

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.

Day - 6-7 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

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 (3 persons 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