

Madagascar

8–28 November 2024

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Schlegel's Asity by Yves Gisseleire

Introduction

In the following sections the species naming and taxonomy follow that of Birdlife International and the Cornell Lab 'Checklist of the Birds of the World' found at <https://birdsoftheworld.org>, where birds such as Dimorphic Egret and Totoroka Scops Owl are not regarded as separate species. The bird species endemic to Madagascar are marked (E) and near endemics are marked (NE). We also saw an incredible eighteen species of lemur on the trip. All animal species positively identified are listed at the end of the report.

Day 1, Saturday 9th November

Our group of ten met up at Antananarivo (Tana) International airport to be greeted by our local tour guide, Mr Lalaina Raoelinoro (known as Lala) a smiling and friendly guy who was a good organiser and an expert birder. At the airport we found our first Malagasy birds – (1) Madagascar Kestrel (E), (2) Red Fody (E) and (3) Mascarene Martin (NE) as well as (4) Common Myna (an introduced species). We were then taken to the comfortable Hotel San Cristobal nearby, where some of the group saw several (5) Madagascar Wagtail (E).

Day 2, Sunday 10th November

As we departed the hotel at 4am there was an unexpected (6) African Stonechat of the Madagascar sub-species *S.t.sibilla* singing on the roof. At the domestic flights' terminal, we waited hours for our flight south to Toliara. During the wait a (7) Sooty Falcon was sitting on a lighting tower close by. On the other side of the runway, we could see another new species (8) Olive Bee-eater, Madagascar ssp. *M.s.superciliosus*. Then came the news that our flight was cancelled so we were taken to the Hotel Ibis in Antananarivo to wait for news of when the next flight south might depart. Not to waste time, we went in the afternoon to a small wetland reserve in the city, called Parc Tsarasaoatra. There we were lucky to see five rare (9) Meller's Duck (E) along with (10) White-faced Whistling Duck, (11) Fulvous Whistling Duck, (12) Black-crowned Night Heron, (13) Squacco Heron, (14) Black Heron, (15) Red-billed Teal, (16) Hottentot Teal, (17) Madagascar Pond Heron (E), (18) Great White Egret, African

ssp. *A.a.melanoryhnchos*. (19) Common Moorhen, Malagasy region ssp. *G.c.pyrrhorhoa* (20) Madagascar Bulbul (E), (21) Striated Heron, Madagascar ssp. *B.s.rutenbrgi*, (22) White-throated Rail (NE) Madagascar ssp. *D.c.cuvieri*, (23) Madagascar Brush Warbler (NE) Madagascar ssp. *N.t.typica*. (24) Cattle Egret, (25) Malagasy Coucal (NE) Madagascar ssp. *C.t.toulou*, (26) Greater Vasa Parrot (NE) Madagascar ssp. *C.v.vasa*, (27) Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon (introduced species), and (28) Little Egret, nominate race *E.g.garzetta*. But when we returned to the Ibis Hotel for dinner there was no news of a flight south to Toliara.

Day 3, Monday 11th November

This morning, new birds seen in the hotel grounds were (29) Little Swift, and (30) Souimanga Sunbird (NE) ssp. *C.s.souvimanga*. As we waited for news of a flight, we went again to the Parc Tsarasaotra where new birds seen were (31) Malagasy White-eye (NE) ssp. *Z.m.maderaspatanus*, (32) Madagascar Swamp Warbler (E) and (33) Malagasy Kingfisher (NE) ssp. *C.v.vintsiodes*. By the afternoon we were increasingly worried that we might not get a flight to the south-west and would miss the amazing species of the spiny forest habitat, the most unique habitat on the island. With the main road south in such bad condition, it would take days to drive there. But by tea-time there came the good news that Birdfinders would pay for a private plane to fly us south the following morning. Due to weight restrictions, we could only take a backpack weighing ten kilograms each for the next three days, until we met up again with our luggage which would be taken by road to Ranomafana National Park. Despite this restriction, we were overjoyed to be able to go south and very grateful to Vaughan Ashby for approving the charter flight, a decision that may not have been made by a larger, more impersonal company.

Day 4, Tuesday 12th November

We arrived early at the domestic terminal to see by torchlight a new bird calling from the top of a tower on the roof (34) Madagascar Nightjar (E). We then boarded a small twin engine turbo prop plane and as the sun rose flew at low altitude south-west over the dry hills of Madagascar's central plateau until we landed at Toliara's little airfield. Leaving the plane we immediately saw new birds by the runway (35) Madagascar Cisticola (NE), (36) Madagascar Lark (E) and (37) Pied Crow. We then boarded the tour bus which would carry us for most of the tour, driven by the untiring and careful Allain. We drove south along a coast road to arrive at an area of low spiny scrub habitat near St Augustin where in over 30 degrees Celsius heat an excellent team of local spotters helped us to see (38) Verraux's Coua (E), and (39) Red-shouldered Vanga (E) plus (40) Black Kite, ssp. *M.m.parasitus* part of the 'Yellow-billed Kite' group. We then went back up the coast road, where some saw two (41) Lafresnaye's Vanga from the bus. At an area of salt pans on the coast near Ifaty we searched unsuccessfully for Black-banded (Madagascar) Plover, but we did see (42) Grey Heron, Madagascar ssp. *A.c.firasa*, and (43) Kittlitz's Plover. We arrived in time for lunch at our beautiful lodge, the Le Paradisier north of Ifaty with its spectacular setting facing the Indian Ocean. In the hotel grounds were some very tame (44) Madagascar Magpie-robin (E) White-winged ssp. *C.a.pica* and several (45) Sakalava Weaver (E). After lunch we set off again to make up some of the lost time from the flight delay. Before leaving, in the hotel carpark we saw (46) Subdesert Brush Warbler (E) and (47) Common Jery (E). In the Reniala spiny forest, amongst the huge Baobabs and other exotic trees, another excellent team of local guides helped us to find a wonderful set of special species (48) Stripe-throated Jery (E) Subdesert race *N.s.pallidor*, (47) Madagascar Buttonquail (NE), (49) Olive-capped Coua (E), (50) Long-tailed Ground-roller (E), (51) Subdesert Mesite (E), (52) Crested Coua (E), (53) Common Newtonia (E), (54) Grey-headed Lovebird (E), (55) Running Coua (E), and (56) Long-billed (Madagascar Green) Sunbird (E). Plus, we saw a **Warty Chameleon**, **Lined Day Gecko**, and a **Three-eyed Lizard**. We then went to a different area of salt pans where Madagascar Plover again eluded us, but we did see a single (57) Madagascar Three-banded Plover (E). Back at the hotel, after a delicious dinner some of us went to a feeding station in the grounds to see two **Grey Mouse Lemur**, one of the smallest primates in the world.

Day 5, Wednesday 13th November

We were up early for the six-hour drive to our next destination of Zombitse National Park and then Isalo NP. We stopped for a break on a dry scrubby plateau dotted with thorny trees where a local farmer led us to find a single (58) Madagascar Sandgrouse (E). At Zombitse National Park, a remnant dry forest amongst the bare landscape of Madagascar's central plateaux, we saw flying over the road in the distance five (59) Cuckoo-roller (NE) *Leptosomus discolor discolor*. We were then led into the forest by three local guides, who showed us (60) Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher (NE) *T.m.mutata*, (61) Giant Coua (E), and a new lemur species, **Verraux's Sifaka**, plus (62) Appert's Tetraka (E), (63) Hook-billed Vanga (E), (64) Red-tailed Vanga (E), (65) (Lesser) Vasa Parrot (NE) race *C.V.drouhardi*, and (66) White-browed Owl (E). On the way out of the forest we saw an **Oustalet's Chamaeleon**. After a picnic lunch we departed northwards and spotted two large birds on the roadside (67) Helmeted Guineafowl (an introduced species). We later entered the boundary of Isalo National Park with its huge cliffs and fantastic rock formations. Almost immediately we briefly saw from the bus another new species by the roadside, the (68) Madagascar Partridge (E). Arriving at the empty national park tourist office at the base of a huge cliff, we soon saw (69) Forest Rock Thrush (E) ssp. *M.s.bensoni* known as 'Benson's Rock Thrush'. Arriving at the exclusive Relais de la Reine Hotel, a short walk in the grounds produced (70) African Palm Swift, ssp. *C.p.gracilis*, known as 'Madagascar Palm-swift', plus some (71) Madagascar Black Swift, *Apus balstoni* (E) and a (72) Madagascar Hoopoe (E). There were five large specimens of the rare and endemic **Radiated Tortoise** in the grounds, along with many large **Dumeril's Madagascar Swift** lizards on the rock formations. After booking in and finding our luxury lodges in the grounds, we had a very nice dinner. After dinner we went into the grounds with Lala and he called for the Madagascar Scops Owl, Torotoroka sub-species which replied but did not show.

Day 6, Thursday 14th November

Before breakfast we could individually wander the grounds for an hour after sunrise, where new birds were (73) Madagascar Munia (E), and (74) Broad-billed Roller, ssp. *G.c.glaucurus*. Departing north-westwards towards Ranomafana National Park, we saw our first (75) Hamerkop from the bus. At midday we arrived at D'Anja Park a community forest reserve for wildlife which held very approachable **Ring-tailed Lemurs** that gave great photo opportunities before we had our picnic lunch. Heading north-westwards again we arrived at Ranomafana NP, our first rainforest destination. Before checking in at the hotel Centrest Sejour we saw (76) Madagascar Starling (E) and (77) Madagascar Cuckoo (NE).

Day 7, Friday 15th November

An early start took us to the NP entrance from where we went into the fascinating forest, which was dry in this drought year so that our leech socks were unnecessary. We soon began to find stunning new birds (78) Rand's Warbler (E), (79) Chabert Vanga (E), (80) Forest Fody (E), (81) Pitta-like Ground-roller (E), (82) Tylas Vanga (E), and (83) Crossley's Vanga (E). We also saw here an **Eastern Red Forest Rat** and a pair of **Red-bellied Lemur**. New birds then kept coming, so most of the group kept going even though some were unwell with tummy troubles and the path was getting steeper. A female (84) Velvet Asity (E) was followed by (85) Common Sunbird Asity (E), (86) Ward's Flycatcher (Vanga) (E), (87) Scaly Ground-roller (E) and (88) Rufous Vanga (E). At our picnic lunch spot a **Giraffe-necked Weevil** was found to everyone's amusement. Despite the midday heat, we soon set off on a new trail as we were still short of time due to the delayed flight south. We started to see new birds (89) Blue Coua (E), (90) Madagascar Cuckoo-shrike (E), (91) Collared Nightjar (E), (92) Madagascar Blue Pigeon (E) and (93) Dark Newtonia (E). Nearby we saw a nice male Velvet Asity and further on a **Peacock Day Gecko**. Later, walking on the road to the NP entrance we caught up with (94) Nelicourvi Weaver (E) and a confirmed (95) Madagascar Buzzard (E). Near to the NP entrance we stopped on the roadside to wait for tiny **Brown Mouse Lemurs** come to banana bait on branches at dusk. As we waited, we had good views of a group of five **Red-fronted Brown Lemur** in the trees.

Day 8, Saturday 16th November

This morning, we took a flatter trail than yesterday and soon saw (96) Pollen's Vanga (E). We searched for a Madagascar Yellow-brow which was calling from very close by in thick vegetation on a low bank right by the path but frustratingly would not show itself. But we did find (97) Rufous-headed Ground-roller (E), (98) Cryptic Warbler (E), (99) White-headed Vanga (E), and (100) Brown Mesite (E). Then we drove back down the road to search the trees on a rocky cliff above, where we found the nominate race of Forest Rock Thrush, not the Benson's sub-species. Back at the hotel we had a nice lunch and a two-hour break from the heat. Later in the afternoon most of us went to a site for (101) Madagascar Grassbird (Grey Emu-tail) (E) and (102) Madagascar Plain Martin (Brown-throated Martin) (E). We then returned to the hotel for dinner. Sadly, due to our loss of two days early in the trip we had only two full days in this NP rather than three, so we could not visit a nearby high-altitude cloud forest where the rare and endemic Yellow-bellied Asity is found. Hopefully, the next tour will be able to do that.

Day 9, Sunday 17th November

We left at 6am for the long drive back to Tana on a bumpy road. After two hours we stopped briefly at the small town of Ambohimahaso to see a colony of over one hundred nests of different heron species in large pine trees, including the Dimorphic sub-species of Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta dimorpha*. There were also here a few (103) House Sparrow. Two hours further north we stopped at some roadside ponds where a local guide joined us and flushed two (104) Madagascar Snipe (E) over our heads with another two seen. At midday we stopped at the town of Ambositra for lunch at an outdoor tourist restaurant with traditional Malagasy dancers. The food was good but some in our party were still suffering from tummy troubles. We departed at 1pm and arrived at the Hotel Tres Metis in Tana at 8.45pm.

Day 10, Monday 18th November

We left the hotel in a convey of four Toyota Landcruisers instead of the bus and drove quickly eastwards out of the city on the N2 road through low scrubby hills under a blazing sun towards Anamalazaotra National Park. The surface of this road was unusually good, and our progress was faster than usual. On the way were a pair of introduced (105) Mallard on a flooded field by the road and we stopped to see a (106) Madagascar Pratincole (E) on rocks in the Mangoro river. In the NP we stopped by a small river to descend into a thicket to see close-up a confiding (107) Madagascar Scops Owl (E) *O.r.rutilus* which was roosting there. At midday we stopped for lunch at a large tourist restaurant overlooking a stream where we had good views of a White-throated Rail and a Madagascar (Malachite) Kingfisher. In the afternoon at the community reserve of Parc Villageoise V.O.I MMA, we managed a decent view of a shy (108) Madagascar Flufftail (E) and a (109) Madagascar Wood Rail (E). By 3pm we were standing quietly in the forest observing the nest of a (110) Madagascar Crested Ibis (E) high in a large tree, where we could see the bird's head but not much more of it. This was to be the bogey bird of the trip as despite much searching here and at other sites, only a couple of us managed a better but brief sighting of this species. Our consolation prizes were three **Eastern Brown Lemur** and a decent view of a famously shy bird, the impressive (111) Red-breasted Coua (E). We then caught up with a male and female **Indri** feeding high in the canopy, our last new species of the day before we arrived at the Vakona Forest Lodge. This lodge had one of the best settings of all the places that we stayed at on the tour. In the grounds, birds included the black-bellied race *C.a.albospecularis* of the Madagascar Magpie-robin.

Day 11, Tuesday 19th November

After an early breakfast we departed in cooler and overcast weather for the forest of the Mantadia NP along a very bumpy dirt track, stopping to have a better view of a (112) Nuthatch Vanga (E) than one seen previously. In the NP, we saw (113) Green Jery (E), (114) Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher (E) and (115) Short-legged Ground-roller (E), which completed for us the set of all five Ground-rollers. We were on a roll! Plus, a male Velvet

Asity gave us our best sighting of that species. After examining a tiny **Baron's Mantella** 'painted' frog, by a stream we found a (116) White-throated Oxylabes (E) in the dark shade under tangled undergrowth. We stopped for lunch at a bamboo picnic table near to the roadside having walked only five kilometres up and down but, in the heat, it felt like twice that distance. The afternoon brought us two **Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur** as well as a pair of (117) Madagascar Blue Vanga (E) and the nest of a (118) Madagascar Harrier-hawk (E) with just the head of a bird showing inside. Later we exited the forest, and those in the front Landcruisers saw a Madagascar Harrier Hawk land in a small tree beside the track. Back at the hotel we had a cold drink on the veranda where among the Mascarene Martins circling above were (119) Madagascar Spinetail. At 5.30pm we went for a night walk, soon spotting two well camouflaged **Mossy Leaf-tailed Geckos** and a **Weasel Sportive Lemur**. Next, we saw a young male **Parson's Chameleon** and two young males of the **Short-horned Chameleon**. Further on, resting on leaves just above the ground were three small but adult **Brown Leaf Chameleon**. Further on we found a **Woolly Lemur** female with a young one, a **Greater Dwarf Lemur** in a leaf tangle and a **Goodman's Mouse Lemur** in its nest in a vine on a small tree. The night walk ended at 7.30pm after seeing another Eastern Red Forest Rat and we returned to the hotel for a late dinner.

Day 12, Wednesday 20th November

After breakfast at 6.30am, most of the group departed in the Landcruisers for a day in the spectacular Iaroka Forest of the Antavalobe Reserve area in search of Helmet Vanga. On the way, in a damp open area with low vegetation we saw (120) Madagascar Rail (E). Back on the roadside a (121) Red-fronted Coua showed (E) well on the edge of the forest. Then after our roughest drive yet, we left the Landcruisers and started walking on a trail which led up and down into the high unspoiled forest. The new bird here was (122) Madagascar Turtle-dove (NE) nominate ssp. *N.p.picturatus*. Further on after some stiff upward paths and slippery downwards ones we stopped in a small, wet gorge as our local guide went in search of Helmet Vanga. A **Big Nose Chameleon** was our entertainment as we waited for him to return, but without having seen or heard a Helmet Vanga. They could be nesting somewhere in this forest, but it is a difficult place to access. We arrived back at the vehicles after a walk of ten kilometres, which felt like a lot more with the up and down on slippery trails. At 4.30 were in the forest near Vakona Lodge in search of Madagascar Long-eared Owl but the bird was not at any of its usual roosts. After a tiring day we were back at the lodge at 5.30pm, for a shower and change of muddy and sweaty clothes before dinner.

Day 13, Thursday 21st November

Today we departed for Tana. First stopping at the site of the Madagascar Crested Ibis nest in the nearby forest in the hope of seeing one on the ground but we were disappointed. But we did see a (123) Spectacled Tetraka (E), and a well camouflaged Collared Nightjar sitting on a nest of leaves in the low crown of a Pandanus tree with a chick underneath it. We also had very close views of nine adult and two very approachable young **Diademed Sifaka**. By 11.20am when we left the forest it was 35 degrees Celsius in the car park. Ten minutes later we were at a restaurant for an early lunch. At 1pm we departed for Tana and after a fast and smooth ride arrived at 4.30pm at the Relais des Plateaux hotel.

Day 14, Friday 22nd November

After coffee at 4am we left for the long drive on the N4 towards Mahajanga on the north-west coast, with a packed breakfast of sweet breads. With one member of the party staying in Tana due to illness. As we bumped our way across the vast hilly central plateau around 6am, a (124) Madagascar Marsh-harrier (E) was seen briefly from the bus. Twenty minutes later, a distant flying (125) Purple Heron of the endemic sub-species *A.p. madagascariensis* was also seen from the bus. Then our driver spotted a female Madagascar Harrier, and we all piled out for a decent if distant 'scope view. A small number of (126) Glossy Ibis were also seen from the bus. In the afternoon we made a short stop at a roadside lake near Antanambazaha where new birds were (126) Madagascar Jacana (E) and (127) African

Pygmy Goose. We arrived at our hotel in Mahajanga after dark where some of us had a good fish and chip dinner with a welcome beer. At 3.30am a storm with impressive lightning over the Indian Ocean signalling the start of the rainy season.

Day 15, Saturday 23rd November

We were up at five am for coffee before driving to the beach in cloudy and humid weather to wade through the surf and board a small motorboat which roared up the huge estuary of the Betsiboka river, seeing (128) Whiskered Tern, (129) Greater Crested Tern and (130) Lesser Crested Tern on the way. As the boat neared a large island fringed with exposed tidal mud flats and covered with mangrove forest, new birds began to appear (131) Crab-Plover, four very rare (132) Madagascar Teal (E), (133) Grey Plover, (134) Greater Sandplover, and (135) Terek Sandpiper. As we cruised around, more new birds appeared including a flock of (136) Lesser Flamingo and a couple of (137) Greater Flamingo until one rare (138) Madagascar Sacred Ibis (NE) nominate ssp. *T.B. bernieri* was found, which was another of our target birds here. As the rising tide forced the birds into an ever-smaller area of mudflats, other wader species present included (139) Common Sandpiper, (140) White-fronted Plover, (141) Whimbrel, (142) Lesser Sandplover and (143) Curlew Sandpiper. There were numbers of small terns flying over us, which photographs later showed to be mostly (144) Little Tern but one at least was a (145) Saunders Tern. As we cruised around the mangrove islands, a (146) Frances's Sparrowhawk (E) perched in a tree. By 8.30am the rising tide had almost covered the mudflats, with most birds going into the shade of the mangroves and out of sight. We then headed back down the estuary to Mahajanga.

Soon our bus was heading back inland down the N4 towards Ankarafantsika National Park. Stopping for a picnic lunch in a grove of trees by the roadside we found a new lizard, **Cuvier's Madagascar Swift**, and a Madagascar Nightjar roosting on the ground. At 3.30pm we arrived at the NP HQ to find that the bungalows by the lake that were booked for us were closed for refurbishment. We had no choice but to go to the Asity Lodge instead, which was below the usual standard of accommodation. But hopefully the NP bungalows will be ready for next year. Fortunately, all our meals at Ankarafantsika were provided by a hard-working team at the National Park HQ and served in a pleasant outdoor dining area under large trees full of birds and at times lemurs. After checking in at the Asity Lodge we were driven back to the National Park HQ where we birded a patch of forest just across the road on the edge of Lake Ravelobe while waiting for dinner. Here the local guides quickly showed us a (147) Sickie-billed Vanga (E) on a nest with another one nearby. We also saw here a group of six **Western Brown Lemur** and a female of the critically endangered **Mongoose Lemur**. On the roadside we found a dead **Blonde Hognose Snake**. In trees around the park HQ were **Coquerel's Sifaka** one with a baby. As darkness fell, we were taken on a night walk through the forest behind the park HQ, where we saw several **Mahafaly Sand Snake**, a **Dwarf Gecko** and a 'near threatened' **Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat**. On the damp path, winged termites were coming out of the ground to be eagerly swallowed by **two unidentified species of small frog**. After seeing a Grey Mouse Lemur, we then saw a **Golden-brown Mouse Lemur** which is endemic to Ankarafantsika. At 7.15 this walk finished, and we returned to the outdoor dining area for our dinner, though some were still suffering tummy troubles.

Day 16, Sunday 24th November

After more rain in the night, we were up and out at 5am to an area of forest on the opposite side of the road from the park HQ where our first new bird was (148) Coquerel's Coua (E) followed by good views of a male and female of (149) Schlegel's Asity (E). The next new bird was two (150) Madagascar Green Pigeon (E) followed by three (151) White-breasted Mesite (E), which completed the set for us of all three Mesite species. We then turned back for our breakfast at the park HQ, on the way encountering a large **Western Plated Lizard**. After breakfast we set off on the trail behind the park HQ where our local guide caught a flash of a Madagascar Crested Ibis before it disappeared, to our frustration. But soon after we saw a

(152) Madagascar Sparrowhawk (E), while on the ground was a **Four-striped Snake**. There was great excitement when our guides found a **Greater Hedgehog Tenrec**, which quickly hid in a hollow log. This was followed by a **Giant Hog-nosed Snake** on the trail and later a white morph male Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher. Our guides then called two striking (153) Red-capped Coua (E) into view before we returned to the dining area for lunch. After a midday break, we went for a boat trip on Lake Ravelobe. Here the star birds were two impressive (154) Madagascar Fish Eagle (E) perched on a dead tree low over the water feeding on a big fish. From the boat we went back across the road to the park HQ and at 6.30pm went into the edge of the forest where the guides called for Madagascar Scops Owl, the Torotoroka Scops Owl form *O.r.madagascariensis* and the bird soon showed itself!

Day 17, Monday 25th November

After thunder and more rain in the night we were up at 5.45 to a cooler, damp morning under a cloudy sky. Around Asity Lodge were many (155) Namaqua Dove. After a leisurely breakfast we started birding along the roadside just five minutes away from the park HQ going south past Lake Ravelobe. Almost immediately we saw two (156) Eleanor's Falcon hawking for dragonflies. There was also here a (157) Crested Drongo (NE) nominate ssp. *D.f.forficatus*, a bird that we had seen before. By 9.30 we were at the southern end of Lake Ravelobe on the edge of rice paddies just off the road with the forest edge on our right maybe three hundred metres away. Above the forest a flock of falcons were circling, probably hawking for insects. We estimated there to be around twenty Eleonora's Falcon, two Sooty Falcon and at least one Madagascar Kestrel plus one Broad-billed Roller. To our left and further away on the other side of Lake Ravelobe another group of around fifteen falcons were hawking but it was difficult to identify them to species level. By 10am we were back at the park HQ for another walk in the forest behind. After seeing a few nice birds but nothing new we returned to the dining area. After lunch we went back to the Asity Lodge for a break. We left the lodge at 5pm to return to the rice paddies at the south end of Lake Ravelobe for an hour but did not see any new species.

Day 18, Tuesday 26th November

After breakfast at the park HQ open-air dining area and a last look at a group of Coquerel's Sifaka in the trees above us, we began the long drive back to Tana at 6.30am. After a bumpy hour and a half, we stopped at the same lake near the small town of Ambondrimany as on the way out. There we were lucky as a (158) Madagascar Heron (E) was standing in full view, as well as the African subspecies of (159) Purple Swamphen, *P. madagascariensis*. For the remainder of the journey, we saw only the odd Pied Crow or Black Kite, except for a female Madagascar Harrier briefly over the road in a village at 3.15pm. We finally arrived at our hotel in Tana at 7.45pm.

Day 19, Wednesday 27th November

After a leisurely breakfast at the hotel, we were driven to the airport and said our goodbyes to Lala and Alain. The trip had been hard work at times but hugely rewarding for the birds that we had seen, most of them endemic, as well as all the lemurs and other wildlife. Plus, the fascinating landscapes and the friendly people of Madagascar who welcomed us everywhere despite them often being extremely poor and living in difficult conditions.

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Mammals list.

- 1 Grey Mouse Lemur
- 2 Verraux's Sifaka
- 3 Ring-tailed Lemur
- 4 Eastern Red Forest Rat
- 5 Red-bellied Lemur
- 6 Brown Mouse Lemur
- 7 Red-fronted Brown Lemur
- 8 Eastern Brown Lemur
- 9 Indri
- 10 Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur
- 11 Weasel Sportive Lemur
- 12 Woolly Lemur
- 13 Greater Dwarf Lemur
- 14 Goodman's Mouse Lemur
- 15 Diademed Sifaka
- 16 Brown Rat
- 17 Western Brown Lemur
- 18 Mongoose Lemur
- 19 Coquerel's Sifaka
- 20 Commerson's Leaf-nosed Bat
- 21 Golden-brown Mouse Lemur
- 22 Greater Hedgehog Tenrec

Reptiles and amphibians list

- 1 Warty Chameleon
- 2 Lined Day Gecko
- 3 Three-eyed Lizard
- 4 Oustalet's Chamaeleon
- 5 Radiated Tortoise
- 6 Dumeril's Madagascar Swift
- 7 Peacock Day Gecko
- 8 Baron's Mantella 'painted' frog.
- 9 Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko
- 10 Parson's Chameleon
- 11 Short-horned Chameleon
- 12 Brown Leaf Chameleon
- 13 Big Nose Chameleon
- 14 Cuvier's Madagascar Swift
- 15 Western Plated Lizard
- 16 Giant Hog-nosed Snake
- 17 Blonde Hognose Snake
- 18 Mahafaly Sand Snake
- 19 Dwarf Gecko
- 20 Four-striped Snake

Invertebrates list.

- 1 Giraffe-necked Weevil

End