evening on the tranquil shore of famous Lake Kinkony. The only bird of note seen on the drive was a Madagascar Harrier-Hawk.

After an early breakfast we boarded three small, oar-propelled boats that took us out into the reedbeds of Lake Kinkony. We first found a good selection of herons including lovely Little Bitterns and Malagasy Pond, Black and Purple Herons. Knob-billed Duck, African Swamphen, Madagascar Jacana, Whiskered Tern, Yellow-billed Stork, Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, lots of Malagasy Kingfishers and Madagascar Swamp Warbler were further additions to the tally. After a fair bit of scanning reed edges along the narrow channels through the reedbeds, a smashing Sakalava Rail was spotted and we stayed with this extremely rare rail for a terrific 15 minutes as it showed off perched up on an elevated reed stem. We obtained really cracking views of this much wanted endemic!! After this much appreciated boat trip, we took a walk in the nearby open forest where Grey-headed Lovebird and White-headed Vanga showed. After a rest in the middle of the day – it was exceedingly hot – we further explored the surroundings of our camp and came away with lots of Sakalava Weavers and Madagascar Mannikins. Although we sent out local guides to find the localized Van Der Decken's Sifakas none could be tracked down, sadly.

Early next morning we broke up camp and retraced our steps towards the ferry at Katsepy. We experienced a rather eventful journey with stuck vehicles, broken bridges, an exceedingly slow small ferry etc, but eventually, in mid-afternoon, we reached the beach where we were lucky to still find the ship. It should have left at midday but was luckily delayed for several hours ("Madagascar time"). We shared the ferry with c30 Zebu oxen that definitely hated the sea crossing. The drive yielded several Madagascar Buttonquail and African Openbills and the ferry crossing gave us a party of Saunders's Terns. A much-appreciated hot shower and some cold beers made for a nice evening.

Next day was an uneventful travel day as we made our way north along increasingly worsening roads to the small town of Antsohihy. Another travelling day followed and on the journey we picked up several Eleonora's Falcons and a Sooty Falcon. The final 45 km will be long remembered as they must rate as some of the very worst tracks, we have ever driven on a Birdquest tour!! We finally arrived late in the evening at our camping spot at the edge of beautiful rainforest.

Our full day at Bemanevika was truly magical. It started with point blank sightings of c30 Madagascar Pochards (one of the rarest duck in the world), and this was soon followed by great looks at a roosting Red Owl (another very rarely observed species). The support cast consisted of marvels like Meller's Duck, Madagascar Partridge, Blue Coua, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Madagascar Grebe, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, Malagasy Brush Warbler, Madagascar Swamp Warbler, Grey Emutail, Madagascar Starling, Forest Rock Thrush, Nelicourvi Weaver and Forest Fody. While munching our lunch we obtained great looks at a cracking female Madagascar Buttonquail making her "platelets". In the afternoon we walked to a nice marsh which gave us excellent views of Madagascar Snipe and exquisite looks at a pair of extremely smart Madagascar Harriers. A magnificent, very rare Slender-billed Flufftail eventually showed extremely well. At dusk some of us took a walk through the nearby forest and found wonders like Greater Dwarf, Brown Mouse and Hairy-eared Dwarf Lemurs. We also saw an as yet undescribed Lemur, which is obviously closely related to the Sportive Lemurs. It was only seen for the first time just over two years ago. But the absolute highlight of the walk was our encounter with an impressive Fossa, which for a short while stared at us only 15 meters away before it disappeared into the forest. We also found three different species of amazing Chameleons (Madagascar Flap-necked, Blue-legged and Short-horned).

The following day we retraced our steps along that atrocious track, but this time it took much less time (downhill) and everything went smoother. In late afternoon we arrived at our hotel in Antsohihy for a major clean up. Another travelling day ensued, and this time we had to get up in the middle of the night, as our flight departed from Mahajanga just after midday. Upon arrival in Tana, we transferred to our nearby hotel for a relaxed late afternoon and evening.

In late morning we took a flight from Antananarivo to the town of Maroantsetra, situated at the base of the Masoala Peninsula in north-eastern Madagascar. In the afternoon we explored a nearby river mouth by boat and came away with a variety of widespread waterbirds. New for the list were White-fronted Plover, Eurasian Whimbrel and Common Greenshank, but best of all was a nice Marsh Owl that was flushed from a patch of riverine vegetation.

Next morning two speedboats took us across the Helodrano Antongila Bay, past the famous island of Nosy Mangabe (which was once an excellent place to see Aye-aye) to our ecolodge on the western side of the Masoala Peninsula. The seas were delightfully calm and after a bit under two hours we set foot at the beach of our lodge. We settled in and soon went for our first walk in the surrounding forested hills. We were shown a recent nest of a Helmet Vanga, but the chick had left the nest just days ago... a real pity. We walked along the narrow and sometimes steep, root-covered trails and found beauties like Rufous and Tylas Vangas, until our guide suddenly heard the distinctive call of a Helmet Vanga. Not

much later one of these spectacular birds was sitting up at eye-level for all of us to admire. What a truly phantastic creature!! A Bernier's Vanga was also heard but couldn't be nailed down. In the camp clearing a pair of Madagascar Ibises performed ever so well and on offshore rocks we scoped many Lesser Crested Terns and a Roseate Tern. An afternoon walk in the nearby hills only produced several delightful Red Ruffed Lemurs. After dinner a few hardy souls went on a nightwalk and came away with four species of lemur: Greater Dwarf, Brown Mouse, Moore's Woolly and Scott's Sportive. All of these showed brilliantly.

A short boat ride took us to a patch of what looked like white sand forest, where after just a few minutes we connected with a vanga flock that held a cracking female Bernier's Vanga. She showed particularly well. Further along the trail we found quite a bit of bird activity and at a clearing we obtained marvellous scope views of a male and a female Bernier's Vanga perched up. Terrific stuff. A Madagascar Wood Rail was glimpsed. After a rest in the middle of the day we returned to the nearby hills where a pair of very well-behaved Scaly Ground Rollers performed ever so well. These exquisite beauties gave an amazing show. We also obtained good looks at a family group of White-throated Oxylabes. A party of Red Ruffed Lemurs cavorted and vocalized in a nearby fruiting tree and Madagascar Spinetails and Madagascar Black Swifts were identified over the camp's clearing. The nightwalk gave us the same selection of lemurs as yesterday, but we also found spectacularly camouflaged Mossy and Giant Leaf-tailed Geckos.

The following day started just after dawn near our camp where a family party of Brown Mesites obliged so very, very well. After breakfast only a few of us walked along a rather steep trail to a more distant patch of beautiful primary forest. Amongst the forest giants adorned with extraordinary plank roots and the different kinds of pandanus (screw palm) we first found a cracking, perched Helmet Vanga which minutes later divulged its nearby nest. We admired this really special bird at its wonderfully crafted nest from a distance. Not much later one of our guides found a second nest, which was being built. Both adults regularly flew in with mosses in their bright blue bill and one of the birds was shaping the inside of the nest with its body. A distant hooting alerted us to the presence of a Short-legged Ground Roller, but it took the better part of 30 minutes to clamber up a boulder-strewn, liana-cloaked slope to finally connect with this modestly clad species. We obtained great looks as it sat sedately on a horizontal branch in the subcanopy. Suddenly, in mid-morning some of us saw a large bird fly through the canopy of the giant trees and we were immediately on high alert, as it looked very much like a Serpent Eagle. Unexpectedly it started to call and we couldn't believe our luck, as it confirmed that we were dealing with Madagascar's rarest bird of prey, a Madagascar Serpent Eagle. We saw it fly several times and also found it perched so we could discern its distinctive features. A very happy party returned to camp. In the afternoon we walked to the same area to try to get the rest of the group onto this elusive bird of prey, and, eventually, we managed to obtain perfect scope views of this very rarely-observed cracker!!! A real mega. White-fronted Brown Lemur and several parties of Red Ruffed Lemur obliged handsomely. On the return walk to camp, we flushed a Scaly Ground Roller and managed perfect scope views of a very well behaved Short-legged Ground Roller next to the trail.

The following morning, we further explored the forested hills just behind our lodge. Soon after entering a Madagascar Wood Rail was heard and soon it showed very nicely to us. A Crossley's Vanga showed very well as did a male Madagascar Magpie-Robin (of the attractive black bellied race). It took a while to entice a Red-breasted Coua into view, but eventually one kept on circling us, offering great looks. We admired a gorgeous Scaly Ground Roller for ages, but the highlight of the morning was finding the two Madagascar Serpent Eagles again. One of them obliged very well again... simply amazing. We also located some smart White-fronted Brown and exquisite Red Ruffed Lemurs. After a bit of a break, we checked a stretch of forest edge where an attractive White-throated Rail stole the show. Several Madagascar Starlings were feeding in a fruiting tree. An after-dinner walk produced the regular Greater Dwarf, Brown Mouse and Masoala Sportive Lemurs. A dainty Madagascar Pimple-nosed Chameleon and a Lined Leaf-tailed Gecko were also very much appreciated.

We left our cosy lodge early the next morning and travelled by speed boat to the town of Maroantsetra, where we admired a magnificent Tomato Frog in the garden of the hotel. From here we flew to Tana, where this unusual tour ended.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

BIRDS

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*

Meller's Duck ♦ *Anas melleri* Endemic.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

Madagascar Pochard ♦ *Aythya innotata* Endemic. c 30 were noted at Bemanevika. One of the rarest ducks in the world.

Madagascar Partridge ◊ *Margaroperdix madagarensis* Endemic.

Madagascar Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

Madagascar Spinetail ◊ *Zoonavena grandidieri*

Malagasy Palm Swift ◊ *Cypsiurus gracilis*

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

Malagasy Black Swift ◊ (Madagascar S) *Apus balstoni*

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Malagasy Coucal ◊ *Centropus toulou*

Crested Coua ◊ *Coua cristata* Endemic.

Blue Coua ◊ *Coua caerulea* Endemic.

Red-capped Coua ◊ *Coua ruficeps* Endemic.

Red-fronted Coua ◊ *Coua reynaudii* Endemic.

Coquerel's Coua ◊ *Coua coquereli* Endemic.

Red-breasted Coua ◊ *Coua serriana* Endemic.

Madagascar Cuckoo ◊ (M Lesser C) *Cuculus rochii* Endemic.

White-breasted Mesite ◊ *Mesitornis variegatus* Endemic.

Brown Mesite ◊ *Mesitornis unicolor* Endemic.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia*

Malagasy Turtle Dove ◊ *Nesoenas picturatus*

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Madagascar Green Pigeon ◊ *Treron australis*

Madagascar Blue Pigeon ◊ *Alectroenas madagascariensis* Endemic.

Madagascar Wood Rail ◊ *Mentocrex kioloides* Endemic.

Madagascar Flufftail ◊ *Sarothrura insularis* Endemic, heard only.

Slender-billed Flufftail ◊ *Sarothrura watersi* Endemic

Madagascar Rail ◊ *Rallus madagascariensis* Endemic, heard only.

White-throated Rail ◊ *Dryolimnas cuvieri* Endemic.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Sakalava Rail ◊ *Zapornia olivieri* Endemic. Great looks at this very localized species at Lake Kinkony.

Madagascar Grebe ◊ *Tachybaptus pelzelni* Endemic.

Madagascar Buttonquail ◊ *Turnix nigricollis* Endemic.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

Madagascar Jacana ◊ *Actophilornis albinucha* Endemic.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Madagascar Snipe ◊ *Gallinago macrodactyla* Endemic.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Madagascar Pratincole ◊ *Glareola ocularis* Endemic.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

Saunders's Tern ◊ *Sternula saundersi*

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

African Openbill (A O Stork) *Anastomus lamelligerus*

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus*

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Madagascar Ibis ◊ (M Crested I) *Lophotibis cristata* Endemic.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata*

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Malagasy Pond Heron ◊ (Madagascar P H) *Ardeola idae*

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Humboldt's Heron ◊ *Ardea humbloti*

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Great Egret (G White E) *Ardea alba*

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*

Dimorphic Egret ◊ *Egretta dimorpha*

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Madagascar Harrier-Hawk ◊ *Polyboroides radiatus* Endemic.

Madagascar Serpent Eagle ◊ *Eutriorchis astur* Endemic. The Bird of the Trip. Exceptional scope views of this very rare and very rarely observed bird of prey.

Frances's Sparrowhawk ◊ *Accipiter francesiae*

Henst's Goshawk ◊ *Accipiter henstii* Endemic, heard only.

Malagasy Harrier ◊ (Madagascar H) *Circus macroscelus*

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*

Madagascar Fish Eagle ◊ *Haliaeetus vociferoides* Endemic.

Madagascar Buzzard ◊ *Buteo brachypterus* Endemic.

Red Owl ◊ *Tyto soumagnei* Endemic. Excellent views at a day roost at Bemanevika.

Torotoroka Scops Owl ◊ *Otus madagascariensis* Endemic.

Rainforest Scops Owl ◊ *Otus rutilus* Endemic, heard only.

Madagascar Owl ◊ (M Long-eared O) *Asio madagascariensis* Endemic, heard only.

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*

Cuckoo-roller ◊ (Madagascar C R) *Leptosomus [discolor] discolor* Endemic.

Madagascar Hoopoe ◊ *Upupa marginata* Endemic.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

Short-legged Ground Roller ◊ *Brachypteracias leptosomus* Endemic.

Scaly Ground Roller ◊ *Geobiastes squamiger* Endemic. Regular observations of this very smart species on the Masoala Peninsula.

Pitta-like Ground Roller ◊ *Atelornis pittoides* Endemic, heard only.

Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher ◊ *Corythornis madagascariensis* Endemic.

Malagasy Kingfisher ◊ (Madagascar Malachite K) *Corythornis vintsioides*

Olive Bee-eater (Madagascar B-e) *Merops superciliosus*

Malagasy Kestrel ◊ (Madagascar K) *Falco newtoni*

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

Sooty Falcon ◊ *Falco concolor*

Greater Vasa Parrot ◊ *Coracopsis vasa*

Lesser Vasa Parrot ◊ *Coracopsis nigra*

Grey-headed Lovebird ◊ *Agapornis canus*

Schlegel's Asity ◊ *Philepitta schlegeli* Endemic. A pair at the nest at Ankarafantsika.

Red-tailed Vanga ◊ *Calicalicus madagascariensis* Endemic.

Hook-billed Vanga ◊ *Vanga curvirostris* Endemic.

Bernier's Vanga ◊ *Oriolia bernieri* Endemic. Scope views of a pair on the Masoala Peninsula.

Van Dam's Vanga ◊ *Xenopirostris damii* Endemic.

Sickle-billed Vanga ◊ *Falcula palliata* Endemic.

White-headed Vanga ◊ *Artamella viridis* Endemic.

Chabert Vanga ◊ *Leptopterus chabert* Endemic.

Blue Vanga ◊ (Madagascar B V) *Cyanolanius [madagascarinus] madagascarinus* Endemic.

Rufous Vanga ◊ *Schetba rufa* Endemic.

Helmet Vanga ◊ *Euryceros prevostii* Endemic. Regular observations of this magnificent species on the Masoala Peninsula. Two active nests were found.

Tylas Vanga ◊ *Tylas eduardi* Endemic.

Nuthatch Vanga ◊ *Hypositta corallirostris* Endemic.

Common Newtonia ◊ *Newtonia brunneicauda* Endemic.

Crossley's Vanga ◊ *Mystacornis crossleyi* Endemic.

Madagascar Cuckooshrike ◊ (Ashy C) *Ceblepyris cinereus*

Crested Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus forficatus*

Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher ◊ *Terpsiphone mutata*

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Madagascar Lark ◊ (M Bush L) *Eremopterix hova* Endemic.

Malagasy Bulbul ◊ *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

Mascarene Martin ◊ *Phedina borbonica*

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

Malagasy Brush Warbler ◊ *Nesillas typica*

Madagascar Swamp Warbler ◊ *Acrocephalus newtoni* Endemic.

Grey Emutail ◊ *Bradypterus seebohmi* Endemic.

White-throated Oxylabes ◊ *Oxylabes madagascariensis* Endemic.

Long-billed Bernieria ◊ *Bernieria madagascariensis* Endemic.

Spectacled Tetraka ◊ *Xanthomixis zosterops* Endemic.

Rand's Warbler ◊ *Randia pseudozosterops* Endemic, heard only.

Common Jery ◊ *Neomixis tenella* Endemic.

Green Jery ◊ *Neomixis viridis* Endemic, heard only.

Madagascar Cisticola ◊ *Cisticola cherina* Endemic.

Malagasy White-eye ◊ *Zosterops maderaspatanus*

Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis*

Madagascar Starling ◊ *Hartlaubius auratus* Endemic.

Madagascar Magpie-Robin ◊ *Copsychus albospectularis* Endemic.

Forest Rock Thrush ◊ *Monticola sharpei* Endemic.

Madagascar Stonechat ◊ *Saxicola sibilla*

Souimanga Sunbird ◊ *Cinnyris sovimanga*

Malagasy Green Sunbird ◊ *Cinnyris notatus*

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus*

Nelicourvi Weaver ◊ *Ploceus nelicourvi* Endemic.

Sakalava Weaver ◊ *Ploceus sakalava* Endemic.

Red Fody ◊ (Madagascar R F) *Foudia madagascariensis*

Forest Fody ◊ *Foudia omissa* Endemic.

Madagascar Mannikin ◊ (M Munia) *Lepidopygia nana* Endemic.

Madagascar Wagtail ◊ *Motacilla flaviventris* Endemic.

MAMMALS

Small Indian Civet (introduced) *Viverricula indica*

Fossa *Cryptoprocta ferox* Endemic. This rarely observed carnivore showed quite well on our nightwalk at Bemanevika.

Hairy-eared Dwarf Lemur *Allocebus trichotis* Endemic.

Greater Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus major* Endemic.

Red Mouse-lemur *Microcebus rufus* Endemic.

Scott's (Masoala) Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur scottorum* Endemic.

Undescribed Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur sp nov* Endemic.

White-headed Lemur *Eulemur albifrons* Endemic.

Brown Lemur *Eulemur fulvus* Endemic.

Sambirano Lesser Bamboo Lemur *Haplemur occidentalis* Endemic.

Red-ruffed Lemur *Varecia rubra* Endemic.

Moore's (Masoala) Woolly Lemur *Avahi mooreorum* Endemic.

Coquerel's Sifaka *Propithecus coquereli* Endemic.

Lowland Red Forest Rat *Nesomys audeberti* Endemic.

Webb's Tuft-tailed Rat *Eliurus webbi* Endemic.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Collared Spine-tailed Lizard *Oplurus cuvieri*

Madagascar Day Gecko *Phelsuma madagascariensis*

Mossy Leaf-tailed (or Southern Flat-tailed) Gecko *Uroplatus sikorae*

Giant Leaf-tailed (or Common Flat-tailed) Gecko *Uroplatus fimbriatus*

Lined Leaf-tailed (or Flat-tailed) Gecko *Uroplatus lineatus*

Madagascar Flap-necked Chameleon *Chamaeleo dilepis*

Blue-legged (or Cryptic) Chameleon *Calumma crypticum*

Short-horned Chameleon *Calumma brevicornis*

Madagascar Pimple-nosed Chameleon *Calumma nasutum*

Oustalet's (or Malagasy Giant) Chameleon *Furcifer oustaleti*

Madagascar Cat-eyed Snake *Madagascarophis colubrinus*

Tomato Frog *Dyscophus antongilii*



The endemic Totoroka Scops Owl was keeping an eye on us from its roost in the Ankarafantsika National Park (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The endemic Meller's Duck was regularly encountered in the Bemanevika area (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Lake Kinkony held fair numbers of the elegant, endemic Madagascar Jacana (image by Mark Van Beirs)



We obtained our best looks at Grey-headed Lovebirds in the forest surrounding Lake Kinkony (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The attractive Crested Coua is a widespread endemic all over the forested areas of Madagascar (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Acrobatic Coquerel's Sifakas showed very well at the Ankarafantsika National Park (image by Mark Van Beirs)



We regularly encountered cute Brown Mouse Lemurs on our nocturnal wanderings (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The Blue Coua is one of several totally blue coloured birds that inhabit the eighth continent (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The endearing Black Heron regularly showed off its unique foraging behaviour (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The rare and unobtrusive Bernier's Vanga showed well on the Masoala Peninsula; this is a male (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The highly attractive Madagascar Blue Pigeon was only seen a few times on our tour (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Good numbers of Lesser Crested Terns were roosting on offshore rocks near our base on the Masoala Peninsula (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The much-wanted Helmet Vanga is restricted to primary forest in the northeast of Madagascar (image by Mark Van Beirs)



This cute Hairy-eared Dwarf Lemur performed beautifully at night at Bemanevika (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The Madagascar Lark is one of the few endemics that inhabits the grassy expanses of Madagascar's central plateau (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Madagascar holds half of the world's chameleons and the Oustalet's (or Madagascar Giant) Chameleon is one of the more widespread ones (image van Mark Van Beirs)



The endemic Red Owl showed beautifully at its day roost in the forest at Bemanevika (image van Mark Van Beirs)



Good numbers of endemic Madagascar Grebes showed at the Madagascar Pochard lake (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The endemic Red Owl favours dense pandanus palms to roost in (image van Mark Van Beirs)



The endemic Madagascar Mannikin is widespread all over the island (image by Mark Van Beirs)



This lake in northern Madagascar holds most of the tiny population of the Critically Endangered Madagascar Pochard (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The charming Red Ruffed Lemur is virtually restricted to the Masoala Peninsula, where we saw and heard it regularly on our walks (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The endemic Rufous Vanga is a not very active inhabitant of primary forest; this is a female (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The Madagascar Pochard was thought to be extinct till a small population was found in 2006 at Bemanevika, this endemic is now considered to be Critically Endangered (image by Mark van Beirs)



The endemic Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher showed very well in the forest at Bemanevika (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The incredible Helmet Vanga surely is one of the best birds in the world (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The cute Sakalava Rail is restricted to a few marshy lakes in western Madagascar. We obtained cracking views of this rarely seen endemic on Lake Kinkony (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The endemic Sakalava Weaver is a widespread endemic of western Madagascar (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The Madagascar Serpent Eagle is a very rare and seldomly encountered inhabitant of Madagascar's eastern rainforests. We were exceedingly lucky to be able to obtain perfect scope views near our accommodation on the Masoala Peninsula (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The modestly-clad Madagascar Bulbul is one of the most widespread endemics in Madagascar (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The endemic Madagascar Buzzard showed regularly in forested areas (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The very rare Madagascar Serpent Eagle is the only member of its genus (Eutriorchis) and feeds mainly on chameleons (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The beautifully patterned Scaly Ground Roller showed very well in the forests of the Masoala Peninsula (image by Mark Van Beirs)



*The nocturnal Scott's (or Masoala) Sportive Lemur showed regularly on our night walks on the Masoala Peninsula
(image by Mark Van Beirs)*



The lovely Madagascar Stonechat is a widespread and common endemic (image by Mark Van Beirs)



A pair of very smart Madagascar Ibises regularly foraged amongst the chalets of our accommodation on the Masoala Peninsula (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The very colourful Madagascar Day Gecko is a very adaptable species which often occurs where people live (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Two active nests of the very attractive Helmet Vanga were found on our walks in the primary forests of the Masoala Peninsula (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The very attractively patterned Malagasy Harrier performed very well at Bemanevika (image by Mark Van Beirs)



It took a bit of effort to find our first Short-legged Ground Roller in the primary forest of the Masoala Peninsula. The second observation involved a bird that could be scoped next to the trail... (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The amazing Tomato Frog only lives in a small area centered around the town of Maroantsetra. One of these unbelievable amphibians showed exceedingly well in the garden of our hotel (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The Masoala Peninsula is one of the very few places in Madagascar where primary forest comes down to the coast (image by Mark Van Beirs)



The feisty, endemic Madagascar Drongo often acts as the flock leader in the Madagascan forests (image by Mark Van Beirs)