

Birds Heaven - Birding Tour

The best season for bird watching is from October through December, when birds, through their songs, can be more easily spotted in the forests. Madagascar is a promised destination for ornithologist or twitchers with its 107 endemic bird species, 198 nesting birds and 5 ENDEMIC FAMILIES. During this tour, you do not need a luck to discover at least the members of the 5 ENDEMIC species of groundrollers, the unique assitys, the diverse Vangas, the terrestrial mesites and the couas. You will also have the opportunity to discover other animal in their natural habitat: lemurs, chameleons, weird leaf tiled geckos.....the fascinating landscape of the Big Island, meeting with its local population and discovering their culture. With the teamwork run with our professional birding guide, the driver and the local guides in the national parks, it is a real pleasure to make your trip unique and unforgettable.

- Birdwatching in all parks
- See Lemurs, Chameleons, Frogs, etc.
- Enjoy breathtaking Landscapes
- Meet the locals

Day - 1 Antananarivo

ARRIVAL – ANTANANARIVO (D)

Arrival in Antananarivo, after the different procedures, meeting and greetings and then transfer to your hotel. Free at leisure : possibility to walk around the hotel.

Overnight: Antananarivo

Day - 2 Ifaty

ANTANANARIVO - TOLIARA (internal flight) – IFATY (B, D)

Breakfast at the hotel. In agreed time, transfer to the airport and flight to Toliara. Meeting at the airport and then drive to Ifaty. Arrival late in the afternoon. Overnight on half board for 02 nights at your hotel.

Overnight: Ifaty

Day - 3 Ifaty

IFATY (B, D)

Early Breakfast at the hotel. Birdwatching at the Reniala spiny forest. Possibility of spotting the Long tailed ground roller, the subdert mesite, the green capped coua, the subdert warbler, the thamnornis warbler, the common newtonia, the archbold newtonia, the striped throated Jery, the Sickle billed vanga, the chaberts vanga..... Back to the hotel after the visit. Possibility to embark on a second visit to the Reniala spiny forest at the hotel for the rest of your journey or you can enjoy yourself of spotting birds in the spiny forest surrounding the hotels.

Overnight: Ifaty

Day - 4 Ranohira

IFATY - TOLIARA - RANOHIRA (B, D)

Early breakfast and you'll depart to Andatabo site which is home to Madagascar's most recently described endemic, Red-shouldered Vanga. We will also search for Grey-headed Lovebird and Verreaux's Coua. We may even be lucky with Madagascar Sandgrouse at one of their regular drinking points. The mudflats around Toliara are great for all sorts of waders, Saunderson's Tern and possibly Humblot's Heron. Continuation to Zombitse National Park, in order to arrive before it gets too hot. Cuckoo-rollers displaying over the canopy is one of the highlights here. Males of this huge forest endemic engage in flapping displays and loops accompanied by their shrieking whistles. This forest's speciality, Appert's Greenbul, is one of Madagascar's rarest endemics. This highly threatened species is restricted to Zombitse and a small adjacent forest patch. Here we could also find Coquerel's and Giant Couas, Rufous Vanga and Stripe-throated Jery. The forest is a very special transition zone between the south's flora and the western deciduous forest (which we will explore in Ankarafantsika National Park). Similar in appearance as the latter, it contains baobab species of the former. We will continue on the long drive to Isalo's remarkable landscape: eroded 'ruiniforme' sandstone outcrops, with hints of silver and green reflections of sunlight and interspersed with endless palm savanna. Surrounded by the spectacular mountains of the Isalo massif, we will stay at one of Madagascar's most scenic places. Key target birds this evening and the following morning will include Madagascar Partridge, Torotoroka Scops-owl, White-browed Owl and Benson's Rock-thrush (although noticeably different in plumage and structure, this species is now often considered to be conspecific with the Forest Rock-thrush from further east).

Overnight: Ranohira

Day - 5 Ranomafana

RANOHIRA – RANOMAFANA (B, D)

This morning, will offer another chance to target our key birds, before travelling northwards towards Ranomafana's rainforest. On this spectacularly scenic long drive, we'll search for the elegant Madagascar Harrier then have a picnic lunch at Anja, a protected and sacred forest which may offer us splendid photographic opportunities of the very social and charismatic Ring tailed lemur. Our drive during the late afternoon will progressively be through more forested terrain until we'll reach our first rainforest destination: Ranomafana national park. We will arrive at our accommodation just before dark and take a stroll around to prepare for the next day's early start.

Overnight: Ranomafana

Day - 6 Ranomafana

RANOMAFANA (B, D)

We'll have two full days in this very important rainforest area. Ranomafana was set aside to protect one of the largest remaining rainforest patches of eastern Madagascar. It is a superb area, holding 39200 ha of mid-altitude rainforest and higher-altitude mountain cloud forest. A new species of lemur, the Golden Bamboo Lemur, was discovered here as recently as 1986, and this is the best place to seek one of the world's rarest primate species,

the Greater Bamboo Lemur! We'll explore the excellent network of paths through the forests and dense stands of giant bamboo. Birding is excellent, and we'll see a lot of new species as this is the first time that we'll be exploring this rich habitat, home to most of Madagascar's endemics. Good birds that we may well encounter include, Pitta-like Ground-roller, White-throated Oxylabes, Crossley's Babbler, Green and Wedge-tailed Jerys and Tylas Vanga. We'll also search for the more retiring Madagascar Wood-rail, Brown Mesite, Madagascar Ibis and Henst's Goshawk. We will also explore Vohiparara, a nearby high altitude site of mossy cloud forest that includes forest trails and a small marsh. This is the best site in the world to get to grips with asitys, a brightly-coloured family of birds endemic to Madagascar that are related to the broadbills. The undisputed special here is the threatened Yellow-bellied Asity, which will be a major focus of the walk. We'll prick our ears for sign of its soft call, and search special places along the trail where its favoured flowers will be in bloom. We'll also look out for Sunbird Asity and fruit-eating Velvet Asity (with its bright green head wattles). Rufous-headed Ground-roller and Cryptic Warbler (discovered in 1996!) occur here as well. Other excellent birds are Pollen's Vanga, Grey-crowned Greenbul, and Forest Rock-thrush. Yellow-browed Oxylabes and Brown Emu-tail are highly secretive and we'll have to work hard to get a good view of these mega-skulkers. Marsh restricted specials such as Grey Emu-tail and Madagascar Snipe could be found in the ever smaller patches of habitat. We have even seen the declining Meller's Duck here a number of times, but we'd need to be very fortunate to see this declining species as it dwindles into extinction. A nearby river holds Madagascar Pratincoles and we've been lucky enough to discover a breeding site. This is a hotspot for lemur diversity and Ranomafana sports 12 species, including the spectacular red-eyed Milne-Edwards's Sifaka and the endangered Golden and Greater Bamboo Lemurs. During our evening visit to the nocturne, we'll likely get very close views of Brown Mouse Lemur. If we are very lucky, we may see Malagasy Striped Civet whilst we often see Ring-tailed Mongoose during the day.

Overnight: Ranomafana

Day - 7 Antananarivo

RANOMAFANA – ANTANANARIVO (B, D)

Early breakfast and drive to Antananarivo. On the way, drive through Antsirabe, a very picturesque and interesting town historically known as the "place of much salt". It is renowned for its warm springs and thermal bath, its cool climate (at about 1500m altitude) and having hundreds of registered rickshaw taxis. Arrival late in the evening.

Accommodation on Half Board at your hotel.

Overnight: Antananarivo

Day - 8 Andasibe

ANTANANARIVO - ANDASIBE (B, L, D)

After a good night's rest, drive to the Andasibe- Mantadia National Park. Upon arrival, you will start your first exploration. Check in at your hotel. Nocturnal visit for discovering nocturnal lemurs and chameleons.

Accommodation on half board for 3 Nights at your hotel. **GOOD HOTELS:** Andasibe lemur lodge or similar

Overnight: Andasibe

Day - 9 Andasibe

ANDASIBE (B, D)

First day you will explore this spectacular wilderness. The protected area consists of the larger Mantadia National Park. These protect one of Madagascar's most important primary rainforest areas. We have ample time to explore the area thoroughly, on various trails and with local guides. The list of birds we can see is very long, but some highlights may include White-throated Rail, Madagascar Flufftail, Madagascar Blue-pigeon, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Red-breasted, Blue and Red-fronted Couas, Madagascar Long-eared Owl, Madagascar Spine-tailed Swift, Madagascar Kingfisher, Cuckoo-roller, Sunbird Asity, Ward's Flycatcher, Dark Newtonia, Rand's Warbler, Madagascar Blue, Nuthatch and Pollen's Vangas, Madagascar Starling, Forest Fody and Nelicourvi Weaver. We may also be fortunate enough to encounter Collared Nightjar roosting almost imperceptibly on the forest floor. Mantadia is also the very best place in the world for Ground-rollers. We'll need some luck and perseverance, but we've seen all four rainforest species in a single morning: Pitta-like, Scaly, Rufous-headed and Short-legged Ground-roller. Despite this long list of bird endemics, there are few natural history experiences that can compare to the Indri's morning calls echoing through the misty forests. More than anything else, these echoing calls from the world's largest lemur sound like whales! The park also forms the ideal habitat for the iconic Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur and Diademed Sifaka. On the 02nd day, you will have a full day to explore this spectacular wilderness. The protected area consists of the Anamalazaotra Special Reserve (also named Andasibe or the colonial name Perinet). These protect one of Madagascar's most important primary rainforest areas. We have ample time to explore the area thoroughly, on various trails and with local guides. The list of birds we can see is very long, but some highlights may include White-throated Rail, Madagascar Flufftail, Madagascar Blue-pigeon, Lesser Vasa Parrot, Red-breasted, Blue and Red-fronted Couas, Madagascar Long-eared Owl, Madagascar Spine-tailed Swift, Madagascar Kingfisher, Cuckoo-roller, Sunbird Asity, Ward's Flycatcher, Dark Newtonia, Rand's Warbler, Madagascar Blue, Nuthatch and Pollen's Vangas, Madagascar Starling, Forest Fody and Nelicourvi Weaver. We may also be fortunate enough to encounter Collared Nightjar roosting almost imperceptibly on the forest floor.

Overnight: Andasibe

Day - 10 Antananarivo

ANDASIBE – ANTANANARIVO (B, D)

In the morning, explore the reserve of Antavolobe to discover the Helmeted Vanga. Then drive back to Antananarivo.

Overnight: Antananarivo

Day - 11 Anjajavy

ANJAJAVY (B, L, D)

More time to enjoy delightful Anjajavy. If you wish you can also visit one of the nearby villages, where the hotel has made admirable contributions to improve living standards of the residents, such as financing a clinic, school and wells.

Overnight: Anjajavy

Day - 12 Majunga

ANTANANARIVO – MAJUNGA by road (B, D)

Breakfast at the hotel. You will drive to Majunga most important seaport. Arrival at the end of the day. Installation in your room. We'll settle in for some good French cuisine.

Overnight: Majunga

Day - 13 Ankarafantsika

MAJUNGA – ANKARAFANTSIKA (B, D)

Excursion by boat. The Betsiboka River spills into the sea at a huge delta; one of the last refuges for some of Madagascar's most endangered endemics. This morning, our boat will take us along the coast and deep into the delta, in search of Bernier's Teal and Madagascar Ibis. Although numbers are low, we will hope to find both of these species feeding along the edge of the mangrove swamps in this area. Other possible species may include Crab Plover and Terek Sandpiper. Around midday, we will drive to Ankarafantsika National Park. After we settle in, we will start introductory birding around camp and, if time allows, head onto our first evening walk.

Overnight: Ankarafantsika

Day - 14 Ankarafantsika

ANKARAFANTSIKA

Ankarafantsika National Park protects Madagascar's western dry deciduous woodlands on a gently undulating area of 20000 ha. It also contains Lake Ravelobe, where we'll search, on foot or by boat, for the critically endangered Madagascar Fish-eagle; far less common than its African counterpart (less than 50 pairs still exist!). Other species here include White-throated Rail and Madagascar Jacana. We will spend most of our time stalking through the woodlands, where top target birds will be the stunning Schlegel's Asity, White-breasted Mesite and Van Dam's Vanga. We also hope to find Madagascar Ibis, Madagascar Buttonquail, Madagascar Green-pigeon, Grey-headed Lovebird, Greater Vasa Parrot, Coquerel's and Red-capped Couas, Madagascar Scops-owl, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, White-headed, Sickle-billed and Rufous Vangas as well as Madagascar Cuckoo-shrike. Night walks with local guides in search for nocturnal lemurs, owls and chameleons will be an exciting after-dinner activity. We often see a staggering 8 species of lemurs on the night walks here, including the recently-described Golden-brown Mouse Lemur and the localised Mongoose Lemur. Some of the largest specimens of Oustalets's Chameleon can also be seen here! Our accommodation will be at the Ampijoroa Research Station, in either simple bungalows or tents (subject to availability). As this accommodation is rather basic, our special catering team will time and again surprise us with excellent fresh and tropical meals.

Overnight: Ankarafantsika

Day - 15 Antananarivo

ANKARAFANTSIKA – ANTANANARIVO

After the breakfast, drive back to Antananarivo. Lunch on the way. Arrival late in the day. Accommodation on half board at your hotel.

Overnight: Antananarivo

Day - 16 Antananarivo

ANTANANARIVO – FLIGHT BACK HOME (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. In the morning visit of Tsararasaotra and then transfer to Ivato. Day use at San Cristobal. transfer to the airport for the flight back home.

Inclusions

- 16 nights in your chosen accommodation
- Meal as specified in itinerary (B = Breakfast, BR = Brunch, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)
- Activities and excursions according to itinerary
- All transfers from/to the airport where needed.
- The car from Toliara until Antananarivo.
- The car from Antananarivo to Majunga and back
- The car from Antananarivo to Andasibe and back (3persons per car)
- The excursion by boat in Ankarafantsika
- The visit of Tsarasaotra on last day
- Admission fees according to itinerary
- One small bottle of mineral water per day per person
- A small gift at the end of the trip

Exclusions

- International flights
- Domestic flight (to be added on the land arrangement rates)
- Meals other than mentioned in itinerary
- Tours and Excursions other than mentioned in itinerary
- Early check-in and late check-out at hotels
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips for driver/guides
- Visa fees
- Long haul air ticket and taxes

Payment Details:

Group from 6 persons and
more starting from (p.P)

USD 2655

Private tour for 2 persons
starting from (p.P.) USD 3370

Booking Availabilities

Booking in between : **3rd April 2020 & 31st December 2020**

Good Hotels

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|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Single Supplement | : USD 753.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 1st + 2nd person | : USD 3735.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 3rd + 4th person | : USD 3312.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 5th + 6th person | : USD 3036.00 |

Middle Range Hotels

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|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Single Supplement | : USD 468.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 1st + 2nd person | : USD 3370.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 3rd + 4th person | : USD 2917.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 5th + 6th person | : USD 2655.00 |