

# INDRI

Ultimate Mammal Voyages

## Trip Report

### Madagascar Mammals of a Magical Island

*30<sup>th</sup> October to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (12 days)*



Ring-tailed Lemur with young by Markus Lilje

***Trip Report compiled by tour leader Markus Lilje***

## Mammals of a Magical Island

Day 1, 30 October	Arrive in Antananarivo
Day 2, 31 October	Antananarivo to Ranomafana
Day 3, 1 November	Ranomafana
Day 4, 2 November	Ranomafana
Day 5, 3 November	Ranomafana to Antananarivo
Day 6, 4 November	Antananarivo to Fort Dauphin to Berenty
Day 7, 5 November	Berenty
Day 8, 6 November	Berenty to Fort Dauphin
Day 9, 7 November	Fort Dauphin to Perinet via Antananarivo
Day 10, 8 November	Perinet and Mantadia National Parks
Day 11, 9 November	Perinet and Mantadia National Parks
Day 12, 10 November	Perinet to Antananarivo and depart

## Tour Summary



One of the major attractions that Madagascar has for any naturalist, is the very high degree of endemism within the species that occur here. This is particularly true of the mammals and reptiles, of which very few of the indigenous species occur anywhere else on the planet. It was with this in mind that we set off on this short introductory exploration of some of the varied habitats that make this island so unique. We visited 3 main destinations during this tour, covering the very different rainforest and spiny forest zones in central highlands and the southern parts of the country.

Our tour started in Antananarivo, the island's capital where we spent the first night at a pleasantly cool 1300m above sea level, before we headed out in a southerly direction early the next day as

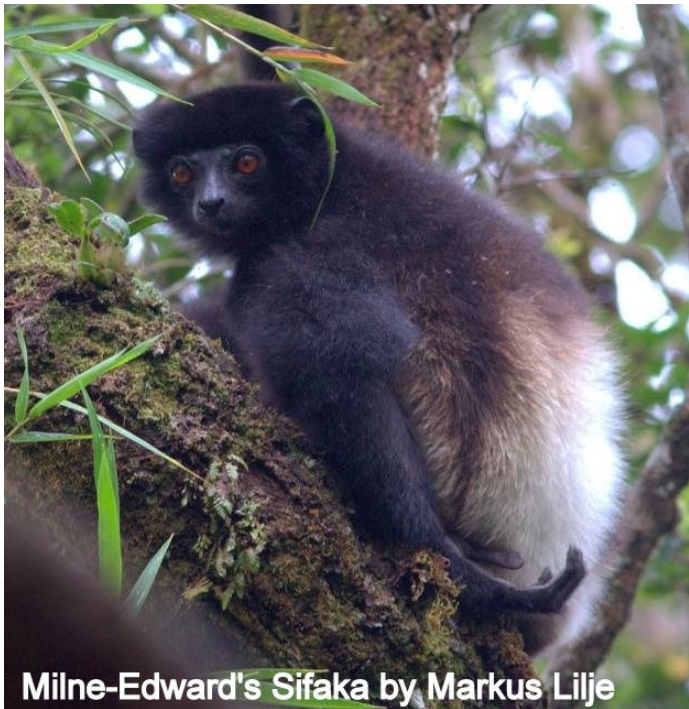
we had quite a long drive ahead of us through very degraded and changed habitat. We were very happy when we arrived in the Ranomafana area. This national park is covered with lush high-lying rainforest, and we were looking forward to exploring it for the next 2 full days. On the first evening a leg-stretch was very welcome and we did



Collared Nightjar by Markus Lilje



a night walk on the road above our accommodations, finding a number of different species of chameleon as well as getting great views of some Brown Mouse Lemurs. During our 2 days on the trails of Ranomafana we had a few species that we particularly targeted and were rewarded with great views of all of them! The Golden Bamboo Lemur – only described in the 1980's – and the main reason why the park even exists, gave us some great close-up views, moving around and feeding just metres away. Red-fronted Brown Lemur is generally restricted to the forest canopy, but we had them at eye-level for a good while and we again had a great opportunity for unusually good views. The local Red-bellied Lemurs had some youngsters that clearly had too much energy, fighting and playing almost without a pause above our heads, until one missed a branch and dropped down, followed very quickly by its father, who grabbed it and took it back to the others, unharmed. We had 2 fantastic encounters with the large and very dark Milne-Edward's Sifaka, that is often difficult to locate. After walking up and down steep forest trails for a long time, we eventually found 2 animals resting on the ground, before we had great views of a very inquisitive pair with very young offspring on the Vohiparara Ridge. On this same ridge we were also fortunate to find the nocturnal Small-toothed Sportive Lemur at its hole where it spends its day hiding, out of site of danger or on the lookout for it. Other mammals that we were lucky



Milne-Edward's Sifaka by Markus Lilje

to see around Ranomafana were some fairly shy Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur and the now very rare Greater Bamboo Lemur, as well as wonderful looks at a very close Ring-tailed Mongoose on one of the paths in the forest. Of course there were not just mammals in this highly diverse area and we recorded a number of frogs and 4 species of chameleon as well as 2 different species of the well-known and sought-after *Uroplatus* or Leaf-toed Geckos, that were so well camouflaged that they were hard to see from just metres away. Birds were also well-represented here with some of the highlights being Brown Mesite, Pitta-like Ground Roller, Blue Coua, Velvet Asity, Pollen's Vanga,

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Madagascar Starling, Forest Rock Thrush, Malagasy Green Sunbird, Nelicourvi Weaver and Forest Fody.

After our drive back to the capital and spending another night there, we caught a flight down to the far southern tip of the island. In Fort Dauphin we were met at the airport by our local guide and a driver from Berenty, the small private reserve that we got to know over the next 2 days. We drove through some wetland and drier mountain habitats, seeing the strange and range-restricted Triangle palm before we got into the unique Spiny Forest habitat. Very little of this habitat remains intact, but small pockets of this, as well as Tamarind-dominated gallery forest is protected on the Berenty property, surrounded by endless rows of sisal plants. This is the most accessible and easiest way to explore this very unusual area and we again found most of our targets and had some great wildlife encounters. A number of lemur species are easy to find here and habituated to human presence, allowing for a very close approach and great photographic opportunities. Around the camp the big attraction is the Ring-tailed Lemur, the most terrestrial of all the lemur species, that we saw right around the huts themselves. At this time of the year the youngsters are around 2 months old and just begin jumping and playing around on their own between bouts of catching a ride on their mother, making it very entertaining. The other major drawcard here is the Verreaux's or Dancing Sifaka that are often also around the edges of the



**Verreaux's Sifaka by Markus Lilje**

camp, where they can often be seen performing their sideways dance as they have to cross more open areas and are unable to jump. The third large lemur here, the Red-fronted Brown Lemur, was introduced from other forests and is now putting the local Ring-tailed Lemur under pressure. It is still a great chance to see

this species at very close quarters. On various walks in the gallery and spiny forests we found the White-footed Sportive Lemur on a number of day roosts and feeding on leaves at night. There are also 2 different species of Mouse Lemur in this area, the largest of this group of lemurs, the Grey Mouse Lemur, which reluctantly showed quite well in the gallery forest, and the tiny Grey-brown Mouse Lemur which we had great views of in the spiny forest. Some of the birds we encountered while exploring the area included relaxed Giant Coua, White-headed and Hook-billed Vangas, a Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk near its nest, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Madagascar Buttonquail, Malagasy Pond Heron, Madagascar

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Sandgrouse, Grey-headed Lovebird, Crested Coua, Tototoroka Scops Owl and White-browed Hawk-Owl. Dumerill's Boa is a very uncommon species that we found in one of the spiny forest patches, along with the lovely Spider Tortoise and Three-eyed Lizard.

We then headed back to the airport area for the night. With some extra time on our hands around Fort Dauphin we decided to try something new and visit the small reserve area that has been set up near one of the large mines in the area. Here we managed to find a few of the very range-restricted Collared Brown Lemurs after a Madagascar Crested Ibis, a very sought-after endemic walked across the path in front of us as we entered the forest. This area had some lovely wetland habitat where we had White-throated Rail and great views of the lovely Antanosy Day Gecko.



Then it was a flight back to Madagascar's capital and onwards to the last destination of the tour: Andasibe. This was our base for exploring two areas: the fantastic primary forest area of Mantadia and the much smaller and closer area of Analamazaotra. Both of these areas protect rainforest, but do have a slightly different species make-up and differences in accessibility. Mantadia was the first destination we went to, spending a fair amount of time walking through the forests, searching for the species that call this area home. After the 90-minute drive from our accommodation we began the search for two of the most interesting and good-looking of the larger lemurs. First we managed to find the impressive Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur, very high up in the branches of some large trees that grow along the river in this area. We watched 2 adults and 3 youngsters here for a while, after first having heard their very far-carrying raucous calls to find them. The Diademed Sifaka is generally considered to be the most beautiful of the large lemurs and we finally managed to find a group and stayed with them for a considerable amount of time. These animals are almost constantly in the highest canopy, feeding and moving as well as resting there, but once again our patience was rewarded and we had the whole group descend to ground level, where they continued feeding just metres away from us – what an incredible experience!

Common Brown Lemur was around as well and some participants again managed great views of this species that is more tolerant of different conditions within the forest and has a slightly wider range. Of course there are not only mammals in this area and we found Meller's Duck, Madagascar Grebe, Ward's Flycatcher, Madagascar Starling and Madagascar Mannikin. During the afternoon some of the participants decided to go to Lemur Island, where a number of animals that have been rescued from the illegal pet trade, and had some very close encounters with a variety of lemurs.

The last full day was spent in Analamazaotra, sometimes known by the somewhat easier name: Perinet Special Reserve, where we hoped to find the Indri – the largest Lemur species and the animal that gives this company its name. We headed out early, and getting straight into our tactic of following their occasional



Calling Indri by Markus Lijje

and very far-carrying territorial calls. Unless they move or are calling this large black and white species can be remarkably hard to find as they usually stay well up in the canopy of the trees they feed on. After a bit of searching we found family group that we then stayed with for a while, enjoying their athletic bounding through the forest and other behaviour. Because this is probably the most iconic species in the country

there can often be many people around, watching them, but because we got there early and found them first, we had them to ourselves for a long time before other groups of tourists joined us there. In the afternoon the group decided to look for a group again and after quite a bit of walking and listening we were finally rewarded when a family group started calling nearby and we were again able to track them down and watch them at close quarters for a while, before they headed into the canopy for the night. This tail-less lemur is a very impressive animal and surely having a group calling at close quarters must be one of the ultimate mammal experiences anyone can have the privilege to enjoy. Other species we recorded here were the nocturnal Eastern Avahi, Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur, Goodman's Mouse Lemur, Eastern Red Forest Rat, Madagascar Tree Boa, Madagascar Plated Lizard, Red-breasted Coua, Madagascar Wood Rail, the incredibly camouflaged Collarred Nightjar, Nuthatch Vanga, Madagascar Cuckooshrike and Nelicourvi Weaver.

After 12 days of exploring just a few of the top biodiversity hotspots together, we certainly all felt that there was much more to be seen on this amazing island. Despite rampant deforestation and many of the species now being threatened, this remains a must-see destination for any serious world-wide mammal or wildlife enthusiast, with such a diverse range of special and unique species being hard to find elsewhere on the planet.

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## **Annotated List of Mammals recorded**

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication: Mammals of Madagascar - A Complete Guide (2007) by Nick Garbutt.

### **Total species recorded: 26**

#### **Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae**

**Madagascar Flying Fox** *Pteropus rufus*

While at Berenty, we had very good views of this species at a roost, where they remain noisy and restless even in the heat of the day and we could wonder at their immense wingspans!

#### **Vespertilionid Bats Vespertilionidae**

**Manavi Long-fingered Bat** *Miniopterus manavi*

We saw these tiny bats at their dayroost in Ranomafana NP in a small cave.

#### **Old World Rats and Mice Muridae**

**Eastern Red Forest Rat** *Nesomys rufus*

We were fortunate to get great views of this large, bright and diurnal rodent on two occasions during our tour – once in Ranomafana, once Mantadia.

#### **Mongoose Herpestidae**

**Ring-tailed Mongoose** *Viverricula elegans*

This beautiful predator was seen well by some participants in the Ranomafana forest.

#### **Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae**

**Grey Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus murinus*

A single animal was seen well in Berenty, where they inhabit the riverine woodland.

**Brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus rufus*

At a feeding station at Ranomafana we were treated to great extended views of this active little lemur on all of the 3 evenings we were there.

**Grey-brown Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus griseorufus*

On the one night we walked in the spiny forest in Berenty we had great views of around 5 of these great little lemurs, including some at very close range.

**Goodman's Mouse Lemur** *Microcebus lehilahytsara*

Around 3 tiny lemurs were seen during 2 night walks in the Andasibe area.

**Greater Dwarf Lemur** *Cheirogaleus major*

This was only seen very briefly at night in the Ranomafana area – probably this species.

**Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur** *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*

This species seems to be fairly common around the Andasibe area, where we had around 5 over 2 days.

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## **Sportive Lemurs Lepilemuridae**

### **Small-toothed Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur microdonta*

We had fantastic views of one animal on its day roost in the higher parts of Ranomafana's great forests.

### **White-footed Sportive Lemur** *Lepilemur leucopus*

This species is fairly common at Berenty, and we got a number of great looks of this species (both on day roosts and at night).

## **True Lemurs Lemuridae**

### **Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur griseus*

A delightful species, it was seen very well in the Andasibe area in a small patch of bamboo, after we had first views of much shyer animals in Ranomafana.

### **Golden Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur aureus*

Definitely one of the mammalian highlights of the tour, we had a total of 4 animals over 2 days in Ranomafana. A really good looking lemur and this and its very restricted range and fairly recent discovery make it a really big target for this tour!

### **Greater Bamboo Lemur** *Hapalemur simus*

We had two of these animals in Ranomafana. Closely related to the previous species, it has also undergone a huge reduction in population and it is uncertain how many of them remain.

### **Ring-tailed Lemur** *Lemur catta*

One of the most recognisable of all Madagascar's animals, we were witness to their antics at Berenty, where we saw them in large groups a number of times. At this time of the year all the young are also starting to become quite active and are great to watch. A lot of the ring-tails looked fairly scruffy, with patchy fur coverage on their bodies, this is probably caused by eating pods from the *Leucena* tree, introduced to the area.

### **Red-bellied Lemur** *Eulemur rubriventer*

A smart, sexually dimorphic forest lemur, which we recorded in Ranomafana, where we watched a male looking after 3 hyperactive youngsters. Seen on 2 days in the area.

### **Common Brown Lemur** *Eulemur fulvus*

We enjoyed fantastic and extended views of these fairly common lemurs in Analamazaotra and particularly in the Mantadia section where some participants got some great video footage.

### **Collared Bown Lemur** *Eulemur collaris*

Around 7 animals were seen in a small patch of forest that has been set aside by mining companies in the Fort Dauphin area. This species has lost much of its former range in southern Madagascar.

### **Red-fronted Brown Lemur** *Eulemur rufus*

We again had some great views of these animals; they often stay in the canopy most of the time, but we had a few come down to eye-level for a while, allowing great views in Ranomafana. The Berenty animals we saw are introduced to that area.

### **Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur** *Varecia variegata*

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After hearing its distinctive calls in Ranomafana, we had good views of this very smart lemur in the very high canopy, while we were at Mantadia.

### **Avahis, Sifakas and the Indri Indridae**

#### **Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur) *Avahi laniger***

We did unusually well with these nocturnal species, with 4 and 3 animals seen on consecutive days in the Andasibe area.

#### **Diademed Sifaka *Propithecus diadema***

Certainly one of the most beautiful of the lemurs, we saw a group of around 6 at Mantadia, where we spent a fair amount of time with them and got some amazing and unusual views as they descended right down to the ground.

#### **Milne-Edward's Sifaka *Propithecus edwardsi***

Another stunning and very distinctively marked large lemur that was seen on 2 days in Ranomafana, first we had 2 animals that were on the ground, before again heading into the trees. Another 3 were then seen on the Vohiparara Ridge, where we had more close views, including of a mother with a very small youngster. This can be one of the more difficult of the larger lemurs to locate.

#### **Verreaux's Sifaka *Propithecus verreauxi***

Totally different to the previous species – this one can't be missed in gallery forest or spiny forest in Berenty, where we enjoyed many great views. These are the famous "dancing sifakas", and they certainly didn't disappoint us, with close-up views of feeding individuals, and many "dancing" across the paths near us.

#### **Indri *Indri indri***

We heard the far-carrying and mournful calls of these, the largest lemurs during our day in Mantadia. On the following day we put in a big effort to locate them early; we were successful in this and stayed with them for a long time, having them to ourselves for much of the time and getting to see some great interaction between different members of the small family group in Analamazaotra.

## **Annotated List of Amphibians recorded**

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication: A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar by Frank Glaw and Miguel Vences – Third edition (2007).

### **Total species recorded: 7**

#### **Madagascar Tree Frog**

Seen in Ranomafana NP.

*Boophis madagascariensis*

*Boophis reticulatus*

A single one seen in Ranomafana NP.

*Guibemantis pulcher*

Huge numbers seen in the Andasibe area, after first views in Ranomafana NP.

*Mantidactylus femoralis*

Recorded in Ranomafana NP.

*Mantella baroni*

This stunningly colourful species was finally found in Ranomafana.

*Mantella madagascariensis*

A single frog seen in Mantadia.

*Anodontyla boulengeri*

Another frog we encountered once in Ranomafana NP.

## Annotated List of Reptiles recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the publication: A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Madagascar by Frank Glaw and Miguel Vences – Third edition (2007).

### Total species recorded: 24

#### Chameleons Testudinidae

##### Spider Tortoise

*Pyxis arachnoides*

2 were seen during our time in sandy areas in Berenty.

#### Chameleons Chamelaeonidae

##### Short-horned Chameleon

*Calumma brevicornis*

2 were seen on our first night walk at Andasibe. possesses large occipital lobes.

*Calluma crypticum*

A total of around 13 of these animals were seen during our 3 days in the Ranomafana area. This species was only recognised as separate from *C. brevicorne* in 2006.

##### O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon

*Calluma oshaughnessyi*

2 were recorded at Ranomafana during night walks, unfortunately no really distinct large males were found, as the male is a particularly good looking and large chameleon!

##### Nose-horned Chameleon

*Calluma nasuta*

Another species recorded every day in Ranomafana - regarded as the smallest "typical" chameleon.

##### Band-bellied Chameleon

*Calluma gastrotaenia*

A bright green chameleon with a white belly, we recorded it first at Ranomafana, again near Andasibe.

##### Parson's Chameleon

*Calluma parsonii*

Single animals were seen twice in the area around Andasibe, one of the biggest 2 species.

##### Warty Chameleon

*Furcifer verrucosus*

There are fewer chameleon species in the dry parts of the country, this is one that we found a number of times in the far south – berenty and surrounds.

##### Side-striped Chameleon

*Furcifer lateralis*

Another species we found in the drier south, where we had a single animal at Berenty.

## Iguanids Iguanidae

### **Three-eyed Lizard** *Chalarodon madagascariensis*

Fairly commonly seen in dry areas such as Berenty and surrounding spiny forest areas. Possesses a pineal gland on top of its head (this gland is supposedly light sensitive).

## Geckos Gekkonidae

### **Painted Big-headed Gecko** *Paroedura pictus*

A few were seen on night walks in the gallery forest near the camp at berenty.

### **Fimbriated Leaf-tailed Gecko** *Uroplatus fimbriatus*

While sitting with some sifakas in Ranomafana, one of these incredibly camouflaged lizards was spotted, we were then able to watch this amazing creature at our leisure.

### **Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko** *Uroplatus sikorae*

One of these nocturnal species was seen well in Ranomafana, with other views later in the Andasibe area. The camouflage of these lizards makes them particularly difficult to find.

### **Southern Bark Gecko** *Lygodactylus tuberosus*

Seen on some vegetation in the Berenty property.

### **Brown Day Gecko** *Phelsuma mutabilis*

A single animal was seen very well in Berenty.

### **Lineated Day Gecko** *Phelsuma lineata*

This species can be fairly common in some parts of the rainforest zone – 2 were seen in Andasibe.

### **Four-spotted Day Gecko** *Phelsuma quadriocellata*

Also a handsome species, the black dot behind the forelimbs and bright green colour facilitated identification. We saw half a dozen at a viewpoint at Ranomafana.

### *Phelsuma antanosy*

Yet another great-looking Madagascan day gecko – singles were seen on the drive to Berenty and in the small mining reserve near Fort Dauphin, both in fairly moist areas.

## Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae

### **Lesser Plated Lizard** *Tracheloptychus madagascariensis*

One was identified in the spiny forest at Berenty, although we probably saw many more.

## Skinks Scincidae

### **Gravenhorst's Skink** *Trachylepis gravenhorstii*

A fairly common species in Madagascar, we recorded it in Berenty.

### **Elegant Skink** *Trachylepis elegans*

A single animal was seen well near the mines of Fort Dauphin.

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### **Boas Boidae**

**Madagascar Tree Boa***Sanzinia madagascariensis*

Two snakes were sunning themselves near the old fish ponds in Analamazaotra reserve – seen well.

**Dumeril's Boa***Boa dumerili*

Some local guides in Berenty knew a site where this sought-after species could sometimes be seen – we were fortunate enough to get great views of this uncommon species.

### **"Typical" Snakes Colubridae**

**Black-and-white Striped Snake***Liopholidophis lateralis*

A very good-looking snake, seen in Ranomafana.

## **Annotated List of Birds recorded**

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC List of Please cite: Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2006. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Total species recorded: 92

### **Guineafowl Numididae**

**Helmeted Guineafowl***Numida meleagris*

Recorded at Berenty, where we saw a few of these introduced species, originally from Africa.

### **Ducks and Geese Anatidae**

**Meller's Duck***Anas melleri*

2 of these ducks were seen in a small pool in the Mantadia forest.

### **Grebes Podicipedidae**

**Madagascar Grebe***Tachybaptus pelzelinii*

In the same pool as the bird above we had 5 birds, including 3 chicks.

### **Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**

**Madagascar (Crested) Ibis***Lophotibis cristata*

One of the big surprises of the trip was getting one of these very difficult birds as we entered the mining forest near Fort Dauphin. Unfortunately it kept moving and did not hang around for long views.

### **Bitterns and Herons Ardeidae**

**Black-crowned Night Heron***Nycticorax nycticorax*

Seen quite frequently along rice paddies.

**Striated Heron***Butorides striata*

Only a single bird was recorded in rice paddies in the south near Berenty.

**Malagasy Pond Heron** *Ardeola idae*

A single bird was seen well in the river at Berenty.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

A fairly common trip bird, seen quite frequently along rice paddies.

*NOTE: This group is split into 2 species by the IOC, the nominate Western Cattle Egret and the Eastern Cattle Egret E. coromanda. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.*

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

Good numbers around Tana, common near rice paddies.

*Note: Clements does not accept this split and lumps this with Eastern Great Egret as one species: Cattle Egret A. alba.*

**Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca*

A few were seen near Tana's wetlands and again on the way to the Berenty reserve.

**Dimorphic Egret** *Egretta dimorpha*

Another common species during our drive to Ranoafana.

*NOTE: Clements lumps Little E. garzetta and Dimorphic Egret into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted.*

### **Hamerkop Scopidae**

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*

Single birds were seen during our drives to and from Berenty.

### **Falcons Falconidae**

**Malagasy Kestrel** *Falco newtoni*

One of the more common raptors on the island, seen in good numbers during our time on the road.

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

**Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk** *Aviceda madagascariensis*

Great views of a single bird on its nest in Berenty – a big bird target in Madagascar.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

The most commonly recorded raptor in the Berenty area.

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius*

2 were seen near the coast of Fort Dauphin.

**Madagascar Buzzard** *Buteo brachypterus*

Great views were had of single birds in the Ranomafana and Perinet areas.

### **Mesites Mesitornithidae**

**Brown Mesite** *Mesitornis unicolor*

We put in a very determined effort to find this very shy and tricky species, finally getting lucky with it and getting great views as it scampered around on the ground in Ranomafana.

### **Rails, Crakes and Coots Rallidae**

**Madagascar Wood Rail***Canirallus kioloides*

This handsome species was first heard and then seen fairly well in the forests at Analamazaotra.

**White-throated Rail***Dryolimnas cuvieri*

On the way back from Mantadia we had some nice views of this species.

**Buttonquail Turnicidae****Madagascar Buttonquail***Turnix nigricollis*

Amazing views were enjoyed of this often shy and uncommon species - Berenty Reserve.

**Snipes and Sandpipers Scolopacidae****Common Greenshank***Tringa nebularia*

A single bird seen in a small wetland in Ranomafana NP.

**Gulls, Terns and Skimmers Laridae****Kelp Gull***Larus dominicanus*

This huge gull was seen fairly well, when we had a single bird at the Fort Dauphin coast.

**Sandgrouse Pteroclididae****Madagascar Sandgrouse***Pterocles personatus*

We had lovely scope views of a total of 10 birds in the open areas of Berenty.

**Pigeons and Doves Columbidae****Common Pigeon***Columba livia*

A common species, these "rats with wings" were seen around a number of the human settlements.

**Malagasy Turtle Dove***Streptopelia picturata*

A fairly common bird in woodland environs at Berenty.

**Namaqua Dove***Oena capensis*

A fair number were seen in the drier southern areas of the island, particularly Berenty.

**Madagascar Green Pigeon***Treron australis*

We obtained excellent views of 2 birds on the way back from Mantadia.

**Parrots Psittacidae****Grey-headed Lovebird***Agapornis canus*

This delicate species seen at Berenty, where we had a huge flock on one morning.

**Lesser Vasa (Black) Parrot***Coracopsis nigra*

After hearing them in Ranomafana, we enjoyed good views of this bird around Andasibe.

**Cuckoos and allies Cuculidae****Malagasy Coucal***Centropus toulou*

One of the commoner birds on the island, seen at scattered locations.

**Crested Coua** *Coua cristata*

We had very good looks at this species in the dry woodlands of Berenty.

**Blue Coua** *Coua caerulea*

A different-looking coua that was seen well in Ranomafana and Analamazaotra forests.

**Red-capped Coua** *Coua ruficeps*

2 birds were seen over two days in Berenty.

**Giant Coua** *Coua gigas*

A huge coua (aptly named!), it was excellently seen on a number of occasions at Berenty.

**Red-breasted Coua** *Coua serriana*

A very shy rainforest species that we found on a nest in a community forest near Andasibe.

**Madagascar Cuckoo** *Cuculus rochii*

Commonly heard, with a single bird seen well in Ranomafana NP.

### Owls Strigidae

**Torotoroka Scops Owl** *Otus madagascariensis*

A total of around 5 birds were seen in Berenty, where they were unusually easy to find.

**White-browed Hawk-Owl** *Ninox superciliaris*

A surprisingly common species in the forest around Berenty, where their calls can be heard nearly constantly at night and we saw a few birds on a number of occasions.

### Nightjars Caprimulgidae

**Madagascar Nightjar** *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*

4 birds were seen in total with a mother and 2 chicks in Berenty the highlight.

**Collared Nightjar** *Caprimulgus enarratus*

We were very fortunate to get incredible views of a single bird on its day roost in the Analamazaotra forest, where we could watch it until some Indri came in overhead.

### Swifts Apodidae

**Madagascar Spinetail** *Zoonavena grandidieri*

2 of these very distinctive birds were seen in the Mantadia area.

**African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus*

Frequently recorded during our time in Ranomafana and the drive to Berenty.

**Malagasy Black Swift** *Apus balstoni*

We had a number of these fairly large swifts flying overhead in the Ranomafana area.

### Rollers Coraciidae

**Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus*

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This noisy, colourful species was seen at a number of sites, including Berenty.

### Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae

**Pitta-like Ground Roller** *Atelornis pittoides*

The commonest of the ground rollers, we managed to find around 3 of these skulkers in Ranomafana.

**Rufous-headed Ground Roller** *Atelornis crossleyi*

Despite much time and effort we only managed to hear this lovely species, at very close quarters on the Vohiparara Ridge on Ranomafana.

### Cuckoo Roller Leptosomatidae

**(Madagascar) Cuckoo Roller** *Leptosomus discolor*

Heard frequently around Ranomafana and the Andasibe forests.

### Kingfishers Alcedinidae

**Malagasy Kingfisher** *Alcedo vintsioides*

We had some very good views of this small kingfisher a few times in the Perinet area and between Berenty and Fort Dauphin.

### Bee-eaters Meropidae

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

Surprisingly we only recorded 3 of these birds as they called in Berenty.

### Hoopoes Upupidae

**Madagascar Hoopoe** *Upupa marginata*

This charismatic bird was seen very well in the Berenty area.

### Asities Philepittidae

**Velvet Asity** *Philepitta castanea*

3 birds showed incredibly well in Ranomafana as we were looking for Golden Bamboo Lemur.

**Common Sunbird Asity** *Neodrepanis coruscans*

A single bird was seen in Ranomafana, where it showed well.

**Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity** *Neodrepanis hypoxantha*

A single young bird came in for some flowers briefly high up in the Ranomafana reserve.

### Vangas Vangidae

**Red-tailed Vanga** *Calicalicus madagascariensis*

A single female bird was seen briefly in Analamazaotra.

**Hook-billed Vanga** *Vanga curvirostris*

This large vange was seen on a nest in Ranomafana and later in Berenty's gallery forest.

**Lafresnaye's Vanga** *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*

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1 bird showed fairly well but very briefly in didieria habitat on our drive to Fort Dauphin.

**Pollen's Vanga** *Xenopirostris polleni*

We finally managed to find 3 birds during our time on the ridge in Ranomafana.

**White-headed Vanga** *Artamella viridis*

Also seen high up in Ranomafana and again in Analamazaotra.

**Chabert's Vanga** *Leptopterus chabert*

Often the easiest vanga to find – on this tour we finally got one bird on the last day in the Andasibe area, where we got fairly good views.

**Tylas Vanga** *Tylas eduardi*

2 birds were seen both in Ranomafana and later in the Analamazaotra area.

**Nuthatch Vanga** *Hypositta corallirostris*

One bird was seen in a flock in the lovely forest at Analamazaotra.

**Common Newtonia** *Newtonia brunneicauda*

Seen in Ranomafana, Berenty and the Mantadia forest.

**Ward's Flycatcher** *Pseudobias wardi*

A single bird was seen very well in the forest of Mantadia.

### Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae

**Madagascar Cuckooshrike** *Coracina cinerea*

A fairly common species, was seen in a flock in Analamazaotra.

### Drongos Dicruridae

**Crested Drongo** *Dicrurus forficatus*

This common species was seen frequently during the tour.

### Monarchs Monarchidae

**Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher** *Tersiphone mutata*

A stunning bird, recorded in big numbers at a number of the sites we visited during the tour.

### Crows Corvidae

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*

A widespread and common bird in dry and/or degraded areas and towns.

### Martins and Swallows Hirundinidae

**Mascarene Martin** *Phedina borbonica*

This species was seen well at the Tana Airport.

### Larks Alaudidae

**Madagascar Lark** *Mirafrha hova*

Seen well in the Berenty area.

### Cisticolas Cisticolidae

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**Madagascar Cisticola** *Cisticola cherina*  
Good views were had in the short grass of Berenty.

**Family Uncertain**

**Common Jery** *Neomixis tenella*  
After our drive to Ranomafana, we had views of this common species.

**Green Jery** *Neomixis viridis*  
Less common than the previous species, also seen near Ranomafana.

**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**

**Malagasy Bulbul** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*  
Seen on almost every day of the trip.

**Old World Warblers Sylviidae**

**Malagasy Brush Warbler** *Nesillas typica*  
This denizen of the thick undergrowth, briefly seen a few times during the tour.

**Subdesert Brush Warbler** *Nesillas lantzii*  
Berenty provided us with a single sighting of this endemic species.

**Madagascar Swamp Warbler** *Acrocephalus newtoni*  
Seen very well at a small pond in the forest in Mantadia.

**Long-billed Bernieria** *Bernieria madagascariensis*  
A few birds were seen well in a flock in the Perinet area.

**Spectacled Tetraka** *Xanthomixis zosterops*  
Both Ranomafana and Analamazaotra forests provided good views of this species.

**White-eyes Zosteropidae**

**Madagascar White-eye** *Zosterops maderaspatanus*  
A fairly common species, seen often.

**Starlings Sturnidae**

**Madagascar Starling** *Saroglossa aurata*  
Uncommon, but seen in both Ranomafana and Mantadia.

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*  
A real "trash" bird, introduced from the Indian subcontinent and seen almost daily.

**Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**

**Madagascar Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus albospectularis*  
Another very common trip bird, its delightful singing was commonplace at many sites throughout the trip and we enjoyed numerous close sightings.

**Madagascar Stonechat** *Saxicola madagascariensis*  
Seen on 3 days during the tour – near Tana and in Mantadia.

**Forest Rock Thrush** *Pseudocossyphus sharpei*  
Single birds were seen twice in Ranomafana.

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### Sunbirds Nectariniidae

**Souimanga Sunbird**

*Cinnyris souimanga*

The common species on the island – seen a number of times during the trip.

**Malagasy Green Sunbird**

*Cinnyris notatus*

A single bird was seen well in the forest along the roadside near the Ranomafana waterfall.

### Weavers Ploceidae

**Nelicourvi Weaver**

*Ploceus nelicourvi*

First seen in Ranomafana, before we enjoyed great views in the Andasibe area.

**Sakalava Weaver**

*Ploceus sakalava*

We had a few good sightings of this bright species in the Berenty area.

**Red Fody**

*Foudia madagascariensis*

Common in most parts of Madagascar, we had views in scattered sites.

**Forest Fody**

*Foudia omissa*

A single bird showed fairly well in forest near the Vohiparara ridge, Ranomafana.

### Waxbills, Munias & allies Estrildidae

**Madagascar Mannikin (Munia)**

*Lemuresthes nana*

A single bird was seen in the Tana hotel gardens, 3 more later in Mantadia.

### Wagtails Motacillidae

**Madagascar Wagtail**

*Motacilla flaviventris*

A common species in the moister portion of the tour around Ranomafana and Andasibe-Mantadia.

All Photos by Markus Lilje – all taken during this tour.

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