

ITINERARY  
**MADAGASCAR**  
*October 31-November 23, 2026*



*The asities are a small family endemic to Madagascar. The Velvet Asity is found in the rainforests of eastern Madagascar, where it occurs in most of the protected areas we will visit. This male was seen well in Ranomafana. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2026 Field Guides Madagascar:*

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

*Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:*

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

**NOTE REGARDING FLIGHTS:** In 2026 we are changing the order in hopes of eliminating some long, bumpy drives, and we will now fly on commercial flights from Tana to Tulear, and to and from Mahajunga. While these flights add to the tour cost considerably we feel the extra expense is well worth the time it saves, not to mention the flat tire changing we'll avoid!

**M**adagascar is the fourth largest island in the world, but it has been separate from Africa for so many millions of years and has fostered the preservation and evolution of such a multitude of unique life forms that it is considered one of the

major zoogeographic regions of the Earth. Ninety percent of its forest species are unique, as well as all of the native Malagasy land mammals, among them what are now recognized as 105-plus species of lemurs, an ancient primate group once widespread but now largely confined in shrinking numbers to Madagascar. More than half of the 250-plus bird species are endemic, including about thirty-six genera and six families of birds found only here or the nearby Comoros: the mesites, the Cuckoo-Roller, the ground-rollers, the asities (now placed with broadbills), the Bernieridae (Malagasy tetrakas and warblers) and the vangas. In addition, the couas comprise a bird subfamily endemic to Madagascar. Our tour visits all the major zoogeographic regions of the island, from xerophytic spiny forest near Tulear to deciduous tall forest near Mahajunga in the northwest and lush eastern rainforest at Mantadia-Andasibe (Perinet) and Ranomafana. This broad coverage, with intensive birding in the best locales, gives us an excellent chance to find representatives of all the endemic bird families as well as the endemic genera. Our tour route includes localities for more than 110 of Madagascar's endemic birds—a little more than a dozen remaining species being either nearly extinct, virtually unknown, highly localized, or inaccessible to groups. And though the proportion of endemics in Madagascar's avifauna is remarkably high, participants have an excellent chance of seeing most of these birds. We expect our past discoveries (including that of a new species of warbler, the Cryptic Warbler) and our extensive recording collection to serve us well on our upcoming tours to Madagascar, where Field Guides began running tours over thirty years ago back in 1986, a well-established pedigree! And with the assistance of several recent field guides to the birds and mammals, there is every reason to visit this remarkable island now.



*We'll see many species of lemur, possibly even the critically endangered Diademed Sifaka.  
Photograph by participant Paul Koker.*

Seeing so many unique and often bizarre birds—Sickle-billed Vanga, Sunbird Asity, Blue Coua, or Long-tailed Ground-Roller—makes for exciting birding indeed. And Madagascar offers many spectacular pluses. Most numerous and conspicuous of the indigenous mammals are the lemurs. A very few small, nocturnal relatives of lemurs survive in Africa, but only in Madagascar do lemurs still inhabit the daylight world, in graceful and beautifully colored and patterned forms to more than three feet tall. We should see 20 or more species of lemurs, including the nearly all-white sifakas and

the tiny mouse lemurs, smallest of all primates. The misty forest of Perinet can have an unforgettable dawn chorus of Indri with their astonishing humpback-whale like vocalizations. We'll also have opportunities to see families of Ring-tailed Lemurs near Isalo, while Lesser Vasa Parrots and Cuckoo-Rollers are other species we should see and hear during our time here. It is truly amazing to feel one is returning to a living remnant of the Miocene era—the Earth as it might have appeared fifty million years ago when the last significant immigration of African species to Madagascar occurred.

You will see, too, we are sad to report, that Madagascar is an island lost in more than time. Humans did not reach Madagascar until about 500 A.D. The incredible natural world those first visitors found is now largely despoiled and lost forever. On Madagascar, eleven species of lemurs and the twelve-foot-tall Elephant Bird (*Aepyornis*), the largest bird that ever lived, were exterminated by hunting and by man-made fires that stripped the island of more than eighty percent of its forest cover. Few areas on Earth have so many species listed as endangered or threatened. Fortunately, the island has been the focus since the 1980s of a concentrated conservation effort by international organizations in concert with the Malagasy government, and the outlook for preservation of areas representative of all of Madagascar's habitats may be improving slightly with combined efforts from many overseas and local organizations. Our tour supports many local guides and workers, and we make a significant contribution to the local village economies, which is gratifying.



*Some of our hikes will involve terrain that may be rocky and uneven, while other days we will be in steep, muddy conditions.  
Photograph by participant Randy Beaton.*

*We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.*

### **Physical requirements of this tour**

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Good amounts of walking (occasionally up to 3-4 miles per day), some of it on roads, some on trails. Trails vary from flat and broad with no obstacles (in most areas) to steep, slippery, and uneven, with obstacles such as rocks or fallen branches (two locations). Walking sticks are recommended on the more difficult hikes. Ranomafana also has some quite steep steps to negotiate.

- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We cover much ground on this tour, and on several days we must use dusty, very bumpy roads. Participants should be able to step up 12 inches into and out of our transports. We do spend a bit of time standing to watch birds on this tour (a small folding stool can provide relief as needed).
- **PACE:** Frequent early mornings (5:00-5:30 a.m. breakfasts), with afternoon breaks on some days followed by optional afternoon outings. On some days, we will be in the field all day, with a picnic lunch, to maximize field time or when traveling to the next lodging. Optional nighttime outings will also be offered.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the low 60's F (15C) at night in the central highlands to the high 90s (or even low 100s) F (30-33 C) during the day in coastal lowlands. Rain showers are a possibility.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops (bush stops) in nature for most of this tour, as there are simply no other options along most of the tour's route, away from our lodgings.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

## About the Birding Areas



**Ranomafana National Park**—Situated on the slopes of Madagascar's humid eastern escarpment, Ranomafana National Park protects an area of rainforest habitat similar to that we'll find later at Mantadia-Andasibe (Perinet), but at a slightly higher elevation. In the mid 1980s, Ranomafana received much attention because of the discovery of a new species of lemur, the Golden Bamboo Lemur; other species including Greater Bamboo, Red-bellied, and Red-fronted lemurs, Milne-Edwards Sifaka, and Eastern Mouse Lemur occur as well, making the area of particular interest to primatologists. We'll hope to find all of these lemurs, of course, but the real draw for our group will be a host of birds typical of rainforest, Madagascar's richest habitat. Beyond the forest regulars, our main quest will be a cadre of birds we are unlikely to see anywhere else. These include Brown Mesite (affording us a realistic opportunity to see all of the mesites on one tour), Madagascar Snipe, Madagascar Wood-Rail, Pitta-like Ground-Roller (fairly common here and seen well repeatedly on our past tours), Yellow-bellied Sunbird Asity (rare), Gray-crowned Tetraka, Forest Rock-Thrush (a beautiful songster), Wedge-tailed Tetraka (Jerry), Cryptic Warbler, White-throated Oxylabes (little groups of which skulk in the densest forest undergrowth), the elusive and skulking Madagascar Yellowbrow (Yellow-browed Oxylabes), and the handsome Pollen's Vanga. Almost all of these species are difficult to see, and we will invest most of our time seeking them out while still enjoying the more common and widespread rainforest birds as we encounter them. The terrain at Ranomafana is quite hilly, but with three nights and two full days to explore the area, we will have time to look for all of these birds at a reasonable pace.

**Zombitse Forest/Isalo Massif**—We'll take advantage of a necessary travel day to visit these two areas in south-central Madagascar and seek out two very local endemics, though it will be hot by the time we get there. The Zombitse comprises tall deciduous forest reminiscent of what we saw at Ankarafantsika in the northwest. It is home to the Appert's

Tetraka, described in 1972 and with a very patchy distribution within its tiny range in this part of the island. Few birders have seen this bird, and its restricted habitat is gravely endangered by charcoal production activities of the local people. On our past tours, we've had great looks at small groups of these birds foraging on the ground in the company of the bulkier Long-billed Tetraka, and it's also a great place for Cuckoo-roller.

The Isalo Massif is a fabulous landscape of large, rugged rock outcrops amidst near-desert surroundings, though at 3100 feet elevation it is quite comfortable. This is the area where our past tour groups have found one of Madagascar's seldom-seen species, the taxonomically challenged Benson's Rock-Thrush.



*Long-tailed Ground-Roller is found in the spiny forests near Tulear in the southwest. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.*

**Tulear/Ifaty area**—The region north of Tulear in southwest Madagascar is covered with great tracts of the island's bizarre and unique spiny forest (although in recent years there has been an increased amount of cutting and burning). Here, the landscape is dominated by a fantastic association of baobab trees, with endemic euphorbias and *Didierea* shrubs on the sandy soil. The huge, fat trunks of baobabs stick out above the waving arms of bizarre, spine-covered plants reminiscent of a giant version of the Ocotillo of the American Southwest. This completely foreign landscape is home to a broad assortment of Malagasy birds, but we'll search most of all for two members of endemic families: Subdesert Mesite and Long-tailed Ground-Roller. Our recent tour groups have enjoyed long, close looks at both species, and some years we are fortunate enough to find active nests of the ground-roller. Other prizes among the many possibilities include: Madagascar Harrier-Hawk, Madagascar Buttonquail, Madagascar Hoopoe (split from the continental forms by its peculiar voice), Sickle-billed, Chabert, Red-tailed, Lafresnaye's (restricted to the southwest), and White-headed vangas, Running, Crested, and Olive-capped (if split from Red-capped) couas, Archbold's Newtonia, Thamnornis, Stripe-throated Jery, and Sakalava Weaver. We'll also bird an area of white coral rag scrub near Tulear, home to a couple of very local endemics—Verreaux's Coua and the very recently discovered (1997) Red-shouldered Vanga.

**Ankarafantsika Forest Station and Lake Ravelobe**—These birding sites lie about 110 kilometres inland from Mahajunga (also known as Mahjunga) in north-western Madagascar. Important birding habitats include marshes and rice paddies, a large freshwater lake, and dry deciduous woodland. On a typical birding trip to Madagascar, a number of specialties are seen only here, including Madagascar Jacana, Madagascar Fish-Eagle (one of the world's rarest raptors), White-breasted Mesite, Coquerel's and Red-capped couas, Rufous and the rare Van Dam's Vanga, and the rare and decidedly wonderful Schlegel's Asity. The richly colored Coquerel's Sifaka is sometimes seen very close to the forest station entrance. The Madagascar (Crested) Ibis (a spectacular, rare and elusive forest ibis) has nested in the reserve and we sometimes encounter them here. Collared Iguana is common here, the day geckoes and chameleons can be fascinating, and a couple of species of the spectacular hog-nosed snake are possible (non-venomous!).

**Andasibe (Perinet) Special Reserve / Mantadia National Park**—This reserve and the adjacent national park comprise an area of 10,000 hectares of rainforest. Located about 130 kilometres east of Antananarivo (known to most as Tana), Andasibe’s forest features very tall trees with a particularly dense understory, a feature apparently caused in part by the cyclones that regularly hit the island. Low hills and ridges characterize the area, and a number of trails in the reserve will give us access to both streamside and ridge forest as well as a small lake. Many of the birds here will be shared with Ranomafana. Specialties include Madagascar Grebe, Madagascar Flufftail (a tiny crane that can hide effectively behind even the smallest leaf, but which we have a good chance of seeing), Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher (elusive), Red-breasted Coua (scarce here), Ward’s Flycatcher (Vanga), Rand’s Warbler, Dark Newtonia, the rare Nuthatch Vanga and the fabulous Rufous-headed Ground-Roller, plus a couple of rare nocturnal species (that we often find in daylight): Collared Nightjar (vocalization unknown) and Madagascar Owl (the largest of the island’s endemic owls). We’ll also visit the recently opened Mantadia National Park, about a 90 minute drive on a very bad road from Perinet, giving us a chance to find the beautiful Scaly and the much more elusive Short-legged ground-rollers, as well as several other species that are more easily found here than at Perinet itself.

During our visit to Andasibe (Perinet), we’ll also have the chance to watch a variety of lemurs—Brown, Eastern Mouse, Greater Dwarf, and Gray Bamboo—and there is even a chance for the splendid Diademed Sifaka, now a rare species due to habitat destruction. However, the Indri, largest of the living lemurs, will be a focus of part of one of our mornings, usually our finale. Indris are far and away the greatest single attraction for the general visitor to Perinet, and we have an excellent chance of seeing these magnificent creatures at close range, and you will likely hear them singing just after dawn from our hotel. Their loud, plaintive wails—surely one of the Earth’s most evocative sounds, like a terrestrial Humpback Whale—carry for great distances through the forest. Herps both here and at Ranomafana are outstanding, with beautiful and colorful day geckoes, amazingly camouflaged *Uroplatus* leaf-tailed geckoes (if we are lucky), chameleons and skinks.



*Madagascar Owl is found throughout the island where there is dense foliage for roosting. We'll look for it at Andasibe. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.*

**IMPORTANT!** Although we plan to visit all of the areas below, a precise itinerary is always difficult to produce far in advance. Much depends on local flight schedules that fluctuate from year to year and season to season. In Madagascar, schedules are decidedly elastic and we will undoubtedly encounter changes. We will do our best to duplicate the outline below but it is unlikely that the sequence of days and flight times will be the same as what follows. The itinerary has been fine-tuned to balance Air Madagascar flights (with their many schedule changes!!) with driving where we feel the road conditions are withstandable, and allows time at some gorgeous local sites like Feon' NyAla and Ranomafana.



*The tetrakas are small songbirds reminiscent of warblers, but these species are members of a family endemic to Madagascar. Appert's Tetraka is found in only a small area near Zombitse. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

## Itinerary for Madagascar

**Days 1-2, Sat-Sun, 31 Oct- 1 Nov. Flight from US to Paris; evening flight from Paris to Madagascar.** Participants coming from the US will depart this evening (October 31), with most folks arriving in Paris, or another European city, on the morning of Day 2 (November 1). Flights to Madagascar's capital city of Antananarivo (known locally as Tana) will departure anywhere from mid morning to late evening. Please make sure you arrive in Tana on or before November 2.

**Day 3, Mon, 2 Nov. Arrival in Madagascar.** On arrival in Tana you'll clear customs and transfer to our hotel, where we'll have some time to rest after the long flight. We'll plan to meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for dinner. Night at Hotel Carlton in Tana.

**Day 4, Tue, 3 Nov. Antananarivo to Ambositra.** Today is mostly a travel day as we make the drive south from Tana to Ambositra, with a few short stops along the way for light birding and a roadside lunch. We've opted for this to get the longest drive under the belt early, so more time can be spent birding for the rest of the tour. Drive times are extremely variable due to traffic and road conditions but one could expect anything around 7-8 hours for the day's drive

**Day 5, Wed, 4 Nov. Ambositra to Ranomafana.** We continue our way south towards Ranomafana, making a few short birding stops on enroute. This is our first chance at Meller's Duck, White-throated Rail, as well as Madagascar Flufftail. We should arrive at Ranomafana in the early afternoon. If time allows, we will do some road side forest birding, hoping for various Vanga's, Nelicourvi Weaver, Blue Coua, and our first chance at Cuckoo-Roller, or have an optional excursion in the evening to look for lemurs and chameleons along the road cutting through the forest. Night in Ranomafana at Centrest Hotel or Grenat.

**Days 6-7, Thu-Fri, 5-6 Nov. Ranomafana NP.** We'll spend two full days and part of a third exploring various trails in the park, one of the most beautiful rainforest areas in the whole of Madagascar. In addition to many of the more common forest birds, we'll be hoping for Brown Mesite, Pitta-like and Rufous-headed ground-rollers, Sunbird Asity, Gray-crowned Tetraka (Greenbul), Brown Emu-tail, and Cryptic Warbler. In addition to the birds, we should see a number of lemurs, including Eastern Mouse, Golden and maybe Greater Bamboo, and Brown Lemur, and perhaps Milne-Edwards Sifaka.

Herps here are also outstanding, with a variety of day geckoes, leaf-tailed geckoes, chameleons and lizards. The terrain here is primarily hill forest between 3000 and 5000 feet, and the park trails climb up and down accordingly—sometimes rather steeply. Some of the trails can be muddy and slippery if they're wet, but a couple of areas we'll visit will offer at least some flat walking. The condition of the trails will depend on recent weather; if there has been rain, rubber boots may be valuable, though typically the trails are in good, firm condition. Raingear and/or an umbrella should always be carried. Nights in Ranomafana at Centrest Hotel or Grenat.



*Madagascar is home to some fascinating reptiles, including the Parson's Chameleon, the largest chameleon species. We'll watch for them at Ranomafana. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.*

**Day 8, Sat, 7 Nov. Ranomafana NP to Ranohira.** We'll have a final morning of birding at Ranomafana NP, before heading south west towards the interior of the country, with stops to visit a local silk-making co-operative, as well as the Ring-tailed Lemur Reserve of Anja, which has about 600 of these delightful primates. We'll have lunch at Anja, and hopefully some time for some afternoon roadside birding during our drive to Ranohira, where we'll be accommodated at the lovely *Jardin du Roy* Hotel for our one night stay. **Ranohira** is located in the quite recently established Isalo NP, and our comfortable lodge is of a beautiful architectural designed, made of sandstone, with the very localized Benson's Rock Thrush right nearby. This area can also be good for Madagascar Partridge, Madagascar Hoopoe and White-throated Rail. Night at Jardin du Roy.

**Day 9, Sun, 8 Nov. Ranohira to Tulear.** Today we'll drive to the fascinating Zombitse Forest NP, hopefully getting here before it gets too hot to have some time to search for another local endemic—Appert's Tetraka (Greenbul). We'll be walking on hard-packed sand and over some granite plates, so comfortable footwear should be adequate. As the weather is warm, we recommend breathable, moisture-wicking clothing that is also comfortable for travel. We will also try for Giant Coua, White-browed Owl and Rufous Vanga. We then continue our drive to the coast. After lunch we'll make a visit to the dry coral rag scrublands at La Table, with a chance for Red-shouldered Vanga and Verreaux's Coua, two very localized endemics. Night in Tulear at Victory Hotel.

**Day 10, Mon, 9 Nov. Tulear to Ifaty.** We'll have an early departure from Tulear for a boat trip to Nosy Ve and Anakau where we'll be birding the local area. Nosy Ve is home to breeding Red-tailed Tropicbirds, and our first chance at Crab Plover, depending on the tides. We may also visit the local local markets in Tulear where many interesting things are on sale, from carvings, baskets and rocks to *Aepyornis* eggs. After lunch, we make our way north up the coast to Ifaty making a few short road side stops along the way aiming for Madagascar Plover. Our hotel in Ifaty is a fairly simple but comfortable coastal resort lodge. The sunsets here are fabulous and the sound of the lapping waves very relaxing. Night in Ifaty at the Bamboo Club.



*The unusual Crab Plover is found along the shores of the Indian ocean; we'll look for them near Ifaty and at the Betsiboka River mouth. The Crab Plover is the only species in its family, and unlike other shorebirds, it breeds in burrows. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.*

**Day 11, Tue, 10 Nov. Parc Mosa, Ifaty.** We'll start early this morning, trying to beat the heat of the day while exploring the nearby spiny forest. The remaining forest is protected by the local community and is fortunately still full of wonderful birds! The tracks are soft and sandy, but well worth the effort, with Sub-desert Mesite, Long-tailed Ground-Roller, and Lafresnaye's Vanga being possible highlights. A full water bottle (or two!) and a hat for sun protection are necessities today. We'll return for a break during the mid-day heat, and there may be an opportunity for a dip in the Mozambique Channel, plus there is a swimming pool, so bring your swimsuit if desired. This afternoon, we'll do some birding along the coast or return to the spiny forest, depending on what we still need to see. Night in Ifaty at the Bamboo Club.

**Day 12, Wed, 11 Nov. Tulear to Antananarivo.** Birding today will be determined by the internal flight back to Tana. Should we have time, we will bird along the coast road heading south to Tulear, focusing on small wetland areas for targets such as Baillon's Crake, Madagascar Swamp Warbler, and both Greater and Lesser Flamingos. We will transfer to the airport for the group flight to Tana. Again, time dependent, we plan to visit Lac Alarobia en-route from the airport to the hotel. Lac Alarobia is a RAMSAR site, and notable for the heronry of Squacco Herons, and perhaps Madagascar Pond Heron, Cattle Egret and Black-crowned Night Heron, in addition to Dimorphic Egret and a few Black Herons. Meller's Duck has also been good here, and White-throated Rail could also be seen in this area. Night in Tana at Carlton Hotel.

**Day 13, Thu, 12 Nov. Antananarivo to Majunga, then Ankarafantsika.** We'll have a travel day today, starting with a transfer to the airport in Tana for our group flight to Majunga. Upon arrival, we'll transfer by car to Ankarafantsika, which is roughly a four-hour drive. We'll make a stop en route to enjoy a packed lunch, and we should make it to our destination in the late afternoon, hopefully in time for some pre-dinner birding. Later in the evening, after dinner, a short night walk is not to be missed. Our lodging is in simple but comfortable bungalows with private bathrooms (singles are limited here so we maybe be required to double-up). Night at *Ampijoroa Lodge*.

**Day 14, Fri, 13 Nov. Ampijoroa Forest Station.** The advantage of staying at the Ampijoroa Lodge will be immediately apparent when we step out of our cabins at dawn, knowing we didn't need to leave our beds at 3:00 a.m. (as we've done in the past) to get to the birding site for the dawn chorus! Being here at dawn is extremely important, as this region is one of the hottest and driest we'll encounter on the trip. We will have 1 full day to explore this area. The trails are not particularly difficult—mostly flat and sandy—but we will do at least a little climbing, and the heat can be intense so carrying sufficient water is an absolute must! The three big targets here—White-breasted Mesite, Schlegel's Asity, and Van Dam's Vanga—can all be quite tricky, so we'll focus on these birds first, though we'll certainly see many other species along the way. After birding the deciduous forest on the plateau, we'll go to nearby Lake Ravelobe, a good site for Madagascar Fish-Eagle, one of the world's rarest raptors, and sometimes Humblot's Heron and Madagascar Jacana. After lunch, our return to Mahajunga will be somewhat dependent on how we do with the birds, though we'll try to be back before dark. If time permits, we may make a few stops in the marshes and rice fields en route to check for Black Herons, Greater Painted-Snipe, and the striking African Pygmy-Goose. Night at *Ampijoroa Lodge*.

**Day 15, Sat, 14 Nov. Ankarafantsika to Majunga.** We have another morning to experience the dawn chorus within the National Park, and some time to find any missing target birds in the area. We will have an early lunch before making the drive back to Mahajunga, with road side birding stops along the way. Night at *EdenaKely* in Mahajunga.

**Day 16, Sun, 15 Nov. Mahajunga to Tana.** After an early breakfast, we'll take a short boat trip to the mouth of the Betsiboka River for a chance to see the rare and elusive Bernier's Teal, Humblot's Heron, and the distinctive Madagascar race of Sacred Ibis (split by most), though we do need the tide to be right to have a chance of these rarities. The exposed mudflats usually have a range of migrant shorebirds (which can include Crab Plover), which will keep us occupied while we search for the scarcer species listed above. In the evening we'll take a flight back to Tana. Night at Hotel Carlton in Tana.

**Day 17, Mon, 16 Nov. Antananarivo to Andasibe.** Early in the morning, we'll again visit Lac Alarobia, the previously visited RAMSAR site (see Day 12). We'll then make the three-to-four-hour drive (135 km) to the Feon' Ny Ala Hotel, our comfortable base near the Andasibe Reserve. We'll enjoy some roadside birding at Andasibe after lunch, where our local guide may know of roosting Madagascar Long-eared Owl. Night at *Feon' Ny Ala* ("Song of the Forest") in Andasibe.



*Madagascar Ibis is resident in woodlands around the island, but might be found most easily at Andasibe.  
Photograph by participant Maureen Phair.*

**Days 18-20, Tue-Thu, 17-19 Nov. Andasibe (Perinet/Analamazaotra) Special Reserve.** We'll spend these three days exploring Andasibe (Perinet) and nearby areas, including a visit to the new Mantadia National Park. Trails vary but most of the walking is on fairly flat terrain with only occasional steeper sections. Condition of the trails will depend on recent weather; if there has been rain, rubber boots may be valuable, though typically the trails are in good, firm condition. Raingear and/or an umbrella should always be carried. During our time here we will have second looks at many of the forest birds we saw at Ranomafana, and undoubtedly we'll also find some new ones—Andasibe/Perinet often proves to be the best area for Madagascar Ibis, Madagascar Flufftail, Collared Nightjar, Nuthatch Vanga, and with a great deal of luck, Scaly and Short-legged ground-rollers. The park is also excellent for lemurs, including the fabulous Indri, and the herps here include a fascinating variety of chameleons, leaf-tailed geckoes and lizards, plus many small and very colorful frogs. Night at *Feon' Ny Ala* ("Song of the Forest") in Andasibe.

**Day 21, Fri, 20 Nov. Andasibe to Pangalanes Area.** We'll make another drive lasting around four to five hours via Brickaville to the Pangalanes area. From here, we'll make a one-hour boat crossing to our comfortable waterside hotel where we shall be ready for the short trip to Aye-aye Island, where chances of seeing this legendary little creature are excellent, and where our group has had great experiences on past trips. Overnight at the local waterside hotel. Palmarium Hotel in Ankanin'Nofy.

**Day 22, Sat, 21 Nov. Pangalanes Area to Antananarivo.** We can explore the area around the hotel early, then take the boat back to meet up with our bus and driver, before heading back to Tana. This is largely a travel day, but if time is on our side we'll make a quick shopping stop. Night at Hotel Carlton in Tana.

**Day 23, Sun, 22 Nov. Departure from Tana. Today we bid the amazing island good bye as we transfer to the international airport.** Should time allow, a short stop at the Lac Alarobia can be arranged should we not have had time previously during the tour.

**Day 24, Mon, 23 Nov. Arrival back home the U. S.**

## About Your Guides

**Tarry Butcher** was born and raised in Namibia, where his interest in birds was kindled at an early age. He spent much of his childhood exploring the vast open areas of the dry Namibian wilderness, where his love for birds and animals grew. His interest in and knowledge of wildlife in general, and birds in particular, drew him inevitably to a career in guiding. That interest was further developed during his studies in Game Ranch Management in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, and he undertook additional travels to explore different areas of South Africa in search of new birds in different habitats.

After working as a Naturalist-Guide in the region for eight years, Tarry made the jump to guiding birding groups in both Namibia and South Africa, with his past

experience as a solid base. He has also traveled to other parts of Africa, where he has always been keen to learn about new birds. Tarry's easy-going nature, his sense of humor, hosting, and logistical skills, and his yearning for adventure, coupled with his passion for sharing his love of nature with people of all ages, make him an excellent guide.

In recent years, Tarry worked as a driver/guide on Field Guides tours under Terry Stevenson's leadership, and during fall 2022 he co-led three additional Field Guides tours to South Africa and Namibia with Field Guides veterans Megan Edwards Crewe, Marcelo Padua, and Doug Gochfeld, who with their groups found him to be a delightful and knowledgeable guide and traveling companion, as we think you will too. Tarry lives in Pretoria, South Africa.

*"Tarry Butcher's knowledge, enthusiasm, demeanor and sense of humor made this special trip one of the best ever! We really enjoyed being in the field with Tarry. Not only is he great at spotting birds and recognizing their sounds but he's good at getting others to see the birds as well. He is unfailingly patient and always helpful. He is the kind of guide we've come to expect from Field Guides. We would love to go on another trip with him." S.E. & R.B., Namibia & Botswana*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for complete tour schedules for Tarry; just click on his photo.

Your Field Guides leaders will be joined by a local guide.

## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$10995 (includes domestic flight(s) within Madagascar)

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$1000

(single rooms are limited at Ampijoroa Lodge);

**DEPOSIT:** \$1100 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** May 4, 2026

**LIMIT:** 9

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** While Madagascar is definitely "off the beaten track," its accommodations have improved enormously over the past few years. Though some accommodations are typical of third-world countries without an overwhelming amount of tourism, overall our lodgings are surprisingly good, particularly given the remoteness of some of the birding areas. At Ampijoroa Lodge singles are limited so some folks may need to double up, and anyone in the research section with the guides will need to share bathroom facilities.

For those situations where netting isn't provided (Ambositre and Tana only in 2023), you might want a portable, self-supporting mosquito-net sleeping tent which you can erect over your bed in order to sleep free of mosquito worries; alternatively, buy some insect spray in the local towns. If you're a light sleeper, you may also want to bring along earplugs.

**DOCUMENTS:** Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

**Passport:** A current **passport** valid six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Madagascar. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

**Visa:** US citizens must obtain a **tourist visa** for Madagascar and application should be made in advance of travel, though it is possible to pay and get one on arrival in Madagascar. We will provide you with the necessary visa application form, and recommend getting it in advance of travel.

**Travelers connecting via Europe and the United Kingdom** may need an authorization in the form of an eVisa. Please check for requirements for the country you'll visit or transit through on your way to and from the tour. It is ultimately the client's responsibility to acquire the necessary documents required for travel, and your tour manager will try to assist where possible.

- Europe: [https://travel-europe.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://travel-europe.europa.eu/index_en)
- United Kingdom: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>

Citizens of other countries should check with the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** This tour begins and ends in Antananarivo (Tana), Madagascar; Ivato International Airport (TNR)

**Arrival:** Tana on or before November 2. Participants coming from the US will depart the evening of October 31, arriving in Paris, or another European city, on the morning of November 1. Flights to Tana will depart anywhere from mid-morning to late evening November 1, landing early to mid-day November 2.

**Departure:** Tana, any time Sunday, November 22.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

**SMOKING:** Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** **The tour fee is \$10995 for one person in double occupancy from Antananarivo, Madagascar.** It includes all lodging from Day 3 through Day 22, all meals from dinner on Day 3 through breakfast on Day 23, the flights within Madagascar, all ground transportation, boat trips, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling, plenty of drinking water, and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leader(s).

**The above fee does not include** your airfare to and from Madagascar, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

**The single supplement for the tour is \$1000 for those requesting a single room.** If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** **To register for this tour, please contact us at [fieldguides.com/contact-us/](https://fieldguides.com/contact-us/).** Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

**Please send your deposit of \$1100 per person;** see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by May 4, 2026.** We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/>.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only

as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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2/25 peg; 3/26peg