

# Madagascar: 8<sup>th</sup> Continent! | Species List

November 5 – 19, 2022 | with Naturalist Journeys



With Carlos Sanchez, Dalton Gibbs, and Marc Rabenandrasana, and 11 participants: Karen, Kathy, Katy, Mary, Kim, Ken, Kenny, Jerry, Linda, Lee, and Howie

Compiled by Carlos Sanchez

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(E)= Endemic to Madagascar

(RE)=Regionally endemic to the islands of the Indian Ocean

(BrE)=Endemic breeder to Madagascar but migrates to Africa

**Summary:** Isolated for nearly 80 million years, Madagascar boasts some of the most unique animals on Earth: lemurs, tenrecs, ground-rollers, mesites, asities and more are all endemic families to the island. Over the course of this tour, we sampled the southern two-thirds of the island from the otherworldly spiny forest at Ifaty to the lush montane forests of Ranomafana for lemurs, chameleons and endemic birds (we saw over 80 endemic birds). The places that left the deepest impressions on our group were Nosy Ve and the spiny forest near Ifaty. The favorite birds of the trip included Malagasy Kingfisher, Malagasy Paradise-Flycatcher, Pitta-like Ground-Roller, and Brown Emutail. When it came to mammals, it was no contest – Ring-tailed Lemur was the favorite by far.

## **BIRDS (141 species recorded, of which 2 were heard only):**

### **DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (4)**

**White-faced Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*—large numbers of these attractive ducks at Lac Alarobia, where they were associating with large numbers of smaller dabbling ducks (11/05).

**Blue-billed Teal** *Spatula hottentota*—we saw about a couple dozen of these little blue-billed ducks at Lac Alarobia (11/05).

**Meller's Duck** *Anas melleri* (E)—an endemic duck that looks like a female Mallard but sporting a long gray bill. We saw a pair at D'Ankazomivada Reserve (11/15).

**Red-billed Duck** *Anas erythrorhyncha*—the most widespread and common waterfowl species on our route, recorded on two days. Good numbers at Lac Alarobia and the D'Ankazomivada Reserve (11/05, 11/15).

### **FLAMINGOS: Phoenicopteridae (1)**

**Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor*—we saw about thirty-two individuals at the Belalanda Wetlands, which were quite dry and saline on this visit (11/08).

### **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (4)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* (I)—common feral bird in towns and cities

**Madagascar Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia picturata* (RE)—widespread and common elsewhere but very shy due to hunting.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*—this elegant and pretty little dove was common in the dry southwest

**Madagascar Blue-Pigeon** *Alectroenas madagascariensis* (E)—we recorded this beautiful and unique fruit-eating pigeon in the rainforests of Ranomafana and Andasibe-Mantadia, including several birds perched by the road on

our way out of Ranomafana (11/13, 11/14). The blue-pigeons of the Indian Ocean islands are most closely related to the Australian and Pacific Island fruit doves thousands of miles away!

### **MESITES: Mesitornithidae (2)**

**Brown Mesite** *Mesitornis unicolor* (E)—we saw an individual in a ravine at Ranomafana on one day, after a concerted effort to see this uncommon and unusual species (11/14).

**Subdesert Mesite** *Monias benschi* (E)—one perched in a low tree at length for the group in Ifaty, allowing us to approach it to within a few feet (11/08). Really does not look like anything else!

### **SANDGROUSE: Pteroclididae (1)**

**Madagascar Sandgrouse** *Pterocles personatus* (E)—several birds walking briskly through short grass on a strategic stop on the highway from Toliara to Relais de la Reine (11/12).

### **CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae(10)**

**Crested Coua** *Coua cristata* (E)—we saw a couple of these attractive, arboreal couas at Ifaty, where they were reasonably common in the spiny forest (11/09).

**Verreaux's Coua** *Coua verreauxi* (E)—seen very well, albeit briefly, in the spiny forest of La Table (11/06). This coua has an extremely limited distribution in coastal southwest Madagascar.

**Blue Coua** *Coua caerulea* (E)—this large, arboreal coua was not too uncommon in the rainforests of Ranomafana and Andasibe (11/14, 11/18). This species resembles and behaves like mainland Africa's colorful turacos.

**Red-capped Coua** *Coua ruficeps* (E)—we saw the 'Green-capped' subspecies of this coua at Ifaty (11/06) and the Arboretum d'Antsokay (11/09).

**Coquerel's Coua** *Coua coquereli* (E)—a terrestrial coua of drier, semi-deciduous forests – brief views of a skittish individual at Zombitse National Park (11/11/).

**Running Coua** *Coua cursor* (E)—seen a few times in the spiny forest at Ifaty, where we saw it both running on the ground or feeding higher up in the trees (11/09).

**Giant Coua** *Coua gigas* (E)—the largest of all the couas and perhaps the most cooperative and tranquil; we observed one at close range at Zombitse National Park (11/11).

**Red-breasted Coua** *Coua serriana* (E)—spectacular views of an individual jumping up on a large rock, then crossing the path in front of us, at Andasibe (11/17). This species is the hardest to see of all the couas.

**Madagascar Coucal** *Centropus toulou* (RE)—a very common cuckoo of secondary growth and disturbed areas throughout Madagascar from cities to dry forest to rainforest

**Madagascar Cuckoo** *Cuculus rochii* (BrE)—this is a common summer migrant to Madagascar, equally at home in both wet and dry forests. We had our best views at Ifaty (11/09) and the D'Ankazomivada Reserve (11/15).

### **NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (2)**

**Collared Nightjar** *Gactornis enarratus* (E)—an adult sitting on a nest at Analamazaotra Reserve. No one knows what this species even sounds like, such are the gaps in our knowledge of Madagascar's fauna.

**Madagascar Nightjar** *Caprimulgus madagascariensis* (RE)—surprisingly common and tolerant of human disturbance, with our best sighting as a group at Ifaty during a night walk.

### **SWIFTS: Apodidae (2)**

**Madagascar Swift** *Apus balstoni* (RE)—scattered sightings of these large swifts during long travel days, such as at Ihosy (11/12).

**Malagasy Palm-Swift** *Cypsiurus gracilis* (RE)—very common at Relais de la Reine and our hotel near Ranomafana, often in small flocks.

### **FLUFFTAILS: Sarothruridae (2)**

**Madagascar Wood-Rail** *Canirallus kiolooides* (E)—brief views of a shadowy figure hurrying along over the leaf litter at the Andasibe Orchid Garden (11/17). The flufftails and some of the rails have recently been split off as a new family, the Sarothruridae.

**Madagascar Flufftail** *Sarothrura insularis* (E)—seen well at Ranomafana during an afternoon walk.

#### **RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (2)**

**White-throated Rail** *Dryolimnas cuvieri* (RE)—great views of this colorful rail at a small marsh at Lac Alarobia (11/5) and Vakona Rainforest Lodge (11/18).

**Eurasian Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*—a few of these familiar birds at Lac Alarobia (11/8), very similar to the Common Gallinule found in the Americas.

#### **STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (1)**

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*—a couple dozen birds at the Belanda Wetlands gave everyone great views (11/8), as well as further on at a series of roadside pools.

#### **PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (8)**

**Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*—about a half-dozen on the beach at Nosy Ve (11/7).

**Lesser Sand-Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*—a single bird at the roadside pools just south of Ifaty was a nice find (11/8), as this species is unusual (underreported?) in Madagascar.

**Greater Sand-Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*—two birds on the beach at Nosy Ve (11/7) mixed in with a small flock of shorebirds.

**Kittlitz's Plover** *Charadrius pecuarius*—a common species in the arid southwest, filling a niche close to that of America's Killdeer. One of the most numerous birds at the Belanda Wetlands (11/8)! Also seen at the Ifaty salt pans (11/10).

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*—reasonably common boreal migrant, with sightings at Belanda Wetlands (11/8) and Ifaty salt pans (11/10). Most of these birds migrate all the way from the Scandinavian and Russian tundra to spend the winter in Africa and Madagascar.

**Madagascar Plover** *Charadrius thoracicus* (E)—a cooperative individual in highly degraded habitat just south of Ifaty (11/10), differentiated from Kittlitz's Plover by its black breast band. The IUCN classifies this species as Vulnerable due to habitat loss in southwest Madagascar.

**Three-banded Plover** *Charadrius tricollaris*—one of these striking plovers a roadside pool just south of Ifaty (11/8).

**White-fronted Plover** *Charadrius marginatus*—four birds at Nosy Ve (11/7) and a few more at the Ifaty salt pans (11/10).

#### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (7)**

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*—at least three birds on the beach at Nosy Ve (11/7).

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*—a small flock of this familiar shorebird at Nosy Ve (11/7) and Belanda Wetlands (11/8).

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*—nice views of a dozen or so individuals at the Belanda Wetlands (11/8) and the salt pans at Ifaty (11/10).

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*—a few at Nosy Ve in the mixed shorebird flock (11/7).

**Madagascar Snipe** *Gallinago macrodactyla* (E)—one flushed at D'Ankazomivada Community Reserve gave good in-flight views (11/15). This cool shorebird is larger and darker than the more familiar migratory Wilson's Snipe of North America.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*—singles at the Belanda Wetlands (11/8) and Ifaty salt pans (11/10). This shorebird is the Old World equivalent of Spotted Sandpiper.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*—a single bird at Ifaty salt pans gave excellent views (11/10).

#### **BUTTONQUAILS: Turnicidae (1)**

**Madagascar Buttonquail** *Turnix nigricollis* (E)—seen at Anakao under a community water cistern (11/7) and again in the fields behind Guesthouse Madalief (11/16).

#### **GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (1)**

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*—one loafing out on a salt pan south of Ifaty (11/8).

### **TROPICBIRDS: Phaethontidae (1)**

**Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda*—lovely views of these elegant birds both in flight and sitting on nests at Nosy Ve (11/7).

### **HAMERKOP: Scopidae (1)**

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*—several individuals observed in rice paddies on travel days. This relative of the herons is the only member of its family and builds massive domed nests.

### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (10)**

**Gray Heron** *Ardea cinerea*—this widespread and familiar Old World heron was seen only on one day, the day trip to Nosy Ve (11/7). A few years ago, we observed breeding on that islet.

**Humblot's Heron** *Ardea humbloti* (RE)—we saw this impressive heron at Lac Alarobia (11/5) and more distantly at Ifaty (11/8).

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*—this cosmopolitan species was present in small numbers throughout

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*—we had many sightings, including large and active rookeries and Lac Alarobia and Nosy Ve. The subspecies of Little Egret on the island is sometimes split as 'Dimorphic Egret.'

**Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca*—nice numbers at Lac Alarobia (11/5), where we got to see their famous 'parasol' hunting strategy on the edge of the lake

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*—scattered sightings throughout the island, as well as studies of multiple birds at the Lac Alarobia rookery

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*—a couple hundred were nesting at Lac Alarobia, with a few scattered sightings elsewhere in rice paddies.

**Malagasy Pond-Heron** *Ardeola idae* (BrE)—a few crisp breeding plumage adults at Lac Alarobia offered our best views (11/5). This species migrates to eastern Africa outside the breeding season.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*—a couple individuals at Lac Alarobia (11/5) with scattered sightings at rice paddies elsewhere.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*—numerous at Lac Alarobia at the wader rookery (11/5), as well as a few roosting individuals at Guesthouse Madalief in the introduced pines (11/16).

### **HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (6)**

**Madagascar Harrier-Hawk** *Polyboroides radiatus* (E)—great views in the spiny forest at Ifaty (11/8 and 11/9), where we enjoyed seeing an individual perched out in the open. This is a striking and large raptor with expressive facial skin that changes color according to mood.

**Frances's Goshawk** *Accipiter francesiae* (RE)—a single one of these small *Accipiters* appeared at Vakona Rainforest Lodge for a few lucky people. Not a common raptor!

**Madagascar Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter madagascariensis* (E)—this medium-sized *Accipiter* performed well for us at Ifaty at a nest on two days (11/8 and 11/9).

**Henst's Goshawk** *Accipiter henstii* (E)—we saw this large *Accipiter* briefly at both Ranomafana National Park (11/14) and chasing a Hamerkop over Andasibe-Mantadia National Park (11/18).

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*—the most common raptor on the island, regularly seen in all open habitats

**Madagascar Buzzard** *Buteo brachypterus* (E)—seen only a couple times, with our best views at the Ifaty spiny forest in the early morning glow (11/9).

### **BARN OWLS: Tytonidae (1)**

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*—a very shy bird at Guesthouse Madalief (11/16).

### **OWLS: Strigidae (3)**

**Malagasy Scops-Owl** *Otus rutilus* (E)—beautiful views of a roosting individual at Andasibe-Mantadia National Park (11/18).

**White-browed Owl** *Ninox superciliaris* (E)—nice views of a roosting individual at Zombitse (11/11). After much genetic work, it seems to be an aberrant *Athene* owl like Little and Burrowing Owl.

**Madagascar Owl** *Asio madagascariensis* (E)— seen at a stakeout near the Andasibe Orchid Garden, where we got very nice views of a roosting individual (11/17).

#### **CUCKOO-ROLLER: Leptosomidae (1)**

**Cuckoo-Roller** *Leptosomus discolor* (RE)—one of the most common sounds in the forests of Madagascar. We saw this hawk-sized bird (yes, they are that big!) a few times at Zombitse (11/11) and Andasibe (11/17), often performing their display flights overhead.

#### **HOOPOES: Upupidae (1)**

**Madagascar Hoopoe** *Upupa marginata* (E)—seen at Lac Alarobia (11/5), Anakao (11/7), Ifaty spiny forest (11/9), and sightings elsewhere, usually in drier areas near villages or gardens such as Relais de la Reine.

#### **KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (2)**

**Malagasy Kingfisher** *Corythornis vintsioides* (RE)—this colorful little kingfisher was fortunately quite common wherever there was freshwater on our route, so we got to enjoy it again and again

**Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher** *Corythornis madagascariensis* (E)—beautiful views of this little gem at the Sahamalaotra Track at Ranomafana National Park (11/14). Not necessarily near water.

#### **BEE-EATERS: Meropidae (1)**

**Madagascar Bee-eater** *Merops superciliosus* (BrE)—present in small numbers in open areas throughout our route on the island, including La Table (11/6), Arboretum d’Antsokay (11/6), and Anakao (11/7).

#### **ROLLERS: Coraciidae (1)**

**Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus* (BrE)—we saw our first of these flying rainbows at Relais de la Reine, and it was also common at Andasibe-Mantadia at Vakona Rainforest Lodge (11/19). Who knew brown, blue and purple looked so great together?

#### **GROUND-ROLLERS: Brachypteraciidae (5)**

**Short-legged Ground-Roller** *Brachypteracias leptosomus* (E)—observed by some who were willing to hike a steep hill in order to see it, after a long hike through pristine and very beautiful Malagasy rainforest (11/18).

**Scaly Ground-Roller** *Brachypteracias squamiger* (E) (HO)—heard while birding along the montane forest trails at Ranomafana, but we never laid eyes on this species.

**Pitta-like Ground-Roller** *Atelornis pittoides* (E)—not uncommon at Ranomafana (11/13), where we got to enjoy this jewel a handful of times on the forest trails. The coloration, calls and tail movements are reminiscent of Neotropical motmots.

**Rufous-headed Ground-Roller** *Atelornis crossleyi* (E) (HO)—despite our best attempts, this handsome bird simply would not come out from the wet understory at Ranomafana.

**Long-tailed Ground-Roller** *Uratelornis chimaera* (E)—the local guides at Ifaty herded one of these spectacular birds into view at Ifaty (11/8 and 11/9). It does not look quite like anything else on Earth – understandable why many birders consider it one of the world’s most striking birds.

#### **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (1)**

**Madagascar Kestrel** *Falco newtoni* (RE)—common and widespread in all habitats across the island

#### **OLD WORLD PARROTS: Psittaculidae (3)**

**Greater Vasa-Parrot** *Mascarinus vasa* (RE)—we saw this bizarre parrot at Andasibe-Mantadia (11/18) on the forest path leading to the Short-legged Ground-Roller. Both Vasa-Parrots are most closely related to Pesquet’s Parrot of New Guinea, and this ancient lineage should perhaps be split off as a separate family.

**Lesser Vasa-Parrot** *Mascarinus niger* (RE)—seen near roadside pools south of Ifaty (11/8) and quietly perched inside the transitional forest at Zombitse (11/11).

**Gray-headed Lovebird** *Agapornis canus* (E)—nice views of these cute little parrots at the Ifaty spiny forest (11/9) and Relais de la Reine (11/12).

### **ASITIES: Philepittidae (2)**

**Velvet Asity** *Philepitta castanea* (E)—seen at both Ranomafana (11/14) and Andasibe-Mantadia. These chunky birds and their sunbird-like relatives are most closely related to the broadbills of tropical Asia and parts of Africa.

**Common Sunbird-Asity** *Neodrepanis coruscans* (E)—a female feeding actively along the Vohiparara Trail at Ranomafana at the top of the forest canopy (11/14). The resemblance to the more widespread sunbirds is uncanny.

### **CUCKOOSHRIKES: Campephagidae (1)**

**Madagascar Cuckooshrike** *Coracina cinerea* (E)—we saw this dapper bird at Ranomafana (11/13) in a mixed feeding flock.

### **VANGAS AND ALLIES: Vangidae (14)**

**Archbold's Newtonia** *Newtonia archboldi* (E)—we saw this small vanga at Ifaty (11/9), differentiated from the following species by the rufous forehead.

**Common Newtonia** *Newtonia brunneicauda* (E)—this plain little bird was common in forests throughout, with nice views at Zombitse (11/11) and Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17).

**Dark Newtonia** *Newtonia amphichroa* (E)—a rainforest newtonia, seen a couple times at Ranomafana (11/14)

**Tylas Vanga** *Tylas eduardi* (E)—common component of mixed feeding flocks at Ranomafana (11/13) and Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17 and 11/18). Looks vaguely like an Old World oriole.

**Red-tailed Vanga** *Calicalicus madagascariensis* (E)—an attractive little vanga seen in forests throughout the island, often as the core members of mixed feeding flocks.

**Red-shouldered Vanga** *Calicalicus rufocarpalis* (E)—we saw this very special bird at La Table (11/6). Described only in 1997, it was the last bird Phoebe Snetsinger saw before her death in 1999.

**Chabert Vanga** *Leptopterus chabert* (E)—the very first vanga we saw on the tour, with sightings at La Table and excellent views at Vakona Rainforest Lodge (11/18 and 11/19). One of the more adaptable vangas.

**Madagascar Blue Vanga** *Cyanolanius madagascarinus* (E)—this vanga's blue plumage almost glows! Seen at wetter forest types: Ranomafana NP (11/13) and Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17 and 11/18). It is a rather common component of mixed vanga feeding flocks.

**Hook-billed Vanga** *Vanga curvirostris* (E)—seen in the Ifaty spiny forest (11/9). An impressive and large black and white vanga that feeds primarily on small vertebrates and large insects.

**Ward's Flycatcher** *Pseudobias wardi* (E)—a bird of mixed feeding flocks but always high in the forest canopy. We saw it at both Ranomafana (11/13) and Andasibe-Mantadia (11/18). It's body shape and behavior once made scientists believe that it was a true flycatcher.

**Rufous Vanga** *Schetba rufa* (E)—we saw this large and striking vanga only at Ranomafana, sitting quietly on a nest (11/13).

**Sickle-billed Vanga** *Falcolea palliata* (E)—large and spectacular vanga seen only once at Ifaty (11/9). It was the group favorite among the vangas.

**White-headed Vanga** *Artamella viridis* (E)—similar in plumage to the preceding species but lacking the long, decurved bill – we only saw one in the wet forest at Andasibe-Mantadia (11/18).

**Lafresnaye's Vanga** *Xenopirostris xenopirostris* (E)—we saw a pair of these odd birds in the Ifaty spiny forest (11/9). The hooked bill is laterally compressed.

### **DRONGOS: Dicruridae (1)**

**Crested Drongo** *Dicrurus forficatus* (RE)—a common, boisterous black bird of open habitats throughout the island

### **MONARCH FLYCATCHERS: Monarchidae (1)**

**Malagasy Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone mutata* (RE)—these stunning birds were reasonably common across the island. We saw females at Arboretum d’Antsokay (11/6), Ranomafana NP (11/13), Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17 and 11/18), a white morph male at Zombitse (11/11) and a rufous morph male at Vakona Rainforest Lodge (11/19).

#### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (1)**

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*—these strong flying African crows were very common on the west side of the island. In size and voice, they seem more like a raven than a crow.

#### **LARKS: Alaudidae (1)**

**Madagascar Lark** *Eremopterix hova* (E)—nice views in overgrazed grassy areas around the salty ponds at Belalanda Wetlands (11/8). Even though Africa has very high lark diversity, only one species occurs on neighboring Madagascar.

#### **CISTICOLAS: Cisticolidae (4)**

**Common Jery** *Neomixis tenella* (E)—common in a variety of natural habitats throughout our route.

**Green Jery** *Neomixis viridis* (E)—seen at Ranomafana NP (11/13).

**Stripe-throated Jery** *Neomixis striatigula* (E)—common at La Table (11/6), Arboretum d’Antsokay (11/6), and Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17 and 11/18). Associates with Rand’s Warbler in wetter forest, even singing the same song from the same perches – a mystery to be solved one day.

**Madagascar Cisticola** *Cisticola cherina* (RE)—this cisticola was abundant in open or disturbed habitats such as at Nosy Ve (11/7) and the Belalanda Wetlands (11/8).

#### **REED-WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae (3)**

**Madagascar Brush-Warbler** *Nesillas typica* (RE)—very common by voice. Multiple individuals observed at Lac Alarobia (11/5) and during our stay at Andasibe-Mantadia NP, including a very cooperative one a pergola (11/18).

**Subdesert Brush-Warbler** *Nesillas lantzii* (E)—the dry scrub and forest equivalent of the preceding species, recorded at La Table (11/6) and Anakao (11/7).

**Madagascar Swamp-Warbler** *Acrocephalus newtoni* (E)—our best views of the trip were at Lac Alarobia (11/5), where one perched up in the reedbeds.

#### **GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: Locustellidae (1)**

**Brown Emutail** *Bradypterus brunneus* (E)—incredible views of this very shy species on the Sahamalaotra Track at Ranomafana – it does look like a little feathered mouse!

#### **MALAGASY WARBLERS: Bernieridae (9)**

**White-throated Oxylabes** *Oxylabes madagascariensis* (E)—seen once on the Sahamalaotra Track at Ranomafana NP (11/14) – one of the more striking of the Malagasy warblers.

**Long-billed Bernieria** *Bernieria madagascariensis* (E)—we saw this neat Malagasy warbler at Zombitse (11/11), Ranomafana (11/14), and Andasibe-Mantadia NP (11/18), often in association with other Malagasy warblers or vangas.

**Cryptic Warbler** *Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi* (E)—fantastic views of a singing individual coming down relatively low over the group at Ranomafana NP (11/14).

**Wedge-tailed Jery** *Hartertula flavoviridis* (E)—fantastic views of this tetraka at Ranomafana (11/14), looking and behaving very much like some of the resident Neotropical warblers such as Golden-crowned (Clements should change the common name of this bird to avoid confusion with the unrelated jerys). Convergent evolution in this family is so cool.

**Thamnornis** *Thamnornis chloropetoides* (E)—this is the large, rather bland warbler we saw in the spiny forest at Ifaty (11/9).

**Yellow-browed Oxylabes** *Crosleyia xanthophrys* (E)—brief views of this shy and uncommon species at Ranomafana NP, where it occurs in dense cover fairly close to the ground (11/14).

**Spectacled Tetraka** *Xanthomixis zosterops* (E)—we saw this usually common species only once at Andasibe-Mantadia NP in a bamboo thicket, although everyone did see it quite well (11/17).

**Gray-crowned Tetraka** *Xanthomixis cinereiceps* (E)—a flocking species of high altitude montane forest at Ranomafana. We saw only one individual this time at this site (11/14).

**Rand's Warbler** *Randia pseudozosterops* (E)—we saw this odd little bird at Ranomafana (11/14), including one singing in association with a Stripe-throated Jery.

#### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (2)**

**Plain Martin** *Riparia paludicola*—these close relatives of Bank Swallow were present in small numbers at Guesthouse Madalief (11/16), Lac Alarobia (11/5), and elsewhere on our route.

**Mascarene Martin** *Phedina borbonica*—the most common and widespread swallow on the island. The big colony at Vakona Rainforest Lodge was a lot of fun to watch and photograph (11/18 and 11/19).

#### **BULBULS: Pycnonotidae (1)**

**Madagascar Bulbul** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis* (RE)—perhaps the most common native passerine on the island.

#### **WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae (1)**

**Madagascar White-eye** *Zosterops maderaspatanus* (RE)—common and sociable little songbird in the wetter east side of the island.

#### **STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (2)**

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* (I)—unfortunately, we saw this invasive and aggressive species at every conceivable site on every day of the tour.

**Madagascar Starling** *Hartlaubius auratus* (E)—we saw this scarce forest starling a couple times near the trailhead at Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17 and 11/18) – one that is very easy to miss on a tour.

#### **OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS AND CHATS: Muscicapidae (4)**

**Madagascar Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus albospectularis* (E)—a common garden bird in Madagascar. Seen at Arboretum d'Antsokay (11/6), Ifaty spiny forest (11/9), Andasibe-Mantadia NP (11/17), and elsewhere.

**Littoral Rock-Thrush** *Monticola imerina* (E)—this very range-restricted species took some effort to find this time around Anakao (11/7).

**Forest Rock-Thrush** *Monticola sharpei* (E)—we saw a pair of this pretty species around the Isalo Visitor Center one morning (11/12), here represented by the 'Benson's subspecies.

**African Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*—seen regularly in open areas of the wetter east side of the island, such as at d'Ankazomivada Community Reserve (11/15) and the old fish farm at Andasibe-Mantadia NP (11/17).

#### **SUNBIRDS: Nectariniidae (2)**

**Souimanga Sunbird** *Cinnyris sovimanga* (RE)—very common.

**Malagasy Sunbird** *Cinnyris notatus* (RE)—our first sighting was at the Ifaty spiny forest (11/9), with scattered sightings on the wetter side of the island as the tour progressed.

#### **WEAVERS: Ploceidae (4)**

**Nelicourvi Weaver** *Ploceus nelicourvi* (E)—small numbers seen almost daily in the rainforests of Ranomafana and Andasibe.

**Sakalava Weaver** *Ploceus sakalava* (E)—abundant in the dry southwest, where we also got to see a large colony near the owner's house at Arboretum d'Antsokay (11/6).

**Red Fody** *Foudia madagascariensis* (E)—this beautiful crimson weaver was common throughout the island, even in downtown Antananarivo.

**Forest Fody** *Foudia omissa* (E)—nice views of a couple birds at Ranomafana NP in a mixed feeding flock, deep inside the forest (11/13).



### **WAXBILLS AND MUNIAS: Estrildidae (1)**

**Madagascar Munia** *Lonchura nana* (E)—small flocks of these dainty little munias in open, grassy areas of Lac Alarobia (11/5), Belanda Wetlands (11/8). And Vakona Forest Lodge (11/19).

### **PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae (1)**

**Madagascar Wagtail** *Motacilla flaviventris* (E)—these dapper birds were a lot of fun to watch, usually around human habitation such as Vakona Forest Lodge (11/18 and 11/19).

## **MAMMALS (15 species recorded):**

### **MOUSE AND DWARF LEMURS: Cheirogaleidae (3)**

**Gray-brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus griseorufus*—seen on our night walk in the Ifaty spiny forest (11/9). Hard to believe these tiny mammals are primates!

**Rufous Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus rufus*—seen on a night walk along the road at Ranomafana NP after looking for chameleons (11/13).

**Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur** *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*—seen on our night walk at Andasibe-Mantadia NP (11/17). Slightly larger than the previous two species.

### **TRUE LEMURS: Lemuridae (5)**

**Eastern Lesser (Gray) Bamboo Lemur** *Haplemur griseus*—fantastic experience following these cute lemurs through the forest at Andasibe-Mantadia NP on two days (11/17 and 11/18).

**Ring-tailed Lemur** *Lemur catta*—when someone mentions the word lemur, this species is usually the one they think about. The experience of a large family group moving and feeding all around us at Anja (11/12) was one of the highlights of the entire trip.

**Common Brown Lemur** *Eulemur fulvus*—seen well at Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17).

**Red-bellied Lemur** *Eulemur rubriventer*—seen at Ranomafana NP (11/13).

**Red-fronted Brown Lemur** *Eulemur rufifrons*—seen regularly at Ranomafana (11/13, 11/14, and 11/15). A beautiful lemur species with a nice head pattern.

### **SIFAKAS AND INDRI: Indriidae (4)**

**Diademed Sifaka** *Propithecus diadema*—we saw a troupe of these critically endangered lemurs in the Analamazaotra part of Andasibe-Mantadia National Park (11/17 and 11/18), where they are reintroduced.

**Milne-Edwards's Sifaka** *Propithecus edwardsi*—lovely views of this beautiful lemur at Ranomafana NP, right by the bridge over the river (11/13).

**Verreaux's Sifaka** *Propithecus verreauxi*—the famous 'dancing lemurs' so named for their habit of moving along the ground with an extraordinary 'dancing' motion. Seen well at Zombitse (11/11).

**Indri** *Indri indri*—we saw this one, the world's largest lemur, at Andasibe-Mantadia (11/17). It produces one of the world's great natural sounds, almost like the mournful drawn out notes of a singing whale.

### **OLD WORLD RATS AND MICE: Muridae (2)**

**Eastern Red Forest Rat** *Nesomys rufus*—seen briefly at Andasibe-Mantadia NP (11/18).

**Brown Rat** *Rattus norvegicus* (I)—seen early on in the tour near Toliara.

### **TENRECS: Tenrecidae (1)**

**Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec** *Echinops telfairi*—we observed this unusual little animal at Ifaty (11/9). The resemblance to a hedgehog is uncanny, even though they are not close relatives.

## **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (32 species recorded):**

### **GECKOS: Gekkonidae (6)**

**Asian House Gecko** *Hemidactylus frenatus*

**Antananarivo Dwarf Gecko** *Lygodactylus blancae*—seen at Lac Alarobia (11/5). This tiny species seems to be endemic to the area around Antananarivo.

**Thick-tailed Gecko** *Phelsuma mutabilis*—seen at Arboretum d’Antsokay and Anakao (11/6 and 11/7).

**Striped Day Gecko** *Phelsuma lineata*—common at Lac Alarobia (11/5) and Andasibe-Mantadia NP (11/17-19).

**Peacock Day Gecko** *Phelsuma quadriocellata*—these colorful day geckos loved to chase the green laser pointer! Seen at Ranomafana (11/14).

**Banded Day Gecko** *Phelsuma standingi*—a large and striking day gecko, seen at Ifaty (11/9) and Zombitse (11/11).

### **MALAGASY IGUANAS: Opluridae (3)**

**Madagascar Iguana (Three-eyed Lizard)** *Chalarodon madagascariensis*—common in the dry southwest portion of the country, where we saw it daily.

**Merrem’s Madagascar Swift** *Oplurus cyclurus*—seen at the Arboretum d’Antsokay (11/6).

**Dumeril’s Madagascar Swift** *Oplurus quadrimaculatus*—many of these right outside the main building at Relais de la Reine (11/11 and 11/12).

### **PLATED LIZARDS: Gerrhosauridae (1)**

**Madagascar Girdled Lizard** *Zonosaurus madagascariensis*

### **SKINKS: Scincidae (1)**

**Gold-spotted Mabuya** *Trachylepis aureopunctata*—beautifully patterned lizard seen at Arboretum d’Antsokay (11/6).

### **Chamaeleonidae: Chameleons (6)**

**Oustalet’s Giant Chameleon** *Furcifer oustaleti*—we saw this large chameleon at several sites, including Arboretum d’Antsokay, Anja Community Reserve, and Zombitse.

**Short-horned Chameleon** *Calumma brevicorne*—seen on our night walk at Andasibe-Mantadia NP (11/18).

**Cryptic Chameleon** *Calumma crypticum*—seen while spotlighting along the road at Ranomafana (11/13).

**Deceptive Chameleon** *Calumma fallax*—seen while spotlighting at Ranomafana (11/13).

**O’Shaughnessy’s Chameleon** *Calumma oshaughnessyi*—a couple individuals while spotlighting at Ranomafana (11/13).

**Anja Stub-tailed Chameleon** *Brookesia brunoi*—we saw these tiniest of chameleons at Anja (11/12), where they were only recently described in 2012.

### **BOAS: Boidae (1)**

**Dumeril’s Ground Boa** *Acrantophis dumerili*—great views of a large specimen at the Ifaty spiny forest (11/9). One of the largest terrestrial predators on the island.

### **LAMPROPHIID SNAKES: Lamprophiidae (4)**

**Mahfaly Sand Snake (Pencil Snake)** *Mimophis mahfalensis*—not too uncommon in the spiny forest of Ifaty (11/9)

**Madagascar Cat-eyed Snake** *Madagascarophis colubrinus*—observed at Zombitse feeding on a hapless chameleon (11/11).

**Lateral Water Snake** *Thamnosophis lateralis*

**Gold-collared Snake** *Liophidium rhodogaster*—we saw this rare and beautiful snake at Ranomafana (11/14). The underbelly of this snake is a beautiful pastel pink coloration.

### **MALAGASY FROGS: Mantellidae (3)**

**Green Bright-eyed Frog** *Boophis viridis*—we saw this beautiful frog at Andasibe-Mantadia during a night walk (11/17).

**Red-spotted Bright-eyed Frog** *Boophis tasymena*—seen near the same site as the previous species.

**Madagascar Jumping Frog** *Aglyptodactylus madagascariensis*—seen at Ranomafana in the leaf litter.

**GRASSLAND FROGS: Ptychadenidae (1)**

**Madagascar Ridged Frog** *Ptychadena mascareniensis*

**Notable Insects:**

**Giraffe-necked Weevil** *Trachelophorus giraffe*—we found a few at Ranomafana.

**Flatid Leaf Bug** *Flatida rosea*—we saw these odd looking insects at Zombitse.

**'Kung Fu' Cricket** *Colossopus grandidieri*

**Madagascar Giant Swallowtail** *Pharmacophagus antenor*—this spectacular butterfly was commonly seen fluttering along the tops of trees around Ifaty

**Plain Tiger Butterfly** *Danaus chrysippus*