



# INDRI

Ultimate Wildlife Tours

**Trip Report**  
**Madagascar Mammals of a Magical Island**  
*8th to 23rd November 2013 (16 days incl. extension)*



***Trip Report compiled by tour leader Lawrence Weitz***

## Mammals of a Magical Island

Day 1, 8 November	Arrive in Antananarivo
Day 2, 9 November	Antananarivo to Ampijoroa
Day 3, 10 November	Ankarafantsika National Park
Day 4, 11 November	Ampijoroa to Antananarivo
Day 5, 12 November	Antananarivo
Day 6, 13 November	Antananarivo to Berenty
Day 7, 14 November	Berenty
Day 8, 15 November	Berenty to Antananarivo
Day 9, 16 November	Antananarivo to Perinet
Day 10, 17 November	Perinet
Day 11, 18 November	Perinet
Day 12, 19 November	Perinet to Antananarivo
Day 13, 20 November	Antananarivo to Ranomafana
Day 14, 21 November	Ranomafana National Park
Day 15, 22 November	Ranomafana National Park
Day 16, 23 November	Ranomafana to Antananarivo

## Tour Summary

Madagascar is a unique and wonderful destination to travel. Almost all of its fauna and flora are endemic to this island. It is one of the mega-biodiversity hot-spots of the world and a must see for any wildlife enthusiast.

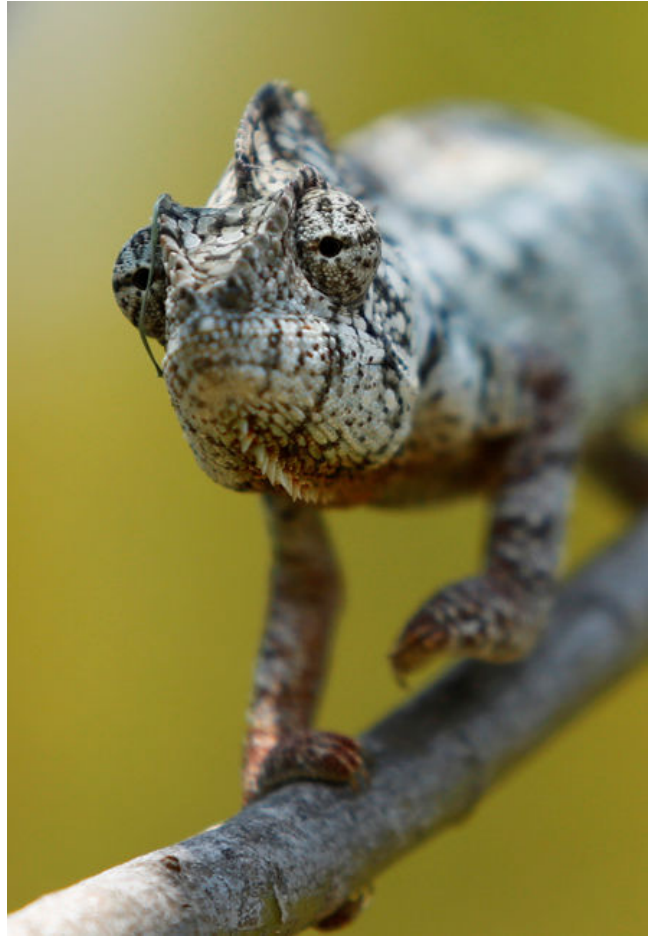
The INDRI tour covers areas in its itinerary which allow you to experience some of the best diversity imaginable!



Our tour began in Antananarivo, the city of a thousand warriors as it was known 400 years ago. From Tana we took a short flight to Mahajanga. Upon arrival we had great views of the Baly Bay from the air, where this beach side town is situated. From Mahajanga we took a 2.5 hour drive to Ankarafantsika National Park. It is here that we were to encounter our first marvels of Madagascar. We began with a night walk and had views of a Rhinoceros Chameleon, Oustalet's

Chameleon, Mongoose lemurs and also some nocturnal Grey Mouse Lemurs and Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur in some tangled brush. These night walks take place in community areas and are often the only way to see many of Madagascar's species, and they can be very productive indeed.

The following morning's four hour walk was a very productive activity, with the dry deciduous forest of Ankarafanstika delivering great views of Cuvier's Iguanid, Oustelet's Chameleon in the camp grounds. We also were privileged to see the nocturnal Milne-Edwards Sportive Lemur and Western Woolly Lemur in their respective roosting places. The Common Brown Lemur also made an appearance with one of the trip highlights, the Coquere's Sifaka.



This afternoon's activity took us around Lake Ravelobe, where we saw a large Nile Crocodile, the endangered Madagascar Fish Eagle as well as great views of another Oustalet's Chameleon. We also made a stop at the sacred Baobab Trees (*A. madagascarenis boensis*).

We had a beautiful storm building on the horizon, but managed to evade the oncoming summer rain. Spring had certainly made an entrance into this hot and generally dry region, with clear signs of fresh green growth on all the plants.

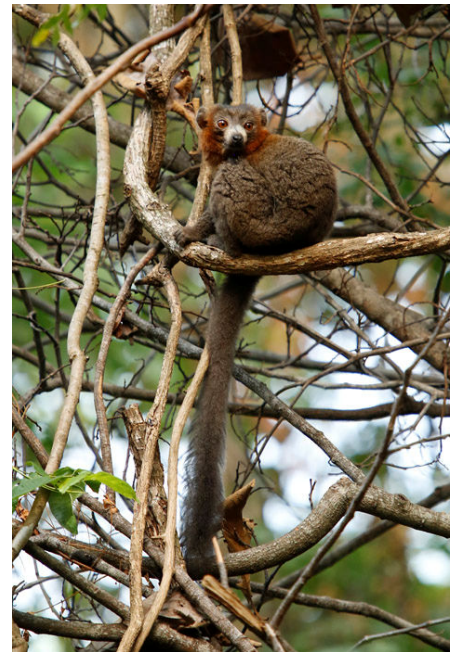




That evening we did another night walk, and managed to see a Western Tufted Rat, Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat and also some more Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemurs. Then it was time for a well deserved rest, but first to be serenaded by the Milne-Edward's Sportive Lemurs high up in the three canopies.

The following morning we had another walk through the Ankarafantsika Forest and had our first clear views of some Mongoose Lemurs, they had only

been seen at night with a flash light until now. These lemurs are active at day and also night, but often difficult to see in the evening as they are cautious not to expose themselves to the predatory, tree-climbing Fossa. We also saw a variety of snakes including a large Hog-nosed Snake.



After a lovely lunch provided by the competent Hery and his team we took our drive back to Mahajanga in time for our flight back to Tana. It was an early night for the team after having endured some heat in the Western region of the island, the air-conditioned rooms were a relief for many.

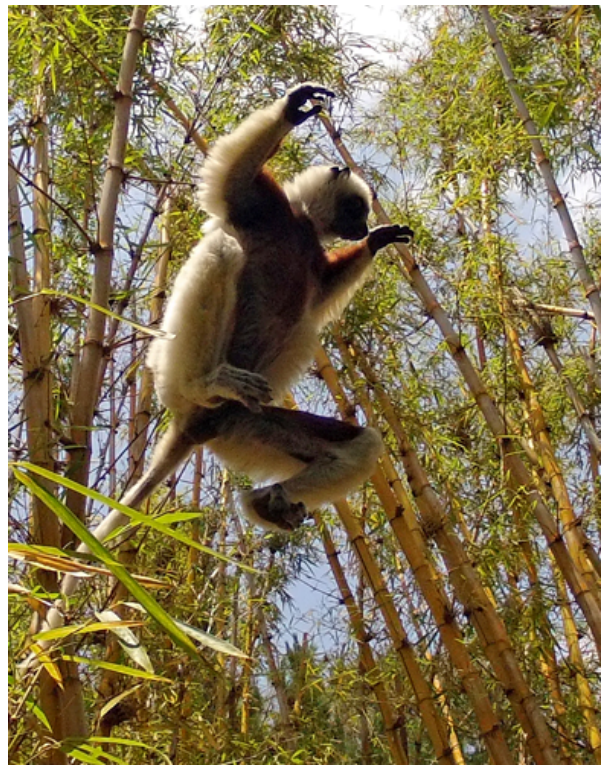
The following day was spent in the vicinity of Tana, and we made our way to the Lemur Park out of town. It was sunny day with blue skies and the lemur sanctuary made for some good photographic opportunities. We had good views of Common Brown Lemurs, Black and White Ruffed Lemurs, Coquerel's Sifaka, Western Bamboo Lemur and some Ring-tailed lemurs.





The afternoon was spent relaxing at our comfortable hotel, and we had an early night as we heading out again before dawn the next morning.

On this day we left for Fort Dauphin via Tulier, to make our way to Berenty, the home of the 'dancing Sifaka'. The condition of the road surface did not allow for much speed but did allow for the enjoyment of the views around us. People were on their way to markets with home-made baskets loaded with fruit such as litchi, mangoes and jac fruit.



We arrived at the family owned Berenty in the late afternoon. We were greeted by a dozen Ring-tailed Lemurs. These cat like creatures are very habituated and will come right up to you to investigate the possibility of acquiring a piece of fruit.



The Ring-tailed lemurs have been the focus of so many television crews and visitors, that they are very relaxed and sometimes in and amongst your feet when viewing around the camp.

That evening we did a night walk in a protected spiny forest. These forest are made up of half a dozen unique *Dideiri sp.* These plants are endemic to Madagascar and only to be found in the extreme southwest of the island

where there is little rainfall.

On this evening we had great views of Whit-footed Sportive Lemurs and also Torotoroka Scops Owl. We had our first good view of a Warty Chameleon on this evening too.

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The following morning we out looking for the Verreaux's Sifaka, also known for their bipedal locomotion when moving from forest to forest. We managed to see a family in some trees and also had some "dancing" briefly toward the end of the walk. This was another highlight!



It was only on our way out of Berenty on the last morning that we were treated to the real spectacle of a family of Verreaux's Sifaka crossing an open field on their way to some trees. They covered an area of 80 meters through a grass field. Everyone was in the best position to take some photos and the Lemurs certainly delivered their best with this interesting locomotion. We left Berenty feeling very privileged, having to then make our way back to Tana for an overnight stay.





The following morning we made our way to Perinet, known locally as Andasibe-Mantadia. Comprised of two parks this is another highlighted destination and the best place to see habituated Indri.



We began the afternoon walk with a view of a Short-horned Chameleon and a brief encounter with a Greater Tenrec. These shy mammals are not often seen in the day! Not long into the walk we heard the wailing of some Indri and promptly made our way in that direction. Amazingly, we encountered a male and female only a few meters from us! It was great to see this large tailless lemur up close. They spent a minute or two over our heads and then swiftly took off through the trees. This was a magical encounter indeed!

Hearing these majestic arboreal mammals call in the wild is a sound and memory which one will not forget. Observing these graceful primates only meters away is a very special experience.



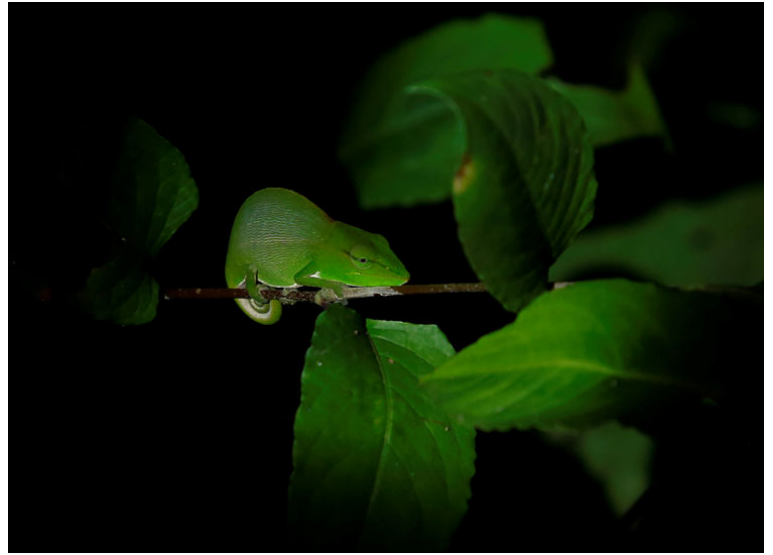
The rest of the walk was spent searching for our other target species, the Diademed Sifaka. We did not manage to locate them before sunset, but we did encounter some harmless Forest Snakes along the way, together with a Giant Land Snail. We extended the afternoon walk into the evening activity, and this allowed us a perfect view of a fledgling Long-eared Owl and also some Nose-horned and Short-horned Chameleons and a Band-bellied Chameleon. We then made our way back to our cosy hotel, in time for a great dinner.

The following morning we had a great hike into the Analamazotra forest area. We had views of Diademed Sifaka playing on the ground, a sign of confidence in humans. We spent over half an hour with this family, totally at ease with our presence.

That afternoon, we had a brief moment with a female Indri and her baby riding on her back. Some of the group returned for an extended walk and got to see the Eastern Bamboo Lemur and a

giant Pill millipede.

The evening walk was once again very productive in Perinet, this evening we managed to see a beautiful 50cm Parson's Chameleon, arguably the world's largest chameleon. What an impressive reptile this is!



The night walk also provided us with lovely views of the locally found Goodman's Mouse Lemur and also the larger Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur.

Our plan the following day was to go looking for the very rare Black and White Ruffed Lemur, a canopy species under severe threat of extinction. The best possibility of locating this animal is in the mountainous region of Mantadia, the high-lying area of Perinet. This 10 000 hectare park has steep hillsides and can make for tough trekking. As luck would have it, we located a family of these rare primates shortly after entering the forest. They were foraging high up in the canopy and calling vigorously to demarcate their territory against the neighbours'. It was a lucky find of one of the most beautiful "true" lemurs.





After a very welcome picnic lunch we made our way to a peaceful waterfall in one of the park valleys. Some of the group even took a refreshing dip in the cool waters.

From there we headed back to the hotel for a cold drink and prepare for an evening walk. Perinet is great for chameleons and we saw many this evening. Another Parson's Chameleon was located, together with Nose-horned Chameleons and some Furry-eared Dwarf Lemurs high up in a Travellers Palm, Madagascar's national plant.

We spent three productive nights at Perinet, to then head back to Tana by road, through the scenic areas dominated by rice cultivation and subsistent living.





On the way out of Perinet we stopped briefly at the Lemur Island to get a close-up view of some Black and White Ruffed Lemurs. These are truly beautiful animals with a variety of subspecies.



The afternoon in Tana provided an optional shopping spree for those that wanted to get some arts and crafts. That evening was our last of the main tour, and we celebrated with a another scrumptious dinner and some drinks. We bid farewell to some of the team as the extension would begin the following morning.



We left early the following morning for a full day drive to Ranomafana National Park, home of the Golden Bamboo Lemurs. The scenic route taking us over the highland 'backbone' of the island. Mostly large granite massifs with layers of Laterite cover the interior of the country. We travel through quaint villages and fertile valley's heading southeast towards the hilly national park. The terraced

rice paddies make for great scenic photographic opportunities.





We arrived in time for an evening walk, and within five minutes had seen four new chameleon species. New to our list were, Tusked, Elogated Leaf, Side-striped and Oshaughnessy's Chameleon. These stunning reptiles present themselves to you by being only a couple of meters away and allowing for easy photography.



Ranomafana National Park is a 39000 Hectare park and home to some unique fauna and flora. We had two full days to explore and find some outstanding species. Immediately into the first day hike we found a family of Golden Bamboo Lemurs, only found in the late 80's and reason for the parks gazetting in 1991. The lemurs were high up in the bamboo resting in the early morning sun after some rain showers during the night. It was soon after that, when we had a family of Red-

bellied Lemurs at eye-level and moving past our view. The female had a little new born with her, and she was a little shy, understandably so.



We continued with our hike and within a few minutes were informed of one of Madagascar's highlighted species. The Fantastic Leaf-tailed Gecko, had been located by one of the local guides. We were on our way out of the forest when we received the information. As this is a rarity and a possible once off, we did an about turn and made our way back up the hillside to reach this incredibly cryptic



reptile only a meter from the pathway, we had already walked past it twice during the morning! The group was stunned by this little creature, and for a moment it stole the show from all the lemurs that we had seen. After a needed photo session, we headed back to the hotel.

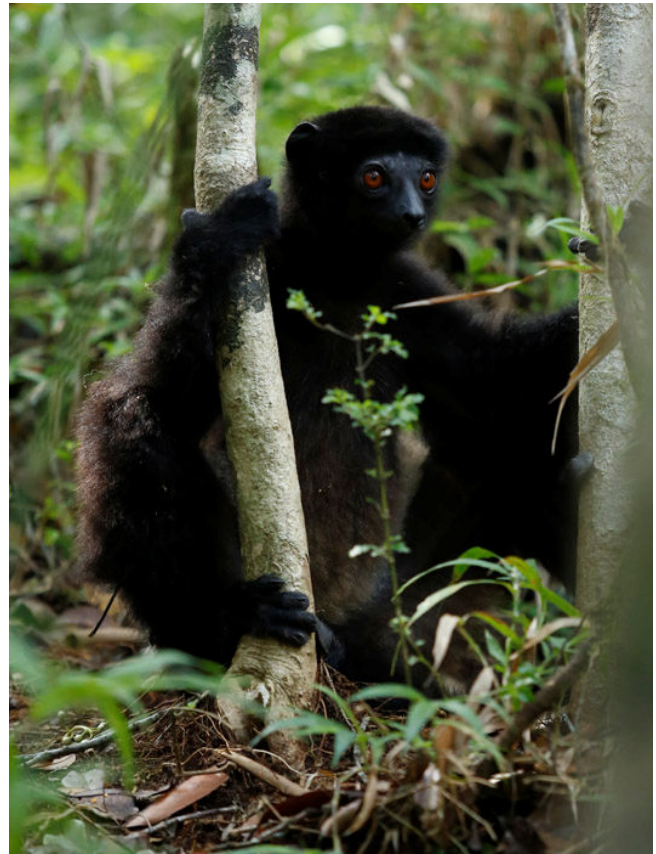
The afternoon walk merged into the night walk once again and numerous chameleons were seen. Another lemur species was seen too, the Rufus Mouse

Lemur feeding at a research station in clear view of our group.

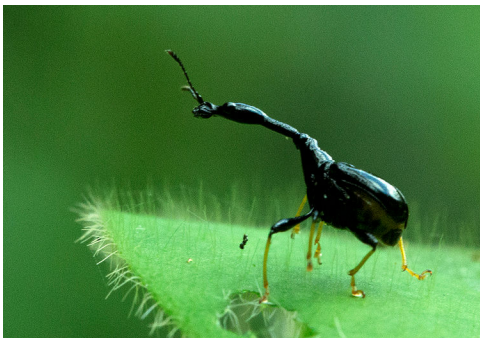
The following morning we went back into the forest in search of the Greater Bamboo Lemur and the Milne- Edwards Sifaka. We had huge success with both



these species. The Milne-Edwards Sifaka were on the ground only five meters away and wrestling with each other for ten minutes while we observed carefully. Another special moment with these large red-eyed Sifakas.



As a surprise, we had another superb encounter with one of the rarest lemurs, the Greater Bamboo Lemur. There are only two remaining in this area of the park, and another dozen in another sector of Ranomafana. We spent almost an hour as we observed these two feeding on bamboo stalks, with their strengthened jaw muscle and large teeth. Another great day brought by Madagascar's wildlife!



We also encountered the "insect of the trip". This is the less frequent Pygmy Giraffe-necked Weevil from Ranomafana. These insects are 7mm long.

We thought we had seen it all when, on the way out of the forest another special cryptic gecko was spotted. The Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko. An amazing specialist in camouflage, mimicking the moss on branches to keep away would be predators.

It too was also close to the pathway and everyone in the group had god views and was able to take some great photographs.



This was a welcome surprise for the end of a very productive day. We had a couple hours rest before the last night walk, during which began to rain but managed to see the rare Sameiti's Leaf-Tailed Gecko too. Unbelievable day it was, what a perfect way to end this INDRI Mammals of a Magical Island tour!

The following morning we made our way back to Tana, the long drive was split into two by the delicious lunch we had at an old colonial hotel in Antsirabe. The final leg of the adventure was to be had before arriving in Tana for most of the group to freshen up and catch a late flight back home. Another successful INDRI tour!



**Report and images by Lawrence Weitz.**

**INDRI**

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## List of Mammals recorded

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

### Total species recorded: 28

#### Old World Leaf-Nosed Bats

Commersons Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros commersoni*

#### Tenrecs Tenrecidae

Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec *Echinops telfairi*

Greater Hedgehog Tenrec *Setifer setosus*

#### Old World Rats and Mice Muridae

Eastern Red Forest Rat *Nesomys rufus*

Western Tufted Rat *Eliurus myoxinus*

#### Mouse and Dwarf Lemurs Cheirogaleidae

Grey Mouse Lemur *Microcebus murinus*

Brown Mouse Lemur *Microcebus rufus*

Goodman's Mouse Lemur *Microcebus lehilahytsara*

Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus crossleyi*

Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur *Cheirogaleus medius*

#### Sportive Lemurs Lepilemuridae

Red-tailed Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur ruficaudatus*

White-footed Sportive Lemur *Lepilemur leucopus*

#### True Lemurs Lemuridae

Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur griseus*

Golden Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur aureus*

Greater Bamboo Lemur *Hapalemur simus*

Ring-tailed Lemur *Lemur catta*

Red-bellied Lemur *Eulemur rubriventer*

Common Brown Lemur *Eulemur fulvus*

Red-fronted Brown Lemur *Eulemur rufus*

Black and white Ruffed Lemur *Varecia variegata variegata*

Mongoose Lemur *Eulemur mongoz*

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

<b>Eastern Avahi (Woolly Lemur)</b>	<i>Avahi laniger</i>
<b>Western Avahi (Woolly Lemur)</b>	<i>Avahi occidentalis</i>
<b>Diademed Sifaka</b>	<i>Propithecus diadema</i>
<b>Milne-Edward's Sifaka</b>	<i>Propithecus edwardsi</i>
<b>Verreaux's Sifaka</b>	<i>Propithecus verreauxi</i>
<b>Coquerel's Sifaka</b>	<i>Propithecus coquereli</i>
<b>Indri</b>	<i>Indri indri</i>

## **List of Amphibians & 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: 47**

### **'True' Frogs Ranidae**

*Boophis madagascariensis*  
*Plethodontohyla mihanika*  
*Plethodontohyla iguanalis*  
*Mantidactylus melanopleura*  
*Boophis albilabris*  
*Guibemantis pulcher*  
*Mantella madagascariensis*  
*Mantella baroni*  
*Aglyptodactylus madagascarensis*

### **Chameleons Testudinidae**

<b>Spider Tortoise</b>	<i>Pyxis arachnoides</i>
<b>Radiated Tortoise</b>	<i>Geochelone radiata</i>

### **Crocodiles Crocodylidae**

<b>Nile Crocodile</b>	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>
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### **Chameleons Chamelaeleionidae**

<b>Greater Stump-tailed Chameleon</b>	<i>Brookesia superciliaris</i>
<b>Elongated Leaf Chameleon</b>	<i>Brookesia nasus</i>



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<b>Short-horned Chameleon</b>	<i>Calumma brevicornis</i>
<b>Blue-legged Chameleon</b>	<i>Calumma crypticum</i>
<b>O'Shaughnessy's Chameleon</b>	<i>Calumma oshaughnessyi</i>
<b>Nose-horned Chameleon</b>	<i>Calumma nasutum</i>
<b>Band-bellied Chameleon</b>	<i>Calumma gastrotaenia</i>
<b>Parson's Chameleon</b>	<i>Calumma parsonii</i>
<b>Tusked Chameleon</b>	<i>Furcifer balteatus</i>
<b>Rhinoceros Chameleon</b>	<i>Furcifer rhinocerotus</i>
<b>Warty Chameleon</b>	<i>Furcifer verrucosus</i>
<b>Side-striped Chameleon</b>	<i>Furcifer lateralis</i>
<b>Oustalet's Chameleon</b>	<i>Furcifer oustaleti</i>

### **Iguanids Iguanidae**

<b>Three-eyed Lizard</b>	<i>Chalarodon madagascariensis</i>
<b>Cuvier's Iguanid</b>	<i>Oplurus cuvieri</i>

### **Geckos Gekkonidae**

<b>Fantastic Leaf-tailed Gecko</b>	<i>Uroplatus phantasticus</i>
<b>Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko</b>	<i>Uroplatus sikorea</i>
<b>Sameitis Leaf-tailed Gecko</b>	<i>Uroplatus sameiti</i>
<b>Moreau's House Gecko</b>	<i>Hemidactylus mabomuia</i>
<b>Mercator House Gecko</b>	<i>Hemidactylus mercatorius</i>
<b>Brown Day Gecko</b>	<i>Phelsuma mutabilis</i>
<b>Lineated Day Gecko</b>	<i>Phelsuma lineata</i>
<b>Four-spotted Day Gecko</b>	<i>Phelsuma quadriocellata</i>
<b>Madagascar Day Gecko</b>	<i>Phelsuma madagascariensis</i>

### **Plated Lizards Gerrhosauridae**

<b>Broad-tailed Plated Lizard</b>	<i>Zonosaurus laticaudatus</i>
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### **Skinks Scincidae**

<b>Elegant Skink</b>	<i>Trachylepis elegans</i>
<b>Spotted tree Skink</b>	<i>Trachylepis aureopunctata</i>

### **Boas Boidae**

<b>Madagascar Tree Boa</b>	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>
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### **Typical Snakes Colubridae**

<i>Leioheterodon madagascariensis</i>
<i>Leioheterodon modestus</i>
<i>Mimophis mahfalensis</i>

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*Madagascarophis colubrinus*  
*Comsophis infralineatus*  
*Liophidium torquatum*  
*Liopholidophus grandidieri*

## 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: 74

#### Guineafowl Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*

#### Ducks and Geese Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*  
Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*  
Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

#### Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

#### Bitterns and Herons Ardeidae

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*  
Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*  
Malagasy Pond Heron *Ardeola idae*  
Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*  
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*  
Humblot's Heron *Ardea humbloti*  
Great Egret *Ardea alba*  
Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*  
Dimorphic Egret *Egretta dimorpha*

#### Hamerkop Scopidae

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

#### Falcons Falconidae

Malagasy Kestrel *Falco newtoni*

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**Kites, Hawks and Eagles Accipitridae**

Madagascar Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vociferoides</i>
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>
Madagascar Buzzard	<i>Buteo brachypterus</i>

**Mesites Mesitornithidae**

White-breasted Mesite	<i>Mesitornis variegatus</i>
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**Rails, Crakes and Coots Rallidae**

Madagascar Wood Rail	<i>Canirallus kiolooides</i>
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**Pigeons and Doves Columbidae**

Common Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Malagasy Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia picturata</i>
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>
Madagascar Green Pigeon	<i>Treron australis</i>

**Parrots Psittacidae**

Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>
Lesser Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis nigra</i>

**Cuckoos and allies Cuculidae**

Malagasy Coucal	<i>Centropus toulou</i>
Crested Coua	<i>Coua cristata</i>
Blue Coua	<i>Coua caerulea</i>
Red-fronted Coua	<i>Coua reynaudii</i>
Coquerel's Coua	<i>Coua coquereli</i>
Giant Coua	<i>Coua gigas</i>
Madagascar Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus rochii</i>

**Owls Strigidae**

Torotoroka Scops Owl	<i>Otus madagascariensis</i>
Malagasy Scops Owl	<i>Otus rutilus</i>
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio madagascarensis</i>

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae**

Madagascar Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus madagascariensis</i>
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**Swifts Apopidae**

Madagascar Spine-tail	<i>Zoonavena grandidieri</i>
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Malagasy Black Swift	<i>Apus balstoni</i>

**Rollers Coraciidae**

Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>
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**Ground Rollers Brachypteraciidae**

Pitta-like Ground Roller	<i>Atelornis pittoides</i>
Scaly Ground Roller	<i>Geobiastes squamiger</i>

**Cuckoo Roller Leptosomatidae**

Cuckoo Roller	<i>Leptosomus discolor</i>
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**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

Malagasy Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo vintsioides</i>
Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Ispidina madagascariensis</i>

**Bee-eaters Meropidae**

Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>
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**Hoopoes Upupidae**

Madagascar Hoopoe	<i>Upupa marginata</i>
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**Vangas Vangidae**

Red-tailed Vanga	<i>Calicalicus madagascariensis</i>
Hook-billed Vanga	<i>Vanga curvirostris</i>
Sickle-billed Vanga	<i>Falcula palliata</i>
Rufous Vanga	<i>Schetba rufa</i>
Common Newtonia	<i>Newtonia brunneicauda</i>

**Drongos Dicruridae**

Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus forficatus</i>
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**Monarchs Monarchidae**

Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher *Tersiphone mutata*

**Crows Corvidae**

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

**Martins and Swallows Hirundinidae**

Mascarene Martin *Phedina borbonica*

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*

**Family Uncertain**

Common Jery *Neomixis tenella*

**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**

Malagasy Bulbul *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

**Old World Warblers Sylviidae**

Malagasy Brush Warbler *Nesillas typica*

**White-eyes Zosteropidae**

Madagascar White-eye *Zosterops maderaspatanus*

**Starlings Sturnidae**

Madagascar Starling *Saroglossa aurata*

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

**Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**

Madagascar Magpie-Robin *Copsychus albospectularis*

Madagascar Stonechat *Saxicola madagascariensis*

**Sunbirds Nectariniidae**

Souimanga Sunbird *Cinnyris souimanga*

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**Weavers Ploceidae**

**Nelicourvi Weaver**

*Ploceus nelicourvi*

**Sakalava Weaver**

*Ploceus sakalava*

**Red Fody**

*Foudia madagascariensis*

**Waxbills, Munias & allies Estrildidae**

**Madagascar Mannikin (Munia)**

*Lemuresthes nana*

**Wagtails Motacillidae**

**Madagascar Wagtail**

*Motacilla flaviventris*

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