



**BIRDING
AFRICA**
THE AFRICA SPECIALISTS

Madagascar

2022 Trip Report



Helmet Vanga © Michael Mills

Text and photos by Michael Mills

SUMMARY

Madagascar is one of the most extraordinary wildlife destinations worldwide—due to its array of peculiarities it's often called the eighth continent. We spent 18 days sampling its delights, plus another five days at Masoala. Top birds seen included all species of vanga, mesite, ground roller and coua, three asities, Collared Nightjar, Madagascar Jacana, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, and close to a full set of Malagasy endemics. Not to mention all the lemurs, snakes, chameleons and geckos.

Our journey took us first to Masoala where Helmet Vanga was the undoubted highlight and Bernier's Vanga, Red-breasted Coua and Madagascar Long-eared Owl were also enjoyed. In the north-west the Betsiboka Delta produced Madagascar Teal and Madagascar Sacred Ibis, before we found Schlegel's Asity, White-breasted Mesite, Sickle-billed Vanga, Van Dam's Vanga and Red-capped Coua at Ankafantsika. The long drive to Andasibe brought Madagascar Jacana, Madagascar Partridge and Madagascar Harrier. At Mantadia we saw Henst's Goshawk, Short-legged Ground Roller and Scaly Ground Roller, and around Andasibe highlights included Collared Nightjar and Nuthatch Vanga. En route to Ranomafana we found Madagascar Snipe.

Long-tailed Ground Roller © Michael Mills



Three days at Ranomafana produced the goods with exceptional views of Brown Mesite, Rufous-headed Ground Roller, Pitta-like Ground Roller, Brown Emutail, Madagascar Yellowbrow, and Common Sunbird-Asity. Moving on we visited Anja Ring-tailed Lemur reserve before overnighting at Isalo where White-browed Hawk-Owl showed well in the gardens. At Zombitse the next morning we enjoyed Giant Coua and Appert's Tetraka, before moving on to Ifaty with Madagascar Sandgrouse en route. Highlights at Ifaty included Long-tailed Ground Roller, Subdesert Mesite and Madagascar Plover. Finally, in the Toliara area we found Lafresnaye's Vanga and Red-shouldered Vanga.



Common Sunbird-Asity © Michael Mills

ITINERARY

- 14 Nov: Arrive Antananarivo.
- 15 Nov: 'Tana to Maroansetra.
- 16 Nov: Maroansetra to Masoala.
- 17–18 Nov: Masoala.
- 19 Nov: Masoala to Maroansetra to 'Tana.
- 20 Nov: 'Tana to Mahajanga.
- 21 Nov: Betsiboka; to Ankafantsika.
- 22 Nov: Ankafantsika.
- 23 Nov: Ankafantsika to 'Tana.
- 24 Nov: 'Tana to Andasibe.
- 25 Nov: Mantadia.
- 26 Nov: Analamazoatra.
- 27 Nov: Andasibe to Antsirabe.
- 28 Nov: Antsirabe to Ranomafana.
- 29 Nov – 1 Dec: Ranomafana.
- 2 Dec: Ranomafana to Isalo via Anja.
- 3 Dec: Isalo to Ifaty via Zombitse.
- 4 Dec: Ifaty.
- 5 Dec: Toliara area, including Nosy Ve.
- 6 Dec: Toliara to 'Tana.

REPORT

We met up in the leafy grounds of our ‘Tana hotel, and quickly got to work on our bird lists with Torotoroka Scops Owl and Western Barn Owl and day roosts and Madagascar Nightjar seen while we waited for our dinner to be prepared.

The next morning visited Lac Alarobia, where large numbers of herons and waterfowl were enjoyed at close range. A single Madagascar Heron and a pair of breeding Madagascar Pond Herons were the highlights, but other birds of interest included our first White-throated Rail, Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher and Madagascar Swamp Warbler, plus Black Heron, Blue-billed Teal and a single Fulvous Whistling Duck. Then it was back to the hotel before we transferred to the airport

Red-breasted Coua © Michael Mills



for our charter flight to Maroansetra. After touching down in the north-east of the country we visited the river mouth in Maroansetra, where Reed Cormorant | Long-tailed Cormorant and White-fronted Plover were seen, but not much else.

After an early breakfast the next morning we were headed out across the Bay of Antongil. Passing by Nosy Mangabe we found a pair of Madagascar Pratincole perched on the rocks, and on arrival at Masoala we headed straight off for our first walk in Malagasy forests, on the Lahatrousua trail. A mixed flock at the start of the trail brought our first vanga (Red-tailed Vanga) before we carefully made our way up the rocky slopes. Red Ruffed Lemur and White-fronted Brown Lemur were seen, but it wasn't long before we were enjoying



Madagascar Long-eared Owl © Michael Mills

incredible views of the peerless Helmet Vanga. A calling Scaly Ground Roller faded into the forest before we managed to set eyes on it, but the pretty Red-breasted Coua played along nicely, before we strolled back to our beach-front camp for lunch. A short afternoon walk was interrupted by rain.

The rest of our time at Masoala was very rewarding too, and at our first attempt we enjoyed good views of the tricky Bernier's Vanga. While we waited for it to show we acquainted ourselves with various Malagasy forest birds, including Madagascar Starling, Madagascar Blue Vanga, Red-tailed Vanga, Nelicourvi Weaver, Crested Coua, White-

headed Vanga, Common Newtonia, Madagascar Green Pigeon, Souimanga Sunbird, Madagascar Green Sunbird, Lesser Vasa Parrot and Madagascar Spinetail. In the undergrowth a Red-fronted Coua proved difficult to see, but White-throated Oxylabes played along nicely. A recently-fledged Scaly Ground Roller sat in the trail for ages while it's agitated parent complained nearby, mostly out of sight. Other highlights of our stay included Rainforest Scops Owl, Rufous Vanga, Crossley's Babbler-Vanga, Madagascar Wood Rail, Collared Nightjar, Hook-billed Vanga and incredible views of Madagascar Long-eared Owl.



Madagascar Blue Vanga © Michael Mills

Our return to ‘Tana was pleasantly uneventful, as was our onwards flight to Mahajanga. We killed some time around the now-dry airport pools in the late afternoon, where we saw Madagascar Palm Swift and Madagascar Cisticola, plus the biggest surprise of the trip in the form of a White Wagtail, a first for Madagascar. The next morning we made our way up the Betsiboka River to an area of mudflats and mangrove-covered islands. The tide was perfect and we spotted our first Madagascar Sacred Ibis

immediately upon arrival. Lesser Crested Terns were conspicuous, and among them were several smaller terns which appeared all to be Little Terns. As we searched the various mudflats for a certain missing teal we enjoyed good numbers of Dimorphic Egret, one Madagascar Heron, one Grey Heron, Greater Sand Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Terek Sandpiper, more ibis, and a circling Frances’s Sparrowhawk and Madagascar Harrier-Hawk. After three hours we still hadn’t managed to find a teal, but fortunately

a final check produced the goods and we spotted two moderately distant Madagascar Teal feeding on a mudflat we had checked previously. Yours truly provided some additional, dirty entertainment by attempting to get onto the mudflats (the less said, the better) before we returned to town for lunch. The hottest part of the day was spent driving to Ankarafantsika, with roadside female Madagascar Buttonquail the highlight of the trip.

At Ankarafantsika we struck out immediately into the dry forest, doing a walk with the main aim of finding Schlegel’s Asity. Unfortunately the two known nests had recently been deserted, but we managed to find a bright male and enjoyed some

good looks at his electric-blue-and-green wattle. A very confiding Coquerel’s Coua was the other highlight, before we headed to our lodges for dinner. The next day at Ankarafantsika produced all our hoped-for goodies. Greater Vasa Parrot flapped noisily in the car park treetops; Sakalava Weaver was active around a colony; Sickle-billed Vanga showed well; White-breasted Mesite crossed the trail for us twice; a pair of Red-capped Couas tip-toed down the path; Van Dam’s Vanga sat directly overhead; Grey-headed Lovebirds busily inspected various cavities for nesting; Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher gave prolonged views; and two adult and a juvenile Madagascar Fish Eagle allowed close approach.

Coquerel's Coua © Michael Mills





Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher © Michael Mills

This year we again opted for the longish drive back to 'Tana, and a good decision it was. As we set off, Eleonora's Falcon was feeding alongside Sooty Falcon, with another Sooty Falcon seen further along. After an hour-and-a-half we made our first stop to enjoy excellent views of Madagascar Jacana. Here too African Pygmy Goose showed well and a pair breeding-plumaged Whiskered Tern were active. At the Betsiboka River we paused to admire some Madagascar Pratincole. And in the later afternoon we enjoyed good views of a female Madagascar Harrier, excellent views of a pair of Madagascar Partridge, and

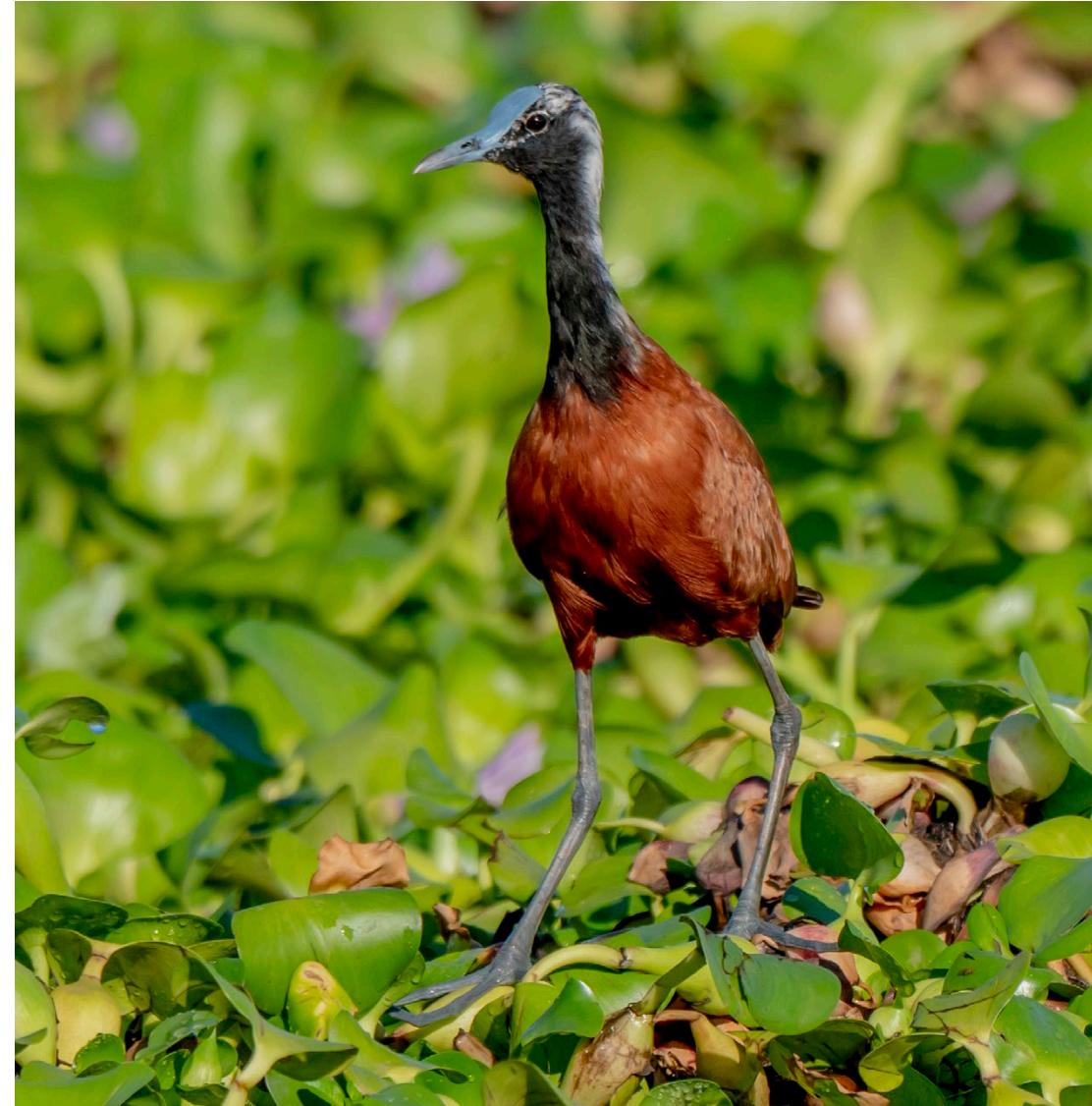
our first Madagascar Larks.

We were pleased to arrive at Andasibe at midday the next day, and looked forward to spending some time off our behinds and on our feet. An afternoon walk provided a great introduction, with Nuthatch Vanga found almost immediately in a large mixed flock beside a Madagascar Crested Ibis nest with a bird incubating. Good views of Madagascar Wood Rail in the track followed, then a roosting Madagascar Long-eared Owl, roosting Rainforest Scops Owl, nesting Madagascar Blue Pigeon, nesting Madagascar Buzzard and Grey Bamboo Lemur.

We enjoyed two full days in the Andasibe-Mantadia area, first turning our attention to some tricky ground rollers. Fortunately Short-legged Ground Roller played along well, and we enjoyed some prolonged looks at this oversized puffbird at our first attempt. Nearby a Hensl's Goshawk showed very well at the nest, Pitta-like Ground Roller showed well and we saw our first Forest Fody. Next we moved onto a Scaly Ground Roller nest. A longish vigil succeeded in getting views for all, but we needed to return later in the day

for an improved sighting. The forest nearby gave great views of Wedge-tailed Jery, and a nearby forest pond proved ever-reliable for Madagascar Little Grebe. We also saw Indri and Black-and-white Ruffed Lemurs, before bouncing our way back to our hotel. We paused in a marshy area where we managed to persuade Madagascar Rail to show, and Madagascar Brown-throated Martin were conspicuous and a Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk drifted overhead.

Madagascar Jacana © Michael Mills



At Analamazoatra the next day we started off with a Collared Nightjar on the nest, followed by some quality time with a family of Diademed Sifaka. Along the various trails we also found Madagascar Flufftail (with better views to follow in the afternoon), Tylas Vanga, Nelicourvi Weaver, Red-fronted Coua, Red-breasted Coua, Blue Coua, Madagascar Cuckooshrike, Chabert Vanga, Ward's Flycatcher-Vanga and a female Velvet Asity. After dark a walk produced a spectacular Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko, Goodman's Mouse Lemur and Crossley's Dwarf Lemur.

The two following days were mostly dedicated to travel to Ranomafana, although we made various stops along the route to add to our bird lists. At Antsirabe a Marsh Owl played along nicely and Madagascar Cuckoo gave it's best views. Further south we found a breeding colony of Madagascar

Black Swift in a roadside cutting, and saw a couple of Madagascar Snipe on the margins of a wetland. But once again we were glad to be back on the trails, this time at Ranomafana. Our first day was dedicated to the ridge-top forests at Vohiparara, where we soon found White-throated Oxylabes before hearing Brown Mesite calling in the distance. A bit of a scramble got us into range, but the undergrowth was very dense and not everyone managed to lay eyes on them... Things were a bit quiet after that, but then everything began to happen at once. First a calling Rufous-headed Ground Roller was seen a close range, before a Brown Emutail hopped around our feet and a Madagascar Yellowbrow gave reasonable views. We opted to stay out in the field for lunch, and a good decision it was as another pair of Brown Mesite were found just before our lunch was

Short-legged Ground Roller © Michael Mills



Ward's Flycatcher-Vanga © Michael Mills

delivered, and this time they gave incredible views. Once our appetites were satisfied this was followed by incredible views of a male Common Sunbird-Asity, point-blank views of a Madagascar Yellowbrow and some brief looks at Grey-crowned Tetraka. Dark Newtonia was also seen well, and on our way back to the hotel we enjoyed excellent views of Forest Rock Thrush.

Our second day was focussed on the lower forests, but not before a return visit to Vohiparara where we enjoyed eye-level views of Cryptic Warbler along the road, and Rand's Warbler at the park entrance. Crossing the raging torrent into the park, we climbed many a step, in search of Milne-Edward's Sifaka, Golden Bamboo Lemur and Greater Bamboo Lemur. Forest Fody was seen again, a male Velvet Asity eventually showed, and we finally tracked down Crossley's Babbler-Vanga, which gave

excellent views. Nearby we were alerted to some Red-bellied Lemurs, but we didn't pause long as a Pollen's Vanga called close by. They were part of a large foraging flock but proved rather unresponsive, so it took some time before we all eventually laid eyes on our final vanga of the eastern rainforests. After a midday siesta we made our way to the swamps above the park, where Grey Emutail gave incredible views.

Our final day at Ranomafana was spent filling in the gaps and involved visits to various parts of the park. Unfortunately Meller's Duck failed to materialise, but we did track down Rufous-headed Ground Roller, Grey-crowned Tetraka, Crossley's Vanga-Babbler, Hook-billed Vanga, Madagascar Spinetail (unexpected here), and perched Mascarene Martin (many previously seen in flight). A night walk entertained with several species of chameleon and Rufous Mouse Lemur.

Leaving the moist, eastern forests behind we now travelled to the west coast through ever-drier habitats. Our first stop was at Anja Lemur Reserve where we enjoyed some quality time with two families of Ring-tailed Lemur and saw some very large Oustalet's Chameleons. Madagascar Hoopoe showed well too, and we also saw Grey-headed Lovebird. Approaching Isalo we enjoyed our second excellent sighting of Madagascar Partridge, this time three birds at the roadside. A rain storm greeted our arrival at Isalo, but it stopped in time for us to find Forest Rock Thrush ("Benson's Rock Thrush), and after dark we enjoyed some excellent views of White-browed Hawk-Owl in the garden.

The next morning saw us making an early start for Zombitse Forest, where several very productive hours were spent. Appert's Tetraka was found fairly quickly, and was followed shortly by a very good showing of a pair of Giant Coua around their nest. Other goodies seen included perched Cuckoo Roller, Chestnut-vented Coua, Western Long-billed Bernieria, Subdesert Jery, Rufous Vanga and a roosting Zombitse Sportive Lemur. Overhead a pair of Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk circled, and we found a perched male Frances's Sparrowhawk. It was warming up quickly, however, and we had an appointment with some Madagascar Sandgrouse further down the road, so we moved on a bit sooner than we perhaps would have liked. However, it was certainly worth it, and we enjoyed some excellent views of the sandgrouse before continuing onto Toliara for a late lunch. A short afternoon stint at Le Table produced Verreaux's Coua, before we fought our way through the traffic of Toliara and continued onto Mangily where we were to bird the spiny forests of Ifaty the next morning.

Our final major habitat in Madagascar didn't disappoint, although the Spiny Forest didn't give up all of its jewels without a bit of a fight. We started swiftly with a fantastic encounter with Long-tailed Ground Roller, and followed this up with a lovely Running

Coua. Thamnornis didn't take too long to find either, and after a bit of careful searching we tracked down Archbold's Newtonia. We followed the narrow, sandy trails through the unusual habitat to both Madagascar Sparrowhawk and Madagascar Harrier-Hawk nests, and found Green-capped Coua too. But one certain species was giving us a hard time, and there was not a hint of a mesite by 09h30, so we decided to turn our attention to some wetland birds and try again in the afternoon. Madagascar Plover gave itself up very quickly, and nearby we also found Madagascar Three-banded Plover, before resting out the heat of the day back at our beach-side lodge. A bit later bit we were back in the Spiny Forest, thankful for the cloud cover which kept things much cooler than normal. We trudged around various tracks for what felt like ages, before finally we heard some mesites calling. We managed to draw them in and Michael set eyes on them, but then they went quiet and seemed to vanish. Suddenly, however, everything came together and we were all watching a treed Subdesert Mesite at point-blank range. Whew! Job done we wearily headed back to our bus, pausing for a White-footed Sportive Lemur on the way.

Our final full day of birding in Madagascar had arrived, and there was still some work to be done. We started off in the coral rag scrub at Le Table, this time fortunately finding Red-shouldered Vanga and Lafresnaye's Vanga quite quickly to complete a full house of vangas. Subdesert Brush Warbler also gave better views. Then it was onto our speedy boat to Anakao village, where a Littoral Rock Thrush male was found feeding a recently-fledged chick, and across to Nosy Ve for lunch and some quality time with Red-tailed Tropicbird. A final stint of birding near Toliara the next morning produced the only Greater Flamingo of the trip, before we flew back to 'Tana and bade our farewells.



BIRDS RECORDED

Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*—Seen at Masoala (introduced)

Phasianidae

Madagascar Partridge *Margaroperdix madagarensis*—Good views north of Antananarivo and at Isalo

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*—Seen by some at Antsirabe (*africana*)

Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*—Many at Lac Alarobia, and seen at several other sites

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*—One at Lac Alarobia

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*—Excellent views on the drive from Ankrafantsika to Antananarivo

Blue-billed Teal *Spatula hottentota*—Seen well at Lac Alarobia

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrорhyncha*—Most numerous at Lac Alarobia

Madagascar Teal *Anas bernieri*—Seen at the Betsiboka Delta after much searching

Caprimulgidae

Collared Nightjar *Gactornis enarratus*—Excellent views on the nest at Analamazoatra, and also seen at Masoala

Madagascar Nightjar *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*—Seen at Antananarivo and Ankrafantsika

Apodidae

Madagascar Spinetail *Zoonavena grandidieri*—Most numerous at Masoala, but also seen at Ifaty, Zombitse and Ranomafana

Madagascar Palm Swift [African Palm Swift] *Cypsiurus [parvus] gracilis*—Seen regularly in the lowlands (*gracilis*)

Madagascar Black Swift [African Black Swift]

Apus [barbatus] balstoni—Seen very well (*balstoni*, endemic)

Little Swift *Apus affinis*—Seen in Antananarivo

Cuculidae

Madagascar Coucal *Centropus toulou*—Heard and seen almost daily

Crested Coua *Coua [c.] cristata*—Seen at Ankrafantsika (*dumonti*) and Masoala (*cristata*)

Chestnut-vented Coua [Crested Coua] *Coua [cristata] pyropyga*—Seen at Zombitse and Ifaty

Verreaux's Coua *Coua verreauxi*—Good views near Toliara

Blue Coua *Coua caerulea*—Observed regularly in the eastern forests

Red-capped Coua *Coua [r.] ruficeps*—Good views at Ankrafantsika

Green-capped Coua [Red-capped Coua] *Coua [ruficeps] olivaceiceps*—Good views at Ifaty

Red-fronted Coua *Coua reynaudii*—Seen at all eastern forest sites, with the best views at Andasibe

Coquerel's Coua *Coua coquereli*—Nice looks at Ankrafantsika

Running Coua *Coua cursor*—Seen well at Ifaty

Giant Coua *Coua gigas*—Quite exceptional views at Zombitse

Red-breasted Coua *Coua serriana*—Seen at Analamazoatra, but our best views were at Masoala

Madagascar Cuckoo *Cuculus rochii*—Several good sightings and heard almost daily

Mesitornithidae

White-breasted Mesite *Mesitornis variegatus*—Good views at Ankrafantsika

Brown Mesite *Mesitornis unicolor*—Brilliant views at Ranomafana

Subdesert Mesite *Monias benschi*—After a lengthy search, seen well at Ifaty

Pteroclidae

Madagascar Sandgrouse *Pterocles personatus*—Good views between Zombitse and Toliara

Columbidae

Rock Dove or Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*—Feral Pigeon was common in towns and villages

Madagascar Turtle Dove *Nesoenas picturatus*—Several good sightings (*picturatus*)

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*—Most numerous in the Toliara area (*aliena*, endemic)

Madagascar Green Pigeon *Treron [a.] australis*—Seen at Masoala (*australis*), and Ankrafantsika and Zombitse (*xenius*)

Madagascar Blue Pigeon *Alectroenas madagascariensis*—Good views at Analamazoatra on the nest, and at Ranomafana

Sarothruridae

Madagascar Wood Rail *Mentocrex [k.] kiolooides*—Good views at Andasibe and Masoala (*kiolooides*)

Madagascar Flufftail *Sarothrura insularis*—Great views of a male at Ranomafana and also seen at Andasibe

Rallidae

Madagascar Rail *Rallus madagascariensis*—Seen on our way back from Mantadia

White-throated Rail *Dryolimnas cuvieri*—Seen well a few times (*cuvieri*)

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*—A few good sightings (*pyrrhorhoa*, regional endemic)

Podicipedidae

Madagascar Little Grebe *Tachybaptus pelzelni*—Great views at Mantadia

Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*—One near Toliara

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*—A small flock of flamingos in flight at the Betsiboka Delta were probably this species

Turnicidae

Madagascar Buttonquail *Turnix nigricollis*—Good views of a female by the roadside between Mahajanga and Ankrafantsika

Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus [h.] himantopus*—Seen in the Ifaty area

Charadriidae

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*—Seen along the coast

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*—Seen a couple of times

Madagascar Plover *Charadrius thoracicus*—Seen at close range at Ifaty

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*—Seen near Isalo and the south-west

Madagascar Three-banded Plover [Three-banded Plover] *Charadrius [tricollaris] bifrontatus*—Seen at Ifaty

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*—Seen at Maroansetra and Ifaty (*tenellus*)

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*—Seen at the Betsiboka Delta

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*—Several seen at the Betsiboka Delta

Jacanidae

Madagascar Jacana *Actophilornis albinucha*—A single bird was seen well on the drive from Ankrafantsika to Antananarivo

Scolopacidae

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius [p.] phaeopus*—Seen along the coast

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*—Seen along the coast

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*—Seen along the coast

Sanderling *Calidris alba*—Seen at Nosy Ve

Madagascar Snipe *Gallinago macrodactyla*—Seen well en route from Antsirabe to Ranomafana

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*—Quite numerous at the Betsiboka Delta

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucus*—Several sightings

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*—Seen mostly along the coast

Glareolidae

Madagascar Pratincole *Glareola ocularis*—Seen between Mahajanga and Antananarivo, at Masoala and en route from Andasibe

Lariidae

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*—Seen at Nosy Ve

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*—The most numerous tern

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*—All of the small terns at the Betsiboka Delta appeared to be this species

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*—Seen at Toliarra

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*—Two breeding-plumaged birds seen on the drive from Ankarafantsika to 'Tana

Phaethontidae

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*—Many on Nosy Ve (*rubricauda*)

Phalacrocoracidae

Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus*—Seen at Maroansetra and Ankarafantsika (*pictilis*, endemic)

Threskiornithidae

Madagascar Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis bernieri*—Good views of at least five at the Betsiboka Delta (*bernieri*)

Madagascar Crested Ibis *Lophotibis cristata*—Seen well at the nest at Andasibe (*cristata*)

Ardeidae

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*—Seen a few times (*nycticorax*)

Striated Heron [Green Heron] *Butorides [s.] striata*—Several sightings (*rutenbergi*)

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*—Most common at Lac Alarobia

Madagascar Pond Heron *Ardeola idae*—Seen well at Lac Alarobia

Western Cattle Egret [Cattle Egret] *Bubulcus [i.] ibis*—Common and widespread

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*—Seen at Nosy Ve and Betsiboka Delta (*firasa*, region endemic)

Madagascar Heron *Ardea humbloti*—Good views at Lac Alarobia, Betsiboka Delta and Ankarafantsika

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*—Seen a few times (*madagascariensis*)

African Great Egret [Great Egret] *Ardea [alba] melanorhynchos*—Widespread sightings, especially in highland rice paddies

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*—Our best views were at Lac Alarobia

Dimorphic Egret [Little Egret] *Egretta [garzetta] dimorpha*—Widespread and common, with white morph bird dominating inland and black morph birds along the coast

Scopidae

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*—Several sightings around wetlands and rice paddies (*umbretta*)

Accipitridae

Madagascar Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides radiatus*—Seen at Ankarafantsika, Mantadia, Ranomafana and Ifaty

Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk *Aviceda madagascariensis*—Fantastic views at Ifaty, and also seen at Zombitse and near Mantadia

Frances's Sparrowhawk *Accipiter francesiae*—A male was seen perched at Zombitse, and another bird in flight at Betsiboka Delta (*francesiae*)

Madagascar Sparrowhawk *Accipiter madagascariensis*—Brilliant views at the nest at Ifaty

Henst's Goshawk *Accipiter henstii*—An excellent encounter at Mantadia

Madagascar Harrier *Circus macrourus*—Good and very welcome views of a female north of Antananarivo

Yellow-billed Kite [Black Kite] *Milvus [migrans] aegyptius*—Fairly common and widespread (*parasitus*)

Madagascar Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vociferoides*—Fantastic views at Ankarafantsika

Madagascar Buzzard *Buteo brachypterus*—Seen regularly throughout the tour

Tytonidae

Western Barn Owl [Barn Owl] *Tyto [a.] alba*—Seen in Antananarivo (*hypermetra*, regional endemic)

Strigidae

Totororoka Scops Owl [Madagascar Scops Owl] *Otus [rutilus] madagascariensis*—Brilliant views at night at Antananarivo, and seen briefly also at Isalo

Rainforest Scops Owl [Madagascar Scops Owl] *Otus [r.] rutilus*—Seen at day and night at Andasibe, and at night at Masoala

White-browed Owl *Athene superciliaris*—Great views at night at Isalo

Madagascar Long-eared Owl *Asio madagascariensis*

—Great day-time views at Masoala, and also seen at the nest at Andasibe

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*—Excellent day-time views near Antsirabe (*hova*, endemic)

Leptosomidae

Cuckoo Roller *Leptosomus discolor*—Seen a few times (*discolor*, endemic)

Upupidae

Madagascar Hoopoe [Hoopoe] *Upupa [epops] marginata*—Several good sightings in the west

Coraciidae

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*—Several good sightings (*glaucurus*, endemic breeder)

Brachypteraciidae

Short-legged Ground Roller *Brachypteryx leptosoma*—Excellent views at Mantadia

Scaly Ground Roller *Geobius squamiger*—Seen well at the nest at Mantadia, and a young bird was seen well at Masoala

Pitta-like Ground Roller *Atelornis pittoides*—Excellent views at Mantadia and Ranomafana

Rufous-headed Ground Roller *Atelornis crossleyi*—Seen well at Vohiparara

Long-tailed Ground Roller *Uratelornis chimaera*—Brilliant views at Ifaty

Alcedinidae

Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher *Corythornis madagascariensis*—Excellent views at Ankarafantsika

Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis vintsioides*—Seen regularly around wetlands (*vintsioides*)

Meropidae

Olive Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*—Seen regularly (*superciliosus*)

Falconidae

Madagascar Kestrel *Falco newtoni*—Seen regularly throughout the tour (*newtoni*)

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae*—Good views of one bird alongside Sooty Falcon at Ankrafantsika

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*—Our best views were of a perched bird between Ankrafantsika and Antananarivo

Peregrine Falcon *Falco [p.] peregrinus*—One at Antsirabe and one at Toliara (*radama*)

Psittaculidae

Greater Vasa Parrot *Coracopsis vasa*—Our best views were at Ankrafantsika (*drouhardi*)

Lesser Vasa Parrot *Coracopsis [n.] nigra*—Seen at Ankrafantsika (*libs*) and regularly in the eastern forests (*nigra*)

Grey-headed Lovebird *Agapornis canus*—Seen at Anja (*ablectaneus*) and Ankrafantsika (*canus*)

Philepittidae

Velvet Asity *Philepitta castanea*—One male at Ranomafana, and females at Masoala, Mantadia and Analamazoatra

Schlegel's Asity *Philepitta schlegeli*—A lovely male was seen by all at Ankrafantsika

Common Sunbird-Asity *Neodrepanis coruscans*—Superb views at Ranomafana

Vangidae

Red-tailed Vanga *Calicalicus madagascariensis*—Several good sightings

Red-shouldered Vanga *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*—Great views near Toliara

Hook-billed Vanga *Vanga curvirostris*—Good views at Masoala and Ranomafana (*curvirostris*)

Bernier's Vanga *Oriolia bernieri*—Seen fairly easily this year at Masoala

Lafresnaye's Vanga *Xenopirostris xenopirostris*—Seen well near Toliara

Van Dam's Vanga *Xenopirostris damii*—Great views at Ankrafantsika

Pollen's Vanga *Xenopirostris polleni*—Seen at Ranomafana

Sickle-billed Vanga *Falculea palliata*—Super views at Ankrafantsika, and also seen at Ifaty and Zombitse

White-headed Vanga *Artamella viridis*—Several good sightings, the best at Ankrafantsika (*anna*) and Masoala (*viridis*)

Chabert Vanga *Leptopterus chabert*—Seen several times in the east (*chabert*)

Madagascar Blue Vanga [Blue Vanga] *Cyanolanius [m.] madagascarinus*—Several good sightings (*madagascarinus*)

Rufous Vanga *Schetba rufa*—Seen at Ankrafantsika and Zombitse (*occidentalis*), and Masoala (*rufa*)

Helmet Vanga *Euryceros prevostii*—Incredible views at Masoala

Tylas Vanga *Tylas eduardi*—Seen at Analamazoatra and Ranomafana (*eduardi*)

Nuthatch Vanga *Hypositta corallirostris*—Good views at Andasibe

Dark Newtonia *Newtonia amphichroa*—Seen well at Vohiparara

Common Newtonia *Newtonia brunneicauda*—Seen regularly (*brunneicauda*)

Archbold's Newtonia *Newtonia archboldi*—Good looks at Ifaty

Ward's Flycatcher-Vanga *Pseudobias wardi*—Our best views were at Analamazoatra

Crossley's Babbler-Vanga *Mystacornis crossleyi*—Point-blank views of this great bird at Ranomafana and Masoala

Campephagidae

Madagascar Cuckooshrike *Ceblepyris [c.] cinereus*—Several good sightings (*cinerea*)

Dicruridae

Crested Drongo *Dicrurus forficatus*—Common and widespread (*forficatus*)

Monarchidae

Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone mutata*—Common and widespread, with white-backed white morph, black-backed white morph and rufous morph males seen (apparently there is no basis for recognising multiple subspecies on Madagascar)

Corvidae

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*—Common and widespread

Alaudidae

Madagascar Lark *Eremopterix hova*—Seen very well in open habitats

Pycnonotidae

Madagascar Bulbul *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*—Common and widespread (*madagascariensis*)

Hirundinidae

Mascarene Martin *Phedina borbonica*—Seen regularly (*madagascariensis*)

Madagascar Brown-throated Martin [Brown-throated Martin] *Riparia [paludicola] cowani*—Regular around wetlands in the highlands

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*—Seen briefly at Mahajanga

Acrocephalidae

Madagascar Brush Warbler *Nesillas [t.] typica*—Common in the highlands (*typica*)

Subdesert Brush Warbler *Nesillas lantzii*—Seen well in the Toliara area

Madagascar Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus newtoni*—A few good sightings, the first at Lac Alarobia

Locustellidae

Grey Emutail *Bradypterus seebohmi*—Seen very well at Ranomafana

Brown Emutail *Bradypterus brunneus*—Good views at Vohiparara

Bernieridae

White-throated Oxylabes *Oxylabes madagascariensis*—Good views at Masoala and also seen at Ranomafana

Eastern Long-billed Bernieria [Long-billed Bernieria] *Bernieria [m.] madagascariensis*—Seen several times

Western Long-billed Bernieria [Long-billed Bernieria] *Bernieria [madagascariensis] inceleber*—Seen at Zombitse

Cryptic Warbler *Cryptosylvicola randrianasoloi*—Eye-level views at Vohiparara

Wedge-tailed Jery *Hartertula flavoviridis*—Brilliant views at Mantadia and Ranomafana

Thamnornis *Thamnornis chloropetoides*—Good views at Ifaty

Spectacled Tetraka *Xanthomixis zosterops*—Several good sightings; we probably saw *andapae* at Masoala and *zosterops* at Andasibe and Ranomafana

Appert's Tetraka *Xanthomixis apperti*—Close views at Zombitse

Grey-crowned Tetraka *Xanthomixis cinereiceps*—Seen at Vohiparara

Madagascar Yellowbrow *Crossleyia xanthophrys*—Quite incredible views at Vohiparara

Rand's Warbler *Randia pseudozosterops*—Seen very well at Ranomafana, and also at Analamazoatra

Cisticolidae

Common Jery *Neomixis tenella*—Common and widespread, with *tenella* at Masoala, *decaryi* at Ankrafantsika and *orientalis* at Ranomafana

Green Jery *Neomixis viridis*—Seen at Andasibe and Mantadia (*viridis*)

Stripe-throated Jery *Neomixis [s.] striatigula*—Seen well at Andasibe and Ranomafana

Subdesert Jery [Stripe-throated Jery]

Neomixis [striatigula] pallidior—Good views at Ifaty and Zombitse

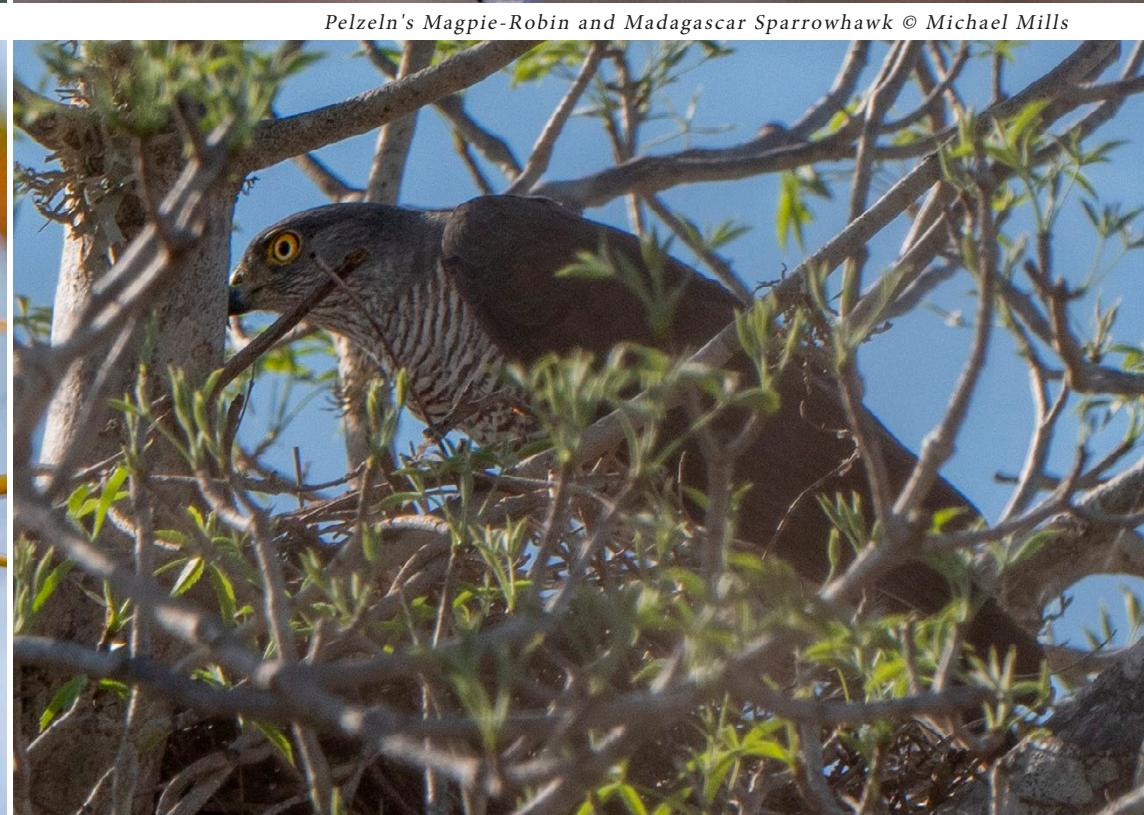
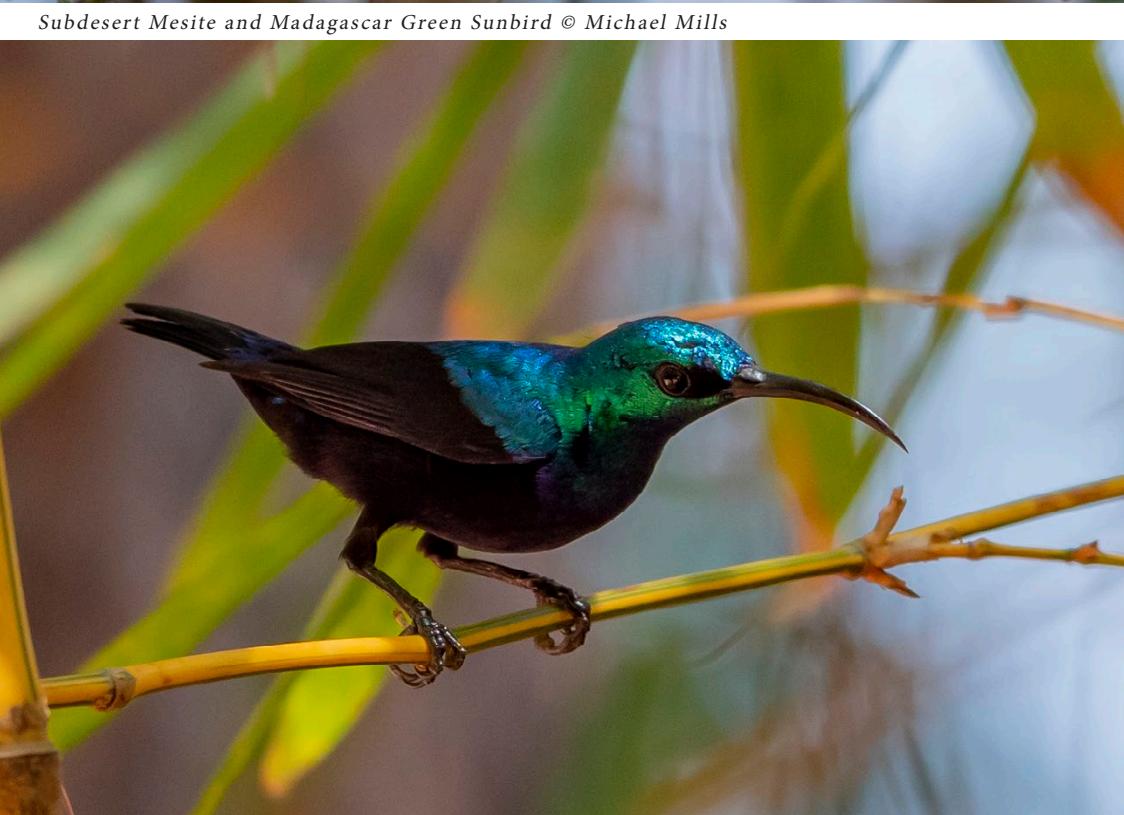
Madagascar Cisticola *Cisticola cherina*—Several good sightings**Zosteropidae****Madagascar White-eye** *Zosterops [m.] maderaspatanus*—Seen regularly in the east (*maderaspatanus*)**Sturnidae****Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*—Common indeed (introduced)**Madagascar Starling** *Hartlaubius auratus*—Seen at Mantadia, Andasibe and Ranomafana and in larger numbers at Masoala**Muscicapidae****Madagascar Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus [a.] albospecularis*—Seen throughout the east; *albospecularis* at Masoala, and *inxpectatus* at Andasibe and Ranomafana**Pelzeln's Magpie-Robin [Madagascar Magpie-Robin]** *Copsychus [albospecularis] pica*—Seen at 'Tana, Ankarafantsika and in the southwest**Littoral Rock Thrush** *Monticola imerina*—Good looks at a male and juvenile at Anakao**Forest Rock Thrush** *Monticola [s.] sharpei*—Good views of a male on the road at Ranomafana (*salomonseni*) and at Isalo ("Benson's Rock Thrush", *bensonii*)**Madagascar Stonechat [Common Stonechat]** *Saxicola [torquatus] sibilla*—Fairly common in the highlands (*sibilla*)**Nectariniidae****Souimanga Sunbird** *Cinnyris [s.] sovimanga*—Many great views (*sovimanga*), with the white-bellied birds confined to the Toliara and Ifaty areas (*apolis*)**Madagascar Green Sunbird** *Cinnyris [n.] notatus*—Several good sightings (*notatus*)**Passeridae****House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*—Seen at Maroansetra, Mahajanga, Ankarafantsika and Andasibe**Ploceidae****Nelicourvi Weaver** *Ploceus nelicourvi*—Seen at all eastern forest sites**Sakalava Weaver** *Ploceus sakalava*—Seen well at Ankarafantsika and Ifaty (*sakalava*)**Red Fody** *Foudia madagascariensis*—Common and widespread**Forest Fody** *Foudia omissa*—Seen at Ranomafana and Mantadia**Estrildidae****Madagascar Mannikin** *Lepidopygia nana*—Several good sightings**Motacillidae****Madagascar Wagtail** *Motacilla flaviventris*—Common and widespread**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*—One at Mahajanga was a first for Madagascar



Subdesert Mesite and Madagascar Green Sunbird © Michael Mills



Pelzeln's Magpie-Robin and Madagascar Sparrowhawk © Michael Mills

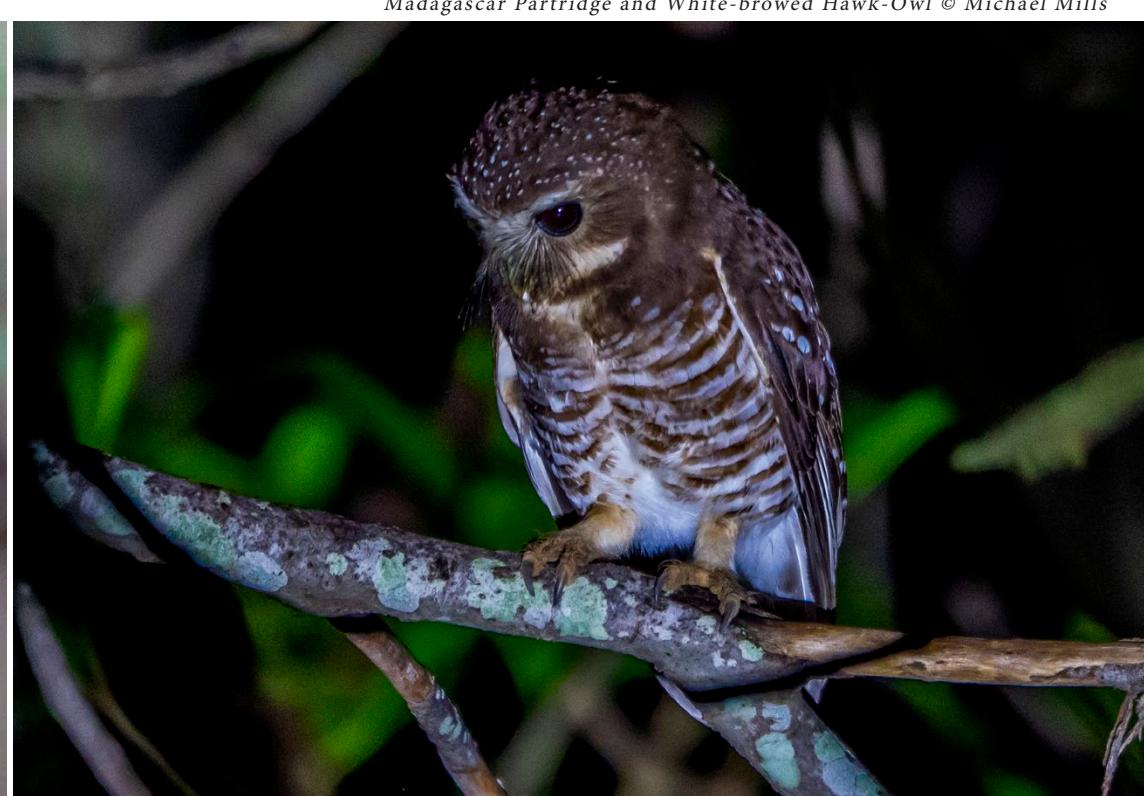




Rufous Vanga and Appert's Tetraka © Michael Mills



Madagascar Partridge and White-browed Hawk-Owl © Michael Mills





Grey Emutail and Crossley's Babbler-Vanga © Michael Mills



Rand's Warbler and Cryptic Warbler © Michael Mills





Forest Rock Thrush and Brown Mesite © Michael Mills





Marsh Owl and White-throated Oxylabes © Michael Mills



Collared Nightjar and Scaly Ground Roller © Michael Mills

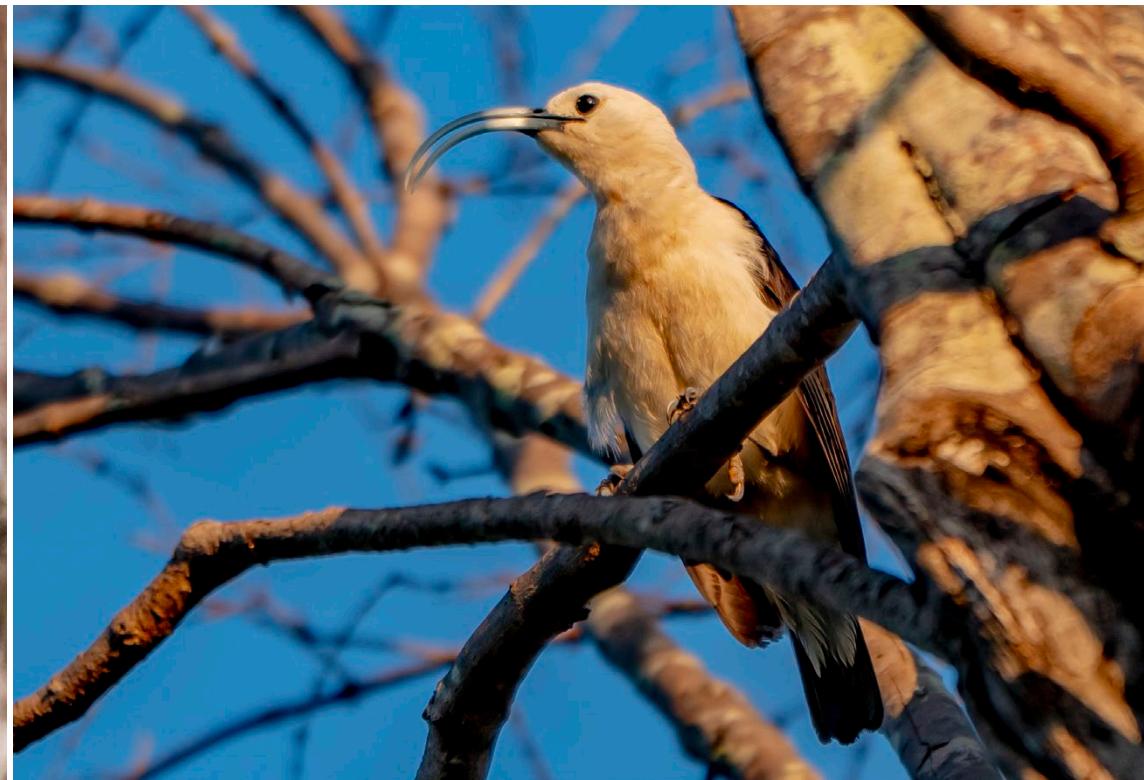




Wedge-tailed Jery and Red-capped Coua © Michael Mills



Pitta-like Ground Roller and Sickle-billed Vanga © Michael Mills





Running Coua and Hook-billed Vanga © Michael Mills

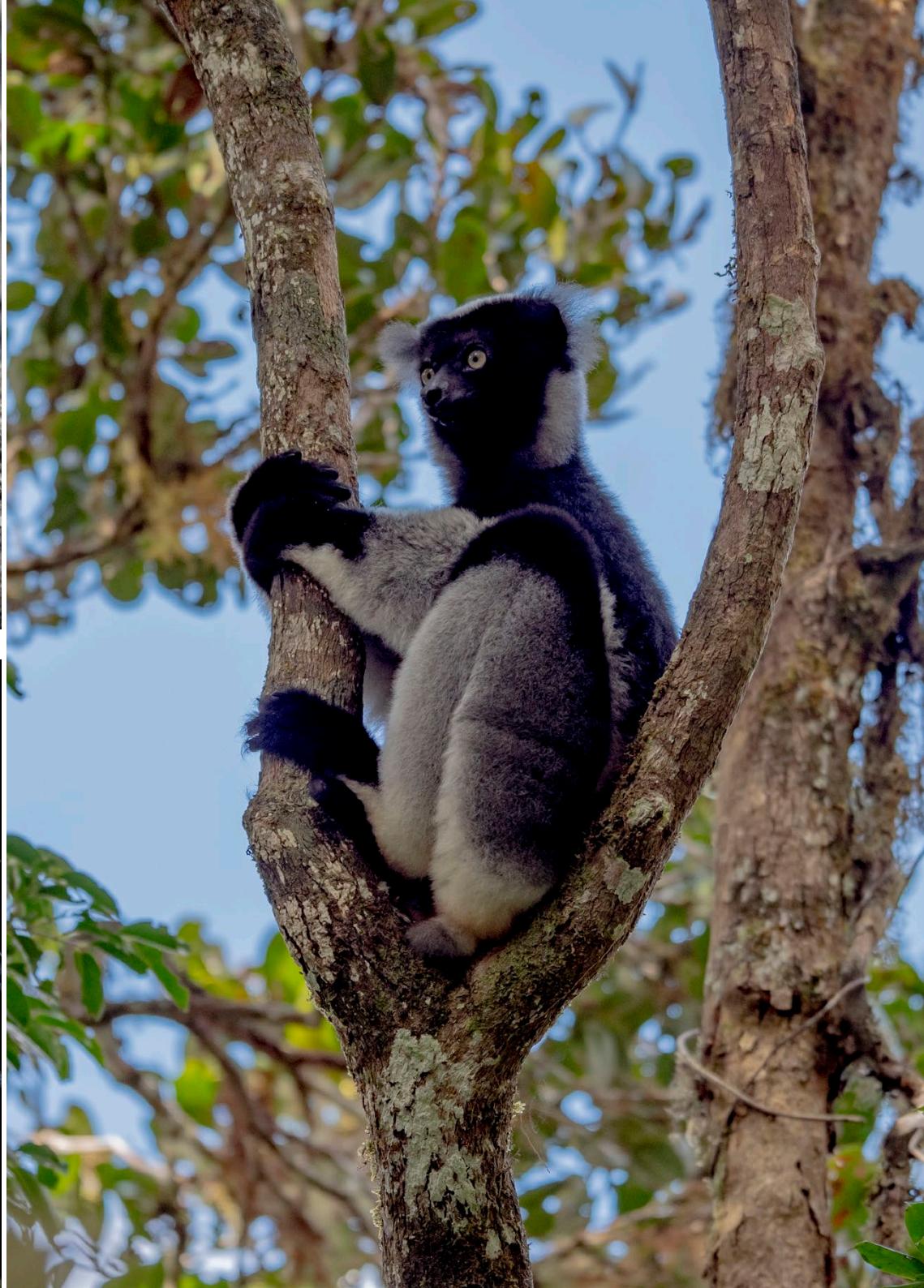


Ring-tailed Lemur and Red-tailed Tropicbird © Michael Mills





Frog (*Mantella baroni*), Rainforest Scops Owl and Indri © Michael Mills



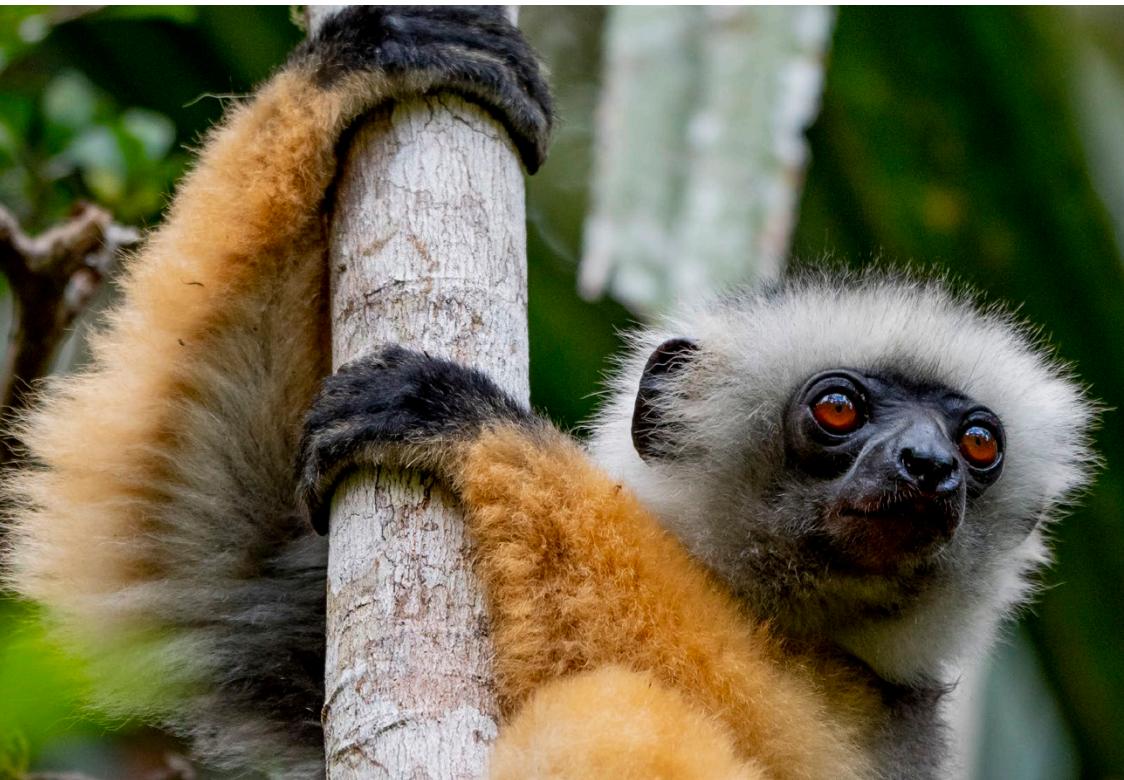


Coquerel's Sifaka, White-breasted Mesite and Madagascar Fish Eagle © Michael Mills





Madagascar Yellowbrow, Diademed Sifaka and Red-fronted Coua © Michael Mills





Madagascar Magpie-Robin, Red-shouldered Vanga & Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher © Michael Mills



